

**SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE**

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: CHILD CARE RESOURCES GROUP UPDATE FOR 2009**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. THAT Council receives this report for information.

**REPORT**

The Social Issues Committee, at its meeting held on 2009 March 19, received and adopted the *attached* report providing a summary of activities of the Child Care Resources Group during 2008 and to propose a Workplan for 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor P. Calendino  
Chair

Councillor P. McDonell  
Vice Chair

Councillor A. Kang  
Member

Copied to:	City Manager Director Planning & Building Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE **DATE:** 2009 March 11

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 1750 20

**SUBJECT:** CHILD CARE RESOURCES GROUP UPDATE FOR 2009

**PURPOSE:** To provide a summary of activities of the Child Care Resources Group during 2008 and to propose a Workplan for 2009.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** this report be forwarded to Council for information.

**REPORT****1.0 BACKGROUND**

The Child Care Resources Group (CCRG) was established in 1990 as a subcommittee of the Social Issues Committee. It is comprised of representatives from non-profit child care societies operating in Burnaby, as well as representatives from the Fraser Health Authority, the Burnaby School District, relevant Provincial ministries, the local Child Care Resource and Referral Program, and the City's Planning and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Departments. The CCRG's Terms of Reference also provide an opportunity for the Social Issues Committee to be represented on group.

As outlined in its Terms of Reference, the mandate of the CCRG is to:

- serve as an advisory body to the Social Issues Committee on child care matters;
- assist with the development of Burnaby child care policies, services, and programs; and
- act as an advocate for child care services and programs in Burnaby.

In accordance with Burnaby's Child Care Policy, originally adopted by Burnaby Council in 1993 and revised in 2000, the CCRG has prepared periodic update reports on its activities for the Social Issues Committee and Council. Nine reports have been prepared to date. This report provides an overview of activities in 2008, and proposes a Workplan for the CCRG for 2009.

## 2.0 KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2008

In service to the advocacy role outlined in its mandate, the CCRG spent considerable time and energy in 2008 working on printed information targeted to the general public and to parents requiring child care services. The information focuses on:

- what constitutes quality child care, and how parents can best go about finding the most appropriate care for their children; and
- capacity, staffing and affordability issues in the child care field that make it very difficult for many families to access quality care.

The intention was to distribute the information at community events. The information is now ready for production, and will be distributed at events in 2009, as noted in Section 3.0 below.

Another key advocacy activity in 2008 was the celebration of Child Care Month. At the request of the CCRG, Burnaby City Council proclaimed May 2008 as Child Care Month and May 15, 2008 as Child Caregiver Appreciation Day in Burnaby. Banners celebrating Child Care Month and the importance of quality child care as a foundation for life-long learning were displayed from the City's two pedestrian overpasses at Kingsway and Boundary, and on Canada Way in front of City Hall.

In its advisory role to the Social Issues Committee, a primary focus for the CCRG in recent years has been to monitor – and report to the Committee – the impact of senior government changes to funding and legislation on the child care system in Burnaby. Following deep Federal and Provincial government funding reductions to child care in 2007, there was very little child care activity at the senior government level in 2008. Therefore, the CCRG's usual reporting function was not necessary.

## 3.0 THE YEAR AHEAD

The CCRG's proposed Workplan for 2009 is *attached* as Appendix 1. It provides additional detail on the proposed activities summarized below.

The Child Care Resources Group is proposing to focus its work in 2009 on three areas as follows:

- 1) the challenges of recruiting and retaining qualified child care staff;
- 2) the need for additional child care spaces in Burnaby; and
- 3) public awareness of critical issues in the child care field, and of the importance of quality child care for healthy child development.

### 3.1 *The Child Care Staffing Issue*

A current focus of many individuals and groups involved in child care provision is the challenge of recruiting and retaining qualified staff, given the low wages, the heavy workload, and the lack of prestige associated with the work. Those who operate child care facilities cannot offer quality care if they do not have committed, qualified staff.

The results from a 2007 survey of child care centres by the First Call B.C. Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition indicate that 75% of child care operators view low wages and lack of benefits as the main impediments to recruiting and retaining staff. Almost half of British Columbia's child care workers (48.9%) earned less than \$15 per hour in 2008<sup>1</sup>, with the average wage in the Lower Mainland being \$13.82.<sup>2</sup>

The situation is so critical that the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC), the professional association for early childhood practitioners, has commenced a campaign to have child care providers' wages raised to \$20 per hour. To support that campaign, the CCRG proposes – as part of its 2009 Workplan – to make a presentation to the Social Issues Committee on the true costs of child care if child care workers were paid a “living” wage.

### 3.2 *The Child Care Spaces Issue*

The shortage of child care spaces results in very long waitlists, the inability – on the part of child care providers – to accommodate current child clients as they age and need to move up to a more age-appropriate program, and great frustration for parents seeking child care.

As one vehicle for possibly increasing the number of child care spaces in Burnaby, the CCRG will assist City staff to review the City's parking requirements for licensed family and group child care centres. The purpose of the review is to determine parking needs for centres. Any recommendations resulting from the parking review would be subject to the regular City approvals process, with Council making the ultimate decision on any supportable changes to parking regulations in the Zoning Bylaw.

To encourage the development of additional child care spaces in Burnaby, the CCRG also proposes in 2009 to update the *Child Care Planning Resource*

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<sup>1</sup> Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia, *Early Learning and Care* survey conducted among early childhood educators in B.C. in 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Service Canada, Labour Market Information for early childhood educators and assistants in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland in 2008.

*Package*, first produced by the group in 1999 and updated in 2005. The package is intended to assist groups and individuals desiring to develop child care spaces in Burnaby by providing a sampling of useful information to get them started. The update is timely, given that many residents are expressing a desire to start a child care centre in their homes, and given that 2006 Census data for Burnaby neighbourhoods is now available and can be used in determining possible locational demand for child care. Printed copies of the revised *Package* will be available to the public through the City and member organizations of the CCRG. The resource will also be made available on the City's website.

### 3.3 *Public Awareness*

Members of the CCRG are of the opinion that critical issues in the child care field can only be resolved if parents – and the public in general – advocate to senior levels of government for funding and legislative changes. A key to such advocacy is raising public awareness of:

- capacity, staffing and affordability issues in the child care field that make it very difficult for many families to access quality care; and
- what constitutes quality child care, and how parents can best go about finding the most appropriate care for their children is key to such advocacy.

Therefore, a priority activity for the CCRG in 2009 will be to distribute the printed information on the above-mentioned topics which was developed in 2008 at community events such as Hats Off Day, preschool fairs, and Discovery Day.

To raise public awareness of the importance of child care, the CCRG will also celebrate Child Care Month in May 2009 by requesting Burnaby Council to proclaim the month and childcare giver appreciation day, by displaying banners celebrating Child Care Month from pedestrian overpasses, and by seeking opportunities to collaborate with other relevant groups in sponsoring an appreciation event for child care workers.

As always, the CCRG will continue to monitor changes in the child care environment at the Provincial and Federal levels, and to provide advice to the Social Issues Committee and Council on any necessary City response.

As the year progresses, members of the CCRG may identify other activities pertaining to child care issues in Burnaby. The CCRG would seek prior approval for any additional major activities it wishes to undertake in 2009.

Resource requirements for the CCRG's proposed 2009 activities are expected to be minimal, consisting primarily of costs for printing public awareness pamphlets, and the revised *Child Care Planning Resource Package*. The costs for these two items can be accommodated within the Planning Department's operating budget allocation.

To: Social Issues Committee  
From: Director Planning and Building  
Re: Child Care Resources Group Update for 2009  
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#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

This report has provided an overview of the CCRG's key activities in 2008. It also outlines a proposed Workplan for the CCRG for the year ahead. During 2009, the CCRG intends to:

- seek the opportunity to make a presentation on wage and staffing issues in the child care field to the Social Issues Committee as a means of supporting a "better wage" campaign for child care providers;
- assist City staff to review parking needs for licensed family and group child care centres in order to identify any supportable changes to established City regulations;
- update the *Child Care Planning Resource Package* to assist those interested to develop child care spaces in Burnaby;
- distribute printed information at community events about staffing, capacity, and affordability issues in the child care field, and the importance of quality child care to early child development; and
- celebrate Child Care Month by requesting Council to proclaim May 2009 as Child Care Month and May 15, 2009 as Childcare Giver Appreciation Day, by displaying Child Care Month banners from pedestrian overpasses, and by seeking opportunities to collaborate with other relevant groups in sponsoring an appreciation event for childcare workers.

The CCRG will also continue to monitor, on behalf of the Social Issues Committee and Council, any relevant Federal and Provincial activities in the child care field.

It is recommended that this report be forwarded to Council for information.

  
B. Luksun, Director  
for PLANNING AND BUILDING

JS/sla  
Attachment

cc: City Manager  
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

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## **Burnaby Child Care Resources Group (CCRG) Draft 2009 Workplan**

### **Child Care Resources Group Mandate (as outlined in CCRG Terms of Reference):**

- to serve as an advisory body to the Social Issues Committee on child care matters;
- to assist with the development of Burnaby child care policies, services, and programs; and
- to act as an advocate for child care services and programs in Burnaby.

### **Child Care Resources Group Objectives for 2009:**

- 1) to examine strategies to improve the recruitment and retention of qualified staff for child care programs in Burnaby;
- 2) to examine strategies to encourage the development of additional child care spaces in Burnaby;
- 3) to raise public awareness of critical issues in the child care field, and of the importance of quality child care for healthy child development; and
- 4) to monitor changes in the child care environment at the Provincial and Federal levels, and to provide advice to the Social Issues Committee and Council on an appropriate City of Burnaby response.

### **Child Care Resources Group Activities for 2009:**

- 1) Support the province-wide campaign initiated by the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia to have wages for child care providers raised to \$20/hour by making a presentation to the Social Issues Committee of Burnaby City Council on the true costs of child care if child care workers were paid a "living" wage.
- 2) Assist City staff to review parking needs for licensed family and licensed group child care centres to identify supportable changes to City parking regulations. The review would seek to ensure that the parking requirements ensure a sufficient supply of parking spaces, and minimize parking spill-over into the neighbourhood, while also ensuring that the requirements are consistent with the times and with requirements in other local municipalities.
- 3) Update the *Child Care Planning Resource Package*, as a means of assisting groups and individuals desiring to develop child care spaces in Burnaby. The revised Package will be available in hard copy through the City and member organizations of the CCRG, and on the City's website.
- 4) Distribute printed information on critical issues in the child care field and on the importance of quality child care to early child development at community events such as Hats Off Day, preschool fairs, and Discovery Day.

5) Celebrate Child Care Month by:

- requesting that Burnaby Council proclaim May 2009 as Child Care Month and May 15, 2009 as Childcare Giver Appreciation Day; and
- displaying child care banners from City pedestrian overpasses during Child Care Month. The banners highlight the importance of quality child care and the early years as a foundation for life-long learning and the creation of strong communities.
- seeking opportunities to collaborate with other relevant groups (e.g., the Burnaby Understanding the Early Years Project, the Child Care Resource and Referral Program) in sponsoring an appreciation event for childcare workers during Child Care Month.