

Kids can't wait for child care in BC ***Action needed, not more studies***

(VANCOUVER) Child care advocates expressed concern that the Throne Speech indicates the government intends to invest in endless feasibility studies instead of investing in real child care.

Kids can't wait any longer for child care in BC, say the organizations who represent thousands of working parents, early childhood educators and child care advocates.

"More than 80-percent of BC families who need quality child care can't find it today," says George Heyman, president of the BC Government and Service Employees' Union.

"We urge this government to put real money in this year's budget to create and sustain actual child care spaces that respond in a meaningful way to the immediate needs of families and their children."

"The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC has already been consulting with parents, early childhood educators, and experts," says Susan Harney, chair of CCCABC.

"We have a plan, we know the cost, and communities are ready to deliver an accessible, quality, publicly-funded child care system in BC today."

Harney adds, "We believe that public schools can and should play an important role in helping to meet the needs of children and families. There may be a role for expanded universal, free access to kindergarten as long as the developmental needs of young children and the needs of working families are met in an integrated way.

"But parents need to know – will such a kindergarten system actually be free, public and universal? And, can it offer a caring environment for young children beyond traditional school hours?"

Heyman notes, "One of the few extended kindergarten models at this point is in West Vancouver, but unlike any other kindergarten programs it's available only to the lucky parents who can afford the fees.

"We don't need more studies to show us that model will not deliver accessible quality care."

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Child care - let's make it happen!

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.

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