

# BCGEU Child Care Campaign

## Message Box / Presentation Notes



**BC child care crisis -- \$10/day childcare plan is the solution to the crisis**

*Last updated on: December 10, 2012*

### Key campaign messages

- BC has a child care crisis!
  - Current approach to child care in BC is not working
  - We have high fees, few spaces, and poor working conditions.
  - Proof of failure: child care has moved to the market place instead of where it should be (at the boards of education);
- We need \$10 a day child care in B.C.!
  - We need universal affordable, accessible quality child care in BC!

### The child care crisis

- Families can't afford child care in BC
  - Paying for childcare is like having a second mortgage/rent.
  - Fees are high because, unlike parks, libraries or schools, child care is a user fee service;
  - Childcare costs \$9,000/year *on average* in BC for a 2-year old. In Vancouver, it's \$14,000.
- Child care plan supports kids, families, communities and the economy. Young BC families are squeezed
  - Young families are squeezed between unaffordable housing and unaffordable child care;
  - Childcare is so expensive, it's not worth going back to work.
  - Women (mostly) are often staying at home: BC mothers with kids aged 2 to 15 have lowest labour force participation rate in Canada.
  - In Vancouver, child care can cost up to \$1915 per month for one child!
- Families can't access licensed child care in BC
  - Available licensed spaces cover 20% of overall need - even less in greater Vancouver.
  - Too many babies and toddlers are in unregulated, even illegal, unsafe, care
- Early childhood educators are trained teachers, not babysitters.
  - High fees aren't enough to pay early childhood educators a living wage.
- Early childhood is important!
  - Kids learn 80% of their social, cognitive and developmental skills before age 6.
  - We are not investing in early childhood education - but the early years are our emotional, social and intellectual foundation.
  - 30% of BC's 5 year old children arrive at kindergarten vulnerable on one or more of the 5 developmental domains (language, cognitive, socio-emotional, physical, communication)
  - There is a fundamental right for every child to quality care in their early years (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child).

## The Plan

- Known as the "Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care & Learning" or, informally, as BC's "\$10 a Day Child Care Plan"
- An initiative of the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (CCCABC)—community partners of the BCGEU. (copies of the Plan on their website)
- Plan offers concrete, innovative, "made in BC" solution to BC's childcare crisis.
- The Plan will cap child care fees to \$10/day;
  - No user fee for families making less than \$40,000/year;
- Child care workers wages would move to an average of \$25/hour plus 20% benefits;
- Gives boards of education the mandate to fund, develop and govern delivery of early care and learning

## Child poverty

- Introducing a \$10/day childcare plan is the fastest way to reduce child poverty in BC
  - One in five kids live in poverty in BC—that's 89,000 kids in BC.
  - Without childcare, parents cannot go to work, cannot go to school and remain in poverty.

## Plan is not too expensive

- Inaction on childcare is expensive—for business
  - Work/life conflict through lack of childcare causes greater absenteeism, turnover, and lower productivity;
  - \$600 million a year in lost productivity every year for BC business;
  - Many business groups recognize this: Surrey Board of trade endorses \$10/day child care plan for BC.
- Investing in early childhood education pays for itself over time
  - Investing in child care has a bigger job multiplier effect than any other sector.
  - More people in the paid labour force leads to more tax revenue
  - The Quebec \$7/day childcare model now pays for itself.
    - For every dollar invested, the Quebec government recoups \$1.05, and the federal government \$0.44 (calculated through workers paying income taxes and spending money in local economy)
  - Allocating tax revenue to early care and learning would be an extension of our current education taxes, and beneficial to our economy.
- Government priorities are wrong.
  - Government has chosen to cut taxes for corporations and the wealthy, instead of investing in our kids;
  - BC government earns more from MSP premiums than corporate taxes;
  - BC tax system is regressive: the richest 1 percent pay less tax as a percentage of income than the poorest 10%;

- Early childhood education is just as important as schooling;
  - BC Government spends \$8357/child on K-12 education funding, but only \$382 on early childhood education (2011 school year).
  - Our kids success is our future competitive edge;
  - Investing in early education pays for itself over time.
  
- Canada ranks dead last among developed countries in supporting quality early care and learning programs
  - Mexico spends more on early childhood (as per % of GDP) than we do.

### **Early childhood educators**

- ECEs are teachers, but receive babysitter poverty-level wages.
  - ECEs are college or university trained;
  - ECEs are an extension of the family;
  - ECEs work is vital to the health and wellbeing of children, families and communities.
  - Average ECE wage in BC in 2009 was \$16.64/hour.
  
- Improving ECE wages will stimulate local economy
- Investing in a child care system is like the investment we make collectively in firehalls, public libraries, community centres, hospitals and elementary schools. Some things it makes more sense to pay for together rather than create an individual hardship.
  
- This is also about pay equity
  - 97% of ECEs are women