



Child Care Development Advisory Committee

January 31, 2007

Linda Shirley, Member
Child Care Development Advisory Committee
c/o City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Dear Mayor and Council:

The Child Care Development Advisory Committee requests the opportunity to make an urgent presentation to you on Monday, February 4, 2007 regarding the child care crisis in Richmond as a result of recent funding cuts

On January 5, 2007, Minister Linda Reid announced provincial government funding would be significantly reduced effective July 1st, 2007. There are two major areas of concern.

As a result, of this announced cuts, the Richmond Childcare Resource and Referral has closed. This is a devastating blow to local child care infrastructure. The RCCR made over 6000 referrals to Richmond residents last year directing parents to licensed child care programs across the City. In addition, the RCCR provided a multitude of resources to programs through equipment lending, program materials, professional development, first aid training, Family child care training, parent drop-in programs and much more. It offered services in several languages, which is critical considering the diversity of our multicultural city. The RCCRR is the "glue" of the child care community in Richmond and cannot be replaced by a website or other regional service. The cost of operating this service is approximately \$300,000 per year. Province-wide, these programs had a budget of \$14 million per year. It is our understanding that the provincial Liberal government plans to expend funds from the current Childcare budget to buying out contracts and equipment in order to close these crucial programs.

Second, all child care providers in Richmond have been informed that effective July 1st, 2007 there will be a 27% cut in their government funding. Most providers indicate they will have to increase fees to make up for the loss and keep their doors open. In many cases they will also have to cut wages to childcare workers, thereby deteriorating the quality of care available for the children of our city. This will certainly create great hardship for those families currently receiving subsidy and for those already struggling to pay their fees. These cuts further destabilize an already fragile system and will do nothing to address the huge waitlists in the community.

The Child Care Development Advisory Committee is urging City Council to

1. Write a letter to the Province of British Columbia protesting the recent cuts to child care funding and advocating that the funding be restored from the province's surplus funds.
2. Consider ways the City of Richmond could fund a continued CCRR service in Richmond, and act expediently to restore this essential service for children and families

At a time when the federal government has scrapped a plan to improve child care and accessibility and the province is cutting funds and passing the buck back to the federal government, it is crucial that the City of Richmond show leadership in child care. We urge you to stand up for the children, families and dedicated teachers and administrators who are working so hard to fill the gaps. We are confident that you will see fit to act in accordance with the City's policy of supporting quality child care and helping to move towards Richmond's stated goal of being "The Most Livable City in Canada".

Yours truly,

Linda Shirley, Member
Child Care Development Advisory Committee