



# School Board Lobby Kit

A joint campaign of the  
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.  
and  
B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

# Child Care Campaign - School Board Lobby (2006)

## SPEAKER'S NOTES

The following information has been developed to assist you in your presentation to your local school board. Your goal is to gain their support in pressuring our MLAs and MPs to commit to work for the reinstatement of the federal child care funding, as promised in the 2005 federal-provincial agreements.

### How to get on the agenda for your local school board meeting:

- **See the School Board Contacts list in this kit for your local contact numbers.**
- Contact your local school board chairperson, secretary-treasurer or superintendent.
- One or more of these people usually make up the agenda for meetings.
- Most school boards allow about 10 min. for presentations, followed by a 5 minute question period.
- You may want to ask your local school board what their format will be, so you can be prepared.

### Preparation tips:

In preparing your presentation you may want to consider the following:

If possible, your presentation should **focus on an issue or a story you have experienced first hand** personally, or through your family, friends, neighbours, your work, your volunteer roles etc. Make sure your facts are correct! Ensure you are credible. Don't say things you can't prove.

**Give a context for your comments.** Describe how B.C. child care has already suffered significant cuts. This federal funding is critical for those parents currently on waiting lists for affordable child care in this community. These parents may include you, your neighbours, your friends or your family. **Quality, affordable, accessible child care is needed in this community.**

**Remember that you are not able to use the names of other people (parents, children, clients)** if you are relating a story, as that would be a breach of confidentiality. Please speak only in generalities when you are speaking about others' experiences.

**Relax.** Your school board will be patient and considerate of you during your presentation. Focus on what you know. You are not expected to be an expert. Look board members in the eye. Be confident in the power of your message.

**Remember to distribute the Handout and Sample Resolutions for all board members to read!**

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## 1) Introduction:

Introduce yourself by describing your ties to the school district/community you are speaking in.

Identify if you are a member of the community, a parent and/or grandparent, a volunteer for community organizations, or if you hold any formal community roles. Also explain your work background, if applicable to the subject.

By capturing your full community, family and work roles the school board will be able to understand more about who you are in a broad context. This will strengthen the value of your message.

## 2) Presentation focus:

- ✓ The federal child care funding as promised in the 2005 federal-provincial agreements must be reinstated.
- ✓ Child care funding received by provinces must be dedicated to child care.
- ✓ B.C. needs to restore and commit more provincial funding to child care.
- ✓ **Quality, affordable, accessible child care is needed in this community.**

## 3) How school boards can help:

1. By passing the resolutions (that you've handed out to board members) and,
2. By sending a copy of the resolution(s), when passed, to:
  - Prime Minister Stephen Harper
  - Federal Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Diane Finley
  - Premier Gordon Campbell
  - Provincial Minister of State for Child Care Linda Reid
  - Provincial Minister of Child and Family Development Stan Hagen
  - The local MLA and MP seeking her/his support for the resolution
  - And, by providing our child care campaign with a copy of school board letters.

Provide support for your request by stating that Vancouver School Board has already passed these resolutions on October 17, 2005 and March 8, 2006.

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#### 4) Presentation outline:

##### Points to consider including:

##### *B.C. is in serious need of child care funding:*

There are not enough affordable child care spaces in B.C.

- It is not uncommon for parents to sign up on long wait lists at more than one child care centre as soon as they become pregnant. After the child is born and they really need child care, they are often faced with the reality that there are still no available spaces.

Even in this context, the B.C. government:

- cut child care spending by \$40 million annually since 2002.
- and drastically cut the wages and benefits of quality child care workers in B.C. (some of whom agreed to have their wages and benefits cut severely just to keep their centres open).

##### *Federal child care funding*

- In 2005, the federal government committed \$5 billion dollars over the next five years to build a national child care system and signed agreements with the provinces to confirm this commitment.
- The intended national child care system is based on the QUAD principles supported by child care research and advocates across Canada. These principles are: Quality, Universally inclusive, Accessible, and Developmental child care.
- In January 2006, the federal Conservatives were elected as a new minority government. They soon announced they would not honour the signed federal-provincial child care funding agreements.
- They intend to cut the national child care funding in early 2007 and implement a taxable family allowance of \$1200/year (only for every child under 6) that parents can 'choose' to use for child care.
- While any contribution to support Canadian families is welcome, parents know that this taxable family allowance does not come close to covering the real cost of child care.
- Because the new family allowance is taxable, it amounts to significantly less than \$100/month per child and does not address after-school care for children 6 and older.
- It is important to understand that the taxable family allowance does nothing to create the child care spaces that are so desperately needed.

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### ***The B.C. government must direct federal child care funds to child care.***

- The B.C. government held child care “consultation meetings” across the province in November 2005.
- Child care advocates, child care workers and concerned citizens were not able to make any presentations at these meetings.
- The government’s presentation at these meetings indicated that they plan to direct the federal child care funding to instead fund education and the Premier’s campaign promise on literacy.
- Education is important and it should be given a higher priority in the provincial government’s budget.
- However, taking funding that belongs to child care is not the answer, especially when there is such an urgent need for affordable, accessible child care in B.C.
- We want to ensure that when the federal funding is reinstated, it is appropriately directed to child care and not other provincial initiatives.

### ***Why is the B.C. government silent on child care?***

- The BC government was supposed to develop a *Child Care Action Plan* based on the feedback from these “consultation” meetings last November, and issue the plan in January 2006.
- To date, they have not put forward their *Child Care Action Plan*, and they have been silent about the federal Conservatives’ decision to not honour the federal child care funding agreement with B.C.
- In fact, the B.C. government did not even mention child care in their February 2006 Throne Speech.
- Other provinces have spoken out against the Conservatives’ decision on child care, including Ontario Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Quebec.
- This is no time for the B.C. government to be silent.

### ***What do we stand to lose in B.C.?***

- The national initiative would have provided \$455 million for additional child care spaces, over the remaining three years of the agreement.
- All recent increases in child care spending in BC have been paid for with federal child care funds. This includes increases to the Child Care Operating Fund (CCOF) that many child care centres rely on to: keep their doors open, keep parent fees affordable, subsidize child care workers wages, upgrade equipment and facilities to ensure child safety
- Unless the province is prepared to pick up the costs, child care centres will have to make up the difference by raising parent fees, laying off workers, cutting programs, or closing their doors.
- This is why it is so important to act now. We must put pressure on our MLAs to ensure the provincial government takes action in the interest of B.C. children. We must also pressure our MPs to ensure they commit to working for the reinstatement of the federal child care funding.

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## SAMPLE SCHOOL BOARD CHILD CARE RESOLUTION #1

**The Vancouver City School Board passed this resolution on October 17, 2005:**

*THAT the Vancouver School Board recognizes universal quality child care as centres for holistic early learning, and*

*THAT the Vancouver School Board, while supporting All-Day Kindergarten and other early literacy ventures, opposes the diversion of federal child care dollars for other purposes, and*

*THAT this position be outlined in letters sent to Federal Minister K. Dryden and Provincial Ministers L. Reid, S. Hagen and S. Bond.*

### Sample Resolution

THAT the \_\_\_\_\_ School Board recognizes publicly-funded, universal, quality child care programs as centres for holistic early learning, *and*

THAT the \_\_\_\_\_ School Board, while supporting All-Day Kindergarten and other early literacy ventures, opposes the diversion of federal child care dollars for other purposes, *and*

THAT this position be outlined in letters sent to:

- Prime Minister Stephen Harper;
- Federal Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Diane Finley;
- Premier Gordon Campbell;
- Provincial Minister of State for Child Care Linda Reid;
- Provincial Minister of Child and Family Development Stan Hagen;
- The local MLA and MP seeking her/his support for the resolution;
- The BCGEU and/or the CCCABC for their records.

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## SAMPLE SCHOOL BOARD CHILD CARE RESOLUTION #2

**This motion was passed by the Vancouver School Board on March 8, 2006:**

*WHEREAS the Board recognizes that every neighbourhood in Vancouver has children entering Kindergarten who are deemed to be vulnerable and that some neighbourhoods have as many as 60% of children vulnerable on one or more of the University of BC (UBC) Early Development Indicator scales; and*

*WHEREAS the Board recognizes that quality child care (daycare/preschool) supports children's early learning and school readiness, as well as parents in their parenting role; and*

*WHEREAS the current federal government is moving to replace the national child care plan with an income support plan that will not further the development of quality child care services in Vancouver,*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of School Trustees of School District No. 39 (Vancouver) write a letter to senior levels of government indicating that every effort should be made to ensure that Vancouver families have access to quality, affordable child care through the established national child care program, and the aforementioned plan be continued.*

### SAMPLE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the Board recognizes that every neighbourhood in \_\_\_\_\_(City) has children entering kindergarten who are deemed to be vulnerable and that some neighbourhoods have as many as 60% of children vulnerable on one or more of the University of BC Early Development Indicator scales; and

WHEREAS the Board recognizes that quality child care (daycare/preschool) supports children's early learning and school readiness, as well as parents in their parenting role; and

WHEREAS the current federal government is moving to replace the national child care plan with an income support plan that will not further the development of quality child care services in \_\_\_\_\_(City),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of School Trustees of School District No.\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)City) write a letter to senior levels of government indicating that every effort should be made to ensure that Vancouver families have access to quality, affordable child care through the established national child care program, and the aforementioned plan be continued.

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*(handout)*

## **How B.C. school boards can help support quality child care:**

We are seeking the support of school boards across the province to support child care advocates in our attempt to stop child care funding from being cut by the federal government - by passing resolutions like those passed by the Vancouver School Board on Oct 17, 2005 (*supporting federal child care funding to be used only for child care in B.C.*) and on March 8, 2006 (*supporting the reinstatement of the full five year federal child care funding plan*).

We are asking school boards to send a copy of their own resolutions to:

- Prime Minister Stephen Harper
- Federal Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Diane Finley
- Premier Gordon Campbell
- Provincial Minister of State for Child Care Linda Reid
- Provincial Minister of Child and Family Development Stan Hagen
- The local MP and MLA.

***Thank you for your support!***

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## What is quality child care?

All of the research indicates that to ensure sustainable gains for children, parents and the public, early childhood care and early learning must be of “high quality.” Studies have described the elements of quality child care that give us these positive results as:

- licensed, non-profit and government regulated programs with stable funding
- high adult to child ratios
- small group sizes
- stable consistent child care staff
- caregivers trained in early childhood education
- adequate health, safety and physical environment precautions
- good wages and working conditions for staff and good workplace morale

## Quality child care means a better educational experience for our children

Research indicates that the type of care received during a child’s early years influences their emotional, social, intellectual and physical health in later years. Quality child care can significantly improve a child’s educational experience.

Numerous studies have shown that high quality child care results in:

- ✓ early identification of special needs;
- ✓ improved development and academic achievement;
- ✓ more social skills and less problem behaviours;
- ✓ higher likelihood of completing high school and higher education;
- ✓ higher likelihood of being gainfully employed as adults;
- ✓ less likelihood of committing crimes;
- ✓ less likelihood of requiring public assistance.

## Economic benefits of quality child care

Quality child care provides generations of benefits to the community at large.

- A University of Toronto study in 1998 showed that spending on early learning and child care programs is a social investment that returns \$2 for every \$1 invested.
- Research has established that children who receive high quality child care need less public funds for employment, education, and social programs.
- Providing quality child care also increases the commitment of mothers to the labour force, which leads to increased long-term economic security for women, and greater tax revenues.
- The Vancouver Board of Trade supports publicly funded child care for its economic benefits.

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## **The child care situation in Canada is urgent!**

- In 2005, the federal government committed \$5 billion to be spent over the next five years to build a national child care system, and signed agreements with the provinces to confirm this commitment.
- In January 2006, the federal Conservatives were elected as a new minority government. They soon announced they would not honour the signed federal-provincial child care funding agreements.
- They intend to cut the federal child care funding in early 2007, and will implement a taxable family allowance of \$1200/year (only for every child under 6) that parents can choose to use for child care.
- While any contribution to support families is welcome, parents know this taxable allowance does not come close to covering the real cost of child care.
- Because the allowance is taxable, it amounts to less than \$100/month per child and does not address after-school care for children 6 and older.
- The taxable family allowance does nothing to create the child care spaces that are so desperately needed.

## **What do we stand to lose in B.C.?**

The B.C. government has made significant cuts to child care in recent years:

- cut child care spending by \$40 million annually since 2002;
- and drastically cut the wages and benefits of quality child care workers, (some of whom agreed to have their wages and benefits cut severely, just to keep their centres open.)
- The national initiative would have provided \$455 million for additional child care spaces, over the remaining three years of the agreement.
- All recent increases in child care spending in BC have been paid for with federal child care funds. This includes increases to the Child Care Operating Fund (CCOF) that many child care centres rely on to: keep their doors open, keep parent fees affordable, subsidize child care workers wages, upgrade equipment and facilities to ensure child safety
- Unless the province is prepared to pick up the costs, child care centres will have to make up the difference by:
  - Raising parent fees
  - Laying off workers
  - Cutting programs
  - Closing their doors

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***The time to act is now!***

With the loss of federal child care funding in early 2007, the closure of many B.C. child care centres is inevitable. We need to urge our MLAs and the provincial government to stand up and speak out to ensure this federal commitment is followed through with, and to commit itself to increased child care funding. We must also pressure our MPs to ensure they commit to working for the reinstatement of federal child care funding.

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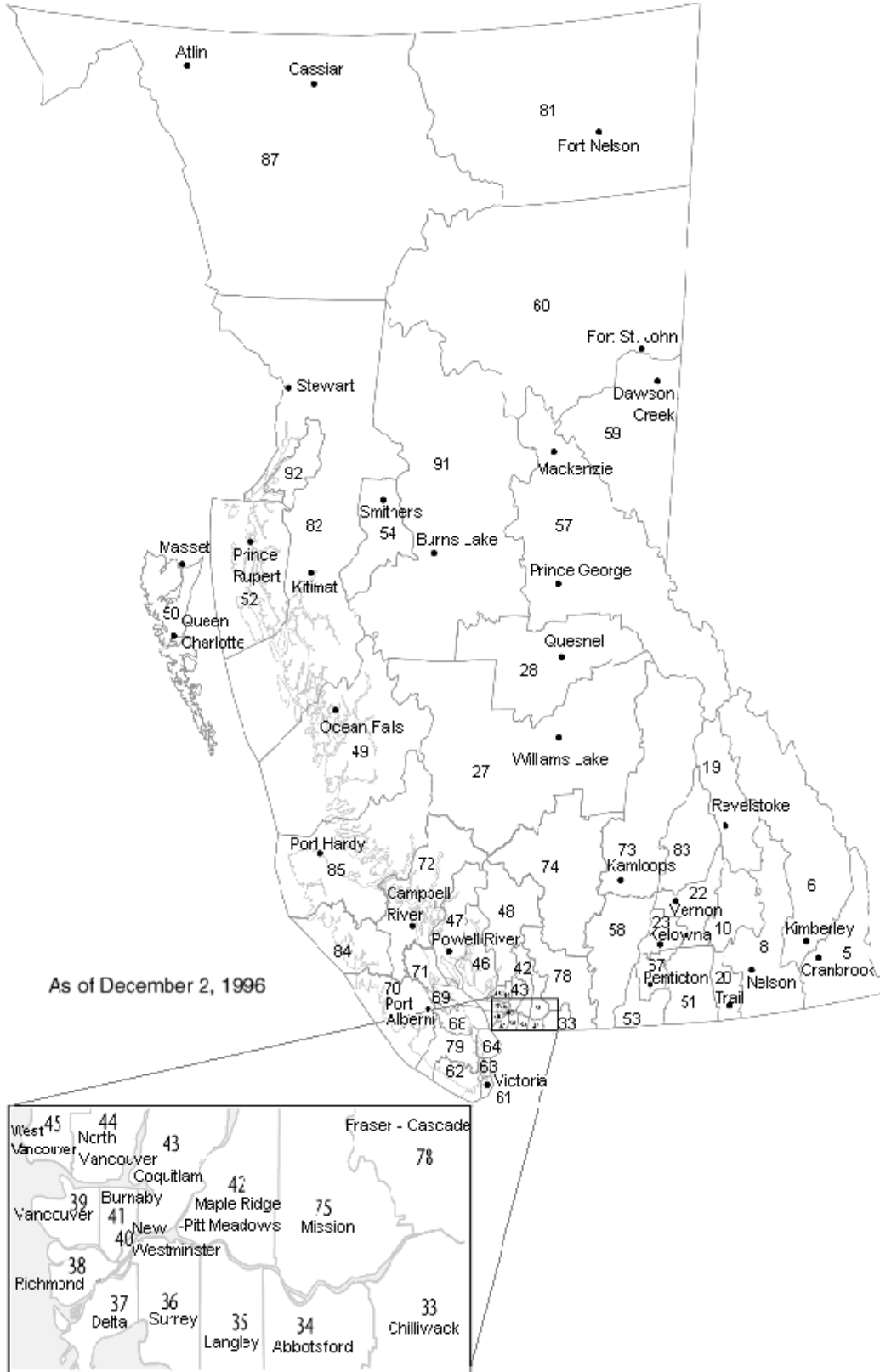
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# British Columbia School District Map



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