

Child Care Funding Cuts – The Local Impact

- Operating funding provided by the provincial government will decrease July 1, 2007 by \$4 per day for children in infant and toddler care and \$2 per day for older children. The decrease will create operating deficits of between \$12,000 and \$20,000 per year at most child care facilities. Deficits that must be absorbed or passed on to parents.
- Funding for each of the province's 38 Child Care Resource Referral (CCRR) Programs, including a program operated by the Kelowna Child Care Society, will be eliminated beginning Oct. 1. Kelowna's CCRR program, operational for the past 30 years, provides referral services and support to more than 200 child care providers and families in our community.

In 2005/2006, the CCRR program's five staff visited more than 1,000 child care facilities, provided 5,800 parent referrals and more than 59,000 consultations including more than 11,000 face-to-face consultations with parents. Services that will no longer be provided include: Training and workshops for child care providers; support and assistance to those wanting to open a licensed child care facility; child care referrals for parents; assistance to parents completing complex subsidy forms; access to child care resources, equipment, toys and library materials; and outreach support services to child care providers.

- The Kelowna Young Parents Daycare Center, a program that makes it possible for young parents to complete their education, with face an annual deficit of \$20,000 per year as a result of the cuts. In order to continue, the Kelowna Child Care Society may have to pass increases on to young parents.

Some Things to Consider

- The number of two parent families supported by a lone breadwinner is decreasing. Today, almost 60 per cent of Central Okanagan women are in the labour force. (*Jan. 2006 CATCH survey*)
- A single parent with two children under five years old spends approximately 40% of their pre-tax dollars on child care. Families with two parents working outside the home spend about 20% of the pretax dollars on child care. (*Jan. 2006 CATCH survey*)
- Research shows that investing in children during their early years yields economic benefits as high as 7 to 1. These significant dividends are realized through improved school performance, lower school dropout rates, increased lifelong learning potential and lower delinquency rates. The economic benefits of well-designed programs for disadvantaged children four and younger are even greater – as high as \$17 for every \$1 spent on programs. (*Rand Corporation Report "Early Childhood Interventions: Proven Results, Future Promise" www.rand.org*)
- Trained child care educators are paid an average of \$12.30 per hour – about \$10,000 less per year than workers in all sectors. This pay disparity makes recruiting and retaining staff difficult. (*Jan. 2006 CATCH survey*)
- More and more families moving (or considering a move) to the Central Okanagan are finding themselves unable to find suitable child care. This creates a dilemma where workers (essential for meeting the escalating worker shortage) may decide not to move here.
- The Province has introduced an immediate cap on the Child Care Operating Program, which means new child care spaces will only be funded if existed centers close. This despite the fact that additional licensed infant and toddler child care spaces are desperately needed.
- A recent report (produced by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) comparing public expenditures on early care and education services for children 0 - 6 as a percentage of a nation's GDP revealed Canada and the United States both in lower tier. (*Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care Sept. 2006*)