



David Eby, BC Premier
Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care
Mitzi Dean, Minister of State for Child Care

SENT BY EMAIL ONLY

March 17, 2024

Dear premier Eby and Ministers of Child Care

Re: ChildCareBC Plan

This submission is sent on behalf of the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition (RPRC) to provide observations and recommendations on the ChildCare BC Plan.

The RPRC is *'a coalition of Richmond residents and agencies working together to reduce poverty and the impacts of poverty with research, projects, and public education.'* Our members include numerous individuals as well as 11 Richmond organizations that provide services and programs to Richmond residents, including working families with children requiring childcare.

The RPRC commends the provincial government's vision for a comprehensive childcare system throughout BC, including providing more programs with \$10 a day childcare.

However, Richmond has a ways to go. A Canada-wide study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) reported on various Canadian cities and their progress in reducing fees by 50%, stating *'the expansion of \$10-a-day spaces was much more limited in Richmond, Burnaby, Surrey and Kelowna. Kelowna was close to the target in its under-three category, but the other three cities fell far short of the 50 % target across all age categories.'*¹

It is noted in minister Dean's mandate letter that *"since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including making child care more affordable, accessible, inclusive, and higher quality for families."*²

This aligns with the RPRC policy pillar for child care that advocates for affordability, accessibility and inclusion, and quality programs. We desire a future where all childcare programs are \$10 a day, sufficient spaces are accessible, and people who want to work in childcare have access to training and adequate compensation.

Our membership is also concerned that other non-childcare organizations, such as Family Resource Centres that require workers trained in ECE, will be at a disadvantage in

¹ <https://monitormag.ca/reports/measuring-matters/>

² <https://tinyurl.com/y486tjdu>

recruitment and retention as they grapple with wage parity issues due to government ECE wage enhancement for ECE's working in childcare settings.

Regarding Affordability: Richmond is a city of over 200,000 people. We now have about 620 childcare spaces at \$10 a day in 13 childcare centres, including all six childcare centres in the society of Richmond Society of Child Care Centres.³ Seven other Richmond childcare programs, including four not-for-profits and three for-profit centres also receive funding to achieve \$10 a day childcare.

The RPRC recommends the provincial government:

- actively support the implementation of a universal, publicly funded childcare system,
- work towards transitioning all interested childcare programs in BC to \$10 a day,
- advocate to senior levels of government for a comprehensive plan for public and not-for-profit childcare expansion,
- extend wage parity for ECE workers in non-childcare settings (such as BC Family Resource Centres).

Regarding Accessibility and Inclusion: We understand Richmond desires to create childcare hubs and co-locate spaces with community facilities and focus on improving the availability of childcare spaces for infants and toddlers, school-age children, and children who require extra supports.

In addition, the provincial government has mandated the minister of Education and Child Care to “*support the Minister of State for Child Care by working toward universal access to before and after school care, continuing to build spaces on school grounds, and finalizing development of a capital plan for child care.*”⁴

The RPRC also believes that all parents on low-income and other diverse populations and caregivers should have input on changing accessibility needs.⁵

The RPRC recommends the provincial government:

- work with BC school boards to expand school age care in elementary schools and care for children who require extra supports,
- advocate to senior levels of government to stabilize existing \$10 a day programs with sufficient operating funds to provide care for parents working non-standard hours,
- establish a BC Child Care advisory body with low-income and other parents and caregivers to provide ongoing input into a universal childcare system.

Regarding Quality, Richmond states it is committed to work with all partners to plan, develop and maintain a quality, affordable and comprehensive childcare system in Richmond. The City of Richmond's Child Care Development Policy⁶ recognizes that quality and affordable

³ <https://richmondchildcare.org/>

⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/yc4wpctw>

⁵ <https://assets.nationbuilder.com/singlemothersalliancebc/pages/1366/attachments/original/1702845604/2311-CFE-whole-life-report-digital.pdf>

⁶ https://www.richmond.ca/_shared/assets/update_child_care_development_policy55115.pdf

childcare is an essential service in the community for residents, employers, and employees. A comprehensive childcare system should also include funding for administrative and supervisory roles Early Childhood Educators (ECE) can focus on childcare.

The RPRC recommends the provincial government:

- establish additional ECE training seats and province-wide wage equity including improvements to benefits, pensions and working conditions of all BC childcare workers,
- advocate to senior levels of government for funding for appropriate administrative support in centres so childcare educators can focus on childcare duties,
- highlight the need for all families to have equitable and barrier-free access to comprehensive, quality, and culturally responsive childcare.

In closing, at the municipal level the RPRC recognizes the City of Richmond's high level of achievement in the planning, developing, and advising on Richmond's child care needs.

The provincial government should fully support the goals of the City of Richmond through adequate funding to ensure equitable, accessible and quality child care for every family that needs it.

Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact the undersigned at de_whalen@hotmail.com or at 604.230.3158.

Sincerely,

-original signed-

Deirdre Whalen
President, RPRC

cc. RPRC Directors
City of Richmond Mayor & Councillors
Richmond MLA's Aman Singh, Henry Yao, Kelly Greene, Teresa Wat
