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Selected summary of impact of child care cuts (by region)

(To report more local details or send news clippings from your area, please email teresa.marshall@bcgeu.ca)

Introduction

“As of September 30, 2007, the BC government is closing all 45 Child Care Resource and Referral programs (CCRRs) across the province. Reduced operating funding will also force child care facilities to either raise parent fees or to close programs.

The cuts are already having devastating impact on working families and child care workers and our communities. The Berry Patch child care centre in Dawson Creek will close its doors on February 2. Other centres are announcing increased parent fees and halting expansion plans.

There will be NO child care referrals for parents looking for child care.

For child care providers there will be NO training, monitoring, accountability, administrative support, assistance in managing the business or dealing with difficult child-care issues.

There will also be NO criminal record checks, reference checks, medical release, first aid training or support for this important group of workers.

For parents, there will be NO support or assistance filling out the extensive child-care subsidy applications.

There will be NO toy and resource lending library including affordable art supplies, NO parent education, NO CCRR play groups or parenting support programs.

There will also be a huge loss of staff expertise in the child-care field and a loss of input from this staff to early childhood community development.”

[excerpted from Trail Daily Times Opinion piece from Sue MacIntosh, local CCRR coordinator Jan31/07]

Vancouver and Sunshine Coast region

West Coast CCRR is receiving staff layoff notices.

Richmond CCRR will be closing its doors March 31, 2007 after 15 years of service to the community.

Young Parent Program facing \$18,000 in the next school year that will affect nutrition programs including teaching parents to cook.

Tri-Cities Child Care Resource and Referral Centre will close Sept. 30.

YMCA Child Care Resource and Referral Centre facing closure because of a 77% cut in funding.

Richmond Community Services Advisory Council program operated by Volunteer Richmond, with an annual budget of about \$300,000. Service will be closed and nine full-time people and several part-timers will lose their jobs.

We are (unnamed) a Licensed Out of School Care Centre with capacity for 40 and wait list exceeding 30. The cuts will reduce our CCOFP [Child Care Operating Fund] revenue by half. May have to raise fees by as much as 14 per cent and cut staff hours and staff to child ratio. Families on subsidy likely to withdraw their children because of increased fees.

There won't be enough funding to continue with the programs in Sechelt, Gibsons or Pender Harbour according to Sunshine Coast Community Services. CCRR programs will likely be replaced with a website that is "totally inadequate to service the needs of parents and caregivers on the Sunshine Coast."

Fraser Valley

A year ago the CCRR centre opened a large facility on Lougheed Highway, expanded mandate, hired staff – and now to close doors.

"It's such devastating news," said Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Community Services Executive Director Vicki Kipps. "We've gone from one extreme to the other." "we're devastated. We're shocked. We didn't anticipate this."

But that level of childcare, according to Mission-Maple Ridge Liberal MLA Randy Hawes, might be too much to expect the ordinary parent to have to pay for. Taking time out from his holiday in Maui, Hawes said this level of childcare is the "Cadillac model," and "sometimes you can't afford the Cadillac."

A is For Apple daycare will have to find the dollars to advertise and buy toys that formerly could be borrowed from the CCRR. That means cutting services to families or increasing fees: can not afford to be without the services provided by our CCRR.

Vancouver Island

The annual loss to Forest Circle Child Care in Campbell River will be \$27,030. Centre will have to raise parent fees because they refuse to cut staffing levels, nor ask the staff to subsidize the cost of child care through a reduction of wages "as they do enough of that already". Many parents are college students living on student loans.

Crafty Kids Family Child Care in Port Alberni will lose \$2 per child per day so raising rates. Some parents may find that child care is too expensive now. Cuts threaten future of the facility.

Thompson/Okanagan

Kelowna Child Care Society's day-care resource and referral program will cease operation Oct. 1. After that, parents will be on their own finding day-care options. The Kelowna referral service provided assistance to more than 5,000 families last year.

Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs says early childhood care is not to be thought of as an added opportunity for those who can afford it, but rather a necessary reality in preparing our children to compete and succeed in tomorrow's world.

East & West Kootenays

Plans for a daycare centre in Kimberley stopped. Cuts have effectively ended any possibility the non-profit Summit Community Services Society could open and operate a

new facility. The Society operates four not-for-profit licensed daycares. The CCOF is instrumental in keeping the daycare facilities open.

Trail's Child Care Resource and Referral program bought the old school board building from the City of Trail and moved all its programs on July 1. The Sunshine Centre will have to increase its fees dramatically, making day care unaffordable for many.

Golden Child Care Resource and Referral centre reports centre will likely shut its doors for good in the fall. "if we can't maintain the programs, we lose the trust in parents that the programs will continue to exist for them." More than 30 per cent of children in the early learning years (ages three to six) in the Golden area are considered 'vulnerable'.

East Kootenay Child Care Resource and Referral Program says the service will continue until Sept. 30, but nothing is certain after that. Four full-time staff work at EKCCRR now, but this will go down to three April 1, 2007 and all the staff may be out of a job by Oct. 1.

Nelson Dads for Childcare say "Child care has always been under siege, but there are certain times when cuts -- particularly when they're made in the vacuum of any sort of rationale or plan -- are particularly crippling and that's what this is."

Trail City Hall supports local child-care advocates when it comes to telling the province that slated program cuts are unacceptable.

Central Interior

Cariboo Child Care Society, a campus-based non-profit society, will lose approximately \$38,000 per year. CCOF went directly to enhancing staff wages. Will have to increase fees to maintain staff wages. There is a critical shortage of licensed childcares in the area.

100 Mile House Child Care Resource & Referral under more pressure and at least one local 100 Mile House licensed family child care provider closing her facility for financial reasons, including the loss of CCOF funding. Every local facility is already full.

The CRR in Kamloops is a hub of support for parents who are looking for child-care referrals or needing help with subsidy forms and information. It provides a drop-in centre for parents with young children and supports day cares and preschools with an extensive lending cupboard, seminars and training courses. The impact of losing this centre will be felt throughout all areas of Kamloops.

North

The Berry Patch in Prince Rupert and Q.C.I. Child Care Resource and Referral on Haida Gwaii, will be closed. CRR programs like The Berry Patch were not considered among those services that support the community's most vulnerable. The Berry Patch serves the communities of Hartley Bay, Kincolith, Kitkatla, Metlakatla, Oona River, Port Edward, Port Simpson and Prince Rupert. The Q.C.I. Child Care Resource and Referral Program services those in Masset, Old Massett, Port Clements, Queen Charlotte, Sandspit, Skidegate and Tlell.

Oscare Day Care Centre in Ft. St. John raised their prices last year to cover a raise in pay for their staff. They will have to hike their rates again. "The staff at McDonalds make more than our educated people who go to school for years," said president of the non-profit child care centre, adding that a lot of the parents using her centre can barely afford child care as it is.

Baby Bear Daycare is a for-profit facility, but owner doesn't know what she's going to do when the cuts come into effect. "There is no 'for-profit' in what I do."

Berry Patch Child Care facility in Dawson Creek will be shutting down. 42 children could be without child care come Feb. 2, following the "unfortunate" decision that South Peace Community Resources Society (SPCRS) announced it was forced to make last Friday. Berry Patch staff are unionized under the B.C. Government and Service Employee's Union (BCGEU).

Prince George-Peace River Conservative MP Jay Hill said "I don't know all the reasons for that, but I strongly suspect it has absolutely nothing to do with either the provincial or federal government. It probably has to do with the way they're managing their operation there."