

## **REALITY CHECK: MISLEADING BC DAYCARE INFO CORRECTED**

### **August 2005 Report by Kids First Parent Association of Canada**

[www.kidsfirstcanada.org](http://www.kidsfirstcanada.org) 604-291-0088

#### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- only 9% of children are enrolled in daycare (see #1)
- most daycares have vacancies (see #2)
- most mothers are not at full-time paid jobs outside the home (see #3)
- most daycare is low quality (see #5)
- an infant/toddler centre 'space' costs over \$14,600/yr (see #4)
- high second income families can be subsidized over \$10,000/yr/child (see #4)
- Quebec allows 1 staff to care for 8 babies.(see #5)
- 9 out of 10 say funding should go to families not daycare spaces (see #6)
- the daycare lobby is powerful because it is heavily tax funded (see #7)

***"All child care data is flaky data."***

Martha Friendly, leading daycare researcher and lobbyist, Co-ordinator of the Child Care Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto, phone conversation 2001

Politicians are accountable for their policy decisions regarding children. They must make informed choices. Parents also have a right to informed choice. This requires accurate information. But when it comes to daycare, policy is founded on misinformation dispensed by tax-funded lobbyists. The result has been massive legislated discrimination in favour of daycare centre care, and against parental care. This report addresses the most critical examples of misinformation.

#### **1 – FEW CHILDREN ARE IN DAYCARE**

- \*only 9% of children in BC are in daycare centres
- \* there are 601,700 children 0-12 in BC and only 36,115 are enrolled, excluding preschool and drop-in child-minding
- Provincial Child Care Survey 2001 [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/PDFs/Appendix\\_F.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/PDFs/Appendix_F.pdf), p.1
- Early Childhood Education and Care 2001 [http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2001/tables\\_big/TABLE4.pdf](http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2001/tables_big/TABLE4.pdf)

\* the other 91% also get 'early learning and child care' (ELCC); parents do most providing and regulating.

#### **2 - WHAT ABOUT THE "CRISIS", THE "SHORTAGE" AND "WAITING LISTS"?**

\*The 'crisis' is the surplus of spaces and the shortage of children in them. Waiting lists measure nothing. Children are on multiple lists, not born, in daycare already, and those whose parents plan ahead.

\*58.3% of daycares reported vacancies, and the overall vacancy rate is 10.8%

- You Bet I Care! Report 1, pp. 163-166  
[http://action.web.ca/home/cfwwb/attach/ybic\\_report\\_1.pdf](http://action.web.ca/home/cfwwb/attach/ybic_report_1.pdf)

\* the mean number of vacancies in daycare centres ranges from 5.1-7.3

- Provincial Child Care Survey 2001 [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/PDFs/part\\_iii.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/PDFs/part_iii.pdf) p.55

#### **3 –FALSE: "THE REALITY IS 70% OF MOTHERS ARE WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME"**

\* every mother is a working mother working inside and outside home

- \* 70% is not for "work" or "paid work": it is "labour force participation rate". This includes mothers who:
  - do paid home-based work with children present, e.g. daycare, telecommute, music
  - do any paid work at all – no minimum time or pay
  - are unemployed, looking for work, on EI
  - on paid or unpaid maternity/parental leave and not at their job
  - do unpaid work for a family farm or business
  - do a paid full or part time job away from children and do not use daycare

-definitions in Statistics Canada's work data: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/71-222-XIE/2004000/glossary.htm>  
- Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2004 [http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/tables\\_big/TABLE6.pdf](http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/tables_big/TABLE6.pdf)

\* 68% of Canadian children 0-11 are in *parental* care while their parents "work or study"

- Statistics Canada National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, *Growing Up in Canada* p.25

#### **4 - COSTS, FUNDING, SUBSIDIES**

\*Even high income parents' fees are heavily subsidized: infant/toddler centre, up to over \$10,000/yr. Based on fees of \$705/month = \$8,450/yr with \$7000 tax deductible, and "true cost" of \$1217/month = \$14,604/yr (operating costs only excluding capital, training, bureaucracy, research, lobbying, regulation, monitoring, etc.)

- Provincial Child Care Survey 2001 [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/PDFs/Appendix\\_F.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/PDFs/Appendix_F.pdf) p.2

-BC Gov't public consultation paper: *Building a Better Future for BC's Kids*, p.4, 1999.

\*Centres are the most subsidized. Low income parent fee subsidies were increased and are up to 300% higher for centre care, which few fee recipients choose: \$618/month vs \$198 for a second infant in 'at-home' care.

-BC fee subsidy info [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/subsidy\\_promo.htm#rates](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/subsidy_promo.htm#rates)

\*Per child in daycare: over \$4,500 (BC spent \$164,563,000 on “regulated child care” including preschool, excluding municipal and federal expenditures.)

-*Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2004* [http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/tables\\_long/TABLE28.pdf](http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/tables_long/TABLE28.pdf)

\*Per licensed “space” \$2,256 (2001) (including preschool, excluding local & federal expenditures)

-*ECEC 2004* [http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/tables\\_long/TABLE29.pdf](http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/tables_long/TABLE29.pdf)

\*Per child in province if they all got an equal benefit: \$274 (2001)

-[http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/tables\\_long/TABLE30.pdf](http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/tables_long/TABLE30.pdf)

## **5 - FALSE: GOV'T REGULATION ASSURES QUALITY**

Leading daycare lobbyists find that:

\*Most government-regulated child care in Canada “is of minimal to mediocre quality”

-*You Bet I Care! 2* [http://action.web.ca/home/cfwwb/attach/ybic\\_report\\_2.pdf](http://action.web.ca/home/cfwwb/attach/ybic_report_2.pdf), p. ix-x

\*“The majority of children age 0-12 in centres do not receive adequate amounts or types of experiences to promote language and cognitive development”

-Dr. Gillian Doherty presentation [http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/documents/Gillian\\_Doherty\\_ANG.pdf](http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/documents/Gillian_Doherty_ANG.pdf) p.4

\*No “overwhelming research” shows daycare benefits children. Research shows that children benefit from “sensitive, responsive care” and adult attachment. Research shows that daycare children get sick more. And—depending on quality, continuity, age and hours—daycare compromises children’s adult attachment, mothers’ sensitivity, health, cognitive, emotional and social development. Mothers’ sensitivity is greatest predictor of child’s outcomes.

-[http://www.nichd.nih.gov/new/releases/child\\_care.cfm](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/new/releases/child_care.cfm)

-[http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/documents/Margaret\\_Tresch\\_Owen\\_ANG.pdf](http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/documents/Margaret_Tresch_Owen_ANG.pdf)

-<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/new/releases/rel4top.cfm>

-Gordon Neufeld & Gabor Mate, *Hold on to Your Kids: Why Parents Matter*

\*Quality may worsen as child:staff ratios are being increased: for age 1 yr: Ontario from 3.3:1 to 5:1, Quebec from 5:1 to 8:1.

-“Daycare Staff:Child Ratios & ‘Quality’: Bad and Getting Worse” <http://www.kidsfirstcanada.org/blog-vol3.htm>

## **6 – UNIVERSAL?**

\* “Universal” means ALL can and do use a service we can’t do ourselves, like medical services. Daycare can only be financed and staffed if all PAY but FEW use it; OR if it is grossly understaffed - as in Sweden.

-“Swedish Government Report Critiques Appalling Daycare Conditions” <http://www.kidsfirstcanada.org/blog-vol1.htm>

\*Quebec’s so-called “universal” system is now costing over \$1.56 billion and faces chronic staffing problems, and has fewer than 25% of children in it.

-*ECEC 2004* [http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/tables\\_long/TABLE28.pdf](http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/tables_long/TABLE28.pdf)

-Jocelyn Tougas, *Reforming Quebec’s Early Childhood Care and Education: the First Five Years*, p. 74

<http://www.childcarecanada.org/pubs/op17/op17ENG.pdf>

## **7 - POLLS: PREFER PARENTAL CARE, FUNDS SHOULD GO TO FAMILIES NOT ‘SPACES’**

\*polls that say we want a “child care system” are meaningless as they do not define “child care” as “daycare”

\* "9 out of 10 say 1 parent should be at home with preschool child" and 6+/10 say same for elementary age child . Parental care is ranked #1, daycare centre care is ranked #5.

-2004 Vanier Institute poll [http://www.vifamily.ca/library/future/future\\_toc.html](http://www.vifamily.ca/library/future/future_toc.html) section 5 and section 8 - #5

\* “Should government give money to daycare so that it costs less, or should government give money to parents so that parents can better afford whatever care they themselves decide is best for their own children?” 79% said parents, up 10% since 1997, and 21% said daycare.

-2000 Canada-wide Compass poll for National Foundation for Family Research and Education

## **8-TAX-FUNDED LOBBY NOT GRASSROOTS**

\* daycare lobbyists are funded by federal and provincial taxes: government is lobbying itself - and us.

-Child Care Research and Resource Unit at the University of Toronto <http://www.childcarecanada.org/about/>

-Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada [http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca/resources/pdf/ccaac\\_annualreport04.pdf](http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca/resources/pdf/ccaac_annualreport04.pdf), p.4

-Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC [www.cccabc.ca](http://www.cccabc.ca)

-Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre <http://www.wstcoast.org/>

-(BC) Child Care Advocacy Forum <http://www.cccabc.bc.ca/forum/index.html>

-The Child Care Federation Of Canada [http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/aboutus/annualreport\\_en.pdf](http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/aboutus/annualreport_en.pdf) p.7

-Canadian Council on Social Development <http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2003/ar-0304.pdf> p.2

-Canadian Social Policy Research Network [www.cprn.com/documents/33894\\_en.pdf](http://www.cprn.com/documents/33894_en.pdf) p. 42