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Releases

BC Families Demand Affordable Public Childcare in Stroller Rally

Vancouver, BC – A large, energetic group of BC families, their children and early childhood educators gathered at Jericho Park in Vancouver this morning in support of affordable public childcare in BC.

The event, organized by labour and community organizations, included a short and spirited rally, followed by families, childcare workers and union officers leading a stroller parade to Christy Clark's nearby MLA office.

"For women to participate fully and equally in our workforce, we must ensure families have access to affordable childcare," said Irene Lanzinger. "This BC Liberal government's failure to invest in public childcare has left BC's children without the quality of care they deserve."

BCGEU Treasurer Stephanie Smith said that the current system fails to adequately value the role of professional Early Childhood Educators. "Social attitudes about early childhood education and educators have been tied to outdated and gendered notions about women's work for decades. This devalues the profession--reflected in low wages and recruitment and retention problems."

Sheryl Burns, Vice President of CUPE Local 1936, looked at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House as an example of high quality care. "When I saw the caring environment staff provided during our visit to the childcare centres at Collingwood I was moved," she said. "These programs provide nurturing,

high quality care in a public service setting, despite increasingly limited resources and a profound lack of appreciation by the federal and provincial governments for the hard work that they do."

Susan Harney, Chairperson of the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC explained her organization's Plan, which is heavily endorsed by parents, grandparents, BC Labour, community, business, municipalities and school boards. "Similar to the $7 a day childcare plan that already exists in Quebec, the BC Plan calls on government to commit to a childcare system with fees for families capped at $10 per day. Families making less than $40,000 a year would pay no user fee. This Plan is good for children, women and the BC economy. "

The event came the day after International Women's Day to ensure the greatest number of families could participate.

Messages left at Premier Clark's constituency office were from mothers and fathers, children, and early childhood educators asking the premier to stand behind her "Families First" commitment.

The event was organized by the B.C. Federation of Labour (BCFED) and its affiliates, BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU), Canadian Union of Public Employees of BC (CUPE BC) and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (CCCABC).

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For more information, please contact Michael Gardiner at 604-436-7030.