

CHILD CARE

The International Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), of which Canada is a member, recently released two studies addressing child care and early childhood education. The OECD suggests that “governments potentially can promote family-friendly policies for numerous reasons: reduce poverty and promote child development and family well-being, underpin economic growth, and bolster pension systems.”¹

Cost

For many parents, child care is not affordable, especially for those with low wage jobs.

In a Canadian study, one mother said “[To pay] even \$15 a day would have been too much, because the pay for working the sewing machine was really low...it’s not worth it.”²

Subsidies

Child care subsidies are available from the BC government. The table below illustrates the story of one mother. A slight increase in her hours of work bumped her into the next salary level where the subsidy was reduced disproportionately to her earnings.³

Affordability of Average-Priced Centre Based Child Care* in BC⁴

	Monthly After-Tax Income	Child Care Cost	BC Child Care Subsidy	% spent on Child Care
Minimum Wage	\$1619	\$556	\$395	10%
Low Wage	\$1870	\$556	\$244	17%
Difference	+16%	0%	- 38%	

For a Single Parent with One Child, Two Years Old

Flexibility and Location of Services

It is difficult to find flexible or part-time child care services to accommodate parents working shift, evening or weekend hours, common in service sector jobs.⁵

The greatest number of child care facilities are available in Victoria and Saanich.⁶

Number of Spaces

Child Care Spaces Compared to Population in BC’s Capital Region⁷

Number of licensed spaces	2,600
Number of children 0-5	16,937
Difference	- 14,337

There are considerably more children under 6 than there are available child care spaces for these ages. Although this is not an indication of demand, the table above highlights the fact that only a small portion of these children can be accommodated by the current facilities.

In May 2004 only one daycare in the region had a vacancy.

Sources:

¹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004

² Campaign 2000 (2001). Stacking the Deck: The Relationship Between Reliable Child Care and Lone Mothers’ Attachment to the Labour Force, p.7

³ ibid, p. 7

⁴ National Council of Welfare (2004). *Income for Living?* Appendix G: Affordability of Child Care & BC Child Care Subsidy Estimator, www.childcareestimator.gov.bc.ca

⁵ Campaign 2000 (2001). Stacking the Deck, p.7

⁶ Child Care Information Service, Licensed Child Care Facilities in Greater Victoria, March 2004

⁷ Child Care Information Service, Licensed Child Care Facilities in Greater Victoria, March 2004 and BC Stats, 2003 Regional Population Estimates



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Bringing people together
 to create solutions in the areas of homes,
 paid work and community connections
 in BC’s Capital Region.