

# 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.”<sup>1</sup>

## 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.”<sup>2</sup>

## 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.<sup>3</sup>

### Affordability of Average-Priced Centre Based Child Care\* in BC<sup>4</sup>

	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%
<b>Difference</b>	<b>+16%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>- 38%</b>	

*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.<sup>5</sup>

The greatest number of child care facilities are available in Victoria and Saanich.<sup>6</sup>

## Number of Spaces

### Child Care Spaces Compared to Population in BC’s Capital Region<sup>7</sup>

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

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:

<sup>1</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004

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

<sup>3</sup> ibid, p. 7

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

<sup>5</sup> Campaign 2000 (2001). Stacking the Deck, p.7

<sup>6</sup> Child Care Information Service, Licensed Child Care Facilities in Greater Victoria, March 2004

<sup>7</sup> 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.