



Bringing Out the Best for Children and Families



Expanding Child Care Options

Safe, quality child care options are vital for parents and families. To expand spaces and access, the province has:

- ▶ Created a child care operating funding program that will increase the number of child care spaces eligible for provincial funding by 32,000 to 77,000. 1,400 licensed family child care providers and centres will be eligible for funding for the first time.
- ▶ Increased access to the monthly child care subsidy for low-income families – benefiting thousands of children, many of whom are in single-parent families
 - Raised the subsidy rate for children under six in regulated child care
 - Increased the monthly supplement for eligible children with special needs from \$107 to \$150
- ▶ Made community-based preschool available for 2,000 children of non-working parents.

More resources for First Nations children



B.C. has committed \$8 million in annual funding for aboriginal early childhood development programs.

Improving Protection for Children at Risk

To ensure B.C. children can enjoy a supportive and stable family environment, the province has:

- ▶ Reduced the number of children in government care by 15 per cent – to 9,083 in April 2004 from 10,748 in June 2001.
- ▶ Passed legislation that, where suitable, allows children to be placed in the custody of extended family members or friends of the family, rather than in government care.
- ▶ Found adoptive homes for 330 children in care in 2003-04 – twice the number placed in 2000-01.
- ▶ Created a \$3 million BC Adoption and Permanency Trust fund to assist with adoption awareness and research.
- ▶ Created an Early Childhood Development partnership with the United Way and Credit Union Central of B.C. for the Success by Six program, with a contribution of \$10 million.
- ▶ Extended the Children First Learning Initiative to 17 B.C. communities. It provides educational, physical and social support to pre-schoolers and helps identify children at risk and prevent crises before they reach school age.
- ▶ Committed \$30.8 million in 2004/05 for extended autism intervention services for 2,100 BC children.
- ▶ Added \$3 million in 2002-03 to the Youth Education Assistance fund to support bursaries for post-secondary education for youth who have been in foster care.
- ▶ Signed a memorandum of understanding with First Nation leaders, aimed at providing them with greater independence in caring for aboriginal children in need.
- ▶ Created Canada's First Mental Health Plan for children and youth to improve resources – and outcomes – for children's mental health.

Bringing Out the Best for Children and Families

Helping People Achieve Self-Sufficiency

We're honouring our commitment to help people achieve greater independence through efforts like the new B.C. Employment and Assistance program, which provides income support for those in need and helps people find jobs that lead to self-reliance. The province has:

- ▶ Invested more than \$300 million in employment programs to help people find sustainable jobs and become self-reliant.
- ▶ Nearly doubled funding for employment programs for people with disabilities by adding \$11 million, for a total of \$24 million a year.
- ▶ Introduced a \$5-million bridging employment program that will help people who have experienced violence or abuse to overcome barriers and gain sustainable employment.
- ▶ Doubled the monthly earning exemption for people with disabilities, to \$400, to help them move toward greater independence.

Increasing Safe and Affordable Housing

The province is expanding the supply of safe, affordable housing for those most in need.

- ▶ In 2003-04, the province contributed \$153.3 million to subsidized housing – the largest subsidized housing budget in B.C.'s history. In 2004-05, the province will contribute a further \$154.4 million.
- ▶ Since June 2001, the province has committed funding for 3,400 units of non-profit housing across B.C.

Keeping Taxes Low so Families Get Ahead

The province cut personal income taxes by an average 25 per cent and British Columbia now has the lowest personal income tax rates on income up to \$66,123.

In addition to low personal income tax rates, British Columbia's overall taxes - including sales tax, property tax, and MSP premiums - are very competitive. Most B.C. families pay the second lowest provincial taxes in Canada. Other results of tax cuts introduced in 2001:

- ▶ After-tax income in B.C. jumped 4.7 per cent in 2001 – the third-strongest increase in Canada and the largest increase in after-tax income for B.C. families in at least two decades.
- ▶ The average income tax paid by B.C. families decreased by 13.5 per cent, the largest decrease in 20 years.
- ▶ While B.C. taxpayers received provincial income tax cuts averaging 25 per cent, the largest cut of 28 per cent went to B.C.'s lowest income earners.
- ▶ Since June 2001, the province has provided 31 tax-related measures worth more than \$1.1 billion in annual tax savings to consumers and businesses.

Canada's lowest income taxes



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Child Support and Care

BC Employment and Assistance

www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/publicat/ft/bcea.htm

Family Maintenance Program

www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/publicat/bcea/fmp.htm

B.C. Child Support Infoline

Vancouver: 604 660-2192

Toll-free provincewide: 1 888 216-2211

Child Care Resource and Referral Program

www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/childcare/childcar/cc_resourc.htm

Child Care Subsidy Program

www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/subsidy_promo.htm

Child Care Operating Funding Program

Victoria: 250 356-6501

Toll-free provincewide: 1 888 338-6622

www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/childcare/childcar/grant_op_fund.htm

At Home Program

(to assist parents with the costs of caring for a child with severe disabilities at home)

Victoria: 250 387-9649

Toll-free provincewide: 1 888 613-3232

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/at_home/

Child Abuse Prevention Web Site

www.safekidsbc.ca/index.htm

Helpline for Children

(reporting of child abuse and neglect)

Monday to Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Weekends and Statutory holidays: 24 hours

310-1234 (no area code needed)

Telephone device for the deaf: 1 888 660-0505

www.safekidsbc.ca/helpline.htm

Youth Against Violence Line

Toll-free provincewide: 1 800 680-4264

Family Services

Adoption

Toll-free provincewide: 1 877 236-7807

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption/index.html

Foster Care

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster_recruitment/index.htm

Foster Parent Support Line

Monday to Friday: 4:00 p.m. - 12:45 a.m.

Weekends and Statutory holidays: 8:00 a.m. - 12:45 a.m.

Ministry of Children and Family Development After Hours Line

Vancouver, North Shore, Richmond: 604 660-4927

Lower Mainland, Burnaby, Delta, Maple Ridge, Langley:
604 660-8180

Rest of B.C.: 1 800 663-9122

Ministry of Children and Family Development

www.gov.bc.ca/mcf

Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services

www.gov.bc.ca/mcaaws

Ministry of Health Services

www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/

Ministry of Human Resources

www.gov.bc.ca/mhr

We want your input

All of us want to build a future of hope and opportunity for our families.

British Columbia has unlimited potential. We're working to ensure B.C.'s families have the resources they need to thrive and prosper.

I welcome your input and invite you to contact me for more information on the steps we're taking to improve the services you count on.

Gordon Campbell
Premier

E-mail your comments to: premier@gov.bc.ca