

Kids on the Bus

Highlights:

- (To come from Ministry)

Main Message:

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Background:

- (To come from Ministry)
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Nanaimo Child Development Centre

Highlights:

- The Nanaimo Child Development Centre is a community-based, non-profit organization that provides individualized services for children and promotes child development.
- The employees at Nanaimo CDC voted to unionize in July 2017. A new collective agreement includes wage increases of 5.5% over five years.
- There has been speculation that the additional costs the agency will incur as a result of these increased salaries will lead to layoffs.

Main Message:

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Background:

- In late July 2017 employees at the Nanaimo Child Development Centre voted to unionize under the Health Sciences Association of BC (HAS). According to the union, the 34 new members include professionals who deliver services in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, infant development program, family development, and supported child development.
- As a result of unionizing, a new collective agreement was signed on Oct. 2, 2017, which leveled salaries up to the level negotiated by the union under the 2014 Economic Stability Mandate, which included wage increases of 5.5% over five years).
- The salary increases take effect April 2018.
- There has been speculation that the additional costs the agency will incur as a result of these increased salaries will lead to layoffs. ^{s.13}

- Ministry staff met with the employer on Oct. 26 to discuss options for moving forward.

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- The Nanaimo Child Development Centre is an agency that contracts with MCFD and the local Delegated Aboriginal Agency. Their contract with MCFD is in place until March 31, 2018 and covers the following:
- Early Intervention therapies – \$1,178,640.58
- Infant Development Programs – \$415,090.50
- School Age Therapies – \$74,317.42
- Supported Child Development – \$1,462,512.68
- Child and Youth Special Needs (Family Support) – \$235,354.42
- CYMH (Family Support) – \$48,443.20
- Contract annual total \$3,414,358.80

Injury or Death of Child in Care

Main Message:

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Background:

- The Child, Family and Community Service Act explicitly prohibits the ministry from disclosing private information or confirming its involvement with any given family.
- Where there is ministry involvement, the facts surrounding the incident are examined to determine if a case review is appropriate.
- There are two types of case review:
 - File reviews, which involve an examination of the case records only;
 - And comprehensive reviews, which – in addition to examination of case records – include interviews with staff and others involved in the case.
- The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth is also notified and may also conduct its own review.

Tracking of data:

- The ministry tracks, and reports publically on a bi-annual basis, deaths of children and youth in care (aged 0-19), as well as children and youth who received ministry services but were not in care.
- The Ministry verifies child fatality categories of death with the British Columbia Coroner's Service - Child Death Review Unit¹ before postings occur. The classification of a fatality may change as a death is investigated or new information becomes available.
- The classification of death information may change over time and the statistics are updated to reflect recent changes verified with the British Columbia Coroner's Service (BCCS).

Children in Care Deaths:

- From January 1st to June 30th, 2017, eight children in care died. The following classification of death is information currently provided by BCCS :
 - 2 Natural;
 - 4 Accidental;
 - 0 Suicide;
 - 0 Homicide;
 - 2 Undetermined with an ongoing investigation by the Coroner's Service; and,
 - 0 Undetermined and the Coroner's investigation is complete and their file closed;
- Four of the eight children in care who died were First Nations, Metis or Inuit.
- All four of the opioid/fentanyl related deaths classified as Accidental by the BCCS were in the continuing custody of the director at time of their death; two of these youth were First Nations, Metis or Inuit.
- All of these deaths proceeded to Case Review; five are in progress and three are completed.

Children who had Received Services (not in care) in previous 12 months:

- Between January 1st and June 30th, 2017, 48 children who had received services died. The following classification of death is information currently provided by the British Columbia Coroner's Service:
 - 26 Natural;
 - 12 Accidental;
 - 2 Homicide;

- 7 Suicide;
- 1 Undetermined with an ongoing investigation by the Coroner's Service; and
- 0 Undetermined with a Coroner's investigation completed and their file closed
- 13 of the 48 children who died were First Nations, Metis or Inuit,
- Seven of the 12 Accidental deaths were children and youth who died of opioid/fentanyl related causes; and one was First Nations, Metis or Inuit.
- All fatalities were screened to determine whether a Case Review was required.
- Two of these deaths have proceeded to Case Review; one is in progress and one is completed.

Adoptions

Highlights:

- A report by the Representative for Children and Youth published on December 13, 2017 revealed the number of adoptions declined in the first half of the 2017 fiscal year compared to the previous two years.
- The number of adoptions for Aboriginal children and youth also declined during this time as detailed in the report.

Main Message:

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Background:

- A report by the Representative for Children and Youth published Dec. 13, 2017 says the provincial government is faltering in its efforts to find permanent homes for children and youth in care.
- The report shows 84 children and youth in care were adopted during the first six months of the 2017/18 fiscal year.
- These lag behind the totals of 149 and 104 placements in the first half of fiscal 2015/16 and 2016/17, respectively.
- Of those adopted in the first 6 months of 2017/18 fiscal year, 16 are Aboriginal children and youth. This compares to 55 and 40 Aboriginal children and youth adopted, respectively, during the first six months of the previous two years.

Advice to Minister

Baby ^{s.22} Unlicensed Childcare

Highlights:

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- Media reports say the daycare has since closed.
- Under B.C.'s Community Care and Assisted Living Act, unlicensed child-care operators are only allowed to care for two children at a time and can be fined up to \$10,000 a day for violations.

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- Advocates and the public are looking ahead to the 2018 budget for more details on the government's plan to address childcare access and affordability.

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Main Message:

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Background:

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- Given that they are unlicensed, health authorities do not have an estimate of the number of unlicensed daycares in B.C.
- There is a child-care category called Registered Licensed not Required (RLNR). Rather than being registered through the Ministry of Health/Health Authority, License Not Required (LNR) child-care providers can voluntarily register as RLNRs through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (CFD) via Child Care Resource and Referral Centres (CCRRs).
- There are currently 400+ RLNRs across the province.
- Health authority licensing staff investigate all complaints regarding care at daycares, whether they are licensed or not.
- For example, last year Fraser Health investigated 37 complaints related to unlicensed daycares, Island Health investigated 42 complaints and Interior Health had 35 complaints about unlicensed daycares.
- Most individuals work co-operatively with Licensing to come into compliance – either by starting the licensing process or by limiting the number of children that they care for to remain unlicensed.
- Fines are rare, and health authorities do not have any records of any fines in the past year.
- All facilities that have complaints substantiated are required to cease operation immediately or reduce the number of children they are caring for to less than three.
- Health authorities are working improve their tracking of unlicensed operators – tracking complaints received by both operator and address.

Childcare mandate:

- Minister of State Katrina Chen's mandate letter calls on her to:

- Work with all levels of government, child-care providers, the private and not-for-profit sectors to implement a universal child-care plan that provides affordable, accessible and high-quality care and early learning to every child whose family wants or needs it, starting with infant/toddler programs before gradually expanding.
- Provide additional investments in the Early Childhood Educator workforce through training, education and fair wages to enhance and ensure quality.
- Accelerate the creation of new child-care spaces in communities across the province as part of building a Better BC.

Unlicensed Childcare

Highlights:

- Many parents access unlicensed childcare spaces.
- Safety concerns have been raised,^{s.22}
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- Advocates and the public are looking ahead to the 2018 budget for more details on the government's plan to address childcare access and affordability.

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- Provide additional investments in the Early Childhood Educator workforce through training, education and fair wages to enhance and ensure quality.
- Accelerate the creation of new child-care spaces in communities across the province as part of building a Better BC.

Children and Family Development Main

Highlights:

- Questions may be asked about government's work to improve services provided by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and what the government is doing to improve the lives of children in B.C.

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Background:

Children in Care Statistics

- Updated: June 9, 2017
- Provincial Numbers:
- The number of children in ministry care on May 31, 2017 was 6,898. That is a 35% decline from May 2001 (10,681).
- Of that number, 4,337 Aboriginal children in care make up 62.9% of the ministry's total caseload.
- The total number of Aboriginal children served by a Delegated Aboriginal Agency has more than tripled since 2001 – from 561 (May 2001) to 1,952 (May 2017).
- There are 23 delegated agencies across B.C.

Grand Chief Ed John's Recommendations:

- In September 2015, Grand Chief Ed John was appointed as Special Advisor to the Minister on Indigenous children in care, permanency and early years. In his role, Grand Chief John met with 86 First Nations, 10 Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and 12 organizations or interest groups over a 14-month period.
- In November 2016, Grand Chief Ed John produced a report recommending 85 systemic changes in government's approach to Aboriginal child welfare, 71 of which fall under the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).
- This report has been considered in the context of the ministry's operational plan and Budget 2017, of which \$70.1 million was allocated for 2017/18 to make improvements in line with Grand Chief Ed John's recommendations, including:
 - \$14.4 million to help ensure Delegated Aboriginal Agencies are funded at levels equitable to the ministry;
 - \$24.2 million for family supports and reunification, culturally appropriate services, and additional staff within Indigenous communities; and,
 - \$16 million for services to children in care including those with special needs.

Childcare:

- Canada ranks last among developed countries for child-care spending, and B.C. has some of the highest fees in the country.
- The cost of child care in B.C. has risen by 35% since 2007, while wages have only increased by 10%.
- The median fee paid by parents of toddlers in Vancouver is \$1,325 a month.
- According to the Centre for Spatial Economics, the \$10 a day plan would create a 2% – or \$5.79 billion – increase to provincial GDP by the time it is fully implemented.
- Budget 2017-18 includes a \$20 million increase in child care to increase our spending on early childhood development and child care to \$330 million this year and support more than 4,000 new child care spaces.

Oak Bay Tragedy

Highlights:

- Media have extensively reported that two girls – ages four and six – were found dead in their father's Oak Bay apartment on Christmas Day 2017. The father was reportedly taken to hospital under police guard with self-inflicted wounds.
- The father of the girls has been formally charged with two counts of second-degree murder in the deaths of his daughters.
- Media have questioned the nature of the ministry's involvement – what reports were made and the timing and nature of the ministry's response.
- The Child, Family and Community Service Act explicitly prohibits the ministry from disclosing private information or confirming its involvement with any given family.

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- The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth is also notified and may also conduct its own review.

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- There are two types of case review:
 - File reviews, which involve an examination of the case records only;
 - And comprehensive reviews, which – in addition to examination of case records – include interviews with staff and others involved in the case.
- Comprehensive reviews cannot be conducted while legal proceedings are underway.

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- On January 15, an Op-Ed by BCGEU President Stephanie Smith was published which focused on “the extremely difficult work environment social workers face.”
- It said there are severe staff retention problems and that social workers struggle with high case-loads.

Childcare

Highlights:

- Consultation on building an affordable, accessible childcare plan has been ongoing.
- Advocates and the public are looking ahead to the 2018 budget for more details.
- Media outlets have commented on no mention of the “10aDay” branding in the Throne Speech.
- Media attention has been placed on a federal funding agreement for \$153 million in funding for childcare over three years. The final signing announcement is currently being rescheduled

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“Even in our best dreams this isn't going to happen overnight. **The child care crisis is so bad, no one throne speech or one budget is going to fix it. But we can start to make some inroads, and we can start some implementation. Let's make it more affordable for all families, not just single families.** You know, there's lots of mums and dads trying to go to work, between their housing and their child care, that are stressed. So let's make it more affordable. After all, elementary school is affordable for all families. Child care should be too.” Sharon Gregson, 10\$aDay Advocate (CFAX, February 13, 2018)

“We know the NDP and the Greens are supportive of new investment, and we even know that the Liberals, for their short time in government, put forward a throne speech that had \$1b committed to child care. So we're expecting across government support for fixing this very serious problem for young families and our economy.” Sharon Gregson, 10\$aDay Advocate (CFAX, February 13, 2018)

(More on next page)

“I think this government is the one that finally listened to parents and advocates. And said we’re not just listening, we’re going to act. I feel elated that there’s changes coming.” Kate Spence, teacher and mother of 2, (CBC, Feb. 14, 2018)

“The name is less important than the commitment to new and better policies with meaningful investment.” Kate Spence, teacher and mother of 2, (CBC, Feb. 14, 2018)

“The overarching thing that parents want and advocates want is affordable and universal, quality safe childcare. This government is committed to delivering that. We take the global overarching approach that yes, changes are being made, and they’re for the better.” Kate Spence, teacher and mother of 2, (CBC, Feb. 14, 2018)

Background:

- Canada ranks last among developed countries for child-care spending, and B.C. has some of the highest fees in the country.
- The cost of child care in B.C. has risen by 35% since 2007, while wages have only increased by 10%.
- The median fee paid by parents of toddlers in Vancouver is \$1,325 a month.
- According to the Centre for Spatial Economics, the \$10 a day plan would create a 2% – or \$5.79 billion – increase to provincial GDP by the time it is fully implemented.
- Budget 2017-18 includes a \$20 million increase in child care to increase our spending on early childhood development and child care to \$330 million this year and support more than 4,000 new child care spaces.
- Minister of State Katrina Chen's mandate letter calls on her to:
 - Work with all levels of government, child-care providers, the private and not-for-profit sectors to implement a universal child-care plan that provides affordable, accessible and high-quality care and early learning to every child whose family wants or needs it, starting with infant/toddler programs before gradually expanding.
 - Provide additional investments in the Early Childhood Educator workforce through training, education and fair wages to enhance and ensure quality.
 - Accelerate the creation of new child-care spaces in communities across the province as part of building a Better BC.

Childcare Licensing and Regulation

Highlights:

- Budget 2018 includes the largest investment ever in childcare in the province: one billion dollars over three years to provide relief to parents through fee reductions and a child care benefit, create 22,000 new licensed spaces, and train, develop and recruit more Early Childhood Educators.
- On budget day, MLA Shirley Bond criticised the emphasis on licensed spaces: “We are also concerned about a stereotypical big-government solution, which we believe will suffer from the same issues as all big-government solutions — escalating costs, bureaucratization, overregulation, unionization and wait-lists.”
- This framing was reiterated by MCFD critic Laurie Throness in the House on February 22.

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Background:

- Over the next three years, the Province will invest more than \$1 billion in cross-ministry programs and strategies to improve early care and learning in B.C.
- This includes:
 - \$979.6 million for the Ministry of Children and Family Development:
 - \$176.8 million in 2018-19
 - \$347.2 million in 2019-20
 - \$455.6 million in 2020-21
 - More than \$9.7 million for the Ministry of Education
 - Nearly \$7.4 million for the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training.
 - Nearly \$6.3 million for the Ministry of Health.
- Total: \$1,002,970 over three years
- \$630 million to make child care more affordable for up to 86,000 B.C. families, starting by offering immediate relief to parents with infants and toddlers. This will be expanded to parents with children from 3- to 5-years-old in 2019/20.
- \$237 million to fund more than 22,000 new licensed child-care spaces across the province.
- \$136 million to deliver new supports for training and development of existing Early Childhood Educators, and to recruit more ECEs.
- The provincial investment under Budget 2018 is supplemented by approximately \$153 million in federal funding over three years – beginning in 2017-18 – through a bilateral Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Framework Agreement.

- In total, government will invest \$263 million, including the federal funding, in the first year of government's longer-term commitment to a universal child care.

On immediate affordability:

- There are several supports to help with the cost of child care for low- and middle-income families in B.C.:
- The Child Care Subsidy currently supports around 20,000 B.C. families and provides full or partial subsidy for families with an income below \$55,000.
- CCS will be replaced with a new affordable child care benefit in September 2018, which will increase the amount that a family can get, and provide support for families with a household income of up to \$111,000.
- Starting from April 2018, parents with infants and toddlers will benefit from a child care fee reduction, available from licensed child-care providers who opt in to this new program. This program will be expanded to support families with children up to the age of five in the second year of the child-care plan.

ECE Providers

Highlights:

- Budget 2018 includes one billion dollars over three years to provide relief to parents through fee reductions and a child care benefit, create 22,000 new licensed spaces, and train, develop and recruit more Early Childhood Educators.
- Wage increases for ECEs have not been specifically mentioned in the plan.
- Child care advocates are calling for better compensation for ECEs in order to attract and retain them.
- Following the budget speech, opposition MLA Shirley Bond said “without an increase in wages, the government has not provided a way to ease the critical shortage of early childhood educators without whom new spaces will be difficult to deliver.”

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- Over the next three years, the Province will invest more than \$1 billion in cross-ministry programs and strategies to improve early care and learning in B.C.
- This includes:
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 - \$176.8 million in 2018-19
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- \$237 million to fund more than 22,000 new licensed child-care spaces across the province.
- \$136 million to deliver new supports for training and development of existing Early Childhood Educators, and to recruit more ECEs.
- Addressing ECE wages will be part of a broader approach that examines all of the issues associated with the recruitment and retention of ECEs in child-care settings.

- To support workforce capacity, Budget 2018 allocates \$7.4 million to increase the number of ECE graduates from public post-secondary institutions by approximately 620 over the next three years.
- Through the Early Learning and Child Care agreement with the federal government, \$16.3 million will be allocated to support the ECE Bursary Program and expand training and professional development options for ECEs.

On bursaries:

- A total of 33 approved B.C. post-secondary educational institutions currently offer early childhood education (ECE) programs.
- All eligible students attending recognized ECE programs are able to apply for the bursary funding.
- The bursary is administered by the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC)
- A number of recognized programs offer some of their courses online to improve access for students across the province.
- Of those, six schools offer programs with an Indigenous perspective.

Adoptions

Highlights:

- A report by the Representative for Children and Youth published on December 13, 2017 revealed the number of adoptions declined in the first half of the 2017 fiscal year compared to the previous two years.
- Opposition Critic Laurie Throness said in his budget response: “There is no mention of adoption in the budget. Although we have a thousand children waiting for adoption, the Representative for Children and Youth produced a report in December expressing his concern at the lapse in this government’s activity on adoption.”

Main Message:

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Background:

- A report by the Representative for Children and Youth published Dec. 13, 2017 says the provincial government is faltering in its efforts to find permanent homes for children and youth in care.
- The report shows 84 children and youth in care were adopted during the first six months of the 2017/18 fiscal year.
- These lag behind the totals of 149 and 104 placements in the first half of fiscal 2015/16 and 2016/17, respectively.
- Of those adopted in the first 6 months of 2017/18 fiscal year, 16 are Aboriginal children and youth. This compares to 55 and 40 Aboriginal children and youth adopted, respectively, during the first six months of the previous two years.

Childcare Commitments

Highlights:

- Budget 2018 includes the largest investment ever in childcare in the province: one billion dollars over three years to provide relief to parents through fee reductions and a child care benefit, create 22,000 new licensed spaces, and train, develop and recruit more Early Childhood Educators.
- Media outlets and the opposition (including critic Laurie Throness) have suggested that this is not “10-a-Day” Childcare.

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Validators:

“After 16 years child care in this province is a disaster, and this government is committed to turning that around. We were hopeful, we were optimistic, and today they've delivered.” (Sharon Gregson, 10aDay advocate, Feb. 20, 2018)

“The 2018 BC Budget commits to over \$1 billion in new federal and provincial child care funding over 3 years – enough to make substantial and measurable progress towards the high quality, affordable, accessible system detailed in the popular \$10aDay Child Care Plan.” (Coalition of Child Care Advocates News release, Feb. 20, 2018)

“Thousands of \$10aDay supporters called on government to take the first steps to fix BC’s child care chaos, and today the government did just that.” (Coalition of Child Care Advocates News release, Feb. 20, 2018)

“The high cost of child care is an extraordinary expense for many students. This Budget’s immediate fee reduction for families with young children and commitment to increase licensed spaces will give students an improved opportunity to access education.” (Simka Marshall, Chair of the BC Federation of Students)

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- Starting from April 2018, parents with infants and toddlers will benefit from a child care fee reduction, available from licensed child-care providers who opt in to this new program. This program will be expanded to support families with children up to the age of five in the second year of the child-care plan.

Foster Parents Budget

Highlights:

- Foster parents are not receiving a pay increase in Budget 2018.
- Opposition and media may ask how we can increase recruitment for foster parents without an increase, and highlight a shortage of foster parents.
- Opposition Critic Laurie Throness said in his budget response: “There is no money in this budget for supporting foster parents or recruiting new foster foster parents. There was a story not long ago in the *Chilliwack Progress* about a critical shortage of foster homes throughout the province, particularly in Chilliwack.”

Main Message:

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Background:

- (BACKGROUND TO COME FROM MINISTRY)