



MOUNT PLEASANT NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

800 East Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1Y1

Telephone: (604) 879-8208 Fax (604) 879-4136

April 13, 2007

Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier of British Columbia
Room 156, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
E-mail: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Hon. Gordon Campbell:

Re: Cuts for Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre

At a time when our province is celebrating greater economic stability and increasing attention from the national and world stage, it is shocking to witness the erosion of child care supports initiated by the Honourable Linda Reid, the Minister of State for Child Care. In particular, I am writing this letter to draw your attention to the recent drastic cut of \$800,000 for Westcoast Provincial Services experienced by Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre, and to request that you urge Hon. Linda Reid to reconsider her decision regarding the closure of many of the invaluable services provided by Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre.

Westcoast Childcare Resource Centre's loss will have a tremendous impact on the carefully constructed system of childcare supports and resources that service providers in our communities have worked together to build over the years. The cuts to Westcoast will result in a loss in the integrated services provided Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House (MPNH) in partnership with other agencies, and will have direct impact on the clients that we mutually serve at the neighbourhood house. Westcoast has provided the Child Care Resource and Referral services to families in our neighbourhood, which has facilitated access to child care and subsidies for families who are resource-challenged. In addition, Westcoast provides a network of supports to licensed-not-required and licensed family day care providers, which promotes quality and effective child care for our neighbourhood's children. Finally, the services offered by Westcoast at MPNH enhanced our mutual services to immigrant communities as one of Westcoast's staff stationed at MPNH is fluent in English, Cantonese and Mandarin. This staff person's presence at MPNH provided extra capacity for collaborative approaches to child care services for a growing immigrant community in our neighbourhood.

Our example is but one of many as Westcoast has been providing similar services through a broad network of neighbourhood houses, community centres and family places in Vancouver. Thus, the erosion of these services will create gaps in several existing hubs. In addition to the loss that neighbourhood-based service providers will experience by the cuts to Westcoast, the impact is farther reaching as Westcoast is BC's only provincial resource centre dedicated specifically to early childhood education and care. Westcoast's library has been providing resources to parents with young children as well as professionals in the field; however, this valuable resource will be less accessible within Vancouver, and non-existence outside of the City of Vancouver.

The drastic cuts to Westcoast will be felt by many—parents, childcare professionals, educators and other service providers—and I urge you to request that Hon. Linda Reid restore funding to Westcoast Childcare Resource Centre. I also urge you to initiate other measures to support child care services in our province to ensure that BC continues to have healthy children, healthy families and healthy communities.

Sincerely,



Jocelyne Hamel
Executive Director

cc. Honorable Linda Reid, Minister of State for Child Care
Honourable Tom Christensen, Minister of Children and Family Development
Dianne Liscumb, Executive Director, Westcoast Childcare Resource Centre