



January 8, 2019

VIA E-MAIL
Ref: 240121

Adrienne Montani
Provincial Coordinator
First Call: BC Child and
Youth Advocacy Coalition
E-mail: adrienne@firstcallbc.org

Dear Adrienne Montani:

Thank you for your letter sharing the concerns of First Call’s Early Childhood Development Roundtable regarding added child care fees charged for children with extra support needs. As Minister of Children and Family Development, and Minister of State for Child Care, we are pleased to respond.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is aware of a range of barriers facing families of children with extra support needs when accessing child care, gaps including the points you raise in your letter:

- Providers have charged higher fees for their child with extra support needs, than the fees charged for other children.
- Families are charged for the full-time space, but their children with special needs are provided shorter hours of service.
- Parents are paying for additional employee hours that the Supported Child Development (SCD) program is not able to cover with funding.
- Parents are paying infant/toddler space fees for their child to attend a 3-5 year old space.

As British Columbia moves toward universal child care it is important that we work to address these barriers and ensure our system is inclusive of all children, including those with extra support needs.

Currently, it is our expectation that child care operators welcome and include children with extra support needs. However, as you have noted, parents have told us experiences where this is not the case. The Ministry is committed to exploring ways to achieve more consistent practice as we move toward a universal child care system.

Recently introduced provincial initiatives (such as the Affordable Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative) extend to families including those with children requiring extra support needs.

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Ministry of
Children and Family
Development

Office of the
Minister

Mailing Address:
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Location:
Parliament Buildings
Victoria

The Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) and the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) are providing significant help for families with the cost of child care. With the introduction of the ACCB, more families of children with special needs will qualify for the special needs supplement than previously qualified under the former Child Care Subsidy program.

You raise concerns regarding operators participating in the CCFRI program charging differential fees for children with extra support needs. While MCFD is not currently able to discern if different fees are being charged for individual children, we thank you for raising this concern and will explore ways to address this important issue.

You identify under-funding of the SCD and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) programs as a factor influencing child care operators to charge enhanced fees to families whose children require additional support. We are pleased to share that these programs have recently seen a funding enhancement as a component of the Canada - British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Bilateral Agreement; \$30M over three years has been invested into these programs. Many of the agencies receiving this funding will be able to reduce waitlists and help child care operators have the resources in place to support inclusion of children with special needs.

Even with this investment in SCD and ASCD, we know that more needs to be done. MCFD will evaluate two models of inclusion through a pilot project underway across 15-20 child care facilities throughout British Columbia. Learnings from this evaluation will assist us in understanding the strengths and challenges of each approach and help government move toward sustainable and responsive programming that supports full inclusion of children with extra needs. Should you wish to further discuss these pilot projects, Emily Horton, Executive Director, Early Years and Inclusion, MCFD, can provide you with a thorough briefing. She can be reached via e-mail at: Emily.Horton@gov.ca.ca.

We appreciate the concerns you raise and will consider your input as we continue to work toward Government's 10 year vision for universal child care. We look forward to continued engagement as we move toward a system that is inclusive of all children.

Sincerely,



Katrine Conroy
Minister of Children and
Family Development



Katrina Chen
Minister of State for Child Care

pc: Jackie Watts, Provincial Advisor, Aboriginal Supported Child Development
Emily Horton, Executive Director, Early Years, Indigenous Early Years
and Inclusion Policy