



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21st, 2009

COWICHAN CHILD CARE COUNCIL RELEASES RESPONSE TO UNICEF REPORT
ON CHILD CARE

The Cowichan Child Care Council is working to build on efforts already underway that raise awareness of the recently published UNICEF Report, *The Child Care Transition: A League Table of Early Childhood Education and Care in Economically Advanced Countries*. The report identifies today's rising generation as the first in which a majority are spending a large part of early childhood in some form of out-of-home child care. UNICEF identifies this as a positive development, provided that the policies and programs for young children are sufficiently available.

In the report Canada tied dead last (with Ireland), out of the 25 countries measured in the report in the provision of early childhood care and education. The report rated countries using 10 basic minimum standards as benchmark indicators. The only benchmark that Canada achieved in the report was having 50% of staff in accredited early education services holding proper post-secondary qualifications. Under the guidelines of the United Nation's Convention of the Rights of the Child, many Canadian children are being denied entitlement to their rights.

Benchmarks that Canada **did not** achieve include:

- Subsidized and regulated child care services for 25% of children under 3;
- Subsidized and accredited early education services for 80% of 4 yr. olds;
- 80% of child care staff trained;
- 1% of GDP spent on early childhood services; and
- Child poverty rate less than 10%;
- A national plan with priority for disadvantaged children.

The UNICEF Report calls on public and policy makers to decide whether we will stand up and rise to the challenge of this time of transition in our world to set standards that will ensure the well-being of "today's children and tomorrow's world". Here in Cowichan, the Cowichan Child Care Council will take this message to our local government representatives to ask that this information reaches the UBCM in an effort to help Provincial and Federal governments realize the dire need we are in.

"I often hear members of the BC Government saying that the solution to poverty is for people to get a job. The missing link for parents is often quality childcare. Parents cannot go to work unless their children have reliable, affordable, high quality care for their children. If this is not available how can we recommend that parents go to work? A universal childcare system is necessary in communities." Says Mary Dolan, member of the Cowichan Child Care Council.

