

AUGUST 2019 SECOND EMAIL TO BC GOVERNMENT Re: "Gender Equity"-based discrimination against women working at parental child care

SUBJECT: Re: Child care funding and gender equity

Helen

Cc: MCF Early Years MCF:EX,Throness,
Laurie,MCF.Minister,andrew.weaver.mla@leg.bc.ca,andrew.wilkinson.mla@leg.bc.ca and 2
more...

Bcc:

Aug 22 at 4:13 PM

Dear Teresa Butler, Director of Child Care Policy,

Thank you kindly for your reply (below).

A few questions and concerns come up.

Your response did not address any of the questions regarding the misogynistic discrimination against parents - especially against mothers - who prefer to prioritize the work of parental child care, and against their children, and in fact against all who do not prefer the government's preferentially funded form of child care, ie full time group child care from birth.

1 - Re: The assumption that women as mothers should be in full time paid jobs and their extremely diverse individual preferences and circumstances are not valid and should be disregarded. That mothers engage in waged work or more waged work when non-parental child care is heavily subsidized and parental child care is not does not indicate that mothers or parents prefer this.

Q1 - How does the government define 'gender equity'?

Q2 - How is this measured?

Q3 - What weight if any is given to mothers' preferences in this measure?

Q4 - What is done to empirically ascertain mothers' and parents' preferences regarding care care forms (including parental child care) and waged work?

2 - You wrote: "I appreciate your advocacy for parents who make the decision to stay at home with their children."

However, I do not advocate for such parents because they do not exist in reality. In fact I have never encountered a parent who decided to or in fact did "stay at home with their children".

Q5: What parents are you referring to?

- 3 - This terminology ('stay at home' often contrasted with 'working') violates the human rights of parents, women as mothers including single mothers, and children because it:
- is belittling
 - is patronizing and patriarchal
 - is inaccurate, false, misleading
 - is misogynistic in that it fails to recognize and respect the preferences/choices of many or most parents and mothers
 - fails to recognize let alone respect or treat equitably the socially essential work that is done mostly by women
 - fails to acknowledge that parental child care is work
 - is part of the dangerous, harmful, misogynistic narrative that claims that the work of parental child care when especially when done by mothers is not productive and does not contribute to the economy or the society
 - fails to recognize the diverse spectrum of child care and paid work arrangements which results in discriminatory treatment all parents who do not prefer full time group care from birth
 - perpetuates harmful negative stereotypes about parents, and mothers in particular who prioritize doing child care work for their own children
 - fosters a climate of contempt for parents and mothers in particular who prioritize doing this socially essential work for their own children
 - this climate of contempt legitimizes male contempt for, violence towards, and abuse of women who prioritize providing parental child care
 - harms human dignity of parents and especially mothers who prioritize doing child care work for their own children
 - perpetuates the historic dis-valuing of women, the work women do, and children
 - promotes low self-concept and self-contempt for mothers who prioritize doing parental child care work
 - etc.

Q7,8,9,10: Would you and the government of BC:

- cease using this terminology?
- apologize for using this terminology?
- publicly acknowledge that parental child care is work?
- publicly acknowledge the massive social and economic contribution and productivity of parents who prioritize doing parental child care work?
- apologize for all harm that has resulted from the dis-valuing of this work and the parents - especially the mothers - who do it?

All the best,

Helen Ward

On 2019-07-24 11:04 a.m., MCF Early Years MCF:EX wrote:

VIA E-MAIL

Ref: 244156

Helen Ward

Dear Helen Ward:

Thank you for your email of July 3, 2019, addressed to the Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development and the Honourable Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care, regarding support for parents who choose to stay at home to care for their children. As the Director of Child Care Policy, I am pleased to respond.

As you are likely aware, under the [Childcare BC plan](#), government is investing \$630 million over three years to improve the affordability of child care, along with multiple programs and initiatives to expand the sector and ensure a supply of well-qualified early childhood educators to provide early care and education. The expansion of child care under the Childcare BC plan is expected to benefit women in multiple ways. For example, evidence suggests that female labour force participation behaviour is affected by the price and availability of child care (as well as other family benefits). Statistics Canada analysis suggests the cost of child care, along with the limited availability of regulated spaces, may play a role in the high gender employment gap in Vancouver to the extent that it inhibits mothers' participation in the labour market as women typically serve as primary care providers for their children. As well, women are predominantly engaged in the early learning and child care sector and are the predominant employee group, and so expansion of the sector will provide more employment opportunities.

As part of government's investment, the new [Affordable Child Care Benefit](#) (ACCB) and [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#) (CCFRI) are already helping to bring down child care fees for many families. The ACCB is an income-tested benefit to help families with their child care costs, and families earning under \$111,000 annually are encouraged to apply. The ACCB supports families with children attending Licensed Child Care, Registered Licence-Not-Required Child Care, Licence-Not-Required Child Care, and In-Child's-Own-Home Care. For further information on the ACCB, please go to [our website](#).

To support the affordability of child care, government also provides benefits for all parents of young children. The BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit (BCECTB) is a tax-free monthly payment made to eligible families to help with the cost of raising young children under age 6. Benefits from this program are combined with the federal Canada Child Benefit (CCB) into a single monthly payment. The BCECTB provides a benefit of up to \$55 per month per child under age 6. Benefits are based on the number of children in the family and the family's net income. For more information on the BCECTB, please visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/family-benefits/bc-early-childhood-tax-benefit>.

In Budget 2019, government announced it intends to replace the BCECTB with a new, enhanced BC Child Opportunity Benefit (BCCOB) effective October 1, 2020. The BCCOB will provide a tax-free monthly payment to families that have children under the age of 18, regardless of their choices for child care. The BCCOB will be paid with the CCB as a single monthly payment. For families with a family net income under \$80,000, the maximum BCCOB amount is:

- \$1,600 for a family's first child,
- \$1,000 for a second child and
- \$800 for each subsequent child under the age of 18.

For more information on the BCCOB, please visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/family-benefits/child-opportunity-benefit>.

I appreciate your advocacy for parents who make the decision to stay at home with their children. Thank you again for writing.

Respectfully,

Teresa Butler

Director

Child Care Policy