



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Honourable Grace Lore
Minister of State for Childcare
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V1V 1X4

August 25, 2023

Dear Minister Lore,

In estimates earlier this year, I expressed many deep concerns regarding significant challenges faced by childcare providers due to the frustratingly slow processing of their annual funding applications and renewals. Additionally, these providers have been confronted with extended wait times on the phone when trying to connect with your Ministry's representatives.

In response, you stated that 30 FTEs were hired to deal with the slow processing times, and a new system had been implemented for providers to see their application status online.

However, numerous providers have reached out in recent weeks as they are still waiting for approvals despite having submitted all required documents by March.

As you also stated in estimates, provisions were made for temporary funding to assist providers who hadn't received approval by April 1st. This funding is now set to expire at the end of this month — five months after childcare providers submitted their applications — leaving them in a challenging position.

As a direct consequence, many childcare providers have been put in the unfortunate position of having to notify parents that the childcare subsidy will end on September 1st. Parents will now lose the long-promised NDP fee reductions and they will be responsible for full fees again. This is not the fault of childcare providers. This is the direct result of your Ministry's inability to manage its own complex bureaucratic system and provide childcare providers with funding.

The federal government has provided the province with the funds required to pass onto childcare providers to meet their commitment to reduce fees for parents. However, your NDP government is unable to get that money to childcare providers in a timely manner, resulting in significant financial hardship for providers who are forced to borrow money to cover their costs.

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Providers attempting to seek clarity from your Ministry are met with vague responses indicating that their applications are 'in process,' which does little to alleviate their immediate financial concerns. Messages left for supervisors have gone unanswered, adding to the frustration and uncertainty faced by childcare providers.

Minister Lore, I implore you to take immediate action on the pivotal question at hand: when can providers expect their approvals to be finalized? Furthermore, is there a plan to extend temporary funding until these approvals are processed?

The urgency of this matter cannot be overstated. Prompt and effective action is required to mitigate the dire consequences faced by childcare providers and the parents who rely on their services. I urge you to address this issue decisively and expeditiously.

Sincerely,

Karin Kirkpatrick
MLA, West Vancouver-Capilano
Shadow Minister for Childcare, Housing, Autism & Accessibility, Gender Equity & Inclusion

CC: Honourable Jenna Sudds, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development