
Where are children and youth represented in the Provincial Budget Consultation Report 2007?

The November 2006 report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services contained 36 recommendations for the development of the 2007 provincial budget. Of particular interest to children, youth and families are the following recommendations:

Education:

- Consider increasing the resources to expand both the programs and program supports available for students to achieve higher level of proficiency in English-as-a-second-language in order to be competitive in the workforce;
- Consider providing additional funding for graduate students, graduate student spaces, as well as the establishment of a competitive scholarship and financial aid program available for graduate students;
- Examine the funding formula to post-secondary institutions for trades and technology programs, with the intent to optimizing the availability of these programs. In addition, the government should continue to provide resources to permit the expansion of apprenticeship training programs within the education system, with a particular emphasis on providing additional opportunities for aboriginals;
- Increase funding to allow for the elimination of fees charged for Adult Basic Education;
- Ensure that tuition fees at B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions remain competitive vis-à-vis other Canadian jurisdictions;
- Immediately allocate necessary resources to eliminate the waitlists for assessments of children and youth with special needs. Furthermore, the government should provide funding for a comprehensive pre-screening program for all children; and,
- Consider reviewing B.C.'s income assistance policy to enable income assistance recipients to access further education opportunities.

Housing:

- Address British Columbians' needs for a diverse selection and an increase in the number of affordable rental housing accommodations; including an expedited review and development of a comprehensive housing strategy that may include, but is not limited to:

- Capital grants for new affordable housing and co-op housing, Rehabilitation of abandoned and substandard buildings;
- Support services for those in need; and,
- Assistance for community-based housing providers.

Child Care:

- Develop a province-wide strategy for affordable, accessible, and quality child care options and consider providing additional funds for child care.

Youth supports:

- Consider additional funding to Community Living BC for the developmentally disabled and their families, including support for youth as they transition into adulthood, and residential supports and services; and,
- Provide funding for a comprehensive mental health and addictions plan.

Women's Services:

- Consider providing a full range services for women such as: sexual assault crisis counseling, women's shelters, and public outreach programs that assist in providing women information on the variety of services available for women in need.