

September 4, 2010

MEETING – SEPTEMBER 13th

Dear Families,

We are the proud parents of a child with special needs. Her name is Kate. She is 3 years old and has Down syndrome. Our daughter is one of hundreds of children across the Lower Mainland on a waitlist with Supported Child Development Program (SCDP) for extra staffing support. This waitlist and the lack of services make us also very worried parents.

Are you in the same situation? Are you a worried parent of a child with special needs? Is your child on waitlist with SCDP? If so, **we strongly recommend you to attend this meeting on September 13th.**

The SCDP provides consultation and staffing support so children with special needs can be included in childcare settings from daycare to preschool and out-of-school care. Currently, this program is not meeting the needs of far too many children and their families, due to insufficient funding from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

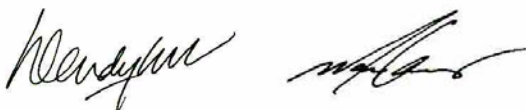
Over the past six years, the number of children requiring support from the Burnaby SCDP has increased by over 100% (from 123 children in 2004, to 275 in March 2009!). Consultants now have an average caseload of 49 children each while the provincial standard for caseloads is 25-35 children. It is our understanding that other regions are facing the same challenges. The increasing strain on the SCDP coupled with a significant budget shortfall is causing waitlists to grow. Consequently, many children – **including yours** – will remain on a waitlist for services. In our daughter's case, she is number 62 on a waitlist for extra staffing support at her daycare. Specific to daycares, there has been little movement on the waitlist for staffing support over the past 2 years. These numbers leave us with little hope for change or service at a time when it will most benefit Kate.

If we want our children to be a part of the community when they grow up, this is where we need to start. Our children deserve to have the opportunity to develop to their highest potential amongst their peers in the community. The SCDP ensures a safe and inclusive environment but they need the funding to be able to do this, therefore, we need to let our voices be heard and bring these issues to the forefront.

Families need to come together on this issue. We encourage you in this time of urgency to stand up and be counted. Please join us on Monday September 13, 2010 to find ways to let the provincial government know how very important it is that they work to increase the funding to the SCDP and the impact it has on families like ours who are sitting at home waiting for support.

Our kids can't wait anymore!!

Sincerely...two proud but worried parents,



Wendy Seet and Marc Adams