



January 15, 2024

Honourable Mitzi Dean
Minister of State for Child Care
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Dean:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Minister of State for Child Care. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.

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- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

Building the first new social program for British Columbia in generations is a significant piece of work, and one that is still very much underway. Reducing costs and increasing access for parents to child care is vital, and a key part of our economic strategy as a province. As Minister of State for Child Care, you will be the front-line contact for workers, service-delivery organizations, Indigenous organizations, parents, school boards, and other key stakeholders to ensure that our programs meet the needs of British Columbians and we are responsive to their suggestions as we work together.

Your support for the Minister through active involvement with community will help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our work as we focus on making life better for all parents and families in our province through efficient, safe, and educational child care opportunities across the province.

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Making child care more affordable, accessible, inclusive, and higher quality for families. Cuts to licensed child care fees have reduced average costs from \$53 to \$21 a day for parents of kids kindergarten aged and younger. Today, more than 20,000 families are paying \$10 a day or less for child care, with more savings on the way.
- Increasing the number and availability of child care spaces, with over 10,500 new spaces open and over 20,000 new spaces on the way. We know that early childhood educators are critical to providing the child care services families need, which is why we doubled our ECE wage enhancements to \$4 per hour.

- Supporting the delivery of safe, quality child care through the COVID-19 pandemic and beginning the work to integrate child care into the K-12 learning environment.

As you continue to make progress on items in the previous mandate letter, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Continue to implement ChildCareBC, our government's ten-year plan to provide universal, affordable, accessible, quality, and inclusive child care to every family that wants or needs it, with the goal of no family paying more than \$10 a day for licensed childcare when fully implemented in partnership with the federal government. As a next step, expand our child care fee reductions to all licensed before and after school care spaces, so more parents see savings in their monthly budgets.
- With support from the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education and Child Care, finalize development of a capital plan for child care to keep increasing the number of child care spaces, and leverage opportunities to build spaces on public land, including at hospitals, medical centres, government offices, and post-secondary institutions.
- With support from the Minister of Education and Child Care, continue to work with school boards to use existing elementary school facilities toward universal access to before and after school, and continue to build spaces on school grounds.
- With support from the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, take concrete steps to improve wages and supports in early learning and child care, and establish a timeline to implement a wage grid for all early childhood educators in partnership with the child care sector, to ensure that early childhood educators are a well-supported profession, just like other professionals who work in B.C.'s education system.
- In partnership with Indigenous Peoples and the federal government, support a distinctions-based approach to increasing Indigenous-led child care for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples who want and need it.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual Cabinet and Treasury Board oversight and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

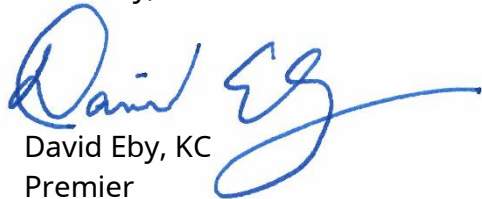
British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the Members' Conflict of Interest Act. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,



David Eby, KC
Premier