

Child Poverty

All of us take child poverty very seriously indeed

- The reports and studies citing BC as having a marked incidence of child poverty are notably out of date by at least 2 ½ years.

- This province's economy has soared in the last few years. *in 30 years.* Unemployment stands at ~~5.1%~~ ^{4.8%} - ~~one of the lowest levels since 1976~~

- Since December 2001 BC has created about 275,000 jobs – leading Canada and almost 95% of these jobs are fulltime.

- Getting parents off income assistance and in the workforce are the best chance children have to thrive and take their place in society

- This government is investing more than \$70 million a year on job training programs to help employable people, on income assistance, find and keep employment

- Being on income assistance, generation to generation, stigmatizes children:

- In the 90s, an astounding 135,000 children were in families on assistance – more than 10% of the child population or 1 in 7 children

- In early 2001 – there were 85,000 children or about 6% of the child population

- In December 2005 – there were 35,000 children, down to 3% of the child population or only 1 in 30 - that's tremendous progress.

- In December 2005 the number of people dependent on income assistance – adults and the kids who depend on them was the lowest it has been since the 80's

- Unemployment for women *is also at the lowest level in 30 years* ~~now stands at 5.3%~~ the lowest monthly figure in over a decade. Mothers are now more able than ever before to help provide for their children.

- The annual report, put out by the Canadian Association of Food Banks states that, according to data collected in 2005, food bank usage in BC was down by 10.5%.

Child Poverty – support for low-income families:

- BC has the best healthcare system in Canada – this is excellent for children!
- Children in low-income families receive free basic dental & optical services
- No MSP charges for a family of four with net income of less than \$29,000 – an increase of \$4,000 in this threshold
- We significantly increased the income threshold for receiving full child care subsidy, from \$21,000 to \$38,000. That means about 10,000 more children are eligible for subsidized child care and about 6,000 families will receive an increase in their existing subsidy.
- Reduced or eliminated provincial income taxes for about 730,000 British Columbians – providing substantial relief for low-income families