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BC child care advocates say consultation survey is shaped by what government wants to hear.

VANCOUVER, BC — The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC is raising serious concerns about the design of the provincial government's recent child care survey, arguing that many of its questions are structured in ways that prevent British Columbians from expressing support for a quality \$10aDay universal child care system.

Many questions ask people to make trade-offs between key policies that research confirms are all required to build effective child care systems. “Parents should not be asked to choose between desperately needed new spaces, affordable fees, or investing in the educators who care for children while parents work,” said Sharon Gregson, Coalition spokesperson.

Overall, the Coalition's review found that the survey revisits questions for which government already has substantial evidence and research, which informed their commitment to supporting family affordability and growing the economy through child care, starting in 2018. The survey:

- Offers too few or overly vague response options to support informed answers;
- Creates false choices, including between universal affordable fees and additional support for lower-income families, when both are necessary;
- Avoids fundamental questions about whether child care should be funded collectively through the progressive tax system rather than through higher parent fees;
- Conflates distinct issues such as capital and operating funding, workforce qualifications and experience, and auspice with physical location;
- Asks respondents to rank priorities that should be strengthened simultaneously.

Advocates say these problems reflect broader concerns about the current direction of child care policy in British Columbia. Despite extensive evidence showing that investments in affordable child care generate significant economic returns through increased labour force participation, tax revenues, and economic growth, child care is now treated primarily as a government expense rather than as essential economic infrastructure.

While other sectors are routinely recognized as economic priorities, child care, which particularly impacts women, remains vulnerable to underinvestment.

The Coalition is calling on government to act on evidence already available - families, educators, and the economy need universal low capped fees, planned expansion, and fair educator wages.

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