

## National guidelines for day care services in Canada

"If we want day care it's going to cost us money and we may as well not duck that and in so doing short-change the kids," declared Reuben C. Baetz, executive director of the Canadian Council on Social Development recently. Mr. Baetz was commenting on national guidelines for day-care services in Canada which were recently published by the Council under the title *Day Care: growing, learning, caring*.

"When parents have to rely on strangers to help care for their children, as in many day-care situations," stated Mr. Baetz, "adequate safeguards and realistic standards are needed. But while more and more people are recognizing the growing need for good day-care services for parents who need to use them, it's not at all certain that Canadians are prepared to pay the cost of providing them," he said.

The guidelines deal with the physical well-being of children (health, fire and building safety; staff, space, equipment); the social, emotional and intellectual development of children (personnel, program development, physical environment) and legislation for and administration of day-care services.

The Council's guidelines, which state that *choice* is the key to comprehensive day-care planning, welcome the expansion of day-care services because this increases the range of options available to parents.

"If the guidelines are incorporated into provincial and regional standards on day care, they would guarantee children in day care in Canada a basic, minimum level of service that could then expand differently from region to region according to local resources, priorities and community need," Mr. Baetz said.

He stressed that an effort was made to suggest that guidelines be general and flexible enough to be applicable across Canada but specific enough to be meaningful and realistic enough to be practical.

"The fact that the guidelines resulted from the work of a committee with representatives from various parts of Canada and from a series of regional meetings between project workers and



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*"Adequate safeguards and realistic standards" needed in day-care services, says Reuben C. Baetz, executive director of the Canadian Council on Social Development.*

a sampling of people involved in day care for children reflects our conviction that such guidelines can't be developed in an ivory tower."

The statement says that it is "vital" for parents and staff to work together if a day-care facility is to provide an adequate service. The two specific responsibilities of government are: to protect the child from persons who would abuse him for mercenary purposes or subject him to living conditions not generally tolerable or considered adequate by adults; and to provide parents with child-care services as needed.

### Day-care guidelines

The national guidelines for the development of day-care services include: written health policies and procedures in all day-care services; the participation by children with special physical, mental, or emotional health needs in regular day-care services (severely handicapped children should, however, have their own day-care services, unless appropriate facilities and staff are available in regular ones); enough

staff at centres to ensure the children's well-being and development of specific procedures for determining the competence of potential personnel; written personnel policies; volunteers should have broad guidelines for their effective integration into the day-care service.

The committee says that if day care is to expand as a universally available social service in Canada, it will have to rely less on semi-volunteer labour and more on adequately paid staff.

The cultural and ethnic background of the children in a day-care service should be reflected by a similar proportion of staff of the same cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Programs should supplement and support the child's home activities and foster consultation with and support from parents.

Day-care centres and family day-care services should be licensed by the province to operate for a specific, renewable period of time; the provincial licensing unit should be advised by a citizens' board.

Specific, community-based support services should be developed to strengthen existing private neighbourhood day-care arrangements.

## Scientists keep track of glacier

The Department of Environment is keeping a close watch on Tweedsmuir Glacier which is expected to move forward next winter, blocking the Alsek River in British Columbia and creating a new lake in the region.

Environment Minister Jack Davis said recently that scientists of the Department's Inland Waters Directorate were studying the 44-mile long glacier and that plans had been made to log its movement and the resulting back-up of water this winter.

"An aerial photography study has been carried out and our people are making an on-the-spot examination of the glacier and the river flow-rate to determine what we can expect next winter," said Mr. Davis. "The evidence suggests that the Alaska Panhandle, rather than British Columbia or the Yukon, will be most directly affected, but we intend to keep a close eye on the situation."

According to present estimates, the eight-mile wide "snout" of the glacier,