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## **Furstenau releases B.C. Greens plan to support young families**

VANCOUVER B.C. – B.C. Green Leader Sonia Furstenau released her party’s plan to support young families. The plan includes universal early childhood education, support for stay-at-home parents with young children and policies to support flexible work arrangements.

“B.C. should be the best place in the world to raise a family, but parents with young children are facing tremendous pressure,” said Furstenau.

“The generation raising young children today juggles long working hours and multiple demands on their time, as their household incomes stagnate, and housing costs skyrocket. We need to move beyond the 20th century model for working lives approach and develop supports that recognise the needs of families today.

“Our economy has been structured to encourage more work, more spending, and more economic growth -- but the benefits of economic growth haven’t been shared by most. Instead, the wealth has been concentrated at the top, while more people feel like they’re working harder and harder but still falling behind. Ultimately, we need to make sure our economy benefits people. Our plan to support families is about giving people real options.”

The B.C. Greens plan includes:

### **1. Support for stay-at-home parents**

- Up to \$500 per month for families with children under 3 and a stay at home parent

### **2. Early childhood education and care**

Create a comprehensive program for early childhood education and care. We would increase funding for child care programs from \$674 million in 2020/21 to \$897 million in 2024/25.

Funding would cover the phase-in of the various elements of this plan for a comprehensive program that would include:

- Professional development opportunities to increase qualifications of existing child care workers, and the training of more early childhood educators in certified programs;
- The expansion of available physical spaces, prioritizing partnerships with public schools, community non-profits, and First Nations;
- Establish professional wages for early childhood educators;

- Up to 25 hours' free ECE per week for 3 and 4 year olds;
- Free childcare for working parents with children under 3;
- Maintaining child care subsidies and supports as needed to ensure adequate financial support for all families.
- Moving the Ministry of State for Childcare into the Ministry of Education.

### **3. Supporting flexible work arrangements**

We would take the first steps towards policies that ensure that families have a viable choice between going back to full-time work, staying at home or balancing both, including:

- In consultation with business, labour and other stakeholders, explore options for reduced work weeks and or flexible work hours. For example, encouraging employers to adopt a 4-day work week, or reduced hours for a standard work week while maintaining full-time status to maintain benefits, or modified work week arrangements.
- Supporting telecommuting to save commuting time
  - Helping employers to continue to support telecommuting where feasible.
  - Enhancing investments to deliver high-speed internet access across BC

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