

March 2, 2010

BACKGROUND

NEW SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES, AND YOUTH

Budget 2010 provides an additional \$108 million over three years to reflect government's commitment to support families through investments in full-day kindergarten, services for families with children, youth sports development and excellence, and community level arts activities.

In addition to \$60 million for the 2010 Sports and Arts Legacy, the Province is fully funding the implementation of voluntary, full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds. Funding is also provided to support programs that assist low- and moderate-income families with the cost of child care.

Budget 2010 also provides measures to support families with children who struggle in difficult economic times, including the new property tax deferral program for families with children under 18, and continues to provide \$160 million in 2012/13 in support of those in need of income assistance during the economic downturn.

Full-Day Kindergarten

Budget 2010 reaffirms government's commitment to introduce voluntary, full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds beginning September 2010. Full-day kindergarten programs will help ensure that every child in B.C. has the best possible start in school and in life. Funding has been set at \$44 million in 2010/11, \$107 million in 2011/12, and \$129 million in 2012/13, of which \$22 million in 2012/13 is new funding.

Full-day kindergarten will be available for more than half of B.C.'s eligible students this September. By September 2011, full-day kindergarten will be available for every five-year-old in the province.

Additional Child Care Support for Families

Budget 2010 also provides an additional \$26 million in funding over three years to support child care programs that assist low- and moderate-income families with the cost of child care. This includes direct assistance to families for child care.

Additionally, the new Extended Family Program will improve upon the Child in the Home of a Relative Program, ensuring adequate assistance and safeguards for vulnerable children are in place.

Property Tax Deferral Program for Families with Children

Budget 2010 includes provision for a new property tax deferral program for families with children under 18 for the 2010 tax year. Beginning July 1, 2010, homeowners who are financially responsible for a child under the age of 18 and have at least 15 per cent equity in their homes will be able to defer property taxes on their principal residence.

As with the property tax deferral program for seniors and the financial hardship property tax deferment program, eligible homeowners will be able to defer all or part of the unpaid portion of their property taxes. Deferred taxes must be paid if the home is sold, ownership is transferred or it becomes part of an estate.

Interest on deferred taxes will be charged at the prime lending rate of interest. The rate will be set twice annually. To be eligible for the program, homeowners with financial responsibility for a child under 18 must also meet the basic eligibility requirements of the current property tax deferral programs. They must:

- Be the registered owner of the home.
- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident under the *Immigration Act* (Canada).
- Have lived in B.C. for at least one year prior to applying.
- Apply on the home in which they currently live.
- Have a current fire insurance policy on their home.

This expansion of existing property tax deferral programs enables the B.C. government to assist families with children, especially during years when household costs are highest.

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For the Finance Minister's speech and more details on *Budget 2010*, visit www.bcbudget.ca.

Visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca for online information and services.

Media Contact: Finance Communications
250 356-9872