

BULLETIN

Professionals at Central Okanagan Child Development Centre on strike Wednesday

January 21, 2013

Therapists, counsellors, and other workers at Central Okanagan Child Development Centre will be off the job Wednesday, as part of rotating job action in the community social services sector. The workers are represented by the Health Sciences Association.

HSA President Reid Johnson said professionals providing these crucial services deserve a fair deal. "Our members at COCDA work with infants, children, and families to provide support, therapy, and counselling," he said.

"They provide crucially important care. Physiotherapists, supported child development consultants, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, autism interventionists: these are all highly-trained professionals who are passionate about the care they provide to children and families," he said.

"If your child has a speech delay and needs assessment and speech language therapy, your family comes to see us. If your infant is medically fragile and needs specialized care, you come to see us. The care and therapy our members provide can make the difference -- so that your child can live a full and engaged life," he said.

Since 2004, the BC Liberal government has cut \$300 million in funding for programs that support vulnerable families, people with developmental disabilities, at-risk youth, children and infants in community-based programs, and many other vulnerable citizens.

"BC's government has consistently undervalued the skilled workers who provide these services, and these professionals are among the lowest paid in the public sector. That's just not fair," Johnson said.

"I've worked in this sector as a social worker. I'm amazed at what these workers are able to do for families, often under extreme program budget constraints. This sector has already been cut to the bone," he said. "There are no so-called 'savings to be found' here under the government's unrealistic 'cooperative gains' mandate."

Essential services will be maintained during job action. This job action is a continuation of rotating strikes in the community social services sector across BC. More than 20 agencies on Vancouver Island were on strike the week of December 10, generating significant media coverage, including on radio, television and in print. Rotating strikes began on October 16.

The Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) represents 15,000 community social service workers across BC. The BCGEU is the largest union in the community social services sector, representing about two-thirds of workers. HSA, CUPE, and HEU are members of the association, as are UFCW, CSWU, USW, SEIU and CLAC.

An interactive timeline of the community social services job action to date is now available online [here](#)

You can print the community social services strike leaflet [here](#)

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HSA President Reid Johnson and professionals on strike at Central Okanagan Child Development Centre are available to speak with media.

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