



# **BC GOVERNMENT CAUCUS**

NEWS RELEASE

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## **Families Deserve Tax Break on Sports, Recreation and Arts says Christy Clark**

**Victoria** – The provincial government should give tax credits to families for the cost of enrolling their children in extra-curricular activities, such as sports, recreation and the arts says Christy Clark.

The Port Moody-Westwood MLA threw her support behind the concept today announcing that she plans to introduce a Private Members Motion in the Legislature this spring.

“As a society, we have a lot to gain by ensuring children are active in sports, recreation and the arts as early as possible. Tax relief for families who often pay significant amounts on their children’s extra-curricular activities makes sense. It makes participation in sports and the arts more affordable,” says Clark.

“Our government has taken important steps towards making BC schools healthy and active and a tax credit would build on that work. As we prepare to meet the Premier’s goal of making BC 20% more active by 2010, it’s a positive message that is backed by action.”

In Canada, 35 percent of boys and 29 percent of girls are now overweight. Illnesses associated with obesity include heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. As a result, this generation of children may be the first in human history that will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Further, the American Medical Association has published a 2002 study showing children who are obese rate their quality of life as low as children who are undergoing treatment for cancer.

Bobbe Wood, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. & Yukon, added her support for the initiative. “Physical inactivity is a significant risk factor in heart disease and stroke. We must get our children more active in order to prevent the early onset of these devastating conditions. This initiative will help that happen,” says Wood.

While sports and recreation keep children physically healthy, engaging in the arts keeps their minds in good shape, says Clark. “There is ample evidence that children’s involvement in the arts improves problem solving, reading, writing and math skills,” she says.

The executive director of Arts Umbrella, Canada’s Arts Institute for Young People, agrees. “By providing children and youth with access to high-quality arts education, we are helping them develop their creativity and appreciation for the arts; they are the citizens of the future,” says Lucille Pacey. “A tax credit will lower costs for parents and make it easier for more families to get involved.”

One parent who has long advocated for this change is Sharon Mack of Port Moody. “I have one child. My costs for enrolling Shanel in extra-curricular sports and arts will be \$1,800 this year. A tax credit is one way that the government can encourage and recognize the financial commitment BC families like mine make to help keep their children fit and active.”

Municipal Councils across BC are being lobbied by local groups to pass supporting resolutions.

Clark has also started an on-line petition to allow British Columbians to register their support for the idea. The petition can be accessed at [www.christyclark.net](http://www.christyclark.net).

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