

Provincial & Regional Partners:

Adoptive Families Association of BC
Affiliation of Multicultural Societies & Service Agencies
Alternate Shelter Society
Association for Community Education BC
ACT – Autism Community Training Society
BC Aboriginal Childcare Society
BC Assoc. for Child Development & Rehabilitation
BC Association for Community Living
BC Association for Play Therapy
BC Association of Child Care Employers
BC Association of Family Resource Programs
BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs
BC Association of Social Workers
BC Council for Families
BC Crime Prevention Association
BC Early Years Alliance
BC Farm Women's Network
BC Federation of Foster Parents Association
BC Government & Service Employees' Union
BC Institute Against Family Violence
BC Pediatric Society
BC Recreation and Parks Association
BC School Trustees Association
BC Teachers' Federation
BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses
Boys & Girls Clubs of BC
Canadian Association for Young Children
Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division
Canadian Red Cross • Capilano Student Union
Cerebral Palsy Association of BC
Child & Family Counseling Association
Child & Youth Care Association of BC
Child Care Advocacy Forum
Children's & Women's Health Centre of BC
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC
Council of Parent Participation Preschools BC
Deaf Children's Society of BC
Dietitians of Canada, BC Region
Early Childhood Educators of BC
East Kootenay Childhood Coalition
Family Services of Greater Vancouver
Federated Anti-Poverty Groups
Federation of BC Youth In Care Networks
Federation of Child & Family Services of BC
Fulcrum Project
Infant Development Program of BC
International Dyslexia Association, BC Branch
Justice Institute of BC
Labour Environmental Alliance Society
Learning Disabilities Association of BC
Literacy BC • McCreary Centre Society
MOSAIC • Nisika Community Services
National Council of Jewish Women
Pacific Association of First Nations Women
Pacific Community Resources Society
Pacific Legal Education Association /PARCA
Parent Support Services Society of BC
Penticton & District Community Resources Society
Public Health Association of BC
Self Help Resource Association of BC
Social Planning & Research Council BC
Society for Children & Youth of BC
Society for Public Education of BC
Society of Special Needs Adoptive Parents
Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
United Way of the Lower Mainland
Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
Westcoast Family Resources Society
Western Canada Family Child Care Association
Working Group on Poverty
YWCA of Greater Vancouver

Community Coalition Partners: 100 Mile House, Abbotsford, Armstrong, Burnaby, Chilliwack, Delta, Duncan, Fraser North, Golden, Grand Forks, Houston, Kamloops, Kelowna, Langley, Maple Ridge/ Pitt Meadows, Port Alberni, Prince George, Salmon Arm, Smithers, Squamish, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver, Vancouver Aboriginal Council, Vernon, Victoria, Williams Lake

July 6, 2007

Dr Kellie Leitch
Advisor on Healthy Children and Youth
Health Canada
Postal Locator 0911D, Room 1161D
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Dear Dr. Leitch,

It was a pleasure to meet with you in Vancouver on April 4, 2007. At that meeting First Call stressed the importance of federal government support in addressing the social determinants of health such as income inequality and healthy caring communities. We are writing to express First Call's support for the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) and the Canadian Pre-Natal Nutrition Program (CPNP).

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition is a province-wide coalition of 78 organizations and hundreds of individuals committed to improving the lives of children and youth through public policy advocacy, mobilizing community support for children, youth and families and raising public awareness about the developmental needs and social environments for children and youth.

For the past eleven years, CAPC and CPNP have represented the foundation of the Population Health approach for Canadian children aged 0 – 6 years of age. CAPC/CPNP programs have had demonstrated long-term success in supporting at-risk children and families, including expectant mothers, and have proved effective in promoting health education and improving outcomes for these groups. In many communities, particularly isolated and rural communities, these are the only programs that exist for the promotion of early childhood health.

CAPC funded programs have provided a stable foundation for building healthy families and the stable CAPC funding has enabled community agencies to leverage other sources of funding to enhance their programs. Nationwide, 59% of CAPC projects receive money from other sources and the national total for in-kind donations made to CAPC projects is over 5 million dollars. The impact of funding lost to either CAPC or CPNP programs would not only mean the loss of federally funded programs for children and families but also the loss of the significant funds leveraged through funding partnerships with CAPC and CPNP.

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CAPC and CPNP programs also address the broader determinants of health and through CAPC programs parents can begin to gain confidence in their own strengths, volunteer in their communities, join a parent committee or become active in seeking change in their own communities. In addition, CAPC and CPNP programs participate in diverse health initiatives such as the need to encourage vulnerable families to focus on healthy lifestyles and eating, which will help to decrease obesity and chronic health disease.

In BC, 22 CAPC coalitions administer 187 programs, which provide services to 267 communities. Most BC projects (62%) serve more than six communities. In BC alone, over 3,500 children attend CAPC programs in their community each month. The 900 CPNP programs across the country reach 60% of prenatal women living in poverty and 40% of teens having live births. The far-reaching preventative impacts of these programs are *essential* to helping vulnerable families become healthy Canadians.

We understand that you are conducting a review of CAPC/CPNP across the country and this has caused a great deal of discussion, concern and anxiety amongst the families who receive these services and the not-for-profit organizations that support them.

We urge you to lend your support to CAPC/CPNP and continue to build on eleven years of unparalleled support of the health of vulnerable children, families and expectant mothers across Canada by protecting these programs. In addition, program participants and community agencies want to urgently request that the solid foundation of CAPC and CPNP programs are maintained under the federal government's jurisdiction to ensure continuity of programs and services.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Sheila Davidson
Chair, First Call ECD Round Table

cc: Sylvie Bérubé, Regional Director, BC/Yukon Region, PHAC
Dr David Butler-Jones
Hon. Tony Clement
Right Hon. Stephen Harper