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October 25, 2011

The Honourable Mary McNeil  
Minister of Children and Family Development  
PO Box 9057 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister McNeil,

I am writing to thank you for meeting with the delegation from First Call in September. We found the meeting to be productive in getting issues of concern on the table and we greatly appreciated your openness to listening and your interest in making things better for the children, youth and families served by your ministry. We hope you also found the meeting and the briefing note we left with you to be informative and useful.

Of necessity, the meeting was short, and we know we covered a lot of ground very quickly. We hope our general themes of increasing permanency for children and youth in care, the need to address the crisis in child care, and preventing vulnerability through responsive and early supports, including the reduction of child poverty, resonated with you. We are grateful for your willingness to explore where we can make progress.

As noted in our briefing document, First Call is happy to use the breadth and depth of our coalition to assist your ministry with consultation on specific issues, and for the ministry to communicate with community-based child and youth advocates across the child-serving sectors.

We encourage your ministry to take bold steps toward improving services, supports and outcomes for BC's children, youth and families. None of the themes that we've identified in the briefing note will be resolved without a strong commitment and additional resources. We are looking for Government to make the decision that issues such as quality early care and learning, poverty reduction, and increased permanency for youth in care are priorities for public investment. It is well established that increased early investments in services and supports for children and families will reduce government expenditures at the more expensive, remedial or crisis end of the spectrum in health, education, and the justice system. The evidence also points to prevention providing the highest return on investment.

We look forward to working with you and providing whatever support we can to assist in making things better for BC's children, youth and families.

Sincerely,

[original signed by]

Adrienne Montani  
Provincial Coordinator

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