



202 – 1193 Kingsway, Vancouver V5V 3C9  
Phone: (604) 873-8437/1-800-307-1212  
Fax: (604) 874-9898  
info@firstcallbc.org  
www.firstcallbc.org

## **First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition Minutes of September 14, 2011 Big Brothers' Office, 1193 Kingsway**

### **In attendance:**

James Chamberlain – BC Teachers' Federation  
Andrina Perry – First Call  
Ian Boyko – Canadian Federation of Students  
Shari Laliberte – Vancouver Community College  
Nursing  
Roxanne Hughes – Pacific Community Resources  
Society  
Deanna Ogle – West Coast LEAF  
Sue Irwin – CCRR Programs, Vancouver Coastal  
Sophia Barton-Bucknor – Adoptive Families  
Association  
Gaye Ferguson – CAPC and Nobody's Perfect, Vanc  
Jessie Deacon – Roots of Empathy  
Jeremy Vis – BC Association for Community Living  
Adrienne Montani – First Call  
Steve Kerstetter – First Call  
Chris Buchner – Federation of BC Youth in Care  
Networks  
Karen Moss – RespectED Canadian Red Cross  
Emily Mliczko – Early Childhood Educators of BC  
Samantha Hartley-Folz – BC Healthy Living Alliance  
Michelle Haddon – MCFD  
Agata Feetham – Gordon Neighbourhood House

Mandy Wold – BC Self Advocacy Foundation  
Megan Yarema – Canada Without Poverty  
Michael McCarthy Flynn – First Call  
Paul Tranter – University of New South Wales  
Scott Guffey – Representative for Children and Youth  
Bella Cenezaro – Parent Support Services  
Dawn Johnson – MCFD  
Vanessa Kay – City of Vancouver Social Policy  
Bill Preston – BC School Trustees Association  
Alexandra Watkins  
Susan Forest – Justice Institute of BC  
Christina Thiele – Society for Children & Youth of BC  
Mieke Koehoorn – UBC, Pop and Public Health  
Melissa McDowell – AMSSA  
Carol Ross – Parent Support Services  
Nathan Parnell – AYIP MCFD  
Laura Track – West Coast LEAF  
Darlene Rigo – Helping Spirit Lodge Society  
JoAnn Lauber – BC Retired Teachers' Association  
Jules Wilson – MCFD  
Nicole Skuce – Dixon Transition Society

### **Regrets:**

Mab Oloman – Coalition of Child Care Advocates

## **1. Introductions**

Chair Julie Norton opened the meeting, and there was a round of introductions.

## **2. Meeting with Minister McNeil, MCFD**

First Call has a meeting scheduled with the new Minister later this month. Meeting participants discussed priorities for discussion at this meeting, including:

- The integrated child care plan from ECEBC and CCCABC
- Child poverty and MCFD's child protection mandate
- Improved support for youth with mental health issues
- Access to enhanced kith and kin supports
- The challenge of frequent changes in ministry staff
- Reappointment of the Representative for Children and Youth
- Appreciation for how the ministry is working with the Representative
- IQ restrictions being applied to younger children with special needs
- Making mental health screenings available in multiple languages
- Training support for child protection workers
- Gap between sexual abuse assessments by MCFD and court decisions
- Waitlists for accessing agreements with young adults
- The trafficking of Aboriginal girls off of reserves
- Child poverty statistics are unacceptable, even when they go down from previous higher rates

- Effectiveness of MCFD and other public partners' participation in local inter-agency teams
- What are the Ministry's plans to improve the child care landscape?

### **3. Child Labour Standards Improvement**

Mieke Koehoorn is from the School of Population and Public Health at UBC. She presented her research on young workers, whom she noted are difficult to study given that young workers are difficult to find as a group, and young people's definitions of work can be challenging.

Workers under the age of 15 are not captured in provincial or federal labour statistics. The rate of reported injuries among young workers is almost ten times the rate of compensated injury claims. 12-14 year olds suffer more injuries than 15-19 year olds. Her research found that workers compensation claims for young workers result in ongoing increased doctor's visits over a number of years, often as a result of musculoskeletal injuries.

1049 injury claims were filed by 12-14 year olds between 1990 and 2008. 7-10% of all injury claims in 2006-08 were young workers, compared to only 2-3% in 1996 to 2005. Many claims by young workers are not properly coded and important statistical information has been left out.

First Call has just received funding from the Law Foundation for a 16 month project focused on advocacy research to improve employment standards for children in BC.

### **4. First Call Reports and Updates**

First Call hosted a meeting over the summer with NDP MP Jean Crowder, who is the opposition critic on children's issues. The [briefing note on federal children's issues](#) prepared for this meeting is available on the First Call website. First Call is working with the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children to explore the possibility of briefings with other federal parties.

First Call is doing a presentation to the provincial budget committee tomorrow and will circulate and post our submission.

This year's child poverty report card will be released on November 23, and we are working with AMSSA to highlight issues of poverty affecting newcomer children and youth.

The Living Wage for Families Campaign continues to focus on gaining support for a living wage in the municipal elections. An open letter to candidates is available to support on the website at [www.livingwageforfamilies.ca](http://www.livingwageforfamilies.ca). The campaign will be publishing candidate responses to the letter. A policy tool is now also available on the website to show the impact public policy changes would have on the living wage. A campaign is starting at SFU with a survey of low wage workers on campus. Vancity and United Way of the Lower Mainland are the newest certified living wage employers.

First Call held our bi-annual forum on youth issues on June 17 with over 100 people in attendance. The focus was on youth activism and building advocacy skills.

The ECD Roundtable met on July 20 and have committed to writing a letter of concern about the growth of commercial child care in BC.

First Call's annual dinner is coming up on October 4.

## **5. Strategic Plan**

First Call's new strategic plan includes changes to the wording of the Coalition's vision and mission:

**VISION:** BC's children and youth have the rights, opportunities and resources required to achieve their full potential.

**MISSION:** Mobilizing British Columbians in support of strong public policies and the allocation of resources for the benefit of children and youth through a multi-sectoral, non-partisan coalition made up of provincial and regional organizations and engaged communities.

The 4 Keys to Success for Children and Youth continue to guide and frame the Coalition's advocacy work. Long term strategic goals outlined in the plan are:

- First Call is a respected resource on effective public policies needed for children and youth to achieve their full potential.
- First Call effectively influences and engages with decision makers within BC to improve public policy affecting children, youth and families.
- First Call has the organizational resources to support its mission.
- First Call facilitates the involvement of children and youth in decision-making processes.
- First Call mobilizes broad public support in BC for effective monitoring and implementation of child and youth rights and improvements in their well-being.
- First Call is a strong coalition builder in British Columbia.

The plan identifies the Coalition's top two priorities as:

1. Effective Advocacy for Children and Youth
  - Strong Coalition
  - Effective Communications
2. Organizational Sustainability
  - Finance and Fundraising
  - Staffing Sustainability
  - Volunteer Engagement

The plan will be posted to the First Call website shortly. Coast Capital Savings provided support for the work on the plan.

## **6. Partner Updates**

Parent Support Services has succeeded in obtaining MCFD funding for a telephone helpline for grandparents raising grandchildren.

The BC Teacher's Federation had a number of trainings over the summer on living wages, and upcoming trainings will focus on targeting trustee candidates about living wages for contracted out services.

MCFD's integrated case management is going live on April 1, 2012.

The Public Health Association of BC will hold a conference on health inequities on November 28 and 29.

BC Council for Families is holding a conference on young families October 21.

HELP is hosting a research exposition day on October 26.

The FASD Collaboration Roundtable conference is November 4-5.

BC Association for Community Living is hosting an event with Peter Block for Community Living Month on October 6.

The Red Cross is looking for youth to participate in a film they're producing on children targeted by bullying.

**7. Time and Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October 12, 2011.

Refreshments served at 9:00, meeting from 9:15 – 11:30 am. BC Teachers' Federation, 550 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. in Vancouver. Telephone participation welcome.