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**First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition  
Minutes of September 9, 2009  
BC Teachers' Federation Building**

**In attendance:**

Andy Wachtel – Consultant  
Ruth Annis – Consultant  
Steven Klein – Office of Mable Elmore, MLA  
Mabel Elmore – MLA Vancouver-Kensington  
Denise Wong – Hollyburn Family Services  
Colleen Bob – RespectED, Red Cross  
Adrienne Montani – First Call  
Andrina Perry – First Call  
Lesley Richardson – First Call  
Karen Lai – SPARC BC  
Darryl Quantz – Vancouver Coastal Health  
James Chamberlain – BC Teachers' Federation  
Colleen Wickenheiser – Public Health Agency of Canada  
Heather Armour – Public Health Agency of Canada  
Rachel Douglas – Public Health Agency of Canada  
Kristina Dixon – Canadian Mental Health Association  
Jean Moore – Canadian Mental Health Association  
Jason Chan – SUCCESS

Jocelyn Helland – Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks  
Lynell Anderson – Human Early Learning Partnership  
Mary Burgaretta – BC Aboriginal Child Care Society  
Nicole Mate – BC Children's Hospital Aboriginal Health  
Treanne Keylor – BC Children's Hospital Aboriginal Health  
John Gotoweic – FASD Collaboration Roundtables  
Ian Mass – Pacific Community Resources Society

**On phone:**

Moire Porter – Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Vancouver Island  
Theresa Hermary – Interior Health  
Shawn Hoey and Linda Lucas – Caring for First Nations Children's Society

**Regrets:**

Mab Oloman – Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC  
Bill Preston – BC School Trustees Association

**1. Introductions**

Chair Adrienne Montani opened the meeting and added the following items to the agenda:

- Under First Call Reports and Updates, the refugee transportation loans campaign;
- Under Partner News and Updates, the joint letter from the Federation of Community Social Services of BC and MCFD.

**2. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Collaboration Roundtables Presentation – John Gotoweic and Ian Mass**

Pacific Community Resources Society is the administrative head of the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Collaboration Roundtables. The goal of the FASD Collaboration Roundtables is to make systemic change and improve the lives of those with FASD. Their current efforts are focused on building inter-sectoral collaboration in Vancouver and Surrey.

BC developed a 10 year strategic plan on FASD in 2008, but this plan is not really moving forward due to the current economic climate.

The FASD Collaboration Roundtables will have three phases: develop an organizational framework and training, develop a strategic plan and build "buy in", and implement the strategic plan. They hope to refocus local resources to make them more effective at aiding people with FASD. The Roundtables are currently in the third phase, implementing their

strategic plan. The plan is unique in that it is not mandated by any organization and is a community agenda.

The vision of the FASD Collaboration Roundtables is to improve life chances. FASD is a lifelong issue, but the strategic plan is focused on only the child, youth and young adult stages of life. FASD requires a special response from many systems, but this plan focuses on education; child, youth and family supports; and criminal justice.

The strategic themes are to improve the ability to track and report on persons with FASD, including improving information systems at MCFD and attach designation to personal health numbers; to improve the ability to identify persons affected by FASD, including improving screening tools; to ensure persons receive assessment and diagnosis; train 90% of core system workers to be FASD aware; to improve the effectiveness of FASD interventions and services by retooling or repurposing existing services; and to improve the transition to adulthood for persons with FASD.

The FASD Collaboration Roundtables recommend a functional rather than IQ assessment. Province-wide training is in place for teachers to become FASD aware. Teaching approaches and classrooms can be adapted. Family and natural supports can be strengthened.

It is estimated that at least 1% of the population lives with FASD, and the actual figure may be as high as 3%. Integrated special needs teams are recommended for supporting people with FASD. FASD key workers are navigating the system for families. Children and youth need to be connected to social activities. Caregiver respite is an issue that needs more attention and resources.

The Vancouver Police have received FASD training. The FASD Collaboration Roundtables' strategy is to involve a member of the group as a trainer to make it more relevant to their field.

Resources are in place to implement the FASD Collaboration Roundtables' strategic plan over the next year and a half. They are working with consultants Joyce Preston (child, youth and family supports), Barry Stewart (criminal justice) and Paul Pallan (education), and Dayna Mussell is acting as the aboriginal coordinator.

There is a pattern in the school system to label kids with "severe behaviour" so they will get funding for classroom supports.

The FASD Collaboration Roundtables are holding the "Finding Success" conference at Douglas College on October 23 and 24.

[Find out more at [http://www.asantecentre.org/ Modules/Calendar/234/October\\_2009\\_Finding\\_Success.pdf](http://www.asantecentre.org/Modules/Calendar/234/October_2009_Finding_Success.pdf)]

### **3. Population Health – The New Agenda, presented by Darry Quantz**

This video from Vancouver Coastal Health is an educational video highlighting health inequities. It includes stories from the Lower Mainland's North Shore residents and local health officers. It is a very useful tool for raising awareness of the relationship between health inequities and poverty.

[Video can be viewed online here: <http://www.lemongrassmedia.net/lgm/blog/files/pophealth-the-new-agenda.html>]

Copies can be downloaded and burned to a CD, or people can contact Darryl Quantz at [darryl.quantz@vch.ca](mailto:darryl.quantz@vch.ca) to request a copy be sent to them for showing to other audiences, along with the discussion material VCHA has prepared.

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

Much **appreciation** for the time and service given to First Call by our recently resigned coordinating committee members: **Ruth Annis, Steve Kerstetter, and Sheila Davidson.**

The report from **Taking Stock of Youth Wellbeing in BC: A Forum** is available now on our web site.

**The Living Wage for Families Campaign** is moving forward with recent community consultation workshops and work to publicize the concept of the living wage. We are looking for opportunities to present to boards, staff, and community groups on this issue. Research and employer recognition sub-committees have been formed to support this campaign.

First Call has written to BC MP's asking for their stance on the issue of **refugee transportation loans**. Currently, government assisted refugees have to repay the cost of their transportation to Canada to the government with interest. This is an unnecessary burden and places great stress on vulnerable families. We are asking you to contact your MP and let them know that you would like Canada to forgive existing loan debt and stop requiring new refugees to repay these costs.

Due to financial constraints, the **Early Childhood Development Roundtable** will now be meeting quarterly. At the June meeting, we previewed a new DVD from Westcoast Family Resources on the importance of play, which is available in multiple languages. We discussed the new provincial cabinet and ministry mandates and the split between early learning and child care. We tried to arrange a meeting with both the ministers of Education and Child and Family Development over the summer without success. All day kindergarten will be the focus of the September meeting.

**First Call's fundraising dinner is coming up on October 20**, and tickets are on sale now. Dr. Adele Diamond will be the keynote speaker. Details are on the web site.

First Call is holding a **strategic planning session** on September 18, and partners are invited to attend.

#### **5. Partner Updates**

The August letter to Federation of Community Social Services of BC members signed by the Federation and the MCFD deputy minister was seen by some recipients to take unusual joint ownership of provincial budgetary challenges, raising concern that it will undermine advocacy efforts to protect child, youth and family services when they are most needed.

The impacts of the provincial budget include \$128 million less for education, including the cancellation of the annual facilities grant. The MSP premiums increase will impact employers, including school boards. Lottery grants for Parent Advisory Councils have been cut in half. We need to mobilize around the hardship that these cuts cause for children in lower income neighbourhoods where parents are not successful at fundraising.

There are no details yet on the program-by-program budget for early childhood development. There have been cuts to the minor capital grants for child care programs.

Training in child and youth mental health may have been cut, as well as the implementation of the mental health plan.

Coalition partners are encouraged to share information about budget impacts as they become known, with First Call, with their MLAs, and with the public.

The BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses is holding a symposium on empowering aboriginal youth on September 30. Find out more at [www.bcysth.ca](http://www.bcysth.ca).

BCTF's summer social justice training focused on ending violence against women and trafficking of aboriginal women.

There is a conference on aboriginal women's justice coming up in Chase, September 24-26.

**6. Time and Date of Next Meeting:** October 14, 2009, 9:00 – 11:30 am, BC Teachers' Federation building, 550 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver. Telephone participation welcome.