



## MINUTES

### **First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition Early Childhood Development Roundtable meeting – April 2, 2009 Held at United Way of the Lower Mainland, Burnaby**

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#### ***In Attendance:***

Alison Bledsoe, United Way of the Lower Mainland  
Lynn McBride, BC Aboriginal Child Care Society  
Sue Khazaie, Abbotsford Community Services  
Debbie Jackson, BC Association of Family Resource Programs  
Erin Balmer, City of Surrey  
Lesley Richardson, First Call  
Adrienne Montani, First Call  
Sheila Davidson, Early Childhood Educators of BC (Chair)  
Marilee Peters, BC Council for Families  
Jean Beale, BC Council for Families  
Cynthia Low, Britannia Community Services  
JoAnne McBean, KIDS  
Cathy Sales, St. Barnabas Daycare  
Susan Foster, Tri-Cities ECD Community Development  
Sabine Tanasiuk, Ray Cam Cooperative Centre

Jasmine Howes, ECE/parent  
Mab Oloman, CCCABC  
Sanja Sladojevic, Windows of Opportunity  
Sue Irwin, Vancouver Coastal CRR  
Glenn Hope, BC Council for Families  
Lynell Anderson, Human Early Learning Partnership  
Tess Prendergast, Vancouver Public Library

#### ***On Phone:***

Sharon White, MCFD, Vancouver Coastal  
Patricia McClelland, Northern Lights College  
Mary Walters, Interior CCRR  
Moire Porter, Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Vancouver Island

#### ***Regrets:***

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

## **2. Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) recommendations to Government on improving ECD outcomes - presented by Lynell Anderson**

HELP's five policy recommendations to government for an integrated strategy to reduce child vulnerability to 15 percent by 2015 are based on international evidence confirming that:

1. Children thrive when families thrive
2. Families need *Time, Resources and Supports to Care and Earn*; needs vary
3. Earning provides best insurance - but no guarantee - against family poverty, including in two-parent households
4. Gender equality is good for children and families

Lynell's presentation set the context by using international comparisons to illustrate where BC stands with respect to each of the following recommendations.

### **Recommendation 1: Parental leave**

Build on parental leave, by working with the federal government to:

- increase duration to 18 months
- improve coverage
- improve benefit levels
- reserve time for fathers.

### **Recommendation 2: Income Supports and work/life balance**

Build on income support policies to reduce child and family poverty:

- Raise welfare benefits

- Enhance family/individual work tax credits and/or minimum wage levels
- Make ECEC services available and affordable in order to strengthen and increase labour force attachment, and increase net incomes
- Adapt employment standards to shorten full-time hours, in order to improve work/life balance & reduce family time poverty

**Recommendations 3: ECD coalitions, community planning, and 4: Pregnancy, parenting and early intervention**

- Build on ECD programs and services - pregnancy, parenting and early learning resources, screening and intervention, coalition and planning tables, etc.
- Coordinate and integrate with ECEC services
- Specifically, prior to 18 months add universal monthly trajectory-based monitoring of ECD
- Includes accountability framework to monitor effectiveness of policy implementation

**Recommendation 5: Early childhood education and care**

Build on early childhood education and care to provide:

- universal access to quality ECEC, with inclusion, and
  - seamless transitions to elementary school
- For example: - full-day Kindergarten for 5-, 4-, and 3-year-olds.  
 - extend services to 18 month old children in time.

Due to time constraints there was little time for post presentation discussion but in general participants were very positive and suggested Lynell and HELP should share the presentation ‘far and wide’. One participant felt that combining Recommendations 3 and 4 diminished the importance of each.

**3. BC Council for Families report ‘Voices of BC’s Child Care Community’- presented by Marilee Peters.**

In February 2008, on behalf of MCFD the BC Council for Families distributed funds from the first \$10 million installment of the Child Care Quality Enhancement Fund to licenced child care providers in British Columbia. Recipients were encouraged to provide the Council with details on their use of the funds, including how the funding helped their facility, their staff, and how it impacted the children and families for whom they care.

Of the 3518 child care providers who received the 2008 funds almost 350 responded. Some used the online reporting template, others sent emails, handwritten letters or cards, or phoned Council staff directly. The Council has consolidated the feedback into a report that can be found on-line at [http://www.bccf.bc.ca/img/content\\_images/File/child-care-report.pdf](http://www.bccf.bc.ca/img/content_images/File/child-care-report.pdf) .

Marilee’s presentation summarized the highlights of the report and included:

- information about the funding formula ( Family Child Care \$115/licenced space; Preschool or Out of School Care \$130/licenced space and Group Child Care \$140/licenced space );
- distribution statistics,
- how the respondents used the funds, and
- respondents opinions on various matters

Again there was little time for post presentation discussion but participants briefly expressed some concern that the report was based on a low response rate and suggested that its conclusions should be used cautiously. Respondents were not identified by type of provider. Roundtable participants offered to assist BCCF in the design of the response survey for the 2009 distribution.

**4. ECEBC Wages and Benefits Survey - report by Sheila Davidson**

Board members of the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC) developed and disseminated a survey to early childhood educators throughout the province in 2008. The purpose of the survey was to gather current and relevant information, specifically regarding wages and working conditions, and general information regarding philosophical approaches in providing care and early learning to young children and their families. The results of the survey have been compiled and are available on line at:

[http://www.ecebc.ca/resources/pdf/ecebc\\_survey\\_mar09.pdf](http://www.ecebc.ca/resources/pdf/ecebc_survey_mar09.pdf)

In summary, the responses illustrated the commitment and desire of early childhood educators to continue to work towards increasing awareness and recognition of their profession and their dedication to and acknowledgment of the importance of their work and the care of young children. Further, the responses clearly indicate that Early Childhood Educators feel undervalued and that longevity in the field is significantly impacted by low wages and lack of employment benefits.

**5. Updates and other business**

Adrienne Montani encouraged participants to sign on to the [Poverty Reduction Open Letter](#) if they haven't already done so.

Mab Oloman mentioned that the Coalition's election tool kit can be found at

<http://www.cccabc.bc.ca/act/actions/2009/election09/index.html>

Sabine Tanasiuk described a problem that some families in her community are having with subsidy policy related to relatives providing care.

Sue Khazaie reported on a lunch meeting she and some others had with Minister Christensen where they were seeking his insight on how to achieve better opportunities for children. He confirmed that no new money for early childhood is anticipated in the current budget year. His suggestions for early childhood advocates included discussing issues with more ministries than MCFD, preferably in the same room.

Sue Irwin reported that CCRR's have signed 3-year contracts.

The Child Care Advocacy Forum has new [election postcards](#) available.

**6. Next meeting -** The next meeting will be June 18th, 2009 at the United Way of the Lower Mainland at 4543 Canada Way, Burnaby.