



## MINUTES

### **First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition Early Childhood Development Roundtable meeting – October 28, 2009 Held at United Way of the Lower Mainland, Burnaby**

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

Alison Bledsoe UWLM  
Steven Klein Office of Mable Elmore MLA  
Joanne Wooldridge Vancouver Coastal Health  
Debbie Jackson Family Resource Programs of BC  
Mary Burgaretta BC Aboriginal Child Care Society  
Leah Drayton Britannia Community Centre  
Sue Khazaie Abbotsford Community Services  
Dianne Liscumb Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre  
Kim Adamson Success by Six  
Katarina Jovanonic Pacific Immigrant Resources Society  
Rishima Bahadoorsingh Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC  
Maria Morisseau North Shore Community Resources/  
Vancouver Coastal Regional Child Care Coordinator

Lynell Anderson Human Early Learning Partnership  
Mab Oloman Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC  
Rita Chudnovsky Child Care Advocacy Forum  
Carol Matusicky Council for Early Child Development  
Adrienne Montani First Call  
Lesley Richardson First Call  
Julie Norton First Call

***On Phone:*** Sharon Strasdin Northern Lights College  
Sarah Bryce Boys and Girls Club of Central Island  
Sanja Sladojevic Windows of Opportunity

#### **1. Welcomes, Introductions, Regrets**

#### **2 Provincial Budget Impacts**

Meeting participants identified the following as cuts to funding and changes to policy that have resulted from the Province's cost cutting measures "in these difficult economic times" or are ongoing problems.

Cuts to funding include:

- Child care minor capital grants reduced from \$5K to \$2K maximum
- Elimination of the Provincial Advisor for Infant Development Programs
- Elimination of the Provincial Advisor for Supported Child Development Programs
- Elimination of the Provincial Advisor for Aboriginal Infant Development Programs
- Elimination of the Provincial Advisor for Children First initiatives
- Elimination of Books for Babies
- Elimination of the Healthy Choices and Pregnancy office
- Elimination of the EIBI autism program funding
- Elimination of funding to Roots and Seeds of Empathy programming
- Reduction in Mother Goose program funding
- Reductions in Nobody's Perfect parenting funding
- Cuts to high risk prenatal classes
- Cuts to mental health programming for young mothers
- Cuts to Building Blocks grants and conversion to one-time-only funding
- Some cuts to distance education affects travel for ECE students

Some of the above are directly attributable to MCFD in Victoria. Others are regional decisions and demonstrate the increasing potential for regional inequity. Some are health authority cuts.

Policy matters:

- Child care subsidies are increasingly inadequate to cover the cost of parents' actual fees
- One-time-only child care enhancement funding ends in 2010
- Budget projections suggest that fewer child care spaces will receive operating funds
- The future of the provincial coordination for the CCRRs is unclear
- Shifts to regional funding and decision making - regional inequity
- No one appears to be “in charge” of ECD provincially
- The status and responsibilities of the inter-ministry ECD working group is unclear
- There has been a considerable amount of work over the past few years building community partnerships ( through Children First/Success by 6 and other initiatives) but they now appear to be left out of decision making about funding and policy priorities

### **3. Success by 6 - Highlights of the 2008 evaluation.**

As a result of the evaluation process the raw data as well as regional roll-ups for community capacity building are now on the Success By 6<sup>®</sup> website <http://www.successby6bc.ca/home>. The report is very close to being finished. More information will be presented at the next ECD Roundtable meeting.

### **4 October 29, 2009 with Minister Polak - ECD Roundtable messages**

The key message that participants wanted the First Call delegation to share with the Minister is that “children are only young once” and that her government’s policy and funding decisions are not meeting the needs of many of BC’s young children in either good economic times or bad. They also wanted the following emphasized. There is considerable evidence about the importance of early years and the under investment in BC is resulting in high rates of vulnerability, poverty and service fragility. Cuts to services to children and families have serious long-term impacts. The research about the importance of preventative measures in the early years is being ignored which results in higher public costs later in life.

There is no comprehensive ECD plan although this has been promised many times. The current moves to a regionalized model for decision-making, without an overarching plan, will result in regional disparity and inequity. StrongStart and All Day K expansion, while potentially positive, are not enough.

Participants would like improved communication with the Ministry, both to share the knowledge they gain from the front line, and to hear about Ministry initiatives. They also wanted the delegation to offer encouragement and support to the Minister to make the case to other parts of government and publicly for restoring vital services and enhancing MCFD’s capacity to sustain prevention services.

*(Note: The backgrounder that was prepared for the Minister in response to the input from participants is attached with these meeting notes.)*

## 5. Agency Updates

**University of Victoria:** There was agreement that the ECD Roundtable send a letter to the President and Board of Governors expressing concern about the proposal from the U. Vic Board to engage a commercial chain to provide campus childcare.

**CAPC:** Future of this program is still unclear.

**BC Aboriginal Child Care Society** is supporting the “I am a Witness” Campaign in support of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada which is holding Canada accountable before the Canadian Human Rights Commission for its current inequitable treatment of First Nations children. See <http://www.fnwitness.ca/>

**Northern Lights College:** Sharon Strasdin, Instructor Northern Lights College (NLC) spoke of about new programs/ courses and opportunities with Human Development Education and Care (HDEC) program at NLC and kindly sent the following for the meeting notes.

□ NLC is pleased to offer a course this term from the Aboriginal Early Childhood Education program. The course(s) is very similar in content to the current NLC course work but has a much stronger connection to Aboriginal themes in BC. This course is open to all students as a credit for certificate work and or professional development courses. This term we are offering the Aboriginal Health and Safety course.

If you would like further information about the Aboriginal ECE Program being offered through College of New Caledonia, please contact Alice Winkel, AECE Program Coordinator, at 250-997-7200 or toll free at 1-877-997-4300, by email at [winkela@cnc.bc.ca](mailto:winkela@cnc.bc.ca), or see the CNC website program listing: [http://www.cnc.bc.ca/CNC\\_Programs/AECE\\_MK.htm](http://www.cnc.bc.ca/CNC_Programs/AECE_MK.htm)

□ NLC is also pleased to offer the Early Learning Framework course for credit. This course explores the post modernist ideas and concepts related to the changing field of Early Education and builds opportunities to explore the British Columbia Early Learning Framework in a deeper manner.

□ NLC HDEC is very honoured to be working with the British Columbia Centre for Non Profit Development and will be offering the Introduction to Non profit Management course this winter in the online format. There are only 25 seats available in this course and they are free to those in non profit societies.

### **First Call:**

The 2009 Child Poverty Report Cards will be released on November 24<sup>th</sup> and will be posted to the First Call website.

## 6. Future meetings:

Next meeting is scheduled **for January 20, 2010** at United Way offices.