

First Call's Weekly Announcements – August 10, 2010

Next Coalition Meeting: September 8

Next ECD Roundtable: September 15

First Call for the Children Annual Dinner: October 28

Visit our [web site](#) for more information.

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We encourage you to forward and share the Weekly Announcements with your networks. If circulating excerpts from the Weekly Announcements, please acknowledge First Call as the source of the information.

We welcome your comments, suggestions and any research or event information you wish to have shared with the First Call network. Please let us know what's going on in your community so we can help spread the word!

Please visit our web site at www.firstcallbc.org for further details on upcoming First Call meetings, events, new publications and more.

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Advocacy/Calls to Action

1. Winnipeg Statement on the Provincial and Territorial Road to Poverty Reduction

Statement from Campaign 2000, the national campaign against child poverty:

The August 4th Roundtable on Poverty Eradication, sponsored by the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg and Campaign 2000 in collaboration with Council of Canadians with Disabilities and Canadian Council on Social Development, ratified the Winnipeg Statement: The Provincial and Territorial Road to Poverty Reduction. Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger, Chair of the Council of the Federation, received the statement on Aug. 5.

The roundtable included a wide range of participants from low-income communities, labour, business, women's groups, people with disabilities, Aboriginal communities, faith communities, recent immigrants, lone parents and others in the meeting in Winnipeg, and more than 15 participants from across Canada participated by webinar. We were very pleased that Senator Art Eggleton and MP's Mike Savage (Liberal, Dartmouth-Cole Harbour), Tony Martin (NDP, Sault Ste. Marie) and Yves Lessard (Bloc Quebecois, Chambly—Borduas) joined the roundtable discussion on strategies to move toward a poverty-free Canada. This roundtable was held on the eve of the Council of the Federation's annual meeting which Manitoba hosted. The roundtable provided an opportunity for dialogue among levels of government, civil society and Aboriginal organizations.

Despite some complications with the technology of the webinar, a robust discussion was held and participants across Canada re-affirmed the importance of strong and appropriate public policies and funding by the federal, provincial and territorial governments as essential to eradicating poverty in Canada.

The [communiqué of the Council of the Federation](#) is encouraging. For the first time since Campaign 2000 began its annual communication with the Premiers in 1997, the Council of the Federation explicitly cites poverty: "Premiers will also continue to promote sustained economic recovery by fostering a culture of innovation, encouraging continued private sector investments, removing barriers to economic development, expanding trade, strengthening Canada's labour market, and reducing poverty."

Read the [Winnipeg Statement](#) from Campaign 2000 and its partners in the Winnipeg roundtable.

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2. Urge City Councilors to Support Poverty Reduction at UBCM

From the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition:

We're going to the UBCM! This year's UBCM (Union of BC Municipalities) Convention will include a resolution to urge the province to adopt a poverty reduction strategy. Urge your local councilors to vote for it!

The UBCM Convention is an opportunity for government leaders from across the province to come together, learn, grow and take a united position on important issues facing their communities. Having a resolution before the UBCM that takes a stand on poverty and encourages the province to adopt a plan sends a clear message that this is an important issue across constituencies. This year, more than 1,500 delegates will participate in workshops and forums while setting policy direction for UBCM to follow in the year ahead. The 2010 conference will be held in Whistler, September 27th - October 1st.

In our [open letter](#) the Coalition called for a post-Olympic legacy that included a clear and concise plan to end poverty and homelessness in our province. Delegates at this year's UBCM will focus on the theme Forging Gold Medal Standards, striving to build upon the Olympics' momentum to build gold medal communities. We want them to go in with the clear message that our standards are much higher than the shameful levels of poverty that currently exist across BC. We want a vision and a plan that captures the hopes and aspirations of all of us and establishes a profound and lasting legacy.

Your task in 3 easy steps:

- Contact your municipal council over the summer.
- Tell them why a poverty reduction resolution is important to you.
- Urge them to vote in favour of it!

Our sincerest thanks to the city councils of Vancouver, Grand Forks, White Rock, Victoria, Nelson, Parksville, The Island Trust, as well as the Lower Mainland Local Government Association for supporting a poverty reduction motion to go to the UBCM Convention this fall.

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3. Support for Children with Special Needs – Share your Story

The Moms on the Move advocacy group is seeking stories from parents who have had challenges obtaining Supported Child Development funding for their children when they turn 13, including parents who may have to quit their job in order to look after their child. MOMS is sharing stories with MCFD staff about the challenges of teen care.

Supported Child Development's primary mandate is 0 -6. Sometimes funding is also made available to 7 – 12 year old and occasionally to 13 – 18 year olds. Children have been asked to leave day cares because there isn't enough support for the child and there is a waitlist for support.

MOMS is also looking for stories about experiences with teen care and the following issues:

- 1) Special education: trouble accessing public education with required supports, inclusive placement, appropriately-trained staff, IEPs, consistency in programming, etc
- 2) Supported Child Care: trouble accessing supports among younger children as well as teens
- 3) Group homes/residential: individuals threatened with forced relocation from a group home to a less costly alternative; eligible individuals denied/waitlisted for a group home placement; individuals placed inappropriately in home share arrangements (note: we're not suggesting that there is anything intrinsically wrong with home share - it works very well for some but it's not the right choice for everyone and the concern is about CLBC forcing individuals into home share arrangements that are unsafe/inappropriate).
- 4) Other issues? Family support, respite, access to early intervention/ therapy (autism or other special needs), adult transition, waitlists, adults with IQ>70, etc

Community feedback on these issues will shape the Moms on the Move fall advocacy campaigns. Individuals and families who are willing to share their personal stories with government and the media will help to illustrate the issues at a human level.

Please distribute this widely and send stories to: momsonthemove@telus.net

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4. Census Questionnaire Won't Count Unpaid Work

An article in the Globe and Mail by Heather Scoffield points out that the voluntary questionnaire that will replace the census long form has omitted important questions about unpaid work:

In the 2006 long census, Statistics Canada asked respondents how many hours a week they spent doing unpaid housework, yard work or home maintenance.

They also asked how much time they spent looking after their own children or other people's children, without pay – including helping kids with their homework and talking to teens about their problems.

And they asked how much unpaid time they dedicated to looking after seniors, including talking with them on the phone or helping them with medication.

"What's really going on here is that it's the unpaid care economy that's being removed from the detailed economic data that's being collected," said Kathleen Lahey, a law professor at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont.

"They've decided to erase the care economy."

The omission means there will no longer be a robust collection of data that helps everyone from policy makers to marketers plan for what people do when they're not at the office, she said.

"Almost every policy option touching on the family and community services is touched by that data," Prof. Lahey said.

When governments look at care of the elderly, child care, discrimination against women and productivity, the information collected in the mandatory long census was central and crucial, Prof. Lahey argues. "There is no other way to validly and accurately collect this information."

Read [more](#).

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5. Red Tent Housing Campaign Meeting with BC MP's

The Red Tent campaign, hosted by Pivot Legal Society, is taking action on Bill C-304, the Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing. The campaign is visiting the offices of BC MP's who voted against the Act, including Dona Cadman, Russ Hiebert, and James Moore. These visits are leading up to a National Day of Action on October 19, as the Bill is expected to go to final vote in late October.

Find out more about the campaign at www.redtents.org.

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6. Taking Action to Stop Group Home Cuts and Evictions

News release from Moms on the Move:

Moms on the Move (MOMS), BC's largest network of families of people with developmental disabilities, has called on Minister Rich Coleman to halt a cost-cutting initiative by Community Living BC, after media reports that it is forcibly relocating adults with developmental disabilities from their group homes to potentially unsafe or unsuitable residential alternatives.

In a letter to the Minister, MOMS expressed concern over reports that group home residents were being forced to leave their homes against their wishes, and that their relatives are being excluded from decision-making or their concerns ignored. MOMS also warned that these cost-cutting measures threaten safety and could potentially expose highly-vulnerable adults to abuse or neglect.

MOMS called for an independent review of the changes that have been ordered by Community Living BC, which has been forced to find savings after a \$20 million provincial budget cut this year. The parent network also called for more transparency, full involvement of families and advocates in all placement decisions, meaningful choices, and a stronger and more transparent oversight framework to

reassure the public that residents are being supported appropriately and protected from neglect and/or abuse in all residential care settings.

MOMS also launched an online petition and created a special Group Home information Web page to support families from around the province who have been frustrated by the failure of the Provincial government and/or CLBC to respond to their concerns about the changes underway. The Web page includes background information, reports and links showing that budget pressures since 2001 have repeatedly threatened group homes, which have been a vital component of the community-based residential care options that were established in BC in the wake of de-institutionalization in the 1990s.

Visit the MOMS group home web page and sign the petition [here](#).

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Research & Resources

1. Statistics on Refugees Entering BC

According to the April – June 2010 bulletin of the Immigrant Services Society of BC, 41% of the 184 government-assisted refugees who arrived during this period were children under the age of 18. Just 30% of the 800 refugees expected in BC this year arrived between January and June. Over 175 school-aged children are expected over the next six months. Find out more about supports and services offered by Immigrant Services Society at www.isssofbc.org.

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2. Study on the Role of Race and Gender in Economic Inequality in Ontario

A new report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' Growing Gap campaign uses data from the 2006 census to examine the labour market experience of racialized Ontarians. The key findings including:

- Racialized Ontarians want work but have trouble finding it: While a larger share of racialized workers in Ontario were looking for work, fewer of them found jobs compared to the rest of Ontarians. Higher unemployment rates cut across the majority of racialized groups, accounting for 90 per cent of the racialized population. In 2005, long before the Great Recession wreaked havoc on Canada's employment scene, the unemployment rate for racialized workers in Ontario was high — 8.7 per cent — compared to the 5.8 unemployment rate for the rest of Ontarians.

- Racialized Ontarians are paid less: Sexism and racial discrimination pack a double wallop for racialized women in Ontario, seriously hampering their earnings. They made 53.4 cents for every dollar non-racialized men made in 2005. Racialized men in Ontario made 73.6 cents for every dollar than non-racialized men made. Racialized women made 84.7 cents for every dollar that non-racialized women made.
- These labour market experiences result in much higher poverty rates for racialized Ontarians: While 6 per cent of non-racialized families lived in poverty in 2005, more than three times the share of racialized families, 18.7 per cent, lived in poverty.

Download the report [here](#).

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3. New Resources from the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development

The Centres of Excellence for Children's Wellbeing on Early Childhood Development has several new resources available in their online encyclopedia, including articles on [play](#), [sleeping behaviour](#), and a [parents' practices brochure](#) titled "When responsiveness and beliefs enter the picture." Search the encyclopedia at www.child-encyclopedia.com.

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4. Food Inequality Negatively Impacts Cardiac Health in Rabbits

Researchers from a number of universities in Tehran, Iran collaborated to conduct studies on the heart muscles of rabbits that were fed different amounts either in isolation or in contact with other groups. The following are excerpts from the study which was published in November, 2008.

The relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and health is well defined. Individuals with lower SES experience higher rates of mortality and are more likely to undertaking numerous health conditions. This so-called "social gradient" in health has been observed across different time periods and age groups using an extensive range of SES indicators, health measures, and methodologies.

Rabbits were studied to determine the effect of social inequities on a physiological outcome, specifically the interaction between food intake inequality and cardiovascular reactivity (in the form of accumulation of Lipofuscin pigmentation):

Previous empirical studies have indicated that animal models, like people, respond negatively to inequity. Stress causing negative health outcomes may be caused by comparing one's own outcomes to those of others.

Lipofuscin pigmentation is one of the most important characteristics of aging and the results of this study demonstrate that a sense of inequality in food intake, rather than food deprivation alone, could promote aging.

To read the rest of the study click [here](#).

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Announcements

1. Support First Call Through Our Annual Dinner

Our Annual Dinner, First Call for the Children, is coming up on Thursday, October 28! This year, we will be honouring retired judge Ted Hughes.

You can help support First Call by donating items to be auctioned or raffled at this event, such as gift certificates, theme baskets, and unique gift items. We are also seeking a number of volunteers to help out on the night of the event with a variety of tasks. Volunteers will get to enjoy the buffet dinner and network with other First Call supporters! Contact Andrina at info@firstcallbc.org for more information. Tickets for the dinner will go on sale on September 7.

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2. BC Society of Transition Houses Annual Conference

Each fall BCSTH hosts the Annual Conference *Pathways to Service Excellence*. The conference offers streamed training sessions for Frontline Staff, Managers, and Executive Directors in Transitional Houses, Children Who Witness Abuse Programs and Violence is Preventable Programs.

This year the Conference will be held on October 21-22, 2010 in Richmond BC.

Please click here for conference brochure and early bird registration:
www.bcsth.ca/sites/default/files/RegistrationBrochure2010.pdf

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3. Middle Years Development Instrument Forum - Vancouver

Coast Capital Savings, United Way of the Lower Mainland, the Vancouver School Board and the Human Early Learning Partnership are holding a forum with UBC's Dr. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl to discuss Vancouver's groundbreaking 2010 Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI).

More than 3,000 Grade 4 students in Vancouver completed a survey about their thoughts and feelings both in and out of school. These elements are strongly linked to their well-being, health and academic achievement throughout their school years and in later life. The survey results will help educators, service providers and parents to examine their assumptions and expectations about child development.

The purpose of the Middle Years Development Instrument is to give voice to children about their psychological and social experiences in and out of school. The MDI gives children a chance to provide the adult community with critical information about their current life experiences. This in turn helps us to better understand how we can foster children's strengths and well-being during the middle childhood years so they can reach their fullest potential.

The forum will take place on Wednesday, September 22 at UBC Robson Square from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. RSVP at www.uwlm.ca/mdiforum.

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