

First Call's Weekly Announcements – August 20, 2010

Next ECD Roundtable: September 15

Next Coalition Meeting: September 8

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. First Call Launches NoChildLabour.org: Have You Spoken up?

In July First Call launched a website nochildlabour.org to draw attention to the BC government's unacceptable child labour laws. A First Call report published last fall found a startling increase in the number of child work-place injury claims accepted by WorkSafeBC since the general work-start age was lowered to 12-years-old in late 2003. The report made specific recommendations for change. **Since then Minister of Labour Murray Coell has taken no action to improve protections for children in the work-place.** Read First Call's news release [here](#).

Have you let your MLA and Minister Coell know what you think of this shameful situation? A [sample letter](#) is available for your use and adaptation. Please take a moment to register your outrage with your provincial representative and the Minister on behalf of children's safety with a phone call, an email or a letter, with a copy to First Call to let us know you have acted.

Dr. Paul Martiquet, Medical Health Officer for the Sea to Sky, wrote an [article](#) in the Squamish Chief to help raise awareness of this issue. Why not write a short letter to the editor about this to your community newspaper too?

Read what others have said and add your individual or organizational support through a comment on the [No Child Labour website](#) blog. Thanks to Pacific Community Resources Society and Parent Support Services for adding their organization's voice to this campaign.

There is also a page on the website for youth to share their experiences and views about work-place safety. Help us spread the word by putting a note on your Facebook page or circulating [this link](#) to your contacts.

For facts on this issue, see our research report, What's Happening to our Children?: A Look at Child Work-Related Injury Claims in BC Over the Past 10 Years, and earlier reports [here](#).

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2. MCFD Urged to Stop Group Home Closures Pending Review

MCFD'S PLAN TO SHUT DOWN RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR HIGH NEEDS YOUTH WILL SAVE DOLLARS, BUT AT THE EXPENSE OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND BC'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

The recent decision of the Ministry of Children and Family Development to shut down a number of staffed homes for youth requiring 24 hour supervision is another indicator that the ministry continues to make decisions that are not informed by research, claims the BC Association of Social Workers.

The plan has been framed by a ministry spokesperson as offering children and youth "a different, more superior model of care" than residential care would offer, in "a family like setting". It will move youth currently living in staffed resources into foster homes or into independent or semi-independent living. It is expected that such a move will save the Interior region alone \$850,000.

The decision to close these staffed beds was implemented at the same time that a study, funded by the ministry, is underway to ascertain the effectiveness of these resources. The report, with its recommendations, is not expected to be completed until early next year. Read the full BCASW news release [here](#).

Read the Times Colonist article on this issue [here](#).

Moms on the Move is collecting stories from families concerned with these closures and has created a "**Speaking Up: Group Homes**" [Webpage](#). They also have a [petition](#) protesting group home closures for adults addressed to Rich Coleman, Minister responsible for Community Living BC.

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3. Winnipeg Roundtable on Poverty Eradication

For those of you who did not have a chance to attend the Winnipeg Roundtable on Poverty Eradication on Aug. 4th, you may be interested in viewing this short news-style [YouTube video](#), (by Donald Benham of the Winnipeg Social Planning Council).

Read [Senator Art Eggleton's comments](#) at the Roundtable about how the plight of the poor puts Canada's social fabric at risk.

The Roundtable was held to coincide with the Winnipeg meeting of the Council of the Federation (Provincial Premiers' summer meeting). The Council's communiqué is encouraging. For the first time since Campaign 2000 began its annual communication with the Premiers in 1997, the Council of the Federation explicitly mentions poverty.

Their August 5 statement says "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 more](#)

Collectively we've put poverty on the radar screen of the premiers! Thanks to all who participated. We look forward to continued work together to achieve progress.

Other related materials from the Winnipeg Roundtable are posted on the Campaign 2000 [website](#).

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4. Federal Pre-Budget 2011 Hearings in Surrey and Kamloops

The federal Standing Committee on Finance has solicited briefs and will be holding hearings as its pre-budget consultation process for the 2011 budget. The deadline for written submissions has passed (August 13th), and the Committee has confirmed that invitations to present to the Committee will be extended only to those who have sent in briefs. The Committee has scheduled hearings on the following dates in BC:

- Surrey: September 27, 2010
- Kamloops: September 28, 2010

The hearings are open to the public to attend and listen, even if you are not presenting.

For more detail on the time and place, contact the Committee Clerk, Jean-Francois Pagé at 613-992-9753, or e-mail at FINA@parl.gc.ca.

First Call has submitted a brief to the Committee, and it will be available on our [website](#) shortly. Feel free to share it with your MPs. Briefs are also available from Campaign 2000 and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC. If other First Call partners submitted federal budget briefs, please let us know and we will circulate links to them.

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5. Public Commission on Legal Aid Community Hearing Dates

Are you concerned about the loss of access to legal aid for poverty law and family law matters in BC? Here is a chance to share your concerns. The Public Commission on Legal Aid will visit 11 communities throughout BC in September and October, 2010 to gather input from the public and stakeholder groups regarding their views on the future of legal aid.

The list of locations and dates include:

September 20 – Williams Lake
October 4 – Nanaimo
September 21 – Prince George
October 5 – Victoria
September 23 – Terrace
October 7 – Vancouver
September 27 – Kamloops
October 8 – Surrey
September 28 – Kelowna
October 12 – Chilliwack
September 30 – Cranbrook

The Public Commission is accepting both written submissions and expressions of interest to make in-person presentations. Submissions can be made by organizations or individuals who have had dealings with, thoughts on, or innovative ideas about the provision of legal aid in British Columbia. Hearings are open to the general public, though a limited number of submissions will be selected for in-person presentations.

A submission guide and further details regarding the times and exact locations of the Public Commission Hearings can be found on the Public Commission [website](#).

The Public Commission will make recommendations to improve legal aid in B.C.

For more information contact:

Michael Litchfield
Commission Coordinator

Research & Resources

1. Study Shows Higher Levels of Bisphenyl A in Children

New data from the Canadian Health Measures Survey released on August 16, 2010 by Statistics Canada show that concentrations of the chemical bisphenyl A (BPA) in urine were found to be higher for children aged 6 to 11 than they were for adults aged 40 to 79. The highest concentrations were measured in teens aged 12 to 19.

BPA is an industrial chemical used primarily in the production of polycarbonate plastic and epoxy resins for food containers, water bottles and protective linings for canned food and beverages. It does not occur naturally in the environment. Some studies on animals suggest that low levels of exposure to BPA very early in life can affect neural development and behaviour; however, there is some uncertainty in interpreting how these findings might be relevant to human health.

Read the Statistics Canada release [here](#). Read The Province newspaper article on this study [here](#).

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2. Precarious Housing in Canada

Precarious Housing in Canada (2010) is a powerful, new research and policy report from the Wellesley Institute. Using the most comprehensive and current data, research and analysis, ***Precarious Housing*** sets out a pragmatic, five-point plan targeted to the millions of Canadians who are living in substandard, over-crowded and unaffordable homes – plus those who are living without any housing at all. Housing is one of *the most* important factors for a healthy life. A good home is important for individuals and for overall population health. The growing number of Canadians who are precariously housed continues to be a deep and persistent problem throughout the country; the nation-wide affordable housing crisis is costly to individuals, communities, the economy, and the government. Federal housing and homelessness investments – adjusted for inflation and population growth – have been shrinking over the past two decades; and, while the federal government announces short-term initiatives from time to time, Canada still doesn't have a comprehensive, fully-funded and integrated national housing strategy.

Read the report [here](#).

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3. UN Declares International Year of Youth

On August 12, 2010 the United Nations declared the start of the International Year of Youth (IYY). The IYY focuses on the three key areas:

1. Create awareness (increase commitment and investment in youth)

- Increase recognition of youth development as a smart investment by the public and private sectors
- Advocate for the recognition of young people's contributions to national and community development and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals
- Promote understanding of inequalities amongst youth and how to effectively address the needs of the most disadvantaged
- Foster research and knowledge building on youth to better inform youth policies and programmes

2. Mobilize and engage (increase youth participation and partnerships)

- Institutionalize mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making processes
- Support youth-led organizations and initiatives to enhance their contribution to society
- Strengthen networks and partnerships among Governments, youth-led organizations, academia, civil society organizations, the private sector, the media and the UN system, to enhance commitment and support for holistic youth development

3. Connect and build bridges (increase intercultural understanding among youth)

- Promote youth interactions, networks and partnerships across cultures
- Empower and support youth as agents of social inclusion and peace.

The [IYY website](#) is seeking participation from youth through it's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#) and posting photos. The year's slogan is Our Year Our Voice and there's a logo people can use on promotional materials for events or activities.

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4. New Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators

A new set of occupational standards for early childhood educators has been released by the Child Care Human Resource Sector Council. More than 900 ECEs with extensive knowledge and experience in early childhood education developed and validated these occupational standards through interviews, online surveys, regional workshops and provincial/territorial validation exercises. They are a revision of the Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners developed by the Canadian Child Care Federation in 2003.

The publication can be downloaded [here](#).

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Announcements

1. Youth Voice for Youth Health: Spoken Word Workshop

The McCreary Centre Society is hosting a youth spoken word workshop on Monday, August 30th at the Wosk Centre for Dialogue (580 W. Hastings Street, Vancouver).

This free one day workshop is for any youth ages 15-24 who are interested in Spoken Word poetry and would like to spend a day with professional hip hop artists and facilitators in creating spoken word pieces using quotes taken from McCreary's 2008 Adolescent Health Survey. Please read the [registration package](#) for more information!

Workshop spots are limited so please encourage youth that are interested to have registrations returned asap.

Contact Carly at carly@mcs.bc.ca, or 604-291-1996 ext.227 if you have any further questions.

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2. Representative's Awards Nominations Deadline

Just a reminder on behalf of Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, that nominations for the Representative for Children and Youth's 2010 Awards of Excellence close in just 14 days, on Sept. 3, 2010!

There are so many deserving organizations and individuals in B.C.'s child-serving system so nominate an exceptional colleague, staff member, friend or stakeholder today! All information about the awards can be found [here](#).

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3. Early Childhood Educators Advocacy Forum

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC are hosting a [forum](#) on Saturday, October 23, 2010, at Vancouver Community College downtown campus.

Topics include children's rights, all school day Kindergarten and the state of child care. Attendance will give you a certificate for 5 hours towards re-licensing.

More details coming soon. Contact advocacyleadership@cccabc.bc.ca

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4. Free Online Training Opportunity for Settlement Workers

Free Online Training Opportunity for Staff - Caring for Canada's Children: An Online Course on Settlement Work with Newcomer Families and Their Young Children - Sept 2010-Feb 2011

Funded by CIC and delivered by Mothercraft College, this online course consists of one monthly two-hour webinar from September 2010 to February 2011 and participants will receive a Certificate of Completion.

The Course will focus on:

- Becoming a more competent cross-cultural service provider
- Strategies for building trusting relationships with families
- The importance of the early years: attachment and interaction
- Promoting children's mental health
- Developing working relationships with child welfare services
- Building circles of support for families through service coordination

This is actually a Level 2 course - Level 1 was offered last year and all of the archived videos of last year's lessons can be found on [the Mothercraft College website](#).

(Received from AMSSA as advertised on the Federal Government's Integration Net website.)

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