

## First Call's Weekly Announcements – February 15, 2010

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

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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](http://www.firstcallbc.org) for further details on upcoming First Call meetings, events, new publications and more.

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition  
202 – 1193 Kingsway, Vancouver, V5V 3C9  
Ph: 604-873-8437 Fx: 604-874-9898  
Email: [info@firstcallbc.org](mailto:info@firstcallbc.org)

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## Advocacy/Calls to Action

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1. Provincial Throne Speech

The Throne Speech was read on Tuesday last week, and focused on strengthening the economy, expanding green initiatives, and “modernizing” the education system. The Throne Speech precedes the March 2 provincial budget.

In the section on children and families, government announced that “education improvements will focus on the individual and unique needs of our children.” Other new announcements included:

- *New partnerships with the private sector and parents will enable the establishment of neighbourhood preschools for four-year-olds and three-year-olds within communities over the next five years.*
- *A new Extended Family Program will modernize and improve upon the Child in the Home of a Relative program, to provide increased assistance, broader supports and new safeguards for children.*
- *A new \$180-million integrated case management information technology system will deliver better front-line services and supports to women, children, income assistance recipients and those most vulnerable.*
- *A new Family with Children Property Tax Deferral Option will be provided to all B.C. families with children under the age of 18.*

The Throne Speech also indicated an ongoing commitment to StrongStart Centres and Neighbourhood Learning Centres. It hinted at changes to school boards, stating that less will be spent on administrative costs in education.

A recent [Georgia Straight](#) article examined concerns over the elimination of school boards and funding inadequacy.

Read the Throne Speech [here](#).

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## 2. First Call Endorses Coalition to Build a Better BC

At the February 10 coalition meeting First Call partners voted in favour of endorsing the Coalition to Build a Better BC. CBBBC is a coalition of public, community and cultural service organizations advocating for a strong public sector to help ensure that every British Columbian can participate and share in a quality of life that is recognized around the world. The coalition is calling on the provincial government to:

- Immediately end the elimination of public and community services;
- Fulfill their legislative responsibility to provide adequate, fair and consistent funding to support public services and community groups; and
- Work in substantive consultation with groups and individuals to build public and community services that give every individual the democratic opportunity to participate in building a better BC.

Currently, CBBBC is encouraging organizations to participate in the March 2 budget lock up in Victoria so they have a chance to examine the new provincial budget and make comments to the media. If your organization has not been invited to the

budget lock up, you can contact the Minister of Finance to request an invitation at [colin.hansen.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:colin.hansen.mla@leg.bc.ca).

Anyone is welcome to attend CBBBC meetings. The next meeting is Wednesday, February 17 at 5:30 PM at the BC Federation of Labour, 200-5118 Joyce St. in Vancouver. RSVP to [jessieuppal@bcfed.ca](mailto:jessieuppal@bcfed.ca).

Save the date for two upcoming CBBBC events (more details will be circulated closer to these dates):

March 20 - a Teach-In in Vancouver

April 10 - a Rally in downtown Vancouver

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### 3. Living Wage Campaign Updates

The Union of Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW 1518) have started campaigning for a living wage for the workers they represent throughout BC. You can keep up to date with their efforts through the following Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/livingwage](http://www.facebook.com/livingwage).

Michael McCarthy Flynn, Living Wage Campaign Organizer with First Call, recently spoke on the Latin Waves radio programme about the proposed living wage by-law in New Westminster. You can listen to that podcast [here](#).

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### 4. Supreme Court Overturns Order to Repatriate Khadr

In a January 29 ruling, the Supreme Court of Canada overturned lower court orders to the federal government to try to repatriate Canadian citizen and child soldier Omar Khadr, who has been in the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay since 2002, when he was 15 years old. He is scheduled to be tried by a US military court in July.

The Court did however state that the Canadian government had breached Khadr's right to life, liberty and security of the person under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and that he was threatened by the effects of those violations, in part as a result of his being interrogated by Canadian intelligence officials who knew he had been deprived of sleep and passed information on to US officials.

Following this decision by the Supreme Court, government announced that it has no plans to attempt to repatriate Khadr.

Read more details on the [CBC website](#).

A commentary on the decision is available from the [Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children](#).

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## 5. YWCA Announces Closure of Vancouver Child Care Centre

From [www.ywcavan.org](http://www.ywcavan.org):

*YWCA Vancouver will close one of its child care centres this summer.*

*YWCA Citygate Early Learning and Care Centre provides care to children aged three to five, 25% of whom have special needs, and will be closing on August 31, 2010. The closure was a very difficult decision for the YWCA, who is committed to quality early learning and care for children.*

*The YWCA will take steps to minimize the impact on families, children and staff by working with families to find alternative arrangements and transferring staff to other YWCA early learning and care centres.*

*The decision was a financial one, as the YWCA has subsidized the Citygate facility by more than \$1 million over the past ten years. The YWCA also currently funds its four child centres at a combined deficit of approximately \$500,000 each year. Operating all four centres is not sustainable in the long term.*

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC reports that BC families can wait for up to two years for a child care space. Canada ranked last among OECD countries for public spending on early learning and child care.

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## 6. Petition to Reinstate Charitable Gaming Grants

Volunteer BC is circulating a petition regarding the cuts to gaming grants in the province of British Columbia on behalf of all organizations affected by the budget cuts of 2009–2010. Sign on to the petition [here](#).

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## Research & Resources

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### 1. National Welfare Incomes and Provincial Caseload Stats

The National Council of Welfare has released a comparison of welfare incomes in 2008 by family type. [A lone parent with a child aged 2](#) received \$11,347 from BC income assistance in 2008, and other benefits including the GST credit and Canada Child Tax Benefit bring that figure up to \$16,808. This is \$5553 less than the low

income cut off for that year. The peak year for welfare earnings for this family type was \$18,183 in 1994.

[A family with two parents and two children](#) ages 10 and 15 would have received \$13,213 from income assistance in 2008 in BC, for a total of \$21,016 with other benefits, which is \$13,722 below the low income cut off. This is \$2,751 less than the same family would have received in 1994.

The methodology used in these reports is available [here](#).

According to December 2009 statistics from the [Ministry of Housing and Social Development](#), the number of two parent families in the province's Expected to Work category of income assistance increased by 68.8% between 2008 and 2009 (using annual averages). Lone parent families increased by 33.9%.

In September 2008, there were 967 two parent families in the Expected to Work category – this figure increased to 1,910 families in December 2009. Lone parent families in the same category jumped from 4,135 in September 2008 to 6,182 in December 2009.

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## 2. Making Linkages - A Teaching Framework Connecting Early Learning and Primary Program

*Making Linkages* is a May 2009 document from the Ministry of Education linking the Early Learning Framework to the primary education program. It is geared toward primary and early childhood educators who can "facilitate a continuity of learning for young children in British Columbia." Read it [here](#).

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## 3. Kelty Resource Centre on Children's Mental Health and Addiction

The Kelty Resource Centre is a free, all-inclusive, virtual resource centre for BC children, youth and their families through BC Mental Health and Addictions Services. They provide resources and information on mental health and addiction programs and services, and on topics including anger managements, anxiety, ADHD, depression, eating disorders, and self help/prevention. You can explore their website [here](#).

The resource centre is located at Children's Hospital, in entrance 2 of the Mental Health Building. Check the website for hours, or call 1-800-665-1822.

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# Announcements

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## 1. Moving the Child Care Discussion Forward – Feb. 25 at UVic

REACH (Research in Early Childhood Care, Education and Health) presents an upcoming forum *Illuminating Examples: Moving the UVic Childcare Discussion Forward*.

How have other institutions successfully expanded their child care services? A panel with representatives from four other institutions will inform and lay the basis for a discussion of options for the University of Victoria.

The panel includes Janet MacDonald, Capilano University Children's Centre (a lab school); Niki Byers, Society of Richmond Children's Centres (a non-profit society founded by community volunteers, working in cooperation with Community Partners and the City of Richmond); Darcelle Cottons, University of British Columbia Child Care; and Sarah Amyot, University of Winnipeg (a partnership between the University of Winnipeg Students' Association and the University with initial provincial involvement). The forum will be facilitated by Jane Beach, Early Childhood Research and Policy Consultant, Victoria.

The forum takes place Thursday, February 25 from 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm in the MacLaurin Building, Room D116 at the University of Victoria. There is no charge to attend this event. Find out more at <http://reach.uvic.ca>.

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## 2. Tri-Cities Champions for Children Awards of Excellence

The deadline for nominations is March 8 for the Tri-Cities ECD Committee's "Tri-Cities Champions for Children Awards of Excellence." A dinner banquet will be held on May 6 to acknowledge individuals, groups/organizations and businesses that have demonstrated a commitment to the future of children in the Tri-Cities. Appropriate nominees are people who:

- Serve as a champion, through a professional or personal relationship, for the well-being of children
- Demonstrate through work or volunteer efforts a genuine commitment to providing a better future for children
- Work with others to raise awareness about children's issues
- Believe in building strong families
- Demonstrate leadership in the community to have a positive impact on the lives of young children
- Follow practices that encourage outstanding employee relations or family friendly customer relations

Download a nomination form [here](#).

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### 3. Journey Through Complex Trauma: Two-day Workshop from Justice Institute

JIBC Special Event: Journey Through Complex Trauma: Focusing, Treatment & Healing (SPE114) featuring Shirley Tourcotte with Alannah Earl Young.

Date: April 15-16, 2010 (JIBC New Westminster)

Fee: \$295; Group rate, \$275 (Early Bird Rate:\$275/\$255 before Feb 28, 2010)

This two-day course is intended for counsellors, social workers, crisis teams, healers and therapists who work in/with Aboriginal agencies and/or communities or in various other cross-cultural situations/settings.

You will explore the dynamics of trauma-based families, the relationship between the body and memory; traumatic bonding and "brainwashing"; the impacts of complex trauma on individuals; the reliability of memory and "false" memory; self-injury; flashbacks, projections and re-enactments of trauma.

Shirley Turcotte, RCC has worked with survivors of sexual abuse and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders and childhood abuse in adults for the last two decades. She has been a pioneering activist in the areas of therapeutic treatment and program development for survivors of childhood abuse.

Alannah Earl Young, MA, is Opaskwayak Cree/Peguis Anishnabe. She is an advisor with University of British Columbia's First Nations House of Learning in Vancouver. She is trained in complex trauma and specializes in focusing – a body centered therapy, expressive art therapies, and body mind psychotherapies.

To register, call 604.528.5590 or 1.877.528.5591.

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