

First Call's Weekly Announcements – January 14, 2010

Next ECD Roundtable: January 20
Next Coalition Meeting: February 10
Visit our [web site](#) for more information.

A. [Advocacy/Calls to Action](#)

1. [Monthly Reports Highlight Child Poverty Statistics](#)
2. [Joint Statement in Support of BC Pesticide Ban](#)
3. [Petition to Prorogue Poverty](#)

B. [Research & Resources](#)

1. [Living Wage for Families Campaign Fact Sheets Available](#)
2. [National Report on People with Disabilities](#)
3. [Why Social Housing Policy Matters](#)

C. [Announcements](#)

1. [Cindi Seddon Speaks on Bad Play and Bullying](#)
2. [Learning Disabilities Association Parent Training in Vancouver](#)
3. [Presentation on Court Appointed Special Advocate Program in Vancouver](#)

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.

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

Advocacy/Calls to Action

1. Monthly Reports Highlight Child Poverty Statistics

Beginning this week, First Call will be releasing a series of monthly reports to the media in a continuing call to the BC government to start getting serious about fighting child and family poverty. The first report, [Twenty Years Later – A Second Look](#), examines poverty statistics [released by the BC government](#) in response to the [2009 BC Child Poverty Report Card](#):

None of the figures [given by government] were incorrect, but they gave the misleading impression that BC is a leader in fighting poverty. The technique is what statisticians call "cherry picking," using selected figures that seem to reinforce the argument you're trying to make.

Let's take a longer-term view of the child poverty statistics and compare poverty rates twenty years ago in 1989 and in 2007. The year 1989 was the best year of the 1980s for the economy, and the national child poverty rate was 15.3 percent. It was also the year that the House of Commons voted unanimously to work to end child poverty by the year 2000...

Eight provinces reported declines in the child poverty rate in this 20 year period, some of which were dramatic. British Columbia and Ontario were the only provinces that did worse over this time period, with BC the worst by far.

An article in the Province Newspaper quotes the Minister for Children and Family Development in response:

"We haven't tried to downplay the severity of the problem, but there's no question during our time in government [since 2001] the rate has been declining," Polak said.

"That's not in any way saying we think we're doing fine. Nobody likes to be last in Canada."

The fact is that the poverty rate has risen and fallen since 2001, and trends suggest that it will rise further in 2008 and 2009 (this data is not yet available). In 2001, the child poverty rate was 19% for BC; in 2007 it was 18.8%. Read the rest of the Province story [here](#).

[../top](#)

2. Joint Statement in Support of BC Pesticide Ban

The Canadian Cancer Society BC/Yukon, together with First Call coalition partner Toxic Free Canada, is calling for a legislated ban on the sale and use of cosmetic pesticides in BC.

A [press release](#) issued today by Toxic Free Canada notes that a coalition of 18 health and environment groups, including First Call, have come together to support this ban. Other supporters include the David Suzuki Foundation, Public Health Association of BC, and West Coast Environmental Law.

The call for this ban was endorsed by a Union of BC Municipalities resolution in 2008; 20 BC municipalities have enacted pesticide by-laws, and both Ontario and Quebec have passed pesticide laws. There is no safe level of exposure to these pesticides for children or pregnant women.

Last week, the Canadian Cancer Society issued a press release stating:

[Canadian Cancer Society CEO] Kaminsky says that in 2010, B.C. will have an opportunity to demonstrate national leadership by adopting the strongest cosmetic pesticide ban in Canada.

The Society in partnership with Toxic Free Canada introduced model legislation as part of the 60 day on-line public consultation process announced last month by B.C. Environment Minister Barry Penner. In addition to adopting some of the standards set in the Province of Ontario's ban, the Society's proposed bill goes further and includes:

- *immediate ban on use of cosmetic pesticides on all sports fields – including those being used for an international or national event;*
- *municipalities to pass stronger cosmetic pesticide bylaws, as they have done in passing smoke-free bylaws;*
- *ban on the use of cosmetic pesticides on B.C. golf courses within three years; and,*
- *establishment of a public education campaign and 'white list' of low risk products that can be used as alternatives to cosmetic pesticides.*

You can also participate in the government consultation by clicking [here](#). The consultation ends on February 15. The full text of the proposed legislation is available [here](#), and this is the full [joint statement](#).

In addition to participating in the online consultation, **we encourage you to ask your MLA to support the private member's bill being brought forward by Rob Fleming**, which is a modified version of the legislation drafted by Toxic Free Canada, the Canadian Cancer Society and UVic's Environmental Law Centre.

A new film on this topic called *A Chemical Reaction* will premiere in Vancouver on January 20 at 7:00 PM at the Park Theatre. Watch the trailer [here](#).

[../top](#)

3. Petition to Prorogue Poverty

From ONE and Make Poverty History:

It's been a pretty interesting New Year in Ottawa so far. The decision to shut down parliament dominated the headlines, but just 24 hours after that story broke, Canada also took over the presidency of the G8, a group made up of the leaders of the eight of the world's most powerful countries, and a critical decision making body when it comes to supporting the world's poorest people.

It is once again Canada's time to lead and it's our time to remind Ottawa that even though parliament may be prorogued, we can't prorogue the fight against global poverty.

Ask our leaders to develop a new Canadian plan to invest in meeting the Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty and disease by 2015. Take action now by clicking the link below to add your name to our urgent [petition](#).

[.../top](#)

Research & Resources

1. Living Wage for Families Campaign Fact Sheets Available

The Living Wage for Families Campaign has compiled 4 fact sheets (please see links below) packed with information, statistics and references to help anybody who is considering developing a living wage campaign within their workplace or community. Facts such as:

- The Chief Public Health Officer has reported recently that of 27 factors identified as having an impact on child development, up to 80% were seen to improve as family income increases.
- Census figures show that median wages in the Vancouver metropolitan area fell between 2000 and 2005 for both men and women working full-time full-year and both men and women working less than that.
- It's fair to say that at least 25 percent of the couples with children in greater Vancouver live below the Living Wage level and more than 50 percent of the single parents with children live below the Living Wage level. Of the single parent families, 83 percent below the Living Wage were headed by women.
- BC continues to have the highest proportion of children living in poverty with at least one member of their family having a full-time full-year job
- A recent Goldman Sachs report confirms that increasing the income of those on lower wages has a proportionately larger stimulating effect on the economy than increasing the income of those on high incomes. Low-earners tend to spend more of their increased income than those on much higher incomes, because those on low-incomes have more essential spending needs to be met by any income increases. Higher income populations deliver only 3-5 cents increased spending per additional dollar of wealth.
- Through a detailed survey of 20 U.S. cities, Andrew Elmore (2003) found that the economic impact of living wage policies was grossly overestimated by city administrators. He found that in most municipalities "contract costs increased by less than 0.1 percent of the overall local budget in the years after a Living Wage law was adopted."

Please feel free to use the information provided in these fact sheets about the living wage in your workplaces and your communities.

Living Wage Fact sheets:

- [Studies on effects and impacts of living wage by-laws in other jurisdictions;](#)
- [The living wage and social determinants of health;](#)
- [Low wages in Metro Vancouver;](#)
- [Business support of the living wage.](#)

[.../top](#)

2. National Report on People with Disabilities

Advancing the Inclusion of People with Disabilities is a new report from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. The report covers a number of topics including supports and services, education and training, employment, income, and health and well-being.

The report touches on a number of issues related to children and youth with disabilities:

- Younger Canadians are more likely to have unmet needs. Over half of children with disabilities aged 5 to 14 who require aids and devices do not have their needs fully met.
- Eight out of ten children with disabilities attend mainstream public or private schools. About 4,000 Canadian children with disabilities do not attend school or receive tutoring for reasons including lack of special education schools and insufficient care supports.
- 19.7% of youth with disabilities have experienced long school interruptions because of their disability, and 11.3% of youth have to leave their communities in order to attend school because of their disability.

Read the report [here](#).

[.../top](#)

3. Why Social Housing Policy Matters

Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) in partnership with the Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC) has released six comprehensive papers that address a wide range of social housing policies in Canada. This joint initiative between CPRN and SHSC began in 2006 with the goal of building policy capacity in the housing sector and encouraging evidence-based research initiatives from quality graduate students.

The available reports include:

[Rehousing Vancouver's Street-Involved Youth](#) by Heather Millar

[Can Inclusionary Zoning Help Address the Shortage of Affordable Housing in Toronto?](#) by Julie Mah

[The Homeownership Component of the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program: Critical Analysis of Program Objectives](#) by Helen Looker

[Under Pressure: Affordable Housing in Rural Ontario](#) by Amanda Slaunwhite

[Overcoming Challenges in Centralized and Decentralized Housing Models: Ontario and British Columbia Compared](#) by Carla Schuk

[../top](#)

Announcements

1. Cindi Seddon Speaks on Bad Play and Bullying

The keynote speaker at the Children: the Heart of the Matter Conference, Cindi Seddon will discuss *When is it Bad Play and When is it Bullying: Determining the Appropriate Responses for Inappropriate Interaction between Preschool and Early School Age Children*.

Cindi will present on Friday, February 5 from 7:00 – 9:00 PM at Earl Marriott Secondary School in Surrey. The cost is \$10. Contact 604-572-8032 for more information.

[../top](#)

2. Learning Disabilities Association Parent Training in Vancouver

Has your child undergone testing for a disability but you are confused about the results? Would you like to know how to interpret the findings? January's meeting will provide parents and teachers with a better understanding of how to read a psycho-educational assessment. Join us as we discuss the types of tests involved, how the diagnosis is put together and what the recommendations mean.

Dr. Marjolaine Limbos will present Understanding Special Needs Testing at The Learning Center, 3292 East Broadway in Vancouver on Monday, January 18 from 7:00 – 8:00 PM.

This meeting is open to the public. RSVP's encouraged but drop ins are welcome. The meeting is free. For more information or to RSVP please contact 604.873.8139 or info@ldav.ca.

[../top](#)

3. Presentation on Court Appointed Special Advocate Program in Vancouver

Please join us on January 27th, 2010 for a free, informal presentation introducing the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA) to Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. This event will be held at the main branch of the Vancouver Public Library from 1:30-4:30 PM, in the Alma Van Dusen & Peter Kaye room.

Please RSVP to casavancouver@gmail.com and indicate the number in your party if you are bringing colleagues.

Agenda

1:30 1:40 - Welcome and introduction to CASA Vancouver, Andy Chan of CASA Vancouver

1:40 - 2:15 - Guest speaker - Dr. Joel Milgram, former Executive Director of CASA Michigan on the CASA Concept

2:15 - 3:00 Panel Discussion - Mr. Paul Harder, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Collaborative Practice Team; Mr. Fred Milowsky, Youth Advocate, BC Representative for Children and Youth; and Joel Milgram. Moderated by Andy Chan

3:00 - 3:15 - Coffee break

3:15 - 4:00 - Breakout sessions/ small groups at tables

4:00 4:30 - Concluding comments and remarks

[../top](#)