

Provincial & Regional Partners:

Aboriginal Mother Centre Society
ACT Autism Community Training Society
Adoptive Families Association of BC
Affiliation of Multicultural Societies & Service Agencies
Alternate Shelter Society
Association for Community Education BC
BC Aboriginal Childcare Society
BC Assoc. for Child Development & Rehabilitation
BC Association for Community Living
BC Association for Play Therapy
BC Association of Child Care Employers
BC Association of Family Resource Programs
BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs
BC Association of Social Workers
BC Council for Families
BC Crime Prevention Association
BC Early Years Alliance
BC Farm Women's Network
BC Federation of Foster Parents Association
BC Government & Service Employees' Union
BC Institute Against Family Violence
BC Pediatric Society
BC Recreation and Parks Association
BC School Trustees Association
BC Teachers' Federation
BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses
Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland
Boys & Girls Clubs of BC
Canadian Association for Young Children
Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division
Canadian Red Cross • Capilano Student Union
Caring for First Nations Children Society
Cerebral Palsy Association of BC
Child & Family Counseling Association
Child & Youth Care Association of BC
Child Care Advocacy Forum
Children's & Women's Health Centre of BC
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC
Council of Parent Participation Preschools BC
Deaf Children's Society of BC
Dietitians of Canada, BC Region
Developmental Disabilities Association
Early Childhood Educators of BC
East Kootenay Childhood Coalition
Family Services of Greater Vancouver
Federated Anti-Poverty Groups
Federation of BC Youth In Care Networks
Federation of Child & Family Services of BC
Health Officers Council of BC
Infant Development Program of BC
Institute for Safe Schools of BC
International Dyslexia Association, BC Branch
Invest in Kids • Justice Institute of BC
Labour Environmental Alliance Society
Learning Disabilities Association of BC
Literacy BC • McCreary Centre Society
MOSAIC • Nisika Community Services
National Council of Jewish Women
Pacific Association of First Nations Women
Pacific Community Resources Society
Pacific Legal Education Association • PARCA
Parent Support Services Society of BC
Penticton & District Community Resources Society
Public Health Association of BC
Self Help Resource Association of BC
Social Planning & Research Council BC
Society for Children & Youth of BC
Society for Public Education of BC
Society of Special Needs Adoptive Parents
Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
United Way of the Lower Mainland
Vancouver Coastal Health – Population Health
Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
Westcoast Family Resources Society
Working Group on Poverty
YWCA of Greater Vancouver
...and 26 Community Coalition Partners.

February 2008

**First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition
Resolution in Support of Jordan's Principle**

Background on Jordan's Principle

The “jurisdictional debate” between the federal and provincial/territorial governments relates to a long-standing disagreement over which government has the ultimate legislative, constitutional, fiscal, and moral responsibility for the provision of services to First Nations children. This debate has resulted in First Nations children falling through the “cracks” and being denied services entirely based on their race and place of residence.

In 2005, a child-centered alternate dispute mechanism/principle was proposed entitled Jordan's Principle¹. This Principle ensures that First Nations children are no longer denied services that they are entitled to. Under this Principle the government or ministry/department of first contact must pay for the services without delay or disruption. The paying government can then refer the matter to a jurisdictional dispute mechanism.

The Principle is named in honour of a young Manitoba boy who died in hospital while the Federal and Provincial governments argued over who would pay for his specialized care (close to his home community). Sadly, at the age of 5, Jordan passed away – he never got to go home.

Further information on Jordan's story and the national advocacy campaign in support of Jordan's Principle can be found on the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada website: www.fncfcs.com/home.html and the Many Hands, One Dream website: www.manyhandsonedream.ca/english/AdvocacyCampaign.html.

Government and Community Support

On December 12, 2007, the House of Commons voted unanimously in support of BC Member of Parliament Jean Crowder's private member's bill to adopt Jordan's Principle. The bill stated, "That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately adopt a child first principle, based on Jordan's Principle, to resolve jurisdictional disputes involving the care of First Nations children."

The Hon. Ted Hughes in his B.C. Children and Youth Review recommended that the Federal and Provincial governments address the jurisdictional issuesⁱⁱ. BC's Representative for Children and Youth recently echoed this recommendation and called upon the provincial government to implement Jordan's Principleⁱⁱⁱ.

In January 2008, Premier Gordon Campbell stated publicly that his government fully supports the principle and will work with the federal government and First Nations to make sure children will get the first call and be put at the centre^{iv}. The February 2008 Throne Speech stated that the principle will be put into action and that no Aboriginal child should be put at risk due to jurisdictional disputes.

To date, over 1500 organizations have signed a petition in support of Jordan's Principle.

<http://www.fncfcs.com/more/jordansPrinciple.php>

First Call Resolution of Support

As a coalition of provincial and regional organizations and mobilized communities across British Columbia, First Call's partners endorse the 4 Keys to Success for Children and Youth:

- A strong commitment to early childhood development;
- Support in transitions from childhood to youth to adulthood;
- Increased economic equality;
- Safe and caring communities.

First Call's partner organizations feel strongly that Jordan's Principle, a child-first principle for resolving jurisdictional disputes involving the care of First Nations children, positively contributes to our commitment to safe and caring communities. Therefore, be it resolved that:

As a Coalition, First Call supports the full implementation of Jordan's Principle through legislation. We call on the government of British Columbia to follow through on its commitment to supporting Jordan's Principle by:

- Bringing a bill to the provincial legislature for a vote that confirms British Columbia's commitment to implementing a child first principle, based on Jordan's Principle, to resolve jurisdictional disputes involving the care of First Nations children without disrupting services to or negatively impacting the quality of life of First Nations children;
- Including in the proposed bill a commitment to immediate implementation of the principle when the dispute is between provincial ministries;
- Including in the proposed bill a timeline for concluding negotiations with the federal government on the implementation of the principle in the case of federal-provincial disputes;
- Working on an ongoing basis to ensure adequate support and care for First Nations children across ministries and jurisdictions.

First Call resolves to continue advocating for the full implementation of Jordan's Principle until satisfied that the needs of First Nations children in BC will no longer be compromised by jurisdictional disputes. First Call recognizes the complexities of implementing Jordan's Principle and looks forward to supporting and contributing to the process of successful implementation at the provincial level.

Procedure for making decisions on First Call Policy (2001)

The participants in the monthly Coalition Meetings of First Call make decisions using the following consensus model. Full discussion is afforded, usually over several weeks.

- ◆ That policy and priority decisions in First Call are made by the participants in the monthly Coalition Meetings.
- ◆ All major items will be announced in advance. Those who are not able to attend the meeting may send their comments in writing at least one day before the meeting. These will be read at the meeting.
- ◆ First Call will strive for consensus where possible. When there is strong division, the item will be deferred to another meeting to reflect, get more information, have committee work done, etc.
- ◆ Where consensus cannot be reached and a decision must be made, a minimum 85% majority of those in attendance is required for a decision to carry.

ⁱ Kelly A. MacDonald & Kylie Walman, *Jordan's Principle: A Child First Approach to Jurisdictional Issues*, Chapter 3 in WEN:DE We are Coming to the Light of the Day (FNCSC, 2005).

ⁱⁱ Hon. Ted Hughes, *B.C. Children and Youth Review: An Independent Review of B.C.'s Child Protection System* (April 7, 2006). Recommendation No. 14.

ⁱⁱⁱ Representative for Children and Youth, *2007 Progress Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the BC Child & Youth Review* (Nov. 26, 2007), p. 9.

^{iv} "Premier backs rule to aid native kids in need," Vancouver Sun, January 25, 2008.