

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Premier Christy Clark  
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Clark,

As a British Columbian, I want to express my support for First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition's ***Make BC's Young Children and Families a Priority: A Call to Action\****. I believe that it is important that our province's children and their families have what they need in order to thrive.

**BC families need:**

❖ **MORE TIME**

Flexible workplaces or hours, job sharing and enhanced parental leaves make a significant difference to young families. Many families with low incomes need to work many hours, sometimes in several jobs, in order to make ends meet, leaving them with too little time at home. **Children need time with their parents in order to thrive.**

❖ **MORE INCOME**

Too many BC children live in poverty. Children who live in poverty grow up with multiple disadvantages that impact their health, education and well-being and limit their potential. Our children need adequate and nutritious food, secure and safe housing, and access to the opportunities that support their growth and development. Policies that support living wages, sufficient welfare rates and adequate parental leave benefits are steps in the right direction. Families who struggle to pay off student debt or to access higher education are particularly challenged to adequately provide for the needs of their children. **Families should not have to go to the food bank in order to feed their children.**

❖ **AND MORE SERVICES**

It takes a community to raise a child. In recent decades our communities have changed: fewer families are raising children in extended families or in supportive networks of neighbours and friends. Many neighbourhoods are not as welcoming as they once were. Services need to replace the supports and sense of community that have been lost.

- **Child care is fundamental.** Many families rely on quality child care to ensure that their children are in good hands as they earn a living. Finding a spot is challenging. It is more so when the child has extra needs, or is an infant. Child care fees are a tremendous burden on a young family. Many parents are unable to find work that they can afford to do, as the cost of child care outweighs the income they might receive. Children have a right to quality child care that supports their development and learning. The proposed \$10 a day child care plan would address the child care crisis many families are experiencing.

- **Families can be isolated and need information or help.** Families need supports such as family resource programs, parenting classes, prenatal classes, treatment for post partum depression, and activities that connect parents and other caregivers. We want supports available to help parents understand their children’s development and when they might need extra help. When their children have extra needs, they need extra support. Services for children with special needs are critical to family well-being. Families need access to all these services close to home, without wait lists and with stable funding.
- **We need family-friendly communities** that give families access to an affordable and accessible public transit system.

Our province’s children need loving families that live in safe and healthy communities.

But that is not enough.

**Governments, especially at senior levels, are responsible for the public investments and good public policies that put our province’s children first.** We expect the government to help families to provide an environment in which children can thrive: help parents to balance and fulfill their responsibilities for caring and providing for their children. All families have the right to raise healthy, thriving children, and the right to the time, money and services that enable them to do so.

We call on our federal and provincial governments to step up now with the public policies recommended in the **Call to Action**, to make our province’s children and families an investment priority and to scale up services to meet their real needs. BC’s children are only young once and their growth and development cannot wait.

I look forward to hearing from you about how your government is going to step up with better policies, income supports and services for our families.

Sincerely,

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[Signature]

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[address]

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[address]

\*available at [www.firstcallbc.org](http://www.firstcallbc.org)