



## COALITION MEETING AGENDA

BC TEACHERS' FEDERATION  
550 WEST 6TH AVENUE, VANCOUVER

Wednesday, September 14

### PRESENT:

Agata Feetham, Gordon Neighbourhood House  
Allison Parker, Broadway Youth Resource Centre/Pacific Community Resources Society  
Anastasia Gaisenok, Check Your Head  
Barb Ryeburn, BC Teachers' Federation  
Carol Madsen, Parent Support Services Society of BC  
Cheryl Mixon, First Call  
Chris Buchner, Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks  
Fionn Yaxley, BC Aboriginal Child Care Society  
Fred Milowsky, Representative for Children and Youth Office  
Gyda Chud (chair), First Call/Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC  
Joel Kaplan, BC Council for Families  
Katarina Jovanovic, Vancouver Community College

Katherine Moore, University of BC/First Call  
Mandy Thayil, Society for Children and Youth of BC  
Mary Johnston, Five Family Place Partnership  
Michelle Davies, BC Teachers' Federation  
Mike McGreer, BC Dental Association  
Patricia Grohne, University Women's Club Vancouver  
Renée Turner, BC Society of Transition Houses  
Sara Cameron, MOSAIC  
Sheena Ashdown, Help BC Foster Kids Now  
Steve Bailey, BC Retired Teachers' Association  
Sue Irwin, Child Care Resource and Referral, Regional  
Trish Garner, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition  
Tunde Getaneh, Child Care Resource and Referral, North Shore  
Vanessa Bui, PeerNet BC

Virginia O'Connell, BC Community Action Program for Children  
Adrienne Montani, First Call  
Julie Cheng, First Call  
John Kennedy, First Call  
Deanna Ogle, Living Wage for Families Campaign

### REGRETS:

Erin Arnold  
Jean Moore, BC Alliance on Mental Health/Illness and Addiction  
Jennifer Westoby, Alliance for Professionals Serving Young Parents  
Mab Oloman, Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC  
Rhiannon Wong, BC Society of Transition Houses  
Yvette Plante, Canadian Red Cross, Respect Education

### CALL-IN:

Caroline Kent, BC Government and Service Employees' Union

## 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Gyda Chud welcomed everyone and acknowledged we are grateful to be meeting on unceded Coast Salish, Squamish, Tseilwuth territory. A round of introductions was made.

## 2. FIRST CALL UPDATES

Member annual appeal response update

Member organizations' response to our 2016 annual appeal was very generous, with over \$30,000 raised. This was the first year we asked members for a minimum \$100 annual contribution and many organizations that had not contributed stepped up in response, others contributed more in line with their financial ability, and a few organizations asked for a waiver, which was happily granted. This has been a tough year financially for First Call and this response has demonstrated the power of our collective commitment to our advocacy work on behalf of BC's children and youth.

putting children and youth first

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**Annual Dinner:** Hold the date: February 16, 2017! First Call will be honouring Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond for her work on behalf of BC's children and youth over the past 10 years.

ECD Roundtable report

**Child movement** – In July 2016, the provincial government approved a change (see [Schedule 1 of Order in Council No. 526](#) page 3) in the Child Care Licensing Regulation that reduced the outdoor play space per child from a minimum of seven square metres to only six square metres. Ministry of Health representatives declined to attend the roundtable meeting, and we will be writing to seek answers to the reasons for this change. There is a good [report](#) by Susan Herrington out of the University of BC about children's outdoor play spaces.

**Survey of early childhood access barriers for services** – We're in phase 1 of the survey. It's a very short survey, if you see it in your inbox please take a look at it and fill it out. We've extended the deadline to the end of October.

The second phase will involve getting back to respondents to share their data with us and share their stories and roll them into an advocacy campaign.

**Early Years Call to Action** – We are developing a four-pager summarizing key points of the [Call to Action](#) and we can ramp up a communications campaign around that.

**Sanctuary Health**, a group of volunteers, presented to the roundtable. Infants born here to parents with precarious immigration status are no longer entitled to Medical Services Plan coverage **because they're now asking for parents' MSP number**. Sanctuary Health has written to the Ministry of Health. Minister of Health Terry Lake stated in the legislature that Canadian-born babies are enrolled but this is not actually happening in practice. Vancouver Coastal Health have said they are not reporting families to Canadian Border Services Agency if families need health services. However, **Coastal Health can't by law waive fees**, they have to charge for the services. First Call will be writing a letter in support of this issue to the minister of health. Sanctuary Health has case examples. Publicizing some of those would highlight this issue.

Fostering Change projects: Study Circles, Art for Change

First Call is working to support the Vancouver Foundation's Fostering Change initiative to achieve better supports for youth aging out of care. We are collaborating with two member organizations on projects funded through Fostering Change grants.

The Canadian Federation of University Women, BC Council, through First Call member the University **Women's Club Vancouver**, is working on **study circles** to engage their clubs around BC to raise awareness of youth from care transition challenges and plan local actions. Former youth in care have been hired to lead the project. The University Women's Club is thrilled to be working with First Call on a tangible project.

The Society for Children and Youth **Art for Change** grant is supporting gathering stories of youth transitions from care into poverty for the 2016 *Child Poverty Report Card* as well as featuring their artistic expressions online on the stillin5.ca website. SCY are seeing what themes are coming out of the art-based work of youth in care and seeing what advocacy can come out of that. The project is hosting a skill-building day on September 30 for youth.

**As Word Spreads youth podcasts** – This initiative also came up at a Fostering Change event. The youth at John Kennedy's table pitched the idea of a podcast and it is now called As Word Spreads. The team members are 16 and 17 years old. Listen to the [first episode](#).

**Coalition member podcasts** – John Kennedy is also looking for ideas for podcasts coming out of coalition meetings. He will be listening at coalition meetings for story ideas and will be looking to set up meetings with members to create a podcast if they're interested.

**Waiving tuition fees for foster youth** – First Call has written a [letter](#) to Advanced Education Minister Andrew Wilkinson calling on him to ensure tuition fees are waived for any youth from care pursuing post-secondary education at a public institution.

Repeal s.43 campaign

The Corinne's Quest committee has been active over the summer, meeting with federal Minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould. Government promised to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action, including the call to repeal section 43. However, this seems to be bogged down in a general review of the Criminal Code. MOSAIC's Sherman Chan has connected with Sister Shirley Brown of Covenant House to see if there is a youth who can share a relevant story to help the campaign.

There are other forces arguing against repeal, including the Canadian Teachers' Federation and Canadian Bar Association, who are worried about criminalizing teachers and parents. If BCTF can help us advocate with the Canadian Teachers' Federation we would appreciate it. There is a need to do more education around this issue, using the evidence in other countries and research evidence.

ILO Convention 138 signing

On June 8, the Canadian government [announced](#) it has ratified the International Labour Organization's *Minimum Age Convention, 1973*. The commitment to a minimum working age in Canada of 15 years will come into effect June 2017. Catherine Evans and Adrienne Montani wrote a [joint op-ed](#) that was published in the *Vancouver Sun*.

Employment Standards Coalition work update

First Call had an opportunity to meet with Ministry of Labour officials through the Employment Standards Coalition, where we raised our expectations of a minimum age change in BC in compliance with [ILO Convention 138](#), as well as other concerns about the lack of enforcement and substandard protections for young workers. Officials said they're in compliance on the minimum age. Subsequently, with other members of the Employment Standards Coalition, were able to present information to the NDP about child labour standards changes we would like to see in their platform.

Another opportunity for engagement: the Employment Standards Coalition is holding [workers' forums](#) in October to give workers a chance to share their bad work experiences and perhaps get help from trained advocates. This will highlight how the current employment standards poorly serve precarious workers.

Living Wage for Families Campaign update

There have been several recent successes. Quesnel became the second municipality to implement a living wage policy and the first municipality outside of the Lower Mainland. They noted the policy is a way to address poverty and an economic driver to support the local economy.

Other local governments that have adopted a living wage policy are Parksville, Port Coquitlam and Vancouver. The Huu-ay-aht First Nations was the first First Nations government to certify as a Living Wage Employer. New Westminster was the first BC municipality to be certified.

On September 13, Port Moody city council requested staff to report on the impact of implementing a living wage policy. Port Moody residents are encouraged to contact city councillors to express their support of the living wage.

We are waiting to hear back from Pitt Meadows if they will be adopting the living wage.

Vancouver city council will be voting to implement the living wage Wednesday, September 21 at 10 am at City Hall. We are looking for people to fill the council chambers. The Vancouver Public Library and VPD will also be supported to certify independently as Living Wage Employers separate from the City of Vancouver. The concern is the PNE site where there are many low-wage workers. If any members want to attend on September 21 please contact Deanna [info@livingwageforfamilies.ca](mailto:info@livingwageforfamilies.ca) and she will update you.

The Living Wage for Families Campaign has partnered with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition on a summit in November 2016 to gather community activists and coordinate efforts on living wage and poverty reduction activities. We're looking to prioritize voices of those most affected by poverty. If coalition members know of any of their connections who should be at this summit please contact Deanna.

El maternity/parental leave clawback campaign; CPP clawback

If you have a disabled partner and you are working, then get pregnant, have a baby and get maternity benefits, the maternity benefits get clawed back from the disabled partner's income assistance. Community Legal Assistance Society has a human rights complaint based on gender discrimination in progress on behalf of a woman and family profiled in last year's *Child Poverty Report Card*. First Call has written an [op-ed](#) and written a [letter](#) to Minister Stilwell.

The other clawback we're still working on is the clawback of CPP (federal) spousal benefits after the spouse dies. The BC government now lets the family keep the orphan's benefit but is still clawing back spousal benefits. These can be changed by an order in council by calling benefits earned income rather than unearned income.

We appreciate when parents come forward so if members know people who can share their stories please [contact Adrienne](#).

Federal consultations: HUMA Committee on poverty reduction & Habitat III

First Call is preparing a brief for the federal HUMA Committee (the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities). Policy areas under study include housing, education and training, government-administered savings and entitlement programs, and neighbourhoods, all in relation to poverty reduction. If you have any input please let Adrienne know.

**Habitat III** – The federal minister of families, children and social development is seeking public input on eight issues to guide a new urban agenda for Canada. You can go online to fill out a [survey](#) with an urban planning focus, thinking about how children are impacted by urban planning (for example, play space, safety, clean environment, child-friendly housing and transit).

### **Children's Lawyer Initiative**

There is a [callout](#) to have a dedicated lawyer for children in BC. It's a one-time, two-year position. It is challenging for groups to apply to take up this work, when it's only funded for a two-years.

## Campaign 2000 – Canada Child Benefit

Campaign 2000 has been keeping the pressure on the federal government to ensure the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) meets the needs of children. It's not indexed as promised. The federal government has promised to index it no later than 2020. The benefit will lose value because of inflation and rising costs.

There are problems for First Nations and other low-income families and refugees who have not been filing taxes to make sure these families are enrolled and benefit from the CCB.

## Public education forum – Monday, November 7

Public education funding will be a hot topic ahead of the provincial election. We agreed to partner with Paul Shaker, former dean of education at Simon Fraser University and host of [Your Education Matters](#), on an event Monday, November 7, 2016.

This evening forum will feature a panel that includes Alex Hemingway of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – BC, author of the report [What's the Real Story behind BC's Education Funding Crisis?](#), and our member agencies who are seeing the impact of underfunding public education on vulnerable student populations, such as Aboriginal, refugees, immigrants, youth in care, children with disabilities and children living in poverty. If your sector or agency has interesting stories or want to be part of the panel, please [let Adrienne know](#).

The forum will be by invitation to First Call members, as well as open to the public. It will be filmed and put on Your Education Matters.

## Presentations and other publications

See the end of minutes.

## 3. WORKING POVERTY IN METRO VANCOUVER, STUDY BY IGLIKA IVANOVA, CCPA-BC

Iglika Ivanova is a senior economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – BC Office. [Working Poverty in Metro Vancouver](#) came out earlier this summer, co-published by the United Way of the Lower Mainland and the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition.

Media and people keep on saying there is no research and data on working poverty in Canada. The last report was by the federal government using 2001 census data. The previous government cut the census so there is no recent data. This report uses 2012 taxfiler data. The poverty measure is the low income measure (LIM) after tax, which represents those who are making less than half of the median income. LIM after tax for 2012 across Canada is \$17,000 for single parent, which doesn't account for Vancouver being a more expensive city to live in.

The study found that the median income of the working poor is \$15,000.

After Toronto, Metro Vancouver has the second-highest working-poverty rate out of the largest Canadian cities. 8.7% are working poor out of all working age population, around 100,000 people.

However, it's not just a city problem. Across the entire province, BC has a higher working poverty rate than Ontario and rest of Canada.

The definition of working poor used is conservative, e.g., it excludes students. In Metro Vancouver 61% of working poor are 30–54 years old and 42% have children (32% are two-parent families and 9% are single parents).

Single parents are more likely to be working poor than two-parent families but there are more two-parent families. This is important because BC government has focused policy on single parents needing extra support. Other families need support, too.

Earlier research based on census data suggest immigrants and people of colour are overly represented in the working poor. The poverty rate for immigrants is double that of non immigrants, research suggests.

The working poor work the same hours as other people, they just make a lot less.

Suburban growth is where we're seeing the highest growth in working poverty. This is where questions of transit and transportation become important.

Decrease in working poverty rates across the region can potentially be because of gentrification, e.g., Olympic Village, and people are getting pushed out.

Why is working poverty so high in Metro Van?

- BC's minimum wage remains a poverty wage
- The labour market is changing, making jobs more precarious: contracts, part-time, casual
- Government transfers became less generous, e.g., EI benefits
- BC has weakened our public services and supports such as rental assistance subsidy reaches few people; child care subsidy rates have been frozen since 2006.

Comment: Parents are working two or three jobs to make ends meet above the poverty line but the impact on children and mental health is immense.

The report's provincial recommendations:

- Raise the BC minimum wage to \$15/hr
- Strengthen employment standards and enforce them
- Build new social housing for low-income families
- Implement the widely endorsed \$10/day child care plan
- Properly fund education and training at all levels

Question: What about the working income tax benefit? Is it a subsidy for employers paying low wages?

Answer: We don't want to subsidize bad employers but it could be part of a larger package. Working income tax benefit is one small piece of the recommendations.

Question: Are there recommendations for rental housing? Answer: The CCPA [report](#) by Marc Lee looks at affordable housing. Check it out.

BC as a whole is 108,000 people who are working poor. Across Canada more than one million people are working poor.

## 4. MEMBER UPDATES

**BC Government and Service Employees' Union** – Caroline Kent is an early childhood educator and sits on Local 303 of Community Social Services and Component 3 within the BCGEU. She will be reporting

back to these groups on First Call coalition meetings. She also sits on the Coalition of Child Care Advocates. For the provincial elections they will be calling for the \$10/Day child care plan.

**Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks** – The new YouthSpeak report can be found at [www.fbcycn.ca](http://www.fbcycn.ca). They have brought the report to decision-makers and talked about the top five issues and will release a new report on this in a couple of months. FBCYCN will be presenting the results at the MCFD permanency forum in November 2016.

**PeerNet BC** – This year PeerNet will be doing fewer workshops that are open to the public but members on the mailist are still invited to participate.

**BC Community Action Program for Children Society**– The national campaign to increase funding for CAPC programs is on-going. A paper has been submitted to the minister of health and meetings with MPs are taking place to educate them on the value of this program.

**Office of the Representative of Children and Youth** – It's the last two months of Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's mandate. It is a difficult period for all those in the office. She has set a very high bar. However, she has not slowed down over the summer, releasing several reports and done lots of media work.

The new report [A Tragedy in Waiting](#), found on [rcybc.ca](http://rcybc.ca), details the suicide of an Aboriginal youth and how the lack of changes in the mental health system since the last report three years ago lead to the system failing him. They will be releasing another report next month.

The office will continue on and there will be an acting representative. The advocacy section where they respond to individual concerns will not change.

**Five Family Place Partnership news:** East Side Family Place's Circles of Care program is now located in the new Immigrant Services Society building. Sharon Babu from South Vancouver Family Place is retiring and having a celebration. The new executive director is Kim Collier. Marpole-Oakridge is working with the City of Vancouver on a new building and new services. The City of Vancouver is proclaiming October 9 as Family Place Day.

**Society for Children and Youth** – Their PhotoVoice project aims to help youth in government care be heard. September 15 at 6 pm Abbotsford (Abbotsford library), youth will be speaking and sharing their experiences through spoken word, photography and a panel. All welcome.

**BC Council for Families** has a sale on all their trainings and resource for 3 more days. Please check out their website [BCCF.ca](http://BCCF.ca) for sale details. BCCF was awarded a grant to provide trainings to agencies supporting Syrian refugees and to translate resources into Arabic.

Using the combined results of the Let's Talk Family survey and SPARC BC data, they will publish infographics by November 1 for all regional districts.

Executive director Joel Kaplan will be going on leave for three months starting October 1. Ruby Banga will be promoted to the director of programs.

**BC Teachers' Federation's** social justice committee is working on a policy for Sanctuary Schools. They have passed 14 equity motions to be a more inclusive environment as an organization. Their public education conference is February 17 and 18 and coalition members are invited to set up a display table there.

**Healthy Minds | Healthy Campuses Student Network** – Katherine Moore joined the [Healthy Minds | Healthy Campuses](#) student network. She is the director of student advocacy and political engagement related to mental health. She encourages coalition members to [send her way](#) information, resources and connections.

**Check Your Head** offices have moved to the Broadway Youth Resource Centre at Fraser and Broadway in Vancouver. This fall they are offering two workshops. Private versus Public Health Care is offered together with the BC Health Coalition. The second workshop is on migrant justice delivered through their inclusion and anti-racism project. Youth interested in working on migrant issues please contact [Anastasia Gaisenk](#).

**Broadway Youth Resource Centre's** director of youth services Jocelyn Helland has left the organization. Recruitment for her position closes on September 20 and they are looking for someone who represents Aboriginal and LGBT youth, among others. More addiction services are coming online.

**BC Society of Transition Houses:** Their children's program is studying the impact of a trauma-informed yoga pilot project with women and children and youth in transition houses. Executive director Joanne Baker met with Patty Hajdu, the minister of Status of Women of Canada, and brought up the issue child workers and children who have experienced violence. They have their [annual conference](#) October 26-28 for people working with women in the anti-violence sector and are happy for members to have a table and resources there.

**BC Poverty Reduction Coalition** continues to create public and media awareness on the disability bus pass clawback issue. We know already 3,500 people on disability have given up their bus pass, reducing their ability to be in the community, visit friends, see the doctor. If you know families in this situation please encourage them to contact [Trish Garner](#) with their story.

BCPRC's Rethink Poverty theme this September is [Rethink Work](#) – focusing on the living wage, minimum wage and employment standards. September 15 there will be an increase in minimum wage (to \$10.85) but it's not enough. On this day there events will happen in Burnaby, Vancouver and Surrey. This increase brings us up to the middle of the pack in Canada but doesn't make a difference for working poverty.

BCPRC continues to press for the provincial government to come up with a [poverty reduction plan](#). Some 15 municipalities will take this to the BC Union of Municipalities to pressure the BC government.

The [Welfare Food Challenge](#) is coming up in October and members and board are encouraged to participate. The amount of food that participants can purchase for this week is now \$18 and they've cut out bus tickets from the budgeting. If you can't do take the challenge follow on social media and help amplify the message.

[Chew On This!](#) National Day of Action on Poverty on October 17 marks the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The Chew On This! campaign presses Federal Minister Duclos on a national poverty reduction strategy. Members are encouraged to take one hour of their lunch time to raise awareness.

## 5. NEXT MEETING

The next coalition meeting will take place Wednesday, October 12, 2016. Refreshments are served at 9:00, meeting from 9:15–11:30 am. BC Teachers' Federation, 550 West 6th Avenue in Vancouver. Telephone participation welcome; please contact us by the Monday before the meeting at [info@firstcallbc.org](mailto:info@firstcallbc.org) if you wish to participate by phone.

## FIRST CALL OUT AND ABOUT

### Community Presentations Summer 2016

- Vancouver City Council – Healthy Living Strategy – Supporting recommendations for funding poverty reduction, living wage and reconciliation work
- Living Wage Webinar: Reaching Out to Employers about the Living Wage
- Port Moody Community Care Committee on the living wage
- Pitt Meadows City Council on the living wage

### Recent Publications

- September 2016: [Letter to MSDSI Minister Stilwell on EI Maternity Benefit Clawback](#)
- September 2016: [Quesnel becomes second municipality in Canada to implement a living wage policy](#)
- August 2016: [ECD survey on access to early years programs in BC](#)
- August 2016: [As Word Spreads Episode 1: What happens to foster kids who age out of care?](#)
- August 2016: [First Call urges Minister of Advanced Education to waive post-secondary tuition for foster youth](#)
- July 2016: [Adrienne Montani: CCB is good public policy but needs to be indexed](#)
- July 2016: [Opinion: B.C.'s child labour laws make Canada look bad](#)
- June 2016: [Adrienne Montani: Maternity benefits clawbacks unfair to women](#)
- May 2016: [Backgrounder concerning MCFD's Child Care Major Capital Funding Program](#)
- May 2016: [First Call's Adrienne Montani sheds light on Plecas report and RCY response](#) (radio interview)

### Media Hits

First Call recorded 19 media hits from June to August, including radio interviews on Roundhouse Radio and CBC Almanac on the effects of the Canada Child Benefit on child poverty. The media hits covered these additional topics:

- Living wage
- Maternity benefits clawback
- BC's child labour standards
- Disability bus pass clawback