



ECD ROUNDTABLE MINUTES

UNITED WAY OF THE LOWER MAINLAND
4543 CANADA WAY, BURNABY

Wednesday, September 7, 2016

PRESENT

Maria Cargnelli, Abbotsford Comm. Services/CCCABC
Lianne Carley, Vancouver Coastal Health
Joanne Chen, MOSAIC Newcomers' Centre
Omar Chu, Sanctuary Health
Mike Clarke, BC Government and Service Employees' Union
Coralys Cuthbert, City of Richmond
Joseph Dunn, Success By 6
Nichole Holdbak, Success By 6 BC
Sue Irwin, Child Care Resource & Referral - Vancouver Coastal Region
Joel Kaplan, BC Council for Families

Ramsay Malange, BC Association of Family Resource Programs
Katherine Moore, First Call/UBC
Tasha Nijjar, Sanctuary Health
Claire O'Brien, BC Children's Hospital, Pediatrics
Mab Oloman, Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (recorder)
Jessica Pan, Children's Partnership - Surrey-White Rock
Beverley Pitman, United Way of the Lower Mainland
Pam Preston, Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
Karen Sadler, Children First Vancouver

Andrea Senfz, Abbotsford School District
Patricia Steiner, Family Services of Greater Vancouver
Jan Waldbillig, Westcoast Family Centres
Adrienne Montani, First Call

REGRETS

Pam Alcorn, Federation of Community Social Services of BC
Vanessa Kay, City of Vancouver
Tracey Korotash

1. Welcome and agenda

- Introductions and regrets - Adrienne Montani chairing
- Agenda adopted

2. Previous meeting minutes - [May 18, 2016](#)

- Reviewed and approved
- Actions arising
 - Teleconference with MCFD on commercial child care and [backgrounder](#)
Representatives of the ECDRT met by conference call with MCFD officials on May 26, 2016 and conveyed the following two main messages:
 - i) The policy and practice behind the Major Capital Funding Program is flawed and needs to be fixed before it becomes an embarrassment for government. This is demonstrated through reports from the community - all but one of which are related to the funding of the commercial sector.
 - ii) Future capital funding should be directed only to the non-profit and/or public sector.

A [backgrounder](#) with the evidence supporting these messages was provided to MCFD officials and a summary of it is available on the First Call website.

- [Letter to Michelle Stilwell, Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation](#) on EI maternity benefit clawback - Adrienne reported that a letter was sent to the Minister yesterday asking for a simple amendment to the Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Regulation, specifically to reclassify pregnancy and birth-related Employment Insurance (EI) benefits as earned income, rather than as unearned income. [Find the letter online.](#)

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3. ECD Sector Updates/Presentations/Discussions

- **Ministry of Children and Families (MCFD) updates**
No one from MCFD was available to participate in this meeting so participants used the time to review and discuss MCFD matters.
- **Child Care Resource and Referral** - Sue Irwin spoke to the "Key Findings Child Care Resource and Referral Program Review" and offered the following summary for the minutes
 - Acknowledgment of links between the child care referral service and child care subsidy support service
 - Confirmation of the high volume of professional development that CCRRs provide.
 - Acknowledgment of the high degree of coordination between CCRRs and community partners.
 - Acknowledgment of CCRR staff expertise, experience, and situated in communities.
 - Further discussion is planned regarding the RLNR service and other considerations the review stated.

After Sue's summary the following observations were made and discussed.

- It was noted that the report also appears to raise questions related to registered Licence Not Required providers (RLNR). It is hoped that these questions will be discussed in the imminent conference call with the Ministry.
 - The report concluded that there may be opportunities to adjust mandates etc. of the CCRR and EYC Centres "to more effectively use existing resources". Participants noted that overlap or synergy of CCRRs and Early Years Centres (EYCs) was not considered before the government established EYCs and while some CCRRs are co-located with EYCs, others are not.
- **Child care licensing [regulation changes](#) reducing outdoor play space.** Dawn Williams, Senior Program Manager, Ministry of Health was invited to attend the meeting but declined. The media release from the Coalition of Child Care Advocates on this change was circulated. In brief, it states that the changes reduce the minimum amount of outdoor play space an operator is required to provide at a child care centre to 6 square meters per child, down from 7 square meters (about half of an average parking space). Large operators will no longer have to provide one outdoor play space for each child care program. Multiple programs will now have to rotate through one outdoor yard. Some consider this a scheduling nightmare and simply not what is best for kids. The evidence indicates that 14 square meters is ideal and that the minimum threshold of aggressive space is considered to be 7.62 square meters per child. If anything, we should be making outdoor play spaces bigger.

Lots of discussion on and concern about this issue including: questions about who is lobbying government for regulation reduction and why; how capacities/interests differ when the commercial and non-profit sector lobby government; the influence of the increasing number of providers who promote schoolification often operating out of commercial malls where outdoor space is limited and may be subject to air pollution from vehicles and nearby industries.

First Call is concerned that quality will be lowered by these and other regulatory changes. Susan Herrington's presentation to Vancouver City Council in May is highly recommended viewing see: <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/outdoor-play-spaces-at-child-care-centres.pdf>.

Actions:

- Get in touch with some new allies who will speak out about children’s developmental need for outdoor play. Some academics were recommended as well as BCRPA, SCOPE 5310.
 - Adrienne, Pam and Bev will draft a letter about quality implications of a regulation change without consultation. Adrienne asked for suggestions/input for the letter. One recommendation was that the letter include a focus on the larger context and advocacy for the \$10aDay plan. Another was that comparisons are often useful and noted the minimum jail cell size standard for single occupancy in Canadian jails is 7 square meters.
 - Maybe in the new year we can do something about the importance of outdoor play space, e.g., Raffi’s event May 24th.
- **Monitoring access to early years services – Phase 1 [survey](#) progress**
Thanks to Lianne and Joseph for their work on the survey’s pilot phase that went out to Langley and Prince Rupert. It has now gone out more broadly and there have been about 130 responses so far. Cut-off for phase 1 is Sep 23rd.

Phase 2 will be a request to share detailed data. First Call is seeking help for Phase 2 through grant applications and staffing.

Actions: It was suggested that the deadline be extended to the end of October. When promoting the survey through organization’s newsletters, stress that the survey is a “quickie” (four questions) and the very first step of building a data base for the ECD sector in BC.

- **Advocacy plan - First Call’s Early Years [Call to Action](#)**
Adrienne reported that information has been sent to a designer to create a communications tool for the Call. She is waiting for a response and once received will circulate material for comment.
- Success by 6 is working on building a network of early years communications people. Nicole is the lead. It was suggested that SLACK might be used for network communications.

- **Sanctuary Health and infant MSP enrollment**
Omar and Tasha, volunteer members of Sanctuary Health, reported that before 2012 Infants born here of parents of uncertain immigration status would be registered for MSP. Since 2012 the MSP eligibility for Canadian newborns has been tied to their parents – a barrier for these children when needing access to medical services. When the issue was raised with Minister Terry Lake in the legislature he said Canadian born babies are eligible for MSP. He also said this when he was asked on another occasion. So Sanctuary Health wrote to the Ministry of Health about the problems they were having when trying to register these babies. The Ministry’s response contradicted the Minister and referred to the post 2012 policy stating that parents should be on work or study permits and Canadian born babies of those parents must be 3 months before applications are submitted... meaning no access to medical care for their first three months. Not only that, but families fear that if they apply they may be reported to the CBSA. Omar and Tasha shared some stories about how this policy has affected some of the families they support. Sanctuary Health is seeking support from others to help raise this issue more broadly.

Action: First Call will try to help Sanctuary Health secure a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Health, the Health Officers of BC and PHAC of BC. The matter should also be brought to the attention of the BC Healthy Child Alliance and hopefully get it on the agenda. First Call will also write a letter to Minister Lake. This is also an issue to include in the First Call provincial election toolkit. First Call coalition members can be encouraged to contact their MLA’s and Ministry of Health and other related critics.

- **Other issues** – None added.

4. Member Updates and New Resources

(limited due to time constraints)

- City of Richmond, Community Social Development Department/Social Planning is conducting a child care needs assessment survey. It was launched August 20th and the survey will be available until October 2, 2016. They are also holding focus groups. They learned a lot about survey tools which they are happy to share with others. They will be reporting to council in December to update Richmond's child care strategy. The survey can be found at:
<http://www.letstalkrichmond.ca/childcare-2016>

The City has also established an interactive map of their licensed child care services.

http://map2.richmond.ca/Html5Viewer_2_0/Index.html?viewer=RCCUsing
and have developed a brochure on Creating Child Care Space in Richmond.
http://www.richmond.ca/___shared/assets/childcarespace44132.pdf

5. Future Meeting Dates

Wednesdays, 9:30 am to noon:

- October 26, 2016
- January 18, 2017
- March 15, 2017
- May 17, 2017