



COALITION MEETING MINUTES

BC TEACHERS' FEDERATION
550 WEST 6TH AVENUE, VANCOUVER

December 14, 2016

PRESENT:

April Martin-Ko, BC Council for Families
Barb Ryeburn, BC Teachers' Federation
Beverley Pitman, United Way Lower Mainland
Charissa Patricelli, Family Physician
Cheryl Mixon, First Call (chair)
Colleen Wickenheiser, Public Health Agency of Canada
Deb Anderson Eng, Pacific Community Resources Society
Fred Milewsky, Representative for Children and Youth office
Gyda Chud, First Call/Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC
Jessica Pan, Children's Partnership Surrey-White Rock

Katarina Jovanovic, Vancouver Community College, ECCE Program
Lisa Young, SUCCESS
Mab Oloman, Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC
Mary Johnston, Five Family Place Partnership/Eastside Family Place
Pam Preston, Westcoast Child Care Resources
Patricia Grohne, University Women's Club Vancouver
Ramsay Malange, BC Association of Family Resource Programs
Rita Koutsodimos, BC Healthy Living Alliance
Sara Cameron, MOSAIC
Steve Bailey, Retired BC Teachers' Association, Living Wage for Families Campaign

Tara Wolff, Canadian Mental Health Association – BC
Adrienne Montani, First Call
John Kennedy, First Call
Julie Cheng, First Call
Deanna Ogle, Living Wage for Families Campaign

CALL-IN:

Pamela Alcorn, Federation of Community Social Services of BC

REGRETS:

Fionn Yaxley, BC Aboriginal Child Care Society
Caroline Kent, Comp 3, BC Government and Service Employees' Union

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Cheryl Mixon welcomed everyone and acknowledged we are meeting on unceded Coast Salish territory, home of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. A round of introductions was made.

2. FIRST CALL UPDATES

Feb. 23, 2017 Fundraising Gala (date change)

The new date for the gala is Thursday, Feb. 23, 2017. Tickets are available online at firstcallbc.org/gala

Anyone interested in being involved in planning the event, please [let us know](#), as we're interested in planning how we honour 10 years of contributions of special guest Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, BC's former representative for children and youth.

putting children and youth first

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2016 Annual Report

The First Call [annual report](#) shows 2016 was a very busy year for us. The report provides highlights of the year and a snapshot of our work.

Living Wage for Families Campaign update – Summit

The campaign partnered with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition to host a Poverty Reduction-Living Wage Summit in November 2016. There were 75 attendees with 35 from outside the Lower Mainland. Workshops identified strategic goals and campaign planning then moved to more concrete skills building such as implementing living wage campaigns and poverty reduction work. There was funding support for people travelling from out of town as well as accessibility supports. People felt supported and that freed them up to do the strategic thinking. Participants asked if we could form a provincial network around the living wage. We will be reaching out and establishing stronger relationships to move the living wage forward in their communities.

December 13, 2016, Pitt Meadows passed a living wage policy. There are now seven local governments with living wage policies. On December 12, 2016, we certified Port Coquitlam as a Living Wage Employer.

There has also been movement in the non-profit sector with the Cooperative Housing Federation of BC (CHFBC) most recently becoming a Living Wage Employer. Pacifica Housing, Big Brothers Big Sisters Fraser Valley, United Way Fraser Valley and Parent Support Services Society have recently certified.

Portland, Oregon, has decided to tax companies where CEOs earn 100 times more than their lowest-paid employees. BC has the biggest gap between high- and low-income families in Canada at 13:1. Highlighting the gap and how it contributes to poverty in light of the Portland experience will have a high impact.

Presentations and other publications (see end of minutes)

First Call has been receiving [replies](#) from BC MPs regarding the child poverty report card. We will ask coalition members to help us follow up with their MPs.

Former Liberal MLA Colin Hansen was heard on CBC Radio discounting our child poverty statistics. Margot Young from the University of BC was interviewed for rebuttal on CBC Radio this morning. She had reached out to First Call and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-BC to get more information on the statistics we use.

Government will always choose the low-income cut-off (LICO) after tax for their poverty statistics because it always gives the lowest number. The BC government is picking a year when child poverty was very high using the LICO measurement and finding the most dramatic drop in child poverty rates.

We also have produced our third [podcast](#) on youth in and from care. This episode sheds light on their experiences around Christmas.

We have written to Bernard Richards, the new representative for children and youth, welcoming him and inviting him to attend a coalition meeting and the fundraising gala.

New First Call member

We welcome Charissa Patricelli, self-employed physician, as a new First Call member.

3. 2016 BC CHILD POVERTY REPORT CARD

Thanks to SPARC-BC and Campaign 2000 as our close partners in producing the *2016 BC Child Poverty Report Card*. Thanks also to the financial support from the Vancouver Foundation and the United Way of the Lower Mainland as well as Vancity Community Foundation, Vancity, Health Sciences Association, BC Government and Service Employees' Union, BC Teachers' Federation and the Hospital Employees' Union.

The report card is meant to be used as an advocacy tool. It illustrates a crisis in child and family poverty in BC. The overarching message: where is our poverty reduction plan for BC?

Our mission as a coalition is move the political will to make that happen.

The report card includes stories that illustrates the different aspects contributing to child poverty, such as stories of the working poor, benefit clawbacks and youth aging out of care. We are grateful to all those people who shared their stories and bring the issues to life.

Go to stillin5.ca to see all the stories, maps of child poverty rates across BC, social media shareables and a take-action tool to send an email to the premier.

There is overall a 5% gap between the overall child poverty rate and young 0-6 child poverty rate. We also have a higher rate than the Canadian average.

There is not one number for the poverty line. We use the low-income measure (LIM) after tax (used internationally and by most provinces) and there are different poverty lines for different family sizes. The drawback to LIM is it doesn't take into account different costs of living in different cities and regions. We use this measure against taxfiler data which includes families living on reserve and children in institutions.

We will be getting better data again on groups overrepresented in poverty statistics from the reinstatement of the long-form census.

We don't have the highest poverty rate in Canada. The prairies provinces with high Indigenous populations have highest child poverty rates, as well as some Maritime provinces.

Overrepresented groups include children who are Aboriginal, from single-parent parents, affected by disability (includes parents with disabilities), new immigrants and racialized populations.

The BC government put out a press release at the same time as the release of the report card with a headline "What we're doing is working."

The effect of the new federal Canada Child Benefit don't show up in these statistics yet. It did show up in the living wage calculation for 2016, keeping the wage from rising. It will show up in 2016 data (2018 report card) and it will make a difference in the stats.

Fact sheet 4: Depth of poverty is a huge issue. We always aim to lower the depth of poverty in addition to the number of children in poverty. Two things that would affect the depth of poverty: a raise in social assistance rates and the Canada Child Benefit. Ending the clawback of child support reduced the depth of poverty for many families. Children may still be living in poverty but their quality of life has improved.

Fact sheet 5: Child poverty and working parents: The majority of children in poverty come from working families. The minimum wage is not enough to lift families out of poverty. Income has not kept pace with

rising costs such as child care and rent. Solutions are raising the minimum wage to \$15/hr and paying living wages.

Fact sheet 6: A minority of poor children in BC are on income assistance. Families on income and disability assistance are way below the poverty line. When adjusted for inflation, the total value of income assistance has dropped over time, meaning a decrease in buying power.

Fact sheet 7: Aging out of foster care into poverty: Aging out at 19 resonates with the public because most people realize the support they give to their children over 18. Our recommendation is to increase supports for youth in and from care through to age 25.

Fact sheet 8: Child Poverty across BC: The Central Coast continues to have the highest child poverty rates. You can find the maps at stillin5.ca. Some of the highest rates are Duncan, Port Alberni and Prince Rupert, the same as last year.

Fact sheet 9: Growing income inequality for families: this is a major cause of poverty. The richest 10% of BC families with children received 27% of total income, while the poorest half shared 25%.

Fact sheet 10: Importance of government help: The percentage drop in child poverty due to government transfers was 27% in BC (from a 27% rate w/out transfers to a 20% rate with transfers), but this was a smaller drop than many other provinces. This illustrates the power of public policy.

The chart comparing provincial child benefit policies shows BC is out of sync with other provinces.

COMPARISON OF PROVINCIAL CHILD BENEFIT POLICIES



Province	Child's age	Annual benefit amount (1 child)	Lifetime investment (1 child)	Full benefit income threshold	Benefit phased out at	Benefit indexed?
PQ	0-18	\$2,392	\$43,056		\$35,000	Y
ON	0-18	\$1,336	\$24,048	\$20,400		Y
AB	0-18	\$1,100	\$19,800	\$25,500	\$41,220	Y
NS	0-18	\$625	\$11,250	\$18,000	\$26,000	N
MB	0-18	\$420	\$7,560	\$15,000	\$20,435	N
NL	0-18	\$377	\$6,786	\$17,397	\$24,849	N
NB	0-18	\$250	\$4,500	\$20,000	\$30,000	N
BC	0-6	\$660	\$3,960	\$100,000	\$150,000	N

2015 BC Child Poverty Report Card www.stillin5.ca

We always want to fine tune the recommendations so please contact us with questions, comments and input. It was suggested that the recommendation for refugee transportation loans include “without reducing the number of immigrants and refugees being brought in.”

Members are encouraged to go to stillin5.ca and take action, including meeting with their MLAs especially during pre-election period. Maps are useful to show to local politicians.

A fuller presentation in the form of the [webinar](#) is available.

Discussion:

Kudos to the First Call team for helping to change the language dramatically in the lead-up to the CBC Food Bank Day —CBC reporters are using different language that food banks are not the answer.

Is there a cost-benefit ratio showing the Quebec experience that we can take to the MLAs? (Yes.) Can we calculate the cost benefit of shifting BC's Early Childhood Tax Benefit maximum threshold down and give the savings to an expanded benefit for low income families? These are good provincial election toolkit suggestions.

What about a guaranteed annual income? It is based on assuming people can negotiate better pay above it, which is not a safe assumption. Another caution, advocates of smaller government want to use it to erode social programs, such as benefits to seniors and families, that **we've worked hard for**.

Youth aging out of care are encouraged to go on social assistance but they are not allowed to go to school full time on social assistance. It should be called transition assistance for youth from care who want to go to school.

4. MEMBER UPDATES

University Women's Club–Vancouver just held their Action Forum where four communities — Vancouver, North Vancouver, Kelowna, Victoria — looked at what action could be taken on an individual and provincial level. Look for the election forum to be held at Hycroft for women candidates of all parties.

Five Family Place Partnerships held a two-day strategic planning session. The Vancouver eastside is still one of the poorest communities in Canada. All five centres will open longer around the holiday season to ensure families are supported.

Public Health Agency of Canada: Three health promotion programs (Canada Action Program for Children, Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program and Aboriginal Head Start) have received continued three-year funding until March 2020, but no increase.

Office of the Representative for Children and Youth: The new acting representative is Bernard Richard, to be appointed officially in February 2017. It was noted that for youth aging out of care, the Ministry of Children and Family Development has changed the Agreements with Young Adult policy to include youth up to age 26 (from 24), and extended the individual limit from 2 to 4 years, with flexibility moving on and off agreements. The criteria has expanded to allow youth involved in life skills and rehabilitation (addiction, mental health) programs. Please let any eligible youth know.

BC Healthy Living Alliance has a new policy focus on making BC healthier for children, and this is the focus of their election advocacy. Their recent food security webinar had over 200 participants. They are also promoting investments in public transit, including healthy routes to school, and have met with the minister responsible for Translink, Peter Fassbender. They will be meeting with Michelle Stilwell, the minister of social development, about their healthy strategy.

The BC Healthy Living Alliance provides the administration and oversight for the provincial physical activity strategy. Phase two of the strategy involves developing concrete resources to develop physical activity in early years centres.

Children's Partnership Surrey-White Rock is working on strategic planning and renewing 11 tables and subcommittees. Pre-election, they're getting members to think about what we want to take action on, including growth of early years centres.

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre is celebrating 30 years next year and will be launching a new website.

BC Association of Family Resource Programs is working with the BC CAPC Society around advocacy to raising funding for Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) programs. It was noted there is a new national child advocacy organization called Children First Canada.

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC is working hard on an election strategy. Look at early March for action participation.

First Call is always looking for new hosts for their foster care podcast *As Word Spreads*. Coalition members are encouraged to go to stillin5.ca to [email the premier and your MLA](#) that you support the recommendations in the child poverty report card. The First Call steering committee welcomes ideas on new guest speakers or panels featuring coalition members.

BC Council for Families has a train the trainer program for their new manual [My Tween and Me](#). New trainers are involving children in the training. BCCF also has the [Hypersexualization of Youth](#) program looking at how service workers deal with hypersexualization of girls in media.

BC Teachers' Federation is celebrating the Supreme Court victory that restores funding to children in schools.

BCTF is hosting a [provincial social justice conference](#) on February 10 and 11. Teachers who are social justice representatives from around the province will be attending. If your organization is interested in hosting an information table at the conference, please contact Barb Ryeburn at bryeburn@bctf.ca

BC Retired Teachers' Federation's draft election toolkit has been well received and they appreciate the First Call research on our own election toolkit. They have signed on to B4Stage4 as result of the November 2016 coalition meeting. Steve Bailey is now the BC representative of the Retired Teachers' Federation to the council of senior citizens ACER CARP. Their campaign to renew the national health accord is going full steam ahead.

Federation of Community Social Services of BC's Voices in Action: The Federation Social Policy Forum is coming up on February 16 and 17 in Victoria. They will be meeting with provincial parties and having panel discussions. Find more information and register at fcssbc.ca/engagement/conferences/february-conference/

Coalition members from around the table thanked First Call for our work throughout the year.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next coalition meeting will take place Wednesday, January 11, 2016. Refreshments are served at 9 am, 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 if you wish to participate by phone.

FIRST CALL OUT AND ABOUT

Community Presentations November 2016

- Education Forum in partnership with Simon Fraser University and Education matters
- Port Moody Council Meeting on the living wage
- Poverty Reduction-Living Wage Summit with 75 antipoverty activists from around the province
- UBC Social Work Class
- Living Wage Community of Practice

Recent Publications

December: [2016 BC Child Poverty Report Card – Response from BC MP Ken Hardie](#)

December: [2016 First Call Annual Report](#)

December: [As Word Spreads Episode 3: Merry Christmas, thank you for buying me socks](#)

November: [2016 BC Child Poverty Report Card](#)

November: [2016 BC Child Poverty Report Card – Letter to BC MPs](#)

November: [2016 BC Child Poverty Report Card – Letter to BC MLAs](#)

November: [2016 BC Child Poverty Report Card – Letter to Premier and Opposition](#)

November: [First Call Welcomes New RCY Bernard Richard](#)

November: Op-ed: [Adrienne Montani: B.C. Liberals must do more to help the poor](#)

October: [As Word Spreads Episode 2: Struggles every foster kid will understand](#)

October: [What does it mean for the City of Vancouver to implement a living wage policy?](#)

Media Hits

The *2016 BC Child Poverty Report Card* garnered much of the media hits with 54 out of the 62 media hits for November.