



November 1, 2017

Hon. Katrine Conroy
Minister of Children and Family Development
Government of British Columbia
PO Box 9048 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E2

Andrew Weaver
Leader, BC Green Party
Room 027C Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Conroy and Mr. Weaver,

I am writing on behalf of First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition's Early Childhood Development (ECD) Roundtable. The Roundtable brings together representatives from the early childhood sector to monitor how public policy and investments are serving our youngest children.

Our message echoes the earlier letter from the broader First Call Coalition that expressed concern about the delay in concrete child care commitments in the September 2017 budget update due to a 'difference of opinion' between government and the BC Green Caucus and expresses our encouragement for urgently-needed commitments to action in the 2018 provincial budget.

We know that the shared commitment government has with the BC Greens to put people first in BC, including those struggling in the child care crisis, lays solid ground for successful negotiations on the implementation of a strong universal child care system for our province's families.

Early childhood advocates and families across the province are counting on this government to move quickly with the implementation of a universal child care system that provides affordable, accessible, regulated high-quality care and early learning to every child whose family needs or wants it, starting with infant/toddler programs before gradually expanding.

We know that thousands of young children with special needs are stuck on wait lists for access to child care due to underfunding of the Supported Child Development Program (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal programs). We also know the huge challenges child care providers face when it comes to recruiting and retaining qualified early childhood educators, largely because of low wages. And we know that without affordable, high quality child care available, parents, especially mothers, cannot return to work when they want to after the birth of their children.

Our members are aware that thinking through the first steps of implementing a universal publicly-funded child care system needs to be done with care and forethought. However, the \$10aDay child care plan has already articulated the principles and policy shifts needed to build a universal system. Its proponents, including First Call member organizations and the ECD Roundtable, urge government to act swiftly. Next steps should include

putting children and youth first

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delivering immediate tangible benefits to families to address affordability and access; investing in the workforce and developing a detailed three-year plan.

We also look forward to seeing a long overdue process begin to develop a distinct provincial Early Learning and Child Care framework for Indigenous children, defined by deep collaboration with Indigenous families, communities, organizations and governments across BC.

Please accept this letter as more evidence of the tremendous public support for bold and immediate government action to begin to address the child care crisis BC families are facing. We are confident a significant investment will bring the predicted rich returns to the provincial economy and to healthy child development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Adrienne Montani".

Adrienne Montani
Provincial Coordinator

Copies: Hon. Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care
Laurie Throness, MLA and Liberal MCFD critic
Linda Larson, MLA and Liberal Child Care critic