

Date _____

Premier John Horgan
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC
V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Horgan,

As a parent of a young child in British Columbia, 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****. It is important that our children have what they need in order to thrive.

Families like mine need:

❖ **MORE TIME**

Flexible workplaces or hours, job sharing and enhanced parental leaves make a significant difference to us. 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 of us raise our 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 of us rely on quality child care to ensure that our children are in good hands as we earn a living. Finding a spot is challenging. It is more so when your child has extra needs, or is an infant. Child care fees are a tremendous burden on a young family. Many of us are unable to find work that we can afford to do as the cost of child care outweighs the income we 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 of us are experiencing.

- **Families can be isolated and need information or help.** We need family 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 us understand our children’s development and when they might need extra help. When our children have extra needs, we need extra support. Services for children with special needs are critical to our family well-being. We need access to all these services close to home, without wait lists and stably funded.
- **We need family-friendly communities** that give us access to an affordable and accessible public transit system.

Our 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 children first. We expect you to help us to provide an environment in which our children can thrive: help us to balance and fulfill our responsibilities for caring and providing for our children. All families have the right to raise healthy, thriving children, and the right to the time, money and services that enable us 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 children and our families an investment priority and to scale up services to meet our real needs. Our 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 policy, income supports and services for our families.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[address]

*available at www.firstcallbc.org