

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2020 9:15 TO 11:30 AM

**PRESENT:**

Audrey Hobbs Johnson, BC Council:  
Canadian Federation of University  
Women  
Beryl Matthewson, University  
Women's Club Vancouver  
Caitlin Alder, Parent Support  
Services  
Calum Scott, Pacific Community  
Resources Society  
Carol Madsen, Parent Support  
Services  
Caroline Kent, BC Government and  
Service Employees' Union Comp 3  
Cora Boecker, Inclusion Langley  
Daniel Garfinkel, The Treehouse  
Child and Youth Advocacy Centre  
Darren Usher, BC Association of  
Social Workers  
Doug Kinna, BC Government and  
Service Employees' Union  
Galen Hutcheson, Parent Advocacy  
Network  
Garrett Jones, McCreary

Gyda Chud, Coalition of Child Care  
Advocates of BC, First Call  
Heather Lynch, Options Community  
Services  
Jean Moore, First Call Steering  
Committee  
Jim Staton, Family Services of  
Greater Vancouver  
John Millar, Public Health  
Association of BC  
Joshua Evers, Student  
Katherine Moore, First Call Steering  
Committee  
Lin Chen, Vision Loss Rehabilitation  
Mageeh Dhir, MOSAIC  
Nicky Bowman, BC Society of  
Transition Houses  
Sharnelle Jenkins-Thompson, West  
Coast LEAF  
Simone Klein, Parent Support  
Services  
Stephanie Howell, Society for  
Children and Youth BC  
Adrienne Montani, First Call

Becky Kelly, First Call  
Emily Chan, First Call  
Helesia Luke, First Call  
Susan Russell, First Call, Fostering  
Change

**CALL-IN:**

Barb Jones, Communities that Care  
Mike Lally, DIVERSEcity  
Bronwyn Armstrong,  
Representative of Children and  
Youth  
Michelle Boshard, AABB Homecare  
Services Ltd

**REGRETS:**

Jessica Forster-Broomfield,  
DIVERSEcity  
Dave Scott, BC Retired Teachers'  
Association

**1. WELCOME, RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS LANDS, INTRODUCTIONS, AGENDA**

Gyda Chud, chairing, acknowledged we are meeting on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish Nations, followed by a round of introductions.

**2. FIRST CALL UPDATES/ CALLS TO ACTION**

**Staff News**

Halena Seiferling, Living Wage for Families Campaign Organizer, moved on from her position in January. We currently have a [posting out](#) to rehire for this role. Dylan Cohen, Fostering Change Campaign Organizer, is moving on from his role this week. Emily Chan, Office and Engagement Coordinator, is leaving her role in the end of March. This gives us an opportunity to reconfigure the jobs to decide on next steps.

**First Call Fundraising Gala**

A reminder that the [First Call Fundraising Gala](#) will be held on Thursday, February 27. We are looking forward to hearing from our keynote speaker, Dr. Melissa Lem, on the impacts of the climate crisis on BC children and youth. The last day to register for the event is Friday, February 21. We will hand around a sign-up sheet if

**putting children and youth first**

you're interested in attending and would like more information. Another reminder to add in your attendee information into Eventbrite to make registration fast and easy.

We are so excited to announce that Karen Isaac, Executive Director at BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, is the recipient of our 2020 Champion for Child and Youth Rights Award! She has helped move the dial during her decades of advocacy, and we're honoured to be able to recognize her work.

### **Fostering Change Campaign**

We are working on an evaluation with stakeholders, allies, and youth who have been involved in the Campaign. We will use the evaluation results to create more clarity on moving forward with our campaign advocacy. We recently received a letter from staff at the Ministry of Children and Family Development and will share that letter online. On Friday, we are meeting with Minister of Education, Rob Fleming. We look forward to discussing our advocacy and holding him accountable to our asks.

### **Youth Services Meeting – Feb 26**

Later this month, First Call is hosting a Youth Services Meeting for service providers who are providing support services for youth in and from care. We look forward to the conversation.

### **Living Wage for Families Campaign**

Thank you to Becky Kelly and many other campaign supporters for keeping the Campaign running while we are without a Campaign Organizer. The Campaign has exciting momentum! We recently provided the City of Burnaby with their Living Wage Employer plaque. We are also excited to receive 3-year funding from the Vancouver Foundation so that we can hire a Campaign Assistant.

Leila Trickey, Research Coordinator, recently facilitated a focus group conversation to gather thoughts for the Fair Wages Commission. Leila is officially [launching her Making Ends Meet](#) participatory action research project on Saturday, March 7. All are welcome!

### **First Call and Society for Children and Youth's Child Rights Review Roundtable – Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 1:30-4:30pm**

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child reviews the compliance with the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Canada has now reported back on their compliance and the review committee is now accepting reports from civil society organizations. First Call and the Society for Children and Youth are co-hosting a Child Rights Review Roundtable to gather input for a BC civil society report. If you are unable to attend or want more information, we encourage you to contact Margie Sanderson, Communications and Outreach Coordinator at SCY, at [outreach@scyofbc.org](mailto:outreach@scyofbc.org).

## **3. 2019 BC CHILD POVERTY SUMMARY REPORT**

Adrienne presented [this Powerpoint](#) presentation about the [BC Child Poverty Report Card](#). Every year, we collaborate with Campaign 2000 to release our BC Child Poverty Report Card. The release is usually in November, to mark the anniversary of the all-party resolution to eradicate child poverty by 2000. This year, we received the data late from Stats Canada and therefore released the report in January. This is a high-level summary report, with only 9 recommendations. There are more recommendations and data coming in a future release. Thank you to SPARC for their assistance in data analysis and mapping (see [www.still1in5.ca](http://www.still1in5.ca) for maps).

We are disappointed to find that 1 in 5 BC children are still poor. We use the CFLIM (Census Family Low Income Measure) to calculate the report card data, as it is a relative measurement of poverty. The biggest social determinant of health is income inequality. It has a huge impact on child and youth development and social inclusion.

The data we use from Stats Can is tax filer data, which accounts for 95% of tax-filing families. The official government poverty measure in BC and Canada is the Market Basket Measure, which is an absolute measure. When comparing poverty data results, the Market Basket Measure provides the lowest poverty measurement.

Using CFLIM, BC's poverty rate is higher than the national average and has the 8<sup>th</sup> highest rate compared to the other provinces and territories. We are one of the "have" provinces, so the fact that our data is above the Canadian average is troubling.

We need to look at the level of systemic discrimination in our province. Children who are recent immigrants, Aboriginal, or part of a visible minority are over-represented due to systemic discrimination, colonization, and racism that they experience. Over 50% of children in lone-parent families are living poor, and most of those families are women-led, further evidence of systemic discrimination affecting women.

Most poor children have parents who are linked to the paid workforce. One of our recommendations is to raise the minimum wage to better support those families. Holly's story exemplifies many of the struggles that BC families face. As a single mother with two children, one with complex needs, she cannot work because she provides 24/7 care for her daughter.

In 2017, 76,450 children were kept out of poverty due to government support. The poverty rate would have been 28%, but it is 19% because government policy is working. We were pleased to see the Child Opportunity Benefit announced in February 2019 provincial budget. It will now cover children 0-18 (instead of 0-6) to a maximum of \$1600/year (instead of \$660) when it takes effect in October 2020. Overall, the Benefit will invest \$280M more each year in lower income children.

We currently have released 9 recommendations, which include paying a Living Wage, supporting children with disabilities, and reducing barriers that prevent eligible families from receiving the Canada Child Benefit, Canada Education Savings Grant, and the Child Disability Benefit.

Our [Still1in5 website](#) has a lot of resources available, including [regional factsheets](#) and [maps by city, region and census tract](#).

**Question:** Do you have the data to compare wealth in communities compared to low-income families who may live in those communities?

**Answer:** Yes, we haven't published income inequality data yet. The only data we can access right now is economic families, which also includes couple families without children. The income inequality data provide the evidence that the rich are getting richer and poor are getting poorer.

Comment: Canada's [Office of the Taxpayers' Ombudsman](#) launched an investigation on families who qualify for financial benefits but don't receive them. First Call is meeting with their office in early March. If anyone is interested in participating in that meeting, please contact Helesia Luke, Communications and Development Coordinator, at [helesia@firstcallbc.org](mailto:helesia@firstcallbc.org).

#### **4. TALK WITH ME, PLAY WITH ME, CARRY ME PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN, CORA BOEKER, LANGLEY INFANT MENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATIVE**

Cora Boeker [presented this Powerpoint](#) presentation to our Coalition Meeting. She was presenting about the Talk with Me, Play with Me, Carry Me Public Awareness Campaign. The campaign was created because people were noticing that parents are distracted by their phones and are losing attachments with family, causing children to miss out on learning and developmental opportunities.

On average, we check our phones every 12 minutes, which accounts for about 5 hours a day. We end up missing important cues, demonstrating that children's development can't wait. The digital landscape is changing quickly, and while there is ample research on the impact of children screen use, there is limited research on the impact of adult screen use on child development.

Infancy and early childhood are the most important times for children to have their parents' attention. Missed opportunities for these connections negatively impacts speech development and behaviours. For example, the Still Face Experiment shows the behavior effects on children when adults "turn off."

More time in baby equipment means less time with human interaction and natural physical development. It is better for children to be attached to the human body instead of through equipment. New concern is labeled "container baby syndrome".

To address these concerns, the Langley Infant Mental Health Collaborative created the Talk with Me, Play with Me, Carry Me Public Awareness Campaign. This multi-faceted public awareness campaign includes videos ([Talk to Me, Play with Me, Carry Me](#) and [Talk with Me, Play with Me, Comfort Me](#)), baby bandanas, comment cards for educators, playing balls, and more.

**Comment:** Thank you so much for your advocacy. Attachment for children aged 0-6 is very important. Disorganized attachment looks a lot like distracted parenting, and it then prevents children from learning because their emotional needs are not being met.

The **Langley Infant Mental Health Collaborative** are happy to come out to meet with groups if anyone else would like more information about their campaign.

## 5. BC BUDGET EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

The Thone Speech outlines what the BC Government has done that year and outlines what they feel deserves more attention. The BC Budget will be released on Tuesday, February 18. Helesia and Adrienne will go to the budget lock-up to see what is announced. Adrienne was on CBC Radio this morning to explain what First Call is looking for in the next upcoming budget. On Monday afternoon, she'll be On the Coast for further discussion on the Budget announcements.

We will take messaging from this table to the lock-up and will look for certain things in the budget, including Fostering Change's asks. Other coalition members will also be there in person.

## 6. MEMBER UPDATES AND ISSUES FOR FUTURE COALITION MEETING AGENDAS

**Options Community Services** is participating in a meeting with government about youth justice in Victoria on February 25. If you have messages you want shared, contact Heather Lynch at [Heather.Lynch@options.bc.ca](mailto:Heather.Lynch@options.bc.ca).

The **Vision Loss Rehabilitation** team is moving to New Westminster in June. They will send out a news blast about their team and how to get involved.

**The BC Council of Canadian Federation of University Women's** [website](#) lists events to celebrate International Women's Day.

The **BC Association of Social Workers** reminded everyone that BC Social Work Week is mid-March this year. They have a [conference](#) happening on March 13-14. They are also interested in the recent Ministry of Health announcements on the changes to the Health Professionals Act to see how it affects the Social Workers Act, which is held by MCFD.

**Family Services of Greater Vancouver** is in the middle of negotiations and budgets. They are attending a conference after the budget to discuss how the budget announcements affect their work.

**McCreary Centre Society** is conducting a study with their youth research academy. They are looking to research with a group of youth with government care experience and youth transitioning out of care.

**Health Sciences Association** is working on a campaign for better WorkSafeBC coverage for health care workers. Nurses are already included, but they are looking to involve all health care and social service workers. They are also representing workers in the child development sector, who have experienced a decade of stagnant funding.

**The Treehouse Vancouver Child and Youth Advocacy Centre** provides a coordinated team response to child abuse. They are co-sponsoring a screening of a film called [Rewind](#), which is a haunting and brilliant film about child sexual abuse.

**BC Government and Service Employees' Union** had their Early Childhood Educator lobby day in October, where they met with 30 MLAs to tell their stories. They have since created a workshop for ECEs to learn more about lobbying through storytelling. They are also hosting an ECE conference to talk about how to move towards a wage grid for out of school care.

**West Coast LEAF's** [Gender Equality Report Card](#) will come out in April of this year. It will cover a range of issues, including child protection and support for survivors of sexual assault. They hope it will be a good advocacy resource for many. They are also hosting their annual fundraiser, the [Equality Breakfast](#), on Friday March 6.

**John Millar** noted that we are currently faced with the biggest health challenge affecting us right now – climate change. We need to fix these issues in the next 10 years. There are many inequalities that are affecting our society, and therefore driving down our life expectancy. The Green New Deal is in parliament now, and the motion needs to be passed to urgently address climate change.

## **7. MEETING ADJOURNED**

### **Time and date of next meeting**

The next coalition meeting will take place Wednesday, March 11, 2020, 9:15–11:30 am. Refreshments are served at 9:00 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.