

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020 9:15 TO 11:30 AM

PRESENT:

Gyda Chud, Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, First Call (Chair)
Derek De Basio, Foster Parent
Jim Staton, Family Services of Greater Vancouver
Katarina Jovanovic, Vancouver Community College
Marlene Adam, University Women's Club of Vancouver
Mike Lally, DIVERSEcity
Calum Scott, Pacific Community Resources Society
Nicky Bowman, BC Society of Transition Houses
Gary Goodwin, Grandfather, Parent Support Services BC
Rebecca Vattathichirayil, Parent Support Services BC
Caitly Georke, Parent Support Services BC
Christina Campbell, Parent Support Services BC
Galen Hutcherson, Parent Advocacy Network for Public Education
Jackie Watts, Aboriginal Supported Child Development

Cheryl Mixon, First Call Steering Committee
Nicky Bowman, BC Society of Transition Houses
Kate Buium, Human Early Learning Partnership
Simran Sarwara, PeerNet BC
Pamela Alcorn, Federation of Community Social Services of BC,
Garrett Jones, McCreary Centre Society
Helena Browett, Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Community Services
Janet Fraser, Vancouver School Board
Audrey Hobbs Johnson, BC Council: Canadian Federation of University Women
Heather Lynch, Options Community Resources
Bronwyn Armstrong, Office Representative for Children and Youth BC
Faye Willick, DASH BC
Doug Kinna, BC Government and Service Employees' Union
Brynn Joyce, BC Federation of Students

Sharnelle Jenkins-Thompson, West Coast LEAF
Tatiana Eroujenets, Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Community Services
Judy Lee, BC Problem Gambling Program
Jean Moore, First Call Steering Committee
Elba Bendo, West Coast LEAF)
Darcy Morgan, Roots/Seeds of Empathy
Caroline Kent, BCGEU Component 3
Rocio Vasquez, Family Services of Greater Vancouver
Adrienne Montani, First Call
Helesia Luke, First Call
Leila Trickey, Making Ends Meet, First Call
Susan Russell, First Call, Fostering Change
Anastasia French, First Call, Living Wage for Families

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

Fostering Change

Susan Russell shared that the Fostering Change campaign recently hosted a well-attended workshop on advocacy for youth from care featuring Katherine McParland of A Way Home Kamloops. The campaign is having weekly calls with the Ministry of Children and Family Development to discuss emergency supports during COVID for youth in and from care, bringing requests such as access to a free counselling platform to MCFD senior staff. The campaign is mobilizing youth and allies to make submissions to the BC 2021 Budget consultations, supported by workshops and sample letters. The OutTV documentary film by Maureen Palmer, 19 and Homeless, will be shown in collaboration with Pacific Cinematheque, supplemented by a panel of youth who appeared in the film.

putting children and youth first

Living Wage

Anastasia French has joined us as the new Campaigns and Operations Organiser for the Living Wage Campaign as well as working on other First Call projects and campaigns. She is currently engaging with current and prospective employers about the Living Wage campaign. She started work on June 1st. We recognize at this time that many businesses and organizations, large and small, are struggling and finding it difficult to make long term plans and commitments because of the uncertainties. The current crisis is shining a light on the heightened vulnerabilities of low wage workers and others in precarious employment, as well as highlighting the crucial role they play in the safety and well-being of our families and communities. Meanwhile, the campaign is still receiving applications from employers wanting to be certified.

Making Ends Meet

The Making Ends Meet project is still recruiting researchers to take part in this Living Wage participatory action research project. If you have any recruitment flyers, they are no longer relevant because we will not be meeting in person and so won't be offering childcare or lunch. We are hoping to recruit around 10 peer researchers to take part in the project. Introductory and training workshops are planned for the coming months.

Campaign 2000

The national campaign has released a [statement about anti-black racism](#). First Call will release our statement along with a report containing BC child poverty data soon. [See <https://firstcallbc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/First-Call-Anti-Black-Racism-Statement-June-2020-FINAL.pdf>]

ECD roundtable

Adrienne reported on a few updates from the Early Childhood Development Roundtable of May 27:

- The Deaf Children's Society's succeeded in their campaign to secure funding from MCFD to keep open the province's only ALS preschool in BC, but only for one year. More advocacy will be needed.
- The pandemic has presented many difficulties for early childhood and family service providers at this time, but they are adapting and innovating to find ways to provide support remotely and safely. Many services are doing counselling online and even some group programming. Some, such as West Coast Family Centres, are now moving to also meet families in person (wearing PPE).

Open letter with Basics for Health

First Call is working with Dr. Vanessa Brcic of Basics for Health Society to write [an open letter](#) calling on the BC Government to implement a COVID-19 Children's Safety and Wellness Task Force. The letter is currently circulating and getting signatories. First Call members will be invited to sign the open letter via email today.

3. GUEST PRESENTATION: PARENT SUPPORT SERVICES BC

Gary Goodwin, Christina Campbell, Caity Goerke and Rebecca Vattathichirayil discussed the lack of access to Federal benefits for disabled children raised in kinship care.

Gary, Christina, Caity and Rebecca introduced the work that the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group are doing. They explained the different benefits that people raising children in kinship care are eligible and ineligible for, and raised awareness of a loophole that means that people who raise children through agreements with MCFD under Section 54.01 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA) are ineligible for Canada Child Tax Benefit and the sChild Disability Benefit, as the CRA provide the money to MCFD. This is different treatment than kinship care providers who are under the Extended Family Program. It has also meant that these families have not received the COVID benefit they should have gotten.

The following chart illustrates the programs or agreements which determine the benefits caregivers are eligible to receive:

Programs	Maintenance Payment	Basic Medical (MSP)	Extended Medical	Dental & Optical	Child Care Subsidy & Surcharge	Canada Child Benefit & Child Disability Benefit	Tuition Waiver
Extended Family Program Agreement Age 0 to 11 Age 12 to 19	YES (Not income tested) \$994.81 \$1099.09	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Interim & Temporary Custody to Others Age 0 to 11 Age 12 to 19	YES (Not income tested) \$994.81 \$1099.09	YES	YES	*	YES	Not eligible	YES
s. 54.01 & 54.1 Agreements Age 0 to 11 Age 12 to 19	YES (Not income tested) \$994.81 \$1099.09	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	YES	Not eligible	YES
Family Law Act	\$0	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	YES Income-tested Subsidy only	YES	Not eligible
Restricted Foster Care Agreement Age 0 to 11 Age 12 to 19	YES (Not income tested) \$994.81 \$1099.09	YES	YES	YES	YES Subsidy only	Not eligible	YES
Post Adoption Assistance	Income & Asset tested	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	YES Income-tested Subsidy only	YES	YES

MCFD have stated that changes to a federal/provincial agreement are required to remedy this situation and there is a working group looking into this. Gary has proposed an interim solution, asking the province to stop applying for the federal Children’s Allowance for children with disabilities in kinship care under s. 54.01 agreements, thus allowing the families to apply for and receive the same benefits kinship caregivers receive under Extended Family Program agreements.

There was agreement for First Call to sign a letter to the Minister of Children and Family Development and circulate through our newsletter to encourage individual members organizations and others to send one too. First Call can also raise this issue through Campaign 2000’s working group on tax policy, as well as putting it in our budget submission.

It was suggested that this issue can also be raised with the federal Office of the Taxpayers’ Ombudsman, and that the letter to the Minister be copied to the Representative for Children and Youth.

4. BC BUDGET 2020 DISCUSSION

Adrienne presented some draft recommendations for First Call to include in our BC Budget 2021 submission to the legislative Finance Committee consultations. The recommendations were grouped under five priorities:

1. Reduce barriers to income supports for families living in deep poverty.
2. Target and increase investment in infant and early childhood development.
3. Accelerate building a quality, public child care system.
4. Support youth in and aging out of care and their care-givers including kinship caregivers.
5. Ensure no child goes hungry and every child is safely housed.

Members are invited to contact staff with comments, things missing. We have been invited to make a virtual presentation on June 19th, so feedback before that date would be appreciated.

5. MEMBER UPDATES

There was insufficient time to do a round of member updates at this meeting.

6. MEETING ADJOURNED

Time and date of next meeting

Members were supportive of holding an extra coalition meeting in July this year, so the next coalition meeting will take place Wednesday, July 8, 2020, 9:15–11:30 am via Zoom.