



March 1, 2022

VIA E-MAIL

Honourable Mitzi Dean
Minister of Children and Family Development
Province of British Columbia
E-mail: MCF.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Dean,

Re: Restoring Provincial Advisor Positions

I am writing on behalf of First Call's Early Childhood Development Roundtable with a request for your ministry to consider restoring the positions of Provincial Advisor for Infant Development Programs (IDP) and Supported Child Development Programs (SCDP), which were cut many years ago. As we have learned from both from the history of these positions before they were eliminated and the excellent work done by the continuing Aboriginal IDP and SCDP provincial advisors, the loss of these two provincial leadership positions has negatively impacted the field and the families they serve.

We have heard that, especially in these times of change, the lack of provincial representation, leadership and support are sorely missed. The provincial community of practice for IDP and SCDP has become isolated and fractured. Regional Advisors in some regions of the province are more able to meet, while others are rarely, if ever, able to do so. Provincial Advisors have a crucial role to play in bringing cohesiveness to a fragmented system, even more so because of the pandemic.

Reinstating these two positions is critical, as they can provide:

- Support and consistency of practice for Regional Advisors and their programs,
- A central place to find out what's going on provincially through networking and regular information sharing,
- Regular and consistent opportunities for province-wide training and development,
- Dissemination of research-based information about best practices and mentorship,
- Opportunities to review IDP and SCDP policy,
- Opportunities to develop, review and evaluate assessment tools, support guides, operational manuals and practice,
- Bring the voice and expertise of the field to inform and consult with government as decisions are made about changes in the Early Years and Child Care System.

Through these leadership and support roles, the concerns about uneven service delivery across communities and the province can be brought to light. Small communities especially need help with potential liability issues and inconsistent policy and practice guidance. There are differences in the challenges faced by the Regional Advisors and practitioners in IDP and SCDP that require the expertise and attention of Provincial Advisors knowledgeable in these two areas.

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Regional Advisors are limited in their ability to provide mentorship and don't have the mandate to provide this. They report that there is no one to go to if they have a problem. Many of them are doing this work off the side of their desks.

In calling upon you to restore these two Provincial Advisor positions we recommend that:

- They hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree,
- They have clearly defined roles, including providing training, coordination and support to Regional Advisors,
- They have explicit mandates to advocate for communities and families,
- There is clarity on collaborative roles with AIDP and ASCD Provincial Advisors,
- Methods for continued coordination between IDP and SCD be developed, should they eventually arrive in separate ministries.

We would welcome the opportunity to facilitate a meeting with you or Ministry staff to discuss the restoration of these critical positions to improve supports for some of BC's youngest and most vulnerable children. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Adrienne Montani
Executive Director