



June 20, 2022

Honourable Katrina Chen  
Minister of State for Child Care  
Room 028 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria BC, V8V 1X4

Via Email: [CC.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:CC.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Minister Chen,

We are writing in support of the 32 Young Parent Programs (YPPs) in BC that are part of the Alliance of Professionals Serving Young Parents (APSYP) and who work on the front lines with these young parents and their children. These programs do incredibly important work to enhance positive outcomes for the young parent families they serve.

In the 2020-21 school year, at least 180 young parents under the age of 24 were supported by YPPs, and 146 were receiving Young Parent Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) funding. At least 75 children of young parents were in child care and 42% of young parents in these programs identified as Indigenous. The most pressing issues these parents identify are financial hardship, including housing and transportation challenges, and the accompanying anxiety and other impacts on their mental health.

The supports provided to young parents by YPPs are wide-ranging and can include child care, parent education and resources, mental health support and/or counselling, help with completing forms and referrals to community agencies, in-program meals, grocery gift cards and/or food to take home, infant supplies, transportation, outreach support for pregnant or at-home parents, as well as individual and group support. YPP staff need specialized skills and education to be able to support and engage with the youth, many of whom are highly vulnerable and have complex needs.

Thanks to all this hard work, these are highly successful programs contributing to healthy outcomes for the parents and their children. A recent Young Parent Alumni Survey found that:

- 77% of young parent alumni said that as a result of attending a YPP, their children were better prepared for elementary school, and they were better prepared to cope with their challenges.
- After they left the YPP, 28% of young parents graduated from secondary school; 24.5% got a training certificate and almost 61% went on to get a post-secondary diploma or degree.
- Currently, 56% of young parents are working full-time and 12.5% are working part-time.

Important successes such as regaining custody of their children from government care are also recorded. Existing service gaps and restrictions continue to exist on these programs and need to be addressed by government:

- Young parents who give birth to their first child over the age of 20 and are still working towards completing grade 12 are ineligible to access the Young Parent portion of the ACCB.

- Once young parents have completed their grade 12, their access to the Young Parent portion of the ACCB ends. This ends the access to the supports that come with it, leaving young parents hanging in their transition to post-secondary or work.
- Many YPPs are still without regional contracts that allow them to provide the extensive wraparound family support services needed for these vulnerable youth.

The First Call Early Childhood Development Roundtable strongly supports the following amendments to the criteria for Young Parent portion of the ACCB requested by the Alliance for Professionals Serving Young Parents:

- Modify the criteria to include parents who give birth to their first child before the age of 24 (instead of age 20) and are participating in an education program for the purpose of completing Grade 12.
- Add a transitional time of 18 months to support young parents who have completed their secondary education.

All Young Parent Programs should be able to access regional MCFD outreach and coordination contracts, so they can provide - beyond Child Care - the accessible support needed when young parents are pregnant and/or facing challenging issues in their lives. This requires prioritizing regional funding to provide these crucial preventative supports.

These recommendations have been shared by APSYP with MCFD (in previous reports and conversations as far back as 2014) and directly with you, Minister Chen, and now are being shared with the Ministry of Education and Child Care. We recognize that, in 2018, important changes were made that considerably supported YPPs, young parents and their children. These current suggestions - supporting both equity and consistency in services and supports - are wise investments that will make an even greater difference for the long-term health and well-being of young parent families in BC, and we urge your government to respond positively in next year's budget.

We look forward to your response and encourage you to connect with APSYP and their Regional YPP Representatives table for more context or questions about these recommendations.

Sincerely,



Adrienne Montani  
Executive Director

Copies: Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development  
Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education and Child Care  
Joseph Dunn, Executive Director, BC Council for Families  
Jennifer Westoby, Coordinator, Alliance for Professionals Serving Young Parents, BC Council for Families

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