

October 2010

To: BC Association of Family Resource Programs  
BC's Early Childhood Development Community

We welcome this opportunity to openly share our perspectives on the potential relationship between services offered by the broader early childhood development sector and *Our Emerging Plan for an Integrated System of Early Care and Learning in BC*.

First, as you know, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and the Early Childhood Educators of BC actively support a comprehensive range of early childhood development services including family resource and parent support programs. This support is reflected in our long standing commitment to First Call's ECD Roundtable and our advocacy to advance the consensus reached at that table.

This support is also reiterated in our Emerging Plan which states that "a full range of integrated pre- and post-natal health and family support services is required."

That said, the primary focus of our Emerging Plan is on how BC can and should integrate early care and learning programs that meet the needs of the majority of BC families – most of whom require quality care and learning programs for their children while they work or study.

There are four main reasons for this focus.

1. While BC families need many supports, the current urgent crisis is the lack of access to quality, affordable child care.
2. The Ministry of Education is implementing full school day Kindergarten for 5 year olds and promises some form of pre-kindergarten for 3 and 4 year olds.
3. Our particular expertise is in regulated child care (including preschool) and the research and lived experience emanating from that sector.
4. While we recognize their importance, it is beyond the limited resources and scope of this project to attempt to detail a complete system of family supports.

That said, the Emerging Plan clearly situates proposed new Early Years Centres (EYCs) as possible 'hubs' for the delivery of a full range of family and parent support services.

We understand there are remaining questions about the relationship between family resource and parent support programs and our Emerging Plan. To the degree this interest indicates that your sector sees a potential place for your programs in our Emerging Plan – we are delighted!

We anticipated this question would emerge but felt it would be presumptuous for us to attempt to answer it for services beyond our expertise. Still, we decided it was worth the risk of sharing key elements of our plan now, to get the ideas into the public dialogue and to learn from others as we move towards finalizing our plan.

As you may know, we are inviting feedback to our Emerging Plan through a web-based survey tool at [http://surveymonkey.com/s/emerging\\_plan](http://surveymonkey.com/s/emerging_plan). We encourage you to share your support, your concerns and any alternative suggestions through this vehicle. We very much hope you will support our plan for the integration of early care and learning programs/services that BC's children attend unaccompanied by their parents.

In addition, we invite you to share, in more detail, your perspectives on the potential relationship between the services you provide and those described in our Emerging Plan. Specifically, is your sector interested in finding a new home within the mandate of the Ministry of Education, do you wish to stay in MCFD or, as some propose, would you rather be under the umbrella of Health Promotion? Do you see your service as a component of an Early Years Centre? If so, what governance, funding and accountability models would you suggest?

We hope that, just as we shared our Emerging Plan at the First Call ECD Roundtable, you will use the Roundtable to continue this discussion.

We are excited about the innovative and creative approach reflected in our Emerging Plan and the enthusiasm with which it is being received around the province. We look forward to your thoughts on how we can build a strong, integrated system of services and supports that meet the needs of all children and families.

Sincerely,

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC  
Early Childhood Educators of BC