

Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

July 13, 2016

Dear Minister Duclos,

On behalf of over 2 million British Columbians who represent the base of support for BC's community-developed \$10aDay Child Care Plan (attached), we are writing to express our optimism that current federal-provincial-territorial discussions will result in an effective national early care and learning framework.

For over 3 decades, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (CCCABC), has advocated for a universal, affordable, inclusive, high quality childcare system in BC and across Canada. We are a proud member of the Child Care Association of Canada (CCAAC) and helped shape the "Shared Framework for building an early childhood education and care system for all". We continue to work with the CCAAC and other national partners to advance this Framework.

As the federal Cabinet Minister responsible for leading the negotiations with provinces and territories – we are counting on you to make sure that these discussions lead to a shared vision for equitable early care and learning systems for all - while respecting the diversity that exists across our country.

Based on our experiences in BC, we are confident that diversity within a shared framework is both possible and necessary. However, the federal government must ensure that sustained federal funds coming to BC are used to build a child care system rather than to prop up the current patchwork of services and failed demand-side funding of child care.

This caution also comes from experience. In 2005, we worked closely with the federal government to support *Moving forward on early learning and child care* - the Agreement-in-principle between the government of Canada and the government of British Columbia through which significant federal funding flowed to our province. While this agreement included the key QUAD principles, it did not require provinces to dedicate the funds to affordable, quality child care. Consequently, and regrettably, BC did not use the funds to form the child care system that our families and children need. So despite a seemingly positive federal step, the child care crisis in BC has only deepened since then.

In 2011, in response to the lack of effective action, our organization along with the Early Childhood Educators of BC, took the initiative to develop a community-based solution to BC's child care crisis. The resulting *Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning* – now widely known as the *\$10aDay Plan* - provides a way to move from the current patchwork of services and failed policies to a coherent, accountable system that provides affordable quality child care for all who want and need it.

The \$10aDay Plan builds on well-established evidence. It integrates policies that have demonstrated effectiveness in achieving quality, affordable child care and rejects those that have failed. The research clearly demonstrates that there isn't actually a lot of 'choice' about how to achieve these public goals. Affordability will only improve if fees are controlled and quality will only be enhanced if early childhood educators' wages and education improve.

The \$10aDay Plan is now supported by 46 BC local governments, 30 BC School Districts, a broad range of organizations including Vancity Credit Union, the Surrey Board of Trade, and the United Way of the Lower Mainland along with academics, community, labour, community, business and women's groups and over 10,000 individuals across the province.

BC's \$10aDay Plan identifies 3 key roles for the federal government:

1. Ensuring that First Nations have the power, resources and support to design, govern and deliver early care and learning services that meet the needs of their peoples
2. Legislating and funding an enhanced parental leave program that provides parents with up to 18 months of leave, including reserved time for fathers and adequate incomes
- 3. Transferring sustained, dedicated funds to provinces to build systems of early care and learning with accountability measures that ensure the funds are used to develop and deliver systems that are universal, high quality, affordable, inclusive and democratically governed.**

The current negotiations about a national early care and learning framework provide an historic opportunity to deliver on the 3rd key role. And, our \$10aDay Plan and its broad base of support provide an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate how a national vision can be applied in provinces in ways that respond to different contexts while leading towards a shared outcome.

Yet, our biggest fear remains that under the cover of responding to diversity, a new national framework will be weak on accountability measures and will only lead to greater disparity.

As the Prime Minister so clearly stated, for Canadian families high quality, affordable child care is now a necessity. We are counting on you to ensure that your government's investments in child care are not squandered on patchwork, fragmented approaches that don't work.

We request an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the \$10aDay Plan in more detail. We think this would be helpful as you undertake your work at the national level and could serve as a model of how a federal vision can support an evidence-based provincial solution. We would be pleased to participate in a conference call, meet with you or your staff when you are in BC or, as resources allow, travel to Ottawa to meet with you.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,

Susan Harney
Chairperson

cc. Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs
Stephanie Cadieux, BC Minister of Children and Family Development
Early Childhood Educators of BC
Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada
Members of Parliament from British Columbia