



Annual Report 2004/05

This has been another year of change for the sector and MCFD. The year started with the then Minister of Children and Family Development, Gordon Hogg stepping down and the Deputy Minister, Chris Haynes, being released along with Doug Walls, the interim chief of Community Living B.C. Multiple studies and audits indicated the problems in MCFD and the community living sector and the importance of having a clear plan of where the adult and children's sectors were going as well as the need for strong and ethical leadership. Christy Clarke was appointed Minister of MCFD in late January 2005 and Alison MacPhail was appointed as deputy minister of MCFD at the same time. Christy Clarke resigned as Minister in October 2004 for personal reasons and Stan Hagen was sworn in as the new Minister of MCFD one week later. In contrast, BCACDI has had a stable Board of seven committed directors and a dedicated provincial advisor for the last year. We have worked diligently on behalf of children's services with the three different Ministers of MCFD, Minister of State Linda Reid and the senior bureaucrats.

A new consolidated division of early childhood development, children with special needs and child care was formed in the summer of 2004 with Robin Syme as the assistant deputy minister. BCACDI advocated strongly for all of children's services for children and youth 0 to 19 years of age to be consolidated under one ministry or one ministry division. As per the recommendations of the Allen and Boyd reports, all of services for children 0 to 6 years of age are now the responsibility of MCFD and only children over the age of 6 with an identified life long developmental disability (e.g. an I.Q. of 70 +/- 5) will be under the proposed Community Living B.C. If families want to access some planning and family support services for their children under the age of six with identified life long developmental disability then they can apply for this support from CLBC. All other services for children with special needs including those with autism will be the responsibility of MCFD. Currently, CLBC has a new Board but no executive team. The current government is planning to transfer responsibility for adult services to CLBC as of July 2005. BCACDI, along with a number of parent and family groups, advocates for keeping all of children's services together and simply transferring adult CLS services to another ministry such as Human Resources or CLBC. BCACDI continues to discuss this with the current government as well as the other major parties leading up to the provincial election on May 17, 2005.

Our association has been successful in lobbying and advocating for increased and protected funding for intervention and behavioral support services for our member agencies. In the past few years BCACDI, in conjunction with other concerned groups, has effectively lobbied the provincial government for the elimination of a proposed 28% cut to supported child development programs and, in fact, were able to secure a \$3.3 million increase in funding for the SCC programs throughout the province.

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British Columbia Association for Child Development & Intervention

BCACDI has successfully lobbied for and continues to lobby for additional funding for intervention therapies and advocated for the funding and development of a paediatric therapy consultant position and advisory committee. BCACDI has been advocating for the expansion of training spots for therapy students at UBC, UNBC and UVic and for incentives for therapists to work in rural and remote areas of the province. BCACDI has successfully lobbied to keep services and programs for children and youth with special needs including autism spectrum disorder centralized and to ensure that there is ongoing funding for autism programs and services after the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision.

BCACDI has played an integral part in ensuring that the federal funding for child care and early learning is available for children and youth with special needs and ensuring that the funding is increased and annualized. The funding for B.C. of \$288 million under the National Children's agenda has recently been annualized as will the \$121 million under the federal early learning and child care initiative. An additional \$133 million per year will be allocated to B.C. under the recent \$5 billion child care initiative by the federal government. BCACDI is involved with the child care community and the Provincial Advisor serves on the First Call ECD roundtable to ensure that services children and youth with special needs are appropriately represented and that they receive appropriate funding not only from the Federal government but also from the provincial government which has a significant surplus this fiscal year.

In BCACDI's recent submissions to the provincial standing committee on Finance with respect to the projected provincial surplus of \$2 billion and in our recent meetings with Ministers Hagen and Reid we have been advocating for additional funding to address the 7,000 children with special needs on intervention wait lists in the province. In our most recent meeting with Minister Hagen in November he indicated to us that the government has been paying attention to our funding requests and that we would be pleased with the Treasury Board submission and the announcement of additional funding in the New Year. We have already seen some of these promises play out with the recent announcement of new funding for school aged children with special needs included in the government's commitment of \$150 million new funding for education.

BCACDI is an active member of First Call. We have been actively involved as members of the Early Childhood Development Roundtable and the full council. We were participants in the development of the ECD framework and in the ongoing discussions and lobbying on behalf of all child care services. BCACDI was represented at the recent meeting and senior administrator policy forum on Healthy Children in B.C. which has made a number of policy recommendations to government. BCACDI is also on the multi-sectoral steering committee on revisions to contract templates and client service agreements.

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BCACDI has been actively involved in research with respect to best practices in the delivery of services for children with special needs. Through provincial Success by Six funding we directed and sponsored a study on evaluation frameworks for best practices in the delivery of ECD services for children with special needs. We have also been supporting research on the delivery of services to children with special needs in conjunction with U.B.C. and Women's and Children's Hospital as well as a study on waitlists for early intervention services. BCACDI has the opportunity to be involved in on-going research with respect to best practices in the delivery of services for children with special needs as well as to partner with MCFD and the three major provincial universities on the delivery of a conference on best practices in the delivery of services and programs for children and youth with special needs. Discussions with potential partners and funding sources are being explored at this time.

In addition to ongoing lobbying, advocacy, and research initiatives, BCACDI continues to provide ongoing regular news and updates, it has a number of active committees, it held three successful provincial meetings with key themes and speakers in 2004, and provides a forum for ongoing discussions, problem solving and planning amongst member agencies.

With an upcoming provincial election and with child care funding initiatives from the Federal government it is vitally important to have all agencies and providers of services for children and youth with special needs working together to ensure that services and programs are adequately represented at the local, regional, provincial and federal levels. When we speak with one voice for children and youth with special needs and their families we are strong and we are heard at all levels of government. I invite you to join us in ensuring that services and programs for children and youth with special needs continue to be a priority for B.C.

I would like to thank the Board for all its support this past year. I would like to thank D'Anne Epp for her leadership and guidance over the last two years as President of the Board and to recognize Connie Surerus for her hard work and financial acumen as the Treasurer for BCACDI over the last couple of years. Both D'Anne and Connie will be leaving the Board this year. Their wisdom and hard work on behalf of children and youth with special needs has been greatly appreciated and will be greatly missed.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Sandy

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