

Provincial & Regional Partners:

ACT – Autism Community Training Society
Adoptive Families Association of BC
Affiliat'n of Multicultural Societies & Service Agencies
Alternate Shelter Society
Association for Community Education BC
BC Aboriginal Childcare Society
BC Assoc. for Child Development & Rehabilitation
BC Association for Community Living
BC Association for Play Therapy
BC Association of Child Care Employers
BC Association of Family Resource Programs
BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs
BC Association of Social Workers
BC Council for Families
BC Crime Prevention Association
BC Early Years Alliance
BC Farm Women's Network
BC Federation of Foster Parents Association
BC Government & Service Employees' Union
BC Institute Against Family Violence
BC Pediatric Society
BC Recreation & Parks Assoc.
BC School Trustees Association
BC Teachers' Federation
BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses
Boys & Girls Clubs of BC
Canadian Association for Young Children
Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division
Canadian Red Cross • Capilano Student Union
Cerebral Palsy Association of BC
Child & Family Counseling Association
Child & Youth Care Association of BC
Child Care Advocacy Forum
Children's & Women's Health Centre of BC
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC
Council of Parent Participation Preschools BC
Deaf Children's Society of BC
Dietitians of Canada, BC Region
Early Childhood Educators of BC
East Kootenay Childhood Coalition
Family Services of Greater Vancouver
Federated Anti-Poverty Groups
Federation of BC Youth In Care Networks
Federation of Child & Family Services of BC
Fulcrum Project • Infant Development Program of BC
Institute for Safe Schools of BC
International Dyslexia Association, BC Branch
Justice Institute of BC
Labour Environmental Alliance Society
Learning Disabilities Association of BC
Literacy BC • McCreary Centre Society
MOSAIC • Nisika Community Services
National Council of Jewish Women
Pacific Association of First Nations Women
Pacific Community Resources Society
Pacific Legal Education Association /PARCA
Parent Support Services Society of BC
Penticton & District Community Resources Society
Public Health Association of BC
Self Help Resource Association of BC
Social Planning & Research Council BC
Society for Children & Youth of BC
Society for Public Education of BC
Society of Special Needs Adoptive Parents
Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
United Way of the Lower Mainland
Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
Westcoast Family Resources Society
Working Group on Poverty
YWCA of Greater Vancouver

Community Coalition Partners: 100 Mile House, Abbotsford, Armstrong, Burnaby, Chilliwack, Delta, Duncan, Fraser North, Golden, Grand Forks, Houston, Kamloops, Kelowna, Langley, Maple Ridge/ Pitt Meadows, Port Alberni, Prince George, Salmon Arm, Smithers, Squamish, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver, Vancouver Aboriginal Council, Vernon, Victoria, Williams Lake

August 24, 2007

The Right Hon. Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing on behalf of our coalition of partner organizations, communities and individuals in the First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition who come together to promote the well-being of children and youth in BC.

With the conclusion of your recent meeting with U.S. President Bush and Mexican President Calderon as part of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) project, we were disappointed to note the lack of attention given to the well-being of North America's children and youth in your agenda. As noted by the Canadian Council on Social Development, the omission of a serious focus on children and youth in the SPP project goals ignores the fact that children's health and well-being today are crucial to the future health of our economies and our collective security.

All of the SPP goals need to be examined through the lens of their impact on children, youth and families, the building blocks of our society. We would be wise to put the principle of the best interests of children and youth at the top of the list of priorities in any proposed legislative, regulatory or policy changes, whether this is considering "harmonizing" regulations governing environmental toxins, traded products or safety protocols, or what information to collect to inform these decisions.

We urge you to become a champion for the continent's children and youth by introducing a new focus on the social determinants of health for children and their families into the work of the SPP project. These social determinants reflect the environments children are exposed to, ranging from the family to the broader socioeconomic context shaped by government policy, international agreements, business activity and civil society. There is a wealth of excellent Canadian and international research to draw upon underscoring the importance of supporting and protecting the healthy development of children, particularly in their early years when they are most vulnerable to environmental impacts.

... /2

As a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Canada has committed to the principle of promoting and protecting children's rights. These rights are the foundation of children's health and well-being. We urge you to renew our government's commitment to implementing the Convention in the work of the SPP and all other government leadership activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrienne Montani". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Adrienne Montani
Provincial Coordinator

Copies: Jack Layton, NDP leader
Stephane Dion, Liberal Party leader
Hon. Tony Clement, Minister of Health
Hon. Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development
All BC Members of Parliament