



*Working together for a community based, non-profit child care system that is high quality, affordable, accessible, publicly funded and accountable.*

## **Chairperson Report**

### **AGM June 2020**

The world is in a time of change. The COVID pandemic has forced us to see and act in the world differently. Personal and community changes have left us learning to be – in ways we never thought we would. As our social framework rocks back and forth, our economic framework leaves us wondering and perhaps even scared. The aloneness that this pandemic has caused has been devastating. And yet, as we mourn for who and what we have lost, I believe a phoenix is rising from the ashes to declare a new day is here.

Millions of people have been gathering, all over the world, to demand change. The systems and institutions that perpetuate racism, inequality, and privilege for some are being challenged to do better. What our leaders have failed to do, we are ready to do ourselves. The world is tired of empty promises and the old ways need to change.

Recently, we applied for and were successful in receiving federal funding from “Women and Gender Equality” for a project that would help us rethink and restructure our organization. If we are calling on the dismantling of systems that are racist, inequitable, and wrong then we needed to make sure that we first look at ourselves. Our REDI work (Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) is a 4-year project which will lead our Board through individual awareness training and reflection with a collective goal to re-envision and restructure our ways of working and participating.

We have seen, in the past weeks, crowds of protestors around the world, speaking up against systemic racism, injustice and brutality. Voices are loud, demanding justice for people of colour, Indigenous peoples, folks of the LGBTQ+ communities and others. We are hearing about systemic inequities and the consequences of poverty – lack of food security, lack of housing, inequities of health care, etc. We are seeing that when our communities are vulnerable, those folks who are most vulnerable suffer the most. We are learning that it isn’t enough to “want to be an ally” or “don’t mean any harm”. We have come to understand that our responsibility to create change starts with an analysis of ourselves. We must look at our policies and our way doing advocacy. Even though our hearts may be in the right place, do our ways encourage participation and all voices to be heard and considered or do we perpetuate a way that excludes some folks from the table? Words and thoughts are powerful. Do our

policies and language reflect the wider community of all families or do our biases only make us think we do? The work is hard, emotional and perhaps the most important work that we can do at this moment in history. I'd like to sincerely thank Jocelyn McDougall, Jada-Gabrielle Pape and Lisa Gibson for leading us through the first steps of our individual awareness and helping us to consider different ways of being.

Even through this historic time, the world kept moving. And our advocacy work kept us busy:

In 2019 we participated in the federal election, highlighting our \$10aDay campaign. Parents, grandparents, and educators from around the province held simultaneous stroller brigades in 22 communities across the province on October 5<sup>th</sup>, attracting significant media attention. The work that continues around the province from child care advocates continues to bring me a sense of pride and optimism. In the coming year, we want to take a more in depth look at how we can better support activism around the province and engage volunteers in more meaningful ways. Thanks particularly to Sharon Gregson for all the organizing and media work she does to keep the \$10aDay campaign alive and thriving.

As we began to look at organizational change, we began the process of updating our website and brochure.

We have integrated more administrative structures through NationBuilder allowing for increased efficiency.

We hosted a successful Breakfast Seminar for those in the technology and gaming sectors and a several well-attended Lunch n' Learns.

We released a provincial poll through Research Co., demonstrating the broad support for the \$10aDay campaign and provincial child care investments.

We attended the Ministry of Education's Early Learning Summit.

We updated our financial policies and created an organizational logic model.

While in the past, we focussed on other child care campaigns (national and other provinces) we updated our Endorsement Policy to contain language that reflects a broader approach to supporting other important social justice campaigns.

We issued statements of support for the Wet'suwet'un, and Black Lives Matter. CCCABC signed on to support the Just Recovery Campaign, All Aboard transit campaign, and the BC Children's Pandemic Recovery Task force.

We made submissions to provincial and national budget consultations.

Thanks to Lynell Anderson for leading us through our first audit as required by WAGE Canada.

We organized thousands of emails sent from our supporters to provincial and federal politicians.

We participated in and continue ongoing media interviews and articles (including OpEds in the papers) highlighting the success of the \$10aDay campaigns. Thanks in particular Sharon Gregson for her outstanding contributions as our media spokesperson.

We participated at the Feminist Deliver conference.

We continue to share our \$10aDay Plan policy recommendations with the Minister of State for Child Care, Katrina Chen and the BC government regarding the roll out of their Childcare BC program. We grow increasingly concerned about public funds being used to create privately-owned assets in the growing for-profit child care sector, the lack of caps on parent fees, and low ECE wages.

The \$10aDay campaign continues to be our biggest project. To date over a hundred local governments and school districts, hundreds and hundreds of unions, businesses, child care programs, organizations, and academics - as well as over 20,000 individuals - have signed the petition to voice their support. To date, families of over 50,000 children are seeing fee reductions, there are fifty \$10 a day prototype sites across the province.... And ECE's are receiving wage lifts and education supports.

But more needs to be done. We continue to advocate for a coordinated plan for school-age child care in schools, a move of our sector to the Ministry of Education and for an increase in spaces developed with public partners. As Childcare BC continues to roll out, we continue to advocate that a coordinated, well thought through, systemic approach to change is needed which will lead to ensured progress benefiting children, families and communities.

The COVID 19 pandemic has highlighted many of the continued weaknesses in the infrastructure of our sector. There is no denying that child care is an essential service. While we worked for many, many years to try to get elected officials to understand and publicly talk about this reality, it is heartening to see and hear our Premier do just that. Even with John Horgan as a champion to our cause, there is so much more that needs to be done.

As we know, a well-remunerated, well-respected and well-educated workforce is key to creating the system we want. In 2019, along with the Early Childhood Educators of BC, we initiated work on our recently released report "Next Steps: A competitive, Publicly-funded Provincial Wage Grid is the Solution to BC's ECE shortage." The

project brought together provincial, federal and cross-sectoral research and policy expertise to address the issues of wages in our sector. Huge thanks to Lynell for taking the lead in this monumental work.

For representing the Coalition at various national, provincial, and regional tables, for your insight, bravery, and dedication to the cause I would like to acknowledge and thank my sisters around our collective table for their work during the past year:

Ruth Bancroft, Katie Barthel, Maria Cargnelli, Gyda Chud, Rita Chudnovsky, Darcelle Cottons, Kristen Keighley-Wight, Caroline Kent, Sara Langlois, Mab Oloman, Lucia Rincon, Shelley Sheppard, Kate Spence, Sharon Gregson and Lynell Anderson

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The coming year will, no doubt, be as busy as this one has been. Thank you to all our members who hold trust in our work and who support us. Thank you for your hard work and commitment to a better child care system and to bring about change that will create the kind of world that is kind and loving, equitable and accessible and ensures equality and justice for all.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Harney, Chairperson