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BC Association of
Child Care Employers

Coalition of Child Care
Advocates of BC

Early Childhood
Educators of BC

School Age Child Care
Association of BC

Westcoast Child Care
Resource Centre

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Celebrating a Decade of Advocacy... and moving on

May 2010

At the end of 2009, the BC Child Care Advocacy Forum honoured and celebrated a decade of working together to advance a progressive child care vision and agenda.

A lot has changed since 1999. Until then, BC's leading child care organizations worked independently from each other. At that time, the community social services sector was just beginning to define itself as an important economic and social player – and child care was at the table. At the same time, we faced an historic strike with the potential to set a new benchmark for child care wages and benefits.

Many of us realized that to make progress, we needed a collective voice for child care. So, six provincial child care organizations met to explore how we could work together. In short order, the group crafted *A Common Vision and Agenda for Child Care Services in BC* and the BC Child Care Advocacy Forum was born.

While each organization recognized the importance of working on our own priorities, we all agreed that without a common vision for child care, few of our long-term goals were achievable. We accepted a shared responsibility for advancing our common beliefs.

We agreed then – as we do today – that BC and Canada need a publicly funded child care system that entitles **all** children access to quality child care. We agreed this system must honour and respect diversity; must provide families with real choices; and must provide caregivers with wages, benefits and working conditions they deserve.

Over the past ten years, we have accomplished much to be proud of. Together, we:

- Provided consistent and clear public information about public policies and budgets – highlighting their impact on children, families and communities.
- Supported advocacy across BC through outreach, workshops, public speaking and networking.
- Organized postcard, letter writing and petition campaigns.
- Built partnerships with the broader early childhood development community.
- Educated the public, policy makers, and community leaders about child care through an accessible and effective website, public presentations and workshops.
- Met with decision makers to inform and influence their child care policies.

And, most importantly, in the face of budget cuts, fragmentation and setbacks, we stuck together. It is a decade of work well worthy of respect, honouring and celebration!

2009 was our final year of funding from the Vancouver Foundation. We would like to bring closure to our work, celebrate an important era in BC child care advocacy and put our on-going commitment to advocacy to work where it can continue to make a difference.

We believe that First Call's Early Childhood Development (ECD) Roundtable best reflects the spirit and vision of the Advocacy Forum. We agree it makes most sense for the Forum's member organizations to devote whatever time and resources they can to the Roundtable and to ensure that child care remains a priority at that table. And, we have contributed the Forum's remaining resources to support First Call and the ECD Roundtable to carry on the work.

We thank everyone for your support and promise that we will keep at it until BC has the child care system our children, families and communities need and deserve!