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From: Maria Squance

Sent: October-05-09 10:13 PM

To: Polak.MLA, Mary

Cc: Mungall.MLA, Michelle; Farnworth.MLA, Mike; Black.MLA, Dawn; Foster.MLA, Eric; Trevena.MLA, Claire; Bennett.MLA, Bill; Horgan.MLA, John; Bloy.MLA, Harry; Hawes.MLA, Randy; Lee.MLA, Richard; Slater.MLA, John; Letnick.MLA, Norm; Huntington.MLA, Vicki; Reid.MLA, Linda; Cadieux.MLA, Stephanie; Corrigan.MLA, Kathy; Thornthwaite.MLA, Jane; McNeil.MLA, Mary; Hansen.MLA, Colin; Lali.MLA, Harry; Kwan, Jenny (Office); Bains.MLA, Harry; Hogg.MLA, Gordon; Barnett.MLA, Donna; Pimm.MLA, Pat; Fleming.MLA, Rob; Chouhan.MLA, Raj; van Dongen.MLA, John; Herbert.MLA, Spencer; Coleman.MLA, Rich; Coons.MLA, Gary; Sultan.MLA, Ralph; Thorne.MLA, Diane; Popham.MLA, Lana; Donaldson.MLA, Doug; Falcon.MLA, Kevin; Elmore.MLA, Mable; Les.MLA, John; Gentner.MLA, Guy; Yap.MLA, John; Routley.MLA, Bill; deJong.MLA, Mike; Austin.MLA, Robin; Routley.MLA, Douglas; Rustad.MLA, John; Heed.MLA, Kash; Black.MLA, Iain; Howard.MLA, Rob; Thomson.MLA, Steve; premier@gov.bc.ca; Conroy.MLA, Katrine; Cantelon.MLA, Ron; Penner.MLA, Barry; Macdonald.MLA, Norm; Barisoff.MLA, Bill; Coell.MLA, Murray; Bond.MLA, Shirley; Hammell.MLA, Sue; Karagianis.MLA, Maurine; Lake.MLA, Terry; Brar.MLA, Jagrup; Horne.MLA, Douglas; Lekstrom.MLA, Blair; McRae.MLA, Don; McIntyre.MLA, Joan; James.MLA, Carole; Dix.MLA, Adrian; Bell.MLA, Pat; Stilwell.MLA, Moira; Simpson.MLA, Bob; Simons.MLA, Nicholas; Fraser.MLA, Scott; Hayer.MLA, Dave; Dalton.MLA, Marc; Chong.MLA, Ida; Stewart.MLA, Ben; Abbott.MLA, George; Simpson.MLA, Shane; Krueger.MLA, Kevin; Ralston.MLA, Bruce; Yamamoto.MLA, Naomi; Sather.MLA, Michael; Krog.MLA, Leonard; MacDiarmid.MLA, Margaret

Subject: Cuts to children's services

Hon. Mary Polak, Minister for Children and Family Development  
Victoria, BC

Dear Minister Polak,

BC FamilyNet Society, a provincial organization which promotes effective and readily accessible supports and services for people with disabilities and their families, is deeply concerned about the short-sighted elimination of programs which provide invaluable long term benefits to children who face extraordinary challenges, their families, and society as a whole.

Cutting funds for the Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention (EIBI) program for autistic children, and the Provincial Advisor Offices for the Infant Development Program (IDP), the Aboriginal Infant Development Program (AIDP), and Supported Child Care (SCC) represents a major policy shift in the use of always scarce dollars, yet your ministry has done this without apparent consultation with affected groups. Further we question whether depriving families of the proven EIBI program, to give them instead an amount of money insufficient to purchase similarly effective programs, while simultaneously spending \$20 million on a building with no funded programs, meets the goal of equitable and effective service delivery.

The Provincial Advisor Offices for IDP, AIDP and SSC, rather than representing a needless level of bureaucracy, provide the research, training, mentoring and crucial connection between families, that are integral to the successful development of children across the province. These critical services are presently provided by extremely knowledgeable staff. To lose their expertise, or in any way dilute the essential roles these advisors play in the lives of children and families, would clearly be false economy.

FamilyNet is greatly concerned about further cuts within MCFD and to CLBC. We remain concerned about the large number of children who receive no funding whatsoever. At a time when \$14 billion can be found for capital stimulus projects, surely the amounts needed for long term investment in people can also be found.

FamilyNet is asking you to reconsider the funding cuts to the EIBI and Provincial Advisory Offices, to fund all programs adequately for success, and to consult with the Community Living and Autism communities before making policy and allocation decisions. Our organization remains ready to discuss any of these issues with you further.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Squance, Vice President BC FamilyNet  
for Anita Dadson, President