



Parent Support Services Society of BC

SPRING NEWSLETTER

WHATS INSIDE!

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR CONT'D - 1

JOIN US! - 2

BEFORE THE PANDEMIC... - 3

GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER
KINSHIP CAREGIVERS -
ADVOCACY ACTION - 4

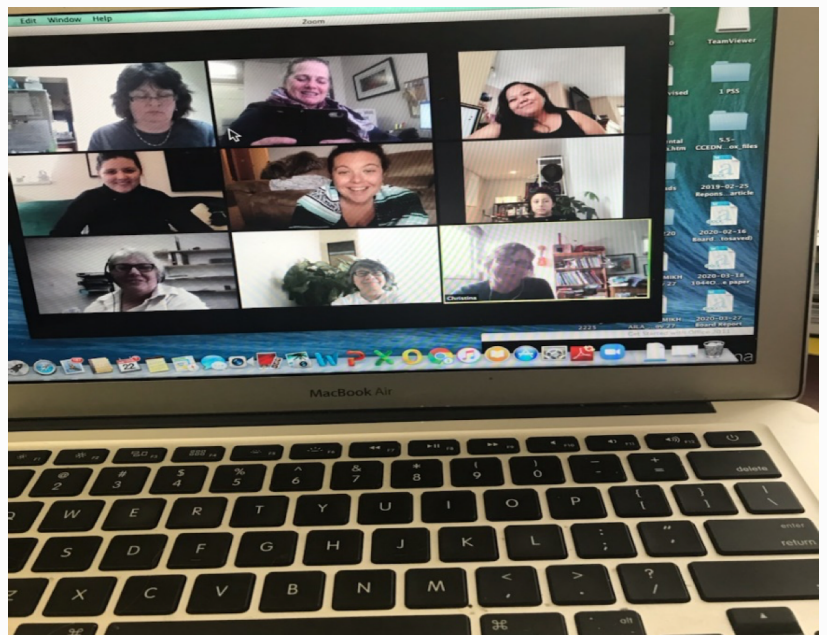
LETTER FROM A KINSHIP
CAREGIVER - 5

LETTER FROM MLA: THE HON.
KATRINE CONROY - 6

KINSHIP FAMILIES MOBILIZE
FOR CHANGE PROJECT - 7

PSS ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING - 8

OUR SERVICES AVAILABLE
DURING COVID-19 - 9



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Parents and Kinship Caregivers,

COVID-19 has challenged us at Parent Support Services Society of BC. Staff have had to adapt to working from home, using new hard and software and conducting meetings through teleconference. We worry about the families who are unable to participate in our face to face circles and the children who are stuck at home and not going to school. Our funders send us surveys and ask for reports.

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONT'D

PSS has chosen to look at our glass as half full instead of half empty. It's kind of nice to not have to worry about what you are wearing to work or if our hair is brushed or not. It is (to some extent at least) nice to spend more time as a family. It's fun to dust off the old board games, turn soil to prepare gardens for all us non-gardeners, plan menus on shoe-string budgets and if we are fortunate to have internet and access to a computer, FaceTime or ZOOM with friends, family or service providers. Banging pots and pans in recognition of the work of the Essential service providers has become the 7 pm highlight each night in my neighbourhood. It's great to see all the neighbours' kids really getting into the clanging and the creation of thank you posters in windows and chalk art on sidewalks.

These are strange times we are living. Like so many things, during COVID-19, it's important to pick our battles and it is ok as parents/caregivers to let things slide a bit as long as our kids are safe and loved. This may not be the best time to insist that the children eat all their vegetables or quibble over their screen time.

We know how challenging parenting is at the best of time. It is even extra hard, when we trying to parent, at the same time as working or struggling with the stress of being laid off. It is difficult to navigate through all the government programs to get the support that is being offered.

Many of us worry about friends or family who may be sick, working in essential services or need medical assistance and cannot get it. Lots of us struggle with home schooling and managing teenagers who are not wired to stay inside, are sad about missing their friends or their graduation ceremonies.

If you are feeling stress - please call our new **COVID-19 parent support line at 1-855-345-9777**. One of our staff will get back to you. Kinship Caregivers (Grandparents Raising Grandchildren) can continue to contact our Kinship Care advocates at **1-855-474-9777**.

Also consider joining one of our peer-to-peer support circles - where you can connect with other parents, grandparents and other caregivers. During COVID-19 we are offering them online on a variety of days and times. For more information please check our website- <https://www.parentsupportbc.ca/parenting-support-during-covid-19/> or the poster that is in this newsletter.

We continue working to support you.

Yours sincerely,

Carol A. Madsen

Executive Director,
Parent Support Services Society of BC.

JOIN US!

Become a Member

We are always seeking new members to join our society. Individual membership is **\$35.00**

Members have the opportunity to vote at our Annual General Meeting, run for the Board of Directors, and attend our workshops for free. You can also pay by cheque, mail to Parent Support Services Society of BC. 204 - 5623 Imperial St. Burnaby BC V5J 1G1

To become a member, sign up here:

<https://www.parentsupportbc.ca/become-a-member/>



BEFORE THE PANDEMIC...

Just prior to our office change, 42 of our volunteer facilitators and 8 staff attended a 2.5 day training out at Zajac Ranch. We thought would share a picture of one of the workshops. Can you spot any of our volunteer facilitators, steering committee members, staff or board members in the picture?



GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER KINSHIP CAREGIVERS - ADVOCACY ACTION

Families in BC who receive the Child Tax benefit are getting **\$300.00** top ups this May. This is an important development. PSS has been working to ensure that all Kinship Caregivers receive this top up.

After writing both the Federal and Provincial Governments, we received a letter from the Minister of Children and Family Development telling us that Kinship Caregivers who have Interim and Temporary Custody to Other, as well as Permanent Transfer of Custody Assistance arrangements (section 54.01 or 54.1 and Interim will receive this top-up. Those on EFP's are also receiving this \$300.00 See letter below. If you are on section 54.01 or 54.1 and still have concerns after May, you could bring this to the attention of the MLA in your region (constituency). Attached is the list of all the MLAs in BC <https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members>

You can ask the following question:

I AM A GRANDPARENT RAISING MY GRANDCHILD UNDER A SECTION 54.01 (OR 54.1) OF THE CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT. BECAUSE THE MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES ME WITH MONTHLY MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS TO SUPPORT MY GRANDCHILD, I AM NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE FEDERAL CANADA CHILD BENEFIT. INSTEAD, THE FEDERAL DOLLARS FOR MY GRANDCHILD GET SENT TO THE PROVINCE (AS PER THE CHILD SPECIAL ALLOWANCE ACT) AND ARE ROLLED INTO THE MONTHLY MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS THE PROVINCE SENDS TO ME. DO YOU KNOW HOW THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT PLANS TO PASS ALONG THE ADDITIONAL \$300 PER CHILD/PER MONTH IN CRISIS MONEY THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS MAKING AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT FAMILIES DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME?



LETTER FROM A KINSHIP CAREGIVER

My wife and I are raising our beautiful eight year grand-daughter, and have been receiving financial support from MCFD's 54.01 program since we obtained permanent custody of her when she was two.

Last year, our girl was diagnosed with multiple disabilities, and her doctors encouraged us to apply, with their support, for federal disability tax credit (DTC) status on her behalf, to help us pay for the additional supports she requires because of her disabilities.

Although Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) ruled she is eligible for DTC benefits, they also ruled that two of those benefits - the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) and the Disability Child Benefit (DCB) - would be sent to MCFD as CRA considers MCFD responsible for her care because of the 54.01 funding they provide.

CRA also ruled we were not eligible to use her non-transferable disability tax credit, which parent/guardians are normally allowed to use to reduce their taxable income, for the same reason. This can mean tax savings of thousands of dollars for families. The province does not receive this benefit either - it simply goes unused.

Although it is the Federal Children's Special Allowances Act (CSA) that governs these child payments, it is actually up to the provinces to decide whether or not they will claim these allowances for themselves, or allow the child's guardians to receive them.

If MCFD files the Children's Special Allowance (CSA) form with the CRA for your child, it will receive the CCB and the DCB rather than you.

For example, MCFD chooses not file the CSA form for families receiving funds in their Extended Family Program, so those families with federal DTC eligible children will receive the CCB and DCB directly from CRA and can use their child's disability tax credit.

54.01/54.1 guardians and their children with disabilities who qualify for the federal DTC, are doubly penalized. Not only does MCFD not pass on the additional DCB benefit to affected family, their filing of the CSA form means CRA will deny families the use of their child's disability tax credit.

MCFD's actions deny 54.01/54.1 families thousands of dollars that should be going to help their children with disabilities.

If you're one of the 54.01/54.1 families in BC with children with disabilities who are eligible for the federal disability tax credit, I urge you to get in touch with PSSBC, and join our fight to try to convince MCFD to end their discrimination against children with disabilities in the program, and allow those children to get the federal funds they are rightly entitled to. I know collective action can work. Thanks to PSSBC and other advocates concerted campaign, MCFD recently agreed to pass on to 54.01/54.1 families the temporary \$300 month top up to the Canada Child Benefit that is part of the federal government's COVID-19 emergency response.

Together we can make a difference!

**Kinship
Caregiver**

Victoria, BC





VIA EMAIL

May 4, 2020

Carol Madsen

Dear Carol:

Thank you for your letter of April 8, 2020, regarding the temporary increase to the Canada Child Benefit due to the COVID-19 emergency. I appreciate and acknowledge the concerns you brought forward and want to express my gratitude for your contributions as a valued and important partner.

As you are aware, the Ministry of Children and Family Development receives the Canada Child Benefit amounts on behalf of all children and youth in care, as well as those under Interim and Temporary Custody to Other and Permanent Transfer of Custody Assistance arrangements.

Given the federal government's temporary one-time increase of \$300 per child through the Federal Enhanced Canada Child Benefit, the maintenance rate for eligible children and youth will be increased for the month of May in order to reflect this temporary increase to the Canada Child Benefit. Specifically, the increase will be provided for eligible children and youth being cared for through a family care home agreement or out-of-care care agreement with the ministry and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies.

In Budget 2019, the maintenance rate for those families under the Extended Family Program (EFP) was aligned to the rate provided to foster caregivers, and so EFP families will also receive the temporary increase of \$300 per child to the maintenance rate in May.

I appreciate these are challenging times, and I want to extend my gratitude for everything you do to support children, youth and families across the province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katrine Conroy".

Katrine Conroy

Minister of Children and Family Development

PARENT SUPPORT SERVICES SOCIETY'S THREE YEAR PROJECT

OUR AIM

To create an independent organization/coalition/network that can do the political work necessary to achieve change

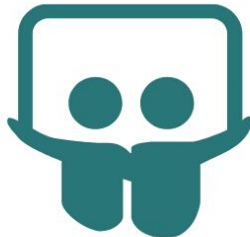
COLLABORATION AND RESEARCH

Since January 2019 we have conducted research through:

- Surveys
- Phone interviews
- Focus Groups
- and other Gatherings

SHARING INFO/FINDINGS

We have conducted self-advocacy training workshops for kinship families, and will soon be releasing a report of our findings for you



MOBILIZATION

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO JOIN US!

Soon we will be mobilizing! this will include:

- Kinship family networking gatherings across BC
- Kinship Caregiver & Youth Conference
- Advocacy Campaigns
- Forming Kinship Caregiver & Youth Advisory/ Steering Committee
- Establishing Coalition/Organizations of Kinship Caregivers & Youth



KINSHIP FAMILIES MOBILIZE FOR CHANGE PROJECT

Kinship care families face unique challenges that often go unrecognized and/or are misunderstood by the larger system. Although, we have always and continue to make concerted efforts to advocate on behalf of kinship care families, PSS has limitations on political lobbying.

With this in mind, in 2019 PSS began a project with the intention to inform the public about the state of kinship care in BC, and support a kinship caregiver and youth driven advocacy campaign for adequate supports & benefits.

This project is merely supported by PSS staff, it is kinship caregivers and youth raised in kinship care that continue to drive this project forward.

Supporting Staff:



Jane Bouey
Lead Project Manager -
Kinship Care Research



Rebecca Vattathichirajil
Co-op Student



**Parent Support Services
Society of BC**

Parent Support Services Society of BC invites you to our first virtual ...

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, June 29, 2020, 5:45 –6:45 p.m.

Meeting will be conducted by Zoom videoconferencing or by teleconference.

See below for login details

AGENDA

- 1. Start to login to Zoom or the conference line (5:30)*
- 2. Call to Order and Introductions (5:45 -6:15)*
- 3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest*
- 4. Introduction of Board and General Membership*
- 5. Approval of 2019 Annual General Meeting Minutes*
- 6. Auditor's 2020 Report*
- 7. Appointment of Auditor for 2021*
- 8. President & Officers' Reports*
- 9. Executive Director's Report*
- 10. New Business*
- 11. Adjournment*

**PLEASE CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDANCE BY June 15, 2020
via E-MAIL TO:**

office@parentsupportbc.ca so we can provide you with login details.

Please use: **PSS AGM** as your subject line item



PARENT SUPPORT SERVICES OF BC

Creating a world where children and families are nurtured, valued and safe.

PROVINCIAL SERVICES AVAILABLE DURING COVID-19

Grandparent Raising Grandchildren Support line

Help for Grandparents and relatives raising a family member's child (Kinship Care Providers)

Providing Advocacy & Emotional Support.

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri
10:00am -2:00pm

Toll-free across BC
1-855-474-9777 or **1-855-GRG-9PSS**
grgline@parentsupportbc.ca

Parenting Support Line

Are you juggling home, work, at home education and possibly childcare? Are the new changes stressful and taking a toll on your emotional and mental health? Do you need space to talk it out?

Give us a call

Monday to Friday
10:00am -4:00pm

Toll-free across BC
1-877-345-9777 or **1-877-345-9PSS**
ext. 100

WEEKLY ONLINE PROVINCIAL SUPPORT CIRCLES

Our Support Circles are here to provide a safe and confidential space for Parents and GRG/Kinship Caregivers to share the challenges, concerns, questions and offer the support you need during COVID-19

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Indigenous Monday 6pm	Bi-weekly				
	Monday 10am	Tuesday 6pm	Wednesday 6:30pm	Thursday 1pm	Thursday 6pm

Parents

Indigenous Tuesday 6pm	Monday 9pm	Tuesday 1pm	Wednesday 1pm	Thursday 6pm
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Wanting to Join an Online Support Circle via Zoom
Please Call 1-877-345-9777 ext. 100

Check out our website for Parenting during COVID-19
<https://www.parentsupportbc.ca/parenting-support-during-covid-19/>

