



West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund

555–409 Granville Street, Vancouver, BC, V6C 1T2

t: 604.684.8772 [westcoastleaf.org](http://westcoastleaf.org)

July 21, 2017

Honourable Katrina Chen

Via email: [katrina.chen.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:katrina.chen.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Dear Minister Chen:

**Re: Key priorities for gender equality**

Congratulations on your appointment as the new Minister of State for Child Care. West Coast LEAF has done in-depth research and law reform work on how child care services impact the human rights of women and children, and we applaud the government's creation of your role as a first step towards achieving a comprehensive and accessible child care system.

In 2016, we released a report entitled [\*High Stakes: the impacts of child care on the human rights of women and children\*](#), which documents the ways in which the current child care crisis in BC undermines women's equality and human rights (available online at [www.westcoastleaf.org](http://www.westcoastleaf.org)). The report was based on interviews with a diverse group of women about their experiences with child care and documents the needs of particularly marginalized groups of women, including Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and women with precarious immigration status. The overarching finding of the project is that the current state of child care services in BC violates the human rights of women and children in complex and wide-ranging ways.

Ultimately, the report recommends that BC take immediate steps to adopt and implement the \$10aDay Plan. However, we also recognize that a comprehensive and coordinated public child care system cannot be built overnight. For that reason, we recommend that the BC government take immediate steps to ensure that the most serious human rights violations for women and children are remedied by creating a new funding category through Child Care Operating Funding to provide free child care to women fleeing violence, including those without legal immigration status; culturally appropriate caregivers awaiting reunification with children in government care; the children of women with disabilities that affect their ability to provide care; and low-income lone parent families, including those on social assistance if a parent is in school, training or searching for employment.



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We look forward to working with you to develop affordable, high quality, accessible child care that will better support women in BC. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter further, as well as other ways we can support your work to improve child care in the province.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kasari Govender". The signature is stylized with a large initial "K" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kasari Govender  
Executive Director