



## Message from the Minister



*Honourable Linda Reid  
Minister of State  
for Child Care*

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Reid Report, a quarterly newsletter focussing on child care and a whole host of topics relating to the care and well-being of B.C. children aged 0 to 6.

As minister of state with responsibility for child care, it's important to me – and to the ministry as a whole – that a dialogue takes place with parents, partners and stakeholder groups. I want to hear your suggestions, your ideas, your issues and concerns. By sharing our thoughts, we can work toward our goal of making BC the best place on earth to live, to work and to raise a family.

I have dedicated this first newsletter to an issue of great importance to all British Columbians: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD is, without question, the most preventable birth disorder in the western world.

The financial cost of supporting an affected child ranges from \$1 million to \$2 million over a lifetime; the human cost – the loss of potential, of quality of life, of hopes and dreams – is so much greater.

That's why, in acknowledgment of September 9, International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day, I'm dedicating the first issue of the newsletter to FASD. Because it's preventable, there is much we can do to address it – to help children, and their families, lead better, healthier, happier lives.

I recently attended the Fetal Alcohol Canadian Expertise (FACE) Research Roundtable in Moncton, New Brunswick on September 9th. At the end of the month, I'll be heading up to Yellowknife for meeting of ministers representing the Canadian Northwest FASD Partnership. I will be sharing the information, research and ideas learned at these meetings with staff, stakeholders and partners out in the field.

**Send your comments and suggestions to:**  
[minister.childcare@gov.bc.ca](mailto:minister.childcare@gov.bc.ca)



*Dr. Asante presents Minister Reid with a Dutchie Mathison print honouring the role of communities in preventing FASD. Randy Hawes, Maple Ridge-Mission MLA and Audrey Salahub, Asante Centre executive director were also on hand as Reid presented a \$150,000 cheque to the Asante Centre for their ongoing work with FASD.*

## MINISTRIES, GOVERNMENTS JOIN FORCES TO ADDRESS FASD

In 2003, British Columbia became Canada's first province to release a comprehensive strategy aimed at reducing the incidence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). (Download a copy of the report at: [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/fasd/pdf/fasd\\_strategic\\_plan-final.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/fasd/pdf/fasd_strategic_plan-final.pdf)). Three years later, B.C. continues to strengthen its position as a leader in FASD prevention, assessment and diagnosis and in the development of supports for affected families.

With a strong commitment to healthy living for all British Columbians, government – working closely with provincial and community partners -- has renewed its efforts to address the preventable disorder.

At the first Fraser Regional Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder --(FASD) From the Sharing Circle, held September 7th and 8th – Minister of State for Child Care Linda Reid announced \$570,000 in funding to the Whitecrow Village Society. The society operates camps for children and youth affected by FASD, their families, support people, practicum students and professionals. More than 59 families – including 128 children – attended the Whitecrow camps last year.

*"FASD" continued on Page 2 >*

## Story Time

Baby Beluga, one of our best-loved children's songs about a 'little white whale on the go', is 25 years old this year. It is both an extraordinarily fine book and a fabulous song and offers a great opportunity to engage young learners in early literacy -- and have a lot of fun at the same time! That's really what it's all about – engaging with babies so they get the strongest possible start in life.

**Baby Beluga by Raffi**



## Neighbourhood 'Hubs' Strengthen Communities, Support Families



The concept of a community centre, or neighbourhood house, is not a new one in British Columbia.

What's new, however, is the concept of an organized network of neighbourhood hubs – centres where early childhood development, child care and family strengthening programs and services are housed under one roof. The benefits of this model are threefold: first, co-locating services make accessibility for families easier and more convenient; second, housing programs and services for children and their families under one roof streamlines administration and increases cost-effectiveness; and third, the hub model allows for greater flexibility, allowing services to be tailored to meet the unique – and changing – needs of the communities they serve.

On September 15, Minister Reid participated in an all-day Hub meeting that brought together proponents, administrators and staff, government representatives and early childhood development advocates from across the province. Speakers included Joanne Schroeder, provincial advisor for Children First and, from Toronto, Jane Bertrand who spoke on building a framework for hubs. There were also excellent and informative presentations on hubs in aboriginal communities, partnering with the federal government and school and municipal leadership.



For information on Canada's Universal Child Care plan visit the website at:  
[www.cra-arc.gc.ca/benefits/ucbc/menu-e.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/benefits/ucbc/menu-e.html)

### "FASD" continued from Page 1

This past March, the Ministry of Children and Family Development provided the Victoria Foundation with \$10 million to establish an FASD Action Fund aimed at promoting prevention, public education and education and training for parents and caregivers.

The majority of the fund - \$7 million – will go toward the creation of demonstration projects focused on improving the quality of life for FASD-affected children and youth through peer support, social and life skills development, transition supports and school-based initiatives. The goal of these projects is to help ensure that kids affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol have every opportunity to grow and learn and thrive.

In June, the Ministry of Health also announced a \$50,000 boost in funding through its ActNow initiative to revamp and expand the distribution of pamphlets, posters and signs promoting the importance of avoiding alcohol during pregnancy. Developed in partnership with the Ministries of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and Children and Family Development, the materials were distributed to every licensed facility in BC for voluntary posting, with signs displayed year-round in government liquor stores.

BC continues to be an active member of the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership, an alliance of the four western provinces and three territories that share resources in FASD prevention and support and the advancement of research. In 2005, the Partnership established a collaborative FASD Research Network, linking leading FASD researchers working in the field of prevention, diagnosis and support and providing leading edge information to ensure the very best program design.

## MINISTER LAUNCHES BOOSTER SEAT AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Boost BC, the province's booster seat awareness campaign, was launched Monday at Maple Grove Elementary School in Vancouver. Guests included Alan Lamb, executive Director of the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation, Port Moody-Westwood MLA Iain Black and Linda Christensen and Sonny Senghera of ICBC's Loss Prevention Programs.

The campaign, supported by a \$100,000 grant from the Ministry of Children and Family Development in partnership with the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation and ICBC Road Sense, will help get the message out that for children between 18 and 36 kg's, booster seats save lives.

The statistics speak volumes. More than one-third of B.C. children who die in car crashes are not wearing restraints such as booster seats – and we know that kids are at greater risk during traffic accidents because they are placed in adult seat belts too soon. So it's vital that we get the message out to children and their parents that booster seats are an important and integral part of child safety, just like wearing a helmet when riding a bike.

The event at Maple Grove was a big success, thanks in large part to the efforts of principal Dr. Eileen Phillips. Students at the elementary school were weighed to find out if they were still eligible to join the Boost BC Club as part of a class information session and demonstration. Special thanks to Sharon Hale's K – 1 student for their fabulous co-operation. These in-class sessions will be delivered free to interested schools throughout the province as part of the campaign, with each participating school receiving a Booster Club poster, tattoos, certificates and colouring materials and a Boost BC video.

For more information on Boost BC or to arrange an in-class demonstration, visit the web site at [www.boostbc.ca](http://www.boostbc.ca)



Minister Reid helps students Annie Blundell (age 8) and Jack Blundell (age 5) buckle up at the Boost BC launch.