

BRITISH COLUMBIA HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Terms of Reference

Who we are?

The British Columbia Healthy Child Development Alliance (BCHDA) is a cross sectoral coalition of health, social, education, research and community organizations sharing a common interest in supporting the social determinants of early healthy development of all children in BC.

The Alliance grew out of the 2004 Healthy Child BC Forum in part from the identification of healthy child development as a core public health function¹. Participants at the 2004 Forum outlined a number of key areas and recommendations for action in early childhood development².

The Alliance recognizes that:

- “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing” (WHO Constitution, 1948);
- There is a strong correlation between early childhood experiences and adult health status and societal well-being, including intellectual development and lifelong learning.
- Healthy child development is determined by broad environmental, social, educational, economic and cultural conditions, and human biology;
- Healthy pregnancy is an important determinant of healthy infant and child development;
- Early child development is a determinant of lifelong health and well being;
- Parents and other primary care givers are the main influence in a child’s life and they should be empowered and supported to nurture and care for their children;

Purpose

The purpose of the Alliance is to provide leadership in, and be a resource to the development and implementation of policies, strategies and preferred practices that are essential to ensuring the healthy early development of all children in BC.

¹ A Framework for Core Functions in Public Health. Available: http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2005/core_functions.pdf

² Healthy Child BC Working Group Forum: Working Group Discussions (November 8 and 9, 2004) Available: http://www.childhealthbc.ca/chbc-media/pdf-library/bchcda/forums/Healthy_BC_Child_Forum_Nov2004.pdf

Specifically, we will:

- Contribute to the development of a provincial vision for the early years that will support the development of policies and programs that contribute to the healthy development of all children in BC;
- Facilitate multi-sectoral and multilevel opportunities for discussion and collaborative action around healthy early childhood development, early intervention, early care and learning policies and practices through regular meetings and periodic special events;
- Develop, provide considered feedback and disseminate early child development discussion documents to inform and support early childhood policy in key topic areas;
- Identify new trends and novel topics affecting early childhood development, for consideration by member organizations.
- Raising the profile of children by engaging society to increase public awareness of understanding that children are a collective responsibility, and hence decisions regarding the support of early childhood development initiatives involve and impact all of us.
- Evaluate the impact of our initiatives on a regular basis.

Chair/Alternate Chair

The chair for the Alliance will be held by the sitting Executive Director of Child Health BC or their designate.

Frequency of Meetings/Communications

Regular meetings will be held bi-monthly from September to June. When required, members may also be requested to participate in smaller working groups.

Minutes will be taken during the meeting and distributed prior to the next meeting. Members will have an opportunity to review and approve minutes.

Decision-making

Consensus is a decision-making strategy where most of the committee members are comfortable with the decision and all are in agreement with its implementation. It is a decision that is fair and workable and has the support of all committee members. In order for consensus decision making to be successful, it is paramount for committee members to participate in discussion.

Levels of Consensus: During each round of decision-making, each person indicates where they are with respect to the decision being proposed:

1. Fully support.
2. Support with reservations.
3. Acceptable.

4. Will not block it, can live with it.
5. Abstain from participating in decision.
6. Need more information or more discussion (identify what information is needed, how it will be obtained and when).
7. No, cannot accept it.

Any response at #5 or above constitutes consensus. #6 indicates that consensus may be possible with more information or discussion. #7 indicates a fundamental disagreement.

Membership/Participation

The Alliance recognizes several different types of participation:

1. Members (regular attendance, participation in decision making)
2. Government Liaisons (regular attendance, may or may not participate in decision making)
3. Corresponding Liaisons (receive regular Alliance updates, minimal participation in meetings or decision making)
4. Guests/Individuals