



## Academic Endorsement for BC Parenting Centres Concept

### **Dr. Grant Charles, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia Expert for BEHAVIOUR - Growing Up in BC Report 2010**

One of the problems with our current child and family serving systems is we tend to operate in isolation from each other. We are also often trapped in doing things the way we have always done them. Part of this lack of integration of services can be traced back to the manner in which programs developed in Canada. Rather than being one system with one common set of values and beliefs, we have a series of overlapping and sometimes contradictory programs which generally attempt to serve a narrow service population. We need to develop new ways of reaching out to young people and families and to each other as practitioners, researchers, policy makers and funders. We need to develop frameworks of practice that bring people together to work towards common goals and outcomes. This is the only way we will be able to effectively deal with the many current challenges being faced by our society and our citizens. It is for this reason that I strongly endorse the concept of BC Parenting Centres.

Dr. Grant Charles is Associate Professor and Chair of Field Education in the School of Social Work at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver). Prior to coming to the University of British Columbia, he worked in a variety of mental health, special education and child welfare settings. He has been the treatment director of a number of specialized community and residential treatment programs working with such diverse client groups as adolescent sexual offenders, Aboriginal adolescent solvent abusers and other hard to serve young people and their families. He has published extensively on issues relating to at-risk youth and professional practice.

### **Dr. Jessica Ball, Professor School of Child and Youth Care, Co-Coordinator of the First Nations Partnership Programs, University of Victoria**

Over the last 15 years Dr. Jessica Ball has been working with rural and remote First Nations BC communities. Dr. Ball has seen first-hand and documented in her research a desperate need for First Nations parenting supports especially for the young lone aboriginal parent; both lone female and lone male. First Nations Peoples have always embraced and expressed a strong culturally based understanding that their young children are their future, but the children are here now. Dr. Ball shared: "In order to grow into effective parents themselves, they need to experience the conditions for their optimal development now. Young First Nations parents want and need accessible, meaningful, affordable supports now to build strong future generations." Dr. Ball advises, "Services are too fragmented particularly for those living in poverty and in rural areas of BC. We need community based, culturally relevant, accessible services for remote and rural families. Family Parenting Centres with broad mandates of supports for parents can be focal points for building community strengths and helping parents to navigate to the supports they need. Dr. Jessica Ball strongly endorses the concept of BC Parenting Centres.

Dr. Jessica Ball is a professor at the University of Victoria and Coordinator of the First Nations Partnership Programs. She has worked extensively in innovative programs to sustain cultural diversity and support community development in the interests of children and families. Dr. Ball spent 12 years, from 1984 to 1996, in Southeast Asia, working as a consultant to community service agencies and government ministries in education, health, and social services. Upon returning to her native country of Canada, Dr. Ball joined the First Nations Partnership Programs ([www.fnpp.org](http://www.fnpp.org)). This work has broken new ground in reconceptualising early childhood education and training and advancing the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into our understandings of how to protect and promote child well-being while sustaining culture, traditional languages, and community social structures. Dr. Ball is the principal investigator of a broad program of research focused on Indigenous children and families ([www.ecdip.org](http://www.ecdip.org)).

### **Dr. Leslie Foster, Adjunct Professor in Child & Youth Care, Department of Geography, University of Victoria**

Dr. Foster is in the process of completing the second edition of the BC Atlas of Wellness. In today's society parents often juggle child rearing with employment, and increasingly the care of aging parents. Dr. Foster believes that more supports are needed for a variety of different parenting groups throughout the province to help them deal with these competing demands. Dr. Foster's research on regional variations in the lives of families across the province indicates that resources need to be available to all communities, especially the more rural and remote communities, and new immigrant families. This will ensure that children have the opportunity to have an equal start in life and that parents have the resources necessary to meet this goal. Dr. Foster provides unreserved endorsement for the concept of BC Parenting Centres, and believes that BC can become a leader in Canada in this endeavour.

Dr. Leslie Foster has over 20 years of experience in senior positions in provincial governments and has worked as an Assistant Deputy Minister in Finance, Health, Social Services and Children and Family Development. He has also been a consultant for several provincial and federal agencies over the last decade and has edited several books on child, health and social issues and studies regional variations in wellness throughout BC.

### **Dr. Cecilia Benoit, Centre for Addictions Research of BC, Department Sociology, University of Victoria Expert for HEALTH - Growing Up in BC Report, 2010**

Dr. Cecilia Benoit believes in early intervention and prevention: "What happens early in life has a tremendous impact on the well-being of populations. Life trajectories are shaped by access to resources, including social support, very early life. While adult harm reduction strategies are crucial, improved parenting supports and early investments in children can have long term positive impact on B. C. populations." Dr. Benoit strongly endorses the concept of BC Parenting Centres.

Cecilia Benoit, PhD, is a Scientist at the Centre for Addictions Research of British Columbia, Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Victoria, and former co-leader of the Women's Health Research Network. Dr. Benoit studies the link between social determinants, risk behaviours, health status and access to health care services. Over the past 20 years, her community-based research with vulnerable populations has helped to improve the lives of those who are outside the mainstream because of the statuses in which they are born, where they live, what they do for a living, or what they require to become healthy and productive.

### **Dr. Bruce Hardy, Coordinator Child and Youth Program, Douglas College**

Dr. Bruce Hardy who wrote his 2006 dissertation on the Change and Leadership in the Ministry of Child and Family Development, 2006 shares "The importance of collegial partnership work is in the nucleus of our Province". This is the key factor to how we can impact our populations and create effective change for future generations". Bruce feels the Ministry of Children and Family Development is stronger when it operates from a vision that is shared with the broader community and that the Province of British Columbia will be positively impacted with the creation of BC Parenting Centres. Dr. Bruce Hardy strongly endorses the concept of BC Parenting Centres.

Bruce Hardy PhD (University of Victoria), MA (Simon Fraser University), MEd (University of Manitoba) has over 30 years of experience managing not-for-profit agencies in Canada. Bruce is a full time faculty member and Coordinator of the degree Program for Child and Youth Care at Douglas College as well as a contract instructor at the Justice Institute of BC, BCIT and the University of Victoria. He is an Accreditation team leader and a Commissioner for the Council on Accreditation. Bruce teaches and lectures on leadership in social services, change, ethics in social services, the history of social services in BC and standards in social services.

