

FOI CFD-2017-73932

Timeframe of request: July 18, 2017 – November 24, 2017

Material from Client Relations Branch

Taggesell, Claire MCF:EX

From: s.22
Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2017 2:30 PM
To: Minister, MCF MCF:EX
Subject: Adoption being Blocked by MCFD

Good Afternoon, Minister Conroy

I would like to make you aware of a situation we are dealing with in our lives and I am so disappointed and annoyed at the treatment we have been encountering with our local MCFD agency.

My husband and I have been a restricted foster home with VACFSS s.22 and we have had good times and not so good times with the children in our care but we continue to do our best in providing children and youth that come into our lives the love and care that they deserve to be shown. s.22
s.22

s.22 There was no other family or friends that would take this girl in. s.22
s.22

s.22 Why? we do not get a reply to, other then, "It is complicated" it is actually not that complicated, there is an infant who will spend her life in Foster Care or wants to be adopted by her surrogate family, remain in contact with her birth parents and have a loving caring family that will provide her with a loving caring supportive home for her entire life.. I am not sure why this has become something so difficult and I have been spending weeks trying to get answers but they avoid and do not make any effort to have a discussion. We need some authority in this matter, we have had SW lie directly to birth parents , myself, other members of the community and it needs to stop. We request your help in this matter. I know it is a challenging situation but we are just asking for a gathering at the table to discuss the future of this s.22

Thank you for your time in reading my email.

Sincerely

s.22

Subject: FW: A question from a foster parent

-----Original Message-----

From: s.22

Sent: Sunday, September 10, 2017 7:12 AM

To: Conroy.MLA, Katrine <Katrine.Conroy.MLA@leg.bc.ca>

Subject: A question from a foster parent

To the right Honourable Katrine Conroy
Minister of Children & Family Development

I wish to firstly offer my prayers and best wishes as you move forward in this delicate, rewarding and frustrating ministry that you find in your care.

For a very long time I have asked a simple question of people within government and during the election campaign asked candidates of all parties this

question.

"When did Foster Parenting working directly within the province of British Columbia last receive a rate increase or a increase in cost of living expenses for the young lives in their care?"

This often takes a long time to answer because it is almost or over a decade.

I wish you well minister but let us upon no raises, no cost of living increases for over ten years.

Look forward to a possible drive but after asking this same question for over six years do not hold out much hope.

Respectfully

s.22

Taggesell, Claire MCF:EX

From: s.22
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2017 7:07 AM
To: Minister, MCF MCF:EX
Cc: Simons.MLA, Nicholas LASS:EX
Subject: attachment...letter
Attachments: Minister Katrine Conroy.docx

Dear Minister Conroy:
We ask that you please read and reply to the attached letter.
Thanking you in advance,
Sincerely,

s.22

(foster parents)



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Minister for Children and Families dated Sept. 26, 2017

Dear Minister Katrine Conroy

Nick Simons said I should tell you our story.

s.22 and I have been foster parenting on the Sunshine Coast s.22
s.22

s.22 we were asked to care for two s.22 children, a girl s.22 and a
boy s.22

The children s.22 Twice
we were asked if we would consider adopting them –and we said yes without hesitation both times.

Shortly after the Ministry's second request, the children's natural mother got a lawyer s.22
s.22

We had supported and coordinated visits with the children's mother throughout the years and respected the Ministry's decision to return them to her-who they referred to as “mom”. But the Ministry’s transition plan -especially for the boy who knew us as his only caregivers -was so sad and insensitive, and entirely unprofessional.

When the time came, the boy, s.22 stated quite clearly that he did not want to live with her (he said “not yet”) but that he would visit as long as he didn't have to stay overnights.
s.22

The Ministry s.22 family support worker arranged an overnight visit with his mother
ir s.22 , which of course did not go well:
s.22

We have always been on board with the transition but we knew better than the Ministry that it would take time for this child to bond with his mother.

Despite repeated resistance and mostly unsuccessful visits, the Ministry set the transition date of s.22 we were told we had 10 minutes to bring the child out of the house to put into his mother's car. Incredibly, the RCMP accompanied the social workers for reasons we were never told.

We were told by the mother that we could text, email, phone the boy anytime. We were also given an official Ministry letter indicating the date and times that we could call him. We adhered to all directions. The Team Leader sent a note thanking us for making the transition go smoothly and indicating that they were looking forward to continuing to work together in the future.

It is now September. I have written letters asking for an explanation, with no response.

We are hoping you can give us some clarity to this issue. We are so disappointed with 2 issues...one is the fact that we were "model" foster parents for the Ministry for Children and Families s.22

s.22 , Also...we raised this child
s.22 , how unfortunate that he not have any contact s.22 It doesn't seem right at
all.

Thanking you in advance for taking the time to read this letter to you.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

s.22

Foster Parents

Taggesell, Claire MCF:EX

From: s.22
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2017 9:04 PM
To: Minister, MCF MCF:EX
Subject: Foster children-solutions that save them!

Hello Minister Katrine Conroy,
Welcome to your most important role.

s.22

Please consider the following issues that I have viewed as critical issues after fostering^{s.2} children. In my experience, if these issues are addressed positively then children will manage much better.

1. Make sure foster parents are respected as an active and important members of the child's network or team. Make other workers accountable to foster parents just as they are to bio families, their supervisors and the child's team. We are not at the bottom of the totem pole. Take our concerns about child welfare and about possible protection risks as seriously as the bio family and community members. Give us extended healthcare and a fair income that we can claim for benefits. This level of respect and inclusion will generate a greater number of foster parents and less attrition. We are in desperate need of foster parents!

2. If you want to reduce the number of children in care, please begin by making children adoption-ready as soon as it's determined to be in their best interest. This requires man and woman power and funding for additional Social Workers. Our system has been hurting children and in crisis ever since the Liberals slashed numerous workers back in 2000 when I began fostering and even before that. s.22

s.22

when we were under NDP and then when the Liberals got in, everything froze. s.22

3. Don't avoid bringing children into care because they are not beaten or bleeding nor at immediate risk. Wounds of the mind and heart are large injuries too. And don't avoid protecting children who suffer borderline abuse or neglect. s.22 I learned that that's what others see on the surface and family crisis lies just below the surface.

4. Prevent children coming into care by supporting families at no cost to them. Free therapy and parenting classes as soon as people decide to start a family. Then, a minimum of 1 year of therapy and parenting classes and other resources is provided if a child has been removed or a family is under supervision. I would like to think that children are being 'protected' but not necessarily 'removed'. If these programs are there from the start, you will find fewer children in care.

5. Please don't count on extended family or grandparents to do the work of parents unless you provide this help. Many other family members are also not safe. Intergenerational patterns exist. Please, please, don't deny that truth. s.22 I have seen this. These patterns of abuse or neglect or witnessing thereof only change after long-term treatment of the issues. By long-term I mean a minimum of 1 year of weekly therapy combined with parenting groups or classes. That's when I see progress that can be sustained.

Thank-you for your time.

P.S. I would be grateful if you can read my letter at the next fostering event you attend or the foster parent appreciation lunch.

Now you have more knowledge about our experiences as foster parents s.22
needs fixing. My colleagues usually share these thoughts, at least in part.

and what

In solidarity,

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Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.22

Taggesell, Claire MCF:EX

From: s.22
Sent: Wednesday, November 8, 2017 3:45 PM
To: MCF Info MCF:EX
Subject: Job inquiry

This is^{s.22}

I was a foster parent for several years. I want to know if I am eligible for a career in social work or not. Please let me know ASAP

s.22

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

Taggesell, Claire MCF:EX

From: s.22
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 10:03 AM
To: Minister, MCF MCF:EX
Subject: delegated aboriginal agencies

Dear Minister Conroy,

I am a foster caregiver in the Cowichan Valley. In this capacity, I work with both MCFD and the delegated agency Lalumutl Smuneem. I am aware of many issues in the delegated aboriginal agencies, some of which are directly impacting a child in my care, and in discussions with other caregivers, I am realizing that the issue is much broader. Many caregivers are witnessing first hand trauma with the children in their care due to policies and decisions being made. I am sure I speak for many in that we are frustrated with a lack of accountability, and oversight which is allowing decisions which are anything but "best practise" and are certainly not in the best interest of the children in our care. I realize this is a political hot potato, but I am sure that if there was an awareness of some of the actions being taken, there would be less damage being done.

I would appreciate a phone call by anyone who would be best able to hear and effect change.

s.22

Subject: s.22 Incoming

From: s.22

Date: October 24, 2017 at 1:04:20 AM PDT

To: katrine.conroy@gov.bc.ca

Cc: s.22

Subject: Reply to Foster Parents Letter Ref: 233707

Hello Katrine,

Thank you for your letter to all Foster Parents and we note that you mentioned that you are open to feedback.

We have been through a lot, s.22 due to our previous concurrent fostering contract with MCFD.

We are happy we have finally got a positive outcome, but it hasn't been without untold stress and close to s.22 in legal bills.

We have been victims of inefficient systems and unfair processes. We would like work collaboratively with the Ministry, in order to ensure that firstly, no other family has to endure what we have, and also to help contribute to meaningful and positive change. Our son was repeatedly overlooked by those who really should know better, and we have seen first hand the affects of all this on another child.

Our input and suggestions for change are on the following subjects:

- **Concurrent planning:** when it's appropriate; family training, information and selection process; consideration of adopted siblings in a concurrent planning home
- **Openness:** MCFD staff following through to encourage openness between foster, adoptive and birth families
- this was not done
- **Transitions:** NO child should be moved without a transition unless there is a child protection concern
- **Administrative Reviews:** "nothing about us without us" An Administrative File Review was absolutely littered with inaccuracies and omissions. It was extensively about us without consulting us at all
- **Foster parent inclusion:** who knows the child better than the people bringing them up 24/7? Foster parents should be consulted during all stages of a child's time in care, including garnering feedback on how they are after birth family visits and so on. This did not happen - MCFD social workers saw the child in question for a combined total of less than one hour through the 18 months she was in our care. They simply did not follow up - they never asked about her care, needs, etc.
- **Social Worker conflict of interests:** A child should not share the same social worker as the birth parent. The birth parent can talk, convince and manipulate. A very young child does not have a voice. This is a huge imbalance of power.
- **Child Court Teams** - this is the model used in the UK, and other parts of Canada and the US. A team is assigned to a child from the get-go - including a judge. Regular meetings include their social workers, counsellors, judge, bio and foster families. BC needs this team child-centred approach.

There is no doubt there is need for real change, and we sincerely hope that the new government takes the opportunity to rid MCFD of the terrible reputation it has been gaining for the last several years.

We look forward to hearing from you, and really hope we can meet with you to provide our input from a first-hand perspective.

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Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.22

Taggesell, Claire MCF:EX

Subject: s.22 Incoming

From: s.22

Sent: Tuesday, August 22, 2017 8:17 PM

To: Conroy.MLA, Katrine

Subject: Foster Parent Pay Increase

Honorable Conroy:

I was very pleased to read the news that the province of BC had a large surplus for the fiscal year.

My wife and I have been long time foster parents and we are wondering if there will be increases in the basic monthly fee and specialized fees in the near future.

As you aware, the last increases occurred from 2007 to 2009.

With the change of government we are hoping that the NDP will recognize the efforts of foster parents through the province with a pay increase.

Warm regards,

s.22

Taggesell, Claire MCF:EX

Subject: s.22 : Incoming

-----Original Message-----

From:s.22

Sent: Thursday, October 5, 2017 9:30 PM

To: Conroy.MLA, Katrine <Katrine.Conroy.MLA@leg.bc.ca>

Subject: Foster Parents

Greetings!

Thank you for the Letter of Recognition! I would love to sit down and tell you about some of the children who have enlightened our life and the lives of our children, grandchildren, extended family, friends and relatives. I could write a book! Hmmm, maybe my retirement plan.

I have been a Foster Parent s.22 My husband and I have taken into our home, some very challenging children that no one else could handle. Some excluded from school because of aggressive behaviours, some wouldn't go to school! With a variety of disabilities and aggressive/ destructive behaviours. We kept children long term.s.22
s.22

We have trained and employed Support Workers in order to get respite. Worked with parents and taught them techniques that work. Our home has been subject to wear and tear that only Foster Parents can understand. Not only our home, but our physical and spiritual selves have been put to the test many times every day.

We have a talent that few possess. Patience, inclusion, consistency, and unconditional love, lots of love. And sometimes we have a moment when we have to pretend everything is fine, when really, deep down inside, we are in turmoil or frustration. We smile, and carry on. This is our job. To be the strong for the most vulnerable.

After all these years of devoting our lives to these children, we must find a time to bow out. But we have no pension or benefits. I would like to see a plan in place to take care of us Caregivers when it is OUR turn.

Sincerely,
s.22