

**ADMN 598 Management Report**

**TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE: WEB-BASED INVENTORY OF  
YOUTH IN CARE EDUCATIONAL, EMPLOYMENT AND LIFE SKILLS  
RESOURCES FOR GUARDIANSHIP WORKERS**

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## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Since 1999, the Guardianship Policy and Standards Branch (**GPSB**) has been working on developing a strategic plan focused on improving their approaches and outcomes to preparing youth in care (**YIC**) as they transition out of care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (**MCFD**). Within this plan, the branch is exploring tangible ways of improving access to educational, employment and life skills (**EELS**) opportunities for YIC so that by the time they leave the care of MCFD, they have the education, means and skills necessary to live independently.

Study after study show that YIC do not feel adequately prepared to live on their own upon leaving care and they do not have the education or skills necessary to obtain meaningful work. YIC have expressed that they have trouble finding and accessing information especially in terms of programs and funds to pursue their education, gain employment skills, obtain the skills they need to live on a day-to-day basis on their own.

GPSB sees the Internet as a viable tool for guardianship workers to utilize when working with YIC in identifying their EELS needs, thereby improving the outcomes for YIC.

### **1.2 Research Question**

The purpose of this project was two fold. First, to investigate the challenges guardianship workers face when obtaining EELS resources for YIC. Second, to determine if a web-based inventory of EELS resources, applicable to YIC, would help guardianship workers better plan with YIC in their transition to independence.

### **1.3 Methodology**

In order to seek answers to the research questions, a qualitative participatory research approach was used to obtain detailed information during the research process and hear about the experiences of guardianship workers when helping YIC in the areas of EELS within their own unique regions.

A set of questions were designed with the client and staff to obtain opinions from participants of this study. These questions were open-ended so as to gain comprehensive information based on the experiences of guardianship workers.

Further, a test web site consisting of YIC EELS resources was developed for guardianship workers to experiment with and provide input.

Input for the research questions was obtained from staff in headquarters and from the regions through consultation, electronic feedback mechanism found on the mock web site, and a teleconference focus group discussion.

### **1.4 Findings**

A number of issues were identified as challenges to obtaining and accessing information for YIC. These include:

- lack of awareness and knowledge to EELS resources at the provincial and national levels,
- lack of access to EELS due to strict eligibility criteria that YIC do not meet,
- work load, human resources and funding issues, and
- inadequate capacity to use the Internet to gain information in an efficient and effective manner.

Input regarding the usefulness of a web-based inventory of services included:

- content, design and format of the test website, and
- support to placing EELS resources on MCFD site.

### **1.5 Recommendations**

1. Up load EELS resources that appear on the test web site onto the guardianship web page.
2. Develop a survey to evaluate the usefulness of having EELS resources on the guardianship web site.
3. Collaborate with BC Youth in Care Network to develop and maintain EELS resources on their web site.
4. Develop a single-window database of resources for all ministry workers to access when looking for information for their clients.
5. Provide Internet Searching Training to MCFD employees.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is mandated, through the *Child, Family and Community Service (CF&CS) Act* (1996) to ensure the safety and well-being of a child<sup>1</sup> or youth<sup>2</sup> who comes into the care of the director of MCFD. Often children and youth come into care when there are child protection concerns, such as abuse or neglect “or on a voluntary basis when their families need support” through voluntary care agreements (<http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/guardianship.htm>). A child in care means “a child who is in the custody, care or guardianship of a director or the director of adoption” (*CF&CS Act*, p.6).

While every effort is made to keep children and families together, some children and youth remain in care of the Ministry for a longer period of time or until the child’s 19<sup>th</sup> birthday under continuing custody orders<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, under the *CF&CS Act*, Part 2.1 (Youth and Transitional Support Services and Agreements), high-risk youths between the ages 16 and 19 may access programs and services under Youth Agreements ([http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/youth/youth\\_agreements.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/youth/youth_agreements.htm)) with a director of MCFD.

The Guardianship Policy and Standards Branch (GPSB) is responsible for developing policies and practice standards for residential services, foster homes and specialized resources that support children and youth in care. In addition, practice standards are developed for ministry staff who is delegated to carry out the Director’s guardianship responsibilities for children and youth in care. It is within this branch that I worked as a co-

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<sup>1</sup> Child means “a person under 19 years of age and includes a youth” (*CF&CS Act*, p. 6)

<sup>2</sup> Youth means “a person who is 16 years of age or over but is under 19 years of age” (*CF&CS Act*, p. 6)

<sup>3</sup> Continuing Custody Order means “an order under section 41 (1) (d), 42.2 (4) (d) or (7) or 49 (4), (5) or (10) (a) placing a child in the continuing custody of a director” (*CF&CS Act*, p. 6)

op student from September 4, 2001 to January 4, 2002, under the Transition to Independence Initiative for youth in care (YIC)<sup>4</sup>.

However, since my departure, the MCFD, Child and Family Development Division has reorganized and GPSB's duties have now been divided into two units: the System of Care Unit and the Permanency for Children and Youth Unit. This project, is therefore, presented to the System of Care Unit (SCU), which is responsible for the Transition to Independence Initiative. For this paper, I will continue to use GPSB instead of SCU since GPSB was the branch I worked under.

## **2.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND RATIONALE FOR PROJECT PURPOSE**

### **2.1.1 Transition to Independence Initiative**

Since 1999, GPSB, has been working on developing a Strategic Plan focused on improving their approaches and outcomes to preparing YIC as they transition out of care upon reaching the age of majority, that is, age 19. Within this Strategic Plan, GPSB is exploring tangible ways of improving access to educational, employment, and life skills (EELS) opportunities and resources for YIC. EELS are seen as three key areas that influence the outcomes of YIC to a successful transition to independence.

### **2.1.2 Role of Guardianship Workers**

Guardianship workers play an important role in supporting YIC meet their EELS needs. In the Practice Standard for Guardianship (1999), practice standard 39 indicates that,

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<sup>4</sup> A youth in care is “applied to any youth who has been placed in the legal care and guardianship of the state” (National Youth in Care Network, 2001, p.2).

within the context of a child or youth's comprehensive plan of care, you [guardianship worker] must assist the child or youth to prepare for independence by providing him or her with the necessary training, guidance and support to take responsibility for most aspects of his or her life, according to his or her capabilities, upon reaching the age of majority. (p. 74)

Further, under the MCFD's *Youth Policy Framework* (2000), ministry workers are encouraged to support youth successfully transition out of care. Specifically, within the context of transitioning to independence, ministry workers are to consider the key environmental influences that effects the youth's well-being and support youth "transition to adulthood, while achieving positive youth roles at school, work, community, and with family; and increase self-reliance and self-sufficiency" (p. 2). Environmental influences include the evaluation of "social and economic conditions in which youth live, play, and work ... [the] family and social connections ... [and the] youth['s] ... sense of control over their lives" (p.5).

Therefore, under this practice standard and youth policy framework, guardianship workers are required to support YIC identify the resources they need to succeed in his or her life upon leaving the care of the ministry. This process begins when the youth reaches the age of 15 where the guardianship worker and the youth work together to identify the youth's emotional, developmental, mental, physical, educational, employment and life skills needs. A comprehensive plan of care is done for each child/youth who comes under the care of the ministry.

## **2.2 Current State of YIC**

Despite these plans of care, YIC and youth formerly in care have expressed that they are not adequately prepared to live on the own, that they do not have the education or skills to obtain meaningful work, and that they do not have the life skills necessary to be self-sufficient (Rutman, Barlow, Hubberstey, Alusik, and Brown 2001).

MCFD's 2002 statistics indicate that there are above 10,000 children in care in British Columbia ([http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/media\\_site/statistics.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/media_site/statistics.htm)), of which 3,000 are YIC between the ages of 15 and 19 (Dobrowolsky, 2002). Each year approximately 700 YIC leave the care of MCFD ([http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/media\\_site/pdfs/YEA\\_Fund1.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/media_site/pdfs/YEA_Fund1.pdf)), of these approximately 400 YIC participate in the Independent Living Program. Not all YIC are enrolled in this program due to lack of funding and services in their respective regions (GPSB consultation).

The well-being of youth in care is a major concern for MCFD as a number of reports suggest that the educational and career success and qualifications of YIC or formerly in care are significantly lower when compared to youth in the general population (National Youth in Care Network, 2001).

Empirical and statistical studies done by MCFD, the Children's Commission, the Ministry of Education, the Federation of BC Youth in Care Network, and the Canadian National Youth in Care Network, just to name a few, show that the outcomes of youth leaving care are poor in terms of graduating from high school, finding meaningful and stable employment, and having the life skills necessary to live successfully on their own upon leaving care.

### **2.2.1 Education Attainment**

For example a draft report entitled, "Educational Attainment of Children in Care", (2001), prepared by MCFD, the Ministry of Education, and the BC Children's Commission, found that children in care are not doing as well as other children. The study indicate that 46.8% of children in care (CIC) in British Columbia are in special education compared to 9.2% of non-children in care (NCIC). Further, 56.8% CIC were behind a grade compared to 22.3% NCIC in grade 10 and 54.4% of CIC were behind a grade compared to 34.5% in grade 12.

A report by Rutman et al. (2001), identified some of the support needs and barriers that British Columbia's YIC and youth formerly in care (YFC) face in the process of independent

living. YIC/YFC are who are interested in pursuing higher education, or who are interested in going back to school, express that they face “financial barriers to pursuing their education and the difficulties they experienced trying to go to school while living on their own” (p. 17).

Support needs and financial barriers are not unique to British Columbia’s YIC. Similar stresses are also expressed at the national level. One hundred YIC across Canada participated in a study entitled *Who Will Teach Me to Learn* which was conducted by the National Youth in Care Network (2001). The report notes that the futures of YIC “are compromised by a lack of support services, a high level of early school drop out and chronic unemployment” (p.1).

Some of the many issues discussed in this study was the awareness of, access to, and availability of obtaining EELS resources. Within this scope, many YIC expressed that “they were often not aware of their options or resources they could access when faced with a decision regarding their education ... [and] many people were unwilling to help them or unable to help them due to their own lack of knowledge” (Rutman et al., 2001, p. 7). In the areas of obtaining funds through scholarships, bursaries, etc., the National Youth in Care Network noted that YIC have a difficult time locating resources and understanding the information ones it was found (p.7). Furthermore, YIC also expressed that often they were not given the opportunity to have a voice about their own educational interest and extracurricular activities (p. 1 and 7-8).

It was suggested in the National Youth in Care Network report (2001) that guidance counselors and social workers need to “help youth locate resources that they will need and to explain the resources where necessary ... in helping youth plan for their future” (p. 8).

### **2.2.2 Employment**

The lack of education and skills in turn has had a negative impact on a YIC’s ability to seek meaningful work. Many YIC become dependent on social assistance or income assistance

(Rutman et al., 2001, p. 4). Youth in Care and youth formerly in care said that they found it financially difficult to meet their needs especially when they did not have a job prior to leaving care even though they really wanted to work (p. 16-17).

Therefore, there is an expectation for YIC to begin thinking about their futures way before other youth in the general population and it is assumed that with proper planning, YIC will be self-sufficient and financially independent by the time they leave the foster care system.

### **2.2.3 Life Skills**

Other than needing an education to gain meaningful employment, YIC also need the skills necessary to live independently upon leaving the care of the ministry.

The 1996 Canadian census data indicates that the average age for the general youth population leaving home is at the mid-twenties (Rutman et al., 2001). This privilege is not possible for YIC, as they must leave the care of MCFD, the legal guardian, by the time they reach their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Reports suggest that YIC leave government care at an even earlier age, that is 16 years of age (Rutman et al., p. 3).

The stress that YIC face upon leaving care is significantly higher compared to the general youth population who often have the luxury of returning to their parents' home if they are having difficulty making it on their own. This means that YIC need to acquire the necessary skills quickly in order to successfully transition out of care. Skills in this area include renting a place, budgeting their finances, cooking, cleaning, taking care of their physical and emotional health, etc.

#### 2.2.4 Other Considerations

Many YIC are often still struggling with emotional, mental, and physical issues upon leaving care. This can be attributed to a number of reasons: being removed from their families and placed into care, high anxiety, further abuse in foster homes, number of moves while under government care, the lack of appropriate matching between child and foster parent, and the relationships with their own families, foster families, and support networks, the lack of services and funding, etc. (*Youth Policy Framework*, 2000, p. 4; Rutman et al., 2001; National Youth in Care Network, 2001).

Countless stories of children and youth in care have been documented to express the disruption and struggles they face while in care. The bibliography at the end of this document names some books, such as *Children and Youth in Care Review: Listen to their voices* (2000) and *Pain ... Lots of Pain: Family violence and abuse in the lives of young people in care* (1993), for readers interested in hearing the experiences of children and youth in care. This report does not aim to address all the factors that affect a child's or youth's life in care, but nonetheless, does acknowledge that children and youth who come into care do face many issues and barriers in their circumstances.

In addition, there are systemic barriers within organizations such as MCFD and the Ministry of Human Resources. Some YIC/YFC noted that while there may be programs and services available to them, the eligibility criteria, their status while under care of MCFD, and the availability of support services due to "limited funding allocated to each regions" makes it difficult for them to access the program and services offered in their community (Rutman et al., 2001, p. 17). One participant commented,

They bounced me from Human Resources, the welfare office, to MCF. And every time I go back to an office they would be like, 'I'm sorry, we cannot help you.' and then I would go to the welfare office and they'd say, 'This is not our problem. You're under age.' (p.17)

GPSB is aware of all of these issues, as they have been working closely with the BC Youth in Care Network to improve the lives of children and YIC, as well as provide further support to youth upon reaching the age of 19.

### **2.3 Transition to Independence: Handbook for YIC**

One of the approaches GPSB has employed to assist youth to prepare for leaving the care of the MCFD is the development of a handbook of resources entitled *Useful Tips for Youth Leaving Care* (Reference number MCF 197 or go to: [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child\\_protection/useful\\_tips.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_protection/useful_tips.pdf)). A companion Facilitators Guide was also developed for use in workshops with YIC to complement the handbook. GPSB has held a number of pilot workshops with YIC to test the usefulness of the handbook and Facilitators Guide, and to identify the services and programs YIC need to live independently. Final copies of these documents were distributed to the regional offices of MCFD for distribution to the youth they serve. Some topics in the handbook include: budgeting, job searching, independent living, schooling, employment and assistance, income assistance, housing, health, self-esteem, stress, communication, and dealing with conflict.

While the handbook is useful, there are some concerns over keeping the information updated given the shifts in government, services, and funding allocations to organizations. In order to keep such a handbook updated and accurate, there are huge human resources, printing, and distribution costs to consider.

In terms of education and employment, the resources that YIC can access is limited. The handbook gives job search tips and information to YIC on accessing information about school, going back to school, obtaining scholarships, bursaries, etc., in a general sense, and it does not identify specific programs, services, scholarship, etc., that YIC can apply for at all levels of government and public/private sectors. In most regions and communities, there are ways of accessing information through community resources, however little is known about what more is available. The lack of specific resources applicable to YIC limits the options available to YIC and limits the guardianship workers ability to identify programs, services or

supports that YIC may be able to access beyond their communities, especially in the areas of education and employment.

Given that guardianship workers work closely with YIC, GPSB thinks that if guardianship workers were aware of more options for their youth, they would be in a better position to help their youth develop meaningful plans for their future. Successful transition out of care means youth having connectivity to their communities, having the education and skills required to gain meaningful work upon graduating from school, and having the skills necessary to live on their own.

Further to support YIC, MCFD also has an Independent Living Program (ILP) to assist eligible YIC between the ages of 17 and 18 begin the process of living on their own. ILP provides financial support to YIC to meet their basic necessities and may also provide youth with funding to help them gain life skills and pursue their education. The hope is that the ILP will enable to YIC to successfully transition out of care and become self-sufficient.

As yet another strategic approach, GPSB would like to disseminate education, employment, and life skills resources applicable to YIC available at the provincial and national levels via their web page.

### **2.3.1 Transition to Independence: Inventory of EELS resources on the Guardianship Webpage**

Given that the Internet is becoming an important medium for information gathering, knowledge management, and knowledge transfer in government, and the BC government's commitment to "bridge[ing] the 'digital divide'" (A New Era for British Columbia: A vision for hope and prosperity for the next decade and beyond, [www.bcliberals.com](http://www.bcliberals.com)), it is a good

opportunity for GPSB to consider using the Internet as tool for communicating regional<sup>5</sup>, provincial and national EELS resources to guardianship workers.

As part of the Strategic Plan for the independent living initiative, GPSB sees the Internet as a viable tool for guardianship workers to utilize when working with YIC in identifying their EELS needs, thereby improving outcomes for the youth. The dissemination of EELS information via the GPSB web-page began some time ago, however, the efforts to compile a comprehensive list of provincial and national resources has been difficult due to the lack of human resources and time. There is only one person who is working on the transition to independence initiative and other priorities within the division take over this effort.

### **2.3.2 GPSB Assumptions**

It is assumed that if there is an inventory of EELS resources on the GPSB web page, for example, guardianship workers will be:

- aware of a larger range of EELS options for YIC that looks beyond what is offered locally and regionally,
- in a better position to assist and provide information to YIC in the assessment, planning and decision making process when working on the youth's plan of care,
- better able to identify program, services, and/or educational/career needs based on their age, needs, and capabilities in the assessment/planning process, thereby creating more opportunities for YIC
- able to access more up-to-date information in a quick and efficient manner, and

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<sup>5</sup> The researcher is only looking at provincial and national EELS resources for youth in care because some regions/communities have detailed resource guides on youth services and related information. Also, GPSB is part of a Pan-Canadian study that is looking at regional resources offered in each province, which is in its initial stages. This study is looking at children and youth at risk, at-risk concepts, education, and outcomes for youth at risk. To view the symposium report, go to: [www.cmec.ca](http://www.cmec.ca)

- apt to develop more meaningful plans for the future with their youth, thereby improving outcomes of YIC.

#### **2.4 Use of Information Technology in Social Work Practice**

Interestingly, there is a lot written about the use of Internet in social work practice. It is common knowledge that the Internet is full of information, some of which is credible, while others not so credible. Often people go to the Internet to use their emails, get onto chat lines and discussion groups, and look for information for personal and professional knowledge. Therefore, knowing how to use the Internet as a source of information can have great value in social work practice, especially when looking for credible information for ameliorating work-based practices and helping clients. Cwikel and Cnaan (1991) point out that “the social worker with access to information on various agencies, volunteers, philanthropies, welfare rights, and regulations has a valuable tool with which to aid clients. The concept of case management depends on the ability to link clients with a network of resources for help and support” (p. 116).

Despite these potential benefits, organizations are still slow in integrating information technology into social work practice. This can be contributed to a number of factors to include the “quality and currency of information, bandwidth, staff time, agency support, rapid technological change, marketing, browser consistency, user skill, and the lack of Internet access by potential users” (Nartz, M. and Schoech D., 2002). Some of this findings are also confirmed by Sandell and Haynes (2002), who note that people are often very uneasy to use the Internet as a source of information in their daily work (p. 85). Finding meaningful information on the Internet, evaluating the credibility of the information source, lack of access to information and technology, finding current information, information overload, time schedules, implementation of delivery systems, and bridging the digital divide are on-going challenges in integrating information technology into social work practice (Sandell and Haynes, p. 87-96).

Furthermore, Cwikel and Cnaan note that the “development and maintenance of a resource database is expensive”. However, they also note that the lack of knowledge and awareness to resources for clients on the Internet also means a decrease of potential resources for their clients (1991, p. 116).

In terms of outcomes for clients, it is stressed that while social workers may share and provide information to their clients, the quality of care and welfare of client outcomes are unclear (Cwikel and Cnaan, 1991, p. 114). Cwikel and Cnaan assert that “organizations often must wait years for meaningful results” (p. 116). Nonetheless, the need to integrate information technology in social work practice is becoming necessary (Sandell and Haynes, 2002).

### **3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

Therefore, the research questions that the client seeks answers for are:

- What are the current successes and barriers guardianship workers face when accessing EELS information for YIC?
- If an inventory of YIC EELS resources were available for guardianship workers on the guardianship web page, will they a) use it, b) find it helpful when developing plans of care with their YIC?, and c) could it improve the outcomes for YIC?

At this point, it is worth noting that this research project is NOT intended to be a technical piece, that is, this research does not aim to look at technical issues or systems/software design issues. While these issues are relevant, it is felt that GPSB can work with the Communications Branch and the Management Information Systems (now the Electronic Service Division which oversees all aspects of information technology and information management for MCFD) within MCFD on these issues if the project is implemented.

Moreover, there are information technology/web-design frameworks, protocols, policies, and guidelines that the divisions within MCFD have to adhere to, which could have slowed down the research purpose. Nonetheless, the communication department and the web-design specialists at MCFD were consulted during the research process.

In order to seek answers to the research questions, a qualitative participatory research approach was used to obtain detailed information during the research process and hear about the experiences of guardianship workers when helping YIC in the areas of EELS within their own unique regions. A participatory research approach was used to enable all participants to contribute to the research design and process, and participate actively in the purpose, content, and outcomes of the project.

Information was gathered through:

- Consultations with internal staff members of MCFD (listed below under consultations),
- Automatic email feedback mechanism placed on the test web site, and
- A teleconference focus group session with MCFD staff to gather their impressions of the test web site and their personal experiences on gathering information for YIC and the strengths and barriers they face in their current work.

## **4 METHODOLOGICAL IMPLEMENTATION AND FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Consideration to the Research Process**

This project began in September 2001, during a co-op term of the researcher, and officially ended on January 4, 2002. During the time on-site, a test web site was developed and tested by ministry workers on a time-limited basis. The actual teleconference did not occur till mid January 2002. It is difficult to tell if focus group participants remembered the details of the web site and recorded their impressions/thoughts on the questions posed to them.

In addition, since January 2002, a lot has changed in terms of government's direction to providing services to communities. YIC are directly affected by the cuts in services and programs recently made by the government. Therefore, some of the resource links, especially provincial links, collected during the co-op term may prove to be outdated. Therefore, it is imperative that all the links be validated for its existence and usability.

Also, it is worth noting that the consultative process was hindered by time schedules and workload issues. Significant events were taking place within the ministry, such as core review, which led to high anxiety among staff members and extra work on their plates. It was also a time in which the regions hired six new guardianship consultants in November/December, 2001. As a result, the people who participated in the focus group were mixed in terms of their roles and responsibilities, but nonetheless, worked with YIC at a various capacity.

## **4.2 Consultations**

A number of key people were identified for consultation. They were the policy analysts in the guardianship branch, a researcher for the Child Protection Division, an Assistant Deputy Minister of the Child Protection Division, directors of Aboriginal Services and Program Management and Audit Branch, staff of the Youth Services Branch, staff members of the Communications Branch and manager of the MCF Resource Centre. The academic advisors of the author were also consulted during the process.

The purpose of these consultation was to:

- determine if there was support for the initiative proposed by the Guardianship Branch,
- obtain feedback on what they thought of the overall direction of the project and what they would like to see in the project phase,

- obtain their input on web site design, and to determine which organisations internal and external to the BC government we should seek information on EELS, and
- determine the kinds of questions this research should consider.

Prior to meeting with these key people, a briefing note was emailed to each person inform them of the purpose of the project (See Appendix A). The researcher took extensive notes during the consultation phase.

#### **4.2.1 Results of Consultation**

Almost everyone that the researcher spoke to expressed overwhelming support and need for developing a web-based inventory of resources of all ministry workers at MCFD to use when they are working with their clients.

The input generated during this consultation phase ranged from simply expressing support for the initiative to providing the researcher with specific challenges and recommendations to meet the project purpose.

##### Awareness and Access to EELS and Workload Issues

GPSB staff commented that when a YIC ask for information on EELS, often times guardianship workers from the regional offices call upon them looking for information and resources. The policy and program analysts at GPSB end up doing the research for them. It was felt that if this information was placed on the guardianship web page, it will not take time away from their work and will enable guardianship workers to access the information directly from their web-page. It was also stressed that this initiative will be congruent with the practice standards for guardianship workers and the *Youth Policy Framework (2000)*.

##### Website Comments: Scope, Design, and Format

In terms of the web-site, the client and GPSB staff requested that I focus on EELS resources available to YIC at the provincial and national levels. It was felt that workers generally know what is available in the regions in which they work. Therefore, the main parameters of this component of the project included looking at:

- Educational resources such as scholarships, bursaries, awards, loans, advanced education, re-entry into school for upgrades or completion of high school diploma, and vocational training,
- Employment resources such as job search and career enhancement resources, youth employment, work study, apprenticeship, internships, youth summer employment, and entrepreneurship, and
- Life Skills, that is independent living skills resources such as finding affordable housing, money management, health, safety, etc.

In addition, GPSB wanted only a list of resources that YIC could potentially be eligible for and access. GPSB staff are aware of the many youth programs offered by the provincial and national levels, however, whether these programs are available to YIC, is unclear. Therefore, the staff expressed that the format of the materials on the web page should be manageable, simple, easy to understand, youth-friendly, and navigational. Some staff even suggested that this information be placed on a youth site such as the BC Youth in Care Network so that YIC could access it as well. It was expressed that the corporate structure of the MCFD web site would deter youth from going to the MCFD site for information.

Upon having a list of resources gathered, GPSB also wanted to know if the guardianship workers will find this information useful in their work with YIC. Therefore, it was suggested by the researcher that a test web site be developed and tested for its usefulness and determine if such a site would assist guardianship workers when they develop plans of care with their youth in regards to EELS.

GPSB wanted to be conscious about how this information is presented to guardianship workers. They want the inventory of resources placed on the web page to be seen as an additional tool to help guardianship workers help their youth make better decisions about their lives. GPSB did not want this web-based tool to add onto the guardianship roles and responsibilities. Numerous discussions on practice issues lead to asking what challenges guardianship workers faced when looking for EELS information and also if this information was available on the web site would it enable guardianship workers to be more efficient and effective and would it improve the outcomes of YIC. Answers to these queries were unclear. Nonetheless, some questions did come out of the discussions with GPSB staff. These included:

- In practice, where and in what form do guardianship workers obtain YIC resources? (Example, pamphlets, brochures, Internet, community resource booklets, etc?)
- What are the challenges guardianship workers come across when looking for or accessing information for their youth? What are the successful methods?
- Would this initiative place more stress on guardianship workers? Would they need to spend more time looking through an inventory of resources when looking for information for their youth? Would more time have to be spent explaining the information to their youth? Would the information on the web-page be easily understood and accessible? Would there be a resource on how to do a search? Would youth be able to use it? Who is going to keep the information on the web page up-to-date?

Similar concerns and questions were also raised by the communications branch and the resource centres that are responsible for the web-site content and design issues. Some other issues they raised were the changing environment and direction of MCFD. They were unclear of their role since the ministry was going through the core review process. Therefore, they could not be directly involved in the web-site development process. Nonetheless, they did provide many suggestions and resources for the researcher to look at in the development of a good web site, as well as other BC ministry sites for EELS information.

In terms of web site design and content, they commented that a good web site should provide users (both workers and clients) with a step-by-step and logical approach to accessing information. In addition, users with limited knowledge may need a guide on “how to search on the Internet”. They also brought up the concern over keeping the information up-to-date and asked who will make this happen given that there is a lack of funding and human resources.

Staff from other departments, such as Youth Services and Aboriginal Youth Services also expressed that they would like to see one database for all ministry workers to use, thereby avoiding duplication of similar projects.

### YIC Concerns

Interestingly, only a couple of people talked about evaluating the outcomes of YIC. That is, did the web site help develop better plans of care? How will we know? When these issues were discussed with the client, it was clear that there was no easy way of evaluating the outcomes of the YIC unless there was a mechanism in place to follow the progress of the YIC from the beginning to the end. Also, given that this project aims at providing only an additional tool for guardianship workers to use and improve their ability to help YIC, it was felt that the number of hits on the web site would be a sufficient means of determining whether the site was useful or not. Nonetheless, an academic advisor did suggest the development of a short questionnaire or on-line evaluation forms for people to provide feedback on. As a result, the researcher developed a draft questionnaire (See Appendix B).

Lastly, everyone, including the GPSB staff, wanted to know what YIC thought about having such information on the Internet for them to access, if they would use it, etc., in planning for their future. While there was support for including the YIC in the research process and in the development of a youth-friendly web site, it was decided that this component of the research project could be investigated at a later time. There were many ethical and logistical issues to consider when involving YIC in the research process. Therefore, out of this discussion, the

researcher developed a draft questionnaire for GPSB to pursue with YIC (See Appendix C) in the future.

In going back to the research question, it appears that the access to information, use of technology in practice, workload issues, design and format of the web site, the need for up-to-date information, and human resource and funding issues are some of the main challenges identified during the consultation process.

In terms of having EELS on the web page of the guardianship branch, it appears that there is unanimous support to have a web-based inventory of resources to help ministry workers in their practice. Guardianship workers would be more efficient in providing information to their clients, which may prove to be an effective way of accessing more resources outside of their respective regions.

Some participants felt that if developing a single information system is possible, it could definitely enable both workers and clients to have access to information beyond what they already know and could create more opportunities for worker/client success. Others expressed that this information should be placed in the BC Youth in Care Network's web page so that YIC and youth formerly in care also have access to it. Nonetheless, all participants felt that this project was a good start to updating the current GPSB web site.

In terms of evaluating the outcomes of YIC in this process, it is difficult to determine if information on the web site would actually provide YIC with more opportunities and improve their outcome. It was suggested that some kind of survey be put in place for guardianship workers to evaluate their experiences using the web-based inventory of resources with their youth.

With this information in mind, the researcher proceeded to work on collecting EELS resources for the web-site development and preparing for the teleconference focus group meeting. At this point, work was carried out simultaneously.

### 4.3 Web-Site Development

#### 4.3.1 Analysis of Current Educational Links on the Guardianship Web Page

The first task was to evaluate what was already on the current GPSB web page and determine if there are any resources that are applicable to YIC.

Currently, there is a handful of scholarship and award links sited in the guardianship web page (<http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/guardianship.htm> or see Appendix D). It seems that it was copied from the National Youth in Care web site ([www.youthincare.ca/linkinfo/scholar.htm](http://www.youthincare.ca/linkinfo/scholar.htm)). Nonetheless, to illustrate the level of relevancy and usefulness of these links to YIC, the author reviewed all nine links that appear on the GPSB web page. The results are as follows:

- Links that are applicable, or may be applicable, to YIC: 1) Ken Dryden Scholarship and Achievement Award, which is offered to YIC or youth formerly in care of the state across Canada, 2) Canadian Merit Scholarship Foundation and 3) the Leonardo Da Vinci Competition, which are both geared towards youth in general.
- Links not directly linked to scholarships and awards, but are a useful resources include: 1) CanLearn Canada -- consists of tools for educational and career planning, and information on student awards, and 2) Studentawards.com -- free service to people who want to learn about the scholarships and awards that are applicable to them via instant messaging of upcoming scholarships and awards applicable to them based on the information the person provides about themselves.
- Links that are not applicable to YIC include: 1) Humanities Social Sciences Federation of Canada award – provides support in the areas of teaching, research and scholarship in the humanities and social sciences, 2) Megna for Canada Scholarship – provides scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students, and is not applicable to high school student, 3) Mount Royal scholarships and awards – only applicable to students living in Alberta, and

4) Science Council of British Columbia Scholarship -- supports students at the post-secondary level on the areas of science and technology.

As it stands, the current GPSB site is not too useful for YIC or guardianship workers, with an exception of a few. It is clear that efforts have been made to identify some links on the Internet that YIC can look at. However, it is not clear if guardianship workers refer to these resources or refer them to YIC, given that the eligibility criteria for some of these resources would make it difficult for YIC to access these resources. Only the Ken Dryden Scholarship and Achievement Award, thus far, is the most applicable to YIC.

#### **4.4 Compilation of EELS**

Given that the scope of the project was already defined (under consultation), a set of criteria was developed based on what people had said during the consultation process. The researcher asked the following questions during the search process:

- What is the purpose of this site? What is the resource - EELS?
- Is the resource applicable to YIC/YFC? What age group does it cater to?
- Does it seem like an easy resource to access? How many people does the organization serve? Is it relevant to YIC based on criteria and eligibility?
- Is it easily understandable and accessible? Is it user-friendly?
- Is it current, updated?
- Is the organization legitimate? Is there contact information?

In addition, the criteria for evaluating Internet sources delineated by MCFD was very useful in helping the author delineate what makes a site credible and good (Appendix E). The six main criteria included: authority, accuracy, objectivity, currency, coverage, and presentation and navigation.

Keeping these questions and criteria in mind, the author first looked at the MCFD site (<http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/>). Programs and services applicable to YIC were identified. The MCFD site also had links to other organizations and services, which proved to be highly valuable in the areas of life skills and support, as well as some scholarships and awards. The list of resource applicable to YIC were compiled into a Word Document under the headings: Educational Resources, Employment Pathways, and Life Skills (For a complete list of resources from all sources see Appendix F).

Further resources were gathered from other organizations, ministries and Federal agencies that were identified during the consultation process. These included the: Ministry of Advanced Education, Student Services Branch; Ministry of Education, Community-based Learning; Ministry of Human Resources, Youth Works; Ministry of Forests; Ministry of Competition, Science & Enterprise; Ministry of Energy and Mines; Ministry of Transportation; Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection; Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries; BC Youth in Care Network; BC Business Council; Human Resources Development Canada, Youth Options; Government of Canada, Youth Employment Strategy; National Youth in Care Network; and British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Association. Within these organizational web sites other links were identified. Again, relevant links were placed into one of the three headings. Also, as a result, two additional headings emerged: Getting Started and Glossary of Terms. These headings aimed to help youth identify themselves and do a little research in the area of interest. The Glossary of Terms aimed to help YIC understand some of the bureaucratic jargon, which often could be found in the areas of loans, scholarships, grants, etc., for example.

Finally, general searches were conducted using search engines on the World Wide Web. Simple key word searches (example: Youth in Care or Foster children) and concept-based searches (example: Youth in Care and Services or Programs) were used to generate YIC related links, which were also placed into one of the three main headings in the Microsoft Word document.

#### **4.4.1 Results of Compiling EELS Resources**

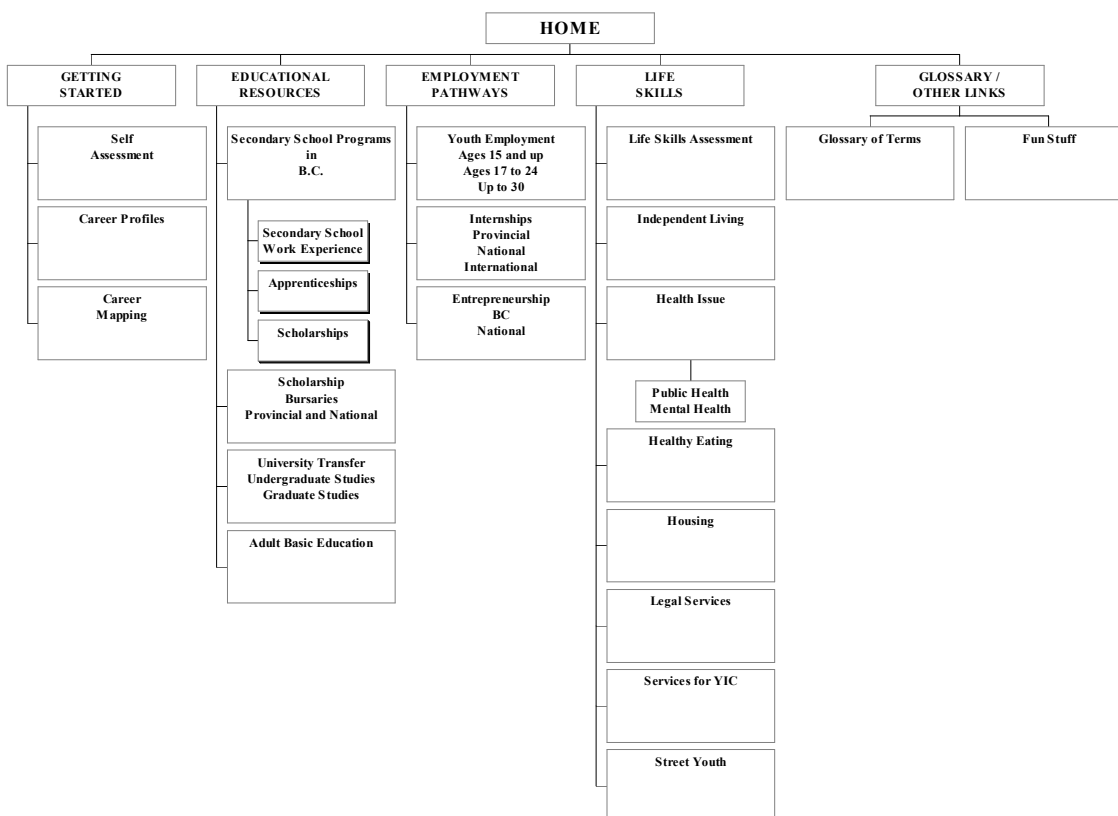
It is worth noting that while a set of criteria were used to find EELS information applicable to YIC, it was not always possible to determine how many people the organization served, and what happens when there are too many people seeking the same service, etc.

Further, some resources that were found were applicable to all youth. These were also included in the compilation of links. It was felt that resources, such as life skills information or high school information, would be of interest to all youth including YIC.

In terms of understandability, accessibility, and ease of use of the web site, the author felt that these issues are very subjective and depends on who is accessing the information and their own comfort levels with the use of technology and following instructions. Therefore, any resource that is relevant to YIC was included.

As a result, the Word Document formed the basis for the test site development. Diagram A formed the framework of the web site to be.

Diagram A: Structure of the Web Site



#### 4.5 Development of a Test Web Site Using FrontPage 98

Having all the resources gathered and an approved framework in place (diagram A above), the author began to develop a test web site using FrontPage 98, keeping in mind that this site is to be youth- and user-friendly, understandable, not wordy, manageable, accessible and applicable to YIC. A sample of the test web site can be found in appendix G.

The main benefits of FrontPage program is that it is easy to use, enables a novice to create a professional looking web site without needing any programming language, develop and update a web site quickly, copy and paste information from a Word document (saved as HTML document) onto the web page, and make edits in ‘real time’, thus allowing for fast and easy updates to the site’s content. There are many other benefits to using FrontPage 98. For further readings go to <http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage/>.

The site’s main content was grouped in five main categories (as per diagram A), each representing a distinct type of information resource: Getting Started, Educational Resources,

Employment Pathways, Life Skills, and Glossary of Terms. Within each of the main categories, other sub-categories were formed to enable users to get to specific resources. For example, if one wanted to look for educational resources for youth between the ages of 15 and 17, one would just go to education and click on that category. In addition, the site also included a Feedback form for users to provide their feedback.

On the web page, all the resources that were identified had a brief description to explain what they were. The purpose of including these brief summaries is to help the user decide if they wanted to carry on with the link or not. If the user decided to proceed with investigating the link, then the link opens into a separate window, thus minimizing users' need to use 'back' button repeatedly.

Upon completion of the web site development, it was uploaded as a sub-domain over an existing web site for testing and soliciting feedback.

#### **4.5.1 Results of the Test Site**

An email was send to most of the people who were consulted during the initial project phase. These included the manager and staff of GPSB (6 people), two Youth Services consultants, the researcher for the Child Protection Division, the manager of the communications branch and the manager of the MCF Resource Centre (responsible for web-site development).

Of the ten people who were asked to test and comment on the web site, nine responded. One was on holidays at the time of the testing the web site in December 2002.

#### Website Comments: Content and Format

All participants were very pleased with the content and format of the web site and thoroughly supported it. In terms of the content, they found that the information very useful and

informative. All participants were surprised to see the number of resources that were applicable to YIC and expressed an increased awareness of EELS resources. They felt that the guardianship workers, as well as YIC, could really benefit from having such information on the guardianship web page, especially if a YIC inquire about specific information about their EELS preparation.

Further, they found the content easy to read, understand and follow, as it was simple, uncluttered and to the point. Two participants even said that they would use some of this information for their own children.

However, there were also some recommendations and comments made to web site content. In terms of recommendations, some participants wanted to see more life skills resources the YIC can access, such as public health, mental health, emotional health, addictions, pregnancy, etc. One participant suggested that there be more clarity to some of the terms in the glossary of terms, such as the difference between scholarships, bursaries, and loans.

In terms of the format, GPSB staff found the layout of the web site very appealing and easy on the eyes. Some commented that the navigational bars were very useful, as they could easily move from one topic to the next without needing to hit the “back” button.

In addition, all participants commented that the language used was very youth-friendly and appealing, which would enable guardianship workers to explain and print materials that their youth may want to explore on their own. Having an easy to read format will “keep the youth interested”, as one GPSB staff pointed out and one other staff commented that “if Ebert were here, I’m sure we’d give it a two-thumbs up”.

#### Access to Resource

Also, one participant commented that while there may appear to be many resources available to YIC, they may not always be assessable. This participant cautioned against making it show as if all of these programs are readily available. This is an extremely valuable point.

Upon making the recommended changes offered by the GPSB staff, the web site was made available to the focus group participants prior to teleconference focus group session.

## **4.6 Focus Group Preparation**

### **4.6.1 Pre-focus Group Questions**

In preparation of the teleconference focus group sessions, a list of open-ended questions were designed with the client, program/policy analysts and the liaison staff between headquarters and regional operations. The purpose of developing open-ended questions was to enable participant to speak freely about their experiences, about the range of issues that they come across in the areas of EELS when planning with to their youth, and gain their insights on their experiences with the test web site.

These questions were revised numerous times to meet the project purpose and solicit responses for the research questions posed in the study, that is, identifying the successes and barriers guardianship workers face when accessing EELS information for YIC and determining if a web-based inventory of resources would be useful to guardianship workers in their work with youth. Five key questions were identified during this process (See Appendix H). In addition, a facilitator and co-facilitator question guide was also developed. This question guide had the same five questions, but also consisted of probing questions (See Appendix I).

#### **4.6.2 Invitation to Participate in the Research Project**

Given that this was an initial phase of the project, only a selected number of people were invited to participate in viewing the test web site and participate in the teleconference focus group. The decision to invite only a selected number of people was made by the client. The client felt that having only one or two people from each region would enable GPSB to get a good impression of the experiences of staff who work with YIC on their EELS plans. Also, it was felt that the feedback from a cross-section of guardianship workers and regions would inform GPSB whether or not the inclusion of an inventory of EELS resources would be supported at a larger scale. Further, he did not want to raise the expectations among all MCFD guardianship workers that this inventory of resources will be placed on their web page for immediate access. Finally, there are MCFD's information technology protocols that GPSB has to adhere to, which could have made it difficult to upload information onto the GPSB web page immediately.

Therefore, an email invitation was sent to regional managers to solicit voluntary participation for testing the web site and the teleconference focus group (See Appendix J). The question sheet was also attached to the email and sent to all eleven regions of the MCFD to include the Kootenays, Okanagan, Thompson Cariboo, North, Upper Fraser, South Fraser, Simon Fraser, Vancouver Richmond, Coast/North Shore, Central and Upper Island, and the Capital regions. A face-to-face meeting would have been very costly.

Also, participants who were not able to participate in the teleconference focus group session were informed that they could provide their impressions and thoughts of the web site and questions proposed through the feedback form found on the test web site, which was automatically forwarded to the author's email address upon submission. Participants were informed that they did not need to indicate their names if they chose not to do so.

As a result, a total of 20 people participated in this study.

#### **4.6.3 Input from Participants via Email**

Input was also generated from feedback received through the feedback mechanism on the test web site. Responses came directly to the researcher anonymously and, therefore, the positions of the respondents cannot be determined. Nonetheless, twelve responses were received through this process.

Data gained through this process was placed under one of the five questions for analysis. A category called “other” included all other information that did not fit into the five questions posed.

#### **4.6.4 Focus Group Teleconference Participants**

Eight participants took part in the focus group teleconference on the scheduled date, January 15, 2002, from 9:30 to 11:30 am. The participants represented the following regions: Thompson Cariboo, Upper Fraser, Vancouver Richmond, Coast/North Shore, Central and Upper Island, and Capital. Within this group, there were two guardianship workers, one policy analyst, one clinical supervisor, and four guardianship consultants.

The author and a policy/program analyst facilitated the group discussion. The policy/program analyst opened the session by providing an overview and purpose of the project and discussed the issues of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were informed that while no names will be used in the report to conceal the person’s identity, it is impossible to guarantee anonymity given that all of the participants knew each other. Further, we also informed them that the discussion will be recorded and transcribed for analysis, however the tape will be erased after the transcription is completed. The participants did not seem concerned about these issues and gave a verbal consent and group consent to proceed.

Upon covering the logistical issues, we began having an informal discussion on the questions posed. Data was sorted out into the five main questions, as well as into the category entitled “other”.

#### **4.6.5 Results: Email Responses And Focus Group**

Themes were generated upon reviewing the data under each question. There was considerable overlap between social work practice and use of technology.

While there was hardly much said about the success of obtaining information, many challenges were identified in search of EELS information for YIC.

The main themes that emerged from the insights generated from the built-in feedback form and the focus group teleconference included:

- lack of awareness and knowledge of the provincial and national EELS resources for YIC/YFC,
- lack of time to do research for YIC, lack of human and financial resources, and training issues
- strict criteria set forth by some programs and services that disqualify YIC from having access to these resources

In terms of the test site and resources, participants commented on:

- their overall impressions of the test web site,
- the benefits they saw with an inventory of resources on the Internet, and
- support for developing an inventory of resources on the MCFD web site.

#### 4.6.5.1 Awareness and Knowledge of EELS Resources

Currently, participants rely on their own awareness, their colleagues, paper material, the Guardianship staff, and others to obtain information for YIC who are interested in pursuing their education, obtaining employment information/opportunities and accessing life skills resources. For example, one participant commented that one of her youths was interested in looking at entrepreneurialship programs and she could not find any information on such a program. She, therefore, called GPSB to obtain this information.

This lead into a discussion on how the current plans or care are often very vague and general because specific information is not readily available and guardianship workers may not be aware of resources, programs and services that a youth may be eligible for. This has limited the guardianship workers' ability to truly provide options to YIC.

In addition, some participants indicated that they were not always aware of the programs offered at the provincial and national levels. A couple of participants noted there had been times when they had to look for resources for YIC who are moving to another region or province. They did not know where to look for programs/services offered in that region or province. Again, many workers rely on their colleagues or government offices for this information. One person mentioned that when she does look for information on the Internet, the amount of "hits" she received can be very overwhelming and deciphering through that information can be extremely time consuming and counter productive. Workers just do not have the time to thoroughly research for programs and services for their youth.

In terms of regional resources, one participant acknowledged that guardianship workers are often aware of what is offered in their own communities for their youth, however, generalist workers or new employees may not be familiar with many of these resources. Therefore, they come to rely heavily on the field staff for program/service information, which takes valuable time away from the work they have to do. Therefore, with this in mind, participants felt that it was equally important to include regional pages onto the site.

The issues of technological competency and ease of using the Internet was discussed in this process. Participants, especially in the focus group, stated that while having resources for their youth in their fingertips would definitely help many guardianship workers be more efficient and effecting in providing valuable information to their youth and developing meaningful plans of care, there is a need to train people who are not comfortable using the Internet.

The majority of participants thought that the web site they tested would make it more possible to look at provincial and national resources, especially when a youth is truly motivated and interested to work towards his or her goals.

#### **4.6.5.2 Access to Resources and YIC outcomes**

Comments were also made regarding having access to these resources. One participant said that while these resources, programs, and services seem to be available, some youth may not have access to them because they are deemed not to be eligible. The Ministry of Human Resources (MHR) was cited as an example. Some YIC who are having difficulty in making ends meet attempt to apply for BC Benefits. In this case, YIC have been bounced between MCFD and the Ministry of Human Resources because they were underage or still under the care of MCFD and, therefore, do not meet the eligibility criteria of MHR. The information set forth by some programs gives the impression they YIC could have access to these services, but in reality the criteria makes it difficult, if not impossible, for YIC to gain access.

One participant warned against giving YIC the impression that there is a lot of resources out there to help them, when in actuality, it is difficult to access these resources due to the strictly defined criteria of who can and cannot have access to the program or service. Moreover, organisations are also limited to how many people they can serve because of the funding they received. Issues such age, ability, disability, etc., also determines who gets support.

When participants were asked if access to these resources could potentially improve the outcomes of YIC, they were not sure. Many expressed that the success of the youth

depended on many things like stability, sense of self, level of motivation, level of development, issues of trust, etc. Therefore, it is not clear if increased resources would lead to improved outcomes. Nonetheless, one participant did mention that the number of hits on the web site would indicate if there are people visiting the site and finding the site useful.

Despite these challenges, participants indicated that an inventory of resources would still help in the planning and decision-making processes and increase the pool of resources available to YIC.

Moreover, participants also indicated that an inventory of resources will enable a broader range of people to research information for their youth, such as YIC, youth formerly in care, foster parents, school counsellors, academic counsellors, probation officers, and anyone working with youth at risk.

Participants agreed that almost everyone these days have access to the Internet in their workplaces, at the library and in schools. On this note, a few participants stated that access to computers should also be available at the regional offices for youth to use.

### **4.6.5.3 Overall Impressions of the Test Web Site**

Asking the participants their overall impression on the test web site generated overwhelmingly positive remarks. Participants indicated that the test site was very good, helpful, encouraging and that they are in full support of having an inventory EELS resources in one place on the Internet.

#### **4.6.5.3.1 Content**

While the majority of the participants indicated they found the content on the test site very useful and applicable for their youth, a number of them provided additional resources they wanted added into the web site. These included links to programs and services on drug and alcohol, mental health, public health (birth control and pregnancies, smoking, sexually

transmitted disease), sexual orientation, housing, budgeting, transportation, and general health maintenance issues such as exercise and diet under the life skills sections.

Two of the teleconference participants also pointed out that they thought that self-assessment tests were helpful. However, they did note that these self-assessment tests should not be used as the final analysis for youth capabilities and interest and pigeonhole the youth into something they may not completely agree with. Nonetheless, these participants felt that some of the self-assessments were fun, helpful for youth to think about their personality, think about what they can see themselves doing, and how they can attain their goals.

#### **4.6.5.3.2 Presentation**

All participants found the test web site to be well organized, logical and easily useable and navigational by both adults and youth. They were able to see the sequence of topics presented on the navigational bar, which enabled them to get to their area of interest very quickly and easily.

A participant commented that MCFD did not use frames when developing web pages because MCFD already has its own guidelines and standards for web site development and design. Having said this, another participant commented that the appearance of a youth-friendly site may not seem possible, as the MCFD site follows a standard corporate format, which will limit the potential use of the web site by youth.

#### **4.6.5.3.3 Language**

Many of the participants liked the simple, understandable, and fun language that was used in the test web site. They felt that it was engaging and thoughtful and was suited for not only ministry staff and other adults, but also for the YIC.

The simple two/three sentence statements were simple to understand and detailed enough to give participants a sense of what the program or service was about. One participant liked the

fact there was not too much text, which also made it easier for her to decide if she is interested in going further into investigating the link. It was also noted that the simplicity of the text will enable guardianship workers to print off the information for YIC, but whether or not YIC will access a ministry site to investigate further was questionable.

This discussion brought about other literacy-related issues and computer literacy issues of YIC. It was mentioned that we do not know the habits of YIC and whether or not even a simple site would be utilized. Some questions one participant raised were, “Do they use computers in their lives? Do they use the Internet? What kind of information do they seek? Are they using the Internet for chat lines, entertainment and email?”

#### **4.6.5.4 Benefits to Having an Inventory of Resources on the Internet for YIC**

Nonetheless, participants agreed unanimously that an inventory of resources would help them in their work, decrease the amount of time it would take them to gather information, and access information quickly when they are looking for resources for their youth. In addition to getting information quickly and saving time, participants thought that having an inventory of resources on one web site would enable social workers to:

- look at the various options with their youth: funding opportunities to attend school or work programs offered through the educational programs, work exchange programs, and life skills information, etc.,
- create meaningful plans with their youth,
- plan ahead with the youth to work towards their educational and employment goals, as well as provide information on the kinds of skills youth seek in order to have a successful transition to independent living, and
- give youth the opportunity to research and follow-up on the information themselves.

Participants also indicated that such a tool would enable workers to keep a record of what they have looked at and discussed with their youth. Youth can be provided with printed materials that they themselves can follow-up with before the next meeting, as well as give YIC some decision making power over their futures. In this vein, participants also acknowledged that not all of the YIC/YFC may be mentally or emotionally or physically prepared to take this initiative and that these youth will still need the guidance from his or her social worker.

#### **4.6.5.5 Support For Developing An Inventory of Resources On The MCFD Web site**

There was unanimous support and agreement that an inventory of resources should be developed and available on the Internet site. Participants felt that this will provide guardianship workers and YIC updated information and the web site would be a much better way of getting information compared to receiving information on brochures, handbooks, etc., because they become outdated with the changing environment and funding allocation. Therefore, the importance of keeping the information on the web site up-to-date was stressed over and over again by many participants.

One participant indicated that a service that she was trying to access for her youth had stopped without notice. She was not always aware of what is current and what is not until she went to access it. Participants agreed that the process of sifting through a high volume of paper material and filed materials that they had gathered themselves somewhere along their work is frustrating, inefficient, and time consuming.

When participants were asked who should be responsible for developing and maintaining this site, all the participants in the teleconference thought that the BC Youth in Care Network should take up the task of developing, implementing and maintaining the web site because:

- they already have a great youth-friendly web site for their clients (YIC/YFC),
- they have the time to keep the links up-to-date,

- they already work closely with MCFD, and
- the ministry workers and others can access their web site to obtain up-to-date information.

## **5 DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS**

From the consultation to the focus group stage, it is obvious that guardianship workers come across a number of barriers when accessing EELS information for their youth. The main barriers that have been discussed include the lack of knowledge and awareness of EELS resources applicable to YIC at the provincial and national levels, and sometimes even at the regional/local levels; access to programs and services due to strict eligibility criteria placed on YIC; human resources, funding, time and workload issues; and inadequate capacity to use the Internet.

Throughout the research process, everyone the author spoke to supported this initiative and felt that if there is an inventory of EELS resources for YIC, they would use it when developing plans of care with their youth.

Although no one said that this project will improve the outcomes of YIC, many did say that being knowledgeable about the information at all levels will provide better opportunities and more options to YIC in pursuit of their education, employment and life skills goals.

In terms of who should take on this responsibility of uploading this information on a website and where should this information appear, it seems clear that the staff of MCFD believes that BC Youth in Care Network should take on this task.

## **5.1 Recommendations**

Based on the research process and research findings, the following recommendations are made:

### **5.1.1 Implementation of Research EELS Link on Guardianship Webpage**

First, as an immediate step, the GPSB should work in collaboration with its communications staff and the information technology team to upload what has already been found on the Internet for YIC during the co-op term of the author.

This will serve two purposes. One, it will update the resource list that is already on the Guardianship web page to make it more relevant and useful for guardianship workers to use. Second, it will provide guardianship workers to look at more options with their youth when working on their plans of care.

### **5.1.2 Develop a survey to evaluate the usefulness of having EELS resources on the web site**

It is also recommended that a survey be designed to evaluate the usefulness of having program, service, and other resources on any web site – MCFD or BC Youth in Care Network. The purpose of having a survey would be to obtain feedback from users who tap into the inventory looking for information and to get their impressions on how useful they found it to be in helping them access information. Such information can play a key role in identifying barriers to, and gaps in, services and programs. Further changes or actions can be taken to ameliorate the lives of both workers and clients, as well as re-evaluate practices and policies within organizations, branches, and divisions.

### **5.1.3 Collaborate With BC Youth In Care Network To Develop And Maintain EELS Resources On Their Web Site**

The second recommendation stems from the input from the participants at the consultative level and the focus group discussion who believe that the BC Youth in Care Network (BCYICN) should develop and maintain a information system of resources, programs and services for YIC available at all levels. Since BCYICN is funded by MCFD, it is imperative that MCFD supports BCYICN to make it a reality. MCFD will need to work with BCYICN to determine if BCYICN are able to take on this initiative on its own, if it is within BCYICN mandate to take on this additional role, and if BCYICN has the technological expertise, capability, funding, and time to develop and remain current with the resources.

The advantage of this recommendation is that not only can guardianship workers access this information, but YIC and youth formerly in care will more likely visit the site given that BCYICN is operated by, and for, youth in care and formerly in care. Second, it will give staff at BCYICN to design a site that is youth friendly and appealing. Third, it saves GPSB time and human resources to get approval for this initiative at various levels within MCFD. Fourth, further strategies can be identified if a survey is carried out with YIC/YFC to identify where they go to get information.

### **5.1.4 Single Window For MCFD Workers And Clients**

Forth, it is recommend that MCFD considers developing a single window information system of resources, programs and services for the various client groups that MCFD serves. The benefit of having an integrated resource base will enable all ministry workers with information and access to information beyond their own designated areas. Such a system will:

- reduce duplication of work and links that can be found in different branches within MCFD,

- increase efficiency in accessing information on the Internet,
- reduce expenses of hiring people to develop similar initiatives taking place at the other departments/branches/regions within MCFD,
- inform employees and clients of the vast array of resources, programs and services available at levels: regional, provincial and national.

The cost, time, energy and collaborative efforts may be very challenging in the initial process, however the long-term benefits may prove worthwhile.

#### **5.1.5 Provide training on how to search on the Internet effectively**

Provide on-going support and training to old and new employees on how to search on the internet so that they can be in a better position to search for information for their clients, as well as for themselves in the work or research they do. The benefit of investing in training staff is that they will be more competent, productive, and less apprehensive on finding information for clients on the Internet.

Again, the cost, time, and energy required to invest in this endeavour may be very challenging in the initial process, however the long-term benefits may prove worthwhile. Moreover, the use and competency in information technology in social work practice is a reality today.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

There is no single place on the Internet that guardianship workers can go to access educational, employment, and life skills resources for the YIC in British Columbia. The lack of access to these resources hinders the quality of information that guardianship workers can provide to their YIC when working on the present and future needs of their youth.

The lack of knowledge and access to the unrealized EELS opportunities ultimately hinders the efforts of the transition to independence initiative and puts YIC at a disadvantage in learning about their options to a potentially successful academic and professional career.

It is obvious that there is support for having an inventory of resources for YIC on the Internet. It is important that executives at MCFD support this initiative so that youth under the care of the ministry can have many more options to their personal and professional dreams.

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## 7 APPENDIX A: BRIEFING NOTE FOR CONSULTATION

### MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT BRIEFING NOTE

#### PREPARED FOR:

**TITLE:** Educational, employment, and life skill resources for youth in and from care living in British Columbia (BC)

#### BACKGROUND:

Preliminary studies indicate that youth in care are often faced with challenges when trying to obtain or have access to information on post-secondary education, employment, and life skills. The lack of knowledge and access to these opportunities act as barriers to their personal, educational and employment goals and impedes their transition to successful independence.

A recent study done by the Canadian National Youth in Care Network (2001) indicates that:

- children and youth in foster care generally do not perform as well in the secondary school education system as other children and youth,
- youth in care are generally unaware of funding options or resources they could access when faced with decisions regarding their education, and
- youth who want to pursue their education find it difficult to locate relevant information. Moreover, when information is found, youth have a difficult time understanding the information and eligibility criteria.

The youth who participated in the study conducted by the National Youth in Care Network expressed the need for:

- life skills program to help them in their transition to independence,
- increased support services to help them access educational and employment opportunities, and
- guidance in obtaining funds for post-secondary education.

#### PROPOSAL:

- Obtain input regarding the current challenges MCFD staff face in obtaining information for YIC.
- Obtain input regarding web site design.
- Research and compile current provincial educational, employment and life skill resources relevant for youth in and from care aged 15 – 24 living in BC.
- Document resources for implementation onto ministry's web site.

## **8 APPENDIX B: DRAFT EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GUARDIANSHIP WORKERS**

1. Is having an inventory of educational, employment, and life skills resources on the guardianship web-page beneficial?

Very      Somewhat      Not at All      Never use it      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did this site increase your awareness on the educational, employment and life skills opportunities for YIC, such as work-study programs, scholarships, bursaries, etc.?
3. Did you refer to these resources when doing plans of care with your youth?
4. Were you able to identify and tap into resources applicable to your youth? Was it useful?
5. What are your impressions of YIC when they receive this information from you?
6. What would you improve about the site? or the way in which information is presented?
7. Does having this inventory of resources help you with your workload? Please discuss.

## 9 APPENDIX C: DRAFT YOUTH IN CARE QUESTIONNAIRE

### Focus Group Questions for Youth in Care(YIC) /from Care (YFC) Area of Focus: Education, Employment and Life Skills Resources

Thank you for volunteering to take part in filling out this questionnaire and participating in the focus group. Your input is very valuable and important for this research project. Please note that:

- A) Your name will not be used in the research. This questionnaire will be torn after the results are examined.
- B) Its totally okay if you do not wish to participate in this research project. If you do participate and feel like talking to someone later, please talk to your social worker.
- C) The information obtained in this session will help identify the best ways of reaching out to youth in care and from care regarding obtaining information on education, employment and life skills resources available to them.
- D) You are our teachers today!

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of asking for your age and city is to determine some of the possible barriers you may face because of your age or where you live.

#### General Questions: About your journey of obtaining knowledge and skills...

1. Do you think a lot about your future goals? Yes/No/Sometimes
  - a. List the top 3 goals.
    - 1.
    - 2.
    - 3.
  - b. How will you meet these goals?
2. Are you in school right now?
  - Secondary school
  - Alternative school: \_\_\_\_\_ (example: adult education)

- Trade/Vocational School
  - College/University
  - Not in school
  - Not considering school
  - Would like to go back to school
3. If you are in school, what grade are you in right now? \_\_\_\_\_
- a. If you are not in school, what was the last grade you attended? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. I have graduated from: high school, college, university, other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you working right now?      Yes/No                      Part-time/Full-time
- Currently seeking for work
  - Not considering working

Specific Questions: Education, Employment and Life Skills

5. Are you thinking about:
- Going back to school?
  - Obtaining or enhancing your employment possibilities?
  - Obtaining more life skills? Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other? Please explain:
6. Do you look for information on the areas you ticked above? Yes/No
- a. What do you find?
  - b. What is missing?
7. List 3 challenges that you face when deciding about your education, employment, or life skill resources? (PS: you can list more, or less, if you wish ;-))
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

8. What are you doing to get information on your educational options, employment possibilities or life skills resources?
  - a. Are you able to find the information you need easily? Yes/No/Sometimes
  - b. Where do you find this information? (examples: social workers, academic counsellors, caregivers, friends, brochures, Internet)
  
9. Have you **talked** to anyone about your educational and career goals? Yes/No
  - a. If so, with whom?
  
  - b. If not, what were the circumstances?

**Obtaining Information: Where in the world is ...**

10. What is the most convenient way/satisfactory way of getting information you are looking for? (examples: Internet, talking to someone (friend, counsellor, parent(s)), pamphlets, posters, school, etc.)
  
11. If information on educational, employment, and life skills is available, how would you like to receive this information? (example: Youth Website, brochure, etc.)
  
12. Would you use the Ministry for Children and Family Development's Internet site if educational, employment, and life skills information is available for Youth in Care/from Care? Yes/No
  - a. If no, could you explain why?

**Internet-related Questions: Wizard of Oz**

13. Do you have experience using the Internet? Yes/No
  - a. If no, what stops you from using the Internet? (examples: no computer access, don't understand how computers work, not interested in computers, etc.)
  
  - b. If yes, what do you use the Internet for? (examples: playing games, on-line chats, entertainment, work)

14. Have you ever used the Internet to obtain information on educational, employment, and life skills opportunities? Yes/No/Sometimes
- a. Were your searches successful? (that is, you found what you were looking for) Yes/No/Sometimes
  - b. What worked/what did not work? (examples: easy to use, fun, informative, interactive, etc.)
  - c. If your searches were successful, what did you find?

**Web-Design Questions:**

15. If you would design a website, what would you include?
16. What gets you interested in a website?
17. What kinds of fun stuff would you like to see? (example: chat room, message board, games, mind tests)
18. Would you be interested in serious “news stuff”? (example: daily news, government news, changes in government services, etc.) Yes/No
19. Would you like to see a Canadian Youth Magazine on the Website? Yes/No
- a. If yes, should this be provincial or national?
20. If you could name such a youth website, what would it be?

## 10 APPENDIX D: SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARD LINKS ON GUARDIANSHIP WEB PAGE

Scholarships and Awards for University/College

Interested in going on to secondary education, but need help with funds?

Here's a start. Below you will find links to scholarships and awards available nationally across Canada. Each link contains information on how to apply, eligibility, deadlines and the dollar amounts of the awards or scholarships.

**CanLearn Interactive**. This is Canada's only Internet-based, one-stop resource, providing information, products and services to Canadians making decisions about their learning and career goals.

**Canadian Merit Scholarship Foundation**. Awards for well-rounded students who combine distinguished talents with character, leadership potential and commitment to the community.

**Humanities and Social Sciences Federation for Canada**. Promotes teaching, research and scholarship in the humanities and social sciences.

**Magna for Canada Scholarships**. To apply, state how would you make Canada a more prosperous and united country.

**Mount Royal**. Over 25 bursaries and scholarships mostly for students entering or continuing at Mount Royal in Alberta.

**Ken Dryden Scholarship and Achievement Awards**. Each year several scholarships are awarded to young people across the country who demonstrate great achievement and promise.

**Leonardo Da Vinci competition**. National annual engineering-oriented competition for senior high school students in Canadian secondary schools or first year Cegep. Cash and scholarship prizes.

**Science Council of British Columbia scholarship**. Administers funding programs for applied research and development, scholarships and fellowships.

**Studentawards.com**. This free service provides instant access to a comprehensive database of thousands of Canadian scholarships, bursaries, grants and fellowships for all levels of post-secondary education.

## 11 APPENDIX E: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING INTERNET RESOURCES

Subject guides to the Internet feature current, reliable, authoritative on-line resources—including web sites, electronic documents, and e-journals—on selected topics, in addition to books and videos in the MCFD Library. We welcome your suggestions for new resources to add to the subject guides as well as recommendations for new topics. Please send an email to the [Knowledge Desk](#).

Suggestions for on-line resources will be evaluated by applying the following criteria:

### 1. Authority

Is it clear what organization is responsible for the contents of the page?

Is there a link to a page describing the goals of the organization?

Is there a way of verifying the legitimacy of this organization? That is, is there a phone number or postal address to contact for more information? (Simply an email address is not enough).

Is there a statement that the content of the page has the official approval of the organization?

Is there a statement giving the organization's name as copyright holder?

Does the url include .gov (part of a government web site) .edu (part of a university web site), or .org (an organization)? These are more reliable than .com or personal web sites.

### 2. Accuracy

Are the sources for any factual information clearly listed so they can be verified in another source? (If not, the page may still be useful to you as an example of the ideas of the organization but it is not useful as a source of factual information).

Is the information free of grammatical, spelling, and other typographical errors? (These kinds of errors not only indicate a lack of quality control but also can actually produce inaccuracies in information).

### 3. Objectivity

Is the point of view of the organization presented in a clear manner with its arguments well supported?

Are the organization's biases (if any) clearly presented?

If there is any advertising on the page, is it clearly differentiated from the informational content and is it suitable to target audience?

### 4. Currency

Are there dates on the page to indicate:

– When the page was written?

– When the page was first placed on the Web?

– When the page was last revised?

Are there any other indications that the material is kept current?

### 5. Coverage

Is there an indication that the page has been completed, and is not still under construction?

Is it clear what topics the page intends to address?

Does the page succeed in addressing these topics, or has something significant been left out?

#### 6. Presentation and navigation

Is the information presented in a clear logical format useful for the intended audience?

What is the overall functionality of the site: uncluttered? Easy-to-find links?

Would the site be functional for users with special needs (potential problems: small type, frames, poor use of white space, lack of colour contrast)

Is there a text-only version available?

Is it clear how to navigate through the site?

Is the site searchable?

Is there a site map?

Are images optimized for quick downloading?

#### References:

Evaluating Web-based Resources: A Practical Perspective

<http://www.thelearningsite.net/cyberlibrarian/elibraries/eval.html>

Checklist for an Advocacy Webpage

<http://www2.widener.edu/Wolfgram-Memorial-Library/webevaluation/advoc.htm>

Evaluation of Information Sources (part of Information Quality WWW Virtual Library)

<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/~agsmith/evaln/evaln.htm>

## 12 APPENDIX F: COMPILED LINKS OF EDUCATIONAL, EMPLOYMENT AND LIFE SKILLS RESOURCES ON WORD DOCUMENT

### Getting Started

#### Ready, On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!

Resources for Youth in Care and From Care  
15 to 24

Getting started with your future lets you think about what your interests are, what you want to do in terms of your future goals, and how to get there. The links in this box helps you focus on **YOU**.

Now to get there ... click on the subject area of your choice.

The links below are just a few that were picked from many links on the Internet. Just in case you are interested ... the criteria for picking these web sites were based on: Relevancy, Ease of Use, Understandability, Reliability, Credibility

Click on one of the following topics.

➤ Self Assessment

**"Where do I Start?"** Simple: "Start with you." Whether you want to go back to school or look for a job, the experience can be a confusing and anxiety-producing. The question is "What do you want to do?" ... and a common response is "I dunno". Doing a self-assessment will let you look at your strengths, areas of improvements, interest, values so that you don't get trapped in something you don't like.

➤ Occupational Profiles

Hey, now that you know your area of interest, check out what kind of education you need, what are the job prospects out there, how much you can earn, and much more

➤ Career Planning Guide

## Self Assessment

**Right on!**

**You have taken the first step help you focus on yourself.**

These sites are designed to help you identify your aptitudes, interests, and values. They can assist you in making life decisions regarding your career and can help you in your job search.

### STEP 1: Self-Assessment

#### **Personality Test: Keirsey Temperament**

<http://www.advisorteam.com/user/ktsintro.asp>

#### **Self-Awareness**

Career Key

Other Self-Assessment Test – IQ, Relationships, Health, Personality and Career

<http://www.queendom.com/tests/>

### STEP 2: About Careers and Jobs in British Columbia

#### **Work Futures – British Columbia Occupational Outlooks**

Find out how your career program matches BC's labour market trends and employment prospects

<http://workfutures.bc.ca/>

[http://www.workfutures.bc.ca/EN/def/home\\_e1.html](http://www.workfutures.bc.ca/EN/def/home_e1.html)

### STEP 3: Mapping Out your Future

#### **Personal Planning K – 7**

#### **Career and Personal Planning 8 – 12**

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/>

#### **Career planning**

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/planning/plan/>

#### **Developing your Career Path**

<http://www.mapping-your-future.org/planning/>

#### **BC Opportunities**

looks at the job market of the future; ideas about career planning; a searchable database of the credentials available in all the major program areas at BC's 28 post-secondary institutions; a comprehensive listing of the apprenticeships available in BC; details about the BC student assistance program; and, tips and suggestions about how to make your job search less stressful and more effective.

<http://www.bcopportunities.com/>

**Destination 2020**

Build your workskills FUN web site

<http://www.careerccc.org/destination2020/intro02.htm>

## Educational Resources

?

Did you know that there are many kinds of education and training that one can go for?

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Did you know that many teaching institutions usually have a whole bunch of scholarships, awards, work-study opportunities available on the Web site or in the school calendar? Why not check it out or ask your school counsellor ...

Here is a short list:

- Secondary School Programs
- Apprenticeship
- Adult Basic Education
- Career/Technical Programs
- Vocational
- University Transfer
- Undergraduate Studies
- Graduate Studies

Yeah So? ... what does all this mean anyway ....

We'll click [here](#) to get some definitions ... and find out what suits you most. This will help you focus on the kinds of programs you could look for.

Now for the real fun stuff ... looking under the category of your choice. Just click on one of the above arrow-heads.

## Secondary School Programs

**BC Ministry of Education** – [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/scholarships](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/scholarships)

**Secondary School Work Experience:** . To graduate from secondary school, all students must meet the learning outcomes identified in Career and Personal Planning 11/12, which include a 30-hour (1-credit) mandatory work experience component. Students may also choose to participate in career programs such as Career Preparation, Co-operative Education or Secondary School Apprenticeship, all of which contain over 100 hours of focused work experience. Ask your school counsellor to find out what career programs are available in your school.

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/weinfo.htm>

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/reps.htm>

[http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/planning/plan/p\\_opport.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/planning/plan/p_opport.htm)

### BC Opportunities

In BC's high schools today, work experience is an important part of secondary education. To graduate from high school, all students must complete a 30-hour work experience project. You can also participate in career programs such as Career Preparation, Co-operative Education or Secondary School Apprenticeship, all of which contain more than 100 hours of focused work experience.

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/planning/work/expernce.htm>

### Schools and School Districts in BC with Web Sites:

<http://www.cln.org/community/schools.html>

**BC Government Work Experience Program:** GWEP, or the Government Work Experience Program, is a program coordinated by the Ministry of Education to make work placement opportunities available across the provincial government for secondary students.

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/gwepinfo.htm>

**Passport to Education:** For grade 9 to 12 students. Why not be rewarded for your successes in high school? You could make up to \$800

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/scholarships/passport.htm>

**Provincial Scholarships:** Each year, the Ministry grants \$1000 and \$2000 scholarships based on provincial examination results to students who meet the established criteria.

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/handbook/chapter5/provincial.htm>

**District Scholarships:** The District Scholarship Program rewards grade 12 graduating students for excellence in their chosen **non-academic field(s)**. District scholarships are used to further students' post-secondary education. A District Scholarship consists of a \$500 cheque and a \$500 scholarship voucher. District scholarship vouchers may only be redeemed by enrolling in a full-time program at a post-secondary institution or apprenticeship program approved/accredited by the Ministry of Advanced Education.

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/handbook/chapter5/district.htm>

**On-line Scholarship Handbook:** This handbook is developed by School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) and includes scholarships available from government, post-secondary institutions, private industry, and non-profit organizations.

**Grade 12 Provincial Examinations** – Want to test your knowledge. Here is where to find old exams for practice! See how you do.

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/search/exsection.htm>

## Apprenticeships

Secondary School Students ... Age 15 and up ... check this out

### **Training and Apprenticeship Commission**

**[http:// www.learnandearn.bc.ca/education/](http://www.learnandearn.bc.ca/education/)**

**Secondary School Apprenticeship Program (SSA)** – The SSA program is a career program that provides students over the age of 15 with the opportunity to begin an apprenticeship while they are still completing high school. **Earn while you learn!**  
**<http://www.learnandearn.bc.ca/education/entrypoints/ssa1.htm>**

**Student Summer Works (SSW)** – SSW provides secondary and post-secondary students with an opportunity to gain work experience related to their chosen career or field of study. It runs from May to August of each year.

**<http://www.learnandearn.bc.ca/education/entrypoints/ssa1.htm>**

**Secondary School Apprenticeship Scholarship** – If you maintain a C+ average while doing the SSA program, you are eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship.

**<http://www.learnandearn.bc.ca/education/entrypoints/ssa1.htm>**

## Scholarships

### British Columbia Resources

#### **BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA) Scholarship for Student Citizenship**

This scholarship is awarded annually to students graduating from the BC public education system to support them in any form of further education (apprenticeship, college, post-secondary, private training, etc.). Students are recognised for the contributions they have made to their school AND their community. Amount \$250

<http://www.bcsta.org/about/about.htm>

### National Resources:

**Free Canadian Scholarship Search** – this is an excellent web site that allows you to put in your personal profile. Then just sit back and the computer will do all the work for you to tell you what you could possibly apply for. It will even send you a notification if there is a scholarship for you. WOW.

<http://www.scholarshipscanada.com/search/customsearch.asp>

#### **Free Canadian Scholarship Search**

<http://www.angelfire.com/ns/scholarship/canada.html>

#### **Youth Link, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition**

This is a national resource booklet for youth between the ages of 15 and 30, as well as for career counselors, parents, educators, employers and community groups. There is TONS of information on awards, bursaries, fellowships, grants, scholarships, career information tools, entrepreneurship, job search tools, skills development tools, etc... Check it out. However, be patient and focused!

<http://youth.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ythlink/ythlink.shtml>

#### **Educational Resources Specifically for Aboriginal Students**

Here are some resources for First Nations youth. Also talk to your Band, Tribal Councils, and First nations Schools for more information on career programs, training programs, employment programs, awards, scholarships, etc.

#### **Assembly of First Nations**

[www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)

**Heroes of Our Time Scholarships** are geared towards First Nations citizens who have completed at least one year of post-secondary education in the specified field below. The student must have also have demonstrated exceptional academic abilities and shown a commitment to extracurricular activities. Deadline for all these awards is June 1.

**Jake Fire Award** – Criminology Program  
**Tommy Prince Award** – Program of Native Studies  
**Walter Dieter Award** – Social Work  
**Omer Peters Award** – Political Science Program  
**Robert Smallboy Award** – Medical Program  
**James Gosnell Award** – Law Program

## **Bursaries**

**The Region C Natural Child Bursary** -- Natural or legally adopted children of foster parents who have been members of the BCFFPA for 3 consecutive years

**The Merv Davis Bursary** -- foster children who have reached age of 19 and wish to continue their education

**William Curtis Memorial Fund** -- foster children who are/were in the care of the Ministry in BC and which to continue their education

**Public Trustee Educational Assistance Fund** -- For former permanent (Continuing Custody) youth

**The Jennifer Wade Endowment Fund** -- For foster children and women prisoners in their educational pursuits

### **National Programs**

**Council of Ministers of Education, Official Languages Support Programs Branch Summer Language Bursary Program** – This is an awesome way of learning Canada's official languages. All it takes is filling out a really short application form (one page) and committing to a fabulous linguistic, cultural and social experience  
[Http://www.cmec.ca/olp](http://www.cmec.ca/olp)

## Adult Education

Thinking of completing your high school? Go for it! Here is the information you need.

**Ministry of Education: Adult Education** [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/adult\\_graduation/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/adult_graduation/)

The Adult Graduation Program is offered in almost every school district in the province. Adult students may finish the courses necessary for receiving their regular dogwood diploma, or may work towards the BC Adult Graduation Diploma (also known as the Adult Dogwood ). Courses are also offered through colleges in BC; please contact your local college for more information or visit <http://www.aett.gov.bc.ca/abe/handbook/>. In the adult program, 20 credits are needed for graduation. This is different from the regular graduation program which requires 52 credits for graduation. To be eligible for the adult dogwood, the student must be at least 19 years of age, and must take at least three of their courses leading towards graduation as an adult.

**BCOpportunities** -- looks at the job market of the future; ideas about career planning; a searchable database of the credentials available in all the major program areas at BC's 28 post-secondary institutions; a comprehensive listing of the apprenticeships available in BC; details about the BC student assistance program; and, tips and suggestions about how to make your job search less stressful and more effective.

<http://www.bcopportunities.com/>

## Post Secondary Education

### How do I find out university entrance requirements?

Whether applying to a university within BC, Canada or internationally, you must contact each university individually to find out what their specific entrance requirements are. Your secondary school counsellor may be able to assist you with your career/post-secondary planning. Some useful sites can be found at: [bcopportunities.com](http://bcopportunities.com) and [openingdoorsbc.com](http://openingdoorsbc.com)

**Schoolfinder.com:** One of Canada's premier education guides to schools, scholarships, and careers. You can even apply for schools on-line, take a virtual tour, get recruited, etc... very cool. [http://www.workfutures.bc.ca/EN/def/home\\_e1.html](http://www.workfutures.bc.ca/EN/def/home_e1.html)

### The Post-Secondary Application Service of British Columbia (PASBC)

Hey check out this Internet application-for-admission service ... Definitely makes applying for public post-secondary education quick and easy. You can also get information on post-secondary education in BC, link to the educational resources and institutions, and get information and links on financial assistance.

<http://www.pas.bc.ca/>

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Did you know that many teaching institutions usually have a whole bunch of scholarships, awards, work-study opportunities available on the Web site or in the school calendar? Why not check it out or ask your school counsellor ...

## Internships/Work Experience

**Secondary School Work Experience:** . To graduate from secondary school, all students must meet the learning outcomes identified in Career and Personal Planning 11/12, which include a 30-hour (1-credit) mandatory work experience component. Students may also choose to participate in career programs such as Career Preparation, Co-operative Education or Secondary School Apprenticeship, all of which contain over 100 hours of focused work experience. Ask your school counsellor to find out what career programs are available in your school.

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/weinfo.htm>

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/reps.htm>

[http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/planning/plan/p\\_opport.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/planning/plan/p_opport.htm)

### Exploring Internship Opportunities

An internship is an extended work placement that allows you to gain career-related experience during or following the completion of your formal education. Internships are a wonderful way to gain valuable knowledge and are an excellent means of enhancing your career development. It lists over two hundred internships offered by Canadian organizations.

<http://www.cacee.com/english/students/>

<http://www.cacee.com/co2000/0000.html>

### Province of B.C.:

#### AWARE

Youth Internship program: The One-to-One Youth Internship Program

This program is for unemployed youth age **15 - 30** with no EI attachment, living in Burnaby, New Westminster and East Vancouver. You must also have been out of school or a training program for at least 6 months in order to be eligible. *Please call 604-525-4325.* Also ask them about individualized employment counselling, 3-week job club, independent job search resource center, Career Planning, Internet Workshops!!

#### All Youth

**Public Service Internship Program** – Recent graduates from post-secondary institutions and colleges

<http://www.pserc.gov.bc.ca/youth/Internships.htm>

### National Internships:

#### Career Edge

As a national, not-for-profit organization, Career Edge's mandate is to enhance youth employability. Graduates of university, college and high school gain practical, career-related

experience through 6-, 9- or 12-month paid **internships** with Canadian businesses. Internships are available in a wide variety of industries with over 400 Host Organizations. All internship are listed on the Career Edge Web site only at: [www.careeredge.org](http://www.careeredge.org).

### **International Internships:**

#### **CIDA International Youth Internship Program**

**Organization:** Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

**Web Address:** [www.acdi-cida.org](http://www.acdi-cida.org)

**Description:** CIDA's International Youth Internship Program is part of the Federal Government's Youth Employment Strategy, and is an employment program for recent Canadian graduates who lack relevant work experience. To help ease the transition from school to work, the internship provides youth with the opportunity to get work experience in an international setting. Although parts of the internship may be completed in Canada, the majority of the internship will take place in developing countries and countries in economic transition. In the final stage of the internship, participants receive guidance and assistance in finding work in Canada.

#### **Youth International (YI) Program**

**Organization:** Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)

**Web Address:** [www.youth.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca](http://www.youth.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca)

**Description:** Funded by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), this internship program provides Canadian youth with international work experience. This program is targeted at out of school youth who are either unemployed or underemployed, and who are seeking an internationally focused work experience. Organizations act as sponsors, and provide and implement the internships. Internships are available in many fields, including manufacturing, trades, theatre, arts and culture, marketing/finance, sports and recreation, and agriculture.

**Requirements:** To be eligible for the Youth International Program, you must be legally entitled to work in Canada; under the age of 30; out of school; and unemployed or underemployed.

**Classification:** General Positions: 150+ Duration: 6-8 months Location: International Compensation: Yes

**Note:** Contact the Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) office nearest to you for details. Compensation varies with organization and internship duties.

**How To Apply:** Visit the HRDC Youth International web site to view all available internship positions. Follow the application procedures outlined for that internship. Or visit the HRDC office nearest you and ask for information about Youth International Internships. Locate the HRDC office nearest to you by visiting the HRDC web site at: [www.on.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca](http://www.on.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca).

#### **Internship of the Americas**

Contact: Gayleen Wren, Langara College, Program Manager, 100 West 49th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5Y 2Z6, tel: (604)323-5434, [ghouriga@langara.bc.ca](mailto:ghouriga@langara.bc.ca), [www.langara.bc.ca](http://www.langara.bc.ca)  
Internship of the Americas is a youth international **internship** program managed by Langara

College, which provides an opportunity for young graduates to work in Latin America. Participating employers provide a challenging career related work experiences and the federal government provides funding for the program.

**The World Sport Program**

MiWorld Youth International, 540 Besserer Ave. Ottawa, On. K1N 6C7, tel: 613 562-2586, fax: 613 562-3646, email: [miworld@cyberus.ca](mailto:miworld@cyberus.ca), [www.cyberus.ca/~miworld](http://www.cyberus.ca/~miworld). The World Sport Program provides funded internships in amateur and professional sport management and administration. The **internship** program, offered by the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union and MiWorld Communications and Consulting offers positions with World University sporting events and professional soccer teams in the United States and Europe.

## **Age Specific Work Experience**

### **Province of B.C.:**

#### **Ages 15 and Up**

**Youth Options B.C.** - [www.youth.gov.bc.ca](http://www.youth.gov.bc.ca)

**Youth Options B.C.: Summer Student Works** – BC students attending secondary or post-secondary educational program full-time or part-time and plan to return to study in the fall  
[http://www.youth.gov.bc.ca/programs/summer\\_works.asp](http://www.youth.gov.bc.ca/programs/summer_works.asp)

**Youth Options B.C.: Youth Community Action** – Youth between 15 and 24 gain community work experience and credit for future post-secondary tuition fees.  
[http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/youthinitiative/youth\\_com\\_act.htm](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/youthinitiative/youth_com_act.htm)

**The Crown Youth Employment Initiative** - Subject to meeting the qualifications of a specific job [http://www.youth.gov.bc.ca/programs/crown\\_youth.asp](http://www.youth.gov.bc.ca/programs/crown_youth.asp)

**(YEP) Youth Employment Program** - Students must have been attending accredited education institute (or high school) within the past 12 months  
<http://www.youth.gov.bc.ca/programs/other.asp>

**(YEP) Post Secondary Graduates** – Students must have been attending accredited education institute (or high school) within the past 12 months  
<http://www.youth.gov.bc.ca/programs/other.asp>

#### **Ages 16 to 24**

**E-Team Environment Youth Team** – Permanent resident of BC  
<http://www.youth.gov.bc.ca/programs/eteams.asp>

#### **Ages 17 to 24**

**Job Start** – BC youth who are not currently employed, have no or limited experience, & not planning to return to school soon  
<http://www.youth.gov.bc.ca/programs/jobstart.asp>

#### **Youth up to Age 30**

**Summer Jobs in both official languages**  
<http://www.pch.gc.ca/ycw-jct/english/language.htm>

#### **SchoolNet Youth Employment Program**

155 Queen Street, 4th Floor 155, rue Queen, Ottawa, K1A 0H5, tel: 1-800-575-9200, email: [schoolnet@ic.gc.ca](mailto:schoolnet@ic.gc.ca) [rescol@ic.gc.ca](mailto:rescol@ic.gc.ca), [www.schoolnet.ca/yei](http://www.schoolnet.ca/yei) [www.rescol.ca/pej](http://www.rescol.ca/pej). The program helps youth between the ages of 15-30, who are unemployed and under-employed high school, college and university graduates. Young people with proficiency in information and communication technology (ICT) acquire valuable employability skills to secure longer-term careers in technology by gaining relevant, marketable work terms in schools and libraries.

### **BC WorkInfoNet Youth Site**

<http://www.workinfonet.bc.ca/youth/directory/>

### **BC Job Links**

### **BC Most Popular Employment Sites can be found at:**

<http://workinfonet.bc.ca/jobseeker.htm?bcjoblinks>

### **National Job Resources/Opportunities:**

#### **Experience Canada**

Contact person: Frances O'Malley, Marketing Coordinator, 1495 Heron Rd. Building K, Ottawa, ON K1V 6A6 tel: 1-888-234-6618 or 613-247-8686 fx: 613-247-0063

[www.experiencecanada.org](http://www.experiencecanada.org) [info@experience-canada.ccu-cuc.ca](mailto:info@experience-canada.ccu-cuc.ca) . Experience Canada is a national career development program designed to reduce youth unemployment and increase national unity by helping graduates gain the work experience they need to qualify for the modern workplace. Eligible participants benefit from an all expenses paid, 6 month work experience in a province or territory other than their own.

#### **Youth Link, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition**

This is a national resource booklet for youth between the ages of 15 and 30, as well as for career counselors, parents, educators, employers and community groups. There is TONS of information on awards, bursaries, fellowships, grants, scholarships, career information tools, entrepreneurship, job search tools, skills development tools, etc... Check it out. However, be patient and focused!

<http://youth.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ythlink/ythlink.shtml>

### **International Youth Employment Experiences/Opportunities:**

#### **Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT): International Youth Exchange**

International Youth Exchange Programs, Lester B. Pearson Building, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2; (613) 992-6142, fax (613) 992-5965, <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca> . This department holds approximately 60 International Youth exchange programs in more than 20 countries. Programs are geared towards improving professional skills during a period of training abroad. Periods are paid but travel and accommodations are not.

### **International Youth and Young Workers Exchange Programs**

[www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/culture/youth/intern/agp0621e.htm](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/culture/youth/intern/agp0621e.htm) . Hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade lists government sponsored programs for international employment and study abroad.

### **International Youth Experience- The Canada - Finland Development Exchange Program**

12, rue Laval, Aylmer, Qc., CANADA, <http://www.experience.qc.ca>, [jp.larochelle@experience.qc.ca](mailto:jp.larochelle@experience.qc.ca) Tel. (819) 684-9212 Fax (819) 684-5630 Professional expertise in your field of training in a foreign country is an investment in your future. By training in Finland you will have a unique opportunity to experience first-hand Finnish culture, commerce and industry, education and technological expertise. At the same time, you can take the advantage of the often breathtaking beauty of Finland's natural surroundings. The Canada-Finland Young Workers Exchange Program gives you the opportunity to work in Switzerland for a period of 4 to 12 months.

### **International Youth Experience- The Canada-Switzerland Young Workers Exchange Program**

12, rue Laval, Aylmer, Qc., CANADA, <http://www.experience.qc.ca>, [j.larochelle@experience.qc.ca](mailto:j.larochelle@experience.qc.ca) Tel. (819) 684-9212 Fax (819) 684-5630 Professional expertise in your field of training in a foreign country is an investment in your future. In terms of choice, Switzerland, in the centre of Europe, is certainly one of the finest countries in the world in various fields such as culture, business, services and technology. The Canada-Switzerland Young Workers Exchange Program gives you the opportunity to work in Switzerland for a period of 4 to 18 months.

### **Campus WorkLink**

Canada's Biggest Job Site for Students and Recent Graduates  
[www.campusworklink.com](http://www.campusworklink.com)

## Entrepreneurship Programs for Youth

**Youth Entrepreneurial Development Program:** This is a nationally funded program (Human Resources Development Canada) for youth between the ages of 18 to 30, who is motivated to start a business or become self-employed, have a sound and feasible business idea, and are not eligible for E.I. benefits. Interested? Find out more by either visiting <http://www.success.bc.ca/eng/location/sbctre/yedp/index.htm> or emailing [fctam@success.bc.ca](mailto:fctam@success.bc.ca) or visiting or calling #501-1788 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC, Canada V6J1Y1  
Tel: (604) 732-3278 Fax: (604) 732-9818

**Self-Employment Assistance Program:** Another Human Resources Development Canada program to help young adults be their own boss. Go to:  
<http://www.success.bc.ca/eng/location/sbctre/sea.htm>

**Entresource:** Dedicated to providing a clear path to entrepreneurship for youth in the Central Okanagan, BC, Canada. Go to : <http://www.cfdcco.bc.ca/youth/>

## Life Skills Resources

**Independence ... How sweet ... Here are some resources to help you move on.**

T  
I  
P  
S

Most communities have resources for youth in general. However, there might also be resources that are specific to youth in care/from care. Look in the phone book, speak to your social worker, ask around for information. You will be amazed at what you find.

Here are some resources that your community may provide:

- ❑ Education Upgrade
- ❑ Employment Preparation and Search Services
- ❑ Jobs specific to youth in care or youth in general
- ❑ Support Services (example, Gay/Lesbian Support; Single Parent Support, etc.)
- ❑ Volunteer/Internship Opportunities
- ❑ Centers for Youth/Friendship Centers

For fun: Flip through the phone book in your area and see what you find.

**Services to Former Permanent Youth In Care (SPY Program)** - Youth between 19 to 21 may be eligible for this program. Talk to your social worker or call the Ministry of Children and Family Development – the number is in the blue pages of the phone book. This program can help you with completing high school, obtain life skills, and obtain vocational training, college or university.

### **Youth Outreach and Support Services, Ministry of Children and Family Development**

Check out this site for Services to Former Permanent Youth-In-Care and Youth with Youth Agreement and other youth support links. You will be surprised!

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/youth/other\\_services.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/youth/other_services.htm)

**RECONNECT - A Program for Street Youth:** RECONNECT is a provincial program for youth under 19 who are living on the street. This service can help you create a safer, healthier lifestyle by leaving the street. It can also help other young people from getting involved in street life. Learn about the program and find out who to contact in your area.

<http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/youth/reconnect.htm> or

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/youth/contacts\\_chart.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/youth/contacts_chart.htm)

### **Useful Tips for Youth Leaving Care**

This is a great on-line book for youth living in BC and want to find out about getting I.D., money management, independent living, school, housing, etc. etc... A click to this guidebook takes only a second, but the information in it could serve you a long while. It has phone numbers and everything. Check it out.

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child\\_protection/useful\\_tips.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_protection/useful_tips.pdf)

**Ministry of Human Resources** – Here is the site to find out about income assistance and youth works program under BC Benefits. It provides information on employment training, basic education, volunteer incentive program, self-employment program, BC Benefits, job placement services, self directed services, employment counseling services, entrepreneurial exploration services, job club services, transition to work benefits, and more.

<http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/PUBLICAT/fasttrak/employserv.htm> or

<http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/PUBLICAT/BCBen/TransToWork.htm> or

<http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/PROGRAMS/Ispocty.htm>

**McCreary Centre Society** –This is a great place to find out what kind of innovative or unique initiatives are going on for youth around the province. To check out what's happening in your community, click here. It's worth checking out the McCreary Center Homepage!

[http://www.mcs.bc.ca/ya\\_model.htm](http://www.mcs.bc.ca/ya_model.htm)

**Addiction Services by service type or by community**

<http://www2.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/dbs/kaiser/home.html>

<http://www2.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/dbs/kaiser/Types/typelist.html>

<http://www2.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/dbs/kaiser/Communities/communitylist.html>

**Alcohol and Drug Help: 1-800-663-1441**

**Gay/Lesbian Services for Youth**

<http://www.youthquest.bc.ca/dropins/index.html>

**The Facts of Life Line: 1800-739-7367**

**STD/HIV/AIDS: 1800-661-4333**

**Tenants Rights Hotline: 1800-665-1185**

**Looking for Legal Aid?** Look up the phone number of your local legal aid office in the white pages of the phone book under “Legal Aid – Legal Services Society”. Or check out:

<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/lssbc/>

**Healthy Eating:** [http://www.canadian-health-network.ca/1healthy\\_eating.html](http://www.canadian-health-network.ca/1healthy_eating.html)

**Caring for Kids** – this is an excellent site for Youth who are parents and caring for young ones. It provides information on a child's and teens health, immunisation, behaviour and development, healthy eating habits and more. <http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/>

**Canadian Consumer Information:** Great site to find out about children, communication, housing, food, health, money, safety, transportation, and much much more ...

<http://consumerinformation.ca/>

**Other highly valuable and related web sites:** Includes the Office of the child youth and family Advocate, Ombudsman, the Children's Commission, and much much more!!!

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/related\\_resources.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/related_resources.htm)

**Money Management:** <http://credit.about.com/cs/familyfinances/>

## Glossary of Terms

**Apprenticeship programs:** learn a trade hands-on with several weeks or months of classroom instruction. Learn and earn!! Why not?

**Adult Basic Education:** training and education for adults in secondary school subjects, literacy, and English as a Second Language. You could earn your high school diploma at your own pace!

**Bursaries:** Money offered to students at various educational institutions for free, but may be based on certain needs and criteria.

**Career/Technical Programs:** A very specific program area which leaves you specialized in a certain field. These programs are usually two-years in length. You become the expert :-)

**Co-op:** Work experience as a part of post-secondary education is known as co-operative education. Usually paid

**Internship:** An internship is an extended work placement that allows you to gain career-related experience during or following the completion of your formal education. May receive pay

**Scholarships:** a sum of money awarded to a student to help with tuition, living expenses, study, or travel. *Also called* studentship

**Student Loans:** Money that you borrow from the provincial and/or federal government that you have to pay back. But you maintain an interest-free status on your loan until six months after you graduate.

**Vocational Programs:** These are short and hands-on programs that require one year or less of school. You'll never be standing around twiddling your thumb.

**University Transfer:** Credits obtained at the college level can be transferred to a university degree program. Make sure you confirm which credits are transferable to the university of your choice.

**Undergraduate Studies:** A bachelor's degree or professional program (4 to 5 years to complete)

**Graduate Studies:** A Master's or Doctoral Degree (generally from anywhere from 1 year to 5 years)

**Work Experience:** "Work experience" means that part of an educational program which provides a student with an opportunity to participate in, observe or learn about the performance of tasks and responsibilities related to an occupation or career and includes work experience as part of a Career and Personal Planning course.

**13 APPENDIX G: TEST SITE SAMPLE WEB PAGES**







## 14 APPENDIX H: PRE-FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Guardianship Branch has been examining issues linked to YIC obtaining information about education, training and employment opportunities. Here are some questions for you to consider prior to the teleconference focus group and as you test the web site.

1. Do you work with youth who could benefit from information on educational, employment, and life skills resources?
2. What are the challenges/successes you come across when obtaining information on education for YIC?
3. What are the challenges/successes you come across when obtaining information on employment for YIC?
4. What are the challenges/successes you come across when obtaining information on life skills for YIC?
5. If this information is available to you via the Internet, would you use it when doing plans of care with YIC?

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## 15 APPENDIX I: FACILITATORS AND CO-FACILITATORS QUESTION GUIDE

1. Do you work with youth who could benefit from information on educational, employment, and life skills resources?
  - what kinds of youth do you work with?
  - do they ask you information regarding EELS opportunities?
  - what are the most common complaints you hear from YIC when obtaining EELS information?
  
2. What are the challenges/successes you come across when obtaining information on education for YIC?
  - Can you provide us with examples?
  - Where do you find this information?
  - What is the most convenient way of getting information you are looking for?
  - Do you use the Internet to get this information? Were your searches successful? What worked? What did not work?
  
3. What are the challenges/successes you come across when obtaining information on employment for YIC?
  - Can you provide us with examples?
  - Where do you find this information?
  - What is the most convenient way of getting information you are looking for?
  - Do you use the Internet to get this information? Were your searches successful? What worked? What did not work?
  
4. What are the challenges/successes you come across when obtaining information on life skills for YIC?
  - Can you provide us with examples?
  - Where do you find this information?
  - What is the most convenient way of getting information you are looking for?
  - Do you use the Internet to get this information? Were your searches successful? What worked? What did not work?
  
5. If this information is available to you via the Internet, would you use it when doing plans of care with YIC?
  - Do you think it could improve the outcomes for YIC in the transition to independence?
  - What are your overall impressions of the test site? Structure? Content?
  - Is it a good idea to proceed any further with the website?

## 16 APPENDIX J: E-MAIL INVITATION TO REGIONAL MANAGERS

Hello everyone,

We would like to extend an invitation to you in the participation of a teleconference scheduled for January 15, 2002 from 9:30 am to 11:30 am (may be shorter).

### **Background**

This project is at an early stage. An impetus for the project and the focus on the three areas of education, employment and life skills is related to the development of an overall strategy for Transition to Independence and our role as guardians of youth in care to prepare them for adulthood.

Some of the outcomes we are seeking are:

- increase the number of YIC who graduate from high school or who become enrolled in training or apprenticeship programs;
- increase their employment opportunities; and
- ensure they have a range of life skills that will equip them for day to day life challenges.

We know there is a lot of information out there but it is not always easily accessible and staff don't have the time to be researching everything from scratch. Some regions/communities have detailed resource guides on youth services and related information, while others do not. The information on the test site would be a starting point for province and nation wide services and programs, complimentary to the more detailed local information about specific education, employment and life skill services.

As a first step we are hoping to attach this site, [www.quis8.com/TestSite](http://www.quis8.com/TestSite), or similar to the MCFD Guardianship Intranet site, for staff to use with their youth when working on plans of care, goals setting, integrating service planning, etc.

This site may also go on the Internet so that youth in care and youth in general could access the information directly. We will be working with the BC Youth in Care Network and gaining feedback from youth focus groups to gather their input regarding design and content.

We welcome your ideas to assist us with taking the project to the next stage and find out whether it would be considered of value to the field or not.

In the meantime, please feel free to test the web site and provide your feedback electronically or via the teleconference. Attached you will also find a questionnaire for discussion. If you are unable to participate in the teleconference, your input will still be very valuable. Simply fill out the form and forward it. You do not have to indicate your name on the questionnaire.

Please confirm your attendance with Annette Harding so that we know how many phone lines will be required for January 15, 2002.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! We look forward to talking to you soon.

Regards  
Annette and Soki

**17 APPENDIX C: SAMPLE PAGE OF TEST WEB SITE**

