



## Throne Speech Raises Multiple Issues Faced by Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Sector

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**COAST SALISH TERRITORY/ VANCOUVER** – This week’s Throne Speech reminded us that the last six months have shown us what glaring gaps exist in our society and hopefully now make it impossible to ignore the issues that have arisen. It has highlighted the importance of child care, women’s rights, wage enhancement for the social and service sectors, reconciliation, access to food and water, access to internet, and exposed existing systemic racism, the fragility of equality, the dangers of homelessness, and the list goes on.

This pandemic has been a struggle for people across the globe. But for those who were already marginalized, it has been an extreme burden. The Indigenous Early and Child Care (IELCC) Sector has been caught in the wasteland of COVID-19. The majority of early childhood educators (ECEs) are women, getting paid low wages, listed as essential, and required to be on the frontline; interacting with children and families, with increased demands but without the benefit of danger pay.

And yet, throughout emergency lockdowns, food, water and essentials scarcities, technological learning curves, job transformation and insecurity, staff shortages, and required re-openings, IELCC professionals continue to show their strength and determination to provide their children and families with quality, culturally based, spiritually enriching care.

“Early childhood educators and their support staff in Indigenous communities across BC, have inspired us with their courage, creativity and energy. They have found ways to connect with their children and continue to provide service and support families from afar. They figured out what they needed to do and got it done,” declared Karen Isaac, BCACCS Executive Director.

The stories from community highlight that it is more important than ever to make sure that funding goes to Indigenous peoples so they can determine and develop their own priorities and strategies in the early learning and child care field. We hope the new funding being promised to Indigenous communities, will be offered with this in mind.

BCACCS is pleased by the Government of Canada’s recognition of the need for a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. We welcome federal commitment to building a national child care system that is high quality and comprehensively supported through training, living wages, professional development and mentorship, etc. We also appreciate that this will be a difficult promise to realize considering the current state of the sector and lack of public investment in the last decade.

We hope that the federal government will continue to work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation partners to support the promised 10-year continued implementation and future shift to Indigenous administration of the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

“We agree that this is our moment to change the future for the better, but it will take more than promises,” said Mary Teegee BCACCS Board President, “We look forward to being part of the actions that arise.”

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BCACCS is committed to nurturing excellence through community outreach, education, research, and advocacy to ensure every Aboriginal child in BC has access to spiritually enriching, culturally based, high quality early learning and child care services. [Link to BCACCS website](#)

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