



Continued Investment in Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Promised in Federal Fall Economic Plan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 1, 2020

COAST SALISH TERRITORY/ VANCOUVER – This week’s Government of Canada Fall Economic Statement by Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland reminds us about the heavy burden COVID-19 has placed on child care, women, and Indigenous communities.

For those working in the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (IELCC) Sector it has been an ever-evolving struggle dealing with COVID-19 emergency measures on top of staff shortages and retention issues, job insecurity, training limitations, low wages, and family and staff health and safety.

Although details are vague, we are encouraged that there will be dollars invested to support the retention, training and recruitment of the ELCC workforce since this is an ongoing and crucial challenge. Karen Isaac, Executive Director of BCACCS notes, “We need a workforce that has the foundation to ensure Indigenous children and families, wherever they live, have access to culturally grounded and spiritually enriching programs.” Isaac adds, “In this regard, our hope is that there will be more focus on a distinct Indigenous process to ensure the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework is properly implemented and that our vision for children is not lost in a pan-Canadian approach.”

We also acknowledge the importance of oversight and the creation of the federal Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Secretariat and look forward to a time when governance and policy decisions about Indigenous ELCC are led and determined by Indigenous leadership.

“Indigenous-led initiatives are what will support our people to care for children in ways that reflect traditional child rearing practices that build confidence, strengthen a child’s physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, and help them reach their goals,” Claims Mary Teegee, BCACCS Board President.

BCACCS will be looking closely at the priorities in the 2020/21 federal budget and hope to see continued and further investments in the sector.

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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 childcare services. [Link to BCACCS website](#)

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