



BC Aboriginal
Child Care Society

www.acc-society.bc.ca

Caring for Our Children Newsletter

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CONTENTS

Jordan's Principle Team Intro
Pages 1-2

A Summary of Support for the
Re-opening of the IELCC Sector
During the Pandemic
Page 2

Nominate Someone for the Child
Care Recognition Award
Page 3

ACCRR Program Highlight
Page 4

The Return of Fair in the Square
Page 4

Resilience and Gathering Strength
Pages 5-6

Celebrating National Indigenous
History Month and National
Indigenous Peoples Day
Page 7

In Honour of Father's Day:
A Profile of a Cheam Nation Father
Page 8

Save the Date: BCACCS Fall
Hybrid Conference
Page 9

Event and Early Years Professional
Development Links
Page 9

"There is no work more important than motherhood and fatherhood. We need to understand that the most sacred calling of all is the commitment to family."

Albert Pooley, Founder and President,
Native American Fatherhood and Families

Jordan's Principle Team Intro

Jordan's Principle is a legal rule that ensures that all First Nations children living in Canada can access the products, services and supports they need, when they need them.

Jordan's Principle Service Coordinators can act as authorized representatives, assist requestors to prepare and submit requests to Jordan's Principle and access approved products, services and supports.

Please welcome the newest members of our team!



Interim Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator

Lenny LaRock is a member of the Sts'ailes First Nation located in the Lower Mainland. Lenny is the new Interim Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator for the Fraser Salish Region.

Lenny has 35 years of experience working with First Nations communities throughout the Lower Mainland and Fraser Region in many different positions.

She has had the opportunity to work as a Delegated Social Worker, Child and Youth Care Worker, Aboriginal Coordinator, Early Childhood Educator, Daycare Manager, and worked with children with special needs. Lenny's educational background gives her a solid understanding of the various challenges that many First Nations families face. As a mother, grandmother and great grandmother, she recognizes the opportunities that are available to First Nations children and families and has made it her goal to share her knowledge and information so that children, families, and communities can thrive. Lenny is looking forward to bringing her skills and experience to her service area.



Jordan's Principle Hub Resource Coordinator

Lisa Marsh started as the Hub Resource Coordinator in May 2022. Lisa will be working closely with the frontline Jordan's Principle Service Coordinators throughout the province.

Originally from the Cowichan Valley, Lisa is honoured to be a guest on the beautiful traditional and unceded Sylix/Okanagan territory in West Kelowna, BC, where she works from

her home. Over the last decade, Lisa has worked exclusively with Indigenous families both in Aboriginal Infant and Supported Child Development. As the proud mother to a Cree-Métis daughter with complex needs, Lisa has had to learn to think outside the box and challenge systems that did not meet the unique needs of her own family. Lisa brings a wealth of knowledge to this position with great understanding of the barriers children and families face when seeking supports and services.

Lisa loves to cook, and when she can get away, she and her daughter enjoy camping and spending time with family and friends. Lisa feels honoured to be part of the Jordan's Principle Hub team with the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society.

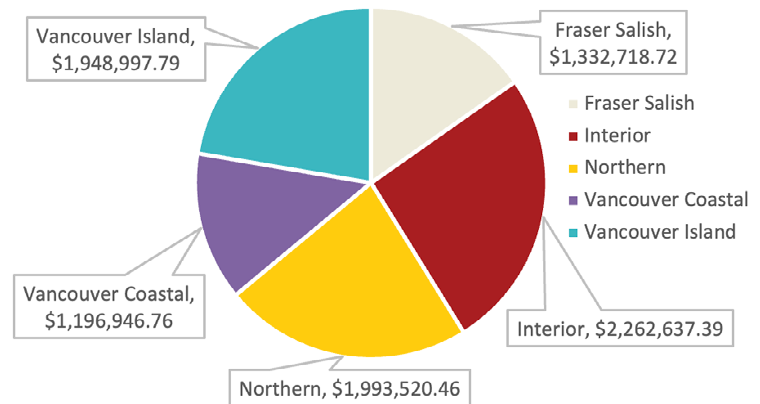
A Summary of Support for the Re-opening of the IELCC Sector During the Pandemic

In June 2020 BCACCS entered into a funding agreement (Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan – Support for the Re-opening of the Indigenous early learning and child care (IELCC) Sector Funding Agreement) to distribute additional funding to support the communities and families of young children.

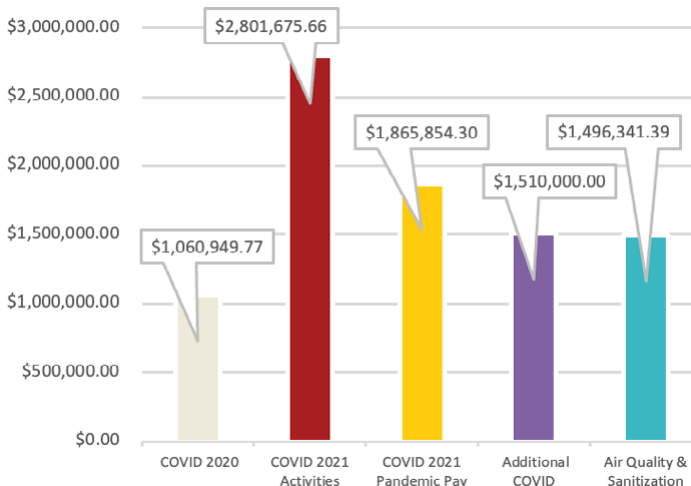
BCACCS worked with First Nations and urban IELCC programs to provide funding so they could offer service during the pandemic and have emerging COVID-19 needs supported. Despite having to work remotely and/or by telephone, the uptake was large, showcasing the intense need. Over the following 22 months (June 1, 2020 – March 31, 2022) several funding streams were implemented, resulting in 611 applications totalling \$8,734,821.12.

Through the various funding streams, a number of measures were funded including: child care operation costs, at-home activity kits for families, implementation of technology supports, food security packages, enhanced cleaning, development of COVID-19 plans/policies, pandemic pay, indoor air quality and sanitization, etc.

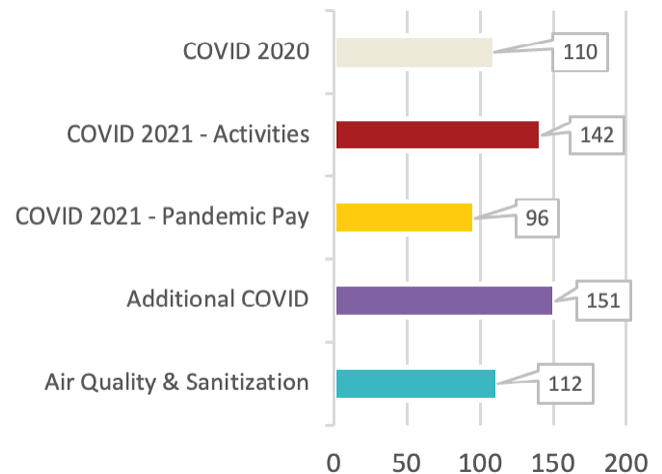
Dollars Approved by Region



Dollars Committed by Funding Stream



Number of Applicants by Funding Stream





Nominate Someone for the Child Care Recognition Award

Have you been inspired by someone who makes a difference in the lives of young children and is dedicated to early childhood education? Show your appreciation by nominating them for the Child Care Recognition Award.

This award honours exceptional role models working in the Indigenous early learning and child care field throughout BC. These inspiring individuals are the champions of our communities.

Do you know someone who ensures traditional First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis language, culture, and practices are celebrated through their passion, dedication, and hard work? We want to hear from you!

Eligible candidates may be dedicated to any or all of these areas:

- Educating and caring for Indigenous children age 0 - 6 years
- Teaching and promoting Indigenous culture and language in early learning and child care programs
- Ensuring early learning and child care services are integrated with other community programs that support young Indigenous children and their families
- Making communities better for all children, especially those requiring extra support
- Enhancing research and best practices in Indigenous early learning and child care

Winners are publicly announced at the Child Care Award Ceremony at our annual conference in the Fall. The deadline to submit a nomination is August 29, 2022.

Download the nomination form and find out more about the award at www.acc-society.bc.ca/services/scholarship-awards/how-to-nominate-someone-for-the-child-care-recognition-award or by emailing coordinator@acc-society.bc.ca.

ACCRR Program Highlight

The Aboriginal Child Care Resource and Referral (ACCRR) program is a cornerstone of BCACCS and provides support to First Nations and Indigenous communities to develop high quality community child care services that reflect local culture and language.

The program is designed to be adaptive and respond to community needs and trends in the Indigenous early learning and child care (IELCC) sector. Members of the ACCRR team deliver service to both IELCC programs and Indigenous child-serving organizations.

The ACCRR has a team of Provincial Child Care Advisors and a Library Technician who provide training, consultation



and resources in all matters related to providing safe, culturally responsive care to Indigenous children, families, and communities. They have been very busy over the last six months. From October 2021 to now, they have held 5 in-person and 32 online training events.

Funding for the ACCRR program is provided by the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

The Return of Fair in the Square



After cancelling the Fair for the past two years due to the pandemic, BCACCS participated in the Fair in the Square on Sunday June 12, 2022. This year we highlighted our Eagle's Nest Aboriginal Head Start and the support that the Central City Foundation has provided to renovate their outdoor play space. It was so amazing to share the work we do and the Eagle's Nest story with everyone who attended the event.

From the dancing, laughing, and friendly smiles, it was clear how much the community welcomed coming together again. Thanks to the Central City Foundation for a wonderful day of connection and community.



Resilience and Gathering Strength

The Sts'ailes Early Education Centre (SEEC) is located in Chehalis. Jennifer Thompson, SEEC Manager, and the rest of the staff have shared some of their thoughts about resilience and gathering strength in difficult times. SEEC runs four programs P'esk'a - Infant Toddler, Qw'si:tsel - 3 yr old, Sp'oq'es - K4 Preschool, and Chitmexw - Out of school care program. They provide service to 24 families, with 32 children.

Like many centres, they closed March 13th, 2020 due to the pandemic. They rallied, during the pandemic, so staff stayed employed and they were able to provide Outreach Program Kits for each family; they were made and delivered to each child's home on a weekly basis.

In September 2021, the centre re-opened for in-person operations. New policies were set in place for the safe operation of the child care centre while the pandemic was still very serious. These included enhanced cleaning protocols, masks being worn by all staff, no outside visitors, and parents dropped off outside in designated time slots to maintain social distancing. For additional safety, health checks were done with parents and staff at morning drop off. This included a temperature check and answering a series of related questions. To avoid any spreading of the virus SEEC closed if contact tracing was confirmed for any outbreak within the community or centre and staff and children stayed home when sick. A thorough clean was done for a safe re-opening. All Staff were required to have 1st and 2nd doses of



Photo courtesy of Sts'ailes Early Education Centre

the COVID-19 vaccination to be employed in Sts'ailes. Once the safety precautions were in place the Lending Library Program for families and children was able to safely send home materials for families to have extra resources.

There were times when things were very difficult. In January 2022, during a wave of COVID-19 within the community, SEEC closed for 8 days to all staff, children/families living off-reserve. The centre operated at a very low capacity with on-reserve staff servicing the essential workers of the community only until it became evident that the wave was continuing. The centre re-opened on February 14th, 2022.

Additionally, the effects of the flooding had a huge impact on their community. "Due to our location, with the closure of highway 1 and highway 7 we were unable to get on or off the reserve," remembered Jennifer Thompson. Sts'ailes was forced to close November 15-19th due to the highway 7 closure. On November 22nd SEEC opened, however it was still a challenging time for travel since there was only one source of entry connecting the valley with the lower mainland. Paying close attention to the news, road reports and weather, SEEC spent the next few days evaluating the safety of a return based on current conditions. During November, SEEC closed and re-opened several times in an effort to support families whenever possible.

"We did everything we could to stay connected during these times," said Tina Normand, ECE/IT/SN Supervisor. "We emailed, texted, and made sure to do mental health check-ins with staff and families." Essentially, they did what they could to keep things "normal" for the children during the



Photo courtesy of Sts'ailes Early Education Centre



Photo courtesy of Sts'ailes Early Education Centre

rollercoaster of uncertainty everyone was going through. They supported each other as needed, both inside the classrooms and out. “There were countless times when my staff reached out for support during these challenging times,” Jennifer Thompson, SEEC Manager recollected. “I felt confident to be able to give them the reassurance that we were always putting everyone’s safety first both during the pandemic and the flooding.” They did, and continue to do everything possible, to always keep a safe environment at Sts’ailes.

The staff at the centre are dedicated to the children and families they serve. “I love being able to support our families with quality childcare,” said Anastasia Modeste-Point. “We offer a safe and fun environment for children of all ages.” They invest in professional development to stay up-to-date with new developments in early learning and keep connected to other professionals. This helps them provide new activities to the children and enhance the curriculum; giving children access to more learning opportunities. The outdoor space is a highlight at the centre. “Our outdoor spaces are continuously being revamped to enhance outdoor programming,” said Jenny Lee Billy. It supports outdoor activities and adds a different element to programming.

SEEC has been working to increase the traditional language and teachings within their programs, by inviting Elders and Knowledge Keepers to visit the centre. Sts’ailes incorporates the language and culture within their programs. “The children in all our programs experience Sts’ailes culture through stories, dancing, drumming, songs, and language,” said Mary George, ECE/IT/SN. Staff teach Halq’eméylem to children by using the language daily during program activities. All educators to the best of their knowledge, speak the language. Their K4 program benefits from daily Halq’eméylem sessions with a cultural teacher. In addition, staff utilize several cultural resources with young children, such as Moe the Mouse®, who is a huge part of their centre.

It is very important to be teach children the language their people speak and share an understanding of Elders and the role they have in communities. “Having access to stories, drums, and paddles for the children’s use is very important,” said Venessa Charlie, ECE/IT/SN. “Our children sing the prayer before meal times, they learn about the land and medicine that grows around us, and we talk about traditional foods and how they are harvested.”

The centre also acts as a hub for other community programs such as speech/ language services, dental health initiatives, and is the site for the Aboriginal Head Start on-reserve program. SEEC collaborates and reports to other groups in the community, such as the community school and Yeqwethet (health dept.), and engages with the broader community through networking and information sharing to solidify relationships and support the children and families in the best possible way.

“On behalf of all of us here at Sts’ailes Early Education Centre, we are proud to share that we always feel supported; we are taken care of and valued for our work here. The continued opportunity to learn and grow inspires us to always, do our best. Overall, we work for such an amazing community.”

Many thanks to the staff at SEEC for sharing information to inspire us all.

Jennifer Thompson – SEEC Manager
 Tina Normand – ECE/IT/SN Supervisor
 Jenny Lee Billy – ECE/IT/SN
 Venessa Charlie – ECE/IT/SN
 Anastasia Modeste-Point – ECE
 Mary George – ECE/IT/SN
 Joanne Clark – ECE
 Octavius Billy – RA
 Dominick Hart – RA
 Lilli Joe – RA
 Valerie Paul – RA



Photo courtesy of Sts'ailes Early Education Centre



Celebrating National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day

National Indigenous Peoples Day is celebrated annually on June 21st to highlight the culture and accomplishments of Indigenous peoples in Canada and to showcase Indigenous languages and histories. The date of June 21 coincides with the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, a time that holds great significance for Indigenous peoples and communities.

National Indigenous History Month celebrates the rich and diverse cultures, languages, stories, and experiences of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people across BC and Canada. The Indigenous first peoples of this land stand with courage, resilience, survival, and resurgence. These virtues are to be admired as we acknowledge our ancestors who struggled under colonialism to lay down the path for our survival as peoples with distinct languages, cultures, and territories across Canada. We must have hope and commitment to do this work.

Not only in June, but throughout the year, we honour our past, present, and future, celebrate our Indigenous cultures, look to the future, and embrace Indigenous-led education as a pillar of continuing to grow and build our communities. We encourage everyone to keep the learning and the conversations going all year long. Not only do we need to recognize, celebrate and reflect on the unique histories, contributions, and strengths of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples we need to continue to work toward securing Indigenous rights, self-determination and self-governance.

BCACCS is committed to nurturing excellence through community outreach, education, research, and advocacy, to ensure every Indigenous child in BC has access to spiritually enriching, culturally based, high quality early learning and child care services. We celebrate strengthening our communities and providing a culturally rich and safe future for our children. The greatest strength of Indigenous communities, both rural and urban, is education for children and all generations in language, culture, history, and traditions. These are the paths that will ensure our communities have a bright, strong, and culturally-rooted future.

In Honour of Father's Day: A Profile of a Cheam Nation Father



xótxwes qas Kayse'me, Jonathan Williams

This year Father's Day occurred on June the 19, 2022. To celebrate fathers and recognize how important they are for families and their communities, we spoke with a father who is deeply involved and committed to his community and with children of all ages.

Jonny Williams was born and raised in Chilliwack, BC and is a member of the Cheam First Nation. At 45 years of age, Jonny is a committed father and grandfather to four children and four grandchildren, all of whom he sees daily either as a caregiver, a teacher, but most importantly a parent and grandparent. We asked Jonny what he feels is his most important role as a father and what he wants to pass onto his children and grandchildren?

Jonny believes his most important role is that of a teacher to his children, grandchildren, and children in his community. As a parent he reminds himself that everything is about learning and that his role for the children in his life is to be a parent first, then a teacher and a caregiver. Jonny says, "As

a parent it is our job to teach. I am a teacher in their lives, but children also teach us. They shape our parenting, and we learn from our mistakes, we become a better parent with each child."

Jonny's grandmother is a teacher for him and has taught him the traditions and history of his culture, as well as learning to speak his traditional language, Halq'eméylem, which he began learning in 1997. Siyamiyatiot Elizabeth Phillips is a Stó:lō Nation Elder and the last fluent speaker of Halq'eméylem, an Indigenous language of the Fraser Valley and Fraser Canyon. She was honoured in Ottawa as the recipient of the 2022 Indspire Culture, Heritage & Spirituality Award. Jonny is proud to say that his grandmother is still a teacher to him today and not only do they speak to one another in their traditional language, but they also text in their language! It is this teaching and learning that confirms for Jonny that the most important thing to pass onto his children and grandchildren is identity.

He believes that without identity the children of his community will not know who they are. "Culture, language, and history are the most important things we can pass onto our children, so they know where they came from and who they are." Jonny wants the children in his family and community to live and breathe their culture, to learn from their Elders, his grandmother, and other parents. His commitment to passing on identity lies in his role as a teacher of traditional canoe racing, traditional singing, drumming, and dancing.

Jonny's life with his family is a busy one! During the Spring and Summer months multiple generations are together seven days a week teaching, learning, and practicing for canoe races and drumming, singing, and dancing. Over the Fall and Winter months they all spend about five days a week together as a part of dances and gatherings. Jonny ensures that his children and grandchildren have at least one special time a month together where they can play and relax. He takes them out to the movies and dinner, and he rents a room at a hotel that has a pool so that everyone can get out and have fun.

The lesson Jonny teaches his family on a daily basis is, "if you work hard, that allows you to go and have fun." He sets goals for himself on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis and he teaches his children and grandchildren to do the same. As a teacher and a role model, Jonny passes on tradition, culture, and language to ensure that his children and grandchildren know their identity and will be able to teach and be models for their children and grandchildren.



Save the Date

BCACCS Annual Provincial Training Conference

September 29 – October 1, 2022

Join us at our first hybrid training event in the Fall. There are 200 in-person seats available.

Registration is scheduled to open soon.

www.acc-society.bc.ca/education-training/bcaccs-annual-provincial-training-conference

Event and Early Years Professional Development Links

- earlyyearsbc.ca/events
- bcfcc.ca/events
- www.childcareoptions.ca/child-care-providerstraining-and-workshops
- www.ecebc.ca/professional-development



Caring for Our Children is published by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS). It is distributed to BCACCS members, on and off reserve child care centres, Head Start programs, Bands and Tribal Councils in BC and individuals interested in Indigenous early childhood education and care.

Readers are invited to reprint articles provided proper credit is given. We welcome the submission of articles, book reviews, artwork, photos, letters and poetry.

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Our provincial office is located on the unceded ancestral lands of the (X^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwəta7/səlilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh).

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