



## CONTENTS

Supporting Indigenous Languages  
in Early Learning and Child Care  
Programs  
Page 2

Blossoming Leadership at Eagles  
Nest Aboriginal Head Start Preschool  
Page 3

April is World Autism Month  
Page 4

Celebrate Bear Witness Day  
Page 4

Responding to Community Needs  
Page 5

First Nations Pedagogies Network  
Workshops Now Available  
Page 6

BCACCS Is Hiring  
Page 6

Celebrate Child Care Month in May  
Page 7

BCACCS Workshop and Event  
Listings are Live  
Page 7

Event and Early Years Professional  
Development  
Page 8

*“As an Indigenous person who was systematically denied the opportunity to grow up with my language, I cannot stress enough the importance of National Indigenous Languages Day. In our communities I always hear the Elders talk about how concerned they are about language and the need to prioritize language revitalization. On this day, I hope everyone stops and reflects on languages. For Indigenous people, through Canadian policies and practices such as residential schools and child welfare, speaking Indigenous languages was intentionally forbidden. Post-secondary institutes now need to provide as many opportunities as we can to revitalize languages and intentionally create opportunities to learn them.”*

-Qwul'sih'yah'maht Robina Thomas,  
UVic Vice President Indigenous



# Supporting Indigenous Languages in Early Learning and Child Care Programs



March 31<sup>st</sup> was National Indigenous Languages Day. BCACCS recognizes this day to honour the importance of Indigenous languages and to promote their revitalization and survival. It is a day that we pause and recognize Indigenous language loss, reclamation, and protection represent a part of our shared history.

Every day, in communities across the province, there is inspiring, creative work being done to ensure access to traditional languages for children and families.

Linda Mitchell, Head Start Manager at Kwantlen First Nation, has generously shared some of the journey she has been on to support language revitalization in her program. There are no longer many traditional language speakers in the community. When the program is unable to have a full-time language teacher, Linda finds creative ways to continue supporting learning traditional language.

Linda shared, “We try to weave traditional language into everything we do with the children. We play games that incorporate language learning and we have guest language speakers visit the children.”



Children learn best when they are engaged and having fun. Linda has made a number of matching games that can be used to learn how to count. She also created several versions of Bingo, one with clothing and one with animals, that encourage the children to learn the language while they are playing.



Being in a location where there are multiple traditional languages (Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / həh'qəmi'nəh) can be a challenge. With support from the IELCC Transformation Initiative funding, Linda created a book called Toti:ltQ'ép (Learning Together) that incorporated the traditional name of colours, numbers, and local animals like fish and birds from Halq'eméylem language, but was intentionally structured to be flexible.

“I wanted to create a book that supports anyone to read and allows the reader to speak their own words depending on which language they speak,” explained Linda.

You can create a book or make your own matching and Bingo games too! How do you weave traditional language into your program? Share your innovations and creativity. Send an email to [communications@acc-society.bc.ca](mailto:communications@acc-society.bc.ca) and we'll share your story next month to help inspire other programs.

Kwantlen was able to accomplish some of this important work due to funding provided by the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Transformation Initiative. If you would like to find out more about accessing this funding contact [lisa@acc-society.bc.ca](mailto:lisa@acc-society.bc.ca).

*“We try to weave traditional language into everything we do with the children. We play games that incorporate language learning and we have guest language speakers visit the children.”*

- Linda Mitchell

*Photos courtesy of Linda Mitchell - Kwantlen*

# Blossoming Leadership at Eagles Nest Aboriginal Head Start Preschool

We wish the very best to Dawn Westlands, who has moved on to other leadership roles, and is no longer the Coordinator for the preschool. Dawn will excel in her new leadership roles - helping to increase awareness about the importance of Indigenous early learning and child care across BC and Canada.

We are so pleased to welcome Mikayla Itittakoose-Seto, the new Coordinator.

*Tansi! My colonized name is Mikayla Seto. I am of mixed decent of Plains Cree and Chinese ancestry. I am a registered treaty member with Daystar First Nation in Saskatchewan. My Family resides in the Treaty 4 area of Saskatchewan. My Lakota Name is "Mahpiya Ska Win" that came to a medicine man from the Cheyenne Lakota People who had a vision of me, and my other Plains Cree name "She sounds good to him (creator)" was given to me in a Cree Name Giving Ceremony by my Moshum (Kirby Littetents brother). My Chinese name is "Seto Mei Wah".*

*I was born into a family of rich cultures with traditional foods, cultural singing/dancing and craftsmanship handed down to me as a young child. My mom's side is Nehiyawak (Plains Cree), we are a family of Champion powwow dancers and Powwow/Round Dance singers. My other side is Chinese. My family immigrated to Canada in the early 1970s. I am a former Jr and Teen Champion Powwow Jingle Dress Dancer in both USA/Canada competing in many powwows hosted in Turtle Island. I have made many friends and many acquaintances in my travels and experienced the deep rooted richness in our uniqueness of language, customs and traditions. I am very fortunate to have parents who were involved in the Eagles Nest Preschool PACT and continued to be active positive role models in my life. I feel lucky to have had a wonderful childhood and a life filled with positive experiences.*

*I have studied Early Childhood Education with further studies in Special Needs Educator and Infant/toddler Educator Programs. I work with children in an environment that promotes opportunities to master skills and develop emerging skills to help foster early development in the First Nations children. I believe sharing my knowledge and approaching learning through an Indigenous lens benefits our children. I hope that myself and our*

*staff help foster a strong sense of belonging and identity. We, as the Aboriginal Headstart Program, stand by the saying "It takes a village to raise a child".*

*-Hiy Hiy*



Mikayla's story is unique and heartwarming. You might even say that she is now blossoming into a leader where the seeds of inspiration were planted.

She grew up in the neighbourhood and attended Eagles Nest as a child. She remembers, "When I was a little kid I would play outside and look up to where my grandparents were waving at me from their apartment above. It seems like yesterday, but the outdoor playground area has changed a lot!"

Mikayla feels that her experience at Eagles Nest shaped her interest in pursuing a career in early childhood education. Fond memories also made her jump at the chance to do her practicum at Eagles Nest.

While working at Eagles Nest, the Coordinator position opened, and she knew she had to apply. It was an opportunity to grow and share her interest in supporting families and children. She was, "Excited to be able to inspire the next generation, like I was inspired as a kid."

We are delighted Mikayla has been able to step into the role with enthusiasm and a deep love for the children and families her team supports. We look forward to seeing her vision for the future unfold.

*Photos courtesy of Mikayla Itittakoose-Seto*



## Celebrate Bear Witness Day

On May 10 celebrate Spirit Bear's birthday and an important date in the history of Jordan's Principle at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

Jordan's Principle is a child first principle and legal rule named in memory of Jordan River Anderson. It ensures First Nations children receive the services and supports they need, when they need them.

This day honours Jordan River Anderson and invites people of all ages to "Bear Witness" to ensure Jordan's Principle is fully implemented!

Take action, learn more and share the message that Canada needs to continue to uphold Jordan's Principle.

- Read the Spirit Bear Book to understand the history of Jordan's Principle by visiting [fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides](https://fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides)
- Post photos with your teddy bears or stuffed animal friends on social media, using the hashtags #JordansPrinciple and #BearWitnessDay
- Watch the video of TA'nss oj-Moooooooke Sul Sulee (link below)
- Visit the Caring Society's website to find out what else you can do by visiting [fncaringsociety.com/events/bear-witness-day](https://fncaringsociety.com/events/bear-witness-day)

The Jordan's Principle Enhanced Service Coordination Hub Reconciliation Ambearrister is TA'nss oj-Moooooooke Sul Sulee (Mother of Aaaaalll Souls). She had her naming ceremony on May 10, 2022. You can watch a video of the ceremony by visiting [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueptYGZ7qhk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueptYGZ7qhk)



## April is World Autism Month

Although there is no cure for autism, there are highly effective research-based treatment and intervention methods available that can help children and their families address the characteristics of this disorder, particularly in the early years.

April is World Autism Month, an annual opportunity for a dedicated conversation about autism spectrum disorder. This complex neurological disorder touches more than 70 million people globally.

For families needing help with resources, information, and financial assistance there are a few places they can find support.

BCANDS is an Indigenous run and governed society. They offer assistance with PWD benefits, the Disability Tax Credit, and RDSP awareness. [www.bcands.bc.ca](http://www.bcands.bc.ca)

For children with autism or suspected autism, services can include Psycho-educational assessments, tutoring services, assistive technologies, and respite. Specialized ABA therapies may not exist in First Nations communities but with funding from Jordan's Principle, services can be established.

Families can find their local Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator by visiting [jordansprinciplehubbc.ca](http://jordansprinciplehubbc.ca)

For more information about autism visit [www.autismspeaks.ca/world-autism-month](http://www.autismspeaks.ca/world-autism-month)



# Responding to Community Needs

BCACCS provides leadership, oversight, and accountability for new annual funding from the federal government to support Indigenous early learning and child care (IELCC) capacity, access, and quality among First Nations and other Indigenous communities in BC.

This is being accomplished by enhancing, expanding, and supporting innovation within existing IELCC programs and supporting communities or regions where there are

no programs and services, or where they are severely underfunded, through the Transformation Initiative funding.

In collaboration with First Nations, BCACCS has collected impact stories that show how accessing the funding helped them build access, capacity, and strengthen support for IELCC in their communities. View the highlighted videos to find out, in their voice, more about the triumphs and challenges communities experienced and what their hopes are for the future.

If you would like to find out if your program or community can access this funding, please contact [lisa@acc-society.bc.ca](mailto:lisa@acc-society.bc.ca).



Nak'azdi Whu'ten  
*Corinna Courtoreille*



N'Quatqua  
*Anita Patrick*



Kwantlen  
*Linda Mitchell*



Kitselas  
*Anne Wright*



Westbank  
*Andrea MacLellan*



Gitwangak  
*Elizabeth Williams*

# First Nations Pedagogies Network Workshops Now Available

With the first series of FNPN Online Workshops taking place in the winter and spring of 2023, FNPN members seek to share from the strength of their ongoing collaborative process and build upon good work done within BCACCS. In an open and conversational format, FNPN workshops are an opportunity for ECEs, other professionals in the field and community members to explore and contribute to important and shared topics in Indigenous early learning and child care.

All workshops are free to attend and offer professional development certificates, following registration through the BCACCS registration portal — so please use the links below for each workshop to sign up! Upcoming topics include:

## [Documentation in Indigenous Terms](#)

Friday, April 28, 12-1:30 PM

## [Working with Elders, in Good Ways](#)

Tuesday, May 2, 12-1:30 PM

## [Decolonizing Licensing](#)

Friday, May 19, 1-2:30 PM

## [Antiracism Storywork](#)

Friday, May 26, 5:30-7:30 PM

## [Early Childhood Education in Indigenous Terms](#)

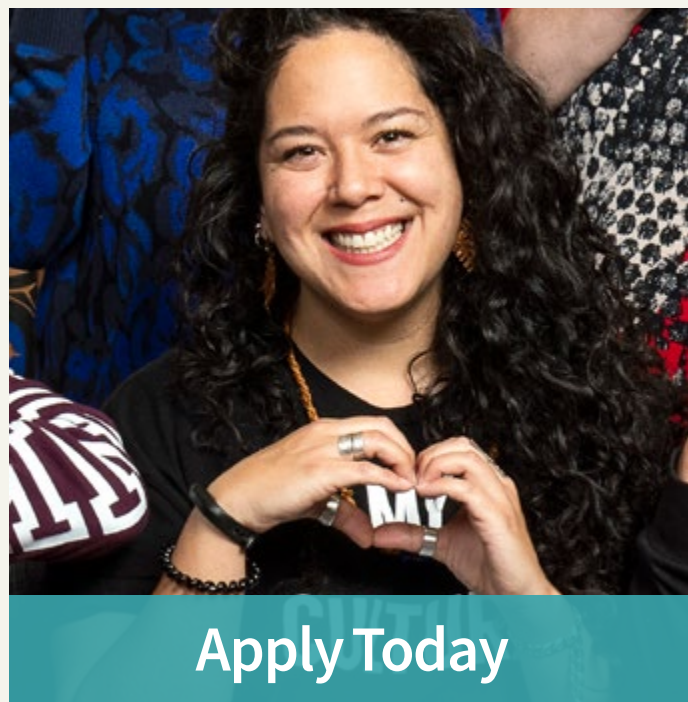
Friday, June 2, 12-1:30 PM

FNPN members would also like to invite you to ‘join the conversation’ of the two initial episodes of the FNPN podcast: ‘Braiding Indigenous Pathways with the First Nations Pedagogies Network.’ These share from the FNPN process to take up ‘Land Acknowledgements’ and ‘Food Sovereignty and Security’—and are now available on Spotify and Google podcasts, with a third episode coming in May.

For more on FNPN visit the FNPN website, and please don’t miss a growing collection of Digital Storywork that depicts some of the interests, commitments, and process of FNPN members, and also their visions of the FNPN.

Under the auspices of the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, the First Nations Pedagogies Network works to realize the principles of the First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Framework. The FNPN workshops, podcast and digital storywork combine to ‘support and share innovation and promising practice’ in a

good process that centres Indigenous languages, knowledges, and cultures. They support, develop, and promote quality ECE on First Nations terms in self-determination, and foster partnerships and linkages toward further Indigenous capacity development in ECE and related forms of life and learning. In its work to uplift and support Indigenous children, families and communities, FNPN is grateful also for its partnership with the Early Childhood Pedagogies Network and for the support of the Province of B.C.



## BCACCS is Hiring

Our team is growing! Your experience and skills could be just what we need. If you want to work for an organization that supports Indigenous children and families, you’ll want to apply for one of the available job opportunities we have open right now.

Positions will remain posted until the ideal candidate is found and will close without notice.

- [Regional Community Facilitator](#)
- [Contract Administrator](#)
- [Human Resources Manager](#)
- [Communication Specialist](#)
- [Office Manager/Receptionist](#)

# Celebrate Child Care Month in May

The Aboriginal Child Care Resource and Referral (ACCRR) team is working hard to create something special for Child Care Month. More information will be shared once it is available. Don't miss out, sign up for our [E-News](#), follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or visit our [new workshop listings page](#).

Don't forget BC Child Care Provider Appreciation Day is May 18 this year. Make sure the amazing people who nurture our children's well-being and development know how much they are appreciated.

To mark Child Care Month in May the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) renews the From Seed to Cedar Awareness Campaign every year. Find out how you can support Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (IELCC) and become a champion!

With the right conditions the smallest seeds can become the tallest cedars. Like seeds, our children hold incredible potential. IELCC programs play a central role in creating the conditions that nurture the potential of our children and unlock the spirit of our communities.

Show your support:

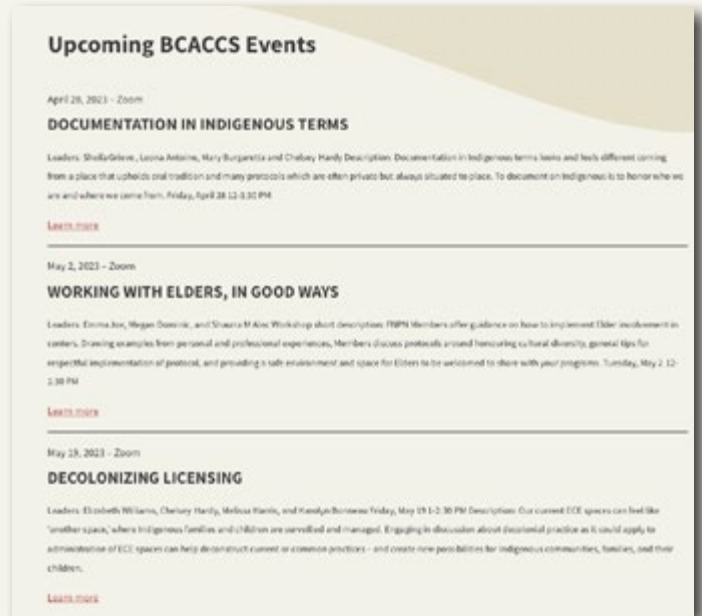
Become a  
Champion

Watch the  
documentary

Use  
#SeedtoCedar  
#SupportIELCC

Watch  
Speakers Circle  
video

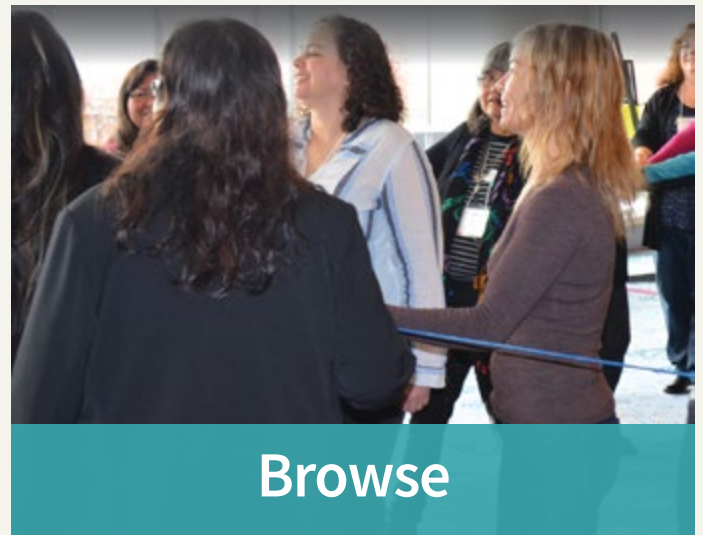
# BCACCS Workshop and Event Listings are Live



Did you know that you can take a look at what workshops and events BCACCS is hosting by visiting our [website listings page](#)?

This new part of our website highlights BCACCS professional development opportunities for early childhood education professionals and support staff. To browse upcoming listings visit [www.acc-society.bc.ca/bcaccs-events](http://www.acc-society.bc.ca/bcaccs-events).

If you have any questions about professional development opportunities, or you want to book something for your program directly, contact [coordinator@acc-society.bc.ca](mailto:coordinator@acc-society.bc.ca).



Browse

# Event and Early Years Professional Development Links

- [ECEBC 2023 Conference – “Power of Story”](#)  
May 11 - 13, 2023
  - [Moving From Power and Control to Collaboration and Problem Solving](#)  
May 18 - 19, 2023
  - [Right to Be Ready Conference](#)  
May 10 - 11, 2023
  - [Exploring BC’s ELF - Community of Practice](#)  
April 25 - May 30, 2023
  - [Making Tomorrow Conference 2023: Finding Your Flow](#)  
April 22, 2023
- [acc-society.bc.ca/bcaccs-events](http://acc-society.bc.ca/bcaccs-events)
  - [fnpn.ca/fnfn-online-workshops](http://fnpn.ca/fnfn-online-workshops)
  - [bcearlyyearshub.ca](http://bcearlyyearshub.ca)
  - [earlyyearsbc.ca/events](http://earlyyearsbc.ca/events)
  - [bcfcc.ca/events](http://bcfcc.ca/events)
  - [www.childcareoptions.ca/child-care-providerstraining-and-workshops](http://www.childcareoptions.ca/child-care-providerstraining-and-workshops)
  - [www.ecebc.ca/professional-development](http://www.ecebc.ca/professional-development)
  - <https://www.gv.ymca.ca/training>

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<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓xwú7mesh (Squamish) and səilwətaʔ/seilwutlh (Tsleil-Waututh).

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