



Comments by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society about the 2016 Federal Budget and the Indigenous Early Learning and Childcare Framework Talks

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WEST VANCOUVER, BC - COAST SALISH TERRITORY – The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) is not convinced that the investment announced in the 2016 federal budget will do much to address the critical underfunding of First Nations early childhood development and child care services in BC and Canada.

The 2016 federal budget commits \$29.4 million in 2016-17 infrastructure funding for two programs - Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHS-OR) and the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) - plus \$100 million beginning in 2017 towards Early Learning and Child Care on reserve. The infrastructure investment translates to approximately \$3 million for facility repairs or upgrades for all 202 First Nations in BC. First Nations without child care infrastructure will have to wait for a year or more if they want to create programs for their youngest citizens. “That’s a very long time in a young child’s life,” observes Mary Teegee, BCACCS Board President.

Research conducted by BCACCS in 2007* and 2014** found that federal investment in early childhood development and child care for Indigenous children has remained stagnant since the mid-1990s, when these programs were first announced. Inadequate and piecemeal policy approaches have compromised quality and limited access.

“First Nations children birth to six years continue to experience significant disparity in health and well-being compared to other children in British Columbia. Access to quality early childhood development and care programming is one proven strategy for helping marginalized children and their families flourish. Forty years of research both in Canada and globally shows how high quality ECD programs have the power to transform the lives of individual children, families and whole communities,” states Mary Teegee, BCACCS Board President.

Teegee admits there are challenges ahead but says BCACCS will work with leadership, community and the First Nations ECE sector to ensure BC has a voice at the table when talks on the promised national and Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework start in the next few months.

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Background Documents:

*[An Environmental Scan of Public Policy and Programs for young Aboriginal Children in BC: A Cold Wind Blows 2014](#)

**[Environmental Scan of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Programs in BC: The Winds of Change 2007](#)

More info about BCACCS: [Link to BCACCS](#)

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 relevant, high quality early childhood development and care services.

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