



Celebrating 20 Years of Championing Quality Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEST VANCOUVER, BC - COAST SALISH TERRITORY – The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) is celebrating that it has miraculously survived the last twenty years of struggling to promote high quality early learning and child care services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children in British Columbia. We have succeeded in demonstrating the huge impact that culturally-rooted, high quality, and spiritually enriching early childhood education can have in helping our children thrive. “We have survived with a lot of help from our friends and some support from government,” said Karen Isaac, Executive Director of BCACCS, “we have much to celebrate together today but also a way yet to go!”

BCACCS is a provincial organization that provides support services, professional development and resources that foster the well-being of Aboriginal children birth to six years old, and their families in all five regions of BC. Today, BCACCS directly trains more than 800 early childhood educators and caregivers annually and provides resources, research, policy analysis, and professional workshops. BCACCS is recognized across Canada as the only designated Aboriginal childcare resource and referral program (Aboriginal CCRR) in the country. “We believe in supporting communities, programs and services to ensure every Aboriginal child has a healthy, happy start in life,” observed Mary Teegee, BCACCS Board President, “And we thank our supporters for the past 20 years of success and continuing to be part of the ongoing effort to ‘close the gap in life chances’ for Aboriginal children—especially in the early years when quality interventions are most impactful.”

“We’ve collaborated with many partners along the way,” said Isaac. “In the early days, the United Way of Lower Mainland gave a boost to our policy and research efforts and funding from the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development helped us develop the Aboriginal childcare resource and referral service for the province. With funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada over the last 10 plus years, 80 Aboriginal preschoolers and their families living in the Downtown Eastside have been able to access, on an annual basis, Aboriginal Head Start, a culturally informed early development program.”

The Society has also forged successful partnerships with all BC universities as well as with other early childhood education organizations in BC, across Canada, and internationally.

“We are most proud of the hundreds of early childhood educators working in our communities, the overwhelming majority of whom are women, dedicated to caring for our young children and doing so for very low wages and little recognition,” commented Teegee.

In the months ahead, BCACCS will be working with other First Nations leaders in the support of Aboriginal children and families to hold the Federal government to its commitment to a National Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care framework. The potential and promise of Indigenous-led child and family supports cannot be overstated, as partnerships borne in the spirit of Canadian reconciliation make new and often overdue advances possible for Indigenous communities. “After 20 years, BCACCS is ready for the challenge and is grateful for partners that wish to be as well,” stated Teegee.

For more information on #BCACCScelebrates20 visit this link:

<https://bcaccscelebrates20.wordpress.com/blog/>

For direct access to our share kit visit this link:

http://www.acc-society.bc.ca/files_2/news-and-events.php

-30-

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

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