



## **INDIGENOUS-LED CHILD CARE IN BC FINALLY HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE A REALITY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COAST SALISH TERRITORY/ VANCOUVER** – The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) welcomes the February 20, 2018 BC government’s budget as prioritizing supports for families with young children.

BCACCS is also encouraged that Indigenous-led child care is part of the provincial plan for universal child care, as it recognizes the distinct importance of supporting Indigenous families and communities through access to culturally specific quality child care and early learning services.

Given historical inequities and current commitments to reconciliation, commitments to Indigenous communities for Indigenous early learning and care are crucial, and so this budget is a step in the right direction.

The news of a good new direction is tempered with some concern that new child care funds are destined currently for one type of government program, which is not the answer for every community, and has not been chosen through an Indigenous-led community-based engagement process. As well, beyond federal transfers specific provincial fiscal allocations to Indigenous ELCC remain absent.

However, BCACCS is hopeful that the provincial government will follow through on its commitment to transformative processes with Indigenous families and communities, as well as their organizations and governments where Indigenous child and family supports are concerned—as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) in implementing the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

“We look forward to working with the provincial government and First Nations leadership to ensure that new funding for Indigenous child care and learning support will be substantial, and supportive of the self-determination of Indigenous authorities, families and organizations who understand how and where the most impact can be made for their communities,” remarked Mary Teegee, BCACCS Board President.

As the mandated First Nations regional lead agency in the First Nations-led co-development of a distinct National Indigenous ELCC Framework, BCACCS looks forward to continuing to support Indigenous ELCC in partnership with the province.

“Our Elders say ‘we can do it, if you let us,’ our leaders say ‘do not sidestep governance and jurisdiction.’ Certainly supporting Indigenous families and their children is fundamental to reconciliation, but such supports have to be sustainable and self-determined in order to empower Indigenous people according to their laws, and to engage productively in ways that do not render the powerful promise of systemic change as lip service,” said Karen Isaac, BCACCS Executive Director.

Indigenous families have raised their children on these lands for hundreds of generations, so leadership for change must come from within communities and nations, rather than continue to be imposed upon them. They know what they need in order to succeed, for early learning and care to become a key contribution to the revitalization of Indigenous languages and the strengthening of Indigenous cultures through the raising of healthy Indigenous children in their own vibrant communities and traditions.

The BC Government has made a good start on a new way forward for Indigenous ELCC in BC. Success will depend on working in new ways, following Indigenous leadership in the challenges ahead.

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For more on the National IELCC framework: [link to e-bulletin on IELCC development](#)

More info about BCACCS:

BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (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.

Link to BCACCS [website](#)

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