



**ECEBC 's Position Paper for:
Integrating the Early Childhood Education Professional and
Programs into the Ministry of Education**

ECEBC **acknowledges that** our offices are on the unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), S^kwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selíłwítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We thank them for having cared for this **land**. ECEBC members represent many Nations throughout the province and we look forward to continuing to work and learn from the Indigenous people and communities of British Columbia.

We further want to acknowledge that this paper was developed in collaboration with the support and guidance of the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, and the BC Early Years Pedagogy Network.

This position paper builds on the pioneering research, policy recommendations, and advocacy work behind the broadly supported Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning - known as the \$10aDay Plan (ECEBC & CCCABC, 2019). The Plan was jointly developed by ECEBC and CCCABC. In this position paper, ECEBC affirms that early childhood education, including school-age care, becomes a publicly funded system under the Ministry of Education's sole responsibility. The position paper adds detailed proposals to ensure that early childhood educators are valued and respected professionals in this Ministry.

ECEBC encourages the Ministry of Education to take inspiration in the vision, principles, and pathways to learning outlined in the BC Early Learning Framework as a way to implement the following plan of action. These actions are in keeping with the BC Government's position "to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy."

ECEBC demands that the BC government honours its duty to consult with Indigenous peoples as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and the Indigenous Early Learning Child Care Framework (IELCCF). We call on the BC Government to ensure that any changes to the delivery of Indigenous early childhood education will respect the obligations stated in Bill C-41 - *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and will be undertaken with Indigenous leadership and governing bodies.

ECEBC's integration plan supports the current work and vision of the BC government to provide inclusive, accessible, and high-quality early years programs and school aged-care programs.

ECEBC calls for the Ministry of Education to implement an Early Care and Learning Act and an Early Childhood Educator Act, both aligned with the BC Early Learning Framework. While the Early Care and Learning Act will set out how the fully publicly funded system is governed and regulated, the Early Childhood Educator Act will clearly define who can practice as a professional in this integrated system as well as the conditions in which they are to work with young and school-aged children. This position paper, *Integrating the Early Childhood Education Professional and Programs into the Ministry of Education*, recognizes a strong strategy, such as an implementation of a provincial wage grid, which is critical for the recruitment and retention of Early Childhood Educators.

ECEBC is pleased to offer the BC government a plan of action to successfully integrate early care and learning into the Ministry of Education.

PLAN OF ACTION

1. The Government of BC upholds and commits to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and The Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. The Government of BC recognizes the Indigenous Early Learning Child Care Framework as an Indigenous-mandated and developed assertion of these rights, arising from Indigenous law, practices, and rights.
2. In keeping with these commitments and in partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, BC commits to ensuring equitable, comprehensive, and sustainable funding to support Indigenous ECE/IELCC systems and structures in ways authorized and developed by Indigenous leadership and Nations.
3. The Ministry of Education Early Learning Division develops an **Early Childhood Policy Framework** that closely aligns with the vision stated in the *BC Early Learning Framework* (2019).
4. The Ministry of Education Early Learning Division develops an **Early Care and Learning Act** that:
 - enshrines the rights of all young children, from birth to 12, to access meaningful, integrated early childhood education programs,
 - closely aligns with the vision in the BC Early Learning Framework,
 - reflects the ECEBC Code of Ethics,
 - defines how the system is governed and sufficiently funded,
 - sets out the regulations within which services operate,
 - provides child-educator ratios that are reflective of the program being delivered and mandate for the delivery of a curriculum that reflects the BC Early Learning Framework,
 - replaces the current provision for “early learning programs” in the BC School Act, and,
 - meets state obligations as enumerated in UNDRIP and actualized in IELCC framework implementation (including Article 39).

5. The Ministry of Education develops an **Early Childhood Educator Act** that:
 - closely aligns with the vision in the BC Early Learning Framework,
 - reflects the ECEBC Code of Ethics,
 - defines who is eligible to practice as a pedagogist and can be employed to provide pedagogical leadership to early care and learning programs,
 - establishes a pedagogist-educator ratio to ensure curriculum reflects the BC Early Learning Framework,
 - includes the existing Early Childhood Educator Registry,
 - appoints a Director of Certification to issue certificates to practice,
 - defines who is eligible to practice as an educator and can be employed to provide early care and learning programs,
 - establishes a time frame plan for 50% of educators working in a program to hold, as a minimum, a diploma (60 credits)
 - establishes a time frame plan for 50% of educators working in the program hold, as a minimum, a degree in early childhood education (120 credits), or a degree that identifies early childhood education course work (e.g., child and youth care and education degrees that include an early childhood specialization)

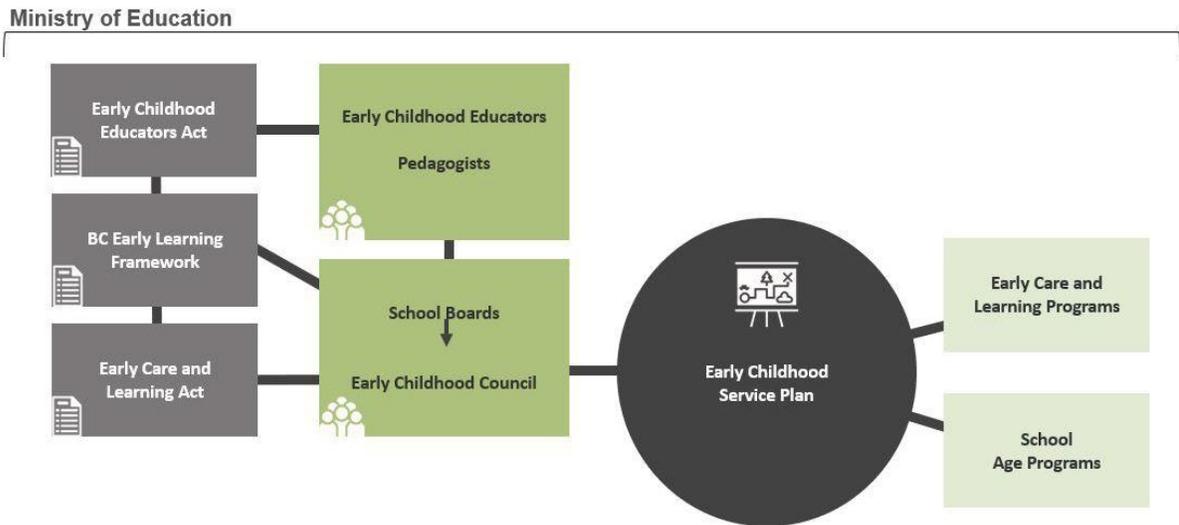
6. The Ministry of Education develops and implements a province-wide, publicly funded, competitive and equitable ECE wage grid. Fair compensation is critical to ensure recruitment and retention of the Early Childhood Education professional.

7. Under the new Early Care and Learning Act school boards would have the mandate and funding to plan, develop and govern all provincially funded early care and learning programs.

8. Each School board creates an **Early Care and Learning Council**, comprised of a number of Early Childhood professionals, and develops (in collaboration with the Ministry) an **Early Care and Learning Service Plan** that outlines outcomes and targets with appropriate funding needs.

9. School Board Early Care and Learning Childhood Council, at a minimum, offer:
 - a variety of publicly funded and inclusive early childhood programs (e.g., full and partial day including infant/toddler programs, programs for children between three years and five years, *school aged-care, multi age family groupings, family child care, StrongStart BC, for all children in British Columbia) [*further details to be developed]
 - programs that are community specific and guided by factors such as number of children in a community, local/cultural preference/practice for the grouping of children by age,
 - programs where participation is by family decision,
 - programs reflecting the pedagogical orientation of the BC Early Learning Framework and ensure health and safety of children according to the Early Care and Learning Act,
 - programs that are pedagogically led by a pedagogist (as outlined in the BC Early Learning Framework),

- inclusive programs that consolidate and develop protocols for early identification and intervention services,
- partnerships with Health Authorities and specialized agencies to facilitate individualized educational plans,
- additional educators to meet the identified specialized individual needs of a specified child,
- additional educators to meet the identified needs of a specific program,
- links to community resources and programming for families around health, libraries, counselling, recreational services, language services and so forth.



We are ready and look forward to working with government and stakeholders to implement this plan.

Respectfully submitted,

ECEBC Board of Directors and Emily Gawlick, ECEBC Executive Director