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educators of BC

Early Childhood Educators of BC

309, 515 W Pender St,
Vancouver BC, V6B1V5

January 11, 2022

Dr. Bonnie Henry
Provincial Health Officer
PO Box 9648
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9P4

Dear Dr. Henry,

Urgent: Lack of Consultation and Sector Prioritization Impacts the Early Care and Learning Sector

Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC) is disheartened. The recent direction taken by your office supporting the K-12 education system has blatantly neglected the early learning and childcare sector and missed another opportunity to recognize simultaneous impacts and direction needed. Once again, early childhood educators (ECEs) working in early learning and childcare settings are not being acknowledged, nor addressed. Many of the decisions made around the delayed start of school for the K-12 system had a direct impact and strain on the sector and early learning programs. This letter includes recommendations that we implore Government to act on, in consultation with the Provincial Health Authorities.



We call on Government to act on their obligations to create a provincial system of early care and learning in BC in order to unify our sector and professional protocols. We are asking for the opportunity to work as a collaborative body that is able to make intentional and responsive decisions as we navigate and interpret information and updated health guidelines.

We urge you to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place for ECEs and others working in child care, including:

- [priority access to COVID-19 vaccination boosters](#), for those who want them
- rapid antigen tests and access to PCR testing, and
- personal protective equipment including N95 masks.

Further to these recommendations, we urge you to ensure appropriate communication, and transparency of information about the virus and emerging variants that affects our field:

- Changes to the K-12 education system need to be made in consultation with the child care sector so that we are equally able to navigate the potential risks and pressures this creates for centers and educators
- As educators, we are advocates for children and their well-being. As such, we need to be regularly briefed on the most [up to date data and information on COVID-19](#) in order to make informed decisions

Educators co-create responsive pedagogical contexts in early years spaces which support the health and well-being of children. We are hearing from early childhood educators that they feel recent public health decisions have been based on the health of the economy over the health of the child and the educator.

As one member stated: “We have gone above and beyond to provide the safest possible environments for the children in our care and yet somehow we have been given little to no guidance or support. Even when schools were closed, we remained open to those same children and still were left out of the discussion. At what point does this STOP?!”



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ECEBC is deeply committed to working with the government on the recommendations as outlined above. We are ready for consultation with our stakeholders in response to emerging understandings about COVID-19 and updated public health guidelines. ECEBC is well positioned to represent educators as they respond to the current and ever-changing conditions of our times.

Should you have any questions about the recommendations above, please do not hesitate to connect.

Sincerely,

Emily Gawlick,
ECEBC Executive Director
executive.director@ecebc.ca

CC: Honourable Ministers Chen, Dean, Dix and Whiteside

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¹ <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/EDUC-Whiteside-mandate.pdf> ;
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/MCFD-Chen-mandate.pdf> ;
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/MCFD-Dean-mandate.pdf> ;
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/premier-cabinet-mlas/minister-letter/kang_mandate_2020.pdf ;
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/premier-cabinet-mlas/minister-letter/robinson_mandate_2020_mar_fin.pdf;