



Joint Statement to Acknowledge May is Child Care Month 2023 BCACCS, ECEBC, MNBC, CCCABC

Across British Columbia children are thriving, parents are able to be at work or school, and communities are prospering in a multitude of ways, all because of quality licensed child care programs.

Recognizing May as Child Care Month brings public and political acknowledgement of the significance of quality child care as an essential community service.

This year, May brings with it a heartfelt recognition and appreciation for all who work in the child care sector; the educators, administrators, Elders, cooks, and other professionals who together care for children and families. We collectively celebrate the skilled professionals who care for and educate children in licensed child care programs across the province. Without them there is no child care system.

Since 2018, with provincial and federal funding, there has been some measurable progress towards a child care system in BC that:

- meets the needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children through equitable and culturally grounded teaching which reflects Indigenous knowledge.
- reduces fees for families in licensed programs, creates more licensed spaces, and invests in early childhood educators.

Yet, there is much more for governments to do to realize their commitments under the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and to uphold Indigenous rights as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Today there are child care spaces available for fewer than 25% of BC children, educators are not fairly compensated, not all families have affordable fees, and there are too few culturally relevant programs for Indigenous families.

In 2023 our pledge for Child Care Month is that we will continue to work and advocate for the child care system BC families want, need and deserve. A system that cares for and provides supports to include all children successfully, provides fair compensation and working conditions for educators, respects First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledge, promotes gender equity, creates strong communities and a robust economy.



In May and throughout the year, **BCACCS** acknowledges all early childhood educators for the invaluable work they do for and with our children every day. We believe Early Childhood Education is a calling and that all ECEs have been gifted with the special skills, traits, and talents needed to enrich children and families in their care. This work can be challenging as we continue to experience the ongoing traumas and impacts of colonization. The knowledge, culture, compassion, and patience ECEs bring to the work is needed and necessary if we are to raise future generations of children with a strong sense of identity and belonging in this place called British Columbia. We invite all community leaders to use this time to recognize, value and hold up the work of our ECEs in Nation building.

Métis Nation British Columbia would like to honor Early Learning and Child Care professionals and the important work that they do as they nurture, guide, and foster a sense of belonging and self-identity for our children. Métis people acknowledge that our children are sacred gifts from our ancestors. They become knowledge-keepers and carry our culture, language, and heritage forward for future generations. We place our children at the center of all that we do.

This month **ECEBC** honours all early childhood educators as the essential factor to a quality system that supports children, families, and communities across BC. We are inspired by the research and pedagogical practices that are transforming our field and we embrace our ethical obligation to make visible and public the multifaceted work and role of the early childhood educator. This role is one that has and will continually shift, transform, and respond to an ever-changing world. ECEBC is honoured to journey alongside you.

Early Childhood Educators enrich the lives of children and provide vital support to families. They deserve to be fairly compensated with competitive wages, good benefits, and pensions. Educators also need working conditions that enable them to provide quality care for children and maintain their own well-being. The BC government's promise to make sure Early Childhood Educators are a well-supported profession is essential to achieving a high-quality child care system. The **Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC** celebrates all the educators and staff in child care programs. We recommit to advocating for a provincial, publicly-funded, equitable wage grid within a comprehensive compensation package for early learning professionals in the child care sector.