



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 03/2026

SUBJECT: ALLOCATION OF FIRST NATIONS EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE FUNDING

MOVED BY: KUKPI7 HELEN HENDERSON, TSQÉSCENĀ FIRST NATION

SECONDED BY: CHIEF JERRY JACK, MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations peoples have always maintained jurisdiction over the care, teachings, and responsibility of their children, including the design, delivery, and administration of early learning and child care programs and services in their communities;
- B. the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of B.C., passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

Article 14(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures.

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Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development, including in matters relating to education and child care;

- C. BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly have, through Resolution 14/2017 “Mandate the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society as Regional Lead Agency in National Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework Development and Implementation”, expressed support for the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) as the regional lead agency in the ongoing development and implementation of a regional Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) strategy and have, through Resolution 31/2022 “First Nations Early Learning and Child Care”, called on the provincial and federal governments to 1) work with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), supported by BCACCS, to immediately create an interim framework to flow funding under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CW-ELCC) to First Nations, and 2) engage in Government-to-Government dialogue with the proper title and rights holders regarding a “permanent funding arrangement” for ELCC dollars available under the CW-ELCC;
- D. in 2022–23, the FNLC worked with BCACCS and the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) to confirm that MECC distribute approximately \$35 million in combined CW ELCC funding and provincial funding directly to all 204 First Nations as “One-Time Only” grants, and again in 2024–2025, that MECC distribute approximately \$35 million in combined 2023–24 and 2024–25 C-W ELCC funding directly to all 204 First Nations as “One-Time Only” grants;
- E. MECC has identified approximately \$16.5 million in CW ELCC funding for the 2025–26 fiscal year that must be allocated by March 31, 2026, but may be expended in future fiscal years, which is a significantly smaller amount of funding than was available in fiscal year 2022–23;
- F. BCACCS has recommended that this 2025–26 funding be transitioned from “One-Time Only” grants to being advanced to BCACCS to be held in trust, with no administrative costs, and allocated in support of four or five major capital projects in First Nations communities in the 2026–27 and 2027–28 fiscal years, using BCACCS’ existing First Nations-led capital funding policy;
- G. BCACCS has demonstrated experience and capacity in supporting an equity-based approach to First Nations ELCC capital planning, feasibility, design, and construction, has highlighted a planned reduction in provincial and federal funding for capital starting in 2027-28, and has identified that holding funds in trust would support a strategic approach to prioritizing Nations with limited existing ELCC infrastructure and capacity;
- H. FNLC, acting in collaboration with BCACCS and the First Nations Education Steering Committee and with provincial and federal governments under the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding on First Nations ELCC endorsed by BCAFN Resolution 20/2023, is exploring

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options for long-term funding arrangements for ELCC to bring forward to title and rights holders for review and direction; and

- I. The recommendation from BCACCS represents a shift in funding allocation, from direct distribution of the CW ELCC funds to all 204 First Nations, to an allocation of a reduced amount to BCACCS to advance four or five major capital projects as a part of a broader investment strategy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly support the advancement of the identified approximately \$16.5 million in Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) funding to the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society to be held in trust and allocated in support of a few major capital projects in B.C. First Nations communities commencing in 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 fiscal years, for priority access for those First Nations who have not been able to secure this funding to date, in accordance with BCACCS' First Nations-led capital funding policy, and then evenly distribute the remaining funding among all First Nations in B.C.; and
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief, working with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, to work with the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and the B.C. Aboriginal Child Care Society, to advocate for the timely advancement of the funding in a manner that respects First Nations jurisdiction, equity, and long-term infrastructure needs, as directed by title and rights holders.

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