



## The BC First Nations ECD Framework

### A Summary

*For those looking for more information, the complete Framework and accompanying background paper can be found online at [www.fnesc.ca/ecd/ecd.php](http://www.fnesc.ca/ecd/ecd.php).*

#### **Vision—Healthy, culturally strong children**

Optimal, culturally-relevant opportunities for First Nations children that nurture social, emotional, physical, cognitive and cultural, linguistic and spiritual development within their families, communities and Nations.

#### **Mission**

To develop a coordinated, holistic early childhood system of programs, services, supports and resources designed to support children, parents, families, communities and Nations through collaborative and integrated approaches to planning, service delivery, governance and administration.

#### **Core Values and Beliefs**

- First Nations children are sacred gifts from the Creator.
- Each child is born with gifts.
- Children are the present and future of our families, communities and Nations.
- Caring for children is a sacred and shared responsibility.
- Parents and families are recognized as the first teachers and caregivers of their children.

#### **Guiding Principles for First Nations ECD Programs and Services**

- **Based on First Nations ways of knowing and being.** Relationships, programs, services, supports, practices, infrastructure and governance structures are anchored in First Nations knowledge.

- **Community-based and directed.** ECD programs and services are developed through a community/Nation-driven process and delivered based on the needs of First Nations communities.
- **Holistic, universal, accessible and comprehensive.**
  - Holistic:** programs and services support the social, emotional, physical, cognitive, cultural, linguistic and spiritual development of children.
  - Universal and accessible:** programs and services are accessible to every child, whether on or off reserve, or whether in an urban centre or remote community.
  - Comprehensive:** programs and services meet the diverse needs of children and their families.
- **Integrated and coordinated.** ECD legislation, regulations, standards, policies and program and service delivery structures are aligned.
- **Transparent and accountable.** Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on ECD programs and services help ensure the quality of programs and services as well as their effectiveness. They also help identify any gaps and overlaps.
- **Sustainable.** Funding for ECD programs and services is continuous and consistent over time so as to inspire the trust of parents and families, attract and retain qualified staff, and make a difference in children's lives.

### Elements of quality First Nations ECD programs and services<sup>1</sup>

- A First Nations world view
- A close, respectful relationship with the earth and its inhabitants
- Cooperative relationships that reflect teamwork, mutual assistance and sharing
- Elder involvement
- Culturally-appropriate, holistically-based curricula and assessment mechanisms
- Respect for First Nations languages
- Recognition that children's families are the primary care providers and educators
- Recognition that children must prepare for future responsibilities in the community
- The principle of inclusion; of all children, whether they have exceptional abilities or need extra support

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<sup>1</sup> Developed by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society

- Multi-age grouping
- Respect and regard for childcare staff
- First Nations-led research
- Applicability to all settings in which children receive care and education
- Collaborative relationships among child care providers and programs
- Accountability to First Nations parents and communities
- Compliance with regulations developed by First Nations administrative bodies

## **Goals**

The overarching goal of the Framework is to improve the lives of all BC First Nations children by supporting their healthy growth, education and development in the early years. Building upon a decade of consultations, meetings and research with BC First Nations communities, the Framework is intended to serve as a road map that will provide guidance and advice to First Nations communities, leadership and governments about the kinds of strategies and actions that are needed to develop a comprehensive, holistic system of early childhood education (ECD) programs, services and supports focused on the needs of children, from birth to school age, and their families.

There are three specific goals that will lead to improved outcomes for all BC First Nations children:

### **Goal 1:**

Increased availability, accessibility and participation in ECD programs, services and supports by children and families

Result: All First Nations children have access to quality ECD programs, services and supports.

### **Goal 2:**

Enhanced quality of ECD programs, services and supports

Result: High quality, culturally relevant ECD programs, services and supports

### **Goal 3:**

Increased integration and collaboration at all levels of a First Nations ECD system

Result: Integrated and collaborative ECD programs and services