

Early Child Development Funders Working Group

May 5, 2021

Budget 2021 is the culmination of decades of tireless, dedicated efforts of many to recognize the benefits of early learning for every Canadian child and the value of child care in supporting families.

Investment of \$30 billion over five years, starting in 2021-22, and \$9.2 billion going forward, will bring the federal government's annual contribution for early learning and child care equal to that of the provinces and territories. Included in the amount, is \$2.5-billion to expand and improve early learning and care for Indigenous families.

Recognizing the groundwork laid by Quebec, the federal government is committed to working in partnerships with provinces, territories and Indigenous peoples to make meaningful progress towards publicly-managed, quality systems that support children's early learning and well-being and work for families. The commitment to sustained federal funding is a critical element to successful collaboration. The process is already in place through the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework and the bilateral agreements with provinces and territories, the asymmetrical agreement with Quebec and the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and accompanying accords reached with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

We applaud the Federal government for its:

- Recognition that early learning is as important to lifelong development as elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education—it increases emotional and social well-being, increases graduation rates, promotes lifelong well-being, and boosts lifetime earnings,
- Acknowledgment that early childhood educators “are at the heart of the system” and the foundation of quality,
- Intention to expand access primarily through not-for-profit and public providers,
- Commitment to accountability and recognizing that early learning and child care is a provincial jurisdiction, work with provincial and territorial partners to build a strong baseline of common, publicly available data on which to measure progress, report to Canadians, and help continuously improve the systems, and
- Understanding that the role of early learning and child care is vital for economic recovery coming out of, and after the pandemic.

This is a big, bold, ambitious step forward. As a group of foundations committed to ensuring high quality, accessible early learning and child care is available for all children across Canada, we look forward to continuing to work alongside to bring this vision to life.

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