

First Nations-driven implementation essential, says AFN National Chief on federal investment in early learning and child care ^[1]

Author: Assembly of First Nations

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

OTTAWA, Sept. 17, 2018 /CNW/ - Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Perry Bellegarde, together with AFN Manitoba Regional Chief Kevin Hart, support the National Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework as one opportunity for First Nations to develop and implement their own early learning and child care systems.

"Healthy children are raised in healthy environments," said AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde. "First Nations children will have enhanced opportunities for success when they have identities built from strong connections to their nations, languages, cultures and history. This framework is reflective of direction and input by First Nations experts in health, education and early childhood education. It can now be used as a guide for First Nations to create their own early learning and child care systems based on their vision for their children and families. The implementation is crucial and I look forward to continued participation by First Nations to determine how this will roll out in our nations."

Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Jean-Yves Duclos, released the National Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework in Ottawa today. The Framework was developed with input by First Nations, Métis and Inuit. As part of its release, Minister Duclos announced \$1.02 billion over ten years for early learning and child care initiatives specific to First Nations as well as additional resources for innovation and governance development.

"The work toward achieving this framework is first and foremost about our children, our most precious resource and the focus of all we do," said AFN Manitoba Regional Chief Kevin Hart who is the portfolio lead for the AFN in this area. "We welcome the commitments made by the federal government today and look forward to using this framework as a guide to implement First Nations approaches and design. First Nations want to care for their children and must drive the design and delivery of all early childhood programming, and this includes ensuring a strong connection to language and culture. This new approach must support First Nations entities that do this work to ensure proper costing, design and delivery."

The AFN established a national expert working group on Early Learning and Child Care following direction by Chiefs-in-Assembly in 2016. The working group is comprised of First Nations experts from across the disciplines of health, education and early childhood. The working group led a First Nations regional engagement process to identify and confirm key principles, priorities and actions of a First Nations early learning and child care framework and action plan. This effort helped inform the co-development of the National Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

The AFN is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada. Follow AFN on Twitter @AFN_Updates.

SOURCE Assembly of First Nations

Related link: [Indigenous early learning and child care framework](#) ^[3]

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