

New legislation moves B.C. toward inclusive universal child care

[1]

Author: Children and Family Development

Source: Government of British Columbia

Format: Press release

Publication Date: 8 Jun 2021

AVAILABILITY

Access online [2]

EXCERPTS

New child care legislation is building on the strong foundation that will bring an inclusive, universal early learning and child care system to B.C. families.

The introduction of the early learning and child care (ELCC) act and the early childhood educators (ECEs) act recaptures the momentum of the original BC Child Care Act introduced in 1996 to begin building an accessible, affordable, quality, inclusive child care system.

“Families have been experiencing child care chaos for too long,” said Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care. “This legislation is an important step in our 10-year Childcare BC plan to give families access to quality, affordable child care. These proposed acts will reduce barriers to quality care, such as improving inclusive child care access and facilitating Indigenous-led child care, and will lay the foundation as we continue to build an inclusive, universal child care system for families.”

The proposed ELCC act will increase transparency and accountability by requiring the Province to produce annual reports on its progress towards building an inclusive, universal child care system. The report will also include how the Province is collaborating with Indigenous peoples to support Indigenous-led child care. The ELCC act will also give the minister responsible the authority to create new regulations, including the ability to set limits on child care fees for parents. This will help ensure child care is more affordable for families.

“We have been calling for an early care and learning act since the \$10aDay Plan was first released by the Coalition of Child Care Advocates and the Early Childhood Educators of BC in 2011,” said Sharon Gregson, spokesperson for the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC. “There is much more for government to do, and we are hopeful this legislation will support development of the universal, high-quality, affordable public system that British Columbians expect.”

The proposed ECE act will help strengthen and support quality, and recognizes the value of the child care workforce by creating a stand-alone statute for ECEs. It will also reduce barriers to certifications for ECEs by allowing the registrar to issue temporary certification to ECEs who have received training abroad. This will help address the need for trained ECEs throughout the province.

“Along with the early care and learning act, we are pleased to see a separate act that aims to recognize educators for their unique and important pedagogy,” said Emily Gawlick, executive director, Early Childhood Educators of BC. “We hope to see the ECE act increase the call for highly educated early childhood educators across the province.”

Once enacted, this legislation will move the province further along the path to achieving a child care system that meets the needs of B.C. families. These acts are part of the foundation for an inclusive, universal child care system in B.C. They will be adapted based on input from the child care sector, including advocates, families, First Nations leaders and Indigenous partners, as B.C.’s early learning and child care system is built.

“Our government committed to transform the fragmented child care ‘patch work’ into an early learning and child care system, and introducing legislation is key to that vision,” said Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development. “Once passed, these two pieces of legislation will lay the foundation for our work and will support the delivery of affordable, quality and inclusive child care in B.C. for generations to come.”

These acts reintroduce aspects of BC Benefits (Child Care) Act, which was introduced in 1996, as well as the Child Care BC Act from 2001, which signalled the government of the day’s commitment to building affordable, quality and accessible child care for families. The sections of the act that made affordability programs possible were repealed later in 2001 following a provincial election and a change in government.

Quick Facts:

- The Province has funded almost 26,000 new licensed spaces since the launch of Childcare BC.
- The Childcare BC plan has helped tens of thousands of parents save up to \$1,600 a month, per child, through the Affordable Child

Care Benefit and Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.

- Budget 2021 includes investments to double the wage enhancements for ECEs to \$4/hour by the end of September 2021.
- Budget 2021 investments will also convert about 400 licensed spaces into Aboriginal Head Start spaces that will provide Indigenous-led, culturally relevant and no-cost child care to Indigenous families throughout the province.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: universal child care ^[4]

legislation & regulation ^[5]

child care workforce ^[6]

Source URL (modified on 9 Jun 2021): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/06/new-legislation-moves-bc-toward-inclusive-universal-child-care>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/06/new-legislation-moves-bc-toward-inclusive-universal-child-care> [2]

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021CFD0055-001105> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7860> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9003> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/legislation-regulation> [6]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care-workforce>