

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation: Indigenous early learning and child care ^[1]

CRRU statement and resources for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

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CRRU Statement for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30 has been declared the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation when Canadians across the country will come together to honour the lost children and survivors of residential schools, their families and communities. In observance of this important day CRRU dedicates our weekly newsletter to Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. We acknowledge that public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process. The CRRU remains committed to putting in the work to unlearn, listen and reflect on Canada's past, present and future with Indigenous communities.

We are an organization committed to the development of a high quality early learning and child care system for all across Canada. We are cognizant that this cannot be done without Indigenous voices defining what this means for Indigenous children, families and communities. We support Call to Action #12, one of the 94 Calls to Action created by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada ^[3], which states "we call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families."

We understand that our position as a child care policy research organization comes with responsibility to recognize the legacy of residential schools and ongoing colonial practices that continue to negatively impact Indigenous children, families and communities today. Thus, policies and programs in early childhood education and care must recognize the right of Indigenous communities, regardless of their location, to self-determination and access to publicly funded early childhood programs that are spiritually enriched, culturally appropriated and developed through active consultation with Indigenous communities.

Reconciliation requires more than a national holiday. We are committed to continuously reflect in our work the critical role of early childhood education and care to ensure the well-being of Indigenous communities, to protect and promote Indigenous traditional languages and ways of life, and to honour the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

This newsletter presents some resources and tools for reflection and education related to the Call to Action #12. We encourage further exploration of the existing 94 Calls to Action as well as other resources from First Nations, Inuit and Métis voices and experiences. You can also check out BC Aboriginal Child Care Society ^[4] and the AECEO's eceLINK ^[5] for additional resources.

Tools and resources

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action ^[3]

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, June 2015

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's development of 94 Calls to Action upon the unjust legacy of residential schools in Canada.

Beyond 94: Truth and reconciliation Canada ^[6]

CBC News, 19 March 2018

This CBC interactive tool provides readers with the ability to engage with and visualize the progress of each of the 94 Calls to Action. The interactive tool identifies each call to action as: not started, in progress and completed. Call to Action #12: "Develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs" is currently in progress. The tool provides analysis and updates on government action and commitment.

Dr. Margo Greenwood on Indigenous early learning and child care ^[7]

Child Care Now, 18 September 2021

Indigenous early learning and child care^[8]

Government of Canada, 2018

In 2018, the Federal Government established an Indigenous early learning and child care framework and in Budget 2021, committed to \$2.5 billion dollar investment over the next five years to implement the framework across Canada.

Indigenous early learning and child care: Early childhood education and care in Canada 2019^[9]

Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 17 December 2020

Since the early 1990s, CRRU has published pan-Canadian compilations of ECEC data about every two years—Canada's main source of consistently collected, longitudinal, cross-Canada data and information about regulated child care and kindergarten. This specific section of the report provides 2019 data on Indigenous early learning and child care in Canada.

Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action^[10]

First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, 2020

This booklet is written by Spirit Bear as a youth-friendly guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) 94 Calls to Action.

Survivor offers advice on how to honour National Day for Truth and Reconciliation^[11]

CTV News, 26 September 2021

How to talk to kids about the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation^[12]

CBC News, 27 September 2021

Research, policy and practice

Structural challenges & inequities in operating urban Indigenous early learning and child care programs in British Columbia^[13]

Journal of Childhood Studies, 7 July 2021

This qualitative study examines the barriers of non-profit Indigenous early learning and child care (ELCC) programs in urban areas of British Columbia. The study interviews 19 executive directors, ELCC managers and provincial Indigenous ELCC experts. It notes several considerations and issues for the implementation of quality early learning programs for Indigenous children and families including: the programs; capacity to set up a solid foundation, the high level of resources required for quality ELCC, and challenges with recruitment and retention of trained early learning professionals. The authors argue there is a crucial need to address operational challenges of urban, non-profit Indigenous ELCC and for all levels of government to act on their commitments to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

Culturally responsive indigeneity of relations^[14]

Journal of Childhood Studies, 13 November 2020

Lori Huston, Elder Brenda Mason, and Roxanne Loon take part in a wildfire circle (traditional sharing circle) at a SPARK conference at the University of British Columbia. In the SPARK conference they were able to share their experiences and have conference participants share their stories as well. In doing so, it is clear that transfer of knowledge in Indigenous culturally responsive ways should be encouraged in academia and early childhood education. The authors make note that a look towards Elders and their teachings is crucial for institutional change.

Indigenous knowledge in early childhood education: Building a nest for reconciliation^[15]

Journal of Childhood Studies, 17 January 2020

Cheryl Kinzel, using a metaphor of a nest, explores how Indigenous knowledge is experienced by non-Indigenous students in an ECE diploma program. The nest represents the stories exchanged, critical pedagogy, truth telling and relationships, and the spirit, heart, mind, and body. The metaphor of the nest helps to explain how transformative learning, truth telling, and Indigenous ways of knowing in post-secondary early childhood education (ECE) programs can move towards truth and reconciliation.

Walking together in reconciliation^[16]

eceLINK, 2020

In this article the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO) Guiding Committee on Truth and Reconciliation, shares the perspectives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples across Ontario of what reconciliation means to them, particularly in regard to early learning and child care. It is upon their critical and ethical reflection and dialogue of Indigenous early learning, where they situate Indigenous leadership and self-determination, as well as collaboration as keys to walking together in reconciliation.

Indigenous ways of knowing: The early learning perspective^[17]

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta, 5 May 2019

In this paper the author explains the Indigenous perspectives related to early learning. The paper provides background knowledge about the Truth and Reconciliation, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, language and terms, and history of Indigenous education. The paper makes comparisons between Canada's Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework. A section specific to accreditation standards of child care in Alberta is also included.

Toward Reconciliation: What do the Calls to Action mean for early childhood education?^[18]

Journal of Early Childhood Studies, 30 May 2017

This article focuses on how the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada's Calls to Action pertain to early childhood education. The author, who is a student and soon to be educator, traces her understanding of reconciliation within early childhood spaces by considering the TRC call to develop culturally appropriate Aboriginal early childhood education programs. Incorporating her recent learning she explores curriculum, language, parents, community and treaty relationships. She questions her own previously held assumptions around dominant discourses of success and reflects on new understandings of reconciliation gained in her program of study.

Early childhood education and care for Aboriginal children in Canada ^[19]

Moving Child Care Forward, 3 November 2014

A policy brief by Jane Preston discusses contextual factors that are important to quality Aboriginal early childhood education and argues that "strong collaborative efforts are needed by multi-level leaders to ensure that quality Aboriginal early childhood education is actualized throughout Canada". This policy brief is part of the Moving Child Care Forward project.

Truth and reconciliation in early learning curriculum frameworks

Here is a list of provinces and territories which have made specific mention to the Calls to Action put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in their early learning curriculum frameworks. This list allows us to presently reflect on the steps taken forward, challenges, and missing pieces of action upon truth and reconciliation within early learning and child care across Canada. As seen here, this list is small, which illustrates an immense need for Indigenous communities to be centred in the development of early learning programs across the country.

CA: Indigenous early learning and child care framework ^[20]

Government of Canada, 16 September 2018

SK: Inspiring success: First Nations and Métis preK-12 education policy framework ^[21]

Government of Saskatchewan, June 2018

BC: British Columbia early learning framework ^[22]

Government of British Columbia, 30 April 2019

NT: A framework for early childhood development in the Northwest Territories: Action plan ^[23]

Government of Northwest Territories, 7 February 2014

Events

Starting in place: Recognizing the colonial self in early childhood studies (workshop) ^[24]

'Ryerson' University Early Childhood Studies Master of Arts Alumni Association, 30 September 2021

In recognition of the first annual National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, this presentation addresses the colonial truths that remain embedded in the early childhood service sector as a way to generate pathways toward reconciliation with Indigenous communities in Canada. This presentation is offered through an Indigenous integrative framework to bring a critical analysis of colonialism in early years programs and offer tangible steps toward better relations with Indigenous communities, children and families through self-reflection and self-location.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day ^[25]

First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, Assembly of Seven Generations, Project of Heart & Beechwood Cemetery, 30 September 2021

The Caring Society partners with the Assembly of Seven Generations, Project of Heart, and Beechwood Cemetery to bring together a day of education, reflection and action towards reconciliation. The organizers invite the public to honour Orange Shirt Day and recognize the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by virtually participating in various education and justice-based events such as the showing of the Spirit Bear and Children Make History film and Reconciling Walking Tours. A letter template is also available for all Canadians to write to their elected representatives and the Prime Minister to urge them to fully implement the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.

Region: Canada ^[26]

Tags: reconciliation ^[27]

indigenous early learning and child care ^[28]

residential schools ^[29]

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