

Engagement on federal early learning and child care legislation: What We Heard Report ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

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Excerpts

Overview

The Government of Canada is committed to working with provincial, territorial and Indigenous partners to create a Canada-wide early learning and child care (ELCC) system. The goal is to offer all families access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive ELCC no matter where they live. This vision builds on the principles of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework^{Footnote1} and the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (IELCC) Framework. Following a comprehensive engagement process, the co-developed Indigenous ELCC Framework was endorsed by the Government of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council.^{Footnote2}

In Budget 2021, the Government of Canada committed to tabling federal ELCC legislation to further support a lasting federal commitment over time and enshrine the principles of a Canada-wide child care system in law. Budget 2021 also committed to engaging with provincial, territorial and Indigenous partners, and stakeholders on this commitment prior to introducing the legislation. The commitment to introduce legislation was reinforced in the mandate letter of the Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development in December 2021.

Federal legislation in this area would respect provincial, territorial and Indigenous jurisdiction, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis right to self-determination in the design and delivery of ELCC programs and services that reflect their needs, priorities and aspirations. At the same time, the federal government has a role to play in setting guiding federal principles for ELCC, as well as in providing funding support. The ELCC legislation would build on the Multilateral and Indigenous ELCC Frameworks and associated bilateral agreements with provinces and territories. The legislation would be intended to build on progress, further support the jointly established objectives, and facilitate ongoing collaboration and success, including through distinctions-based approaches with Indigenous partners.

Subsequent to the commitment in Budget 2021 to table ELCC legislation, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act received royal assent and came into force in Canada on June 21, 2021. With the passing of this Act, the federal government has 2 years to develop an action plan with Indigenous peoples to achieve the objectives of the Declaration.

Region: Canada ^[4]

Tags: public consultation ^[5]

policy ^[6]

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