

Call for proposals to help support high-quality Indigenous early learning and child care ^[1]

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Excerpts

High-quality and culturally appropriate early learning and child care programs designed by and with Indigenous families and communities give Indigenous children the best start in life and forms an essential part of Reconciliation. That is why the Government of Canada is committed to promoting and investing in Indigenous-led early learning and child care, including through Quality Improvement Projects. Quality Improvement Projects help to identify best practices, models, and innovations which can be adapted for use in other communities or Indigenous early learning and child care settings and help ensure that First Nations, Inuit and Métis children have the opportunities in the early years to succeed in the future.

Today, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Karina Gould, launched a call for proposals for the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Quality Improvement Projects. The funding for Quality Improvement Projects aims to advance the vision and goals of the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework through research and innovation. It will complement and inform the other Indigenous-specific investments in place to build governance systems, expand access to culturally-appropriate programs and services, support training and retaining a skilled early learning and child care workforce, undertake repairs and renovations of existing Indigenous ELCC centres, and build new centres in additional communities.

This call for proposals is targeted towards First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, governments and organizations and will support Indigenous practices and approaches to early learning and child care that are grounded in Indigenous languages, cultures, and ways of knowing and learning. The results achieved through these research and innovation projects will contribute to a pool of knowledge and expertise, such as identifying best practices and developing service delivery models to improve early learning and child care services available to Indigenous communities.

The Government of Canada is providing approximately \$39 million over three fiscal years in available funding, starting in 2023-24, for projects through this call for proposals.

Priority areas for the projects were identified through engagement with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners. The key priorities identified were:

- development of a vision or framework for a high-quality, culturally appropriate early learning and child care system within an Indigenous context;
- activities to build and strengthen local Indigenous early learning and child care licensing rules and procedures;
- actions to support ongoing education and training for Indigenous early learning and child care leaders, management and staff; and
- new tools, curriculum or training to support Indigenous early learning and child care staff working with children with special needs.

Indigenous communities, governments and organizations are encouraged to submit a proposal by April 11, 2023 at 2:00 pm EDT.

Quotes

"Access to high-quality early learning and child care that takes into account their cultures, languages, traditions, values and customs is essential for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and families. The Quality Improvement Projects will help support practices and approaches to early learning and child care centred on the needs of Indigenous children to provide a solid foundation for future success."

– The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

Quick Facts

- The Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Quality Improvement Projects aim to advance the vision and goals of the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework through research and innovation.
- The co-developed Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework was jointly released by the Government of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council in 2018. It adopts a distinctions-based approach to strengthening high-quality, culturally appropriate early learning and child care for Indigenous children guided by Indigenous

priorities.

- Budget 2017 included up to \$1.7 billion over 10 years, starting in the 2018 to 2019 fiscal year, to support the co-developed Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and strengthen culturally appropriate early learning and child care programs for Indigenous children and families.
- To sustain the 10-year investment in Indigenous early learning and child care announced in Budget 2017, the 2020 Fall Economic Statement committed to make this funding permanent and ongoing at \$210 million per year, starting in the 2028 to 2029 fiscal year. Budget 2021 invested an additional \$2.5 billion over five years and \$542 million ongoing to implement this Framework, building on previous investments made since 2016 to ensure an early learning and child care system meets the needs of Indigenous families, wherever they live.

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