

**EARLY LEARNING
AND
CHILD CARE****OVERVIEW**

At the 2016 Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Annual General Assembly in Niagara Falls, Chiefs-in-Assembly passed AFN Resolution 39/2016, *First Nations National Working Group on Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)*. This Resolution provided the mandate for the creation of the National Expert Working Group on Early Learning and Child Care (Working Group). This Working Group guided the development of the First Nations component for an Indigenous framework for ELCC through the coordination of regional engagement and research.

The First Nations ELCC Framework was endorsed by Chiefs-in-Assembly in December 2017 through AFN Resolution 83/2017, *Support for National First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Policy Framework*. This Resolution called for the First Nations ELCC Framework to stand as the First Nation component within the co-developed National Indigenous ELCC (NIELCC) Framework, which also includes distinction based components for Inuit and Métis. The Resolution outlined support for implementation of the First Nations ELCC Framework, including continued support for the Working Group on ELCC and First Nations direction and leadership as required.

Resolution 83/2017, *Support for National First Nations Early Child Learning and Child Care Policy Framework*, also calls for the AFN to work with the Government of Canada to secure additional funding for existing ELCC

programs, new investments for capital funding, and to fully and separately fund capacity development related to implementation of the First Nations ELCC Framework.

Budget 2016 included a commitment of an additional \$100 million for ELCC in Indigenous communities, which rolled out in 2017-18. Budget 2017 further committed an additional \$7 billion over 10 years for ELCC programs and services nationally). Beginning in 2018-19, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) officials have indicated that there will be an additional \$130 million available for IELCC.

On September 17, 2018, the National Indigenous ELCC (NIELCC) Framework was formally announced in a joint event with the AFN, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the Métis National Council (MNC) and federal partners. The NIELCC Framework announcement was accompanied by a commitment of \$1.7 billion over 10 years to support Indigenous ELCC, including a specific commitment of \$1.02 billion over 10 years for First Nations ELCC. The NIELCC Framework intends to act as a guide for Indigenous peoples to achieve their vision of high quality ELCC for their children and families, according to their own priorities, principles, and goals. The NIELCC Framework takes a distinctions-based approach, and is flexible and adaptable to meet the realities and interests of Indigenous children and families.

UPDATE

The Working Group worked through fall 2018 to develop and make an interim recommendation on the regional allocation of the \$1.02 billion funding for First Nations ELCC. The Working Group presented their recommendation at the December 2018 Special Chiefs Assembly, where the AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly passed AFN Resolution 59/2018, *First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Regional Funding Allocation Approach*, in support of the recommended approach as an interim measure, dependent on the creation of a new funding model in the immediate term. The proposed funding model is a per-capita approach based on the Modified Berger Formula using the Indian Registration System population counts of on- and off-reserve children aged 0-6, and weighted for remoteness using the Band Classification Manual.

Resolution 59/2018 directs the Working Group to provide ongoing support in implementing the First Nations and National Indigenous ELCC Frameworks, as well as the creation of a sub-working group to develop an equitable, fair

and First Nations-driven model to divide funds, with recommendations to be brought forward to the AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly in the fiscal year 2019-20.

Resolution 59/2018 also calls on the federal government to adequately resource the development of a new funding approach for First Nations ELCC. The Resolution further calls on the federal, provincial and territorial governments to work with First Nations, agreement holders, and regional coordination structures to develop strong partnerships to support First Nations ELCC.

As the current funding plan for the First Nations ELCC funding is heavily back-ended, beyond the current government's mandate, Resolution 59/2018 urges the federal government to reallocate the back-ended funding immediately. The Resolution finally calls upon the AFN to advocate to Canada to ensure that the carry-over of the funding for fiscal year 2018-19 is enabled, given the short timeframe that First Nations have been tasked to work within.

NEXT STEPS

The National Expert Working Group on First Nations ELCC continues to support the regional implementation processes for the First Nations and National Indigenous ELCC Frameworks.

The sub-working group will work to develop an appropriate model to bring forward to the AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly on a priority basis.

The AFN continues to support the regional implementation efforts and coordinate communication about ongoing ELCC matters, and will advocate to the federal government to bring forward the urgently needed funding

that is back-ended in the ELCC funding plan. The AFN will further advocate for the carry-over of funds from fiscal year 2018-19 to the next fiscal year, given the persistent federal delays. The AFN will continue to support federal and provincial/territorial partnerships at the regional and national level for First Nations ELCC, and will support regional coordination bodies as needs are identified.