
Assembly of First Nations

55 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L5
Telephone: 613-241-6789 Fax: 613-241-5808
www.afn.ca



Assemblée des Premières Nations

55, rue Metcalfe, Suite 1600
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 6L5
Téléphone: 613-241-6789 Télécopieur: 613-241-5808
www.afn.ca

SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 5, 6 & 7, 2017, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 83/2017

TITLE: Support for the National First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Policy Framework

SUBJECT: Early Learning and Child Care

MOVED BY: Chief Maureen Chapman, Skawahlook First Nation, BC

SECONDED BY: Chief Cathy Merrick, Cross Lake Band of Indians, MB

DECISION: Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) states:

- i. Article 5: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.
- ii. Article 14 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
- iii. Article 14 (2): Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
- iv. Article 14 (3): States shall, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for Indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

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83 - 2017

Page 1 of 3

Head Office/Siège Social

Unit 5 — 167 Akwesasne International Rd., Akwesasne, ON K6H 5R7 Telephone: 613-932-0410 Fax: 613-932-0415
Suite no 5 — 167, chemin Akwesasne International, Akwesasne (ON) K6H 5R7 Téléphone: 613-932-0410 Télécopieur: 613-932-0415

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- v. Article 17 (2): States shall in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples take special measures to protect Indigenous children from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, taking into account their special vulnerability and the importance of education for their empowerment.
 - vi. Article 22 (1): Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of Indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration;
 - vii. Article 22 (2): States shall take measures, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, to ensure that Indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.
- B.** The articles of the UN Declaration support a mandate for First Nations control, direction and governance of First Nations early learning and child care (ELCC) within an Indigenous right to strengthen and maintain distinct social and cultural institutions (Article. 2(a); 5; 14; 20; 23) which is an integral part of Indigenous cultural revitalization (Article. 13.1) and a part of Indigenous educational systems, for which there exists a right of Indigenous establishment and control (Article 14).
- C.** Assembly of First Nations Resolution 39/2016 *First Nations National Working Group on Early Learning and Child Care* endorsed the establishment of a First Nations national working group on ELCC from across disciplines of health, education, child and family services and early childhood with a mandate to oversee a 4-6 month community engagement process that would confirm and identify the key principles, priorities and an action plan for First Nations ELCC. ELCC regional engagement reports have since been received and form the basis for the development of the draft national First Nations ELCC Policy Framework to make possible transformative systemic change—at First Nations' direction—in the governance and service delivery structures that provide for early learning and child care supports for First Nations children and families and will be considered by the federal cabinet for implementation starting in fiscal 2018-2019.
- D.** First Nations ELCC programs and services have been developed and delivered by a patchwork of disjointed federal and provincial programs since their inception in the mid-1990s. They are unevenly distributed, subject to systemic funding neglect, uncoordinated and typically without the direction of First Nations leadership in the legitimacy of First Nations governance.
- E.** The National First Nations ELCC Policy Framework will provide for First Nations ELCC in organized, legitimate and systemic First Nations coordination and control (at local, regional and national levels) that will promote and enable stronger supports for First Nations children and families within a governance context accountable to them and their communities.

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PERRY BELLEGARDE, NATIONAL CHIEF

83 - 2017

Page 2 of 3

- F. Supported by the National Indigenous ELCC Framework, the First Nations ELCC Framework will provide for First Nations governance locally, regionally and nationally in ELCC, subject to First Nations jurisdiction pursuant to inherent rights and title and will facilitate First Nations and governments in constructive relations of reciprocal accountability following from a basis in the strengths of existing programs;
- G. The National Indigenous ELCC Framework will be a means for the expression and direction of First Nations aspirations and priorities for their children and families over the short and long terms.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

1. Endorse the National First Nations ELCC Policy Framework as drafted as the First Nation component of the co-developed National Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and as a basis to support federal approval of the National Indigenous ELCC Framework.
2. Support the continuing co-development of the First Nations ELCC Framework and the pending implementation of both frameworks, subject to continuing First Nations' direction and leadership.
3. Direct the National Experts ELCC Working Group to continue its framework development work through to implementation, reporting nationally to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and to First Nations within their respective regions and territories.
4. Call on the AFN to work with the Government of Canada for additional First Nations early learning and child care (ELCC) funding for existing programs and new investments (including capital funding for new child care centres) and to fully fund capacity development separate from ELCC program funding to support ongoing framework development and implementation at all levels (local, regional and national).

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