



## **EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE**

### **OVERVIEW**

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The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chiefs-in-Assembly passed AFN Resolution 39/2016, *First Nations National Working Group on Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)*, mandating the National Expert Working Group on Early Learning and Child Care (Working Group) to develop a First Nations ELCC Framework through regional engagement and research.

The First Nations ELCC Framework was endorsed by Chiefs-in-Assembly through AFN Resolution 83/2017, *Support for National First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Policy Framework*. This Resolution supported the First Nations ELCC Framework as the First Nations component of the National Indigenous ELCC (NIELCC) Framework, and called for increased funding to First Nations ELCC, including implementation of the First Nations ELCC Framework.

On September 17, 2018, the National Indigenous ELCC Framework was formally announced in a joint event with the AFN, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), 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 Working Group developed an interim recommendation for dividing the First Nations-specific funds regionally. The Working Group recommended 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, weighted for remoteness using the Band Classification Manual.

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, dependent on a sub-working group creating a new funding model in the immediate term. This Resolution further mandated the Working Group to provide ongoing implementation support to the NIELCC Framework and First Nations ELCC Framework and called for strong partnerships across all levels of government.

Additionally, the Resolution called on the federal government to adequately resource the Working Group's mandated activities and ensure that carry-over of unspent funds is enabled in the funding profile, given the significant delays related to funding.

### UPDATE

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The AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly passed AFN Resolution 64/2019, *Extension of Interim Funding Model for First Nations Early Learning and Child Care*. This Resolution supported the extension of the interim formula that was previously endorsed by AFN Resolution 59/2018, to allow adequate time to develop a First Nations-determined funding model for First Nations ELCC.

The Resolution further called for immediate support for the AFN and Working Group to carry out their mandated activities, as Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the federal lead for ELCC, has declined to support national coordination-related activities at the AFN, stating that this should come from the First Nations allocation. The Resolution explicitly calls for this support to come separately from service delivery,

partnerships and governance funding, in light of concerns that the existing funding for First Nations ELCC is inadequate.

The AFN Executive Committee appointed Dr. Jonathan Dewar, Executive Director of the First Nations Information Governance Centre, to the Ministerial Expert Panel on Early Learning and Child Care Data and Research. The Expert Panel is mandated to make recommendations on a national data and research strategy for ELCC. Given the lack of data and research available on First Nations ELCC, Dr. Dewar and the AFN will advocate strongly for a specific First Nations data strategy.

Despite a lack of funding support, the AFN continues to advocate for increased funding to First Nations ELCC and continues to support regions in their implementation processes.

### NEXT STEPS

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The AFN continues to support the regional implementation efforts and coordinate communication about ongoing ELCC matters. The AFN will continue to support federal and provincial/territorial partnerships at the regional and national levels for First Nations

ELCC and will support regional coordination bodies as needs are identified. The AFN will continue to advocate for proper support of the Working Group to fulfil its mandated activities per recent Resolutions.

