



**Submission to Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services  
\$10aDay Child Care Recommendations for BC Budget 2022  
September 30, 2021**

We recognize today is September 30<sup>th</sup> the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. A sombre day reflecting on re-discovered unmarked graves of Indigenous children, and ongoing injustices, violence and racism against First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. We lift-up the good work of the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, the Métis Nation British Columbia, the Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC, and the many other Indigenous organizations advocating for systemic change. And we support all the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, especially #12.

*We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.*

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The Government of British Columbia is in an enviable position in relation to much of Canada on the important and necessary journey to create a quality universal \$10aDay child care system. This is significant because if there was any lingering doubt, the pandemic has made clear to everyone that quality child care is essential for children, families, women and communities - and for achieving social and economic equity.

BC is fortunate to have the \$10aDay Child Care Plan and Roadmap developed by experts and supported by voters in two provincial elections. BC has achieved measurable progress in recent years on lowering parent fees, raising educator wages, and funding new spaces. We also have a knowledgeable, dedicated Minister of State for Child Care. And now we have a historic \$3.2 billion Bilateral Agreement with the federal government to accelerate implementation of Premier Horgan's election commitments to the popular \$10aDay Plan.

It is important to remind the BC government of those 2020 election commitments because BC Budget 2021 feel far short of the funds promised during the election and not all this shortfall can be delivered via the Bilateral Agreement. Those election commitments included:

- Bring \$10-a-day child care to more families
- Work towards universal access to before- and after-school care on school grounds
- Ensure Early Childhood Educators are a well-supported profession
- Move responsibility for child care to the Ministry of Education
- Protect child care in law
- Develop a New Child Care Capital Program

The Bilateral Agreement will have a significant impact on delivering the child care system families want and need; to develop a wage grid for early childhood educators, to invest in Indigenous-led child care, and inclusion for children requiring extra supports, and to create new licensed non-profit/public/Indigenous programs to meet the needs of families in all their diversities across the province.

Specifically, BC's priority areas for investment under the Bilateral Agreement in the detailed two-year Action Plan are:

#### 1. Improving Affordability

- By December 2022, increase \$10/day spaces to 12,500, and reduce average fees for BC parents by 50 percent, bringing average parent fees to approximately \$21/day.
- BC and Canada agree on the goal of \$10 a day child care and will work together to achieve an average parent fee of \$10/day in all regulated child care spaces for children under age 6 by the end of the five-year agreement.

#### 2. Increasing Access

- Create a total of 30,000 new regulated spaces for children under age 6 years by 2025-26, increasing to 40,000 new regulated spaces by 2027-28. These new spaces will be focused on community investments that are long term and run by public and non-profit institutions;
- Invest in child care space planning and design, including consideration of a modular strategy, to facilitate accelerated space creation in Year 3 (2023/24) and beyond.

#### 3. Supporting Quality and Inclusive Care

- Expand access to Indigenous-led child care options for more BC families;
- Expand access to Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development to enable increased access to inclusive child care

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates supports this Action Plan and will be encouraging \$10aDay supporters to watch for and celebrate these improvements.

But the Bilateral Agreement also requires the provincial government to play a significant role in system building. The federal agreement is specifically directed at child care for children under 6 years old. This means that school-age child care remains the responsibility of the province to expand. It is reasonable and achievable for every elementary school to provide before and after school child care to meet the needs of families in their community.

And, the Bilateral Agreement commits to developing a wage grid for educators but not to implementing that wage grid. Given the severity of the recruitment and retention crisis, the current ECE wage enhancement program must transition promptly into a province-wide competitive wage grid. Improved compensation is the only way the sector will attract and retain educators.

**Therefore, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC recommendations for BC Budget 2022 are to ensure the Bilateral Agreement is implemented quickly and effectively, with additional provincial investments to fulfill the 2020 election commitments, which include:**

- 1. Confirmation of the move of the Child Care Programs and Services Branch to the Ministry of Education effective April 1, 2022, along with provincial funding to regions and school districts to ensure a successful transition.**
- 2. Commitment of the resources required in the Ministry of Education to move child care from the current application-based process for creating new (non-profit, public, Indigenous) facilities to a capital planning and budgeting approach, as is done with schools.**
- 3. Creation of facilities more quickly and affordably with an immediate bulk purchase of custom-designed, high-quality modular child care buildings to be located on public land across the province.**
- 4. Prompt implementation of a province-wide publicly-funded competitive wage grid for positions within the child care sector.**
- 5. Provision of on-site school-age child care to meet community needs, either operated directly by school districts or through a partnership with non-profit organizations.**
- 6. Working with First Nations, Métis, Inuit Peoples to ensure Bill 41 and the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework are implemented and Indigenous leadership is meaningfully consulted where child care decisions impact Indigenous families on and off-reserve.**

We appreciate the political and public service leadership within government in creating the first new social program in decades in BC and Canada. We offer these six recommendations based on the urgent needs of families across the province. Our recommendations are supported by multiple benefit/cost analyses, an intersectional gender lens, and government's commitments to the rights of children, women, and families.