



Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care

**Nishnawbe Aski Nation
Education Forum**

December 11, 2025



OVERVIEW

- Co-Developed IELCC Framework
- IELCC Transformation Initiative
- IELCC Partnership Model: National and Regional
- IELCC Funding
- Questions?



INDIGENOUS EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE



Co-developed Indigenous ELCC Framework

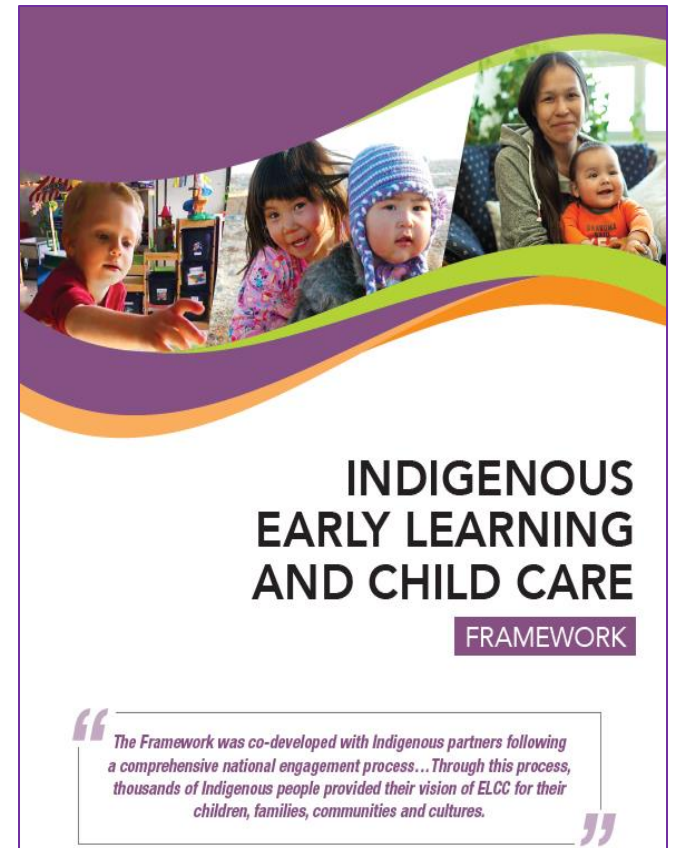
Renewed federal ELCC agenda in 2016 led to extensive engagement with Indigenous partners and a co-developed [Framework](#) endorsed by leadership of National Indigenous Organizations; guides all actors in the Early Learning and Child Care sphere.

Offers an overarching vision and a shared path forward for everyone in the ELCC sphere

Includes distinct First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation Frameworks

Sets principles and provides foundation for ongoing collaborative work in Indigenous ELCC

Complements the provincial/territorial Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework



IELCC Transformation Initiative

- IELCC Horizontal Terms and Conditions (ESDC, ISC, and PHAC)
- Expand access to IELCC programs, including legacy programs
- Strengthen IELCC by enabling culturally appropriate content to be developed
- Enable greater control and influence by Indigenous peoples working towards self determination
- Adapt current federal programs to provide greater flexibility and integration to better meet the needs of Indigenous peoples

Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (ISC)

- Offers half-day programming to First Nations children on reserve focussed on early learning and child development, including early intervention and screening for developmental difficulties.
- Has its own Terms and Conditions, gaps can be addressed by accessing the IELCC Horizontal Terms and Conditions.

First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (ESDC)

- Full-time, year around ELCC to First Nation and Inuit children up to age 12.
- Utilizes IELCC Horizontal Terms and Conditions.

Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern (PHAC)

- Offers half-day programming for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children off reserve and the North, focussed on early learning and child development, including early intervention for development difficulties.
- Has its own Terms and Conditions, gaps can be addressed by accessing the IELCC Horizontal Terms and Conditions.

Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Partnership Model

The majority of IELCC investments are assigned to distinctions-based funding envelopes that are jointly managed through partnership tables with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation governments.

The partnership model enables Indigenous-led decision-making and offers a pathway to transfer high-quality IELCC programs to Indigenous governing bodies or entities

Over 60 national and regional IELCC partnership tables that:

- Bring forward advice and recommendations to political leadership for decision and direction
- Coordinate IELCC activities by bringing together many partners across programs, sectors, communities and levels of government
- Develop plans and set priorities supported by flexible program authorities
- Build Indigenous governance and capacity in the ELCC sector

Bilateral relationships with Modern Treaty Holders and Self-Governing Indigenous Governments



Partnerships and Governance: Working Together

- **National level**

- Advice through the National Expert Working Group (NEWG), which has membership from each region, and is coordinated by the AFN.
 - Ontario representatives: Anangons Johnson-Owl - COO; Arliss Skye – Six Nations of the Grand River; Kristy Hankila - NAN (Observer)
- Resolutions tabled to Chiefs in Assembly (AFN) for endorsement, including decision on national allocation of IELCC governance and program funding to regions.
 - Interim national allocation was adopted through the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly Resolution 59/2018



Partnerships and Governance: Working Together

- **Regional level - Ontario:**
 - Resolution 24/19A provides direction to apply the Ontario First Nation Limited Partnership Funding Formula (OFNLP) to all IELCC funding until a needs-based allocation formula is determined or until the agreement exhausts.
 - As per previous resolutions, First Nations Political Territorial Organizations (PTOs), Independent and unaffiliated First Nations to continue to confirm application of regional funding formula annually.

First Nations ELCC Framework Principle and Goal 6:

Collaborations and partnerships that support the establishment of a coordinated, integrated First Nations-led ELCC system of policies, programs, services, and supports, including national and regional linkages between relevant departments, governments, nations, and related sectors.



Federal Investments in Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care

1990s Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care programs start (legacy):

- Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve
- Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities
- First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative

Reached \$136M annually with \$132M to programs

Budget 2016

\$129.4M in 2016-2017 for urgent repairs in early learning and child care centers

Budget 2017: Establishes Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Transformation Initiative

\$1.7B over 10 years starting in 2018-19

2020 Fall Economic Statement

Makes B2017 investments ongoing, to reach \$346M annually by 2026-27

Budget 2021*

Commits \$2.5B over 5 years, and by 2026-27 total funding would reach \$542M annually, and ongoing **

Funding flows to Employment and Social Development Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Indigenous Services Canada or to Crown Indigenous Relations.



IELCC Funding is available for:

- **Programs and Services:** E.g. ongoing delivery of IELCC programs and services, creation of new spaces/ELCC services, ECE staff/recruitment & retention/training, curriculum development/enhancement, etc.
- **Governance and Partnerships:** E.g. engagement, coordination/convening IELCC partnership tables, research, establishing/formalizing an IELCC governance authority/structure, etc.
- **Infrastructure (includes Repairs and Renovations):** E.g. planning, design, construction, acquisition/purchase, renovation, retrofitting, expansion, repair, replacement, decommissioning, demolition, continued operation and maintenance of IELCC buildings, etc.
- **Transformative Action Fund:** E.g. governance development, multilateral engagement, FPTI tripartite agreements, capital projects, etc.



First Nations National IELCC allocation

FIRST NATIONS ^{1, 4} (\$ millions)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	5 year Total	Ongoing (2026-27 and beyond)
Budget 2021 Program and Services	46.46	105.93	178.40	224.86	212.47	768.13	212.47
Budget 2021 Governance	22.08	22.08	22.08	22.08	22.08	110.40	22.08
Budget 2017 Program and Services	67.5	103.2	109.7	110.2	124.0	514.6	126.0
Transformation Action Fund	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	25.0	5.0
Repairs and Renovations*	-	80.0	80.0	80.0	24.0	264.0	24.0
New Infrastructure*	-	-	140.0	140.0	140.0	420.0	21.0
Budget 2017 Quality Improvement Project	3.25	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	27.25	6.0
Budget 2021 Quality Improvement Projects	-	-	10.0	10.0	10.0	30.0	10.0
Total	144.29	322.21	551.18	598.14	543.55	2159.4	426.55

Notes:

1. Distinctions-based funding allocations were developed using the population-based approach approved by Cabinet in 2018.
2. Amount does not include Before- and After-School Child Care funding on reserve, which will be administered through Indigenous Services Canada's education agreements.
3. Funding is subject to Indigenous ELCC Transformation Initiative Terms and Conditions and parliamentary appropriations and are provided for planning purposes.
4. Figures are rounded.

NAN IELCC allocation for 2026-27

AFN confirmed status quo direction for national funding decision

Program Stream	Amounts
IELCC Programs & Services	\$24,100,739.78
IELCC Governance & Partnerships	\$1,432,340.77
IELCC Transformative Action Fund	\$356,337.00
IELCC Infrastructure	\$7,461,155.67



Questions?

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IELCC Framework Document Link:

https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/canada/employment-social-development/programs/indigenous-early-learning/1352-IELCC_Report-EN.pdf

