



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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4th Annual General Meeting
 June 28, 2007 Okanagan Indian Band, Vernon, BC

Resolution 14/2007

SUBJECT: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

MOVED BY: Chief Shane Gottfriedson, Kamloops Indian Band

SECONDED BY: Chief Linda Pryce, Ulkatcho Indian Band

DECISION: Carried By Consensus

WHEREAS: Early Childhood refers to the growth that takes place during the early years (from pre-conception until age 6) and is the most rapid period of development in a human life. The most significant brain growth occurs in the first six years of life, and the experiences of early childhood have a fundamental impact on the overall health, education and well-being of individuals throughout their lifetime.

WHEREAS: The ultimate goal of Early Childhood Development initiatives is to improve the capacity of children to develop and learn, and encompasses health, education, social and child care sectors.

WHEREAS: A group of First Nations individuals and organizations with an interest in Early Childhood Development (a "First Nations Early Childhood Development Council") has formed with the goal of increasing effective collaboration and partnerships through the development of an Early Childhood Development Memorandum of Understanding and a coordinated Early Childhood Development Action Plan aimed at improving the wellbeing of First Nations children in British Columbia.

WHEREAS: The First Nations Early Childhood Development Council is an inclusive body with membership open to interested First Nations individuals and organizations. It currently includes the following members, each representing a unique mandate:

- First Nations Summit: Mandate is to represent those First Nations participating in or supportive of the treaty negotiation process in British Columbia and to provide a forum for those First Nations to address issues related to treaty negotiations as well as other issues of common concern.

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- Union of BC Indian Chiefs: Mandate is to promote and support the efforts of First Nations to affirm and defend Aboriginal Title and Right, including to help First Nations exercise their inherent rights and holding the Crown to its obligation to honour and respect those rights.
- BC Assembly of First Nations: Mandate is to advance the rights and interests of First Nations people in British Columbia, restore and enhance the relationship among First Nations people in British Columbia, the Crown and the people of Canada, develop and promote programs and policies for the benefit of First Nations people in British Columbia, and work in coalition with other organizations that advance the rights and interests of indigenous peoples.
- First Nations Education Steering Committee: Mandate is to facilitate discussion about education matters affecting First Nations in BC by disseminating information and soliciting input from First Nations.
- First Nations Schools Association: Mandate is to promote First Nations control of education, and to improve and support the development of quality and culturally appropriate education for First Nations students.
- First Nations Health Council
- Aboriginal Human Resource Development Groups: Mandate is to deliver a wide range of labour market and associated programming, including child care programs, to Aboriginal peoples.
- BC Aboriginal Child Care Society: Mandate is to help Aboriginal communities develop high quality, integrated, community child care services that are based in the children's culture, language and history and to build an Aboriginal child care network by undertaking research, development, advocacy and supporting communities to develop their own resources.
- Others

WHEREAS: The First Nations Early Childhood Development Council has developed an Early Childhood Development Memorandum of Understanding that reads as follows:

It is acknowledged that Early Childhood Development is critical to the success of First Nations children in all aspects of their lives and serves as the foundation for life-long learning. We, the signatories, agree to work together, and within our respective organizations, to improve Early Childhood Development opportunities for First Nations children.

WHEREAS: The First Nations Early Childhood Development Council is developing a Terms of Reference and a draft Early Childhood Development Action Plan.

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WHEREAS: To streamline efforts and prevent any duplication of bureaucracy, the First Nations Education Steering Committee has provided coordinating support to the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council on a volunteer basis, including the dissemination of information and logistical planning of meetings in full cooperation with all members of the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the BCAFN Chiefs in Assembly support collaboration and partnership between education, health, child care, employment and other sectors on Early Childhood Development matters.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the BCAFN Chiefs in Assembly support the concept of a First Nations Early Childhood Development Council as a forum for collaboration and coordination, where organizations and individuals may work with each other and within their respective mandates to improve the wellbeing of First Nations children in BC. This includes working with the AFN Chiefs Committee on Child Development on a national and international level.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the BCAFN Chiefs in Assembly support the attached Early Childhood Development Memorandum of Understanding and direct the Regional Chief to become a signatory to the agreement.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the BCAFN Chiefs in Assembly support the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council's efforts to improve the wellbeing of First Nations children in BC and recognize them, collectively, as the primary source of expertise and technical support on First Nations Early Childhood Development matters.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the BCAFN Chiefs in Assembly direct the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council to produce an Early Childhood Development Action Plan for review by the Chiefs in Assembly and others.

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the BCAFN Chiefs in Assembly support the First Nations Education Steering Committee serving as the coordinating body for the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council.

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