

ISSUE 2: December 2021



# The Here and Now Reimagining Early Childhoods In Urgent Times



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## Engaging with Theme #2 of BC Childcare Plan: Educators' Obligations and Responsibilities Towards Difference and Diversity

On December 1, 2021 Ministers Chen and Whiteside [announced](#) that the BC Government is seeking input from a broad range of child care partners as a next step in shaping the future of early childhood education in British Columbia. Five themes were highlighted to guide the consultation process, including “[making child care culturally safe and inclusive of all children](#)” (Theme #2).

While terms like ‘cultural safety and inclusion’ risk becoming buzzwords, attending to them requires understanding that they represent a complex range of [intersecting](#) factors contributing to the exclusion of BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+, impoverished and other marginalized groups of children and families (and educators). As we have stated [previously](#), children in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are inheriting complex and at times challenging worlds.

With the intention of contributing to the ongoing consultation process, the ECPN calls on others in the field to think about this crucial theme in relation to the education of early childhood educators. We propose that ‘how to make early learning and care more inclusive and culturally safe for all children’ needs to begin with the following questions:

- Who is the early childhood educator expected to be in their work supporting BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+, impoverished and other marginalized children and families?
- How are we supporting educators to respectfully engage with these groups?
- How are we promoting approaches to everyday practices that complexify superficial (status quo) understandings of inclusion in early childhood education communities?
- Are we doing enough to support educators to reconsider the way inclusion lives (or fails) in everyday practice?
- What competencies and ongoing professional opportunities do we envision to support educators in the complex ongoing process of creating ‘culturally safe and inclusive’ spaces?

Considering these questions helps us think more critically about the systemic exclusions preventing children and their families from fully participating in the first place. Creating spaces where differently situated children and families are welcomed requires educators to enact practices that focus on more than simply keeping children (emotionally & physically) ‘safe and happy’ while their parents engage in the workforce or study.

To this point, the [BC Early Learning Framework](#) asks educators to create a curriculum that considers children’s well-being and belonging, grounded in a vision of “respectfully living and learning together.” This call obliges educators to take responsibility for creating ‘culturally safe and inclusive’ pedagogical spaces. Of course, this also involves wages for educators that are commensurate with the education levels required to promote deeper understandings of the transformative potential of early childhood education.

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## Continuing the Conversation

### Responding to the BC Government’s Call for Input in 2022

On December 1, 2021 the BC government held a virtual information session to frame the conversation about its Childcare BC Plan inviting feedback in multiple ways. The full recording of the [Childcare BC Information Session](#) is available and members of the early childhood education community can subscribe to get [updates](#). The ECPN contributed to this conversation with a piece that prioritizes the reconfiguration of “[early education systems as spaces for imagining how we might live justly together in difference.](#)”

A Childcare BC Plan that takes seriously the call for living justly together demands careful attention to the recent 2021 BC Child Poverty Report Card (read it [here](#)). Among many considerations, we wonder: What does inclusion look and feel like in our communities? What are our obligations to the fact that 1 in 5 children continue to live in poverty in the province of BC? How should we respond within our local early childhood contexts to the key message that poverty and racism intersect to impact children and their families already living with precarity?

The ECPN urges others to thoughtfully plug into the upcoming BC Government consultation process and keep this important conversation on their new year's "to do" list.

Read and follow us on Twitter to continue the conversation:

[Join the Conversation](#)

## Upcoming ECPN Events



### **ECPN Conversations V Part 2: "This is so Bad"**

Tuesday January 25, 2022 6:30 pm PST

Educators Iryna and Katina with faculty pedagogist Michelle as they share their living inquiry.

[Register Here](#)



### **Nick Conbere: Using Drawing to Visualize Changing Landscapes**

Wednesday January 26, 2022 6:00 pm PST

An ECPN exposure to be in dialogue with Nick Conbere's work. He juxtaposes and layers imagery to encourage connections among disparate ideas and to evoke a sense of memory and history.

[Register Here](#)