

SECTION 6

Protect Child Care in Law



In 2011, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and the Early Childhood Educators of BC created the *Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning*, popularly known and widely supported as the \$10aDay Plan. Ten years later we released our Roadmap; a framework detailing the next steps of \$10aDay implementation.

Now, with significant new \$10aDay child care commitments from the provincial and federal governments, we have updated the Roadmap and made it more accessible through individual, policy focused sections. This section details how government can protect child care in law.

The entire Roadmap to \$10aDay can be found at 10aday.ca/roadmap

GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT to protect principles of affordable, accessible, and inclusive quality child care in legislation is a foundational element of an effective child care system. The BC NDP 2020 election platform promised new child care legislation that moves beyond aspirational goals to entrench fundamental principles to guide the development of BC's emerging child care system. Legislation is the vehicle by which governments can and will be held accountable.

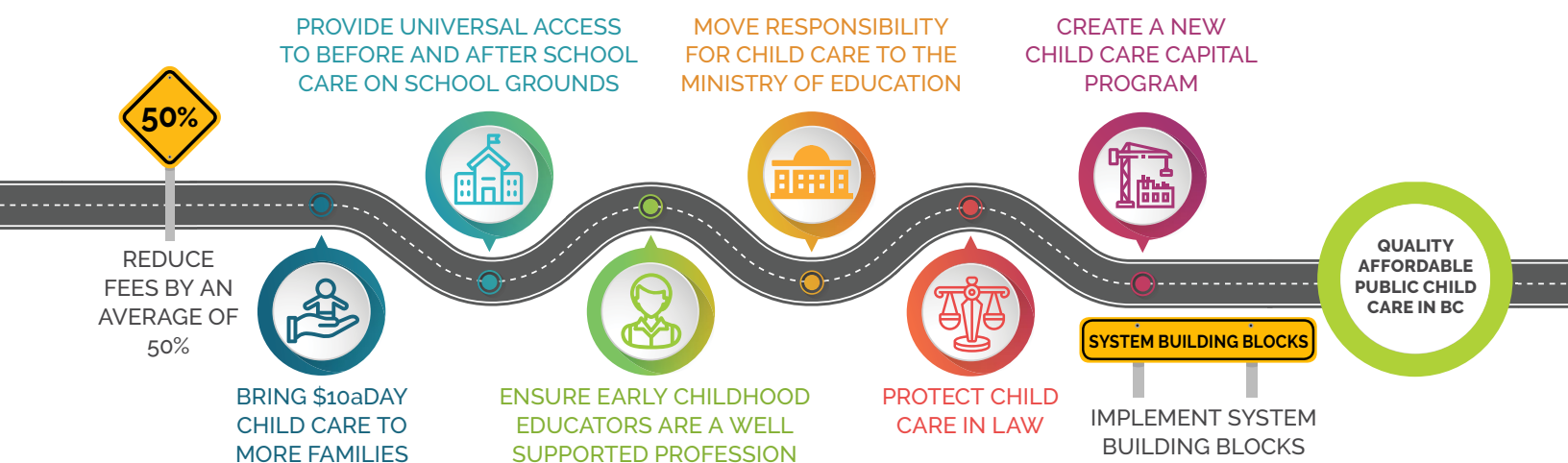
Government must honour its duty to consult with Indigenous Peoples as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework. Any changes to the delivery of Indigenous early childhood education will respect the obligations stated in Bill 41–2019: *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and will be undertaken with Indigenous leadership and governing bodies.¹

The \$10aDay Plan proposed two pieces of legislation — a BC Early Care and Learning Act² and a BC Early Childhood Educators Act — and recommended a focus on broad principles that built from existing child care sections in BC's *School Act*. In October 2021, BC introduced **two new pieces of legislation** that began the process of protecting child care in law.

Amend the BC Early Learning and Child Care Act

The BC *Early Learning and Child Care Act* became law on October 27, 2021 and is expected to increase transparency and accountability with required annual reporting on progress to date and on government relationships with and support for Indigenous-led child care. Importantly, the legislation gives government the authority to set limits on child care fees.

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- 1 ECEBC, "Position Paper for: Integrating the Early Childhood Education Professional and Programs into the Ministry of Education," November 2020.
 - 2 The \$10aDay Plan recommended this act be called the Early Care and Learning Act, putting "care" first because without care there is no learning.



The Roadmap providing a level of policy detail required to create a quality system for BC. Download it at 10aday.ca/roadmap

While an important first step, the Act needs to be amended to enshrine the rights of:

- All young children, from birth to 12 years of age, to access high quality, inclusive and culturally safe early care and learning;
- All families, on a voluntary basis, to access quality affordable child care for their children; and
- Children and families in all their diversities, including Indigenous children, immigrant and refugee children, LGBTQ2+ families and children, and children with different abilities to be included and fully supported.

The new ELCC Act also needs amending to reflect the upcoming move to the Ministry of Education by including a legislated mandate for, and funding to, school districts to govern, plan, develop, manage, coordinate, and/or deliver provincially funded licensed child care programs.

Over time, these amendments to the new *Early Learning and Child Care Act* will help end the historic divide between the publicly managed and delivered, relatively well-funded, universal, K–12 public education system and poorly funded, fragmented, market-based child care programs.

Amend the BC Early Childhood Educators Act

The *Early Childhood Educators Act* became law on October 27, 2021, taking an important step in creating a stand-alone statute for the profession of early childhood education under the responsibility of the Minister of State for Child Care. The Act is expected to support quality child care by creating a public registry of ECEs and approved post-secondary programs, and improving oversight of ECEs. It will reduce barriers to certification by allowing internationally trained ECEs to work while getting certified, making it easier for child care providers to hire skilled educators.

However, additional amendments are required to meet the criteria for legislation to advance the profession, as recommended by the Early Childhood Educators of BC,³ including but not limited to:

³ Ibid.

- Aligning with the vision in the BC Early Learning Framework and the recommended learning framework for 9–12 year olds;
- Reflecting the ECEBC Code of Ethics;
- Defining who is eligible to practice and be employed as an educator;
- Defining who is eligible to use the title of and be employed as a pedagogist; and
- Establishing a time frame for new educational standards.

These amendments will bring child care and the profession of early childhood education to the table as a strong and equal partner within public education. It is essential that ECEBC and early childhood educators are actively consulted during the process to ensure that their professional, pedagogical, and ethical perspectives are reflected and respected.

TIMELINE for protecting child care in law

PHASE 1 (January to December 2022):

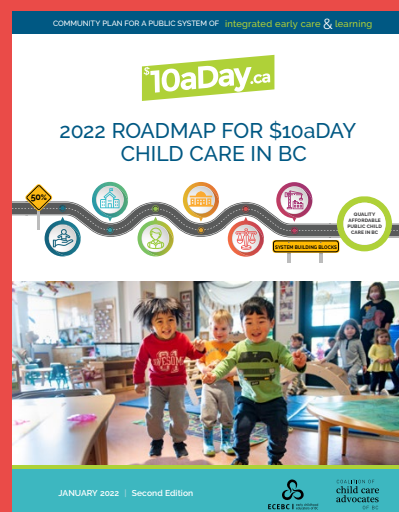
Develop amendments to the two pieces of child care legislation in consultation with Indigenous leadership and governing bodies, early childhood educators, education stakeholders, and the broader child care sector.

PHASE 2 (January 2023 to March 2026):

Enact the amended legislation. ■



Download the full timeline for the Roadmap at 10aday.ca/roadmap



2022 ROADMAP FOR \$10aDAY CHILD CARE IN BC

Second Edition | January 2022

We put the Roadmap forward in full support of the rights and jurisdiction of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples to design, develop, and deliver early care and learning services that meet their needs. We commit to listen and learn in our ongoing work to decolonize our own practices and perspectives.

COALITION OF
**child care
advocates**
OF BC

ECEBC | early childhood
educators of BC

Download the full Roadmap at
10aday.ca/roadmap

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