

**SACCA BC Position Paper for:
Integrating the Early Childhood Education Professional and
Programs into the Ministry of Education**



Organizational Background and History

The School Age Child Care Association of British Columbia (SACCA) is a province-wide, non-profit organization open to both professionals and students working or studying in the school age child care field. We arose out of the need for school age child care professionals to have a support and communications network of our own. From our original conception, we have grown into a province-wide organization working with all aspects of school age child care.

Our goal is to promote and advance the field of school age child care, and child care as a whole, in the province of British Columbia. In support of our goal, we have identified these as our major objectives:

- Increase public awareness through lobbying, advocacy, workshops, and forums
- Provide opportunities for professional networking through a province-wide newsletter, monthly board meetings, and professional development opportunities
- Enrich the school age child care sector through a program of guest speakers, seminars, workshops, and events aimed at the needs of child care providers
- Lobby and advocate for the development and advancement of a province-wide set of standards for school age child care

We also point out that the BC Early Learning Framework includes children from birth to age 8, and we encourage the BC Government to expand this framework to the middle years to be inclusive of children 9-12 years of age and to provide explicit pedagogical guidance for our sector.

Unique Position and Challenges in our Sector

In school age child care, educators collaborate with children, families, *and entire school ecosystems* in order to provide play opportunities that are meaningful to children and support their well-being, learning, and development; build pro-social and social-emotional skills; and foster a sense of belonging. We are called upon to pay attention to the needs and interests of individual children within a context that promotes collaboration and active citizenship opportunities *beyond an already full day of school*. Our work asks that we enable children to experience meaningful and joyful learning, enriching their childhood and their life skills, in keeping with core values in the Early Years Learning Framework, *and to do so in just a few hours each day*.

Appreciating the values of learning through play, school age child care provides opportunities for children's lifelong health, development, and learning. School age educators are committed to each child's uniqueness including their strengths, interests, and inquiries; we recognize diversity in multiple facets, embracing differences in gender, abilities, and backgrounds within our communities. We further

strengthen children's self-identity and promote an inclusive practice in child care through centre-based cultural activities and programs. *And again, all this is in addition to any provided in community or through school.*

Our field endures split-shifts, part-time hours, low wages, high child-to-staff ratios, high turnover, and a lack of training and capacity-building, further challenging our under-resourced system and endangering service stability and quality.

School age child care is an asset to every community it serves, and as we move toward a universal child care system, it is time for school age child care to be resourced so that we can provide more communities and more families with affordable, accessible, and high-quality school age child care.

Allies and Acknowledgements

We at SACCA acknowledge all of the unceded territories of the Indigenous Nations across the Province, including the land, culture, community, place, and history, by responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and Rights of the Child and the Indigenous Early Learning Child Care Framework (IELCCF). We encourage the BC Government to ensure that any changes to the delivery of Indigenous early childhood education will respect the obligations stated in Bill C-41 - Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and will be undertaken with recommendations and guidance from the Indigenous leadership and governing bodies.

We acknowledge and support the positions stated in the [ECEBC position paper dated November 13, 2020](#), and we strongly advocate for the Community Plan of a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning, commonly known as the \$10aDay Plan (ECEBC & CCCABC, 2019).

We acknowledge and support the position of the Coalition of Child Care Advocates ([\\$10aday ROADMAP pg. 24](#)) and the Early Childhood Educators of BC in developing a BC Early Care and Learning Act and the BC Early Childhood Educators Act. This act must, at a minimum, closely align with BC's Early Learning Framework and the ECEBC Code of Ethics.

We support both early childhood education and school age care joining into a publicly funded system under the Ministry of Education. We are further aligned with the BC Early Years Framework in our commitment to quality, inclusive learning experiences and environments for children, families, and school age educators.

SACCA applauds and appreciates the visionary leadership of the BC Government in building a system of early childhood education for children and families that provides access to affordable, quality, inclusive care. We share in the goal of providing all educators with equitable wages aligned in a provincial wage grid with professional recognition.

Call to Action

SACCA calls on the BC Government to build a transition plan for the move of child care to the Ministry of Education. This plan should include:

- Legal enshrinement of the right to access child care, including school age child care
- Strategic considerations for the recruitment and retention of quality educators for all age groups
- Child-to-educator ratios that reflect the program being delivered under the BC Early Learning Framework
- Acknowledgement that school age educators are legitimate educators doing important work
- Departure from tenant/landlord arrangements, in favour of strong and equal partnerships between all stakeholders towards the true needs of children and families beyond 9:00-3:00 school hours
- Expansion of the qualifications of school age educators beyond the current minimum 20-Hour Responsible Adult requirements, and wide-ranging supports for a transition towards a higher level of education for the benefit of children from 5-12 years of age
- A shift away from the inequitable funding access between early learning and school age child care programs, such as the wage enhancement and fee reduction programs

Such a transition plan will be more credible and better informed through:

- Engagement with existing school age operators to transition them into the new publicly funded system
- Consultation such that the expansion of a publicly funded program is based on identified needs within communities
- Representation at community tables that includes stakeholders from the school age child care community
- Attention to federal plans and agreements in order to build a system specific to BC that supports the diverse needs of children, families, and communities for children 0-12 years of age

A well-considered integration of school age child care into public education will lay the groundwork for children and families to benefit from a more robust continuum of learning and a more seamless and supportive experience. SACCA is well-positioned to be a thoughtful and well-informed partner in this essential groundwork to integrate the Early Childhood Education professional and programs into the Ministry of Education.