

AECEO Public Position Statement and Action Plan on Truth and Reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada calls on Canada to educate all Canadians about Indigenous peoples to prepare them for the important work of reconciliation. A specific call for action in the TRC directs the federal, provincial, territorial, and First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation governments to “develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families”. One response to this call, is a national Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework which “sets out a shared vision, principles and a path forward for Indigenous early learning and child care—a Canada where all Indigenous children have the opportunity to experience high-quality, culturally rooted early learning and child care programming”. Guided by this framework, the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario is actively committed to participating in and supporting the processes of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Ontario. As an organization, the AECEO’s role in reconciliation will be to:

1. Acknowledge Indigenous self-determination and cultural reclamation by creating space for Indigenous peoples to bring forward their ways of knowing and being into early childhood education discussions and activities.
2. Support and contribute to First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation priorities and strategic actions identified in the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and any future changes to this Framework. The AECEO will adapt its efforts based on the most widely accepted and culturally responsive framework.
3. Examine and change AECEO policies and practices that create barriers for Indigenous members to assume decision-making and leadership roles within the organization.
4. Provide culturally inclusive and equitable opportunities for Indigenous educators to have their own voice within the AECEO.
5. Establish and sustain an AECEO Guiding Committee on Truth and Reconciliation that is lead through consensus by Indigenous ECEs and leaders, Elders and non-Indigenous allies.
6. Along side Indigenous communities, share Indigenous ways of knowing and learning with AECEO members and all early childhood educators and early years staff in Ontario.
7. Advocate for post-secondary and in-service professional development institutions to include First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation, ECE content, settler-colonialism and culturally appropriate curricula and to create opportunities for this curricula to be delivered by Indigenous peoples
8. Support Indigenous and non-Indigenous employers and educators in moving forward with strategies to embed reconciliation initiatives in all aspects of programming.
9. Guided by the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework, evaluate on an on-going basis the AECEO’s progress in meeting its truth and reconciliation goals and identify in what ways the organization is changed at a fundamental level.

For the purpose of this organizational statement, we draw upon the language used in the Indigenous Early Learning Child Care Framework. However, we recognize that Indigeneity is more complex than this terminology represents. When possible and in practice we ascribe to use the language which the individual/community uses to self-identify.

