



Introduction

[The Early Childhood Educators of BC \(ECEBC\)](#) supports early childhood educators in informing the broader community about our work. Since 1969, we have been dedicated to building respect for and understanding of early childhood education and educators. We provide a collective voice to advance professional and personal commitment to the value of early childhood education by empowering the sector through education, collaboration, advocacy, and leadership. To that end, ECEBC creates Position Papers and Statements that provide members and the public with information about issues related to early childhood educators. This paper is meant to be aspirational, thought-provoking and dynamic. ECEBC articulates positions that can sometimes be provocative; however, these will always be consistent with the organization's mission and vision. We welcome your feedback.

This position paper joins [families](#), [activists](#), and [scholars](#) in asserting that inclusion is an urgent political concern in early childhood and the broader global community. As early childhood educators, we recognize the challenges within the current system, such as those noted in the [2022 report on parent experiences by Newbury and Gerlach](#) and the [2024 position paper presented by the BCADI](#). Therefore, ECEBC is committed to challenging the ongoing and systemic inequities that emerge from unchecked ableism, racism, colonialism, sexism, homophobia and other social and ecological injustices (see, for example, [Nxumalo & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2022](#)).

ECEBC acknowledges that an inclusive society refuses an idealized version of what it means to be human.

ECEBC acknowledges that an inclusive society must first disrupt dominant and social constructions of what it means to be human that reflect idealized images ([Kafher, 2013](#)). As educators, it is critical that we acknowledge that those deemed different are often seen as lesser than the ideal and have experienced historically and continue to experience violence and exclusion (for example, eugenics, hate crimes, genocide and forced sterilization) ([Brilmeyer, 2018](#)). The legacy of ongoing public narratives that categorize differences as undesirable, tragic, and to be fixed continues to create a culture of inclusion that is predicated on that person's ability to "fit" into the 'normal' or 'ideal' (Michalko, 2002). ECEBC, as a professional association, is resolute in working towards an alternative narrative of inclusion. For inclusion to thrive, we must first refuse predetermined hierarchies based on ability, body shape and form, chromosome composition, gender, race and other forms of human categorization.

ECEBC acknowledges that exclusion is a critical societal issue and that acts of exclusion occur in early childhood education spaces.

At ECEBC, we are deeply aware that, for example, [bullying, trauma and violence \(e.g. homophobia, racism, and son on\) do not begin in the upper grades of the education system](#) but in [early childhood education](#). We also acknowledge that too often, the interventions and arguments meant to counter exclusion and violence position the problem or solution within the individual (Love & Benke, 2022). As educators, our [ethical responsibility](#) is not only to work with children, families, communities, and others to actively respond to acts of exclusion and inequity in early years programs, but to challenge the status quo and the discourses that make exclusion and violence possible. ECEBC understands the role of early childhood educators as one that strives "to disrupt the legacies of the past in order to activate transformative change for the future" and, in turn, to co-create a "new world with alternative narratives" ([ECEBC, 2022](#)).



For inclusive education to become a reality, ECEBC commits to stand with those who continue calling for a view of early childhood programs as [ethical-political sites for societal change](#) rather than institutions that prepare children to maintain the status quo. We work with children, families, and others to make space for other ways of knowing, being and living. This means we recognize the inherent danger of relying solely on child development to understand and do our work. We acknowledge that child development is implicated in colonization, racism, sexism, and other forms of violence. Thus, we are committed to being in a relationship with children that is not defined by universal constructs that reflect white, European, male, and heteronormative values and beliefs ([Ineese-Nash, 2020](#)).

We also acknowledge that the sciences of medicine and development can also offer ways and interventions that may enhance an individual's life and ability to participate differently in the world (Kafher, 2013). Therefore, as professionals, we commit to working with the tensions and complexities of inclusion in ways that at times might make our work difficult.

ECEBC acknowledges that we, as early childhood educators are called to work as allies with those who have been excluded to create more livable worlds

As educators, we are called to engage in self-reflective practices (as outlined in the [BC Early Learning Framework](#)) to rethink our understanding of the category of human. As a professional organization, ECEBC supports all educators in their ongoing work of critical reflection to reimagine pedagogical practice that refuses an ongoing legacy of oppression and violence towards those deemed to be outside of the category of normal.

Inclusive early childhood education requires the careful work of educators, pedagogists, researchers and others working with, listening to and taking direction from those whose bodies and ways of being have been excluded (for example, Indigenous, Inuit and Métis governments and leaderships, people who identify as disabled, people who live with chronic health issues, the [2SLGBTQI+](#), the [BIPOC](#) community) to critically examine practices, policies, discourses, and language to create the conditions for a new humanity. We know this is difficult and complex work, requiring all of us to engage in ongoing learning and relearning in response to ever-changing worlds. As educators, we will work to bring to life the commitments to inclusion and equity in through standing with, listening to and guided by the leadership of those who understand what is necessary for them, their body, their way of being to be and feel welcome, included and necessary to our communities. We will work to ensure that that our practices and policies are responsive to the current issues and inspired by documents such as the [United Nations Declarations on Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), [Indigenous Early Learning and Care Framework](#), [Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Calls to Action](#), [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), [Rights of People with Disabilities](#), [Sexual Orientation and Gender identity in BC](#) and the [ECEBC Code of Ethics](#).

While this paper is aspirational, children cannot wait. It is incumbent upon early childhood educators to think differently, imagining a world that moves beyond conditional acceptance. This paper asks us to consider the worlds we want to and could create with children and families. As a professional body, ECEBC calls on all early childhood educators to recognize that inequities and inequalities are often created and maintained, often unintentionally, within our everyday practices. It is imperative that early childhood educators continually engage in the difficult but necessary work of critically disrupting the taken-for-granted knowledges, and ideas that emanate from centuries of Euro-American imperialism and colonialism. Today, more than ever, it is critical that educators commit to thinking differently and acting differently in the name of creating livable worlds for all.