

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Experts urge elected officials to use the new Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan to green children’s spaces and integrate the environment into their learning

Montreal, September 13, 2022 – At a recent summit on early childhood education organized by the Atkinson Centre at the University of Toronto and the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development at the University of Montreal and Laval University, scientists urged governments to embed green solutions into Canada’s newly developing child care system.

The event brought 25 experts in areas of climate action, Indigenous knowledge, urban planning, green engineering, and early learning and sustainability, to support climate responsibility and action in early childhood.

Participants agree there is an urgency to act and federal funding to expand child care provides a unique opportunity to do so.

The Canada-Wide [Early Learning and Child Care Agreements](#) (CWELCC) bring \$27 billion over 5 years to establish a national early learning and child care system. Added to this are funds targeted to [Indigenous early learning and child care](#); a \$625 million [Infrastructure Fund](#); and money to improve disability access to child care facilities.

Canada’s climate goals MUST be reflected in CWELCC spending, policy, and practice, including pending federal child care legislation.

“This funding provides an unparalleled opportunity to incorporate green solutions into the building of a new social program”, according to **Dr. Emis Akbari**, a Senior Fellow in Early Childhood Policy at the Atkinson Centre.

What should governments do?

Summit participants developed a [Policy Brief](#) with five main asks of elected officials:

1. Incorporate climate goals in all sectors and within all public expenditures;
2. Incorporate sustainability and pro-environmental learning into the early years’ curriculum;
3. Build reciprocal relationships and partnerships with Indigenous leaders and knowledge keepers and incorporate land-based learning into early childhood programming;
4. Keep climate action and sustainability as a top priority in urban planning and the design of early childhood facilities;
5. Use an equity lens in all policy decisions.

“While the crisis affects our entire planet and its population, young children are disproportionately impacted. As with all trials, the more racialized, the more socially and economically disadvantaged, the greater the negative outcomes.”, adds **Isabelle Vinet**, Executive Director, for the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development.

- For interviews and information
Dr. Emis Akbari: emis.akbari@georgebrown.ca
- Open letter, [click here](#)
- Summit presentations and videos, [click here](#)
- Climate change and early childhood references, [click here](#)
- Press kit, [click here](#)

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The ***Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*** is the leading resource for the most up-to-date knowledge on the development of young children (0-5).

The ***Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development*** is a research centre committed to using the best available evidence on early child development to inform public discourse, public policy and the professional learning of those who work with young children.