



SURREY CHILD CARE

Surrey Community Child Care Task Force

April 2018

REPORT

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FOREWORD BY THE CO-CHAIRS

On behalf of the Surrey Community Child Care Task Force (SCCCTF), we would like to thank you for taking the time to read and consider this report. For those families that need child care, it is an essential ingredient that builds and supports families to be successful in their parenting years and allows for their contribution to broader society and support the social well-being of our communities.

This report highlights the important child care research that makes obvious the challenges that families face in seeking quality, affordable and accessible child care. It highlights the difficult reality of finding child care facing many Surrey families today. The stories of children and families are not unique to Surrey - similar stories are heard across the province from families facing a child care crisis and organizations struggling to provide this service. As the fastest growing City in this province with the most children per capita, our issues are magnified thus, requiring a strong commitment of support from many levels to ensure we can make the necessary changes for our children.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Non-Profit Working Group, a committee of the Children First Network, that brought this issue to the City of Surrey, School District #36 and other relevant partners, to provide an opportunity for us all to work together to describe the realities and particulars of Surrey's child care situation.

Thank you to each of our SCCCTF members who volunteered their time, expertise, deep knowledge, experience and passion for finding a better way forward for child care for the sake of all our children and families. Many partners, such as the School District, offered additional in-kind resources for the working group to meet and develop the report.

Thank you to the City of Surrey for the significant commitment of staff time to develop this report and the path forward.

Thank you to Ana Molina who distilled and synthesized our partners' insights with deeper dives into literature and comparative analysis across other jurisdictions to create this report.

We began with a deep commitment to take action to improve child care outcomes for the citizens of Surrey. This report takes a pragmatic and results-oriented approach, to describe the literature, detail the history of child care efforts in Surrey and makes three key recommendations that allow for immediate and practical next steps of action. The Task Force maintained a commitment to deliver an actionable product that can be helpful to many partners in understanding the Surrey child care situation, advocate for appropriate and relevant needs, and highlights pathways to move forward in a productive and comprehensive way.

We acknowledge the provincial government policy direction to create universal child care and with that recognition, we suggest the following:

IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

1. Invest in local child care resources and support services to families, child care providers, and employers through additional funding to the Child Care Resource and Referral Program (CCRR) to meet growth needs and provide one-time support for local government to develop an immediate space creation plan with a focus on building capacity of the non-profit sector.
2. Invest in local ECE training spaces in partnership with high quality public educational providers in Surrey (e.g., explore potential opportunities with Surrey School District SD36 with the City of Surrey as partner)
3. Invest in increased Fraser Health Authority quality control licensing resources to facilitate and keep up with growth in child care licensing applications and support regulatory functions to mitigate pressures on child care quality and reduce risks to children in child care

Our success will be evidenced in the measurement of improvements in the child care spaces, opportunities for organizations to develop and maintain their child care businesses and the well-being of our youngest residents and their families.

In closing, our aims are detailed in the report, along with the current realities of child care for the citizens living in Surrey. We recognize many of our observations may be applicable to other regions of Metro Vancouver and Province of British Columbia. However, our focus is on the particular challenges specific to Surrey, coupled with our tremendous and continuing population growth, high proportion of children, significant diversity, geographic scale and long-standing service gaps and lags across the entire waterfront of human services. We hope this report helps to synthesize the issues and provides actionable steps forward.

Sincerely,



Gerard Bremault
Chief Executive Officer
The Centre for Child Development
(including Sophie's Place)
& Child Development Foundation of BC



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Co-Chairs of the Surrey Community Child Care Task Force

PREFACE

The Surrey community has a rich history of coming together to understand and coordinate efforts in tackling prevailing community needs. Public partners, the non-profit community service sector, and the private sector work together to identify and address community gaps. Each plays a key role given their unique perspectives and the diversity of ways in which each sector and organization interacts with the community and residents. The experiences of families, child care operators, service providers, training institutions, businesses and public partners together create a robust picture of child care issues in Surrey, shedding light on gaps and opportunities for how to address these.

Previous efforts have been made to understand and address child care in Surrey. This Report learns and builds on these efforts, taking the exploration of identified issues and observed opportunities for action further. The previous challenges that were uncovered are still persistent today, and include: increasing unaffordability for child care costs for parents, lack of available spaces and long waitlists for licensed child care, unacceptably low rates of pay for most early childhood educators, barriers to the creation of new spaces and maintenance of existing spaces, inadequate senior government funding and complex, sometimes competing, policy approaches to child care. New insights highlight the lack of resources to support comprehensive local child care planning and key gaps in the Early Childhood Education sector. These include inadequate local opportunities to obtain an ECE education, which correlates with Early Childhood Educator shortages, recruiting and retention challenges for Surrey operators, and capacity challenges in child care licensing. These key gaps limit the expansion of child care services in Surrey, while aggravating ongoing child care affordability, quality, and accessibility issues unless they are addressed.

CHILD CARE REPORT: OBJECTIVES

The Child Care Report aims to achieve collaborative, partnership-based child care solutions with government, private and non-profit community services sector partners to support a child care vision for the betterment of Surrey's children and families.

This Report is a comprehensive analysis of research, best practices and local experiences of the Surrey Care Task Force (SCCCTF) that includes perspectives from community partners, experts, advocates and child care operators in Surrey.

SCCCTF meetings provide a foundation of qualitative data. Additional research and analysis builds on SCCCTF data, creating a robust picture of key child care challenges in the City of Surrey. Several themes are identified, each pointing to notable child care challenges across the community. A set of recommendations are provided that can be actioned immediately and support the development of a universal child care system. Together, these shape a collective understanding of child care risks facing the community, for children and families, non-profit child care operators and the City as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

WHY A COMMUNITY TASK FORCE ON CHILD CARE, NOW?

Over the years, Surrey families, child care practitioners, community leaders, family and child serving agencies, and the media have voiced concern with the existing patchwork of child care services in the community that which is not successfully meeting the diverse range of needs of children and families in Surrey. While some innovative community and public partner projects incorporating child care have been developed adding much needed child care spaces, including Gateway, the Surrey Memorial Hospital, Maxxine Wright, Kensington Prairie, Bridgeview, Don Christian School and City Hall, a lack of coordinated child care planning and service delivery remains a significant challenge.

Community efforts to come together to develop child care solutions date back at least 30 years to the late 1980's when then City of Surrey requested a meeting and presentation to Council on child care issues in the community. In the 1990's, community efforts led to the creation of a Child Care Committee, with initial efforts at data collection. These efforts continued and grew, leading to the 2004 Make Children First report "Valuing Our Children: Taking First Steps Together". This report marked a renewed community-wide emphasis on addressing Surrey child care needs, prioritizing advocating and finding opportunities to expand and support affordable, high quality child care, especially infant and toddler care.

In 2005, a child care working group was created with a vision to develop a comprehensive child care strategy for Surrey/White Rock, but not only did the supportive policy climate of senior levels of government start to shift, but also competing local priorities including the establishment of the Early Childhood Partnership, the roll-out of Strong Start and efforts to address the urgent needs of young refugee children and their families took precedence, forcing partners to pause work on the child care strategy, leaving it as a working document. In the years that followed, child care efforts did continue in the community, but not as part of a Surrey-wide coordinated plan.

In 2011, the Children's Partnership of Surrey-White Rock undertook a *Child Care Gap Assessment*¹, which reinvigorated conversations around the need for child care in Surrey after finding data that demonstrated critical gaps in services, particularly for children under 3 years of age and school age care.

Surrey's rapid growth and shared concerns about the sector's ability to sustain existing services and meet growing child care needs among child serving non-profit community service agencies led to a need to renew multi-stakeholder child care discussions. In 2015, the Surrey Working Group on Non-Profit Child Care, initiated by Alexandra Neighbourhood House, Options Community Services, A Place to Grow Child Care Society, and the YMCA, with the support of the Surrey/White Rock Children First Coalition and the Office of the Children's Partnership, made

¹ Children's Partnership of Surrey-White Rock & Papadionissiou, S. (2011). *Surrey Child Care Gap Assessment. Build Surrey: Build a Foundation for Families*. Retrieved from <http://www.childrenpartnershipsurreywr.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/CHILD-CARE-GAP-ASSESSMENT-FINAL.pdf>

presentations to Surrey City Council and the Surrey School Board calling for the creation of a Surrey Community Child Care Task Force. They sought a mandate to explore collaborative strategies and secure commitments of key stakeholders to a community planned, affordable, high quality, comprehensive child care continuum provided by non-profit agencies. These presentations led to the creation of the Surrey Community Child Care Task Force.

The Task Force is sponsored by Children First, in alignment with its longstanding commitment to the integration and expansion of non-profit child care as a key component of an early childhood and family support system in Surrey and White Rock. The City of Surrey plays a leadership role, with a City staff member serving as co-chair of the Task Force. In addition to four community agency representatives and one representative from Children First, the Task Force membership includes representatives from the School District 36, Fraser Health Community Care Facilities Licensing, Surrey Board of Trade, and Creative Kids, Surrey's largest commercial child care operator.

CHANGING PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL CONTEXT: POTENTIAL CHILD CARE OPPORTUNITIES

Municipal child care efforts in Surrey have not always benefited from tailwinds in child care policy, funding and practice at senior government levels. This has resulted in a slow progress on child care, with notable local impacts on service levels, including space capacity, labour force capacity, fee affordability, to name a few.

In BC, the child care advocates have been actively lobbying for a new approach to child care - the \$10 a Day Child Care campaign. Poverty reduction activists have identified child care as a key component of any poverty reduction strategy; early learning and care initiatives have been acknowledged by the health and education sectors as critical for improved health and education outcomes; and business associations are increasingly recognizing the workplace productivity benefits of families' access to high quality child care. All advocacy momentum has created heightened awareness amongst politicians and policy makers about the intersectoral importance of ramping up investments in child care.

Recent changes in federal and provincial governance contexts appear to present notable opportunities for an alignment of priorities, actions and funding. The 2015 Federal Election spurred federal efforts toward the negotiation of a new national child care framework with the provinces. The recent bilateral agreements with the federal government will increase funding for child care to support child care affordability, quality, flexibility, accessibility and inclusivity², with an initial focus on vulnerable and marginalized children and families. Changes in child care funding to British Columbia will make positive contributions to addressing the child care needs faced by families in Surrey. Similarly, the 2017 Provincial Election has brought increased attention – and funding – to child care issues, with commitments for additional investments in child care spaces, operational stability, and affordability initiatives for parents.

² Government of Canada. (June 12, 2017). *Federal-Provincial/Territorial Early Learning and Child Care Agreement*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement.html>

The new Minister of State for Child Care has been consulting with groups across the province and it is expected that the government will start to move forward with early steps towards a more universal system in 2018 that appears to open possibilities for existing local efforts on child care³.

This unique alignment of multi-level government focus on child care presents a critical window of opportunity for Surrey, including all local public, non-profit and private sector partners, to come together to achieve meaningful investments and changes in child care.

PURPOSE OF THE SURREY COMMUNITY CHILD CARE TASK FORCE

The Surrey Community Child Care Task Force is guided by the objective to develop active stakeholder commitment to a made in Surrey action plan on child care that will enhance, expand and support the long-term sustainability of a community planned continuum of high quality, accessible, affordable, comprehensive child care services for Surrey families with children up to age 12 years.

The Task Force is committed to exploring collaborative strategies and securing commitments of key stakeholders to a community planned, affordable, high quality, and comprehensive child care continuum.

The key prioritized areas of focus are:

- Integration of child care into the continuum of other child and family support services;
- Optimal utilization of existing licensed and license not required child care spaces;
- Meeting the needs of children, families and employers for a continuum of high quality, accessible, affordable, comprehensive child care services;
- Increased capacity of the non-profit community agency sector to undertake the start-up and operation of child care services;
- Priorities, targets, benchmarks and timelines set for the various action plan strategies; and
- Securement of letters of agreement that outline how key stakeholders will contribute to the collective implementation of a child care action plan.

³ British Columbia. (July 18, 2017). *Minister of State for Child Care Mandate Letter*. Retrieved from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/premier-cabinet-mlas/minister-letter/chen-mandate.pdf>

SHARED VALUES

Four principles comprise the pillars of Surrey’s vision of an adequate child care system: child care that is *accessible, affordable, high quality* and *comprehensive*. Task Force partners have committed to working collaboratively towards a child care system that incorporates these features:

High quality child care services

- Are child focused, family centred, culturally competent, inclusive, and integrated into the broader network of child and family support services
- Demonstrate evidence based early childhood and middle childhood development best practice
- Are aligned with the BC Early Learning Framework and MCM’s Five Dimension for Assessing the Well Being of Children Aged 6-12
- Promote the use of natural materials, natural element design, and environmental sustainability strategies
- Support province-wide child health strategies particularly around active outdoor play
- Meet and exceed all regulatory requirements
- Recruit and retain well trained, fully qualified, caring practitioners
- Strive for child care staff compensation levels that meet or exceed the Living Wage
- Invest in professional development and networking for staff
- Support parent education, parent involvement and parent engagement
- Engage in assessing developmental progress and goal setting for each child attending child care through ongoing and specific opportunities for staff/parent dialogue
- Ensure that children and families who require extra support are connected to the appropriate community services

The concept of “quality child care” is generally founded on three basic goals for children⁴: protection of children’s health and safety; nurturing emotional and pro-social development; and providing intellectual stimulation through play and hands-on activities. However, ideas about quality in child care can vary across stakeholders’ perspectives (e.g., parents, caregivers, government and policy makers); and whether the focus is, for example, on the child, the family, the community or the child care system. Several Metro Vancouver municipalities have adopted similar concepts of child care quality.

Quality child care is child care that meets the best interest and unique developmental needs of the child, supports the child’s emotional, intellectual, physical and social development, and assists and complements the family in its child-rearing role.^{5,6} Additionally, research evidence

⁴ Friendly, M., Doherty, G., & Beach, J. (2006). *Quality by design: What do we know about quality in early learning and child care, and what do we think? A literature review*. Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto. Retrieved from http://www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/QbD_LiteratureReview.pdf

⁵ City of Richmond. (2009). *2009-2016 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy*. Prepared by SPARC BC. Retrieved from http://www.richmond.ca/__shared/assets/Child_Care_Needs_Assessment_and_Strategy_2009-201629995.pdf

demonstrates key inputs to a quality child care system include: the existence of and compliance with licensing standards; staff that is adequately trained in child development and early childhood education; the effective administration of child care programs; parental involvement in child care choices; and adequate and sufficient child care operating funds and program resources to support care that is developmentally and individually appropriate.

Accessible child care services

- Are welcoming to all children and families
- Are culturally responsive
- Are located close to where families live and/or work
- Are located close to public transit
- Include children requiring extra supports
- Include children on child care subsidy
- Facilitate multi-age sibling care for purposes of consistency and continuity of care
- Strive to respond to the diverse needs of families and employers for such services as part-time care, shift care, extended hours care, emergency care and child minding
- Complement workplace needs and support employer efforts to attract and retain a stable workforce
- Encourage healthy family/work balance

Affordable child care services

- Strive to keep parent fees as low as possible in the context of available provincial funding
- Strive to remove or minimize financial barriers for low income families
- Receive adequate provincial operating funding and capitalize on federal child care funding initiatives

Comprehensive child care services

- Are recognized as a public good and collaboratively planned for as an integral part of a healthy, sustainable community
- Provide a continuum and clustering of services to meet diverse family needs
- Interface with other child and family services at the neighbourhood and city-wide level
- Connect children and families into the broader network of child and family support services
- Are actively engaged with the Child Care Resource and Referral Program, and participate in Children First and /or Middle Childhood Matters
- Are willing to work collaboratively together with other child care stakeholders, and contribute to a new systemic approach to child care

A SNAPSHOT OF CHILD CARE IN SURREY

Surrey is increasingly seen as an attractive place for young families. However, child care challenges threaten Surrey's family friendliness and liveability, as demonstrated by the

⁶ City of New Westminster. (2016). *Child Care Strategy*. Retrieved from https://www.newwestcity.ca/database/files/library/Child_Care_Strategy_October_2016.pdf

following key data:

- Surrey has BC's largest child population and highest birth rate: 35,000+ children 0-5 and over 41,000 children 6-12. However, Surrey has only 12.4 child care spaces for every 100 children aged 0-12. This is the lowest child care access rate among 17 Metro Vancouver municipalities
- Access to 'Under 3' care and after school care is particularly limited, with few facilities serving more than 1 age group
- Child care fees comprise the second largest expense for Surrey families. Yet, despite high need, there are unfilled spaces because many families cannot afford existing child care costs
- Child care fees are as high as \$1850 per month for 'Under 3' and up to \$1550 for 'Over 3' care in the commercial sector
- Barriers to the creation of new and maintenance of existing child care spaces include complexities in the development and licensing processes, and cost barriers. These economic constraints hinder non-profit agencies' efforts to create and/or expand child care
- Gaps in the early childhood education sector and severe labour shortages constraining sector capacity
- Low rates of pay for most early childhood educators limits the attractiveness of the field and constrains the ECE workforce
- Surrey's child care sector is comprised primarily of commercial operators, with 93% of child care spaces in Surrey offered by commercial operators. Only 7% of spaces are provided by non-profit agencies. In other Metro Vancouver municipalities, non-profit child care is more readily available, providing a broader continuum of support to families

ACTIONS TO DATE ON CHILD CARE

Surrey has seen numerous efforts and innovative approaches to creating new and sustaining existing child care services for Surrey families. A legacy of community collaboration, dialogue and an openness for partnerships has enabled diverse efforts to understand and address community child care needs. Notable examples include:

- In 2004, the *Valuing Our Children: Taking First Steps Together* and the 2005 child care strategy working document were first attempts to look at a systemic approach to child care for Surrey.
- In 2011, the Children's Partnership of Surrey-White Rock came together to undertake a *Child Care Gap Assessment* for the City of Surrey. This effort built on the momentum created by the City of Surrey's adoption in 2010 of a *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy*⁷. The *Gap Assessment* developed a foundation for understanding the qualitative and quantitative need for child care in Surrey, the gaps in services in the community, and created a baseline for innovative child care efforts and monitoring going forward.
- Informed by the findings of the *Gap Assessment*, in 2012 the Children's Partnership of Surrey-White Rock initiated work on the development of a child care strategy report for the City of Surrey and its partners.⁸ This report further clarified child care priorities in Surrey and made initial steps to identify opportunities for efforts to address said needs.
- Collaborative efforts to create spaces in recent years include the development of the early years focused Kensington Prairie Community Centre in 2011, which was made possible through partnerships between community service agencies and public partners including Fraser Health Licensing, Surrey School District and the City of Surrey. Kensington Prairie Community Centre provides a range of children and family support services, including licensed child care and preschool.
- The City of Surrey has taken a leadership role in licensed preschool and licensed before/after school and recreation programming during the critical after school hours. The City is the largest provider of licensed preschool for children ages 3-5, receiving provincial recognition for the quality of its services. Similarly, seeking to address the need for recreation and learning opportunities for school-aged children during the critical afterschool hours, the City created and has expanded the MYzone program for children 8-12 years of age, providing affordable, high quality after-school recreation programming for children across Surrey communities.
- The City of Surrey has prioritized afterschool services as a key service focus to expand a range of licensed school-aged care and semi-structured recreational programming to meet the developmental needs of school-aged children during the critical afterschool hours. It has committed to support broad-based afterschool service expansion for school-aged children that includes unstructured play activities to licensed school-aged

⁷ City of Surrey. (2010). *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy*. Retrieved from https://www.surrey.ca/files/Child_and_Youth_Friendly_City_Strategy_City_of_Surrey.pdf

⁸ Children's Partnership of Surrey-White Rock. (2012). *An Emerging Child Care Strategy for the City of Surrey. Build Surrey: Build a Foundation for Families*. Retrieved from <http://www.childrenspartnershipsurreywr.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/An-Emerging-Child-Care-Strategy-for-the-City-of-Surreydraft2.pdf>

care through the development of the *Afterschool for All Strategy Framework*⁹ and *Implementation Plan*.¹⁰

- The City of Surrey – Parks, Recreation and Culture Department – continues to support child care efforts in the Surrey community, integrating early learning as part of the organization’s efforts to support children in Surrey in the Parks, Recreation and Culture *10 Year Strategic Plan (2018-2027)*.
- Municipal partnerships with the YMCA have enabled the creation of licensed child care spaces at Surrey City Hall and a future planned family YMCA facility in City Centre.
- The City identifies and measures its initiatives to advance child care objectives and priorities identified in the City’s *Sustainability Charter*.¹¹ Child care objectives are found in the “Inclusion” and “Education & Culture” goals of the *Charter* and include that “families have access to affordable and quality local child care” (Inclusion – DO 17); “sufficient high quality child care spaces are available in the City” (Inclusion – SD 14); and that “meaningful and accessible early childhood learning opportunities are in place for children and families” (Education & Culture – DO 3).
- The Surrey School District has faced significant space pressures in schools due to population growth. Whereas in some Districts recent provincial changes in education have had unintended impacts on the availability of school space for Out of School Time (OST) programs, the Surrey School District has been successful in protecting existing OST spaces wherever possible with limited impact on existing before and afterschool care programs.
- Non-profit organizations and private child care centres have individually sought child care capital funding for one-off projects when possible.

Past and current efforts demonstrate Surrey’s child care sector is ready to explore opportunities for reaching shared child care objectives.

⁹ City of Surrey. (2017). *Afterschool for All Strategy Framework*. Community and Recreation Services. Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. (Unpublished).

¹⁰ City of Surrey. (2017). *Afterschool Stretch Goal Strategy Implementation Plan*. Community and Recreation Services. Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. (Unpublished).

¹¹ City of Surrey. (2016). *Sustainability Charter 2.0*. Retrieved from <http://www.surrey.ca/files/SUSTAINABILITY%20CHARTER%20%5bFINAL%20SCREEN%5d.pdf>

KEY THEMES: EVIDENCE FROM TASK FORCE MEETINGS

Throughout 2016-2017 community and public partners, including representatives from the non-profit family and child serving agency and commercial child care sectors participated in discussions and presentations to share and document their experiences in child care and the experiences of the families they serve. Discussion topics were explored at length and supported by additional research and analysis of key data and scholarly works. The following “Key Themes” provide a comprehensive picture of child care issues and opportunities in the community. This work shapes the Task Force’s priorities for a made in Surrey action plan for child care.

LACK OF AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

- Child care fees remain largely unaffordable for many Surrey families and are often higher and less affordable among many commercial child care operators.
- High fees are a barrier to accessing child care for low income and middle income families. Notably, even low income families who qualify for the BC Child Care Subsidy may be unable to afford child care due to high “parent contributions” which they are unable to meet.
- Lacking child care affordability can result in increased safety risks for children where families have no other options but to opt for unlicensed and/or illegal child care arrangements, often of unknown quality.
- Lack of affordable child care combined with increasing housing, utility, food and other essential expenses contribute to economic hardship for families, with greater impact on those at higher risk of vulnerability e.g., lone-parent families, Aboriginal families, recent immigrant and refugee families.
- In some cases, the lack of affordable child care constrains families’ opportunities to get ahead through employment and/or education, with notable labour force impacts. For example, the high cost of child care particularly for infants and toddlers can tilt the scales against working for caregivers whose take home income is not sufficient to carry the cost of child care.
- Similarly, lack of affordable child care can reduce labour force participation, especially of women, having negative impacts on individual and family economic resilience and income levels. For businesses, decreased worker productivity, absenteeism and turnover due to a lack of child care can bring added costs and affect the bottom line.

INSUFFICIENT CHILD CARE SPACES TO MEET EXISTING NEEDS AND KEEP UP WITH SURREY’S GROWTH

- Surrey is Metro Vancouver’s fastest growing community; it also has the largest child care gap. Local growth in child care spaces is not keeping up with Surrey’s population growth.

- There is a lack of purpose-built indoor and outdoor child care spaces and the expense of retrofitting inadequate spaces can serve as barriers to child care expansion.
- There is limited integration of child care space considerations into the planning of new developments.
- Declining affordability of rental space and narrow child care sector margins are generally perceived as deterrents to growth in the sector.
- Additional barriers include perceived hurdles in municipal planning and development and child care licensing processes.
- In addition to few spaces, partners note Surrey lacks child care spaces that offer flexible hours and extended/weekend/evening care despite labour force trends that increasingly call upon parents to work in part-time, contract and extended-hours jobs.

LIMITED OUT OF SCHOOL (OST) CARE ON OR IN PROXIMITY TO SCHOOLS

- Systemic shortages of Out-of-School (OST) care for school age children present one of the most pressing challenges in Surrey. While the optimal location for OST care is on or in proximity to schools, accessing space on schools is extremely difficult due to Surrey's rapid population growth and capacity pressures on existing schools.
- Limited access to OST limits caregivers' opportunities to maintain employment. Task Force members note families cope through various means, including: working part-time and shift-work, off-shifting (caregivers work alternate schedules to cover child care responsibilities), relying on family members including grandparents, utilizing nannies and other informal care arrangements, allowing children to care for themselves, and sometimes by reducing hours of work or leaving the workforce altogether.
- Limited access to OST has notable impacts on families' economic resilience.

SECTOR GROWTH CONSTRAINED BY SEVERE SHORTAGES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS AND LACK OF FUNDING TO OFFER COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION

- Feedback from child care operators paints a stark picture of recruitment and retention challenges caused by widespread shortages of qualified, well-trained ECE workers across Surrey communities. While this is not unique to Surrey, given rural and remote BC communities face similar labour force challenges, Surrey's population size and rapid growth intensifies labour shortage impacts in the community.
- The child care labour market is increasingly a "seller's market", with intense competition for qualified staff among child care operators. Operators note the negative impacts of this include: reduced stringency in hiring practices, including weakened vetting and risk mitigation practices; reduced transparency in hiring, including false promises about pay/benefits to attract staff; and negative impacts on child care quality due to suboptimal levels of staff experience/skills/training, employer competition in hiring, and staff turnover.
- Operators note staff constraints push some operators to hire "sight-unseen", sometimes through social media platforms such as Facebook, without prior vetting, reference and

qualification checks. Operators note this seems an increasingly prevalent practice for finding on-call/sick-coverage/short term staff.

- Fraser Health Authority identifies an increasing number of licensing exemptions are requested and processed, which appears to correlate with the sector's shortage of ECE certified staff, especially in connection to infant toddler certified educators.
- An increasing number of child care facilities operating under exemptions for staffing are resulting in the dilution of minimum legislative standards in regards to qualification requirements. With fewer staff holding specialized early childhood educator knowledge, comes a real potential for a decrease in the quality of care being provided in such settings. This is particularly concerning in smaller child care settings, where fewer ECE educators may work alongside one another, limiting opportunities for mentorship and on-the-job training.
- Low ECE wages limits the attractiveness of the ECE field.

CONCERNS WITH QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) TRAINING PROGRAMS

- An increasing number of ECE students are accessing ECE education programs provided by private educational institutions, including training programs with online components. Child care operators identify a concern that a growing number of ECE graduates do not demonstrate the skills and abilities necessary to practice in the field upon graduation and hire, pointing to potential gaps in training and/or experience.
- Child care operators and educators note there is wide variability in the caliber and quality of ECE programming in the region, with notable differences in the quality of instruction and opportunities for skill development through applied and supervised work experience. As a result, the skills and knowledge ECE graduates possess upon entry into the labor force can vary greatly across institutions. Poor training can negatively impact graduates' employment success.
- Importantly for children in care, inadequate ECE education and training negatively impacts the quality of child care, with risks to child safety and well-being.
- Compounding concerns with child care quality in Surrey, Task Force findings suggest that only a limited number of child care operators in Surrey are in-step with the latest educational research and B.C. Curriculum changes, so many children are not receiving the social-emotional learning and school readiness support needed for school entry.

LIMITED LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES TO OBTAIN HIGH QUALITY ECE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Community partners and operators identify a critical gap in local ECE education opportunities in Surrey. The only Surrey based public ECE education program was closed many years ago, and while similar high-quality, public programs remain in other Metro Vancouver communities, their annual intake is very limited.
- Partners note students receiving high-quality training in ECE programs outside of Surrey may be less likely to practice in Surrey due to wage differentials between communities

and students may not make connections between ECE education programs, ECE practicum opportunities and child care operators.

- Partners note a waning interest in the field among young students and workers. In addition to the cost of education, the cost of transportation to obtain an ECE education in other communities and lengthy commuting times are identified as disincentives to pursuing a career in ECE, discouraging young people from entering the field. This poses a threat to Surrey's existing and future supply of qualified ECE professionals, further constraining the sector's growth.

LIMITED INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF EXISTING CHILD CARE SERVICES

- A limited number of inclusive child care programs for young parents, children with special needs, Aboriginal children and refugee children exist in the community. The programs and services that exist are overburdened, geographically localized, and not accessible across the City. This inevitably leaves many children and families unable to access the services they need. Low income and other factors exacerbate access barriers, leaving the most vulnerable and/or in-need children behind.
- Caring for children with special needs presents unique demands. Partners note many commercial child care operators may be unwilling to accept children with special or extra needs. Many children already in programs who are later identified to require extra care may be encouraged to find alternative arrangements, as operators may lack the capacity and/or willingness to address their needs. As a result, many special needs children, especially children with mental health challenges, and their families are unable to find the care and support they need.
- Surrey has various innovative, broad-reaching, and mission-driven non-profit community service organizations committed to ensuring no child is left behind. A stronger focus and adequate funding would enhance their reach and impact in the community.

CRITICAL NEED FOR INVESTMENT IN SYSTEM CAPACITY

- Evidence from the childcare gap data, experience by local service providers and public organizations and research conclusively shows a need for sustainable and adequate growth in the number of quality child care spaces in the City to meet existing and projected child care needs as the City grows. However, a push toward the creation of new spaces requires – in tandem – adequate resources to increase the system's capacity.
- *Licensing capacity:* for reviewing, inspecting, approving, licensing and regulating new and existing spaces. Feedback from public partners indicate the existing licensing system is stretched; sudden, unplanned and unfunded growth poses risks to a system tasked with ensuring children are cared for in safe environments where risks are minimized. Increased demands without resources constrains the system's capacity for assessing and processing new child care licenses and achieving desired growth in child care spaces.

- *Staffing and ECE education capacity:* to ensure child care operators can meet staffing requirements with trained, skilled ECE staff, where quality of child care is prioritized. Expansion in the child care sector without adequate investments in ECE education can further destabilize current labour market conditions, creating more acute labour shortages and potentially negative pressure on child care quality.
- *Quality space capacity:* an input to child care quality and the lived-experiences of children and educators is the built environment in which child care is provided and received by children. Research demonstrates benchmarks of high quality child care environments. Easy and sufficient access to adequate outdoor “natural” play space is an important component of child care quality. Child care expansion must take into consideration space barriers to ensure growth does not forsake the quality of the built-environment of child care spaces.
- *Urban space capacity:* there is inadequate capital funding to address maintaining existing spaces and building new spaces in high density neighbourhoods, particularly the City’s rapidly densifying City Centre.
- *Non-profit sector capacity:* the non-profit child care sector plays a critical role in the continuum of child care services in Surrey. Non-profit child care operators often provide child care which is of high quality, is more affordable and inclusive of families in financial need, and is more inclusive and accessible to children with special needs. Supporting and strengthening Surrey’s non-profit child care operators benefits all families and builds on the continuum of child and family support services already present in Surrey.

COMPLEXITY OF EXISTING CHILD CARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS AFFECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE

- Task Force members explored in depth the landscape of child care and family support programs available to Surrey families. Several support programs may be available to families.
- Programs were mapped according to objective, eligibility, funding and other criteria. Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) programs include the BC Child Care Subsidy, Special Needs Subsidy and Child Protection and Young Parent Program (YPP). Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI) programs include the Single Parent Employment Initiative (SPEI) and Special Healthcare/Disability Exemption.
- Discussions with government staff and community service workers pointed to notable issues in the existing system. See Appendix II.
- *Complexity and gaps:* Though some programs can in some circumstances overlap, often the complexity inherent in the application processes, lack of or inadequate information regarding eligibility criteria and thresholds, lengthy application processing timelines, and discrete cut-off points in eligibility can hinder applicants’ success in accessing programs.
- *Timing of requisites:* Can place families and child care providers in financial hardship, e.g., the requirement to have child care in place to apply for subsidy can burden families unable to carry the cost of child care. It may also contribute to providers’

reticence to accept subsidy families, given such families are perceived as riskier for a business.

- *Inadequate Child Care Subsidy*: low subsidy rates well below actual child care fees, with “parent portions” which remain largely unaffordable for many low-income families; and restrictive monthly net family income eligibility. Notably, community sector partners point out that a decline in the number of families receiving the BC Child Care Subsidy is not due to a decline in need, which would indicate a positive trend in family conditions, but rather a tightening of eligibility requirements, making it harder for even the neediest of families to qualify even for partial assistance.
- *Lack of systems to support transitions off government programs*: a change in family circumstances can trigger ineligibility without an opportunity for families to plan, prepare for and/or adjust their circumstances.

LACK OF SENIOR GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN A COMPREHENSIVE CHILD CARE SYSTEM

- Inadequate capital planning and funding and lack of co-ordination with municipalities and school districts. Currently there is no mechanism for identifying, retaining and planning appropriate future child care sites particularly in high density neighbourhoods. Instead the focus is on retro-fitting existing buildings often with less than desirable outdoor play space.
- Current operational funding formula does not allow for proper compensation of ECE staff or address the issue of affordability for families.
- Existing marketplace approach does not recognize the educational, social capital or sustainability benefits of high quality child care for children and their families.

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY SERVICE SECTOR

- Several non-profit societies in Surrey offer child care as one component of a range of family support and community services.
- Childcare in non-profit settings allows children and families to access childcare but also the whole range of supports available in the community non-profit sector. Childcare becomes part of a broader continuum of service and this can be very helpful for families, whether need access to income subsidy programs, single parent programs, training and development initiatives, children’s health programs or assistance to new immigrant and refugee families to integrate into Surrey communities, are just some examples.
- Non-profits and municipal settings often provide more support to children with special needs and help them to reach their potential. The City’s Accessibility and Inclusion section is keen to develop collaborative responses to the child care issues identified in the community.

CONSIDERATIONS

The following comprise the most salient observations and identified risks of the existing child care system:

- Surrey is a thriving city regarded by families as a desirable place to call home. The City's relative affordability in an increasingly unaffordable region gives it an edge, making it particularly attractive to young families and recent immigrants.
- Population growth presents challenges and opportunities. Consistent growth in the number of children across Surrey communities stretches existing capacities across sectors, including the education and child care sectors. Investments and expansion in infrastructure and services is necessary to meet existing and new residents' needs and maintain the liveability for which Surrey is known.
- The public sector and non-profit community service agencies have expanded their scope to address growing child care needs in innovative and collaborative ways that support the principles of affordability, high quality, accessibility and comprehensiveness. However, limited financial capacity has meant efforts have resulted in only a limited number of additional spaces. In contrast, most child care spaces created in recent years have come about from private commercial sector investment, but affordability challenges for families have left many commercial spaces unused and families' needs unmet. Altogether, the sector's growth in Surrey has not kept pace with Surrey's population growth and child care needs, with feedback from non-profit community service agencies, commercial operators and public partners painting a stark picture of severely stretched resources.
- There is limited integration of child care in new developments, presenting notable risks to the integration of family and child-centred infrastructure and services as the City develops. Particularly in the City's urban core, a lack of consideration for integrating child care into the built environment threatens to exclude a key social infrastructure from City Centre, which is projected to become the City's fastest growing and most dense community in the coming years.
- Inadequate local ECE education opportunities exacerbate existing shortages of ECE workers. Labour shortages threaten child care operators' capacity to maintain existing services. Feedback demonstrates ECE labour shortages may also discourage private sector investment in child care, with operators consistently noting staffing issues are a deterrent to growing their operations.
- Child care quality is threatened when employers are desperate to fill positions, potentially sacrificing requirements and standards for staff experience and training. An increasing number of exemptions to Fraser Health Authority Licensing appear to have a correlation with tightening shortages of ECE certified staff, especially in connection to infant toddler certified educators. Negative pressures on hiring practices and increasing

licensing exemptions may negatively impact child care quality and potentially the safety and well-being of children.

- Evidence of unfilled child care spaces despite high need suggest affordability issues – child care fees are higher than what many Surrey families can afford to pay. While space creation is needed, there is broad consensus on the need to adequately utilize existing child care capacity by closing the price disequilibrium in the market. Child care closures pose a risk to businesses and the families and children who rely on those spaces.
- Similarly, a lack of affordable child care leaves many families with no choice but to place children in illegal child care, with potential child safety risks and legal consequences. Education around safety and legal risks is necessary to support parents in making an informed child care decision; however, addressing affordability is critical to decreasing the number of children left in illegal child care.
- Fraser Health Licensing is responsible for the assessment of new license applications, routine monitoring and the investigation of all complaints and serious incidents that relate to licensed child care facilities. Any increase in applications for license and operating facilities directly impacts the Fraser Health Authority Licensing resources and capacity. Additional resources to Fraser Health Authority Licensing are critical for supporting the government’s efforts to expand the number of licensed child care spaces across the region. Additional resources will mitigate the potential for bottlenecks in the child care licensing process and assessment of new license applications, supporting government timelines for the creation of new child care spaces.
- Suboptimal child care environments negatively impact children’s lived experiences in child care settings and child care quality, resulting in adverse impacts on children’s development and health. It is important to maintain a focus on child care quality as efforts and investments are made to address a lack of spaces. Adequate access to outdoor “natural” play space should remain a prioritized concern.
- Surrey’s School District continues to face significant space pressures within schools as a result of Surrey’s sustained population growth.
- Surrey’s Child Care Resource and Referral is a cornerstone for Surrey families, child care providers small and large, and child and family serving community service agencies. The CCRR plays a critical role in disseminating child care information to parents, connecting providers with needed resources and training, liaising with the public sector, providing a temperature reading of community needs to the City, Child Care Licensing and the provincial government. Community partners note the CCRR’s functions include assisting families learn about, apply and/or connect to financial and support programs, helping to close critical access gaps faced by the most vulnerable in Surrey, including young parent, lone parent, Aboriginal and refugee families. Feedback indicates the CCRR is severely stretched for resources, and adequate investment in it would help bridge more families to programs and systems of support.

PRIORITIES

The following framework of five priorities guides proposed actions to address Surrey's existing and future child care challenges, and incorporates Surrey's vision for an adequate child care system where child care is *ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, HIGH QUALITY* and *COMPREHENSIVE*.

1. CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Investing in the creation of more child care spaces so that capacity keeps up with population growth and shortages in existing/current capacity are addressed

2. OPERATING CAPACITY

Supporting additional and improved operating capacity so that spaces are viable, usable and accessible

3. INTEGRATION & COORDINATION

Improving the integration and coordination of all parts of the local child care system so that each child is connected and can access what they need, when, where and how they need it; and the supply can be changed/adapted in an ongoing and proactive way

4. TALENT DEVELOPMENT & SUPPLY

Creating more local ECE education and training opportunities to develop high quality talent that is appropriately incentivized for recruitment, retention and delivery of high quality child care.

5. ACCESSIBILITY & EQUITY

Helping the most vulnerable so the poorest don't get left behind

IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

1. Invest in local child care resources and support services to families, child care providers, and employers through additional funding to meet growth needs and develop an immediate space creation plan for the non-profit sector
 - a. Options Community Services - Child Care Resource and Referral Program (CCRR)- Increase additional staff to meet current unmet need and broaden expansion to meet impact of space creation. Invest in 4 FTE to address 500 plus subsidy referral requests per month, currently inclusive of an additional 30% of subsidy related requests representing unmet need.
 - b. Local Government - provide time limited support to local government to immediately develop an action plan that supports universal child care space expansion. Building the capacity of the non-profit community service agencies to provide child care services (currently represents less than 10% of Surrey providers) promoting social welfare, job readiness, and child well-being and development. Invest in 1 FTE within the City of Surrey to support the coordinated expansion of child care spaces and \$100,000 to assist non-profit organizations to expand service provision.
2. Invest in local ECE training spaces in partnership with high quality public educational providers in Surrey (e.g., explore potential opportunities with Surrey School District #36, with the City of Surrey as partner)
3. Invest in increased Fraser Health Authority quality control licensing resources to facilitate and keep up with growth in child care licensing applications and support regulatory functions to mitigate pressures on child care quality and reduce risks to children in child care
 - a. Fraser Health – Child Care Licensing: Invest in 5 FTE to address 200 applications per year for new child care operations requiring 50 hours per application to ensure appropriate full day inspections for each applicant and enable re-allocation of existing licensing staff to all other licensing inspection functions that are currently under-resourced.

Note: The above recommendations are based on our understanding that the Province of British Columbia will continue to advance commitments and proposed investments to expand child care spaces, in alignment with the development of a universal child care system to increase affordability, quality, accessibility and comprehensiveness of child care services for B.C. children and families. Furthermore, the above recommendations support sustained government efforts to consult with and invest in child care that addresses the needs of Aboriginal children and families.

CONCLUSION and NEXT STEPS

The Surrey Child Care Report synthesizes the findings of the Surrey Community Child Care Task Force with the objective of developing a robust picture of child care challenges in Surrey and achieving collaborative, partnership-based child care solutions with government, private and non-profit community services sector partners to support a child care vision for the betterment of Surrey's children and families.

The Report outlines existing child care challenges and identifies the risks these pose to Surrey children and families, child care operators, the community, and public partners. Building on community-gathered evidence of insufficient child care spaces and unaffordability, pressures that dilute child care quality, training and ECE labour force concerns, and risks associated with an overburdened Fraser Health Licensing Authority, to name only a few, the Report presents key immediate recommendations to the provincial government.

Moreover, the Report lays a foundation for collaborative action from all partners. Internal discussions among partners will follow to identify what each partner is capable of doing to advance the work of the Task Force to date and secure letters of agreement that outline how each will contribute to the collective implementation of actions resulting from this work.

APPENDIX I CHILD CARE TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

Gerard Bremault (Co-Chair)	Chief Executive Officer, The Centre for Child Development (including Sophie's Place) & Child Development Foundation of BC
Daljit Gill-Badesha (Co-Chair)	Healthy Community & Children-Youth Manager, City of Surrey, Middle Childhood Matters and Board Member of the Provincial Child Care Council (PCCC) of BC
Christy Northway	Assistant Superintendent, Surrey School District # 36
Annette Dellinger	Regional Childcare Manager, Licensing, Health Protection, Fraser Health
Nicole Marshall	Regional Manager, Fraser Health
Anne Peterson	Policy & Research Manager, Surrey Board of Trade
Sharlene Wedel	Program Manager, Child Care Options Resource and Referral
Rhea Hubbard	Director, Youth & Family Programs, Alexandra Neighbourhood House, Children First
Sandra Christian	President/Founder, Creative Kids
Erin Friday	Program Manager, Maxxine Wright Early Care & Learning Centre, Atira Women's Resource Society
Penny Coates	Child Care Consultant and Advocate

***Additional support provided by the Surrey Working Group on Non-Profit Child Care, whose efforts spurred the initial steps of this work.**

APPENDIX II COMPLEXITY OF PROVINCIAL CHILD CARE AND RELATED FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

MINISTRY	PROGRAM	FAMILY STATUS	CHILD STATUS	TYPE OF CARE	MAXIMUM SUBSIDY	SPECIAL NOTES
MCFD	BASIC CHILD CARE SUBSIDY	* Net Family Income - BC Resident - Canadian citizenship/permanent resident, convention refugee/need of protection - Family Size - Employment status or Student status - Hours of Work - Parents with preschoolers who meet other subsidy criteria but not employment status or student status, may be eligible for part-time preschool subsidy consideration - Parents with preschoolers who meet other subsidy criteria but cannot work or go to school because of a significant confirmed medical or disability condition may be eligible *Families earning up to \$40,000 per year may be eligible for full subsidy if meet other criteria. Families up to \$55,000 may receive partial subsidy	- Number of children - Age - Hours of care required	<u>Licensed:</u> - Preschool - Under 3 Group care 3-5 Group care - School aged Group care during school year - School aged Group care during school breaks - Family child care - Mixed Age Group care <u>Unlicensed:</u> - Registered License Not Required care - License Not Required care - In Own Home care	Variable rates by: - Type of care - Number of days per week - Whether 4 hours of care and under per day or over 4 hours per day - Eligibility for full or partial subsidy See Subsidy chart for actual rates NOTE: Subsidy rates are substantially below the actual child care fees being charged by providers. Low income families who only qualify for basic subsidy, are required to cover the difference. Low subsidy rates and restrictive monthly net family income eligibility are creating HUGE Affordability and Accessibility barriers	Parent must find care first, then apply for subsidy. Parents are responsible for full fees until subsidy is approved. MCFD does not back pay. Subsidy starts in the month the applicant applies but often process delays mean care providers are not receiving timely payments. Parents responsible for renewing their subsidy whenever a change in eligibility. Often leads to delays in payment for care providers Many care providers very hesitant to take subsidy clients due to payment delays
MCFD	SPECIAL NEEDS (SN) SUBSIDY	Family must be eligible for basic subsidy to be considered. (See above)	Assessed disability requiring support and child given a Special Needs designation by a professional working with the child	All types of care (see above)	Maximum \$150/month top up to existing subsidy rates Possible subsidy can be applied to children up until 19 years	Parent must find care for child with special needs and then apply for subsidy <u>and</u> special needs subsidy -Additional form filled by professional working with child confirming impairment which requires support * Challenge is to find a care provider that will accept a child with both a SN designation and subsidy.

SURREY CHILD CARE REPORT

April 2018

MCFD	CHILD PROTECTION	Open MCFD or delegated Aboriginal Authority Child Protection file Foster family (including blood family foster situation) where guardianship has <u>not</u> been granted	- Age - Protection or foster plan in place that specifically requires child care as part of approved plan	All types of care (see above), but there seems to be a preference for licensed group care	Full fee subsidy ONLY while approved MCFD protection or foster plan in place. Where child is in foster care, foster family applies for basic subsidy, but care provider must invoice social worker for top-up	Full fee subsidy must be approved by individual social workers and Victoria (referral 2044). Often delays in payment to care providers. Fee top-up lost if foster family (which can be extended family) receives guardianship
MCFD	YOUNG PARENT PROGRAM (YPP)	- Registered in Young Parent program at participating high school - Not completed high school - A parent at age 20 or younger - Up to the age of 24 in some programs - Meets basic subsidy criteria	Pre-kindergarten age	Under 3 Group care 3-5 Group care (if available through the YPP centre)	Enhanced child care subsidy up to \$1,000 per month	Parent must be eligible for, registered in and actively attending the Young Parent Program Enhanced subsidy lost when parent no longer part of YPP or child has to move to non-YPP child care
MSDSI	SINGLE PARENT EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE (SPEI)	- Single parent on income assistance - Must go through qualification process through WorkBC	- Number - Age - Hours of care required	All types of care (see above)	Full fee subsidy for maximum 2 years while part of SPEI program; provided as part of contract with WorkBC agency	Parent must be eligible for, registered in and actively attending the SPEI program. Care provider must invoice WorkBC agency for fee top-up. Can create delays for care providers Fee top-up lost at end of SPEI program Parent has to apply for fee top-up.
MSDSI	SPECIAL HEALTHCARE/ DISABILITY EXEMPTION AS PER MSSD REGULATIONS	- Income assistance or Person with Disability client - Significant parental healthcare/ disability issue confirmed by health practitioner eg substance abuse, complex health needs	- Number - Age - Hours of care required	All types of care	Full fee subsidy while parent attending approved treatment program	Fee top-up lost when approved treatment program ends

* Some specialized federal programs for new immigrants, refugees and Aboriginal children may include fully funded child care or child care fee top-ups while participants attend. Very limited availability and program specific criteria. Child care ends when program ends.

** February 22, 2017 Draft

APPENDIX III SCAN OF ECE TRAINING IN BC

Prepared for the Surrey Community Child Care Task Force

ECE TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Currently ECE training in BC is offered through classroom instruction at 19 public institutions, 10 private colleges and 2 school district continuing education programs. Five public institutions and 1 private institution offer ECE training on-line; this includes the out of Province University of Lethbridge on-line program. Note: MTI College has recently closed both campuses and their ECE students have been directed to other ECE programs).

With the recent closure of MTI College, the only Surrey based programs remaining are the private programs at Sprott-Shaw College, Stenberg and Vancouver Career College. Surrey students are also attending Douglas College, University of Fraser Valley, Burnaby and Delta continuing education programs, and CDI College of Business, Technology and Healthcare. It is possible for Surrey students to go to Capilano, Langara, Vancouver Community College, the Montessori Training Centre of BC and Ridge Meadows College, but this is considered less likely for travel reasons. Little is known about the number of Surrey students pursuing an on-line ECE program.

All the ECE training institutions offer the Basic ECE program and most also offer the Infant Toddler and the Special Needs certification. Note: Sprott-Shaw Surrey campus, Stenberg and Ridge Meadows only offer the Basic program. University of Lethbridge on-line students are required by the Registry to take some additional programs to ensure proper orientation to the BC context.

Note: Private colleges are certified under the Private Training Act 2016. The legislation was marketed as improving standards, however the actual content focuses primarily on the mechanics of the approval process and fees, ongoing certification fees, inspection fees, enforcement policies, a security bond, and contribution of monies to a Student Tuition Administrative Penalty Protection Fund (in case a college or one of its programs lose its certification or is forced to close for financial reasons). All public and private institutions wishing to enroll international students and those students applying for the BC Student Financing program must achieve and retain a “designated” status.

ECE INSTRUCTORS

It is a requirement that ECE instructors must have at least ECE Basic certification. Other professional requirements are up to each institution.

FEES

Very little on-line information is available but fees seem to vary from \$5,000 to \$16,000 for the Basic program.

COURSE CONTENT

An ECE training program must submit their course objectives, outlines, number of course hours, and student expectations to the ECE Registry at the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Private institutions must have their courses first reviewed by a paid field expert and the ECE Registry. The Ministry website identifies the following key documents for training ECE students:

- ECEBC Code of Ethics
- BC Child Care Sector Occupational Competencies (currently being reviewed by an Inter-ministerial Committee and a first draft should be available shortly)
- CCFL Act & Child Care Regulation particularly Schedule G and the new gross motor/outdoor play requirements

Note: BC's Early Learning Framework is integrated into most public and school district based ECE training programs, but it is not currently considered a required document for ECE training purposes by the ECE Registry and is not used by most private ECE training institutions.

A quick scan of those institutional websites that provide information regarding their ECE curriculum, suggests that the following Basic modules are considered core by all training institutions, although the priority and time given to each module seems to vary:

- ECE context in BC
- Child Growth and Development
- Observation and Recording Skills
- Guiding and Caring/Discipline
- Health, Safety, Nutrition
- Interpersonal Communication
- 3-4 modules related to Play Environments and ECE Curriculum – language arts, literature, arts, music, movement, science, math, community
- 2-3 practicums (may be faculty supervised or simply documented by student video or portfolio), (practicums may be selected by faculty or at most private colleges students are left to find their own practicum)

Other modules that seem to vary from institution to institution include:

- English & Communication Skills
- Daycare Administration, policies and procedures
- Computer skills

- Employment Success Strategies – resumes, job interviews, self-evaluation, teamwork
- Family and Community Relationships and Resources
- Early Learning Framework, Reflective Practice
- Honouring Diversity

