

# DEVELOPING A CHILD CARE STRATEGY AND PLAN

**Guide 1: Developing A Child Care Strategy and Plan** provides a detailed outline of how local governments can complete a child care strategy and action plan. This guide contains the following:

- Introduction
- Aligning with the provincial child care policy
- Steps towards building a child care plan

## 1.1 Introduction

Local governments have the authority over land planning and zoning in their communities, which are common barriers to creating child care spaces. Many are now realizing the importance of child care to their local economy and overall community wellbeing. As a result, they are stepping into leadership roles, creating child care plans and supporting the development of new child care spaces. Many are even delivering child care.

Planning for child care, and then developing detailed strategies and implementation plans, are the main local government pathway towards enhancing child care in their communities.

Formal strategies and plans can be leveraged to obtain child care capital funding, improve accountability, and serve as a road map towards an inclusive universal child care system. Child care plans also build cross-sectoral partnerships that are an essential part of child care development. By collaborating with partners such as Indigenous governments, community members, and school boards, local governments are able to determine the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps present within existing services, and plan for change accordingly.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.2 Aligning with Provincial Policy

While child care services are managed and delivered at a local level, the primary role for policy and funding lies with the Province. Local child care plans should strategically align with the provincial government's commitments and plans.

Following the 2017 provincial election, there was a significant shift in child care with unparalleled commitment by the Province of BC to provide new funding towards building a universal, publicly funded, quality child care system for families who need or want it.

BC established the following priority areas of investment:

- Enhance the **accessibility** of child care options by increasing the number of spaces;
- Increase **affordability** of child care, beginning with Infant/Toddler care;
- Enhance the **quality** of licensed child care programs by supporting the training and professional development of early childhood educators;
- Enhance child care **equity** through targeted investment in underserved communities, such as Indigenous families, families with children with support needs and young parents/guardians completing their secondary education.

While details of the long term plan are still unfolding, a number of initiatives towards increasing access, reducing fees and improving quality have been made. See [Childcare BC](#) for details.

<sup>6</sup>(Friendly, Doherty, & Beach, 2005).

## 1.3 Steps Towards Building A Child Care Strategy and Plan

Undertaking the development of a child care strategy, and subsequently implementing the plan, is a significant long-term commitment. While there is no universally agreed upon “best practice” for child care planning, there are several promising practices and key learnings to be gleaned from local governments across British Columbia. This section will outline recommended key steps which include:

1. Establish internal planning processes
2. Complete a community profile
3. Develop and implement a public consultation or community engagement plan
4. Write a needs assessment (with the data from the community profile and community engagement)
5. Plan for change through strategic and operational planning
6. Implement, monitor and report

### Step 1 – Establish internal planning processes

To start the planning and ensure that the work will move forward seamlessly, it is important to identify a staff member as the ‘project lead’.

Next, create a working group to monitor, advise and help implement the child care planning work. The working group should contain representation from key partners and stakeholders, such as local First Nations and Indigenous organizations, the school district, licensing office, MCFD, child care resource and referral centre, parks and recreation, local child care providers, childhood development centres, early childhood interventionists (e.g. Supported Child Development, Aboriginal Supported Child Development, and Early Intervention Therapists), community businesses and major community employers. The role of the advisory/working group could be to:

- Exchange information;
- Collaborate on joint initiatives;
- Collect and evaluate data on child population, child care inventory, needs of local parents/guardians, children and providers;
- Pursue continuous improvement by implementing initiatives in response to the data; and
- Prepare annual reports on child care services in the region

It may be possible to add child care to the purview of an existing working group. However, the timing and frequency of all meetings must recognize that most child care operators do not have the capacity to have staff available during regular business hours.

Once you have decided to develop a child care strategy and plan, it is important to confirm your goals, principles/values and reasons for taking action.

Table 2 Steps to establish internal planning processes

## STEPS

## ACTIONS

## HELPFUL LINKS

### 1. 1. Establish the point person

- a. Identify the responsible staff person/ position
- b. Establish the position's responsibilities and accountabilities

### 1.2. Create a cross-sectoral advisory/working group

- a. Recruit advisory committee members from the following groups as applicable to the community, such as:
  - First Nations Métis Nation Chartered Communities and Indigenous organizations (off-reserve),
  - Schools (e.g., Early Learning Lead, Principals, Facilities, Parent Advisory Council)"
  - Health Authority Community Care Licensing,
  - MCFD,
  - Child care resource and referral
  - Parks and recreation,
  - Local child care providers,
  - Early childhood interventionists (e.g. Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development),
  - Child Development Centres,
  - Community businesses and
  - Major community employers
  - Local Health Authority: Public Health & Healthy Communities
- b. Create Terms of Reference

#### Examples of child care advisory committees:

- I. [Delta Child and Youth Committee](#)
- II. [North Shore Child Care Planning Committee](#)
- III. [City of Vancouver Joint Child Care Council](#)
- IV. [City of Burnaby Child Care Resources Group](#)

**Tip:** It may be possible to add child care to the purview of an existing advisory/working group, as opposed to creating a new table.

### 1.3. Confirm goals, principles/values and reasons for taking action

Answer the following:

- a. What do we hope to achieve as a local government in relation to child care? What is our vision for the future of child care in our community?
- b. What principles and values will guide our child care strategy and plan development process?
- c. Why do we believe it is necessary to create a child care strategy and plan?
- d. What other local strategies or plans exist?
- e. What key partnerships should be considered?
- f. What are our service population priorities (Ex. Inclusion supports, new immigrants/refugees, Francophone/other cultural groups)

## Step 2. Complete a Community Profile

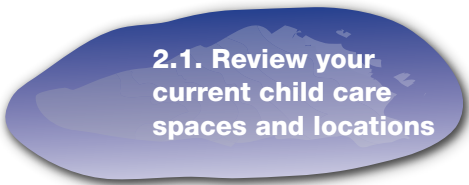
In order to plan effectively for your community, it is important to have current information on your community's population and child care situation. These profiles have various components, outlined below, and should be used to help inform the development of your strategy and plan.

Table 3 Steps to complete a community profile

### STEPS

### ACTIONS

### HELPFUL LINKS



#### 2.1. Review your current child care spaces and locations

- a. Create an inventory of who is delivering child care, and where. Be sure to include which public and independent schools have licensed child care on site

- b. Review number of child care spaces by type
- Group (birth to 36 months)
  - Group (30 months to school age)
  - Group (school age)
  - Preschool
  - Multi-age
  - Licensed family child care
  - Other

- c. Look at who provides child care
- Not-for-profit, for-profit or for-profit family child care

- d. Understand what other agencies and groups provide child care supports (Ex. Supported Child Development, Boys and Girls Club, libraries, etc.)

- I. [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Interactive Child Care Desert Map](#)
- II. [British Columbia Child Care Map](#)
- III. [Child Care Resource and Referral Centres](#)
- IV. [Fraser Health Child Care Facilities](#)
- V. [Interior Health Child Care Programs](#)
- VI. [Island Health Community Care](#)
- VII. [Vancouver Coastal Health Child Care Licensing](#)
- VIII. [Northern Health Child Care](#)

## STEPS

## ACTIONS

## HELPFUL LINKS

### 2.2. Document what you know about your community

- a. Obtain the following information:
- Child population statistics by age range (0-2, 3-5, 6-12)
  - Child population projections
  - Number of children in one-parent families
  - Median family income couple families with at least one child 0-5
  - Median family income, lone parent families with at least one child 0-5
  - Children in low income families
  - Languages spoken at home
  - Median monthly shelter costs of owned dwellings
  - Median monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings
  - Population: Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
  - Population: Black/people of colour
  - Immigration statistics
  - Employment statistics
  - Percent of residents who work within the local government
  - Children who have support needs
  - Middle Development Instrument (MDI) and Early Development Instrument (EDI) scores

- I. [Statistics Canada Census data](#)
- II. [Population Projections](#)
- III. [Middle Development Instrument \(MDI\)](#)
- IV. [Early Development Instrument \(EDI\)](#)
- V. [BC Government. Open Data Catalogue - Student Enrollment and FTE by Grade.](#)

- b. Analyse the access rates by calculating the number of spaces per current (and projected) populations for each age group and type of care. (i.e.: # of infant /toddler spaces ÷ numbers of birth to 3-year-old children x 100 = spaces per 100 children)

- I. [CCOF & Universal Child Care Prototype Sites \(PT\) Child Care Spaces to Child Population](#)

### 2.3. Complete an inventory of assets or opportunities for the Local Government or other public partners

- a. Map key public assets like community centres, libraries, parks, schools, post-secondary institutions and transportation routes

- I. [City of Surrey Child Care Space Prioritization-Calculator](#)

- b. Review current or planned capital projects, growth areas, vacant land or spaces

### 2.4. Where is child care in current internal policies, practices and plans?

Review Official Community Plans (OCP), land use policies (i.e. where is child care permitted), zoning bylaws, application processes, public information about child care for operators and/or parents/guardians (See [GUIDE #2: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE IN FACILITATING, SECURING AND FINANCING CHILD CARE](#))

- I. [2019 Survey of Licensed Child Care Spaces and Policies in Metro Vancouver – Appendix B \(p.16\).](#)

## Step 3. Develop and Implement a Community Engagement Plan

Completing a meaningful community engagement plan will ensure that community needs and voices are represented in the child care strategy. Below are recommendations for creating and implementing this plan.

**Table 4: Steps to develop and implement a public consultation or community engagement plan**

### STEPS

### ACTIONS

### HELPFUL LINKS

#### 3.1. Confirm engagement objectives

- a. Determine what you need/want to learn from community partners and the public

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- b. Establish what community partners and the public need to know in order to participate in engagement activities effectively. For example, community members may need some background information on the provincial child care strategy, the role of local governments in child care, etc.

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- c. Set community engagement objectives, determine what you want to achieve

- I. [Province of BC Child Care BC](#)
- II. [Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C.](#)

#### 3.2. Identify stakeholders and determine the level of engagement, using an Equity and Inclusion Lens

- a. Determine who you need to consult, engage, and partner with (likely different for each level of engagement) Some examples include:
  - Local First Nations, Métis charter communities and Indigenous organizations
  - Parents/ guardians, especially from underserved groups such as single parents, parents of children with support needs, immigrants/newcomers, Black, Indigenous, Persons of Colour , etc.
  - Child care operators
  - Child Development Centres
  - School district staff
  - Local Government staff
  - Health Authority
  - Local post-secondary institutions
  - Major employers in the community

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- b. Select the appropriate engagement methods and questions for each group (survey, focus group, interviews, workshops, etc.)

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- c. Confirm budget and timelines

- I. Survey Samples:
  - [Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey Template](#)
  - [Child Care Provider Survey Template](#)
  - [City of New Westminster - Survey Samples.](#)
  - [City of North Vancouver - Survey Samples.](#)
  - [City of Richmond - Survey Samples.](#)
- II. [Interview Guide Sample](#)
- III. [Advancing Equity and Inclusion - A Guide for Municipalities](#)

#### 3.3. Carry out the engagement work

- a. Follow your engagement plan and complete the engagement work

## Step 4: Prepare a Needs Assessment

After compiling the community profile data and completing the community engagement work, writing a needs assessment is your opportunity to analyze the collected data and provide evidence for the development of a child care strategy and plan. The needs assessment helps establish the future vision for the community. This analysis will enable the local government to understand community strengths, gaps, and opportunities. Key questions to consider when reviewing the data are:

1. What is the local government doing well?
2. What/where are the gaps?
3. What do stakeholders identify as priorities?
4. What is the availability of spaces compared to the Provincial or National average?
5. What opportunities are available to create new spaces?
6. What is the median household income compared to monthly child care costs?



### TIP

**Estimating child care need or setting service targets can be a helpful planning tool that can support policy to better align need and supply. Potential approaches include:**

- i. Assessing child care supply against “level of service” targets based on child population (e.g. European Commission’s “Barcelona objectives” to provide child care to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and school age, and 33% of children under 3.)**
- ii. Estimating child care needs based on select data inputs (e.g. City of Vancouver models child care need by neighbourhood or proposed development).**
  - **This approach permits neighbourhood-based needs analysis reflecting geography and social indicators. However, this method does not tend to reflect realistic need in major employment centres, or patterns of child care access across neighbourhood boundaries.**

**[Link to an overview of City of Vancouver’s approach to estimating need](#)**

## Step 5: Create the Child care strategy and plan

When considering the child care strategy and plan development, it is important to note that local governments have limited resources to address child care needs on their own. Nonetheless, local governments can play a leadership role in many ways, such as having child care friendly policies, seeking opportunities for funding, engaging in local government social planning, liaising with partners, building strategic relationships, and advancing the efforts of others. The process for developing the child care strategy and plan is outlined below.

**Table 5: Steps to Create the Child care strategy and plan**

STEPS	ACTIONS	HELPFUL LINKS
5.1. Confirm a set of values or guiding principles for the future	a. Review principles and values created prior to the engagement process and confirm they still align	
5.2. Develop a broad policy or commitment statement	a. Receive approval for the policy/ commitment statement from Council	
5.3. Set child care space targets	a. Set space targets based on community need	
5.4. Identify options for increasing child care supply (i.e., change to land use policies)		II. <a href="#">List of UBCM Planning Grant Recipients</a>
5.5. Establish priorities that align with your set of values and guiding principles.		
5.6. Establish action items for the priorities	a. Answer the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your short, (0-2 years), mid (3-5 years) and long-term actions (6-10 years)?</li> <li>• Who is going to do what and by when?</li> <li>• Who do you need to partner with for each action?</li> <li>• What resources are required?</li> </ul> b. Tip: Plan for changes in supply and demand	



## Step 6. Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

In order to move the child care strategy and plan forward, local governments should work closely with the established advisory committee to identify areas where on-going collaboration would be most effective. These could include joint initiatives such as advocacy, information-sharing, collection and evaluation data, preparation of regional annual reports, etc.

If something is measured, it is seen as important. Accordingly, local government staff should develop concrete (but not complicated) tools to measure their progress on implementation. Annual reports should be provided to local government council highlighting statistics and also a discussion of successes, failures and learnings with recommendations for necessary changes.

**Table 6 Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting**

### STEPS

**6.1. Work with the advisory committee to identify areas for on-going collaboration**

### ACTIONS

- a. Review options for collaboration on joint initiatives such as
- advocacy
  - information-sharing
  - collection and evaluation of data
  - preparation of regional annual reports

**6.2. Develop concrete tools to measure progress on implementation.**

**6.3. Report annually on local government child care statistics, success, failures and learnings with recommendations for necessary changes.**

