

# Stepping Stones

**Child Care  
Planning Guides  
For BC's Local  
Governments**

February 2021

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# Introduction

Local governments have increasingly recognized that child care is an essential support for the economic and social wellbeing of their residents, and that child care services are critical to supporting a robust local economy.

Research has confirmed the importance of child care for healthy child development, gender equity, social inclusion, and poverty reduction strategies. Yet Canada only averages 27 regulated child care spaces per 100 children, aged birth to twelve. This average is even lower in BC, where there are 19.6 regulated child care spaces per 100 children (2020). Additionally, these access levels in BC are greatly reduced for those children under the age of three and school age. With over 70% of women with children under the age of 12 in the labour force, it is understood that there is a shortage of quality and affordable child care across the province.<sup>1</sup>

Child care is a critical community service that can be supported by every level of government. While the Provincial and Federal governments have the primary roles to play in the policy and funding of child care, local governments have authority over local planning and land use, as well as the most in-depth understanding of local area needs. While not an assigned or legislated role, local governments can have an important leadership role with respect to planning, facilitating, and even delivering child care in order to support their residents and the local economy.

The idea of creating guides to assist local governments was first presented to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) by the Social Issues Subcommittee of the Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Advisory Committee in 2018. UBCM pursued support and resources from the Province and these guides were then developed in partnership with an Advisory Committee consisting of representation from local governments across the province.

The purpose of this document is to consolidate new child care planning ideas and approaches to assist local governments of all sizes in planning, facilitating, and even delivering child care. It includes examples of innovative approaches that are being implemented across BC and offers helpful tips to support the work, while also recognizing differences in capacity and size between urban, rural and remote communities.

## There are five guides:

- **[Guide #1 DEVELOPING A CHILD CARE STRATEGY AND PLAN](#)**
- **[Guide #2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE IN FACILITATING, SECURING AND FINANCING CHILD CARE](#)**
- **[Guide #3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN DESIGNING AND BUILDING CHILD CARE SPACES](#)**
- **[Guide #4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS AND PROVINCIAL LICENSING PROCESSES](#)**
- **[Guide #5 WORKING WITH CHILD CARE OPERATORS](#)**

Each guide has a distinct focus and local governments, along with their partners, should consult the ones most applicable to their current situation. These guides can be read collectively, individually or applicable sections can be read on their own as they adapt to the diverse structures and contexts experienced by local governments when facilitating child care in the community. [Link here for the individual guides.](#)

It is important to note that these guides were written during the COVID-19 pandemic and it is difficult to predict what child care will look like post-pandemic, however, it is widely recognized that child care remains critical to economic recovery and will continue to be a priority for families in BC

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<sup>1</sup>StatsCan 150



# Background: Child Care in BC

There are not enough child care spaces available in BC to meet the needs of families in communities across the province. Historically, child care has been driven by the market economy resulting in high costs that are unaffordable for many families and certain populations have even more limited access. Furthermore, historically low wages and benefits provided for staff have made recruitment and retention extremely difficult.

In 2018, the BC Government launched the \$1-billion Childcare BC plan to put BC on the path to universal child care. Budget 2020 built on this initial investment in child care to bring the total to \$2 billion over three years. Through Childcare BC, the Province is making progress towards addressing the system-wide challenges related to accessible, affordable and quality child care in BC.

Since 2018, local governments have also received support to plan for child care in communities and examine how they can support the creation of more child care spaces for their local families, taking into consideration local context and challenges.

## Government Roles and Responsibilities

### 1. Local Government's Role:

Local governments are uniquely positioned to plan, manage, design, remove barriers and implement programs within their local communities.<sup>2</sup>

On the most basic level, local governments are responsible for land planning and zoning, which are common barriers to creating child care spaces. Many local governments are also realizing the importance of child care to their local economy and overall community wellbeing. As a result, they are stepping into leadership roles by enacting child care friendly policies, creating child care plans, seeking new opportunities for funding, engaging in social planning, building strategic relationships and supporting the development of new child care spaces. Many local governments are even delivering child care.

### 2. Provincial Role:

In 2018, the Province announced Childcare BC, a 10-year commitment towards a universal child care system that provides accessible, affordable and quality child care. Government has since implemented a number of new policies and funding initiatives including programs to reduce and subsidize parent fees, and ones that support the creation of new child care spaces, and workforce development.

Currently in British Columbia, child care and early learning governance, as well as policy and funding spans across three ministries: Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. Table 1 outlines the different responsibilities of each Ministry.

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<sup>2</sup>(Friendly, Doherty, & Beach, 2005).

**Table 1 Provincial Ministry Responsibilities**

<b>Ministry of Children and Family Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care Policy</li> <li>• Administration of child care funding programs, including operating funding, subsidization of parent fees and capital funding</li> <li>• Administration of the Early Childhood Educator Registry</li> <li>• Services to support Inclusive Child Care</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry of Health &amp; Regional Health Authorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for <a href="#">Community Care and Assisted Living Act</a> and the <a href="#">BC Child Care Regulations</a>, which outlines child care types and licensing requirements.</li> <li>• Child care licensing and monitoring by Regional Health Authorities</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry of Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for the <a href="#">School Act</a>, which outlines Boards of Education role in developing child care policies and operating school-age care.</li> <li>• BC's <a href="#">Early Learning Framework</a></li> <li>• StrongStart BC - delivered by School Districts</li> </ul>

### 3. Federal Role:

The Government of Canada has a range of programs that support child care, including direct funding to three specific population groups: First Nations, Métis and Inuit; families serving in the Canadian military; and newcomers to Canada enrolled in language programs.

The federal government also provides tax deductions for child care costs and offers maternity and parental benefits through Employment Insurance to eligible parents/guardians.

Additionally, the federal government is investing in early learning and care support to create more high-quality, affordable child care across the country. Click here to see Government of Canada [Early Learning and Child Care](#).

## Indigenous Early Childhood and Care

Approximately 70% of Indigenous people in BC live off-reserve<sup>3</sup> and many [Métis Chartered Communities](#) are also based in urban centres. Additionally, many of the Indigenous on-reserve populations also reside near neighbouring municipalities. As a result, Indigenous families and communities regularly interact with and utilize municipal services.

Planning for child care must consider the needs of local Indigenous families who may access the programs. Provincial (and regional) partners to consult with include:

The Indigenous Early Years and Child Care Planners and Navigator positions, located within:

- BC Aboriginal Child Care Society
- Métis Nation BC
- BC Aboriginal Association of Friendship Centres
- Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (Greater Vancouver Region)

<sup>3</sup>StatsCan 150



And other organizations that provide provincial early years and child care services, such as:

- Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC
- First Nations Health Authority

## Inclusive Child Care and Early Intervention Services

Each community must also include equal access and supports for all children in their child care planning. In inclusive programs, children of all abilities, including those with extra support needs, have access to full participation to learn through play with their peers.

Two specific services promoting inclusive child care that are delivered in BC are the [Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development](#) programs. These offer a range of consulting and support services to children, families and child care centres so that children with extra support needs can participate in fully inclusive child care settings. The Aboriginal Supported Child Development program provides these supports in a culturally-relevant and meaningful way.

## Child Care Operations

As local governments embark on their child care journey, it is important to understand who operates child care centres and what the operating model looks like. This will assist with making sound decisions about the roles that a local government might choose. (i.e.: planner, facilitator, grantor, or operator). Child care is primarily a market system in Canada, where finding and paying for child care is mostly the responsibility of parents or guardians.

There are three types of child care operators<sup>4</sup>:

1. Not-for-profit child care services;
2. For-profit child care services, including personal residence based child care programs; and,
3. Publicly operated child care services (i.e. services directly operated by a public entity. Examples include local governments, First Nations bands and boards of education).

Currently in BC, 41% of child care spaces are operated by not-for-profit or public organizations. The remaining 59% are delivered by for-profit entities including licensed care that is delivered in personal residences. This mix varies by community.

Child care is regulated with specific requirements for the number and qualifications of staff and the number of children per program. Human resource costs are the biggest expense, accounting for 70-75% of the operating budget in a typical not-for-profit operation. Additional expenses include building occupancy costs, capital expenses, program and food supplies.

The main source of revenue for most child care programs are parent fees where this can account for 60-70% of revenue in a not-for-profit operation. The balance of revenue comes from the Provincial Government (see [Childcare BC](#)) in the form of Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF) Base Funding, the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, and Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement grants and, more typically in the not-for-profit sector, some fundraising as well. There are a small number of programs (like [Aboriginal Head Start Program](#) or the MCFD pilot [Universal Prototype Sites](#)) that receive most or all of their revenue either directly or indirectly from the provincial or federal governments.

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<sup>4</sup>(Doherty, G., Friendly, M., & Forer, B. (2002). Child care by default or design? An exploration of differences between non-profit and for-profit Canadian child care centres using the "You Bet I Care!" data sets. Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, 75).

## Quality in Child Care

The research is clear that high-quality child care is linked to positive outcomes for children. By engaging with public and community partners, local governments can create policies and make commitments that contribute to quality, including supporting child care operators to have the capacity for growth.

### Quality at the 'system' level

While the direct mandate and authority to build, monitor and assess a quality child care system is within the Provincial government's scope, local governments can ensure that actions and investment decisions are aligned with what research has identified as eight commonly accepted elements, graphically presented below.

These elements are: (1) Ideas, (2) Human Resources (3) Data, Research and Evaluation (4) Infrastructure (5) Financing, (6) Physical Environment (7) Policy and Planning Development (8) Governance<sup>5</sup>. All elements are interconnected and essential to create a strong system; individually they do not have as much impact.



(Source: Martha Friendly and Jane Beach, (2005). Elements of a high quality early learning and child care system. Childcare Resource and Research Unit.)

For local governments that choose to deliver child care programs, [Appendix C](#) offers considerations for quality child care programming.

<sup>5</sup>Friendly, M., & Beach, J. (2005). High quality early learning and child care system. Child Resource and Research Unit, 1-8.

# 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

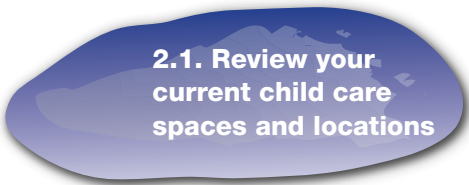
In order to plan effectively for your community, it is important to have current information on your community's population and child care situation. These profiles have various components, outlined below, and should be used to help inform the development of your strategy and plan.

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?

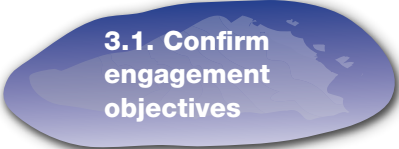


Review Official Community Plans (OCP), land use policies (i.e. where is child care permitted), zoning bylaws, application processes, public information about child care for operators and/or parents/guardians (See [GUIDE #2: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE IN FACILITATING, SECURING AND FINANCING CHILD CARE](#))

- 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
 <p><b>3.1. Confirm engagement objectives</b></p>	<p>a. Determine what you need/want to learn from community partners and the public</p> <hr/> <p>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.</p> <hr/> <p>c. Set community engagement objectives, determine what you want to achieve</p>	<p>I. <a href="#">Province of BC Child Care BC</a></p> <p>II. <a href="#">Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C.</a></p>
 <p><b>3.2. Identify stakeholders and determine the level of engagement, using an Equity and Inclusion Lens</b></p>	<p>a. Determine who you need to consult, engage, and partner with (likely different for each level of engagement) Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local First Nations, Métis charter communities and Indigenous organizations</li> <li>• Parents/ guardians, especially from underserved groups such as single parents, parents of children with support needs, immigrants/newcomers, Black, Indigenous, Persons of Colour , etc.</li> <li>• Child care operators</li> <li>• Child Development Centres</li> <li>• School district staff</li> <li>• Local Government staff</li> <li>• Health Authority</li> <li>• Local post-secondary institutions</li> <li>• Major employers in the community</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>b. Select the appropriate engagement methods and questions for each group (survey, focus group, interviews, workshops, etc.)</p> <hr/> <p>c. Confirm budget and timelines</p>	<p>I. Survey Samples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey Template</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Child Care Provider Survey Template</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">City of New Westminister - Survey Samples.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">City of North Vancouver - Survey Samples.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">City of Richmond - Survey Samples.</a></li> </ul> <p>II. <a href="#">Interview Guide Sample</a></p> <p>III. <a href="#">Advancing Equity and Inclusion - A Guide for Municipalities</a></p>
 <p><b>3.3. Carry out the engagement work</b></p>	<p>a. Follow your engagement plan and complete the engagement work</p>	



## 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	

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. [List of UBCM Planning Grant Recipients](#)

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:
- What are your short, (0-2 years), mid (3-5 years) and long-term actions (6-10 years)?
  - Who is going to do what and by when?
  - Who do you need to partner with for each action?
  - What resources are required?
- 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.**





# LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE IN FACILITATING, SECURING AND FINANCING CHILD CARE

**Guide #2 provides insight into the multiple actions local governments can take to facilitate, secure and finance child care in their community. This guide includes the following:**

- Funding Child Care Through the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund
- Laying the Groundwork: Zoning and Land Use Regulation
- Reducing Barriers to Local Government Development, Zoning, Permitting and Business Licensing Programs
- Using Land Use Authority to Encourage and Fund Child Care Development
- Local Government Capital Allocations and Grants
- Other In-Kind Contributions by Local Government to Create Child Care Spaces
- Local Government Role as Owner-Landlord, Owner-Operator, Or Grantor
- Identifying Suitable Sites for New Child Care Spaces/Facilities
- Other Roles and Activities for Local Governments in Supporting Child Care

## 2.1 Introduction

Many local governments in BC have taken strong leadership roles in facilitating the development of new child care spaces in their communities. They have done this in recognition of the key role that child care plays in economic development and stability, as well as the benefits to healthy child development.

Local governments do not need to bear the total financial burden of creating child care spaces and facilities alone. They can partner with others to facilitate new child care in their communities or collaborate with public institutions and non-profits to greatly increase the impact of their combined efforts.

## 2.2 Creating Spaces Through Childcare BC's Space Creation Programs

The Province has created the [Childcare BC New Spaces Fund](#) to support the creation of licensed child care spaces in communities across the province. Eligibility for provincial capital funding is open to public sector organizations, Indigenous governments, and non-profit societies, as well as businesses and corporate companies. Having local child care plans in place will support the case for needed spaces, however, the New Spaces Fund currently has a funding cap for maximum amount per licensed space that may not cover all project costs.

When applying for the New Spaces Fund, local governments may:

- apply directly for a project of their own;
- partner with another public partner, e.g., school district, housing agency, etc., as part of another social infrastructure project;
- partner with other local community investors i.e., Northern Development Initiative Trust, Columbia Basin Trust, community foundations, etc.) to share the capital costs of creating spaces and facilities;
- partner with other local governments/First Nations.



### District of Vanderhoof

Developed a child care hub with 72 spaces ( infant -school age) as part of their recreation centre with funding from the Province; partnered with the YMCA to operate; received funding from the Province, Integrus Credit Union (sold land at half its value), the District of Vanderhoof & Northern Development Initiative.

### District of Lake Country

Developed 60 spaces (infant – school age) as part of a multi -generational activity centre with funding from the Province; partnered with YMCA.

### City of Port Alberni and Port Alberni Friendship Centre

Developed 50 spaces (infant to school age) with the Province providing funding and the city donating a vacant parcel of land.

### City of Vancouver

A three-year funding partnership with the Province to create 2,300 new spaces, located in schools, community centres and other public facilities.

Maximum impact is achieved by working with other partners and ensuring child care goals and policies are recommended in other strategic plans (e.g.: housing strategies, health authority plans, school district plans, etc.).

## 2.3 Laying the Groundwork: Zoning and Land Use Regulation

Local governments seeking to expand the supply of child care in their jurisdictions should first ensure there are no barriers to child care in their zoning bylaws, related guidelines and policies.

As a first step, the definition(s) of child care within the zoning bylaw must be up-to-date and consistent with the Child Care Licensing Regulation under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act.

Listing child care as an Outright Approval Use wherever it is deemed compatible with the other outright approval, and where it does not impact other uses, provides the least complicated approval path for prospective applicants.

However, where a closer examination of compatibility, design for quality care, or other impacts (such as managing pressures on public parks) is sought, and where there are no potential or anticipated health and safety conflicts with other uses, child care should be listed as a Conditional Approval Use and should reference the BC Child Care Licensing Regulations.

## 2.4 Reducing Barriers to Local Government Development, Zoning, Permitting and Business Licensing Programs

Child care operators are typically unfamiliar with the array of regulatory approval processes required to open new facilities. It can be very helpful to have local governments develop and implement policies and practices that streamline and prioritize the processing of applications.

Examples of ways to streamline this process include:

- Consider assigning one or more staff as the regular contact for child care applications and enquiries. This facilitates the development of expertise and familiarity with child care requirements, including the need for strong coordination with the local health authority.
- Waiving fees outright or charging a nominal fee for all child care applications and related processes.
- Coordinating inspections across departments (in larger jurisdictions) for child care applications to avoid unnecessary disruption of child care programming, minimize confusion, and enhance safety of children in existing facilities.
- Prioritizing child care applications when assigning projects and workloads.

The provincial government has published a useful handbook on local government requirements for child care providers. It covers all regulatory topics related to land use, including: official community plans, zoning, building permits, signage, parking, and business licenses. It can be downloaded here: [A Handbook for Local Child Care Providers](#).

Due to the specific characteristics of some communities, such as the size, economy, limited numbers of Early Childhood Educators, capacity of local non-profits and other providers, the only existing options for child care may be care in a providers' own home. While Family Care Providers and In-home Child Care are an important part of the service delivery, there can be high turnover of providers of this type, so careful consideration of the long term impact of any financial investments must be made.

## 2.5 Using Land Use Authority to Encourage and Fund Child Care Development

In areas with robust development activity, the use of negotiated Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) or Density Bonus Zoning (See 2.5.1) can be very effective in raising funds for new child care spaces, either alone or in combination with other funding sources. Both CACs and Density Bonusing can be used to cover all or a portion of the capital costs of creating new facilities.

**Note:** Capital costs include both 'soft' and 'hard' costs like the design, construction, fit, furnishing, and equipping of the facility.

### 2.5.1 Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) Through Rezoning

CACs are in-kind and/or cash contributions provided by property developers on a negotiated, case-by-case basis as part of the approval process for a rezoning application. The premise of CACs is that growth through development creates increased demand on local infrastructure, including child care.

Local governments without up-to-date CAC policies are encouraged to become familiar with the [provincial government guide on use of the CACs](#). Prepared in 2014, it includes important and useful advice on general principles and approaches to negotiating, securing, and allocating CACs, as well as important context for local government officials considering the use of CACs for child care.

Several municipalities in BC have defined child care as a Community Amenity, including: Burnaby, Delta, New Westminster, North Vancouver (City & District), Port Coquitlam, Vancouver and West Vancouver.

Vancouver has a history of also providing funding from annual operating budgets to cover operational start-up costs for non-profit child care operators in City-owned child care centres, and to address ongoing affordability of child care provided in certain developments. A discussion of Development Cost Charges, CACs and Density Bonusing in the City of Vancouver, including context and background information on benefits, examples, and uses of each, can be found here: [Community Benefits From Developments](#).

### TIP

In both situations, if the CAC or Bonused space is provided 'in-kind', it is important that design and technical standards for the child care facility be provided to the developer, referenced throughout the permitting and construction processes, and included as conditions or subjects of approval to be signed off at every regulatory milestone in the process. A legal agreement, registered on title, is an important tool to ensure that everyone understands exactly what is to be provided, and that obligations are met.

- [City of Richmond Child Care Design Guidelines](#)
- [City of Vancouver Child Care Design Guidelines](#)

## 2.5.2 Density Bonus Zoning

Density Bonus Zoning is another way of achieving amenities, such as child care, through the rezoning/development process. Different from a CAC scenario where a rezoning is negotiated with a CAC, Density Bonus Zoning identifies specific areas in the Official Community Plan as eligible for bonusing, and the conditions that need to be met to qualify. Developers are awarded a higher level of density in those areas in exchange for providing an 'in-kind' amenity such as child care on the development site.

As with CACs, the value of the amenity must be calculated and agree with the value of the additional density.

The advantage of Density Bonusing over negotiated CACs is that it offers more predictability for developers, staff, and communities because of the certainty afforded by the provisions in the OCP and zoning bylaw.

## 2.6 Local Government Capital Allocations and Grants

Although the majority of child care spaces in BC are built through capital funding provided by the Province, or through the land use development provisions described above, many municipalities and other local government entities are able to financially contribute to the capital costs of new facilities, or adaptation of existing assets.

Strong child care infrastructure contributes to economic vitality, just as streets, water, and sanitation do. Including child care as a capital budget item in local government capital plans ensures that funds are set aside for this purpose. These funds can be used by local governments to build child care spaces or provided to non-profit child care operators as grants.

Some examples of jurisdictions in BC that offer capital grants include:

- City of New Westminster
- City of North Vancouver
- District of North Vancouver
- City Richmond
- University of British Columbia – Electoral Area A
- City of Vancouver

In most cases, the grant is relatively small and limited in scope, (e.g., Focused on equipment and furnishing rather than land acquisition and construction). Nevertheless, these funds can help with the costs of finishing or renovating assets to make them suitable for child care. In all cases, only non-profit societies and registered charities are eligible for grants as Section 25 of the [BC Community Charter](#) prohibits local governments from providing a grant, benefit, advantage or other assistance to a business. (i.e., individuals and for-profit businesses are not eligible).



## 2.7 Other In-Kind Contributions by Local Government to Create Child Care Spaces

While the financial resources of most local government entities are limited, by partnering with health authorities, school boards, non-profits, and family child care operators, local governments can combine and lever resources to achieve new spaces.

For example, land assets of local governments that are not required for other priority uses, can be developed directly or leased out to provide new child care facilities as stand-alone facilities, or in shared space or co-location situations. Partnerships with school districts, BC Housing, non-profits, and other local social infrastructure investors can maximize the impact of each party in achieving new spaces.

Co-location with other compatible uses, e.g., community centres, schools, health centres, non-market housing, etc., reduces the cost of land for each, can result in more energy efficient construction, and in some cases can reduce ongoing building operation costs through shared services. For families, co-location of child care in service hubs can increase convenience and accessibility of services.

The [Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative \(SPRE\) website](#) offers many useful resources to “enhance and increase the capacity of not-for-profits and social enterprises to find, develop and operate real estate assets to better serve their communities”.

Tip: Strong, clear leases that spell out responsibilities for maintenance, replacement, recapitalization, and allowable uses ensure long-lasting collaborative relationships.

## 2.8 Local Government Role as Owner-Landlord, Owner-Operator, Or Grantor

Local governments can act as either the owner-operator, owner-landlord, or the grantor, and therefore need to determine their preferred role in providing for child care. This role may also change on a case by case basis. The greater the role taken on by local government, the greater the degree of control, but also the greater degree of responsibility and risk. The least amount of control and lowest degree of risk is with the role of grantor.

### 2.8.1 Local Government as Owner-Operator of Child Care

This role provides the greatest degree of control, accountability, and flexibility in terms of meeting evolving needs of the community.

**COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT** owns and has been operating child care at the Shawnigan Lake Community Centre for over 23 years.

**DISTRICT OF TOFINO** operates the only group care for children ages 3-5 and school age children in the District out of a shared building with Island Health.

**DISTRICT OF OAK BAY**, through its recreation department operates a licensed group care for 3 –5 year olds.

## 2.8.2 Local Government as Landlord to non-profit operators

Where local government entities do not have the capacity or interest in operating child care, they may choose to partner with another public entity (school board, health authority, post-secondary institution, etc.) or non-profit organization who will operate the facility. Instead, local governments can contribute to the stability, affordability and quality of child care spaces it creates and leases to other public and non-profit operators by:



- upholding quality standards for these facilities' design and construction
- carefully selecting operators
- offering nominal or below-market child care leases.

As with any landlord-tenant relationship, a strong lease with a clear description of responsibilities is key to ongoing successful partnerships. Particular consideration should be given to how ongoing maintenance and recapitalization responsibilities will be shared, with thought given to lifecycles of various categories of capital assets.

## 2.8.3 Local Government as (At-Arms-Length) Grantor

When local government entities do not have the capacity or interest in owning-operating, or partnering in the operation of child care facilities, local governments may opt to support new spaces by providing capital funding to experienced not-for-profit organizations for the development of new spaces. This approach would typically be considered the lowest risk approach.

Partnering with school districts, non-profits, health facilities, etc., can result in efficient use of limited capital funds while also increasing accessibility. Where this is the preferred approach, the same considerations regarding clarity in expectations, accountabilities, and ultimate disposal or renewal of the asset is important. If the financial contribution is considered substantial, a funding agreement may be negotiated to secure ongoing operation of the new child care spaces, and the local government may require provisions in the non-profit's constitution and bylaws for how the asset will be disposed of in the event of dissolution of the society.

## 2.9 Identifying Potential Sites for New Child Care Spaces/Facilities

As local governments begin to identify locations for new child care facilities, the planning process should include an inventory and analysis of possible sites. These sites must then be reviewed for suitability. (See [GUIDE #3: LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLES IN DESIGNING AND BUILDING CHILD CARE SPACES](#).) This process is best performed collaboratively with potential community partners, including school districts, health authorities, non-profits, etc. (See [GUIDE #1: DEVELOPING A CHILD CARE STRATEGY AND PLAN](#)).

Possibilities include:

- Existing municipal or other government (i.e., school board-owned property) or non-profit-owned facilities already in use by the public;

### TIP

The City of Surrey, through its most recent Child Care Planning activities, worked with their partners to develop a Child Care Space Prioritization-Calculator: [City of Surrey Child Care Space Prioritization Calculator](#). The Calculator uses a set of quality criteria to identify spaces and places that are worth further and more detailed assessment.

- Vacant land or existing structures in public ownership, but not currently used by the public;
- Public land or facilities with pending redevelopment
- Suitable sites that might be acquired for the purpose of building a new facility.

These are discussed in more detail below.

### 2.9.1 Expansion or Redevelopment of Existing Facilities

Existing facilities already in the public domain are ideal candidates for new or expanded child care facilities and should be given priority consideration for new spaces. These facilities already in the public domain offer the most control over the development or expansion process, and have the potential convenience to families of having more than one program or service offered in the same “hub” location.

Considerations for assessing this category of site include:

- Does the current zoning of the site allow for this use? And added density?
- Is there enough parking for the added use? Or capacity on the site to add required parking/drop-off?
- Are the existing building systems and municipal services (HVAC, structural, code, sewer, water, etc.) adequate to support new spaces?
- Is there unmet demand in the neighbourhood where the land/facility is located? For school age care, is the location easily accessible from the local elementary school?
- Is there enough outdoor space on site that can be designated for child care use?
- Is facility renovation, upgrading or redevelopment planned? Could the scope expand to include child care?
- Does the facility meet the needs of children within the community (wheel chair access, toileting modification, areas for movement)?

### 2.9.2 Vacant land in public ownership

This category of asset is slightly lower in priority than adapting or expanding existing public facilities. Vacant sites, whether publicly owned or not, require various regulatory processes, possibly including rezoning, to develop. These processes require time and capital investments, making them less attractive for “quick wins”. Nevertheless, they are worth considering in the event there are no suitable sites already in use by the public, suitable for expansion in your community.

Consideration for assessing the suitability of sites in this category include:

- Will the site require rezoning to accommodate the use and density?
- Is there demand in the neighbourhood?
- Are there any adjacent or nearby uses that might be a cause for concern from a health and safety perspective? (e.g., land fill, waste transfer station, heavy manufacturing or industrial use, gravel pit, log sorting site, etc.)

#### TIP

Facilities that are already magnets or hubs for the public (e.g., community centres, recreation facilities, schools, etc.) are ideal for expansion to include child care because they are likely to already have the building systems and parking required to support the additional use.

#### TIP

Working with local school districts in planning for new schools in growing areas can benefit everyone. Planning for inclusion of child care from the earliest stages will result in better facilities and a more efficient design.

### 2.9.3 Sites that can be purchased or leased for new facility

This category of site or location is third in terms of priority for consideration due mainly to the additional time and effort required to acquire or secure. Beyond that, the same considerations for vacant sites in the public domain apply:

- Will the site require rezoning to accommodate the use and density?
- Is there demand in the neighbourhood?
- Are there any adjacent or nearby uses that might be a cause for concern from a health and safety perspective? (e.g., land fill, waste transfer station, heavy manufacturing or industrial use, gravel pit, log sorting site, etc.)
- Does the facility trigger building code upgrade requirements?
- Is there appropriate access (i.e. parking or public transit)?

## 2.10 Other Roles and Actions for Local Governments to Facilitate and Support Child Care

Local governments are encouraged to identify other ways to facilitate and support the creation of quality child care facilities and spaces in their communities. Public support for child care is generally strong among families with young children, but often the importance that child care plays in economic and population health, school readiness, and lifelong learning is less understood.

Local governments can play an influential role in building support for child care by educating, promoting and informing members of their community.

Specific activities include:

- Providing statements and descriptions of the importance of child care within publications, presentations, and web pages to help create understanding of how child care supports healthy communities.
- Ensuring that newly elected officials are briefed and kept updated regarding the status of child care in the community and any outstanding needs and deficiencies.
- Advise and inform Provincial and Federal officials on local needs, gaps, and priorities, including accessible education and training for Early Childhood Educators and other Early Care and Learning professionals.

### TIP

Property tax notices and recreation brochures are ideal for including updates on the status of child care in local communities.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLES IN DESIGNING AND BUILDING CHILD CARE SPACES

**Guide #3: Designing and Building Child Care Spaces** provides information to local governments who are planning to develop their own child care spaces and for supporting others to design and build spaces.

**More specifically, this guide includes information on:**

- The importance of quality spaces for children
- Selecting a Location
- Interior and Exterior Design Considerations
- Additional considerations if the local government is the owner or operator

## 3.1 Introduction

Child care is a place where children experience the world, and one of the greatest influences on childhood development is the quality of settings where they spend most of their time.

*“A child who attends a child care program from infancy through young school-age years will spend more time in child care than all the hours of schooling, and in their early years may spend more waking hours in child care than at home.”*

Jim Greenman- Caring Spaces, Learning Places (2005)

Children need age-appropriate physical environments that promote and positively support the child's interaction with space, materials and people. A child care facility must be safe, suitable and provide a rich, diverse range of experiences that promote children's learning and development and meet the needs of all children. The location and the way a child care centre is designed, equipped and organized will determine how those spaces and resources are used by staff and children, regardless of whether the facility is stand alone, part of a mixed-use development, newly built, or a retrofit of an existing building.

Inclusive spaces that are properly designed in quality locations can also enhance the identity of the community, adjacent sites and streetscapes and can be responsive to the demographic, cultural and socio-economic makeup of the neighbourhood.

Quality child care facilities are complex to design. These spaces are highly regulated and must meet the minimum standards outlined in the [BC Community Care and Assisted Living Act and its Child Care Licensing Regulation](#), the [BC Building Code](#) and the local by-laws for the jurisdiction where the facility is located.

## 3.2 Selecting a Location

The best site for a child care centre is near to, or co-located on the grounds of other public community spaces such as schools, community centres and parks, and therefore offer a continuum of services for multiple age groups. This allows for coordinated services that enhance program quality, as well as construction and operating cost efficiencies gained by building facilities that can share spaces.

**TIP**

Create an inventory of prospective opportunities for child care development by:

- a. identifying assets (buildings and land), including those that are slated for capital redevelopment;
- b. identifying underutilized or vacant spaces or land, including parks that could be repurposed for child care; and
- c. work with other public and not-for-profit partners to identify potential land or facilities that could further explored for use for child care.

The City of Surrey, through its recent Child Care Planning work, developed a [Child Care Space Prioritization-Calculator](#) which uses a set of quality criteria to identify spaces and places that are worth further and more detailed assessments to see if they can be used for child care.

Not all sites will be suitable for child care facilities. Firstly, the location and physical context of a child care facility should be safe and healthy for children. Child care facilities should also be compatible with the surrounding land uses and be a permitted use under the zoning by law. Impacts and issues will vary depending on the location and setting of the site, the type and size of development being proposed, and surrounding land uses.

There will also be differences depending on whether the area is urban or rural. Sites should not be located near major transportation routes such as highways, heavy rail lines, or near industrial uses and should be on land that is deemed environmentally safe. Child care Licensing Officers and other public health staff can offer helpful advice early in the site selection process.

**3.2.1. Site and Facility Considerations**

**a. Adjacent Uses**

Child care facilities should be located in proximity to compatible, safe and environmentally appropriate land uses. This provides easy access, seamless services for children, convenience for busy families, builds on existing local infrastructure, and offers efficient ways to share resources and assets. It also offers opportunities for service providers to plan together, integrate services and to provide a full range of other important supports to children and their parents/guardians.

Good examples of adjacent uses include community centres, schools, libraries, museums, parks, employment centres, business centres and town centres. As well, easy access to public transit and close to pedestrian access are other important considerations.

Adjacent uses to avoid include commercial loading or service areas, large parking lots, major mechanical plants, building exhaust fans, electrical substations and major above- grade electrical lines, transformers or other noisy, noxious or dangerous environments.<sup>7</sup>

**b. Relationship to Grade**

Child care facilities should be designed to provide barrier- free, same level access from the exterior to the interior of a building (i.e., wheelchair, mobility aid accessible). This makes the space more accessible and inclusive for small children, families and people with physical support needs.

If a child care facility is proposed for an above-grade level, or on the upper floor of a building, concerns about emergency evacuation of the children and the safety and security of the outdoor play area must be addressed as part of the licensing process. In addition, consideration must be given to how maintenance supplies for outdoor play areas will be transported. These concerns increase with height above-grade.<sup>8</sup> Locations below grade are unacceptable due to requirements for natural light and outdoor areas.

**c. Relationship of indoor and outdoor spaces**

Outdoor space should be at the same level as the indoor space wherever possible and contiguous with it in order to make the space easily accessible to children and their caregivers. When possible, the two areas should be planned together and ramps for wheeled equipment should be provided when a level change exists.

<sup>7</sup>Design Resources for Child Care Facilities -Vancouver Coastal Health

<sup>8</sup>City of Vancouver Child Care Design Guidelines

A strong visual and physical connection should exist between the indoor and outdoor activity area to allow children and staff to flow freely between inside and outside.

**d. Environmental Considerations<sup>9</sup>**

The availability of natural light is important for a healthy environment. For example, Vancouver Coastal Health guidelines for child care require at least 10% of the wall areas to be windows. Care should be taken to install window coverings to create a cooling affect during the summer months and additional insulation during the winter months.

It is recommended that child care areas have their own systems for heating, ventilation, and air cooling to allow staff to regulate the temperature according to the children's needs. Ventilation should be planned for children's washrooms, diaper areas, sleep areas and kitchens to reduce exposure to air borne illness and diseases.

Many studies show that noise poses a serious threat to children's hearing, health, learning and behaviour. The design of the centre should include as many ways as possible to reduce noise (i.e. natural amenities outdoors such as trees and grass, noise absorbing surface on floors, ceiling and walls).

**e. Safety and security**

Pedestrian access should be safe, well-lit and allow for strollers and bikes to be safely wheeled, ideally visible to many people. To ensure close monitoring, entrances and exits must be controlled.

The outdoor space must be enclosed in a manner that is suitable for the ages of the children with non-climbable fences.

**f. Parking, pick up and drop off**

Accessing the child care needs to be carefully considered both from an access and a safety perspective.

## 3.3 Interior and Exterior Design

A local government's influence on the interior and exterior of the child care centre may take different forms depending on whether it is leading a development on public land or exercising a regulatory role.

The physical environment has a significant impact on the children, the staff, parents/guardians and the broader community. The location, the type and amount of space, how the space is organized, the type and arrangement of furnishings and equipment, availability of natural light and views to the outdoors, health and safety considerations, the amount and layout of outdoor space and proximity to indoor, colours, surfaces and textures are all important aspects of designing and building child care<sup>10</sup>.

For child care projects led by local governments, the design team should be structured to include members with specialized expertise in child care and childhood development, to ensure that environments are highly functional and meet the diverse needs of children.

All licensed child care in BC must meet the provincial legislated requirements of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and its Child Care Regulation.

However, the Provincial standards are minimum requirements that do not address all of design and building elements that research confirms is necessary for high quality functional child care programs.

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<sup>9</sup>Design Resources for Child Care Facilities -Vancouver Coastal Health

<sup>10</sup>Friendly, M., Doherty, G., & Beach, J. (2005). Quality by design: Physical Environments

**TIP**

Develop a set of local government design guides for a high-quality functional facility based on research and evidence

Both the City of Vancouver and the City of Richmond have developed their own guides which exceed the provincial licensing requirements. Both municipalities require up to 7 metres squared per child for interior space and up to 14 metres squared per child for exterior spaces, nearly double the Provincial requirements. In Richmond, these guides are applied to all City required, facilitated, or built spaces. In Vancouver, the guides apply to all for conditional approval development applications involving child care facilities, including private applications.

- [City of Richmond Child Care Design Guidelines](#)
- [City of Vancouver Child Care Design Guidelines](#)

**3.3.1. Interior:**

The Provincial Child Care Licensing Regulation require 3.7 metres squared of useable floor area per child and have requirements for maximum group sizes. These minimums are for spaces that are used for activities only and do not include storage, washrooms, nap rooms, staff rooms, offices, kitchens, hallways, cloakrooms, and janitorial closets<sup>11</sup>. In addition, consideration in design must be given to allow for building inefficiencies, circulation and services.

Large, open designs are preferred with an emphasis on flexibility to accommodate the diverse, developmental abilities of children and to be responsive to emerging community needs. All play areas (inside and out) should be accessible to all children, safely constructed, free from hazards and in good repair. Equipment, furniture and play materials must be suitable for the age and developmental levels of the children and accessible for children with diverse support needs.

An example of child care guides that are based on research are the European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile the Employment Responsibilities of Men and Women (1996)<sup>12</sup>. This guide confirms internal space of at least 6 metres square for each child under three years and of at least 4 metres square for each child 3-6 years old excluding storage and corridor or through-way space, plus an additional 5% of internal space for adult use.

Example of 'Optimal Spatial Inter-relationships for Interior Space': [City of Richmond Child Care Design Guidelines - page 17](#)



<sup>11</sup>Design Resources for Child Care Facilities -Vancouver Coastal Health

<sup>12</sup>European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile the Employment Responsibilities of Men and Women. (1996). Quality targets in services for young children: Proposals for a ten-year action programme (1996) <https://www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Qualitypaperthree.pdf>



## 3.3.2. Exterior

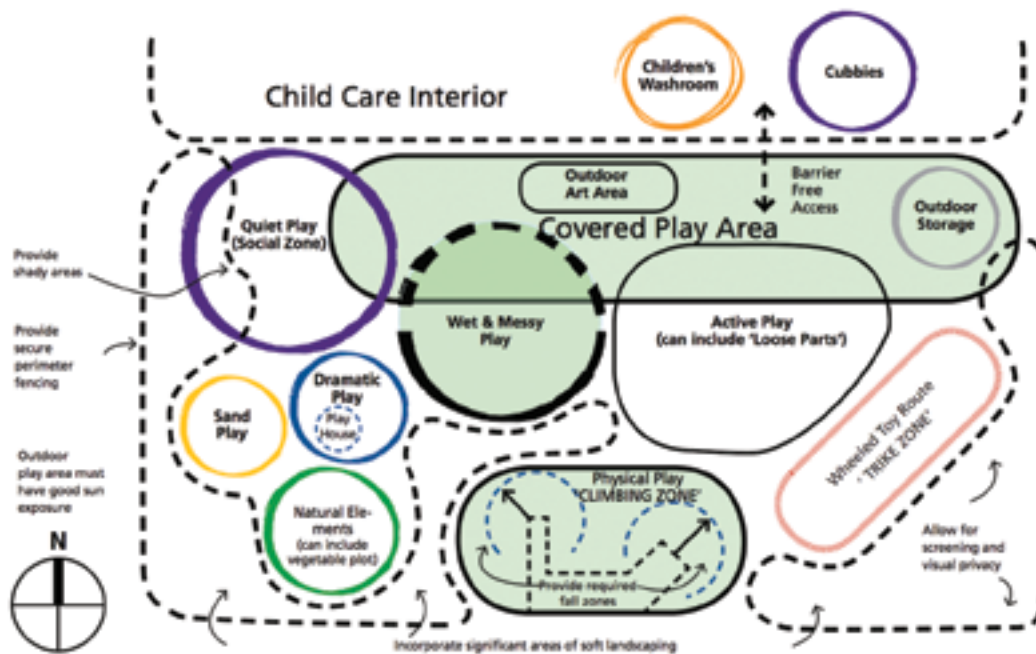
BC's Child Care Licensing Regulation requires a minimum of 6 metres square per child of outdoor play space. This is less than half the size of a standard parking space for a car. This open space is reduced even further once landscape elements, play structures and walkways are installed. Outdoor play areas must be accessible for children with diverse needs (i.e. mobility needs).

Empirical research indicates children benefit from more outdoor spaces than the current minimum standards in the provincial Child Care Licensing Regulation. For example, a 1999 Canada wide safety assessment of outdoor play spaces in child care centres recommended 13.5 metres square outdoor space per child in order to provide children “with the diversity of experiences needed outside for their development while respecting safety standards.”<sup>13</sup> Other studies recommend between 7 and 25 metres square per child.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to the amount of space, the nature and organization of the space is also important. Every effort should be made to link outdoor play space with the inside play space. Centres that had direct physical and visual connection to their outdoor play space from inside, use the outdoors more frequently than those centres that lack this connection.<sup>15</sup>

While licensing standards permit a single outdoor child care area to be shared by multiple programs through scheduled rotations, shared outdoor spaces can decrease practical access by each program, and eliminate spontaneous access, thereby reducing children’s outdoor time. If local government standards permit shared access to outdoor spaces, reducing the number of sharing programs contemplated to no more than two can support children’s access to nature and outdoor exercise.

### Example of “Optimum Spatial Inter-relationship for Outdoor Play Area”:



<sup>13</sup>Maufette, A.G., Frechette, L., & Robertson, D. 1999. Revisiting Children Outdoor Environments: A Focus on Design, Play, and Safety.

<sup>14</sup>The U.S. National Association for the Education of Young Children recommends per child. Britain recommends 9m2. Australia recommends for 25 children, 20m2 per child for 40 children, 15m2 per child for 75 children (1996).

<sup>15</sup>The City of Vancouver and the City of Richmond have established guidelines that require 8 – 14 m2 per child.

Herrington, S., Lesmeister, C., Nicholls, J., & Stefiuk, K. (N.D.). 7Cs: An Informational Guide to Young Children’s Outdoor Play Spaces. Retrieved from <https://sala.ubc.ca/sites/sala.ubc.ca/files/documents/7Cs.pdf>

## 3.4 Additional Considerations if Local Government will be the Owner of the Spaces

As noted in **GUIDE #4: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS AND PROVINCIAL LICENCING PROCESSES**, local governments have an important regulatory role for child care development in their communities, which includes zoning approvals, building inspections, and business licensing. And in BC, local governments may be owners, landlords, and operators of licensed child care spaces and play critical leadership roles in planning and facilitating new child care developments. Although standards for child care facilities are regulated provincially, those are minimum standards. Some local governments have established their own criteria for designing and building spaces that are more in line with best practices and what the evidence says makes for good quality environments.

### 3.4.1 If Owner -Landlord

The local government may be the owner/ builder of child care, and the landlord of spaces negotiated as part of new developments or publicly owned assets like a community centre. As an owner-landlord, it is in the best interest of the local government to:

- a. Build spaces that are financially sustainable, ideally with multiple programs and co-located with other public services that meet the highest needs in the community.
- b. Build quality spaces to ensure long -term durability in the most accessible and safe locations possible.

The best site for a child care centre is near to or co-located on the grounds of other public community spaces. This provides easy access, coordinated services for children, builds on existing local infrastructure, and offers efficient ways to share resources and assets. It also offers opportunities for service providers to plan together, to integrate their services, and to provide a full range of other important supports to children and their parents/guardians.

Child care facilities have daily, year-round high usage. In order to ensure safe, high quality infrastructures for many years and multiple generations of children, investing more capital resources up front to construct spaces that can withstand this intense use which can result in a longer lifespan with fewer renovation expenses over time.

- c. Select an architect and/ or designer who has experience with designing licensed child care and involve an experienced child care operator early on in the design process to ensure a quality environment. (refer to **GUIDE #5: WORKING WITH CHILD CARE OPERATORS**)
- d. Involve local licensing officials early to ensure that the facility meets all necessary requirements.

### 3.4.2. If Owner – Operator

The local government entity may choose to directly operate the child care spaces. It is then recommended that:

- a. Time is spent to fully understand the legislation and regulation governing child care ([BC Child Care Rules and Regulations](#))
- b. Internally, work is completed to assess financial and operational impacts to

Both the City of Vancouver and the City of Richmond have specific technical requirements for child care which outline the expected building details, the required quality of materials, finishes, equipment and other key building and design details. The City of Richmond has included these details in their design guides documents while the City of Vancouver created a companion document. It can be downloaded here: [City of Vancouver Child Care Technical Guides](#)

ensure long-term sustainability. (For example, human resource requirements including collective agreements, administration and infrastructure requirements for items like fee collection and reporting to the Province.)

- c. Consider 3.4.1 a, b and c above.
- d. Identify and secure a subject matter expert (either a lead staff person internally or secure external support) to manage and provide oversight to the licensed child care.

### 3.5 Helpful Tools and Resources

Below is a list of helpful tools and resources that can be used when designing and building child care spaces.

1. Government of BC: Child Care in BC is governed by the rules and requirements in the:
  - a. [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#); and the
  - b. [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#)

In addition, the Director of Licensing has a set of Standards of Practice that provide further regulations and requirements specifically for:

- a. [Family Child Care: requirements for private residences](#)
  - b. [Safe Play Space: design, materials and supervision requirements for outdoor play spaces](#)
  - c. [Active Play: requirements for active play and physical movement in child care programs](#)
  - d. [Water Safety: recommendations to prevent drowning in child care programs](#)
2. Health Authority Design resources
    - a. [Design Resources for Child Care Facilities -Vancouver Coastal Health](#)
  3. [Quality by Design: Child Care Centre Physical Environments](#)
  4. [7Cs: An Informational Guide to Young Children's Outdoor Play Space](#)





# LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS AND PROVINCIAL LICENCING PROCESSES

Guide #4 outlines the local government and provincial government roles in the child care licensing process. More specifically, this guide includes information on:

- Types of Child Care Facilities and Programs
- Local Government Regulator Roles
- The Provincial Licensing Process
- Navigating the Local Government Regulation and Child Care Licensing Processes

## 4.1 Introduction

To open and operate a new child care facility, prospective providers must navigate both municipal permitting and provincial licensing processes.

This section outlines the roles of local governments as regulators, suggesting ways that bylaws, such as zoning, may be amended to support the creation of new child care spaces in communities, especially recognizing many of the applicants often do not have any prior experience or familiarity with building development or local permitting processes.

Additionally, this section provides insight into the provincial licensing process, acknowledging that this process typically happens concurrently to municipal inspections and approvals.

Finally, information is provided on licensing requirements to assist local governments seeking to obtain a child care licence for a local government-owned facility.

At the **provincial level**, licensing legislation and regulation for child care facilities are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. The requirements consider the following areas:

- Health and safety
- Staffing qualifications
- Staff – to – child ratios
- Group size
- Indoor and outdoor space
- Furniture, equipment and play materials, and
- Programming standards

The Regional Health Authority Community Care Facility Licensing programs process the applications and issue the licenses to operate a child care program. They are responsible to ensure child care facilities comply with the provincial legislation and regulation and conduct annual site inspections.

This child care license from the health authority will not be issued until all local government requirements are met.

At the **local government level**, there is a regulatory role with a set of by-laws that may include:

- Official Community Plans
- Zoning and Development
- Building
- Signage

- Business licence (municipalities only)
- Parking
- May include Child Care Design Guidelines

It is important to note that requirements for local government vary greatly across the province which makes it challenging for child care applicants who are delivering services in more than one jurisdiction.

## 4.2 Types of Child Care Facilities and Programs

### A. In BC there are two types of legal child care operations: licensed and license- not -required.

- ii. **Licensed programs** include group programs for children from birth through school age, Preschool programs, Family Child Care, Multi-age and In-Home Multi-age and Occasional care.

#### Details for all Types of Child Care in BC

- ii. **Licence Not- Required** or Unlicensed Providers, can provide care for up to two children (or a sibling group) in their own home, as well as their own children. They may be operating illegally if they have more than two children (or more than a sibling group) in their home.

There are also two categories of License Not Required Child Care:

- Registered Licence Not Required where the providers are registered with a Child Care Resource and Referral Centre and must complete:
  - Criminal record check and character references
  - A home safety assessment
  - First aid training
  - Child care courses or workshops
- Unregistered: where the providers are not monitored or inspected and do not have to meet health and safety requirements.

### B. Generally, there are two types of settings for child care facilities: commercial and residential home-based.

- i. Programs in **Commercial Spaces (including but not limited to retail, publicly owned, not-for-profit owned or leased)**, include:
- Multi-Age Care: maximum 8 children per group
  - Group Daycare for children under 36 months: maximum 12 children per group
  - Group Daycare, 30 Months to School Age: maximum 25 children per group
  - Group Child Care School Age: maximum 24 or 30 per group (depending on the age)
  - Preschool – 30 months to school age: maximum 20 children

There may be more than one program type offered at the same location. The applicant hires staff to deliver the service.

- ii. Programs in residential homes (i.e. single-family dwelling, duplex or apartment) which include:
- Family Child Care: maximum 7 children
  - In-Home Multi-Age Care: maximum 8 children

The applicant must reside in the home and personally provide the care of the children.

## 4.3 Local Government Regulator Roles

As noted in [GUIDE #2: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE IN FACILITATING, SECURING AND FINANCING CHILD CARE](#), local governments have an important and significant role that can strategically support child care expansion in their local community. It is therefore important for local government staff to be knowledgeable of the bylaws that may affect child care so that they can both share the requirements with prospective applicants and, even more importantly, ensure that by-laws are up to date, that they support new spaces and are streamlined to remove unnecessary barriers.

### A. Official Community Plan (OCP) and Zoning By-laws

Guide #2 notes that local governments should ensure that their OCP includes specific statements about the importance of child care, and a commitment to facilitating and supporting child care. This will support staff to prioritize and support child care in policy development and implementation.

Zoning by-laws should be reviewed with the goal of including child care as a permitted or conditional use wherever possible, therefore reducing the need for rezoning applications, and the time and processes required for those.

### B. Other by-laws that may impact child care include: Building Permits, Parking and Drop -off Requirements, Signage, and Business licenses.

Often changes made to the review process can be more effective than any other measure taken to improve the permitting process.

- Consider identifying one staff position as the primary point person for all child care applications who ensures the application is complete, supports the applicant through all the local permitting processes, and is the link for other staff.
- Prioritize not-for-profit and public child care applications, over private operators
- Ensure inspections are coordinated
- Undertake a full review of the processes, in consultation with the child care community, to identify ways to streamline and remove barriers.
- A review of internal communication processes on policies, commitments, regulations, especially when changes are made, can expediate the approval of new child care spaces.

Having a clear resource document, as noted in 4.5, will also assist applicants in understanding the requirements.

- C. Section 20 of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act provides exemptions from any land use and building laws for licensed in-home providers who care for eight or less children, even if current the local bylaws specifically disallow child care in a residential zone. However, these home-based locations must still meet the requirements as outlined in the [BC Building Code](#).

- [City of Coquitlam Official Community Plan](#)

- [District of North Vancouver Official Community Plan](#)

### TIP

The majority of child care-related applications are for modifications or renovations to existing spaces, often managed directly by the child care operator themselves, not a building professional. These will require inspections and while the inspection process is not onerous, these inspections often require pre-booking and can take weeks to complete, potentially delaying the opening of spaces. Coordinating these inspections can help the spaces open more quickly.

## 4.4 The Provincial Licensing Process

In BC, the Ministry of Health is responsible for the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and the Child Care Licensing Regulation.

Regional Health Authorities are responsible for the delivery of the Community Care Licensing Program in their communities. The Medical Health Officer (MHO) has responsibility for licensing, inspection, and monitoring of community care facilities. MHO's delegate their authority to licensing officers to carry out day-to-day work, such as licensing, inspection, and monitoring for compliance with provincial legislation and regulation.

Anyone who is interested in opening a new child care facility or in expanding their current child care operation must apply to the Community Care Facility Licensing Program at their Regional Health Authority. The steps can be found here: [Open a Licensed Child Care Facility](#).

Once an application is received it is assigned to a Licensing Officer who then:



Approval process for provincial licensing and the local requirements generally occur at the same time.

## 4.5 Local Government's Role in Supporting Applicants to Navigate the Local Government Regulation and Child Care Facility Licensing Processes

Typically, the Health Authority licensing program is the first place a prospective child care operator goes to learn what to expect from all of the processes and requirements, including those from the local government. Since the application process is hinged on the applicant also meeting all the local requirements, it is helpful for both the licensing staff and local government staff to be able to broadly speak to all of the processes.

### TIP

Engage the local Licensing Officers early in the process for any local government- involved developments so that the work is efficient and aligned with all the requirements, avoiding delays in licensing.

### TIP

Identify a key position in each organization (local government and provincial licensing) who has the responsibility to meet regularly to ensure information is up to date, to distribute that information through their respective organizations and to act as point persons to ensure as many barriers as possible are removed so new child care spaces can be more easily created.



Providing applicants with a document that outlines the step by step processes, including a link to the [BC Building Code](#) will expediate and streamline the processes. This resource should:

- Contain all the information about processes and requirements in one place
- Assume that applicants do not have any familiarity with the processes
- Identify all the departments and agencies involved with reviewing child care facility applications, including the contact information for the relevant Staff position.
- Provide easy to understand process steps and flow charts for each type of application, including references to Community Care Facilities Licensing and the relationship to or interplay with local government processes
- Provide information on zoning districts that indicates where child care facilities (and how many spaces) can (or cannot) be located, being mindful of the provincial standards;
- List or provide links to the fee schedule for various applications (e.g., rezoning, building permit, business licence); and,
- Specify application requirements (e.g., for rezoning, building permits, business licences, community care facility child care licence)

## TIP

**Posting the step by step processes on local government and Health Authority websites, and make it available through the licensing office and the local [BC Child Care Resource and Referral Centres](#). This makes that information publicly available prior to a child care application being submitted, potentially reducing time needed to respond to incomplete applications or answer basic questions.**

- [Creating Child Care Spaces in Richmond](#)
- [Developing A Child Care Centre in Vancouver](#)
- [Opening A Child Care Facility in New Westminster](#)
- [Child Care Facility Requirements - Coquitlam](#)





# WORKING WITH CHILD CARE OPERATORS

Building respectful and mutually reinforcing relationships is critical to the success of any local child care plan. Through this guide, local governments will be able to reflect on the key relationships with child care operators.

More specifically, **Guide #5: Working with Child Care Operators** reviews how to:

- Strengthen Local Partnerships
- Support Operators to Open New Child Care Centres or Expand Their Current Operations
- Find a Not-for-profit or Public Partner to Operate Local Government Owned Space

## 5.1 Introduction

Among the most important relationships a local government can develop is with their community child care providers and those agencies who offer complimentary services. Strong partnerships will promote comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated programs that are responsive to the evolving needs of children and families. Community partners will also be strong allies to support change and improve processes in local policy, regulations and requirements.

Successful, well planned, high quality and effective services require a significant investment of time and resources from many players, the most important of which are the child care operators. See the [Child Care in BC](#) section for details about who operates child care in the Province.

Working closely and in partnership with the community will make certain that child care services are planned and delivered in a way that is responsive, inclusive and timely for children and families.

## 5.2 Strengthen Local Partnerships

- As noted in [GUIDE #1](#), local partnerships are powerful and impactful for children, families, and professionals working in their community. However, successful partnerships require leadership, time, resources and the willingness of collaborating agencies. Local governments are well positioned to provide this leadership and to guide the way for strong partnerships.

Key practices that support strong partnerships include:

- Establish a shared vision and common set of guiding principles, including expected outcomes
- Establish communication and decision- making processes
- Allow for power-sharing
- Provide adequate, appropriate time for partners to meet, plan and carry out activities
- Involve representatives from all primary stakeholders
- Think ‘blue sky’, embrace innovation, use research and data
- Celebrate, evaluate and renew

### TIP

The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides funding to [Child Care Resource and Referral Centres \(CCRR's\)](#) across BC, to work in partnership with government to improve the accessibility, affordability, and quality of child care in all BC communities. “Child Care Resource and Referral Centres provide support services and consultations to parents looking for child care and to all child care providers to foster quality inclusive care through services such as: workshops and training, networking opportunities, supportive program outreach, access to lending libraries, referrals to community resources, drop-in programs, and listing in a registry of licensed and Licence-Not-Required child care providers.”

Across BC there are a number of places where the local government provides leadership to local planning for child care, some examples include:

- City of Burnaby has a [Child Care Resources Group](#)
- City of North Vancouver, the District of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver collaborate on the [North Shore Child Care Planning Committee](#)
- City of Vancouver has a [Joint Child Care Council](#)

Providing leadership to community child care partnerships can take several forms:

- a. Facilitate networking and professional development opportunities which will enhance shared learning, capitalize on limited resources, decrease isolation and increase capacity for child care providers.
- b. Formal neighbourhood planning to identify current needs, set targets and develop a child care strategy and plan to fill in gaps.
- c. Working together to educate, promote and advocate for the needs of children
- d. Collaborating on developing new child care spaces (i.e.: supporting capital grant applications or partnering on a new centre).

There are several groups that are important to consider as partners, especially child care operators who are the most knowledgeable about the delivery of service. It is also critical to include agencies that provide support to the sector, such as the Child Care Resource and Referral Centre, services that provide supports to children with support needs in child care (i.e. the Supported Child Care and Aboriginal Supported Child Care Programs), the local health authority community care facility licensing program, school districts, community service agencies (i.e. Immigrant Services, Family Resource Programs), local businesses and local Indigenous organizations and services.

### TIP

**In a typical child care program, generally all staff are working directly with children for at least part of every day. Child care programs do not often have staff who are available (or compensated) to attend day time meetings therefore consideration needs to be given to when meetings are scheduled to allow for full participation.**

## 5.3 Supporting Operators to Open New Child Care Facilities or Expand Their Current Operations

As outlined in [GUIDE #4: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS AND PROVINCIAL LICENCING PROCESSES](#) if someone wishes to open a new licensed child care program, or expand their current operations, they must adhere to two sets of requirements, one at the provincial level, which is administered through the regional health authority, and one at the local government level.

Child care operators are typically unfamiliar with the range of regulatory approval processes required by the local jurisdiction, therefore, it is helpful to have policies and practices that are clearly outlined, modernized and make child care a priority.

Some strategies that would assist include:

1. Identify or assign one staff person who will be the primary contact for all child care applications. This will be an efficient way of providing both internal and external support.
2. Clearly communicate the child care needs and priorities of the Local Government through the Official Community Plan or in by-laws so that child care applications can be prioritized.
3. Ensure that child care strategies/plans are publicly available

4. Have simple, plain language, joint information documents that that outlines both the Regional Health Authority and the local government requirements.
5. Provide as much detail as possible early on to applicants about rezoning, development permit and change of use implications so that time is not wasted. (i.e. a change from a Family Child Care operation to a Group Care operation means the operator must consult with both their regional health authority community care facility licensing program and municipality before taking action).
6. Consider fast-tracking and streamlining applications for child care development, especially those from non-profit and public entities, ahead of other types of development. These means a review of how staff workload and projects are assigned.
7. Share needs assessment data with child care operators, for example, noting areas of unmet need, or areas where need may be fully met and new programs difficult to fill. This information may help child care operators plan expansion, and/or apply for funding.

### Examples of local government requirements and practices.

- [Creating Child Care Spaces in Richmond](#)
- [Developing A Child Care Centre in Vancouver](#)
- [Opening A Child Care Facility in New Westminster](#)
- [Child Care Facility Requirements - Coquitlam](#)

## 5.4 Finding a Not-for-Profit or Public Partner to Operate Local Government Owned Space

While local governments may be actively looking for ways to secure new child care spaces through partnerships, land use, or applying for capital funds from the Province, they might not have the ability or interest to directly operate the new child care programs. In this case, it is crucial to have clear processes and procedures for selecting and working with an operating partner.

### Why work with public or non-profit operators?

The [Child Care BC New Spaces Fund](#) requires local governments receiving capital funds to either operate the child care spaces themselves, or partner with another public or not-for-profit entity who will deliver those spaces. In addition, Section 25 of the [BC Community Charter](#) also prohibits local governments from providing a grant, benefit, advantage or other assistance to a business.

### Selecting an operator

The chosen operator should have the capacity, the experience and the commitment to offer services that are in the public interest for the long-term and should be thought of as more than a typical tenant. Given the nature of child care operating budgets (see the [INTRODUCTION](#)), consideration must also be given to ensure that the occupancy costs are kept to a minimum.

In order to select a Child Care Operating Partner, local governments should have a transparent, public process, such as a Request for Proposals or a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) that is broadly advertised. If there are plans to develop more than one location, then attention should be given to a multi- project process. In other words, develop a process to select one or more proponents who will be the partner for more than one location; this limits the resources required for all parties in the selection process and establishes a deeper commitment.

## REOI Examples:

- [City of Vancouver RFEOI Document](#)
- [City of Burnaby - RFP Sample - Operator for Burnaby Lake Child Care Centre](#)
- [City of Richmond – Request for Expression of Interest Sample](#)

a. Criteria that should be considered when selecting a Child Care Operator include:

- Strong governance and operating policies and procedures
- Sustainable and viable finances
- Organizational capacity, including roles and responsibilities of key employees and organizational structure
- Experience operating the type, size and scope of child care programs that are proposed
- History of Community Care Facility Licensing site Inspections, if currently operating a facility
- Vision and commitment to quality child care, including staff professional development and child care program staffing model
- Child Care Program Philosophy and Service Delivery Model, including priorities for enrolment
- Commitment to engaging parents/guardians and the broader community
- Policies and practices to promote inclusion, diversity and culturally competent programming
- Awareness of local child care needs

b. Consider all legal and liability issues when selecting an operator and when negotiating the final arrangement.

Consideration could be given to developing a draft lease and operating service level agreement that is attached to the REOI documents to provide proponents with a clear overview of the responsibilities that each party will have.

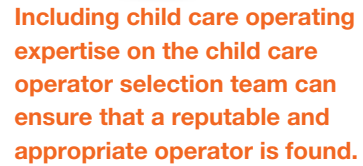
This will also enable appropriate budgeting by both parties. In particular, it is necessary to clearly articulate:

- Maintenance, repairs and occupational costs
- Recapitalization costs, including life cycle of the capital assets
- Insurance requirements both liability and property

City of [Vancouver Child Care Service Level Agreement](#) and [Vancouver Sample Lease](#)



**TIP**



**Including child care operating expertise on the child care operator selection team can ensure that a reputable and appropriate operator is found.**

# Conclusion

Child care is an essential service and a key part of thriving, supportive local communities. While addressing the child care shortage is not an easy, “quick fix” endeavor, and cannot be achieved by a local government alone, an intentional, well-planned and coordinated effort can make lasting and meaningful change. These guides provide the foundation for local governments and their partners to move towards addressing child care needs in their community.

This document explored five key facets of child care planning: (1) child care strategy and plan creation, (2) securing and financing child care, (3) designing and building child care, (4) licensing child care spaces and (5) working with child care operators.

Although these guides do not cover every aspect of child care planning in detail, they serve as a starting point, are built on successful experiences, and link to many existing resources and tools already in use by local governments across the province.

In closing, advancing the guides included in this document will be a long-term, ongoing commitment; however, the benefits will outweigh the necessary time and effort to do this work, and contribute to creating a healthier society for us all.



# Appendices

## Appendix A: Types of child care in BC

CHILD CARE TYPE		AGES	MAX GROUP SIZE
<p><b>LICENSED CHILD CARE</b></p> <p><b>Licensed child care facilities are monitored and regularly inspected by regional health authorities. They must meet specific requirements for health and safety, staffing qualifications, record keeping, space and equipment, child-to-staff ratios, and programming.</b></p>	Group child care – under 3 years	From birth to 36 months	12 children
	Group child care – 2.5 years old to school age	From 30 months to school age (Kindergarten)	25 children
	Group child care – school age (before-and-after school care)	School age (Kindergarten and up)	24 children from Kindergarten and Grade 1 or 30 children from Grade 2 and older with no Kindergarten or Grade 1 children present
	Multi-age child care	From birth to 12 years old	8 children, having no more than 3 children younger than 36 months old and, of those 3, no more than one child younger than 12 months old or having no more than 3 children younger than 36 months old
	In-home multi-age child care	From birth to 12 years old	8 children, having no more than 3 children under 36 months old and, of those 3, no more than one child younger than 12 months old; or having no more than 3 children younger than 36 months old
	Family child care	From birth to 12 years old	7 children, having no more than 3 children younger than 48 months old and, of those 3, no more than one child younger than 12 months old; or having no more than 4 children younger than 48 months old and, of those 4, no more than 2 children younger than 24 months old
	Preschool – 2.5 years old to school age	From 30 months to school age (Kindergarten)	20 children
	Occasional child care	18 months old and up	16 children if children under 36 months are present or 20 children if children under 36 months are not present



CHILD CARE TYPE	AGES	MAC GROUP SIZE
<p><b>REGISTERED LICENCE-NOT-REQUIRED CHILD CARE</b></p> <p>These are unlicensed care providers. They are registered with a <b>Child Care Resource and Referral Centre</b>. To register, operators must have completed: criminal record checks (for everyone over age 12 living in the home), character references, a home safety assessment, first aid training, and child care training courses or workshops.</p>	<p>From birth to 12 years</p>	<p><b>Only</b> 1 or 2 children or a sibling group who are not related to them</p>
<p><b>LICENCE-NOT-REQUIRED CHILD CARE</b></p> <p>These child care providers can operate legally in BC. They are not registered or licensed and are not monitored or inspected. Unlicensed child care providers do not have to meet health or safety standards. Parents and guardians are responsible for overseeing the care and safety of their children in these care arrangements.</p>	<p>From birth to any age</p>	<p><b>Only</b> 1 or 2 children or a sibling group who are not related to them</p>
<p><b>IN-CHILD'S-OWN-HOME CARE</b></p> <p>This unlicensed care is when parents arrange for child care at home – like a nanny or a baby-sitter. Children from other families cannot be included in this care. It is not legally required to monitor this care. No specific qualifications are required for the child care provider. Parents or guardians must decide how to screen and hire the child care provider who becomes their employee.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Children from other families cannot be included in this care.</p>

# Appendices

## Appendix B: Definitions and Terms

**Building Permit:** “This gives permission to carry out development as approved by a development permit or where a development permit is not required, or to demolish, excavate or carry out most new construction, alterations and renovations of existing buildings.<sup>16</sup>”

**Children with Support Needs:** Children who are experiencing, or at risk of, developmental delay or disability and require support beyond that required by children in general. The developmental delay or disability may be in one or more of the following areas: physical, cognitive, social, emotional, communicative, or behavioural. Children may be experiencing, or at risk of, developmental delay or disability as a result of neurobiological factors (such as genetic, metabolic, or other biological factors) or as a result of social/environmental factors.

**Community Care Facility:** means any facility that

- (a) provides care, supervision, social or educational training or physical or mental rehabilitative therapy, with or without charge, to 3 or more persons not related by blood or marriage to an operator of the facility; or
- (b) provides food and lodging
  - (i) with or without charge to 3 or more pregnant women during any portion of their pregnancy, or during the 3 months immediately following delivery; or
  - (ii) to 15 or more persons receiving a type of social assistance, as defined by the Guaranteed Available Income for Need Act, approved by the board; or
- (c) is designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to be a community care facility, but does not include
- (d) a school under the School Act;
- (e) any portion of a facility licensed under the Hospital Act;
- (f) a home approved as a foster home under the Family and Child Service Act;
- (g) a home designated as a youth containment centre under the Correction Act;
- (h) a school primarily providing, in the opinion of the board, educational training for children 6 years of age or more;
- (i) an approved home under the Mental Health Act;
- (j) a facility designated by order or a class of facility designated by regulation of the Lieutenant Governor in Council not to be a community care facility; or
- (k) a home providing day care for a sibling group only;

**Conditional Uses:** “These are uses that may be permitted but require approval. Such uses (e.g., a church in a residential area) would also be reviewed with regard to the applicable regulations and provisions of the by-laws and the approving authority would also have regard for the intent of the by-laws, any plans, policies or guidelines approved for the area, the recommendations of any advisory groups for the area, and the responses of adjacent neighbours who may be notified.<sup>17</sup>”

**Development:** “Any change in the use of any land or building, including the carrying out of any construction, engineering or the operations, in, on, over or under land or land covered by water.<sup>18</sup>”

**Development permit:** “Local governments have the authority to designate development permit areas. These areas identify locations that need special treatment for certain purposes including the protection of development from hazards, establishing objectives for form and character in specified circumstances, or revitalization of a commercial

<sup>16</sup><https://development.vancouver.ca/documents/GlossaryofTermsBriefExplanationofZDPermits.pdf>

<sup>17</sup><https://development.vancouver.ca/documents/GlossaryofTermsBriefExplanationofZDPermits.pdf>

<sup>18</sup><https://development.vancouver.ca/documents/GlossaryofTermsBriefExplanationofZDPermits.pdf>

use area. Local governments may designate areas of land as development permit areas to be used for one or more purposes.<sup>19</sup>

**Developmental Delay:** Children reach developmental milestones at their own pace, as delays may not be permanent for some. A developmental delay is a significant delay in achieving age-expected “norms” or milestones within the domains of gross and fine motor skills, speech and language, social and personal skills, activities of daily living and/or cognition. There are many factors that may contribute to a developmental delay (e.g., biological, environmental), and can sometimes help to identify children with an increased risk of disabilities.<sup>20</sup>

**Inclusion:** Supporting all people to participate fully within society regardless of their abilities. People of all abilities have equal access to, and the supports needed to fully participate.

**Inclusive Child Care:** Child care settings that support the individual strengths and needs of each child. All children are welcomed, supported, and valued, which allow them to participate meaningfully in all aspects of the child care program. In inclusive programs, children of all abilities have equitable access to quality child care and are provided supportive opportunities to learn through play with other children in the program. All child care providers work together as a team to collectively meet the needs of all of the children, including children with support needs in their care.

**Official Community Plan:** Official community plans describe the long-term vision of communities. They are a statement of objectives and policies that guide decisions on municipal and regional district planning and land use management. These decisions impact communities’ sustainability and resilience.<sup>21</sup>

**Outright Approval Use:** These are uses that are permitted “as of right” under the existing zoning and a development permit will be issued on the basis that the development application satisfies all other related City by-laws, policies and guidelines or building permit.<sup>22</sup>

**Request for Proposals or a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI):** “A Request for Proposals (RFP) is one of the standard solicitation strategies used by government to compete contract opportunities. An RFP is most often used to acquire services, although it may be used in some circumstances to acquire goods.<sup>23</sup>”

**Rezoning:** “Rezoning changes how a property can be used or developed.<sup>24</sup>”

**StrongStart BC:** “StrongStart BC programs provide rich learning environments designed for early learning development – language, physical, cognitive, social and emotional. Qualified early childhood educators lead learning activities where children find opportunities to make friends and interact with others of similar ages.<sup>25</sup>”

### **Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development:**

“The Supported Child Development Program (SCD) and Aboriginal Supported Child Development Program assists families of children who require additional support to access inclusive child care programs.<sup>26</sup>”

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<sup>19</sup><https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/land-use-regulation/development-permit-areas>

<sup>20</sup>World Health Organization. ( 2007) . International classification of functioning, disability and health: children and youth version: ICF-CY. World Health Organization. Retrieved from <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/43737>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/local-government-planning/official-community-plans>

<sup>22</sup><https://development.vancouver.ca/documents/GlossaryofTermsBriefExplanationofZDPermits.pdf>

<sup>23</sup>[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/services-for-government-and-broader-public-sector/buy-goods-services-and-construction/how-to-buy-services/ministry\\_rfp\\_guide.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/services-for-government-and-broader-public-sector/buy-goods-services-and-construction/how-to-buy-services/ministry_rfp_guide.pdf)

<sup>24</sup><https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/rezoning-applications.aspx>

<sup>25</sup><https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/support/programs/strongstart-bc>

<sup>26</sup><https://bc-cfa.org/programs-services/supported-child-development/supported-child-development/>

# Appendices

## Appendix C: Quality at the Program Level

As local governments explore their roles, investments and partners, consideration should be given to supporting services that meet quality standards as identified in the research.

High quality at an individual program level means honouring children where they are at, supporting children of all abilities and giving them opportunities to develop and learn through play in a safe environment<sup>27</sup>. In 2019, the BC Ministry of Education released the updated [Early Learning Framework](#) that provides detailed guidance to educators as they develop quality programs including reflective practices that support learning for children. This framework should be referenced when developing or evaluating child care programs.

The Childcare BC plan has also committed to work with Indigenous partners to understand and meet the specific needs of Indigenous children and families in the context of early care and learning. The plan acknowledges the importance of culture and therefore supports childcare programs to include cultural focus<sup>27</sup>. Additionally, the federal Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework outlines visions and principles for a distinctions-based framework to support quality, culturally based First Nations, Métis and Inuit early learning and childcare.

Furthermore, extensive research has established contributing factors that foster a high-quality program, which Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2005) outline in their literature review of quality child care. For instance, at a relational level, reporting of positive relationships between families and providers, among colleagues, and between children and staff is indicative of quality care. Additionally, when staff are more educated, feel appreciated and are well supported, the quality of care increases. Planned programming with a strong pedagogical foundation that is tailored to meet the diverse needs of children plus well designed indoor and outdoor spaces (see [GUIDE #3](#))<sup>27</sup> further enhances the quality of care.

Finally, when considering who is operating the child care services in your communities, it is important to know that who operates the programs can have an impact on the quality of those services. Research from Canada, the United States, Britain, and New Zealand indicates that group not-for-profit/public operations are generally higher quality<sup>30</sup>, with lower parent fees<sup>31</sup>, and provide more training and better compensation for staff. In fact, the Province of BC has recently prioritized capital funding to public and not-for-profits agencies and has required public entities (like boards of education or local governments) who receive capital funds for child care to either operate the program themselves or partner with a not-for-profit organization.

<sup>27</sup>British Columbia Early Learning Framework. Ministry of Education. 2019 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework>

<sup>28</sup>Promising Practices First Nations, Aboriginal Maternal & Child Health Programs, 2015

<sup>29</sup>Herrington, S., Lesmeister, C., Nicholls, J., & Stefiuk, K. (N.D.). 7Cs: An Informational Guide to Young Children's Outdoor Play Spaces. Retrieved from <https://sala.ubc.ca/sites/sala.ubc.ca/files/documents/7Cs.pdf>

<sup>30</sup>[Childcare Resource and Research Unit. \(2011\). Briefing Note: What Research Says About Quality in For-Profit, Non-Profit and Public Child Care.](#)

<sup>31</sup>Macdonald D, Friendly M, March 2020 [In Progress: Child Care Fees in Canada](#)

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