

CHILD CARE SPACE ACTION PLAN

Greater Vernon



Final Draft February 2020

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Child Care Space Action Plan – Greater Vernon

Executive Summary

This study looks at the changing demographics and the current inventory of child care spaces within the Greater Vernon area. The Greater Vernon Area (GVA) includes the City of Vernon, District of Coldstream, Electoral Area B and C. The study also looks at future need for child care spaces based on current demographics projected out for 10 years and is based on the information collected through the community survey and stakeholder meetings.

Community surveys garnered more than 450 respondents. The information collected painted a clear picture on the desperate need for additional child care spaces in Greater Vernon. Lack of child care affects parents' ability to work, to advance in their careers, their quality of life (mental, physical and social). It also affects children who may not have an opportunity for interaction with other children supporting the development of social skills and school readiness.

The stakeholder meetings clearly confirmed the need for many more child care spaces. They also identified the need for a better system for the education and retention of child care staff.

The School District #22 recognizes the importance of early childhood education and is moving forward on developing a partnership for the provision of additional child care services at School District sites.

The total number of children in Vernon ages 12 and under is 4,890 (as of 2016). Although all families do not require child care, there are currently only 1,411 spaces in Vernon. In Coldstream, there are 1,385 children under the age of 12, with only 256 spaces.

The findings in this study are supported by findings from other municipal child care surveys conducted in BC as well as the recently released report: Early Years Study 4, Thriving Kids, Thriving Society. This Study calls on governments to offer early education to all preschool-aged children. Instead of a “place to go while mom works”, today's early childhood education provides a first tier of education that is as important as those that follow.

The recommendations in the Early Years Study 4 support those coming out of our consultation sessions – that we need a “publicly funded, publicly managed system of early childhood education centres for children starting at the age of 2, which would act as an extension of the public education system” (Early Years Study 4).

In order to start meeting the needs of their communities, the City of Vernon and the District of Coldstream are moving forward in the development of new child care spaces. This study is the first step.

Introduction

The City of Vernon engaged GDH Solutions to develop a Community Child Care Space Action Plan for the Greater Vernon Area (GVA). This Action Plan is based on a review of existing locations, demand and includes an assessment on future needs of child care spaces.

This report covers the context and background of the study, demographics, child care spaces inventory, and results from the community survey and stakeholder meetings.

It provides recommendations on the child care space needs over the next ten years (2020 to 2029).

Background

The provision of child care in Greater Vernon is consistent with similar sized communities in British Columbia. The lack of a well-organized child care system at the provincial and federal levels impacts service levels in the GVA.

The Federal Government has committed funding of \$7.5 billion towards child care funding of over 11 years. The Federal Government has distributed the first \$1.2 billion to the provinces and territories through bi-lateral funding agreements.

The province of BC is endeavouring to create 22,000 new licensed child care spaces by 2021. The Ministry of Children and Family Development is the key player in this effort.

Through the Province's Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (ELCC) with the Government of Canada, the Province is investing \$60 million to convert around 2,500 licensed child care spaces – with a priority on infant and toddler spaces – into low-cost spaces at existing child care facilities across B.C. (The Provinces version of \$10 a day child care.)

Approved sites are on the leading edge of one of the largest social policy changes in B.C.'s history. The positive financial impact on parents with children in these prototype sites is significant, with families paying no more than \$200 a month per child for full-time enrolment during regular business hours, regardless of the care type. For some low-income families, child care could be free.

Ultimately, over 50 prototype sites will be operational from November 1, 2018 to March 31, 2020. These sites will help test funding and operational models required to move British Columbia towards a universal child care system.

The Ministry of Education is involved through the provision of early learning services (StrongStart BC); the Ministry of Health through Interior Health is responsible licensing and monitoring of child care facilities, and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training administers funding for continuing education and training for early childhood educators.

UBCM – the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, has provided a Child Care Spaces Inventory for the GVA. Within this inventory one facility (Maven Lane) is participating as a prototype site for the Provinces *Universal Child Care* initiative. This document includes extensive information for Child Care facilities in the study area. The Child Care Spaces Inventory was updated as part of this Action Plan.

Demographic Information

The City of Vernon and the District of Coldstream have been growing steadily since 2014. The 2018 population of the City of Vernon was 42,574 and the District of Coldstream was at 11,395.

Information taken from BC Statistics for 2018 indicated the numbers of children in the Vernon School District 22.

This takes in Vernon, Coldstream, Lumby and Regional Districts Area B, C, D and E.

Although the study area only included Greater Vernon it is likely that there are families in those areas that would potentially access childcare spaces within Vernon.



School District 22 (2018)			
<i>Ages 0-2 yrs.</i>	<i>Ages 3-4 years</i>	<i>Ages 5-12 years</i>	<i>Total number of children 12 & under</i>
1725	1309	5511	8,545

UBCM provided data for just the City of Vernon and the District of Coldstream, using data from the 2016 census.

Vernon and Coldstream Data from UBCM (2016)							
	Ages 0-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Total 12& under	Number of households	Number with children	
Vernon	1,050	1,105	2,735	4,890	17,800	5,195	
Coldstream	260	290	835	1,385	3,915	1,610	

These numbers indicate that a higher percentage of households in Coldstream (41%) have children than those in Vernon (29%).

Projected growth numbers from *BC Stats - PEOPLE 2019: BC Sub-Provincial Population Projections*. Indicate growth for the Thompson Okanagan Development Region to be an average of .9% annual growth from 2019 to 2041. The growth rate is anticipated to be higher in the near term, then declining towards the end.

Therefore, the projected numbers of children by age group from 2016 to 2029 have been calculated based on one percent (1%) per year. The chart follows on the next page.

The following chart was created by increasing the numbers in each age category by 1% per year. Although this may not be a true representation of the actual future numbers and ages of children, it does serve to project the potential numbers of children in Vernon and Coldstream over the next ten years.

The numbers increase from 4,890 to 5,565 for Vernon, and from 1,385 to 1,576 for Coldstream.

Projected Numbers of Children by Age Category for 14 year period

VERNON

AGES	0 to 2	3 to 5	6 to 12	Total	Population Growth	
					Change %	Accum %
2016	1,050.00	1,105.00	2,735.00	4,890.00		1.00%
2017	1,060.50	1,116.10	2,762.40	4,938.90	1.00%	1.00%
2018	1,071.10	1,127.20	2,790.00	4,988.30	1.00%	2.00%
2019	1,081.80	1,138.50	2,817.90	5,038.20	1.00%	3.00%
2020	1,092.60	1,149.90	2,846.10	5,088.60	1.00%	4.10%
2021	1,103.60	1,161.40	2,874.50	5,139.40	1.00%	5.10%
2022	1,114.60	1,173.00	2,903.30	5,190.80	1.00%	6.20%
2023	1,125.70	1,184.70	2,932.30	5,242.70	1.00%	7.20%
2024	1,137.00	1,196.60	2,961.60	5,295.20	1.00%	8.30%
2025	1,148.40	1,208.50	2,991.20	5,348.10	1.00%	9.40%
2026	1,159.90	1,220.60	3,021.10	5,401.60	1.00%	10.50%
2027	1,171.50	1,232.80	3,051.40	5,455.60	1.00%	11.60%
2028	1,183.20	1,245.10	3,081.90	5,510.20	1.00%	12.70%
2029	1,195.00	1,257.60	3,112.70	5,565.30	1.00%	13.80%

COLDSTREAM

AGES	0 to 2	3 to 5	6 to 12	Total	Population Growth	
					Change %	Accum %
2016	260	290	835	1,385		1.00%
2017	262.6	292.9	843.4	1,398.90	1.00%	1.00%
2018	265.2	295.8	851.8	1,412.80	1.00%	2.00%
2019	267.9	298.8	860.3	1,427.00	1.00%	3.00%
2020	270.6	301.8	868.9	1,441.20	1.00%	4.10%
2021	273.3	304.8	877.6	1,455.60	1.00%	5.10%
2022	276	307.8	886.4	1,470.20	1.00%	6.20%
2023	278.8	310.9	895.2	1,484.90	1.00%	7.20%
2024	281.5	314	904.2	1,499.80	1.00%	8.30%
2025	284.4	317.2	913.2	1,514.80	1.00%	9.40%
2026	287.2	320.3	922.4	1,529.90	1.00%	10.50%
2027	290.1	323.5	931.6	1,545.20	1.00%	11.60%
2028	293	326.8	940.9	1,560.70	1.00%	12.70%
2029	295.9	330	950.3	1,576.30	1.00%	13.80%

Methodology

GDH Solutions, with the support of the City of Vernon, conducted an online survey from October 22, 2019 until November 30, 2019 through the City's Engage Vernon tool. This survey had 453 respondents.

An open house was held on November 24, 2019 at the Recreation Centre, in conjunction with the Active Living Open House. About 35 surveys were filled out (on paper and on iPads), and others noted the information to do the survey online at home.

Two stakeholder consultation sessions were held on January 15, 2019 at the Recreation Centre, one afternoon and one evening session. In total there were 45 participants including child care providers (large and small centres), parents, and professionals working in the sector.

Key Informant discussions were held with City of Vernon and District of Coldstream staff, and a number of key stakeholders.

An extensive update was done to the UBCM document – the child care facility listing and numbers of child care spaces. The projected number of new spaces has also been provided.

There was consultation with staff in Recreation, Planning, Communication and Economic Development in Vernon; and the Chief Administrative Officer in Coldstream. The staff provided guidance and support throughout the project.

GDH Solutions analyzed all the data and provided recommendations.

Municipal Involvement

As the development of child care spaces is an infrastructure project affected by municipal policies, local government review of policies, plans, and bylaws is required; to identify child and family friendly policies and to pinpoint any aspects that may create barriers to the creation of licensed child care spaces.

Policy Involvement Review

The City of Vernon reviewed its bylaw, policies and the Official Community Plan to allow for easier child care facility development and access to zoning areas. Overall the zoning bylaw, policies and Official Community Plan do not create undue barriers to childcare in the community.

1. Definitions of childcare minor and major are complex and not very different from each other. Also they reference the Community Care Facilities Act – which is not needed.

CARE CENTRE, MINOR means the premise licensed as required under the Community Care Facilities Act intended to provide care to children, youth, or adults where not more than thirteen hours of care is provided per day. This use includes in home multi age child care for up to eight (8)

children, group day care limited for up to sixteen (16) children, child minding for up to sixteen (16) children, preschool for up to fifteen (15) children, out of school care for up to twenty (20) children, and all other care provided under the Community Care Facilities Act for up to eight (8) people including but not limited to special needs day care, emergency child care, and adult day care.

CARE CENTRE, MAJOR means the premise licensed as required under the Community Care Facilities Act intended to provide care to children, youth, or adults where not more than thirteen hours of care is provided per day. This use includes group day care limited for more than sixteen (16) children, child minding for more than sixteen (16) children, preschool for more than fifteen (15) children, out of school care for more than twenty (20) children, and all other care provided under the Community Care Facilities Act for more than eight (8) people including but not limited to special needs day care, emergency child care, and adult day care.

2. Most commercial zones allow for childcare; a rezoning is required for a childcare centre in a residential zone (this is not necessarily a barrier but a good practice) – see neighbourhood commercial as an example:
https://www.vernon.ca/sites/default/files/docs/bylaws/zoning_10_101_c1_neighbourhood_commercial.pdf
3. Most residential locations allow childcare as a minor home based business and some allow a major – see the R1 zone as an example of this;
https://www.vernon.ca/sites/default/files/docs/bylaws/zoning_9_92_r1_estate_lot_residential_1.pdf
Care Centres 5.13.1 (home based business section)

Care centres shall comply with the following regulations:

- where located in a residential zone the care centre shall not change the residential character or external appearance of the building involved; or where new development is occurring, the character and external appearance shall be residential in nature and reflective on existing neighbourhood development.
 - where located in a residential zone, care centres, minor shall not be permitted signs advertising the care centre.
 - where located in a residential zone, care centres, major shall be permitted signs according to the provisions of the City of Vernon Sign Bylaw No. 4489, as amended.
 - a safe drop-off area for patrons shall be provided on the site.
 - where access is available to a rear lane, vehicle access for the purpose of the care centre is only permitted from the rear lane.
4. There is a requirement in the bylaw for onsite drop off and there are parking requirements. (these might be seen as a bit of a barrier, but exemptions can be requested)

For community planning, the City of Vernon continue to link child care and care options to meet the goals or enhance the goals of the Youthful Vernon Strategy. Some of the recommended actions from the Youthful Vernon Strategy are:

Action 36: Work with community partners to access funding to conduct a Child Care Needs Assessment to understand and address the needs in the community and to support economic development. *This is now completed as of this project.*

Action 37: Encourage larger businesses, employers and residential subdivisions to consider including child care provisions in new development. *This is also identified in this project.*

Action 38: Encourage School District #22 to consider including child care provisions in new builds and facility expansions to co-locate related services. Recognize that School District #22 is currently at 104% capacity which puts early years/child care programs at risk and explore providing other options in the municipality. *This is also identified in this project.*

Action 39: Working with licensing partners, evaluate and update business license and zoning bylaw regulations related to child care. Working with early childhood education partners, lobby for increased enforcement of unregulated, illegal childcare.

Action 40: Promote child care resources on the Welcome to Vernon website.

Non-Policy Involvement in Child Care

Local governments in the region are involved in child care in ways other than policy. This includes:

- Participating at or convening child care planning tables
- Advocating to senior governments on local/regional child care needs
- Undertaking child care needs assessment(s)
- Seeking funding and facilitating the creation of early childhood development hubs (child care centres co-located with other child and family oriented services)
- Promoting child care by facilitating partnerships within the community

Best Practices-Other Municipalities

- Municipal statements of support for child and family services in respective Official Community Plans
- Council motion to recognize child care as an essential service
- School District partnerships for transferring children to after school care programs
- Strong support for child care facilities and programs in First Nation communities
- Providing grants or tax exemptions to child care providers
- Making space available in municipal facilities- at nominal or below market rates- for the provision of child care
- Securing built child care spaces or cash in lieu from developers through the development approval process
- Providing planning tools to existing and prospective child care operators
- Establishing family-friendly policies for municipal employees (e.g. compressed work weeks; flexible scheduling to accommodate employees' child care needs)
- Considering the provision of child care in the context of neighbourhood planning by evaluating the need for child care in proposed developments

Though the level of municipal support for child care varies, it is encouraging to see the mention of child care in the plans and policies of most.

Current Inventory of Child Care Facilities

There is a total of 68 child care facilities in the City of Vernon and District of Coldstream. Of those 51 are in Vernon, with 17 in Coldstream.

The breakdown for numbers of spaces by category is as follows:

VERNON – Number of Spaces by Category. Total number of spaces for all groups is 1,411.

<i>Birth-36 mos.</i>	<i>30 mos. - School Age</i>	<i>Licensed Pre-school</i>	<i>School Age</i>	<i>Multi-Age</i>	<i>Family Child Care</i>	<i>In-Home Multi- Age</i>
112	342	286	466	64	133	8

COLDSTREAM– Number of Spaces by Category. Total number of spaces for all groups is 256.

<i>Birth-36 mos.</i>	<i>30 mos. - School Age</i>	<i>Licensed Pre-school</i>	<i>School Age</i>	<i>Multi-Age</i>	<i>Family Child Care</i>	<i>In-Home Multi-Age</i>
0	36	40	123	0	49	8

The total number of full time equivalent childcare spaces in the study area is 1504. In addition to this number, there are 32 spaces for “Occasional Child Care” for preschool to school age children. These are not included in the totals, as these spaces are not funded by the Province.

The total number of children in Vernon and Coldstream based on the UBCM information is 6,465. It is difficult to determine what percentage of children require childcare, although the survey results show that 51.2% of respondents were on one or more wait lists.

The types of spaces do not match the need for the ages of the children. The deficit is particularly high in the 0 to 2 age category, with a population of 1,310, and only 112 child care spots (with none in Coldstream).

When comparing the total number of children living in the area and the current number of child care spaces, it is evident that the child care space availability rate for certain age groups in Greater Vernon area is well below the provincial and national average. Greater Vernon has a 8% availability rate for children ages 0-2 years, 38% for children ages 3-5 years, and 16% availability rate for school-aged children (6-12 years). The national availability rate for children 0-12 years is 27.3% and the provincial availability rate is 18% (national and provincial availability rates for the specific age groups are not available).

The complete inventory of child care spaces by facility, is attached as a separate report (excel format). This is the UBCM spreadsheet, updated with current information.



Survey Results

A survey was posted online from October 22, 2019 until November 30, 2019. (Appendix C – Survey Document)

The participation in the survey was excellent, with 453 responses. These responses represented 783 children, with the largest age group being birth to 4 years.

The following is a brief synopsis of the survey responses. It is recognized that this was not a “statistically valid” survey, and that not all interested parties would have been aware of this opportunity to provide input. It did however result in useful information to support the need for child care spaces in both Vernon and Coldstream.

Question 1: **Please provide your Postal Code**

The Postal Codes were captured on a map. (See Appendix C). The map shows the neighbourhoods that are in most need of child care are:

- Alexis Park
- Vernon City Centre
- Coldstream (all one postal code)
- East Hill
- Foothills
- Harwood
- Mission Hill
- Okanagan Landing North
- South Vernon

Question 2: **“How many children, by age currently live in your household?”**

The following chart shows the total numbers by age group.

Age Group	Total numbers
Under 1	123
1 year	106
2 years	95
3 years	90
4 years	91
5 years	72
6 years	49
7 years	39
8 years	31
9 years	32
10 years	25
11 years	14
12 years	16
Total	783

This breakdown of age groups indicates the large number of infants and very young children.

Question 3: **“Are any of your children currently in child care, either full or part time?”**

- YES - 247 (54.5%)
- NO – 206 (45.5%)

Question 4: **“For what age group do you now, or in the future, need child care?”**

- Infant/toddler (0-2 years) - 247
- 3 to 5 years - 289
- School Age – 265

Question 5: **“What type of child care do you need?”**

- Full – time - 299
- Half days - 114
- Before and/or after school - 260
- Evening care - 53
- Weekends - 57
- Drop-in care- 127

Question 6: **“What are the barriers for you in accessing child care?”**

- Availability of care - 388
- Cost of care - 306
- Transportation to/from care – 108
- Finding care for children with special needs - 22
- Location of child care facilities -120
- Hours of care -213
- Quality of care- 171
- Scheduling child care to match work schedule -210

Question 7: **“Are you currently on any waitlists for child care?”**

- Yes - 221 (48.8%)
- No – 231 (51.2%)

These questions, number 2 to 7, paint a picture of a huge need for additional child care space. They also indicate the need for a variety of options in the types of child care. Many families work shifts, or part- time evening and week-end hours, as well as before and after school hours. Cost is the biggest issue, just behind the lack of available care.

The final question, number 8, was open ended, giving participants an opportunity to comment on child care in Vernon and Coldstream.

The comments section was populated by responses from 190 participants. This is almost half of those who filled out the survey.

The following is a list of some of the comments, representative of what people were saying:

- Not enough child care options, and in particular for children with special needs
- Difficult to find any childcare for parents who don't work 9 to 5 jobs; or rotating work schedules, changing shifts, 12 hour shifts etc. People work part-time as there is no 12 hour child care – this limits opportunity for promotions
- Weekend and evening care is rare, and is usually unlicensed
- Can't find part-time care (multiple comments on this)
- Cost is a big issue, particularly with multiple children and even with good jobs (multiple comments)
- Desperate need for infant/toddlers
- Frustrating trying to get before and after school care
- Sick of being so stressed and not finding any options
- Been on 5 waitlists for 18 months
- Many comments on not being able to go back to work due to lack of childcare options – ridiculous that parents have no options when trying to return to work after maternity leave; some spouses have to work out of town so that wife can stay home with kids – due to lack of childcare spaces; others can only work part-time (doctors included)
- Some women give up their jobs and go on income assistance as they are unable to pay the high cost of child care even if they can find care. A mother should not have to give up her career because safe child care is not accessible.
- Need care during Christmas, Spring break and summer (most jobs work through those school breaks!). Pro D days are also an issue for many families.
- Every school should have before and after school care available
- Can't use affordable child care benefit for non-licensed spaces; nor any help with a nanny
- (shared)
- Kids are on multiple wait lists – can only go to work if all are in care – otherwise can't afford any childcare!
- Childcare should be considered essential – same as school. These kids are our future!
- Some places don't even accept applications as their wait lists are too long
- There is abuse of the system -regarding subsidy – some accept \$ under different names to get more \$\$
- Low wages for child care workers – no wonder so few stay in the field. Staff retention is a problem
- Often takes at least 2 years to get a spot
- Transportation to and from school from childcare facility is difficult
- Need a childcare facility near the hospital for shift workers. Health care workers need more assistance as they work long shifts, are “on-call”, work changing hours etc.
- If a new recreation facility is built, include a large multi-age child care facility
- Large employers should build childcare facilities
- Need more inspections at childcare facilities
- Finding quality child care for infants is almost impossible; very few infant spots available
- Many childcare centres do not have access to green space or playgrounds
- Lack of part-time care spaces

The number and quality of the comments indicate the tremendous need for additional child care spaces in Vernon and Coldstream. It also shows the high levels of frustration and the impact on the ability of parents to obtain and keep good paying jobs.

The Final Survey Results Report (from Engage Vernon) is attached as separate document.

Child Care Providers

Child care provider input was solicited both through a phone interview and through the child care provider attending open house sessions.

Participants discussed the value of community support, hub models and finding ways to better support early years education. A main topic of conversation was around the need to increase respect and value for Early Childhood Educators, to be seen and compensated as educators rather than daycare workers. Participants underscored the need for infant/toddler and after school programs as well as increased flexibility in hours to meet family needs. Innovative ideas were proposed as systemic interventions which could assist in increasing local capacity, including partnerships between the School District and municipality for co-location of child care spaces, and business sponsorship.

Care provider input highlighted the challenges of service provision; given the limited number of staff and centres, offering flexible care (flexible days of the week and hours of the day) is very challenging. Offering and maintaining quality care is dependent on the child care providers in place - having a passionate and committed provider makes all the difference. Thus, recruiting and retaining quality staff is of utmost importance. In the event that additional child care providers need to be recruited, offering higher pay or increased professional development incentives were suggested solutions.

Provider Challenges

The child care providers struggle with attracting and retaining staff. The wages are low, hours can be long, and staff “burn-out”.

The BC government is only supplementing wages at \$1 an hour and this is potentially going up to \$2 an hour for ECE’s, so unqualified care assistants can’t access this wage enhancement. This does create incentive for ECE certification, but has also caused some staff moral issues with difference in pay.

Barriers faced include lack of access to initial and ongoing training (Responsible Adult, ECCE designations, professional development) and lack of access to a network of other child care providers

Key themes from Child Care Provider Input

1. Staff recruitment and retention are concerns.
2. The current number and types of spaces are insufficient to meet current family needs.
3. Offering families more flexibility in the days/hours that care is available is constrained by the reality of running a small centre.
4. Increase capacity in ECE sector through grants for education, increased professional development, and sharing of resources and educators (staff exchange, subs, specialists).
5. Increase ability to meet family’s needs - open infant/toddler centre, increase hours and flexibility, and help parents access Affordable Child Care Benefit subsidy.
6. Hub model - Develop partnerships with SD22, municipality, seniors and other services.
7. Get creative with space - SD22 for portable to increase early years space; increase infant/toddler spaces at community child care centre.
8. Early Years 2 yr plus as part of education system

Stakeholder Consultation

Two consultation sessions were held on January 14, 2020, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, with a total of 45 participants. The sessions were promoted through Engage Vernon as well as through the media.

The sessions were attended with representation from agencies that support child care services, municipal staff and councilors (Vernon and Coldstream), Interior Health representatives, School District 22, as well as many private (non-profit and for-profit) child care providers operating both small and large centres. Members of the public with a vested interest in child care were also present.

A number of significant discussions took place at both sessions. The key topic areas were:

- Shortage of spaces – young children ages 1-3 in particular and before and after school care
- Levels of funding for child care space providers
- Government funding process changing regularly
- Extreme lack of qualified staff
- Lack of staff -impacts number of child care spaces
- Structure of ECE programs and outcomes
- Philosophical shift – 2 income families
- Shift work both men and women- lack of child care availability
- Large employers need to provide care on site
- Need for coordinated transportation with school district
- Managing Waitlists is difficult for service providers and frustrating for parents

The stakeholder consultation session confirmed the findings from the survey, that is, a huge need for additional child care spaces in Vernon and Coldstream. An additional key finding was the issues around staffing. Finding and retaining qualified child care staff is an ongoing struggle for child care providers. This is due to low wages, inconsistent funding for student bursaries and government grants for childcare operators. Care for children with special needs is also extremely difficult to find.

School District 22 informed that it is anticipating the creation of one or more childcare centres on certain sites owned by the School District. They will be used for early childhood education through the delivery of child care programs.

The consultant also had discussions with a number of key service providers. These included:

- Kirstie Blanleil, Regional Director, North Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs
- Becky Kirkham, Program Manager – Early Years, Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs
- Chere Lane, Program Coordinator - Child Care and Resource Referral,
- Annette Sharkey, Social Planning Council
- Adrian Johnson, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, School District 22
- Katrina Lehenbauer, Healthy Communities, Population Health, Interior Health Authority
- Margaret McEwan, Licensing Officer, Health Protection, Interior Health Authority
- Kalli Van Stone, School Feasibility Study Co-ordinator, Okanagan Indian Band

The consultant received support and information from City of Vernon staff in the Recreation Department, the Planning Department, Economic Development, and in Communications, as well as from the Chief Administrative Officer in Coldstream.

Summary of Findings

Availability and Affordability

The lack of availability of child care was the greatest issue for working parents with children, followed by cost of care. The greatest need is for children under the age of 3.

Parents who work shifts or hours outside of the “8 to 5” norm have almost no access to child care. They must resort to non-licensed child care, or pay a nanny. Part-time care is also a big issue, and in some cases, parents will pay for full-time care only to use it on a part-time basis.

This prevents families from the option of two incomes, the ability for a single parent to work outside the home and, can hinder opportunities for career advancement.

Waitlists

The survey indicated that 221 respondents were on wait lists. The consultation confirmed the issue of long waitlists and the difficulty on the part of care providers to manage those lists in a fair and transparent manner. Parents are frustrated with the long wait times and most are on multiple lists. Although child care centres try to keep families together, it is not always possible, and parents must take their children to different locations.

Quality of Care

Due to the demand versus supply, parents most often do not have a choice of child care. Some use child care that does not meet the Licensed or Unlicensed criteria set by the province. There is a risk of poor quality care at those types of facilities (usually in a private home).

Special Needs

Families with a child with special needs has unique requirements, which are even more difficult to access, and more expensive.

Before and After School Care

There are a large number of children in the 6-12 age group – 2,735 in Vernon and 835 in Coldstream. Many of these children require before and after school care. There are 466 children in Vernon and 123 in Coldstream that have before and/or after school care.

It should be noted that only 10 child care facilities offer before school care, whereas there are 18 for after school care.

Impact of Child Care Shortage on the Community

The impact of a lack of child care has far reaching implications. It affects the child in terms of social skills and school readiness, it affects the parents mental and physical health, and it has a negative economic impact. The economy is affected by the parents’ inability to participate in the workforce, advance their careers, operate businesses, provide professional services or attend school or training.

It affects businesses in that it is difficult to attract and/or retain a qualified workforce. It also impacts local businesses if families cannot spend money on dining out or extracurricular activities.

The Early Years Study 4: Thriving Kids, Thriving Society

This report, released in February 2020, is the fourth in a long term study (20 years) on the impact of Early Childhood Education.

Early Years Study 4 calls on governments to offer early education to all preschool-aged children. The concept replaces outdated notions of daycare. Instead of “a place kids go while mom works”, today’s early childhood education provides a first tier of education that is as important as those that follow.

The Early Years 4 Study provides a clear, comprehensive case on the critical role of early childhood education. The most accelerated phase of learning takes place between birth and age 5. The research shows that age 2 to 5 is a unique time for learning, and that high quality early childhood education environments provide benefits in language, thinking and well-being.

Neurologists and psychologists unanimously agree that a child’s earliest experiences have long-lasting impact on brain, cognitive, and behavioural development. Yet, only one in two Canadian children age 5 and younger regularly attend an early childhood education program. Canada ranks 33rd out of 35 OECD countries where enrolment for this age group averages 70%. Canadian parents also pay more for early education: 19% of net income (the OECD average is 12%). (Early Years Study 4)

https://earlyyearsstudy.ca/report_chapters/margaret-mccain-introduction/

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section outlines recommended actions to address the existing and future child care challenges in the GVA. Building on community-gathered evidence of insufficient child care spaces, care provider training and ECE staffing concerns, these recommendations lay a foundation for action required from each level of the system and all partners involved.

Child Care Spaces Targets and Predicted Need Trends

Using the projected population growth and the aspirational targets for child care space availability rates, the consultant was able to identify targets for the total number of child care spaces required for each age group over the next 10 year period (2021-2030), which are represented below. Based on feedback and current need trends, it is estimated that for our community, the following percentage of families require child care in the indicated age categories:

0 to 2 Years 25-30% of Families Require Care (Part Time to Full Time Care)

3 to 5 Years 55-65% of Families Require Care (Part Time to Full Time Care)

6 to 12 Years 25-40% of Families Require Care (Increases for summer)

Current child care spaces combined with predicted growth has been calculated, along with the percentage of predicted community need being met per age category, as shown in the chart below. This data was used to inform recommended space creation targets up to 2030.

	0 to 2	% of Need Provided Capacity	3 to 5	Preschool	% of Need Provided Capacity	6 to 12	% of Need Provided Capacity	Mixed	Total	% of Need Provided Capacity
2019	112	41	378	326	58	589	64	262	1504	71
Current 2020	124	45	390	326	59	601	65	262	1540	72
Recommended										
2021	141	51	425	342	63	637	68	280	1655	76
2022	161	58	463	359	67	675	71	300	1779	81
2023	184	65	505	377	71	716	75	321	1914	87
2024	209	74	551	396	76	759	79	343	2060	92
2025	239	83	600	416	81	804	82	367	2219	98
2026	249	86	630	424	84	836	85	382	2310	101
2027	261	89	662	433	87	870	87	397	2406	105
2028	272	92	695	442	90	905	90	413	2506	108
2029	285	95	729	450	92	941	93	430	2610	111
2030	298	99	766	459	96	979	95	447	2719	115

The action strategies are required to work towards a vision of having increased space availability for all children 0-12. Targets are based on accelerated space creation focus on 0-2 years child care spaces and 3-5 years child care spaces, in the next five (5) years. This would be followed by general space creation through 2026-2030, to fill gaps. The space creation targets have been refined to align with local context and are largely influenced by the current ECE labour force concerns. The space targets strive to reach 15% space availability by 2030.

2020 to 2025 Space Increase Target to reach 100% of low base line, community need overall.

Yearly Increase	14%	9%	5%	6%	7%
	0 to 2	3 to 5	Preschool	6 to 12	Mixed
2020	124	390	326	601	262
2021	141	425	342	637	280
2022	161	463	359	675	300
2023	184	505	377	716	321
2024	205	550	396	758	343
2025	239	600	416	804	367

Percentage Increase in Spaces over 5 years.

	48%	35%	21%	25%	28%
2025 Space Target	239	600	416	804	367

2026 to 2030 Space Increase Target to Reach 115% of Community Need

Yearly Increase	5%	5%	2%	4%	4%
	0 to 2	3 to 5	Preschool	6 to 12	Mixed
2026	250	630	424	836	382
2027	261	661	433	870	397
2028	272	695	441	904	413
2029	285	729	450	941	430
2030	298	766	459	978	447

Percentage Increase in Spaces over 5 years

	20%	22%	9.5%	18%	18%
2030 Space Target	298	766	459	978	447

Affordable Child Care

It should be emphasized that considerable discussions among partners at provincial, municipal and local levels will be required to proceed with a coordinated approach. Collaborative and coordinated efforts are critical to avoid fragmented actions which will compound existing child care challenges.

Source \$10 a Day: <https://findingqualitychildcare.ca/quebec>;

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/cd/bqrd/backgroundfile-102626.pdf>;

<https://www.10aday.ca>

The Universal Child Care, \$10 a Day child care plan, already in motion in BC, is directly linked to the needs that have been identified in Greater Vernon for affordable fees for families, more licensed spaces, and better wages for child care providers - interventions which have the ability to create a more robust sector for Early Childhood Educators.

It is estimated that full implementation of the \$10 a Day Plan will have a significant and positive impact on BCs GOP and will create 69,100 jobs, even in the short term, according to private-sector economist Robert Fairholm.

How? The \$10 a Day Plan invests in the Early Childhood Educator workforce by supporting all caregivers to obtain an ECE Diploma. Over time, the workforce will transition towards a bachelor's degree. Wages will also increase to at least \$25 per hour, along with improved benefits and regular adjustments for inflation.

The plan also lowers parent fees, increases the number and types of licensed spaces to meet diverse family needs and lifts quality by focusing on higher educator wages and education requirements.

Until the plan is fully embedded in legislation, the following recommendations for provincial, municipal and local stakeholders can set the groundwork and maintain the positive momentum that has begun with recent municipal spotlight on child care issues.

Recommendations - Provincial Government

- Expedite the implementation of the Universal Child Care, \$10 a Day child care plan.
- Examine licensing regulations to reduce barriers to space creation and innovative partnerships.
 - Current licensing regulations have the potential to be more responsive to the needs of families and child care centres in the pursuit of a strengthened child care system.
 - With the opportunity of school district involvement, licensing and the School Act require alignment to ensure that progressive and innovative service delivery is allowed.
 - Licensing is also well poised to be a barometer of quality care. Currently, reports reflect compliance, but have the potential to communicate (as they are accessible by the public) efforts to deliver quality programming.
- Balance investments between capital funding to create spaces and operating costs to sustain spaces.
 - Ensure a focus on quality care is as high a priority target as space creation.
 - Along with space creation funds and the potential of expanding a child care maintenance fund, investing in centre operating costs is critical.
 - Without adequate capacity to attract qualified staff to the sector, the spaces will remain unfilled. A sustained staffing strategy that runs parallel to space creation includes support with operating funds.
- Attract Early Childhood Educators to the field, maintain quality and reduce costs associated with staff turnover.
 - Adequate wages, benefits and a wider recognition of value will strengthen this sector.
 - Without enough qualified staff, efforts to increase space is shortsighted. In addition, without the support to hire and retain Early Childhood Educators, community partners will be unable to play an innovative role in serving the needs of families.
 - In addition to making the field more attractive through wage enhancements, consider ECE training incentives to enter the field or pursue specialty training. This may include student loan forgiveness, salary lifts, and recognition.
- Move 2 years plus into early learning frame work as part of the Education System
 - Pre-Kindergarten as part of public education for two years (2) plus
 - Infant / Toddler would remain under the Early Childhood Care system

Recommendations - City of Vernon

It is recommended that the City of Vernon:

- City of Vernon draft letters requesting the Provincial and Federal Governments increase funding for early childhood care providers and educator training as recommended in the Child Care Space Action Plan.
- Encourage the creation of a Child Care Action Team, with key players including, Child Care Resource & Referral and Community Child Care providers (the Boys and Girls Club, Maven Lane etc.). The Child Care Action Team would continue to explore ways to mitigate the Early Childhood Educator and Child Care space shortage.

The committee will propel actions to:

1. Meet space creation targets
 2. Improve quality across community/region
 3. Address ECCE employment barriers
 4. Promote and support Public - Private - Non-Profit partnerships
 5. Support capital project planning
 6. Establish key performance indicators to track including:
 - i. Local training capacity and enrolment
 - ii. Waitlists
 - iii. New spaces created
 - iv. ECE wage range
 - v. Care options for families
- Access the Community Child Care Space Creation Program funds to build new spaces for children under five (5), with a focus on infants and toddlers. Consider City-owned lands for the new facilities, either in the Recreation Complex precinct and/or in Okanagan Landing, near the Laker's Clubhouse. Both of these locations are in high need areas.
 - Encourage and support the development of additional child care spaces by non- profit organizations in other high need areas of the City. These include East Hill, Mission Hill, Foothills and Alexis Park. This would be developed by the Child Care Action Team.
 - Share the Child Care Space Action Plan with the School District.
 - Encourage large employers to provide child care facilities at the workplace. This is particularly important in workplaces that require shift work. Encourage the Chamber of Commerce on this initiative.

Recommendations – District of Coldstream

It is recommended that the District of Coldstream:

- District of Coldstream draft letters requesting the Provincial and Federal Governments increase funding for early childhood care providers and educator training as recommended in the Child Care Space Action Plan.
- Encourage the creation of a Child Care Action Team, with key players including, Child Care Resource & Referral and Community Child Care providers (the Boys and Girls Club, Maven Lane etc.). The Child Care Action Team would continue to explore ways to mitigate the Early Childhood Educator and Child Care space shortage.

The committee will propel actions to:

7. Meet space creation targets
 8. Improve quality across community/region
 9. Address ECCE employment barriers
 10. Promote and support Public - Private - Non-Profit partnerships
 11. Support capital project planning
 12. Establish key performance indicators to track including:
 - i. Local training capacity and enrolment
 - ii. Waitlists
 - iii. New spaces created
 - iv. ECE wage range
 - v. Care options for families
- Access the Community Child Care Space Creation Program funds to build new spaces for children under 5, with a focus on infants and toddlers in Coldstream.
 - Use the government funding to build a child care centre on municipal lands, next to the Women's Institute.
 - Investigate opportunities to support a second child care facility elsewhere in the District of Coldstream. Work in cooperation with the School District on one of their sites.
 - Encourage large employers to provide child care facilities at the workplace. This is particularly important in workplaces that require shift work. Partner with the Chamber of Commerce on this initiative.

Conclusion

The provision of adequate child care spaces, quality programming, and equitable employment opportunities matter not just to those with young families, but to the broader economic and social development of communities. Significant investment and focused activities to both, increasing the number of quality child care spaces available and the number of Early Childhood Educators required for the new spaces. The return on investment for communities is significant; not only will parents be able to return to work, but the resilience of children will increase through quality early care and education, with the ultimate outcome being healthier, more productive citizens, and stronger social and economic sustainability.

Appendices

- A. *Glossary of Terms*
- B. *Sample - Survey Document*
- C. *Map of Survey Responses*
- D. *UBCM Planning Inventory Worksheet Spreadsheet*

APPENDIX A - Glossary of Terms

Source: http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/lo_09_4/l0o94_1332_2007#section1

Child Care

As referenced in this report child care has the meaning of a licensed child care program complying with the BC Community Care & Assisted Living Act and the BC Child Care Licensing Regulation. Programs provide care for three or more children, meeting specific requirements for health and safety, license application, staff qualifications, quality space and equipment, staff to child ratio, and program standards.

Early Childhood Care and Education

A course of study which is required for those wishing to become Registered Early Childhood Educators. Post-basic training may lead to an Infant/Toddler or Special Needs certificate.

Child Care Provider

A person providing child care on an ongoing basis. The person may be employed directly by the parents to care for the child(ren) either in their own home or in the child care provider's home or (s)he may be an employee in a licensed group child care facility.

A registered child care provider will have completed a registration process including criminal record check, character and physicians references, a home-setting review, as well as providing proof of first aid, group liability insurance and child care training.

Early Childhood Educator (ECE)

A person holding a certificate including:

- early childhood educator certificate,
- a special needs early childhood educator certificate,
- an infant and toddler educator certificate

Early Childhood Assistant

A person holding an early childhood assistant certificate

Responsible Adult

A person who is qualified to act as a responsible adult under section 29.

License-Not-Required (LNR) Family Child Care

Family child care homes that offer care for one or two children unrelated to the provider of child care. The operations are not required to obtain a license through Community Care Facility Licensing authorities; however, they may choose to register with a Child Care Resource and Referral Centre. Registered License-Not-Required Child Care providers must complete a minimum of 20 hours of family child care training (or responsible adult training) prior to, or within one year of registering as a Registered LNR child care provider.

Licensed Child Care Facility

A child care facility that meets the requirements of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and the Child Care Regulation.

Types of Licensed Care

Family Child Care - Licensed: Child care offered in the child care provider's own home for a maximum of seven children.

Group Child Care: The provision of care to children in a non-residential group setting. Group child care providers must have Early Childhood Education training and their facility must be licensed with Community Care Facilities Licensing.

- Group Child Care - Under 36 months: Group child care for a maximum of 12 children under 36 months.
- Group Child Care - 30 months to school-age: Group child care for a maximum 25 children aged 30 months to school age (5-6 years), with no more than two children younger than 36 months.
- Group Child Care - School-age (5-12 years): Care provided to children before and after school hours. The maximum group size is 30 if all children are in Grade 2 or higher. If any children present in the program are in Kindergarten or
- Grade 1 then the maximum group size is 24.

Preschool (30 Months to School Age)

A program that provides care to preschool children who are at least

- a. 30 months old on entrance to the program, and
- b. 36 months old by December 31 of the year of entrance.

Occasional Child Care

A program that provides, on an occasional or short-term basis, care to preschool children who are at least 18 months old.

Overnight Care

A program that provides care to cover shift based work hours.

Multi-Age Child Care

A program that provides, within each group, care to children of various ages.

In-Home Multi-Age Child Care

A program in which the licensee personally provides care, within the licensee's personal residence, to no more than 8 children of various ages. An in-home multi-age child care provider has full ECE qualifications.

Infants

Children between birth and 18 months.

Preschool Child

A child who is at least 30 months old but has not yet entered grade 1.

Child Requiring Extra Support

A child who, for physical, intellectual, emotional, communicative or behavioural reasons, requires support or services that are additional to, or distinct from, those provided to other children.

Parent

The parent of a child and includes, if applicable,

- a. the child's guardian,
- b. the person legally entitled to custody of the child, or
- c. the person who usually has the care and control of the child.

Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB)

On September 1, 2018, the Affordable Child Care Benefit replaced the Child Care Subsidy. The new funding will help families with the cost of child care, depending on factors like family size, type of care and household income.

BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit (BCECTB)

A tax-free monthly payment made to eligible families to help with the cost of raising young children under the age of 6 years. Benefits from this program are combined with the Federal Canada Child Benefit (CCB) and the BC Family Bonus Program (BCFB) into a single monthly payment.

Canada Child Benefit (CCB)

A federally-funded tax-free financial benefit, adjusted according to income, disbursed to families with children under 18 years. It is intended to help families with the cost of raising children.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR)

A provincially funded local support service to enhance the availability and quality of child care options by:

- advertising, recruiting and assessing potential family child care providers when a license is not required;
- supporting family and group child care providers;
- establishing and maintaining a registry of licensed and/or regulated child care options in the community; and
- providing resource and referral information to support parents' ability to select quality child care.

Supported Child Development (SCD)

Funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development and delivered by community agencies, Supported Child Development (SCD) Programs help families of children with developmental delays or disabilities to gain access to inclusive child care. The SCD program serves families with children from birth to 19 years, partnering with community licensed child care programs to offer a range of options for local families whose children require additional supports to attend child care programs for various age groups.

Low Income

Canada does not have an official poverty line; however, several measures of low income exist (e.g. Low Income Cut-Off, Market Basket Measure). For the purpose of this Child Care Needs Assessment, the after tax Low Income Measure (LIM) is used. The LIM is a pure measure of relative low income, defined as half the median family income (adjusted for family size). According to Vibrant Communities Canada, LIMs are the most frequently used measure internationally, particularly when making comparisons between countries.

APPENDIX C – Child Care Response Map

