

Partnerships working to create more child care spaces in B.C. ^[1]

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EXCERPTED

Families throughout British Columbia will have better access to closer-to-home child care, thanks to new provincial guidelines that allow local governments to pair funding programs and purchase land to create new child care spaces.

Municipalities and regional districts can now apply for up to \$4 million to buy land for child care centres and create new licensed child care spaces in their communities.

Previously, the maximum funding available was \$1 million and local governments had only one fund to draw from, leaving them to cover the costs of land purchases and additional spaces for new child care projects.

“We hear from local leaders about how important it is to have good quality child care to create a family-friendly community and attract employers to their cities and towns,” said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development. “We want to work with municipalities and regional districts to help make affordable quality child care accessible throughout the province. These grants are a strategic investment to ensure spaces are created where they’re needed most, strengthening communities and our economy.”

Last year, the town of Osoyoos received \$900,000 to add 18 new licensed child care spaces to the Osoyoos Child Care Centre — the first expansion since the centre opened more than 20 years ago.

“This partnership means parents in our community will no longer have to drive to nearby towns to find quality child care for their children,” said Sue McKortoff, mayor of the Town of Osoyoos. “We are putting this funding to work expanding a facility to meet our local needs and to ensure our community is an attractive place to work, live and raise a family.”

Like last year, planning grants of up to \$25,000 are available to help municipalities and regional districts identify needs and create new child care spaces over the next 10 years.

“We know we can create hundreds of new child care spaces if we work together,” said Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care. “I encourage local governments to apply for this funding, so child care can be in reach for their residents. Next year we hope to have a lot more success stories to share.”

Investing in child care and early childhood education is a shared priority between government and the BC Green Party caucus, and is part of the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

Quotes:

Brian Frenkel, councillor for the District of Vanderhoof and second vice-president of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities —

“Increasing the supply of child care spaces will improve the quality of life in communities across B.C. We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Province to deliver these funds to communities.”

Sharie Minions, mayor of Port Alberni —

“Through our community child care planning work, our community is getting a solid understanding of what and where our needs lie. We are so thrilled to have had the opportunity to work through this program and are excited to now move forward informed with a strong, locally made plan to create child care spaces in our community, catered to our community.”

Gary Holman, electoral area director for Salt Spring Island —

“We recognize this government is making historic investments in child care in B.C., and on behalf of the Capital Regional District and Salt Spring Island, I want to express our gratitude for the project funding we received through the first intake. We look forward to pursuing further opportunities resulting from this exciting announcement today.”

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