

# Roadmap for \$10-a-day child care in BC <sup>[1]</sup>

**Source:** Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC & Early Childhood Educators of BC

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online [PDF] <sup>[2]</sup>

Excerpted from introduction

### The Roadmap for \$10aDay Child Care in BC

BC IS ON THE ROAD TO SIGNIFICANT CHILD CARE CHANGE. If there was any lingering doubt, the pandemic has made clear to everyone that quality child care is essential for children, families, women, and communities and for achieving social and economic equity. In the 2020 provincial election the three major political parties each made significant child care commitments. It was the NDP, now BC's majority governing party, whose commitments most closely aligned with the \$10aDay Child Care Plan. And, the federal government has made a renewed commitment to develop a Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

With this unprecedented level of support in place, BC must move boldly and decisively to deliver \$10aDay Child Care to BC children and families. The public supports and demands no less.

We put this Roadmap forward in full support of the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples to design, develop, and deliver early care and learning services that meet their needs. We support the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and acknowledge that Indigenous communities have and may evolve their services in directions other than those outlined in this Roadmap, creating models to learn from and strive for. We commit to listen and learn in our ongoing work to decolonize our own practices and perspectives.

We continue to call on Canada and BC to honour their obligations to consult with Indigenous Peoples as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework. Any changes to the delivery of Indigenous early childhood education must respect the obligations stated in Bill 41–2019: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act—and be undertaken with Indigenous leadership and governing bodies.<sup>1</sup> And, governments must ensure that Indigenous Peoples have the resources required to develop and deliver early care and learning services.

This Roadmap offers a service delivery framework aligned with the \$10aDay Child Care Plan. It provides a level of policy detail required to create a universally accessible, quality system for families who choose child care for their infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children—a public system in which early childhood educators are respected professionals and child care comes to the table as a strong and equal partner with the K–12 education system.

The Roadmap also aligns with six key child care planks in the NDP 2020 election platform:

- Bring \$10-a-day child care to more families;
- Work toward universal access to before and after school care on school grounds;
- Ensure early childhood educators are a well-supported profession;
- Move responsibility for child care to the Ministry of Education;
- Protect child care in law; and
- Develop a new child care capital program.



The Roadmap is based on evidence and lived expertise as well as lessons learned over the last few years as BC began to address its child care chaos. It acknowledges that the province has made measurable progress on lowering parent fees, raising ECE wages, and creating new spaces, and outlines how to protect and build on these achievements. However, to date government has maintained the failed, market-based approach to child care. Initiatives have relied on individual organizations to develop new spaces and apply for a range of

siloe public funding programs.

This approach incentivized significant growth in the for-profit child care sector. Access to public capital grant programs enabled the use of public funds for the acquisition of private real estate assets. And, access to other operating funds with little accountability, coupled with high parent demand, made publicly funded child care appear to be a profit-making enterprise. This unfortunate trend flies in the face of research and evidence. In jurisdictions with effective systems, child care is publicly managed and a significant percentage of services are publicly delivered. Nonprofit services can be important partners in effective systems but there are no examples of effective child care systems that rely significantly on for-profit ownership and delivery of child care.

The approach taken over the last few years was fragmented, lacking a coherent system-building vision. As a result, opportunities for planned growth, consistency, and accountability were lost. New spaces were funded without a parallel strategy to ensure BC had sufficient qualified early childhood educators. Until recently, new programs received public operating funds regardless of the fees they charged. And, equitable access for families to programs receiving public funds was not guaranteed.

This Roadmap rejects fragmented, one-off, market-based initiatives and replaces them with systembuilding strategies that ensure public funds serve the public good and build public assets.

Consistent with the \$10aDay Plan, it charts two parallel paths for creating BC's child care system. The first path builds on existing strengths by welcoming in current providers who want to participate in the new system. While respecting their diversity, the Roadmap outlines policies, funding, professionalization, and related accountability measures to support their transition into a publicly managed \$10aDay system.

The second path outlines the process for creating new \$10aDay programs that are, as much as possible, publicly delivered. Given that there are currently licensed spaces for only 20 per cent of BC children, this ensures that, over time, a significant majority of child care facilities will be publicly owned, managed and/ or delivered—all key elements of effective child care systems.

Finally, the Roadmap outlines how to integrate both current and new child care services into the Ministry of Education at community, school district, and provincial levels. In short—the Roadmap moves BC to a public \$10aDay system. As we say in the \$10aDay Plan, the change we seek will take generosity of spirit and community engagement, adjusting as we go. We are confident that this Roadmap provides a strong place from which to build.

**Region:** British Columbia <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** investment <sup>[4]</sup>

economic recovery <sup>[5]</sup>

affordability <sup>[6]</sup>

accessibility <sup>[7]</sup>

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<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessibility> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/workforce>