

Letter: Childcare desperately needed in Squamish ^[1]

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Source: The Squamish Chief

Format: Article

Publication Date: 17 Mar 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

I am writing as a female entrepreneur working in the mental health field to implore you to prioritize advocating for providing childcare in the Sea to Sky Corridor.

I have spent 18 years living in the region, enjoying the incredible one-of-a-kind lifestyle the area offers.

During this time, I have spent many years working in social service roles with organizations such as Whistler Community Services Society, Sea to Sky Community Services, Zero Ceiling and most recently as a registered clinical counsellor providing mental health support to adults.

I am so fortunate to have a career I am passionate about, especially when mental health needs are at an all-time high.

It is no secret that finding daycare in Squamish and generally in B.C. is a unicorn situation.

Families commonly contact daycares and childcare providers well before starting their families, and it is nearly impossible to even get on a waitlist for these services.

Often, you do not even get a call back. When seeking these services, it seems the problems include a lack of living wage for early childcare educators, inadequate funding for daycare programs and insufficient infrastructure for daycares for our growing communities and province.

This is incredibly discouraging for working professionals, as this problem disproportionately impacts women. I am not alone: I know many women in this position, piecing together nanny shares, cobbling together neighbours and friends or delaying their return to work after having a child in hopes of maintaining their hard-earned careers.

Women in the Sea to Sky are often forced to choose between having a family or having a career. We are your teachers, nurses, firefighters, creators, designers, doctors, therapists, coaches, healthcare providers and administrators.

With labour shortages already crippling the economy and businesses, allowing us to get back to work is critical for the well-being and sustainable functioning of our community.

My husband and I welcomed our baby girl in November 2021, and although we love Squamish, lack of childcare will likely be the reason we leave the community.

We have successfully navigated the other well-known challenges such as the wildly unaffordable housing market (although we are both working in professional roles with master's degrees), danger and congestion on Highway 99 and the inability to get a family doctor. Ultimately, it looks as though lack of childcare is the reason we can no longer stay.

Although this letter could highlight the need for affordable housing, equality for women or the importance of mental health supports, I am requesting that you do your part to lobby on behalf of women: to advocate for accessible, affordable, quality childcare so we can get back to work.

You need us.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: child care shortage ^[4]

child care expansion ^[5]

