

Meet Little Phoenix Daycare, B.C.'s first trauma-informed child care centre ^[1]

With various stakeholders involved in the project, the Ministry of Children and Family Development committed \$500,000 in funding

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EXCERPTS

When we drop our kids off to daycare, we hope they get the specialized attention that they deserve. But for kids who've had to face extraordinary circumstances in their lives, that hope becomes a necessity to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

To meet this need in the province, B.C.'s first trauma-informed daycare opened its doors last week in North Park, Victoria. Nestled in the Victoria Social Innovation Centre building, Little Phoenix Daycare is equipped to look after kids who had to face adversity in their life—be it in the form of family violence, an experience in a refugee camp or physical, psychological, sexual or emotional abuse.

The facility is also open to all children from the North Park community. "What that does is it helps integrate children from various backgrounds and really helps develop an environment of acceptance and tolerance," says Mark Breslauer, CEO of nonprofit United Way Southern Vancouver Island, which is a community service-focused organization that works with families and seniors among others. In partnership with Family Services of Greater Victoria (FSGV) and the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS), the organization is working to secure more funding for the daycare.

Various stakeholders have been involved in this project, with \$500,000 coming from the provincial government. Led by Dr. Alison Gerlach from UVic's School of Child and Youth Care, Little Phoenix employs a methodical, research-based approach to child care that works well when combined with professionals within the daycare space, according to Breslauer.

Research shows that early intervention can make or break a traumatized child's recovery. The professionals holding up the day-to-day operations at the centre are recruited and trained by FSGV and VIRCS to ensure that the program is properly informed. Even the physical layout of the daycare is designed to include colour schemes, toys and stimulation appropriate for children who have experienced trauma in their life.

"All children need a supportive, nurturing environment to grow and thrive," Jane Taylor Lee, executive director of FSGV, said in a release. "The attention to detail is extraordinary, and we have a team of professionals who are excited to welcome children from all backgrounds into the space and assist them in developing and achieving their true potential."

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: trauma ^[4]

child care ^[5]

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[4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9070> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care> [6]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/early-intervention>