

ChildCareBC's New Spaces Fund open for new applications ^[1]

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EXCERPT

More families will soon be able to access licensed child care space, enabling parents to pursue work, school and other opportunities, with B.C.'s ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund now accepting new applications.

"Our government has already funded more than 30,500 new child care spaces since 2018, and as we enter the fifth year of our 10-year ChildCare BC plan, thousands more families will soon have access to child care that meets their needs," said Katrina Chen, B.C.'s Minister of State for Child Care. "We know we can't deliver child care without early childhood educators (ECEs), which is why we're investing in more training seats at post-secondary schools, a \$4-an-hour wage enhancement, and bursaries and other recruitment efforts to help attract, train and upgrade more ECEs."

Public and not-for-profit child care operators and providers and Indigenous governments can now apply for the fund's 2022-23 intake. Together, the Government of Canada and the Province are investing more than \$290 million to fund the creation of an estimated 8,400 new licensed child care spaces in high-need areas throughout B.C. over the next year. Applicants are encouraged to apply to this open intake by January 2023 to ensure their application can be considered within the fiscal year.

"We know that strong early learning and child care will help drive economic growth, increase women's participation in the workforce, and offer each child in Canada the best start in life," said Karina Gould, federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. "These additional licensed child care spaces will allow more children and families across the province to access high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care."

Since the launch of ChildCareBC in 2018, the Province has invested \$2.7 billion in ChildCareBC. The Government of Canada has invested more than \$662 million in early learning and child care in British Columbia since 2017.

The ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund has supported and accelerated the creation of new licensed child care facilities, helping to move toward the goal of quality, accessible and inclusive child care as a core service available to any family that wants it, when they need it, and at a price they can afford. Thousands of B.C. families are already experiencing the benefits.

"With so many new immigrants arriving in Surrey from India, providing infant-toddler child care in Punjabi – the language and culture our families know best – makes children and parents feel safe and comfortable," said Satwant Kaur Gill, manager, Khalsa Child Care. "This funding helped us create 29 new infant-toddler spaces at our two child care locations that filled up quickly. Our organization helps children adjust to life in Canada."

In 2022-23, a new stream will be introduced to fund the creation of new licensed school-aged care on school grounds available for school districts, First Nation schools, First Nation independent schools and not-for-profit independent schools.

New child care spaces require more ECEs. Progress on the ECE Recruitment and Retention Strategy includes provincial funding to enhance ECE compensation by \$4 an hour for ECEs working in licensed child care programs, prioritizing immigration pathways by adding ECEs to the B.C. Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and expanding ECE seats at public post-secondary institutions.

A one-time \$49.2-million federal investment in 2021-22 is further reducing barriers and increasing access to post-secondary ECE programs and professional learning opportunities.

People wanting to start a career as an ECE, as well as current ECEs who want to upgrade their credentials, may benefit from bursaries through the ECE Education Support Fund for as much as \$4,000 and \$5,000, respectively. Applications for the summer intake are being accepted between 7 a.m., June 1, 2022, and 4 p.m., June 15, 2022.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: funding ^[4]

spaces ^[5]

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