

More children will be supported with inclusive child care ^[1]

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Excerpts

An increase in government funding means more children with support needs are receiving inclusive child care, and more child care providers will be trained to provide these services to help children of all abilities thrive in communities throughout British Columbia.

“We know families of children with support needs face unique challenges, and demand is high for these services, which is why we prioritize programs that support inclusive child care,” said Grace Lore, B.C.’s Minister of State for Child Care. “We’re also investing in training child care providers to offer these services so they have the capacity and confidence to provide quality care to all children.”

The Province is committed to creating a future where inclusive child care is a core service that families can rely on by embedding inclusion and equitable access into all aspects of child care in B.C., and by partnering with the federal government to expand supports for children with support needs. This additional investment of \$31.8 million in 2022-23 was provided through the 2021-2026 Canada-B.C. Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and the bilateral 2021-2025 Canada-B.C. Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. This funding will increase the number of children getting the support they need to fully participate in child care settings, while helping to build inclusive child care capacity by training child care providers.

“We are building a Canada-wide system that ensures all families have access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care,” said Karina Gould, federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. “That includes supporting an inclusive system that meets diverse needs so that all children have the best possible start in life.”

Mitzi Dean, B.C.’s Minister of Children and Family Development, said: “Every parent wants the best for their child, and this additional support will enable more children with support needs and their families to benefit from these programs during those crucial early years of development. Increased access to inclusive child care ensures that more children will experience belonging, stability and the opportunity to reach their full potential.”

The BC Centre for Ability (BCCFA) received \$2.5 million in additional supported child development (SCD) funding in 2022-23 that enabled 200 more children to secure a spot in full-time, inclusive child care in Greater Vancouver and Burnaby. The funding also enabled the BCCFA to hire two additional SCD consultants to help families and children access the services they need and build capacity in the sector by training and educating more child care providers to offer service.

“Parents have told me how grateful they are when their child is included in their local preschool or child care so they can meet neighbourhood friends before starting elementary school,” said Terri Calvert, leader of supported child development, BC Centre for Ability. “Families of children with support needs have even more barriers accessing child care and returning to the workforce.”

The Spirit of the Children Society employs Aboriginal supported child development (ASCD) consultants to provide culturally responsive support for Indigenous children who require additional support in the child care setting in New Westminster and the Tri-Cities area. The society will use additional ASCD funding to hire support workers to ensure children with support needs can be fully included in the preschool or child care environment and to prepare trauma-informed training for child care providers.

“This additional funding can help end the cycle of poverty because if children with support needs are repeatedly in and out of child care, parents can’t go to work or school,” said Carly Quinlan, program manager, Aboriginal Supported Child Development, Spirit of the Children Society.

Quick Facts:

- The programs in B.C. that deliver inclusive child care services are Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development.
- The goal of these programs is to help families and children access and participate in fully inclusive child care settings by assessing children’s needs, working with child care providers and families to develop strategies for inclusion, and hiring support workers as needed.
- As part of the 2021-2022 to 2025-2026 Canada-B.C. Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, B.C. has committed to

developing a plan and making progress to ensure children experiencing vulnerability, and children from diverse populations have equitable access to regulated child care spaces.

- B.C. is committed to supporting children learning through play with other children in any child care program of their choice.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: inclusion ^[4]

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