

City announces child care and affordable housing pilot project ^[1]

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Excerpts

The City of Fernie is pleased to announce \$19 million in provincial and federal funding has been secured for a Provincial Pilot Project to create 100 new child care spaces and approximately 27 units of housing, prioritized for early childhood educators (ECEs).

Early this year, Fernie was identified as a potential community for a pilot project to rapidly develop new child care spaces and affordable housing targeting the child care sector. Pilot community and site identification included NUQO Modular, BC Housing and the Ministry of Education and Child Care, New Spaces Fund.

"Innovative approaches to create more affordable spaces for families and children and support ECEs in their careers, like the one announced in Fernie today, are key to the success of a Canada-wide early learning and child care system" added Jenna Suds, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. "Together with our provincial, territorial, and Indigenous partners, our government is focused on making an inclusive, flexible, and affordable early learning and child care system a reality for families across Canada."

"This project is an excellent example of how we're working with communities to identify child care needs and conveniently co-locate child care into new affordable housing developments to enable parents to more easily pursue work, school and other opportunities," said Grace Lore, Minister of State for Child Care. "The fact that these housing units will be available for Early Childhood Educators is an innovative way of attracting people for in-demand ECE positions in Fernie."

"We are extremely grateful for the leadership and funding for this project from the Federal and Provincial Governments, and BC Housing," said Mayor Nic Milligan. "Fernie, like many communities, has a significant need for this type of innovative pilot. Combining much-needed housing and child care space is a wonderful opportunity for our community. We are proud as a Council to be supporting this project by dedicating lands and advancing it as a priority with staff."

Following the assessment process, Fernie was selected for the Pilot Project, to be developed on City-owned land adjacent to the Fernie Aquatic Centre.

\$10 million in funding is being provided through the Canada-British Columbia Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and British Columbia New Spaces Fund, with a further \$9 million in funding through BC Housing.

This project employs specially designed modular structures from NUQO Modular, an Indigenous owned, female lead designer and builder of steel-modular buildings who have helped initiate this innovative pilot project with the Province, City, and local partners.

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"This pilot project combines two things desperately needed in B.C. communities: affordable housing and childcare," said NUQO President Rory Richards. "NUQO are passionate supporters of quality, affordable child care and having the opportunity to advance this type of pilot project is a huge win for B.C. families. Our NUQO team have worked hard to develop proprietary designs for childcare that focus on support for both the child and their caregivers."

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Quick Facts:

- The total project budget including site remediation is approximately \$19 million dollars with \$10 million in funding provided through the Canada-British Columbia Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and British Columbia New Spaces Fund, and a further \$9 million in funding through BC Housing.
- This project will deliver capacity for 100 new child care spaces and 27 new rental housing units.
- A minimum of 50% of the rental housing units will be non-market affordable units, at or below 80% of the median market rent.
- Construction is planned for the spring of 2024 with an anticipated opening date in the fall of 2024.
- The Elk Valley Family Society will provide overall management and operations for the facility, and directly manage the housing component.

- The Elk Valley Child Care society will deliver the child care services from the facility.
- Housing units in the facility will be prioritized for early childhood educators across the community.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: child care expansion ^[4]

cost of living ^[5]

labour shortage ^[6]

space creation ^[7]

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Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/08/city-announces-child-care-and-affordable-housing-pilot-project> [2]

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<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7860> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9210> [5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9337> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9252> [7]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9242>