

Governments talk big about child care, but the struggle to find a spot is real, parents say ^[1]

B.C. government says it has funded and created tens of thousands of new spaces since 2018

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpts

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In recent years, both the federal and provincial governments have frequently touted the benefits of licensed group child care and early childhood education.

Yet today in B.C., there are only enough licensed child care spaces for 25 per cent of children under 12, according to the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C., with the toughest ages to serve being those under three, and school-age children who need before- and after-school care.

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CBC News heard from parents who commuted an additional two hours a day to take their child to daycare, others who feared bringing up safety concerns for fear of losing their daycare spot, and others still who paid for months of care they didn't need to secure a place for their kid.

Sharon Gregson, provincial spokesperson for the \$10-a-day child care campaign, says the difficulty of finding child care isn't new. What has changed in her 30 years as an early childhood education advocate is parents's expectations.

"Senior public health officials and senior government officials, both provincially and federally, talk about child care as an essential service," Gregson said.

The disparity between government talk and the availability of licensed child care, Gregson says, can be a harsh reality for parents when it comes time to start looking for care for their kids.

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"We would never, ever expect that a child in British Columbia couldn't attend kindergarten or Grade 5 because there were no spaces or that their families couldn't afford a space," she said.

"That's how some countries look at early childhood education, look at child care as well, and that's where we need to move to."

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Although the province continues to invest in creating new child-care spaces, Gregson worries that progress may be stalled because of a lack of qualified early childhood educators.

"By fiscal 2027/28, 40,000 new spaces aren't going to happen. Even if they're built, there is nobody to work in them," she said.

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/08/governments-talk-big-about-child-care-struggle-find-spot-real> [2] <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/childcare-families-expect-more-1.6946979> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7860> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessibility> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9026> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/workforce> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9139>