

# Vancouver dedicates \$5-million budget surplus to childcare reserve <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Ryan, Denise

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## EXCERPTS:

The City of Vancouver has announced it will dedicate the 2012 budget surplus of \$5 million to the city's Childcare Reserve for the purpose of creating new child-care spaces.

This is the largest ever increase in child-care funding from the city.

The money will support the initiatives of the Joint Childcare Council, which co-ordinates efforts between the city, park board and school board as well as private partners to create new child-care spaces.

Councillor Andrea Reimer said the funds came out of an operating surplus that was available thanks to a couple of factors. "There was no snowstorm this year, and staff operated very leanly this year, so they were good at keeping costs in line."

Instead of letting the surplus be absorbed into the city's operating budget, Reimer advocated applying the funds to the Childcare Reserve, in order to move toward the city's ultimate goal of making the fund sustainable.

The JCC created 453 new spaces from 2009 to 2011; its goal for 2012-2014 is to create 500 new spaces to serve Vancouver families; money from the endowment will go toward capital costs, including equipment, and staffing costs.

At present, only 19 per cent of infants and toddlers in Vancouver have access to quality licensed daycare.

"I'm not going to say this \$5 million is the solution to child care," said Reimer, "but if we're going to draw the province and the federal government in, we can show we're doing our part."

Vancouver child-care advocate Sharon Gregson said, "The reality check is that Vancouver city council members of all political stripes have made significant contributions to child care in the absence of senior levels of government stepping forward to help families."

Gregson said she applauds city council for going "above and beyond their mandate" with the contribution, but said child care is a "provincial responsibility. It will only ever be possible for Vancouver to make a stopgap measure."

Average fees to keep a child in licensed daycare run up to \$1,915 per month, said Gregson.

"That's how ridiculous the [shortage] situation has become."

The \$5 million dollars works out to a \$1,650 subsidy per child annually "to pay for heat, food, program supplies, staff - a relatively small amount," Gregson said.

In a news release, Mayor Gregor Robertson said, "At a time when demand for child care far outstrips supply due to a lack of funding from senior levels of government, the city is stepping up to help make Vancouver a more supportive city for families and children."

-reprinted from the Vancouver Sun

**Region:** British Columbia <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** funding <sup>[3]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/13/04/vancouver-dedicates-5-million-budget-surplus-childcare-reserve>

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