

British Columbia

PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Number of children 0-12 yrs (2001 rounded estimate)

0-2 yrs	123,100
3-5	125,500
6-12	353,100
Total 0-12	601,700

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

Children 0-12 yrs with mothers in the paid labour force (2001 rounded estimate)

0-2 yrs	71,400
3-5	76,400
6-12	241,200
Total	388,900

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

Children 0-14 yrs identifying with an Aboriginal group (1996)

Age	North American Indian	Métis	Inuit
0-4	17,645	3,115	210
5-9	17,335	3,170	285
10-14	16,435	3,105	140

Note: These 1996 data are the most recent currently available.

Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities (2001)

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Rate of children with disabilities (%)
0-4	3,950	2.0
5-9	9,080	3.9
10-14	12,000	4.7
Total 0-14 yrs	25,040	3.6

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2001 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	No. of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	65,000	62.8
3-5	49,000	69.4
6-15	185,000	77.3

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

Maternity leave

17 weeks. An additional six weeks is available to the birth mother if she is unable to return to work for health reasons related to the birth or pregnancy.

Parental leave

35 weeks for birth mothers who have taken maternity leave; must be taken immediately following maternity leave. 37 weeks for other parent. An additional 5 weeks is available if the child has a condition requiring additional parental care. 37 weeks if birth mother has not taken maternity leave; must be taken within 52 weeks of the child's birth.

Adoption leave

37 weeks. An additional five weeks is available if the child has a condition requiring additional parental care.

Family-related leave

5 days per year

Births and EI maternity claims

Number of births (2000): 40,672

Number of initial maternity claims allowed (2000-2001): 20,570

Note: Provincial leaves are unpaid. The federal government pays for some portions under Employment Insurance. See FEDERAL ECEC PROGRAMS for more information.

KINDERGARTEN

LEGISLATION

British Columbia. Legislative Assembly. *School Act*, 1996. [R.S.B.C c.412]

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Ministry of Education.

KINDERGARTEN SERVICES**KINDERGARTEN**

Kindergarten is delivered in public and private schools. It is available to all five year olds in British Columbia on a part-time basis. There are 2.4 hours of instruction during the day multiplied by the number of instructional days in the standard school calendar for that year.

Kindergarten is compulsory in British Columbia. Access is legislated.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Five years old before December 31. Parents may defer their child's enrollment to the next school year.

CLASS SIZE

A provincial class size limit is specified in *The School Act*. (The *School Act* sets maximum; the average in aggregate must not exceed 19 students.)

Policy regarding teaching assistants is a local school board decision; teaching assistants are usually for special needs students.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

There is a policy regarding children with special needs under Ministerial Orders 150/89, 638/95. Children with special needs are typically included in regular kindergarten. Extra support is available. The province provides funding beyond the standard per pupil allocation.

There are 1,232 kindergarten children with identified special needs (in public schools only) (includes severe handicapped, severe behaviour, moderate handicapped, and gifted).

KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT (2000-2001)

Five year olds	38,290
Six year olds	852
Seven year olds	12
Total	39,154

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Kindergarten teachers must have teacher certification. There are no ECE requirements.

CURRICULUM

There is no specific provincial curriculum for kindergarten. The Ministry has developed a provincial framework for teachers called The Primary Program, which includes students in Kindergarten to Grade 3. Provincial curriculum for Kindergarten and Grade 1 is outlined for each area of study.

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2001)

Average spending for each kindergarten student

Full-time equivalent: \$4,200

Part-time: \$2,100

(not including capital, transportation, special needs, Aboriginal Education, ESL, etc.)

Total provincial spending on kindergarten

\$89,155,500

SPECIAL FEATURES

Full-time kindergarten may be available for special populations. These include Aboriginal, special needs or ESL; there are 3,320 full-day kindergarten children.

The Ministry of Children and Families has a policy on inner-city schools that may provide, for example, a School Meals program. Some Local School Boards may also have policies.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

LEGISLATION

British Columbia. Legislative Assembly. *Community Care Facility Act*, RSBC 1996, Chapter 60; *Child Care Licensing Regulation* 319/89 as amended to O.C. 1476/8, includes amendments up to BC Reg. 390/99.

British Columbia. Legislative Assembly. *Child Care Subsidy Act Regulation 74/97*, revised May 2002.

British Columbia. Legislative Assembly. *Employment and Assistance Act*.

British Columbia. Legislative Assembly. *Child Care BC Act*. SBC 2001. Chapter 4. Assented to March 29, 2001, Updated to November 5, 2001

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

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CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

Unregulated family child care

Maximum number of children permitted: 2

Children related to the caregiver are not included in this definition. This category is often referred to as "license not required" or LNR.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Group child care centres

Group care for no more than 13 hours/day for children, from birth to school age.

Preschools

Group care for no more than four hours/day for no more than 20 children, 30 months to school age.

Out-of-school care

Care outside school hours, including school vacations, for children attending school (including kindergarten) for not more than 13 hours/day.

Family child care

Care in a private home for no more than seven children. Of these seven, there can be no more than five preschool age children, three children under three years of age and one child under one year of age. Children 12 years or older who are related to the caregiver are not included in this definition.

Emergency care

Care for no more than 72 hours/month. Groups may be no larger than 12 for children under three years and no larger than 25 for older children.

Child-minding

Care for up to three hours/day, no more than two days/ week for children 18 months up to entry into grade one. Maximum of 16 children where any child is under three years and a maximum of 20 children if all are three years or older.

Ski hill or resort care

Occasional child care is provided in resort locations to children who are at least 18 months and under six years old, for no more than 40 hours/month, and no more than 8 hours/day.

The Medical Health Officer may authorize a license to extend the maximum number of hours of care as long as there is no health or safety risk to children.

Other

Child Care Resource and Referral Programs (CCRRPs) are provincially funded to provide information, support, and training to child care providers with an emphasis on family child care. They may include equipment and toy-lending, workshops, networking, home visits, and caregiver registries. CCRRPs also assist parents in finding child care. (See recent developments for announced changes to this program.)

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Historically, B.C. had both segregated and integrated child care programs for children with special needs. In September 1993, the Special Needs Day Care Review released its report Supported Child Care. The report proposed to work towards a more inclusive approach. The Supported Child Care Initiative was funded through a federal-provincial Strategic Initiatives agreement of \$8 million over four years from 1995-1999.

A special needs diagnosis is required for a child to access supported child care. Contracts are negotiated either with an agency or an individual to provide the support which facilitates inclusion. The additional supports are not needs tested nor do parents pay fees for those supports, but there are waiting lists.

In 2001, parents of children with special needs who meet the financial eligibility criteria could receive a child care subsidy up to \$107/month to help with the cost of care. (See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS for announced changes to this policy.)

Supported Child Care is under the aegis of the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

B.C. funds and licenses on-reserve child care. There are 65 First Nations communities that have licensed child care facilities. Child care centres run by Band and Tribal Councils became eligible to apply for provincial grants as of October 1994.

Malaspina University College and the First Nations Education Centre in Vancouver have developed training for First Nations early childhood educators with the Cowichan Community. University of Victoria has developed a generative curriculum model.

SPACE STATISTICS

Number of regulated child care spaces (2001)

Centre-based	Full-time	Part-time
Group day care (under 3 yrs)	3,744	—
Group day care (over 2H yrs)	13,905	—
Preschool	—	15,407
Out-of-school	—	19,533
Child minding	—	2,379
Occasional childcare/other	—	422
Special needs	526	—
Total centre-based spaces		55,916
Family child care		17,033
Total regulated spaces		72,949

Average number of children with special needs in regulated child care (2001) 6,200

Estimated number of children in regulated child care receiving subsidies (2001) 18,500

Note: British Columbia provides fee subsidies for children in both regulated and unregulated child care. This figure is a calculation based on the proportion of subsidies in regulated care. Based on information from provincial officials, it was assumed that 50% of subsidies were used in regulated child care.

Subsidized children as a proportion of total regulated spaces (2001) 25%

Sponsorship of regulated centre spaces (2001)

Non-profit	32,699
For-profit	23,217

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CENTRE

Maximum centre size

Not specified.

Maximum staff:child ratios and group sizes

Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group sizes
0-3 yrs	1:4	12
30 mos–school-age	1:8	25
Preschool	1:15	20
School-age	1:10-15	20-25
Special needs	1:4	12-16

Staff qualification requirements

There are three categories of training requirements:

- Early childhood educator
Basic (at least 10 months) early childhood training program offered by an approved institution and 500 hours of supervised work experience.
- Infant/toddler educator
Basic early childhood education program plus specialized training related to infant/toddler care and education.
- Special needs educator
Basic early childhood education program plus specialized training related to children with special needs.

For the purposes of defining staffing requirements in child care programs, people who are currently enrolled in basic early childhood education training are called assistant early childhood educators.

- In group child care, under 36 months:
Each group of five to eight children requires one infant/ toddler educator and one early childhood educator. Each group of nine to twelve children requires one infant/ toddler educator, one early childhood educator and one assistant. The same staffing requirements apply in emergency care for children in this age group.
- In group day care, 30 months to school-age:

Each group requires one early childhood educator plus assistants. The same staffing requirements apply in emergency care for children in this age group.

- In out-of-school, child-minding, and occasional or ski resort care:

Staff must be older than 19 years and have taken a course on the care of young children or have relevant work experience. There are no specific early childhood training requirements (see above).

- In special needs facilities:

Special needs facilities (group care facilities where at least 25% of the children have special needs) require one special needs educator for every group of four or fewer children. Larger groups require one special needs educator plus early childhood educators.

There are no legislated training requirements for staff in Child Care Resource and Referral Programs.

Parent involvement

Not specified.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

The Ministry of Health Planning, through the *Community Care Facility Act*, is responsible for licensing and monitoring child care facilities as well as developing policies and procedures specific to program licensing. The functions are carried out by the local Medical Health Officer.

The local Medical Health Officer, through licensing officers, issues interim permits and licenses, amends, suspends or cancels licenses, investigates complaints about programs, and conducts inspections and ongoing monitoring of programs. There is no legislated frequency for monitoring inspections. In practice, most facilities have an annual licensing visit.

If a centre is not in compliance, conditions can be placed on the license and the operator given a time frame in which to comply. If the situation is considered to be a danger to the children, the license can be suspended or cancelled. The operator can request a hearing and then, if not satisfied, can go to the Community Care Facilities Appeal Board, composed of non-government members, including people from the child care field.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Regulation

Individually licensed.

Maximum capacity

Up to seven children under 12 years (including children living in the home). Of the seven children, there may be no more than five preschoolers, no more than three children under three years of age, and no more than one child under one year.

Provider qualification requirements

Must be over 19 years and have a first-aid certificate, be able to provide care and mature guidance to children, and have either completed a course on the care of young children or have relevant work experience. There are no early childhood training requirements.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Most facilities have an annual licensing visit. An initial inspection by the Fire Marshall's office is required when a new home opens.

FUNDING

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Fee assistance is paid directly to service providers on behalf of eligible parents except when child care is provided in the child's own home. In this case, the fee subsidy is paid to the parent who assumes the role of employer, and is responsible for any required contributions to the Workers' Compensation Board, Employment Insurance Benefits, Canada Pension Plan and Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. Eligibility is determined through an income test.

The number of fee subsidies is not capped.

Fee subsidies may be used in for-profit, non-profit, licensed or unregulated child care and preschool (see RECENT DEVELOPMENTS) but not in child-minding services (see definitions in CHILD CARE SERVICES section). Families who use in-own-home child care may be eligible for subsidy when the caregiver is not a relative who resides with the family. If unregulated care is used, the parent must complete a checklist on the provider and submit it to the Ministry of Human Resources.

There is no minimum user fee but child care services may surcharge subsidized parents above the maximum subsidy rates. Surcharges may be paid by the government on behalf of the parent if

- the child is in child care as part of a risk reduction plan under the *Child, Family and Community Services Act*, or
- child care is recommended under the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* for a parent participating in a Young Parent Program.

Eligibility for fee subsidy (net income, 2001)*

	Turning point	Break-even point
1 parent, 1 child	\$18,984	\$27,816
2 parents, 2 children	23,016	31,846

The turning point is the income level up to which full subsidy is available. Partial subsidy is available up to the break-even point at which income subsidy ceases.

**Subsidy eligibility levels were reduced in 2002. (See recent developments for details.)*

Maximum subsidy by age of child (2001)

Type of care	Part-day monthly (4 hrs or less/day)	Full-day monthly (more than 4 hrs/day)
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Family child care

0-18 months	\$219	\$438
19-36 months	202	404
36 months +	177	354

Centre-based

0-18 months	\$292	\$585
19-36 months	264	528
36 months +	184	368

Kindergarten	\$204	\$255
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School-age	\$147	\$173
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Preschool	\$107	—
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In-own-home

First child (0-18 mos)	\$197	\$394
First child (over 18 mos)	159	318
Second child (0-18 mos)	99	198
Each additional child	73	147

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2001)

One-time funding

Child Care Facilities and Equipment Grant

Up to 25% of eligible capital costs to a maximum of \$250,000 available to assist with facility acquisition, renovation or purchase of furnishings and equipment. Available to non-profit societies in good standing, local governments, and Aboriginal Bands and Tribal Councils on-reserve.

Emergency Repair, Replacement and Relocation Grant

Up to \$4,000 to non-profit centres to upgrade or repair facilities in order to continue to comply with Ministry of Health licensing requirements and to assist with costs when a facility must move to another location. Available to non-profit societies in good standing or Aboriginal Band and Tribal Councils that operate licensed group child care, pre-school, child-minding or out-of-school centres.

Recurring funding

Child Care Compensation Contribution Program

Funds to enhance the wages of child care staff in non-profit and for-profit programs that meet eligibility criteria and, where applicable, assist with the additional costs associated with infant/toddler care in centres.* It combines the former wage supplement initiative and infant/ toddler incentive grant for group centres.

**All non-profit organizations offering infant/toddler care are eligible for the Infant/Toddler Factor under this program. The only for-profit operators who are eligible for the Infant/Toddler Factor are those who have been receiving the Infant/Toddler Incentive Grant continuously since April 1992.*

Infant/Toddler Incentive Grant

Family child care providers who are members of a Child Care Resource and Referral Program (regulated) are eligible to receive \$3/day per occupied space to a maximum of two spaces for children under three years old.

Supported Child Care

Funds to assist with the additional costs for caring for children with special needs in the program of the parents' choice. It covers consultation, training and extra staffing and includes subsidy payments of \$107/month for eligible families to assist with the cost of care. (See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS for announced changes to this program.)

Funding Assistance Program (FAP)

Operating funding to centre-based school-age programs to make spaces available to parents at a maximum of \$7/day for before- and after-school care and \$14 a day for full-day care and child care for children in kindergarten. (See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS for changes to this program.)

Other funding

Child Care Resource and Referral Programs (CCRRP)

Annualized funding for non-profit child care support programs to provide support, resources and referral services for child care providers and parents in all communities across the province. CCRRPs assist in the recruitment, support and training of both licensed and unlicensed family child care providers and the development and operation of child care operation manuals, training and workshops. (See recent developments for announced changes to this program.)

Financial Management and Administration Support Program

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre is funded to assist non-profit programs in developing and maintaining sound financial management practices. (See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS for announced changes to this program.)

PROVINCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2001)

Fee subsidies in regulated care

\$60,500,000

(estimate — see FUNDING section above and note in SPACE STATISTICS.)

One-time funding

Capital:

Facilities and Equipment Grants	1,000,000
Child Care BC Capital Expansion Program*	500,000
Emergency Repair, Replacement and Relocation Grant	490,000

Recurring funding

Child Care Compensation Contribution Program	30,583,000
Infant/Toddler Incentive Grant for family child care	2,000,000
Funding Assistance Program	30,000,000
Supported Child Care	36,790,000
Supported Child Care subsidy	2,700,000
Total	\$164,563,000

Other

Child Care Resource and Referral Programs	\$13,120,000
Subsidies in unregulated child care (estimate)	60,500,000

**The Child Care BC capital expansion program was part of an age-specific expansion plan of the previous government which is no longer in effect.*

SALARIES

Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based child care staff (full- and part-time staff combined) (2001)

Supervisor	\$14.61
Child care teacher	13.28
Assistant	11.68

Source: 2001 Provincial Child Care Survey Report, Government of British Columbia.

Family child care

Information not available.

FEES

Mean monthly parent fees for full-time centre-based care (2001)

Infants (Age 0-17 mos)	\$705
Toddlers (Age 18 mos-3 yrs.)	662
Preschool (Age 3-5.11 yrs)	494
Kindergarten	419
School-age (a.m. and p.m.)	197
Child-minding	61
Preschool (3 times/week)	107

Source: 2001 Provincial Child Care Survey Report, Government of British Columbia.

Average daily fee in family child care

Infants (Age 0-17 mos)	\$29.00
Toddlers (Age 18 mos-3 yrs)	28.00
Preschool (Age 3-5 yrs)	26.74
Kindergarten	24.37
School-age	3.94/hour

Source: 2001 Provincial Child Care Survey Report, Government of British Columbia.

ADMINISTRATION

In May 2001, a new Liberal government was elected. A number of new ministries were established, resulting in changes in responsibility for some program areas. The Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS) now has the legislative and policy mandate for child care (Replacing the Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security). There are no regional positions and all activities are centralized in Victoria.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has responsibility for the Supported Child Care program.

The Community Care Facilities Branch, which is part of the Population Health and Wellness Unit of the Ministry of Health Planning, is responsible for the development and implementation of legislation, policy and guidelines of licensed child care facilities, the registration of early childhood educators, and approving early childhood training programs. Medical Health Officers are responsible for licensing and monitoring through five regional health authorities across the province.

The Ministry of Human Resources is responsible for the budget and administration of child care subsidies.

The Minister of State for Early Childhood Development is responsible for adopting, implementing and monitoring a cross-government integrated early childhood development strategy, preconception up to age six, for the province, and for overseeing the development and implementation of the federal/provincial/territorial Early Childhood Development Initiative. Child care is not included in this.

MUNICIPAL AND OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE

There is no legislated municipal or other local government role.

The City of Vancouver and several other municipalities play a role in planning and developing child care.

CHILD CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A Provincial Child Care Council of 17 members appointed by the Minister of State for Women's Equality addresses policy matters and priorities in an advisory capacity.

There are no provincial target levels of service, limits on licenses or a long-term planning process.

HISTORY OF CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

1910 The City Crèche was established in Vancouver as a child care service and employment agency.

1930 Vancouver Day Nursery Association (later the Foster Day Care Association of Vancouver) was established to provide an employment service for women and a system of family child care homes opened.

1943 The *Welfare Institutions Licensing Act* was amended to govern and license crèches, nursery playschools and kindergartens.

1968 B.C. Preschool Teachers' Association (now called the Early Childhood Educators of B.C.) was established.

1969 The Provincial Child Care Facilities Licencing Board replaced the Welfare Institutions Licensing Board.

1972 The Children's Services Employees Union was established.

1981 The B.C. Day Care Action Coalition was established.

1982 The Western Canada Family Day Care Association was established.

1990 A Task Force on Child Care was appointed.

1991 The Task Force on Child Care Report, *Showing We Care: A Child Care Strategy for the 90s*, was released.

1992 The Child Care Branch, Ministry of Women's Equality, was established. The Provincial Child Care Facilities Licensing Board was disbanded and replaced by a Director of Community Care Facilities. The Ministry of Women's Equality took over existing grant programs from the Ministry of Social Services (Infant/Toddler Incentive Grant; Emergency Repair, Replacement, and Relocation; and Facilities and Equipment), and established the Needs Assessment and Planning Grants, and the Quality Enhancement Grants.

A province-wide consultation on child care for children with special needs was conducted. A committee was formed to make recommendations for children with special needs.

1993 A child care regulation review began.

The Special Needs Day Care Review Board released their report, *Supported Child Care*.

A Provincial Child Care Council was appointed to provide advice to the Minister of Women's Equality on child care.

A school-based child care working group was established by the Ministry of Education to address ways to increase school district participation in the development of school-age child care.

A local government working group was established by the Ministry of Women's Equality to recommend actions to assist local government to improve and expand child care services.

The child care fee subsidy program and funding of the special needs program was shifted from the Ministry of Social Services to the Ministry of Women's Equality.

BC21, a plan to create 7,500 new child care spaces over three years in public buildings, was announced.

1994 A Child Care Policy Team was established to coordinate child care policy across government ministries.

1994 A wage supplement was introduced for non-profit child care programs.

1995 The wage supplement was made available to eligible for-profit child care programs.

The Quality Enhancement Grants/Needs Assessment and Local Planning Grants were discontinued.

Implementation of Strategic Initiatives, a \$32 million, four year provincial-federal initiative was designed to test new approaches to various aspects of child care policy and programs. It included funding for the transition to Supported Child Care, different approaches to service delivery and One Stop Access (four test sites to provide a central location which co-located financial assistance workers, licensing officers and child care information).

The province released The Government's Response to Supported Child Care. A transition plan was developed to move from funding a specific number of places and specific programs to a system where funding is provided for extra supports in child care programs of the parent's choice.

1996 As part of the transition from *Special Needs Day Care to Supported Child Care*, 49 community-based Steering Committees were established to assess attitudes and skills, equipment and resource needs, and physical and structural barriers

The *Emergency Repair, Replacement and Relocation Grant* was reduced to \$4,000 from \$5,000; BC21, the capital funding program which created child care facilities in public buildings, ended. An internal evaluation report was completed.

The *BC Benefits (Child Care) Act* was introduced and superseded The GAIN Act as the source of fee subsidies.

A performance audit of the Ministry of Women's Equality child care programs was completed. The Auditor General's report, *Management of Child Care Grants*, was released. It contained three recommendations:

- The Ministry should improve its child care database so that it can identify areas of the province where needs are the greatest and it should subsequently give preference to funding child care projects in those areas.
- The Ministry needs to develop standard costs for use in setting measurable goals for creating new child care spaces.
- The Ministry should extend its performance measurement to assess the effects of program efforts on quality and accessibility of child care.

1997 Child care moved from the Ministry of Women's Equality to the Ministry for Children and Families (MCF). The former Ministry of Social Services became the Ministry of Human Resources (MHR). The child care subsidy program was administered by MHR on behalf of MCF. Responsibility for licensing and monitoring programs and individuals remains in the Ministry of Health. A regional operational model was introduced.

1998 The Wage Supplement Initiative (WSI) was combined with the Infant/Toddler Incentive Grant (ITIG) for group centres and became the Compensation Contribution Program (CCP). In October 1998, centres on the waiting lists became eligible for funding. Family child care programs were still eligible for the ITIG.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

1998 A national study of wages, working conditions and quality, *You Bet I Care!*, found that — based on a sample of full-time centres for children 0-6 years and regulated family child care — British Columbia scored 5.6 on the ECERS-R (preschool rooms) and 5.6 on the ITERS (infant rooms) and 5.5 on the FDCRS (regulated family child care). (See Table 25 for elaboration.)

1999 The B.C. government announced that child care would be moved to the Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security (MSDES). In the fall, a new policy paper, *Building a Better Future for British Columbia's Kids* was released for public consultation by the Social Development Minister and the Women's Equality Minister. The government received substantial support from the public for its directions; 10,000 letters were received. The Minister for Social Development called for a national child care program and for federal funding.

2001 A multi-phased, four year plan described as a comprehensive, publicly funded child care system was announced. In January, phase one of the Funding Assistance Program (FAP) for school-age group care was implemented. Centre-based after-school programs that chose to participate in the program received funding to provide child care for \$7 per day for before- and after-school care. For children in kindergarten and for all children on non-instructional days and seasonal breaks, parents paid up to \$14.00 per day. Low income families were still eligible for child care subsidies.

The implementation of phase two was planned for January 2002 for school-aged children in licensed family child care and group infant-toddler care, followed by phase three in 2002/ 2003, which was to cover all other

children in licensed family child care settings. Phase four, planned for 2003/ 2004, was to fund children in licensed group care for three to five year olds.

March 2001 *The Child Care BC Act* was proclaimed to provide for the new funding program; the budget allocation for 2000/01 was \$14 million, annualized to \$30 million.

May 2001 A new Liberal government was elected and the main responsibility for child care policy and programs moved to the newly created Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services.

August 2001 The government repealed the implementation plan in the *Child Care BC Act*.

January 2002 The Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services announced that it would replace existing child care grants with a new, consolidated operating grant for family child care and centres effective April 1, 2003, and that the Funding Assistance Program to school-age centres would end June 30, 2002. Out-of-school programs that were receiving the FAP will receive transition funding from July 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003.

Effective April 1, 2002, several changes were made to the child care subsidy program:

- The income exemption level that determines a parent's eligibility was reduced by \$285/month in net income (see table on eligibility for fee subsidy below).
- Parents earning above the exemption level may continue to receive a partial subsidy. The subsidy above the exemption level is reduced by 60 cents (previously 50 cents) on each dollar of additional take-home pay.

An example of what the changes in income level and partial subsidy mean for a single parent with one four-year old in group child care is as follows:

Net monthly income	Previous subsidy	Subsidy effective April 1, 2002	Change in amount parent pays
\$1,200	\$368	\$368	\$0
15,00	368	246	121
1,750	284	96	187
2,000	159	0	159
2,250	34	0	34
2,500	0	0	0

- Families eligible for \$50/month or less in fee subsidy will no longer receive one.
- Low income parents of children with special needs will be required to meet the social criteria as well as the financial eligibility criteria in order to be eligible for a fee subsidy. The social criteria require a parent to be working, seeking work, attending school/training for jobs programs, or have child care recommended by the Ministry of Children and Family Development as part of a risk-reduction plan.
- Families receiving preschool subsidies will no longer be eligible under the financial eligibility criteria unless they also meet the social needs criteria described above.
- Single parents on income assistance are required to seek work once their youngest child turns three.
- Subsidy is no longer available for:
 - parents in rehabilitative programs
 - short term family crisis.

The provincial government announced that it will no longer fund Child Care Resource and Referral Programs, One Stop Access sites and the provincial services of West-coast Child Care Resource Centre as of March 31, 2004.

Over the next three years, all of the Ministry of Children and Family Development's services except for youth justice will devolve to five regional authorities. Approximately 2,800 ministry staff, primarily front-line employees, will transfer to these authorities. Two community-based governance structures are being established; one for Child and Family Development and one for Community Living Services. Supported Child Care and the Infant Development Program will be components of the Child and Family Development

governance structure. It is as yet unclear what, if any, specific changes there will be to Supported Child Care, although changes are anticipated.

Effective March 31, 2003, the registration of Early Childhood Educators may no longer be conducted through the Community Care Facilities Licensing Branch. A number of alternatives are being considered but none has yet been announced.

A new funding arrangement will be introduced for all licensed child care: family child care, centre-based care, preschool and out-of-school. It will be a consolidation of the existing grants into a generalized operating grant to be implemented in 2003. The stated intent of the new grant is "stabilization and growth".

November 2002 A plan to increase the number of government supported child care spaces by 25,000 despite a 40 per cent budget cut by April 2003 is announced. The minister of state responsible for child care announces that the \$78 million program covering 45,000 spaces will be modified to become a \$48 million program covering 70,000 spaces.

KEY PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS

The Child Care Advocacy Forum
210 West Broadway, 3rd Floor
Vancouver, BC V5Y 3W2
Telephone: 604-515-6257
Fax: 604-709-5662

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
210 West Broadway, 3rd floor
Vancouver, BC V5Y 3W2
Telephone: 604-709-5661
Facsimile: 604-709-5662
Website: <http://www.wstcoast.org>

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.
210 West Broadway, 3rd floor
Vancouver, BC V5Y 3W2
Telephone: 604-709-5661
Facsimile: 604-709-5662
<http://www.cccabc.bc.ca/>

Early Childhood Educators of B.C.
210 West Broadway, 3rd floor
Vancouver, British Columbia V5Y 3W2
Telephone: 604-709-6063
Facsimile: 604-709-5662
Email: ccabc@wstcoast.org

School-Age Child Care Association of B.C.
210 West Broadway, 3rd floor
Vancouver, BC V5Y 3W2
Telephone: 604-709-5661
Facsimile: 604-709-5662
Email: sacca@wstcoast.org
Website: <http://www.wstcoast.org>

Western Canada Family Childcare Association
210 West Broadway, 3rd floor
Vancouver, BC V5Y 3W2
Telephone: 604-951-1870

(BC) Aboriginal Child Care Society
1999 Marine Drive, #209
North Vancouver, BC V7P 3J3
Telephone: 604-990-9939

TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

British Columbia Teachers' Federation
100-550 West 6th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2
Telephone: 604-871-2283 or 1-800-663-9163
Facsimile: 604-871-2290
Website: www.bctf.ca