

British Columbia



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British Columbia

■ OVERVIEW

In British Columbia, early learning and child care includes kindergarten, group (centre-based) child care, family child care, part-day preschool and school-age care.

Kindergarten is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Child Care under the *School Act*. All children are eligible for kindergarten if they are five years old by December 31 of the school year. It is offered as a full-school day program in all schools.

First Nations schools are funded by Indigenous Services Canada and operated by local First Nations. The First Nations Schools Association develops and delivers programs to First Nations schools.

Responsibility for child care passed from the Ministry of Child and Family Development to the Ministry of Education and Child Care upon its creation in April 2022. The Ministry of Health will continue to be responsible for child care licensing.

The [*Early Learning and Child Care Act*](#) and [*Early Childhood Educators Act*](#) received Royal Assent in the BC Legislature in October 2021. The *Early Learning and Child Care Act* will replace the [*Child Care Subsidy Act*](#) and the [*Child Care BC Act*](#); the *Early Childhood Educators Act* will replace relevant sections of the [*Community Care and Assisted Living Act*](#) and [*Child Care Licensing Regulation*](#). (These were pending at the end of 2022).

Child care services are delivered by non-profit, for-profit, and public operators, including local and Indigenous governments, and public institutions. For-profit centres represent a majority of centre spaces.

Parent fees are determined by operators but new operators must set set fees at or below the 70th percentile for their region. BC has two parallel approaches to fee reduction: a growing operationally funded set fee sector (“\$10 a day”) and Child Care Fee Reduction.

Parent fee subsidies may be used to reduce eligible parent fees at licensed and unlicensed (licence-not-required) child care. Fully subsidized parents may be required to pay a surcharge if the fee exceeds the province’s maximum subsidy rate. Family child care uses an individually licensed model.

British Columbia signed the Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (Multilateral Framework Agreement) on February 23, 2018. This agreement allocated \$152 million over three years; it was extended on September 18, 2020 with an additional \$52.3 million allocated to the 2020 – 2021 fiscal year, and renewed on August 12, 2021 with another \$272 allocated over four years.

The Canada-British Columbia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement was signed by British Columbia on July 8, 2021. This agreement allocated \$3.21 billion over five years to:

- reduce parent fees to an average of \$10/day by 2025 – 2026 through several initiatives;
- support the creation of spaces by Indigenous governments, non-profit organizations, and public operators;
- increase funding to the Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development programs; and
- develop and implement a provincial wage grid for early childhood educators.

The Canada-wide agreement does not replace but runs parallel to the Multilateral Framework Agreement.

■ PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Please note that some of the following figures are rounded, while totals are based on exact figures and may therefore not equal the sum of the rounded figures shown here.

Number of children 0 – 12 (2021 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children (2021)
0	38,800
1	38,100
2	38,900
3	45,200
4	42,100
5	48,300
6	44,500
7	48,500
8	47,800
9	57,200
10	54,300
11	57,000
12	48,900
Total	609,500

Number of children 0 – 12 years (aggregated) (2021 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2021)</i>
0 – 2	115,800
3 – 5	135,600
6 – 12	358,200
Total	609,500

Number of children 0 – 12 years with employed mothers (2021 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2021)</i>
0	25,100
1	26,400
2	27,300
3	28,600
4	24,300
5	30,300
6	28,500
7	31,100
8	34,100
9	38,500
10	38,400
11	40,200
12	34,600
Total	407,400

Number of children 0 – 12 with employed mothers (aggregated) (2021 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children (2021)</i>
0 – 2	78,800
3 – 5	83,200
6 – 12	245,400
Total	407,400

Number of children 0 – 14 identifying with an Indigenous group (2021)

<i>Age</i>	<i>First Nations</i>	<i>Métis</i>	<i>Inuk (Inuit)</i>	<i>Multiple</i>	<i>Other</i>
0 – 4	12,610	6,025	120	570	240
5 – 9	15,260	7,905	165	670	315
10 – 14	16,780	8,190	180	685	355
Total	44,650	22,120	465	1,925	910

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2021 rounded estimate)

<i>Age of youngest child</i>	<i>Number of mothers</i>	<i>Participation rate (%)</i>
0 – 3	92,100	74.7
4 – 5	37,200	75.8
0 – 5	129,300	75.0
6 – 12	138,500	83.2

Living arrangements by age of child by number of parents (2021)

Age	Living with two parents	Living with one parent	Lone mother	Lone father
0 – 4	189,400	24,310	19,465	4,845
5 – 9	198,595	41,710	32,335	9,370
10 – 14	195,210	55,305	42,685	12,620

Languages spoken most often at home (2021)

Age	English	French	Non-official	Multiple
0 – 4	172,590	890	33,620	9,555
5 – 9	203,035	970	27,875	12,355
10 – 14	215,180	900	26,310	13,210
Total	590,800	2,760	87,805	35,115

Median after-tax income among families with children aged 0 – 5 (2020) (\$)

Two-parent families	Male lone-parent	Female lone-parent
\$108,000	\$54,000	\$45,200

PARENTAL LEAVE AND BENEFITS

Maternity and parental leave provisions in Canada outside Quebec are divided between federal and provincial/territorial governments. The federal government pays benefits under the Employment Insurance program (EI); provincial/territorial provisions for job-protected leave are established in each jurisdiction's employment standards legislation. EI is a contributory program; both employees and employers contribute.

LEAVE PROVISIONS

Maternity leave

17 weeks.

There is no minimum length of employment tied to eligibility. All pregnant employees are eligible.

Parental leave

61 weeks for birth or adoption.

69 weeks if leave is shared, but one parent cannot take more than 61 weeks.

There is no minimum length of employment tied to eligibility.

Parents can receive their weeks of benefits at the same time or one after another.

An employee taking maternity and parental leave must do so consecutively.

Family related leave

Five days per year.

PARENTAL LEAVE BENEFITS

Benefit options in 2022

Employment Insurance (EI) covers 15 weeks of maternity leave for eligible employed birth mothers up to 12 weeks prior to the expected date of birth and up to 17 weeks following the date of birth.

Two options for parental leave benefits

(parents must choose one)

Until December 3, 2017, there was one option for parental leave benefits: 35 weeks of paid leave taken over 12 months, paid at 55% of average weekly insurable earnings (up to \$638/week in 2022). This option is now known as the Standard Parental Benefit.

As of December 3, 2017, EI benefits include an additional option, the Extended Parental Benefit. This pays 61 weeks of parental leave benefits taken over 18 months and paid at 33% of average weekly earnings (up to \$383/week in 2022).

As of March 17, 2019, the Parental Sharing Benefit also became available to non-birth/second parents. Under this additional benefit, five weeks of Standard Benefits is available if parents share Standard Parental Benefits (40 weeks total) or an additional eight weeks of Extended Benefits is available when parents share Extended Parental Benefits (69 weeks total).

Parents' access to paid parental leave requires that provinces/territories' leave provisions must match federal benefits.

Note: For further details about the EI federal benefit, Quebec benefit and leave provisions, and provincial/territorial provisions for job-protected leave, see the PARENTAL LEAVE AND BENEFITS in the front section of this publication.

■ KINDERGARTEN

The Ministry of Education and Child Care¹ is responsible for kindergarten under the *School Act* and the *School Act Regulations*. BC's 60 public school districts, including one Indigenous school district for the Nisga'a Nation and the province-wide Conseil scolaire francophone, manage the day-to-day operations of its schools. Each school district is governed by an elected school board.

All children are eligible for kindergarten if they are five years old by December 31 of the school year. It is offered as a full-school day program in all schools.

Denominational and other independent schools are regulated, monitored and evaluated by the Independent Schools Branch in the Ministry of Education and Child Care. Independent schools receiving public funding must be operated by a non-profit independent school authority and employ BC certified teachers. Schools that have per student operating costs at or below those of public schools are eligible for 50% funding; those with higher costs are eligible for 35%.

First Nations schools are funded by Indigenous Services Canada² and operated by local First Nations. The First Nations Schools Association develops and delivers programs to First Nations schools.



PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Ministry of Education and Child Care
PO Box 9158 STN Prov. Govt.
4th floor, 620 Superior Street
Victoria, BC, V8W 9H1
Email: EDUC.EarlyLearning@gov.bc.ca
Website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/education>

LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

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

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. *School Act – School Regulation* [R.S.B.C 1996] B.C. Reg. 265/89 O.C. 1281/89.

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. *Independent School Act* [R.S.B.C. 1996] Chapter 216.

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. *First Nations Education Act* [S.B.C. 2007] Chapter 40.

KINDERGARTEN FOR FIVE-YEAR-OLDS

ELIGIBILITY

To attend kindergarten, a child must be five years old by December 31 of the respective school year. Kindergarten is available across British Columbia in both rural and urban communities.

ENROLMENT

Kindergarten attendance in British Columbia is compulsory but parents may defer the child's enrolment for a year.

ENTITLEMENT

All eligible children are entitled to attend kindergarten; access is legislated.

-
- 1 The Ministry of Education and Child Care was created in April 2022 when the Child Care Division previously housed within the Ministry of Children and Family Development became part of the Ministry of Education. Before this integration, responsibility for kindergarten was with the Ministry of Education and primary responsibility for child care was with the Ministry of Children and Family Development.
 - 2 Some First Nations schools on-reserve apply as independent schools and receive funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS PER DAY AND TYPICAL LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Kindergarten is full-day school. As of the 2021 – 2022 school year, school boards must provide a minimum of 848 instructional hours annually in kindergarten, reduced slightly from 853 hours. Kindergarten programs follow the same school day hours as their school, typically starting 8:30 – 9:00 am and ending 2:30 – 3:00 pm.

CLASS SIZE

The maximum class size including combined kindergarten/primary classes is 22 students. The average kindergarten class size is 17.5 students.

For more detailed information on average class size, please visit [BC's Data Catalogue](#).

CURRICULUM OR CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The kindergarten curriculum is part of the K – 12 curriculum. Its use is mandated in all publicly funded schools (public and independent). The [British Columbia curriculum](#) was redesigned in 2019.

BC's [Early Learning Framework](#) (ELF) may also be used in kindergarten but its use is not mandatory.

GENERAL TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATION

Kindergarten teachers must hold a Certificate of Qualification issued by the Teacher Regulation Branch in the Ministry of Education and Child Care. Certification usually requires completion of four years (120 credits) of post-secondary studies, a degree (or equivalent), and a professional teacher education program (usually an additional year of full-time study).

There are no ECE qualifications/training requirements for kindergarten teachers.

TOTAL ENROLMENT (SCHOOL YEAR 2020 – 2021)

Kindergarten (public schools)	40,273
Kindergarten (independent schools)	6,769

FINANCIAL (SCHOOL YEAR 2020 – 2021)

Spending on kindergarten (total)	\$372,980,875
(public schools)	
Spending on kindergarten (per child)	\$9,582
(public school average)	

RECENT OR ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING PILOT PROJECTS

In the 2019 school year, BC introduced a seamless day kindergarten program on a pilot project basis in one school and expanded it to 23 public schools and two independent schools in the 2021 school year. The seamless day kindergartens employ two early childhood educators to provide before- and after-school care in kindergarten classrooms and work alongside the classroom teacher during school hours.

In 2020, BC introduced the JUST B4 program on a pilot basis in one school district and expanded to an additional five districts in the 2021 school year. JUST B4 offers a half-day four-year-old licensed preschool program using existing StrongStart BC educators and classrooms. Budget 2022 committed to expanding these initiatives.

OTHER SCHOOL-OPERATED EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

STRONGSTART BC

StrongStart BC is an early childhood play-based drop-in program under the Ministry of Education and Child Care. It operates in 329 sites within all 60 BC school districts for children 0 – 5 years. Children must be accompanied by a parent or other caregiver. StrongStart is provided at no fee and is intended to support children's transition to kindergarten. StrongStart BC sites are staffed by certified early childhood educators and use of the BC [Early Learning Framework](#) is required.



■ CHILD CARE

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

In January 2022, the Government of BC announced the main responsibility for child care would move from the [Ministry of Children and Family Development](#) to the Ministry of Education and Child care as of April 2022.

Ministry of Education and Child Care
PO Box 9158 STN Prov. Govt.
4th floor, 620 Superior Street
Victoria, BC, V8W 9H1
Email: EDUC.EarlyLearning@gov.bc.ca
Website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/education>

Ministry of Health (responsible for licensing)
Community Care Facility Licensing
PO Box 9638 Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria, BC, V8W 9P1
Telephone: (250) 952-1442
Website: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=83785931C8854381849E4208B4EBBAFB>

LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#), S.B.C 2002. Chapter 75.

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#). B.C. Reg. 332/2007 O.C. 728/2007.

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Child Care BC Act](#), S.B.C. 2001. Chapter 4.

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Child Care Subsidy Act](#), S.B.C. 1996, Chapter 26; [Child Care Subsidy Regulation](#) 74/97.

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#). (*not yet in force*)

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Early Childhood Educators Act](#) (*not yet in force*)

The *Early Learning and Child Care Act* and *Early Childhood Educators Act* received Royal Assent in the BC Legislature in October 2021, and will be brought into force by regulation. The provincial government will consult with partners including First Nations communities, in alignment with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' Act*, on these regulations.

When the regulations are approved by Cabinet, the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* will replace the *Child Care Subsidy Act* and the *Child Care BC Act*, and the *Early Childhood Educators Act* will replace relevant sections of the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and Child Care Licensing Regulation which govern the work of the ECE Registry. The Ministry of Health will continue to license child care facilities.

CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

There are three forms of unregulated child care in BC: Licence-not-required (LNR), Registered licence-not-required child care (RLNR) and in child's own home care.

Licence-not-required child care

Unregulated child care providers are termed licence-not-required by the British Columbia government. They can legally care for up to two children of any age (or a sibling group) not related to them in their home. They are not monitored; parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring their children's safety in these care arrangements.

Registered licence-not-required child care

Registered licence-not-required child care providers are not licensed but registered with a Child Care Resource and Referral Centre (CCRR). They must be 19 years of age or older, have 20 hours of child care-related training, relevant work experience and a valid first aid certificate. The child care in their own home is not monitored. They can legally care for up to two children of any age (or a sibling group) not related to them.

To register, operators must complete with the CCRR:

- criminal record check for everyone over age 12 living in the home;
- character references;
- home safety assessment;
- first aid training; and
- child care training courses or workshops.

Registered care providers have access to ongoing CCRR support, training, resources and group liability insurance.

Other forms of care are also exempt from licensing. Additional exemptions can be found in the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Group child care (under 36 months)

Group child care for no more than 13 hours/day for children younger than 36 months.

Group child care (30 months – school-age)

Group child care for no more than 13 hours/day for preschool-age children not yet in school.

Group child care for school-age children

There are three categories of regulated care for school-age children. All provide child care outside school hours including during school vacations for children attending school. It may not be provided for more than 13 hours/day for children who attend school, including kindergarten, but hours vary according to setting:

- Group child care – school-age (before- and after-school care) is provided in a community based-facility or centre;
- School-age care on school grounds is provided in schools or on school grounds; and
- Recreational care is provided in indoor facilities other than a single family dwelling or in outdoor settings such as public parks.

In 2021, two new licence categories for school-age children were created:

- **School-age care on school grounds** – This new category is similar to the current group child care (school-age) licensing category. However, providers licensed under this new category need to be located on school grounds in order to be exempt from meeting certain regulated health and safety requirements. These exemptions vary based on whether the program is delivered by a board of education or a third-party provider (which includes both non-profit and for-profit organizations) partnered with the board of education to provide care on school grounds.
- **Recreational care** – Child care providing after school hours or on a day of school closure, care on a drop-in basis to children who attend school, including kindergarten, and is provided by a local government, an Indigenous governing body within the meaning of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* or a charitable, philanthropic or other not-for-profit organization. Recreational care cannot be provided in a single family dwelling house.

Preschool (30 months – school-age)

Part-day programs for preschool-age children who are at least 30 months old, who are three years old by December 31 of the year they begin the program, and are not yet in school. Preschools provide care for no more than four hours/day per child. They typically operate from September to June.

Family child care

Child care in a private home for no more than seven children, from birth to 12 years including the provider's own children under age 12. No more than three children may be under 48 months, and of those three, no more than one child may be younger than 12 months. If there are no children under 12 months, there may be no more than four children under 48 months and no more than two children under 24 months. The provider must live in the location in which care is provided.

Multi-age child care

Group child care provided by an early childhood educator for groups of up to eight children of various ages. There can be no more than three children under 36 months and, of those three, a maximum of one child under 12 months.

In-home multi-age child care

Child care by an early childhood educator to no more than eight children in the educator's personal residence. There can be no more than three children under 36 months and, of those three, a maximum of one child under 12 months.

Occasional child care

Occasional or short-term child care for children who are at least 18 months old for no more than eight hours per day and no more than 40 hours within each 30 day period to each child and cannot be overnight care. If a child under three years old is present, the maximum is 16 children, and 20 children maximum if all children are at least three years old. Occasional child care must be in a community based-facility or centre.

Child-minding

Care to a child younger than 13 years whose parent is engaged in a program that provides English as a Second Language, settlement or labour market integration services to new immigrants. Parents must be present on the premises where the child is receiving care and be immediately accessible at all times to attend to the child's needs. Child-minding may not provide care for more than five hours per day to each child.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The [Early Learning Framework](#) may be used in kindergarten, StrongStart BC programs, licensed child care services and other early childhood development or child health programs but is mandatory only in StrongStart. The framework aligns with the BC K – 12 [Curriculum](#) and [Core Competencies](#), addresses the early years from infancy through eight years, includes a perspective on reconciliation and Indigenous worldviews, and highlights inclusive practices. There is an accompanying family resource guide: [British Columbia Early Learning Framework: A Guide for Families](#).

Free online [training](#) modules are publicly available and some recognized post-secondary programs teach pre-service ECEs using the framework as a foundational document.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

(British Columbia uses the term children with support needs)

Children with support needs refers to children who are experiencing, or have an increased likelihood of experiencing, developmental delay or disability and require support to optimize their development, functional abilities and quality of life.

The developmental delay or disability may be in one or more of the following areas: physical, cognitive, social, emotional, communicative, or behavioural. While this definition includes neurodiverse children and children with disabilities, it also includes children who are experiencing developmental delay resulting from factors in their social environment.

Documentation is required to determine eligibility for services, but not a diagnosis. If documentation of developmental delay or disability is unavailable, and/or additional information is required, the Supported Child Development consultant may complete a developmental screening/ assessment to determine eligibility.

Funding is specific to the individual child and is limited by budget constraints.

All types of licensed child care are eligible to receive funding to provide inclusive child care for children with support needs.

Licensed child care programs are not required to accept and include children with support needs. However, those who are publicly funded through BC Child Care Operating Fund must indicate that they will make every reasonable effort to provide an inclusive and supportive environment for all children, including children with support needs.

BC funds Supported Child Development (SCD) programs and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) programs through contractual agreements with community agencies. These community-based programs offer a range of consulting and support services to children, families and child care centres so that children with support needs can participate in fully inclusive child care settings. ASCD programs support unique Indigenous service needs and are responsive to local Indigenous culture and communities.

Funding for SCD/ACD programs is available for additional staff, additional training/professional development for regular staff and consultation by specialists. While funding for consultative support or enhanced staffing support (support worker) is specific to the child, SCD and ASCD programs may also support the child care program as a whole, building capacity for inclusion (e.g. through training and mentorship opportunities).

BC does not currently track whether child care providers are offering child care solely or primarily for children with support needs.

While BC has a post-basic ECE program specific to working with children who have support needs (Special Needs Early Childhood Educator), this designation is not required to work with children who have support needs.

All newly constructed facilities are required to meet the BC Building Code. *The Accessible British Columbia Act* (2021) provides a framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. The Accessible British Columbia Regulation lists the types of organizations subject to accessibility requirements; this includes schools and other educational institutions. Standards to support the accessibility of buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces are being developed.

If a child who requires extra support is attending a child care facility, the licensee must ensure that the physical structure is modified to meet the needs of the child while the child is in attendance.

Capital funding programs such as the New Spaces Fund prioritizes project applications that create inclusive and accessible child care spaces that enable children of all abilities to participate meaningfully (i.e. accessible physical design and application of program inclusion policy).

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT CHILD CARE

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT CHILD CARE ON RESERVES AND ON INUIT LANDS

British Columbia licenses full-day child care centres, part-day preschools, family child care providers and Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) by invitation of a First Nation.

There are:

- 110 full-day centres on reserve (numbers and age breakdowns of children 0 – 5 years are not available);
- 636 licensed spaces for school-age children;
- 91 licensed family child care providers; and
- seven licensed AHSOR programs with 153 spaces.

All provincial funding available to licensed centres and homes not on reserve is available to those on reserve, including operating funding, wage enhancements, funding for children with special needs and the Affordable Child Care Benefit (formerly known as fee subsidies). In addition, the province provides additional funding to federally funded AHSOR programs to enable them to provide full-day child care.

Information on unlicensed facilities is not maintained by the provincial government.

The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) provides Child Care Resource and Referral services.

Aboriginal Head Start programs provide wraparound child care services for families.

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT CHILD CARE OTHER THAN ON RESERVE

There are:

- 239 full-day licensed Indigenous focused/led child care centres not on reserve, with approximately 6,600 spaces for children 0 – 12, of which approximately 900 are part-day preschool spaces; and

- 10 licensed Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) programs, with 153 spaces. There are no unlicensed AHSUNC programs.

OTHER INDIGENOUS-SPECIFIC RESOURCES/ INITIATIVES

The Native Education College is a private institution with a recognized ECE Program. Several other institutions serve a large Indigenous population. The ECE Dual Credit, ECE Bursary and Work Integrated Learning programs prioritize Indigenous students.

BC has several Indigenous-focused early learning and child care organizations, including the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS), Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, BC Aboriginal Association of Friendship Centres (Child Care Coordinator), Métis Nation BC (MNBC) (Ministry of Children and Families), First Nations Health Authority BC (Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve) and Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC (Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities).

Other initiatives specific to Indigenous child care include bursary prioritization for Indigenous students, professional development funding prioritizing Indigenous competencies and the development of a quality assessment tool. BCACCS and MNBC support Indigenous ECEs through programs such as wage enhancements and bursaries; the Youth Empowered Speaking Program by First Peoples Cultural Council supports Indigenous ECE students with funding/mentorship with a focus on revitalizing language. The Ministry of Education and Child Care is strongly connected with the Indigenous organizations noted above.

Provincially funded Métis Early Years Navigators and Métis Child Care Navigators support capacity and curriculum development and training for early learning and child care programs and Early Childhood Educators, and connect Métis families and communities throughout BC with early learning and child care programs.

SPACE STATISTICS

NUMBER OF REGULATED SPACES (March 2021)

Full-day spaces

Under 36 months	15,723
Preschool-age (30 months – 5 years) (not in school)	39,100

Part-day centres

Preschool (30 months – 5 years) (not in school)	17,748
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Other

Multi-age (0 – 12 years)	3,643
Occasional (18 months – 5 years) (not in school)	Not available

TOTAL CENTRE SPACES (0 – 5 years) 76,214

Note: Multi-age allows for children 0 – 12 years; however, 95% of children in these facilities are in the 0 – 5 age group.

Before- and after-school care (licensed, regulated)

Number of spaces

Number of spaces in before- and after-school care for children in kindergarten	7,492
Number of spaces in before- and after-school care for children in Grades 1 – 6	30,927
Total number of spaces in before- and after-school care for children in kindergarten and Grades 1 – 6	38,419

Note: The split between kindergarten and Grade 1 – 6 school-age spaces is an estimate generated by enrolment figures.

TOTAL CENTRE SPACES (0 – 12 years) 114,633

Regulated family child care

Family child care	12,729
Total regulated family child care enrolment	12,729

Note: Age breakdowns are not available for regulated family child care; however, 94% of children enrolled are 0 – 5 years.

TOTAL REGULATED SPACES (centre spaces and family child care enrolment) 127,362

Number of child care centres (2021)

Total number of centres 3,283

Centre-based programs

Number of centres providing a full-day program	2,117
Number of centres providing a part-day (nursery/preschool) program	896
Number of centres providing a part-day program for children attending school (approximately 5 – 12 years)	1,256

Number of centres providing child care for children under 36 months	946
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Number of full-day centres providing preschool-age care (30 months – 5 years) (not in school)	1,506
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Number of centres providing non-standard hours child care	335
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Number of centres in publicly delivered and funded schools	775
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For a definition of non-standard hours care in British Columbia, see [Non-standard work and child care in Canada \(pg. 89\)](#).

Number of regulated family child care homes

Number of licensed family child care homes (active)	1,755
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Number of \$10 a day sites

Non-profit/public	38
For-profit	7
Family child care	6
Total number of \$10 a day spaces	2,435

Municipal delivery

Number of child care centres operated by a municipality or a municipal entity (i.e. it is the licence holder)	63
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Note: This figure is the number of facilities that indicate a municipality is the licence holder. Some municipalities operate more than one facility. Information on the number of individual municipalities operating child care is not available.

Programs by auspice (2021)

Centres	Number of centres
For-profit	1,859
Non-profit	1,197
Publicly operated ¹	302

¹ municipality/ municipal entity, school authority, other government agency or Indigenous governance organization – includes 63 by local government, 76 by a First Nations government and 50 by public institutions

For a profile of child care auspice in British Columbia see [Risky Business](#).

Centre spaces by auspice

	Full-day spaces ¹	Part-day spaces ²	BASC spaces ³	Total spaces
For-profit	38,023	8,153	15,681	61,857
Non-profit ⁴	20,567	9,471	22,738	52,776

¹ 0 – 5 years

² Spaces in pre-schools (nursery schools)

³ Before- and after-school care spaces (5 – 12 years)

⁴ Includes publicly operated spaces

Note: The number of publicly operated spaces is not available.

FEE SUBSIDIES

Children receiving fee subsidies (Affordable Child Care Benefit – ACCB) in licensed child care (March 31, 2021)

Number of children

Full subsidy (ACCB)	16,403
Partial subsidy (ACCB)	17,969

TOTAL CHILDREN RECEIVING FEE SUBSIDIES 34,372

SPECIAL NEEDS/ DISABILITY SUPPORT FUNDING

Children in licensed child care being supported by special needs/disability support funding (March 31, 2021)

2,430

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI)

Monthly average approved spaces 66,482

For a list of licensed programs and services in British Columbia, see this [directory](#).

ENROLMENT STATISTICS (MARCH 31, 2021)

Centre-based enrolment

Full-day centres

Under 36 months	17,309
Preschool-age (30 months – 5 years) (not in school)	36,284

Part-day centres

Preschool (30 months – 5 years) (not in school)	10,733
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TOTAL ENROLMENT (0 – 5 years) 64,326

Total number of children in kindergarten and Grades 1 – 6 enrolled in before- and after-school child care 20,743

TOTAL ENROLMENT (0 – 12 years) 88,880

Note: Enrolment figures are based on individual daily enrolments.
Note: Full enrolment is considered any enrolment four hours or more in a day. Enrolment under four hours is counted as 0.5 of a full enrolment.

PARENT FEES

With the exception of the \$10 a day Prototype facilities, parent fees in BC are not provincially set. All types of operators may set their own fees.

As of April 1, 2021, to be eligible for the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI), newly established child care facilities and those that have changed ownership or location must charge fees at or below the 70th percentile for fees in the region for the same type of care.

PROVINCIAL DATA ON AVERAGE FEES

Median monthly parent fees after CCFRI applied

	Average monthly fee (2020 – 2021)	Average monthly fee (2021 – 2022)
<i>Group child care</i>		
<i>Full-day</i>		
Infant	\$1,000	\$1,010
Toddler	\$915	\$950
30 months – 5 years	\$840	\$850
<i>Part-day</i>		
Preschool (five day)	\$450	\$450
Out-of-school (kindergarten)	\$420	\$420
Out-of-school (grade 1+)	\$469	\$481
<i>Family child care</i>		
Infant	\$800	\$830
Toddler	\$800	\$800
3 – 5 years	\$840	\$840
Out-of-school (kindergarten)	\$490	\$490
Out-of-school (Grade 1+ school year)	\$500	\$500

Median monthly fees in British Columbia: Annual Fee Survey

In 2021, a national survey of child care fees in Canada's larger cities included the following British Columbia cities:

Median monthly fees for full-time child care

City	Infant	Toddler	Preschooler
Vancouver	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,015
Richmond	\$1,450	\$1,450	\$1,275
Burnaby	\$1,145	\$1,145	\$890
Surrey	\$1,120	\$1,120	\$925
Kelowna	\$980	\$980	\$900

Source: Macdonald, D., & Friendly, M. (2022). *Game Changer: Will provinces and territories meet the new federal child care fee targets? Canadian child care fees 2021*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Note: These median monthly figures include fees from centre-based child care and regulated family child care.

Fee reduction programs

In 2018, the province introduced two initiatives to reduce parent fees:

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI)

The CCFRI helps lower the cost of child care for parents at approved licensed child care facilities by up to \$350/month per child 0 – 5 years. Approximately 96% of eligible child care providers apply and are approved each year.

In 2021 – 2022, 68,300 child care spaces at nearly 3,600 child care facilities were enrolled in the CCFRI and received funds to reduce parent fees.

In Fall 2022, through BC's Canada-wide ELCC Agreement, the CCFRI was further enhanced to reduce average parent fees for children five years and under by 50% (based on 2019 fee levels).

Universal Child Care Prototype Sites

(\$10 a day ChildCareBC sites)

Introduced in 2018 as part of the Canada-British Columbia ELCC Agreement (Multilateral Framework), the province has converted approximately 2,500 spaces at more than 50 existing child care programs into low-cost (\$10 a day) child care spaces to test funding models to support a transition to a publicly funded, affordable and inclusive child care system over a ten year period. These initial sites were selected from communities across the province, and included a mix of non-profit and for-profit centres and family child care.

In 2021, the province converted approximately 4,000 additional spaces into \$10 a day spaces. In this expansion, priority was given to non-profit/public organizations, Indigenous-led, and family child care in locations where \$10 a day sites were not available. Child care based in municipal community centres and on school grounds was also prioritized.

In Spring 2022, an additional 4,015 spaces at 84 facilities were converted to \$10 a day spaces.

By the end of 2022, under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, the total number of \$10 a day spaces was expected to increase again to 12,500.

WORKFORCE

EARLY CHILDHOOD CERTIFICATION

Early childhood educators (ECEs) and ECE Assistants caring for children younger than school-age in licensed programs are required to be certified by the ECE Registry. The ECE Registry is the regulatory body mandated with responsibility for ECE and ECE Assistant certification, renewal, and investigation, as well as recognition of post-secondary ECE education programs.

Child care providers in family child care or school-age child care programs are not required to be certified but must meet the requirements to be a Responsible Adult (s. 29 of the Child Care Licensing Regulation (CCLR) which is determined and monitored by Community Care Licensing Officers).

There are five categories of certification, with minimum requirements and renewal requirements.

Early childhood educator assistant certificate

- One of three courses of (as per s. 27 of CCLR) a “basic” early childhood education training program from an approved post-secondary institution; and
- Must be renewed every five years by completing:
 - One additional ECE course
 - 400 hours of work experience.

Early childhood educator certificate (one year)

- “Basic” early childhood education program (minimum 902 hours) from an approved post-secondary institution;
- Valid for one year; and
- Can be renewed once if completion of 500 hours of work experience was unable to be completed within the one year time frame, with reason.

Early childhood educator certificate (five year)

- “Basic” early childhood education training program (minimum 902 hours);
- 500 hours of work experience under the supervision of a Canadian-certified ECE; and
- Must be renewed every five years by completing:
 - 40 hours of professional development and
 - 400 hours of work experience.

Infant and toddler educator certificate

- Qualify for an early childhood educator certificate (five year);
- Specialized post-basic program (minimum 250 hours); and
- 200 hour infant/toddler practicum.

Special needs early childhood educator certificate

- Qualify for an early childhood educator certificate (five year);
- Specialized post-basic program (minimum 250 hours); and
- 200 hour special needs practicum.

STAFF WAGES

There is no provincially prescribed wage grid for early childhood educators and child care workers in BC. However, BC has committed to developing a wage grid for ECEs as part of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

Provincial wage data

Median hourly wages (before Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement)

	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022
ECE or ECE+	\$21.00	\$21.00
Non-ECE or ECE+	\$18.00	\$18.50
All child care staff	\$20.00	\$20.00

Note: ECE+ staff includes basic ECE certification, and/or Infant/Toddler certification, and/or Special Needs certification. Non-ECE staff includes ECE Assistants.

Early childhood educator wage enhancement

As part of the BC [Early care and learning recruitment and retention strategy](#), BC implemented wage enhancement (ECE-WE) for certified staff (including those who are also owner/operators) in eligible licensed facilities starting in January 2019.

The ECE-WE was initially set at \$1/hour for a maximum of 195 hours per month, retroactive to September 1, 2018. It was increased to \$2/hour in April 2020 and to \$4/hour effective September 2021. Additional funding for statutory benefits was also provided. Effective January 2022 the rate for statutory benefits was 19.25%.

Median annual employment income (\$) and median hourly wage range (\$) for Early Childhood Educators and Assistants working in day care services full-time, full-year

<i>Median annual employment income</i>	\$39,200
<i>Median hourly employment income</i>	\$18.85 – 21.54

Note: Calculated using 2,080 hours/year (40 hours/week) and 1,820 hours/year (35 hours/week).

Source: *Canadian Census (2021)*. Special run by Statistics Canada.

Note: These data include Early Childhood Educators and Assistants, as defined in NOC 4214 and “working in the day care services industry in centre-based environments with children aged 0 – 12 years”, as defined in NAICS 6244. Included are individuals who worked full-time (30+ hours/week) and full-year (48+ weeks/year), did not work at home, and were not self-employed. Included are supervisors but not managers. Employment income refers to income from all jobs if the Early Childhood Educator or Assistant holds a second job providing a wage, salary or commissions.

Note: See Table 18 in this report for comparable data from other provinces/territories and Canada average.



STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

REGULATED CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

In British Columbia, licensed child care programs, including programs operating in a group/centre or out of a personal residence, are regulated under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and [Child Care Licensing Regulations](#). Staffing requirements vary, depending on whether the program is delivered in a group/centre-based setting, or in a personal residence (family child care).

Maximum centre size

There is no maximum centre size in British Columbia.

Staff:child ratio and maximum group sizes		
Age of child	Staff:child ratio	Group size
Group care (under 36 months)	1:4	12
Group care (30 months – school-age)	1:8	25
Multi-age (0 – 12 years)	1:8	8
Preschool-age (30 months – school-age)	1:10	20
Group child care (school-age) – if any preschool-age child or child in Grade 1 is present	1:12	24
Group child care (school-age) – if no preschool-age child or child in Grade 1 is present	1:15	30
School-age care on school grounds – children from kindergarten and Grade 1	1:12	24 – 30 ¹
– children from Grade 2 and older	1:15	
Recreational care – children from kindergarten and Grade 1	1:12	No maximum ²
– children from Grade 2 and older	1:15	
Occasional child care (18 months and up) – if children under 36 months are present	1:4	16
– if no children under 36 months are present	1:8	20
Child-minding	1:8	24

¹ 24 children from kindergarten and Grade 1 or 30 children from Grade 2 and older with no kindergarten or Grade 1 children present

² No maximum, as long as usable floor area of a space used for activity is sufficient to ensure the health and safety of children participating in the activity.

Note: In child-minding, each child younger than 12 months is counted as 2.5 children, each child 12 months to less than 36 months is counted as two children, and each child 36 months or older counted as one child.
Note: There are no maximum group sizes for school-age programs licensed under the Recreational category.

Staffing requirements for centres

In British Columbia, early childhood qualification requirements are assigned according to group size and age of children.

Minimum number of certified staff required in regulated settings by age range

Group child care (under 36 months)

- 1 – 4 children: 1 Infant-Toddler Educator
- 5 – 8 children: 1 Infant-Toddler Educator and 1 Early Childhood Educator
- 9 – 12 children: 1 Infant-Toddler Educator, 1 Early Childhood Educator and 1 Early Childhood Educator Assistant

Group child care (30 months – school-age)

- 1 – 8 children: 1 Early Childhood Educator
- 9 – 16 children: 1 Early Childhood Educator and 1 Early Childhood Educator Assistant
- 17 – 25 children: 1 Early Childhood Educator and 2 Early Childhood Educator Assistants

Multi-age (0 – 12 years)

- 1 Early Childhood Educator for 8 children

Preschool-age (30 months – school-age)

- 1 – 10 children: 1 Early Childhood Educator
- 11 – 20 children: 1 Early Childhood Educator and 1 Early Childhood Educator Assistant

In child care for school-age children in kindergarten and older, Occasional care and Child-minding, staff do not need to be certified but qualified as “responsible adults.”

Responsible adults must be at least 19 years old, have completed a course or a combination of courses of at least 20 hours duration in child development, guidance, health and safety, or nutrition, have relevant work experience and be able to provide care and mature guidance to children.

Early childhood qualifications for centre supervisors

A designated supervisor or director position is not required in child care centres.

Other requirements

Children must always have immediate access to an employee who holds a valid first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certificate.

All staff and volunteers must provide a criminal record check, up-to-date immunization records and tuberculosis test.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement of regulated child care centres

Child care in BC is licensed and regulated under the authority of the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act \(CCALA\)](#) and the [Child Care Licensing Regulations \(CCLR\)](#).

Community Care Licensing Programs (which include child care) are administered locally by health authorities through Medical Health Officers (MHOs). Health authorities process applications and issue the licence to operate a child care facility.

A licence is not transferable from one person to another or one facility to another.

Licences do not need to be renewed. However, licensed facilities are inspected and regularly monitored for compliance with the CCALA and the CCLR. Medical Health Officers delegate their authority to Licensing Officers, who carry-out the day-to-day work of licensing, inspection and monitoring child care facilities.

The CCALA outlines the conditions under which licensing staff may enter, inspect and make records of any aspect of the operation of licensed or unlicensed premises.

An inspection is an on-site review of the facility to assess compliance with legislation and regulations. An inspection may occur within the first six months of a facility receiving a licence. The frequency rate of future inspections depends on the risk assessment and overall level of compliance at the time of inspection. Facilities typically receive a routine inspection every 12 to 18 months, unless more frequent inspections are required.

Non-compliance with licensing requirements

Routine inspections are a comprehensive inspection of the facility, which typically include a review of all aspects of the physical premises and operations to assess compliance with legislation and regulations. Routine compliance inspections are typically carried out with little or no notice to ensure the setting can be viewed as it normally operates. A follow-up inspection may be performed to ensure the operator has resolved issues of non-compliance identified during a previous inspection.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

In BC, regulated family child care is termed family child care. It must be provided in the provider's personal residence, with the licensee personally providing the care.

Model of organization

Family child care in BC is individually licensed.

Maximum capacity

A family child care provider may care for no more than seven children including the provider's own children.

If any child younger than 12 months old is present, there must be no more than three children younger than 48 months old. Of those three, there may be no more than one child younger than 12 months.

If no child younger than 12 months old is present, there must be no more than four children younger than 48 months old. Of those four, there may be no more than two children younger than 24 months old.

An in-home multi-age child care provider may care for up to eight children including the provider's own children.

No more than three of those children may be younger than 36 months old. No more than one child may be younger than 12 months old.

Licensing, monitoring, and enforcement of regulated family child care

Family child care and in-home multi-age child care are licensed under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and [Child Care Licensing Regulations](#).

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement processes for regulated family home day care are similar to those of centre-based child care settings.

Regulations regarding home inspection

All facilities have at least one comprehensive licensing inspection conducted by their local health authority every 12 – 18 months. An initial inspection by the local fire authority may be required when a new licensed family child care home opens.

Measures to support family child care providers

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) programs help families to find and access responsive and inclusive quality licensed and registered child care by providing information, support, resources and referral services to parents and child care providers across the province. CCRRs work in partnership with the government to improve the accessibility, affordability, and quality of child care in all B.C. communities.

Family child care provider requirements

A family child care provider does not need to be a certified ECE unless she/he operates an in-home multi-age child care facility. An in-home multi-age child care provider must hold at least a provincially issued one-year ECE certificate.

Family child care providers are not required to undertake professional development unless they are a certified ECE, in which case they require 40 hours of professional development over the course of their certification term.

A family child care provider must be at least 19 years of age, have completed a course or a combination of courses of at least 20 hours duration in child development, guidance, health and safety, or nutrition and have relevant work experience.

A criminal records check must be completed for the provider and any person over the age of 12 who will be ordinarily present in the home.

The provider must also have first aid and CPR certificates, up-to-date immunizations and tuberculosis screening.

3 Based on a two-person family, after adjustments are calculated.

■ FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE

CHILD CARE SERVICES' ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

The majority of licensed care types are eligible for most types of funding and unlicensed child care may be eligible for fee subsidies. The level of funding may vary based on the program eligibility criteria.

Occasional child care services, Child-minding and Recreational care are not eligible for any funding.

TYPES OF FUNDING

FEE SUBSIDIES (AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE BENEFIT—ACCB)

Fee subsidies in BC are based on gross income.

The [Affordable Child Care Benefit](#) (ACCB) is an income-tested child care fee subsidy for families with annual pre-tax household incomes of up to \$111,000³. The ACCB is available for families accessing licensed and unlicensed (licence-not-required) child care and is paid to service providers (with the exception of care provided in the child's own home) on behalf of the parent to cover all or some of the parent fee.

The amount of funding a family receives under the ACCB depends on the family's income and size, the ages of their children and the type of child care they are accessing. Families are required to reapply for a fee subsidy every year, or more frequently if their circumstances change.

Eligibility criteria

Most families are required to have one of the following reasons for needing care to be eligible for a fee subsidy:

- working or self-employed;
- attending school;
- participating in an employment program;
- looking for work (only one parent or guardian); or
- a medical condition that interferes with their ability to care for their child.

Families are not required to demonstrate one of the above reasons for needing care if:

- the child is attending a licensed (part-day) preschool program; or
 - care is referred by a Ministry of Children and Family Development or Delegated Aboriginal Agency social worker.
-

Financial eligibility (2021)

Financial eligibility for the ACCB is based on the family's "adjusted annual income", calculated based on gross annual family income, with deductions based on family size and whether the family includes children with additional support needs.

Subsidy eligibility in licensed/regulated child care

	Maximum Income for full subsidy	Income at which partial subsidy ends
One parent, one child	\$45,000	\$111,000
Two parents, two children	\$49,000	\$115,000

BC provides ACCB in various forms of unregulated child care. Families using licence-not-required or in-child's-home care with an adjusted annual income of up to \$24,000 are eligible for the maximum subsidy, with partial subsidy ending at \$70,000. Families using registered licence-not-required child care are eligible for the maximum subsidy if their adjusted annual income is less than \$39,000, and eligibility ends at an income of \$85,000.

Subsidy rates

The subsidy rate is the amount the government pays on behalf of a fully subsidized parent, to cover all or part of the parent fee.

Maximum monthly subsidy rates in licensed child care

	Centre-based care	Family child care/ in-home multi-age care
Full-day programs		
Infant (0 – 19 months)	\$1,250	\$1,000
Toddler (19 – 36 months)	\$1,060	\$1,000
37 months – school entry	\$550	\$550
School-age	\$415	\$415
Part-day programs		
Before- and after-school	\$210	\$210
Preschool (30 months – school entry)	\$225	Not applicable

These rates apply in all full- and part-day licensed child care programs, with the exception of Occasional Care, Recreational Care and Child-Minding.

The subsidy is also available for families accessing unlicensed child care in the provider's home, and in-child's-own-home care, except by someone who is a relative of the child or a dependent of the parent and who resides in the child's home.

Maximum monthly subsidy rates in unlicensed child care

	Infant	Toddler	3 years – school-age	School-age (full-day/part-day)
Registered licence-not-required	\$600	\$600	\$550	\$415/\$210
Licence-not-required	\$438	\$404	\$354	\$354/\$210
In child's home (1st child in family)	\$394	\$318	\$318	\$210/\$174
In child's home (2nd child in family)	\$198	\$147	\$147	\$147/\$73

See [Rates for the Affordable Child Care Benefit – Province of British Columbia](#) for the full list of maximum rates by each type of licensed and unlicensed child care.

Surcharges above the subsidy rate

If the fee charged by the facility is higher than the maximum subsidy rate, the parent is responsible to pay the difference between the ACCB and the provider fee.

Waiting list for fee subsidy

There are no waitlists for the subsidy rate. Any family that applies and is deemed eligible may receive the benefit.

Other programs that subsidize the individual family's child care costs

Young Parent Program: Parents under 25 may qualify for financial support of up to \$1,500/month/child to help cover the cost of child care for child care while they finish high school, if their child is enrolled at a designated Young Parent Program child care facility. Parents qualify for this program by applying through the Affordable Child Care Benefit program.

Families with children with support needs may be eligible to receive an additional supplement above the prescribed ACCB maximums to support their participation in a child care program.

OPERATIONAL FUNDING

Universal Child Care Prototype Sites

Beginning in November 2018, BC introduced the \$10 a day ChildCareBC Centres initiative (previously called the Prototype Sites Initiative) using funding under the Canada-BC Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (Multilateral Framework), which provides operational funding to selected sites who agree to limit parent fees to a maximum of \$200 a month (\$10 a day) for full-time child care.

\$10 a day sites must meet specified conditions to receive individualized monthly payments based on an expectation of 80% enrolment. \$10 a day sites may be non-profit/public, for-profit or family child care. A provincially funded expansion of the \$10 a day ChildCareBC initiative was announced in Budget 2021 and an additional 4,015 spaces at 134 child care facilities were added across BC. BC has committed to further expand the \$10 a day program under the Canada-Wide Agreement.

By December 2022, with a total of approximately 12,500 \$10 a day spaces, over 9% of child care spaces in BC were \$10 a day spaces.

Further details on the \$10 a day ChildCareBC Centres, is available on the Ministry's [website](#).

Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF)

[Child Care Operating Funding \(CCOF\) Base Funding](#) supports eligible licensed centre-based and home-based child care programs to cover a portion of day-to-day operating costs. Daily rates are based on enrolment, the number of hours per day care is provided, age group and type of child care.

Participation in the program by a service provider is optional; the vast majority (more than 90%) of service providers apply for and receive CCOF funding. Participating in CCOF Base Funding is required for a service provider to participate in the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative and the Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement.

CCOF is not available for Occasional Care, Recreational Child Care or for Child-minding.

CCOF daily rates for centres per child by age group and hours of attendance

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Four hours or less</i>	<i>More than 4 hours</i>
0 – 36 months	\$6.00	\$12.00
3 years – kindergarten	\$2.74	\$5.48
Grade 1 – 12 years	\$1.40	\$2.80
Part-day preschool	\$1.37	NA

CCOF daily rates for family child care per child by age group and hours of attendance

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Four hours or less</i>	<i>More than 4 hours</i>
0 – 36 months	\$1.85	\$3.70
3 years – kindergarten	\$1.41	\$2.82
Grade 1 – 12 years	\$0.73	\$1.46

CCOF rates for in-home-multi age and multi-age child care may be found at [Child Care Operating Funding – Base Funding](#).

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI)

The [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#) (CCFRI) provides operational funds to eligible licensed child care providers to reduce and stabilize parent fees. Child care providers must be caring for children five years old and under, must be receiving base CCOF funding and must apply annually.

Providers participating in the CCFRI must agree not to increase fees beyond any amount approved by the province. Additionally, since April 2021, new facilities must have initial child care fees at or below the 70th percentile for fees in their region for the same type of care to be eligible for the CCFRI. New facilities that applied for provincial funding to create new licensed spaces before April 1, 2021, and who were approved for this funding are exempt from this fee cap.

To receive CCFRI, service providers must be approved for CCOF Base Funding and must be providing:

- infant/toddler care (group and family child care) – (Under 36 months); and/or
- care for three-year-olds to kindergarten-age (group and family child care).

Under CCFRI, approved service providers received the following amounts per enrolled child for full-time child care to reduce parent fees in 2018.

In December 2022, further fee reductions were announced.

Monthly fee reductions under CCFRI (December 2022)

	Full-time space (2018)	Full-time space (2022)
<i>Group care</i>		
Infant/toddler care	\$350	\$550
3 – 5 years (not in school)	\$100	\$445
Kindergarten		
(before- and after-school)	\$100	\$320
<i>Family and in-home child care</i>		
0 – 36 months	\$200	\$400
3 – 5 years (not in school)	\$60	\$440
Kindergarten		
(before- and after-school)	\$60	\$260

Note: Service providers receive prorated amounts for children enrolled part-time.

CCFRI Provider Payment

The CCFRI Provider Payment is equivalent to 20% of the facility's monthly CCOF Base Funding for CCFRI-eligible care categories (to offset the administrative costs associated with participating in CCFRI).

See [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#) for full eligibility requirements.

Child Care ECE Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE)

The [Child Care ECE Wage Enhancement](#) is part of the government's [Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#). Certified staff (including owner/operators) working in licensed child care receiving Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF) are eligible to receive a provincial wage enhancement.

As of September 1, 2021 the wage enhancement was increased from \$2/hour to \$4/hour. Payments were made to eligible employees by March 2022 for the \$4/hour wage enhancement retroactive to September 1, 2021.

Additional funding for statutory benefits is also provided, and is set each year for January 1. As of January 1st, 2022, the benefit rate was 19.25%.

To be eligible for Wage Enhancement, the child care service must be receiving CCOF and, if eligible, approved for the CCFRI or be a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC site. Participation is optional, and child care providers can apply at any time.

See full eligibility requirements in the [2021/22 ECE-WE Funding Guidelines](#) (effective April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022).

Supported Child Development Program (SCD) and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD)

SCD and ASCD programs provide supports to children from birth to 12 years of age with a developmental delay or disability who require additional support to attend a licensed child care setting. These supports may include assessing children's needs, creating individual plans, providing guidance to child care centres and, where needed, funding or deploying enhanced staffing within the child care centre.

In 2022/23, through the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Care Agreement and the bi-lateral Early Learning Agreement, BC is investing \$31.8M into these programs, in addition to the current budget of \$80M. This funding is intended to:

- increase the number of children and families who have access to SCD/ASCD supports, and, where needed, increase the level of service for children already on caseload; and
- enable SCD and ASCD Programs to increase emphasis on capacity building within child care settings, through training and mentorship.

ONE-TIME FUNDING

Child Care BC Maintenance Fund

The fund is available to assist licensed providers in emergency circumstances, defined as sudden and unexpected conditions that directly impact children's health and safety or may result in immediate facility closure, or with the costs of addressing necessary repairs or replacing eligible items unrelated to routine or regular service. The fund may also help with expenses for relocation costs, if the relocation is required for compliance under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#).

Emergency repair and/or replacement

For emergency repairs and replacements, each year eligible applicants may receive, per physical location:

- up to \$10,000 for not-for-profit licensed group child care, multi-age child care, school-age on school grounds and preschool providers;
- up to \$5,000 for for-profit licensed group child care, multi-age child care, school-age on school grounds and preschools not operating from a property that may be used as a home or dwelling; or

- up to \$2,000 for licensed personal residence providers regardless of licence type.

Expenses eligible for emergency repair or replacement include washrooms, major systems, accessibility equipment, safety equipment, furniture and equipment, permanent outdoor fixtures and outdoor play equipment. See here for [eligible](#) and [ineligible](#) expenses.

Required relocation

Licensed group child care providers can apply for funding to help cover the cost of required relocation due to emergency circumstances. Relocation support is not available to licensed personal residence providers, regardless of licence type and circumstance, as the move may include home owner expenses that are not related to the child care facility. See here for [eligible relocation expenses](#).

For the required relocation of a licensed facility, each fiscal year eligible applicants may receive, per physical location:

- Up to \$50,000 for not-for-profit licensed group child care, multi-age child care, school-age on school grounds and preschool providers; or
- Up to \$25,000 for for-profit licensed group child care, multi-age child care, school-age on school grounds and preschool providers.

Start-Up Grants

The Start-Up Grants program is designed to increase the number of licensed child care spaces available to B.C. families by supporting individuals who want to operate a licensed child care facility in their personal residence. The grant assists with the costs associated with obtaining a group care, family, and in-home multi-age (IHMA) licence type under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and Child Care Licensing Regulation.

The grant offers \$500 up front to cover costs associated with becoming licensed. There is an additional \$500 per space once a valid licence under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) has been issued and the organization is actively participating in CCOF and, where eligible, the CCFRI.

Child care providers who receive funding through the Start-Up Grants must provide proof of a valid licence within one year of funding approval, enroll in the CCOF and, where eligible, CCFRI, and remain operational and enrolled for three consecutive years.

Childcare BC New Spaces Fund

The Childcare BC [New Spaces Fund](#) provides funding to create new licensed child care.

As of 2021 – 2022 funding is only available to public sector organizations, Indigenous governments, not-for-profit organizations (societies) and Indigenous not-for-profit organizations (societies). Until this change, it was also available to for-profit operations.

Funding guidelines are updated each year to align with current priorities.

Key priorities for the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund 2021 – 2022

- infant-toddler spaces serving:
 - low-income families
 - children with support needs
 - Indigenous children and families
 - families new to Canada
 - young parents (25 years and under)
 - black and other children/families of colour
 - francophone children.
- spaces co-located with other community or family services (e.g. school grounds);
- fully inclusive spaces to allow children of all abilities to participate meaningfully (i.e. accessible physical design and application of program inclusion policy); and/or
- projects with a provincial cost per space of \$40,000 or less.

Maximum provincial spending amounts for the Childcare BC New Spaces Funds 2021 – 2022

Per project, eligible applicants can receive up to:

- \$3 million for up to 100% of eligible project costs for public sector organizations and Indigenous governments;
- \$1.5 million for up to 100% of eligible project costs for Indigenous not-for-profit organizations (societies); or
- \$1.5 million for up to 90% of eligible project costs for not-for-profit organizations (societies), including not-for-profit child care providers and child development centres.

Note: For-profit operations are no longer eligible for the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund.

Community Child Care Space Creation Program

In 2019 the Community Child Care Space Creation Program provided up to \$1 million to local governments for the creation of new non-profit and public licensed child care spaces within their own (public) facilities or under a long-term lease agreement by the local government for children aged 0 – 5, with a focus on infant-toddler spaces. The Community Child Care Space Creation Program was administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

Applications were accepted up to November 22, 2019. This funding was provided under the Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement (Multilateral Framework), which provided a total of \$18.5 million over three years for space creation.

Community Child Care Planning Grants

In 2019, The BC Ministry of Children and Family Development earmarked \$3 million for the [Community Child Care Planning Program](#), which provided funding for local governments to engage in child care planning activities to develop a community child care space creation action plan.

Eligible projects received up to \$25,000. The program was administered by the Union of BC Municipalities. Applications for this program concluded on January 31, 2020.

COVID-19 SUPPORTS

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, two key sources of provincial funding were made available to licensed child care providers – Temporary Emergency Funding and Health and Safety Grants.

Temporary Emergency Funding

Between April and August 2020, BC provided more than \$320M in Temporary Emergency Funding (TEF) for the child care sector. This funding was intended to support:

- facilities to remain open and safely operate as many child care spaces as possible, while complying with public health guidelines;

- access to child care for essential service workers; and
- fixed facility costs for facilities that needed to temporarily close due to the pandemic so that they could continue to provide child care services once they reopened.

In exchange for receiving TEF, child care providers were required to agree to enhanced terms/conditions, including to:

- prioritize access to children of essential service workers;
- not charge parent fees for any periods of temporary closure or in cases where a family was absent due to COVID-19; and
- offer families who temporarily withdrew their child from child care due to the COVID-19 pandemic access to the same space/spaces after the TEF Program ended.

TEF provided 7 x base CCOF amount for facilities that were able to remain open and 2 x base CCOF amount to facilities that temporarily closed. In order to receive TEF, facilities had to agree to the terms and conditions laid out in a Modified Funding Agreement. Approximately 94% of eligible facilities received TEF, supporting more than 120,000 (open and closed) licensed child care spaces in over 4,700 facilities across BC.

Health and Safety Grants

BC provided three rounds of Health and Safety Grants (HSG), in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

<i>Health and Safety Grants, per year</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>
Maximum per-space allocation	\$325	\$175	\$160
Average payment – centre-based group facility	\$10,245	\$5,600	\$5,104
Average payment – home-based facility	\$2,359	\$1,260	\$1,162
<i>Total spending</i>	<i>\$35M</i>	<i>\$18.3M</i>	<i>\$18.9M</i>

HSG funding supported facilities to operate as many of their licensed spaces as possible and to offset the additional costs (e.g. staffing backfill, cleaning supplies, etc.) associated with providing child care services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ECE Education Support Fund

Since September 2018, in partnership with the Early Childhood Educators of BC, the Province has expanded and enhanced the ECE Bursary Program for students enrolled in Early Childhood Education programs at recognized post-secondary institutions in B.C.

The [ECE Education Support Fund](#) consists of two streams:

- the Early Childhood Student Bursary, to assist students studying ECE at a recognized post-secondary institution. Up to \$500 per course, to a maximum of eight courses per semester is available to assist with tuition, books and materials; and
- the ECE Workforce Development Bursary Fund available to ECEs, ECE Assistants, Responsible Adults (as defined in the Child Care Licensing Regulation) and StrongStart BC Facilitators who are currently working in the ECE field to upgrade their credentials. Up to \$5,000 per semester is available to assist with tuition and other expenses such as loss of wages or travel.

As of Fall semester 2021, more than 11,000 bursaries were allocated to over 6,200 students, totaling almost \$20 million in funding. An additional \$25.5 million was allocated through the Canada-B.C. Early Learning and Child Care Agreement in 2021/22 to continue the program to 2024.

Professional Development Funding

In March 2019, the Ministry of Children and Family Development allocated \$6.3-million to improve access to professional development opportunities for early care and learning professionals. Most of this funding has now been expended, although some of the initiatives have received additional funding through the workforce funds included as part of the Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

Early Childhood Pedagogy Network Funding

The Early Childhood Pedagogy Network continues to support ECEs throughout the province through their network of more than 50 pedagogists working in/with child care programs and post-secondary programs around the province.

Expanding Aboriginal Head Start

The B.C. government allocated \$10 million in 2021 – 2022 to expand Aboriginal Head Start programs throughout the province, by more than 640 new licensed early learning and child care spaces in more than 30 communities through partnerships with the First Nations Health Authority and the Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC. These funds are for both Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) and Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC). The programs provide culturally based, inclusive child care and early learning, family bonding and prevention services. Services are available to families at no cost.

Under Budget 2021, the province provided ongoing funding to support an additional 400 Aboriginal Head Start child care spaces in the province.

Post-Secondary Seat Expansion

Since the 2018 launch of BC's ChildCareBC Plan, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) has provided almost \$10 million to fund 1,150 additional student spaces at fourteen public post-secondary institutions across B.C.



PROVINCIAL FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2020-2021)

FEE SUBSIDIES

Program	Amount
Affordable Child Care Benefit (formerly fee subsidies for licensed/ regulated care)	\$226,827,000
Young Parent Program (YPP)	\$1,600,000
Single Parent Employment Initiative (SPEI)	\$1,600,000
Total fee subsidies	\$230,027,000

Note: Actual fee subsidy expenditures totaled \$119,699,302. Factors contributing to low demand/utilization of child care services include:

1. COVID pandemic situation and related Provincial Health Officer pandemic restrictions impacting child care facility operations;
2. Changes to parents'/guardians' employment status, job sustainment and/or work situation (i.e. teleworking) resulting in more children being kept at home;
3. Changing circumstances at post secondary/vocational/training institutions which impacted the number of clients accessing benefits through YPP and SPEI as well as the amount of fee subsidy they were accessing; and
4. Impacts from federal government emergency measures [i.e. Canada Emergency Relief Benefit (CERB)].

OPERATIONAL (PREVIOUSLY RECURRING) FUNDING

Program	Budget amount
Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative	\$127,300,000
Child Care Operating Fund	\$107,350,000
Child Care ECE Wage Enhancement	\$41,780,000
Supported Child Development Program	\$75,403,000
Aboriginal Head Start (provincial)	\$10,000,000
Universal Child Care Prototype Sites	\$31,000,000
Total operational funding	\$392,833,000.00

Note from the BC government: Actual operational expenditures totaled \$291,841,274. Factors contributing to lower spending include:

1. COVID pandemic situation and related Provincial Health Officer pandemic restrictions impacting child care facility operations
2. Lower enrolments at child care facilities
3. Facilities opting into funding from other provincially funded pandemic emergency relief measures such as the Temporary Emergency Fund (TEF) program offered from April 2020 to August 2022 to ensure the financial viability of child care facilities.
4. Permanent closure of some child care facilities

ONE-TIME FUNDING

One-time funding – capital (major and minor)

Program	Budget amount
Child Care BC New Spaces Fund	\$84,239,000
Child Care BC Maintenance Fund	\$1,200,000
Total one-time funding	\$85,439,000

TOTAL FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (fee subsidies, operational funding, one-time funding, and carry over) \$708,299,000

OTHER ELCC FUNDING

Definition: "Other" ELCC funding may include contributions to an early childhood association, research, evaluation, funds for unregulated child care, and pilot projects that do not fall into another category.

Program	Budget amount
Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) for Unregulated Child Care	\$37,273,000
Child Care Resource & Referral Program	\$15,402,000
Early Childhood Pedagogy Network	\$4,800,000



FEDERAL TRANSFERS TO PROVINCE

<i>Federal transfer</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework – Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement	\$52,568,987
Safe Restart Agreement (child care specific funding)	\$82,772,000

COVID-19 RELATED SUPPORTS

Temporary Emergency Funding	\$318,566,819
Health and Safety Grants	\$35,029,820
Aboriginal Head Start Early Learning & Outdoor Play Spaces	\$10,000,000
New Spaces Fund	\$60,656,977
Rapid Renovations Fund	\$1,774,852
Child Care Matching Service for Essential Services workers	\$19,884
Inclusion Support Fund	\$2,651

Note: COVID-19-related spending reflects actual expenditures. This spending was funded through the province's Pandemic Response & Economic Recovery contingency funding. The funding is over and above the budget amounts provided above.

■ OF INTEREST

MUNICIPAL ROLE

British Columbia does not have a mandated role for municipalities in child care but the City of Vancouver has played a significant voluntary role in the planning and funding of child care since the 1990s. There are 17 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver area, and a number of them play similar (although somewhat less extensive) roles in supporting child care through zoning, demand measurement and rental provisions.

In addition to Vancouver's long-time municipal role, the provincial government has funded municipalities across BC to take on a role in child care planning as part of the provincial child care expansion plan.

A number of local governments and school boards operate child care facilities. See Space Statistics in this BC chapter.

FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS

[Family Resource Programs](#) (FRPs) are parent/child centres for families or a caregiver accompanying children 0 – 6 years. There are more than [275 family resource programs](#) in British Columbia. The programs are intended to provide services that strengthen parenting skills, provide stimulating environments for children, and promote family and community engagement.

FRPs engage with families through five core areas of service:

- family support;
- play-based learning;
- early learning and literacy;
- parent education; and
- information and referral.

■ PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS AND ADVISORY GROUPS

[Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia](#)

[Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC](#)

[BC Aboriginal Child Care Society](#)

[British Columbia Family Child Care Association](#)

[Early Childhood Pedagogy Network](#)

[School-Age Child Care Association of British Columbia](#)

[Provincial Child Care Council](#)