



British Columbia

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British Columbia

■ OVERVIEW

In British Columbia, the Ministry of Education and Child Care is responsible for regulated child care centres, preschools, family child care, kindergarten, and before- and after-school child care. The Ministry of Health is responsible for child care licensing.

Licensed child care includes full-day centres, part-day preschools, family child care, and before- and after-school programs.

Centre-based child care is provided by for-profit and non-profit operators, with some publicly operated spaces. A majority of full-day centre spaces are for-profit.

Family child care is individually licensed.

British Columbia offers full school-day kindergarten for all five-year-olds. Kindergarten is compulsory but may be deferred by one year, in which case grade placement is determined at the school level. There is no kindergarten for four-year-olds.

British Columbia has two programs that reduce child care fees: the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) and \$10 a Day ChildCareBC centres. Through the CCFRI, a majority of centres and family child care providers receive a set amount per month to reduce market fees, with the province limiting fee increases. \$10 a Day ChildCareBC service providers receive core funding to provide child care for children 0 – 12 years at a provincially set fee of \$10/day (\$200/month). The Affordable Child Care Benefit is an income-tested fee subsidy that further reduces fees for eligible families using licensed child care and some types of unlicensed child care.

British Columbia does not have a provincial child care wage grid but has committed to developing a wage grid for early childhood educators (ECEs). Since 2023, it has been carrying out a wage grid pilot project with 53 Operating Funding Model test sites. Beginning in January 2019 and retroactive to September 1, 2018, Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement provided certified ECEs working in eligible licensed child care up to \$6/hour of wage enhancement, to a maximum of 195 hours per month.

British Columbia signed the Canada-British Columbia Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement in July 2021. It allocated \$3.21 billion over five years to the province.

In March 2025, British Columbia accepted the federal offer to extend its bilateral agreement until 2031.

Net growth in full-day centre spaces for children 0 – 5 years (2021 – 2025)			
	<i>2021</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>Increase (decrease) 2021 – 2025</i>
Non-profit and public	20,567	27,050	+6,483
For-profit	38,023	54,580	+16,557
Total full-day spaces	58,590	81,630	+23,040
Percentage of full-day spaces that were for-profit	65%	67%	+2%
Percentage of growth of full-day spaces that was for-profit	-	-	72%

■ PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Some of the following figures are rounded; however, the totals are based on exact figures. Therefore, totals may not equal the sum of the rounded figures.

Number of children 0 – 12 years (2024 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
0	39,600
1	37,700
2	42,000
3	43,500
4	48,100
5	48,000
6	48,500
7	55,800
8	51,500
9	55,200
10	51,400
11	50,400
12	53,800
Total	625,500

Number of children 0 – 12 years (aggregated) (2024 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
0 – 2	119,300
3 – 5	139,600
6 – 12	366,600
Total	625,500

Number of children 0 – 12 years with employed mothers (2024 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
0	26,800
1	23,600
2	26,100
3	27,900
4	28,500
5	31,200
6	31,200
7	38,100
8	33,100
9	36,900
10	36,000
11	35,300
12	36,500
Total	411,000

Number of children 0 – 12 years with employed mothers (aggregated) (2024 rounded estimate)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
0 – 2	76,500
3 – 5	87,600
6 – 12	247,100
Total	411,000

Number of children 0 – 14 years 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 (2024 rounded estimate)

<i>Age of youngest child</i>	<i>Number of mothers</i>	<i>Participation rate (%)</i>
0 – 3	93,200	74.4
4 – 5	41,900	77.6
0 – 5	135,100	75.3
6 – 12	146,700	82.2

Living arrangements by age of child (2021)

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

Languages spoken most often at home (2021)

<i>Age</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Non-official</i>	<i>Multiple</i>
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 0 – 5 years (2020)

<i>Two-parent families</i>	<i>Male lone parent</i>	<i>Female lone parent</i>
\$108,000	\$54,000	\$45,200

KINDERGARTEN POLICY, PROGRAMS, AND DATA

KINDERGARTEN FOR FIVE-YEAR-OLDS

Provincial responsibility

Ministry of Education and Child Care

Phone: *Not available*

Email: EDUC.EarlyLearning@gov.bc.ca

Website: gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/education

Legislation

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. [School Act – School Calendar Regulation](#) [R.S.B.C. 1996] Chapter 412.

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

Provision

Kindergarten provision

Definition	Full school-day program for all five-year-old children.
Eligibility	Five years old by December 31.
Compulsory schooling	Compulsory, but participation can be delayed by one year.
Entitlement	All eligible children have access.
Instructional hours per day	Full school-day (minimum 853 hours per year).
Class size	Maximum 22 children.

Teacher qualifications and certification

To be a qualified kindergarten teacher in British Columbia requires a Certificate of Qualification issued by the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education and Child Care. Certification requires, at minimum, completion of four years (120 credits) of post-secondary studies, which must include a professional teacher education program that comprises a full year of full-time study. Kindergarten teachers are not required to have an early childhood qualification.

An Independent School Teaching Certificate is restricted to educators teaching in the British Columbia independent Montessori or Waldorf schools. Certification requires at least 120 credits of post-secondary studies and a teaching credential from an acceptable program that offers training within the Montessori or Waldorf philosophy or pedagogy.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The [British Columbia K – 12 Curriculum](#) (2017) is a mandatory curriculum framework for kindergarten programs in all publicly funded schools (public and independent) in British Columbia.

[British Columbia Early Learning Framework](#) (2019) is a voluntary curriculum framework for kindergarten, licensed child care services, and other early childhood development or child health programs in British Columbia. The framework is mandatory only in StrongStart BC programs. It focuses on children from birth to age eight.

■ ENROLMENT

Kindergarten enrolment (2024 – 2025 school year)

	<i>Full school-day</i>	<i>Part-day</i>
<i>Enrolment in public schools</i>		
Kindergarten for 5-year-olds	38,462	3
<i>Enrolment in private/independent schools</i>		
Kindergarten for 5-year-olds	6,704	184
Total kindergarten enrolment		45,353

■ RECENT OR ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENTS

Seamless Day Kindergarten

In 2019, British Columbia introduced the Seamless Day Kindergarten pilot project. The programs are staffed by two ECEs who provide before- and after-school care in kindergarten classrooms and work alongside the classroom teacher during school hours. The pilot began with one school in 2019 and expanded to 23 public schools and two independent schools in the 2021 school year. The province provided \$3 million in 2022 – 2023 to add 20 classrooms, expanding the program to 45 classrooms. In 2024, \$4.1 million in funding was provided to support the pilot.

Just B4

Just B4 is a part-day licensed preschool program for four-year-olds using existing StrongStart BC educators and classrooms. The Just B4 program was introduced in 2020 on a pilot basis in one school district and expanded to five additional districts in the 2021 school year. Budget 2022 committed to expanding these initiatives; in 2024 – 2025, 24 districts participated in the pilot.

■ OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

StrongStart BC

StrongStart BC is an early childhood play-based drop-in program for children 0 – 5 years under the Ministry of Education and Child Care. It operates in 323 sites within all 60 British Columbia school districts. Children must be accompanied by a parent or other caregiver. StrongStart is provided at no fee and is intended to support children's transitions to kindergarten. StrongStart BC sites are staffed by certified ECEs and must use the [*British Columbia Early Learning Framework*](#) (2019).

CHILD CARE POLICY AND PROGRAMS

■ ADMINISTRATION

Provincial responsibility

Ministry of Education and Child Care
Child Care Division
Phone: 1-888-338-6622
Email: DM.Education@gov.bc.ca
Website: gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children

Ministry of Health (responsible for licensing)
Community Care Licensing
Phone: *Not available* – contact regional health authorities
Email: hlth.ccf@gov.bc.ca
Website: gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/information-for-partners-providers

Legislation

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#). SBC 2021, c. 22

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Early Learning and Child Care Regulation](#). BC Reg. 189/2024.

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#). SBC 2002, c. 75.

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#). BC Reg. 332/2007.

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. [Early Childhood Educators Act](#). SBC 2021, c. 25 (not yet in force).

The *Early Learning and Child Care Act* replaced the *Child Care Subsidy Act* and the *Child Care BC Act*, effective September 1, 2024.

The *Early Childhood Educators Act* received royal assent in the British Columbia legislature in October 2021 and will be brought into force by regulation. It will replace relevant sections of the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and Child Care Licensing Regulation that govern the work of the ECE Registry. The Ministry of Health will continue to license child care facilities.

Service descriptions

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

There are no health, safety, or training requirements or provision for public oversight in unregulated child care. There may be attention by public officials on a complaint basis. See the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) for more information.

Licence-not-required child care

Licence-not-required family child care providers may care for up to two children of any age or a sibling group not related to them (by blood or marriage) in the provider's home.

Registered licence-not-required child care

Registered licence-not-required (RLNR) child care providers are not licensed or monitored by the government but are registered and monitored by the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) centre in their community. The province retains the right to review, audit, or terminate an RLNR provider. An RLNR provider must be 19 years of age and have 20 hours of child care-related training, relevant work experience, and a valid first aid certificate. They may care for up to two children of any age or a sibling group not related to them (by blood or marriage) in the provider's home. New RLNR operators are no longer being registered, but current RLNR providers have access

to ongoing CCRR support, training, resources, and group liability insurance. CCRRs are focusing efforts on recruiting and continuing to support licensed child care providers who qualify for ChildCareBC funding.

In-child's-own-home care

In-child's-own-home care is unlicensed care arranged by parents at home (a nanny or a babysitter). Children from other families cannot be included in this care. The provider cannot be a relative who lives in the home. Under this arrangement, the employer needs to make regular payments to Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan and register the employment situation with Revenue Canada and WorkSafeBC.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

\$10 a Day ChildCareBC

British Columbia's \$10 a Day sites (ChildCareBC initiative) receive operational funding to limit parent fees to a maximum of \$10/day for full-day child care. These sites must meet specified conditions and must be non-profit/public, for-profit, or family child care. See the [Policies and Procedures Manual](#) for more information.

Child care centre

Regulated child care centres for children not yet in kindergarten (termed Group Child Care) provide care for no more than 13 hours/day at a community-based facility or centre. Group Child Care has different categories: under three years old, 2.5 years old to school-age, and school-age. See [Understand the Different Types of Child Care in B.C.](#) for more information.

Preschool

Preschool is a part-day program (maximum four hours/day) for preschool-age children who are at least 30 months old and not yet in school. Preschool programs typically operate from September to June.

School-age child care

Regulated care for school-age children is grouped into three categories, each with different licensing criteria: school-age Group Child Care, school-age care on school grounds, and recreational care. All three provide child care outside school hours and during school vacations for children attending school, including kindergarten, for no more than 13 hours/day.

School-age Group Child Care provides before- and after-school care and care during school closures to children who attend school, including kindergarten. It can be provided within a single-family dwelling.

School-age care on school grounds is care provided in schools or on school grounds. It is a licensing category similar to the school-age Group Child Care category. Providers located on school grounds are exempt from meeting certain regulated health and safety requirements. Exemptions vary based on whether the program is delivered by a board of education or a third-party provider (including non-profit and for-profit organizations).

Recreational care is child care provided after school hours, during school closures, or on a drop-in basis to kindergarten-age and school-age children. It must be provided by a local government, an Indigenous governing body, or a non-profit organization. Programs providing recreational care are exempt from certain facility, outdoor space, and other requirements that pertain to Group Child Care settings. See ss. 14, 14.1, 16, 43, 44, 57(2.4) of the Child Care Licensing Regulation.

Family child care

Family child care is located in a private home for no more than seven children ages 0 – 12 years, including the provider's own children under age 12. The provider must live in the location in which care is provided and personally provide care to the children.

Multi-age child care

Multi-age child care is provided by an ECE in a centre for groups of up to eight children of various ages. There can be no more than three children under 36 months.

In-home multi-age child care

In-home multi-age child care is provided by a certified educator to no more than eight children in the educator's personal residence. There can be no more than three children under 36 months.

Occasional child care

Occasional child care is short-term care in a community-based facility or centre for children who are at least 18 months old. Care for a child cannot be overnight and cannot exceed eight hours/day and 40 hours within a 30-day period. If a child under three years old is present, the maximum group size is 16 children. If all children are at least three years old, the maximum group size is 20 children.

Child-minding

Child-minding is care for a child younger than 13 years old whose parent is engaged in an English as a Second Language, settlement, or labour market integration program for 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

British Columbia Early Learning Framework

(2019) is a voluntary curriculum framework for kindergarten, licensed child care services, and other early childhood development or child health programs in British Columbia. It focuses on children from birth to age eight.

The framework is mandatory only in StrongStart BC programs.

■ CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Terminology and approach

British Columbia uses the term “children with support needs” to refer to children who are experiencing, or have an increased likelihood of experiencing, developmental delay or disability and who require support to optimize their development, functional abilities, and quality of life. The British Columbia definition is broader than disability to include children with support needs who may not yet have a diagnosed disability or may never receive a diagnosis.

All types of licensed child care are eligible to receive inclusion services.

Special Needs Early Childhood Educator is a post-basic ECE program specific to working with children with support needs in British Columbia, but the designation is not required.

In June 2024, British Columbia released [Where All Children Belong: B.C. Inclusive Child Care Strategy](#). This strategy identifies goals and actions the province is taking as it makes progress toward inclusive child care as a core service.

Programs supporting inclusion in ELCC

British Columbia funds Supported Child Development (SCD) and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) 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 intended to assist the participation of children with support needs in fully inclusive child care settings. SCD and ASCD develop and monitor strategies for the inclusion of individual children and provide or fund additional

staffing as required. They may also support the child care program as a whole in building capacity for inclusion through training and mentorship opportunities. ASCD programs support unique Indigenous service needs and are responsive to local Indigenous culture and communities.

The province does not encourage or promote child care that solely serves children with disabilities, as this does not align with their definition of inclusive child care. The one exception is child care that is tailored to deaf and hard-of-hearing children and their siblings and focused on immersion in sign language.

Access to inclusive ELCC

Child care providers in receipt of operating funding through ChildCareBC programs, including the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative and \$10 a Day ChildCareBC, are not required to accept children with disabilities.

A diagnosis is not required for a child to receive inclusion supports, but documentation is required to determine eligibility for services.

Newly constructed or renovated facilities must meet the standards of the BC Building Code, which provides a framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. If a child with disabilities is attending a child care facility, the licensee must ensure that the physical structure is modified to meet the needs of the child. Additionally, British Columbia's [Design Guidelines for Child Care Centres](#) supports improved accessibility and quality of child care centre buildings and infrastructure.

In British Columbia, there may be a delay in accessing inclusion supports due to budget constraints.

See [Inclusive Child Care Resources and Supports](#) for more information about inclusive child care.

■ FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT CHILD CARE

In British Columbia, 5.9% of the total population identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit in the most recent census (2021). There are 1,583 reserves and 203 First Nations in the province. Approximately 60% of First Nations people in British Columbia do not live on reserve. British Columbia most often uses the term First Nations communities, which includes reserves.

First Nations child care

Child care located in First Nations communities in British Columbia is not always provincially licensed. The province licenses child care located in First Nations communities upon invitation by the community.

The province's most recent available data reports that in 2024, more than 65 licensed centre-based child care programs identified as being physically located in First Nations communities. These facilities had more than 2,190 licensed spaces for children aged five and under, and more than 330 licensed spaces for school-age children.

The number of unlicensed child care facilities physically located in First Nations communities is not available.

Fewer than five licensed family child care providers identified as being physically located in a First Nations community in 2024.

Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) programs, which are under the aegis of the British Columbia First Nations Health Authority, may be licensed upon invitation by a First Nation. In 2025, 156 AHSOR programs were operating in the province. The provincial government reported that they supported 66 licensed AHSOR programs, with a total of 1,439 spaces.

Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities

Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) programs are under the aegis of the First Nations Health Authority, Indigenous-led, and not physically located in an Indigenous community, such as a reserve. All AHSUNC programs are licensed by the province.

In 2025, a total of 43 AHSUNC programs operated in British Columbia. Of these, the provincial government reported that they supported 31 licensed AHSUNC programs, with a total of 853 spaces.

Indigenous-specific resources/initiatives

The province works with the First Nations Leadership Council and Government of Canada under a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on early learning and child care (ELCC) for First Nations in British Columbia. This MOU is an important step on British Columbia's path to reconciliation, with the goals of supporting the self-determination of First Nations in British Columbia and advancing Declaration Act Action Item 4.19 to enhance First Nations' jurisdiction in ELCC.

Since 2018, British Columbia and the federal government have been collaborating to support expansion and transformation of Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) programs. Working with Indigenous groups in British Columbia, the government has provided additional financial support, including capital funding, to facilitate development of additional AHSOR and AHSUNC programs. These new AHS programs provide full-day ELCC programs and include infant, toddler, and multi-age care. Some AHSOR programs are supported by both the federal government and the provincial government. While approaches differ from community to community, all programs maintain a focus on cultural continuity, flexibility,

and community governance – ensuring that programming remains responsive to local priorities.

The Native Education College is a private institution with a recognized ECE program. The ECE Dual Credit, ECE Bursary, and Work Integrated Learning programs prioritize Indigenous students.

The province provides funding to the British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS), the Métis Nation of British Columbia, and the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres to undertake engagement, planning, professional development training, and culturally focused resources.

■ PARENT FEES

British Columbia has two programs that reduce child care fees: the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) and \$10 a Day ChildCareBC centres.

The CCFRI provides operational funding to eligible service providers. Through the CCFRI, a majority of centres and family child care providers receive a set amount per month to reduce market fees. Reduced fees are based on the age of the child and type of care. Fees are not set by the province. Annual fee increases are at the discretion of the province and are limited to 3% of the regional median fee.

Since April 1, 2021, newly established child care facilities and those that have changed ownership or location and choose to participate in the CCFRI must charge fees at or below the affordability benchmark for fees in the region for the same type of care.

Average monthly parent fees after CCFRI applied (2021 – 2024)

<i>Group Child Care</i>	<i>Average monthly fee (2021 – 2022)</i>	<i>Average monthly fee (2023 – 2024)</i>
Full-day		
Infant	\$1,060	\$652
Toddler	\$1,025	\$600
30 months – 5 years	\$875	\$510
Part-day		
Preschool (5 days/week)	\$450	\$450
Out-of-school (kindergarten-age)	\$400	\$230
Out-of-school (Grade 1 and older)	\$470	\$505
Family child care		
Infant	\$800	\$462
Toddler	\$800	\$448
3 – 5 years	\$840	\$450
Out-of-school (kindergarten)	\$490	\$300
Out-of-school (Grade 1 and older; school year)	\$500	\$550

\$10 a Day ChildCareBC service providers receive core funding to provide child care for children 0 – 12 years at a provincially set fee of \$10/day or \$200/month.

See British Columbia’s “[Types of funding](#)” section for more information.

Parent fee subsidies

The [Affordable Child Care Benefit](#) (ACCB) is an income-tested child care fee subsidy for parents with annual pre-tax household incomes of up to \$111,000. The ACCB is available for eligible families using licensed child care and some types of unlicensed child care (licence-not-

required or in-child’s-own-home care). Parents using occasional child care, child-minding, and recreational care are not eligible for fee subsidies. The ACCB is paid to service providers (except in-child’s-own-home care) on behalf of the parent to cover all or some of the parent fee. The amount of fee subsidy a family receives depends on family income and size, children’s ages, and type of child care. Families are required to reapply for the benefit every year or more frequently if their circumstances change.

All eligible families are entitled by legislation to a fee subsidy; there is no subsidy waitlist.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Parents must meet one of the following reasons for requiring child care:

- Working or self-employed;
- Attending school;
- Participating in an employment program;
- Looking for work (only one parent or guardian);
- Living with a medical condition that interferes with their ability to care for their child;
- Child care arranged or recommended by a Ministry of Children and Family Development or Indigenous Child and Family Services Agency social worker;
- Child care arranged or recommended by a staff member authorized by an Indigenous authority to provide child and family services under Indigenous law; or
- Child attending a licensed preschool program.

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY

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

Income eligibility in licensed child care (2024)

	<i>Maximum income for full subsidy (ACCB)</i>	<i>Income at which partial subsidy (ACCB) ends</i>
<i>One parent, one child</i>	\$45,000	\$111,000
<i>Two parents, two children</i>	\$49,000	\$115,000

Families earning more than \$111,000 but who have considerable deductions for family size or children who have support needs may also be eligible. Families may be exempt from income testing when a child is living with the applicant following

an agreement under the *Child, Family, and Community Service Act* or an Indigenous law.

SUBSIDY RATES

The subsidy rate is the amount the government pays on behalf of an eligible parent to cover all or part of the parent fee. This may not cover the entire cost of child care.

Maximum monthly subsidy rates in licensed child care (2024)

	<i>Centre-based care</i>	<i>Family child care/in-home multi-age care</i>
<i>Full-day programs</i>		
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
<i>Part-day programs</i>		
Before- and after-school	\$210	\$210
Preschool-age (30 months – school entry)	\$225	<i>Not applicable</i>

Note: These rates apply in all full- and part-day licensed child care programs, with the exception of occasional care, recreational care, and child-minding.

British Columbia provides ACCB in licence-not-required or in-child's-own-home care (both unlicensed) for families with an adjusted annual income starting at \$24,000 (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. Eligibility ends at an income of \$85,000.

Maximum monthly subsidy rates in unlicensed child care (2024)

	<i>Registered licence-not-required</i>	<i>Licence-not-required</i>	<i>In-child's-own-home care</i>
Full-day programs			
Infant (0 – 19 months)	\$600	\$438	\$394
Toddler (19 – 36 months)	\$600	\$404	\$318
37 months – school entry	\$550	\$354	\$318
Part-day programs			
School-age	\$210	\$210	\$210

See [Early Learning and Child Care Regulation](#) for more information.

The [Affordable Child Care Benefit Estimator](#) provides an estimate of the amount of fee subsidy available for both licensed and unlicensed child care.

Additional fees

Since April 1, 2024, licensed child care operators receiving Child Care Operating Funding are not permitted to charge waitlist fees.

Service providers receiving CCFRI funds are permitted to charge optional fees for food, transportation, extended hours, and field trips. Additional fees are not permitted for hours of service that could reasonably be expected to be included in the base parent fee. The Ministry has sole discretion to determine if a fee is permitted.

\$10 a Day ChildCareBC providers with funding agreements under the Eligible Expenses model can charge optional fees for food, transportation, extended hours, and field trips if the fees were charged before they joined the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC program; they cannot introduce new optional fees.

\$10 a Day ChildCareBC sites participating in the Operating Funding Model test sites are not permitted to charge additional fees.

WORKFORCE

Child care staff wages

PROVINCIAL WAGE DATA

Median hourly wages before ECE wage enhancement (2020 – 2025)

	<i>2020 – 2021</i>	<i>2021 – 2022</i>	<i>2022 – 2023</i>	<i>2023 – 2024</i>	<i>2024 – 2025</i>
<i>ECE or ECE+</i>	\$21	\$21	\$22	\$23	\$24
<i>Non-ECE staff</i>	\$18	\$19	\$19	\$20	\$21
<i>All child care staff</i>	\$20	\$20	\$21	\$22	\$23

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

WAGE ENHANCEMENT

[Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement](#) (ECE-WE) for centres and family child care began in January 2019, retroactive to September 1, 2018, as part of British Columbia's Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy. ECE-WE is available to all certified ECEs (including owner/operators) directly employed by and working in eligible licensed child care facilities. For a licensed child care facility to be eligible, it must be enrolled in Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF) and the CCFRI, or operate as a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC centre. Licensed child care facilities that do not charge parent fees may be eligible for ECE-WE despite not participating in the CCFRI. For a staff person to be eligible, they must hold a valid ECE certificate (Childhood Educator, Infant and Toddler Educator, and/or Special Needs Educator) issued by the ECE Registry that has not been suspended, cancelled, or expired. An ECE working as a Supported Child Development or Aboriginal Supported Child Development worker who is directly employed by a licensed child care facility is also eligible for the ECE-WE.

ECE-WE was initially set at \$1/hour for a maximum of 195 hours per month. It increased to \$2/hour in April 2020, \$4/hour effective September 2021, and up to \$6/hour effective December 2023 for ECEs working for non-public sector employers. Unionized ECEs working for public sector employers remained eligible for a \$4/hour wage enhancement. Additional funding for statutory benefits is also provided. Since January 2022, the rate for statutory benefits is 19.25%.

PROVINCIAL WAGE GRID

British Columbia does not have a provincial child care wage grid but has committed to developing a wage grid for ECEs. Since 2023, the province has been carrying out a wage grid pilot project with

53 Operating Funding Model test sites. The test establishes a minimum wage that must be paid for each specified role providing direct care to children, along with a corresponding funding level that exceeds the minimum hourly wage. Funding is provided based on the required role(s) for each care type, not the certificate level held by the employee. See the [Phase 2 Manual](#) for more information.

Staff benefits

British Columbia does not provide or fund any province-wide benefits to the child care workforce. The province is testing a compensation package for direct child care staff. It includes benefits and paid time off for vacation, illness, and attendance at professional development activities.

Early childhood certification

In British Columbia, ECEs and ECE assistants caring for children younger than school-age in licensed programs are required to be certified by the ECE Registry.

Child care providers in family child care or school-age child care programs are not required to be certified; however, they must meet the requirements to be a "responsible adult" (s. 29 of the Community Care and Licensing Regulation) and be monitored by Community Care Facility Licensing Officers. A responsible adult is someone who is at least 19 years old; has completed a 20-hour training course in health, safety, and child development; and can provide care and guidance to children.

The ECE Registry is the regulatory body mandated under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and the [Child Care Licensing Regulation \(CCLR\)](#); these outline the legislative requirements for ECEs and ECE assistants.

ECE CERTIFICATION LEVELS

ECE certification has five categories, each with minimum and renewal requirements.

Professional development is required for those holding an ECE Five Year Certificate, Infant and Toddler Educator Certificate, and/or Special Needs Educator Certificate. These ECEs are required to complete at least 40 hours of professional development relevant to early childhood education within the past five years to [renew certification](#).

Individuals with an ECE Assistant Certificate are required to complete one additional course of a basic early childhood education training program within the last five years.

ECE Five Year Certificates, Infant and Toddler Educator Certificates, Special Needs Educator Certificates, and ECE Assistant Certificates expire on the fifth anniversary of their date of issue.

ECE certification levels with minimum requirements and renewal

<i>Certificate level</i>	<i>Minimum requirement</i>	<i>Renewal</i>
ECE Assistant	One of three courses (as per s. 27 of the CCLR) of a “basic” early childhood education training program from a recognized post-secondary institution.	Must be renewed every five years by completing one additional ECE course and 400 hours of work experience.
ECE One Year	The “basic” early childhood education program (minimum 902 hours, or approximately one year) from an approved post-secondary institution. Valid for one year.	May be renewed once if completion of 500 hours of work experience was unable to be completed within the one-year time frame.
ECE Five Year	The “basic” early childhood education training program (minimum 902 hours) and demonstration of competence through either (i) 500 hours of work experience under the supervision of a Canadian-certified ECE or (ii) completion of sufficient child care experience, both of which must have been completed within the last five years.	Must be renewed every five years by completing 40 hours of professional development and 400 hours of work experience.
Infant and Toddler Educator	An educator holds or qualifies to hold an ECE Five Year Certificate, in addition to a specialized post-basic program (minimum 250 hours) and a 200-hour infant/toddler practicum.	Must be renewed every five years by completing 40 hours of professional development and 400 hours of work experience.
Special Needs ECE	An educator holds or qualifies to hold an ECE Five Year Certificate, in addition to a specialized post-basic program (minimum 250 hours) and a 200-hour special needs practicum.	Must be renewed every five years by completing 40 hours of professional development and 400 hours of work experience.

REQUIREMENTS FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Family child care providers are not required to be certified as educators but must meet the requirements to be a responsible adult. Responsible adults must be at least 19 years old; have completed a course or a combination of courses of at least 20 hours in child development, guidance, health and

safety, or nutrition; have relevant work experience; and be able to provide care and mature guidance to children.

An in-home multi-age child care provider must hold a valid ECE certification.

A family child care provider must have completed a course or combination of courses of at least 20 hours

in child development, guidance, health and safety, or nutrition and have relevant work experience.

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 five-year certificate term.

■ STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

Child care centres and family child care homes must adhere to standards and regulations regarding staffing requirements, grouping of children, and licensing. Some additional key elements of child care standards and regulations, such as physical environments and food provision, are covered in the comparative tables in this

publication, while others may be found in the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and [Child Care Licensing Regulations](#).

Regulated child care centres

Child care centres are licensed under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and [Child Care Licensing Regulations](#). The Act was most recently amended in 2022, and the regulations in 2023. Sections of the Act and regulations will be replaced by the *Early Childhood Educators Act* (which received royal assent in October 2021) when it comes into effect.

STAFF:CHILD RATIO AND GROUP SIZE

British Columbia does not specify a maximum number of children permitted in a child care centre.

Staff:child ratio and maximum group size

<i>Program type</i>	<i>Age group</i>	<i>Staff:child ratio</i>	<i>Maximum group size</i>
Group care	Infant/toddler (<36 months)	1:4	12
	Preschool-age (30 months – school-age)	1:8	25
	School-age (if any preschool-age or Grade 1-age child is present)	1:12	24
	School-age (if no preschool-age or Grade 1-age child is present)	1:15	30
Multi-age care	Children 0 – 12 years	1:8	8
Preschool	Preschool-age (30 months – school-age)	1:10	20
School-age care on school grounds	Kindergarten and Grade 1	1:12	24
	Grade 2 and older	1:15	30 ¹
Recreational care	Kindergarten and Grade 1	1:12	No maximum ²
	Grade 2 and older	1:15	
Occasional care (18 months and up)	If children under 36 months are present	1:4	20
	If no children under 36 months are present	1:8	24
Child-minding ³	-	1:8	24

¹ Maximum of 30 only applies if no children in kindergarten or Grade 1 are present.

² No maximum, but usable floor area of the space must be deemed sufficient by a local medical health officer to ensure the health and safety of children participating in the activity.

³ In child-minding, each child younger than 12 months is counted as 2.5 children, each child 12 – <36 months is counted as two children, and each child 36 months or older is counted as one child.

Minimum staff certification requirements by age group (2024)

<i>Program type/age group</i>	<i>Number of children</i>	<i>Required certified staff</i>
Group care (under 36 months)	1 – 4	1 infant-toddler educator
	5 – 8	1 infant-toddler educator and 1 ECE
	9 – 12	1 infant-toddler educator, 1 ECE and 1 ECE assistant
Group care (30 months – school age)	1 – 8	1 ECE
	9 – 16	1 ECE and 1 ECE assistant
	17 – 25	1 ECE and 2 ECE assistants
Multi-age (0 – 12 years)	1 – 8	1 ECE
Preschool-age (30 months – school-age)	1 – 10	1 ECE
	11 – 20	1 ECE and 1 ECE assistant

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS FOR CENTRES

Qualification requirements for staffing a centre

In British Columbia, staff qualification requirements are specified at a group level by number and age of children.

In child care for school-age children in kindergarten and older, occasional care, and child-minding, staff do not need to be certified ECEs but must be deemed 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 in child development, guidance, health and safety, or nutrition; have relevant work experience; and be able to provide care and mature guidance to children.

Qualification requirements for on-site centre directors/supervisors

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

Other requirements

There is no minimum age requirement for centre staff who are ECEs. Staff who are not ECEs must be at least 19 years old.

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

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

LICENSING AND MONITORING OF REGULATED CHILD CARE CENTRES

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

Five local health authorities are responsible for licensing: Fraser Health Authority, Interior Health Authority, Island Health Authority, Northern Health Authority, and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

Child care centre licences do not have a defined period of validity and do not need to be renewed, but they cannot be transferred from one person or facility to another. Centres are typically inspected every 12 to 18 months, unless more frequent inspections are required.

Regulated family child care

In British Columbia, family child care is regulated under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and [Child Care Licensing Regulations](#).

Family child care must be provided in the provider's personal residence.

MODEL OF ORGANIZATION

Family child care in British Columbia 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 is present, there must be no more than three children younger than 48 months. Of those three, there may be no more than one child younger than 12 months.

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

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. No more than one child may be younger than 12 months.

FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

A family child care provider does not need to be a certified ECE unless they operate an in-home multi-age child care facility, in which case they must hold at least a provincially issued one-year ECE certificate.

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 in

child development, guidance, health and safety, or nutrition; and have relevant work experience.

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

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

LICENSING AND MONITORING OF REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

Family child care licenses do not have a defined period of validity and do not need to be renewed, but they cannot be transferred from one person or facility to another. Family child care homes are typically inspected every 12 to 18 months, unless more frequent inspections are required.

■ 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 roles in supporting child care through zoning, demand measurement, and rental provisions, although some are less involved.

In addition to Vancouver's long-time municipal role, in 2018, the provincial government provided \$21 million to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) to support municipalities to take on a role in child care planning as part of the provincial child care expansion plan. This funding supported municipalities with up to \$25,000 to create a Child Care Community Needs Assessment through UBCM's Community Child Care Planning program and supported the creation of almost 700



child care spaces through UBCM's Community Child Care Space Creation program.

Family resource centres

[Family Resource Programs](#) are parent/child centres for families or caregivers accompanying children. These programs are operated by non-profit organizations and funded through the Ministry for Children and Family Development. 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.

CHILD CARE DATA

REGULATED CHILD CARE SPACE STATISTICS

Number of spaces (2024, 2025)

	2024	2025
Full-day centre spaces		
Infant/toddler (<36 months)	20,406	23,395
Preschool-age (30 months – 5 years, not yet in kindergarten or school)	48,301	54,045
Total full-day centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years)	68,707	77,440
Part-day centre spaces		
Preschool-age (30 months – 5 years, not yet in kindergarten or school)	17,325	16,252
Other centre spaces		
Multi-age (18 months – 5 years, not yet in kindergarten or school)	4,105	4,189
Occasional care (18 months – 5 years, not yet in kindergarten or school)	Not available	Not available
Total centre spaces (children 0 – 5 years)	90,137	97,881
Before- and after-school care centre spaces (licensed or regulated)		
Kindergarten-age	10,946	11,674
Grades 1 – 6	34,491	37,776
<i>Note: The split between kindergarten and Grades 1 – 6 spaces is an estimate based on Child Care Operating Fund enrolment figures.</i>		
Total before- and after-school care centre spaces	45,437	49,450
Total centre spaces (children 0 – 12 years)	135,574	147,331
Family child care licensed capacity		
Full-day (children not yet in kindergarten or school)	11,387	11,965
Part-day (children attending kindergarten or school)	1,240	1,305
Total family child care spaces	12,627	13,270
<i>Note: In 2024, British Columbia changed the way full- and part-day spaces in family child care are calculated. The breakdown of full- and part-day family child care spaces is different from that reported in the 2024 Interim Space Statistics report. The total number of family child care spaces remains the same.</i>		
TOTAL REGULATED SPACES (centre spaces and family child care licensed capacity)	148,201	160,601

Number of child care centres and family child care homes (2024)

Centre-based child care

Total number of centres	3,727
Total number of licences	5,652

Centre-based programs

Centres providing a full-day program	2,471
Centres providing a part-day (nursery or preschool) program	865
Centres providing a before- and after-school program for children attending kindergarten or school (approximately 5 – 12 years)	1,434
Centres providing infant and toddler care	1,168
Centres providing preschool-age care	1,776
Centres providing a Francophone child care program	22
Centres providing non-standard hours care (as defined by the province)	399
Centres in publicly delivered and funded schools (K – Grade 12)	761

Regulated family child care

Individually licensed family child care homes (active)	1,725
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Participation in CWELCC

Centres providing a full-day program	2,163
Centres providing a part-day (nursery or preschool) program	766
Centres providing a before- and after-school program for children attending kindergarten or school (approximately 5 – 12 years)	1,273
Total number of child care centres receiving CWELCC funding	3,301
Total number of licensed family child care homes receiving CWELCC funding	1,657

Auspice (2024)

Centres by auspice

<i>Auspice</i>	<i>Number of centres</i>
For-profit	2,142
Non-profit and public	1,585

Centre spaces by auspice

<i>Auspice</i>	<i>Full-day¹</i>	<i>Part-day²</i>	<i>BASC³</i>	<i>Total</i>
For-profit	48,655	7,361	16,839	72,855
Non-profit and public	24,157	9,964	28,598	62,719

¹ Includes 4,105 multi-age centre spaces.

² Nursery school/preschool.

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

Auspice (2025)

Centre spaces by auspice

<i>Auspice</i>	<i>Full-day¹</i>	<i>Part-day²</i>	<i>BASC³</i>	<i>Total</i>
For-profit	54,580	6,678	17,562	78,820
Non-profit and public	27,050	9,574	31,888	68,513

¹ Includes 4,189 multi-age centre spaces.

² Nursery school/preschool.

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

Fee subsidies (2024)

Number of children receiving fee subsidies

Affordable Child Care Benefit	36,209
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Disability support (2024)

Number of children receiving disability support

Children in licensed child care receiving disability support funding	2,578
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■ REGULATED CHILD CARE ENROLMENT STATISTICS

Number of children enrolled (2024)

Full-day centre enrolment

Infant/toddler (<36 months)	26,057
Preschool-age (36 months – 5 years, not yet in kindergarten or school)	48,937
Total full-day centre enrolment (children 0 – 5 years)	74,994

Part-day centre enrolment

Preschool-age (30 months – 5 years, not yet in kindergarten or school)	21,630
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Other

Multi-age (18 months – 5 years, not yet in kindergarten or school)	337
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Note: Due to data limitations, only \$10 a Day ChildCareBC sites are included in the multi-age enrolment figures.

Total centre enrolment (children 0 – 5 years)	96,962
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Before- and after-school care enrolment (licensed or regulated)

Kindergarten-age	10,083
Grades 1 – 6	31,772
Kindergarten-age and Grades 1 – 6 enrolled at \$10 a Day ChildCareBC sites	3,179

Total before- and after-school care enrolment	45,034
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Total centre enrolment (children 0 – 12 years)	141,996
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Family child care enrolment

Full-day (not attending kindergarten or school)	12,180
Part-day (attending kindergarten or school)	1,326
\$10 a Day ChildCareBC sites (children 0 – 12 years)	35

Total family child care enrolment (children 0 – 12 years)	13,541
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TOTAL REGULATED ENROLMENT (centre and family child care enrolment)	155,537
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CHILD CARE FUNDING

The types of funding available for child care services in British Columbia include operational funding, one-time funding, fee subsidies, and other ELCC funding programs. See [ChildCareBC programs](#) for more information.

■ ELIGIBILITY FOR CWELCC FUNDING

The CWELCC plan provides federal funds to provinces and territories for early learning and child care operational and one-time funding and fee subsidies for licensed child care for children aged 0 – 5. Funded new child care expansion is to be public and non-profit unless otherwise specified in the jurisdiction's agreement. Provinces and territories contribute their own funds and design their own policies and provision within this framework.

In British Columbia, the following are eligible for operational funding under CWELCC:

- Licensed full-day centres;
- Licensed part-day centres (preschools/nursery schools);
- Licensed before- and after-school centres that enrol children under age six; and
- Licensed/approved family child care.

New and expanded for-profit centres are eligible for operational funding.

In British Columbia, the following are eligible for capital funding under CWELCC:

- Licensed full-day centres;
- Licensed part-day centres (preschools/nursery schools); and
- Licensed before- and after-school centres that enrol children under age six.

New or expanded for-profit centres are not eligible for capital funding.

■ 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

Operational funding

\$10 A DAY CHILDCAREBC

Beginning in November 2018, British Columbia introduced the [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC](#) initiative (previously called the Prototype Sites Initiative) using federal funding. This initiative provides operational funding to selected sites that agree to limit parent fees to a maximum of \$10/day (\$200/month) for full-day 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 must be non-profit/public, for-profit, or family child care. As of March 31, 2024, there were more than 13,480 \$10 a Day spaces (monthly average), accounting for 9% of all child care spaces. Of these, more than 10,870 were for children ages five and under, and over 2,600 were for children 6 – 12 years. As of the 2024 – 2025 intake, there were approximately 16,000 \$10 a Day spaces across the province. Priority is given to larger non-profit, publicly delivered, or Indigenous-led providers that primarily offer care

to children up to age five in communities with low or no \$10/day spaces.

CHILD CARE OPERATING FUNDING

[Child Care Operating Funding](#) (CCOF) base funding supports eligible licensed centres and family child care to cover a portion of the day-to-day costs of operating a licensed child care facility. Daily rates are based on enrolment, the number of hours per day that care is provided, age group, and type of child care. A service provider’s participation in the program is optional, but most service providers (more than 90%) apply for and receive CCOF. Participating in CCOF base funding is required for a service provider to participate in the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) and the Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement and to become a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC centre. CCOF is not available for occasional care, recreational child care, or child-minding. Non-profit, public, and for-profit centres are all eligible for CCOF.

CCOF daily rates for centres per child by hours of attendance (2025)

<i>Age group</i>	<i>4 hours or less</i>	<i>More than 4 hours</i>
0 – 36 months	\$6.00	\$12.00
3 years – kindergarten-age	\$2.74	\$5.48
Grade 1 – 12 years	\$1.40	\$2.80
Part-day preschool	\$1.37	<i>Not applicable</i>

CCOF daily rates for family child care per child by hours of attendance (2025)

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

CHILD CARE FEE REDUCTION INITIATIVE

The [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#) (CCFRI) improves child care affordability for families by offering funding to eligible, licensed child care providers to reduce and stabilize monthly child care fees. A fee increase of 3% is permitted. Providers opt in to receive CCFRI funding when they apply for CCOF. Child care providers must be caring for children aged 12 and under and receiving CCOF base funding. They must apply for the CCFRI annually.

To receive CCFRI, providers must be providing care for:

- Infant/toddler (under 36 months; group and family child care);
- Three-year-olds to kindergarten-age (group and family child care);
- Preschool-age children; or
- Children in Grade 1 to age 12.

Non-profit, public, and for-profit centres and family child care providers are all eligible for CCFRI funding. Until September 2023, CCFRI was not available for child care for school-age children (ages 6 – 12) and preschools. It was then expanded to include them.

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

Monthly fee reductions for full-time enrolment under CCFRI (2018 – 2024)

<i>Group care</i>	<i>2018 – November 2022</i>	<i>After December 2022</i>	<i>2024</i>
Infant/toddler care	\$350	\$900	\$900
3 – 5 years (not in school)	\$100	\$545	\$545
Kindergarten (before- and after-school)	\$60	\$320	\$320
Grade 1 – 12 years	-	-	\$110
Preschool-age	-	-	\$95
<i>Family and in-home child care</i>			
0 – 36 months	\$200	\$600	\$600
3 – 5 years (not in school)	\$60	\$500	\$500
Grade 1 – 12 years	-	-	\$145

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

Child care providers participating in the CCFRI receive provider payments to help cover operational costs associated with running a child care centre, including staff wages and administration. This funding is in addition to base funding, fee reductions for families, and the Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR WAGE ENHANCEMENT

Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement for centres and family child care began in January 2019, retroactive to September 1, 2018, as part of British Columbia’s Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy. See British Columbia’s [“Workforce”](#) section for more information.

SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND ABORIGINAL SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Supported Child Development (SCD) and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) programs provide supports from birth to 12 years

of age to children with a developmental delay or disability who require additional support to attend a licensed child care setting. 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. It also enables SCD and ASCD programs to increase emphasis on capacity building within child care settings through training and mentorship.

FULL-DAY ABORIGINAL HEAD START

Through provincial bilateral ELCC and CWELCC investments, British Columbia allocated an additional \$73 million in 2024 – 2025 to expand licensed full-day Aboriginal Head Start child care to 2,150 licensed ELCC spaces in more than 30 communities through partnerships with the First Nations Health Authority and the Aboriginal Head Start Association of British Columbia. These funds are for both Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve and Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities. The programs provide culturally based, inclusive child care and early learning, as

well as family bonding and prevention services. Services are available to families at no fee.

One-time funding

CHILDCAREBC NEW SPACES FUND

The [ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund](#) provides funding to create new licensed child care. This funding was originally available to public sector organizations, Indigenous governments, not-for-profit organizations (societies), Indigenous not-for-profit organizations (societies), and for-profit operations. Beginning in the 2021 – 2022 fiscal year, for-profits were no longer eligible. As of 2024 – 2025, applicants to the New Spaces Fund have access to two funding streams: the Major Capital Grant and Minor Capital Grant.

The Major Capital Grant supports major projects, including ground-up builds, modular builds, and major renovations, including expansions and additions, requesting more than \$500,000. Applicants to the Major Capital Grant must own

the land on which the proposed child care centre will be built. Indigenous governing entities are exempt from this requirement.

The Minor Capital Grant supports minor capital projects, including renovations and equipment-only projects, anticipated to be completed within one year and requesting up to \$500,000. Applicants to the Minor Capital Grant can own or lease the land on which the projects are being completed.

The following applicants are eligible for the ChildcareBC New Spaces Fund 2024 – 2025:

- Indigenous governing entities;
- Local governments;
- Public bodies including health authorities, boards of education, public post-secondary institutions, and Crown corporations;
- Not-for-profits and Indigenous not-for-profits;
- First Nations schools; and
- Other eligible independent schools.

Required organization contribution, financial commitments, and provincial contributions

<i>Applicant type</i>	<i>Required organization contribution as a percentage of project costs</i>	<i>Organization's financial commitment to the project as a percentage of ineligible costs</i>	<i>Provincial contribution as a percentage of eligible costs</i>
Indigenous governing entities, local governments, public bodies, First Nations schools, and Indigenous not-for-profits	0%	100%	100%
Not-for-profits and other eligible independent schools	10%	100%	90%

Funding guidelines are updated each year to align with current priorities. Priorities for the ChildcareBC New Spaces Fund 2024 – 2025 are infant/toddler spaces, school-age spaces, and child care spaces in underserved regions.

The areas of focus for the ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund 2024 – 2025 are:

- Fully inclusive and accessible child care spaces that allow children of all abilities to participate meaningfully (accessible physical design and application of program inclusion policy);
- Spaces with non-standard hours of care (extended hours of care from 6:00 am and after 7:00 pm, weekend care, care provided on statutory holidays, and/or care provided on days of school closures); and
- Spaces offering specialized programming for children with support needs, Indigenous children and families, Francophone children, and/or young parents.

Priority populations for the ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund 2024 – 2025 are:

- Low-income families;
- Children with support needs;
- Indigenous children and families;
- Black and other children and families of colour;
- Francophone children;
- Families new to Canada; and
- Young parents (25 years and under).

An additional priority for 2024 – 2025 under the Major Capital Grants funding stream is projects that commence within six months of application and are scheduled to be completed prior to March 31, 2028.

CHILDCAREBC 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. The emergency funding helps address the immediate, necessary repairs or the replacement of eligible items unrelated to routine or regular service. For emergency repairs and replacements, eligible applicants may receive up to \$10,000/year depending on licence type to cover the costs of necessary repairs or maintenance. Relocation support is not available to licensed personal residence providers, regardless of licence type and circumstance.

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 care on school grounds, and preschool providers; or
- Up to \$25,000 for for-profit licensed Group Child Care, multi-age child care, school-age care 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 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 licence type under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and Child Care Licensing Regulation. The grant offers \$500 to cover costs associated with becoming licensed. An additional \$500 per space is available 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 Start-up Grants must provide proof of a valid licence within one year of funding approval, enrol in the CCOF and, where eligible, the CCFRI, and remain operational and enrolled for three consecutive years.

FIRST NATIONS GRANTS

In 2023, a one-time [First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Grant](#) was available to all First Nations in British Columbia through the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Fee subsidies

AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE BENEFIT

The Affordable Child Care Benefit is an income-tested fee subsidy that reduces fees for eligible families using licensed child care and some types of unlicensed child care. See British Columbia’s [“Parent fees”](#) section for more information.

Other ELCC funding

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

Child Care Resource and Referral programs enhance the availability and accessibility of a range of child care options and services and build relationships within the child care sector to support the advancement of the ChildCareBC Plan.

ECE EDUCATION SUPPORT FUND

Since September 2018, in partnership with the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC), the province has expanded and enhanced the ECE Bursary Program for students enrolled in early childhood education programs at recognized post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. In 2024, \$45 million was awarded to ECEBC to continue to administer the ECE Education Support Fund for 2024 – 2025 through to March 31, 2027.

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

- The Early Childhood Student Bursary, which assists students studying in an ECE program at a recognized post-secondary institution. Up to \$500 per course to a maximum of eight courses per semester (maximum of \$4,000 per semester) is available to assist with tuition, books, and materials; and
- The ECE Workforce Development Bursary Fund is 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 lost wages or travel.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

In 2023 – 2024, the Ministry of Education and Child Care allocated \$7.017 million to support a variety of professional development initiatives. This included the delivery of several programs over three years to support peer mentoring for ECEs; an administration and management in child care course; a program to enhance children’s experiences outdoors, including Indigenous ways of knowing; the delivery of professional development bursaries to reduce the cost for ECEs; the delivery of an online professional development hub; and the Let’s Talk About Touching personal safety curriculum.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PEDAGOGY NETWORK

The Early Childhood Pedagogy Project (ECPP) provides a pedagogical support program for ECEs and other members of the child care workforce and licensed child care programs in British Columbia. In 2024, the ECPP was administered by the Early

Childhood Pedagogy Network. The ECPP supports the maintenance of a provincial network of pedagogists who provide direct support to licensed child care programs; mentoring, capacity building, and pedagogical resources to Child Care Resource and Referral centres, as requested; and a variety of professional development opportunities.

ELCC DISTRICT LEAD

Beginning in the 2022 – 2023 school year, 56 out of 60 school districts accepted capacity-building funding to promote and expand ELCC programs, including 0 – 5 and school-age child care on school grounds. From 2023 – 2024 through 2025 – 2026, district ELCC funding is supporting 59 out of 60 school districts in implementing, promoting, and expanding ELCC initiatives. Districts are also exploring opportunities to create new child care spaces on school grounds and applying for the ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund, where appropriate.

INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGY

The Ministry provides \$123,000 annually to Métis Nation BC to deliver Métis pedagogy services to child care centres throughout the province. This includes support to include Métis culture and language in programming. Starting in 2024 – 2025, the Ministry is also providing support to the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society to deliver First Nations mentorship and pedagogy services to child care centres throughout the province, including developing communities of practice within the Indigenous child care sector.

ECE SPECIALIZED CERTIFICATION GRANT

The ECE Specialized Certification Grant recognizes ECEs with specialized certificates and encourages others to upgrade their credentials to support British Columbians’ access to quality, inclusive child care. For three years (2024 – 2026),

ECEs who work in licensed child care or Aboriginal Head Start Programs with children aged 0 – 5 and who hold a valid Infant and Toddler Educator and/or Special Needs Educator Certificate are able to apply. The annual grant provides \$2,000 for one certificate or \$3,000 for both certificates.

FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (FISCAL YEAR 2023 – 2024)

The funding figures in each category represent provincial spending, which may include both provincial funds and federal funds transferred under bilateral agreements, CWELCC agreements, or other federal programs used for early learning and child care.

Operational funding

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Child Care Operating Funding	\$136,154,247
Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative	\$597,473,642
\$10 a Day ChildCareBC	\$171,208,055
Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement	\$157,810,866
Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development	\$41,800,000
Aboriginal Head Start	\$48,253,000
Total operational funding	\$1,152,699,810

Note: Operational funding includes regularly paid public funding that contributes to the ongoing operation of the child care service. It may include operating grants or formula-based funding, family child care agency operating funds, wage grants/enhancement, disability funding, and other grants/funding paid on a recurring basis.

One-time funding – capital (major and minor)

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
ChildCareBC Maintenance Fund	\$481,069
ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund	\$270,931,425
Start-up Grants	\$607,500
First Nations Grants	\$21,670,316
Total one-time funding	\$293,690,310

Note: One-time funding is paid occasionally or just once to a child care service and is not part of the regular operating budget. It may include major capital, minor capital, start-up, one-time equipment, or repair funding.

Fee subsidies

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Affordable Child Care Benefit	\$130,325,321
Single Parent Employment Initiative	\$195,819
Young Parent Program	\$767,541
Total fee subsidies	\$131,288,681

Note: These are fee subsidies in licensed, regulated, or approved child care. The subsidies are associated with an individual child and family. There are provincial eligibility criteria. Fee subsidies are sent directly to service providers.

TOTAL SPENDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (operational funding, one-time funding, and fee subsidies) **\$1,577,678,802**

Other ELCC funding

<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Child Care Resource and Referral	\$18,384,775
ELCC District Lead	\$10,325,000
Early Childhood Pedagogy Network	\$4,164,092
Indigenous Pedagogy	\$83,500
ECE Specialized Certification Grant	\$5,970,000
Professional Development Funding	\$7,017,000
ECE Education Support Fund	\$15,000,000
Others	\$6,903,046
Total other ELCC funding	\$67,847,412

Federal transfers to British Columbia

<i>Federal transfer</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework – Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreements	\$76,304,060
Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care	\$663,871,725
Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund	\$7,810,264

Note: The federal transfers above represent the funds allocated to British Columbia for fiscal year 2023 – 2024. These funds may be slightly different from those included in the original agreements, as they are updated annually in line with population estimates. They do not represent funds carried over from the previous fiscal year or carried into the next fiscal year.

Source: Early Learning and Child Care Secretariat, Employment and Social Development Canada (2025).