

# Bilateral Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care for British Columbia

Saskatchewan At-a-Glance	
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulated centre-based spaces are available for 24.1% of children aged 0-5 (2016)<sup>28</sup></li> <li>Full-day Kindergarten is available but not compulsory for 5-year-olds</li> </ul>
Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Median monthly centre fees, province-wide (2015/16):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infants - \$1000</li> <li>Toddlers - \$953</li> <li>Preschool - \$755</li> </ul> </li> <li>Median full-time monthly fees in Vancouver (2017):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infant: \$1,360</li> <li>Toddlers: \$1,292</li> <li>Preschool: \$950</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Auspice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>49% of regulated child care is for-profit (2016)</li> </ul>
Wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Median gross hourly wages of program staff: \$17 (2012)</li> <li>Median gross hourly wages of program directors: \$20.83 (2012)</li> </ul>
Provincial Allocations (2015-2016)  Total spending on regulated child care: <b>\$231,401,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fee subsidies: \$80,690,000</li> <li>One-time funding               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major capital \$6,330,000</li> <li>Minor capital \$382,000</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recurring funding               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Care Operating Fund \$85,745,000</li> <li>Supporting Child Development Program \$58,254,000</li> </ul> </li> <li>Other related funding               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Care Resource and Referral \$9,821,000</li> <li>Child care fee subsidies in unregulated child care \$28,350,000</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>28</sup> All provinces and territories also provide regulated home child care. However, an age breakdown (0-5, 6-12) is not available. In 2016, there were enough regulated spaces (including centres and home child care) in British Columbia to cover 18.4% of children aged 0-12.

## Recent Initiatives in British Columbia

There have been some shifts in the ELCC landscape. In 2017, the province committed to the implementation of a universal child care plan over ten years that "provides affordable, accessible and high-quality care and early learning to every child whose family wants or needs it - starting with infant/toddler programs, before gradually expanding".

Since signing the BA and making their Action Plan publicly available, the province released *Child Care British Columbia: Caring for Kids, Lifting Up Families: The Path to Universal Child Care* (Government of British Columbia, 2018a). The report explains that the province will:

Move from the current patchwork of programs and services – delivered with limited accountability and regulation, and with fees that are out of reach for many families – towards universal child care that is affordable and available for any family that wants or needs it.

This plan includes child care that is inclusive, culturally responsive, flexible, safe, and accountable. The 2018 provincial budget earmarks \$1 billion for child care (Government of British Columbia, 2018b):

- Starting in April 2018, parents will be eligible for fee reductions of up to \$350/month for group infant/toddler care; \$200/month for family infant/toddler care; \$100/month for group care for ages 3-Kindergarten; \$60/month for family care for ages 3-Kindergarten. This applies to licensed care only, and the child care provider must opt in to the fee reduction program to receive funding (Child Care Operating Funding program).
- Starting in September 2018, a child care benefit to help reduce fees. Families with incomes up to \$111,000 may be eligible. This will start with licensed infant/toddler care in 2018/19, and 3-5-year-old care will be phased in starting in 2019.
- \$237 million over three years to increase access to licensed child care, including the creation of 22,000 new licensed spaces. This will be done through the expansion and redesign of the Child Care Major Capital program. Cost-sharing partnerships with non-profits, municipalities, and public sector agencies will be pursued.
- The Child Care Minor Capital program will also be expanded to provide 6,200 spaces with funding each year to repair facilities or equipment, or to support relocation costs.
- In 2019/2020, enhanced funding will be available to encourage licensed providers to extend business hours to evenings and weekends.
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development will examine partnerships with the Ministry of Education and school districts to explore co-location of child care facilities with schools.
- Start-up grants will be available to license-not-required providers looking to become licensed.
- Additional funding will be provided to hire Licensing Officers.
- The Ministry of Education will update the *British Columbia Early Learning Framework*.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA'S ACTION PLAN

The province will use federal funds to enhance accessibility by increasing the number of spaces; increase affordability, beginning with infant/toddler care; improve quality by supporting training and professional development of ECEs; and promoting equity through targeted investments in underserved communities.

Federal transfers	Year 1: \$51,036,249	Year 2: \$50,993,994	Year 3: \$50,993,994	Total: \$153,024,237
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### Availability

- **In year 1, \$13.7 million** in new capital grants to “create innovative partnerships with not-for-profit organizations or municipalities to establish new infant/toddler spaces in highest areas of need,” with a focus on establishing centres near public sector institutions like schools or hospitals. Up to \$1 million per project will be provided, and organizations/municipalities in receipt of funding will be required to cover one-third of the capital costs of new spaces. The services may then also be eligible for additional operational funding. The selection of recipients will be prioritized for vulnerable or underserved communities. It is estimated that 1,370 infant/toddler spaces will be created.<sup>29</sup>

### Affordability

- **\$30 million per year in years 2 and 3** for Early Care and Learning Prototype Sites. Operational Grants will be provided so that infant/toddler fees can be reduced. These fees account for approximately 20% of the median child care fees for infant/toddler care in the province. The sites will be both new programs – see above under Availability – and existing non-profits. They will represent both urban and rural settings and prioritize vulnerable and underserved communities. It is estimated that 1,786 children will have access to low-cost care. For about 900 of those children, there will be no cost at all (based on sliding scale of income). These prototypes will serve as models for the future expansion of a universal child care system in the province.

<sup>29</sup> This funding will accompany the provincial amount of \$237 million over three years to the Child Care Major Capital program.

## Working Conditions

- **In year 1, \$16.3 million** to support recruitment and retention of ECEs. This will take the form of one-time funding to the ECE Bursary Program to support enhanced training grants, to promote advanced training, and to support professional development. Funding will be administered over several years. The province will also pilot the use of grants to child care operators to use for incidental expense such as staff training or backfilling staff during periods of training. The funding will include flexible initiatives like providing ECE students with support for travel expenses. It is expected that 4,000 ECEs will access these supports.

## Auspice

- The expansion of capital and operating grants detailed above will be targeted to not-for-profit organizations.

## Inclusion, Equity, Diversity

- **\$10 million per year in each of the three years** to expand culturally-based Indigenous child care. These funds will be directed to the existing system that provides Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) programs. The funding will enhance on-reserve AHS to implement full-day programs in some communities (\$3.5 million) and create 13 new urban AHS programs (\$6.5 million). It is estimated that 590 families will benefit in total.
- **\$10 million per year in each of the three years** to enhance the Supported Child Development Programs for children with special needs, as well as the Aboriginal Child Development Programs. It is estimated that this will increase access for 1,428 children, thereby eliminating the waitlist for these programs.

## Other

- **\$1 million annually for three years** in enhanced funding for Young Parent Programs (YPPs). These programs provide child care located at or near secondary schools. The mechanism for this funding is a targeted enhancement to the Child Care Subsidy Program. YPP participants will therefore see their subsidy increase to \$1,500 (from \$1,000) per month. This will preserve existing YPPs and all others to open or re-open.

## *What is innovative about BC's Action Plan?*

With a \$1 billion investment promised in the 2018 budget, the province is moving towards a system of universal child care. Federal and provincial funding for ELCC allows the province to “lay out several new ways of doing things,” including partnering with public sector organizations (part of the capital funding expansion); targeting operational grants to prototype sites; increasing flexibility in ECE training funds; and expanding Indigenous child care programs.

Following the signing of the Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care in 2017, the federal government reached a bilateral agreement with each province and territory, and an asymmetrical agreement with Quebec. For more information about these agreements, go to

[timeforchildcare.ca](http://timeforchildcare.ca)

