

**TODAY'S CHILDREN, TOMORROW'S
LEADERS: CHILD CARE NEEDS ON THE
NORTH SHORE
JUNE 2007**



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A true measure of a Nation's standing is how well it attends to its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born.

*UNICEF, Innocenti Research Center,
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Glossary of Frequently Used Acronyms and Terms

CCOF.....	Child Care Operating Fund
CCRR.....	Child Care Resource and Referral
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EDI	Early Development Index
ELCC.....	Early Learning Child Care Agreement
HELP.....	Human Early Learning Partnership
MDI.....	Middle Years Development Index
NSCR.....	North Shore Child Care Resources
OECD.....	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
UCCB.....	Universal Child Care Benefit

Child Care Terms Used in This Report (see page 28 for specific requirements)

Infant/Toddler Care (Group Day Care) - for children from birth up to 36 months of age;

Group Day Care over 30 months – for children from 30 months to school age;

Preschool - for children 30 months to school age;

Family Day Care (FCC) - for children from birth through school age;
(Another type of family-based child care is one in which no license is required (**LNR**) as care is given to no more than two children aside from the caregiver’s own children);

Out of School Care/School-Aged Care - for children 6 years to 12 years;

Kindercare – for children in Kindergarten (often combined with school-aged care);

Child Minding - for children 18 months to school age (licensing is dependent upon parent accessibility).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In order to assist the guidance of future planning in the Districts of North and West Vancouver and the City of North Vancouver, the North Shore Child Care Needs Assessment examined the current situation of child care from the perspectives of parents and child care providers. Regulated child care covers children from infancy to age twelve and includes licensed family child care (FCC), family-based License Not Required (LNR) care, licensed centre-based care, child- minding, specialized care, preschool, and out-of- school care, including Kindercare.

Methodology

This four part assessment included:

1. Child care provider surveys with a focus on capacity and current issues in child care.
2. Parental surveys, focus groups and interviews exploring parental needs and perceptions.
3. Review of child care best practices and policies from other jurisdictions.
4. Recommendations for future child care planning and policy development.

Findings

Child Care Providers Feedback

1. Government funding is critical to child care providers.
2. The recruitment and retention of staff is problematic.
3. Enrollment variations across centres make it difficult to plan for the future. Some centres have long waitlists while others struggle to maintain enrollment at full capacity.
4. Local support for facilities is needed to assist in securing affordable space.
5. Ongoing NSCR (CCRR) support for referral, materials and educational opportunities is important.

Child care providers are working hard to create facilities that function well. They provide quality care in the face of many challenges and cutbacks. Newer and smaller operations appear to face greater challenges as compared to larger facilities.

Parent Perceptions and Needs

1. Quality child care is offered at several facilities, however, spaces in facilities in which there is a reputation of high quality care are difficult to for families to secure given the limited capacity and long waitlists. The cost of child care can often be a financial burden for families, particularly families who have more than one child receiving services or families led by lone parents.
2. There are critical shortages in child care. Mentioned most often was the shortage of care for infants and toddlers, centre-based care and school-aged care. Shortages also exist for the other age groups and becomes further exacerbated when geographical locations are factored into the equation. There exist neighbourhoods in which child

- care for different age groups is scarce. As a result, some parents have turned to unlicensed care or have felt forced to use child care of a lower quality. Other families have opted to employ nannies. Parents indicated that by employing a nanny, they can avoid: the challenges of working within the hours of child care facilities; having to utilize the services of two different child care providers due to the different ages of their children; and dealing with transportation issues (e.g., getting the child from school to afterschool care).
3. No parents felt that lower facility fees should be implemented in order to reduce child care costs. Parents acknowledged that wages for caregivers are low and thus, there appeared to be an understanding by parents that attracting and keeping people in the field is difficult.
 4. For working parents, there was a clear message that the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) has put parents further behind due to taxation of this benefit. Rather than provide parents with the taxable benefit, working parents indicated that this money should go directly to funding child care. Parents also indicated that they felt more governmental contribution is needed to support child care in Canada.

Top priorities for parents at this time are:

- The creation of more high quality spaces;
- A reduction of cost associated with child care;
- A focus on the recruiting and retaining of skilled child care providers;
- Greater consistency in programming and quality across services.

Parent Focus Groups and Interviews

The themes arising from focus groups and interviews were very much in line with the information that parents provided in the surveys. The most frequently mentioned key themes that emerged were:

- Lack of spaces;
- Struggle to balance schedules of work and child care;
- The high cost of child care.

In addition to the suggestions from the surveys, the following areas for improvements were indicated by parents:

- Increased governmental funding;
- The utilization of existing community and school resources;
- A streamlined approach to finding child care in order to deal with waitlists, driving to multiple locations, and having to rely on less than high quality care;
- Greater municipal involvement in creating a community that is viewed as appealing by young families.

Review of Best Practices and Policies

The current literature clearly identified a divide in the understanding of child care for children in the early years versus school-aged children. Practitioners in the field have a great deal of knowledge of what children in the early years need for optimal development but child care for children in the middle years (ages six to twelve) has received scant attention. There is promise, however, with the emerging focus generated through work done under the leadership of organizations such as the National Children's Alliance and United Way of the Lower Mainland.

A further divide exists in the area of early childhood development. Although it is well documented what children in the early years require in order to develop in a positive way, there continues to be a polarization between the fields of "child care" and "early learning." It is felt that these labels are merely semantics. Experts in the field of child development have been working to increase the public's understanding that, in reality, the two are not at polar opposites but rather one and the same. It is rather the *quality* of early childhood environments which creates the context in which children can thrive.

From the policy perspective, Canada must address two key issues:

- The inadequate number child care spaces;
- The need to raise the status of child care providers in that child care providers have low wages, little recognition, difficult working environments, and a general lack of job security. By addressing these issues, the process of attracting and retaining more talented people will be made possible.

According to the literature and key informant interviews, the dominant approach to address child care and services to families is the adoption of the neighbourhood hub model approach.

Key Recommendations for the North Shore

1. Continue to advocate, with the support of community leaders, for greater funding from the Provincial Government.
2. Move toward a hub model of child care and other services for children and families.

Within this hub model plan, it may be helpful to consider:

- A. Dividing the municipalities into child care regions (e.g., by communities). For each region, strike a community advisory committee (with one representative from each region to be a member of the district interdisciplinary steering committee).
- B. Create centralized systems to ease the navigation of child care for families.
- C. Work with the Ministry of Education, the school districts of North and West Vancouver and respective partners to incorporate child care into schools.
- D. Seek out and engage in opportunities for community research and program implementation in order to develop model child care practices and leverage successful outcomes to garner more funding.

- E. Examine ways in which incentives/support can be offered to child care establishments to open/expand.
- F. Develop a voluntary, peer reviewed, quality assurance system of child care facilities.
- G. Leverage community expertise to support child care activities and projects (e.g. building and grounds repairs, mentoring children, sharing of skills with children etc.).
- H. Increase public awareness of the importance of child care.
- I. Raise the status of child care providers.
- J. Develop municipal policies around the creation of child care spaces in new property developments (e.g., child care space as a requirement for new developments as per the City of Vancouver).
- K. Plan with the relevant departments of Capilano College to increase the number of graduates in the child care program and develop and deliver course work for school-aged child care in order to better meet the needs during this critical developmental period.
- L. Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for child care providers.



CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Why Focus on Child Care?

The manner in which a society cares for its' children is a reflection of what that society values. Children are the future leaders of Canada and the supports and opportunities that they have as children will impact our collective futures. In an October 2004 report released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Canada's child care system was described as a chronically underfunded patchwork of programs.¹ In a 2006 report by the OECD², Canada was ranked fourteenth among industrialized countries for child care and early learning spending. This ranking is reflected in what many are calling a crisis in Canadian child care.

In focusing on child care in this report, children from birth through age twelve who receive care in licensed family child care, licensed group care, child minding, specialized care, preschools, and school-aged programs are considered. Children in these developmental periods require more direct care and guidance from adults in safe and stimulating settings.³ For younger children, there continues to exist the ongoing tension between early learning and child care, it is important that we come together and see that "child care" or "early learning" is not the issue. The issue is *quality of care* and if the quality of care is high, then learning and development should occur in both "settings" whereas if quality of care is low, then learning and development will not occur at a rate that one would expect or worse, there will be adverse effects on child development. For all children, child care must be stimulating and developmentally appropriate in order to foster positive development.

Despite multiple sources of evidence that positive outcomes relate to high quality care, both in the Canadian context and the international context, and the overwhelming evidence of a crisis in child care in Canada coupled with a labor shortage, we continue to neglect effective planning. A current example can be seen in the Provincial Government's recent decision to use significant public dollars for the creation of "Strong Start" Centres⁴ throughout the province in order to address the problem of one in four B.C. children being at risk for school failure when they start Kindergarten.⁵ The "Strong Start" Centres will be housed in schools that have underutilized space and will allow parents or caregivers to drop in with their young children for educational activities, for up to three hours throughout the week. At the same time, funding has been cut in an area that is in desperate need: child care for working parents.

¹ OECD (October 2004). Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Canada Country note.

² OECD (2006). Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care.

³ For the purposes of the surveys in this report, children between the ages of 0-12 were considered as this is the age range for licensing. It must be noted however that children and teens who have special needs may require care beyond the age of 12 given development delays in the areas of cognitive, social-emotional and physical development.

⁴ To view the press release, see http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2006EDU0131-001512.htm

⁵ These results re: school readiness are from the Early Development Index measure which teachers complete on every child entering Kindergarten in B.C.

In support of the importance of helping children have a solid foundation in the early years, there has been a significant amount of focus in this area in British Columbia and indeed throughout the world. Mounting evidence has demonstrated that programs and services that enhance early childhood development are a necessary investment that we as a society need to make in order that the next generation is comprised of healthy and competent individuals. According to Mustard and Picherack (May 2002)⁶, two experts in the field of early childhood education, , “investing in quality early child development and parenting programs is “hard” investment, as important to society as investments in bridges, power stations and dams.” (p.5).

With three decades of research on the needs of early childhood development, some of which informs public policy and some which does not, we are much further ahead when we compare our knowledge of young children with that of school-aged children. We are just beginning to appreciate the importance of children in the middle years, ages six to twelve. Previously, there was the opinion that this developmental period was a quiet one and that aside from early childhood, the next developmental period that presented pressing needs was that of adolescence. In fact, children in the middle years require as much thoughtful planning as children in other developmental stages as this period significantly impacts adolescent functioning. It is during middle childhood that children tackle new challenges: school, social networking, and the preparation for adolescence (Schonert-Reichl, Buote, Jaramillo, Foulkes, Rowcliffe, Calbick & Cleathero, 2007).⁷ The supports and opportunities that we have for children during this time will aid in creating a smoother transition as they move from elementary to high school with the result being higher levels of overall well-being.

High quality child care provides opportunities for children to develop in all areas. Children have opportunities to learn how to get along with others and learn new skills in a safe and nurturing setting. They come to know and trust other adults who can act as mentors and nurturers. Parents get opportunities to learn about different developmental and parenting issues. Together parents and qualified staff can address concerns about any challenges in development that may arise in order that interventions to assist a child can be incorporated. High quality child care strengthens the web of support for children and families.

Working Families: Child Care and Economic Development

The reality is that in Canada, the majority of families are working families who contribute to the economy and who need to rely on some form of high quality substitute care for their children. In a recent issue of Canadian Social Trends (2007)⁸, it was documented that as of 2005, Canadians are spending 45 minutes less with their families during work days compared to two decades ago. Based on 260 days of work in a year, this amounts to 195 fewer hours with the family. Between 1986 and 2005, the average Canadian spent one half hour more at work, however, there was a significant jump in the number of Canadians who report spending more than 10 additional hours at work, from 17% in 1986 to 25% in 2005. We can

⁶ Mustard, & Picherack (May 2002). Early Child Development in British Columbia: Enabling Communities

⁷ The United Way has undertaken a Middle Childhood Initiative to address the lack of attention that children in this developmentally period have received in the past. Part of this initiative was a research project that involved surveying children in the B.C. Lower Mainland. For complete findings and other aspects of this project, please visit the United Way of the Lower Mainland website <http://www.uwlm.ca/How+We+Work/Children+6-12/MCM.htm>

⁸ Statistics Canada. (February 13, 2007). The Daily: Time with Family

view this as a negative loss for children and parents, or we can think about the opportunities that we can provide for children during these times that will help them navigate the developmental pathway towards success.

Without quality and accessible care for ALL, we are compromising the future of our children, our families and our society. Research has clearly demonstrated the advantages of high quality care both in terms of short term and long term outcomes⁹. At the same time, Canada requires working adults to help keep our economy going. Canadian executives recently identified labor shortages “as the greatest challenge to productivity at 38%, far ahead of the regulatory tax burden at 14% and rising costs at 13%.” (The Canadian HR Reporter, June 15, 2006)¹⁰. We need to work to address both the child and the economic needs of Canadians.

Indeed, child care is closely linked to economic development. Economic development consists of four components: growth in jobs and income, human development such as literacy and health, choice and freedom, and sustainability. The work of Dr. Mildred Warner in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University has demonstrated the economic importance of child care through highlighting economic impact studies.¹¹ Two such longitudinal studies on early child care show the investment return rate to be between 3% - 7% (Barnett, 1998) and 4% - 16% (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003). The challenge for governments is to see child care as an investment that will pay off tremendously in the long term through positive return rates. Child care is truly an investment.

B.C. Five Great Goals¹²

Addressing the issues facing child care is directly related to four of B.C.’s five Great Goals:

1. To make B.C. the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.
2. To lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.
3. To build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, special needs, children at risk and seniors.
4. To lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.
5. To create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada

Creating a high quality system of child care directly impacts the outcomes of Goals 1, 2, 3, and 5. For Goal One, high quality child care is an environment in which children learn and develop. It can promote the love of learning and hence create lifelong learners. High quality child care promotes healthy living through education and opportunities to engage in physical activities. By focusing on providing services to children and adjunct education to parents, we create an environment in which health promotion becomes the foundation, the heart of Goal Two. In order to give B.C. citizens the best start in life, we need to focus on our children as they develop rather than use a reactive approach in addressing challenges. All children who do not receive adequate support in childhood have the potential to be at risk. This is well documented in the educational, physical and mental health literature. If we provide a supportive

⁹ For a review of components of high quality care and the impact on children, see http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/HELPS_QUAD_Research_Summary.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.hrreporter.com/home/default.asp>

¹¹ For a complete list of documents, see http://government.cce.cornell.edu/doc/reports/child_care/research.asp

¹² For details of the provincial plan see <http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2006/sp/prem/>

environment for all children, we decrease the need for intensive services later in life. This allows services to be used for those children and adolescents who require ongoing support due to special needs. Goal Five is the creation of jobs. If we have more jobs, we need people to fill those jobs. These same people will need high quality, affordable child care if they are to fill these jobs. Without access to affordable child care, many people must opt out of the labor force for a significant period of time to care for children.

Taken together, it is clear that a responsive and high quality child care system would help support the achievement of the Five Great Goals of British Columbia. The Province of B.C. has the potential to be seen as progressive if the choice is made to plan long term by addressing the needs of its' citizens. Given the strong economy of B.C., there is the means for it to commit to developing a comprehensive, progressive child care system that could share the stage with other provinces, such as Quebec and other countries. BC can be among the most responsive and successful governments in implementing effective child and family policies.

A Canadian Crisis

Child care has become a growing Canadian crisis, not only for families but for the present and future well-being of our society. In a 2006 an Environics poll conducted for the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, more than 75% of respondents considered the lack of affordable child care a serious problem in Canada.¹³ Currently, there are two pressing issues for families: lack of child care spaces and the high cost of care. On average¹⁴, there are only child care spaces for 20% of children in Canada.¹⁵ In B.C., there are almost 80,000 child care spaces with another 1,500 in the process of being created. As of 2006, British Columbia has a population of approximately 4,300,000 and the following are children:¹⁶:

Under age one:	40,800
Ages 1-4:	165,900
Ages 5-9:	224,400
Ages 10-14:	259,000

Just taking into account birth to age nine estimates, there are 471,900 children. If there are only 80,000 spaces in regulated child cares, do all the other children have the care that they require? Based on feedback from parents and child care centres, it is no surprise to note that some of these children and families who need child care are not able to access it.

Complicating the issue is the cost that parents must bear in order to pay for child care. For some parents the cost of child care leads them to drop out of the workforce as they would merely be working to pay for child care, with no extra financial benefits flowing to the family.

¹³ Environics Research Group (2006). Canadians' Attitudes Toward National Child Care Policy

¹⁴ Depending on the geographical area, the percentage of children who could access high quality licensed child care varies (Quebec has the highest access rates to child care)

¹⁵ 2007 commentary on Federal budget <http://pioneerplus.ejournalism.ca/?q=node/697>

¹⁶ For estimates of the population by provinces, see

<http://www.bestats.gov.bc.ca/DATA/pop/pop/dynamic/ProvPop/Query.asp?category=Prov&type=1&topic=Estimates>

Even with family benefits, the situation only marginally improves for some Canadian families. In a March 2007 Policy Brief¹⁷ examining family benefits in British Columbia and Alberta, the following was found:

- Among families who receive income assistance, the monthly family benefits range from \$227 for single parents with one toddler to \$471 for a couple with a toddler. (The majority of this income is a result of the Canada child tax benefit and the national child benefit supplement).
- Among those families whose total monthly earnings are half that of the provincial average, the family benefits amount to \$350 for one toddler (regardless of whether there are one or two parents).
- For single parents with an average monthly income, the family benefits are negative, i.e., their income is less than that of a couple with no children. For couples in which only one parent works, there is a positive benefit package as they do not need to use funds for child care.

We are currently in a situation in which alleviating the current crisis and looking into the future will require a well-thought out, long-term, multifaceted plan. Aside from B.C., other provinces across the country are feeling the impact of a neglected child care system, for example:

In Alberta, public consultation has been underway to address the child care crisis at the provincial level. Through this process outlined in a recent report (Alberta Government, 2006) with parents, child care operators and business owners, three key areas that need to be addressed in order to improve the child care situation have been identified

**Lack of flexible (part time, extended hours, special needs etc. child care spaces in many communities*

**Low wages of child care providers which results in few entering the field, many leaving the field and high turnover in facilities. The result has been that even in facilities in which there are spaces, these spaces can not be filled due to staffing shortages*

**High cost of child care for families resulting in financial struggles for families resulting in decisions around working, unlicensed care options and limiting family size*



¹⁷ Kershaw, P., March 2007

In Manitoba, a great deal of progress has been made since the inception of the “Five Year Plan for Child Care”¹⁸ however with the recent Federal funding cuts, the next phase of planning must be modified to reflect the change in funding.. Manitoba has not achieved all of the intended long term goals and is now struggling with deciding how to move forward. Despite progress, even in May 2006, 80% of those surveyed in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, by Environics Research for the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, identified the lack of affordable child care as very serious (30%) or somewhat serious (50%).

In a September 2006 report, several recommendations¹⁹ were put forward to the government by the Manitoba Child Care Association. Of huge concern in Manitoba is the problems of recruitment and retention of child care staff and financial sustainability of child care centres. There are approximately 26,000 licensed child care spaces in Manitoba (there are approximately 118,000 children under the age of 12). In March 2006, there were close 15,000 names of children on waitlist for child care in Manitoba.²⁰

In Ontario, much has been written about the child care crisis. In speaking to individuals in the field of child care, the concerns are lack of funding and shortage of qualified staff to run the programs, which translates into not enough spaces to take care of the children. The staffing issue has two main challenges: The first is the limited number of people who receive the training to be qualified; and the second issue is the difficulties in retaining staff when pay is quite low in the field. Many see their role in child care as a stepping stone to other careers in the education field and as many as 60% of trained ECE workers have no intention of staying in the field over the long run.

In order to address the crisis in Ontario, when federal funding came down in the form of the ELCC agreement, Ontario initiated the “Best Start” program²¹. The idea behind this program was to create new regulated child care spaces. From the outset, one of the shortcomings of the program was that this funding was not to be used to assist existing child care facilities with their struggle against the increase in operating costs that were not covered by an increase in revenue. Furthermore, the “Best Start” funding was not allowed to be used to increase subsidies in existing spaces. The creation of new spaces was a short term solution and now that the funding has been cut by the federal government and there is a reliance only on provincial funding, there is a question of sustainability of these new spaces in some areas due to the rise in operating costs over time. In Ontario, municipalities are obligated to cost-share in that 20% of the funding for child care must come from the municipalities. Given the cut backs from the government, municipalities may now need to put more money into the child care system to keep it going. This is a particular burden on smaller communities where there is not the broad tax base that one would find in larger communities.

¹⁸ For complete description, see http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/child_care/five_yr_plan.html

¹⁹ To view this report and recommendations, see <http://www.mcca-house.org/pdf/Recommendations-to-Minister-for-2006-7.pdf>

²⁰ For a complete breakdown of child care statistics, see http://www.mcca-house.org/documents/Child_care_in_Manitoba_2007.pdf

²¹ For an outline of the “Best Start” program and updates on the implementation process, see <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/CS/en/programs/BestStart/default.htm>

What's Holding Us Back

If we know from the research that high quality child care can make a difference in the lives of children and families, and we have evidence from other developed nations as to the effectiveness of universally accessible child care (See Appendix A), what holds us back? Dr. Hillel Goelman, an expert in early childhood development at the Human Early Learning Partnership at the University of British Columbia, has examined this question and suggests that there are seven myths (Goelman, 2006) that continue to influence the ways in which some Canadians view child care.

Myth	Reality
1. Non Parental Care is bad for kids.	Over thirty years of research has demonstrated the positive, short and long term outcomes that quality child care has on children
2. Non parental care is really “substitute” or “institutionalized” or “government run” and “undermines the family.”	Non parental care is family support that supplements family care. Supports extend beyond direct child care and include parental education on child health, nutrition and development. Good quality child care is offered by a range of providers that are community-based and not government run institutions
3. There must be a decision to fund the child, or the system but not both.	Both can be funded. For example, families can be funded by increasing family allowances and child care systems can be funded in the usual ways. Other industrialized countries do both
4. Child care is only for the poor, <i>or</i> only for working parents, <i>or</i> only for middle class parents, <i>or</i> only for wealthy parents who can afford it.	There has been much research to indicate that good quality child care has cognitive and social benefits for all children and parents, regardless of family income and parental work.
5. Most working mothers would prefer to stay home.	There is no research to indicate that large numbers of working mothers would choose to leave their career and incomes to stay home. Canadian women enter the workforce for much the same reasons as men – to have fulfilling lives, to provide for their families and to contribute to society.
6. The national child care program of the previous federal government failed.	This five-year program had just started, therefore, it would need to fully evolve in order to assess its success. Even at the beginning of the plan, changes were seen in B.C. with the focus on improvements to licensed child care programs in communities where large numbers of children were significantly below accepted levels of school readiness.
7. The current government's plan to give families \$100 per month for every child under six will give families more child care choices.	There is no research to indicate that giving families small amounts of money will allow them more child care choices. This money does not increase child care spaces, nor does it assist greatly with the overall cost of having a child in a child care setting. This \$100 may assist parents who, out of desperation, utilize child care from unlicensed, lower quality providers.

Terms of Reference

In the fall of 2006, the North Shore Child Care Planning Committee²² decided to focus on the critical issue of child care on the North Shore as a result of the increasing demands for child care and the shortages of available child care spaces. In reviewing municipal documents, the need for an updated assessment was warranted, given that the last assessment in the City of North Vancouver and the District of North Vancouver had been conducted in 1988 and 1990 respectively. Furthermore, the most recent community child care plans for the City of North Vancouver and the District of North Vancouver were developed in 1995 and 1994 respectively. To date, West Vancouver had not conducted a needs assessment or a child care plan. As a result a “Request for Proposals” was advertised and in January 2007, the Committee contracted with Denise Buote of Arbor Educational and Clinical Consulting Inc. to conduct a child care needs assessment of the North Shore.

The project tasks included the following:

1. Survey parents as to their current experience with child care (both those parents who have child care and those who are seeking child care) with a focus on parental needs and perceptions.
2. Survey child care providers (group care for under 36 months and over 30 months, family, LNR, childminding, specialized care, preschool, and out of school care) as to their current experience in delivering child care with a focus on capacity and current issues impacting service.
3. Conduct a review of best practices in child care by reviewing policies and practices from other jurisdictions.
4. Provide recommendations for the North Shore to assist in future child care planning and policy.

What follows in the next chapter is an overview of the three municipalities and an outline of past formal work done in the areas of needs assessment and child care planning.



²² Membership on the Committee includes representatives of the City of North Vancouver, the Districts of North and West Vancouver, School Districts #44 and #45, ECE Training Programs, the North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral Program, Community Care Facilities Licensing, the North Vancouver Recreation Commission, MCFD and Child Care Programs

CHAPTER TWO: THE THREE MUNICIPALITIES

The District of West Vancouver

The District of West Vancouver is a municipality of 42, 131 people (Census Canada 2006)²³. Since the 2001 census, there has been a growth of approximately 700 people. At the time of this report, the 2006 Census of population breakdown by age was not available, thus the following is a report of the breakdown by age according to the 2001 Census report²⁴.

Age	Number of people (based on 2001 population of 41, 420)
Age 0-4	1,370
Age 5-14	4, 920
Median age of the population	47
Percent of the population over 15	84.4

The School District of West Vancouver #45

In looking at the school district of West Vancouver and the number of children enrolled²⁵, it is easy to see reasons for the shortfall in child care, and furthermore in child care for children with special needs (see Chapter 3 for child care availability information).

*Number of Students by Grade in the West Vancouver School District
(Ministry of Education, December 2006)*

Total number of students: 6, 800 (an increase of 54 students from the 2005/2006 year)
Breakdown according the grade:

Kindergarten:	358
Grade One:	358
Grade Two:	374
Grade Three:	407
Grade Four:	415
Grade Five:	437
Grade Six:	478
Grade Seven:	495

²³ 2006 Census results (wave one) available at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census/Index.cfm>

²⁴ 2001 Census full results available at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/home/index.cfm>

²⁵ There are children in North Vancouver who attend private schools on the North Shore or in other municipalities

Number of Special Needs Students (Grades Kindergarten to Grade 12)

Total number: 603 (an increase of 41 students from the 2005/2006 year)

Breakdown according to Ministry of Education categories:

Physically Dependent:	3
Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability:	16
Physical Disability/Chronic Health:	24
Deaf/Hard of Hearing:	4
Autism Spectrum Disorder:	41
Intensive Behavior/Serious Mental Illness	20
Mild Intellectual Disability:	2
Gifted	223
Learning Disability	215
Moderate Behavior Support/Mental Illness	55

The District of North Vancouver

The District of North Vancouver is a municipality of 82, 562 people (Census Canada 2006). Since 2001 there has been a growth of approximately 200 people. Below is the age breakdown based on the 2001 Census.

Age	Number of people (based on 2001 population of 82,310)
Age 0-4	4,340
Age 5-14	11,730
Median age of the population	39.6
Percent of the population over 15	80.5

The City of North Vancouver

The City of North Vancouver is a municipality of 45,165 (Census Canada 2006). Since 2001 there has been an increase of approximately 900 people. Below is the age breakdown based on the 2001 Census data.

Age	Number of people (based on 2001 population of 44,300)
Age 0-4	2,235
Age 5-14	4,050
Median age of the population	38.2
Percent of the population over 15	85.5

The School District of North Vancouver #44 (serves the City and District of North Vancouver)

In looking at the school district of North Vancouver and the number of children enrolled (note that there are children in North Vancouver who attend private schools on the North Shore or in other municipalities), it is easy to see reasons for the shortfall in child care (see page 24 for actual child care availability)

Number of Students by Grade in the North Vancouver School District (Ministry of Education, December 2006)

Total number of students: 17,698 (a decrease of 564 students from the 2005/2006 year)
Breakdown according the grade:

Kindergarten:	979
Grade One:	1,100
Grade Two:	1,168
Grade Three:	1,142
Grade Four:	1,199
Grade Five:	1,308
Grade Six:	1,430
Grade Seven:	1,302

Number of Special Needs Students (Grades Kindergarten to Grade 12)

Total number: 1,764 (an increase of 75 students from the 2005/2006 year)

Breakdown according to Ministry of Education categories:

Physically Dependent:	26
Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability:	44
Physical Disability/Chronic Health:	145
Visual Impairment:	11
Deaf/Hard of Hearing:	30
Autism Spectrum Disorder:	107
Intensive Behavior/Serious Mental Illness:	154
Mild Intellectual Disability:	20
Gifted:	602
Learning Disability:	526
Moderate Behavior support/Mental Illness:	99

Addressing Child Care on the North Shore: Historical Background

The issue of child care is not a new one for the North Shore. Indeed since the late eighties, child care has been a focus for the City and the District of North Vancouver as documented by the following reports:

The District of North Vancouver	
Report Title	Summary of Findings
<p>Child Care Needs in the District of North Vancouver (1990)</p>	<p>The purpose of this report was to examine the current state of child care, assess the future need, assess the current deficiencies and provide recommendations.</p> <p>Findings indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of 1,543 child care spaces in the District of North Vancouver: • Concerns from child care providers about the quality, accessibility and affordability of care, low wages for staff resulting in significant staff turnover, the need for more spaces to meet current and future needs, financial viability issues (consider a grant program, higher subsidies etc) • Parents identified the following concerns: affordability, accessibility (locations), and quality of child care (staff qualifications, staff-child ratios, facility standards) <p>Based on the above findings several recommendations were made involving the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments that would address financial issues for parents and child care providers and create more child care spaces. The District was encouraged to develop a comprehensive child care policy.</p>
<p>Work Related Child Care (July 1992)</p>	<p>The study examined child care needs of the District of North Vancouver employees. Findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58% of staff felt that their work had been impacted by child care problems such as missing work, being unable to work overtime, needing to use vacation time to cover child care needs, being unable to do their job well such as fulfilling their normal schedule or participating in training sessions; • Most employees were supportive of employer sponsored child care initiatives such as allowing flexible working arrangements, providing child care information, supporting nearby child care facilities and having employee sponsored spaces in child cares • Due to employee struggles with child care, employers are losing valuable resources; • A menu of child care choices is recommended – direct care, financial assistance, personnel policies and information/education.

<p>District of North Vancouver Child Care Plan (February 1994)</p>	<p>Based on the 1990 Child Care needs document and further consultation, the following needs in the District of North Vancouver were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for affordable child care; • Lack of access to services in certain communities; • Need for development of child care spaces for children under three, part time, flexible, extended hours, emergency care, respite, drop-in care and school-age care; • Need for a continuum of care for families (E.g, daycare, in-home support, resource and support programs for parents); • Need to develop child care of high quality. <p>The following recommendations were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of a child care plan that considers neighbourhood development, by-law zoning review, targeted child care grant program; • Involvement of the school district to develop school-aged care; • Inter-municipal approach in order to meet the needs on the North Shore.
<p>Creating Healthy Families: A Framework for Child Care and Family Support (February 1995)</p>	<p>This framework outlines the key roles and responsibilities of the District of North Vancouver, The North Vancouver Recreation Commission, The North Shore Child Care Resource Society, The North Shore Health Unit, Community Service Providers and the Joint Initiatives that encompass all the various groups in creating safe and healthy communities for children</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">The City of North Vancouver</p>	
<p>Report Title</p>	<p>Summary</p>
<p>Child Care Facilities and Services in the City of North Vancouver (August 1988)</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to assess the child care needs in the City of North Vancouver.</p> <p>Findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a shortage of child care spaces, particularly for children under the age of three; • Parents who work shift work rely on unlicensed facilities • There are no emergency care facilities; • There are no corporate sponsored daycares; • There is a need for a resource and information office for parents and child care providers. <p>Furthermore, the study identified challenges to overcoming the child care difficulties such as finding the appropriate amount of indoor and outdoor space to accommodate child care (particularly for family care) and addressing bylaw restrictions.</p>

<p>City of North Vancouver Community Child Care Plan Report (November 1994)</p>	<p>This document outlines a comprehensive child care plan that proposes a continuum of care model that would provide access to a wide range of programs and services and meet the needs of families.</p> <p>The report identified two key existing strengths in the City of North Vancouver:</p> <p>1) Stability of existing services; and 2) the higher than average education level of child care providers.</p> <p>Challenges identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of accessibility to child care due to child care space shortages • High fees for child care. The City has the highest fees in the province for child care <p>Several key recommendations were outlined under a five year plan that would increase the development of child care spaces, provide a greater variety of programs and services, assist with financial issues to support the ongoing work in child care planning and the form committees that would monitor and address child care issues.</p>
<p>Child Care Policy and Plan (1995-2000)</p>	<p>This policy and plan is based on the above document and outlines the key areas of focus in the five year plan. The areas of focus are: zoning bylaws; establishment of a child care capital fund; child care development and enhancement grant program; financial support to the North Shore Child Care Resource Society; advocacy role of the municipal government; establishment of a child care data base and the continuation of the Task Force on Work Related Child Care</p>

Are Children on the North Shore Ready for School?

Under the guidance of Dr. Clyde Hertzman at the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) based at the University of British Columbia, a survey tool called the “Early Development Index” is now used on a regular basis, throughout the province, in kindergarten classrooms.²⁶ This survey, which teachers complete on each student, provides an assessment of the child’s:

- Social competence;
- Physical health and well-being;
- Emotional maturity;
- Language and cognitive development;
- Communication skills and general knowledge;
- An overall composite score of the five above areas is also reported.

²⁶ For access to the HELP report for the North Shore and all maps and reports in BC, see <http://ecdportal.help.ubc.ca/unit/sd44.htm>

Once these surveys are completed, the results are calculated on a group basis for a given area in B.C. (note: individual results are not reported). By examining the group results, one can gain a picture of how communities on the whole are doing in preparing children for school.

The last wave of reported results for North Vancouver was completed in 2006. The last wave of surveys collected and analyzed in West Vancouver was completed in 2004. Updated results for West Vancouver will be available in 2007. Below is the percentage of children who are vulnerable (having a low score on one or more of the five subscales noted above) in the various areas on the North Shore:

Neighbourhood	Percent of Children Considered Vulnerable
Ambleside (British Properties) *	16.7
Dundarave*	14.3
Horseshoe Bay/Bowen Island*	14.9
Dollarton*	8.1
Upper Capilano	12.9
Canyon Heights	14.8
Moodyville	18.2
Delbrook	18.4
Upper Lonsdale	18.9
Grand Blvd	20.8
Lynn Valley West	21.7
Westlynn	21.7
Mosquito Creek	22.0
Edgemont/Pemberton	22.6
Deep Cove	23.0
Norgate	23.9
Lynn Valley	24.3
Blueridge	26.5
Lynnmour	27.9
Central Lonsdale	41.5
Lower Lonsdale	43.1

* Based on 2004 report. All other percentages based on 2006 data

The results of the EDI speak to the importance of early child care as high quality care prepares children for the task of going to school. By providing children with the best possible start, we can prevent, or at least minimize, several challenges of starting school that may arise for children who did not have access to quality care.

Currently under development at HELP, in partnership with the Vancouver School Board, is the Middle Years Developmental Index (MDI). This survey tool will allow for the assessment of grades four and seven students in order to provide information on how these students are doing. In this way, communities can monitor how their children are doing through the elementary school years and implement supports to assist children in their development. The

role of school-age care is relevant to this endeavor as high quality school-aged care can assist in providing children with opportunities for growth.

Report Overview

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

Chapter Three provides a description of the current state and relevant information related to child care on the North Shore based on recent data collected through the North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral Program.

Chapter Four outlines the study design of this assessment

Chapter Five: examines our current understanding of child care in the early years and the middle years

Chapter Six: outlines key issues in the area of child care staff and child care delivery.

Chapter Seven: outlines key thoughts from experts in the field as well as snapshots of promising practices in Canada

Chapter Eight through Ten: present the findings from this assessment. Perceptions of both parents and care providers are considered in this section.

Chapter Eleven: outlines recommendations for the North Shore as they move forward with child care planning and policy development.



CHAPTER THREE: CHILD CARE ON THE NORTH SHORE – WHAT WE KNOW

The following presents the most current information available about child care on the North Shore. This includes issues around licensing (provincial governing body), cost, capacity and funding.

Types of Child Care

Child Care covers a broad range of services from infants to the age of twelve. In B.C., child cares are licensed under the following categories:

- **Group Day Care under 36 months**- for children from birth up to 36 months of age;
- **Group Day Care over 30 months** – for children from 30 months to school age;
- **Preschool** - for children 30 months to school age;
- **Family Day Care** - for children birth to school age (This includes family daycare in which no license is required (LNR) and licensed family daycare);
- **Out of School Care** - for children 6 years to 12 years;
- **Special Needs Day Care** - for children birth to school age who are physically, mentally or emotionally handicapped;
- **Emergency Care** – provision of care on a short-term basis including emotional support and the opportunity for social and intellectual development, in a group setting;
- **Child Minding** - for children 18 months to school age (licensing is dependent upon parent accessibility).

With each licensing category are rules that govern the number of children, the number of adults, the physical space requirements and the education level required of staff. The specific details can be found in the Community Care and Assisted Living Act²⁷ to which all licensed child care facilities must adhere. Presented below are the child capacity limits and staffing requirements for British Columbia (note: other provinces may have varying guidelines).

²⁷ For full Child Care Licensing Regulation document see http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/reg/C/CommuCareAssisted/319_89.htm#part3

Type of Child Care	Maximum Number of Children	Further conditions on the number of children	Staffing Requirements (based on maximum capacity)	Maximum numbers of hours of care
Group care (under 36 months)	12		One infant and toddler educator One early childhood educator One assistant	13
Group care (over 30 months)	25	No more than 2 children under 36 months in the group	One early childhood educator Two assistants	13
Preschool	20		One early childhood educator One assistant	4
Special Needs Daycare	16	Not more than 12 children under 36 months of age	One special needs early childhood educator Two early childhood educators One assistant	13
Family Care	7	Not more than 5 are preschool age; not more than 3 under three; not more than 1 is under 12 months	One (family run)	13
Out of School Care	25		2 responsible adults	13
Emergency Care	12 (if under 3 yrs) 25 (if over 3 yrs)		Follow regulations outlined in group care	72/month
Child Minding	16 (if any child is under 3 yrs) 20 (if all children over 3 yrs)			3 (not more than two days/week)

Child Care Costs

In November 2005, based on feedback from 33% of child care facilities on the North Shore, The North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral Program compiled the following data:

Monthly Cost Range for Child Care for a child under 5 years of age

Type of Care	Infants (0-18 months)	Toddlers (18 mos. – 3 yrs)	Child (30 mos – 5 yrs)	Kindercare
<i>LNR Family</i>	\$650 - \$900	\$900	\$550 - \$800	n/a
<i>Licensed Family</i>	\$600 - \$1000	\$600 - \$975	\$600 - \$975	n/a
<i>Licensed Group</i>	\$750 - \$1175	\$590 - \$1225	\$580 - \$1225	\$270 - \$655

Out of School Care Monthly Cost Range

Before and After School	After School Only	School Breaks and Pro D Days
\$300 - \$600	\$200 - \$500	\$450 - \$975

Preschool Monthly Cost Range

Two days/week	Three days/week	Four days/week	Five days/week
\$90 - \$190	\$95 - \$327	\$205 - \$428	\$200-\$530

Staffing Costs

A recent report (Children Can't Wait, Global Television, February 26, 2007) examined the crisis in daycare in B.C. One issue is the lack of spaces available for families who need child care in order to be an active part of the workforce. Another issue is the training and retention of child care workers. Although early childhood educators ideally have a certificate in early childhood education, which involves both understanding the child development through classroom based learning and a practicum, the wages that they earn are not commensurate with their level of education. As the cost of living in B.C. has risen, there has been an exodus from the child care profession due to the fact that the salary of a child care worker does not meet their financial needs. The following outlines the average monthly wage of staff in licensed group care centres and preschools based on 2006 data collected from 34 surveys by the North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral Program.

2006 Wages for Child Care Staff

Title	Starting Wage		Current Wage	
	Average	Median*	Average	Median*
Administrator	\$19.17	\$17.95	\$21.78	\$20.61
Senior E.C.E Supervisor	\$17.27	\$16.47	\$18.99	\$18.26
E.C.E. Supervisor	\$14.83	\$14.24	\$16.26	\$16.15
Staff for Special Needs	\$15.09	\$14.66	\$15.66	\$15.66
Infant/Toddler Staff	\$16.57	\$16.36	\$17.62	\$17.34
School –Aged Staff	\$12.81	\$13.12	\$14.43	\$14.59
Assistants	\$12.14	\$12.46	\$13.17	\$13.26
Substitutes	\$11.79	\$11.85	\$12.69	\$12.76

* Median wage represents the middle wage earned based on the surveys returned

Other Compensation Issues reported in the survey

Issue	Reported YES (out of 34)
Do you have a salary scale?	18
Are you unionized?	2
Do you have medical benefits?	12
Do you have dental benefits?	13
Do you have extended health?	12
Do you have a pension plan?	3
Does your wage include the Child Care Operating Fund?	20
Has your annual salary increased in the past two years?	16

Note: In addition to the above information, respondents reported an average of 6.24 paid sick days per year and 9.75 paid vacation days per year.

Child Care capacity

There is a crisis in child care spaces on the North Shore given the need for child care by families and the shortage of preferred facilities. Families must go on waitlists and be flexible about location in order to get a space in a child care facility. As of March 2007, there were a total of 255 facilities²⁸ that operated one or more programs on the North Shore:

City of North Vancouver: 63 facilities
 District of North Vancouver: 139 facilities
 District of West Vancouver: 53 facilities

²⁸ Facilities include group (under and over 3), family care, LNR, specialized care, out-of-school care, childminding, preschools, and kindercare

The North Shore Child Care Resource Program reported the following data for child care capacity for each municipality as of March 2007.

Programs and Capacity by type of care for the District of North Vancouver as of March 2007

Type of Care	Total Number of Programs	Total Capacity
License Not Required (LNR)*	12	24
Licensed Family Child Care (FCC)*	61	422
Group Under 36 months	11	139
Group Over 30 months	26	520
Preschool	32	775
School-Age	34	856
Child Minding	6	82
TOTALS	182	2818

* LNR and FCC are single program facilities whereas other facilities may have more than one program running at the same time.

Programs and Capacity by type of care for the City of North Vancouver as of March 2007

Type of Care	Total Number of Programs	Total Capacity
License Not Required (LNR)*	16	32
Licensed Family Child Care (FCC)*	19	131
Group Under 36 months	10	180
Group Over 30 months	15	308
Preschool	12	241
School-Age	8	226
Child Minding	1	18
TOTALS	81	1136

* LNR and FCC are single program facilities whereas other facilities may have more than one program running at the same time.

Programs and Capacity by type of care for the District of West Vancouver as of March 2007

Type of Care	Total Number of Programs	Total Capacity
License Not Required (LNR)*	4	8
Licensed Family Child Care (FCC)*	8	56
Group Under 36 months	8	78
Group Over 30 months	11	189
Preschool	24	550
School-Age	13	448
Child Minding	3	40
TOTALS	71	1369

* LNR and FCC are single program facilities whereas other facilities may have more than one program running at the same time.

Child Care Capacity and Child Care type by Region in the City of North Vancouver as of December 2006

Region	LNR	Childminding	Group Over 30 mos.	Group Under 36 mos.	Licensed Family	School-aged Care	Preschool
Mahon	2		25	24	28		
Marine/Hamilton	2		61	48	6	35	20
Mission Reserve ²⁹		18					14
Central Lonsdale	4		73	40	7	85	100
Lower Lonsdale			25	12	7	24	32
Tempe			17		14		
Westview	6				13	25	
Cedar Village			25				
Grand Blvd.			43	24	14	57	75
Moodyville	4		39	32	28		
TOTALS	18	18	308	180	117	226	241

Note: Some Kindercare is under the umbrella of school aged care but there are no Kindercare specific spaces

²⁹ Although Mission Reserve is located in the City of North Vancouver, child care is not handled by the City of North Vancouver

Child Care Capacity and Child Care type by Region in the District of North Vancouver as of December 2006

Region	LNR	Childminding	Group Over 30 mos.	Group Under 36 mos.	Licensed Family	School-aged care	Preschool
Canyon Heights					7		20
Capilano	2			12	14	75	
Cleveland			25	10	7		
Handsworth					7		
Highlands	2	28	10		14	60	129
Lower Cap/Marine					12		
Norgate		16	38	19	14	54	20
Pemberton Hts			35	12	7	35	20
Carisbrook	2				28	20	60
Delbrook					21	25	
Norwood/Queens			56	12	7	95	60
Upper Delbrook			42			35	
Boundary	2				21		
Central Lynn	2				7	10	25
Keith Lynn			46		28	91	40
Kirkstone					7		
Lower West Lynn	2	10	9		7	34	48
Lynn Canyon						25	
Upper Lynn			12		28	18	
Upper West Lynn					7		
Valley Centre		20	38	12	14	63	145
West Lynn Terrace	2		15		7		
Blue Ridge	2				14		
Cove Cliff					21	10	20
Deep Cove			12	12	7	40	48

Note: Some Kindercare is under the umbrella of school aged care but there are no Kindercare specific spaces

Child Care Capacity and Child Care type by Region in the District of North Vancouver as of December 2006 cont.

Note: Some Kindercare is under the umbrella of school aged care but there are no Kindercare specific spaces

Region	LNR	Childminding	Group Over 30 mos.	Group Under 36 mos.	Licensed Family	School- aged Care	Preschool
Dollarton					14	10	20
Indian River					42		
Lynn timer North			64	24		19	
Lynn timer South			20		14	20	20
Maplewood			20	8	14		
Northlands/Park					7		
Parkgate		8	25	16		55	40
Parkway			25			20	
Seymour Hts.	2		16		32	25	
Windridge						15	40
Windsor Park					7		
TOTALS	18	82	349	137	436	854	755

Child Care Capacity and Child Care type by Region in the District of West Vancouver as of December 2006

Region	LNR	Childminding	Group Over 30 mos.	Group Under 36 mos.	Licensed Family	Out of School Care	Preschool
Altamont		16					20
Ambleside	2			12		85	36
Bowen Island			20		7	55	60
British Properties	4		41	14	7		40
Capilano East			10	8			
Caulfield						23	39
Cypress Park							40
Dundarave		24	38	8	7	70	88
Gleneagles						20	20
Hollyburn						45	
Horseshoe Bay	2		20				
Lions Bay					13		20
Panorama						70	20
Sentinel Hill			60	36	21	80	147
TOTALS	8	40	189	78	55	448	530

For a visual overview of the geographical locations of the licensed group child care, see Appendix Two and for the preschools geographical locations, see Appendix Three

Federal Support to Families

In January 2007, the federal government announced the elimination of the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (ELCC) effective March 31, 2007. For B.C., this loss translates into \$455 million dollars over the next three years. The ELCC was an agreement between the Liberal government and the B.C. government³⁰ signed in September 2005 with the goal of making the Early Years a priority³¹ by investing the necessary resources to enhance services to children and families. The B.C. government has reduced funding to child care as a result of the elimination of the ELCC. This loss translates into the cessation of the federal portion of B.C.'s Child Care Operating Fund, which provided an average of \$40 per month per child to child care providers to offset costs.

After the announcement of the cancellation of the ELCC, the B.C. government stated that it had to spend the remaining dollars from the ELCC by the end of the last fiscal year. This totaled \$86 million dollars. The need to disperse funds in a rapid manner resulted in a series of one time payments to various organizations. A summary of the allocations of these funds can be found on the First Call website.³²

With this funding cut, the only Federal support available directly to *all* families is the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) which is given directly to families. Under this program, all families can apply to receive \$100 per month (taxable) per child under the age of six. It is up to families how they wish to use this money, that is, it is not exclusively for child care.

Additional funding is available for some families through the Canada Child Tax Benefit and the Child Disability Benefit.³³ Funding is dependent upon the number of children and family income. Families must apply and meet all criteria in order to be considered for funding.

In the budget announcement of March 19, 2007, the Federal government announced that in addition to the \$1200/year of taxable UCCB, it will transfer \$250 million to the provinces and territories for the creation of child care and early learning spaces for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The recent budget announcement was met with a great deal of criticism from child care advocates as it represents a significant cut and deviation from the 2005 ELCC. In fact, under this new plan, there is a loss of \$950 million in the 2007-2008 year alone.³⁴

Provincial Support to Families

Provincial support to daycare has been cut by \$50 million since 2002. This added to the increasing strain on the child care system. At the present, the province offers some funding in order to assist parents in navigating the child care system, for example through the Child Care

³⁰ The B.C. government was one of the provinces to engage in an ELCC agreement with the federal government

³¹ For a complete copy of the ELCC see http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_care/pdfs/fed_prov_agreement_05.pdf

³² See First Call for the latest summary www.firstcallbc.org

³³ For more information see <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/benefits/menu-e.html>

³⁴ Code Blue for Child Care (January 2007).

Resource and Referral Program³⁵ which operates offices in various municipalities. Staff at Child Care Resource and Referral Programs help parents make informed choices about child care, and provide subsidy information and opportunities for parental education. Unfortunately, due to provincial cutbacks in child care announced in January 2007, the North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral Program, as it currently operates, may change as a result of reduced funding³⁶. Depending on funding, there may be limited services available to parents through the resource program after the Federal funding is terminated. The Federal funding represents a loss of 5 million dollars for resource programs in B.C. The province will continue to support the resource programs with the 9 million dollars that it had previously committed.

The provincial government, through the Ministry for Children and Families, offers some families subsidies to help cover the cost of child care. In total, the province has committed \$126 million per year to this program.³⁷ To qualify for funding, the family net income must be below \$38,000 per year. In order to access funding, parents and/or caregivers must contact the Child Care Subsidy Service Centre (CCSSC) or local organizations (Child Care Resource and Referral, Immigrant Settlement Service Agencies or Service B.C. – Government Agents). The amount of funding that a family can receive is based on a calculation which incorporates the annual family income and family size. The resulting funding can be used to assist in paying for the following³⁸:

- licensed, registered license-not-required (LNR) or license-not-required family child care facilities;
- licensed group child care centres;
- licensed out-of-school programs;
- licensed preschool programs;
- care in the child's own home.

Families may receive partial or full subsidies (see Appendix Four for subsidy rates).

In addition, families who have children with special needs may also receive services from Supported Child Development³⁹ agencies. The provincial government has committed \$54 million per year to these programs. These agencies provide support for children from 0-12 years old in order that they can participate in regular child care settings. There are also services available for youth, ages 13-19 years old in some communities.

Other provincial services⁴⁰ that may be used in conjunction with child care or as stand alone services are: The Infant Development Program, The Aboriginal Infant Development Program and Family Resource Programs.

³⁵ For information see http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_care/cc_resource.htm

³⁶ As a result of provincial government cuts, the NSCR (CCRR) will be funded at the 2005-2006 level.

³⁷ Linda Reid, March 16, 2007 Letter

³⁸ For information and links, see http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_care/subsidy_promo.htm

³⁹ For information and links, see http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_childhood/scd.htm

⁴⁰ For an overview of the B.C. Provincial Government ECD services and publications, see http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_childhood/language.htm

Provincial Support to Child Care Providers

The B.C. government provides financial support to child care providers in three ways:

1. The Child Care Operating Funding Program;
2. The Child Care Capital Funding Program;
3. The Child Care Resource and Referral Program.

The Child Care Operating Funding Program⁴¹ is intended to assist eligible licensed group and family child care providers. In a letter issued March 16, 2007 from Minister Reid, she outlined that \$40 million would be made available to CCOF funded child cares. To date, \$20 million has been distributed for quality enhancements such as professional development, minor capital improvements, equipment and supplies.

The Child Care Capital Funding Program⁴² provides financial support to child care under two separate programs:

1. Major capital funding for the creation of new child care spaces;
2. Minor capital funding for emergency repair, replacement and relocation.

Due to provincial cutbacks announced in January 2007, Major Capital Funding Applications are no longer being accepted, pending the clarification of the federal child care spaces initiative. Child care facilities can still apply for the minor capital funding up to a maximum of \$5000 per project, or if a provider has more than one program at a site, the maximum of \$10,000 can be requested to assist with repair, replacement and/or relocation.

In addition to providing support to parents, the Child Care Resource and Referral Program provides support to child care providers. Specifically, information and support is available regarding:

- Start-up and operating information;
- Workshops and networking opportunities;
- Supportive home visits;
- Access to child care resources such as infant/toddler equipment, toys and library materials;
- Referrals to community resources;
- Listing in a registry of child care providers.

As mentioned above, due to provincial cutbacks to child care, the existing programs offered by the North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral Program⁴³ may be reduced in the coming year.

⁴¹ For details of funding see http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_care/operating.htm

⁴² For details, see http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_care/capital.htm

⁴³ See <http://www.nscr.bc.ca> for more information

The North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral Program

This program serves parents, families, and child care providers on the North Shore. Staff provide parents with access to community and library resources, information on topics such as selecting quality child care, and referrals to child care. In addition, they offer ongoing support to child care providers through visits and consultations. There are also drop-in programs, networking, workshops, equipment lending, newsletters, and copying/laminating services for child care providers. Parents can speak to someone via the **Parent Information Line** from 9 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday. Office hours are 9 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday, with extended hours on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings.

In the first half of 2006, there were a total of 625 calls from parents asking for assistance in order to find child care. The majority of these calls (62%) were parents who were looking for part time or full time child care for their child under three years of age.

Municipal Support for Child Care Providers

At the municipal level, the City of North Vancouver, the District of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver offer the following support in the area of child care:

- Financial support to the North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral Program
- Advocacy for child care by considering issues in community planning and liaising with various community partners and levels of government in support of increased access to quality child care. This includes being an active participant in the North Shore Child Care Planning Committee and the North Shore Early Childhood Network.

In addition to the above, The City of North Vancouver offers financial assistance to child care facilities through the Child Care Capital Improvement Fund. The purpose of these grants is to assist with expanding, repairing, renovating or purchasing new equipment.⁴⁴ The District of North Vancouver offers grants to child care providers to assist with high priority child care needs.⁴⁵



⁴⁴ For details on the City of North Vancouver child care grants and other related information, see <http://www.cnv.org/server.aspx?c=3&i=198>

⁴⁵ For more information on the District of North Vancouver child care support see <http://www.dnv.org/article.asp?c=433&a=564>

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY DESIGN

The remainder of this report focuses on:

1. A review of child care issues, policies and best practices;
2. Perceptions of North Shore child care providers;
3. Perceptions of North Shore parents.

Review of Child Care Issues, Policies and Best Practices

Prior to examining best practices in child care, we will first briefly review what we know to be important for child care for children in the early and middle childhood. This sets the stage for our emerging understanding in Canada, namely that these two groups of children have distinct needs and that we are only beginning to address this fact in the public domain when we talk about child care. Second, issues in two critical facets of child care are discussed: service delivery and child care workers. Finally, a variety of sources from other jurisdictions were utilized in order to learn about the ways in which they have addressed critical issues in child care in terms of practices and policies.

In order to gather this information, a search of the World Wide Web was conducted to uncover any recent papers related to child care policy and best practices. In addition to several websites that provided insights into child care with policy papers and briefs, facts and statistics, several organizations also had relevant papers, briefs and/or experts with whom this author spent time discussing the issue of child care in Canada.

Organizations with a focus on child care were contacted in order that the author could conduct an informal interview and gather current information. Through these interviews, it was also possible to learn from the interviewee which documents or organizations s/he deemed to be current and relevant to our topic. The following organizations were contacted:

- Calgary Learning Village Collaborative.
- Canadian Child care Federation;
- Centre for Excellence in Early Childhood Development;
- Child care Advocacy Association of Canada;
- City of Dryden;
- City of Hamilton;
- City of Niagara;
- City of Ottawa;
- City of Toronto;
- City of Vancouver;
- Council for Early Childhood Development;
- First Call;
- Government of Manitoba (Services and Housing);
- Human Early Learning Partnership;
- National Children's Alliance;
- Ontario Coalition for Better Child care.

Child Care Provider Perceptions

In order to hear from child care providers, a questionnaire (see Appendix 5) was designed to obtain current and valuable information in four main areas: logistics and operating costs of the facility; staffing; programs and services of the facility; and perceptions about the current and emerging issues in child care. All child care facilities including licensed family, registered LNR, infant/toddler, 30+ months, childminding, preschool and out-of-school care were sent a copy of this survey. In total, 255 facilities were sent surveys. Given that several facilities operate more than one program, facilities were asked to provide information on each of the programs that they offer. In total, these 255 facilities operate 334 programs. The results of the parent surveys are presented in Chapter 8.

Parent Perceptions

Parent perceptions were gathered through a questionnaire (See Appendix 6) in which they were asked about the challenges they face in child care, existing child care arrangements and child care needs. In order to reach as many parents as possible and to make the North Shore public aware of the questionnaire, the following mechanisms were employed:

- Questionnaires and web information was made available at the North Shore Community Resources Society;
- Information and a link was posted on each municipal website;
- Advertisements to parents through all child care facilities was sent with the child care provider surveys
- Hard copies were sent to child care facilities upon request;
- Advertisements were sent to parents through the West Vancouver and North Vancouver School Districts;
- Advertisements were sent through the North Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council;
- Advertisements and hard copies of the surveys were posted at various community centre locations through the North Vancouver Recreation Commission and the West Vancouver Parks and Community Services;
- Copies of the survey were made available through the West Vancouver Public Library, the District of North Vancouver Public Library and the North Vancouver City Public Library;
- Surveys were sent to the North Shore Multicultural Society and North Shore Family Services Society;
- Information was sent to various email lists.

The results of the parent surveys are presented in Chapter 9.

Focus groups and individual interviews were also conducted with parents, not only to elaborate on the questionnaires, but also to explore parental perceptions of current challenges and potential solutions to some of the issues for North Shore child care. The information from the parent focus groups was analyzed for themes. The findings from the focus groups are outlined in Chapter 10.

Finally, Chapter 11 briefly presents some reflections on the process of the needs assessment survey followed by recommendations for the North Shore as it moves forward in its child care and policy planning.



CHAPTER FIVE: CHILD CARE IN THE EARLY AND MIDDLE YEARS

Two key issues must be brought before to the forefront as a way to frame the discussion about child care. The first issue is that of quality of care and the second issue is the need to see child care on a developmental continuum.

High Quality Child Care

When we talk about the child care shortage in Canada, it is not merely an issue of creating more spaces for children so that everyone has access. Critical in this discussion is the need to create more **high quality** spaces. Children in child care settings that are of low quality do not reap the benefits and in fact, negative outcomes can result, such as higher levels of aggression, behavior problems and poor attachment to caregivers. It is only high quality child care that is a worthwhile pursuit. In Canada, given the need for child care, there are minimal spaces available in regulated child care so families are often forced to use unregulated care that is lower in cost. In 2002-2003, 54% of children ages six months to five years were in some form of non-parental care. Given that there are only spaces for approximately 24% of children⁴⁶ (and some estimates are as low as 15%) many of these children were in the care of relatives while many were in unregulated child care settings. For older children, as of 2003, approximately three million mothers with children were in the labor force; 1.8 million of these mothers had children between the ages of six and twelve years. Where did these children go before and after school? Were any of them alone due to lack of access to any form of child care?

“Results from a number of studies demonstrate that child care quality matters. In fact, the importance of child care quality is one of the most robust findings in developmental psychology. Children who experience high quality care have higher scores on achievement and language tests, show better social skills and fewer behavioral problems [than children who experience low quality care].”
(McCartney, 2004)

The Divide: Early Child Care and School-Aged Care

For the purposes of this report, when we talk about child care, we are referring the age range of 0 -12 years, yet there is a glaring divide in the child care world. There are the early years, which have received significant attention, and then there are school-aged children (the middle years from ages 6-12). Although this should be a seamless transition, it is not, and in Canada we are at the very beginning stages of being able to appreciate that both groups require high quality care, care that is developmentally appropriate. In delving into the area of best practices, there is a noticeable difference in terms of the body of knowledge available. In the area of early childhood, one can look nationally and internationally and

⁴⁶ Statistics Canada (April 5, 2006) The Daily

find a rich body of literature. We know what young children need to promote healthy development. We have excellent models in the form of centres that are of high quality and strive to use the latest research to inform practices. The same cannot be said for the middle years. In fact, it is only in the last couple of years in Canada that targeted efforts have been made by organizations to focus on the developmental needs of children in the middle years (e.g., National Children's Alliance, United Way, Canadian Child Care Federation). These efforts, however, have not yet translated into widespread practice. We can draw from work that has been done in the United States^{47 48}, particularly in the Boston area where millions of dollars have been spent addressing children's out-of-school time. Hence, given the lack of continuum, the following section will review what we know about child care in the early and middle years with the opinion that these two groups should be addressed with a continuum of care model.⁴⁹

Child Care in the Early Years

Much has been written about what constitutes high quality care in the early years both nationally and internationally. We know that the early years are critical and that we have tremendous opportunities to impact development in a positive manner. In Canada, we are fortunate to have expert organizations that have a focus on early childhood.⁵⁰ From the vast amount of work that has occurred over the past several years, we have learned which components are necessary for high quality child care.

What are the factors in high quality early child care? (Doherty, 1999; Goelman, 2005)

1. A high adult to child ratio: the ideal ratios are:
 - One adult for every three children under the age of 3 years;
 - One adult for every six children ages two and three years;
 - One adult for every eight preschool children.
2. Small group sizes: Children in smaller groups demonstrate more co operative behavior, less hostility, and better overall behavior. They talk, play more, have better social skills and reading readiness skills.
3. Post secondary training and education: More highly trained staff (college diplomas or university degrees) are more able to meet the developmental needs of children as they have the knowledge base;
4. Child care wages: Appropriate wages for the level of responsibility and education that a child care provider has is one of the strongest predictors in quality child care.

⁴⁷ A great deal of work has been done at Harvard where they have a Masters Program focus on working with children in out of school time. For a complete database of Harvard studies, see <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/evaldatabase.html>

⁴⁸ National Institute of Out of School Time <http://www.niost.org/index.html>

⁴⁹ It is important to meet children where they are developmentally rather than rely on age. This is particularly relevant for children with special needs.

⁵⁰ Examples of these organizations include: The Human Early Learning Partnership, Centre for Excellence in Early Childhood Development, Invest in Kids Foundation, National Children's Alliance

5. A positive care provider-child relationship: Child care providers who are more involved with the children engage children in learning and social activities that promote development
6. Attention to physical space: Child care settings that have clear boundaries between group and activity space provide children with a sense of physical organization that helps them be able to expend more attention to socializing and exploring their environment;
7. Well structured and planned curricula: Routines and structures allow children to feel more secure and ready to learn and play;
8. Significant parent involvement: Good communication between parent and caregiver help the caregiver and the parent in their respective roles;
9. Stability of centre staff and programs: Lower staff turnover and greater stability of programs are indicators of higher quality care;
10. Government regulation: Regulated child care has been shown to be of higher quality than unregulated child care;
11. The operating auspice of the centre: Overall, non-profit child care centres provide better care than for-profit child care centres;
12. Subsidized rent, utilities and operating costs: Centres that can spend less on these costs, can put more money toward staffing and program quality.

Child Care in the Middle Years (ages six to twelve)

Whereas we have the ability to synthesize all that is critical in the early years for child care, the same cannot be said for the middle years. Here, we are at the starting point of our journey.

“School age child care often seems like the forgotten cousin of preschool” (Canadian Child Care Federation, 2006)

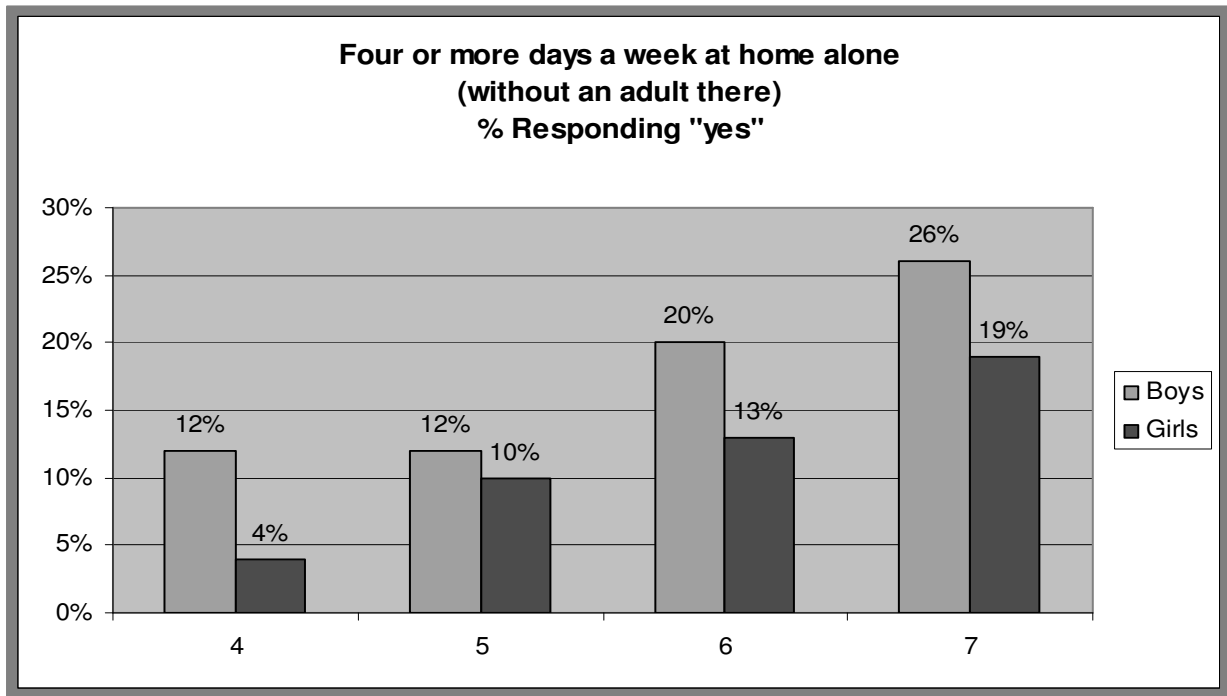
The middle years are just beginning to receive specific attention and recognition as a unique period of development in which children have needs that are different from any other period. Although there has been minimal research conducted on the middle years when compared with other periods of development, we do know that there is an increasing number of children considered “vulnerable” in the middle years (Wilms, 2002). This is definite cause for concern. Even scarcer is the focus on out of school time for children in the middle years. The bulk of the research that has been conducted has had a focus on using out of school time to improve academic achievement. Outside of Quebec, the only other jurisdiction, to this author’s knowledge, that has incorporated school aged care into their plan is Vancouver.⁵¹ It is an area of great need as in 2005 there were almost 400,000 children in kindergarten to grade seven in British Columbia’ (Information Department, BC Ministry of Education, 2005).

⁵¹ Toronto is planning to incorporate school aged care into their plan in the fall of 2007. Ottawa also has plans to incorporate school-aged children into their plan

The United Way of Lower Mainland Study on Middle Childhood: Key Findings

The largest research study in Canada examining children in the middle years has been done in Lower Mainland (Schonert-Reichl, Buote, Jaramillo, Foulkes, Rowcliffe, Calbick & Cleathero, 2007). In this study 1,266 children, in grades four to seven were surveyed and asked to report about various dimensions of their lives. Close attention was given to how children spend their out of school time and how this relates to their overall well-being. Only 7% of children in grades four to seven reported attending an out-of-school program. The remaining 93% reported being at home, at a friend's house or at a community centre but not all have the benefit of being in a situation in which they are supervised and engaged in activities.

Percentage of Children who report four or more days a week at home alone after school without an adult there.



Children were also asked to report how they spend their after school period. Although some children do engage in lessons, sports and so forth, note in the following table that 43% of children report spending time using technology rather than in face-to-face interactions with others through relationships with adults and peers.

What children report doing after school and what their wishes are for after school activities (based on children's report of one afternoon in a typical week)

Activity	% of children reporting engaging in this activity between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.	% of children reporting that they WISH to engage in this activity between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.
Technology-based activities*	43%	9%
Academic activities	11%	1%
Physical activities*	10%	49%
Volunteer/chores	7%	0%
Unstructured relaxing time	7%	11%
Music/Drama/Art	6%	10%
Hanging out with friends	6%	12%
Talking on the phone	5%	0%
Spending time with family	4%	1%
Other (hobbies etc)	1%	8%

* Note discrepancy between children's current time use and wish for time use

Average Time spent in Technology-based Activities between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Activity	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7
TV	1.7 hours	2.0	2.1	2.3
Computer related activities	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.2
Listening to music	1.4	1.4	2.3	1.9

Parents were also surveyed as to the barriers for them in their attempts to have the desired environment and activities for their children in grades four to seven.

- 37% of parents reported one barrier to participation
- 63% of parents reported two or more barriers

Perceived barriers by parents to out-of school support

Barrier	% of parents reporting the issue as a barrier
Availability of programs/activities	29
Cost	41
Transportation	48
Time	45
Language	9
Lack of information	21
Child not interested	26

When asked about program availability, 20% of parents reported not having programs available in their community. Overall, 15% of parents reported being “very dissatisfied” or “somewhat dissatisfied” with how their children spend their after school hours, 15% of parents reported feeling “neutral” and 40% reported being “somewhat satisfied.” Only 30% reported being “very satisfied.”

Implications for Children’s Out-of-School Time

Based on what we know from research done in Canada⁵² and the United States on children in the middle years, it is timely that we begin to address the child care issues of children in the middle years by taking into account their developmental needs. Indeed, in one of the first of its kind, a policy brief on school age child care (Canadian Child care Federation and the National Children’s Alliance, 2006) outlined the following rationale for high quality child care in the middle years:

- There is a need for strong public policy for school-age care so that parents can take part in the workforce in order to provide their children with stability and safety;
- Children can develop quality relationships with peers and caring adults in school-age programs which, if integrated with school and community, can increase feelings of connectedness. This connectedness is important for all children and providing a nurturing environment can be particularly powerful for children who do not feel that they fit in due to disabilities or cultural issues;
- A well-rounded curriculum in a school-age program can provide opportunities for children to develop a wide variety of competencies during this period of growth in which identity formation is a key task;
- Quality child care programs provide children with a safe and caring environment among adults who have their best interests at heart while at the same time encouraging parental participation;
- High quality programs provide another window of opportunity to intervene in order to assist children in the middle years who may have difficulties that were not identified during the early years;
- Opportunities to continue learning in the summer has been shown to foster school success;
- Having high quality school age care can assist families with work-family balance. According to a 2001 national survey of more than 31,000 employees of medium and large companies, over half of the employees reported that work had a negative impact on the time that they spent with their children. In 2003, mothers employed full time reported an average of 4.5 days of work missed during the year due to family responsibilities (Duxbury & Higgins, 2003);
- High quality child care can address the needs of families who have children in self-care. For example, the issue of safety in rural areas has been documented by the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program (2003) which found that an increasing number of boys suffered from injuries as they got older as a result of working with machinery. From 1999-2001, there were 632 machinery injuries of children in Canada between the ages of 5-14.

⁵² For the most recent Canadian research on the middle years, see the National Children’s Alliance <http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.com/nca/index.htm> and the United Way of Lower Mainland

- Given the rise in obesity and Type 2 Diabetes among children, school-age programs that incorporate physical activity and nutrition can have a tremendous impact on the overall health of our children

Given that children in middle childhood attend school on a daily basis, the key recommendation by policy makers in this area is that each school should have an out-of-school program in the school. This would provide children with a seamless day in surroundings and interactions with familiar peers. The issue is the need to have education and child care work together on this plan. The Canadian Child Care Federation (2006) made the following policy recommendations in order to move the agenda of child care in the middle years forward.

*Issue 1: Lack of Understanding of the Developmental Needs of Children in the Middle Years
Policy Recommendations:*

- Establish national standards in order to meet the developmental needs of children in the middle years during out of school time;
- Address the specific developmental needs in provincial/territorial legislation
- Initiate more Canadian research on school age care (e.g., evaluation of pilot projects, surveys of parents as to their wishes);
- Establish policies that straddle education and child care

*Issue 2: Lack of affordability
Policy Recommendation:*

- Provide infrastructure support and funding from all levels of government to increase parent subsidies and to create more spaces in urban and rural communities

*Issue 3: Physical and Environmental Challenges
Policy Recommendation:*

- Develop and implement policies that support collaborations amongst schools, child care and other services

*Issue 4: Training and Professional Development
Policy Recommendations:*

- Provide ongoing professional development in order to assist child care staff in becoming more aware of the developmental needs of middle childhood
- Provide wage enhancements to encourage staff of school aged child cares to remain in the field thereby increasing stability in the care for children

We are at the beginning stages of appreciating that child care is important both for children in the early years and children in the middle years. Further work is required and more effort is needed in the areas of both early and school-aged child care in order to meet the varying developmental needs of children from infancy to age twelve. Beginnings of this work are now being done on the North Shore through the “Middle Childhood Matters” initiative which has been working with children, parents and other stakeholder to examine what children in middle childhood would like to see during out-of-school time.⁵³

⁵³ See the “North and West Vancouver Children Consultation Report” (May, 2007) for further details

CHAPTER SIX: CHILD CARE DELIVERY AND CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

“In most jurisdictions in Canada, child care programs are developed in an ad hoc manner. Policies often fluctuate according to the ideology and priorities of the government of the day. Child care is still funded largely as a support to labor force participation, despite growing awareness that the early years count and quality child care can make a big difference.” (p.4, 2004, Working for Change: Canada’s Child Care Workforce)

As much as we all know that there is a need for more child care spaces, the creation of space is not a simple task. Alongside the challenges of finding the physical space, there are issues of sustainability. Given that we do not as yet have the mechanisms and support for a national system of child care, we must consider what communities can do to mobilize and create the best system possible given the diverse challenges. There are two key areas to consider in this discussion: the systems of child care delivery which includes the people that run these systems, and the child care providers. We will first begin with an overview of the need to address system fragmentation, and to this end the highly recommended neighbourhood hub approach to child care and other services is outlined. Next, we will examine the challenges that we face in the child care workforce.

The Neighbourhood Hub Approach

In reviewing documents and speaking to experts in the field, one of the key issues with the child care system and other related child and family supports is fragmentation. The result of this fragmentation is that people in the community experience the system as confusing and challenging – some services are scarce, others overlap. There is the need to spend time figuring out the system which can be frustrating not only for families but also for people working in the field of child care. In recognition that we need to plan more wisely via community collaboration, the concept of a *neighbourhood hub model*⁵⁴ is deemed to be the most effective approach. Underlying the concept of the hub model is the fact that services for children and families, with child care as the cornerstone, would be more integrated and housed together as much as possible as opposed to existing in individual locations without linkages.

The hub is “an approach to the planning, administration, and delivery of child care programs within a defined geographic area. It provides the infrastructure to support and coordinate services across the range of child care options for families in the community.” (DYAD Projects, 1995, p.4)

In the neighbourhood hub model, the needs of the individual community are at the forefront of all discussions and planning and as such, the components of the hub vary from community to community depending on the existing and emerging needs. Despite the variation in the

⁵⁴ In May 2007, the province of British Columbia provided one time only funding to establish/enhance 22 hubs (total of 2.5 million). These hubs were pre-selected by the provincial government. The North Shore did not receive funding.

configuration of the model, there exist several necessary components in order to be considered a community hub (Schroeder, November 2005). These include:

- At least two services under one roof that serve to strengthen families, one of which must be child care which is the cornerstone of the hub model;
- Links to other services in the community that help support families;
- Mechanisms to continually work on community development in order to address changing needs of families in the community;
- Use of available space in communities (schools, community centres, neighbourhood houses, libraries, public housing complexes and if necessary private spaces (e.g., malls);
- Easy and universal access to families in order to reduce traditional barriers that families experience in their attempts to access services;
- Local collaboration of all stakeholders is a critical endeavor in order to avoid fragmentation or duplication of services and competition among providers;
- Hosting by a community organization in conjunction with intersectoral participation;
- Services based on research in order to provide the best services for children and families.

In Ontario, under the “Best Start” initiative, there are three minimum requirements in order to qualify as a Hub Model:

1. Services must be in or near schools;
2. There must be licensed child care on site;
3. There must be early identification services.

Many communities are striving to move toward a hub model in the long-run as it provides a much more integrated system of service to families, which is user-friendly and cost-effective. This integration is both conceptual and structural.

“Structural integration occurs when the child receives a range of services from different programs without repeated registration procedure, waiting periods, different philosophies, human resource practices and funding systems.” (Colley, 2005, p.11)

The real work is in implementing such a collaborative system over time. This requires all partners to come to the table in a given community, openly communicate and be willing to make some changes to the service structure so that mini systems become integrated into one larger system. Fortunately, we have some road maps in this area in Canada. The YWCA has produced a guide book⁵⁵ for communities to utilize in working toward to hub model and the projects such as “The Integration Network Project”⁵⁶ based out of the University of Toronto can help inform this process. Although these two sources focus on early childhood, these models can be adapted to take into account the needs of school-aged children. There is also the work that has been done by the City of Vancouver, the City of Toronto and the City of Ottawa in developing an articulated framework that would encompass children from 0-12 years of age.

⁵⁵ This Guide Book can be downloaded from the YWCA website http://www.ywca.ca/public_eng/advocacy/Child_care/YWCA_FINAL%20Guidebook_BCAECLC.pdf (YWCA Guide for community coordinators)

⁵⁶ www.inproject.ca

Addressing the Needs of Child Care Providers

In 2004, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council released their report, “Working for Change: Canada’s Child Care Workforce.” The report represents a 15 month study of the child care workforce (child care providers who work in regulated settings) in Canada. There were several key findings that have important implications for the future of child care. It was noted that the child care workforce is aging in Canada and that younger people are not choosing in great numbers child care as a career. It is this aging workforce that is not being replaced to meet the demand of Canadians that is concerning. The underlying issues for this situation are the ones that must be examined and addressed in order for change to occur. So why are young people not choosing to work in child care settings?

Although there are approximately 135 post secondary institutions with ECE programs throughout Canada, there has been a declining enrollment over the past few years. In a National Graduate Survey, it was found that after two years, almost half of those students who went to college directly after high school and completed an ECE program still worked in the field. By five years post graduation, only 40% remained in the field. Many saw an ECE certificate as a stepping stone to environments other than child care. Given that there is already such a shortage of trained caregivers, losing 60% of graduates is only adding to the challenges facing the child care system. However, the reasons for not remaining in child care are valid ones. They include the following:

- **Wages:** The average salary in Canada for full time early child care educators or assistants is just over \$19,000 per year⁵⁷ and from 1997 to 2000, there was almost no change in salary.

In B.C., early childhood educators and assistants who work at home, have an average salary of \$15,000 which is the Canadian average. B.C. is behind the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Quebec. The range is from \$9,000 in Newfoundland to \$25,000 in the Yukon). For early childhood educators and assistants who work elsewhere, the average salary is \$21,000, once again, the Canadian average. Here, B.C. is behind Ontario, Yukon and Quebec. The range is from \$13,500 in New Brunswick to \$24,000 in Ontario.

- **Work Environment:** Due to low wages, there tends to be a great deal of turnover in child care. The hours are longer than the average work week (usually 40-45 per week in child care) with few breaks. Even though, in Canada, we have worked hard to promote the importance of early childhood development, there are still many child care environments that do not provide the activities and environments that focus on promoting optimal child development. Trained ECE workers, who do not have a chance to use their training in an effective manner opt for other environments where they can use their skills.
- **Lack of Job Security:** Due to funding instability, the issue of job security is often an issue for many child care providers (the exception is Quebec where child care providers have a negotiated salary grid and pension plan).

⁵⁷ This figure is based on the 2001 Census

- **Limited Career Opportunities:** Within child care, there is limited opportunity to move forward in ones career. As a result, many trained child care providers opt for jobs in related sectors in which better pay and benefits are offered, for example, in the school system as teaching assistants.
- **Health and Safety Concerns:** Given that the focus of child care is on meeting the needs of young children, the demands of the work can be quite intense and at times the physical environment is not adequate. This, coupled with exposure to infectious diseases, can create a tremendous amount of physical stress for providers.
- **Skills Challenge:** Given the diversity of developmental needs of children, there is not always adequate ongoing training for child care providers. Even recent graduates of ECE programs reported that they did not feel adequately trained to work with the diversity of developmental needs and children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

In B.C., 72% of child care providers in centres have a post secondary credential. The only province that has a higher percentage of providers with a post secondary credential is Newfoundland and Labrador (73%). For Family Care, 50% of providers have a post secondary credential which ranks B.C. third in the country behind New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

- **Lack of Recognition:** Although there is a clear link between quality child care and a quality work force, child care is viewed as having quite low status. This can be seen in terms of wages and working conditions. Despite an increase in the positive way in which child care providers are viewed, there are still some mixed opinions, in part due to the ongoing debate as to whether child care is a public or a private matter.

If the goal is to improve the system of child care, then the two above parts of the system must be taken into account. Given the financial challenges in the field, it is critical that the resources that do exist in a community work together to make the delivery of child care more effective and at the same time, address the longstanding issues that influence the shortage of child care workers.

CHAPTER SEVEN: VOICES OF EXPERTS AND SNAPSHOTS OF CANADIAN PROMISING PRACTICES

Voices of Experts

Through informal interviews, experts in the field pointed towards promising practices and illuminated key challenges in the area of child care. It was stated more than once that “we know what we need to do, we just need funding.” Indeed, three decades of research and attempts at addressing the child care situation in Canada has resulted in a great deal of knowledge and expertise about how to best meet the needs of Canadian families. The last budget announcement was clearly a harsh blow to the child care sector and families in Canada. Just as Canada was beginning to take steps to create a progressive system of child care, it was stopped and reversed. The experts all agree that we need to keep pushing the agenda of child care forward despite what seems like an uphill battle, particularly for non-profit agencies who have been the primary advocates for child care.

The greatest obstacle, according to all the experts, was the lack of funding to child care. It is hard to develop a comprehensive child care system with no funding, or funding that is not stable. In addition, to address the needs of a community, there needs to be a long-term planning approach. One time funding initiatives for programs are not a good investment if they cannot be sustained and do not meet the needs of Canadian families.

Experts offered the following insights and words of advice for moving forward in addressing child care:

Space Creation: Although there is a need for new spaces, the solution is not simply creating new spaces. New spaces must have sustainability issues addressed to ensure viability. However in addition to the new spaces, existing spaces need to be examined in terms of their sustainability. With little or no increase in funds to cover operating costs in the face of the rise in actual operating costs, there needs to be mechanisms in place to support the continuation of existing spaces. Spaces need to be subsidized in order to make them affordable to families.

Child Care Staff: Not only is there is a lack of qualified staff, but also many of the pioneers in child care are currently at the point of retiring which creates even more of a staffing challenge. Working in the child care industry is fraught with challenges such as low wages and lack of recognition. These issues need to be addressed so that more people are attracted to enter and to remain in the field.

Child Care Quality: There must be some process in place to ensure that child care is of a high quality. While space creation is a pressing concern in Canada, creating those spaces must include a structure to monitor ongoing quality.

School-Aged Children: Some areas experience a growing trend of latchkey kids due to the unavailability of or high cost of child care. This is a disconcerting trend. If each school were to have accessible and affordable school-aged care, then it would help to reverse this trend.

Convincing Government: A great deal of energy is necessary in order to try to convince government of the need for funding a child care system. We need to continue doing this until we achieve an effective child care system. One key strategy is to continue to build cross-sectoral collaborations with businesses. The business community has the power to influence government. Child care is also an issue for them due to labor needs. If businesses want people to stay in the community or move into the community in the first place, then there must be child care services to allow people with children to participate in the labour force.

Economic Impact: Key people can be engaged to assist the public and government to recognize the positive return on the investment in child care. Economically, it makes sense for our society to invest in a system of child care.

Keep Child Care on the Agenda: We know there is research that supports quality child care. We know that families are opting for fewer children in Canada due to the cost of raising a child. If we want to see the population of Canada grow, then we need to make it possible for families to have more children, if that is their wish. Young families in Canada face a tremendous challenge in that most start having children when they are not at the peak of their career, hence earnings are lower and they need the support for child care. By keeping child care on the agenda we make it possible to continually address some of the key issues for Canadian families and the country's economic growth.

Fragmentation of Services: A move toward a more integrative system could address the needs of families, reduce administration costs and duplication of services and increase effective service delivery to families. This comprehensive approach involves a cross-sectoral approach to service planning and delivery.

Government Collaboration: All three levels of government need to work together to address the issue of child care. Improvement requires a political will. With all governments working together, the issues of child care spaces and staff training can be addressed in a way which addresses the future needs of communities.

Create an environment that Supports Child Care: Creating an environment in the community that supports the idea of child care will pave the way for opportunities when they arise. Having public support for initiatives will increase chances of success. Creating this environment involves actions such as passing motions at the municipal level to make zoning bylaws child care friendly and working with developers to ensure that new development has child care as one of the amenities.

What follows are examples of promising Canadian practices that can inform child care and policy planning on the North Shore.

Promising Canadian Practices

There is no one system in Canada that has been fully developed, implemented and able to meet the needs of all families. In that regard, Canada is behind some of the countries that have a more progressive approach to child and family policies (e.g., Sweden, Finland). It must be remembered that jurisdictions in Canada have the extraordinary challenge of trying to make a system work in the face of limited and unstable funding. It takes years to build a stable and sustainable system under the best circumstances. In Canada, the struggle for an effective child care system has been going on for the past three decades. Still, jurisdictions are trying to be creative and move forward with limited resources and the resulting challenges. The following are examples of emerging best practices in Canada.

Quebec^{58 59}

When the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) examines child care in Canada, Quebec is always taken out of the equation because it has a very different approach from the rest of Canada. Since the adoption of family policies in 1997, the province of Quebec provides more funding to child care than any other province. In 2004, 45% of the 1.3 billion dollar budget for child and family services went towards child care. Child care in Quebec costs \$7/day per child for a total of \$140/month or \$1620/year and currently, Quebec has 43%⁶⁰ of Canada's child care spaces and over 40% of children in Quebec are in a child care setting for at least part of their day.

The key elements of the Quebec Model of Child Care include:

- Early childhood centres were created from existing non-profit child care centres and family child care agencies. Spaces in for-profit child care were frozen and these agencies were encouraged to convert to non-profit agencies. For-profit centres continue to receive funding but this is reviewed yearly, and centres must meet strict guidelines;
- The early childhood centres are non-profit and community-based. Parents make up the majority on the board of each centre thus assuming control over how a centre is run;
- In order to receive funding, centres must be licensed and meet regulations.
- Schools must provide half-day kindergarten to disadvantaged four year olds and this may be combined with half day regulated care. Schools must offer before and after school care at the rate of \$7/day;
- The government has established a core educational program that must be incorporated into services;
- Wages for child care providers are higher in Quebec and there are stricter regulations around training and credentialing.

⁵⁸ Canadian Labor Congress (2004)

⁵⁹ See Japel, Tremblay, Côté (2005) for a full report on Quebec's child care system the impact on child development

⁶⁰ HELP (Sept 5, 2006).

In a longitudinal study of the Quebec child care model in which the effects of child care on children, the quality of service and family factors that influence development were examined, Japel, Tremblay and Côté (2005) found the following:

- The majority of child care settings (61%) that were rated met the criteria for minimal quality;
- One in eight settings (12%) was inadequate in terms of quality;
- 27% of the settings provided a service whose quality was good, very good or excellent;
- Among 925 children who were observed at least once in this evaluation, 14% were in a setting rated as inadequate, 63% in a setting rated minimal and 23% in a setting with a global rating of good to excellent quality
- Licensed centre-based care and home-based care provided good-quality services more often than centres that were for-profit daycares and unregulated home-based daycares;
- For-profit daycares and unregulated home-based daycares were more often rated as inadequate in terms of quality when compared to licensed centre-based or home-based care;
- In all types of settings observed, the quality of the communication and the interactions between the staff and children were their greatest strength, however, the quality of the educational activities and the personal care routines were problematic;
- Children from less-privileged backgrounds were less likely to be in child care (about 9% of children coming from families in the bottom quarter of family income versus 20% for children whose families are in the top quarter of income);
- At centre-based care, children received the same quality of care regardless of their socioeconomic background, however, where for-profit, home-based or unregulated child care was attended by primarily children who were less privileged, the quality was lower.

It is not that child care is meeting all the needs of Quebec families at the present time, but rather it is a model that is moving forward in that area by continually increasing accessibility and raising the quality of care. Compared to other countries who have a national system, the Quebec model is in its' infancy. It is worthy of attention in that it is a model that is province specific in a country where the rest of the provinces do not yet have a fully developed child care policy and do not receive significant Federal support for child care.

Ontario

The manner in which Ontario handles child care is significantly different from B.C. Ontario is divided into 47 areas and child care is the responsibility of the social services sector and planning is done on a regional basis. Furthermore, municipalities have a greater responsibility in Ontario for child care in terms of contributing funds and in some areas actually having municipal run child care centres. Specifically, municipalities must contribute a minimum of 20% of the overall cost of child care and 50% of the administration fees. Despite the brief partial federal funding from the ELCC agreement, a great deal of progress was made in early child development in Ontario through the “Best

Start”⁶¹ program. In 2005 the “Best Start” plan assisted in establishing local planning tables charged with integrating services for children and families, created 15,000 additional child care spaces⁶², and made some improvements to wage enhancement supports.⁶³ Since the announcement of the termination of the ELCC agreement, Ontario has had to change its’ direction as the province lost \$ 1.4 billion in funding. With the remaining funding (\$63.5 million), Ontario plans to focus on child care between 2006 and 2010. Another challenge due to funding cuts is subsidies for families, As of January 1, 2007, Ontario subsidies are income-based without considering family expenses. Despite the funding cuts and the challenges that this will cause in terms of sustainability, Ontario is working toward integrating services under the provincial support of “Best Start.” At the time of this report, the change in directions (scope of expansion etc.) in terms of community planning given funding cuts is not entirely clear. The year of 2005-2006 saw a great many changes in Ontario in the area of early child care and what follows are some promising practices from Ontario.

Toronto

Toronto embarked upon a journey in 2001, “Toronto’s First Duty”⁶⁴, to begin the integration of all services for children from 0 to Kindergarten age. Integration of services for school-aged children in the official plan is in process for Toronto, however, school-aged children are included in the pilot site. In creating a model that is effective and can be used by other centres to inform their direction, Toronto chose to work with the Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre⁶⁵ from 2001-2005 as the pilot site (this centre was also a “Best Start” site). In taking on the role of a pilot site, five key elements must be met as per Toronto First Duty. These are:

1. Integrated Governance: All partners pool their resources to plan and deliver programs.

“Bruce School supplies the physical space and staffing including the principal, kindergarten teachers, parenting workers, teaching assistants and administrative support staff. WoodGreen supports the centre manager, ECE staff and resource teacher in addition to providing administrative assistance, professional development and family support referrals. Toronto District School Board (TDSB) contributes professional development and meeting release time for the principal and kindergarten teachers in addition to the support of its superintendents and early years’ department. The Foundation for Student Success supports the nutrition program. Toronto Public Health delivers additional parenting programs and early identification & referrals. The Child Development Institute offers social skills groups and parenting programs. Children with special needs and families requiring additional assistance access help through WoodGreen, TDSB and the City. Research and development is provided by the Atkinson Centre for Child and Social Development and the Institute for Child Studies, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Funding for minor capital, start-up, transition and operating costs is provided by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation (ACF) and City of Toronto. The TDSB funds the half day program for children 3.8 – 6 years. Communications is supported by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation.”(p.1., Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre)

⁶¹ For more information on Best Start see <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/CS/en/programs/BestStart/default.htm>

⁶² “Best Start” funding was not able to be used for existing child care spaces/facilities in order to address financial challenges. This posed several challenges to existing providers.

⁶³ For a progress report on Best Start, see http://www.childcareontario.org/library/briefs/OCBCC_BestStartProgressReport.pdf

⁶⁴ For further information about Toronto’s First Duty see <http://www.toronto.ca/firstduty/>

⁶⁵ For a description of the Centre see http://www.toronto.ca/firstduty/bruce_woodgreen_profile.pdf

2. Seamless Access: Families can access all programs through a single enrollment process. Participation for programs is flexible.

“Children aged 2½ and older are eligible for a part-day, non-parental program at no cost. If parents wish their children to attend for more hours, then the parent contribution is \$7/day for the full day (to 3:30 p.m.) and \$15 for an extended day (to 6 p.m.). Eligible families may apply for financial assistance through the City’s child-care subsidy program. Emergency care is also available. The parent fee for the extended day program is one-third to one-half the cost of traditional child care services. The program runs year round. One-third of the children attending the program, either part time or full time, have a parent in the home – an indication of the wide need for non-parental care including by parents who are not in the workforce.”
(p.2., Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre)

3. Integrated Early Learning Environment: The classrooms in the schools are licensed under the Day Nurseries Act which allows for multi-use of the space and furthers the goal of supporting child development and health and safety standards.
4. Staff Teams: Programs are delivered by an integrated team including early childhood educators, kindergarten teachers, parenting workers and educational assistants. All use a common curriculum, resources and space. Using an integrated staffing approach allows for a lower adult to child ratio.
5. Parent Participation: Parents are welcome at any time to join in the activities at the centre whether eating lunch with their children, joining in classroom activities or attending adult-only classes.

After school programs are available and staff from the centre work in the classrooms during school hours as well as support after school programs. This continuity in adults has great benefits for children. Given Toronto’s focus on early childhood, no additional funding is available for children from grade one onward.

Research examining the effectiveness of this model has shown that:

Improved quality: *The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Revised (ECERS -R) is used to assess quality in early childhood programs. The program was reviewed in early 2003 and again in 2005. Quality was found to improve across all indicators with the biggest advances made in the use of space, program activities and parent/staff communication.*

Improved child outcomes: *Significant improvements were found for language development (vocabulary), total “Test of Early Reading Ability” (TERA), and number knowledge in children assessed in 2003 and again in 2005.*

Promotes parent engagement: *The integrated model is more successful in promoting parenting practice than stand alone parenting and kindergarten programs in other Toronto schools. Parents of four year old children at the site are more likely to read to their children and to be involved in their child’s school than those with children enrolled in schools with or without a parenting centre.*

Enhanced capacity: *Approximately 120 families (parents, other caregivers and children from infancy through school age) are registered in the early childhood program and/or attend parent-child activities on a regular basis.*

Universal appeal: Program attendance reflects the demographics of the neighbourhood.

*Cost-effective: Integrated service delivery for four and five year olds and the primary grades is no more expensive than traditional child care wrapped around school hours. Overall integration provides more hours of programming for the same cost as traditional service delivery.
p.2., Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre)*

In speaking with a representative from “Toronto’s First Duty” about this hub-like model approach to service planning and delivery, given the funding challenges, Toronto will continue to work on intersectoral collaboration. There are no plans to build hubs per se, but rather existing resources are encouraged to come to the table and work together in sharing resources, plans and services in the most effective manner. The Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre is an example of how this process comes to life. It is hoped that a school-aged vision and framework will be completed in the fall of this year.

Hamilton

Hamilton’s East-End was one of three original sites selected by the Province to pilot “Best Start” in 2005-2006 (The other two sites were a rural site, Lambton-Kent, and a northern Francophone site, Timiskaming). Each of these three sites had to have the following components:

- Wrap-around child care for children enrolled in junior and senior kindergarten;
- A half-day free preschool program and half-day child care program for two-and-a-half to four-year-olds with links to the kindergarten program;
- Newborn health screening;
- Early identification of specialized hearing and language needs;
- 18-month well-baby check-up.

This initiative and the funding that was attached allowed Hamilton to move toward a hub model of service for early childhood.⁶⁶ Central to the hub model is the foundation of intersectoral collaboration, as described in the Toronto example with all the project partners coming to the table, and this was the case in Hamilton where 45 members formed the “Best Start” network. In Hamilton’s East- End, a total of seven hubs is the goal. Five hubs will be located in schools and two hubs in community centres. One hub will focus on Aboriginal supports for families and another hub will focus on Francophone families. These hubs will strive to meet the needs of families in a more integrated and timely manner.

Hamilton was the first city to implement a peer reviewed process of quality child care. It has been voluntary on the part of the centres and to date highly successful. This program entitled “Raising the Bar on Quality”⁶⁷, strives to build on existing strengths in child care.

⁶⁶ For a complete copy of the Hamilton initiative, see <http://www.myhamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/05DF20D1-EEAE-4AB8-BADC-06091F4CF55E/0/Oct11SPH05005a.pdf>

⁶⁷ For an overview see http://www.ascy.ca/ascy_rtb.html

The majority of the facilities participate in this peer review process and, as a result, varying levels of recognition are granted along with assistance in how to continue to improve overall quality. Since the inception of this process, other municipalities in Southern Ontario have adopted the “Raising the Bar on Quality” framework, or they have developed their own framework.

Dryden

Dryden is a small town of 7,700 people in Northern Ontario. As in Toronto, it also benefited from the initial installment of funding through Ontario’s “Best Start.” They were able to create 164 additional spaces (the goal was 315) prior to the termination of the ELCC agreement. Even within Ontario, Dryden is somewhat unique as the municipality runs all child care.⁶⁸ There are other areas that do the same, but for most part, non-profits assume a great deal of responsibility for running child care services through centres or subcontracts. Some ways in which Dryden has worked to address child care shortages in their small community are the following:

- The municipality pays unionized child care providers approximately \$20/hr with full benefits and holidays. Due to the high level of pay and benefits, Dryden does not have a recruitment and retention issue;
- The municipality regulates quality and has a quality assurance plan for child care;
- Each of Dryden’s schools has before and after school care;
- The city has moved all programs for children who are 3.8 years and older (age required for junior-Kindergarten programs) into existing school space thereby allowing community and other space to be used for younger children. This addressed the limitations in usable space for child care. The junior and senior Kindergarten children receive their Kindergarten program and child care at the school.

Dryden continues to struggle with meeting the needs of infant and toddler care due to the high cost. This is an area of service that they are working on at present.

Niagara

Niagara is a city of 420,000 people and is a popular destination for retirees. Although the City does experience some shortages in child care, particularly among the infant/toddler group, they do not appear to be as pronounced as in other areas. With the commencement of “Best Start”, which resulted in 2.4 Million and an additional one time grant of 6 Million (there was an expected total of 25 Million prior to the termination of the ELCC agreement), Niagara added 380 spaces in child care. This was done through existing facilities and the construction of new facilities in the areas most desperate for child care. Niagara has 7,100 licensed child care spaces, with 200 of these in family care settings (part of the stipulation of “Best Start” for the use of funds is that spaces must be in schools when at all possible). The City is moving toward a hub model of service, however, is not there yet according a representative in the region. The move toward a hub model of service will continue over

⁶⁸ All Child Care in Ontario must be licensed through the Ministry of Youth and Family Services

the coming years with the support of provincial funding through “Best Start”. Of particular success is the following:

- The availability of extended care (evenings and weekends). In the City of Niagara, this is provided in licensed family homes. Previously, there was a centre that provided care, but it was found to not be cost-effective. In selected other areas, there are centres that provide extended care (e.g., St. Catharines).
- The “Vacancy project” – this is a centralized way in which families can search for child care space and reserve a space (once reserved, parents have 24 hours to confirm that they want the vacant space). This is all done online and allows parents to learn a bit about each centre.⁶⁹ This “child care choice” option is part of a larger comprehensive website that services the region.⁷⁰
- Although recruitment and retention continue to be an issue and issues of wage subsidies continues to be a topic of discussion, one action has been successfully implemented. The City of Niagara employs 4% of the child care workers and the city provides its employees with a yearly cost of living allowance. Since the child care providers employed by the City receive this allowance, a case was made with the city to provide this allowance to all child care providers. The cost is the sole responsibility of the city as no outside funds are available for these payments.
- The region has implemented an initiative that monitors quality in child care. It is a voluntary program that licensed centres can take part in and in the past year, 75% of centres participated. Three areas are examined in each centre:
 1. Child development: early screening and referral to further screening and services;
 2. Facility environment rating;
 3. Parent satisfaction with the facility.

This region-specific quality assurance has been critical in moving forward in a manner that ensures that the spaces created are of high quality. The region also uses this information to liaise with the local college providing ECE training in order that students can recognize the components of high quality care in the region.

Manitoba⁷¹

As with the rest of the country, Manitoba was also hard hit by the announcement of the cancellation of the ELCC, given the shortage of child care in that province. However, the climate is still somewhat promising in this province based on past work that has been done and the continuing support of the provincial government.

In 1986, the government established the “The Early Learning and Child Care in Schools Policy.” This began the establishment of child care that was connected to schools. In the 1990’s the policy was amended to clearly state that child cares should be in schools or on school property. Government funding was provided to schools to do renovations so that child cares could open in schools. Currently with the declining birthrate, child care space is more easily found in schools as there are extra classroom spaces.

⁶⁹ See <http://www.eccdc.org/parents/childcarechoices.php>

⁷⁰ See <http://www.eccdc.org>

⁷¹ Information based on conversation with representative from the government of Manitoba

With the announcement of the ELCC funding, capital funding was made available for up to half the cost of renovations of school space (to a maximum of \$400,000) for child care. With the cut of the ELCC funding, the Manitoba government announced that it would continue with capital funding at \$5.2 million a year for school renovations. Currently 40% of child care is in school space and 95% of child care is operated by non-profit organizations.

Just as with other communities in the country, child care gets developed in communities where parents lobby for the service, whereas in communities in which there is no capacity to lobby for this service, shortages occur. A focus for Manitoba is to help communities develop capacity which will benefit not only child care, but also other community services and overall well-being.

Manitoba anticipates creating a multi-year plan for child care in Manitoba (Manitoba has been working on plans for the past few years so this is a continuation of this work and a revision based on cuts in funding).

What Manitoba learned is that there is no “one size fits all” model. In rural communities, there is an increasing move toward the use of a hub approach with one main hub and then satellite programs in the rural areas. In the two urban centres, Winnipeg and Brandon, there are strong, established programs opening satellite sites. The advantages of this approach, for example are: one director examining the many needs of parents in various areas, reducing administration costs by using a centralized system, more effective staffing (sharing between facilities and programs), and bulk purchasing of supplies. The one challenge noted is that because they are non-profit facilities, 20% of the board members must be parents. Getting parents involved at this level and engaging parents who have skills to deal with large budgets and strategic planning issues can be difficult. Parents are busy people.

Calgary, Alberta

The Calgary Learning Village Collaborative has created unique initiatives with a focus on school-aged children.⁷² This organization serves primarily children from ages 5-12 and their families in the Greater Forest Lawn area of Calgary.

⁷² See <http://www.childrensinitiative.ca/learningvillage/index.asp>

A Description of the Calgary Learning Village Collaborative.....

"Working together to enhance student, family and community learning in Greater Forest Lawn"

Our vision: Engaged and inclusive communities where schools are the center of a collaborative community spirit and life long learning, and where children, families and neighborhoods are resilient and hopeful.

The Learning Village is a collaboration of education, health, social, recreation and cultural services coordinated through four satellites and a hub.

Goals:

1. To increase the capacity of the schools to enhance through expanded experiences an environment that promotes hope and resiliency.
2. To increase family involvement in supporting schools and school-based programs that build individual and community assets.
3. To improve the system of collaboration between community, schools and services through written agreements, effective communication, shared decision-making and leadership.

From: <http://www.childrensinitiative.ca/learningvillage/index.asp>

This initiative addresses the idea of intersectoral collaboration for school aged children which is almost non-existent in Canada, given our historical focus on early childhood.⁷³ Within this initiative, there are three family resource centres, each located in a school. There are 17 project partners, some providing services and others providing additional funding support (a recent 4.5. million was granted). The issue of school aged child care is the next part of the initiative that is being addressed. Much work has been done to identify the barriers to families and what supports can be put in place to reduce barriers to service. A key barrier identified in this initiative was transportation. (Transportation was also identified as a key barrier in the Vancouver United Way of the Lower Mainland study on middle childhood.) Hence, future strategies in implementing school aged child care will involve a transportation plan for children. Currently, the active projects within the Calgary Learning Village are as follows:

The Learning Village Family Places – Within three schools providing activities, programs, information and connections for parents, children and the community

Community Adventures: An eight-week after-school program in 16 schools

The Learning Village Volunteer Engagement Strategy: Through schools, effectively engaging more community members to volunteer in Greater Forest Lawn;

The Learning Village Bridging Project: Supporting immigrant children and families to connect to schools and community resources;

The Learning Village Satellite Teams: Connecting, coordinating and celebrating opportunities, supports and services in schools;

The Learning Village Resiliency Strategy: Inspiring hope by enhancing social and emotional well-being, healthy lifestyles and meaningful community connections.

⁷³ There are beginnings of plans being designed for services for middle childhood, for example “Middle Childhood Matters” framework in Ontario. To this author’s knowledge and in consultation with others, this Calgary project is further along in the process when compared to others that are more in the planning stage.

Vancouver

Finally, the neighbouring city of Vancouver has been doing a great deal of work in the area of child care over the past several years. 2002⁷⁴ marked the beginning of a ten year plan to move forward in creating an integrated system of child care (infancy to age 12) using a hub model approach. In this approach, hubs would be built on existing child care centres over time and move from a fragmented type of service to an integrated model of service (See figure below). It is not a replacement to a fully funded child care system, but rather a way to maximize the existing resources (physical locations, staff, specialized services, administration). A central aspect to Vancouver's plan, that is unique and just starting to emerge in other parts of the country, is the focus on 0-12 year olds (as opposed to early childhood only). The key to Vancouver's plan appears to be the continual small steps taken in moving forward with the long term goal in mind. In these steps, several factors add to the momentum for change such as:

- The creation of the Joint Council on Child care;
- Dedicating funds to hire a child care coordinator at the municipal level
- Collaborating with external bodies to examine best practices and implement changes (e.g., YWCA⁷⁵, University of Toronto⁷⁶, UBC);
- Developing and implementing strategic planning around effective usage of existing community space and newly developed community space (e.g., child care as a condition in rezoning for development);
- Encouraging child care providers and all related services to join together in a hub model approach by highlighting the advantages for both families and providers
- Providing funding for the development of hubs;
- Creating multiple city owned and managed child cares;
- Regularly monitoring, evaluating and modifying the steps taken to achieve the goals of the ten year plan.

The City of Vancouver is very active in pushing the agenda forward.⁷⁷ The following comprise the focus of current work in Vancouver:

1. *Joint Council on Child care*

Representatives from the 3 local governments, child care agencies and UBC research staff meet bi-monthly at the Joint Council on Child Care to provide leadership in the areas of resources, planning, development, coordination, problem-solving and monitoring of child care/child development.

⁷⁴ For complete details of the vision for Vancouver, see "Moving Forward" Childcare: A Cornerstone of Child Development Services <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/020423/a13.pdf>

⁷⁵ See "YWCA "Lots to Build On, More to Do" <http://www.ywcavan.org/files/ACF7C29.pdf>

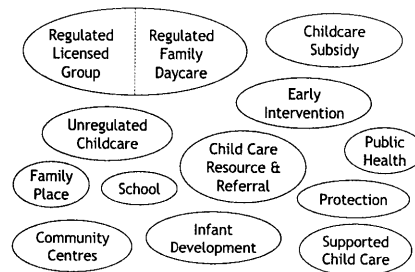
⁷⁶ Quality by Design initiative based at U of Toronto <http://www.childcarequality.ca/>

⁷⁷ See <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/childcare/current.htm#VanMap> for descriptions of current initiatives in Vancouver

Moving Forward - A Vision

Services supporting parental and non-parental care arrangements (childcare centre, family place, parenting center) are fragmented, isolated from one another, governed by different legislation/policies, often under-resourced and have limited structures to support collaboration (see diagram 1). In addition, the limitation on available land and the costs of construction impair the ability of many organizations and/or the city to expand services. Andrew Baque, associate director of the Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative suggests, "it's got to be less expensive to resolve questions of liability, and who pays the custodian after hours, than to build another gym".

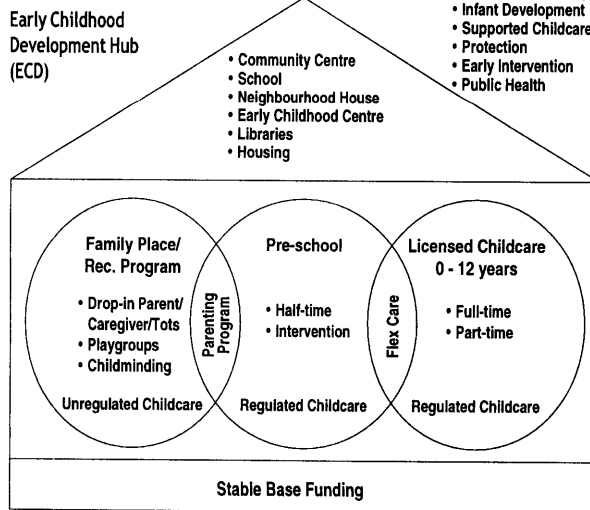
Diagram 1. Existing System



The City's vision (diagram 2) sets out a coordinated comprehensive range of child development services including early childhood education, child care and parenting/caregiver services in a network. The range of services may include, licensed group and family childcare, licensed preschool, parenting programs, supports to informal child care providers and stay at home parents,

including drop-in programs, play groups and child minding. Parents and/or caregivers who need support caring for their children will have a point of contact in their network to go for help and/or services. It builds on the belief that childcare facilities are family and child friendly places that are under utilized in the evenings and/or weekends.

Diagram 2. Vision



Child development hubs will be non-profit organizations, including existing childcare organizations, neighborhood houses, family places, schools, community centres, libraries, residential complexes and/or family serving organizations. These hubs will take a leadership role in their communities to help

2. Municipal involvement in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Services

The Joint Council on Child care is involved with a national research study, examining the municipal role in ECEC.

3. YWCA/ City of Vancouver Child Development Hub Model Project

The City of Vancouver has partnered with the YWCA on a pan-Canadian child care project funded by Social Development Canada. The goals of this project are to further develop Vancouver's integrated approach to child care through neighbourhood hubs and to examine the cost/effectiveness of the model.

4. Quality by Design

The City of Vancouver is a partner in the Quality by Design project. Quality by Design is a national exploratory project intended to develop strategies for improving quality at the policy level, by working with provincial policy makers on system-wide policy level approaches. The participating jurisdictions are Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the City of Vancouver. The project is coordinated by the Child Care Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto.

5. New City owned Child Care Programs

The City is developing a number of new city-owned child care facilities. For example:

- Bayshore (49 spaces) – Downtown;
- Homer St (69 spaces) – Downtown;
- International Village (49 spaces) – Downtown;
- CityGate II (24 spaces) - Main and Terminal;
- #1 Kingsway (49 spaces) - Mount Pleasant.

6. VanMap GIS Mapping of Child care Facilities

Social Planning, in conjunction with VanMap and Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre, has mapped licensed, group child care centres, preschools, out of school care centres, child development hubs and new city-owned facilities under development on the City's GIS mapping system.

The City of Vancouver has made many positive contributions to the world of child care and thus much can be learned from their past and ongoing work.

Key Findings

From the reviewed literature on child care it is clear that there is a divide between care in the early years and care in the school years (middle childhood). In the early years, there has been a great deal of focus on the importance of quality care and learning, however there is the continuing tension between the terms “early learning” and “child care” which, although are not at different ends of the spectrum (as child care should in an environment that fosters early learning), are often treated as separate entities. The importance of child care in the middle years has received scant attention in Canada, however there is promise with an emerging focus through work done under the leadership of the National Children’s Alliance and the United Way.

In examining best practices in meeting the needs of children from birth to age twelve, the practice that is being pursued in many municipalities is the “neighbourhood hub model”. In this model, the traditional fragmentation of services for children and families is replaced by the integration of the services in a given community. This community-based approach to integrating services allows for a more streamlined process for both parents and child care providers with the end result being more effective service delivery.

When we speak about child care, the first issue on people’s minds is the lack of spaces for children, however, in order to address the lack of child care spaces, the perspective of child care providers must be taken into consideration. In Canada, we are seeing fewer talented people going into the child care field due to low wages, little recognition, difficult working environment and lack of job security. The situation of child care providers is tied with the lack of spaces for children.

In speaking with experts, they reinforced the message that years of research, both academic and community-based, provide us the direction which we must pursue. Due to the fluctuating commitment of the federal and provincial governments, it is difficult to make progress in the field of child care. With the recent termination of the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, the hope for a national child care system was once again crushed. Despite the uncertainty of federal funding, several communities have created innovative practices that provide insight and guidance for other communities. Some of these communities are highlighted in this report. Finally international perspectives are considered as they showcase the value that a country can choose to place on the children.

CHAPTER EIGHT: VOICES OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Overview

In order to learn about the perspective of child care providers on the North Shore, child care providers were asked to complete a survey (See Appendix 5) exploring issues in four key areas:

1. Physical condition of the child care facility;
2. Issues related to child care staff;
3. Services and programs offered;
4. Issues related to child care planning.

In total, there are 255 different child care facilities on the North Shore (includes family, under three group child care, over three group child care, LNR, out-of-school care, Kindercare, childminding, preschool and specialized care).

City of North Vancouver	63 facilities
District of North Vancouver	139 facilities
District of West Vancouver	53 facilities

58 facilities (23%) returned a questionnaire from the following areas:

City of North Vancouver	16 facilities
District of North Vancouver	26 facilities
District of West Vancouver	16 facilities

From the 58 facilities that returned a survey there were:

15	licensed family care providers
2	registered LNR
3	infant/Toddler programs
5	group care (30 + months)
12	preschools
6	school-aged programs
15	group child cares offering more than one type of care (6 offering two different types of programs and 7 offering three or more programs)

In total, these 58 facilities offer 118 different programs.

Physical Conditions of Child Care Facilities

What is the approximate square footage of the facility? (based on 43 responses)

Type of Facility	Square Footage Range
Family Licensed Care and LNR	450 – 2,700 (1200)
Preschools	800 – 2,000 (1300)
School-aged	1,100 – 1,700 (1350)
Infant/Toddler	1,350 – 1,440 (only 2 reported)
Over 30 months group care	900 – 2,800 (1200)
Group Care (more than one program)	1,200 – 5,100 (1600)

Note: range may consider areas in which children from a particular program may not use in the course of the program (e.g., family care would have areas of the house which children may not use). Noted in brackets is the median square footage.

How old is the building? (based on 44 responses)

Type of Facility	Age of the building
Family Licensed Care and LNR	9 years – 85 years (50)
Preschools	19 years – 55 years (50)
School-aged	7 years - 94 years (25)
Infant/Toddler	2 years – 33 years (only 2 reported)
Over 30 months group care	15 years – 48 years (45)
Group Care (more than one program)	3 years – 57 years (40)

Noted in brackets is the median building age.

What are the approximate monthly operating costs? (based on 43 responses)

Type of Facility	Approximate monthly operating costs
Family Licensed Care and LNR	\$300 - \$3,000 (\$1770)
Preschools	\$2,000 - \$8,000 (\$3000)
School-aged	\$9,700 - \$20,000 (\$13,000)
Infant/Toddler	\$1,350 - \$1,440 (only 2 reported)
Over 30 months group care	\$2000 - \$10,000 (\$3450)
Group Care (more than one program)	\$1,060 - \$30,000 (\$20,000)

Note: Large variation attributed to some facilities incorporating all expenses (including salaries) whereas others (lower end of cost) reported actual costs related to the building)

Noted in brackets is the median monthly operating cost.

Do you have any plans for major renovations in the facility?

YES	16
NO	40
Not answered	2

Plans for repairs include: changing windows, replacing the hot water tank, replacing the furnace, painting walls, changing floors, fixing fencing, upgrading the washroom, replacing the kitchen, developing an outside yard and playground, repairing the deck, adding an addition to the facility in order to increase capacity and moving entire facility across the grounds.

Do you have any plans for the replacement of the facility?

YES	3
NO	52
Not answered	3

Reasons for replacement include: moving to a new home, searching for a larger facility, moving from the school as required due to school expansion.

In what type of building is the child care program located? (based on 57 responses)

Type of Building	Number of Facilities
Residential	23
Church	11
Commercial building	4
Portable building	4
Municipal building (other than a recreation centre)	1
School Building	5
Recreation Centre	3
Other (portable owned by school, on school grounds, on Rec centre property, in housing development)	6

If child care program is in a residential facility, is it also a residence?

From the 23 respondents who reported that they utilized a residential facility, 21 reported that it is also a residence, one reported that it was not a residence, and one did not provide a response to the question.

Owning versus Renting/Leasing a Facility

For those child care providers who reported **owning** the facility:

18 were freehold
4 were leasehold

From the 16 respondents who answered how many years remain on the mortgage, the breakdown is as follows:

0 years – 5 years:	4 facilities
6 years – 10 years:	2 facilities
11 years – 15 years:	2 facilities
16 – 20 years:	7 facilities
Over 20 years:	1 facility

For those child care providers who reported **leasing or renting** the facility:

13 leased the facility
16 rented the facility

The average monthly cost for renting or leasing was:

Between \$400 and \$1000:	15 facilities
Between \$1001 and \$1500:	1 facility
Between \$1501 and \$2000	6 facilities
Between \$2001 and \$2500	4 facilities
Above \$6000	1 facility

These leasing/renting fees included the following:

Utilities:	In 22 facilities
Minor repairs:	In 17 facilities
Janitorial service:	In 12 facilities
Major repairs:	In 13 facilities
Common space:	In 12 facilities
Outdoor space:	In 18 facilities
Other:	In 3 facilities (other included: full use of school facilities, gym use, security)

Issues Related to Child Care Staff

What strategies does your facility use to recruit child care workers?

Recruitment Strategy	Number of facilities reporting using the strategy
Ads in the paper (predominantly North Shore News)	22
Colleges and Training Centres	12
Westcoast Child Care/CCRR	8
Word of Mouth	8
Online job postings (specific organization is mentioned)	6
Child Care Advantage (online site for job seekers)	2
Workshops and Conferences	2
Other (hire from sub list or interns; resumes, career fairs; community notice boards)	4

How easy is it to find suitable staff? (based on 47 responses)

Very easy:	1 facility (FCC)
Moderately easy:	9 facilities (1 FCC, 5 Preschools, 1 School-Aged, 1 Group)
Somewhat difficult:	17 facilities
Very difficult:	20 facilities

From those respondents who indicated that it was very difficult (20 facilities) to find suitable staff, the following reasons given were:

Reasons	Number of facilities citing this as a reason
Not enough qualified applicants (lack proper training)	18
Pay is too low	6
Hours are too long	3
Person doesn't fit with existing team	3
Facility is too far from applicant's home	3
Not proficient in English	2
Not enough experience	2
No benefits	1

How easy is it to find substitute caregivers? (based on 50 responses)

Very easy:	1 facility
Moderately easy:	7 facilities
Somewhat difficult:	15 facilities
Very difficult:	27 facilities

For those respondents who answered that it was very difficult to find suitable substitute caregivers (27 facilities), the following reasons were cited:

Reasons	Number of facilities citing this as a reason
Not enough qualified applicants	14
Subs sometimes want only certain days/hours that don't match need	9
Wages are too low	6
They want regular hours and not on call	5
A great deal of screening is required and some subs don't want to go through this unless they are guaranteed consistent work	2
Not proficient in English	1

Is there a particular type of care for which it is more difficult to find staff?

Type of Care	Number of respondents citing this type of care as being difficult to staff
Under three years	8
School age	4
Montessori	3
Preschool	3
Daycare in general	4

Note: One of the challenges for preschools and school age care that respondents gave is that the hours are shorter and people tend to want full time hours

Staff Training

Facilities were asked to report on the number of hours staff worked, training and qualifications and number of years of service. In total there were 222 staff members reported by facilities

Number of hours employed per week	Number of staff members
1-5	11
6-10	16
11-15	15
16-20	31
21-25	25
26-30	18
31-35	17
36-40	77
41-45	3
46-50	1
51-60	5
61-70	3

Staff Qualifications

In terms of staff qualifications, staff had a wide variety of training and qualifications. The most common qualifications were as follows:

129 staff:	ECE training (diploma, certificate)
37 staff:	Infant/Toddler Certification
16 staff:	Special Needs Certification
17 staff:	Bachelor of Education
13 staff:	Bachelors Degree

Examples of other training and certifications mentioned less frequently were: Family child care, school aged care, certified teacher, Montessori training, and Masters Degree

Years of Service at the Facility

Number of years of service at current facility	Number of staff members at this level
Less than one year	28
Between 1 and 3 years	87*
Between 4 and 6 years	37*
Between 7 and 10 years	24
Between 11 and 15 years	20
Between 16 and 20 years	6
Over 20 years	4

* Note the large decrease from 1-3 years of service to 4-6 years of service



About the Programs and Services Offered at the Facility

What is the organizational structure of your facility? (based on 54 responses)

Privately owned:	34 facilities
Dedicated non-profit:	16 facilities
Program of a non-profit agency:	3 facilities
Other (municipal)	1 facility

Among these 58 facilities, the following 93 programs are offered:

Infant/toddler:	12 programs
Over 30 months:	9 programs
Preschool:	44 programs
Licensed Family Care:	15 programs
Child Minding:	1 program
Kindercare:	3 programs
School-Aged:	8 programs
Summer programs	1 program

Note: In total there are 344 different programs, thus the 93 programs reflected above represents 27% of all programs.



From the information provided in the child care provider survey, the program capacity and availability is as follows:

Program	Wait Time Range	Number on waitlist (many facilities do not keep a list)	Fee range	Number of children receiving subsidy	Range of Hours of Operation	Range of calls per week re: program
School Aged	0 – 2 years*	0 -50	\$330 - \$530 (or hourly: \$4.50 - \$6)	29	7:00 -6:00 (one offered only 3-6)	2- 5
Kindercare	0-2 years*	0-50	\$225 - \$290	13	7:30 -6:00	1-2
Kindercare/school-aged combined	0-2 years*	0-50	\$550 - \$650	See above	See above	See above
Preschool	0 – 2 years**	0 – 50	\$85 - \$410 (depends on whether 2, 3, or 4 days a week)		Offered between 2.25 and 2.75 hours/session	0 - 6
Infant /Toddler*****	2 months - ?	4 – 630***	\$895 - \$1400 (One charges \$4.50/hr)	1	7:00 – 6:00	4 - 10
Group Care (Over 30 months)	0 – 2 year	0-54****	\$ 600 - \$1200	31	7:30 – 7:00 (all but one ends at 5:30 or 6:00)	1 - 9
LNR	0- 1 year	0 - 3	\$850 or (\$43/day)	0	7:00 – 5:00	0 - 2
FCC	0 – 2 years	0 - 25	\$640 - \$1000*****	4	7:00 – 6:00	0-5
Childminding	1 month	2	N/A	N/A	5 hours per week	1

Notes:

*Two school aged programs and a Kindercare had a waitlist. This waitlist was between one and two years long.

** Only four of the facilities had waitlists

*** One centre had a waitlist of 630 families, therefore, prediction of wait time is not possible given the limited number of spaces. Centre based programs had long waitlists (average of two years) The other smaller programs (not centre-based) were easier to access with wait times of 2 – 4 months).

**** Large centres had substantial waitlists. Higher priced programs did not have a waitlist.

***** Some family daycares (3 in this sample) only operate four days a week. Hence the lower end of the rates reflect a four day week.

***** Centre-based infant/toddler programs had significant wait times for entrance into the program.

Do you have any plans to expand any of the above programs?

Yes:	11
No:	44
Not answered:	3

For those respondents who answered “yes”, the following expansion of programs involved finding a larger space or expanding the programs in the existing space (if the licensing board permitted this expansion).

Do you have any plans to reduce any of the existing programs?

Yes:	4
No:	46
Not answered:	8

For those respondents who answered “yes”, explanations included: waiting to hear if school board will continue to permit the use of space, wanting to reduce the number of children in order to provide a better environment, and choosing to discontinue school-aged care in favor of group child care for 3-5 year olds.

Do you have plans to add new programs?

Yes:	14
No:	42
Not answered:	2

The following programs are ones that the providers who answered “yes” hope to add:

- School aged*
- Full day Kindergarten
- Preschool
- Summer preschool
- Over 30 month group child care
- Infant/Toddler
- Lessons (e.g., music, tennis, biking) for Kindercare and school-aged care *
- Workshops for parents

* noted twice in responses

Issues in Child Care Planning

How will your facility be impacted if there is a permanent cessation of the Child Care Operating Fund⁷⁸?

The following were the responses given to address the event of the permanent cessation of the Child Care Operating Fund.

Raise fees:	28 facilities
Lower wages:	12 facilities (although most stated they would have to raise fees or lower salaries, not both)
Consider closing the facility:	6 facilities
Reduce staff:	5 facilities
Cut back on extras for kids:	4 facilities (e.g., outings, extra snacks, music programs)
Not replace/add equipment:	4 facilities (includes supplies for activities)
Forgo expansion plans:	2 facilities
Increase fundraising:	1 facility
Cut back on staff education:	1 facility

How will your facility be impacted if there are cutbacks of the Child Care Operating Fund?

Raise fees:	31 facilities
No staff raises:	3 facilities
Consider closing the facility:	3 facilities
Reduce staff:	4 facilities
Cut back on extras for kids:	8 facilities (e.g., outings, snacks, music programs etc.)
Not replace/add equipment:	5 facilities (includes supplies for activities)
Forgo expansion plans:	1 facility
Increase fundraising:	1 facility
Lower wages:	1 facility
Less focus on maintenance:	1 facility
Charge parents for extras:	1 facility (e.g., music and sports programs)

⁷⁸ The Child Care Operating Fund financially assists child cares to offset expenses that are not covered by parent fees. Assistance is based on a formula of funding depending on the number of children in the facility.

What type of local and provincial government support do you find most helpful?

Type of Support	Number of facilities indicating that this type of support is helpful (based on 58 facilities)
Operating Funds	46
Child Care Resource and Referral Program	45
Parent subsidy	33
Child Care Grants	33
Information and referral	30
Capital Funds	20
Advocacy	16
Other (gaming funds*, school partnerships for space usage)	11

* Noted by 6 facilities

Please prioritize your needs that you have for your facility in general?

Priority Area One	Number of facilities indicating that this was a priority
Supportive government funding for centres	10
Recruitment and retention of qualified staff	8
Upgrades and improvement to the centre (both physical upgrades and supplies)	7
Program expansion	7
Resource and referral program	3
Parent subsidies	2
Financial viability	2

Note: Other areas indicated were: higher wages for staff, ongoing maintenance, providing quality care at a low cost, and creating a safe environment.

Priority Area Two	Number of facilities indicating that this was a priority
Supportive government funding for centres	5
Resources and materials for children	4
Recruitment and retention of staff	4
Development of outside play space	4
Renovations to the facility	3
Increases in salary	3
Ongoing maintenance of programs	2
Ongoing maintenance of facility	2
Subsidies for parents	2
Supportive Child Care	2

Note: Other areas indicated were: extra funding for educational programs for children, maintaining a safe and clean environment, providing workshops and changes in regulations to allow for expansion.

For priority number three and four, the facilities listed the following:

Priority Area Three and Four	Number of facilities indicating that this was a priority
Supportive government funding for centres	3
Staff professional development	3
Upgrades to facility	3
Workshops for parents	2
Recruitment and retention of staff	2

Note: Other areas indicated were: ongoing maintenance of the building; purchase of equipment and easier access for families

What are the biggest challenges that you face in providing services at your facility?

Top Challenges	Number of facilities indicating that this is a challenge
Finding trained staff	17
Financial viability	16
Variability in enrollment*	15
Finding substitute caregivers	7
Challenges to expansion of programs	5
Possible reduction to CCOF	5
Upgrades to facility	4
Possible loss of leased space in school	3
Increasing staff wages	3
Finding appropriate space	3

* Noted in the child care provider surveys was the concern over the declining enrollment in some school-aged care and some preschools. For school-aged children, the speculation given was that children are being left more on their own for periods of time before and after school. For preschool, some providers are finding enrollment a challenge due to short duration of the preschool day. For parents who work, they are not able to drop off and pick up children. Preschools which have child care on site or associated with their program are at a distinct advantage, although the cost is higher to parents.

Other challenges indicated by one of two facilities were:

- Demand from parents for longer hours;
- Buying materials on a limited budget;
- Competition from other daycares who offer group daycare to over 30 months;
- Challenge of sharing space (need to clean up after/set up after other groups);
- Wear and tear on the body;

- Demand for under three year olds daycare;
- Long term planning due to uncertainty in government funding;
- Coping with rent increases;
- Not having benefits (medical, dental, pension);
- Parking;
- Reputation of family care;
- Strain on families in family care;
- Dealing with licensing regulations;
- Getting outdoor space.

What general trends do you see happening in child care that are worrisome to you?

Trends that are worrisome	Number of child care facilities indicating that this is a concerning trend
Loss of government support	18
Lack of space for infant and toddlers	6
Lack of qualified staff to hire	6
High fees for child care	5
Difficulty in finding space to open new facilities	4
Low quality of child care in some facilities	4
Low salaries for child care providers	3
Limited availability of quality child care	3

In addition to the above concerning trends, the following were indicated less frequently:

- The potential move toward junior Kindergarten which would impact jobs for ECEs;
- Long waitlists for infant/toddler care;
- Decrease in out of school care enrollment and the possibility that more children are being left alone before and after school;
- Good staff leaving for better paying jobs that are less stressful;
- Staff burnout;
- Lack of municipal support;
- Deterioration of physical facilities;
- Strict regulations (caregiver/student ratio; required square footage);
- Reliance on unlicensed care;
- Decrease in child birthrate;
- Lack of public support for child care;
- Struggle of parents balancing work and family;
- Increasing gap between those who can and can't afford child care;
- Shift of funding to early learning at the cost of child care;
- Lack of support for children with special needs.

What is working well for you in providing child care?

What is working well for you	Number of facilities indicating this as a factor
Government funding (CCOF; subsidies)	24
NSCR/CCRR support	17
Parent involvement	10
Support from licensing officers	4
Dedicated staff	3
Other agency support	3

Less frequently indicated were:

- Networks of child care providers
- Local professional development opportunities
- Supported Child Development
- Supported Child Care
- Funds from Gaming
- School District support

In your opinion, what are some ways that your municipal government can assist in making child care better?

Area of desired assistance	Number of facilities indicating this factor would make child care better
Capital grants/financial assistance	14
Assistance in locating affordable space	13
Revising bylaws that limit child care	7
Creating sites in schools/ community spaces	5
Policies for new buildings to include child care	3

Less frequently indicated were:

- Help promote the profession of ECE;
- Assist with playground development and maintenance;
- Supplement wages
- Provide professional development opportunities;
- Work with licensing to allow more children in a facility if space permits;
- Advocate for universal child care;
- Monitor licensing officers (ensure that they have proper training in child care issues);
- Implement stricter guidelines for the regulation of quality of child cares;
- Assist in mediation when neighbourhood concerns arise;
- Provide incentives to open new child care facilities.

Final Comments for Child Care Providers:

Child care providers were invited to make any final comments. Many of the comments have been included above in the survey results. However, the following comments were not part of the previous section:

- It would be helpful if school districts work more closely with local ECEs in the enhancement of early learning;
- Perhaps municipal spaces (houses) could be renovated and then used as child care facilities;
- In order to increase family care, it could be beneficial to promote this opportunity to new mothers as a career option while their children are young;
- Given the cultural diversity of the North Shore, it would be helpful to have more resources to help promote effective communication with the diverse parent population.

Key Findings from Child Care Provider Surveys

Government funding is critical to child care providers. This funding provides some of the support necessary to maintain wages at the same level (albeit at a low level) to purchase needed supplies and equipment, and to run the centre on a daily basis in order that it is financially viable. The current government funding (pre-cutbacks) is by no means sufficient for many facilities as several continue to struggle with paying better wages, and maintaining or upgrading their facilities. If funding were to be further cutback, facilities would not consider expansion as they would be in a difficult situation financially, and some facilities voiced thoughts about closing.

Difficulties recruiting and retaining staff is a tremendous problem for facilities on the North Shore. There are not enough talented people going into the early childhood education when compared to the need in the community, this is particularly glaring in infant and toddler care. Given the low wages, other careers are more lucrative or some of the graduates from ECEs opt for other positions in an environment in which the pay and recognition is higher than in child care. A further problem that is reflective of the Canadian situation is that the people who go into ECE do not necessarily stay in the field. In this needs assessment there was a huge drop in the number of employees remaining at the same facility from years 1-3 (87 employees) to years 4 – 6 (37 employees). In part, this could be reflective of the attempt by employees to secure better paying jobs after being in the field for 1-3 years, however, the drop was significant. This attrition rate is also seen in other high stress jobs such as teaching where the number of people leaving the field after five years is significant.

Enrollment was another challenge on the North Shore. Some facilities found that the variation in enrollment made it difficult to plan for the future while others were always full with a long waitlist. In examining those facilities with waitlists, it was clear that centre-based care was in huge demand when compared to smaller care facilities, including home child care. Even in the area of infant/toddler care, openings were reported

in smaller child cares but centre care had such long waitlists that it would be hard to predict if a family would get a space while their child was in that age category. School-aged care also had wide variation from no wait to a two year wait. Preschools and Kindercare faced the extra challenge of being short in the number of hours of service thus, at times and in certain neighbourhoods, it appeared difficult for parents to utilize the facility. At the same time, it was difficult for child care providers to sustain the numbers to ensure financial viability. Having said that, preschools that were larger seemed once again to be full to capacity with a waitlist (this could be a reflection of reputation combined with the demographics of that particular neighbourhood).

In terms of what is needed for *ongoing support for facilities*, continued government support at all three levels is key to the child care industry as the fees would have to sky rocket if all expenses were to be covered by parents. As it is, facilities are in a difficult situation of competing in terms of price. Other key support which facilities felt would be helpful is having the municipality assist in finding and securing reasonably priced locations which could be used as child care spaces. It was suggested by several respondents that the utilization of existing community spaces would be the best route to pursue. This would include working with the school districts to access schools and with municipalities for their owned locations, such as houses or space sharing in facilities (e.g., community centres, libraries). The support of the NSCR (CCRR) was indicated by a large number of facilities as being an important source of support in terms of a referral source but also with materials and educational opportunities.

Taken together, it is clear that child care providers are working hard to make their facilities function and to provide quality care in the face of many challenges. In the face of further cutbacks, there is wide variation in the level of optimism of the facilities. Some feel that they will not be able to sustain their operation at a level to which they would feel comfortable. Some of the smaller operations appear to face greater challenges than some of the larger facilities. This may relate to a longstanding reputation the larger facilities enjoy in the community for offering high quality care. Location of facilities may also be a critical factor in maintaining adequate enrollment as some neighbourhoods have a much higher demand than others for child care.

CHAPTER NINE: VOICES OF PARENTS

What follows are the results from the parent survey (see Appendix 6) that was completed during the spring of 2007.

A total of **377 parents** completed a survey. In terms of regional breakdown, it was as follows:

West Vancouver	62 (16.4%)
City of North Vancouver	108 (28.6%)
District of North Vancouver	199 (52.8%)
Lions Bay	3 (.8%)
Bowen Island	5 (1.4%)

Impacts from Policy Changes

“Have you felt an impact due to changes in the federal and provincial government child care policies?”

198 (52.5%) responded “YES”
139 (36.9%) responded “NO”
40 (10.6%) did not respond

It must be noted that, due to the timing of this survey and the changes in senior government support that had just been announced, many families were not aware of the pending changes or if they were aware, many would not experience the direct impact (e.g., increase in fees) until after the completion of this report. Hence, the results of this question must be interpreted cautiously.

Further to this, parents were asked to provide comments about how the changes in policies have impacted them. *Impacts on parents* included the following:

- *Higher fees**: Some parent fees had already been increased; others were aware of an upcoming increase in fees in the near future and other parents anticipated an increase. The UCCB was noted as not being helpful at all to parents utilizing outside child care as the raises in child care fees are greater than the \$100 taxable credit.
- *Waitlists**: Worries about even longer waitlists caused by possible closures and the unlikelihood of new facilities opening up due to financial challenges in starting and operating a child care. In addition, there were concerns that the future quality of child care may be negatively impacted due to financial hardships.
- *Stress on child care providers*: Parents noted that they were bothered by the fact that they knew child care providers would not see an increase in their wages as a result of recent provincial policies. Parents worried that the morale of child care providers was negatively impacted by recent policy changes
- *Family Planning*: Considerations about whether they could afford another child due to child care costs.
- *Work issues*: Feelings of frustration that the recent provincial policies would make it even harder to find child care thus harder to return to work.

* indicates multiple comments regarding this issue

Satisfaction with Child Care on the North Shore

Parents were also asked with what aspects of child care on North Shore are they most satisfied?

- *High quality of care:* This included dedicated, caring and knowledgeable staff, quality activities, stimulating environment, cleanliness, safety, continuity of staff. Centre-based care, preschool and family care were noted in these comments;
- *Location:* Those who had child care close to home, work or a school mentioned that this makes the transportation issue easier;
- *Preschools:* High quality learning environments;
- *Out-of-School programs based at the schools:* Having the care based at the child's home school was reported as being very convenient and eliminated the challenge of finding transportation to and from care;
- *Child Care Resource and Referral:* Found staff and child care guidance very helpful;
- *Drop in/ play group programs:* These were enjoyable and welcoming
- *Nannies:* Some parents commented that they felt relieved that they had a nanny and that they made use of the informal nanny network on the North Shore (families who have a nanny and provide references and referrals informally)
- *Variety of Choice:* Having the choice between centre-based or family care

The above were mentioned multiple times by parents. What follows are comments that were also mentioned by a small number of parents:

- *Licensing:* Feeling more secure that there are rules and regulations in place for child care;
- *Hours of operation:* Hours worked well for parents;
- *Affordable:* Comments that child care was reasonably priced;
- *Educational Opportunities:* Workshops available through some facilities on the North Shore;
- *Teacher: Student ratio:* Comments about the small groups of children which allowed more teacher contact;
- *Extended Kindergarten option in West Vancouver;*
- *Specific Facilities were mentioned by parents as having outstanding care and/or offering support in seeking child care.*

Top Concerns about Child Care on the North Shore

Next parents were asked: *What are your top concerns about child care on the North Shore that you would like to see addressed?*

This question received a great deal of response from parents. By far, the two top concerns were:

1. The high cost of child care: The high cost of care due to lack of funding (government or via subsidies to a wider range of families) to offset cost was a concern. Parents noted that it was hard to afford to have two children receiving child care in a two income family let alone one income. Just as lone parents are struggling, “middle class” parents are feeling more financial pressure and stress as the cost of living increases on the North Shore. Having two or more children sometimes led families to have one parent withdraw from the workforce and manage the financial strain until the children reached school age or to opt for a nanny as it was more cost effective and convenient (eliminated the transportation issues, having to go to two different facilities for care due to age of children, worrying about care during the holiday break) however, it was also mentioned that there was a loss of the group socialization when children had a nanny at home).

2. The lack of available spaces hence the long waitlists: Parents voiced concern that there wasn't enough availability of high quality (quality activities that are developmentally appropriate, opportunities for exercise, clean, safe, ECE trained staff) child care settings. Although many parents noted that there should be more family care (particularly for younger children), the majority of parents wanted to see more centre-based care for children. The critical shortage of infant/toddler care was mentioned several times as was the out of school care for children kindergarten to age 12 (parents noted they had to enroll their child in a school out of their catchment area just to access out-of-school care and care for children with special needs. Parents also noted that some areas had a critical shortage of care so it put parents in a situation in which they had to have child care in a location that was not convenient.

In addition to the two above areas of great concern to parents, the following were also noted by parents as areas of some concern:

Child Care Providers

- Recruitment and Retention of well-trained child care staff in order to reduce high turnover experienced in some facilities;
- Low wages of child care staff;
- Variation in training levels (both amount and quality of training).

In Child Care Centres

- Large number of children in comparison to staff (particularly with special needs children);
- Variation in quality across child cares leading to wishes for better monitoring (programs, training, cleanliness, physical environment, adherence to rules and regulations about the number of children)
- Lack of programs for children with special needs (including those over the age of 12 years);
- Variation in programs/activities across child care centres;
- Challenges in accommodating children of different ages in one location;
- Older centres that need physical upgrades but without enough financial support.

Securing Child Care

- Challenge of finding care during the holidays (summer, Christmas etc.).
- Challenge of finding more flexible child care (part time, extended hours, shift work).
- Confusion of waitlists: never knowing exactly where you are on the waitlist which makes it hard to plan for work; lack of transparency of the waitlist; the frustration of having to put your name on several waitlists; having to pay deposits to have your name put on the waitlist.
- Having to use alternative plans (e.g., nanny, piecemeal care for a child, unlicensed care, care that is lower in quality than hoped for by parent).

Support from External Bodies

- Perceived lack of support from the Ministry of Education, school districts and partners in creating child care in every school.
- Perceived lack of municipal support in the creation of more child care spaces;
- Challenges in opening up a child care given space shortages, costs and bylaws

Child Care Costs

“Have you applied for a child care subsidy?”

71 (18.8%) responded “YES”
 276 (73.2%) responded “NO”
 30 (8%) did not respond

Have you applied for the Federal Universal Child Care Benefit? (Note that only parents who have children under 6 are eligible to apply for the UCCB)

307 (81.4%) responded “YES”
 51 (13.5%) responded “NO”
 19 (5%) did not respond

Approximately what percent of your net monthly income is spent on child care?

310 parents answered this question. 67 parents did not give a percent but some offered the exact amount spent on child care, however, from this, we were not able calculate what percent of their income this constitutes. Of the 309 parents who answered the question with a percent, the range was from 0% - 70%. Twenty one parents who indicated 0% were parents who, for the most part, were looking for child care and had not yet successfully secured a space. Of the remaining 288 parents, the breakdown was as follows:

Amount of net income spent on child care	Number of parents	Percent
.5% - 5%	32	11%
6% - 10%	57	20%
11% - 15%	56	19.5%
16% - 20%	50	17%
21% - 25%	37	13%
26% - 30 %	28	10%
31% - 35%	10	3.5%
36% - 40%	10	3.5%
41% - 49%	0	0
50%	6	2%
Above 50%	2	.5%

Findings from Parents who have Child Care

The next section highlights the findings from parents who have child care for their children.

A total of 465 children ranging from infancy to age seventeen (one child was 13 and another child was 17) were reported as receiving child care in the following areas:

District of West Vancouver	22%
City of North Vancouver	29%
District of North Vancouver	47%
Other	2%

What type of setting is this child in?

A total of 501 child care spaces were reported (Note: that some children are in more than one setting, therefore, although there are 465 children identified by parents as receiving child care, they occupy a total of 501 spaces in various settings)

Setting Type	Number of Children utilizing this setting	Percent
Daycare 3 years and under	76	15%
Daycare 3 years and over	107	21%
In-home Care	82	16%
Preschool	78	16%
Out-of School Care	94	19%
Other (e.g., nanny, drop in)	64 (23 had nannies)	13%

Please rank the factors utilized in choosing child care?

Parents were asked to consider eight factors (with an option to add other factors not listed) when choosing child care. Furthermore, parents were asked to rank these factors in order of importance. The following four tables present the results of 387 parents who provided a ranking of some or all of these factors. Tables one through three present the results of the three most important factors. The fourth table presents the ranking of all factors when considered together.

Most Important Factor	Number of parents identifying factor as most important (based on 387 responses)	Percent
Staff Experience	101	26%
Location	58	15%
Safety	56	14%
Space Availability	52	13%
Quality of Activities	38	10%
Other *	32	8%
Affordability	26	7%
Hours of Operation	18	5%
Number of Children	6	2%

* Other factors noted were: cleanliness, philosophical approach, outdoor play area, overall environment, staff education, consistency in care (low staff turnover), support to special needs children, staff interaction with children, transportation issues, multiculturalism, caring staff, reputation of the facility, facility recommended, can accommodate more than one child from the family and satisfaction of children.

Second Most Important Factor	Number of parents identifying factor as most important (365 responses)	Percent
Staff Experience	83	23%
Quality of Activities	82	22%
Location	53	15%
Safety	43	12%
Hours of Operation	33	9%
Space Availability	27	7%
Affordability	24	7%
Other	14	4%
Number of Children	6	1%

Third Most Important Factor	Number of parents identifying factor as most important (349 responses)	Percent
Quality of Activities	70	20%
Staff Experience	60	17%
Location	55	16%
Safety	43	12%
Hours of Operation	42	12%
Space Availability	27	8%
Affordability	26	7%
Other	10	3%
Number of Children	16	5%

Taken together, when one examines the top three factors in choosing child care, the results are as follows:

Factor	Percent of parents endorsing factor
Staff Experience	22%
Location	15%
Quality of Activities	14%
Safety	13%
Space Availability	10%
Hours of Operation	9%
Affordability	7%
Other	5%
Number of Children	3%

How satisfied are you with your child care?

Parents were asked to rate how satisfied they were with their child’s care. A total of 455 responses were given.

Very Satisfied	290 (64%)
Quite Satisfied	122 (27%)
Somewhat Satisfied	30 (6%)
Neutral	12 (3%)
Very Dissatisfied	1 (less than 1%)

How easy was it getting a placement in this child care?

Parents were asked to rate their experience in securing a placement in child care (a total of 446 responses were given)

Very easy	61 (14%)
Easy	192 (43%)
Difficult	140 (31%)
Very difficult	53 (12%)

Those that found it easier to find daycare offered some comments which shed some insight into the child care issue.

“Very easy because sibling attended same school a few years ago, therefore we had priority. New families may have had a more difficult time.”

“Easy only because I am staff.”

“Easy because this is my second child so I requested a spot for the following year.”

“It had just opened at the same time I needed daycare.”

“New facility.”

“Because of friendship.”

“Because already had a sibling at the daycare.”

“It wasn't easy or hard, it was LUCK.” (Luck was mentioned five times)

Further to this, those parents (12%) who identified getting a placement in child care “**very difficult**” were asked to provide comments about their experience. The following comments reflect an explanation of the difficulty that they encountered.

Waitlists (There were close to 50 comments related to waitlists)

“Long Waitlist”

“The waitlist was 2 years long!”

“3 years of waiting”

“Took two years and having priority from having another sibling in to get daycare. Costs are high and wait lists are long.”

“On the waiting list for approximately a year”

“Placed on a waiting list for several months. No full time spaces available right away.”

“This daycare had spots for our two boys but every other daycare had a waitlist at least a year long. One had a waitlist of 3 years.”

“Began searching in August and did not receive a call back until late November. Need 2 spaces, which may have made it more difficult.”

“2 year waiting list and no guarantee they will be able to keep my daughter at the facility when she begins school as before/after school spaces are so limited.”

“Had to get on waitlists while pregnant and then the centre closed down. Found a new centre, but no guaranteed of a spot after she turns 3. On waitlists again.”

“I was on the wait list for 3 years. I had to put my oldest in daycare 2 months before I needed it just to hold the spot and pray my youngest would get in.”

“My two children have care from 3 different facilities. Have been on waitlists for before/after kindergarten care for 2 years and not confident the spots will be open when I need them.”

“They dropped my name off the wait list and did not appropriately notify me. I waited 2 years or more.”

“Was put on a waiting list for one year and not offered a spot until one month into the school year.”

“Were on the wait list for a few months and told we may not get in when we applied.”

Losing Child Care

“The child care is closing down.”

Scheduling

“Currently child is cared for 2 days per week. On 4 waiting lists for full time daycare.”

“Difficult time finding space and still only have 4 days per week care.”

“Difficult to find a facility that would work with our schedules and take both children. Had to adjust our work schedules to match daycare availability.”

“Getting child care space was tight. We were lucky to get 2 days per week and lucky they pick her up at school.”

“Difficult to find a facility that would work with our schedules and take both children. Had to adjust our work schedules to match daycare availability.”

“Easy to get in but difficult because I only got a couple of days initially. The next year I got all the days I needed.”

Perseverance

“Took 25 phone calls and 3 interviews to find. Would have been impossible without info package from NS Community Resource Centre.”

Inconvenient

“Very few workable choices. Had to transfer my son to a different school to obtain onsite out of school care. BC is extremely behind Alberta and Ontario.”

“Have to go to an elementary school out of catchment because I'd like to keep my son at current daycare. That's not convenient.”

“Children are in two different daycares until a space opens up for my daughter in July.”

Availability

“Was not able to get child care. Had to hire a nanny and wait 2 years to get into a group daycare.”

“There are no child care resources in our neighbourhood. Only viable option is to hire your own child care provider.”

“Waitlist for preschool. Ended up asking a friend who is a stay at home mom as I couldn't find care in a licensed place.”

“There are not many places for under 2 yr olds in registered daycares.”

Affordability

“Couldn't find anything affordable near home.”

“Difficult to find affordable daycare for 2, paying grandparent instead.”

Quality

“Difficulty was finding quality, reliable daycare that had before and after school care.”

“Easy only because I was willing to pay \$525.” (out of school care)

“ It's so hard to find a good nanny!”

“There's no openings in good care- there are some AWFUL places!!”

What is the monthly cost of this child care?

Parents were asked to indicate the cost of child care for each child. In order to more accurately view the results, families who indicated that they used a nanny (23 families were considered separately. Among those families using nanny care for their children, the cost ranged from \$400/month (part time or shared nanny) to \$2200/month.

One family reported using a combination of child care and nanny care for three younger children at a cost of \$3000/month.

Among those families who utilized other forms of child care (this includes part time and full time) the range was as follows:

Monthly Cost	Number of Families	Percent
\$0 - \$200*	68	17%
\$201 - \$400	90	23%
\$401 - \$600	68	17%
\$601 - \$800	99	25%
\$801 - \$1000	49	12%
\$1001 - \$1200	22	6%
\$1201 - \$1400	3	Less than 1%
Above \$1400	1	Less than 1%

* Some families have other family members who care for children at no cost

NB: Note that infant/toddler care is the most costly but that there are a limited number of spaces on the North Shore, hence these figures must be examined cautiously as they reflect space availability.

How far is this child care from your residence?

Distance	Number of Parents Reporting	Percentage of Parents
0 – 1 km	97	31%
1.1 km. – 2 km.	58	18%
2.1 km. – 5 km.	99	32%
5.1 km. – 10 km.	39	12%
10.1 km. – 15 km.	13	4%
15.1 km. – 20 km.	6	2%
Over 20 km.	2	1%

Is the child care in a location that works well for you?

444 child care locations were commented on. Of the 444, 402 parents (91%) reported that the location works well for them and 42 parents (9%) reported that it did not work well. For the 9% of parents for whom the location did not work well, when asked where they would prefer the child care to be, the following answers were given by 43 parents (note that in a couple of cases parents said that the location works well but it would be even better in one of the following situations):

- 2 parents would like the child care near work (5%)
- 4 parents would like the child care near public transit (9%)
- 5 parents would like the child care at a school (12%)
- 10 parents would like the child care closer to home or work (23%)
- 22 parents would like the child care closer to home (51%)

Findings from Parents who are Looking for Child Care

The following presents the results of parents who are currently seeking care for a child or children.

In what area are you seeking child care?

There were 157 responses to this question. The areas in which parents were looking for child care are as follows:

City of North Vancouver	49 parents (31%)
District of West Vancouver	27 parents (17%)
District of North Vancouver	78 parents (50%)
Other (Bowen Island)	3 parents (2%)

What type of child care are you seeking?

There were 169 responses to this question (note that some parents gave more than one choice of the child care that they were seeking). The type of child care sought is as follows:

Daycare for children under 3 years old	53 parents (31%)
Daycare for children over 3 years old	28 parents (17%)
In-home daycare	20 parents (12%)
Preschool	19 parents (11%)
Out of school care:	41 parents (24%)
Other*:	8 parents (5%)

* “Other” responses included: special needs child care, nanny, playschool/drop-in and Kindercare.

What are the key factors in choosing a child care setting?

Most important factor for parents seeking child care

Most Important Factor	Number of parents identifying factor as most important (based on 90 responses)	Percent
Safety	16	18%
Location	14	15%
Space Availability	14	16%
Staff Experience	12	13%
Staff Education	12	13%
Quality of Activities	9	10%
Affordability	6	7%
Other *	5	6%
Hours of Operation	1	1%
Number of Children	1	1%

*Other factors include: in-home support due to convenience; established and stable daycare, caring and nurturing staff who engage the children, cleanliness and condition of the facility, similar age of children, and discipline philosophy.

Second Most Important Factor	Number of parents identifying factor as most important (based on 83 responses)	Percent
Staff Experience	21	25%
Hours of Operation	13	16%
Staff Education	11	13%
Location	9	11%
Quality of Activities	8	10%
Safety	8	10%
Affordability	6	7%
Space Availability	5	6%
Other	1	1%
Number of Children	1	1%

Third Most Important Factor	Number of parents identifying factor as most important (based on 81 responses)	Percent
Quality of Activities	15	19%
Safety	13	16%
Location	11	14%
Space Availability	10	12%
Hours of Operation	9	11%
Staff Experience	8	10%
Staff Education	6	7%
Affordability	7	9%
Other	1	1%
Number of Children	1	1%

The top three factors for parents seeking child care (data from three tables above) are:

Top Three Factors in Seeking Child Care	Percent of parents endorsing factor
Staff Experience	16%
Safety	15%
Location	13%
Quality of Activities	13%
Staff Education	11%
Space Availability	11%
Hours of Operation	9%
Affordability	7%
Other	3%
Number of Children	1%

What have been the barriers to finding child care?

122 parents indicated barriers to finding child care. Some parents noted more than one barrier.

There are no spaces available:	90 parents (35%) indicated this is a barrier
Too expensive:	56 parents (22%) indicated this is a barrier
Hours do not fit schedule:	41 parents (16%) indicated this is a barrier
Location is not convenient:	41 parents (16%) indicated this is a barrier
Other:	28 parents (11%) noted other barriers*

* Other barriers included:

- Most programs are not active enough for an eight year old;
- All the “good” daycares seem to be full;
- Lack of facility that will accept two children of different ages;
- Concerned about English language proficiency at some child care facilities;
- Hard to find part time child care;
- Needing someone who can drop off and pick up;
- Prefer in-home child care (my home);
- Need flexible child care due to shift work;
- Not enough child care close to schools.

From the above “other” barriers, transportation, finding part time child care and concern about the quality of child care were mentioned several times.

Finally, parents were invited to make additional comments. Comments included:

- If a parent had not had a connection in the child care field, their child would not have secured a space in child care;
- Happy to have family members to help take care of their child otherwise parent would not be able to afford to work and pay for child care;
- Parent needs to leave school-aged child unsupervised at school before and after school due to cost of out of school care;
- There is lots of unlicensed care so parents are forced into a difficult situation when they feel they have no other choice;
- It would take a lot of pressure off families if they didn’t have to plan so far ahead (as soon as they get pregnant, they need to look for child care);
- Thoughts about leaving the North Shore due to high cost of homes and then the expense of child care;
- Need to have a child care plan – like the school system has a plan;
- Confusion over mixed message from government around the concern about the declining birthrate yet lack of support for families who would like children (or multiple children).

Advocating for child care¹

In the spring of 2006, a parent committee at one elementary school on the North Shore worked together to complete a needs assessment at the school in order to lobby for out of school care. Twenty-two percent of families responded and from the group, 86% of the respondents required out of school care (50 families). The following were some of the comments on the surveys:

“To be able to get back in the workforce, quality, accessible care is needed. In the area there is limited availability for child care where children are picked up/dropped off to school – especially for 3 children from the same family.”

“I would be thrilled to have after school care. I have been using the scant neighborhood caregivers since K.”

“I am currently scrambling for after-school care and paying a neighbor.”

Note: To date, no out of school care has been created at the school.

Key Findings

Overall parents indicated that they felt there were several facilities that offered *quality child care* on the Northshore, although almost all respondents indicated that getting a space in quality child care was very difficult due to the lack of availability versus the demand for child care. Given the shortage, parents had to be willing to work their schedules and transportation around whatever space became available (part time care, further distance from home). There was the feeling that they could not be too demanding as resources in child care are scarce. The high cost appeared to be a hardship for many families, in particular for families who have more than one child and lone parent households.

Shortages exist in all areas of child care. Interestingly, preschool was not indicated to be an area of critical shortage (when compared to group care or school-aged care) in this assessment. This could, in fact, be due to the difficulty that working parents experience in accessing preschool, given the short hours that preschool is in session and the challenge of finding a care provider who would be able to drop off and pick up a child from preschool. Thus, many children from working families may not be able to attend preschool. In addition, there is the added cost of paying for both preschool and child care in the event that a family was able to find a child care provider who would provide transportation. However, there were a small number of preschools that had a substantial waitlist and once again, this may be a reflection of reputation in the community and community demographics.

Parents indicated that *infant/toddler care* was in great shortage and that, due to no other option, a handful of respondents have turned to unlicensed child care providers for child

care. Furthermore, it was reported that there are a number of unlicensed child care providers on the North Shore.

Out of school care was also indicated by parents to be a source of frustration due to the limited number of schools that offer a program. Moreover, where a child may be able to access out-of school care elsewhere, the problem becomes transporting the child to and from school as this is not typically provided by many child care providers.

Despite respondents indicating that there was high quality care available on the North Shore, many respondents noted that there is a *wide variation* in the quality and that the “very good” child care facilities have very long waiting lists while the child cares in which quality is lower have the shorter waitlist. A large number of parents want to see more centre-based care created as they felt that the operations of centre-based care are more transparent than other types of care. However, there were many parents who voiced a wish to see more spaces in family care as they had had very positive experiences and wanted their child, in particular younger children, to be in smaller settings.

Parents voiced frustration at the difficulty in *accessing one child care facility for two or more children of different ages*. Many parents indicated that they were driving to two or more facilities for care for their children, and they felt that they had no other options (due to age limits). Many were on waitlists, hoping to get their children into care at the same facility. Furthermore, there were some parents who opted for a nanny, particularly when the family had two or more children. This eliminated the challenges in terms of coordinating child care for two or more children and the cost of having a nanny was lower than paying for two or more spaces in a child care facility. Indeed, in speaking with families on the North Shore, we learned of an informal “nanny referral” network that some families turn to for assistance.

Despite the frustrations and stress that parents experience in relation to child care, no one indicated that they felt a reduction in the cost in child care should be achieved by expecting facilities to lower fees. There was an understanding by many parents that, for the care providers, the *pay is very low in child care* and that this inequity needs to be addressed in order to attract and keep talented people in the field. All parents who utilized child care noted that the UCCB has put parents further behind. They would like to see this money go to child care in order to have a system that receives more government support, with the overall impact that the system will increase in quality and stability. Parents had many suggestions as to what they would like to see happen and the majority of these changes hinged on rallying the support of the Ministry of Education, school districts, and municipal, provincial and federal governments.

Among the broad areas in which parents would like to see changes are:

- The creation of more, high quality, accessible (family friendly) spaces;
- A reduction in the cost of child care;
- The recruitment and retention of more, high quality, child care providers who receive fair wages;
- Greater consistency across facilities in programming and quality.

CHAPTER TEN: FOCUS GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW RESULTS

A series of focus groups and individual phone interviews were conducted with parents in order to garner more of depth information around child care on the North Shore. A total of 23 parents participated in exploring four key questions:

1. What is working well on the North Shore in terms of child care?
2. What are the biggest challenges in child care on the North Shore?
3. What are the frustrations of parents in relation to child care on the North Shore?
4. What are some solutions to the child care challenges on the North Shore?

What is working well on the North Shore in terms of child care?

- *Number of high quality facilities:* There are many centres and family child cares on the North Shore that provide excellent care with stable staff and dynamic programs. Furthermore, many provide mentoring and education for families around child development issues. Highly trained staff who can assist in the identification of special needs (e.g., hearing, vision or motor skills problems) was noted as important. Child cares that fostered inclusiveness were appreciated by parents.

“There’s a lot of good facilities....there’s just not many spaces.”

“By quality, I mean...excellent care, dynamic programming, happy places to be where I could entrust my child to.”

- *NSCR:* been helpful in assisting with locating child care; they have separated the daycares by area which makes it easier for parents to locate convenient facilities.

“The referral service....I found it very helpful. They break down the list in terms of regions that you are prepared to go to.”

- *Support of community health nurses:* stable staff of nurses can provide guidance about child development issues and child care considerations
- *Capilano College:* good ECE program

“...their (ECE) teaching of the children rubbed off on the parents.”

- *Community Centres:* childminding and activities for families; teen babysitting courses help raise the bar on child care; students who work at summer camps can be a good resource for assisting a family with child care.

“The community recreation centre programs are good...all the variety...”

What are the Biggest Challenges in Child Care on the North Shore?

Child Care Facility Challenges

- *Limited number of facilities*: shortage in all areas but particularly in infant and toddler care;
- *Costs*: it can be very difficult for facilities to make operations financially viable
- *Rules and regulations*: a more transparent quality assurance system is needed for family care as there appears to be a wide variation in quality;
- *Establishing a child care facility*: it is very difficult to navigate the process if one wants to start up a child care;
- *Addressing diversity*: concern about child cares ability to meet the diverse cultural and linguistic needs of children (E.g, there is no publicly funded Francophone child care);
- *Quality of facilities*: there is a wide degree of variation in the quality of child care facilities. Some are very old and are in desperate need of upgrades;
- *Staffing challenges*: there aren't enough trained people working in the field.

“Why go into early childhood education? They don't pay you enough. You should be a teacher.”

“Child care centres should be ideal environments for children's development and nurturing.”

“One was in the basement, not enough sunlight. I didn't want to put my child there.”

Child Care Providers

- *Low wages in child care*: make it hard to get people to go into and stay in the field of child care

“...whether people view ECE as professionals.....and they are but I don't think that they're treated that way. They are seen as babysitters.”

- *The tension between early learning and child care*: there needs to be a balance between the two areas with consideration of what meets the needs of all families

*“Even with the “Ready, Set” program...it's all geared during the day.”
(when many parents are at work)*

“They are focusing on the early learning foundations but they need to focus on actual daycare centres.”

Challenges in accessing appropriate child care that works well for families

- *Waitlist process:* is not effective as there is no way of knowing when and if you will be called for a space; very time consuming getting your name on different lists; there is a cost with some centres to put your name on the waiting list.

“When I see someone pregnant, I want to tell them to get daycare now.”

- *Challenge for parents seeking child care:* parents who are new to the process struggle to know how to go about interviewing for child care; hiring someone, such as a consultant, to seek out child care may also not be effective as the consultant may not have the necessary time and skills in this area.
- *Difficulty accessing centre-based care:* these facilities have long waitlists, particularly for the infant/toddler programs

“My experience was that....because I just recently went through the looking stage. First of all, finding care for under a year.....is extremely difficult...there aren't many large daycare centre spots but I found a multitude of options if you were willing to go the licensed family daycare route. I had eight or nine to choose from.”

- *Transportation issues:* pose a huge barrier for parents who work all day; limits the choices of care for out of school care and preschool.

“I'm going to be challenged because the daycare that I go to told me that they don't want to go to my school anymore, so now I am not going to have a daycare to take her to and from school. So what I am going to do?”

- *Locations of child care:* can be inconvenient for parents particularly if they have to drive two or more children to different child care facilities that are far from home, work and schools.
- *Limited care for children with special needs:* It is difficult to get care for a child who needs additional support; there are no programs for children with special needs who are over the age of 12.
- *Community centre programs:* Child minding programs are geared for stay-at-home moms, so parents who want to do an activity at the community centre and require child care on the weekend, don't have that option.

“It would be nice if there were more options on Saturday or Sunday for people who were working.”

High Cost

- *Subsidy allocation*: there are many families who are just above the cut off for subsidies, but with all of their child care expenses, especially if they have 2 or 3 children the cost of child care becomes a financial hardship.
- *Overall cost of child care*: is very hard for some to afford, particularly when there is more than one child in the family; seems at times that a family works to pay child care; a family who does not need child care for a period of time during the year, such as for extended holidays, may still need to pay or they risk losing their space.

“The cost.....I don’t begrudge paying more but it is expensive and the daycare that our kids go to.....when my son was there in the under three program, it was \$820.00 to start and that was just two years ago and now it is \$1000.00 a month”

Inflexibility in care

- *Inflexibility in care*: Care hours don’t work for people who do shift work, who don’t work a typical work day or work a longer day; difficult to get part time care if needed
- *Hours of child care*: can cause a great deal of stress for a parent who may be held up in traffic or who has a long commute back to the North Shore. There are no choices in child care that offer extended hours in order to meet the various and flexible needs of parents. Difficulties in hours become even more pronounced during holiday times, such as summer.

“Everyone is just rushing all the time.”

“Daycamps at the Rec Centre, the hours....they don’t even cover a 7.5 hour work day”

- *Kindergarten*: can be a difficult year if there is no Kindercare available at the school. It makes it very difficult to work as parents either need to pick up their child and transport him/her to another child care or find someone who can do this for them.

Government Support

- *Bylaws*: consideration must be given to the fact that child care is a community need; and bylaws must be restructured to meet this demand for community service
- *Municipal lack of support*: municipalities can and should do more to address the shortage of child care (e.g., form child care strategy groups)

“Why are kids under 5 or 6 ignored by the municipality?”

- *Lack of government support:* more funding is needed for child care both in terms of actual money for a reduction in the space cost to families, and also in the form of assistance to upgrade the physical structures of cares
- *Need for forecasting child care services:* municipalities must plan ahead in order to meet future child care demands.

“When they are planning for the future...obviously they are thinking about the drop in child numbers, but at a higher level, they aren’t planning for the reality that there is still a large number of children coming through our community and there are not enough daycare spaces.”

School District Support

- *School District* There is a perceived lack of support from the school district, the Ministry of Education and partners. From the parent’s view, these organizations should view child care as part of their role; in contrast, they have raised the cost of leasing space or in some cases are reluctant to even consider leasing space.

“The school district raised the cost of leasing (over three times the amount within a one year period). It’s a non-profit daycare so everything comes from the parents.”

“The schools almost don’t realize that it’s daycare centres that are feeding them the kids. For me, the reason that I chose the school that my kids go to is because the daycare is right beside it. They don’t even have to cross the street.”

- *Closures of school-based care:* During job action, having school-based child care closed posed many problems for parents.

Public Support

- *Public perception of children:* Some members of the community feel that children are the sole responsibility of families and not the responsibility of society, hence some do not support resources going toward child care.

Uncertainty

- *Instability of out of school care:* Due to changes in enrollment, schools sometimes lose out of school care; this poses a great deal of stress of children and parents.
- *Child care closures:* Facilities close due to a lease expiring or a child care provider retiring.

Nanny Care

- *Nanny care:* required regulation of nanny care is necessary in order to ensure quality care

What are the Frustrations of Parents in Relation to Child Care on the North Shore?

The above challenges in the area of child care cause families stress when attempting to access appropriate, high quality child care that works within the schedule of the family. In addition to the above, the following, more personal frustrations of families are presented:

1. Having to make the choice of whether or not to return to work, depending on the cost of child care in relation to the salary of the job, or in the case of many parents, not being able to return to work due to not having any child care place financial burdens on the families. If a child is on a waitlist, then there is also the challenge of not knowing (particularly in centre care) when the child may receive a spot in care. This makes it difficult for the family to make plans for work.
2. Needing to consider whether having a second or third child is possible in light of the cost of child care and the difficulty in accessing child care;
3. Sometimes the choice of where to have a child attend child care is a difficult one due to variations in care quality. This puts parents in a difficult position around decision making for their children. Parents struggle at times with their choice of paying someone else to care for their children. Parents naturally want the best care and do not want to have to settle for anything less;

“It’s hard when your child doesn’t want to go to daycare.”

“I’m not overly impressed by the quality but I don’t have a choice.”

4. Given the shortage of substitute caregivers, particularly for family care, child care closures (in the event of child care provider illness or holidays) can be stressful for parents as they may often not have alternate care available for their children. This means that they may have to miss work until care resumes;
5. Putting together child care in a piecemeal fashion for children can be costly and difficult to manage (e.g., part time care, part time nanny, babysitter).

What are Some Solutions to the Child Care Challenges on the North Shore?

Solutions to child care challenges on the North Shore were diverse in terms of scope, cost and level of support required from the government. The following are solutions which parents felt would assist in improving child care on the North Shore:

The majority of parents wanted to see the cost of child care lowered which would require funding from all levels of government. There was also a suggestion that there would be some financial consideration for families who have a second child enrolled in child care.

Increase high quality, family-friendly spaces

- Examine the feasibility at the provincial and local level of creating child care hubs centred around schools and community centres. First, create more child care in community centres. In this way, there would be more options for children of varying ages. In addition to having access to a variety of activities, child care would be part of municipal monitoring. Second, use all existing school spaces (including schools that have closed) for year round child care facilities; ensure that every school has a child care program attached to it. Municipality and school districts could share the cost of school-based programs;

“It’s part of the responsibility of the school district.”

“Schools are open from 7 in the morning until 3:30 so a lot of the schools aren’t used outside these hours. Why not use the schools during the summer holidays for daycare or some sort of camp?”

- Continue to address the quality of child care centres in order to decrease the variation in quality across the North Shore. This includes the staffing, programming and physical attractiveness of a centre (e.g., recommend activity scheduling that can be used for all child cares, even those that may not have people who have ECE backgrounds);
- Examine shortages in child care in the various areas and address the gaps;
- Project needs for child care and create a plan to meet those needs.

“The highrises that are built...have daycares in there.”

“I think that there needs to be more sites for families. What is the intention of the area?...are you trying to push out young families or do you want to keep them here and if you want to keep them here, you need to create daycare”

- Increase flexibility of facilities in terms of hours of service and part time care;
- Provide incentives and additional supports for opening a child care facility (e.g., tax incentives, leasing costs, assistance in finding rental property);
- Consider the needs to families when creating child care centres (e.g., care centres in which several age groups are served would eliminate the need for families to use multiple sites for child care).

Community Engagement to Address Sustainability Issues

- When starting programs, consider sustainability issues in order that programs can continue to develop over time;
- Create a way in which retired individuals can get involved in assisting with child care;
- Develop community partnerships to access further funding or services (e.g., repairs);

- Engage the community and “adopt a child care facility” – communities could raise money for the child care facility or draw from a pool of expertise in the community (e.g., services) to improve child cares. This would also increase community cohesion.

“Do community fund raisers like BBQs where families could come”

- Promote the concept that child care is a shared responsibility of all and that communities involve a mix of all age ranges.

Child Care Providers

- Increase pay for child care staff (pay scale, benefits);

“If they could all be standardized”

- Increase the profile of child care providers so that they are seen as professionals;

“Create an ECE day where they can all attend workshops.”

- Consider expanding the program at Capilano College.

Information Sharing

- Create a comprehensive website with lists of all supports and services in the area of child care, health, recreation and community events;
- Create a centralized registry for child care;
- Offer workshops on how to effectively interview for child care;
- Create a centralized screening system for caregivers who offer one-on-one support for children, adults or seniors;

“A nanny sharing operation. There’s some people out there who want nannies. I had to share a nanny before I could get my kids into a daycare centre.”

- Create a forum for dialogue in order to bring together all stakeholders (care providers, care users, referral agencies);
- Develop a mechanism that would allow parents to connect with each other in order to assist in figuring out options (e.g., sharing child care spaces or child care responsibilities).

Provincial Support

- Make child care/early learning as part of the education system;
- Provide more funding to assist municipalities in carrying out strategic development of child care plans.

Federal Support

- Continue to lobby for a national daycare system.

Key Findings

Just as in the parent survey, parents in focus groups reported that they felt there are some high quality facilities on the North Shore for child care, however, there just aren't enough spaces and certain areas experience more of a shortage than others. For working parents, it can be stressful finding workable child care and then trying to balance schedules between work and child care. The cost of child care was also a source of strain for some parents, particularly parents whose income was just above the level to qualify for subsidy but whose income was stretched to the limit after paying for all their monthly expenses, child care being a large expense.

Parents did have many suggestions as to how to improve child care. Key was government funding and utilizing existing community and school resources in a creative way. All in all, parents wanted to be able to have a more streamlined approach to accessing high quality care that would not create a stressor on the family (e.g., stress such as: having to navigate the waitlist, driving to multiple locations, and having to sometimes settle for less than high quality). Parents wanted to see greater municipal involvement in planning for the future by anticipating needs and hence, creating a community that is inviting to young families.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reflections

The initiation of this needs assessment came at a time of disappointment among those who work in the child care field. There was frustration at the termination of the ELCC agreement across the country and this was salient in the conversations that this author had with various people. The ELCC was the flame that ignited several outstanding plans for making child care more accessible for more Canadian families. Certainly this decision, and the underlying message, that child care is not a priority federally nor provincially, impacted the overall morale of child care providers and heightened frustration among parents who rely on some form of government funding in the area of child care. Despite this, what was very evident was the ongoing commitment of several organizations that are champions and continue to advocate for child care. To continue this struggle with what must feel like an uphill battle is worthy of admiration and truly brings to focus those who believe that children are our greatest resource.

Given this period of disappointment, certainly this needs assessment was impacted. One could argue that parents and providers would be more likely to have their voices heard, or conversely, that due to crushed hope, people were left frustrated and in need of time to regroup. This author suspects that the latter is true given the challenges experienced in engaging parents and child care providers. Despite this, several child care providers and parents participated in this process and in examining the findings, it was clear by the themes that emerged, that the data presented in this report is reflective of parents and child care providers on the North Shore.

It is interesting to note that when one examines the needs assessments that were completed in the late 80's and early 90's in the City and District of North Vancouver, the same issues are again on the table. This truly speaks to the challenge in trying to improve a system without adequate government support. Having said that, there are areas in which the system can be improved to better meet some of the needs in the community. As these community-driven transformations take place, ongoing advocacy in order to secure more government funding will be critical.

Municipal Recommendations

1. Continue to advocate, with the support of community leaders, for greater funding from the Provincial Government such as:
 - Funding early child care/early learning and school aged child care^{79 80} at the same level as children in the school system. This would allow higher

⁷⁹ See HELP documents for details for the rationale and financial implications for B.C. For example: <http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/2006/HELPBCBudgetSubmissionOct06.pdf>

⁸⁰ See "BC Solutions Budget 2007" which outlines recommendations to BC as to future planning for child care http://policyalternatives.ca/documents/BC_Office_Pubs/bc_2007/bc_solutions_2007.pdf

quality, more accessible programs for children and better working conditions for child care providers;

- Highlighting the importance of child care as it relates to B.C.'s Five Great Goals;
- Funding for the renovations of underutilized schools for child care use;
- Strategic planning for recruitment and retention of talented people in the child care field (e.g., scholarships for students, targeted efforts for training people in areas of critical shortages such as infant/toddler care);
- Following the lead of other provinces such as Quebec, Manitoba, Ontario and most recently Alberta⁸¹ in targeting specific funding for child care;
- Linking child care to the economic returns to Canadian society.

Taking a long term approach is critical. Given our economy at present, we need parents in the workforce, however, in order for that to occur, parents need to feel that their children are in high quality care during work hours. If we invest in children (ages 0-12 years) now, the long term savings will be tremendous for the province in education, physical and mental health. Encouraging the provincial government to take steps in support of day cares could have B.C. recognized as a leader in child care through the development of a model that will be respected worldwide.

2. Move toward a hub model of child care and other services for children and families
 - Create and fund a full time child care planner (as has been done in Vancouver) for the three municipalities to oversee and coordinate all child care planning (possibly based at the NSCR) over the next years to implement changes and build community capacity toward the realization of a hub model;
 - Increase the utilization of an interdisciplinary steering committee (child care providers, agency representatives and parents) to oversee the planning and implementation of a multiyear strategic plan for the North Shore;
 - Develop a strategic multiyear plan, taking into account current and projected demographics of each area, working toward the creation of hubs in a set number of areas with attention to high quality care.

Within this hub model plan, consider:

- A. Dividing the municipalities into child care regions (E.g., by communities). For each region, strike a community advisory committee (with one representative from each region to be a member of the district interdisciplinary steering committee).
 - Identify strengths and needs of each community⁸². Use this data as a baseline and to inform the work toward developing a hub in each

⁸¹ Alberta recently (February 2007) announced a plan to offer start up funding for daycares, free tuition for child care workers who stay in the province for at least three years and increasing child care spaces by 25% in the first four years of the plan

community (Note: some areas may already have a large centre that would be willing to act as a hub);

- Assist each community in the area of capacity development;
- Develop creative solutions pertinent to each area (e.g., utilization of existing space for child care, encouragement of more family care) and create sub-plans of the larger plan.

B. Create centralized systems to ease the navigation of child care for families.

- Create a centralized system for waitlists by area (based on hubs).
- Create a one stop website for child care providers (e.g., rules, regulations, procedures to start child care, suggested program guidelines for the different developmental ages, substitute caregivers, volunteers) and parents (e.g., child development information, waitlists, community resources, interviewing techniques, list of babysitters and nannies, workshops, subsidy information, community activities).
- Continued support for the CCRR on the North Shore

C. Work with the Ministry of Education, two school districts and partners to incorporate child care into schools.

- Build capacity to plan for the inclusion of a school-aged child care program at as many schools as possible;
- Cost share expenses with school districts for operating costs;
- Draw on research to create school-aged programs that meet the developmental needs of children in the middle years (e.g., consider operating two separate programs within the same school, one for younger children and one for older children);
- Provide opportunities for school staff and other child care providers (e.g., teaching assistants, part time teachers, part time child care providers) to be employed in school-aged programs as this can provide continuity for children and employment enhancement to individuals who may be under employed. Provide opportunities for training specific to school aged child care;
- Include school aged children in the planning of program frameworks;
- Space permitting, incorporate preschool and group care into schools;
- Engage, with the Ministry of Education, in exploring the feasibility of utilizing schools that have been closed down for the development of neighbourhood hubs.

D. Seek out and engage in opportunities for community research and program implementation in order to develop model child care practices and leverage successful outcomes to garner more funding.

⁸² For example, communities could utilize

http://www.ywca.ca/public_eng/advocacy/Childcare/YWCA_FINAL%20Guidebook_BCAECLC.pdf
(YWCA Guide for community coordinators)

- Actively engage with partners in order that the municipalities have opportunities to participate in research (e.g., through HELP at UBC, United Way);
 - Develop proposals for pilot projects for submission to appropriate funding bodies in order to highlight the work that is being done in the municipalities and to create further linkages to other communities exploring best practices;
 - Encourage graduate level students in education, psychology, and community planning to do thesis work on the North Shore. Keep a library of all completed theses for reference and use these to apply for additional grants.
- E. Examine ways in which incentives/support can be offered to child cares to open/expand.
- Continue to assist child care facilities in securing affordable space;
 - Determine if there are services that the municipalities can offer to ease the cost to child cares (e.g., playground maintenance, repairs and renovations to municipally owned properties);
 - Examine feasibility of renovations on a case by case basis should a facility have enough room to expand but is held back due to renovation needs.
- F. Develop voluntary, peer reviewed, quality assurance system.
- Following the lead of Southern Ontario (“Raising the Bar”), develop a peer review system to enhance overall quality of child care;
 - Look toward established high quality child care centres as examples and teaching environments.
- G. Leverage community expertise.
- Develop a program linking child care facilities to programs in high schools and colleges in order to have services donated through practicums and projects (could be in spending time with children or in doing work such as painting murals, developing activities, making furniture);
 - Engage seniors in the community who would like to spend time with children under the guidance of child care staff (e.g., reading, doing crafts, playing games)
 - Develop a data base of caregivers for children with special needs (including children beyond the age of 12).⁸³
- H. Public Awareness of the importance of child care
- Advertisements/articles on the importance of child care in Canada (e.g., role that quality child care plays in child development, cost-benefit analysis of child care, highlights from other countries in which child care is a priority)
 - Provide education on “child care” and “early learning” to prevent the continued perception that these two terms are not related.

⁸³ A caregiver matching service has is a proposal that has been developed by a North Shore parent. Please contact this author for further information

- I. Raise the status of child care providers
 - Publicly profile champions in the industry;
 - Provide municipally funded professional development opportunities for child care providers;
 - Create a “Child Care Provider Day”;
 - Draw on child care expertise (news column in the North Shore News or on NSCR website);
 - Provide municipal recognition for outstanding services (ceremonies, bonuses).

- J. Develop municipal policies around the creation of child care spaces in new developments such as child care space as a requirement for new development.

- K. Plan with the relevant departments of Capilano College to increase the number of graduates in the early childhood education program and other related child care programs. Work toward the development and delivery of course work for school-aged child care in order to better meet their needs.

- L. Provide ongoing professional development opportunities
 - Examine high needs in the community and provide learning opportunities for child care providers and parents (e.g., working with special needs children).

All the above recommendations are meant to provide guidance to municipalities that are embedded in a long term, strategic planning process. In looking at other jurisdictions, a five year plan appears to be the most common framework for communities. With step by step efforts and ongoing attention, coupled with creative planning, child care on the North Shore can be improved in the face of limited government support, however, the hope is that eventually Canada will come to view children as our most valuable resource.



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APPENDICES

Appendix One: International Examples of National Child Care Programs

According to an OECD (2005)⁸⁴ report series in which child care was examined in several countries throughout the world, two of the key goals of an effective child care system are to promote healthy child development and to allow parents to contribute to the national economy which in turn allows the country to flourish. Positive child development and contribution to the economy do not need to be seen as separate entities. Underlying this is the creation of structures that allow families to have choices: to be able to stay home with the children, to be able to work full or part time and have access to needed child care, to be able to take parental leave (maternal or paternal) and so forth. The key is **choice** and the current situation in Canada is that not everyone is able to make that choice due to economic reasons (e.g., not able to live on one income due to low wages and/or high necessary expenses) or lack of access to childcare (e.g., not able to secure a space due to lack of spaces, times available).

National Child Care Systems: An International Perspective

When speaking to experts in the field of childcare and reviewing the literature, the focus inevitably turns to a selected number of European countries who have established national child care programs, and countries such as New Zealand that is in the process of establishing an effective national program. Although varied values underlie these national programs, (e.g. play versus education based, parent versus peer focus, organized care versus parental involvement), the teachings from these programs have much to offer Canada as we move forward in trying to address our child care issues. With an overarching national child care policy that has been effectively implemented, the task of ensuring that the system is effective and sustainable is less daunting. In Canada, we are not yet at that point in our development but examining these national models, both in terms of what we can take away from the models and utilize at the local level, and also as a vision for the future in Canada is a worthwhile endeavor. Thus, before focusing on the Canadian situation, a review of some of these international programs follows:

⁸⁴ OECD (2005). *Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life*

Examples of Countries With Well-Established National Child Care Systems

Sweden⁸⁵

Sweden spends 2% of the GDP on early education and childcare. Access to childcare is considered a right for all families regardless of employment status. There are two aims of the Swedish Child Care system: the first is to support parents in balancing their roles in employment and parenthood; and the second is to support children's healthy development and learning. The Swedish child care system began with these two goals in the 1970s. Along with access to childcare, parents have access to a system of parental insurance and benefits.

Childcare has been increasingly taken on an educational focus and is seen as part of a lifelong learning framework; in that vein, responsibility for the child care system was transferred to The Ministry of Education, Research and Culture in 1996. Public childcare is extended to all children ages 1-12 years. Official schooling begins at age seven, however, prior to that families can choose between preschools and family daycares. Preschools are open all year round and have flexible hours to accommodate parents who are working or studying. Parents pay no more than 17% of the cost and this varies as municipalities also provide funding so the cost may be lower in some areas. Fees for childcare, preschools and out of school care are capped for the first child and decrease for the second and third child. There is no charge for a fourth child. In total, child care fees may not exceed more than 1-3% of the family's income (if a family has three children, it would be closer to 3%). Teachers are highly trained. At age six, most children attend what we know as "Kindergarten".

As of 2003, all children in Sweden, ages four and five, have access to "preschool" for at least three hours a day. It is on a voluntary basis. That is, families can opt to keep their children in childcare only rather than send them to preschool for part of the time. The OECD (2005) had very few recommendations to improve childcare in Sweden due to the comprehensive nature of the system. The two suggestions offered were: increase ways to encourage equal sharing of parental leave between mothers and fathers and increase the number of family run daycares due to the cost effectiveness when compared to centres.

Denmark⁸⁶

Denmark spends 2.1% of the GDP on child care (to the age of 10) and early education. According to the OECD (2005), this is about \$6,300 USD per child. In addition to generous parental financial support through benefits and parental leave programs, all children in Denmark have access to some form of child care, from the age of 24 weeks through to aged ten. Eighty percent of school-aged children are in out of school care. There is an emphasis on giving choice in terms of the kind of care that they want for their child. Child care staff is highly trained for an average of three and a half

⁸⁵ Web information on child care in Sweden

<http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/354/a/944;jsessionid=DF019210A67EA2F41DDD0D61AC85541C>

⁸⁶ For more information on Danish child care and early education, see

http://eng.social.dk/netpublikationer/eng/dsp1dsp240902/5_1.htm

years in child development and education. The focus in Denmark is more on play than traditional early learning models. After aged ten there are youth clubs for pre-teens and teens. Although a national program, decision making is done at the local level, with the input of parents in order to accommodate local needs. Parents pay no more than 33% of the actual cost of child care, and partial fees or all fees are waived in circumstances due to financial need. There are no waiting lists as municipalities appear to be quite innovative with approaches to ensure adequate capacity such as:

Daycare Facilities	Description
Crèches	For children between the ages of six months and three years – mainly available in towns.
Local authority childminding	Children mainly between the ages of six months and three years are looked after in the childminder's private home. The childminders are selected, engaged and paid by the local authority, which also determines which children should be looked after in the individual home.
Kindergartens	For 3-6 year-old children; found both in urban and rural areas.
After-school centres	For 6-10 year-old children. For the same age group, school-based day-care facilities have been established at many schools, under the Primary Education Act.
Age-integrated institutions	In most cases, facilities catering for children aged six months to about six years.
Pool schemes	Established privately, typically by groups of parents who make an agreement with the local authority on receiving subsidies.
Youth clubs	A facility for older children and adolescents for the purpose of creating activities and a social life that encourages independence and the ability to be part of a community Taken from: http://eng.social.dk/netpublikationer/eng/dsp1dsp240902/5_1.htm

France

France spends 0.7 of its' GDP on child care for its under six population. It currently has the second highest birth rate in Europe. The view is that families can have both work and family without sacrificing one for the other. In line with this view, government policies support 16 weeks of fully paid maternity leave for women for their

first child and 26 weeks of fully paid maternity leave for the second child. In addition, tax credits for large families are available. A parent may take up to three years parental leave with job protection. During this three year period, financial support is given to a family with two or more children in the form of a stipend. Prior to age three, parents can also access subsidized child care (parents pay about 27% of the cost), and then from age three to five all children have access to free, all day preschool.⁸⁷ In addition, there are government stipends for in-home nannies and monthly child care allowances that increase with the number of children in the home in order to ensure that only a small portion of income goes to child care.⁸⁸

Finland⁸⁹

Finland spends 1.1% of GDP on early education and care. Child care is considered a universal right. Childcare and early education is governed under one body: The Finnish Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The primary aim of the ECEC is to support the healthy growth and development of children. The daycare component is the main focus and daycare is offered by municipalities and private providers (municipalities provide 90% of child care). About half of children under the age of 7 use child care outside the home. Childcares and preschools are staffed by highly trained individuals who have a Bachelor's or Masters Degree. In the municipally-run daycares, child care must be offered in the official languages of Finland: Finnish, Swedish and Sami in addition to supporting the culture and language of immigrant children. Daycare fees are based on family size and income level. Parents pay approximately 15% of the cost. From 1996 onward, parents have the right to place their child in a municipally-run child care and from 1997 forward, parents can receive financial support to have their child in a private child care. Parental leave is currently 43 weeks and fathers have had the right to paternity leave since 1978. There is job protection during these leaves. A family receives a generous home allowance for any child under three years who is being cared for in the home. Municipalities often offer additional funding to supplement the home allowance and hence, many mothers opt to remain home with their children. The OECD (2005) recommended that this funding be reviewed in order to encourage more women to return to the workforce due to labor shortages. In addition, the recommendations encourage family daycares due to the reduced operation cost as compared to centre run daycares.

Children begin pre-school (what we know as Kindergarten) at age six. This is comprised of 700 hours of instructions and is at no cost to parents. As of 2004, The National Board of Education, which oversees the school system, has included morning and afternoon activities (out of school care) for school age children up to the age of eight. This is now part of the Basic Education Act. Municipalities can apply for subsidies to run these activities which must serve children at least 570 hours in the school year.

⁸⁷ American Sociological Association (November 18, 2002)

⁸⁸ The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (2005)

⁸⁹ For an overview of the Finnish child care and early education system, see <http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/publishing/store/2005/01/cd1106216815326/passthru.pdf>

An emerging system.....

New Zealand⁹⁰

New Zealand established a ten year vision and strategy in 2002 for improving early education and childcare services. Their vision is comprised of having a fully qualified workforce, affordable and universal access to early education and care, and the engagement of parents in services. Currently, they offer incentives to providers to improve quality, for example by employing more highly qualified staff. They have also paid close attention to meeting the needs of their Aboriginal children by offering Maori language immersion preschools. Their aim by 2012 is to have 100% of the early years programs staffed by graduates from a three year post-secondary training program. All child care programs at the preschool level are administered centrally through the federal Ministry of Education and are seen as equal to elementary and secondary programs (Goelman, 2004). As such, teachers in preschool programs for three and four year olds (known as Kindergarten in New Zealand) are currently paid at the same rate as elementary school teachers.

Taken together, the above examples of national programs offer many lessons and hopes for Canada. Although varied in the types of services and the amount that parents need to pay for these services, two key issues emerge: choice and accessibility. In each of these systems, parents do not give up their ability to choose the type of care that they want for their children. When that care is chosen, the spaces are available for parents. Child care in all its forms is seen as a social responsibility owed to families and society. Staff are highly educated and seen as professionals who have a stake in the development of children. As emerging needs arise, these countries take on the challenge of making effective policy changes to address these needs. Thus, it is not a static but ever evolving process.

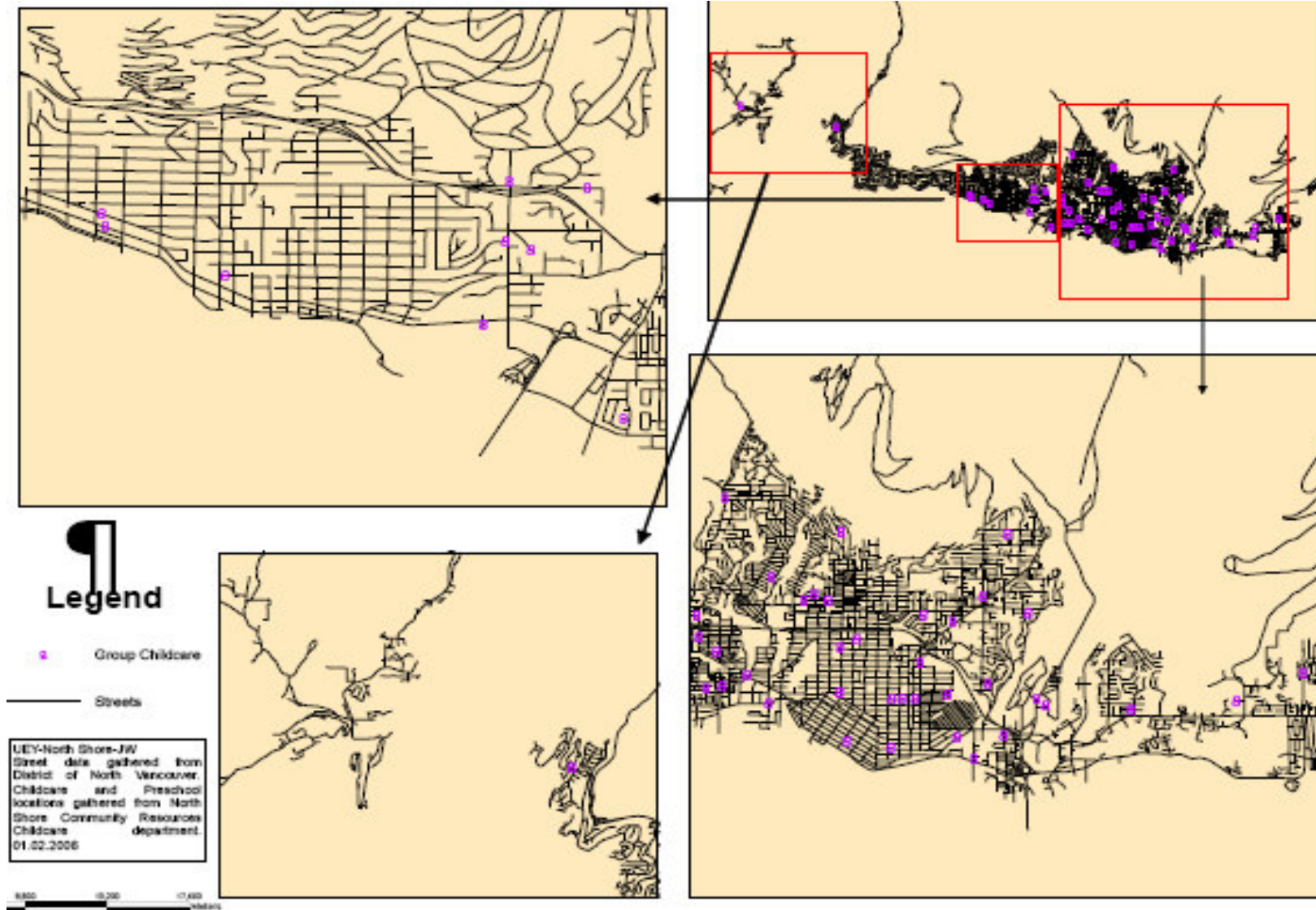
⁹⁰ For more information, see www.nzchildcare.co.nz

Five Countries at a Glance (Source: Starting Strong II (OECD 2006))

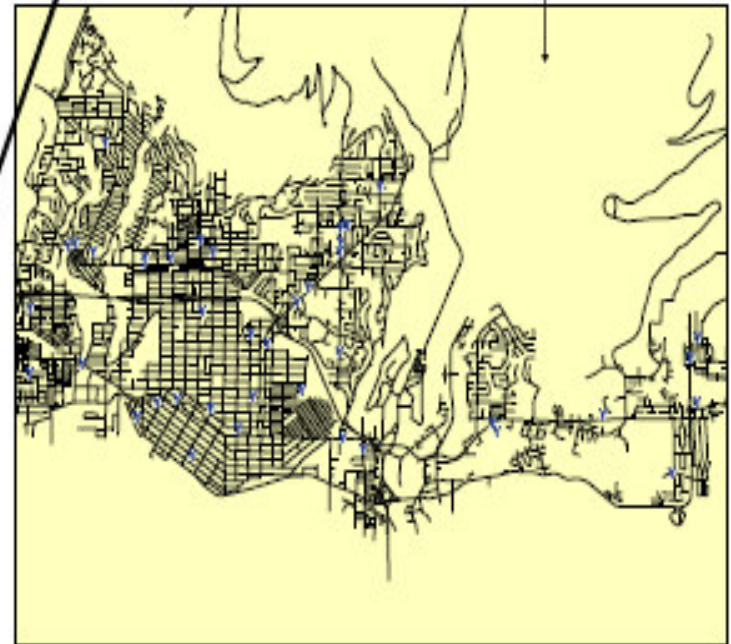
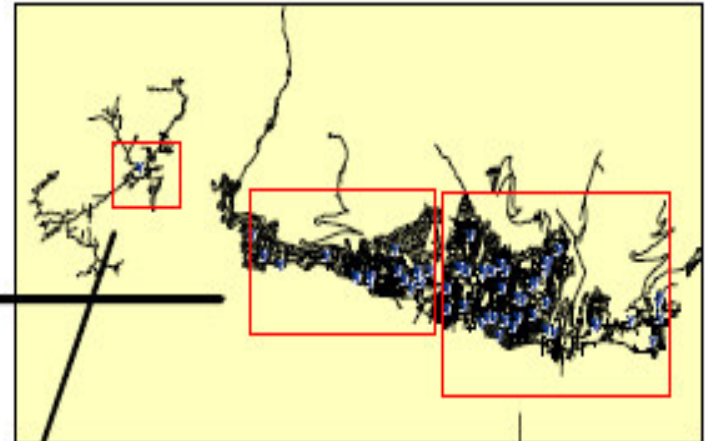
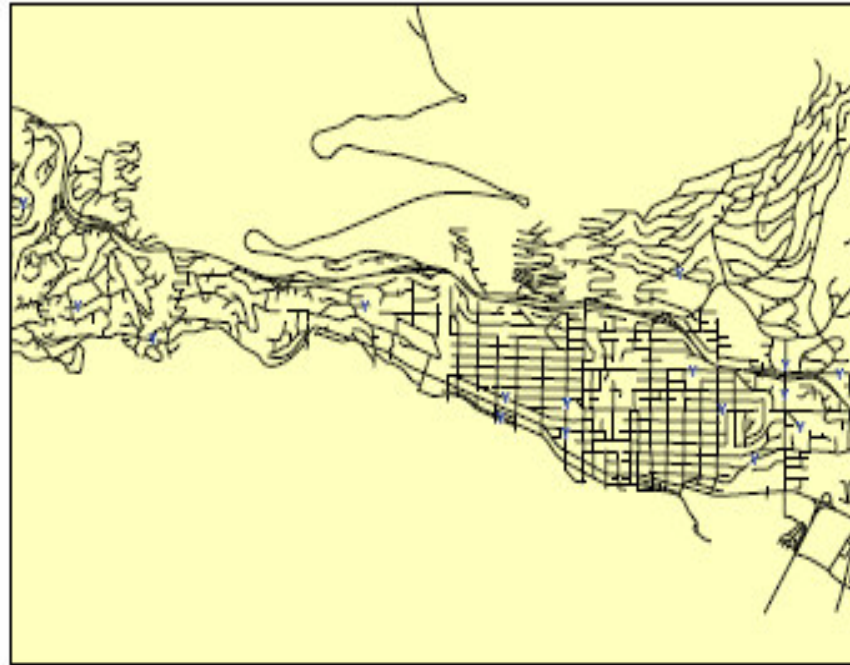
Country	Population	% of females in the workforce	Females with children under 3 in the workforce	Females with children under 6 in the workforce	% of Government funds spent on social programs and supports	Child Poverty Rate	% of actual child care costs that families pay (average)	Access Rates Of child care or preschools (average)
Canada	32.2 million (2 million under age 6)	73.5% ⁹¹	58.7%	67.7%	17.8%	14.9%	50% (except Quebec) (minus subsidies = 85%)	24% (0-6 yr olds) 43% in Quebec
France	60.42 million (4.5 million under 6)	63.7%	49.5%	65%	28.5%	7.5%	27% (full day preschool is free)	59% (0-3 yr olds) Almost 100% from 4-5 yr olds as it is free
Sweden	8.9 million (420, 000 under 6)	76.6%	44%	76.6%	28.9%	4.2%	9%	45% (1-2 yr olds) 86% (2-3 yr olds) 91% (3-4 yr olds) 96% (4-5 yr olds) 91% (6-7 yr olds with another 7% in school) 50% (6-12 yr olds in out of school care)
Finland	5.2 million (400,000 under 6)	72%	Data not available	49.6%	27%	2.8%	15% (preschool is free)	27.4% (1-2 yr olds) 43.9% (2-3 yr olds) 62.3% (3-4 yr olds) 68.5% (4-5 yr olds) 73.5% (5-6 yr olds)
Denmark	5.4 million (400,000 under 6)	76.1%	70%	74%	29.2%	2.4%	22%	12% (0-1 yr olds) 83% (1-2 yr olds) 94% (3-5 yr olds)

⁹¹ Luffman (2006) examined mothers whose youngest child was between 6 and 17 found that 83% of mothers were in the workforce.

Appendix Two: Locations of licensed group care on the North Shore



Appendix Three: Locations of preschools on the North Shore



UEN-North Shore-JW
Street data gathered from District of North Vancouver, Children and Preschool
locations gathered from North Shore Community Resources Children department
01.02.2008

**Appendix Four: B.C. Subsidy Rates for Child Care
Effective October 1, 2005**

Type of Care		Four hours or less daily		More than four hours daily	
		Per Day	Per Month	Per Day	Per Month
License Not Required Family	0-18 months	\$10.95	\$219.00	\$21.90	\$438.00
	19-36 months	\$10.10	\$202.00	\$20.20	\$404.00
	Over 36 months	\$8.85	\$177.00	\$17.70	\$354.00
Registered License Not Required Family	0-18 months	\$15.00	\$300.00	\$30.00	\$600.00
	19-36 months	\$15.00	\$300.00	\$30.00	\$600.00
	37-72 months	\$13.75	\$275.00	\$27.50	\$550.00
	Over 73 months	\$10.38	\$207.50	\$20.75	\$415.00
Licensed Group	0-18 months	\$18.75	\$375.00	\$37.50	\$750.00
	19-36 months	\$15.90	\$317.50	\$31.75	\$635.00
	37-72 months	\$13.75	\$275.00	\$27.50	\$550.00
	Over 73 months	\$10.38	\$207.50	\$20.75	\$415.00
Licensed Family	0-18 months	\$15.00	\$300.00	\$30.00	\$600.00
	19-36 months	\$15.00	\$300.00	\$30.00	\$600.00
	37-72 months	\$13.75	\$275.00	\$27.50	\$550.00
	Over 73 months	\$10.38	\$207.50	\$20.75	\$415.00
In Child's Home	1 st child 0-18 mos.	\$9.85	\$197.00	\$19.70	\$394.00
	1 st child over 18 mos.	\$7.95	\$159.00	\$15.90	\$318.00
	2 nd child, 0-18 mos.	\$4.95	\$99.00	\$9.90	\$198.00
	Each additional child	\$3.68	\$73.50	\$7.35	\$147.00
Out of School	Kindergarten	\$13.60	\$272.00	\$17.00	\$340.00
	Grade 1 and up	\$7.38	\$147.56	\$8.65	\$173.00
Licensed Preschool	Preschool	\$11.25	\$225.00	n/a*	n/a

* Preschool is limited to four hours a day

Appendix Five: Child Care Provider Survey

Child Care on the North Shore: The Voices of Child Care Providers

The North Shore Child Care Planning Committee in partnership with the City of North Vancouver and the Districts of North and West Vancouver are currently conducting a needs assessment of child care resources for the North Shore. For this survey, child care includes group and in-home daycare, preschool and out-of-school care. In order to obtain a current perspective on child care, we are asking for child care providers to assist us by sharing critical information that will help the North Shore communities in their child care planning and policy development. This updated information is needed as the last assessment was conducted in 1994 and all three North Shore Municipalities are currently reviewing child care policy and looking to this study to inform their decisions. In reporting the results of this survey, we will not refer to any facility by name. In this way, we assure that your individual answers will be kept confidential. A final report, summarizing all information and recommendations will be available in the late spring. We appreciate that you are very busy and that that we are asking you to take time to complete this survey. We want you to know that your information is so important in this process.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return this survey by March 15, 2007.

All child care providers who return a survey will be entered into a draw for various prizes as a token of our appreciation. The draw will take place in early April. Child care providers will be notified of any prizes that they have won.

Denise Buote of Arbor Educational and Clinical Consulting Inc. has been hired as a consultant to conduct this assessment. Should you have any questions about this survey, please call Denise Buote at 604.671.1441 or email her at dbuote@arboreducational.com.



Child Care Provider Survey

Part One: Basic Information

- 1. Facility Name: _____
- 2. Facility Address: _____

Area (Please check one area.):

- City of North Vancouver
- District of West Vancouver
- District of North Vancouver

If unsure whether you are in the City of North Vancouver or the District of North Vancouver, please see enclosed map or provide your street address and/or Postal Code here: _____

- 3. Contact Person Name: _____
- 4. Person Completing this survey (if different than above):

- 5. Phone Number: _____
- 6. Email: _____

Part Two: About the Facility

- 7. What is the approximate square footage of your facility? _____
- 8. How old is the building? _____
- 9. What are the approximate monthly operating costs for your facility?

- 10. Do you have any plans for major repairs or renovations in the facility?
NO YES (If yes, please describe):

- 11. Do you have any plans for replacement of the facility? YES NO
(If yes, please describe)

12. In what type of building is the child care program located? (check \surd one)

- Residential (If so, is this also used as a residence? YES NO)
 Church In school building
 Commercial building Recreation centre
 Portable building (not owned by school)
 Municipal building (other than recreation centre)
 Other (please describe: _____)

13. Please answer this question if you **own** the facility.

Is the property.....	Freehold	YES	NO
	Leasehold	YES	NO

How many years remain on the mortgage? _____

14. Please answer the following questions if you lease or rent the facility.

} Lease the facility } Rent the facility	YES	NO
	YES	NO

What is the monthly cost? _____
If leased, for how long is your lease? _____
How much time is left on the current lease? _____

What does your lease or rent include? (check \surd all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> utilities	<input type="checkbox"/> janitorial/cleaning	<input type="checkbox"/> common space
<input type="checkbox"/> minor repairs	<input type="checkbox"/> major repairs	<input type="checkbox"/> outdoor space
<input type="checkbox"/> other (please describe: _____)		

Part Three: Child Care Staff

15. What strategies [e.g., ads, job fairs, college career centres] does your facility use to recruit child care workers?

16. How easy is it to find suitable staff? (circle one)

Very easy Moderately easy Somewhat difficult Very difficult

If you indicated difficult, in your opinion, what are the challenges?

17. How easy is it to find substitute caregivers? (circle one)

Very easy Moderately easy Somewhat difficult Very difficult

If you indicated difficult, in your opinion, what are the challenges?

18. Is there a particular type of care (e.g., daycare, out-of school care etc.) for which it is more difficult to find staff? (please describe)

19. For each staff member, please indicate the following:

Staff Member (names not necessary)	Number of working hours per week	Relevant Training in Child Care (diplomas, degrees, certifications etc.)	Years of Service at your facility
No.1			
No.2			
No.3			
No.4			
No.5			
No.6			
No.7			
No.8			
No.9			
No.10			
No.11			
No.12			
No.13			
No.14			
No.15			
No.16			
No.17			
No.18			
No.19			
No.20			
No.21			
No.22			
No.23			
No.24			
No.25			
No.26			
No.27			
No.28			
No.29			
No.30			

Part Four: About the Services and Programs

20. Please check the appropriate organizational structure of your facility.
 privately owned program of non-profit agency
 dedicated non-profit other (describe: _____)

24. Do you have any plans to add new programs? (Circle one) YES NO

(If yes, describe)

Part Five: Issues in Child Care Planning

25. How will your facility be impacted if there is a permanent cessation of the Child Care Operating Fund? (Please describe)

26. How will your facility be impacted if there cut backs of the Child Care Operating Fund? (Please describe)

27. What type of local and provincial government support do you find most helpful. Please check all that apply and add any others.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> capital funds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> information and referral | <input type="checkbox"/> operating funds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> parent subsidy | <input type="checkbox"/> child care grants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> child care resource and referral program | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (please describe) _____ | |

28. Please prioritize the needs that you have for your facility in general?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

29. What are the biggest challenges that you face in providing services at your facility (e.g. enrolment, financial viability, parental involvement, facility issues, staffing etc.)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

30. What general trends do you see happening in child care that are worrisome to you?

31. What is working well for you in providing child care (e.g., support from agencies, funding etc.)

32. In your opinion, what are some ways that your municipal government can assist in making child care better? (e.g., rental issues, by-laws, property, capital grants, zoning etc.)

33. Is there anything else that you would like to add that would be helpful in this process? (Please write in the space below and on the back of this page)

Thank you so much for taking your time to complete this survey. Your information is critical in this assessment.

Once completed, please return in the addressed envelope to:

*North Shore Community Resources
Suite 201, 935 Marine Drive
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7P 1S3
Attn: Child Care Provider Survey
Or fax to: 604. 985.0645*

Appendix Six: Parent Survey

Child Care on the North Shore: The Voices of Parents

The North Shore Child Care Planning Committee in partnership with the City of North Vancouver and the Districts of North and West Vancouver are currently conducting a needs assessment of child care resources for the North Shore. For this survey, child care includes group daycare, in-home child care, preschool and out-of-school care. In order to obtain a current perspective on child care needs of residents, we are asking for your input. The information that you provide is critical in assisting the North Shore in their child care planning and policy development. All your answers are confidential.

You do not need to provide your name. We want to thank you for taking the time to complete this important survey.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Notice: Any personal information that may be collected in this survey is collected under the general authority of the Local Government Act. The survey is being conducted by the North Shore Child Care Planning Committee, in partnership with the District of West Vancouver, and the City and District of North Vancouver, and the information collected will be used in determining child care planning and policy development for the North Shore. Any personal information collected will be protected in accordance with the BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. If you have any questions regarding the collection or use of this information please contact Denise Buote at 604-671-1441



We are asking that all surveys be returned by April 10, 2007.

Denise Buote of Arbor Educational and Clinical Consulting Inc. has been hired as a consultant to conduct this assessment. Should you have any questions about this survey, please call Denise Buote at 604.671.1441 or email her at dbuote@arboreducational.com.

For parents who **currently have child care**, please complete pages two and three.

For parents who are **seeking child care**, please complete pages two and four.

If you would like to elaborate on any of your answers, please feel free to attach an additional page or email note to this survey.



Please answer the following questions on this page and page three if you currently have childcare. For page three, please complete one column for each child who is receiving care. Thank you

1. In what area do you live? (Please put a check X beside the area)

<input type="checkbox"/>	West Vancouver
<input type="checkbox"/>	City of North Vancouver
<input type="checkbox"/>	District of North Vancouver
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lions Bay
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bowen Island

If aren't sure in which municipality you reside, please provide your street address and/or Postal Code here

2. Have you felt an impact due to changes in the federal and provincial government child care policies? (Mark with an X) YES NO

If yes, please describe how these changes have impacted you.

3. In general, with what aspects of child care on the North Shore are you most satisfied?

4. What are your top concerns about child care on the North Shore that you would you like to see addressed?

5. Have you applied for the child care subsidy? (Mark with an X) YES NO

6. Have you applied for the \$100.00 per month Federal Universal Child Care Benefit? (Mark with an X) YES NO

7. Approximately what percent of your net monthly household income is spent on child care?

Child One (age: _ ____)	Child Two (age: _ ____)	Child Three (age: _ ____)
<p>1. In what area is this child receiving child care?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> City of North Vancouver <input type="checkbox"/> West Vancouver <input type="checkbox"/> District of North Vancouver <input type="checkbox"/> Other (where? _____)</p> <p>2. What type of setting is this child in?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> daycare 3 years & under <input type="checkbox"/> daycare 3 years & over <input type="checkbox"/> in-home daycare <input type="checkbox"/> preschool <input type="checkbox"/> out-of-school care <input type="checkbox"/> other (describe: _____)</p> <p>3. Please rank the following factors in choosing this child care? [#1=most important)</p> <p>___ staff experience ___ quality of activities ___ location ___ affordability ___ hours of operation ___ space availability ___ number of children ___ safety ___ other (describe: _____)</p> <p>4. How satisfied are you with this child care?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> quite satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> neutral <input type="checkbox"/> dissatisfied</p> <p>5. How easy was it getting a placement in this child care?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> very easy <input type="checkbox"/> easy <input type="checkbox"/> difficult <input type="checkbox"/> very difficult (please explain at the bottom of page)</p> <p>6. What is the monthly cost of this child care?</p> <p>7. How far is this child care from your residence? (in km.)</p> <p>8. Is the child care in a location that works well? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If NO, where do you prefer your child care to be?(e.g., near work)</p>	<p>1. 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Explanation to question 5:

Please complete this page if you are seeking childcare. Thank you.

1. In what area are you seeking child care? (Check)

- City of North Vancouver
- West Vancouver
- District of North Vancouver
- Other (where?)

2. What type of child care are you seeking? (Check)

- Daycare for children over 3 years old
- Daycare for children under 3 years old
- In-home daycare
- Preschool
- Out-of-School care
- Other (describe:)

3. What are the key factors in choosing a child care setting? [Please rank with #1 being the most important factor]

- ___ Staff education
- ___ Staff experience
- ___ Quality of activities
- ___ Location
- ___ Affordability
- ___ Hours of operation
- ___ Space available
- ___ Number of children
- ___ Safety
- ___ Other (describe)

4. What have been the barriers to finding child care? (Check all that apply)

- Location is not convenient
- Too expensive
- Hours of operation do not fit my work schedule
- There are no spaces available
- Other (please provide as much detail as possible):

5. Please add any other comments to assist us in understanding your situation in relation to child care (feel free to attach an additional page)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The information you provide is critical in planning for our children. Once completed, please return to:

***North Shore Community Resources
Suite 201, 935 Marine Drive
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7P 1S3
Attn: Parent Child Care Survey***

Or fax to: 604. 985.0645 or email to parentsurvey@arboreducational.com