

# **East Kootenay Child Care Report November 2003**



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## Introduction

**The East Kootenay Childhood Coalition is a non-partisan team of people representing families, communities and service agencies throughout the East Kootenay. The Coalition's purpose is to support families and communities to reach their full potential by working to improve the quality of life and health of the children and families in this region.**

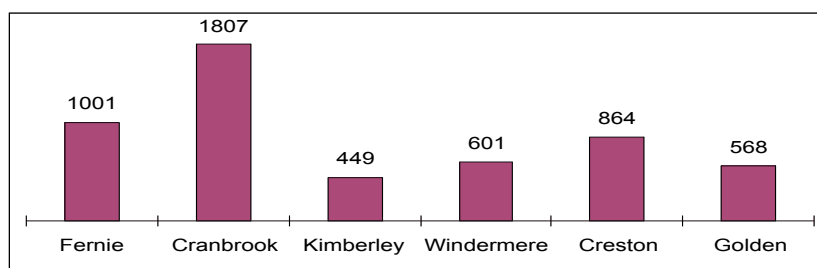
**The Children First Learning Initiative Manager, Gail Brown has prepared this report on behalf of the East Kootenay Childhood Coalition. The information in this report was obtained from Licensing Reports prepared by the East Kootenay Community Care Facilities Licensing Program in the past 10 years.**

### **Demographic Information**

**The East Kootenay region is located in the southeast corner of BC and encompasses just over 45,000 sq. kms. The 2002 projected population for this area is 78,860 persons. The Interior health population growth projection is for a .2% decrease in population over the next 10 years. (Source: Interior Health: Population Health Profile, 2002)**

**The number of children 0-6 years in the East Kootenay Health Area in 2002 was 5,290. Cranbrook is the largest population center with a population of 1807 children 0-6 years.**

**There are 6 major population centres in the East Kootenay: Fernie, Cranbrook, Kimberley, Windermere (Invermere), Creston and Golden. The diversity and rural nature of these communities; separated by mountain ranges, lakes and nestled, each in its own valley, makes each East Kootenay community unique.**

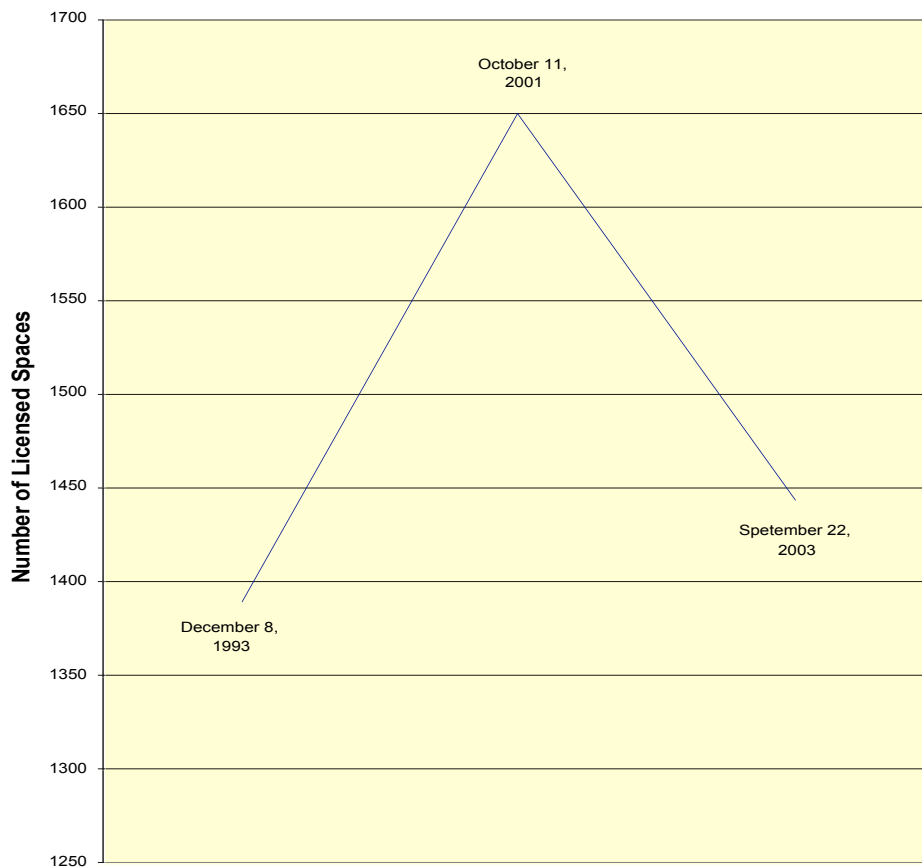


## Licensed Child Care Spaces in the East Kootenay Region

Licensed child care in the East Kootenay shows a marked downward trend from October 2001 to September 2003. In that period, the East Kootenay region lost 238 licensed child care spaces.

These numbers were compared with data on licensed child care spaces from December 1993. The results indicate that licensed child care is approaching service levels of 10 years ago. A survey of local child care services suggests that more closures of group child care programs are expected in 2004.

**1993 to 2003 Licensed Child Care Spaces in the East Kootenay Region**



## **The Good News**

**It is important to examine what occurred for child care in the East Kootenay in the two years from 2001 to 2003. Over this period, only two areas showed increases in licensed child care spaces:**

- \* Windermere Valley: 28 spaces**
- \* Elk Valley: 3 spaces**

**Windermere Valley is the only area in the region to show any significant increase in licensed child care spaces (+28) over the past two years.**

**Looking at the East Kootenay's licensed group child care services over the past 10 years, it is clear that the strongest type of administration for group child care services in this region is the large, non-profit society. These societies have provided group child care services in most East Kootenay communities over the past 10 years and all continue to do so. However, there are indications that even the large societies that administer licensed group child care are concerned about the current inadequacy of operating grant funding.**

**These societies rely on volunteer administration through their board of directors. Their on-site managers provide direct child care services (no paid management). Their links with each community are strong and they fund-raise in their community to support their child care programs.**

**Their history of child care service in some communities is a strength that cannot be easily replaced.**

**Privately owned licensed group child care services in the region have closed, plan to close or have downsized and moved to home settings due to financial stressors.**

## The Bad News

The East Kootenay region has **lost 238 licensed child care spaces** in the past two years.

Most of the East Kootenay region showed losses in licensed child care spaces from 2001 to 2003:

- \* **Kimberley: 87**
- \* **Creston: 76**
- \* **Golden: 53**
- \* **Cranbrook: 22**

**Total 238 closed child care spaces since 2001**

In the East Kootenay Region, there are 6 main communities with catchments areas that include smaller communities. Many are located in valleys between mountain ranges.

Valley/Catchment area	Main City	Outlying communities
Elk Valley	Fernie	Jaffray, Sparwood, Elkford
Creston Valley	Creston	Yahk, Crawford Bay, Riondel
Golden	Golden	Field, Nicholson, Parson
Kimberley/Marysville	Kimberley	Wasa
Windermere Valley	Invermere	Windermere, Radium Fairmont, Edgewater, Canal Flats
Cranbrook	Cranbrook	

**Golden** now has the poorest level of child care service in the East Kootenay region. **Golden has no services** in the following licensed categories:

- \* **Out of School Child Care**
- \* **Preschool**
- \* **Group Daycare under 36 months**
- \* **Group Daycare over 30 months**

**Recently, Golden's privately owned licensed group child care facility closed its doors for financial reasons. It held the licenses for the above services and it was the only licensed group daycare facility in the area.**

**Marysville's only licensed group daycare facility may close its doors in December 2003.**

**Creston almost lost its only licensed group daycare (over 30 months) in the spring of 2003 while awaiting the arrival of the new provincial government operating grant. It has remained open, due to community support. However, the only licensed group day care for infants and toddlers will be required to close and move due to school board and City of Creston requirements. It is unclear what will result.**

**Some of Cranbrook and Kimberley's licensed Group Day Care (under 36 months) programs are under review at present, due to financial concerns.**

## East Kootenay Status Reports by Type of Licensed Child Care

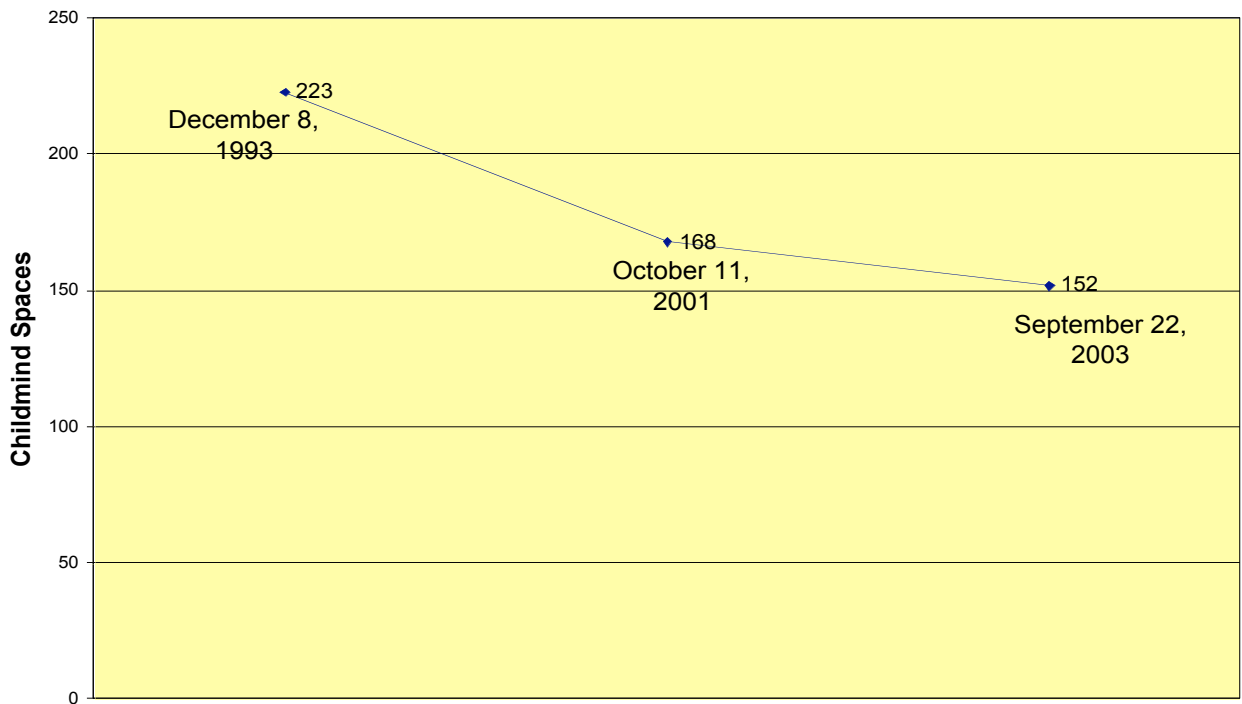
### Childminding



The two-year trend from 2001 to 2003 shows slightly higher levels of licensed childminding service region-wide (+12 spaces). The greatest area of lost childminding spaces is in Golden (-8 spaces).

The ten year comparison shows a drop from 223 spaces in 1993 to 152 spaces in 2003. This is a loss of 71 spaces region-wide in 10 years.

Licensed Childminding Spaces, East Kootenay



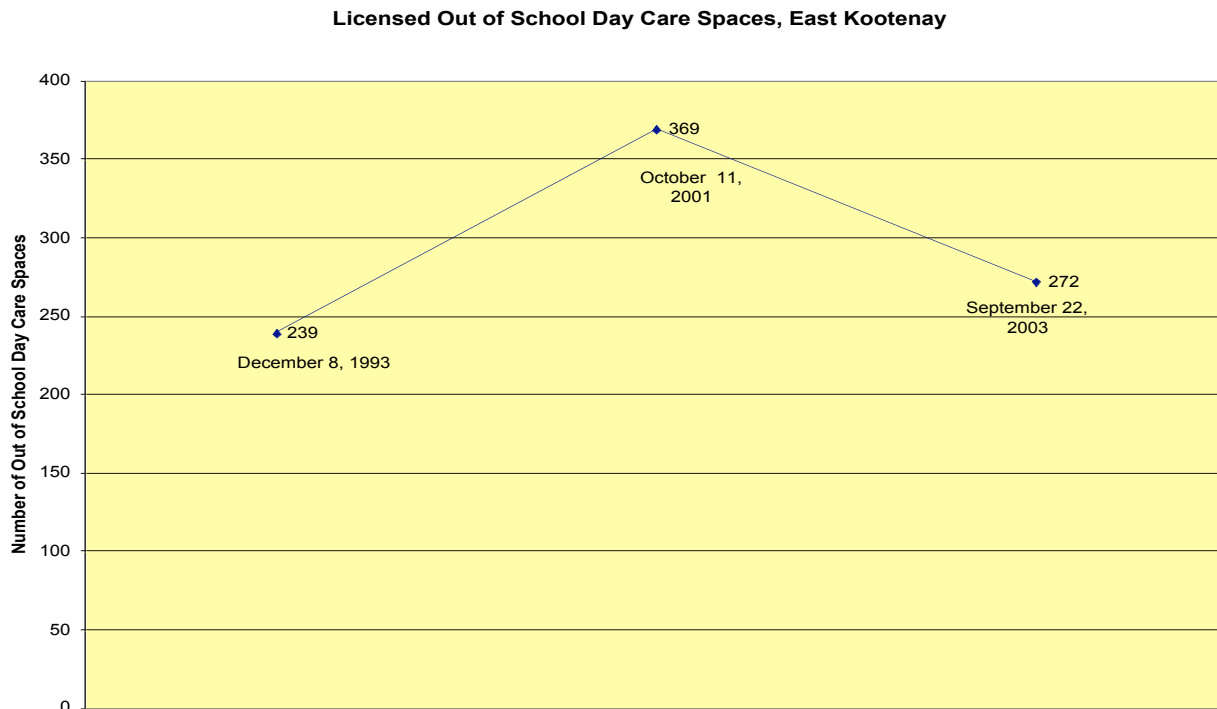


## Out of School Child Care



In the past 2 years, this region lost 102 licensed Out of School Child Care spaces. During this time, 5 of the 6 areas showed decreased service levels. Only the Windermere Valley showed a slight increase in this service (+5 licensed spaces). Golden suffered the greatest losses resulting in zero level of service at present (there were 81 spaces in 1993).

The 1993 levels for Out of School Child Care are 239 licensed spaces, compared with 229 spaces in 2001 and 152 spaces in 2003.

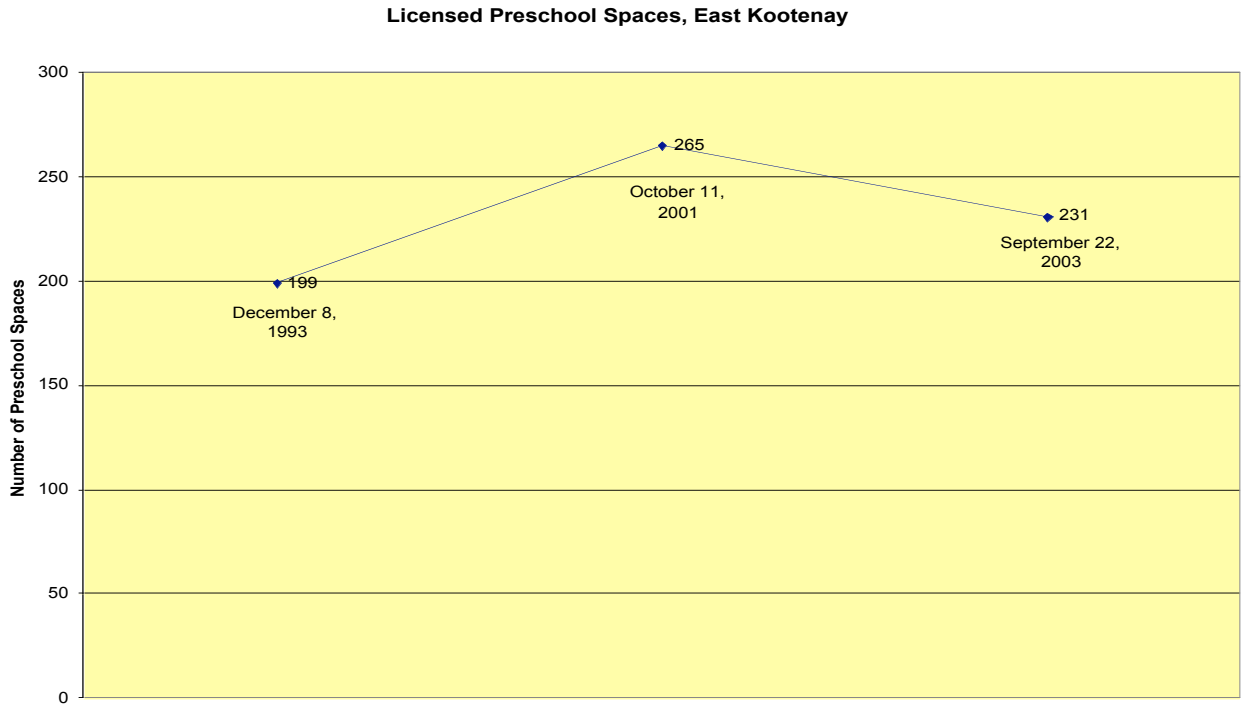


This is a drastic decline in Out of School Child Care serving the East Kootenay region over the past 10 years. Low operating grant funds for this type of care are threatening the continued provision of these services, region-wide.

## Preschool



**This is the most stable of the licensed child care services provided throughout the East Kootenay region. The exception is Kimberley, which provided 49 spaces in 1993 and offers none today.**



## Group Daycare under 36 months

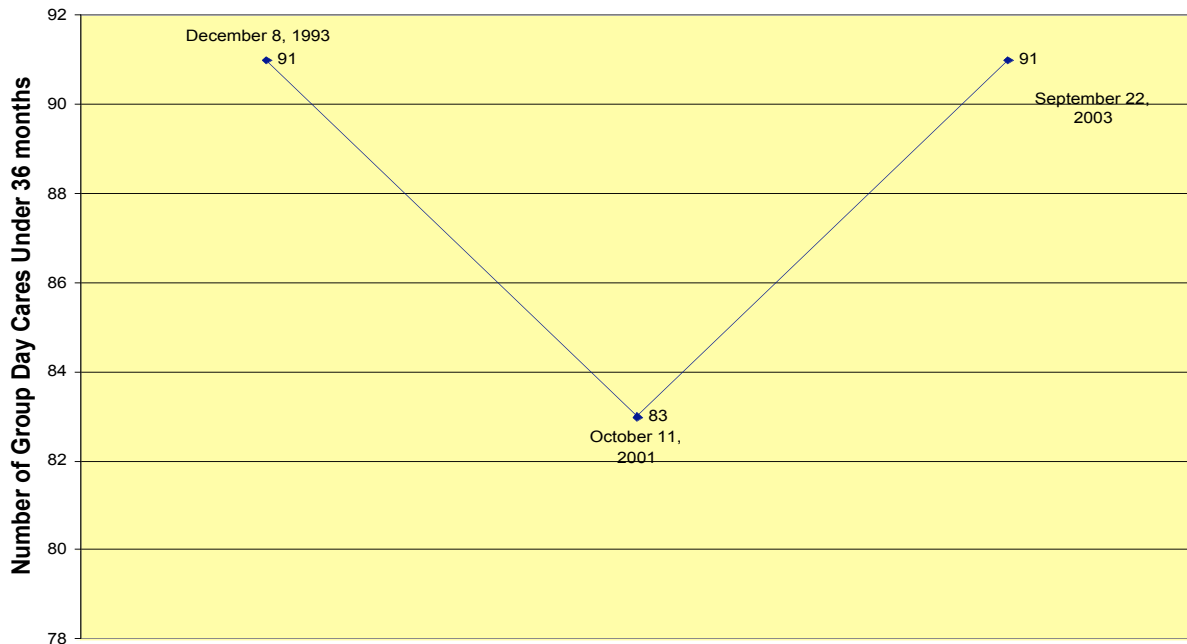


Commonly referred to as Infant/Toddler care, this type of service has been very stable from 2001 to 2003, with growth in Invermere of 8 spaces (one program) during that period.

Golden is the only community in our region that is completely lacking licensed group day care for Infants and Toddlers today. In 1993, both the Elk Valley and the Windermere Valley were lacking this licensed service. Soon, it is anticipated that Golden will be joined by two more communities in the loss of Infant/Toddler care.

Reports from the field indicate that Group Day Care under 36 months is losing about \$1000 per month, per facility due to lowered income from operating grants. Even the largest and most supportive of the East Kootenay societies are now examining the financial viability of continuing to provide this type of licensed group child care.

Licensed Group Day Care Under 36 Months, East Kootenay



## Group Daycare over 30 months

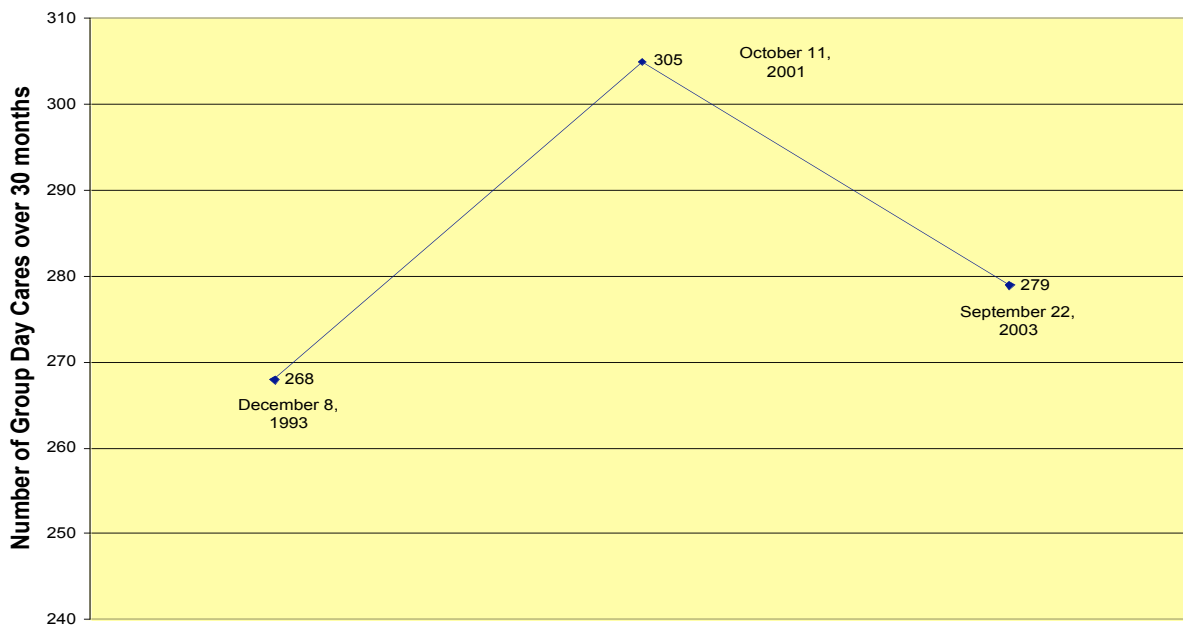


In the past two years, Cranbrook is the only community showing a slight increase (+ 6 spaces) in this service. The remainder of the region shows a combined loss of 32 spaces. Only Creston and Windermere Valley have remained stable in providing this service over the past 2 years.

Right now, private operators are leaving this service, with one large day care in Cranbrook for sale, one in Marysville, recently sold and others in the Elk Valley and Cranbrook moved into family homes with reduced service capacities. Increased costs over the past 2 years are reported as: insurance, heat, electricity and food. Decreased income is reported as: lower operating funds and more difficulty serving families on subsidy (obtaining payments).

Over a ten year period, licensed Group Daycare over 30 months has increased by 15 spaces, region-wide.

Licensed Group Day Care over 30 Months, East Kootenay



## Family Child Care



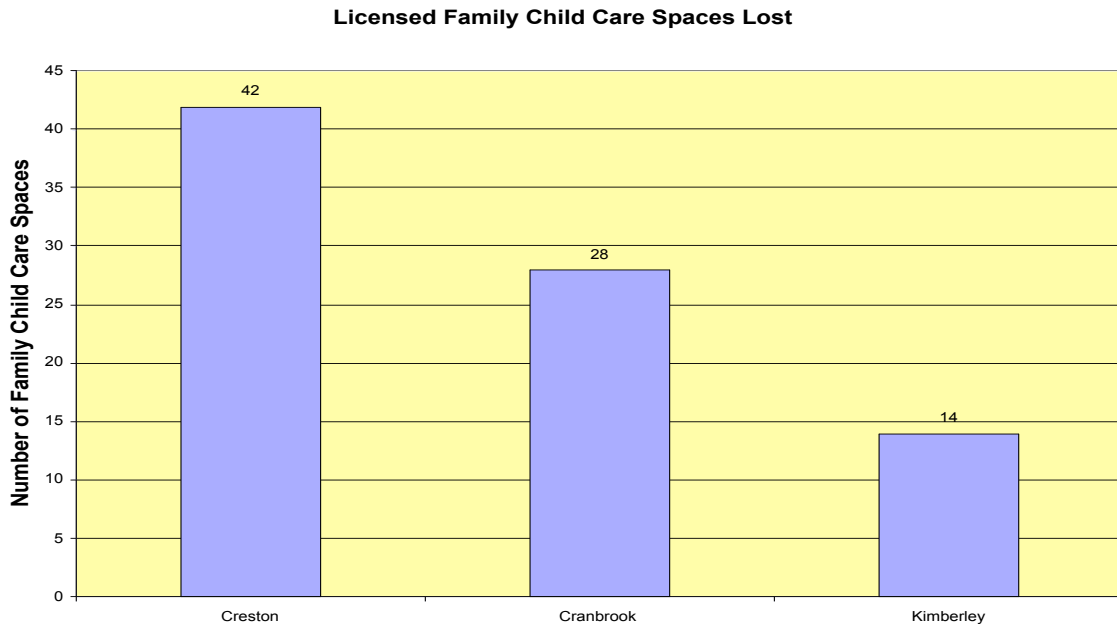
**There have been 84 licensed Family Child Care spaces lost over the past two years in 3 communities of this region**

**Creston: 42 spaces**

**Cranbrook: 28 spaces**

**Kimberley: 14 spaces.**

**Since 2001, Creston has lost two thirds (66%) of its licensed family child care spaces.**



**The Elk Valley and Windermere Valley gained 7 spaces each, i.e. one licensed family child care facility each since 2001.**

**This region now has 7 fewer licensed Family Child Care spaces than it offered in 1993. Our service levels for Family Child Care are below the 1993 service levels.**

**There seems to be an expectation that licensed Family Child Care will grow to fill the void left by closed group child care facilities. This is unsupported in the East Kootenay region. Licensed Family Child care**

service has fallen over 10 years and has drastically reduced in the past 2 years.

Reasons for Family Child Care closures, provided from the field are that Family Child Care is subject to increased costs such as: heat, insurance, electricity and food. Other reasons for Family Child Care closures are: family moving to obtain work, retirement of care provider, returning to work outside the home of the care provider.

### Occasional Ski Hill/Resort care



This type of licensed facility can be found at Panorama, Kimberley and Fernie ski hills. It serves resort visitors only. This type of licensed care has been stable over the last two years, providing a total of 85 licensed spaces in the region. As new ski hills develop in this region, more such licenses are expected (e.g. In Golden).

### Special Needs Day Care



This type of license has been discontinued since 1993; however there were 10 licensed spaces in the East Kootenay region in 1993.

## East Kootenay Status Reports by Community

### Elk Valley



<b>Licensed Child Care Spaces: Elk Valley</b>				Comparisons	
	1993	2001	2003	10 Year	2 Year
Child Minding	33	28	32	-1	4
Out of School Day Care	0	16	16	16	0
Preschool	65	75	75	10	0
Group Day Care < 36 mos	8	17	17	9	0
Group Day Care > 30 mos	25	41	33	8	-8
Family Child Care	28	28	35	7	7
Occasional Ski Hill/Resort Child Care	0	34	34	34	0
Special Needs Day Care	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>3</b>

**The Elk Valley increased its licensed child care spaces to 242 (+3 spaces) in the period 2001 to 2003. The ten year comparison shows marked growth in licensed child care spaces, with an increase of 83 spaces from 1993 to 2003.**

**Possible explanations for this trend include:**

- \* **Strong local society operating child care facility**
- \* **Development of ski hill care (34 spaces developed since 1993)**
- \* **Development of licensed preschool spaces in smaller communities**

## Creston Valley



	Licensed Child Care Spaces : Creston Valley			Comparisons	
	1993	2001	2003	10 Year	2 Year
Child Minding	19	0	8	-11	8
Out of School Day Care	5	50	20	15	-30
Preschool	25	40	28	3	-12
Group Day Care < 36 mos	24	12	12	-12	0
Group Day Care > 30 mos	37	25	25	-12	0
Family Child Care	30	65	23	-7	-42
Total	140	192	116	-24	-76

**The Creston Valley has lost 76 licensed child care spaces in the past 2 years. It has lost 24 spaces over the past 10 years. Despite these losses, Creston continues to provide licensed child care in all the licensed categories of care. Creston Valley offers a range of child care services to its families.**

**Creston's group child care services are provided by 2 long-standing societies. Supports from the community to maintain services to young families are strong.**

**Possible reasons for the decline in licensed child care:**

- \* **Weak local economy**
- \* **Aging population**
- \* **Decrease in provincial funding for child care**



## Golden



	Licensed Child Care Spaces: Golden			Comparisons	
	1993	2001	2003	10 Year	2 Year
Child Minding	32	24	16	-16	-8
Out of School Day Care	81	15	0	-81	-15
Preschool	0	15	0	0	-15
Group Day Care < 36 mos	12	0	0	-12	0
Group Day Care > 30 mos	12	15	0	-12	-15
Family Child Care	43	56	56	13	0
Special Needs Day Care	8	0	0	-8	0
Total	188	125	72	-116	-53

**The area of Golden has been hard-hit with reductions in licensed child care services, resulting in zero levels of service in four types of licensed child care. Since 2001, Golden has lost 53 licensed child care spaces. Families no longer have the choice of licensed group child care or licensed preschool. Only licensed Family Child Care service has remained stable during this two-year period.**

**Since 1993, Golden area has lost 116 licensed child care spaces. In 1993, Golden lacked only licensed preschool spaces and provided some services in the other categories of care. The 8 licensed Special Needs Day Care spaces were eliminated.**

**Possible explanations for this marked trend in reduction of licensed child care in Golden:**

- \* **Decline in financial (grants) support for out of school care**
- \* **Removal of funding for Special Needs Day Care had a negative impact on the group day care's finances**
- \* **Lack of community support (no local society) for licensed child care**
- \* **Weak local economy**
- \* **Decrease in provincial funding to licensed child care and poor families**

**Kimberley / Marysville**



<b>Licensed Child Care Spaces: Kimberley / Marysville</b>					
	1993	2001	2003	Comparisons	
				10 Year	2 Year
Child Minding	55	16	24	-31	8
Out of School Day Care	39	47	10	-29	-37
Preschool	49	35	0	-49	-35
Group Day Care < 36 mos	0	12	12	12	0
Group Day Care > 30 mos	10	25	16	6	-9
Family Child Care	49	42	28	-21	-14
Occasional Ski Hill / Resort Child Care	0	27	27	27	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>-85</b>	<b>-87</b>

**Kimberley/Marysville has shown a steady decline in licensed child care service over the past 10 years. Since 2001, it has lost 87 spaces and since 1993, it has lost 85 licensed spaces. Kimberley/Marysville is the area with the greatest losses of licensed child care service in the East Kootenay Region. Despite this, the area currently provides most types of licensed child care services (no preschool spaces).**

**Possible reasons for marked decline in licensed child care spaces:**

- \* **Closure of the area’s largest source of employment (Sullivan Mine)**
- \* **Decrease in provincial funding for licensed child care and reduced subsidy support for families**
- \* **Lack of a strong community-based society to provide child care services**
- \* **Aging population**

## Windermere Valley



	Licensed Child Care Spaces: Windermere Valley			Comparisons	
	1993	2001	2003	10 Year	2 Year
Child Minding	59	52	52	-7	0
Out of School Day Care	40	90	95	55	5
Preschool	20	20	28	8	8
Group Day Care < 36 mos	0	4	12	12	8
Group Day Care > 30 mos	0	25	25	25	0
Family Child Care	91	78	85	-6	7
Occasional Ski Hill / Resort Child Care	0	24	24	24	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>28</b>

**This valley is the only area in the East Kootenay region with growth in licensed child care over ten years and over the past two years. This area gained 28 licensed child care spaces in the past two years and it gained 111 licensed spaces since 1993.**

**In this area, Out of School Child Care grew from 40 spaces in 1993 to 95 spaces in 2003. This growth was supported by a strong local society and by the school district.**

**The local ski resort at Panorama licensed its child care service (24 spaces) and a group child care facility was begun after 1993. In the past 2 years, a Group Day Care under 36 months was developed by the local society and school district.**

**The Windermere Valley has maintained its licensed spaces in Childminding, Group Day Care (over 30 months) and Ski Hill Occasional Child Care. In all other categories of child care, spaces have increased in the past 2 years.**

**Possible reasons for steady growth in licensed child care:**

**Strong local society administering child care programs**

- \* **Support from local schools, school district and college**
- \* **Ski hill development**
- \* **Economic growth of the area**

## Cranbrook



	Licensed Child Care Spaces: Cranbrook			Comparisons	
	1993	2001	2003	10 Year	2 Year
Child Minding	25	20	20	-5	0
Out of School Day Care	74	151	131	57	-20
Preschool	40	80	100	60	20
Group Day Care < 36 mos	47	38	38	-9	0
Group Day Care > 30 mos	184	174	180	-4	6
Family Child Care	126	161	133	7	-28
Special Needs Day Care	2	0	0	-2	0
Total	498	624	602	104	-22

**Although Cranbrook shows an increase in licensed child care since 1993 (104 spaces), it has lost 22 licensed child care spaces in the past 2 years alone. Losses in the area of licensed Family Child Care are particularly alarming (-28 spaces). Group Child Care has only grown by 6 spaces during the past 2 years.**

**Reductions in Out of School Child Care (-20) are worrying. The 2003 school board decision to implement a 4-5 school week will have effects on Out of School Child Care. The nature of these effects is not yet known.**

**Cranbrook experienced a growth of licensed Preschool spaces (+20) and Group Day Care (over 30 months) (+6 spaces) over the past two years. These were the only areas of positive growth during that time.**

**Possible reasons for the loss of 22 licensed child care spaces in the past 2 years:**

- \* Private operators have stopped providing child care**
- \* Family child care operators have quit because they: moved away, felt isolated at work, returned to school or attended to their own family needs**
- \* Funding for Out of School Child Care was reduced in 2002 (Funding Assistance Program ended)**
- \* Decreased provincial funding for child care programs and reduced subsidy support for families.**

## **Conclusions and Projections**

**Should the current trend in loss of licensed child care spaces continue, the East Kootenay region's child care service level will fall below the 1993 level within the coming year.**

**Already, several societies are considering closures in early 2004 of child care programs they are subsidizing. More private operators are selling and/or quitting the field. Licensed group child care cannot operate as a business in this climate. It is a service that needs our immediate attention.**

**At a time when there is increasing focus in this province on children's readiness for school, child care spaces in this region are declining. Research clearly shows that good child care and preschool programs help to prepare young children for school.**

**British Columbia's licensing regulations establish that trained caregivers work in safe environments with limited numbers of young children. Trained Early Childhood Educators provide licensed group day care service and preschool. These are our local professionals in the area of Early Childhood Development and Care. Our communities benefit from Early Childhood educators and the services they provide to families. We need to benefit from their expertise by keeping them working with young children and families in the East Kootenay.**

**We need to continue training Early Childhood Educators. The college Early Childhood Education training is the only type of college training for child-care, child development and program development with a focus on children from birth to six years of age. Graduates of these training programs provide our child care programs with staff to operate family child care homes and offer information about child-rearing to families.**

**Right now, our communities in the East Kootenay are struggling to provide adequate licensed child care services. How can this trend be stopped?**

**In smaller rural communities, such as those in the East Kootenay region, the caring and commitment of individuals, groups and agencies are somewhat transparent. These communities are committed to capacity-building through volunteer activities and fund-raising. Respect for the**

**unpaid work done in these communities is the least that is expected by community members who volunteer. Child care programs, families and young children benefit from these community supports, however, these supports are no longer enough to save licensed child care programs in our region.**

**Strong, local societies that now provide licensed child care programs are struggling with continued provincial changes and cuts to child care and family services. There is concern that societies subsidizing child care will pull out their resources in 2004, leaving East Kootenay communities with fewer licensed child care services.**

## **Appendix I**

**The following requests are presented from the East Kootenay region:**

**Please DO NOT**

**Reduce licensing regulations, thus reducing the quality of child care**

**Please DO NOT**

**Manage and fund child care and its supports to families from several, competing provincial ministries**

**Please DO NOT**

**Ignore the plight of rural regions and community efforts to provide services for families of young children**

**Please DO NOT**

**Reduce services and supports for poor families and their young children**

**Immediate attention is needed to address the following:**

**PLEASE DO**

**Maintain the standards for licensed child care in BC**

**PLEASE DO**

**Amalgamate the provincial government's supports for child care and young children's services under one ministry**

**PLEASE DO**

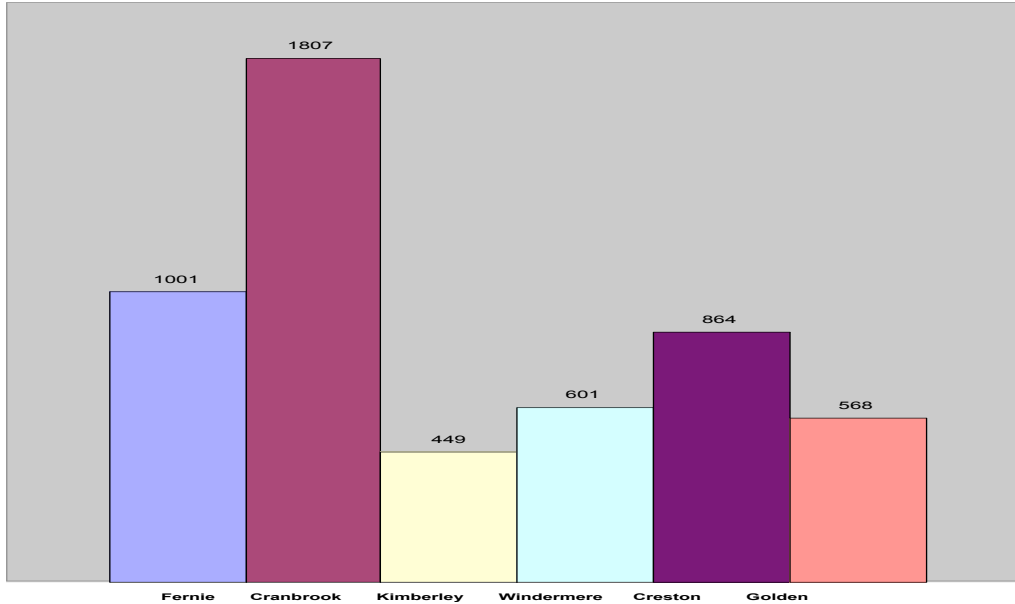
**Fund the rural areas of BC to provide licensed child care services**

**PLEASE DO**

**Reinstate services and supports to poor families to the year 2000 level**

## Appendix II

Number of Children 0 - 6 years,  
East Kootenay Health Region 2002



*Compiled from 2002 East Kootenay Child Health Profile*

### Population Counts, Birth to 14 Years, by Local Health Area, 2002

	< 1 Year	1 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14
Elk Valley	125	540	910	1118
Cranbrook	213	975	1648	1858
Kimberley	55	247	390	484
Windermere	68	325	597	593
Creston	119	518	659	924
Golden	70	307	521	568
East Kootenay	650	2912	4725	5545

*Compiled from 2002 East Kootenay Child Health Profile*



**Appendix III**

**Canadian Summary of Media Coverage**