

FACT SHEET



BY THE NUMBERS

BC Children, Families and Child Care

In 2011, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates and the Early Childhood Educators of BC released a **Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning**. The Plan offers a concrete, innovative ‘made in BC’ solution to the child care crisis facing families with young children.

If and when government puts the Plan in place, child care will cost families \$10 a day for a full-time program, \$7 a day for part-time, and will be free for families with annual incomes under \$40,000. Every young child will have the right to participate in quality early care and learning programs that meet their needs. It will be up to families to choose what services work for them.

With new investments from the province, locally elected school boards will provide early care and learning programs in their communities with the operating funds they need to deliver quality programs. Early childhood educators will receive the respect and remuneration they deserve. Learn more about the Plan at www.ecebc.ca/news/integrated_project.html

By the Numbers, the third fact sheet in a series that provides contextual information for the Plan, provides statistical information about BC children, families and child care.

BC CHILDREN

As of 2008, 567,000 children under 12 live in BC.

- Their distribution by age group is:
 - » Birth to age 2 120,800
 - » 3 to 5 123,400
 - » 6 to 12 323,700
- 358,700 of these children’s mothers are in the paid labour force.
- 124,000 BC children (22 per cent) live in families with incomes below the poverty line.¹
- 30 per cent of BC children enter Kindergarten vulnerable in at least one area of development —social, emotional, cognitive, communications or physical.²
- 55,250 BC children (10 per cent) from birth to 14 years identify with an Aboriginal group.
- 26,520 BC children (5 per cent) from birth to 14 years have a disability.
- In recent years, BC’s population of young children has grown. The HELP costing model³ is based on an estimate of 269,280 children under the age of 6.⁴



The OECD ranks Canada last for investing in child care services for children under 6.



BC labour force participation rates are the lowest in the country for mothers whose youngest child is age 3 to 15.



BC MOTHERS IN THE WORKFORCE

In 2008, BC mothers participating in the paid labour force included:

- 69,200 (64.7 per cent) whose youngest child is under 2;
- 52,700 (71.4 per cent) whose youngest child is age 3 to 5; and
- 189,000 (81 per cent) whose youngest child is age 6 to 15.

These participation rates are below national levels of:

- 69 per cent for mothers whose youngest child is under 2;
- 77 per cent for those whose youngest child is age 3 to 5; and
- 84 per cent for those whose youngest child is age 6 to 15.

BC participation rates are the lowest in the country for mothers whose youngest child is age 3 to 15, and second lowest for mothers whose youngest child is under 2.⁵

EXISTING BC CHILD CARE SPACES

In addition to care by parents and immediate family members, young children in BC also currently experience: licensed child care, in centres and family child care programs; preschool; kindergarten; registered but unlicensed family child care; and/or unlicensed, unregistered home-based care.

In 2008, there were 87,538 licensed child care spaces in BC.

- 72,903 of these spaces are in group centre-based programs, as follows:
 - » 4,788 spaces in group child care for children under 3;
 - » 19,772 spaces in group child care for children from 3 to school entry;
 - » 19,910 part-time spaces in pre-schools for children from 3 to school entry;
 - » 28,233 spaces in group child care for school aged children;
 - » 33 emergency care spaces; and
 - » 167 spaces for children with special needs.
- 14,635 (20 per cent) of the licensed spaces are in family child care programs.

Child care is also provided informally (unlicensed):

- 1,600 estimated spaces are in registered family child care—where care is provided for no more than two children and a license is not required.
- The HELP model estimates that 61,800 BC children are in unlicensed family child care, which includes registered family child care as described above.⁶
- Approximately two thirds (41,400) of children in unlicensed family child care arrangements are under age 3. The remaining 20,400 unlicensed spaces are for children age 3 to 5.⁷

In addition:

- 40,399 BC children attend Kindergarten, which is universally available to 5 year olds.

REQUIRED INTEGRATED EARLY CARE AND LEARNING SPACES

The HELP costing model projects that 40,000 additional licensed full or part-time spaces are required to provide near universal access to quality programs for 3 to 5 year olds. This takes into account children served through existing licensed preschool, group child care, Kindergarten and family child care spaces.

About half of these spaces would provide quality, affordable options for families currently using unlicensed care, while the other half would provide options for families not currently accessing early care and learning experiences for their preschool-aged children.

The HELP costing model also projects that 40,000 additional full or part-time licensed spaces are required to provide 75 per cent access to quality programs for children between 18 months and 3 years. With enhanced parental leave, these additional spaces do not increase the overall use of child care for children under three. Rather, they provide families who are currently using unregulated care access to licensed, quality, affordable options in their communities.⁸

CHILD CARE FUNDING

- Unlike other community and social services, child care is primarily a user fee service. The fees families pay to child care providers account for about 70 to 80 per cent of child care revenue. Remaining revenues come from small government grants and fundraising.
- Child care fees in BC are established by each child care provider with no provincial standards.
- Child care fees represent the second-largest expense for young families (after housing).⁹
- Data provided by the Ministry of Children and Family Development for programs receiving Child Care Operating Funds (see below) indicate that in 2010/11 median monthly child care fees were as shown in the table at right.¹⁰
- The BC government currently budgets about \$300 million for child care from birth to age 12.¹¹ This includes federal transfers for child care of around \$80 million a year.¹²

BC's child care budget is mainly delivered through two funding mechanisms:

- Subsidies to some low income BC families to help cover child care fees. A family of three with a child under the age of 5 in licensed child care qualifies for the maximum subsidy rate if their net annual income is about \$33,000. The same family with a child over 5 in school age child care qualifies for maximum subsidy rates with a net annual income of about \$22,000. Maximum subsidy rates are set by the province and do not reflect the actual cost of care. For example, the maximum subsidy rate for group toddler care is \$635 a month—almost \$220 below the provincial median. Low income families have to make up the difference between their subsidy and the actual cost of care.
- The Child Care Operating Fund (CCOF) which provides a small per diem to licensed group and family child care. CCOF funding is based on the type of care provided and enrolment. CCOF accounts for less than 15 per cent of a child care program's revenue.¹³

Child care is the second-largest expense for young families (after housing).

Provincial median	
Group child care	
Infants	\$900
Toddlers	\$854
2.5 – 5 years	\$665
Out of school	\$300
Family child care	
Infants	\$750
Toddlers	\$700
3 – 5 years	\$700
Out of school	\$275–400

Vancouver Coastal median	
Group child care	
Infants	\$1,033
Toddlers	\$985
2.5 – 5 years	\$705
Out of school	\$315
Family child care	
Infants	\$850
Toddlers	\$800
3 – 5 years	\$750
Out of school	\$300–\$400



The proposed system will require over 26,000 full-time-equivalent Early Childhood Educators.

BC EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

- There are about 12,000 licensed to practice Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) on the BC ECE registry. Projections are that about 50 per cent of these ECEs are currently working in the field.
- In 2009, the average wage for full-time early childhood educators and assistants in BC was \$16.46 per hour.¹⁴
- Caregivers in unlicensed programs earn the lowest wages.

ECEs Needed for an Integrated Early Care and Learning System

HELP's model suggests that the proposed new system will require over 26,000 full-time-equivalent ECEs.¹⁵ This growth will be achieved through increased wages and strategies to:

- Support existing and informal caregivers to upgrade their education and credentials;
- Welcome back those who have left the field; and
- Recruit a new generation into early childhood education, with educators who see it as a life long profession.

Notes

- 1 Jane Beach, Martha Friendly, Carolyn Ferns, Nina Prabhu and Barry Forer, "Early childhood education and care in Canada 2008," Childcare Resource and Research Unit, (June, 2009), p. 177-8 in "The Big Picture," <http://childcarecanada.org/publications/ecec-canada/09/11/early-childhood-education-and-care-canada-2008>
- 2 Human Early Learning Partnership. Fourth Wave of EDI Data Now Available for B.C. Communities: Data provides important information for community development and planning (Vancouver: September 20, 2011, p. 1, http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/uploads/publications/help_press_release_wave_4_edi_results_now_available_final.pdf
- 3 UBC's Human Early Learning Partnership has developed a model that describes the caring and earning arrangements for families with young children in BC, both today and after the implementation of comprehensive family policy including child care.
- 4 Lynell Anderson, "Who Cares?," Human Early Learning Partnership (July 2011), slide 4, http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/uploads/documents/who_cares_landerson_ppt_presentation_july_2011.pdf
- 5 Beach et al., supra note 1, p. 179 Table 6.
- 6 Anderson, supra note 4, slide 5.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Extrapolated from Anderson, supra note 4.
- 9 Tim Richards, Marcy Cohen, Seth Klein and Deborah Littman, *Working for a Living Wage: Making Paid Work*
- 10 Correspondence from the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (August 26, 2011).
- 11 BC Ministry of Children and Family Development "Child Care in British Columbia," (January 2009), p. 3, www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/pdfs/child_care_in_bc_2008_final.pdf
- 12 Early Learning and Child Care Research Unit, "Financial Fact Sheet #2: An Update on Public Funding for Child Care Services in BC," Human Early Learning Partnership, (June 2007), p. 1, http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/uploads/documents/elccru_r_p_highlights_june_2007.pdf
- 13 For example, the daily CCOF rate for group 3 to 5 programs is \$5.48. Assuming 20 CCOF-billed days per month, for a total of \$109.60 per child, and provincial media fees of \$665 per child, CCOF accounts for 14 per cent of the resulting estimated operating budget (\$109.60/(\$109.60 + \$665.00) = 14 per cent. As many programs add fundraising or other organizational resources to their budgets, this figure may overestimate the CCOF contribution. See http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/pdfs/ccof_rates.pdf
- 14 Shannon Pendergast, BC Wage & Salary Survey, BC Stats (Victoria: Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, June 2010), p. 8, http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/lss/labour/wage/Doc/WS_2009_01_Highlights_Final.pdf
- 15 Anderson, supra note 4, slide 13.

Meet Basic Family Needs in Vancouver and Victoria—2008 (Vancouver: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, First Call: Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, and Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, 2008), www.policyalternatives.ca/livingwage2011