

School Age Parent Survey Summary of Findings

September 2024



Ministry of
Education and
Child Care

ChildCareBC

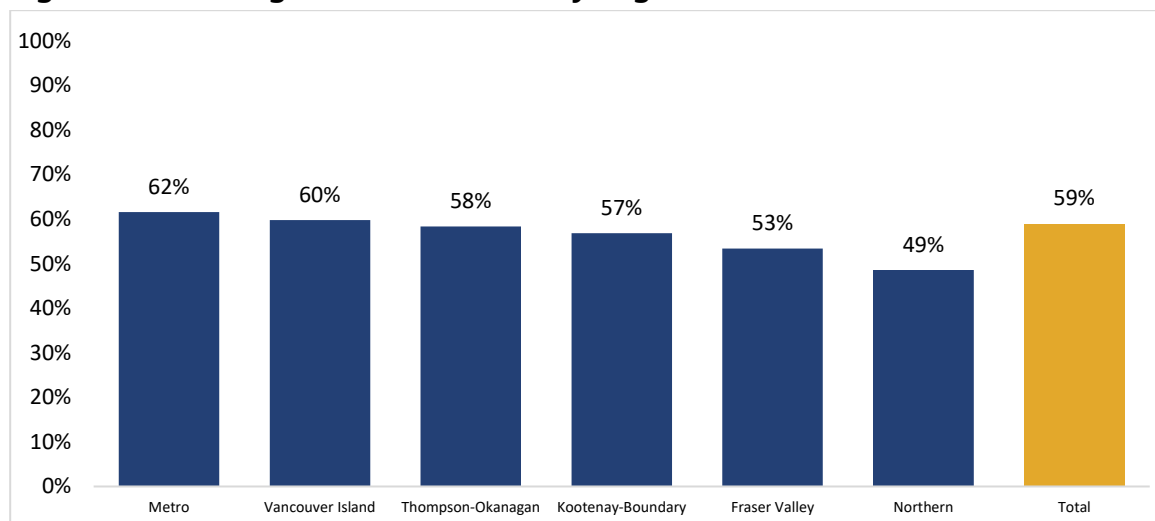
PURPOSE

- Since the release of the ChildCareBC plan in 2018, B.C. committed to expanding access to child care, including school-aged child care. Existing data on child care need was insufficient to inform long-term planning and policy development. Therefore, a survey project was undertaken in 2023 to gather information about the need for child care for B.C.'s school-aged (Kindergarten to Grade 7) population.

CHILD CARE NEED

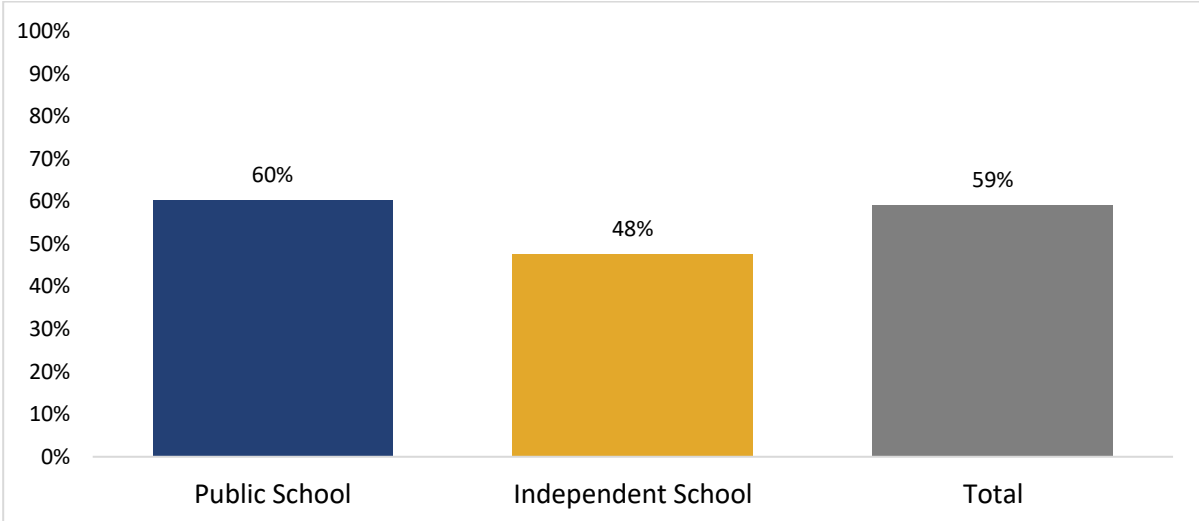
- Overall, 59% of B.C. parents of children from Kindergarten to Grade 7 needed and used child care during the school year (from September 2023).
- The need for child care was highest in the Metro region, where 62% of parents needed child care, and lowest in the Northern region, where 49% of parents needed care.

Figure 1: School Age Child Care Need by Region



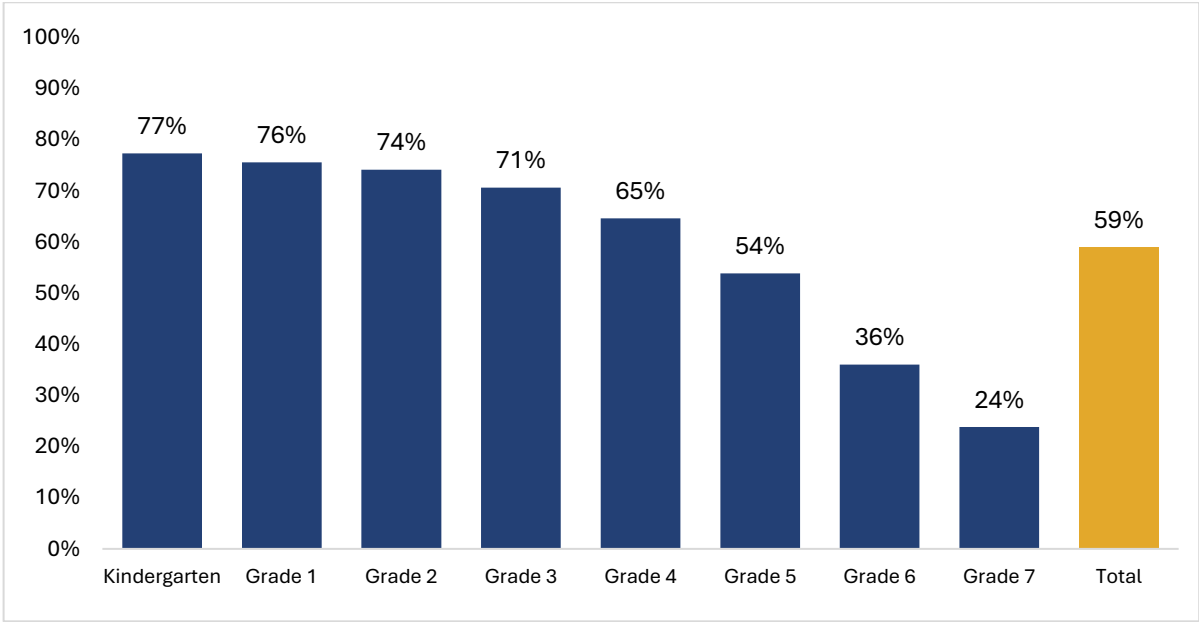
- Parents with children in independent schools were less likely to need child care for their Kindergarten to Grade 7 child. Just less than half (48%) of independent school parents said they needed child care compared with 60% of public school parents.

Figure 2: School Age Child Care Need by School Type



- The need for child care was highest for parents of children in Kindergarten (77%) and lowest for those with children in Grade 7 (24%).

Figure 3: School Age Child Care Need by Grade



- Almost three quarters (74%) of those who needed child care, needed it from Monday to Friday. Almost all parents of school age children who needed child care required it after school (96%), while about half (46%) needed child care before school.

CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

- While parents may use several different arrangements, group child care was the most common main arrangement and was relied on by 44% of parents. An additional 31% relied on non-parent relative arrangements as their main form of child care. Fewer than one in ten (8%) parents relied most on a non-relative in the child's home or on recreational programs (5%) as their main child care arrangement.
- Child care arrangements appear to be meeting the needs of most parents who use them. A quarter (25%) of parents indicated their current arrangements completely met their needs, while an additional third (36%) said that it mostly met their needs. Only 10% said their arrangements poorly met their needs and 4% felt their current arrangement did not meet their needs at all.

ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

- Almost two thirds (65%) of main child care arrangements were on or near school grounds. The Metro region (71%) led the way, followed closely by Vancouver Island (65%) and Fraser Valley (64%), while Thompson-Okanagan (48%) and Kootenay-Boundary (45%) had the lowest percent of child care on or near school grounds.
- Almost all (97%) parents who had child care on or near school grounds said this was important to them.

COST

- Overall, about four in five (79%) parents who used child care paid for it. Not surprisingly, those parents who relied on non-parent relatives (43%) as their main care arrangement were the least likely to pay for care, with two in five (43%) paying for child care. In contrast, almost all (97% to 98%) parents who used various types of licensed group child care programs as their main child care arrangement, paid for that care.
- Among those who paid for child care, the average out-of-pocket monthly fee was \$400.

DIFFICULTY FINDING CARE

- About half (48%) of parents had difficulty finding care, while 14% said they didn't have difficulty finding child care, and the remaining 37% did not need to look for child care or already had child care in place.

INDIGENOUS CHILD CARE

- Indigenous children made up 6% of the total Kindergarten to Grade 7 survey population which aligns with the percent of British Columbians with Indigenous identity, 5.9%¹.

¹ Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0264-01 Indigenous identity by Registered or Treaty Indian status and residence by Indigenous geography: Canada, provinces and territories](#)

- At 61%, parents of Indigenous children had similar need for child care compared with the overall result (59%).
- There were a few differences between parents of Indigenous children and other respondents. Parents of Indigenous children were less likely to say that their child care arrangements met their needs. While a majority of Indigenous parents (56%) said their arrangements completely or mostly met their needs, this was lower than the overall result (61%).
- Among parents who had difficulty finding care, 22% of parents of Indigenous children indicated that they had difficulty finding care that was inclusive of their child's support needs, higher than the 13% of all parents who cited this as a difficulty.

INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE

- 13% of parents felt they would require child care for their child beyond Grade 7 (or age 12) due to their child's diverse or special needs.

NON-USERS OF CHILD CARE

- As noted above, three in five (59%) parents surveyed said that they needed child care for their child. Included among the remaining two in five (41%) parents who said they did not need child care were families where a parent was home either short or long term, a parent who was working from home; families that couldn't find child care that fit their needs are also included. This latter group included those who said they could not find affordable care or care on school grounds, as well as parents who said they could not find care in a suitable location or that provided suitable hours.

Methodology

- The survey was completely voluntary and had a two-step invitation process. In the first step, invitations were sent to all school principals and administrators requesting their assistance and participation in the survey. In the second step, participating schools sent survey invitations to their Kindergarten through Grade 7 parents and guardians.
- Participating parents were invited to complete the survey between November 22, 2023 and December 20, 2023. A total of 45,797 surveys were completed, which accounts for 11% of B.C.'s total Kindergarten to Grade 7 population. At least one survey was submitted by 82% of all public schools and 68% of the independent schools that were invited to participate. Schools from 59 of 60 school districts participated in the survey.