

# **Early Learning and Child Care Act Annual Report**

**2024-2025**

**The Ministry of Education and Child Care acknowledges the territories of First Nations throughout B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands.**

**As the ministry is committed to reconciliation, we acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities and concerns of all Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories and rights.**

## Minister's Message



As Minister of Education and Child Care, I am honoured to share the first Annual Report under the Early Learning and Child Care Act (ELCCA), which came into effect on September 1, 2024.

This landmark legislation reflects our government's deep and ongoing commitment to building a child care system that is affordable, inclusive, culturally safe, and responsive to the needs of families throughout British Columbia. By modernizing and consolidating previous legislation, the ELCCA provides a strong, unified foundation for early learning and child care – one that better supports children, families and educators.

A key feature of the ELCCA is its new reporting requirement, which holds government publicly accountable for transparently demonstrating its efforts to meet its child care mandate, as outlined in the ChildCareBC Plan. This requirement also reflects our broader commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), ensuring that the rights of Indigenous Peoples are respected and upheld in all government actions related to child care.

This inaugural annual report outlines the actions taken in 2024-2025 to strengthen child care throughout the province, including efforts to better connect early learning with the K-12 education system. It also responds to the Office of the Auditor General's findings on child care licensing capacity, detailing steps taken to improve cross-government coordination in the monitoring and inspection of child care facilities.

We are especially proud of the collaborative work underway with First Nations, Métis and Indigenous partners to build a distinctions-based child care system and advance Indigenous jurisdiction over early learning and child care. The annual report is intended to encourage and support ongoing collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, ensuring that their rights – as outlined in UNDRIP – are meaningfully reflected in the design and delivery of child care services.

At its heart, this report reflects our belief that early learning and child care is essential to children's development, family well-being, and the strength and resilience of our

communities. As we move forward, we remain committed to listening, learning, and working in partnership with families, Indigenous communities, early childhood educators, municipalities, school districts and service providers.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are building a brighter future for B.C.'s children.

Sincerely,

Honourable Lisa Beare  
Minister of Education and Child Care  
Province of British Columbia

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# Introduction

## The Early Learning and Child Care Act

The [ELCCA](#) came into force on September 1, 2024, marking a significant step forward in building a child care system that is high-quality, affordable and reliable for families throughout British Columbia (B.C.). The ELCCA replaces and combines the Child Care Subsidy Act and the Child Care BC Act, which have been repealed.

The ELCCA improves access to child care by expanding the purposes for which child care grants may be provided – for example, to enhance inclusivity for children with support needs and to support the design and delivery of child care programs led by First Nations, Métis or Indigenous organizations. It also grants the Minister authority to establish new regulations, including the ability to set limits on child care fees, helping to make child care more affordable for families.

Importantly, the Act introduces a new annual reporting requirement that strengthens government accountability and oversight. This requirement ensures that government actions are transparently documented and publicly shared, demonstrating progress toward meeting the child care mandate outlined in the ChildCareBC Plan. As part of this reporting, government is required to demonstrate actions taken to consult and engage with Indigenous peoples – reflecting its broader commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and advancing reconciliation through collaborative action.

Through this reporting, government aims to foster trust, encourage dialogue, and promote shared responsibility in building a child care system that reflects the diverse needs and strengths of B.C.'s communities.

## Progress through Partnership

In 2018, B.C. launched the [ChildCareBC Plan](#) (the Plan) – a 10-year strategy to transform child care into a high-quality and affordable publicly supported, community-delivered system. The Plan outlines a comprehensive set of cross-ministry actions to support children up to age 12 (and older in some cases), and their families, throughout the province.

Since 2018, \$5.86 billion in provincial funding and \$2.65 billion in federal funding has been invested in ChildCareBC – representing the most significant investment in child care in B.C.'s history.

Provincial funding supports a range of child care supports and programs, including:

- [Affordable Child Care Benefit \(ACCB\)](#) – a monthly payment to help eligible families with the cost of child care
- [Child Care Operating Funding \(CCOF\)](#) to assist child care providers with the day-to-day costs of running a licensed child care facility
- [Maintenance Funding](#) to help licensed facilities in emergency circumstances
- [Child Care Resource and Referral \(CCRR\)](#) programs that provide information, support, resources and referral services to parents and child care providers
- Professional development supports for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs)

Through collaboration with the Government of Canada (Canada), B.C. jointly funds several key initiatives under the ChildCareBC plan. These include:

- [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC](#), delivering child care at a cost of no more than \$10 per day for thousands of families provincewide
- Expansion of the [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative \(CCFRI\)](#), which reduces child care fees by up to \$900 per month (for facilities not enrolled in the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC program)
- Supports for [ECEs](#) – including wage enhancements, bursaries, and professional development
- [New Spaces Fund \(NSF\)](#) to create new licensed child care spaces
- Over 2,200 full day, no fee [Aboriginal Head Start \(AHS\)](#) spaces
- [Supported Child Development \(SCD\)/Aboriginal SCD \(ASCD\)](#) programs

In 2018, B.C. signed the Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (Bilateral ELCC Agreement) and in July 2021, became the first jurisdiction in Canada to sign the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CW-ELCC) Agreement. In March 2024, B.C. again led the way by becoming the first province to sign the Infrastructure Fund Agreement with the Government of Canada.

Most recently, in March 2025, B.C. and the Canada signed a five-year extension to the CW-ELCC Agreement, securing funding through to March 31, 2031. This extension ensures continuity of vital child care services and enables the Province to maintain momentum toward a system that supports access to affordable, high-quality, inclusive child care for families that want or need it.

### Designing a Cohesive Child Care System

B.C. is taking concrete steps to build a cohesive and integrated child care system – one that responds to the evolving needs of children, families, and communities. The child care landscape is rapidly shifting, shaped by provincial and federal investments, new policies

and legislation, and external pressures such as post-pandemic recovery, an uncertain economic climate and a nationwide shortage of ECEs and other child care professionals.

Within this dynamic environment, the ChildCareBC priority investment areas – affordability, accessibility, inclusion, quality, and Indigenous-led child care – are deeply interconnected. Progress in one area often creates ripple effects across others, requiring coordinated action to ensure the system functions effectively and efficiently.

This interdependence plays out across the system. As child care becomes more affordable, demand for spaces increases. This demand, in turn, places pressure on space creation efforts and heightens the need for ECEs and inclusive child care supports. These dependencies highlight the complexity of the system and the importance of designing programs that address multiple needs simultaneously.

The AHS program demonstrates how integrated approaches can work in practice.<sup>1</sup> AHS programs provide culturally grounded, wraparound services – including family support and inclusion services – at no cost to families. These supports often include enhanced staffing, transportation, nutritious meals, and cultural teachings, making AHS a model of holistic, community-based care.

B.C.'s systems approach is designed to ensure child care programs are responsive, inclusive, and sustainable – ultimately benefiting children, families, and communities throughout the province. By recognizing and addressing the interdependencies within the system, the Province is working toward a future where child care is a reliable, high-quality service that supports every child's development and every family's well-being.

### First Nations, Métis and Indigenous Organization-led Child Care

B.C. is committed to ensuring that First Nations, Métis and Inuit children, families, and communities have access to child care that reflects and respects their distinct cultures, identities, and needs. This includes supporting child care delivered by First Nations, Métis, or Indigenous organizations – to ensure programs are rooted in the values, languages, and priorities of each community.

#### **What is a Distinctions-Based Approach?**

A distinctions-based approach means that the Province's work with [First Nations, Métis, and Inuit](#) will be conducted in a manner that acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of each, while respecting and acknowledging these distinct Peoples

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<sup>1</sup> There are over 2,200 AHS spaces, of which ~850 are in urban areas. There are also 160 new Métis-led spaces being created.

In 2019, B.C. became the first jurisdiction in Canada to adopt UNDRIP as the foundation for reconciliation through the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (Declaration Act). In consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, the Province released the [Declaration Act Action Plan](#) in 2022, outlining 89 priority actions to advance reconciliation over five years. Among these is Action 4.19, which commits the Province to working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples to implement a distinctions-based approach to advancing jurisdiction over child care for those who want and need it.

This commitment aligns with the Declaration Act, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) [Calls to Action](#), and Section 35 of the [Constitution Act](#), 1982.

A significant milestone was reached on September 12, 2024, when B.C., Canada and the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) signed a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Early Learning and Child Care for First Nations – the first of its kind in Canada. The MOU commits all parties to work together to improve outcomes for First Nations families and sets out shared objectives:

- Co-developing a collaborative, rights-based, and distinctions-based approach to ELCC for First Nations in B.C., where the goal is to support B.C. First Nations' self-determination and advance jurisdiction in relation to ELCC. This includes the right to control the design, delivery, and administration of an ELCC system for First Nations that reflects their unique needs, priorities, and aspirations
- Concretely addressing systemic barriers experienced by First Nations children and families in accessing affordable, high-quality, and culturally based ELCC programs, through an effective partnership approach that includes strengthened relationships
- Advancing an ELCC system for First Nations that is First Nations-determined, accessible, affordable, high-quality, and culturally based to support First Nations children and their families

Ongoing engagement with Métis Nation BC (MNBC) and urban Indigenous organizations – such as the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) and the Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC (AHSABC) – continues to inform ChildCareBC investments and priorities.

#### Note on Report Structure:

To support readability and transparency, this report is organized into sections that align with the reporting requirements of the ELCCA. These include:

- Collaboration with First Nations, Métis, and Indigenous Organizations

- Affordable Child Care
- Inclusive Child Care
- Growing the Child Care System (Accessibility)
- Workforce and Quality Child Care
- Transitions to Kindergarten–Grade 12

These sections also correspond broadly to the ChildCareBC priority investment areas. We recognize that child care must be understood as a cohesive and holistic system, and as such, many programs described in one section of this report contribute to multiple areas of impact.

# Collaboration with First Nations, Métis, and Indigenous Organizations

## Introduction

Through the Declaration Act, B.C. has adopted a distinctions-based approach to advancing reconciliation and implementing UNDRIP. Section 3 of the Declaration Act requires the Province “in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples” take “all measures necessary” to ensure consistency between the laws of B.C. and UNDRIP.

Working in collaboration, through engagement, and in accordance with formal processes of consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, is foundational to reconciliation. These commitments are interwoven throughout this report, both in this dedicated section and across all areas of child care policy and programming.

## Positive Impact

Advancing shared priorities depends on sustained, respectful partnerships. Building meaningful relationships is a complex and long-term process, and the benefits often emerge over time. For example, the Province’s longstanding relationships with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and MNBC have evolved over many years. These partnerships have led to expanded access to culturally relevant, high-quality, distinctions-based child care for First Nations, Métis and Inuit families.

## Key Milestones and Partnership Activities in 2024-2025

B.C. continues to deepen its relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Indigenous organizations to advance shared priorities in ELCC. These efforts reflect a commitment to reconciliation and a distinctions-based approach to advancing jurisdiction over child care.

- **Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** In September 2024, B.C., Canada, and the FNLC co-developed and signed a historic Tripartite MOU – the first of its kind in Canada for ELCC. The MOU is implemented through a political table, technical table and specialized working groups focused on funding and jurisdiction, licensing and regulation, infrastructure and capital, and workforce
- **Regulatory Consultation:** In spring 2024, B.C. consulted with First Nations, including Modern Treaty Nations, and invited input from FNLC, BCACCS, FNECS, MNBC, BCAAFC, and FNHA to inform the development of regulations under the ELCCA

- **Regional Engagement Sessions:** Between April and June 2024, the Province hosted 10 Regional Indigenous ELCC engagement sessions in partnership with AHSABC, BCACCS, MNBC, FNHA and BCAAFC. More than 300 participants took part in these sessions, sharing best practices, celebrating successes, and identifying challenges and opportunities experienced by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit families, children, and child care providers. The partners co-developed a [What We Heard Report](#) summarizing engagement feedback
  
- **Enhanced ACCB:** As of September 1, 2024, implementation of the ELCCA extended eligibility for the enhanced ACCB to families whose child care is arranged or recommended by an Indigenous authority. This ensures equitable support across systems and affirms government’s commitment to Indigenous jurisdiction, affordability, and inclusion
  
- **First Nations ELCC Grants:** Flexible funding was provided in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 to support the distinct needs of First Nations communities. Grant reporting has offered valuable insights into First Nations’ ELCC priorities and continues to inform provincial planning and investment
  
- **Métis-led Initiatives:** Partnership with MNBC continues to advance Métis-specific early learning and child care programs, including the development and operation of Métis child care centres and the delivery of Métis-specific training, consultation, and family support programs
  
- **Policy and Program Consultation and Engagement:** Throughout 2024-2025, the Province met regularly with First Nations, Métis, and Indigenous partners to discuss key initiatives including:
  - [B.C.’s Inclusive Child Care Strategy](#)
  - Federal-provincial/territorial ELCC initiatives
  - Development of a quality assessment guide/tool
  - Proposed amendments to the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI)
  - Development of a Waitlist Prioritization Framework for ECE Program Recognition
  - Potential updates to the B.C. Child Care Sector Occupational Competencies

## Ongoing Collaboration

- **Tripartite MOU Collaboration:** B.C. works in partnership with Canada and the FNLC under the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding on First Nations Early Learning and Child Care. Collaboration is supported through annual Political Table meetings, regular Technical Table meetings, and dedicated working groups focused on shared priorities such as licensing and infrastructure
- **Bilateral First Nations ELCC Technical Working Group:** B.C. meets on a monthly basis with FNLC technical staff, BCACCS, and FNESC representatives. The Working Group provides a consistent forum for discussion and information sharing
- **Partner Engagement:** B.C. meets monthly meetings with AHSABC, BCACCS, MNBC, FNHA and BCAAFC to advance mutual ELCC priorities and strengthen engagement across the sector

# Affordable Child Care

## Introduction

In 2024-2025, B.C. continued to make meaningful progress toward building a child care system that is more affordable, inclusive, and accessible for families throughout the province. There are currently two primary paths to affordable child care in B.C.: the [CCFRI](#) (supports ~90% of spaces), and the [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC program](#) (supports ~10% of spaces).<sup>2</sup> Eligible families with children in either program may also receive the [ACCB](#), which further lowers fees. Together, these initiatives are easing the financial burden of child care and helping families access the care they need to support their children’s early learning and development.

<b>Child Care Fee Reduction</b>	<b>\$10 a Day ChildCareBC program</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age range: birth to age 12</li><li>• 140,000+ spaces</li><li>• Up to \$900/month, per child in savings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age range: birth to 12+ years</li><li>• 15,000+ spaces</li><li>• All families pay \$10/day (\$200/month), per child</li></ul>
	
<b>Affordable Child Care Benefit</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Income-tested – based on household income on a sliding scale</li><li>• Age range: birth to 12+ years</li><li>• About 35,000 children (birth to age 12 years), monthly</li><li>• Up to \$1,250/month, per child in savings</li></ul>	

<sup>2</sup> The Aboriginal Head Start program provides no-cost child care to families accessing services at AHS providers. However, with only ~2,200 AHS spaces in B.C. it is not considered a ‘primary’ path to affordability.

## **Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI)**

The CCFRI provides up to \$900 per month per child in direct funding to participating licensed child care providers, enabling them to lower fees for families. These savings are applied automatically to parent fees, making the process seamless for parents. The initiative supports a wide range of care types, including full-day, preschool, and school-age programs.

To help providers manage operational costs while maintaining affordability, CCFRI participants receive Provider Payment funding of up to \$96 per child per month. This funding can be used for expenses such as staff wages and administrative costs and is provided in addition to CCOF Base Funding, CCFRI parent fee reductions and, if eligible, the Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE). Together, these supports help ensure providers can deliver quality care while keeping fees low for families.

## **\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Program**

The \$10 a Day program continued to expand in 2024-25, offering families access to full-time child care at a maximum of \$10 per day. In alignment with federal funding requirements, the program prioritizes spaces for children birth to five with not-for-profit and public providers, as well as child care delivered by First Nations, Métis, or Indigenous organizations, particularly in communities where affordable care options are limited. It is designed to deliver high-quality, inclusive care while keeping fees low.

## **Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB)**

The ACCB offers income-tested financial support to low- and middle-income families, helping to reduce or eliminate out-of-pocket child care costs. Factors like family income, size and child care needs determine the benefit amount, which can be combined with other affordability programs like the CCFRI or the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC program.

Enhanced supports are available for families with children who have support needs or disabilities, helping to offset additional costs and ensure equitable access to care.

Families that don't agree with a decision made during ACCB adjudication may request reconsideration from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. If a family

## **Operating Funding Model**

To support the delivery of flat-fee child care, the Province is advancing work on a new Operating Funding Model (OFM). This model aims to ensure equity across providers, maximizing public investments to create more affordable, high-quality spaces for families throughout B.C. The OFM also includes testing of a wage grid and compensation standard – [see p. 26 for further detail](#).

disagrees with the reconsideration decision, they may also appeal to the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.

### **Aboriginal Head Start (AHS)**

AHS programs provide culturally grounded early childhood learning and development for Indigenous children from birth to age six – at no cost to families, significantly improving affordability and access.

### **Positive Impact**

Together, the CCFRI, ACCB, \$10 a Day ChildCareBC, and AHS programs are transforming the child care landscape in B.C., saving families an average of \$6,700 per year. Since 2018, ChildCareBC affordability programs have kept \$3 billion in the pockets of hard-working B.C. families, helping them save money, return to work or school, and access the care they need to support their children’s growth and development. The Province remains committed to building a child care system that works for all families.

## **Key Milestones and Partnership Activities in 2024-2025**

### New Initiatives

- **Implementation of the ELCCA:**
  - On September 1, 2024, the ELCCA and its accompanying Regulation (ELCCR) came into effect, replacing the Child Care Subsidy Act and Child Care Subsidy Regulation.
  - The ELCCR introduced enhanced ACCB supports for families whose child care is arranged or recommended by an Indigenous authority
  - These changes ensure equitable access to financial support, whether child care is arranged through the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies, or under Indigenous law
  - This reflects the Province’s commitment to implementing the Declaration Act (See P.6 for further details on the ELCCA.)
  
- **Expansion of \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Program:**

On October 1, 2024, the Province launched a new intake for eligible providers to apply to become \$10 a Day ChildCareBC centres. Priority was given to:

  - Non-profit, publicly delivered child care, as well as care delivered by First Nations, Métis, or other Indigenous organizations
  - Providers serving children aged five and younger

- Communities with few or no existing \$10 a Day spaces relative to population density

As a result, over 1,850 more spaces were converted into low-cost spaces, and more than 40 licensed child care facilities from Vancouver to Castlegar to Fort St. John joined the program; as of March 31, 2025, there were over 15,300 spaces at over 300 \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres throughout the province (on average, each month).

- **Elimination of Waitlist Fees:**

Effective April 1, 2024, the Province eliminated waitlist fees at child care centres participating in the CCOF and CCFRI programs. This step promotes equity by ensuring families are not charged simply for seeking access to care.

### **Continued Supports**

- Continued operating funding for providers through:
  - CCOF
  - CCFRI Provider Payments
  - \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Program
  - Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE)
  - AHS
  - MNBC Space Creation
- Continued fee reductions for families through:
  - CCFRI
  - \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Program
  - ACCB
  - AHS
  - MNBC Space Creation

### **Working Together**

- In developing regulations for the ELCCA, the Province consulted with First Nations, including Modern Treaty Nations, and engaged with several partners (see pg. 11 for a full list of partner organizations engaged)

# Data-at-a-Glance3

\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres, 2024-25	CCFRI, 2024-25	ACCB, 2024-25	Distinctions-based, 2024-25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• +300 Facilities</li> <li>• +15,300 Spaces</li> <li>• Maximum monthly fee of \$200 per child</li> <li>• 2024-25 Total Investment: \$215.9M</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• +5,300 Facilities (96% uptake)</li> <li>• +140,500 Spaces (97% uptake)</li> <li>• Up to \$900/month in savings</li> <li>• 2024-25 Total Investment: \$754.2M</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• +27,700 Families</li> <li>• +35,000 Children</li> <li>• Up to \$1,250/month in savings</li> <li>• 2024-25 Total Investment: \$134.4M</li> </ul>	<p><b>Aboriginal Head Start</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• +570 new spaces (2,000 total)</li> <li>• 2024-25 Total Investment: \$73.6M</li> </ul> <p><b>MNBC Space Creation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 48 new spaces</li> <li>• 2024-25 Total Investment: \$634K</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> The ministry currently does not collect distinctions-based child-level data. The ministry may explore options to strengthen distinctions-based data collection for future reports.

# Inclusive Child Care

## Introduction

Children thrive in child care environments that are welcoming, inclusive, and celebrate the diverse cultural backgrounds, identities, and abilities of children, families, and educators. The Province is committed to making equitable access to child care a reality so that children from all backgrounds and family circumstances, including those with support needs, can fully participate and truly belong.

Achieving inclusive child care requires a system-wide approach. In June 2024, the Ministry of Education and Child Care released [Where All Children Belong: B.C.'s Inclusive Child Care Strategy](#), which outlines goals and early actions to embed inclusion across the child care system. Key priorities include:

- Embedding equity and inclusion in all aspects of child care, so that children's diverse identities, cultures, languages and needs are welcomed and celebrated
- Supporting educators in building the knowledge and skills needed to deliver inclusive child care
- Meeting the specific needs of children who are neurodiverse, have disabilities, complex needs, or other support needs

To meet the reporting requirements of the Inclusive Child Care Strategy, this annual report includes a 'Spotlight on Inclusion' section every two years.

## Supporting Inclusive Practice

To help build foundational knowledge and skills across the child care workforce, the Province has launched several free, online resources and tools, including:

- Foundations of Inclusive Child Care training
- Behaviour in the Early Years initiative

These and other resources are available on the [ChildCareBC website](#).

To empower educators to meet the specific needs of children, the Province funds consultant and staffing supports through local Supported Child Development (SCD) and Aboriginal Support Child Development (ASCD) programs. These programs focus on individualized support for children and capacity-building for educators. However, demand for inclusive child care supports remains high, and families in many communities continue to face significant wait times – sometimes resulting in children being excluded from care. The Province does not currently have a mechanism to track exclusions from child care;

however, feedback from sector engagement and ongoing advocacy from families, child care providers, and early intervention providers strongly indicates that children with disabilities and other support needs are excluded disproportionately. More work is needed to determine how inclusion supports can be structured to keep pace with the growth of the child care system.

### **Distinctions-based Inclusion**

To support inclusion within child care delivered by First Nations, Métis, or Indigenous organizations, the Province has expanded access to AHS programs, which are wraparound, early intervention programs designed and delivered by Indigenous organizations to reflect each community's unique social and cultural contexts and needs. The Province is also partnering with MNBC to support Métis-specific pedagogical resources and professional learning for educators. Positive outcomes include stronger cultural identity and increased participation in traditional activities among children.

### **Learning from the Sector**

The Province continues to learn from educators, including those participating in the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC program, about how to effectively deliver inclusive care. Educators are encouraged to use tools such as the [Inclusive Child Care Toolkit](#) to build their understanding of inclusion and develop policies that reflect their program's commitment to equity and belonging.

### **Positive Impact**

While child care providers throughout the province have varied capacity and ability to provide inclusive child care, data shows that government investments are having a positive impact on the sector's capacity to provide inclusive child care. For example, more child care providers have developed and implemented a formal inclusion policy, the number of educators engaging in training in inclusive practice continues to rise, and the average number of children receiving inclusive child care supports through SCD and ASCD has increased by 41%, or 2,438 children since 2018. Additionally, the average number of service hours per child has increased.

## **Key Milestones and Partnership Activities in 2024-2025**

### New Initiatives

- **Leadership Support for Inclusion:** The Province initiated work with [CanAssist](#) at the University of Victoria to develop resources, training, and a community of practice to support child care leaders in embedding inclusion into their programs

- **Testing Inclusion Policy Requirements:** In a subset of \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres, the Province is piloting a requirement for providers to develop and implement an inclusion policy using the Inclusive Child Care Toolkit. An inclusion policy describes what steps the child care program will take to reduce exclusions and support all children, including those with support needs and behaviours that may be challenging. It is intended to be reflective of the program’s unique philosophy and structure, tailored to fit the circumstances of each program.  
Learnings from this pilot will inform future approaches to supporting inclusive practices across the sector
- **Modernizing Definitions:** In 2024-2025, the definition of “child with support needs” was updated in the ELCC Regulation and the ACCB program to better reflect current inclusive child care practices
- **Inclusive Design Guidance:** The [Design Guidelines for Child Care Centres](#), released in 2024, provide guidance to support new facilities to meet community needs, foster belonging, and promote respectful, inclusive and accessible environments

### [Continued Supports](#)

- The Province continued to fund community-delivered SCD and ASCD programs to enable inclusive child care supports for children with disabilities or other support needs, and is exploring how to improve access to these programs
- A diverse child care workforce continued to strengthen connection and belonging for children and families throughout B.C. The province’s child care workforce includes many qualified individuals from around the world who have been nominated through the British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP), allowing them to become permanent residents and settle in B.C.

### [Working Together](#)

- **Inclusive Child Care Strategy Engagements:**  
In 2023-2024, the Province conducted a series of engagements to better understand barriers and opportunities for inclusive child care. Insights from these sessions informed the development of Where All Children Belong: B.C.’s Inclusive Child Care Strategy. A summary of this engagement is available in the report [Equity, Inclusion and Child Care in B.C.: Engagement Report](#), published on the ChildCareBC website

- **Inclusion Policy Pilot Feedback:**

In 2024-2025, the Province engaged with a subset of \$10 a Day ChildCareBC providers to assess the impact of the inclusion policy requirement. Participants reported that the process improved understanding and communication about inclusive practices with staff, families, and boards. They also expressed a need for more concrete examples of effective inclusion policies

- **Indigenous ELCC Engagements:**

Regional engagements in 2024 focused on Indigenous early learning and child care, highlighting both enablers and barriers to inclusion.<sup>4</sup> Key themes included:

- The importance of family involvement in fostering inclusion and ensuring cultural continuity within programs
- The need for accessible, culturally relevant, and inclusive training opportunities for all early childhood educators
- High administrative demands, building and operational challenges, and design considerations that can affect the ability to provide inclusive environments
- Licensing barriers that may limit flexibility or innovation in inclusive and culturally grounded programming
- The need for greater integration of Elders, families, and community members in program design and delivery to strengthen cultural programming and inclusive practices
- Calls for more flexible assessment processes to address service backlogs and ensure timely access to inclusive supports, including through SCD and ASCD programs

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<sup>4</sup>Findings are summarized in the [What We Heard](#) report, available on the ChildCareBC website.

Data-at-a-Glance

**Inclusive Child Care Training**

- +4,400 learners enrolled in "Foundations of Inclusive Child Care" as of April 2025
- +4,000 learners enrolled in "Behaviour in the Early Years" as of April 2025

**SCD and ASCD Programs**

- +8,400 children supported monthly (on average)
- +15,200 children served annually
- +5,400 additional children served annually since 2018

# Expanding Access to Child Care Throughout B.C.

## Introduction

Since the launch of ChildCareBC in 2018, B.C. has made significant strides in expanding access to licensed child care throughout the province. B.C. remains committed to expanding access to care for families by using every tool in our toolbox, including working with our education partners to deliver child care space on school grounds.

## Space Creation Programs

### [ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund](#)

This fund supports Indigenous, public, and not-for-profit partners in developing new licensed child care spaces. Funding is available for both minor and major capital projects, helping communities respond to growing demand.

### [ChildCareBC Start-Up Grants](#)

This grant helps individuals establish licensed child care facilities in their personal residences, increasing the availability of home-based care options for families.

### [ChildCareBC Maintenance Fund](#)

Designed to support licensed providers facing [emergency situations](#) that impact children's health and safety or risk immediate facility closure. The fund assists with urgent repairs or relocation costs required for compliance under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act (CCALA) and Child Care Licensing Regulation.

## Supporting Access and Planning

[CCRRs](#) play a vital role in enhancing access to child care by supporting families, providers and the workforce. They help families find care, offer resources and training to providers, and support community-level child care planning.

## Distinctions-Based Indigenous-led Child Care Expansion

Demand for AHS continues to grow, and the Province is working with AHSABC and FNHA to expand AHS spaces in response to community demand, with programming tailored to the needs of First Nations and urban Indigenous families. The Province has also partnered with MNBC to fund 10 new Métis-led child care centres, reflecting a growing model of MNBC-operated early learning and child care that supports Métis families' access to early learning and child care and centres Métis culture and language.

### **Annual Funding for Indigenous Child Care Planning and Engagement:**

The Province provides annual funding to support planning and engagement efforts led by First Nations, Métis, and other Indigenous organizations aimed at increasing access to child care. Key partners include:

- **BCAAFC:**  
Supports friendship centres with professional development, program creation and expansion, and access to culturally led child care for urban Indigenous families
- **MNBC:**  
Offers a Métis-specific child care coordination program that provides training, consultation, outreach, and referrals for families, providers, ECEs, and community members, including Métis Family Connections Navigators, Child Care Coordinators, and Métis Pedagogists
- **BCACCS:**  
Delivers an Indigenous-specific Child Care Resource and Referral program offering culturally focused ELCC resources, training, professional development, and support to early years professionals

### **Positive Impact**

From the launch of ChildCareBC to March 31, 2025, more than 40,800 new licensed child care spaces have been funded, with more than 25,900 of these spaces open and serving families.

## **Key Milestones and Partnership Activities in 2024-2025**

### New Initiatives

- **Infrastructure Investments in Underserved Communities:**  
Through the ELCC Infrastructure Fund, the Province, in partnership with the federal government, awarded over \$31 million to four capital projects, including three First Nations–led child care facilities serving First Nations communities and one francophone facility, creating 249 new licensed child care spaces and advancing inclusion and access in ELCC
- **Child Care on School Grounds:**  
To streamline daily routines for families and support smoother transitions for children, the Province introduced a streamlined application process for boards of education seeking to create child care spaces on school grounds. This new

approach, aligned with K–12 capital project submissions, supported the creation of over 600 new spaces in 2024-2025

- **Design Guidelines for Child Care Centres:**

Published in August 2024, the Design Guidelines offer practical guidance for organizations undertaking child care space creation projects. Developed through engagement with local governments, First Nations, MNBC, Indigenous organizations, school districts, and child care professionals, the guidelines promote consistent, functional, and inclusive design that benefits children, families, and communities

- **Child Care Community Development Team:**

Established in May 2024, this team supports strategic expansion and equitable access to child care throughout B.C. by advising public and non-profit organizations – including Indigenous governments – on project development, partnerships, sustainable operations, and workforce planning

- **Francophone CCRR Launch:**

In September 2024, B.C. opened its first-ever francophone CCRR, providing French-language support and resources to families, providers, and child care professionals provincewide.

### Continued Supports

- Continued commitment to expanding access to child care for families, including working with education partners to deliver child care spaces on school grounds
- Through the Canada-wide ELCC Agreement, continued to support distinctions-based space creation in partnership with the AHSABC and MNBC
- 70 CCRRs throughout B.C. continued to provide in-person and virtual services, including:
  - Professional development and training
  - Support with accessing government funding
  - Business development assistance for providers
  - Help for families in finding suitable child care
  - Collaboration with school districts and communities on child care planning

### Working Together

- **Indigenous ELCC Engagements:**

Regional engagements in 2024 highlighted unique challenges faced by Indigenous communities in building and operating child care facilities. Key issues included:

- Safety concerns in urban and remote areas
- Limited access to professionals experienced in child care construction

- Need for child-centred design approaches
- Difficulty forecasting future demand
- Lack of funding and planning for long-term maintenance
- Capacity constraints among Indigenous ELCC staff and limited experience navigating capital projects
- **Community Development Team Support:**  
In 2024-2025, the Child Care Community Development Team provided tailored support to public, non-profit, and Indigenous organizations applying to the **ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund**, helping them navigate planning and implementation
- **CCRR Engagement:**  
CCRRs continued to play a central role in child care planning, expansion, and workforce development, acting as key partners in community engagement and collaboration

## Data-at-a-Glance

Spaces Funded, 2024-25	Age Groups Served, 2024-25	New Spaces Fund Recipients, 2024-25	Maintenance Fund, 2024-25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New Spaces Fund: +2,000</li> <li>● Start Up Grants: +1,770</li> <li>● Total New Spaces Created: +3,770</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Infants and Toddlers: +1,350</li> <li>● Ages 3 to 5: +1,690</li> <li>● School-Aged: +730</li> <li>● Total New Spaces Created: +3,770</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Board of Education: 26</li> <li>● Crown Corporation: 1</li> <li>● Indigenous Governing Entity: 3</li> <li>● Local Governments: 6</li> <li>● Not-for-Profit: 5</li> <li>● Independent School: 1</li> <li>● Post-Secondary: 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ~100 child care facilities supported, preserving +4,800 spaces</li> </ul>

## Distinctions-based Space Creation Since 2022

### **Aboriginal Head Start:**

- \$15 million invested to create 117 new AHS spaces in partnership with AHSABC
- Three new AHS sites in the planning phase

### **Métis-Led Child Care**

- \$13.9 million to create 160 new Métis-led spaces in partnership with MNBC.
- Two Métis-led sites (48 spaces) open

### **Indigenous-led space through New Spaces Fund (2024-25):**

- 188 spaces

# Supporting the Child Care Workforce

## Introduction

ECEs and other members of the child care workforce are the heart of B.C.'s child care system. Since launching the [Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#) in 2018, the Province has made significant investments – alongside federal partners – to support and strengthen the child care workforce, including:

- Wage enhancements for ECEs
- Specialized certification grants for Infant & Toddler and Special Needs Educators
- Expanded access to post-secondary ECE programs, including dual credit courses for high school students and bursaries to assist with the costs of education
- Streamlined pathways for international applicants to become certified as ECEs in B.C.

Together, these initiatives improve compensation, recognize qualifications, and create sustainable career pathways – helping to recruit and retain skilled professionals and enhance the quality of child care throughout the province.

## Collaborative Workforce Development

The Ministry of Education and Child Care works closely with the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills to:

- Expand student spaces in public post-secondary ECE programs
- Deliver workforce development programming for ECEs and other child care professionals
- Prioritize child care workers through the B.C. PNP

## Professional Learning and Quality Care

Ongoing professional development is key to fostering retention of educators, improving program quality, and supporting positive outcomes for children. With support from federal funding, B.C. has invested in a wide range of learning opportunities, including:

- A peer mentoring program for ECEs
- Online and in-person courses and workshops

- Pedagogical and curriculum support, including First Nations and Métis-specific pedagogists and resources
- Bursaries to help cover professional development costs
- An online learning management system to access training and resources

### **Positive Impact**

Early data shows that these investments are making a difference. The number of active ECE certificates continues to rise – nearly 27,000 by the end of 2024-2025 – and demand for bursaries continues to exceed expectations, with about 2,700 approved applications per semester, signaling strong interest in entering the profession. Additionally, participation in the range of professional development initiatives available throughout the province is high, with the ECE Peer Mentoring Program, and access to the ECE Professional Development Bursary resulting in ECEs stating they were more engaged and excited about staying in the sector.

## **Key Milestones and Partnership Activities in 2024-2025**

### New Initiatives

- Beginning in January 2024, ECEs with Infant-Toddler Educator and/or Special Needs Educator certificates working in licensed child care or AHS programs have been able to apply for the annual ECE Specialized Certification Grant of \$3,000 for those holding both specialized certificates, or \$2,000 for those holding one specialized certificate
- In 2025, the BC PNP announced that any future prioritization in child care will focus on ECEs who hold at least a B.C. one-year or five-year certificate, should nominations become available

### Continued Supports

- Through combined provincial and federal investments, B.C. continued to offer the ECE-WE. This program offers up to \$6/hour to ECEs who have valid certification and who are employed at eligible licensed child care facilities. AHS sites offer a wage enhancement equivalent to ECE-WE
- As part of the introduction of the ChildCareBC OFM Test, initiated in fall 2023, the Province has been testing and collecting feedback on a wage grid and compensation standard that includes funding for paid time off, professional development, and benefits for participating providers. Throughout 2024-2025, the wage grid and compensation standard were piloted with approximately 40 providers
- ECE Dual Credit continued to expand to more school districts, empowering B.C.'s school districts to partner with approved post-secondary institutions to grow sustainable ECE education programs for, or inclusive of, high school students, and award students who earn post-secondary credit with comparable high school course credit
- The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills continued to expand student spaces at select public post-secondary ECE programs, enhancing accessibility for students. Most expansion funding is now allocated through post-secondary institutions' ongoing base budgets and allows programs to hire faculty and provide more predictable programming for students
- The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future skills continued to provide workforce development programming with \$3.9M invested to help 550 people increase their skills and obtain sustainable employment, including careers in child care. This included support for people who were unemployed or precariously employed, vulnerable and underrepresented people, as well as funding for over 100 employers to invest in training for new or existing employees
- The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills continued to prioritize child care workers through the BC PNP, enabling more ECEs and ECE assistants (ECEAs) to obtain permanent residence status and settle in communities throughout the province.

### Aboriginal Head Start

The six components of AHS – education, health, nutrition, parent involvement, social support, and culture and language – are foundational pillars that provide holistic, wraparound supports for Indigenous children and families. This integrated model fosters early development, strengthens family and community ties, and promotes cultural identity.

BC PNP nominations for child care workers have increased from 90 individuals in 2021 to 427 in 2022, 842 in 2023, and 1,279 in 2024. Of the 1,279 child care workers nominated by B.C. in 2024, 46% held at least a five-year certificate, and 34% also held a specialized certificate as an infant and toddler educator or a special needs educator

- Through the ECE Education Support Fund, students wanting to start their career as an ECE continued to receive bursaries of up to \$4,000 per semester to help cover the costs of their post-secondary education in recognized ECE programs. Those already working in the child care sector wishing to upgrade their credentials may receive up to \$5,000 per semester to assist with the costs of education and other expenses such as travel to attend classes in another community, or lost wages due to practicum completion
- The following professional development and learning opportunities continued to be supported and/or expanded:
  - B.C. Early Childhood Pedagogy Program: provides pedagogical support and learning with a focus on implementation of the B.C. Early Learning Framework and other resources endorsed by the Province, and the delivery of quality and inclusive child care
  - ECE Peer Mentoring Program: pairs “beginning” and “experienced” ECEs to share experiences, learn from each other, build effective support networks, and boost confidence in their abilities as educators, which increases retention
  - Learning Outside Together: pro-d opportunity where small groups of ECEs are guided by peer mentors, developing the knowledge and skills needed to increase children’s time and meaningful experiences outdoors, including Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and experiencing land as teacher
  - Let’s Talk About Touching: pro-d opportunity offering an inclusive child personal safety program developed entirely in B.C. for young children aged birth to eight years of age, for ECEs and primary teachers to support children’s learning about personal boundaries and body awareness, specifically aimed at fostering a foundation for personal safety
  - Best Choices – The Ethical Journey: pro-d series focusing on the Early Childhood Educators of BC’s Code of Ethics; guides participants on a journey of ethical discovery and awareness, promoting ethical practices and attitudes of ECEs and other members of the child care workforce
  - Administration and Management in Child Care: pro-d program aimed at improving professionals’ understanding of quality administration and management practices in child care

- ECE Professional Development Bursary Program: provides funds to eligible agencies to develop and deliver ECE pro-d opportunities at reduced or no cost to participants, with particular attention to supporting sufficient opportunities in rural and remote communities where significant travel costs can create barriers to participation and decrease accessibility of pro-d opportunities
  - Early Years Professional Development (EYPD) Hub: an online platform providing child care professionals throughout B.C. access to quality professional development to support their professional requirements and practice by hosting relevant online courses. This shared online space supports learning, connection, and knowledge-sharing across the sector
  - The EYPD Portal is an online platform with training and professional development resources for families, child care providers, and the child care workforce. Each CCRR updates the EYPD Portal with educational opportunities, professional development offerings, communities of practice for members of the child care workforce, and job postings that are available in their community, region, or online. The EYPD Portal is searchable by community making it easier for users to find what they need in their communities. The EYPD Portal is also used by the francophone CCRR and MNBC
  - Indigenous Early Years Leadership Circle and Community of Practice: Led by BCACCS, these groups provide connection and sharing opportunities for leaders in Indigenous child care
  - Changing Results for Young Children: collaborative professional learning for ECEs, StrongStart BC facilitators and primary teachers to strengthen educators' competence in improving children's social and emotional well-being. 49 school districts participated in 2024-2025
  - To support the child care workforce in building foundational knowledge and skills in inclusive child care, the Province has launched several free, online resources and tools, including the Foundations of Inclusive Child Care training and the Behaviour in the Early Years initiative. These resources and more are available on the [ChildCareBC website](#)
- CCRR programs continued to play an important role in the recruitment of new members to the child care workforce, which include ECEs, ECEAs, and Responsible Adults (RAs). They also organize, facilitate, advertise, and lead a range of professional development and training opportunities at low or no cost. The opportunities are offered both in-community and virtually to accommodate a wide range of needs

- ECE translation subsidies continued to be available to help offset translation costs for applicants to the ECE Registry
- B.C. continued to recognize and honour the achievements and dedication of child care professionals in multiple ways. Each year, an official proclamation recognizes May as Child Care Month and the second Friday of May as Child Care Provider Appreciation Day. In 2024, Child Care Provider Appreciation Day fell on May 10, and celebrations included events like the ChildCareBC Provider Appreciation Minister Town Hall, hosted by Minister Mitzi Dean on Thursday, May 9, 2024

## Working Together

- **Exploring New Competencies and Standards:**  
The Ministry of Education and Child Care engaged with First Nations, Métis, Indigenous organizations, equity and inclusion organizations, and post-secondary institutions to explore updates to occupational competencies and new practice standards for ECEs
- **Developing a Quality Assessment Guide:**  
Engagement sessions with First Nations and Métis partners were held in spring 2024 to inform the development of a child care quality assessment guide. The ministry has received the feedback and is working to align the guide with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, using a distinctions-based approach to reflect Indigenous perspectives and priorities
- **National Workforce Strategy Engagement:**  
As part of the federal development of a **Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Workforce Strategy**, B.C. hosted engagement sessions with First Nations, Métis Nation BC, child care sector representatives, inclusion-focused organizations, and post-secondary institutions. Feedback focused on improving recruitment, retention, and recognition of the child care workforce
- **CCRRs:**  
CCRRs continue to play a vital role in community engagement, child care planning, and workforce development. They support recruitment and retention efforts and help connect families and providers to resources and training
- **Sector Labour Market Evaluation of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy:**  
In 2018, the Sector Labour Market Partnerships (SLMP) program, administered by the Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS), provided

funding<sup>5</sup> to the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) to run a sector-led evaluation of the Province’s [Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#) (Strategy). Working with the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation of Canada (SRDC) ECEBC examined data gathered through a variety of tools and sources, published a Benchmark Report in 2019, and in 2024, published the 2022 annual Evaluation Report. This report is available on ECEBC’s website at <https://www.ecebc.ca/sector-initiatives/labour-market>

## Regional Immigration Collaboration

- **BC PNP Outreach:**

In March 2024, BC PNP and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) staff visited communities in the East Kootenays – including Cranbrook, Kimberley, Invermere, Canal Flats, and Fernie – to share information about immigration pathways for recruiting and retaining child care workers. Meetings included local school districts and child care providers

- **Regional Immigration Collaboration (RIC) Initiative:**

The BC PNP expanded its work with regional communities through the new **RIC initiative** – a community of practice that supports local efforts to use immigration as a tool for economic development, including workforce support for the child care sector

## Data-at-a-Glance

ECE Wage Enhancement Program, 2024-25	Educational Opportunities for ECEs, 2024-25	Post-Secondary ECE Program Expansion, 2024-25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 93% of ECEs at funded facilities received ECE-WE</li> <li>● +16,000 ECEs at + 3,900 facilities received ECE-WE each month</li> <li>● \$555M invested in ECE-WE since its initiation</li> <li>● 90% of ECEs employed at funded child care facilities in 2023-24 were retained 2024-25.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● +26,700 Active ECE Certification Holders</li> <li>● + 5,300 bursaries allocated to more than 2,000 students</li> <li>● + 8,200 eligible ECEs approved to receive Specialized Certification Grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● \$5.3 million in funding</li> <li>● 579 new student spaces created in 28 programs at 14 public post-secondary institutions</li> <li>● + \$26M invested to create more than 2,600 spaces as of March 2025</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> SLMP is funded through the Canada-B.C. [Labour Market Development Agreement](#) to sector-led projects that address workforce development challenges by providing long term, strategic, and sustainable solutions.

### Workforce Development Programs, 2024-25

- \$3.9M invested to help 550 people pursue ECE and related training
- Includes \$400,000 for over 100 employers to invest in training for new or existing employees

### BC Provincial Nominee Program, 2024-25

- 1,279 ECEs and ECE Assistants nominated in 2024
- Of these, 46% held at least a five-year certificate, and 34% held a specialized certificate as an infant and toddler educator or special needs educator

## Transitions to Kindergarten – Grade 12

### Introduction

Early childhood experiences lay the foundation for lifelong health, learning, well-being, future success, and resilience. The transition to kindergarten marks a critical moment in a child’s development, when they continue to build on a wide range of skills through their experiences within families, communities, and early learning and care settings. These include language, social interaction, literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving. During this transition period, children continue to build on these foundations, while also deepening their self-regulation and sense of identity as they explore their roles within their families, cultures and broader society.

Children enter kindergarten with a wide range of experiences and abilities. Schools play a vital role in supporting children and families to feel welcomed. Effective transition practices between child care and school, such as strong relationships, continuity of learning, and understanding each child’s unique context, help children adjust smoothly and thrive.

Effective transition practices between child care and school are important for supporting positive developmental trajectories. Approaches that emphasize strong relationships, continuity of learning, and a contextual understanding of each child’s family and community contribute to smoother adjustments and better outcomes for children and their families.

Curriculum frameworks like the B.C. Early Learning Framework and Learning in the Primary Years help bridge early learning and school. These play-based, child-centred approaches support the whole child and reflect the diverse experiences of B.C. families.

Since launching ChildCareBC in 2018, the Province has worked with education partners to support the creation of new child care spaces on school grounds, in both public and independent schools, helping families manage daily routines and providing continuity for children. To explore models of integration, the Province introduced several pilot initiatives, including the Seamless Day Kindergarten Pilot, the Just B4 preschool, the Integration Inquiry Project, a School Age Child Care Pilot and District Early Learning and Child Care Leads.

These initiatives support boards of education in offering affordable, high-quality, and inclusive child care within school settings. Results from these pilots have helped identify opportunities for expanded and sustainable school-aged care.

### **Positive Impact**

As a result of the pilot projects detailed above, more public and independent schools have introduced child care on school grounds. Most of these spaces are for school-aged children, helping families access care before and after the school day and ensuring continuity in children's learning environments. Since 2018, school age spaces on school grounds have increased by 10,200 spaces; from 16,800 spaces in September 2019 to 27,000 spaces in September 2024.

## **Key Milestones and Partnership Activities in 2024-2025**

### New Initiatives

- In 2024-2025 there were 45 Seamless Day Kindergarten pilot sites in 33 school districts and three independent schools. This project employed certified early childhood educators to provide before- and after-school care in kindergarten classrooms and to support learning alongside the classroom teacher. Twenty school districts used StrongStart BC program spaces to offer a Just B4 half-day licensed preschool. Three school districts participated in an Integration Inquiry Project to explore holistic approaches to early learning and child care, and three districts focused on expanding board-owned and operated school age child care.
- In 2024-2025, in partnership with the Government of Canada, the Ministry of Education and Child Care funded early learning and child care lead positions at 59 out of 60 school districts to build child care capacity on school grounds

- The Ministry of Education and Child Care introduced [Learning in the Primary Years](#), a new resource designed to help teachers support children’s development from kindergarten through Grade 3. The publication emphasizes the importance of strong early learning foundations and continuous learning from birth to age eight

Continued Supports

- Ready, Set, Learn continued to provide kindergarten transition supports and orientation activities for preschool-aged children (3-5 years) and their families. These activities help children feel confident and prepared as they enter school
- StrongStart BC continued to offer free, play-based early learning programs in schools for children aged 0-5, with parents or caregivers participating. Led by qualified ECEs, StrongStart helps children build foundational skills in social-emotional development, self-regulation, literacy, and numeracy, supporting smoother transitions to kindergarten and long-term success in school. The program is highly valued for strengthening child development and fostering strong connections between families and schools

Data-at-a-Glance

Ready, Set, Learn, 2024-25	StrongStart BC, 2024-25	Kindergarten Enrolment, 2024-25	Child Care on School Grounds, 2024-25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offered in all 60 school districts and in 75 independent schools</li> <li>• 33,000 children served, annually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• +21,700 children registered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• +38,400 children enrolled in public schools</li> <li>• +6,800 children enrolled in independent schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• +14,000 new spaces funded on school grounds since 2018</li> <li>• +44,000 spaces on school grounds, including 29,000 school age spaces</li> </ul>

# Child Care Facility Monitoring and Inspection

## Introduction

The CCALA and Child Care Licensing Regulation (CCLR) establish the minimum health and safety requirements that must be met to protect and promote the health, safety, and well-being of children in child care facilities.

To support oversight and enforcement of the legislative requirements, Community Care Facility Licensing programs are established and delivered by the regional health authorities throughout B.C. Under the CCALA, the local Medical Health Officer (MHO) is designated as having responsibility for licensing, inspecting, and monitoring child care and other community care facilities, such as seniors long-term care. MHOs delegate these responsibilities to health authority licensing officers, who carry out the day-to-day work of assessing compliance, conducting inspections, investigating complaints and supporting operators.

As MHOs are not involved in decisions regarding funding programs, the recommendations they make or requirements they impose are independent of funding considerations. This separation between the monitoring and funding of child care facilities provide a dual system of safeguards for children in child care.

### **What Licensing Officers Do**

Licensing officers conduct annual inspections and ongoing monitoring of each licensed child care facility. Inspections assess compliance with regulatory requirements such as:

- Staff qualifications and ratios
- Physical environment and equipment
- Health, hygiene and nutrition practices
- Emergency preparedness
- Record-keeping and reporting

Licensing officers investigate complaints about licensed child care facilities and also respond to concerns about individuals or organizations operating child care without a licence when one may be required. If a facility is found to be non-compliant with licensing requirements, progressive enforcement actions may include licence conditions, or licence cancellations. Information about licensed child care facilities inspection reports and

complaint investigations is published on the relevant health authority’s website to support transparency and informed decision-making by families.

## Key Milestones and Partnership Activities in 2024-2025

### Ongoing Supports

- Approximately 99 child care licensing officers are employed by regional health authorities throughout B.C. They play a vital role in safeguarding the health, safety and well-being of children
- A specially developed program, the Advanced Specialty Certificate in Community Care Licensing, was established in 2013 through the Justice Institute of British Columbia to prepare individuals for the role of licensing officer. This program equips current and aspiring officers with the specialized knowledge and skills needed to carry out their statutory duties under the oversight of a Medical Health Officer

### Working Together

Under the Tripartite MOU work plan, the Ministry of Education and Child Care and Ministry of Health work in partnership with FNLC, including BCACCS and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESEC), and Canada to identify barriers related to licensing.

### Data-at-a-Glance

Inspection Type	Fraser Health	Island Health	Interior Health	Northern Health	Coastal Health
<b>Routine Inspection:</b> a comprehensive inspection of a licensed facility.	2,265	1068	778	412	1,669
<b>Complaint Inspection:</b> an inspection in response to a complaint in a licensed facility.	378	126	145	85	215
<b>Unlicensed Complaint Inspection:</b> an inspection in response to complaint that a site may be operating without a licence.	21	3	0	7	0
<b>Initial Inspection:</b> first inspection following receipt of an application for licence.	594	122	149	43	316