



**City of Delta**  
**Childcare Strategy and Action Plan**  
May 2020



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## Executive Summary

Quality childcare is vital to the overall health of a community. This City of Delta Childcare Action Plan was developed in response to challenges faced by the community, as well as recognition that this may be the most opportune time to invest in childcare. The City of Delta Needs Assessment (attached as addendum) provided the context for the strategic directions proposed in this report, which include specific childcare targets and detailed recommendations.

Throughout the engagement process, the state of childcare in Delta was described as a huge community limitation and 80% of survey respondents believe there is an inadequate supply of childcare services to meet their needs. Parents are struggling to afford and access care and care providers are struggling to operate. Most notably lacking is access to before and after school care, infant and toddler care, flexible hours for parents and space for operators to build. Based on current childcare ratios and the community engagement, the birth to 36 months and school-aged children are most in need of more childcare spaces. There are 2,383 childcare spaces in the City of Delta. Notably, there were only 8.8 group (school age) childcare spaces for every 100 school age children and only 5.5 group (birth to 36 months) childcare spaces for every 100 infants and toddlers. Under school age (3-4 year olds and half of all 5 year olds) had 20.1 group childcare spaces per 100 children. As the limited supply of child care is far reaching, it impacts all families and disproportionately affects the most vulnerable, such as families with children with extra support needs, single parents, and newcomers/immigrants.

As a result of the limited childcare options, families are having to make difficult choices when it comes to childcare. Grandparents and extended family are being heavily relied upon for support, and if this support is not available, parents are choosing undesirable childcare options or choosing not to work because childcare is too expensive. From an operator's perspective, offering good wages is a challenge and recruitment and retention of employees is very difficult. There is not enough money to maintain staff and the work is not valued, which is creating a human resources shortage. Furthermore, licensing and regulations are constantly shifting and operators are struggling to keep up with the demands.

Although between 2019 and 2029 the number of children (0-12 years old) in the area served by the Delta School District is projected to decrease by -536.0 children (a - 3.9% decrease), there are projected increases in the infant and toddler and under school age child populations, the age group with the highest childcare needs. The population projections also do not take into consideration the new development occurring in Delta and may not reflect the current population reality.

Nonetheless, to address the child care gaps, SPARC BC recommends:

Working to add 1051 childcare spaces over ten years to reach the Canadian average ratio of 27.2 child care spaces per 100 children with a focus on increasing infant/toddler and school age spaces. This equates to approximately 100 new child care spaces per year.

- Convening a City of Delta Child Care Steering Committee (possibly with the Child and Youth Council) to share this report and begin planning for action plan implementation;
- Maintain a dedicated partnership with the Delta School District to explore the option of co-locating childcare programs in elementary schools;
- Advocate for an increase in the number of publicly funded childcare spaces, and develop partnerships that facilitate such increases; and
- Exploring opportunities for making Early Childhood Education more accessible, affordable and enticing.

Improving childcare services in the City of Delta will not be an easy task; however, it is possible. With concerted and coordinated efforts, the City of Delta can achieve the recommended action items in partnership with key stakeholder for the benefit of the whole community.

# 1. Introduction

Childcare is an essential part of a community’s social infrastructure. In addition to helping the families and children using it, childcare benefits the broader population, contributes to the economy, and enhances the overall health and well-being of the community.

Recognizing the importance of childcare, and the serious challenges being faced with respect to childcare delivery, the City of Delta commissioned the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) to prepare a childcare action plan.

The City of Delta Action Plan (“Action Plan”) is organized into eight (8) sections, as follows:

- Section 1.0: Executive Summary
- Section 2.0: Introduction
- Section 3.0: Methodology
- Section 4.0: Broad Childcare Context
- Section 5.0: City of Delta: Our Community
- Section 6.0: Partnerships
- Section 7.0: Strategic Direction and Recommended Actions; and
- Section 8.0: Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

In addition to this Action Plan, SPARC BC developed a Literature Review (Appendix B) and a regional Needs Assessment which is an addendum to this report.

This Action Plan will provide the City of Delta and its partners with evidence-based, concrete, and actionable recommendations to improve childcare services for the betterment of the community.

# 2. Methodology

This Action Plan is an evidence-based report that synthesizes the best in childcare research and places it within the Delta context. Primary and secondary data from the City of Delta provided the basis for recommendations, which were then refined using promising practices from other British Columbian municipalities and a strong literature evidence base from BC, Canada, and abroad. See Appendix B for a detailed look at the literature.

This Action Plan is a made-for-Delta initiative. It draws upon relevant Statistics Canada data, City of Delta files, vulnerability scores derived from the Human Early Learning Partnership (“HELP”) Early Development Instrument (“EDI”),<sup>1</sup> BC government and Fraser Health Authority information, parent and

<sup>1</sup> The [Human Early Learning Partnership](#) is a collaborative and interdisciplinary research network located within the School of Population and Public Health at UBC, and they developed the Early Development Instrument to measure

childcare provider survey data, and interview with child care operators. To inform this Action Plan, the consultants used five primary methods of data collection and analysis and prepared one background report. These are outlined below.

## Data Collection Methods

### *Review of Relevant Childcare-Related Data*

Data compiled through the Union of BC Municipalities (“UBCM”) Inventory, the Fraser Health Authority as well as data derived from the HELP EDI were reviewed to understand current childhood vulnerabilities and the presence of childcare services and needs across the City of Delta. Identifying childhood vulnerabilities, along with the full range of childcare service options and locations, provided a consolidated picture of neighbourhood needs for the work of setting childcare targets and strategies for the region. The consultants also included tax filer, City of Delta documents, and census data about the region in this profile.

### *Parent Survey*

A *Parent Survey* Regarding Childcare was developed for current and potential parents and guardians accessing childcare services in the City of Delta in order to understand childcare service needs and experiences. An online version of the survey was created and distributed September 2019-October 2019. An online survey link was posted on the City of Delta website and distributed to community partners, Parent Advisory Councils and elementary schools. This survey had 392 responses.

### *Childcare Provider Survey*

An online *Childcare Service Needs, Spaces, and Childhood Vulnerabilities Survey* was developed to gauge the views of key stakeholders (e.g., executive directors, managers and coordinators of childcare service organization) on current childcare services delivered, gaps in services, and current and anticipated childcare populations receiving services, services needed, and spaces to deliver services. This survey was distributed during September– October 2019. This survey had 63 responses.

### *Childcare Operator Interviews*

As part of the City of Delta Childcare Strategy, the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) interviewed ten (10) childcare operators who agreed to participate by providing consent to the Childcare Options Resource & Referral Centre.

the developmental health of the kindergarten population across British Columbia. The EDI measures child vulnerability rates in five key domains: physical health and well-being, social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; and communications skills and general knowledge.

### *Community Workshop Summary*

As part of the City of Delta Childcare Strategy, two (2) community workshops were held in order to hear from the public their perspectives on childcare solutions. The first workshop was held in Ladner on November 21<sup>st</sup> with four (4) participants, and the second was held in North Delta on November 27<sup>th</sup> with three (3) participants. Although the workshop numbers were low, the quality of participation and contributions was high.

### *Meeting with the Child and Youth Council (CYC)*

As part of the City of Delta Childcare Strategy, the Social Planning and Research Council of BC met with the Child and Youth Council to discuss action plan priorities. From that meeting, many action items were created and integrated into the plan. Background Report

### *City of Delta Childcare Strategy: Needs Analysis Report*

The Needs Analysis Report presents socio-demographic information pertaining to child vulnerability levels, as well as childcare spaces and services across neighbourhoods in the City of Delta. The report is based on Statistics Canada Census data, files from the City of Delta, information from the BC Government and the Fraser Health Authority, childhood vulnerability data collected by HELP, and results from the 2019 Parent and Provider surveys. The Needs Analysis Report is attached as an addendum to this report.

## **3. The Current Childcare System**

Childcare is an intricate part of the social infrastructure in Canada, with no one jurisdiction or entity responsible for its planning, funding, and delivery. Childcare involves many parties playing various roles, which means it requires dedicated relationships and collaboration between jurisdictions and other partners. Key partners include the federal government, provincial governments, municipalities, regional public bodies (e.g., health authorities and school districts), childcare providers and operators, not for profit organizations, parents, as well as the broader community.

### **Federal Government**

Advocates have long been calling on the Federal Government to develop a national strategy for childcare. While that has not happened, the Federal Government initiated a [Multilateral Early Learning and Childcare Framework](#) in 2017 to guide the Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments on childcare matters. The Framework articulates the commitment of both levels of government to invest in increasing quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity in early learning and childcare, placing priority on those with the greatest needs.

Funding commitments were outlined in the 2017 Federal Budget and include \$540 million in 2018-2019 and \$550 million in 2020-2021. By 2026-2027, the Federal Government's childcare allocation may reach \$870 million annually. To date, the Federal government has committed to contributing \$153 million to

BC through the Framework. These funds are being used to support initiatives set out in the Province's Childcare BC plan (discussed below). The funding has and will continue to target increasing the number of infant and toddler childcare spaces in areas of highest need, providing low-cost infant and toddler childcare spaces, supporting culturally appropriate care for Indigenous families, and facilitating other initiatives to help vulnerable families.

## Provincial Government

The Provincial Government has historically played several roles concerning childcare, including:

- Development of legislation, policy, and regulations;
- Funding supportive programs and services (e.g., Childcare Resource and Referral programs, Supported Child Development program);
- Providing Major and Minor Capital Grants to eligible childcare providers; and
- Providing fee subsidies and program supports for families with low incomes.

In Budget 2018, the Provincial Government announced over \$1 billion in new investments for childcare and early learning over three years, under the umbrella of the [Childcare BC](#) initiative. The funding constituted the single largest commitment to childcare in BC history and is intended to set the foundation for universal childcare in this province. Selected highlights from the Childcare BC plan are below:

### *Affordability*

- Under the [Childcare Fee Reduction Initiative](#), if a provider signs up for the program, parents are eligible for fee reductions for group and family infant/toddler care, and group and family care for children aged three to Kindergarten.
- Under the [Affordable Childcare Benefit](#), additional affordability relief is available for families with annual incomes up to \$111,000, including a complete fee waiver for most families earning less than \$45,000 annually with children in licensed childcare aged under three years.

### *Quality*

- Under the [Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), early childhood education (ECE) professionals working on the front lines were promised two wage lifts over two years each at \$1 per hour. The first wage lift was effective January 2019, and the second will be effective April 2020.
- ECE professionals will also receive a range of enhanced education supports, including expanded bursaries, paid practicums, professional development opportunities and more spaces for post-secondary ECE training.

### *Accessibility*

- Capital funding is available to support the creation of a total of 22,000 new licensed spaces (24,000 spaces with federal funding) over the three years beginning in 2019. Priority is placed on public partnerships (e.g., with school districts, local governments).
- Grants are also offered to support childcare planning processes at the community level.



- Funding is offered to assist with facility maintenance costs, move unlicensed spaces into the licensed sector, expand options for families working non-standard hours, and increase resources for young parent programs and children with additional support needs.

In Budget 2019, the Provincial Government increased its investment in childcare and early learning by announcing the BC Child Opportunity Benefit, which replaces the previous Early Childhood Tax Benefit. Starting in October 2020, families could receive up to \$3,600 per year, depending on their income and the number of children. Further, the 2019 Budget introduces a \$3 billion revenue-sharing agreement with First Nations over 25 years, with almost \$300 million provided in the first three years. Although not directly related to childcare, the increase in funds to First Nations’ can be used to provide early learning and childcare resources to their communities.

### Provincial Ministry Responsibilities

Ministry of Children and Family Services Responsibilities	Ministry of Health Responsibilities	Ministry of Education Responsibilities
1. Childcare policy including cooperating on the Early Learning Framework	1. Childcare legislation	1. Led the development of Early Learning Framework
2. Childcare programs and services funding	2. <a href="#">Licensing and Monitoring</a> (implemented by regional Health Authorities, follows the BC Childcare Licensing Regulation)	2. StrongStart BC
3. Fee subsidies		
4. Early Childhood Registry		
5. Capital funds		

### Local Governments

Under Provincial legislation, local governments do not have an assigned childcare role. They also lack the mandate and resources of their senior government counterparts to address childcare needs.

Municipalities are the level of government closest to the people, however, and they generally have the most in depth understanding of the local context. Municipalities can also play a vital role in facilitating the establishment of quality childcare in their communities.<sup>2</sup> Examples of supportive actions taken by municipalities in BC include:

- Adopting municipal childcare policies;
- Convening childcare planning tables;
- Advocating to senior governments on local childcare needs;

<sup>2</sup> Note that before the completion of this Childcare Needs Assessment and Strategy, the [Union of BC Municipalities](#) (UBCM) was inviting applications for two programs: the Community Childcare Space Creation program (funded through the Federal Government) and the Community Childcare Planning program (funded through the Provincial Government). The application deadline for the Community Childcare Planning Program is January 31, 2020. Although The UBC-M has not announced details regarding further rounds of funding, it is likely there will be another round. When those details become available, information from this document should provide childcare stakeholders in the City of Delta with the information they require to pursue these opportunities.

- Undertaking childcare needs assessments;
- Providing grants to childcare providers;
- Amending zoning bylaws to facilitate the development of childcare spaces;
- Making space available in municipal facilities, at nominal or below-market rates, for the provision of childcare;
- Securing built childcare spaces or cash in lieu from developers through the development approval process (e.g., by providing bonus density in exchange for childcare contributions);
- Supporting a childcare website or link with information targeted both to childcare operators and interested parent; and
- Providing recreation services that benefit families and complement licensed childcare systems.

While the City has a key role to play, childcare is predominantly a provincial and federal responsibility. It is thus recognized that the City lacks the resources and mandate to address all childcare needs in the community on its own. But by being strategic, and working in partnership with others, it can make an important contribution to efforts to facilitate an effective childcare system in Delta.

## 4. City of Delta: Our Community

This section provides a summary of pertinent information concerning children and childcare for the Delta community, including high-level details about child vulnerabilities and demographic characteristics, current childcare spaces, and highlights from the engagement processes. A complete community profile can be found in the Needs Analysis included as an addendum to this report.

### Plan Bylaw and Policy Review

Prior to developing a Childcare Action Plan for Delta, it is important to have a basic understanding of key plans, bylaws, and policies affecting childcare in the City. Appendix A provides a detailed overview of the pertinent plans, bylaw, and policies.

### *Findings*

Key points to note are as follows:

- *Zoning*: Childcare facilities are permitted in several zones in Delta, both as a principal use (commercial, public use, and childcare zones) and accessory use (townhouse, apartment, and public park and recreation zones)
- *OCP*: The OCP has a section on Children and Families, with the stated objective to “encourage a safe and supportive community that fosters family well-being and the raising of children in a nurturing environment. The OCP also has policies concerning the provision of grants to non-profit childcare providers, encouragement of childcare operations in residential areas, and encouragement of space to be included for childcare facilities and other family-friendly amenities in large residential developments. The OCP does not contain provisions for facilitating childcare through density bonusing or community amenity contributions. The North Delta Area Plan Schedule C (North Delta Area Plan) has a policy statement about working with social

agencies and other partners to provide services to North Delta residents, which may include childcare services. The other four area plan in the OCP are silent on the subject of childcare.

- *Supportive Policies:* Delta has two policies that are considered particularly noteworthy in supporting childcare. The first is the Delta Social Action Plan (2018), which presents ideas and projects aimed at advancing issues identified in the companion document, the Delta Social Profile (2017). The Action Plan has a section on Children and Youth, which includes childcare and related children and youth concerns. The second noteworthy policy is Permissive Property Tax Exemptions. Under Section 224 of the Community Charter, local governments have the authority to exempt eligible properties from property taxation for a specified period of time. Delta has taken advantage of the provision by granting property tax exemptions to five non-profit childcare and children's organizations:
  - ◆ Reach Child and Youth Development
  - ◆ Boys and Girls Club
  - ◆ Developmental Preschool North – Center for Child Development
  - ◆ Lookout Preschool
  - ◆ Sunshine Hills Parent Participation Preschool
  - ◆ Child care in faith communities and schools
  
- *Planning and Networking Structures:* The two primary planning and networking structures in Delta for addressing childcare concerns are:
  - ◆ Community Livability Advisory Committee of Council – the mandate of this committee includes focusing on larger-scale development proposals, environmental issues, and social planning social actions (which could encompass childcare); and
  - ◆ Delta Child and Youth Committee. The Delta Child and Youth Committee (CYC) is a community-based body that collaborates on the provision of service for Delta children, youth and families. It consists of decision-makers representing various clubs, organizations, agencies and governmental ministries working in Delta to support children and youth.
  
- *Information Resources:* The City of Delta website does not offer childcare information either for the community (e.g., links to childcare resources) or childcare providers (e.g., user-friendly information about policies and approval processes for new facilities).

### *Conclusions and Opportunities*

The City of Delta has taken a number of positive steps for facilitating childcare through various plans, bylaws, policies, and related initiatives. The most noteworthy initiatives include:

- Zoning provisions which allow childcare facilities in several districts throughout the city
- Objectives and policies in the OCP for encouraging development of childcare facilities
- Other City policies which can support childcare (e.g., Social Action Plan, Permissive Property Tax Exemptions)

- Supportive planning and networking structures (i.e., Community Livability Advisory Committee, Delta Children and Youth Committee).

Notwithstanding these positive examples, there are several additional measures that the City could consider to help the childcare situation in the community:

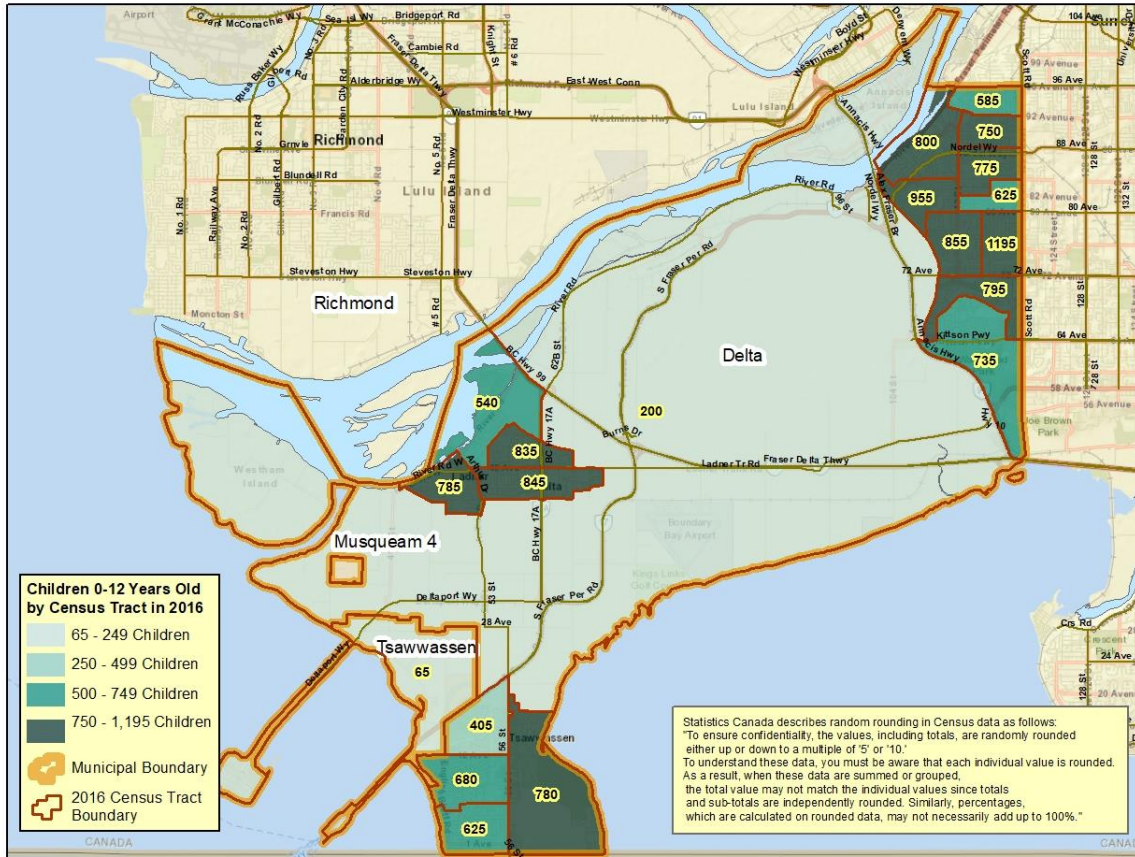
- Developing a City Childcare Policy to specify, in a succinct easily accessible document, the City's understanding of the importance of childcare and the range of roles the City is committed to play to facilitate development of childcare in the community
- Amending the OCP to include more specific information regarding the City's goals and roles regarding childcare – ideally adding provisions for density bonusing or other measures to encourage developers of large projects to include childcare facilities in their projects – or contributing cash-in-lieu (e.g., community amenity contributions) for the City to use for future childcare development
- Including information on the City website targeted to families seeking childcare for their children and operators wishing to establish new childcare facilities in the city.

### Population Profile Highlights

- In 2016, there were 13,850 children (0-12 years old) living in the Delta School District served area, with 13,775 of these children living in the City of Delta and 75 of these children living in the Tsawwassen First Nations (Figure 1);
- In 2016, approximately 63.6% of all children in the Delta School District served area were school aged (6-12 year olds and half of all 5 year olds);
- In 2016, most of the children in the City of Delta lived in North Delta (8,070 children), followed by Ladner (3,005 children), Tsawwassen (2,490 children) and Rural Delta (210 children).
- Between 2019 and 2029, the number of children (0-12 years old) in the area served by the Delta School District is projected to decrease by -536.0 children (a – 3.9% decrease), with decreases in the school age child age group, but increases in the infant and toddler and under school age child populations. This number does not take into consideration the new developments and growth occurring in Delta and may not accurately reflect the population.

Figure 1 Children (0-12 Years Old), By Census Tract, Delta and Tsawwassen First Nations, 2016

**Children (0-12 Years Old), by Census Tract, Delta and Tsawwassen First Nations, 2016**



Source: Downloaded from Statistics Canada Data tables, 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016005 Age (in Single Years) and Average Age (127) and Sex (3) for the Population of Census Metropolitan Areas, Tracted Census Agglomerations and Census Tracts, 2016 Census - 100% Data

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**Child Vulnerabilities and Demographic Groups Summary<sup>3</sup>:**

The Human Early Learning Partnership uses the Early Development Instrument (EDI) to measure the developmental health of the Kindergarten population across British Columbia. The EDI measures childhood vulnerability rates, reflecting how children’s experiences and environments in the first five years of their lives have affected their development as a whole. EDI data presents the differences that exist in children’s developmental outcomes across BC communities. It serves as a tool for population health monitoring, aiding in increasing our understanding of children’s early developmental outcomes across time and geographies. Tracking and observing vulnerability trends can prompt community efforts to understand more about what is driving changes in vulnerability, and work toward reducing

<sup>3</sup> Source: For early development instrument results: UBC (University of British Columbia). HELP (Human Early Learning Partnership). Early Development Instrument (EDI). Help Data Library. EDI Waves 2-6 (SD, LHA, NH, BC). <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/maps/data/>

vulnerability including interventions such as: access to ECD programs and services, availability of supports for children with special needs, and other neighborhood-level factors.

- In 2015, there were 2,590 children (0-17 years old) in low income households in the City of Delta based on the Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT), composing 12.6% of all children in the City of Delta
- The percentage of kindergarten students who were vulnerable on one or more EDI domain in the Delta School District decreased very slightly between Wave 2 (30%) and Wave 6 (28%);
- During wave 6 (2013/2014, 2014/2015, 2015/2016), the domain with the highest percentage of vulnerable kindergarten students was the emotional domain, while the language domain had the lowest percentage of vulnerable kindergarten students;
- During wave 6, North Delta East (34% vulnerability rate) and Sunshine Hills (31% vulnerability) had the highest rates of kindergarten students who were vulnerable on one or more domain among Delta EDI neighbourhoods
- In 2016, there were 2,080 children (0-14 years old) in lone parent families in the Delta School District served area, composing 12.7% of all children (0-14 years old) in the Delta School District served area;
- In 2016, there were 760 children (0-14 years old) of Indigenous Identity (4.6% of all children), 500 recent immigrant children (0-14 years old) (3.1% of all children) and 4,360 children (0-14 years old) with a non-English mother tongue (26.6% of all children) in the Delta School District served area ; and,
- In 2018/2019, there were 1,015 special needs elementary school students in the Delta School District (11.5% of all elementary school students were special needs in 2018/2019); and,
- In 2017/2018, the most common special needs designations for Delta School District elementary school students were Learning Disability (197 students), Gifted (187 students) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (152 students).

## Childcare Spaces

In April 2019, there were 2,383 childcare spaces in the City of Delta . Additionally, some private at home daycares exist that are not licensed and thus numbers for these daycares cannot be confirmed The following Tables (Table 1-4) demonstrate where childcare is located based on the four geographic areas of Delta (North Delta, Tsawwassen, Rural and Ladner) and the type of childcare. Table 1 illustrates that for the infant/toddler age group (0-2), there is an average of 5.5 spaces per 100 children. In North Delta and Ladner, there are around 4 infant/toddler spaces per/100 children available, and in rural Delta there are 0 spaces. Tsawwassen has the highest availability, with 13.5 spaces per 100 children.

**Table 1 Childcare Spaces per region for Children 0-2, City of Delta**

Geographic Area	Number of Children (2016)	Number of Spaces (2019)	Spaces per 100
North Delta	1475	60	4.1
Tsawwassen	430	58	13.5
Ladner	600	24	4.0
Rural	40	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2545</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>5.5</b>

Children aged 3-5 are the best served in the City of Delta, with an average of 20.1 spaces per 100 children (excluding Pre-school spaces). Rural Delta is best served, with 92.5 spaces per 100 children and North Delta the worst served, with 11.4 spaces per 100 children, although North Delta does have the highest number of preschool spaces (Table 2).

**Table 2 Childcare Spaces per region for Children 3-5, City of Delta**

Geographic Area	Number of Children (2016)	Number of Spaces (2019)	Preschool Spaces (2019)	Spaces per 100 (excluding Preschool)
North Delta	1490	170	251	11.4
Tsawwassen	415	193	136	46.5
Ladner	518	97	96	18.7
Rural	45	37	40	92.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2468</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>20.1</b>

Childcare for school aged children is also limited, with an average of 8.8 spaces per 100 children. Rural Delta was the best served with 63.2 spaces per 100 children and Ladner had the least amount of spaces with 5.1 per 100 children (Table 3).

**Table 3 Childcare Spaces per region for Children 6-12, City of Delta**

Geographic Area	Number of Children (2016)	Number of Spaces (2019)	Spaces per 100
North Delta	5105	402	7.9
Tsawwassen	1645	197	12.0
Ladner	1888	96	5.1
Rural	125	79	63.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8763</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>8.8</b>

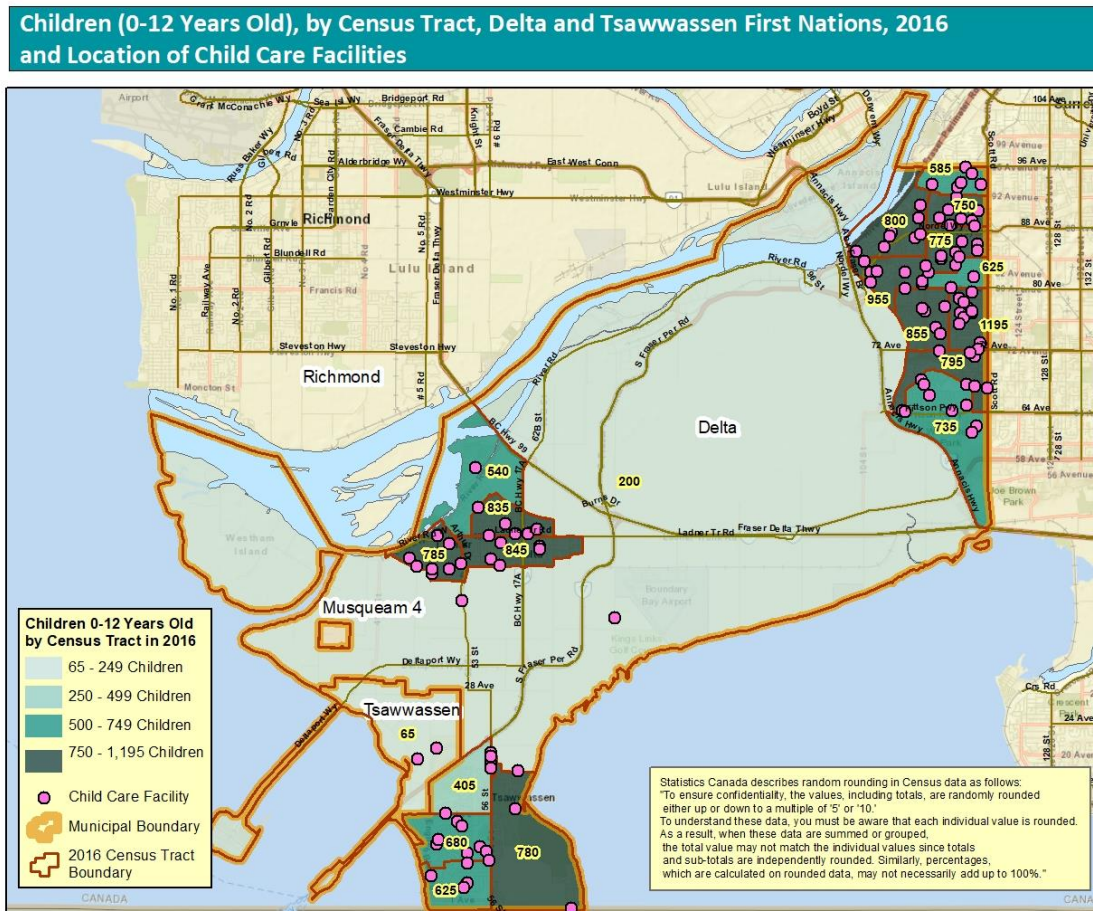
In addition to age specific spaces, there are also 152 multi-age care spaces, 215 family childcare spaces and 80 in home multi-age childcare spaces in the City of Delta (Table 4).

**Table 4 Other childcare spaces per region for all ages, City of Delta**

Geographic Area	Multi-Age Childcare	Family Childcare	In home Multi-age care
North Delta	120	129	56
Tsawwassen	24	28	8
Ladner	8	58	16
Rural	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>80</b>

In 2019, the City of Delta had 17.3 childcare spaces per 100 children (0-12 years old including preschool, multi-age childcare, family childcare and in home multi-age care) which was lower than British Columbia (18.4 childcare spaces per 100 children in 2016) and lower than Canada (27.2 childcare spaces per 100 children in 2016). The Figure below illustrates the distribution of child care facilities in the City of Delta.

**Figure 2 Children (0-12 Years Old), By Census Tract, Delta and Tsawwassen First Nations, 2016 and Location of Childcare Facilities**



Source: Downloaded from Statistics Canada Data tables, 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016005 Age (in Single Years) and Average Age (127) and Sex (3) for the Population of Census Metropolitan Areas, Tracted Census Agglomerations and Census Tracts, 2016 Census - 100% Data



## 5. Partnerships

As discussed in Section 4.0 (The Current Childcare System), the City lacks the resources and mandate to attempt to address all childcare issues in the community on its own. A partnership approach is required, with the City being strategic, focusing on priorities and working in collaboration with Delta School District, senior governments, childcare providers, community agencies and others in responding to local childcare needs.

The City is fortunate to have strong networks and positive working relationships to build on for its childcare planning efforts. Some of the City's key partners, and roles they can play in collaboration with the City of Delta Social Planning department, are as follows:

- **Senior governments:** Adopting policies, establishing programs and providing funding to support development of a strong childcare system in the community (e.g., capital funding for new childcare facilities, wage enhancements for childcare workers, initiatives for improving services for children with special needs);
- **Local MLAs and MPs:** Advocating to their respective governments on behalf of local childcare needs;
- **City of Delta School District:** Sharing information, pursuing joint planning opportunities and exploring the potential for including childcare facilities on school properties;
- **City of Delta Parks and Recreation:** Sharing information, pursuing joint planning opportunities and exploring the potential for accommodating childcare facilities in parks or on recreational properties;
- **Fraser Health (Childcare Facility Licensing):** Sharing information and assisting the City with development of childcare policies (e.g., location and design guidelines);
- **Community agencies (e.g., Childcare Resource and Referral, Reach, Boys and Girls Club, Delta Kids):** Sharing information and assisting the City with development of childcare policies;
- **Community Businesses and Major Employers (e.g., Port Authority, Hospitals etc.):** Collaborate on providing childcare options for shift workers;
- **Urban Development Institute:** Providing advice and feedback to the City on childcare initiatives that could affect the development community (e.g., childcare location or design guidelines, amendments to density bonus policies for childcare);
- **City of Delta Chamber of Commerce:** Sharing information and pursuing opportunities for encouraging large new employers to establish childcare facilities for their employees on their premises; and,
- **Delta CYC:** Sharing information, pursuing opportunities to collaborate on joint initiatives and supporting the initiatives of individual agencies represented on the Committee.

The foregoing is not an exhaustive list; however, it should provide a reasonable illustration of the types of collaboration that the City may wish to pursue as it works to implement the potential actions identified in Section 7.0. In addition to helping the City with its implementation efforts, the collaboration should help to strengthen and expand existing partnerships, thus fostering a broader joint commitment amongst partners to cooperate in addressing childcare issues in the City.

## 6. Strategic Direction and Recommended Actions

This section will discuss three key strategic directions of increasing accessibility, improving affordability, and focusing on quality. Each strategic direction will include an analysis of the data, a discussion of relevant promising practices in other BC municipalities, and recommended actions presented in a table.

The following principles informed the approach to creating the Childcare Strategy and Action Plan and are proposed as guides for the City's efforts to implement the plan:

1. **Data driven:** by grounding all decisions with relevant and reliable data, the City can ensure that it is meeting the real needs of children, youth and families, maximizing the impact of the strategy and measuring its progress;
2. **An informed and engaged community:** creating meaningful opportunities for people to share their perspectives and ideas as implementation proceeds will help keep the Strategy and Action Plan relevant as the City of Delta continues to change and grow; and,
3. **Equity focused:** staying attentive to the demographic characteristics of the community (e.g., income levels, gender, physical ability, language, immigration status) and barriers that particular groups may face in pursuing childcare is critical to improving the childcare system for all

When taking into consideration the recommended actions, it is important to note that municipalities, including Delta, do not hold responsibility to create child care spaces; however, given the impact child care has directly on municipalities, they can choose to play a more substantial role. The role municipalities can play include operating child care spaces, convening groups, engaging in municipal social planning, liaising with partners, building strategic relationships and advancing the efforts of others. The strategic directions below include partners that could be involved in the work, and the municipality does not hold sole responsibility for implementing the recommended action items.

## **Strategic Direction 1: Increase Accessibility - All families can access childcare, and childcare is inclusive of everyone**

### *Age groups*

Based on current childcare ratios and the community engagement, the birth to 36 months and school-aged children are most in need of more childcare spaces. There are 2,539 childcare spaces in the Delta School District served area in 162 different programs. Notably, there were 8.8 group (school age) childcare spaces for every 100 school age children and 5.5 group (birth to 36 months) childcare spaces for every 100 infants and toddlers. Under school age (3-4 year olds and half of all 5 year olds) had 20.1 group childcare spaces per 100 children.

In 2016, 63.6% of all children (13,850) in the Delta School District area were school-aged children between the ages of six and twelve, plus half of all five-year-olds. In 2016, there were 2,560 infants and toddlers (birth to 36 months) in the same area, comprising 18.5% of all children. As noted, the ratios of childcare spaces per 100 children in these two age groups are particularly low. These data are supported by the Parent Survey, which indicated the youngest child of one in three families is on a waitlist to access childcare.

### *Neighbourhoods*

In April 2019, childcare programs were located throughout the City of Delta with the largest concentration of childcare programs located in the area between 115<sup>th</sup> Street, Scott Road, 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue (census tract 162.03). This is also the area which has the largest number of children (0-12 year old) in the Delta School District served area. The area in Tsawwassen bordered by the USA border, 17A Avenue, 56<sup>th</sup> Street and Boundary Bay (census tract 160.02) had a relatively small number of childcare facilities (three childcare facilities) relative to its large child (0-12 year old) population (780 children), with only one childcare facility located in the Boundary Bay neighbourhood near Boundary Bay and the USA border. The area in Ladner bordered by the Fraser River, Ladner Trunk Road, Central Avenue and Elliot Street (census tract 161.06) also had a relatively small number of childcare facilities (two childcare facilities) relative to its medium sized child (0-12 year old) population (540 children). The other parts of Delta seemed to have relatively evenly distributed childcare facilities compared with population concentrations. Per capita, Tsawwassen has the highest number of spaces per 100 children, while North Delta and Ladner have significantly lower ratios, as demonstrated in Section 5.0.

### *Hours*

The percentage of childcare facilities that offer special schedule accommodations is quite low in the area served by the Delta School District: only two facilities (1.7% of all facilities) were open on statutory holidays, only two facilities (1.7% of all facilities) had overnight care and only nine facilities (7.4% of all facilities) had extended hours (before 6 am or after 7 pm). Based on the parent survey, 16.6% of respondents require various hours for childcare

### *Children with extra support needs*

There were 1,015 special needs elementary school students in the Delta School District in 2018/2019, which was slightly higher than in 2014/2015 (1,003 special needs elementary school students) The percentage of elementary school students with a special needs designation has consistently stayed between 11% and 12% during the past five school years, with 11.5% of all elementary school students in 2018/2019 being designated as special needs. During the engagement process, it was consistently stated at engagement sessions that it is difficult to find childcare that provides support for children with special needs (See the Needs Assessment for more detail). There are not enough trained staff to meet the needs, making it increasingly difficult for families to find the appropriate care.

### *Promising Practices*

Of the 21 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver area, almost half have stand-alone childcare strategies. By contracting this Needs Assessment and Childcare Strategy Report, the City of Delta has taken the first step in understanding the strengths and gaps in childcare in its region.

Building partnerships is the way “municipalities can make the most of their resources to address childcare issues,”<sup>4</sup> and the City of Richmond has decided to focus on partnerships with school districts, local organizations, and the provincial government. The City of Richmond also has dedicated staff working specifically on child care. There is also precedent for municipalities creating strong collaborations with School Districts. For example, the City of Burnaby developed a Childcare Facilities Memorandum and Agreement (MOA) in 2014 with School District 41 to, "build up to twelve childcare facilities in modular buildings on School District lands."<sup>5</sup> This agreement was one of the first of its kind across the province. Also, priority for the Provincial Government’s capital funding is being placed on public partnerships, so there may be funds earmarked for these endeavours.

Both the City of Vancouver and the City of New Westminster have provided funding through grants which enable not-for-profit centres to expand, renovate, or repair childcare facilities. The City of Richmond has proposed to follow suit. Also, three-quarters of Metro Vancouver municipalities provide public building space, whether it is rent-free, subsidized, or market lease. This funding, in turn, provides families with more access to quality, accessible, and affordable childcare. More than half of Metro Vancouver municipalities identify childcare facilities as a community amenity in the development approvals process and almost half of them offer property tax exemptions for childcare facilities.

<sup>4</sup> City of Richmond. (2016). 2017-2022: Richmond childcare needs assessment and strategy. Pg. 23.

<sup>5</sup> (City of Richmond, p.23 2016)

## Strategic Direction 1: Increase Accessibility - Recommendations

Recommended Action	Time Frame <sup>6</sup>	Partners
<b>Policy and Planning</b>		
1.1. Work toward reaching a target access rate of 27.2 spaces per 100 children by 2030 with a focus on increasing infant/toddler and school age spaces. In order to meet the Canadian average childcare ratio (as of 2016) by 2030, 1,051.4 additional childcare spaces will need to be added.	Long, ongoing	City of Delta, Delta School District, childcare providers
1.2. Develop a City Childcare Policy to specify, in a succinct easily accessible document, that includes the City's understanding of the importance of childcare and the range of roles the City is committed to play to facilitate development of childcare in the community.	Short	City of Delta
1.3. Explore opportunities to include childcare facilities in the planning and feasibility analysis for current and future City parks and facilities (e.g., libraries, recreation centres).	Short, ongoing	City of Delta
1.4. Begin to place priority on facilitating new child development hubs <sup>7</sup> and the enhancement of existing hubs with a focus on underserved areas of the City.	Short, ongoing	City of Delta
1.5. Consider establishing a dedicated Childcare Planner role at the City of Delta whose job description includes implementing the childcare action plan, is the primary childcare contact, and oversees, plans and facilitates partnerships.	Medium, ongoing	City of Delta
<b>Collaboration and Partnerships</b>		
1.6. Solicit buy-in for this Action Plan from City of Delta regional partners so the strategy can be genuinely region-wide. Focus on streamlined processes within the region to reduce duplication of effort and improve effectiveness.	Short	City of Delta, Delta School District, CYC, childcare providers, etc.
1.7. Convene cross-sectoral City of Delta Steering Committee with relevant partners (this could be with the existing Child and Youth Council). This planning team could also	Short	City of Delta, First Nations, CYC, Delta School District, post-secondary institutions, Fraser

<sup>6</sup> Short = <2 years; Medium = 2-5 years; Long = 5-10 years

<sup>7</sup> "Hubs can be a single location or a network of places working together to offer a continuum of programs, services, and events to support the healthy development of children and their families." [https://www.newwestcity.ca/database/rte/files/UD%20Hub%20Final%20Report%20May%2020%2008\(2\).pdf](https://www.newwestcity.ca/database/rte/files/UD%20Hub%20Final%20Report%20May%2020%2008(2).pdf)

brainstorm the implementation of these recommendations and further actions, including diverse representation.		Health, BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, other relevant community partners like immigrant and newcomer organizations etc.
1.8. Maintain a dedicated partnership between the Delta School District and the City of Delta to explore the option of co-locating childcare programs in elementary schools in the City	Short	City of Delta, Delta School District
1.9. Partner with businesses and organizations such as hospitals, Businesses, Industry the Port Authority, Annacis and Tilbury and those who need/use services with various hours to explore childcare solutions for shift workers, ideally to increase evening and weekend programming.	Short; ongoing	City of Delta, childcare providers, community partners
Information Sharing		
1.10. Create a webpage on the City of Delta website dedicated to childcare information resources, this webpage could link to other websites include CCRR.	Medium	City of Delta, Child Care Resource and Referral <sup>8</sup>
1.11. Consider acting as the liaison between interested childcare providers/investors and new developments and facilities that could support childcare businesses, to support would-be providers to find spaces that could be customized for childcare provision.	Medium	City of Delta, Chamber of Commerce, community partners
1.12. Keep abreast of key trends, information and research concerning childcare in the community, sharing the information with childcare providers and the general public (e.g., population profiles, maps showing locations of childcare facilities).	Ongoing	City of Delta, childcare providers, community partners, Child Care Resource and Referral
Advocacy		
1.13. Liaise with the Provincial and Federal Governments on capital and operating funding opportunities for enhancing childcare services in the City (e.g. for renovations/expansion of existing facilities, development of new facilities, augmenting programs).	Short, ongoing	City of Delta, Federal Government, Provincial Government

<sup>8</sup> "Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) centres make it easier for families to find and access responsive and inclusive quality licensed and registered child care by providing information, support, resources and referral services to parents and child care providers across the province." Province of British Columbia.

## Strategic Direction 2: Improve Affordability

Childcare is expensive across BC, and Delta is no different. Half of the Parent Survey respondents noted the fees they currently pay for childcare are unsustainable for their family, and for 95% of respondents, the primary reason for seeking out childcare was so they can work. Since 12.7% of all children (0-14yrs) are from lone-parent families, and 12.6% of all children (0-17yrs) come from low-income households, it is not difficult to see how childcare fees could become too challenging to manage.

Under the BC Childcare Fee Reduction Initiative, if a childcare provider - offering one or more of the following types of childcare – applies, the BC government will subsidize parent payments.

Type of Childcare Program	Fee Reduction
Group infant/toddler care (birth to 36 months)	Up to \$350/month
Family infant/toddler care (birth to 36 months)	Up to \$200/month
Group care for children three years to kindergarten	Up to \$100/month
Family care for children three years to kindergarten	Up to \$60/month

In addition, affordability relief is available under the BC Affordable Childcare Benefit.

### *Promising Practices*

Along with the Provincial Government’s influx of capital funds to create 22,000 new childcare spaces, municipalities across British Columbia are tackling this issue by providing subsidies and grants to child care providers. In addition to the promising practices noted in the previous section, other methods include: offering grants for childcare capital projects, and offering grants for care operating costs. Additionally, many municipalities across the province have endorsed the \$10/aDay childcare campaign<sup>9</sup>. Municipalities endorse the \$10/aDay childcare campaign as they recognize, “The \$10aDayPlan offers a quality early care and learning experience for every child whose family wants or needs it. Children will benefit from programs that respect them for who they are today and help prepare them for who they will become tomorrow.”

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.10aday.ca/endorse>

## Strategic Direction 2: Improve Affordability - Recommendations

All recommendations throughout this report will indirectly, but positively, affect the affordability of childcare. The recommendations presented below are those that will make a direct impact on affordability.

Recommended Action	Time Frame <sup>10</sup>	Partners
Policy and Planning		
2.1. Continue to maintain property tax exemptions for non-profit childcare providers. The City is already offering tax exemptions and this practice should be continued.	Short	City of Delta
Direct Support		
2.2. Provide information for childcare providers to apply for the BC Childcare Reduction Initiative and other programs that would assist childcare providers in charging lower fees (e.g., Union of BC Municipalities).	Short, ongoing	City of Delta Provincial Government
Advocacy		
2.3. Publicly endorse the \$10aDay Childcare Campaign.	Short, ongoing	City of Delta

<sup>10</sup> Short = <2 years; Medium = 2-5 years; Long = 5-10 years



### Strategic Direction 3: Focus on Quality

The research tells us that elements of a quality childcare program include building quality indoor and outdoor spaces, developing relationships with families, creating a positive work environment, and implementing a structured curriculum. The figure below provides an excellent overview of what a quality childcare system entails:



(Source: Martha Friendly and Jane Beach, (2005). Elements of a high quality early learning and child care system. Childcare Resource and Research Unit.)

For more details around potential municipal roles in fostering quality child care, see [Appendix B](#).

#### *Private vs. Public*

Of the 2,539 childcare spaces in the area served by Delta School District, 2,056 or 81% are in private facilities. Family childcare is private, for-profit childcare where the caregiver does not require an ECE certificate. The research strongly suggests that publicly funded programs have the highest quality care, and that private, for-profit programs have the lowest quality childcare.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Ability to Support Vulnerable Populations*

The Parent and Provider Surveys told us that childcare programs in the Delta region are generally able to provide for the needs of the children and families they serve. For most EDI domains (emotional, communication, physical, etc.), childcare providers said they were able to provide adequate support for

<sup>11</sup> See the Literature Review in Appendix B for more information.

Indigenous children, children living in lone-parent families, children from low-income households, and children with extra needs. During the consultation process, it was raised that supporting children who require extra support needs is a challenge, as there are not enough trained staff.

### *Staffing*

A positive work environment means that staff are paid a good wage, are able to take sick time, have the potential for flexible or part-time work, and allow the opportunity to increase their educational qualifications. When staff are more educated, feel appreciated, and are well supported, the quality of care increases.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a common staffing challenge from the engagement responses was a limited supply of applicants with the right qualifications and experiences to fill positions. Other issues included a lack of access to quality education, limited opportunities to work full-time and flexible hours, and cost of living issues such as low wages in the childcare industry. Housing is an ongoing problem, as it is becoming more and more unaffordable. There is a real concern for employee burnout. All these aspects affect the quality of care. That said, the respondents noted a strong desire to improve their quality by decreasing waitlists, providing sick time for staff, and by providing quality programming.

The Provincial Government's new Recruitment and Retention Strategy will assist with some of these concerns by offering wage lifts to front line workers, in addition to other education supports.

### *Promising Practices*

Relationship-building is at the heart of quality childcare. Still, collaborations and partnerships must be robust and consistent to enable the eight elements of quality in childcare we mentioned above. When we look to other municipalities, we see a few shining examples of effective collaboration: The City of Vancouver established the Joint Childcare Council (JCC) in 2004 which brought together the City, the Vancouver Parks Board, the Vancouver Board of Education, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Vancouver Public Library, along with community agencies and business representatives to create quality childcare. As a result, the JCC has collaborated on the creation of over 1000 new childcare spaces including the creation of a number of childcare centres at schools.

The City of Delta currently offers ECE adult learning options through the Delta School District and provides professional development opportunities through Options, which are both excellent community initiatives.

### Strategic Direction 3: Focus on Quality - Recommendations

Recommended Action	Time Frame <sup>12</sup>	Partners
Policy and Planning		
3.1. Promote high quality design of indoor and outdoor spaces when working with developers on new builds	Long; ongoing	City of Delta
3.2. Encourage City of Delta departments to apply a childcare lens to various plans and policies, noting that the development of a community's children affects the community as a whole.	Short; ongoing	City of Delta
3.3. Develop an inventory of municipal buildings and outdoor spaces that can be used to house/build childcare programs, and determine whether the rent/lease can be subsidized.	Short	City of Delta
3.4. Consider the inclusion of specific provisions for childcare in the next update of the City's Official Community Plan (OCP) - ideally adding provisions for community amenity contributions or other measures to encourage developers of large projects to include childcare facilities in their projects.	Medium	City of Delta
3.5. When new spaces are being developed, advocate for an increase in the number of publicly funded childcare spaces, while maintaining or modestly increasing the levels of its family childcare spaces. Publicly funded childcare programs require ECE-trained staff, which would help address some issues related to the inadequate ability to care for certain groups of vulnerable children.	Short, ongoing	City of Delta Delta School District, not-for-profit community partners
Direct Support		
3.6. Provide training and professional development opportunities for childcare providers to enhance their ability to support children with extra support requirements and special needs.	Medium	City of Delta, Reach, Centre for Child Development, Childcare Resource and Referral
Collaboration and Partnerships		

<sup>12</sup> Short = <2 years; Medium = 2-5 years; Long = 5-10 years

3.7. Focus on developing the partnerships that allow for an increase in publicly funded childcare spaces.	Short, ongoing	City of Delta, Delta School District, First Nations
3.8. Continue to collaborate with the Fraser Health Community Care Licensing to continuously improve the availability of information and training materials for childcare providers and parents, as well as for City staff and local community groups involved in childcare.	Ongoing	City of Delta, Fraser Health

## 7. Monitoring, Reporting and Implementation

The City of Delta and its partners need to take a coordinated approach to effectively advance the recommendations presented in this Action Plan. The City of Delta is geographically large, dispersed, and faces many unique challenges such as the transportation between areas, the high level of shift employees and parental commuting times. It is difficult to imagine the City being able to meet the childcare needs of the entire region on its own. That is partly why collaboration between the City and other partners is essential. In order to be truly effective, the whole region will need to step up and contribute.

To that end, and as indicated in Section 7.0, it is recommended that a City of Delta Childcare Steering Committee be established with a mandate to:

- Share and obtain buy-in for this Action Plan;
- Exchange information;
- Collaborate on joint initiatives;
- Collect and evaluate data on the child population, childcare inventory, and parents' and providers' needs;
- Pursue continuous improvement by implementing initiatives in response to the data; and
- Prepare annual reports on childcare services in the region.

Early establishment of this Steering Committee is essential. Buy-in from relevant partners is also important; because as mentioned above, the City of Delta cannot undertake these improvements alone. Further, early convening of this group will enable a coordinated and collaborative approach to applying for funding from the Provincial Government, which may be the impetus to achieving some of the recommendations contained in this Action Plan.

In closing, advancing the recommendations included in this document will be difficult; however, this also means that Delta has the benefit of being able to learn from other municipalities and partners. With concerted and coordinated efforts, the City of Delta can achieve the recommended action items in partnership with key stakeholder

## Appendix A: City of Delta relevant plans, policies and bylaws

<b>Zoning Bylaw Definition</b>	Childcare Facility means premises used for the care of children, including group childcare, preschool, family childcare, occasional childcare, multi-age childcare, in-home multi-age childcare, and child minding, all as defined, licensed and regulated under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and Childcare Licensing Regulation B.C. Reg. 332/2007.
<b>Zones Permitting Childcare</b>	Permitted as principal use in C1 (Core Commercial), P Public Use Zone and P1A (Childcare) zones. Permitted accessory use to townhouses in the RT40, RT62 and RT76 (Townhouse Residential) zones, as accessory use to apartments in the RA112 and RA120 (Apartment Residential) zones, and accessory uses to community centres in PR (Public Parks and Recreation) zones
<b>Zoning Bylaw Conditions</b>	A <i>childcare facility</i> shall not exceed a total <i>floor area</i> of 3 m <sup>2</sup> per <i>dwelling unit</i> in RT40, RT62, RT76, RA112 and RA 120 zones.
<b>OCP Parameters</b>	<p>The Plan Objectives and Policies section of the OCP contains the following statements:</p> <p><b>Children and Families</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Encourage a safe and supportive community that fosters family well-being and the raising of children in a nurturing environment.</p> <p><b>Policies:</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2.8.18 Where feasible, provide municipal financial assistance, such as community grants, to support family centers and children’s programs operated by non-profit organizations.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2.8.19 Encourage the provision of quality daycare and after school care, which is affordable, accessible, and located in residential neighbourhoods.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2.8.20 In large redevelopment projects, encourage the inclusion of space dedicated for child and family friendly amenities, such as childcare facilities or play space.</p> <p>The OCP contains no provisions for facilitating childcare facilities (or other community amenities) through density bonusing or community amenity contributions (CACs). For background, see February 2018 Memorandum to Mayor and Council (<a href="https://delta.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/search?keywords=density%20bonusing">https://delta.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/search?keywords=density%20bonusing</a>) and Notice of Motion to develop a Delta Community Amenity Policy (<a href="https://delta.civicweb.net/filepro/document/176220/G01%20Community%20Amenity%20Policy.pdf">https://delta.civicweb.net/filepro/document/176220/G01%20Community%20Amenity%20Policy.pdf</a>)</p> <p>Schedule A (Land Use Designations) contains the following:</p>

	<p><b>Mixed-Use (Tsawwassen) Kin Village (MU(T)KV)</b> - This designation is intended for seniors’ rental residential, congregate care housing, and community care facility as primary uses, and neighbourhood café, clinical services and childcare facility as secondary uses.</p> <p>Schedule C (North Delta Area Plan) has the following policy statement:</p> <p><b>Policy G.13: Partnerships with Social Agencies</b> Continue to work with social agencies and other partners to provide services to North Delta residents, which may include childcare services, seniors day programming, and other services and programming.</p> <p>With the exception of the foregoing policy statement in the North Delta Area Plan, there are no references to childcare in the other four area plans in the OCP (East Ladner Area Plan, Riverside Area Plan, Ladner Area Plan, and Tsawwassen Area Plan).</p>
<b>Supportive Policies</b>	Delta Social Action Plan Permissive property tax exemptions
<b>Planning and Networking Structures</b>	Community Livability Advisory Committee of Council Delta Child and Youth Committee
<b>Information Resources</b>	The City website does not provide information on childcare for families or prospective facility operators.

# Appendix B: Key Findings from Research & Promising Practices

## Introduction

Municipalities across British Columbia are developing childcare strategies and action plans to address each communities' childcare needs. In order to better understand current promising practices and key research findings related to quality childcare systems and the role of municipal governments in childcare this document and literature review was undertaken. The purpose of this review is to answer the following guiding questions:

1. What are the elements/indicators of a high-quality early learning and childcare system?
2. What does the research tell us about Quality Childcare at the Individual Program Level?
3. What does the research tell us about auspice –who is operating the childcare programs?
4. What is the broader context for childcare in Canada?
5. What does the research tell us about the role of local governments in the delivery of a high quality childcare system?
6. What are some examples of promising practices for local planning and service delivery?

By reviewing each question, municipalities will be equipped with information to inform their childcare strategies and action plans.

## What are the indicators/elements of a quality early learning and childcare system?

### Overall

There is an innate benefit of having a system in place in order to meet the needs of the community, families, and individuals. A system can be defined as an established framework that creates interrelationships between and among different groups with the purpose of meeting an identified need, in this case, quality, affordable and accessible childcare.<sup>13</sup>

It is well accepted that there are eight elements of a quality early learning and childcare **system**: (1) Ideas, (2) Governance, (3) Infrastructure, (4) Planning and policy development, (5) Financing, (6) Human resources, (7) Physical environment, (8) Data, Research and Evaluation.<sup>14</sup> Each element is interconnected and fit together to create a strong system, but individually do not have as much impact. These eight characteristics are the basis of a quality childcare **system, and**, strong public policy is needed to provide the foundation to build the system. Furthermore, in Canada, childcare is viewed as a

<sup>13</sup>Arnold, R.D., & Wade, P.J. (2015). A definition of systems thinking: A systems approach. *Procedia Computer Science*, 44, 669-678.

<sup>14</sup> Friendly, M., & Beach, J. (2005). High quality early learning and childcare system. *Child Resource and Research Unit*, 1-8.



provincial jurisdiction. Canada presently does not have comprehensive public policy on quality childcare and therefore childcare in Canada is described by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as, “Fragmented, often of dubious quality and characterized by unequal access.”<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, within the literature and amongst early childhood professionals, consensus has been reached on the important aspects of an early learning and childcare system. Notably, the Province of British Columbia has committed to an ambitious “systemic” approach to universal childcare with a focus on quality, affordability, and accessibility. [Childcare BC: A New Day for Families & Providers in B.C](#) is a provincial plan specifically focused on establishing a quality childcare system and adheres to the eight elements outlined by Friendly and Beach (2005).

The following graphic presents a summary of each of the eight elements of a quality childcare system<sup>15, 16</sup>:



(Source: Martha Friendly and Jane Beach, (2005). Elements of a high quality early learning and child care system. Childcare Resource and Research Unit.)

<sup>15</sup> Friendly, M., Doherty, G., & Beach, J. (2005). Quality by design: What do we know about quality in early learning and childcare, and what do we think? A literature review. *Childcare Resource and Research Unit*, 1-32.

<sup>16</sup> Region of Waterloo Children’s Services. (2016). *Early Learning and Childcare Service Plan: 2016-2020 Executive Summary*. <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/resources/Documents/Childrens-Services-/ELCC-Service-Plan-Executive-Summary-access.pdf>

As stated, planning and policy is one of the eight elements of a quality system and an important driver for social change. In 2012, the OECD released the [Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care](#) which is a document that includes, “five policy levers that are likely to enhance quality” of childcare.<sup>17</sup> These categories are:

- Policy Lever 1: Setting out quality goals and regulations;
- Policy Lever 2: Designing and implementing curriculum and standards;
- Policy Lever 3: Improving qualifications, training and working conditions;
- Policy Lever 4: Engaging families and communities; and,
- Policy Lever 5: Advancing data collection, research and monitoring.

This toolbox could be used when considering implementing policy that is aimed at creating quality childcare. In addition, this toolbox should be referenced to support policy decisions at the municipal level especially, when developing an action plan that recognizes the importance of quality childcare.

### **Inclusion and Accessibility**

When developing a quality early learning and childcare system, it is critical to ensure the system meets the diverse needs of children, in particular, children who statistically belong to vulnerable and/or marginalized groups. While there is no “one size fits all” framework that can be implemented, there are promising practices that consistently arise when inclusivity and accessibility are put into practice. For example, a comprehensive global literature review that has been conducted on the accessibility of early childhood education for children from ethnic minority and low-income families, documents some of these promising practices.<sup>18</sup> Based on the literature review, Vanderbroeck and Lazzari (2012) propose three levels from which an inclusive and accessible system can be built:

1. Policy Level: Ex. availability of services, quality regulations, monitoring;
2. Provisions level: Ex. services available for irregular work hours, number of spaces meets the demand, waitlist criteria
3. Parental level: Ex. access to informal network and information about ECE, language, and cultural considerations

To address challenges associated at each level, there are five principles of good practice to be considered:<sup>19</sup>

1. Availability – Do families have access to childcare in their neighborhood?
2. Affordability – Are fees based on income?
3. Accessibility – Are there language, cultural, and/or physical barriers? Is outreach being conducted to reach marginalized and vulnerable population groups who might not have access to information or a trusting relationship with childcare centres?

<sup>17</sup> OECD. (2012). Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264123564-en> )

<sup>18</sup> Vandenbroeck, M., & Lazzari, A. (2012). Accessibility of early childhood education and care (ecec) for children from ethnic minority and low-income families.

<sup>19</sup> (Vanderbroeck & Lazzari, 2012)

4. Usefulness – Are there flexible opening hours? Are families involved in the childcare centre decision making processes?
5. Comprehensibility – Are the values, beliefs and educational practices of the organization comprehensive and reflected of diverse needs? Do diverse staff work at the centre?

Furthermore, in Canada, there has been a national Indigenous Early Learning and Childcare Framework developed to ensure childcare systems meet the needs of Indigenous children and families. This Framework was created with Indigenous partners across Canada through a national engagement strategy and culminates with nine principles that strengthen Indigenous Early Learning and Childcare. This Framework can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/indigenous-early-learning/2018-framework.html>

## Workforce

A strong quality workforce is required in order to operate a quality childcare system. In recent years, there have been many studies and reviews on what constitutes a quality workforce.<sup>20,21</sup> The latest, comprehensive, national labour market review on a quality childcare workforce, which was completed in 2004, determined, “a skilled, stable workforce is the critical determinant of high quality in childcare settings, and the quality of childcare environments influences child development outcomes.”<sup>22</sup> Despite this clear outcome statement, the present day workforce still faces similar challenges workers faced over fifteen years ago at the time of the last national literature review. Bertrand (2004) highlighted that workers were negatively impacted by many factors such as low wages, which resulted in a lack of incentive to obtain higher education, increasing job stress, and difficulty meeting the needs of all children. These issues were compounded with the fact that there was a lack of public investment to mitigate the negative experiences the workforce encountered, resulting in childcare that lacked quality<sup>23</sup>. Over recent years, however, there have been childcare advocates that continue to strive towards a creating a childcare system that is considered, “high quality.” Fundamental to a high-quality system is a workforce that is appropriately remunerated, has access to affordable education and professional development opportunities, and is supported through public policy.<sup>24</sup>

Recently, the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement funded a study on the [BC Childcare Sector Labour Market Partnership](#) and the City of Vancouver completed a survey on [Wages](#)

<sup>20</sup> (Bertrand, J. (2004). Working for Change: Canada’s Childcare Workforce. *Childcare Human Resources Sector Council*, 1-75. ; Early Childhood Educators of BC. (N.D.). BC Childcare Sector Labour Market Partnership: Phase 1 Final Engagement Report. Retrieved from [https://www.ecebc.ca/programs/files/1218\\_Childcare%20SLMP%20-%20Final%20Report%20.pdf](https://www.ecebc.ca/programs/files/1218_Childcare%20SLMP%20-%20Final%20Report%20.pdf);

<sup>21</sup> Forer, B. (2018). 2018 Wages and working conditions survey: Vancouver Centre-Based Childcare Programs, Westcoast Childcare Resource Centre and the City of Vancouver. Retrieved from [https://www.wstcoast.org/application/files/1215/3776/1533/WCCRC\\_Vancouver\\_child\\_care\\_wage\\_survey\\_exec\\_sum\\_web\\_10\\_pg\\_Sept\\_19\\_2018-web.pdf](https://www.wstcoast.org/application/files/1215/3776/1533/WCCRC_Vancouver_child_care_wage_survey_exec_sum_web_10_pg_Sept_19_2018-web.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> (Bertrand, p.13, 2004)

<sup>23</sup> (Bertrand, 2004)

<sup>24</sup> (Bertrand, 2004).

[and Working Conditions in Vancouver centre-based childcare programs](#). Both of these studies validated the findings from Bertrand's 2004 literature review: low wages remain, education and professional development are difficult to obtain, and retaining or recruiting skilled employees is a challenge.<sup>25</sup> In an attempt to address the concerns raised by the early childhood educator workforce in BC, the Ministry of Children and Family Development created an [Early Care and Learning Recruitment Strategy](#). The strategy outlines a plan to:

1. Increase compensation for ECE's working in facilities that are participating in BC's Childcare Fee Reduction Initiative,
2. Expand funding to the ECE post-secondary programs, bursaries available to students, and funds to facilities to support employees while they participate in education/training, and;
3. Create more professional development opportunities.

Creating a more sustainable and supported workforce will take time, however, the path forward is clear based on the ample research conducted nationally, provincially and locally. Investment in the childcare workforce is essential in creating a quality childcare system.

## **What does the research tell us about Quality Childcare at the Individual Program Level?**

Much has been written about quality at the individual child or program level, but as discussed in the last section, there is increasing recognition that there are essential elements at the broader systems level necessary to ensure that quality at an individual or program level is the norm rather than the exception. These systems level elements include infrastructure, financing, governance, planning, human resources, physical environments, research, data collection and evaluation. Most aspects of quality fall within provincial jurisdiction and are outside the scope of a local municipal government, however it is important to recognize what indicates quality childcare at the individual program level.

High quality at an individual program levels means honouring children where they are at, supporting children and giving them opportunities to develop and learn through play and a safe environment.<sup>26</sup> In 2019, the British Columbia Ministry of Education released an [Early Learning Framework](#) that outlines the key factors that contribute to quality programs including different practices that can be implemented to advance child learning. This framework should be referenced when developing or evaluating childcare programs. Furthermore, extensive research has been done to establish the contributing factors that foster a high-quality program which Friendly, Doherty, and Beach (2005) briefly outline in their literature review of quality childcare. For instance, at a relational level, reporting of positive relationships between families and providers, among colleagues, and between children and staff is indicative of quality care. Additionally, when staff are more educated, feel appreciated and are well

<sup>25</sup> (BC Childcare Sector Labour Market Partnership: Phase 1 Final Engagement Report, 2018; Forer, 2018).

<sup>26</sup> British Columbia Early Learning Framework. Ministry of Education. 2019

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework>

supported, the quality of care increases. Planned programming and a strong curriculum that is tailored to meet the diverse needs of children further enhances the quality of care.

In addition to establishing an overall positive environment for children, employees and families, along with the implementation of a strong curriculum, there has been evidence that illustrates the importance of a well-designed indoor/outdoor space in supporting the development of children under five<sup>27</sup>. Although standards for childcare spaces are developed provincially, municipalities are able to establish childcare design standards that are more in line with best practices, such as the “7C’s” (character, context, connectivity, change, chance, clarity, and challenge). For example, the provincial standards recommend less than 7m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor space per child, but the City of Vancouver, in their [Design Guidelines](#) has increased that requirement to 14m<sup>2</sup> per child (globally, standards are as high as 32m<sup>2</sup> per child). The City of Vancouver has also recognized the correlation of well-designed outdoor space with quality individual programs and has taken important steps to improving childcare quality through municipal policy. The design of indoor spaces is important, as, “the arrangement of furniture, structures, and objects in a space sends messages about how people can move and relate to others.”<sup>28</sup> How space is designed and used, inevitably impacts the individual program quality.

As demonstrated, the research indicates that there are several factors contributing to the development of high quality individual childcare programs. Centres that focus on building quality indoor and outdoor spaces, developing relationships with families, creating a positive work environment and implementing structured curriculum have greater success in meeting the needs of children and establishing a quality childcare centre.

## What does the research tell us about auspice – who is operating the childcare programs?

Doherty, Friendly, and Forer (2002)<sup>29</sup> describe the term ‘childcare auspice’ as those who run or operate the childcare market service. Research has shown that the operator of childcare facilities plays a major role in the quality of provision. In Canada there are 3 types of childcare auspices<sup>30</sup>:

1. Not for-profit childcare services;
2. For-profit childcare services; and,
3. Publicly operated childcare services (i.e. services directly operated by a public entity. Example, a city government or a board of education).

<sup>27</sup> Herrington, S., Lesmeister, C., Nicholls, J., & Stefiuk, K. (N.D.). 7Cs: an informational guide to young children’s outdoor play spaces. Retrieved from [file:///T:/10-RC/Current%20Projects/1-E515\\_City%20of%20Coquitlam\\_Child%20Care%20Action%20Plans\\_080719/Lit%20Review/Quality%20at%20Program%20Level/7Cs%20Outdoor%20Playground%20Research%20%20Herrington.pdf](file:///T:/10-RC/Current%20Projects/1-E515_City%20of%20Coquitlam_Child%20Care%20Action%20Plans_080719/Lit%20Review/Quality%20at%20Program%20Level/7Cs%20Outdoor%20Playground%20Research%20%20Herrington.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Education, p.23, 2019

<sup>29</sup> (Doherty, G., Friendly, M., & Forer, B. (2002). Childcare by default or design? An exploration of differences between non-profit and for-profit Canadian childcare centres using the “You Bet I Care!” data sets. *Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Urban and Community Studies*, 75).

<sup>30</sup> (Doherty, Friendly, & Forer, 2002).

There is a substantial amount of research on these 3 auspices from Canada, the United States, Britain, and New Zealand where childcare is delivered as a market commodity. Analysis of research data from Canada-wide studies on the quality of licensed childcare centres have indicated that as a group:

- a) For profit centres were of lower quality than not for-profit and publicly operated centres<sup>31</sup>;
- b) For profit centres lower quality is not only related to lower access to public funds and resources but also due to a multitude other issues related to for-profit care<sup>32,33</sup>, and;
- c) The highest quality childcare was found in municipally operated public childcare centres<sup>34</sup>.

Research on auspice has consistently demonstrated that for-profit centres are of lower quality and perform worse on global evaluation scales compared to not-for-profit and publicly operated centres.<sup>35,36</sup> Using British Columbian data, researchers found that for-profit centres are disproportionately more likely to close, and not-for-profit centres are, 97% times more likely to continue to operate<sup>37</sup>. Table 1 shows that in contrast to not-for-profits, for-profits provide less teaching support, salary schedule, staff policies, job performance appraisals, and grievance procedures. These contributing factors could result in the high staff turnover and lower morale present within for-profits.

**Table 1 Comparison between Non-Profit and Commercial Childcare Written Policies and Formal Procedures\***

Variable	Auspice	Average percent %
Teaching staff have written job descriptions	Non profit	73.4
	Commercial (for-profit)	46.5
Teaching staff have written job contracts	Non profit	41.7
	Commercial (for-profit)	22.2
There is a written salary schedule	Non profit	29.2
	Commercial (for-profit)	12.1
There is a staff manual outlining staff policies	Non profit	70.9
	Commercial (for-profit)	57.2
Teaching staff receive regular written job performance appraisals	Non-profit	38.5
	Commercial (for-profit)	11.2

<sup>31</sup> (Doherty, Friendly, & Forer, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, (2011). Briefing Note: What research says about quality in for-profit, non-profit and public childcare. Toronto: Author).

<sup>33</sup> (Cleveland, G., & Krashinsky, M. (2009). The nonprofit advantage: Producing quality in thick and thin childcare markets. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 28(3))

<sup>34</sup> (Cleveland, G. (2008). *If it don't make dollars, does that mean that it don't make sense? Commercial, nonprofit and municipal childcare in the city of Toronto*. Toronto: City of Toronto, Children's Services Division).

<sup>35</sup> (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> (Kershaw, P., Forer, B. & Goelman, H. (2004). *Hidden fragility: Closure among childcare services in BC*. Vancouver: Human Early Learning Partnership, University of British Columbia).

<sup>37</sup> Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2011.

There is a formal grievance procedure	Non- profit	31.5
	Commercial (for-profit)	15.3

\*Table Source: Staff questionnaire from both *YBIC!* data sets for all centres in Alberta, British Columbia and New Brunswick combined. From Doherty, Friendly and Forer (2002). Note: Data from 147 non-profit and 163 commercial centres.

Other reasons that for-profit centres have higher turnover and lower morale is because they have a higher proportion of untrained staff, lower wages, higher child to staff ratios<sup>38</sup>, and minimal benefits concerning sick leave. Less in-service training, holidays and pensions, are additionally noted<sup>39</sup>; therefore, staff turnover rates are lower in not for -profit, non-religiously affiliated centres and highest in for-profit independent centres.

Lastly, the highest quality childcare auspice was found in municipally operated public childcare centres. According to Doherty, Friendly and Forer’s (2002), municipal centres actively support non-profit agencies that serve their residents and therefore, have the best quality across all age groups. Further, Section 25 of the BC Community Charter<sup>40</sup> states that there are legislative prohibitions on local government assistance to businesses, and due to this, city owned childcare facilities can only be operated by the municipality or by not for -profit operators, and not by for-profits.

## What is the broader context for childcare?

Understanding the broader context for childcare is a key pillar to developing a childcare strategy that is feasible at a local, municipal level. This part of the review will examine the broader international context for childcare, the federal role in childcare and the provincial role of childcare provision. By having a full picture of the childcare context, local governments can be more equipped to adequately position themselves in the conversation.

### International Context

Accessing childcare and establishing childcare arrangements is a universal need for families and, as a result, multi-country studies have been conducted to contribute to the global childcare context.<sup>41 42</sup> From these international studies, there are key findings to be gleaned. Most notably, when Canada participates in international reviews, the country is determined to have an unfavourable system and receives among the lowest scores on quality childcare. For example, in 25 OECD countries, childcare

<sup>38</sup> (Doherty, Friendly, and Forer, 2002).

<sup>39</sup> (Penn, H. (2012) Childcare markets: Do they work? Occasional Paper No. 26. Childcare Resource and Research Unit)

<sup>40</sup> (British Columbia (2019). Community Charter, SBC 2003 Chapter 26.)

<sup>41</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). Early childhood education and care-country information. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/ecec-country-information.htm>

<sup>42</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. (2008). The childcare transition: A league table of early childhood education and care in economically advanced countries

systems were reviewed on 10 benchmarks, and Canada tied for the lowest score with Ireland. Sweden was the only country to reach all benchmarks. The benchmarks were as follows<sup>43</sup>:

1. A minimum entitlement to paid parental leave: At least 1 year at 50% of salary, with provision for unemployed or self-employed individuals;
2. A national plan with priority for disadvantaged children;
3. Minimum level of childcare provision for children under 3 years of age: Subsidized, regulated services for at least 25% of children under 3;
4. Minimum level of access for 4-year-olds: At least 80% of 4-year-olds participate in publicly subsidized and accredited early childhood services for at least 15 hours/week;
5. Minimum level of training for all staff:
  - a. At least 80 per cent of staff having significant contact with young children have relevant training;
6. A move towards pay and working conditions in line with wider teaching or social care professions: At least 50% have a minimum of at least three years of post-secondary education, with recognized qualification in early childhood;
7. Minimum staff to children ratio: Maximum group size of 24 for 4-year-olds;
8. Level of public funding for children 0-6 of at least 1% of GDP;
9. Child poverty of less than 10%;
10. Universal outreach.

When these benchmarks are reached, countries experience greater gender equality, lower poverty rates and ultimately protect the rights of children. As quality, accessible, affordable, childcare systems and services are being developed in British Columbia and implemented at a municipal level, it is imperative for municipalities to understand the positive impacts reaching these validated benchmarks has on communities and strive to create environments where reaching these milestones are possible.

<sup>43</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2008. Proxy measure for basic health services: the rate of mortality less than 4 per 1,000 live births; proportion of low birthweight babies is less than 6%; the rate of immunization for children 12-23 months is greater than 95%.



Figure 3 Early Childhood Services Report Card - UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre report *The Childcare Transition*

Benchmark		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Number of benchmarks achieved	Parental leave of 1 year at 50% of salary	A national plan with priority for disadvantaged children	Subsidized and regulated child care services for 25% of children under 3	Subsidized and accredited early education services for 80% of 4 year-olds	80% of all child care staff trained	50% of staff in accredited early education services tertiary educated with relevant qualification	Minimum staff-to-children ratio of 1:15 in pre-school education	1.0% of GDP spent on early childhood services	Child poverty rate less than 10%	Near-universal outreach of essential child health services
Sweden	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Iceland	9		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Denmark	8	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Finland	8	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
France	8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Norway	8	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Belgium (Flanders)	6		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
Hungary	6		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
New Zealand	6		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Slovenia	6	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
Austria	5		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	
Netherlands	5		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
United Kingdom*	5		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Germany	4		✓		✓		✓	✓			
Italy	4		✓		✓	✓	✓				
Japan	4		✓		✓	✓					✓
Portugal	4		✓			✓	✓				
Republic of Korea	4		✓			✓	✓				✓
Mexico	3		✓			✓	✓				
Spain	3				✓	✓	✓				
Switzerland	3					✓		✓		✓	
United States	3			✓			✓	✓			
Australia	2			✓			✓				
Canada	1						✓				
Ireland	1						✓				
Total benchmarks met	126	6	19	13	15	17	20	12	6	10	8

\*Data for the United Kingdom refer to England only.

## Federal Role

Although childcare in Canada is primarily a provincial responsibility, the Federal Government plays an important role in the childcare system. For instance, the federal government provides direct childcare funding support to three specific population groups: First Nations, Metis and Inuit children and families; families serving in the Canadian military; and some newcomers to Canada enrolled in language programs. Different levels of support are provided for each population group. Some examples include providing resources for Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve program, emergency childcare for military families, and childcare for immigrant or newcomers enrolled in language classes. The Federal government furthermore provides maternity and parental benefits through Employment Insurance to eligible parents. These benefits enable eligible people to stay home with their newborn for up to 18 months, with a reduced rate. Additionally, the Federal government has allocated funds to implement the [Multilateral Early Learning and Childcare Framework](#) and the [Indigenous Early Learning and Childcare Framework](#). BC has a Bilateral agreement and received \$153 million in 2018, with the following priority areas of investment<sup>44</sup>:

1. Enhance the accessibility of childcare options by increasing the number of spaces;
2. Increase affordability of childcare, beginning with Infant/Toddler care;
3. Enhance the quality of licensed childcare programs by supporting the training and professional development of early childhood educators;
4. Enhance equity through targeted investment in underserved communities – Indigenous families, families with children with special needs, and young parents completing their secondary education – improving access to inclusive, affordable, and flexible childcare programs

## Provincial Role

In Canada, provinces and territories maintain primary responsibility for childcare oversight and management. In British Columbia, the system is complex and spans across three main ministries: The Ministry of Children and Family Development, The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. Table 2 outlines the different responsibilities across each Ministry.

<sup>44</sup> Government of Canada. (2018). Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Childcare Agreement Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/british-columbia.html#h2>

**Table 4 Provincial Ministry Responsibilities**

Ministry of Children and Family Services Responsibilities	Ministry of Health Responsibilities	Ministry of Education Responsibilities
2. Childcare policy including cooperating on the Early Learning Framework	6. Childcare legislation	1. Led the development of Early Learning Framework
7. Childcare programs and services funding	2. <a href="#">Licensing and Monitoring</a> (implemented by regional Health Authorities, follows the BC Childcare Licensing Regulation)	2. StrongStart BC
8. Fee subsidies		
9. Early Childhood Registry		
10. Capital funds		

After the 2017 provincial election, creating universal, affordable, quality childcare was established as a priority. Since the election, the government has completed/created the following:

1. Committed to reconciliation by providing funding for Aboriginal Head Start programs to include childcare;
2. Developed the [Childcare Fee Reduction initiative](#);
3. Created [The Affordable Childcare Benefit](#);
4. Committed to create 22,0000 new spaces by 2021;
5. Established [Universal Childcare Prototype Sites](#);
6. Distributed Capital funding via:
  - a. [Childcare BC New Spaces Fund](#);
  - b. UBCM Community Childcare Space Creation Program;
7. Announced wage increases for Early Childhood Educators.

The Province plays an important role in advancing accessible, affordable, quality childcare programs and the current government has demonstrated a desire to enhance the existing system in British Columbia through a multitude of new initiatives. Ultimately, however, childcare services are provided at a local, community level and municipalities hold immense responsibility in fostering a system that provides affordable, accessible, and quality childcare.

### **What does the research tell us about the role of local governments in the delivery of a high quality childcare system?**

The local government plays an important role in the delivery of high-quality childcare systems. Planning, managing, designing, and implementing programs are common roles and responsibilities of the local government<sup>45</sup>. Similarly, school districts collaborate with the local government to create policy documents and strategic plans in order to implement change at the district level.<sup>46</sup> Local community members are encouraged to voice their opinions and concerns in regards to the services offered within

<sup>45</sup> (Friendly, Doherty, & Beach, 2005).

<sup>46</sup> (Provincial Office for the Early Years. (N.D.). Early years in BC school districts: A scan of promising practices)

the community.<sup>47</sup> By collaborating with community partners, local governments are able to determine the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps present within the services and address change accordingly.<sup>48</sup>

Research suggests overtime, local governments roles within the childcare sector in Canada have diminished, allowing provincial governments to act as key decision makers.<sup>49</sup> Within Canada, most provinces, except Ontario, only allow local governments to participate in select decision making processes. For example, in British Columbia, municipalities can choose to invest in childcare, but there is no legislated municipal role. This poses challenges for the local government when trying to meet the demands of the local citizens.<sup>50</sup> Challenges such as, accessibility, affordability, and equality are barriers preventing local governments from providing high quality childcare services.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, evidence suggests that building strong intergovernmental relationships can help eliminate many of these challenges and help local governments provide more equitable, high-quality childcare services.<sup>52</sup>

Several [recommendations](#) have been made by the Province, for municipalities to help support the local childcare needs.<sup>53</sup> These include:

1. Having experienced staff members who are familiar with the processes and municipal requirements for childcare providers;
2. Updating bylaws in accordance with legislation to help eliminate confusion;
3. Creating land bylaws to increase new childcare spaces;
4. Work with school districts to promote joint use of space; and,
5. Assemble a cross-sectoral childcare planning team.

Evidence suggests, lowering municipal fees and increasing the numbers of not for -profit childcare facilities can help support local childcare demands. Other actions that municipalities can take include drafting childcare plans, creating a childcare planning body, streamlining processes, and offering employees childcare services.<sup>54</sup> By following these recommendations, municipalities can help create high quality, accessible, and affordable childcare services.

<sup>47</sup> (Friendly, Doherty, & Beach, 2005).

<sup>48</sup> (Friendly, Doherty, & Beach, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> (McNeil, C., & Cory, G. (2017). The future of childcare in London: Devolving funding for greater affordability, access and equality. *Institute for Public Policy Research*, 17-27).

<sup>50</sup> (Jenson, J., & Mahon, R. (2002). Bringing cities to the table: Childcare and intergovernmental relations. *Canadian Policy Research Network*, 26, 2-9).

<sup>51</sup> (McNeil, & Cory, 2017).

<sup>52</sup> (Jenson & Mahon, 2002)

<sup>53</sup>(Provincial Office for the Early Years. (N.D.). Municipalities: Top 13 actions to support local childcare needs.

<http://nanaimoearlyyears.org/resources/Research%20and%20Resources/municipalities%20top%2013%20actions%20for%20child%20care%20needs.pdf> )

<sup>54</sup> (Provincial Office for the Early Years, N.D)

## What are some examples of promising practices for local planning and service delivery?

In Canada, municipalities have implemented a variety of strategies to plan for and provide quality childcare. To date, no research has been completed on “best practices” of childcare in Canadian municipalities, but in this section, “promising practices” will be explored. To begin this section, promising practices across Canada will be explained followed by promising practices currently underway in British Columbia.

### Promising Practices in Canada

Insights about quality childcare can be acquired from municipalities around Canada. Although provincial legislation largely dictates the role of local municipalities, the Region of Waterloo and City of Toronto are two cases of municipalities that have taken initiative in creating a quality childcare system at the local level. For instance, the [Region of Waterloo’s Early Learning and Childcare Service Plan \(2016-2020\)](#) is a prime example of a quality focused childcare plan in action. Waterloo created their childcare plan around four pillars: availability, affordability, accessibility, and accountability.<sup>55</sup> Action items were then developed that centred around those four pillars. The action items prioritize inter-government relationship, reducing fees for families, supporting diverse needs, and building relationships with school boards to offer public childcare. In regards to public delivery of childcare, the City of Toronto is one of the highest providers of publicly operated centres.<sup>56</sup> Toronto was able to become a leader in public childcare by financing, “20% of the budget for fee subsidies, wage grants, families resource programs and resources for special needs children, and 50% of administration costs.”<sup>57</sup> The province subsequently pays the remainder of costs. The Region of Waterloo and City of Toronto are two municipalities that have leveraged provincial legislation to meet the needs of their respective communities regarding quality childcare.

Furthermore, across the country, municipal governments are hoping to foster environments that create quality childcare. In 2016, the Muttart Foundation in Alberta developed a report: [Engaging Alberta Municipal Level Governments in Support of Early Learning and Care](#) which served the purpose of building a conversation around promising practice for municipal governments. This report takes a comprehensive look at municipal practices in Alberta, Ontario, and Saskatchewan, and culminates in offering suggestions about Albertan municipal roles and responsibilities around regional management and planning, support for services and service delivery, and research and public awareness.<sup>58</sup> This report can be used by municipalities to understand the context of promising practices in municipalities nationally.

<sup>55</sup> (Region of Waterloo, 2016)

<sup>56</sup> (Public childcare profile: Toronto, Ontario, 2009)

<sup>57</sup> (Public childcare profile: Toronto, Ontario, p.1, 2009)

<sup>58</sup> (The Muttart Foundation. (2016). Engaging Alberta Municipal Level Governments in Support of Early Learning and Care).

When reviewing promising practices in Canada, it is vital to recognize that city planners play an important role in creating quality childcare. Holt (2018) has summarized some of promising practices surrounding planning policies and their effect on childcare development. Although the report is geared towards Winnipeg, Holt (2018) effectively explores the impact of policies, financing, zoning and regulatory requirements and partnerships have on the childcare system at the municipal level and stated the following as trends in promising practices<sup>59</sup>:

1. Municipalities recognized that access to early learning childcare services contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of communities; it helps to support families, healthy child development and future economic growth and prosperity;
2. Municipalities provided financial incentives to support childcare services;
3. Municipalities took steps to encourage ELCC spaces through land use and zoning regulations; and,
4. Collaborations and partnerships played a vital role in creating quality childcare.

### Promising Practices in British Columbia

Many municipalities in British Columbia have undertaken important steps towards building quality childcare. In Metro Vancouver, in order to better understand landscape of municipal childcare policies and regulations, the [Municipal Survey of Childcare Spaces and Policies in Metro Vancouver](#)<sup>60</sup> was conducted. Key findings from this report were as follows<sup>61</sup>:

- 8 Metro Vancouver municipalities have a stand-alone childcare strategy;
- 11 municipalities identify childcare facilities as a community amenity in the development approvals process;
- 15 municipalities support childcare through the provision of municipal building space (rent-free, reduced lease, or market lease); the space may be made available on a single property or on multiple sites;
- 6 municipalities offer grants for childcare capital projects; 4 municipalities offer grants for childcare operating costs; and
- 15 municipalities provide space for childcare in municipal facilities; and
- 8 municipalities offer property tax exemption.

Three examples of municipalities with childcare strategies include the [City of New Westminister](#), [City of Richmond](#), and [City of Vancouver](#). These strategies can be used to review promising practices at the local level and help inform future childcare plans. The most recent plan was developed by the City of Richmond and within this plan is a municipal promising practices review focused on the City of Vancouver and City of New Westminister. This review examines strategies these municipalities have used to create spaces, inform planning and policy developments, and build partnerships. In order to inform

<sup>59</sup> (Holt, C. (2018). Planning for childcare: The impact of planning policies and strategies on the development of early learning and childcare spaces in winnipeg, manitoba.

<sup>60</sup> (Metro Vancouver. (2019). 2019 survey of licensed childcare spaces and policies in Metro Vancouver.)

<sup>61</sup> (City of Richmond. (2016). 2017-2022: Richmond childcare needs assessment and strategy.)

planning and policy developments, prior to action plans being created, conducting a needs assessment within the municipality is a key promising practice which was undertaken both by New Westminster and Richmond. When needs assessments are conducted, municipalities are able to have a better understanding of existing gaps and strengths.<sup>62</sup> In regards to space creation, both the City of Vancouver and New Westminster have provided funding through grants which enable not for -profit centres to expand, renovate, or repair facilities and Richmond proposed to follow suite in their action plan. This funding, in turn, provides families with more access to quality, accessible, and affordable childcare.

The final promising practice discussed in the Richmond childcare strategy was to focus on building partnerships and collaborate across sectors (Ex., school districts, local organizations, provincial government). Arguably, building partnerships is the way, “municipalities can make the most of their resources to address childcare issues.”<sup>63</sup> Notably, the City of Vancouver and the City of Burnaby have made relationship building a priority. Vancouver established the Joint Childcare Council (JCC) in 2004 which brings together the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Parks Board the Vancouver Board of Education, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Vancouver Public Library, along with community agencies and business representatives in order to create quality childcare. As a result, the JCC has collaborated on the creation of over 1000 new childcare spaces including the creation of a number of childcare centres at schools.

Furthermore, the City of Burnaby developed a Childcare Facilities Memorandum and Agreement (MOA) in 2014 with School District 41 in order to, “build up to twelve childcare facilities in modular building on School District lands.”<sup>64</sup> This agreement is one of the first of its kind across the province and a pivotal relationship in establishing quality childcare. In addition, in October 2019, the Burnaby School District confirmed a partnership to increasing the number of before and after school childcare spaces, as outlined in their project definition report [Before and After School Childcare: Creating a Plan for Childcare Opportunities within the Burnaby School District](#)<sup>65</sup>.

Although each municipality across British Columbia has unique needs, there are many trends and promising practices which can be applied to any municipal childcare plan. By reviewing existing plans, municipalities are able to better understand the promising practices that will meet the childcare needs of their community, and strive towards creating a quality, affordable and accessible childcare system.

<sup>62</sup> (City of Richmond, 2016)

<sup>63</sup> (City of Richmond, p.23 2016)

<sup>64</sup> (City of Richmond, p.23 2016)

<sup>65</sup> (Burnaby School District 41. (2019). Project definition report: Before and after school childcare: Creating a plan for childcare opportunities within the Burnaby school district.)

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