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# ROADMAP FOR \$10aDAY CHILD CARE IN BC



We put this Roadmap forward in full support of the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples to design, develop, and deliver early care and learning services that meet their needs. We support the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and acknowledge that Indigenous communities have and may evolve their services in directions other than those outlined in this Roadmap, creating models to learn from and strive for. We commit to listen and learn in our ongoing work to decolonize our own practices and perspectives.

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## ROADMAP FOR \$10aDAY CHILD CARE IN BC

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Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and Early Childhood Educators of BC

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COALITION OF  
**child care  
advocates**  
OF BC

PO Box 43008 CASCADE  
Burnaby, BC, V5G 4S2  
t: 604.515.5439  
toll free: 1.866.965.8550  
e: [info@cccabc.bc.ca](mailto:info@cccabc.bc.ca)  
[cccabc.bc.ca](http://cccabc.bc.ca)



**ECEBC** | early childhood  
educators of BC

309 – 515 West Pender  
Vancouver, BC, V6B 1V5  
t: 604.709.6063  
toll free: 1.800.797.5602  
e: [membership@ecebc.ca](mailto:membership@ecebc.ca)  
[ecebc.ca](http://ecebc.ca)





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# The Roadmap for \$10aDay Child Care in BC

**BC IS ON THE ROAD TO SIGNIFICANT CHILD CARE CHANGE.** If there was any lingering doubt, the pandemic has made clear to everyone that quality child care is essential for children, families, women, and communities and for achieving social and economic equity. In the 2020 provincial election the three major political parties each made significant child care commitments. It was the NDP, now BC's majority governing party, whose commitments most closely aligned with the \$10aDay Child Care Plan. And, the federal government has made a renewed commitment to develop a Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

**With this unprecedented level of support in place, BC must move boldly and decisively to deliver \$10aDay Child Care to BC children and families. The public supports and demands no less.**

We put this Roadmap forward in full support of the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples to design, develop, and deliver early care and learning services that meet their needs. We support the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and acknowledge that Indigenous communities have and may evolve their services in directions other than those outlined in this Roadmap, creating models to learn from and strive for. We commit to listen and learn in our ongoing work to decolonize our own practices and perspectives.

We continue to call on Canada and BC to honour their obligations to consult with Indigenous Peoples as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework. Any changes to the delivery of Indigenous early childhood education must respect the obligations stated in Bill 41-2019: *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* — and be undertaken with Indigenous leadership and governing bodies.<sup>1</sup> And, governments must ensure that Indigenous Peoples have the resources required to develop and deliver early care and learning services.

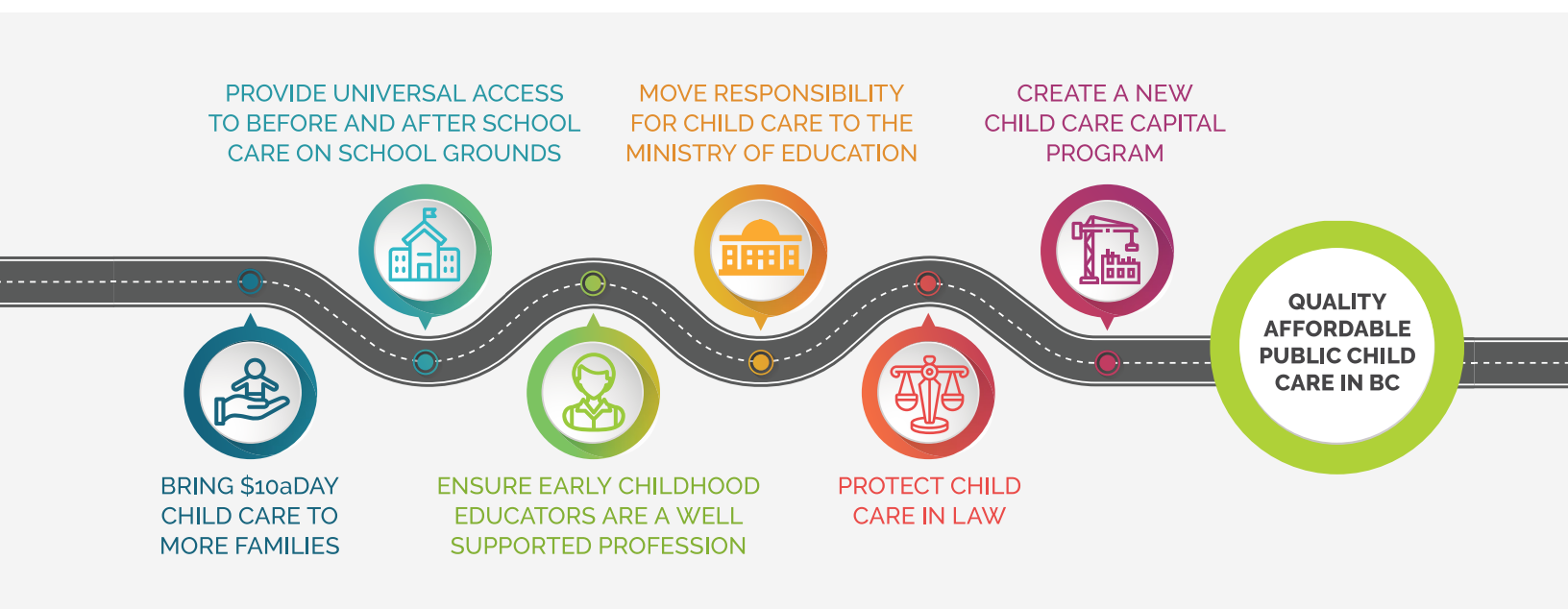
This Roadmap offers a service delivery framework aligned with the \$10aDay Child Care Plan. It provides a level of policy detail required to create a universally accessible, quality system for families who choose child care for their infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children — a public system in which early childhood educators are respected professionals and child care comes to the table as a strong and equal partner with the K-12 education system.

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<sup>1</sup> See ECEBC's *Position Paper for: Integrating the Early Childhood Education Professional and Programs into the Ministry of Education*, November 13, 2020.

The Roadmap also aligns with **six key child care planks** in the NDP 2020 election platform:<sup>2</sup>

- Bring \$10-a-day child care to more families;
- Work toward universal access to before and after school care on school grounds;
- Ensure early childhood educators are a well-supported profession;
- Move responsibility for child care to the Ministry of Education;
- Protect child care in law; and
- Develop a new child care capital program.



The Roadmap is based on evidence and lived expertise as well as lessons learned over the last few years as BC began to address its child care chaos. It acknowledges that the province has made measurable progress on lowering parent fees, raising ECE wages, and creating new spaces, and outlines how to protect and build on these achievements. However, to date government has maintained the failed, market-based approach to child care. Initiatives have relied on individual organizations to develop new spaces and apply for a range of siloed public funding programs.

This approach incentivized significant growth in the for-profit child care sector. Access to public capital grant programs enabled the use of public funds for the acquisition of private real estate assets. And, access to other operating funds with little accountability, coupled with high parent demand, made publicly funded child care appear to be a profit-making enterprise.

This unfortunate trend flies in the face of research and evidence. **In jurisdictions with effective systems, child care is publicly managed and a significant percentage of services are publicly delivered.** Non-profit services can be important partners in effective systems but there are no examples of effective child care systems that rely significantly on for-profit ownership and delivery of child care.

<sup>2</sup> BC NDP 2020 election platform, *Working For You: John Horgan's Commitments to BC*.



The approach taken over the last few years was fragmented, lacking a coherent system-building vision. As a result, opportunities for planned growth, consistency, and accountability were lost. New spaces were funded without a parallel strategy to ensure BC had sufficient qualified early childhood educators. Until recently, new programs received public operating funds regardless of the fees they charged. And, equitable access for families to programs receiving public funds was not guaranteed.

**This Roadmap rejects fragmented, one-off, market-based initiatives and replaces them with system-building strategies that ensure public funds serve the public good and build public assets.**

Consistent with the \$10aDay Plan, it charts two parallel paths for creating BC's child care system. The first path builds on existing strengths by welcoming in current providers who want to participate in the new system. While respecting their diversity, the Roadmap outlines policies, funding, professionalization, and related accountability measures to support their transition into a publicly managed \$10aDay system.

The second path outlines the process for creating new \$10aDay programs that are, as much as possible, publicly delivered. Given that there are currently licensed spaces for only 20 per cent of BC children, this ensures that, over time, a significant majority of child care facilities will be publicly owned, managed and/or delivered — all key elements of effective child care systems.

Finally, the Roadmap outlines how to integrate both current and new child care services into the Ministry of Education at community, school district, and provincial levels. In short — the Roadmap moves BC to a public \$10aDay system.

**As we say in the \$10aDay Plan, the change we seek will take generosity of spirit and community engagement, adjusting as we go. We are confident that this Roadmap provides a strong place from which to build.**



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# Bring \$10aDay Child Care to More Families



**THE PROMISE TO BRING \$10ADAY CHILD CARE TO MORE FAMILIES** was one of government's first and most significant election commitments. A poll conducted in 2019 found that 76 per cent of British Columbians believed that government should move more quickly to deliver on this promise.

Based on the vision in the \$10aDay Plan, this approach balances welcoming existing services into \$10aDay child care while growing new services in a systemic and accountable way. We recommend that government expand access to \$10aDay child care by:

- Opening all new facilities developed with public capital funds as \$10aDay sites — this includes modular sites and new facilities under public or non-profit ownership;
- Prioritizing the transition of existing programs located in publicly or non-profit owned facilities into \$10aDay sites;
- Resolving facility ownership challenges with programs located in privately owned facilities; and
- Implement the four common building blocks (see page 29).

**A poll conducted in May 2019 poll found that 76 per cent of British Columbians believe that government should move more quickly to deliver on its promise.**

This focus on the ownership of the facility in which a child care program is located is key to ensuring that:

- Public funds are used to develop and sustain public assets;
- Child care spaces created through public funds are secured for child care over the long term; and
- Taxpayers do not assume the mortgage/lease costs or other liabilities and risks<sup>3</sup> associated with privately owned facilities.

To support this approach based on ownership of the facility, government should immediately undertake the long-recommended inventory of existing child care programs to determine the current ownership status and related financial and operational information (see Section 6).

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<sup>3</sup> Some examples of 'risks' include an operator going out of business; a facility treated as a real estate investment and sold when market forces make that opportune; a facility used as collateral for other business/ personal purposes, etc.



To ensure integrated and accountable expansion of \$10aDay child care, there are also **four policies and approaches** specific to each of the categories of facility ownership.

### 1. Open all new programs receiving capital funds as \$10aDay sites

To encourage the significant growth of publicly delivered child care — a key element of effective systems — wherever possible:

- New programs in or on school grounds should be **operated directly by local school districts**. Where this is not possible, these new programs should be operated by an experienced community-based non-profit society selected through a transparent process.
- New programs located in **public facilities/lands other than schools** should be operated directly by the local school district or another public entity. Where this is not possible, these new programs should be operated by an experienced community-based non-profit society selected through a transparent process.
- New programs located in facilities **owned by non-profit organizations** should be delivered through partnership agreements between school districts and existing non-profit organizations with the capacity to develop and deliver child care programs.





## 2. Transition existing programs in public facilities to \$10aDay sites

All profit-generating rental costs charged by public entities to on-site child care programs in public facilities should be eliminated and replaced with a consistent approach to covering direct facility operating costs in the provincial funding formula. This builds on current legislation governing facility-related costs for child care programs in schools.<sup>4</sup>

Some existing operators in public facilities may choose to transfer their license(s) to the school district. This option may be most helpful for small, stand alone organizations with limited administrative capacities.

## 3. Transition existing programs in non-profit owned facilities to \$10aDay sites

As in public facilities, the provincial funding formula would cover the direct costs associated with operating the child care facility, eliminating excess rent or lease costs.

The recommended inventory (see Section 6) of existing child care programs will identify programs located in facilities owned by non-profit societies without significant mortgages or leases. We anticipate this will be the case for most programs in this category. On the condition that the space remains available for child care over the long term, these programs would move to \$10aDay sites on comparable terms as those in public facilities.

The inventory will also identify any child care programs located in facilities owned by non-profit societies with outstanding mortgage or leasing costs. Government should enter into negotiations with the non-profit owners of these facilities to address ongoing facility related costs and tenure. Options could include:

- Government assumes the mortgage, bringing the facility into public ownership;
- Government covers a portion of the mortgage/interest directly associated with child care expansion; and
- Government assumes temporary responsibility for the lease until a publicly owned facility is available or the lease expires.

## 4. Resolve challenges in privately owned facilities

Taxpayers should not be expected to pay off debts or assume the risks associated with the acquisition of privately owned assets or to fund programs without an assurance that the facility will be available for child care over the long term. To provide these assurances, government needs to resolve the challenges posed by and for child care programs located in privately owned facilities.

**Privately owned facilities without mortgages/leases:** On the condition that the space remains in child care use over the long term, these programs could move to \$10aDay sites on comparable terms as those in public/non-profit facilities.

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4 BC Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2020.

**Privately owned facilities with outstanding mortgages or leases:** Government will need to enter into negotiations with facility owners to resolve how they may become eligible to operate as \$10aDay sites. Options for consideration include:

- The program agrees to operate as a \$10aDay site at the same level of public funding received by programs in public facilities, with the same accountability requirements, relying on separate private funds to cover any debt or liabilities associated with their facilities;
- Government assumes the mortgage, bringing the facility into public ownership; and
- Government assumes temporary responsibility for the lease until a publicly owned facility is available or the lease expires.

Four building blocks (see page 29) are required to integrate all \$10aDay child care in new and existing programs:

- An equitable funding formula;
- Common operating policies and procedures;
- Community/neighbourhood child care networks; and
- Partnership agreements between school districts and transitioned child care providers.

**TARGET:** Government is now entering Year 4 of its 10-year commitment to bring universal access to \$10aDay child care for all families who chose it. To achieve this goal by 2028, government must set annual targets for expanding access to \$10aDay in both new and existing programs with a priority on infant/toddler and school-age care.<sup>5</sup>

**TRANSITION:** Until programs are able to transition to \$10aDay sites, government should continue to provide CCOF/CCFRI and wage enhancement funds to programs currently receiving them with a COLA cap on all future fee increases in these programs. Families using these services would also continue to receive the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB).

Existing programs that choose not to transition to \$10aDay sites could continue to receive current CCOF/CCFRI and wage enhancements, with a COLA cap on all future fee increases. Families using these services would continue to be eligible for ACCB (or other family-income based subsidy measures).

The success of government's commitment to build the \$10aDay system depends on a multi-year capital budget and plan for building publicly owned facilities (see Section 6). Operators that choose to open new programs in facilities that are not publicly owned or owned by non-profit societies (without significant mortgage/leasing costs), will not be guaranteed access to existing operating funding. A cut-off date of April 1, 2022 provides government sufficient time to ensure this is well and widely understood.

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<sup>5</sup> Annual targets should be based on UBCM community child care plans and modelling such as those in *Socio-Economic Impact Analysis of the \$10aDay Child Care Plan for British Columbia*.





# Provide Universal Access to Before and After School Care on School Grounds

**THE PROMISE TO WORK TOWARDS UNIVERSAL ACCESS** to school-age care on school grounds is an urgent and doable first step on the road to universal access for all children under 12 whose families choose it. It has multiple benefits and allows school districts to begin delivering child care for an age group they already know and serve.

Children will have consistent relationships with the same people and places. As promised during the election, parents will “know their children are safe at one place for the full work day.” Educators delivering school-age care will deepen their relationship with teachers as they implement the Early Learning Framework; and communities will make effective use of public facilities that are unused for much of the day/year.

As outlined in the building blocks section (see page 29), the approach to providing universal access to school-aged care should be consistent with the approach used to extend \$10aDay child care for younger children.

### To effectively deliver on this school-age care promise, government must:

- Establish a legislated mandate for school districts to develop and deliver on site school-age care;
- Move away from ‘landlord/tenant’ relationships between schools and existing on-site school-age care providers to partnership agreements that support the integration of school-age care into the broader education community
- Establish and provide access to appropriate educational qualifications and wage rates for those working in school-age care;
- Implement the four common building blocks (see page 29).

We propose a **four-pronged approach** to providing universal access to school age care on school grounds:

1. Use existing kindergarten/primary classrooms for expanding before and after school care;
2. Integrate existing on-site school aged programs into the \$10aDay system;
3. Open new publicly delivered school aged programs on school grounds; and
4. Engage with existing off-site school age providers to support their integration into the broader learning community.

## 1. Use existing kindergarten/primary classrooms for before and after school care

The most effective way to quickly extend access to school-aged care is to license existing kindergarten and other appropriate classrooms for child care with resulting new programs operated directly by the school district. This will require:

- A province-wide expedited **licensing protocol**, developed with the Ministry of Health, that respects existing group size, staff ratio and other quality provisions, and enables the use of spaces that are safe for children from 9 to 3 to be deemed safe for their use before and after regular school hours.
- **Respectful dialogue** with teachers and the BCTF to ensure that collaborative use of classroom space builds on examples of success where shared space is working well.
- **Minor capital funds** for appropriate equipment and modifications to the space, to address the unique needs of quality school-age child care programs.

Once classrooms are licensed, school districts can deliver two models of school-age care:

- **Extended Day:** This model provides before and after school early learning and care programs in existing kindergarten/primary classrooms. For the most part, staff providing these programs would be employees of the school district although an on-site school age child care provider could increase capacity to deliver and staff an extended day program.





- **Seamless Day:** This model, initiated in School District 53 and now in use in other districts, provides before and after school early learning and care in kindergarten/primary classrooms. Two early childhood educators, employed by the school district, partner with the teacher. One ECE begins the day's program for children whose families require services before traditional school hours. This ECE remains with the class for morning. The second ECE joins the class for the afternoon and continues the early learning and care program for children whose families require longer hours of service.

In some districts, the extended day model may be an easier place to start. The decision about which model to begin with should take into consideration: the readiness of the school district to deliver child care; the relationships between ECE professionals and teachers; the potential impact on the ECE workforce, the age of the children, and the status of existing school-age programs in the district. However, the seamless day supports an integrated implementation of BC's Early Learning Framework and strengthens professional partnerships between ECEs and teachers. As such, it should be the province-wide goal.

## 2. Integrate existing on-site school aged programs into the \$10aDay system

By definition, all existing school-age child care programs located in public schools or on public school grounds already operate in publicly owned facilities.

These programs should be integrated **in the same way outlined above for transitioning all child care programs in publicly owned facilities** into \$10aDay sites including:

- A consistent funding formula based on a maximum fee of \$7 per day for part-time care and \$10 per day for full-time care provided during school vacations and/or PD days — the formula covers comparable costs for school-age care as it does for children before they enter kindergarten;
- Consistent policies and procedures appropriate to school-age care; and
- School-aged care participation in community/neighbourhood child care networks.

Where appropriate, existing operators could choose to transfer their license to the school district. This will lead to a more cohesive system of on-site school aged care. Where this is not appropriate, school districts should enter into partnership agreements (see page 29) with existing providers.

## 3. Open new publicly delivered school aged programs on school grounds as \$10aDay sites

To deliver universal access government will need to increase the capacity for participation in school-aged care. This includes the following actions:

- Invest capital funds to build child care facilities into new public schools, and renovate existing school space for child care and purchase custom-designed modular units to place on public school grounds; and
- Open all new programs as \$10aDay sites (\$7 per day for part-time care) under the same conditions outlined above for new programs for children before they enter kindergarten.

#### 4. Engage with existing community-based school age providers to support their integration into the broader learning community

New developments should focus on unmet needs without eroding current programs. Existing school-aged care providers not located in or on school grounds must also be supported as the new system evolves. Current programs should be integrated into the new \$10aDay system under the same opportunities and conditions outlined in Section 1. Care must be taken to ensure that:

- Existing providers are engaged in the community planning process;
- Priority is given to expanding care on school grounds in under-served communities;
- Existing programs have access to the same level of funding required to lower fees and raise wages; and
- Existing programs are included in networking and professional development opportunities.

Four building blocks (see page 29) are also required to integrate new and existing school-age programs:

- An equitable funding formula;
- Common operating policies and procedures;
- Community/neighbourhood child care networks; and
- Partnership agreements between school districts and transitioned child care providers.

**TARGET:** Government is now entering Year 4 of its 10 year commitment to bring universal access to all families who chose it. To achieve universal access to school age care on school ground by 2028, government must set annual targets for expanding access to new and existing school-age programs.<sup>6</sup>

**TRANSITION:** Until school aged programs are able to transition into \$10aDay sites, government should continue to provide operating funding to those currently receiving it with a COLA cap on all future fee increases in these programs. Families using these services will remain eligible for ACCB. Existing programs that choose not to transition to \$10aDay sites could continue to receive current operating funding. Families using these services would continue to be eligible for ACCB (or other family-income based subsidy measures).

The success of government's commitment to build the \$10aDay system depends on a multi-year capital budget and plan for building publicly owned facilities (see Section 6). Operators that choose to open new programs in facilities that are not publicly owned or owned by non-profit societies (without significant mortgage/leasing costs) will not be guaranteed access to existing operating funding. A cut-off date of April 1, 2022 provides government sufficient time to ensure that this is well and widely understood.

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<sup>6</sup> Annual targets should be based on UBCM community child care plans and modelling such as those in *Socio-Economic Impact Analysis of the \$10aDay Child Care Plan for British Columbia*.



## SECTION 3

# Ensure Early Childhood Educators Are a Well Supported Profession



**THE PROMISE TO “MAKE SURE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS** are a well-supported profession, just like teachers and other professionals who work in BC’s education system” is essential to achieving a high quality, child care system. BC will require an additional 12,000 early childhood educators (ECEs) to achieve government’s commitment to universal child care. Fair compensation is a critical element of a comprehensive approach to recruit and retain well qualified early childhood education (ECE) professionals. And, it will take bold action and accountability to the sector — well beyond ‘training’ — to provide professional education/credentials, competitive compensation, ongoing professional development, support, recognition, and respect.

Just as the Health Career Access Program was developed and funded to meet challenges in long-term care/assisted living, a systemic strategy to support the ECE profession must be a cross government

**While the growth in child care spaces across BC has been a priority, the lack of a parallel strategy to ensure adequate qualified staff undermines the expansion.**

priority. “Education of early childhood educators should strive to prepare educators through many different disciplines to be intellectually curious and deeply engaged with the responsibilities of living in a settler colonial society in times of truth and reconciliation, ecological breakdown, mass species extinction, global migration and other challenges.”<sup>7</sup>

The interrelated factors underlying BC’s ECE recruitment and retention crisis are well documented and include low wages, limited access to post-secondary education, professional isolation, and widespread devaluing of the work of ‘caring.’ “Evidence shows that educators with higher pay and higher qualifications are more likely to interact with children in a stimulating and sensitive way, and that poor compensation can lead to high staff turnover, making it more difficult for staff and children to develop nurturing relationships.”<sup>8</sup> While government made measurable progress on increasing wages from 2018 to 2020, the crisis in ECE recruitment and retention continues. The current pandemic exacerbates the problem. While ECEs continue to put their ethical responsibility for the health and safety of children and families first — the sector has experienced reduced enrolment in child care programs leading to lay-offs, health and safety

7 Early Childhood Pedagogies Collaboratory, *Conditions for Moving Beyond “Quality” in Canadian Early Childhood Education*.

8 Lynell Anderson, Michelle Sing, and Rebecca Haber, *Next Step: A Competitive, Publicly Funded Provincial Wage Grid is the Solution to BC’s ECE Shortage*, June 2020, CCCABC and ECEBC.

concerns, higher wages/benefits available outside of the child care sector and burnout. And, while the growth in child care spaces across BC has been a priority, the lack of a parallel strategy to ensure adequate qualified staff undermines the expansion.

As outlined in the later section on protecting child care in law, government must enact a new Early Childhood Educator's Act to respect, recognize, and govern the profession of early childhood education and integrate ECEs into the broader learning environment as strong and equal partners.

Investment in early childhood education professionals must also be a key element of government's **over-all pandemic recovery strategy**. This strategy must address the long-standing low regard for and devaluing of the work of 'caring' done by ECEs and others. As women have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, a significant investment in the predominantly female ECE sector will provide economic stability for existing ECEs, an attractive career opportunity for future ECEs and an essential support to mothers returning to the labour force. Supportive and proactive policies will be required to ensure access to post-secondary education. Finally, "Investing in the caring professions would greatly contribute to a just transition in Canada. It would provide more good, green jobs with minimal emissions and greater attention to societal wellbeing..."<sup>9</sup>

We propose a **four-pronged approach** to make early childhood educators a supported profession.

## 1. Implement a publicly funded, province-wide, competitive and equitable wage grid

As part of an overall compensation strategy to improve wages, benefits and working conditions, immediately implement and fund a provincial, competitive, and equitable wage grid as proposed in *Next Step: A Competitive, Publicly Funded Provincial Wage Grid is the Solution to BC's ECE Shortage*. Adopt this report's underlying policies and process for implementation and the recommendation that qualified ECEs earn a minimum of \$26/hour (one-year college certificate) and \$29/hour (two-year college diploma).

## 2. Raise educational standards for early childhood educators

To achieve this goal, timelines and supports are required to move to the following educational standards:

- A Bachelor of Early Childhood Education as the new educational standard for the profession;
- A diploma (two years) as the minimum credential for those entering the field including those working in school-age and family child care;<sup>10</sup> and
- A new educational standard/qualification for those currently working in school-aged care.

(For recommended timelines and targets see *ECEBC's Position Paper for: Integrating the Early Childhood Education Professional and Programs into the Ministry of Education*, November 13, 2020, [ecebc.ca/application/files/5516/0582/5020/ECEBC\\_Position\\_Paper-\\_Ministry\\_Transition\\_final-.pdf](https://ecebc.ca/application/files/5516/0582/5020/ECEBC_Position_Paper-_Ministry_Transition_final-.pdf))

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<sup>9</sup> Karel Hermans, *Caring Jobs are Green Jobs*, July 10, 2020, Citizens for Public Justice.

<sup>10</sup> Mature providers who may not want to upgrade to new standards will be able to remain in current positions with current qualifications.



### 3. Increase access to public post-secondary education

To support the ECE workforce and ensure existing and new child care programs can recruit qualified professionals, bold action is required to ensure access to post-secondary education. These steps include:

- Rapid approval of and funding support for new early childhood education programs in public post-secondary institutions including diploma programs that ladder into Bachelor programs;
- Rapid expansion of and funding support for on-line, part time and distance education offerings; and
- Free tuition and/or student-debt relief for students completing ECE programs.

### 4. Implement a transitional strategy to move forward

Grounded in new legislation and the ECEBC Code of Ethics, a focused, funded initiative, similar in scale and scope to BC's Health Career Access Program, is required to support a transition from the current situation to a fully qualified, professional sector. This strategy must include and support:

- Pathways for those already working in the sector that recognize prior education and on-the-job experience to upgrade credentials and engage in active, ongoing professional development;
- ECE assistants currently working in the sector becoming credentialed through a public post-secondary institution within the existing five-year time frame;



- Strong public messaging about the value of ECEs to attract candidates;
- Strategies to welcome back qualified ECEs who have left the sector;
- Active community-based pedagogical networks and other professional development activities;
- Active dialogue between ECEs and primary teachers to build a strong and equal partnership; and
- Ongoing evaluation and modification of these strategies.

While not all elements of the approach used in the Health Career Access program may apply, key components of ECE strategy should include:

- A clear target for the number of qualified ECEs to be added to the system;
- A centralized access point to the pathways and opportunities;
- Competitive salaries and benefits (as detailed in the wage grid report)<sup>11</sup> that encourage those working in the sector to upgrade/complete their qualifications;
- Post-secondary courses offered at no cost to students;
- Opportunity to be paid and/or work while upgrading;
- A funding formula for \$10aDay sites that includes funds and accountability for professional development opportunities including pedagogical networks, communities of practice, and other mentoring initiatives;
- Rigorous accountability to ensure that funds intended to raise wages and benefits and improve working conditions are used for those purposes; and
- Better data collection about retention.

The strategy should also examine the effectiveness of internships and other on-the-job approaches for those already working in the field from other jurisdictions.<sup>12</sup>

**TARGETS:** The overall target of 12,000 additional ECEs required by the time a new system is fully implemented needs to be broken down into annual targets that align with the growth in licensed child care spaces.

**TRANSITION:** As detailed above, a transitional strategy that moves the sector from the current situation to a fully qualified, professional sector is required. To ensure that ECEs are integrated into the broader learning community as strong and equal partners, this comprehensive strategy must begin immediately.

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<sup>11</sup> Lynell Anderson, Michelle Sing, and Rebecca Haber, *Next Step: A Competitive, Publicly Funded Provincial Wage Grid is the Solution to BC's ECE Shortage*, June 2020, CCCABC and ECEBC.

<sup>12</sup> New Zealand and Manitoba approaches merit further exploration.

## SECTION 4

# Move Responsibility for Child Care to the Ministry of Education



**THE 2020 ELECTION PROMISE TO MOVE CHILD CARE TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION** (MOE) from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) provided real hope that government is committed to system building. Given the history of colonization and the multi-generational impacts of the residential schools, change must begin with the recognition that First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have the right to determine the governance and delivery of their own, respective child care services.

Over the last three years it has become clear that, despite the efforts of dedicated individuals, MCFD does not have the tools required to build a universal, public system. The ongoing use of one-off, market-based approaches and business incentives led to further fragmentation of the child care sector. However,

**BC's public education system has the infrastructure, experience, and capacity required to build a public system of child care including: a legislated, universal right to participate; public funding for and democratic control of the system; a respected, highly educated workforce; and a high level of public understanding of, and experience with, the system.**

the decision to delay the move to the Ministry of Education makes system building more difficult and poses real challenges for integrating child care with the broader learning environment.

While we call for the change in ministerial responsibility, we will continue to evaluate government's child care initiatives by measuring progress toward full integration of and respect for child care and early childhood educators as strong and equal partners in the K–12 system. Initiating legislation to support this integration (see Section 5) must begin immediately.

BC's public education system has the infrastructure, experience, and capacity required to build a public system of child care including: a legislated, universal right to participate; public funding for and democratic control of the system; a respected, highly educated workforce; and a high level of public understanding of, and experience with, the system. By implementing a strong transition plan, as outlined below, these foundational elements enable the Ministry of Education to "oversee delivery of all child care initiatives and funding, manage a capital investment program to build more new spaces, and ensure quality care through ongoing curriculum enhancements" as clearly outlined in the 2020 NDP election platform.

National and international research confirms that effective systems integrate child care and education as strong and equal partners. Government must ensure that the move to education honours and respects the rights of young children and the professionals who work with them, and is supported by dedicated early childhood pedagogical and public policy expertise with adequate public funding.



Given the history of colonization and the multi-generational impacts of the residential schools, change must begin with the recognition that First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have the right to determine the governance and delivery of their own, respective child care services.

The role of the Ministry of Education and school districts in developing and delivering child care and respecting the profession of early childhood educators and the Code of Ethics that guides their practice must be mandated in legislation (see Section 5) that aligns with BC's Early Learning Framework and is actively supported at provincial and local levels.

A **two-pronged strategy** is required to initiate and support the move to MOE:

1. A strong transition plan to support integration into the Ministry of Education; and
2. Immediate action to address existing concerns while transition is underway.

### **1. Transition plan for integrating child care into the Ministry of Education**

Transitioning child care to the Ministry of Education requires a thoughtful, engaged process based on an understanding that the move to the Ministry of Education will require growth and change for child care and the K–12 system. This suggests the need for a process comparable to the introduction of BC's new K–12 curriculum with multi-year implementation, flexibility, professional development and the opportunity to learn as we go. The process needs to be accountable to early childhood educators as it supports the readiness of Boards of Education, teachers, administrators and communities to take on their new responsibilities in respectful ways.

The \$10aDay Plan and ECEBC's recent Position Paper provide specific strategies to guide a successful integration of child care, as a strong and equal partner, within the Ministry of Education.

Some of the initial key steps include:

- Enact legislation that enshrines the right of access to child care in law; mandates school districts as the local democratic governing body of all licensed child care in their district; and recognizes, supports and respects the profession of early childhood education. The process of developing this legislation should begin immediately. The legislation should be based on the fundamental principles of a universal, public system and aligned with BC's Early Learning Framework (see Section 5).
- Move the Minister of State for Child Care, staffing in MCFD's Child Care Programs and Services Branch, and annual child care operating budgets into the Ministry of Education's Early Learning Division.
- Initiate and support a dialogue between early childhood educators and primary teachers about the strengths that each profession brings to implementing BC's Early Learning Framework and begin developing

protocols by which these two professional groups will work together as strong and equal partners in integrated programs.

- Engage with the child care sector to plan for the integration of existing child care programs into the broader learning community.
- Develop child care expertise at the school district level along with local child care councils,<sup>13</sup> a dedicated trustee, professional development for administrators, teachers, and all other staff, and community awareness campaigns.
- Create a new, major capital budget for child care within the Ministry of Education, separate from the child care operating budget and from the capital budget for K–12.
- Support each district to develop multi-year plans for child care expansion based on needs assessments and recent child care planning undertaken by municipalities in conjunction with Union of BC Municipalities.
- Create a 'provincial transition team' with early childhood expertise to support school districts to take on new child care responsibilities including their role in the proposed partnership agreements.
- In consultation with the child care sector and learning from other jurisdictions, develop a coordinated wait list system ensuring equitable access for all.

## 2. Immediate actions

Government can and should proceed immediately on two linked initiatives:

### A. Create a major child care capital budget in the Ministry of Education, separate from the child care operating budget and from the capital budget for K–12

MCFD's lack of a capital budget, without infrastructure planning and development capacity, presents the biggest obstacle to system building. The current approach relies on organizations to independently create new spaces with tax payer funded grants partially covering some costs. This reactive, one-off application-based approach does not ensure that new spaces meet priority community needs and is a costly and ineffective use of public funds. Just as the evidence from long-term seniors' care has revealed during the current pandemic — there are tragic dangers to incentivising for-profit provision of caring services.

If this approach to investing public funds into the for-profit sector continues, the transition to the Ministry of Education and the creation of a universally accessible, affordable public system will be far more difficult to achieve.

Government must immediately end the practice of providing capital funds for privately owned facilities. A new child care major capital budget in the Ministry of Education will be used to plan and develop high quality programs in publicly owned facilities and, where opportunities exist, in facilities owned by non-profits organizations — all of which should open as \$10aDay sites.

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<sup>13</sup> District child care councils would bring together public partners, the child care sector and community representatives to develop and implement district wide child care plans.

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## B. Expand publicly delivered school age child care on school grounds

As noted in Section 2, this is a system-building step with multiple benefits for children, families, educators, and communities. It enables government to expand child care in public facilities while developing a long-term capital budget and plan for other types of care. Most importantly, it will chart the course for school district's increasing responsibility for the full range of child care programs.

As outlined in Section 2, expansion can begin by using existing classrooms already designed and safe for young learners. To be effective, it is critical that:

- Existing on-site school-age care programs operated by third parties (non-profit and for-profit providers) move from current 'landlord/tenant' relationships — typically annual rental contracts — to a system based on partnership agreements between school districts and on-site child care providers (see the building blocks section on page 29).
- Wherever possible, all new school age child care programs located in or on school grounds should be delivered directly by school districts and protected by the new Early Care and Learning Act recommended in Section 5. The innovative Seamless Day Project in School District 53, expanding to other districts in 2021, provides an excellent example to emulate across BC.
- Where direct delivery by the school district isn't possible, school districts should establish a transparent process to develop a partnership agreement for new programs, as described above, with an existing local non-profit provider.
- Existing community-based school-age providers serving designated elementary schools are consulted and supported through the expansion process. This will sustain these programs and ensure that new expansion focuses on meeting the needs of under-served communities.

**TARGET:** The current projected transfer date of 2023 should be expedited with the goal of establishing a child care capital budget within the Ministry of Education and undertaking remaining transition steps during fiscal year 2021/22.

**TRANSITION:** The development and implementation of a transition plan must begin immediately. All action undertaken while child care remains in the Ministry of Children and Family Development must support the development of a child care system that can be integrated with the broader learning environment as a strong and equal partner. During the transition period, neither MCFD nor the Ministry of Education should take unilateral action on child care without consultation with and consent from the other ministry.



## SECTION 5



# Protect Child Care in Law

**GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO PROTECT PRINCIPLES** of affordable, accessible, and inclusive quality child care in legislation is a key building block of an effective child care system. As the NDP platform stated — just like the legislation enshrining universal access to health care — new child care legislation must move beyond aspirational goals to entrench fundamental principles to guide the development of BC's emerging child care system. **Legislation is the vehicle by which governments can and will be held accountable.**

Government must honour its duty to consult with Indigenous Peoples as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Indigenous Early Learning Child Care Framework. Any changes to the delivery of Indigenous early childhood education will respect the obligations stated in Bill 41–2019: *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and will be undertaken with Indigenous leadership and governing bodies.<sup>14</sup>

Legislation will help end the historic divide between the publicly managed and delivered, relatively well-funded, universal, public education system and poorly funded, fragmented, market-based child care programs. Legislation will also bring child care and the profession of early childhood education to the table as a strong and equal partner with public education and support an integrated implementation of BC's Ministry of Education's Early Learning Framework for children up to the age of eight.

Development of new legislation aligned with BC's Early Learning Framework and the principles of a public, universally accessible system is required to help prepare the Ministry of Education for its new child care responsibilities. It is therefore essential that the Ministry of Education play a leading role in developing the relevant new legislation. It is also essential that early childhood educators are actively consulted during the process to ensure that their professional, pedagogical, and ethical perspectives are reflected and respected.

We propose **two new pieces of legislation**. Both new Acts should focus on broad principles and build from existing child care sections in BC's *School Act*. This will enable regulations and/or ministerial directives to respond in a timely way to emerging lessons.

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<sup>14</sup> See ECEBC's *Position Paper for: Integrating the Early Childhood Education Professional and Programs into the Ministry of Education*, November 13, 2020.

## 1. BC Early Care and Learning Act

Under the new Early Care and Learning Act, school boards will have a legislated mandate and funding to govern, plan, develop, manage, coordinate and/or deliver provincially funded licensed child care programs

The Act will be closely aligned with BC's Early Learning Framework and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which both BC and Canada are committed. This Act will enshrine the rights of:

- All young children from birth to 12 years of age, to access high quality, inclusive and culturally safe early care and learning;
- All families, on a voluntary basis, to access quality affordable full and part time child care for their children; and
- Children and families in all their diversities, including Indigenous children, immigrant and refugee children, LGBTQ2+ families and children, and children with different abilities to be included and fully supported.

## 2. BC Early Childhood Educators Act

The Early Childhood Educators of BC recommend passing this new piece of legislation to respect, recognize and govern their profession.<sup>15</sup> Amongst other significant professional issues, this Act will:

- Closely align with the vision in the BC Early Learning Framework;
- Reflect the ECEBC Code of Ethics;
- Define who is eligible to practice as an educator and can be employed to provide early care and learning programs; and
- Define who is eligible to practice as a pedagogist and can be employed to provide pedagogical leadership to early care and learning programs.

**TARGET:** During the first session of the new government's mandate, expedite the development of new Legislation to support the full implementation of the system.

**TRANSITION:** Work on the two recommended pieces of legislation must begin immediately. Current Ministerial mandate letters assign the responsibility to "Enshrine the concept of universal child care in legislation to protect the principles of affordable, accessible, inclusive and quality child care" to the Minister of State for Child care within the Ministry of Children and Family Development. As noted above, the lack of an explicit role for the Ministry of Education in this process creates risks. It is essential that, from the start, the Ministry of Education, in consultation with the Minister of State for Child Care and the Early Childhood Educators of BC, takes a leading role in the legislative process.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## SECTION 6

# Create a New Child Care Capital Program



**THE ELECTION COMMITMENT TO ADOPT A NEW APPROACH TO THE EXPANSION** of child care — with the Ministry of Education managing a capital investment program for child care — is critical to building a sustainable public system. Government must replace the one-off, reactive New Spaces Grants used over the last three years to create new spaces and replace it with a system building approach.

Since the election, **there are promising developments that lead in the right direction.** The Minister of State for Child Care is responsible for expanding child care spaces; developing a capital plan and modular strategy, and; working with the Minister of Finance to ensure that whenever government builds a new school, hospital or other project, child care is considered. With support from the Minister of Education and

**Government must replace the one-off, reactive New Spaces Grants used over the last three years to create new spaces and replace it with a system building approach.**

Minister of Children and Family Development, she is also responsible for working toward universal access to before and after school care, prioritizing care on school grounds.

The Minister of Finance is responsible for including child care in the new Recovery Investment Fund and enhancing Treasury Board's capital review process to ensure that public projects, where possible, provide opportunities to create new child care spaces. Together, these responsibilities can enable the expansion of publicly planned, funded and owned child care facilities — key components of a public system.

They stand in contrast with the one-off New Spaces Funding approach that predictably incentivized significant growth of for-profit child care as public funds were used to help purchase, construct, renovate and/or furnish private assets, as the MCFD capital grant program allowed. In recent years, data reveals that over 75 per cent of BC's new child care spaces opened as for-profit operations. This trend undermines government's attempts to improve affordability, as parent fees are typically higher in for-profit care. A 2020 study of fees in major Canadian cities reports that fees in the five BC cities studied were between 20 and 60 per cent higher in for-profit programs than non-profit programs.<sup>16</sup>

To bring \$10aDay child care to those families accessing programs located in privately owned facilities, government will be pressured to fund outstanding mortgage or lease costs. The MCFD program also exacerbated ad hoc expansion without strong community planning or workforce recruitment and retention strategies. These grants came out of the total approval child care operating budget, instead of

<sup>16</sup> Iglia Ivanova and Lynell Anderson, *Now is the time for BC to double down on commitment to \$10-a-day child care*, CCPA-BC Policynote, March 18, 2021.



a capital budget like other public systems. This reduced the operating funds available to lower fees, raise wages and improve quality.

We propose a **multi-year child care capital budget and planning process** to develop publicly owned child care facilities that will:

- Advance cost-effective use of public funds by supporting economies of scale, consistent quality, and public planning to ensure facilities meet community needs;
- Minimize public risk by ensuring that child care facilities are available for the long term and not subject to risks associated with privately owned facilities (e.g., insolvency, sale, change of use);
- Reduce overall costs of the public system as programs in privately owned facilities — often for-profits — typically have significant mortgage/lease costs, resulting in higher parent fees and lower educator wages than public/non-profit programs; and
- Help achieve government's climate goals — through public infrastructure investments in local, green child care facilities (accessible by walking, biking and public transit) and creating new climate sustaining employment.

#### **Supporting policies:**

- Government must adopt a cross-ministry policy prohibiting the use of public capital funds for the acquisition of private assets. Rather, all public capital funds must be used for the acquisition of public assets.<sup>17</sup> Evidence from long-term senior care confirms the risks associated with relying on for-profit provision of caring services.
- Government should establish a provincial **child care capital transition team** that brings together child care, licensing, and major capital project expertise. The team would be responsible for overseeing **short- and long-term initiatives** that transition child care capital expansion from the current fragmented market-based approach to a public system approach.

#### **SHORT-TERM INITIATIVES INCLUDE:**

- 1. End the existing Childcare BC New Spaces Fund grants.** The last funding cycle for this program closed November 1, 2020. The projects approved through that cycle should be the last funded under this program and replaced with the actions below.
- 2. License kindergarten/primary classrooms for before and after school-care.** As outlined in our recommendations for providing universal access to school age care on school grounds (see Section 2) this is the most rapid and cost-effective way to increase child care spaces. Through an expedited licensing protocol that does not erode quality, the current Rapid Renovation Fund can be used to cover minimal costs required to make these spaces appropriate for extended day use.
- 3. Develop a modular child care strategy.** As previously recommended, custom-designed, high quality, publicly-funded child care modular buildings located on public property will meet immediate child

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<sup>17</sup> \$10aDay Child Care Campaign, *Recommendations for Effective Expansion of Licensed Child Care Spaces in BC*, December 29, 2019.

care needs while longer term planning occurs. To ensure quality and efficiency, consistent standards should be applied to bulk purchases.

- 4. Undertake a province-wide inventory of existing child care facilities, confirming their ownership, occupancy levels and financial status.** The inventory will accomplish three goals, as government will be able to:

- Expand \$10aDay programs in identified public and non-profit facilities without significant mortgages or leases (see Section 1);
- Assess the long-term liabilities associated with child care programs located in privately owned facilities and begin resolving these challenges (see also Section 1); and
- Identify where, with additional resources, existing public or non-profit facilities have the capacity to increase enrollment and/or range of services.

These short-term initiatives enable government to address immediate needs and identify programs that can easily transition into \$10aDay sites enrollment.

## LONG-TERM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

- 1. During fiscal year 2021/22, establish a multi-year major capital budget for child care.** This budget must be separate from the child care operating budget and should integrate capital funds allocated to child care through the new Recovery Investment Fund and other major capital projects.

While, this budget will prioritize the development of publicly owned child care facilities, where, as part of a community child care plan, opportunities exist to create child care facilities under non-profit ownership, this budget could also support these developments. Like all new programs receiving public capital funds these would open as \$10aDay sites offering certainty and continuity to community providers.<sup>18</sup>

As outlined in the election promises, overall management of this budget should rest with the Ministry of Education and be supported with comparable planning and development resources as for schools.

- 2. Ensure dedicated capital funds for child care developed by Indigenous governments and Indigenous non-profit societies.** Policies and priorities for these funds must be developed under Indigenous leadership respecting the models developed by and for both on-reserve and urban child care.
- 3. Support a consistent approach for the inclusion of child care in public projects, including Recovery Investment Fund projects.** The inclusion of child care in these initiatives under the leadership of the Minister of Finance is a very positive and promising development. For it to be effective and ensure consistent quality, planning for child care in major public capital projects requires cross-Ministry coordination.

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<sup>18</sup> The same conditions and supports required to move existing facilities owned by non-profit organizations into the system would apply.



**4. Institute a consistent and comparable community child care capital planning process.** Through the Union of BC Municipalities child care planning has begun in many but not all communities. And, evolving plans **are not** consistent, comparable or integrated into a province wide child care capital plan. Based on child population and participation projections, community plans must be integrated at the provincial level with annual targets to achieve the promise of a universally accessible \$10aDay child care system.

**TARGET:** Government is now entering the fourth year of its 10-year commitment to create a universally accessible \$10aDay child care system. Annual targets, based on a consistent approach to expansion, must be established.

**TRANSITION:** The short-term actions outlined above enable government to continue to meet immediate needs through licensing K/primary classrooms, a modular strategy and supporting full licensed capacity in existing spaces. From here on, further expansion must be publicly planned and funded resulting in publicly owned assets.





# Four Building Blocks: A Consistent Approach to System Building

A **CONSISTENT APPROACH** rests on **four common building blocks** that bring current and new providers together in a system.

**1. An equitable funding formula** with built-in accountability measures.<sup>19</sup> The formula must cover operating costs that support quality without incentivizing the growth of privately owned real estate and/or profit. Examples to learn from include the funding models for BC's Aboriginal Head Start programs, BC's \$10aDay prototype sites, and approaches used in other provinces. The funding formula needs to provide public funds that:

- Bring fees down to a maximum of \$10 a day for full-time care and \$7 a day for part-time care;
- Move educators to a competitive, provincial wage grid over time, starting with a minimum ECE wage of \$26/hour and \$29/hour for those with infant/toddler or special needs credentials;
- Honour existing collective agreements;
- Cover direct facility operating costs (including maintenance), excluding mortgage/leasing costs associated with privately owned facilities;
- Cover standard administration costs;
- Support implementation of BC's Early Learning Framework and pedagogical networks;
- Ensure cultural safety for Indigenous children and families;
- Welcome, nurture, and respect children and families in all their diversities, including Indigenous children, immigrant and refugee children, LGBTQ2+ families and children and children with differing abilities; and
- Address regional differences as needed.

As programs transition to \$10aDay sites, this funding formula will replace current operating funding streams such as CCOF, CCFRI, and wage enhancements.

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<sup>19</sup> Separate formulas will be required for family and multi-age child care that recognizes their unique staffing and other characteristics.

**2. Common operating policies and procedures** that respect the unique culture of individual programs while supporting equitable access and improved quality with initial focus on:

- Inclusion, access, and wait listing policies that support the rights of children and families;
- Human resource policies with consistent and equitable job titles/positions, benefit packages, etc.;
- Management/accounting policies that provide for consistent and comparable data collection, accountability reporting, etc.; and
- Pandemic health and safety protocols.

**3. Child care community/neighbourhood networks** that integrate current group, family, and multi-age programs with new \$10aDay child care programs at a community level. In urban settings, networks might align with elementary school catchment areas while in smaller communities, networks might be district wide. Supported by school districts, child care networks would include all community-based child care programs that enter into partnership agreements (see below) with the district as well as new publicly delivered child care programs. As networks evolve, they would take on a number of functions, including:

- Offering a range of services from which families can select those that meet their needs;
- Integrating child care into the broader learning community;
- Establishing and helping to implement child care development and expansion plans;
- Supporting joint professional development and pedagogical networks and partnerships to implement BC's Early Learning Framework;
- Building strong professional collegial relationships between ECEs and teachers;
- Coordinating wait lists, substitute pools, etc.; and
- Connecting with the broader range of family support services.

**4. Partnership agreements** between school districts and existing providers as they transition into \$10aDay sites. These agreements would replace current landlord/tenant contracts and lay a foundation for reciprocal relationships between education and child care. Public delivery of new programs should be pursued wherever possible. And, non-profit societies with the capacity to develop and deliver new programs — and be accountable for public funds — will continue to play an essential role in the years ahead.

Under these partnership agreements, **child care programs** receiving the \$10aDay funding would agree to:

- Lower fees to a max of \$10 per day for full-time care, and \$7 per day for part-time care;
- Transition to ECE wages at a minimum of \$26 an hour and \$29 an hour for those with infant/toddler or special needs credentials;

- Provide equitable access for all children and families;
- Accept ACCB for families earning under \$45,000 (adjust for inflation) resulting in no parent fee;
- Move toward consistent language in policies and procedures (e.g., standardized inclusion and administrative policies);
- Implement the Early Learning Framework and participate in quality enhancing/ELF activities in their district; and
- Participate in their local community/neighbourhood child care network.

Under these partnership agreements, **Boards of Education with participating \$10aDay sites** in their districts would agree to:

- Provide appropriate indoor and outdoor space rent free for programs that operate in or on school grounds;
- Consider early childhood educators, school-aged child care providers, and the families they serve integral members of the school community;
- Recognize early childhood educators as professional partners in the learning community;
- Jointly plan for the implementation of ELF in primary grades and child care programs;
- Plan and support joint professional development activities with early childhood educators;
- Establish a child care council (if one does not already exist) with child care partners and senior representatives of other public partners (e.g., municipalities);
- Designate a senior staffing position within the district responsible for early care and learning; and
- Develop and support child care community/neighbourhood networks.

**These agreements would replace current landlord/tenant contracts and lay a foundation for reciprocal relationships between education and child care.**



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