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2022 ROADMAP FOR \$10aDAY CHILD CARE IN BC



We put this Roadmap forward in full support of the rights and jurisdiction 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 governance structures and child care 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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2022 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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The Roadmap for \$10aDay Child Care in BC

BC IS ON THE ROAD TO SIGNIFICANT CHILD CARE SYSTEM BUILDING. If there was any lingering doubt, the pandemic has made clear that quality child care is essential for children, families, women, and communities and also 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.

Since then, two significant and positive developments provide a strong basis for BC to accelerate implementation of a \$10aDay system by April 2026, while still requiring annual provincial budgets to prioritize increasing investments in child care.

First, on July 8, 2021, BC and Canada signed a historic bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. Under this new agreement, the Government of Canada will invest \$3.2 billion by April 2026 to help

This second edition of the Roadmap integrates the new timelines, targets, and financial commitments in the historic bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement signed by BC and Canada in July 2021.

improve licensed child care for children under six years of age in British Columbia. The bilateral commitments are consistent with the \$10aDay Plan, the BC government's election promises, and the implementation directions outlined in the first edition of this Roadmap.

Then, in September 2021 — before the bilateral agreement could begin to make a difference — the federal government called an election. Voters were offered two very different approaches to child care: one in support of building a \$10aDay child care system across the country and the other a proposed tax credit targeted

to lower income families. On election day, the vast majority of Canadians rejected tax schemes and expressed strong support for our vision of a publicly funded, inclusive, quality child care system.

With this unprecedented level of support in place, BC can and must move boldly and decisively to deliver \$10aDay child care for children and families. The public supports and demands no less. The new bilateral agreement includes funding to reduce parent fees, create more public, non-profit, and Indigenous spaces, and develop an educator wage grid. For the first time, the stars are aligned.

These new developments brought new opportunities to update our Roadmap.

This second edition of the Roadmap integrates the new timelines, targets, and financial commitments in the bilateral agreement, including:

- 50 per cent average reduction in parent fees by December 2022 and \$10aDay fees by 2026;
- 30,000 new Indigenous, non-profit, and public child care spaces; and
- Funds to accelerate design and implementation of the key system building blocks, including development of an educator wage grid as part of an overall compensation strategy.

However, the bilateral agreement develops but does not fund implementation of a wage grid, nor the funds required to ensure access to universal school-age care. These provincial commitments are central to the new system and remain the financial responsibility of the province of BC.

This Roadmap includes a two-phased timeline (see pages 8 and 9) for meeting the bilateral commitments:

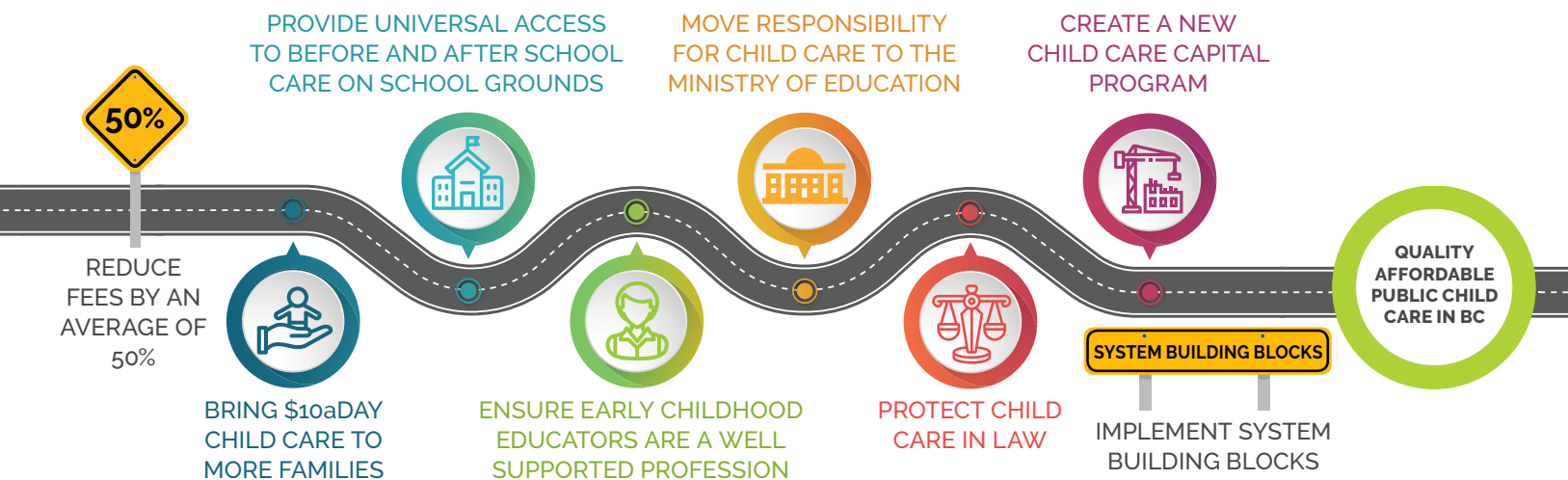
- **PHASE 1** begins immediately and ends December 2022. During this phase, this Roadmap recommends that government use the existing Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI), with increased accountability measures, to fulfill BC's commitment under the bilateral agreement to reduce parent fees by an average of 50 per cent (see Section 1) while government designs the key building blocks (see Section 8) of the new system.
- **PHASE 2** is from January 2023 to March 2026, when child care is in the Ministry of Education. During this phase, the Roadmap outlines how government can reduce fees to \$10 a day by fully implementing the building blocks of the new public system, working with all current providers who choose to opt into a publicly-funded, community-planned, and accountable \$10aDay system.

We put this Roadmap forward in full support of the rights and jurisdiction 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 governance structures and child care services in directions other than those outlined in this Roadmap, creating models to learn from and strive for. We commit to listen, learn, and act 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 child care 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.¹ And, governments must ensure that Indigenous Peoples have the resources required to develop and deliver child care services.

This updated Roadmap offers a framework for implementing the \$10aDay 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 in licensed family homes and centres — a public system in which educators are respected professionals and child care comes to the table as a strong and equal partner with the K–12 education system.

1 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, nctr.ca/records/reports/#trc-reports.



The Roadmap continues to align with affordability, space creation, and professional support planks in both the BC NDP 2020 election platform and the new bilateral agreement commitments, including:

- Reducing fees by an average of 50 per cent by December 2022;
- Bringing \$10aDay child care to more families;
- Establishing universal access to before and after school care on school grounds; and
- Ensuring early childhood educators are a well-supported profession.

It also aligns with system design and implementation election promises and new bilateral agreement commitments, including:

- Moving responsibility for child care to the Ministry of Education;
- Protecting child care in law;
- Developing a new approach to child care capital planning and budgeting; and
- System building.

To make it easier to focus on specific recommendations, this updated Roadmap posts each of these sections individually, on the understanding that they all need to be implemented in an integrated way. We will also update individual sections as initiatives are announced and implemented.

The Roadmap is based on evidence and lived expertise as well as lessons learned over the last few years as BC began to address decades of child care chaos. It acknowledges that the province made measurable progress on lowering parent fees, raising ECE wages, and creating new spaces, and outlines how to protect and build on these achievements.

It also addresses government's continued reliance on failed, market-based approaches that resulted in lost opportunities for planned growth, consistency, and accountability. New spaces were funded without a parallel strategy to ensure BC had sufficient qualified early childhood educators. Equitable access for families to programs receiving public funds was not guaranteed and there was little accountability to limit rising parent fees.

Access to public capital grant programs for the acquisition of privately owned real estate assets incentivized significant growth in the for-profit child care sector. This unfortunate trend flies in the face of research and evidence. In jurisdictions with effective systems, child care is publicly planned and managed and a significant percentage of services are publicly delivered. Non-profit services are also key partners in effective systems.

The good news is that the BC government has begun to address some of these issues. As of Fall 2021, the New Spaces Fund requires that public capital funds are invested in public, non-profit, and Indigenous child care facilities. And, there are now limits on the fees new programs can charge to be eligible for operating funds, along with a new ability for government to cap parent fees in the recently enacted Early Learning and Child Care Act.

This Roadmap outlines how government can continue to move away from fragmented, one-off, market-based initiatives, adopt a clear system vision, and implement effective system building strategies.

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 in the public, non-profit, and Indigenous sectors, informed by community plans. Given that there are currently licensed spaces for only 20 per cent of BC children, over time this means a significant proportion of child care programs and facilities will be publicly planned, 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 updated Roadmap provides a strong place from which to build.



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TIMELINE

PHASE 1

JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2022

AFFORDABILITY

Reduce fees by 50 per cent:

- ✓ Use the BC Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (FRI) with increased accountability measures to move from average \$42/day to \$21/day

Increase \$10aDay spaces to 12,500:

- ✓ End current reactive prototype application process
- ✓ Move to planned transition of non-profit/public programs to \$10aDay programs
- ✓ Begin with multiprogram organizations where only some programs are currently \$10aDay
- ✓ Open new non-profit/public programs that receive capital funds as \$10aDay programs

SCHOOL-AGE CARE

- ✓ Expand school-age care in school districts (seamless day/extended day)

SUPPORT ECE PROFESSION

- ✓ Develop wage grid including school age and family child care educators
- ✓ Implement crisis transition strategy
- ✓ Pay out \$4/hour wage enhancement

CAPITAL EXPANSION

- ✓ End the reactive New Spaces Fund
- ✓ Fund new non-profit, public and Indigenous spaces
- ✓ Include child care in all major public capital projects

SYSTEM DESIGN

Develop Roadmap building blocks:

- ✓ \$10aDay funding formula (lower fees, higher wages, quality provision)
- ✓ Implement common policies and procedures

Move to Ministry of Education:

- ✓ Plan and implement, with regional offices as temporary infrastructure to support the transition

Protect child care in law:

- ✓ Initiate amendments to the ELCC Act and ECE Act, as per Roadmap

CAPITAL PLANNING

- ✓ Undertake inventory of ownership arrangements of current programs
- ✓ Develop total space requirement projections
- ✓ Develop multi-year capital plan including modular strategy
- ✓ Develop and begin to implement multi-year capital budget

PHASE 2

JANUARY 2023 TO MARCH 2026

Building on Phase 1 activities, add:

AFFORDABILITY

Achieve \$10aDay child care:

- ✓ Transition all providers who want to be \$10aDay programs with increased accountability
- ✓ Implement funding formula, wage grid, and common policies and procedures
- ✓ Resolve issues with privately owned facilities as outlined in the Roadmap
- ✓ Continue existing funding to providers who don't opt in to the \$10aDay system
- ✓ Continue to open new non-profit/public programs receiving capital funds as \$10aDay programs

SCHOOL-AGE CARE

Plan, develop, and fund universal access to school-age care on school grounds:

- ✓ Same approach as \$10aDay programs
- ✓ Develop learning framework for 9–12 year old children
- ✓ Support to upgrade educator qualifications

SUPPORT ECE PROFESSION

Fully implement comprehensive cross-sector workforce strategy:

- ✓ Wage grid/compensation package
- ✓ Upgrade educational qualifications to diploma as minimum and increase Bachelors of ECE

CAPITAL EXPANSION

- ✓ Use plan and budget developed in Phase 1 to deliver 30,000-plus non-profit, public and Indigenous spaces

SYSTEM DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

Develop and implement additional Roadmap building blocks:

- ✓ Community/neighbourhood networks
- ✓ Partnership agreements through school districts

Integrate child care as equal partner in Ministry of Education:

- ✓ Ensure child care expertise at all levels of the system
- ✓ Support implementation of early learning framework
- ✓ Transition governance from regional offices to school districts

Protect child care in law:

- ✓ Amend ELCC Act to enshrine rights of children, families, and Indigenous communities
- ✓ Amend ECE Act to include ECEBC Code of Ethics
- ✓ Ensure the rights and jurisdictions of Indigenous Peoples are respected and honoured throughout implementation

SECTION 1

Reduce Parent Fees by an Average of 50% by December 2022



UNDER THE NEW bilateral agreement that BC signed with the federal government in July 2021, the province promised to reduce average parent fees for regulated and funded child care for children aged 0–5 by 50 per cent, resulting in average parent fees of \$21/day by December 2022. The BC government has also committed to bring fees down to an average of \$10aDay by 2026 — so it is essential that the approach used to meet the first target helps move child care toward the \$10aDay system.

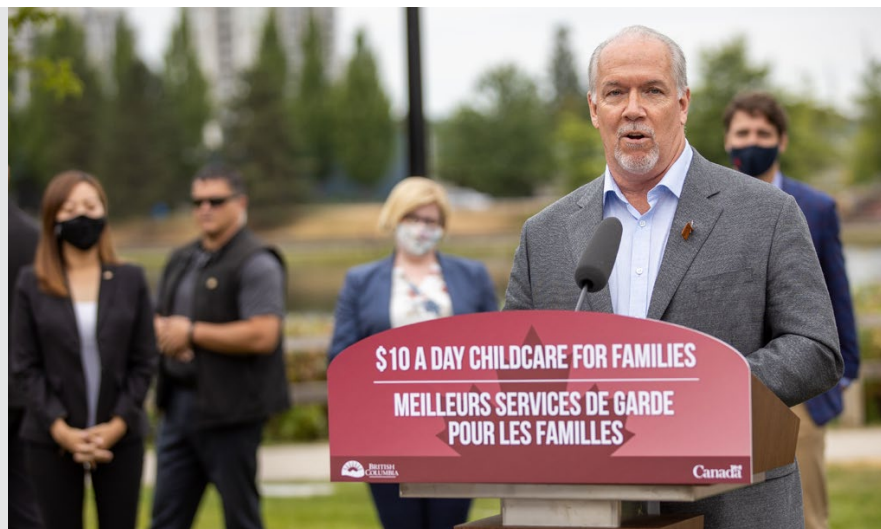
As outlined in the bilateral agreement, BC will use the existing Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) to achieve this goal. Using this existing funding program enables families in participating programs to receive an equitable reduction in their fees in a timely way. It also provides a critical opportunity for government to phase in the increased accountability measures required to achieve the \$10aDay public system they have committed to, with a funding program child care operators are familiar with.

Use the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative

Government should provide increased funds to eligible programs through the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. Based on data in the bilateral agreement, this will result in an average fee of \$21/day in funded programs by December 2022.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau looks on as Premier John Horgan speaks to the historic bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement that BC signed with the federal government in July 2021.

PHOTO: JULY 8, 2021 / PROVINCE OF BC



Eligibility and Accountability for Increased CCFRI Funds

All existing licensed child care programs² that have participated in and met accountability requirements for the Child Care Operating Fund (CCOF), Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, and Wage Enhancement (WE) program for at least two years would be eligible to receive increased CCFRI funding if they agree to:

- Cap parent fees at current levels (with annual cost of living increases in operating costs provided through CCOF/CCFRI);
- Qualified early childhood educators must receive the full benefit of the wage enhancement (\$4/hour by April 2022);
- Publicly post parent fees and ECE wages online and provide up-to-date fee and wage information to child care resource and referral programs;
- Submit full financial records to government;
- Commit to no extra fees for optional, exclusionary services;
- Include children with extra support needs (with funding and support from Supported Child Development);
- Welcome all families and children including families receiving the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB); and
- Have no significant unresolved licensing citations.

TIMELINE for reducing parent fees

PHASE 1 (January to December 2022)

- Increase funding through CCFRI to existing programs willing to meet the new accountability measures to enable them to reduce fees by an average of 50 per cent. The fee reduction could start effective April 2022 and must be fully in place across the province for all eligible programs by December 2022. New eligible programs that open during Phase 1 could also receive increased CCFRI funding.
- Existing licensed programs that choose not to meet these new accountability measures for the 50 per cent average fee reduction could continue to receive their 2021 level of operating funds (CCOF, CCFRI, WE), and families in these programs would remain eligible for the ACCB.

Over time these operating funds could be adjusted for inflation. These programs would continue to have the opportunity to opt in to the new system at a later date.

PHASE 2 (January 2023 to March 2026)

- Programs continue to receive the funds they received during Phase 1 until they transition into \$10aDay programs, with a cap on fees offset by public funding to cover cost of living increases in annual operating costs.

² Programs that open without public capital funds and/or outside of a community plan, after a provincially established cut-off date, would not be guaranteed access to new operating funds.

Bring \$10aDay Child Care to More Families



THE PROMISE TO BRING \$10aDAY child care to more families was one of the BC government's first and most significant election commitments in both 2017 and 2020. A 2019 poll found that 76 per cent of British Columbians believed the government should move more quickly to deliver on this promise.

While BC Budget 2021 only provided funds to add another 3,750 \$10aDay child care spaces over three years, the bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement BC signed in 2021 with the federal government now promises a total of 12,500 \$10aDay child care spaces by the end of 2022 and average fees of \$10 a day across BC by 2026.

To achieve this goal, BC must replace the current reactive competitive process to selecting \$10aDay sites with a planned transition of existing programs to \$10aDay while creating new \$10aDay sites:

- Prioritizing the transition of existing public/non-profit programs, and interested Indigenous programs, located in public or non-profit owned facilities into \$10aDay sites;
- Opening all new facilities developed with public capital funds as \$10aDay sites — this includes modular buildings and new facilities under public or non-profit ownership;
- Resolving facility ownership challenges with programs located in privately owned facilities; and
- Implementing the four common system building blocks (see Section 8).

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 as required by the bilateral agreement;
- 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 risks³ 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 7).

³ 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.

We recommend the following four approaches.

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

All profit-generating rental costs charged by public entities (e.g., municipalities, school districts, hospitals) to on-site child care programs in publicly owned facilities should be eliminated and replaced with a consistent approach to covering incremental facility operating costs in a provincial funding formula. This builds on current legislation governing facility-related costs for child care programs in schools.⁴

In most cases the current operator will remain in place. However, some existing operators in public facilities may choose to transfer their license(s) to the local school districts, as child care will be governed through the Ministry of Education. This option may be of interest to small, stand-alone organizations with limited administrative capacities.

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

As in public facilities, a provincial funding formula would cover the direct costs associated with operating the child care facility (not the capital costs, as explained below). The current non-profit operator would remain in place.

The recommended inventory (see Section 7) 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 transition to \$10aDay at the same level of public funding received by programs in public facilities with the same accountability requirements.

The inventory will also identify any child care programs located in facilities owned by non-profit societies with outstanding mortgages or lease payments related to capital costs. Government should enter into negotiations with interested non-profit societies to address ongoing facility related costs and tenure. Options could include, but are not limited to:

- Where the non-profit society provides services in addition to child care, government covers a portion of the mortgage/interest directly associated with child care provision – in return, government receives assurance that the space will be used for child care over the long term, similar to methods used in other sectors like non-market housing;
- Government assumes temporary responsibility for the lease until a publicly owned facility is available or the lease expires;
- Government assumes the remaining mortgage, acquiring the related share of public equity in the facility; and
- Government purchases the facility from interested non-profit societies, bringing it into public ownership.

4 BC Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2020.

3. 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; and
- New programs located in or **on public facilities/lands** other than schools should be operated directly by the local school district or another public entity (e.g., community centre). 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 societies should be operated by non-profit societies that have the capacity to develop and deliver child care, through partnership agreements with local school districts, which will replace current MCFD funding contracts (see Section 8).

4. Resolve challenges in privately owned facilities

Taxpayers should not be expected to assume the debts or risks associated with 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 available for child care use over the long term, these programs could transition to \$10aDay sites on comparable terms as those in public/non-profit facilities.
- **Privately owned facilities with outstanding mortgages or leases:** Government will need to enter into negotiations with interested facility owners to resolve how they may become eligible to operate as \$10aDay sites. Options for consideration and negotiation between government and facility owners include, but are not limited to:
 - » 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. The program facility remains privately owned, covering any remaining capital costs (mortgages, lease agreements) through other funding sources.
 - » Government assumes temporary responsibility for the lease or rents space in the privately owned facility until a publicly owned facility is available or the lease expires.
 - » Government assumes the remaining mortgage, acquiring the related share of public equity in the facility.
 - » Government purchases the facility from an interested owner, bringing it into public ownership.

FOUR SYSTEM BUILDING BLOCKS (see Section 8) 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 \$10aDay care providers.

The success of government's commitment to build the \$10aDay system depends on a multi-year capital budget and community plans for building publicly owned facilities (see Section 7).

Existing licensed programs that choose not to transition from 50 per cent fee reduction programs to \$10aDay programs could continue to receive their 2022 level of operating funds (Child Care Operating Fund, Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, and Wage Enhancement program), and families in these programs would remain eligible for the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB). Over time these operating funds could be adjusted for inflation.

Government needs to establish a cut off date, after which programs that open in privately owned facilities or outside of a community plan will not be guaranteed access to \$10aDay operating funding. This date needs to be clearly signalled well in advance, giving potential operators ample time to make informed decisions. Consistent information about this cut off date needs to be communicated by licensing officers, child care resource and referral programs, and on government websites.



TIMELINE for bringing \$10aDay child care to more families

PHASE 1 (January to December 2022)

The bilateral agreement commits to 12,500 \$10aDay child care spaces by December 2022. Approximately 2,500 are currently in place, with another 4,000 expected to be created early in 2022. The criteria for the new \$10aDay spaces included much needed increased accountability, but the process was still reactive and application-based rather than incorporating a planned, system building approach. This should be the last round of reactive expansion of \$10aDay. From here on, government should:

- Develop a priority list of eligible and interested existing Indigenous, public, and non-profit programs to transition to \$10aDay;
- Transition eligible and interested programs to \$10aDay with an equitable funding formula and common policies and protocols in place, building on the BC Child Care Administration and Management Knowledge Base developed by Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre;⁵ and
- Open new public and non-profit eligible programs that received public capital funds as \$10aDay programs.

Until willing programs are able to transition to \$10aDay, government should continue to provide CCOF, Wage Enhancement, and increased CCFRI to bring fees down by an average of 50 per cent with related accountability measures. Families using these services would also continue to receive the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB).

PHASE 2 (January 2023 to March 2026)

Government has committed to \$10aDay child care across BC by 2026. To achieve this, government should:

- Continue to transition existing, eligible, and newly opened public and non-profit programs that received public capital funds to \$10aDay in a planned way as outlined above;
- Phase out current funding mechanisms (CCOF, CCFRI, and WE) for programs that transition to \$10aDay, replacing them with an equitable funding formula, including a competitive wage grid and common policies and protocols;
- Resolve issues with interested providers in privately owned facilities as outlined above; and
- Develop and implement community/neighbourhood networks and partnership agreements (see Section 8).
- Before April 1, 2026, government needs to make long-term policy and funding decisions about its relationship with licensed child care programs that choose to operate outside the new \$10aDay system.

5 See WCCRC Administration & Management for Child Care Knowledge Base.



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

THE PROMISE TO WORK TOWARD 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.

As government meets its election commitment to universal child care it is in the school-age sector where the greatest number of new spaces will be required (based on population data) and where there is the most opportunity for rapid successful expansion through existing elementary schools.

Children, including those with extra support needs, will have fewer transitions between their before and after school care and their school day. 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 more effective use of public facilities.

Regrettably, the recently signed bilateral agreement between BC and Canada only addresses the child care needs of children under the age of six. This means that BC is now responsible for delivering on this crucial election commitment.

As school-age care is an integral part of the \$10aDay Plan, government should transition eligible and willing school-age programs in public and non-profit owned facilities into the new system under the same conditions outlined for other child care programs (see Section 2). Issues should be resolved for programs in privately owned facilities as outlined in Section 7. The success of government's commitment to build the \$10aDay system depends on a multi-year capital budget and community plans plan for building public and non-profit owned facilities.

As school-age care is an integral part of the \$10aDay Plan, government should transition eligible and willing school-age programs in public and non-profit owned facilities into the new system under the same conditions outlined for other child care programs

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;
- Develop new on-site child care programs delivered, wherever possible, directly by school districts

or, where this is not possible, by an experienced, non-profit, child care organization selected through a transparent process;

- Move away from landlord/tenant relationships for those programs currently renting space in schools 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; and
- Implement the four system building blocks (see Section 8).

And, to ensure that older children have access to programs that respond to their needs and interests, BC must develop a learning framework for 9–12 year olds that supports the integration of school-age care for these children within the broader learning community.

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

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



1. Expand use of existing classrooms for before and after school care

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

- The new province-wide expedited **licensing protocol**, developed with the Ministry of Health which enables the use of spaces that are safe for children from 9 am to 3 pm to be deemed safe for their use before and after regular school hours. The licensing protocol must respect existing group size, child/staff ratios, and other quality provisions.
- **Respectful dialogue** with teachers and the BC Teachers' Federation to ensure that collaborative use of classroom space is voluntary and builds on examples of success where shared space is working well.
- **Understanding** that the child care program is as necessary and as welcome in the school community as kindergarten and other permanent programs in the Ministry of Education.
- **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 — through a partnership agreement — increase capacity to deliver and staff an extended day program.
- **Seamless day:** This model, initiated in School District 53 and now expanded to over 20 districts, provides before and after school early learning and care in kindergarten and Grade 1 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 care before traditional school hours, and remains with the class for the morning. The second ECE joins the class for the afternoon and continues the child care program for children whose families require care after traditional school hours.

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. 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 for kindergarten and Grade 1.

Given the severe and worsening recruitment and retention crisis in the ECE sector and the expansion of school-age programs, a transition strategy⁶ for staffing will need to be implemented. This transition must be time-limited and incorporate pathways for those working with school-age children to articulate their lived expertise and existing credentials toward completion of an ECE diploma.

6 Section 4 outlines a recommended transition strategy to address the recruitment and retention crisis in the sector.

2. Transition existing on-site school-age programs into the \$10aDay system

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

These programs should be integrated in the same way outlined in Section 2 for transitioning all child care programs in publicly owned facilities into \$10aDay sites, including:

- **A consistent funding formula** based on a maximum parent fee of \$7 per day for part-day care and \$10 per day for full-day care provided during school breaks and/or PD days, along with an educator wage grid. As with a funding formula for younger children, the school-age formula will cover the key operating costs: human resources, programming, facilities, and administration.
- **Consistent policies and procedures** appropriate to school-age care.
- **School-age 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-age care. Where this is not appropriate, school districts should enter into partnership agreements (see Section 8) with existing providers.

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

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

- **Invest capital funds** to build child care into new public schools, 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-day 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

Engaging with existing community-based school-age providers will support their integration with the broader learning community. Expansion should focus on unmet needs without eroding current programs. Existing school-age care providers not located in or on school grounds must also be supported as the new system evolves. Current programs should transition to \$10aDay under the same opportunities and conditions outlined in Section 2. Care must be taken to ensure that existing providers and the School Age Child Care Association of BC are engaged in the community planning process.

FOUR SYSTEM BUILDING BLOCKS (see Section 8) 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 child care providers.

Government needs to establish a prompt cut off date, after which programs that open in privately owned facilities or outside of a community plan will not be guaranteed access to \$10aDay new operating funds. This date needs to be clearly signalled well in advance, giving potential operators ample time to make informed decisions. Consistent information about this cut off date needs to be communicated by licensing officers, child care resource and referral programs, and on government websites.

TIMELINE for universal access to before and after school care on school grounds

PHASE 1 (January to December 2022)

Given that school-age care is not covered by the new bilateral agreement, BC must ensure adequate funds in BC Budget 2022 and beyond. Working with school districts, these funds should be used to:

- Develop annual targets, informed by community plans, for expanding access to new school-age programs and license existing school space and/or new modular buildings to meet these targets;
- Open new non-profit/public school-age facilities that receive public capital funds as \$10aDay programs;
- Reduce fees in school-age care by an average of 50 per cent by December 2022, by extending the CCFRI to school-age programs;
- Include school-age care in the equitable funding formula and common policies and protocols;
- Develop partnership agreements between on-site school-age providers and school districts;
- Begin development of a learning framework for 9–12 year olds;
- Expand access to the Introduction to School Age Child Care⁷ course as an initial qualification standard for new school-age educators; and
- Develop an appropriate provincial wage grid for school-age educators.

Until school-age programs are able to transition into \$10aDay sites, government should continue to provide operating funding to those currently receiving it, with annual cost of living increases provided. Families using these services will remain eligible for the Affordable Child Care Benefit.

PHASE 2 (January 2023 to March 2026)

- Complete and implement the new learning framework for 9–12 year olds.
- Through the public post-secondary articulation process, integrate the provision of school-age education into the core curriculum of ECE diploma programs with advanced credits for those who have already completed the introductory course.
- Before April 1, 2026, government needs to make long-term policy and funding decisions about its relationship with licensed child care programs that choose to operate outside the new \$10aDay system.

⁷ This course, currently offered through Vancouver Community College, should be available for credit at this and other public post-secondary institutions across the province and online.

SECTION 4

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. As the system evolves, all educators who work in licensed programs, including school-age and family care, will be supported to hold a minimum two-year credential.

Since the 2020 provincial election, the recruitment and retention crisis in child care has only intensified and is now widely recognized as the most immediate challenge to achieving real progress.

Government committed to a rapid expansion of spaces without a parallel commitment to ensure sufficient qualified early childhood educators. The current COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the problem.

Since the 2020 provincial election, the recruitment and retention crisis in child care has only intensified and is now widely recognized as the most immediate challenge to achieving real progress.

ECEs continue to put their ethical responsibility for the health and safety of children and families first, yet the profession has been deeply impacted by its own health and safety concerns as well as burnout and the ongoing attraction of higher wages and benefits and more supportive working conditions available outside of the child care sector.

While welcome, the actions taken by government to address this crisis – including the \$4/hour wage enhancement – are proving to be insufficient to resolve the crisis.

It will take much more bold, swift action and accountability to the sector to provide competitive compensation, pathways to professional education/credentials, ongoing professional development, support, recognition, and respect.

Given the current situation, we understand that a transition strategy, including the initiatives outlined below, will be required to staff current and new programs while moving toward a diploma as the minimum credential for all those working in licensed child care.

Regrettably, BC delayed the payment of a \$2 wage enhancement promised for September 2021 until March 2022, which undermined the sector's sense of optimism about the evolving system. And, while the new bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement includes a commitment to develop a wage grid, it does not include the funds required to implement it. Nor does the agreement include a commitment to ensuring all educators have access to a comprehensive benefit package.

The interrelated factors underlying the ECE recruitment and retention crisis are well documented and include low wages, minimal or no benefits, limited access to post-secondary education, professional isolation, and widespread devaluing of the work of caring. Evidence shows that educators with higher pay and 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.⁸

Given the depth of the crisis in the sector, government must find creative approaches to recruit new students into the profession, encourage educators who have left to return, and retain current educators in the system. 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 priority.

All approaches must advance professionalization of the sector and bring early childhood educators into the broader learning environment as strong and equal partners. The BC Early Learning Framework "carries the hope of inspiring and supporting the creation of rich, joyful, early childhood spaces where children, adults, ideas and materials come together, where knowledge is constructed about learning and living in ways that are local, inclusive, ethical, and democratic."⁹

As outlined in Section 6 on protecting child care in law, government must amend the recently enacted Early Childhood Educators Act to include the ECEBC Code of Ethics and recognize the unique professional perspectives ECEs bring to the implementation of BC's Early Learning Framework.

Investment in early childhood education professionals must also be a key element of government's overall pandemic recovery strategy. 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. 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."¹⁰

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

1. Implement a transitional strategy to move forward

Grounded in 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 should provide a centralized access point to the full range of career pathways and opportunities including:

- Incentives to welcome back qualified ECEs who have left the sector;
- Opportunities to be paid and/or undertake paid work while upgrading;

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.

9 BC Early Learning Framework, p. 42.

10 Karel Hermans, *Caring Jobs are Green Jobs*, July 10, 2020, Citizens for Public Justice.



- Waiving tuition fees for public post-secondary education, and relief for student loan debt;
- Internships and other on-the-job approaches;¹¹
- Expanding high school/post-secondary dual credential advanced placement options as a pathway toward ECE diploma completion;
- A requirement that ECE assistants currently working in the sector become credentialed through a public post-secondary institution within the existing five-year time frame;
- Opportunities for live-in caregivers to ladder into the ECE profession;
- Pathways for those already working in the sector to upgrade their credentials through recognition of prior education and on-the-job experience;
- Pathways for those working in related sectors to acquire a child care credential through recognition of prior education and on-the-job experience; and
- Expanded inclusive community-based pedagogical networks, communities of practice, and other professional development streams.

For this transition strategy to be effective, government will need to establish a clear target for the number of qualified ECEs required. Rigorous accountability is required to ensure funds intended to raise wages and benefits and improve working conditions are used for those purposes.

¹¹ New Zealand and Manitoba approaches merit further exploration.

2. Implement a publicly funded, provincial, competitive, and equitable wage grid

As part of an overall compensation strategy to improve wages, benefits, and working conditions in the child care sector, government must develop, fund, and implement 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*. The wage grid must adopt the report's underlying policies and processes for implementation and its recommendation that qualified ECEs earn a minimum of \$26/hour (one-year college certificate) and \$29/hour (two-year post-secondary diploma) (2020 rates). The wage grid should also provide encouragement and incentives for those working in the sector to upgrade/complete their qualifications.

3. Raise educational and professional standards for early childhood educators

Timelines, supports, occupational competencies and standards of practice are required to achieve:

- A diploma (two years) as the minimum credential for those entering the profession, including those working in school-age and family child care;¹² and
- A Bachelor of Early Childhood Education as the new educational standard for the profession.

(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).

To support increased professionalism, membership in the Early Childhood Educators of BC should become a requirement for all those licensed to practice as early childhood educators in BC. Membership in ECEBC aligns with the current ECE Code of Ethics in British Columbia and is one of the key elements that separates a profession from a job. As public policy is informed by this collective voice, membership in this professional association¹³ supports the advancement of professional standards for ECEs.

4. 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 by the Ministry of Advanced Education to ensure access to public post-secondary education. These steps include:

- Rapid approval of and funding for new and expanded early childhood education programs in public post-secondary institutions, including diploma and bachelor degree programs;
- Rapid expansion of and funding for online, part time, and distance education options delivered by public post-secondary institutions; and
- Free tuition and/or student-debt relief for students completing ECE programs in public post-secondary institutions.

¹² The "responsible adult" designation for those entering the licensed child care system will be phased out. Mature providers who do not upgrade their qualifications will be able to remain in current positions with current qualifications, with ongoing professional development.

¹³ A professional organization exists to advance a particular profession, support the interests of people working in that profession, and imbed strong standards for ECEs working in a new BC child care system.

Clear and transparent communication between the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry of Education, and the child care and education sectors is essential as the profession evolves. Government must send a strong public message about the value of early childhood educators and, most importantly, ensure that, when making decisions that impact early childhood educators, they consult with ECEBC and the other organizations representing the professionals in the sector.

TIMELINE for ensuring early childhood educators are a well supported profession

PHASE 1 (January to December 2022)

BC should reverse its decision to delay the promised additional \$2/hour wage enhancement for ECEs and begin immediate payments. BC must also:

- Implement the transition strategy, as above;
- Develop the wage grid and implementation plan;
- Develop annual targets to recruit, educate, and compensate additional ECEs, as required for the growing system;
- Draft amendments to BC's Early Childhood Educators Act (see Section 6); and
- Require that all early childhood educators and child care professionals working in \$10aDay child care sites become members of the Early Childhood Educators of BC professional association.

PHASE 2 (January 2023 to March 2026)

As child care moves to the Ministry of Education, government must support a respectful dialogue between ECEs and teachers so that ECEs come to the table as strong and equal partners. BC must also:

- Implement the provincial ECE wage grid;
- Integrate funds to support the wage grid into a funding formula and provide these funds to programs as they transition to \$10aDay programs;
- Enact further amendments to the BC Early Childhood Educators Act (see Section 6);
- Implement the ECE diploma as a minimum requirement for those entering the sector, including school-age and family child care;
- Support expanded access to, and compensation for, Bachelor of ECE degrees; and
- Require that all licensed early childhood educators and professionals working in licensed child care become members of the Early Childhood Educators of BC, their professional association.

SECTION 5

Move Responsibility for Child Care to the Ministry of Education



THE 2020 ELECTION PROMISE TO MOVE CHILD CARE TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION 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 residential schools, change must begin with the recognition that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have the right and jurisdiction to determine the governance and delivery of their own, distinct child care services.

The ministerial mandate letters post-2020 election committed BC to moving child care to the Ministry of Education by April 2023. We recommend this necessary move happen in 2022. Over the last four years it has become clear that, despite the efforts of dedicated individuals, the Ministry of Children and Family Development 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 unprecedented growth of for-profit child care and further fragmentation of the child care sector. 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.

The ministerial mandate letters post-2020 election committed BC to moving child care to the Ministry of Education by April 2023. We recommend this necessary move happen in 2022.

Most recently, the BC government indicated it will create six regional offices within the Ministry of Education with responsibility for child care. We did not recommend this approach because school districts already have democratic governance, planning, and research infrastructure and the capacity to integrate child care into a public, universal system. However, given this decision, it is essential that regional offices are established on an interim basis with the principal goal of supporting the full transition of child care as an equal partner at the school district level. Regional offices should be staffed by people with child care expertise and existing relationships with community-based child care programs. They should engage with child care resource and referral programs and local governments to begin proactive planning, development, and coordination of existing and new child care programs and help move the sector toward consistent provincial policies and procedures.

We will continue to evaluate this and other 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.

BC's K–12 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 programs, and ensure quality care through ongoing curriculum enhancements" as 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. The move should be supported by dedicated early childhood pedagogists and public policy expertise with adequate public funding.

Integrate child care into education with a transition plan

Transitioning child care to the Ministry of Education requires a thoughtful, engaged process based on an understanding that the move will require growth and change for all stakeholders. 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 those working in both sectors as it supports the readiness of school districts, staff, administrators, and communities to take on their new responsibilities in respectful ways. While the transition will begin with new regional offices, the goal must remain a strong and equal partnership between child care and public education at the school district level.



The \$10aDay Plan and recent position papers from ECEBC and SACCA¹⁴ provide specific strategies to guide a successful integration of child care with the Ministry of Education. Clear and consistent communication from and with government ministries, the child care sector, the education sector, and all stakeholders will be critical to the success of this transition.

Initial key steps include:

- Establish, on an interim basis, regional offices with child care expertise, to begin system building with school districts;
- Amend the new Early Learning and Child Care Act to enshrine the right of access to child care in law, mandate school districts as the local democratic governing body of all licensed child care in their district, and recognize, support, and respect the profession of early childhood education — amendments should be based on the fundamental principles of a universal, public system and aligned with BC's Early Learning Framework (see Section 6);
- Move the Minister of State for Child Care, experienced provincial staff, and annual child care operating budgets into the Ministry of Education's Early Learning Division by April 1, 2022;
- Develop new child care programs delivered, wherever possible, directly by school districts or, where this is not possible, by an experienced non-profit child care organization selected through a transparent process;
- Initiate and support an ongoing dialogue between early childhood educators, primary teachers, and other educational stakeholders, through their respective organizations, about the strengths each profession brings to implementing BC's Early Learning Framework, and the recommended framework for children aged 9–12;
- Begin developing protocols by which early childhood educators and teachers will work together as strong and equal partners in integrated programs;
- Develop child care expertise at the school district level along with local child care councils,¹⁵ a dedicated elected trustee on each board of education, professional development for administrators, teachers, and other staff, and community awareness campaigns;

¹⁴ ECEBC, "Position Paper for: Integrating the Early Childhood Education Professional and Programs into the Ministry of Education," November 2020; SACCA BC, "Position Paper for: Integrating the Early Childhood Education Professional and Programs into the Ministry of Education," September 2021.

¹⁵ District child care councils would bring together public partners, elected officials, the child care sector, and community representatives to develop and implement district wide child care plans.

Transitioning child care to the Ministry of Education requires a thoughtful, engaged process based on an understanding that the move will require growth and change for all stakeholders.

- 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 (see Section 7); and
- 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 the Union of BC Municipalities.

Effective integration of child care and education is key to building the system that BC needs. For this reason, elements that support a successful transition to the Ministry of Education are reflected throughout this Roadmap. All actions taken while child care remains in the Ministry of Children and Family Development must lead toward the integration of child care into the broader learning environment: neither ministry should make unilateral decisions.

TIMELINE for moving responsibility for child care to the Ministry of Education

PHASE 1 (January to December 2022)

- Establish regional offices on an interim basis.
- With support from regional offices, implement the initial steps outlined above with a priority on supporting the capacity of school districts to take on child care responsibilities.
- Provide adequate funds in BC Budget 2022 to expand and support school-age care (school-age care is not funded through the federal bilateral agreement).
- Begin to develop and implement the system building blocks for programs delivered by and through school districts (see Section 8).

PHASE 2 (January 2023 to March 2026)

- Move responsibility from regional offices to newly mandated school districts as the local democratic governing body of all licensed child care in their district, other than Indigenous governing bodies and organizations.
- Implement a child care major capital budget and planning process within the Ministry of Education, informed by community plans.
- Implement common policies and procedures for all programs.
- Implement partnership agreements with child care programs that are not directly delivered by school districts.
- Support and develop community/neighbourhood networks that bring child care providers (on and off site) into their local education system as strong and equal partners.

All actions taken while child care remains in the Ministry of Children and Family Development must lead toward the integration of child care into the broader learning environment: neither ministry should make unilateral decisions.



Protect Child Care in Law

GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT to protect principles of affordable, accessible, and inclusive quality child care in legislation is a foundational element of an effective child care system. The BC NDP 2020 election platform promised new child care legislation that moves 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 and 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.¹⁶

The \$10aDay Plan proposed two pieces of legislation — a BC Early Care and Learning Act¹⁷ and a BC Early Childhood Educators Act — and recommended a focus on broad principles that built from existing child care sections in BC's *School Act*. In October 2021, BC introduced **two new pieces of legislation** that began the process of protecting child care in law.

Amend the BC Early Learning and Child Care Act

The *BC Early Learning and Child Care Act* became law on October 27, 2021 and is expected to increase transparency and accountability with required annual reporting on progress to date and on government relationships with and support for Indigenous-led child care. Importantly, the legislation gives government the authority to set limits on child care fees.

While an important first step, the Act needs to be amended to 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 child care for their children; and

¹⁶ ECEBC, "Position Paper for: Integrating the Early Childhood Education Professional and Programs into the Ministry of Education," November 2020.

¹⁷ The \$10aDay Plan recommended this act be called the Early Care and Learning Act, putting "care" first because without care there is no learning.

- 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.

The new ELCC Act also needs amending to reflect the upcoming move to the Ministry of Education by including a legislated mandate for, and funding to, school districts to govern, plan, develop, manage, coordinate, and/or deliver provincially funded licensed child care programs.

Over time, these amendments to the new *Early Learning and Child Care Act* will help end the historic divide between the publicly managed and delivered, relatively well-funded, universal, K–12 public education system and poorly funded, fragmented, market-based child care programs.

Amend the BC Early Childhood Educators Act

The *Early Childhood Educators Act* became law on October 27, 2021, taking an important step in creating a stand-alone statute for the profession of early childhood education under the responsibility of the Minister of State for Child Care. The Act is expected to support quality child care by creating a public registry of ECEs and approved post-secondary programs, and improving oversight of ECEs. It will reduce barriers to certification by allowing internationally trained ECEs to work while getting certified, making it easier for child care providers to hire skilled educators.

However, additional amendments are required to meet the criteria for legislation to advance the profession, as recommended by the Early Childhood Educators of BC,¹⁸ including but not limited to:

- Aligning with the vision in the BC Early Learning Framework and the recommended learning framework for 9–12 year olds;
- Reflecting the ECEBC Code of Ethics;
- Defining who is eligible to practice and be employed as an educator;
- Defining who is eligible to use the title of and be employed as a pedagogist; and
- Establishing a time frame for new educational standards.

These amendments will bring child care and the profession of early childhood education to the table as a strong and equal partner within public education. It is essential that ECEBC and early childhood educators are actively consulted during the process to ensure that their professional, pedagogical, and ethical perspectives are reflected and respected.

TIMELINE for protecting child care in law

PHASE 1 (January to December 2022): Develop amendments to the two pieces of child care legislation in consultation with Indigenous leadership and governing bodies, early childhood educators, education stakeholders, and the broader child care sector.

PHASE 2 (January 2023 to March 2026): Enact the amended legislation.

¹⁸ Ibid.



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 — is critical to building a sustainable public system. Government must replace the one-off, reactive grant application process for creating new spaces and replace it with a system building approach.

Recently, there has been significant progress for child care:

- Under the bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with the federal government, capital funds to create 30,000 new spaces over five years (40,000 over seven years) will be invested only in public, non-profit, and Indigenous-led child care; and
- The provincial 2021 call for applications for capital expansion through the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund was, for the first time, open only to public, non-profit, and Indigenous-led child care.

These changes align with provincial commitments to develop a capital plan and modular strategy; to work toward universal access to school-age care on school grounds; and to ensure that, where possible, new public capital projects include child care.

From 2018 to 2021, BC's one-off and reactive New Spaces Fund predictably incentivized significant growth of for-profit child care as this program allowed public funds to be used to help purchase, construct, renovate, and/or furnish private assets. Among other concerns, this approach undermined government's attempts to improve affordability. A 2020 study of fees in major Canadian cities confirmed that fees in the five BC cities studied were between 20 and 60 per cent higher in for-profit programs as compared to non-profit programs.¹⁹

While the practice of providing public capital funds for the acquisition of privately owned facilities has finally come to an end, government will need to ensure that public operating funds do not continue to pay the mortgage or leasing costs of privately owned facilities (See Section 2).

The reactive and competitive nature of the current New Spaces Fund grants continues to exacerbate ad hoc expansion without strong community planning or parallel workforce recruitment and retention strategies. And these new spaces grants continue to be funded through the child care operating budget, instead of a capital budget like other public systems. This approach reduced the operating funds available to lower fees, raise wages, and improve quality.

¹⁹ Igluka 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.

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 high quality standards, and public planning to ensure facilities meet community needs;
- Minimize public risk by ensuring that child care facilities are available and managed for the long term and not subject to risks associated with privately owned facilities (e.g., sale, insolvency, 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 in 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.

Instead, government must enshrine its recent policy of providing public capital funds only for the acquisition of non-profit, public, and Indigenous government assets. Evidence from long-term senior care confirms the risks associated with relying on for-profit provision of caring services.

We recommend that government implement a **multi-pronged approach** to deliver on this commitment.

- Undertake a **province-wide inventory** of existing child care facilities, confirming ownership, occupancy levels, capacity for expansion, and outstanding financial obligations (e.g. mortgage, lease agreement). The inventory will enable government to:
 - » Begin expansion of \$10aDay programs in identified public and non-profit facilities without significant mortgages or leases (see Section 2);
 - » Assess the long-term liabilities associated with child care programs located in privately owned facilities and begin resolving these challenges (see also Section 2); and
 - » Identify where, with additional resources, existing public or non-profit facilities have the capacity to increase enrollment and/or expand child care services in existing or new facilities.
- Establish a **multi-year major capital budget** for child care separate from the child care operating budget. This budget must be used for the development of public, non-profit, and Indigenous-led child care.
- 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, including Aboriginal Head Start.
- Establish a provincial **child care capital resource team** with child care planning and development expertise. As child care moves from a market-based system to a public system, it is essential that government develop consistent standards for high quality facilities that meet public requirements for energy efficiency and climate resiliency. This team can support school districts, regional offices, local governments, and communities to undertake child care capital expansion and support the consistent inclusion of child care in public infrastructure projects.

- 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 grounded in the comprehensive inventory of existing facilities described above. The plan must be integrated into the Ministry of Education with annual targets to achieve the promise of an accessible \$10aDay child care system.
- 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 3) this is the most rapid and cost-effective way to increase child care spaces. Through the expedited licensing protocol (that must 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.
- Develop and implement the **modular child care strategy**. As promised in the bilateral agreement, custom-designed, high quality, publicly-funded child care modular buildings should be located on public property to meet immediate child care needs while longer term planning occurs. To ensure quality and efficiency, consistent standards should be applied to bulk purchases.

TIMELINE for creating a new child care capital program

PHASE 1 (January to December 2022)

- Complete the inventory of current child care facilities.
- Replace the current new spaces fund with a capital budget within the Ministry of Education.
- Develop a provincial capital resource team.
- Revise the current \$40,000 per space cap on public funding as required to incorporate consistent standards for high-quality, climate resilient facilities.
- Develop and begin to implement a modular strategy and work with school districts to expand licensing of appropriate classrooms for school age care to meet immediate targets.

PHASE 2 (January 2023 to March 2026)

- Develop and implement consistent planning processes.
- Use the capital budget and planning process to deliver 30,000-plus non-profit, public, and Indigenous spaces.

SECTION 8

\$10aDay System Building Blocks

THE BILATERAL EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE AGREEMENT, together with new provincial funding, supports the design and implementation of system building blocks required to achieve government's commitments to child care.

Four key building blocks bring current and new child care providers together in a \$10aDay system within the Ministry of Education to benefit BC children, families, educators, and the economy:

- An equitable funding formula;
- Common operating policies and procedures;
- Child care community/neighbourhood networks; and
- Partnership agreements.

1. An equitable funding formula

The first building block is an equitable funding formula for child care operators that integrates educator compensation and parent fees, with accountability measures. A funding formula must ensure cultural safety for Indigenous children and families and 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. A funding formula would also recognize differences for programs providing child care outside of traditional operating hours. Separate formulas may be required for family and multi-age child care, recognizing their unique staffing and other characteristics.

A funding formula should be designed around four categories of child care operating budgets: human resources costs; programming costs; facility operating costs (excluding mortgage/leasing costs for private assets); and administration costs.

Examples to learn from include the funding models for new Aboriginal Head Start licensed child care programs, approaches used in other provinces such as Prince Edward Island, and internationally. A funding formula should not incentivize the growth of privately owned real estate and/or profit.

A funding formula should provide sufficient public funds to bring parent fees down to a maximum of \$10 a day for full-day care and \$7 a day for part-day care, and stabilize and improve the quality of child care.

Public funding should include:

Human resources costs: A funding formula should build from existing collective agreements and constitute approximately 80 per cent of the total program budget. For example:

- A competitive provincial wage grid for all educators, including a minimum ECE wage of \$26/hour and \$29/hour (2020 rates) for those with infant/toddler and/or special needs credentials;
- A fair, provincial benefit package;
- Professional development, working conditions, and related resources required to support implementation of BC's Early Learning Framework and pedagogical networks; and
- Other professionals working directly with children.

Programming costs, for example:

- Play and learning materials and non-capital equipment for indoor and outdoor play to meet the needs, curiosities, and diversities of children, as described in BC's Early Learning Framework;
- Healthy food; and
- Honoraria for Elders, guests, and visitors invited in to enrich the programs.

Direct facility operating costs, for example janitorial services, utilities, insurance, and repairs and maintenance.

Programs in public facilities should only be charged for these expenses on an incremental cost recovery basis. A funding formula would not include funds for mortgage/leasing costs associated with privately owned facilities. For options to address this issue see Section 2 of the Roadmap.

Administration costs, for example:

- Office and general program expenses;
- Professional fees (accounting, legal and other); and
- Program share of management and administration staffing and costs.

As programs transition to \$10aDay sites, this funding formula will integrate and replace current operating funding streams such as the Child Care Operating Fund, Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, and Wage Enhancement program.

A funding formula must support a system of high-quality care for all families who choose it. Additional resources will be required to support the inclusion of children and families with differing abilities. Resources, policies, and strategies will also be required to move toward decolonization, support equitable access and outcomes for marginalized groups, address families' needs for non-standard hours of care, and respect community/regional differences.

A funding formula should provide sufficient public funds to bring parent fees down to a maximum of \$10 a day for full-day care and \$7 a day for part-day care, and stabilize and improve the quality of child care.

2. Common operating policies and procedures

The second building block is 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 centralized, transparent waitlist policies that support the rights of children and families to access care;
- Human resource policies with consistent and equitable job titles/positions, benefit packages, etc.;
- Management and administrative policies and practices that provide consistent and comparable data collection for accountability, budgeting, reporting, and planning purposes; and
- Pandemic health and safety protocols.

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre's Administration and Management for Child Care Knowledge Base should be expanded to facilitate and support the development of these and other common policies and procedures.

3. Child care community/neighbourhood networks

The third building block is child care community/neighbourhood networks that bring together 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 larger. Supported by school districts, local governments, and child care resource and referral programs, child care networks would include all community-based child care programs that enter



into partnership agreements (see below) with the school district as well as new publicly delivered child care programs. As networks evolve, they would:

- Offer a range of services from which families can select those that meet their needs;
- Integrate child care into the broader learning community;
- Establish and help develop child care expansion plans;
- Support joint professional development, pedagogical networks, and partnerships to implement BC's Early Learning Framework (including the new framework for age 9–12);
- Build strong professional collegial relationships between ECEs and teachers;
- Work with school districts to coordinate waitlists, substitute pools, bulk purchasing, etc.; and
- Connect with the broader range of family support services.

4. Partnership agreements

The fourth building block is partnership agreements, between the Ministry of Education/school districts and child care providers as they transition into \$10aDay sites. These agreements would incorporate a funding formula and accountability requirements. They would replace current MCFD funding contracts, and for programs currently in schools or other public facilities, they would replace landlord/tenant contracts. The partnership agreements would 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 expand 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 use those funds to:

- Lower fees to a max of \$10 per day for full-day care, and \$7 per day for part-day care;
- Pay educator wages and benefits according to a provincial wage grid and benefit package;
- Provide equitable access for all children and families;
- Accept the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) for families earning under \$45,000 (adjusted for inflation), resulting in no parent fee;
- Move toward consistent language in policies and procedures;
- Implement the Early Learning Framework(s) and participate in quality enhancing/ELF activities in their district (such as pedagogical networks); and
- Participate in their local community/neighbourhood child care network.

Under these partnership agreements, the Ministry of Education and school districts would agree to:²⁰

- Provide appropriate indoor and outdoor space (without rental fees) for programs that operate in or on school grounds (as they do for all other Ministry of Education streams, e.g., StrongStart);

²⁰ Child care programs delivered by school districts would not require partnership agreements.

- Consider early childhood educators, school-age child care providers, and the families they serve integral members of the learning community;
- Recognize educators within the child care sector as professional partners in the learning community;
- Jointly plan for the implementation of the Early Learning Framework 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., local governments, health, libraries);
- Designate an associate superintendent within the district responsible for early care and learning; and
- Develop and support child care community/neighbourhood networks.

TIMELINE for developing the four system building blocks

PHASE 1 (January to December 2022)

- Design an equitable funding formula consulting with stakeholders, the sector, and experts.
- Ensure funds in BC Budget 2022 to develop the wage grid for all educators in the child care sector.
- Wherever possible, implement the new funding formula for new \$10aDay programs.
- Move toward common policies and procedures with a priority on pandemic protocols, inclusion policies, and comparable accounting and human resource policies.
- Implement common policies in new \$10aDay programs and support existing programs to move toward these policies as they transition to \$10aDay programs.
- Begin development of community/neighbourhood networks through engaging with school districts, child care resource and referral programs, and pedagogical networks.
- Develop a partnership agreement template with providers, beginning with school-age care, and implement these agreements with on-site providers that are \$10aDay programs.

PHASE 2 (January 2023 to March 2026)

- Implement a funding formula in all new programs that receive public capital dollars and in existing programs as they transition to \$10aDay operations.
- Ensure funds in BC Budget 2023 and beyond to fully implement the wage grid for educators.
- Develop and implement remaining common policies and protocols with programs participating in the new system beginning with the implementation of consistent waitlist policies in collaboration with operators and school districts.
- Implement and support community/neighbourhood networks as the system moves toward \$10aDay.
- Implement partnership agreements with non-profit providers operating new \$10aDay programs and existing programs that transition to \$10aDay sites.

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