



YMCA Child Care Policy Recommendations for British Columbia



It is a critical time for early learning and child care in BC. The British Columbia Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement has presented exciting new opportunities to help children reach their full developmental potential. Additionally, high-quality child care is foundational for equity, social justice, and economic growth.

We are encouraged by the commitment of all levels of government to improve affordability, enhance access, and foster quality and inclusive care for all. However, several challenges threaten our ability to thrive and grow as a sector. We need a strong and resilient workforce, a long-term and sustainable funding model, and the full inclusion of school age child care in the ChildCareBC strategy. We will continue to work closely with governments and other stakeholders to realize the Province's goal of delivering high-quality and affordable child care to more families.



A STRONG AND RESILIENT CHILD CARE WORKFORCE

Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) are the backbone of our child care system and the long-standing workforce shortage of ECEs represents the most significant barrier to achieving the Province's space creation goals. With almost 900 preschool and school age staff, the YMCAs of BC have various recruitment and retention strategies. Our efforts include participation in the Work Integrated Learning program and offering the online Responsible Adult Course for free. Despite our organizational efforts, we, like other non-profit child care providers across BC, struggle to open all licensed spaces because of this workforce shortage.

YMCA's Recommendations to the Government of BC:

1. Implement a salary grid

The salary grid should be competitive and take regional variability and cost-of-living indicators into account. It should include child care staff with all certification levels.

2. Enhance the ECE Work Integrated Learning Program

Scale up this effective program and prioritize implementation in communities with newly approved capital builds to ensure there are sufficient staff when those spaces open.

3. Invest in innovative affordable housing support for child care staff

Expand affordable housing pilots to support child care staff, prioritizing regions where the high cost of housing is a significant barrier to the growth of child care services.

4. Remove barriers for internationally trained child care professionals

Simplify the recruitment and credential recognition process for internationally trained child care professionals.

A SUSTAINABLE AND STABLE FUNDING MODEL

A long-term, sustainable funding approach is needed to ensure non-profit child care providers can cover the costs of delivering high-quality services. The Province can immediately lay a stable foundation for the future by addressing the challenges related to the Affordability Benchmark and the 3% cap on annual fee increases, and issues regarding both capital and operational funding.

YMCA's Recommendations to the Government of BC:

1. Create a localized approach to fee regulations

A market range approach, rather than the current Affordability Benchmark and 3% fee cap, would give providers the flexibility to maintain their operational models while ensuring the delivery of high-quality child care.

2. Accelerate the expansion of \$10 a Day

For experienced \$10 a Day providers, waive the one-year waiting period to allow new spaces to open immediately under the \$10 a Day system.

3. Enhance and expand operational funding stipulations

Transition from annual renewals of Child Care Operating Funding to longer-term agreements to offer stability for providers. Additionally, ensure that operational funding adequately adjusts for inflation and the costs associated with funding administration.

4. Enhance and expand capital funding stipulations

Broaden capital funding to include asset acquisition and maintenance, including elements such as indoor play structures and smaller play materials (e.g. toys and books vital to the delivery of high-quality child care). The funding should also cover costs incurred before the centre opens, including start up expenses related to recruitment, training, and rent.

A STRENGTHENED SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE SYSTEM

School age child care provides families with the flexibility to pursue meaningful workforce participation and ensure the continued growth and development of children before and after school. The YMCA operates over 3,500 licensed school age child care spaces in partnership with school districts and municipalities in diverse urban, rural, and remote communities across BC. While there has been progress towards affordable school age care, there is still more room for effective collaboration between the non-profit sector, the provincial government, school districts, and local governments to ensure that school age children receive adequate support.

YMCA's Recommendations to the Government of BC:

1. Strengthen the school age child care workforce

Provide school age child care staff with the same wage enhancements, professional development opportunities, and bursaries that are available to ECEs.

2. Foster partnerships and collaboration between school districts and non-profit providers

Provide clear communications and guidelines to school districts to support effective partnerships with non-profit providers in the delivery of high quality child care on school grounds.

3. Facilitate collaboration between teachers and child care professionals

Encourage engagement and information-sharing between child care providers and teachers to create more opportunities for collaborative goal setting and advance child development in efficient, inclusive and innovative ways.

THE YMCAS OF BC

The YMCA is a charity that provides vital community services to advance the health and well-being of all British Columbians. YMCAs provide child care to over 6,000 early years and school age children making us the largest licensed child care provider in BC, with the capacity for significant expansion. The YMCA nurtures children through two acclaimed national curricula which are grounded in research, regularly and rigorously evaluated, and well-aligned with BC's Early Learning Framework. We work in partnership with all levels of government and community partners in the delivery of high-quality child care across BC.



YMCA BC - bc.ymca.ca

YMCA of Southern Interior BC - ymcasibc.ca

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