

City of Richmond

Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy

2020 Update



Community Social Development Department



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Introduction

The City of Richmond has made a significant commitment to support the development of child care over the past thirty years and continues to be a municipal leader in fostering the conditions for a comprehensive child care system in Richmond. The City recognizes that child care is a vital service that supports a wide range of the community's population including residents, employees, employers and post-secondary students. Child care also creates opportunities to support healthy child development and outcomes for children. The *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* provides a framework of ongoing, short, medium and long-term actions for completion over a five-year span to guide and support expanded and enhanced child care options for families in Richmond.

The City's role is to provide leadership in creating and nurturing child care in Richmond as this is important to the liveability of the city. The City demonstrates a commitment to child care through the establishment of child care statutory reserve funds; bylaws and policies that support and provide opportunities for additional child care; the process of securing child care amenities through development; and the allocation of staffing resources focused on this important community service. The City currently owns ten purpose-built child care facilities with an additional child care facility and two Early Childhood Development Hubs under construction. These existing and secured facilities will provide approximately 569 licensed child care spaces.

Since the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* was adopted in July 2017, there has been significant progress in addressing the actions outlined in the strategy. Achievements from the first two and a half years of the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* were outlined in the *2018* and *2019 Updates*. The following report provides a high-level summary of the accomplishments and endeavours the City and community have accomplished in 2020.



About the Strategy

The *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* was adopted by City Council on July 24, 2017. It is the fourth child care needs assessment undertaken by the City since 1995 and provides insight into the status of child care in Richmond. This five-year plan for the City outlines steps to support the development of a healthy child care system in the community and guides the City's actions. In addition, it recommends that the City and other stakeholders work together to address the need for quality, affordable and accessible child care spaces in Richmond.

The City of Richmond's first municipal child care strategy was created in 1991. The vision for the current five-year strategy is for the City to build on three decades of work to continue to support the development and expansion of a child care system in Richmond. The *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* involved a comprehensive review and analysis of the child care landscape in Richmond. It was developed with participation from the public and child care operators through focus groups and surveys, as well as engagement with key stakeholders. The award-winning strategy was commended for being outcome-based with short-term and long-term actions. Its commitment to inclusiveness and representing the needs of Richmond's diverse community was also significant.

The strategy identifies emerging trends in early child development and early learning including securing Early Childhood Development Hubs with co-located child care and family support services, and the importance of multi-lingual community engagement. It is recognized as a high-quality resource among other municipalities and the City has established itself as a leader in the development of this planning document and the creation of community child care spaces.



Implementation Priorities

In the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy*, seven strategic directions and thirty-two recommended actions were adopted to address the current and future needs related to child care in Richmond. The seven strategic directions are:

- 1 Strategic Direction #1:** Policy and Planning
- 2 Strategic Direction #2:** Creating and Supporting Spaces
- 3 Strategic Direction #3:** Advocacy
- 4 Strategic Direction #4:** Accessibility and Inclusion
- 5 Strategic Direction #5:** Collaboration and Partnership
- 6 Strategic Direction #6:** Research, Promotion and Marketing
- 7 Strategic Direction #7:** Monitoring and Renewal

These strategic directions have guided the City's priorities since 2017. Over the next year, the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* will continue to provide focus and direction for the development of quality, affordable and accessible child care spaces in Richmond.



The Reality of 2020 – The Impact of COVID-19 on the Child Care Sector

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had wide-reaching impacts on the world. Between January and late March, cases of COVID-19 in Canada were initially linked to international travel and by the end of this period, local transmission had become the primary source of COVID-19 transmission across the country.¹ The Canadian border was closed and every Canadian province and territory declared a state of emergency.

To understand the preliminary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child care sector and children's health and well-being, the City of Richmond completed a review of available provincial and national-level research and information. The sections below provide information on the data and research that is currently available. As the pandemic is ongoing, the long-term outcomes and impacts on the child care sector and the economy continue to evolve and will be monitored over the upcoming year.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Child Care in Canada

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted the lives of Canadian children and families. Many families have faced changes to or loss of employment, closures of schools and child care programs and significant reductions in interpersonal interactions resulting in isolation and decreased mental health. In addition, these changes have profoundly impacted child care across Canada. The loss of, or significant reduction in, access to both education and child care has and continues to negatively impact children's health and well-being, family functioning and economic stability.²

Public health orders and recommendations, as well as the regulation of child care, are determined individually by each province or territory. Across Canada, there were some regions where child care was closed completely, including Alberta and Quebec, or provided only limited access for the children of essential service workers, such as Ontario and Saskatchewan. In other regions, such as in British Columbia, child care was not ordered to close by public health or regulatory bodies. This resulted in individual organizations and operators determining if they would remain open, creating confusion and uncertainty for many in the sector.



1 Source: Canadian Healthcare Network (2020) COVID-19: A Canadian timeline Retrieved online December 8, 2020 from: <https://www.canadianhealthcarenetwork.ca/covid-19-a-canadian-timeline>.
2 Source: Human Early Learning Partnership (2020) BC Healthy Child Development Alliance, October 7, 2020 .



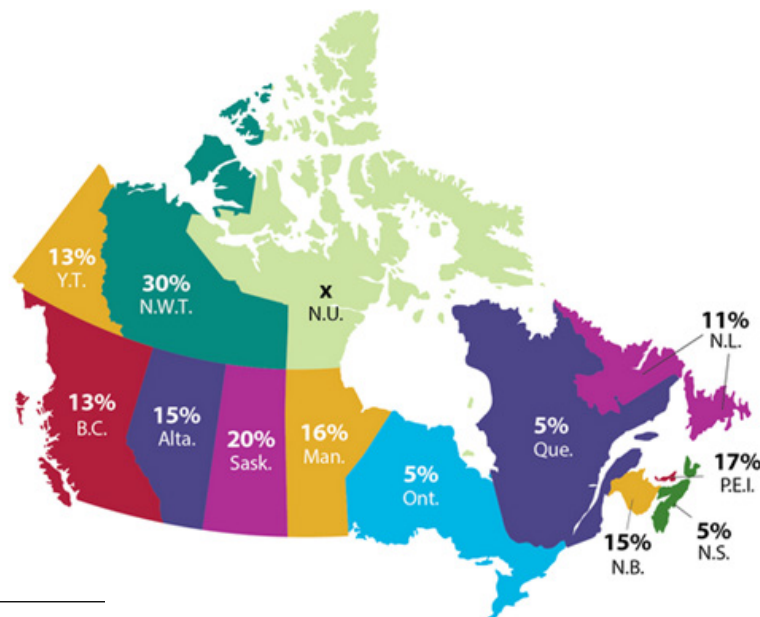
Child Care Usage

Child care is typically in very high demand across Canada with a lack of licensed or regulated child care spaces in many communities. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, child care supported families who were working or attending school, in addition to enhancing and stimulating children’s early learning. In 2019, approximately 60% of children aged 0 to 5 years in Canada participated in a formal or informal child care arrangement.³

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, child care use by Canadian families has changed dramatically. Many families are working from home or have altered their child care situations in response to the wide-spread closures of schools and child care programs. In some provinces, such as Manitoba, child care fees were waived regardless of children’s attendance. In other provinces, such as British Columbia and Ontario, steps were taken to ensure that families who were not using their child care space or where programs had closed, were not required to pay child care fees.

Statistics Canada completed a study titled “Child care use during and after the pandemic”.⁴ This national poll gathered information from over 32,000 people and a report outlining this data was released on July 29, 2020. The study outlined child care usage across Canada during the first wave of COVID-19. It gathered information on parents’ experiences as well as their needs and intentions regarding their children’s return to child care once the pandemic has ended. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of parents who indicated they had access to and used child care across Canada during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Child care use during the COVID-19 pandemic, by province and territory⁴



³ Source: Findlay L (2019) Early learning and child care for children aged 0-5 years: A provincial/territorial portrait Econ. Insights Vol. 11-62.

⁴ Source: Subedi R, Greenberg L, & Turcotte M (2020) StatCan COVID-19 : Data to Insights for a Better Canada: Child care use during and after the COVID-19 pandemic Stat. Canada. Retrieved online November 27, 2020 from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00062-eng.pdf>.

Health and Safety Measures

Across Canada, child care facilities that remained open or gradually reopened as the pandemic progressed, were mandated to adhere to additional provincial and local public health guidelines. These included a range of measures that were typically linked to the level of COVID-19 in the surrounding community and the general public health guidelines for that region. Additional measures included:

- Enhanced ratios of staff to children;
- Reduced group sizes;
- Increased time outdoors and enhanced outdoor learning;
- Use of cohorts or consistent groupings of children and staff;
- Restrictions on parents or visitors in programs;
- Enhanced exclusion criteria for those displaying signs of illness;
- Additional cleaning and sanitizing procedures; and
- Use of masks and other personal protective equipment, where appropriate.

These measures were required of licensed and regulated child care programs and are anticipated to remain in place for the duration of the pandemic.

Federal Government Funding

On July 16, 2020, as part of the Government of Canada Safe Restart Agreement, the Federal Government announced \$625 million in support for the provinces and territories to address the reduced availability of child care spaces and the unique needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds were to be used by each province to ensure that safe and sufficient child care spaces were available to support parents' gradual return to work.

Long-Term Impact

The impact of COVID-19 on the national child care landscape in Canada has been significant and pervasive. Local community COVID-19 levels and related provincial and local health orders continue to impact the provision of child care in many provinces. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the critical role that child care plays as an essential service to support Canada's economic viability. In addition, it has highlighted the importance of a national early care and learning strategy that includes the provision of licensed child care. Ongoing monitoring of the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the child care sector will continue for the foreseeable future.

COVID-19 and Child Care in BC

On March 17, 2020, BC Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Henry, declared COVID-19 a public health emergency in British Columbia (BC). Licensed child care in BC was not required to close by a public health order however, early in the pandemic, parents were directed to care for their children at home if they were able to. While Provincial Health Officer (PHO) directions and BC Center for Disease





Control (BCCDC) guidelines indicated that child care programs could safely continue to operate, many families kept their children at home and many child care programs closed out of an abundance of caution. Some child care programs remained open only for children whose parents worked in essential services.

Following the declaration of the COVID-19-related public health emergency and provincial state of emergency, public schools in BC did not reopen following spring break (end of March) and remained closed until June 1 when a modified reopening was introduced. Schools resumed full-time, in-person instruction in September. Playgrounds and public facilities in many municipalities were closed in late March with playgrounds in Surrey, Vancouver, Richmond and on the North Shore re-opening June 1. These factors impacted both the child care needs of families and child care operations for many providers.

Emergency Child Care For Essential Workers

During the early stages of the pandemic, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) programs across the province were tasked with new responsibilities to track vacant child care spaces in their community and facilitate referrals for families working in essential service roles who required child care. This process was very successful with over 2,650 essential service workers across BC referred to a licensed child care provider by late April.⁵ The spaces were prioritized for children whose parents work in public health and health services, social services and law enforcement, first responders and emergency response sectors with surplus spaces available for families working in other essential roles.

Health and Safety Measures

In March, information about COVID-19 was sent to child care providers by local health authorities which indicated:

- While local community transmission of COVID-19 in BC was low and many people (particularly children) experience mild illness, people should limit contact with others.
- All child care facilities that continue to operate must follow the COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings from the BCCDC and the BC Ministry of Health, in addition to the existing Child Care Licensing Regulation.

These guidelines were initially provided by the BCCDC on March 24, 2020 and have been updated periodically throughout the pandemic.

On May 19, 2020, parents were advised by the Public Health Officer that they were able to return their children to child care, if they chose to do so.⁶ Child care programs that remained open were required to follow the enhanced protocols but were able to operate with the adult to child ratios and groups sizes outlined in the existing Child Care Licensing Regulation.

⁵ Ministry of Children and Family Development (2020) BC's essential service workers matched with child care.

⁶ Ministry of Children and Family Development (2020) Support for child care continues during COVID-19 recovery.

Provincial Government Funding

On April 1, 2020, Provincial Government support was provided to child care providers through the Temporary Emergency Child Care Fund (TEF). This fund was implemented to provide support to operators and relieve the financial burden on families who were following the public health direction and not accessing their existing child care spaces. The details included:

- All families who were able to, should care for their children at home.
- All operators who accessed this funding must not charge child care fees to families who were caring for their children at home due to COVID-19, must hold spaces for any children who were registered in the program prior to the pandemic and allow them to return following the pandemic.
- Operators who remained open had access to funding which covered approximately 75% of their operating expenses. These operators prioritized spaces for essential workers on a temporary basis. Families who accessed child care spaces in these programs continued to pay regular child care fees to the operator. Subsidy and fee reduction programs through the Province continued to be available.
- Operators who closed their programs could apply for funding (equal to approximately 20% of their operating expenses) to support their fixed expenses such as rent and utilities. This funding was only provided to operators who agreed to not charge any child care fees to parents during the period of closure.

The Provincial Government invested \$38 million in the TEF program to ensure essential service workers continued to have access to licensed child care, and centres that closed would be financially stable enough to reopen. As of April 16, 2020, 2,530 child care centres offering up to 58,650 spaces around BC were receiving funding through the Temporary Emergency Funding Program to support them to remain open.⁷ Just over 1,400 facilities who closed also received funding through TEF.

In June, the Temporary Inclusion Support Fund was established by the Province to help child care providers create an inclusive space for children of Essential Service Workers who have disabilities, special needs or require extra support. The funding was available for the purchase of eligible equipment up to a maximum of \$2,000 per child care facility.

On September 1, 2020 the TEF ended, and child care centres receiving this provincial funding returned to their pre-pandemic funding levels and enrolment. Families who had previously not been attending their child care program were required to resume paying child care fees regardless of their child's actual attendance. Child care spaces were no longer held without payment for children who were not attending.

In response to the increased costs of implementing the COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings, the Province implemented the Child Care



⁷ Ministry of Children and Family Development (2020) BC's essential service workers matched with child care.



Health and Safety Grant Program in November 2020. This one-time funding program supported eligible child care facilities with increased janitorial and front-line staffing to ensure enhanced cleaning and sanitizing of facilities and increased supply costs related to COVID-19.

Ongoing Impacts

At this time, the COVID-19 pandemic continues and has both highlighted the vulnerability of the child care sector in BC and confirmed its role as an essential service to families. Public health guidelines continue to recommend children spend increased time outside as an effective way to reduce transmission of COVID-19. This has created a renewed interest in outdoor programming and inclusion of outdoor programs within the existing child care regulations. Again, the long-term implications of the pandemic on the child care sector in BC will not be clearly known for some time and require further monitoring and research at the local level.

COVID-19 and Child Care in Richmond

The impacts of COVID-19 on child care facilities in Richmond initially became evident towards the end of March. By March 20th, City staff learned that, across the nine facilities owned by the City and leased to non-profit operators at the time, approximately 20% of the children were attending due to the pandemic. By March 30th, this had dropped to less than 10% attendance in City-owned facilities.

While child care providers awaited direction on COVID-19 health and safety protocols from Vancouver Coastal Health, the BCCDC and Community Care Facilities Licensing, they began to experience staffing shortages. Staff with any respiratory symptoms which could be caused by COVID-19 were required to self-isolate and were unable to work. As a result, and combined with significantly decreased attendance, many programs closed, while others remained open with very low numbers of children or reduced the number of locations where they offered programs in an effort to reduce costs. Some programs restricted access to only those families working in essential services.

Emergency Child Care For Essential Workers

As COVID-19 cases rose in the community and child care programs began to close, the City initiated an Emergency Child Care Working Group to share information, respond to community needs and collaborate across organizations. The primary focus of this team, which included the City of Richmond Child Care Section, Vancouver Coastal Health-Community Care Facilities Licensing, Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral and the Richmond School District, was to ensure consistent and accurate information regarding current child care options was available to essential service workers during the pandemic, especially those in health care, law enforcement and first responders. The City provided regular updates on the availability of child care to the Richmond Emergency Operations Centre, the Richmond Division of Family Practice, Richmond Fire Rescue and the Canadian Armed Forces.

As of April 1, 2020, when the Temporary Emergency Funding came into place, there were approximately 1,066 spaces vacant and available across the city for temporary child care for essential service workers in Richmond. These spaces were in a wide range of locations and across all age groups (birth to 12 years). All child care providers who lease City-owned facilities continued to operate, although some reduced the number of facilities open due to reduced parental demand for care. The licensed child care programs operated by Community Associations and Societies in Richmond community centres, which had closed in late March, remained closed.

With schools closed, the Richmond School District implemented an 'on-site supervision' program from 8:00am – 4:00pm for children of parents working in essential services who were unable to arrange alternate child care for their children during school hours. Despite initial interest from approximately 160 families, by April 15 there were only 26 children attending at three locations: Brighthouse, Gilmore and McNeely Elementary Schools. By early May, usage of this service had increased to 47 children and additional in-person, school-based supports were put in place for students deemed vulnerable by the School District or their family.

Resumption of Services

On June 1, 2020, in-person classes partially resumed for students in the Richmond School District. In addition, the City of Richmond and Richmond School District reopened playgrounds which had been closed on March 24 to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

By July, additional child care facilities reopened and others indicated they would resume operations over the summer in part due to the increased demand for school age child care during the summer months. In July, licensed child care programs (preschool and school age care) operated by Community Associations and Societies in community centres that typically operate during the summer also reopened in Richmond.

In August, in response to numerous questions from child care providers related to the reopening of schools, the City convened a group of large, licensed school age child care operators to discuss protocols and procedures between schools and child care operators. The group compiled a comprehensive list of questions and met with the Richmond School District to discuss challenges and explore opportunities to ensure the health and safety of all involved. A plan was developed, information and resources were shared, and follow up continued throughout September.

Ongoing Monitoring

As the Fall progressed, community transmission of COVID-19 increased, and additional public health orders and restrictions were implemented in response. Due to the strict health protocols in effect in child care facilities, transmission within these settings was uncommon.





Many parents, concerned for their children’s health or as a result of working from home, withdrew their children from child care completely, releasing spaces that were previously in high demand and often had long waitlists. This resulted in unprecedented child care vacancies, especially in school age programs. The financial impacts of reduced enrollment for child care providers in Richmond, combined with the loss of financial support provided through the Temporary Emergency Funding Program, are not yet fully understood. Low enrollment of even one or two spaces in a child care facility impacts the financial viability of an already vulnerable sector. Ongoing monitoring and additional research will continue into 2021 and will be critical to understanding the long-term implications of COVID-19 for child care operations in Richmond.

COVID-19 Impact on Child Care Spaces

Richmond

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child care spaces in Richmond has been significant. Due to the increased role and responsibilities of the Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral Program in tracking the child care spaces available for Essential Service Workers, additional, detailed data was available regarding the patterns and trends of the temporary child care closures from March to November 2020.

Vancouver Coastal Health-Community Care Facilities Licensing data for Richmond identified 6,827 licensed child care spaces and 300 licensed programs in operation on March 25, 2020. In late-March, many child care programs temporarily closed, reducing the number of licensed child care spaces in operation for families.

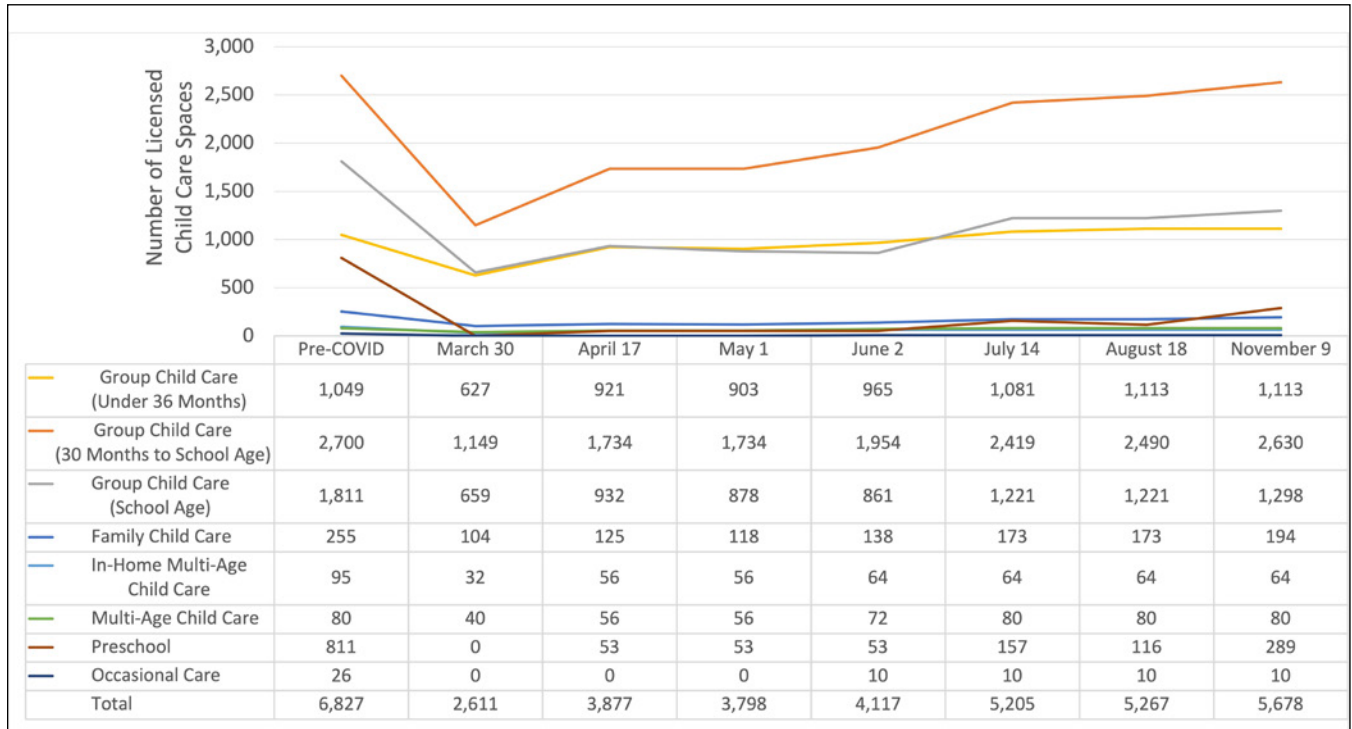
By May 1, 2020, a reported 3,029 licensed child care spaces were temporarily closed in Richmond. This represents approximately half of all licensed child care spaces in the city. As seen in Figure 2 and Table 1, all types of licensed child care faced significant temporary closures at the onset of the pandemic. Approximately 200 programs providing licensed child care were closed in late-March including all licensed Preschool spaces in Richmond. During this same time period, significant closures and a reduction in child care spaces were seen in Group Care (30 Months to School Age), Group Care (Under 36 Months), and Group Care (School Age).

By June 2020, the number of licensed child care spaces in operation had gradually begun to increase but had not yet met pre-COVID-19 numbers. Table 1 displays the change in licensed child care spaces between early March (pre-COVID-19) and June 2, 2020. Between June and November 2020, licensed child care spaces continued to reopen and provide additional care to families (Figure 2). As of November 9, 2020, most types of care had reopened to serve the Richmond community. However, Preschool and Group Care (School Age) continued to have reduced operating capacity due to ongoing facility closures.

Table 1: Change in the Number of Licensed Child Care Spaces, by month and type of care, March 25 – June 2, 2020

Child Care Type	Change in Operational Licensed Child Care Spaces			
	Pre-COVID to March 30		Pre-COVID to June 2	
	Number	%	Number	%
Family Childcare	-151	59%	-117	46%
Group Childcare (30 Months to School Age)	-1,551	57%	-746	28%
Group Childcare (School Age)	-1,152	64%	-950	52%
Group Childcare (Under 36 Months)	-422	40%	-84	8%
In-Home Multi-Age Childcare	-63	66%	-31	33%
Multi-Age Childcare	-40	50%	-8	10%
Occasional Care	-26	100%	-16	62%
Preschool	-811	100%	-758	93%
Total	-4,216	62%	-2,710	40%

Figure 2: Change in the Number of Licensed Child Care Spaces by month and type of care, March 2020–November 2020

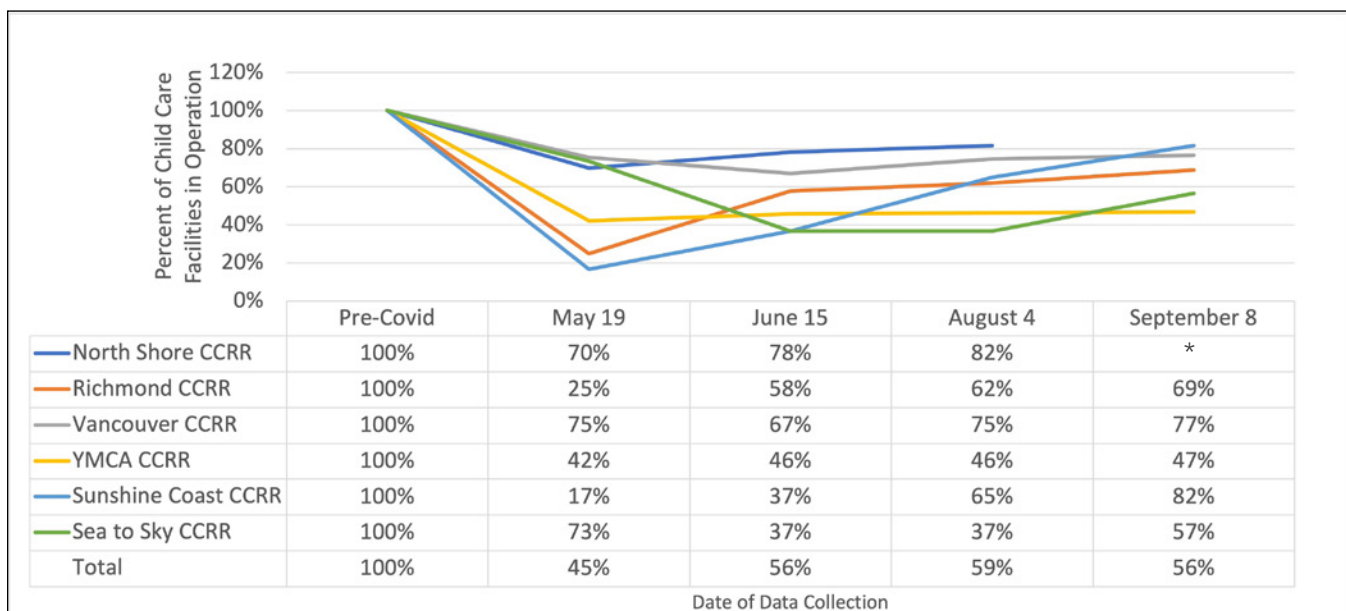


Vancouver Coastal and North Fraser Health Authorities

In addition to the information available for Richmond, Child Care Resource and Referral Centres (CCRR) across Vancouver Coastal Health and parts of the North Fraser region collected data on temporary closures of child care centres in their respective geographic areas. Figure 3 shows the changes in licensed child care from 100% capacity in March (pre-Covid) to September 2020 in available CCRR locations including, North Shore, Richmond, Vancouver, Sunshine Coast, Sea to Sky, and the YMCA CCRR which includes Burnaby, New Westminister, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody and several smaller communities.

In comparison to the other municipalities reporting data, Richmond was among those reporting significant child care space closures by the middle of May. As a proportion of normal operating capacity, Richmond reported some of the highest closure rates at 75%, exceeded only by the Sunshine Coast at 83%. While child care programs gradually reopened by September 2020, this data identifies the ongoing widespread impacts to individual child care operators during the pandemic, highlighting the fragility and fragmentation in the BC child care sector. The City will continue to work with individuals and organizations across Metro Vancouver to assess the implications and opportunities the COVID-19 pandemic has presented.

Figure 3: Percent of Child Care Facilities in Operation, in Comparison to Normal Operating Capacity, by CCRR Region^{8,9}



* Data not available for this region and date

8 YMCA CCRR collects data from Burnaby, New Westminister, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody and several smaller communities.

9 Note: some licensed providers choose not to be on the CCRR referral database and are not reflected in this data.

The 2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan

Supporting New Space Creation in Richmond

The City of Richmond maintains a commitment to child care and promotes the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive child care system to provide accessible and affordable quality programs. The Council-adopted *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* has guided the City's response to the provision of accessible and affordable quality child care programs in Richmond. Since 2017, the City has undergone significant growth and changes in population and cityscape; as such the needs of the community have also shifted. For example, there has been a surge in population growth and infrastructure development within the City Centre planning area. As a result of these changes in the community, it was important to collect recent information to determine if the current child care availability and growth are meeting the needs of families across the city.

The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Child Care Planning Program provides funding for local governments to engage in child care planning activities in order to develop a community child care space creation action plan. In March 2020, the City was successful in receiving a \$25,000 UBCM 2020 Community Child Care Planning Program Grant. Through partnerships and engagement, the goals of this project, which is currently underway, are to:

- Update the inventory of child care spaces in Richmond;
- Identify or confirm areas of greatest community need;
- Identify space creation targets over the next 10 years; and,
- Identify actions that can be taken to meet those targets.

The project involved a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) including representatives from the City of Richmond, Richmond Child Care Development Advisory Committee and community organizations including the Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health, the operators of City-owned child care facilities; Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives; Touchstone Family Association; Richmond Family Place and Family Services of Greater Vancouver.

The methodology for this project included a review of existing background and demographic information, collection of existing quantitative data and qualitative input from the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, child care providers and community organizations supporting children and families. The findings and resulting *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan* outline Richmond's demographics and child care needs, emerging trends, and align with the City of Richmond's strategic mandate and objectives. The *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan* is anticipated to be released in the Spring 2021.





In 2020 there were
30 CHILD CARE SPACES per 100
children from birth to 12 years
in Richmond.



A Summary of Richmond’s Child Care Inventory

The 2021–2031 *Richmond Child Care Action Plan* included an update to the inventory of child care spaces in Richmond. As part of the 2017–2022 *Richmond Child Care Space Needs Assessment and Strategy*, an analysis of licensed child care space in 2016 was conducted. This profile of child care spaces in Richmond was included in the 2018 *Update* and the 2019 *Update*, both of which used 2016 Census data for population information. In the City of Richmond’s 2019 *Update*, it was reported that child care spaces increased by 5.7% from 2018 to 2019.

Information on licensed child care spaces was collected in November 2020 to provide updated data on child care spaces in Richmond. To compare trends over time, information on licensed child care spaces from Vancouver Coastal Health and 2016 Census Data was used to calculate child care space profiles for Richmond Planning Areas. Information on licensed child care spaces was analyzed with child population data to create a 2020 inventory of child care spaces. This information will be used to inform child care planning and priorities for the City.

While child care operations were dramatically impacted in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of licensed child care spaces increased by 3% between 2019 and 2020 (Table 2). A total of 219 new child care spaces were added in 2020, amounting to a total of 7,022 licensed child care spaces in Richmond. In addition, the change in licensed child care spaces between 2016 and 2020 is significant, with 1,220 new child care spaces in Richmond over the past four years.

In the past year, the number of new licensed Group Care (Under 36 Months) spaces represent the majority of the increase in licensed child care spaces in Richmond. This is similar to the trend seen in 2019, where a 10.2% increase in licensed Group Care (Under 36 Months) spaces experienced the largest growth in a single year of any type of care. As indicated in Table 3 and Figure 3, there are currently 23.1 licensed Group Care (Under 36 Months) spaces per 100 children aged 0 to 2 years in Richmond. While this varies by Planning Area, large increases in the number of spaces for the 0 to 2 years age group addresses a priority area outlined in the 2017–2022 *Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy*.

Increases in the number of Group Care (30 Months to School Age) and Group Care (School Age) spaces in Richmond have also been seen since 2016. There are currently 53.7 Group Care (30 Months to School Age) child care spaces per 100 children aged 3 to 5 years in Richmond (Table 3 and Figure 4). Group Care (School Age) has experienced significantly less change in the number of licensed spaces with overall growth of 9% but a decrease of five spaces between 2019 and 2020. (Table 2). In Richmond there are currently 14.2 Group Care (School Age) child care spaces per 100 children aged 6 to 12 years (Table 3 and Figure 5).

Availability of Child Care Spaces

Table 2: Trends in Licensed Child Care Spaces in Richmond: 2016 - 2020

Type of Care	Number of Licensed Child Care Spaces				Change 2016 - 2020		Change 2019 - 2020	
	2016	2018	2019	2020	Change in spaces	% Change	Change in spaces	% Change
Group Care - Under 36 Months	664	928	1,023	1,211	547	82%	188	18%
Group Care - 30 Months to School Age	2,103	2,581	2,708	2,850	747	36%	142	5%
Group Care - School Age	1,666	1,685	1,822	1,817	151	9%	-5	0%
Family Child Care	341	234	248	197	-144	-42%	-51	-21%
In-home Multi-age Care	81	104	105	72	-9	-11%	-33	-31%
Multi-age Care	88	96	80	120	32	36%	40	50%
Preschool	819	769	791	729	-90	-11%	-62	-8%
Occasional Care	40	42	26	26	-14	-35%	0	0%
Total	5,802	6,439	6,803	7,022	1,220	21%	219	3%

Table 3: Group Child Care Spaces per 100 Children by Type of Child Care License

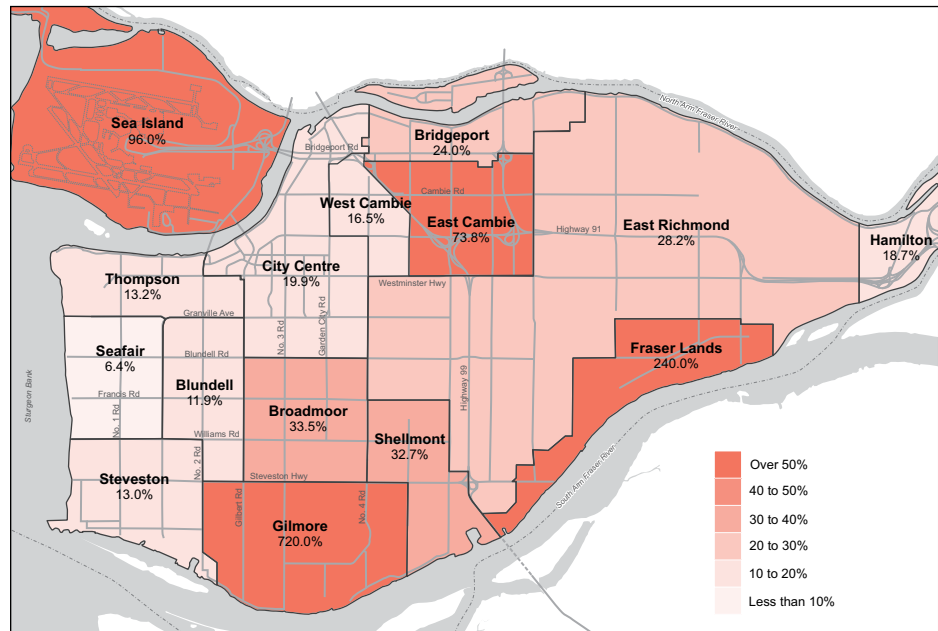
Type of Child Care License	Number of Licensed Child Care Spaces	Child Population	Child Care Spaces per 100 Children
Group Care (Under 36 Months)	1,211	5,250	23.1
Group Care (30 Months to School Age)	2,850	5,305	53.7
Licensed Group Care (School-Age)	1,817	12,830	14.2
Total	7,022*	23,385	30.0*

* Note: Includes family child care, multi-age care, in-home care, occasional care and preschool programs.



In 2020 there were **23.1 GROUP CARE (UNDER 36 MONTHS) SPACES** per 100 children aged 0 to 2 years in Richmond

Figure 4: Percent of Child Care Need Met for Children Aged 0 to 2 Years through Licensed Group Care (Under 36 Months), by Planning Area, 2020¹⁰

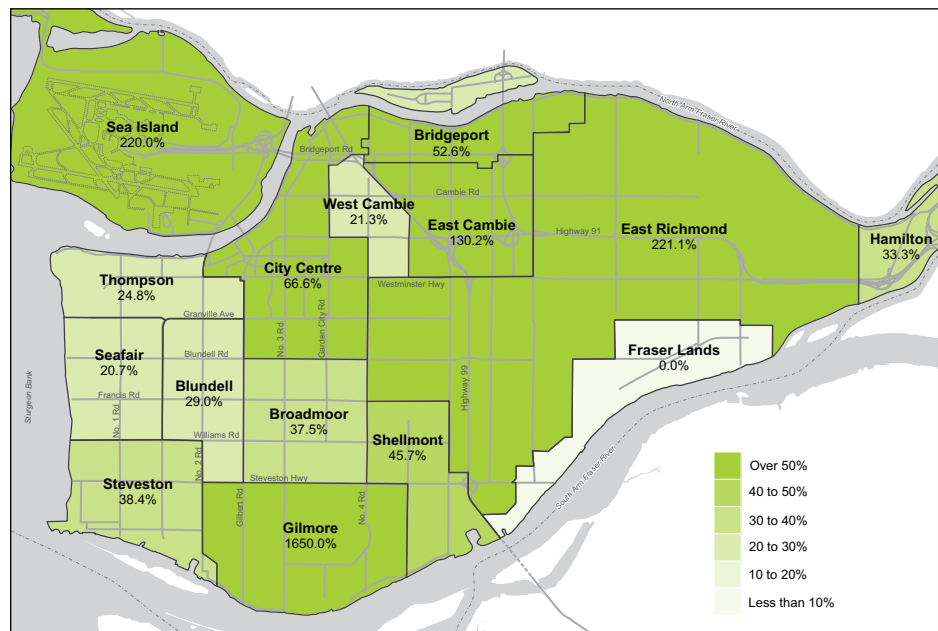


10 Note: Does not include family child care, multi-age care, in-home care, occasional care or preschool programs.



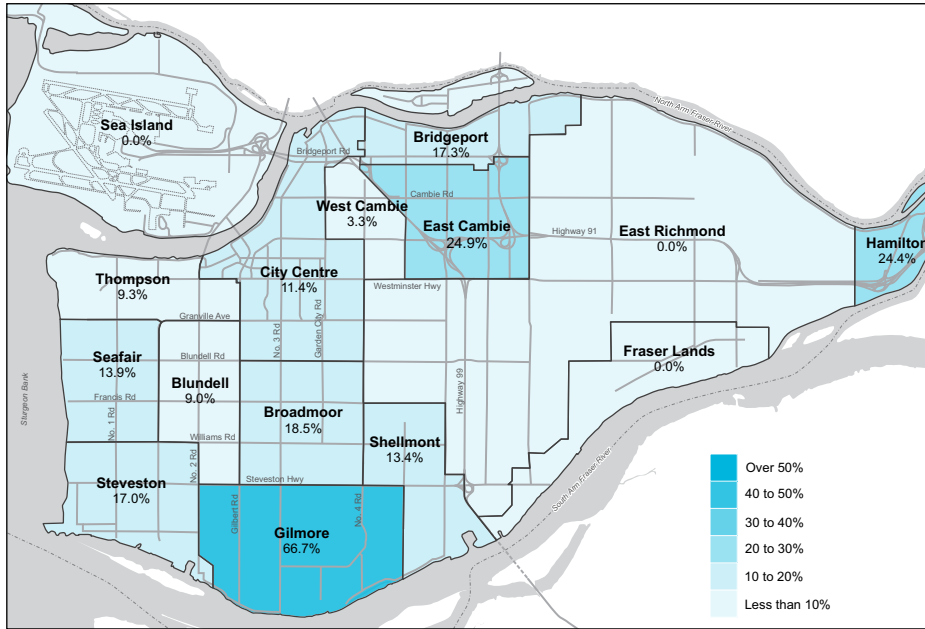
In 2020 there were **53.7 GROUP CARE (30 MONTHS TO SCHOOL AGE) SPACES** per 100 children aged 3 to 5 years in Richmond

Figure 5: Percent of Child Care Need Met for Children Aged 3 to 5 Years through Licensed Group Care (30 Months to School Age), by Planning Area, 2020¹¹



11 Note: Does not include family child care, multi-age care, in-home care, occasional care or preschool programs.

Figure 6: Percent of Child Care Need Met for Children Aged 6 to 12 Years through Licensed Group Care (School Age), by Planning Area, 2020¹²



In 2020, there were **14.2 GROUP CARE (SCHOOL AGE) SPACES** per 100 children.

12 Note: Does not include family child care, multi-age care, in-home care, occasional care or preschool programs.



Progress

The *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* outlines 32 recommended actions to accomplish throughout the five-year period. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of accomplishments that have occurred since the implementation of the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy - 2019 Update*.

2020 Significant Achievements

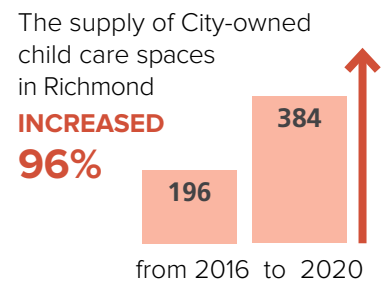
In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City undertook the following actions:

- Enhanced communication and dissemination of information with Richmond child care providers on funding and supports available to operators, as well as national and international research and best practices.
- Convened community and public partners to coordinate and share information regarding emergency child care for essential workers. This included the Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health Child Care Licensing and Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral. Information was shared with the Richmond Emergency Operations Centre, Richmond Fire Rescue, RCMP, Canadian Armed Forces, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Richmond Division of Family Practice.
- Engaged in a systems-level approach in response to supporting child care providers by convening groups (e.g. operators of City-owned facilities, large school age providers), polling organizations to collect sector level data and connecting the child care sector to public partners (e.g. Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond School District).
- Modified the programming for Child Care month to provide free, online professional development focused on child care provision outdoors (a recommended best practice during COVID-19).



In addition to these critical and necessary actions, the City continued advancing work on the actions identified in the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* including:

- Accepted ownership of the City’s tenth purpose-built child care facility, River Run Early Care and Learning Centre, which is operated by Atira Women’s Resource Society. This facility provides up to 77 spaces of licensed child care for infants, toddlers and children up to twelve years old
- Significant progress toward the development of internal City mechanisms for maintaining and coordinating City-owned child care facility improvements including annual site inspections, facility assessments and processes for partnering with operators on capital renovations and life cycle replacement of materials and equipment.
- Increased collaboration and coordination with Richmond School District regarding opportunities to co-locate child care with schools through the sharing of information regarding Provincial Funding Programs and data on child care needs in Richmond.
- Undertook the development of the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan* which includes an updated inventory of child care spaces in Richmond, identifies child care space creation targets over the next 10 years; and actions that can be taken to meet those targets.



In total, existing and secured facilities will provide approximately

585 LICENSED CHILD CARE SPACES



in City-owned purpose-built facilities in Richmond as of 2020





1 Strategic Direction #1: Policy and Planning

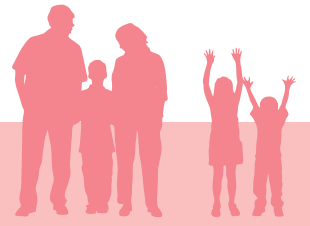
Why is this important?

The City's role in child care policy and planning is to support the development and ongoing provision of an adequate supply of local, licensed child care spaces to meet the needs of resident and employment populations. This entails conducting periodic child care needs assessments and monitoring data sources to analyze trends and child care space needs and availability within the Richmond community. The City's role also involves the administration of the City's Child Care Grant Program and support to the Child Care Development Advisory Committee.

Highlighted Achievements

- In 2020, the City's Child Care Development Reserve received \$1,100,180 in developer amenity and voluntary contributions. These funds will be used to assist the creation of new child care spaces in Richmond and support the operations of child care within the city.
- The UBCM Community Child Care Planning Project was a significant activity for the City this year and included a review of existing policies and strategies related to child care. In March 2020, the City was successful in receiving a \$25,000 UBCM 2020 Community Child Care Planning Program Grant to identify space creation targets over the next 10 years; and, actions that can be taken to meet those targets. As a component of the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan* that is being developed, additional policy review and recommendations will be identified for future consideration.





2 Strategic Direction #2: Creating and Supporting Spaces

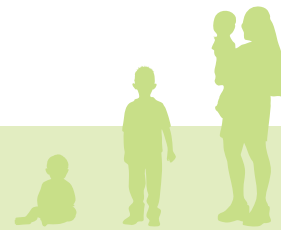
Why is this important?

The City supports the creation of child care spaces by accepting voluntary contributions from developers in the form of built child care facilities or cash-in-lieu contributions to the City's Child Care Statutory Reserves. As of 2020, the City currently manages and maintains ten existing City-owned child care facilities and is in the process of developing an additional City-owned child care facility and two Early Childhood Development Hubs. There are also dedicated City resources to help develop, maintain and support the child care system in Richmond.

Highlighted Achievements

- The River Run Early Care and Learning Centre, located in the Northview Estates development and operated by Atira Women's Resource Society, opened two programs in September 2020 and, when fully operational, will provide up to 77 spaces of licensed child care.
- The City had previously secured two Early Childhood Development Hubs which commenced construction in 2020 scheduled for completion in 2021.
 - The Sprouts ECD Hub is located in the Capstan Village neighbourhood and will offer up to 77 spaces of licensed child care operated by the YMCA of Greater Vancouver.
 - The Seedlings ECD Hub, located in the Brighthouse Village area, will offer up to 87 spaces of licensed child care operated by the Richmond Society for Community Living (RSCL).
- The child care facility secured as a community amenity contribution in the River Green development was officially named Hummingbird Child Care Facility by City Council on May 25, 2020. Construction of this 37 space facility, to be operated by the YMCA of Greater Vancouver, is underway and will be completed in 2022.
- The 2020 City of Richmond Child Care Grants were approved and a total of \$54,000 was awarded to seven organizations including:
 - \$50,000 in Capital Grants to provide necessary capital items such as playground renovations; and
 - \$4,000 in Professional and Program Development Grants to provide workshops, conferences and to support development of a 'Community of Practice.'
- Support was provided to the Richmond School District in their successful application for a Childcare BC New Spaces grant to create additional child care spaces at Tomsett Elementary School.





3 Strategic Direction #3: Advocacy

Why is this important?

The City advocates on behalf of its residents to address the needs of Richmond's resident and employee population. Facilitating quality, accessible, and affordable child care is within the mandate of senior levels of government, and the actions below address advocacy items that the City can undertake.

Highlighted Achievements

- The City engaged in discussions with senior staff at the Ministry of Child and Family Development regarding Provincial child care initiatives and funding to support the creation of new licensed child care spaces in Richmond.
- The City advocated for and supported three successful Childcare BC New Spaces Grant applications for the future operators of Seedlings Early Childhood Development Hub, Sprouts Early Childhood Development Hub and Hummingbird Child Care Centre, which will enhance the ability of the YMCA and Richmond Society for Community Living to provide quality affordable child care in these facilities.
- Through the 2020 Richmond Community Child Care Planning Project, the City identified additional advocacy actions to be undertaken in the upcoming ten years to facilitate the creation of additional child care spaces in Richmond.





4 Strategic Direction #4: Accessibility and Inclusion

Why is this important?

The City works to create an inclusive environment for all residents, in partnership with community organizations. Improving access to information about child care, supporting family services for newcomer families, and enhancing services for children with diverse needs are all important areas that the City strives to strengthen.

Highlighted Achievements

- Significant progress was made in the development of the Accessibility Guidelines for Child Care Facilities which will inform and support the future development of inclusive and accessible child care facilities. This companion document to the *Richmond Child Care Design Guidelines* will articulate current best practice in accessible design for children and is expected to be completed in 2021.
- As a component of the 2020 Richmond Community Child Care Planning Project, focus groups and key stakeholder interviews took place with community partners who provide direct services and supports to families of children with diverse needs and the child care programs they attend. Information from these partners will help inform actions developed to increase access to inclusive child care in Richmond.





5 Strategic Direction #5: Collaboration and Partnership

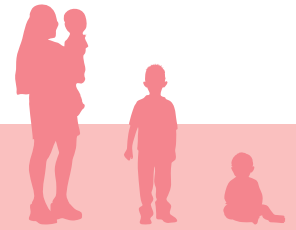


Why is this important?

The City of Richmond engages in and seeks partnerships and collaboration with others to advance its child care strategy. The City continues to identify potential opportunities to work with community partners to remain well informed and prepared to respond to funding opportunities and policy changes.

Highlighted Achievements

- In 2020, the Richmond Child Care Development Advisory Committee provided ongoing and continued support to City staff and City Council, delivering valuable advice on child care planning and service delivery in Richmond.
- In 2020, the Richmond Child Care Development Advisory Committee and the City planned and hosted a series of workshops for Child Care Month, titled ‘Supporting Richmond’s Children’. These events provided professional development and shared best practice research for early childhood educators, child care providers and parents. Approximately 100 individuals participated in this exciting initiative.
 - 97% of participants learned new information
 - 92% of participants agreed that the workshops met their expectations
- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has played a leadership role in convening community and public partners to coordinate and share information regarding emergency child care for essential workers. This collaboration included the Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health Child Care Licensing and Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral. Information was shared with the Richmond Emergency Operations Centre, Richmond Fire Rescue, RCMP, Canadian Armed Forces, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Richmond Division of Family Practice.



6 Strategic Direction #6: Research, Promotion and Marketing

Why is this important?

The City conducts research on child care trends, creates tools to assist the public with finding child care resources, prepares publications to help potential child care operators create child care space, and promotes access to resources within the community.

Highlighted Achievements

- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the City played a critical role in gathering, analyzing and disseminating information to support child care operators, emergency operations teams and parents. This information supported child care operators to access funding, develop health and safety plans and better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on children.
- Resources and communication materials were developed to assist parents working in essential roles to access temporary, emergency child care during the COVID-19 pandemic.





7 Strategic Direction #7: Monitoring and Renewal

Why is this important?

With changing demographics and the evolution of the child care landscape in Richmond, the City will continue to monitor and renew its policies and strategies with key data and research. The following actions discuss approaches for planning the next child care needs assessment and strategy as well as research work that benefits and advances the City's child care work.

Highlighted Achievements

- The 2020 Richmond Community Child Care Planning Project and the development of the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan* will inform the City's ongoing work to support the child care sector and will outline actions that the City and its community and public partners, including the Richmond School District and Vancouver Coastal Health, can undertake to enhance sector stability and increase child care spaces.



Next Steps

The City of Richmond's *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* outlines long and short-term actions to support the development of a comprehensive child care system in Richmond. This report provides information on the City's progress in meeting the short term and ongoing actions since the Strategy was adopted in July 2017. The City continues to implement actions outlined in the Strategy however, additional planning and engagement is required to support the creation of additional child care spaces. Currently in Richmond, the demand for child care significantly exceeds the supply with child care spaces available for only 30% of children across all types of licensed child care.

In 2021, the City will:

- Continue implementation of the ongoing and medium-term and long-term actions in the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy*;
- Begin implementation of actions identified in *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan*; and
- Begin preparation for the next Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy.

The advancement of recommended actions within the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* will continue to be monitored and highlighted in the 2021 Update, detailing the progress made on ongoing, medium-term and long-term actions.



Conclusion

The *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy–2020 Update* demonstrates the City of Richmond’s ongoing commitment to working in partnership with key stakeholders to establish a comprehensive child care system. The COVID-19 pandemic has created circumstances never previously experienced in our present-day society. It has raised the profile of the child care sector as a critical and essential service for the community while also highlighting the vulnerability and fragility of the current model of child care delivery in the province.

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, many innovative programs and opportunities that were initiated in previous years have been elaborated on, further developed or completed. This ongoing and important work has provided families with increased opportunities to access child care in Richmond.

In the upcoming year the City and its key stakeholders will continue to work collaboratively in an ongoing effort to further the vision, “to continue to be a municipal leader in fostering the conditions for a comprehensive child care system in Richmond.”



Strategic Direction	Recommended Actions	Status
Creating and Supporting Spaces	7. Continue to secure community amenity contributions through rezoning processes, focusing on the creation of early childhood development hubs. (Long term) KEY PRIORITY	Ongoing
	8. Work with other City of Richmond departments to plan, secure and build child care spaces co-located with other community facilities. (Long term)	Significant progress made
	9. Review the Child Care Statutory Reserve Fund policy to consider how fund contributions could be apportioned to the Child Care Development Reserve Fund and the Child Care Operating Reserve Fund (e.g. 70% for Capital and 30% for Operating as opposed to the current split of 90% for Capital and 10% for Operating). (Short term) KEY PRIORITY	Completed
	10. Explore mechanisms to increase City staff resources to advance the City’s child care priorities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide additional staff resources (e.g. Planner 1 – Child Care in Community Social Development) to support continued implementation of the Child Care Policy and fulfill the recommendations presented in this report; and b. Support the development of facilities secured as community amenity contributions by ensuring there is an integrated City department approach applied to working with developers providing these amenities. (Short term) KEY PRIORITY 	Completed Significant progress made
	11. Continue to manage and maintain existing and future City-owned child care facilities to ensure both the City and non-profit operators are fulfilling their lease obligations, leases are up to date, and facilities are well maintained. (Long term)	Significant progress made
	12. Pursue partnerships and funding opportunities with senior levels of government for capital investment to assist with the creation of City-owned child care spaces in Richmond. (Long term)	In process
	13. Work with Community Associations to learn about child care needs in the neighbourhoods they serve and how they can build capacity to meet these needs. (Long term)	Ongoing

Strategic Direction	Recommended Actions	Status
<p>Advocacy</p>	<p>14. Send a letter to the Federal Government to indicate the City of Richmond’s support for the development and implementation of a meaningful, appropriately funded Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework for Canada. (Short term)</p>	<p>Delayed due to COVID-19</p> <p>Anticipated to be completed in 2021</p>
	<p>15. Send letters to the Provincial Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expressing City Council’s endorsement of the \$10aDay Child Care Plan; b. Requesting that the City of Richmond be consulted about the creation and implementation of a future Provincial child care plan; and c. Recommending wage enhancements for Early Childhood Educators to attract qualified staff and to support both existing and new child care spaces (e.g. increases to the Child Care Operating Fund Program). (Short term) 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
	<p>16. Send a letter to the Provincial Government requesting that the benefit rates and eligibility provisions for the Child Care Subsidy be reviewed and increased (e.g. expanded coverage for median or moderate income families). (Short term)</p>	<p>Completed</p>
	<p>17. Send a letter to the Provincial Government requesting that they review and increase funding for Early Childhood Intervention Services in accordance with the #KidsCantWait Campaign. (Short term)</p>	<p>Completed</p>
	<p>18. Continue to monitor funding and grant opportunities along with future actions planned by senior levels of government regarding child care initiatives to maximize opportunities to enhance affordable, accessible and quality care in Richmond. (Short term)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Strategic Direction	Recommended Actions	Status
Accessibility and Inclusion	19. Collaborate with Vancouver Coastal Health, the Richmond School District, other schools in Richmond (e.g. private, francophone), Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral, Richmond Children First, the City of Richmond Child Care Development Advisory Committee, the Intercultural Advisory Committee, Community Associations, child care providers, and other appropriate parties to improve availability of information to Richmond families on child care and family-related resources. (Short term)	Significant progress made
	20. Consult with the City of Richmond’s Accessibility and Inclusion section, the Intercultural Advisory Committee, and multicultural and immigrant serving organizations to determine ways to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Improve the dissemination of information on child care to newcomers; and b. Establish ongoing communication channels to enable the City to keep abreast of the needs of and challenges facing recent immigrants regarding child care. (Short term) 	Delayed due to COVID-19 Anticipated to completed in 2021 Anticipated to completed in 2021
	21. Work with the City departments and sections, as well as external organizations who focus on accessibility issues to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Incorporate barrier-free design into new City-owned early childhood development hubs and child care facilities; and 	Significant progress made
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Explore innovations in child care facility design for both indoor and outdoor areas that would enhance the inclusion of children who require extra supports. (Long term: 4-5 years) 	Significant progress made

Strategic Direction	Recommended Actions	Status
Collaboration and Partnership	22. Continue to support the work of the City’s Child Care Development Advisory Committee with the view of building the capacity of the child care sector and parents understanding of child care options. (Short term)	Ongoing
	23. Facilitate and promote the delivery of professional development training for those employed in the delivery of licensed child care programs with the goal of maintaining and enhancing the quality of programs offered in Richmond. (Long term)	Ongoing
	24. Continue to consult with representatives from senior levels of government, other municipalities, Vancouver Coastal Health, Richmond Children First, United Way of the Lower Mainland, the UBC Human Early Learning Partnership and the First Call – BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition to ensure that the City is well informed about latest trends, research and advocacy efforts concerning child care matters. (Short term)	Significant Progress Made
	25. Build and foster relationships with senior levels of government to ensure the City is consulted on federal and provincial policy changes. (Short term)	Ongoing
	26. Seek new partnerships around the delivery of child care services. (Long term)	Ongoing
	27. Host one inter-municipal roundtable workshop to share information and best practises in child care policy, facility development, grants administration and successful advocacy approaches to senior levels of government. (Short term)	Completed

Strategic Direction	Recommended Actions	Status
Research, Promotion and Marketing	28. Regularly update the City's child care website to provide information on current civic initiatives related to child care and links to useful resources that build awareness and educate the community. (Short term)	Ongoing
	29. Monitor and share the latest trends in child care research and best practices in the delivery of quality child care programs with the City's Child Care Development Advisory Committee, Community Associations, Richmond Children First, Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral Centre, Vancouver Coastal Health, child care providers, and other community agencies and organizations. (Long term)	Ongoing
	30. Continue to develop child care educational resources and further expand the complement of promotional vehicles such as social media to share information about child care with parents and child care providers. (Short term)	Ongoing

Strategic Direction	Recommended Actions	Status
<p>Monitoring and Renewal</p>	<p>31. Update City policies plans and publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to work with the City’s Planning Department and other related Departments to update City policies that reference child care; and b. Continue to work with City staff and consultants to undertake research and update City publications and working documents (e.g. Terms of Reference for rezoning reports, City of Richmond Child Care Design Guidelines for City-owned buildings, and checklists related to development processes). (Short term) 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>32. In planning for the next Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Commence the next child care needs assessment and strategy work in late 2022. Begin the survey work and community engagement process, prior to the release of the 2021 Canada Census, and incorporate demographic information for Richmond geographies when it becomes available in 2023. b. Seek information and assistance from Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., and other newcomer-serving organizations regarding approaches for increasing the interest and involvement of the recent immigrant community in the next child care needs assessment community engagement process. (Long term) 	<p>Anticipated to begin in 2021</p> <p>Anticipated to begin in 2021</p>



City of Richmond

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