

British Columbia 2014

1. GOVERNANCE

Table 1.1 British Columbia Governance Structure for Early Childhood Education

Lead Ministry/ Department	Ministry of Children and Family Development Ministry of Education Ministry of Health
Related Ministry/Department	Ministry of Advanced Education
Policy Framework	<i>Families First Agenda for British Columbia: Building a sustainable quality early years strategy to support BC families</i> (BC Early Years Strategy)
Legislation	<i>School Act</i> [R.S.B.C 1996] c.412. and related legislation and regulations including <i>Teachers Act</i> [SBC 2011], <i>Independent School Act</i> [RSBC 1996], and <i>First Nations Education Act</i> (2007) ² <i>Child Care BC Act</i> (2001) ³ <i>Community Care and Assisted Living Act</i> (2002) ⁴ and Child Care Licensing Regulation (2010) ⁵ <i>Child Care Subsidy Act</i> (2008) and Child Care Subsidy Regulation (2011) ⁶
Related Legislation	
Common ECE Supervisory Unit	
Local Authority	Kindergarten and StrongStart BC early learning programs: 60 school districts including the Conseil scolaire francophone, plus independent schools (for kindergarten only) Licensed child care: 5 Regional Health Authorities
Public Advisory	The Provincial Child Care Council

New Developments

In February 2013, the BC government launched an Early Years Strategy. It includes a commitment to a one-government approach for early years services and establishes goals for improving program and service access, quality, affordability and coordination. The Provincial Office for the Early Years, which opened in February 2014, forms the foundation of an eight year commitment to the Early Years Strategy. The Office links Children and Family Development, Health, Education and Advanced Education as key partners to coordinate services across ministries around a number of key initiatives, including:

- Creating a network of Early Years Centres across the province offering a “one-stop shop” access point to a range of services and programs, information and referrals.
- Introducing the BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit in April 2015 providing up to \$55 a month per child up to six years of age.
- Implementing the Child Care Major Capital Funding Program to support the creation of up to 2,000 new licensed child care spaces over the first three years of the strategy, with the goal of supporting the creation of up to 13,000 new spaces throughout the province over the eight years of the strategy, with a current focus on creating new spaces on school grounds.
- Establishing an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Bursary Fund, with a current focus on supporting Aboriginal students and/or students working primarily with Aboriginal children, as well as those working to attain their infant/toddler certification.
- Developing an Online Child Care Registry to provide better access for parents looking for licensed child care in their communities.
- Establishing an Early Years Assistant Deputy Minister Steering Committee, chaired by the Office, to provide support and direction to inter-ministry partnerships and coordinating cross-ministry improvements.

Department Organization

The Provincial Office for the Early Years, hosted by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, is the province’s lead for ensuring early years initiatives are carried out and government ministries are coordinated and accessible across the province.

The Early Years Team (Learning Division) of the Ministry of Education is responsible for developing and establishing policies, standards and tools to support effective program delivery and evaluation mechanisms to support the early years (birth to age 8) across the province.

The Community Care Licensing Branch of the Ministry of Health is responsible for developing and establishing legislation, policies and standards that licensed child care facility operators must follow. These include the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, the *Child Care Licensing Regulation*, and related Standards of Practice.

Health Authority Community Care Licensing Programs (five independent regions) are responsible for issuing licences and carrying out routine inspections and monitoring of child care facilities to ensure the rules are being followed. They also investigate and address complaints about facilities.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is responsible for the development and administration of legislation, regulations, policies and guidelines pertaining to funding for child care and family support programs and services. MCFD administers the Child Care Subsidy Program, Child Care Operating Funding Program, the Early Childhood Educator Registry, Child Care Capital Program(s), and the Child Care Resource and Referral Program.

MCFD administers the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Registry and is responsible for the certification of ECEs and ECE Assistants, as well as for approving and monitoring ECE training programs at post-secondary institutions. MCFD is also responsible for the sections of the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and the Child Care Licensing Regulation that pertain to the functions of the ECE Registry.

Policy Framework

*Families First Agenda for British Columbia: Building a sustainable quality early years strategy to support BC families*⁷ supports the expansion of early learning, family support and child care options, including the establishment of a Provincial Office for the Early Years to map and review the range of early years services, and develop an action plan to facilitate community knowledge of, and access to, services. The plan directs the Ministry of Education to undertake legislative changes to facilitate better use of school facilities for before- and after-school care.

Service Design

School programs:⁸

- **Kindergarten:** All children who turn 5 years of age by December 31 are entitled to a full-day kindergarten program delivered by public and independent schools during the school year. Enrolment is voluntary.
- **StrongStart BC** is a free, play-based early learning program for children from birth to age 5 years who attend with their parents or caregivers. Led by Certified Early Childhood Educators, there are 326 StrongStart BC early learning programs across British Columbia. Most programs are located in public elementary schools, but there are also 40 outreach programs, including mobile resource buses, that support families in small, rural and remote communities.⁹ Children registering in a StrongStart BC program receive a Personal Education Number which is used to track their attendance, to evaluate their progress throughout school and to evaluate programs.
- **Ready, Set, Learn** is offered by over 1,000 public and independent schools and is aimed at 3-year-old children and their families as an orientation to school and a support for parents to guide their child's early learning and development.¹⁰

Licensed child care programs:¹¹

Full-time group child care

- Centres for children 30 months old to school entry (kindergarten)
- Infant/toddler centres serving children from birth to 36 months
- Multi-aged child care provides serving children from birth to age 12

Part-time group child care

- Preschool programs for children 30 months to kindergarten operating for a maximum of 4 hours per day
- School age care serves school-age children to age 12 (including kindergarten) outside of normal school hours

Occasional care

- Occasional child care licence holders may provide care for a child over 18 months for up to 8 hours per day or 40 hours in a 30 day period
- Child minding licence holders may provide care for a child over 18 months for up to 5 hours per day per child. This type of care is limited to programs which fall under a federal contract for immigrants with respect to English as a Second Language, settlement or labour market integration.

Family Child Care

- Licensed family child care: Provided by an operator in the provider's own home for children from birth to age 12. Providers may care for up to seven children at any one time; however, no more than three of the children may be younger than 48 months old and of those three children no more than one child may be younger than 12 months old. If no child is younger than 12 months old, then four children may be younger than 48 months old and of those four children, no more than two children may be younger than 24 months old.

- In-home multi-age child care: A BC licensed early childhood educator may care for up to eight children at any one time. Of the eight children no more than three children may be younger than 36 months old and of those three children no more than one child may be younger than 12 months old. If no child is younger than 12 months old, then three children may be younger than 36 months old.

Unlicensed care:

Unlicensed child care is referred to as “licence not required” (LNR) care. LNR providers may care for a maximum of two children, or a sibling group, not including the care provider’s own children (from birth up to and including age 12). “Registered licence not required” (RLNR) providers must meet specific health and safety criteria, including a criminal record check and a home inspection to register with a Child Care Resource and Referral Program. Registration is not mandatory. Families with children in care with an RLNR provider may be eligible to receive a higher subsidy rate than those with children in care with unregistered LNR providers.

Community support services:

- The Supported Child Development program is a family-centred, community-based program that assists families and child care providers to fully include children needing extra support in typical child care settings. The program serves children from birth to 12 years old, with services for youth 13–19 years old available in some communities. Services include individualised planning, training, information and resources, referrals to other specialised services and, when required, staffing supports. Participation is voluntary and Supported Child Development services are provided at no charge to parents; however, parents are responsible for child care fees.
- Family Resource Programs¹² provide community-based services intended to support the healthy development of children and families and build family and community connections.
- Aboriginal Family Resource Programs provide Aboriginal children and families with access to culturally-appropriate family support services and resources both on- and off-reserve.
- Child Care Resource and Referral programs¹³ assist parents to find child care and offer training and supports to child care providers.
- The Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Regional Initiative¹⁴ supports Aboriginal communities in the delivery of culturally appropriate early childhood development services, both on- and off-reserve, through 43 Aboriginal agencies. The goal of the initiative is to increase the overall health and well-being of Aboriginal children and to increase awareness, outreach and access to a wide range of culturally appropriate programs and services.
- The First Nations, Urban Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Reinvestment Initiative¹⁵ supports community capacity so that effective, quality and culturally appropriate early childhood development services can be developed by members of the Aboriginal community and delivered to Aboriginal children, youth and families.
- Success By 6@¹⁶ is an internationally branded United Way initiative that supports communities working together to improve outcomes for children, birth to 6 years, including professional development and training for early years practitioners.
- Early Years Centres recently opened (2014) in 12 communities providing a range of innovative ways for families with children under the age of 6 to connect to early learning, health and family services in a single location. These early leaders will inform the expansion of Early Years Centres in the future.

Community Involvement/Oversight

The Provincial Child Care Council provides advice on the policies and programs that affect the affordability, quality, stability and accessibility of child care. The Council consists of between 14 and 21 members, each is appointed by the minister to represent parents as well as a wide range of child care stakeholders.¹⁷

Local Service Delivery

Full-day kindergarten and Strong Start BC programs are administered through 60 school districts. Kindergarten may be offered in independent schools.

Regional Health Authorities are responsible for licensing and monitoring child care programs.

2. FUNDING

Table 2.1 British Columbia: Provincial Allocations for Child Care (2014–15)

Child Care Operating Funding ^a	\$72,854,000
Regulated Child Care Subsidy ^{a,b}	89,473,000
Unregulated Child Care Subsidy ^{a,b}	36,546,000
Child Care Resource and Referral ^a	9,712,000
Ongoing Child Care Capital ^a	645,000
Supported Child Development Program ^a	56,600,000

Table 2.1 British Columbia: Provincial Allocations for Child Care (2014–15) (con't)

Child Care Administration ^{a,c}	26,702,000
Early Childhood Development ^a	31,679,000
Total Child Care Allocation ^a	324,211,000

^a Source: 2014/15 Estimates Budget; ^b Split between regulated/unregulated child care subsidy is based on caseload data from fiscal 2013/14; ^c Child Care Administration includes funding for the Provincial Office of the Early Years, Early Years Centres and the 2014/15 Child Care Major Capital Funding Program.

Overall Funding

Table 2.2 British Columbia: Funding Early Childhood Education/Child Care

Kindergarten ^a	\$360,972,000
StrongStart BC ^b	10,309,000
Aboriginal Education Enhancement ^c	4,210,000
Ready Set Learn ^b	2,759,000
Child Care	324,211,000
Total ECE spending	702,461,000
Total budget estimate 2014–2015¹⁸	\$44,416,000,000
ECE as a percentage of provincial budget	1.6%

^a Estimate based on 2013/2014 public school enrolment of 38,815 @ \$8,60319 plus, 2013/2014 independent school enrolment of 6,287 @ \$4,302. Enrolment retrieved from Student Statistics - 2013/14 ²⁰; ^b British Columbia's Early Years Annual Report 2011/2012 Activities and Expenditures on Early Childhood Development and Early Learning and Child Care ²¹; ^c 3,629 Kindergarten students who were self-identified as Aboriginal and received supplemental Aboriginal Education funding in 2013/14.

3. ACCESS

Table 3.1 British Columbia: Child population 0–5 years (2013)

Child population 0–5 years	267,207
0–1 years	87,537
2–4 years	134,014
5 years	45,656
Total population of British Columbia	4,582,625
Children 0–5 years as percentage of total population	5.8%

Statistics Canada, Table 051-0001, Estimates of population, by age group and sex for July 1, 2013 Canada, provinces and territories.

Table 3.2 British Columbia: Workforce Participation of Mothers by Age of Youngest Child (2013)

0–1 years	68.4
2–4 years	74.5
5 years	72.5
Average maternal workforce participation	72%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation S0814_04_Tab1.ivt.

Table 3.3 British Columbia: Enrolment in ECE School Programs

Kindergarten (public and independent schools) ²²	45,102
StrongStart BC ^a	*33,000

^aBased on children who regularly attend a StrongStart BC centre.²³

Table 3.4 British Columbia: Licensed, Funded Child Care Programs²⁴ (2013/14)

Spaces by age group in centre-based programs	
Infants (under 36 months)	8,674
3 years to kindergarten	27,252
Preschool	21,118
Grade 1 to 12 years	32,267
Multi-age	2,570
Total spaces in centre-based programs	91,881
Family child care/homes	14,830
Total capacity licensed child care^a	106,711

^aThe number of regulated child care spaces in both centres and family child care homes are those that received Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF) in 2013/14. Information on the number of spaces that did not receive CCOF is not available and is not included in the totals; however, the majority of licensed child care providers in the province receive operating funding.

Table 3.5 British Columbia: Percentage of children attending ECE programs by age group

Child Ages	Number of children ^a	Child care/ preschool ^b	Kindergarten enrolment ^c	Other ECE programs ^d	% children with access to ECE programming
0–1 years	87,537	8,674			10%
2–4 years	134,014	48,370		33,300	61%
5 years	45,656		45,102		99%

^a Statistics Canada. Table 051-0001, Estimates of population, by age group and sex for July 1, 2013 Canada, provinces and territories; ^b Estimate based on spaces, the ministry does not collect information regarding the number of individual children enrolled in licensed child care programs. Children may attend more than one facility, and licensed spaces may be shared between children; ^c Reported enrolment 2013/14; ^d Estimated attendance in StrongStart BC25 and Aboriginal Head Start programs.²⁶

Affordability

One parent, one child family with a net income of \$30,984 are eligible for a full subsidy. Partial subsidies are available for incomes up to \$48,984. In 2013/14, 31,752 families received a subsidy.²⁷

Inclusion

Special needs supports in Kindergarten: *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines (2010)* emphasizes equality of access.²⁸

Special needs support in child care: The Supported Child Development Program (SCDP) provides families of children with special needs with supports so the child may participate in regular child care. Parents with children with special needs who are in receipt of a child care subsidy are also eligible to receive the Special Needs Supplement. The Special Needs Supplement provides up to an additional \$150 per month towards the cost of child care.²⁹ Approximately 10,600 children received support from the program in in 2012/2013.

4. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Table 4.1 British Columbia: Curriculum Frameworks

Program	Framework Document
Kindergarten	<p><i>Kindergarten Curriculum Package</i> (2010) compiles all Prescribed Learning Outcomes and Suggested Achievement Indicators into one comprehensive document.³⁰</p> <p><i>Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide</i> (2010) assists schools with the implementation of full school day programs.³¹</p> <p>2013–2015: New draft curriculum documents and competency profiles for kindergarten are available for feedback on the BC Ministry of Education website at www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca.</p>
Early Years Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>British Columbia Early Learning Framework</i> (2008)³² • <i>Colombie-Britannique Cadre pédagogique pour l'apprentissage des jeunes enfants</i> (2008)³³ describes the vision, pedagogical principles, and key areas of learning for children birth to 5 years (before school entry). • The <i>BC Early Learning Framework</i> is mandatory in StrongStartBC centres, and is available as a resource for child care and other child and family support programs. • <i>StrongStart BC Operations Guide</i>³⁴ • <i>Understanding the British Columbia Early Learning Framework: From Theory to Practice</i>³⁵ • <i>Comprendre le Cadre pédagogique pour l'apprentissage des jeunes enfants de la Colombie-Britannique: De la théorie à la pratique</i>³⁶

Work Environment

Kindergarten class size: A provincial class size limit is specified in the *School Act*, which sets the maximum average aggregate size for kindergarten at 19 students; no class may exceed 22 students. The 2013/2014 average class size was 19.3.³⁷

Table 4.2 British Columbia: Group Size and Staff Child Ratio in Licensed Child Care Centres

Program	Maximum group size	Children per group	Ratio of employees to children in each group
Group Child Care (Under 36 months)	12, with a separate area designated for each group	≤ 4	One infant and toddler educator
		5 – 8	One infant and toddler educator and one other educator
		9 – 12	One infant and toddler educator, one other educator and one assistant
Group Child Care (30 months to school age)	25, with not more than 2 children younger than 36 months old in a single group	≤ 8	One educator
		9 – 16	One educator and one assistant
		17 – 25	One educator and 2 assistants
Preschool (30 months to school age)	20	≤ 10	One educator
		11 – 20	One educator and one assistant
Group Child Care (school age), if any preschool child or child in grade 1 is present	24	≤ 12	One responsible adult
		13 – 24	Two responsible adults
Group Child Care (school age), if no preschool child or child in grade 1 is present	30	≤ 15	One responsible adult
		16 – 30	Two responsible adults
Family Child Care, if any child younger than 12 months old is present	7, having no more than 3 children younger than 48 months old and, of those 3, no more than one child younger than 12 months old	≤ 7	The licensee who must be a responsible adult
Family Child Care, if no child younger than 12 months old is present	7, having no more than 4 children younger than 48 months old and, of those 4, no more than 2 children younger than 24 months old	≤ 7	The licensee who must be a responsible adult
Occasional Child Care, if any child present is younger than 36 months old	16	≤ 4	One responsible adult
		5 – 8	Two responsible adults
		9 – 12	Three responsible adults
		13 – 16	Four responsible adults
Occasional Child Care, if no child present is younger than 36 months old	20	≤ 8	One responsible adult
		9 – 16	Two responsible adults
		17 – 20	Three responsible adults
Multi-Age Child Care, if any child younger than 12 months old is present	8, having no more than 3 children younger than 36 months old and, of those 3, no more than one child younger than 12 months old	≤ 8	One educator
Multi-Age Child Care, if no child younger than 12 months old is present	8, having no more than 3 children younger than 36 months old	≤ 8	One educator
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care, if any child younger than 12 months old is present	8, having no more than 3 children under 36 months old and, of those 3, no more than one child younger than 12 months old	≤ 8	The licensee, who must be certified as an educator
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care, if no child younger than 12 months old is present	8, having no more than 3 children younger than 36 months old	≤ 8	The licensee, who must be certified as an educator
Child-minding	24, with each child younger than 12 months counted as 2.5 children, each child younger than 36 months but 12 months or older counted as 2 children, and each child 36 months or older counted as 1 child	≤ 8	One responsible adult
		9 – 17	Two responsible adults
		18 – 24	Three responsible adults

Schedule E http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/332_2007#section1

Table 4.3 British Columbia: Educator Qualifications

Kindergarten Teachers	Early Childhood Educators ^{38,39}
A Bachelor of Education degree or Bachelor's degree plus a post-degree in teacher training https://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/Teacher/CertificatesIssued.aspx	<p>Early childhood educator certificate: Basic Early Childhood Education training program (minimum 910 hours, including practicum) through an approved educational institution, plus 500 hours of additional work experience relevant to early childhood education, or the equivalent.</p> <p>Special needs early childhood educator certificate: must qualify for the early childhood educator certificate and have successfully completed a Special Needs Early Childhood Educator training program through an approved educational institution.</p> <p>Infant and toddler educator certificate: must qualify for the Early Childhood Educator certificate and have successfully completed an infant and toddler educator training program through an approved educational institution.</p> <p>Early childhood educator assistant certificate: must have successfully completed a minimum of one course of a basic Early Childhood Education training program in child development, guidance or health and safety, and nutrition through an approved educational institution.</p>

Table 4.4 British Columbia: Professional recognition and development

Qualified Teachers	Qualified ECEs ⁴⁰
<p>The Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB), part of the Ministry of Education, assesses applicants for certification, evaluates teacher education programs, issues teaching certificates, and enforces standards for certificate holders.⁴¹</p> <p>The TRB was created as part of the implementation of the Teachers Act. Responsibilities of the TRB were formerly held by the BC College of Teachers, which existed from January 1, 1988 to January 9, 2012.</p>	<p>The ECE Registry is the provincial body, legislated under the Child Care Licensing Regulation, responsible for the licensure of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and ECE Assistants, as well as the approval of post-secondary institutions offering early childhood education training. The ECE Registry also investigates and rules on concerns of practice.</p>
Ongoing professional development is expected as a standard of practice. ⁴²	Minimum 40 hours of professional development and 400 hours of work experience every 5 years.

Table 4.5 British Columbia: Density of Qualified Staff in Child Care Centres⁴³

See Table 4.2.

Table 4.6 British Columbia: Teacher and ECE Average Annual Salaries

Teachers ^a	Early Childhood Educators ^b	ECE salary as % of teacher salary
\$74,353	\$36,691	49%

^a Based on Level 5.4; ^b Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation S0814_04_Tab2.ivt.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Progress Reports: British Columbia's Early Years Annual Report 2011/2012 Activities and Expenditures on Early Childhood Development and Early Learning and Child Care fulfills the reporting requirements as outlined in the federal/provincial/territorial early childhood agreements.

Program Standards: Child care licensing regulation.

Population monitoring: Early Development Instrument (EDI) is collected in kindergarten classrooms on an annual or biannual basis (at the discretion of the school district). The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at UBC has worked with MCFD since 2002/2003 to analyze EDI results and support communities in interpreting the findings.⁴⁵

CITATIONS

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