



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Planning Committee **Date:** November 19, 2024
From: Kim Somerville **File:** 07-3070-04/Vol 01
 Director, Community Social Development
Re: **Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034**

Staff Recommendations

1. That the Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034, as outlined in the staff report titled “Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034”, dated November 19, 2024, from the Director, Community Social Development, be adopted; and
2. That the Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034 be posted on the City website and distributed to key community partners and elected officials including Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly, Richmond Members of Parliament, Minister of Education and Child Care, Minister of State for Child Care and Youth with Support Needs, Minister of Children and Family Development, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, and the Richmond School Board.

Kim Somerville
 Director, Community Social Development
 (604-247-4671)

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Recreation and Sport Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Building Approvals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Policy Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

On June 24, 2024, City Council approved the following recommendations with respect to the City of Richmond’s Draft Child Care Strategy 2024–2034:

1. *That the draft Child Care Strategy 2024–2034, as outlined in the staff report titled “Draft Child Care Strategy 2024–2034”, dated June 6, 2024 from the Acting Director, Community Social Development, be endorsed for public consultation; and*
2. *That staff report back to City Council with the final Child Care Strategy, including a summary of the public feedback received.*

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the public feedback received on the draft strategy and to seek City Council’s adoption of the final Child Care Strategy 2024–2034.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement:

Proactive stakeholder and civic engagement to foster understanding and involvement and advance Richmond’s interests.

1.2 Advocate for the needs of Richmond in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #2 Strategic and Sustainable Community Growth:

Strategic and sustainable growth that supports long-term community needs and a well-planned and prosperous city.

This report also supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community:

Vibrant, resilient and active communities supported by a wide variety of opportunities to get involved, build relationships and access resources.

6.1 Advance a variety of program, services, and community amenities to support diverse needs and interests and activate the community.

Analysis

The City of Richmond is committed to supporting and advocating for the development of affordable, inclusive, accessible and quality child care for the community. It is well documented that child care is critical for economic development and having a range of child care options supports working parents and allows more parents, especially women, to participate in the labour force. For children, quality early childhood education and early learning programs support growth, learning and development and contribute to positive transitions into elementary school.

Currently only 21 per cent of children (aged birth to 12 years) have access to regulated child care in BC. In Richmond, 38 per cent of children (aged birth to 12 years) have access to regulated child care. According to the Metro Vancouver Regional Planning 2023 Survey of Licensed Child Care Spaces, Richmond has one of the highest ratios of licensed child care spaces per 100 children in the region.

An extensive engagement process has been undertaken to identify the current and future child care needs, challenges and opportunities facing Richmond families. It is clear that despite significant increases in the number of licensed child care spaces available in Richmond, availability of suitable and affordable child care remains a concern. This is particularly challenging for families with school-age children where space availability is lower and for those families who have a child who requires extra supports to participate safely and successfully in child care.

The Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034 (the Strategy) (Attachment 1), the fifth for the City, builds upon the work undertaken in previous strategies, learnings from research of best practices, community characteristics and community engagement findings. The Strategy offers a strategic framework to identify and respond to a range of child care needs and outlines actions that the City and its partners can undertake to respond to them over the next 10 year period.

Engagement and Strategy Revisions

On June 24, 2024, City Council endorsed the Draft Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034 (the Draft Strategy) for public engagement. The purpose of the engagement was to seek input on the vision, strategic directions and recommended actions, to ensure alignment with current and future child care needs. Public engagement on the Draft Strategy was held in July and August 2024 and included the following:

- A survey hosted on the Let's Talk Richmond platform, asking participants their level of agreement on the vision and the strategic directions and actions;
- In-person focus groups for parents, child care providers, members of City Advisory Committees and the Canadian Federation of University Women; and
- Review and guidance from the Richmond Child Care Strategy Advisory Committee.

There were 929 visits to the Let's Talk Richmond Child Care Strategy landing page during the period the survey was open. Of these visits, 674 people were made aware of the Strategy and engagement, 350 people sought additional information through the webpage and 81 people completed the survey. In addition, 34 individuals participated in focus group discussions.

Overall the majority of survey responses were positive and productive, and respondents appreciated that the City was prioritizing child care by developing the Strategy. Eighty-eight per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the vision of the Strategy. There was also a very strong level of support for each strategic direction, ranging between 79 to 90 per cent of respondents, either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the directions.

There were no major revisions to the final Strategy following engagement. However, additional detail was added to respond to themes that emerged from the public engagement activities including:

- Additional information on the governance of the Provincial Government following the 2024 Provincial election.

- Strengthening actions related to the quality and inclusivity of child care in Richmond.
- Increased emphasis on advocating for the early childhood profession, including expanded, quality training for Early Childhood Educators and focus on Early Childhood Educator and child care provider recruitment and retention.
- Expansion of City information and resources about child care, including enhanced access to these for parents and child care operators.
- Additional definitions for terminology used within the Strategy.

A summary of the public feedback received on the Draft Strategy is provided in Attachment 2.

Communications

Following adoption of the final Child Care Strategy by City Council, promotional materials will be developed to share the Child Care Strategy with the community. Copies of the Strategy will be distributed to key partners and organizations, Richmond Members of Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Minister of Education and Child Care, Minister of State for Child Care and Youth with Support Needs, Minister of Children and Family Development, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, and the Richmond School Board.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

The Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034 demonstrates the strong commitment by the City of Richmond to support and advocate for the development of affordable, inclusive, accessible and high quality child care options that meet the needs of families who live or work in Richmond. The Strategy has been informed by demographic analysis, best practices review, analysis of child care data for Richmond and Metro Vancouver and extensive engagement with the community. The actions outlined in the Strategy seek to address the feedback and data collected, and the current and future needs, challenges and opportunities for Richmond families. The City of Richmond is committed to working with families, child care providers and community partners to support the provision of high-quality, accessible, inclusive and affordable child care in Richmond over the next 10 year period.

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Att. 1: City of Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034
2: Child Care Strategy 2024–2034: Public Engagement Overview



City of Richmond
**Richmond Child Care
Strategy 2024–2034**

PLN - 10

Acknowledgements

The Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034 is the result of valuable information and contributions made by staff, volunteers, community organizations and members of the public. We would like to thank the Richmond residents, parents/guardians, caregivers and child care providers who participated in the consultation process through their engagement in focus groups, outreach sessions, interviews and completion of the online surveys.

Richmond Child Care Strategy Advisory Committee

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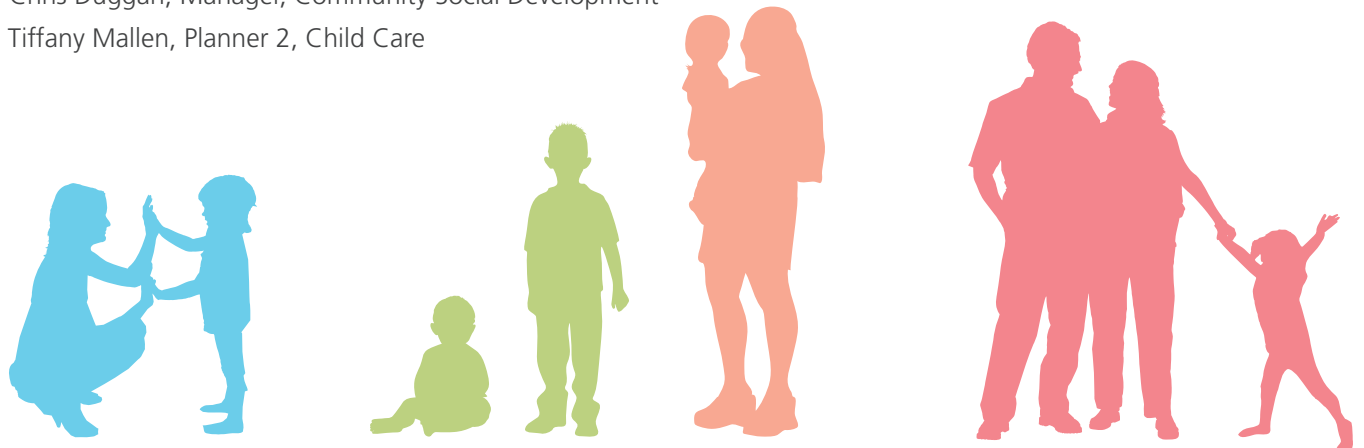
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Executive Summary

The City of Richmond is considered a champion for child care. The City is committed to supporting and creating accessible, affordable and quality child care for the Richmond community. The *Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034* demonstrates the City's understanding and acknowledgement that child care is an essential need for Richmond residents and employees. To support the creation of child care spaces, the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan* was adopted by City Council on April 12, 2021 and complements the *Child Care Strategy* by setting defined child care space creation targets and identifying clear actions to meet these.

The *Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034* builds upon the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* to identify, analyze and provide valuable insights into the current and future needs for child care in Richmond. Extensive engagement with the community, including online surveys, interviews, focus groups, committee presentations and outreach sessions, has helped to identify the key strengths, challenges and opportunities for the child care sector in Richmond and for the City.

Despite significant increases in the number of licensed child care spaces available in Richmond, availability of suitable child care remains a persistent concern for the community. Some operators reported having over 500 children on their waitlist at one time and more than half of parents waited over one year for a child care space in the community. This is particularly challenging for families of school-age children where space availability is lower and for those families who have a child who requires extra supports to participate safely and successfully in child care. Operators expressed limitations on their ability to ensure the inclusion of children who require extra support due to a lack of staff and limited funding for supports and services.

Furthermore, while the Province continues to enhance funding initiatives such as the \$10 a Day Program and the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, parents remain concerned about the affordability of child care in combination with the rising cost of living. Child care operators also noted a challenge in the ability to attract and retain suitably qualified staff; with a rising cost of living and historically low wages, there is concern that Early Childhood Educators will seek employment and/or residence elsewhere. Some operators have noted that they have not been able to expand or create new facilities due to lack of qualified staff.

With this valuable information, a set of strategic directions and related actions, to be undertaken over the next 10 years, have been developed. The five strategic directions include:

- Create and Maintain Spaces;
- Quality, Inclusivity and Accessibility;
- Advocacy;
- Collaboration; and
- Education and Information.

Introduction

The *Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034* is the fifth child care strategy the City of Richmond has undertaken. The Strategy offers valuable insights into the current and future child care needs of the community and outlines the priority actions for the City in relation to child care over the next ten years. The Strategy is complemented by the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan*, which sets defined child care space creation targets and identifies clear actions to meet them.

The City is committed to supporting and advocating for the development of affordable, accessible and quality child care for the community. Child care is an essential service for families and children, providing both support to those who are working or furthering their education and offering learning, socialization and growth opportunities for children themselves.

It is well documented that child care is critical for economic development. Having a range of child care options for the community supports working parents and allows more women to participate in the labour force. Child care can also act as an important poverty reduction measure, offering families the support they need to be able to sustain employment and make financial gains for their future.

For children, quality early childhood education and early learning programs support growth, learning and development and contribute to positive transitions into elementary school, ensuring children are positioned to have the best start in life. Early childhood education programs can also support and enhance parenting, allow opportunities for the early identification of children experiencing delays in their development and those who might require extra support as well as assist families to access to referrals and resources.



Currently, only 21% of children (0-12 years of age) have access to regulated child care in BC. In Richmond, 38% of children (0-12 years of age) have access to regulated child care which compares favourably in relation to the BC average. However, access to suitable and affordable child care in the City continues to be a key concern for parents.

The *Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034* offers a strategic framework to identify and respond to a range of child care needs and outline actions that the City, and its partners, can undertake to respond to them.

Purpose

The purpose of the *Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034* is to:

- Identify and understand key child care needs for Richmond now and over the next 10 years; and
- Provide a framework for the City and others involved in child care in Richmond, to understand and address current and future needs for child care.

The objectives are to:

- Identify child care needs, opportunities and priorities for action for Richmond from 2024–2034;
- Identify child care usage patterns, needs and challenges faced by Richmond residents, parents and guardians;
- Identify concerns of and opportunities for Richmond child care providers; and
- Provide recommendations for addressing priority child care needs in the city over the next 10 years.

The Strategy consists of eight sections: background, developing the strategy, community profile, methodology, assessment of need, community response, analysis and discussion, and strategic directions and actions.

Vision

The *Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034* supports the vision that:

The community has access to a range of affordable, inclusive, accessible and quality child care options that support and enhance child development, learning and growth and meet the needs of families who live or work in Richmond.

Background

Government Roles

Government of Canada

Both the federal and provincial governments have demonstrated a strong commitment to child care in recent years. In 2021, the Government of Canada made an investment of \$27 billion over five years to develop a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. The Early Learning and Child Care Agreement between the Governments of Canada and BC included a federal investment of \$3.2 billion from 2021–2026 to help improve regulated early learning and child care for children under six years in BC.

The Early Learning and Child Care Agreement supports a number of outcomes for BC including:

- Fee reductions for regulated child care by 50% on average, delivering regulated child care costs an average of \$10 a day by 2026;
- Support for Early Childhood Educators through the creation of a wage grid; and
- The creation of 30,000 regulated early learning and child care spaces for children under the age of six years by 2026 and a total of 40,000 spaces within seven years.



Furthermore, through Budget 2024, the federal government announced the launch of a Child Care Expansion Loan Program, which will offer \$1 billion in low-cost loans and \$60 million in non-repayable contributions to public and not-for-profit child care providers. These initiatives will allow these providers to build more child care spaces and renovate their existing facilities. Budget 2024 also proposes to provide \$10 million over two years, starting 2024-2025, to Employment and Social Development Canada's Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program, to increase training for Early Childhood Educators.

Bill C-35 was introduced in the House of Commons in 2022 to reinforce the Governments, long-term commitment to early learning and child care. This Act enhances accountability through reporting to Parliament on progress towards an early learning and child care system. Since 2021, the federal government has committed more than \$34.2 billion over five years starting 2021-2022 and \$9.2 billion ongoing for affordable child care.

Province of BC

The Provincial Government plays a crucial role in the development, funding and delivery of child care. This includes:

- Planning and funding social services, including early learning, child care and related programs;
- Developing child care legislation, policy and regulations;
- Providing operating and capital funding to eligible child care providers;
- Providing fee subsidies and benefits for families with low incomes; and
- Implementing initiatives such as the New Spaces Funding Program, to help create much needed licensed child care spaces.

In 2018 the Province introduced ChildCareBC, with an aim of increasing child care spaces, reducing fees and improving the quality of child care in the region. As part of ChildCareBC, a number of initiatives have been developed and are continuing to evolve. Some of the important initiatives include:

Child Care Operating Funding - Base Funding

This initiative assists eligible licensed child care providers with the day-to-day costs of running a child care facility. Child care providers receiving this funding can no longer charge waitlist or waitlist-related fees. To support child care providers during emergencies, this funding may be paid when a facility is temporarily closed during an emergency.

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative

This initiative lowers the cost of child care for families with children in participating child care facilities. At the time of publication, families can save up to \$900 per month per child for full time care depending on the child's age and type of care. Child care providers receiving Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative can no longer charge waitlist or waitlist-related fees.

Wage Enhancement for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs)

As part of BC’s Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy, ECEs working in eligible licensed facilities can receive a wage enhancement. At the time of publication, ECEs can receive an additional \$6 per hour. As of January 2024, this increased the median wage for ECEs to approximately \$28 per hour.

\$10 a Day ChildCare BC

This initiative lowers the cost of licensed child care to no more than \$200 per month per child for full time enrolment, regardless of care type. The funding covers operating costs including rent, mortgage, building repair and maintenance of core services, supplies, food and wages, minus the revenue generated by the \$10 a Day parent fee. In BC Budget 2021, over 4,000 additional \$10 a Day spaces were added. By 2026, through the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, BC has committed to the creation of 30,000 \$10 a Day spaces. As of the date of this publication, there are 16 child care facilities in Richmond operating as a \$10 a Day centre.

New Spaces Capital Funding Program

This funding is available to support the creation, expansion and relocation of child care facilities proposing new licensed child care spaces. Eligible applicants currently include public sector organizations, Indigenous governments, First Nations schools and not-for-profit organizations.

At the time of publication a Provincial election has just concluded. The previous majority government, the New Democratic Party, remains in power by a slim margin over the Conservative Party. Ongoing collaboration between these two parties and the Green Party will be essential to continue to advance child care funding and programs in BC.



The City of Richmond

Municipal governments do not have direct responsibility for child care. However, being the government that is closest to its community, municipalities take the community's social needs and concerns seriously. Municipalities in BC, including the City of Richmond, therefore play a number of roles to address child care challenges.

Some of the key roles played by the City of Richmond include:

- Identifying child care needs of residents, employers and employees through regular analysis of data, tracking changes in child care spaces, public engagement efforts and the development of annual updates;
- Adopting municipal child care policies, amenity contribution expectations, strategies and child care design guidelines and utilizing these to facilitate the development of child care facilities in the City;
- Making space available in municipal facilities, at nominal or below market rates, for the provision of child care;
- Supporting the delivery of child care services by Community Associations and Societies in City facilities;
- Advocating for Provincial and Federal governments to adopt policies and provide stable funding for child care operators to increase child care spaces and to improve quality and affordability;
- Maintaining connections with local community organizations to strengthen networks and facilitate joint planning opportunities related to child care;
- Developing resources and providing information on child care including materials on the City website and providing an interactive map, targeted to current and prospective child care operators and parents;
- Developing resources and providing information to child care providers and those intending to create or expand licensed child care spaces in Richmond including design guidelines, resource documents, informational bulletins and materials on the City website;
- Providing grants to child care providers to help support facilities, spaces, programming, equipment and furnishings, and professional and program development; and
- Establishing family-friendly policies for municipal employees (e.g. compressed work weeks and flexible scheduling to accommodate employees' child care needs).

Richmond Community Associations and Societies

Community Associations and Societies are an important partner with the City in the provision of licensed child care. They operate preschool programs and/or school-age child care programs, which collectively provide 762 licensed child care spaces. These child care programs are offered by seven of the Community Associations and Societies, including:

- Cambie Community Association
- City Centre Community Association
- Hamilton Community Association
- South Arm Community Association
- Steveston Community Society
- Thompson Community Association
- West Richmond Community Association





City Plans, Policies and Strategies

The City of Richmond has a history of planning for child care and this Strategy is the fifth child care needs assessment and strategy undertaken by the City. In addition to needs assessments, the City's child care initiatives are supported by a variety of other plans, strategies and policies.

Richmond 2041 Official Community Plan (OCP)

One of the objectives of the OCP is to '*Facilitate the establishment of a comprehensive, high quality system of child care services in Richmond*' through the following activities:

- Undertake periodic needs assessments to identify child care requirements;
- Encourage the financing of community amenities such as child care, by developers through 'density bonuses', phased development agreements and other means;
- Encourage private developers to contribute to the City's Child Care Development Reserve Fund;
- Advocate to senior levels of government for funding to address child care needs; and
- Administer the City's Child Care Grant Program to support the provision of quality, affordable and accessible child care.

Area Plans

Area Plans for specific neighbourhoods in Richmond are contained in Schedule 2 of the OCP. These plans acknowledge the importance of child care and include provisions to accommodate the development of child care in a range of areas. The City Centre Area Plan and the West Cambie Area Plan include specific implementation strategies and outline expected contributions towards the creation or expansion of child care through the development process.

Building Our Social Future – A Social Development Strategy for Richmond

Action 10 of the Social Development Strategy commits the City to '*support the establishment of high quality, safe child care services in Richmond*' through such means as:

- Conducting periodic Child Care Needs Assessments, with interim monitoring, to identify existing and future child care requirements, by type of care and geographic area of need;
- Exploring creative financing options to supplement developer contributions to augment the City's Child Care Development Reserves;
- Securing City-owned child care facilities from private developers through the rezoning process for lease at nominal rates to non-profit providers;
- Encouraging the establishment of child care facilities near schools, parks and community centres;
- Encouraging private developers to contribute to the City's Child Care Development Reserve Fund, as appropriate;

- Consulting and collaborating with child care providers and other community partners on child care issues;
- Administering the City’s Child Care Grant Program to support the provision of quality, affordable, accessible child care in Richmond; and
- Advocating for senior governments to contribute funding and improve policies to address local child care needs.

It is noted that an update to the Richmond Social Development Strategy is currently under development.

Richmond Child Care Action Plan

On April 12, 2021, Richmond City Council adopted the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan*. The *Richmond Child Care Action Plan* provides a snapshot of the current state of child care in Richmond and assesses the opportunities and challenges to better meet the child care needs of families. With this information, the Plan identified goals for child care space creation and actions to meet these targets. The *Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034* will complement the *Richmond Child Care Action Plan*.

Richmond Child Care Development Policy

The Child Care Development Policy 4017 acknowledges that quality and affordable child care is an essential service in the Richmond community for residents, employers and employees. It commits the City to being an active partner with senior governments, private and non-profit organizations, parents and the community to plan, develop and maintain a quality and affordable comprehensive child care system.

Child Care Development Advisory Committee (CCDAC)

Established in 1993 as an outcome of the Child Care Development Policy 4017, the CCDAC is an advisory committee to City Council. Its mandate is to advise Richmond City Council on the development of quality, affordable and accessible child care, and to assist with the planning and support of quality child care in Richmond.

Child Care Statutory Reserve Funds

The Child Care Development Reserve Fund (Bylaw No. 7812) was established in 1994 and has been periodically revised. This fund is available to support capital expenses including the creation of new City-owned child care, capital costs related to the City’s child care facilities and providing grants to non-profit organizations for capital purchases and improvements, such as equipment, furnishings, renovations and playground development. Funds collected through the development process are directed to either the City-wide Reserve Fund or the West Cambie Reserve Fund.

The Child Care Operating Reserve Fund (Bylaw No. 8877) was established in May 2012 to assist with non-capital expenses including staffing and operating funding for the City’s child care section of the Community Social Development Department and grants to non-profit organizations to support child care professional and program development within Richmond.

Contributions to the Reserve Fund are secured through specific zoning or re-zoning of property under development, in accordance with provisions from the OCP and Zoning Bylaw, with 70% of the contributions going to the appropriate capital reserve fund and 30% going to the Child Care Operating Fund.

Alignment with Other City Plans

- *Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty (2021–2031)*
 - *Richmond Accessibility Plan (2023–2033)*
 - *Richmond Community Wellness Strategy (2018–2023)*
 - *Richmond Cultural Harmony Plan (2019–2029)*
- See Appendix 2 for further details on aligned City Plans.

Key Child Care Achievements in Richmond since 2017

The *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* outlined a set of strategic directions and 32 recommended actions to accomplish throughout the five-year period between 2017–2022. At the end of this period, the City had either completed or made significant progress on all of the 32 actions recommended within the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy*.

Some of the key achievements during the five-year period from 2017–2022 and throughout 2023 during the period of developing this Strategy include:

- The development of seven new City-owned child care facilities including:
 - Willow Early Care and Learning Centre;
 - Gardens Children’s Centre;
 - Seasong Child Care Centre;
 - River Run Early Care and Learning Centre;
 - Sprouts Early Childhood Development Hub;
 - Seedlings Early Childhood Development Hub; and
 - Hummingbird Child Care Centre.
- The Planner 1, Child Care role transitioned from an auxiliary role to a regular full time role and was then reclassified to reflect an expanded scope of work to a Planner 2, Child Care role, while continuing vital and ongoing support to the child care section.
- The *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan* was adopted by City Council on April 12, 2021 and builds upon the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment Strategy*. The *Action Plan* provides a snapshot of the current state of child care in Richmond and assesses the opportunities and challenges to meeting the child care needs of families. With this, the plan sets targets for child care space creation and clear actions to meet these targets across this 10-year period. Significant progress towards meeting these targets has already been made.

- Over the six year period between 2017 and 2023, a total of \$7,388,800 was received in developer contributions to the Child Care Development Reserves. These funds are used to assist in the creation of new child care spaces in Richmond by supporting the development of new City-owned child care facilities and developing resources to support innovation and best practice in the design of City-owned child care facilities. This fund also supports the maintenance and enhancement of child care in the city, by providing grants to non-profit societies through the Child Care Capital Grant Program.
- Collaboration and coordination with the Richmond School District has resulted in new 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. In the current 2024–2025 school year, the School District and its partners offer 1,215 child care spaces, and on school grounds, they offer a range of licensed programs including Group Care 30 months to School-Age, Preschool and School-Age programs. The School District has accessed the Province of BC’s ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund to deliver new child care spaces and currently has four purpose-built facilities under construction and are anticipated to open in 2024.
- The Child Care Development Advisory Committee and the City planned public events each year to celebrate Child Care Month in May. In 2022, 2023 and 2024, the events included an annual Symposium for ECEs, child care providers and parents, and a Children’s Art Exhibition.





Developing the Strategy

Child Care Strategy Advisory Committee

An advisory committee was created to guide and support the development of the *Child Care Strategy*. The advisory committee assisted in planning the community engagement activities and provided guidance and advice throughout the project. Committee members were selected based on their diverse and varied knowledge and experience in the child care field in Richmond. The members included representatives from the following organizations:

- City of Richmond
- Richmond Community Associations and Societies
- Richmond School District
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives
- Child Care Resource & Referral Centre
- Supported Child Development Program
- Child Care Providers
- Parents residing in Richmond

Guiding Principles

The Child Care Strategy Advisory Committee identified a set of Guiding Principles to direct the development of the Strategy. The Guiding Principles were adopted by City Council on September 25, 2023 and include:

1. Maximize meaningful participation and engagement from a diverse community of families, employers and child care providers including Indigenous Elders, families and community members in Richmond.
2. Identify and prioritize engagement activities that are inclusive, accessible and equitable.
3. Collaborate with child care providers, partners and organizations to promote child care quality and workforce stability, as well as improve equitable access to child care in Richmond.
4. Ensure the *Child Care Strategy* aligns with and complements relevant City of Richmond strategies, plans, policies and resources that support both families and the child care sector in Richmond.
5. Ensure the *Child Care Strategy* is based on the current and forecasted needs for child care in Richmond and can evolve and respond to the changing needs of the community.
6. Ensure the *Child Care Strategy's* actions and recommendations are evidence-based and data-informed and are reliable and realistic for Richmond's context.

Equity

In addition to the identification and utilization of the Guiding Principles, the *Child Care Strategy* incorporates an equity lens, which aims for equity in child care access and provision so the child care needs of all residents can be addressed. Some families experience more barriers than others in accessing appropriate child care (e.g. families with children who require extra support, newcomers, those experiencing low income, those who identify as Indigenous, racialized or LGBTQ2S+ amongst others). An equity lens helps to bring the needs of these individuals to the forefront when planning for and providing child care services in Richmond.

Applying an equity lens means continually asking key questions including:

- Who will benefit from the policy, program, initiative or service?
- Who might be excluded from those benefits and why?
- How might population groups be unfairly burdened today or in the future?
- Have important decisions been made with the direct input of those who will be most affected by those decisions?
- From whose perspective is the ‘success’ of the project or policy being evaluated?

During the development of the *Child Care Strategy*, an equity lens was used to develop the community engagement plan. This incorporated a variety of community engagement strategies such as the use of print and online materials, the use of interpreters, outreach to where people were already connected, providing child-minding, and honorariums. An equity lens was also used during analysis where those voices who are typically underrepresented were more heavily weighted, and actions have been developed to ensure the needs of these populations were met.

Best Practice Review

In planning for child care, it is important to explore and learn about promising practices, opportunities and challenges from other regions, governments and organizations. A review of promising and interesting child care practices from other jurisdictions was conducted for the *Child Care Strategy*. The intent was to identify opportunities to enhance Richmond’s child care efforts while recognizing that any practice must be appropriate and feasible to the local context. The best practice review explored initiatives and examples from other municipalities in BC, other Canadian cities and international practices in countries such as the United States, New Zealand, Norway and Denmark.

This best practice review comprises two sections. The first section includes an overview of the 2023 Metro Vancouver Municipal Survey, which analyzes child care practices undertaken by municipalities in Metro Vancouver and an analysis of the number of child care spaces in each municipality. The second section highlights a selection of the best practice research from across Canada and internationally, that address four child care priority areas: creating spaces; improving access; planning and policy development; and building partnerships.

Metro Vancouver Municipal Child Care Survey 2023

The Metro Vancouver Regional Planning team recently published their 2023 Survey of Licensed Child Care Spaces in Metro Vancouver. As part of this report, 21 municipalities and local governments within the region completed a survey regarding the planning policies, zoning regulations, business license requirements and activities related to child care the municipality undertakes. Some of the key results are set out below:

- The majority of municipalities that responded have a standalone child care strategy and identify child care facilities as community amenities in the development approvals process (75% of respondents).
- 16 of the municipalities that responded have staff resources dedicated to child care work, with nine municipalities having a staff person specifically dedicated to child care.
- In terms of child care facilities, 16 respondents stated they supported child care through the provision of space in local government buildings; seven respondents offer grants for child care projects; three offer grants for child care operating costs; and seven offer property tax exemptions for child care provision.
- In terms of securing child care for long term use, municipalities reported using a range of mechanisms, including municipal ownership of facilities, covenants, developer agreements and long term leases. Burnaby, Maple Ridge and Vancouver reported the use of lease agreements to ensure long-term child care usage, while Richmond and Burnaby identified using city-owned facilities to secure long-term child care usage.
- When asked about the number of municipalities that have \$10 a Day facilities operating in their area, 14 out of 21 reported \$10 a Day programs in their area, with only 10 out of 15 reporting that some municipality-owned facilities were operating as \$10 a Day programs.



The survey confirms that municipalities in Metro Vancouver recognize the importance of child care for their communities and are playing an active role to support child care in their jurisdiction. The report confirms that municipalities utilize various mechanisms to support the development of child care and to create new child care spaces, including the development of city-owned child care facilities.

Examples of Creating Spaces

Based on the best practice review conducted, the following are examples of promising practices to create affordable, appropriate and quality child care spaces.

Co-locating ECE Priority Housing with Child Care Spaces

The City of Fernie secured \$19 million in provincial and federal funding for a Provincial Pilot Project to create 100 new child care spaces and 27 units of housing. The housing will be prioritized for ECEs across the community. A minimum of 50% of the rental housing units will be non-market affordable units at, or below, 80% of median market rent.¹

The project is being developed on City-owned land using \$10 million provided through the Canada-British Columbia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and the BC New Spaces Fund, with a further \$9 million funding through BC Housing.

Partnerships to Create Child Care Spaces

Colwood City Council have partnered with Hulitan Family and Community Services and School District 62 to deliver 97 new child care spaces at Colwood Elementary School for 2025. The City provided a grant contribution of \$311,667 (utilising their Community Amenities Reserve Fund).² The new facility will provide the opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children to learn and grow together. This new child care centre will become the first Indigenous-specific, trauma-informed child care facility in the Capital Region.

Examples of Improving Access

The following examples were identified to illustrate promising practices for improving access to affordable quality child care for families.

Newcomer Support

The Pacific Immigrant Resources Society (PIRS) offer a number of services to reduce the socio-economic barriers that immigrant and refugee women can face. These services include providing free child care to provide mothers with the accessibility and flexibility to attend their programs. The child care program has three early childhood approaches: Play-Based Learning, Emergent Curriculum and Trauma-Informed Approach. The Trauma-Informed Approach is the foundation to all of the PIRS programs, supporting children to develop and increase coping skills and resilience and to manage their feelings and behaviour. Since 1975, the PIRS have served 17,716 women and 9,116 children.³

Night Nurseries

Overnight child care is now available in Sweden in approximately 120 municipalities, to cater for parents who work at night.⁴ Overnight child care, colloquially named 'night nurseries', are state-funded services for parents who provide proof of employment during night-time hours, such as hospital staff, hotel workers, caregivers and airport workers.



1 <https://www.fernie.ca/EN/meta/whats-new/news-archives/2023-archive/city-announces-child-care-and-affordable-housing-pilot-project.html>

2 <https://www.colwood.ca/news-events/news/2022-12-12-000000/colwood-supports-new-child-care-facility-partnership-hulitan>

3 <https://pirs.bc.ca/who-we-are/our-approach/#trauma-informed-approach>

4 <https://womenfriendlycitieschallenge.org/blog/swedens-night-nurseries-after-hours-preschool/>

Crabtree Corner

The YWCA operates a community and resource centre for women and families in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. Crabtree Corner offers transitional housing for new and expecting mothers in recovery, parenting programs, a community kitchen and subsidized child care for families in need.⁵ The Crabtree Corner Early Learning and Child Care Centre provides free, licensed, short term or occasional early learning and child care for children with reservations taken on a week-by-week basis.

Planning and Policy Development Examples

The following example highlights promising practices in policy development and planning which are being used to support the child care sector.

New Zealand Early Learning Action Plan 2019–2029

This action plan has been created to support the Ministry’s vision that New Zealand’s early learning system enables every child to enjoy a good life, learn and thrive in high quality settings that support their identity, language and culture and that are valued by parents and whānau (family).⁶ The Plan sets five objectives and 25 actions to reach this vision over a 10-year period. These objectives include:

- Children and whānau experience environments which promote their well-being and support identity, language and culture;
- All children are able to participate in early learning and have the support they need to learn and thrive;
- Teaching staff and leaders are well-qualified, diverse, culturally competent and valued;
- Children develop capabilities that are valued by their whānau and community and support them to be competent and confident learners; and
- Early learning services are part of a planned and coherent education ecosystem that is supported, accountable and sustainable.

Examples of Building Partnerships

The following are examples of collaborating with other partners, organizations or programs to address child care issues.

Northern Health and YMCA BC collaboration

Northern Health and YMCA BC have collaborated for a new pilot project in Fort St. John. The YMCA Robert Ogilvie Care and Learning Centre has been designed to address the lack of suitable child care in the community for healthcare shift workers. The centre has an extended day model of child care for healthcare workers who need child care as early as 6:30 a.m. to as late as 7:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. The centre will also be trialing a new flexible payment model, allowing parents to pay only for the time and services they need as opposed to paying for full-time care.⁷

5 <https://ywcavan.org/programs/crabtree-corner>

6 <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/early-learning-strategic-plan/>

7 <https://stories.northernhealth.ca/stories/first-its-kind-daycare-comes-northeast>

Child Care Spaces at Kelowna International Airport

The Province has collaborated with the City of Kelowna and KF Aerospace to develop a new standalone child care facility located at Kelowna International Airport. The new facility, which is being funded by ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund, will be operated by the YMCA of Southern Interior and will provide 86 child care spaces.⁸ This onsite child care facility provides airport employees with a quality and convenient child care option at their place of work.

Intergenerational Learning Centre

Providence Mount St. Vincent in Seattle provides apartments and nursing care for seniors combined with a licensed child care program providing 125 child care spaces. The centre provides a range of intergenerational programming and activities such as art, music, exercise and games, with each class having scheduled weekly visits with the senior residents. According to the program, the intergenerational program benefits not only the children and the seniors, but improves community connections and enhances traditions and cultures of communities.⁹



⁸ <https://ylw.kelowna.ca/news-events/news/local-families-staff-will-benefit-new-child-care-centre-kelowna-airport>

⁹ <https://www.providence.org/locations/wa/mount-st-vincent/facility-profile/intergenerational-learning-center#tabcontent-1-pane-2>

Profile of Children and Families in Richmond

The communities where people live, study and play influence their health and development. It is crucial to have a sound understanding of the characteristics of the families and children living in Richmond to inform the *Child Care Strategy*. The following provides a community profile of families and children in Richmond utilising the most recent 2021 Census Data. Child care typically covers the age range from birth to 12 years of age and, where available, data in the Profile reflects this. However, for certain data sets, the Census data available spans the age range of birth up to 10, 14 or 17 years of age and this is noted where relevant. The demographic information provided in this section has contributed to the development of the strategic priorities and actions outlined in the *Child Care Strategy*.

Population

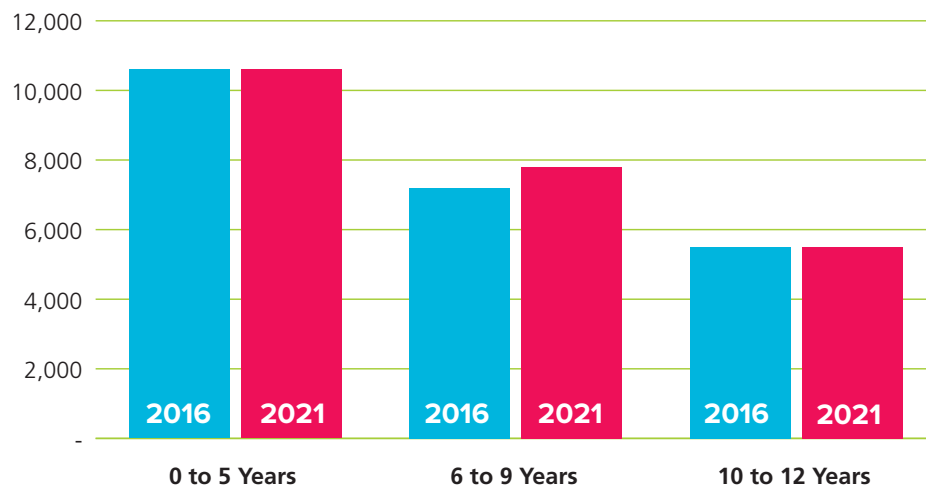
In 2021, Richmond's total population was 209,937. Between 2016 and 2021, the population grew by 11,628 people, representing a growth rate of 5.7%.

Children in Richmond

In 2021, there were 23,955 children and youth between birth and 12 years of age in Richmond. This represents 11% of Richmond's total population and is 680 more children than reported in the 2016 Census. While the number of children between birth and five years of age stayed the same between 2016 and 2021, there were increases in the number of six to nine year olds, as well as 10 to 12 year olds over this time period (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Number of Children by Age Group, 2016 and 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021

In Richmond, City Centre, Broadmoor and Steveston were the three areas with the greatest number of children. Table 1 shows population data by planning area.

Table 1: Number of Children by Age Group and Planning Area, 2021

Planning Area	Number of Children		
	0 to 5 Years	6 to 9 Years	10 to 12 Years
Richmond	10,525	7,855	5,575
Blundell	865	800	545
Bridgeport	260	145	105
Broadmoor	1,080	945	675
City Centre	3,095	1,855	1,150
East Cambie	530	410	290
East Richmond	220	120	105
Fraser Lands*	–	–	–
Gilmore*	–	–	–
Hamilton	320	225	175
Sea Island	60	45	-
Seafair	785	605	455
Shellmont	600	455	360
Steveston	1,200	1,130	930
Thompson	710	660	465
West Cambie	790	435	270

*Data suppressed due to low numbers

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021



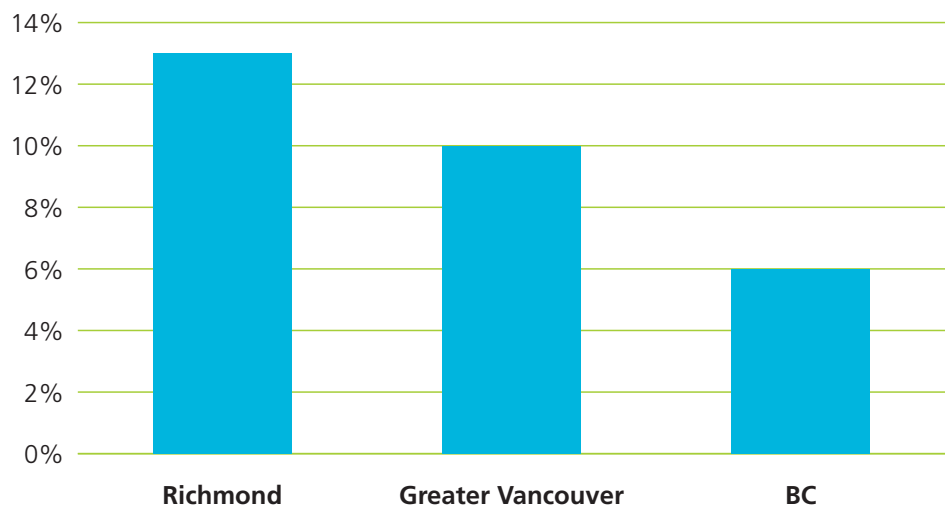
Indigenous Identity

In 2021, there were 1,545 people who identified as Indigenous in Richmond, representing 0.7% of the total population. Of the Indigenous population, there were 270 children between birth and 14 years of age, representing 1% of the total number of children in this age range in Richmond. These 270 individuals include 165 people who identified as First Nations, 95 who identified as Métis, and 10 individuals who selected multiple Indigenous responses.

Immigrant Population

In 2021, 125,600 Richmond residents, representing 60% of the population, identified as immigrants, a term which refers to people who have been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Among children 14 years of age and younger, 3,555 or 13% were immigrants compared to 10% in Greater Vancouver and 6% in BC (Figure 2). These proportions are consistent with the percentages reported in the 2016 Census.

Figure 2: Percentage of Immigrants Amongst Children Aged 0 to 14 Years, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021

Language

In Richmond, the majority of children and youth under 14 years of age are able to hold a conversation in English. However, there were still a significant number of children who were not proficient in the English language. City Centre, Blundell and West Cambie neighbourhoods had the greatest proportion of children who were not able to have a conversation in English or French, at 9%, 8% and 8% of the population respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: First Official Language(s) Spoken by Children Aged 0 to 14 Years, 2021

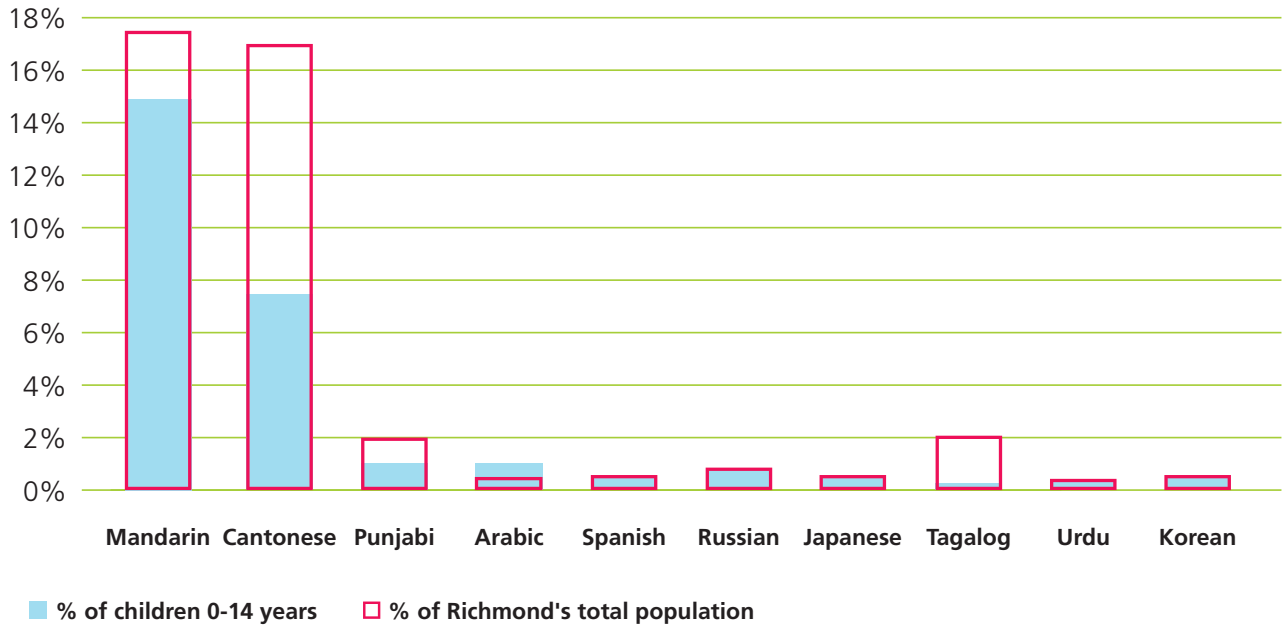
Planning Area	First Official Language(s) Spoken		
	English	Neither English nor French	% with Neither English nor French
Richmond	28,040	1,750	6%
Blundell	2,605	195	8%
Bridgeport	565	35	6%
Broadmoor	3,190	185	6%
City Centre	6,975	630	9%
East Cambie	1,460	65	4%
East Richmond	505	35	7%
Fraser Lands*	–	–	-
Gilmore*	50	–	0%
Hamilton	830	35	4%
Sea Island	135	–	0%
Seafair	2,220	110	5%
Shellmont	1,660	70	4%
Steveston	3,925	110	3%
Thompson	2,190	120	6%
West Cambie	1,710	140	8%

*Data suppressed due to low numbers

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021

In Richmond, the most common languages spoken at home, other than English, by children 14 years of age and under were: Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Arabic and Spanish. When looking at the population of Richmond as a whole, the most common languages spoken at home were: Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, Punjabi and Taiwanese. Figure 3 illustrates the languages most commonly spoken at home comparing, children 14 years of age and under to the total population.

Figure 3: Language Spoken Most Often at Home Other than English by Children Aged 0 to 14 Years Compared to the Total Population in Richmond, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021

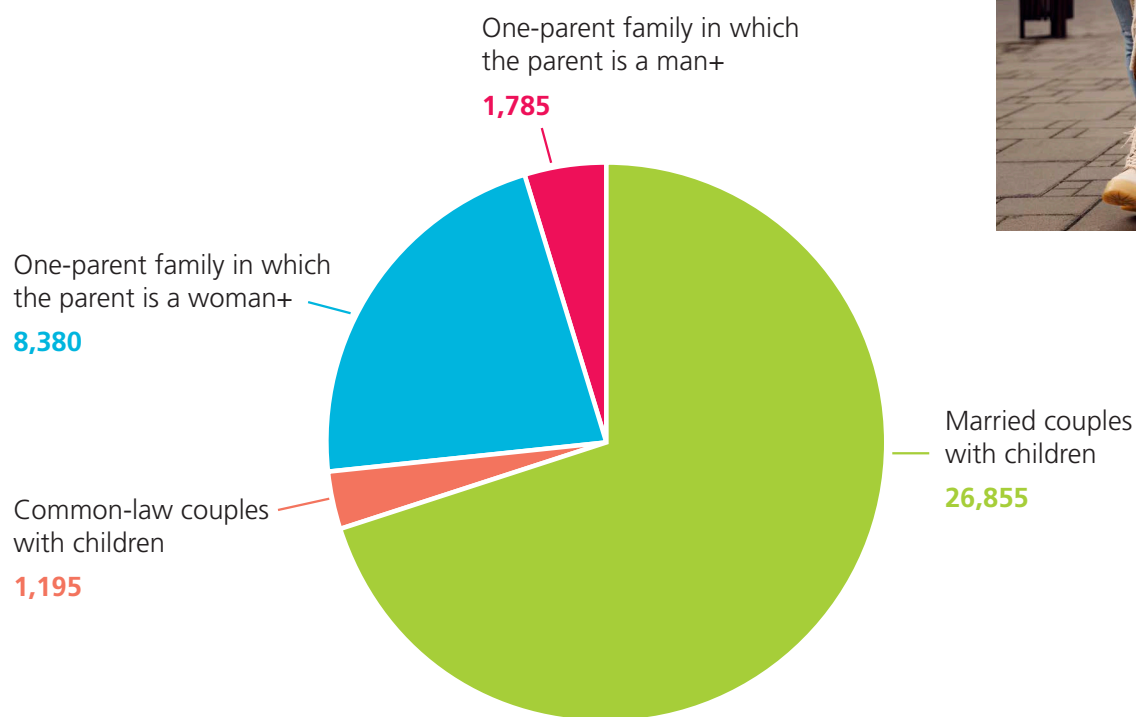
While 18% of Richmond’s population speaks Mandarin most commonly at home, only 15% of children 14 years of age and under do so. This difference is more pronounced amongst Cantonese speakers where 18% of Richmond’s population speaks Cantonese most commonly at home, where as only 8% of children 14 years of age and under do. How long ago the child or child’s parents immigrated to Canada may influence what language a child speaks most commonly at home.



Family Composition

In Richmond in 2021, there were 38,215 families with children. Of these, the majority (70%) were married couples with children, representing 26,855 families. There were also 10,165 one-parent families, which represented approximately a quarter (27%) of all families with children in Richmond (Figure 4). Of the one-parent families, 8,380 were families where the parent was a woman+ and 1,785 were families where the parent was a man+. The terms woman or man throughout this document refer to self-identified gender and may include those who identify as non-binary.

Figure 4: Composition of Families with Children in Richmond, 2021¹⁰



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021

¹⁰ Based on Statistics Canada's definitions used in the 2021 Census, the term "man+" includes men (and/or boys), as well as some non-binary persons, and the term "woman+" includes women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons.





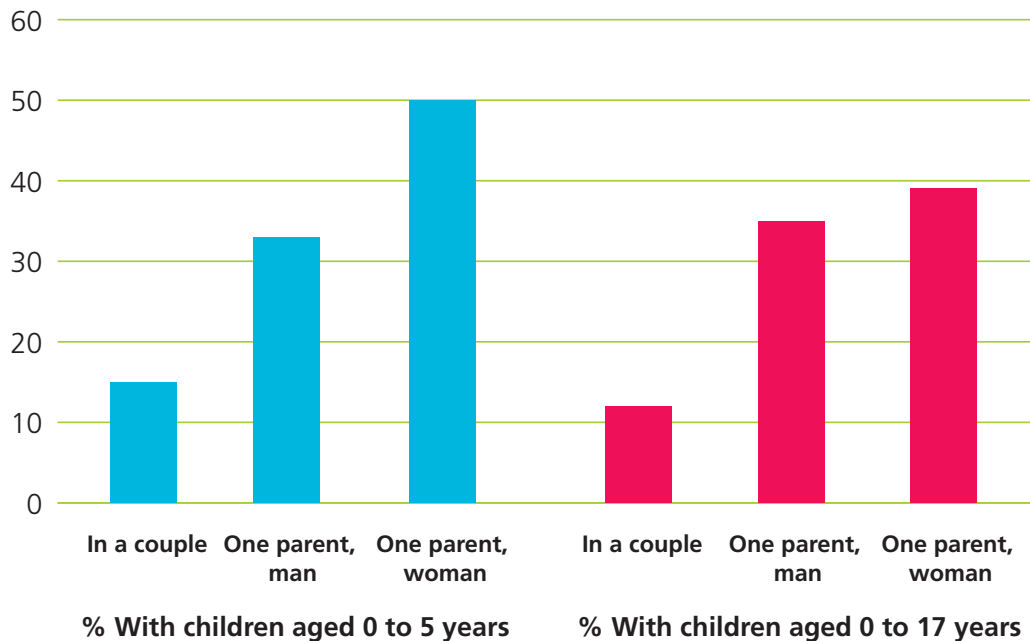
Median Income

As identified in the 2021 Census and based on 2020 income data, the median reported annual household income in Richmond was \$79,000. Median incomes vary significantly depending on household type. For couples with children, the median income was significantly higher at \$115,000. In contrast, one-parent families had much lower median incomes – \$63,600 for one-parent families in which the parent was a woman and \$71,500 for one-parent families in which the parent was a man.

Low Income

Factors such as family structure, parental level of education and a child’s age affects how likely a family is to be living with low income. For families with young children, factors such as high child care costs create barriers to full-time employment, which disproportionately affects one-parent families. Of families with children, one-parent families in which the parent was a woman with children under five were more likely to be living with low income than any other type of family (Figure 5). In total, half (50%) of single parents (in which the parent is a woman) with children under five years of age and one third (33%) of single parents (in which the parent is a man) with children under five were considered low-income in Richmond, compared to 15% of couples with children in this same age range.

Figure 5: Prevalence of Low-Income by Family Type in Richmond, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021

The prevalence of children and youth (0 to 17 years of age) in low-income households varied significantly depending on the area in which they lived. The proportion of children (0 to 5 years of age) in low-income families in Richmond ranged from 28% in Blundell to 6% in Shellmont (See Table 3). Factors including the prevalence of rental housing stock; the average monthly rental rate; and proximity to public transportation and other community resources, may affect the prevalence of low-income households in a particular planning area and in turn the prevalence of children in low-income households.

Table 3: Prevalence of Children and Youth Aged 0 to 17 Years in Low-Income Households in Richmond by Planning Area, 2021

Planning Area	0 to 5 Years		6 to 10 Years		11 to 17 Years	
	# of Individuals	Prevalence of low income households (%)	# of Individuals	Prevalence of low income households (%)	# of Individuals	Prevalence of low income households (%)
Richmond	1,830	18	1,785	18	2,220	16
Blundell	245	28	195	21	225	16
Bridgeport*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Broadmoor	160	16	250	22	400	23
City Centre	640	21	525	23	690	23
East Cambie	50	10	55	12	65	7
East Richmond	45	20	-	-	-	-
Fraser Lands*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gilmore*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hamilton*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sea Island*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Seafair	180	22	190	25	165	14
Shellmont	35	6	45	8	75	10
Steveston	140	12	195	13	225	10
Thompson	140	18	205	27	180	16
West Cambie	145	18	80	16	85	14

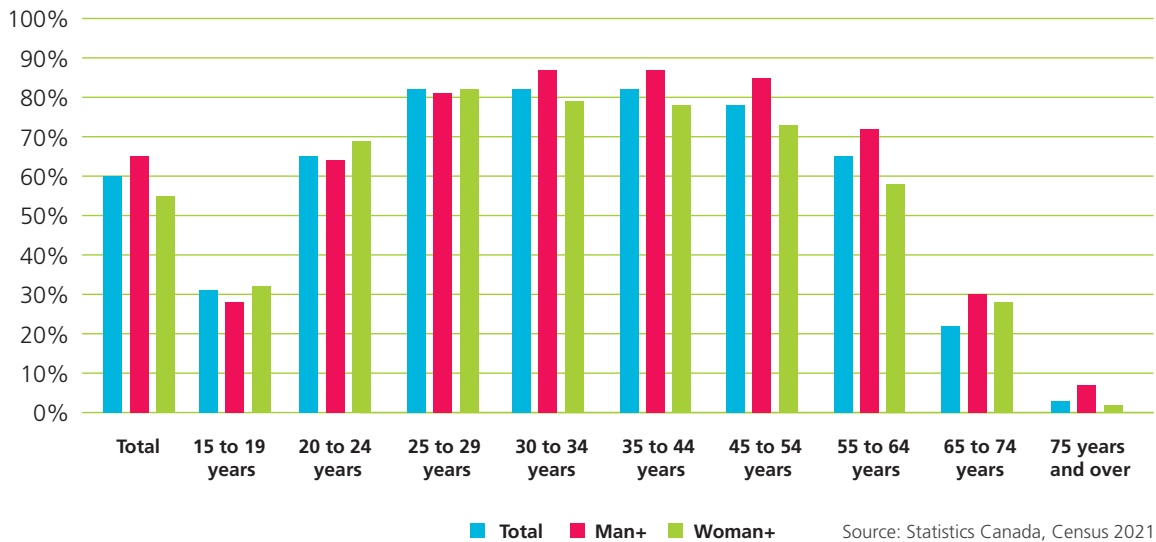
*Data suppressed due to low numbers

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021

Employment

In 2021, there were 108,470 people in the labour force in Richmond, representing a participation rate of 60.1%. Of these, 96,785 were employed and 11,685 were unemployed, which is equivalent to an unemployment rate of 11%. The following figure shows labour force participation rates in Richmond by self-identified gender. While labour force participation rates remain similar between men and women between the 20 and 29 years of age, there is a more pronounced difference from age 30 onwards. For example, for men between 30 and 34 years of age, the labour force participation rate was 87.7%, whereas for women it was 79.7% (Figure 6). One of the factors contributing to lower labour force participation rates for women between 30 and 44 years of age is child care responsibilities.

Figure 6: Labour Force Participation Rates by Age and Gender in Richmond, 2021



Vulnerability in Children (Human Early Learning Partnership)

The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) collects population-level data about children’s experiences and development through their Child Development Monitoring System. The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a questionnaire completed by Kindergarten teachers for students in their classrooms. The questionnaire is based on five core areas of early childhood development: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge.

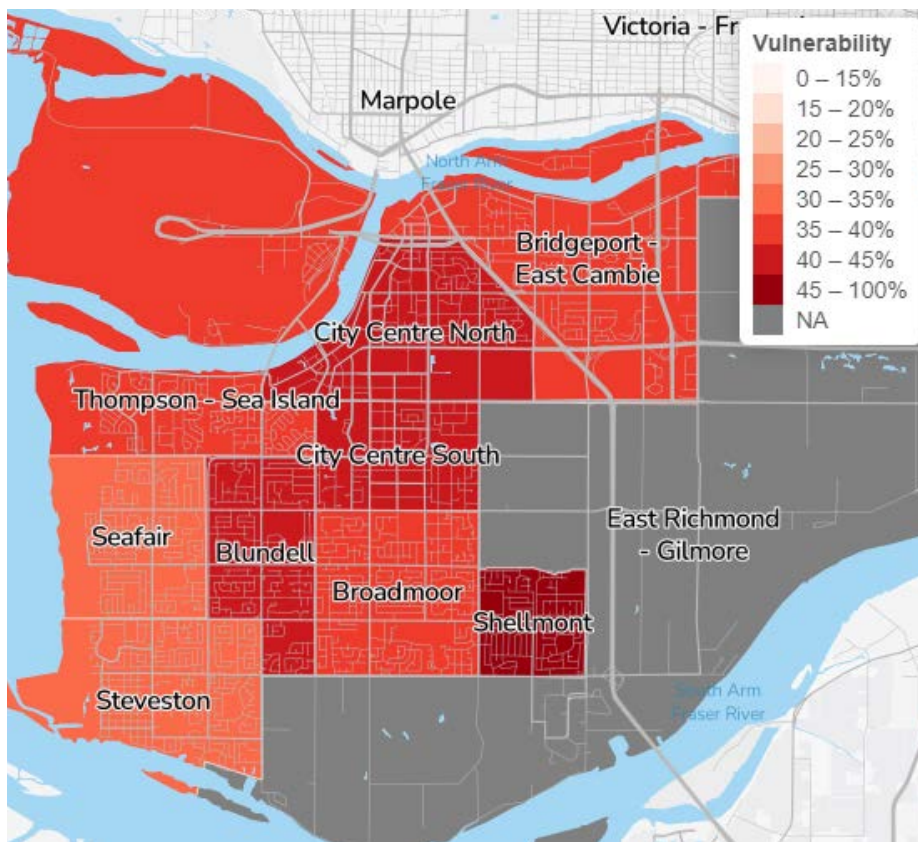
The data is collected in ‘waves’; Wave 8 of the EDI was collected between 2019 and 2022. The data collected for Richmond shows that 39.7% of Kindergarten children were on track in their overall development. However, 39.3% of children were found to be vulnerable on one or more EDI scales. Vulnerable on an EDI scale means the percentage of children who score below the 10th percentage

cut off in the area of development measured by that scale. In Richmond, 21.2% were in flux; these are the children who are neither on track nor vulnerable. According to HELP, children in the 'in flux' measure may or may not catch up to their peers who are on track and may benefit from additional supports. The overall level of child vulnerability in Richmond has increased in both the short and over the long term.

The data for BC overall shows that 32.9% of children were considered to be vulnerable on one or more scales of the EDI. Richmond had higher rates of vulnerability than the province on social competence, emotional maturity, and communication skills and general knowledge.

Figure 7 below shows the vulnerability levels for areas across Richmond. The darker the shade of red, the higher the number of children who are considered vulnerable overall. City Centre North, City Centre South, Shellmont and Blundell have the highest levels of vulnerability amongst children overall.

Figure 7: Map of overall EDI Vulnerability for Richmond, Wave 8



Source: <https://dashboard.earlylearning.ubc.ca/>



Community Engagement Methodology

Engagement with the community is crucial to identify the needs, opportunities and challenges in relation to child care in Richmond. A community engagement plan was created alongside members of the Child Care Strategy Advisory Committee and LevelUp Planning Collaborative. The goals of the community engagement were to:

- Hear from residents, parents and guardians, caregivers and those who work in the child care field to better understand the current and future needs for child care in Richmond; and
- Utilize the data to create a set of priorities and actions for the Child Care Strategy.

The public engagement plan utilized a multi-pronged approach, targeting different audiences through a variety of methods. For the first period of engagement, two online surveys were created: one survey aimed at residents, parents and guardians and one survey aimed at child care providers including owners, managers and employees of providers in Richmond. Feedback was also sought through focus groups, key informant interviews, outreach sessions and committee presentations.

Promotional materials were distributed to the Richmond community through social media, posters, postcards and digital ads. In total, 625 members of the community engaged with the City through various methods of engagement. 1,256 people visited the Let's Talk Richmond child care project page and 354 people completed the online surveys. Table 4 summarizes participants by engagement activity:

Table 4: Number of Participants by Engagement Activity

Type of Engagement Activity	# of Participants
Interviews	7
Focus Groups	47
Community Outreach with Parents/Guardians/Caregivers	54
Professional Development Sessions for Child Care Providers	100
Committee Presentations	63
Survey (Residents, Parents, Guardians and Caregivers)	299
Survey (Child Care Providers)	55
Total	625

Through the variety of techniques used, we were able to engage with a diverse range of people to understand the unique perspectives, needs and aspirations of those involved in the child care sector. The information collected through this public engagement process has been used to assess the needs for child care in Richmond and identify priorities and actions.

Let's Talk Richmond Survey

The two surveys were available online through the Let's Talk Richmond platform. The surveys were also available as a paper copy upon request or from Community Centres, Richmond Public Library branches and City Hall. The surveys were available from October 23 to December 6, 2023. Completed paper copies of the survey were accepted at Richmond Public Libraries, Community Societies and Associations, and City Hall during this time.

Resident, Parent and Guardian Survey

- The resident, parent and guardian survey sought information on the communities' circumstances, needs, views and aspirations for child care in Richmond. The survey included questions about their child care arrangement, why they require child care, time spent on waitlists, affordability and how child care in Richmond could be improved.
- A total of 299 surveys were completed by the community and used in the analysis of the assessment of need.

Child Care Operator Survey

- The child care operator survey sought information about the facility, such as: types of programs they offer, operational times, enrolment and waitlists and information about fees and funding.
- A total of 55 child care operator surveys were completed and used in the analysis of the assessment of need.

Additional Engagement Activities

Feedback was also sought through a range of outreach and interview methods, held both in person and online. A summary of these is provided below.

Committee Meetings

Presentations were given at a range of committee and board meetings, including the individual board meetings of the Community Associations and Societies that provide programs and services at the City's community centres, the Child Care Development Advisory Committee, the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee, the Richmond Poverty Reduction Table and the Richmond Children First community table. A total of 63 participants representing 43 different organizations provided input through these various advisory committee presentations. Information was also shared with all City advisory committees, with contact details should anyone wish to provide feedback or have questions. This enabled input from a diverse range of individuals and organizations across Richmond, many of whom work directly with children and families.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with seven participants who have extensive experience, knowledge or unique perspectives in the child care sector.

Focus Groups

Seven focus group sessions were held with a total of 47 participants attending. Sessions were held with child care providers, community partners and parents including City of Richmond staff, newcomers and recent immigrants, with one session being held in Mandarin.

Community Outreach

Outreach sessions were held at family programs and community centres including:

- Strong Start programs at Walter Lee Elementary, Currie Early Learning Centre, RM Grauer Elementary and Daniel Woodward Elementary;
- Parent and tot groups at Thompson and South Arm community centres;
- Storytime at Richmond Public Library;
- Family First Music Group at Richmond Family Place; and
- Outreach was also undertaken at three professional development workshops for child care providers organized by Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral.

These outreach sessions allowed engagement with parents, grandparents and caregivers to hear their perspectives and experiences within the child care sector.



Engagement on the Draft Child Care Strategy


On June 24 2024, City Council endorsed the Draft *Child Care Strategy 2024-2034* for public engagement, for the purpose of seeking input on the vision and the strategic directions and actions and to ensure alignment with current and future child care needs. Public engagement took place during July and August 2024 and a summary of the activities is provided below.

Online Survey


- A survey was available on the Lets Talk Richmond website, from July 2 to August 4, 2024.
- Respondents were asked their level of agreement on the vision, strategic directions and associated actions, and their thoughts on the Draft Richmond Child Care Strategy overall.
- There were 929 visits to the Lets Talk Richmond *Child Care Strategy* landing page during the period the survey was open. 674 of those visitors were made aware of the Strategy and engagement, 350 people sought additional information through the page and 81 people completed the survey.

Focus Groups

In person focus groups were held for parents, child care providers, City Advisory Committee members and the Canadian Federation of University Women. Board members and staff from the Community Associations and Societies and other organizations such as Vancouver Coastal Health also had the opportunity to provide feedback.

 **929** people visited the website

 **674** were made aware

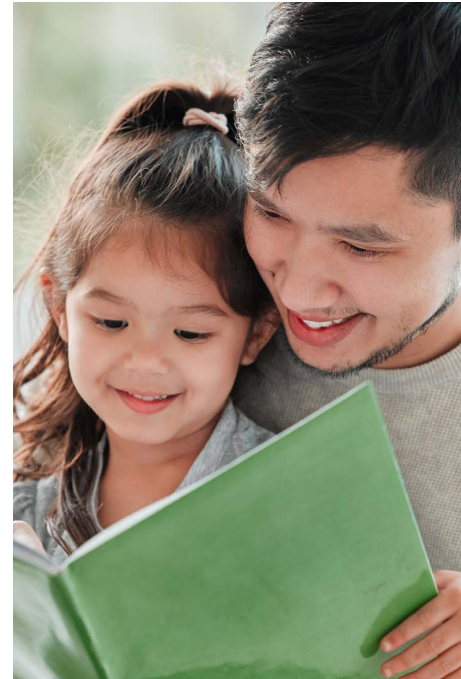
 **350** sought additional information

 **81** completed the survey

Assessment of Need

The assessment of child care needs for this Strategy is comprised of two components:

- 1. Child care space supply:** Analysis of the supply and demand for child care in Richmond and the potential need using child care space data and the demographics of the community.
- 2. What the Community said:** Summary and analysis of the feedback received during the community engagement process, through the public surveys, key informant interviews, outreach sessions and focus groups.



Child Care Space Supply

Changes in Child Care in Richmond from 1995 to Present

Since the first Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment in 1995, the supply of child care spaces has increased substantially. In 1995, there were 2,436 licensed child care spaces in the City. By 2001, the number had increased to 3,216; by 2009 this had increased to 3,974. In 2016, the number of licensed child care spaces had increased to 5,802 and in 2023 there were 9,103 licensed child care spaces in Richmond. This represents a 275% increase in spaces from 1995 to 2023, or an increase of 6,677 licensed spaces.

All types of child care programs have seen increases in the number of spaces, with the exception of Family Child Care and Occasional Care, both of which have seen a decrease in the number of spaces between 1995 to 2023 (Table 5).

Table 5: Child Care Spaces by Program Type 1995–2023*

Type of Care	# of Spaces 1995	# of Spaces 2001	# of Spaces 2009	# of Spaces 2016	# of Spaces 2023	Change 1995–2023	% Change 1995–2023
Group Care (Under 36 Months)	66	92	166	664	2,045	+1,979	+2,998%
Group Care (30 Months to School Age)	408	576	1,333	2,103	3,829	+3,421	+838%
Group Care (School Age)	775	1,062	1,228	1,666	2,100	+1,325	+171%
Family Child Care	377	537	434	341	167	-210	-56%
In-home Multi-age Care	0	0	64	81	79	+79	0%
Multi-age Care	0	0	24	88	104	+104	0%
Preschool	600	820	689	819	763	+163	+27%
Occasional Care	155	104	36	40	16	-139	-90%
Total Licensed Spaces	2,426	3,216	3,974	5,802	9,103	+6,677	+ 275%

*Source of data for 1995, 2001 and 2009 population figures was Richmond School District population projections (cited in 2009–2016 Child Care Needs Assessment). Source for 2016 figures was BC Stats PEOPLE Projections. Source for 2023 data was the 2021 Census Data.



The number of children 0–2 years of age has decreased by 425 children when compared to the 2016 Census Data. However, the number of children 3–5 years of age and school age children aged 6–12 years of age has increased. Overall, the number of children 0–12 years of age in Richmond has increased by 570 children since 2016.

The number of licensed child care spaces per 100 children 0–12 years of age is 38, which means there are child care spaces available for approximately 38% of the child population in Richmond. While the number of children aged 0–12 has fluctuated slightly between 1995 and 2023, the overall number of spaces per 100 children has increased substantially, from just 10 spaces per 100 children in 1995. This has also increased since 2022, which had a rate of 35.6 child care spaces per 100 children in Richmond (Table 6).

Table 6: Number of Child Care Spaces by Child Population*

Type of Child Care License	Number of Licensed Child Care Spaces	Child Population Per Age Group	Child Care Spaces per 100 Children
Group Care (Under 36 Months)	2,045	4,825	42.4
Group Care (30 Months to School Age)	3,829	5,700	67.2
Licensed Group Care (School Age)	2,100	13,430	15.6
Total**	9,103	23,955	38

*Source Statistics Canada Census, 2021.

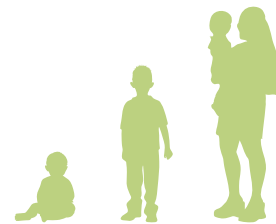
** Total includes all licensed child care in Richmond.



in 2023 there were **42.4 GROUP CARE (UNDER 36 MONTHS) SPACES** per 100 children.



in 2023 there were **67.2 GROUP CARE (30 MONTHS TO SCHOOL AGE) SPACES** per 100 children.



in 2023 there were **15.6 LICENSED GROUP CARE (SCHOOL AGE) SPACES** per 100 children.

2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan Targets and Supply

The 2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan set a target to increase licensed child care spaces in Richmond by 3,688 spaces between 2021 and 2031. Table 7 below shows that significant progress has already been made to achieve these targets, with 85% of the total number of licensed child care spaces being met by 2023.

Table 7: 2031 Licensed Child Care Space Targets Compared with 2023 Supply

Type of Care	2031 Target	2023 Supply	Target Met %
Group Care – Under 36 Months	1,774	2,045	115%
Group Care – 30 Months to School Age	3,937	3,829	97%
Group Care – School Age	3,791	2,100	55%
Occasional Care	58	16	28%
Licensed Child Minding	24	0	0%
Multi-Age Child Care – Overnight Care	8	0	0%
Total*	10,710	9,103	85%

*Includes all types of child care, including licensed preschool, multi-age care, in-home multi-age care and family child care.

Distribution by Planning Area

In 2023, child care spaces were available in all of the 15 City Planning Areas in Richmond as outlined in Table 8. The largest increases in licensed child care spaces since 2016 were seen in East Cambie, with an increase of 1,088 spaces, and City Centre, with an increase of 966 between 2016 to 2023. Bridgeport also saw a large relative increase in child care spaces between 2016 to 2023, with a percentage increase of 573%, from 37 spaces in 2016 to 249 spaces in 2023. The only planning area which has seen a loss in the total child care spaces between 2016 and 2023 was in Hamilton, with a loss of nine spaces since 2016; however this only equates to a 3% decrease in the area.

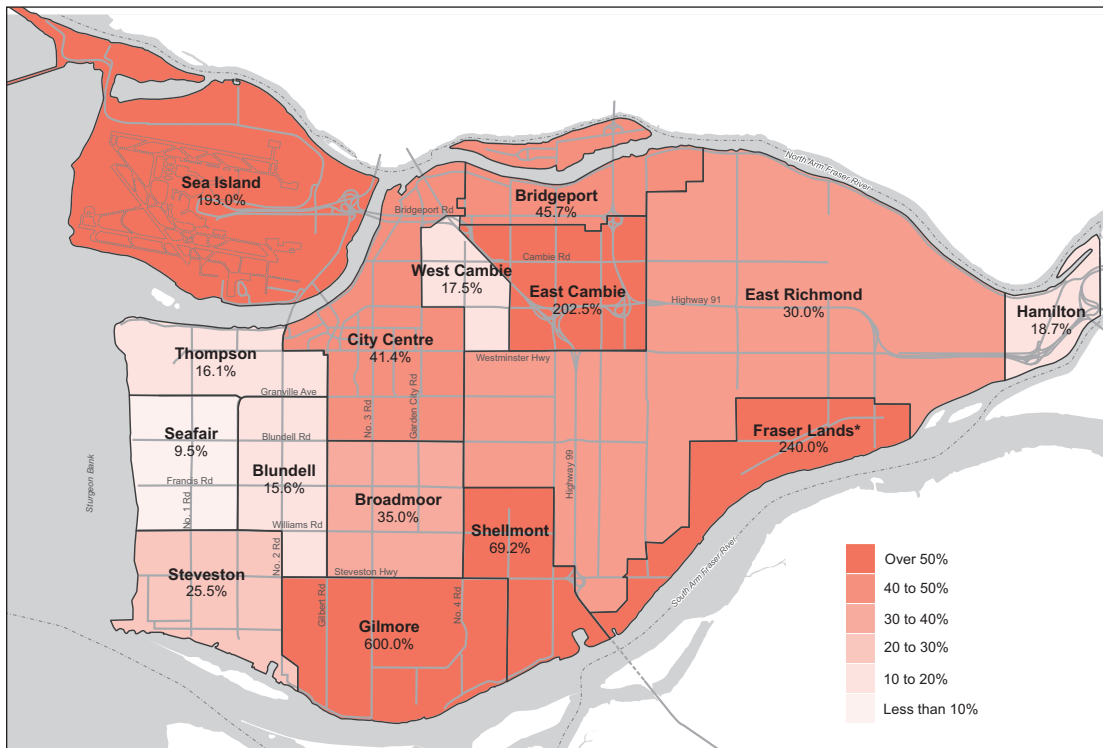
Table 8: Child Care Spaces by Planning Area by Type of Care (2016–2023)

	Group Care-Under 36 Months	Group Care 30 months to School Age	Group Care School Age	Family Child Care	In-home Multi-age Care	Multi-age Care	Preschool	Occasional Care	Total	% change 2016–2023
Blundell	58	177	103	14	7	8	17	0	384	+21%
Bridgeport	64	114	44	7	0	0	20	0	249	+573%
Broadmoor	156	244	407	28	8	56	117	0	1,016	+9%
City Centre	630	1,078	362	0	8	0	97	0	2,175	+80%
East Cambie	486	711	287	7	8	0	44	0	1,543	+239%
East Richmond	36	246	0	7	0	0	20	0	309	+42%
Fraser Lands	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0%
Gilmore	60	186	0	0	0	0	7	0	253	+58%
Hamilton	29	60	117	6	0	8	30	0	250	-3%
Sea Island	58	47	0	0	0	0	94	0	199	+201%
Seafair	32	105	164	14	16	8	113	16	468	+14%
Shellmont	180	226	114	21	8	8	0	0	557	+98%
Steveston	124	328	347	42	16	0	113	0	970	+11%
Thompson	50	118	113	0	8	16	71	0	376	+8%
West Cambie	70	189	42	21	0	0	20	0	342	+47%
Total	2,045	3,829	2,100	167	79	104	763	16	9,103	+57%



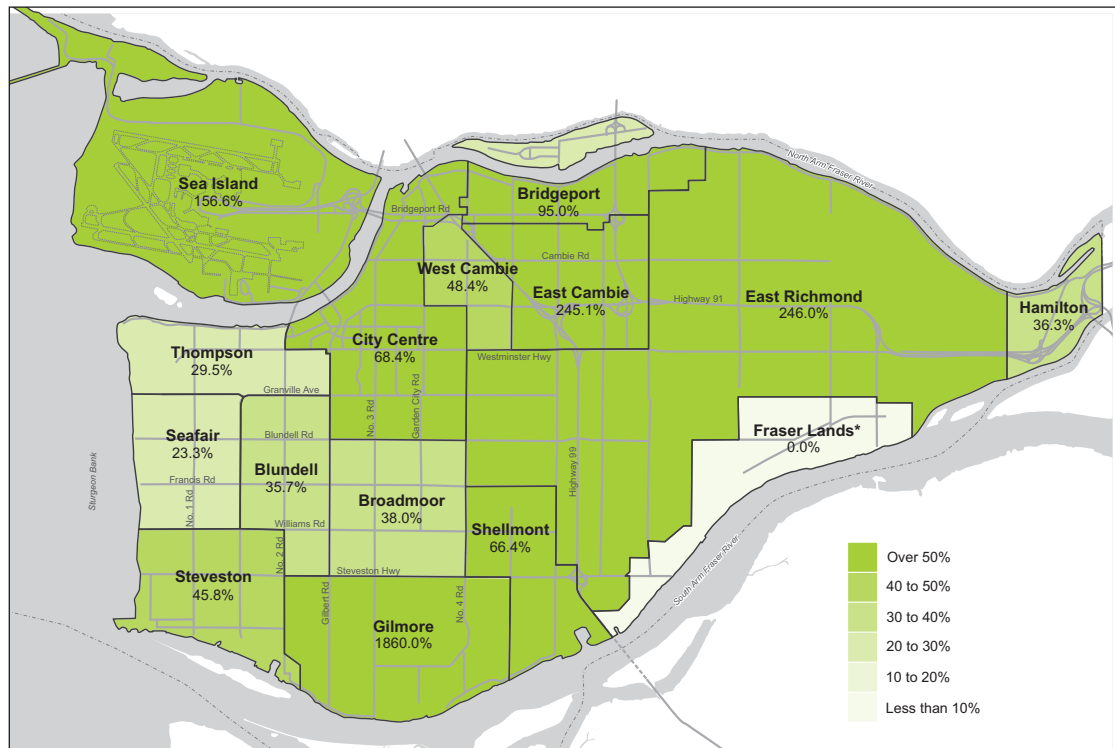
The following figures show the number of licensed child care spaces by program type, per the number of children in that area (Figures 8, 9, 10 and 11). Some areas have child care spaces for over 100% of the child population in the area. This means that for some areas, such as East Cambie, there are more child care spaces for Group Care under 36 Months and Group Care 30 Months to School Age than there are children between 0-5 years of age.

Figure 8: Percentage of Group Care Under 36 Months Spaces per 100 Children by Planning Area



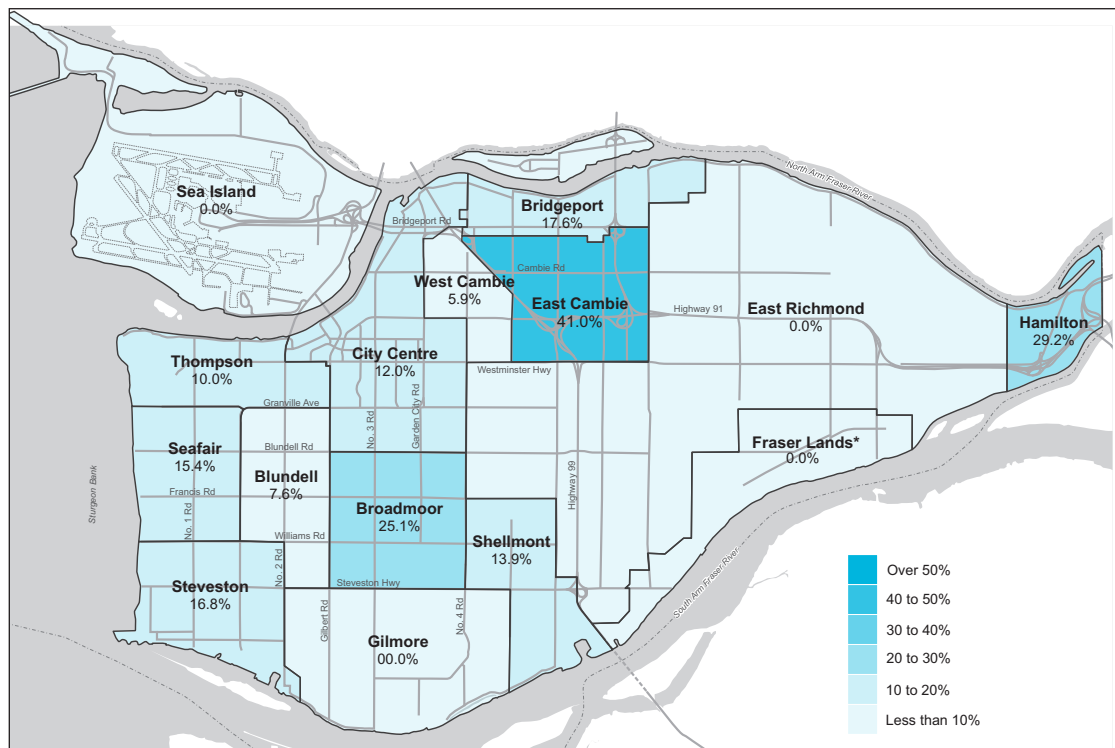
*Population data suppressed due to low numbers.

Figure 9: Percentage of Group Care 30 Months to School Age Spaces per 100 Children by Planning Area



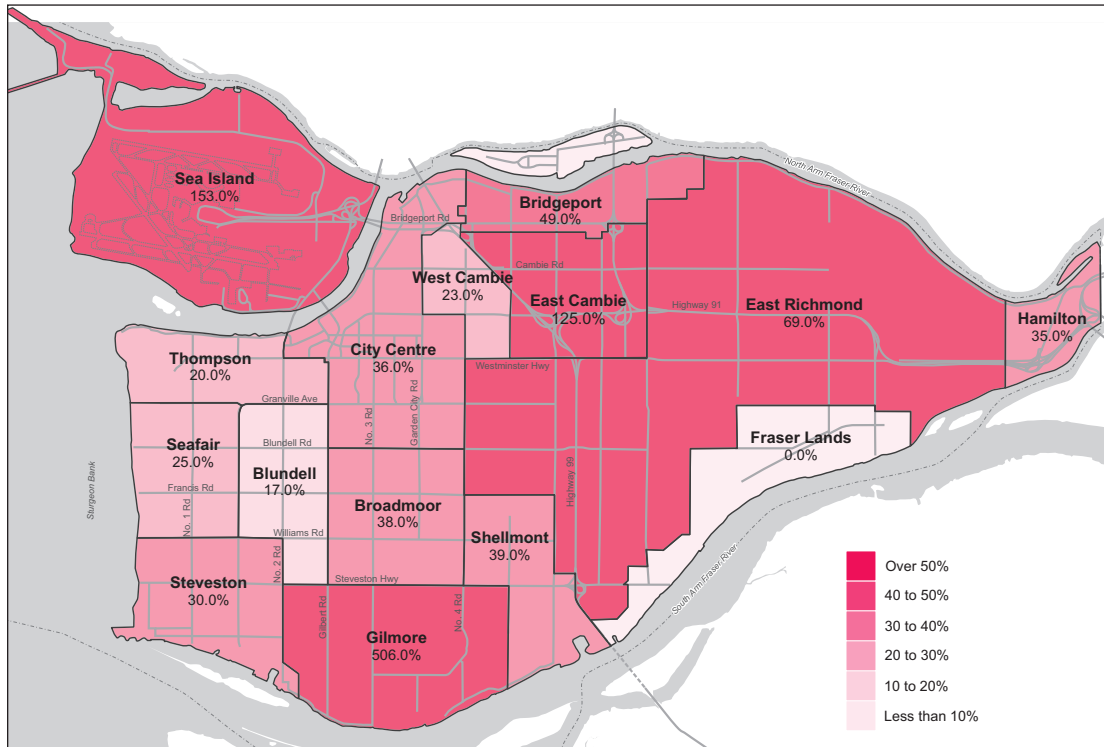
*Population data suppressed due to low numbers.

Figure 10: Percentage of Group Care School Age Spaces per 100 Children by Planning Area*



*Population data suppressed due to low numbers.

Figure 11: Percentage of Child Care Spaces per 100 Children by Planning Area*



*Population data suppressed.

* Includes all types of child care, including licensed preschool, multi-age care, in-home multi-age care and family child care.

Regional Comparison

Metro Vancouver Regional Planning published their 2023 Survey of Licensed Child Care Spaces for Metro Vancouver. The survey finds that the number of children under 12 years of age is expected to continue to grow by 1.1% by 2028. The survey finds that in 2023, the number of child care spaces in Metro Vancouver grew by 33%, from 60,970 spaces in 2019 to 81,235 in 2023. This equates to an average of 25.1 spaces per 100 children 12 and under, which is an increase of 6.5 spaces per 100 children 12 and under from 2019.

Table 9 below, taken from the 2023 Survey of Licensed Child Care Spaces in Metro Vancouver, shows the estimated number of children in 2023 as estimated by Metro Vancouver Regional Planning and the estimated number of child care spaces, taken from Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health in May 2023.

The rate of growth in child care spaces in Metro Vancouver between 2019–2023 is much higher than between 2011–2019 (Table 8). Metro Vancouver considers that this is likely to have been a direct impact of the ChildCareBC program and the increased amount of provincial and federal funding contributed towards child care space creation and enhancement.

Table 9: Estimated Number of Children (0–12) and Child Care Spaces in Metro Vancouver, 2023*

Geographic Area	2023 Estimated # of children 0–12 years	Estimated # of child care spaces	Estimated Child Care Spaces per 100 children 0–12 years
Anmore	266	91	34.2
Belcarra	25	0	0
Burnaby	29,056	6,433	22.1
Coquitlam	19,118	5,299	27.7
Delta	13,573	3,041	22.4
Langley City	4,301	1,280	29.8
Langley Township	21,108	5,303	25.1
Lions Bay	165	40	24.2
Maple Ridge	13,954	3,316	23.8
New Westminister	9,206	3,164	34.4
North Vancouver City	6,832	1,930	28.2
North Vancouver District	12,267	4,156	33.9
Pitt Meadows	2,858	1,260	44.1
Port Coquitlam	8,207	2,794	34.0
Port Moody	4,519	1,277	28.3
Richmond	24,507	8,521	34.8
Surrey	81,034	14,795	18.3
Tsawwassen First Nation	334	164	49.1
University of British Columbia (UBC)	1,951	996	51.1
University Endowment Lands (UEL**)	394	32	8.1
Vancouver	63,300	15,203	24.0
West Vancouver	5,114	1,732	33.9
White Rock	1,707	437	25.6
Metro Vancouver Total	323,796	81,264	25.1

*Source: <https://metrovancover.org/services/regional-planning/Documents/survey-of-licensed-child-care-spaces-in-metro-vancouver-2023.pdf>

** Licensed spaces received directly from Child Care Centres in UEL (data as of September 2023). UEL does not record data.

The Metro Vancouver data shows that overall, the estimated number of child care spaces per 100 children in 2023 was 34.8 spaces for City of Richmond. Only Tsawwassen First Nation, UBC and Pitt Meadows had more licensed child care spaces per 100 children than the City of Richmond in Metro Vancouver, which is a significant achievement.

Community Response Engagement and Input

To identify the current and future needs for child care in Richmond, the community was engaged through a range of methods. The primary forms of feedback were through two online surveys, key informant interviews, focus groups, outreach sessions and engagement sessions with various advisory and community committees. This section summarizes the feedback received, both written and verbally, through the surveys and through online and in-person events.

Profile of Respondents (Parents, Guardians and Residents Survey)

In total, 299 people took the survey. The individuals who responded had the following characteristics:

- 79% of the respondents were parents;
- 76% of respondents reported they had a child care provider for their child/children;
- 97% of respondents live in Richmond;
- 60% of respondents are employed full time and 35% worked within Richmond;
- Over half of the respondents stated they used child care to enhance their child's development;
- The majority of respondents who had child care, stated their child was enrolled into child care five days a week; and
- 15 of respondents indicated that they are a parent to a child or children who require(s) extra support due to a developmental delay or disability.



91%
OF RESPONDENTS
stated they **REQUIRED**
CHILD CARE so that
they could work.

Profile of Respondents (Child Care Provider Survey)

Fifty-five child care providers completed the survey. The respondents had the following characteristics:

- Managers (31%), employees (25.5%), operators (16%) and owners (16%) completed the survey;
- Over half of the respondents offered Group Care Under 36 Months and Group Care 30 Months to School Age programs;
- Less than 2% of the respondents offered occasional care or other forms of care;
- 53% of the respondents were from a non-profit child care facility and 36% were from a privately owned child care facility;
- 27% of the respondents utilized a City-owned facility for their child care facility; and
- 16% used a residential building for their child care facility and 16% used a commercial building.

“Our staff really are invested in providing the best quality care they can. They are also proud of what they do.”

– Child Care Provider Survey respondent

“We strive to offer a very inclusive, supportive and community building programs.”

– Child Care Provider Survey respondent

Quality of Child Care

Richmond parents, residents and child care providers were asked to share their thoughts about the strengths of the child care system, the quality of child care and how satisfied they were with various aspects of the current system in Richmond.

Some of the key strengths noted by parents, residents and child care providers included:

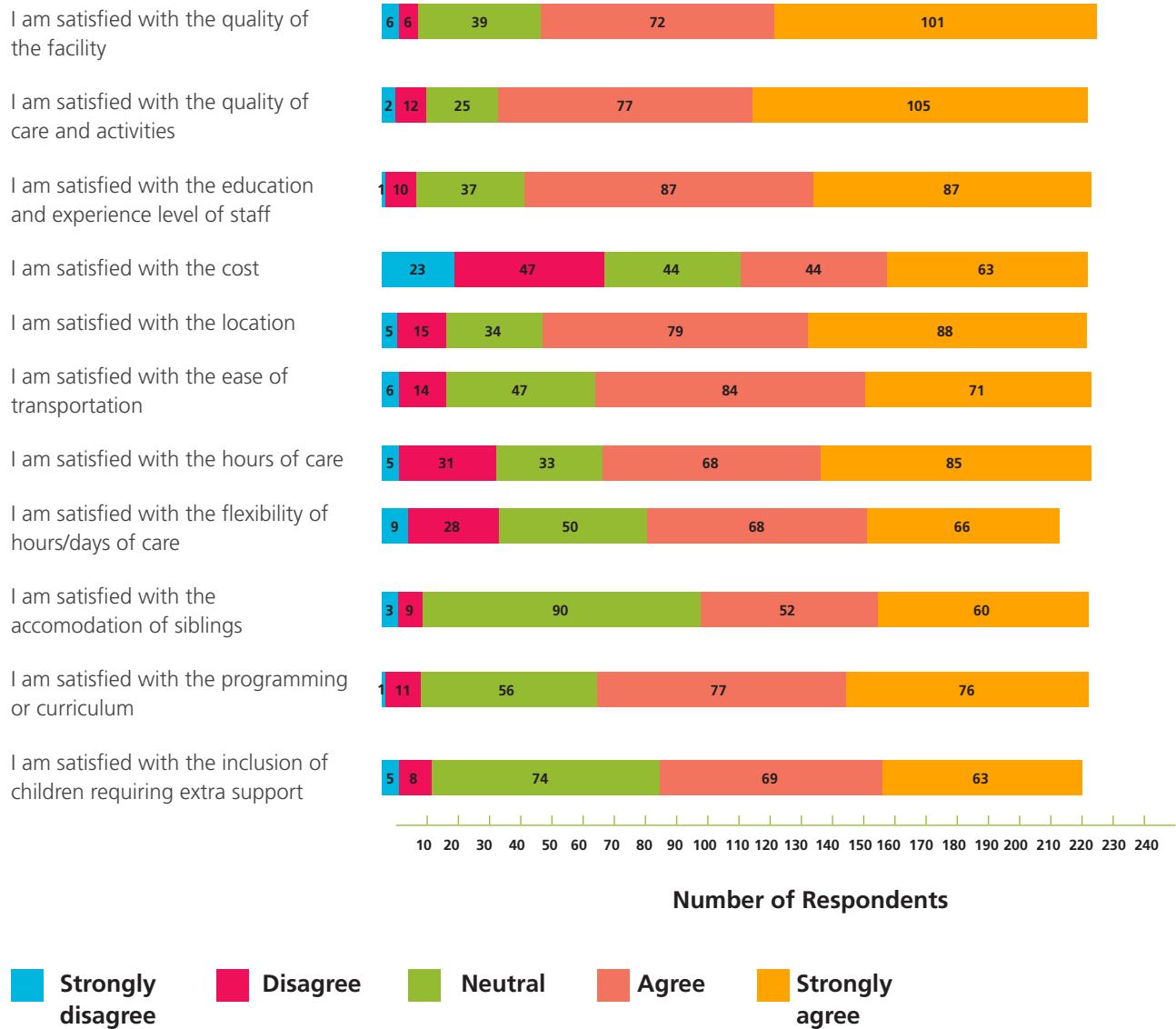
- Passionate employees that provided quality child care;
- Diverse types of child care, including multicultural and multilingual programs;
- A range of philosophy styles, including play-based, Montessori and outdoor-based programs;
- Sense of community in facilities to create supportive and nurturing environments;
- Support from the City of Richmond and commitment to working with the community and community partners to address child care needs; and
- Partnerships between the City and the School District were also noted as improving child care access for school-aged children.

When asked how satisfied the community was with the quality of care and activities their child receives at their child care in Richmond, 82% of parents, guardians and residents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied. Figure 12 summarizes satisfied levels of parents, guardians and residents, based on a variety of aspects and characteristics.



Figure 12: Satisfaction with Child Care Arrangement

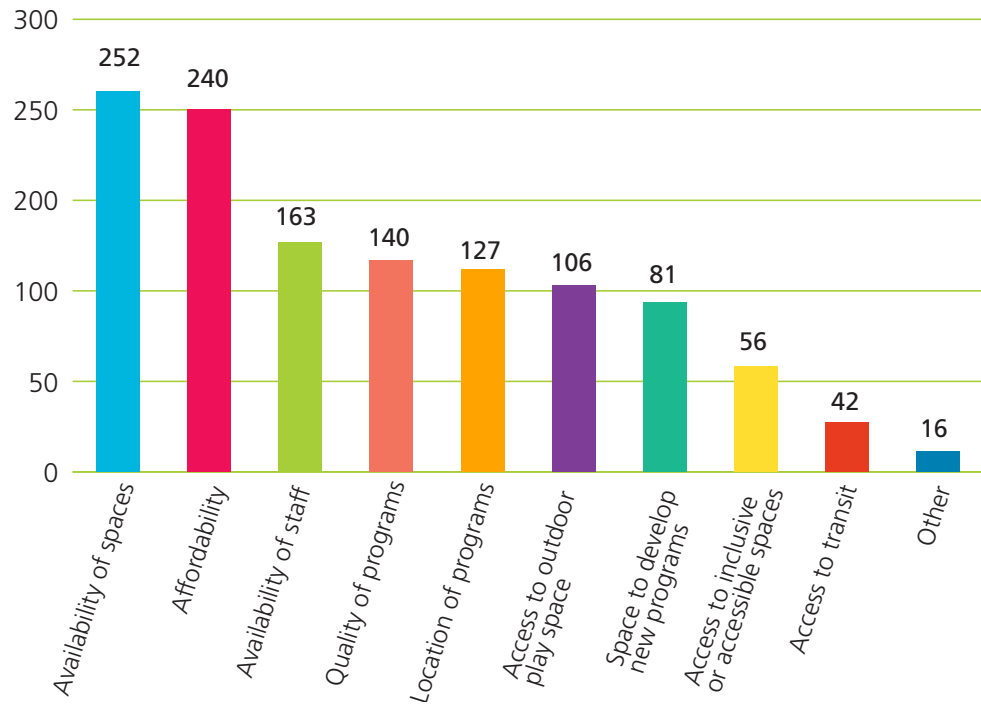
How satisfied are you with your child/children’s current child care arrangement?



Key Challenges Facing the Community

Parents, guardians and residents were asked to identify what they considered were the keys issues in relation to child care in Richmond. The key issues identified were the availability of spaces (85%), the affordability of child care (81%) and the availability of staff to work in child care facilities (55%) (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Key Issues for Child Care in Richmond for Parents, Guardians and Residents



In addition to the above, other challenges frequently raised by parents, guardians and residents during the engagement process included:

- Lack of flexible child care operating hours; and
- Difficulty accessing information and resources about finding child care.

For parents whose children require extra support, in addition to the top three challenges identified above, program location and staff availability were also key issues raised.

When asked about the key issues in Richmond child care from the perspective of child care providers, they listed the same top three concerns, with the same priorities in a different order. Child care providers indicated availability of staff (69%), affordability (56%) and availability of spaces (33%) as their main concerns.

In addition to the above, child care providers also raised the following challenges:

- Quality of programs;
- Access to outdoor play space;
- Capital costs to open new child care facilities, expand existing and challenges with finding affordable rental space; and
- Facility issues such as dated equipment and furnishings or challenging physical layouts of space.

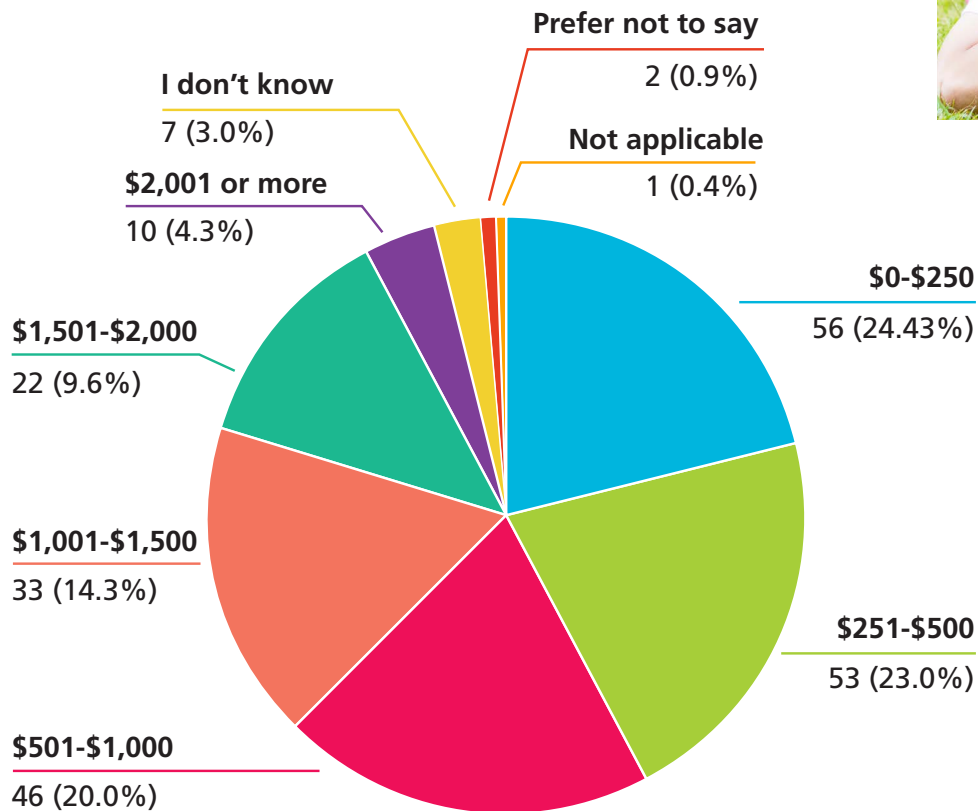
Affordability

Affordability of child care is a challenge that has been raised by the community repeatedly, not just in Richmond but across Canada. Parents, guardians, residents and child care providers cited affordability as one of the key challenges in Richmond and many respondents had not obtained child care because they felt child care is too expensive.

Over two-thirds (63.7%) of parents and guardians paid \$1,000 per month or less for their child care (in total, not necessarily per child). Of this figure, 24.3% spent less than \$250 per month on child care. However, 21.6% reported they spend \$1,000 per month or more on child care (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Monthly Amount Parents Currently Spend on Child Care



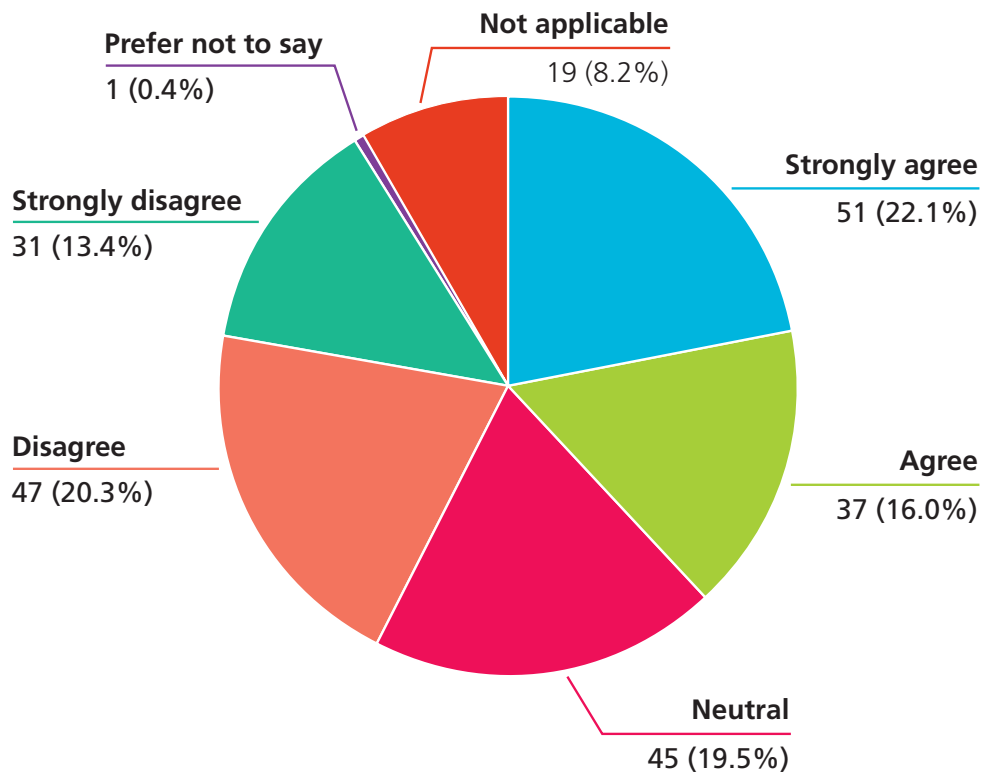
“\$10 a Day programs are now available, which makes child care more affordable.”

– Community partner

Respondents to the child care provider survey reported that after fee reductions, the majority of parents pay between \$201–\$1,000 per child per month for full time care at their facility. Respondents stated that a smaller number of parents (6.7%) paid over \$1,001 per child per month for full-time care. For part-time care, child care providers reported that almost half of parents pay between \$201–\$500 per child per month after fee reductions.

When asked whether families feel their child care arrangement is affordable to them, 38% agreed or strongly agreed that it was affordable. 34% disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was affordable (Figure 15). Disagreement or strong disagreement on the affordability of care was more evident among parents of children needing extra support, with nearly half (47%) disagreeing/strongly disagreeing with this statement.

Figure 15: Degree to which respondents feel their child care is affordable



As part of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, each province agreed to reduce average parent fees by 50% by December 2022 and reduce them to an average of \$10 a Day by 2025/2026.

The increasing availability of provincial fee reductions to child care, including the \$10 a Day initiative, was acknowledged as significant by some respondents. However, for some respondents, the rising cost of living in Richmond coupled with child care fees meant working while raising young children wasn’t always financially beneficial.

Availability and Waitlists

The availability of child care in Richmond has improved significantly. There has been an increase from an average of 24 licensed child care spaces per 100 children in 2016, to 38 licensed child care spaces per 100 children in 2023, and an increase of 3,301 licensed spaces. However, the community engagement process revealed there are still challenges regarding the supply, the time it takes to secure a space, and the length of waitlists for child care spaces in Richmond.

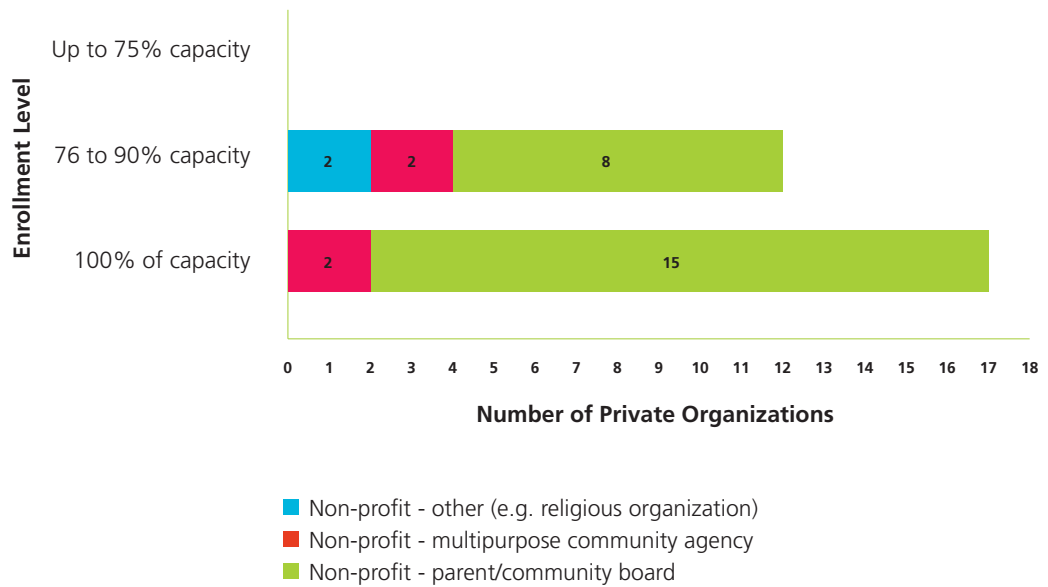
In the last six months, enrolment at the respondents’ programs was at 100% of capacity for 42% of the programs (Figure 16). For private organizations, 25% reported they were at 100% capacity. For non-profit organizations, 59% reported they were at 100% capacity, with the other 41% of facilities reporting they were at 75–90% capacity. This shows that at the time of the survey, the non-profit child care facilities were all between 75 and 100% capacity (Figure 17).

“Private child care’s really expensive. What’s the point of going to work?”
 – Outreach participant

Figure 16: Enrolment Levels at Private Organizations in the Past 6 Months



Figure 17: Enrolment Levels In the Past 6 Months At Non-Profit Organizations

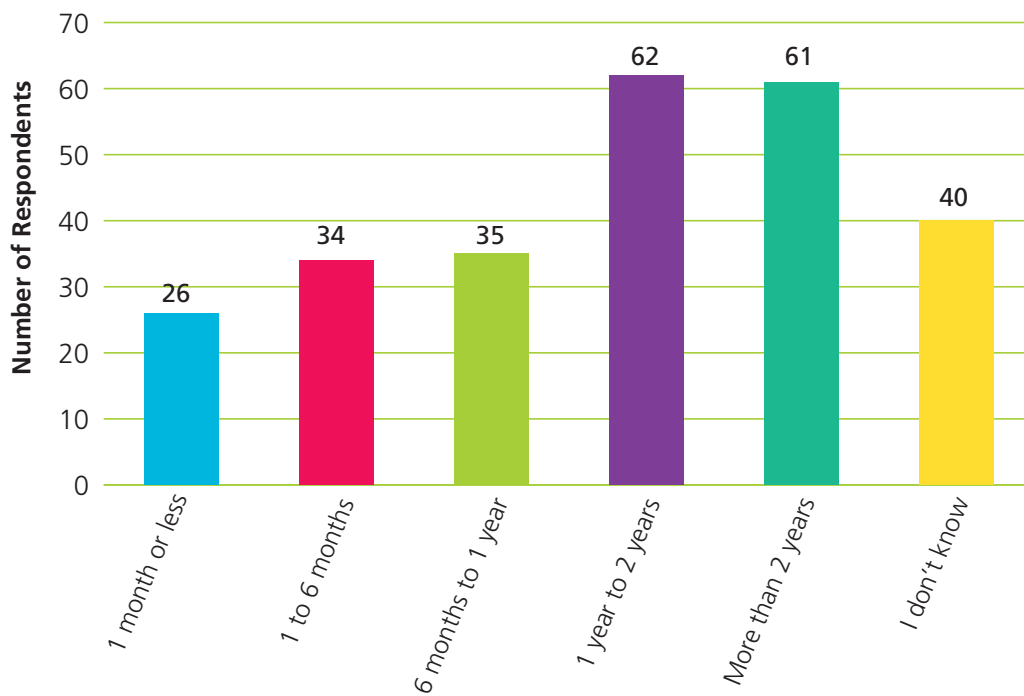


When asked whether the respondent currently had a child care provider for their child/children, 76% reported they did and 18.3% reported they did not. When asked if they have another person they can rely on to provide child care, over half of the respondents said no. For those that do not have a child care provider for their child, the majority relied on a grandparent for child care, followed by another parent or guardian.

The time taken to secure a child care space in Richmond can vary. Parents, guardians and residents were asked whether their child was on a waitlist at the time of the survey. A third of the respondents indicated they had at least one child currently on a waitlist(s) for a child care space at the time of the survey. When asked about the wait time to secure a child care space in Richmond, almost 50% of the respondents noted that their child was or had been on a waitlist for one year or more, with nearly a quarter of respondents waiting for two years or more before they acquired a space (Figure 18). For parents who did not currently have child care, the majority said their child was currently on two or more waitlists. Furthermore, 16.4% of child care providers revealed they currently had more than 500 children on their waitlist.

“Trying to contact day cares every day to get a space, I tried anything I have, I want to go back to school.”
 – Focus group participant (Newcomers/Recent Immigrant)

Figure 18: Length of Time on a Waitlist for a Child Care Space



Challenges in finding available spaces were also identified by participants in the focus group for newcomers and recent immigrants. Some parents and guardians stated they had limited family supports in Canada and as a result, child care was frequently the responsibility of one parent, often the mother, while the other parent finds employment. Participants noted that long waitlists for child care make it challenging to find work or go to school. Parents also cited difficulty in making plans for the future without child care. As noted by respondents, the impact of this is that many newcomers resort to informal or unlicensed child care.

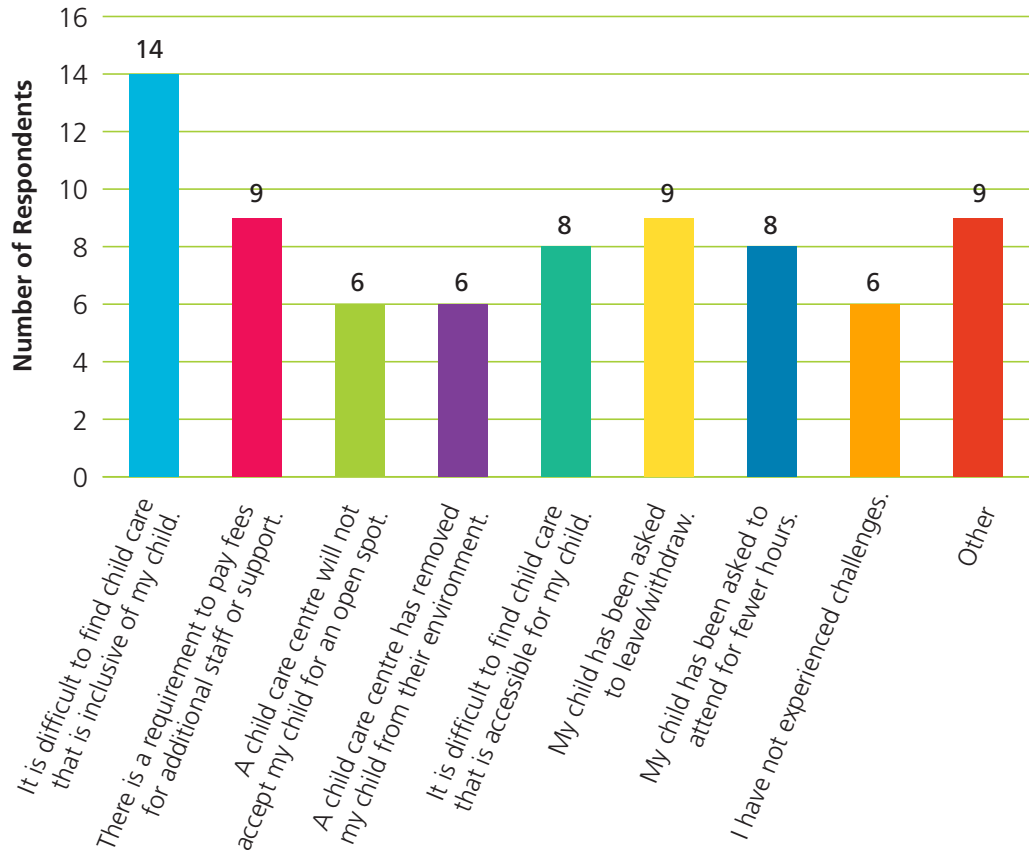
Accessible and Inclusive Care

While many participants praised their child care providers for being inclusive and welcoming, some families also felt that many child care providers needed to be more welcoming of all children. Parents commented that children had been turned away from programs due to requiring extra support or required to pay additional fees for support workers. Cultural awareness amongst providers was also raised, with respondents suggesting that more education and training is needed around cultural practices, types of care (such as trauma-informed approaches) and a wider variety of multilingual child care providers.

“Given various barriers and challenges, a lot of families have informal arrangements and unregulated spaces.”
 – Key informant interview

Parents and guardians who self-identified that their child required extra support were asked to identify the challenges they have faced in securing child care. The challenges described are illustrated in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Challenges with Securing Spaces for Children who Require Extra Support



“More inclusion and accessibility in all programs is required...”

– Community partner

When asked whether their programs included children who require extra support, 72% of child care provider respondents currently included children who require extra support in their program. Alternately, 13% of respondents stated they did not include children who require extra support. Out of the 29 non-profit organizations, all of them had provided care for children with additional support needs within the last three years. In privately owned facilities only 12 (60%) had provided care for children with additional support needs within the last three years.

For programs that do not include children who require extra support, respondents cited that additional staffing and training were required to be able to include children who require extra support. For those programs that do include children who require extra support, the majority stated they receive funding and/or support from the Supported Child Development Program (SCDP). A number of those who completed the child care survey indicated that without this support from SCDP, they would not be able to successfully include children who require extra support.

55.9% of parents of children who needed extra support had used a SCDP consultant, 20.6% had not, and 17.6% indicated they were on a waitlist for one.

Staffing

Challenges with the recruitment and retention of Early Childhood Educators (ECE) in BC are well documented. Findings from the recent report “Evaluation of Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy” indicate that while wages of ECE staff have been improving with initiatives such as the ECE Wage Enhancement, ECE staff are still paid less than similarly educated adults in BC. It is thought that these challenges could be contributing to ECEs leaving the sector and in turn creating a shortage of qualified staff. These staffing challenges were identified throughout the engagement by both parents and guardians and child care providers.

Child care providers reported that the three positions that are currently in the highest need are:

- Substitute or casual staff;
- Certified Special Needs Educators; and
- Certified Infant Toddler Educators.

A small number of respondents also stated that their facility has had to close programs, lower the capacity of the programs or reduce the hours of care due to a lack of certified staff. A larger number of respondents (20%) stated that they have not expanded programs due to a lack of certified staff.

In terms of staff wages, 81% of child care providers reported they accessed the Child Care Wage Enhancement. Before wage enhancement, as outlined in Table 10, the majority of child care providers paid between \$20.01–\$25.00 per hour for an ECE, with 30% paying between \$25.01–\$30.00 per hour. ECEs with an Infant/Toddler Certification and/or a Special Needs Certification were paid slightly more, with 42% of respondents stating they paid between \$25.01–\$30.00 per hour for this additional level of certification.

Table 10: Pay Range for Staff before Wage Enhancement (per hour)

	Under \$20.00	\$20.01–\$25.00	\$25.01–\$30.00	\$30.01 +
Supervisor/Manager	4%	21%	36%	40%
ECE	6%	61.5%	30%	2%
ECE with Infant/Toddler Certification	4%	51%	42%	2%
ECE with Special Needs Certification	4%	50%	41%	4%
ECE Assistant	34%	57%	9%	0%
Responsible Adult	58%	37%	5%	0%

“Recognizing ECEs as essential educators that deserve the proper recognition and better supplementation and a raise is important.”

– Child Care Provider
Survey participant

“Trying to attract responsible adult and/or part time staff is difficult, they do not qualify for the wage enhancements and so it’s hard to attract and retain these for after school programs, they might not feel as valued as other staff as they don’t get the wage enhancement.”

– Community partner

“Could Richmond have an early childhood education program providing training and certification? We don’t currently have this in Richmond. People have to leave the community to train as an ECE.”

– Community partner

“More funding toward child care—affordable rental space—less capital cost to open a new centre.”

– Child Care Provider Survey respondent

The majority of child care providers also provided paid sick time and paid vacation time as part of employment benefits. A smaller number of respondents stated their facility provides retirement savings plan, overtime pay or time off in lieu of overtime pay. Competitive wages, benefits and opportunities for professional development were identified as ways to attract and retain more workers.

Funding

The costs associated with opening, operating and expanding a child care facility were frequently raised throughout the engagement process. Child care providers also cited a need for funding for additional support staff, staff training, and initial capital costs including furnishing, equipment and supplies.

There are a number of funding initiatives currently available to facilities and/or parents in BC, provided through the Province. The three main funding sources child care providers reported to be using were:

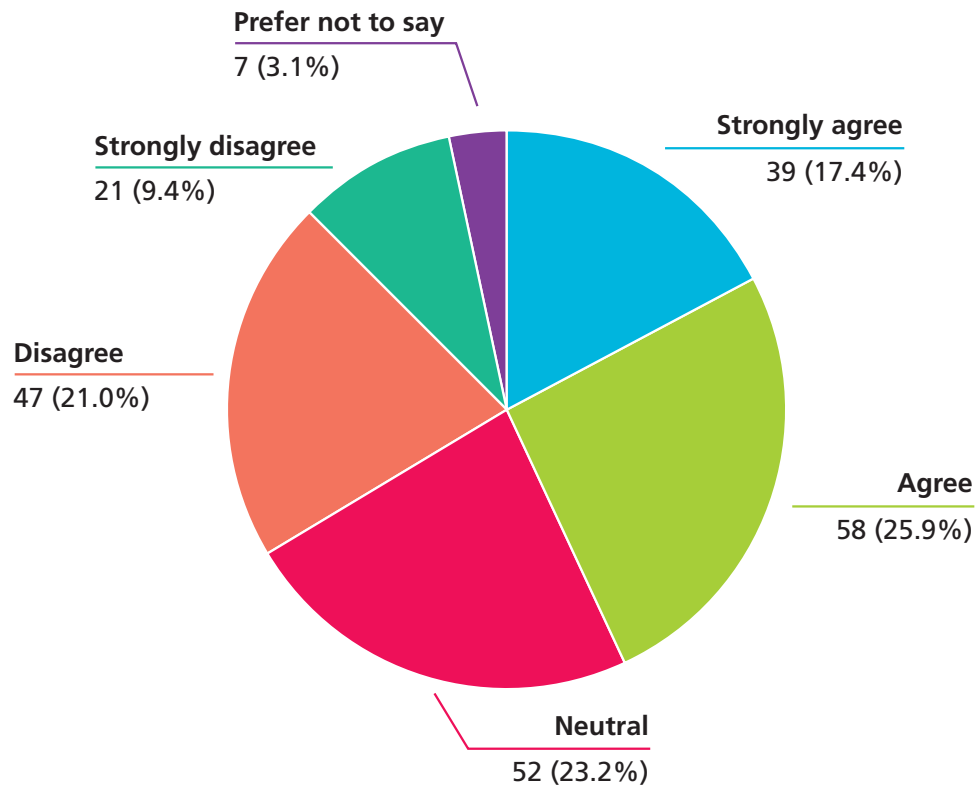
- Child Care Operating Funding
- Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative
- Child Care Wage Enhancement

Many respondents stated that advocating to senior levels of government for increased funding to open new child care facilities, expanding existing facilities and increasing the number of spaces available is crucial. Many respondents expressed a desire for an increase in the number of \$10 a Day sites in Richmond and suggested that helping organizations apply for the funding may encourage more facilities to take up this initiative. Other suggestions included advocating to senior government for an ECE wage grid, based on experience and demand, and a standard level of training expected for staff entering the field from different institutions.

Hours of Care

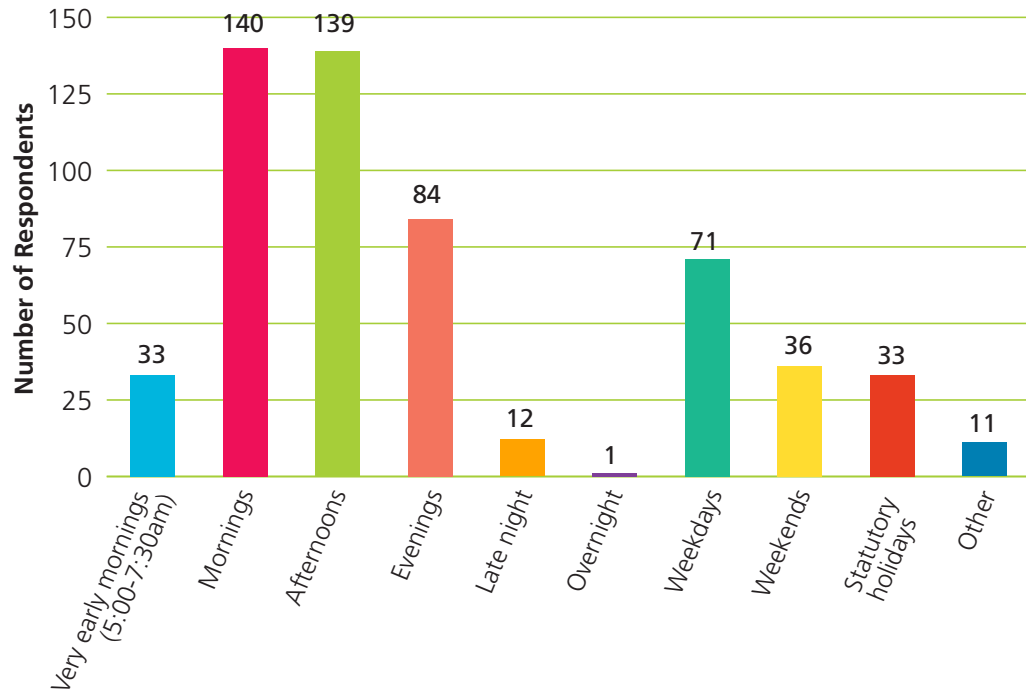
Child care programs typically run on a full-time or a part-time basis, but the exact operational timeframe is determined by the operator. Forty-three per cent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they required child care during different hours or days from their current arrangement (Figure 20). This figure was higher amongst parents of children needing extra support, with 62% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Figure 20: 'I require child care for different hours than my current arrangement'



When asked what times were needed, responses varied as outlined in Figure 21. The top three responses were mornings (64%), afternoons (64%) and evenings (39%).

Figure 21: Hours Required for Child Care



For parents of children needing extra support, the responses were slightly different:

- Afternoons (61%)
- Mornings (46%)
- Very early morning (5:00-7:30am) (21%)
- Evenings (21%)
- Weekdays (21%)

Only 11% of the child care providers who responded to the survey offered ‘drop in’ child care spaces and only one facility offered occasional child care. One provider offered child care on weekends and one provider offered child care before 7:00 a.m. While 38% of parents, guardians and residents expressed a need for child care in the evenings, none of the child care provider survey respondents offered child care after 6:00 p.m. or overnight.

“For newcomers with no other family, no job or income, if there is no occasional child care in Richmond they won’t have anywhere to leave their children to attend appointments or interviews.”

– Community Partner

Many parents, caregivers and community partners who engaged noted that child care hours needed to be more flexible to meet the varied and changing needs of work schedules. Respondents felt that the typical hours of full-time child care exclude those who work non-typical work hours, such as shift workers. Many parents also noted that drop-off and pick-up times were not early enough in the morning, or late enough in the afternoon and require them to negotiate flexible work schedules with their employer, or not work at all.

Challenges were also raised by newcomers, people with limited family, no job or income, or without occasional child care in Richmond; they find it difficult to attend interviews or appointments.

Location of Child Care

As identified by the data, there are areas within Richmond which have both fewer children and/or access to more child care spaces per 100 children than other areas, such as East Cambie, Sea Island and Gilmore. When looking for child care, almost all parents, guardians and residents (95%) reported they looked for child care close to their home. 39% looked for child care close to their child’s elementary school and 35% looked for child care close to their place of employment.

For parents and guardians who had child care:

- 74% were satisfied with the location of their child care
- 70% were satisfied with the ease of transportation access to their child care
- For parents of children who needed extra support, fewer were satisfied with the ease of transportation access to their child care (64%)

A significant number of respondents stated they used their own vehicle as their primary mode of transport to and from their child care. 10.8% of respondents walked to their child care facility and only 2.2% utilized public transport as their primary means. This shows a small number of respondents utilising public transport and a heavy reliance on private vehicles to access child care facilities.

Respondents identified that not having adequate transportation poses additional barriers for families, especially for newcomers and refugees or those marginalized in other ways. Having transportation options within proximity to child care centres also allowed providers to take children on field trips or support other outdoor activities.

“Finding child care near my home or my work is hard. Some areas are growing in population in Richmond and it’s really important to increase child care spaces in these locations.”

– Community Partner

“Transportation is a barrier and a lack of public transport options to take children to their child care. Sometimes all they need is transport to take their children to and from school.”

– Child Care Provider

“Hard to access all of the child care information at once for newcomers. Waitlists are very long which means limited access for newcomers. It forms an additional barrier for newcomers.”

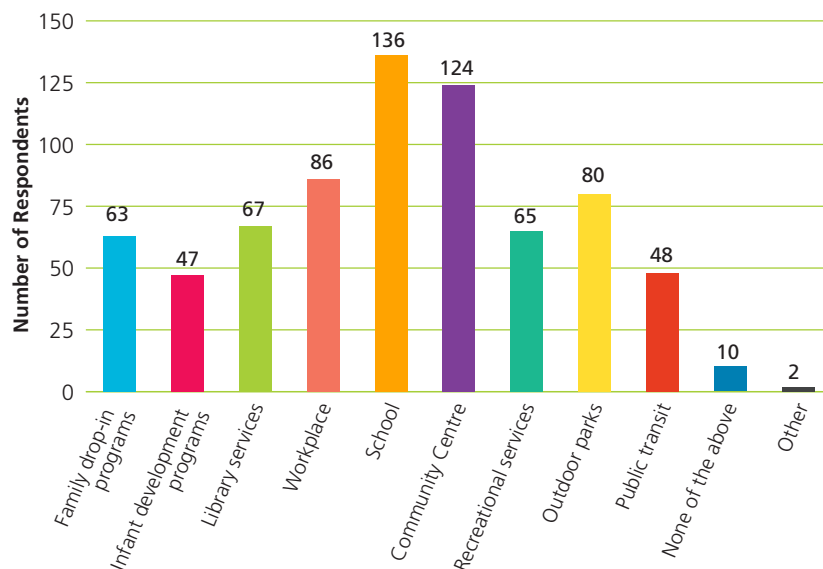
– Community Partner

The City Centre was identified as a convenient location for accessing child care and other amenities, but parents, guardians and caregivers felt more child care is needed at various sites across the city. A number of parents reported that co-locating child care near places of employment or schools would be an easier way for parents to pick up or drop off their children. Access to safe environments was also noted by many families as a preference, including measures such as traffic calming, expanding school speed zones and speed limit enforcement around child care facilities.

When considering what amenities child care could be co-located with, as illustrated in Figure 22, respondents preferred the following locations:

- Schools
Schools were identified as a convenient way to pick up and drop off children, particularly where parents have one child in child care and other children in school. Co-locating with a school also helps the transition from child care into Kindergarten.
- Community Centres
Some respondents noted that being connected to a community centre contributed to a sense of community.
- Workplace
Co-locating near places of employment, or in convenient areas on transport routes so that people can drop children off en-route to their workplace.
- Outdoor Parks
Locating child care in proximity to parks and greenspace was noted by parents, caregivers, community partners, as well as child care providers as being beneficial.

Figure 22: Preferred Locations for Child Care Programs



Information, Resources and Support

Information and Resources

A need for a variety of information and resources was identified throughout the engagement process, especially for newcomers, recent immigrants or people whose first language is not English. Looking for child care can be challenging and there is a lot of information for new parents to consider. The following examples were identified:

- Information about the types of child care;
- Availability and capacity levels;
- How to access child care;
- The registration process;
- Information about subsidies and funding;
- Resources available in a range of languages;
- How to access employment benefits for new parents; and
- Information on returning to work after maternity or parental leave.

Support for Caregivers

The responses during engagement activities indicated that many grandparents and other informal caregivers were providing care to children, and that more supports for these caregivers were needed. Grandparents identified a need for more intergenerational programs which they could attend either with their grandchildren, or have child care available onsite. Participants felt this would help balance their own health and well-being needs with the demand for providing child care to their grandchildren.



“I studied here, so my English is good, but for newcomers or if parents are not good in English, it is hard to find information; different application forms and processes, need to call makes it hard to navigate.”

– Focus Group Participant (Mandarin-speaking)

“Caregivers exercise class would be good. Everyone is looking after each other and grandparents can look after each other as well.”

– Outreach Participant



Analysis and Discussion

A thorough review of the vast range of information received throughout the engagement process has been undertaken, and an overview provided of the key issues, challenges and opportunities for child care in Richmond. The following analysis outlines the strengths, challenges and opportunities related to child care in Richmond. This information was utilized to create strategic directions and a set of actions to address these challenges over the next 10 years.

Strengths of the Child Care System in Richmond

- Dedicated City staffing resources for advancing child care in Richmond through the establishment of an additional regular full-time member of staff for child care (Planner 2, Child Care) within the Community Social Development team to support the work of the Manager.
- A strong policy and planning foundation for child care in the City; this includes the Official Community Plan, Area Plans, Social Development Strategy, Richmond Child Care Policy, Child Care Needs Assessments and regular updates.
- The development of City-owned child care facilities and Early Childhood Development Hubs through the rezoning process.
- Community Associations and Societies that provide 762 child care spaces for preschool and school-age care and other child and youth programs.
- Partnerships in the community, with Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health and organizations such as Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral and Supported Child Development.
- Collaboration with the community through platforms such as the Child Care Development Advisory Committee and Richmond Children First. Convening regular meetings to discuss child care needs and challenges from a range of perspectives.
- Continued dialogue with Richmond School District on expanding space on school sites and to create new 30 months to School-Age and preschool programs on school grounds. This has allowed the School District to support eleven permanent child care facilities on school grounds with two more dedicated child care facilities currently under construction.

Challenges Facing Child Care in Richmond

- Affordability of child care is a persistent issue in Richmond and across the region. While the provincial initiatives to reduce child care fees for families have had an impact by reducing overall child care fees in Richmond, many of these initiatives such as the \$10 a Day initiative are still within early phases and there has been limited implementation of this in Richmond to date.
- The lack of available child care spaces to meet demand continues to be a challenge as the population continues to grow in Richmond. While Richmond has one of the highest number of spaces per 100 children in Metro Vancouver, there is still a long way to go before the majority of children have access to licensed child care. The waitlists and time to secure a space is still significant, with over 50% of parents reporting to wait over a year for a space. The impact of a lack of available spaces is particularly challenging for families that have no one else they can rely on for child care. This affects their ability to seek employment, to further their education, to attend interviews and for their child’s learning and development. This is a significant concern for newcomers and recent immigrants, who typically have a smaller support network they can rely on for child care.
- Attracting people to the ECE profession and retaining qualified staff is a key concern in the community. The sector needs competitive wages, benefits and opportunities to incentivize people to remain in the sector and attract people to the profession. New facilities cannot operate and new child care spaces cannot be created without the appropriate staff available.
- Families whose children require extra support are facing barriers to finding child care, paying extra fees and being asked to withdraw from their current child care because facilities cannot accommodate their needs. Many child care providers reported they needed extra funding to be able to accommodate children with extra support needs.
- Lack of flexible child care and occasional child care in Richmond is an issue, with 38% of parents, guardians and residents identifying a need for child care in the evenings. None of the respondents to the child care provider survey offered child care after 6:00 p.m. or overnight. Furthermore, only one provider reported offering occasional child care and available spaces for occasional care have decreased significantly since 1995. This makes it challenging for people who work shifts, or for people who need to attend appointments or interviews.
- Many of the respondents felt more information and resources were needed to help the community find child care. While many respondents utilized and appreciated the Child Care Resource and Referral program, many people did not know about their services. Resources in a range of different languages and on different platforms to enhance access was considered important.

Potential Future Challenges

- The rising cost of living and housing costs in Richmond may make it increasingly challenging for families with children to remain living in Richmond.
- The increase in cost of living coupled with the average wages for ECE and support staff may make it challenging to attract and retain staff to live and work in Richmond.
- The increasing child population in Richmond has the potential to increase the demand for child care spaces in the City.
- Potential loss of facilities or programs due to redevelopment opportunities and difficulty with finding a suitable and affordable alternative premises for providers to lease.
- Potential impact to methods of collecting cash contributions or built facilities through the rezoning process due to new or amended legislation.
- The increasing impact of climate change on the operation of child care facilities and the health and safety of children, including, but not limited to, air quality impact, extreme weather events and wild fire smoke.

Opportunities for Enhancing Child Care in Richmond

- The potential to co-locate new child care facilities in future City capital projects, buildings and community facilities.
- The potential to locate new child care facilities on active transportation routes to enhance car-free access to child care programs.
- The potential to partner with community partners to enhance the creation of child care spaces.
- The increasing creation of child care on school grounds.
- The potential to co-locate child care programs with programming for other ages, such as intergenerational programs or providing child care alongside existing programs for adults or seniors.
- The potential for funding to support the creation of new child care facilities through development processes.

Feedback on the Draft Child Care Strategy

Overall, the majority of survey responses were positive and productive and respondents appreciated that the City was prioritizing child care by developing the Strategy.

- 88% strongly agreed or agreed with the vision of the Strategy.
- There was a very strong level of support for each strategic direction, ranging between 79% to 90% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing.
- There were a small number of respondents who strongly disagreed with the vision of the Strategy (7 respondents). These respondents questioned why this work was being undertaken and expressed the opinion that child care outside the scope of municipal responsibilities.

Key Themes

- Strengthen actions related to the quality of child care and the quality of training for Early Childhood Educators and child care providers.
- Increase emphasis on advocating for the early childhood profession, including expanding training and increased focus on Early Childhood Educator and child care provider recruitment and retention.
- Expand on City information and resources about child care and enhance access to these for parents and child care operators.

“Congratulations on a robust framework, looking forward to seeing the end result.”

- Survey Respondent

“I believe the Strategic Direction 1 (create and maintain spaces) is the most important of the proposed directives.”

- Survey Respondent





Strategic Directions and Recommended Actions

The vision of this Child Care Strategy is that ‘the community has access to a range of affordable, accessible, inclusive and quality child care options, that support and enhance child development, learning and growth and meets the needs of families who work or live in Richmond.’ To address the child care needs, challenges and opportunities identified in this Strategy, actions have been developed under five strategic directions:

1. Create and Maintain Child Care Spaces
2. Quality, Inclusivity and Accessibility
3. Advocacy
4. Collaboration
5. Education and Information

For each action, the City’s role includes:

ACT – Developing policies, bylaws and guidelines, educating, communicating, providing funding or grants and collaborating.

FACILITATE – Convening and building relationships.

ADVOCATE – Advocating to senior levels of government or to other institutions.

Some of the actions require collaboration with community partners including: senior levels of government, community organizations, public bodies and child care operators. Partners who could be engaged to support and assist this work have been identified for applicable actions.

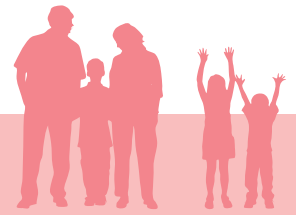
Each action is assigned a timeline across the 10-year plan period. The actions are grouped into the following timelines:

Short-term – 0–2 years

Medium-term – 3–5 years

Long-term – 6–10 years

Ongoing



1 Create and Maintain Spaces

The City of Richmond is committed to creating and maintaining child care spaces in partnership with senior levels of government, child care operators, and community organizations to address child care needs for the resident and employee population. New spaces should align with the vision to be affordable, accessible, inclusive and high quality.

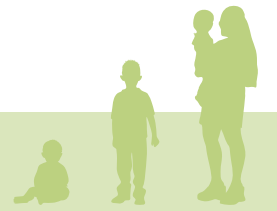
Action	Partners	City Role			Timeline
		ACT	FACILITATE	ADVOCATE	
1.1 Review new Provincial housing legislation, assess potential impacts to child care space creation and implement appropriate response.	Province of BC	✓			Short-term
1.2 Identify opportunities to create additional child care spaces that align with the vision on City-owned or other publically-owned land, while also considering co-location with affordable housing projects, schools and other government involved projects.	Province of BC	✓			Ongoing
1.3 Explore opportunities and supports needed for child care facilities to offer expanded, flexible and non-traditional hours to meet the demands of Richmond’s diverse work force.	Child Care Operators, Employers	✓	✓	✓	Medium-term
1.4 Review, identify opportunities and undertake actions to accelerate the process for developing new child care facilities.	Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)	✓			Medium-term
1.5 Provide additional supports to current and prospective child care providers to learn about and apply for government funding to create or maintain child care spaces.	Province of BC, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR), VCH	✓	✓		Ongoing
1.6 Evaluate opportunities to expand the ‘complete community’ approach to all areas in Richmond in line with the OCP when creating new child care spaces.	Developers	✓			Ongoing
1.7 Support and prioritize the creation of school-aged child care spaces on or adjacent to school sites.	Richmond School District (SD38)	✓		✓	Medium-term
1.8 Implement the child care decision-making tool identified in the 2021–2031 <i>Richmond Child Care Action Plan</i> (Action 2.6).		✓			Short-term
1.9 Evaluate and monitor current City-owned child care structures, processes and operation of sites.	Child Care Operators	✓			Short-term
1.10 Support the creation, implementation and quality of public ECE certification and ensure it is geographically and financially accessible to Richmond residents.	Province of BC, Post Secondary Institutions			✓	Medium-term



2 Quality, Inclusivity and Accessibility

The City of Richmond strives for high quality, diversity, inclusivity and accessibility within the child care sector.

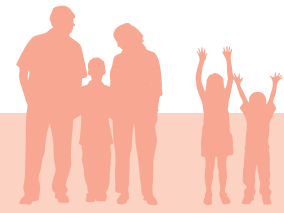
Action	Partners	City Role			Timeline
		ACT	FACILITATE	ADVOCATE	
2.1 Monitor child care space creation and investigate mapping tools and GIS data to enhance understanding of child care need with an equity lens (e.g. map social equity and resilience, access to green space and transportation with child care spaces).		✓	✓		Short-term
2.2 Identify opportunities and undertake actions to support expansion of a high quality, inclusive, universal system of early learning and child care that meets the diverse needs of the community.		✓		✓	Medium-term
2.3 Enhance and expand supports for informal and non-licensed caregivers including social, educational, recreational and intergenerational opportunities and after-school programs.	Richmond Public Library (RPL), Community Associations and Societies, Community organizations	✓	✓		Ongoing
2.4 Promote responsive and relevant opportunities and resources to support cultural inclusivity within child care to address the increasing cultural diversity of Richmond.	Child Care Operators, CCRR	✓	✓		Medium-term
2.5 Analyze and support dissemination of the Province's accessibility legislation in relation to the provision of high quality inclusive child care and funding tools and training, to support child care operators to apply it.	Province of BC	✓		✓	Long-term
2.6 Continue to offer the City of Richmond Child Care Grant Program and undertake regular reviews of this program to promote quality, equity and inclusivity.		✓	✓		Long-term
2.7 Promote awareness of and support the implementation of the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework and Indigenous-led child care.	Child Care Operators, CCRR, Richmond School District (SD38)	✓	✓		Medium-term
2.8 Research the current and anticipated impacts of climate change on child care programs and explore ways to support potential adaptation and resilience of the child care sector in Richmond.	VCH, Province of BC	✓	✓	✓	Long-term
2.9 Explore expanded applicability of the City of Richmond Child Care Design Guidelines to promote quality, accessibility, inclusivity and good design.	Child Care Operators	✓	✓		Long-term



3 Advocacy

The City of Richmond advocates to senior levels of government, employers and public institutions for increased child care funding, dedicated supports for child care, and the creation of child care spaces to create an universal and affordable child care system.

Action	Partners	City Role			Timeline
		ACT	FACILITATE	ADVOCATE	
3.1 Advocate for a universal, affordable child care system that supports equitable access for families and child care providers.	Child Care Operators, Richmond Child Care Development Advisory Committee (CCDAC)		✓	✓	Ongoing
3.2 Advocate for increased funding and supports to enable child care operators to comply with the Accessible British Columbia Act.	CCDAC			✓	Ongoing
3.3 Advocate to senior levels of government to access and respond to the administrative requirements associated with accessing government funding.	Child Care Operators, CCDAC			✓	Short-term
3.4 Advocate to other levels of government for expanded and increased funding for creation of spaces, capital costs, facility maintenance and repair and/or emergency situations.	Child Care Operators, CCDAC			✓	Short-term
3.5 Advocate for ongoing strategies and tools to support accessible and high quality training, recruitment, retention and compensation for Early Childhood Educators.	Child Care Operators, CCDAC			✓	Ongoing
3.6 Monitor and support the relevant actions within the Poverty Reduction Plan that impact families in Richmond.				✓	Long-term
3.7 Continue to advocate for increased mental wellness and inclusion supports for children to support caregivers, families and child care providers.	CCDAC, Richmond Children First			✓	Medium-term
3.8 Monitor licensing requirements to ensure on-going relevance, applicability, and quality, and advocate for changes as necessary.	Child Care Operators, Community Associations and Societies, VCH	✓		✓	Ongoing



4 Collaboration

The City of Richmond partners with senior levels of government, community organizations, child care operators, employers and residents to meet the child care needs of Richmond. Additional opportunities for collaboration have been identified in the actions below.

Action	Partners	City Role			Timeline
		ACT	FACILITATE	ADVOCATE	
4.1 Continue to build and maintain relationships with Richmond School District No. 38 to collaborate on innovative and new ways to meet child care needs in Richmond, with particular attention to the need to accelerate creation of quality school-age child care.	Richmond School District (SD38), CCDAC		✓		Medium-term
4.2 Engage in ongoing collaboration with Indigenous Elders and families regarding the Child Care Strategy, its relevance and its implementation.	Musqueam First Nation, Richmond School District (SD38), Connections Community Services	✓	✓		Ongoing
4.3 Collaborate with Community Associations and Societies, libraries and community organizations to explore and implement further supports for informal and non-licensed caregivers.	Community Associations and Societies, Richmond Public Library (RPL), Community Organizations	✓	✓		Short-term
4.4 Investigate the feasibility of convening regular meetings with child care operators to encourage networking, collaboration and mutual support.	Child Care Operators, CCRR, CCDAC	✓	✓		Medium-term
4.5 Encourage and support BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, Richmond School District, large employers and other public entities to explore the co-location of child care in their buildings and capital projects.	Richmond School District (SD38), BC Housing, VCH, YVR, Large Employers		✓		Long-term
4.6 Expand opportunities and collaborate with Child Care Licensing to address child care needs and expansion in Richmond.	VCH	✓			Ongoing
4.7 Continue to foster and enhance relationships with staff at the Ministry of Education and Child Care.	Province of BC, Ministry of Education and Child Care	✓			Ongoing



5 Education and Information

Increased education and information-sharing between the City of Richmond and child care providers, operators, community partners and residents.

Action	Partners	City Role			Timeline
		ACT	FACILITATE	ADVOCATE	
5.1 Partner with CCRR to provide enhanced navigational support to all parents, with emphasis on newcomers refugees and new parents.	CCRR, Richmond Multicultural Community Services, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., MOSAIC	✓	✓		Medium-term
5.2 Collaborate with CCRR to further promote the RichmondKids website and help to ensure it remains relevant and accessible to the community.	Community Organizations, CCRR	✓	✓		Medium-term
5.3 Develop and enhance resources to assist child care operators to navigate requirements for creating new facilities and maintaining existing facilities.	Province of BC, Child Care Operators	✓			Medium-term
5.4 Expand and promote the City's child care resources including the City's child care locator map and translation instructions to help families understand and access child care.		✓	✓		Medium-term
5.5 Create child care resource templates for Richmond employers to provide to employees to support awareness, understanding and access to child care.	Other City departments, CCRR, Richmond Chamber of Commerce	✓	✓		Short-term
5.6 Enhance public education on the importance of child care and the role of the City of Richmond in relation to the provision of child care in the community.	CCRR, Richmond School District (SD38), CCDAC	✓	✓		Short-term
5.7 Inform child care providers about new or updated City initiatives and resources to navigate new or updated legislation.		✓	✓		Short-term
5.8 Continue to develop and disseminate updates on progress of the Child Care Strategy, broadly within Richmond.	CCDAC	✓			Ongoing



Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

\$10 a Day ChildCareBC

A provincial initiative where providers of licensed child care facilities in BC can apply to become a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC centre to provide affordable child care for their community.

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI)

A provincial initiative to enhance the affordability of child care by offering funding to eligible licensed child care providers. This initiative reduces the amount families pay for child care. Families currently receive up to \$900 per month per child to reduce parent fees for full time care, at participating child care providers. It is optional for child care providers to be enrolled.

Child Care Operating Funding

This funding assists providers with the day-to-day costs of running a licensed child care facility. It also enhances Early Childhood Educator wages and reduces fees for families. It is optional for child care providers to be enrolled.

Child Care Operator (or provider)

A person providing child care on an ongoing basis. The person may be employed directly by the parents to care for the child(ren) either in their own home or in the child care provider's home or they may be an employee in a licensed group child care facility

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR)

A provincially funded local support service to enhance the availability and quality of child care options by:

- Advertising, recruiting and assessing potential family child care providers when a license is not required;
- Supporting family and group child care providers;
- Establishing and maintaining a registry of licensed and/or regulated child care options in the community; and
- Providing resource and referral information to support parents' ability to select quality child care.

ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund

A provincial initiative that provides funding to build or create new licensed child care spaces. Applicants currently eligible for the New Spaces Fund include Public Sector organizations, Indigenous Governments, First Nation Schools and non-profit organizations.

Complete Communities

According to the Province, a Complete Community provides a diverse range of housing, employment opportunities, amenities and services within a 15 to 20 minute walk.

Early Childhood Educator (ECE)

A person who has successfully completed, through an educational institution recognized within the Child Care Regulation, a basic early childhood education training program which is required to become a Registered Early Childhood Educator. Further training may lead to an Infant/Toddler or Special Needs Certification.

Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE)

A provincial initiative available to all ECEs directly employed by and working in eligible licensed child care facilities and is intended to increase the existing wages of ECEs.

Early Learning and Child Care Agreement

This is an agreement between the governments of Canada and British Columbia to further build their early learning and child care system. Objectives of this agreement include:

- Enhancing the accessibility of child care options by increasing the number of spaces;
- Increasing affordability of child care beginning with Infant/Toddler care;
- Enhancing the quality by supporting training and professional development of ECEs; and
- Enhancing equity through investment in underserved communities, ultimately improving access to inclusive, affordable and flexible child care programs.

Group Child Care

The provision of care to children in a non-residential group setting as defined by the Child Care Licensing Regulation. Group child care providers must have Early Childhood Education training and their facility must be licensed with Community Care Facilities Licensing.

Group Child Care – 30 Months to School-Age

Group child care for a maximum of 25 children, from 30 months to school-age (see definition of preschool child).

Group Child Care – School-Age

Group child care for children aged 5-12 who have entered school, before and after school or on a day of school closure. A maximum of 24 children from Kindergarten and Grade 1 or, 30 children from Grade 2 and older with no Kindergarten or Grade 1 children present.

Group Child Care – Under 36 Months

Group child care for a maximum of 12 children aged birth to 36 months.

Infants

Children between birth and 18 months.

In-home Multi-Age Care

Child care in a provider's own home for a maximum of eight children (birth to 8 years). The licensee must be a certified Early Childhood Educator.

License-Not-Required Family Child Care

Family homes that offer child care for one or two children unrelated to the provider of the care. The operators are not required to obtain a license through Community Care Facility Licensing authorities; however, they may choose to register with a Child Care Resource and Referral Centre as a 'Registered License-Not-Required'. Registered License-Not-Required (LNR) Child Care providers must complete a minimum of 20 hours of family child care training (or responsible adult training) prior to, or within one year of registering as a Registered LNR child care provider.

Licensed Child Care Facility

A child care facility that meets the requirements of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and the Child Care Licensing Regulation.

Low Income

Statistics Canada uses the Low-Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) to determine low-income. LIM-AT is calculated based on 50% of the national median income and is adjusted for household size. For the purposes of the 2021 Census, a one-person household was determined to be in low-income if their after-tax income fell below \$26,503; for a three-person household the threshold was \$45,904.

Multi-age Group Care

Child care for children aged birth to 12 years of age, with a maximum group size of eight children and a certified Early Childhood Educator.

Occasional Care

Drop-in child care that can be for a maximum of eight hours a day and no more than 40 hours per calendar month, for children aged 18 months and older. Maximum group size is 16 children (if children under 36 months are present) or 20 children (if no children under 36 months are present). Staff must be a responsible adult.

Parent or Guardian

A parent or other person entrusted to be responsible for the care, upbringing and decision making about a child.

Preschool

The provision of a program offering child care are from one to four hours per day for children aged 30 months to School-Age. Preschools have a maximum group size of 20.

Preschool Child

A child who is at least 30 months old but has not yet entered Grade 1.

Responsible Adult

A person who is 19 years of age or older and able to provide care and mature guidance to children. Must also have 20 hours of child care-related training, relevant work experience, a valid first aid certificate and a clear criminal record check.

School-Age Care on School Grounds

The provision of child care for school-age children on school grounds (Kindergarten and up) for 24 children from Kindergarten and Grade 1, or 30 children from Grade 2 and older with no Kindergarten or Grade 1 children present.

Supported Child Development Program

A program funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development and delivered by community agencies, Supported Child Development (SCD) Programs help families of children with developmental delays or disabilities to gain access to inclusive child care. The Richmond SCD Program partners with community licensed child care programs to offer a range of options for local families whose children require additional supports to attend child care programs from birth to 19 years.

Toddlers

Children between the ages of 18 and 36 months.

Universal Child Care

A comprehensive system of early learning and child care in which access for children and families is universally available, equitable and accessible regardless of economic status, background or ability.

It is noted that government programs and initiatives are accurate at the time of publication, these are subject to change.



Appendix 2: Aligned City Plans

Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty 2021–2031

The Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond (Poverty Reduction Plan) acts as a guide for the City, Community Associations and Societies, community organizations, public-sector agencies and the business community to improve access to services and supports and increase inclusion and belonging for individuals and families at risk of or living in poverty in Richmond.

Richmond Accessibility Plan 2023–2033

The Richmond Accessibility Plan aims to ensure Richmond is a place where everyone is able to fully participate in all aspects of community life. The Accessibility Plan provides a framework to advance accessibility in Richmond and has a set of 34 actions under six Strategic Pillars. All of the Strategic Pillars within the plan are relevant to this Child Care Strategy and the actions:

- Strategic Pillar 1: An Accessible Community
- Strategic Pillar 2: An Inclusive Organization
- Strategic Pillar 3: Accessibility in the Built Environment
- Strategic Pillar 4: Accessible Programs and Services
- Strategic Pillar 5: Accessible Communications and Technology
- Strategic Pillar 6: Research and Monitoring

Richmond Community Wellness Strategy 2018–2023

Richmond's Community Wellness Strategy is a partnership project with the City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond School District. The purpose of the Strategy is to promote healthy lifestyles and wellness outcomes for Richmond residents. The focus areas that relate to child care are:

- Focus Area 1: Foster health, active and involved lifestyles for all Richmond residents with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellness.
- Focus Area 3: Enhance equitable access to amenities, services and programs within and among neighbourhoods.

Richmond Cultural Harmony Plan 2019–2029

The Cultural Harmony Plan represents the City's commitment to strengthening intercultural connections, removing barriers to participation and responding to the evolving needs of Richmond's increasingly diverse population. The actions within the Cultural Harmony Plan which are most relevant to the Strategy include:

- Review and pursue viable options of providing City-related information for newcomers, immigrants and refugees that would assist them in accessing services in the community;
- Work with immigrant-serving agencies and Community Associations and Societies to reduce barriers for new immigrants to participate in programs and services at City facilities; and
- Pursue opportunities to participate in joint planning and networking with community service organizations in order to share information and identify gaps in program and service delivery.



City of Richmond

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Child Care Strategy 2024–2034: Public Engagement Overview

Background

The Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034 (the Strategy) has been developed to identify and address the current and future child care needs of the community over the next 10 years. The Strategy has been informed by best practices review, community profile of Richmond and extensive community engagement and guidance from the Richmond Child Care Strategy Advisory Committee. During the first period of engagement, 625 individuals participated in two online surveys, interviews, focus groups, presentations and community outreach sessions.

The Strategy includes the following vision statement and five strategic directions.

Vision Statement

The community has access to a range of affordable, inclusive, accessible and quality child care options that support and enhance child development, learning and growth and meet the needs of families who live or work in Richmond.

Strategic Directions

1. Create and Maintain Spaces
2. Quality, Inclusivity, Accessibility
3. Advocacy
4. Collaboration
5. Education and Information

To ensure that the final Strategy is comprehensive and relevant for Richmond families, caregivers, and child care providers over the next 10 years, community engagement, consisting of a survey and focus groups, was undertaken, to hear feedback on the Draft Strategy.

The following provide an overview of the feedback and themes from the public engagement on the Draft Strategy. This information has been used to develop the final Child Care Strategy.

Engagement Methodology

On June 24, 2024, City Council approved the Draft Richmond Child Care Strategy 2024–2034, for the purpose of gathering public input on the vision, strategic directions and actions to ensure alignment with current and future child care needs. Public engagement was held from July to August 2024 and consisted of:

- An online survey open to the public, on the Let's Talk Richmond platform;
- Focus groups for parents, child care providers and members of City Advisory Committees; and

- An opportunity for Board members, staff from Community Associations and Societies, and organizations such as Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and the Richmond Poverty Reduction Committee to provide feedback.

Survey

The Draft Richmond Child Care Strategy survey was hosted on the Let’s Talk Richmond website. The survey was open from July 2 to August 4, 2024 and communications about the survey included:

- Posters with QR codes emailed to Community Associations and Societies, City-owned child care facilities and to Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral Centre to share with their networks;
- Emails to registered users of the Let’s Talk Richmond platform;
- Emails to the Child Care Strategy Advisory Committee and other City Advisory Committees; and
- Information about the survey to focus group participants.

The survey was divided into three parts: vision and strategic directions, additional feedback and optional demographic information. Participants were provided with the vision statement and summary of the strategic directions and associated actions, and a copy of the full Draft Child Care Strategy was available to view online. Participants were asked for their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree.’ Participants were then able to provide additional feedback in text form for the vision statement, each of the five strategic directions and the strategy overall.

There were 929 visits to the Let’s Talk Richmond Child Care landing page while the survey was available. Of those visits, 674 of those people were made aware of the Strategy, 350 people sought additional information through the page and 81 people completed the survey.

Focus Groups

Three in-person focus groups were organized in July 2024, which were held at City Hall, Seedlings Early Childhood Development Hub and Sprouts Early Childhood Development Hub. All sessions were held in the evening with light snacks and refreshments, and child care was provided for parents. Focus group participation was as follows:

Type of Focus Group	Number of participants
Parents	2
Child Care Providers	15
City Advisory Committee Members	5
Canadian Federation of University Women	12

The Child Care Provider focus group included representation from 12 different organizations including private and non-profit child care centres. The Advisory Committee Member focus group represented three different Richmond Advisory Committees:

1. The Child Care Development Advisory Committee;
2. The Youth Advisory Committee; and
3. The Seniors Advisory Committee.

Focus group participants were provided with copies of the Draft Strategy focus areas and associated actions along with a summary of the actions before participating in a facilitated discussion.

Data Analysis

Survey data was analyzed through the Let's Talk Richmond survey analysis function, and qualitative data from the survey and focus groups were analyzed through MAXQDA data analysis software. Themes from the analysis are presented below, along with recommendations for consideration when finalizing the Child Care Strategy.

Findings

Overall, the survey responses were positive and productive, respondents appreciated that the City continues to prioritize child care by developing an updated strategy and noted that it was comprehensive. Participants were interested to see how the actions would be evaluated over the course of the next 10 years and hoped for publicly available updates. As this is something that the City has done in previous years, more awareness about these update reports could prove helpful in continuing to keep the community informed. One survey respondent suggested the need for innovation but did not provide specifics about the types of innovation needed.

There were a small number of participants who strongly disagreed with the vision of the Strategy (approximately four people), and who questioned why this work was being completed and indicated that this is not within the scope of municipal responsibilities. Increased education about the importance of child care for the benefit of the community as a whole is recommended. Of note and for clarification, the Strategy includes a section about the roles of the different levels of government.

Vision

The vision for the Draft Strategy was:

The community has access to a range of affordable, accessible and quality child care options that support and enhance child development, learning and growth and meet the needs of Richmond families.

The percentage of survey respondents who support the vision was 88 per cent.

Survey respondents highlighted the importance of affordability, accessibility and quality child care and noted the aspirational and comprehensive nature of the statement.

There were recommendations to include “inclusive” in the statement, as well as opening the vision statement to include those who might work in Richmond, not just residents. It is noted that out of the four respondents who ‘strongly do not support’ the vision, two of these made comments related to the municipal role of child care and utilisation of tax dollars.

Strategic Directions

There was a high level of agreement for the five strategic directions. Below are summaries of engagement responses by strategic direction.

Strategic Direction 1: Create and Maintain Spaces

The percentage of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with Strategic Direction 1 was 90 per cent.

Themes related to the creation and maintenance of spaces from survey and focus group participants and written feedback included the need for:

- Quality, inclusive spaces.
- Affordable spaces.
- School-aged spaces on or adjacent to schools.
- Support for operators to provide flexible spaces such as occasional care and longer hours.
- Collaboration to create spaces, such as with Richmond School District No. 38 for the creation of school-aged spaces.
- Advocacy to ensure affordability and quality staffing for increased spaces.

Overall impressions and comments for Strategic Direction 1: Create and Maintain Spaces included:

- This is a vital strategic direction and implementation will be important.
- The need for increased staffing related to the creation and maintenance of spaces is a factor to consider in this strategic direction, as are quality spaces.
- Tie creation of spaces to need (e.g. population projections).
- Advocate to senior levels of government for a comprehensive plan/funding for public and not-for-profit child care expansion.

Strategic Direction 2: Quality, Inclusivity and Accessibility

The percentage of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with Strategic Direction 2 was 79 per cent.

Engagement insights regarding this strategic direction included the need for more of an emphasis on quality and inclusive child care, especially as it relates to the needs of children with special needs.

Overall impressions and comments for Strategic Direction 2: Quality, Inclusivity and Accessibility included:

- Strengthen actions related to quality and inclusive, barrier-free access to comprehensive, quality and culturally responsive child care.
- Continue to engage parents/families who are low-income as well as other diverse populations regarding ways to meet child care needs.
- Work with employers to improve the availability of quality child care for employees working in Richmond.
- Consider exploring the potential implications of climate change to child care facilities and providers and explore ways to support adaptation and resilience.

Strategic Direction 3: Advocacy

The percentage of survey respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with Strategic Direction 3 was 88 per cent.

Common themes in the feedback for Advocacy included continuing to advocate to senior levels of government for a universal child care system, and to advocate for the recruitment and retention of quality Early Childhood Educators (ECE).

Overall impressions and comments for Strategic Direction 3: Advocacy included:

- Affordability and universal child care are essential.
- ECE training, recruitment and retention are vital for the child care strategy to be successful.
- More support is required for families and children with special needs.
- Healthy childhood development needs to be supported as there has been a perceived change in child development post-pandemic.
- Appreciation for an emphasis on staff mental health (Action 3.7) as staff burnout is a real issue in child care.

Strategic Direction 4: Collaboration

The percentage of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with Strategic Direction 4 was 84 per cent.

There was recognition by engagement participants that collaboration is key to meeting child care needs in Richmond. On-going collaboration with Richmond School District, parents, child care providers, faith-based organizations, Community Associations and Societies, and employers were identified by participants to contribute to the success of the Child Care Strategy.

Overall impressions and comments for Strategic Direction 4: Collaboration included:

- Be specific about collaboration/partnerships with organizations such as Richmond School District and Vancouver Coastal Health.
- The need for continued collaboration with child care providers.
- Collaborate with parents regarding approaches to care.

Strategic Direction 5: Education and Information

The percentage of survey respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with Strategic Direction 5 was 86 per cent.

While many respondents noted the ability to access information and resources related to Richmond child care, others identified the need for more promotion of information.

Overall impressions and comments for Strategic Direction 5: Education and Information included:

- The need for child care providers and operators to be informed about City initiatives and ways to navigate new or changing legislations.
- Provide education and information to parents such as workshops on parenting and childhood development.

Summary of Engagement Themes

Theme	Related Strategic Direction	Considerations for the Final Strategy
Create more robust actions related to ensure 'quality' child care	2. Quality, Inclusivity and Accessibility	<p>Add more specific language related to quality and inclusive child care.</p> <p>Consider applicability of Richmond Child Care Design Guidelines for all developments to promote quality, accessibility, inclusivity and good design.</p>
Advocate for the early childhood profession: training, recruitment and retention	1. Create and Maintain Spaces	Add an advocacy action related to quality training: the need for ECE training accessible to Richmond residents.
Dissemination of information	5. Education and Information	<p>Inform the public about new or updated City initiatives and resources, and provide progress updates on the Strategy.</p> <p>Add VCH as a partner to collaborate with Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral Centre and VCH to make information and resources more accessible for parents and child care operators.</p>
A small number of respondents question the value of the City developing a Child Care Strategy	5. Education and Information	<p>Consider strengthening information regarding public education on the importance of child care and emphasizing the City's role.</p> <p>Consider strengthening the wording in the Strategy about the municipal role in Child Care.</p>