



Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy

2018 to 2023

Technical Appendices

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Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy: Technical Appendices

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1.0 Squamish Child Care Parents Survey – Executive Summary

Overview and methodology:

Sea to Sky Putting Children First Initiative, in partnership with the District of Squamish, is developing a Child Care Strategy for Squamish. The Child Care Strategy will include a community needs and issues assessment related to licensed child care for children 0-12 years.

The purpose of this survey is to understand, from parents' and guardians' perspectives, the current and anticipated child care service needs from residents of Squamish and those who anticipate needing child care in Squamish. For this survey, child care includes group daycare, in-home child care, preschool and out-of-school care. A total of 478 parents responded to this childcare survey.

Demographics of respondents:

Almost all respondents were a parent or a guardian to one or more child aged 0-12 years old (98.1% of this question's respondents). The majority of the respondents had either one child (44.1% of this question's respondents) or two children (47.6%). Just over three-fifths of respondents did not plan to adopt, foster or have more children aged 0-12 years old within the next five years (61.3% of this question's respondents). Almost three quarters of the respondents were married (73.4% of this question's respondents). Just under half of the respondents were employed full-time (47.1% of this question's respondents). Just under two in five respondents had lived in Squamish for 10+ years (37.2% of this question's respondents). Just over half of all respondents lived in V8B (South and Central Squamish) (53.1% of this question's respondents).

Survey respondents lived in a variety of Squamish neighbourhoods, with the highest proportion of respondents living in Downtown (30.2% of this question's respondents). The majority of respondents had before-tax household incomes in 2016 in the higher income brackets (\$80,000+). The vast majority of respondents mentioned English as the main language spoken by their family at home (94.5% of this question's respondents). Almost three quarters of the respondents did not have a family member other than the respondent who is available and provides regular child care for their child (72.6% of this question's respondents). The most common family member that provides regular child care to their child was the other parent or guardian (59.7% of this question's respondents).

Childcare needs:

The two most common answers for required child care schedules were full-day (49.3% of this question's respondents), followed by after school care (42.1%). Much more than half of survey respondents required childcare for each weekday. More than half of the respondents required childcare during the morning (9 am – 12 pm) (53.1% of this question's respondents), afternoon (12 pm – 3 pm) (51.9%) and late afternoon (3 pm – 6 pm) (69.2%). Just under half of the respondents felt that the fee(s) that their family currently paid for childcare were sustainable for their family (yes = 47.0% of this question's respondents). More than two in three respondents felt that there was not an adequate supply of child care services in Squamish for their needs (69.7% of this question's respondents).

When asked what types of location offerings they would prefer their child care program to be located at or near, respondents overwhelmingly noted outdoor parks (64.4% of this question's respondents) followed by recreational services (53.4%). When asked which places they would choose their child care program to be close to, respondents most often mentioned their home (52.1% of this question's respondents) and their child's elementary school (29.7%). The most common specific commuting

destinations were Vancouver and Squamish (both 19.5% of this question's respondents). By far the most common primary reason for seeking child care was so that the respondent could work (89.9% of this question's respondents). The majority of the respondents have accessed childcare services (71.2% of this question's respondents have accessed childcare services).

Childcare experiences:

Over four in five respondents traveled to and from child care by their own vehicle (82.8% of this question's respondents). The vast majority of respondents accessed childcare in Squamish (94.3% of this question's respondents). Friends/word of mouth (68.0% of this question's respondents), child care resource and referral (57.6%) and internet search (46.3%) were the most commonly used resources to help find childcare services.

About children and their childcare:

Almost all of the respondents had at least one child 0-12 years old and could answer questions in their care ('yes' – 96.4% of this question's respondents). Approximately half of the respondents had another child 0-12 years old (51.0% of this question's respondents said 'yes').

Almost half of all children were 5-12 years old (47.3% of children of this question's respondents), with the next most common age being 2.5-5 years old (23.6%). The most commonly attended schools were Ecole Squamish Elementary School (16.8% of children of this question's respondents) and Brackendale Elementary School (13.7%). The most commonly attended childcare option was school age out-of-school care (15.4% of children of this question's respondents). The most commonly accessed secondary form of childcare was unpaid extended family member or friend (22.7% of children of this question's respondents) and hired babysitter/nanny (16.7%). Just over half of the children of the respondents were accessing child care outside the home (53.6% of children of this question's respondents were accessing childcare outside the home).

The vast majority of children were in paid childcare situations (87.1% of children of this question's respondents). Just over three quarters of all children were in licenced childcare only (76.9% of children of this question's respondents). 3-4 days/week was the most common number of days enrolled in childcare (41.5% of children of this question's respondents), followed by 5 days/week (27.6%) and 1-2 days/week (25.2%). The most common time attended, by a large margin, was late afternoon (3 pm – 6 pm) (80.9% of children of this question's respondents), with early morning (6 am – 9 am) (51.5%), morning (9 am – 12 pm) (59.2%) and afternoon (12 pm – 3 pm) (54.8%) also being very common.

For more than half of the children, the travel time to and from childcare was 5-15 minutes (58.1% of children of this question's respondents). 1-6 months (29.8% of children of this question's respondents), 1 month or less (23.1%) and 6 months – 1 year (21.7%) were the most common times needed to secure a childcare spot. The most common monthly amount spent on childcare for each child was \$201-\$400/month (19.1% of children of this question's respondents), with \$401-\$600/month (15.4%) and \$601-\$800/month (15.4%) being the next most common monthly amounts.

By far the most common reason that survey respondents had not accessed child care services outside of home was that they or another member of their family looks after their child (62.7% of children of this question's respondents). Approximately one quarter of their children (25.3% of the children of this question's respondents) were currently on a wait list for a child care program. The majority of the children represented by the respondents answered 'not applicable, my child is not on a waiting list' (69.2% of

children of this question's respondents) followed by 1-6 months (14.9%) currently on a wait list. The majority of the children represented by the survey respondents were not currently on a wait list (69.9% of children of this question's respondents), followed by being on a wait list for group child care (infant/toddler) (20.1%).

Special needs children:

The vast majority of children of the respondents did not have a developmental delay or a disability (94.3% of children of this question's respondents), but a small proportion of the children did (4.9%). The most common challenge faced by respondents with special needs children was difficulty in finding child care that is inclusive of their child's extra support needs (55.6% of special needs children). Just under two fifths of the special needs children had used a supported development consultant (38.9% of special needs children).

2.0 Child Care Managers, Owners and/or Operators Survey – Executive Summary

Overview and methodology:

Sea to Sky Putting Children First Initiative, in partnership with the District of Squamish, is developing a Child Care Strategy for Squamish. The Child Care Strategy will include a community needs and issues assessment related to licensed child care for children 0-12 years.

A survey was conducted among child care managers, owners and operators, as well as child care staff. For the purposes of this analysis, the child care manager, owner and operator responses have been presented in a separate report from the child care staff responses. Questions 4-37 (questions 53-85 are not analyzed here as there were no responses recorded for these questions as no child care managers, owners and operators were able to provide answers about second facilities) were for child care managers, owners and operators and are analyzed in this report. A total of 26 child care managers, owners and operators responded to this survey.

Facility information:

Over three quarters of respondents who answered question 4 used a residential building (also used as a family home) for their child care facility (76.0% of question 4 respondents). Over two thirds of respondents who answered question 5 owned the space where their childcare was located (69.6% of question 5 respondents). One third of question 6 respondents had been at their current location for a long time (more than 10 years) (33.3% of question 6 respondents).

Question 7 respondents were more likely to plan to expand their current facility (39.1% of expansion sub-question respondents) than to plan to renovate their space (31.8% of renovate sub-question respondents) or plan to relocate their program (26.1% of relocate sub-question respondents). Most survey respondents (19 out of 26 survey respondents; 73.1% of survey respondents) noted at least one challenge facing their childcare facility. The most common challenges noted were being unable to expand program space in order to increase licensed spaces (47.4% of question 8 respondents) and design of program space (36.8% of question 8 respondents).

Themes mentioned about reasons why these challenges exist included high housing costs and rents, limited amount of commercial space available and the need for the District of Squamish to improve policies and bylaws to make it easier to do renovations. Funding was a major theme mentioned by survey respondents when asked what the District of Squamish could do to help reduce the challenges that child care facilities face.

Program information:

The most commonly mentioned child care programs offered by survey respondents who answered question 11 were family child care (42.9% of question 11 respondents), group care 30 months to school age (19.1%), pre-school (19.1%) and multi-age care (19.1%). Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays were the most common days of operations (each mentioned for 31 programs). Mondays (29 programs) and Fridays (25 programs) were also frequently mentioned, while Saturdays (1 program) and Sundays (0 programs) were much less common.

8 am was the most common starting time (mentioned for 13 programs), followed by 9 am (5 programs) for childcares. 4:30 pm (9 programs) and 5 pm (8 programs) were the most common closing times for programs. The majority of survey respondents who answered question 15 offered child care programming during spring break (90% of question 15 respondents), summer break (95%), winter break (70%) and school year non-instructional days (80%). The vast majority of survey respondents who answered question 16 said that there were time periods throughout the year when they do not offer child care programming (85.7% of question 16 respondents).

Child care populations information:

Children in lone or 1 parent families (currently enrolled in the programs or on the waitlists of 63.6% of question 17 respondents) and children who primarily speak a language other than English (50.0%) were currently enrolled or on the waitlists of half or more of the question 17 respondents. The total number of children enrolled was largest for children who primarily speak a language other than English (23 children), followed by children who live in lone or 1 parent families (11 children), although the number of children not in any of these groups (62 children) was much larger than any particular group. The total number of children enrolled full-time was the largest for children who live in lone or 1 parent families (4 children) and children who primarily speak a language other than English (4 children), although the number of children not in any of these groups (16 children) was much larger than any particular group.

The total number of children enrolled part-time was largest for children who primarily speak a language other than English (19 children) and children who live in lone or 1 parent families (7 children), although the number of children not in any of these groups (28 children) was much larger than any particular group. Very few population groups were mentioned as being in drop-in spots by question 21 respondents. The total number of children on wait lists was largest for children who primarily speak a language other than English (15 children), children who live in lone or 1 parent families (8 children) and children who come from low-income households (8 children), although the number of children not in any of these groups (81 children) was much larger than any particular group.

Themes discussed about programs and child enrollment that would assist the District of Squamish in updating its Child Care Strategy included survey questions (need to focus more on overhead and wages instead of categories of registered children), the need to view for profit programs more positively, affordability challenges and descriptions of daycare.

Child care staffing information:

Supervisor/manager was the most commonly mentioned staff type employed at child care facilities (mentioned for five programs), followed by responsible adults as defined under BC Childcare Regulation (four programs).

Just over one-quarter of survey respondents mentioned any staffing challenges that they faced (seven out of 26 survey respondents answered question 27; 26.9% of survey respondents). Themes mentioned for the District of Squamish to help address and reduce staffing challenges included tax breaks, helping ECE educators with education, helping with overhead and wage funding, as well as the need for more affordable housing. Themes mentioned related to causes of staffing challenges included housing challenges, qualifications, cost of living, lack of interest in becoming ECE because of wages (noted as a big issue) and not enough big city draws (no movie theatre, businesses close too early).

Child development capacity information:

The majority of survey respondents who answered question 30 felt that their programs had very adequate or adequate capacity to support the physical health and wellbeing, the cognitive development, the social development, the emotional development and the communication development of each child population group. Themes discussed related to challenges that impact child care program's capacity to address child development included no challenges so far (mentioned by two respondents), funding, accessing supplies, upgrades and times. Recommendations for the District of Squamish to help child care programs address child development included coming to listen to needs, giving direction and providing more funding (with specific examples of funding needed). 15 survey respondents answered question 37 (Do you manage, own, and/or operate an additional child care facility for which you can provide data?), with 13 survey respondents (86.7% of question 37 respondents) answering the question with 'No' and two survey respondents answering the question with 'Yes, but I am unable to provide the data at this time' (13.3%).

3.0 Engagement Summary for the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy

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Executive Summary

The District of Squamish, along with the Putting Children First Initiative (PCFI), is in the process of creating a Child Care Strategy to meet the needs of families with children ages 0-12 years in the Squamish area. The Child Care Strategy is being developed in recognition that many families struggle to access child care in Squamish, and that there are new opportunities for the District and partners to take an active role in meeting these needs. The Child Care Strategy will be completed in Summer 2018.

The development of the Child Care Strategy has followed a multi-phased approach. The first phase consisted of needs assessment and analysis work, which included gathering information about the child populations in the area, existing child care programs, childhood vulnerabilities and other socio-economic and demographic information. Data from Statistics Canada, the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and a survey of parents/guardians and child care providers in Squamish informed the needs assessment and analysis work. The second phase of work involved a series of sessions with community members, parents, child care providers and other key stakeholders. The three (3) consultation sessions were held on June 19, 2018 at the Sea to Sky Community Services (SSCS) meeting room. The three (3) main purposes of these engagement opportunities were:

- To share what the District of Squamish has learned about child care needs so far;
- To discuss participants' perspectives and experiences to further develop the understanding about child care needs in the community; and,
- To solicit information and discussion that informs the development of the District's Child Care Strategy.

11 parents and community members, 13 child care managers, owners and operators and 7 staff from stakeholder agencies took part in the meetings, for a total of 31 participants in phase 2.

The key insights at all three (3) sessions are summarized as follows:

- Affordability is an issue for both parents, who struggle to find affordable quality child care for their children, and early childhood educators (ECEs), whose wages are too low to live in Squamish;
- ECE education requirements and the earning potential in the field are mismatched, leading to fewer people entering the field;
- Child care operators struggle to hire and retain qualified ECEs because of the reasons listed above. This leads to staff burnout among the few people with ECE qualifications, especially those working with infant-toddler (IT) populations. It also means operators must hire anyone they can, which can lead to decreased quality of care;
- Parents do not necessarily have the information they need to make informed decisions about what safe and high-quality child care looks like. The lack of child care spaces means parents are desperate to place their children in child care, and often make sacrifices regarding the quality and safety of care for their children;
- There is a general lack of after-school and summer child care options in Squamish, placing additional burdens on parents to find different child care options as their children get older;
- The District of Squamish policies and Vancouver Coastal Health licensing requirements are often misaligned, making it challenging for current and would-be child care operators to start, build or expand a child care business;

- There is a need for the District of Squamish to take an integrated approach to decision-making about child care, transportation and housing planning in the community. Currently these decisions seem disjointed, which contributes to challenges families face in accessing child care;
- There is a lack of collaboration across the District of Squamish, the School District and other partners and stakeholders to address child care needs; and,
- There is a need for all child care partners to coordinate their actions in order to create systemic change and address child care needs in Squamish.

Specific recommendations to address these issues include:

- Shifting public perspectives around child care, such that it is seen as a child's right to access early childhood education, and align policies and decision-making accordingly;
- Integrating District of Squamish policies and decision-making around transportation, housing and child care in recognition that these are interdependent and critical to family wellbeing;
- Reducing and removing barriers for would-be and current child care providers to start or expand child care operations, including through enabling policies (e.g., zoning, building requirements, different taxation schemes), better access to information (e.g., how-to guides, designated staff to navigate the process) and financial supports (e.g., developer levies and community amenity contributions specific to child care);
- Increasing child care spaces across all age groups and child care types (i.e., infant-toddler, before- and after-school care, summer care) and working to increase scheduling flexibility to meet a variety of families' needs;
- Improving quality monitoring and information-sharing about existing child care facilities;
- Lobbying for the province to align ECE education policies, licensing requirements for child care facilities and ECE wages to reduce staffing challenges and fairly value the work of ECE workers;
- Creating opportunities for child care providers to collaborate with other stakeholders, such as the School District, developers and each other; and,
- Ensuring that new child care facilities are prioritized in neighbourhoods with high childhood populations, as well as in/near schools, the recreation centre and other public places (e.g., senior centre), thus creating child care hubs that bring people together and connect them to their neighbourhoods.

Introduction and Background

The District of Squamish, along with the Putting Children First Initiative (PCFI), is in the process of creating a Child Care Strategy to meet the needs of families with children ages 0-12 years in the Squamish area. The Child Care Strategy is being developed in recognition that many families struggle to access child care in Squamish, and that there are new opportunities for the District and partners to take an active role in meeting these needs. The Child Care Strategy will be completed in Summer 2018.

The development of the Child Care Strategy has followed a multi-phased approach. The first phase consisted of needs assessment and analysis work, which included gathering information about the profile of child populations in the area (i.e., ages and trends); existing child care programs (i.e., types of programs, capacities, neighbourhood distribution, and waitlists); and childhood vulnerabilities as measured by the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and other socio-economic and demographic information. A survey of parents/guardians and child care providers was also conducted in April 2018. A total of 478 parents and 26 child care managers, owners and operators completed their respective surveys; the results informed the needs assessment and analysis work.

The second phase of work involved a series of sessions with community members, parents, child care providers and other key stakeholders. The three (3) consultation sessions were held on June 19, 2018 at the Sea to Sky Community Services (SSCS) meeting room. The three (3) main purposes of these engagement opportunities were:

- To share what the District of Squamish has learned about child care needs so far;
- To discuss participants' perspectives and experiences to further develop the understanding about child care needs in the community; and,
- To solicit information and discussion that informs the development of the District's Child Care Strategy.

11 parents and community members, 13 child care managers, owners and operators and 7 staff from stakeholder agencies took part in the meetings, for a total of 31 participants in phase 2.

This rest of the document outlines the feedback from the engagement activities. The report is divided into four (4) sections: section one (1) summarizes the feedback on the needs assessment and analysis work. Sections two (2) through four (4) share the summaries of the feedback from each of the engagement sessions. The appendix includes the full notes from each engagement session in a set of tables.

Section 1: Feedback on the Needs Assessment and Analysis Work

At the start of each community engagement session, there was a short presentation to share some of the key statistical data about child care needs in Squamish. This data provided an evidence base to inform the discussions during the rest of the engagement session. The data shared included information about space shortages and challenges, financial concerns and affordability, scheduling and waitlists, staffing challenges, childhood vulnerabilities as measured by the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and Statistics Canada data on low-income families in Squamish.

Participants were invited to share their insights, including elements that were surprising or unexpected, as well as to identify gaps in the needs assessment and analysis to date. The following points summarize the feedback and discussion at all three (3) engagement sessions:

- What is considered low-income when we discuss children living in low-income families in Squamish? A map was provided with data from 2015, as measured by Statistics Canada using the Low-Income Measure (LIM). Participants commented that the cost of living in Squamish is high, and so even though the data provided gives some insight, it does not consider the relationship between the LIM and actual cost of living in this community. Families living in low-income situations are likely much higher than what is currently mapped.
- Child care is too expensive. The recent increase of subsidies from the provincial government is a drop in the bucket compared to cost. However, when one of the parents present reapplied for provincial subsidies this year, after new subsidies were announced, she found the process very smooth and she was approved for the funding. Things are easier now because in the past they asked too many questions.
- Operators discussed the challenges they face regarding access and spaces: “when people call us, and you said to them it is full, it is very hard for us to say no to them.”
- Some people were surprised at the levels of need of full day-care and after-school day care. They expected after-school care needs to be higher.
- People were not surprised at the low number of child care operators with hours of operation on Saturdays, Sundays, the late afternoon and evenings.
- There was a question about whether it was easier for families with their first child in child care to find a space for their younger children.
- There was an acknowledgment that the surveys are not perfect as we cannot know which parents responded due to anonymity – it makes it challenging to know whether parents across all demographic and socio-economic categories are represented in these results.

Section 2: Summary of the Feedback from the Key Stakeholder Session

Seven (7) staff from key stakeholder agencies, including Sea to Sky Community Services (SCSS), Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and the District of Squamish (DOS) attended the key stakeholder consultation session on June 19, 2018. The discussion centred on three (3) questions and the main insights for each question are summarized below:

1. What do you see as major issue areas in child development, child vulnerabilities, and child care provision in the District of Squamish?

Existing child care options are too few and too costly for families. Hours are inflexible, and parents experience particular challenges finding before and after school care, summer care and appropriate supports for children with extra support needs. Waitlists are sometimes 2-3 years long. The speed of growth in Squamish, combined with a high cost of living, is putting added pressure on parents seeking child care and operators trying to offer child care. Licensing requirements are high and challenging to meet, adding barriers to people wanting to start child care businesses. Affordability is also an issue for ECE workers, who have high education requirements but do not make adequate wages to live in the area, contributing to issues attracting and retaining staff and fewer people entering the ECE field. This affects the quality of staff in existing child care facilities, as ECE educators take other jobs and unqualified adults work in child care. While some partnerships exist to help address these gaps in service, there is more room to work with the School District and Child Care Resources and Referral, among other partners.

2. What are the opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for helping your work improving child care in our communities?

Opportunities to improve child care through the strategy include developing stronger partnerships across the School District, District of Squamish and other stakeholders and providers to take advantage of new provincial investments in child care. The District can take a strong advocacy role to support policies like a \$10-a-day child care plan and encourage new policies around ECE education requirements and fair wages for ECE workers. The District of Squamish can develop an approach that integrates housing, transportation and child care decision-making across all District business. Supporting policies could include asking developers for community amenity contributions for child care and altering business taxation structures to support child care businesses. There are also opportunities to improve knowledge about child care issues and solutions in Squamish through developing public education campaigns about child care quality and clear, centralized and accessible guidelines for building and licensing child care facilities. More generally, the Child Care Strategy presents opportunities for a streamlined and cohesive approach to how all child care partners make decisions about systemic child care issues in Squamish.

3. What are your suggestions for locating and designing child care spaces in Squamish neighbourhoods?

When it comes to designing and locating new child care spaces in Squamish, recommendations include creating community hubs near or in schools that include child care. For after school care, consider finding underutilized spaces such as churches, senior centres and commercial places. Working with developers to add child care space to new developments, with priority for not-for-profit child care operators to run these spaces, would help meet the need for child care. Additionally, there was discussion about generally prioritizing not-for-profit child care businesses over for-profit centres, as families are struggling with child care costs and adding expensive options may not be the best approach to meet the needs of Squamish families.

The full datasets for the key stakeholder session can be found in Tables 1, 2 and 3 in the Appendix.

Section 3: Summary of the Feedback from the Parent and Community Member Session

Eleven (11) parents and community members attended the community consultation session on June 19, 2018. The discussion centred on three (3) questions and the main insights for each question are summarized below:

1. What do you see as the major gaps in child care delivery in the District of Squamish?

Child care options are so inflexible that often parents must sign their children up for full time care to access a space, even if they work part time and do not need full care. This takes spaces away from families that do need full time care. Current after school care options are limited and best suited for younger children – kids 7 to 12 years do not have adequate interesting programming options. Similarly, summer care options are limited and costly. Waitlists for all types of child care are long, and some parents report paying to be on waitlists, which is illegal but challenging to manage. Parents are desperate to find spaces and end up settling for less-than-ideal child care for their children, including unlicensed options which can be worrisome, and informal arrangements (e.g., babysitting) which can be unreliable. Parents recognize that ECE workers are underpaid and should be better valued by society. Affordability is an issue for both parents and ECE workers. Finally, many families in Squamish do not have extended family networks that can help with child care, making the need for professional, safe, affordable child care options greater.

2. What would make child care better for families in the City?

Child care schedules should align with workplace schedules to support families as much as possible, including summer care options. Parents also would like to see more flexible options to access child care (e.g., a few days per week, drop in centres for a few hours). Planning for child care should take transportation needs into account, and the District of Squamish should take child care licensing requirements into consideration when approving new buildings to facilitate home-based child care. Generally, Squamish needs more child care options across all age groups and scheduling needs, and parents would like the priority to be for licensed facilities with fully educated ECE workers. Having more choice of child care means parents can make informed choices about where to send their children to ensure they are accessing high quality, safe early childhood education options. To that end, the District and others should also advocate for better policy around education requirements and wages for ECE workers. Parents also shared many grassroots solutions to meet child care needs, such as a database of informal care providers that can be accessed through a phone line, and speed dating type of events for babysitters and parents, or formal care providers and parents, to meet and establish relationships.

3. How do you think locations for new child care spaces should be prioritized?

Parents would like to see child care spaces balanced between great central places for children (e.g., the rec centre, especially given its current planning process, could have a child care component) and neighbourhood hubs for all areas of Squamish to be served. Other community spaces where child care could be integrated include schools, seniors centres and near parks. New child care spaces should be prioritized in neighbourhoods with high childhood populations first. The District of Squamish should also be mindful of child care licensing requirements when approving new housing and commercial buildings in Squamish, and prioritize builds and units that could meet residential accessory child care

requirements over smaller condos, townhouses and other buildings that cannot support child care businesses.

The full datasets for the key stakeholder session can be found in Tables 4, 5 and 6 in the Appendix.

Section 4: Summary of the Feedback from the Child Care Operator Session

Thirteen (13) child care operators attended the community consultation session on June 19, 2018. The discussion centred on three (3) questions and the main insights for each question are summarized below:

1. What do you see as the major gaps and issues with child care provision in the District of Squamish?

Staffing and ECE education are major hurdles for child care operators in Squamish. Specific issues include: the high cost of living in Squamish and low wages in the sector making it challenging to recruit and retain qualified staff; exceptions to education requirements making it challenging to both provide high quality child care and meet licensing requirements for staffing while also ensuring staff can maintain healthy work-life balance; and existing staff taking advantage of these conditions to pressure operators into paying them more to stay on staff. The administrative burdens of operating a child care business are high, and the requirements and cost to expand existing child care spaces are too significant for operators to pursue the opportunity. District of Squamish and VCH requirements often do not align, adding to the bureaucratic roadblocks. Operators need better access to information on licensing, expanding or building child care spaces while parents need better information on questions to ask when looking for quality child care.

2. What are the opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for helping your work improving child care in our communities?

Lobbying to improve ECE workers' wages and subsidizing access to ECE education are top priorities for child care operators, along with better aligning ECE education costs with earning potential. The District of Squamish can play this advocacy role. The District should also play a strong role in monitoring and reporting on child care quality to support parents' decision-making and increase child care operator accountability and service standards. The District can reduce administrative barriers to building or expanding child care facilities by designating a position to help applicants navigate the process and act as a "listener" to develop better communication between operators and the District. Other enabling policies could include reducing taxes for family-owned child care businesses, establishing CAC policies to redirect funds toward child care operators, and better coordinating with VCH to ensure requirements align. Ultimately, if the District and the Squamish community at large adopts the principle that child care is early childhood education, which is the right of every child, and ensures that policy and action follows this principle, the decision-making framework in Squamish would change significantly. Child care operators also identified a desire to collaborate and connect more often to support and learn from each other, perhaps by reinstating manager meetings in a constructive way and/or altering CCRR's role to support all child care providers.

3. What are your suggestions for locating and designing child care spaces in Squamish neighbourhoods?

New child care facilities should be spread out across Squamish neighbourhoods to avoid clusters of home-based child cares. Commercial places and schools should also support child care facilities, and the District of Squamish should pursue a strong collaborative relationship with the School District to that effect. Upgrading playgrounds and putting fences around them would reduce a barrier for home-based child cares to be licensed and approved. The District could also create a developer CAC for child care that meets District and VCH requirements at the building stage.

The full datasets for the key stakeholder session can be found in Tables 7, 8 and 9 in the Appendix.

Appendix: Engagement Session Feedback

Table 1: Stakeholder Perspectives on the Major Issue Areas for Child Care in Squamish

Theme	Major issue areas in child development, child vulnerabilities, and child care provision in the District of Squamish
Child Care Hours and Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most child care centers close at 5pm. Finding care during the afternoon hours is a major problem. • People working shift work have a huge challenge; shift-friendly child care used to exist in Squamish but closed. It is hard to manage these flexible options from an administrative standpoint. • Parents feel defeated because of the pressure of not finding child care space to be able to return to work. • Often, families will split child care duties and work schedules because of the lack of options.
After School Child Care Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are too few programs for school-aged children after school. Children cannot be on their devices at home, but child care is not affordable even if it is important for socialization. For school-aged kids, parents are most likely to let their kids be home alone. • After school care waitlists are 2-3 years long. Some programs that existed were unsustainable because they were so popular they couldn't find staff to keep up with demand.
Children with Extra Support Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with extra support needs face multiple barriers (e.g., they need a worker which puts them on one waitlist, and then a space so they go on a second waitlist. If the space is available before the worker, then they can't accept it). • Parents sometimes place their kids on a waitlist without telling the provider their child has a special need out of desperation to get for care for their child, which leads to issues for the provider. • Nannies with needed skills are in short supply. • Therapists work with children but often that's not in child care spaces.
Summer Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people (15 years +) can be seasonal staff for summer camps/care, but the hours are long and affordable housing is hard to find, so staffing these programs is a challenge.
Access Rates, Demographic Trends and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The access rate as of 2018 is 20 spaces per 100 children 0-12 years. • There is a general deficit of child care options which, combined with the speed of growth in Squamish and the cost of housing, makes for a tough situation. The natural increase in births plus families moving into the area is part of why the child population is growing so quickly. • The provincial child care benefit will start in September 2018, but spaces are not there for the newly eligible families. There is a concern that waitlist times might increase in the Fall.

Theme	Major issue areas in child development, child vulnerabilities, and child care provision in the District of Squamish
Coordination, Collaboration and Partnerships	<p>School District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of coordination between the School District and child care partners and a need to improve this. • The new teacher ratios in classrooms have reduced available classroom spaces for child care in schools. • Many teachers do not want to share their classroom space for after-school options. Concerns/barriers include teachers working in their space after school, concerns over supplies and space being used/altered. • The School District offers Teacher Assistant (TA) positions with good benefits, higher pay than ECE, summers off, which attracts qualified ECE workers away from their field into the School District. This is a huge challenge for ECE managers, who report losing qualified workers every Fall. There may be an opportunity to better coordinate across the School District and ECE field (e.g., standardize wages across fields). <p>Collaboration Across Providers/Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a regional committee through CCRR that monitors and shares opportunities for providers to collaborate, but money and staffing issues tend to dominate discussions.
Data Gaps and Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a perceived mismatch for child care in the community: where are the children living in low-income families and where are the child care centers? • Recreation services tracks the use of its child care programs over time; this should inform the child care strategy. • There is a lack of knowledge around how many families have nannies. This information would help build our understanding of child care needs in Squamish. • The Early Development Index (EDI) statistics show that children in Squamish under 5 years score low on the socioemotional and physical areas. Why? Perhaps because dual income parents don't spend much time with their kids, social media makes it a challenge for people to connect? • Parents struggle to understand the different type of childcare spaces (ex. licensed, not licensed) and need education about their options and what questions they should be asking providers.
Location of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squamish is a spread-out community and it can be challenging to travel to child care locations. Biking and bussing is not always possible, safe, or reliable. More programming near schools could help address this challenge. • Child care enhances neighbourhoods, but neighbours also complain, and quality of home-based child care is a concern. • Meeting building codes is hard, building stock is limited.
Staffing and ECE Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are different opinions of what's good for children and a lack of universal standards across child cares. • The quality of child care provision is impacted by the lack of staff. • There are no parameters or incentives for ECE Assistants to build to ECE status – people take the same class over and over. This is bad policy and makes it challenging for providers to find qualified staff for their child care.

Theme	Major issue areas in child development, child vulnerabilities, and child care provision in the District of Squamish
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The courses that are periodically offered in Squamish are often full. Most people in Squamish can only access ECE education courses online or out of town as Capilano University closed its Squamish campus in 2015. • The School District offers Teacher Assistant (TA) positions with good benefits, higher pay than ECE, summers off, which attracts qualified ECE workers away from their field into the School District. This is a huge challenge for ECE managers, who report losing qualified workers every Fall. There may be an opportunity to better coordinate across the School District and ECE field (e.g., standardize wages across fields). • Not-for-profit and for-profit child cares face the same challenges, but for-profits don't get public money or support. • Post-secondary institutions are promoting ECE 4-year degrees, but people use their degree to transfer into other fields that require a degree (e.g. teaching certification) so people never end up working in ECE sector. • There are not enough staff to provide full-day or extended hours of child care. What are the barriers? They can't find a place to stay because they do not live here. There is also a lack of transportation. • Before- and after-school programming is challenging to staff: during the school year, they only work 1 hour in the morning and 3 in the afternoon.
Licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although additional licensing staff were recently hired in BC, there is only one licensing officer for the Squamish area (three for the Sunshine Coast in total, with one in Powell River and one in Sechelt). Still, they are very busy and people have complained that this slows down the licensing process. • "When you have two programs you need two playgrounds... this is stupid." Is there a way to reduce these regulations? Licensing requirements do allow multiple programs to use the same playground if the equipment is appropriate for each program (CCLR 16(1)(b)). However, when equipment needs are different this adds complexity to the licensing process.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents support the needs of the ECE sector until their kids go to school, and then their attention shifts to other issues.
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every year at least 1 or 2 child care provider quits. Often it is to move away from Squamish because they cannot afford to live here, or to join a different work force with better wages. There were 4 notices of closure within the past week in Squamish (June 2018) – we need to recognize that cost of living is an issue on all sides – for families, caregivers, everyone. • It is expensive to build new purpose-built child care facilities. Groups need to put 10% of funds forward if they're to be funded by the government.

Table 2: Stakeholder Perspectives on the Opportunities for Child Care in Squamish

Theme	The opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for helping your work improving child care
Coordination, Collaboration and Partnerships	<p>There is a need and opportunity to improve collaboration between child care partners and the School District through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a child care protocol that includes a principle to collocate child care spaces at/with schools. The protocol would give the School District, District of Squamish and other partners collective control to manage partnerships. • Developing a catchment system for child care to ease children’s transition from child care to kindergarten. • Being more creative and flexible about what spaces in schools can be used for after-school care (e.g., library or gym could be the “classroom space” – Mamquam school does this already). • Coordinating across the School District and ECE field (e.g., standardize wages across fields). • Working with a child care champion at each school to push these ideas forward at the school level (i.e., with teachers) and the School District level (i.e., policy- and decision-makers). <p>District of Squamish (DOS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring the needs analysis data and results to Council. Ensure the strategy is adopted by Council. <p>General partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have some way of addressing the systemic issues of how people work on child care in Squamish.
Data Gaps and Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a public education campaign to educate people on the deep need for child care in Squamish and the benefits of child care for society more broadly. • Explore how to measure and provide information on the quality of child care/ECE options in Squamish. • Child Care Strategy itself needs to be clear and accessible to a wide range of readers, with specific guidelines for District and child care providers that are easy to follow.
Staffing and ECE Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing strategies need to be #1: bursaries for people to study ECE, courses in Squamish so people don’t have to leave the community to get ECE education, lobby to increase wages. • It is important to promote the child care provider job even if it is not very attractive.
Policymaking	<p>District of Squamish policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Child Care Strategy is an opportunity to reflect needs with policy and development. • Opportunity to reduce business taxes for child care businesses – incentives for people to start and stay in the business. • Lease caps for rentals to child care operations. • “Reducing parking requirements but it is also tricky because the need of parking is real in the neighbourhood too.”

Theme	The opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for helping your work improving child care
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a child care community amenity contribution (CAC) policy wherein the developer builds a space, the District controls and rents it to not-for-profit child care operators. “Affordability through perpetuity” for child care spaces. • The District should have some strategies for long term goals and a guideline to support child care. Long term planning should include consideration of population projections. • District has done some enabling policy (e.g., zoning for child care is very generous/broad) to help increase child care spaces and opportunities. Now we need the District to enable more child care spaces, including child care residential, and a neighbourhood traffic plan. <p>Connections between child care and other policies/needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop targets for housing and child care in tandem in the strategy; marry affordable housing policy with child care policy – recognize they are interconnected. Consider low-income housing for ECE staff with a staff housing concept (similar to Whistler). Also consider working with developers to create housing in/near new child care facilities. • “The key is to centralize every child care and after school child care to avoid the lack of transportation and the issues of transportation for young children.” Align transportation planning with child care considerations.
Licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a way to encourage people to have their license and support them in licensing process: information sessions, talk to people even if the job is not attractive. • Create a clear page online with cohesive, streamlined information for child care providers to get a license with minimal administrative hoops while still ensuring providers are accountable. Different authorities and services are too hard to navigate (District of Squamish, VCH, fire department, etc.). • Need to enable child care providers to find and be creative with spaces – could help attract people to the field and keep them in the field longer.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing projects working toward the universal child care plan (e.g., \$10 a day campaign) into the strategy for the District to lobby on. • Consider supporting ECE BC’s work. • Advocate for post-secondary institutions to move away from advocating for 4-year ECE degrees in order to keep ECE certifications accessible and to get people graduated and actually working in the ECE field. • Include PCFI/regional table as part of the strategy to earmark funding for it – the table can keep the strategy moving in the long term if there is new funding possible. • Look at other Districts/municipalities’ policies. Make the comparison with Quebec, Australia and Europe.
Alignment with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squamish partners should be inspired by the Prototype Center opportunity and try to be part of that. Infant-toddler centres open for at least 2 years are eligible – strategy could build an action to host a prototype centre.

Theme	The opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for helping your work improving child care
Provincial Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Advanced Education and ECE Labour Market Program/project is also in progress – Squamish child care strategy can leverage this work into local initiatives. Make provincial initiatives work for Squamish’s geography, align with Squamish Living Wage project (in progress) – action could be for child care providers to sign onto providing a living wage to staff and standardizing across practices to ensure staff aren’t poached and can’t coerce providers into different wages.
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy needs to address affordability for ECE workers.

Table 3: Stakeholder Perspectives on Locating and Designing New Child Care Spaces in Squamish

Theme	Suggestions for locating and designing child care spaces in Squamish
Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People complains because we are there with children and it makes noise. “Need to recognize that it is a great need for the community”. Suggestion to locate child care in or near schools because people living near a school recognize there will be noise, are less likely to complain. Concept of community hubs for kids and other generations (e.g., seniors centres). Balance this idea with the trend in Squamish for people to stick to their neighbourhoods. Commercial places should have child care in it. Schools should also provide more spaces. “Look at dead space, need to use it better. If we are more creative, we could use: churches, commercial places, senior centers”. While churches are typically underutilized spaces, we should also recognize the history people may have with places like churches and schools, including intergenerational experiences. Chief Center is empty at night, could be useful. Need nimble spaces that can evolve as kids grow up. Outdoor areas (playgrounds) can be a part of the solution, but they need to be fenced. There are not many fenced playgrounds in Squamish, so more fences would open opportunities for new child care centres near playgrounds. Some new developments are offering free spaces – foster more of this. Neighbourhood houses on School District property with staff housing for child care? Original solutions!
Designing and prioritizing spaces	<p>Prioritizing private vs public childcare spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private child cares add options for families. However, we know that families are struggling to pay their bills so more expensive choices are not necessarily the best answer.

Theme	Suggestions for locating and designing child care spaces in Squamish
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should there be a limit to the number of private child care businesses in the community? The District could set a ceiling in the strategy, or encourage private enterprises to offer services outside of 9-5 like during evenings and weekends, etc. • Child Care Strategy could also require private child care franchise representatives to network with other child care providers and commit to being part of implementing the strategy as part of getting them to work together in the community, be more transparent.

Table 4: Parent and Community Perspectives on the Major Issue Areas for Child Care in Squamish

Theme	Major issue areas in child care delivery in the District of Squamish
Child Care Hours and Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people book some hours in some services even if they do not need it, just in case. They work part time but put kids in full time care. “I noticed from my personal experience: my sister needed to put her children in day care for 2 days, but I had to sign up to a full-time spot (whole month) because you have no choice due to the high number of people who need day care. It was also the only thing available.” • “There should have the opportunity to have something like ‘sick day’ for children too.” • Sometimes as a parent you would like to have doctor’s appointment on your own. “We should have the opportunity to have a couple of days or a couple of hours: drop in center for kids.” • “When I go to the gym, I can bring my child, because in Surrey there is a gym with a drop-in child care option.” • Juggling shift work and Monday-Friday work schedules makes finding child care hard. • As a business manager, have changed a person’s schedule so that they can deal with child care hours, but this is a disadvantage for other workers, and the employee ultimately left anyway for another job that could be more flexible. Having an office manager which can deal with work schedule and day care is huge. Ideal situation for a person that is going to have a child: flexible child care with different options throughout the day. What would be the cost benefit?
After School Child Care Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After school care at SCSS is better for younger children (0 to 6), but there is a gap for children between 7 and 12 who are not able to be home on their own after school. Older kids get bored at programming which feels more like daycare than interesting dynamic programs. Need active stuff at after school care, like biking, using gyms in schools, etc.
Summer Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older kids; for after school and summer, SCSS offers programs that get filled up in 3 hours from registration start time. • Most camps are booked weekly, so you must sign up child for a full week even if you work part time. • “For summer, child care is too expensive and inappropriate. Activities do not need to be that kind of crazy adventure but just to take children to the lake for example. I just want it to be simple. A nature thing should be enough to allow children to be children. Just to keep them busy. For example: soccer.” • Current options often require gear (e.g., mountain bikes) which can be a barrier to sending kids to the camp. Current options also take kids to fun adventure-based activities that parents would prefer to do with their children themselves. • Timing of summer care doesn’t align with workday schedules to make it easier on families – these should align.
Access to and Choice of Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait lists – started looking January 2018, still looking, no openings until next year – preference is for licensed care, family based or not. • Some parents don’t want to send their children to private child care because they feel the social environment is too small. Perception is that larger centres seem to have better trained staff. • A lot of people in Squamish do not have family or friends to take care of their children. This is why we need child care.

Theme	Major issue areas in child care delivery in the District of Squamish
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many families are competing for too few spaces. • Unlicensed child care is increasing because of the need, which is scary for parents. • “When I moved to Squamish and looked for day care, there were many and I asked, ‘do you have space available for my son?’ but they were all full. The ones I found were too small and overcrowded and the fees were too high, playgrounds seemed too small. It is horrible as a parent because in our mind, family day cares are very good. It is not the case here. I should be happy to pay for the care of my child... They asked me \$70 for a not very good service... Local government should support local day care and bigger child care centers. Private day cares are too small, and I prefer licensed people to educate my kids”.
Informal Care Options and Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I do not like the fact that babysitters charge you \$15/hour while my child is sleeping. It is hard to find babysitters that are reasonably priced. Sometimes I just tell the babysitter this is the amount of money I’m going to give you. Some are cancelling at the last minute and they are not really available in the summer, but they usually are after school.” • Quest university students @ \$15/hr for 2 kids is a cheap option, better than Brennan Park rec program during the summer, but they sometimes cancel and then you get stuck. Need an after school similar option, and reliable. • “I do not really know teenagers in my neighbourhood even if I know that there are many young people. As a parent, do I need to get to know the local teens to find a babysitter? Is there a community-building piece to the strategy that can pull something like this together?”
Data Gaps and Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of resources for parents in general. • CCRR focuses on kids 0-6, is there something else for other ages? Perhaps a more expanded service that is separate to make sure there’s enough resources for families with kids a bit older to know where to go.
Staffing and ECE Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government needs to put more money on child care providers and spaces, wage increases for ECE because it is not appropriate to pay them so little given the huge responsibility they have in caring for our young children. Child care providers should earn more money because nobody wants to do that job. Valuing that work is important for the future. • We need standards in the ECE sector that make it attractive to actually do this work.
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need more affordable childcare. • \$40/day would be workable, but the reality is closer to \$60-70/day. As a parent, want to give kids a good education and would consider paying more if I felt the quality was good and worthwhile. • Child care provider should earn more money because nobody wants to do that job. They should get paid more to provide this kind of education, because it is hard for them to make a living right now. • “Pay to play” – some places are getting parents to bid on care and give a space to the highest bidder – illegal but anecdotal accounts that this is happening.

Table 5: Parent and Community Perspectives on the Opportunities for Child Care in Squamish

Theme	The opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for improving child care
Summer Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more ‘free play’ summer camp options using local resources (at the rec centre itself, for example – use the pool, etc.). • Timing of summer care doesn’t align with workday schedules to make it easier on families – should align these.
Location of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s a good idea to have people running some programs right after school. Kids are already physically in that space. • Because Squamish is really spread out, we should have several child care centers throughout town. Child care for each category of children: a youth center by age – e.g., a “younger youth centre” for kids 8-12 (right now it is only for 13+).
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need child care to be more flexible for certain hours in the week/day. • The child care provider wants to get paid even if the child is not there (sick for example). Can the government subsidize “kid sick days” for days kids can’t go to child care, but the operator still gets paid? • More choices with more flexibility. “More choices could create more flexibility in order not to lose my money. It is a lot of stress to book things for my child in the summer because if you modify something, you don’t have your fees back.”
Coordination, Collaboration and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent rec centre survey didn’t ask ANYTHING about child care – someone should talk about that. New centre/building in the works presents a great opportunity. • Need a better connection between the teens completing the babysitting course and parents who could hire them. Families and teenagers should directly contact schools to offer their services.
Connections to Other Needs	<p>Transit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places are too far away: transportation issues. Transit is not good in Squamish; central rec centre is good but biking there is too far for a lot of kids/families. Maybe we need a satellite rec centre downtown. • Better transit would be helpful. With no vehicle it is hard. Even taxis are difficult to catch (needed to go to the hospital 2 days ago). Taxis with appropriate seating for kids is impossible to find. • Connect child care with transit planning at the District as much as possible. <p>Work Schedules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “As a business manager, I have changed a person’s schedule so that they can deal with child care hours, but this is a disadvantage for other workers, and the employee ultimately left anyway for another job that could be more flexible.” Work matters – having an office manager which can deal with work schedule and day care is huge. Ideal situation for a person that is going to have a child: something flexible throughout the day. What would be the cost benefit?

Theme	The opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for improving child care
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People commuting to work in Vancouver need longer hours – aligning work schedules with child care schedules. “Not all the programs are full day programs, so it is complicated to deal with all of them and my schedule.”
Data Gaps and Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a business rating system for child cares – beyond what exists through VCH (which shows the results of annual inspections, but that’s only through a government entity). Maybe parents could rate their experiences to have an opportunity to hold centres more accountable, discuss stories as they happen when something unsafe is occurring.
Staffing and ECE Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack staff is the main issue. We need more people to deal with children. • Want the provider to be someone the parent can connect with, feel comfortable with. “Sometimes, even if you are not comfortable with a child care provider you must send your children to them because there are no other places available. It will be more comfortable to have a continuity with the services for children. I know it is a dream but if you could build this in your strategy, it would be great.” • Continuing education courses and professional development requirements – having someone with license and up to date credentials should be a priority. “Child care is an environment to learn in peace for your children. I prefer to look for the childcare provider as the professional because the know what to do in a situation of emergency. Child care professional as a role model, qualified, can give good learning and child development environment.” • Pay ECEs better!
Policymaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for child care facilities near playgrounds that don’t necessarily have their own playground. • Some people are not allowed to create child care because they do not have a backyard or the right insurance – e.g., Townhouses, strata councils for condos say no, landlords can be a barrier. As a result, people create just a home day care which can only serve a few families. They need the city support to start a child care business more easily. • New builds in Squamish are small spaces which makes it hard to even have family-based child care in a lot of new units. District should look ahead before approving buildings, to prioritize units that could possibly host a family-based child care option and mandate/write it into strata as an option for residents. • Connect child care with transit planning at the District as much as possible.
Licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New builds are small spaces which makes it hard to even have family-based child care in a lot of new units. District should look ahead before approving buildings to approve units that could align with VCH licensing requirements.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby for government to pay parents to stay home to raise their children with minimum wage. You don’t have to stress all day long to figure out how to raise your children. Parenting would be seen as a job with value. Parents could get educated around what being a good parent looks like, gain skills. • Make the comparison with other countries. Child care feels like an afterthought in Canada. Use best practices. • Advocate to create a provincial policy that people with unlicensed child care facilities need to do continuing education to maintain any grants from the government, progress toward licensing over time.

Theme	The opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for improving child care
Infrastructure Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play structures for 0 to 6 years old; older children have structures, but we need more appropriate play spaces for young kids. Need more and better quality of playgrounds across neighbourhood. • Maybe need a satellite rec centre downtown.
Grassroots Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An open phone line to help with child care needs. “Grandma hotline” – emergency child care help via a directory. • “The way I found a place is through Facebook. If there are no options, am I going to stay at home? I found a nanny on Facebook. It is a big stress to go to work”. Facebook could be a good way to connect mothers together. There is a current Facebook Group: <i>Strong Squamish Mums</i>, for moms trying to help each other out. Find a way to connect parents because we are in the same boat. A support network on a peer to peer level. • I do not really know teenager in my neighbourhood even if I know that there are many young people. Families and teenager should directly contact schools to offer their services. As a parent do I need to get to know the local teens to find a babysitter? Is there a community-building piece to the strategy that can pull something like this together? • Need a better connection between teens completing the babysitting course and parents who could hire them. Ideas include a speed dating night for babysitters and parents, maybe high school students walk across to elementary school after school and walk kids home and take care of them for a few hours. • Could also do speed dating idea for connecting care providers and parents to establish the connection. Focus on the informal and flexible care needs.

Table 6: Parent and Community Perspectives on Locating and Designing New Child Care Spaces in Squamish

Theme	Suggestions for locating and designing child care spaces in Squamish
Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We could have a neighbourhood hub (parks, schools, child care, etc.). • Specifically: close to schools, at the Brennan Park Rec Centre. • Combined with a senior’s center; could be good for both groups, intergenerational connections. • “Brackendale has a lack of services too. As a nurse, I know it.”
Designing and prioritizing spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the child population density in different neighbourhoods and prioritize those neighbourhoods first. Child care centers should be where there is a high concentration of people and children are living.

Theme	Suggestions for locating and designing child care spaces in Squamish
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New builds in Squamish are small spaces which makes it hard to even have family-based child care in a lot of new units. District should look ahead before approving buildings, to prioritize units that could possibly host a family-based child care option and mandate/write it into strata as an option for residents.

Table 7: Child Care Operator Perspectives on the Major Issue Areas for Child Care in Squamish

Theme	Major issue areas in child care delivery in the District of Squamish
Child Care Hours and Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families need earlier and later hours because they are working in Vancouver and need to commute.
Access to and Choice of Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents on waiting lists for 2020 – 1.5 years away! Lack of choice in care and lack of qualified staff = a bad situation. Some care providers take advantage of waitlists, people are being charged to go on a waitlist while operators know the kids will never actually have a space at their service. Illegal but impossible to enforce. People are desperate. Parents are on waitlists. Need more spaces, the district should be aware of it because the efforts are not enough. District needs to make sure that we get those spaces.
Coordination, Collaboration and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives from one part of the District aren't aligned with other departments/requirements – VCH says yes, District building department says no – these need to align! The bureaucratic issues can stop a lot of process. Hurdles to expand child care spaces to serve more families are not worth the cost, which is very high (\$100,000 to add 8 spaces, according to one provider).
Data Gaps and Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need better access to the information to start a child care or renovate a space – if you aren't in the know or don't have the right connections (ex. Husband is a builder and knows how to navigate requirements) then you get tied up, confused, waste time and money on something that makes no sense. It is too expensive and too complicated.
Staffing and ECE Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of fully qualified staff, especially IT (Infant Toddler). People can take the ECE-A class, but an IT facility needs an IT teacher and a full ECE in the classes, and the wages do not match the education needs, so there are gaps in ability to serve IT population. “Wage is not fair. My sister and I both studied for four years and I only have the right to be paid \$16 an hour, as a nurse she can have close to \$30” – such a mismatch between education needs and wages.

Theme	Major issue areas in child care delivery in the District of Squamish
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need bursaries for education to get educated people in the door; and yet the existing bursary for IT education doesn't seem to have much uptake – why? • Wage subsidies are a short-term solution that is not sustainable and yet wages need to be higher. • Qualified ECEs and ITs are going into the School District as Education Assistants because they get benefits and summers off, contributing to operators struggling even more to staff their facilities. • ECEs are not already living in Squamish and cannot afford to move here – operators end up hiring anyone they can. “I have been days away from closing my doors because of staffing.” • Hiring RAs (responsible adults) was not even an option a few years ago, but now people are asking for exemptions to hire RAs out of staffing desperation, and quality decreases. • People are closing their larger centres and moving to family-based child care due to lack of staff, which means fewer families are served. • Practicum students used to come up to Squamish whereas there is now a shift toward sponsoring permanent residents to get help in child care – because no one from Squamish wants to work in child care. • Getting students to Squamish is very difficult. Young students could be part of the solution – job shadowing for people before they decide to pursue ECE could be good, but currently high school students cannot do work placements in child care, or it's hard to figure out. • YMCA and other programs actually have open spaces, but not enough staff. • You just hire everyone and hope that they do not leave. Because of the staffing issue, operators can't provide extended hours. If one of the child care providers becomes sick, there will be huge consequences for children. 8-hour programs are the norm because of maximum shift times – can't open early or stay late to maintain our sanity and work-life balance as humans (staff). Staff don't have the time to lunch because of the lack of staff. IT needs to be on the floor at all times and if there is only one qualified IT educator in the centre then they have to work without breaks. • “I changed my hours of work to fit with the family's schedule, but it is much more stressful for me...” • “I have never seen this situation as bad in Squamish. The lack of staff need to be the priority. Without staff we can't provide child care. It should be the first step.” • Operators tell of situations where their staff go interview at another child care centre, then go back to current job and ask for more money to stay – staff coercion is made possible because of the desperate situation for operators looking to keep staff. In some cases, people ask for 1 month of vacation, or just don't show up or come in late because “what can the operator really do?”
Administrative Burdens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to paperwork requirements in the last 20 years amounts to an additional \$5-6,000 to update a space that is in the same home-based child care space as 20 years ago. Requirements are very high – too high? • When serving fewer than 16 children it can be a home day care, but there is much more administrative work involved.

Theme	Major issue areas in child care delivery in the District of Squamish
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin time eats into time to give care, and also maintain a balanced life. • Too many road blocks to expand.
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of spaces is massive. • One partner couple moved to Squamish one year ago. They have enough land to add more spaces to their child care by renovating. They have found that requirements to add one room to serve 8 more children costs \$100,000 and no architect is interested in the work. Too many road blocks to expand.
Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mismatch between education needs and wages is driven by policies that need to be changed. • People can take the ECE Assistant class, but there is no incentive for them to work toward a full ECE qualification – again, bad policy that affects the labour market for ECE. • RAs get exemption without an incentive to do further training beyond ECE-A which is insufficient – bad policy. • How can District support family-based operations to expand more easily? 2014 changes to fine print of building code are a barrier. Need for an architect to approve building plans a barrier. • Mismatch or misalignments between VCH and District policies to build and license child care facilities is frustrating.
Connections to Other Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is nowhere to live. Need more low-income housing, regulations on housing. • For-profits have money to support people to move to Squamish but it isn't working – there is a real issue because of the cost of living.

Table 8: Child Care Operator Perspectives on the Opportunities for Child Care in Squamish

Theme	The opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for helping your work improving child care
Coordination, Collaboration and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District and VCH requirements need to be more cohesive. Staff need to actually meet and talk to each other and align their requirements. • How can child care businesses have a cooperative type of relationship? Ideas include staff sharing across different operators to spread out capacity, standardize offers for employment to avoid staff exploiting operators for higher wages – how feasible is this? • Reinstate manager meetings in a constructive way for child care operators to support each other (used to happen at a time when child care operators were super competitive, so it was not necessarily useful). Support each other when issues come up, bounce ideas off each other, etc. • Find opportunities for child care operators to visit each other’s facilities and learn from each other – but operating hours are the same! Tough to do. • Mandate that CCRR change to have a different focus – child care generally instead of family child care; or a separate and analogous organization that can support other types of child care so that they also get support.
Data Gaps and Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting people in one room together to address these issues is a good opportunity from strategy already – voicing issues is important. Can the strategy have a public education component for parents to advocate for child care centres too? Parents need to know questions to ask to know where to look, what to choose, advocate for better care. • Mentality is changing (Child care educators are not baby sitters, they are not playing, they educate the children) – this is a good thing! But, people still complain because child care take children to playgrounds – culture change is needed.
Staffing and ECE Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District priority should be on topping up wages or subsidizing ECE education instead of adding spaces using a CAC developer levy type of policy, and/or add low-income housing for people to move and live as ECEs in the community, and/or implement regulations on housing developments to have ECE tenants at set rents. • Create opportunities for child care providers to mentor each other. • Young students can be the solution by creating job shadowing opportunities for people before deciding to pursue ECE. • Facilitate an easier process for high school students to do work placements in child care. • Most people only have access to online course for ECE in Squamish – need classroom-based ECE education here. • District should set aside a community space with 10 computers for people doing online learning courses. A hub for online learning generally could support ECE learners specifically. Locals can work toward their ECE/IT qualifications and study together. There will be less support than a full classroom experience, but the learners can be together, maybe bring a teacher in once a month to answer questions. Local child care providers could provide further support to people studying for ECE and maybe offer placements to link all aspects of the course to the Squamish context specifically. It’s a way to support what is possible now with online-only ECE education option.

Theme	The opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for helping your work improving child care
Policymaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a principle that child care is early childhood education, which is the right of every child, and ensure that policy follows this principle. If District adopted this stance it would change entire decision-making framework. “The key is when we start looking at childcare as an early education space and not a place where children can be drop off to allow parents to go to work.” • Specific CAC with % of housing for ECE, similar to Whistler Housing. • “To provide long term child care we need more staff, there is so much to do... Municipal taxes should go to child care, this is the priority.” • Consider different taxes for child care businesses to allow people to put more money towards wages. Business licenses are the same for an in-home child care as Starbucks. Scaffold requirements and taxes based on business sizes (perhaps beyond child care to account for difference between a multinational corporation and a family owned business). • If you build a day care you shouldn’t have to go through with an architect but an engineer – this would help with costs. • District “listener” or process for feedback, to ensure District is actually hearing from child care providers regularly – some sort of avenue to deal with the disconnect between the stakeholders and child care operators. • Create a fund that comes back to centers themselves. • The district can change the by-laws to facilitate more child care facilities opening.
Licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate a person to navigate the process to deal with architects, engineers, etc. when starting a child care business. • Create a step by step package with information in regular language, “how to” guide to start/expand child care.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District should advocate for higher staff wages and specific supports for child care centres to the BC government. • ECE Assistant requirements should change. One course for 5 years graduate is not enough. Market is flooded with ECE-As but licensed centre requirements are way more stringent so there is still a staff mismatch – need to address this. District should push for policy for RAs and ECE-As to have to move forward ECE qualifications. Provincial government could provide subsidies for education upgrades and create a standardized wage scale so that as workers increase their education they are compensated accordingly. This would create multiple incentives to get into the field and stay in it. Requirements to receive funding to study ECE could include staying in certain communities after graduation. • Make the criteria of early childhood educator not too specific. Nurses and teachers could help the child care providers. • Look at other places in the world or in the country to have other examples of child care.
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to get out of the cycle of costing so much to build/update buildings just for an architect to sign off on a plan. Reduce financial barriers for child care operators to build or increase child care spaces.
Quality Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the issue of quality; parents are desperate and can’t leave low quality child care spaces because of lack of other options.

Theme	The opportunities that the District of Squamish Child Care Strategy brings for helping your work improving child care
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents do not have the luxury of checking on existing child care quality beyond annual checks from VCH but also deserve to know their children are safe. District should play a role in monitoring.

Table 9: Child Care Operator Perspectives on Locating and Designing New Child Care Spaces in Squamish

Theme	Suggestions for locating and designing child care spaces in Squamish
Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are several child care centers on the same street. Bad planning policy – issue for parking, pick up and drop off, no wonder neighbours are unhappy. District decision-making should be more strategic to avoid these clusters. Commercial places should have child care space within them, and costs should be reduced to open more commercial group centres that are affordable. Outdoor areas (playgrounds) can be a solution, but they need to be fenced. There are not many fenced playgrounds in Squamish for now. Update or upgrade outdoor play areas in a way that connects to and meets child care licensing requirements to facilitate more home-based child cares. Child care in schools – go there, explore with the School District and make it happen. Force them to come to the table!
Supporting policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a developer CAC for child care that meets District and VCH requirements at the building stage. To have more spaces, we need to lower the price of property. “When you have two programs you need two playgrounds... it is stupid.” Change some of these requirements or discuss revisiting these requirements with VCH. For family centres, it would be helpful for bylaws on where you can do child care to be more permissive – condo, trailer, townhouse, tiny homes, etc. For example, right now, a carriage home on land where someone lives is currently not eligible to be a child care because family accessory child care must be in the primary home. Strata bylaws are often a barrier too. “I cannot build another home next to mine, home day care has to be at home.”