

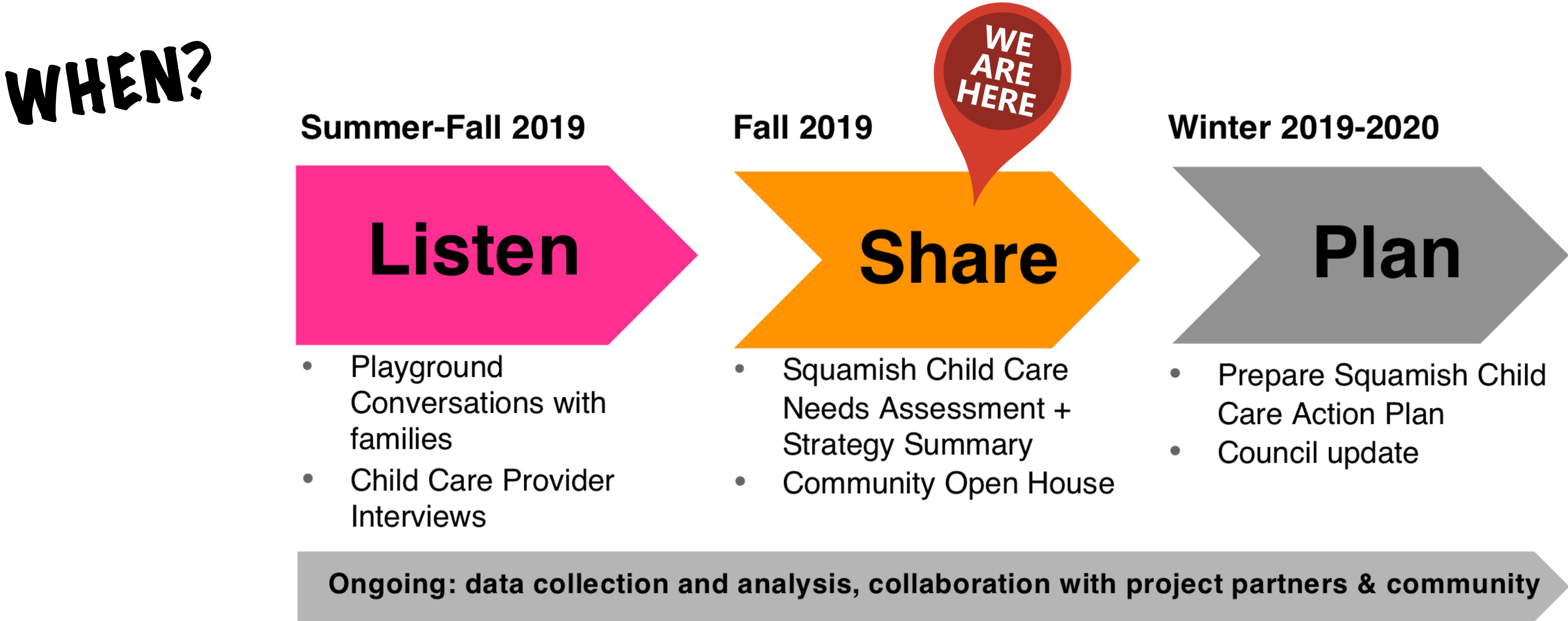
What's Happening?

SQUAMISH CHILD CARE ACTION PLAN

**This project builds on and is a continuation of the
Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023**

WHAT? In March 2019, the District obtained provincial funding for continued local child care action planning. This 12-month community-based project aims to develop tangible action plans to improve the access rate for affordable, accessible, and high-quality child care, in line with projected growth.

- Activities currently underway:
- Refining Squamish child care targets for the next 5-10 years, with focus on the number of spaces needed by age group, by neighbourhood and location, hours of operation, and program supports needed to better serve underserved populations.
 - Identifying organizational leadership, critical partnerships, and required resources to improve and sustain child care access rates in line with demonstrated needs.
 - Reviewing and aligning child care licensing processes (provincial regulations and municipal requirements) and developing synchronized processes and public resources for child care providers.



*Squamish Child Care Action Planning has been funded by the
Community Child Care Planning program of the Province of BC.*

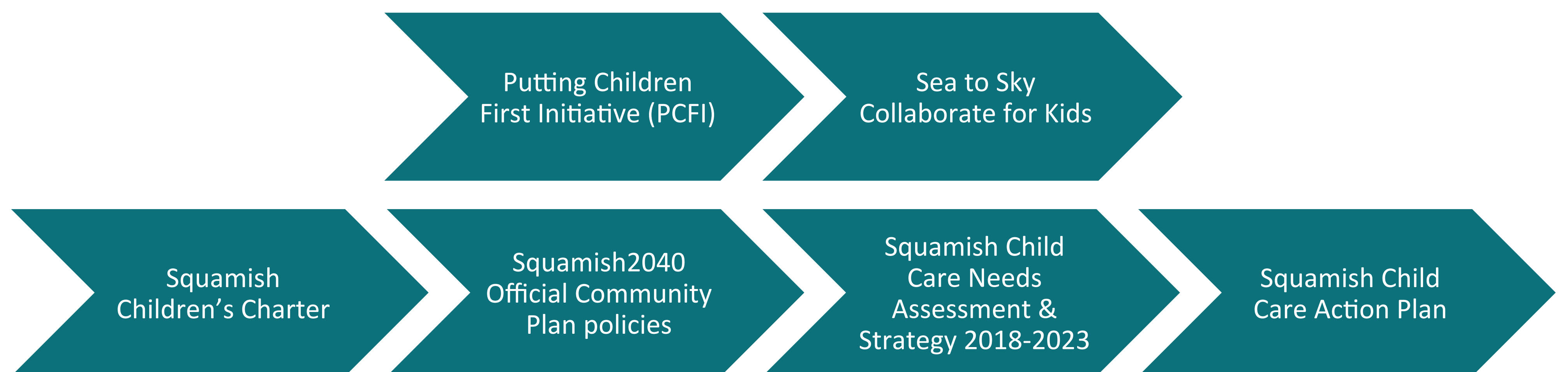
BC Community Child Care Planning Program

The Community Child Care Planning Program provides funding for local governments to engage in child care planning activities in order to develop a community child care space creation action plan.

Through partnerships and engagement, all funded projects will collect information regarding the child care needs of the community; create an inventory of existing child care spaces; identify space creation targets over the next 10 years; and identify actions that can be taken to meet those space creation targets.

The information gathered through these plans will be shared with the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, and may inform future investments in child care space creation that the Government of British Columbia may provide your community through programs such as the Child Care BC New Spaces Fund. Please note that completion of a community child care space creation action plan does not guarantee future space creation funding.

BACKGROUND



Background

GROWING FOCUS ON CHILDREN AND FAMILY NEEDS

2002 - 2019

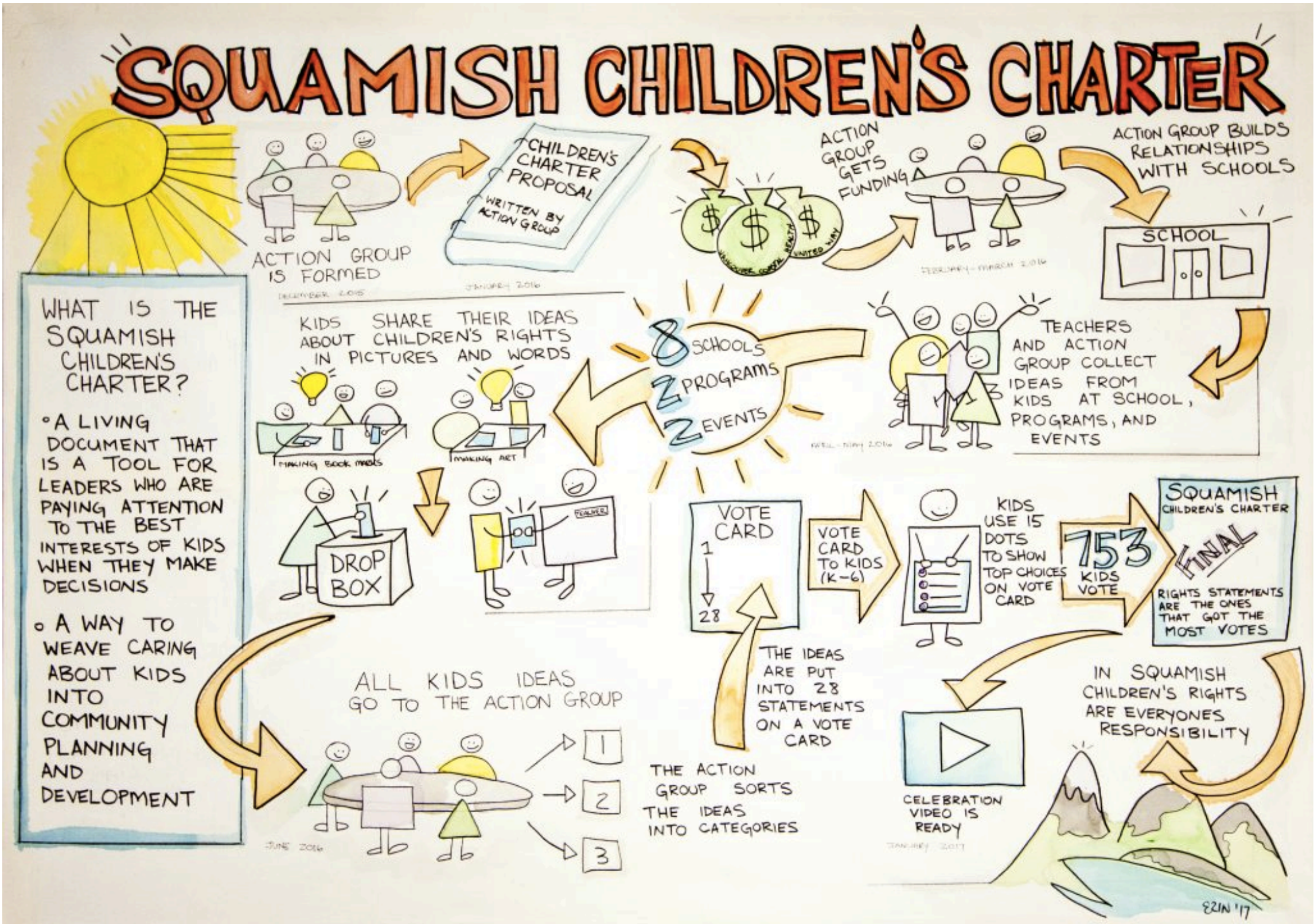
The **Putting Children First Initiative (PCFI)** brought together stakeholders from School District #48, Squamish Nation, the District of Squamish, Sea to Sky Community Services, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and Vancouver Coastal Health to collaborate on initiatives for **children 0 to 6 years** across the Sea to Sky region from 2002-2019. The Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy is one of many initiatives that have come out of the PCFI collaborations. Funding for this initiative has ended, but collaboration continues...

2019 - on-going

...amongst partners and agencies under the informal **“Sea to Sky Collaborate for Kids”**. It is a voluntary constellation of local stakeholders in the Sea to Sky corridor dedicated to supporting families and meeting the comprehensive developmental needs of children from **0 to 12 years**.

2016

In 2016, PCFI lead the creation of the Squamish Children’s Charter, developed by over 700 children in Squamish.



1. I have the right to survive. I have the right to a warm home, to food, to clothing and to sleep.
2. I have the right to a clean environment, including fresh air and fresh water.
3. I have the right to peace, to be free and to live in a safe world.
4. I have the right to choice, to my own beliefs and be happy and to love who I want and to be loved.
5. I have the right to play, to exercise and to recreation. I have the right to nature, to be outside, to explore, to imagine and to create.
6. I have the right to be who I want and to be respected for it.
7. I have the right to express myself, to have a voice, to speak out and to be included.
8. I have the right to safety and to feel safe, to trust someone and the right to privacy.
9. I have the right to an education.
10. I have the right to health care.
11. I have the right to have equal rights and to know that I have rights.

2016 - 2018



SQUAMISH2040 OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN POLICIES

The District will work with community partners to:

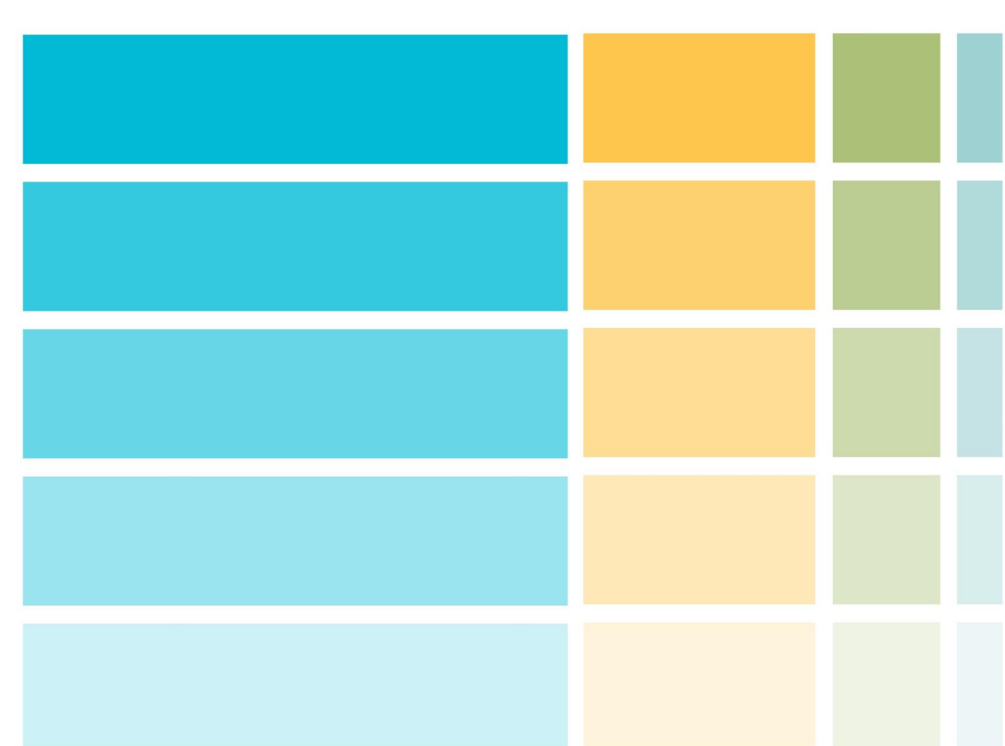
- Closely monitor and assess local child care needs, including the number and distribution of licensed daycares throughout the community;
- Encourage and help to facilitate the provision of on-site amenity child care space within neighbourhood developments, and
- Advocate for increased senior government funding for quality affordable childcare.

Background

CHILD CARE ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Squamish Child Care Action Plan builds on and is a continuation of the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023

SUMMARY:
SQUAMISH CHILD CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT & STRATEGY 2018-2023



Squamish Child Care
Needs Assessment and Strategy
2018 to 2023
Prepared by SPARC BC



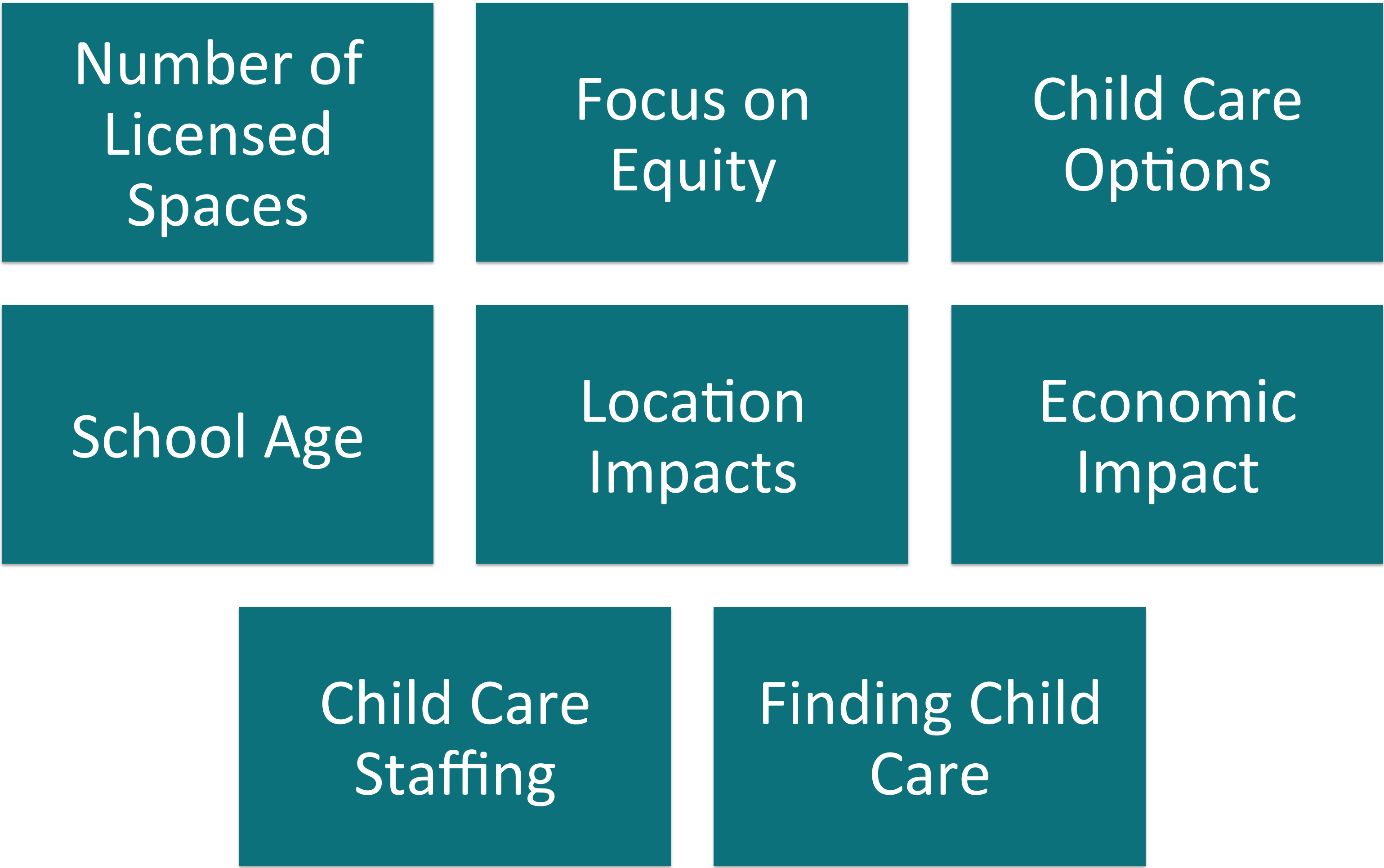
A long-term child care strategy to address critical issues such as lack of available space, shortage and high cost of care for children under 36 months, and the need for before and after school-age care. The needs assessment and strategy was completed by SPARC BC, under the leadership and direction of the Sea to Sky Putting Children First Initiative early years planning table.

VISION FOR CHILD CARE IN SQUAMISH
Squamish families have access to a range of affordable, accessible, high quality child care options that meet the demand throughout the community and support children’s healthy development.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1 Promote Shared Leadership and Collaboration:**
The strategy’s implementation will be dependent on political support of elected officials and District staff, and community partners sharing the responsibility for its roll-out. Taking a collaborative approach will help all partners develop a sense of joint ownership over the strategy and its implementation.
- 2 Focus on Equity:**
Applying an equity lens to the strategy is essential to ensure that improvements to child care consider the range of demographic characteristics and systemic barriers that families may face when accessing child care in Squamish.
- 3 Engage the Community Meaningfully:**
Effective and meaningful community engagement includes not only informing community members of the strategy’s progress, but also inviting citizens to share perspectives and ideas throughout the implementation process and adjusting the strategy’s focus as circumstances and needs shift in the community.

2019 CHILD CARE SNAPSHOT



2019 Child Care Snapshot

NUMBER OF LICENSED SPACES

Access Rate by Age Group in Squamish (Sept 2019)

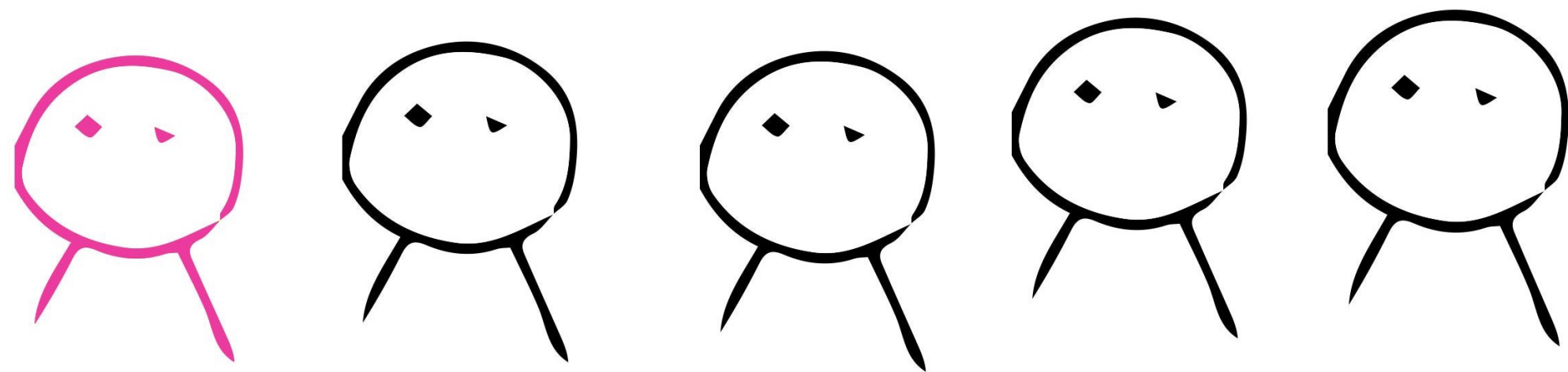
Age Range	Age Range Total	Number of Spaces	Child Care Access Rate
Infants and Toddlers (12-30 months)	478	96	20%
Preschool Age, including part-day Preschool (30-60 months)	1010	516	51%
Preschool Age, excluding part-day Preschool (30-60 months)	1010	414	41%
School Aged Children (5-12 years)	2117	205	10%
Total Child Population (0-12 years)	3894	817	21%

**Assumes 1/4 of FCC and Multi-Age spaces are occupied by children less than 30 months of age.*
***Assumes very few, if any, under 1s are in licensed care by excluding this population from the Infant/Toddler age category.*
****"Preschool" programs typically run part-time, from 1 to 4 hours/day.*
*****2019 population estimate based on Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016002, and average annual growth rate for 0-12 population between 2006 and 2016 of 3.5%.*

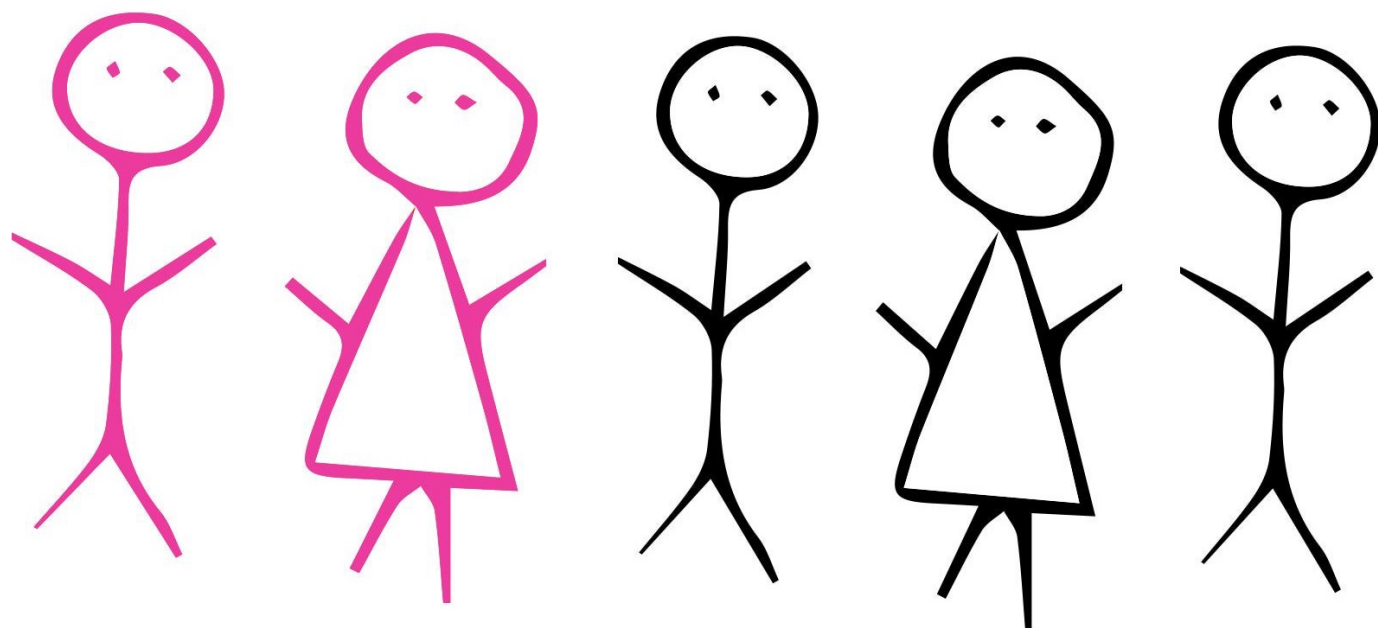
Did you know?

In Squamish there are...

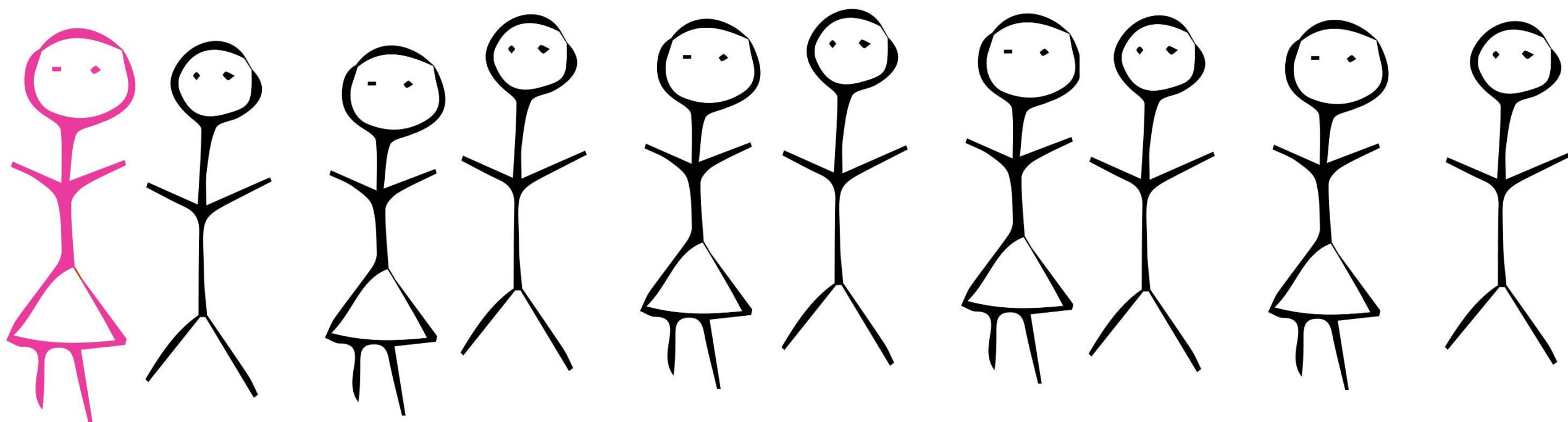
licensed full-time spaces for *one in five* kids aged 12 to 30 months.



licensed full-time spaces for *less than half* of kids aged 3 to 5 years.



licensed before-/after-school spaces for *one in ten* kids aged 5 to 12 years.



Community Feedback

NUMBER OF LICENSED SPACES



"I was offered a space in Squamish for 1 day per week when my daughter was 6 months old. At the time, they recommended that I take it and pay for the days even if I didn't need them in the hope that more days could be added. It was upsetting to have to pay for a space before needing it."

"The high cost of living and lack of affordable daycare has lead to marital issues, kids who are regressing, mental health issues, etc., amongst our peers. I see this daycare crisis as a catalyst for disaster."

"Squamish is growing and you can see where the money is going – businesses are growing and condos are being built – and you can see that child care hasn't been a priority. That sends a strong message about our community. I want a community that cares about our future and our youth."

"I didn't see this coming when we moved to Squamish; I thought it couldn't be as bad a Vancouver. We would have reconsidered moving to Squamish. We might have to consider leaving."

"I'm starting to ask, is Squamish worth it?"

"Growth is great for the building industry, but terrible for families."

"The lack of child care is limiting our ability to have a bigger family – we can't grow our family and afford to be here (with one income)."

"I'm concerned about unsafe care situations that people have to resort to."

"Had I known about Squamish daycare situation, I might not have moved here. I would have at least waited until my youngest was over 30 months."

"I had to take a full-time space for my son even though he doesn't need it, and I'm sure there are other people doing the same. People are desperate; they take what they can get."

"Not having care means that I need to split time with my husband. We're like ships passing in the night and it's hard on our relationship."

"My child has been on waitlists since two months of age. She's 15 months old now and I'm told that there should be a space available in 2021. At the moment, for to be able to work (I'm a recently single full-time working mum who commutes everyday), I have to pay for a lady in my building to have my child in the mornings, and then I try to find different people each afternoon to look after my precious child. This is incredibly stressful and expensive to the point where I don't know what to do."

2019 Child Care Snapshot

FOCUS ON EQUITY

“Child care needs to be looked at as a right for all children, the same as school.”

When child care spaces are scarce, they may be even less available for the families who would benefit from them the most. Increasing the number of child care spaces available would help to improve equity of access.

UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS:
The BC Child Care Planning Program defines underserved populations as including:
Children who have extra support needs, Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) children and families, low-income families, young parents under the age of 25, children and families from minority cultures and language groups, immigrant and refugee children and families, and francophone families.

REDUCING VULNERABILITIES – OPPORTUNITIES IN SQUAMISH

CHILDREN WITH EXTRA SUPPORT NEEDS

Children with identified extra support needs sometimes end up waiting for two things – extra support staff and licensed child care. There is limited funding available for extra supports and there is a waitlist to provide the help children need. If a child with extra support needs is on a waitlist for child care, they sometimes end up waiting longer for extra support than they would if they already had access to licensed child care. **To improve the situation for children with extra support needs, two things are needed: more funding for extra support staff in order to increase availability of extra help and reduce waitlist times *and* better access to licensed child care.**

“How can children who need extra support be supported when you have no stability of care?”

“I can articulate my needs and advocate for my family, but not everyone can do that.”

CULTURAL SAFETY

In order to reach underserved populations, Squamish needs accessible, affordable, high quality child care that is inclusive of the diverse population it serves. In Squamish, there is need for inclusive, culturally safe programming that welcomes First Nations families.



In the summer of 2018, United Way lead the Avenues of Change project with Squamish Nation, with the goal of improving development of children aged 0-6. The following are some suggestions for improvement that came out of this work that are closely related to the provision of child care:

- There is need for cross-pollination between Squamish Nation and non-Squamish Nation programs.
- It would be helpful if a percentage of spots in non-Squamish Nation programs could be held for Squamish Nation members to allow easier access to services; provision of a staff member could help to make sure people feel comfortable and welcome in non-Squamish Nation spaces.
- Families and kids need to feel accepted, secure, and welcome in their community, the place their own ancestors called home.
- Improve cultural teachings so children know their heritage and increase their sense of pride.
- Create safe spaces where indigenous and non-indigenous people can interact and bridge communities.

“Squamish is the perfect place to raise children, but we need more child care options – especially Francophone child care, which is totally lacking right now.”

FRENCH LANGUAGE

As of September 2019, there are no licensed French language child care options in Squamish. This is a missed opportunity that especially impacts the French-speaking community in Squamish.

IMPROVING STABILITY OF CARE

When child care facilities close suddenly, it not only leaves families feeling stressed and scrambling to find new child care, it also breaks the bonds children have with their care providers. When families can’t find consistent care, children are sometimes shuffled between different arrangements to try to patch together adequate child care. Research has shown that increases in the number of non-parental child care arrangements a child experiences are related to increases in behaviour problems and decreases in pro-social behaviour.

Source: Morrissey, T. W. (2009). Multiple child-care arrangements and young childrens behavioral outcomes. *Child Development*, 80(1), 59-76

“How are children supposed to form caring relationships without stable care? My son will have been in at least 6 daycares by the time he reaches Kindergarten.”

“I noticed behavioural changes in my child when our daycare closed – first when a favourite teacher left, then with the big change of the actual closing. Daycare closures are very stressful for families and that impacts kids too.”

2019 Child Care Snapshot

CHILD CARE OPTIONS

There are a wide variety of child care services that Squamish families use, ranging from reliance on friends and family to nannies to licensed group facilities. Most families make use of a variety of different types of care depending on their needs, availability, location, age and number of children, family situation, work schedules, etc. In BC, child care types are classified by the province according to the following definitions:


- Licensed:** Licensed child care programs are monitored and regularly inspected by Vancouver Coastal Health; they must operate in accordance with the regulations set out in the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*.

License-not-Required (LNR): Two children or a sibling group, other than the care provider's own children.


Registered License-not-Required (RLNR): Two children or a sibling group, other than the care provider's own children. Registered with the Child Care Resource & Referral Program (birth up to and including age 12).

In-Child's-Own-Home Care: Unlicensed care that parents arrange for in their own home – like a nanny or a baby-sitter who takes care of their children. Children from other families cannot be included in this arrangement and the care provider cannot be a relative who lives in the home.

Unlicensed: The provision of care to three or more children who are not related to the care provider and are not a sibling group requires a Community Care Facilities Licence. If a person or facility providing child care is not in compliance with these Child Care Regulations, they are operating illegally.



There's no requirement to register or report on the use of LNR and in-child's-own-home child care, so it's impossible to know how many Squamish families are relying on these arrangements. It's also not known how many unlicensed child care operators there are in Squamish.



There has been an **anecdotal increase in nannies, babysitters, au pairs, and other types of child care** accessed in Squamish. Families may increasingly look for other options when licensed care is not available, or as a back-up plan in case a licensed space doesn't become available when parents need to return to work. Some families, of course, choose to employ these other types of care for reasons such irregular or sporadic work schedules, or as a family preference.

COST TO FAMILIES

LNR, RLNR, and in-child's-own-home care are typically more expensive than licensed care. In addition to the generally higher cost, for families that qualify for the BC Affordable Child Care Benefit, the amount available differs depending on the type of care used – rates are lower for in-child's-own-home, LNR, and RLNR care than for licensed care.

In the case of an au pair, families typically provide room and board (for a fee), in addition to an hourly wage, which means that they must have at least a spare bedroom available. This is obviously not a luxury that all families have access to, especially given the high cost of housing in Squamish and higher density/smaller unit size of newer housing stock. It also sometimes means forgoing rental income that families could otherwise earn with their extra space.

For these reasons, for most families, licensed care is more affordable than other paid child care arrangements. **A shortage of licensed care may push families toward more expensive child care and potential financial hardship, or out of employment, or out of Squamish.**

HELP FROM EXTENDED FAMILY



Statistics Canada found BC ranks 9th amongst Canadian provinces for the percentage of people who have at least 5 close relatives¹. Because Squamish is a young, fast-growing community, and people come from all over Canada and the world to live here, Squamish residents may be even more unlikely to live near grandparents or other family members who might otherwise be able to help with child care. There's a general feeling in Squamish that **there is likely a higher need for child care than in other communities because extended families often don't live nearby.**

¹ Sinha, M., Statistics Canada, (2014). *Canadians' connections with family and friends*.

Please use the pages on the table below to **let us know:**

- (1) which types of *child care you are currently using*, and
- (2) which types of *child care you would choose* if you could?

2019 Child Care Snapshot

CHILD CARE OPTIONS (BY LAND USE TYPE)

LOCATION – FAMILY HOME OR OTHER FACILITY?

Every child care centre is different, but all can be broadly grouped into two categories according to where they are located:



Local governments are responsible for land use decisions within their boundaries, so they determine where child care facilities may be located – **child care is currently permitted in most zones in Squamish**. When planning for the future, it’s important to understand current conditions and look for opportunities to build on success and try to identify where improvement is needed.

In Squamish, **there is currently heavy reliance on small home-based daycares, especially for infants and toddlers**. Policies that support these small businesses are needed so they can continue to serve the community. Opening a new child care facility can be challenging, especially for family home child care – finding ways to streamline what is required and then help people navigate the required steps is one way to make the process a little easier to understand and follow.

Age Range	Age Range Total (2019 estimate)	Total # of Spaces (Sept 2019)	% of Spaces (family home)	% of Spaces (non-residential)
Infants and Toddlers (12-30 months)	478	96	42%	58%
Preschool Age, including part-day Preschool (30-60 months)	1010	516	28%	72%
Preschool Age, excluding part-day Preschool (30-60 months)	1010	414	35%	65%
School Aged Children (5-12 years)	2117	205	0%	100%
Total Child Population (0-12 years)	3894	817	23%	77%

Nearly half of licensed infant/toddler spaces are in family homes

*2019 population estimate based on Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016002, and average annual growth rate for 0-12 population between 2006 and 2016 of 3.5%.

QUICK ACTION ITEM: Streamline and clarify process for District of Squamish requirements for opening, renovating, and expanding child care facilities. Provide guide to help people navigate the process and requirements.



Community Feedback

CHILD CARE OPTIONS



You have to take anything you can get; there's no time for due diligence.

I've interviewed a possible nanny, but she's only available for a few months and has no nannying experience. As with unlicensed daycares, you have to lower your expectations and standards because there's nothing else available. It puts the burden on parents to have faith that everything will be ok.

It's not just about money – when there's nothing available, no amount of money can solve it.

We have to take what we can get. It might not be the perfect environment, but it's the only environment."

There's such a shortage, it felt like I was being interviewed by a potential nanny.

I have already lowered the standards of what I'm looking for. I'm concerned for friends who have done this as well and people having to accept situations that aren't what they want for their families .

I've visited an unlicensed daycare that I wouldn't want my kids to go to – I'm sure it's great and that the kids are fine, but I value having rules in place to make sure operators aren't taking on more than they can handle, especially if they are feeling a lot of pressure from families to provide care for more children

Not only do we all need new daycares, just as importantly we need these daycares to be reliable and professionally run so we know that day-to-day our child can go (so we can work and live) and that they are safe.

I'm waiting for a daycare going through the licensing process. Because I don't know when they will be opening, I also have to have a back-up plan in place, so I've hired an au pair. If the daycare is able to open and take my son, I won't have work for the au pair.

Power has been taken from parents, this leads to desperation and risky situations; you have to take what's given to you.

We both have a long commute so a nanny made sense. However, our 4-year old regressed significantly. He would have been better off in a more social daycare setting, which wasn't available.

Our families live far away so we have no one to step in, even for a short period.

The difficulty with a nanny is that when they aren't available or are sick or injured, there's no back up. This week our nanny was injured and had to cancel all week. My son was watched by three different people this week, which is stressful and required transporting him all over – as far as North Van.

Nannies tend to either be transient or students only available in the summer.

We live in a townhouse and we have a roommate. If we hire an au pair, we lose the ability to have a roommate *and* the majority of my income would go to paying for the au pair.

"Family daycare has lots of benefits, especially early opening hours, but there is one big draw-back – when the operator is sick or if they send kids home for minor illnesses – it means I can't work unless I have a back-up plan in place. I always have to have a back up, but even with that, last minute situations are really tough to find care for."

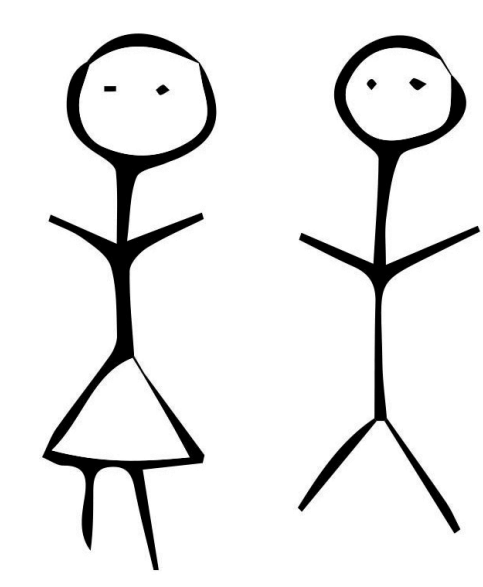
It's great to have the stability of family daycares - the same provider and same kids every day.

Group centres cannot meet all the need and many families prefer family child care for the more personal and smaller setting. We need all different types of care and all should be supported.

You want to find someone who runs a family daycare because they want to, not because they have to.

2019 Child Care Snapshot

SCHOOL AGE (5-12 YEARS)



BEFORE SCHOOL, AFTER SCHOOL, PROFESSIONAL DAYS, SCHOOL BREAKS, SUMMER...

School days and schedules don't align with most work schedules, so children don't necessarily stop needing child care when they start Kindergarten. This project covers ages 0-12, but it is acknowledged that most children stop requiring child care by around age 10, although some need it longer.

As of September 2019, there are 205 licensed before- and after-school child care spaces for 2,117 Squamish children aged 5-12, for an access rate of just 10% for this age group. There are other programs available to Squamish families, but there isn't solid information on the availability and usage of these options.

Here are a few of the common themes parents of school age children bring up when asked about child care in Squamish:

OPTIONS FOR OLDER KIDS

A common refrain from parents of kids toward the older end of the 5-12 spectrum is that the child care options available to them are better suited to younger children. There's a feeling that the multi-age programming offered in many before and after school care programs doesn't always work well for older children.

"There aren't many after school care programs, and if they do exist, they cater to young kids and my boys are bored – no basketball, open gym, floor hockey-type after school programs. They are all a group of multi-aged kids doing crafts and expected to be happy on the same playground day-in, day-out, year-after-year."

"Children's health and well-being are directly related to the positive activities they participate in during the after-school hours of 3-6 pm" (MDI)



When asked if they are already doing the after-school activities that they wish to be doing, 20% and 23% of Grade 4 students surveyed in North and South Squamish, respectively, answered "no". In both geographic locations, the number 1 response to which activities they wish they could be doing after-school was "Physical and/or Outdoor Activities".

Source: Human Early Learning Partnership. MDI [Middle Years Development Instrument] Grade 4 report. School District & Community Results, 2017-2018. Sea to Sky (SD48). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, School of Population and Public Health; June 2018.

SUMMER CAMP HOURS

"Many summer camps for school aged kids are 9-3; this is so difficult when you are working."

There are many summer day camp options in Squamish. Many of the programs available run from 9-3, which makes them ill-suited to families in which parents work longer hours. Some of the camps offered at Brennan Park are longer (8:45-4:45), but that still doesn't cover full work days for a lot of families.

"Brennan park pool has NO open swim after school any day of the week. How are we supposed to keep kids active when we can't drop in to swim after school? They could take the bus there and have fun swimming for an hour after school. Evenings are too busy with dinner and homework."

BRENNAN PARK RECREATION CENTRE

There are many after school programs for school age children offered at Brennan Park. Unfortunately, unless kids have transportation to get there, they aren't an option for families in which parents work longer hours. Improving bus access would help remedy this for older children, but transportation is still a challenge for younger ones.



Having more programming that provides pick up service, a range of activities for different ages, and longer hours would address many of the gaps mentioned above. Please see Additional Action #2.

Are you between 5 and 12 years old?
Please leave a comment or complete a worksheet
(thank you!)

2019 Child Care Snapshot

LOCATION IMPACTS

“No one gets to choose where in Squamish their child care is, you have to take anything you’re offered and just find a way to get there.”

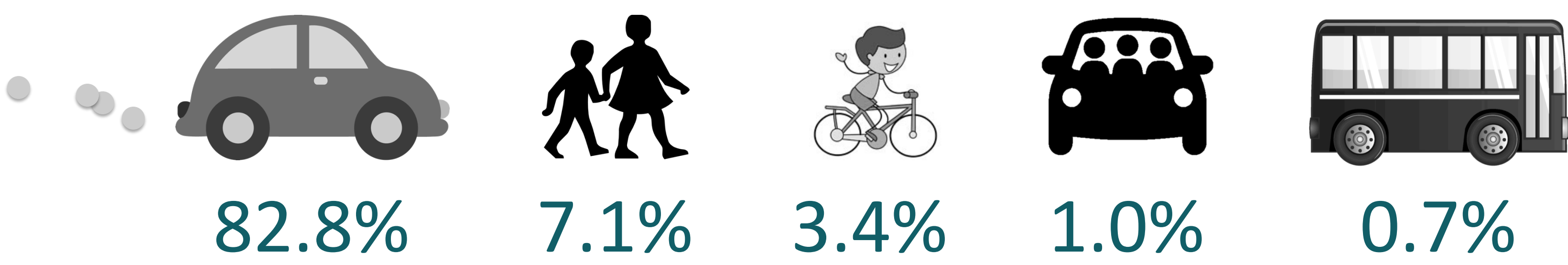
Families lucky enough to find child care in Squamish rarely have the luxury of choosing care in their neighbourhood or close to work, especially for infants/toddlers. Instead, many families end up criss-crossing the District to access child care. This means either longer driving times for parents already commuting by private vehicle, or extra vehicle trips for those not commuting or who would otherwise travel by another mode.

TRAVEL MODE TO ACCESS CHILD CARE

In Squamish, most employed people commute to work by motor vehicle, either as a driver or a passenger: 85.3%. Only 14.8% walk, bike, take transit, or use another form of transportation.
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

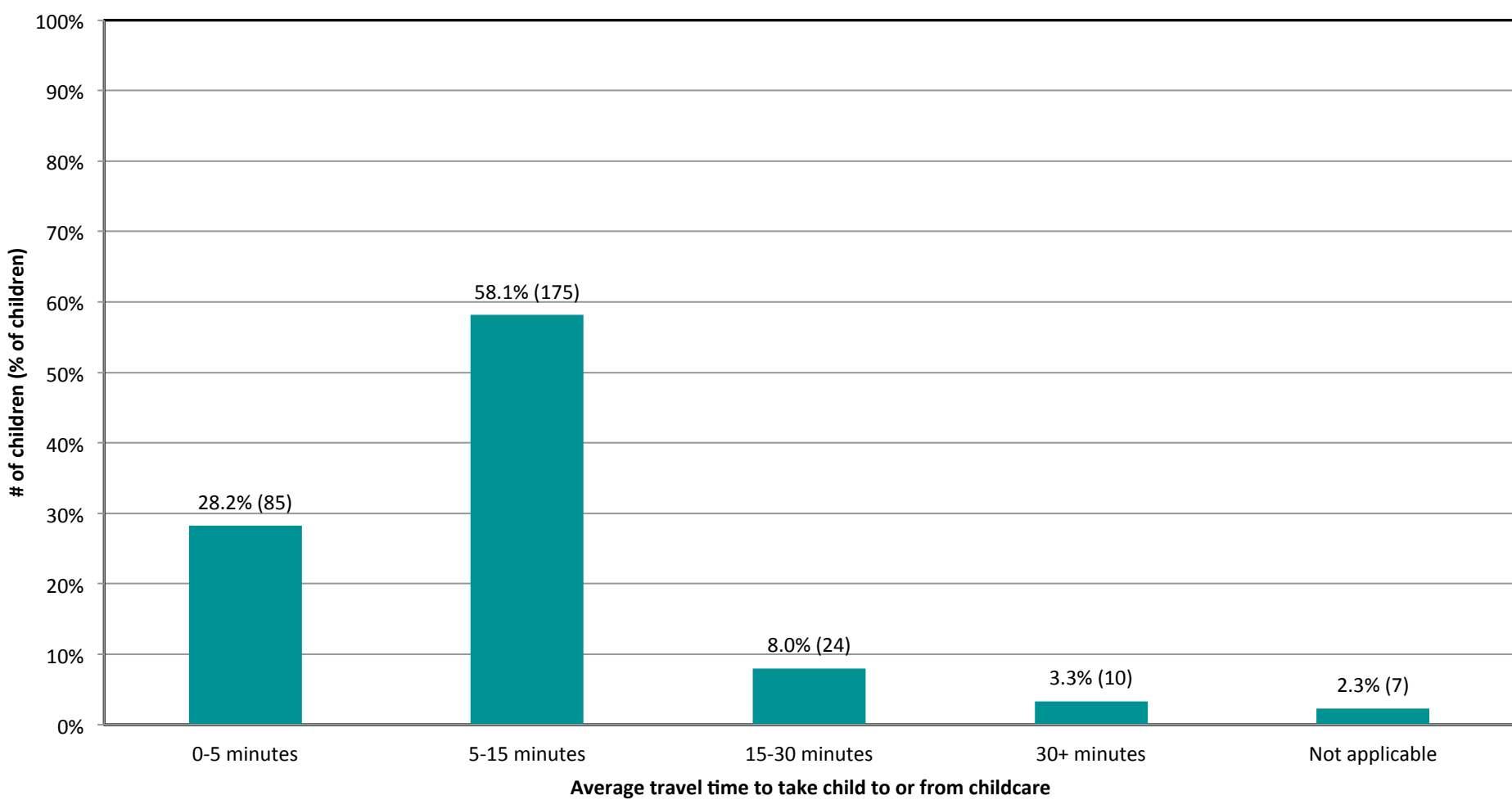
Similarly, **the vast majority of Squamish families use personal vehicles for travel to and from child care (82.8%);** very few families walk (7.1%), bike (3.4%), carpool (1.0%), or use public transport (0.7%) to access child care.

Source: Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy 2018-2023



TRAVEL TIME TO ACCESS CHILD CARE

The parent’s survey conducted as part of the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy 2018-2023 found that travel time to and from child care for Squamish families took 0-5 minutes for 28.2% of families, 5-15 minutes for 58.1%, and 15-30 minutes for 8.0%. 3.3% of families spent 30 minutes or more.



MORE THAN EMISSIONS, FORMING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL HABITS

Young children have specific travel needs that can affect the travel modes families choose, and constraints to using alternative transport are often the greatest for families with young children. **Improving the ability of families to choose sustainable transportation modes during early child-rearing years, when it’s generally most difficult to do so, could have significant long-term benefits – not only in reducing the negative externalities of car dependence, but also in helping people change their travel behavior over the longer term.**

Owning private vehicles is a financial burden, and car-dependent families miss out on opportunities to gain incidental physical activity, which contributes to worsening health outcomes. When relying on cars, young children lose the opportunity to cultivate independent, active travel patterns, and this impacts their overall health and well-being.

Source: Laura McCarthy, Alexa Delbosc, Graham Currie & Andrew Molloy (2017) Factors influencing travel mode choice among families with young children (aged 0–4): a review of the literature, Transport Reviews, 37:6, 767-781

2019 Child Care Snapshot

LOCATION IMPACTS



BUILDING COMMUNITY

Having child care options close to home or work not only means reduced travel times for families and greater ability to choose more sustainable modes of travel, it’s also **a way for families to get to know their neighbours and connect to their community**. When asked about preferred locations for child care in Squamish, many parents emphasize the importance of community and helping their children make social connections close to home. The current shortage of child care may actually erode sense of community; sometimes parents feel that they are directly competing with each other for child care.

“The competition for child care is ugly – I don’t want to feel that way about my neighbours.”

“I would like my son to make friends in the community. If we want to grow a sense of community, sending our kids to West Van, North Van, Whistler doesn’t achieve this.”

SCHOOL AGE

During the school year, school-age child care programs obviously need to be located near children’s schools, or provide transport to and from school. Some Squamish parents report having to choose schools outside of their catchment areas in order to ensure access the before/after school care they need.

KIDS WHO COMMUTE

Parents who commute to work outside of Squamish are faced with a steep challenge – not only finding care in Squamish, but finding care with long enough hours to support commute time. Single parent families and families with two parents who commute sometimes have to find care for their children outside of Squamish. The travel is hard on children and parents, and they miss out on opportunities to make social connections in Squamish.



Child Care, Commuting, and the Squamish Economy

Child care shortage for some Squamish families may also represent lost local economic potential:

1. Wages can be higher in the city, so when families need extra income to afford child care, they might choose employment opportunities outside of Squamish.
2. If there isn’t child care available in Squamish, families might not be able to even consider local employment possibilities.

“I’ve been on waitlists in Squamish since pregnancy. It was a shocker to me that nothing opened up before I went back to work. My son is in full-time daycare in West Vancouver; the commute is a challenge.”

“I hate the commute, I didn’t want my daughter to have to commute too. It’s disruptive to her sleep schedule and I worry about missing social connections.”

“We have full-time daycare in West Van. I would like to have care in Squamish, but I would need longer hours in order to cover the commute time.”

“We have part-time daycare in North Vancouver. I think we were lucky, but we need to drive 45 minutes morning and evening... it’s really not the best for our child and we are considering leaving Squamish because of this.”