



Cowichan Region Child Care Plan

Final Report
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- Cowichan Early Years Table
- Cowichan Lake Community Services
- Cowichan Tribes
- Cowichan Valley Métis Association
- First Nations Health Authority
- Growing Together Child Care
- Healthy Beginnings Duncan
- Ladysmith Early Years Table
- Parkside Academy Childcare Society
- Regional Child Care Resource and Referral
- School Districts 68 and 79
- Sundrops Centre for Child Development
- The Early Years Child Care Task Force
- Tsz'unimus Child Care
- Vancouver Island Health Authority
- Vancouver Island University

It has been a pleasure to work with the following members of the Project Authority Group:

Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD)	
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Our Cowichan Communities Health Network	
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (Malatest) undertook research and consultation on behalf of the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) to develop a child care plan for the region, for the next ten years. Lines of evidence included surveys with parents, caregivers, the general public, and child care service providers in the CVRD; key informant interviews with child care service providers, local government representatives, and other key stakeholders in the region; a focus group with recent Early Childhood Education (ECE) graduates; and secondary data review of local government documentation, community profiles and projections from Statistics Canada and BC Stats, and inventory on child care spaces from the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM). The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings of this research and the recommended direction for future child care in the CVRD.

KEY FINDINGS

Current State of Child Care in the Cowichan Region

- For every five children aged 0-12 years old in the Cowichan region, there is approximately one child care space available (a 22% coverage rate).
- Coverage rates are insufficient for infants and toddlers (aged 0-2 years) in most areas of the Cowichan region. The region overall qualifies as a *child care desert* with a coverage rate of less than 33% for infants and toddlers.
- Cost and availability of spaces are major barriers for families in the region, with approximately one-half of all families reporting that these factors are barriers to them receiving their preferred choice of child care.
- Based on survey findings and secondary data review, it is anticipated that one in five families in the Cowichan region have an unmet need for child care.
- While the majority of parents and caregivers are happy with their *personal* child care arrangements, only minorities of parents and caregivers, and the general public, believe that child care options are inclusive of children with extra support needs, or representative of the diversity of the communities they serve.

Anticipated Future Child Care Needs

- The population of children in the Cowichan region is expected to decline by approximately 8%, or 850 children, by 2030. The largest declines will be seen in the 3-5 years and 6-12 years age groups.
- Despite this decline in population, aggressive increases in coverage rates are needed to respond to existing demand, and to anticipate a future surge in demand as a result of provincial government strides towards universal child care coverage in B.C.

Child Care Providers' Needs

- Recruiting and retaining qualified staff is the biggest challenge for child care providers, due to a shortage of qualified ECEs in the region. This shortage results in difficulty both in finding qualified staff, and also paying them a wage high enough to be competitive with other providers in the region.

- Low wages in the profession, generally, were noted as a deterrent for young people considering early childhood education as a career. Typical wages in the profession were noted as being insufficient to make the work “worth it” for many young people, both in terms of the education needed before entering the workforce, and the strenuousness of the daily work.
- Despite the work being acknowledged as “intense” and low-wage, many recent ECE graduates noted the more intangible or emotional benefits of the work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from this project, Malatest has proposed a series of recommendations to increase the supply of child care spaces in the Cowichan region, as well as improve the quality of child care available. Specific local and provincial government actions that could support each of these recommendations are provided at the end of the report; general recommendation areas are listed here.

Increasing Coverage Rates

Increase the number of child care spaces as per the recommended space creation targets.

This report has provided a detailed breakdown of recommended space creation targets, by age group and by care type (see Tables 9 and 11). Malatest recommends making efforts to meet these targets within the time frame specified, with regular review and assessment of capacity to ensure these targets remain relevant.

Emphasize increasing infant/toddler spaces.

Space creation targets place a strong emphasis on infant/toddler spaces; this reflects both the comparatively low current coverage rate for this age group, as well as demand voiced by stakeholders who participated in this research. Malatest recommends that efforts to expand child care coverage in the region should ensure that creation of infant/toddler spaces are prioritized.

Creating New Child Care Sites

Support creation of new child care programs and sites.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will necessitate the creation of new child care programs and, likely, opening of new child care centres and facilities in the region. This will require considerable capital investment that could be aided by support from both municipal and provincial governments.

Accessibility

Consider public accessibility of potential new child care sites.

Accessibility and location of child care sites was noted by a number of stakeholders in this research; many noted that there are a number of child care facilities that are not accessible by public transit. This results in the child care programs under-serving the community, particularly lower income families who may not have access to a personal vehicle. Accessibility and location of child care sites should be considered when examining potential child care sites.

Consider need for, and incentivize, child care with extended and non-traditional hours.

Shift work poses a unique challenge to finding child care options. Very few child care sites in the Cowichan region offer extended hours such as early morning, late evening, or overnight care. Yet, for families where one or both parents are employed in shift work, there is a need to find child care options that can provide reliable care during these hours.

Affordability

Attend to affordability as a key aspect of the expansion of child care in the Cowichan region.

Affordability of child care was noted as a major barrier to child care, and to child care of choice, among parents and caregivers in this research. Further, child care space targets set out in this report have assumed a considerable increase in demand due to an increase in affordability. As such, affordability of child care for families in the region should be a major priority for municipal, regional, and provincial governments.

Supporting Child Care Workers and Providers

Promote child care as a career to youth in the Cowichan region.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will require the creation of many full-time equivalency child care positions throughout the Cowichan region. As a result, there will be a large need in the region for qualified child care workers, particularly those with higher levels of qualifications (e.g., ECE, ECE with infant-toddler and/or special needs training).

Promote the ECE qualification, and ECE with special training, to current and potential child care workers.

During this research, Malatest heard from recent graduates of ECE programs that the ECE qualification itself was perceived to be financially burdensome, when considering the investment required and the anticipated pay of an ECE-qualified position. Many noted that it made more financial sense to seek a lower level of qualification, such as an ECE Assistant, because the difference in pay between the roles was minimal. In addition, many child care program operators noted that they faced significant challenges finding qualified staff, particularly ECEs and ECEs with infant-toddler and special needs training.

Support ECEs in maintaining their credentials through affordable professional development opportunities.

Child care workers qualified as ECEs must participate in regular professional development in order to maintain their credential over time; this training is typically paid for by the individual, creating another barrier or disincentive for child care workers to pursue and/or maintain their full ECE qualification. Supporting ongoing professional development for ECEs can help to reduce this burden and better meet the need for qualified child care workers in the Cowichan region.

Improving Quality of Child Care

Promote cultural diversity in child care centres.

The diversity of child care centres in the Cowichan region was rated poorly by both the general public and parents and caregivers of children, in this research. Diverse child care centres that reflect the communities in which they are located provide children with higher quality, more enriching care that promotes inclusive

communities. As such, promoting cultural diversity should be a priority under the general initiative of improving quality of child care.

Promote inclusion of children with extra support needs in child care programs.

Families of children with extra support needs can struggle to find spaces for their children in licensed child care programs, due to the additional resourcing and staffing required to accommodate these children. In particular, the need for specialized training for ECEs to provide care for children with additional support needs has resulted in limited qualified staff available at these child care programs, and high demand for care among the sites that are able to accommodate children with extra support needs.

Promote best practices in child care through monitoring and accountability measures.

While most parents and caregivers in the survey for this research rated their own child care arrangements highly, overall perception of child care quality in the Cowichan region was middling. Promotion of standards and best practices in licensed child care can provide guidance to providers (particularly during periods of rapid expansion) and build public confidence in the quality of child care offered locally.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

To better meet the child care needs of families, the Province of British Columbia announced expanded investment in the child care sector in the 2018 Provincial Budget. A total of \$1 billion, over three years, will be used to build B.C.'s early learning and child care system by addressing local, regional, and system priorities that impact families most in need. The province will focus on increasing the quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity in early learning and child care. This will support the objectives of:

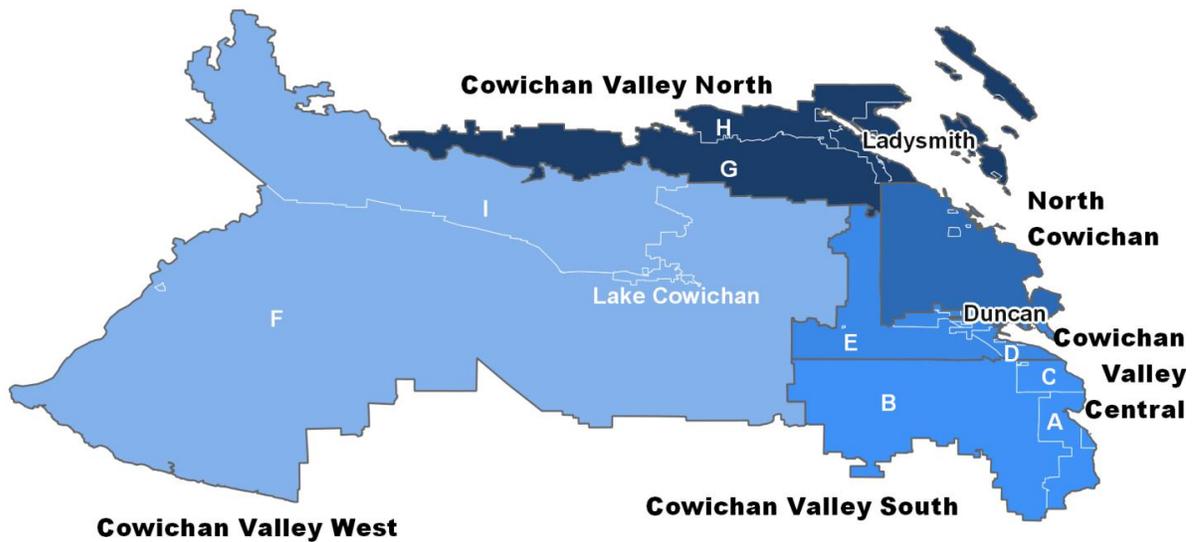
- Enhancing the accessibility of child care options by increasing the number of child care spaces (22,000 new licensed child care spaces);
- Increasing the affordability of child care;
- Enhancing the quality of licensed child care programs by supporting the training and professional development of early childhood educators; and
- Enhancing equity through targeted investment in underserved communities – including Indigenous families, families with children with extra support needs, and young parents completing their secondary education – by improving access to inclusive, affordable, and flexible child care programs.



THE COMMUNITY CHILD CARE PLANNING PROGRAM

To gain a deeper understanding of the child care needs of communities across the province, the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) assigned \$2.85 million to the Community Child Care Planning Program. The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) is administering the program which provides funding (up to \$25,000 per project) for local governments to engage in child care planning activities. The goal of these activities is to develop a community child care space creation plan. Strong planning at the community level will ensure the investment creates child care spaces in areas with the greatest need.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), together with the City of Duncan, the Municipality of North Cowichan, the Town of Ladysmith, and the Town of Lake Cowichan (collectively called “the Project Authority Group”) were awarded \$125,000 (\$25,000 per area) from the Community Child Care Planning Program to complete a Child Care Needs Assessment and develop a Child Care Action Plan for the Cowichan Region. The Project Authority Group contracted R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (Malatest) to complete the work on behalf of the Cowichan Region. The project took into consideration the nine electoral areas and four municipalities that comprise the Cowichan Valley Regional District, including areas that encompass School Districts 68 and 79 and the adjacent First Nations as shown on the map provided.



For the purposes of reporting, the Cowichan region (i.e., the Member Municipalities and the CVRD Electoral Areas) was divided into the following groupings:

Area Grouping	Municipalities and Electoral Areas Encompassed
Cowichan Valley Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Duncan • Electoral Area D: Cowichan Bay • Electoral Area E: Cowichan Station / Sahtlam / Glenora
Cowichan Valley North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Ladysmith • Electoral Area G: Saltair / Gulf Islands • Electoral Area H: North Oyster / Diamond
Cowichan Valley South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral Area A: Mill Bay / Malahat • Electoral Area B: Shawnigan Lake • Electoral Area C: Cobble Hill
Cowichan Valley West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Lake Cowichan • Electoral Area F: Cowichan Lake South / Skutz Falls • Electoral Area I: Youbou / Meade Creek
Municipality of North Cowichan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality of North Cowichan

PURPOSE OF THE CHILD CARE PLANS

The purpose of the Child Care Plan is to create action plans – one for each of the area groupings – that provide strategic, coordinated approaches to increasing access to child care. These action plans emphasize affordable, quality, early learning and child care in their recommendations for new child care spaces. Each plan provides an explanation of current trends in child care in each area, a review of government plans, policies and bylaws as they relate to child care, and an interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data collected through community engagement with relevant stakeholders. Each plan recognizes and addresses the specific needs of each area, and the regional context that families needing child care in the Cowichan Region work, live, and play in.

This report provides an overarching view of child care needs across the entire Cowichan Valley region. It pulls together findings and recommendations from each region grouping, and identifies unifying strategic objectives for those regions. Short-, medium-, and long-term actions necessary to support the development of additional community-supported child care spaces have been identified. Findings from this Child Care Plan will provide the Project Authority Group with a better understanding of child care needs in the Cowichan Region and provide recommendations to address current barriers and/or gaps. In addition to the Cowichan Region Child Care Plan, an inventory of existing child care spaces has been compiled as a deliverable for this project.



EXPECTED BENEFITS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) plays an important role in the well-being of children and their development, and positively impacts families, communities, and the economy. Impacts of ECEC on these domains are discussed in the sections below.

CHILD WELL-BEING

Quality child care programs provide environments and instruction that address both the early learning and nurturance needs of children. Research suggests important links between early childhood experiences and a child's social, emotional, academic, and physical well-being. Attendance in quality ECEC programs is often positively correlated with school readiness (Anderson et al., 2003) and successful student outcomes in later childhood such as higher scores on achievement and language tests, better social skills, and fewer behavioural problems (Growing Together Society, 2010).

Early childhood experiences set the stage for lifelong learning. Research suggests that early learning experiences in day care and nursery school give children a sense of self efficacy which supports later school success (Sylva & Wiltshire, 1993); that participation in early education and care programs has strong short-term and smaller long-term cognitive benefits for children, particularly children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Burger, 2010); and that participation in ECEC programs can have long-term impacts on factors such as educational attainment and income in adulthood (Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2012). Emotional and social skills are also known to benefit from participation in ECEC, such as increasing a child's ability to cooperate and socialize (Anderson, et al., 2003).

Overall, quality early learning lays the groundwork for lifelong learning and shapes society's future workers, parents, voters and active community members (Growing Together Society, 2010).

FAMILY, SOCIAL, AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Economic circumstances in the CVRD, and throughout B.C. and Canada more generally, continue to push two-parent households to a dual-earner arrangement, and require single parents to earn market income. Large increases in housing costs, combined with stagnant incomes when adjusting for inflation, put pressure on families to increase employment income by having both parents work (Human Early Learning Partnership, 2011). In 2017, dual-earner households accounted for 61% of all families with children in B.C.; single-earner households represented 20%, and single-parent households represented 18% (Statistics Canada, 2020). Further, these dual-income households are significantly more likely to have both parents





working full-time, compared to generations past, which is resulting in greater need for hours of child care per week (Statistics Canada, 2020). The provision of quality child care is consistently linked with a young families' ability to participate in work, return to school, and participate in community life (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2008; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2008a). Quality child care helps mothers enter the labour force; and reduces unpaid absences that reduce lifetime earnings and affect pension income and job advancement (Glynn & Hamm, 2019; Traub, Hiltonsmith, & Draut, 2016). In addition, it is thought to lower stress when mothers know their children are well cared for in reliable child care arrangements (Glynn & Hamm, 2019; Parker, 2015).

Given the important benefits for child development and school readiness (Anderson, et al., 2003), quality child care programs are also important for stay-at-home mothers/fathers, whose children should have the opportunity to socialize and learn alongside children in their age group in early learning programs.

Parents of children in high quality child care settings are afforded opportunities to learn about different developmental and parenting issues that they would not otherwise have access to. Together, parents and qualified staff can address concerns about developmental or behavioural challenges that may arise during the early years, and effective interventions can be developed to mitigate such challenges (Anderson, et al., 2003). Parents also have the opportunity to develop strong social support networks with other parents that can reduce social isolation and also help secure informal care and information outside of regular child care hours.

Quality child care programs have also been shown to help assist immigrant and refugee families, not only in caring for their children, but also helping them integrate into the community and build social support networks (Park, Katsiaficas, & McHugh, 2018). These networks can even help immigrant or refugee parents secure employment or housing (Park, Katsiaficas, & McHugh, 2018).

Quality child care is an important part of the broad range of supports that help parents balance work and family. It helps parents work, study, and care for other family members and allows them to maintain an active involvement in the community. Access to quality child care ensures parents in the workforce are better equipped to feed, clothe, and house their children, which then helps reduce child poverty. Moreover, flourishing families are the building blocks of thriving communities. Helping children become responsible and productive citizens is ensuring the social and economic well-being of a community. It is imperative that the whole community is invested in, and supportive of, early child development.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The economic impact of the child care industry has been the subject of research across North America (Glynn & Hamm, 2019; Traub, Hiltonsmith, & Draut, 2016; Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003). Child care programs create jobs, and contribute to the economy through buying goods and services and providing the community with government funding (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003). In 2011, child care facilities in the Cowichan region provided approximately 240 jobs for early childhood educators and early childhood educator assistants, not including casual or substitute child care workers (Collette, 2011).

Families with young children are reluctant to leave communities where they have access to high quality child care or establish themselves in areas where they are unable to secure it. Therefore, not only does child care create incentives for young families to establish and maintain homes in remote or rural areas, it also makes it essential to the economic development of these communities. In a Health Canada study examining the costs of work-life conflict in Canada (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lyons, 2008), employers reported that the availability of early childhood developmental programs – including child care – was critical to the recruitment and retention of their parent employees.



Not having affordable, quality, child care options is thought to have a negative impact on the ability of businesses to attract women, young families, and skilled workers in general to the workforce. Businesses are starting to consider the availability of child care in their expansion and relocation decisions as it has been proven to have an impact on worker productivity (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lyons, 2008; Parker, 2015). Having accessible child care options has also been found to reduce worker absenteeism and stress among parent employees (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lyons, 2008).

Typically viewed as a social issue, increasing evidence demonstrates that child care is not only important to child well-being and development, but essential to communities and plays a crucial role in the economy. In response to this emerging knowledge, many municipalities are beginning to develop and incorporate policies geared toward helping families acquire and maintain accessible, affordable and quality child care.

METHODOLOGY

The Cowichan Region Child Care Plan project has involved data collection from a variety of sources, based on the UBCM Community Child Care Planning Program requirements outlined in the application guide.¹ These included:



Review of policies, plans and bylaws related to child care



Compiling data on regional trends in population and household composition



Creating an inventory of child care facilities and spaces within the plan area



Administering surveys to local child care providers, parents and caregivers, and the general public



Semi-structured stakeholder interviews and gathering stakeholder submissions



A focus group with recent Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Care graduates

POLICY, PLAN, AND BYLAW REVIEW

A review of policies, plans, and bylaws related to child care for each of the four municipalities and the nine CVRD Electoral Areas in the Cowichan region was conducted. Current policies, plans, and bylaws for each area were compared to practices thought to promote an adequate supply of child care spaces, such as those advocated in the Metro Vancouver area. Recommended actions to reduce barriers and encourage child care space creation are presented.

ANALYSIS OF THE DEMAND FOR ADDITIONAL CHILD CARE SPACES

To determine the need for additional child care spaces in the Cowichan Region, several research methods were employed.

- Population projections for a ten year period, by age group and area based on BC Stats' 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data;

¹ Community Child Care Planning Program: 2019 Program & Application Guide. Union of BC Municipalities. Retrieved from <https://www.ubcm.ca/assets/Funding~Programs/LGPS/Childcare/childcare-2019-planning-program-guide.pdf>

- Analysis of the number of licensed child care spaces currently available by age group and area, based on data provided by MCFD (as of April 2019) within the UBCM inventory, and verified through the Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey (Winter 2019/20); and
- Review of the most recent MCFD “Average Monthly Child Care Utilization Rates” for the Cowichan region.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Three types of community engagement were undertaken, namely: surveys; key informant interviews; and a focus group.

Stakeholder Surveys

This project utilized data collection from multiple surveys aimed to target different groups (parents / caregivers, child care providers, and the general population in the Cowichan region). The design and implementation of each survey, however, followed the same basic structure. The following process was used to develop and implement all three surveys.

Programming of the Survey Instrument

All surveys were submitted to the Project Authority Group for review, and finalized based on the Group’s feedback prior to use. Once approved, the finalized parent / caregiver survey (Appendix A), the child care provider survey (Appendix B), and general population survey (Appendix C) were programmed into Malatest’s CallWeb computer-assisted telephone/web interviewing (CATI/CAWI) platform. Once survey programming was complete, the surveys were tested in-house to ensure functionality, usability, and adherence to the approved instruments. Following in-house testing, the Project Authority Group was provided with the opportunity to test the surveys and their feedback was incorporated prior to full administration.

Administration of the Surveys

The surveys were administered in paper-based and online formats.

Online surveys could be accessed either via a URL or a QR code which were included on marketing materials (e.g., posters) displayed in the local area or via online advertising through social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), email, etc. Using the CallWeb system, an email invitation was sent out to child care providers in the Cowichan region asking them to complete the survey; the email contained both a URL and a unique identification code for each respondent. Email reminders were sent to child care providers (up to six email reminders, once per week) until the survey was complete, or until the intended respondent communicated a refusal to participate. The Malatest help desk in Victoria was available to answer questions about the survey instrument and to deal with technical issues. The call centre’s help desk number was included in all reminder emails, as well as in the introductory email.

Paper surveys were made available at various locations across the region and during local events (see Table 1 for full details). Respondents filled out the survey and then mailed it back to Malatest using a postage-paid reply envelope that was provided with the survey. Data from the paper surveys were entered directly into CallWeb upon receipt.

Table 1: Survey Availability and Promotion

In-Person Events

- Ladysmith National Child Day Event (20th November, 2019)
- Family and Friends Drop-In Ladysmith (22nd November, 2019)
- Cowichan National Child Day “Stone Soup” Event (23rd November, 2019)

Hard Copy Locations

- Frank Jameson Community Centre, Ladysmith
- Aggie Hall, Ladysmith
- Ladysmith Resource Centre Association, Ladysmith
- Ladysmith Health Centre
- Ladysmith Family and Friends program time
- LEYP and Interagency meetings
- Cowichan Community Centre
- Kerry Park Recreation Centre
- Cowichan Lake Recreation

Online Advertising

- Facebook pages (CVRD, CVRDRec, City of Duncan, Town of Ladysmith, Ladysmith Parks, Recreation & Culture)
- Newsletters (Our Cowichan Health Matters newsletter, Town of Ladysmith newsletters)
- Websites (City of Duncan, Town of Ladysmith)
- Twitter (Town of Ladysmith, Ladysmith Parks, Recreation & Culture)
- Instagram (Ladysmith Parks, Recreation & Culture)
- Direct emails (early years contacts, Our Cowichan Communities Health Network members)

Each of the three surveys was designed to take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The target audiences for the surveys were:

1. Parents and caregivers who live in the Cowichan region, and had at least one child aged 12 years or younger.
2. Providers offering child care in the Cowichan region.
3. Residents (i.e., general public) of the Cowichan region.

The surveys were an opportunity for the various stakeholders to share their thoughts and experiences with child care in the Cowichan region. Parents/caregivers and residents who completed the survey were able to enter their name into a draw for a chance to win a \$50 or \$100 grocery voucher or Amazon gift card or one of five \$50 RecCowichan gift cards as a thank you for participating.

In total, 354 parents/caregivers, 106 child care providers and 91 members of the general public completed the survey.

Table 2: Survey Responses, by Region and Stakeholder Group

Area	Care Provider Survey Responses	Parent and Caregiver Survey Responses	General Population Survey Responses
Cowichan Valley Central	21	64	21
Cowichan Valley North	23	84	17
Cowichan Valley South	26	79	20
Cowichan Valley West	5	21	3
Municipality of North Cowichan	31	106	30
Total	106	354	91

Respondent Profile: Care Providers

Among survey respondents, no single operation type predominated; the most-common operation type was a sole proprietorship (43%, n=36), followed by a not-for-profit organization (28%, n=23), and corporate or limited companies (12%, n=10). Nearly three-quarters of all care provider survey respondents (72%, n=78) reported that they provided licensed care.

Slightly less than one-fifth of care provider survey respondents (18%, n=16) reported that their organizations operate multiple sites, while the remainder (82%, n=71) reported that they do not. Slightly less than two-thirds of care provider respondents (62%, n=66) reported that they were directors, managers, or owners of the programs that they were answering on behalf of, while 22% (n=23) were educators and 10% (n=11) were supervisors or coordinators.

Respondent Profile: Parents and Caregivers

The large majority of respondents to the parents and caregivers survey were mothers (87%, n=307). Slightly more than one in ten respondents (11%, n=39) were fathers, while legal guardians and other caregivers comprised approximately 2% of respondents. Nearly all respondents (89%, n=309) reported having a spouse or partner; this is higher than the average for the CVRD, which is around 75% of family households being two-parent households. This suggests that single parents may have been less likely to respond to this survey and therefore their concerns about child care may not be well represented in the findings.

Slightly less than one-half of survey respondents (46%, n=161) reported that they worked full-time. Single parents were slightly more likely to report that they worked full-time (53%, n=20), or that they are going to school (13%, n=7). Respondents with a spouse or partner were more likely to work part-time (22%, n=68), be on maternity or parental leave (12%, n=38), or be unemployed and not looking for work (8%, n=26). Among two-parent households, one-third of respondents (33%, n=103) reported that both they and their partners worked full-time. A further 25% (n=77) reported that one partner worked full-time while the other worked part-time.

Approximately one-half of survey respondents (48%, n=167) reported having two children under the age of 12 in their homes. Slightly more than one-third of respondents (35%, n=124) had only one child in this age range, while 13% had three children under 12. Only 3% of respondents (n=13) had four or more children under the age of 12 in their homes.

Respondent Profile: General Public

Slightly more than one-third of general public survey respondents (34%, n=30) were between the age of 25 and 44, and a further 39% (n=35) were aged 45-64. More than two-thirds of respondents (68%, n=58) were married or in a common-law relationship, while 16% were single and 12 % were divorced or separated.

Eight percent of respondents (n=7) identified as Indigenous. This is comparable to the proportion of Indigenous people living in the overall CVRD.

More than one-third of all general population survey respondents (35%, n=31) had completed a university degree, and a further 22% had completed some level of postgraduate studies. This is higher than the overall education level in the CVRD, suggesting that the survey sample may be skewed towards the more highly educated.

Forty percent of survey respondents (n=34) reported being employed full-time, and a further 26% (n=22) reported being employed part-time. Slightly more than one in five respondents (22%, n=19) were retired. Fifteen percent of respondents (n=10) had annual household before-tax incomes of less than \$30,000, while 37% had annual household before-tax incomes of \$90,000 or higher. Similar to the sample bias towards more highly educated individuals, this survey sample appears to over-represent wealthier households.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were undertaken with a variety of stakeholders in the region, in order to collect in-depth qualitative data on the state of child care in the CVRD and collect input on possible future strategies from those most knowledgeable about the sector. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guides; one guide was developed for each of the seven stakeholder groups, and approved by the Project Authority Group (please refer to Appendix D for copies of the guides). Interviews were conducted by phone or in-person where possible; stakeholders unable to connect for a live interview gave input via email submissions.

Stakeholder groups, their definitions, and some key characteristics about each interview group are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Key Informant Interview Groups and Interviewees

Stakeholder Group	Definition	n
Chambers of Commerce	Members of the Chambers of Commerce throughout the CVRD, representatives for local business	1
Child Care Providers and Supporters	Organizations and businesses that provide child care services in the CVRD, or provide support for child care services (e.g., referral organizations)	8
Community Resource Organizations	Organizations that provide community support services that may connect with, but are not directly involved in, child care services	1
Community Stakeholders	Individuals involved in community planning and development, such as members of local government and First Nations band leadership	3
Health Providers and Supporters	Individuals and organizations involved in providing health care in the CVRD	4
Post-Secondary Stakeholders	Representatives from post-secondary organizations	1
School District Stakeholders	Representatives from school districts in the CVRD area	2
Total Interviewees		20

Focus Group

Seven recent ECE graduates took part in a focus group held at Vancouver Island University Cowichan Campus.

The focus group followed a semi-structured focus group moderator’s guide (Appendix E), and lasted approximately two hours. The discussions focused on the graduates views and experiences of early childhood educator training and finding employment in the child care field. The focus group was audio recorded with participants’ consent, and notes were taken during the discussion. Recordings were used to verify notes and were destroyed once no longer needed. Participants of the focus group received a “thank you” gratuity of \$75.

The majority of focus group participants were young adults (under 30 years old), and all were women. All but one had graduated from a child care program within the past four years (one was a current ECE student, anticipating graduation in Spring 2021). All participants who had graduated from a child care program were employed in the child care sector, and all worked with children five years and younger.

LIMITATIONS

There were a number of limitations that need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the data presented within this report, particularly with regards to community engagement and the recommended space creation targets provided.

Community Engagement

Despite best efforts to advertise all the surveys widely across the Cowichan region, not all community members participated (parents/caregivers, child care providers, or the general public). There was a general underrepresentation from men in terms of parental engagement. There were multiple surveys (some also related to child care) in field at the same time, potentially leading to a reduced response rate due to survey fatigue. Due to the smaller number of families living in the CVRD Electoral Areas, and survey respondents from these areas, it was not possible to provide specific feedback by CVRD Electoral Area (i.e., respondents from these areas must have their data combined with those from a neighboring municipality).

Space Creation Targets

This report focuses on licensed child care centres and doesn’t report on the availability of non-licensed/informal child arrangements or the need for more spaces for these care types. Although Indigenous communities were approached, it is unknown how many of their members may require child care beyond what is available in their community or accessible for members living away from home. Projections are estimates and exact numbers are not possible to calculate. It is especially difficult to estimate child care space utilization by age group in multi-age, in-home and family care. Other unknown factors may influence the number of child care spaces required in the future (e.g., improvements in transportation or economic conditions). Moreover, should child care be provided at a lower cost, more families may want to have their children in child care as these costs might make employment more viable than ‘staying at home’ with the child/ren.

CURRENT STATE OF CHILD CARE

Based on findings from the multiple lines of inquiry undertaken, Malatest has identified several key themes around child care in the CVRD. These findings are discussed in this section. Analysis and summary begins with a quantitative accounting of the current state of child care in the CVRD, followed by more qualitative findings related to the quality, accessibility, and availability of child care. Finally, this section provides projections for future child care needs to 2030, and recommendations for areas of focus and improvement in terms of service quality.

THEMES FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Three key themes emerged from surveying and community stakeholder engagement: availability, affordability, and quality of child care.

Availability of Child Care

[There is a] huge need in our community for infant and toddler spaces.

Across all stakeholder groups, there was a consensus that more child care spaces are needed. Nearly all child care providers in the CVRD who participated in the survey (96%, n=64) reported a need for more child care spaces.

Currently, nearly three-quarters (73%, n=55) of participating child care centres in Central Cowichan have waitlists. When asked about the number of spaces needed, more than two-thirds of providers (69%, n=38) recommended doubling the number of current spaces in the area.

Among parents and caregivers in the CVRD who participated in the survey, slightly more than one half (53%, n=171) reported using child care. Among those who did not use child care, slightly less than one quarter (23%, n=35) reported high costs as their main reason for not using child care. More than one in ten parents and caregivers in this survey (13%, n=20) reported lack of availability as the main barrier to their families using child care. Further, availability was cited by one-half of all parents and caregivers (51%, n=182) as a barrier to their *preferred* type of child care, and cost was a barrier to preferred type of care for slightly less than one-half of parents and caregivers (47%, n=166).

All groups agreed that infant and toddler spaces are particularly needed, followed by after-school care spaces. Increasing the availability of child care for children with extra support needs was also identified as a priority among all groups. Slightly less than three-quarters of child care provider respondents (74%, n=52) currently are able to care for children with additional support needs. As a result, available child care spaces are even scarcer for children with additional support needs. Less than one-third of parents and caregivers (30%, n=105) agreed with the statement: “Child care options in the Cowichan region provide all the services / supports necessary for children to succeed.”

Children with extra support needs [such as language and speech] tend to be underserved.

Key informants echoed these findings, and pointed out that there is not enough Support Child Development (SCD) funding available to support the children currently in care. For this reason, these interviewees questioned the benefits of additional spaces on the already-strained services in the region. Stakeholders also noted a lack of support workers who are able and/or willing to work contracted support hours.

Stakeholders shared stories of programs being unable to take on children requiring extra supports, due to insufficient numbers of trained educators or additional support staff. A small proportion of parents and caregivers (3%, n=9) surveyed said a barrier to accessing their preferred type of child care was that local care could not meet their child’s extra support needs.

In addition to a lack of spaces, all stakeholder groups expressed a need for more flexible options in the hours when care is available. Child care providers recognized the need for extended hours including early mornings (49%, n=54 agreed this was a need), later evenings (33%, n=36 agreed this was a need), and before and after school and during school closures (46%, n=51 agreed this was a need). A number of stakeholders suggested opening a child care centre in the hospital to help improve accessibility of child care for shift workers.

Earlier start times for daycare would allow me to work more and would help all shift workers.

Finally, lack of public transportation to child care centres was noted as a challenge to accessibility of child care. The scarcity of child care spaces across the Cowichan region doesn’t allow parents and caregivers the option to select a child care site within walking distance from home, leaving it up to parents and caregivers to find ways to reach facilities that may be a long distance from their home and/or place of work. For those without reliable access to a personal vehicle, this creates an additional hurdle to accessing child care.

Availability of spaces and affordability are barriers to preferred type of care for about one-half of all parents and caregivers in the Cowichan region.

Affordability of Child Care

All stakeholder groups and key informants agreed that child care is too expensive for many families. Participants believed that access to more affordable child care would have benefits for parents and caregivers in a number of areas. These included:

- Improve parents’ and caregivers’ chances to gain employment (20% of parents and caregivers, n=69; 52% of the general population throughout the CVRD, n=49);
- Allow parents and caregivers to work more hours (33% of parents and caregivers, n=116);
- Reduce parents’ and caregivers’ absences at work (26% of parents and caregivers, n=92; 59% of the general population throughout the CVRD, n=56); and
- Allow parents and caregivers to improve their education, or update their training and/or credentials (28% of parents and caregivers, n=98).

One-half of general population respondents in the CVRD (50%, n=47) indicated that lowering child care fees would result in increased economic prosperity. Majorities of both parents and caregivers in the CVRD (60%, n=211) and the general population throughout the region (78%, n=74) agreed that low-cost child care would have a number of non-economic benefits such as reduced stress on families, increased parental and caregiver satisfaction with child care options in the CVRD, and increased parental and caregiver satisfaction with their personal child care arrangements.

Key informants stated that affordability of child care is a common concern among families they serve. These interviewees shared stories of many families, especially young parents, not being able to find child care even if they could afford it. Qualifying for child care was also noted as a concern, particularly for parents who are not employed or are attending school, and therefore cannot qualify for subsidies.

Quality of Child Care

Slightly more than one-half of general population survey respondents (53%, n=35) agreed that “child care options in the Cowichan region offer quality child care.” Similarly, 52% (n=148) of parents and caregivers in the CVRD agreed with this statement. An even higher proportion of parents and caregivers indicated that they were satisfied with their personal child care arrangements (76%, n=207), and few (8%, n=21) reported being dissatisfied with the quality of their current child care arrangements. Key informants spoke highly of the quality of child care in the region.

Inclusivity, a common indicator of child care quality, is defined as the extent to which a child care site is inclusive of children of all abilities (including extra support needs) and incorporating the diversity of the community. Minorities of general population respondents (37%, n=35) and parents and caregivers (30%, n=83) agreed that child care options in the Cowichan region are inclusive in terms of children’s abilities. Similarly, one-third of local parents and caregivers (31%, n=109), and less than one-half of the general population in the CVRD (45%, n=43) agreed that child care options reflect the diversity of the community. These findings suggest that inclusivity of child care could be an area for further improvement.

The quality of a child care centre is also impacted by the quality of the individuals who work there. Slightly more than one-half of child care providers believed that child care services in the CVRD would be improved by increased educator wages (53%, n=58) and increased availability of qualified staff (54%, n=59). In addition, key informants felt non-licensed care can hinder child care quality and if more care centres are added, they should be licensed.

Less than one-third of parents and caregivers believe that child care options are inclusive of diverse abilities, and reflect the diversity of the local community in the Cowichan region.

CHALLENGES IN CHILD CARE PROVISION

The number one issue is finding and retaining good quality staff.

Child care providers identified staffing as their primary challenge in providing child care. In particular, providers noted challenges with hiring qualified staff (41%, n=45) and retaining qualified educators (34%, n=37). Similar issues were raised regarding potential challenges to expanding existing child care centres. A majority of

[There is a] lack of people motivated to open a daycare, as it is a lot of work for little pay.

stakeholders echoed the sentiments expressed by child care providers, regarding current staffing issues in the industry. There was consensus among all groups that increased compensation would encourage more people to pursue education in, and join, the child care profession as they could expect to be fairly compensated for their work.

In Cowichan there are several municipal boundaries and capacity issues. Regional districts haven't had child care on their agendas and tightening budgets make it more difficult to add new services or expand existing ones.

Child care providers identified some other important areas that could influence child care sites' willingness to increase their capacity. Current needs to support increasing the number of spaces included:

- The need for more funding (44%, n=48); and
- The need for more physical space (35%, n=38).

Notably, very few child care providers (6%, n=7) indicated that they felt more interest or demand from the community was needed to

justify increasing child care spaces; this suggests that sufficient demand for more spaces already exists throughout most of the CVRD.

Similar issues were noted among child care service providers regarding the biggest barriers for them increasing spaces at their sites. Barriers reported by sites included:

- Finding qualified staff (91%, n=58);
- Increasing wages for staff, to better retain them (91%, n=58);
- Expanding existing sites (75%, n=48);
- Better managing or reducing operating costs (57%, n=36); and
- Working with licensing bylaws (45%, n=28).

More governance was also thought to be needed over unlicensed child care. Concerns were raised from stakeholders that these unlicensed centres get the same access to government funding as licensed child care centres, and they charge the same or more than licensed centre, yet their quality may often not be equivalent.

Approximately 90% of child care providers cited finding qualified staff, and paying them high enough wages to retain them long-term, as major barriers to their sites offering more spaces.

CURRENT CHILD CARE SPACES AND UPTAKE

Review of the inventory of child care spaces provided by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), with follow-up confirmation with specific programs and sites, has resulted in a comprehensive understanding of the current child care programs and spaces inventory in the CVRD. Child care programs are summarized by type of service – group or family care. Child care spaces are similarly categorized by service type, as well as by age group served.

Table 4: Operating Child Care Programs and Spaces, by Sub-Region and Care Type

Region	Group Child Care (Birth to 36 months)	Group Child Care (30 months to school age)	Licensed Preschool	Group Child Care (School age)	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care
Cowichan Valley Central	3 programs 52 spaces	10 programs 205 spaces	4 programs 70 spaces	1 program 8 spaces	2 programs 16 spaces	5 programs 35 spaces	2 programs 16 spaces
Cowichan Valley North	3 programs 82 spaces	9 programs 193 spaces	2 programs 36 spaces	5 programs 168 spaces	8 programs 100 spaces	2 programs 14 spaces	2 programs 16 spaces
Cowichan Valley South	3 programs 28 spaces	10 programs 154 spaces	5 programs 108 spaces	7 program 160 spaces	3 programs 32 spaces	3 programs 21 spaces	1 program 8 spaces
Cowichan Valley West	1 program 8 spaces	1 program 12 spaces	1 program 10 spaces	1 program 10 spaces	0 programs 0 spaces	2 programs 14 spaces	0 programs 0 spaces
Municipality of North Cowichan	1 program 12 spaces	10 programs 265 spaces	4 programs 80 spaces	9 programs 254 spaces	1 program 7 spaces	22 programs 150 spaces	3 programs 24 spaces
Total	11 programs 182 spaces	40 programs 829 spaces	16 programs 304 spaces	23 programs 600 spaces	14 programs 155 spaces	34 programs 234 spaces	8 programs 64 spaces

Source: UBCM Community Child Care Planning Inventory, February 2020

As can be seen in the table above, there is a wide variety in the number of child care spaces for different age groups in the CVRD. For example, there are 1,133 spaces in group child care (30 months to school age) and preschool care, while only 182 spaces for group child care for the 0-2 years age group. However, given that these different age groups are of different sizes, it is more helpful to consider *coverage rates* – the number of child care spaces per 100 children in a given age group, or the proportion of children in a given age group that are “covered” by a child care space – than it is to consider raw numbers. Table 5 below summarizes coverage rates by age group.

Table 5: Child Care Coverage Rates, by Age Group

Age Group	Number of Child Care Spaces	Population of Children	Coverage Rate
All Children 0-12 Years	2,368	10,836	22%
Pre-School Aged Children, 0-5 Years	1,545	4,545	34%
Infant / Toddler Children, 0-2 Years	386	2,131	18%
Preschool Aged Children, 3-5 Years	1,159	2,414	48%
School-Aged Children, 6-12 Years	823	6,291	13%

Source: UBCM Community Child Care Planning Inventory, February 2020

As can be seen in the table above, there is wide variety in the coverage rates for various age groups in the CVRD. Coverage rates range from 13% for children aged 6-12 years, to a high of 48% for those in the 3-5 years age group. While it is not necessarily true that all age groups require equal coverage rates – for

example, the infant-toddler group may need comparatively lower coverage rates due to more parents taking leave at this time in their child’s life, and therefore do not need child care – these coverage rates do provide us context for the overall accessibility of child care for each of these age groups.

In the Cowichan region, there is one child care space available for every five children 0-12 years old. Coverage rates are lowest among infants and toddlers, and school-aged children.

Utilization rates provide a broad measure of the uptake of available child care services in a region; it represents what proportion of available child care spaces are being used. Utilization rates offer a proxy for the appropriateness of the amount and combination of types of child care spaces available. Efficient use of child care spaces will be reflected in high utilization rates. However, at very high utilization rates, in excess of 80% to 85%, finding child care becomes progressively more challenging, potentially impacting the time taken to find a space and with affordable fees.²

Utilization rates are available by service delivery area; the CVRD is located within the South Vancouver Island service delivery area. The South Vancouver Island service delivery area not only includes all of the CVRD but also Greater Victoria and other municipalities, which impacts the overall averages for the area. Breakdowns for only the CVRD are not available. South Vancouver Island is similar to the provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators, in terms of very high utilization rates for group infant and toddler care in 2016/2017. Utilization rates for South Vancouver Island, alongside provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Average Monthly Child Care Space Utilization Rates, April 2016 through March 2017

Service Delivery Area	Group Care, Infant/Toddler	Group Care, 3 to 5 years	Group Care, School Age	Total Group Care	Family Care	Total Group and Family Care
British Columbia	85%	74%	48%	70%	72%	71%
South Vancouver Island	87%	70%	42%	65%	72%	69%
North Vancouver Island	88%	62%	38%	62%	68%	63%

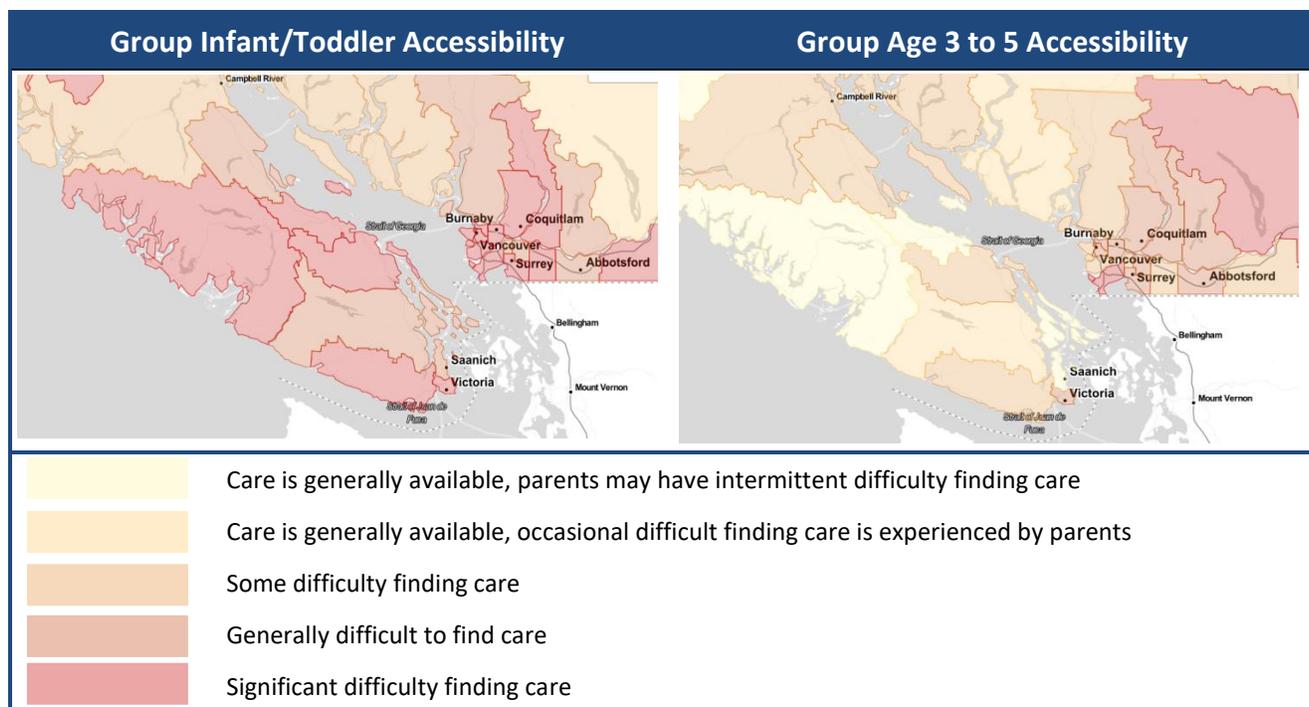
Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. *Performance Management Report*. Volume 9 March 2017. Performance Indicator 1.01, Spare Capacity in Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/services-supports-for-parents-with-young-children/reporting-monitoring/00-public-ministry-reports/volume_9_mar_2017.pdf

Note: ‘Group Multi-Age’ spaces have been excluded as it cannot be determined which spaces of a facility’s reported enrolments are utilized, by age.

² A child care facility’s Utilization Rate is determined by dividing its total enrollments for the month by the number of times a child care space can be used in a month. Two part-time enrollments are assumed to be equivalent to one full-time enrollment; 100% utilization of one child care space is assumed to be 22 full-time equivalent enrollments in a month.

Provincial government estimates of child care accessibility align with these findings on utilization rates. Accessibility of licensed child care spaces, by geography, is visualized in Figure 1 below. As can be seen, licensed care is generally more available for children aged 3-5 years in the Cowichan region compared to spaces for children aged 0-2 years. Parents in the CVRD are likely to face moderate to significant difficulty in finding care for their infants and toddlers, while care for preschool-aged children in this region is generally available.

Figure 1: Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces 2017-18 Cowichan Region



Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. Early Years Performance Indicators: 1.01 Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from <https://mcf.gov.bc.ca/reporting/services/early-years/performance-indicators>

Findings from surveys with licensed child care providers supported this analysis, suggesting moderate to significant difficulty in finding licensed child care for parents. Slightly less than three-quarters of licensed child care facilities surveyed (71%, n=55) reported that they had a waitlist for their program. This did not vary much across age groups; facilities that offer infant-toddler spaces were just as likely to have a waitlist as facilities that offer school-aged spaces. Table 7 below summarizes the frequency and size of waitlists at child care facilities, by age group served. It should be noted that these groups may not be mutually exclusive; a single facility may hold licenses for multiple age groups, and so the proportion of facilities reporting waitlists should be interpreted with caution and as indicative of general trends in demand only, rather than a definitive statement on the frequency of waitlists at child care facilities in the CVRD.

Table 7: Waitlists at Child Care Facilities, by Age Group Served

Age Group	Number of Facilities Licensed for this Age Group	Number of Facilities Reporting Waitlists	Proportion of Facilities Reporting Waitlists	Median Waitlist Size
Infant-Toddler	17	13	76%	8
Preschool Aged	49	35	71%	6
School Aged	55	42	76%	5
Total	77	55	71%	12*

*This median is considerably higher than any of the individual age categories, due to the presence of several outliers in the data with waitlists of 60 or more – likely these are programs that offer multiple sites and are uniquely different from the majority of child care programs in the Cowichan region. 49% of facilities had waitlists with 10 or fewer children on their waitlist, and 74% had 20 or fewer children on their waitlist.

Among parents and caregivers, uptake and use of child care spaces is driven by a number of factors – personal choice and parenting approaches, external factors such as cost and accessibility, and other issues. Respondents to the parents and caregivers survey were split roughly in half in terms of child care use: 53% (n=171) reported using child care, and 47% (n=154) reported that they did not.

Respondents who reported that they did *not* use child care were asked what their primary reason for not using child care was. Reasons related to personal choice – such as preferring for one parent to stay home with their child(ren) – accounted for the choice of 47% (n=72) of respondents. External accessibility issues – including cost, availability, and location – were the main reason for not using child care among 42% (n=65) of respondents. Complex needs that could not be met at available facilities or other reasons accounted for the reason that 11% (n=16) of families did not use child care.

Table 8: Reasons for Not Using Child Care

Reason	Frequency	Valid Percent
<i>Personal Choice Reasons</i>		
I or my partner want to stay home with our child	44	29%
A family member is able to provide care	21	14%
My child is old enough to stay home alone	7	5%
<i>Accessibility Reasons</i>		
Fees for child care are too high	35	23%
Shortage of spaces or long waitlists	20	13%
Care not available during hours or days needed	7	5%
Care is too far away / no transportation	3	2%
<i>Complex Needs or Other Reasons</i>		
Care could not meet my child's extra support needs	3	2%
Care could not accommodate more than one child in my family	1	1%
Other	12	8%
Valid Total	153	100%
Prefer not to say / Missing	201	-

Source: Cowichan Child Care Planning Parents and Caregivers Survey, Fall-Winter 2019

These findings suggest that, were child care made more accessible in terms of cost, availability of spaces, extended hours, and location, demand for licensed child care would increase considerably. This is in line with findings from a City of Toronto child care demand study that simulated different affordability conditions; in the most affordable scenario (a \$20 per day cap on fees), researchers anticipated a 46% increase in demand for child care.³ Given that current provincial government policy aims to introduce universal child care and a \$10 per day cap on fees for parents, it can be anticipated that demand for child care in the CVRD will surge in the coming years.

Finally, it is important to note that this need for child care exists among households with older children. Among households with children only in the 6-12 year age range, more than one half (57%) said they do not use child care, but within this group more than one third (35%) cited external accessibility factors as the reason that they do not use child care. Among households with a mix of older and younger children, 38% did not use child care and of those, 41% cited external accessibility factors as their reason for not using child care.

42% of parents and caregivers who don't use child care say this is because of accessibility issues like affordability and availability of spots.

Overall, 20% of all families in the Cowichan region do not use child care because it is inaccessible to them due to cost, lack of spaces, hours of care, or transportation issues.

³ Cleveland et al. (2016). *City of Toronto Licensed Child Care Demand and Affordability Study*. Retrieved from <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/8d0a-Community-Services-and-Facilities-Toronto-Demand-Affordability-Study-2016.pdf>

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE TRAINING

A focus group with recent graduates from ECE training programs at a variety of institutions on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland provided insights into the training experiences and career expectations that young people entering the field of ECE have.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION EXPERIENCES

Most recent graduates felt positive about their experiences with the ECE training programs they had attended locally and/or online. Graduates noted that the programs provided recent graduates with a hands-on experience, the ability to develop and maintain friendships, and discuss their practicum experiences in their classes. Recent graduates were interested in an ECE career once they completed their training, both locally and abroad. Graduates are currently employed as ECEs and working with infant/toddler and preschool children.

ENTERING THE WORK FORCE

Finding a Job

Most of the attendees agreed that there is no problem locating ECE jobs, as everywhere is always hiring, regardless of location. One individual described filling a mat leave position and then having that centre create a position just for her. Another described taking a part-time position, to find a place where she would be happier. Most of the participants have year round positions, but the ones who work in programs located on school grounds find it difficult to find a position for the summer months. They feel that finding employment is not the issue, and that most centre's will adapt positions to keep them. One mentioned taking casual work to increase variety, but that it can be hard bouncing around if subbing. There was also a great deal of concern regarding the number of new centre's opening versus the lack of qualified educators. Without teachers, there can be no spots.

Employment Conditions and Remuneration

There was no information given that described the expectations that the participants had prior to entering the ECE field. Most of them noted that their wages are not enough to make ends meet, and the amount of education required does not match up with the small amount of compensation gained. One attendee stated: "You don't go to university and expect to live pay cheque to pay cheque." Another participant who is currently in a training program for working with children with special needs said that she can only afford to do so because she still lives with very supportive parents. Many agreed that there were few benefits to becoming a full ECE when ECE assistants make almost as much for only a small percentage of the education. Even those who intended to go back to complete their education found it difficult to go back and finish when becoming a full ECE is such a big commitment. A couple participants knew individuals who had not bothered to complete their programs because "why would I stay in a program for 3-4 years for \$16 an hour?"

There was also a discussion surrounding the required 40 hours of professional development training that is required in order to maintain the ECE license. Most agreed on the importance of keeping up with professional development as licensed ECEs, and they are quite pleased with the options of training available to them. However, the workshops can be expensive: "\$50 for 3 hours." In order to keep their license they

need to pay for the workshops, but they cannot afford them because their wages are so low, which is not sustainable.

Expectations of whether or not the job would come with benefits did not seem to come up in the conversation. Some of the participants have benefits provided in their positions, while others did not. One discussed having left a position that provided benefits because they were unhappy in the job, but is now finding it difficult to no longer have those benefits that they were once used to. Many of the attendees work in centres that do not pay for their professional development, although some of their centre's do pay them for the hours they spend in the trainings. One attendee explained needing to pick their battles: "I get tired of asking the board for things all the time."

The participants did not say much in terms of the hours of work they expected prior to entering the ECE field. One did mention that their manager did not feel that ECE's should need a break, given that they eat their lunch with the children.

Overall Early Career Experiences

Most of the attendees stated that they feel happy with their current position, although they would not mind having more financial compensation. They did mention that they need to be paid more, be recognized, respected and treated as professionals. But they "go home happy, singing songs every day."

PROJECTED CHILD CARE NEEDS

In addition to examining current issues in child care and early childhood education delivery in the Cowichan region, this research projected future demand for child care in the Cowichan region. Projections for each of the five sub-regions in the CVRD are included in individual region reports, which are attached in Appendix F.

METHODOLOGY FOR PROJECTING CHILD CARE NEEDS

Based on findings from these two broad lines of evidence – current child care demand and utilization, and projected future population changes – Malatest has developed a series of licensed space creation targets for 2021 through 2030. The approach to setting target spaces relied on expectations for higher demand among families in the Cowichan region in the coming years, tempered slightly by an overall decrease in the number of children under 12 living in the region.

Overall, findings suggest that approximately one in five households with older children (20%) have an unmet need for child care. When comparing this unmet demand to current child care spaces currently available, the CVRD would need to increase its overall spaces for children aged 0-12 years by approximately 37%. However, given the anticipated decrease in number of children in the CVRD overall, increases in coverage rates do not represent a straightforward 37% increase in the current number of child care spaces. Instead, space creation targets calculated a 37% increase in the proportional child care coverage, to meet demand, and then multiplied these coverage rates by projected populations in each age group to identify specific total spaces needed. Further, in some sub-regions and age groups where coverage was already quite high or quite low, this 37% increase in demand was adjusted up or down to better meet the needs of the communities.

Coverage targets for age groups were created based on this anticipated increase in demand, as well as existing literature regarding child care coverage rates for different age groups. Baseline or minimum target coverage rates were set for each age group:

- 55% for the 0-2 years age group;
- 85% for the 3-5 years age group; and
- 20% for the 6-12 years age group.

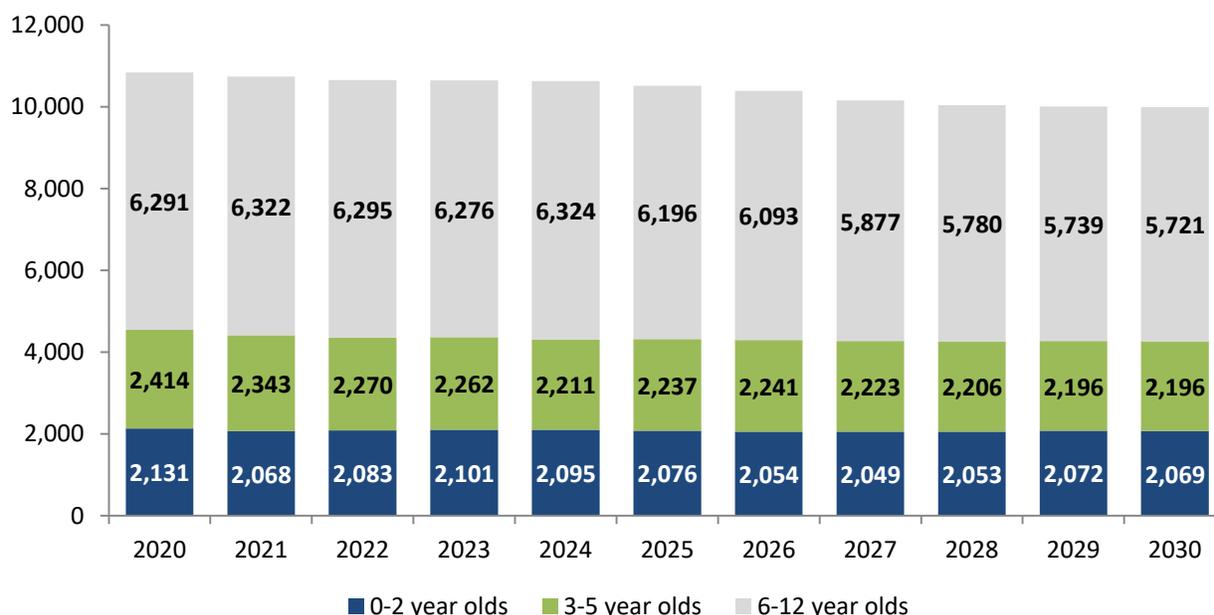
Targets for the infant-toddler and preschool-aged groups were set much higher than the generally-accepted minimum needed to avoid the designation of a “child care desert,” which is a 33% coverage rate for 0-5 year olds in Forward Sortation Areas (FSAs) with 50 or more children in this age group. Malatest set target coverage rates higher, based on numerous evidence from this research including high utilization rates in Southern Vancouver Island, key informant interviews emphasizing high demand for infant-toddler care, existing high coverage rates in the areas examined, and anticipated surges in future demand due to the expansion of provincially-led affordable child care programs.

Further, it should be noted that these target coverage rates were baselines that were adjusted up or down for each region (e.g., Cowichan Valley Central, Cowichan Valley North, etc.) based on unique factors facing each region. These baseline targets should not be taken as blanket guarantees of future coverage rates in the CVRD.

PROJECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES, 2020-2030

While the total population of the CVRD is anticipated to grow by approximately 7% over the next ten years,⁴ there is expected to be a notable decline in the number and proportion of children under the age of 12 over that same period. Overall, the population of children aged 0 to 12 years old is expected to decline by about 850, or 8% between 2020 and 2030. This change is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Population Change in Children Aged 0-12 Years, by Age Group, 2020-2030



Source: BC Stats' 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

Declines are moderate in the 0-2 and 3-5 years age groups, but larger in the 6-12 years age group. These population changes will have an impact on demand for child care services in the CVRD, overall and by age group.

PROJECTED CHILD CARE SPACE NEEDS, 2020-2030

As described above, space creation targets for each age group were calculated from coverage rate targets, and projected populations of children in the Cowichan region over the next ten years. Coverage rate targets were set based on estimates of unmet demand in the region (based on parent and caregiver survey data, and key informant interviews), as well as literature regarding child care coverage and best practices in other jurisdictions. Some variation was incorporated for sub-regions within the CVRD, to account for existing coverage rates and unique community needs.

⁴ BC PEOPLE Population Projection data for the Cowichan Valley Regional District estimate total population growth from 91,789 in 2020 to 98,644 in 2030. Data retrieved from <https://bcstats.shinyapps.io/popProjApp/>.

Overall, recommended space creation targets identify a need for 807 new child care spaces for children aged 0-12, by 2030. Table 9 below provides a breakdown of these space creation needs by age group, and for the short, medium, and long term.

Table 9: Space Creation Targets by Age Group, CVRD Overall, 2020-2030

Year	Total Spaces for Children 0-2 years	Total Spaces for Children 3-5 years	Total Spaces for Children 0-5 years	Total Spaces for Children 6-12 years	Total Spaces for Children 0-12 years
2020	387	1,160	1,547	823	2,370
2021	413	1,159	1,572	898	2,470
2022	462	1,158	1,620	984	2,604
2025	560	1,210	1,771	1,113	2,883
2030	677	1,268	1,945	1,190	3,135

While the number of space creation targets will be helpful for the CVRD for planning purposes, it is also important to note the difference in coverage rates that these changes will represent for families in the CVRD. Table 10 below summarizes the changes in coverage rates over time, as a result of the spaces recommended for creation in the coming decade.

Table 10: Coverage Rates by Age Group, CVRD Overall, 2020-2030

Year	Coverage Rate for Children 0-2 years	Coverage Rate for Children 3-5 years	Coverage Rate for Children 0-5 years	Coverage Rate for Children 6-12 years	Coverage Rate for Children 0-12 years
2020	18%	48%	13%	34%	22%
2021	20%	49%	14%	36%	23%
2022	22%	51%	16%	37%	24%
2025	27%	54%	18%	41%	27%
2030	33%	58%	21%	46%	31%

It is recommended that, by 2030, the Cowichan region increase its number of child care spaces by 765: 290 for infants and toddlers, 108 for preschool-aged children, and 367 for school-aged children.

In addition to projecting child care space needs by age group, this research broke down these space needs by care type. Projections for child care types attempted, to the greatest extent possible, to maintain the current proportional breakdown of child care spaces by care type in each region. However, target spaces within home-based care types (e.g., family child care and in-home multi-age child care) did not see much in the way of increased target spaces. This is due to the fact that space in these care programs is very limited – a maximum of seven or eight children – and most of these programs in the Cowichan region are already

fully subscribed. As such, the only way to meaningfully increase spaces in these programs would be to open new sites, and it was believed that encouraging child care operators to open new businesses would be significantly more challenging to promote and incentivize than adding spaces to other existing child care sites.

Table 11: Space Creation Targets by Care Type, CVRD Overall, 2020-2030

Type of Care	2020 Supply	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2021*	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2022*	Estimated Medium-Term Need, 2025*	Estimated Long-Term Need, 2030*
Group Child Care (Birth to 36 months)	182	205	243	309	379
Group Child Care (30 months to school age)	829	848	881	965	1,061
Licensed Preschool	304	316	331	362	397
Group Child Care (School age)	600	636	678	751	786
Multi-Age Child Care	155	167	174	197	212
Family Child Care	234	234	234	236	236
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	64	64	64	64	64
Total Spaces Needed	2,368	2,470	2,605	2,884	3,135

*Consultant estimates

PROJECTED CHILD CARE SITE NEEDS

In addition to estimating the need for individual child care spaces, by age group and care type, over the next decade, Malatest developed estimates and recommendations on creation of child care programs to accommodate these additional spaces, and identified potential sites that could be used to house these additional child care programs. These estimates and recommendations are discussed in the sub-sections below.

Program Creation

Malatest used its recommendations for space creation targets, by care type, to identify the number of additional programs that will be needed to accommodate these targets. In calculating the number of additional programs needed, the following assumptions or parameters were used:

- All programs will be fully subscribed to the legal maximums prescribed by the provincial government; and
- Where partial programs are needed (e.g., calculation indicated a need for 4.35 programs), number of needed programs were always rounded up to accommodate legal requirements for the *maximum* number of children in a program.

As a result of these approaches, these recommendations for additional programs needed should be taken as the minimum required to meet the space creation targets identified, but will also provide a small amount of additional capacity for more spaces if needed.

Further, it is important to note that Malatest has delineated a difference between *programs* and *sites*. “Program” refers to each licensed child care program that serves up to its maximum number of children. “Site” refers to the physical location (building and outdoor space) that serves one or more programs. Many of the larger child care operators host multiple programs at their site; for example, a child care operator who reports 24 spaces for infant-toddler group care hosts two programs, as the maximum number of children who can be served by that care type in a single program is 12.

Given that the UBCM inventory does not break down the number of programs at a specific site in this manner, the number of sites in 2020 is a best estimate based on the number of spaces that each operator reports offering and the applicable legal maximum enrolments for each type of care. It is also important to note that staffing shortages may be limiting the ability of sites to operate at their maximum potential capacity. For example, while the maximum number of children in a licensed preschool program is 20, there is also a requirement that there be a minimum of one ECE or ECE assistant for every ten children (with at least one full ECE required for every program). Therefore, it should not be assumed that simply because a site appears to have unfilled spaces based on potential maximum capacity, these sites could start meeting an increase in demand immediately.

Finally, it is important to note that although in some cases, there are negative net gains in programs between 2020 and 2030 based on Malatest’s recommendations, this should not be taken as a blanket recommendation to completely shutter child care programs or whole sites. Closure of child care sites would likely result in backlash from families in the community, and closure of sites in already poorly served areas could result in *no* child care sites being available to some families within a reasonable distance. Therefore, where there is potential to close child care programs, municipalities and electoral areas should consider:

1. Whether there is an opportunity to reduce the number of programs within a single site (e.g., if a child care centre currently operates the equivalent of two preschool-aged group care programs, could this be reduced to one in order to maintain access within the geographic area while still reducing the number of spaces?),
2. Whether closures would put hardship on the local community or neighbourhood to find alternative child care options, and
3. If there are opportunities to re-purpose program closures to offer other needed programs (e.g., if the preschool-aged group care is over-served, but additional programs are needed for birth to 36 months group care, can that program space be altered to serve a different group rather than shut down altogether?).

With these considerations in mind, Table 12 summarizes the changing needs for child care programs in the Cowichan region over the next ten years. Overall, there are increases for most care types, with the largest increases seen in infant-toddler group care (18 new programs needed), and multi-age care (13 new programs needed).

Table 12: Change in Need for Child Care Programs, CVRD Overall, 2020-2030

	Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Care	Family Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care
2020 Spaces Reported	182	829	304	600	155	234	64
2020 Programs	20	45	21	30	19	34	10
2030 Target Spaces*	414	1023	386	844	243	241	72
2030 Programs Needed*	38	44	22	32	32	33	10
2030 Net Program Gain	18	-1	1	2	13	-1	0

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces and programs only)

*Consultant estimates

Space creation targets will require the creation of 18 new infant-toddler group care programs, and 13 new multi-age care programs.

Program Space Needs

Each child care program is required to meet certain minimum space requirements, to ensure adequate area for care, activities, and enrichment for children served by the program. Based on the number of additional child care programs identified as needed in each sub-region of the CVRD, Malatest has calculated the amount of additional space – interior and exterior – needed to accommodate these additional programs. Below is a list of assumptions and limitations should be kept in mind when reviewing the estimates of additional space needed.

- Calculation of additional space needed for each program type was calculated based on provincial minimum requirements. These recommendations should be considered the *minimum* needed to legally open and operate the recommended child care programs.
- Malatest has assumed that all programs will be operating at maximum capacity, therefore calculation of site size was based on per-child space requirements at the maximum number of children allowable in a single program.
- There are different maximum program enrollments by age within the school-aged group care program; these programs may serve up to 25 children in the K-Grade 2 age group, and up to 30 children older than that. Malatest’s calculations for space requirements for these programs are based on a “middle ground” assumption of enrollment at 28 children per program.
- Exterior space requirements for preschool and school-aged group care programs, as well as home-based care programs, specify that an exterior activity area must exist, but do not give space requirements. Malatest has maintained the general requirement of 7 m² per child that exists for other group care programs, to create estimates, however it should be noted that municipalities and electoral areas may have flexibility for these program types in terms of the exact size of outdoor activity areas.

- Provincial interior space minimums do not account for non-activity areas that may be required, such as hallways, janitorial closets, washrooms, and kitchens. Malatest has added a 25% allowance to interior space calculations to accommodate for these other spaces, based on recommendations from the City of Richmond’s Child Care Design Guidelines.
- There are provincial allowances for some co-located programs to share required non-activity areas such as kitchen facilities and janitorial closets. This is an opportunity to reduce the total amount of space needed to meet new program requirements and maximize efficient use of available sites. However, given insufficient information available to Malatest regarding the total size of potential child care sites and thus the ability to co-locate programs at single sites, Malatest has not assumed that programs will be co-located and so the space recommendations here may be slightly higher than actual needs.
- Exterior space requirements account for activity areas accessible to children only. These exterior space requirements do not account for other space that may be required under applicable bylaws such as set-backs, parking spaces, or pick-up and drop-off areas.

With these considerations in mind, Table 13 summarizes program space needs by program type. Space needs are given for each program (columns three and four), and overall space needs to accommodate all needed programs of that type (columns five and six).

Table 13: Interior and Exterior Space Needs to Serve Recommended Program Creation, 2030

Care Type	New Sites Needed by 2030	Interior Floor Space per Program (m ²)	Exterior Activity Space per Program (m ²)	Total Interior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)	Total Exterior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)
Group care, birth to 36 months	18	55.5	84.0	999.0	1512.0
Group care, 30 months to school age	-1	115.6	175.0	-115.6	-175.0
Licensed Preschool	1	92.5	140.0	92.5	140.0
Group care, school age	2	103.1	192.5	206.3	385.0
Multi-Age Care	13	37.0	56.0	481.0	728.0
Family Child Care	-1	32.4	49.0	-32.4	-49.0
In-Home Multi-Age Care	0	37.0	56.0	0.0	0.0

Reference: *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. Child Care Licensing Regulation. Retrieved from http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/loo70/loo70/12_319_89

Potential Sites for Program Creation

Malatest has identified a number of potential sites for housing new child care programs throughout the Cowichan region. Due to the large size of the Cowichan region and existence of multiple “clusters” therein, please refer to individual region reports (included in Appendix F) to view potential sites for locating child care programs in each of the municipalities and electoral areas throughout the CVRD.

When reviewing these maps, it is important to note that Malatest did not assess potential future child care sites for their suitability for different types of child care programs. A number of issues that could not be addressed in the data that Malatest had available should be examined prior to making any final decisions about the suitability of potential sites, including:

- Interior and exterior floor space available, and whether there is sufficient space to meet minimum requirements for the intended care program(s);
- Building remediation and upgrading needs, whether it will be cost-efficient to make the building suitable for child care programs if such improvements are needed;
- Ability of municipalities and partner organizations to negotiate sale or leasing agreements with current property owners; and
- Accessibility of potential sites to likely child care users (e.g., whether the site is easily accessible by public transit, whether it would serve an area or neighbourhood that is currently under-served by child care programs, etc.).

Each local government should conduct a review of potential sites for these issues, as well as other concerns that may be relevant to community goals, prior to making any commitments to locate child care programs at any of these locations. A full list of potential sites, in tabular format, is provided in Appendix G.

STAFFING NEEDS FOR FUTURE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Finally, as noted previously, the ability to offer child care spaces is limited not only by physical space at a site, but also by the number of staff available to supervise and care for children. Minimum staffing requirements are established by the provincial government and are applicable to all licensed child care programs, although requirements vary by program type.

Malatest has calculated the number of staff that will be needed to serve the new programs and number of new spaces recommended to be created in the Cowichan region by 2030. When calculating these requirements, the following assumptions were made:

- All programs recommended for creation will be fully subscribed;
- All programs will be staffed at the minimum qualification level required by the provincial government (e.g., if a program requires one ECE and one ECE assistant, Malatest assumed that the second staff member is qualified at the ECE assistant level and the program does not employ two full ECEs); and
- All staff work full-time (i.e., these are full-time equivalency, or FTE, positions).

It should also be noted that Malatest did not undertake a comprehensive labour market analysis of child care workers in the Cowichan region. Typically, forecasting for future labour market need would encompass surveying employers regarding not only their current number of employees and qualification levels, but also the ages and expected retirements of these employees, employee turnover rate, and other metrics that can be used to create a comprehensive forecast of labour market trends over the medium- to long-term. Although Malatest has calculated the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by creating additional child care spaces and, thus, new child care programs, this forecast does not account for potential complicating factors in workforce needs such as coming retirements, “burnout rate” where workers – particularly those in caregiving work – leave the profession entirely, in- and out-migration of

qualified workers in the region, and other factors that can impact labour markets beyond simply graduation rates from eligible programs and positions available in the region.

With these considerations in mind, Table 14 summarizes the total needed child care workers, by qualification level, by 2030. Included in the table are both total labour pool needs in the Cowichan region, and the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by the recommended increase in spaces by 2030.

Overall, the child care space creation targets identified in this report will require 31 new FTE positions for ECE-qualified workers, and 18 new FTE positions for ECE-qualified workers with additional infant-toddler training. There will also be a need for 16 new FTE ECE Assistants, and 5 new FTE child care workers with their Responsible Adult qualification.

The Cowichan region will need 31 new ECE, 18 new ECE-IT, 16 new ECE-A, and 5 new Responsible Adult full-time positions by 2030.

Table 14: Child Care Worker Needs by Qualification Level, CVRD Overall, 2030

	Group Care, birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, school age	Multi-Age Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care	<i>Total Staffing Requirements</i>
Total 2030 Programs Needed	38	44	22	32	32	33	10	-
Gain in Programs by 2030	18	-1	1	2	13	-1	0	-
Total ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	38
Gain in ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
Total ECE Needed	38	44	22	0	32	0	10	146
Gain in ECE Needed	18	-1	1	0	13	0	0	31
Total ECE Assistant Needed	38	132	22	0	0	0	0	192
Gain in ECE Assistant Needed	18	-3	1	0	0	0	0	16
Total Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	96	0	33	0	129
Gain in Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	6	0	-1	0	5

MUNICIPAL BYLAWS, RESOURCES, AND PLANS

While a number of areas for potential improvement and expansion of child care in the Cowichan region have been identified in this report, these suggestions should be considered within the context of broader municipal or regional needs, priorities, and plans. There are a number of areas under municipal jurisdiction, such as zoning and business licensing, that can be leveraged to support strong child care growth initiatives.

Table 15 below summarizes the types of municipal approaches that can have an impact on child care availability, affordability, and accessibility in a region. Summaries of the existence of each of these policy types, by municipality or electoral area, are provided in the regional reports attached in Appendix F.

Table 15: Types of Local Government Policies and Resources, and their Impacts on Child Care

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access
<i>Strategies, Plans, and Policies</i>	
Child Care Strategy or Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges child care as fundamental to supporting healthy children and communities Provides guiding principles for municipal governments when working individually, with other levels of government, and/or with businesses and non-profit organizations; guiding principles help ensure that various initiatives and efforts are complementary and support one another
Child care addressed in Official Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that child care facilities and businesses are incorporated into long-term community development goals, land use planning, and business licensing practices
Child care addressed in Social Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges links among social inequities and access to child care (e.g., poverty, gendered differences in labour force participation) Provides guiding principles on creation and implementation of child care policies that address, or do not exacerbate, existing social inequities
Child care considered a community amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates incentives for local government to approve appropriate zoning and business licensing for child care throughout region / city If voluntary amenity contributions are available to developers, child care as an amenity incentivizes and leverages private capital to serve the community's child care needs

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access
<i>Municipal Resources</i>	
Municipal building space available for child care (any cost structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate set-asides for child care space can reduce market competition for operators and ensure availability of space
Municipal grants for child care operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide funding to sustain specific child care operations, ensuring that specific communities maintain a minimum level of access • Grants at a municipal level allow for funding to be targeted to better meet specific community needs (more targeted than provincial operating grants)
Municipal grants for child care capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can encourage creation or expansion of child care facilities in specific communities / neighbourhoods to meet community needs • Can help operators leverage private equity / investment that otherwise would not be sufficient to accomplish capital project • Creates physical space to support creation of needed child care spots
Child care design guidelines available to child care operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies requirements on child care facilities for operators, reducing confusion and facilitating capital projects • Can promote best practices or community goals through design guidelines and recommendations
Child care information documents for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates access to child care for local residents, by making them aware of available licensed child care options
Municipal child care program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures a minimum number of child care spaces are available locally
Municipal staff resource dedicated to child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can promote and enforce municipal requirements for child care businesses (thereby ensuring quality of care), advise on provincial requirements • Can promote information about available child care programs in municipality to families

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access
<i>Child Care Facilities Permitted In:</i>	
Single Family Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate
Duplex (semi-detached) Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate
Row House / Townhouse Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate
Apartment Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate
Mixed Use Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care)
Commercial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate
Public Use / Assembly Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate
Industrial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate
Agricultural Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care)
<i>Additional Zoning or Licensing Requirements for Child Care</i>	
Additional parking required for home-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to limit ability of child care operators to offer home-based child care
Municipal Business License required for child care use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional fees and submission requirements can create barriers to opening a child care business, or operating a child care business legally
Non-resident child care staff are permitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows home-based child care operations to accommodate more children, if space on property allows
Additional outdoor play space requirements / recommendations above provincial standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of spaces in a municipality that may house child care facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for space
Additional building requirements beyond the BC Building Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of buildings in a municipality that may house facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for qualifying buildings.

SUMMARY

CURRENT STATE OF CHILD CARE IN THE CVRD

A considerable portion of this research project involved examining the current state of child care in the CVRD, on topics ranging from the availability and accessibility of child care to the quality of existing child care options in the region.

Availability of Child Care for Families

Overall, the CVRD has a coverage rate of 22% for children aged 0-12 years old; this means that for every five children in this age group in the CVRD, there is approximately one child care space at existing facilities and programs. This coverage rate varied considerably by age group; preschool-aged children (3-5 years) tended to have the highest coverage rates among all regions within the CVRD, while children aged 6-12 years tended to have the lowest coverage rates. In many regions, coverage rates for infants and toddlers (birth to 2 years) were under 33%, qualifying these regions as *child care deserts*.

Child care availability also ranged considerably by region, from a low of 8% for all children aged 0-12 year (Cowichan Valley West) to a high of 43% for this same age group (Cowichan Valley North). Four out of five regions qualified as child care deserts for children in the 0-2 years age group, but only one region qualified as a child care desert for children aged 3-5 years.

Availability and the need for more child care spaces was an issue that was raised in qualitative interviews, as well as survey data. More than one-half of all parents and caregivers indicated that a lack of available spaces was a barrier to their families accessing their preferred type of child care. Among child care providers who participated in the survey, nearly three quarters reported having a waitlist and almost all (95%) indicated a need for more child care spaces in the CVRD. Approximately 70% of child care providers recommended *doubling* the current number of child care spaces available in the region.

Utilization of Existing Child Care Spaces

Utilization rates of existing child care spaces in the Southern Vancouver Island region are highest for the 0-2 years age group (87%) and lowest for the 6-12 years age group (42%). These numbers align with qualitative data from child care providers, suggesting that the highest demand and greatest shortages of space currently in the CVRD are in the infant-toddler age group. Given the high utilization rate in this group, as well as low coverage rates in most parts of the CVRD, it is likely that parents of infants and toddlers who are in need of care are currently finding it very difficult to find available spaces for their children.

Accessibility of Child Care

Beyond availability of spaces, the ability of a family to use child care services can be impacted by other accessibility factors such as cost, ability of services to meet their child(ren)'s needs, and the availability of services during hours when parents need care (e.g., overnight care for shift workers). Approximately one-half of parents and caregivers of children noted that cost was a barrier to accessing their preferred type of care.

Availability of child care at non-traditional hours was a challenge for about one-quarter of parents and caregivers, although this varied by region. In regions where a larger proportion of parents work shift work

(e.g., Cowichan Valley North), there was a higher reported need for child care at non-traditional times such as early morning, evening, and overnight. Approximately one-half of child care providers recognized that early morning hours were needed to better meet the needs of local families, but one-third or less of respondents agreed that other extended hours were needed such as later evening care.

A small proportion of parents – less than 10% - indicated that a barrier to using child care was due to being unable to find care providers who could provide additional support services needed by their children. Further, approximately three-quarters of child care providers in the CVRD reported that they are able to provide care for children with additional support needs, suggesting that while current child care services are currently not meeting the needs of all families with additional support needs in the region, the gap in care is relatively small.

Quality of Child Care

Accessibility and inclusivity for children were perceived by parents and caregivers, and the general public, to be an area where current child care services are not meeting quality expectations. Less than one-half of these groups felt that child care services in the CVRD were inclusive of children with additional support needs, or inclusive of the diversity of their local communities. These findings suggest that inclusivity and diversity are areas for targeted improvements in the coming years.

However, majorities of parents and caregivers reported that they were satisfied with *their own personal child care arrangements*, suggesting that those who are receiving child care services do believe that their children are being well taken care of in the programs. This also suggests that inclusivity may not be a high priority for parents and caregivers in assessing overall quality of care.

PROJECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN THE CVRD

While the total population of the CVRD is expected to grow by about 7% over the next ten years, the population of children aged 0-12 years old is expected to *decline* by about 8% (or 850 children) over that same time frame. This decline will be smallest in the infant-toddler age group, which will decline by about 3% (around 60 children), but declines will be about 9% in the 3-5 years and 6-12 years age groups.

Changes over the next ten years were not projected out for qualitative population data, such as family structure or diversity. Recent Census data, however, indicate the following about families in the CVRD:

- 68% of families with children are led by two parents, 32% by a single parent;
- 29% of individuals in the CVRD fall within the Low Income Measure, meaning that they make 50% or less of the region's median income;
- 14% of individuals in the CVRD identify as Indigenous, with 11% identifying as First Nations;
- 14% of individuals are immigrants to Canada;
- English is the mother tongue of 91% of individuals in the CVRD, and the language spoken most often at home among 97% of individuals.

While immigration (rather than birth rate) is expected to be a primary driver of population growth in the CVRD over the next decade, this immigration will include intraprovincial (i.e., from elsewhere in B.C.), intranational (i.e., from elsewhere in Canada), and international (i.e., from another country) immigrants.

PROJECTED CHILD CARE NEEDS, 2020-2030

Child Care Spaces

Despite anticipated declines in the population of children aged 0-12 years old, there is a need in the CVRD for aggressive increases in child care coverage rates in all age groups, but especially in the 0-2 years age group. The recommended increases in coverage rates more than outweigh the anticipated declines in population, resulting in the recommendation for a net increase in child care spaces of 765. This increase breaks down by age group as follows:

- 290 new spaces for the 0-2 years age group by 2030;
- 108 new spaces for the 3-5 years age group by 2030; and
- 367 new spaces for the 6-12 years age group by 2030.

These targets will ensure that no area within the CVRD will qualify as a child care desert, with a minimum 33% coverage rate for children under 5 in all regions. For regional breakdowns of recommended space creation targets, please refer to regional reports.

Child Care Programs

As there are legal limits to the number of children that can be served in any one child care program, the addition of these new child care spaces will require the creation of a number of new programs. Malatest has recommended the creation of the following program care types overall for the Cowichan region:

- 18 new group care programs for infants and toddlers;
- 1 fewer group care program for preschool-aged children;
- 1 new licensed preschool;
- 2 new group care programs for school-aged children;
- 13 new multi-age child care programs;
- 1 fewer family child care program; and
- No change to in-home multi-age child care programs.

These recommendations are based on largely maintaining the proportional breakdown of care types in the region that already exists. Consultation with families about what care types are preferred, and why, may be needed to supplement these recommendations and reduce friction with local families as the child care landscape in Cowichan changes over the coming decade.

Site and Space Needs

When reviewing potential sites for the location of child care programs, minimum space requirements set by the provincial government should be accounted for. Malatest has calculated the minimum interior and exterior space requirements needed, per program, for each of the above-listed care types.

Care Type	Minimum Interior Space (m ²)	Minimum Exterior Activity Space (m ²)
Group Care, birth to 36 months	55.5	84.0
Group Care, 30 months to school age	115.6	175.0
Licensed Preschool	92.5	140.0
Group Care, school age	103.1	192.5
Multi-Age Care	37.0	56.0
Family Child Care	32.4	49.0
In-Home Multi-Age Care	37.0	56.0

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS’ NEEDS

Child care providers who participated in this research – whether surveys or interviews – provided insight into the current challenges facing child care providers in offering more spaces for children in their facilities. In addition, a focus group with recent ECE graduates from a variety of programs on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland provided insight into the motivations and preferences for people entering the child care workforce.

Workforce Expansion

Due to the needed expansion in number of child care spaces, and number of child care programs, in the Cowichan region, Malatest anticipates that there will be a need for a large number of qualified child care workers, at a variety of levels. This includes:

- 18 FTE positions for ECEs with infant-toddler training;
- 31 FTE positions for ECEs;
- 16 FTE positions for ECE Assistants; and
- 5 FTE positions for workers with a Responsible Adult qualification.

Due to an anticipated surge in demand for child care across the province, as the provincial universal child care program continues to roll out and expand, it is anticipated that similar demand for these positions will be seen throughout the province. For this reason, workforce planning to meet these needs should focus on increasing the number of qualified graduates locally, rather than relying on recruitment from outside the region – it is likely that most regions will be trying to recruit child care and early childhood education workers.

Education and Qualifications

Child care providers who responded to the survey identified recruiting and retaining staff with higher-level qualifications (e.g., ECE or higher) was a major challenge that limited their abilities to offer child care. In key informant interviews, many providers tied this challenge to the generally low wages offered in the field, particularly when considering the level of education required for the work and the high level of investment and energy it takes to do the daily work.

Recent graduates from ECE programs reported similar attitudes among themselves and their peers with regards to the education investment relative to the income earned in the career. It was noted that, given the relative returns on education investment, it can be more worthwhile to become an ECE assistant rather than a full ECE. In addition, the ongoing professional development requirements to maintain an ECE license, at one's own expense, can be an additional deterrent to committing to a full ECE education and career.

Remuneration

Related to the above, low pay in the child care sector was raised among nearly all key informant interviewees as a challenge to recruiting individuals to the sector in general (e.g., encouraging youth to pursue post-secondary education in early childhood education), and in recruiting and retaining ECEs at individual child care centres due to high demand for qualified ECEs and, therefore, competition among existing child care centres for a limited number of qualified individuals in the region.

Despite the high demand for ECEs, wages in the field remain low due to a variety of factors such as high operating costs, requirements for maximum student-to-educator ratios, and the realities of how much parents are willing or able to pay towards child care each month. For these reasons, increasing pay for this crucial role may require support from governments at the local or provincial levels, to guarantee a minimum pay rate or offer supplementary pools of funding to “top up” pay for these workers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are a series of recommendations for a child care strategy in the Cowichan region. These recommendations incorporate findings from all three major lines of inquiry: population projections and target setting for future child care spaces and programs; stakeholder consultation regarding the availability, accessibility, and quality of child care in the region; and secondary data review of existing municipal policies, resources, and bylaws among communities in the Cowichan region.

While this report is intended for the use of the Cowichan region and its constituent local governments, there are a number of priority areas for change that are outside the jurisdiction of municipal and regional governments. Therefore, recommendations listed here include comments on responsible and/or contributing levels of government.

Finally, it should be noted that the specific actions for municipal, regional, and provincial governments are not meant to be definitive recommendations; they are suggestions for actions that would support the overarching recommendation. Each community and government must consider their local context, mandate, and other factors when deciding which actions to pursue.

INCREASING COVERAGE RATES

Increase the number of child care spaces as per the recommended space creation targets.

This report has provided a detailed breakdown of recommended space creation targets, by age group and by care type (see Tables 9 and 11). Malatest recommends making efforts to meet these targets within the time frame specified, with regular review and assessment of capacity to ensure these targets remain relevant.

Local Government Actions

- Review and revise existing bylaws and regulations that may be artificially limiting the ability of child care operators to offer child care (e.g., space requirements per child that are above provincial requirements), to enable existing operators to offer more child care spaces
- Incorporate targets for the creation of child care spaces and programs into community planning and strategy documents, to promote a coherent and complementary approach to child care across all departments of municipal government
- Consider creating grants to fund child care operations and/or capital investment projects, to support the creation of new programs and spaces
- Explore opportunities to acquire sites, either through purchase or lease agreements, to be made available to child care operators to support target spaces and programs

Provincial Government Actions

- Make available grant funds for capital projects to support child care space and program creation targets
- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, anticipate providing funding to child care centres aligned with space and program creation targets

Emphasize increasing infant/toddler spaces.

Space creation targets place a strong emphasis on infant/toddler spaces; this reflects both the comparatively low current coverage rate for this age group, as well as demand voiced by stakeholders who participated in this research. Malatest recommends that efforts to expand child care coverage in the region should ensure that creation of infant/toddler spaces are prioritized.

Local Government Actions

- Should target space creation targets be revised, municipal governments should consider the resulting coverage rates and aim for, at a minimum a 33% coverage rate for children aged 0-2 years old
- Incorporate language in official community plans and social plans that acknowledges the importance of infant/toddler child care in allowing mothers to re-enter the workforce, thus reducing “brain drain” in local sectors as well as promoting gender equity

Provincial Government Actions

- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, set aside a certain proportion of funding to be dedicated to infant/toddler spaces in the region

CREATING NEW CHILD CARE SITES

Support creation of new child care programs and sites.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will necessitate the creation of new child care programs and, likely, opening of new child care centres and facilities in the region. This will require considerable capital investment that could be aided by support from both municipal and provincial governments.

Local Government Actions

- Consider making current available municipal space (e.g., unused space in municipal buildings) available for the exclusive use of child care programs
- Consider leasing / renting available municipal space to child care programs for no, nominal, or below-market rates
- Examine opportunities to acquire sites (e.g., closed elementary schools) for the operation of child care programs
- Consider making municipal grants available for capital investment projects, to leverage private dollars to expand existing child care sites

Provincial Government Actions

- Make grants available for capital investment projects, either to renovate and build new sites or to expand existing sites
- Consider working with regional and municipal governments to promote acquisition of sites for child care use

ACCESSIBILITY

Consider public accessibility of potential new child care sites.

Accessibility and location of child care sites was noted by a number of stakeholders in this research; many noted that there are a number of child care facilities that are not accessible by public transit. This results in the child care programs under-serving the community, particularly lower income families who may not have access to a personal vehicle. Accessibility and location of child care sites should be considered when examining potential child care sites.

Local Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans emphasizing the need for child care sites to serve the entire community, and therefore be accessible by public transit
- When assessing potential future sites for child care programs, consider accessibility by public transit and prioritize locations that are more accessible
- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit

Provincial Government Actions

- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit
- Incorporate consideration of accessibility by public transit into any potential land transfers with municipal or regional governments, prioritizing sites with public transit access for child care use

Consider need for, and incentivize, child care with extended and non-traditional hours.

Shift work poses a unique challenge to finding child care options. Very few child care sites in the Cowichan region offer extended hours such as early morning, late evening, or overnight care. Yet, for families where one or both parents are employed in shift work, there is a need to find child care options that can provide reliable care during these hours.

Local Government Actions

- If municipal operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- If municipal space is being used for child care programs, consider options to allow access to facilities during these extended hours.
- Explore options with provincial government to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

Provincial Government Actions

- If provincial operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- Explore options with municipal and regional governments to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

AFFORDABILITY

Attend to affordability as a key aspect of the expansion of child care in the Cowichan region.

Affordability of child care was noted as a major barrier to child care, and to child care of choice, among parents and caregivers in this research. Further, child care space targets set out in this report have assumed a considerable increase in demand due to an increase in affordability. As such, affordability of child care for families in the region should be a major priority for municipal, regional, and provincial governments.

Local Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans, acknowledging the importance of child care being affordable to local residents to ensure equal opportunity and accessibility for all children
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)
- Examine opportunities to reduce child care operators' overhead through making municipal space available to them for no, nominal, or below-market rent

Provincial Government Actions

- Continue the rollout of the Universal Child Care program, which provides child care to families at a low, flat cost per day (currently \$10 per day)
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)

SUPPORTING CHILD CARE WORKERS AND PROVIDERS

Promote child care as a career to youth in the Cowichan region.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will require the creation of many full-time equivalency child care positions throughout the Cowichan region. As a result, there will be a large need in the region for qualified child care workers, particularly those with higher levels of qualifications (e.g., ECE, ECE with infant-toddler and/or special needs training).

Local Government Actions

- Promote child care work as a career through community programs and space (e.g., an ad campaign in recreation centres and local schools)

Provincial Government Actions

- Promote child care work, particularly the ECE qualification, through existing career promotion programs (e.g., the *Find Your Fit* tour has an ECE station, this tour could be brought to Cowichan region secondary schools)
- Consider expanding ECE programs at post-secondary institutions on Vancouver Island to ensure sufficient graduates to meet demand over the coming ten years

Promote the ECE qualification, and ECE with special training, to current and potential child care workers.

During this research, Malatest heard from recent graduates of ECE programs that the ECE qualification itself was perceived to be financially burdensome, when considering the investment required and the anticipated pay of an ECE-qualified position. Many noted that it made more financial sense to seek a lower level of qualification, such as an ECE Assistant, because the difference in pay between the roles was not much different. In addition, many child care program operators noted that they faced significant challenges finding qualified staff, particularly ECEs and ECEs with infant-toddler and special needs training.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant to support upgrading to ECE and ECE with special training skills, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider opportunities to reduce the financial burden of ECE qualifications (e.g., bursaries standard to all students in ECE programs, other) to make the qualification more attractive to potential students
- Promote upgrading of lower-level child care qualifications (e.g., Responsible Adult, ECE Assistant) to full ECE accreditation through targeted ad campaigns in child care programs at post-secondary institutions in B.C.
- Promote a higher wage for fully qualified ECEs, either as part of or in addition to the ongoing Universal Child Care program; may be accomplished through wage subsidies or other means to create a higher “floor” wage for ECEs

Support ECEs in maintaining their credentials through affordable professional development opportunities.

Child care workers qualified as ECEs must participate in regular professional development in order to maintain their credential over time; this training is typically paid for by the individual, creating another barrier or disincentive for child care workers to pursue and/or maintain their full ECE qualification. Supporting ongoing professional development for ECEs can help to reduce this burden and better meet the need for qualified child care workers in the Cowichan region.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) undertake polling of child care programs and help to organize local, affordable professional development opportunities for child care workers
- Consider creating a municipal grant to support ongoing ECE professional development training, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider incentivizing regular professional development for ECEs through dedicated provincial grants available to all licensed child care operators in the Cowichan region

IMPROVING QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Promote cultural diversity in child care centres.

The diversity of child care centres in the Cowichan region was rated poorly by both the general public and parents and caregivers of children, in this research. Diverse child care centres that reflect the communities in which they are located provide children with higher quality, more enriching care that promotes inclusive communities. As such, promoting cultural diversity should be a priority under the general initiative of improving quality of child care.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) regularly collect information on diversity within child care centres and promote best practices in diversity to child care centres
- Ensure affordable child care is available in all communities and neighbourhoods (see recommendations regarding placement of sites and space targets), to enable families to send their children to programs that are nearby and that are reflective of the diversity of their communities

Provincial Government Actions

- As the Universal Child Care program continues to roll out, consider incentives for children attending child care centres local to their homes, to ensure that child care centres reflect their communities

Promote inclusion of children with extra support needs in child care programs.

Families of children with extra support needs can struggle to find spaces for their children in licensed child care programs, due to the additional resourcing and staffing required to accommodate these children. In particular, the need for specialized training for ECEs to provide care for children with additional support needs has resulted in limited qualified staff available at these child care programs, and high demand for care among the sites that are able to accommodate children with extra support needs.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider creating a provincial grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification
- Promote the ECE-SN training designation among students and alumni of child care programs at Vancouver Island universities, through ad campaigns and other promotional materials

Promote best practices in child care through monitoring and accountability measures.

While most parents and caregivers in the survey for this research rated their own child care arrangements highly, overall perception of child care quality in the Cowichan region was middling. Promotion of standards and best practices in licensed child care can provide guidance to providers (particularly during periods of rapid expansion) and build public confidence in the quality of child care offered locally.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) collect key performance indicators from local child care centres to monitor quality, and promote best practices through promotional materials and other initiatives

Provincial Government Actions

- Create a set of key performance indicators for regular monitoring and measurement of child care quality
- Liaise with municipal child care resources to promote best practices endorsed by the provincial government, identify regional needs and provide support

APPENDIX A: PARENT AND CAREGIVER SURVEY

Cowichan Child Care Plan Parent/Guardian Survey

Your opinion matters!

A Child Care Needs Assessment is being conducted to assist with planning the creation of new child care spaces for the Cowichan region. This survey is an opportunity for you, as a **parent/guardian**, to share your thoughts and experiences with child care in your local community.

Who can participate?

If you live in the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), the City of Duncan, the Municipality of North Cowichan, the Town of Ladysmith or the Town of Lake Cowichan and have at least one child 0-12 years of age, this survey is for you! It is important that only one survey is completed per household. The best person in the household to complete the survey is the adult who is most familiar with your family's child care arrangements.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Malatest, an independent research firm, has been contracted to conduct the survey on behalf of the Cowichan region. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Your feedback will be used to develop a Child Care Action Plan. Your individual responses will be kept anonymous; responses will be grouped together to create the final report. All information you provide will be protected under the British Columbia provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)*. More information about our privacy policy can be found at <http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm>

Chance to win a prize!

At the end of the survey you will have a chance to enter a draw to win a \$50 or \$100 grocery voucher or Amazon gift card or one of five \$50 RecCowichan gift cards.

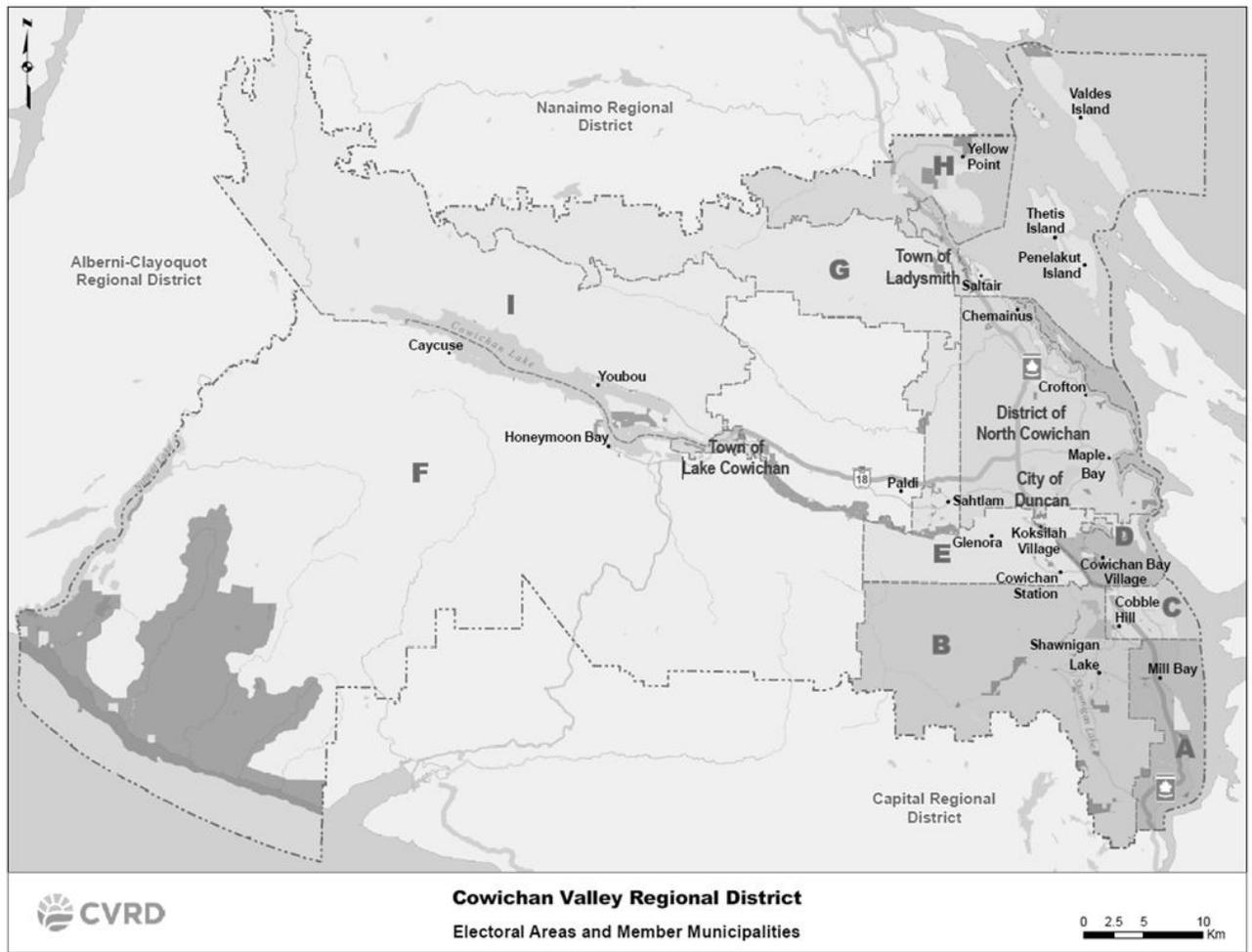
If you have any questions about the survey, please email Malatest at Cowichanchildcare@malatest.com or call 1-800-665-5848 ext. 314.

Thank you for your participation!



Which area best represents where you live?

- City of Duncan
 - District of North Cowichan
 - Town of Ladysmith
 - Town of Lake Cowichan
 - Electoral Area A – Mill Bay / Malahat
 - Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Lake
 - Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill
 - Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay
 - Electoral Area E – Cowichan Station / Sahtlam / Glenora
 - Electoral Area F – Cowichan Lake South / Skutz Falls
 - Electoral Area G – Saltair / Gulf Islands
 - Electoral Area H – North Oyster / Diamond
 - Electoral Area I – Youbou / Meade Creek
 - Outside the Cowichan Region
- Other → Please specify: _____



What is your postal code? _____ - _____

SECTION A: Family Profile

We would like to start by asking you some questions about you and your family.

A1. I am a:

- Mother of child(ren) 12 years of age or younger
- Father of child(ren) 12 years of age or younger
- Legal guardian of child(ren) 12 years of age or younger
- Other → Please specify: _____

A2. Are you?

- Working full-time (30 or more hours/week)
- Working part-time (less than 30 hours/week)
- On maternity, parental or caregiver leave
- Recovering from an illness of disability
- Going to school and working
- Going to school and not working
- Unemployed and looking for work
- Unemployed and not looking for work
- Prefer not to answer
- Other → Please specify: _____

A3. Do you have a partner/spouse?

- Yes
- No → **Go to question A5**

A4. Which best describes your partner/spouse's current work/study situation?

- Working full-time (30 or more hours/week)
- Working part-time (less than 30 hours/week)
- On maternity, parental or caregiver leave
- Recovering from an illness of disability
- Going to school and working
- Going to school and not working
- Unemployed and looking for work
- Unemployed and not looking for work
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Prefer not to answer

A5. How many children do you have that are 12 years of age or younger? ____ children

A6. Please provide the ages of the child/children you have 12 years of age or younger, identify if they attend child care, and if so, the cost of child care per month, and the average number of hours each child is in child care.

Child's Age:	Does this child have extra support needs? Yes / No	Check if the child is enrolled in child care	Average child care cost per month or total per month for all children	Average # of hours in child care per week
Child 1. _____			\$ _____ month	_____ hours/week
Child 2. _____			\$ _____ month	_____ hours/week
Child 3. _____			\$ _____ month	_____ hours/week
Child 4. _____			\$ _____ month	_____ hours/week
Child 5. _____			\$ _____ month	_____ hours/week
Child 6. _____			\$ _____ month	_____ hours/week
Child 7. _____			\$ _____ month	_____ hours/week
Child 8. _____			\$ _____ month	_____ hours/week
Total			\$ _____ month	

SECTION B: Child Care Arrangements

We are interested in your current child care arrangements and your experiences with child care services in the region.

If you do not use child care, go to B1. If you use child care, go to B3

B1. What is your main reason for not using child care?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I/my partner/spouse want to stay at home with our child(ren) | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff qualifications inadequate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family member is able to provide care | <input type="checkbox"/> Care could not accommodate more than one child in my family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost – fees for child care being too high | <input type="checkbox"/> Care could not meet my child's extra support needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of care - shortage of spaces or long waiting lists | <input type="checkbox"/> Care could not meet my language or cultural needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule – care not available during hours/days needed | <input type="checkbox"/> Programming and/or philosophy did not meet my needs/preferences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality – lack of quality care | <input type="checkbox"/> My child is old enough to stay home alone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location – child care is located too far away / no transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other → Please specify: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of licensed care providers | _____ |

B2. If you were able to find affordable child care, what impact would it have for you or your partner/spouse? Check all that apply

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> It would have no impact | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Gain more education/update training/credentials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work more hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce family stress levels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accept a promotion | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve mental health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Switch jobs | <input type="checkbox"/> Other → Please specify: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have fewer absences at work/school | |

→ **Go to Section C**

B4. What are the barriers to you accessing your preferred choice of child care? Check all that apply

- There are no barriers to accessing preferred choice of child care → **Go to question B5**
- Cost – fees for child care being too high
- Availability of care - shortage of spaces or long waiting lists
- Schedule – care not available during hours/days needed
- Quality - lack of quality care
- Location - child care is located too far away / no transportation
- Lack of licensed care providers
- Staff qualifications inadequate
- Care could not accommodate more than one child in my family
- Care could not meet my child's extra support needs
- Care could not meet my language or cultural needs
- Programming and/or philosophy did not meet my needs/preferences
- Other → Please specify: _____

B5. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of care your child receives through your current child care arrangements? Check applicable box

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know

B6. What would improve your satisfaction with the quality of care your child receives through your current child care arrangements? Check all that apply

- Nothing, I am satisfied
- More flexible hours
- Lower cost
- More inclusive
- Improved communication
- More toys/resources
- Improved programming
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Higher educator to child ratios
- More highly trained/qualified staff
- More support for my child's extra support needs
- Healthy snacks provided
- More physical activity promoted and supported
- My language or cultural needs reflected

SECTION C: Child Care in the Cowichan Region

We are interested in your opinions on the child care options available in the Cowichan region.

C1. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is 'strongly disagree' and 5 is 'strongly agree,' please rate your agreement with the following statements.

I feel child care options in the Cowichan region...	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5	Don't Know	Prefer Not to Answer
a. provide all the services/supports necessary for children to succeed?							
b. are <u>inclusive</u> of children of all abilities, including children with <u>extra support needs</u> ?							
c. <u>reflect the diversity of your community</u> ?							
d. offer <u>quality</u> child care?							

By inclusive we mean that children of all abilities, including children with extra support needs have equitable access to quality child care and are supported in learning through play along with other children in a regular program.

By 'extra support needs' we mean children requiring support beyond that required by children in general due to a developmental delay or disability in one or more of the following areas: physical, cognitive, social, emotional, communicative, or behavioural.

By 'reflect the diversity of your community' we mean child care that recognizes a range of abilities, cultures, ethnicities, and family types represented in your community.

C2. What could be done to improve the child care services in your local area? Check all that apply

Nothing, no improvements needed → **Go to question C3**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offer more flexibility in hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Offer more support for children with extra support needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make child care more affordable | <input type="checkbox"/> Carry out more quality checks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve training of child care staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Employ more educators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offer more inclusive care options | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve pay for child care staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offer child care in my language | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide more government funding/benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create more spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> Include healthy meals and snacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve transportation/access | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide healthy meals/snacks | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other → Please specify: _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | |

C3. If child care were offered at a reduced cost (e.g., \$10 per day or less if adjusted for income), how would this impact you and/or your partner/spouse (if applicable)? Check all that apply

It would have no impact → **Go to question C4**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gain employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Gain more education/update my training/credentials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work more hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my/our families stress levels/mental health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accept a promotion | <input type="checkbox"/> Change current child care type |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Switch jobs | <input type="checkbox"/> Have more children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have fewer absences at work/school | |

Other → Please specify: _____

C4. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the quality, affordability or accessibility of child care in the Cowichan region?

Not at this time

SECTION D: A Few Questions About You

In this final section, you will be asked some questions about yourself and your family. The reason we are asking these questions is so that we can begin to understand how the topics discussed in this questionnaire affect different groups of people (for example, lone parents/caregivers, women, ethnic minorities, Indigenous families etc.). As we mentioned at the beginning of the survey, the information you provide will be kept confidential, meaning it will be grouped with other responses and will not be reported individually.

D1. What is your age?

- 18 or younger
- 19-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and older
- Prefer not to answer

D2. What language do you speak most often at home?

- English
- French
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Prefer not to answer

D3. Are you?

- A single parent household
- Married/Common-law
- Multi-generational family living in the same household
- Prefer not to answer

D4. Do you identify as an Indigenous person (i.e., First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or other North American Indigenous group)?

- Yes → **Go to question D7**
- No
- Prefer not to answer

D5. Are you? Check all that apply

- White
- South Asian (for example, East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- Chinese
- Black
- Filipino
- Latin American
- Arab
- Southeast Asian (for example, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, etc.)
- West Asian (for example, Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
- Korean
- Japanese
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Prefer not to answer

D6. How long have you lived in Canada?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- More than 10 years
- I have always lived in Canada
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

D7. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

- Less than high school
- Graduated high school
- Some commercial, technical or vocational college or trade-certificate
- Graduated commercial, technical or vocational college or trade-certificate
- Some university
- Completed university
- Postgraduate
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

D8. Do you or your partner/spouse (if applicable) work shift work?

- Yes, I work shift work
- Yes, my partner/spouse works shift work
- No
- Prefer not to answer

D9. What is your annual household income before tax?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$69,999
- \$70,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 - \$89,999
- \$90,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$109,999
- \$110,000 - \$119,999
- \$120,000 - \$129,999
- \$130,000 - \$139,999
- \$140,000 - \$149,999
- \$150,000 - \$159,999
- \$160,000 - \$169,999
- \$170,000 - \$179,999
- \$180,000 - \$189,999
- \$190,000 - \$199,999
- \$200,000 or above
- Don't know

D10. Does your family receive income from any of the following sources?

Source of Income	Yes, my household receives this	No, my household does not receive this	Don't know
B.C. Affordable Care Benefit			
B.C. Income Assistance			
Canada Child Benefit			

SECTION E: Prize Details and Future Contact

E1. Would you like to be entered into a draw to win a \$50 or \$100 grocery gift card or a RecCowichan gift card?

- Yes
- No → **Go to E3**

E2. Please provide your contact details so we can enter you into a prize draw as a thank you for your time.

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Phone: () _____ - _____

Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City or Town: _____

Postal Code: _____

E3. Would you be interested in participating in further discussions about child care in your community or future research?

- 1. No → **Thank you for participating!**
- 2. Yes

E4. Shall we use the same contact as provided previously?

- 1. Yes → **Thank you for participating!**
- 2. No → **Go to E5**

E5. Please provide your contact details so we can contact you for further discussions about child care in your community or future research.

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Phone: () _____ - _____

Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City or Town: _____

Postal Code: _____

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your input will help us understand child care needs in the Cowichan region for future child care planning.



APPENDIX B: CHILD CARE PROVIDER SURVEY

Cowichan Child Care Plan Child Care Provider Survey

Your opinion matters!

A Child Care Needs Assessment is being conducted to assist with planning the creation of new child care spaces for the Cowichan region. This survey is an opportunity for you, as a **child care provider**, to share your thoughts and experiences on child care in the Cowichan region.

Who can participate?

If you provide child care in the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), the City of Duncan, the Municipality of North Cowichan, the Town of Ladysmith and/or the Town of Lake Cowichan, this survey is for you!

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Malatest, an independent research firm, has been contracted to conduct the survey on behalf of the Cowichan region. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Your feedback will be used to develop a Child Care Action Plan. In appreciation of your time and feedback, you may receive an Executive Summary of the Child Care Needs Assessment for the Cowichan region. Please provide your contact information at the end of the survey if you would like an Executive Summary.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Malatest at:

CowichanProvider@malatest.com or 1-800-665-5848 ext. 314

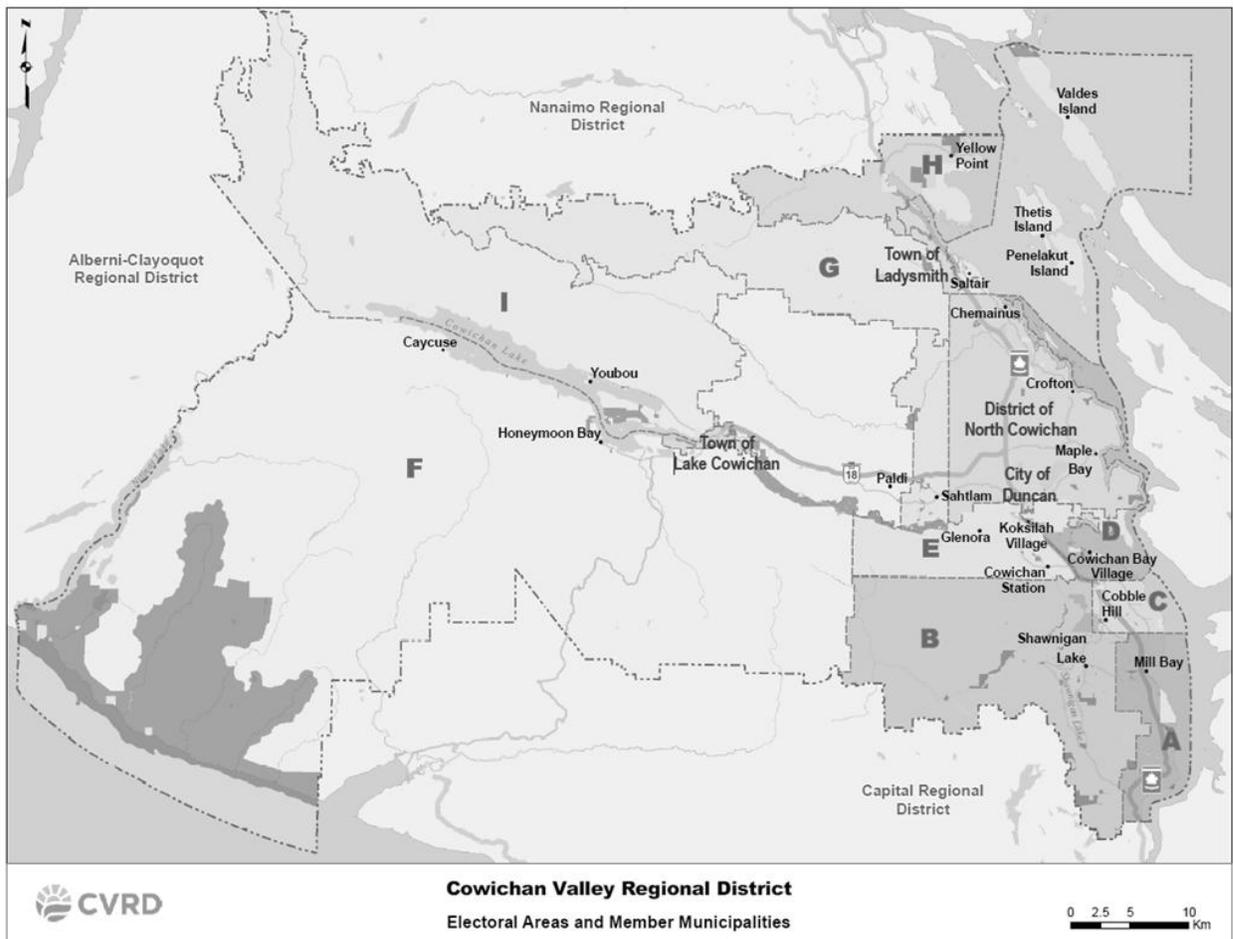
Thank you for your participation!





Which jurisdiction do you provide child care services in?

- City of Duncan
 - District of North Cowichan
 - Town of Ladysmith
 - Town of Lake Cowichan
 - Electoral Area A – Mill Bay / Malahat
 - Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Lake
 - Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill
 - Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay
 - Electoral Area E – Cowichan Station / Sahtlam / Glenora
 - Electoral Area F – Cowichan Lake South / Skutz Falls
 - Electoral Area G – Saltair / Gulf Islands
 - Electoral Area H – North Oyster / Diamond
 - Electoral Area I – Youbou / Meade Creek
 - Outside the Cowichan Region
- Other → Please specify: _____



What is the postal code of the location where you provide child care services? _____ - _____

SECTION A: About You

A1. What is your role/position? (Check one that best describes you)

- Executive Director/Director/Manager/Owner
- Supervisor/Coordinator
- Educator
- Other → Please specify: _____

A2. What is your current level of education/certification? Check all that apply

- No ECE Training
- Some ECE Training
- Responsible Adult Certification
- Basic ECE Certification
- Post-Basic Infant/Toddler ECE Certification
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Post-Basic Special Needs ECE Certification
- Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education
- Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education

A3. What is/are the main way(s) you prefer to access professional development opportunities for you and/or your educators (if applicable)? Check all that apply

- In-person training delivered locally
- In-person training that you have to travel to
- Online training
- Training provided by my centre/organization
- Other → Please specify: _____

A4. What professional development topics would you and/or your educators (if applicable) benefit from? Check all that apply

- Early Childhood Education (ECE) training
- BC Early Learning Framework Theory
- BC Early Learning Framework in Practice
- Child growth and development
- Child guidance
- Advocacy for children, families and the field
- Self-care as related to supporting effective practice
- Development of program policies
- Infant/Toddler (RIE)
- Risky play
- Addressing human resources issues
- Managing child care programs
- Maintaining children's health, safety and nutrition
- Interpersonal communication
- Special Needs --> Please identify: _____
- Inclusivity --> Please identify: _____
- Indigenous learning --> Please identify: _____
- Trauma-informed practice
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Don't know

A5. What have been your greatest challenges related to professional development?

Check all that apply

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty getting staff coverage so that I can attend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inconvenient location(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> No online training options available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inconvenient time(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> No in-person training options available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning opportunities available would not provide the skills or knowledge myself or my educators need | <input type="checkbox"/> No challenges |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other → Please specify: _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | |

A6. Does your centre promote physical literacy (i.e., developing children's skills, confidence and love of movement to be physically active)?

- Yes
 No → Why not? _____

A7. Do you feel it is important for child care professionals in the region to have a venue for communicating about this child care plan or other issues that arise?

- Yes → Go to A8
 No → **Go to Section B**

A8. What would be the best location for child care professionals in the region to meet?

- Ladysmith Community Centre/Library
 Duncan Community Centre/Library
 Chemainus Community Centre/Library
 Other → _____

A9. How frequently should child care professionals in the region meet?

- Weekly
 Monthly
 Every two months
 Twice a year
 Once a year
 Other → _____

A10. What is the preferred time for child care professionals in the region to meet?

- Evenings
 Saturday
 Sunday
 Weekday
 Other → _____

SECTION B: About Other Educators at Your Child Care Centre

B1. Please tell us about the child care educators currently employed at your centre?

I/my child care centre do/does not employ any other educators → **Go to question B2**

How many educators do you currently employ with the following?	Number	Average hourly wage in this position
No child care training		\$ /hour
Some child care training		\$ /hour
Responsible Adult Certification		\$ /hour
ECE Assistant		\$ /hour
Basic ECE Certification		\$ /hour
Post-Basic Infant/Toddler ECE Certification		\$ /hour
Post-Basic Special Needs ECE Certification		\$ /hour
Post-Basic I/T and Special Needs ECE Certification		\$ /hour
Child and Youth Care (CYCC) Diploma		\$ /hour
BC Teaching Certificate		\$ /hour
Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education		\$ /hour
Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education		\$ /hour
Other → Please specify: _____		\$ /hour

B2. Do you and/or the educators that you employ receive any of the following benefits?

No benefits provided → **Go to Section C**

Benefits	Check if you receive benefits	Check if the educators receive benefits
Paid sick days		
Paid leave/vacation time		
Health benefits (e.g., dental plans and/or prescription medication coverage)		
Retirement benefits		
Opportunities for promotion		
Professional development at reduced or no cost		
Coverage for professional development		
Reduced child care fee		
Priority for a child care space		
Other → Please specify: _____		

SECTION C: Your Child Care Centre

C1. Is your child care centre...

- Not-for-profit
- Sole Proprietor
- Corporate/Limited Company
- Aboriginal Head Start (AHS)
- Public Institution
- Partnership
- First Nations Government
- Band/Tribal Council
- Don't know

C2. Which best describes the location of your child care services?

- Privately owned building
- Church
- Government building
- Public school building/property
- Independent school building/property
- Other non-profit building (e.g., community centre, municipal building, band office)
- College/university/post-secondary institution
- Other → Please specify: _____

C3. Is the facility a publicly-owned asset?

- Yes
- No

C4. If your services are provided within a school building, in which school is it located?

- School name: _____
- Not applicable

C5. Does your organization have multiple child care locations in the Cowichan Region?

- Yes → How many? _____
- No

C6. Do you provide licensed child care?

- No I do not provide licensed child care → **Go to C7**
- Yes → What type of license(s) does your child care centre hold? Check all that apply:

License Type	Check if yes	Number of spaces
Group child care - birth to 36 months		
Group child care - 30 months to school age		
Licensed preschool - 2.5 years old to school age		
Group child care - school age (before-and-after school care)		
Multi-age child care		
Family child care		
In-home multi-age child care		
Occasional child care		
Child-minding		
Other → Please specify: _____		

C7. How many children do you or your organization provide care for in each of the following age groups and what is the average cost per child in each age group?
Enter "0" if none in an age group.

Age Group	Number of children	Average cost per child per day
Infants (18 months and under) if in a separate in a room		\$
Toddlers (19-36 months) if in a separate in a room		\$
Infant and toddler (Under 36 months) if in the same classroom		\$
Pre-school age (2.5-5 years old)		\$
School-age (5 years or older)		\$
Other → Please specify: _____		\$

C8. Are there any family service organizations located within the premises where you run your child care services?

Yes → What is/are their name(s)? _____

No

Don't know

C9. At what time(s) does your child care centre offer child care? Check all that apply.

Full-time (Monday to Friday daytime) → Hours: ____ am to ____ pm

Part-time (Monday to Friday daytime) → Hours: ____ am to ____ pm

Extended hours (~Before 6am or after 7pm) → Hours: ____ am to ____ pm

Before school

After school

Overnight

Drop-in or emergency care

Weekends

Other → Please specify: _____

C10. Do you offer child care services on statutory holidays?

Yes

No

C11. a. **Excluding** statutory holidays (i.e. Christmas day, New Years day, Easter), how many days does your centre close a year? _____ days

b. Do any of these days reflect extended closures in the summer months?

Yes

No

C12. Does your child care centre currently have a wait-list?

- Yes
 No → **Go to question C14**

C13. How many children are currently on the waitlist?

Age Group	Number of children
Infants (18 months and under) if separated	
Toddlers (19-36 months) if separated	
Infant and toddler (under 36 months) if not separated	
Pre-school age (2.5-5 years old)	
School-age (5 years or older)	
Other → Please specify:	
TOTAL	

C14. Do you offer any of the following “extras” at your child care centre? Check all that apply.

Extras	Check if provided	Check if additional cost to parents
Meals for children		
Supplemental nutrition program		
Snacks for children		
Field trips		
Late pick-up or early drop-off		
Other → Please specify:		

Other → Please specify:		

C15. Do you provide care for children with extra support needs?

- Yes
 No

C16. Does your child care centre receive support or resources from....

Support or Resources	Check if yes
Supported Child Development (SCD)	
Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD)	
Child Care Resource and Referral Centre	
Other → Please specify:	

Other → Please specify:	

C17. What supports or resources other than those identified in C16, do you need in order to provide care for children with extra support needs?

- Additional staffing
- Smaller class sizes
- Staff with specialized training
- Additional rooms /speciality rooms (e.g., sensory room)
- Adaptive equipment
- One-on-one support
- Other → Please specify: _____

C18. Is your program guided by the BC Early Learning Framework in supporting children's play and learning?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

C19. Roughly what proportion of families at your child care centre receive the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB)

- 0%
- 5-14%
- 15-24%
- 25-49%
- 50-74%
- 75-100%

SECTION D: Child Care Needs in the Cowichan Region

We are interested in your opinions on the child care options available in the Cowichan region.

D1. Based on your knowledge of your community, which of the following hours of care would best meet the needs of the families requiring child care? Check all that apply.

- Traditional hours: Monday to Friday within the hours of 8am and 6pm
- Early morning hours (before 8am)
- Later evening hours (after 6pm)
- Weekends or holidays
- Before school, after school, or during school closures
- Drop-in or emergency care
- Other → Please specify: _____

D2. Based on your knowledge of your community, what is the approximate need for the number of more child care spaces in the community?

- No more child care spaces required
- More child care spaces required → How many?
 - Less than half as many
 - Half as many more as we have now
 - Double what we have now
 - Other → _____
- Don't know

D3. What would motivate you to increase the number of child care spaces at your centre?

Check all that apply

- Ability to hire qualified ECEs
- Ability to retain qualified ECEs
- More physical space
- More funding
- More interest or need in the community
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Nothing

D4. In terms of increasing the number of quality child care spaces in the region, to what extent do you feel the following would be 'barriers' to possible future expansion? Please rate the following from 1 to 5 (1="Not a Barrier" and 5="A Major Barrier").

	Not a Barrier				A Major Barrier	Don't Know	Prefer Not to Answer
	1	2	3	4	5		
a. Ability to find well-trained staff							
b. Ability to increase wages to attract/retain staff							
c. Ability to expand existing space/add more spaces to existing location							
d. Licensing/bylaw restrictions							
e. Other operating expenses (e.g., rent, utilities)							
f. Other → Please specify: _____							
g. Other → Please specify: _____							



D5. What other challenges do you feel exist with respect to possible expansion of child care in the region?

D6. What could be done to improve the child care services in your local area?

- Increased educator wages
- Increased availability of qualified/well trained staff
- Enhanced coordination of child care programming in the region
- Other → Please specify: _____

D7. Is there anything else you want to tell us about the child care needs of your community?

SECTION E: Future Discussions

E1. Would you be interested in participating in future discussions or research with Malatest or your community regarding child care needs in your community?

- Yes, with Malatest
- Yes, with representatives from my community
- No

Please provide your contact information if you are interested in participating in future discussions or research. Note that only Malatest will know how you responded to the survey.

Please print:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____

Email: _____

E2. Would you be willing to promote a survey regarding child care needs in your community to parents/guardians at your child care centre?

- Yes, I would be willing to distribute postcards with a survey URL on them to parents at my child care centre
- Yes, I would be willing to distribute hardcopies of the survey to parents at my child care centre
- Yes, I would be willing to promote the survey in another way. ->

Please specify: _____

- No

If you are willing to promote a survey to parents/guardians, please provide your contact information. Note that only Malatest will know how you responded to the survey.

- Same contact as provided previously OR

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____

Email: _____

E3. If you would like a copy of an Executive Summary of the results, please provide your contact information below.

- Same contact as provided previously OR

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____

Email: _____

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your input will help us understand child care needs in the Cowichan region for future child care planning.

APPENDIX C: GENERAL POPULATION SURVEY

Cowichan Child Care Plan General Public Survey

Your opinion matters!

A Child Care Needs Assessment is being conducted to assist with planning the creation of new child care spaces for the Cowichan region. This survey is an opportunity for you, as a **member of the Cowichan Region**, to share your thoughts and experiences on the future of child care in the Cowichan region.

Who can participate?

If you live in the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), the City of Duncan, the Municipality of North Cowichan, the Town of Ladysmith and/or the Town of Lake Cowichan, this survey is for you!

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Malatest, an independent research firm, has been contracted to conduct the survey on behalf of the Cowichan region. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. The data will be used to develop a Child Care Action Plan. Your individual responses will be kept anonymous; responses will be grouped together to create the final report. All information you provide will be protected under the British Columbia provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)*. More information about our privacy policy can be found at <http://www.malatest.com/Privacy.htm>.

Chance to win a prize!

At the end of the survey you will have a chance to enter a draw to win a \$50 or \$100 grocery voucher, Amazon gift card, or one of five \$50 RecCowichan gift cards.

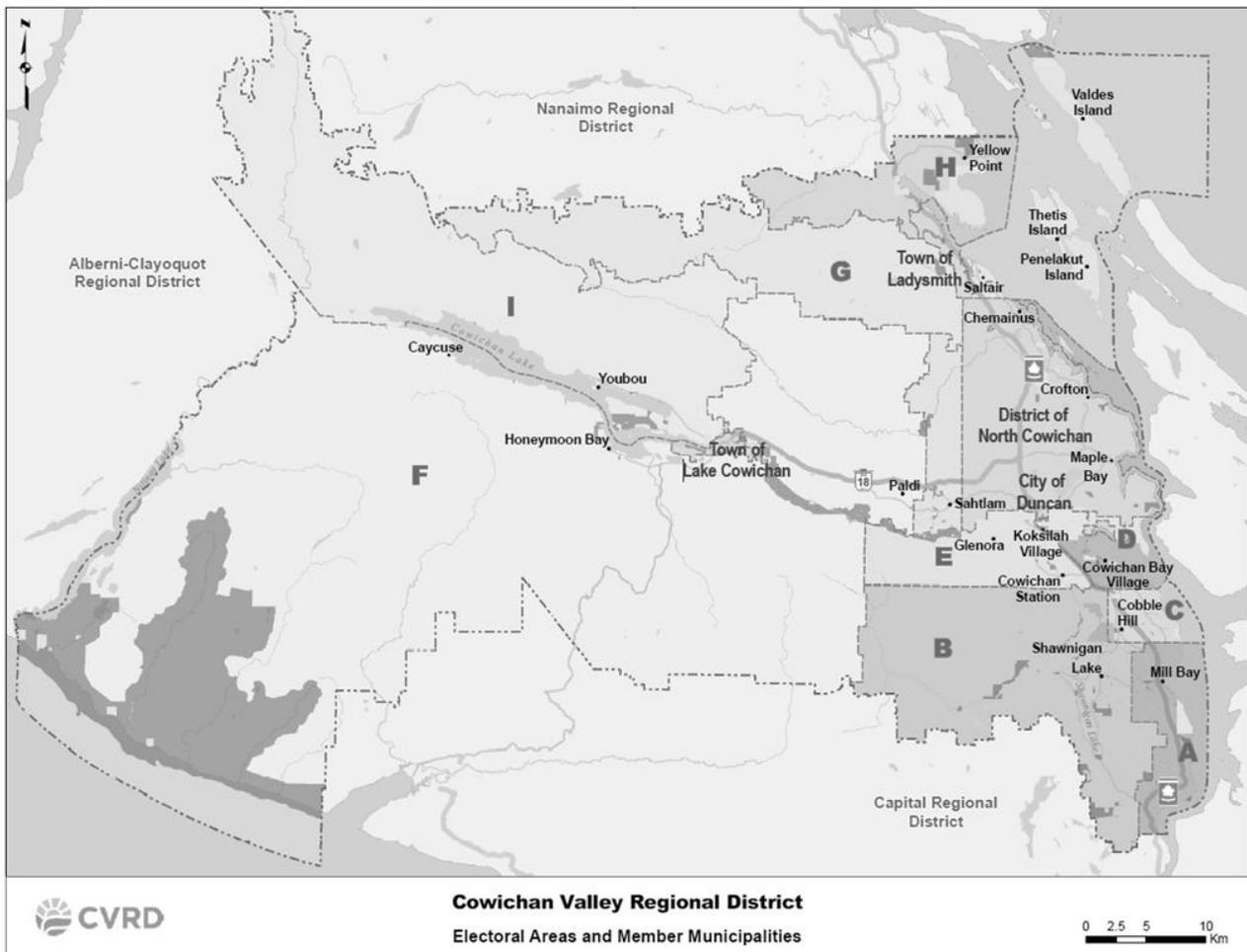
If you have any questions about the survey, please email Malatest at Cowichanchildcare@malatest.com or call 1-800-665-5848 ext. 314.

Thank you for your participation!



Which area best represents where you live?

- City of Duncan
 - District of North Cowichan
 - Town of Ladysmith
 - Town of Lake Cowichan
 - Electoral Area A – Mill Bay / Malahat
 - Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Lake
 - Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill
 - Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay
 - Electoral Area E – Cowichan Station / Sahtlam / Glenora
 - Electoral Area F – Cowichan Lake South / Skutz Falls
 - Electoral Area G – Saltair / Gulf Islands
 - Electoral Area H – North Oyster / Diamond
 - Electoral Area I – Youbou / Meade Creek
 - Outside the Cowichan Region
- Other → Please specify: _____



What is your postal code? _____ - _____

SECTION A: About You

- A11. How long have you lived in the Cowichan region?
- Less than a year 1 to 5 years 6 to 10 years Over 10 years
- A12. Have you ever worked in child care or a child care related field?
- Yes No
- A13. Are you a parent?
- Yes No
- A14. Have you ever used child care in the past?
- Yes No

SECTION B: About Child Care in the Cowichan Region

- B3. What do you feel child care providers in the region need to ensure they offer? Select the top 5 priorities.
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offer flexibility in hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Offer support for children with extra support needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide affordable child care (\$10 day or less if adjusted for income) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure children spend at least two hours a day in active play |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide professional development to child care staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Have an oversight organization make quality checks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offer <u>inclusive</u> ⁵ care options | <input type="checkbox"/> Employ staff with post-secondary education in the child care field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offer child care in languages other than English | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide pay for staff equivalent to teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide transportation/access | <input type="checkbox"/> Support parents in obtaining government funding/benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide healthy meals/snacks | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide sufficient educational materials for the number of children | |
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Don't know

⁵ Inclusive means that children of all abilities, including children with extra support needs have equitable access to quality child care and are supported in learning through play along with other children in a regular program.

B4. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is 'strongly disagree' and 5 is 'strongly agree,' please rate your agreement with the following statements.

I feel child care options in the Cowichan region...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Prefer Not to Answer
	1	2	3	4	5		
a. provide all the services/supports necessary for children to succeed							
b. are <u>inclusive</u> of children of all abilities, including children with <u>extra support needs</u>							
c. <u>reflect the diversity of our community</u>							
d. offer <u>quality</u> child care							

By inclusive we mean that children of all abilities, including children with extra support needs have equitable access to quality child care and are supported in learning through play along with other children in a regular program.

By 'extra support needs' we mean children requiring support beyond that required by children in general due to a developmental delay or disability in one or more of the following areas: physical, cognitive, social, emotional, communicative, or behavioural.

By 'reflect the diversity of your community' we mean child care that recognizes a range of abilities, cultures, ethnicities, and family types represented in your community.

B3. What could be done to improve the child care services in your local area? Check all that apply

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide healthy meals/snacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offer more flexibility in hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Offer more support for children with extra support needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make child care more affordable | <input type="checkbox"/> Carry out more quality checks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve training of child care staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Employ more educators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offer child care in family language | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve pay for child care staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create more spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide more government funding/benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve transportation/access | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

B4. How could new child care spaces be created in the Cowichan region? Check all that apply

- Collaborative partnership between Municipalities
- Collaborative partnerships with School Districts
- Collaborative partnerships with Indigenous communities
- Collaborative partnerships with local non-profit organizations
- Collaborative partnerships with local businesses
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Don't know

B5. If child care were offered at a reduced cost (e.g. \$10 per day or less if adjusted for income) how would this impact your community? Check all that apply

- Have no impact
- Increase in employment
- Have fewer absences at workplaces/schools
- Increase education/training/credentials of people in the community
- Decrease family stress
- Decrease mental health concerns
- Increased economic prosperity
- Increase social connectedness in the community
- Improve school readiness for children in the region
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Don't know

B6. What needs to be in place before child care spaces can be expanded? Check all that apply

- Nothing
- Have more trained educators
- Identify low rent spaces for child care
- Improve training of child care staff
- Offer child care in family language
- Train staff to work with children who have extra support needs
- Develop oversight of child care centres to ensure quality
- Improve pay for child care staff
- Obtain government funding/benefits
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Don't know

B7. Would you support expanding child care options in the Cowichan region?

- Yes → **Go to question B7a**
- No → Why not? _____
- Don't know

B7a. Would you be willing to support a modest increase in property taxes to support the expansion of child care in the region?

- Yes, up to \$100/year
- Yes, up to \$50/year
- Yes but less than \$50/year
- No, I would not support any increase in taxes
- Don't know

B8. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the quality, affordability or accessibility of child care in the Cowichan region?

SECTION C: A Few Questions About You

In this final section, you will be asked some questions about yourself and your family. The reason we are asking these questions is so that we can begin to understand how the topics discussed in this questionnaire affect different groups of people (for example, lone parents/caregivers, women, ethnic minorities, Indigenous families etc.). As we mentioned at the beginning of the survey, the information you provide will be kept anonymous, meaning your feedback will be grouped with other respondents and will not be reported individually.

C1. What is your age?

- 18 or younger
- 19-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and older
- Prefer not to answer

C2. What language do you speak most often at home?

- English
- French
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Prefer not to answer

C3. Are you?

- Single
- Married/Common-law
- Divorced/Separated
- Widowed
- Prefer not to answer

C4. Do you identify as an Indigenous person (i.e., First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or other North American Indigenous group)?

- Yes → **Go to question C7**
- No
- Prefer not to answer

C5. Are you? Check all that apply

- White
- South Asian (for example, East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- Chinese
- Black
- Filipino
- Latin American
- Arab
- Southeast Asian (for example, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)
- West Asian (for example, Iranian, Afghan)
- Korean
- Japanese
- Other → Please specify: _____
- Prefer not to answer

C6. How long have you lived in Canada?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- More than 10 years
- I have always lived in Canada
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

C7. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

- Less than high school
- Graduated high school
- Some commercial, technical or vocational college or trade certificate
- Graduated commercial, technical or vocational college or trade certificate
- Some university
- Completed university
- Postgraduate
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

C8. What is your annual household income before tax?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$110,000 - \$119,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 - \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$120,000 - \$129,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 - \$39,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$130,000 - \$139,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 - \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$140,000 - \$149,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 - \$59,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150,000 - \$159,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 - \$69,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$160,000 - \$169,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 - \$79,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$170,000 - \$179,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 - \$89,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$180,000 - \$189,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000 - \$99,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$190,000 - \$199,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 - \$109,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200,000 or above |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |

C9. Are you?

- Working full-time (30 or more hours/week)
- Working part-time (less than 30 hours/week)
- On maternity, parental or caregiver leave
- Recovering from an illness or disability
- Going to school and working
- Going to school and not working
- Unemployed and looking for work
- Unemployed and not looking for work
- Retired
- Prefer not to answer

SECTION D: Prize Details and Future Contact

D1. Would you like to be entered into a draw to win a \$50 or \$100 grocery voucher, Amazon gift card, or one of ten \$50 RecCowichan gift cards?

- Yes
 No → **Go to question D3**

D2. Please provide your contact details so we can enter you into a prize draw as a thank you for your time.

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Phone: () _____ - _____

Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City or Town: _____

Postal Code: _____

D3. Would you be interested in participating in further discussions about child care in your community or future research?

- No → **Thank you for participating!**
 Yes

D4. Shall we use the same contact as provided previously?

- Yes → **Thank you for participating!**
 No → **Go to question D5**

D5. Please provide your contact details so we can contact you for further discussions about child care in your community or future research.

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Phone: () _____ - _____

Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City or Town: _____

Postal Code: _____

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your input will help us understand child care needs in the Cowichan region for future child care planning.

APPENDIX D: KII GUIDES

**Interview Guide: Chamber of Commerce
Cowichan Valley Regional District: Child Care Plan**

Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **Completed by:** _____

Contact Information Name: _____

Position/Role: _____

Introduction

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has contracted R.A. Malatest & Associates (Malatest) to conduct a Child Care Needs Assessment that is focused on creating new child care spaces in the Cowichan region. It is understood that there is a complex interconnection between child care accessibility, affordability, and quality, but within the scope of this project, Malatest’s focus is on accessibility through the creation of new spaces.

As part of this assessment, Malatest is interviewing community stakeholders, including the Chamber of Commerce. It is known that the Province of BC has other initiatives related to affordability and quality that are currently ongoing. While the issues of affordability and quality may arise, the goal of this conversation is to gain insight into your understanding of the need for child care spaces in the region, your perspective on how that can be achieved, and what role you envision for yourself and your organization in helping to create these spaces. Malatest is also interested in how the new spaces will impact the work that you do. This interview is expected to take 15-25 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are not obligated to answer any of the questions. You may skip any question, at any time, for any reason. You may also end the interview at any time, without fear of any negative consequences to you or your organization.

Malatest will adhere to the regulations set out in Part 1 of the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA). We are also compliant with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (British Columbia). With your permission, we would like to digitally record the interview to ensure the accuracy of our notes. All data collected as part of this evaluation will be securely stored until the report is complete, at which point it will be destroyed.

Do I have permission to audio-record the interview? Yes / No

Do you have any questions for me before we begin? Yes / No

Interview Questions

- 1) Do you envision the Chamber of Commerce, as a representative for local businesses, having a role in ensuring that those businesses and their employees have access to child care spaces as a factor in the economic development and successes of the community?
- 2) Do you have any ideas about how the Chamber can partner with the CVRD in promoting the child care surveys and in facilitating partnerships with the business community to increase child care spaces?
- 3) Based on your knowledge of your community, what is the need for more child care spaces in the Cowichan region?
- 4) What could be done to improve the child care services in the Cowichan region?
- 5) What are some of the current challenges in creating additional child care spaces?
- 6) Do you have any additional suggestions for how new child care spaces could be created in the Cowichan region?
- 7) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the accessibility or quality of child care in the Cowichan region?
- 8) Would you be willing to help promote this survey amongst your colleagues? If yes, how might you be willing to distribute the information?

<input type="checkbox"/> Hand Out Hard Copies	<input type="checkbox"/> Through Email
<input type="checkbox"/> Post on Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook /Twitter /Instagram
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide information in Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
- 9) Would any of the following provisions be useful to you or your organization, in terms of helping advertise or promote this survey?

<input type="checkbox"/> Posters	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Cards
<input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____

Cowichan Valley Regional District: Child Care Plan

Date: _____ Time: _____ Completed by: _____

Contact Information Name: _____

Position/Role: _____

Introduction

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has contracted R.A. Malatest & Associates (Malatest) to conduct a Child Care Needs Assessment that is focused on creating new child care spaces in the Cowichan region. It is understood that there is a complex interconnection between child care accessibility, affordability, and quality, but within the scope of this project, Malatest's focus is on accessibility through the creation of new spaces.

As part of this assessment, Malatest is interviewing community stakeholders. It is known that the Province of BC has other initiatives related to affordability and quality that are currently ongoing. While the issues of affordability and quality may arise, the goal of this conversation is to gain insight into your understanding of the need for child care spaces in the region, your perspective on how that can be achieved, and what role you envision for yourself and your organization in helping to create these spaces. Malatest is also interested in how the new spaces will impact the work that you do. This interview is expected to take 20-30 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are not obligated to answer any of the questions. You may skip any question, at any time, for any reason. You may also end the interview at any time, without fear of any negative consequences to you or your organization.

Malatest will adhere to the regulations set out in Part 1 of the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA). We are also compliant with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (British Columbia). With your permission, we would like to digitally record the interview to ensure the accuracy of our notes. All data collected as part of this evaluation will be securely stored until the report is complete, at which point it will be destroyed.

Do I have permission to audio-record the interview? Yes / No

Do you have any questions for me before we begin? Yes / No

Interview Questions

- 1) Based on your knowledge of your community, what is the need for more child care spaces in the Cowichan region?
- 2) Do you feel the child care options in the Cowichan region provide all the services/supports necessary for children to meet the developmental needs of their early years and support a seamless transition into the kindergarten/primary years?

[Probe:] If not, what is needed?

- 3) What would be the impact on you/ your centre/ child care supportive services if child care spaces in the Cowichan region were to increase?
- 4) What is your opinion on the quality of child care options in the Cowichan region?

[Probe:] How can this be improved?

- 5) What is your opinion on whether the child care options in the Cowichan region provide child care that is inclusive of children of all abilities, including children with extra support needs?

[Probe:] How can inclusion/ a sense of belonging be improved?

- 6) In what ways do the child care options in the Cowichan region offer childcare that reflects the cultural and economic diversity of the region and how can these be improved?

- 7) What could be done to improve child care services in the Cowichan region?

- 8) What are some of the current challenges in creating additional child care spaces?

- 9) Do you have any additional suggestions for how new child care spaces could be created in the Cowichan region?

- 10) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the accessibility and quality of child care in the Cowichan region?

- 11) Would you be willing to help promote this survey amongst your colleagues? If yes, how might you be willing to distribute the information?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Out Hard Copies | <input type="checkbox"/> Through Email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Post on Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook /Twitter /Instagram |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide information in Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |

- 12) Would any of the following provisions be useful to you or your organization, in terms of helping advertise or promote this survey?

- Posters
- Pamphlets

- Business Cards
- Other (please specify): _____

**Interview Guide: Community Resource Organizations
Cowichan Valley Regional District: Child Care Plan**

Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **Completed by:** _____

Contact Information Name: _____

Position/Role: _____

Introduction

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has contracted R.A. Malatest & Associates (Malatest) to conduct a Child Care Needs Assessment that is focused on creating new child care spaces in the Cowichan region. It is understood that there is a complex interconnection between child care accessibility, affordability, and quality, but within the scope of this project, Malatest's focus is on accessibility through the creation of new spaces.

As part of this assessment, Malatest is interviewing community stakeholders. It is known that the Province of BC has other initiatives related to affordability and quality that are currently ongoing. While the issues of affordability and quality may arise, the goal of this conversation is to gain insight into your understanding of the need for child care spaces in the region, your perspective on how that can be achieved, and what role you envision for yourself and your organization in helping to create these spaces. Malatest is also interested in how the new spaces will impact the work that you do. This interview is expected to take 20-30 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are not obligated to answer any of the questions. You may skip any question, at any time, for any reason. You may also end the interview at any time, without fear of any negative consequences to you or your organization.

Malatest will adhere to the regulations set out in Part 1 of the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA). We are also compliant with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (British Columbia). With your permission, we would like to digitally record the interview to ensure the accuracy of our notes. All data collected as part of this evaluation will be securely stored until the report is complete, at which point it will be destroyed.

Do I have permission to audio-record the interview? Yes / No

Do you have any questions for me before we begin? Yes / No

Interview Questions

- 1) Based on your knowledge of your community, what is the need for more child care spaces in the Cowichan region?
- 2) What does your organization see as its role in addressing child care needs in the region? Are there specific actions or changes that your organization could undertake to support increased accessibility for families through the creation of new child care spaces?
- 3) What would be the impact on your organization if you were to undertake these changes?

[Probe:] What would be the impact on your organization, and your work, if new child care spaces were created in the Cowichan Region?
- 4) What is your opinion on whether child care options in the Cowichan region provide all the services/supports necessary for children to succeed?

[Probe:] How can they be improved?
- 5) What is your opinion on whether child care options in the Cowichan region offer child care that is inclusive of children of all abilities, including children with extra support needs?

[Probe:] How can this be improved?
- 6) What is your opinion on whether child care options in the Cowichan region offer child care that reflects the diversity in the population and cultural and economic needs in the region?
- 7) What is your opinion on whether child care options in the Cowichan region offer quality child care?
- 8) What could be done to improve child care services in the Cowichan region?
- 9) What are some of the current challenges in creating additional child care spaces?
- 10) Do you have any additional suggestions for how new child care spaces could be created in the Cowichan region?
- 11) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the accessibility and quality of child care in the Cowichan region?
- 12) Would you be willing to help promote this survey amongst your colleagues? If yes, how might you be willing to distribute the information?
 - Hand Out Hard Copies
 - Through Email
 - Post on Website
 - Facebook /Twitter /Instagram
 - Provide information in Newsletter
 - Other (please specify): _____

13) Would any of the following provisions be useful to you or your organization, in terms of helping advertise or promote this survey?

- Posters
- Pamphlets

- Business Cards
- Other (please specify): _____

Interview Guide: CVRD
Cowichan Valley Regional District: Child Care Plan

Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **Completed by:** _____

Contact Information Name: _____

Position/Role: _____

Introduction

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has contracted R.A. Malatest & Associates (Malatest) to conduct a Child Care Needs Assessment that is focused on creating new child care spaces in the Cowichan region. It is understood that there is a complex interconnection between child care accessibility, affordability, and quality, but within the scope of this project, Malatest’s focus is on accessibility through the creation of new spaces.

As part of this assessment, Malatest is interviewing community stakeholders. It is known that the Province of BC has other initiatives related to affordability and quality that are currently ongoing. While the issues of affordability and quality may arise, the goal of this conversation is to gain insight into your understanding of the need for child care spaces in the region, your perspective on how that can be achieved, and what role you envision for yourself and your organization in helping to create these spaces. Malatest is also interested in how the new spaces will impact the work that you do. This interview is expected to take 15-25 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are not obligated to answer any of the questions. You may skip any question, at any time, for any reason. You may also end the interview at any time, without fear of any negative consequences to you or your organization.

Malatest will adhere to the regulations set out in Part 1 of the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA). We are also compliant with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (British Columbia). With your permission, we would like to digitally record the interview to ensure the accuracy of our notes. All data collected as part of this evaluation will be securely stored until the report is complete, at which point it will be destroyed.

Do I have permission to audio-record the interview? Yes / No

Do you have any questions for me before we begin? Yes / No

Interview Questions

- 1) How do you envision the role of the CVRD in creating new child care spaces?
- 2) Do you have any ideas about how the CVRD can facilitate broader partnerships to increase accessibility to child care spaces for families in the Cowichan region?
- 3) How would the creation of new child care spaces impact the CVRD?
- 4) Based on your knowledge of your community, what is the need for more child care spaces in the Cowichan region?
- 5) What could be done to improve the child care services in the Cowichan region?
- 6) What are some of the current challenges in creating additional child care spaces?
- 7) Do you have any additional suggestions for how new child care spaces could be created in the Cowichan region?
- 8) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the accessibility or quality of child care in the Cowichan region?

Cowichan Valley Regional District: Child Care Plan

Date: _____, 2020 Completed by: _____

Interviewee: _____ Position/Role: _____

Introduction

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has contracted R.A. Malatest & Associates (Malatest) to conduct a Child Care Needs Assessment that is focused on creating new child care spaces in the Cowichan region. It is understood that there is a complex interconnection between child care accessibility, affordability, and quality, but within the scope of this project, Malatest's focus is on accessibility through the creation of new spaces.

As part of this assessment, Malatest is interviewing community stakeholders. It is known that the Province of BC has other initiatives related to affordability and quality that are currently ongoing. While the issues of affordability and quality may arise, the goal of this conversation is to gain insight into your understanding of the need for child care spaces in the region, your perspective on how that can be achieved, and what role you envision for yourself and your organization in helping to create these spaces. Malatest is also interested in how the new spaces will impact the work that you do. This interview is expected to take 20-30 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are not obligated to answer any of the questions. You may skip any question, at any time, for any reason. You may also end the interview at any time, without fear of any negative consequences to you or your organization.

Malatest will adhere to the regulations set out in Part 1 of the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA). We are also compliant with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (British Columbia). With your permission, we would like to digitally record the interview to ensure the accuracy of our notes. All data collected as part of this evaluation will be securely stored until the report is complete, at which point it will be destroyed.

Interview Questions

- 1) Based on your knowledge of your community, what is the need for more child care spaces in the Cowichan region?

- 2) As a school district, what do you feel is your role in increasing accessibility for families requiring child care spaces in the Cowichan region?
- 3) As a school district, what do you feel you could contribute to addressing accessibility through increased child care spaces in the Cowichan region?
- 4) What is your opinion on the quality of child care options in the Cowichan region? How could this be improved?
- 5) Do you feel the child care options in the Cowichan region provide all the services/supports necessary for children to succeed, particularly in relation to a seamless transition into school?
- 6) What is your opinion on the ability of child care options in the Cowichan region to offer child care that is inclusive of children of all abilities, including children with extra support needs?
- 7) What is your opinion on whether child care options in the Cowichan region offer child care that reflects the cultural and economic diversity of the region?
- 8) What could be done to improve child care services in the Cowichan region?
- 9) What are some of the current challenges in creating additional child care spaces?
- 10) Do you have any additional suggestions for how new child care spaces could be created in the Cowichan region?
- 11) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the quality, affordability or accessibility of child care in the Cowichan region?
- 12) Would you be willing to help promote this survey amongst your colleagues? If yes, how might you be willing to distribute the information?

<input type="checkbox"/> Hand Out Hard Copies	<input type="checkbox"/> Through Email
<input type="checkbox"/> Post on Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook /Twitter /Instagram
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide information in Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
- 13) Would any of the following provisions be useful to you or your organization, in terms of helping advertise or promote this survey?

<input type="checkbox"/> Posters	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Cards
<input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____

**Interview Guide: Post-Secondary Institution(s)
Cowichan Valley Regional District: Child Care Plan**

Date: _____ Time: _____ Completed by: _____

Contact Information Name: _____

Position/Role: _____

Introduction

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has contracted R.A. Malatest & Associates (Malatest) to conduct a Child Care Needs Assessment that is focused on creating new child care spaces in the Cowichan region. It is understood that there is a complex interconnection between child care accessibility, affordability, and quality, but within the scope of this project, Malatest's focus is on accessibility through the creation of new spaces.

As part of this assessment, Malatest is interviewing community stakeholders. It is known that the Province of BC has other initiatives related to affordability and quality that are currently ongoing. While the issues of affordability and quality may arise, the goal of this conversation is to gain insight into your understanding of the need for child care spaces in the region, your perspective on how that can be achieved, and what role you envision for yourself and your organization in helping to create these spaces. Malatest is also interested in how the new spaces will impact the work that you do. This interview is expected to take 20-30 minutes of your time.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are not obligated to answer any of the questions. You may skip any question, at any time, for any reason. You may also end the interview at any time, without fear of any negative consequences to you or your organization.

Malatest will adhere to the regulations set out in Part 1 of the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA). We are also compliant with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (British Columbia). With your permission, we would like to digitally record the interview to ensure the accuracy of our notes. All data collected as part of this evaluation will be securely stored until the report is complete, at which point it will be destroyed.

Do I have permission to audio-record the interview? Yes / No

Do you have any questions for me before we begin? Yes / No

Interview Questions

- 1) Can we start by talking about the courses offered by VIU if someone wanted to go into the field of child care (i.e., the Early Childhood Education and Care Diploma).

- 2) What other options would people have in the Cowichan region for ECE education other than at VIU (outreach training)?
- 3) Do you know what your current program capacity is? (Are you running at full capacity?)
- 4) Do you see demand changing in the near future?
- 5) Based on your knowledge of the Cowichan Valley Regional District, what is the need for more child care spaces in the Cowichan region?
- 6) What do you see as your role as a post-secondary institution in creating new spaces in the Cowichan region?
- 7) What is your opinion on the success of child care options in the Cowichan region in providing all the services/supports necessary for children to meet their developmental needs and to ensure a seamless transition into school?

[Probe:] What is needed to improve the services and supports?

- 8) How would an expansion of child care spaces impact your institution? How do the training opportunities offered by your institution impact quality through such consideration as recruitment of diverse students, practicum placements, and innovative training approaches?
- 9) Do you feel the child care options in the Cowichan region offer child care that is inclusive of children of all abilities, including children with extra support needs?

[Probe:] If not, how can this be improved?

- 10) What is your opinion on the quality of the child care being offered in the region and what can be done to ensure all children have access to quality programs?
- 11) What could be done to improve the child care services in the Cowichan region?
- 12) What are some of the current challenges in creating additional child care spaces?
- 13) Do you have any additional suggestions for how new child care spaces could be created in the Cowichan region?

APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Cowichan Child Care Plan
Cowichan Valley Regional District
ECE Recent Graduates Focus Group Guide

Welcome

Welcome! My name is <<name>>, and I am an <<position>> with R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (Malatest). Thank you for agreeing to take part in this focus group discussion today.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the unceded territory of the XXXXXX.

A Child Care Needs Assessment is being conducted to assist with planning the creation of new child care spaces for the Cowichan region. The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), the City of Duncan, the Municipality of North Cowichan, the Town of Ladysmith or the Town of Lake Cowichan has contracted Malatest, an independent Canadian research organization to conduct this focus group on behalf of the Cowichan region. As part of development of the child care plan, we are interested in your views and experiences of early childhood educator training and finding employment in the child care field.

Our discussion today will take **about two hours**. Your participation is **voluntary**.

The discussion will be audio recorded to ensure we capture your feedback accurately. Your individual responses provided in this session will be grouped together and included as part of a larger report presented to the project group to help inform the Cowichan Child Care Plan. Your name will be kept confidential. We ask that everyone be respectful of one another's experiences and what they share here today, and to be respectful of one another's privacy by not sharing what was said with others outside the group.

Remember, there are **no right or wrong answers**. We would like everyone to have a chance to talk and make any comments that you think are important to the discussion. Please share whatever you are comfortable sharing. I'd just like to ask that you **talk one at a time**, and please **try not to interrupt anyone** when they are speaking - this also makes it easier for me to follow the discussion now and on the recording afterwards.

My main role is to keep the discussion going.

Does anyone object to the recording?

Are there any questions before we start?

Note: Italics indicate prompt questions and moderator notes.

Introductions

Let's start with some introductions.

Starting at this end of the table, please introduce yourself with your first name, the name of the institution (i.e., college/university) you attended, the course you took, and the type of work or education you are currently doing now (*moderator: prepare these questions on a flipchart for reference*).

Part A: Experience of Early Childhood Education Training

A1. Let's now look at your experiences in the ECE training programs.

- a. What are your overall impressions of the program you attended?
Probe: Did you feel you received all the theoretical information you needed to work in the field? All the practical experience you needed to develop the required skills?
- b. Are there components of the program that were missing or not sufficient to provide you with the training you need to work in the field? (*moderator: to make notes on flipchart paper*).
- c. What were some of the most useful elements of the program? (*moderator: to make notes on flipchart paper*). Would you recommend the program to friends/family? (*probe: if not, why?*)
- d. Would you recommend the program to friends/family? (*probe: if not, why?*)
- e. What were your intentions after completing the training? (*probe: apply for a child care position, apply for another position related to child care etc. If people were no longer interested in working in child care probe as to why*).

Part B: Experience of Finding Employment in Child Care Post-Secondary Education Training

B1. Did any of you have any difficulty securing a position in child care after you graduated?

- a. Were there several positions to choose from?
- b. Were the wages offered what you expected?
- c. Were the hours of work what you expected?
- d. Did you expect to be offered things that were not available (e.g., benefits)?
- e. Is your current position meeting your expectations? (*probe: if not, why not?*)

Part C: Experience in Current Position and Future Aspirations

C1. Do you feel your education prepared you sufficiently for working in the child care field? (*probe: if not, why not?*)

- a. Do you plan to stay working in the field? (*probe: why or why not?*)
- b. What would keep you working in child care as a lifelong career? (*probe: what aspects are important?*)
- c. What would make you want to find different work?
- d. Would you recommend working in child care to friends/family?

C2. What are your employment goals and future aspirations for career development in the field of early childhood education?

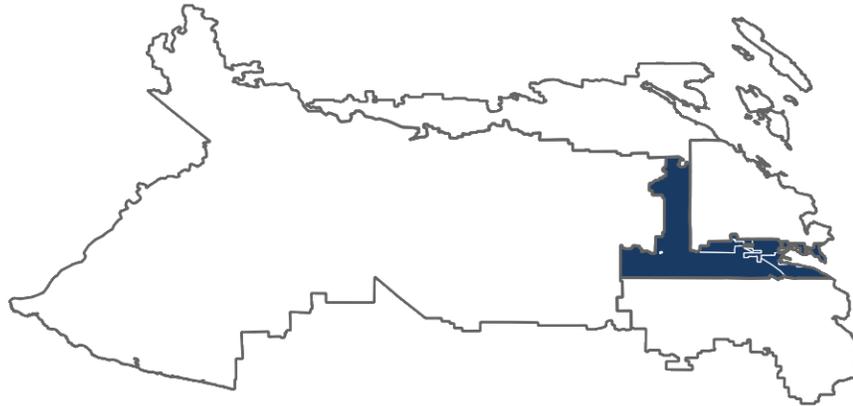
C3. What suggestions do you have to increase the desirability of child care as a career?

Part D: Conclusion

D1. Any other comments you would like to make about child care training and employment?

Thank you for joining us in the focus group

APPENDIX F: REGIONAL REPORTS



This report summarizes the current and anticipated future child care needs in Cowichan Valley Central. Cowichan Valley Central is a sub-region of the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), and is comprised of: the City of Duncan; CVRD Electoral Area D (Cowichan Bay) and Electoral Area E (Cowichan Station / Sahtlam / Glenora).

COWICHAN VALLEY CENTRAL CONTEXT

In this section, population-level factors that impact child care needs are described. This includes summaries of population size, family demographics, income, cultural diversity, and childhood vulnerability.

DEMOGRAPHY

The tables below summarize key trends in Cowichan Valley Central related to household composition, income, and cultural diversity.

Total Population		Households	Number of Households	Number of Households with Children
 Duncan 4,944	 <p>The proportion of households with children in Cowichan Valley Central (31%) is lower than those seen in the CVRD (34%), BC (39%), and nationally (41%).</p>	Duncan 2,385	Duncan 585	
 Area D 3,243		Area D 1,395	Area D 465	
 Area E 4,121		Area E 1,630	Area E 620	
 Total 12,308		Total 5,410	Total 1,670	

Family Structures

Dual-Parent Families			
305 (52%)	330 (71%)	470 (76%)	
Duncan	Area D	Area E	
1,105 (66%) Total			
Lone-Parent Families			
280 (48%)	135 (29%)	150 (24%)	
Duncan	Area D	Area E	
565 (34%) Total			

Of all families with children in Cowichan Valley Central, 66% are led by two parents and 34% are led by a single parent. This varied greatly by specific community: in Duncan, there was a near 50/50 split between single-parent and dual-parent families, while in Electoral Areas D and E the proportion of dual-parent families was between 71% and 76%. These proportions are comparable to the split of single-parent to dual-parent families seen at the regional level (68% of CVRD families are led by two parents, 32% by single parents), at the provincial level (73% are two-parent families, 27% lone-parent families) and the national level (72% two-parent families, 28% lone-parent families).



Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

	Income				
	Median Total Household Income	Median Total Income Of Couple Economic Families With Children ⁶	Lone-Parent Economic Families' Median Income	Prevalence of Low Income (LIM-AT) ^{7*}	Prevalence of Low Income (LICO-AT)*
City of Duncan	\$40,320	\$78,976	\$37,120	1,290 (29%)	520 (12%)
CVRD Area D	\$71,360	\$110,933	\$48,768	420 (13%)	225 (7%)
CVRD Area E	\$70,144	\$103,629	\$44,160	645 (16%)	260 (6%)
Total	\$57,325[†]	\$98,842[†]	\$41,637[†]	2,355 (20%)	1,005 (9%)

A weighted average of median incomes in the City of Duncan, CVRD Area D, and CVRD Area E was \$57,325. Median incomes varied considerably, with the City of Duncan having a median income approximately \$30,000 less than those of Areas D and E. Areas D and E had median incomes slightly higher than the median income of the broader Cowichan Valley Regional District (\$65,191), while Duncan's was considerably lower. Incomes in Areas D and E were comparable to the median income across all of BC (\$69,995) and Canada (\$70,336) while again, median income in the City of Duncan was lower.

Similarly, rates of individuals falling within the low-income cut-off, after tax (LICO-AT) category (meaning that they are expected to spend 20 percentage points more of their income on food, shelter, and clothing compared to the average family) were highest in Duncan. Overall, eight percent of individuals in Central Cowichan fell within the low-income cut-off category, which is comparable to the overall CVRD (7%) and the national average (9%), and lower than the provincial average (11%). The low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) indicates whether a household takes in an income of 50% or less of the median income in their area (i.e., make about half of what the average household, of similar composition, in their area does). Nearly one in three households in Duncan qualified as low income under this measure. In contrast, only 13% and 16% of households in CVRD Areas D and E fell within this definition, respectively.

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

[†] These numbers were calculated as weighted averages of the medians of the three regions. These numbers are expected to provide a good estimate of central tendency, but may not reflect the true median of the full region.

*It is important to note that these low-income measures capture the number and proportion of *individuals*, not *households*, falling within these low-income categories.

⁶ "Economic family" refers to two or more persons living in the same home, related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law union, adoption, or a foster relationship. Cohabiting, unrelated adults (e.g., roommates) do not constitute an economic family, nor do single-person households.

⁷ The Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) indicates whether a household receives 50% or less of the median household income in their region, adjusting for household size to accommodate that larger households have greater income needs.

	Cultural Diversity			
	Self-Identified Aboriginal ⁸	Self-Identified First Nations ⁹	Self-Identified Métis ¹⁰	Self-Identified Immigrant
City of Duncan	630 (14%)	485 (11%)	130 (3%)	605 (14%)
CVRD Electoral Area D	170 (5%)	70 (2%)	85 (3%)	475 (15%)
CVRD Electoral Area E	260 (6%)	195 (5%)	70 (2%)	340 (8%)
Total	1,060 (9%)	750 (6%)	285 (2%)	1,420 (12%)
<p>The City of Duncan is the most diverse within Central Cowichan, with 14% identifying as being Indigenous and 14% identifying as an immigrant. Overall, 9% of Central Cowichan residents identify as Indigenous, and 12% identify as immigrants.</p> <p>Central Cowichan has an Indigenous population that is proportionally lower than that of the overall CVRD (12%), but higher than BC (6%), and Canada (5%). In contrast, the proportion of Central Cowichan's population that identify as immigrants is roughly comparable to the overall CVRD (13%), and lower than BC (28%) and Canada (22%).</p>				
Most Common Mother Tongue				
City of Duncan	CVRD Electoral Area D	CVRD Electoral Area E		
English (85%)	English (92%)	English (93%)		
Most Common Language Spoken at Home				
City of Duncan	CVRD Electoral Area D	CVRD Electoral Area E		
English (91%)	English (98%)	English (97%)		
<p>While English is the most common first language, and most common language spoken at home, for large majorities of residents in Duncan, and Electoral Areas D and E, there were no other languages that predominated among non-English-primary speakers. There were a wide variety of languages other than English reported as being first languages and/or the language spoken most often at home. These included Tagalog, Vietnamese, Polish, German, Dutch, and others. Given that there were such a wide variety of languages, with none predominating as a "second-most-common" language in the region, there are no recommendations for languages of focus for future child care programs.</p>				

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

⁸ Self-identified Aboriginal, according to Statistics Canada's Census counting methodology, includes all individuals who identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or a combination thereof.

⁹ Self-identified First Nations in this column represents the count of individuals in the 2016 Census who identified as being solely of First Nations descent (i.e., not having multiple Indigenous heritages such as Métis and First Nations).

¹⁰ Self-identified Métis in this column represents the count of individuals in the 2016 Census who identified as being solely of Métis descent (i.e., not having multiple Indigenous heritages such as Métis and First Nations).

CHILDHOOD VULNERABILITY

“Vulnerability” in this context refers to a child’s likelihood to experience poor health, education, and/or social outcomes. Childhood vulnerability is captured on a regular basis in B.C. through the Human Early Learning Partnership’s Early Development Instrument (EDI). This instrument measures five core domains of early child development and identifies, based on questionnaire scores, children who are vulnerable in these five areas.

	Vulnerability (EDI)				
	Percentage of Children Vulnerable	Overall BC Vulnerability One Or More Scales (Wave 7)			
City of Duncan Electoral Areas D & E*	42% 39%	33%			
	Domain				
	Physical Health & Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language & Cognitive Development	Communication Skills
City of Duncan	33%	27%	19%	19%	28%
Electoral Areas D & E*	23%	24%	19%	16%	14%
<p>The percentage of vulnerable children in Cowichan Valley Central is <u>higher</u> than the provincial average for vulnerability on one or more scales based on the EDI Wave 7 data. Vulnerability was highest in Duncan, with 42% of children measured by the EDI considered vulnerable on one or more scales. Among the five subscales, rates of vulnerability were highest on physical health and well-being (33% of children vulnerable in Duncan, 23% in Electoral Areas D and E), and social competence (27% in Duncan, 24% in Electoral Areas D and E). Children in the City of Duncan also had high rates of vulnerability on the communication skills measure (28%).</p>					

EDI Wave 7 (2017-19), Human Early Learning Partnership

* Note: EDI data is based on school district boundaries. These boundaries do not directly map to the exact CVRD boundaries used for this report. Therefore, the EDI data presented in the table above are approximations for the areas that comprise Cowichan Valley Central, but are anticipated to be broadly representative of trends and needs in the region.

CURRENT STATE OF CHILD CARE IN COWICHAN VALLEY CENTRAL

This subsection of the report will provide a summary of the current state of child care in Cowichan Valley Central, specifically focusing on the potential demand for child care from children aged birth to 12 years and the current supply of licensed child care spaces available.

COWICHAN VALLEY CENTRAL CHILD CARE DEMAND FACTORS

Determining the need for child care is challenging given demand is influenced by a number of dynamic factors including, but not limited to, population and labour force participation rates over time. Initiatives such as the B.C. government's Universal Child Care Initiative will likely cause a significant increase in the demand for regulated child care as low-cost spaces are rolled out across the province, making licensed child care more affordable and accessible for a larger number of families.

POPULATION FACTORS

The population of children (aged 12 years and younger) in Cowichan Valley Central is projected to decrease very slightly between 2020 and 2030; there is a projected decrease of about 8% over the ten-year period, or approximately a 1% decrease annually. These decreases are occurring mainly in the 3-5 and 6-12 year age groups, while the number of children aged 0-2 is anticipated to remain relatively stable over the next decade. A summary of population statistics for Cowichan Valley Central broken down by area and age group can be found in Table CVC1.

Table CVC1: Cowichan Valley Central Population Projections, 2020-2030

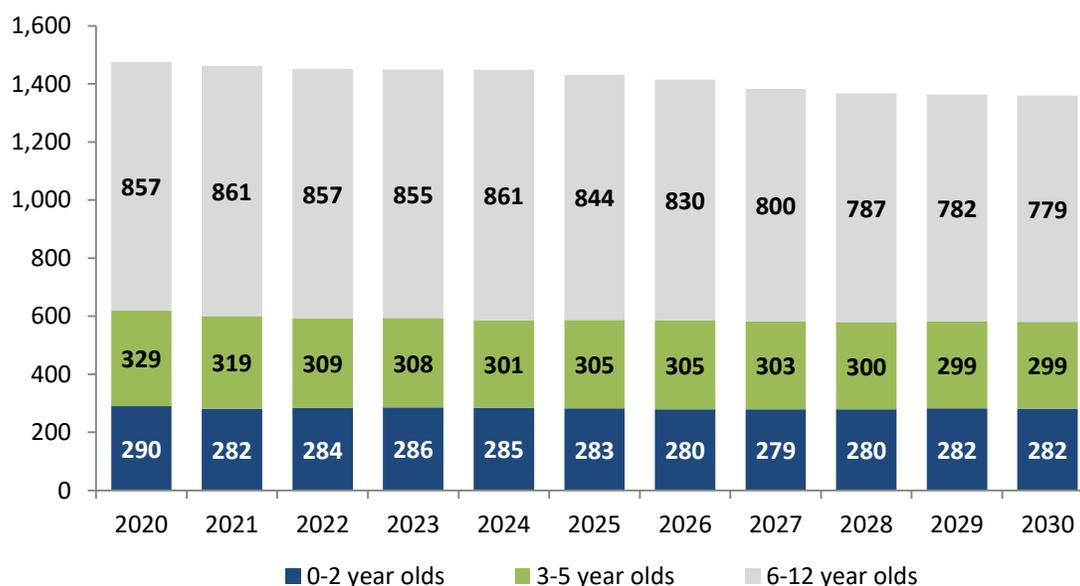
Area	2020	2025	2030	Change 2020-2030	Average Annual Change 2020-2030	Average Annual % Change 2020-2030
City of Duncan						
Children 0-2 years	105	103	102	-3	-0	0%
Children 3-5 years	119	111	109	-10	-1	-1%
Children 6-12 years	311	306	283	-28	-3	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	535	520	494	-41	-4	-1%
CVRD Electoral Area D						
Children 0-2 years	79	77	77	-2	0	0%
Children 3-5 years	90	83	82	-8	-1	-1%
Children 6-12 years	235	231	213	-22	-2	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	404	392	372	-32	-3	-1%

Area	2020	2025	2030	Change 2020-2030	Average Annual Change 2020-2030	Average Annual % Change 2020-2030
CVRD Electoral Area E						
Children 0-2 years	105	103	102	-3	0	0%
Children 3-5 years	119	111	109	-10	-1	-1%
Children 6-12 years	311	306	283	-28	-3	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	536	520	494	-42	-4	-1%
Cowichan Valley Central						
Children 0-2 years	290	283	282	-8	-1	0%
Children 3-5 years	329	205	299	-30	-3	-1%
Children 6-12 years	857	844	779	-78	-8	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	1,476	1,431	1,360	-116	-12	-1%

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

These changes in child population in Cowichan Valley Central, from 2020 to 2030, are illustrated in Figure CVC1 below. As noted above, the overall decrease is relatively small – about 1% - but this represents a decrease of 116 children in the region over the next ten years.

Figure CVC1: Cowichan Valley Central Projected Population Change, 2020-2030



Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

UTILIZATION OF LICENSED CHILD CARE SPACES

Cowichan Valley Central is located within the South Vancouver Island service delivery area. The South Vancouver Island service delivery area includes not only all of the CVRD, but also Greater Victoria and other municipalities; this impacts the overall averages for the area. Breakdowns at a more granular level, such as CVRD alone, are not available.

Utilization rates provide a broad measure of the uptake of available child care services in a region. These numbers represent what proportion of *available* child care spaces are *being used*.¹¹ Utilization rates offer a proxy for the appropriateness of the amount and combination of types of child care spaces available. Efficient use of child care spaces will be reflected in high utilization rates, indicating that there are not “too many” spaces available for the number of families in a region that want to make use of child care. However, at very high utilization rates – in excess of 80% to 85% – finding child care becomes progressively more challenging for families, potentially impacting the ability to find a suitable child care space that is accessible and affordable to them.

Utilization rates for South Vancouver Island, alongside provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators, are shown in Table CVC2. South Vancouver Island’s utilization rate is similar to the provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators. Across all groups, utilization rate was very high for infant-toddler care in 2016-17, while utilization rate was lower for the 3-5 year age group, and lowest for the school-age group.

Table CVC2: Average Monthly Child Care Space Utilization Rates, April 2016 through March 2017

Service Delivery Area	Group Care, Infant/Toddler	Group Care, 3 to 5 years	Group Care, School Age	Total Group Care	Family Care	Total Group and Family Care
British Columbia	85%	74%	48%	70%	72%	71%
South Vancouver Island	87%	70%	42%	65%	72%	69%
North Vancouver Island	88%	62%	38%	62%	68%	63%

Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. *Performance Management Report*. Volume 9 March 2017. Performance Indicator 1.01, Spare Capacity in Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/services-supports-for-parents-with-young-children/reporting-monitoring/00-public-ministry-reports/volume_9_mar_2017.pdf

Note: ‘Group Multi-Age’ spaces have been excluded as it cannot be determined which spaces of a facility’s reported enrolments are utilized, by age.

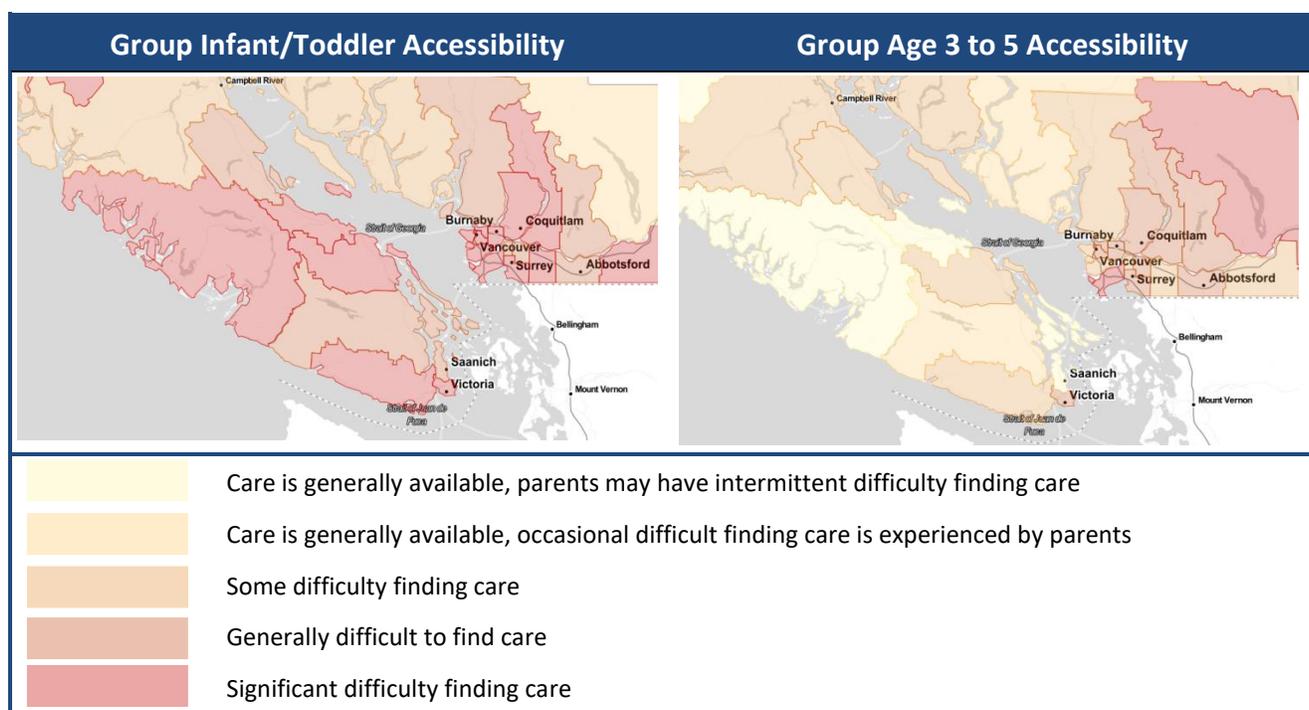
¹¹ A child care facility’s Utilization Rate is determined by dividing its total enrollments for the month by the number of times a child care space can be used in a month. Two part-time enrolments are assumed to be equivalent to one full-time enrollment; 100% utilization of one child care space is assumed to be 22 full-time equivalent enrollments in a month.

COWICHAN VALLEY CENTRAL CHILD CARE SUPPLY FACTORS

The accessibility of licensed child care spaces for infant/toddlers and children aged 3-5 years across the Cowichan Region in general is illustrated in Figure CVC2. These maps, based on 2017/18 data, suggest that parents generally have difficulty finding group infant/toddler child care, whereas care for the 3-5 age group is generally available, with occasional difficulty experienced by parents.

This aligns with information on utilization rates available (utilization is about 70% for the 3-5 years group in South Vancouver Island) and coverage rate data based on recent child care inventories, which suggest a 72% coverage rate for children aged 3-5 in the Cowichan Valley Central region. Findings from key informant interviews also stressed the pressing need for infant-toddler spaces, with less focus on the 3-5 years age group.

Figure CVC2: Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces in the Cowichan Region, 2017-18



Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. Early Years Performance Indicators: 1.01 Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from <https://mcf.gov.bc.ca/reporting/services/early-years/performance-indicators>

AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE IN COWICHAN VALLEY CENTRAL

There are currently a total of **402** licensed child care spaces across **27** programs in Cowichan Valley Central. Summaries of child care spaces and program type by area are below in Tables CVC3 and CVC4, respectively.

Table CVC3: Cowichan Valley Central Licensed Child Care Spaces, 2020

Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	Total Spaces
City of Duncan							
52	173	38	0	8	14	8	293
Electoral Area D							
0	0	0	0	8	7	8	23
Electoral Area E							
0	32	32	8	0	14	0	86
Total Cowichan Valley Central							
52	205	70	8	16	35	16	402

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey, Winter 2019/20

Table CVC4: Cowichan Valley Central Licensed Child Care Programs, 2020

Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	Total Programs
City of Duncan							
3	8	2	0	1	2	1	17
Electoral Area D							
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
Electoral Area E							
0	2	2	1	0	2	0	7
Total Cowichan Valley Central							
3	10	4	1	2	5	2	27

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey, Winter 2019/20

COWICHAN VALLEY CENTRAL CHILD CARE COVERAGE RATES

Current child care coverage rates (i.e., the number of child care spaces per 100 children) were calculated using current population estimates for Cowichan Valley Central, and the number of licensed child care spaces currently available in the region. Within Canada, the ratio of child care spaces per 100 children aged 12 and under varies significantly by province. The national average in 2017 was 27.2 spaces per 100 children, while British Columbia’s provincial average was considerably lower at 18.4 spaces per 100 children.¹²

Table CVC5 below summarizes the coverage rates, by age group, in Cowichan Valley Central.

Table CVC5: Cowichan Valley Central Licensed Child Care Coverage Rates, 2020

Age Group	Current Child Population	Current Number of Spaces	Current Estimated Coverage Rate
<i>All children 0-12 years</i>	1,524	402	26.4
Pre-school aged children, 0-5 years	654	361	55.2
Infant / Toddler children, 0-2 years	276	90	32.7
Preschool aged children, 3-5 years	378	271	71.6
School aged children, 6-12 years	870	41	4.7

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

There is little consensus or established benchmarks regarding what is a sufficient number of child care spaces within a region. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) identifies forward sortation areas (FSAs) with one licensed child care spot per three (or more) children aged 0-5 years (i.e., 33% coverage), and a minimum of 50 children in that FSA, as a child care desert. Families living in child care deserts are anticipated to experience significant difficulty getting access to child care.¹³ Currently, Cowichan Valley Central has a 33% coverage rate for children aged 0 to 2 years (infant-toddler group), putting it on the cusp of being a child care desert for that age group. Coverage is much higher for the 3-5 years age group, at 72%. The child care coverage rate for children aged 6-12 is lowest, at only 5% coverage.

Currently there are 26.4 child care spaces for every 100 children aged 0-12 years in Cowichan Valley Central.

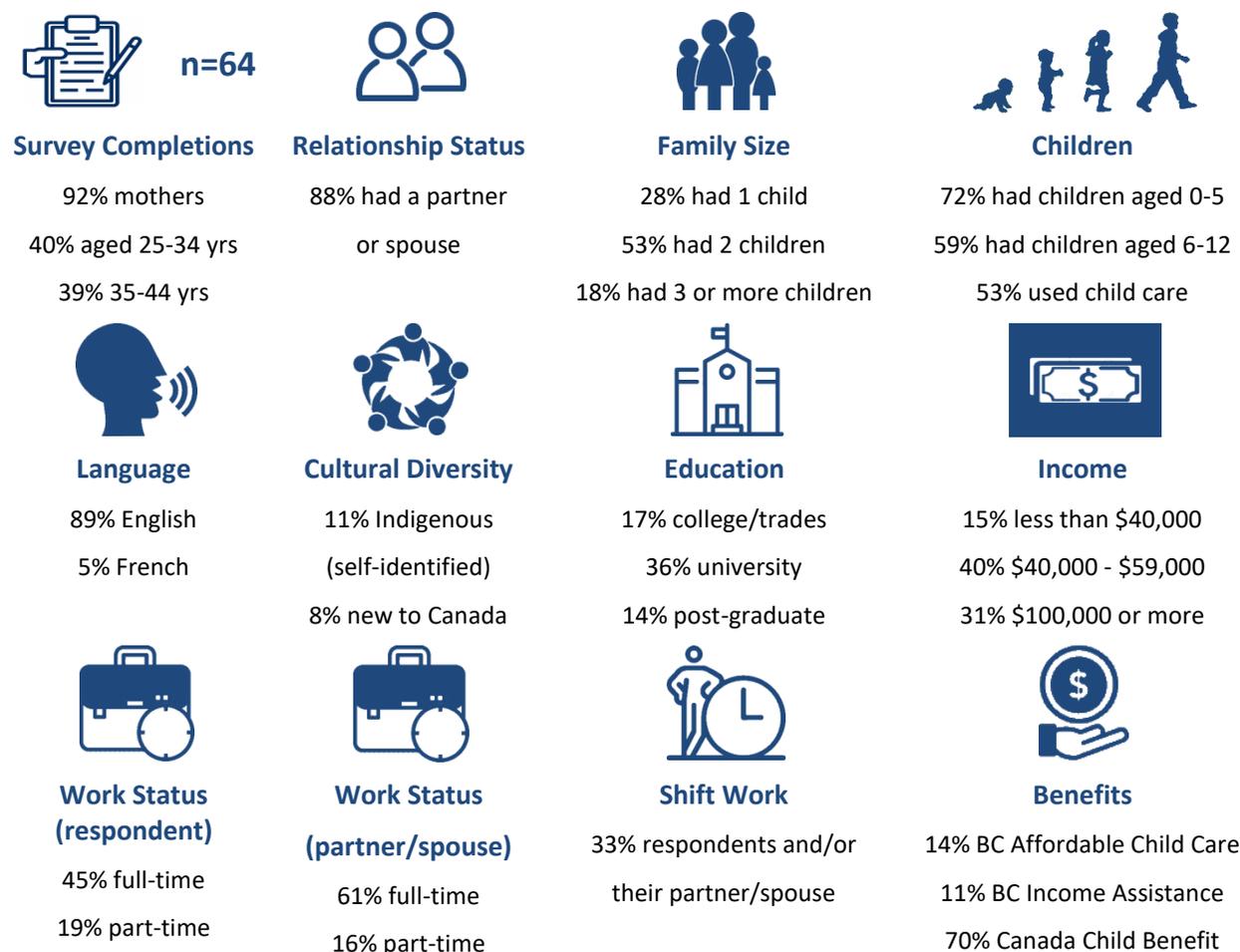
¹² Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2012 (9th edition, June 2013), Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Retrieved from https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/CRRU_ECEC_2012_revised_dec2013.pdf

¹³ Macdonald, D. Child Care Deserts in Canada. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (June 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2018/06/Child%20Care%20Deserts.pdf>

CHILD CARE QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

In addition to review of the child care capacity and coverage rates, Malatest conducted survey and interview research with stakeholders to better understand local perceptions of the quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care in Cowichan Valley Central. Information about research participants, and key themes that emerged from this research, are discussed in this section.

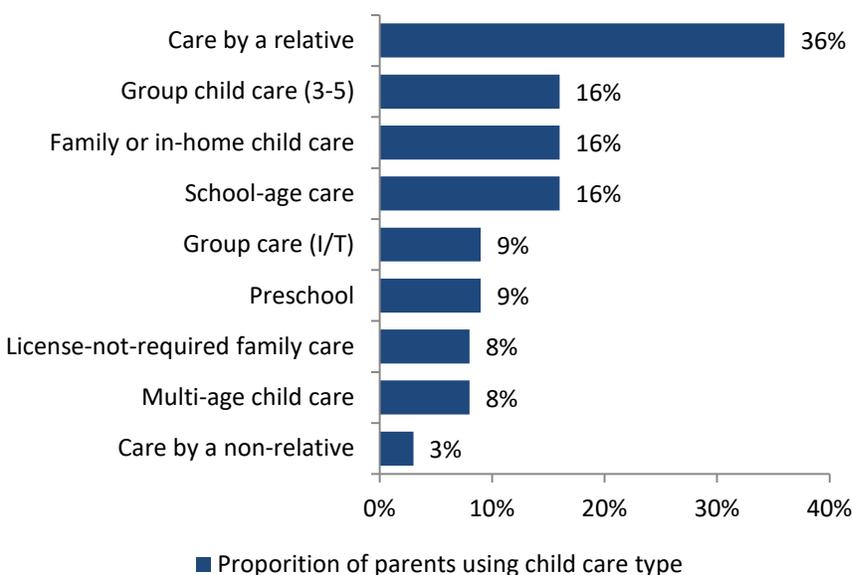
SUMMARY OF PARENT AND CAREGIVER SURVEY RESPONDENTS



Source: 2020 Cowichan Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey, n=64. Not all response options are shown.

Of the 64 parent/caregiver respondents, almost one-half (44%, n=28) reported using child care, and of these respondents used all care types (see Figure CVC3). Care by a relative was the primary care type used in Cowichan Valley Central (36%, n=23).

Figure CVC3: Child Care Use by Care Type, Cowichan Valley Central Respondents



Source: Cowichan Valley Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey, n=28. This question allowed for multiple responses, therefore percentages may add up to more than 100%.

KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Three key themes emerged from surveying and interviewing community stakeholders regarding child care in Cowichan Valley Central: availability, affordability, and quality of child care.

AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE

[There is a] huge need in our community for infant and toddler spaces.

Across all stakeholder groups, there was a consensus that more child care spaces are needed. Over three-quarters of child care providers in the Central Cowichan region (76%, n=16) reported a need for more child care spaces.

Currently, more than one-half (62%, n=13) of participating child care centres in Central Cowichan have waitlists. When asked about the number of spaces needed, almost one-half of these providers (43%, n=9) recommended

doubling the number of current spaces in the area.

One-half of all parents and caregivers in the Central Cowichan region (50%, n=32) cited lack of availability of child care spaces as a primary reason for not accessing their preferred type of child care. Over one-half of these parents and caregivers (61%, n=39) felt that the creation of more spaces would improve child care services in Cowichan Valley Central.

All groups agreed that infant and toddler spaces are particularly needed, followed by after-school care spaces. Increasing the availability of child care for children with extra support needs was also identified as a priority among all groups. Slightly less than two-thirds of child care provider respondents in the Central Cowichan area (62%, n=13) currently are able to care for children with additional support needs. As a result, available child care spaces are even scarcer for children with additional support needs. Only one-third of

parents and caregivers (37%, n=35) agreed with the statement, “Child care options in the Cowichan region provide all the services / supports necessary for children to succeed.”

Children with extra support needs [such as language and speech] tend to be underserved.

Key informants echoed these findings, and pointed out that there is not enough Support Child Development (SCD) funding available to support the children currently in care. For this reason, these interviewees questioned the benefits of additional spaces on the already-strained services in the region. Stakeholders also noted a lack of support workers who are able and/or willing to work contracted support hours.

Stakeholders shared stories of programs being unable to take on children requiring extra supports, due to insufficient numbers of trained educators or additional support staff. A small proportion of parents and caregivers (6%, n=4) surveyed said a barrier to accessing their preferred type of child care was that local care could not meet their child’s extra support needs.

In addition to a lack of spaces, all stakeholder groups expressed a need for more flexible options in the hours when care is available. Child care providers in Cowichan Valley Central recognized the need for extended hours including early mornings (48% agreed this was a need), later evenings (43% agreed this was a need), and before and after school and during school closures (52% agreed this was a need). Over one-half of parents in Central Cowichan (61%, n=39) said that a greater flexibility in hours of child care availability would improve local child care services. A number of stakeholders suggested opening a child care centre in the hospital to help improve accessibility of child care for shift workers.

Earlier start times for daycare would allow me to work more and would help all shift workers.

Finally, lack of public transportation to child care centres was noted as a challenge to accessibility of child care. The scarcity of child care spaces across the Cowichan region doesn’t allow parents and caregivers the option to select a child care site within walking distance from home, leaving it up to parents and caregivers to find ways to reach facilities that may be a long distance from their home and/or place of work. For those without reliable access to a personal vehicle, this creates an additional hurdle to accessing child care.

AFFORDABILITY OF CHILD CARE

All stakeholder groups and key informants agreed that child care is too expensive for many families. Participants believed that access to more affordable child care would have benefits for parents and caregivers in a number of areas. These included:

- Improve parents’ and caregivers’ chances to gain employment (20% of local parents/caregivers, n=12; 52% of the general population throughout the CVRD, n=49);
- Allow parents and caregivers to work more hours (30% of local parents/caregivers, n=19);
- Reduce parents’ and caregivers’ absences at work (22% of local parents/caregivers, n=14; 59% of the general population throughout the CVRD, n=56); and
- Allow parents and caregivers to improve their education, or update their training and/or credentials (30% of local parents/caregivers, n=19).

One-half of general population respondents in the CVRD (50%, n=47) indicated that lowering child care fees would result in increased economic prosperity. Majorities of both parents and caregivers in Central Cowichan (50%, n=32) and the general population throughout the CVRD (78%, n=74) agreed that low-cost child care would have a number of non-economic benefits. Anticipated benefits included:

- Reduced stress levels and improved mental health for parents and caregivers (50%, n=32 of parents and caregivers; 78%, n=74 of general population respondents);
- Increased parental and caregiver satisfaction with child care in the area (70%, n=45 of parents and caregivers); and
- Increased parental and caregiver satisfaction with their current child care arrangements (39%, n=25 of parents and caregivers).

One-half of parents and caregivers (50%, n=32) in Cowichan Valley Central reported cost as one of their primary reasons for not accessing their preferred type of child care.

Key informants stated that affordability of child care is a common concern among families they serve. These interviewees shared stories of many families, especially young parents, not being able to find child care even if they could afford it. Qualifying for child care was also noted as a concern, particularly for parents who are not employed or are attending school, and therefore cannot qualify for subsidies.

QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Slightly more than one-half of general population survey respondents (53%, n=35) agreed that “child care options in the Cowichan region offer quality child care.” Parents and caregivers in Central Cowichan were less likely to agree with that statement, with only 39% agreeing (n=50). However, over one-half of local parents and caregivers (55%, n=35) indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of care provided by the child care arrangement they currently have, and few (4%, n=6) were dissatisfied with the quality of their current child care arrangements. Key informants spoke highly of the quality of child care in the region.

Inclusivity, a common indicator of child care quality, is defined as the extent to which a child care site is inclusive of children of all abilities (including extra support needs) and incorporating the diversity of the community. Minorities of general population respondents throughout the CVRD (37%, n=35) and parents and caregivers local to Central Cowichan (26%, n=17) agreed that child care options in the Cowichan region are inclusive in terms of children’s abilities. Similarly, one-third of local parents and caregivers (31%, n=20), and less than one-half of the general population in the CVRD (45%, n=43) agreed that child care options reflect the diversity of the community. These findings suggest that inclusivity of child care could be an area for further improvement.

The quality of a child care centre is also impacted by the quality of the individuals who work there. Over two-thirds of child care providers in Central Cowichan (67%, n=14) believed that increased wages and a greater availability of qualified staff would improve the quality of child care in their area. In addition, key informants felt non-licensed care can hinder child care quality and if more care centres are added, they should be licensed.

CHALLENGES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

The number one issue is finding and retaining good quality staff.

Child care providers identified staffing as their primary challenge in providing child care. In particular, providers noted challenges with hiring qualified staff (67%, n=14) and retaining educators (48%, n=10). Similar issues were raised regarding potential challenges to expanding existing child care centres. These participants noted that it was a challenge to find an available labour pool of well-trained staff (47%, n=10 identified this as an issue) and to offer wages at the level needed to attract and retain these qualified staff (62%, n=13 identified this as an issue). However, many felt that an increased availability of early childhood educators would motivate them to increase the number of child care spaces at their facility.

A majority of stakeholders echoed the sentiments expressed by child care providers, regarding current staffing issues in the industry. There was consensus among all groups that increased compensation would encourage more people to pursue education in, and join, the child care profession as they could expect to be fairly compensated for their work.

[There is a] lack of people motivated to open a daycare, as it is a lot of work for little pay.

In Cowichan there are several municipal boundaries and capacity issues. Regional districts haven't had child care on their agendas and tightening budgets make it more difficult to add new services or expand existing ones.

Child care providers identified some other important areas that could influence child care sites' willingness to increase their capacity. Barriers to increasing the number of spaces included:

- The need for more physical space (52%, n=11); and
- More funding (57%, n=12).

More governance was also thought to be needed over unlicensed child care. Concerns were raised from stakeholders that these unlicensed centres get the same access to government funding as licensed child care centres, and they charge the same or more than licensed centre, yet their quality may often not be equivalent.

FUTURE CHILD CARE TARGETS

Based on anticipated future need for child care in Cowichan Valley Central, Malatest has developed a series of targets for increasing the supply of licensed child care spaces in the region. Recommendations include:

- Number of child care spaces needed, by age group and care type, over the next ten years to meet changing demographics and anticipated change in demand;
- Number of child care programs needed to accommodate these spaces;
- Space needs for recommended programs (i.e., interior and exterior space requirements to accommodate children in the identified programs);
- Potential sites in the City of Duncan, and Electoral Areas D and E, where additional needed programs could be located; and
- Staffing needs to accommodate the increased number of programs and spaces recommended.

SPACE CREATION TARGETS

This subsection of the report provides short-, medium-, and long-term child care space creation targets for Cowichan Valley Central.

Space creation targets for each of the child care age groups were calculated by multiplying projected populations for each age group (taken from BC Stats' PEOPLE Population projections) by target coverage rates for these age groups. Target coverage rates were decided based on multiple factors: available recommendations for best practice in existing literature, the experience of other jurisdictions in providing child care, and estimates of unmet need for each age group within the CVRD based on survey and interview data. Baseline target coverage rates for each of the age groups were:

- 55% for the 0-2 years age group;
- 85% for the 3-5 years age group; and
- 20% for the 6-12 years age group.

These target coverage rates were baselines only, and were adjusted for each community as appropriate based on anticipated unmet need as well as findings from key informant interviews. For more information on how these targets were arrived at, please refer to the Methodology Section of the Final Report prepared for this project.

These targets identify the number of child care spaces required to support the projected population of Cowichan Valley Central over the next ten years (see Table CVC6). The most aggressive increases are seen in the 6-12 year age group, as this age group requires the largest increase in coverage rates – a fourfold increase from 5% coverage to 20% coverage by 2030.

Table CVC6: Total Target Child Care Spaces by Age Group, Cowichan Valley Central, 2020-2030

Year	Spaces Children 0-2 years	Spaces Children 3-5 years	Total Spaces Children 0-5 years	Spaces Children 6-12 years	Total Spaces Children 0-12 years
2020	90	271	361	41	402
2021	90	262	352	60	412
2022	94	254	347	86	433
2025	105	250	354	118	473
2030	120	245	365	156	521

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces only); 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

Space creation targets for 2030 require 119 net new spaces over ten years: 30 for infant-toddler, a reduction of 26 spaces for preschool ages, and 115 additional spaces for school-aged children.

Table CVC7 provides a summary of how these required spaces could be broken down by child care type. It is important to note that very small increases in family and in-home multi-age child care were projected, due to the fact that these operations have low capacity numbers and most in the region are already serving as many children as possible. The only way to substantially increase child care spots in these types of programs would be for child care operators to open their own in-home facilities, which is considerably more challenging to promote and incentivize than adding capacity to other types of child care sites.

Table CVC7: Total Target Child Care Spaces by Type of Care, Cowichan Valley Central, 2020-2030

Type of Care	2020 Supply	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2021*	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2022*	Estimated Medium-Term Need, 2025*	Estimated Long-Term Need, 2030*
Group Child Care (Birth to 36 months)	52	54	56	62	68
Group Child Care (30 months to school age)	205	211	221	243	265
Licensed Preschool	70	72	75	82	92
Group Child Care (School age)	8	8	13	16	24
Multi-Age Child Care	16	16	17	19	21
Family Child Care	35	35	35	35	35
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	16	16	16	16	16
Total Child Care Spaces	402	412	433	473	521

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces only)

*Consultant estimates

Figures in brackets indicate net change in space numbers between the column's year targets and the previous column's year targets.

It is important to note that, over the course of this project, School District 79 has committed to creating 201 new child care spaces, 74 of which will be in Duncan, within the Central Cowichan region. Of these 74 spaces, 50 are being dedicated to Group Child Care (30 months to School Age) and 24 are being dedicated to Group Child Care (Birth to 36 months). As a result, some of the targets provided above may already have been met.

Finally, Table CVC8 provides a summary of the overall increase in coverage rates, from 2020 to 2030, based on recommended space creation targets and population projections for these age groups. As can be seen in the table, childcare space creation targets proposed by Malatest result in the largest improvements targeted at the 0-2 years age group, while increases are smallest among the 6-12 years age group.

Table CVC8: Change in Proportional Child Care Coverage, Cowichan Valley Central, 2020-2030

Age Group	2020	2030	Percentage Point Change
0-5 years	55%	74%	+19 pts
0-2 years	33%	58%	+25 pts
3-5 years	72%	86%	+14 pts
6-12 years	5%	20%	+15 pts
Overall Coverage Rate: 0-12 years	26%	43%	+17 pts

PROGRAM CREATION AND SITE LOCATION NEEDS

In addition to estimating the need for individual child care spaces, by age group and care type, over the next decade, Malatest developed estimates and recommendations on creation of child care programs to accommodate these additional spaces, and identified potential sites that could be used to house these additional child care programs. These estimates and recommendations are discussed in the sub-sections below.

PROGRAM CREATION

Malatest used its recommendations for space creation targets, by care type, to identify the number of additional programs that will be needed to accommodate these targets. In calculating the number of additional programs needed, the following assumptions or parameters were used:

- All programs will be fully subscribed to the legal maximums prescribed by the provincial government; and
- Where partial programs are needed (e.g., calculation indicated a need for 4.35 programs), number of needed programs were always rounded up to accommodate legal requirements for the *maximum* number of children in a program.

As a result of these approaches, these recommendations for additional programs needed should be taken as the minimum required to meet the space creation targets identified, but will also provide a small amount of additional capacity for more spaces if needed by the community.

Further, it is important to note that Malatest has delineated a difference between *programs* and *sites*. “Program” refers to each licensed child care program that serves up to its maximum number of children. “Site” refers to the physical location (building and outdoor space) that serves one or more programs. Many of the larger child care operators host multiple programs at their site; for example, a child care operator who reports 24 spaces for infant-toddler group care hosts two programs, as the maximum number of children who can be served by that care type in a single program is 12.

Given that the UBCM inventory does not break down the number or programs at a specific site in this manner, the number of sites in 2020 is a best estimate based on the number of spaces that each operator reports offering and the applicable legal maximum enrolments for each type of care. It is also important to note that staffing shortages may be limiting the ability of sites to operate at their maximum potential capacity. For example, while the maximum number of children in a licensed preschool program is 20, there is also a requirement that there be a minimum of one ECE or ECE assistant for every ten children (with at least one full ECE required for every program). Therefore, it should not be assumed that simply because a site appears to have unfilled spaces based on potential maximum capacity, these sites could start meeting an increase in demand immediately.

Finally, it is important to note that although in some cases, there are negative net gains in programs between 2020 and 2030 based on Malatest’s recommendations, this should not be taken as a blanket recommendation to completely shutter child care programs or whole sites. Closure of child care sites would likely result in backlash from families in the community, and closure of sites in already poorly served areas could result in *no* child care sites being available to some families within a reasonable distance. Therefore, where there is potential to close child care programs, municipalities and electoral areas should consider:

1. Whether there is an opportunity to reduce the number of programs within a single site (e.g., if a child care center currently operates the equivalent of two preschool-aged group care programs, could this be reduced to one in order to maintain access within the geographic area while still reducing the number of spaces?),
2. Whether closures would put hardship on the local community or neighbourhood to find alternative child care options, and
3. If there are opportunities to re-purpose program closures to offer other needed programs (e.g., if the preschool-aged group care is over-served, but additional programs are needed for birth to 36 months group care, can that program space be altered to serve a different group rather than shut down altogether?).

With these considerations in mind, Table CVC9 summarizes the changing needs for child care programs in Cowichan Valley Central over the next ten years. Due to anticipated decreases in the number of children in the region, and already-high proportional coverage rates, Malatest anticipates a need for three fewer group care programs for children aged 30 months to school age, and two fewer licensed preschools. There will, however, be increases in demand for all other care programs. In particular, Malatest anticipates a large increase in need for multi-age care programs to accommodate the higher target coverage rates for school-aged children, and a need for two additional group care programs serving infants and toddlers.

Table CVC9: Change in Need for Child Care Programs, Cowichan Valley Central, 2020-2030

	Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Care	Family Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care
2020 Spaces Reported	52	205	70	8	16	35	16
2020 Programs	7	13	7	2	2	5	2
2030 Target Spaces*	103	227	81	82	52	40	24
2030 Programs Needed*	9	10	5	3	7	6	3
2030 Net Program Gain	2	-3	-2	1	5	1	1

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces and programs only)

*Consultant estimates

PROGRAM SPACE NEEDS

Each child care program is required to meet certain minimum space requirements, to ensure adequate area for care, activities, and enrichment for children served by the program. Based on the number of additional child care programs identified as needed in each sub-region of the CVRD, Malatest has calculated the amount of additional space – interior and exterior – needed to accommodate these additional programs. Below is a list of assumptions and limitations should be kept in mind when reviewing the estimates of additional space needed.

- Calculation of additional space needed for each program type was calculated based on provincial minimum requirements. These recommendations should be considered the *minimum* needed to legally open and operate the recommended child care programs.

- Malatest has assumed that all programs will be operating at maximum capacity, therefore calculation of site size was based on per-child space requirements at the maximum number of children allowable in a single program.
- There are different maximum program enrollments by age within the school-aged group care program; these programs may serve up to 25 children in the K-Grade 2 age group, and up to 30 children older than that. Malatest’s calculations for space requirements for these programs are based on a “middle ground” assumption of enrollment at 28 children per program.
- Exterior space requirements for preschool and school-aged group care programs, as well as home-based care programs, specify that an exterior activity area must exist, but do not give space requirements. Malatest has maintained the general requirement of 7 m² per child that exists for other group care programs, to create estimates, however it should be noted that municipalities and electoral areas may have flexibility for these program types in terms of the exact size of outdoor activity areas.
- Provincial interior space minimums do not account for non-activity areas that may be required, such as hallways, janitorial closets, washrooms, and kitchens. Malatest has added a 25% allowance to interior space calculations to accommodate for these other spaces, based on recommendations from the City of Richmond’s Child Care Design Guidelines.
- There are provincial allowances for some co-located programs to share required non-activity areas such as kitchen facilities and janitorial closets. This is an opportunity to reduce the total amount of space needed to meet new program requirements and maximize efficient use of available sites. However, given insufficient information available to Malatest regarding the total size of potential child care sites and thus the ability to co-locate programs at single sites, Malatest has not assumed that programs will be co-located and so the space recommendations here may be slightly higher than actual needs.
- Exterior space requirements account for activity areas accessible to children only. These exterior space requirements do not account for other space that may be required under applicable bylaws such as set-backs, parking spaces, or pick-up and drop-off areas.

With these considerations in mind, Table CVC10 summarizes program space needs by program type. Space needs are given for each program (columns three and four), and overall space needs to accommodate all needed programs of that type (columns five and six).

Table CVC10: Interior and Exterior Space Needs to Serve Recommended Program Creation, 2030

Care Type	New Sites Needed by 2030	Interior Floor Space per Program (m ²)	Exterior Activity Space per Program (m ²)	Total Interior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)	Total Exterior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)
Group care, birth to 36 months	2	55.5	84.0	111.0	168.0
Group care, 30 months to school age	-3	115.6	175.0	-346.9	-525.0
Licensed Preschool	-2	92.5	140.0	-185.0	-280.0
Group care, school age	1	103.1	192.5	103.1	192.5
Multi-Age Care	5	37.0	56.0	185.0	280.0
Family Child Care	1	32.4	49.0	32.4	49.0
In-Home Multi-Age Care	1	37.0	56.0	37.0	56.0

Reference: *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. Child Care Licensing Regulation. Retrieved from http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/loo70/loo70/12_319_89

POTENTIAL CHILD CARE SITES

Malatest has identified a number of potential sites for housing new child care programs throughout Cowichan Valley Central. The following three maps illustrate the location of existing child care locations (represented by circles), and locations of potential future child care sites (represented by triangles) in each of the City of Duncan, Electoral Area D, and Electoral Area E.

It is important to note that Malatest did not assess potential future child care sites for their suitability for different types of child care programs. A number of issues that could not be addressed in the data that Malatest had available should be examined prior to making any final decisions about the suitability of potential sites, including:

- Interior and exterior floor space available, and whether there is sufficient space to meet minimum requirements for the intended care program(s);
- Building remediation and upgrading needs, whether it will be cost-efficient to make the building suitable for child care programs if such improvements are needed;
- Ability of municipalities and partner organizations to negotiate sale or leasing agreements with current property owners; and
- Accessibility of potential sites to likely child care users (e.g., whether the site is easily accessible by public transit, whether it would serve an area or neighbourhood that is currently under-served by child care programs, etc.).

Figure CVC4: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Duncan

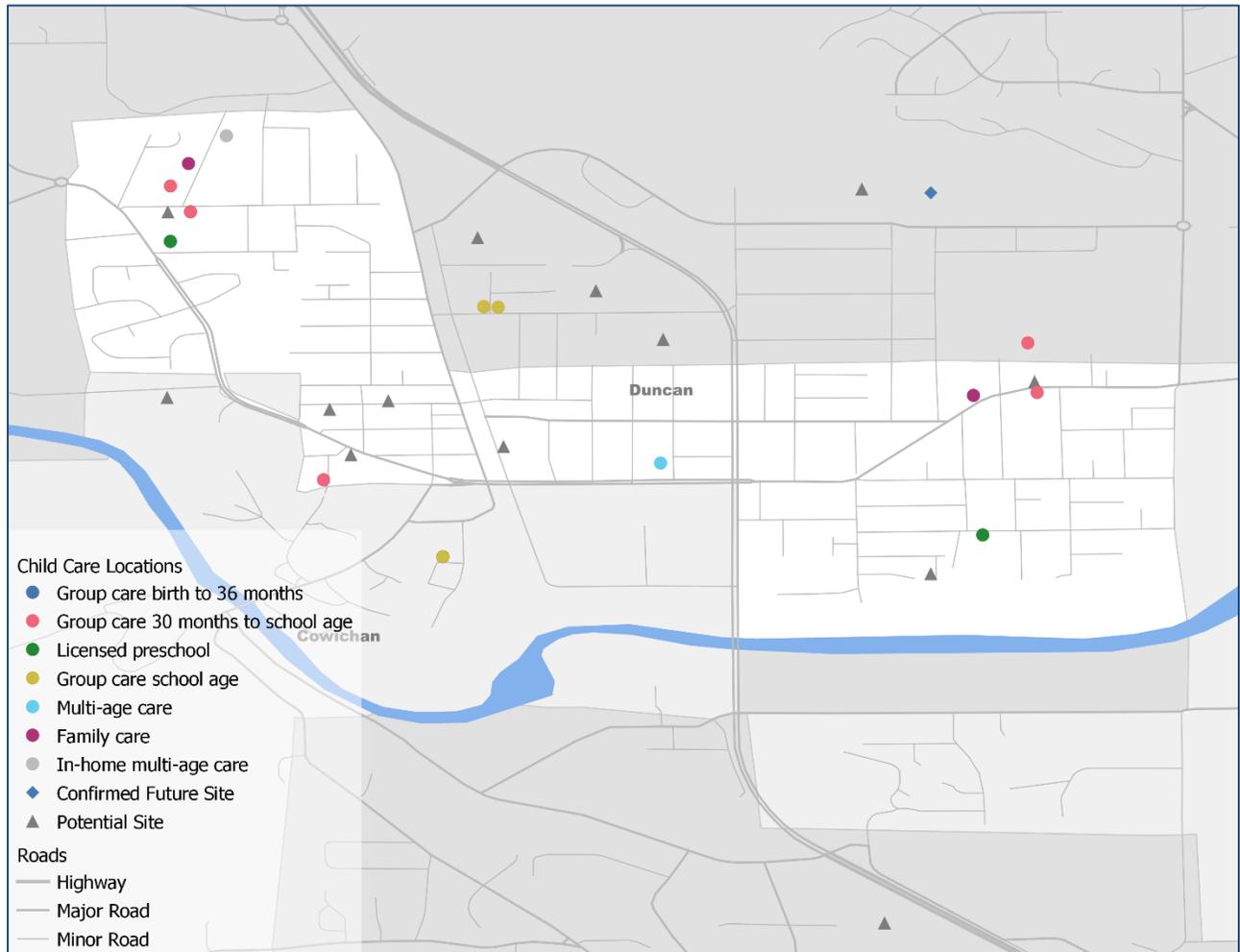


Figure CVC5: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Electoral Area D

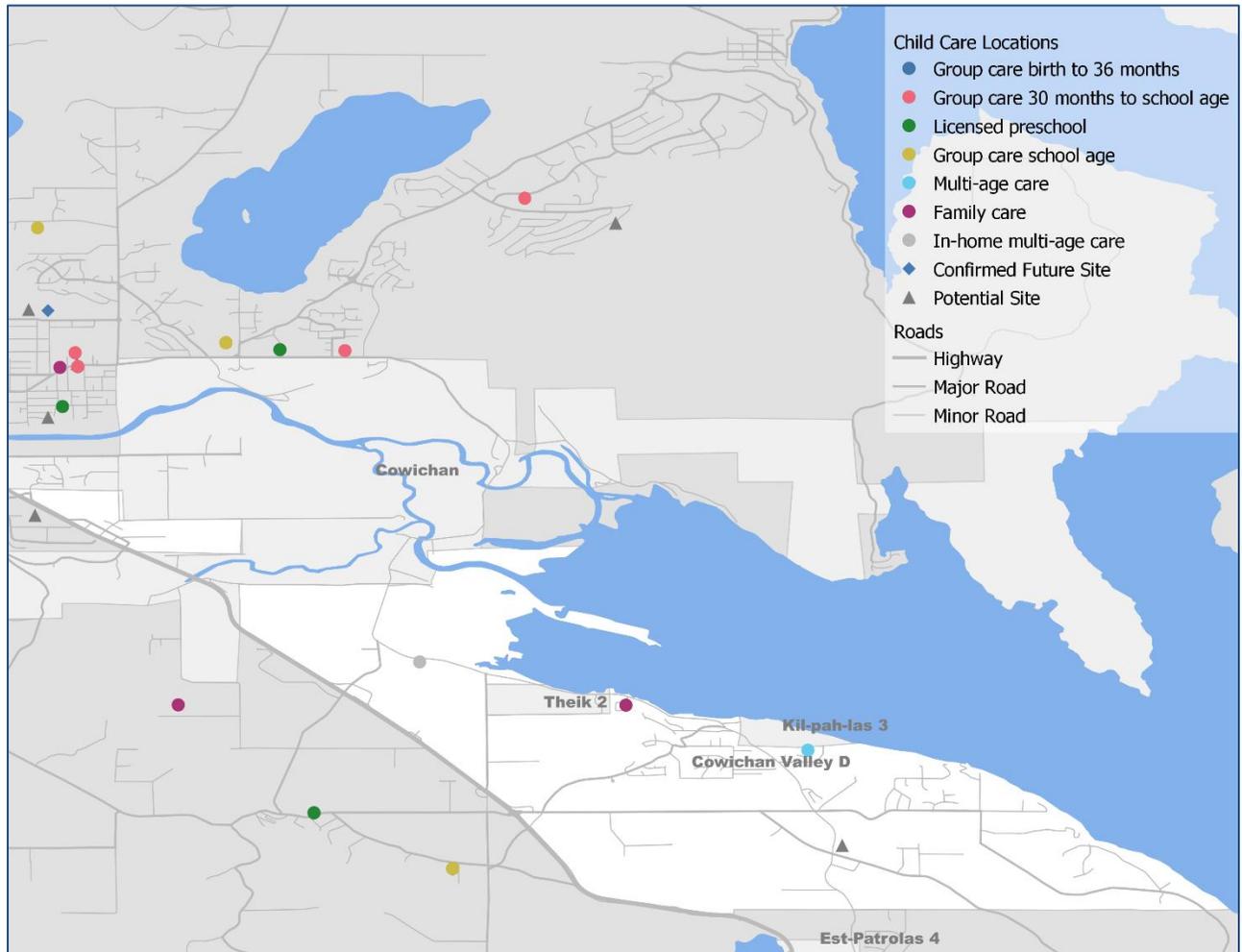
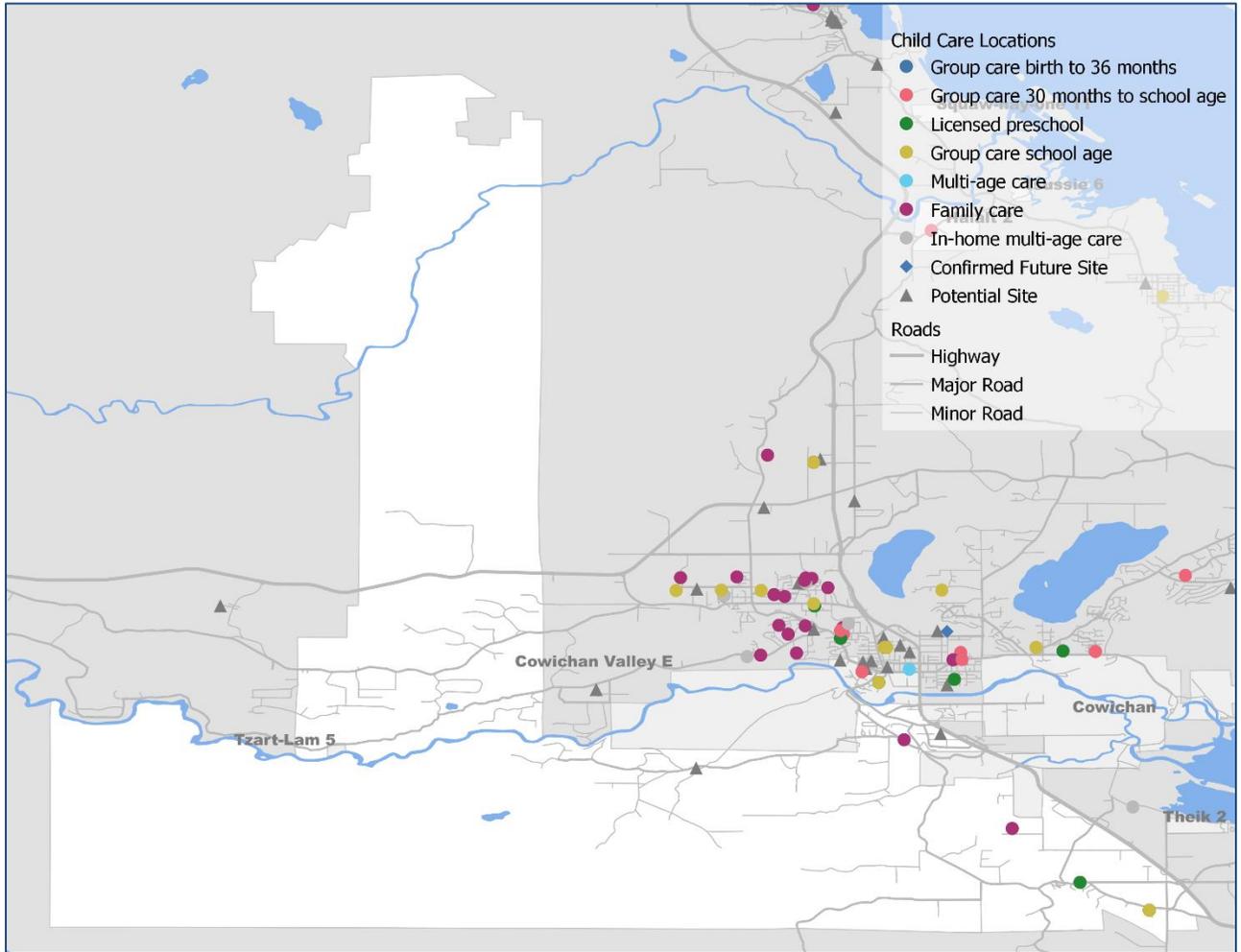


Figure CVC6: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Electoral Area E



STAFFING NEEDS FOR FUTURE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Finally, as noted previously, the ability to offer child care spaces is limited not only by physical space at a site, but also by the number of staff available to supervise and care for children. Minimum staffing requirements are established by the provincial government and are applicable to all licensed child care programs, although requirements vary by program type.

Malatest has calculated the number of staff that will be needed to serve the new programs and number of new spaces recommended to be created in the Cowichan region by 2030. When calculating these requirements, the following assumptions were made:

- All programs recommended for creation will be fully subscribed;
- All programs will be staffed at the minimum qualification level required by the provincial government (e.g., if a program requires one ECE and one ECE assistant, Malatest assumed that the second staff member is qualified at the ECE assistant level and the program does not employ two full ECEs); and
- All staff work full-time (i.e., these are full-time equivalency, or FTE, positions).

It should also be noted that Malatest did not undertake a comprehensive labour market analysis of child care workers in the Cowichan region. Typically, forecasting for future labour market need would encompass surveying employers regarding not only their current number of employees and qualification levels, but also the ages and expected retirements of these employees, employee turnover rate, and other metrics that can be used to create a comprehensive forecast of labour market trends over the medium- to long-term. Although Malatest has calculated the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by creating additional child care spaces and, thus, new child care programs, this forecast does not account for potential complicating factors in workforce needs such as coming retirements, “burnout rate” where workers – particularly those in caregiving work – leave the profession entirely, in- and out-migration of qualified workers in the region, and other factors that can impact labour markets beyond simply graduation rates from eligible programs and positions available in the region.

With these considerations in mind, Table CVC11 summarizes the total needed child care workers, by qualification level, by 2030. Included in the table are both total labour pool needs in Cowichan Valley Central, and the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by the recommended increase in spaces by 2030.

Within Cowichan Valley Central, the recommendations to reduce the number of preschool-aged care programs (both licensed preschools and group care for this age group) will result in a decreased need for ECE Assistants. However, there will be increased demand for fully qualified ECEs, and ECEs with infant-toddler training. There is an opportunity here to encourage some of those currently qualified as ECE Assistants to pursue upgrading to meet these changes in demand for qualifications. There is also anticipated to be an increase in demand for child care workers with Responsible Adult certification in order to meet increased demand for school-aged spots. However, Responsible Adult certification is the minimum credential required to work in these care programs; ECE Assistants may also fill these roles.

Table CVC11: Child Care Worker Needs by Qualification Level, Cowichan Valley Central, 2030

	Group Care, birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, school age	Multi-Age Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care	Total Staffing Requirements
Total 2030 Programs Needed	9	10	5	3	7	6	3	-
Gain in Programs by 2030	2	-3	-2	1	5	1	1	-
Total ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Gain in ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total ECE Needed	9	10	5	0	7	0	3	34
Gain in ECE Needed	2	-3	-2	0	5	0	1	3
Total ECE Assistant Needed	9	30	5	0	0	0	0	44
Gain in ECE Assistant Needed	2	-9	-2	0	0	0	0	-9
Total Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	9	0	6	0	15
Gain in Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	4

MUNICIPAL BYLAWS, RESOURCES, AND PLANS

While a number of areas for potential improvement and expansion of child care in Cowichan Valley Central have been identified in this report, these suggestions should be considered within the context of broader municipal or regional needs, priorities, and plans. There are a number of areas under municipal jurisdiction, such as zoning and business licensing, that can be leveraged to support strong child care growth initiatives.

Table CVC12 below summarizes the types of municipal approaches that can have an impact on child care availability, affordability, and accessibility in a region. The three right-most columns indicate whether each of the communities within Cowichan Valley Central have undertaken such an approach to date. Where a column has been left blank, Malatest has confirmed with the relevant municipal or regional government that this approach has *not* been implemented to date and therefore may be an opportunity for action at the municipal or regional level.

Table CVC12: Municipal Policies, Plans, Bylaws and Resources, within Cowichan Valley Central

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Duncan	Area D	Area E
<i>Strategies, Plans, and Policies</i>				
Child Care Strategy or Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges child care as fundamental to supporting healthy children and communities • Provides guiding principles for municipal governments when working individually, with other levels of government, and/or with businesses and non-profit organizations; guiding principles help ensure that various initiatives and efforts are complementary and support one another 			
Child care addressed in Official Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that child care facilities and businesses are incorporated into long-term community development goals, land use planning, and business licensing practices 	✓	✓	✓
Child care addressed in Social Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges links among social inequities and access to child care (e.g., poverty, gendered differences in labour force participation) • Provides guiding principles on creation and implementation of child care policies that address, or do not exacerbate, existing social inequities 			
Child care considered a community amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates incentives for local government to approve appropriate zoning and business licensing for child care throughout region / city • If voluntary amenity contributions are available to developers, child care as an amenity incentivizes and leverages private capital to serve the community's child care needs 			

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Duncan	Area D	Area E
Other child care strategies, plans, and policies				
Municipal Resources				
Municipal building space available for child care (any cost structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate set-asides for child care space can reduce market competition for operators and ensure availability of space 	✓		
Municipal grants for child care operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can provide funding to sustain specific child care operations, ensuring that specific communities maintain a minimum level of access Grants at a municipal level allow for funding to be targeted to better meet specific community needs (more targeted than provincial operating grants) 			
Municipal grants for child care capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can encourage creation or expansion of child care facilities in specific communities / neighbourhoods to meet community needs Can help operators leverage private equity / investment that otherwise would not be sufficient to accomplish capital project Creates physical space to support creation of needed child care spots 			
Child care design guidelines available to child care operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies requirements on child care facilities for operators, reducing confusion and facilitating capital projects Can promote best practices or community goals through design guidelines and recommendations 			
Child care information documents for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates access to child care for local residents, by making them aware of available licensed child care options 			
Municipal child care program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures a minimum number of child care spaces are available locally 			
Municipal staff resource dedicated to child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can promote and enforce municipal requirements for child care businesses (thereby ensuring quality of care), advise on provincial requirements Can promote information about available child care programs in municipality to families 			
Other child care documents				
Other				

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Duncan	Area D	Area E
<i>Child Care Facilities Permitted In:</i>				
Single Family Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓	✓	✓
Duplex (semi-detached) Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 		✓	✓
Row House / Townhouse Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 		✓	✓
Apartment Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 			
Mixed Use Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care) 			
Commercial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 	✓		
Public Use / Assembly Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 	✓		
Industrial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 			
Agricultural Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care) 		✓	✓

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Duncan	Area D	Area E
<i>Additional Zoning or Licensing Requirements for Child Care</i>				
Additional parking required for home-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to limit ability of child care operators to offer home-based child care 	✓		
Municipal Business License required for child care use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional fees and submission requirements can create barriers to opening a child care business, or operating a child care business legally 	✓		
Non-resident child care staff are permitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows home-based child care operations to accommodate more children, if space on property allows 	✓		
Additional outdoor play space requirements / recommendations above provincial standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of spaces in a municipality that may house child care facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for space 			
Additional building requirements beyond the BC Building Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of buildings in a municipality that may house facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for qualifying buildings. 			

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are a series of recommendations for a child care strategy in Cowichan Valley Central. These recommendations incorporate findings from all three major lines of inquiry: population projections and target setting for future child care spaces and programs; stakeholder consultation regarding the availability, accessibility, and quality of child care in the region; and secondary data review of existing municipal policies, resources, and bylaws among communities in the Cowichan region.

While this report is intended for the use of Cowichan Valley Central and its constituent municipalities and districts, there are a number of priority areas for change that are outside the jurisdiction of municipal and regional governments. Therefore, recommendations listed here include comment on responsible and/or contributing levels of government.

Finally, it should be noted that the specific actions for municipal, regional, and provincial governments are not meant to be definitive recommendations; they are suggestions for actions that would support the overarching recommendation. Each community and government must consider their local context, mandate, and other factors when deciding which actions to pursue.

INCREASING COVERAGE RATES

Increase the number of child care spaces as per the recommended space creation targets.

This report has provided a detailed breakdown of recommended space creation targets, by age group and by care type (see Tables CVC6 and CVC7). Malatest recommends making efforts to meet these targets within the time frame specified, with regular review and assessment of capacity to ensure these targets remain relevant.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- Review and revise existing bylaws and regulations that may be artificially limiting the ability of child care operators to offer child care (e.g., space requirements per child that are above provincial requirements), to enable existing operators to offer more child care spaces
- Incorporate targets for the creation of child care spaces and programs into community planning and strategy documents, to promote a coherent and complementary approach to child care across all departments of municipal government
- Consider creating grants to fund child care operations and/or capital investment projects, to support the creation of new programs and spaces
- Explore opportunities to acquire sites, either through purchase or lease agreements, to be made available to child care operators to support target spaces and programs

Provincial Government Actions

- Make available grant funds for capital projects to support child care space and program creation targets
- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, anticipate providing funding to child care centers aligned with space and program creation targets

Emphasize increasing infant/toddler spaces.

Space creation targets place a strong emphasis on infant/toddler spaces; this reflects both the comparatively low current coverage rate for this age group, as well as demand voiced by stakeholders who participated in this research. Malatest recommends that efforts to expand child care coverage in the region should ensure that creation of infant/toddler spaces are prioritized.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- Should target space creation targets be revised, municipal governments should consider the resulting coverage rates and aim for, at a minimum a 33% coverage rate for children aged 0-2 years old
- Incorporate language in official community plans and social plans that acknowledges the importance of infant/toddler child care in allowing mothers to re-enter the workforce, thus reducing “brain drain” in local sectors as well as promoting gender equity

Provincial Government Actions

- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, set aside a certain proportion of funding to be dedicated to infant/toddler spaces in the region

CREATING NEW CHILD CARE SITES

Support creation of new child care programs and sites.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will necessitate the creation of new child care programs and, likely, opening of new child care centers and facilities in the region. This will require considerable capital investment that could be aided by support from both municipal and provincial governments.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- Consider making current available municipal space (e.g., unused space in municipal buildings) available for the exclusive use of child care programs
- Consider leasing / renting available municipal space to child care programs for no, nominal, or below-market rates
- Examine opportunities to acquire sites (e.g., closed elementary schools) for the operation of child care programs
- Consider making municipal grants available for capital investment projects, to leverage private dollars to expand existing child care sites

Provincial Government Actions

- Make grants available for capital investment projects, either to renovate and build new sites or to expand existing sites
- Consider working with regional and municipal governments to promote acquisition of sites for child care use

ACCESSIBILITY

Consider public accessibility of potential new child care sites.

Accessibility and location of child care sites was noted by a number of stakeholders in this research; many noted that there are a number of child care facilities that are not accessible by public transit. This results in the child care programs under-serving the community, particularly lower income families who may not have access to a personal vehicle. Accessibility and location of child care sites should be considered when examining potential child care sites.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans emphasizing the need for child care sites to serve the entire community, and therefore be accessible by public transit
- When assessing potential future sites for child care programs, consider accessibility by public transit and prioritize locations that are more accessible
- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit

Provincial Government Actions

- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit
- Incorporate consideration of accessibility by public transit into any potential land transfers with municipal or regional governments, prioritizing sites with public transit access for child care use

Consider need for, and incentivize, child care with extended and non-traditional hours.

Shift work poses a unique challenge to finding child care options. Very few child care sites in the Cowichan region offer extended hours such as early morning, late evening, or overnight care. Yet, for families where one or both parents are employed in shift work, there is a need to find child care options that can provide reliable care during these hours.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- If municipal operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- If municipal space is being used for child care programs, consider options to allow access to facilities during these extended hours.
- Explore options with provincial government to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

Provincial Government Actions

- If provincial operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- Explore options with municipal and regional governments to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

AFFORDABILITY

Attend to affordability as a key aspect of the expansion of child care in the Cowichan region.

Affordability of child care was noted as a major barrier to child care, and to child care of choice, among parents and caregivers in this research. Further, child care space targets set out in this report have assumed a considerable increase in demand due to an increase in affordability. As such, affordability of child care for families in the region should be a major priority for municipal, regional, and provincial governments.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans, acknowledging the importance of child care being affordable to local residents to ensure equal opportunity and accessibility for all children
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)
- Examine opportunities to reduce child care operators' overhead through making municipal space available to them for no, nominal, or below-market rent

Provincial Government Actions

- Continue the rollout of the Universal Child Care program, which provides child care to families at a low, flat cost per day (currently \$10 per day)
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)

SUPPORTING CHILD CARE WORKERS AND PROVIDERS

Promote child care as a career to youth in the Cowichan region.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will require the creation of many full-time equivalency child care positions throughout the Cowichan region. As a result, there will be a large need in the region for qualified child care workers, particularly those with higher levels of qualifications (e.g., ECE, ECE with infant-toddler and/or special needs training).

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- Promote child care work as a career through community programs and space (e.g., an ad campaign in recreation centers and local schools)

Provincial Government Actions

- Promote child care work, particularly the ECE qualification, through existing career promotion programs (e.g., the *Find Your Fit* tour has an ECE station, this tour could be brought to Cowichan region secondary schools)
- Consider expanding ECE programs at post-secondary institutions on Vancouver Island to ensure sufficient graduates to meet demand over the coming ten years

Promote the ECE qualification, and ECE with special training, to current and potential child care workers.

During this research, Malatest heard from recent graduates of ECE programs that the ECE qualification itself was perceived to be financially burdensome, when considering the investment required and the anticipated pay of an ECE-qualified position. Many noted that it made more financial sense to seek a lower level of qualification, such as an ECE Assistant, because the difference in pay between the roles was not much different. In addition, many child care program operators noted that they faced significant challenges finding qualified staff, particularly ECEs and ECEs with infant-toddler and special needs training.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant to support upgrading to ECE and ECE with special training skills, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider opportunities to reduce the financial burden of ECE qualifications (e.g., bursaries standard to all students in ECE programs, other) to make the qualification more attractive to potential students
- Promote upgrading of lower-level child care qualifications (e.g., Responsible Adult, ECE Assistant) to full ECE accreditation through targeted ad campaigns in child care programs at post-secondary institutions in B.C.
- Promote a higher wage for fully qualified ECEs, either as part of or in addition to the ongoing Universal Child Care program; may be accomplished through wage subsidies or other means to create a higher “floor” wage for ECEs

Support ECEs in maintaining their credentials through affordable professional development opportunities.

Child care workers qualified as ECEs must participate in regular professional development in order to maintain their credential over time; this training is typically paid for by the individual, creating another barrier or disincentive for child care workers to pursue and/or maintain their full ECE qualification. Supporting ongoing professional development for ECEs can help to reduce this burden and better meet the need for qualified child care workers in the Cowichan region.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) undertake polling of child care programs and help to organize local, affordable professional development opportunities for child care workers
- Consider creating a municipal grant to support ongoing ECE professional development training, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider incentivizing regular professional development for ECEs through dedicated provincial grants available to all licensed child care operators in the Cowichan region

IMPROVING QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Promote cultural diversity in child care centers.

The diversity of child care centers in the Cowichan region was rated poorly by both the general public and parents and caregivers of children, in this research. Diverse child care centers that reflect the communities in which they are located provide children with higher quality, more enriching care that promotes inclusive communities. As such, promoting cultural diversity should be a priority under the general initiative of improving quality of child care.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) regularly collect information on diversity within child care centers and promote best practices in diversity to child care centers
- Ensure affordable child care is available in all communities and neighbourhoods (see recommendations regarding placement of sites and space targets), to enable families to send their children to programs that are nearby and that are reflective of the diversity of their communities

Provincial Government Actions

- As the Universal Child Care program continues to roll out, consider incentives for children attending child care centers local to their homes, to ensure that child care centers reflect their communities

Promote inclusion of children with extra support needs in child care programs.

Families of children with extra support needs can struggle to find spaces for their children in licensed child care programs, due to the additional resourcing and staffing required to accommodate these children. In particular, the need for specialized training for ECEs to provide care for children with additional support needs has resulted in limited qualified staff available at these child care programs, and high demand for care among the sites that are able to accommodate children with extra support needs.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider creating a provincial grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification
- Promote the ECE-SN training designation among students and alumni of child care programs at Vancouver Island universities, through ad campaigns and other promotional materials

Promote best practices in child care through monitoring and accountability measures.

While most parents and caregivers in the survey for this research rated their own child care arrangements highly, overall perception of child care quality in the Cowichan region was middling. Promotion of standards and best practices in licensed child care can provide guidance to providers (particularly during periods of rapid expansion) and build public confidence in the quality of child care offered locally.

Municipal / Regional Government Actions

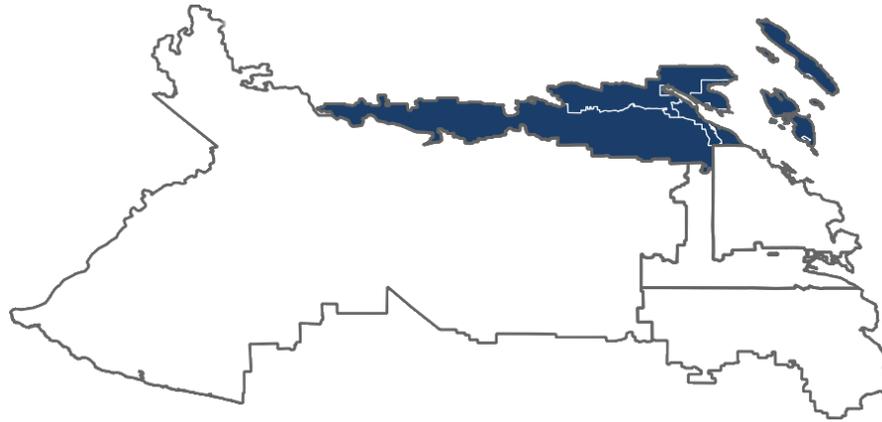
- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) collect key performance indicators from local child care centers to monitor quality, and promote best practices through promotional materials and other initiatives

Provincial Government Actions

- Create a set of key performance indicators for regular monitoring and measurement of child care quality
- Liaise with municipal child care resources to promote best practices endorsed by the provincial government, identify regional needs and provide support



COWICHAN VALLEY NORTH



This report summarizes the current and anticipated future child care needs in Cowichan Valley North. Cowichan Valley North is a sub-region of the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), and is comprised of: the Town of Ladysmith, CVRD Electoral Area G (Saltair / Gulf Islands) and Electoral Area H (North Oyster / Diamond).

COWICHAN VALLEY NORTH CONTEXT

In this section, population-level factors that impact child care needs are described. This includes summaries of population size, family demographics, income, cultural diversity, and childhood vulnerability.

DEMOGRAPHY

The tables below summarize key trends in Cowichan Valley North related to household composition, income, and cultural diversity.

Total Population		Households	Number of Households	Number of Households with Children
	Ladysmith 8,537	 The proportion of households with children in Cowichan Valley North (33%) are approximately equal as those seen in the overall CVRD (34%), but lower than the provincial (39%) and national (41%) proportions of households with children.	Ladysmith 3,710	Ladysmith 1,225
	Area G 2,325		Area G 1,050	Area G 250
	Area H 2,446		Area H 1,085	Area H 305
	Total 13,308		Total 5,845	Total 1,780

Family Structures

Dual-Parent Families			
830 (68%)	190 (76%)	225 (74%)	
Ladysmith	Area G	Area H	
1,245 (70%) Total			
Lone-Parent Families			
395 (32%)	60 (24%)	80 (26%)	
Ladysmith	Area G	Area H	
535 (30%) Total			

Of all families with children in Cowichan Valley North, 70% are led by two parents and 30% are led by a single parent. This varied by specific region: in Ladysmith, nearly one in three families with children are led by a single parent, whereas in Electoral Areas G and H this proportion was closer to one quarter. These proportions are comparable to the split of single-parent to dual-parent families seen at the regional level (68% of CVRD families are led by two parents, 32% by single parents), at the provincial level (73% are two-parent families, 27% lone-parent families) and the national level (72% two-parent families, 28% lone-parent families).



Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

	Income				
	Median Total Household Income	Median Total Income Of Couple Economic Families With Children ¹⁴	Lone-Parent Economic Families' Median Income	Prevalence of Low Income (LIM-AT) ^{15*}	Prevalence of Low Income (LICO-AT)*
Town of Ladysmith	\$67,674	\$115,712	\$52,608	985 (12%)	400 (5%)
CVRD Area G	\$71,595	\$107,520	\$69,790	250 (11%)	120 (5%)
CVRD Area H	\$72,285	\$103,168	\$48,512	315 (13%)	125 (5%)
Total	\$69,232[†]	\$112,119[†]	\$53,921[†]	1,550 (12%)	645 (5%)

A weighted average of median incomes in the Town of Ladysmith, CVRD Area G, and CVRD Area H was \$69,232. Median incomes varied slightly, with all communities' median incomes falling within approximately \$5,000 of one another. Incomes in all communities were comparable to the median income across all of BC (\$69,995) and Canada (\$70,336).

Similarly, rates of individuals falling within the low-income cut-off, after tax (LICO-AT) category (meaning that they are expected to spend 20 percentage points more of their income on food, shelter, and clothing compared to the average family) were identical in all communities at 5%. This is slightly lower than the LICO-AT rate for the overall CVRD (7%), the national rate (9%), and the provincial rate (11%). The low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) indicates whether a household takes in an income of 50% or less of the median income in their area (i.e., make about one-half of what the average household, of similar composition, in their area does). In all three communities in Cowichan Valley North, slightly more than one in ten individuals (11% to 13%) qualify as low-income under the LIM-AT measure.

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

[†] These numbers were calculated as weighted averages of the medians of the three regions. These numbers are expected to provide a good estimate of central tendency, but may not reflect the true median of the full region.

*It is important to note that these low-income measures capture the number and proportion of *individuals*, not *households*, falling within these low-income categories.

¹⁴ “Economic family” refers to two or more persons living in the same home, related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law union, adoption, or a foster relationship. Cohabiting, unrelated adults (e.g., roommates) do not constitute an economic family, nor do single-person households.

¹⁵ The Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) indicates whether a household receives 50% or less of the median household income in their region, adjusting for household size to accommodate that larger households have greater income needs.

	Cultural Diversity			
	Self-Identified Aboriginal ¹⁶	Self-Identified First Nations ¹⁷	Self-Identified Métis ¹⁸	Self-Identified Immigrant
Town of Ladysmith	735 (9%)	475 (6%)	280 (3%)	1,030 (12%)
CVRD Electoral Area G	165 (7%)	100 (4%)	50 (2%)	335 (15%)
CVRD Electoral Area H	195 (8%)	130 (5%)	70 (3%)	360 (15%)
Total	1,095 (8%)	705 (5%)	400 (3%)	1,725 (14%)
<p>Similar proportions of residents in all three communities identified as being Indigenous (7% to 9%), First Nations (4% to 6%), Métis (2% to 3%), and immigrants (12% to 15%).</p> <p>Cowichan Valley North has an Indigenous population that is proportionally lower than that of the overall CVRD (12%), but higher than BC (6%), and Canada (5%). In contrast, the proportion of Cowichan Valley North's population that identify as immigrants is roughly comparable to the overall CVRD (13%), and lower than BC (28%) and Canada (22%).</p>				
Most Common Mother Tongue				
Town of Ladysmith	CVRD Electoral Area G	CVRD Electoral Area H		
English (93%)	English (92%)	English (93%)		
Most Common Language Spoken at Home				
Town of Ladysmith	CVRD Electoral Area G	CVRD Electoral Area H		
English (97%)	English (98%)	English (98%)		
<p>While English is the most common first language, and most common language spoken at home, for large majorities of residents in Ladysmith, and Electoral Areas G and H, there were no other languages that predominated among non-English-primary speakers. There were a wide variety of languages other than English reported as being first languages and/or the language spoken most often at home. Given that there were such a wide variety of languages, with none predominating as a "second-most-common" language in the region, there are no recommendations for languages of focus for future child care programs.</p>				

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

¹⁶ Self-identified Aboriginal, according to Statistics Canada's Census counting methodology, includes all individuals who identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or a combination thereof.

¹⁷ Self-identified First Nations in this column represents the count of individuals in the 2016 Census who identified as being solely of First Nations descent (i.e., not having multiple Indigenous heritages such as Métis and First Nations).

¹⁸ Self-identified Métis in this column represents the count of individuals in the 2016 Census who identified as being solely of Métis descent (i.e., not having multiple Indigenous heritages such as Métis and First Nations).

CHILDHOOD VULNERABILITY

“Vulnerability” in this context refers to a child’s likelihood to experience poor health, education, and/or social outcomes. Childhood vulnerability is captured on a regular basis in B.C. through the Human Early Learning Partnership’s Early Development Instrument (EDI). This instrument measures five core domains of early child development and identifies, based on questionnaire scores, children who are vulnerable in these five areas.

	Vulnerability (EDI)					
	Percentage of Children Vulnerable		Overall BC Vulnerability One Or More Scales (Wave 7)			
Town of Ladysmith	34%	33%				
CVRD Electoral Area G*	28%					
CVRD Electoral Area H*	53%					
	Domain					
	Physical Health & Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language & Cognitive Development	Communication Skills	
Town of Ladysmith	29%	20%	22%	16%	12%	
CVRD Electoral Area G*	13%	15%	14%	9%	8%	
CVRD Electoral Area H*	32%	28%	34%	20%	8%	
<p>The percentage of vulnerable children in Cowichan Valley North is higher than the provincial average for vulnerability on one or more scales based on the EDI Wave 7 data. Vulnerability was highest in Electoral Area H, with 53% of children measured by the EDI considered vulnerable on one or more scales. Among the five subscales, rates of vulnerability were highest in two regions on emotional maturity (34% of children vulnerable in Electoral Area H, 22% in the Town of Ladysmith), and physical health and well-being (32% in Electoral Area H, 29% in Ladysmith). Children in the Electoral Area H also had high rates of vulnerability on the social competence skills measure (28%).</p>						

EDI Wave 7 (2017-19), Human Early Learning Partnership

* Note: EDI data is based on school district boundaries. These boundaries do not directly map to the exact CVRD boundaries used for this report. Therefore, the EDI data presented in the table above are approximations for the areas that comprise Cowichan Valley North, but are anticipated to be broadly representative of trends and needs in the region.

CURRENT STATE OF CHILD CARE IN COWICHAN VALLEY NORTH

This subsection of the report will provide a summary of the current state of child care in Cowichan Valley North, specifically focusing on the potential demand for child care from children aged birth to 12 years and the current supply of licensed child care spaces available.

COWICHAN VALLEY NORTH CHILD CARE DEMAND FACTORS

Determining the need for child care is challenging given demand is influenced by a number of dynamic factors including, but not limited to, population and labour force participation rates over time. Initiatives such as the B.C. government's Universal Child Care Initiative will likely cause a significant increase in the demand for regulated child care as low-cost spaces are rolled out across the province, making licensed child care more affordable and accessible for a larger number of families.

POPULATION FACTORS

The population of children (aged 12 years and younger) in Cowichan Valley North is projected to decrease very slightly between 2020 and 2030; there is a projected decrease of about 8% over the ten-year period, or approximately a 1% decrease annually. These decreases are occurring mainly in the 3-5 and 6-12 year age groups, while the number of children aged 0-2 is anticipated to remain relatively stable over the next decade. A summary of population statistics for Cowichan Valley North broken down by area and age group can be found in Table CVN1.

Table CVN1: Cowichan Valley North Population Projections, 2020-2030

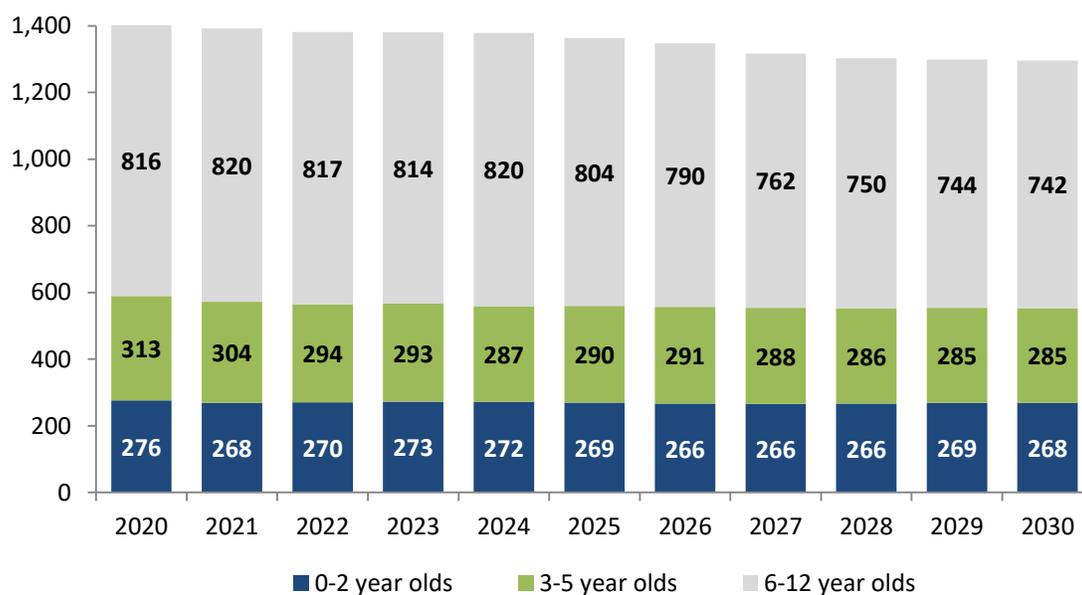
Area	2020	2025	2030	Change 2020-2030	Average Annual Change 2020-2030	Average Annual % Change 2020-2030
Town of Ladysmith						
Children 0-2 Years	197	192	191	-6	-1	0%
Children 3-5 Years	223	207	203	-20	-2	-2%
Children 6-12 Years	581	573	528	-53	-5	-2%
Total Children (0-12 Years)	1,001	972	922	-79	-8	-1%
CVRD Electoral Area G						
Children 0-2 Years	34	33	33	-1	0	0%
Children 3-5 Years	38	35	35	-3	0	0%
Children 6-12 Years	99	98	90	-9	-1	-1%
Total Children (0-12 Years)	171	166	158	-13	-1	0%

Area	2020	2025	2030	Change 2020-2030	Average Annual Change 2020-2030	Average Annual % Change 2020-2030
CVRD Electoral Area H						
Children 0-2 Years	46	45	44	-2	0	0%
Children 3-5 Years	52	48	47	-5	-1	-1%
Children 6-12 Years	135	133	123	-12	-1	-1%
Total Children (0-12 Years)	233	226	214	-19	-2	-1%
Cowichan Valley North						
Children 0-2 Years	276	269	268	-8	-1	0%
Children 3-5 Years	313	290	285	-28	-3	-1%
Children 6-12 Years	816	804	742	-74	-7	-1%
Total Children (0-12 Years)	1,405	1,363	1,295	-110	-11	-1%

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

These changes in child population in Cowichan Valley North, from 2020 to 2030, are illustrated in Figure CVN1 below. As noted above, the overall decrease is relatively small – about 1% – but this represents a decrease of 110 children in the region over the next ten years.

Figure CVN1: Cowichan Valley North Projected Population Change, 2020-2030



Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

UTILIZATION OF LICENSED CHILD CARE SPACES

Cowichan Valley North is located within the South Vancouver Island service delivery area. The South Vancouver Island service delivery area includes not only all of the CVRD, but also Greater Victoria and other municipalities; this impacts the overall averages for the area. Breakdowns at a more granular level, such as CVRD alone, are not available.

Utilization rates provide a broad measure of the uptake of available child care services in a region. These numbers represent what proportion of *available* child care spaces are *being used*.¹⁹ Utilization rates offer a proxy for the appropriateness of the amount and combination of types of child care spaces available. Efficient use of child care spaces will be reflected in high utilization rates, indicating that there are not “too many” spaces available for the number of families in a region that want to make use of child care. However, at very high utilization rates – in excess of 80% to 85% – finding child care becomes progressively more challenging for families, potentially impacting the ability to find a suitable child care space that is accessible and affordable to them.

Utilization rates for South Vancouver Island, alongside provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators, are shown in Table CVN2. South Vancouver Island’s utilization rate is similar to the provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators. Across all groups, utilization rate was very high for infant-toddler care in 2016-17, while utilization rate was lower for the 3-5 year age group, and lowest for the school-age group.

Table CVN2: Average Monthly Child Care Space Utilization Rates, April 2016 through March 2017

Service Delivery Area	Group Care, Infant/Toddler	Group Care, 3 to 5 years	Group Care, School Age	Total Group Care	Family Care	Total Group and Family Care
British Columbia	85%	74%	48%	70%	72%	71%
South Vancouver Island	87%	70%	42%	65%	72%	69%
North Vancouver Island	88%	62%	38%	62%	68%	63%

Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. *Performance Management Report*. Volume 9 March 2017. Performance Indicator 1.01, Spare Capacity in Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/services-supports-for-parents-with-young-children/reporting-monitoring/00-public-ministry-reports/volume_9_mar_2017.pdf

Note: ‘Group Multi-Age’ spaces have been excluded as it cannot be determined which spaces of a facility’s reported enrolments are utilized, by age.

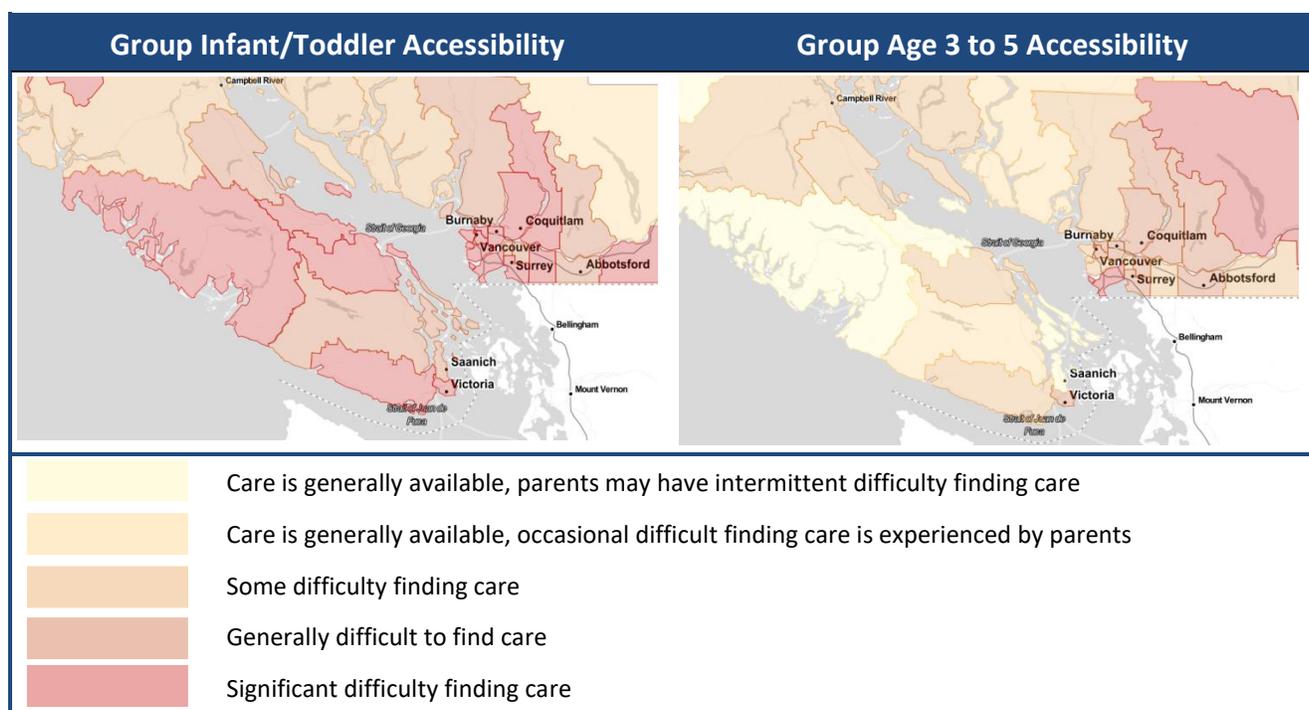
¹⁹ A child care facility’s Utilization Rate is determined by dividing its total enrollments for the month by the number of times a child care space can be used in a month. Two part-time enrolments are assumed to be equivalent to one full-time enrollment; 100% utilization of one child care space is assumed to be 22 full-time equivalent enrollments in a month.

COWICHAN VALLEY NORTH CHILD CARE SUPPLY FACTORS

The accessibility of licensed child care spaces for infant/toddlers and children aged 3-5 years across the Cowichan Region in general is illustrated in Figure CVN2. These maps, based on 2017/18 data, suggest that parents generally have difficulty finding group infant/toddler child care, whereas care for the 3-5 age group is generally available, with occasional difficulty experienced by parents.

This aligns with information on utilization rates available (utilization is about 70% for the 3-5 years group in South Vancouver Island) and coverage rate data based on recent child care inventories, which suggest a 90% coverage rate for children aged 3-5 in the Cowichan Valley North region. Findings from key informant interviews also stressed the pressing need for infant-toddler spaces, with less focus on the 3-5 years age group.

Figure CVN2: Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces in the Cowichan Region, 2017-18



Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. Early Years Performance Indicators: 1.01 Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from <https://mcf.gov.bc.ca/reporting/services/early-years/performance-indicators>

AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE IN COWICHAN VALLEY NORTH

There are currently a total of **609** licensed child care spaces across **31** programs in Cowichan Valley North. Summaries of child care spaces and program type by area are below in Tables CVN3 and CVN4, respectively.

Table CVN3: Cowichan Valley North Licensed Child Care Spaces, 2020

Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	Total Spaces
Town of Ladysmith							
8	112	16	124	64	14	16	354
CVRD Electoral Area G							
50	37	0	0	16	0	0	103
CVRD Electoral Area H							
24	44	20	44	20	0	0	152
Total Cowichan Valley North							
82	193	36	168	100	14	16	609

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey, Winter 2019/20

Table CVN4: Cowichan Valley North Licensed Child Care Programs, 2020

Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	Total Programs
Town of Ladysmith							
1	6	1	3	6	2	2	21
CVRD Electoral Area G							
1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
CVRD Electoral Area H							
1	2	1	2	1	0	0	7
Total Cowichan Valley North							
3	9	2	5	8	2	2	31

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey, Winter 2019/20

COWICHAN VALLEY NORTH CHILD CARE COVERAGE RATES

Current child care coverage rates (i.e., the number of child care spaces per 100 children) were calculated using current population estimates for Cowichan Valley North, and the number of licensed child care spaces currently available in the region. Within Canada, the ratio of child care spaces per 100 children aged 12 and under varies significantly by province. The national average in 2017 was 27.2 spaces per 100 children, while British Columbia’s provincial average was considerably lower at 18.4 spaces per 100 children.²⁰

Table CVN5 below summarizes the coverage rates, by age group, in Cowichan Valley North.

Table CVN5: Cowichan Valley North Licensed Child Care Coverage Rates, 2020

Age Group	Current Child Population	Current Number of Spaces	Current Estimated Coverage Rate
<i>All children 0-12 years</i>	1,406	609	43.3
Pre-school aged children, 0-5 years	589	376	63.8
Infant / Toddler children, 0-2 years	276	94	34.1
Preschool aged children, 3-5 years	313	282	90.1
School aged children, 6-12 years	816	233	28.6

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

There is little consensus or established benchmarks regarding what is a sufficient number of child care spaces within a region. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) identifies forward sortation areas (FSAs) with one licensed child care spot per three (or more) children aged 0-5 years (i.e., 33% coverage), and a minimum of 50 children in that FSA, as a child care desert. Families living in child care deserts are anticipated to experience significant difficulty getting access to child care.²¹ Currently, Cowichan Valley North has a 34% coverage rate for children aged 0 to 2 years (infant-toddler group), putting it just above being a child care desert for that age group. Coverage is much higher for the 3-5 years age group, at 90%. Coverage for the 6-12 age group is also relatively high within the overall CVRD, at 29%. Overall, for all children birth to 12 years old, the coverage rate in the CVRD is 26%.

Currently there are 43.3 child care spaces for every 100 children aged 0-12 years in Cowichan Valley North.

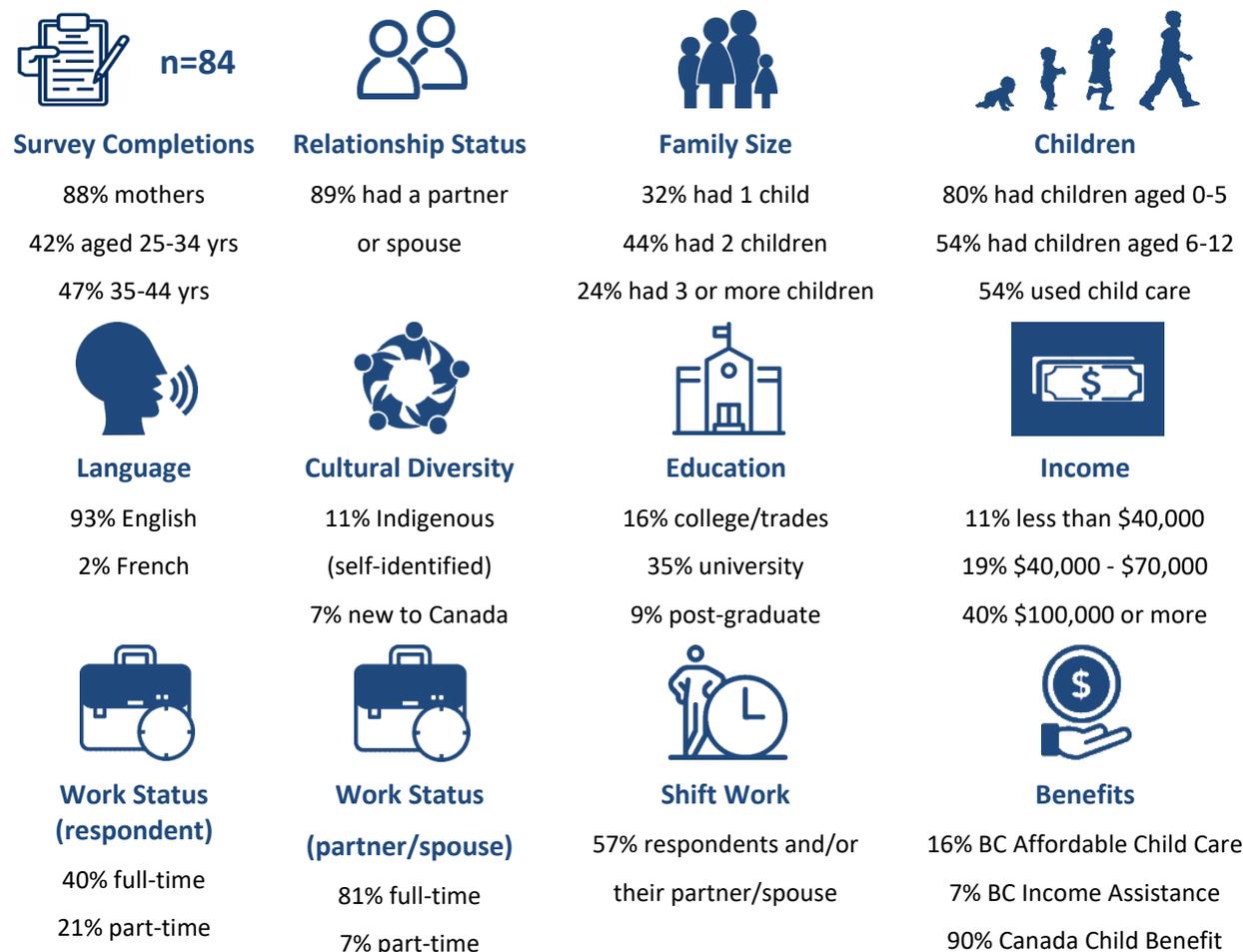
²⁰ Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2012 (9th edition, June 2013), Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Retrieved from https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/CRRU_ECEC_2012_revised_dec2013.pdf

²¹ Macdonald, D. Child Care Deserts in Canada. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (June 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2018/06/Child%20Care%20Deserts.pdf>

CHILD CARE QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

In addition to review of the child care capacity and coverage rates, Malatest conducted survey and interview research with stakeholders to better understand local perceptions of the quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care in Cowichan Valley North. Information about research participants, and key themes that emerged from this research, are discussed in this section.

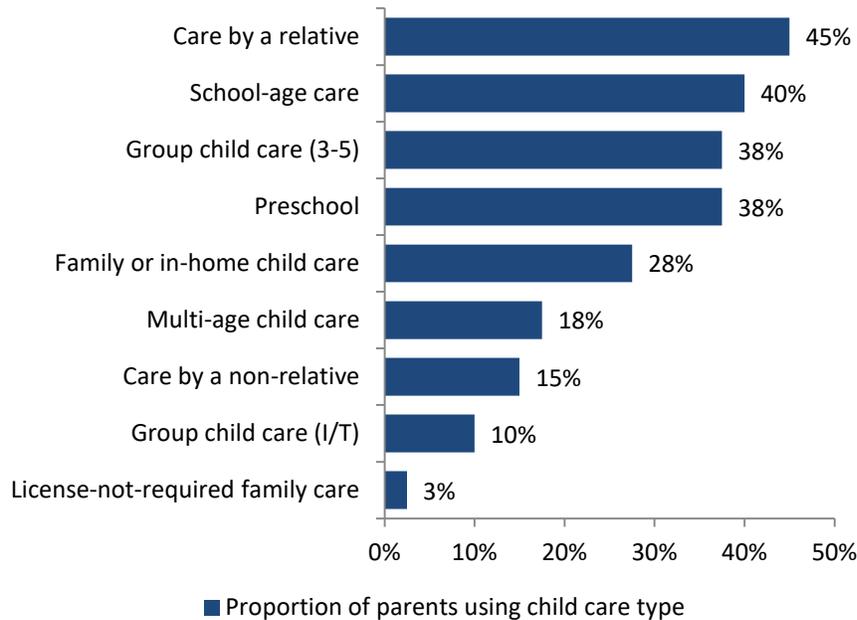
SUMMARY OF PARENT AND CAREGIVER SURVEY RESPONDENTS



Source: 2020 Cowichan Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey, n=84. Not all response options are shown.

Of the 84 parent/caregiver respondents, more than one-half (54%, n=40) reported using child care, and these respondents used all care types (see Figure CVN3). Care by a relative was the primary care type used in Cowichan Valley North (36%, n=23).

Figure CVN3: Child Care Use by Care Type, Cowichan Valley North Respondents



Source: Cowichan Valley Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey, n=40. This question allowed for multiple responses, therefore percentages may add up to more than 100%.

KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Three key themes emerged from surveying and interviewing community stakeholders regarding child care in Cowichan Valley North: availability, affordability, and quality of child care.

AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE

[There is a] huge need in our community for infant and toddler spaces.

Across all stakeholder groups, there was a consensus that more child care spaces are needed. Nearly three-quarters of child care providers in Cowichan Valley North (73%, n=11) who responded to the survey reported a need for more child care spaces.

Currently, nearly three-quarters of these child care centres (71%, n=10) have waitlists. When asked about the number of spaces needed to meet current demand, one-half of child care providers in Cowichan Valley North (50%, n=8) recommended doubling the number of current spaces in the area.

Cost, availability, and other accessibility factors are less of a concern among parents and caregivers in Cowichan Valley North, relative to other areas of the CVRD. Approximately one-quarter of respondents (24%) to the parent and caregiver survey in the Cowichan Valley North region reported that cost was their primary reason for not using child care. Only 15% of this group reported availability of spaces as a major concern. However, 52% of all respondents in this region reported that cost was a barrier to accessing their preferred choice of child care, and 55% reported that availability of spaces was a barrier to their preferred type of child care.

All groups agreed that infant and toddler spaces are particularly needed, followed by after-school care spaces. Increasing the availability of child care for children with extra support needs was also identified as a priority among all groups. Slightly more than two-thirds of Cowichan Valley North child care providers (69%, n=11) currently are able to care for children with additional support needs. As a result, available child care spaces are scarcer for children with additional support needs. Only one-third of parents and caregivers in the region (37%, n=25) agreed with the statement, “Child care options in the Cowichan region provide all the services / supports necessary for children to succeed.”

Children with extra support needs [such as language and speech] tend to be underserved.

Key informants echoed these findings, and pointed out that there is not enough Support Child Development (SCD) funding available to support the children currently in care. For this reason, these interviewees questioned the benefits of additional spaces on the already-strained services in the region. Stakeholders also noted a lack of support workers who are able and/or willing to work contracted support hours.

Stakeholders shared stories of programs being unable to take on children requiring extra supports, due to insufficient numbers of trained educators or additional support staff. Only one parent / caregiver in the region (1%, n=1) surveyed said a barrier to accessing their preferred type of child care was that local care could not meet their child’s extra support needs.

In addition to a lack of spaces, all stakeholder groups expressed a need for more flexible options in the hours when care is available. Child care providers in Cowichan Valley North recognized the need for extended hours, largely in the early mornings (52% agreed this was a need). Child care providers in the region were less convinced that there was a need for child care availability in the later evenings (30% agreed this was a need), and before and after school and during school closures 39% agreed this was a need). A number of stakeholders suggested opening a child care centre in the hospital to help improve accessibility of child care for shift workers.

Earlier start times for daycare would allow me to work more and would help all shift workers.

Finally, lack of public transportation to child care centres was noted as a challenge to accessibility of child care. The scarcity of child care spaces across the Cowichan region doesn’t allow parents and caregivers the option to select a child care site within walking distance from home, leaving it up to parents and caregivers to find ways to reach facilities that may be a long distance from their home and/or place of work. For those without reliable access to a personal vehicle, this creates an additional hurdle to accessing child care.

AFFORDABILITY OF CHILD CARE

All stakeholder groups and key informants agreed that child care is too expensive for many families. Participants believed that access to more affordable child care would have benefits for parents and caregivers in a number of areas. These included:

- Improve parents’ and caregivers’ chances to gain employment (18% of local parents / caregivers, n=15; 52% of the general population throughout the CVRD, n=49);
- Allow parents and caregivers to work more hours (29% of local parents / caregivers, n=24);
- Reduce parents’ and caregivers’ absences at work (24% of local parents / caregivers, n=20; 59% of the general population throughout the CVRD, n=56); and

- Allow parents and caregivers to improve their education, or update their training and/or credentials (28% of local parents / caregiver, n=23).

One-half of general population respondents throughout the CVRD (52%, n=44) indicated that lowering child care fees would result in increased economic prosperity. Majorities of parents and caregivers local to Cowichan Valley North (62%, n=52) and the general population throughout the entire CVRD (78%, n=74) agreed that low-cost child care would have a number of non-economic benefits, such as reduced stress on families and overall better mental wellness.

Key informants stated that affordability of child care is a common concern among families they serve. These interviewees shared stories of many families, especially young parents, not being able to find child care even if they could afford it. Qualifying for child care was also noted as a concern, particularly for parents who are not employed or are attending school, and therefore cannot qualify for subsidies.

QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Slightly more than one-half of general population survey respondents throughout the CVRD (53%, n=35) agreed that “child care options in the Cowichan region offer quality child care.” Approximately one-half of parents and caregivers in the Cowichan Valley North region (52%, n=44) agreed with the statement. An even higher proportion of parents and caregivers – 78% (n=49) – reported being satisfied with the quality of their personal child care arrangements. Key informants spoke highly of the quality of child care in the region.

Inclusivity, a common indicator of child care quality, is defined as the extent to which a child care site is inclusive of children of all abilities (including those with extra support needs) and incorporating the diversity of the community. Minorities of general population respondents in the CVRD (37%, n=35) and parents and caregivers in Cowichan Valley North (32%, n=21) agreed that child care options in the Cowichan region are inclusive in terms of children’s abilities. A slightly higher proportion of local parents and caregivers (41%, n=27), and less than one-half of the general population in the CVRD (45%, n=43) agreed that child care options reflect the diversity of the community. These findings suggest that inclusivity of child care could be an area for further improvement.

The quality of a child care centre is also impacted by the quality of the individuals who work there. Approximately one-half of child care providers (48%, n=11) believed that increased wages and a greater availability of qualified staff would improve the quality of child care in their area. In addition, key informants felt non-licensed care can hinder child care quality and if more care centres are added, they should be licensed.

CHALLENGES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

The number one issue is finding and retaining good quality staff.

Child care providers identified staffing as their primary challenge in expanding child care spaces, although this appeared to be less of a challenge in Cowichan Valley North than elsewhere in the CVRD. Hiring qualified staff was noted as a challenge among 30% of survey respondents in the region (n=7), and retaining staff was a challenge for 35% of respondents in the region (n=8). Many key informant interviewees felt that an increased availability of early childhood educators would motivate them to increase the number of child care spaces at their facility.

A majority of stakeholders echoed the sentiments expressed by child care providers, regarding current staffing issues in the industry. There was consensus among all groups that increased compensation would encourage more people to pursue education in, and join, the child care profession as they could expect to be fairly compensated for their work.

[There is a] lack of people motivated to open a daycare, as it is a lot of work for little pay.

In Cowichan there are several municipal boundaries and capacity issues. Regional districts haven't had child care on their agendas and tightening budgets make it more difficult to add new services or expand existing ones.

Child care providers identified some other important areas that could influence child care sites' willingness to increase their capacity. Barriers to increasing the number of spaces included:

- The need for more physical space (30%, n=7); and
- The need for more funding (43%, n=10).

More governance was also thought to be needed over unlicensed child care. Concerns were raised from stakeholders that these unlicensed centres get the same access to government funding as licensed child care centres, and they charge the same or more than licensed centre, yet their quality may often not be equivalent.

FUTURE CHILD CARE TARGETS

Based on anticipated future need for child care in Cowichan Valley North, Malatest has developed a series of targets for increasing the supply of licensed child care spaces in the region. Recommendations include:

- Number of child care spaces needed, by age group and care type, over the next ten years to meet changing demographics and anticipated change in demand;
- Number of child care programs needed to accommodate these spaces;
- Space needs for recommended programs (i.e., interior and exterior space requirements to accommodate children in the identified programs);
- Potential sites in Town of Ladysmith, Electoral Area G, and Electoral Area H, where additional needed programs could be located; and
- Staffing needs to accommodate the increased number of programs and spaces recommended.

SPACE CREATION TARGETS

This subsection of the report provides short-, medium-, and long-term child care space creation targets for Cowichan Valley North.

Space creation targets for each of the child care age groups were calculated by multiplying projected populations for each age group (taken from BC Stats' PEOPLE Population projections) by target coverage rates for these age groups. Target coverage rates were decided based on multiple factors: available recommendations for best practice in existing literature, the experience of other jurisdictions in providing child care, and estimates of unmet need for each age group within the CVRD based on survey and interview data. Baseline target coverage rates for each of the age groups were:

- 55% for the 0-2 years age group;
- 85% for the 3-5 years age group; and
- 20% for the 6-12 years age group.

These target coverage rates were baselines only, and were adjusted for each community as appropriate based on anticipated unmet need as well as findings from key informant interviews. For more information on how these targets were arrived at, please refer to the Methodology Section of the Final Report prepared for this project.

These targets identify the number of child care spaces required to support the projected population of Cowichan Valley North over the next ten years (see Table CVN6). Moderate increases are seen in the 0-2 years and 6-12 years age groups by the year 2030, while spaces for the 3-5 years age group will decline somewhat.

Table CVN6: Total Target Child Care Spaces by Age Group, Cowichan Valley North, 2020-2030

Year	Spaces Children 0-2 years	Spaces Children 3-5 years	Total Spaces Children 0-5 years	Spaces Children 6-12 years	Total Spaces Children 0-12 years
2020	94	282	376	233	609
2021	97	274	370	246	617
2022	103	265	368	261	629
2025	113	261	374	281	655
2030	125	256	381	290	671

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces only); 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

Space creation targets for 2030 require 62 net new spaces over ten years: 31 for infant-toddler, a reduction of 26 for preschool ages, and an increase of 57 spaces for school-aged children.

Table CVN7 provides a summary of how these required spaces could be broken down by child care type. It is important to note that very small increases in family and in-home multi-age child care were projected, due to the fact that these operations have low capacity numbers and most in the region are already serving as many children as possible. The only way to substantially increase child care spots in these types of programs would be for child care operators to open their own in-home facilities, which is considerably more challenging to promote and incentivize than adding capacity to other types of child care sites.

Table CVN7: Total Target Child Care Spaces by Type of Care, Cowichan Valley North, 2020-2030

Type of Care	2020 Supply	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2021*	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2022*	Estimated Medium-Term Need, 2025*	Estimated Long-Term Need, 2030*
Group Child Care (Birth to 36 months)	82	82	85	94	98
Group Child Care (30 months to school age)	193	190	187	187	184
Licensed Preschool	36	38	40	40	40
Group Child Care (School age)	168	170	177	180	185
Multi-Age Child Care	100	106	110	123	133
Family Child Care	14	14	14	16	16
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	16	16	16	16	16
Total Child Care Spaces	609	616	629	656	672

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces only)

*Consultant estimates

Figures in brackets indicate net change in space numbers between the column's year targets and the previous column's year targets.

It is important to note that, over the course of this project, School District 79 has committed to creating 201 new child care spaces, 37 of which will be in Chemainus, within the North Cowichan region. Of these 37 spaces, 25 are being dedicated to Group Child Care (30 months to school age) and 12 are being dedicated to Group Child Care (birth to 36 months). As a result, some of the targets provided above may already have been met.

Finally, Table CVN8 provides a summary of the overall increase in coverage rates, from 2020 to 2030, based on recommended space creation targets and population projections for these age groups. As shown in the table, childcare space creation targets proposed by Malatest result in the largest improvements targeted at the 0-2 years age group, while smaller increases are suggested for the 6-12 years age group and no increase at all recommended for children aged 3-5 years, as this group already has a 90% coverage rate.

Table CVN8: Change in Proportional Child Care Coverage, Cowichan Valley North, 2020-2030

Age Group	2020	2030	Percentage Point Change
0-5 years	64%	69%	+5 pts
0-2 years	34%	47%	+13 pts
3-5 years	90%	90%	-
6-12 years	29%	39%	+10 pts
Overall Coverage Rate: 0-12 years	43%	52%	+9 pts

PROGRAM CREATION AND SITE LOCATION NEEDS

In addition to estimating the need for individual child care spaces, by age group and care type, over the next decade, Malatest developed estimates and recommendations on creation of child care programs to accommodate these additional spaces, and identified potential sites that could be used to house these additional child care programs. These estimates and recommendations are discussed in the sub-sections below.

PROGRAM CREATION

Malatest used its recommendations for space creation targets, by care type, to identify the number of additional programs that will be needed to accommodate these targets. In calculating the number of additional programs needed, the following assumptions or parameters were used:

- All programs will be fully subscribed to the legal maximums prescribed by the provincial government; and
- Where partial programs are needed (e.g., calculation indicated a need for 4.35 programs), number of needed programs were always rounded up to accommodate legal requirements for the *maximum* number of children in a program.

As a result of these approaches, these recommendations for additional programs needed should be taken as the minimum required to meet the space creation targets identified, but will also provide a small amount of additional capacity for more spaces if needed by the community.

Further, it is important to note that Malatest has delineated a difference between *programs* and *sites*. “Program” refers to each licensed child care program that serves up to its maximum number of children. “Site” refers to the physical location (building and outdoor space) that serves one or more programs. Many of the larger child care operators host multiple programs at their site; for example, a child care operator who reports 24 spaces for infant-toddler group care hosts two programs, as the maximum number of children who can be served by that care type in a single program is 12.

Given that the UBCM inventory does not break down the number of programs at a specific site in this manner, the number of sites in 2020 is a best estimate based on the number of spaces that each operator reports offering and the applicable legal maximum enrolments for each type of care. It is also important to note that staffing shortages may be limiting the ability of sites to operate at their maximum potential capacity. For example, while the maximum number of children in a licensed preschool program is 20, there is also a requirement that there be a minimum of one ECE or ECE assistant for every ten children (with at least one full ECE required for every program). Therefore, it should not be assumed that simply because a site appears to have unfilled spaces based on potential maximum capacity, these sites could start meeting an increase in demand immediately.

Finally, it is important to note that although in some cases, there are negative net gains in programs between 2020 and 2030 based on Malatest’s recommendations, this should not be taken as a blanket recommendation to completely shutter child care programs or whole sites. Closure of child care sites would likely result in backlash from families in the community, and closure of sites in already poorly served areas could result in *no* child care sites being available to some families within a reasonable distance. Therefore, where there is potential to close child care programs, municipalities and electoral areas should consider:

1. Whether there is an opportunity to reduce the number of programs within a single site (e.g., if a child care center currently operates the equivalent of two preschool-aged group care programs, could this be reduced to one in order to maintain access within the geographic area while still reducing the number of spaces?),
2. Whether closures would put hardship on the local community or neighbourhood to find alternative child care options, and
3. If there are opportunities to re-purpose program closures to offer other needed programs (e.g., if the preschool-aged group care is over-served, but additional programs are needed for birth to 36 months group care, can that program space be altered to serve a different group rather than shut down altogether?).

With these considerations in mind, Table CVN9 summarizes the changing needs for child care programs in Cowichan Valley North over the next ten years. Malatest anticipates a large increase in need for multi-age care programs to accommodate the higher target coverage rates for school-aged children, and smaller increases for some other child care programs (infant and toddler group care, school aged group care, and family care). No additional programs are required for pre-school aged group care, licensed preschools or in-home multi-aged care.

Table CVN9: Change in Need for Child Care Programs, Cowichan Valley North, 2020-2030

	Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Care	Family Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care
2020 Spaces Reported	82	193	36	168	100	14	16
2020 Programs	8	8	2	5	12	2	2
2030 Target Spaces*	98	184	40	185	133	16	16
2030 Programs Needed*	9	8	2	7	17	3	2
2030 Net Program Gain	1	0	0	2	5	1	0

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces and programs only)

*Consultant estimates

PROGRAM SPACE NEEDS

Each child care program is required to meet certain minimum space requirements, to ensure adequate area for care, activities, and enrichment for children served by the program. Based on the number of additional child care programs identified as needed in each sub-region of the CVRD, Malatest has calculated the amount of additional space – interior and exterior – needed to accommodate these additional programs. Below is a list of assumptions and limitations should be kept in mind when reviewing the estimates of additional space needed.

- Calculation of additional space needed for each program type was calculated based on provincial minimum requirements. These recommendations should be considered the *minimum* needed to legally open and operate the recommended child care programs.

- Malatest has assumed that all programs will be operating at maximum capacity, therefore calculation of site size was based on per-child space requirements at the maximum number of children allowable in a single program.
- There are different maximum program enrollments by age within the school-aged group care program; these programs may serve up to 25 children in the K-Grade 2 age group, and up to 30 children older than that. Malatest’s calculations for space requirements for these programs are based on a “middle ground” assumption of enrollment at 28 children per program.
- Exterior space requirements for preschool and school-aged group care programs, as well as home-based care programs, specify that an exterior activity area must exist, but do not give space requirements. Malatest has maintained the general requirement of 7 m² per child that exists for other group care programs, to create estimates, however it should be noted that municipalities and electoral areas may have flexibility for these program types in terms of the exact size of outdoor activity areas.
- Provincial interior space minimums do not account for non-activity areas that may be required, such as hallways, janitorial closets, washrooms, and kitchens. Malatest has added a 25% allowance to interior space calculations to accommodate for these other spaces, based on recommendations from the City of Richmond’s Child Care Design Guidelines.
- There are provincial allowances for some co-located programs to share required non-activity areas such as kitchen facilities and janitorial closets. This is an opportunity to reduce the total amount of space needed to meet new program requirements and maximize efficient use of available sites. However, given insufficient information available to Malatest regarding the total size of potential child care sites and thus the ability to co-locate programs at single sites, Malatest has not assumed that programs will be co-located and so the space recommendations here may be slightly higher than actual needs.
- Exterior space requirements account for activity areas accessible to children only. These exterior space requirements do not account for other space that may be required under applicable bylaws such as set-backs, parking spaces, or pick-up and drop-off areas.

With these considerations in mind, Table CVN10 summarizes program space needs by program type. Space needs are given for each program (columns three and four), and overall space needs to accommodate all needed programs of that type (columns five and six).

Table CVN10: Interior and Exterior Space Needs to Serve Recommended Program Creation, 2030

Care Type	New Sites Needed by 2030	Interior Floor Space per Program (m ²)	Exterior Activity Space per Program (m ²)	Total Interior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)	Total Exterior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)
Group care, birth to 36 months	1	55.5	84.0	55.5	84.0
Group care, 30 months to school age	0	115.6	175.0	0.0	0.0
Licensed Preschool	0	92.5	140.0	0.0	0.0
Group care, school age	2	103.1	192.5	206.3	385.0
Multi-Age Care	5	37.0	56.0	185.0	280.0
Family Child Care	1	32.4	49.0	32.4	49.0
In-Home Multi-Age Care	0	37.0	56.0	0.0	0.0

Reference: *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. Child Care Licensing Regulation. Retrieved from http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/loo70/loo70/12_319_89

POTENTIAL CHILD CARE SITES

Malatest has identified a number of potential sites for housing new child care programs throughout Cowichan Valley North. The following three maps illustrate the location of existing child care locations (represented by circles), and locations of potential future child care sites (represented by triangles) in each of Town of Ladysmith, Electoral Area G, and Electoral Area H.

It is important to note that Malatest did not assess potential future child care sites for their suitability for different types of child care programs. A number of issues that could not be addressed in the data that Malatest had available should be examined prior to making any final decisions about the suitability of potential sites, including:

- Interior and exterior floor space available, and whether there is sufficient space to meet minimum requirements for the intended care program(s);
- Building remediation and upgrading needs, whether it will be cost-efficient to make the building suitable for child care programs if such improvements are needed;
- Ability of municipalities and partner organizations to negotiate sale or leasing agreements with current property owners; and
- Accessibility of potential sites to likely child care users (e.g., whether the site is easily accessible by public transit, whether it would serve an area or neighbourhood that is currently under-served by child care programs, etc.).

Figure CVN4: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Town of Ladysmith



Figure CVN5: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Electoral Area G

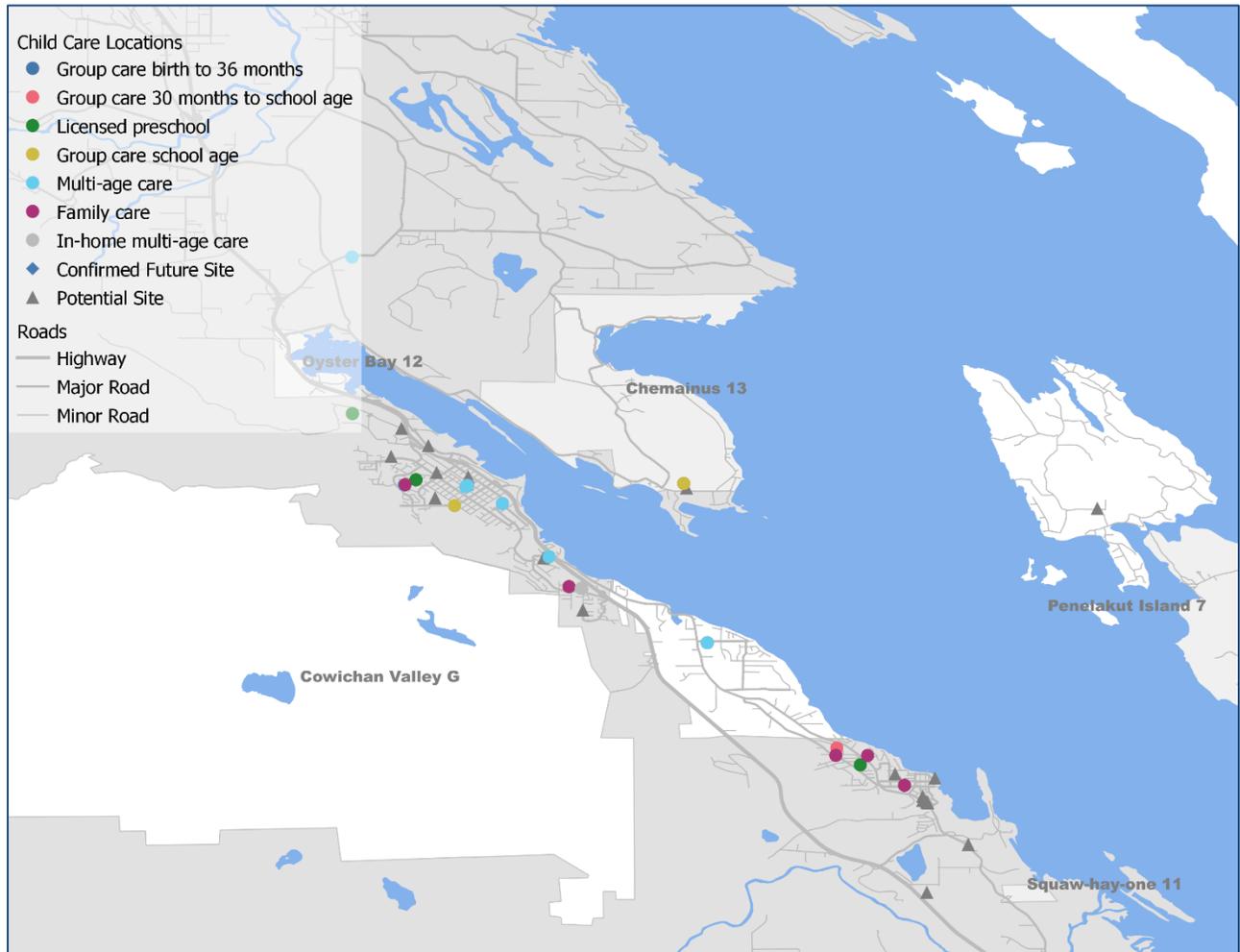
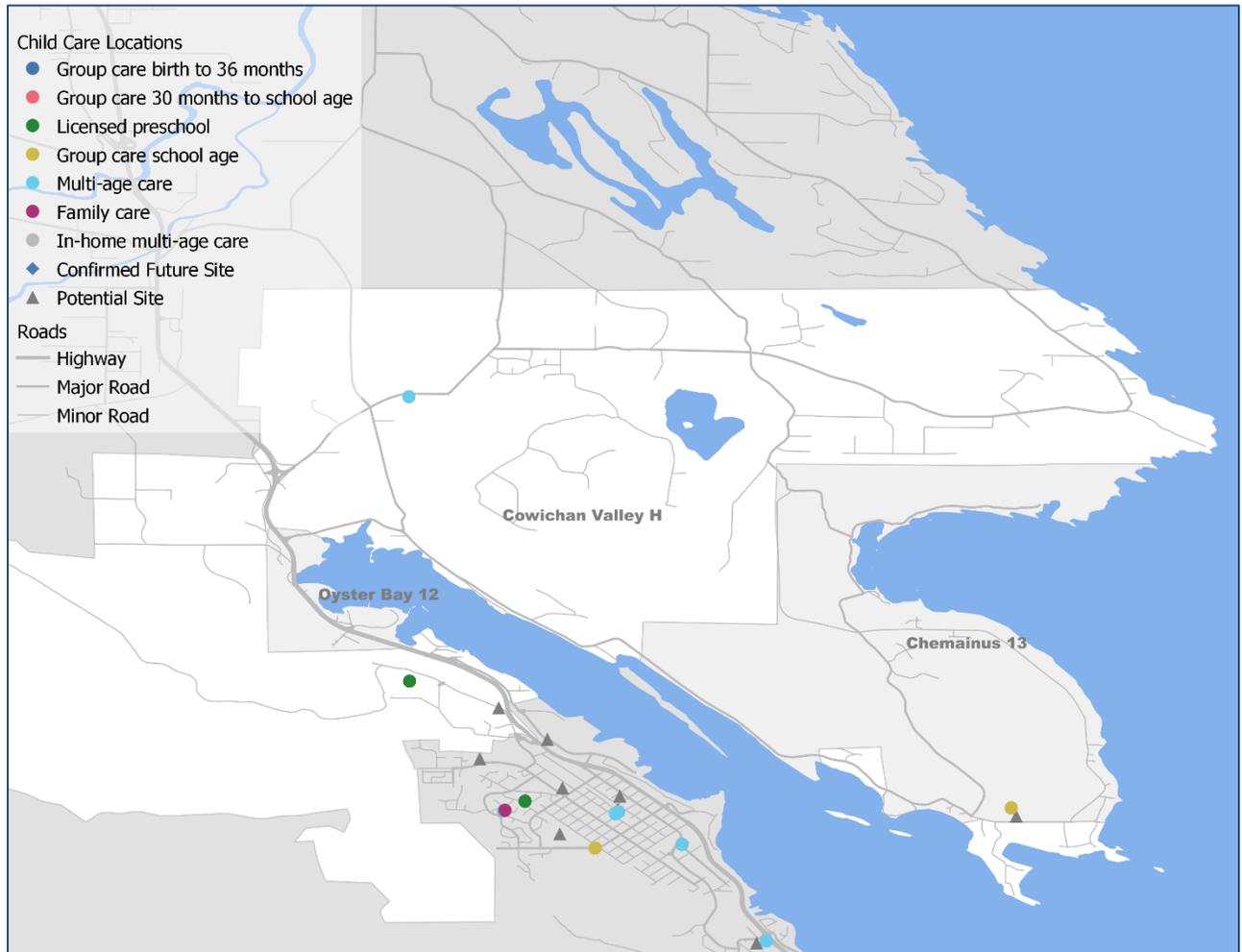


Figure CVN6: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Electoral Area H



STAFFING NEEDS FOR FUTURE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Finally, as noted previously, the ability to offer child care spaces is limited not only by physical space at a site, but also by the number of staff available to supervise and care for children. Minimum staffing requirements are established by the provincial government and are applicable to all licensed child care programs, although requirements vary by program type.

Malatest has calculated the number of staff that will be needed to serve the new programs and number of new spaces recommended to be created in the Cowichan region by 2030. When calculating these requirements, the following assumptions were made:

- All programs recommended for creation will be fully subscribed;
- All programs will be staffed at the minimum qualification level required by the provincial government (e.g., if a program requires one ECE and one ECE assistant, Malatest assumed that the second staff member is qualified at the ECE assistant level and the program does not employ two full ECEs); and
- All staff work full-time (i.e., these are full-time equivalency, or FTE, positions).

It should also be noted that Malatest did not undertake a comprehensive labour market analysis of child care workers in the Cowichan region. Typically, forecasting for future labour market need would encompass surveying employers regarding not only their current number of employees and qualification levels, but also the ages and expected retirements of these employees, employee turnover rate, and other metrics that can be used to create a comprehensive forecast of labour market trends over the medium- to long-term. Although Malatest has calculated the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by creating additional child care spaces and, thus, new child care programs, this forecast does not account for potential complicating factors in workforce needs such as coming retirements, “burnout rate” where workers – particularly those in caregiving work – leave the profession entirely, in- and out-migration of qualified workers in the region, and other factors that can impact labour markets beyond simply graduation rates from eligible programs and positions available in the region.

With these considerations in mind, Table CVN11 summarizes the total needed child care workers, by qualification level, by 2030. Included in the table are both total labour pool needs in Cowichan Valley North, and the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by the recommended increase in spaces by 2030.

In Cowichan Valley North, there is an anticipated across-the-board increase in demand for child care workers at all qualification levels. The large increases in demand are expected to be seen for workers with a full ECE qualification (six FTE workers needed by 2030), and for those with a Responsible Adult certification (seven FTE workers needed by 2030). There will also be need for ECE Infant-Toddler (one FTE) and ECE Assistant (one FTE).

Table CVN11: Child Care Worker Needs by Qualification Level, Cowichan Valley North, 2030

	Group Care, birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, school age	Multi-Age Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care	<i>Total Staffing Requirements</i>
Total 2030 Programs Needed	9	8	2	7	17	3	2	-
Gain in Programs by 2030	1	0	0	2	5	1	0	-
Total ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Gain in ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total ECE Needed	9	8	2	0	17	0	2	38
Gain in ECE Needed	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	6
Total ECE Assistant Needed	9	24	2	0	0	0	0	35
Gain in ECE Assistant Needed	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	21	0	3	0	24
Gain in Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	6	0	1	0	7

MUNICIPAL BYLAWS, RESOURCES, AND PLANS

While a number of areas for potential improvement and expansion of child care in Cowichan Valley North have been identified in this report, these suggestions should be considered within the context of broader municipal or regional needs, priorities, and plans. There are a number of areas under municipal jurisdiction, such as zoning and business licensing, that can be leveraged to support strong child care growth initiatives.

Table CVN12 below summarizes the types of municipal approaches that can have an impact on child care availability, affordability, and accessibility in a region. The three right-most columns indicate whether each of the communities within Cowichan Valley North have undertaken such an approach to date.

Table CVN12: Municipal Policies, Plans, Bylaws and Resources, within Cowichan Valley North

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Ladysmith	Area G	Area H
<i>Strategies, Plans, and Policies</i>				
Child Care Strategy or Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges child care as fundamental to supporting healthy children and communities Provides guiding principles for municipal governments when working individually, with other levels of government, and/or with businesses and non-profit organizations; guiding principles help ensure that various initiatives and efforts are complementary and support one another 			
Child care addressed in Official Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that child care facilities and businesses are incorporated into long-term community development goals, land use planning, and business licensing practices 	✓	✓	✓
Child care addressed in Social Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges links among social inequities and access to child care (e.g., poverty, gendered differences in labour force participation) Provides guiding principles on creation and implementation of child care policies that address, or do not exacerbate, existing social inequities 			
Child care considered a community amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates incentives for local government to approve appropriate zoning and business licensing for child care throughout region / city If voluntary amenity contributions are available to developers, child care as an amenity incentivizes and leverages private capital to serve the community's child care needs 			
Other child care strategies, plans, and policies				

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Ladysmith	Area G	Area H
<i>Municipal Resources</i>				
Municipal building space available for child care (any cost structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate set-asides for child care space can reduce market competition for operators and ensure availability of space 			
Municipal grants for child care operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can provide funding to sustain specific child care operations, ensuring that specific communities maintain a minimum level of access Grants at a municipal level allow for funding to be targeted to better meet specific community needs (more targeted than provincial operating grants) 			
Municipal grants for child care capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can encourage creation or expansion of child care facilities in specific communities / neighbourhoods to meet community needs Can help operators leverage private equity / investment that otherwise would not be sufficient to accomplish capital project Creates physical space to support creation of needed child care spots 			
Child care design guidelines available to child care operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies requirements on child care facilities for operators, reducing confusion and facilitating capital projects Can promote best practices or community goals through design guidelines and recommendations 			
Child care information documents for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates access to child care for local residents, by making them aware of available licensed child care options 			
Municipal child care program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures a minimum number of child care spaces are available locally 			
Municipal staff resource dedicated to child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can promote and enforce municipal requirements for child care businesses (thereby ensuring quality of care), advise on provincial requirements Can promote information about available child care programs in municipality to families 			
Other child care documents				
Other				

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Ladysmith	Area G	Area H
<i>Child Care Facilities Permitted In:</i>				
Single Family Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓	✓	✓
Duplex (semi-detached) Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓	✓	✓
Row House / Townhouse Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓	✓	✓
Apartment Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 			
Mixed Use Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care) 			
Commercial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 	✓		
Public Use / Assembly Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 	✓		
Industrial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 			
Agricultural Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care) 	✓	✓	✓

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Ladysmith	Area G	Area H
<i>Additional Zoning or Licensing Requirements for Child Care</i>				
Additional parking required for home-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to limit ability of child care operators to offer home-based child care 	✓		
Municipal Business License required for child care use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional fees and submission requirements can create barriers to opening a child care business, or operating a child care business legally 	✓		
Non-resident child care staff are permitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows home-based child care operations to accommodate more children, if space on property allows 	✓		
Additional outdoor play space requirements / recommendations above provincial standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of spaces in a municipality that may house child care facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for space 			
Additional building requirements beyond the BC Building Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of buildings in a municipality that may house facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for qualifying buildings. 			

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are a series of recommendations for a child care strategy in Cowichan Valley North. These recommendations incorporate findings from all three major lines of inquiry: population projections and target setting for future child care spaces and programs; stakeholder consultation regarding the availability, accessibility, and quality of child care in the region; and secondary data review of existing municipal policies, resources, and bylaws among communities in the Cowichan region.

While this report is intended for the use of Cowichan Valley North and its constituent municipalities and electoral areas, there are a number of priority areas for change that are outside the jurisdiction of local governments. Therefore, recommendations listed here include comments on responsible and/or contributing levels of government.

Finally, it should be noted that the specific actions for local and provincial governments are not meant to be definitive recommendations; they are suggestions for actions that would support the overarching recommendation. Each community and government must consider their local context, mandate, and other factors when deciding which actions to pursue.

INCREASING COVERAGE RATES

Increase the number of child care spaces as per the recommended space creation targets.

This report has provided a detailed breakdown of recommended space creation targets, by age group and by care type (see Tables CVN6 and CVN7). Malatest recommends making efforts to meet these targets within the time frame specified, with regular review and assessment of capacity to ensure these targets remain relevant.

Local Government Actions

- Review and revise existing bylaws and regulations that may be limiting the ability of child care operators to offer child care (e.g., space requirements per child that are above provincial requirements), to enable existing operators to offer more child care spaces
- Incorporate targets for the creation of child care spaces and programs into community planning and strategy documents, to promote a coherent and complementary approach to child care across all departments of municipal government
- Consider creating grants to fund child care operations and/or capital investment projects, to support the creation of new programs and spaces
- Explore opportunities to acquire sites, either through purchase or lease agreements, to be made available to child care operators to support target spaces and programs

Provincial Government Actions

- Make available grant funds for capital projects to support child care space and program creation targets
- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, anticipate providing funding to child care centers aligned with space and program creation targets

Emphasize increasing infant/toddler spaces.

Space creation targets place a strong emphasis on infant/toddler spaces; this reflects both the comparatively low current coverage rate for this age group, as well as demand voiced by stakeholders who participated in this research. Malatest recommends that efforts to expand child care coverage in the region should ensure that creation of infant/toddler spaces are prioritized.

Local Government Actions

- Should target space creation targets be revised, municipal governments should consider the resulting coverage rates and aim for, at a minimum, a 33% coverage rate for children aged 0-2 years old
- Incorporate language in official community plans and social plans that acknowledges the importance of infant/toddler child care in allowing mothers to re-enter the workforce, thus reducing “brain drain” in local sectors as well as promoting gender equity

Provincial Government Actions

- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, set aside a certain proportion of funding to be dedicated to infant/toddler spaces in the region

CREATING NEW CHILD CARE SITES

Support creation of new child care programs and sites.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will necessitate the creation of new child care programs and, likely, opening of new child care centers and facilities in the region. This will require considerable capital investment that could be aided by support from both municipal and provincial governments.

Local Government Actions

- Consider making current available municipal space (e.g., unused space in municipal buildings) available for the exclusive use of child care programs
- Consider incorporating purpose-built space for child care programs into new municipal buildings that may be built over the coming decade
- Consider leasing / renting available municipal space to child care programs for no, nominal, or below-market rates
- Examine opportunities to acquire sites (e.g., closed elementary schools) for the operation of child care programs
- Consider making municipal grants available for capital investment projects, to leverage private dollars to expand existing child care sites

Provincial Government Actions

- Make grants available for capital investment projects, either to renovate and build new sites or to expand existing sites
- Consider working with regional and municipal governments to promote acquisition of sites for child care use

ACCESSIBILITY

Consider public accessibility of potential new child care sites.

Accessibility and location of child care sites was noted by a number of stakeholders in this research; many noted that there are a number of child care facilities that are not accessible by public transit. This results in the child care programs under-serving the community, particularly lower income families who may not have access to a personal vehicle. Accessibility and location of child care sites should be considered when examining potential child care sites.

Local Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans emphasizing the need for child care sites to serve the entire community, and therefore be accessible by public transit
- When assessing potential future sites for child care programs, consider accessibility by public transit and prioritize locations that are more accessible
- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit

Provincial Government Actions

- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit
- Incorporate consideration of accessibility by public transit into any potential land transfers with municipal or regional governments, prioritizing sites with public transit access for child care use

Consider need for, and incentivize, child care with extended and non-traditional hours.

Shift work poses a unique challenge to finding child care options. Very few child care sites in the Cowichan region offer extended hours such as early morning, late evening, or overnight care. Yet, for families where one or both parents are employed in shift work, there is a need to find child care options that can provide reliable care during these hours.

Local Government Actions

- If municipal operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- If municipal space is being used for child care programs, consider options to allow access to facilities during these extended hours
- Explore options with provincial government to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

Provincial Government Actions

- If provincial operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- Explore options with local governments to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

AFFORDABILITY

Attend to affordability as a key aspect of the expansion of child care in the Cowichan region.

Affordability of child care was noted as a major barrier to child care, and to child care of choice, among parents and caregivers in this research. Further, child care space targets set out in this report have assumed a considerable increase in demand due to an increase in affordability. As such, affordability of child care for families in the region should be a major priority for municipal, regional, and provincial governments.

Local Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans, acknowledging the importance of child care being affordable to local residents to ensure equal opportunity and accessibility for all children
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)
- Examine opportunities to reduce child care operators' overhead through making municipal space available to them for no, nominal, or below-market rent

Provincial Government Actions

- Continue the rollout of the Universal Child Care program, which provides child care to families at a low, flat cost per day (currently \$10 per day)
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)

SUPPORTING CHILD CARE WORKERS AND PROVIDERS

Promote child care as a career to youth in the Cowichan region.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will require the creation of many full-time equivalency child care positions throughout the Cowichan region. As a result, there will be a large need in the region for qualified child care workers, particularly those with higher levels of qualifications (e.g., ECE, ECE with infant-toddler and/or special needs training).

Local Government Actions

- Promote child care work as a career through community programs and space (e.g., an ad campaign in recreation centers and local schools)

Provincial Government Actions

- Promote child care work, particularly the ECE qualification, through existing career promotion programs (e.g., the *Find Your Fit* tour has an ECE station, this tour could be brought to Cowichan region secondary schools)
- Consider expanding ECE programs at post-secondary institutions on Vancouver Island to ensure sufficient graduates to meet demand over the coming ten years

Promote the ECE qualification, and ECE with special training, to current and potential child care workers.

During this research, Malatest heard from recent graduates of ECE programs that the ECE qualification itself was perceived to be financially burdensome, when considering the investment required and the anticipated pay of an ECE-qualified position. Many noted that it made more financial sense to seek a lower level of qualification, such as an ECE Assistant, because the difference in pay between the roles was not much different. In addition, many child care program operators noted that they faced significant challenges finding qualified staff, particularly ECEs and ECEs with infant-toddler and special needs training.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant to support upgrading to ECE and ECE with special training skills, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider opportunities to reduce the financial burden of ECE qualifications (e.g., bursaries standard to all students in ECE programs, other) to make the qualification more attractive to potential students
- Promote upgrading of lower-level child care qualifications (e.g., Responsible Adult, ECE Assistant) to full ECE accreditation through targeted ad campaigns in child care programs at post-secondary institutions in B.C.
- Promote a higher wage for fully qualified ECEs, either as part of or in addition to the ongoing Universal Child Care program; may be accomplished through wage subsidies or other means to create a higher “floor” wage for ECEs

Support ECEs in maintaining their credentials through affordable professional development opportunities.

Child care workers qualified as ECEs must participate in regular professional development in order to maintain their credential over time; this training is typically paid for by the individual, creating another barrier or disincentive for child care workers to pursue and/or maintain their full ECE qualification. Supporting ongoing professional development for ECEs can help to reduce this burden and better meet the need for qualified child care workers in the Cowichan region.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) undertake polling of child care programs and help to organize local, affordable professional development opportunities for child care workers
- Consider creating a municipal grant to support ongoing ECE professional development training, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider incentivizing regular professional development for ECEs through dedicated provincial grants available to all licensed child care operators in the Cowichan region

IMPROVING QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Promote cultural diversity in child care centers.

The diversity of child care centers in the Cowichan region was rated poorly by both the general public and parents and caregivers of children, in this research. Diverse child care centers that reflect the communities in which they are located provide children with higher quality, more enriching care that promotes inclusive communities. As such, promoting cultural diversity should be a priority under the general initiative of improving quality of child care.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) regularly collect information on diversity within child care centers and promote best practices in diversity to child care centers
- Ensure affordable child care is available in all communities and neighbourhoods (see recommendations regarding placement of sites and space targets), to enable families to send their children to programs that are nearby and that are reflective of the diversity of their communities

Provincial Government Actions

- As the Universal Child Care program continues to roll out, consider incentives for children attending child care centers local to their homes, to ensure that child care centers reflect their communities

Promote inclusion of children with extra support needs in child care programs.

Families of children with extra support needs can struggle to find spaces for their children in licensed child care programs, due to the additional resourcing and staffing required to accommodate these children. In particular, the need for specialized training for ECEs to provide care for children with additional support needs has resulted in limited qualified staff available at these child care programs, and high demand for care among the sites that are able to accommodate children with extra support needs.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider creating a provincial grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification
- Promote the ECE-SN training designation among students and alumni of child care programs at Vancouver Island universities, through ad campaigns and other promotional materials

Promote best practices in child care through monitoring and accountability measures.

While most parents and caregivers in the survey for this research rated their own child care arrangements highly, overall perception of child care quality in the Cowichan region was middling. Promotion of standards and best practices in licensed child care can provide guidance to providers (particularly during periods of rapid expansion) and build public confidence in the quality of child care offered locally.

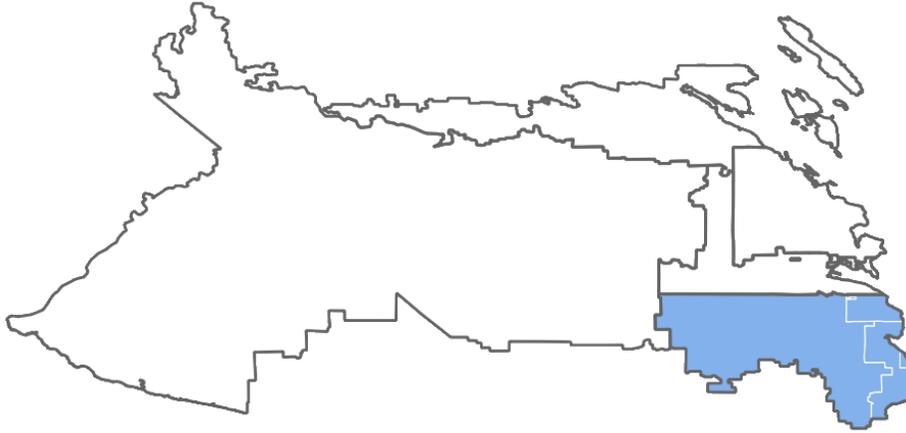
Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) collect key performance indicators from local child care centers to monitor quality, and promote best practices through promotional materials and other initiatives

Provincial Government Actions

- Create a set of key performance indicators for regular monitoring and measurement of child care quality
- Liaise with municipal child care resources to promote best practices endorsed by the provincial government, identify regional needs and provide support

COWICHAN VALLEY SOUTH



This report summarizes the current and anticipated future child care needs in Cowichan Valley South. Cowichan Valley South is a sub-region of the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), and is comprised of: Electoral Area A (Mill Bay / Malahat), Electoral Area B (Shawnigan Lake), and Electoral Area C (Cobble Hill).

COWICHAN VALLEY SOUTH CONTEXT

In this section, population-level factors that impact child care needs are described. This includes summaries of population size, family demographics, income, cultural diversity, and childhood vulnerability.

DEMOGRAPHY

The tables below summarize key trends in Cowichan Valley South related to household composition, income, and cultural diversity.

Total Population		Households	Number of Households	Number of Households with Children
	Area A 4,733	 The proportion of households with children in Cowichan Valley South (35%) are approximately equal as those seen in the overall CVRD (34%), but lower than the provincial (39%) and national (41%) proportions of households with children.	Area A 1,965	Area A 645
	Area B 8,558		Area B 3,300	Area B 1,395
	Area C 5,019		Area C 2,220	Area C 605
	Total 18,310		Total 7,485	Total 2,645

Family Structures

Dual-Parent Families				
485 (75%) Area A	1,045 (75%) Area B	450 (74%) Area C	<p>Of all families with children in Cowichan Valley South, 75% are led by two parents and 25% are led by a single parent. The ratio of dual-parent to lone-parent families was consistent across all Electoral Areas in the region. A slightly larger proportion of families in South Cowichan are led by two parents, compared to the overall CVRD (68% of CVRD families are led by two parents, 32% by single parents), and comparable to proportions at the provincial (73% two-parent, 27% lone-parent households) and national (72% two-parent, 28% lone-parent households) levels.</p>	
1,980 (75%) Total				
Lone-Parent Families				
160 (25%) Area A	350 (25%) Area B	155 (26%) Area C		
665 (25%) Total				



Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

	Income				
	Median Total Household Income	Median Total Income Of Couple Economic Families With Children ²²	Lone-Parent Economic Families' Median Income	Prevalence of Low Income (LIM-AT) ^{23*}	Prevalence of Low Income (LICO-AT)*
CVRD Area A	\$77,568	\$124,224	\$62,080	495 (11%)	270 (6%)
CVRD Area B	\$81,169	\$116,693	\$49,536	1,035 (12%)	465 (6%)
CVRD Area C	\$77,349	\$121,856	\$53,760	555 (11%)	255 (5%)
Total	\$79,091[†]	\$119,704[†]	\$53,557[†]	2,085 (12%)	990 (5%)

A weighted average of median incomes in the CVRD Area A, CVRD Area B, and CVRD Area C was \$79,091. Median incomes varied slightly, with all communities' median incomes falling within approximately \$4,000 of one another. Incomes in all communities were higher than the median income across all of BC (\$69,995) and Canada (\$70,336).

Similarly, rates of individuals falling within the low-income cut-off, after tax (LICO-AT) category (meaning that they are expected to spend 20 percentage points more of their income on food, shelter, and clothing compared to the average family) were similar in all communities, ranging from 5% to 6%. This is slightly lower than the LICO-AT rate for the overall CVRD (7%), the national rate (9%), and the provincial rate (11%). The low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) indicates whether a household takes in an income of 50% or less of the median income in their area (i.e., make about one-half of what the average household, of similar composition, in their area does). In all three communities in Cowichan Valley South, slightly more than one in ten individuals (11% to 12%) qualify as low-income under the LIM-AT measure.

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

[†] These numbers were calculated as weighted averages of the medians of the three regions. These numbers are expected to provide a good estimate of central tendency, but may not reflect the true median of the full region.

*It is important to note that these low-income measures capture the number and proportion of *individuals*, not *households*, falling within these low-income categories.

²² “Economic family” refers to two or more persons living in the same home, related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law union, adoption, or a foster relationship. Cohabiting, unrelated adults (e.g., roommates) do not constitute an economic family, nor do single-person households.

²³ The Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) indicates whether a household receives 50% or less of the median household income in their region, adjusting for household size to accommodate that larger households have greater income needs.

	Cultural Diversity			
	Self-Identified Aboriginal ²⁴	Self-Identified First Nations ²⁵	Self-Identified Métis ²⁶	Self-Identified Immigrant
CVRD Electoral Area A	185 (4%)	90 (2%)	90 (2%)	680 (15%)
CVRD Electoral Area B	560 (7%)	225 (3%)	310 (4%)	790 (9%)
CVRD Electoral Area C	185 (4%)	40 (1%)	145 (3%)	870 (17%)
Total	930 (5%)	355 (2%)	545 (3%)	2,340 (13%)
<p>Similar proportions of residents in all three communities identified as being Indigenous (4% to 7%), First Nations (1% to 3%), and Métis (2% to 4%). A lower proportion of residents in CVRD Electoral Area B (9%) identified as immigrants compared with other South Cowichan Electoral Areas (15%-17%).</p> <p>South Cowichan has an Indigenous population that is proportionally lower than that of the overall CVRD (12%), BC (6%), and Canada (5%). In contrast, the proportion of South Cowichan's population that identify as immigrants is roughly comparable to the overall CVRD (13%), and lower than BC (28%) and Canada (22%).</p>				
Most Common Mother Tongue				
CVRD Electoral Area A	CVRD Electoral Area B	CVRD Electoral Area C		
English (91%)	English (94%)	English (91%)		
Most Common Language Spoken at Home				
CVRD Electoral Area A	CVRD Electoral Area B	CVRD Electoral Area C		
English (97%)	English (98%)	English (98%)		
<p>While English is the most common first language, and most common language spoken at home, for large majorities of residents in Electoral Areas A, B, and C, there were no other languages that predominated among non-English-primary speakers. There were a wide variety of languages other than English reported as being first languages and/or the language spoken most often at home. Given that there were such a wide variety of languages, with none predominating as a “second-most-common” language in the region, there are no recommendations for languages of focus for future child care programs.</p>				

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

²⁴ Self-identified Aboriginal, according to Statistics Canada's Census counting methodology, includes all individuals who identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or a combination thereof.

²⁵ Self-identified First Nations in this column represents the count of individuals in the 2016 Census who identified as being solely of First Nations descent (i.e., not having multiple Indigenous heritages such as Métis and First Nations).

²⁶ Self-identified Métis in this column represents the count of individuals in the 2016 Census who identified as being solely of Métis descent (i.e., not having multiple Indigenous heritages such as Métis and First Nations).

CHILDHOOD VULNERABILITY

“Vulnerability” in this context refers to a child’s likelihood to experience poor health, education, and/or social outcomes. Childhood vulnerability is captured on a regular basis in B.C. through the Human Early Learning Partnership’s Early Development Instrument (EDI). This instrument measures five core domains of early child development and identifies, based on questionnaire scores, children who are vulnerable in these five areas.

	Vulnerability (EDI)				
	Percentage of Children Vulnerable	Overall BC Vulnerability One Or More Scales (Wave 7)			
CVRD Electoral Area A*	31%	33%			
CVRD Electoral Area B*	28%				
CVRD Electoral Area C*	31%				
	Domain				
	Physical Health & Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language & Cognitive Development	Communication Skills
CVRD Electoral Area A*	19%	14%	21%	7%	9%
CVRD Electoral Area B*	11%	11%	16%	9%	12%
CVRD Electoral Area C*	19%	14%	21%	7%	9%
<p>The percentage of vulnerable children in Cowichan Valley South is lower than the provincial average for vulnerability on one or more scales based on the EDI Wave 7 data. Vulnerability was similar across all three electoral areas, with 28-31% of children measured by the EDI considered vulnerable on one or more scales. Among the five subscales, rates of vulnerability were highest in two regions (Electoral Area A and C) on emotional maturity (21% of vulnerable children), and physical health and well-being (19% of vulnerable children).</p>					

EDI Wave 7 (2017-19), Human Early Learning Partnership

* Note: EDI data is based on school district boundaries. These boundaries do not directly map to the exact CVRD boundaries used for this report. Therefore, the EDI data presented in the table above are approximations for the areas that comprise Cowichan Valley South, but are anticipated to be broadly representative of trends and needs in the region.

CURRENT STATE OF CHILD CARE IN COWICHAN VALLEY SOUTH

This subsection of the report will provide a summary of the current state of child care in Cowichan Valley South, specifically focusing on the potential demand for child care from children aged birth to 12 years and the current supply of licensed child care spaces available.

COWICHAN VALLEY SOUTH CHILD CARE DEMAND FACTORS

Determining the need for child care is challenging given demand is influenced by a number of dynamic factors including, but not limited to, population and labour force participation rates over time. Initiatives such as the B.C. government's Universal Child Care Initiative will likely cause a significant increase in the demand for regulated child care as low-cost spaces are rolled out across the province, making licensed child care more affordable and accessible for a larger number of families.

POPULATION FACTORS

The population of children (aged 12 years and younger) in Cowichan Valley South is projected to decrease slightly between 2020 and 2030; there is a projected decrease of about 8% over the ten-year period, or approximately a 1% decrease annually. These decreases are occurring mainly in the 3-5 and 6-12 year age groups, while the number of children aged 0-2 is anticipated to remain relatively stable over the next decade. A summary of population statistics for Cowichan Valley South broken down by area and age group can be found in Table CVS1.

Table CVS1: Cowichan Valley South Population Projections, 2020-2030

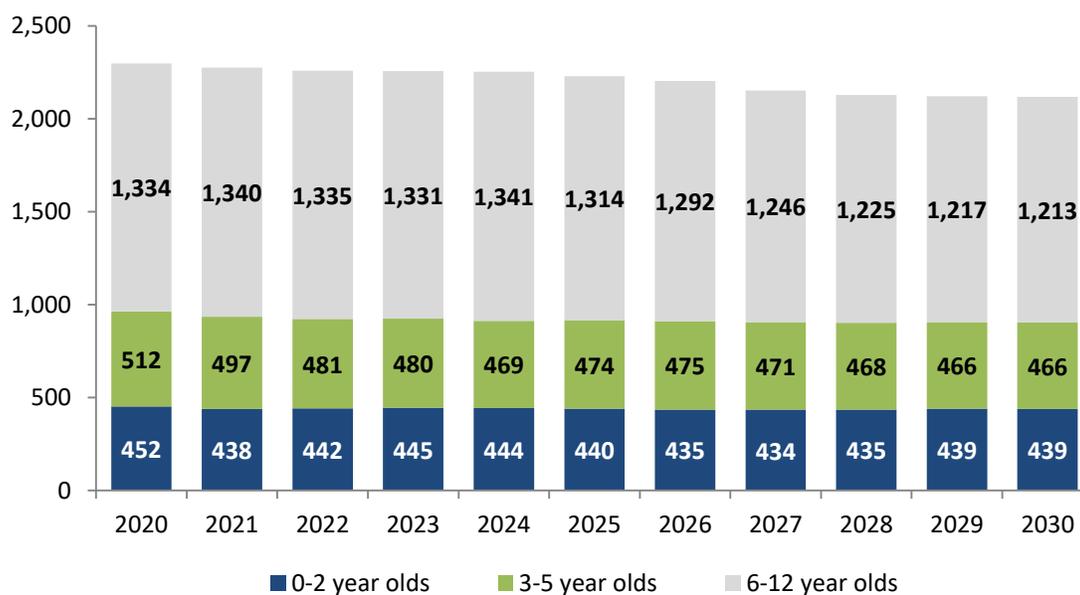
Area	2020	2025	2030	Change 2020-2030	Average Annual Change 2020-2030	Average Annual % Change 2020-2030
CVRD Electoral Area A						
Children 0-2 years	109	106	106	-3	0	0%
Children 3-5 years	123	114	112	-11	-1	-1%
Children 6-12 years	321	316	292	-29	-3	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	553	537	510	-43	-4	-1%
CVRD Electoral Area B						
Children 0-2 years	245	239	238	-7	-1	0%
Children 3-5 years	278	258	253	-25	-2	-1%
Children 6-12 years	724	713	659	-66	-7	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	1,247	1,210	1,150	-98	-10	-1%

Area	2020	2025	2030	Change 2020-2030	Average Annual Change 2020-2030	Average Annual % Change 2020-2030
CVRD Electoral Area C						
Children 0-2 years	98	95	95	-3	0	0%
Children 3-5 years	111	102	101	-10	-1	-1%
Children 6-12 years	288	284	262	-26	-3	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	496	481	457	-39	-4	-1%
Cowichan Valley South						
Children 0-2 years	452	440	439	-13	-1	0%
Children 3-5 years	512	474	466	-46	-5	-1%
Children 6-12 years	1,334	1,314	1,213	-121	-12	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	2,297	2,228	2,117	-180	-18	-1%

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

These changes in child population in Cowichan Valley South, from 2020 to 2030, are illustrated in Figure CVS1 below. As noted above, the overall decrease is relatively small – about 1% - but this represents a decrease of 180 children in the region over the next ten years.

Figure CVS1: Cowichan Valley South Projected Population Change, 2020-2030



Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

UTILIZATION OF LICENSED CHILD CARE SPACES

Cowichan Valley South is located within the South Vancouver Island service delivery area. The South Vancouver Island service delivery area includes not only all of the CVRD, but also Greater Victoria and other municipalities; this impacts the overall averages for the area. Breakdowns at a more granular level, such as CVRD alone, are not available.

Utilization rates provide a broad measure of the uptake of available child care services in a region. These numbers represent what proportion of *available* child care spaces are *being used*.²⁷ Utilization rates offer a proxy for the appropriateness of the amount and combination of types of child care spaces available. Efficient use of child care spaces will be reflected in high utilization rates, indicating that there are not “too many” spaces available for the number of families in a region that want to make use of child care. However, at very high utilization rates – in excess of 80% to 85% – finding child care becomes progressively more challenging for families, potentially impacting the ability to find a suitable child care space that is accessible and affordable to them.

Utilization rates for South Vancouver Island, alongside provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators, are shown in Table CVS2. South Vancouver Island’s utilization rate is similar to the provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators. Across all groups, utilization rate was very high for infant-toddler care in 2016-17, while utilization rate was lower for the 3-5 year age group, and lowest for the school-age group.

Table CVS2: Average Monthly Child Care Space Utilization Rates, April 2016 through March 2017

Service Delivery Area	Group Care, Infant/Toddler	Group Care, 3 to 5 years	Group Care, School Age	Total Group Care	Family Care	Total Group and Family Care
British Columbia	85%	74%	48%	70%	72%	71%
South Vancouver Island	87%	70%	42%	65%	72%	69%
North Vancouver Island	88%	62%	38%	62%	68%	63%

Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. *Performance Management Report*. Volume 9 March 2017. Performance Indicator 1.01, Spare Capacity in Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/services-supports-for-parents-with-young-children/reporting-monitoring/00-public-ministry-reports/volume_9_mar_2017.pdf

Note: ‘Group Multi-Age’ spaces have been excluded as it cannot be determined which spaces of a facility’s reported enrolments are utilized, by age.

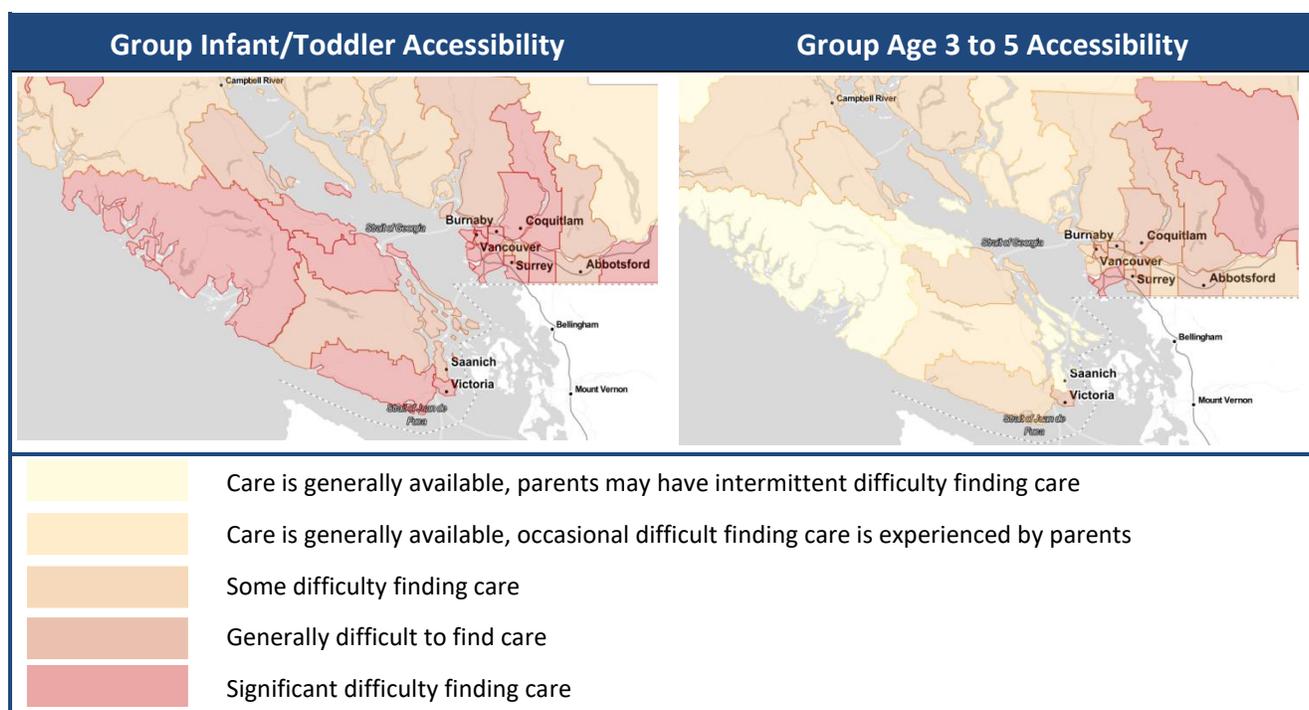
²⁷ A child care facility’s Utilization Rate is determined by dividing its total enrollments for the month by the number of times a child care space can be used in a month. Two part-time enrolments are assumed to be equivalent to one full-time enrollment; 100% utilization of one child care space is assumed to be 22 full-time equivalent enrollments in a month.

COWICHAN VALLEY SOUTH CHILD CARE SUPPLY FACTORS

The accessibility of licensed child care spaces for infant/toddlers and children aged 3-5 years across the Cowichan Region in general is illustrated in Figure CVS2. These maps, based on 2017/18 data, suggest that parents generally have difficulty finding group infant/toddler child care, whereas care for the 3-5 age group is generally available, with occasional difficulty experienced by parents.

This aligns with information on utilization rates available (utilization is about 70% for the 3-5 years group in South Vancouver Island) and coverage rate data based on recent child care inventories, which suggest a 47% coverage rate for children aged 3-5 in the Cowichan Valley South region – the highest coverage among all age groups in the region. Findings from key informant interviews also stressed the pressing need for infant-toddler spaces, with less focus on the 3-5 years age group.

Figure CVS2: Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces in the Cowichan Region, 2017-18



Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. Early Years Performance Indicators: 1.01 Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from <https://mcf.gov.bc.ca/reporting/services/early-years/performance-indicators>

AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE IN COWICHAN VALLEY SOUTH

There are currently a total of **511** licensed child care spaces across **32** programs in Cowichan Valley South. Summaries of child care spaces and program type by area are below in Tables CVS3 and CVS4, respectively.

Table CVS3: Cowichan Valley South Licensed Child Care Spaces, 2020

Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	Total Spaces
CVRD Electoral Area A							
45	69	0	28	0	7	0	83
CVRD Electoral Area B							
8	72	60	96	24	7	8	275
CVRD Electoral Area C							
8	46	48	36	8	7	0	153
Total Cowichan Valley South							
28	154	108	160	32	21	8	511

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey, Winter 2019/20

Table CVS4: Cowichan Valley South Licensed Child Care Programs, 2020

Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	Total Programs
CVRD Electoral Area A							
1	3	0	3	0	1	0	8
CVRD Electoral Area B							
1	4	2	2	2	1	1	13
CVRD Electoral Area C							
1	3	3	2	1	1	0	11
Total Cowichan Valley South							
3	10	5	7	3	3	1	32

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey, Winter 2019/20

COWICHAN VALLEY SOUTH CHILD CARE COVERAGE RATES

Current child care coverage rates (i.e., the number of child care spaces per 100 children) were calculated using current population estimates for Cowichan Valley South, and the number of licensed child care spaces currently available in the region. Within Canada, the ratio of child care spaces per 100 children aged 12 and under varies significantly by province. The national average in 2017 was 27.2 spaces per 100 children, while British Columbia’s provincial average was considerably lower at 18.4 spaces per 100 children.²⁸

Table CVS5 below summarizes the coverage rates, by age group, in Cowichan Valley South.

Table CVS5: Cowichan Valley South Licensed Child Care Coverage Rates, 2020

Age Group	Current Child Population	Current Number of Spaces	Current Estimated Coverage Rate
<i>All children 0-12 years</i>	2,297	511	22.2
Pre-school aged children, 0-5 years	964	323	33.5
Infant / Toddler children, 0-2 years	452	81	17.9
Preschool aged children, 3-5 years	512	242	47.2
School aged children, 6-12 years	1,333	188	14.1

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

There is little consensus or established benchmarks regarding what is a sufficient number of child care spaces within a region. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) identifies forward sortation areas (FSAs) with one licensed child care spot per three (or more) children aged 0-5 years (i.e., 33% coverage), and a minimum of 50 children in that FSA, as a child care desert. Families living in child care deserts are anticipated to experience significant difficulty getting access to child care.²⁹ Currently, Cowichan Valley South has a 18% coverage rate for children aged 0 to 2 years (infant-toddler group), qualifying the region as a child care desert for this age group. Coverage is much higher for the 3-5 years age group, at 47%. Coverage for the 6-12 age group is also low for South Cowichan, at 14%. Overall, for all children birth to 12 years old, the coverage rate in the CVRD is 26%; South Cowichan’s rate is lower than this at 22%.

Currently there are 22.2 child care spaces for every 100 children aged 0-12 years in Cowichan Valley South.

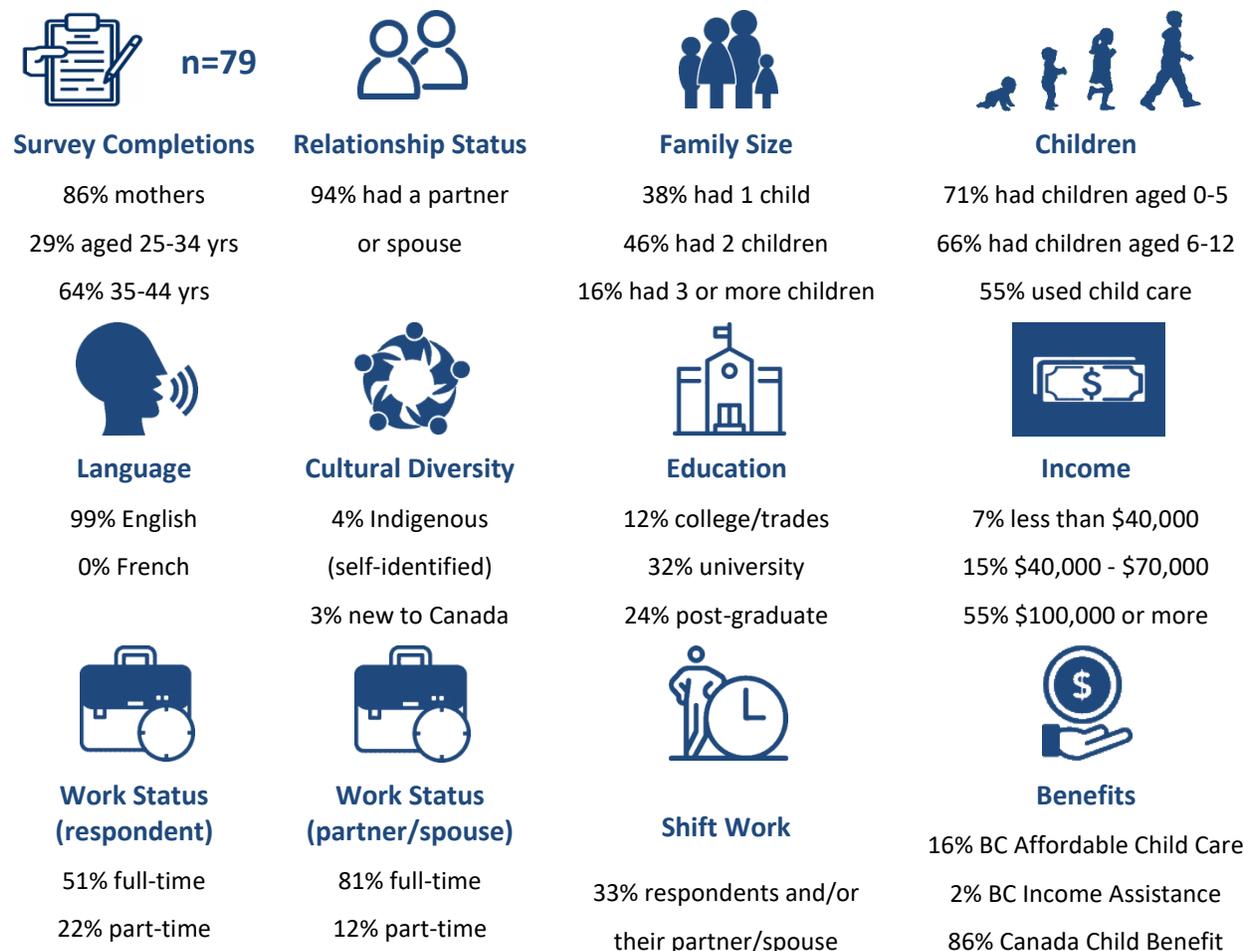
²⁸ Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2012 (9th edition, June 2013), Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Retrieved from https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/CRRU_ECEC_2012_revised_dec2013.pdf

²⁹ Macdonald, D. Child Care Deserts in Canada. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (June 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2018/06/Child%20Care%20Deserts.pdf>

CHILD CARE QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

In addition to review of the child care capacity and coverage rates, Malatest conducted survey and interview research with stakeholders to better understand local perceptions of the quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care in Cowichan Valley South. Information about research participants, and key themes that emerged from this research, are discussed in this section.

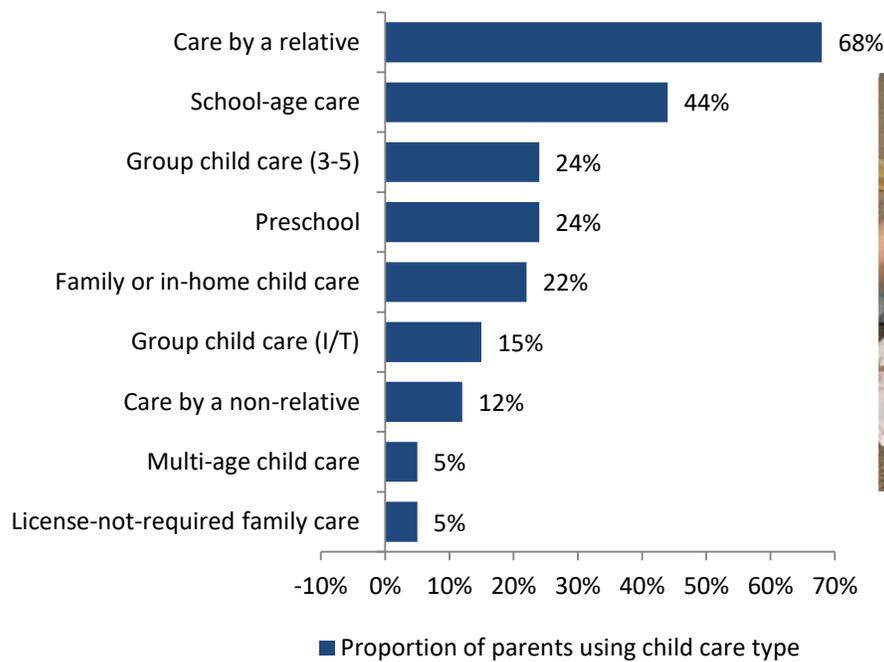
SUMMARY OF PARENT AND CAREGIVER SURVEY RESPONDENTS



Source: 2020 Cowichan Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey, n=79. Not all response options are shown.

Of the 79 parent/caregiver respondents, more than one-half (55%, n=41) reported using child care, and of these respondents they used all care types (see Figure CVS3). Care by a relative was the primary care type used in Cowichan Valley South (36%, n=23).

Figure CVS3: Child Care Use by Care Type, Cowichan Valley South Respondents



Source: Cowichan Valley Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey, n=41. This question allowed for multiple responses, therefore percentages may add up to more than 100%.

KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Three key themes emerged from surveying and interviewing community stakeholders regarding child care in Cowichan Valley South: availability, affordability, and quality of child care.

AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE

[There is a] huge need in our community for infant and toddler spaces.

Across all stakeholder groups, there was strong indication that more child care spaces are needed. One-half of child care providers in South Cowichan (50%, n=13) reported a need for more child care spaces.

Currently, more than 80% of these child care centres (81%, n=13) have waitlists. When asked about the number of spaces needed, about two-thirds of providers in Cowichan Valley South (64%, n=7) recommended doubling the number of current spaces in the area.

Cost, availability, and other accessibility factors are creating barriers to child care among parents and caregivers in South Cowichan. Slightly more than one-third of respondents (35%) to the parent and caregiver survey in the South Cowichan region reported that cost was their primary reason for not using child care. Eighteen percent of parents and caregivers in the region reported availability of spaces as a major concern. However, 57% of all respondents in this region reported that cost was a barrier to accessing their preferred choice of child care, and 63% reported that availability of spaces was a barrier to their preferred type of child care.

All groups agreed that infant and toddler spaces are particularly needed, followed by after-school care spaces. Increasing the availability of child care for children with extra support needs was also identified as a priority among all groups. Slightly less than two-thirds of child care provider respondents in Cowichan Valley South (64%, n=9) currently are able to care for children with additional support needs. As a result, available child care spaces are even scarcer for children with additional support needs. Less than one-half (40%, n=32) of local parents and caregivers agreed with the statement, “Child care options in the Cowichan region provide all the services / supports necessary for children to succeed.”

Children with extra support needs [such as language and speech] tend to be underserved.

Key informants echoed these findings, and pointed out that there is not enough Support Child Development (SCD) funding available to support the children currently in care. For this reason, these interviewees questioned the benefits of additional spaces on the already-strained services in the region. Stakeholders also noted a lack of support workers who are able and/or willing to work contracted support hours. Stakeholders shared stories of programs being unable to take on children requiring extra supports, due to insufficient numbers of trained educators or additional support staff.

In addition to a lack of spaces, all stakeholder groups expressed a need for more flexible options in the hours when care is available. Child care providers in Cowichan Valley South recognized the need for extended hours, largely in the early mornings (50% agreed this was a need). Child care providers in the region were less convinced that there was a need for child care availability in the later evenings (23% agreed this was a need), and before and after school and during school closures (42% agreed this was a need). A number of stakeholders suggested opening a child care centre in the hospital to help improve accessibility of child care for shift workers.

Earlier start times for daycare would allow me to work more and would help all shift workers.

Finally, lack of public transportation to child care centres was noted as a challenge to accessibility of child care. The scarcity of child care spaces across the Cowichan region doesn't allow parents and caregivers the option to select a child care site within walking distance from home, leaving it up to parents and caregivers to find ways to reach facilities that may be a long distance from their home and/or place of work. For those without reliable access to a personal vehicle, this creates an additional hurdle to accessing child care.

AFFORDABILITY OF CHILD CARE

All stakeholder groups and key informants agreed that child care is too expensive for many families. Participants believed that access to more affordable child care would have benefits for parents and caregivers in a number of areas. These included:

- Improve parents' and caregivers' chances to gain employment (17% of local parents / caregivers, n=12; 52% of the general population in the broader CVRD, n=49);
- Allow parents and caregivers to work more hours (42% of local parents / caregivers, n=29);
- Reduce parents' and caregivers' absences at work (28% of local parents / caregivers, n=19; 59% of the general population in the CVRD, n=56); and

- Allow parents and caregivers to improve their education, or update their training and/or credentials (28% of local parents / caregivers, n=19).

One-half of general population respondents throughout the broader CVRD (52%, n=44) indicated that lowering child care fees would result in increased economic prosperity. Majorities of parents and caregivers within Cowichan Valley South (57%, n=45) and the general population of the CVRD more broadly (78%, n=74) agreed that low-cost child care would have a number of non-economic benefits, such as reduced stress on families and overall better mental wellness.

Key informants stated that affordability of child care is a common concern among families they serve. These interviewees shared stories of many families, especially young parents, not being able to find child care even if they could afford it. Qualifying for child care was also noted as a concern, particularly for parents who are not employed or attending school, and therefore cannot qualify for subsidies.

QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Slightly more than one-half of general population survey respondents in the CVRD (53%, n=35) agreed that “child care options in the Cowichan region offer quality child care.” Approximately one-half of parents and caregivers in the South Cowichan region (57%, n=36) agreed with the statement. An even higher proportion of local parents and caregivers – 70% (n=45) – reported being satisfied with the quality of their personal child care arrangements. Key informants spoke highly of the quality of child care in the region.

Inclusivity, a common indicator of child care quality, is defined as the extent to which a child care site is inclusive of children of all abilities (including those with extra support needs) and incorporating the diversity of the community. Minorities of general population respondents (37%, n=35) and parents and caregivers (25%, n=15) agreed that child care options in the Cowichan region are inclusive in terms of children’s abilities. A slightly higher proportion of parents and caregivers (39%, n=24), and less than one-half of the general population (45%, n=43) agreed that child care options reflect the diversity of the community. These findings suggest that inclusivity of child care could be an area for further improvement.

The quality of a child care centre is also impacted by the quality of the individuals who work there. One-half of child care providers (50%, n=13) believed that increased wages would improve the quality of child care services in the area. Further, slightly more than one-half of child care providers (54%, n=14) believed that greater availability of qualified staff would improve the quality of child care in their area. In addition, key informants felt non-licensed care can hinder child care quality and if more care centres are added, they should be licensed.

CHALLENGES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS



The number one issue is finding and retaining good quality staff.

Child care providers identified staffing as their primary challenge in providing child care. Issues related to hiring qualified workers, and accessing needed funding, were noted as challenges to expanding existing child care centres. These participants noted that it was a challenge to find an available labour pool of well-trained staff (93%, n=13 identified this as an issue) and to offer wages at the level needed to attract and retain these qualified staff (93%, n=13 identified this as an issue). However, many felt that an increased

availability of early childhood educators would motivate them to increase the number of child care spaces at their facility. This could have the benefit of increasing the overall number of child care spaces in the region, but may also result in staff-to-child ratios remaining low.

A majority of stakeholders echoed the sentiments expressed by child care providers, regarding current staffing issues in the industry. There was consensus among all groups that increased compensation would encourage more people to pursue education in, and join, the child care profession as they could expect to be fairly compensated for their work.

[There is a] lack of people motivated to open a daycare, as it is a lot of work for little pay.

Child care providers identified some other important areas that could influence child care sites' willingness to increase their capacity. Barriers to increasing the number of spaces included:

In Cowichan there are several municipal boundaries and capacity issues. Regional districts haven't had child care on their agendas and tightening budgets make it more difficult to add new services or expand existing ones.

- Increasing wages for staff (93%, n=13); and
- The need for more physical space (64%, n=9).

More governance was also thought to be needed over unlicensed child care. Concerns were raised from stakeholders that these unlicensed centres get the same access to government funding as licensed child care centres, and they charge the same or more than licensed centre, yet their quality may often not be equivalent.

FUTURE CHILD CARE TARGETS

Based on anticipated future need for child care in Cowichan Valley South, Malatest has developed a series of targets for increasing the supply of licensed child care spaces in the region. Recommendations include:

- Number of child care spaces needed, by age group and care type, over the next ten years to meet changing demographics and anticipated change in demand;
- Number of child care programs needed to accommodate these spaces;
- Space needs for recommended programs (i.e., interior and exterior space requirements to accommodate children in the identified programs);
- Potential sites in Electoral Area A, Electoral Area B, and Electoral Area C, where additional needed programs could be located; and
- Staffing needs to accommodate the increased number of programs and spaces recommended.

SPACE CREATION TARGETS

This subsection of the report provides short-, medium-, and long-term child care space creation targets for Cowichan Valley South.

Space creation targets for each of the child care age groups were calculated by multiplying projected populations for each age group (taken from BC Stats' PEOPLE Population projections) by target coverage rates for these age groups. Target coverage rates were decided based on multiple factors: available recommendations for best practice in existing literature, the experience of other jurisdictions in providing child care, and estimates of unmet need for each age group within the CVRD based on survey and interview data. Baseline target coverage rates for each of the age groups were:

- 55% for the 0-2 years age group;
- 85% for the 3-5 years age group; and
- 20% for the 6-12 years age group.

These target coverage rates were baselines only, and were adjusted for each community as appropriate based on anticipated unmet need as well as findings from key informant interviews. For more information on how these targets were arrived at, please refer to the Methodology Section of the Final Report prepared for this project.

These targets identify the number of child care spaces required to support the projected population of Cowichan Valley South over the next ten years (see Table CVS6). Moderate increases in child care spaces were identified across all age groups, from an additional 55 spaces for school aged children, to 64 spaces for infants and toddlers.

Table CVS6: Total Target Child Care Spaces by Age Group, Cowichan Valley South, 2020-2030

Year	Spaces Children 0-2 years	Spaces Children 3-5 years	Total Spaces Children 0-5 years	Spaces Children 6-12 years	Total Spaces Children 0-12 years
2020	81	242	323	188	511
2021	88	248	336	201	537
2022	97	255	352	214	566
2025	119	275	394	236	630
2030	145	302	446	243	689

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces only); 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

Space creation targets for 2030 require 179 new spaces over ten years: 64 for infant-toddler, 60 for preschool ages, and 55 for school-aged children.

Table CVS7 provides a summary of how these required spaces could be broken down by child care type. It is important to note that very small increases in family and in-home multi-age child care were projected, due to the fact that these operations have low capacity numbers and most in the region are already serving as many children as possible. The only way to substantially increase child care spots in these types of programs would be for child care operators to open their own in-home facilities, which is considerably more challenging to promote and incentivize than adding capacity to other types of child care sites.

Table CVS7: Total Target Child Care Spaces by Type of Care, Cowichan Valley South, 2020-2030

Type of Care	2020 Supply	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2021*	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2022*	Estimated Medium-Term Need, 2025*	Estimated Long-Term Need, 2030*
Group Child Care (Birth to 36 months)	28	40	59	83	101
Group Child Care (30 months to school age)	154	154	156	170	193
Licensed Preschool	108	108	110	120	130
Group Child Care (School age)	160	168	172	180	185
Multi-Age Child Care	32	38	40	48	51
Family Child Care	21	21	21	21	21
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	8	8	8	8	8
Total Child Care Spaces	511	537	566	630	689

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces only)

*Consultant estimates

Figures in brackets indicate net change in space numbers between the column's year targets and the previous column's year targets.

It is important to note that, over the course of this project, School District 79 has committed to creating 201 new child care spaces, 37 of which will be in Mill Bay, within the South Cowichan region. Of these 37 spaces, 25 are being dedicated to Group Child Care (30 months to School Age) and 12 are being dedicated to Group Child Care (Birth to 36 months). As a result, some of the targets provided above may already have been met.

Finally, Table CVS8 provides a summary of the overall increase in coverage rates, from 2020 to 2030, based on recommended space creation targets and population projections for these age groups. As can be seen in the table, childcare space creation targets proposed by Malatest result in the largest improvements targeted at the 0-2 and 3-5 years age groups, while a smaller increase is suggested for the 6-12 years age group

Table CVS8: Change in Proportional Child Care Coverage, Cowichan Valley South, 2020-2030

Age Group	2020	2030	Percentage Point Change
0-5 years	34%	49%	+15 pts
0-2 years	18%	33%	+15 pts
3-5 years	47%	65%	+18 pts
6-12 years	14%	20%	+6 pts
Overall Coverage Rate: 0-12 years	22%	33%	+11 pts

PROGRAM CREATION AND SITE LOCATION NEEDS

In addition to estimating the need for individual child care spaces, by age group and care type, over the next decade, Malatest developed estimates and recommendations on creation of child care programs to accommodate these additional spaces, and identified potential sites that could be used to house these additional child care programs. These estimates and recommendations are discussed in the sub-sections below.

PROGRAM CREATION

Malatest used its recommendations for space creation targets, by care type, to identify the number of additional programs that will be needed to accommodate these targets. In calculating the number of additional programs needed, the following assumptions or parameters were used:

- All programs will be fully subscribed to the legal maximums prescribed by the provincial government; and
- Where partial programs are needed (e.g., calculation indicated a need for 4.35 programs), number of needed programs were always rounded up to accommodate legal requirements for the *maximum* number of children in a program.

As a result of these approaches, these recommendations for additional programs needed should be taken as the minimum required to meet the space creation targets identified, but will also provide a small amount of additional capacity for more spaces if needed by the community.

Further, it is important to note that Malatest has delineated a difference between *programs* and *sites*. “Program” refers to each licensed child care program that serves up to its maximum number of children. “Site” refers to the physical location (building and outdoor space) that serves one or more programs. Many of the larger child care operators host multiple programs at their site; for example, a child care operator who reports 24 spaces for infant-toddler group care hosts two programs, as the maximum number of children who can be served by that care type in a single program is 12.

Given that the UBCM inventory does not break down the number of programs at a specific site in this manner, the number of sites in 2020 is a best estimate based on the number of spaces that each operator reports offering and the applicable legal maximum enrolments for each type of care. It is also important to note that staffing shortages may be limiting the ability of sites to operate at their maximum potential capacity. For example, while the maximum number of children in a licensed preschool program is 20, there is also a requirement that there be a minimum of one ECE or ECE assistant for every ten children (with at least one full ECE required for every program). Therefore, it should not be assumed that simply because a site appears to have unfilled spaces based on potential maximum capacity, these sites could start meeting an increase in demand immediately.

Finally, it is important to note that although in some cases, there are negative net gains in programs between 2020 and 2030 based on Malatest’s recommendations, this should not be taken as a blanket recommendation to completely shutter child care programs or whole sites. Closure of child care sites would likely result in backlash from families in the community, and closure of sites in already poorly served areas could result in *no* child care sites being available to some families within a reasonable distance. Therefore, where there is potential to close child care programs, municipalities and electoral areas should consider:

1. Whether there is an opportunity to reduce the number of programs within a single site (e.g., if a child care center currently operates the equivalent of two preschool-aged group care programs, could this be reduced to one in order to maintain access within the geographic area while still reducing the number of spaces?),
2. Whether closures would put hardship on the local community or neighbourhood to find alternative child care options, and
3. If there are opportunities to re-purpose program closures to offer other needed programs (e.g., if the preschool-aged group care is over-served, but additional programs are needed for birth to 36 months group care, can that program space be altered to serve a different group rather than shut down altogether?).

With these considerations in mind, Table CVS9 summarizes the changing needs for child care programs in Cowichan Valley South over the next ten years. Malatest anticipates a need for two fewer group care programs in both the 30 months to school age care type and school age care type, as well as one less in-home multi-age care program. There will, however, be increases in demand for all other care programs with the exception of family care. In particular, Malatest anticipates a large increase in need for birth to 36 months group care to accommodate the higher target coverage rates for infants and toddlers, as well as a need for three additional multi-age care programs.

Table CVS9: Change in Need for Child Care Programs, Cowichan Valley South, 2020-2030

	Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Care	Family Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care
2020 Spaces Reported	28	154	108	160	32	21	8
2020 Programs	3	10	6	9	4	3	2
2030 Target Spaces*	101	193	130	185	51	21	8
2030 Programs Needed*	9	8	7	7	7	3	1
2030 Net Program Gain	6	-2	1	-2	3	0	-1

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces and programs only)

*Consultant estimates

PROGRAM SPACE NEEDS

Each child care program is required to meet certain minimum space requirements, to ensure adequate area for care, activities, and enrichment for children served by the program. Based on the number of additional child care programs identified as needed in each sub-region of the CVRD, Malatest has calculated the amount of additional space – interior and exterior – needed to accommodate these additional programs. Below is a list of assumptions and limitations should be kept in mind when reviewing the estimates of additional space needed.

- Calculation of additional space needed for each program type was calculated based on provincial minimum requirements. These recommendations should be considered the *minimum* needed to legally open and operate the recommended child care programs.

- Malatest has assumed that all programs will be operating at maximum capacity, therefore calculation of site size was based on per-child space requirements at the maximum number of children allowable in a single program.
- There are different maximum program enrollments by age within the school-aged group care program; these programs may serve up to 25 children in the K-Grade 2 age group, and up to 30 children older than that. Malatest’s calculations for space requirements for these programs are based on a “middle ground” assumption of enrollment at 28 children per program.
- Exterior space requirements for preschool and school-aged group care programs, as well as home-based care programs, specify that an exterior activity area must exist, but do not give space requirements. Malatest has maintained the general requirement of 7 m² per child that exists for other group care programs, to create estimates, however it should be noted that municipalities and electoral areas may have flexibility for these program types in terms of the exact size of outdoor activity areas.
- Provincial interior space minimums do not account for non-activity areas that may be required, such as hallways, janitorial closets, washrooms, and kitchens. Malatest has added a 25% allowance to interior space calculations to accommodate for these other spaces, based on recommendations from the City of Richmond’s Child Care Design Guidelines.
- There are provincial allowances for some co-located programs to share required non-activity areas such as kitchen facilities and janitorial closets. This is an opportunity to reduce the total amount of space needed to meet new program requirements and maximize efficient use of available sites. However, given insufficient information available to Malatest regarding the total size of potential child care sites and thus the ability to co-locate programs at single sites, Malatest has not assumed that programs will be co-located and so the space recommendations here may be slightly higher than actual needs.
- Exterior space requirements account for activity areas accessible to children only. These exterior space requirements do not account for other space that may be required under applicable bylaws such as set-backs, parking spaces, or pick-up and drop-off areas.

With these considerations in mind, Table CVS10 summarizes program space needs by program type. Space needs are given for each program (columns three and four), and overall space needs to accommodate all needed programs of that type (columns five and six).

Table CVS10: Interior and Exterior Space Needs to Serve Recommended Program Creation, 2030

Care Type	New Sites Needed by 2030	Interior Floor Space per Program (m ²)	Exterior Activity Space per Program (m ²)	Total Interior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)	Total Exterior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)
Group care, birth to 36 months	6	55.5	84.0	333.0	504.0
Group care, 30 months to school age	-2	115.6	175.0	-231.3	-350.0
Licensed Preschool	1	92.5	140.0	92.5	140.0
Group care, school age	-2	103.1	192.5	-206.3	-385.0
Multi-Age Care	3	37.0	56.0	111.0	168.0
Family Child Care	0	32.4	49.0	0.0	0.0
In-Home Multi-Age Care	-1	37.0	56.0	-37.0	-56.0

Reference: *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. Child Care Licensing Regulation. Retrieved from http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/loo70/loo70/12_319_89

POTENTIAL CHILD CARE SITES

Malatest has identified a number of potential sites for housing new child care programs throughout Cowichan Valley South. The following three maps illustrate the location of existing child care locations (represented by circles), and locations of potential future child care sites (represented by triangles) in each of Electoral Area A, Electoral Area B, and Electoral Area C.

It is important to note that Malatest did not assess potential future child care sites for their suitability for different types of child care programs. A number of issues that could not be addressed in the data that Malatest had available should be examined prior to making any final decisions about the suitability of potential sites, including:

- Interior and exterior floor space available, and whether there is sufficient space to meet minimum requirements for the intended care program(s);
- Building remediation and upgrading needs, whether it will be cost-efficient to make the building suitable for child care programs if such improvements are needed;
- Ability of municipalities and partner organizations to negotiate sale or leasing agreements with current property owners; and
- Accessibility of potential sites to likely child care users (e.g., whether the site is easily accessible by public transit, whether it would serve an area or neighbourhood that is currently under-served by child care programs, etc.).

Figure CVS4: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Electoral Area A

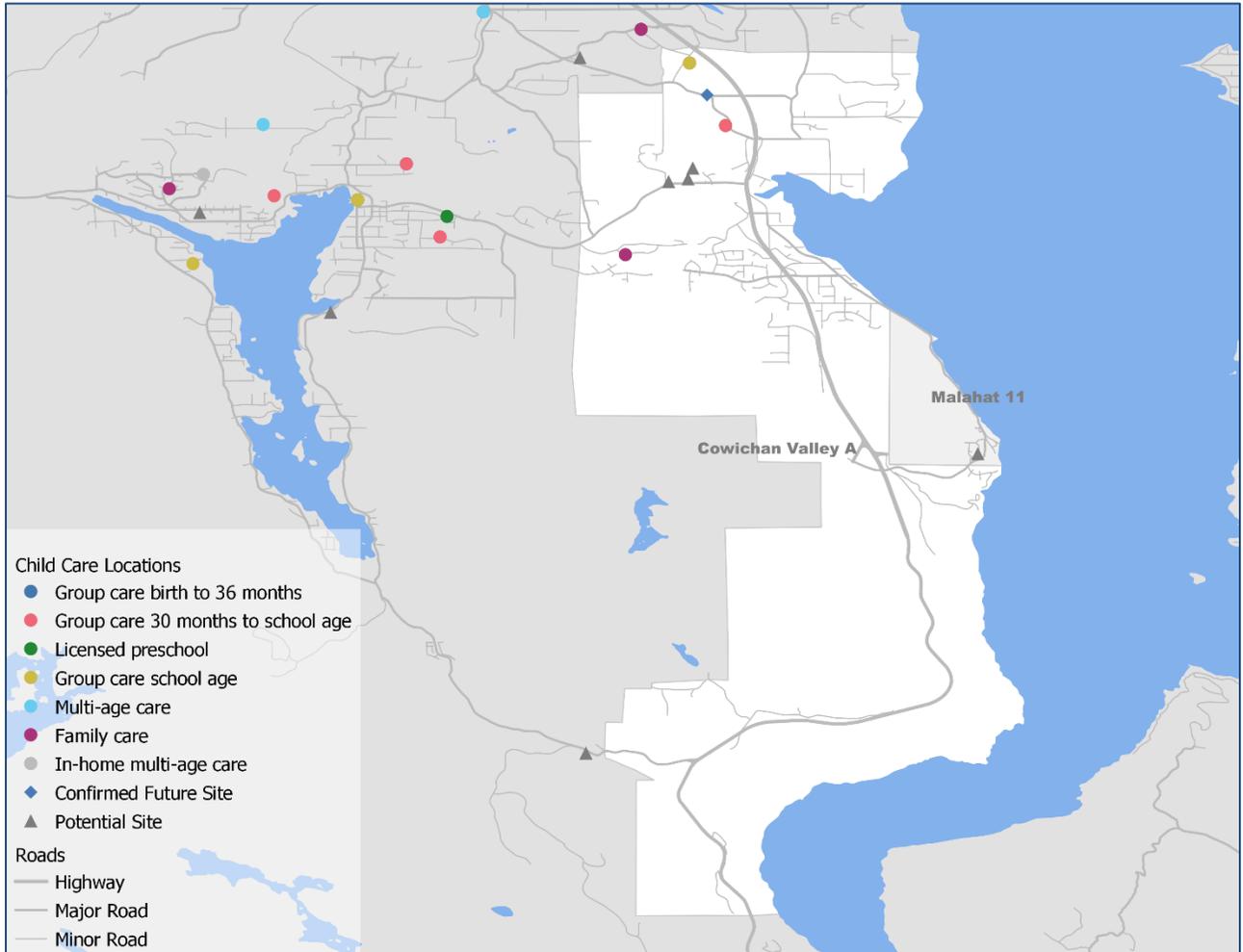


Figure CVS5: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Electoral Area B

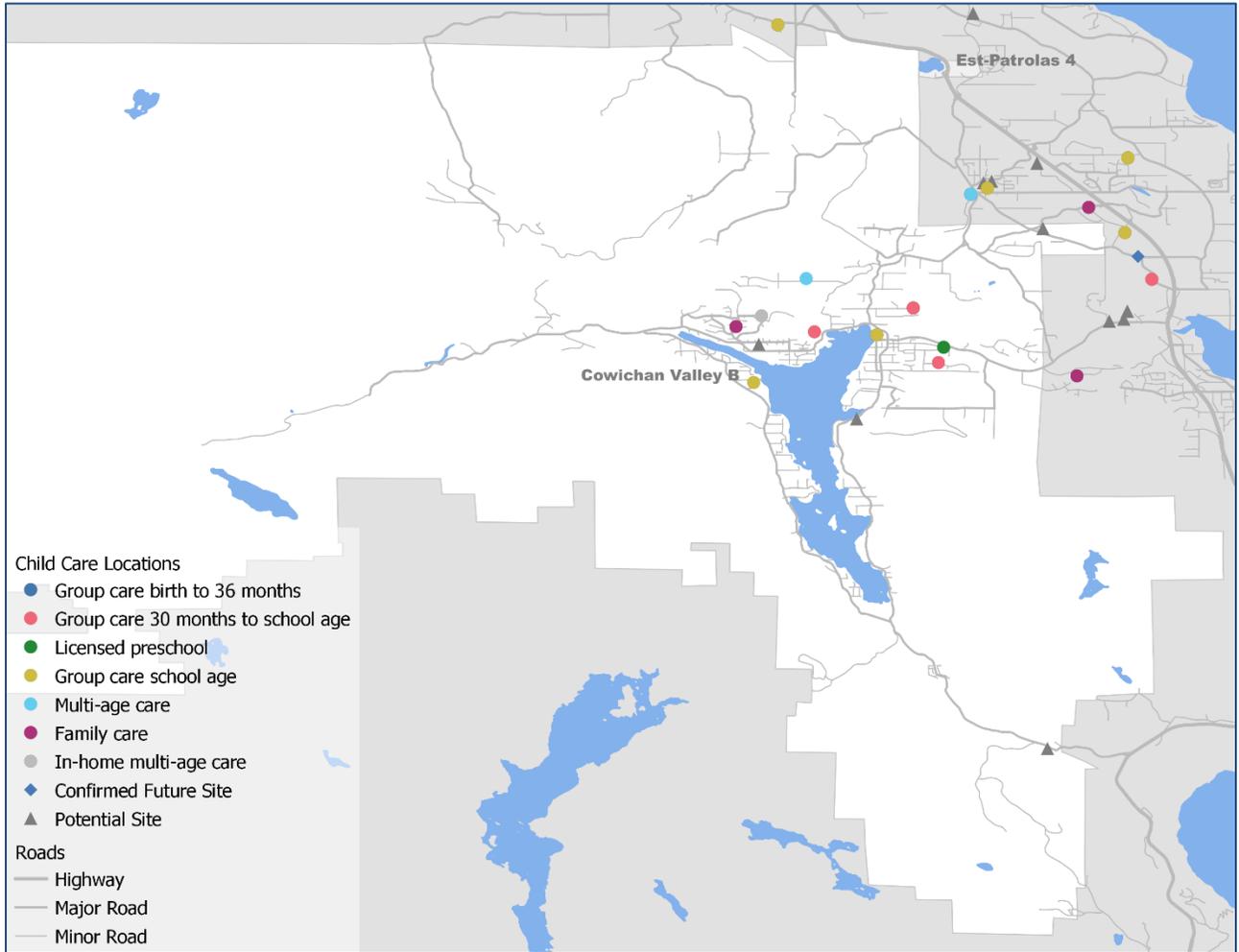
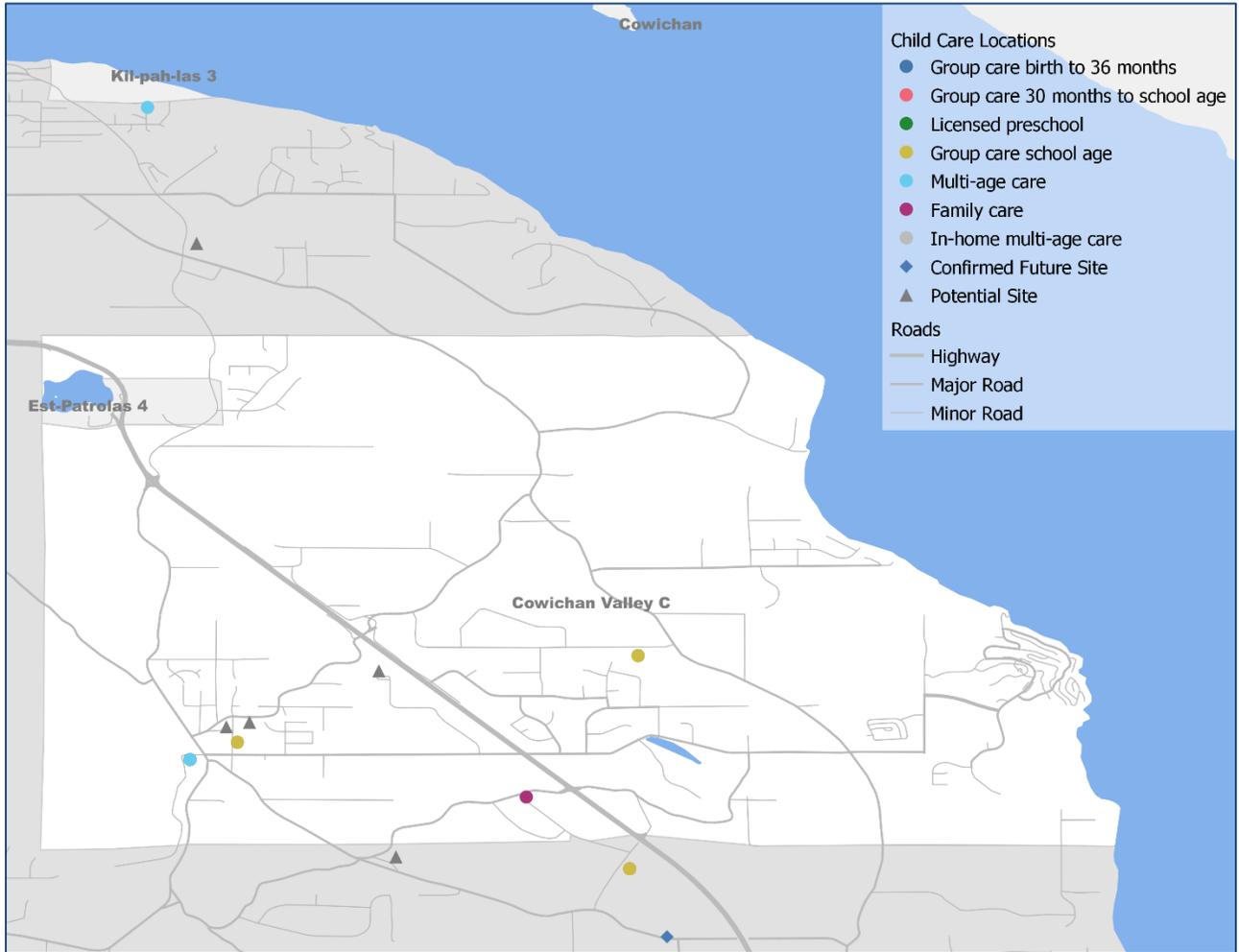


Figure CVS6: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Electoral Area C



STAFFING NEEDS FOR FUTURE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Finally, as noted previously, the ability to offer child care spaces is limited not only by physical space at a site, but also by the number of staff available to supervise and care for children. Minimum staffing requirements are established by the provincial government and are applicable to all licensed child care programs, although requirements vary by program type.

Malatest has calculated the number of staff that will be needed to serve the new programs and number of new spaces recommended to be created in the Cowichan region by 2030. When calculating these requirements, the following assumptions were made:

- All programs recommended for creation will be fully subscribed;
- All programs will be staffed at the minimum qualification level required by the provincial government (e.g., if a program requires one ECE and one ECE assistant, Malatest assumed that the second staff member is qualified at the ECE assistant level and the program does not employ two full ECEs); and
- All staff work full-time (i.e., these are full-time equivalency, or FTE, positions).

It should also be noted that Malatest did not undertake a comprehensive labour market analysis of child care workers in the Cowichan region. Typically, forecasting for future labour market need would encompass surveying employers regarding not only their current number of employees and qualification levels, but also the ages and expected retirements of these employees, employee turnover rate, and other metrics that can be used to create a comprehensive forecast of labour market trends over the medium- to long-term. Although Malatest has calculated the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by creating additional child care spaces and, thus, new child care programs, this forecast does not account for potential complicating factors in workforce needs such as coming retirements, “burnout rate” where workers – particularly those in caregiving work – leave the profession entirely, in- and out-migration of qualified workers in the region, and other factors that can impact labour markets beyond simply graduation rates from eligible programs and positions available in the region.

With these considerations in mind, Table CVS11 summarizes the total needed child care workers, by qualification level, by 2030. Included in the table are both total labour pool needs in Cowichan Valley South, and the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by the recommended increase in spaces by 2030.

Cowichan Valley South will require large increases in child care workers at higher levels of qualifications: six additional FTEs will be needed with ECE Infant-Toddler qualifications; seven additional FTEs will be needed with ECE qualifications; and one additional FTE will be needed with ECE Assistant qualifications. It is anticipated that there will be a decrease in need for workers with Responsible Adult certifications (six fewer FTE positions needed by 2030); this may present an opportunity to encourage those with their Responsible Adult certificate to seek upgrading for ECE Assistant and full ECE qualifications.

Table CVS11: Child Care Worker Needs by Qualification Level, Cowichan Valley South, 2030

	Group Care, birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, school age	Multi-Age Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care	Total Staffing Requirements
Total 2030 Programs Needed	9	8	7	7	7	3	1	-
Gain in Programs by 2030	6	-2	1	-2	3	0	-1	-
Total ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Gain in ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Total ECE Needed	9	8	7	0	7	0	1	32
Gain in ECE Needed	6	-2	1	0	3	0	-1	7
Total ECE Assistant Needed	9	24	7	0	0	0	0	40
Gain in ECE Assistant Needed	6	-6	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	21	0	3	0	24
Gain in Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	-6	0	0	0	-6

MUNICIPAL BYLAWS, RESOURCES, AND PLANS

While a number of areas for potential improvement and expansion of child care in Cowichan Valley South have been identified in this report, these suggestions should be considered within the context of broader municipal or regional needs, priorities, and plans. There are a number of areas under municipal jurisdiction, such as zoning and business licensing, that can be leveraged to support strong child care growth initiatives.

Table CVS12 below summarizes the types of municipal approaches that can have an impact on child care availability, affordability, and accessibility in a region. The three right-most columns indicate whether each of the communities within Cowichan Valley South have undertaken such an approach to date.

Table CVS12: Municipal Policies, Plans, Bylaws and Resources, within Cowichan Valley South

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Area A	Area B	Area C
<i>Strategies, Plans, and Policies</i>				
Child Care Strategy or Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges child care as fundamental to supporting healthy children and communities Provides guiding principles for municipal governments when working individually, with other levels of government, and/or with businesses and non-profit organizations; guiding principles help ensure that various initiatives and efforts are complementary and support one another 			
Child care addressed in Official Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that child care facilities and businesses are incorporated into long-term community development goals, land use planning, and business licensing practices 	✓	✓	✓
Child care addressed in Social Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges links among social inequities and access to child care (e.g., poverty, gendered differences in labour force participation) Provides guiding principles on creation and implementation of child care policies that address, or do not exacerbate, existing social inequities 			
Child care considered a community amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates incentives for local government to approve appropriate zoning and business licensing for child care throughout region / city If voluntary amenity contributions are available to developers, child care as an amenity incentivizes and leverages private capital to serve the community's child care needs 			
Other child care strategies, plans, and policies				

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Area A	Area B	Area C
<i>Municipal Resources</i>				
Municipal building space available for child care (any cost structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate set-asides for child care space can reduce market competition for operators and ensure availability of space 			
Municipal grants for child care operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can provide funding to sustain specific child care operations, ensuring that specific communities maintain a minimum level of access Grants at a municipal level allow for funding to be targeted to better meet specific community needs (more targeted than provincial operating grants) 			
Municipal grants for child care capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can encourage creation or expansion of child care facilities in specific communities / neighbourhoods to meet community needs Can help operators leverage private equity / investment that otherwise would not be sufficient to accomplish capital project Creates physical space to support creation of needed child care spots 			
Child care design guidelines available to child care operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies requirements on child care facilities for operators, reducing confusion and facilitating capital projects Can promote best practices or community goals through design guidelines and recommendations 			
Child care information documents for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates access to child care for local residents, by making them aware of available licensed child care options 			
Municipal child care program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures a minimum number of child care spaces are available locally 			
Municipal staff resource dedicated to child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can promote and enforce municipal requirements for child care businesses (thereby ensuring quality of care), advise on provincial requirements Can promote information about available child care programs in municipality to families 			
Other child care documents				
Other				

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Area A	Area B	Area C
<i>Child Care Facilities Permitted In:</i>				
Single Family Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓	✓	✓
Duplex (semi-detached) Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓	✓	✓
Row House / Townhouse Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓	✓	✓
Apartment Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 			
Mixed Use Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care) 			
Commercial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 			
Public Use / Assembly Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 			
Industrial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 			
Agricultural Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care) 	✓	✓	✓

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Area A	Area B	Area C
<i>Additional Zoning or Licensing Requirements for Child Care</i>				
Additional parking required for home-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to limit ability of child care operators to offer home-based child care 			
Municipal Business License required for child care use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional fees and submission requirements can create barriers to opening a child care business, or operating a child care business legally 			
Non-resident child care staff are permitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows home-based child care operations to accommodate more children, if space on property allows 			
Additional outdoor play space requirements / recommendations above provincial standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of spaces in a municipality that may house child care facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for space 			
Additional building requirements beyond the BC Building Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of buildings in a municipality that may house facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for qualifying buildings. 			

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are a series of recommendations for a child care strategy in Cowichan Valley South. These recommendations incorporate findings from all three major lines of inquiry: population projections and target setting for future child care spaces and programs; stakeholder consultation regarding the availability, accessibility, and quality of child care in the region; and secondary data review of existing municipal policies, resources, and bylaws among communities in the Cowichan region.

While this report is intended for the use of Cowichan Valley South and its constituent electoral areas, there are a number of priority areas for change that are outside the jurisdiction of local governments. Therefore, recommendations listed here include comments on responsible and/or contributing levels of government.

Finally, it should be noted that the specific actions for local and provincial governments are not meant to be definitive recommendations; they are suggestions for actions that would support the overarching recommendation. Each community and government must consider their local context, mandate, and other factors when deciding which actions to pursue.

INCREASING COVERAGE RATES

Increase the number of child care spaces as per the recommended space creation targets.

This report has provided a detailed breakdown of recommended space creation targets, by age group and by care type (see Tables CVS6 and CVS7). Malatest recommends making efforts to meet these targets within the time frame specified, with regular review and assessment of capacity to ensure these targets remain relevant.

Local Government Actions

- Review and revise existing bylaws and regulations that may be limiting the ability of child care operators to offer child care (e.g., space requirements per child that are above provincial requirements), to enable existing operators to offer more child care spaces
- Incorporate targets for the creation of child care spaces and programs into community planning and strategy documents, to promote a coherent and complementary approach to child care across all departments of municipal government
- Consider creating grants to fund child care operations and/or capital investment projects, to support the creation of new programs and spaces
- Explore opportunities to acquire sites, either through purchase or lease agreements, to be made available to child care operators to support target spaces and programs

Provincial Government Actions

- Make available grant funds for capital projects to support child care space and program creation targets
- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, anticipate providing funding to child care centers aligned with space and program creation targets

Emphasize increasing infant/toddler spaces.

Space creation targets place a strong emphasis on infant/toddler spaces; this reflects both the comparatively low current coverage rate for this age group, as well as demand voiced by stakeholders who participated in this research. Malatest recommends that efforts to expand child care coverage in the region should ensure that creation of infant/toddler spaces are prioritized.

Local Government Actions

- Should target space creation targets be revised, municipal governments should consider the resulting coverage rates and aim for, at a minimum, a 33% coverage rate for children aged 0-2 years old
- Incorporate language in official community plans and social plans that acknowledges the importance of infant/toddler child care in allowing mothers to re-enter the workforce, thus reducing “brain drain” in local sectors as well as promoting gender equity

Provincial Government Actions

- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, set aside a certain proportion of funding to be dedicated to infant/toddler spaces in the region

CREATING NEW CHILD CARE SITES

Support creation of new child care programs and sites.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will necessitate the creation of new child care programs and, likely, opening of new child care centers and facilities in the region. This will require considerable capital investment that could be aided by support from both municipal and provincial governments.

Local Government Actions

- Consider making current available municipal space (e.g., unused space in municipal buildings) available for the exclusive use of child care programs
- Consider incorporating purpose-built space for child care programs into new municipal buildings that may be built over the coming decade
- Consider leasing / renting available municipal space to child care programs for no, nominal, or below-market rates
- Examine opportunities to acquire sites (e.g., closed elementary schools) for the operation of child care programs
- Consider making municipal grants available for capital investment projects, to leverage private dollars to expand existing child care sites

Provincial Government Actions

- Make grants available for capital investment projects, either to renovate and build new sites or to expand existing sites
- Consider working with regional and municipal governments to promote acquisition of sites for child care use

ACCESSIBILITY

Consider public accessibility of potential new child care sites.

Accessibility and location of child care sites was noted by a number of stakeholders in this research; many noted that there are a number of child care facilities that are not accessible by public transit. This results in the child care programs under-serving the community, particularly lower income families who may not have access to a personal vehicle. Accessibility and location of child care sites should be considered when examining potential child care sites.

Local Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans emphasizing the need for child care sites to serve the entire community, and therefore be accessible by public transit
- When assessing potential future sites for child care programs, consider accessibility by public transit and prioritize locations that are more accessible
- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit

Provincial Government Actions

- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit
- Incorporate consideration of accessibility by public transit into any potential land transfers with municipal or regional governments, prioritizing sites with public transit access for child care use

Consider need for, and incentivize, child care with extended and non-traditional hours.

Shift work poses a unique challenge to finding child care options. Very few child care sites in the Cowichan region offer extended hours such as early morning, late evening, or overnight care. Yet, for families where one or both parents are employed in shift work, there is a need to find child care options that can provide reliable care during these hours.

Local Government Actions

- If municipal operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- If municipal space is being used for child care programs, consider options to allow access to facilities during these extended hours
- Explore options with provincial government to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

Provincial Government Actions

- If provincial operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- Explore options with local governments to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

AFFORDABILITY

Attend to affordability as a key aspect of the expansion of child care in the Cowichan region.

Affordability of child care was noted as a major barrier to child care, and to child care of choice, among parents and caregivers in this research. Further, child care space targets set out in this report have assumed a considerable increase in demand due to an increase in affordability. As such, affordability of child care for families in the region should be a major priority for municipal, regional, and provincial governments.

Local Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans, acknowledging the importance of child care being affordable to local residents to ensure equal opportunity and accessibility for all children
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)
- Examine opportunities to reduce child care operators' overhead through making municipal space available to them for no, nominal, or below-market rent

Provincial Government Actions

- Continue the rollout of the Universal Child Care program, which provides child care to families at a low, flat cost per day (currently \$10 per day)
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)

SUPPORTING CHILD CARE WORKERS AND PROVIDERS

Promote child care as a career to youth in the Cowichan region.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will require the creation of many full-time equivalency child care positions throughout the Cowichan region. As a result, there will be a large need in the region for qualified child care workers, particularly those with higher levels of qualifications (e.g., ECE, ECE with infant-toddler and/or special needs training).

Local Government Actions

- Promote child care work as a career through community programs and space (e.g., an ad campaign in recreation centers and local schools)

Provincial Government Actions

- Promote child care work, particularly the ECE qualification, through existing career promotion programs (e.g., the *Find Your Fit* tour has an ECE station, this tour could be brought to Cowichan region secondary schools)
- Consider expanding ECE programs at post-secondary institutions on Vancouver Island to ensure sufficient graduates to meet demand over the coming ten years

Promote the ECE qualification, and ECE with special training, to current and potential child care workers.

During this research, Malatest heard from recent graduates of ECE programs that the ECE qualification itself was perceived to be financially burdensome, when considering the investment required and the anticipated pay of an ECE-qualified position. Many noted that it made more financial sense to seek a lower level of qualification, such as an ECE Assistant, because the difference in pay between the roles was not much different. In addition, many child care program operators noted that they faced significant challenges finding qualified staff, particularly ECEs and ECEs with infant-toddler and special needs training.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant to support upgrading to ECE and ECE with special training skills, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider opportunities to reduce the financial burden of ECE qualifications (e.g., bursaries standard to all students in ECE programs, other) to make the qualification more attractive to potential students
- Promote upgrading of lower-level child care qualifications (e.g., Responsible Adult, ECE Assistant) to full ECE accreditation through targeted ad campaigns in child care programs at post-secondary institutions in B.C.
- Promote a higher wage for fully qualified ECEs, either as part of or in addition to the ongoing Universal Child Care program; may be accomplished through wage subsidies or other means to create a higher “floor” wage for ECEs

Support ECEs in maintaining their credentials through affordable professional development opportunities.

Child care workers qualified as ECEs must participate in regular professional development in order to maintain their credential over time; this training is typically paid for by the individual, creating another barrier or disincentive for child care workers to pursue and/or maintain their full ECE qualification. Supporting ongoing professional development for ECEs can help to reduce this burden and better meet the need for qualified child care workers in the Cowichan region.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) undertake polling of child care programs and help to organize local, affordable professional development opportunities for child care workers
- Consider creating a municipal grant to support ongoing ECE professional development training, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider incentivizing regular professional development for ECEs through dedicated provincial grants available to all licensed child care operators in the Cowichan region

IMPROVING QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Promote cultural diversity in child care centers.

The diversity of child care centers in the Cowichan region was rated poorly by both the general public and parents and caregivers of children, in this research. Diverse child care centers that reflect the communities in which they are located provide children with higher quality, more enriching care that promotes inclusive communities. As such, promoting cultural diversity should be a priority under the general initiative of improving quality of child care.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) regularly collect information on diversity within child care centers and promote best practices in diversity to child care centers
- Ensure affordable child care is available in all communities and neighbourhoods (see recommendations regarding placement of sites and space targets), to enable families to send their children to programs that are nearby and that are reflective of the diversity of their communities

Provincial Government Actions

- As the Universal Child Care program continues to roll out, consider incentives for children attending child care centers local to their homes, to ensure that child care centers reflect their communities

Promote inclusion of children with extra support needs in child care programs.

Families of children with extra support needs can struggle to find spaces for their children in licensed child care programs, due to the additional resourcing and staffing required to accommodate these children. In particular, the need for specialized training for ECEs to provide care for children with additional support needs has resulted in limited qualified staff available at these child care programs, and high demand for care among the sites that are able to accommodate children with extra support needs.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider creating a provincial grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification
- Promote the ECE-SN training designation among students and alumni of child care programs at Vancouver Island universities, through ad campaigns and other promotional materials

Promote best practices in child care through monitoring and accountability measures.

While most parents and caregivers in the survey for this research rated their own child care arrangements highly, overall perception of child care quality in the Cowichan region was middling. Promotion of standards and best practices in licensed child care can provide guidance to providers (particularly during periods of rapid expansion) and build public confidence in the quality of child care offered locally.

Local Government Actions

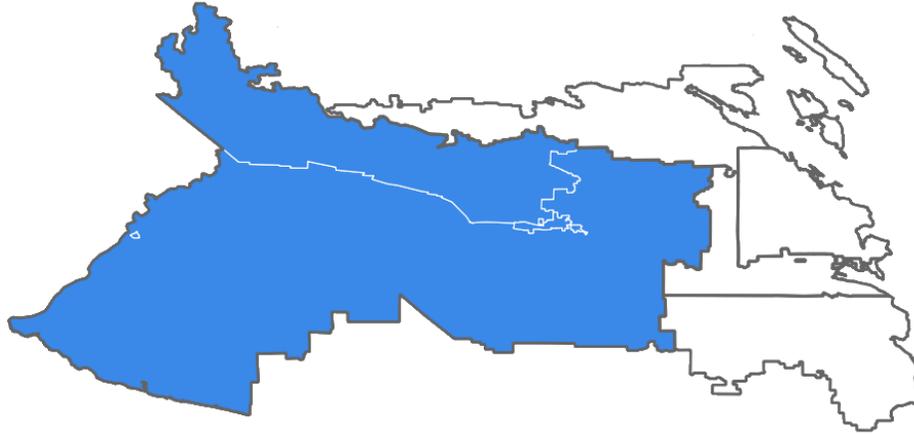
- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) collect key performance indicators from local child care centers to monitor quality, and promote best practices through promotional materials and other initiatives

Provincial Government Actions

- Create a set of key performance indicators for regular monitoring and measurement of child care quality
- Liaise with municipal child care resources to promote best practices endorsed by the provincial government, identify regional needs and provide support



COWICHAN VALLEY WEST



This report summarizes the current and anticipated future child care needs in Cowichan Valley West. Cowichan Valley West is a sub-region of the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), and is comprised of: the Town of Lake Cowichan, CVRD Electoral Area F (Cowichan Lake South / Skutz Falls) and Electoral Area I (Youbou / Meade Creek).

COWICHAN VALLEY WEST CONTEXT

In this section, population-level factors that impact child care needs are described. This includes summaries of population size, family demographics, income, cultural diversity, and childhood vulnerability.

DEMOGRAPHY

The tables below summarize key trends in Cowichan Valley West related to household composition, income, and cultural diversity.

Total Population		Households	Number of Households	Number of Households with Children
 Lake Cowichan 3,226	 The proportion of households with children in Cowichan Valley West (29%) are lower than those seen in the overall CVRD (34%). West Cowichan is also lower than the provincial (39%) and national (41%) proportions of households with children.	Lake Cowichan 1,475	Lake Cowichan 470	
 Area F 1,629		Area F 720	Area F 210	
 Area I 1,206		Area I 590	Area I 135	
 Total 6,061		Total 2,785	Total 815	

Family Structures

 Dual-Parent Families				
300 (64%) Lake Cowichan	155 (74%) Area F	80 (59%) Area I	<p>Of all families with children in Cowichan Valley West, 66% are led by two parents and 34% are led by a single parent. This varied by specific region: in CVRD Area F, roughly three quarters of families were led by two parents; in Lake Cowichan, 64% were dual-parent families; and in CVRD Area I fewer families were led by two parents at 59%. These proportions are slightly lower than the split of single-parent to dual-parent families seen at the regional level (68% of CVRD families are led by two parents, 32% by single parents), the provincial level (73% are two-parent families, 27% lone-parent families) and the national level (72% two-parent families, 28% lone-parent families).</p> 	
535 (66%) Total				
 Lone-Parent Families				
170 (36%) Lake Cowichan	55 (26%) Area F	55 (41%) Area I		
280 (34%) Total				

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

	Income				
	Median Total Household Income	Median Total Income Of Couple Economic Families With Children ³⁰	Lone-Parent Economic Families' Median Income	Prevalence of Low Income (LIM-AT) ^{31*}	Prevalence of Low Income (LICO-AT)*
Town of Lake Cowichan	\$53,440	\$88,917	\$41,216	660 (20%)	325 (10%)
CVRD Area F	\$60,544	\$107,349	\$45,696	295 (18%)	60 (4%)
CVRD Area I	\$52,992	\$90,368	\$39,552	290 (24%)	135 (11%)
Total	\$55,175[†]	\$94,423[†]	\$41,680[†]	1,245 (21%)	520 (9%)

A weighted average of median incomes in the Town of Lake Cowichan, CVRD Area F, and CVRD Area I was \$55,175. Median incomes in the Town of Lake Cowichan and CVRD Area I were similar but CVRD Area F was about \$7,000 higher. Annual incomes in all communities were lower than the median income across all of B.C. (\$69,995) and Canada (\$70,336).

Rates of individuals falling within the low-income cut-off, after tax (LICO-AT) category (meaning that they are expected to spend 20 percentage points more of their income on food, shelter, and clothing compared to the average family) ranged from 4% to 11% across all communities in West Cowichan. These rates range are comparable to the LICO-AT rate for the overall CVRD (7%), the national rate (9%), and the provincial rate (11%).

The low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) indicates whether a household takes in an income of 50% or less of the median income in their area (i.e., make about one-half of what the average household, of similar composition, in their area does). In the Town of Lake Cowichan and Electoral Area F, roughly one in five individuals (20% and 18%, respectively) qualify as low-income under the LIM-AT measure. CVRD Area I had a lower prevalence of LIM-AT at 24%.

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

[†] These numbers were calculated as weighted averages of the medians of the three regions. These numbers are expected to provide a good estimate of central tendency, but may not reflect the true median of the full region.

*It is important to note that these low-income measures capture the number and proportion of *individuals*, not *households*, falling within these low-income categories.

³⁰ “Economic family” refers to two or more persons living in the same home, related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law union, adoption, or a foster relationship. Cohabiting, unrelated adults (e.g., roommates) do not constitute an economic family, nor do single-person households.

³¹ The Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) indicates whether a household receives 50% or less of the median household income in their region, adjusting for household size to accommodate that larger households have greater income needs.

	Cultural Diversity			
	Self-Identified Aboriginal ³²	Self-Identified First Nations ³³	Self-Identified Métis ³⁴	Self-Identified Immigrant
Town of Lake Cowichan	310 (10%)	170 (5%)	130 (4%)	215 (7%)
CVRD Electoral Area F	55 (3%)	10 (1%)	35 (2%)	125 (8%)
CVRD Electoral Area I	75 (6%)	50 (4%)	25 (2%)	70 (6%)
Total	440 (7%)	230 (4%)	190 (3%)	410 (7%)
<p>In the Town of Lake Cowichan, 10% of residents self-identified as Indigenous and 5% identified as First Nations. In CVRD Area I, 6% self-identified as Indigenous and 4% identified as First Nations. In comparison with other regions in West Cowichan, a lower proportion of residents in CVRD Area F self-identified as Indigenous (3%) and First Nations (1%). Similar proportions of residents in all three communities identified as being Métis (2% to 4%), and immigrants (6% to 8%).</p> <p>West Cowichan has an Indigenous population that is proportionally lower than that of the overall CVRD (12%), but higher than BC (6%), and Canada (5%). The proportion of West Cowichan's population that identify as immigrants is lower than the overall CVRD (13%), BC (28%) and Canada (22%).</p>				
Most Common Mother Tongue				
Town of Lake Cowichan	CVRD Electoral Area F	CVRD Electoral Area I		
English (94%)	English (95%)	English (94%)		
Most Common Language Spoken at Home				
Town of Lake Cowichan	CVRD Electoral Area F	CVRD Electoral Area I		
English (98%)	English (99%)	English (99%)		
<p>While English is the most common first language, and most common language spoken at home, for large majorities of residents in Lake Cowichan, and Electoral Areas F and I, there were no other languages that predominated among non-English-primary speakers. There were a wide variety of languages other than English reported as being first languages and/or the language spoken most often at home. Given that there were such a wide variety of languages, with none predominating as a "second-most-common" language in the region, there are no recommendations for languages of focus for future child care programs.</p>				

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

³² Self-identified Aboriginal, according to Statistics Canada's Census counting methodology, includes all individuals who identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or a combination thereof.

³³ Self-identified First Nations in this column represents the count of individuals in the 2016 Census who identified as being solely of First Nations descent (i.e., not having multiple Indigenous heritages such as Métis and First Nations).

³⁴ Self-identified Métis in this column represents the count of individuals in the 2016 Census who identified as being solely of Métis descent (i.e., not having multiple Indigenous heritages such as Métis and First Nations).

CHILDHOOD VULNERABILITY

“Vulnerability” in this context refers to a child’s likelihood to experience poor health, education, and/or social outcomes. Childhood vulnerability is captured on a regular basis in B.C. through the Human Early Learning Partnership’s Early Development Instrument (EDI). This instrument measures five core domains of early child development and identifies, based on questionnaire scores, children who are vulnerable in these five areas.

	Vulnerability (EDI)				
	Percentage of Children Vulnerable	Overall BC Vulnerability One Or More Scales (Wave 7)			
Town of Lake Cowichan, Area F, Area I*	14%	33%			
	Domain				
	Physical Health & Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language & Cognitive Development	Communication Skills
Town of Lake Cowichan, Area F, Area I*	7%	5%	7%	5%	3%

The percentage of vulnerable children in Cowichan Valley West is lower than the provincial average for vulnerability on one or more scales based on the EDI Wave 7 data. Vulnerability rates were highest on measures of physical health and well-being, and emotional maturing (7% of children were vulnerable on each of these scales). Overall, however, vulnerability rates in Cowichan Valley West were very low compared to nearby regions and the provincial average.

EDI Wave 7 (2017-19), Human Early Learning Partnership

* Note: EDI data is based on school district boundaries. These boundaries do not directly map to the exact CVRD boundaries used for this report. Therefore, the EDI data presented in the table above are approximations for the areas that comprise Cowichan Valley West, but are anticipated to be broadly representative of trends and needs in the region.

CURRENT STATE OF CHILD CARE IN COWICHAN VALLEY WEST

This subsection of the report will provide a summary of the current state of child care in Cowichan Valley West, specifically focusing on the potential demand for child care from children aged birth to 12 years and the current supply of licensed child care spaces available.

COWICHAN VALLEY WEST CHILD CARE DEMAND FACTORS

Determining the need for child care is challenging given demand is influenced by a number of dynamic factors including, but not limited to, population and labour force participation rates over time. Initiatives such as the B.C. government's Universal Child Care Initiative will likely cause a significant increase in the demand for regulated child care as low-cost spaces are rolled out across the province, making licensed child care more affordable and accessible for a larger number of families.

POPULATION FACTORS

The population of children (aged 12 years and younger) in Cowichan Valley West is projected to decrease very slightly between 2020 and 2030; there is a projected decrease of about 8% over the ten-year period, or approximately a 1% decrease annually. These decreases are occurring mainly in the 3-5 and 6-12 year age groups, while the number of children aged 0-2 is anticipated to remain relatively stable over the next decade. A summary of population statistics for Cowichan Valley West broken down by area and age group can be found in Table CVW1.

Table CVW1: Cowichan Valley West Population Projections, 2020-2030

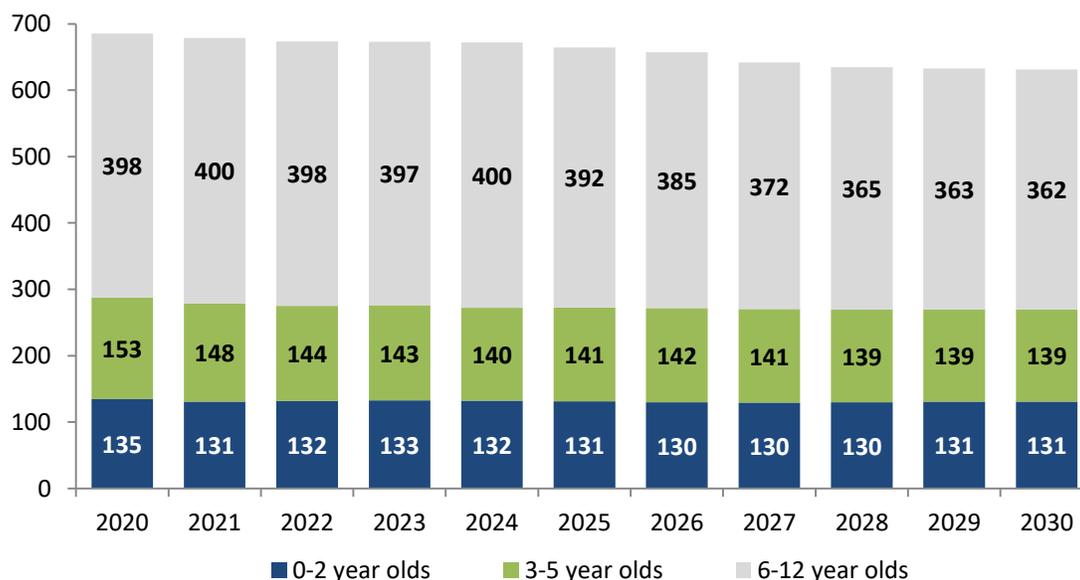
Area	2020	2025	2030	Change 2020-2030	Average Annual Change 2020-2030	Average Annual % Change 2020-2030
Town of Lake Cowichan						
Children 0-2 years	79	77	77	-2	0	0%
Children 3-5 years	90	83	82	-8	-1	-2%
Children 6-12 years	235	231	213	-21	-2	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	404	392	372	-32	-3	-1%
CVRD Electoral Area F						
Children 0-2 years	36	35	35	-1	0	0%
Children 3-5 years	41	38	37	-4	0	0%
Children 6-12 years	107	105	97	-10	-1	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	184	179	170	-14	-1	-1%

Area	2020	2025	2030	Change 2020-2030	Average Annual Change 2020-2030	Average Annual % Change 2020-2030
CVRD Electoral Area I						
Children 0-2 years	19	19	18	-1	0	0%
Children 3-5 years	22	20	20	-2	0	0%
Children 6-12 years	56	55	51	-5	-1	-2%
Total Children (0-12 years)	97	94	89	-8	-1	-1%
Cowichan Valley West						
Children 0-2 years	135	131	131	-4	0	0%
Children 3-5 years	153	141	139	-14	-1	0%
Children 6-12 years	398	392	362	-36	-4	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	685	665	631	-54	-5	-1%

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

These changes in child population in Cowichan Valley West, from 2020 to 2030, are illustrated in Figure CVW1 below. As noted above, the overall decrease is relatively small – about 1% - but this represents a decrease of 54 children in the region over the next ten years.

Figure CVW1: Cowichan Valley West Projected Population Change, 2020-2030



Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

UTILIZATION OF LICENSED CHILD CARE SPACES

Cowichan Valley West is located within the South Vancouver Island service delivery area. The South Vancouver Island service delivery area includes not only all of the CVRD, but also Greater Victoria and other municipalities; this impacts the overall averages for the area. Breakdowns at a more granular level, such as CVRD alone, are not available.

Utilization rates provide a broad measure of the uptake of available child care services in a region. These numbers represent what proportion of *available* child care spaces are *being used*.³⁵ Utilization rates offer a proxy for the appropriateness of the amount and combination of types of child care spaces available. Efficient use of child care spaces will be reflected in high utilization rates, indicating that there are not “too many” spaces available for the number of families in a region that want to make use of child care. However, at very high utilization rates – in excess of 80% to 85% – finding child care becomes progressively more challenging for families, potentially impacting the ability to find a suitable child care space that is accessible and affordable to them.

Utilization rates for South Vancouver Island, alongside provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators, are shown in Table CVW2. South Vancouver Island’s utilization rate is similar to the provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators. Across all groups, utilization rate was very high for infant-toddler care in 2016-17, while utilization rate was lower for the 3-5 year age group, and lowest for the school-age group.

Table CVW2: Average Monthly Child Care Space Utilization Rates, April 2016 through March 2017

Service Delivery Area	Group Care, Infant/Toddler	Group Care, 3 to 5 years	Group Care, School Age	Total Group Care	Family Care	Total Group and Family Care
British Columbia	85%	74%	48%	70%	72%	71%
South Vancouver Island	87%	70%	42%	65%	72%	69%
North Vancouver Island	88%	62%	38%	62%	68%	63%

Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. *Performance Management Report*. Volume 9 March 2017. Performance Indicator 1.01, Spare Capacity in Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/services-supports-for-parents-with-young-children/reporting-monitoring/00-public-ministry-reports/volume_9_mar_2017.pdf

Note: ‘Group Multi-Age’ spaces have been excluded as it cannot be determined which spaces of a facility’s reported enrolments are utilized, by age.

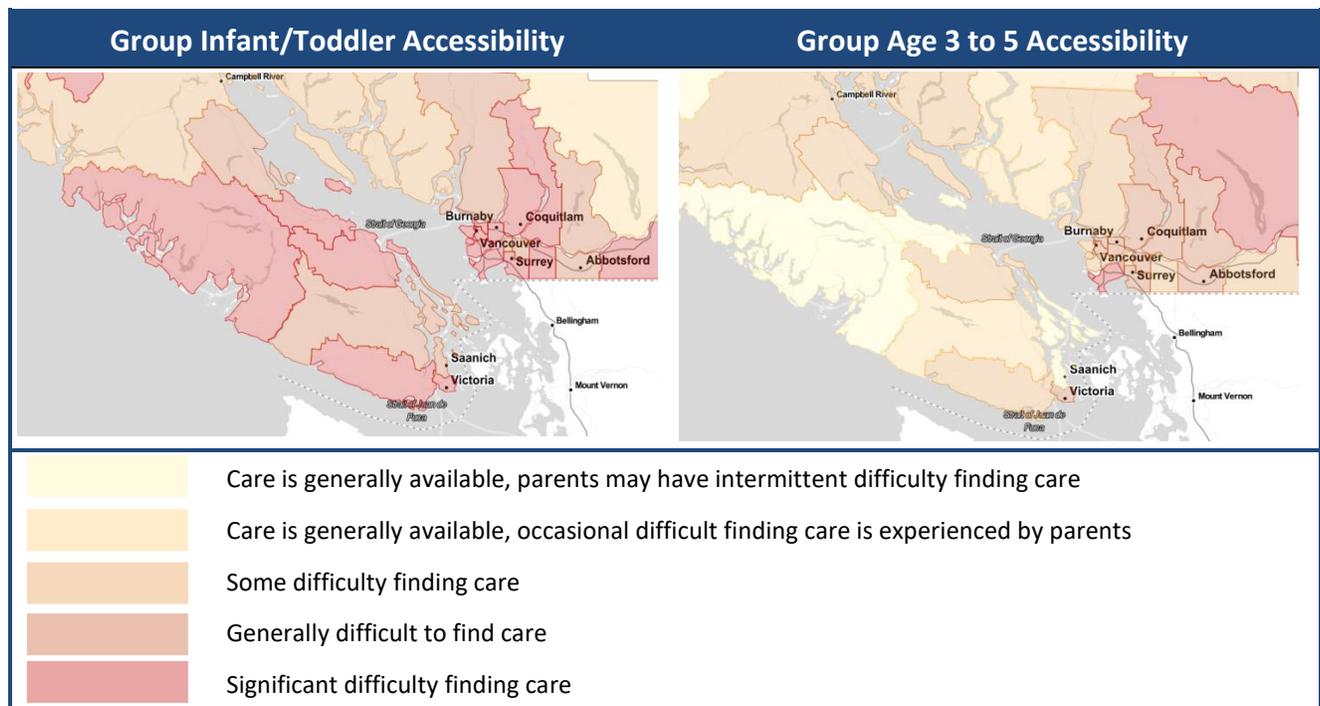
³⁵ A child care facility’s Utilization Rate is determined by dividing its total enrollments for the month by the number of times a child care space can be used in a month. Two part-time enrolments are assumed to be equivalent to one full-time enrollment; 100% utilization of one child care space is assumed to be 22 full-time equivalent enrollments in a month.

COWICHAN VALLEY WEST CHILD CARE SUPPLY FACTORS

The accessibility of licensed child care spaces for infant/toddlers and children aged 3-5 years across the Cowichan Region in general is illustrated in Figure CVW2. These maps, based on 2017/18 data, suggest that parents generally have difficulty finding group infant/toddler child care, whereas care for the 3-5 age group is generally available, with occasional difficulty experienced by parents.

This aligns with information on utilization rates available (utilization is about 70% for the 3-5 years group in South Vancouver Island) and coverage rate data based on recent child care inventories, which suggest a 90% coverage rate for children aged 3-5 in the Cowichan Valley West region. Findings from key informant interviews also stressed the pressing need for infant-toddler spaces, with less focus on the 3-5 years age group.

Figure CVW2: Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces in the Cowichan Region, 2017-18



Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. Early Years Performance Indicators: 1.01 Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from <https://mcf.gov.bc.ca/reporting/services/early-years/performance-indicators>

AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE IN COWICHAN VALLEY WEST

There are currently a total of **54** licensed child care spaces across **6** programs in Cowichan Valley West. Summaries of child care spaces and program type by area are below in Tables CVW3 and CVW4, respectively.

Table CVW3: Cowichan Valley West Licensed Child Care Spaces, 2020

Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	Total Spaces
Town of Lake Cowichan							
8	12	10	10	0	7	0	47
CVRD Electoral Area F							
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CVRD Electoral Area I							
0	0	0	0	0	7	0	7
Total Cowichan Valley West							
8	12	10	10	0	14	0	54

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey, Winter 2019/20

Table CVW4: Cowichan Valley West Licensed Child Care Programs, 2020

Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	Total Programs
Town of Lake Cowichan							
1	1	1	1	0	1	0	5
CVRD Electoral Area F							
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CVRD Electoral Area I							
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total Cowichan Valley West							
1	1	1	1	0	2	0	6

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey, Winter 2019/20

COWICHAN VALLEY WEST CHILD CARE COVERAGE RATES

Current child care coverage rates (i.e., the number of child care spaces per 100 children) were calculated using current population estimates for Cowichan Valley West, and the number of licensed child care spaces currently available in the region. Within Canada, the ratio of child care spaces per 100 children aged 12 and under varies significantly by province. The national average in 2017 was 27.2 spaces per 100 children, while British Columbia’s provincial average was considerably lower at 18.4 spaces per 100 children.³⁶

Table CVW5 below summarizes the coverage rates, by age group, in Cowichan Valley West.

Table CVW5: Cowichan Valley West Licensed Child Care Coverage Rates, 2020

Age Group	Current Child Population	Current Number of Spaces	Current Estimated Coverage Rate
<i>All children 0-12 years</i>	685	55	8.0
Pre-school aged children, 0-5 years	288	39	13.5
Infant / Toddler children, 0-2 years	135	10	7.4
Preschool aged children, 3-5 years	153	29	19.0
School aged children, 6-12 years	398	16	4.0

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

There is little consensus or established benchmarks regarding what is a sufficient number of child care spaces within a region. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) identifies forward sortation areas (FSAs) with one licensed child care spot per three (or more) children aged 0-5 years (i.e., 33% coverage), and a minimum of 50 children in that FSA, as a child care desert. Families living in child care deserts are anticipated to experience significant difficulty getting access to child care.³⁷ Currently, Cowichan Valley West has a 7% coverage rate for children aged 0 to 2 years (infant-toddler group), suggesting that parents in this region may have difficulty in finding local child care. Coverage is higher for the 3-5 years age group, but still very low, at 19%. Coverage for the 6-12 age group is also extremely low within the overall CVRD, at 4%.

Currently there are 8.0 child care spaces for every 100 children aged 0-12 years in Cowichan Valley West.

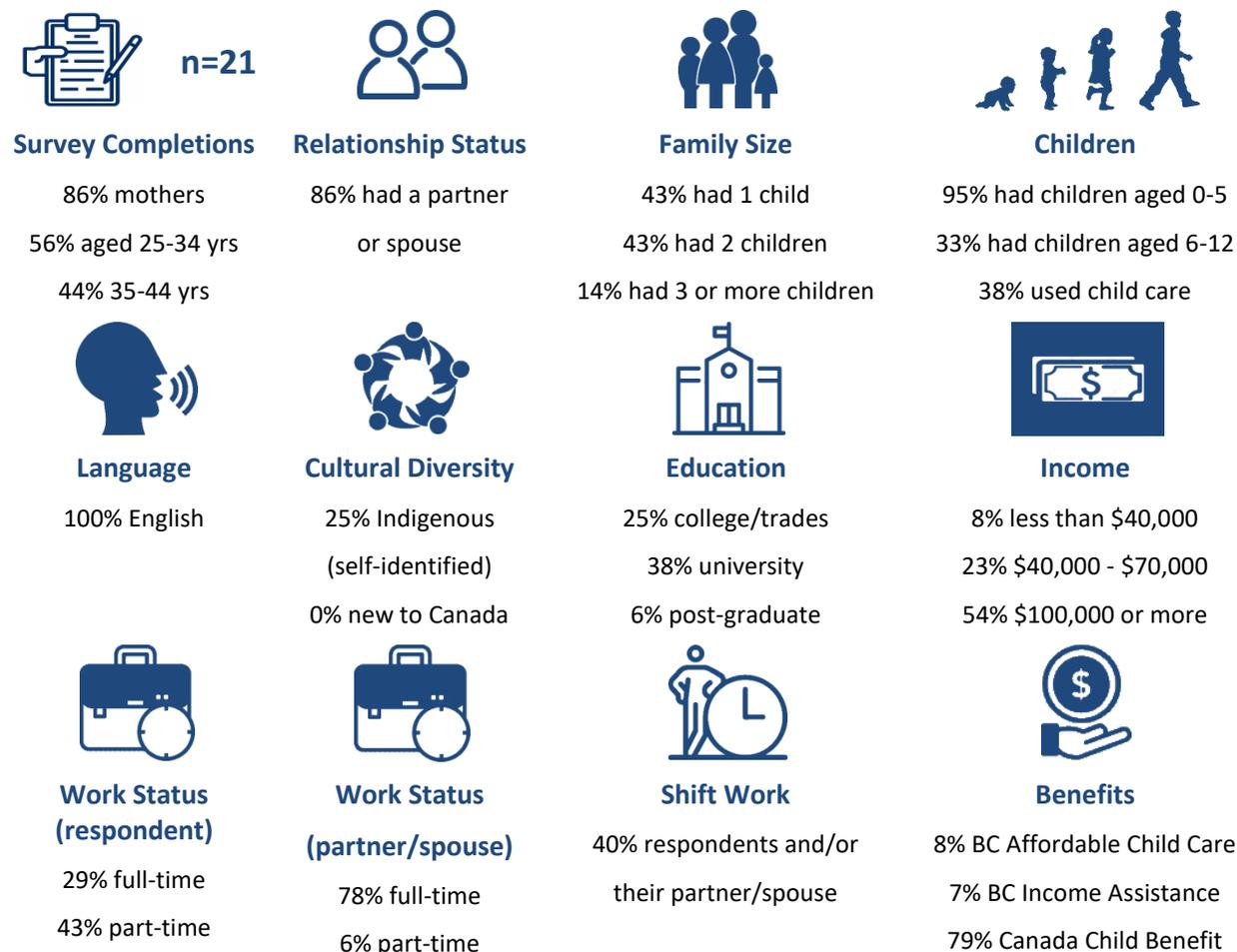
³⁶ Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2012 (9th edition, June 2013), Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Retrieved from https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/CRRU_ECEC_2012_revised_dec2013.pdf

³⁷ Macdonald, D. Child Care Deserts in Canada. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (June 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2018/06/Child%20Care%20Deserts.pdf>

CHILD CARE QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

In addition to review of the child care capacity and coverage rates, Malatest conducted survey and interview research with stakeholders to better understand local perceptions of the quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care in Cowichan Valley West. Information about research participants, and key themes that emerged from this research, are discussed in this section.

SUMMARY OF PARENT AND CAREGIVER SURVEY RESPONDENTS



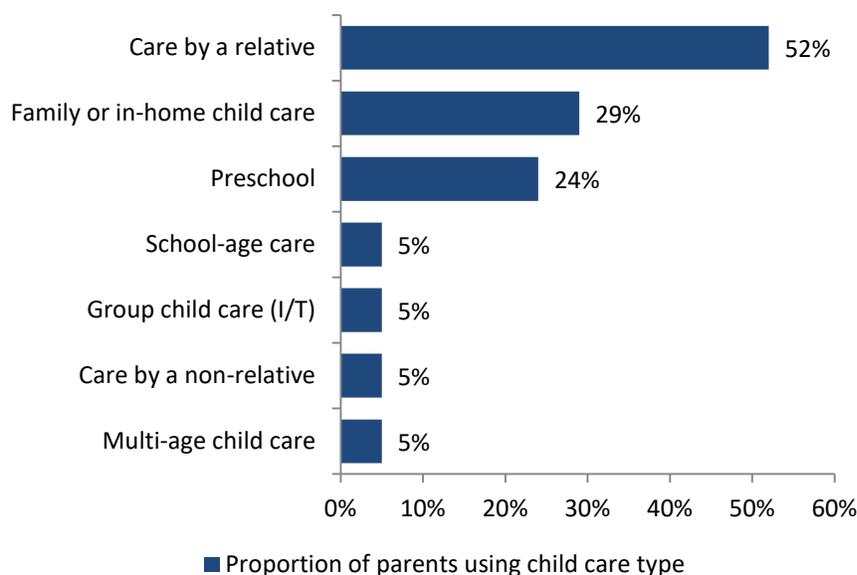
Data source: Parent/caregiver survey, n=21. Not all response options are shown.

Please note that, due to the small sample size for the parents and caregivers survey in this region, all proportions should be interpreted with caution and not be presumed to be representative of the broader population.

Source: 2020 Cowichan Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey, n=21. Not all response options are shown.

Of the 21 parent/caregiver respondents, six reported using child care, and these respondents used most care types, with the exception of license-not required family care and care by a non-relative (see Figure CVW3). Care by a relative was the primary care type used in Cowichan Valley West, with 11 respondents reporting using it.

Figure CVW3: Child Care Use by Care Type, Cowichan Valley West Respondents



Source: Cowichan Valley Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey, n=6. This question allowed for multiple responses, therefore percentages may add up to more than 100%.

KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Three key themes emerged from surveying and interviewing community stakeholders regarding child care in Cowichan Valley West: availability, affordability, and quality of child care.

AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE

[There is a] huge need in our community for infant and toddler spaces.

Across all stakeholder groups, there was a consensus that more child care spaces are needed. Two of five child care providers in this region, who participated in the survey, reported a need for more child care spaces. Two of four child care providers reported having a waitlist for their care centre (one respondent did not answer the question).

Cost, availability, and other accessibility factors are less of a concern among parents and caregivers in West Cowichan, relative to other areas of the CVRD.

Of twelve respondents in the region who do not use child care, three identified cost as their main reason for not using it. A further two respondents reported that availability of spaces was their main barrier to child care use. Ten of 21 respondents (48%) reported that cost was a barrier to accessing their preferred choice of child care. Eight respondents noted that availability of spaces was a barrier to preferred type of care, and nine reported that schedule was a barrier to preferred type of care.

All groups agreed that infant and toddler spaces are particularly needed, followed by after-school care spaces. Increasing the availability of child care for children with extra support needs was also identified as a priority among all groups. Only one of three child care providers in the region who answered the question reported that they are able to provide care for children with extra support needs. As a result, available child care spaces are even scarcer for children with additional support needs. Only one-quarter of parents and

caregivers (27%, n=4) agreed with the statement, “Child care options in the Cowichan region provide all the services / supports necessary for children to succeed.”

Children with extra support needs [such as language and speech] tend to be underserved.

Key informants echoed these findings, and pointed out that there is not enough Support Child Development (SCD) funding available to support the children currently in care. For this reason, these interviewees questioned the benefits of additional spaces on the already-strained services in the region. Stakeholders also noted a lack of support workers who are able and/or willing to work contracted support hours.

Stakeholders shared stories of programs being unable to take on children requiring extra supports, due to insufficient numbers of trained educators or additional support staff. A small proportion of parents and caregivers (5%, n=1) surveyed said a barrier to accessing their preferred type of child care was that local care could not meet their child’s extra support needs.

In addition to a lack of spaces, stakeholder groups expressed a need for more flexible options in the hours when care is available. Child care providers in Cowichan Valley West recognized the need for extended hours, largely in the early mornings and later evenings (three of five respondents agreed these were needs among local families). Child care providers in the region were less convinced that there was a need for child care availability on weekends or holidays or before and after school care (two of five respondents agreed these were needs among local families). A number of stakeholders suggested opening a child care centre in the hospital to help improve accessibility of child care for shift workers.

Earlier start times for daycare would allow me to work more and would help all shift workers.

Finally, lack of public transportation to child care centres was noted as a challenge to accessibility of child care. The scarcity of child care spaces across the Cowichan region doesn’t allow parents and caregivers the option to select a child care site within walking distance from home, leaving it up to parents and caregivers to find ways to reach facilities that may be a long distance from their home and/or place of work. For those without reliable access to a personal vehicle, this creates an additional hurdle to accessing child care.

AFFORDABILITY OF CHILD CARE

All stakeholder groups and key informants agreed that child care is too expensive for many families. Participants believed that access to more affordable child care would have benefits for parents and caregivers in a number of areas. These included:

- Improve parents’ and caregivers’ chances to gain employment (29% of parents/caregivers, n=6; 52% of the general population, n=49);
- Allow parents and caregivers to work more hours (43% of parents/caregivers, n=9);
- Reduce parents’ and caregivers’ absences at work (19% of parents/caregivers, n=4; 59% of the general population, n=56); and
- Allow parents and caregivers to improve their education, or update their training and/or credentials (38% of parents/caregiver, n=8).

One-half of general population respondents (52%, n=44) in the CVRD indicated that lowering child care fees would result in increased economic prosperity. Majorities of parents and caregivers (57%, n=12) and the general population (78%, n=74) agreed that low-cost child care would have a number of non-economic benefits, such as reduced stress on families and overall better mental wellness.

Key informants from the CVRD stated that affordability of child care is a common concern among families they serve. These interviewees shared stories of many families, especially young parents, not being able to find child care even if they could afford it. Qualifying for child care was also noted as a concern, particularly for parents who are not employed or are attending school, and therefore cannot qualify for subsidies.

QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Slightly more than one-half of general population survey respondents from the overall CVRD (53%, n=35) agreed that “child care options in the Cowichan region offer quality child care.” Only five of fourteen parents and caregivers in Cowichan Valley West (36%) who responded to the question agreed with this statement. Fourteen of eighteen parent and caregiver respondents (78%) reported being satisfied with their own child care arrangements, however. Key informants spoke highly of the quality of child care in the region.

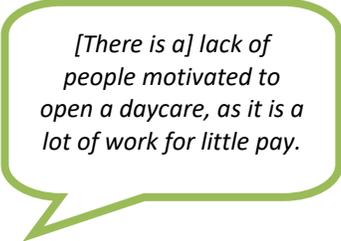
Inclusivity, a common indicator of child care quality, is defined as the extent to which a child care site is inclusive of children of all abilities (including those with extra support needs) and incorporating the diversity of the community. Minorities of general population respondents (37%, n=35) and parents and caregivers (36%, n=4) agreed that child care options in the Cowichan region are inclusive in terms of children’s abilities. A similar proportion of parents and caregivers (36%, n=4), and less than one-half of the general population (45%, n=43) agreed that child care options reflect the diversity of the community. These findings suggest that inclusivity of child care could be an area for further improvement.

Concerns about staff recruitment and retention were less of a concern in West Cowichan than elsewhere in the greater CVRD. Only two of five respondents agreed that child care services would be improved by increasing educator wages or by increasing the availability of qualified staff. Key informants indicated that they felt non-licensed care can hinder child care quality and if more care centres are added, they should be licensed.

CHALLENGES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

While many child care providers in the greater CVRD identified staffing as their primary challenge in providing child care, these concerns were less noted among West Cowichan child care providers. Only one of five respondents reported challenges with hiring qualified staff or retaining educators.

A majority of CVRD stakeholders echoed the sentiments expressed by child care providers, regarding current staffing issues in the industry. There was consensus among all groups that increased compensation would encourage more people to pursue education in, and join, the child care profession as they could expect to be fairly compensated for their work. It is also important to note that, due to Cowichan Valley West’s geographic proximity to the rest of Cowichan Valley, changes to the labour market pursued by other municipalities and electoral areas may influence the labour market in Cowichan Valley West (e.g., more daycare workers being willing to commute to other regions for increased pay and benefits). Therefore, while



[There is a] lack of people motivated to open a daycare, as it is a lot of work for little pay.

these challenges may not be as pressing of an issue for Cowichan Valley West currently, it is important context and an issue to be aware of as changes to child care programs progress in the region.

In Cowichan there are several municipal boundaries and capacity issues. Regional districts haven't had child care on their agendas and tightening budgets make it more difficult to add new services or expand existing ones.

The only barrier to increasing child care spaces, reported by multiple providers in the Cowichan West region, was expanding physical space at sites; two of five respondents reported this as a barrier for their child care center.

More governance was also thought to be needed over unlicensed child care. Concerns were raised from stakeholders that these unlicensed centres get the same access to government funding as licensed child care centres, and they charge the same or more than licensed centre, yet their quality may often not be equivalent.

FUTURE CHILD CARE TARGETS

Based on anticipated future need for child care in Cowichan Valley West, Malatest has developed a series of targets for increasing the supply of licensed child care spaces in the region. Recommendations include:

- Number of child care spaces needed, by age group and care type, over the next ten years to meet changing demographics and anticipated change in demand;
- Number of child care programs needed to accommodate these spaces;
- Space needs for recommended programs (i.e., interior and exterior space requirements to accommodate children in the identified programs);
- Potential sites in Lake Cowichan, CVRD Electoral Area F and Electoral Area I, where additional needed programs could be located; and
- Staffing needs to accommodate the increased number of programs and spaces recommended.

SPACE CREATION TARGETS

This subsection of the report provides short-, medium-, and long-term child care space creation targets for Cowichan Valley West.

Space creation targets for each of the child care age groups were calculated by multiplying projected populations for each age group (taken from BC Stats' PEOPLE Population projections) by target coverage rates for these age groups. Target coverage rates were decided based on multiple factors: available recommendations for best practice in existing literature, the experience of other jurisdictions in providing child care, and estimates of unmet need for each age group within the CVRD based on survey and interview data. Baseline target coverage rates for each of the age groups were:

- 55% for the 0-2 years age group;
- 85% for the 3-5 years age group; and
- 20% for the 6-12 years age group.

These target coverage rates were baselines only, and were adjusted for each community as appropriate based on anticipated unmet need as well as findings from key informant interviews. For more information on how these targets were arrived at, please refer to the Methodology Section of the Final Report prepared for this project.

These targets identify the number of child care spaces required to support the projected population of Cowichan Valley West over the next ten years (see Table CVW6). Large increases in child care spaces, particularly when compared to current spaces, are needed for infant-toddler and school-aged children. A moderate increase in spaces for preschool-aged children is also recommended.

Table CVW6: Total Target Child Care Spaces by Age Group, Cowichan Valley West, 2020-2030

Year	Spaces Children 0-2 years	Spaces Children 3-5 years	Total Spaces Children 0-5 years	Spaces Children 6-12 years	Total Spaces Children 0-12 years
2020	10	29	39	16	55
2021	13	31	44	28	72
2022	20	34	54	40	94
2025	30	40	70	55	125
2030	43	46	89	72	161

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces only); 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

Space creation targets for 2030 require 106 new spaces over ten years: 33 for infant-toddler, 17 for pre-school ages, and 56 for school-aged children.

Table CVW7 provides a summary of how these required spaces could be broken down by child care type. It is important to note that very small increases in family and in-home multi-age child care were projected, due to the fact that these operations have low capacity numbers and most in the region are already serving as many children as possible. The only way to substantially increase child care spots in these types of programs would be for child care operators to open their own in-home facilities, which is considerably more challenging to promote and incentivize than adding capacity to other types of child care sites.

Table CVW7: Total Target Child Care Spaces by Type of Care, Cowichan Valley West, 2020-2030

Type of Care	2020 Supply	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2021*	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2022*	Estimated Medium-Term Need, 2025*	Estimated Long-Term Need, 2030*
Group Child Care (Birth to 36 months)	8	11	15	24	38
Group Child Care (30 months to school age)	12	15	19	25	30
Licensed Preschool	10	12	18	24	30
Group Child Care (School age)	10	20	28	38	49
Multi-Age Child Care	0	0	0	0	0
Family Child Care	14	14	14	14	14
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	0	0	0	0	0
Total Child Care Spaces	54	72	94	125	161

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces only)

*Consultant estimates

Figures in brackets indicate net change in space numbers between the column's year targets and the previous column's year targets.

It is important to note that, over the course of this project, School District 79 has committed to creating 201 new child care spaces, 37 of which will be in Lake Cowichan, within the West Cowichan region. Of these 37 spaces, 25 are being dedicated to Group Child Care (30 months to School Age) and 12 are being dedicated to Group Child Care (Birth to 36 months). As a result, some of the targets provided above may already have been met.

Finally, Table CVW8 provides a summary of the overall increase in coverage rates, from 2020 to 2030, based on recommended space creation targets and population projections for these age groups. As can be seen in the table, childcare space creation targets proposed by Malatest result in large improvements to coverage rates for all age groups, with the largest percentage point increase for infant-toddler spaces.

Table CVW8: Change in Proportional Child Care Coverage, Cowichan Valley West, 2020-2030

Age Group	2020	2030	Percentage Point Change
0-5 years	14%	33%	+19 pts
0-2 years	7%	33%	+26 pts
3-5 years	19%	33%	+14 pts
6-12 years	4%	20%	+16 pts
Overall Coverage Rate: 0-12 years	8%	26%	+18 pts

PROGRAM CREATION AND SITE LOCATION NEEDS

In addition to estimating the need for individual child care spaces, by age group and care type, over the next decade, Malatest developed estimates and recommendations on creation of child care programs to accommodate these additional spaces, and identified potential sites that could be used to house these additional child care programs. These estimates and recommendations are discussed in the sub-sections below.

PROGRAM CREATION

Malatest used its recommendations for space creation targets, by care type, to identify the number of additional programs that will be needed to accommodate these targets. In calculating the number of additional programs needed, the following assumptions or parameters were used:

- All programs will be fully subscribed to the legal maximums prescribed by the provincial government; and
- Where partial programs are needed (e.g., calculation indicated a need for 4.35 programs), number of needed programs were always rounded up to accommodate legal requirements for the *maximum* number of children in a program.

As a result of these approaches, these recommendations for additional programs needed should be taken as the minimum required to meet the space creation targets identified, but will also provide a small amount of additional capacity for more spaces if needed by the community.

Further, it is important to note that Malatest has delineated a difference between *programs* and *sites*. “Program” refers to each licensed child care program that serves up to its maximum number of children. “Site” refers to the physical location (building and outdoor space) that serves one or more programs. Many of the larger child care operators host multiple programs at their site; for example, a child care operator who reports 24 spaces for infant-toddler group care hosts two programs, as the maximum number of children who can be served by that care type in a single program is 12.

Given that the UBCM inventory does not break down the number or programs at a specific site in this manner, the number of sites in 2020 is a best estimate based on the number of spaces that each operator reports offering and the applicable legal maximum enrolments for each type of care. It is also important to note that staffing shortages may be limiting the ability of sites to operate at their maximum potential capacity. For example, while the maximum number of children in a licensed preschool program is 20, there is also a requirement that there be a minimum of one ECE or ECE assistant for every ten children (with at least one full ECE required for every program). Therefore, it should not be assumed that simply because a site appears to have unfilled spaces based on potential maximum capacity, these sites could start meeting an increase in demand immediately.

Finally, it is important to note that although in some cases, there are negative net gains in programs between 2020 and 2030 based on Malatest’s recommendations, this should not be taken as a blanket recommendation to completely shutter child care programs or whole sites. Closure of child care sites would likely result in backlash from families in the community, and closure of sites in already poorly served areas could result in *no* child care sites being available to some families within a reasonable distance. Therefore, where there is potential to close child care programs, municipalities and electoral areas should consider:

1. Whether there is an opportunity to reduce the number of programs within a single site (e.g., if a child care center currently operates the equivalent of two preschool-aged group care programs, could this be reduced to one in order to maintain access within the geographic area while still reducing the number of spaces?),
2. Whether closures would put hardship on the local community or neighbourhood to find alternative child care options, and
3. If there are opportunities to re-purpose program closures to offer other needed programs (e.g., if the preschool-aged group care is over-served, but additional programs are needed for birth to 36 months group care, can that program space be altered to serve a different group rather than shut down altogether?).

With these considerations in mind, Table CVW9 summarizes the changing needs for child care programs in Cowichan Valley West over the next ten years. Malatest anticipates small increases in need for some types of child care programs, with the greatest increase in need observed for group care programs serving infants and toddlers – an increase of 3 additional programs.

Table CVW9: Change in Need for Child Care Programs, Cowichan Valley West, 2020-2030

	Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Care	Family Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care
2020 Spaces Reported	8	12	10	10	0	14	0
2020 Programs	1	1	1	1	0	2	0
2030 Target Spaces*	38	30	30	49	0	14	0
2030 Programs Needed*	4	2	2	2	0	2	0
2030 Net Program Gain	3	1	1	1	0	0	0

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces and programs only)

*Consultant estimates

PROGRAM SPACE NEEDS

Each child care program is required to meet certain minimum space requirements, to ensure adequate area for care, activities, and enrichment for children served by the program. Based on the number of additional child care programs identified as needed in each sub-region of the CVRD, Malatest has calculated the amount of additional space – interior and exterior – needed to accommodate these additional programs. Below is a list of assumptions and limitations should be kept in mind when reviewing the estimates of additional space needed.

- Calculation of additional space needed for each program type was calculated based on provincial minimum requirements. These recommendations should be considered the *minimum* needed to legally open and operate the recommended child care programs.
- Malatest has assumed that all programs will be operating at maximum capacity, therefore calculation of site size was based on per-child space requirements at the maximum number of children allowable in a single program.

- There are different maximum program enrollments by age within the school-aged group care program; these programs may serve up to 25 children in the K-Grade 2 age group, and up to 30 children older than that. Malatest’s calculations for space requirements for these programs are based on a “middle ground” assumption of enrollment at 28 children per program.
- Exterior space requirements for preschool and school-aged group care programs, as well as home-based care programs, specify that an exterior activity area must exist, but do not give space requirements. Malatest has maintained the general requirement of 7 m² per child that exists for other group care programs, to create estimates, however it should be noted that municipalities and electoral areas may have flexibility for these program types in terms of the exact size of outdoor activity areas.
- Provincial interior space minimums do not account for non-activity areas that may be required, such as hallways, janitorial closets, washrooms, and kitchens. Malatest has added a 25% allowance to interior space calculations to accommodate for these other spaces, based on recommendations from the City of Richmond’s Child Care Design Guidelines.
- There are provincial allowances for some co-located programs to share required non-activity areas such as kitchen facilities and janitorial closets. This is an opportunity to reduce the total amount of space needed to meet new program requirements and maximize efficient use of available sites. However, given insufficient information available to Malatest regarding the total size of potential child care sites and thus the ability to co-locate programs at single sites, Malatest has not assumed that programs will be co-located and so the space recommendations here may be slightly higher than actual needs.
- Exterior space requirements account for activity areas accessible to children only. These exterior space requirements do not account for other space that may be required under applicable bylaws such as set-backs, parking spaces, or pick-up and drop-off areas.

With these considerations in mind, Table CVW10 summarizes program space needs by program type. Space needs are given for each program (columns three and four), and overall space needs to accommodate all needed programs of that type (columns five and six).

Table CVW10: Interior and Exterior Space Needs to Serve Recommended Program Creation, 2030

Care Type	New Sites Needed by 2030	Interior Floor Space per Program (m ²)	Exterior Activity Space per Program (m ²)	Total Interior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)	Total Exterior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)
Group care, birth to 36 months	3	55.5	84.0	166.5	252.0
Group care, 30 months to school age	1	115.6	175.0	115.6	175.0
Licensed Preschool	1	92.5	140.0	92.5	140.0
Group care, school age	1	103.1	192.5	103.1	192.5
Multi-Age Care	0	37.0	56.0	0.0	0.0
Family Child Care	0	32.4	49.0	0.0	0.0
In-Home Multi-Age Care	0	37.0	56.0	0.0	0.0

Reference: *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. Child Care Licensing Regulation. Retrieved from http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/loo70/loo70/12_319_89

POTENTIAL CHILD CARE SITES

Malatest has identified a number of potential sites for housing new child care programs throughout Cowichan Valley West. The following three maps illustrate the location of existing child care locations (represented by circles), and locations of potential future child care sites (represented by triangles) in each of Lake Cowichan, CVRD Electoral Area F and Electoral Area I.

It is important to note that Malatest did not assess potential future child care sites for their suitability for different types of child care programs. A number of issues that could not be addressed in the data that Malatest had available should be examined prior to making any final decisions about the suitability of potential sites, including:

- Interior and exterior floor space available, and whether there is sufficient space to meet minimum requirements for the intended care program(s);
- Building remediation and upgrading needs, whether it will be cost-efficient to make the building suitable for child care programs if such improvements are needed;
- Ability of municipalities and partner organizations to negotiate sale or leasing agreements with current property owners; and
- Accessibility of potential sites to likely child care users (e.g., whether the site is easily accessible by public transit, whether it would serve an area or neighbourhood that is currently under-served by child care programs, etc.).

Figure CVW4: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Town of Lake Cowichan

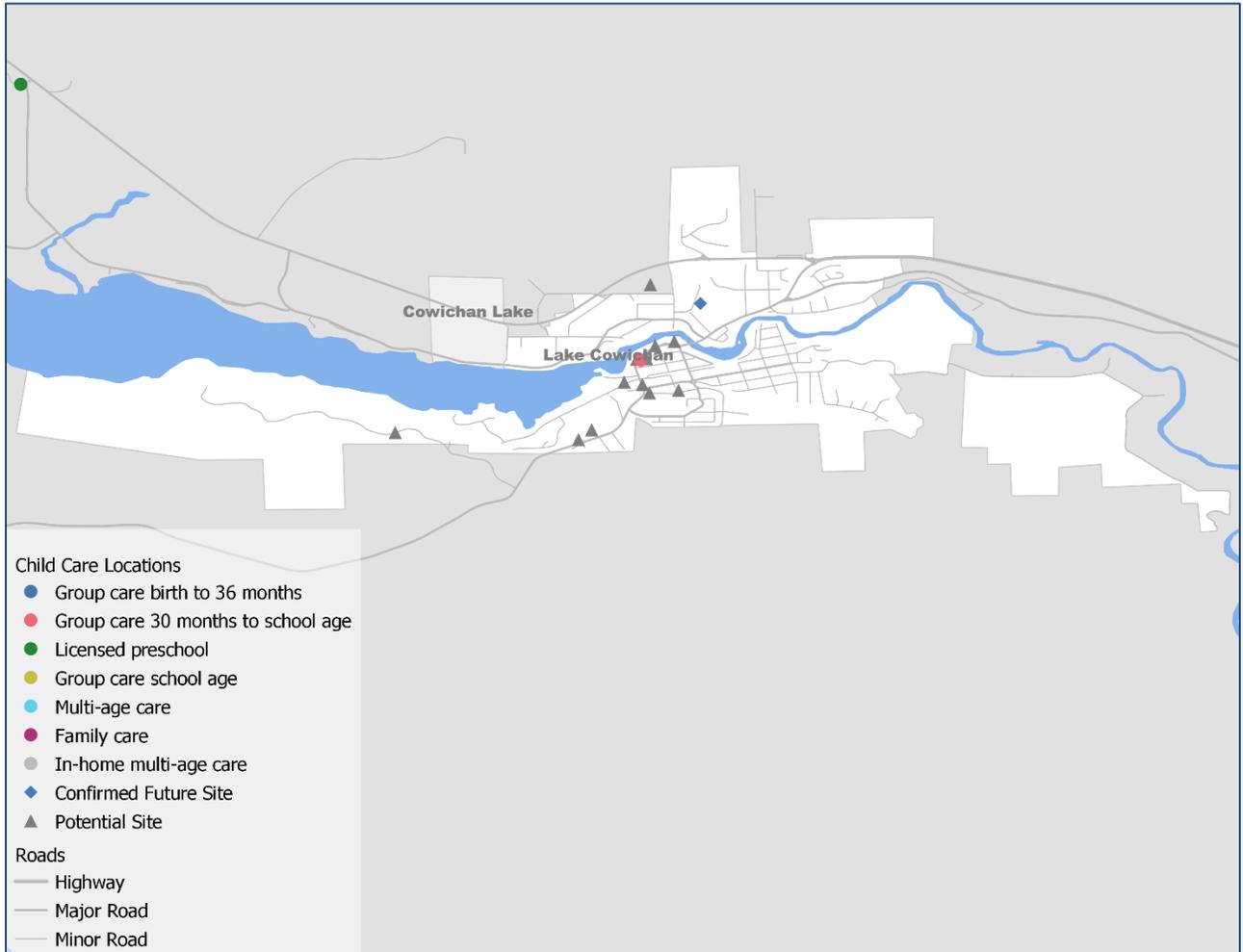


Figure CVW5: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Electoral Area F

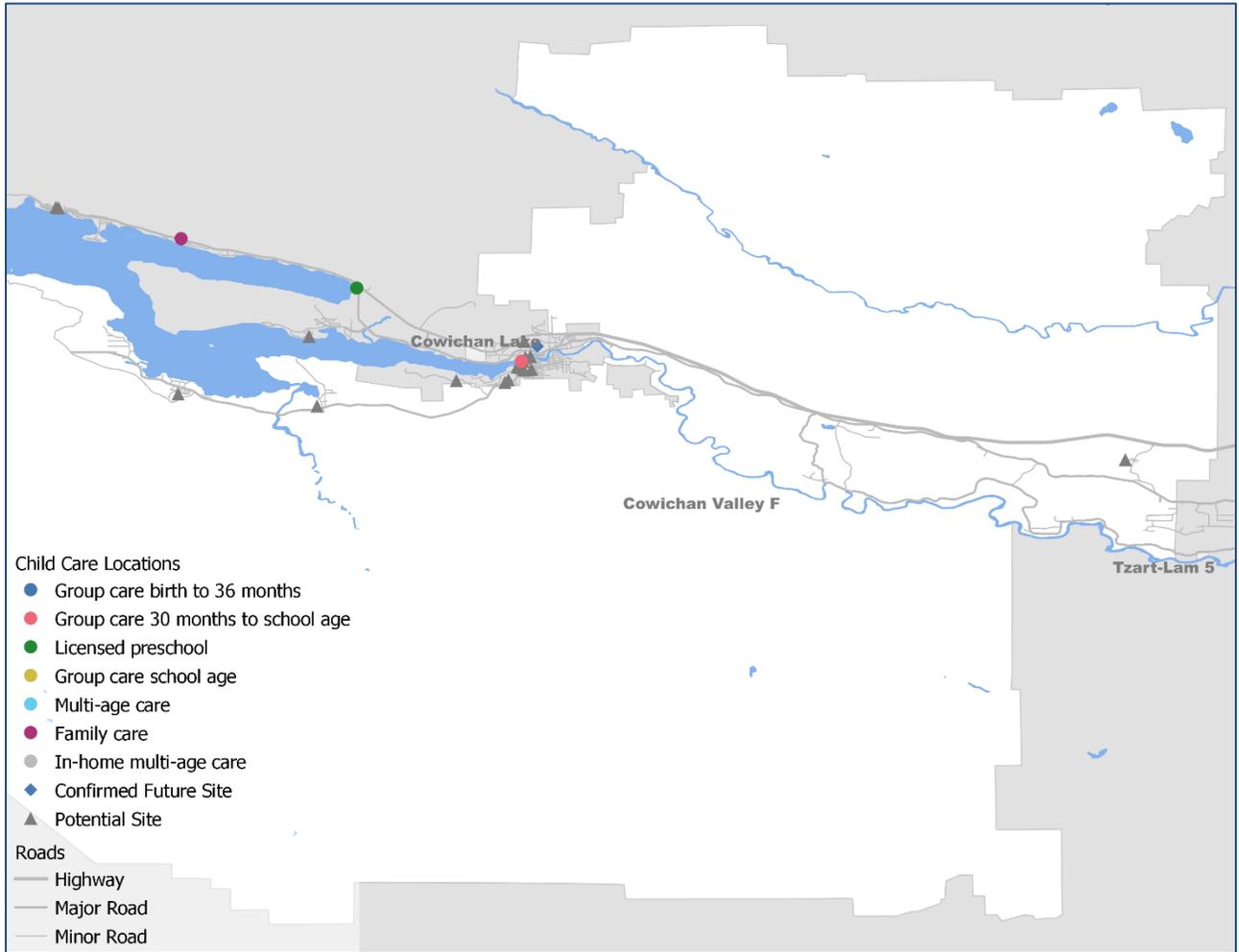
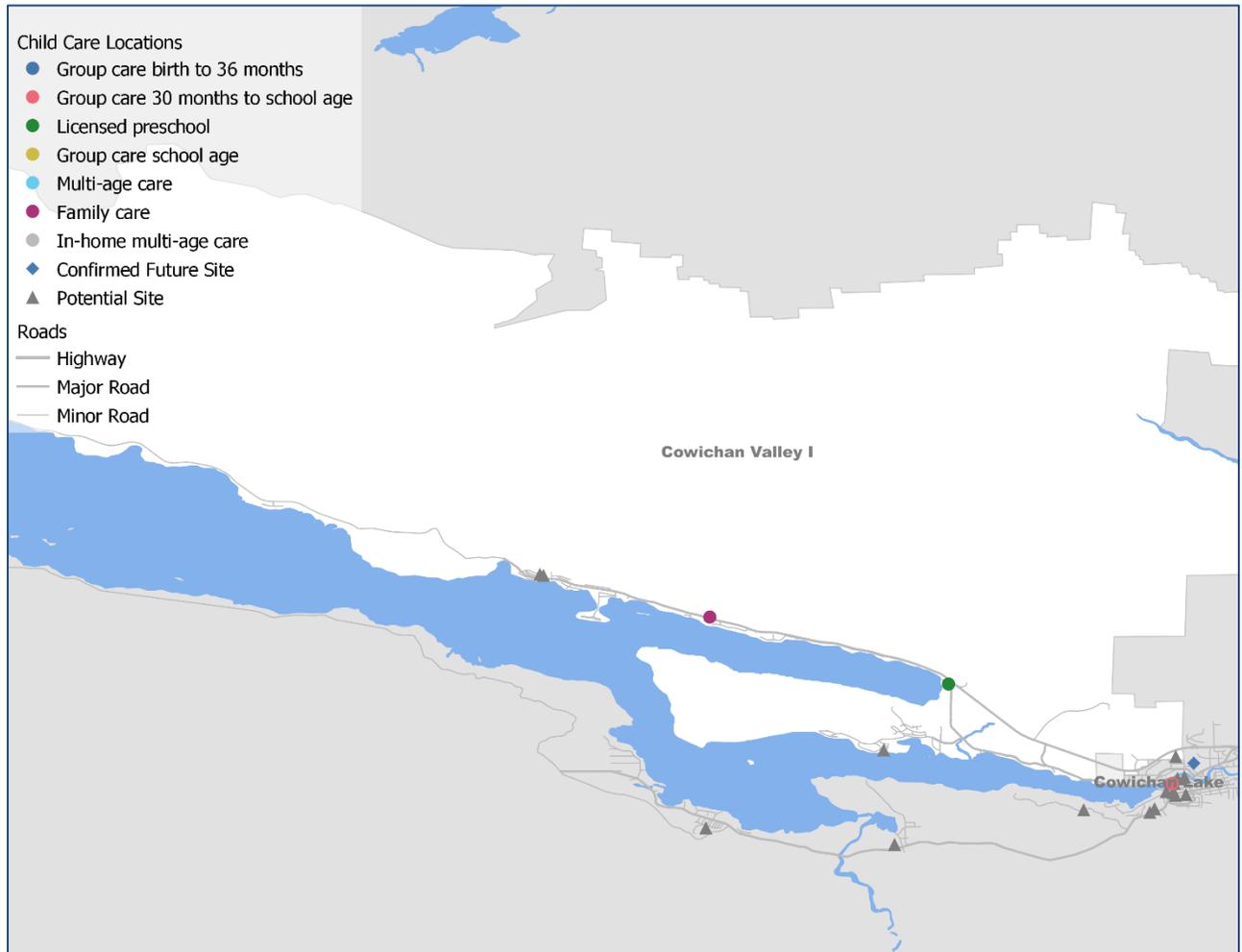


Figure CVW6: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, Electoral Area I



STAFFING NEEDS FOR FUTURE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Finally, as noted previously, the ability to offer child care spaces is limited not only by physical space at a site, but also by the number of staff available to supervise and care for children. Minimum staffing requirements are established by the provincial government and are applicable to all licensed child care programs, although requirements vary by program type.

Malatest has calculated the number of staff that will be needed to serve the new programs and number of new spaces recommended to be created in the Cowichan region by 2030. When calculating these requirements, the following assumptions were made:

- All programs recommended for creation will be fully subscribed;
- All programs will be staffed at the minimum qualification level required by the provincial government (e.g., if a program requires one ECE and one ECE assistant, Malatest assumed that the second staff member is qualified at the ECE assistant level and the program does not employ two full ECEs); and
- All staff work full-time (i.e., these are full-time equivalency, or FTE, positions).

It should also be noted that Malatest did not undertake a comprehensive labour market analysis of child care workers in the Cowichan region. Typically, forecasting for future labour market need would encompass surveying employers regarding not only their current number of employees and qualification levels, but also the ages and expected retirements of these employees, employee turnover rate, and other metrics that can be used to create a comprehensive forecast of labour market trends over the medium- to long-term. Although Malatest has calculated the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by creating additional child care spaces and, thus, new child care programs, this forecast does not account for potential complicating factors in workforce needs such as coming retirements, “burnout rate” where workers – particularly those in caregiving work – leave the profession entirely, in- and out-migration of qualified workers in the region, and other factors that can impact labour markets beyond simply graduation rates from eligible programs and positions available in the region.

With these considerations in mind, Table CVW11 summarizes the total needed child care workers, by qualification level, by 2030. Included in the table are both total labour pool needs in Cowichan Valley West, and the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by the recommended increase in spaces by 2030.

Table CVW11: Child Care Worker Needs by Qualification Level, Cowichan Valley West, 2030

	Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care	Total Staffing Requirements
Total 2030 Programs Needed	4	2	2	2	0	2	0	-
Gain in Programs by 2030	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	-
Total ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Gain in ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total ECE Needed	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	8
Gain in ECE Needed	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	5
Total ECE Assistant Needed	4	6	2	0	0	0	0	12
Gain in ECE Assistant Needed	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	7
Total Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	6	0	2	0	8
Gain in Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3

MUNICIPAL BYLAWS, RESOURCES, AND PLANS

While a number of areas for potential improvement and expansion of child care in Cowichan Valley West have been identified in this report, these suggestions should be considered within the context of broader municipal or regional needs, priorities, and plans. There are a number of areas under municipal jurisdiction, such as zoning and business licensing, that can be leveraged to support strong child care growth initiatives.

Table CVW12 below summarizes the types of municipal approaches that can have an impact on child care availability, affordability, and accessibility in a region. The three right-most columns indicate whether each of the communities within Cowichan Valley West have undertaken such an approach to date.

Table CVW12: Municipal Policies, Plans, Bylaws and Resources, within Cowichan Valley West

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Lake Cowichan	Area F	Area I
<i>Strategies, Plans, and Policies</i>				
Child Care Strategy or Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges child care as fundamental to supporting healthy children and communities Provides guiding principles for municipal governments when working individually, with other levels of government, and/or with businesses and non-profit organizations; guiding principles help ensure that various initiatives and efforts are complementary and support one another 			
Child care addressed in Official Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that child care facilities and businesses are incorporated into long-term community development goals, land use planning, and business licensing practices 	✓	✓	✓
Child care addressed in Social Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges links among social inequities and access to child care (e.g., poverty, gendered differences in labour force participation) Provides guiding principles on creation and implementation of child care policies that address, or do not exacerbate, existing social inequities 			
Child care considered a community amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates incentives for local government to approve appropriate zoning and business licensing for child care throughout region / city If voluntary amenity contributions are available to developers, child care as an amenity incentivizes and leverages private capital to serve the community's child care needs 			
Other child care strategies, plans, and policies				

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Lake Cowichan	Area F	Area I
<i>Municipal Resources</i>				
Municipal building space available for child care (any cost structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate set-asides for child care space can reduce market competition for operators and ensure availability of space 			
Municipal grants for child care operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can provide funding to sustain specific child care operations, ensuring that specific communities maintain a minimum level of access Grants at a municipal level allow for funding to be targeted to better meet specific community needs (more targeted than provincial operating grants) 			
Municipal grants for child care capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can encourage creation or expansion of child care facilities in specific communities / neighbourhoods to meet community needs Can help operators leverage private equity / investment that otherwise would not be sufficient to accomplish capital project Creates physical space to support creation of needed child care spots 			
Child care design guidelines available to child care operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies requirements on child care facilities for operators, reducing confusion and facilitating capital projects Can promote best practices or community goals through design guidelines and recommendations 			
Child care information documents for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates access to child care for local residents, by making them aware of available licensed child care options 			
Municipal child care program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures a minimum number of child care spaces are available locally 			
Municipal staff resource dedicated to child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can promote and enforce municipal requirements for child care businesses (thereby ensuring quality of care), advise on provincial requirements Can promote information about available child care programs in municipality to families 			
Other child care documents				
Other				

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Lake Cowichan	Area F	Area I
<i>Child Care Facilities Permitted In:</i>				
Single Family Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓	✓	✓
Duplex (semi-detached) Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓	✓	✓
Row House / Townhouse Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓	✓	✓
Apartment Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓		
Mixed Use Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care) 	✓		
Commercial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 	✓		
Public Use / Assembly Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 	✓		
Industrial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 			
Agricultural Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care) 		✓	✓

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Lake Cowichan	Area F	Area I
<i>Additional Zoning or Licensing Requirements for Child Care</i>				
Additional parking required for home-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to limit ability of child care operators to offer home-based child care 	✓		
Municipal Business License required for child care use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional fees and submission requirements can create barriers to opening a child care business, or operating a child care business legally 	✓		
Non-resident child care staff are permitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows home-based child care operations to accommodate more children, if space on property allows 	✓		
Additional outdoor play space requirements / recommendations above provincial standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of spaces in a municipality that may house child care facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for space 			
Additional building requirements beyond the BC Building Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of buildings in a municipality that may house facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for qualifying buildings. 			

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are a series of recommendations for a child care strategy in Cowichan Valley West. These recommendations incorporate findings from all three major lines of inquiry: population projections and target setting for future child care spaces and programs; stakeholder consultation regarding the availability, accessibility, and quality of child care in the region; and secondary data review of existing municipal policies, resources, and bylaws among communities in the Cowichan region.

While this report is intended for the use of Cowichan Valley West and its constituent municipalities and electoral areas, there are a number of priority areas for change that are outside the jurisdiction of local governments. Therefore, recommendations listed here include comments on responsible and/or contributing levels of government.

Finally, it should be noted that the specific actions for local and provincial governments are not meant to be definitive recommendations; they are suggestions for actions that would support the overarching recommendation. Each community and government must consider their local context, mandate, and other factors when deciding which actions to pursue.

INCREASING COVERAGE RATES

Increase the number of child care spaces as per the recommended space creation targets.

This report has provided a detailed breakdown of recommended space creation targets, by age group and by care type (see Tables CVW6 and CVW7). Malatest recommends making efforts to meet these targets within the time frame specified, with regular review and assessment of capacity to ensure these targets remain relevant.

Local Government Actions

- Review and revise existing bylaws and regulations that may be limiting the ability of child care operators to offer child care (e.g., space requirements per child that are above provincial requirements), to enable existing operators to offer more child care spaces
- Incorporate targets for the creation of child care spaces and programs into community planning and strategy documents, to promote a coherent and complementary approach to child care across all departments of municipal government
- Consider creating grants to fund child care operations and/or capital investment projects, to support the creation of new programs and spaces
- Explore opportunities to acquire sites, either through purchase or lease agreements, to be made available to child care operators to support target spaces and programs

Provincial Government Actions

- Make available grant funds for capital projects to support child care space and program creation targets
- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, anticipate providing funding to child care centers aligned with space and program creation targets

Emphasize increasing infant/toddler spaces.

Space creation targets place a strong emphasis on infant/toddler spaces; this reflects both the comparatively low current coverage rate for this age group, as well as demand voiced by stakeholders who participated in this research. Malatest recommends that efforts to expand child care coverage in the region should ensure that creation of infant/toddler spaces are prioritized.

Local Government Actions

- Should target space creation targets be revised, municipal governments should consider the resulting coverage rates and aim for, at a minimum, a 33% coverage rate for children aged 0-2 years old
- Incorporate language in official community plans and social plans that acknowledges the importance of infant/toddler child care in allowing mothers to re-enter the workforce, thus reducing “brain drain” in local sectors as well as promoting gender equity

Provincial Government Actions

- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, set aside a certain proportion of funding to be dedicated to infant/toddler spaces in the region

CREATING NEW CHILD CARE SITES

Support creation of new child care programs and sites.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will necessitate the creation of new child care programs and, likely, opening of new child care centers and facilities in the region. This will require considerable capital investment that could be aided by support from both municipal and provincial governments.

Local Government Actions

- Consider making current available municipal space (e.g., unused space in municipal buildings) available for the exclusive use of child care programs
- Consider incorporating purpose-built space for child care programs into new municipal buildings that may be built over the coming decade
- Consider leasing / renting available municipal space to child care programs for no, nominal, or below-market rates
- Examine opportunities to acquire sites (e.g., closed elementary schools) for the operation of child care programs
- Consider making municipal grants available for capital investment projects, to leverage private dollars to expand existing child care sites

Provincial Government Actions

- Make grants available for capital investment projects, either to renovate and build new sites or to expand existing sites
- Consider working with regional and municipal governments to promote acquisition of sites for child care use

ACCESSIBILITY

Consider public accessibility of potential new child care sites.

Accessibility and location of child care sites was noted by a number of stakeholders in this research; many noted that there are a number of child care facilities that are not accessible by public transit. This results in the child care programs under-serving the community, particularly lower income families who may not have access to a personal vehicle. Accessibility and location of child care sites should be considered when examining potential child care sites.

Local Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans emphasizing the need for child care sites to serve the entire community, and therefore be accessible by public transit
- When assessing potential future sites for child care programs, consider accessibility by public transit and prioritize locations that are more accessible
- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit

Provincial Government Actions

- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit
- Incorporate consideration of accessibility by public transit into any potential land transfers with municipal or regional governments, prioritizing sites with public transit access for child care use

Consider need for, and incentivize, child care with extended and non-traditional hours.

Shift work poses a unique challenge to finding child care options. Very few child care sites in the Cowichan region offer extended hours such as early morning, late evening, or overnight care. Yet, for families where one or both parents are employed in shift work, there is a need to find child care options that can provide reliable care during these hours.

Local Government Actions

- If municipal operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- If municipal space is being used for child care programs, consider options to allow access to facilities during these extended hours
- Explore options with provincial government to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

Provincial Government Actions

- If provincial operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- Explore options with local governments to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

AFFORDABILITY

Attend to affordability as a key aspect of the expansion of child care in the Cowichan region.

Affordability of child care was noted as a major barrier to child care, and to child care of choice, among parents and caregivers in this research. Further, child care space targets set out in this report have assumed a considerable increase in demand due to an increase in affordability. As such, affordability of child care for families in the region should be a major priority for municipal, regional, and provincial governments.

Local Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans, acknowledging the importance of child care being affordable to local residents to ensure equal opportunity and accessibility for all children
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)
- Examine opportunities to reduce child care operators' overhead through making municipal space available to them for no, nominal, or below-market rent

Provincial Government Actions

- Continue the rollout of the Universal Child Care program, which provides child care to families at a low, flat cost per day (currently \$10 per day)
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)

SUPPORTING CHILD CARE WORKERS AND PROVIDERS

Promote child care as a career to youth in the Cowichan region.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will require the creation of many full-time equivalency child care positions throughout the Cowichan region. As a result, there will be a large need in the region for qualified child care workers, particularly those with higher levels of qualifications (e.g., ECE, ECE with infant-toddler and/or special needs training).

Local Government Actions

- Promote child care work as a career through community programs and space (e.g., an ad campaign in recreation centers and local schools)

Provincial Government Actions

- Promote child care work, particularly the ECE qualification, through existing career promotion programs (e.g., the *Find Your Fit* tour has an ECE station, this tour could be brought to Cowichan region secondary schools)
- Consider expanding ECE programs at post-secondary institutions on Vancouver Island to ensure sufficient graduates to meet demand over the coming ten years

Promote the ECE qualification, and ECE with special training, to current and potential child care workers.

During this research, Malatest heard from recent graduates of ECE programs that the ECE qualification itself was perceived to be financially burdensome, when considering the investment required and the anticipated pay of an ECE-qualified position. Many noted that it made more financial sense to seek a lower level of qualification, such as an ECE Assistant, because the difference in pay between the roles was not much different. In addition, many child care program operators noted that they faced significant challenges finding qualified staff, particularly ECEs and ECEs with infant-toddler and special needs training.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant to support upgrading to ECE and ECE with special training skills, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider opportunities to reduce the financial burden of ECE qualifications (e.g., bursaries standard to all students in ECE programs, other) to make the qualification more attractive to potential students
- Promote upgrading of lower-level child care qualifications (e.g., Responsible Adult, ECE Assistant) to full ECE accreditation through targeted ad campaigns in child care programs at post-secondary institutions in B.C.
- Promote a higher wage for fully qualified ECEs, either as part of or in addition to the ongoing Universal Child Care program; may be accomplished through wage subsidies or other means to create a higher “floor” wage for ECEs

Support ECEs in maintaining their credentials through affordable professional development opportunities.

Child care workers qualified as ECEs must participate in regular professional development in order to maintain their credential over time; this training is typically paid for by the individual, creating another barrier or disincentive for child care workers to pursue and/or maintain their full ECE qualification. Supporting ongoing professional development for ECEs can help to reduce this burden and better meet the need for qualified child care workers in the Cowichan region.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) undertake polling of child care programs and help to organize local, affordable professional development opportunities for child care workers
- Consider creating a municipal grant to support ongoing ECE professional development training, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider incentivizing regular professional development for ECEs through dedicated provincial grants available to all licensed child care operators in the Cowichan region

IMPROVING QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Promote cultural diversity in child care centers.

The diversity of child care centers in the Cowichan region was rated poorly by both the general public and parents and caregivers of children, in this research. Diverse child care centers that reflect the communities in which they are located provide children with higher quality, more enriching care that promotes inclusive communities. As such, promoting cultural diversity should be a priority under the general initiative of improving quality of child care.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) regularly collect information on diversity within child care centers and promote best practices in diversity to child care centers
- Ensure affordable child care is available in all communities and neighbourhoods (see recommendations regarding placement of sites and space targets), to enable families to send their children to programs that are nearby and that are reflective of the diversity of their communities

Provincial Government Actions

- As the Universal Child Care program continues to roll out, consider incentives for children attending child care centers local to their homes, to ensure that child care centers reflect their communities

Promote inclusion of children with extra support needs in child care programs.

Families of children with extra support needs can struggle to find spaces for their children in licensed child care programs, due to the additional resourcing and staffing required to accommodate these children. In particular, the need for specialized training for ECEs to provide care for children with additional support needs has resulted in limited qualified staff available at these child care programs, and high demand for care among the sites that are able to accommodate children with extra support needs.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider creating a provincial grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification
- Promote the ECE-SN training designation among students and alumni of child care programs at Vancouver Island universities, through ad campaigns and other promotional materials

Promote best practices in child care through monitoring and accountability measures.

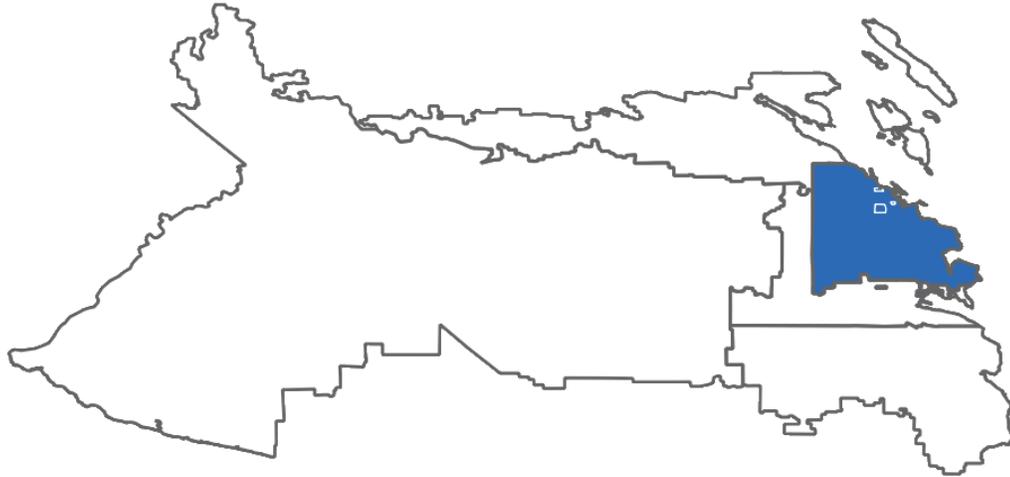
While most parents and caregivers in the survey for this research rated their own child care arrangements highly, overall perception of child care quality in the Cowichan region was middling. Promotion of standards and best practices in licensed child care can provide guidance to providers (particularly during periods of rapid expansion) and build public confidence in the quality of child care offered locally.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) collect key performance indicators from local child care centers to monitor quality, and promote best practices through promotional materials and other initiatives

Provincial Government Actions

- Create a set of key performance indicators for regular monitoring and measurement of child care quality
- Liaise with municipal child care resources to promote best practices endorsed by the provincial government, identify regional needs and provide support



This report summarizes the current and anticipated future child care needs in the Municipality of North Cowichan. The Municipality of North Cowichan is a sub-region of the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD).

MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH COWICHAN CONTEXT

In this section, population-level factors that impact child care needs are described. This includes summaries of population size, family demographics, income, cultural diversity, and childhood vulnerability.

DEMOGRAPHY

The tables below summarize key trends in the Municipality of North Cowichan related to household composition, income, and cultural diversity.

Total Population		Households	Number of Households	Number of Households with Children
	Total 29,676	 <p>The proportion of households with children in the Municipality of North Cowichan (33%) are approximately equal as those seen in the overall CVRD (34%), but lower than the provincial (39%) and national (41%) proportions of households with children.</p>	Total 12,770	Total 4,185

Family Structures

 Dual-Parent Families	<p>Of all families with children in the Municipality of North Cowichan, 68% are led by two parents and 32% are led by a single parent. This is comparable to the family composition of the CVRD overall (68% of CVRD families are led by two parents, 32% by single parents). Slightly higher proportions of families with children are led by two parents across BC (73% are two-parent families, 27% lone-parent families) and Canada (72% two-parent families, 28% lone-parent families).</p>	
2,835 (68%) Total		
 Lone-Parent Families		
1,350 (32%) Total		

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

	Income				
	Median Total Household Income	Median Total Income Of Couple Economic Families With Children ³⁸	Lone-Parent Economic Families' Median Income	Prevalence of Low Income (LIM-AT) ^{39*}	Prevalence of Low Income (LICO-AT)*
Total	\$64,169[†]	\$105,242[†]	\$45,205[†]	4,705 (16%)	2,035 (7%)

The median annual household income in the Municipality of North Cowichan is \$64,169. This amount is slightly lower than the median income across all of BC (\$69,995) and Canada (\$70,336).

Rates of individuals falling within the low-income cut-off, after tax (LICO-AT) category (meaning that they are expected to spend 20 percentage points more of their income on food, shelter, and clothing compared to the average family) were 7%. This is identical to the LICO-AT rate for the overall CVRD (7%), and slightly lower than the national rate of 9% and the provincial rate of 11%. The low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) indicates whether a household takes in an income of 50% or less of the median income in their area (i.e., makes about one-half of what the average household, of similar composition, in their area does). In the Municipality of North Cowichan, approximately 16% of individuals qualify as low-income under the LIM-AT measure.

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

[†] These numbers were calculated as weighted averages of the medians of the three regions. These numbers are expected to provide a good estimate of central tendency, but may not reflect the true median of the full region.

*It is important to note that these low-income measures capture the number and proportion of *individuals*, not *households*, falling within these low-income categories.

³⁸ “Economic family” refers to two or more persons living in the same home, related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law union, adoption, or a foster relationship. Cohabiting, unrelated adults (e.g., roommates) do not constitute an economic family, nor do single-person households.

³⁹ The Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) indicates whether a household receives 50% or less of the median household income in their region, adjusting for household size to accommodate that larger households have greater income needs.

	Cultural Diversity			
	Self-Identified Aboriginal ⁴⁰	Self-Identified First Nations ⁴¹	Self-Identified Métis ⁴²	Self-Identified Immigrant
Total	2,380 (8%)	1,595 (5%)	680 (2%)	4,345 (15%)
<p>Eight percent of residents of the Municipality of North Cowichan self-identified as Indigenous, 5% identified as First Nations, 2% identified as Métis, and 15% identified as immigrant status.</p> <p>The Municipality of North Cowichan has an Indigenous population that is proportionally lower than that of the overall CVRD (12%), but higher than BC (6%), and Canada (5%). In contrast, the proportion of the population that identify as immigrants is slightly higher than the overall CVRD (13%), and lower than BC (28%) and Canada (22%).</p>				
Most Common Mother Tongue				
English (90%)				
Most Common Language Spoken at Home				
English (96%)				
<p>While English is the most common first language, and most common language spoken at home, there were no other languages that predominated among non-English-primary speakers. There were a wide variety of languages other than English reported as being first languages and/or the language spoken most often at home. Given that there were such a wide variety of languages, with none predominating as a “second-most-common” language in the region, there are no recommendations for languages of focus for future child care programs.</p>				

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

⁴⁰ Self-identified Aboriginal, according to Statistics Canada’s Census counting methodology, includes all individuals who identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or a combination thereof.

⁴¹ Self-identified First Nations in this column represents the count of individuals in the 2016 Census who identified as being solely of First Nations descent (i.e., not having multiple Indigenous heritages such as Métis and First Nations).

⁴² Self-identified Métis in this column represents the count of individuals in the 2016 Census who identified as being solely of Métis descent (i.e., not having multiple Indigenous heritages such as Métis and First Nations).

CHILDHOOD VULNERABILITY

“Vulnerability” in this context refers to a child’s likelihood to experience poor health, education, and/or social outcomes. Childhood vulnerability is captured on a regular basis in B.C. through the Human Early Learning Partnership’s Early Development Instrument (EDI). This instrument measures five core domains of early child development and identifies, based on questionnaire scores, children who are vulnerable in these five areas.

	Vulnerability (EDI)				
	Percentage of Children Vulnerable	Overall BC Vulnerability One Or More Scales (Wave 7)			
Municipality of North Cowichan	33%	33%			
	Domain				
	Physical Health & Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language & Cognitive Development	Communication Skills
Municipality of North Cowichan	14%	12%	22%	7%	8%
<p>The percentage of vulnerable children in the Municipality of North Cowichan is <u>about the same</u> as the provincial average for vulnerability on one or more scales based on the EDI Wave 7 data. Children were most likely to be vulnerable on the emotional maturity domain, with 22% of children scoring as vulnerable on this scale.</p>					

EDI Wave 7 (2017-19), Human Early Learning Partnership

* Note: EDI data is based on school district boundaries. These boundaries do not directly map to the exact CVRD boundaries used for this report. Therefore, the EDI data presented in the table above are approximations for the areas that comprise the Municipality of North Cowichan, but are anticipated to be broadly representative of trends and needs in the region.

CURRENT STATE OF CHILD CARE IN MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH COWICHAN

This subsection of the report will provide a summary of the current state of child care in the Municipality of North Cowichan, specifically focusing on the potential demand for child care from children aged birth to 12 years and the current supply of licensed child care spaces available.

THE MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH COWICHAN CHILD CARE DEMAND FACTORS

Determining the need for child care is challenging given demand is influenced by a number of dynamic factors including, but not limited to, population and labour force participation rates over time. Initiatives such as the B.C. government's Universal Child Care Initiative will likely cause a significant increase in the demand for regulated child care as low-cost spaces are rolled out across the province, making licensed child care more affordable and accessible for a larger number of families.

POPULATION FACTORS

The population of children (aged 12 years and younger) in the Municipality of North Cowichan is projected to decrease very slightly between 2020 and 2030; there is a projected decrease of about 8% over the ten-year period, or approximately a 1% decrease annually. These decreases are occurring mainly in the 3-5 and 6-12 year age groups, while the number of children aged 0-2 is anticipated to remain relatively stable over the next decade. A summary of population statistics for the Municipality of North Cowichan, broken age group can be found in Table MNC1.

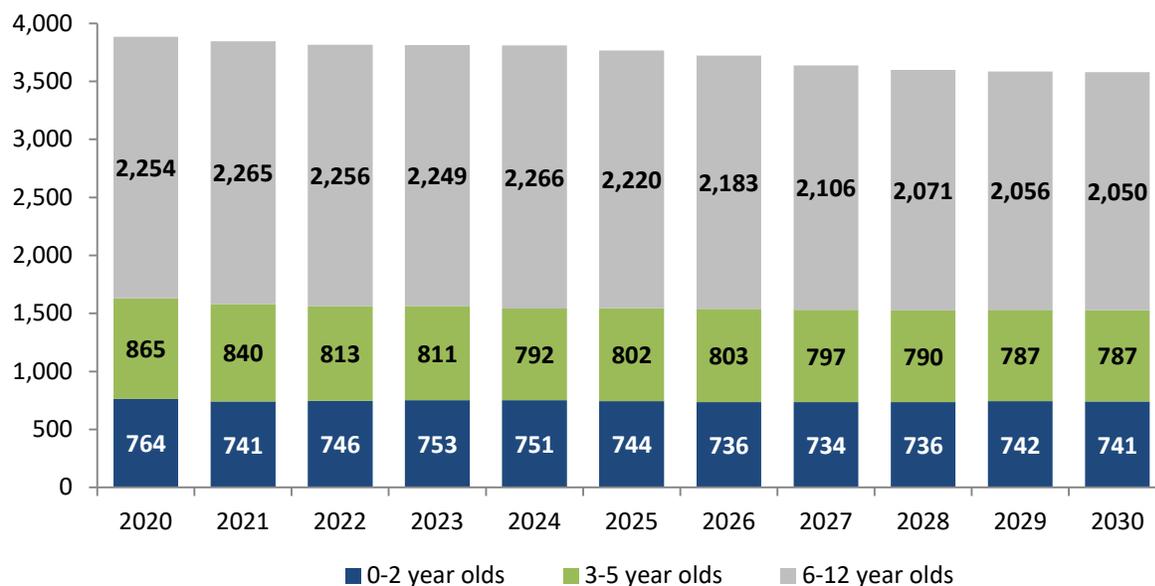
Table MNC1: The Municipality of North Cowichan Population Projections, 2020-2030

Area	2020	2025	2030	Change 2020-2030	Average Annual Change 2020-2030	Average Annual % Change 2020-2030
Municipality of North Cowichan						
Children 0-2 years	764	744	741	-23	-2	0%
Children 3-5 years	865	802	787	-78	-8	-1%
Children 6-12 years	2,254	2,220	2,050	-204	-20	-1%
Total Children (0-12 years)	3,883	3,766	3,578	-305	-31	-1%

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

These changes in child population in the Municipality of North Cowichan, from 2020 to 2030, are illustrated in Figure MNC1 below. As noted above, the overall decrease is relatively small – about 1% – but this represents a decrease of 305 children in the region over the next ten years.

Figure MNC1: The Municipality of North Cowichan Projected Population Change, 2020-2030



Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

UTILIZATION OF LICENSED CHILD CARE SPACES

The Municipality of North Cowichan is located within the South Vancouver Island service delivery area. The South Vancouver Island service delivery area includes not only all of the CVRD, but also Greater Victoria and other municipalities; this impacts the overall averages for the area. Breakdowns at a more granular level, such as CVRD alone, are not available.

Utilization rates provide a broad measure of the uptake of available child care services in a region. These numbers represent what proportion of *available* child care spaces are *being used*.⁴³ Utilization rates offer a proxy for the appropriateness of the amount and combination of types of child care spaces available. Efficient use of child care spaces will be reflected in high utilization rates, indicating that there are not “too many” spaces available for the number of families in a region that want to make use of child care. However, at very high utilization rates – in excess of 80% to 85% – finding child care becomes progressively more challenging for families, potentially impacting the ability to find a suitable child care space that is accessible and affordable to them.

Utilization rates for South Vancouver Island, alongside provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators, are shown in Table MNC2. South Vancouver Island’s utilization rate is similar to the provincial and North Vancouver Island comparators. Across all groups, utilization rate was very high for infant-toddler care in 2016-17, while utilization rate was lower for the 3-5 year age group, and lowest for the school-age group.

⁴³ A child care facility’s Utilization Rate is determined by dividing its total enrollments for the month by the number of times a child care space can be used in a month. Two part-time enrolments are assumed to be equivalent to one full-time enrollment; 100% utilization of one child care space is assumed to be 22 full-time equivalent enrollments in a month.

Table MNC2: Average Monthly Child Care Space Utilization Rates, April 2016 through March 2017

Service Delivery Area	Group Care, Infant/Toddler	Group Care, 3 to 5 years	Group Care, School Age	Total Group Care	Family Care	Total Group and Family Care
British Columbia	85%	74%	48%	70%	72%	71%
South Vancouver Island	87%	70%	42%	65%	72%	69%
North Vancouver Island	88%	62%	38%	62%	68%	63%

Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. *Performance Management Report*. Volume 9 March 2017. Performance Indicator 1.01, Spare Capacity in Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/services-supports-for-parents-with-young-children/reporting-monitoring/00-public-ministry-reports/volume_9_mar_2017.pdf

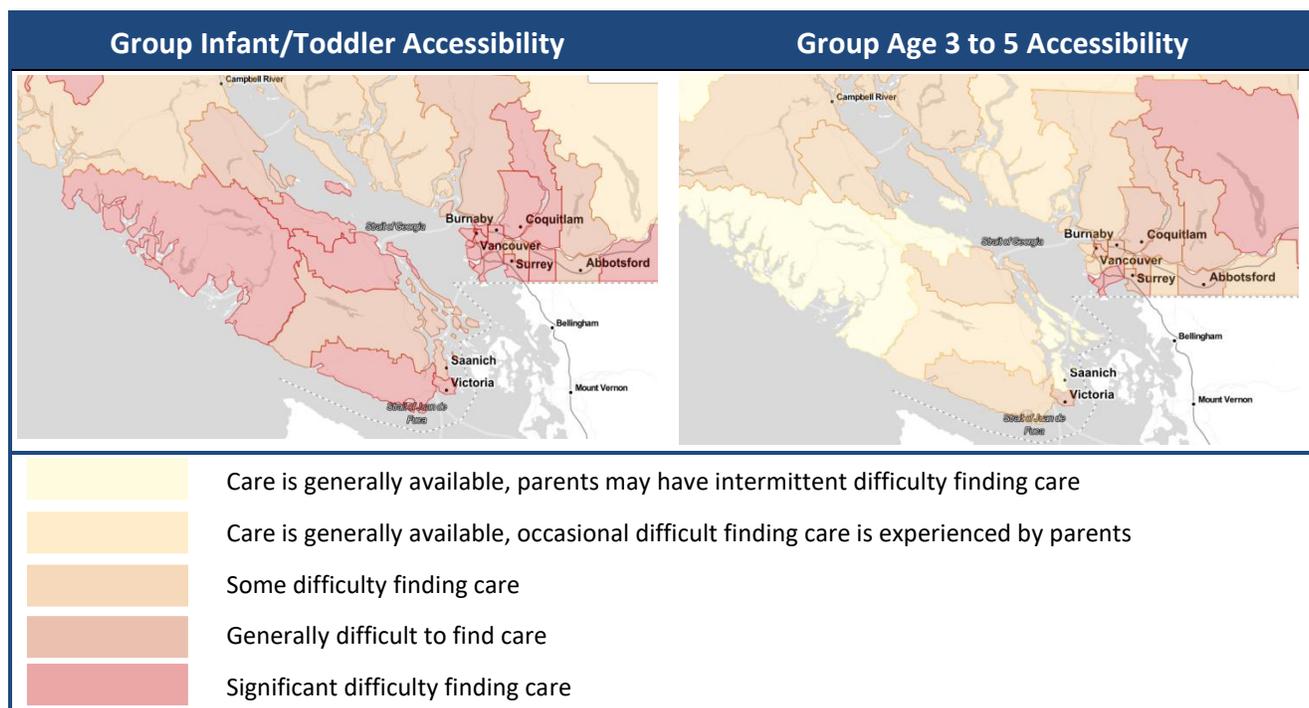
Note: ‘Group Multi-Age’ spaces have been excluded as it cannot be determined which spaces of a facility’s reported enrolments are utilized, by age.

THE MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH COWICHAN CHILD CARE SUPPLY FACTORS

The accessibility of licensed child care spaces for infant/toddlers and children aged 3-5 years across the Cowichan Region in general is illustrated in Figure MNC2. These maps, based on 2017/18 data, suggest that parents generally have difficulty finding group infant/toddler child care, whereas care for the 3-5 age group is generally available, with occasional difficulty experienced by parents.

This aligns with information on utilization rates available (utilization is about 70% for the 3-5 years group in South Vancouver Island). Findings from key informant interviews also stressed the pressing need for infant-toddler spaces, with less focus on the 3-5 years age group. This aligns with findings on current coverage rates in the Municipality of North Cowichan, which suggest that coverage for infants and toddlers is less than one-half of the coverage rate for preschool-aged children (15% coverage compared to 39% coverage, respectively).

Figure MNC2: Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces in the Cowichan Region, 2017-18



Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development. Early Years Performance Indicators: 1.01 Accessibility of Licensed Child Care Spaces. Retrieved from <https://mcf.gov.bc.ca/reporting/services/early-years/performance-indicators>

AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH COWICHAN

There are currently a total of **792** licensed child care spaces across **50** programs in the Municipality of North Cowichan. Summaries of child care spaces and program type are below in Tables MNC3 and MNC4, respectively.

Table MNC3: The Municipality of North Cowichan Licensed Child Care Spaces, 2020

Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	Total Spaces
Municipality of North Cowichan							
12	265	80	254	7	150	24	792

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey, Winter 2019/20

Table MNC4: The Municipality of North Cowichan Licensed Child Care Programs, 2020

Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Child Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	Total Programs
Municipality of North Cowichan							
1	10	4	9	1	22	3	50

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 Cowichan Child Care Provider Survey, Winter 2019/20

THE MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH COWICHAN CHILD CARE COVERAGE RATES

Current child care coverage rates (i.e., the number of child care spaces per 100 children) were calculated using current population estimates for the Municipality of North Cowichan, and the number of licensed child care spaces currently available in the region. Within Canada, the ratio of child care spaces per 100 children aged 12 and under varies significantly by province. The national average in 2017 was 27.2 spaces per 100 children, while British Columbia’s provincial average was considerably lower at 18.4 spaces per 100 children.⁴⁴

Table MNC5 below summarizes the coverage rates, by age group, in the Municipality of North Cowichan.

Table MNC5: The Municipality of North Cowichan Licensed Child Care Coverage Rates, 2020

Age Group	Current Child Population	Current Number of Spaces	Current Estimated Coverage Rate
<i>All children 0-12 years</i>	3,883	792	20.4
Pre-school aged children, 0-5 years	1,629	448	27.5
Infant / Toddler children, 0-2 years	764	112	14.7
Preschool aged children, 3-5 years	865	336	38.8
School aged children, 6-12 years	2,254	344	15.3

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory; 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

There is little consensus or established benchmarks regarding what is a sufficient number of child care spaces within a region. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) identifies forward sortation areas (FSAs) with one licensed child care spot per three (or more) children aged 0-5 years (i.e., 33% coverage), and a minimum of 50 children in that FSA, as a child care desert. Families living in child care deserts are anticipated to experience significant difficulty getting access to child care.⁴⁵ Currently, the

⁴⁴ Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2012 (9th edition, June 2013), Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Retrieved from https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/CRRU_ECEC_2012_revised_dec2013.pdf

⁴⁵ Macdonald, D. Child Care Deserts in Canada. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (June 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2018/06/Child%20Care%20Deserts.pdf>

Municipality of North Cowichan has a 15% coverage rate for children aged 0 to 2 years (infant-toddler group), qualifying it as a child care desert for that age group. Coverage is higher for the 3-5 years age group, at 39%. Coverage for the 6-12 age group is moderately high, at 15%.

Currently there are 20.4 child care spaces for every 100 children aged 0-12 years in the Municipality of North Cowichan.

CHILD CARE QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

In addition to review of the child care capacity and coverage rates, Malatest conducted survey and interview research with stakeholders to better understand local perceptions of the quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care in the Municipality of North Cowichan. Information about research participants, and key themes that emerged from this research, are discussed in this section.

SUMMARY OF PARENT AND CAREGIVER SURVEY RESPONDENTS



n=106

Survey Completions

- 83% mothers
- 33% aged 25-34 yrs
- 55% 35-44 yrs



Relationship Status

- 84% had a partner or spouse



Family Size

- 39% had 1 child
- 48% had 2 children
- 13% had 3 or more children



Children

- 65% had children aged 0-5
- 63% had children aged 6-12
- 57% used child care



Language

- 95% English
- 1% French



Cultural Diversity

- 4% Indigenous (self-identified)
- 3% new to Canada



Education

- 13% college/trades
- 41% university
- 15% post-graduate



Income

- 18% less than \$40,000
- 23% \$40,000 - \$70,000
- 41% \$100,000 or more



Work Status (respondent)

- 51% full-time
- 16% part-time



Work Status (partner/spouse)

- 81% full-time
- 7% part-time



Shift Work

- 45% respondents and/or their partner/spouse



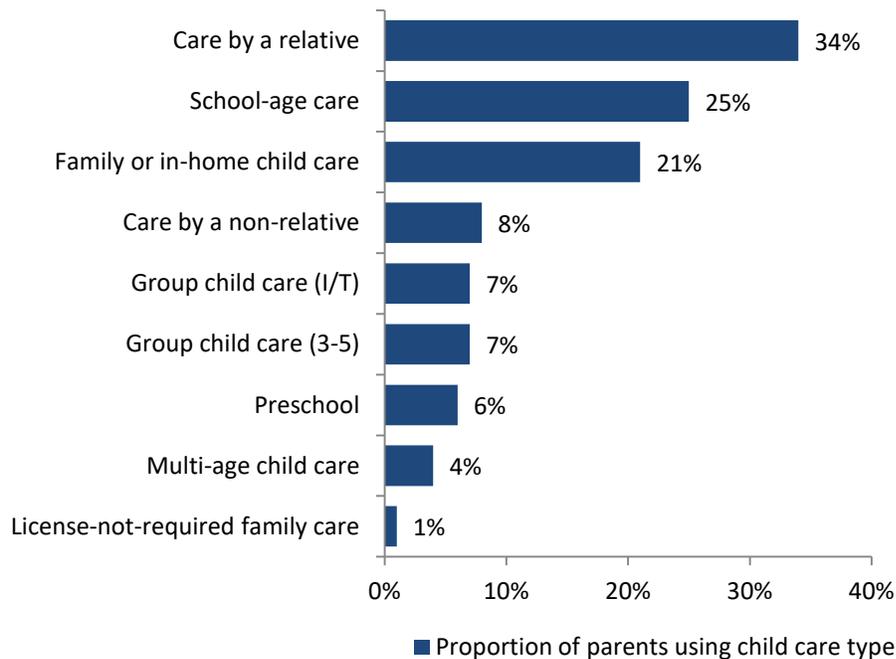
Benefits

- 27% BC Affordable Child Care
- 5% BC Income Assistance
- 89% Canada Child Benefit

Source: 2020 Cowichan Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey, n=106. Not all response options are shown.

Of the 106 parent/caregiver respondents, more than one-half (57%, n=56) reported using child care, and of these respondents used all care types (see Figure MNC3). Care by a relative was the primary care type used in the Municipality of North Cowichan (34%, n=36).

Figure MNC3: Child Care Use by Care Type, the Municipality of North Cowichan Respondents



Source: Cowichan Valley Child Care Parent and Caregiver Survey, n=56. This question allowed for multiple responses, therefore percentages may add up to more than 100%.

KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Three key themes emerged from surveying and interviewing community stakeholders regarding child care in the Municipality of North Cowichan: availability, affordability, and quality of child care.

AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE

Across all stakeholder groups, there was a consensus that more child care spaces are needed. Ninety-five percent (n=20) of child care providers in the Municipality of North Cowichan reported a need for more child care spaces.

[There is a] huge need in our community for infant and toddler spaces.

Currently, more than two-thirds of respondent child care providers in the Municipality of North Cowichan report having a waitlist at their center (68%, n=15). When asked about the number of spaces needed, three-quarters of providers (75%, n=12) recommended doubling the number of current spaces in the area.

Cost, availability, and other accessibility factors are less of a concern among parents and caregivers in the Municipality of North Cowichan, relative to other areas of the CVRD. Slightly more than one in ten parent

and caregiver respondents from the Municipality of North Cowichan reported that cost was their reason for not using child care (14%, n=6), or that availability was the main barrier to child care (14%, n=6). However, 41% of all respondents (n=43) in the Municipality of North Cowichan reported that cost was a barrier to accessing their *preferred* choice of child care, and 53% (n=56) reported that availability of spaces was a barrier to their preferred type of child care.

All groups agreed that infant and toddler spaces are particularly needed, followed by after-school care spaces. Increasing the availability of child care for children with extra support needs was also identified as a priority among all groups. Slightly more than three-quarters of child care provider respondents in the Municipality of North Cowichan (76%, n=16) currently are able to care for children with additional support needs. As a result, available child care spaces are scarcer for children with additional support needs. Only one-third of parents and caregivers (34%, n=30) agreed with the statement, “Child care options in the Cowichan region provide all the services / supports necessary for children to succeed.”

Children with extra support needs [such as language and speech] tend to be underserved.

Key informants echoed these findings, and pointed out that there is not enough Support Child Development (SCD) funding available to support the children currently in care. For this reason, these interviewees questioned the benefits of additional spaces on the already-strained services in the region. Stakeholders also noted a lack of support workers who are able and/or willing to work contracted support hours.

Stakeholders shared stories of programs being unable to take on children requiring extra supports, due to insufficient numbers of trained educators or additional support staff. A small number of parents and caregivers in the Municipality of North Cowichan (3%, n=3) said that a barrier to accessing their preferred type of child care was that local care could not meet their child’s extra support needs.

In addition to a lack of spaces, all stakeholder groups expressed a need for more flexible options in the hours when care is available. However, within the Municipality of North Cowichan, this was not recognized as a need by most child care providers. Less than one-half of survey respondents believed that early morning hours were needed by local families (48%, n=15), and less than one third believed that later evening hours were needed (32%, n=10). Slightly more than one-half of respondents (55%, n=17) did believe there was a need for hours before and after school and during school closures.

Earlier start times for daycare would allow me to work more and would help all shift workers.

Finally, lack of public transportation to child care centres was noted as a challenge to accessibility of child care. The scarcity of child care spaces across the Cowichan region doesn’t allow parents and caregivers the option to select a child care site within walking distance from home, leaving it up to parents and caregivers to find ways to reach facilities that may be a long distance from their home and/or place of work. For those without reliable access to a personal vehicle, this creates an additional hurdle to accessing child care.

AFFORDABILITY OF CHILD CARE

All stakeholder groups and key informants agreed that child care is too expensive for many families. Participants believed that access to more affordable child care would have benefits for parents and caregivers in a number of areas. These included:

- Improve parents' and caregivers' chances to gain employment (22% of parents/caregivers, n=23; 52% of the general population, n=49);
- Allow parents and caregivers to work more hours (33% of parents/caregivers, n=35);
- Reduce parents' and caregivers' absences at work (33% of parents/caregivers, n=35; 59% of the general population, n=56); and
- Allow parents and caregivers to improve their education, or update their training and/or credentials (26% of parents/caregiver, n=28).

One-half of general population respondents (52%, n=44) indicated that lowering child care fees would result in increased economic prosperity. Majorities of parents and caregivers (61%, n=65) and the general population (78%, n=74) agreed that low-cost child care would have a number of non-economic benefits, such as reduced stress on families and overall better mental wellness.

Key informants stated that affordability of child care is a common concern among families they serve. These interviewees shared stories of many families, especially young parents, not being able to find child care even if they could afford it. Qualifying for child care was also noted as a concern, particularly for parents who are not employed or are attending school, and therefore cannot qualify for subsidies.

QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Slightly more than one-half of general population survey respondents (53%, n=35) agreed that "child care options in the Cowichan region offer quality child care." Less than one-half of parents and caregivers in the North Cowichan region (46%, n=49) agreed with the statement. However, a higher proportion of parents and caregivers – 59% (n=62) – reported being satisfied with the quality of their personal child care arrangements. Key informants spoke highly of the quality of child care in the region.

Inclusivity, a common indicator of child care quality, is defined as the extent to which a child care site is inclusive of children of all abilities (including those with extra support needs) and incorporating the diversity of the community. Minorities of general population respondents (37%, n=35) and parents and caregivers (25%, n=26) agreed that child care options in the Cowichan region are inclusive in terms of children's abilities. A slightly higher proportion of parents and caregivers (41%, n=27), and less than one-half of the general population (33%, n=35) agreed that child care options reflect the diversity of the community. These findings suggest that inclusivity of child care could be an area for further improvement.

The quality of a child care centre is also impacted by the quality of the individuals who work there. Over one-half of child care providers (55%, n=17) believed that increased wages and a greater availability of qualified staff would improve the quality of child care in their area. In addition, key informants felt non-licensed care can hinder child care quality and if more care centres are added, they should be licensed.

CHALLENGES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

The number one issue is finding and retaining good quality staff.

Child care providers identified staffing as their primary challenge in providing child care. In particular, providers noted challenges with hiring qualified staff (52%, n=16). Similar issues were raised regarding potential challenges to expanding existing child care centres. These participants noted that it was a challenge to find an available labour pool of well-trained staff (36%, n=11 identified this as an issue) and to offer wages at the level needed to attract and retain these qualified staff (29%, n=9 identified this as an issue). However, many felt that an increased availability of early childhood educators would motivate them to increase the number of child care spaces at their facility.

A majority of stakeholders echoed the sentiments expressed by child care providers, regarding current staffing issues in the industry. There was consensus among all groups that increased compensation would encourage more people to pursue education in, and join, the child care profession as they could expect to be fairly compensated for their work.

[There is a] lack of people motivated to open a daycare, as it is a lot of work for little pay.

In Cowichan there are several municipal boundaries and capacity issues. Regional districts haven't had child care on their agendas and tightening budgets make it more difficult to add new services or expand existing ones.

Child care providers in the CVRD identified some other important areas that could influence child care sites' willingness to increase their capacity. Barriers to increasing the number of spaces included:

- The need for more physical space (32%, n=10); and
- More funding (42%, n=13).

More governance was also thought to be needed over unlicensed child care. Concerns were raised from stakeholders that these unlicensed centres get the same access to government funding as licensed child care centres, and they charge the same or more than licensed centre, yet their quality may often not be equivalent.

FUTURE CHILD CARE TARGETS

Based on anticipated future need for child care in the Municipality of North Cowichan, Malatest has developed a series of targets for increasing the supply of licensed child care spaces in the region.

Recommendations include:

- Number of child care spaces needed, by age group and care type, over the next ten years to meet changing demographics and anticipated change in demand;
- Number of child care programs needed to accommodate these spaces;
- Space needs for recommended programs (i.e., interior and exterior space requirements to accommodate children in the identified programs);
- Potential sites in the Municipality of North Cowichan, where additional needed programs could be located; and
- Staffing needs to accommodate the increased number of programs and spaces recommended.

SPACE CREATION TARGETS

This subsection of the report provides short-, medium-, and long-term child care space creation targets for the Municipality of North Cowichan.

Space creation targets for each of the child care age groups were calculated by multiplying projected populations for each age group (taken from BC Stats' PEOPLE Population projections) by target coverage rates for these age groups. Target coverage rates were decided based on multiple factors: available recommendations for best practice in existing literature, the experience of other jurisdictions in providing child care, and estimates of unmet need for each age group within the CVRD based on survey and interview data. Baseline target coverage rates for each of the age groups were:

- 55% for the 0-2 years age group;
- 85% for the 3-5 years age group; and
- 20% for the 6-12 years age group.

These target coverage rates were baselines only, and were adjusted for each community as appropriate based on anticipated unmet need as well as findings from key informant interviews. For more information on how these targets were arrived at, please refer to the Methodology Section of the Final Report prepared for this project.

These targets identify the number of child care spaces required to support the projected population of the Municipality of North Cowichan over the next ten years (see Table MNC6). Space creation targets result in large increases in spaces across all age groups, with the highest increase in infant-toddler spaces. Overall, the Municipality of North Cowichan is recommended to aim for large space creation targets due to its high population of children and, therefore, high numbers of spaces needed to reach coverage rate targets.

Table MNC6: Total Target Child Care Spaces by Age Group, the Municipality of North Cowichan, 2020-2030

Year	Spaces Children 0-2 years	Spaces Children 3-5 years	Total Spaces Children 0-5 years	Spaces Children 6-12 years	Total Spaces Children 0-12 years
2020	112	336	448	344	792
2021	126	344	470	362	833
2022	149	350	499	383	883
2025	193	385	578	422	1,000
2030	245	419	663	429	1,093

Sources: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces only); 2020 PEOPLE Population Projection Data

Space creation targets for 2030 require 301 new spaces over ten years: **133 for infant-toddler, **83** for preschool ages, and **85** for school-aged children.**

Table MNC7 provides a summary of how these required spaces could be broken down by child care type; numbers in brackets in each cell indicate the increase in spaces relative to the previous column's year. It is important to note that very small increases in family and in-home multi-age child care were projected, due to the fact that these operations have low capacity numbers and most in the region are already serving as many children as possible. The only way to substantially increase child care spots in these types of programs would be for child care operators to open their own in-home facilities, which is considerably more challenging to promote and incentivize than adding capacity to other types of child care sites.

Table MNC7: Total Target Child Care Spaces by Type of Care, the Municipality of North Cowichan, 2020-2030

Type of Care	2020 Supply	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2021*	Estimated Short-Term Need, 2022*	Estimated Medium-Term Need, 2025*	Estimated Long-Term Need, 2030*
Group Child Care (Birth to 36 months)	12	18 (+6)	28 (+10)	46 (+18)	74 (+28)
Group Child Care (30 months to school age)	265	278 (+13)	298 (+20)	340 (+42)	389 (+49)
Licensed Preschool	80	86 (+6)	88 (+2)	96 (+8)	105 (+9)
Group Child Care (School age)	254	270 (+16)	288 (+18)	337 (+49)	343 (+6)
Multi-Age Child Care	7	7 (-)	7 (-)	7 (-)	7 (-)
Family Child Care	150	150 (-)	150 (-)	150 (-)	150 (-)
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	24	24 (-)	24 (-)	24 (-)	24 (-)
Total Child Care Spaces	792	833	883	1,000	1,092

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces only)

*Consultant estimates

Figures in brackets indicate net change in space numbers between the column's year targets and the previous column's year targets.

It is important to note that, over the course of this project, School District 79 has committed to creating 201 new child care spaces. None of these have been dedicated for creation in the Municipality of North Cowichan, so the numbers above may be helpful as guidelines for future child care space creation targets. The influence of the creation of child care spaces in regions adjacent to the Municipality of North Cowichan, however, may have an impact on local families' needs for child care within the Municipality of North Cowichan proper.

Finally, Table MNC8 provides a summary of the overall increase in coverage rates, from 2020 to 2030, based on recommended space creation targets and population projections for these age groups. As can be seen in the table, childcare space creation targets proposed by Malatest result in the largest improvements targeted at the 0-2 years age group, with a similarly-sized increase for children aged 3-5 and a smaller increase for the 6-12 years age group.

Table MNC8: Change in Proportional Child Care Coverage, the Municipality of North Cowichan, 2020-2030

Age Group	2020	2030	Percentage Point Change
0-5 years	28%	43%	+15 pts
0-2 years	15%	33%	+18 pts
3-5 years	39%	53%	+14 pts
6-12 years	15%	21%	+6 pts
Overall Coverage Rate: 0-12 years	20%	31%	+11 pts

PROGRAM CREATION AND SITE LOCATION NEEDS

In addition to estimating the need for individual child care spaces, by age group and care type, over the next decade, Malatest developed estimates and recommendations on creation of child care programs to accommodate these additional spaces, and identified potential sites that could be used to house these additional child care programs. These estimates and recommendations are discussed in the sub-sections below.

PROGRAM CREATION

Malatest used its recommendations for space creation targets, by care type, to identify the number of additional programs that will be needed to accommodate these targets. In calculating the number of additional programs needed, the following assumptions or parameters were used:

- All programs will be fully subscribed to the legal maximums prescribed by the provincial government; and
- Where partial programs are needed (e.g., calculation indicated a need for 4.35 programs), number of needed programs were always rounded up to accommodate legal requirements for the *maximum* number of children in a program.

As a result of these approaches, these recommendations for additional programs needed should be taken as the minimum required to meet the space creation targets identified, but will also provide a small amount of additional capacity for more spaces if needed by the community.

Further, it is important to note that Malatest has delineated a difference between *programs* and *sites*. “Program” refers to each licensed child care program that serves up to its maximum number of children. “Site” refers to the physical location (building and outdoor space) that serves one or more programs. Many of the larger child care operators host multiple programs at their site; for example, a child care operator who reports 24 spaces for infant-toddler group care hosts two programs, as the maximum number of children who can be served by that care type in a single program is 12.

Given that the UBCM inventory does not break down the number or programs at a specific site in this manner, the number of sites in 2020 is a best estimate based on the number of spaces that each operator reports offering and the applicable legal maximum enrolments for each type of care. It is also important to note that staffing shortages may be limiting the ability of sites to operate at their maximum potential capacity. For example, while the maximum number of children in a licensed preschool program is 20, there is also a requirement that there be a minimum of one ECE or ECE assistant for every ten children (with at

least one full ECE required for every program). Therefore, it should not be assumed that simply because a site appears to have unfilled spaces based on potential maximum capacity, these sites could start meeting an increase in demand immediately.

Finally, it is important to note that although in some cases, there are negative net gains in programs between 2020 and 2030 based on Malatest's recommendations, this should not be taken as a blanket recommendation to completely shutter child care programs or whole sites. Closure of child care sites would likely result in backlash from families in the community, and closure of sites in already poorly served areas could result in *no* child care sites being available to some families within a reasonable distance. Therefore, where there is potential to close child care programs, municipalities and electoral areas should consider:

1. Whether there is an opportunity to reduce the number of programs within a single site (e.g., if a child care center currently operates the equivalent of two preschool-aged group care programs, could this be reduced to one in order to maintain access within the geographic area while still reducing the number of spaces?),
2. Whether closures would put hardship on the local community or neighbourhood to find alternative child care options, and
3. If there are opportunities to re-purpose program closures to offer other needed programs (e.g., if the preschool-aged group care is over-served, but additional programs are needed for birth to 36 months group care, can that program space be altered to serve a different group rather than shut down altogether?).

With these considerations in mind, Table MNC9 summarizes the changing needs for child care programs in the Municipality of North Cowichan over the next ten years. The largest increase is recommended for group infant-toddler care, with six new programs needed by 2030. Group care for children 30 months to school age, and licensed preschools, also have recommended increases in number of programs. The family care type does not recommend changes in overall number of spaces, but *does* recommend a reduction in number of programs overall; this is due to a number of family care programs throughout the Municipality of North Cowichan not being fully subscribed and, therefore, there are opportunities to increase efficiency by closing and consolidating some of these programs. However, Malatest recognizes that this would likely be a highly unpopular move with families that use these programs, and may not be an appropriate choice for the region. Instead, surplus capacity at these sites may be helpful to maintain as "overflow" options while efforts are made to increase coverage rates and capacity in other care types.

Table MNC9: Change in Need for Child Care Programs, the Municipality of North Cowichan, 2020-2030

	Group Care, Birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, School Age	Multi-Age Care	Family Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care
2020 Spaces Reported	12	265	80	254	7	150	24
2020 Programs	1	13	5	13	1	22	4
2030 Target Spaces*	74	389	105	343	7	150	24
2030 Programs Needed*	7	16	6	13	1	19	4
2030 Net Program Gain	6	3	1	0	0	-3	0

Source: Union of BC Municipalities Community Child Care Planning Inventory (2020 spaces and programs only)

*Consultant estimates

PROGRAM SPACE NEEDS

Each child care program is required to meet certain minimum space requirements, to ensure adequate area for care, activities, and enrichment for children served by the program. Based on the number of additional child care programs identified as needed in each sub-region of the CVRD, Malatest has calculated the amount of additional space – interior and exterior – needed to accommodate these additional programs. Below is a list of assumptions and limitations should be kept in mind when reviewing the estimates of additional space needed.

- Calculation of additional space needed for each program type was calculated based on provincial minimum requirements. These recommendations should be considered the *minimum* needed to legally open and operate the recommended child care programs.
- Malatest has assumed that all programs will be operating at maximum capacity, therefore calculation of site size was based on per-child space requirements at the maximum number of children allowable in a single program.
- There are different maximum program enrollments by age within the school-aged group care program; these programs may serve up to 25 children in the K-Grade 2 age group, and up to 30 children older than that. Malatest’s calculations for space requirements for these programs are based on a “middle ground” assumption of enrollment at 28 children per program.
- Exterior space requirements for preschool and school-aged group care programs, as well as home-based care programs, specify that an exterior activity area must exist, but do not give space requirements. Malatest has maintained the general requirement of 7 m² per child that exists for other group care programs, to create estimates, however it should be noted that municipalities and electoral areas may have flexibility for these program types in terms of the exact size of outdoor activity areas.
- Provincial interior space minimums do not account for non-activity areas that may be required, such as hallways, janitorial closets, washrooms, and kitchens. Malatest has added a 25% allowance to interior space calculations to accommodate for these other spaces, based on recommendations from the City of Richmond’s Child Care Design Guidelines.

- There are provincial allowances for some co-located programs to share required non-activity areas such as kitchen facilities and janitorial closets. This is an opportunity to reduce the total amount of space needed to meet new program requirements and maximize efficient use of available sites. However, given insufficient information available to Malatest regarding the total size of potential child care sites and thus the ability to co-locate programs at single sites, Malatest has not assumed that programs will be co-located and so the space recommendations here may be slightly higher than actual needs.
- Exterior space requirements account for activity areas accessible to children only. These exterior space requirements do not account for other space that may be required under applicable bylaws such as set-backs, parking spaces, or pick-up and drop-off areas.

With these considerations in mind, Table MNC10 summarizes program space needs by program type. Space needs are given for each program (columns three and four), and overall space needs to accommodate all needed programs of that type (columns five and six).

Table MNC10: Interior and Exterior Space Needs to Serve Recommended Program Creation, 2030

Care Type	New Sites Needed by 2030	Interior Floor Space per Program (m ²)	Exterior Activity Space per Program (m ²)	Total Interior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)	Total Exterior Space Needed, All Programs (m ²)
Group care, birth to 36 months	6	55.5	84.0	333.0	504.0
Group care, 30 months to school age	3	115.6	175.0	346.9	525.0
Licensed Preschool	1	92.5	140.0	92.5	140.0
Group care, school age	0	103.1	192.5	0.0	0.0
Multi-Age Care	0	37.0	56.0	0.0	0.0
Family Child Care	-3	32.4	49.0	-97.1	-147.0
In-Home Multi-Age Care	0	37.0	56.0	0.0	0.0

Reference: *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. Child Care Licensing Regulation. Retrieved from http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/loo70/loo70/12_319_89

POTENTIAL CHILD CARE SITES

Malatest has identified a number of potential sites for housing new child care programs throughout the Municipality of North Cowichan. The following maps illustrate the location of existing child care locations (represented by circles), and locations of potential future child care sites (represented by triangles) in the Municipality of North Cowichan.

It is important to note that Malatest did not assess potential future child care sites for their suitability for different types of child care programs. A number of issues that could not be addressed in the data that Malatest had available should be examined prior to making any final decisions about the suitability of potential sites, including:

- Interior and exterior floor space available, and whether there is sufficient space to meet minimum requirements for the intended care program(s);
- Building remediation and upgrading needs, whether it will be cost-efficient to make the building suitable for child care programs if such improvements are needed;
- Ability of municipalities and partner organizations to negotiate sale or leasing agreements with current property owners; and
- Accessibility of potential sites to likely child care users (e.g., whether the site is easily accessible by public transit, whether it would serve an area or neighbourhood that is currently under-served by child care programs, etc.).

Figure MNC4: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, MNC North

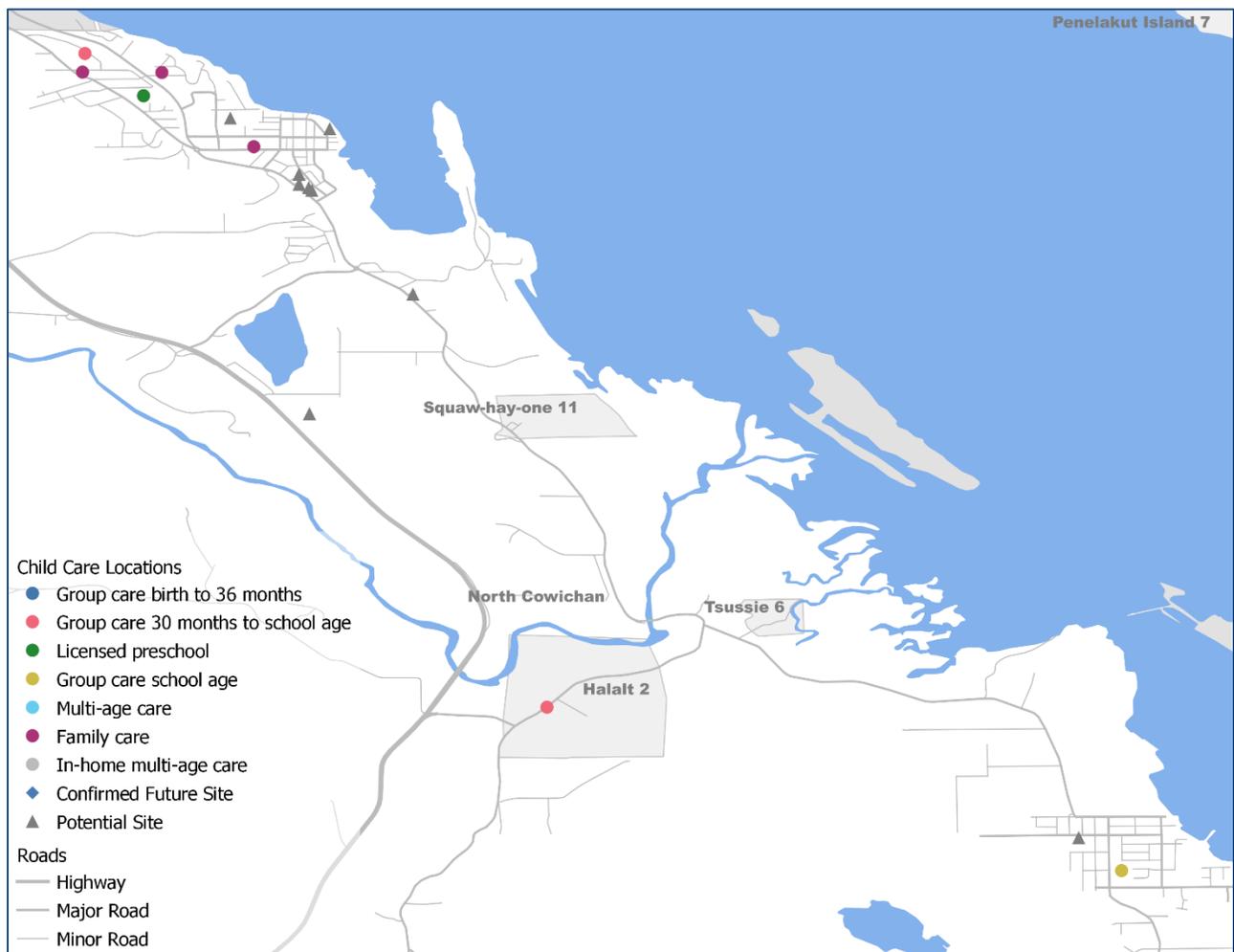
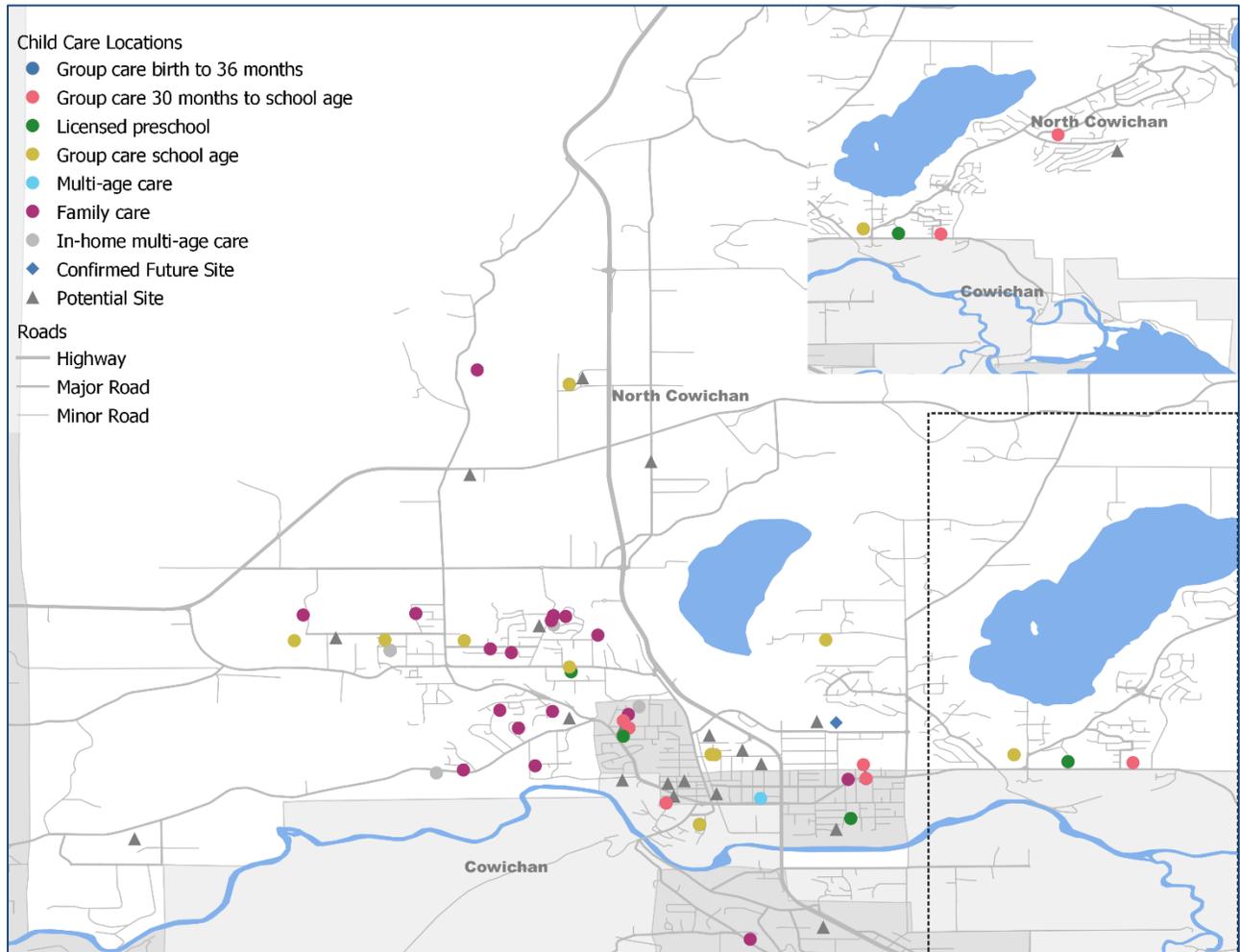


Figure MNC5: Current and Potential Future Child Care Sites, MNC South



STAFFING NEEDS FOR FUTURE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Finally, as noted previously, the ability to offer child care spaces is limited not only by physical space at a site, but also by the number of staff available to supervise and care for children. Minimum staffing requirements are established by the provincial government and are applicable to all licensed child care programs, although requirements vary by program type.

Malatest has calculated the number of staff that will be needed to serve the new programs and number of new spaces recommended to be created in the Cowichan region by 2030. When calculating these requirements, the following assumptions were made:

- All programs recommended for creation will be fully subscribed;
- All programs will be staffed at the minimum qualification level required by the provincial government (e.g., if a program requires one ECE and one ECE assistant, Malatest assumed that the second staff member is qualified at the ECE assistant level and the program does not employ two full ECEs); and
- All staff work full-time (i.e., these are full-time equivalency, or FTE, positions).

It should also be noted that Malatest did not undertake a comprehensive labour market analysis of child care workers in the Cowichan region. Typically, forecasting for future labour market need would encompass surveying employers regarding not only their current number of employees and qualification levels, but also the ages and expected retirements of these employees, employee turnover rate, and other metrics that can be used to create a comprehensive forecast of labour market trends over the medium- to long-term. Although Malatest has calculated the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by creating additional child care spaces and, thus, new child care programs, this forecast does not account for potential complicating factors in workforce needs such as coming retirements, “burnout rate” where workers – particularly those in caregiving work – leave the profession entirely, in- and out-migration of qualified workers in the region, and other factors that can impact labour markets beyond simply graduation rates from eligible programs and positions available in the region.

With these considerations in mind, Table MNC11 summarizes the total needed child care workers, by qualification level, by 2030. Included in the table are both total labour pool needs in the Municipality of North Cowichan, and the anticipated number of new FTE positions that will be created by the recommended increase in spaces by 2030.

The Municipality of North Cowichan is expected to see very large increases in demand for child care workers with ECE Infant-Toddler qualifications (six additional FTE positions by 2030), ECE qualifications (ten additional FTE positions by 2030), and ECE Assistant qualifications (sixteen additional FTE positions by 2030). At the same time, there is an anticipated decrease in demand for workers with the Responsible Adult qualification; this represents an opportunity for some of these workers to upgrade their credentials to fill the anticipated workforce needs for ECE Assistants and full ECEs.

Table MNC11: Child Care Worker Needs by Qualification Level, the Municipality of North Cowichan, 2030

	Group Care, birth to 36 months	Group Care, 30 months to school age	Licensed Preschool	Group Care, school age	Multi-Age Care	Family Child Care	In-Home Multi-Age Care	<i>Total Staffing Requirements</i>
Total 2030 Programs Needed	7	16	6	13	1	19	4	-
Gain in Programs by 2030	6	3	1	0	0	-3	0	-
Total ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Gain in ECE Infant-Toddler Needed	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Total ECE Needed	7	16	6	0	1	0	4	34
Gain in ECE Needed	6	3	1	0	0	0	0	10
Total ECE Assistant Needed	7	48	6	0	0	0	0	61
Gain in ECE Assistant Needed	6	9	1	0	0	0	0	16
Total Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	39	0	19	0	58
Gain in Responsible Adult Needed	0	0	0	0	0	-3	0	-3

MUNICIPAL BYLAWS, RESOURCES, AND PLANS

While a number of areas for potential improvement and expansion of child care in the Municipality of North Cowichan have been identified in this report, these suggestions should be considered within the context of broader municipal or regional needs, priorities, and plans. There are a number of areas under municipal jurisdiction, such as zoning and business licensing, that can be leveraged to support strong child care growth initiatives.

Table MNC12 below summarizes the types of municipal approaches that can have an impact on child care availability, affordability, and accessibility in a region. The right-most column indicates whether the Municipality of North Cowichan has undertaken such an approach to date.

Table MNC12: Municipal Policies, Plans, Bylaws and Resources, within Municipality of North Cowichan

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Municipality of North Cowichan
<i>Strategies, Plans, and Policies</i>		
Child Care Strategy or Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges child care as fundamental to supporting healthy children and communities • Provides guiding principles for municipal governments when working individually, with other levels of government, and/or with businesses and non-profit organizations; guiding principles help ensure that various initiatives and efforts are complementary and support one another 	
Child care addressed in Official Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that child care facilities and businesses are incorporated into long-term community development goals, land use planning, and business licensing practices 	✓
Child care addressed in Social Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges links among social inequities and access to child care (e.g., poverty, gendered differences in labour force participation) • Provides guiding principles on creation and implementation of child care policies that address, or do not exacerbate, existing social inequities 	
Child care considered a community amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates incentives for local government to approve appropriate zoning and business licensing for child care throughout region / city • If voluntary amenity contributions are available to developers, child care as an amenity incentivizes and leverages private capital to serve the community's child care needs 	

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Municipality of North Cowichan
<i>Municipal Resources</i>		
Municipal building space available for child care (any cost structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate set-asides for child care space can reduce market competition for operators and ensure availability of space 	
Municipal grants for child care operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can provide funding to sustain specific child care operations, ensuring that specific communities maintain a minimum level of access Grants at a municipal level allow for funding to be targeted to better meet specific community needs (more targeted than provincial operating grants) 	
Municipal grants for child care capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can encourage creation or expansion of child care facilities in specific communities / neighbourhoods to meet community needs Can help operators leverage private equity / investment that otherwise would not be sufficient to accomplish capital project Creates physical space to support creation of needed child care spots 	
Child care design guidelines available to child care operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies requirements on child care facilities for operators, reducing confusion and facilitating capital projects Can promote best practices or community goals through design guidelines and recommendations 	
Child care information documents for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates access to child care for local residents, by making them aware of available licensed child care options 	
Municipal child care program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures a minimum number of child care spaces are available locally 	
Municipal staff resource dedicated to child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can promote and enforce municipal requirements for child care businesses (thereby ensuring quality of care), advise on provincial requirements Can promote information about available child care programs in municipality to families 	
Other child care documents		
Other		

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Municipality of North Cowichan
<i>Child Care Facilities Permitted In:</i>		
Single Family Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓
Duplex (semi-detached) Residential Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓
Row House / Townhouse Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓
Apartment Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for home-based child care providers to operate 	✓
Mixed Use Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care) 	✓
Commercial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 	✓
Public Use / Assembly Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 	✓
Industrial Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for group care child care providers to operate 	✓
Agricultural Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for a variety of child care providers to operate (home-based, group care) 	✓

Approach	Impacts on Child Care Access	Municipality of North Cowichan
<i>Additional Zoning or Licensing Requirements for Child Care</i>		
Additional parking required for home-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to limit ability of child care operators to offer home-based child care 	✓
Municipal Business License required for child care use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional fees and submission requirements can create barriers to opening a child care business, or operating a child care business legally 	✓
Non-resident child care staff are permitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows home-based child care operations to accommodate more children, if space on property allows 	✓
Additional outdoor play space requirements / recommendations above provincial standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of spaces in a municipality that may house child care facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for space 	
Additional building requirements beyond the BC Building Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More thorough requirements may limit the number of buildings in a municipality that may house facilities, potentially reducing the overall number of operators and/or increasing operational costs through increased rent and competition for qualifying buildings. 	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are a series of recommendations for a child care strategy in the Municipality of North Cowichan. These recommendations incorporate findings from all three major lines of inquiry: population projections and target setting for future child care spaces and programs; stakeholder consultation regarding the availability, accessibility, and quality of child care in the region; and secondary data review of existing municipal policies, resources, and bylaws among communities in the Cowichan region.

While this report is intended for the use of the Municipality of North Cowichan, there are a number of priority areas for change that are outside the jurisdiction of local governments. Therefore, recommendations listed here include comments on responsible and/or contributing levels of government.

Finally, it should be noted that the specific actions for local and provincial governments are not meant to be definitive recommendations; they are suggestions for actions that would support the overarching recommendation. Each community and government must consider their local context, mandate, and other factors when deciding which actions to pursue.

INCREASING COVERAGE RATES

Increase the number of child care spaces as per the recommended space creation targets.

This report has provided a detailed breakdown of recommended space creation targets, by age group and by care type (see Tables MNC6 and MNC7). Malatest recommends making efforts to meet these targets within the time frame specified, with regular review and assessment of capacity to ensure these targets remain relevant.

Local Government Actions

- Review and revise existing bylaws and regulations that may be limiting the ability of child care operators to offer child care (e.g., space requirements per child that are above provincial requirements), to enable existing operators to offer more child care spaces
- Incorporate targets for the creation of child care spaces and programs into community planning and strategy documents, to promote a coherent and complementary approach to child care across all departments of municipal government
- Consider creating grants to fund child care operations and/or capital investment projects, to support the creation of new programs and spaces
- Explore opportunities to acquire sites, either through purchase or lease agreements, to be made available to child care operators to support target spaces and programs

Provincial Government Actions

- Make available grant funds for capital projects to support child care space and program creation targets
- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, anticipate providing funding to child care centers aligned with space and program creation targets

Emphasize increasing infant/toddler spaces.

Space creation targets place a strong emphasis on infant/toddler spaces; this reflects both the comparatively low current coverage rate for this age group, as well as demand voiced by stakeholders who participated in this research. Malatest recommends that efforts to expand child care coverage in the region should ensure that creation of infant/toddler spaces are prioritized.

Local Government Actions

- Should target space creation targets be revised, municipal governments should consider the resulting coverage rates and aim for, at a minimum, a 33% coverage rate for children aged 0-2 years old
- Incorporate language in official community plans and social plans that acknowledges the importance of infant/toddler child care in allowing mothers to re-enter the workforce, thus reducing “brain drain” in local sectors as well as promoting gender equity

Provincial Government Actions

- As the rollout of the Universal Child Care program continues, set aside a certain proportion of funding to be dedicated to infant/toddler spaces in the region

CREATING NEW CHILD CARE SITES

Support creation of new child care programs and sites.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will necessitate the creation of new child care programs and, likely, opening of new child care centers and facilities in the region. This will require considerable capital investment that could be aided by support from both municipal and provincial governments.

Local Government Actions

- Consider making current available municipal space (e.g., unused space in municipal buildings) available for the exclusive use of child care programs
- Consider incorporating purpose-built space for child care programs into new municipal buildings that may be built over the coming decade
- Consider leasing / renting available municipal space to child care programs for no, nominal, or below-market rates
- Examine opportunities to acquire sites (e.g., closed elementary schools) for the operation of child care programs
- Consider making municipal grants available for capital investment projects, to leverage private dollars to expand existing child care sites

Provincial Government Actions

- Make grants available for capital investment projects, either to renovate and build new sites or to expand existing sites
- Consider working with regional and municipal governments to promote acquisition of sites for child care use

ACCESSIBILITY

Consider public accessibility of potential new child care sites.

Accessibility and location of child care sites was noted by a number of stakeholders in this research; many noted that there are a number of child care facilities that are not accessible by public transit. This results in the child care programs under-serving the community, particularly lower income families who may not have access to a personal vehicle. Accessibility and location of child care sites should be considered when examining potential child care sites.

Local Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans emphasizing the need for child care sites to serve the entire community, and therefore be accessible by public transit
- When assessing potential future sites for child care programs, consider accessibility by public transit and prioritize locations that are more accessible
- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit

Provincial Government Actions

- If offering capital investment grants to existing child care operators to expand sites, consider weighting application criteria to favour sites that are more accessible by public transit
- Incorporate consideration of accessibility by public transit into any potential land transfers with municipal or regional governments, prioritizing sites with public transit access for child care use

Consider need for, and incentivize, child care with extended and non-traditional hours.

Shift work poses a unique challenge to finding child care options. Very few child care sites in the Cowichan region offer extended hours such as early morning, late evening, or overnight care. Yet, for families where one or both parents are employed in shift work, there is a need to find child care options that can provide reliable care during these hours.

Local Government Actions

- If municipal operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- If municipal space is being used for child care programs, consider options to allow access to facilities during these extended hours
- Explore options with provincial government to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

Provincial Government Actions

- If provincial operating grants are offered, consider weighting application criteria to favour programs that offer non-traditional hours
- Explore options with local governments to locate child care programs in major hospitals in the region, to provide child care for those who work shifts in the hospital

AFFORDABILITY

Attend to affordability as a key aspect of the expansion of child care in the Cowichan region.

Affordability of child care was noted as a major barrier to child care, and to child care of choice, among parents and caregivers in this research. Further, child care space targets set out in this report have assumed a considerable increase in demand due to an increase in affordability. As such, affordability of child care for families in the region should be a major priority for municipal, regional, and provincial governments.

Local Government Actions

- Incorporate language into official community plans and/or social plans, acknowledging the importance of child care being affordable to local residents to ensure equal opportunity and accessibility for all children
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)
- Examine opportunities to reduce child care operators' overhead through making municipal space available to them for no, nominal, or below-market rent

Provincial Government Actions

- Continue the rollout of the Universal Child Care program, which provides child care to families at a low, flat cost per day (currently \$10 per day)
- Examine opportunities to financially support child care operators through granting funds (e.g., for training and upgrading, for operating costs, for capital investment projects)

SUPPORTING CHILD CARE WORKERS AND PROVIDERS

Promote child care as a career to youth in the Cowichan region.

The space creation targets recommended by Malatest will require the creation of many full-time equivalency child care positions throughout the Cowichan region. As a result, there will be a large need in the region for qualified child care workers, particularly those with higher levels of qualifications (e.g., ECE, ECE with infant-toddler and/or special needs training).

Local Government Actions

- Promote child care work as a career through community programs and space (e.g., an ad campaign in recreation centers and local schools)

Provincial Government Actions

- Promote child care work, particularly the ECE qualification, through existing career promotion programs (e.g., the *Find Your Fit* tour has an ECE station, this tour could be brought to Cowichan region secondary schools)
- Consider expanding ECE programs at post-secondary institutions on Vancouver Island to ensure sufficient graduates to meet demand over the coming ten years

Promote the ECE qualification, and ECE with special training, to current and potential child care workers.

During this research, Malatest heard from recent graduates of ECE programs that the ECE qualification itself was perceived to be financially burdensome, when considering the investment required and the anticipated pay of an ECE-qualified position. Many noted that it made more financial sense to seek a lower level of qualification, such as an ECE Assistant, because the difference in pay between the roles was not much different. In addition, many child care program operators noted that they faced significant challenges finding qualified staff, particularly ECEs and ECEs with infant-toddler and special needs training.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant to support upgrading to ECE and ECE with special training skills, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider opportunities to reduce the financial burden of ECE qualifications (e.g., bursaries standard to all students in ECE programs, other) to make the qualification more attractive to potential students
- Promote upgrading of lower-level child care qualifications (e.g., Responsible Adult, ECE Assistant) to full ECE accreditation through targeted ad campaigns in child care programs at post-secondary institutions in B.C.
- Promote a higher wage for fully qualified ECEs, either as part of or in addition to the ongoing Universal Child Care program; may be accomplished through wage subsidies or other means to create a higher “floor” wage for ECEs

Support ECEs in maintaining their credentials through affordable professional development opportunities.

Child care workers qualified as ECEs must participate in regular professional development in order to maintain their credential over time; this training is typically paid for by the individual, creating another barrier or disincentive for child care workers to pursue and/or maintain their full ECE qualification. Supporting ongoing professional development for ECEs can help to reduce this burden and better meet the need for qualified child care workers in the Cowichan region.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) undertake polling of child care programs and help to organize local, affordable professional development opportunities for child care workers
- Consider creating a municipal grant to support ongoing ECE professional development training, for existing child care operators

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider incentivizing regular professional development for ECEs through dedicated provincial grants available to all licensed child care operators in the Cowichan region

IMPROVING QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Promote cultural diversity in child care centers.

The diversity of child care centers in the Cowichan region was rated poorly by both the general public and parents and caregivers of children, in this research. Diverse child care centers that reflect the communities in which they are located provide children with higher quality, more enriching care that promotes inclusive communities. As such, promoting cultural diversity should be a priority under the general initiative of improving quality of child care.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) regularly collect information on diversity within child care centers and promote best practices in diversity to child care centers
- Ensure affordable child care is available in all communities and neighbourhoods (see recommendations regarding placement of sites and space targets), to enable families to send their children to programs that are nearby and that are reflective of the diversity of their communities

Provincial Government Actions

- As the Universal Child Care program continues to roll out, consider incentives for children attending child care centers local to their homes, to ensure that child care centers reflect their communities

Promote inclusion of children with extra support needs in child care programs.

Families of children with extra support needs can struggle to find spaces for their children in licensed child care programs, due to the additional resourcing and staffing required to accommodate these children. In particular, the need for specialized training for ECEs to provide care for children with additional support needs has resulted in limited qualified staff available at these child care programs, and high demand for care among the sites that are able to accommodate children with extra support needs.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification

Provincial Government Actions

- Consider creating a provincial grant fund to promote training and upgrading for child care workers, including obtaining training for ECEs to obtain their Special Needs qualification
- Promote the ECE-SN training designation among students and alumni of child care programs at Vancouver Island universities, through ad campaigns and other promotional materials

Promote best practices in child care through monitoring and accountability measures.

While most parents and caregivers in the survey for this research rated their own child care arrangements highly, overall perception of child care quality in the Cowichan region was middling. Promotion of standards and best practices in licensed child care can provide guidance to providers (particularly during periods of rapid expansion) and build public confidence in the quality of child care offered locally.

Local Government Actions

- Consider creating a municipal child care resource position, which would (among other responsibilities) collect key performance indicators from local child care centers to monitor quality, and promote best practices through promotional materials and other initiatives

Provincial Government Actions

- Create a set of key performance indicators for regular monitoring and measurement of child care quality
- Liaise with municipal child care resources to promote best practices endorsed by the provincial government, identify regional needs and provide support

APPENDIX G: LIST OF POTENTIAL CHILD CARE SITES

Site Identifier	Street Address	Municipality or Electoral Area
Cairnsmore Primary (Closed)	540 Cairnsmore Street	City of Duncan
Charles Hoey VC school	756 Castle Place	City of Duncan
Cowichan Green Community Society	360 Duncan St	City of Duncan
CVRD Office	175 Ingram St	City of Duncan
Duncan United Church	246 Ingram Street	City of Duncan
Khowhemun Elementary	2918 Cliffs Road	City of Duncan
Lot 3 Section 17 Range & Quamichan District Plan 24352	238 Government Street, Duncan	City of Duncan
North Cowichan Alliance Church	931 Trunk Rd	City of Duncan
Frances Kelsey	953 Shawnigan Lake-Mill Bay Road	Electoral Area A
Kerry Park Recreation Centre	1035 Shawnigan Lake-Mill Bay Rd	Electoral Area A
Malahat Multi Purpose Centre	5 Kwunew Kwasun Lane	Electoral Area A
Sylvan United Church	985 Shawnigan Lake-Mill Bay Rd	Electoral Area A
Discovery Elementary	2204 McKean Road	Electoral Area B
Malahat Centre	700 Shawnigan Lake Road	Electoral Area B
Maxwell International School (Closed)	2371 Shawnigan Lake Rd	Electoral Area B
Cobble Hill Community Hall	3550 Watson Ave	Electoral Area C
École Cobble Hill Elementary	3642 Learning Way	Electoral Area C
St. John the Baptist - Cobble Hill	3295 Cobble Hill Road	Electoral Area C
Stu Armour Hall	1438 Fisher Rd	Electoral Area C
Bench Elementary	1501 Cowichan Bay Road	Electoral Area D
Glenora Community Hall	3660 Glenora Rd	Electoral Area E
Koksilah Elementary	5265 Boal Rd	Electoral Area E
Honeymoon Bay Community Hall	10022 Park Drive	Electoral Area F
Lakefront Commercial	8 Lakefront Place	Electoral Area F
Mesachie Lake Community Hall	9315 South Shore Rd	Electoral Area F
Paldi Sikh Temple	23 Paldi Rd	Electoral Area F
Thetis Island Elementary	291 North Cove Rd	Electoral Area G
Diamond Community Hall	4962 Christie Rd	Electoral Area H
Stz'uminus Community Centre	3949 Shell Beach Road	Electoral Area H
Youbou Community Hall	8550 Hemlock St	Electoral Area I
Chemainus Branch - Vancouver Island Regional Library	9796 Willow Street	Municipality of North Cowichan
Chemainus Health Care Centre	9909 Esplanade Street	Municipality of North Cowichan
Chemainus Library (former)	2592 Legion Street	Municipality of North Cowichan
Chemainus Secondary	9947 Daniel Street	Municipality of North Cowichan
Chemainus Pentecostal Church	9471 Chemainus Rd	Municipality of North Cowichan
Cowichan Community Centre	2687 James Street	Municipality of North Cowichan

Site Identifier	Street Address	Municipality or Electoral Area
Cowichan District Hospital (will be old hospital once new one is built)	3045 Gibbins Rd	Municipality of North Cowichan
Cowichan Secondary	2652 James Street	Municipality of North Cowichan
Crofton Community Centre Society	8104 Musgrave	Municipality of North Cowichan
Drinkwater Elementary	6236 Lane Road	Municipality of North Cowichan
Fuller Lake Arena	2876 Fuller Lake Rd	Municipality of North Cowichan
Mill Street business location 1	2877 Mill Street	Municipality of North Cowichan
Mill Street business location 2	2976 Mill Street	Municipality of North Cowichan
New hospital in Duncan (will be complete in 2024)	6756-6742 Bell McKinnon Road	Municipality of North Cowichan
North Cowichan Municipal Hall	7030 Trans-Canada Hwy	Municipality of North Cowichan
Oasis City Church	3540 Auchinachie Rd	Municipality of North Cowichan
Quamichan School	2515 Beverly St	Municipality of North Cowichan
Sansum Drive	6058 Sansum Drive, Duncan	Municipality of North Cowichan
Somenos Community Hall	3248 Cowichan Valley Hwy	Municipality of North Cowichan
Vancouver Island University, Cowichan Campus	2011 University Way	Municipality of North Cowichan
Vimy Community Hall	3968 Gibbins Rd	Municipality of North Cowichan
Bethel Church Ladysmith	1149 4th Ave	Town of Ladysmith
Frank Jameson Community Centre	810 6 Ave	Town of Ladysmith
Ladysmith 4th Ave	1237 4th Ave	Town of Ladysmith
Ladysmith Branch - Vancouver Island Regional Library	740 First Ave	Town of Ladysmith
Ladysmith Community Health Centre	1111 4 Ave	Town of Ladysmith
Ladysmith Resources Centre Association	630 2 Ave	Town of Ladysmith
Oceanview Community Church	381 Davis Rd	Town of Ladysmith
Rocky Creek Road	1156 Rocky Creek Road	Town of Ladysmith
Town-owned property	900 Russel Road, Ladysmith	Town of Ladysmith
application for a Temporary Use Permit to operate a daycare at 87 SouthShore Road	87 South Shore Rd	Town of Lake Cowichan
A.B Greenwell Elementary (Closed)	8545 Hemlock Street	Town of Lake Cowichan
Countrywide Village	47 Coronation St	Town of Lake Cowichan
Cowichan Lake Baptist Church	8259 Beaver Road	Town of Lake Cowichan
Cowichan Lake Branch - Vancouver Island Regional Library	68 Renfrew Ave	Town of Lake Cowichan
Cowichan Lake Community Services	121 Point Ideal Dr	Town of Lake Cowichan

Site Identifier	Street Address	Municipality or Electoral Area
Cowichan Lake Education Centre	Lakeview Park Rd	Town of Lake Cowichan
Cowichan Lake Sports Arena	311 South Shore Rd	Town of Lake Cowichan
Lake Cowichan Centennial Hall	309 South Shore Rd	Town of Lake Cowichan
Lake Cowichan School	190 South Shore Road	Town of Lake Cowichan
Lake Cowichan Municipal Office	39 South Shore Rd	Town of Lake Cowichan
NAI Commercial	15-19 South Shore Road	Town of Lake Cowichan
South Shore Road	154-156 South Shore Road	Town of Lake Cowichan