

City of Richmond 2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan

Key Findings



Community Social
Development Department

April 2021





Purpose

The City of Richmond is a municipal leader in its commitment to child care. The child care space targets and actions outlined in the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan* demonstrate the City's recognition of child care being an essential need for Richmond residents and employees.

Building on the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy*, this plan offers valuable insight on municipal initiatives to expand and enhance child care choices in Richmond. Through research and consultation, the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan* provides a snapshot of the current state of child care in Richmond and assesses the opportunities and challenges to better meet the child care needs of families. With this information, targets for child care space creation and actions to meet these targets are identified.

This booklet provides a summary of the findings and future direction of the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan*.

What we know about Richmond

- **27,240 children** aged 0 to 14 years reside in Richmond¹;
- **21%** of all families are headed by a female lone-parent¹;
- **66.3%** of women with children are in the labour force¹;
- **25.6%** of children ages 0 to 17 years, live in households reporting low income¹; and
- Children entering kindergarten demonstrate an overall vulnerability in one or more developmental domains of **35.0%**, which is slightly higher than the provincial average².

1 2016 Census, Statistics Canada

2 EDI report, Wave 7 Community Profile, 2019. Richmond School District (SD38), Human Early Learning Partnership

What Has Been Achieved From 2016-2021

by the numbers...



Three City-owned child care centres were constructed.



Seven child care facilities previously constructed were managed.



Combined, these ten existing child care facilities provide up to

384

licensed child care spaces.



One additional City-owned facility and two Early Childhood Development Hubs, underwent design and are currently under construction.



These future facilities will accommodate up to

201

child care spaces.

In total, existing and secured facilities will provide approximately

585

licensed child care spaces in City-owned purpose-built child care facilities in Richmond.

The supply of child care spaces in Richmond increased

21%



from 5,802 spaces in 2016



to 7,022 spaces in 2020



Spaces for licensed Group Care (Under 36 Months) have

EXPANDED BY 82%

Spaces for licensed Group Care (30 Months to School Age) have



EXPANDED BY 36%

The number of Group Care (School Age) spaces has

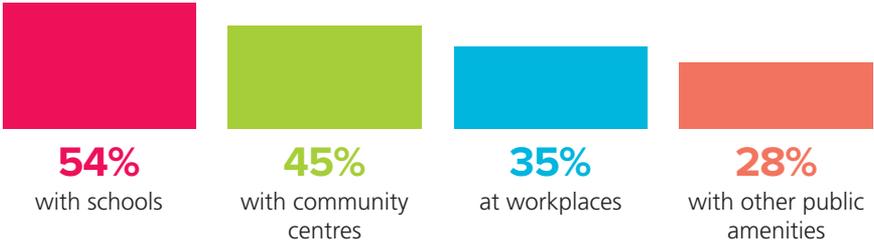
INCREASED BY 9%



Spaces in Family Child Care, In-home Multi-Age Care, Preschool and Occasional Care have **DECREASED**

Common Themes

HIGH PRIORITY CHILD CARE LOCATIONS



Parent and Operator Survey, City of Richmond (2020).



69% of **PARENTS** who are not able to access child care **ARE ON A WAITLIST.**



20% OF PARENTS report having challenges accessing care that meet their **UNIQUE SCHEDULING NEEDS.**



64% of CHILD CARE OPERATORS identified **RECRUITING AND RETAINING QUALIFIED STAFF** as a primary barrier to creating additional child care spaces.



48% of CHILD CARE OPERATORS reported **ACCESS TO SPECIALIZED STAFF TO SUPPORT INCLUSION** as a primary challenge to their work.

CHALLENGES THAT PARENTS FACE FINDING/ACCESSING CHILD CARE



77%

High cost



62%

Finding care based on work or school schedule



60%

Not enough spaces



42%

Quality of care



30%

Staff experience and availability

CHALLENGES FOR CHILD CARE OPERATORS



46%

access to ECE training and education



46%

mentorship opportunities



44%

access to professionals to support families



33%

access to professionals to enhance quality programming



33%

supervisory training

Child Care Operator Survey, City of Richmond (2020).



Challenges

- ✓ There are no licensed child care centres offering extended hours (outside of 7am to 7pm);
- ✓ There are no child care centres that offer overnight care;
- ✓ There is a lack of flexible licensed child care options for parents who work part-time or whose schedules change due to shift work. This includes regular or variable part-time care, non-traditional hours or intermittent care;
- ✓ There are insufficient child care spaces located in schools or on school property; and
- ✓ There are opportunities for more and expanded child care programs co-located with other community services.

What we heard

I've found our City's community centres and staff are amazing. I think there are really good opportunities to expand affordable child care offerings here.

-Parent

Co-locating [child care] at schools would provide the greatest benefit for children with easier transition to kindergarten and no need to go elsewhere after school.

-Public partner

I was on a waitlist for 3 years before getting a call and when I did, it didn't fit in my schedule.

-Parent

Every school should have out of school care available on site or within walking distance whether public or private.

-Parent

I would like to see more availability for outdoor childcare spaces that could be developed on school grounds.

-Parent

I would like to see more programs offer part time care.

-Parent

CHILD CARE AVAILABILITY

In 2020 there were

30 CHILD CARE SPACES

per 100 children from birth to 12 years in Richmond.



In 2020, there were

14.2 GROUP CARE (SCHOOL AGE) SPACES

per 100 children.



In 2020 there were

23.1 GROUP CARE (UNDER 36 MONTHS) SPACES

per 100 children aged 0 to 2 years in Richmond.

In 2020 there were

53.7 GROUP CARE (30 MONTHS TO SCHOOL AGE) SPACES

per 100 children aged 3 to 5 years in Richmond.





Impact of COVID-19 on Child Care Usage

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many families have altered their child care arrangements in response to the wide-spread changes to schooling, employment and the closure of many child care programs. The vulnerability and instability of the child care sector in BC has been highlighted as centres struggled with the health and safety requirements, financial impacts and staffing required to deliver this essential service under uncertain conditions.

The long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child care space sustainability and future space creation is not known and will require further monitoring as public health guidelines continue to impact families.

Creation of New Child Care Spaces

The 2021–2031 *Richmond Child Care Action Plan* proposes child care space creation targets to address these needs:

- A net increase of 3,741 licensed child care spaces by 2031 to achieve targets of:
 - 25 spaces per 100 children under 36 months
 - 55 spaces per 100 children aged 30 months to school age
 - 25 spaces per 100 school aged children
- Child care spaces for school age children that are on-site or within walking distance for all elementary schools in Richmond, both public and independent, by 2031.
- A focus on three areas of flexible, licensed child care to meet the needs of families who require part-time or intermittent child care or who seek care during non-traditional hours due to employment.



Proposed and Recommended Actions

The actions required to expand child care spaces to meet the identified targets have been structured under four pillars. Each of these pillars is fundamental to the development of a comprehensive child care system for Richmond and contributes to the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan*. These pillars include:

1 Commitment to Child Care

Space creation goes beyond simply creating spaces. Actions must also include a commitment to plan for a diverse system of spaces to accommodate and respond to the range of unique needs of the Richmond community. The City of Richmond makes, facilitates and advocates for decisions that support, promote and improve child care options for local families and providers.

2 Child Care Space Creation

The creation of child care spaces will be most successful as a collaborative effort involving City staff, child care providers and community partners, including the Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health, Community Associations and Societies, and multi-service organizations who support children and families. Within its role, the City of Richmond plans, implements and facilitates strategies that increase access to quality child care spaces.

3 Sector Quality and Sustainability

A critical aspect of child care that bears consideration in community level planning, beyond simply the creation of additional spaces, is the provision of quality, inclusive programs. In order to create spaces that can be staffed for quality care, the creation of spaces and the support of the Early Childhood Care and Education sector must work in tandem. The City of Richmond recognizes, implements and collaborates on actions that reduce the fragility of the child care sector and support affordable, sustainable, quality child care.

4 Evaluation and Monitoring

As the child care system in Richmond evolves, periodic review is required. In addition, the ongoing and evolving impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic must be considered and monitored. The City of Richmond, in its role, monitors and evaluates the influences of these actions on accessible, quality child care spaces.



Moving Forward

The 2021–2031 *Richmond Child Care Action Plan* was adopted by City Council on April 12, 2021. Within the next two years, the City will:

- Continue implementation of the ongoing and medium-term and long-term actions in the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy*;
- Begin implementation of actions identified in the *2021–2031 Richmond Child Care Action Plan*; and
- Begin preparation for the next Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy.

Over the next 10 years the City and its key stakeholders will continue to work collaboratively to implement the actions outlined in the *2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Action Plan* in an ongoing effort to further the vision, “to continue to be a municipal leader in fostering the conditions for a comprehensive child care system in Richmond.”



City of Richmond

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