

News Release

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Cowichan Child Care Plan provides roadmap for expansion in early childhood education

DUNCAN, BC – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) recently completed a comprehensive, regional plan to direct the expansion of child care services over the next decade.

The [Cowichan Region Child Care Plan](#) found that the region currently has a 22% coverage rate for children 0 – 12, with the greatest need identified for infants and toddlers (aged 0 – 2). 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.

“We now anticipate that one in five families in the Cowichan region have unmet needs and aggressive increases in coverage rates are required to respond to existing demand,” said John Elzinga, General Manager of Community Services for the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “With the child care space creation targets recommended in this plan, we now have a solid understanding how and where our local and regional governments can support the creation of new child care programs and centres to meet the current and future shortfall.”

In addition to increasing coverage rates and creating new child care sites, the plan also recommends:

- improved accessibility of child care by public transit
- extended and non-traditional hours to accommodate shift work
- promotion of child care as a career and improved accessibility to training
- greater cultural diversity across child care centres
- increased resources for children with extra support needs

The [Cowichan Region Child Care Plan](#) was undertaken by the CVRD in collaboration with its municipal partners, the Municipality of North Cowichan, City of Duncan, Town of Ladysmith and Town of Lake Cowichan. The study and accompanying report was completed by R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., and included surveys, interviews and secondary data collection.

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