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# Extended Hour Child Care Feasibility Study

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Also supporting the research process was the Greater Trail and Castlegar Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) program of the Trail Family and Individual Resources Centre Society (Trail FAIR) which distributed a second survey to child care providers in the region.

The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute greatly enhanced the project through the production of a Research Brief containing a review of child care facilities providing extended hours of care in other regions of the province and Canada as well as internationally.

# Contents

Acknowledgements..... 1

Executive Summary..... 3

Introduction and Context ..... 4

Needs Determination ..... 5

    Employee Survey Results .....6

    Service Provider Survey.....11

Service Model.....14

Financial Assumptions and Budgets.....15

    Operating Budget .....17

    Start up Capital Budget.....18

Feasibility and Gap Analysis.....19

Conclusions and Recommendations.....19

    Next Steps:.....20

Appendix A: RDI Brief - Review of Childcare Facilities Providing Extended Hours of Care

Appendix B: Employee Survey

Appendix C: Child Care Provider Survey



## Executive Summary

The availability of extended hour child care services that meet the needs of shift and casual workers has been identified by employers, workers and community agencies as a key issue affecting the economic development of the Lower Columbia Region in the southern end of B.C.'s West Kootenay Valley.

Although identified as a problem through a variety of workforce development projects and initiatives over the past seven years, the need has been further confirmed through a need and demand survey of employees of the region's two largest employers, both of which have a high dependency on shift and casual workers. This research was further enhanced by a survey of local child care providers as well as a review by the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute of extended hour child care services in other parts of the province, across Canada and internationally.

Drawing on the results of the needs survey, a service model has been developed which calls for the establishment of a new licensed group child care centre that operates year round, seven days a week, opening at 4:30 a.m. and closing at 8:00 p.m. This centre would provide care for infants and toddlers (aged 0-3); pre-school children (aged 3-5) and school aged children (aged 5-12) before and after school and during school breaks.

As the review of other extended hour child care centres demonstrate, operation of a centre of this nature poses a number of significant challenges including: complex scheduling and staffing requirements; development of an adequate pool of qualified child care workers; and enhanced operational funding from the Province.

Regardless of this challenge, the study demonstrates that with further business planning, some additional operating funding from the Province and the establishment of solid partnerships with employers and other service providers, an extended hour child care centre is not only feasible but also greatly needed.

The report concludes with a series of steps that will guide the development and implementation of a service that addresses the social and economic needs of this rural region of the Province. There is an exciting opportunity to bring together a number of key players to pilot the implementation of a service that addresses the needs of children, families and employers and which strengthens the social and economic fabric of rural, resource-based regions across the province.

## Introduction and Context

The availability of child care, including services scheduled to meet the needs of shift and casual workers, has been identified for many years as a key issue affecting community economic development in the Lower Columbia Region.

With a population of approximately 20,000, the Lower Columbia Region includes the municipalities of Trail, Warfield, Rossland, Montrose and Fruitvale as well as Electoral Areas A and B of the Regional District Kootenay Boundary. It is a rural, resource-based economy in which close to 30% of the workforce is in manufacturing, utilities, trades, transport and equipment operator occupations and 7% in healthcare, all of which commonly involve extended work days and shift work.<sup>1</sup>

In 2006, the West Kootenay Children First Initiative issued a report that highlighted a serious shortage of child care spaces in the West Kootenay<sup>2</sup>, a situation which has seen little change over the intervening years. In 2007, the Trail and District Chamber of Commerce spearheaded awareness of the issue with the BC Chamber of Commerce<sup>3</sup>, resulting in the adoption of a resolution entitled *The Role of Child Care in Enabling British Columbians to Re-Enter the Workforce*. Although not about the immediate region, the 2015 report on child care barriers and opportunities for shift workers in the Elk Valley<sup>4</sup> further highlighted similar challenges of finding and sustaining child care in a rural resource-based region.

In 2013, the Greater Trail Community Skills Centre issued a report providing a *Gender Based Analysis of Economic Opportunity in the Lower Columbia Region*<sup>5</sup> that identified the cost and shortage of child care as a significant barrier to economic opportunity for women. In 2015, through a survey of Teck Metal Ltd. employees, as part of the Skills Centre's *Mining and Refining for Women*<sup>6</sup> project, both male and female respondents identified that community child care options did not align with shift hours and were therefore a barrier to recruitment and retention.

In the interest of finding at least a partial solution to the issues identified, the Skills Centre secured funding from the BC Rural Dividend Fund to undertake a feasibility

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<sup>1</sup>2017-18 Community and Employer Engagement Plan, Trail Work BC Employment Service Centre, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> Adamson, Kim, *The Story of Child Care in the West Kootenay*, West Kootenay Child First Initiative, 20

<sup>3</sup> BC Chamber of Commerce, *The Role of Childcare in Enabling British Columbians to Re-Enter the Workforce* AGM Resolution, 2007

<sup>4</sup> Scotland, Phoebe, *A Community Survey of Child Care Issues in Canadian Shift Workers: Evidence for Barriers and Opportunities*, 2015, see: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18357/ijcyfs81201716741>

<sup>5</sup> Lister, Lindsay and Lutz, Helen, *Gender Based Analysis of Economic Opportunity in the Lower Columbia Region*, Greater Trail Community Skills Centre, 2013

<sup>6</sup> *Mining and Refining for Women* was a 30 month project funded by the Status of Women Canada and managed by the Skills Centre in partnership with Bock and Associates and Teck Metals Ltd. (Trail Operations).

study into the establishment and operation of an “extended hour” or non standard child care centre in the region. For the purpose of this study, “extended hour” assumes an opening time earlier than 7:30 a.m. and a pick up time later than 5:00 p.m. but less than a 24/7 operation.

The Skills Centre contracted Bock and Associates to conduct the feasibility study and prepare this report. For this project, the Bock and Associates’ team included:

- Sue Bock who has extensive experience in organizational development and executive coaching, including having served as lead consultant for the *Mining and Refining for Women* project mentioned on the previous page;
- Janet Morton who has more than forty years experience in adult education, employment services and community economic development; and
- Lynn Proulx who recently retired as Director of Sunshine Child Care Centre, having been a child care provider for 38 years.

Supporting the feasibility study is a Research Brief prepared by the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute on child care facilities providing extended hours of care (see Appendix A). Looking at examples as well as issues related to non-standard child care in B.C., across Canada and internationally, the Research Brief profiles the patchwork of services and examples of enhanced funding models as well as the financial, administrative and operational challenges of delivering child care that addresses the needs of workers beyond regular weekday hours.

This report provides a summary of the assessment of need, a proposed service and financial model and an assessment of feasibility with conclusions and recommendations.

## Needs Determination

The two largest employers located in the Lower Columbia Region are Teck Metals Ltd. (Trail Operations) and the Interior Health Authority. Combined, they employ the equivalent of 29% of the local workforce, the majority of whom work on an extended hour and/or shift work basis. It was decided to focus the needs determination on employees of these two organizations, recognizing that if results demonstrate sufficient need to merit further development, employees working extended hours for other employers and in other sectors of the economy will also benefit.

Two surveys were developed, one to prospective consumers and one to existing child care service providers. Copies of the surveys are included in Appendices B and C. The survey to prospective consumers was distributed with a covering explanatory email by Teck Metals Ltd. to its 1400 Trail Operations personnel and the 40 Teck Resources

Ltd. personnel working in Applied Research and Technology (A.R.T.) and by the Interior Health Authority (Kootenay Boundary Hospitals and Communities Integrated Services) to its estimated 900 Acute Care and 346 Community Services personnel in the Trail, Castlegar and surrounding areas. The survey was open for three weeks, from March 20<sup>th</sup> through to April 9<sup>th</sup> 2018.

A second survey, of child care service providers in the region, was developed and subsequently distributed on behalf of the research team by the Greater Trail and Castlegar Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) program operated by the Trail Family and Individual Resources Centre Society (FAIR). It was sent to all 52 child care operators registered with this CCRR. Similar to the first survey, it was open for response over a three week period in late March and early April 2018.

Bock and Associates worked closely with senior Teck, IHA and CCRR staff to distribute several rounds of email communication to prospective survey respondents to ensure they were aware of the purpose of the survey and periodically reminded to respond if they had not already done so. See Appendices B and C for copies of the surveys.

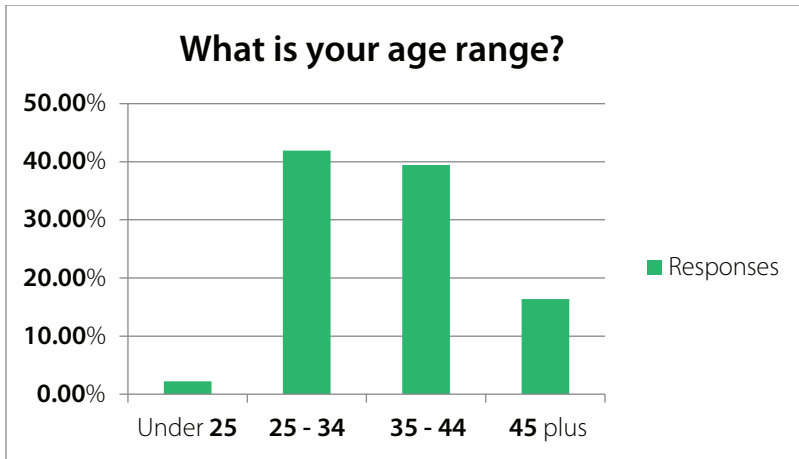
## Employee Survey Results

Over the three week period in which the survey was open, 360 employee responses were received, representing 13.4% of potential respondents, with a fairly even response rate from the two employer groups: 13% from Interior Health Authority (IHA) employees and 13.6% from Teck employees.

The majority (75%) of the respondents indicated living in one of the communities of the Lower Columbia Region with another 20% who indicated living in Castlegar (a 30 minute drive from downtown Trail) and 5% who indicated living elsewhere in the West Kootenay (Slocan Valley, Nelson and Salmo).

61% of the respondents were female and 39% were male with one respondent indicating "other". A larger proportion of the Teck workforce is male whereas a larger proportion of the IHA workforce is female.

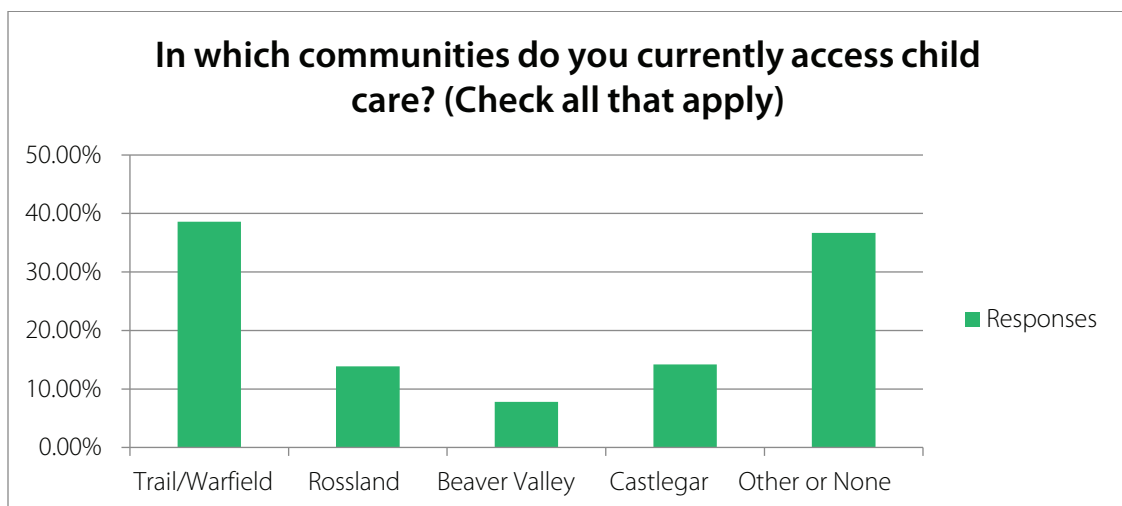
Although instructions made it clear that *any* employee was welcome to respond to the survey, regardless of age or family composition, the majority of the respondents were in what would be considered normal child-bearing and child-raising years, which means the feedback received was from those most in need of child care services.



70% of the respondents indicated they were a “parent, guardian or primary caregiver” while 8% indicated they were another family member of children requiring child care and 20% indicated they were “future parents”.

For those who have primary or occasional responsibility for arranging child care, 48% indicated having children aged 0-2 years, 37% aged 3-4 years and 55% aged 5-12 years. 2% indicated having a child with special needs. Combining the age ranges of the respondents, the age ranges of their children and the interest in responding to the survey results demonstrate that the full range of child care services is needed and will likely be needed for the foreseeable future.

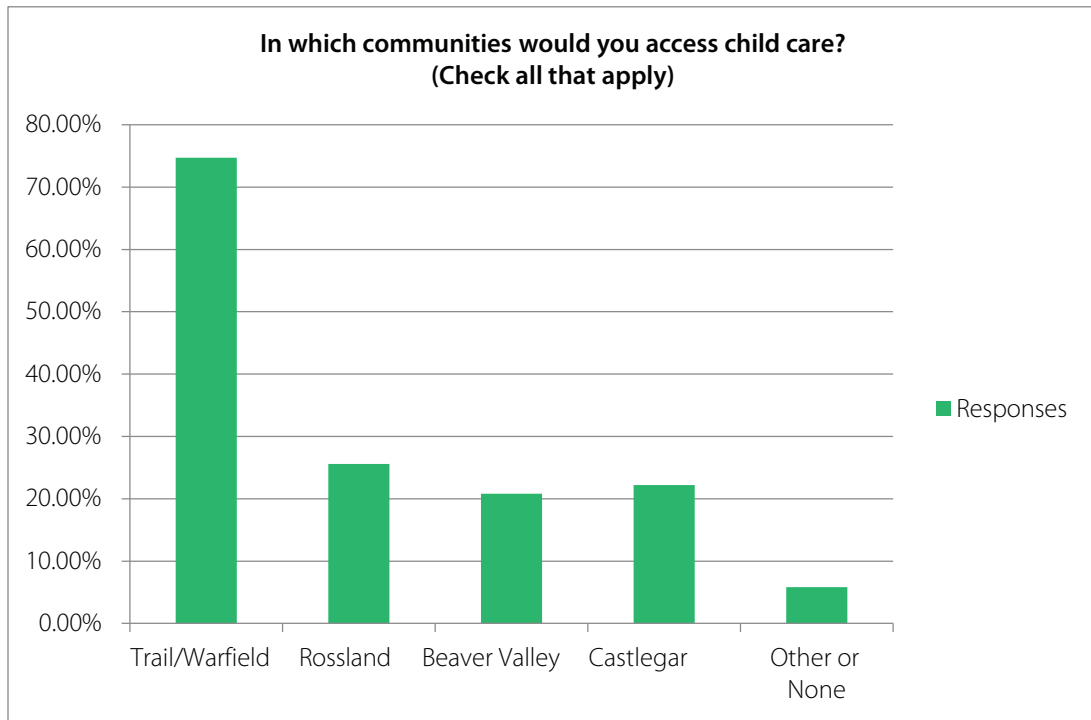
Respondents indicated accessing child care in a variety of communities:



“Other” locations included Nelson, Slocan Valley and Salmo. Respondents also volunteered other ways in which child care needs are being met including a stay-at-home spouse, grandparents and babysitters.



When asked in which community they would access childcare, responses shifted, indicating a 75% preference for services located in Trail/Warfield with “other” locations dropping to 6%.



Several questions were asked regarding the child care schedule required. Combining the number of children with the required child care schedule resulted in complicated data but the overall picture indicates the need for child care to accommodate:

- Monday to Friday weekday coverage;
- variable coverage (for example 4 days on and 4 days off);
- casual or drop-in coverage;
- school break coverage; and
- both before and after school care.

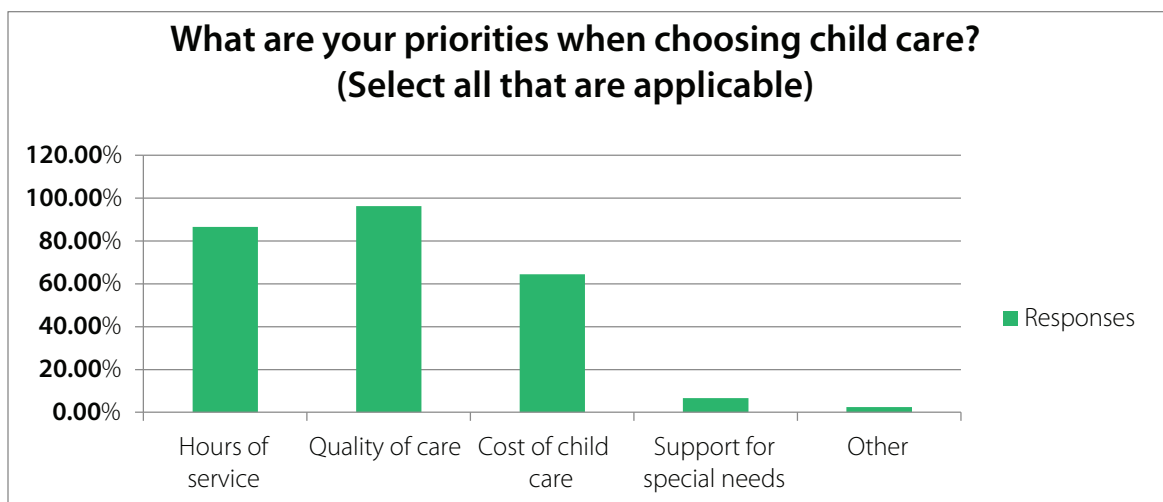
There was a full range of times provided for the early morning start time with the first peak starting at 4:30 a.m. A summary of the required key start times is as follows:

Start Time	Number of respondents
Prior to 4:30 a.m.	10
4:30 – 4:45 a.m.	15
5:00 – 5:15 a.m.	18
5:30 – 5:45 a.m.	38
6:00 – 6:15 a.m.	54
6:30 – 6:45 a.m.	88
7:00 – 7:15 a.m.	39
7:30 a.m. and later	23

There was also a broad range of required end-of-day pick up times indicated.

Pick-up Time	Number of respondents
Prior to 4:00 p.m.	18
4:00 p.m.	23
4:30 - 4:45 p.m.	10
5:00 p.m.	38
5:15 – 5:30 p.m.	29
6:00 – 6:15 p.m.	41
6:30 p.m.	10
7:15 – 7:30 p.m.	31
7:45 – 8:00 p.m.	8
8:30 p.m. – 12 a.m.	11

When asked about priorities when choosing child care, the top priority was quality of care child care, followed by hours of service, cost and other.



When asked about the challenges experienced accessing child care, the greatest challenge was hours of service, followed by lack of coverage for casual/irregular hours, cost, lack of space and quality of care. It is interesting to note that the majority of respondents are satisfied with the quality of child care they are able to access.



The impact on employers and the labour market of lack of access to extended hour child care is significant. When asked, over the three last years, how the lack of extended hour child care had affected their choices:

- 40% reported that they or their partner had decided not to seek employment;
- 21% had decided to leave the workforce;
- 38% had declined a job offer;
- 56% had decided not to pursue other career opportunities; and
- 22% had decided not to return to work following parental leave.

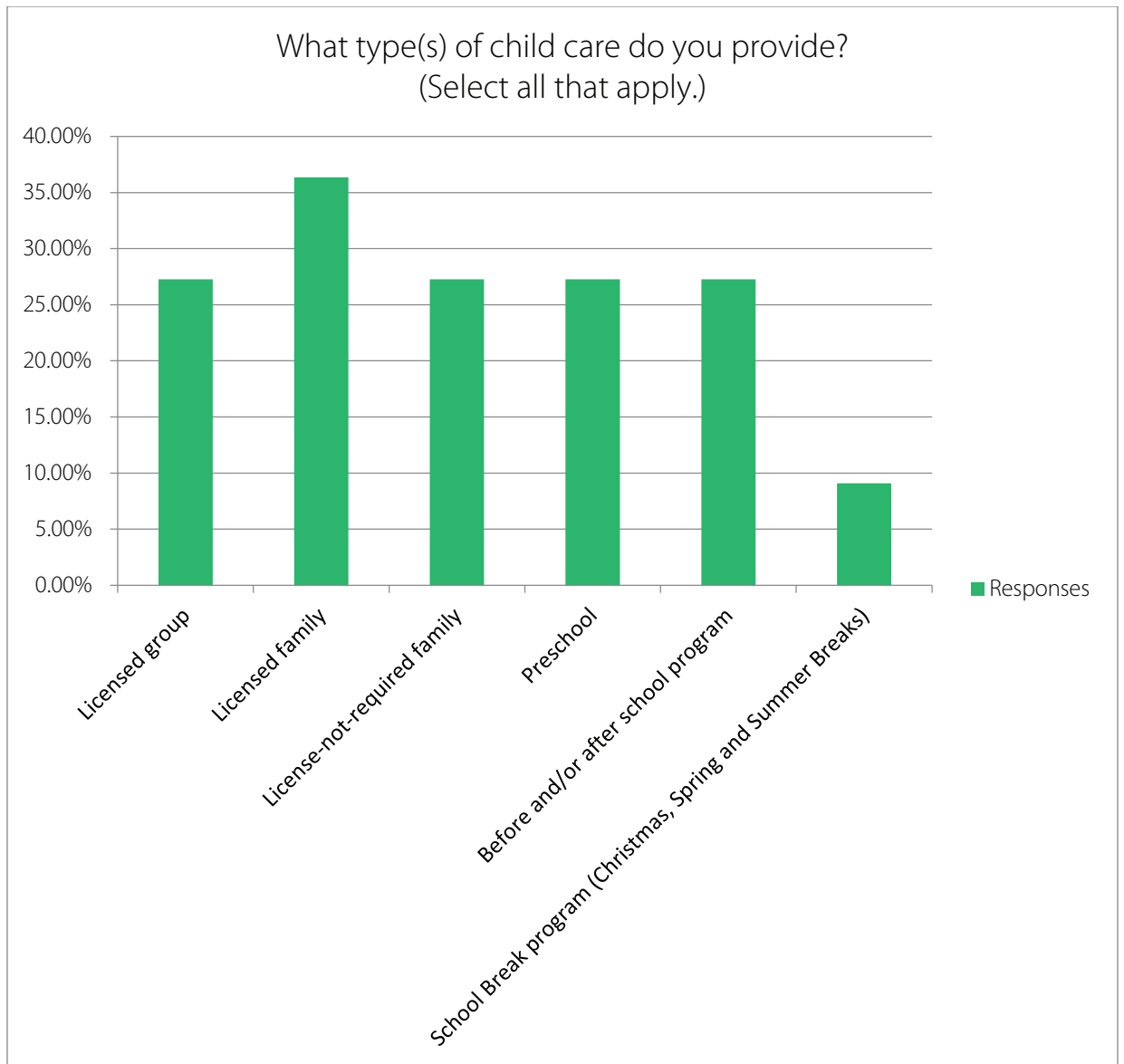
## Service Provider Survey

Child care providers are strongly encouraged to be members of the Greater Trail and Castlegar Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) program. Included amongst 52 child care providers associated with the local CCRR are the following categories of services:

- Licensed group;
- Licensed family;
- License-not-required family;
- Preschool; and
- Before and/or after school.

Similar to the surveys sent to Teck and IHA employees, Bock and Associates worked with the CCRR Program Coordinator to distribute messages explaining the purpose of the survey and encouragement to respond prior to the closing date.

Although only 11 responses were received from child care providers, a full range of types of service providers and services was included amongst those who responded. While further discussion may be required with a broader number of providers when moving into further business planning and implementation, the key trends, themes and issues that emerged are similar to those contained in the Research Brief (Appendix A) of extended hour child care facilities.



82% indicated providing care for children aged 0-3 (Infant/Toddler) while 100% provide care for children aged 3-5 and 55% for children aged 5-12.

Reflective of other local and provincial child care studies, wait lists are a significant issue. All respondents indicated wait lists of children in both the 0-3 and 3-5 age categories while only one indicated a wait list of 1 child in the 5-12 age category. There were a total of 34 children aged 0-3 on a wait list and a further 34 children aged 3-5 on a wait list. While some children may be on more than one wait list, it also needs to be recognized that this data has been collected from only 11 of the 52 child care providers that are part of the local CCRR, reinforcing the evidence of the overall shortage of child care spaces.

The cost and, more significantly, the way of representing the cost of fees for parents varies widely. The monthly full-time rates reported ranged from \$1,000 to \$2,200 (although this latter figure may not have been an accurate response to the question asked) while the day rate varied from \$35 to \$55 per day. The hourly rate charged by some centres for before and after school care is in the range of \$5/hour (which notably is substantially less than anecdotal reports of the fee charged by babysitters).

Generally, the child care rates in the Lower Columbia Region are lower than more urban areas of the province. As indicated in the 2017 report on child care fees in Canada<sup>7</sup> issued by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the median full time monthly rate in Vancouver for infant care is \$1,360; for toddler care is \$1,292; and for pre-school (ages 3-5) care is \$950.

It should be noted that even at the somewhat lower levels in the Lower Columbia Region, child care is the single most expensive item when calculating the living wage for a family of four (including 2 children aged 4 and 7 respectively), using the Canadian Living Wage Framework.<sup>8</sup> While placing children in child care allows parents or guardians to remain attached to and active in the labour market, these costs can be overwhelming for lower income and/or single parent families, even with the available subsidies.

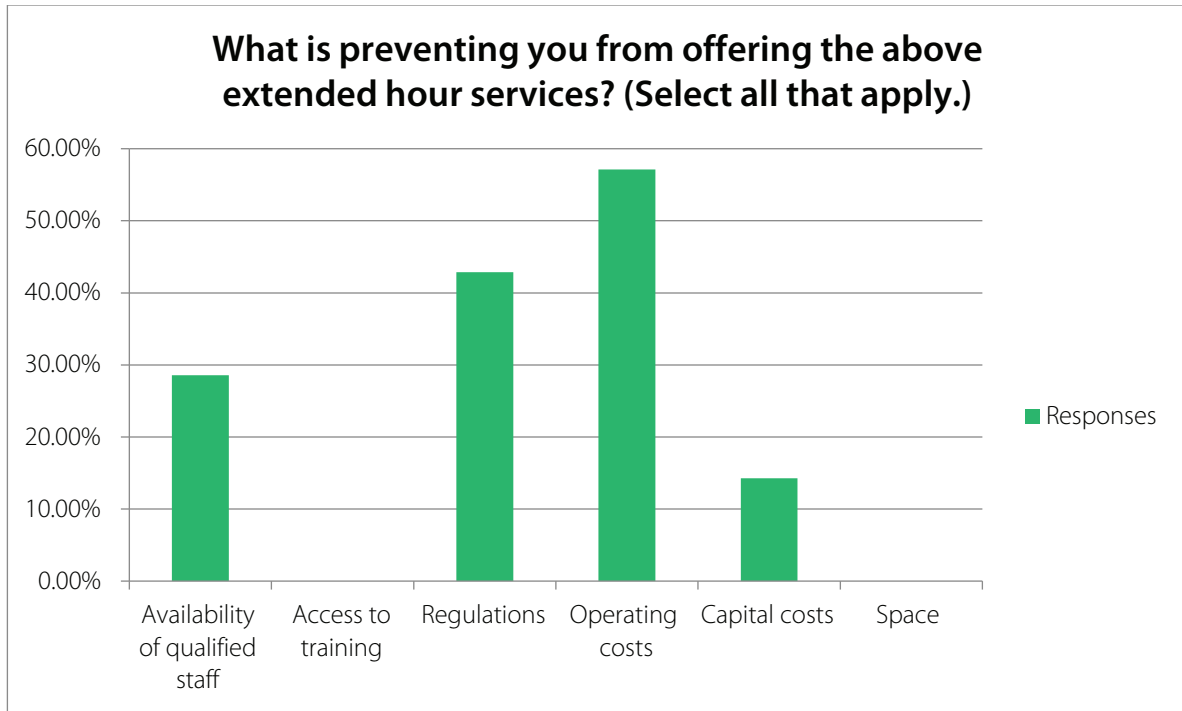
Current opening times amongst the service provider respondents ranged from 6:30 to 9:00 a.m., with the majority opening at 7:30 a.m. Closing times also varied, ranging from 11:30 a.m. (presumably a nursery school) to 6:00 p.m., with the majority between 5:00 and 5:30 p.m.

Although several child care operators indicated an interest in offering extended services, including casual/drop-in, early morning and late afternoon and school break care, there were a number of issues preventing them from doing so, including operating costs, regulations and availability of qualified staff. Written comments indicated a high level of concern about long hours and burn-out amongst child care operators.

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<sup>7</sup> Macdonald, David and Friendly, Martha, Time Out: Child care fees in Canada 2017, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, December, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> The Living Wage is a standardized calculation of what is considered the minimum income necessary for a household to meet their basic needs. See [www.livingwagecanada.ca](http://www.livingwagecanada.ca) for the Canadian Living Wage Framework for calculation methodology and [www.communityskillscentre.com](http://www.communityskillscentre.com) for Surviving Not Thriving: Poverty Reduction in the Lower Columbia Region, page 12.



Remuneration of child care workers is low with 67% of the respondents indicating an average hourly rate of \$14-17 per hour and 33% paying, on average, \$18-\$23 per hour. It is interesting to note that the living wage calculated in 2016 for the Lower Columbia Region was \$18.21/hour<sup>9</sup> which demonstrates that most child care workers earn less than the region’s living wage. Two of the respondents reported providing a sick leave benefit and only one reported providing extended health, dental and both short and long term disability coverage.

Particularly taking into account wages and benefits earned by child care workers, it is no surprise that 70% of the respondents indicated that they are experiencing a shortage of qualified staff. These are all concerns that must be taken into account when moving into developing an operational and financial service model for an extended hour child care service.

## Service Model

Taking into account the child care needs expressed in the employee survey as well as the impact of lack of care on employers and the labour market, the report authors are recommending designing an extended hour child care service that provides care that:

<sup>9</sup> See [www.communityskillscentre.com](http://www.communityskillscentre.com) for Surviving Not Thriving: Poverty Reduction in the Lower Columbia Region, page 12.

- is a year round service, operating 7 days/week;
- opens at 4:30 a.m. and closes at 8 p.m. with peak staffing between 6:00 a.m. and 5:30 pm;
- provides the option of casual or drop-in spaces for casual workers; and
- is located in the Trail/Warfield area of the Lower Columbia Region.

Furthermore, given the reported shortage of qualified workers together with a work schedule that that could involve very early mornings, evenings, weekends and potentially shift work, it is recommended that the minimum wage paid to staff be the living wage, with the average wage between \$20 and \$23/hour. It is also recommended that a program budget includes a full range of extended benefits paid fully by the employer.

## Financial Assumptions and Budgets

In developing an annual operating budget for an extended hour child care centre designed to reflect the service model described above, the following assumptions were made:

- The centre will be open 7 days per week, 4:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., with the bulk of the children in attendance between 6:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.;
- Recognizing that actual scheduling around parent/caregiver shift schedules will be complicated, an arbitrary assumption has been made that an extended hour 7 day/week operation will accommodate 25% more registrations per week than a regular week day child care program.
- Staffing ratios and qualifications at any given time are as follows:
  - 1 Infant/Toddler qualified staff for 4 children aged 0-3
  - 1 ECE qualified staff for 8 children, aged 3-5;
  - 1 Responsible Adult for 10 children, aged 5-12; and
  - 1 Responsible Adult for Assistant/Float duties
- At any given time, the centre will have the capacity to provide care at any given time for up to 8 children aged 0-3; up to 16 children aged 3-5; and up to 20 children aged 5-12 (before and after school and school breaks but not on weekends.). Recognizing registrations will be distributed over a 7 day week, the number of children aged 0-3 and 3-5 served has been increased by 25% as per above note.
- The centre will be fully subscribed with preference given to full-time (12-13 hour day) registrations. While some families will shift from other child care services to this new operation, given the overall shortage of child care spaces, it is assumed a new centre would have no negative impact on other service providers. The maximum time



any one child will be in care will not exceed 13 hours/day in keeping with regulations for a licensed group centre.

- Employers needing workers to have access to non-standard child care services will be encouraged to contribute to the centre's financial sustainability, at least for the first five years by guaranteeing or sponsoring a specified number of seats for which they will pay if the seat is not otherwise utilized by one or more of their employees.
- Recognizing the average day in which a child will be in care will be 12-13 hours as opposed to an average of 8-9 hours in more standard child care operations, the fees proposed are as follows:
  - \$78/day for children aged 0 – 3;
  - \$65/day for children aged 3 – 5;
  - \$10/hour for before and after school care for children aged 5-12; and
  - \$50/day for children aged 5-12 on school breaks.

These rates are higher than the average rate per hour charged by the majority of local providers but lower than the median rate charged in Vancouver.

- Permanent employees will receive employer paid extended benefits including health, dental and both short and long term disability paid, at an average cost of 22% of the hourly wage. Also included is the assumption of an employer contribution of 5% of the wage to an RRSP assuming the contribution is matched by the employee.
- Operating subsidies are based on what is currently available from the Province as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 as follows:
  - \$12.00/day for children aged 0-3 (Infant/Toddler)
  - \$5.48/day for children aged 3-5
  - \$2.80/day for children aged 5-12 (before/after school and school break care)
- The facility will be owned by the operator (potentially a strata title that is part of a larger facility). Sufficient grants and donations will be secured for centre start up including: property acquisition; construction or leasehold improvements; and both indoor and outdoor equipment costs. There is provision in the budget, however, for an annual contribution to a building reserve fund for major repairs, a figure which could be converted to rent or partial mortgage; and
- An allowance of 10% of the operating budget for administrative overhead. Given the tremendous complexity that will be involved in scheduling the spaces, staffing and invoicing, 10% overhead is a bare minimum. 15% would be more realistic reflection of cost.

## Operating Budget

<b>Revenue</b>	
<i>Parent Fee</i>	
10 children aged 0-3 (\$78/day x 20 days/mo x 12 mo./year)	\$ 187,200
20 children aged 3-5 (\$65/day x 20 days/mo x 12 mo./year)	\$ 312,000
20 Children aged 5-12, before and after school (\$10/hr x 5 hr/day x 185 school days)	\$ 9,250
20 Children aged 5-12, school break weekdays (\$55/day x 55 school break days)	\$ 60,500
<i>Childcare Operating Fund</i>	
10, 0-36 months @ \$12/day x 20 days/month	\$ 28,800
20, 3-5 year olds @\$5.48/day x 20 days/month	\$ 26,304
20, 5-12 year olds @ \$2.80/day x 240 days	\$ 13,440
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 637,494</b>

<b>Expenses</b>			
Staffing	Wages	Benefits	
Director, 40 hours per week @ \$30/hr	\$ 62,640	\$ 13,781	\$ 76,421
2 ECE staff, 11 hrs/day x 7 days/week x \$20/hr	\$ 180,873	\$ 39,792	\$ 220,665
1 ECE staff, 5 hrs/day x 7 days/week x \$20/hr	\$ 41,108	\$ 9,044	\$ 50,151
2 Infant Toddler staff, 11 hours/day x 7 days/week x \$22.50/hr	\$ 180,873	\$ 39,792	\$ 80,900
1 Infant Toddler staff, 5 hours/day x 7 days/week x \$22.50/hr	\$ 41,108	\$ 9,044	\$ 47,672
Assistant/Float, 8 hours/day x 5 days/week x \$18.50/hr	\$ 38,628	\$ 8,498	\$ 47,126
Assistant/Float, 4 hours/day x 2 days/week x \$18.50/hr	\$ 19,314	\$ 4,249	\$ 23,563
Responsible Adult (5-12 care); 5 hours/day x 185 days x \$18.50/hr	\$ 17,113	\$ 3,765	\$ 20,877
Responsible Adult (5-12 care), 12 hours/day x 55 days x \$18.50/hr	\$ 12,210	\$ 2,686	\$ 14,896
Janitorial service (12 hrs/week)	\$ 13,150	\$ 2,893	\$ 16,043
Accounting/Legal			\$ 2,000
Web site and social media maintenance			\$ 1,000
Bank Charges			\$ 300
Repairs and Maintenance			\$ 9,500
Utilities and Telephone			\$ 11,000
Insurance			\$ 2,500
Organizational Development (staff development, license renewal, meeting supplies)			\$ 5,000
Office and Janitorial Supplies			\$ 3,000
Operating Supplies			\$ 10,000
Mileage (for staff for meetings and supply pick up)			\$ 1,500
Photocopier rental and usage			\$ 5,000
Property Tax			\$ 3,000
Administrative Overhead and Contingency (10% of operating costs)			\$ 65,211
Contribution to building reserve fund (or rent/mortgage)			\$ 10,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 727,325</b>

**Shortfall in Operating Income**

**\$ (89,831)**

## Start up Capital Budget

Although several options within the City of Trail and Village of Warfield have been considered as possible locations for an extended hour child care facility, it is too early in the process to confirm a preferred location.

While availability of suitable land is limited in this mountain valley region, there are some potential options either to construct a new centre or renovate an existing building. Any option will require working closely with local government in relation to zoning, parking, green space requirements and other planning issues. Depending on who owns the land and/or building of choice, there could be opportunities to explore donations or partnerships.

In addition, given the industrial history of the region, soil testing, with the potential of hazardous waste remediation, will need to be factored into the planning process. The Trail Health and Environment Program can assist with assessment and, given the nature of any remediation required, Teck Metals Ltd. may need to become involved.

New construction or renovation costs have been estimated at \$250/sq. ft. Any renovations would involve an older building with potential structural and/or hazardous material abatement requirements, making costs similar to new construction.

Initial purchase and start-up capital costs have been estimated as follows:

<b>Estimated Capital Costs: Extended Hour Child Care Centre</b>	
Land cost	\$ 250,000
Facility Construction or Renovation (1,500 sq. ft. @ \$250/sq. ft)	\$ 375,000
Indoor Equipment	\$ 30,000
Outdoor Play Equipment and Green Space Preparation	\$ 40,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 695,000</b>

## Feasibility and Gap Analysis

Through the process of this study, a number of important gaps have been identified:

1. The most critical gap is the absence of licensed child care services in the region that operate on weekdays prior to 6:30 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m. and on weekends, with limited coverage during school breaks. This absence of extended hours of service is further compounded by an overall shortage of child care spaces and long waiting lists, particularly for Infant/Toddler care.
2. The second gap is the shortage of qualified child care workers prepared to work in the sector. Low wages, often without benefits, is insufficient incentive to remain in the field. While, in part, this issue can be addressed through better wages and benefits it will also require Selkirk College to provide appropriate and consistent training to ensure an adequate pool of qualified ECE workers.
3. The third gap is in operational funding. The estimated operating budget developed for this feasibility study shows an annual shortfall of \$89,831. This shortfall assumes that the employer community has been engaged to sponsor or guarantee a sufficient number of seats for the centre to be operating at full capacity throughout the year, seven days a week.  
The Province has an opportunity to address this gap by providing additional operating funding to assist with costs during the hours of operation outside the usual weekday hours that most child care centres are open. As demonstrated in the Research Brief contained in Appendix A, where extended hour child care has proven feasible in other parts of Canada and internationally, there is additional operating funding, in most cases, provided by government.
4. The fourth gap is capital funding which can be addressed through a variety of sources, including public funding, foundation and private sector donations as well as potential partnerships with current owners of suitable land and buildings.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This feasibility study demonstrates that there is a distinct need for extended hour child care in a rural resource-based economy requiring a significant component of the workforce to be available to work on shift as well as on a casual, on-call basis. The need and demand study demonstrates that the overall shortage of child care spaces together with the absence of extended hour child care has a direct impact on labour

force participation as well as career advancement for those who remain in the workforce, juggling schedules to look after children.

The need and demand is sufficient to warrant the development of a new licensed extended hour group child care centre. It is financially feasible to operate a centre of this nature with:

- support from local employers through the guarantee or sponsorship of specified numbers of seats at least for the initial five years;
- support from the Province in the form of additional operating funding that recognizes the challenges of providing care outside of regular weekday hours; and
- support from various funding sources and partners to address the initial capital costs of establishing a centre.

### **Next Steps:**

1. Establish a lead agency and working team committed to proceed with further business planning;
2. Secure funding for business planning and development;
3. Confirm preferred location and explore potential partnerships related to land and building ownership;
4. Work with local employers to explore the feasibility of corporate sponsorship of partially-used or casual spaces, particularly during the first five years of operation;
5. Work with the Province of B.C. to explore the feasibility of enhanced operational funding to address the challenges of operating a facility beyond the usual weekday hours that most child care centres operate;
6. Identify a variety of funding sources to address start up capital requirements;
7. Work with Selkirk College or other post-secondary education providers to plan for the delivery of training to ensure an adequate pool of qualified Early Childhood Education workers.



# Appendix A

Research Development Institute Research Brief:  
Review of Childcare Facilities Providing Extended Hours of Care

# Review of Childcare Facilities providing Extended Hours of Care



RESEARCH BRIEF

## INTRODUCTION

Families requiring childcare outside of a standard Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 6:00pm schedule often have an extremely difficult time accessing regulated childcare. Most families requiring childcare outside of standard hours in Canada, rely on a patchwork of unregulated care such as family, friends, or neighbours either in their own home or in the caregiver's home. This report will provide a scan of some of the regulated program options for extended hours of childcare, sometimes referred to as 'non-standard hours of childcare' within the province of British Columbia, across the country, and in other parts of the world.

## EXTENDED HOURS OF CHILDCARE IN CANADA

A 2015 Canadian study, entitled *Work around the clock: A snapshot of non-standard hours child care in Canada*, documents the dearth of regulated childcare available outside of standard hours, a general lack of knowledge surrounding the need, and an overall absence of data about how much is currently available.<sup>1</sup> The report found that "no province or territory has a comprehensive program or policy to ensure access to non-standard hours of childcare (or childcare of any kind)."<sup>1</sup> BC is one of only three provinces<sup>1</sup> where it is possible to identify the number of childcare providers providing extended hours of care of via an online childcare search. The reality is that there are few possibilities for families to access regulated childcare that provides extended hours of care. A 2017 article from the *Globe and Mail* equated finding non-standard childcare in Canada with finding a "unicorn".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Manitoba and Saskatchewan are the other two.



The 2015 study *Work around the clock: A snapshot of non-standard hours child care in Canada*, included a case study of five childcare services from four provinces. The study found that:

- All non-standard hour programs were somewhat different from their standard day programs, with differences such as less programming, more free-time, multi-age groupings, dinner routines, bedtime routines, and homework support.
- There was an understanding that this was more “care” than an “educational” service.

Factors cited as supporting the success of these programs include:

- Being associated with a larger organization, specifically for the financial and administrative support they provide;
- Having access to a larger cohort of staff; and
- Extra funding, other than parents and regular government funding. Extra funding came from special government funding and employer/union funding.

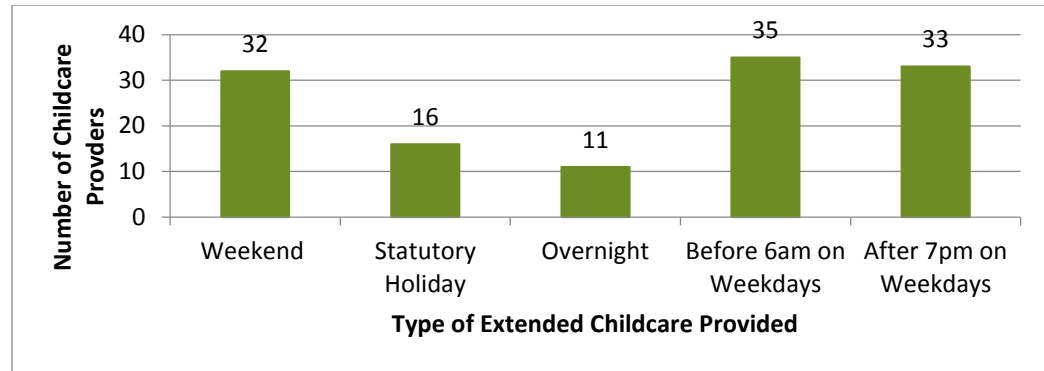
Challenges included:

- Inconsistent usage due to irregular or rotating shifts;
- Affordability;
- Significant administrative and human resources, some quoted as much as 50 percent more administration than regular childcare programs;
- Shift to full day kindergarten is a challenge as the higher ratios for four and five year olds “allowed centres to subsidize of the costs for younger children – and – in this case – the non-standard hours provision;”<sup>1</sup>
- Recruitment of staff willing to work non-standard or irregular hours;
- Maintaining high standards of care;
- Disruption to sleep patterns for school-age children; and
- Challenges for children with ever-changing schedules.

### Childcare in BC

BC is one of only three provinces<sup>1</sup>, where it is possible to identify the number of childcare providers providing extended hours of care through an online search.<sup>3</sup> According to this provincial database, in 2018 there are 4,687 childcare providers registered with the provincial government. Of those, 1.2% or 59 childcare providers offer some form of extended childcare. Extended childcare is defined as childcare that is provided outside of a Monday to Friday, 7am to 6pm scenario. Of those 59, 14 or 24% are licensed group childcare facilities, and 45 or 76% operate as a licensed family childcare.

The most frequently offered form of extended childcare is on weekdays before 6am by 35 childcare providers, followed by 33 childcare providers who offer childcare after 7pm on weekdays. Weekend care is offered by 32 childcare providers, while just 16 offer care on statutory holidays. Just 11 licensed childcare providers across the province offer overnight care.



**Figure 1: Extended Childcare in British Columbia<sup>3</sup>**

Of the 59 childcare providers offering some form of extended hours of care, 26 childcare providers from non-urban parts of BC were contacted to provide insight into the type of extended hours of childcare they provide and some of their program features. 7 childcare providers responded to the request for information. Responses were received from care providers in Williams Lake, Kamloops, Merritt, Tofino, Invermere, Fort St. James, and Prince Rupert. 6 are private licensed family childcare providers while 1 operates as a not-for-profit. All 6 of the private licensed family childcare providers were run by 1 staff only and cared for a maximum of 7 or 8 children at any one time. Four providers access childcare operating funding from the provincial ministry, and four providers also indicated that they accept families who access the government childcare subsidy.

The hours of operations for each childcare provider varied greatly: three of the providers explicitly provide care on Saturdays and two provide care on the weekends as needed when arranged in advance with the family, while 1 childcare provider provides Sunday care during the summer only. Of the 7, only 2 provide care on weekdays only. Just one provider offered overnight care, and charged an extra \$5 per day in addition to the regular daily fee. Hours ranged from 6am – 10:30pm, with 6 of the family childcare providers indicating that the hours were flexible based on the needs of the family. Two of the family childcare providers identified that the long days and lack of breaks were a significant challenge to providing extended hours of care. The one group childcare facility noted that while they would like to offer care on Saturdays, there hasn't been enough demand, and have altered their policy to require a minimum of two children attending in order to offer care on Saturdays. They have found that approximately 50% of their families make use of the extended hours of care available on weekdays (6 am to 9pm).

### Childcare in Alberta

The government of Alberta has created a program that recognises that parents who work or attend classes during evenings or weekends may require additional support for childcare. The Alberta model provides a subsidy of \$100 per month per child, when at least 4 hours of extended hours of care is accessed per month.<sup>4</sup> The program has a number of eligibility requirements, including a qualification based on income. The government also provides general childcare subsidies for lower income families accessing childcare in a variety of licensed or approved childcare facilities, including centres, family care settings, and pre-schools.<sup>5</sup> Additional programs that may support parents seeking childcare outside of regular hours include the [Kin Child Care Funding Program](#); this program provides a maximum of \$200 or \$400 per month depending on the age of the children to relatives not living in the child's home, and is available to low and moderate income earning families.<sup>4</sup>

### Childcare in Manitoba

The province of Manitoba provides “annual operating grants to eligible, licensed, non-profit childcare facilities and sets maximum fee limits for those facilities.”<sup>6</sup> Facilities that receive operating grants, are required to comply with provincial regulations that set out “the maximum fees that can be charged for the type of child care spaces being offered.”<sup>6</sup> Families are also eligible to receive provincial subsidies, and eligibility is based on income, number and age of the children, number of days required for care, and the reason for care.<sup>7</sup>

The [Discovery Children's Centre](#) in Winnipeg is the largest centre for multiple age groups in Winnipeg with 171 licensed spaces serving children from 12 weeks to 12 years old. The centre has been providing extended hours care since 1996, in a program called ‘[Flex Program](#)’. The centre offers childcare for extended (not overnight) hours for children aged 2 – 12, from 6:30 am until 12:30am on weeknights as well as childcare on Saturday until 6:30pm.<sup>8</sup>

The two factors cited for the success of the Discovery Children’s Centre program is the model of government funding the program receives in the form of operating funds and the overall size of the centre.<sup>1</sup> The provincial funding model allows the Discovery Children’s Centre to receive “one and a half times the regular operational funding for each evening space and double the regular operating grant if also opened on the weekends.”<sup>1</sup> This results in funding for the Flex Program that is “twice the amount [of] the regular day spaces.”<sup>1</sup> The additional funding is necessary to sustain the program and was fundamental in the decision to create a Flex Program.<sup>1</sup> Additional funding is used to ensure the program is fully staffed, is able to accommodate urgent requests and unexpected changes, as well as the extra administrative costs of (estimated at 50% more) the Flex Program.<sup>1</sup> The large size of the centre creates built in administrative and staffing support for the higher needs of the Flex Program.

### Childcare in Saskatchewan

[Stepping Stones Child Care Co-operative](#) in Regina, Saskatchewan provides extended hours care from 5:30 AM to midnight every day of the week for children aged 18 months and older in one of their three childcare facilities.<sup>9</sup> The extended hour location gives priority to families who need extended hours care with the assumption that they cannot receive this type of care anywhere else.<sup>1</sup> The co-operative receives extensive external funding which contributes to the success of the extended hours program. Funding is provided by the province through the:

- Early Childhood Service Grant, which provides operating funds to all non-profit childcare providers. In Saskatchewan, childcare centres operating 80 – 120 hours per week receive a higher (+25%) early childhood services grant per space while those operating 120+ hours/week receive an additional 50% of the grant per space;
- Centre Inclusion Block Funding provides funding to enhance child to care provider ratios to facilitate inclusion of children with disabilities in regulated childcare;
- Social Services provides funding for families requiring respite or care while they attend programs/courses; and
- KidsFirst provides respite care for families on an as-needed, pre-booked basis.<sup>1</sup>

### Childcare in Ontario

Two innovative programs were identified in Ontario: A Children’s Place and the Short Term Child Care program with the Andrew Flex Child Care Services, both located in Ottawa. Neither of these programs receive substantial government funding.

[A Children's Place](#) is a non-profit providing extended 24-hour care, seven days a week in two centres. Care is available for a wide range of ages, from infants to school aged children. A Children's Place originally opened to cater for hospital personnel at two nearby hospitals.<sup>8</sup> Priority is given to families who: work shifts or are on call, attend evening school, work part-time, work less than 20 hours per week, or have difficulty securing non-traditional licensed childcare.<sup>10</sup>

The Short Term Child Care (STCC) program provided by [Andrew Fleck Children's Services](#) is also located in Ottawa, Ontario. The program, originally funded by the Ontario government, provides 24 hour emergency childcare for children aged three months to 12 years when they are mildly ill, when regular childcare arrangements are interrupted, or when other family emergencies arise.<sup>11</sup> The service is only available to employees of the organizations that have an arrangement with the STCC program. STCC provides a variety of options for families: providing a caregiver in the child's home, finding space in a licensed home childcare facility, or in a licensed childcare centre. The service is available when a child is mildly ill, regular childcare arrangements are unavailable, school holidays, families requiring childcare due to business trips, evening meetings, family emergencies, or other unplanned events that require temporary back up childcare.<sup>11</sup>

## EXTENDED HOURS OF CHILDCARE - INTERNATIONAL

### Childcare in the United Kingdom

The Childcare Act 2006 mandates local authorities with ensuring the supply of childcare satisfies parental demand, this includes considering the needs of families with irregular work patterns.<sup>12</sup> Some of the practices that have been developed as a result of this legislation include:

- Working with care providers to ensure that they are open by 7:30am – 7pm where there is demand;
- Locating childcare centres in areas where there are a large number of employers who employ staff outside of regular hours, such as hospitals, shopping centres, and airports;
- Sufficient drop-in childcare centres for parents with irregular work patterns;
- Recruitment of childcare providers; and
- Home-based childcare provided by registered caregivers<sup>ii</sup>.

An example of innovation in the provision of flexible childcare is found in one local government; the Brent Council in London created a service to coordinate the provision of flexible childcare for parents working irregular hours, weekends or overnight. The local council ensures that the caregivers providing this service have all of the necessary qualifications, and provides regular assessments.<sup>13</sup> The caregivers provide the service from their own home. A webpage is also available to assist parents in locating and contacting caregivers who offer flexible childcare.<sup>14</sup> As the childcare providers are registered through the local council, parents are able to access the governmental grants and subsidies available.<sup>15</sup>

### Childcare in Australia

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<sup>ii</sup> Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, a government office responsible for the inspection and regulation of services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. This includes registering caregivers.

The Australian government has recently focused on policies to support parents who work non-standard hours or variable hours. A [Child Care Flexibility Trials](#) project was conducted by the Australian Government between 2012 and 2015. The objectives of the project were to:

- gain greater understanding about parents’ and service providers’ perspectives on flexible childcare;
- test the delivery of flexible childcare, with a focus on families whose needs did not fit with standard models of childcare delivery; and to
- explore the level of demand for greater flexibility and whether this demand could be met in the long term in a sustainable and replicable way.<sup>16</sup>

Specific trials for increased flexible childcare were undertaken at family day care centres, “long day care” settings or group childcare facilities, weekend care in centre-based settings, and school holiday care for older children and for children with special needs across the country. The key findings from the trials were:

- “parents’ child care needs and preferences are diverse, so parents need a range of easily accessed child care options;
- identification of demand for flexible care is not straightforward;
- “flexibility” is just one of the characteristics of care that parents look for;
- delivery of a flexible child care solution is dependent on service provider commitment and educator availability; and
- when introducing a new child care option, timing and continuity matters.”<sup>16</sup>

Additional research completed by the University of Queensland in 2016 consulted with family childcare providers to explore whether there was potential increase access to flexible care by delivering more models of flexible care. The findings suggests that while

“families’ demand for more flexible care has increased over time while coordinators’ reports suggest that [family childcare care] educators’ willingness to provide more flexible care has decreased over time in part due to the increased legislative requirements placed on educators who offer 24-hour and overnight care.”<sup>17</sup>

The University of Queensland’s research also included a review of overseas models, but did not find any country that provides a comprehensive strategy to address flexibility in childcare.<sup>17</sup> Innovative models that they identified included: in-home after and before school care, combined group care and nanny services, and emergency care. In-home after and before school care is a model of care where a caregiver is assigned from a childcare service to pick up or drop off the child at school and provide for care in the child’s home. Delivering children to their after school activities is also accommodated. Combined group care and nanny packages are agencies that provide families with nanny care and access to a nursery or playgroup for a single fee, and all childcare providers are employees of the childcare agency. Emergency care is a one-off emergency care service for young and old persons; the agency provides regular care, but also has a program that provides 24/7 emergency care. A key finding of this research, was that more flexible forms of care tend to be either unregulated or very lightly regulated.<sup>17</sup>

The amount of policy, research and data available in Australia regarding childcare is substantially richer than the information available in Canada. For instance, quarterly reports are published by the Australian government and provide detailed data on childcare usage, availability and affordability, and vacancies across the country. Funding for childcare is also different, with the cost of childcare substantially subsidised by the federal government. According to government data, in March of 2017, childcare costs for families earning \$35,000 per year went from 28.3% of

their gross income to 7.6% after government subsidies, and for families earning \$215,000 the cost of childcare went from 9.1% to 4.6% after government subsidies.<sup>18</sup>

### EXTENDED HOURS OF CHILDCARE IN SWEDEN

The model for childcare in Sweden is significantly different than the experience in British Columbia. Every child is entitled to a space in childcare and fees are based on the number of children they have and a percent of their income to a maximum of 3%.<sup>1</sup> While there is a national requirement for local governments to meet the childcare requirements of the families in their communities, this requirement does not extend to providing childcare during “inconvenient” or non-standard work hours. Notwithstanding this, access to licensed non-standard hours of childcare is significantly easier in Sweden than in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

### CONCLUSION

There are many factors which impact a childcare providers willingness and ability to provide extended hours of childcare. The current model in the province of BC appears to indicate that in the rare instances when regulated extended childcare is offered, it is done so predominantly by licensed family childcare providers in order to meet the needs of families in their care. Recent Australian research shows that the individual scenarios surrounding flexible or extended hours of childcare is complicated and is subject to many variables such as cost, needs, availability, and models of care, from both the families and childcare providers perspective. The regulatory and funding climates appear to be key factors in determining the viability of providing extended hours of care.

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# Appendix B

## Employee Survey



## Employee Survey

**The Skills Centre is seeking information from individuals who have a current or anticipated need for child care for whom they have responsibility, whether as a parent, guardian or other role (such as grandparent, neighbour or friend). If this fits you, please complete the following survey. Thank you.**

\* 1. Who is your employer?

- Interior Health Authority
- Teck Metals Ltd.

\* 2. Which community do you live in?

- Trail/Warfield
- Rossland
- Beaver Valley
- Castlegar

Other (please specify)

\* 3. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- LBGTQIA

\* 4. What is your age range?

- Under 25
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 plus

\* 5. Which of the following describes your interest in this survey?

- Parent, guardian or primary caregiver
- Other family member to children who require child care
- Future parent

Other (please specify)

6. What are the current ages of the children for whom you have responsibility (primary or occasional) to provide care? (select all that apply)

- 0 - 2 years of age
- 3 - 4 years of age
- School age (5 - 12)

7. Do you have a child/children who require special needs child care?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify age(s).

\* 8. In which communities do you currently access child care? (Check all that apply)

- Trail/Warfield
- Rossland
- Beaver Valley
- Castlegar
- None

Other (please specify)

\* 9. In which communities would you access child care? (Check all that apply)

- Trail/Warfield
- Rossland
- Beaver Valley
- Castlegar
- None

Other (please specify)

10. Please indicate the child care schedule you need.

	Mon - Fri Full day	Saturday / Sunday	Variable days (4 X 4)	Casual / Drop-in Coverage	Overnight	Early morning	Early evening	School Breaks Including summer
Child 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

11. If you need early morning child care, what is the start time you need?

12. If you need early evening child care, what do you require for pick up time?

\* 13. What are your priorities when choosing child care? (Select all that are applicable)

- Hours of service
- Quality of care
- Cost of child care
- Support for special needs

Other (please specify)

\* 14. What are the challenges you experience accessing child care? (Select all that are applicable)

- Hours of service
- Quality of care
- Lack of space
- Cost of child care
- Lack of coverage for casual/irregular hours
- Support for special needs

Other (please specify)

15. In the last three years, have you or your partner decided not to seek employment because of the lack of extended hour child care?

- Yes
- No

16. In the last three years, have you or your partner decided to leave the workforce because of the lack of extended hour child care?

- Yes
- No

17. In the last three years, have you or your partner declined a job offer because of the lack of extended hour child care?

- Yes
- No

18. In the last three years, have you or your partner decided not to pursue other career opportunities because of the lack of extended hour child care?

- Yes
- No

19. In the last three years, have you or your partner decided not to return to work following parental leave due to the lack of extended hour child care?

Yes

No





# Appendix C

## Child Care Provider Survey



**The Skills Centre is seeking information from service providers who currently care for children in the region. If this fits you, please complete the following survey. Thank you.**

1. What type(s) of child care do you provide? (Select all that apply.)

- Licensed group  Preschool
- Licensed family  Before and/or after school program
- License-not-required family  School Break program (Christmas, Spring and Summer Breaks)

2. How many children are in your child care program?

0-3 years

3-5 years

School age (5 - 12)

3. How many children are on your wait list?

0-3 years

3-5 years

School age (5 - 12)

4. What is the cost for the parents/primary caregivers?

Monthly rate

Full date rate

After school rate

Before school rate

School break rate

5. What is your current opening time?

6. What is your current closing time?

7. If you do not already do so, would you have an interest in offering any of the following extended services? (Select all that apply.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early morning (prior to 7 am) | <input type="checkbox"/> Casual - Drop In services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Late afternoon (after 5 pm)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas break           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekends                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Spring break              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Summer break              |

8. What is preventing you from offering the above extended hour services? (Select all that apply.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of qualified staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Operating costs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to training              | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital costs   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regulations                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Space           |

Other (please specify)

9. What is the average hourly rate paid to your employees?

- \$14 - \$17/hour
- \$18 - \$23/hour
- \$24 and above

10. What benefits do you provide your employees?

- Sick leave
- BC Medical
- Extended Health
- Dental
- Short term disability
- Long term disability
- Pension plan/RRSPs

11. Are you experiencing a shortage of qualified staff?

- Yes
- No