



Richmond Mayor & Councillors
City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC, V6Y 2C1

SENT BY EMAIL ONLY

February 21, 2024

Dear Mayor Brodie and Councillors

Re: City of Richmond Child Care Strategy Update

This submission is sent on behalf of the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition (RPRC) to provide observations and recommendations on the Child Care Strategy Update.

The RPRC is *'a coalition of Richmond residents and agencies working together to reduce poverty and the impacts of poverty with research, projects, and public education.'* Our members include numerous individuals as well as 11 Richmond organizations that provide services and programs to Richmond residents, including working families with children requiring childcare.

The RPRC commends the City of Richmond's vision for a comprehensive childcare system and encouraging the development of programs that provide a continuum of care for children from birth to 12 years, especially infant and toddler and school age care spaces.¹ The RPRC recognizes that Richmond has made significant progress on childcare in the last 30 years, including providing more programs with \$10 a day childcare.

However, a Canada-wide study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) reported on various Canadian cities and their progress in reducing fees by 50%, stating *'the expansion of \$10-a-day spaces was much more limited in Richmond, Burnaby, Surrey and Kelowna. Kelowna was close to the target in its under-three category, but the other three cities fell far short of the 50 % target across all age categories.'*²

The RPRC policy pillar on childcare promotes affordability, accessibility and quality programs. We desire a future where all childcare programs are \$10 a day, sufficient spaces are accessible, and people who want to work in childcare have access to training and adequate compensation.

Our membership is also concerned that other non-childcare organizations requiring workers trained in ECE will be at a disadvantage in recruitment and retention as they grapple with wage parity issues due to government ECE wage enhancement for ECE's working in childcare settings.

¹ <https://www.richmond.ca/shared/assets/childcareneedsassessstrat202266553.PDF>

² <https://monitormag.ca/reports/measuring-matters/>

Regarding Affordability: Richmond now has about 620 childcare spaces at \$10 a day in 13 childcare centres, including all six childcare centres in the society of Richmond Society of Child Care Centres.³ Seven other Richmond childcare programs, including four not-for-profits and three for-profit centres also receive funding to achieve \$10 a day childcare.

The RPRC recommends the City of Richmond:

- actively support the implementation of a universal, publicly funded childcare system,
- work towards transitioning all interested childcare programs in Richmond to \$10 a day,
- encourage all not-for-profit centres in Richmond to join the Richmond Society of Child Care Centres,
- advocate to senior levels of government for a comprehensive plan for public and not-for-profit childcare expansion,
- advocate to the provincial government for wage parity for ECE workers in non-childcare settings (such as Family Resource Centres).

Regarding Accessibility, the City's vision is to create childcare hubs and co-locate spaces with community facilities and focus on improving the availability of childcare spaces for infants and toddlers, school-age children, and children who require extra support. Parents on low-income and other diverse populations and caregivers should have input on changing accessibility needs.⁴ Parents need access to a clear and current map of childcare programs on the City's website.⁵

The RPRC recommends the City of Richmond:

- make available City-owned land for additional child care programs and co-locate centres with affordable housing developments,
- work with the School Board to expand school age care in elementary schools and care for children who require extra supports,
- develop and make easily accessible, a current map to find childcare in Richmond,
- advocate to senior levels of government to stabilize existing \$10 a day programs with sufficient operating funds to provide flexible care for parents working non-standard hours,
- advocate to senior levels of government for a Child Care advisory body with low-income and other parents and caregivers to provide ongoing input into a universal childcare system.

Regarding Quality, the City states it is committed to work with all partners to plan, develop and maintain a quality, affordable and comprehensive childcare system in Richmond. The City's Child Care Development Policy⁶ recognizes that quality and affordable childcare is an essential service in the community for residents, employers, and employees. A

³ <https://richmondchildcare.org/>

⁴ <https://assets.nationbuilder.com/singlemothersalliancebc/pages/1366/attachments/original/1702845604/2311-CFE-whole-life-report-digital.pdf>

⁵ <https://maps.richmond.ca/RCC/>

⁶ https://www.richmond.ca/_shared/assets/update_child_care_development_policy55115.pdf

comprehensive childcare system should also include funding for administrative and supervisory roles Early Childhood Educators (ECE) can focus on childcare.

The RPRC recommends the City of Richmond:

- advocate to the provincial government for additional ECE training seats and province-wide wage equity including improvements to benefits, pensions and working conditions of all childcare workers in BC,
- advocate to senior levels of government for funding for appropriate administrative support in centres so childcare educators can focus on childcare duties,
- highlight the need for all families to have equitable and barrier-free access to comprehensive, quality, and culturally responsive childcare.
- work with local businesses to improve the availability of quality childcare for employees working in Richmond.

In closing, at the municipal level the RPRC recognizes the City's high level of achievement in the planning, developing, and advising on Richmond's child care needs.

The RPRC recommends the City of Richmond:

- provide ongoing funding and sufficient operational support for the City's Child Care Development Advisory Committee⁷,
- provide sufficient funding to enable the Child Care Development Reserve fund and Child Care Operating Reserve Fund to respond to emerging community needs.

Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact the undersigned at de_whalen@hotmail.com or at 604.230.3158.

Sincerely,

Deirdre Whalen
President, RPRC

cc. RPRC Directors

⁷ <https://www.richmond.ca/culture/social/child-care/childcareadvisorycommittee.htm>