



# ACTION PLAN! CHILD CARE

## Squamish Child Care Action Plan



**Final Report | May 19, 2020**

*Including Addenda October 2020*

[www.squamish.ca/childcare](http://www.squamish.ca/childcare)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This final report is the result of a year-long community-based collaborative to develop tangible actions to improve the access rate for affordable, accessible and high-quality child care in Squamish. It was made possible and enriched through the involvement of many engaged, passionate, caring Squamish community members brimming with creative ideas. Thank you Squamish!

Special thank you to the following people for providing leadership, expertise, and support throughout the project:

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Prepared for the District of Squamish by  
Torill Gillespie, Community Planning Consultant

[Cover photo with permission by Torill Gillespie](#)

# Squamish Child Care Action Plan

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## INTRODUCTION

This plan is an update and companion document to the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023. It builds on the Needs Assessment by:

- Refining child care targets for the next 5-10 years, with focus on the number of spaces needed by age group, by neighbourhood and location, hours of operation, and program supports needed to better serve underserved populations; and
- Identifying organizational leadership, critical partnerships, and required resources to improve and sustain child care access rates in line with demonstrated needs.

The Needs Assessment & Strategy set a vision for child care in Squamish:

***Squamish families have access to a range of affordable, accessible, high quality child care options that meet the demand throughout the community and support children's healthy development.***

This vision and the guiding principles of **shared leadership and collaboration**, **focus on equity**, and **meaningful community engagement** were drivers for the analysis and actions included in this report.

Pink quotes throughout were collected as part of community engagement.

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

The first part of this plan is a refined, detailed summary of the current state of child care in Squamish and projected future needs. The following topics are addressed in this section:

- Number of licensed spaces;
- Assessment of the sufficiency of the current number of licensed spaces, in the context of Squamish's growing child population and unique demographics, and affordability challenges;
- Child care staffing challenges;
- Location of licensed child care spaces;
- Travel patterns and location of licensed child care spaces by neighbourhood;
- Colocation of child care spaces;
- Hours of operation;
- Meeting the child care needs of underserved populations;
- Economic impact, with focus on women; and
- Projected future licensed child care space needs.

## PART 2: ACTIONS

The second part of this plan focuses on tangible, actionable strategies for advancing the highest priority recommendations in the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023. Actions included:

- Implement preliminary amenity space creation guidelines,
- Provide affordable housing for Early Childhood Educators,
- Update District of Squamish resources and requirements,
- Provide child-minding service,
- Improve middle years (ages 7-12) programming, and
- Build partnership between the District of Squamish and School District 48.

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

### NUMBER OF LICENSED SPACES

There are an estimated 3,894 children aged 0-12 living in Squamish<sup>1</sup>. As of September 2019, there were 817 licensed child care spaces in Squamish, for an overall access rate of 21%.

The child care access rate in Squamish varies greatly by age group (Table 1). There are licensed child care spaces for approximately 20% of infants and toddlers (aged 12-30 months) and 41% of 3-5 year olds. Licensed out-of-school care is available for 10% of school-aged children (5-12 years).

**Table 1: Squamish Child Care Access Rate by Age Group (Sept 2019).**

Age Range	Age Range Total*	Number of Spaces	Child Care Access Rate
Infants and Toddlers (12-30 months)	478**	96***	20%
Preschool Age, including part-day Preschool (30-60 months)	1010	516	51%
Preschool Age, excluding part-day Preschool**** (30-60 months)	1010	414	41%
School Aged Children (5-12 years)	2117	205	10%
<b>Total Child Population (0-12 years)</b>	<b>3894</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>21%</b>

\* 2019 population estimate based on Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016002, and average annual growth rate for 0-12 population between 2006 and 2016 of 3.5%.

\*\* Assumes no under 1s are in licensed care by excluding this population from the Infant/Toddler age category.

\*\*\* Assumes 1/4 of FCC and Multi-Age spaces are occupied by children less than 30 months of age.

\*\*\*\* "Preschool" programs typically run part-time, from 1 to 4 hours/day.

***"My child has been on waitlists since 2 months of age. She's 15 months old now and I'm told that there should be a space available in 2021. At the moment, for me to work (I'm a recently single, full-time working mom who commutes everyday), I have to pay for a lady in my building to have my child in the mornings, and then I try to find different people each afternoon to look after my precious child. This is incredibly stressful and expensive to the point where I don't know what to do."***

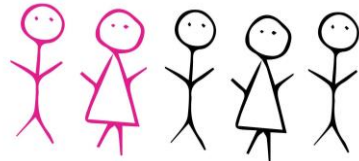
<sup>1</sup> 2019 population estimate based on Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016002, and average annual growth rate for 0-12 population between 2006 and 2016 of 3.5%.

*In Squamish there are...*

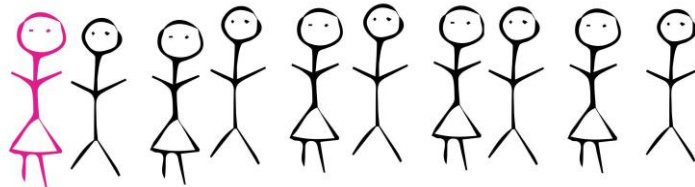
...licensed full-time spaces for **one in five** kids aged 12 to 30 months.



...licensed full-time spaces for **fewer than half** of kids aged 3-5 years.



...licensed out-of-school care spaces for **one in ten** school-aged kids.



*“I didn’t see this coming when we moved to Squamish; I thought it couldn’t be as bad a Vancouver. We would have reconsidered moving to Squamish. We might have to consider leaving.”*

*“I’m concerned about unsafe care situations that people have to resort to.”*

*“I’m starting to ask, is Squamish worth it?”*

## SUFFICIENCY OF LICENSED SPACES

There is a shortage of child care across BC. The situation is particularly challenging in Squamish for a number of reasons, many of which are related to population growth and/or demographics, or affordability:

<b>Growth and Demographics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rapid population growth</li><li>• High percentage of children relative to other age groups</li><li>• High migration rates and lack of extended family</li><li>• High educational attainment and labour force participation rate</li></ul>
<b>Affordability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High housing cost</li><li>• Low rental vacancy</li><li>• High cost of child care space</li><li>• Staff shortage</li></ul>

Squamish’s overall child care access rate of 21% is similar to that of many other BC communities, but the numbers do not tell the whole story. Squamish’s unique demographics and affordability challenges result in high need for child care, much of which is currently unmet and will require significant action to improve as the child population in Squamish continues to grow.

This section focuses on details regarding the connections between Squamish’s rapid growth and demographic context, affordability challenges, and child care needs.

### Utilization Rate

The Ministry of Children and Family Development collects information about spare capacity in licensed child care spaces to use as a proxy indicator for the appropriateness of the amount of child care spaces available by region. Utilization rates in 2017/2018 for the North Shore/Squamish region were categorized as “Generally Difficult to Find Care” for infants/toddlers and “Some Difficulty Finding Care” for 3-5 year olds<sup>2</sup>.

Unfortunately, regional utilization rates do not provide meaningful insight into what is happening at the local level. For example, in Squamish, there are frequently vacancies shown for infant/toddler spaces<sup>3</sup>. When contacted, child care providers indicate that these vacancies do not mean that space is available; they actually indicate a staff shortage that limits the number of spaces that can be filled. In June and October 2019, child care facilities showing vacancies for infants/toddlers were contacted. In all cases, “vacancies” were explained as the result of staff shortage and no spaces were available, meaning that the actual utilization rate for licensed infant/toddler spaces in Squamish was 100%.

<sup>2</sup> <https://mcfcd.gov.bc.ca/reporting/services/early-years/performance-indicators>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://maps.gov.bc.ca/ess/hm/ccf/>.



# PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

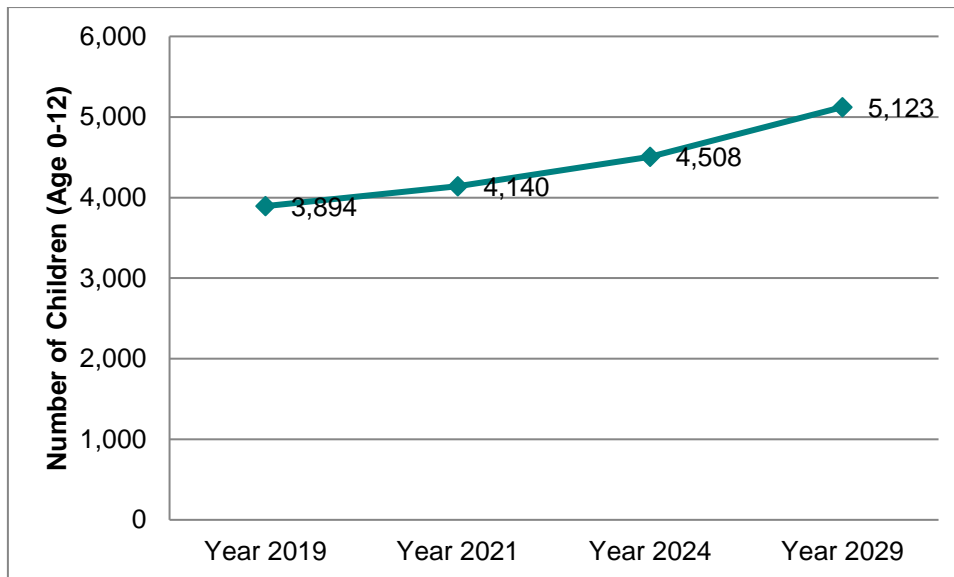
## GROWTH AND DEMOGRAPHICS

### Squamish's Growing Child Population

Squamish is one of the youngest and fastest growing communities in BC. Between 2006 and 2016, the District of Squamish grew by an average of 2.4% per year<sup>4</sup>. During the same time period, the average annual growth rate for children aged 0-12 in Squamish was 3.5%. The growth rate for children aged 0-5 over the same time period was even higher: an average of 5.2% per year. While the overall annual growth rate for Squamish has eased in recent years<sup>5</sup>, this project assumes Squamish's child population growth will continue to outpace provincial averages and has set a growth rate of 3.5% every year for the foreseeable future.

In Squamish, 19.7% of our population is aged 0-14 years, which is considerably higher than the provincial average of 14.9% for this age group<sup>6</sup>.

**GRAPH 1: Projected Child Population (Ages 0-12) for 2019, 2021, 2024, and 2029.**



<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Squamish [Census agglomeration], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> BC Stats. January 24, 2020. 2019 Sub-Provincial Population Estimates Highlights. [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/data/statistics/people-population-community/population/pop\\_sub-provincial\\_population\\_highlights.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/data/statistics/people-population-community/population/pop_sub-provincial_population_highlights.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Squamish [Census agglomeration], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

### Migration and Social Connections

Statistics Canada found BC ranks 9<sup>th</sup> amongst Canadian provinces for the percentage of people who have at least 5 close relatives<sup>7</sup>. Squamish is a young, fast-growing community, with correspondingly high migration rates. The 2016 Census found that 49.6% of Squamish residents had moved from one residence to another within the preceding five years (compared to 42.6% for the province overall). Of these “movers”, 18% moved to Squamish from elsewhere in BC, 4.7% moved from another province, and 4.3% from outside Canada<sup>8</sup>. High migration rates indicate a large number of new Squamish residents who may lack the social connections that develop in communities over time. Therefore, not only do many families in Squamish not live near grandparents or other family members who might otherwise be able to help with child care, they may also be new to the community and may not have informal friend networks to lean on.

Social connections in Squamish are related to child care in another way – they can help in the search for child care. Because there is such shortage of child care and maintaining waitlists can be a burden for child care providers, vacancies are sometimes filled through word of mouth. This may be a barrier to entry for families new to Squamish. It also has the potential to make finding child care even more challenging for underserved populations, unless they have access to support through services such as Supported Child Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development. Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) services can also help to break down barriers to access for families who seek assistance.

**“The only reason I have daycare is because I’ve been in Squamish for eight years and I have some connections. You have to pull all the strings you can.”**

Improving equity of access in a rapidly growing community with a high migration rate is challenging. Other Canadian communities have attempted to address this challenge by providing a centralized waitlist<sup>9</sup>. This option has not been considered in Squamish because it would require a high percentage of buy-in from local providers who are already facing administrative burdens, and operating waitlists is expensive. It is recommended that focus instead be on opening new licensed child care spaces. Easing the child care shortage will improve the situation for all Squamish families, regardless of their social connections and any other barriers to accessing child care they may face.

#### **Not All Child Care Providers Use Waitlists**

Child care programs manage waitlists in various ways. Some facilities have their own waitlist policies, and others, as private businesses, manage waitlists in their own ways. For example, some providers interview families to determine if the arrangement would be a good fit for the child and program, and some implement a trial period to test things out. Others may make decisions based on scheduling needs.

<sup>7</sup> Sinha, M., Statistics Canada, (2014). *Canadians' connections with family and friends*.

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Squamish [Census agglomeration], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the City of Ottawa, City of Kingston and County of Frontenac, Province of Manitoba.

### Educational Attainment and Labour Force Participation

Across nearly every category of educational attainment, Squamish residents compare favourably to that of the overall BC population. For example, 27.1% of Squamish residents hold a university certificate, diploma, or degree, compared to 24.6% of BC residents overall<sup>10</sup>. Squamish residents are also less likely to have no certificate, diploma, or degree (12.8%) than the overall BC population (15.5%).

The labour force participation rate in Squamish (75.5%) is also higher than the overall BC participation rate (63.9%)<sup>11</sup>. The high educational attainment and labour force participation rate in Squamish indicate high need for child care – to enable Squamish’s well-educated population to get to work and continue to work.

### AFFORDABILITY

#### Cost of Living

Squamish is an expensive place to live. The high cost of living in Squamish presents challenges for families and child care providers alike. There are many ways that affordability is connected to child care in Squamish, including:

- Scarcity and high cost of housing increase cost of living.
- Child care enables parents to work; more child care is needed to enable parents to work more in communities such as Squamish that have a high cost of living.
- High wages are needed to afford housing in Squamish, often higher than the \$18.12/hour that Early Childhood Educators and Assistants in Squamish earn on average<sup>12</sup>.
- Child care space can be expensive to own or lease in Squamish; this can especially impact programs with infants/toddlers, which are significantly more costly to operate.
- The BC Affordable Child Care Benefit and Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative have increased affordability of child care for BC families, but the cost of care and administrative requirements of these programs can still be a barrier to families. These programs also add to the administrative burden of child care providers.
- Higher subsidies are available for licensed child care than Licence not Required, Registered Licence not Required, and in-child’s-own-home care, but shortage of licensed spaces means the more highly subsidized spaces are often unavailable to Squamish families.
- When child care costs are high, it can make the decision to return to work more challenging for parents who work in low wage industries, such as child care.
- Wages can be higher in the city, so when families need extra income to afford child care, they might choose employment opportunities outside of Squamish, resulting in lost local economic potential.

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<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Squamish [Census agglomeration], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> EMSI 2019.3.

### Affording Squamish

- An Early Childhood Educator/Assistant in Squamish earning an average wage of \$18.12/hour<sup>13</sup>, working 40 hours/week earns \$3,140/month. If affordable housing costs less than 30% of this monthly income, it means \$940/month is available to pay for housing. A one-bedroom private apartment rental in Squamish averages \$1,128/month<sup>14</sup>, and would therefore not be affordable for an Early Childhood Educator/Assistant earning an average wage.
- Nearly half of the licensed infant/toddler spaces in Squamish are located in family or multi-age daycares located in residential homes. The average assessed value of a detached, single unit home in Squamish in 2019 was \$930,000<sup>15</sup>, which is an increase of 54% since 2015<sup>16</sup>. This rapid increase in housing value is a barrier to entry for potential new family child care providers.
- In the case of an *au pair*, families typically provide room and board (for a fee), in addition to an hourly wage, which means that they must have at least a spare bedroom available. This is not a luxury all families have access to, especially given the high cost of housing in Squamish and higher density/smaller unit size of newer housing stock. It also sometimes means forgoing rental income that families could otherwise earn with extra space in their homes.

***“We live in a townhouse with our baby, and we have a roommate. If we hire an au pair, we lose the ability to have a roommate and the majority of my income would go to paying for the au pair.”***

***“When you have to rely on one income, Squamish is not affordable. We’re thinking about leaving.”***

***“The lack of child care is limiting our ability to have a bigger family – we can’t grow our family and afford to be here (with one income).”***

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<sup>13</sup> EMSI 2019.3.

<sup>14</sup> CMHC, January 15, 2020, Rental Market Report Data Tables – British Columbia, <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/data-and-research/data-tables/rental-market-report-data-tables>.

<sup>15</sup> BC Assessment, January 2, 2020, Lower Mainland Property Assessments in the Mail, <https://info.bcasessment.ca/news/Pages/Lower-Mainland-2020-Property-Assessments-in-the-Mail.aspx>.

<sup>16</sup> District of Squamish, July 2018, Community Housing Needs Assessment.

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

### Child Care Staffing

A living wage estimate for Squamish has not yet been calculated, but the minimum hourly amount a family of four in Metro Vancouver needs in order to cover basic expenses is a good proxy: \$19.50/hour, which assumes two parents, both working full-time<sup>17</sup>. In Squamish, the median hourly wage for Early Childhood Educators and Assistants is \$18.12<sup>18</sup>. The mismatch between the level of education required of Early Childhood Educators and other child care workers and their wages is compounded in Squamish by high cost of living, especially lack of affordable housing.

In Squamish, at least two licensed child care providers closed their doors permanently in 2019 due to staff shortage. Other providers report struggling constantly to maintain minimum staff numbers to meet licensing requirements and remain open.

***“Staff shortages impact programming and quality of care. You have to maintain higher staff to children ratios than the minimum required by licensing in order to offer high quality programming and to keep staff from burning out.”***

### Access to Education

In September 2019, Capilano University launched an Early Childhood Education program based in Squamish. To date, funding for a one-time intake for this program has been provided by the province to Capilano University. There is strong support for this program throughout Squamish, and desire to see funding provided to enable new student intake annually.

## LOCATION OF SPACES

### Residential or Non-Residential Facility?



Every child care centre is different and there are many categories of licences, but all licensed child care can be broadly grouped into two categories according to whether they are located within a family home or elsewhere on a residential property, or in a stand-alone non-residential facility.

In Squamish, there is currently heavy reliance on licensed child care located in residential homes or on residential properties, especially for infants/toddlers. 42% of the licensed spaces for infants/toddlers in Squamish are located in residential homes.

<sup>17</sup> Ivanova, I. (2019). *Working for a living wage 2019: Making paid work meet basic family needs in Metro Vancouver*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

<sup>18</sup> EMSI 2019.3.

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

**TABLE 2: Licensed Squamish Child Care Facilities Located in Family Homes and Non-Residential Centres.**

Age Range	Age Range Total (2019 estimate)	Total # of Spaces (Sept 2019)	% of Spaces (family home)	% of Spaces (non-residential)
Infants and Toddlers (12-30 months)	478	96	42%	58%
Preschool Age, including part-day Preschool (30-60 months)	1010	516	28%	72%
Preschool Age, excluding part-day Preschool (30-60 months)	1010	414	35%	65%
School Aged Children (5-12 years)	2117	205	0%	100%
<b>Total Child Population (0-12 years)</b>	<b>3894</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>77%</b>

*\*2019 population estimate based on Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016002, and average annual growth rate for 0-12 population between 2006 and 2016 of 3.5%.*

### Age Groups - Maintaining Balance

Nearly half of the licensed infant/toddler spaces currently in Squamish are in family or multi-age daycares located in residential homes. Family child care licenses permit up to 7 children. Depending on the age composition, provincial regulations specify that typically only 4 of the 7 spaces can be used by children under 48 months, and only 2 of those spaces can be for children under 24 months. As a result, family daycares need to have a range of ages of children in their care in order to fill their spaces and make it a viable business.

In order to support these small businesses, which are so essential for infant and toddler care in Squamish, there needs to be balance in the way that new spaces are opened in the community. For example, if too many preschool age spaces become available, it has the potential to make it harder for family daycares to fill all of their spaces, which could mean a loss of infant/toddler spaces if family daycares cannot make ends meet.

When making plans for new child care spaces, needs for each age group/license type must be considered, since the current access rates vary greatly by group, and upsetting the balance could have the unintended consequence of making the situation worse for infants/toddlers - the age for which care is most needed.

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

### Travel Patterns

The vast majority of Squamish families use personal vehicles for travel to and from child care (82.8%); very few families walk (7.1%), bike (3.4%), carpool (1.0%), or use public transport (0.7%) to access child care<sup>19</sup>.



Young children have specific travel needs that can affect the travel modes families choose, and constraints to using alternative transport are often the greatest for families with young children. Improving the ability of families to choose sustainable transportation modes during early child-rearing years, when it's generally most difficult to do so, could have significant long-term benefits – not only in reducing the negative externalities of car dependence, but also in helping people change their travel behavior over the longer term<sup>20</sup>. Owning private vehicles is also a financial burden, and car-dependent families miss out on opportunities to gain incidental physical activity, which contributes to worsening health outcomes.

**“No one gets to choose where in Squamish their child care is, you have to take anything you're offered and just find a way to get there.”**

### Licensed Spaces by Neighbourhood

Ideally, Squamish families would be able to access child care in proximity to home, work, school, or other places or services they regularly travel to. As the child care access rate in Squamish improves, the location of new child care spaces will become more important. Currently, there is shortage everywhere – no particular neighbourhood or geographic area stands out as either especially lacking or over-served.

The largest Squamish neighbourhoods with the most children aged 0-12 are shown in the table below, along with the number of licensed child care spaces in the neighbourhood<sup>21</sup>. Neighbourhoods are further grouped into two larger geographical areas – Squamish North (all neighbourhoods located north of the Mamquam River) and Squamish South (all neighbourhoods located south of the Mamquam River).

<sup>19</sup> Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023, Parent Survey.

<sup>20</sup> Laura McCarthy, Alexa Delbosc, Graham Currie & Andrew Molloy (2017) Factors influencing travel mode choice among families with young children (aged 0–4): a review of the literature, *Transport Reviews*, 37:6, 767-781.

<sup>21</sup> The boundaries of Squamish neighbourhoods used in this report correspond to the Squamish Evacuation Zones defined in the Sea to Sky Multimodal Evacuation Plan. [https://squamish.ca/assets/SEP/4841668f91/Evacuation\\_Zones\\_and\\_Muster\\_Points-interactive.pdf](https://squamish.ca/assets/SEP/4841668f91/Evacuation_Zones_and_Muster_Points-interactive.pdf).

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

**TABLE 3: Number and Population Percentage of Children 0-12 (2016) and Licensed Child Care Spaces (Sept 2019) by Neighbourhood.**

<b>Neighbourhood*</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Children 0-12 (2016)</b>	<b>Percentage of Population Aged 0-12 (2016)</b>	<b>Licensed Child Care Spaces (Sept 2019)</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Access Rate</b>
<b>Brackendale</b>	638	19.0%	119	19%
<b>Garibaldi Highlands</b>	724	19.9%	96	13%
<b>Garibaldi Estates East</b>	351	15.8%	136	39%
<b>Garibaldi Estates West</b>	409	18.0%	85	21%
<b><i>Total: Squamish North</i></b>	<b>2122</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Northyards</b>	202	18.1%	21	10%
<b>Dentville</b>	202	16.5%	39	19%
<b>Loggers Lane East</b>	63	24.2%	58	92%
<b>Valleycliffe</b>	463	18.0%	130	28%
<b>Downtown</b>	319	13.9%	81	25%
<b><i>Total: Squamish South</i></b>	<b>1249</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>31%</b>

\* Please note that significant population growth has occurred in some neighbourhoods since the last Census in 2016, which has not been estimated.



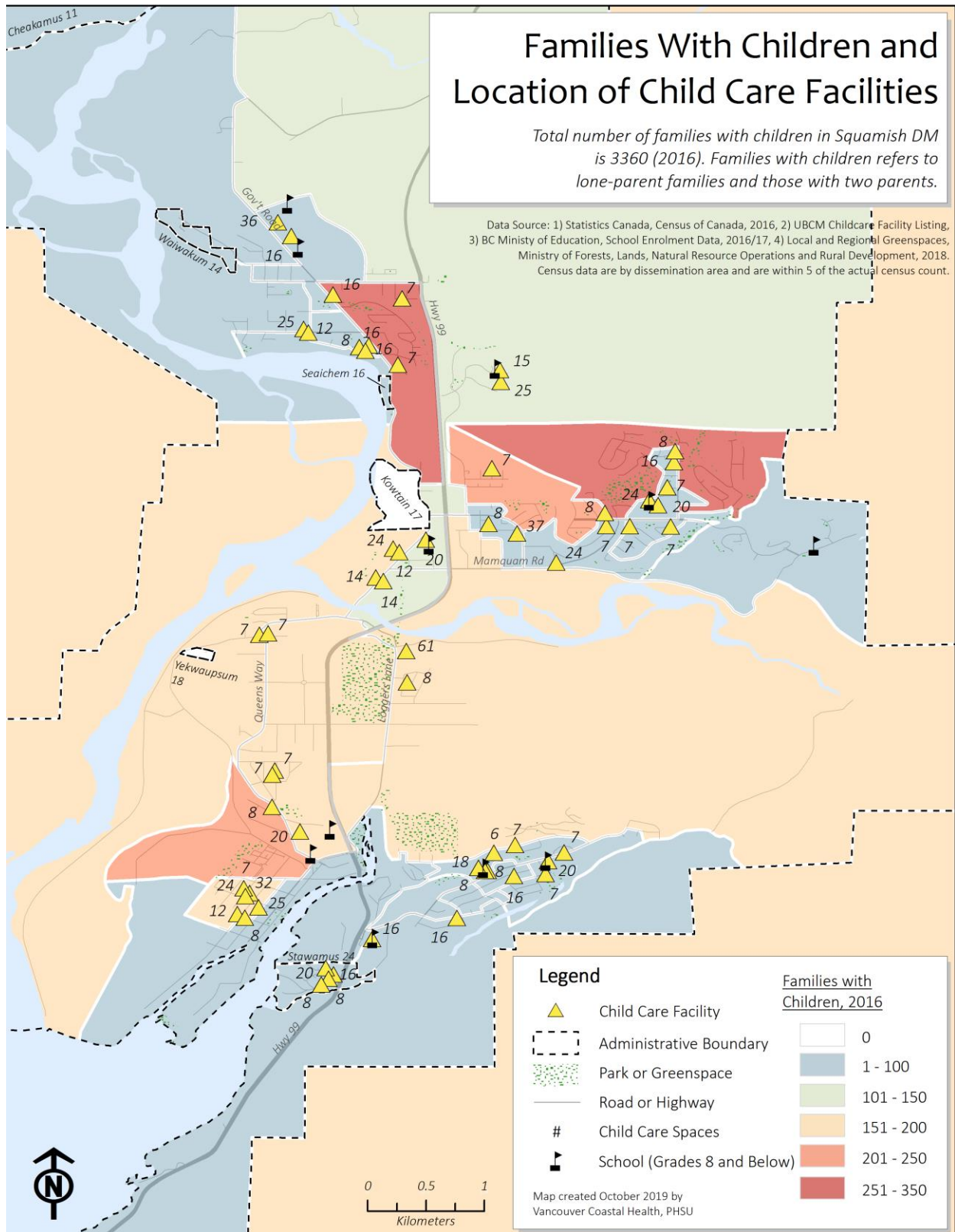
## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

The number of spaces by child care licence type are summarized on the table below, for each Squamish neighbourhood, as well as larger geographic area. Child care spaces by licence type are currently well-distributed across Squamish.

**TABLE 4: Number of Child Care Spaces by Licence Type (Sept 2019), by Neighbourhood.**

<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Family Child Care</b>	<b>In-Home Multi-Age Child Care</b>	<b>Multi-Age Child Care</b>	<b>Group Child Care (under 36 months)</b>	<b>Group Child Care (30 months to school age)</b>	<b>Preschool</b>	<b>Group Child Care (school age)</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Brackendale</b>	14	0	16	12	41	16	20	119
<b>Garibaldi Highlands</b>	21	23	8	0	0	20	24	96
<b>Garibaldi Estates East</b>	7	0	0	12	74	8	35	136
<b>Garibaldi Estates West</b>	0	0	0	12	39	14	20	85
<b>Total – Squamish North</b>	42	23	24	36	154	58	99	436
<b>Northyards</b>	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
<b>Dentville</b>	7	0	0	12	0	0	20	39
<b>Loggers Lane East</b>	0	0	0	0	58	0	0	58
<b>Valleycliffe</b>	28	0	16	0	8	24	54	130
<b>Downtown</b>	0	0	0	0	57	0	24	81
<b>South Squamish/Stawamus</b>	0	0	0	8	16	20	8	52
<b>Total – Squamish South</b>	56	0	16	20	139	44	106	381
<b>TOTAL - SQUAMISH</b>	98	23	40	56	293	102	205	817

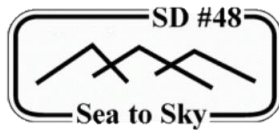
# PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS



22 Map provided by Vancouver Coastal Health.

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

### Colocation



As of September 2019, 172 licensed child care spaces are located on School District 48 property; 120 of these spaces are licensed Group Child Care for school age children and the remaining 52 are part-day Preschool spaces.



Sea to Sky Community Services offers family and child programming at their downtown Squamish location (48024 Fourth Ave). There are 32 licensed spaces for children aged 30 months to school age co-located at this facility. A licensed 24-space school age out-of-school care program also operates in this building.

The Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 recommends prioritizing “new child care facilities in neighbourhoods with high child populations, as well as around existing and future planned family service hubs, schools, seniors’ centres, parks and Brennan Park Recreation Centre to create and strengthen child care hubs across Squamish” (Recommendation 2.2).

#### Child Care on Public Property

In Squamish, most licensed child care spaces are located on private property. As of September 2019, 27% of licensed spaces were located on publicly owned property:

- District of Squamish property: 50 spaces (6%)
- School District 48 property: 172 spaces (21%)

### HOURS OF OPERATION

A survey conducted as part of the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 found that very few Squamish child care centres are open outside of regular business hours. Of the 21 programs included in the survey, only 1 opened before 7:00 am, and just 2 programs closed after 5:30 pm. The most common opening time was 8:00 am and the most common closing time was 4:30 pm. There are currently no licensed child care providers in Squamish offering care on weekends or overnight. It can be challenging to find child care in Squamish that covers the entirety of typical working hours between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm – and this presents an enormous challenge for single-parent families and families with atypical and/or inflexible schedules.

The unavailability of licensed child care spaces in Squamish with longer opening hours is also challenging for families with parents who commute. Single parent families and families with two parents who commute sometimes have to find care for their children outside of Squamish. The travel is hard on children and parents, and they miss out on opportunities to make social connections in Squamish.

***“We have full-time daycare in West Van. I would like to have care in Squamish, but I would need longer hours in order to cover the commute time.”***

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*“I’ve been on waitlists in Squamish since pregnancy. It was shocking to me that nothing opened up before I went back to work. My son is in full-time daycare in West Vancouver; the commute is a challenge.”*

### **Child Care, Commuting, and the Squamish Economy**

Child care shortage for some Squamish families may also represent lost local economic potential:

- Wages can be higher in the city, so when families need extra income to afford child care, they might choose employment opportunities outside of Squamish.
- If there isn’t child care available in Squamish, families might not be able to even consider local employment possibilities.

## **MEETING THE NEEDS OF UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS**

*“Child care needs to be looked at as a right for all children, the same as school.”*

When child care spaces are scarce, they may be even less available for the families who would benefit from them the most. Increasing the number of child care spaces available would help to improve equity of access. Equity of access can be further increased when creating new spaces by going a step further and applying barrier-reducing measures such as:

- Using alternatives to first-come first-served registration,
- Reducing financial barriers,
- Stopping “pay-to-play” practices (such as when providers accept higher fees from families who can afford it, or require deposits to put children on waitlists or to hold spaces),
- Creating opportunities for colocation with other child and family services,
- Improving cultural safety and humility and increasing indigenous content, and
- Reducing transportation barriers.

These strategies are included in the recommendations in the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023, and are also embedded in the actions in Part 2 of this report.

Implementation of the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 is guided by three principles: shared leadership and collaboration, focus on equity, and meaningful community engagement. Continuing to follow these guiding principles is essential for achieving the vision of affordable, accessible, high quality child care to meet demand throughout the community and support children’s healthy development. In order to support families and children from underserved populations, applying an equity lens to all child care-related decisions is especially critical. Improvements to child care must consider the range of demographic characteristics and systemic barriers that families may face when accessing child care in Squamish.

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### Children with Extra Support Needs

Children with identified extra support needs sometimes end up waiting for two things – extra support staff and licensed child care. There is limited funding available for extra supports and in Squamish there is a waitlist to provide the help children need. If a child with extra support needs does not already have child care and is on a waitlist, they sometimes end up waiting longer for extra support than they would if they already had access to licensed child care. To improve the situation for children with extra support needs, two things are needed:

1. More funding for extra support staff in order to increase availability of extra help and reduce waitlist times, and
2. Better access to licensed child care.

**“I can articulate my needs and advocate for my family, but not everyone can do that.”**

### Cultural Safety

In order to reach underserved populations, Squamish needs accessible, affordable, high quality child care that is inclusive of the diverse population it serves. In particular, there is need for inclusive, culturally safe programming that welcomes First Nations families.

In the summer of 2018, United Way lead the Avenues of Change project with Squamish Nation, with the goal of improving development of children aged 0-6. The following are some suggestions for improvement that came out of this work that are closely related to the provision of child care:

- There is need for cross-pollination between Squamish Nation and non-Squamish Nation programs.
- It would be helpful if a percentage of spots in non-Squamish Nation programs could be held for Squamish Nation members to allow easier access to services; provision of a staff member could help to make sure people feel comfortable and welcome in non-Squamish Nation spaces.
- Families and kids need to feel accepted, secure, and welcome in their community, the place their own ancestors called home.
- Improve cultural teachings so children know their heritage and increase their sense of pride.
- Create safe spaces where indigenous and non-indigenous families can interact and bridge communities.

### Improving Stability of Care

When child care facilities close suddenly, it not only leaves families feeling stressed and scrambling to find new child care, it also breaks bonds children have with their care providers. When families cannot find consistent care, children are sometimes shuffled between different arrangements to try to patch together adequate child care. Research has shown that increases

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

in the number of non-parental child care arrangements a child experiences are related to increases in behavioural problems and decreases in pro-social behaviour<sup>23</sup>.

Licensed child care operators in Squamish struggle to recruit and retain qualified staff and also face affordability challenges given the high cost of real estate ownership and rental in Squamish. These challenges combined have led to the closure of child care facilities, and may contribute to reluctance of some private operators to open in Squamish despite the identified high need for child care in the community.

**“How are children supposed to form caring relationships without stable care? My son will have been in at least 6 daycares by the time he reaches Kindergarten.”**

**“How can children who need extra support be supported when you have no stability of care?”**

### ECONOMIC IMPACT – FOCUS ON WOMEN

“Women are doing much of the organization of care and also trying to be employed. There’s a lack of policy support for families, and sacrificing maternal employment may be the tradeoff. Women reduce their workload, or don’t take a promotion, or take jobs rather than careers, to address child care gaps.”<sup>24</sup>

### Realizing Squamish’s Economic Potential

The District of Squamish’s Economic Development Action Plan 2017-2019 identifies “Continued labour shortage” and “Continued rise in cost of living” as significant risks to achieving desired economic development outcomes. There is unrealized economic potential when women in Squamish are unable to work due to lack of affordable, high quality child care.

**“I’ve had employees who have had to leave because they’ve been unable to find child care and have had general affordability challenges. It causes a lot of stress in the workplace.”**

### Squamish Women and Education

Squamish has a higher than provincial average education rate, and this is particularly true for women. In Squamish, 71% of women aged 25-64 have a post-secondary certificate, degree, or

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<sup>23</sup> Morrissey, T. W. (2009). Multiple child-care arrangements and young childrens behavioral outcomes. *Child Development*, 80(1), 59-76.

<sup>24</sup> Bretkreuz, R., Colen, K., & Horne, R. (2019). Producing the patchwork: The hidden work of mothers in organizing child care. *Journal of Family Studies*, 1-24.

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diploma (this compares to a provincial average of 66% for BC women and 64% for both men and women across BC).<sup>25</sup>

**“It’s such a tragedy to have all these highly educated, motivated women unable to contribute to the economy.”**

**“I have had to scale back to part-time work. Now I’m not getting assigned the project management roles and interesting projects I get excited about, and I’m worried about the impact on my career. My peers who aren’t in this situation are moving ahead of me.”**

**“I now have seen and felt the discrimination that women face in the work force, and how this impacts career goals.”**

### Labour Force Participation

Labour force participation rates in Squamish are lower for women than men – 80.0% of men participate in the labour force, compared to 70.8% of women<sup>26</sup> - and part of the gender gap in labour force participation can be explained by the price and availability of child care<sup>27</sup>. Statistics Canada has found that regions with high child care costs and limited availability of regulated spaces have a higher gender employment gap because mothers’ participation in the labour force is inhibited<sup>28</sup>.

Labour force participation rates in Squamish are significantly higher than the provincial rates for both men and women (overall provincial rates: 68.3% and 59.7%, respectively<sup>29</sup>). This indicates higher child care needs in Squamish than other BC communities.

There is also a slightly higher labour force participation rate gap between men and women in Squamish (9.2%, compared to 8.6% for BC overall<sup>30</sup>), which could be in part explained by shortage of affordable, high quality child care.

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<sup>25</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Squamish [Census agglomeration], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Business Council of British Columbia (2018) Women and Work: An Analysis of the Changing British Columbia Labour Market.

<sup>28</sup> Moyser, M. (2017) Women and paid work. Statistics Canada.

<sup>29</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Squamish [Census agglomeration], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

### PROJECTED FUTURE CHILD CARE SPACE NEEDS

Achieving the vision of affordable, accessible, high quality child care that meets demand throughout the community requires detailed understanding of the current state of child care in Squamish and how needs are anticipated to change in response to projected community growth. Ongoing monitoring of licensed spaces is recommended, as is re-evaluation and adjustment of the target access rate. It is recommended that the process for taking stock included in the Evaluation Process section of the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 be followed.

Two scenarios are imagined below:

1. Maintaining the current child care access rate of 21%, and
2. Increasing the child care access rate to 30%, as recommended in the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023.

#### SCENARIO 1: Maintain the Current Access Rate (21%)

Maintaining the current overall access rate of 21% isn't good enough, but even this could be challenging given the high average annual growth rate for children aged 0-12 in Squamish. As more families move to Squamish, doing nothing isn't an option because the situation will quickly get worse than it already is.

- The following estimates for the number of new spaces needed don't take into account the potential for closure of existing licensed child care facilities – when existing facilities close, more new spaces will be needed to make up the difference and stay on track for maintaining the current child care access rate.

**TABLE 5: Licensed Child Care Spaces Needed to Maintain 21% Access Rate for Years 2021, 2024, 2029.**

	2021	2024	2029
<b>Population growth rate</b>	3.5% per year		
<b>Projected number of children (0-12 years)</b>	4140	4508	5123
<b>Total number of spaces needed to maintain access rate 21%</b>	869	947	1076
<b>Number of spaces that exist now (2019)</b>	817		
<b>Number of <i>new spaces needed</i> to maintain access rate 21%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>Number of <i>new spaces needed/year</i> to maintain access rate 21%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>

#### ***2021 Maintain - Space Distribution***

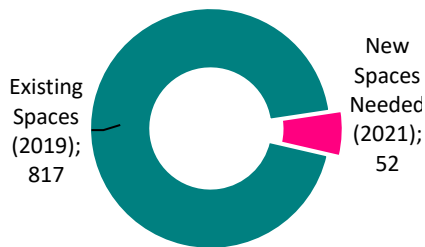
By 2021, to maintain the current access rate of 21%, there will need to be approximately 869 licensed child care spaces in Squamish. As of September 2019, Squamish has 817 licensed child care spaces. This means that by 2021, 52 new licensed child care spaces are needed. If the current distribution of age groups is to be maintained, by 2021, 6 new licensed infant/toddler



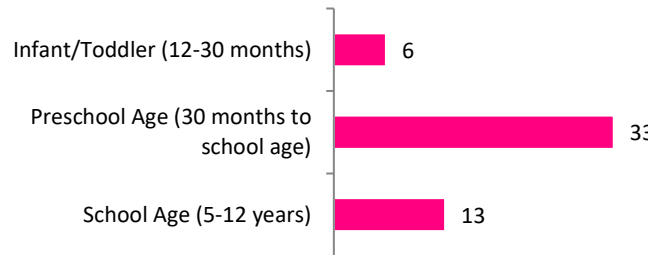
## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

spaces, 33 new licensed preschool age spaces, and 13 new licensed school age spaces are needed.

A total of 869 licensed child care spaces are needed by 2021:



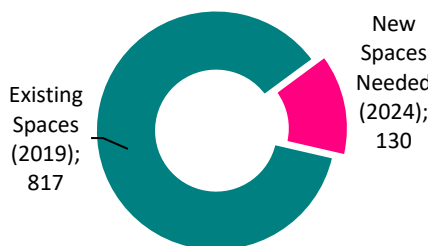
To maintain the current distribution of age groups, the 52 new spaces should be distributed as follows:



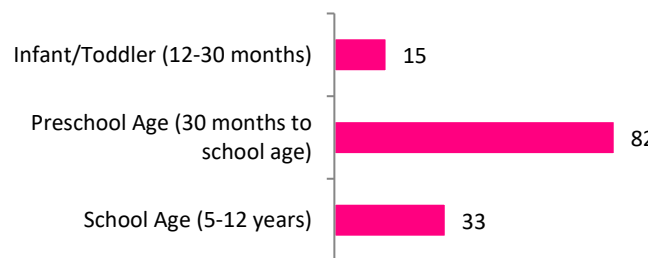
### 2024 Maintain - Space Distribution

By 2024, to maintain the current access rate of 21%, there will need to be approximately 947 licensed child care spaces in Squamish. As of September 2019, Squamish has 817 licensed child care spaces. This means that by 2024, 130 new licensed child care spaces are needed. If the current distribution of age groups is to be maintained, by 2024, 15 new licensed infant/toddler spaces, 82 new licensed preschool age spaces, and 33 new licensed school age spaces are needed.

A total of 947 licensed child care spaces are needed by 2024:



To maintain the current distribution of age groups, the 130 new spaces should be distributed as follows:



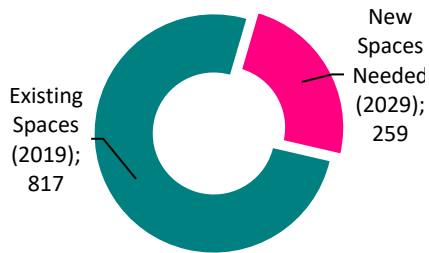
### 2029 Maintain - Space Distribution

By 2029, to maintain the current access rate of 21%, there will need to be approximately 1076 licensed child care spaces in Squamish. As of September 2019, Squamish has 817 licensed child care spaces. This means that by 2029, 259 new licensed child care spaces are needed. If the current distribution of age groups is to be maintained, by 2029, 30 new licensed

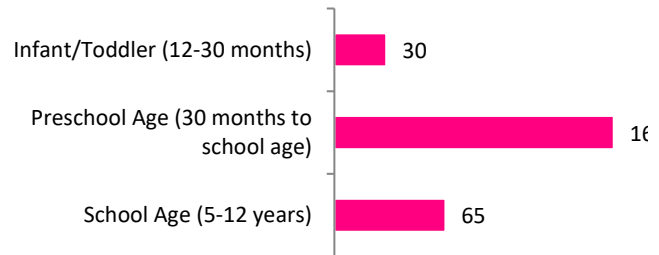
## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

infant/toddler spaces, 163 new licensed preschool age spaces, and 65 new licensed school age spaces are needed.

A total of 1076 licensed child care spaces are needed by 2029:



To maintain the current distribution of age groups, the 259 new spaces should be distributed as follows:



### SCENARIO 2: “Reach” Target Access Rate (30%)

The Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 identified a 30% overall access rate as a “reach” target. 30% was selected because it aligns with and slightly exceeds the provincial average of 27% in 2015. It is an ambitious target that reflects the extensive need for child care in our community. Meeting the reach target would require increasing the total number of child care spaces by 88% over the next 10 years.

**TABLE 6: Licensed Child Care Spaces Needed to Reach 30% Access Rate for Years 2021, 2024, 2029.**

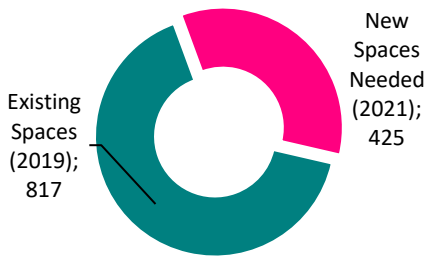
	2021	2024	2029
<b>Population growth rate</b>	3.5% per year		
<b>Projected number of children (0-12 years)</b>	4140	4508	5123
<b>Total number of spaces needed to reach access rate 30%</b>	1242	1352	1537
<b>Number of spaces that exist now (2019)</b>	817		
<b>Number of new spaces needed to reach access rate 30%</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>720</b>
<b>Number of new spaces needed/year to reach access rate 30%</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>72</b>

### 2021 Reach - Space Distribution

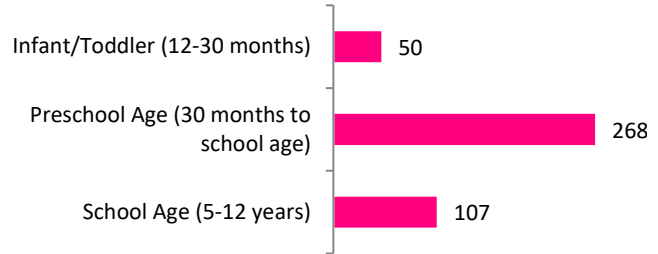
By 2021, to reach the target access rate of 30%, there will need to be approximately 1242 licensed child care spaces in Squamish. As of September 2019, Squamish has 817 licensed child care spaces. This means that by 2021, 425 new licensed child care spaces are needed. If the current distribution of age groups is to be maintained, by 2021, 50 new licensed infant/toddler spaces, 268 new licensed preschool age spaces, and 107 new licensed school age spaces are needed.

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

A total of 1242 licensed child care spaces are needed by 2021:



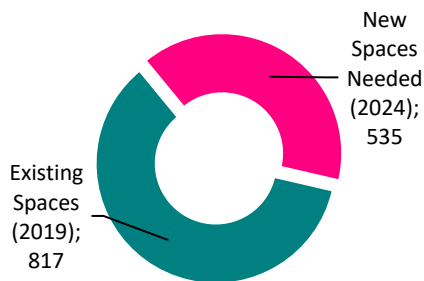
To maintain the current distribution of age groups, the 425 new spaces should be distributed as follows:



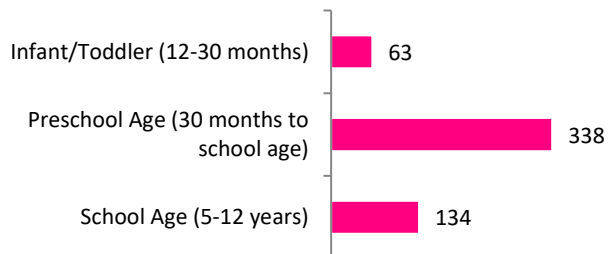
### 2024 Reach - Space Distribution

By 2024, to reach the target access rate of 30%, there will need to be approximately 1352 licensed child care spaces in Squamish. As of September 2019, Squamish has 817 licensed child care spaces. This means that by 2024, 535 new licensed child care spaces are needed. If the current distribution of age groups is to be maintained, by 2024, 63 new licensed infant/toddler spaces, 338 new licensed preschool age spaces, and 134 new licensed school age spaces are needed.

A total of 947 licensed child care spaces are needed by 2024:



To maintain the current distribution of age groups, the 535 new spaces should be distributed as follows:



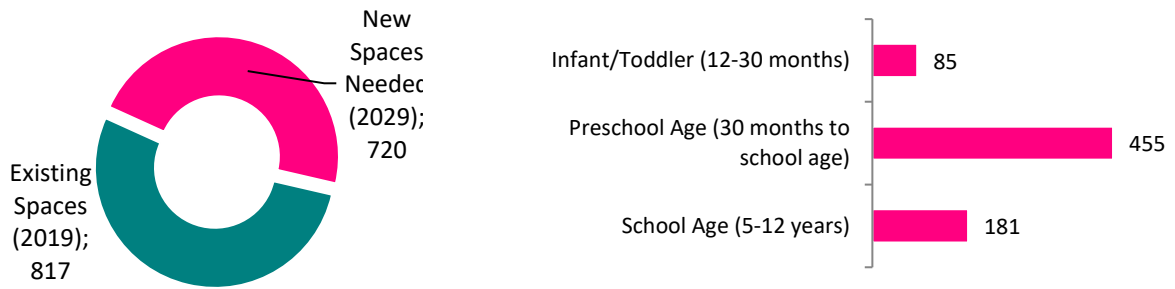
### 2029 Reach - Space Distribution

By 2029, to reach the target access rate of 30%, there will need to be approximately 1537 licensed child care spaces in Squamish. As of September 2019, Squamish has 817 licensed child care spaces. This means that by 2029, 720 new licensed child care spaces are needed. If the current distribution of age groups is to be maintained, by 2029, 85 new licensed infant/toddler spaces, 455 new licensed preschool age spaces, and 181 new licensed school age spaces are needed.

A total of 1537 licensed child care spaces are needed by 2029:

To maintain the current distribution of age groups, the 720 new spaces should be distributed as follows:

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### Space Creation Targets – Leads, Locations and Delivery Details (Addenda October 2020)

Table 6A identifies potential locations of new spaces and the anticipated lead organizations for space creation by age group/licence type to achieve the 30% access rate over the short, medium, and long-term horizon. The identified space creation and leads for child care delivery noted in Table 6A are based on current in-stream development proposals and known plans that include new child care space, as well as *general estimates* for future space creation that can be reasonably anticipated at this time. Longer-term facility master planning is underway by the School District and the municipality, which will influence and provide further specificity for ongoing child care planning efforts over time.

Table 6A applies the 10-year annualized target for child care space creation (72 spaces each year) over ten years (2019-2029). In Year 1 (2020), the target for space creation will be met and slightly exceeded by private operators in newly created space, with the inclusion of ~98 spaces across several mixed use developments located Downtown (construction nearing completion) and in the Valleycliffe neighbourhoods. In Year 2 (2021), new space creation by both private and non-profit providers is expected to add 52 spaces in Loggers East, Brackendale and Garibaldi Springs/Tantalus areas. For the short-term, together these 150 new spaces will slightly surpass the targeted space creation for Years 1-2 (72 x 2=144). Further, with 36 new infant/toddler spaces created by 2021 year end, this will offer a solid jump start to the required 85 IT spaces required over the next 10 years.

**TABLE 6A: Location, Type and Delivery Organization for Space Creation Targets (30% Access Rate).**

Year	Targeted New Spaces (year)	Total # Spaces (inventory by year X)	Delivery Lead	Approx #, Space Type & Location Details
Current (2019)	-	817		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Operator <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Operator
Year 1 (2020)	72	889	Private Child Care Providers (in process)	Downtown: 70+ spaces: infant/toddler (24) and 25 multi age (30mo to school age) +24 school age; Valleycliffe: 25 spaces; multi age (30mo to school age)+ =98 new spaces in Year 1

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

Year	Targeted New Spaces (year)	Total # Spaces (inventory by year X)	Delivery Lead	Approx #, Space Type & Location Details <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Operator <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Operator
Year 2 (2021)	2 x 72/year =144	961	Private and Non-Profit Child Care Providers	Garibaldi Springs/Tantalus: 12 spaces (infant toddler) Loggers East: 16 spaces; multi-age (30mo to 5 years) Brackendale: 12 multi-age (30mo to 5 years); plus 12 afterschool spaces (non-profit) =52 new spaces in Year 2 Subtotal 150 new spaces Years 1-2
Years 3-5 (2022-24)	3 x 72/year =216	1177	Private and Non-Profit Providers; Squamish District, School District 48	Loggers East/Centennial: 50 spaces (12 IT; 25 spaces 30 mo to school age; 12 group school age) Waterfront Landing: 25 spaces (30mo to school age) Valleycliffe (SD48; DOS): 36 spaces (12 IT; 24 multiage) +additional 106 spaces required, broken out by: 13 spaces (group under 36 months); 66 spaces (group 30 months to school age); 27 spaces (group school age) =216 new spaces in Years 3-5
Years 6-10 (2025-29)	5 x 72/year = 360	1537	Private and Non-Profit Providers; Squamish District, School District 48	Brennan Park (DOS, Non-Profit): 25 spaces (12 IT; 13 multi age); Downtown/Oceanfront (DOS, Non-Profit): 25 spaces (multiage 30mo to school age) +310 additional spaces to be focused NE Garibaldi Highlands, University, Garibaldi Estates, Loggers East as follows: 36 spaces (group under 36 months); 195 spaces (group 30 months to school age); 78 spaces (group school age) =360 new spaces in Years 6-10
<b>Total</b>	<b>720 (new)</b>	<b>1537</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>Total number of spaces by Age Group by 2029:</b> Infant/Toddler (0-36 months): 85 Preschool (30-months to school age): 455 School Age (5-12): 181

For the medium term (Years 2022-24), and through the longer-term horizon (Years 2025-29), space creation will be led by a combination of private and non-profit providers across the community as further discussed below.

For Years 3-5 (2022-24) the District in partnership with School District 48 will continue to look for capital funding for a purpose built facility co-located at a school site within the municipality to be operated by a non-profit provider. (Initial funding has been sought for a 36-space facility, including 12 infant/toddler spaces, at Valleycliffe Elementary School). In addition, approximately 75 spaces are anticipated to be created in the Loggers East/Centennial and Waterfront Landing projects by private operators. For this medium term period, an additional 106 spaces will be required to meet the target 30% overall access rate. New mixed use construction in the Downtown and Oceanfront areas, as well as in existing neighbourhoods such as Garibaldi Estates, Mamquam and the Garibaldi Highlands will be focus areas for multi-age care within residential settings and co-located with churches and other existing facilities.

Planning for the long-term, future public space creation (and partnering with non-profit operators) will primarily focus on co-location at school sites or integration within available public facilities (Brennan Park Recreation Centre expansion, and potentially as part of future Municipal Hall). An additional 50 public spaces may be provided for non-profit operators in Years 6-10 (the

## PART 1: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

remaining spaces required to meet the 30% access target would be provided by private or non-profit operations on privately-held sites). It is noted that facilities and public lands in Squamish are limited and both the School District and the municipality have limited funds for facilities portfolios. As noted on Page 15, currently the ratio of public vs private licensed spaces is 27% public sites, and 73% private sites. This is not expected to shift substantively over the medium term. Progressively increasing public child care assets in the community over time is an important goal but one that will require significant support from senior levels of government to fill funding gaps given the fiscal pressures on local governments and school districts.

Finally, School District 48 is undergoing long-term facility and space planning to identify the availability of space and strategy for co-location of early learning spaces at elementary school sites within the District. Space availability is dictated by student enrollment, which fluctuates year to year. Therefore long-term availability of surplus space for childcare providers currently in those schools is uncertain. Collaborations between SD48 and the municipality will be key in long-term neighbourhood growth planning and integration of early learning hubs at school sites.

### FOCUS ON INFANTS/TODDLERS

Licensed spaces for infants/toddlers (ages 12-30 months) are the scarcest in Squamish. As of September 2019, of the 817 licensed child care spaces in Squamish, only 96, or just under 12%, are for infants/toddlers.

Providing licensed care to infants/toddlers is more costly than for older children. Provincial licensing regulations require smaller group sizes and higher employee-to-child ratios for infants/toddlers in group child care settings, and they restrict the number of young children in family and multi-age child care. In group child care settings, there are also higher educational requirements for infant/toddler educators than for care of older children. Different physical space is also required for licensed group care of infants/toddlers than for older children – to meet requirements such as nap rooms and changing areas.

Because of the scarcity and higher costs associated with providing licensed child care for infants/toddlers, new spaces for this age group must be prioritized. Ensuring that licensed infant/toddler programs are developed alongside all new licensed preschool age spaces is one way to offset the extra cost of infant/toddler spaces. Developing new licensed spaces for infants/toddlers in tandem with preschool age spaces also prevents the unintended consequence of taking preschool age children away from family and multi-age child care.

In both the “Maintain” and “Reach” scenarios above, the current percent of total licensed spaces that are for infants/toddlers - 12% - is maintained for each selected year. For the Reach scenario, this means that although the overall access rate is improved to 30%, the access rate for infants/toddlers is a little less. Table 7 shows the number of licensed infant/toddler spaces that are required by each selected year in order to bring the access rate for infants/toddlers up to the desired 30%.

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**TABLE 7: Infant/Toddler Spaces Needed to Reach 30% Access Rate for Years 2021, 2024, 2029.**

	2021	2024	2029
<b>Population growth rate</b>	3.5% per year		
<b>Projected number of children (12-30 months)</b>	508	553	629
<b>Total number of spaces needed to reach access rate 30%</b>	152	166	189
<b>Number of spaces that exist now (2019)</b>	96		
<b>Number of <i>new spaces needed</i> to reach access rate 30%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Number of <i>new spaces needed/year</i> to reach access rate 30%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>

The limited number of infants/toddlers permitted in family and multi-age child care, and the smaller class sizes for this age group in group child care mean that adding new licensed child care spaces for infants/toddlers is more challenging than for older age groups. For example, adding 93 new licensed infant/toddler child care spaces over the next 10 years would require more than 30 new family or multi-age daycares with 3 infant/toddler spaces each, or 8 new group daycares with 12 infant/toddler spaces each.



### NEXT STEPS

Forty-four recommendations are proposed in the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023. All of these recommendations are important and need to be considered over the long term in order to improve access to high quality, affordable child care in Squamish.

The following actions come from the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023. They have been identified as being of the highest priority and impact in the short term and having tangible next steps. Many of the identified actions need an extra nudge or an intermediary step in order to move forward; practical strategies for advancing these actions are included.

Each action aims to implement the vision for child care in Squamish:

Squamish families have access to a range of affordable, accessible, high quality child care options that meet the demand throughout the community and support children's healthy development.

The principles of shared leadership and collaboration, focus on equity, and meaningful community engagement, as defined in the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023, have guided the development of these actions and should continue to be applied through each step of action implementation.



### Implement Preliminary Amenity Space Creation Guidelines

#### Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 Recommendations:

##### **Action 1.3**

Set targets for child care spaces in neighbourhoods/nodes and work with developers in the design and build of in-kind child care spaces. Develop a policy framework for ensuring spaces are dedicated for child care and rented to not-for-profit child care providers in perpetuity, and explore partnerships to operationalize these policies.

##### **Action 2.1**

Increase child care spaces across all age groups and child care types (i.e., infant-toddler, children with extra support needs, before- and after-school, summer options).

##### **Action 2.2**

Prioritize new child care facilities in neighbourhoods with high child populations, as well as around existing and future planned family service hubs, schools, senior's centres, parks and Brennan Park Recreation Centre to create and strengthen child care hubs across Squamish.

#### Next Steps

When proposals for new development are reviewed, they are measured against policies and guidelines for alignment with community needs and goals. There is opportunity at the time of development application review to consider the impact on child care needs that a proposal might have, and how the proposal could help to meet that need. For projects proposing inclusion of child care space, additional review could help to ensure the proposal meets core community needs for accessible, affordable, high quality care child, in a physical space that meets provincial child care licensing requirements, and that is viable from economic and operational perspectives.

It is proposed that a proactive approach to inclusion of child care space in new development proposals be followed, to ensure new child care space meets the goal of improving access to affordable, high quality child care, and results in child care facilities that are viable in the long term.

If a proposed development is predicted to impact child care needs in Squamish by adding new family-friendly residential units, or new employment space that is likely to generate a significant number of jobs, the proposal could then be reviewed to see if it might be an appropriate location in which to consider setting space aside for child care. Criteria such as proximity to schools, places of work, recreation and outdoor amenities, high child populations, and opportunities for colocation with other child or family services should be considered. Careful consideration of how new child care space is created in terms of location, physical properties, opportunities for colocation, ownership, affordability, and equity considerations would maximize community benefit from new child care spaces created and ensure the spaces created are in alignment with community need.

Proposal for additional review of how new development is anticipated to impact child care is supported by the following OCP policies:

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**25.8b** Uphold the Squamish Children’s Charter of Rights and apply a child and family lens in community planning, policies, programming, and service delivery.

**28.8d** Encourage the provision of child care amenities within neighbourhood developments. Encourage large employers and developers of mixed use commercial and multi-unit developments to provide on-site amenity child care space.

### **Preliminary Process for Development Application Review in Support of New Child Care Spaces**

It is recommended that this process be further developed as staff time and funding permit. In the meantime, the following resources and criteria for review are recommended.

#### **Resources and Criteria for Review:**

- Physical space requirements for licensing – indoor and outdoor. See [Vancouver Coastal Health Design Resource for Child Care Facilities](#) and [BC Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).
- Balance in proposed age groups/licence types for care of children aged 0-5 is needed to support infant/toddler spaces, which are in most critical need.
  - Facilities sized to accommodate two classrooms of 25 preschool age children and one classroom of 12 infants/toddlers are recommended as minimally meeting the need for licensed infant/toddler spaces.
  - A better mix would be two classrooms of 25 preschool age children and two classrooms of 12 infants/toddlers. Or one classroom of 25 preschoolers and one classroom of 12 infants/toddlers. For arrangements with a higher percentage of infant/toddler spaces to be financially viable for a child care operator and affordable for families, below-market rent is likely required.
  - To maintain greater affordability for operators and families, dedicated and publicly owned space made available for reduced rent to a non-profit child care provider is recommended as the best scenario for maximizing the available number of infant/toddler spaces. While the District is limited in its current capacity to take on and manage newly dedicated child care space that is conferred in private developments, use of covenants to secure below-market rents in privately owned spaces should be considered.
- Consider ways to encourage new non-profit operations that may access new spaces under the control of the School District or municipality, where there is preference for a non-profit provider in a publicly-owned space due to Community Charter regulations.
- Location assessed as being in proximity to schools, places of work, recreation and outdoor amenities, or high child population.
- When located near an elementary school, consider a requirement for a licensed out-of-school program for school aged children.
- Explore opportunity for colocation in civic facilities and with other child/family services.
- To address equity concerns, a waitlist policy is recommended as a requirement for new group child care facilities. No deposits should be required for waitlist access.
- To address the need for longer hours of operation for child care in Squamish, consideration of specifying required hours, such as 7:30 am to 6:00 pm.
- When new child care space is proposed, the development application is to be referred to experts in the community in order to collect recommendations and work together

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collaboratively. It is recommended that all development applications involving child care be referred to [Vancouver Coastal Health - Child Care Licensing](#) and [Child Care Resource and Referral](#) at the time the application is received.

### Provide Affordable Housing for Early Childhood Educators

**Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 Recommendation:**

***Action 2.4***

Advance the Community Amenity Contribution framework wherein developers build ECE worker affordable housing units held for the purpose in perpetuity.

#### **Next Steps**

The mismatch between the level of education required of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and other child care workers and their wages is compounded in Squamish by high cost of living, especially lack of affordable housing. Policies and programs to support affordable housing, especially those targeted at ECEs, would help to address child care staffing challenges.

When developing affordable housing strategy and workforce housing policies, the District of Squamish should prioritize the needs of ECEs and other child care workers.

When affordable housing is part of rezoning consideration, there should be discussion of the inclusion of units designated for ECEs and other child care workers, especially when new licensed child care spaces are proposed as part of the development. Land Development Agreements or Housing Agreements that include units for child care workers should clarify that these units are to be occupied by a person currently working in front-line child care provision, with priority for those who have ECE certification or are in the process of obtaining ECE certification.

**“We would like to expand our child care centre, and we’ve explored various ways it might be possible, but staffing is the limit.”**

**“Staff shortage is sooo connected to housing.”**

### Update District of Squamish Resources and Requirements

#### Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 Recommendation:

##### *Action 1.4*

Reduce and/or remove barriers to starting/expanding a child care facility through:

- Reviewing current District policies and zoning, communicating building code requirements, and addressing barriers wherever possible;
- Streamlining paperwork requirements for child care providers.

#### **Steps Completed**

A new guide to opening child care facilities in Squamish has been prepared. As part of the preparation of this guide, municipal requirements and procedures were reviewed, streamlined between departments, and brought into better alignment with provincial child care licensing requirements.

#### **Next Steps**

Zoning in Squamish is already permissive of child care in most zones throughout the community. As part of the 2020 Zoning Bylaw Update process, it is recommended that minor improvements be made to the definitions of types of child care permitted. Changes are recommended in order to reduce confusion by bringing the zoning bylaw definitions into better alignment with provincial child care licence types. Clarification of parking requirements for child care facilities is also recommended.

### Provide Child-Minding Service

#### Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 Recommendation:

##### **Action 2.6**

Research best practices for flexible, short-term/drop-in, and evening/extended hour child care options.

**“Drop-in care would be great. Just to feel like myself for a short amount of time.”**

#### Next Steps

Many BC municipalities offer child-minding<sup>31</sup> services for infants and toddlers as part of their recreation programming. Programming of this type requires that a guardian is present in the building at all times. Often child-minding programs require registration in advance, but allow drop-in when space permits.

Squamish parents report enormous amounts of stress throughout pregnancy and parental leaves as they try to secure child care before returning to work. There are currently many programming options for parents and children under 3 offered by the District of Squamish, but none that do not require direct guardian involvement. Offering a few hours per week of child-minding for children under 3 years is a gesture that acknowledges the strain child care shortage puts on Squamish families with young children and offers a small way to relieve pressure.

In Squamish, it is recommended that a few hours of child-minding for children under 3 years of age be made available weekly as part of regular recreation programming. A child-minding program could be timed to align strategically with existing drop-off programs for preschool aged children, which could benefit families with multiple children, or could be used to fill in staff schedules and room vacancies as time and space permit.

Ideally, user fees for a child-minding program would be minimal in order to reduce barriers to access; the Recreation Access Pass program should include child-minding offerings for eligible Squamish residents.

The need for a municipal fitness/wellness centre in Squamish has been identified in both the District of Squamish Real Estate and Facilities Master Plan and the engagement summary for the Brennan Park Fields and Lands Master Plan. As decisions are made regarding the development of this facility, inclusion of space for child-minding should be prioritized.

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<sup>31</sup> The term ‘child-minding’ in this context refers to care that meets the requirements for exemption from the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, as described in the BC Child Care Licensing Regulation (Division 2 – Exemptions from the Act).

### Improve Middle Years (Ages 7-12) Programming

#### Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 Recommendations:

##### **Action 2.17**

Improve programming for children ages 7-12 years-old and explore opportunities for “middle-years” programs and services as well as a younger youth centre or spaces.

##### **Action 2.15**

Reduce financial barriers to participate in current summer care options (e.g., gear requirements, outings).

#### Next Steps

At Brennan Park, the District of Squamish currently offers programming for school age children, much of it on weekdays between 3 and 6 pm. Unfortunately, these programs are only an option for children who have transportation to get there, which can be a challenge for families with parents who work longer hours. Summer programming is also offered for this age group, with many full-day camps running from 8:45 to 4:45, Monday to Friday.

The Brennan Park Fields and Lands Master Plan is currently under development. It is recommended that after-school programming for 7-12 year olds be prioritized in this plan, and that transportation and access barriers be addressed.

When planning for summer camps and Pro-D day scheduling, it is recommended that longer hours be considered where possible. Some BC communities offer optional add-on early morning and later afternoon programming – this allows for longer hours for families who need it, without over-staffing. Any financial barriers to participation should also be addressed.

For children toward the older end of the 7-12 year age spectrum, offering open, drop-in gym and pool hours could help to improve recreational offerings. The District of Squamish Real Estate and Facilities Master Plan recommends creating pool allocation guidelines that prioritize recreation programs and public swims during prime hours; development of these guidelines should take into account the needs of children aged 7-12 and how they might benefit from reimagined after-school pool opportunities. Aligning activity times with bus schedules could help to reduce transportation limitations for older children.

Due to physical space limitations at Brennan Park, expanding programming for 7-12 year olds to other locations, including other District facilities, is recommended. Moving toward a Neighbourhood Hub model and providing programming at or near schools would help to reduce transportation barriers for this age group. For locations within walking distance of schools (within approximately 1.6 km), a “walking school bus” could be considered rather than transporting children by motor vehicle<sup>32</sup>. Please also see the following Action (Build Partnership Between District of Squamish & School District 48).

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<sup>32</sup> <https://hastebc.org/walking-school-bus-bicycle-train/how-to-organize-a-walking-school-bus/>.

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Funding for the operation of after school activities is available to BC communities through organizations such as Jumpstart<sup>33</sup> and the BC Recreation and Parks Association<sup>34</sup>. Accessing funds such as these could help to offset the potential cost of expanding programming while ensuring affordability for children and families.



Findings from the Middle Years Development Index (MDI) should be considered in the development of middle years programming. The MDI is a self-report questionnaire completed by children in Grade 4 and Grade 7. It asks them how they think and feel about their experiences both inside and outside of school, and includes questions about use of after-school time. The 2017-2018 Grade 4 MDI found that 20% and 23% of students surveyed in North and South Squamish, respectively, answered “no” when asked if they were already doing the after-school activities they wished to do. In both geographic locations, the number 1 response to which activities they wish they could be doing after-school was “Physical and/or Outdoor Activities”<sup>35</sup>.

**“There aren’t many after school care programs, and if they do exist, they cater to young kids and my boys are bored—no basketball, open gym, floor hockey-type after school programs. They are all a group of multi-aged kids doing crafts and expected to be happy on the same playground day-in, day-out, year-after-year.”**

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<sup>33</sup> <https://jumpstart.canadiantire.ca/>.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/everything-else/before-after-school-recreation-program/>.

<sup>35</sup> Human Early Learning Partnership. MDI [Middle Years Development Instrument] Grade 4 report. School District & Community Results, 2017-2018. Sea to Sky (SD48). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, School of Population and Public Health; June 2018.



### Build Partnership Between District of Squamish & School District 48

#### Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 Recommendation:

##### **Action 1.12**

Initiate discussions to develop a child care partnership with School District 48 that may include:

- Collocating child care spaces at/with schools through creative approaches and joint management.

#### **Steps Completed**

School District 48 and Sea to Sky Community Services have a long history of working together with co-located licensed child care spaces in schools and on school grounds. Together, they recently partnered with the District of Squamish on a capital grant application for the creation of 36 new licensed child care spaces to be co-located at Valleycliffe Elementary.

#### **Next Steps**

To build on these experiences in child care space coordination and development and consider future partnership opportunities to meet community needs, there is clarity needed on who will take leading roles and where, how partners will work together, who will own and manage facilities under various scenarios, and how spaces will be operated.

As a first step toward achieving the partnership between the District of Squamish and School District 48 envisioned in the Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023, creation of a Memorandum of Understanding or Child Care Protocol is recommended. The MOU/Protocol should identify objectives, priorities, and roles for each partner in the development and operation of early learning and child care spaces on land owned by School District 48 or the District of Squamish.

This action is included in the Squamish2040 OCP, as Policy 28.8(e): “Work with School District 48 to establish a Child Care Protocol to stabilize existing and increase the viability of new child care spaces/programs to ensure no loss in space under the parties’ collective control, and plan for joint use of space for new child care spaces.”

Advancing this action is well timed to coincide with School District 48’s strategic facility review and priority setting for early learning space integration that has begun in 2020. Opportunities for partnership should be considered throughout this broader School District process.

### Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy 2018-2023 Recommendation:

#### **Action 2.20**

Reduce transportation barriers for before- and after-school care by offering programs at schools through a joint-use agreement with SD48.

### **Next Steps**

Many School District 48 schools in Squamish are at or near capacity, which limits opportunities for use of school space for child care provision.

*Short-term:* Where space may be available in locations such as school gyms, multi-purpose rooms, and outdoor classrooms, possibilities of running District of Squamish programming at schools should be explored. This could mean shifting existing programming to operate in a new location, or creating new programming. In the short term, the District of Squamish and School District 48 could work toward offering pilot programs one or two afternoons per week that could be trialed at one or more elementary schools. Guidance from local PACs should be sought to assess need and build support for pilot programming.

*Medium-term:* Starting with smaller pilot projects in schools where space permits and need is identified could help to guide creation of a longer-term joint-use agreement for more comprehensive programming. This could include consideration of opportunities for creation of new joint-use space at existing Squamish schools.

*Long-term:* When a new school is under consideration to meet the needs of Squamish's growing child population, a community school should be considered. Community schools allow for use of space in the school for community purposes, such as the delivery of recreational programming as out-of-school care for school age children. There are currently two elementary community schools in School District 48, both of which are located in Whistler.

Developing the partnership between the District of Squamish and School District 48 for the delivery of out-of-school programming is in alignment with the following Squamish2040 OCP policies:

**18.4d** Enhance recreation access, services and programming for children and families, youth, seniors, and vulnerable and at-risk populations, providing a range of affordable, age-appropriate and accessible play, recreation and nature exploration opportunities.

**18.4e** Explore opportunities for mobile recreation services and 'pop-up' programming for greater outreach in neighbourhood centres, parks and public open spaces, schools, and community facilities.

Providing District of Squamish programming at schools and future consideration of a community school would also help to achieve the objective for Neighbourhood Centres, as described in the District of Squamish Real Estate and Facilities Master Plan.

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