



Learn More about Quality Childcare in the Eastern Fraser Valley

Eastern Fraser Valley Child Care Coalition

Call: 604.852.1236

Email: earlyyears@uwfv.bc.ca

Mail: #201 – 31667 South Fraser Way
Abbotsford BC V2T 1T8

Child Care Resource & Referral Program

www.childcarechoices.ca

Abbotsford 604.850.7934 abbccrr@telus.net

Mission 604.826.6194 mcsscrr@shawbiz.ca

Agassiz-Harrison 604.796.0605 mcsscrr@shawbiz.ca

Chilliwack 604.792.4267 chwkcrr@comserv.bc.ca

Hope 604.869.2466

Early Childhood Committees

Abbotsford 604.852.1236

Mission 604.820.4367

Chilliwack 604.845.2258

Hope and area (HANDS) 604.869.2279

Agassiz-Harrison 604.796.0313

Aboriginal Communities 604.796.2177

Fraser Region Aboriginal Early
Childhood Development Network 604.584.3717

Other Members of the EFVCCC

Abbotsford Community Services

Fraser Health Authority

Seabird Island Aboriginal Supported Child
Development Program

Success by 6 Eastern Fraser Valley

United Way of the Fraser Valley

Visit: www.efvccc.ca

Other Resources

► Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC
www.cccabc.bc.ca

► BC Government and Service Employees' Union
www.bcgeu.bc.ca/Child_care_information

► Canadian Union of Public Employees
www.cupe.ca/childcare



What is the Eastern Fraser Valley Child Care Coalition?

A cross-section of non-profit early childhood organizations. Diverse in nature, they formed the coalition in late 2007 in response to growing concern about the lack of affordable, accessible, and regulated quality child care in their communities.

The goals of the coalition are to increase:

- The number of trained child care providers in the Eastern Fraser Valley
- Access to affordable quality child care

To achieve these goals, partners in the coalition:

- Promote awareness of the importance of quality child care
- Provide information concerning important child care issues
- Advocate for more accessible, quality child care
- Engage members of the community, employers, and lawmakers and invite them to help make a difference

The coalition is rooted in collaboration and acts in direct response to urgent needs expressed by parents and other caregivers.



Child Care Matters

EASTERN FRASER VALLEY CHILD CARE COALITION

www.efvccc.ca

What Is Quality Child Care?

Universal. Just like health care, every child has access to quality child care — no matter what.

Affordable. Parents' fees are capped or eliminated so that cost is not a barrier.

Publicly funded. Just like education and health care. This promotes stability, efficiency, and accountability. Decisions are based on the needs of children, families, and communities — not shareholders. Adequate compensation attracts and retains qualified workers.

Comprehensive. A wide range of options in both private and public child care programs.

Developmental. Programs are age-appropriate, respect diversity, and respond to the needs of individual children.

Quality childcare makes for good public policy.

Research tells us that for every dollar we invest in quality universal early learning and child care programs, we save at least two dollars in social costs later.

The Child Care Crisis in B.C.

- Canada is one of the few highly industrialised nations without a publicly funded child care system.
- When the federal government scrapped the federal-provincial child care agreements, it cost B.C. \$455 million in child care funding.
- The provincial government has cut child care spending by \$50 million annually since 2002.
- Only 16% of children have access to regulated child care.
- Child care costs are among the highest in the world. From 2001 to 2006, average annual fees for pre-school aged children increased by \$672.
- Most child care providers in the Fraser Valley report a shortage of qualified staff — mainly due to low wages.
- The workforce is growing, yet the number of child care educators is decreasing.

Abbotsford

- ▶ Abbotsford has 1,175 licensed childcare spaces, but needs about 6,800 spaces to accommodate children under five whose parents work.
- ▶ In 2006, 64% of licensed groups and preschools and 86% of family providers turned parents away or placed them on a waiting list.
- ▶ Almost 60% of parents are forced to limit work or school because they could not find adequate child care. Even more (63%) take unscheduled time off work due to lack of child care.
- ▶ Less than half (42%) of licensed group / preschool and family providers make a profit. Another 29% of family providers sometimes make a profit.



Chilliwack

- ▶ Cost and lack of spaces and transportation are the biggest obstacles that parents face in finding quality child care.
- ▶ Almost half (43%) of the group and preschool providers turn parents away because of staff shortages.
- ▶ Almost half (46%) of parents with children in child care limit the hours because they can't find an adequate facility with space.
- ▶ Sixteen per cent of providers consider leaving the child care field because of low wages and income.



Agassiz – Harrison Hot Springs

- ▶ Every child care provider considers leaving the field due to poor wages / low income.
- ▶ Nearly two-thirds (59%) of parents limit the hours they work due to lack of adequate child care.
- ▶ Almost two-thirds (63%) of parents take unscheduled time off from work because adequate child care is not available.
- ▶ All providers are willing to take on children who need extra support, but cannot due to staffing shortages.

Hope and Fraser Canyon

- ▶ The Child Care Resource and Referral Program is unable to find child care spaces for half the parents who contact them.
- ▶ Nearly two-thirds (60%) of children are home alone either before or after school.
- ▶ The primary need for parents is more affordable child care. Yet child care providers do not operate at a profit.
- ▶ Between half and two-thirds of parents take time off from work because of lack of adequate child care.



Mission

- ▶ Nearly two-thirds (62%) of centres have turned parents away due to lack of space, hours requested, or requests for rotating shifts.
- ▶ Almost half (46%) of parents limit their childcare because of the cost.
- ▶ Just over 90% of parents cite reliability as the highest priority when deciding who should care for their children.

Data taken from the Eastern Fraser Valley Childcare Project Report (2007). Complete report available on request.

Parents

You are the best advocates for your children.

- ▶ Make sure that you are receiving the subsidies you are entitled to, including the Universal Childcare Benefit*
- ▶ Get informed as to what a quality, universal child care system looks like
- ▶ Support child care workers and their bid for stability, incentives for opening spaces, and better wages

Contact your elected government representatives, especially your MLA. Write letters and emails or visit them.**

Ask them to:

- Lower parents' fees and cap them
- Raise child care wages to a fair wage and improve working conditions
- Move the burden of funding from user fees to public funding
- Ensure that licensing standards and regulations are maintained
- Add part time and full time licensed spaces in centres and family homes
- Encourage the federal government to restore the federal-provincial child care funding agreement
- Ensure that the provincial government commits more funding to child care

Until these issues are addressed and the child care crisis in the Eastern Fraser Valley is stabilized, child care providers have little choice but to continue raising user fees, reducing spaces, laying off workers, cutting programs — or closing their doors.

* Tel. 1.888.959.2221. www.cra-arc.gc.ca/benefits/ucdb/menu-e.html
** Find your MLA: www.leg.bc.ca/Mla/

Employers

You have a stake in ensuring that working parents have access to quality, affordable, regulated child care for their children. It could mean higher productivity, less absenteeism, increased morale, and less turnover. The benefits often exceed the costs and the bottom line is improved.

How you can help

- ▶ **Create a workplace culture that is family-friendly**
 - ▶ Make it a management goal to help parents who work
 - ▶ Initiate a company-wide dialogue about work-family issues
- ▶ **Support on-site parenting networks**
 - ▶ Encourage employees to create an informal parenting network
 - ▶ Support guest speakers and family activities for employees
- ▶ **Introduce flexible work hours and family leave policies**
 - ▶ A compressed work week or flexible scheduling
 - ▶ Use of sick days for dependent care
- ▶ **Subsidize regulated child care**
 - ▶ Offer full or partial subsidies for employees
 - ▶ Partner with a specific child care centre
- ▶ **Establish child care partnerships**
 - ▶ With community organizations that provide after school programs and summer camps
 - ▶ With nearby child care centres to create spaces for employees
 - ▶ With nearby businesses to create a child care centre nearby
- ▶ **Provide on-site child care**
 - ▶ Partner with an existing licensed child care centre to create a site in the workplace
 - ▶ Subsidize it through free rent, payroll support, purchasing, or minimal fees

Find Out More

WorkLife BC

www.worklifebc.ca

**Human Resources and Social
Development Canada**

www.worklifecanada.ca