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Child care grant supports research into local service demand, plan for more spaces in future

Child care needs in Campbell River will soon be better understood. The City of Campbell River in partnership with Campbell River Family Network has been awarded \$25,000 to develop a child care needs assessment and space creation strategy. The project is estimated to take approximately eight months and will include developing a comprehensive inventory and mapping of existing child care spaces and stakeholder engagement to develop short, medium and long-term space creation targets.

“Accessible, quality child care is essential to the success of a community. Child care plays a vital role in supporting Campbell River families and in attracting newcomers. Assessing local child care needs and planning to create more spaces will help meet the demand in our growing community,” said Mayor Andy Adams.

In 2018, the Province of B.C. through the Ministry of Children and Family Development, announced investment in the child care sector totaling \$1 billion over three years. As part of this investment, the Province committed to providing \$237 million to create 22,000 new licensed child care spaces. To understand community child care needs, the Province offered funding to local governments to undertake an assessment of community child care needs and develop a community child care space creation action plan through collaboration with local stakeholders.

“We are very pleased the BC Government has made affordable, quality child care a priority for our families, and we are happy to have this opportunity to get a comprehensive inventory of spaces in our community, which will help us establish where more spaces are needed now and into the future,” said Alison Boucher, child care consultant with PacificCARE Family Enrichment Society. *“We are also pleased to be able to partner with the City to make child care a priority for community development.”*

“The Campbell River Family Network, working with parents, employers, and early years professionals, has long been aware of a mounting concern related to the availability of quality, affordable child care. The growing awareness of the critical nature of the early years in setting the trajectory for lifelong health and success adds pressure to parents’ search for the right care for their children,” said Joyce McMann, chair of the Campbell River Child Care Society.

The 2018 State of the Child Report for Campbell River identified that one in three children is vulnerable in one or more of the early development measurements such as health and wellness, communication and language. Accessible, affordable child care plays a key role in early childhood development.

For more information or to get involved visit Campbell River Family Network at crfamilynetwork.ca.

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