
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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May 19, 2021

Ministry of Children and Family Development

Central Island families to benefit from new child care spaces

PARKSVILLE – More parents on the central Vancouver Island will have the option to return to work, go back to school or pursue other opportunities as the Province invests in more than 380 new licensed child care spaces, 98 of which are expected to open by the end of the year.

“By increasing child care spaces here on central Island, we are ensuring that more families can receive high-quality and inclusive childcare that supports their child’s healthy development,” said Adam Walker, MLA for Parksville-Qualicum. “As we have seen throughout COVID-19, affordable child care is an important part of our province’s economy and this latest investment will help us recover from the pandemic stronger.”

The Province is supporting eight projects to create 383 new licensed child care spaces in Lantzville, Port Alberni and Parksville:

- Lantzville (137 spaces)
- Port Alberni (176 spaces)
- Parksville (70 spaces)

“The Oomiiqsu Childcare Centre will help create new stories for children and families going forward by offering quality child care and nurturing child development, teaching children the Nuu-chah-nulth language, cultural traditions and supporting their participation in cultural activities,” said Edward R. Johnson, citizen development portfolio holder, Huu-ay-aht First Nations Executive Council. “This funding is another step towards reconciliation and will allow Huu-ay-aht and other Nuu-chah-nulth Nations to move towards cultural and language revitalization and healing.”

In addition to these projects, three other projects have also received funding in Port Alberni since the launch of Childcare BC in July 2018, including Alberni Valley Saplings, which opened 16 new licensed child care spaces in July 2020.

“This funding has made a huge impact for our daycare and our community. We would not exist without it,” said Jessica Thompson, co-Owner and operator, Alberni Valley Saplings. “Our community, like many has a major need for more child care spaces, and we are so happy to be a part of addressing that need. So far, we have received really positive feedback from families and the community about our program.”

The Province has funded almost 26,000 new licensed spaces since the launch of Childcare BC – more than 6,000 of which are now open.

“As we enter the fourth year of our 10-year Childcare BC plan, thousands of families are already feeling the life-changing impact of having affordable, quality and inclusive child care,”

said Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care. “As we continue to build toward an inclusive universal child care system, these new spaces will make it easier for parents, especially mothers, to pursue their own goals while being part of B.C.’s economic recovery.”

An additional 4,370 spaces, funded through the 2017 Budget Update and the Early Learning and Child Care agreement with the Government of Canada, takes the total number of new child care spaces funded since July 2017, to more than 29,300.

Quick Facts:

- Since July 2018, almost 26,000 new licensed child care spaces have been funded in British Columbia, including 235 in Port Alberni and 85 in Parksville.
- The Childcare BC plan has helped parents save up to \$1,600 a month, per child, for a total of over \$770 million through the Affordable Child Care Benefit and Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.
- As a result of these investments, parents in the Parksville-Qualicum and the mid-Island-Pacific rim regions have saved more than \$6 million and \$8.5 million respectively.
- Early childhood educators in the Parksville-Qualicum and mid-Island-Pacific rim regions have received over \$850,000 in wage enhancements combined.

Learn More:

For information on health and safety standards for child care during COVID-19:

www.gov.bc.ca/ChildCareCovid-19Response

Child care factsheet: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/18430>

More about Childcare BC: www.gov.bc.ca/childcare

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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New child care spaces create more options for families

This backgrounder contains additional information on the eight projects that will create 383 new licensed child care spaces in Lantzville, Port Alberni and Parksville. Of these, 98 spaces are expected to be open by the end of the year.

Uy'sqwalawun Childcare Centre (Lantzville) –

Operated by the Nanoose First Nation, this new facility will create 85 new child care spaces, including 12 spaces for infants and toddlers, 24 spaces for children aged three years to kindergarten, 25 spaces for school-age children, and 24 preschool spaces. The facility will feature Hul'q'umi'num language immersion and will offer parenting workshops, including Nobody's Perfect parenting, Bringing Tradition Home, Circle of Security and Bringing Our Families Together. Completion is expected by September 2022.

Seaview Elementary Learning and Child Care Centre (Lantzville) –

School District No. 68, which is building a new child care facility on the grounds of Seaview Elementary school, will create 52 new child care spaces, including 12 spaces for infants and toddlers, 16 spaces for children aged three years to kindergarten and 24 spaces for school-age children. The school district has an English language learning co-ordinator, a settlement worker, and Arabic and Mandarin cultural supports to help children and families. The new facility is expected to be open in fall 2022.

Oomiiqsu Child Care Centre (Port Alberni) –

BC Housing, under the Women's Transitional Housing Fund, is partnering with Huu-ay-aht First Nations to create Oomiiqsu — an Aboriginal Mothers' Centre — that includes the Oomiiqsu Child Care Centre. The centre will create 24 new child spaces for children residing in Oomiiqsu, including eight spaces for infants and toddlers and 16 spaces for children aged three years to kindergarten. Oomiiqsu will provide on-site supported housing for 12 families, and 24-hour wraparound supports for mothers and children to address protection concerns, neglect, domestic violence, substance use, mental health, parenting, child care needs, poverty, employment and social/emotional issues in a culturally appropriate and supportive space. Oomiiqsu will also have four transitional housing units. The Oomiiqsu Childcare Centre is expected to be open in September 2023.

Mighty Learners Child Care Centre (Port Alberni) –

Renovations to A.W. Neill Elementary school will create 81 new child care spaces, including eight spaces for infants and toddlers, 16 spaces for children aged three years to kindergarten and 57 spaces for school-age children. After-hours programming with community organizations

will support family outreach, reduce barriers of access and work collaboratively with family navigators. Mighty Learners will provide culturally responsive programming, be inclusive, support resiliency and have a family-centred approach. The child care centre will be accessible and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

The Learning Lab Preschool (Port Alberni) –

Renovations at The Family Hub at E.J. Dunn Elementary school will convert a tennis court at the current preschool site into an accessible outdoor play space and water play area, which will add five (10 part-time) new preschool child care spaces. Renovations are expected to be complete by August 2021.

City of Port Alberni (Port Alberni) –

The City of Port Alberni is partnering with the Community Arts Council to create 66 new child care spaces, including 15 spaces for infants and toddlers, 19 spaces for children aged three years to kindergarten, 24 spaces for school-age children and eight spaces for children up to the age of 12. This project will also include 22 additional spaces funded through the Union of B.C. Municipalities. The facility will be located next to the Eighth Ave Learning Centre, which provides alternative and distance-learning opportunities, so families will be able to access the child care facility while attending school. Completion is expected by December 2022.

Craig Street Commons (Parksville) –

Renovations to a former school will create 12 new child care spaces for school-age children. Operated by School District #69, the facility will include a care model that allows for a seamless transition of children to and from child care and classrooms as well as fluid communication between parents, teachers, and child care providers. Completion is expected by August 2021.

BGCCVI Parksville Child and Family Centre (Parksville) –

Renovations to the Parksville Community Centre will create 58 new child care spaces, including four for infants and toddlers and 54 for school-age children. An additional 33 spaces will be funded through the Union of B.C. Municipalities, bringing the total number of new child care spaces at the facility to 91. The City of Parksville is partnering with the Boys and Girls Clubs Central Vancouver Island to operate the facility and provide diverse community programming. The centre will be fully accessible, provide transportation for out-of-school care programs, and have a new outdoor space. It will open in January 2022.

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