

## 2017 Columbia Valley Childcare Need And Demand Assessment



This report is intended as Phase One of the project; to identify the Need and Demand for Child Care before researching options to resolve any identified shortages. *PlanningWorks Consulting Inc.* was retained to assist with the Columbia Valley Child Care Need and Demand Assessment by Family Dynamix Association in July 2017.

After reviewing the various sources of data and findings, it is the goal of Family Dynamix to:

- Confirm the need and demand for additional child care facilities,
- Identify the highest priorities for child care by age group and regional location,
- Evaluate and identify facility and operating options to provide child care in those areas and,
- Determine the capital requirements and business plan to implement the preferred option(s).

Funded in part by the Columbia Basin Trust

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# Columbia Valley Child Care Need and Demand Assessment



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## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Family Dynamix Association is a registered not for profit society based in Invermere, BC serving the population of the upper Columbia Valley from Spillemacheen in the north to Canal Flats in the south. The association provides social supports, counselling, housing, employment services and Early Years Support Centres to assist parents.

Other local social service agencies in the area including the Early Childhood Coalition and the Chamber of Commerce have raised concerns over the lack of available child care in the region. Parents are calling on Family Dynamix looking for help to find available daycare space, as most licensed daycares in the area are reporting wait lists.

As such, Family Dynamix wishes to quantify the need for child care in the Columbia Valley through a Need and Demand Assessment.

Further, should the demand prove warranted, Family Dynamix wishes to collaborate with existing service providers to create an approach and sustainable business plan to apply for up to \$500,000 in Child Care Capital Funding from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) that would increase child care capacity in the area.

PlanningWorks Consulting Inc. was retained to assist with the Columbia Valley Child Care Need and Demand Assessment.

This report is intended as Phase One of the project; to identify the Need and Demand for Child Care before researching options to resolve any identified shortages.



## STUDY AREA

All demographic data presented as part of the Columbia Valley Child Care Need and Demand Assessment corresponds with the geographic area of the Windermere Local Health Area which includes:

- The District of Invermere
- The Regional District of East Kootenay rural Areas F and G including the unincorporated communities (listed north to south) of:
  - Spillemacheen,
  - Brisco,
  - Edgewater,
  - Radium Hot Springs,
  - Wilmer,
  - Panorama,
  - North Windermere,
  - Windermere,
  - Fairmont Hot Springs,
  - Columere and,
  - Canal Flats.



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to determine the demand and need for additional new child care facilities in the Windermere Local Health Area, several research approaches were undertaken and evaluated.

1. A review of community demographics was conducted to determine;
  - The current population by age group and community (2016 Census),
  - The ten year projected population by age group and community (BC Stats),
  - The existing active licensed child care spaces available by age group and community (IHA Licensing and verification of current active programs by childcare providers).
2. The Stats Canada "General Social Survey" was utilized as a benchmark to compare the percentage of Canadian parents that use childcare, to the number of licensed current spaces per population in the Windermere Local Health Area.
3. A review of the current Ministry of Children and Family Development "Average Monthly Child Care Utilization Rates" was evaluated for the Windermere Local Health Area.
4. A review of the vacancy rate and wait lists for child care spaces at most of the existing licensed child care facilities.
5. A review of anecdotal information collected from the Columbia Valley Child Care Need and Demand Survey, completed by Family Dynamix in June 2017. The survey was completed by parents, child care providers and local businesses.

***Please Note: It is not intended to use each source of research data independently, but rather to draw a general picture of trends and conclusions from a variety of sources.***

After reviewing the various sources of data and findings, it is the goal of Family Dynamix to:

- Confirm the need and demand for additional child care facilities,
- Identify the highest priorities for child care by age group and regional location,
- Evaluate and identify facility and operating options to provide child care in those areas and,
- Determine the capital requirements and business plan to implement the preferred option(s).

# 1. COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

## EXISTING POPULATION

The 2011 Census recorded 8,888 persons living in the Windermere Local Health Area. The 2016 Census recorded an increase of an additional 594 persons over 5 years at a growth rate of .2% per year. Invermere recorded the majority of that growth with an increase of 436 persons.

Of note is the number of dwelling units recorded in relation to the population. Overall, there are 1.2 persons per dwelling unit. This is far below the provincial average, indicating a high number of non-resident or recreational residents. The Imagine Invermere Sustainability Plan (OCP), notes that the increase in non-resident owners has led to concerns around housing affordability for the area's full time resident population and young families in particular.

Note: The Census numbers includes residents only. Non-residents are not counted in their recreational home location.

2016 CENSUS	Population	Dwellings	P/Hshld
<b>RDEK Area F:</b>			
District of Invermere	3,391	2,032	1.7
Village of Canal Flats	668	375	1.8
Dutch Creek, East side Hwy 93/95, East side of Columbia Lake north to Cross River	651	734	0.9
Cory Rd, East side Lake Windermere west of Hwy 93/95 except Windermere (North St. to Windermere St.)	575	1,267	0.5
Windermere (North St. to Windermere St.), East of Hwy 93/95 to Windermere Loop Rd.	415	308	1.3
Toby Creek Rd, Westside Rd. south of Ruault Rd. to Hwy 93/95 south to Area E boundary	566	380	1.5
Fairmont Hot Springs	519	578	0.9
Shuswap IR	319	183	1.7
Columbia Lake IR#3 (Akisqnuq)	140	186	0.8
<b>Total Area F:</b>	<b>7,244</b>	<b>6,043</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>RDEK Area G:</b>			
Village of Radium Hot Springs	776	876	0.9
Wilmer to Spillimacheen west of Hwy 93/95 and Hwy 95	532	345	1.5
District of Invermere to Spillimacheen east of Hwy 93/95 and Hwy 95	401	307	1.3
Edgewater	529	247	2.1
<b>Total Area G:</b>	<b>2,238</b>	<b>1,775</b>	<b>1.3</b>
<b>Windermere Health Area Total:</b>	<b>9,482</b>	<b>7,818</b>	<b>1.2</b>

Data Source: Regional District of East Kootenay Web Site, ftp.rdek.bc.ca/2016\_Census\_Population\_&\_Dwelling\_Count.pdf

## EXISTING POPULATION OF CHILDREN

The Census indicates that the median age of the population in the region for both men and women ranges from 36.6 years old to 52.7 years old depending on which community they reside in. The median age generally indicates a large component of the population is past child bearing age. The Imagine Invermere Official Community Plan update concurs that there is a stable but aging population in the area.

The 2016 Census indicates there were 960 children between the ages of 0 and 14. They are quite equally spread out in age with a slight increase in the 0 to 4 age group. The majority of children aged 0 to 14 (57%) live in the Invermere area. However, Edgewater and the First Nations Reserves have a larger percentage of children living in their communities.

The chart below shows the number of children by community and age recorded in the 2016 Census.

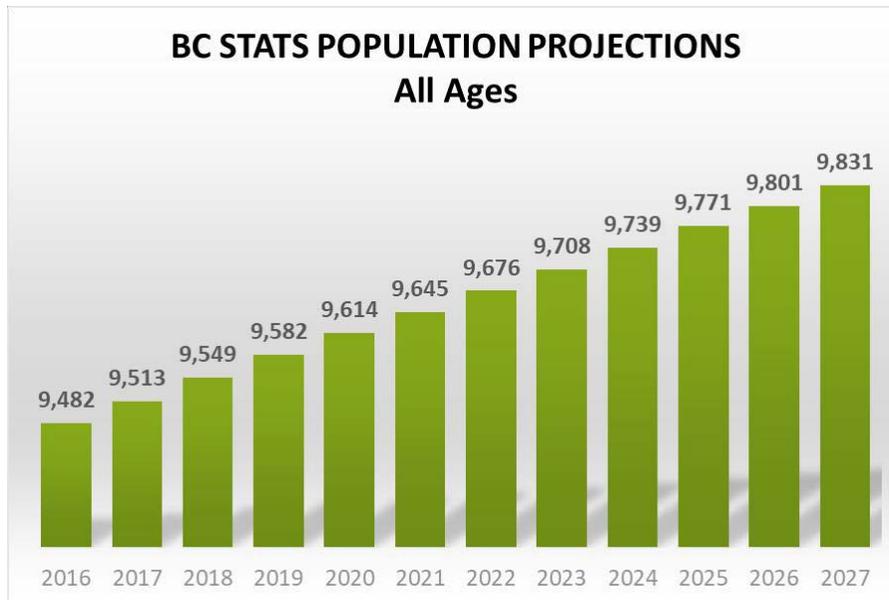
2016 CENSUS PROFILE				CHILDREN BY AGE GROUP								
COMMUNITY	TOTAL POPULATION			AVG	Group	Approx. #	Group	Approx. #	Group	Approx. #	Group	% of
	2016	2011	% CHANGE	AGE	0-4	Each Age	5-9	Each Age	10-14	Each Age	0-14	Population
<b>AREA G</b>												
Radium Hot Springs	776	777	-0.13	47.3	30	7.5	30	6	35	7	95	12.2
Edgewater	529	544	-2.76	40.6	30	7.5	35	7	25	5	80	18.3
Rural Area	933	868	7.5	45.5	30	7.5	50	10	30	6	120	11.7
	2238	2189	2.24		90		115		90		295	13.2
<b>AREA F</b>												
Invermere	3391	2955	14.75	43.1	175	43.8	190	38	185	37	545	16.1
Canal Flats	668	685	-2.48	42.8	40	10	40	8	30	6	105	15.7
Fairmont Hot Springs	519	526	-1.33	52.7	10	2.5	10	2	10	2	30	6.5
Rural Area (Incl Windermere)	2207	2109	4.60	50	60	15	35	7	70	14	200	8.8
Shuswap IR	319	293	8.87	36.6	20	5	25	5	15	3	55	17.2
Columbia Lake IR#3	140	131	6.87	41.4	5	1.25	10	2	5	1	25	17.9
	7244	6699	8.14		310		310		315		960	13.3

Data Source: Stats Canada Website, [www.statscan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E](http://www.statscan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E)

## PROJECTED POPULATION

### POPULATION GROWTH – WINDERMERE LOCAL HEALTH AREA

BC Stats population projections at between .2% to .4% growth per year estimate the population growth for the Windermere Health Area are shown in the chart below.



Data Source: BC Stats Web Site, Population Projections, <https://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/apps/PopulationProjections.aspx>  
 Note: BC Stats Population Projection do not include persons living on Reserves. They have been added in by the author at a flat growth rate.

### POPULATION GROWTH – DISTRICT OF INVERMERE

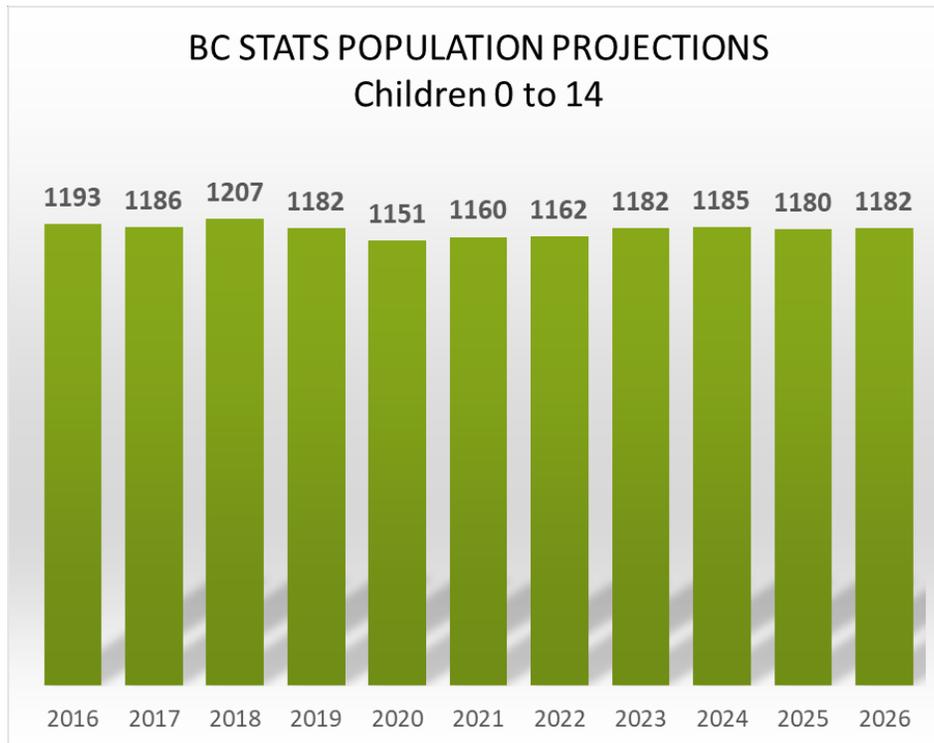
The Imagine Invermere Official Community Plan Update of May 2015 has provided 3 possible growth scenarios for the permanent population based on historic growth rates. These range from a negative growth of -0.3% to 0.7% and 1.7%. This is lower than the BC Stats population projections and relates to the District of Invermere only, not the area as a whole. Recent growth in Invermere as verified by the 2016 Census suggests that the District of Invermere's OCP projections may be low.

Projected Permanent Population Imagine Invermere 2015 OCP Update			
	5 Year Average	15 Year Average	20 Year Average
Year	-0.3%	0.7%	1.7%
2019	2,882	3,116	3,380
2024	2,837	3,221	3,676
2029	1,793	3,329	3,999

Data Source: District of Invermere Web Site/Government/Document Library/Official Community Plan/2015 OCP Update  
 Imagine Invermere 2030

## POPULATION GROWTH OF CHILDREN ONLY

BC Stats is predicting that the birth rate peaked in 2014 at 87 births, and the number of births will decline but remain stable to between 68 and 73 new children per year for the next decade. BC Stats projections for the next ten years of children aged 0 to 14 are shown in the chart below.



<b>BC STATS POPULATION PROJECTIONS: AGE 0 TO 14</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>CHILDREN BY AGE GROUP</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>1-4</b>	<b>5-9</b>	<b>10-14</b>	
2016	68	301	400	424	1193
2017	67	312	389	418	1186
2018	68	305	404	430	1207
2019	67	291	411	413	1182
2020	69	289	398	395	1151
2021	69	291	393	407	1160
2022	71	293	409	389	1162
2023	71	296	409	406	1182
2024	72	300	397	416	1185
2025	73	303	399	405	1180
2026	72	307	399	404	1182

Data Source: Prov. Of BC, BC Stats Website, <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/people-population-community/population/population-estimates>

## POPULATION SUMMARY

In summary, the review of the existing population statistics and projection of future growth indicates that over the whole region there is relatively slow but steady growth.

Some outlying rural communities such as Canal Flats, Edgewater, Radium Hot Springs and Fairmont Hot Springs have seen some decline in population and the number of accompanying children, however it does not represent a large number of children. The more central areas in Invermere, Windermere and on the First Nations Reserves have seen significant growth. Invermere had the highest growth rate; 14.75% from the 2011 Census to the 2016 Census at a rate of 3% per year.

Overall, the population is stable and the implementation of new any services to meet market demand in the area should be sustainable.



## EXISTING CHILD CARE SERVICES

A study was conducted to verify the existing active licensed childcare programs in the Windermere Local Health Area. Active, licensed child care facilities were confirmed by Interior Health, Community Care Licensing. Currently there are 223 licensed spaces in the area. Each of the major childcare providers was then contacted to verify what programs they were currently offering. Due to a shortage of qualified ECE workers, some providers have not been able to offer the full spaces allowable under their license.

WINDERMERE LOCAL HEALTH AREA: ACTIVE, LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITIES			Group Child Care				Family Child Care		Capacity *	
Name	Location	Comments	Under 36 Mos	30 Mos to School Aged	Preschool (3 & 4 yr olds)	School Aged Out of School	7 Children in Caregivers Home	8 Children in Caregivers Home	Current Operating Status	Total Licensed Capacity
Einstein's Treehouse	Edgewater	Family Child Care					7		7	7
Dragonfly Discovery Centre	Radium	Has room to expand. Montessori Programming.		8		8			16	16
Sonshine Children's Centre	Invermere	Recently discontinued Preschool & After School Programs. Under 36 Mos. licensed for 20 but operating at 16. 30 Mos. to School Aged Licensed for 19 but operating at 16 due to qualified staff shortages. Alliance Church -Bible based value programming	16	16					32	59
The Playhouse	Invermere	Family Child Care					7		7	7
Windermere Valley Child Care Society	Invermere	Preschool Half Days 20 -3yr olds Mon & Thurs & 20 -4yr olds Tues, Wed & Fri. Out of School Care operates after Preschool hrs.	12	24	20	24			80	62
Little Badgers Early Learning Program	Windermere	Licensed for 8 Infants & Toddlers but currently running at 4 Infants & Toddlers due to shortage of ECE staff. Some Aboriginal Programming	4	16	20	8			48	52
Mountain Ridge Early Learning Program	Windermere	Preschool licensed for 20 in morning and afternoon care for 8 children. No more than 20 max at any one time. Montessori Programming		8	20				28	20
			32	72	60	40	14	0	218	223

\* Note: The Current Operating Status cites the number of children currently served rather than the licensed spaces. There may be more than one child utilizing 1 licensed daycare space on specific days. For example; one child in the morning and 1 child in the afternoon.

The majority of licensed providers are located in the central Invermere and Windermere areas. Very few options are located in the outlying smaller communities and rural areas.

Of particular note, is the lack of before and after school child care providers. For an estimated 625 children aged 5 to 14, there are only 40 spaces. It is concerning that many children in this age bracket may not only be going home to empty houses, but with a large number of non-resident homes in specific subdivisions, are often going home to empty neighbourhoods. Many child care needs may be accommodated through non-licensed providers and by family and friends. It is not known how many children are in this category.

There also appears to be a shortage of Infant and Toddler Care to meet demand. Although it is not as severe as the shortage of after school care, it is more difficult to find qualified care for this very young age group.

## 2. AVERAGE CANADIAN CHILD CARE NEEDS –COMPARISON TO WINDERMERE AREA

It is difficult to determine what the appropriate number of child care spaces should be in any given community. In an attempt to determine a benchmark, the Stats Canada “General Social Survey” was reviewed. This survey identifies the average percentage of Canadian parents utilizing child care outside the home. This was compared to the Windermere Local Health Area population and the available licensed child care spaces.

The availability of child care spaces in the Windermere area was above the Canadian average for Infants and Toddlers, but below the average for children under 4 years of age, and significantly below the Canadian average for before and after school care.

STATS CANADA GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY, 2011		WINDERMERE LOCAL HEALTH AREA COMPARISON TO STATS CANADA DATA							
Parents Use of Child Care		WINDERMERE LOCAL HEALTH AREA COMPARISON TO STATS CANADA DATA							
Children's Age Group	% of Parents That Use Child Care	Population	Under 36 Mos	30 Mos to School Age	Preschool	Out of School Care	Multi-Age Home Care	Total Spaces	% of Parents That Use Existing Childcare
Age 0 to 14	46%	1255	32	72	60	40	14	218	17%
Under 1	26%	68	32					32	47%
Age 4 and Under	54%	400	32	72	60		14	178	45%
Ages 5 to 14	39%	830				40	14	54	7%
Ages 11 to 14	19%	328				40	14	54	16%

Source: Stats Canada Website, General Social Survey, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2014005-eng.htm>

### Additional Findings:

- 86% of parents used child care on a regular, recurring basis.
- 60% of parents used child care for at least 30 hours per week. (70% if under 4 years old)
- Parents of very young children tend to use relatives or private child care
- 43% of parents in BC use before and after school care programs

Assumptions based on this data should be utilized with caution, as non-licensed child care was not included in the Windermere count, child care needs are likely to differ throughout Canada and may also differ between rural and urban communities. However, it is still a general benchmark for consideration.

If we were to use the Canadian Average to determine the number of child care spaces required in the Windermere Local Health, a total of 241 new child care spaces would be required, with the majority of those for age 5 to 9 which would require before and after school care.

<b>SCENARIO USING CANADIAN AVERAGES OF CHILD CARE DEMAND</b>				
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>AGE 0-4 @54%</b>	<b>AGE 5-9 @39%</b>	<b>AGE 10-14 @19%</b>	<b>TOTAL 0-14</b>
<b>North</b>				
Edgewater	16	14	5	35
Radium Hot Springs	16	12	7	35
Rural North of Invermere	16	20	6	41
Invermere	95	74	35	204
	143	119	52	314
Existing Spaces	110	32	0	142
New Required	33	87	52	172
<b>South</b>				
Canal Flats	22	16	6	43
Fairmont Hot Springs	5	4	2	11
Rural Area (Incl Windermere)	32	14	13	59
Shuswap IR	11	10	3	23
Columbia Lake IR#3	3	4	1	8
	73	47	25	144
Existing Spaces	68	8	0	76
New Required	5	39	25	68
<b>Total New Required</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>241</b>

### 3. MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DEVELOPMENT (MCFD) AVERAGE MONTHLY CHILD CARE UTILIZATION REPORTS

The MCFD collects child care utilization information from all licensed child care providers submitting for financial assistance under the Child Care Operating Funding Program. This data is used as a performance indicator and to determine spare child care capacity.

“Child care space utilization rates offer a proxy for the appropriateness of the amount and combination of types of child care spaces available in the province. Efficient use of child care spaces will be reflected in high utilization rates. However, at very high utilization rates in excess of 80% to 85%, finding child care becomes progressively more challenging, potentially impacting the time taken to find a space and fees.” MCFD

On August 9, 2017, the Manager Modelling, Analysis & Information Management provided the following data for the Windermere Local Health area.

Average Monthly Child Care Operating Funding Program (CCOF) Child Care Space Utilization Rates, April 2016 - March 2017						
Local Health Area	Group Infant / Toddler <sup>1</sup>	Group Age 3 to 5 <sup>1</sup>	Group School Age <sup>1</sup>	Total Group <sup>1</sup>	Family	Group and Family
Windermere	81.6%	63.3%	34.8%	55.4%	84.6%	59.5%

<sup>1</sup>For utilization rates by individual Group age cohorts, facilities with 'Group Multi-Age' child care spaces are excluded.

The data provided indicates a strong demand for Infant and Toddler Care spaces. There appears to be adequate Age 3 to 5 year old spaces in the area.

However, it is suspected that the gap between spaces available and spaces utilized for School Age care may not reflect low demand, but rather the reality that very few licensed After School Care spaces even exist in the area. Also Multi Age Home Group Care has been excluded by MCFD, and this category may meet a small portion of the After School Care that does exist.

Not all child care providers apply for assistance under the CCOF Program, however there is a high participation in the Windermere Area of 89%. (193 of the 218 active spaces), which means the data presented in the chart above is a very good representation of child care utilization in the area.

Average Monthly CCOF Contracted Child Care Spaces, April 2016 - March 2017						
Local Health Area	Group Infant / Toddler	Group Age 3 to 5	Group Preschool	Group School Age	Group Multi-Age or Family	Total
Windermere	20	57	60	33	23	193

Additional information on how the MCFD utilization rates are calculated can be found in Appendix A.

## 4. EXISTING CHILD CARE PROVIDER WAIT LISTS

At the beginning of 2017, The Family Dynamix Association had estimated that at any given time there were approximately 75 children on wait lists in the Valley.

The major licensed child care providers were surveyed again as part of this study in August 2017 to determine their current vacancy and approximate number of children on wait lists. These findings concur with the Family Dynamix findings earlier in the year, with approximately 100 children currently on wait lists. However, it should be noted that some children may be on more than one wait list. It is suspected this occurs predominantly on the Infant and Toddler Program wait lists.

Operators indicate that the majority of programs are operating close to, or at capacity for the majority of the year. However there are some vacancies in some programs on specific days. (For example, providers often accommodate parents that may work 4 days a week, or half days and then are unable to fill the remaining partial openings.)

Providers find it difficult to keep wait lists accurate and up to date, as parents often do not advise the provider when they find alternate child care arrangements. The chart below indicates the approximate number of children on wait lists **in blue**, as surveyed in August 2017.

<b>WAIT LISTS OF ACTIVE, LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITIES (NOT INCLUDING LICENSED FAMILY HOME CHILD CARE FACILITIES)</b>			<b>Group Child Care Wait Lists</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Under 36 Mos (Infants &amp; Toddlers)</b>	<b>30 Mos to School Aged</b>	<b>Preschool (3 &amp; 4 yr olds)</b>	<b>School Aged Out of School</b>
<b>Dragonfly Discovery Centre</b>	Radium	Registration close to, or at capacity most of the year.		<b>Full</b>		<b>Full</b>
<b>Sonshine Children's Centre</b>	Invermere	Operating under capacity due to shortages of qualified staff. Wait Lists for this facility are approximate.	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>		
<b>Windermere Valley Child Care Society</b>	Invermere	The 30 children on Wait List for Infant & Toddler Program includes some children not born yet.	<b>30</b>	<b>Fall wait list registration uncertain as last years 4 yr olds enter school, but the program is expected to be full</b>	<b>3 Yr olds: 2 4 yr olds: full</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Little Badgers Early Learning Program</b>	Windermere	Infant & Toddler temporarily operating under capacity due to shortages of qualified staff therefore uncertain of wait list for this program.	<b>Not Avail</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Mountain Ridge Early Learning Program</b>	Windermere			<b>2-3</b>	<b>2</b>	
		<b>Total Children on Wait Lists:</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>

## 5. COLUMBIA VALLEY CHILD CARE NEED & DEMAND SURVEY

Family Dynamix conducted a Child Care Need and Demand public survey in June, 2017. The purpose of the survey was to identify barriers, challenges, opportunities and potential future initiatives for child care in the Columbia Valley. The survey could be completed in one of three categories; as a parent/caregiver, as a business owner/operator or as a child care provider or agency.

There were 126 respondents; 96 parent/caregivers, 20 business owner/operators and 10 child care providers or agencies. The highlights from each of the three respondent groups are provided below.

### Parent/Caregiver Respondents:

- 96 Respondents. 95% female, 5% male.
- 89% are two parent families; 11 % are single parent families.
- 90% of parents surveyed do not think that families in the community have access to an adequate supply of child care services.
- 10% of respondents have need for additional support for children with special needs.
- 65% are employed in the paid labour force; 19% are self-employed or a business owner; 3% work on an irregular basis; 7% are full time homemaker caring for children; 6% other.
- 30% of those employed have their work/study hrs change on a seasonal or other basis.
- 30% of those employed have a second job which is often seasonal.
- 75% of spouses are employed in the labour force; 18% are self-employed or own a business and 17% of spouses work a second job.
- The annual family income of survey respondents was; 3% under \$10,000; 10% \$10,000 to 29,999; 16% \$30,000 to \$59,999; 17% \$60,000 to \$79,999; 49% \$80,000 and over.
- Top choices for child care for own children; 1. Child Care Centre; 2. Child care in own home; 3. Regulated care in Caregivers home; 4. Nursery/Preschool; 5. Before and After School Care; 6. Unregulated care in Caregivers home.
- 80% of parent respondents require child care on a regular, recurring basis; 15% require care infrequently or on an irregular basis.
- Full time homemakers caring for their children use a variety of child care services; child care centres, private home care; parent/child drop in programs; occasional use drop in services; paid and unpaid arrangements with a caregiver; play groups and care by extended family.
- Top choices for additional new child care services for the community; 1. Child Care Drop-Off Centre for occasional use; 2. Child Care Centre; 3. Parent /Child Drop in Programs; 4. Regulated Care in Caregiver's home; 4. Trained Caregiver for Occasional Use; 5. Nursery/Preschool 6. Play Groups; 7. Parent Education Programs; 8. Toy Library

- 76% of homemakers/unemployed would accept paid employment outside the home if adequate child care services were more available and affordable in the community.
- For those parents enlisting child care services outside the home; 29% we indicated they are satisfied with their current arrangements.
- 44% of parents would like to have their child care services located near their home; 31% near their work and 6% near their child's school. 14% indicated it doesn't matter where child care facilities they are located.
- 91% of parents need daily regular care for children year round.
- 37% have different child care needs during the summer months; 51% use child care centres for care during the summer months, 6% use summer camps or rec programs and 11% stay home. A variety of other caregivers fill in the voids during the summer.
- 36% of parents take time off work to care for their children during school breaks, professional days etc.
- When a child is sick, 93% of parents most often choose to stay home from work.
- 33% would use a trained, supervised caregiver to come into their home to care for sick children if this service was available and 15% would use a child care center especially for children who are mildly ill. 63% would be willing to pay for a service to mind sick children. 42% of parents used a friend or relative to care for sick children at least once in the past 12 months, but 35% found this somewhat difficult and 47% found it very difficult to arrange.
- 48% of parent respondents have had to arrange for short term emergency childcare in the past 12 months due to unexpected circumstances. 60% of these parents elected to stay home from work with unpaid leave and 33% were able to find a friend or relative to provide care.
- Top choices for short term emergency child care were 1. A child care centre providing this service; 2. Leave from work; 3. Licensed, supervised child care worker that would come into the home.



50% of parents have required child care outside regular working hours in the past 12 months due to occasional work on evenings and weekends or shift work; 24% of these frequently have difficulty making child care arrangements and 52% occasionally have difficulty making child care arrangements. The majority of these parents would choose full or part time child care centres with extended hours for child care and the balance would choose licensed caregivers in their home or friends.

### **Business Owner/Operator Respondents:**

- 20 respondents
- 100% agreed that child care availability is a community issue.
- All respondents are small businesses that employ between 1 and 25 employees.
- The majority of businesses have some employees that rely on child care services so that they can come to work.
- 90% feel their business is family friendly. None have considered providing child care services for employees.
- Most business respondents would suffer if employees were unable to attend work due to lack of child care including; limiting customer service, rescheduling clients, finding alternate employees or owners to cover shifts, reducing hours or closing the business for the day and potential loss of income.
- 64% of businesses agreed that more child care options would allow more employees to work, and employees to be more productive.
- 80% believe the lack of access to child care effects recruitment and retention of employees for Valley businesses. 11 of 20 businesses have experienced employees missing work due to child care issues in the past 12 months. Employee missed days due to lack of child care range from one day to 60 days. Of the 11 businesses that experienced loss of employee days due to child care issues: the average loss was 16 days per business per year.
- 45% of the business operators try to offer flexible work schedules to assist employees with child care.
- 82% require employees during regular weekday working hours. 36% require employees on weekends and holidays and 10% on evenings/night shifts. 10% have seasonal work with irregular hours during peak periods.

### **Child Care Provider or Agency Respondents:**

- 10 respondents
- 90% were licensed and 10% were private, non-licensed.
- 90% provide preschool child care; 60% provide Infant & Toddler Child Care; 40% provide after school care; 10% provide special needs programs.
- 60% provide full time care; 70% provide part time care and 40% provide drop-in care. None provide temporary emergency or care for a sick child.
- No providers offer transportation to or from their program.
- At the time of the survey there were 12 vacancies; 3 Infant & Toddler; 5 Preschool; and 4 after school program vacancies. Available openings were split between full and part time spaces.

- The majority of providers offered child care services during regular working hours, however 38% offered weekend child care and 50% offered some limited extended hours. Only one provider offered services on statutory holidays.
- The majority of providers offered assistance or government subsidy options,
- 78% of providers felt their service was meeting the needs of enrolled families, however several commented on the need for more spaces and more qualified ECE workers.
- All child care providers feel they offer a variety of developmentally appropriate programming.
- 100% of child care providers offer professional development and training for staff.
- 9 of the providers employ 49 staff. 86% of these employees have ECE qualifications. 58% have Infant/Toddler or Special Needs qualifications.
- Staff turnover is problematic. In the last 6 months 8 child care providers had 20 employees leave their agencies; 7 on maternity leave, 2 returned to school, 2 left the community, 4 left the Early Years field, 2 took a position with another agency, 1 was not able to obtain provincial qualifications, 1 left due to illness and 1 left for other reasons.



### **Survey Summary:**

Although the survey results are largely anecdotal, several strong themes surfaced.

- Parents are quite satisfied with the quality of care given by existing child care providers.
- There is a shortage of licensed child care spaces in the community. There are no or very limited spaces available at any given time. More child care spaces are needed for all age groups.
- Child care issues seem to focus more on lack of available spaces and services than on the ability to pay.
- Child care options for evening, weekend or shift work are extremely limited.
- Child care options for short term emergency or mildly ill children is virtually non-existent and has a financially negative impact on both local families and businesses.
- There is a shortage of qualified ECE workers to staff child care facilities.
- The Columbia Valley would benefit socially and economically if additional child care services were provided.

The survey respondents indicated the preferred choices for child care are as shown in the chart below.

Preferred Choice of Child Care for Own Family		Currently Used Child Care Providers		Preferred Choice of New Child Care for the Community		Preferred Location for Child Care	
1	Child Care Centre	1	Child Care Centre	1	Child Drop-Off Centre for occasional use	1	Near home
2	Care in own home	2	Care for own children	2	Child Care Centre	2	Near place of work or study
3	Regulated Care in Caregivers Home	3	Regulated Care in Caregivers Home	3	Parent/Child Drop-in Program	3	Doesn't matter
4	Nursery/Preschool	4	Other	4	Regulated Care in Caregivers Home	4	Near child's school
5	Before and After School Care	5	Other children in the home, relative or nanny	4	Trained Caregiver for occasional use	4	Other
6	Unregulated Care in Caregivers home			5	Nursery School		
80%	Full time care	25%	Regulated/Licensed	6	Play Groups		
14%	Occasional care	75%	Unregulated/Licensed	7	Parent Educational program		
6%	Other			8	Toy Library		



## 6. SOCIAL NEED AND VULNERABILITY OF CHILDREN

The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) is an interdisciplinary research institute that brings together researchers and practitioners to address complex child development issues. Their work is supported by UBC, the Ministries of Children and Family Development, Education and Health and School Districts and many other organizations.

HELP has developed an 'Early Development Indicator' (EDI) to assist in understanding the state of children's development in different areas of the province. It is believed that children's development is impacted by the broad policy environment, socio-economic conditions, parents, family and neighborhood characteristics, play and peers, language and literacy, early learning and care and their overall health. The EDI data is useful for exploring early childhood outcomes at a neighbourhood-level, and also comparing the data within the larger regional and provincial context. Interpreting EDI data through a local lens can enhance the work of community planners, coalitions, providers, and governments in decision making and priority setting to improve childhood development.

The EDI measures the health of the kindergarten population, specifically childhood vulnerability in five key areas;

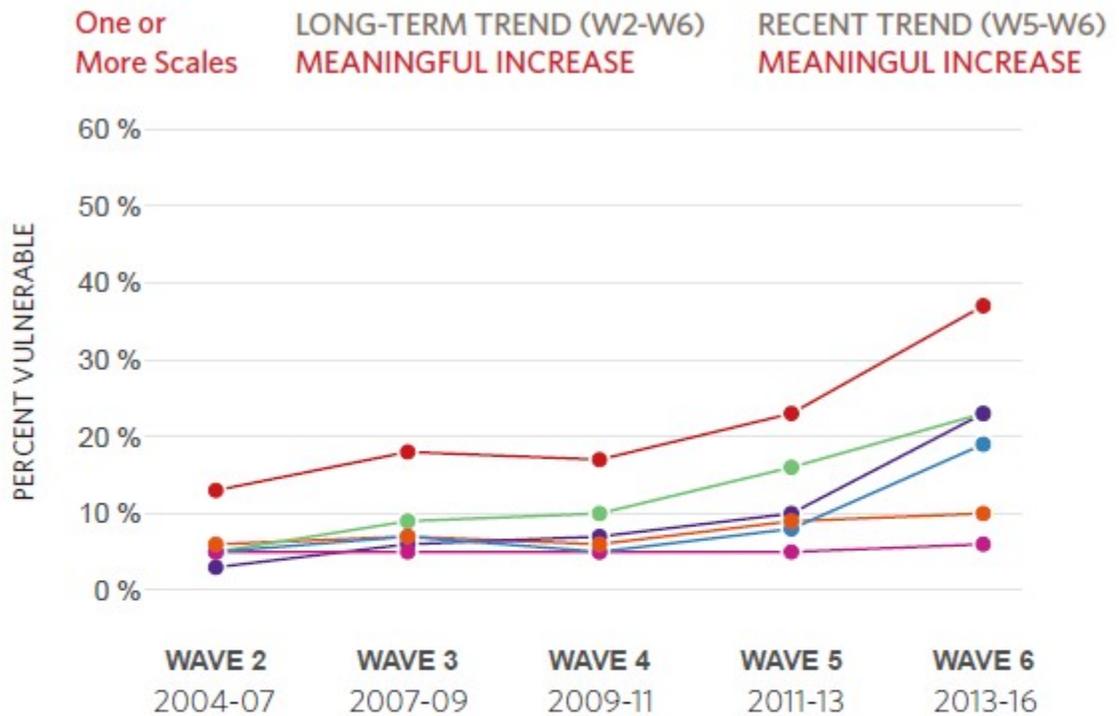
- Physical Health and Well-Being
- Social Competence
- Emotional Maturity
- Language and Cognitive Development
- Communication Skills and General Knowledge

The current Provincial vulnerability rate for children vulnerable on one or more scales of the EDI is 32.2%.

The EDI has been completed for the Windermere Local Health area in five waves since 2004. The current 2013-2016 Wave Data indicates that the Windermere vulnerability rate has climbed to from 23% to 37% over the last three years. This is considerably higher than the adjacent communities of Golden (26%) and Kimberley (23%) as well as the provincial average of 32.2%

**WINDERMERE EARLY DEVELOPMENT INDICATOR**  
**WAVE 6 – 2013 TO 2016**  
**Number of Children: 193**

## WINDERMERE EARLY DEVELOPMENT INDICATOR CHANGE OVER TIME



Source: Human Early Learning Partnership. EDI (Early Years Development Instrument) report. Wave 6 Community Profile, 2016. Rocky Mountain (SD6). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, School of Population and Public Health; October 2016.

The reason for the rise in vulnerability rates in the Windermere Local Health Area has not been determined. However, the results do suggest the need for the community, local, regional and provincial agencies to focus efforts in the areas of child development. The data is a common concern for social and other service providers in the area to collaboratively expand or enhance resources for children and families.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS SUMMARY

After reviewing the various sources of data, the findings confirms a need for additional child care in the Windermere Local Health Area for certain age groups.

### Demographics and Population

The review of the existing population statistics and projection of future growth indicates that there is very slow but steady growth in the area. Overall, the population is stable and the implementation of any new child care services to meet market demand in the area should be sustainable.

### Existing Child Care Services and Space Availability

There are currently 223 licensed child care spaces including preschool, however only 218 spaces are currently operating due to shortages of qualified ECE staff. The majority of child care facilities are located in the central area of Invermere and Windermere. Very few child care options exist in the smaller communities or rural areas.

Preschool is considered an Early Learning Enhancement & Development Program, is usually half days, and children do not necessarily attend 5 days a week. As such Preschool cannot really be considered "daycare". For the purposes of determining the local daycare need, preschool has been excluded from the following summary.

There are 158 spaces excluding Preschool. They can be broken down as follows:

- 32 Infant and Toddler spaces to service approximately 155 children
- 72 30 months to school age spaces to service approximately 155 children
- 40 Before and After School Spaces to service approximately 310 children aged 5 to 9 years old and to a lesser degree an additional 315 children aged 10 to 14.
- 14 Multi-age in licensed home care spaces

Using this data, it appears that the most significant shortage of spaces is for Before and After School care. Creation of additional Infant and Toddler spaces appears to be the second highest priority, while the 3 to 5 year old age group appears to be relatively well serviced. Although it is difficult to include Preschool as daycare, it also assists in servicing the child care needs for the 3 and 4 year old age group.

The other sources of research appear to substantiate this assumption.

- Comparing the number of licensed child care spaces per age group to the Canadian average need for daycare also indicates an extreme shortage of Before and After School child care spaces and a need for some additional Infant and Toddler spaces.



- The MCFD utilization rates for local reporting child care operations also indicates a strong demand for Infant and Toddler Care spaces. The utilization rates also indicate there seems to be adequate Age 3 to 5 year old spaces in the area.

However, the utilization rate for before and after school care is very low. It is suspected that the gap between spaces available and spaces utilized for School Age care may not reflect low demand, but rather the reality that very few licensed after school care spaces even exist in the area.

- Vacancy rates and wait lists for existing child care suggest a high need for Infant and Toddler Care. However it was shared that some of the 59 children on this wait list are not even born yet. It is also suspected that there may be duplication of children on the wait lists between the two major providers.

It is curious that there are only 10 children on the Before and After School care wait lists as this does not support the other findings. One of the major child care providers recently shut down their after school program due to shortage of staff. They believe that if they were in a position to reopen the program they could immediately fill it again.

### **The Columbia Valley Child Care Need and Demand Survey**

Although a public survey is usually considered an anecdotal source of information, they reflect opinions, trends and general experiences of the community. The Columbia Valley Child Care survey had a considerable number of respondents from three varied interest groups which give the results increased validity.

The survey indicated a shortage of licensed child care spaces in the community. There are no or very limited spaces available at any given time. The respondents believe more child care spaces are needed for all age groups.

Also there is a demand for non-traditional hours and emergency care. Child care options for evening, weekend or shift work are extremely limited. Child care options for short term emergency or mildly ill children is virtually non-existent and has a financially negative impact on both local families and businesses.

### **Social Need and Vulnerability of Children**

The HELP Early Development Indicator which measures the health of children starting school in five key areas of; Physical Health and Well-Being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language and Cognitive Development, Communication Skills and General Knowledge indicates that 37% of the children in the Windermere Local Health Area are vulnerable on one or more scales.

This is 5% higher than the current Provincial vulnerability rate of 32.2% and 11% to 14% higher than the adjacent communities of Golden and Kimberley respectively. The data

also indicates the Windermere early childhood vulnerability rate has risen steadily over the past few years.

The results suggest the need for the community, local, regional and provincial agencies to focus efforts in the areas of child development. The data is a common concern for social and other service providers in the area to collaboratively expand or enhance resources for children and families.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That the Family Dynamix Association take a lead role and explore options to assist the community to increase the number of Infant and Toddler spaces by 12 to 24 spaces. This may be achieved as a collaboration and/or partnership with other existing child care providers , or as an independent initiative or in associations, or by providing assistance to other agencies.
2. That the association also take a lead role and explore options to increase the number of spaces for Before and After School Care. This may be achieved as a collaboration and/or partnership with other existing child care providers , or as an independent initiative or in associations, or by providing assistance to other agencies.

And, further that, the association conduct a simple survey of parents (perhaps through the schools) to determine the number of children that would enroll in Before and After School Care before determining the optimum number of spaces to be provided.

And further that, Family Dynamix consult with the School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain) and local daycare providers to determine if there is suitable facility space available to accommodate Before and After School Programs and the willingness and terms of those agencies to house a Before and After School program.

And further that, Family Dynamix look into grant opportunities to provide transportation from outlying areas to a Before and After School program(s). (For example, The BC Variety Club Sunshine Van Grant that currently allows numerous communities equal access to services such as Child Care.)

3. That Family Dynamix explore the service of providing or encouraging extended day, temporary emergency and mild illness child care options along with the other child care initiatives (non-traditional care).
4. That the association continue with existing early learning and parenting programs and also consider additional programs to address the social need and vulnerability of children in the area.
5. That the Association proceed to Phase II of the project to explore facility and operating options to provide the spaces recommended above.

## **BARRIERS:**

1. There is a historical shortage of qualified ECE professionals to staff child care facilities. Attracting and retaining qualified staff must be addressed to ensure the success of any new child care programs.
2. Servicing the greater Windermere Local Health Area is challenging due to the large geographic area and distance between communities. Family Dynamix must determine if they wish to centralize child care services in the Invermere/Windermere area, or provide full, part time or satellite child care to the outlying communities.
3. Finding suitable and affordable facilities/locations to offer new child care services may be challenging and depending on the options chosen will require significant planning and professional expertise in advance of funding applications.



## **FACILITY AND OPERATING OPTIONS**

Through the initial research phase and discussion with Family Dynamix several options to provide additional child care facilities have arisen. They are listed below in no particular priority order.

### **1. Partner with Existing Suitable Agencies**

To leverage existing child care expertise, staff and/or facilities in the region, partnerships or collaboration may be an option.

- A partnership could be created with an existing Child Care Agency to assist them in reopening licensed spaces or expanding their number of spaces. Some of these agencies may already own land or have long term leases, but do not have the expertise to fund, staff or manage the construction of new space.
- In Invermere, the College of the Rockies is linked to David Thompson Secondary. The secondary school is currently operating under capacity and has surplus space that may be suitable for a child care program. Currently the College offers an ECE Program, but it is largely a distance learning program. If the College ECE Program could be converted to an on-site program with hands-on experience at an on-site Infant and Toddler Day Care, it may be more appealing for local residents to enroll. This partnership option could also help to address the shortages of qualified Child Care staff in the area. Exploratory discussions with the College of the Rockies and the School District would be required.
- Most before and after school programs throughout the province are located in schools, often with pick up transportation services provided from adjacent schools. (The Variety Club grant vans in many communities for this purpose.) After school programs can be held in multi-purpose rooms and/or gyms when they are available and School Districts generally provide reasonable lease rates for recovery of custodial, utility and any other direct costs associated with the rental. Utilization of schools in smaller rural communities such as Canal Flats or Edgewater may be a more realistic option.
- There may also be other partnership opportunities within the community.

### **2. Convert Existing Retail, Office or Other Vacant Space**

A large vacant retail/office space exists in the Invermere town centre area that could be converted and renovated into a new child care centre. Other local spaces may also be vacant and available. A suitable lease arrangement, rezoning and a detailed renovation design and budget would need to be created. Parking and easy access may be an issue.

### **3. Install a Modular Child Care Facility**

Many child care centres throughout the province are utilizing modular structures. Some advantage of modular structures are that:

- Many modular manufacturers have a variety of size and proven child care design options already available;

- Procurement through a Request for Proposals is a relatively simple process and does not commit the Association into a contract;
- The installation and project management can also be completed by the manufacturer (often with local trades);
- Placement of a modular structure on leased or temporarily donated land is usually more acceptable.
- A local developer has indicated support for a child care centre and a modular structure on his lands may be an appealing option.

#### 4. Construct a New Permanent Facility

Identification and acquisition of lands for a new facility would be required. This could be achieved through outright purchase, long term lease arrangements or a joint use/development partnership agreement.

Outright purchase of lands at market value may not be financially achievable. A major capital campaign would likely be required in addition to any available grants to create new child care spaces.

Other known options include:

- Two vacant properties near the Invermere town centre (different locations) are owned by the District of Invermere and either site would be very suitable to house a Child Care Centre. Consideration for donation or long term lease with the District could be explored. Negotiation and agreements with the District of Invermere could be a lengthy process. The District may be more open to a modular structure on their lands.
- A local developer has indicated support for a child care centre and may make land available for a permanent structure.

#### 5. Create a New Comprehensive Family Dynamix Centre

Family Dynamix currently operates a variety of programs and services out of leased space in downtown Invermere. The facility is very crowded and does not have room for expansion. One vision is to create a new facility to house not only needed new licensed child care spaces, but all the Family Dynamix Programs and administration. This would also allow space to enhance services for children and families to address the social needs and increasing vulnerability rate in the area.

It is also believed that there would be some capital and operating economies by amalgamating all services, and the current rent and operating expenses could be used to support a mortgage or other new leased space.

There has also been some thought on a somewhat smaller scale to develop a new Child Care Development Centre that could house new child care spaces along with all the other Family Dynamix early learning programs, parenting workshops and other children and family focused programs.

Either of these options could be created utilizing most of the facility options listed above, but would require more extensive planning, design and capital funding.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Consult/share the results of the Columbia Valley Child Care Need and Demand Assessment with other existing agencies and service providers and; Discuss and explore opportunities to address the recommendations collaboratively through assistance, partnership or other cooperative means.
2. Based on the research, determine what new child care programs Family Dynamix wishes to pursue and where those spaces should be geographically located. Determine the number and location of:
  - o New Infant and Toddler Spaces
  - o New After School Child Care Program(s)
  - o Extended hour and occasional care options
3. Determine if the Association wishes to pursue amalgamation of other Family Dynamix services with a new Child Care Centre.
4. Determine which preferred facility options to explore.
5. Research the preferred facility options to determine their viability and achievability and short list to one or two preferred options.
6. Determine the capital requirements and develop a business plan to implement the preferred option(s).
7. Submit a grant application to access up to \$500,000 in Child Care Capital Funding for 2018 from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to increase child care capacity in the area.
8. If required, develop a local capital fundraising campaign and develop a strategy for ongoing operational funding needs. Explore and consider appropriate grant opportunities from charitable organizations such as Columbia Basin Trust, Vancouver Foundations, Variety Club and other organizations.

## **APPENDICES**

### Appendix A: MCFD Utilization Rate Calculation

## Appendix A

### **MCFD Utilization Rate Calculation:**

"A child care facility's utilization rate is determined by dividing its total enrollments for the month by the number of times a child care space can be used in a month. Two part-time enrollments are assumed to be equivalent to one full-time enrollment; 100% utilization of one child care space is assumed to be 22 full-time equivalent enrollments in a month.

For example, a child care facility with one child enrolled full-time in each child care space, for 22 days in a month will have a utilization rate of 100% (as will a facility with two children enrolled part-time in each child care space, for 22 days in a month).

For the calculations of utilization rates by the group age cohorts (infant/toddler, age 3-5, school age, and total group), facilities with 'Group Multi-Age' spaces have been excluded as it cannot be determined which spaces a facility's reported enrollments are utilized.

Licensed 'preschool' child care spaces have been excluded from these calculations as preschool facilities may be open on a part-time basis both with morning and/or afternoon sessions, and from one to five days per week."