



SUBJECT: FAQ regarding School District No. 6's Child Care Plan

REFERENCE: [Ministry of Education and Child Care Announcement](#), [Minister of State for Child Care Mandate Letter](#), [Minister of Education Mandate Letter](#), [ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund](#), [School District No. 6 Early Learning and Child Care Webpage](#)

GENERAL BACKGROUND

On June 7, 2021, an announcement was formally made that childcare would move to the Ministry of Education by 2023. However, on February 8, 2022, Government announced that childcare and education would integrate to form the new Ministry of Education and Child Care effective April 2022.

SD6 began building relationships with childcare providers across the District in June 2021. The messaging from the District and the Ministry was clear; education is not taking over childcare or putting any childcare facilities out of business. SD6 has been working alongside childcare providers to learn about what services are currently available for families, what are the additional needs, and how can we work together to meet these needs of families across in all our communities.

QUESTION: WHAT HAS SD6 DONE TO EMBRACE THE NEW MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE AND THE SHIFT FROM A K-12 SYSTEM TO A BIRTH TO GRADUATION SYSTEM?

In September 2021, SD6 put in an Expression of Interest to the Ministry of Education and Child Care to participate in the Changing Possibilities for Young Children pilot project. This project brings together Early Childhood Educators and Kindergarten and/or Grade 1 teachers for six collaborative working sessions throughout the school year. Sessions are focused on deepen understanding and use of the BC Early Learning Framework that was revised in 2019 to compliment the redesigned curriculum and provide continuity in pedagogy from birth to eight years (Grade 3). This project initially began in Kimberley and has since expanded to the Columbia Valley.

Additionally, SD6 created a K- ECE (Early Childhood Educator) Collaboration in all communities that began in the 2021-2022 school year. This project places an ECE from the childcare sector and a K-teacher in a partnership allowing three reciprocal visits to each other's classroom. In its first year, partners focused on building connections and spent their time deepening their understanding, awareness, and appreciation for the teaching and learning that happens in both the early years and school settings. In its second year, partners have engaged in dialogue and collaboration focused on everything from play-based learning, to the BC Early Learning Framework, to social emotion learning, to the First Peoples Principles of Learning, and more!

SD6 has also created after-school programs in elementary schools with the support of third-party providers and is operating a licensed preschool program as part of the Ministry's JUSTB4 pilot program.

SD6 will continue to build upon relationships between early years and school as well as explore new opportunities for connecting and collaborating in the coming years.

QUESTION: WHY DID SD6 CREATE AFTER-SCHOOL CARE IN SCHOOLS?

In the Minister of State for Child Care and the Minister of Education mandate letters, it clearly states that school districts are expected to leverage space in schools to provide before and/or after school care in school buildings for school-aged students where required.

SD6 surveyed K-6 families across the District in February 2022 to determine the need for after-school care. These survey results were compiled and based on this information the District began conversations with third-party providers and Interior Health in June 2022 to license five after-school programs. These programs are in the following locations:

Kimberley – third-party provider is Summit Community Services Society

1. Marysville Elementary – this program has been in operation since 2006.
2. Lindsay Park Elementary – this program opened in November 2022
3. McKim – while licensing was approved, there were not enough registrations to begin operating at this location

Windermere – third-party provider is the Eva Joseph Learning and Cultural Society

1. Windermere Elementary – this program opened in September 2022

Invermere – third-party provider is Windermere Valley Child Care Society

1. Eileen Madson – this program opened in October 2022
2. Edgewater Elementary – this program opened in October 2022

Canal Flats

1. Martin Morigeau and J.A. Laird schools did not have enough parents indicating that they would access this service to sustain programming

Golden Area– third-party provider is Golden Community Resources Society

1. Alexander Park – GCRS has available space for after-school care in Mountain Child which is attached to APES. SD6 continues to support Mountain Child in recruiting a facilitator for this program and anyone interested can apply [here](#).
2. Nicholson Elementary – we were unable to secure a third-party provider to run this program
3. Lady Grey Elementary – there were not enough parents interested in this service to sustain programming

Click [here](#) for more information on after-school care.

QUESTION: WHY IS SD6 BUILDING CHILDCARE FACILITIES?

With the formation of the new Ministry of Education and Child Care, school districts are strongly encouraged to get involved in the childcare crisis by building childcare spaces on school grounds by accessing the [BC Child Care New Spaces Fund](#). In the spring of 2022, SD6 began conversations with the Board to determine a plan for submitting applications to help create more childcare spaces. This involved reading the childcare needs assessment reports that had been done in Kimberley, the Columbia Valley, and Golden and Area A as well as discussions with current daycare providers to find out about community waitlists.

In the fall of 2022, SD6 submitted its first New Spaces Fund application to build 148 childcare spaces on the grounds at Marysville Elementary School in Kimberley. Once this application received approval in January 2023, SD6 submitted a second application to build a facility with the same number of spaces on the piece of land owned by the District behind Eileen Madson Primary School. This application received approval in March 2023 and the District is planning to have both projects out to tender in August/September 2023.

Q: IS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6 OPERATING THESE NEW CHILDCARE FACILITIES?

No, SD6 does not have the human capacity to operate its own childcare facilities so these facilities, like after-school programs, will be operated by third-party providers. The Board voted to extend the longstanding relationships SD6 already had with Summit Community Services Society in Kimberley and Windermere Valley Child Care Society in Invermere. These partners meet the requirements for third-party providers outlined in the New Spaces Fund application

as they operate under the guidance of non-profit boards and both societies have successfully operated childcare facilities in their local communities for over 20 years.

Q: WHEN WILL THESE NEW CHILDCARE FACILITIES BEGIN OPERATING?

SD6 is planning to have the Marysville and Eileen Madson projects out to tender in August/September 2023. The hope is that these facilities will be operational in the fall of 2024. For more information on submitting an expression of interest for childcare in one of these facilities and/or to read updates on the building of these facilities please click on this [link](#).

Q: WHAT IS SD6 DOING TO HELP ADDRESS THE SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS (ECEs)?

SD6 is working collaboratively in a variety of ways with several organizations to help increase the number of qualified ECEs in all our communities.

In May of 2021, the Board of SD6 created a District Vice Principal of Early Learning position. One of the primary goals of this role was to engage in collaborative conversations across the District with municipalities, chambers of commerce, a wide range of childcare providers and organizations including Child Care Resource and Referral and College of the Rockies. These ongoing conversations include ways the District can support the recruitment and retainment of qualified ECEs in all of our communities and we will continue to do this work moving forward.

In 2021 SD6 partnered with SD5, SD8, and College of the Rockies to apply for funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care to offer an ECE Dual Credit Program for high school students in the second semester of their Grade 12 year. Interested students are able to take the first four courses towards becoming an ECE fully funded by the Ministry. Once they successfully complete these courses, students can apply to the ECE Registry for their Early Childhood Education Assistant certification and begin working in licensed childcare facilities. The goal is that these students will continue their studies to attain their full ECE certification either part time while they work or as full-time students. In the first two years of this partnership, SD6 has had 12 students register from across the District. The Ministry has confirmed funding for this project for the 2022-23 school year and SD6 continues to promote this opportunity in all three of its high schools as well as its alternate schools. Click on this [link](#) to learn more about the ECE Dual Credit Program.

Since its inception in 2021, SD6 has been a part of the ECE Regional Roundtable which is facilitated by Community Futures East Kootenay. This roundtable meets to discuss childcare needs and challenges across the East and West Kootenays and works collaboratively to address issues. The group shares resources and information including strategies they are using in their region to alleviate the childcare crisis either by creating spaces or recruiting and retaining ECEs. One of the contributions SD6 has made to this group is sharing the creative way we provide after-school care in schools by working in formal partnership with third-party providers and licensing library and gym spaces.

SD6 has been working in the Kimberley area to coordinate and host a series of free ECE Information Sessions for anyone interested in pursuing a career as a professional Early Childhood Educator. The presenters at these sessions include East Kootenay Child Care Resource and Referral, College of the Rockies, and WorkBC who all share an overview of the role of an Early Childhood Educator and provide information on various supports available for this career path. Local childcare providers are invited to attend and talk about the programs they offer and share employment opportunities they have within their organization. To date we have had Summit Community Services Society, Purcell Preschool + Daycare, Kimberley Independent School, and CBAL participate and these sessions have been promoted through the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Kimberley. This has proven to be a successful collaboration and these sessions will be offered on an ongoing basis. For more information on how to become an Early Childhood Educator please visit this [site](#).

Q: WHAT ABOUT THE LACK OF AVAILABLE HOUSING IN OUR COMMUNITIES?

SD6 is aware of the lack of housing in our communities and is supportive of the initiatives that local municipalities and housing committees are working on to address this issue.