



On the Path to High Quality School-Age Child Care



Working towards seamless and integrated systems for high quality school-age child care was the focus of the Early Learning Summit in Vancouver earlier this month.

On November 8, over 225 representatives from 54 B.C. school districts and early learning, child care, education and Indigenous groups gathered to discuss the educational, social and economic benefits of quality early learning experiences. The goal of the Summit was to strengthen partnerships between K-12 and child care communities and engage on the ministry's proposed model for school-aged child care. This model, which is still in development, intends to support school districts and child care providers to work collaboratively to deliver quality before and after school care for young children.

"The early years are key to a child's development — it's in those years that the majority of a child's brain development happens," said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development. "By encouraging child care to be offered in our schools and making early learning a foundation of the education curriculum, we are creating an inclusive, safe environment for children to learn the skills that will carry them to success throughout their lives."

Craig Alexander, Chief Economist at Deloitte Canada and one of the keynote speakers at the conference, spoke of the economic and financial benefits of expanding Early Childhood Education. Alexander argued that expansion could boost maternal labour force participation, improve labour market success and help to reduce



income inequality. Another keynote speaker, Dr. David Philpott, a Professor in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, addressed the positive, pre-emptive impacts early childhood education can have on special education needs. Philpott outlined research suggesting early childhood education can benefit a child's mental health, regulate behavior problems and enhance literacy, numeracy and language skills. The third keynote, Jane Bertrand who is a Program Director and the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation, shared provincial, national, and international perspectives on the continuity of learning before children enter school and once they get there.

At the Summit, Rob Fleming, Minister of Education, also introduced the revised Early Learning Framework, which offers a host of new perspectives on education, as well as tools and resources to help young learners be successful. To support the implementation of the revised framework, Minister Fleming announced the Province is investing \$1.28 million so education professionals throughout B.C. will be better supported to help young children from birth to eight years of age build a strong foundation for learning. Grants will go out to public school districts to support early learning educators at StrongStart BC centres to participate in early learning professional development activities. These grants will make it easier for early care and learning professionals to keep up with best practices and provide children with a smooth transition from child care to schools across the province.

Participant Feedback on the Partnership Model and Early Learning Summit

After learning more about the proposed Partnership Model for Before and After School Care and hearing examples of successful community-school district partnerships already taking place, conference attendees were invited to share their feedback. While there were concerns with implementation going forward, attendees expressed positive interest in the model:

"We need to work on partnerships with our child care providers rather than our current tenant/landlord relationship."

"We like the 'Seamless Day' concept and welcome the Ministry of Education's help in making this happen."

"We have enough space for children during school hours, therefore we have enough space for them when the final bell rings - we have space!"



Those who attended the Summit also appreciated the opportunity to collaboratively discuss ways to improve early childhood education and care through before and after school programs:

"I would like to thank the organizers for a well-organized and complete day of information. It was extremely exciting to have all the Ministers and educators of early years children included in a professional and equal manner. I look forward to many more collaborative sessions."

"The speakers were outstanding, and the information is so relevant."

The Early Learning and Child Care Summit provided a valuable opportunity to bring together stakeholders—including school districts, Indigenous partners, government, post-secondary and child care organizations—for a full day of thinking about the role of child care and early learning in the B.C. school system. Look for more information on this important topic in future editions of Learn.

Learn More

- › Watch the [Early Learning Summit presentations](#).
- › Read more about [B.C.'s vision for early learning](#) and how this is reflected in the revised Early Learning Framework
- › Take a look at the [new Early Learning Framework](#) and see what has changed to better recognize the new realities of children, families and communities
- › Read about the [Changing Results for Young Children \(CR4YC\) Program](#).
- › Get more information on the [initiatives that support Early Learning British Columbia](#).