

ECE Training Roundtable

Monday 23 August 2021, 10:00-11:30am



Aim

To initiate discussions on the challenges of finding trained early childhood educators (ECEs) in the East Kootenays and discuss initiatives in the area, including funding options through the Community Workforce Response Grant (CWRG).

Agenda

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| 10:00am | Welcome and Introductions |
| 10:10am | Setting the Scene |
| 10:15am | Challenges & Needs |
| 10:35am | Current Initiatives |
| 10:55am | Discussion: CWRG |
| 11:15am | Next Steps |
| 11:25am | Thank you and Goodbye |

Attendees

Robyn Peel (facilitator, convener, CFEK), Colleen Watts (East Kootenay CCRR), Crystal MacLeod (School District 6), Frankie Seitz (East Kootenay CCRR), Gerri Brightwell (FLNRORD), Heather Hepworth (COTR), Kathy Bonnell (Rural Communities Early Childhood Institute), Leah Bradish (COTR), Londa Morris (Kootenay Employment Services), Pamela Tetrault (Golden Child Daycare), Renee Quanstrom (Golden CCRR), Theresa Wood (Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce), Viveka Johnson (School District 6)

Context

- Childcare needs assessments have been completed across the region and they highlight the need for ECE staff/training
 - [Columbia Valley Childcare Need and Demand Assessment 2017](#)
 - [Cranbrook Child Care Action Plan 2020](#)
 - District of Elkford – Snapshot of Child Care Need 2020
 - [Elk Valley Child Care Barriers & Opportunities 2015](#)
 - [Golden and Area A Childcare Action plan for 2020-2030](#)
 - [Kimberley Child Care Action Plan 2019](#)
 - [East Kootenay Child Care Needs Assessment 2015](#)
- CBT have childcare as one of their [strategic priorities for 2020-2022](#)
 - CBT commissioned an ECE Workforce review, with the final report completed in July 2021. They are now exploring options as a result of this report.
- BC Govt has an [ECE strategy for recruitment and retention](#)
- Ministry of Education is taking over childcare provincially by 2023
- The Universal Childcare \$10/day promise from BC Government is likely to increase demand for childcare

Challenges

- Recruitment and retention of trained childcare workers is the greatest challenge facing providers' right now. Getting people into the field and then having them continue training.
- In small communities, there is competition between local daycares for ECE staff. If one place recruits, other providers in the area likely to lose a staff member.
- Difficult to attract from outside of region / town due to high cost of relocation for a relatively low-paying job
- There is a major shortage of Infant Toddler certified staff. Cost to move from certificate to diploma is not always beneficial to students with regards to increasing wage.
 - Most Infant Toddler programs across the East Kootenays are not running at full capacity due to lack of staff.
 - It is difficult to find grants for Infant Toddler training because they are ECEs already
 - Need to entice people to not only be ECEs but continue on to Infant Toddler.
- Infant Toddler programs are not profitable, making the financial model work is problematic. They need other programs to subsidize the Infant Toddler programs.
- ECE Bursary has flaws:
 - Timing isn't great. As an employer it is best to pay upfront for staff to do training and then staff pay back when they get the bursary.
 - Amounts doesn't fully cover costs of Infant Toddler certification.
- Most students choose to study part-time, as likely to be working part-time already as ECEAs, and need to do study around their job
- The challenge of finding practicum spaces, especially for those doing the Special Needs / Infant Toddler certificate
- Practicum supervisors often own a childcare centre and difficult to connect or have time for effective in-house training
- Grade 12 English requirement is a barrier to entering ECE program for some
- As a lot of training done online, access to internet can be a barrier for some students
- COTR historically has only done intake one-time per year (September), so many students choose to use private provider Pacific Rim as they do continuous enrolment model (although cost is much higher for students)
- Pathway to provincial accreditation is a barrier for new program development.
- ECE not seen as a professional career. Need to raise perception and elevate ECE as a career.
- Important for communities to have network of ECEs, to feel that you are working together and feel part of something bigger.
- Specifically for COVID, to cover sick days of staff, facilities running at less than occupancy proactively to prevent shut down days

Initiatives

- Work BC training funding eligibility has recently changed, meaning more people likely to be able to access it to complete ECE training (as can provide year-long funding). If underemployed then could be a candidate for this skills training.
- COTR ran a fast-track Child Youth and Family Studies (CYFS) program in 2020 through the [Community Workforce Response Grant \(CWRG\)](#) funding ([STER stream](#))
 - 24 students started, 22 completed (and now have ECEA certification) and 17 are continuing with training this Fall (8 of which are doing ECE)
 - Focus was on those living within the East Kootenay region
 - Had 70 people waitlisted
 - Looking to run another CWRG grant for Feb 2022 (as getting staffing for a 2021 start wasn't possible)
 - The fast-track program offered five courses, of which students chose and completed four of them

- Tuition was free for students and a laptop and books were also covered for the students through the funding.
- An online orientation week helped solidify the group and stick with the program
- Also did on-campus face-to-face training at their local campus (in small cohorts of 4-5 students) for first aid and food safe. There was support on resumes and interview skills. This further helped with the sense of support and community.
- COTR partnering with SD5, SD6 and SD8 on dual credit semester, starting in February 2022
 - Need to work on marketing to students as currently low uptake in program.
 - Funding is coming from BC government through the Ministry of Education to school districts to support students to do dual credit for ECEs.
 - BC Government is talking about students starting dual credit as early as Grade 11.
- COTR have increased number of seats for September 2021 enrolment of ECE from 30 to 50 seats and currently waiting on confirmation of funding for this
 - This increase is there to support regional students.
- COTR looking to develop an international cohort for the ECE diploma, to start in September 2022.
 - This face-to-face program could also support those locally who want to do a full face-to-face program as there often aren't enough to run a full face-to-face cohort.
- COTR have started monthly intake for Health, Safety and Nutrition course (ECED-113), one of the courses you need to take to be a ECEA. Can do course from September to April
- Kathy Bonnell is running a pilot program in Wilmer, a 1,000 hour inhouse, rural grass-roots training program. Those completing the program will finish in Spring 2022 and then apply to the province for accreditation of their ECE certificate. This pilot has potential to support and overcome the issues with training of ECEs in rural and remote communities.
- Pilot projects through Ministry of Education currently:
 - “Seamless Day” in 22 school districts across the province (none in our region at the moment). ECE worker comes in and does before school care and then works side-by-side with kindergarten teacher to lunch. Then another ECE worker comes in and works side-by-side with kindergarten teacher in the afternoon and then does after-school care.
 - SD6 in Kimberley doing a project “Changing Results for Young Children”. Triads – kindergarten teacher, Strong Start facilitator who is ECE qualified and ECE worker from community come together for 6 sessions to talk about practice and familiarize with Early Learning Framework
- CBT have a bursary of \$1,500 which can go towards training
- As part of the Golden Community Coop Action Plan they are keen to develop an ECE Learning Hub for local retention of those doing practicums

Potential Solutions

- Shuswap Children’s Association in the Okanagan did the CWRG grant last year, applying for the [Emerging Priorities](#) stream.
 - It was a wrap-around client-management model targeting 'responsible adult' part-time workers. As well as the free tuition of 3 courses through Okanagan College (giving them ECEA) they also received money for mileage, grocery cards to cover food, laptops and other supports such as headsets, webcams and microphones for online learning. The courses were run online two nights a week and every second Saturday to support them as they worked during the week.
 - They then linked these students onto WorkBC to potentially apply for further funding to complete their ECE certificate.
 - The CWRG Emerging Priorities Stream requires the lead of a non-profit organization, but can then get \$15K per participant rather than the \$8K available via the STER stream. This could open opportunity for a full one-year ECE certificate to be done.
 - KES would be interested in being a lead in this region. Londa and KES to follow up with COTR off-line to see if this could be feasible for 2022.
- Look for ways to fund Infant Toddler training in order to meet that gap
 - Could this be done through specific provincial government training grants?

- Would CBT look at this? Helping full-time employees, taking part-time studies have their training covered
- If go through ECE bursary do get priority if going for Infant Toddler, but as mentioned under challenges there are issues. Could this be solved and thus this challenge overcome?
- Look for opportunities, perhaps working with local Chambers, to promote ECEs as a career and childcares as possible winners of business awards
- Find a different model of practicum that could be offered to better support and provide more opportunities for rural students
- Look to collect data as to how many students who complete training stay in the field, and for how long.
- Set up specific scholarships for Child Youth and Family Studies at COTR

Next Steps

- Robyn to set up a follow-up roundtable discussion towards the end of September 2021 to update on offline discussions and discuss further ideas and initiatives
- Robyn and Gerri to meet with Kathy to discuss post-secondary research options to help her research her pilot program in Wilmer
- Leah (COTR) and Londa (KES) to discuss the CWRG Emerging Priorities stream and if they could do this together for the ECE certification, as well as COTR repeating the successful CYFS fast-track stream they have run previously.