

ECE Training Roundtable

Thursday 8 September 2022, 10:00 – 11:30am



Aim

To continue discussions on how best to support early childhood educators and childcare centres in the East Kootenays, with the aim to increase spaces and support economic development across the region.

Agenda

10:00am	Welcome
10:10am	Introductions & Roundtable Update All participants will have the opportunity to provide an update on the projects they are working on, or needs and challenges and successes in their centre or community
10:50am	Discussion: Making Infant Toddler Programs work The need for Infant Toddler places across the region is a challenge. Beyond finding appropriately trained staff, it seems to be a challenge to make this work operationally and financially for centres. Let's have a brief discussion about this challenge to look at advocacy, information, support or other actions that are needed to move forward with this need in our region
11:20am	Next Steps

Attendees

Robyn Peel (facilitator, convener, CFEK), Caroline Tremblay (Golden CED), Carrie Rickards (Eva Joseph Learning and Cultural Society), Colleen Watts (East Kootenay CCRR), Crystal MacLeod (School District 6), Diane Casault (School District 5), Frankie Seitz (East Kootenay CCRR), Gerri Brightwell (Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery & Innovation), Glenda Newsted (Interior Region CCRR), Heather Hepworth (COTR), Jennifer Moss (Kootenay Employment Services), Kathleen Holton (Mountain Child Early Learning and Care Centre), Leah Bradish (COTR), Londa Morris (Kootenay Employment Services), Theresa Wood (Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce)

Update

Robyn did a short introduction, highlighting the BC Government support that has been announced since the last ECE roundtable in May 2022. She also shared data on the location of students that are undergoing ECE training across the region. [You can view information that was reported here.](#)

Roundtable Discussion

- Golden CED in partnership with the WorkBC office in Golden did an ECE marketing campaign to invite people to consider ECE as a career choice. This has helped raise profile of sector in the area. 6 people contacted the WorkBC office and 2 of them are starting online ECE training this Fall.
- The Invermere WorkBC office (run by Kootenay Employment Services) has been ringing around childcare centres, offering information on funding and supports to make sure everyone is aware of what is on offer.
- It is a hard labour market, but it is important to look at what can be done to be a good employer and focusing on supporting the teachers. Little Badgers on ?akisqnuq First Nation has gone to a 4-day consolidated work week, which although requires more staff, allows staff a greater quality of life (and time for recuperation). Also have good benefits and pension. They close for 2 weeks every year, including one week focused on professional development.
- Mountain Child Early Learning and Care Centre in Golden has three young women who are interested in becoming ECEs. They are offered a chance to volunteer and see what it is like within the centre before committing to training, so they know what they are getting in for and are committed. Giving youth access to that knowledge and understanding prior to training is important. The centre is paying for the ECEA course and then offering them part-time work, hoping they will then undergo further training to be ECEs.
- Accessing the training wage subsidies through Columbia Basin Trust is important to improve the labour needs.
- Both school districts are actively promoting the Dual Credit program, with a focus on Year 10s, to ensure they know what is available when they get to Year 12. Also suggesting students do volunteering within childcare centres to know what they are signing up for.
- Don't know of many centres within our region who applied to be \$10/day centres in the last round. There could be a number of reasons for this including:
 - Staffing challenges, it being in Summer when some centres are closed or are really busy.
 - Non-profit centres are prioritized with this funding meaning many for-profit centres aren't choosing to apply.
 - Centres choosing not to apply to reduce unfair competition in small communities.
 - The application is very lengthy and with staffing challenges it is hard to find the time to complete (unless centres have Managers who aren't on the floor).
- Need to make sure we are looking at the support for childcare workers There is major concern not just about burnout but also demoralization. Need to really look at supporting wellbeing within the sector, as well as building trust and relationships.
- All 60 seats for the ECE program at College of the Rockies (COTR) for this year have been filled. If demand stays high, likely to be another 60 seats next year.
- Reminder that the ECE113 is run monthly online (outside of Summer), allowing people to then register to be an ECEA.
- The international cohort at COTR which has been spoken about in previous roundtable sessions, is looking to start in January 2024, face-to-face in Cranbrook. The challenge is for students to have the English language requirement, so the college is looking at a bridge program to upskill students on their English language.
- A childcare working group has brought partners together in Creston over the past 6-9 months. Focus has been on where can we provide new spaces, who has the capacity to do so and looking for opportunities within the community.
- There is a need for the full ECE training to start in other times of the year, other than September. Would COTR look into this? If people identify themselves now through WorkBC, have to do other programs rather than using local college.
- To promote job opportunities across the region, could there be guest speakers that come into the COTR ECE program to promote opportunities.
- Across the SD6 area, afterschool care in elementary schools is happening, in conjunction with childcare providers.

- There have been large challenges in licensing the after-school programs in SD6 (Windermere, Edgewater, Invermere and Kimberley). There has been a lot that has been learned that could be shared.
 - They have since found that if there is a formal partnership between the childcare provider and the school district, the process is much simpler and streamlined.
 - Look to do a follow-up in 6 months to share learning.
- One concern with the after school program, is where are all those children going in the Summer? There aren't the camps and care and location for this support in the Summer holidays.

Infant Toddler Discussion

- Infant toddler spaces are a massive need within all of our communities, and this has been raised in every previous roundtable we have had.
- Londa has been looking at developing an infant-toddler centre in Creston and has developed a budget to do so. One of the options is a partnership with the housing society, so rent and overheads would be very low. 90% of cost of running an infant toddler service is staff wages, as you need the three staff there. And even with those low overhead costs, parents would need to pay \$60/day every day (including days when the service is closed through the Christmas period) in order for the program to break even. That is a cost of \$15,000 a year for a family to pay for the care of one under 3-year old, which is a large amount to ask a family to pay.
- There was discussion around how the infant toddler programs are almost impossible to break even, making them unfeasible for many centres. There is also the added challenge of forward planning and ensuring you have space in the 3-5-year-old spaces when children age-out from the infant-toddler room.
- The teachers for infant toddler are the highest paid teachers as they have the highest level of qualification, making it even more expensive.
- There is a growing distress among staff members at childcare centres, when they receive calls at least once a day for parents looking to find space for their infant. With wait lists over 100 in most centres, this is a real challenge that needs to be addressed in our region.
- Being a \$10/day centre does make having an infant-toddler room easier financially, so once there are more \$10/day centres it may alleviate some of these problems. But you do need to have the infant toddler business model set up to then apply.
- The Ministry is collecting data with regards to how much it costs to run daycare, so important to keep feeding this information in. We are in the process of a systems change.
- Important that the Ministry makes funding available to different types of childcare, as home based providers in our community are also important and may provide another opportunity for infant toddler care, as are registered license not required.
- There was also a brief discussion about the best way to share with the public what being a \$10/day centre means, that it isn't everywhere and that it isn't a space creation tool.
- Important to include local governments in these discussions. As well as ensuring childcare is integrated into other community discussions such as housing and poverty. Keep waving the rural flag and the unique challenges that exist within rural communities.

Next Steps / Actions

- **EKCCRR** to gather information on why centres didn't apply for \$10/day application, so as to inform future regional supports we can offer, as well as feedback to the province.
- Look to develop a \$10/day information session for the region in early 2023. A chance for prototype sites to share their learning and stories of why it has helped them. Also a chance to prepare centres to ensure they understand the policies and other documentation required to apply. **Robyn** to work with **CCRRs**, **Londa** and **Glenda** to begin to discuss what this might look like, and where funding could be sourced.

- **Robyn** to discuss with **CCRAs** about the best way to share positive stories of what is working in centres across the region.
- **Glenda** to see if she can get information on how many centres within the East Kootenays applied for the \$10/day program this year.
- **Robyn** and **Glenda** to have initial discussions about what a regional mentoring program could look like and what would be needed to kick-start it.
- **Heather** to see if she can find out the ages of students in the current COTR cohort from the East Kootenays.
- **Heather** to send around promotional material for the dual credit program again to ensure it is being promoted across the region, particularly within youth networks.
- **Robyn** to have discussions with **Heather** and **Leah** about applying for CWRG for a non-September start date (perhaps in a local community).
- **Robyn** to work with **Heather** and the COTR Employment team to develop a way to promote ECE job opportunities across the whole region, with a focus on the Cranbook-based students looking outside their community.
- **Robyn** to discuss with **Crystal** and **Carrie** as to the best way the learning from their after school care licensing can be shared with others. Perhaps a 6-month follow-up and lessons learned session at a future roundtable.
- **Glenda** to share the learning from SD6 about the challenges of licensing with the Ministry of Education and Childcare and Interior Health.
- **Robyn** to discuss with **Glenda** and **Gerri** about advocacy work that would be done to promote the issues with infant toddler programs, and ensure **Londa**, **Carrie** and **Katherine** are able to loop in to share their knowledge and challenges.
- **Robyn** to again send around the [UBCM Stepping Stones report](#), *Childcare planning guides for BC's local governments*.
- **Robyn** to organize next roundtable for early December. This will allow us to talk about the promotion of the dual credit program, if not filled by school students.