

ECE Training Roundtable

Monday 6 February 2023, 10:30am – 12:00pm



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

10:30am	Welcome & Introductions
10:40am	SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY What building blocks are needed to support sector sustainability? How can we work together across the East Kootenay region to support this?
11:20am	Roundtable Update A chance for attendees to update the roundtable on projects related to training, access and sector sustainability.
11:40am	Role of Roundtable Discussion on focus and need for roundtable in next 12-18 months

Attendees

Robyn Peel (facilitator, convener, CFEK), Caroline Tremblay (Golden CED), Colleen Watts (East Kootenay CCRR), Crystal MacLeod (School District 6), Diane Casault (School District 5), Frankie Seitz (East Kootenay CCRR), Glenda Newsted (Interior Region CCRR), Jennifer Dunkerson (Columbia Basin Trust), Jennifer Moss (Kootenay Employment Services), Londa Morris (Kootenay Employment Services), Merisa Butler (Family Dynamix), Theresa Wood (Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce)

Sector Sustainability

- Focus on having a professional sector which provides strong, sustainable, quality care for children in the East Kootenays for the long term.
- Now have eight centres within the East Kootenays who are part of the [\\$10/day pilot program](#).
- Latest (2021) [Evaluation of BC's Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#) was recently released, with information that helps inform our discussion today:

What do ECL professionals say?

Significant investment has been made however 15% of ECLs are considering leaving within 1 year

The main reasons they are leaving:

low pay

lack of benefits

poor working conditions

45%
of employers are losing more staff than they can hire and ...



27%
of employers refused children because of a lack of qualified staff.

How can BC retain Early Care & Learning (ECL) Professionals?

- BC GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED ECL RECRUITMENT & RETENTION STRATEGY** In 2018, the BC Government made an initial investment of \$1.36B in funding for the province's ECL sector.
- ANNUAL SECTOR SURVEY** Every fall since 2018, the ECL workforce provides feedback on issues affecting recruitment and retention in BC.
- INCREASE PAY** Wage enhancements are improving satisfaction with income however 60% of ECLs are still the top reason for leaving the sector.
- RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF RELATIONSHIPS** Early learning professionals have high satisfaction with the relationships they have built with families, co-workers, and with the childcare philosophy of their workplace.
- REDUCE WORKLOAD** Rates of burnout among ECL professionals have been steadily rising since 2017.
- IMPROVE BENEFITS** Satisfaction with benefits is low at ECLs and is a top way to enhance retention in the sector.
- GOAL** Proven, well-understood professionals are needed to remain in the sector, new recruits are attracted to.
- MORE ACTION IS URGENTLY NEEDED** The number of ECL professionals who expect to leave the field within one year is growing.
- Find the full report online here or at [webcbe.ca](#)**

Findings from the Evaluation of the ECL Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

Canadii, BC CHILDREN'S SERVICES, SRDC, SRSA, ECBC

- The goal is passionate, well-educated professionals who are excited to remain in the sector and new recruits are attracted in.
- It was noted that this is a long-term vision, this isn't going to be solved overnight, but the roundtable is keen to look at ways that partnerships and collaborations and regional actions could support this.

Initiatives / Ideas / Concerns for our Region

- [Peer mentoring program](#), run by Thompson River University in partnership with ECEBC, is being facilitated by CCRRs. This 10-month program aims to support retention of staff. Mentors and mentees meet once a week, and the whole group (max 12 participants) meets together monthly. There is an honorarium that attendees receive and credit for hours for professional development. If funding continues (which it should hopefully do), then new group will start in September 2023. Interested people should contact their local CCRR to learn more.
- The Little Badgers 4-day work week was highlighted at a recent [Employee Attraction and Retention workshop](#) put on by Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce (for all businesses, not just childcare). The 4-day work week has helped reduce worker burnout and improved employee retention. There was discussion around the culture and leadership of the organization that makes this such a success, not just the 4-day week.
 - *Great to see childcare examples shared for other businesses to learn from.*
 - *Is there a way to collect and share ideas of good practice on reducing stress and burnout of staff across the region?*
- There was discussion around how the CCFRI rates are based on historic rates, and with the Kootenays being historically very low (the lowest in the province), it's a hard place to make improvements from.
 - *Could there be advocacy from this group to have these rates based on actual costs in communities rather than historic rates? i.e housing costs, living costs, average income*
 - *Could these rates be different in resort municipalities where the cost of living is often higher?*
- A lot of staff are put into management positions quickly because of the high turnover of staff. How can we support them in these roles? Support them as they learn about how to manage staff, administration needs, manage contracts etc.
 - *Share the [Administration & Management for Childcare training](#) through the BC Early Years Hub.*
 - *Partners to highlight leadership / management training courses and opportunities to childcare centres in their communities.*
 - *Are there micro-credentials that COTR could run to support with these skills and training?*
 - *Ensure networking and support for businesses, including peer-mentoring or learning, includes childcare providers. Value childcare professionals as professionals by inviting them to opportunities you would invite other professionals / businesses to.*
- A number of childcare providers don't have the technology skills required to do the work and reporting required by provincial government. There is also the challenge that a number of these providers are in-home care providers and don't have the ability to step away from children during a working day to get support for this, it all happens after the children have gone home (which is when government offices are closed).
 - *Look for ways to support and improve technology skills for childcare providers.*
 - *Where appropriate, partners could connect with providers to see if there is support that they need (or that families need) to navigate the administrative processes to access subsidies, support programs etc.*
 - *Are there opportunities for more collaboration between providers on an administrative level?*

- Discussions from previous roundtable meetings fuelled Kootenay Employment Services (KES) to launch their [childcare-focused self-employment program](#). The first ten weeks supports people to write businesses plans, marketing plans, produce budgets etc for their planned business. There are also workshops to walk students through the various processes and websites to access funding for childcare providers. KES have had very positive feedback so far (30 applications from within the KES region, and many more outside the region but focus is on KES region only currently). For our rural region we need to have the diversity of a range of providers, and not just on the larger centres which are the current focus of government funding.
 - *Once the pilot is complete, take the learning from the students (and applicants who maybe weren't eligible for this program) and look for funding to provide the necessary skills and support they are looking for.*
- In our rural communities there are very few centres which are large enough for there to be a manager who has the time to look at planning and training and support. The employees of the centres are in there supporting the children and just surviving. It is also important that we have the [range of childcare options](#), not just for children and families, but also what suits the providers and employees best. Although being aware that it can be isolating for those running in-home care by themselves.
 - *Continue to look for innovative supports and solutions that meet the needs of our rural communities, and advocate for this at the local, regional and provincial level. The focus on group childcare in large centres isn't going to best meet our rural needs.*
- Professional growth is important to support sector growth, allowing staff to see a way to develop within the sector. How can the Boards of our non-profits support the growth and sustainability of their organizations? What role do they have in helping access funding?

Roundtable Update

- CCRRs are hosting a virtual conference on Saturday 4 March 2023. Register and find out more here: [Interior Early Years Conference](#).
- May is Childcare Appreciation Month. This is a great opportunity to connect with local government and other organizations in your communities to raise awareness.
- 18 school students are part of the [Child Youth and Family Studies Dual Credit Program](#) that is starting soon.
 - SD 5 – 5 Cranbrook; 1 Sparwood
 - SD6 – 3 Kimberley; 5 Columbia Valley; 1 Golden
 - SD 8 – 3 Creston
 - One student from SD6 is enrolled in one course as dual credit – ECED 113.
- This coming September COTR is likely to do the same as this year, and have 60 seats available, with 30 set aside for regional students.
- COTR are looking to have an international face-to-face diploma cohort at the Cranbrook campus starting September 2023. COTR are also looking to find a solution to offering more face-to-face in regional communities. They are exploring whether there could be a certificate exit with a few of the courses being taken online alongside this international cohort. They are in discussions with Golden about a model to try and broadcast some learning to the regional campus if there is a cohort of students who wish to be face-to-face and a certificate exit solution can be found. The College will also need to seek approval from the ECE registry to deliver face-to-face learning in sites other than Cranbrook. If other communities (Fernie, Invermere, Creston) are interested in creating a small face-to-face hub (5-6 students), please contact Heather Hepworth at COTR to discuss.

- Reminder that COTR are still running the ECED 113, Health, Safety and Nutrition course that when successfully completed allows individuals to apply for an ECEA license. The February intake is full, however the final intake before summer, beginning March 6th is available.
- Also a reminder that Columbia Basin Trust continues to offer the [ECE Wage Subsidy program](#) and the [ECE Training Wage Subsidy program](#).
- Columbia Basin Trust is engaging in their Columbia Basin Management Plan planning process, which is highlighted by community engagement across the region. Encourage people within the sector to take part, whether online or with in-person meetings. [More information here](#).

Roundtable Next Steps / Role of Roundtable

- How do we get more direct feedback from childcare providers in the region? Could we each have one or two questions we asked childcare providers in our area - what is their number one issue and how can this group support them with it?
- Can we produce, share or develop case studies (especially rural case studies) that highlight different ideas and opportunities that could spark innovation and ideas in our communities?
- Do we have a document that outlines the steps for in-home start-ups, including business licenses, fire safety needs etc? Glenda mentioned this is something that she could do, that we could then disseminate out through our networks and communities to help improve supports and understanding for these new businesses.
- Do we have a targeted roundtable session with municipal staff, to improve our supports and networks and help local governments? We need to ensure we have everyone at the table to clarify roles, responsibilities and strengthen relationships.
 - *Remember there is the [Stepping Stones Guide for Local Governments](#) which you can share with your local government.*
 - *Do we want to share examples of where good collaboration has occurred in other regions that we can learn from?*
- There are many opportunities for community conversations around the region. Many municipalities are starting to look at updating their Official Community Plans (OCPs). There is the CBT strategic planning discussion, and COTR is looking at labour challenges as part of their strategic planning. How can childcare discussions fit into these conversations?
 - *Are there conversations that Robyn and CFEK can support you to have in your local communities?*
 - *How can we support and allow childcare providers to realise their voice is important at these various consultations?*
- Can we explore and share different models of delivery?
 - What is the best model for shift work care? Is it something we could be supporting more?
 - How do we involve businesses in the discussion of childcare and models where businesses provide a space that a non-profit runs within it? What are the ways we can support those organizations already providing great care in communities to expand their reach, rather than getting new people to reinvent the wheel.
 - Ensure we are linking into discussions happening in communities about workforce housing, affordable housing and resident restricted housing. Help ensure childcare providers and those working in childcare are at the table for those discussions.