

East Kootenay ECE Roundtable

Thursday 22 June 2023, 10:30am – 12:00pm MT



Agenda

10:30am	Welcome & Introductions
10:35am	Survey Review / Reflection Did anything in the survey results surprise you? Anything else that you feel needs to be discussed or teased out?
10:50am	Regional Recruitment and Retention Strategy - Small group discussions What are some actions or next steps that can be taken to support the development and roll out of these strategies? What is the best structure to facilitate these actions? Who is already doing work in this area that needs to be factored into this?
11:10am	Regional Recruitment and Retention Strategy – Group discussion Feedback from small group discussions. Agreement on some next steps.
11:30am	Other Actions Looking at the other top rated potential actions, are there any that need to be moved forward now? What is the best structure to facilitate these actions? Who is already doing work in this area that needs to be factored into this?
11:45am	Roundtable Update A chance for attendees to update the roundtable on projects and activities taking place around the region.

Attendees

Robyn Peel (facilitator, convener, CFEK), Alex Denis (Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation), Ashley Nielsen (Village of Canal Flats Daycare), Caroline Tremblay (Golden CED), Frankie Seitz (East Kootenay CCRR), Glenda Newsted (Interior Region CCRR), Heather Hepworth (COTR), Laura Eadie (Wild Wapiti Playschool), Pamela Tetrault (Golden Child Daycare), Sarah Jacklin (Summit Community Services Society), Theresa Wood (Columbia Valley Economic Development), Tracy Robertson (Blossom and Budd Child Care Centre)

Survey review

- 12 people completed the survey on priority actions ([see results here](#))
- Recruitment and retention reflected as highest priority.
- It was noted that CCFRI advocacy is important, as retention of staff is impacted by pay constraints.
- There was a short discussion around ensuring alignment on UBCM advocacy.
 - Sharon Gregson from the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC has a resolution that has been sent out to all municipalities to look to support. It is timely for all of us to be linking with local government about this and other potential resolutions.

NOTE: The resolution date was 30 June 2023 for UBCM, so the opportunity to link with East Kootenay municipalities was missed this year. Roundtable to look to identify key resolutions to get municipal support for next year's UBCM meeting.

Regional Recruitment and Retention Strategy – Discussion Points

- Kootenay Employment Services has been involved with community outreach activities across the region, such as open houses and community events to discuss the ECE career path.
- CCRR is helping to promote the dual credit program that College of the Rockies and School Districts 5 and 6 partner on.
- In Kimberley there is a group meeting monthly to share the opportunities for ECEs and to promote the profession and sector (a free public ECE Information Session). Group consists of childcare providers, SD6, EKCCRR, COTR and Kootenay Employment Services. Focus is on collaboration and getting information out to the community about what an ECE is, the pathway to becoming one, the supports that are available, and the potential employment opportunities available once you are certified.
 - Only small number of potential employees has come forward so far. So looking at promotion through Farmers' Market and other community outreach to share the word.
 - Funding for greater recruitment drive is important and needed (outside of Kimberley)
 - For new facility opening on SD6 grounds in Marysville in Fall 2024, will need 40 staff to be fully operational.
- Attendance at Strong Start events in Columbia Valley has also clarified community challenges. For example, unpaid practicums or part time students being ineligible for bursaries.
- Important to use and advocate for 'childcare professionals' terminology to raise the profile of the field.
- Housing has a big impact on ability to recruit and retain staff.
 - Some centres have looked to provide a housing allowance to staff and also work with families with rental properties to potentially move up on the waitlist.
- Alternate schedules have been explored as a retention strategy. For example, Little Badgers offers opportunity to work a 4-day work week.
- Advocacy required for the expansion of the CBT wage enhancement program, which would have benefits in hiring more ECEs (as currently it is full so no new employers can access it)
- Opportunities for those interested in ECE career path to come volunteer at a childcare centre and learn the profession should be promoted.
- Important to follow education/career paths of ECE students and ensure understanding of the long-term career goals of ECEs when hired.
- In some cases, the [BC Employer Training Grant](#) may be worth pursuing to hire new employees or upskill existing employees (ie. ECEA to ECE).
- In Golden, a local peer mentoring cohort has been created of ECE students attending classes virtually (starting in September) through a partnership between Golden CED, COTR, CCRR, and two local childcare centres.
- For recruitment drives outside of the area, look to link with education facilities further afield such as College of Lethbridge, Selkirk College and online students through Pacific Rim.
 - Promote the lifestyle and opportunities in the East Kootenays. Potentially link with tourism and Chambers already promoting the region for other sectors and ensure ECE is part of the promotion
- Any larger promotional recruitment program should include social media materials that can be shared including personal stories of working and living in the East Kootenays.
 - Promotion could focus on larger urban areas (Toronto, Vancouver) and cross promote with other sectors to highlight there are jobs and opportunities for both partners looking to move to the region.

- Provincial Nomination Program is an opportunity for providers looking to hire foreign workers. Need to be aware it might be a short-term solution as many are using it as a way into the country rather than being drawn to our rural region.

How to move forward / how to action regionally

- Childcare is interlinked with many issues; there is a need to connect Chambers, tourism organisations and municipalities in looking bigger at family recruitment and promoting the region.
- There are regional groups already working together, so need to link those up and use those as key communication and support channels (ie Elk Valley, Columbia Valley, Golden, Kimberley)
 - Could there be a sub-committee of this roundtable that takes some actions forward?
- Need feedback from childcare providers on their needs and to buy-in to a larger regional recruitment program.
 - Interior Health's childcare contact lists may be an appropriate method to communicate through, as there are many protections for the CCRR contact lists.
- Potential interest in a regional Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP) application for a childcare navigator pilot type position to help people get into the field and promote the region to skilled ECE staff to move here.

Roundtable updates

- COTR still recruiting for the 60 ECE places starting in September. There isn't the waitlist that there was last year.
 - Also have 10 international students signed up for the 2-year diploma program starting in September. Local students wanting face-to-face learning can join this cohort. Sessions are morning only from Tuesday – Friday starting in September 2023. **ACTION:** Heather to share promotional material that can be shared on this opportunity
- Glenda requested updated promotional material on the 113 ECE course from COTR to share. [Click link to download.](#)
- Crystal McLeod from SD6 wasn't able to attend the meeting but sent in an update: They have met with the City of Kimberley and the Chamber to enlist their active participation in recruiting ECEs locally and outside of the East Kootenays. The City is working on creating a childcare page on their website and SD6 and Summit will provide links and other important information. We are brainstorming additional opportunities to engage the community and explain how everyone can play a part in this crisis whether they have children on a waitlist or they are retired and have a room/basement to rent for a soft landing into our community for an ECE. A healthy community needs to have accessible child care and we can tackle this together.
- Justice Education Society of BC have a webinar for navigating BC employment law in November, [register here](#)
- The [Early Years Portal](#) have a wide range of professional development opportunities, including many by the Justice Education Society.
- Keep an eye on Facebook for forthcoming CCRR online webinars/workshops. Intake for the Thompson River peer mentoring ECE program will be opening again soon, and please promote.
 - **ACTION:** Frankie to share promotional material for the peer mentoring program with Robyn when ready so can get out through network.
- For navigation of supports, make sure to link with CCRRs as they can support individually.
 - The [BC government website](#) also has plenty of information, including [support for early childcare educators](#).

- Golden has produced a booklet on how to become an ECE. **ACTION:** Caroline to share the booklet that was produced so Robyn can share out wider.