

## East Kootenay ECE Roundtable

Tuesday 19 March 2024, 10:00 – 10:45am MT



### Attendees

Robyn Peel (facilitator, CFEK), Colleen Watts (East Kootenay CCRR), Jenn Moss and Veronique Hamelin (Kootenay Employment Services, Invermere), Londa Morris (Kootenay Employment Services), Theresa Wood (Columbia Valley Economic Development)

### Roundtable Updates

- Representatives from the BC Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and the Federal Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) met with the Kimberley ECE group (including SD6, EKCCRR and childcare providers) to introduce the range of immigration pathways available. ECE is prioritized in the skilled workers intake. Often those coming through the BCPNP skilled migration pathways are already in Canada and may already be pursuing their ECE certification.
- There is an International cohort doing their ECE certification through College of the Rockies in Cranbrook. Crystal McLeod from SD6 has linked with them to highlight job opportunities across the region following their completion of training.
- Summit Community Services Society is looking to apply to the Economic Trust of the Southern Interior (ETSI-BC) to support a Kimberley recruitment pilot program. Robyn is supporting the Kimberley ECE group in this application process. We'll know in June if they are successful.
- With Marysville, Windermere and Fernie new spaces all coming online in the next few years, the region is going to need at least 90 ECEs to staff these new facilities. This is a massive challenge and recruitment that doesn't just take the workforce from one facility to another is going to be very important.
  - There was discussion around the concern of where the ECEs are coming from to fill the workforce spaces created from all these new (and planned) childcare centres. Is more advocacy needed to get the seats in the appropriate communities to fill these workforce needs? And specifically in-person training or hybrid training within our rural communities rather than it being online. And how do we support more qualified instructors to come to COTR to support this growth and need?
  - **ACTION:** Robyn to find out if there are any plans for COTR to increase the number of seats this year to help meet this massive need in our region?
  - **ACTION:** Robyn to create a table / document of all new and planned childcare spaces across the region so can have a better understanding of workforce needs to fully staff all these new spaces. It would be good to know which ones are linking with housing as well.
- Kootenay Employment Services has recently been contacted by [Piers](#), a training provider, to see if they would support a [PBLMT](#) for ECEs in our region. This would be a fully funded program, where the funding flows through WorkBC offices, and where participants would be eligible for weekly living supports for the entire duration of training. Piers have put in an application request, including training in Central and East Kootenays and are waiting to hear back, so there could be supported training for up to 20 people in our region. KES have requested that the training be at a time different to that run by COTR, to allow a different cohort of people to be supported and trained.
- **ACTION:** It was asked how are we engaging the graduates coming out of the COTR program in June, to connect as many of them to job opportunities in our region (such as the new centres in Marysville and Fernie) that may not be employing people straight away? We don't want to lose them to other

communities even though all those positions may not be open when they graduate. Robyn to follow up with COTR on this opportunity.

- The WorkBC centre in Columbia Valley have put a number of people through the Pacific Rim training in the last few years, which seems to have had the positive outcome of not many vacancies in childcare centres in Columbia Valley at the present time. However, Pacific Rim costs have gone up which does make it harder for people to access this training through the WorkBC program anymore.
- On April 1<sup>st</sup> all the Child Care Resource and Referral Centres (CCRRs) will be running on new contracts. Not all CCRRs have signed their contracts, although the one for SD5 has been signed. It is important to note that the CCRRs are now aligned to School District areas, which is a change across our region and may mean that those who provide CCRR services in your community will be different from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024 onwards.
- The City of Cranbrook have completed their Request for Proposal (RFP) and Cover Architecture Collaborative Inc. has been selected to conduct the New Spaces work in collaboration with the City ([read a news article about it](#)). The project will commence immediately with the goal to submit the New Spaces grant application to the Ministry of Education and Child Care by the end of June 2024.
  - It was noted that Cover Architecture were involved in the New Spaces Funding request in conjunction with the Town of Creston too. This request was for 110 new spaces and they are hoping to include housing on top of the childcare centre. The original application was declined, so the Town of Creston will be resubmitting.
- There are a number of other communities looking at new spaces:
  - In Cranbrook there has been interest from a for-profit Vancouver company to open a large childcare facility on land that has already been purchased.
  - There is also mention of a new childcare facility at a new housing development in Cranbrook ([see news article](#)).
  - Canal Flats are looking to expand their childcare spaces and also looking to include 52 housing units on the land next to the current childcare facility.
- In Cranbrook and the Elk Valley SD5 are rolling out Ready Set Learn which allows three- to five-year-old's to connect with their local school. See the flyers here for [Cranbrook](#) and the [Elk Valley](#) for dates across April and May.
- On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April SD5 is hosting a Numeracy evening in Fernie for pre-Kindergarten parents and caregivers, ECEs and childcare providers. [See the flyer here.](#)
- Community Futures East Kootenay is leading on a student-lead Mitacs research project with Selkirk Innovates. The project aims to understand the business needs and challenges of childcare providers in the Kootenay Region and to contribute to constructive business solutions for the long-term sustainability of childcare providers. A student intern has been selected and they will begin the project on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. An advisory committee has also been established which is currently helping with the development of the questionnaire. **ACTION:** Robyn would appreciate everyone's help to distribute the questionnaire when it is released and aim to get a really high response rate.
- Community Futures East Kootenay has provided a small grant to Sparwood's Society for Kids' Care for their Mountainview Child Development Hub feasibility study. This study will investigate the opportunities of using space at the Mountainview School in Sparwood to increase the number of full-time day-care spaces for those under 5, support before and after school care, provide offices for child support services and also allow space for other community programs to use.

**Next Sharing Roundtable: Monday 3 June 2024, 11:00 – 11:45am MT**