

East Kootenay ECE Roundtable

Tuesday 13 January 2025, 11:00 – 11:45am MT

Attendees

Robyn Peel (facilitator, CFEK), Arunveer Kamboj (Mountain Child Early Learning Centre), Cheryl Anderson (Summit Community Services), Crystal MacLeod (School District 6), Frankie Seitz (Southeast Kootenay CCRR), Glenda Newsted (CCRR Interior Region), Jeanie Holis (Kootenai Community Centre Society), Katrina Heyde (Kootenay Employment Services), Kristie Krisher (COTR), Laura-Lee Phillips (School District 5), Lisa Wrench (Kootenai Community Centre Society), Londa Morris (Kootenay Employment Services),

Roundtable Updates

- An update on new spaces from SD5:
 - The new spaces at Steeples Elementary in Cranbrook (being run in partnership with the BGC Cranbrook) is completed and waiting on licensing before opening. There is a community engagement session on 3 February 2026 ([see details here](#)).
 - The new spaces at Jaffray School should be completed by the end of February.
 - Currently finishing the design for the new childcare facility at the new school in Fernie (37 spaces for 0-5 years).
- School Districts 5 and 6 are currently reviewing their [CHEQ](#) data – the experience of early years environment prior to kindergarten. They are in discussions with childcare providers, discussing ways to support some of the challenges these reports raise, such as how many families don't read daily to their children.
- Researchers at the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at UBC, led by Dr Martin Guhn, have launched a two-year project to improve the well-being of children, youth, and families by strengthening collaboration between communities, advocacy organizations, researchers and Ministry partners. The HELP team will travel to Southeast Kootenay in April 2026 (Fernie on April 20 and Cranbrook on April 21) to present provincial and local results from the CHEQ, EDI, MDI, and YDI datasets. Community members, service providers, and organizations are invited to review and discuss the initial findings together. They will reflect on whether the data aligns with their lived experience and identify any additional priorities or gaps they would like explored.
 - Dr Guhn is open to sharing the data with this roundtable as well. **ACTION:** Robyn to follow-up with Laura-Lee to set up a date that Dr Guhn can present to this roundtable.
- Glenda Newsted's regional role with the Interior CCRRs will finish at the end of March 2026. The Ministry of Education and Childcare will be taking over the roles and responsibilities for this service coordinator role going forward.
 - In this role Glenda did receive quarterly reports from Interior Health on their active licensed facilities, and so not sure where this data will be sent going forward.
- Summit Community Services have been successful with the ReDi grants in past years. A reminder to all nonprofit childcare providers, that this grant opportunity is currently open.
 - For nonprofit organizations within Golden and surrounding areas, check out the information [here](#). Applications close 2 February 2026.
 - For nonprofit organizations within the Regional District of East Kootenay, check out the information [here](#). Applications close 9 February 2026.
 - Organizations within ʔaᑕam, ʔakisᑕnuk, Yaᑕit ʔa-knuᑕᑖiᑕit and Shuswap Band can apply on a continuous intake. Details can be found [here](#).

- The [Kootenay Childcare Initiative](#) has a number of updates:
 - They have recently released their first [impact report](#).
 - In the Fall they recorded promotional videos at childcare centres around the region, and these should be ready for release soon. The videos promote the Kootenay region in general, as well as working in the Kootenay childcare sector. They will be shared when released and we ask you to promote them widely.
 - A reminder that the business coach and recruitment support through the initiative is ongoing. Please refer any providers interested in getting support to [reach out](#).
 - The [Leadership web series](#) is also being promoted and open to any Kootenay childcare providers to register for.
- An update from SD6:
 - The new space in Invermere (being operated by Windermere Valley Childcare Society) has now opened and will continue to add cohorts on a gradual basis.
 - They are finding ways to connect with incoming kindergarten families, including hosting in-person recruitment parties in communities.
 - They are growing the connection to health professionals to grow the network of who is supporting the transition from early years into the school system.
- There are seven Dual Credit students (six from SD6) who are taking the regular courses at COTR as they couldn't get the cohort up and running this year. Hoping this will show the need and interest in the region, and they can go back to a more formal cohort model next year.
- Londa and Crystal have both joined the Provincial Childcare Council. This is a great opportunity to share the needs and challenges across the Kootenay region with the Minister. The next meeting will be the end of February 2026.
- A reminder that WorkBC are here to support anyone looking at going back to school to train to be an ECE. Now is a great time for those looking to go back to school in September to connect with their local WorkBC office, as they need to support the client for a while before going for funding.
- The Kootenay Boundary Early Years Conference will be taking place from 22-23 May 2026 in Cranbrook. Registration and more details coming soon, so keep an eye on CCRR newsletters and Facebook pages.
- Arun mentioned they are struggling to find staff currently. Staff are leaving to go to a different field, and it is sad to see educators leave the sector. There were a number of Golden graduates of the ECE certificate over the past couple of years, but they are not choosing to enter the sector. So, need to understand why and look to get new students into the childcare centres first so they can know what they are getting into before they start training.
- Community Futures East Kootenay (CFEK) are partnering with WeBC for a peer mentor group that is childcare focused. This is for women managers and owners of childcare centres across the Kootenay region. The focus is on business operations. [Applications are now open](#).
- Towards the end of last year the provincial government released its [inaugural annual report](#) under the Early Learning and Child Care Act (ELCCA).

Next Sharing Roundtables:

- **Tuesday 10 March 2026, 11:00 – 11:45am MT**
- **Tuesday 19 May 2026, 11:00 – 11:45am MT**