

**SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: CHILD CARE RESOURCES GROUP UPDATE FOR 2022**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT Council endorse the Child Care Resources Group work plan for 2022.
2. THAT Council approve an expenditure of \$800 from the 2022 Boards, Committees and Commissions budget to support the activities of the Burnaby Child Care Provider Appreciation event in 2022 May, as detailed in Section 4.2 of this report.

**REPORT**

The Social Planning Committee, at its meeting held on 2022 March 22, received and adopted the attached report providing an update on the activities of the Child Care Resources Group during 2021 and proposing a work plan for 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Jordan  
Chair

Councillor J. Keithley  
Vice Chair

Copied to:	Chief Administrative Officer Deputy CAO/CFO GM Corporate Services GM Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services GM Planning and Development
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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 2022 March 10

**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

**FILE:** 1750 20

**SUBJECT:** CHILD CARE RESOURCES GROUP UPDATE FOR 2022

**PURPOSE:** To provide an update on the activities of the Child Care Resources Group during 2021 and propose a work plan for 2022.

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1. **THAT** the Committee request Council to endorse the Child Care Resources Group work plan for 2022.
2. **THAT** the Committee request Council to approve an expenditure of \$800 from the 2022 Boards, Committees and Commissions budget to support the activities of the Burnaby Child Care Provider Appreciation event in 2022 May, as detailed in *Section 4.2* of this report.

**REPORT****1.0 BACKGROUND**

The Child Care Resources Group (CCRG) was established in 1990 as an advisory body to the City on child care matters. It is comprised of representatives from non-profit child care societies operating in Burnaby, as well as Fraser Health Community Care Facilities Licensing, the Burnaby School District, the Burnaby-New Westminster Child Care Resource and Referral Program, and the City's Planning and Development and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services departments.

As outlined in its Terms of Reference and Burnaby's Child Care Policy, the mandate of the CCRG is to:

- serve as an advisory body on child care matters;
- assist with the development of Burnaby child care policies, services and programs; and
- act as an advocate for child care services and programs in Burnaby.

In accordance with the Child Care Policy, the CCRG prepares update reports on its activities for the Social Planning Committee and Council. This report provides an overview of activities in 2021 and proposes a work plan for the CCRG for 2022.

## 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

Over the years, the CCRG has assisted staff in monitoring the child care environment and identifying and providing advice to address emerging issues in child care. It was instrumental in developing the City's *Child Care Policy*, adopted in 1994 and revised in 2000. The Policy's vision states that the City is committed to:

- assisting with the creation of a comprehensive and inclusive child care system in Burnaby;
- supporting families and children in their search for child care options; and
- working with the Board of Education, government ministries, child care providers, community service providers, and others in pursuing the City's child care objectives.

Further, the Child Care Policy states that the City will work to improve the availability, accessibility, and affordability of child care by providing appropriate and sufficient opportunities for the establishment of child care facilities within the context of the Official Community Plan, community plans, the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw, and other City regulations.

These policy statements are also identified as key objectives in the City's *Social Sustainability Strategy*, adopted in 2011. The Strategy recognizes the role child care plays in people's economic security and its contribution towards the development of complete communities (communities with a range of housing, services, transportation options and amenities within their own boundaries). Similarly, the City's *Environmental Sustainability Strategy* (2016) supports the development of complete communities that are walkable, bikeable and transit-supported. City policies recognize that while the provision and regulation of child care is the responsibility of the Provincial government, the City can play a supportive role. Support for the work of the CCRG also aligns with the City's *Corporate Strategic Plan* (2017).

## 3.0 KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE CCRG IN 2021

### 3.1 Child Care Policy Review

In 2021, the CCRG continued to provide advice and insights into provincial and federal child care policy. This role aligns with Action #2 in the Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy:

*Continue to advocate to the federal and provincial governments for a comprehensive and integrated child care plan which establishes an early care and learning system that is universal, publicly funded, inclusive, affordable, and of high quality.*

In 2018 the Provincial government published its 10-year plan to create a universal child care system in B.C. including the creation of new spaces through the Childcare BC New Spaces fund. More recently, the Federal government announced its new Early Learning and Child Care Plan (2021) to provide parents with, on average, \$10/day licensed child care spaces for children under six years old within five years, including a fifty percent reduction in average fees by the end of 2022. B.C. was the first province to sign onto the Federal-Provincial agreement (2021 July 8). Through the agreement, the Federal government will allocate \$3.2 billion to B.C. over the next five years. Both the Provincial and Federal governments' plans focus on three key elements – access to child care spaces, fee reductions for parents, and recruitment and retention of the child care workforce – as detailed below.

### ***Access to Child Care Spaces***

The pandemic has demonstrated that child care is a vital part of our social infrastructure and key to economic recovery. The economic recovery plans of both the Provincial and Federal governments emphasize the importance of access to affordable, quality and inclusive child care. Together, the Province and the Federal government aim to fund over 50,000 new licensed child care spaces in B.C. by 2026.

Since the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund was first announced in 2018, the City has accessed \$5,280,000 in funding to create new child care centres for children under six years old including the Montecito, Capitol Hill and Stride child care centres, built in partnership with Burnaby School District, and a new child care centre in the Christine Sinclair Community Centre.

Initially, when the Childcare BC New Space funding was first announced in 2018, private as well as public and non-profit providers were eligible to apply for the funding. In the most recent intake (2021 November), eligible organizations were restricted to public and non-profit sector organizations to align with the Province's goal of creating a universal child care program.

The City and School District's child care facilities partnership<sup>1</sup> and the City's existing operating model for its purpose-built child care centres align with this provincial direction. In these models, the asset (child care centre) is publicly-owned while each centre is operated by a locally-base non-profit organization. Centres developed through these models will remain in the public domain for the long term. Going forward, it will be important to identify additional publicly-owned sites to create new spaces in Burnaby.

### ***Fee Reductions***

Child care fees are one of the most significant household expenses for young families. Prior to recent funding programs, the main source of operating funds for child care operators was parent fees. This situation has limited the ability of operators to attract and retain qualified child care staff through higher wages since any increases have been directly derived through parent fees.

Since 2018, the Provincial government has introduced a fee reduction initiative that has lowered the cost of infant/toddler care (by up to \$350/month in group centres) and three-to-five year old care (by up to \$100/month in group centres). With funding from the Federal government, the Province also implemented a prototype program at 50 sites across B.C. to test the funding and operational models required to move towards a universal child care program.

Since 2018, families at prototype sites have paid \$200 or less per month per child for full-time child care. Four of the first prototype sites are located in Burnaby for a total of 136 licensed spaces out of a total of 2,525 spaces across B.C. In the recent Federal/Provincial funding agreement, the Province announced its intention to increase the number of \$10/day spaces to 12,500 spaces across B.C. by the end of 2022. A number of Burnaby-based child care providers are waiting to hear if they will be one of new prototype sites. As noted above, for the remaining, non prototype spaces, the Province aims to reduce parent fees to \$20/day for spaces for children under six years old by December 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> In the City/School District child care facilities partnership, the City provides capital contributions, the School District provides land and oversees the operations of new centres, and local non-profit organizations operate the centres.

### **Recruitment and Retention of Child Care Workforce**

A third and critical component of creating a universal child care system is the recruitment and retention of the child care workforce. As noted above, the child care sector has historically depended on parent fees to fund the operating costs of child care. As such, because of the direct impact on parents, child care providers have been limited in the wages they can pay child care workers which in turn has affected their ability to recruit and retain qualified staff. Many members of the CCRG struggle to recruit and retain a full complement of staff to operate their centres. Since child care licensing requirements have strict staff-to-child ratios, this means that some licensed spaces are vacant because agencies cannot recruit enough qualified staff to meet staffing ratios.

To address this challenge the Province initiated an Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy in 2018. The strategy has included bursaries for Early Childhood Education (ECE) students, the creation of new ECE spaces at post-secondary institutions and implementation of a wage enhancement of \$4 an hour for ECEs. These initiatives have helped the sector but members of the CCRG note that the wage enhancement program to date has not included child care administration staff (non-floor staff), early childhood education assistants and child care staff who provide child care to school age children. In addition, the wage enhancement program does not cover vacation time or sick time so organizations are required to make up the difference in wages which creates budget and accounting challenges.

In the Provincial budget for 2022, the Province has announced it will extend the wage enhancement to some child care administration staff. While this addresses some concerns, child care advocates are calling for a publicly funded, competitive and equitable wage grid for Early Childhood Educators that recognizes staff qualifications and experience and provides wages that are competitive with other positions with similar education, experience and responsibilities.

To raise awareness of the critical need to recruit and retain more child care sector staff, Council, at its meeting on 2022 March 7, approved a resolution for submission to the UBCM highlighting the issue. Staff will monitor the progress of the resolution and report back to Council on any outcomes.

### **3.2 Development of the Child Care Needs Assessment and Action Plan**

As part of its 10-year child care plan, the Province, through the UBCM, has encouraged and funded municipalities to develop child care action plans to identify the number of spaces needed over the next 10 years and strategies to achieve the spaces. The City received a \$25,000 UBCM grant in 2019 to develop a child care action plan. CCRG members guided the development of the action plan<sup>2</sup> which was adopted by Council in 2021 July. The plan identifies a need for 1,287 new infant/toddler spaces, 1,512 new three-to-five year old spaces, and 1,613 new school age spaces over the next ten years, for a total of 4,412 new spaces.

The plan identifies actions to achieve the targets and includes an action to review the role, mandate and governance/reporting structure of the CCRG to ensure it is aligned and equipped to assist in the implementation of the plan.

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<sup>2</sup> See Burnaby Child Care Action Plan <https://www.burnaby.ca/sites/default/files/acquiadam/2021-09/Child%20Care%20Action%20Plan%20Final.pdf>

### **3.3 Provision of Child Care Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, child care services have remained open while other services, including schools, have switched to virtual services at times. In B.C., child care programs were encouraged to remain open and were provided additional funding so that essential workers from other sectors could access child care. As the pandemic has progressed, economic recovery plans, including those of the Federal and Provincial governments and the Burnaby Board of Trade, have highlighted the critical role child care will play in supporting economic recovery.

The relationships established over the years by CCRG members have proved invaluable during the pandemic. In the early stages, CCRG members held weekly online meetings to share information and resources as they adapted their programs to meeting evolving Provincial health orders. The CCRG has now returned to monthly meetings and members continue to share information and strategies. To document the challenges experienced over the past two years, City staff surveyed CCRG members in 2021 December to understand what has been both helpful and challenging regarding communications, funding and staffing issues during the pandemic. Twenty responses were received from staff of the organizations represented at the CCRG. Key findings are listed in *Appendix 1 attached*.

CCRG members intend to invite Ministry and Health staff to a focused discussion on the above findings with a view to supporting mutual learning from these experiences and improving services and communications going forward.

### **3.4 Celebration of Child Care Month**

In recognition of the important role quality child care plays in the social and economic well being of our community, the CCRG celebrates child care month in May each year. Activities include the Child Care Appreciation event for child care providers from home-based, private and non-profit child care centres throughout Burnaby. In 2021, the City provided funding to help support an online appreciation event that included a fun hands-on craft activity that child care providers could use toward their professional development requirements. Seventy providers from across Burnaby attended. Burnaby Council also proclaimed May as Child Care Month and the Mayor recorded a video message expressing the City's appreciation for the essential role child care providers were playing during the pandemic. The video message was shared widely and was much appreciated by the child care sector.

## **4.0 THE YEAR AHEAD – 2022**

### **4.1 Burnaby Child Care Action Plan Implementation**

The CCRG's main activity for 2022 will be to provide guidance and advice in the implementation of the Burnaby Child Care Action Plan. A separate report will be prepared for the Social Planning Committee on the first phase implementation plan. As noted above, a priority action for the first phase will be a review of the role, mandate and governance/reporting structure of the CCRG to ensure it is aligned and equipped to assist in the implementation of the plan.

To: Social Planning Committee  
From: General Manager Planning and Development  
Re: Child Care Resources Group Update for 2022  
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#### 4.2 Celebration of Child Care Month

The CCRG will work with partners to celebrate Child Care Month in May 2022 by:

- requesting Burnaby Council to proclaim child care month and child care provider appreciation day; and
- working with the Burnaby Early Childhood Development (ECD) Table in sponsoring the Child Care Provider Appreciation event on 2022 May 26. The intent is to have the event in person at the Burnaby Neighbourhood House – South House. The event is open to all in-home, private and non-profit child care providers in Burnaby and includes a dinner and a professional development component. To support this event, it is proposed the Social Planning Committee request Council to approve an expenditure of \$800 to assist with expenses for this event.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

This report provides an overview of the CCRG's key activities in 2021. It also proposes a work plan for the CCRG for the year ahead. Specifically, the CCRG proposes to provide guidance and advice for the implementation of the first phase of the Burnaby Child Care Action Plan. A separate report will be prepared for the Social Planning Committee on the first phase implementation plan.

As detailed in *Section 4.2* above, it is also recommended that the Committee request Council to approve an expenditure of \$800 from the 2022 Boards, Committees and Commissions budget to support the activities planned for the Child Care Provider Appreciation event on 2022 May 26.



E.W. Kozak, General Manager  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

MM:sa

Attachment

Copied to: Chief Administrative Officer  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer  
General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
City Clerk

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### **Survey of the Burnaby Child Care Resources Group Child Care Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic December 2021**

The Child Care Resources Group (CCRG) is an advisory body to the City of Burnaby on child care matters. It is comprised of representatives from non-profit child care societies operating in Burnaby, as well as Fraser Health Community Care Facilities Licensing, the Burnaby School District, the Burnaby-New Westminster Child Care Resource and Referral Program, and the City's Planning and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services departments.

In December 2021, CCRG members were surveyed on their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic to identify helpful initiatives, challenges and overall impressions related to communications with government agencies, funding and staffing. Twenty responses were received from staff of the organizations represented at the CCRG.

Key findings include the following:

#### Communications with MCFD and Health

##### *Most helpful:*

- Regular updates via email bulletins from MCFD and Health agencies that provide clear directions for the safe operation of child care services, especially as guidelines continue to evolve.
- Conference/video calls with Ministry and Health agency staff that allow for questions and answers with child care providers.

##### *Most challenging:*

- Receiving information on changing health protocols for schools long after schools receive the information and, as a result, having to modify child care services with very short notice; delays mean that child care providers do not always have sufficient time to communicate with parents resulting in frustration and parents questioning the operations and practices of child care providers.
- Receiving conflicting information from MCFD and health agencies on health and safety protocols.
- Receiving limited guidance from health agencies when exposures have happened in child care centres.

#### Funding Programs

##### *Most helpful:*

- Temporary emergency funding from MCFD that allowed child care centres to remain open even when parents withdrew children from programs and were no longer paying monthly fees.
- Health and safety grants from MCFD that have allowed child care providers to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies and replace outdoor equipment and appliances (e.g. washers and dryers) due to increased use during the pandemic.

*Most challenging:*

- Health and safety grants could not be used for staff training on health protocols.

Staffing

*Most helpful:*

- Health and safety grants allowed centres to purchase PPE which helped child care staff feel safer at work.
- The temporary emergency funding allowed centres to top-up the wages of child care staff in recognition of their willingness to provide in-person (frontline) services during the pandemic, especially during periods of heightened risk. The funding also allowed centres to enhance capacities to:
  - replace staff who were sick;
  - clean and disinfect centres;
  - adapt/consolidate programs to maintain the same cohorts of children and appropriate staff-to-child ratios; and
  - maintain high quality care in a constantly evolving environment.

*Most challenging:*

- Some centres were challenged to remain open because some staff felt the risk level was not worth the compensation (pay) and stress of working.
- The Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) drew part-time staff away from centres because they could earn more from CERB than working in the centres.
- Centres struggled to find substitute workers when their own staff members were sick.
- Staff in many centres have experienced burn-out from working in ongoing stressful conditions, including long work hours, reduced staffing levels and ongoing risk of exposure.
- Child care workers were not given priority access to vaccinations even though child care services were deemed essential services. Priority access would allow for child care providers to plan for staff vaccinations (time off for staff to get vaccinated, logistics of vaccination booking, vaccination recovery).

Next Steps

The CCRG will invite MCFD and Health staff to a focused discussion on the above findings with a view to supporting mutual learning from these experiences and improving services and communications going forward.