

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION NOTE**

DATE: 2019-04-03
CLIFF#: 241767

DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE (if applicable): [Date]
PREVIOUS CLIFF # 238751; 236320; 236649

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development and Honourable Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care

ISSUE: Update on the distribution of provincial local planning funding (\$3.0M) and federal Early Learning and Child Care (Can-B.C. ELCC) Agreement space creation funding (\$13.7M) through the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)

BACKGROUND:

Child Care Planning Grants

Budget 2018 provided \$3.0M in provincial funding in fiscal 2018/19 to deliver grants to communities to develop local community child care plans. In April 2018, a decision was approved to allocate this funding to UBCM through a direct-award contract (see CLIFF 236649) and to work with UBCM to design an application process and eligibility criteria for local governments (municipalities and regional districts).

ELCC Space Creation

The Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CAN-BC ELCC Agreement) provides \$13.7M to support the creation of up to 1,370 new licensed infant/toddler child care spaces. Under the terms of the ELCC Agreement, the funding will:

- Provide up to \$1M per project, and be available to non-profit organizations or municipalities, which would be encouraged to locate child care in local government-owned facilities;
- Prioritize more vulnerable or underserved communities and in different regions of the province;
- Be provided to selected organizations in instalments tied to milestones, with the final amount provided once the space is operational; and
- Create innovative partnerships to help create needed spaces.

An additional \$4.8M in ELCC funding has been provided to UBCM through a contract amendment in March 2019. This additional funding resulted from an under-spend on the Universal Child Care Prototype Sites related to delays in getting the program up and running. Employment Services Development Canada approved this approach in December 2018.

DISCUSSION:

Applications for both UBCM child care programs were due on January 18, 2019. A total of 11 applications were received by UBCM for the Space Creation program, with a funding request of \$8.66M (short of the \$13.7M available). The number of Planning applications is higher at 49 applications (representing 73 local governments due to collaborative applications), with a total funding request of just over \$1.7M, again falling short of the \$3M available.

Given that this is the first time local governments have been engaged in planning for or building child care spaces, and that child care has not historically been considered part of the Municipal role or mandate, this is a relatively positive first step. The timing of these child care grants was shortly before the municipal elections, making it more complicated to undertake an application which includes informing a new slate of councillors about the programs; bringing the new council along with a very new initiative; and securing the appropriate approvals and resolutions to go forward with an application in a relatively short period of time. UBCM remains confident that many local governments are interested and that full funding will be expended through a second intake of applications.

Ideally it would have been beneficial to provide the funding for the planning grants prior to the space creation funding being available. The timing was determined by the requirements of the Canada-BC ELCC Agreement. As this was Canada-BC ELCC funding from 2017/18, it had to be expended immediately, and the Government of Canada will be expecting to begin seeing results in the coming year.

NEXT STEPS:

- A discussion with UBCM to strategize next steps for the remaining funding is underway. UBCM were aware that there may be a need for a second intake of applications, and are fully prepared to hold another call for proposals for both programs to fully expend the funds.
- It is hoped that as some of the planning grants go out, and some local governments are able to complete them before the allowed completion timeline of 12 months, that these local governments will be interested in coming forward to UBCM to begin work on capital projects later in the fall of 2019.
- A second call for proposals for planning grants could tentatively take place in early 2020.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. Appendix A: UBCM Project Status

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Appendix A: UBCM Project Status

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION NOTE**

DATE: April 4, 2019

CLIFF#: 242025

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development
Honourable Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care

ISSUE: Update on Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Education Support Fund

BACKGROUND:

The Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Education Support Fund (formerly the ECE Bursary Program) provides funds to support the training of individuals working, or wishing to work, in the Early Care and Learning (ECL) sector in B.C.

The program has been administered by the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC) through a contract with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) since 2014/15, and received an additional \$10M in funding in 2017/18, and an additional \$1.9M in March 2019 (not yet announced), through the Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (ELCC Agreement) to expand the scope of the program.

Funding through the ECE Education Support Fund is provided to eligible students who are studying at a recognized ECE post-secondary program, or who are completing further ECE education (i.e., Masters) through two separate streams:

- the ECE Student Bursary:
 - max \$4,000 per semester to offset the costs of tuition, books, and materials
- the ECE Workforce Development Bursary Fund:
 - max \$5,000 per semester to offset the costs of tuition, books, materials, as well as other associated costs such as tutoring, travel, occasional childcare, and a partial wage replacement for time off to complete practicum requirements
 - targeted to ECEs, ECE Assistants, and Responsible Adults working in Licensed Child Care; also open to Licence-Not-Required providers who are Registered with their CCRR program

Applications to the ECE Education Support Fund are open on an on-going basis, and to date are completed through the submission of a paper application form that is downloaded from the ECEBC website. Applicants have been required to provide proof of BC residence, as well as financial information to support financial need for the bursary funds.

ECEBC provides quarterly reports to MCFD with program level data, including but not limited to the number of bursaries distributed, the number of applications denied, geographical distributions of applicant's home and workplace and percent of bursary students working while

they study. This data is used by MCFD to monitor, audit and evaluate the success of the ECE Education Support Fund program.

DISCUSSION:

Feedback from ECE students and child care staff has been shared with both MCFD and ECEBC regarding the ECE Education Support Fund program and its application process. While response is in general very positive, applicants and post-secondary instructors have indicated the requirement to provide financial information is burdensome and for many individuals is a barrier to applying. Feedback has also indicated that the requirement to provide financial information creates the assumption that if an individual is not eligible for a student loan that they would not be eligible for a bursary under this program (which is not the case).

In addition, StrongStart BC facilitators are currently only eligible for the student bursary, and have requested that they also be eligible to access the Workforce Development Fund to allow them to continue working while they pursue post-secondary to maintain or upgrade their ECE credential.

In response to this feedback, and in order to ensure the program meets its intent of providing an incentive for individuals to obtain their ECE certification and increase the number of ECEs in BC, the program policies have been updated to remove the financial need requirement from the applications, and open the Workforce Development Bursary to StrongStartBC facilitators, effective May 2019 for the Summer semester. These changes also coincide with the additional \$1.9M in ELCC funds being allocated to the program from the 2018/19 budget.

Further, ECEBC is continuing to work with a web development company to create a mobile-friendly online application process that will launch in time for the Fall 2019 semester, and will:

- enable students to apply and submit all required information online;
- allow for the automation of some administrative systems, including informing applicants immediately of any missing information; and
- generate and maintain data according to government privacy policies and standards, that will also meet contractual reporting requirements.

In addition to the collection of program data, ECEBC will also deploy an annual survey to gather qualitative data from past and present recipients, to support the evaluation of this program.

Finally, ECEBC is developing a communications plan for early summer 2019 to ensure the ECL sector is aware of the opportunities available through the ECE Education Support Fund, and to communicate the improvements outlined above. This plan will be inclusive of considerations for underserved communities and geographical reach. The plan will include earned (interviews, articles) and paid media as well as presentations. Paid media advertising will be developed for print and social media.

NEXT STEPS:

- MCFD staff will continue to have monthly meetings with ECEBC to discuss the ECE Education Support Fund and other initiatives, and provide continued support as needed.

- Ministry staff will be invited to test the online application process functionality prior to launch.
- ECEBC will continue to provide quarterly updates on bursary program through a standardized template to ensure data accuracy until the reporting through the online application process is launched.

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION NOTE**

DATE: April 29, 2019
CLIFF#: 242201

DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE (if applicable):
PREVIOUS CLIFF # (if applicable):

PREPARED FOR: The Honourable Minister Katrine Conroy

ISSUE: BC Federation of Foster Parent Association Meeting on May 1, 2019

BACKGROUND:

The BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA) is a provincial organization for foster parents governed by foster parent representation from all areas of the province. BCFFPA is a registered non-profit charity which aims to bring together foster parents, social workers and other stakeholders who are working to improve the standard of care for children in care.

The BCFFPA provides information to the public about fostering, recruitment services, offers foster parents opportunities for education and provides direct support to foster parents when they encounter challenges. One key role in the province is to advise and consult on the development and revision of child welfare policy and practice.

The following projects are a key focus for this organization:

- BC Foster Basics Videos - BCFFPA provides training for foster parents through videos hosted on BCFFPA's YouTube channel. They will be adding three new videos this fiscal year. They are Engaging with Indigenous Communities, How Foster Parents Can Support Permanency Planning and one topic to be determined.
- Home Studies Project - In 2017 BCFFPA was provided with one-time-only funding to expedite the process of completing home studies for fostering applicants. Unfortunately, due to an Adoption Agency Closure the BCFFPA is not able to process any further referral and funding will be returned to the Ministry of Finance.
- BCFFPA in partnership with MCFD Strategic Priorities Division completed Caregiver Education (online pre-service and in-service) and participated in the development of Caregiver PRIDE in-service online training and Kinship online training.
- BCFFPA has hired a Solutions Program Manager to provide support and advocacy for foster parents. This manager has been providing support for Foster Parents since September 2018. Additionally, this manager is providing training to foster parent volunteers to support other foster parents across the province.

The BCFFPA President and Executive Director meet with the Minister of Children and Family Development on a regular basis to share the work of the Association, the successes and challenges faced by foster parents.

DISCUSSION:

BCFFPA President, Marcy Perron, and Executive Director, Jayne Wilson, are meeting with Minister Conroy to discuss the activities and partnerships the Association is involved with; the challenges foster parents are facing and the goals they envision for the future.

The BCFFPA has advise the ministry that they are continuing to receive reports of disrespectful treatment of foster parents from social workers in some communities across the province. In communities where caregivers aren't treated well, they feel bullied by one or two individuals in positions of power. This has been an ongoing issue for at least nine years.

The BCFFPA has identified four key issues:

- I. Education for resource workers has not been delivered province-wide. The online Resource Worker Training that was developed by Learning and Development Branch in the Fall of 2017 has been redeveloped and piloted but not yet launched.
- II. Some guardianship social workers demonstrate little understanding or knowledge of the realities and challenging logistics of fostering many children with varied needs. An educational component regarding working with foster parents would be valuable core knowledge for guardianship workers.
- III. There is an unfortunate loss of knowledge and relationship within MCFD regional and community offices when staff in leadership positions either move into other roles or retire.
- IV. Some leaders have a personal philosophy which is not necessarily conducive to supporting team-focused relationships throughout the community.

The Solutions Manager will work to establish and maintain a continuous connection to the regional offices and build relationships with front line workers. With regular contact to regional offices, our hope is that newer Ministry staff will maintain their familiarity with our services throughout their career.

Foster parents that are experiencing challenges with their local MCFD social workers can contact BCFFPA for support. BCFFPA has identified strained relationships between foster parents and MCFD staff as an ongoing issue. The Solutions Manager has been actively working with foster parents and MCFD to resolve issues and improve relationships.

In December 2017, BCFFPA submitted a lengthy proposal to the ministry that included supporting Kinship and out of care providers. Since mid-2018 foster parents in the province are being asked by kinship/out of care caregivers to provide support. Learning and Development will be implementing Kinship and out of care givers training the Summer of 2019, this should help address this matter.

Next Steps: Meeting with BCFFPA is scheduled for May 1, 2019 at which time these topics will be discussed.

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION NOTE**

DATE: April 8, 2019

CLIFF#: 242202

PREPARED FOR:

The Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development

ISSUE: Information in preparation for a joint briefing on April 11, 2019, regarding designation of the Portland Hotel Society as a public sector employer.

BACKGROUND:

The Portland Hotel Society (PHS) is a community services society and non-profit based in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The organization provides housing, services, and advocacy to those poorly serviced in Vancouver, BC's Downtown Eastside as well as False Creek and the West End, and in Victoria, BC.

PHS provides shelter and homes to thousands of community members through emergency shelter beds, converted hotels and homes, and purpose-built social housing buildings.

Services offered by the PHS are focused on the residents and their specialized needs.

PHS receives 58% of its funding from BC Housing, 30% from Vancouver Coastal Health and Island Health, and the remaining 12% is a mix of miscellaneous funding and cost recovery sources, of which the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is a funder.

In fiscal year 2017/2018 PHS received \$142,680.00 through contracted funding from the MCFD for youth outreach services in Victoria.

DISCUSSION:

Under the Sustainable Services Negotiating Mandate (SSNM), MCFD provides funding for General Wage Increase (GWI) and Service Improvement Allocation (SIA) to non-union agencies or agencies subject to other BC public sector collective agreements (i.e. non-CSSEA/non-HEABC).

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SUMMARY:

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ATTACHMENTS:

N/A

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
MEETING NOTE**

DATE: 2019/04/09
CLIFF#: 242550

DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE (if applicable): N/A
PREVIOUS CLIFF # (if applicable): N/A
PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED: N/A

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care

DATE, TIME AND LOCATION OF MEETING: April 10, 2019 at 3:30 pm, Birch Room

ISSUE(S): In preparation for a meeting with MLA Sonia Furstenau, BC Green Party

BACKGROUND:

Sonia Furstenau is the Deputy Leader of the Green Party in British Columbia.

Under the Confidence and Supply Agreement (CASA), an agreement was reached to “invest in childcare and early childhood education to improve quality, expand spaces, increase affordability and ensure childcare is accessible for all families, with a focus on early childhood education”.

This note provides a summary of the Childcare BC Plan Year One accomplishments and highlights key Year Two initiatives.

DISCUSSION:

Year One Childcare BC Plan Accomplishments:

The government introduced a number of child care initiatives under the 3 pillars of affordability, access and quality.

Affordability:

- April 2018: Launched Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) to reduce the cost of child care for parents. In year 1 we provided funding for more than 50,000 spaces and saved parents more than \$82 million.
- June 2018: Start-up Grants Program. A new program to incent unlicensed child care providers to become licensed. Becoming licensed ensures regular inspections and oversight through the local Health Authority, and also allows the providers to increase their capacity to care for more children. In year 1 more than 200 applicants were approved, creating a potential 1,469 new spaces if each of those successful applicants decides to operate at full capacity. So far 426 of these new licensed in-home child care spaces are available for families.
- September 2018: Replaced Child Care Subsidy Program with new Affordable Child Care Benefit. Raised income threshold for eligibility and the maximum threshold for the amount of funding that can be received. This means more families are receiving enhanced support for child care. To illustrate the difference we’ve made here – in the 5 month period of September 2018 to

January 2019 more than 27,000 families received benefits through ACCB – compared with just over 17,000 families under the old Child Care Subsidy program in the same time period in 2017.

- And, supported almost 200 young parents who are working to finish high school through the Young Parent Program, and increased the maximum Affordable Child Care Benefit rate they can receive by \$500 – from \$1,000 per month to \$1,500.

Accessibility:

- July 2018: Launched New Spaces Fund to create more child care spaces in improve access to child care for families. We have tied eligibility for this funding to enrollment in the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative – in order to ensure the funding is being directed to providers which support government’s objectives to stabilize fees for families. We’ve created 1,400 new spaces so far through this program.
- November 2018: Prototype sites. Launched 53 low cost child care sites across BC that provide more than 2,500 child care spaces for \$200/month for full time care. The sites represent the diversity of BC’s geography, population, program types and operational models.
- December 2018: Launched a pilot project as part of the Prototype sites testing additional models of funding inclusive child care. This project will extend through year 2 and will help inform approaches to inclusion in child care.
- In partnership with federal government, we directed new funds to expand culturally based Indigenous child care both on and off reserve – and we will exceed our target of 500 new spaces. We anticipate around 600 spaces in total – and 83 of these are already in operation.
- And we also partnered with Union of BC Municipalities to develop the Community Child Care Space Creation Program which will create new licensed child care spaces in local government-owned facilities, as well as the community planning grants program to help municipalities and regional districts assess their current child care landscapes and identify what local families will need over the next decade.

Quality:

- September 2018: Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy to attract more people to the sector and support Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) currently working in the field. Included initiatives such as:
 - A \$1/hour wage enhancement for front-line ECEs. Over 7,000 ECEs have so far received a wage enhancement.
 - Increased bursaries and grants for individuals interested in becoming an ECE to pursue their education, and also to support the existing workforce to upgrade or maintain their certification
 - For the Fall 2018 semester, almost 1,100 students received a total of almost \$2 million in bursaries

Year Two Key Initiatives:

Affordability:

- Affordable Child Care Benefit: Working on changes to the Child Care Subsidy Regulation to increase maximum benefit rates for all licensed child care by September 2019, as well as a number of additional changes to improve the administration of the program.
- CCFRI: As of April 2019, all funding through CCOF, including CCFRI and the ECE Wage Enhancement, is consolidated into a single funding agreement. Also, minor revisions to CCFRI

policy for the 2019/20 funding term, to enhance transparency for parents, increase funding accountability, and make the application and adjudication process more clear and fair for providers. Looking ahead to year 3 of the CCFRI (2020/21), we will engage with the sector in 2019 on potential further changes to program policy and administration.

- Prototype sites: Undertake analysis and external evaluation (through contract with Malatest and Associates) to get a deeper understanding of what contributes to:
 - quality care,
 - a sustainable and engaged workforce,
 - potential funding models, and
 - effective organizational structures to support future funding

to inform potential future funding models and how universal child care could be implemented on a larger scale. Also, as the Prototype Sites initiative is slated to end March 2020, we will develop a plan to transition sites this year.

Accessibility:

- New Spaces Fund: Putting strategies in place to continue to increase uptake of this program – particularly with Indigenous Governments, and non-profit and public sector providers.
- Investment in new spaces in non-profit vs for profit
 - 55 successful applicants (total 2,284 new spaces)
 - 23 Non-profit applications (\$15.4M),
 - 32 for-profit (\$4.8M)
- Look at the potential for incentives and supports for providers to offer extended hours – to support shift workers, trades workers and others that don't work 9-5 Monday to Friday.

Quality:

- \$6.3 Million to expand and enhance professional development opportunities for ECEs and other child care staff to enhance quality of care and job satisfaction.
- Exploring ways to enhance the regulatory framework for ECEs and enhance the mandate of ECE Registry to strengthen oversight of the profession, enforce standards of quality and practice and remove barriers to certification.
- Examining the potential implementation of new standards of practice and occupational competencies.

Additional Information

CCFRI Contract Renewal:

- Providers were invited to apply to opt in to the 2019/20 contract term on March 1, 2019.
- As part of their application to the CCFRI, providers must report any parent fee increases they introduced in the past 12 months and any parent fee increases they plan to introduce over the contract term (April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020).
- As the purpose of the CCFRI is to enhance affordability for B.C. families, the Ministry reviews facilities' recent and proposed fee increases to ensure the greatest possible benefit is passed along to parents in the form of reduced monthly parent fees.
- On March 23, 2019, the Ministry offered temporary approval for the CCFRI until April 30, 2019 to some providers. Temporary approvals ensure stable monthly fees for parents while the Ministry continues its assessment of applications.
- The Ministry is working to complete CCFRI assessments and notify applicants of the outcome of their application as soon as possible. The Ministry anticipates that most providers will receive an update of their application status towards the end of April, allowing sufficient time for those facilities that are approved for the 2019/20 term to receive May payments.

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
DECISION NOTE**

DATE: April 9, 2019

DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE (if applicable): January 24, 2019

CLIFF#: 242621

PREVIOUS CLIFF # (if applicable): 241445

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Minister, Katrine Conroy

ISSUE: Decision needed for program launch and announcement of the new TELUS Mobility for Good Program.

BACKGROUND:

In March 2017, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) partnered with TELUS to provide cell phones to young adults transitioning out of care through a pilot program that was previously referred to as the Keeping Young Adults Connected (KYAC) program and is currently referred to as the TELUS Mobility for Good (M4G) program.

In early 2019, TELUS announced its intention to continue offering this program in BC and a decision was made in partnership with MCFD to transition the administration of the program to the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada (CAFC).

To achieve this transition, Strategic Priorities Division (SPD) staff are working with TELUS and CAFC to:

- Migrate the previous KYAC program participants to M4G for an additional two-year renewal at zero cost to the participants.
- Develop internal change management process and communication materials to convey the changes to frontline staff.

DISCUSSION:

In initial meetings between TELUS and MCFD, an early June announcement to launch the TELUS M4G program was discussed; this was proposed to allow MCFD enough time to ensure an effective transition and that front-line MCFD and DAA services were aware of the changes to the program. Early June also aligns with the BC Child and Youth in Care Week.

However, CAFC has shared the following concerns related to an early June launch date:

- Typically the first month after the program is announced is when there is a high volume of applications and CAFC would not have capacity in June to meet this demand due to staffing shortages, potentially creating bottlenecks in processing applications and causing young people long wait times to acquire their phone, and
- CAFC's ability to conduct social media and other information sharing campaigns will be minimal during the month of June.

In working to address the concerns and desires of both MCFD and CAFC, a proposal has been made for a soft program launch to occur May 21, 2019 which would include the online application portal going live, followed by a Minister announcement in June.

The proposed May date would allow for CAFC to have adequate staffing capacity to process the expected high volume of applications and give MCFD enough time to properly inform service delivery of the program changes; a later Minister announcement in early June would still allow for alignment with the BC Child and Youth in Care Week.

Additionally, TELUS and CAFC have indicated previous experiences launching T4G starting with an early program and website launch, followed by a Government announcement afterwards; it was suggested that this usually has a positive effect on the promotion of the program and they do not envision any issues with this.

An early launch of the M4G program and website in May will require information to be available at the time of the launch to community organizations and young people, as well as MCFD and DAA front-line service delivery. This will ensure awareness of the changes to the program, that no misinformation is communicated, and that all eligible young people have easy access to the program.

MCFD staff are working towards developing information and education materials including promotional material and a series of webinars to reach out to MCFD and DAA front-line services; CAFC in consultation with MCFD, is working on a communication and outreach strategy targeting youth serving agencies and young people in BC.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: Launch the M4G program and online application portal on May 21st, followed by Minister announcement in early June.

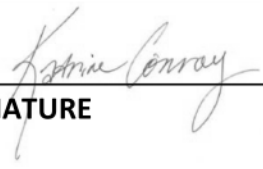
Implications:

- Information provided regarding changes to program and administration will be distributed prior to Ministers announcement.
- CAFC will have staff capacity to manage influx of applications during May and June.
- CAFC will be able to conduct information sharing via community partners and social media.
- MCFD staff will have reasonable timeframe for change management considerations.
- Aligns Minister announcement with the BC Child and Youth in Care Week.

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RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1: Launch the M4G program and online application portal on May 21st, followed by Minister announcement in early June.

Approved / 
DECISION and SIGNATURE
Katrine Conroy
Minister of Children and Family Development

April 29, 2019
DATE SIGNED

Attachments:

N/A

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JOINT DECISION NOTE
MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING

DATE: April 25, 2019

CLIFF#: 115741/242757

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development
Honourable Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care
Honourable Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

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s.12; s.13

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION NOTE**

DATE:
CLIFF#: 242453

DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE:
PREVIOUS CLIFF #:

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care in preparation for a meeting with Ms. Kathy Sager and Honourable Michelle Mungall, MLA Nelson-Creston on April 8, 2019.

ISSUE: Operating funding for Multi-Age Child Care (MACC) providers

BACKGROUND:

On January 17, 2019 Minister Mungall wrote to the Minister of State Chen on behalf of her constituent Ms. Sager, with regard to the level of Child Care Operating (CCOF) funding available to Multi-Age Child Care (MACC) providers (see Appendix C). The Minister of State Chen replied on February 27, 2019 providing more information about MACC funding.

Under the Child Care Licensing Regulation (CCLR), MACC programs are defined to allow care to children of various ages within one or more groups of no more than eight children, either in a personal residence or a community-based setting. MACC programs are required to have certified Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) provide care.

Recipients of CCOF and/or the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) receive either a Group rate or a Family rate. Due to the higher administration costs associated with centre-based facilities (according to information collected through the CCOF Provider Profile), CCOF and CCFRI Group rates are higher than Family rates.

Beginning March 2019, retroactive to September 2018, In-Home Multi-Age Child Care providers and Multi-Age Child Care providers receiving the Family CCOF rate will be provided a 20% increase to their base CCOF funding, in recognition of the value Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) provide in offering home-based care and to incentivize Family Child Care providers to obtain their ECE certification.

DISCUSSION:

MACC advocates have raised concerns related to operating funding for MACC providers.

Family CCOF and CCFRI funding rates for some MACC providers

The CCOF and CCFRI rate MACC providers receive depends on the number of children in the child care and/or the location in which child care is provided. MACC providers who care for eight children or less in their personal residence receive the (lower) Family CCOF/CCFRI rate, whereas MACC providers who care for more than eight children of various ages, in two or more groups in their residence, or provide child care in a location other than a personal residence are eligible for the (higher) Group CCOF/CCFRI rate.

This distinction is based on Provider Profile data that indicates that MACC providers caring for eight or less children in their personal residence have lower median operating expenses than MACC providers caring for more than eight children and/or providing care outside their own home, likely due to higher facility costs for centre-based care (see Appendix A).

MACC providers currently eligible for the Family CCOF rate (i.e. those caring for no more than eight children in their personal residence) are requesting a change to CCOF policy so that they receive the higher Group CCOF rate, as outlined in a [recent LeadNow petition](#) (Appendix B). If this policy change is not made, one MACC provider has suggested they may change their license type to one eligible for higher funding, such as Group Child Care (GCC), which could result in a fewer MACC facilities and fewer spaces licensed to care for infants and toddlers.

Ministry staff are working with the Ministry of Health to investigate this issue and associated issues and implications for child care licensing. Following this investigation, staff will present options for the funding of MACC facilities through CCOF and CCFRI for decision.

Providers caring for their own children

As with the current Affordable Child Care Benefit policy, providers may receive CCFRI funding for a child that they are related to if:

- The parent or foster parent has a child enrolled in a facility that they own, and the parent does not directly provide care for the child;
- The child resides with a relative and that relative operates a licensed facility in their home and provides care for the child; or,
- A parent or foster parent works at a facility in which they have a child enrolled, regardless of whether or not the parent provides the care directly.

Consequently, home-based providers, including some MACC providers, that own their own facility and directly care for children are not eligible for CCFRI payments for their child if that child is enrolled in their facility. Some MACC providers have raised concerns regarding this policy, indicating that it creates barriers for them to offer quality child care while ensuring an adequate child care space for their own child (see Appendix C).

This policy is intended to ensure that CCFRI and ACCB funding is not benefiting providers that have the ability to set and increase their own child care fee. Additionally, the Ministry's focus is on providing funding for parents to pay for child care, rather than on providing parents with funding to care for their own children. The ministry has committed to looking into further examining the impacts of this policy.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE:

- The Ministry has received feedback from several individuals and organizations regarding our operating funding policies affecting MACC providers. We appreciate hearing these concerns, as we are committed to continuing to work with providers and parents to ensure our initiatives best meet the needs of families with young children across the province.
- In recognition of the important role that MACC providers play in the child care system, the Ministry is offering enhanced CCOF funding for some home-based MACC providers.

- Beginning March 2019, retroactive to September 2018, In-Home Multi-Age Child Care providers and Multi-Age Child Care providers receiving the Family CCOF rate will be provided a 20% increase to their base CCOF funding, in recognition of the value Early Childhood Educators provide in offering home-based care.

Family CCOF and CCFRI funding rates for some MACC providers

- Ministry staff are currently working with the Ministry of Health to explore concerns raised regarding CCOF and CCFRI funding for MACC providers caring for one group of no more than eight children in their own home and associated issues related to child care licensing. The issues we are reviewing are complex, and we are taking the time necessary to thoroughly investigate these and determine an appropriate course of action.
- Currently, the CCOF and CCFRI rates for MACC providers are based on Provider Profile data that indicates that MACC providers caring for eight or less children in their personal residence have lower median operating expenses than MACC providers caring for more than eight children and/or providing care outside their own home.
- The Ministry has received feedback from MACC providers regarding the Provider Profile survey and is exploring updating the Provider Profile survey questions to ensure the MACC's providers concerns are reflected.

Providers caring for their own children

- The Ministry has also been hearing concerns from child care providers, including MACC providers, regarding their ineligibility for CCFRI funding for their child if they own the facility in which they directly care for their own child.
- This policy is intended to ensure that CCFRI and ACCB funding is not benefiting providers that have the ability to set and increase their own child care fees. Additionally, the Ministry's focus is on providing funding for parents to pay for child care, rather than on providing parents with funding to care for their own children.
- We are looking into this concern, in order to determine if more should be done for providers in these cases.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. 2017/18 total median operating expenses by care type
- B. LeadNow Petition - Group Funding Rates Needed for Multi-Age Child Care Centres – Petition to Honourable Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care
- C. Relevant Correspondence

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Appendix A: 2017/18 total median monthly operating expenses by care type

Facilities eligible for Group CCOF rate	
All facilities eligible for Group CCOF rate	\$14,000
Group Child Care facilities	\$14,207
Group MACC facilities	\$11,200
Facilities eligible for Family CCOF rate	
All facilities eligible for Family CCOF rate	\$3,804
Family MACC facilities	\$3,809
IHMACC facilities	\$3,740
Family Child Care facilities	\$3,381

Notes:

- Based on self-reported CCOF Provider Profile data; actual expenses may vary
- The size of the facilities and the type of services that facilities provide may vary within each category
- “Group MACC” refers to MACC providers who are currently eligible for the Group CCOF rate (i.e. facilities with more than 8 children and/or that offer care in a setting other than the provider’s home)
- “Family MACC” refers to MACC providers who are currently eligible for the Family CCOF rate (i.e. facilities with 8 or less children that are in the provider’s home)
- The Group MACC category includes facilities only licensed as MACC, without any additional license (e.g. for Group Child Care). Facilities with an additional license cannot be discretely identified, and so are included in the Group Child Care category.

Appendix B: LeadNow Petition - Group Funding Rates Needed for Multi-Age Child Care Centres – Petition to Honourable Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care.

Dear Minister Chen, it is important that you give all child care centres licensed as "Multi-Age" the group funding rates through the Child Care Operating Funding program (CCOF) and Child Care Subsidy. You must change the unfair policy which states that Multi-Age child care centres located in the licensee's residence are only eligible for family funding rates.

Why is this important?

Multi-age child care centres (located in the licensee's residence) are currently eligible for only family funding rates, rather than the group funding rates that they really deserve. The difference between group and family funding rates works out to hundreds of dollars per month that Group centres (located in the licensee's residence) receive and Multi-Age centres (located in the licensee's residence) do not.

The following outlines the ways in which licensed Multi-Age programs are the same as Group (30 month to school age) programs licensed for up to 8 children, and why they should receive the same amount of funding:

1. Both can be operated in a licensee's residence.
2. There must always be a certified Early Childhood Educator (ECE) caring for the children in both Multi-Age and Group care programs. This means that staff in both Multi-Age and Group programs are required to have the same qualifications. Unlike in Family care programs where the care providers do not need to have their ECE certification.
3. Licensees of Multi-Age and Group programs are eligible to hire ECEs to care for the children in their programs. Unlike in licensed Family and In Home Multi-Age programs, where the licensee themselves must provide care to the children in the program. Hiring staff creates greater overhead costs which is partially why Group centres receive more funding than Family centres. Since Multi-Age centre licensees are eligible to hire staff, they should be considered the same as Group centres and receive the group funding rate as well.
4. In both Multi-Age and Group centres the staff to child ratio is 1:8. Unlike in Family care programs where the ratio is 1:7

Multi-Age centres can offer spaces for children from 0 - 12 years of age, while Group (30 month to school age) centres can only accommodate children 2.5 - 6 years of age. This means that Multi-Age centres can accommodate infants and toddlers, while Group (30 months to school age) centres can not.

It is important to note that there is a great lack of infant and toddler child care spaces in the province on British Columbia. Changing the policy to give all Multi-Age centres group funding rates is a simple way to encourage current and future licensees to maintain and

create Multi-Age centres. Thus maintaining and creating more infant and toddler child care spaces in the province.

Caregivers in Multi-Age programs are required to have their ECE certification. They should be able to make fair wages for the important work that they do and the credentials they have obtained throughout their time in college and other professional development programs. Giving Multi-Age centres the higher group funding rate will help Multi-Age centres maintain fair wages for their qualified staff.

Parents of children attending Multi-Age care programs should be eligible for the same child care fee reductions and subsidy rates as parents of children attending almost identical Group (30 months to school age) programs. The group funding rate for parents is 1.5 to 2 times higher than the family funding rate.

It is also interesting to note that the licensee of a Multi-Age program must have their ECE certification, whereas the licensee of a Group program does not need to have their ECE certification. This means that it requires a greater qualification to obtain a Multi-Age child care license than it does to obtain a Group (30 month to school age) license. Clearly, Multi-Age centres should be eligible to receive at least the same resources as Group centres do.

Most centres licensed as "Multi-Age" do receive the group funding rates from CCOF and Child Care Subsidy. However, the policy currently states that if a Multi-Age centre is operated out of the licensee's residence then they are only eligible for family funding rates. Meanwhile, a Group (30 month to school age) program can be operated out of the licensee's residence and still receive they higher group funding rates.

Minister Chen is making important changes in child care right now. Let's put this one small policy change on her priority list.

Minister Chen must change the unfair policy which states that Multi-Age child care centres located in the licensee's residence are only eligible for family funding rates. It is only fair that all Multi-Age child care centres receive group funding rates!

Appendix C: Relevant Correspondence

Letter from Honourable Michelle Mungall, MLA, Nelson-Creston

January 17, 2019

Dear Minister of State for Childcare Katrina Chen,

I am writing to ask you to look into a situation confronting Kathy Sager, a licensed Multi-Age Child Care provider in my constituency. She is advocating for a change to Child Care Operating Fund (CCOF) policy to allow Multi-Age facilities located in the provider's residence to be eligible for the higher CCOF Group child care rates.

My concern is that the existing policy acts as a systematic disincentive for childcare providers to offer multi-age care. This results in fewer siblings having the opportunity to be cared for together or even in the same center, particularly in small rural and remote communities where geography and distance rather than age can be a greater determinant for grouping children in community-based child care centres.

Currently Multi-Age facilities are eligible for Group CCOF rates as long as the Multi-Age facility is not located in the licensee's residence. However, all other types of Group child care centres can be located in a licensee's residence and receive Group funding rates from CCOF. Multi-Age and all other types of Group facilities can be licensed in a personal residence as long as there is a separate entrance to the child care facility and dedicated space used for child care which is blocked off from other living spaces. In this case, the location is considered "a community-based facility or centre" rather than "in the childcare provider's own home." Current policy states that if a Multi-Age childcare centre is located in the licensee's own home they are to receive the lower CCOF Family child care rates. This creates an inequitable situation between Group Multi-Age and other types of Group facilities that may be more prevalent in small rural and remote areas.

I am also concerned that there appear to be inconsistencies with the information that is being shared with providers regarding eligibility requirements for Group CCOF rates and what is occurring in practice. Various CCOF and ministry staff have provided inconsistent information to both my constituency office staff and the constituent herself regarding eligibility requirements for Group CCOF rates.

As you know our government has prioritized making child care more accessible and affordable for families. These inconsistencies in policy around Group Multi-Age centres are a disincentive for providers to choose to provide much needed Multi-Age Care, as they will qualify for less CCOF funding if their facility is attached to their personal residence. I am concerned that such policies lingering from past governments result in fewer opportunities for siblings to be cared for together in my region. Siblings provide important supports to each other and to separate them would be a disservice to them, their families and community.

In advance of when CCOF renews their contracts in March please consider implementing a policy change to allow Multi-Age Centers that meet group licensing requirements (not those

that are licensed as In-Home Multi-Age) to receive group CCOF rates. I would appreciate any assistance or clarification you can provide to help this constituent. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Kind regards,

Michelle Mungall
MLA, Nelson-Creston

Letter from Multi-Age Child Care Association of BC (MACCABC)

Multi-Age Child Care Association of British Columbia

February 6, 2019

Honourable Minister Katrina Chen
Minister responsible for Child Care in BC

RE: Policy Briefing for Multi-Age Child Care in BC

Dear Honourable Minister Katrina Chen,

I'd like to again request a call or meeting that can address issues that Multi-Age ECE are struggling with. We are ECE qualified Educators who would love a chance to engage with you Honourable Minister Chen through a call-in or through a meeting like the Family Childcare conference that I have attended.

ECEBC and BCCCOA have been engaging in divisive interactions over social media regarding Multi-Age Childcare. Both have been calling to hear what MACCABC have to say about Provincial Child Care recommendations surrounding Multi-Age care and funding.

MACCABC would like to assure you that we believe all families who want or need childcare in BC should have access to affordable quality childcare, and more importantly, diversity in the choice of licensed care that they receive. We can all agree that this is a fundamental right for families in BC.

This also includes ECE and their children. The childcare demand in BC is critical and the ECE demand is even more severe. Many ECE have left the field, or, are actively planning to leave this field because of high stress, low pay, and long hours, but more than any of that, it is because they are unable to find licensed and quality childcare for their own children, while they themselves work hard to serve the community providing quality child care.

In my area, there was no licensed care for my children to attend, and I had to quit my job at a non-profit program to open my own licensed program, so that while I served my childcare desert community, I could have access to licensed care for my children as well. I was not fine with placing my children in unlicensed, and unregulated child care.

This is a common issue for any ECE who are of childbearing age. Early Childhood Professionals should not have to worry about their children in an unlicensed, and unregulated childcare. Furthermore, as a multi-age provider making little over \$10/hour it is unbelievable to say that a mere \$60- or \$100-month fee reduction compensation for my child's space would be "paying me for taking care of my own child".

This is not how Hospitals, Fire Departments, or of course, most similarly, Teachers work. My child was in class with her friend whose parent, was their teacher, and it was not an issue at all, and I'm certain that the parent/educator was not required to receive less pay to "care for" or teach her child.

Any profession where the expectation to be licensed, and educated, and, when clear ethical boundaries are in place, the children all grow, and, learn in the care they receive, and, the providers are able to work hard to ensure the safety and growth of those children in care regardless, of if the children attending is their own child.

After hearing many child care advocates speak about where public funding should go, it is easy to use old, antiquated, or inapplicable research, to label MA care type with lesser quality care. Research suggests, If the ECE is compensated fairly for operating a licensed, well run, and low hazard program, there's no need to feel burned-out or work at less than high quality levels.

Policy Briefing for Multi-Age Child Care in BC:

We as a growing group of more than 250 ECE, and our families who attend our programs equal more than 1800 British Columbians across B.C. are asking you to:

1. Create Funding Equality for Parents who receive CCFRI in ECE led Multi-Age Child care programs.
2. CCOF Funding Equity for Multi-Age programs with recognition that our programs are paying all ECE staff in our programs a fair wage, regardless of where the program licensee lives.
3. Allow the primary care providers children attending these programs receive CCFRI and CCOF which allows our own children to receive funding for care as do ECE who directly care for their own children in group programs.

We as a group want high quality, and excellent care for all the children of BC. This starts with valuing ALL ECE in BC. We want to use our licensed programs and our ECE certification to lift our field and show the world why diversity and quality care is an effective and meaningful way to address our ECE crisis. Minister Chen, I will be in Victoria on Saturday, February 9th, and I ask you to please take the time to meet with me and work with our Multi-Age providers this contract renewal. Please value our ECE and families in every licensed childcare program.

Sincerely,
Tracie Bourgeois
President
Multi-Age Child Care Association of BC

Letter from MACC provider

February 7, 2019

Honourable Minister Katrina Chen
Minister responsible for Child Care in BC

Re: Policy Briefing for Multi-Age Child Care in BC

Dear Honourable Minister Katrina Chen,

I am an Early Childhood, Infant/Toddler & Special Needs Educator that owns and operates a multi-age childcare facility in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia. I am writing to you today to voice my concern around the funding inequality that we the multi-age providers, are experiencing in BC's Universal Child Care System.

Last year when the new child care operating funding initiative was announced, I along with hundreds of other child care providers felt excited yet conflicted. The lack of information, knowledge and inconsistent answers from government officials was concerning. I believe that all families deserve access to quality child care at an affordable rate. I became a licensed Early Childhood Educator so I could foster the growth and development in young children in my care. I have worked in all types of child care programs over the past 18 years. I have been a multi-age child care provider for the past 7 years and feel beyond lucky to provide this type of care to families. I am also a child care provider that has not opted into the Child Care Funding Initiative at this time. I would like to take the opportunity to explain to you the reasons why:

1. I believe that in a "Universal child care system" families have the right to choose the type of child care that best suits each child and family's needs. Not all children will flourish in a large group setting and this needs to be acknowledged. If the universal childcare system is truly about offering quality child care, each individual child and family's needs must be considered. A family should not be punished financially for the type of care that best suits their needs. Therefore, I want to see all families receive the same CCFRI funding for whichever type of ECE led child care program they choose.
2. I have personally provided care for 42 children in the seven years that New Roots Children's Centre has been open. During this time, I have also provided care for my own 2 children. For 3 years my two children took up 2 full time spots every day. The other 4 years they have taken up one full time spot. As a parent and educator, I feel that my children are entitled to quality child care just like every other child across BC. It is time the government stopped discriminating against Multi-Age Child Care providers and their children and include them in the "universal child care system" they are offering to all other children and families in BC.
3. As the owner/operator of a licensed 310 Multi-age Child Care facility, it is my responsibility to hire and retain a licensed Early Childhood Educator to work alongside me at my facility. As multi-age care providers must have their Early Childhood Education it is not easy to hire employees with the shortage of qualified ECE's in BC. I must be able

to offer a competitive wage in order to retain a qualified staff. I would like to see parity in group and multi-age Child Care Operating Funding so I can offer more money to my ECE staff. Maintaining consistent, qualified staff is crucial in providing quality child care in British Columbia.

Providing children and families with quality child care has always been our number one priority at New Roots Children's Centre. This contract term I would like to opt in to the child care initiative program to give the families at my centre the opportunity to receive discounted rates on their childcare. In order for me to feel confident in this decision I feel that we as a Multi-Age Child Care Facility need to be seen and respected as the Early Childhood Educators that we are.

I support the policy briefing for Multi-Age Child Care in BC set forth by the Multi-Age Child Care Association of BC. We are asking you to:

1. Create Funding Equality for Parents who receive CCFRI in ECE led Multi-Age Child Care programs.
2. CCOF Funding Equality for Multi-Age programs with recognition that our programs are paying all ECE staff in our program a fair wage, regardless of where the program licensee lives.
3. Allow the primary care providers children attending these programs receive CCFRI and CCOF which allows our own children to receive funding for care or their own children in group programs.

Thank you again for your time and attention in this matter.

Lindsay Leffler (Vanatko)
Owner/Operator, New Roots Children's Centre