



Childhood Connections

Okanagan Family & Childcare Society



Who We Are

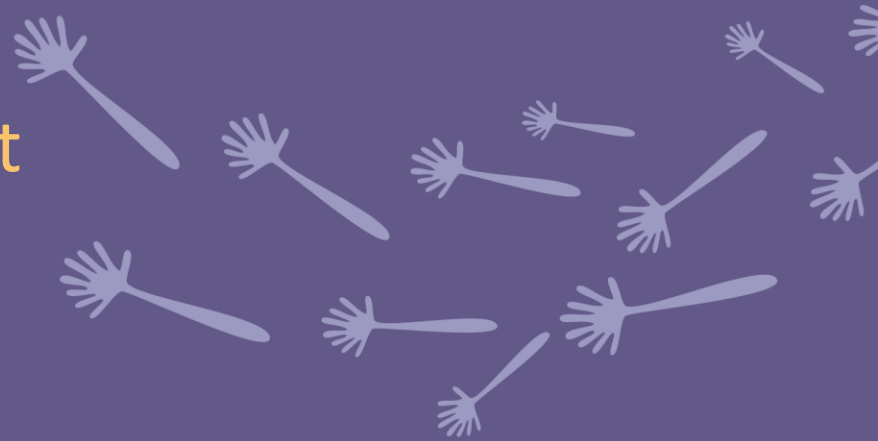
Childhood Connections supports children and all those who care for them.

Research shows that **90% of brain development** happens in the first six years of a child's life. The preschool years are the most active period of brain development.

Early experiences impact the development of speech and language, fine and gross motor skills, cognitive, social and emotional wellbeing.

We want every child in the Central Okanagan to get a healthy start in life, physically, mentally, and socially-emotionally.

Our Purpose is to ensure that all children in the Central Okanagan get a healthy start in life.



Caring for our community's children benefits us all.

We help support children by caring for childcare educators/providers, parents, caregivers and families.

In doing this, we improve every other aspect of life in the Central Okanagan.



Our Vision

We see a future where every child in the Central Okanagan receives the care, education, and love they need to become confident, compassionate, thriving adults.

Our Story

Since 1977, we have been working with community to support children and all those who care for them.

“Connection is why we’re here; it is what gives us purpose and meaning in our lives” –Brene Brown

Centering early childhood development at the core of community development will solve many of society's problems.

Our Values

Connection gives us meaning.

We cannot be supportive and fulfill our mission without connection.

Strong relationships are the foundation of our work, and we will strive to ensure that others feel heard, seen, and valued.

Child Care Resource & Referral Program

- Child Care Referrals for parents
- Job postings for childcare providers
- Early childhood development Library for parents and childcare providers
- Childcare educator training and networking events
- childcare benefit/subsidy (ACCB) support for childcare programs and parents
- ASQs for childcare and early years programs
- Childcare advocacy and public education

Family Resource Program

- Parent training
- Parent-tot groups
- Nourish Families Initiative
- Playful Healing
- ASQs for parents

Our Values

Collaboration is great for children and good for the world.

Working with others is how we succeed.

Collaboration brings together new ideas, opportunities, and improvements to the work that we're already doing.

Community Tables

Central Okanagan Early Years Partnership (formerly CATCH)

- Monthly roundtable meetings about early years programs and services
- Sharing identified service gaps and created Nourish Families Initiative and Playful Healing programs
- Story Walks (17 in April 2020 for Unplug & Play Week)

Central Okanagan Universal Screening Initiative (COUSI)

- Encouraging all children <5yrs to be universally screened
- Detect delays early to make appropriate referrals
- Childcare and early years program ASQ training
- ASQs for parents

Childcare Council - Central Okanagan

- Childcare educator training
- Childcare advocacy and public awareness education (new quality, affordable spaces and more educators)
- CO Childcare Needs Assessments (2018/19), and 2019/2020 with UMBC and 4 municipalities

Mental Health + Wellness Table

- Brand new Table that meets to connect about mental health and wellness programs/services
- Children to seniors
- Supporting appropriate and timely referrals



Childcare Council

Central Okanagan

Advocacy, collaboration and innovation to enhance the childcare sector in the Central Okanagan

Member of

Childhood Connections
Okanagan Family & Childcare Society

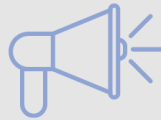
Since 2018

393 NETWORKING

12 networking events have been provided to child care managers, educators and community partners, seeing nearly 400 attendees. Events include workshops with Lynell Anderson, Emily Gawlick and Sharon Gregson and meetings with MLA's and Central Okanagan Mayors regarding child care crisis.



ADVOCACY \$10/day



The Council is a strong advocate for \$10/day child care. Advocacy includes meeting with Sharon Gregson, provincial spokesperson for \$10aday campaign, hosting an All Candidates Forum for the 2019 provincial election, organizing a stroller brigade and much more!

\$100K INNOVATION

Childhood Connections and the Childcare Council supported our Central Okanagan Municipalities with a \$100k grant to conduct a Child Care Needs Assessment. This assessment resulted in the *Child Care Planning Report and Action Plan*. A document outlining the path to solving the child care crisis over the next 5 years.



GROWTH 3 yrs



Kelowna, West Kelowna, Lake Country and Central Okanagan Public Schools (SD23) joined the table since 2018. This growth has been beneficial in recent accomplishments. The next of which is a \$25k grant application for a local education campaign and leadership training for the childcare sector.

LET'S FIND CHILDCARE SOLUTIONS

Sign up and join us! Visit www.childhoodconnections.com/ccoco
email us at admin@childhoodconnections.ca



The Problem

Not enough childcare spaces available for families when they need it - to go to work or school in our community – especially families with infants and toddlers (aged 12mos to 36mos)

Central Okanagan Childcare Crisis:

- 2016 Census: Over 18,000 children aged 0-9 years in the Central Okanagan
- Only ~6,000 childcare spaces available
- Long waitlists (up to 2yrs for infant and toddler spaces)
- 2020 Childcare Needs Assessment showed that 40% of parents in Central Okanagan do not have the childcare they need
- CCRR Program saw double the amount of referrals this July 2021 compared previous two years
- ~200 spaces currently closed in Central Okanagan

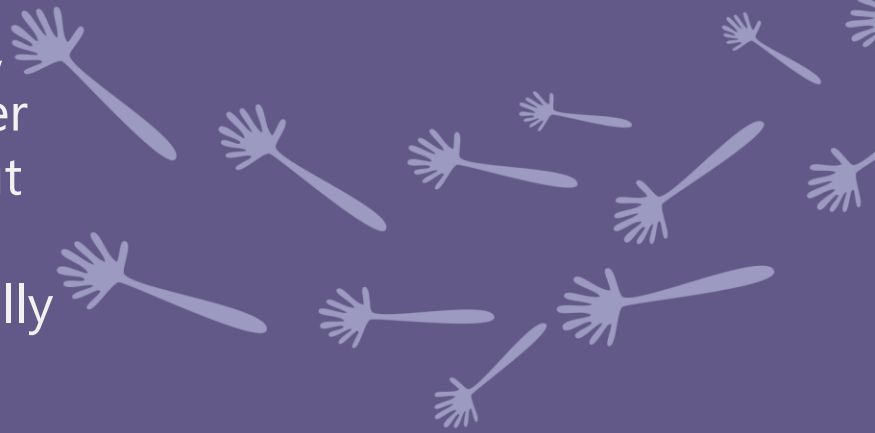


Why? Lack of Childcare Providers and Early Childhood Educators (ECEs)

- Low wages don't attract/retain educators
- High cost of ECE certificate training
- Not enough ECE Bursaries available to support students wanting to take the training
- ECE Certificate Program is not an apprenticeship program
- Largely female dominated workforce
- High cost of living, especially housing in our community
- High burnout rates among staff because of need to keep ratio

The Solutions

- Advocate for more flexibility for childcare IH regulations around ratio, especially for ECEs with Infant-Toddler designation – this will reduce burnout
- Advocate for an increase of Provincially funded ECE Bursaries
- Advocate for the BC Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP) to recognize Early Childhood Educators (ECE)
- Advocate for Labor Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) recognition of ECEs as in-demand job
- Advocate the development of the apprenticeship ECE certificate program, and recognition of first two years of B.Ed as ECE equivalent designation



Thank-you.

Please contact **Melissa Hunt**, Executive Director of Childhood Connections if you have questions or ideas to support our **childcare sector – the workforce behind the workforce!**

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