

Key Messages – June 2025

Child Care on School Ground Pilot Initiatives & Early Learning Programs Update

Child Care Pilot Initiatives

- Schools are at the heart of their communities and offer the potential to help address the child care needs of families.
- Since the launch of the ChildCareBC plan in 2018, the Ministry of Education and Child Care gradually introduced several child care on school ground pilot initiatives with school districts, including: **Integration Inquiry Project, Just B4, School Age Child Care, Seamless Day Kindergarten** and the **District Early Learning and Child Care Lead Project**.
- The series of pilots were designed to build school district capacity and explore the integration of child care on school grounds through different program models and delivery approaches.
- Following evaluations of the various child care pilot models, findings have highlighted key learnings, opportunities and barriers that school districts are experiencing with operating and expanding school-aged care. This includes specific challenges with moving from pilot models to sustainable child care programs.
- **Given this, the Ministry has extended funding for the Seamless Day Kindergarten and Just B4 projects for the 2025/26 school year with the condition that districts work with the Ministry in establishing long-term sustainable child care. Pilot funding will conclude in June 2026.**
 - During this transition year of funding, the Ministry is removing the conditions of original pilot models to allow flexibility to focus on sustainable models and keeping child care spaces as the priority.
- **In addition, the Ministry is again confirming that funding for District Early Learning and Child Care Leads will continue in 2025/26; this pilot will conclude in June 2026.**
- Funding for the Integration Inquiry Project and School-Age Child Care Pilot have been discussed with participating districts; IIP is concluding June 2025 and SACC June 2026.
- The year ahead will be focussed on transition to sustainable models, with support from the Ministry, to keep child care spaces available to families.

- The ministry is committed to continue working with school districts to expand access to school age care on school grounds and ensure continuity of care that meets the needs of communities.

Early Learning Programs

- NEW: The Ministry is pleased to announce that each **StrongStart BC** site will receive a \$2,000 increase from \$32,000 to \$34,000 starting in 2025/26 funding agreements.
- NEW: In addition, we have heard districts on the need for flexibility in funding allocations to support StrongStart BC programs. Starting this upcoming school year, Districts have flexibility to reallocate funds from Ready, Set Learn programs to support the operations of StrongStart BC centres.
- NEW: **Changing Results for Young Children** and **Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transitions** projects have transitioned to district leads and teams are well positioned to apply the valuable skills and strategies learned through these initiatives over the last number of years. To support district teams, the Ministry has created program guides that will be available online for September.
- Districts with enrolled Kindergarten students will continue to receive **Ready, Set, Learn** funding for each school but again have the flexibility to reallocate and support StrongStart BC centers as a priority.

Please be advised that all child care pilot and early learning program funding changes will be formalized in funding letter agreements coming in June/July 2025.