

# COMMUNITY PLAN FOR A PUBLIC SYSTEM OF integrated early care & learning

\$**10aDay.ca**

It's time for affordable child care in BC

SPRING 2016 EDITION



**ECEBC** | early childhood  
educators of BC

COALITION OF  
**child care  
advocates**  
OF BC

## BECAUSE IT'S 2016

Since its release in April 2011, the \$10aDay Plan has raised awareness about the child care crisis in BC and generated unprecedented support for the concrete solution it offers. The Plan now frames provincial dialogue about child care and puts the benefit of the Plan for families front and centre.

This 6th edition comes at a time of renewed optimism. A new federal government is committed to working with provinces, territories and Aboriginal communities to build the child care system we need, and promising new federal transfers to develop an Early Learning and Child Care Framework for Canada.

Furthermore, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called on governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families as a part of healing and reconciliation. The \$10aDay Plan fully supports this recommendation.

### THE GOOD NEWS

The \$10aDay Plan is ready to go with new research that shows BC can afford it. A recent report by CCPA-BC economist Iglia Ivanova lays out a 10 year schedule for implementing the Plan and calculates the return to public revenue as more parents are able to enter the labour force because they have quality, affordable child care. This detailed analysis shows that the Plan almost pays for itself.

### BROADENING AND ENGAGING OUR SUPPORT

Support for the Plan now represents 2 million British Columbians in 120 communities, with 46 local governments, 30 school districts, organizations like the United Way of the Lower Mainland and the Health Officers Council of BC, labour organizations, credit unions, a major BC media outlet, academics, businesses, and early childhood, social justice, women's and community organizations.

Polling by Insights West confirms the majority of British Columbians know that it costs more now to raise a family than it did 40 years ago and 66 per cent say government funding for child care should support most families, not just those who are poor. By a margin of 3 to 1, they agree government funding of child care services is better than providing cash to parents.

Add your support at [10aDay.ca](http://10aDay.ca)

## WE'VE HAD SOME VICTORIES...

The new BC Single Parent Employment Initiative recognizes that, if parents are going to be able to work or study, they need child care and takes the significant step of providing child care for some low income parents with no user fee. This commitment aligns directly with the \$10aDay Plan's calls for no user fees for families with incomes under \$40,000. The BC government also acknowledges the urgent shortage of child care spaces by committing capital funding for new licensed spaces and has renewed commitments to the ECE Student Bursary fund.

### ...BUT, SOME POLICIES AND INACTION ARE MAKING THE CHILD CARE CRISIS WORSE

Child care fees get more expensive each year, leaving too many families with no choice but to use unregulated or illegal care. Child care programs report that their financial viability is in jeopardy and some early childhood educators have no choice but to leave the field to earn a living wage. BC continues to have amongst the highest levels of child poverty in the country.

In the face of this, government action has been inadequate. Capital dollars to build new spaces come without commitments to stable operating funds, affordable fees, or a guarantee the funds won't be used to fund private assets or generate profits for shareholders. There is no plan to ensure early childhood educators will be fairly paid. The BC government's current promotion of the \$55 a month early childhood tax benefit and focus on small grants to coordinate family support services will not solve the crisis.

### WHERE TO BEGIN

Three things the BC government can do right now:

1. Follow other provinces by moving child care into the Ministry of Education, a low cost way to ensure the Plan is implemented without the false divide between 'early care' and 'early learning';
2. Reduce fees to \$10 a day in all licensed infant and toddler programs that embrace the Plan's accountability requirements, providing relief for families now paying some of the highest fees in the country; and
3. Put child care at the top of BC's agenda in discussions with the new federal government, so that federal transfers of adequate, dedicated funds can make the Plan even more affordable for BC.

We look forward to working with policy makers at all levels to make the \$10aDay Plan a reality.

# \$10aDay.ca

It's time for affordable child care in BC

## Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning

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The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and the Early Childhood Educators of BC are pleased to share our Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning.

Our Plan offers a concrete, innovative and ambitious way forward and provides a framework for significant and lasting system change in British Columbia.

Across British Columbia, supporters of this \$10aDay Plan are working to ensure that child care is a central issue for governments.

## The Plan...

### **Builds on well-established evidence...**

An ever-expanding body of research clearly demonstrates that:

- Public spending on the early years is a wise social and economic investment;
- Quality child care *is* early learning;
- High quality early years programs promote healthy development;
- Children and families need, and have a right to, quality care and learning; and
- Current policies and approaches are not working.

### **Responds to two conflicting realities...**

**BC has created a Provincial Office for the Early Years** with a focus on integration, coordination and collaboration of existing programs and services for young children. Yet, programs and services are not available to all children and families, especially those in rural and remote areas or on First Nations Reserves, and government's Early Years Strategy has not addressed the child care crisis.

**BC families face a crisis in accessing quality, affordable child care.** BC still has no plan to meet the needs of working families. Fees are too high – the second highest family expense after housing. Wait lists are too long, with a regulated space for only 20 per cent of children. And, the wages of college trained early childhood educators are so low, many are forced to leave the field to earn a living wage.

### **Is a “made in BC” solution...**

While this Plan grew out of the lived experience in BC and builds on our strengths, it also owes much to lessons learned elsewhere. Based on the evidence, it rejects commercial big-box child care as the answer to the current child care crisis and instead looks to public systems that work well – systems that integrate child care and education under one lead ministry (increasingly Education), and where child care and learning come together as strong and equal partners.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A BC example of the integration of early care and learning is the Education Department of the Stz'uminus First Nation which operates the Nutsumaht Lelum Child Day Care.



## THE PLAN...

### **Incorporates the best of child care *and* public education...**

The Plan focuses on the integration of child care programs regulated under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act, Child Care Licensing Regulation, with early learning programs delivered by schools. On the "child care" side, this includes family child care, preschool, group child care for infants, toddlers and 3 to 5-year-olds, and school age care. On the "school" side, it includes Kindergarten and Grade 1.

This focus, which flows from the mandates and expertise of the two sponsoring organizations, affirms the pivotal role child care plays in supporting families. Licensed BC child care providers interact, on a regular basis, with the families of close to 65,000 children under 6 years of age; this makes child care the largest front line support service for BC families with young children. Given the child care crisis experienced by many families, child care is a top priority.

We support strong family policies and comprehensive services such as income supports, pre/post-natal health services, family resource and parent education programs, and early intervention services — just to name a few. We remain committed to working with the broader early years' services sector and beyond to meet the needs of all families and children.

### **Emerged through an extensive community briefing consultation process...**

In 2010, we briefed British Columbians on our *Emerging Plan for an Integrated System of Early Care and Learning in BC*.

We distributed over 5,000 copies of the emerging plan, conducted an online survey, and received written comments from more than 700 individuals and groups. We responded to over 60 invitations to present the emerging plan, and as a result visited more than 25 BC communities. We also hosted an on-line webinar that reached hundreds more. Our audiences included, and went well beyond, the child care and community social services sectors. We are proud of the breadth and depth of this briefing process and the meaningful dialogue it encouraged and supported.

We were amazed and humbled by the positive response our emerging plan received.

While there are a few who perhaps don't agree with the direction of the Plan, don't see themselves in it, or aren't ready to endorse it — overwhelmingly, people are convinced by the Plan's potential to make a difference and want policy makers to move forward with implementation.

Since releasing the first edition of this Plan, we have continued to engage in dialogue with communities across BC. We value all we have learned and we thank everyone who has taken the time to listen and share. The Plan is much stronger as a result of the input. We continue to work on expanding key elements of the Plan.



## THE PLAN...

### **Acknowledges and celebrates innovative practice in BC communities...**

As we travel the province, we hear inspiring stories about the work being done in communities, from early childhood community tables, First Nations, and coalitions to programs at colleges and universities, originating from front line practitioners, groups and individuals that do the best they can every day, often with little support. As important as this work is, we sadly still see the vulnerability of young children increasing across the province. We need system change that would make innovative but now isolated examples of quality the daily experience for children across British Columbia.

### **Demands change from us all...**

Change is never easy — perhaps least of all for child care providers who have faced years of instability, band-aid solutions and broken promises. We know our Plan requires a cultural shift that may take a generation to fully achieve. It will take an openness to learn, a willingness to trust, and a generosity of spirit: all values at the core of quality early care and learning programs. We are confident that with these values early childhood educators can and will continue to find their voices to help change the world for children, their families and the workforce.

### **Doesn't answer every question...**

We value opportunities to further engage with and learn from First Nations and Aboriginal organizations respecting and supporting the inherent right to First Nations control of First Nations education. We recognize some elements of the Plan need more discussion and refinement. This includes a workforce development strategy, aligning the child care regulatory framework with the new system, integrating Supported Child Development and Child Care Resource and Referral, embedding early childhood practices into Kindergarten and Grade 1, strengthening the school age care component of the Plan, recognizing diverse experiences and cultures of children and families new to Canada, and coordinating implementation with the broader range of early childhood development and family support services.

We and many others acknowledge there are fundamental differences between child care and other early years programs. Other early years programs receive substantial public and/or philanthropic operating funds, are delivered by non-profit organizations or public institutions and are available to families, regardless of income, at little or no cost. Regrettably, child care does not yet benefit from these same conditions, putting working families and their children at a distinct disadvantage. That is why fundamentally different approaches are required to solve the child care crisis.

So, our invitation to those in the education, family support, early intervention, health, recreation, library, and post-secondary systems and beyond, remains wide open. Please share your visions of how we can work together to honour and advance services and supports for children and families. We welcome the dialogue.

Finally, our Plan is generating unprecedented interest. The next step is for policy makers to embrace the vision and make a commitment to implementation. We stand ready, willing and able to help them do just that.

# The Big Picture

## Conditions Needed to Support the Plan

This Plan includes four conditions to support a system of early care and learning: strong family policy, commitment from federal and provincial governments, First Nations and Aboriginal community control, and adequate and stable funding.

### Strong Family Policy

In the 2011 report *Does Canada Work for All Generations?*<sup>2</sup> Paul Kershaw and Lynell Anderson, of UBC's Human Early Learning Partnership, note that Canada has become a country in which it is far harder to raise a young family:

*The country's economy has doubled in size since the mid-1970's, yet the new reality for parents with preschool children is a decline in the standard of living. Compared to the previous generation, the average household income for young Canadian couples has flat-lined (after adjusting for inflation) even though the share of young women contributing to household incomes today is up 53 per cent. Meanwhile, housing prices increased 76 per cent across the country (150 per cent in BC) since the mid-1970's.*

*The generation raising young children today is squeezed for time at home, squeezed for income because of the high cost of housing, and squeezed for services like child care that would help them balance earning a living with raising a family... The resulting work-life conflict [for generation squeeze] also costs employers.*

Kershaw and Anderson estimated that work-life conflict among employees with preschool age children costs BC businesses in excess of \$600 million per year, including turnover, absenteeism and health care premiums.

The authors propose a New Deal for Families with Young Children centred on two core family policy changes:

- New both-parent benefits "will ensure that all parents, including the self-employed, have the time and resources to be at home with their newborns, at least until children are 18 months; and
- Thereafter, \$10 per day child care services will ensure that parents can afford enough employment time to manage the rising cost of housing and stalled household incomes."

This Plan clearly addresses the key missing service — child care — but its ultimate effectiveness depends on both elements of strong family policy being in place.



This Plan includes four conditions to support a system of early care and learning: strong family policy, commitment from federal and provincial governments, First Nations and Aboriginal community control, and adequate and stable funding.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Kershaw and Lynell Anderson, *Does Canada Work for All Generations?* (UBC Human Early Learning Partnership, 2011).





## Commitment from Federal and Provincial Governments

While the design and delivery of systems of early care and learning are provincial responsibilities, both provincial and federal governments have an obligation to honour their commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to access quality early care and learning.

Therefore, the role of the federal government should be to: legislate and fund an enhanced parental leave program that provides parents with *up to 18 months of leave*, including reserved time for fathers, along with adequate incomes, and; transfer dedicated funds to help build systems of early care and learning, with funds tied to accountability for universality, high quality, affordability, inclusiveness, and democratic governance.

While a commitment from both levels of government would be an asset, the absence of federal commitment does not absolve BC of the responsibility of implementing a solution to the current child care crisis in BC.

## First Nations and Aboriginal Community Control

As affirmed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples are rightfully claiming and exercising their human and constitutional rights to develop and control culturally relevant programs for their children and families. The UN Declaration guarantees the rights

**Full support for the right of First Nations and Aboriginal communities to design and deliver services does not absolve the early care and learning system of its responsibility to provide culturally welcoming and affirming programs across BC.**

of Aboriginal peoples to enjoy and practice their cultures and customs, religions, and languages, and to develop and strengthen their economies and their social and political institutions. Therefore, an effective early care and learning system must provide First Nations with the power, resources and supports — with the involvement of Elders and Knowledge Keepers — to design, govern and deliver holistic early care and learning services that meet the needs of their children, families and communities in ways strengthened through Aboriginal knowledge and worldview.

We acknowledge that respectful dialogue with BC's First Nation peoples is critically important. We are committed to continuing that dialogue now, and into the future.

Full support for the right of First Nations and Aboriginal communities to design and deliver services does not absolve the early care and learning system of its responsibility to provide culturally welcoming and affirming programs across BC. We must ensure that all Early Childhood Educators in BC are educated about the history, cultures and practices of First Nations peoples and can integrate these learnings into the programs they provide for all children.





## Adequate and Stable Funding

A transformation of early care and learning services from the current “user fee” market system to a publicly funded and delivered system is critical to the success of the Plan. This will require significant additional public funding and a change in the way these funds are delivered. Given the historic underfunding of a broad range of early childhood development and family support services, funding to implement this Plan cannot come through reallocation of existing program funds. New investments are required.

Building on previous costing models, HELP’s 15 by 15 report calculates that the additional operating cost for a universal, quality, inclusive early care and learning system for BC children under the age of 6 would be \$1.5 billion annually.<sup>3</sup> As this Plan also includes services for elementary school age children, the full operating costs would be somewhat higher.<sup>4</sup> Yet, 15 by 15 identifies multiple benefits that offset these costs and the experience from Quebec demonstrates that its \$7 per day system more than pays for itself. More recently the CCPA–BC report *Solving BC’s Affordability Crisis in Child Care Financing the \$10 a Day Plan*<sup>5</sup> confirms that the near-term benefits, solely from increased labour force participation, that access to child care creates, almost pays for the cost of the Plan.

As part of a 10-year implementation strategy, provincial funding would increase incrementally over the first five years, with a commitment to stable, long-term funding. Public funding must be tied to clear system accountability measures with transparent monitoring to ensure it is used to achieve public goals. Initially, existing child care services that integrate into the new system would be funded through contracts for service or similar funding mechanisms.

As Boards of Education develop new programs to meet demonstrated needs, these programs would be funded directly, as is the Kindergarten to Grade 12 system.

**A recent CCPA–BC report confirms that the near-term benefits, solely from increased labour force participation, that access to child care creates, almost pays for the cost of the Plan.**

3 15 by 15: *A Comprehensive Policy Framework for Early Human Capital Investment in BC*, April 2010, p. 20, [earlylearning.ubc.ca/research/initiatives/social-change/15-by-15-smart-family-policy/](http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/research/initiatives/social-change/15-by-15-smart-family-policy/)

4 A complementary capital budget to retrofit existing or create new quality spaces will also be required, as will a higher level of investment in ECE post-secondary education.

5 Iglia Ivanova, July 2015, *Solving BC’s Affordability Crisis in Child Care: Financing the \$10 a Day Plan*, [policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/solving-bc%E2%80%99s-affordability-crisis-child-care](http://policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/solving-bc%E2%80%99s-affordability-crisis-child-care)

# From a Patchwork to a Democratic System

## Legislative and Policy Change

This Plan proposes a sea change from the current patchwork of fragmented child care services to a cohesive, democratic system of early care and learning.

Historically, the development of child care in BC has depended on the initiative of community groups and individuals. However well-intentioned, the result is a patchwork of isolated programs, high levels of operational fragility, and no guarantee that programs exist where they are most needed. While ad hoc development has not worked for children, families or communities, it is no surprise that some providers value the autonomy they now have over their operations.

The shift from stand-alone programs, no matter who operates them, to a cohesive, democratic system will take time — perhaps a generation. With the right elements in place new generations of early childhood educators will enter a system in which they are respected and supported by the communities to whom they are accountable.

The Plan includes three initiatives that are the foundation of a democratic system: legislation, a new home in the Ministry of Education, and a new role for Boards of Education.

### An Early Care and Learning Act for BC

A new Early Care and Learning Act would turn international commitments to honour children's, families' and First Nations' rights to quality early childhood programs into law — for which government can and would be held accountable.

The proposed new Early Care and Learning Act would enshrine the rights of:

- All young children (from birth to 5 years) to access high quality, integrated care and learning services that respect their unique developmental needs;<sup>6</sup>
- All children from age 6 to 12 to access high quality before and after school care that responds to and respects their developmental needs;
- All families, on a *voluntary* basis, to access quality, affordable care for their children;
- Families to be actively engaged in their children's early care and learning programs;
- First Nations and Aboriginal communities to govern, develop and deliver early care and learning services that meet their communities' needs;
- Children with extra support needs to be fully supported and included; and
- Children from families facing economic, social or cultural barriers to be fully supported and included.

The Early Care and Learning Act would also define how the system is governed and funded, and set out the regulations within which services operate.

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<sup>6</sup> While this plan supports extended parental leave of 18 months, some families will want and need infant care.

This Act would replace the current provision for “early learning programs” in the BC School Act, which narrowly defines Ministry of Education early learning programs as those designed to “improve readiness for and success in kindergarten” and restricts access to only those children whose parent or designated caregiver can attend with them.<sup>7</sup>

Enshrining access to early care as a right equal to the right to public education will help overcome the historic divide between relatively well-funded, universal public education services and relatively poorly funded, poorly regulated, privatized child care services.

An Early Care and Learning Act would bring “child care” to the table as a strong and equal partner with public education and help protect against a downward extension of a narrowly defined academic readiness approach to programs for young children.

## A New Home for Early Care and Learning in the Ministry of Education

While BC’s public schools face many challenges, a new home in the Ministry of Education provides an historic opportunity to extend the strengths of the public education system to a public system of early care and learning. These strengths include:

- **Universal entitlement for all children.** The School Act provides this for children from age 5 and up; the new Early Care and Learning Act would provide this for children from birth to age 5.
- **Public funding.** BC law requires that no user fees be charged for Kindergarten to Grade 12 education.<sup>8</sup> This plan proposes a move to affordable access to early care and learning that has no user fee for families with household incomes under \$40,000 annually.
- **Democratic control.** Elected Boards of Education can strengthen civic engagement in, and ownership of, a public early care and learning system.
- **Public understanding and support.** Just as the public expects and accepts schools in every community, they will come to accept and expect early care and learning as well.
- **Respect and fair compensation for the workforce.** The Plan proposes a way for early childhood educators to increase their education and strengthen their profession.
- **Infrastructure to deliver.** Rather than create new administrative structures, this Plan proposes to make use of the existing infrastructures of the Ministry of Education and Boards of Education.



A new home in the Ministry of Education provides an historic opportunity to extend the strengths of the public education system to a public system of early care and learning.

A home in education does not mean children would start school at a younger age or that all early care programs would necessarily be located in schools. Rather, this Plan calls for the Ministry of Education to be responsible for a system of community-based early care and learning and school age programs for children from birth to 12 years. Children would still start school at age 5 when they enter Kindergarten.

<sup>7</sup> *School Act*, Revised Statutes of British Columbia, 1996, page C-12, [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/revisedstatutescontents.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/revisedstatutescontents.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, Section 82, page C-73.



To fulfill this new mandate, the Ministry of Education would need to establish an Early Care and Learning Division with responsibility for stable funding, transition planning, licensing and regulatory frameworks, and workforce development. A designated Director of Early Care and Learning would also be required.

## A New Role for Boards of Education<sup>9</sup>

With a new home in the Ministry of Education, elected Boards of Education would be mandated and funded to plan, develop, and govern the delivery of a range of early care and learning (ECL) services in their districts — whether these services are located in community or school facilities. This new mandate builds on the commitment to children and youth, engagement with stakeholders and the relevancy that Boards of Education have within their communities.

To undertake these new responsibilities, school districts would be required to:

- Work with municipal/regional governments and the child care community to develop and implement ECL plans. With annual targets and reporting benchmarks, ECL plans would guide the integration of existing child care services into the education system and the development of new ECL services to meet unmet needs, within a 10-year implementation strategy.
- Create ECL standing committees comprised of families and other stakeholders to guide board decision-making.
- Designate at least one elected board of education trustee as an ECL liaison.
- Assign knowledgeable staff to support ECL programs and find ways to integrate licensing, support for children with unique needs, and resource/referral responsibilities into the new system.
- Ensure that all ECL programs operate in stable and appropriate spaces, whether in schools, on school grounds, or in the community.
- Provide professional development for school district administrators and staff about the board's new responsibilities and programs.



With a new home in the Ministry of Education, elected Boards of Education would be mandated and funded to plan, develop, and govern the delivery of a range of early care and learning (ECL) services in their districts — whether these services are located in community or school facilities.

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<sup>9</sup> As noted on page 8, First Nations and Aboriginal peoples have the right to the power and resources they need to design, govern and deliver their own early care and learning programs. First Nation and Aboriginal communities may be funded directly rather than through Boards of Education.

# Children and Families Come First

## Early Care and Learning Programs and Services

The central goal of a new public system of early care and learning is to meet the needs of children and families. While the policy environment and governance structure outlined above lay a foundation for that system, it is the services the foundation supports that matter for children and families.

With a well-functioning system, families can access quality care and learning services when and where they need them, without having to worry about the infrastructure that makes it possible. This Plan provides an innovative set of services that build on the strengths of the public education system and quality early childhood education.

### Putting Care at the Core

The Plan proposes two new categories for early care and learning services – one at the individual program level, the other at the neighbourhood level.

At the neighbourhood level, Early Years Centres (EYCs) would affiliate into Early Years Networks. Individual programs participating in the new system would be known as Early Years Centres. Since the release of this Plan, the term Early Years Centres is being used by the BC government to describe a very different concept than envisioned here, one focused on coordination of other family support services rather than child care.

### Early Years Centres

This new designation would apply to programs currently licensed under the Child Care Licensing Regulations, e.g. group care for infants, toddlers, and 3 to 5-year-olds, family child care for mixed ages, and preschools for 3 to 5-year-olds. It would only be used for programs that participate in the new system.

EYCs would be:

- Staffed by qualified early childhood educators and family child care providers,
- Play-based programs where children have opportunities to develop physically, socially, emotionally, morally, spiritually, culturally, cognitively and creatively, where each child's self-esteem is enhanced, and a warm, loving atmosphere is maintained
- Places that support a partnership between families and early childhood educators through positive and respectful relationships;
- Diverse enough to offer a range of pedagogical approaches to early childhood education (Reggio Emilia, Montessori, etc.); and
- A BC way to meet the developmental needs of children that puts "care at the core" and also meets the needs of working families, including shift workers.
- An alternative to pre or junior Kindergarten which is typically limited to school day hours in a classroom context.

Since the release of this Plan, the term Early Years Centres is being used by government to describe a very different concept than envisioned here.



To become an EYC, programs and providers would

- Embrace a shift from independent operations to participation in a democratic system;
- Affiliate, at the neighbourhood level, with other providers into a unified Early Years Network (see below)
- Develop a plan to demonstrate their readiness and ability to meet the system accountability measures
- Complete an application process to enter into contracts for service or similar funding mechanisms with the local Board of Education.

### **Early Years Centre Funding and Accountability**

Early Years Centres would provide the core services delivered by the new public early care and learning system.

As such, they would receive operational funding, through new public investments in early care and learning, to meet five system accountability measures:

1. Cap parent fees at \$10 per day for full-time, \$7 per day for part-time, and no user fee for families with an annual income of less than \$40,000;
2. Meet improved staff education and wage levels at an average of \$25 an hour plus 20 per cent benefits
3. Welcome all children, including those with extra support needs;
4. Address demonstrated community need; and
5. Offer play-based programs that are consistent with the BC Early Learning Framework or Aboriginal frameworks.

Early Years Centres that evolve from existing services would receive operational funding through a contract for service or similar funding mechanism from local Boards of Education, while Early Years Centres developed by Boards of Education would be funded directly by those Boards. A formula to recognize differences in regional operating costs would be required.

EYCs would be held accountable for public funds through mechanisms such as open financial records, filed financial statements, audits, and other transparency measures.

During the transition period to the new system, the current child care subsidy program would remain in place to support families who do not yet have access to an affordable space in an EY Network.

Providers who choose not to participate in the system would be able to continue to operate independently, if they meet licensing requirements; however, they would not receive any of the public funds tied to the new system of integrated early care and learning.





## Development of Early Years Centre

Early Years Centres would develop in two ways: evolving from existing providers, and creating new EYCs to meet demonstrated needs.

Existing group child care, preschool and regulated family child care providers who want to be part of the new system and are prepared to meet the new accountability measures would become Early Years Centres and members of their local Early Years Network.

Boards of Education would then develop and operate new Early Years Centres in response to the needs identified in their early care and learning plans.

New EYCs offering group programs could be located in schools, purpose-built facilities, on school grounds or other appropriate community facilities such as community recreation centres and community amenity spaces.

## Early Years Networks

Early Years (EY) Networks would be clusters of neighbourhood-based regulated full and part-time early care and learning programs that are participating in the new system. These would include Early Years Centres (group and family programs) and school age child care programs.

They would integrate these individual programs into a unified service at a neighbourhood level – offering a range of programs from which families can select the one that meets their needs.

Through EY Networks, early childhood educators, school age providers and family child care providers would be part of a collegial team learn from and with each other, share resources and pursue career paths

EY Networks would develop close working relationships with the schools in their community – easing the transition for children and sharing resources.

EY Networks would also be key players in a coordinated and integrated broader system of early years' services. They would provide a neighbourhood based vehicle to determine unmet needs and plan for growth in the system.

Just like individual EYCs, Networks would first evolve from existing providers who are participating in the new system. Boards of Education would then be responsible for developing and integrating EYCs into neighbourhood based Networks in response to the needs identified in their early care and learning plans.

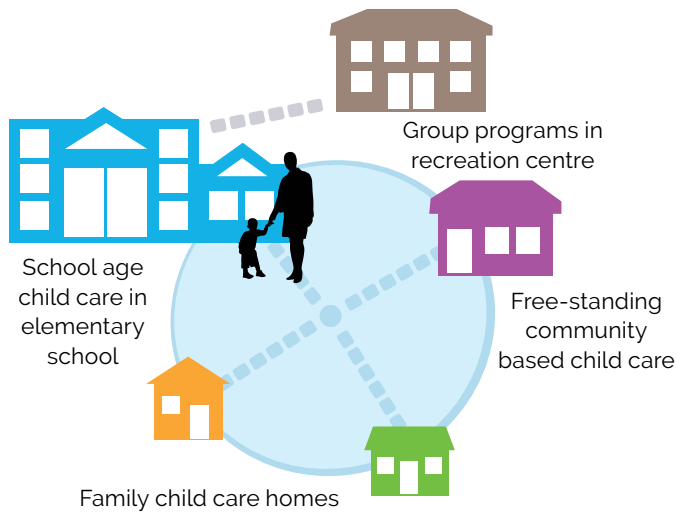
Over time, EY Networks would exist in every community – just like elementary schools. In rural communities, where young children travel long distances to school, EY Networks could include family child care homes and small group programs closer to home.

For examples of how EY Networks might look, see page 16.

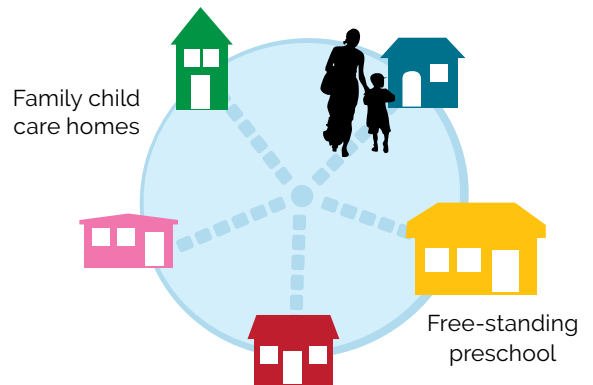
# Early Years Networks: Some Examples

## Evolving EY Networks from existing providers

An **urban** EY Network that brings together existing:

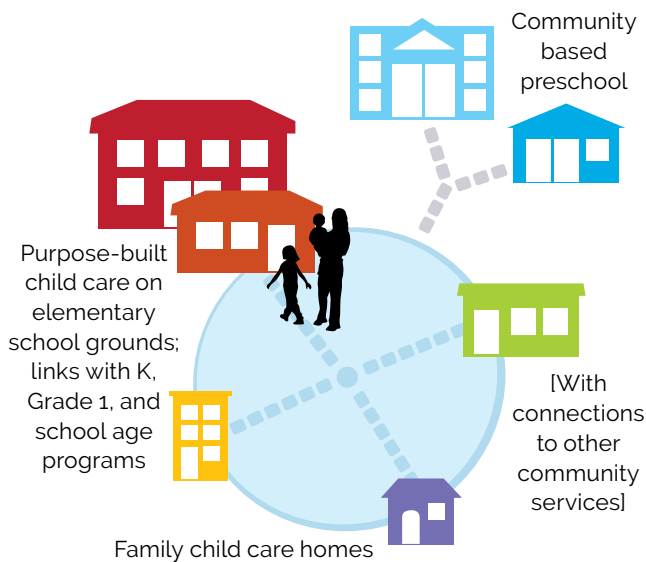


An EY Network in a **small community** that brings together existing:

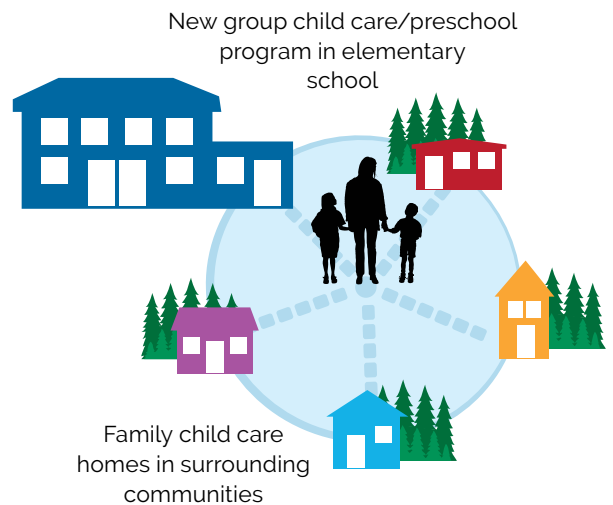


## Creating new EY Networks to meet demonstrated needs

A new **urban** EY Network that includes:



A new **rural** EY Network that includes:



## Kindergarten and Grade 1

Quality early care and learning programs are critical to children's development and, whether in child care, Kindergarten or Grade 1, share many common features. While school entry would still begin at age 5, and Kindergarten and Grade 1 would continue to be governed by BC's School Act, this Plan integrates the first two years of school into the system of early care and learning.

To offer children optimal care and learning experiences, this Plan enhances Kindergarten and Grade 1 by:

- Having qualified early childhood educators (ECEs) work with teachers as professional colleagues in order to support full school day, play-based programs, acknowledging the need for protected class size and composition so that the addition of ECEs enhances current ratios;
- Offering an extended full day and full year program for working and other families who want or need it, at the same location and with stable adult/child relationships;
- Respecting the vital role played by Education Assistants (EAs) in public schools and working with them to support the successful inclusion of children with extra support needs; and
- Enhancing early childhood education expertise and perspectives within the Kindergarten to Grade 12 system.

## School Age Care

Quality school age care plays a critical role in supporting children's development through the important middle years. While at work or study, families rely on school age care for their children. Consistent, genuine and caring relationships with qualified school age care educators who support children's growing independence are an essential element of an effective early care and learning system.

While more work is needed to deepen the school age component of this Plan, as a starting place:

- Regulated school age programs would offer before and after school care and full day care during non-instructional days and school breaks for children from Grade 2 to the end of Grade 7.
- Boards of Education would be responsible for providing quality school age programs wherever there is an identified need.
- Like EY Networks, school age programs would receive public operating funds to meet the five system accountability measures:
  - » Cap parent fees at \$10 per day for full-time, \$7 per day part-time, no user fee for families earning less than \$40,000 annually;
  - » Meet improved staff education and wage levels at an average of \$25 per hour plus 20 per cent benefits;
  - » Welcome all children, including those with extra support needs;
  - » Address demonstrated community need; and
  - » Offer programs that support children's holistic development.
- Existing school age providers who want to be part of the new system and agree to meet these accountability measures would be funded through contracts for service or similar funding mechanisms with Boards of Education.
- New programs to meet demonstrated needs would be developed and operated by Boards of Education.
- School age programs would work in cooperation with other community services to provide care that meets the full spectrum of children's developmental needs throughout the year.



# Building Capacity

## Investing in the Workforce

The success of this proposed system of early care and learning depends on investing in a respected, well-educated and fairly-compensated workforce.

This would:

- Enhance the quality of early care and learning programs by raising educational standards for all providers;
- Build on ECEs' ethical commitment to pursue, on an ongoing basis, knowledge, skills and self-awareness to be professionally competent;<sup>10</sup>
- Respect the culture, values and expertise of the field of early childhood education; and
- Move ECEs toward parity with teacher credentials and remuneration.

While a comprehensive workforce development strategy is required, this Plan includes three steps for building workforce capacity: a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education as a new educational standard, a diploma as a minimum credential for providers, and support for existing ECEs and providers to upgrade their qualifications.

### Bachelor of ECE as the Educational Standard

A Bachelor of Early Childhood Education as the new educational standard recognizes the importance and value of the work done by early childhood educators and invests in their development. It builds on BC's existing and evolving Bachelors of Early Childhood Care and Education and calls for additional degree programs with diverse specialties.

New Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECE) degrees should reflect the breadth and depth of knowledge required to support all aspects of the new system, including care for children from birth to age 12 in a variety of settings, care for children in mixed age groupings, support for children with extra needs, and partnering with teachers and other staff members in Kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms. Articulation with related degrees in fields such as Child and Youth Care would be required. Post-baccalaureate diploma programs with early childhood education specialties for teachers and other professionals should also be available.

Within five years of implementation of the \$10aDay Plan, the goal is that at least one early childhood educator in every EYC, Kindergarten, Grade 1, and school age care program should hold a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education degree or a bachelor's degree with an early years specialization from a related field. It is recognized that BC needs an increase in post-secondary opportunities in early childhood education, including distance and online learning.

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<sup>10</sup> Early Childhood Educators of BC, Code of Ethics, 2008.



## Diploma as the Minimum Credential for Providers

This Plan includes establishing a diploma as the minimum credential for all child care providers, including those working in family and school age care. This goal recognizes that current educational requirements for ECEs, as well as family and school age providers, are not commensurate with the importance and value of their work and relegate the sector to low wages and recruitment and retention problems.

This standard builds on existing ECE diploma and certificate programs, the Good Beginnings Program for family child care, the Responsible Adult Course, and other courses related to school age care. Diploma programs would address the work done across the sector, including the specific work done in family and school age care, and be articulated with BECE degrees so that diploma graduates enter a bachelor's program at year two or three.

## Support for Providers to Upgrade Qualifications

The goal of supporting existing ECEs and providers to upgrade their qualifications recognizes that while future practitioners will enter the sector with new educational standards in place, existing practitioners may need support to upgrade their education.

Existing training and experience would be recognized and the Plan's costing model includes annual funds for practitioners to upgrade their education while they continue to work. Training opportunities should be available across the province and made accessible for all. Post-secondary institutions across BC are already working to strengthen their capacity to offer increased educational opportunities in early childhood education. We trust that the long term vision of this Plan will inform these developments. Strategies to welcome ECEs who have left the field back into the new system would also be helpful.

Mature providers who may not want to upgrade their education to the new standards could remain in their current positions, with their current qualifications, until they decide to retire or move on.



**Mature providers who may not want to upgrade their education to the new standards could remain in their current positions, with their current qualifications, until they decide to retire or move on.**

# Getting from Here to There

## Building on Strengths

One of the strengths and challenges of implementing this Plan is that it requires change from all partners in the new system.

The cultural shift required to move from stand-alone, isolated child care programs into a cohesive, democratic system may be hard and will definitely take time — perhaps a generation.

Existing ECE practitioners and providers entered the field under different expectations and circumstances. For some, the current high-demand, low-supply market serves their business interests. Others value the independence and autonomy they have over their operations. Others, who have experienced years of instability, are wary. Some may not want to move into a new system. The Plan respects the right of providers to continue to operate independently, as long as they meet licensing requirements; however, they would not receive the public funds tied to the new system and its accountability measures.

Fear of change and private interests must not stand in the way of meeting the needs of BC children and families and respecting the value of early childhood educators. The status quo is not acceptable.

This Plan:

- Builds on existing child care services that have been created and nurtured in communities, despite the obstacles;
- Welcomes all existing providers who are excited by the Plan's potential and want to be part of the new system — children and families need their services and the new system needs their wisdom and experience; and
- Ensures future generations of early childhood educators will enter a field where their work is respected and supported by, and accountable to, the community it serves.

Implementation will take generosity of spirit, community engagement and vigilance, and an openness to learn through practice — and make adjustments as needed.

## Implementation

Once legislation is enacted, an initial five-year budget commitment within a 10-year implementation strategy, with annual benchmarks, will be required. This time frame provides a stable context for implementation, assures the community of government's long-term commitment, and provides opportunities for learning and adapting as the Plan moves forward.

Significant investment and action will be required in the first five years. This front loading will provide access to quality, affordable early care and learning services to large numbers of BC children and families as quickly as possible.



## The key initial implementation steps for government are:

1. **A COMMITMENT TO EMBRACE AND IMPLEMENT THE PLAN:** Primary responsibility for enacting this Plan rests with the provincial government, which needs to commit to its vision and goals. The needs of BC children and families should be a non-partisan issue that garners support from all. A federal commitment to support BC's implementation of this Plan will also be important to success, but provincial action on this issue must not be dependent on the federal government. A commitment from Boards of Education to take up their new mandate for early care and learning is essential. Support and cooperation from local governments and other public governing bodies is also important.
2. **SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLES:** Respectful dialogue with BC's Aboriginal peoples is critically important, particularly given the findings of the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society report *A Cold Wind Blows*. As a significant and necessary layer of the child care system we need in BC, the government must support the *BC First Nations Early Childhood Development Framework* and *Creating Pathways – An Aboriginal Early Years Five Year Strategic Plan*, and the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
3. **ENACTING THE EARLY CARE AND LEARNING ACT:** A first step is for the BC legislature to pass an Early Care and Learning Act. This will provide a stable legislative and regulatory framework for implementing the Plan and alleviate concerns about a downward extension of a narrow academic-readiness focus.
4. **MOVING CHILD CARE TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION:** Following the lead of most other Canadian provinces and territories, responsibility for child care policy and programs should immediately be moved to the Ministry of Education. The ministry could then work with local Boards of Education to develop targets and timelines for providing early care and learning services for all, with a priority on services that meet the needs of young children and working families. Boards of Education should give top priority to expanding access to full-time programs for young children before they enter Kindergarten through the development of Early Years Centres. This responds to the majority of BC families who need quality, affordable care for their children while they work or study.
5. **DEVELOPING A FIVE-YEAR ROLL OUT WITH A STABLE BUDGET:** Successful implementation will require a stable budget on which to proceed; this is the only way to assure parents, child care providers, Boards of Education, and other partners that the necessary funds will be there to reach the targets and timelines they establish. Significant investment, with annual reporting on benchmarks, is required to provide access to services for a large number of children and families as quickly as possible and ensure returns to government.
6. **IMMEDIATE ACTION:** Recognizing that it will take 10 years to fully realize the \$10aDay Plan, we recommend that government begin to implement the Plan by immediately:
  - Making a commitment to address affordability by reducing parent fees to \$10 per day for all licensed infant and toddler spaces (in group and family settings) that are willing to commit to the accountability measures – this step recognizes that the current crisis is most acute for infants and toddlers who, at their most vulnerable stage, are over-represented in unregulated care; and
  - Put child care at the top of the agenda in discussions with the federal government as transfers of dedicated funds to build early care and learning systems will make implementation even more affordable for the province.

# Moving The Plan Forward

Together we can make affordable child care a reality in BC

Our 10aDay Plan, the *Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning in BC* offers a concrete, innovative and ambitious way forward. It provides a framework for significant and lasting system change. While it does not yet answer every question,<sup>11</sup> the support it has generated is unprecedented and only continues to grow.

Moving the Plan forward depends on a willingness to meld this excitement into a cohesive voice that resonates with the public and impels decision makers to act.

We all have a role to play in promoting the Plan and ensuring it frames the ongoing public dialogue about early care and learning. Let all elected officials know we want and expect the \$10aDay Plan to be implemented in BC:



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Sign the petition



Endorse the Plan



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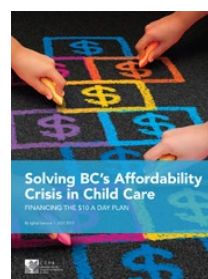


Share on Twitter  
@10aDayplan



Share the Plan with all  
elected officials in your riding

Download and share the Plan and other resources like the CCPA-BC report on financing the \$10aDay Plan

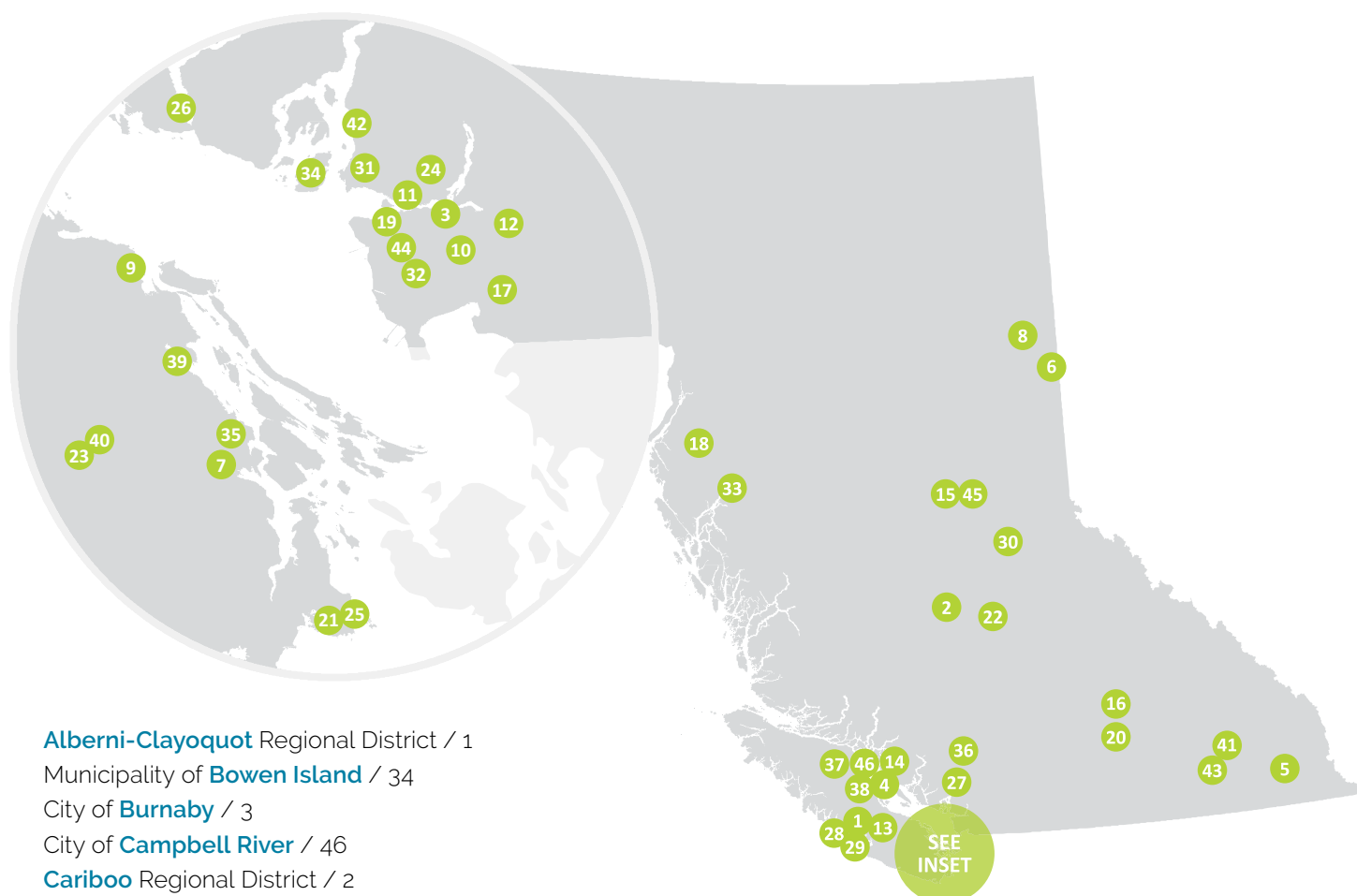


Download and share the Plan fact sheets:

- 1 For BC Parents: What the Plan Means for Families, in English, Chinese, Filipino, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese (2011)
- 2 It Makes Good Dollars & Sense: Economic Rationale For Public Investment (2011)
- 3 By The Numbers: BC Children, Families and Child Care (2011)
- 4 \$10 A Day Child Care: A Key to Ending Family Poverty (2012)
- 5 \$10 A Day Child Care: Good for BC Business (2014)
- 6 Coming Soon: What the \$10aDay Plan means for Early Childhood Educators

11 For more detailed answers to frequently asked questions, see [10aDay.ca/resources](http://10aDay.ca/resources)

# Local Government Support for the \$10aDay Plan



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 Municipality of **Bowen Island** / 34  
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 City of **Campbell River** / 46  
**Cariboo** Regional District / 2  
 Town of **Comox** / 38  
 City of **Courtenay** / 4  
**Cowichan Valley** Regional District / 23  
 City of **Cranbrook** / 5  
 City of **Dawson Creek** / 6  
 City of **Duncan** / 7  
 City of **Fort St. John** / 8  
**Greater Vancouver** Regional District (GVRD) / 32  
 Village of **Kaslo** / 41  
**Kitimat** Regional Council / 33  
 Town of **Ladysmith** / 39  
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 City of **Nanaimo** / 9  
 City of **New Westminster** / 10  
**North Central** Local Government Association / 45  
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 District of **North Vancouver** / 24  
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JANUARY 2016

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