

# Town of Osoyoos

## Childcare Needs Assessment & Childcare Plan

January 2024





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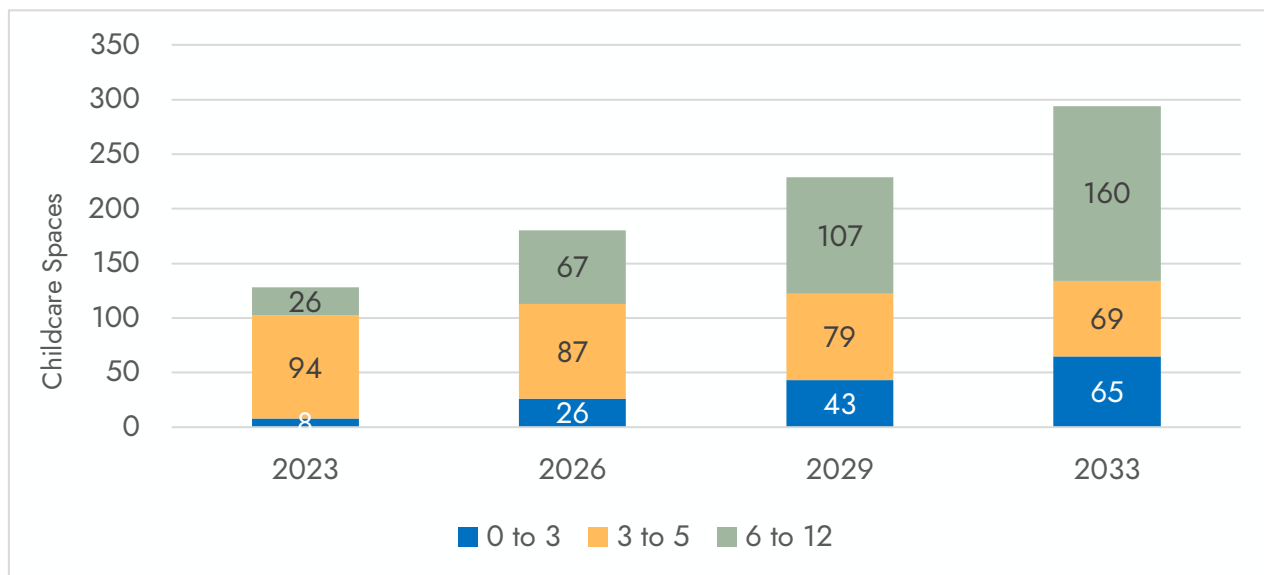
# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Osoyoos does not have sufficient childcare spaces to meet demand and to promote workforce participation for families. There has been an identified need to create a comprehensive Childcare Plan for the Town in order to qualify for Provincial childcare funding initiatives, and to strategically guide efforts to address the childcare space deficit. Cornerstone Planning Group has been engaged to create a Childcare Plan including a Needs Assessment and recommendations for implementation.

The current state of childcare availability in Osoyoos is that there is both a deficit and an uneven distribution of childcare spaces in Osoyoos, mainly due to staffing challenges. Spaces serving children 3-5 are relatively abundant, with 110 per 100 children, exceeding the national average of 27.2 spaces per 100 children. The spaces serving children 0-3 are much lower, with 13.3 per 100 children. Feedback from stakeholders emphasized the difficulty staffing this category of spaces, and the difficulty of parents accessing care in this category. Spaces serving children 6-12 are similarly under the national benchmark, with 11.3 spaces per 100 children.

An aspirational target was set for Osoyoos of 70 per 100 children 0-3, 70 per 100 children 3-5, and 60 per 100 children 6-12, based on comparative jurisdictions and national recommendations that aim to maximize workforce participation for families. This results in the following targets for Osoyoos childcare spaces:

Figure 1: Osoyoos Childcare Space Targets







Additionally, the primary recommendations of this study focus on enabling parents to participate in the local workforce. Seamless day programming, multi-age spaces, non-standard hour spaces, and transitioned out-of-school care will better enable parents to work, including in sectors like healthcare and agriculture which are likely to require in-person shift work. Further, the recommendations of this report are developed to enhance equity by focusing on underserved populations, including urban Indigenous families and children requiring extra support. Targets have been set for each of these underserved populations.

This report identifies a number of recommended municipal actions Osoyoos should undertake to achieve these targets. A primary recommendation is for the Town to act as a convener and host a committee of key partners to monitor implementation of the Childcare Plan, as well as identify challenges in achieving targets and opportunities for partnership, collaboration, and systemic problem-solving.

*Figure 2: AI-generated image of a modern Osoyoos Childcare Centre using MidJourney software*





## 2 INTRODUCTION

The following report consists of three main components: an introduction and current context of the state of childcare in Osoyoos; the Childcare Needs Assessment; followed by the Childcare Action Plan and recommendations for the Town of Osoyoos.

### 2.1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Town of Osoyoos, like many communities in BC, do not have sufficient licensed childcare spaces to meet demand. The Province of British Columbia has responded to this childcare deficit by supporting local governments to increase childcare spaces through funding programs. The Town of Osoyoos in 2020 sought provincial funding and were not successful; as they did not have a childcare action plan or inventory of existing spaces they were ineligible to receive funding from the Provincial program. The Town of Osoyoos Council has since approved the development of a childcare needs assessment and action plan to be proactive and identify the childcare needs of the town, and to be in a better position to take advantage of future funding opportunities to address the shortage of available childcare spaces.

### 2.2 GOVERNMENT POLICY CONTEXT

Childcare policy and funding are primarily Provincial and Federal responsibilities, and local governments do not have the resources to fund childcare to meet the demand for affordable childcare on their own. The Federal and Provincial governments have prioritized increasing access to affordable childcare and have committed to create a universal childcare system through funding programs, tax deductions, wage enhancements for Early Childhood Educators, with the commitment to create a universal, high quality, publicly funded childcare system that makes childcare affordable for any family that needs or wants it.

Local governments, however, are best equipped to understand the local context and needs in communities. With the creation of childcare needs assessments and action plans, local governments can communicate childcare needs to higher levels of government and work together to bridge gaps in funding for space creation, training, subsidies, bursaries, and other means to meet childcare needs.

The development of a childcare needs assessment and action plan for the Town of Osoyoos is framed within this context.

### 2.3 METHODOLOGY

Cornerstone Planning Group (Cornerstone) was contracted to complete the scope of work, following a 4-step approach. The following information summarizes the approach taken to complete the study.

1. **Project Launch** — This step involved preparing and hosting a teleconference with the Project Team to initiate the project and to clarify and confirm scope, approach, schedule, stakeholders, deliverables,



communication plan, vendor and project evaluation procedures, and available background documentation.

2. **Current Context Analysis: Demographic Profile / Preliminary Demand Planning / Inventory Development** – Following Project Launch, the Current Context Analysis phase began, which involved an analysis of Osoyoos’s economic and demographic details, an environmental scan of Osoyoos and the surrounding area to create an inventory of existing childcare facilities and spaces, to determine community childcare demand, and to identify current gaps in service. It involved an analysis of Osoyoos background information relating to childcare facilities and childcare demand.

In the development of the childcare space inventory, maps were made to showcase childcare facility size (i.e. the number of childcare spaces they provide), type, location, and access considerations. The number of childcare spaces existing within Osoyoos and within a 20-minute drive radius were identified to set the baseline and then compared with target ratios and established metrics such as the Canadian National Average of 27.2 licensed childcare spaces per 100 children. This ratio is considered the baseline target a community can reach to not be considered a childcare desert.

3. **Stakeholder Engagement** – The Stakeholder Engagement phase involved interviews with local stakeholders, including the Osoyoos Indian Band, School District #53, Interior Health Authority, not-for-profit agencies providing childcare or childcare resources (Boys and Girls Club, OneSky), childcare providers, and the Town of Osoyoos Planning Department. These interviews gave additional insight with respect to childcare demand in the study area, and existing challenges and opportunities.

This phase also involved the development of a childcare survey aimed to gain the diverse perspectives on childcare needs from Osoyoos parents and families. The survey was open for 3 weeks and was approved and distributed online through the Town’s established channels and through social media. It was also distributed by OneSky on their social media page to enhance the number of people reached. The survey results were analyzed, and a small number of secondary interviews were conducted to gain a better understanding on current and future childcare opportunities and challenges.

4. **Develop Childcare Plan** – The last phase of the project involved the drafting of the Needs Assessment paired with the Childcare Action Plan. The Needs Assessment synthesized information gleaned from interviews, community survey results, and discussions with childcare experts to identify current and future needs for childcare for the Town of Osoyoos. This part of the document focused on how the Town of Osoyoos might ameliorate some of the major barriers to childcare in Osoyoos create incentives to better enable childcare facilities to be staffed and implemented.

Building on the Needs Assessment, the Childcare Action Plan forecasted childcare space creation targets and outlined recommendations for the Town of Osoyoos to pursue to enable more favourable conditions to support a thriving childcare sector.



## 2.4 STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

In order to fully understand the state of childcare provision in the Town of Osoyoos, a number of key representatives from a variety of local organizations were interviewed (see table below).

*Table 1: Stakeholder List*

Organization	Position	Purpose of Engagement
OneSky	Team Leader – Early Years and Support Services, OneSky Community Resources	To discuss current and future childcare demand in the region, major challenges and opportunities, as well as best practices and emerging trends in childcare facilities.
Boys' and Girls' Club	Youth & Family Worker, Boys and Girls Clubs of the Okanagan	To discuss current and future childcare demand in the region, major challenges and opportunities, as well as best practices and emerging trends in childcare facilities.
School District #53	Vice Principal of Early Learning and Childcare, Okanagan Similkameen School District #53	To gain a better understanding of the childcare landscape, to explore the success of the Seamless Day program, and to explore sector-wide challenges around hiring qualified childcare staff, as well as potential solutions.
Interior Health	Community Health Facilitator  Childcare Licensing Officer, Environmental Public Health  Corporate Director, Environmental Public Health  Health System Planning Specialist  Team Lead	To discuss current and future childcare demand in the region, major challenges and opportunities, as well as best practices and emerging trends in childcare facilities.  The discussion also focused on potential partnerships that could be formed to better support childcare provision efforts in Osoyoos as well as nuances with regard to the childcare licensing process.
Osoyoos Indian Band Nk'Mip Daycare Centre	Manager, Nk'Mip Daycare Centre	To discuss current and future childcare demand in the region, major challenges and opportunities, as well as best practices and emerging trends in childcare facilities from an Indigenous perspective.





## 3 CURRENT STATE

This section identifies key characteristics of the Town of Osoyoos such as its unique demographics and economics, and cultural context, which, in tandem, pose unique challenges with respect to the optimal provision of childcare.

### 3.1 OSOYOOS DEMOGRAPHICS

The existing population, its unique makeup, and its projected growth are key considerations with regard to childcare planning.

#### 3.1.1 POPULATION

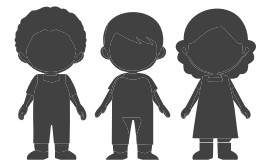
In this study, BC Statistics is used for historical population growth data as well as projections, while census data is used for more precise demographic and economic point-in-time figures.

In 2021, The Town of Osoyoos had a population of 5,556. An additional 2,139 live in Electoral Area A, with an additional 1,426 people living in Osoyoos Indian Band territory.<sup>1</sup> The population of the Osoyoos 1 Reserve is spread over a large area, with most of the population living close to Oliver in the North. It is currently the largest South Okanagan community south of Penticton, and is a growing community popular with retirees.

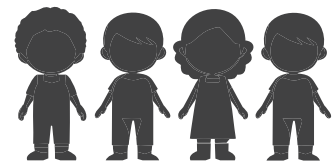
Osoyoos is one of the most elderly municipalities in Canada, with a median age of 63.2 in 2021, compared to the provincial median of 42.8. In 2021 46.1% of the population was aged 65 or older, compared to 20.3% in BC. The median age of Osoyoos has been steadily increasing over the past two decades, increasing from 58.2 in 2001 to 63.2 in 2021. There are also proportionally fewer children in the town compared to the provincial figure, with only 6.7% of the population being between the ages of 0 and 12, compared to the provincial figure of 12.3%.

The total number of children aged 0 to 12 decreased from 385 to 370 from 2016 to 2021 according to census data. However, the BC Government estimated the number of children 0-12 to be 404—9.2% higher than the

Figure 3. Projected Population Increase, 0 to 12



2023  
417



2033 (Projected)  
450

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Osoyoos & British Columbia.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=British%20Columbia&DGUIDlist=2021A00055907005,2021A000259&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0>



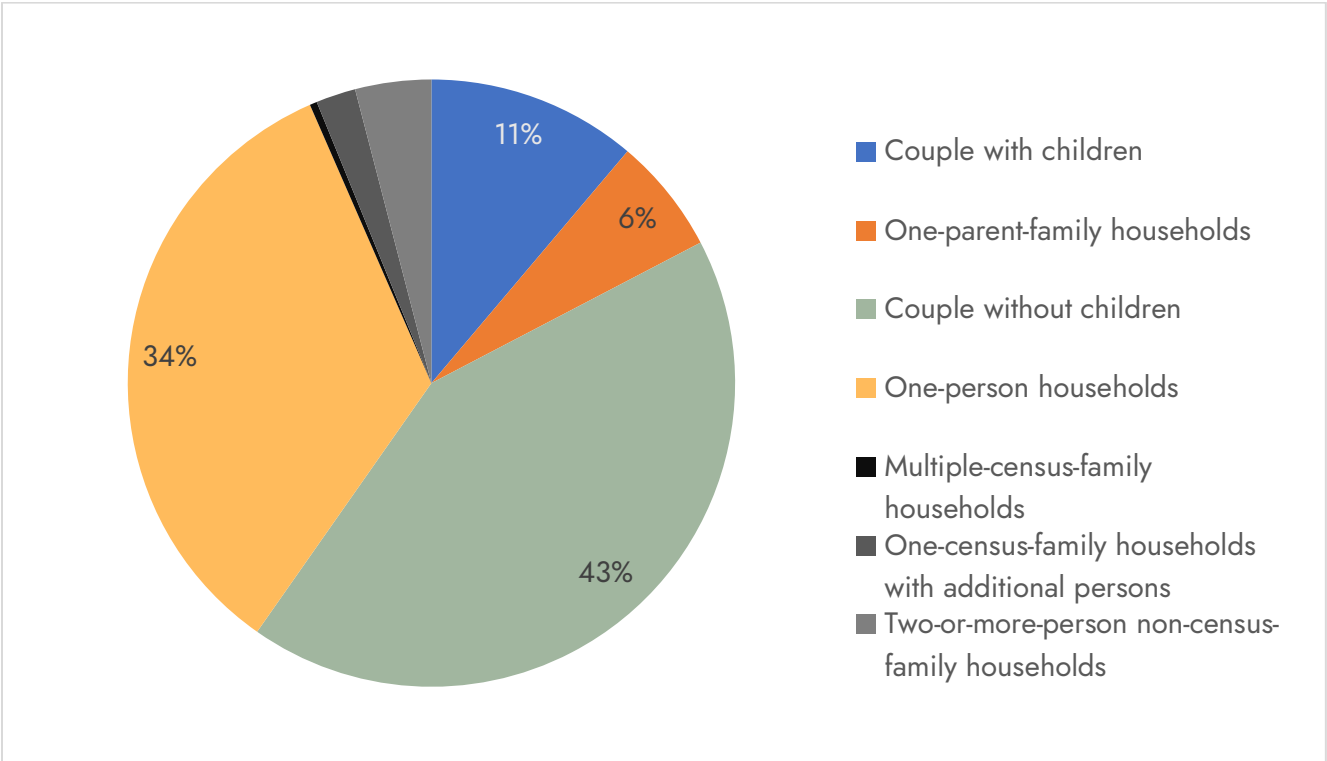
census figure in 2021.<sup>2</sup> The discrepancy is due to the fact that the number of children and trends of population growth are hard to determine empirically due to migration, but overall, there has been slow but modest growth in the number of children over the past 10 years. On the other hand, there has been a decrease in the number of childcare centres and spaces in the town, leading to an increasingly challenging situation for residents accessing childcare.

### 3.1.2 HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

The average household size in the Town of Osoyoos is 2.0, which has stayed stable since 2006. This figure is lower than the provincial figure of 2.4, which is an important demographic characteristic of Osoyoos. Only 17.0% of all households have children, compared to 21.6% of households having children in the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS), and a figure of 30.3% provincially.

The smaller average household size is influenced by the high median age of the community and its status as a retirement community. While this means that there are fewer children per capita than the average community in BC, there are also fewer people working and providing services for other Osoyoos residents, including the childcare industry.

Figure 4. Household Composition of Osoyoos, 2021 Census



<sup>2</sup> BC Stats (2023). BC Sub-Provincial Population Estimates and Projections.  
<https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/86839277-986a-4a29-9f70-fa9b1166f6cb>



### 3.1.3 POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS

Osoyoos is a growing community, but the demographic profile of the population growth is unique. The town experienced an average of about 1.2% population growth year-over-year from 2012 to 2022, or a total of 15% growth, with its population increasing from about 4,841 to 5,551 over that 10-year period.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the population growth over the past two decade has been in the 65+ age group. From 2001 to 2022, the 0 to 12 age group experienced an average of 0.1% growth year-on-year.<sup>4</sup> The 13 to 29 and 30-64 age group grew by an average of 0.3% year-on-year and 0.4% year-on-year respectively, while the 65+ age group grew by an average of 2.0% year-on-year.

The number of children aged 0 to 12 was trending downwards between 2001 and 2011, falling by 19% in that time period from 394 to 319. Since then, there has been a reversal of the trend with the number of children increasing; from 2012 to 2022, the population of the 0 to 12 age group has since increased to 408. During the same period, the population aged 13 to 64 remained relatively stable, experiencing negligible growth. The largest demographic growth has been the 0 to 12 and 65+ age groups, which grew by an average of 2.2% and 2.4% year-on-year respectively.

Osoyoos Population Growth, 2012-2022			
Age	2012	2022	10y growth
0 to 12	329	408	24%
13 to 29	576	575	0%
30 to 64	2031	2076	2%
65+	1,905	2492	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4841</b>	<b>5551</b>	<b>15%</b>

Evidence of growth in the number of children include increasing enrollment numbers at Osoyoos Elementary School, which have increased annually since the 2013/2014 school year, increasing from 308 students in that year to 376 in the 2022/2023 school year.<sup>5</sup> This indicates that the number of young families may be increasing in the Town and surrounding areas, which also indicates an increasing need for childcare.

### 3.1.4 POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS

The population of the town is projected to experience modest growth in the next decade, increasing from 5,656 in 2023 to 6,385 in 2033. By 2043, the Town's population is projected to be around 7,233. The expected population distribution of the age cohorts (0 to 12, 13 to 29, 30 to 64, and 65+) is not expected to change.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> BC Stats (2023). BC Sub-Provincial Population Estimates and Projections.

<https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/86839277-986a-4a29-9f70-fa9b1166f6cb>

<sup>4</sup> BC Stats (2023). BC Sub-Provincial Population Estimates and Projections.

<https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/86839277-986a-4a29-9f70-fa9b1166f6cb>

<sup>5</sup> BC Government (2023). Osoyoos Elementary Contextual Information.

<https://studentsuccess.gov.bc.ca/school/05314005/report/contextual-information>

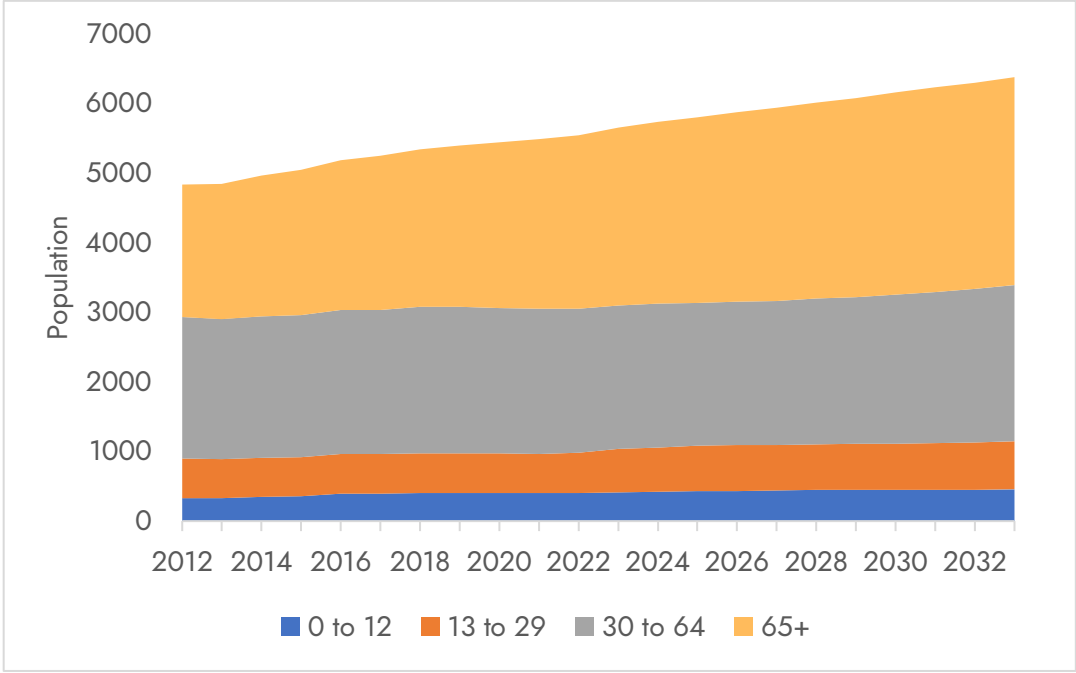
<sup>6</sup> BC Stats (2023). BC Sub-Provincial Population Estimates and Projections.

<https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/86839277-986a-4a29-9f70-fa9b1166f6cb>



Within the age groups that require childcare, there is projected to be some change in the age distribution over the next 10 years. The number of children in the Infant-Toddler (under 3) and Pre-Schooler (3 to 5) age cohorts is not projected to grow. The school-aged population (6 to 12) is projected to drive the majority of the growth in the population of children in Osoyoos (See Figure 4). There is a high degree of uncertainty when it comes to population projections, especially over a longer time horizon. However, it is likely that population growth trends will remain as predicted in the future unless there are substantial contextual changes such as major economic development.

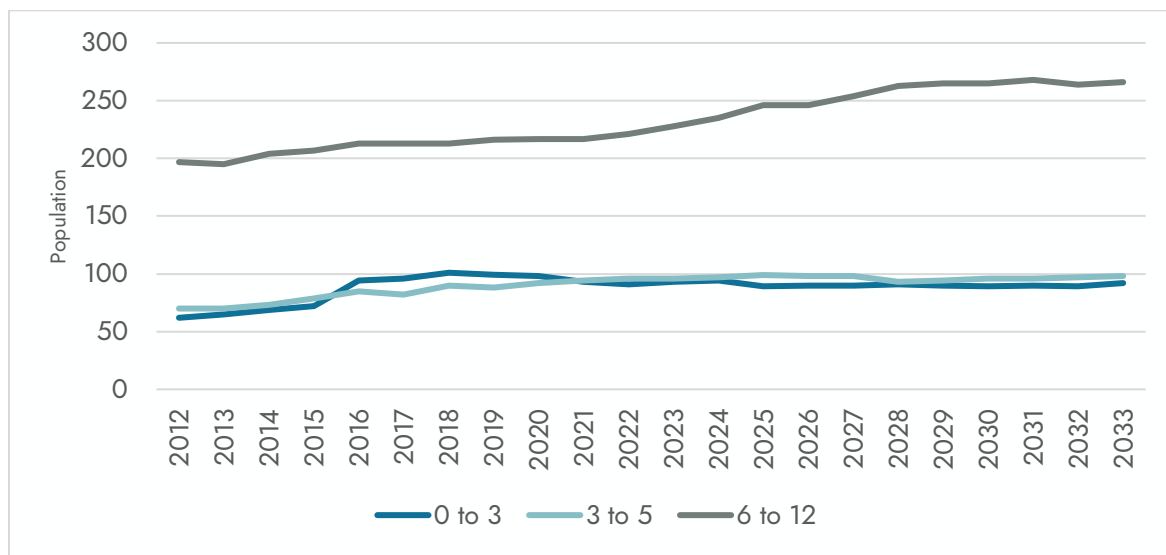
Figure 5. Population Projections by Age Cohort 2012-2032, BC Stats



As shown in the projections above, the demographic makeup of the Town of Osoyoos is expected to continue and age to a greater degree than the current state.



Figure 6. Population Projections of Childcare Age Cohorts 2012-2033, BC Stats



Despite the minimal projected growth to the 0-3 and 3-5 age groups, this does not imply the provision of childcare in the future to be a marginal undertaking, given initial findings, community sentiment, and existing deficits.

## 3.2 OSOYOOS ECONOMICS

Similar to the demographic makeup of the Town of Osoyoos and its role in impacting childcare provision, the economics of Osoyoos plays a major role.

### 3.2.1 CHILDCARE AND ECONOMIC VITALITY

Childcare is essential for communities. It has far-reaching effects on economic vitality, poverty reduction, gender equality, and family livelihoods. The availability of childcare allows parents, and especially women, to work and stay employed, stimulating the local economy, and providing income for families. This is why the availability of affordable childcare spaces is critical for community health, vitality, and economic development.

The financial burden of childcare can be a major impediment for families looking to access childcare. In 2022, parents paid on average \$7,790 per year for the main full-time childcare arrangement for their 0 to 5-year-old child, or about \$649 a month. In BC, the average is even higher, at \$9,618 per year, or about \$802 a month.<sup>7</sup> The lack of affordable childcare can force families to move away, stifling the growth of a community. On the other hand, the availability of affordable, high-quality, accessible childcare can attract families to settle in the town, boosting the economy in the process.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada (2023). Estimates of parental child care expenses in January to February 2022.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2023007/article/00001-eng.htm>





### 3.2.2 ECONOMIC PROFILE OF OSOYOOS

Osoyoos is situated on the warmest lake in Canada surrounded by a semi-arid desert—a unique climate and landscape that makes it a popular holiday destination. The region's economy is closely tied to seasonal tourism as well as seasonal residents who flock in during the summer months. According to Osoyoos Planning Department staff, it is estimated that the population of Osoyoos balloons from around 5,500 in the low season to about 20,000 during the summer. In 2020, there were an estimated 301,000 visitors to Osoyoos who spent an estimated \$174 million in the community that year.<sup>8</sup> Approximately two-thirds of tourists visit between the beginning of July and the end of September. The seasonal nature of the economy is tied to all aspects of the community, including economic activity, housing, and childcare.

Most of the economic impact of tourism is in the Accommodation sector, as well as Food & Beverage, Retail, and other services. All in all, approximately 30% of the Osoyoos labour force is directly employed in the tourism industry.<sup>9</sup>

Many jobs in the top employment industries in Osoyoos require irregular hours outside of the typical 9-5 schedule, which presents challenges for those needing to access childcare. The seasonal nature of work in Osoyoos also presents unique challenges. Seasonal work may create a specific demand for seasonal, flexible, on-demand, and non-standard hour childcare. Seasonal work can also pull workers away from roles in specific fields (like childcare) toward more lucrative positions in the hospitality and tourism industries. The creation of affordable, accessible, and flexible childcare spaces and supporting childcare providers will help meet the varied childcare needs of the community.

### 3.2.3 LABOUR PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

A defining and unique characteristic of Osoyoos is the age profile of the community. Osoyoos is one of the most elderly municipalities in Canada, with a median age of 63.2 in 2021, compared to the provincial median of 42.8. In the same period, 46.1% of the population was aged 65 or older, compared to 20.3% in BC as a whole.<sup>10</sup>

Only 46% of the population falls within the working age group of 15 to 64. Of the population 15 and over, only 43.8% are participating in the labour force—far less than the provincial labour participation rate of 63.3%. This means that only about 40% of the population of the Town are employed and producing goods and services for residents and tourists, compared to 54% provincially. The seasonal nature of work in the tourism and hospitality

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<sup>8</sup> Destination Osoyoos (2022). Economic Impact & Value of Tourism in Osoyoos.

<https://www.destinationosoyoos.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Economic-Impact-and-Value-of-Tourism-in-Osoyoos-v3.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Osoyoos & British Columbia.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=British%20Columbia&DGUIDlist=2021A00055907005,2021A000259&ENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0>



industry, as well as the high average age and low labour force participation rate are factors that make Osoyoos and the surrounding region unique.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the low labour force participation rate, the Town's unemployment rate, calculated as the number of people out of work who are actively looking for a job, was 11.7%—higher than the provincial figure, at 8.4%.<sup>12</sup> A higher unemployment rate can indicate several things. There may be a lack of jobs in the area, or there may be other limiting factors that prevent jobseekers from taking jobs that are available, including skills mismatch and schedule conflicts.

With a low labour participation rate, barriers to accessing childcare could add additional barriers to workforce participation. Affordable childcare allows parents, especially mothers, to enter or remain in the workforce and contribute to the local economy.

### 3.2.4 INCOME AND COST OF LIVING

Overall affordability, including the availability of affordable childcare, can influence the choice for families to relocate and remain in Osoyoos, making it important for overall community development. The median household income in the Town in 2020 was \$66,000, lower than the regional figure of \$71,000 and British Columbia's median household income of \$85,000 (2021 Census). Additionally, 29.9% of children in the Town lived in lone-parent families, higher than the provincial figure of 23.4%. The availability of affordable childcare allows households—particularly single-parent households and low-income households, to remain in the workforce and contribute to the local economy, as well as providing a means to provide a good quality of life for their children.

Housing availability and affordability are challenges that are present in Osoyoos. The conventional measure of housing affordability is that less than 30% of a household's pre-tax income should be spent on shelter costs. In 2021, 18.2% of Osoyoos residents spent 30% or more of income on shelter costs.<sup>13</sup> This is lower than the Provincial figure of 25.5%. However, the percentage of tenant households spending 30% of household income on shelter costs was 38.2% for renter households, slightly higher than the provincial figure of 37.8%. The high rent burden on renters

Osoyoos' 2021 median home value of \$500,000 puts homeownership out of reach for the median working family. The median monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings were \$1,100 in 2021. However, since this figure includes shelter costs of incumbents who have rented their homes for many years, the figure for new listings put on the market is higher. There is also a lack of rental supply in the Town, presenting challenges for both

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Osoyoos & British Columbia.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=British%20Columbia&DGUIDlist=2021A00055907005,2021A000259&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0>



current residents and families looking to relocate to the Town. 21% of the housing stock is not occupied by its usual residents, meaning that they are either vacant or rented out on a short-term basis.

### 3.2.5 REGIONAL CONTEXT OF EMPLOYMENT AND CHILDCARE

Osoyoos is a community situated in the Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) in the South Okanagan. The Town is surrounded by unincorporated land organized as RDOS Electoral Area A and abuts Osoyoos 1 Reserve of the Osoyoos Indian Band to the northeast. The nearest town is Oliver, with a population of 5,094 in 2021, about 20 km to the north. Penticton is the closest major population centre in the region, situated about 60 km north of Osoyoos and has a population of 36,885. These population centres are about 20 and 50 minutes away by car, respectively.

Despite the proximity of these other population centres, the majority of Osoyoos residents work within the Town. In 2021, 71% of Osoyoos residents worked within the Town, with 64% reporting their commute to work was less than 15 minutes. Only 14% reported a commute longer than 30 minutes. Most people commuted to work by motor vehicle (82.3%). The remainder largely walked (14.7%).

The proximity of the communities means that people will drive to neighbouring areas to access childcare if spaces are not available locally, or if their employment is in those neighbouring communities. However, it is important for childcare spaces to be created within the Town to ensure that there is convenient and affordable childcare for Osoyoos residents.

## 3.3 OSOYOOS CULTURAL CONTEXT

The cultural context of the Town of Osoyoos reveals that there are specific childcare needs for underserved communities as well.

### 3.3.1 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Osoyoos is located within the traditional territory of the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB), home to the Syilx People of the Okanagan Nation. The name “Osoyoos” comes from the Nsyilxcən word *swiws*, meaning “narrowing of the waters.” The Syilx people have a rich history in the region, residing here for thousands of years, despite being divided by the Canada-US border.

The Town of Osoyoos is adjacent to the Osoyoos Indian Band, and Indigenous people made up 4.07% of the town’s population in 2021. There has also been rapid growth in population in the Osoyoos 1 Indian Reserve adjacent to the Town of Osoyoos. From 2016 to 2021, the population increased from 762 to 1,426—a 87.1% increase. However, the percentage of non-Indigenous people residing in Osoyoos Indian Reserve 1 has increased from 53.2% in 2016 to 76.8% in 2021, possibly as an impact of COVID-19.

The Indigenous community in the region is growing—while the Indigenous population of the Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District was 7.6% in 2021, 19% of students in Okanagan-Similkameen School District K-6



(or K-7) are Indigenous. This indicates that the indigenous population is younger and growing, leading to a growing importance of culturally competent care and indigenous-focused programming to foster a positive sense of identity and cultural belonging.

With respect to the state of childcare, OIB offers an indigenous perspective that views children as sacred gifts that must be treated as such. They are the future given that they are the ones to carry on OIB traditions, culture, and way of life as articulated in the Indigenous Early Learning Framework. Specifically to the traditions of OIB, it is essential that Indigenous children have access to land-based, traditional learning about their traditional four food chiefs:

- Spring Salmon (Ntytyix), chief for all creatures in the water;
- Berry (Siya) chief for all things that grow on their land;
- Bitter Root (Spitlem) chief for all things under the ground and
- Bear (Skemxist) chief for all things that grow on their land

The OIB own and operate the non-profit Nk'Mip Daycare Centre founded by the Nk'Mip Preschool Daycare Society and the OIB. The purpose of the centre is to provide an inclusive environment that surpasses licensing standards that benefit the child, parents, and caregivers of Oliver BC and the surrounding community. Nk'Mip Daycare Centre offers the children / families that are enrolled in their licensed programs access to certified ECE Educators, Infant Toddler (IT) Educators and Special Needs Certified Educator and an Aboriginal Supported Child Development Consultant. Additionally, they are located adjacent to the Health / Resource Centre, the Independent School Sen Pok Chin and their local band office who all provide invaluable support to the Centre.

Unfortunately, the Centre has not been able to run at full capacity post-COVID due to the lack of qualified staff. The Centre currently has lengthy waitlists for both programs (3-5 year olds and under 30-month age groups) and have not been able to run their preschool program. Additionally their Supported Child Development (SCD) resources have been supported through OneSky, as the Centre has not been able to attract or retain SCD staff.

### 3.3.2 IMMIGRANT AND CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

The Town of Osoyoos is largely an Anglophone town, but there are also other vibrant cultural communities that make up the fabric of Osoyoos. The proportion of people with non-English language most spoken at home increased from 6.6% in 2011 to 8.2% in 2021. The trend may continue as immigration levels are at a historic high, and chain migration encourages people from similar areas to follow family and friends.

Two of the largest cultural communities are Punjabi and Portuguese communities. The number of people who reported speaking Punjabi at home doubled from 2011 to 2021 and made up 3.9% of the population in 2021. The growth of the Punjabi-speaking community may lead to demand for the recruitment and support of Early Childhood Educators and workers that speak Punjabi.



### 3.4 EXISTING CHILDCARE DEMAND

There are no universal standards for childcare space targets, and different jurisdictions have set their own targets based on literature, targets from other jurisdictions, and local context. However, there are a few commonly used metrics, described below.

#### 3.4.1 CANADIAN NATIONAL AVERAGE – # OF CHILDCARE SPACES / 100 CHILDREN

There are a variety of benchmark childcare space provision targets, however in recent years across many different childcare plans, the most common baseline benchmark that communities reference and strive towards is the Canadian National Average (as of 2016) of 27.2 childcare spaces per 100 children. Today, this benchmark is still considered the minimum target a community should meet in order for a given community to rid itself of the childcare desert reputation. Of course, the minimum should not be the end-all target – please consult additional targets detailed below.

Similarly, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) defines a childcare desert as a location with fewer than 33 spaces per 100 children. By this definition, Osoyoos is currently *not* a childcare desert overall, when considering all age groups together. However, it can be described as a childcare desert for the Infant-Toddler and School-Aged groups.

#### 3.4.2 CHILDCARE SPACE TARGETS TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

Figure 7: Childcare space targets

There has been research done on the appropriate number of spaces per 100 children that would meet childcare demand. This figure is informed by the approximate percentage of families that need childcare, which is influenced by many factors, including labour participation, cost of living, and many other factors. Research by Statistics Canada<sup>14</sup> found that 60% of Canadians with children younger than 6 years were in licensed or unlicensed childcare in 2019, with the demand likely being higher due to lack of availability of affordable childcare.

Likewise, there are more robust targets the Town of Osoyoos can move towards. For instance, the Comox Valley Regional District identified an aspirational goal of 70 spaces per 100 for the Infant-Toddler age group, 70 spaces per 100 for the Preschooler age group, and 60 spaces per 100 for the School-Age group.<sup>15</sup> This childcare space ratio meets demand for childcare and supports working families, contributing to the economic vitality of the town. Most working families require some form of childcare, and making childcare available for all working families supports Federal policies to promote and increase labour force participation. See Section 5.2 for more comparative jurisdiction targets.

##### Space Targets



Infant-Toddler (0-3)  
70 per 100



Pre-schooler (3-5)  
70 per 100



School-Ager (6-12)  
60 per 100

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada (2022). Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements, 2022.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220601/dq220601a-eng.htm>

<sup>15</sup> Comox Valley Regional District (2019). Comox Valley Child Care Action Plan.



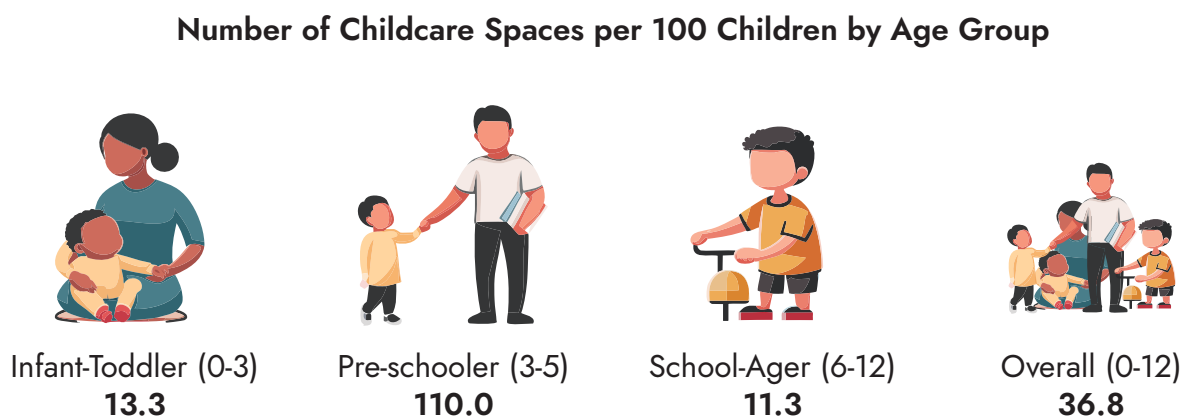


### 3.5 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN – CHILDCARE INVENTORY

The Town of Osoyoos has five childcare centres with a total of 136 licensed spaces. There are a mix of Licensed Group and Licensed Family Centres located across the city. All childcare centres are in West Osoyoos, with no centres on the eastern shore of Lake Osoyoos. A large majority of the licensed childcare spaces are offered by non-profit providers and the School District. Osoyoos Childcare Centre is a Town-owned and non-profit-operated centre. There is only one privately-owned licensed group centre in Osoyoos.

The following graphic below showcases the existing number of childcare spaces broken down by age group in the Town of Osoyoos. These figures by age group include licensed childcare spaces in Licensed Group centres and do not include spaces in Family Care centres that can accommodate children 0 to 12. These spaces are included in the childcare ratios for the Overall child population.

Figure 8: Existing Childcare Space Ratios



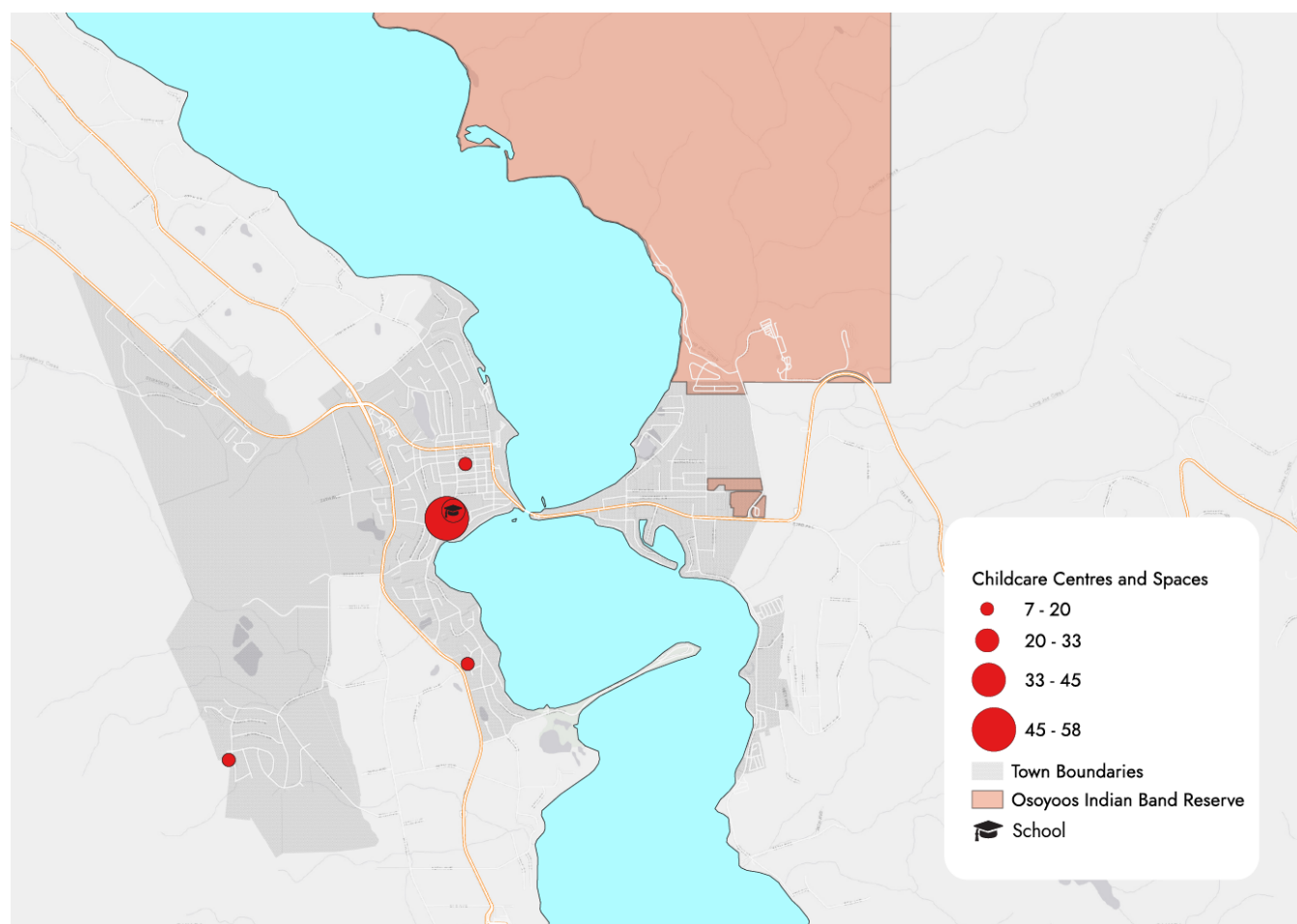
As shown above, overall, the Town of Osoyoos has 36.8 spaces per 100 children. This is in excess of the Canadian National Average of 27.2. However, when broken down into age group, there are major discrepancies in the number of spaces available. For instance, Osoyoos exhibits a significant shortage of Infant-Toddler (Under 3) and School-Age (6 to 12) spaces, with 13.3 and 11.3 spaces per 100 children respectively. However, there are more licensed pre-schooler spaces than children in that age group, with 110.0 spaces per 100 children.

While Osoyoos appears to have an oversupply of spaces for the Preschooler (3 to 5) age group, with over one space per child in that age group, there are fewer effective spaces due to many centres having insufficient staff to operate existing 3-5 spaces. For example, the Nk'Mip Centre has had to shut down their 3-5 spaces entirely due to staffing shortages. While the Nk'Mip Centre is not within Osoyoos, it is within the range people will travel to access childcare. What can be gleaned from these numbers is that policy interventions should focus on space creation and staffing support for Infant-Toddler and School-Age childcare.



See the following map and table below to get a sense of the existing licensed childcare space inventory in Osoyoos. This is a point-in-time snapshot of childcare spaces in Osoyoos and the region, which changes regularly. Licensed spaces may also not be in operation due to staffing shortages and other limitations.

Figure 9: Map of existing childcare centres complete with the range of the number of childcare spaces in Osoyoos and related table

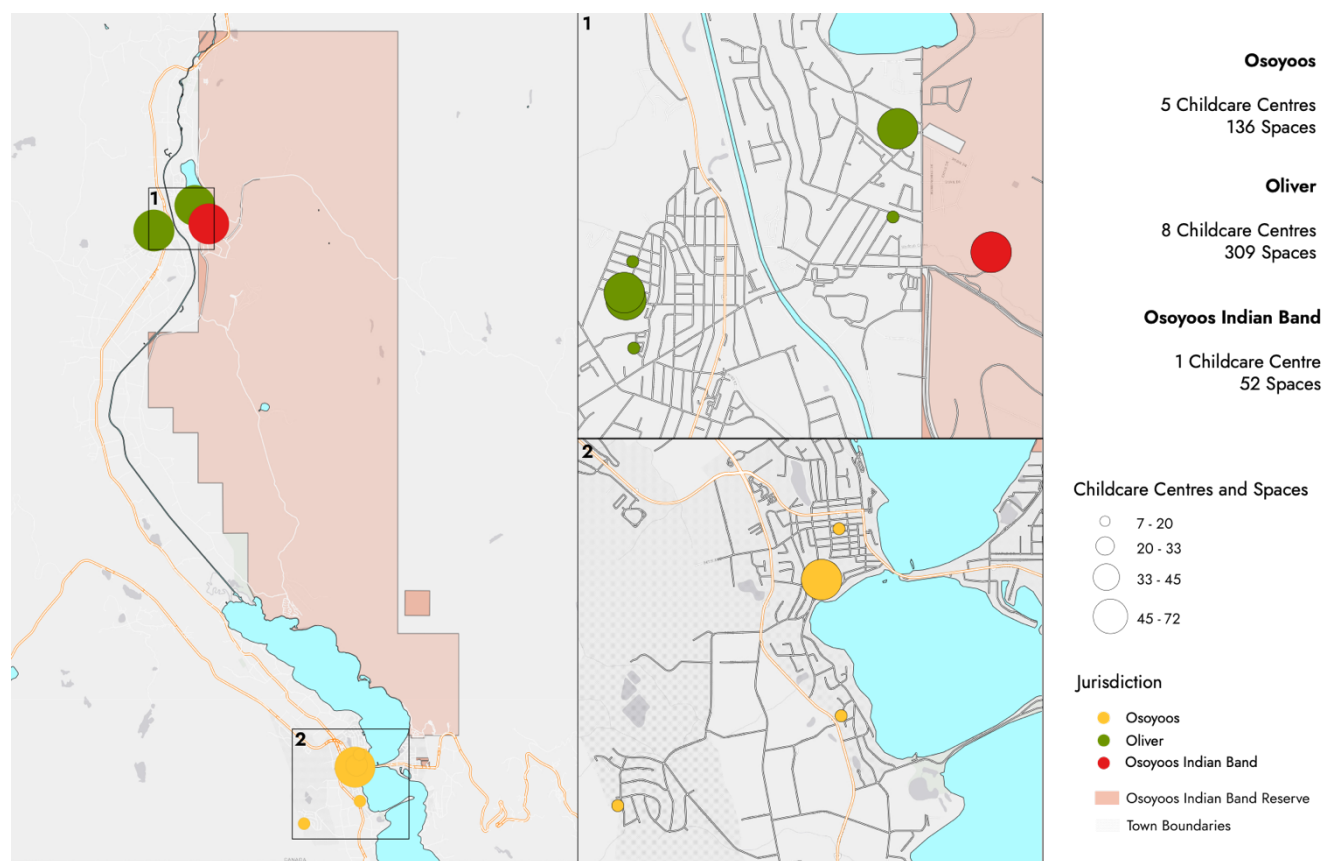


NAME	Service Type	0-3 Years	3-5 Years	6-12 Years	0-12 Years (Family)	Total
Osoyoos Child Care Centre	Licensed Group	8	30	20		58
Osoyoos Elementary Seamless Day	Licensed Group		40	6		46
Dharma Kids Centre	Licensed Group		18			18
Tammy's Childcare	Licensed Family				7	7
Di's Daycare	Licensed Family				7	7
TOTAL:		8	88	26	14	136
Spaces per 100 Children		13.3	110.0	11.3		36.8



On a regional level, Osoyoos has far fewer childcare spaces than the nearby municipality of Oliver. Oliver (population 5,094) is a similar size to Osoyoos; however, it has over double the number of licensed childcare spaces compared to Osoyoos.

Figure 10: Regional Childcare Inventory—Osoyoos, Oliver, and Osoyoos Indian Band and related table



NAME	Service Type	0-3 Years	3-5 Years	6-12 Years	0-12 Years (Family)	4-12 Years (School Grounds)	Multi-Age	Total Capacity
Tuc El Nuit Childcare Centre	Licensed Group	32	20	40				72
Modern Day Mommy	Licensed Family				7			7
Little Haven	Licensed Family				7			7
Little Wonders Childcare	Licensed Group	32	20	40				43
Oliver High School Childcare	Licensed Group	12					8	20
Oliver Elementary Seamless Day	Licensed Group		14			54		68
OES Childcare	Licensed Group		20	40				40
Nk'Mip Daycare	Licensed Group	12	25	15				52
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>88</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Spaces per 100 Children (Oliver + Osoyoos Indian Band, excluding Osoyoos)</b>		<b>73.3</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>38.6</b>				<b>48.7</b>



## 3.6 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The discussion below highlights particular challenges that are barriers in the childcare landscape for the Town of Osoyoos.

### 3.6.1 SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

There is a large and growing unmet need for Supported Child Development (SCD) services provincially, and Osoyoos is no exception. UBC's Early Development Instrument (EDI) has been collecting data from BC schools on child developmental health since 2001. In 2022-2023, 46% of children in the Okanagan-Similkameen School District were reported to be vulnerable on one or more scales (Physical Health & Well-being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language & Cognitive Skills, and Communication Skills & General Knowledge). This has been trending up, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>16</sup>

The number of students with Diverse Needs has also been increasing. In 2023, 13% of children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 in the Okanagan-Similkameen School District were reported to have Diverse Needs. The percentage of children with Diverse Needs increases with age; 20% of Grade 5 students were reported to have Diverse Needs, and the figure peaks at 27% for Grade 10 students.

While these metrics do not directly translate to increased need for Supported Child Development and do not serve as criteria for SCD, it does indicate that children are increasingly requiring special attention. The availability of SCD can determine if a child can be accommodated in a childcare centre; if extra support is not available for children with high needs, childcare centres sometimes cannot accept or serve the child. This makes even more important for families with children who require additional support; if SCD is not available, many families are left without childcare options even if spaces are available, which has knock-on effects for a family's finances and the child's well-being.

There are currently no children being served by the Provincial Supported Child Development program in Osoyoos due to staffing shortage. OneSky Community Services is contracted to provide SCD in Osoyoos but are unable to deliver services in Osoyoos due to a lack of staff. With 8 children on the waitlist (November 2023), the training and recruitment of SCD staff in Osoyoos is a priority need that must be met.

### 3.6.2 CULTURALLY COMPETENT CARE FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

Children's cultural identities are formed during their formative years, and influences all aspects of their development, including language, communication, beliefs, and behaviours. Because of this, it is important that childcare educators and practitioners are culturally competent, recognizing the effects of colonialism and adapting care to meet the distinct needs of Indigenous families living off-reserve.

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<sup>16</sup> UBC Human Early Learning Partnership (2020). EDI Wave 7 Community Profile, Okanagan Similkameen School District. [https://earlylearning.ubc.ca/app/uploads/2022/03/edi\\_w7\\_communityprofile\\_sd\\_53.pdf](https://earlylearning.ubc.ca/app/uploads/2022/03/edi_w7_communityprofile_sd_53.pdf)



Children and families need to feel culturally safe. This depends on whether the care providers are culturally competent. A culturally safe environment is free from discrimination, racism, and other barriers. Culturally safe care builds trust with Indigenous people, communicates respects for Indigenous beliefs, behaviours, and values, and creates an environment where Indigenous people are treated with empathy and dignity.<sup>17</sup>

The BC Government has committed to increasing the number of Indigenous-led care by investing in the creation of new childcare spaces for First Nation, Metis, and Inuit people in 2022-23. Additional supports and levers on the local level can further enable the creation of Indigenous-led care and encourage childcare providers to provide culturally competent care.

### 3.6.3 IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

For immigrants and refugees, access to childcare; language barriers and challenges with understanding the local childcare system are the primary challenges with respect to childcare. Families may not understand the available childcare options or different types of care, and immigrant and refugee children may have more difficulty adapting to childcare in a new language.

### 3.6.4 COST OF LIVING AND STAFFING

Low labour participation rate presents additional challenges to finding staff. There is a limited pool of people able to take jobs in Osoyoos due to the low proportion of working-age people and low labour participation rate. Additionally, the high cost of housing is a major deterrent for prospective childcare staff to relocate to Osoyoos, as ECE wages are too low to meet the high cost of living in the Town.

The unavailability of childcare is also a barrier for those looking to pursue ECE and other specialized childcare training, as childcare workers and prospective childcare workers also require childcare. Supports and incentives are tools that can be used to encourage and allow people to pursue ECE training and a career in childcare.

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<sup>17</sup> Sylix Okanagan Nation Alliance (n.d.). What is Cultural Competency? <https://www.sylx.org/wellness/resources/cultural-competency/what-is-cultural-competency/>





## 4 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS & SURVEY RESULTS

The following section provides discussion around key themes and challenges unearthed in stakeholder interviews, followed by an analysis of the parent childcare community survey.

### 4.1 ECE STAFFING

While the shortfall of childcare spaces may appear be the primary childcare issue to solve, stakeholder engagement revealed that the lack of qualified Early Childhood Educators (ECE) is a primary driver for this shortage, and that the creation of more childcare spaces would not meet demand if they are not able to be staffed. Currently, Osoyoos and other BC communities are limited with respect to the ECE workforce shortage. Discussions had with the School District #53, OneSky, and Boys and Girls Club of the Okanagan reiterated this. There are four main identified barriers for ECE staff:

1. **Workforce Shortage:** There is a significant shortage of qualified ECEs, leading to understaffing in childcare centres and limited access to quality early childhood education.
2. **High Demand:** The demand for childcare services is increasing due to the growing number of working parents, making it challenging to meet the needs of families.
3. **Low Wages:** ECEs often face low wages, making it difficult to attract and retain professionals in the field, especially given the cost of living in Osoyoos and the surround area.
4. **Educational Requirements:** Becoming an ECE requires a diploma or degree, which can be a financial and time barrier for potential candidates.

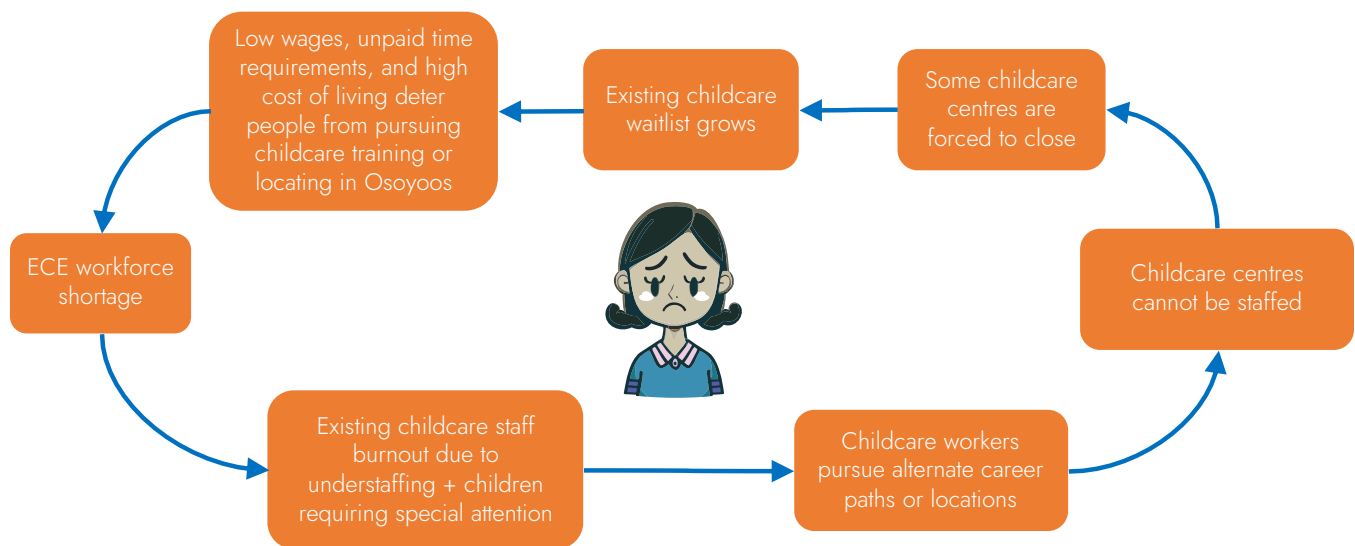
Many of these barriers are inextricably linked. For instance, the workforce shortage is not for a lack of interest, but rather the relatively low wages makes the pursuit of an ECE career a less favourable option for people considering different careers in related fields (e.g. Educational Assistants typically have higher wages than ECE workers). In Osoyoos, this deterrent is even more pronounced given the high cost of living and the general lack of availability and affordability of housing. Additionally, the educational requirements of an ECE program and related specializations (Infant and Toddler, Special Needs, etc.) are inhibited in that the specialization training options are unpaid, and require significant time commitments (~10 months to complete the ECE diploma, and another 10 months to complete a specialization). For the Nk'Mip Daycare Centre, having early childhood educators with specializations is critical to the success of the centre as they care for children with a variety of needs, including children with autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), ADHD, and children who are in the foster care system that often struggle with trust, detachment, and anxiety issues. Because of this, the 1:1 staff-child ratio for some children is necessary for children.

All of these issues are exacerbated even further by the rising demand childcare spaces (and therefore for ECE workers), as well as the rising prevalence of feelings of vulnerability in children over the last 20-30 years according to the Early Development Instrument (EDI). In fact, 46% of kindergarten students from School District



#53 showed vulnerability on one or more of the five scales of EDI in 2023.<sup>18</sup> These scales include physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge. What results is a positive feedback loop that results in exceedingly poor conditions to provide and staff childcare spaces and facilities.

Figure 11: Childcare Desert Positive Feedback Loop

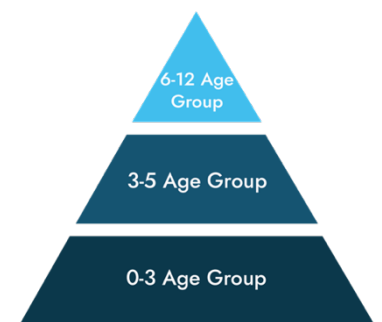


## 4.2 AGE GROUP SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

Childcare challenges and opportunities are unevenly distributed, with each age group presenting unique care and staffing demands that need to be met. Strategies aimed at addressing the specific challenges of each age group should always keep in mind the broader objective of ensuring a seamless continuum of care to promote uninterrupted child development. The two primary age groups that present challenges in the Osoyoos context are the 0-3 Age Group, and the 6-12 Age Group.

Figure 12: Childcare Age Group Pyramid

Age group care can be visualized conceptually in a segmented pyramid with different shades of blue where the darker the shade, the more complexity of care is required and the more qualifications and time and attention from staff are needed (see Figure 10). However, certain individuals will require more complex care and staffing attention regardless of age group.



<sup>18</sup> Human Early Learning Partnership (2023). Early Development Instrument (EDI) School District #53 Okanagan Similkameen School District Summary. Human Early Learning Partnership, University of British Columbia.



#### 4.2.1 0-3 AGE GROUP

While the 0-3 Age Group technically has more childcare spaces available compared to the 6-12 Age Group, the 0-3 Age Group could be considered of greater developmental importance as it can be considered the foundation of care from which all the other age groups depend on. The first five years of a child's life is understood to be critical for developing thinking, behavioural, and emotional wellbeing. Moreover, this period of a child's life sets the stage for the rest of their development and given their inherent vulnerabilities at such an age, require qualified Early Childhood Educators with Infant and Toddler specialty training for optimal care. Like the 6-12 Age Group, the 0-3 Age Group faces a severe deficit in available childcare spaces. Because of the limited number of spaces, parents seeking childcare often face long wait times.

#### 4.2.2 3-5 AGE GROUP

Although the 3-5 age group exceeds the Canadian National Average target of 27.2 childcare spaces per 100 children (117.5 spaces per 100 children), many 3-5 spaces in the region are inoperable due to shortages in staffing. While the number of 3-5 spaces is currently in a much better place than the 0-3 and 6-12 age groups, focusing on providing childcare with a continuum of care model is considered best practice, where 0-3, 3-5, and 6-12 age groups are cared for in the same facility, developing together, allowing kids to progress without gaps. This model is also more convenient for families with multiple children, where parents do not need to make multiple stops to drop off and pick up children at different childcare centres.

#### 4.2.3 6-12 AGE GROUP

The school-age 6-12 age group is easily the least well-accommodated of the age groups in the study area with only 11.3 spaces per 100 children. It has been identified that there are promising programs to help alleviate this deficit in the school-age group, such as the BC Government's Seamless Day Program, which was spearheaded in Oliver in 2019. This program incorporates before- and after-school care in the elementary school setting. The program is set up as follows: ECEs lead the before-school care, transition the children into their school day, work as additional educators in the kindergarten classroom, and provide after-school care in a variety of environments, including the kindergarten classroom, outdoors, the school gym, or library.

The benefits of this program have shown to be significant for children and families. Particularly with respect to children's growth in their capacity to self-regulate and their growth in social and emotional development, this program helps reduce peaks and valleys in development because there is more consistent and quality care provided.

Though a promising development that appears to be gaining traction in many communities in BC and the Osoyoos region, the Seamless Day Program does not fully alleviate the deficit faced in this age group due to limited capacity.



## 4.3 SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Supported Child Development (SCD) programming is support for children requiring additional supports in childcare settings. Supported Child Development staff will provide extra resources in childcare centres, or assist childcare centre staff with skills and strategies to best support those needing additional supports. For Osoyoos, OneSky and Nk'Mip hold provincially funded SCD and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) contracts to provide resources to the childcare centres in the South Okanagan region.

Engagement with community leaders and parents revealed that these services are in high demand and there is a significant waitlist. Community partners shared that at times families will lose their childcare spot due to the SCD resource being removed in their centre, following staffing challenges. In these cases, the childcare centre can no longer accommodate children with additional needs without the SCD support, and will have to discharge the child from the centre. Other feedback from community partners included parents not being able to access childcare at all while they are on the SCD waitlist, since many childcare centres are unable to accept children with additional needs until the SCD resource becomes available to them.

This inequity of access is significant and primarily due to staffing challenges. Feedback from community partners was that generally the SCD funding may be sufficient to meet demand, but qualified staff are unavailable to fill the funded positions. There are additional training requirements that are not supported through provincial programs (unlike recent provincial funding support for ECE training, recently introduced), and the work can be challenging with relatively low pay. With the cost of living in the Okanagan, many people cannot afford to live on these wages, nor take time to do additional training without funding support in order to be qualified for SCD positions.

OneSky is shifting their SCD model away from supporting individual children. Instead, they shared that they are moving to a model where SCD positions focus on educating and consulting for staff at childcare centres, in order to optimize the reach of the resources they have.

## 4.4 ZONING CHALLENGES

There are limited options for childcare centres with respect to the zones that can accommodate them. For instance, only the Public and Private Institution (PI) zone are permitted to accommodate a multi-age group care childcare centre. Commercial zones can also accommodate childcare centres, but commercial zones are limited in quantity, highly competitive, lack sufficient outdoor space and parking, and are often located in spots not conducive to meet childcare licensing requirements, particularly for the 0-3 age group (a high demand age group). Lastly, Residential Zones (R1) can support Family Care childcare centres (max 7 spaces per facility) as a conditional use (home occupation business) however Family Care spaces are finding it difficult to keep up with administrative tasks related to the operation of the business.

Without changing the zoning bylaw, as it stands, commercial spaces offer very few incentives for childcare centre development. However, the Town of Osoyoos is currently undergoing a zoning bylaw update which will



add flexibility to support more mixed-use developments. The draft updated zoning bylaw is scheduled for the summer of 2024. The timing of the update with respect to this study is beneficial as it offers a key Town-led pathway to open opportunities and incentives for childcare centres to be better accommodated. Indirect and direct updates to the zoning bylaw and Town policies to do just this could include:

- Focusing on ways to increase housing rental stock (indirect).
- Creating incentives in a variety of areas to make housing more affordable (generalized, indirect).
- Permit multi-age group care childcare facilities in more than just the PI zone (direct).
- Enhance the quantity and ability of commercial zones to accommodate multi-age group care childcare facilities (direct).
- Look to create more commercial spaces on the Eastern side of Osoyoos that can accommodate childcare (direct).
- Shift the Town of Osoyoos' focus around its status as a seasonal resort-town and instead strengthen policies and zoning to entice young families (indirect).

## 4.5 LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Many of the challenges related to licensing stem from the zoning challenges described above, but another challenge related to licensing requirements is the inability or difficulty of elementary schools in trying to meet childcare licensing requirements as part of the BC government initiative to encourage the creation of school-age childcare spaces on school grounds. While the requirements for school-age care are not as stringent as those for infant toddler and preschooler age groups, there may be schools that struggle with creating spaces that align with the licensing requirements. That said, Osoyoos Elementary School has implemented the Seamless Day Program by working with Interior Health to adapt licensing requirements for the elementary school context.

## 4.6 SPACE AVAILABILITY

Stakeholders indicated that parents have consistent difficulty finding a daycare space. Though the Preschool spaces in Osoyoos are above the national average, Infant-Toddler spaces and School-Age spaces are significantly below the average at 13.3 and 11.3 per 100 children respectively. As a childcare resource and referral centre, OneSky reported getting frequent phone calls from parents in distress about their inability to find a childcare space, inhibiting their ability to work or return to work after paternity leaves. When there are no spaces available, OneSky advises families to phone around to the providers in their area and ask to be placed on their waitlist. At times, providers have requested that OneSky not give their phone number to families, because their waitlist is too long.

Waitlisting is particularly significant for children requiring additional supports. As discussed in the Supported Child Development section, many parents are unable to accept childcare spaces when they become available, because there is no available SCD resource to accompany their placement.





Out-of-School care availability is in a critical deficit, with 11.3 spaces per 100 children in Osoyoos. As parents are therefore often unable to find care for their 6-12 year old children before or after school, many parents utilize Town Recreation programming informally as childcare after school.

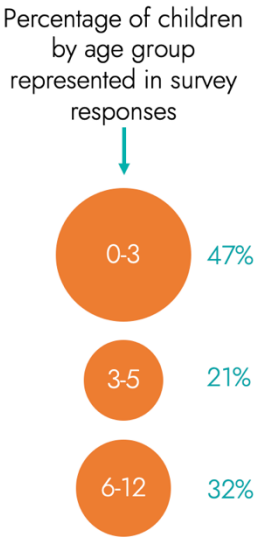
## 4.7 AFFORDABILITY

Increasing cost of living in BC generally, including Osoyoos, impacts childcare in a number of ways. As there are currently no \$10/day childcare spaces, the cost for childcare is significant for families, with an average of \$800/month per child. Stakeholders reported that this burden, combined with rising rental rates and mortgage interest rates, is causing tremendous stress on working families.

Additionally, the increasing cost of living impacts childcare because childcare staff wages are not sufficient to live in Osoyoos. Nearly every stakeholder interviewed emphasized this point, explaining that the staffing crisis in childcare is primarily driven by the inability to live in the region on relatively low wages. Some providers reported that they have had to pay for staff to relocate to Osoyoos and pay higher wages to encourage retention of relocated staff, because staff cannot be found locally.

## 4.8 SURVEY FINDINGS

A survey was developed and distributed to parents through the Town of Osoyoos's communication channels as well as through OneSky's social media pages. The intention of the survey was to gain perspectives from parents about their childcare challenges and priorities. The survey was open for three weeks and yielded approximately 70 responses. The survey results were analyzed for key themes, which ultimately aligned with feedback from stakeholder interviews.

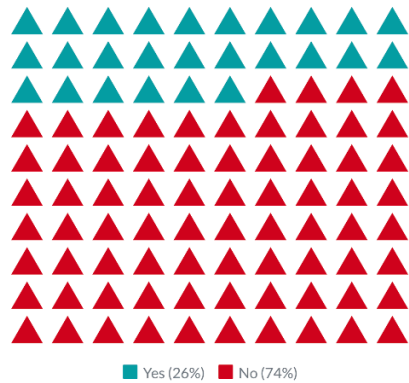


Most survey respondents reported that they do not have childcare that meets their needs (74% of responses). This may be partly due to selection bias - as people who do not have childcare they require would be more



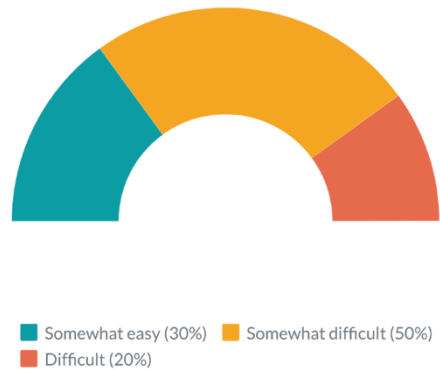
likely to respond to a survey about childcare needs—although stakeholder interviews also reported that demand for childcare is unmet.

Do you currently have childcare that meets your needs?



Of the parents who did have childcare, 70% found it difficult or somewhat difficult to secure.

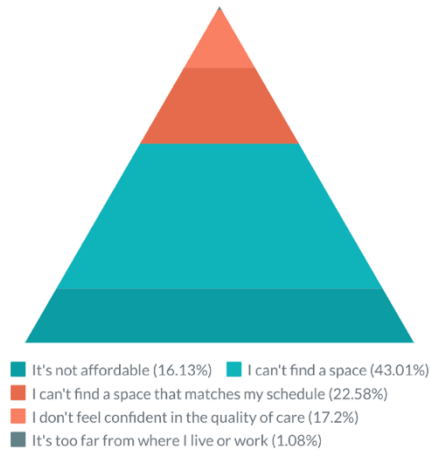
Was it easy or difficult to find the childcare you're enrolled in?



The primary barrier for parents was reported to be that they cannot find a space, representing 43% of responses.



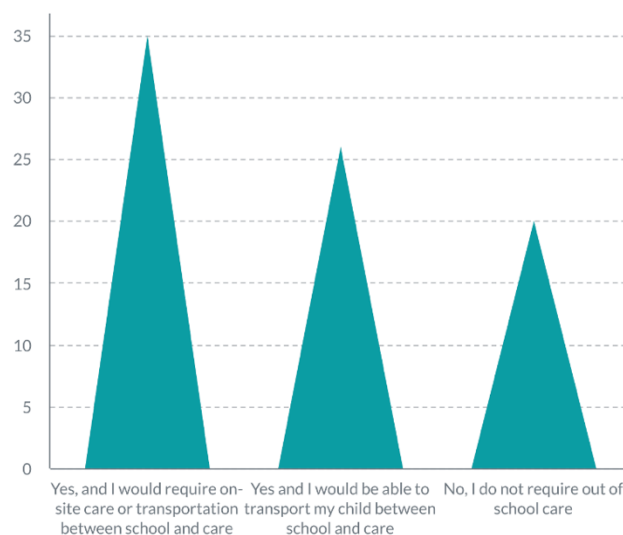
What has been your primary barrier accessing childcare?



Further, 93% of respondents reported that they require childcare for employment-related reasons, supporting the case that childcare availability is a driver of workforce participation and economic development.

An additional finding of note is the high percentage of respondents who are interested in out-of-school care (61%), including 35% of respondents who would require transportation for their child between school and out-of-school care. This finding is supported by stakeholder interview feedback that transitioning children to an out-of-school care provider is a major disruption in their workday and makes employment not possible for many parents.

Are you interested in out of school programs for school-aged children?





## 5 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Childcare Needs Assessment for the Town of Osoyoos stems from informational inputs such as the environmental scan and inventory of childcare spaces, discussions had with childcare experts and relevant stakeholders around the challenges and opportunities of childcare, background research and childcare resources and benchmarks, and the perspectives of Osoyoos parents.

The Needs Assessment consists of planning assumptions, future childcare demand, and childcare design guidelines and considerations.

### 5.1 PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

The following set of planning assumptions outline general project parameters and the parameters of the childcare space projection analysis.

#### 5.1.1 GENERAL

- The planning horizon for this project is to 2033.
- Despite sometimes being considered distinct from childcare, School-Age care (Age Group 6-12) was determined to be included in the project scope due to known deficits in this age group, and due to the established goal of a continuum of care.
- BC Stats figures are used for population projections.
- The childcare space targets assume two scenarios or levels the Town of Osoyoos should strive for (high / ideal and low / baseline)
  - The baseline target to address immediate childcare space deficits is the Canadian National Average of 27.2 spaces per 100 children across all age groups (0-3, 3-5, 6-12) as it is recognized across many jurisdictions and communities as the bare minimum target to not be considered a childcare desert.
  - Based on comparative jurisdictions and national research, the target number of childcare spaces that is considered ideal is 70 spaces per 100 children 0-3; 70 spaces per 100 children 3-5; and 60 spaces per 100 children 6-12.
  - The age-specific targets do not take into account childcare spaces that can accommodate children in different age groups. An overall childcare space target of 65 per 100 children for ages 0-12 is recommended, based on the weighted proportion of children in each age group with the same targets as above.
  - Space and staffing targets are provided for Licensed Group Care for specific age groups. There are other kinds of care that can be provided, such as Family Care and Multi-Age Care. However, these licensed facilities are small-scale, difficult to run, and have small profit margins. Recommendations do not focus on these kinds of facilities to meet demand. However, the overall childcare space target of 65 per 100 children does take these spaces into consideration.



- Childcare is an integral part of broader community economic and social health, and align with Osoyoos' Goals of Economic Prosperity and Business Resilience as well as policies to ensure that the town is an inclusive community for all.
- The availability of childcare is essential to attract working-age families to relocate to Osoyoos and contribute to the local economy, which has a low labour participation rate and staffing shortages.
- Increased availability of non-standard hour childcare supports shift workers and other service-sector workers, which is a large part of the local economy. For projection purposes, Statistics Canada occupation categories assumed to require non-standard hour childcare are Accommodation, Health Care, and Agriculture.
- Osoyoos Indian Band members may increasingly migrate to Osoyoos town, consistent with provincial trends. For projection purposes, a 10-year increase of 59% Indigenous population in Osoyoos has been used.
- For projection purposes, it is assumed that 1.0 FTE Supported Child Development consultant staff can support 60 childcare spaces.

## 5.2 COMPARATIVE CHILDCARE SPACE TARGETS

The number of childcare spaces required to meet a community needs do not have universally established figures, and targets in other jurisdictions vary widely. Targets are based on a variety of factors, ranging from a community's goals, resources, and whether the communities set more realistic or aspirational targets. Statistics Canada's 2022 Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements found that before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, about 60% of children younger than 6 were in some kind of licensed or unlicensed child care arrangement, and 4 in 10 parents using child care during the pandemic reported difficulties finding care, with over 1 in 10 parents reporting not using childcare because of a shortage of spaces.<sup>19</sup>

*Table 2: Childcare Space Targets in other Jurisdictions*

Childcare Space Targets per 100, Other Jurisdictions				
Jurisdiction	0 to 3	3 to 5	6 to 12	Overall
Quebec	-	-	-	55
Surrey	-	-	-	40
Langley City	70	70	50	-
Langley Township	70	70	55	-
Richmond	25	55	25	-
Penticton	33	75	50	-
Mid-Island Region (Nanaimo)	50	75	50	-
Comox Valley	70	70	60	-
Sunshine Coast	70	70	60	-
Osoyoos	70	70	60	65

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada (2022). Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements, 2022.  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220601/dq220601a-eng.htm>



BC's labour participation rate of 65% with an additional unemployment rate of 5% indicates that about 70% of BC's working-age population is employed or looking for work. BC's labour participation rate of those in prime working age (25 to 54) is even higher, standing at 87% in November 2023.<sup>20</sup> Childcare is required for a large percentage of working parents, so a target that approaches the labour participation rate is likely required to meet the needs of a community.

Because of the extensive shortage of childcare spaces provincially, the starting point for childcare spaces is far below what would be ideal. As a result, many communities have targets that are lower than what is likely needed as realistic targets for the plan's time horizon. Other communities set aspirational targets closer to what is needed to meet childcare demand.

Osoyoos is a unique place with few comparable jurisdictions in Canada. The combination of a very high median age, low labour participation rate combined with a tourism-based economy has few parallels. The Mid-Island Region on Vancouver Island contains many similarly elderly communities, including Qualicum Beach, Parksville, and areas surrounding Nanaimo, but the whole Mid-Island Region is much younger and less tourism-dependent than Osoyoos. The Sunshine Coast is also a community that has a high average age with an economy linked to tourism. Whistler is a community that is similarly tourism-based; however, its demographic makeup is markedly different. While Osoyoos is one of the most elderly communities in Canada with a median age of 63.2, Whistler is one of the youngest communities in Canada with a median age of 35.6. The vast difference in age demographic makeup makes Whistler a poor comparison for childcare targets. For Osoyoos, targets of 70 spaces per 100 children 0 to 3, 70 spaces per 100 children 3 to 5, and 60 spaces per 100 children 6 to 12 are aspirational in nature but reflect the number of childcare spaces required to meet the community's needs and foster an age-inclusive and economically-vibrant environment in Osoyoos.

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<sup>20</sup> Statistics Canada (2023). Labour force characteristics by age group, monthly, seasonally adjusted.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410028702&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.11&pickMembers%5B1%5D=3.1&cubeTimeFrame.startMonth=11&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2023&referencePeriods=20231101%2C20231101>



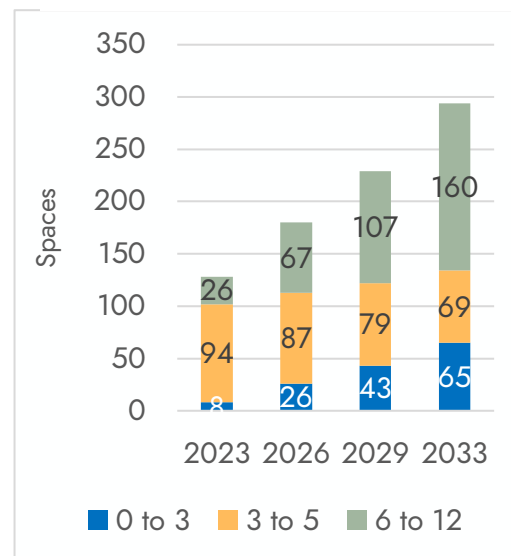
## 5.3 FUTURE CHILDCARE DEMAND

Population growth in the childcare age groups is projected to be limited, particularly in the Infant-Toddler (Under 3) and Preschooler (3 to 5) age groups, which are not projected to grow between 2023 and 2033. The only childcare age group projected to grow is the School Age group, which is projected to grow 16.7% from 2023 to 2033, from 228 to 266.

The limited growth profile of children in Osoyoos means that childcare demand will not increase significantly, and the childcare space demand is a relatively fixed target for the Town to reach.

Based on population projections and childcare space targets, Osoyoos is projected to need a total of 65 Infant-Toddler spaces, 69 Preschooler spaces, and 160 School-Age spaces by 2033.

Figure 13. Short-, medium-, and long-term space targets, 2023-2033



### 5.3.1 INFANT-TODDLER (UNDER 3) CHILDCARE DEMAND

The demand for Infant-Toddler childcare is high, and there is a high urgency to create childcare spaces for this age group due to the very low number of existing spaces available.

To reach a target of 70 spaces per 100 children in 2033, a total of 65 spaces are required. At present, there are 8 Infant-Toddler spaces in Osoyoos. To reach this target, the town will need to create 5.7 spaces annually.

Infant-Toddler Space Targets			
	Children	Spaces	Per 100
2023	93	8	8.6
2026	90	26	28.9
2029	90	43	47.8
2033	92	65	70.7





### 5.3.2 PRESCHOOLER (3 TO 5) CHILDCARE DEMAND

Osoyoos currently has an oversupply of Preschooler childcare spaces, with more than the target 70 spaces per 100 children. The target figures provided here are not *targets* (i.e. these are not recommendations to remove Preschooler childcare spaces). Rather, focus should be placed on continuity of care and more flexible licensing that can be changed to other age groups if spaces for the Preschooler age group cannot be filled.

Preschooler Space Targets			
	Children	Spaces	Per 100
<b>2023</b>	96	88	91.7
<b>2026</b>	98	83	84.7
<b>2029</b>	94	77	81.9
<b>2033</b>	98	69	70.4

### 5.3.3 SCHOOL AGE (6-12) CHILDCARE DEMAND

The demand for School Age Childcare in Osoyoos is high and projected to increase, as it is the only childcare age cohort that is projected to increase between 2023 and 2033.

To reach a target of 60 spaces per 100 children in 2033, 160 spaces are required. At present, there are 26 School Age Childcare spaces in Osoyoos. To reach this target, 13.4 childcare spaces must be created annually.

School Age Space Targets			
	Children	Spaces	Per 100
<b>2023</b>	228	26	11.4
<b>2026</b>	246	67	27.2
<b>2029</b>	265	107	40.4
<b>2033</b>	266	160	60.2



### 5.3.4 SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT DEMAND

There are currently 8 children on the waitlist for Supported Child Development (SCD) Services in Osoyoos, with no children currently being served. This is a major unmet need both in Osoyoos and the region.

OneSky is contracted by the Province to deliver Supported Child Development in the South Okanagan. There is currently one Inclusive Community Consultant supporting all childcare centres in the South Okanagan, which currently has over 400 childcare spaces. The target is to meet demand for SCD and to ensure that children who need additional support can get it.

A target of 1 to 60 Inclusive Community Consultant staff to spaces ratio is recommended to adequately support SCD needs in the Osoyoos. With a target of 294 total spaces, 4.9 FTEs of Inclusive Community Consultants are required to meet the recommended 1 to 60 staff to student ratio.

Supported Child Development Waitlist, Osoyoos		
Age	Served	Waitlist
Under 5	0	6
6 to 12	0	2
<b>Total</b>	0	8

Supported Child Development Targets, 2033		
Year	Childcare Spaces/Target	Inclusive Community Consultants
<b>2023</b>	126	1*
<b>2033</b>	294	4.9

\* regional; no children served in Osoyoos

### 5.3.5 INDIGENOUS-FOCUSSED PROGRAMMING

There should be sufficient childcare spaces dedicated to Indigenous-focussed programming to provide culturally safe and relevant care for Indigenous families living in the Town of Osoyoos.

In 2021, 4.1% of Osoyoos' residents reported Indigenous identity. This figure is projected to increase in line with provincial trends of Indigenous people moving off-reserve. For projection purposes, a 10-year increase of 59% Indigenous Population in Osoyoos has been used, in line with provincial trends.

Indigenous-Focussed Programming Space Targets, 2033		
Age	Total Space Target	Indigenous Focussed Programming
<b>0 to 3</b>	65	4
<b>3 to 5</b>	69	5
<b>6 to 12</b>	160	11
<b>Total</b>	294	20

The percentage of Indigenous people in Osoyoos as a proportion of the total population is projected to increase from 4.1% to 6.5%. Accordingly, a target of 6.5% of total spaces providing Indigenous-Focussed programming is recommended, with a total target of 20 spaces in 2033.



### 5.3.6 NON-STANDARD HOUR SPACES

The nature of Osoyoos' and its service and tourism-based economy means that a large percentage of people work jobs that may require childcare outside of the standard schedules that accommodate workers who work 9 to 5 jobs. Information is limited on the proportion of workers that work in non-standard hour occupations. Based on census data on employment by industry, an estimated 30% of the workforce are employed in non-standard hour occupations, including those working in accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance, construction, and transportation. While not all people employed in these industries may require non-standard hour childcare.

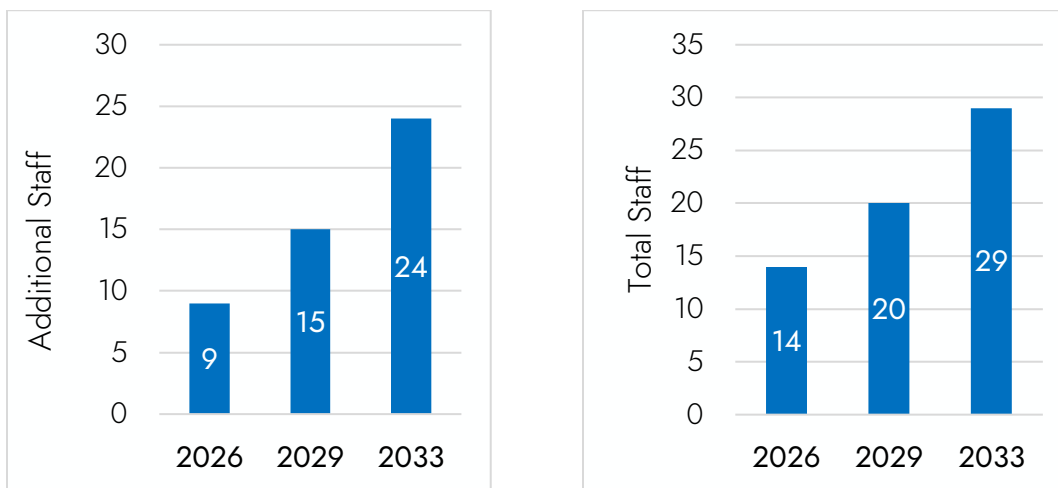
There are presently no non-standard hour childcare spaces in Osoyoos. A target of 30% of all spaces to be offered as non-standard hour spaces is recommended, with a total of 88 target non-standard hour spaces required to meet this target.

## 5.4 STAFFING DEMAND

Staffing is one of the most important determining factors for childcare availability. Childcare centres can be created, and spaces licensed, but unless staff are available, the spaces cannot be filled. Staffing is the largest challenge that stakeholders raised, making it even more important that targets for staffing be included in the needs assessment.

Overall, there is a need for at least 24 additional childcare staff in various positions to meet childcare space targets. This includes Infant-Toddler Educators, Early Childhood Educators, ECE Assistants, and Responsible Adults. This is based on staffing ratios required by BC's Childcare Licensing Authority and projected number of spaces required to meet childcare space targets.

Figure 14: Minimum additional, and total staff required to meet childcare targets by 2033



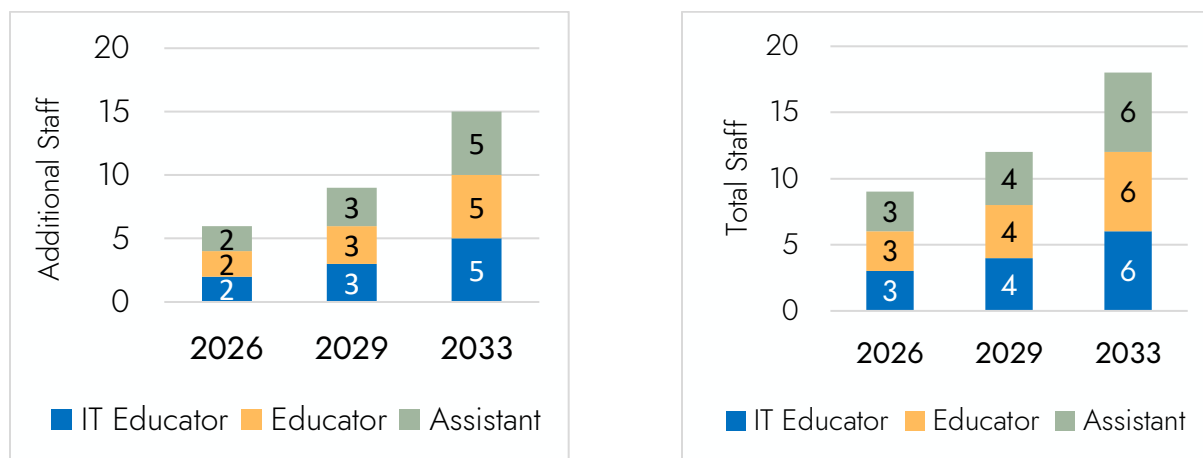
As Osoyoos already meets childcare space targets for the Preschooler (3 to 5) age cohort, staffing demand will focus on Infant-Toddler and School Ager age groups.



#### 5.4.1 INFANT-TODDLER (UNDER 3) CHILDCARE STAFFING DEMAND

The childcare space target for Infant-Toddler spaces is 65 to meet the target of 70 spaces per 100. This is an increase of 57 spaces on top of the 8 existing spaces. To staff 57 additional childcare spaces, at least 15 additional staff are required. At least 5 additional Early Childhood Educators with Infant-Toddler Certification are required. In conjunction with 5 additional ECEs and 5 additional ECE Assistants, 60 additional Infant-Toddler Childcare Spaces can be staffed.

Figure 15: Number of additional and total staff required to meet Infant-Toddler targets



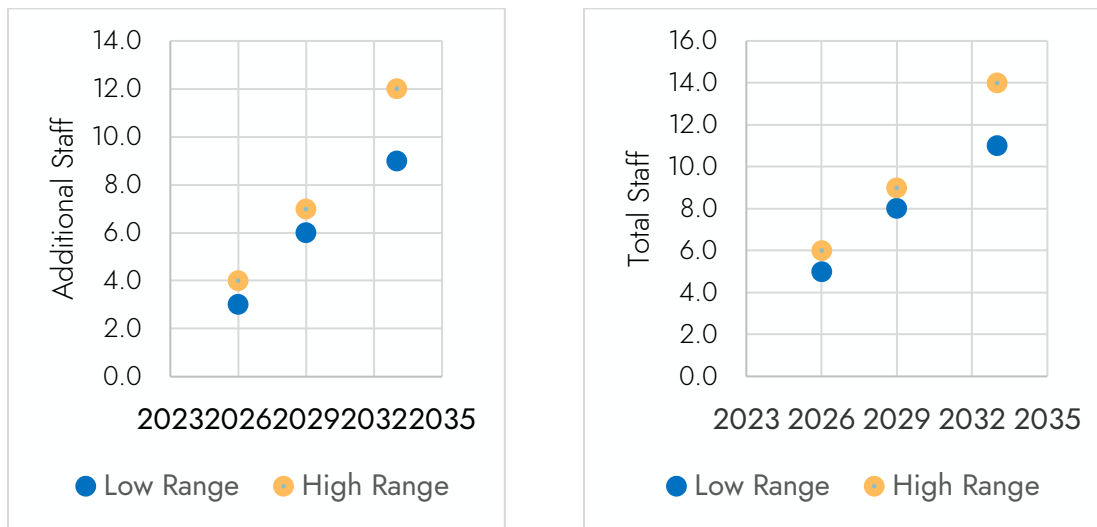
Because the Infant-Toddler Certificate requires additional time, fees, and practicum experience, many cannot afford to pursue the additional certification. This adds challenges to the availability of qualified staff to take these positions.

#### 5.4.2 SCHOOL AGED (6 TO 12) CHILDCARE STAFFING DEMAND

The childcare space target for School Ager spaces is 160 to meet the target of 60 spaces per 100 children. This is an increase of 134 spaces on top of the 26 existing spaces. To staff 134 additional childcare spaces, at least 9 additional Responsible Adults must be hired. At a ratio of one Responsible Adult to 15 children (if no child Grade 1 or under is present), 9 additional staff will be able to staff 135 additional spaces.



Figure 16: Additional and Total Staffing Requirements for School Age Childcare Space Targets



Like childcare for the Infant-Toddler age group, there is a significant undersupply of childcare spaces in the School Aged cohort. Unlike the Infant-Toddler age group, there are no credential-related barriers to staffing before- and after-school care for school-aged children. Rather, the inhibitor to staffing is short shifts and relatively low pay.

## 5.5 CHILDCARE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following set of design guidelines stem largely from discussions had with childcare experts and stakeholders, an understanding of the community of Osoyoos, and background documentation review. While childcare design guidelines are required to abide by the rules and regulation of the BC Community Care and Assisted Living Act Child Care Licensing Regulation (CCLR) (2022), there are additional more qualitative considerations that should be top of mind when planning childcare centres and spaces. Additionally, and for the purposes of this study, it is recommended that the City of Vancouver's Childcare Design Guidelines (2021) and Childcare Technical Guidelines (2021) be consulted. These guidelines are widely recognized across BC as the best resource with respect to Childcare requirements in the context of BC as they provide recommendations beyond what is required in the CCLR.

### 5.5.1 ACCESSIBILITY

The entirety of a childcare facility should feature barrier-free accessibility for all spaces and should incorporate universal design throughout.<sup>21</sup> Namely, reception desks should be at an accessible height for those with mobility issues. All washrooms should be universal (gender-neutral) and be sized appropriately to accommodate wheelchairs and their turning radii.

<sup>21</sup> (2021) Childcare Technical Guidelines. Real Estate and Facilities Management. Facility Planning and Development, City of Vancouver.



### 5.5.2 INCLUSIVITY

A new or renovated childcare facility should also embody inclusive design across all spaces to appropriately reflect the diverse communities of Osoyoos. That is, indigenous and other children of minority groups should feel welcome in the space and see themselves in it. It is important however to design the facility that accurately reflects local communities to avoid a design that feels generic or involves “Indigenous-washing” or other similarly generic design efforts. To achieve this, it is recommended that childcare planners consult with local Osoyoos Indian Band in the design stage. Some design features may include:

- ❖ Local indigenous art
- ❖ Circular spaces
- ❖ Designing spaces that have input from Elders

### 5.5.3 ACCESS CONTROLS AND SECURITY

Entrances to new Childcare Centres must be lockable for security purposes. Parents should be able to access the childcare area using a FOB or by way of an audio and video intercom system. The outdoor childcare spaces should have clear and secure boundaries, which can be monitored from many vantage points. Local alarms may be required (to be determined during detailed design with facility operators).

### 5.5.4 CONNECTIVITY

All components of new Childcare Centres should be accessible from that Centre’s major circulation system (corridors/elevators). Within the Centre, all program spaces should be accessible from the reception area, with the outdoor areas directly connected to the appropriate indoor Childcare and Out of School Care spaces.

### 5.5.5 WAYFINDING

Visitors of Childcare Centres in Osoyoos should be presented with a clearly indicated entrance with clear directions to each childcare component (infant, toddler, age 3-5, Out of School Care). Cubbies should be visible from major circulation and easy to access. Signage should include non-English languages that are widely spoken in Osoyoos, as well as indigenous languages. Signs should also include braille.

The external design of the Centre should showcase itself as a Childcare Centre and be visible from the road for better findability.

### 5.5.6 FLEXIBILITY

Many of the spaces in Childcare Centres should be re-configurable to adapt to changing activities, needs, and conditions. Furniture and other elements should be moveable to support these changes. Subdividable walls should be implemented where possible to open up opportunities for activity changes.



### 5.5.7 SHARED SPACES

To enhance operational and spatial efficiency, and to better help develop a continuum of care and learning, shared spaces should be integrated into the design of childcare centres where possible.<sup>22</sup> Generally the most appropriate spaces for sharing are the outdoor and covered outdoor spaces. Activity rooms should connect and flow to the Gross Motor / Nap Rooms and the Quiet Rooms, to enable shared use and to enhance flexibility. Schedules should be carefully considered as some activities should not involve overlapping age groups.

### 5.5.8 ACOUSTICS

Childcare spaces should be designed to dampen noise transmission between spaces to support both nap and motor activities (quiet and loud) on the same floor. Spaces occupied by children will not exceed a sound pressure level of 45 dB(A) and will follow the minimum acoustic requirements outlined in 3.6 of the Childcare Technical Guidelines (2021).

### 5.5.9 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Childcare centres should feature quality heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. As well, all major indoor activity spaces used by children should accommodate a direct source of natural light. Outdoor play areas should be protected from noise, dirt, wind, pollution, and noxious smells. Exhaust vents from building or parking garages and other hazardous elements should not be located adjacent to outdoor play areas.

### 5.5.10 NATURAL LIGHT

The availability of natural light is important to the creation of a suitable childcare space. Centres should be equipped with large windows to bring in sunlight and provide visitors with a sense of orientation. The outdoor spaces require a minimum of three hours of sunlight per day at the winter solstice, with at least two hours of sunlight during the typical playtimes. North facing centres are not recommended unless the sunlight requirement can be met.

### 5.5.11 ACCESS TO NATURE

One of the emerging trends in childcare is to improve access to nature as outdoor play is an essential component of children's lives. There are many benefits integrating naturalized learning environments into Childcare Centres.<sup>23</sup> They are as follows:<sup>22</sup>

- ❖ Supports multiple development domains (i.e. supports children's development in every major way – intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and physically)
- ❖ Supports creativity and problem solving
- ❖ Increases physical activity
- ❖ Improves nutrition (children are more likely to continue healthy eating habits throughout their lives with an understanding of growing food and gardening)

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<sup>22</sup> (2021). Childcare Design Guidelines. City of Vancouver.

<sup>23</sup> (2012). Benefits of Connecting Children with Nature: Why Naturalize Outdoor Learning Environments. North Carolina University College of Design. Natural Learning Initiative





- ❖ Enhances cognitive abilities
- ❖ Improves academic performance (studies have shown the potential for nature-based experiential education to support significant gains in social studies, science, language arts, and math)
- ❖ Reduced Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) symptoms
- ❖ Improves eyesight
- ❖ Improves social relations
- ❖ Improves self-discipline
- ❖ Reduces stress (green plants and vistas reduce stress among highly stressed children)

What naturalizing outdoor learning environments means for childcare design is to incorporate trees, shrubs, perennial plants, vines, and edible plants for children's enjoyment and healthy development. It is important to note that outdoor environments should be protected from wind, pollution, noise, fumes and noxious smells or any hazardous elements such as exhaust vents from buildings or parking garages.

#### 5.5.12 PARKING

According to the Town of Osoyoos' Zoning By-Law's off-street parking requirements for a Childcare Centre, 1.5 parking spaces should be allocated per employee.

Additional parking considerations are as follows:

- ❖ Safe vehicular access should be provided to the childcare facility.
- ❖ Access from the street drop-off area should be as direct, simple and close as possible to the children's entry or elevator, and in no case be more than 100 m from the entry.
- ❖ Drop-off parking spots should be full-size; small car only spaces are not acceptable as they do not allow for easy loading and unloading of children into car seats, etc.
- ❖ Access to drop-off parking should not require children to cross the drive aisle.
- ❖ Where childcare facilities are located in a school or other community facility, drop-off parking may be combined with that of the school/facility provided that the needs of both are adequately met.
- ❖ Secure bicycle parking should be provided.

#### 5.5.13 FINISHES

Finishes shall meet or exceed the City of Vancouver Childcare Technical Guidelines (2021). These would include detailed description for partitions, wall finishes, ceiling finishes, floor finishes, toilet partitions, washroom accessories, lockers, blinds, mailboxes, entrance mats, notice boards, signage, fire and life safety plans, fire extinguishers and elevators. Finishes should consider using local materials that fit within the aesthetic of the Town of Osoyoos.



## 6 CHILDCARE PLAN

The Town of Osoyoos Childcare Plan consists of childcare space creation targets as well the required staffing to support additional spaces at 3-4-year intervals up to 2033, along with general childcare plan goals and recommended municipal actions that coincide with those intervals.

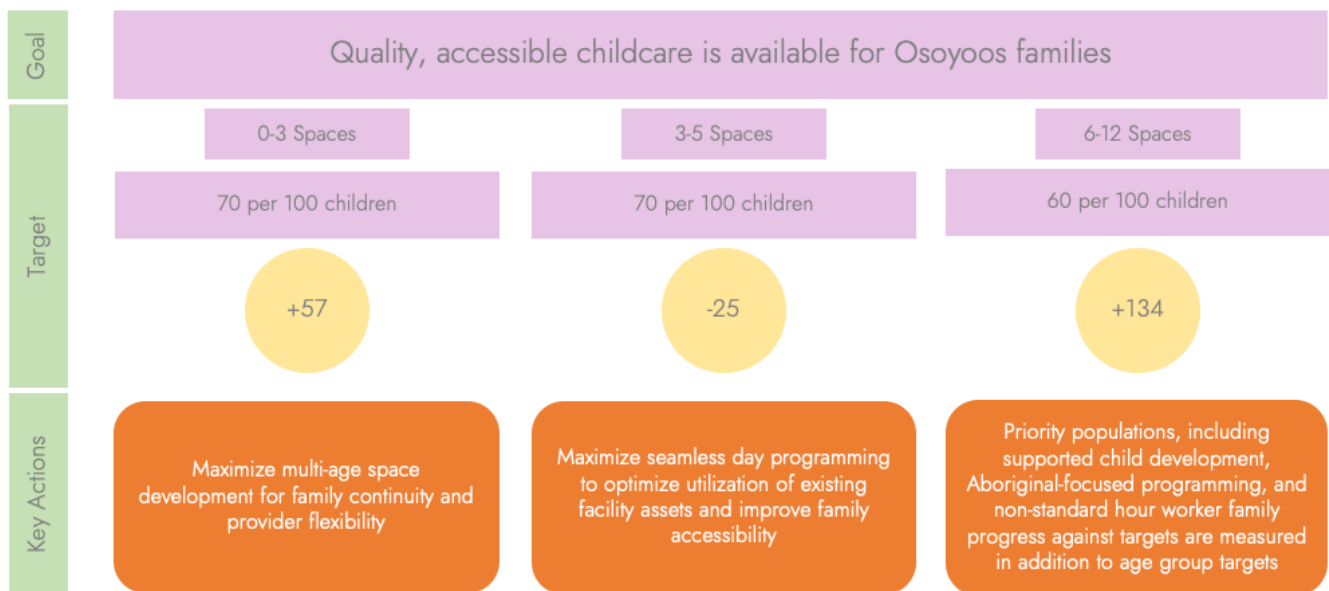
### 6.1 CHILDCARE PLAN GOALS

The graphic below highlights the high-level goal of having quality, accessible childcare be available for Osoyoos families. To achieve this goal, childcare spaces at each age group need to be provided / adapted and there are three key actions (among other actions – see Section 6.2) that will help achieve these targets.

The three key actions are:

- The development of a multi-age group care childcare centre in a community-based facility;
- The maximization of Seamless Day programming to make use of existing facility spaces
- The prioritization of underserved populations which include increasing the number of qualified staff for children who require supported child development, the increasing the availability of aboriginal-focused programming and aboriginal-specific childcare spaces, and the provision of childcare spaces for children requiring non-standard hours of care.

Figure 17: Long-Term Childcare Goal



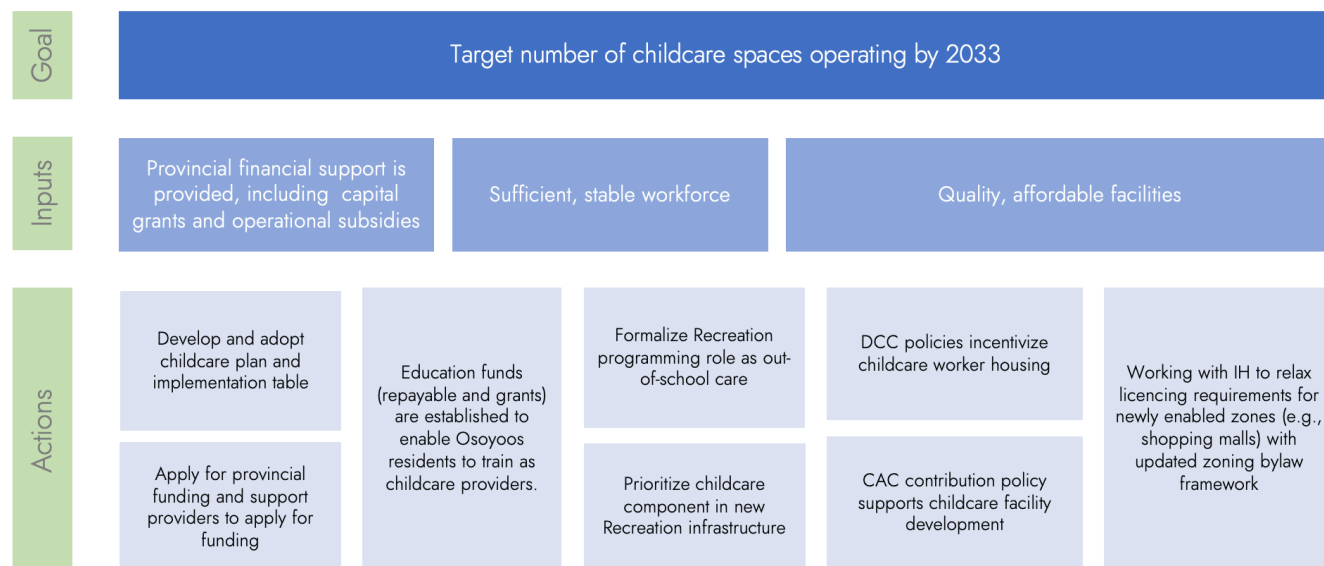
While these actions are not solely the responsibility of the Town of Osoyoos, there are steps they can take that can help facilitate these actions and achieve the greater end goal of providing quality accessible childcare for all.



## 6.2 MUNICIPAL CHILDCARE ACTIONS

There are also a variety of Municipal-led actions that the Town of Osoyoos should undertake to ensure quality childcare space creation and support is enabled and encouraged (see Figure 16 for a summary).

Figure 18: Municipal Actions for Childcare Space Targets



## 6.3 SHORT-TERM SPACE CREATION TARGETS

The table below shows a breakdown of the required number of spaces by age group needed by 2026 to stay on track to meet the long-term targets of 70 childcare spaces per 100 children for the 0-3 age group, 70 childcare spaces per 100 children for the 3-5 age group, and 60 spaces per 100 children for the 6-12 age group. This is accompanied by a list of recommended actions and considerations that should take place within this timeframe.

Table 3: 2026 Space / Staff Creation Targets (Total, not Cumulative)

2026	0-3	3-5*	6-12	TOTAL
# Of Total Childcare Spaces	26	87	67	180
# Of Indigenous Spaces	1	2	3	6
# Of Non-Standard Hour Spaces	8	26	20	54
# Of Total Childcare Staff* *	3	6	5-6	14-15
# Of Supported Child Development (SCD) Staff				3

\*Note: Due to the existing surplus of 3-5 spaces relative to other age groups at the time of writing, these lower numbers (compared to current) appear to suggest the removal of these spaces – this however is not recommended as best practices would recommend the creation of group care facilities with all age groups supported for an optimal continuum of care. That said, the Town of Osoyoos can work with Interior Health to look to adapt some 3-5 spaces to appropriately accommodate



*other required age group targets (e.g. in 2026, potentially 8 3-5 spaces could be adapted into either 6-12 spaces or 0-3 spaces. Of course, this can be done only in alignment with BC Childcare licensing requirements – such an exercise should be done on a case-by-case basis.)*

*\*\*Note: Staff counts are total values, they are not the counts of what is needed in addition to current staffing (they are current + additional). This is based on current staffing being frequently in flux and totals are in alignment with BC Childcare Regulation licensing requirements.*

Given the dire need for childcare at present, and given the timing of an impending update to the existing Osoyoos Zoning Bylaw, the list of recommended actions is front-heavy to start, with most of the actions requiring initiation by 2026. The 2029 and 2033 intervals are primarily geared towards ensuring those initiatives stay afloat and are on track, plus some additional initiatives that are more appropriately undertaken in the 2029 interval.

### 6.3.1 ACTIONS by 2026

1. Adopt the Childcare Action Plan, and monitor progress against age group specific targets, as well as Aboriginal-focused programming, Inclusive Community Consultants for Supported Child Development, and non-standard hour spaces.
2. Osoyoos Community Services Department should establish and host a cross sectoral committee of key partners to monitor implementation of the Childcare Action Plan. This committee should include representatives from:
  - i. Town of Osoyoos (Planning and Recreation Departments)
  - ii. Interior Health
  - iii. School District (for Seamless Day programming)
  - iv. Post-secondary and Secondary Schools (for staff training components)
  - v. Osoyoos Indian Band
  - vi. Childcare Providers
  - vii. OneSky / Childcare Resource & Referral

The committee will monitor progress of the Childcare Action Plan against targets, identify barriers to progress, and opportunities for resolving barriers through partnerships and new initiatives. The committee should also lead the evaluation of the childcare plan based on the evaluation plan in Appendix A and report progress to Council.

This committee should also lead the Town's application for provincial funding for childcare initiatives, and provide support to providers applying for provincial funding directly.

3. Consider establishing a repayable education fund for Osoyoos resident students who wish to complete Early Childhood Education or Child and Youth Care certification, while they await reimbursement from provincial bursary programs (which require tuition payment to be made by the student up front).



4. Consider establishing a grant fund for Osoyoos resident students to complete Special Needs Certification to staff Supported Child Development positions. This fund would not be repayable as there is currently no provincial bursary program for this certification.
5. Following updates to the zoning bylaw, identify areas which may newly accommodate the development of childcare facilities. Work with Interior Health on licensing requirements for childcare facilities in zones that will permit childcare following updates to the Zoning Bylaw. For example, shopping malls may provide opportunities for childcare facilities to be established, however they would not meet the licensing requirement for access to outdoor space. Where possible, prioritize large facilities to enable multi-age spaces. By working with Interior Health, some flexibility on licensing requirements may open more facility options than currently exist. Town resources will be required from Planning and Community Services to coordinate with Interior Health.
6. Formalize Osoyoos Recreation programming to function as out-of-school care, including working with Interior Health to establish appropriate licensing requirements. A formalization of programs would involve matching the staff ratios as per the Childcare Licensing Regulation, more flexible hours (opening earlier / closing later), the safe supervision of Elementary Students as they cross the parking lot to the Sonora Centre for programming, and robust protocols typical of a standard daycare centre.
5. Work with the School District to identify opportunities to maximize Seamless Day Programming, to optimize utilization of existing facility assets and improve family accessibility.
6. Consider revisiting the recent South Okanagan Aquatics Facility Feasibility Study (2022) with a new perspective given the need for more childcare spaces. While the proposed facility in the feasibility study did include not childcare spaces, childcare was mentioned as a potential desirable component.
7. Consider developing an RFP for a Group Care Childcare Centre Feasibility Study to be operated by a non-profit with the goal of the facility to help the Town meet childcare targets.



## 6.4 MEDIUM-TERM SPACE CREATION TARGETS

The table below shows a breakdown of the required number of spaces by age group needed by 2029 to stay on track to meet the long-term targets of 70 childcare spaces per 100 children for the 0-3 age group, 70 childcare spaces per 100 children for the 3-5 age group, and 60 spaces per 100 children for the 6-12 age group. This is accompanied by a list of recommended actions and considerations that should take place within this timeframe.

*Table 4: 2029 Space Creation Targets (Total, not Cumulative)*

2029	0-3	3-5*	6-12	TOTAL
# Of Total Childcare Spaces	43	79	107	229
# Of Indigenous Spaces	2	2	4	8
# Of Non-Standard Hour Spaces	13	24	32	69
# Of Total Childcare Staff**	4	8	8-9	20-21
# Of Supported Child Development (SCD) Staff				4

\*Note: Refer to the note above in the Short-Term timeframe.

\*\*Note: Refer to the note above in the Short-Term timeframe.

### 6.4.1 ACTIONS by 2029

1. Ensure by 2029 that recreation programming is fully formalized as out-of-school care.
2. Continue working with Interior Health in relation to the potential relaxation of licensing requirements for newly enabled zones.
3. If established, continue to support short-term education funds for ECE, CYC, and Special Needs Certificate students who are waiting for bursary/grant payments or require financial support.
4. Continue communication with and support of childcare providers in their pursuit of provincial funding.
5. Continue to encourage Seamless Day Programming to optimize utilization of existing facility assets and improve family accessibility.
6. Consider updates to the Development Cost Charges (DCC) Bylaw to incentive the development of either affordable housing or housing specifically established for childcare sector workers. Developers may allocate a portion of units in a new development to be rented at affordable rates or by childcare staff in a covenant, in exchange for reduced DCCs.
7. Consider establishing a Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) policy as part of the re-zoning process which prioritizes childcare facility development. For example, a policy may indicate that a Community Amenity Contribution reserve fund may be established which directs funds towards childcare facility



development among other key amenities such as playground infrastructure, park space, or recreation facility development. A CAC policy may also allow for in-kind contributions from developers, including a childcare facility to be created as part of a prospective development.

It is recommended that purpose-built rental or low-end-of-market developments be exempted from this policy, in order to decrease barriers to affordable and rental housing development.

8. Support development of childcare centres as possible. Consider developing an RFP for a Group Care Childcare Centre Feasibility Study to be operated by a non-profit with the goal of the facility to help the Town meet childcare targets (*if this action was not completed previously in 2026*).
9. Conduct evaluation of childcare plan based on the Evaluation Plan in Appendix A.





## 6.5 LONG-TERM SPACE CREATION TARGETS

The table below shows a breakdown of the required number of spaces by age group needed by 2033 to stay on track to meet the long-term targets of 70 childcare spaces per 100 children for the 0-3 age group, 70 childcare spaces per 100 children for the 3-5 age group, and 60 spaces per 100 children for the 6-12 age group. This is accompanied by a list of recommended actions and considerations that should take place within this timeframe.

*Table 5: 2033 Space Creation Targets (Total, not Cumulative)*

2033	0-3	3-5*	6-12	TOTAL
# Of Total Childcare Spaces	65	69	160	294
# Of Indigenous Spaces (~4%)	1	1	3	5
# Of Non-Standard Hour Spaces (~30%)	20	21	48	89
# Of Total Childcare Staff**	6	12	11-14	29-32
# Of Supported Child Development (SCD) Staff (~%)				5

\*Note: Refer to the note above in the Short-Term timeframe.

\*\*Note: Refer to the note above in the Short-Term timeframe.

### 6.5.1 ACTIONS by 2033

1. Continue working with Interior Health in relation to the potential relaxation of licensing requirements for newly enabled zones.
2. Continue to support short-term education funds for ECE, CYC, and Special Needs Certificate students who are waiting for bursary/grant payments or require financial support.
3. Continue communication with and support of childcare providers in their pursuit of provincial funding.
4. Continue to encourage Seamless Day Programming to optimize utilization of existing facility assets and improve family accessibility.
5. Support development of childcare centres as possible, including considering childcare space in the proposed South Okanagan Aquatic Centre. Ideally this would be a multi-age facility that can host out-of-school care as well as Infant Toddler and Preschool, depending on progress against age group-specific targets at the time of development.
6. Conduct evaluation of childcare plan based on the Evaluation Plan in Appendix A.



## 7 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study found that there is a deficit and an uneven distribution of childcare spaces in Osoyoos, mainly due to staffing challenges. Insufficient childcare spaces create barriers to workforce participation and economic development; for Osoyoos, with a higher average age and percentage of seniors in the local population, it is critical to enable employment for those of working age in order for the economy to thrive. Further, primary employment sectors in Osoyoos operate on non-standard hours, while all current childcare spaces operate on a standard Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm basis. This creates a further barrier to workforce participation and economic development.

The primary recommendations of this study focus on enabling parents to participate in the local workforce. Seamless day programming, multi-age spaces, non-standard hour spaces, and transitioned out-of-school care will better enable parents to work, including in sectors like healthcare and agriculture which are likely to require in-person shift work. Further, the recommendations of this report are developed to enhance equity by focusing on underserved populations, including urban Indigenous families and children requiring extra support.

Finally, this report acknowledges the scope of influence for municipalities. Provision of childcare is not a municipal responsibility, however there are actions within the municipality's jurisdiction that can enable the creation of childcare spaces. By analyzing the childcare deficit for root causes and systemic issues, key municipal enablers are identified, including acting as a convener for partnerships and collaborations, modifying development policies, and potentially establishing a repayable education fund for childcare staff training.

Below are the key recommendations emerging from this study:

- i. Adopt the Childcare Action Plan, and monitor progress against age group specific targets, as well as Aboriginal-focused programming, Inclusive Community Consultants for Supported Child Development, and non-standard hour spaces.
- ii. Establish and host a cross sectoral committee of key partners to monitor progress of the Childcare Action Plan against targets, identify barriers to progress, and opportunities for resolving barriers through partnerships and new initiatives.

This committee should also provide support to providers applying for provincial funding. Town resources will likely be required to support administration of this committee and should be prioritized.

- iii. Explore establishing a repayable education fund for Osoyoos resident students who wish to complete Early Childhood Education or Child and Youth Care certification, while they await reimbursement from provincial bursary programs (which require tuition payment to be made by



- the student up front). Additionally, the Town may establish a grant fund for Osoyoos resident students to complete Special Needs Certification to staff Supported Child Development positions. Town resources would be required to fund and administer these programs.
- iv. Formalize Osoyoos Recreation programming to function as out-of-school care, including licencing and transportation. Town resources may need to be reallocated within existing Recreation resources, or new resources may be required.
  - v. Establish a Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) policy as part of the re-zoning process which prioritizes childcare facility development, either through a reserve fund with childcare as an articulated benefit, or as in-kind contributions. Town Planning Department resources would be required to develop the policy.
  - vi. Update the Development Cost Charges (DCC) Bylaw to incentivize the development of either affordable housing or housing specifically established for childcare sector workers. Town Planning Department resources would be required to develop bylaw amendments.
  - vii. Consider an embedded childcare centre in the proposed South Okanagan Aquatic Centre, particularly for multi-age care spaces.
  - viii. Work with Interior Health on licensing requirements for childcare facilities in zones that will permit childcare following updates to the Zoning Bylaw. Where possible, prioritize large facilities to enable multi-age care spaces. Town resources will be required from Planning and Community Services to coordinate with Interior Health.



## 8 APPENDICES



# 9 APPENDIX A: EVALUATION PLAN

As part of implementation, it is recommended that fulsome evaluations be conducted at short-, medium-, and long-range intervals. Below is a recommended approach to evaluating success of the plan, driven by outcomes indicated.

The qualitative evaluation activities (i.e., surveys and interviews) are intended to provide insight into the quantitative measures (i.e., progress against targets). The results of all evaluation activities should therefore be analyzed collectively, to provide a full picture of progress, challenges, and opportunities to pivot or refocus resources.

## 9.1 EVALUATION PLAN 2026

2026 Outcomes	Spaces meet current demand	Partners are well-coordinated	Staff positions are able to be filled
2026 Targets	26 Total Infant Toddler Spaces	87 Total Preschool Spaces	67 Total School Aged Spaces
	6 Total Aboriginal-Focused Spaces	3 Total Inclusive Community Consultant FTE	54 Total Non-Standard Hour Spaces
Key Evaluation Activities	Assess progress against each target		
	Survey of childcare facility staff to identify recruitment and retention challenges	Third-party interviewing of Implementation Committee members to identify successes and opportunities for improved efficacy	Survey of childcare providers to identify priority challenges and opportunities



## 9.2 EVALUATION PLAN 2029

2029 Outcomes	Spaces meet current demand	Partners are well-coordinated	Staff positions are able to be filled
2029 Targets	43 Total Infant Toddler Spaces	79 Total Preschool Spaces	107 Total School Aged Spaces
	8 Total Aboriginal-Focused Spaces	4 Total Inclusive Community Consultant FTE	69 Total Non-Standard Hour Spaces
Key Evaluation Activities	Assess progress against each target	Assess proportion of spaces in a multi-age or seamless day program	Assess proportion of out-of-school care offering transportation
	Survey of childcare facility staff to identify recruitment and retention challenges	Survey to parents identifying priority challenges and opportunities, including seamless day and transitions	Survey of childcare providers to identify priority challenges and opportunities

## 9.3 EVALUATION PLAN 2033

2033 Outcomes	Spaces meet current demand	Partners are well-coordinated	Staff positions are able to be filled
2033 Targets	65 Total Infant Toddler Spaces	69 Total Preschool Spaces	160 Total School-Aged Spaces
	19 Total Aboriginal-Focused Spaces	4.9 Total Inclusive Community Consultant FTE	88 Total Non-Standard Hour Spaces
Key Evaluation Activities	Assess progress against each target	Assess proportion of spaces in a multi-age or seamless day program	Assess proportion of out-of-school care offering transportation
	Survey of childcare facility staff to identify recruitment and retention challenges	Survey to parents identifying priority challenges and opportunities, including seamless day and transitions	Survey of childcare providers to identify priority challenges and opportunities