



## CORPORATE POLICY MANUAL

Section:	Social & Community Services Planning	10
Sub-Section:	Planning - Child Care Services	4750
Title:	CHILD CARE POLICY	1

### POLICY

The creation of safe and healthy environments for residents at all stages of their lives is a priority for the District of North Vancouver (District). For the children in our community, this includes facilitating the provision of **quality** child care services which affords opportunities for children to develop socially, emotionally and intellectually. The investment into **quality** child care is far-reaching and can have positive social and economic returns for all residents living in the District.

As such, the District of North Vancouver is committed to being an active partner with senior levels of government, other municipal governing bodies, the community, parents and child care providers in the development and maintenance of a **comprehensive**<sup>1</sup> child care system. This system is one that encourages equitable and **affordable** access to **quality** programs to all District residents.

### REASON FOR POLICY

The Child Care Policy articulates actions to be undertaken by various District Departments in order to support the continuation and enhancement of child care facilities in the District of North Vancouver. This Policy also recognizes that the responsibility for creating and sustaining child care in the community must be shared with its partners. **Appendix A** of this Policy, articulates the mandates and responsibilities of these partners in relation to the District's Child Care Policy.

### AUTHORITY TO ACT

Retained by Council

### PROCEDURE

#### 1. District of North Vancouver

##### Mandate

The District of North Vancouver is to take a leadership role in:

- Co-ordinating the implementation of the Child Care Policy;
- Integrating the provision of child care into ongoing planning and development functions where appropriate;
- Supporting existing child care services and encouraging new initiatives in high need areas; and
- Advocating for provincial and federal action in support of child care.

The District's priority is to encourage equal access to **quality** child care for all families in the District.

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<sup>1</sup> For definitions of all bolded words, please refer to the final page of this Policy.

### 1.1. **Child Care Planning Practices**

Child care is recognized as being an essential building block in the creation of safe, liveable and healthy communities. Where appropriate, child care needs to be integrated into the District's planning function alongside planning for other basic municipal services such as water, roads and green space.

The District will:

- Research demographic profiles and consult with appropriate stakeholders, including staff from the North Shore Child Care Resource & Referral Program, to remain up-to-date on trends and needs related to child care;
- Support child care operators in finding appropriate locations for needed child care programs;
- Continue to allow child care facilities in all zones as per the Zoning Bylaw, while respecting the current stipulations about maximum group size and outdoor play space requirements as included in the District of North Vancouver's *Childcare Facilities Business Regulation Bylaw No. 6724* as well as the provincial child care licensing regulations under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*;
- Develop a consistent approach to the provision of child care facilities or child care contributions as part of new developments;
- Consider the provision of child care facilities or services whenever community amenities are being proposed as a condition of rezoning, especially where child care is identified as a priority need in the subject neighbourhood; and
- Establish a Child Care Reserve Fund for those instances where developers may be required to provide a community amenity contribution toward the provision of child care in order to receive an incentive.

### 1.2. **District Leasing Practices**

In its leasing practices, the District will treat non-profit child care as a community service, rather than as a commercial enterprise as per the *Community Facilities Leasing Policy*.

The District will:

- Continue to implement the *Community Facilities Leasing Policy* which provides use of municipal land and/or facilities to non-profit child care operators for \$1 a year;
- Maintain an inventory of municipal land and/or facilities that are available for child care development;
- Maintain a roster of prospective operators who will be pre-screened for space and facilities as they arise;
- Encourage the provision of child care spaces in its negotiations to develop, sell or lease District lands where appropriate and where there is a demonstrated need; and
- When ownership of a child care facility is obtained by the District through the development process, the District will work to lease the facility to a child care operator.

### 1.3. **District Licensing Procedures**

Through the issuance of business licenses, District Licensing staff has a role in enhancing the quality of child care facilities in the District of North Vancouver by ensuring that health and safety standards are met.

The District will:

- Retain the right to withhold a business license where there are concerns about the health or safety of a prospective child care facility (under licensing);
- Provide prospective child care providers with information on the District's requirements for establishing child care facilities, including the steps that are necessary in to meet Provincial licensing requirements, building code requirements and the District Business License requirements; and
- Provide a single point of contact in Permits and Licenses to support potential child care providers through the application, permitting and licensing process, with additional support from social planning staff.

#### 1.4. Operating and Program Support

While the District is not responsible for direct operations of child care programs, it does target its limited resources to support high need child care services. This funding support is targeted at key priority areas which are established annually by staff in consultation with various stakeholders, including the North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral Program.

The District will give priority to:

- Providing an annual contract for "Child Care Support Services" to the North Shore Child Care Resource Society<sup>2</sup> for expanded child care information, support and development services;
- On an annual basis, working with staff at the Child Care Resource and Referral Program, as well as other interested stakeholders, to identify priority needs for child care and communicate these priorities to the District's Child Care Grants Committee as well as child care providers;
- Providing a staff liaison to the Council appointed, Child Care Grants Committee, whose mandate is to review grant applications from non-profit child care providers that serve District residents;
- Providing annual funding through Child Care Grants to eligible non-profit societies to enhance the availability, **affordability** and **quality** of child care services through approaches that include, but are not limited to: reduced fees for low-income families (including bursaries), care for infants and toddlers, enriched multicultural programming, training for staff and boards, innovative administration models, as well as research and program development; and
- Providing Permissive Tax Exemptions to non-profit child care providers located in the District.

#### 1.5. Advocacy

The District can play an important role in advancing child care issues by advocating to provincial and federal governments the importance of high **quality** and **accessible** child care in supporting healthy communities.

At the Federal level, the District will:

- Advocate to the federal government for a national child care strategy that supports the development of a **comprehensive, affordable, accessible** system of high **quality** child care services.

At the Provincial level, the District will:

- Lobby for a new co-ordinated funding mechanism that provides adequate support for the construction and operation of quality child care services that are **accessible** and **affordable** and that provides caregivers with wages and working conditions reflecting the value of their work;
- Work with the provincial government's Ministry of Education to support the co-location of child care services on School District properties and in schools with under-utilized space, where appropriate; and
- Lobby both senior levels of government to support initiatives that provide quality training for individuals in the child care field to assist with the recruitment and retention of qualified individuals.

At the Municipal and community level, the District will:

- Continue to work with the North Shore Child Care Planning Committee to raise the profile of trained and certified early childhood educators working in the child care sector through advertisements/articles and other educational opportunities; and
- Continue to recognize and support Child Care Month in May.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for further information on the North Shore Child Care Resource and Referral Program.

## 1.6 Child Care Hubs

The District recognizes the benefits of establishing a network of **child care hubs** on the North Shore as they can provide a more integrated system of services to families, which is both user-friendly and cost-effective. Cost efficiencies are generated by intensifying the use of new or existing facilities, and by having multiple organizations sharing administrative and other costs.

### The District will:

- Take a leadership role by providing financial and other support to assist community organizations in developing and implementing **child care hubs**;
- Work with the North Shore Child Care Planning Committee to further the development of a network of **child care hubs** across the North Shore;
- Work with School District #44 to explore the opportunities for locating **child care hubs** in schools, on School District property or in proximity to existing schools; and
- Investigate the possibility of working with private schools to establish **child care hubs** on or near their property if identified as a priority need.

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### DEFINITIONS

**Accessibility** - An accessible child care system is one in which there is appropriate and adequate capacity for all families and children requiring care. This means an integrated continuum of services for children from birth to twelve years of age in developmentally appropriate programs for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and elementary school-age children; mandated accountability for developing and delivering child care programs at appropriate federal and provincial departmental levels, with adequate staff and financial resources; planning, co-ordination and delivery of child care services at the neighbourhood level; culturally and linguistically appropriate services; and physically accessible facilities that promote the independence and inclusion of children with special needs.

**Affordability** - An affordable child care system is one in which equitable access to child care is available to all families, regardless of income; child care is recognized as an essential community service and has a stable, public and accountable funding basis; with federal, provincial and municipal cost-sharing programs in which senior levels of government have the major responsibility.

**Child Care Hubs** - The province defines a child care hub as “the co-location of two or more family-strengthening or early childhood development services along with a child care service.” The underlying concept of the hub model is that services for children and families, with child care as the cornerstone, are more integrated by being located together in the same facility as much as possible.

**Comprehensive** - A comprehensive child care system is one that supports the economic, social and cultural health of communities and reflects the needs of all families and children that require care and/or can benefit from participation in quality early childhood and family support programs. This means a range of child care choices for parents including: full and part-time group programs; licensed family day care; supported informal and in-home care; family resource and support programs; respite, drop-in and emergency care; childminding as part of community social services; care for children with special needs; parental leave options; provisions for shift, seasonal, casual and flexible care; neighbourhood-based recreational and social programs.

**Quality** - The provision of quality child care programs is essential if optimal childhood development is to be realized. Research and experience indicate that the predictors of quality childcare programs include: the existence and compliance with licensing standards; the provisions of specialized and appropriate staff training; staff salary levels commensurate with training and responsibility; informed parental choice in selection of care and active involvement in the care options of their choice; stable and adequate administration of programs under accountable auspices; and sufficient operating funds and program resources to cover programming costs.

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1. Amendment Date:	December 13, 1994	Approved by:	Executive Committee
2. Amendment Date:	December 11, 1995	Approved by:	Regular Council
3. Amendment Date:	November 3, 2008	Approved by:	Regular Council

## **APPENDIX A**

### **PARTNERSHIPS**

The District of North Vancouver recognizes that partnerships with key agencies in the community are critical to the implementation of the Child Care Policy. As such, the District is committed to work with these agencies in order to establish a **comprehensive** child care system that supports child care and families in the District and the North Shore as a whole.

#### ***North Vancouver Recreation Commission (NVRC)***

##### **Mandate**

The NVRC was established by the City and District of North Vancouver to provide recreation services and facilities on behalf of the two municipalities. The NVRC provides child-minding services at recreation centres for participants in their programs, pre-school programs and a wide array of recreation services for children. The Recreation Commission views its role in the provision and facilitation of recreation programs for school-age children as part of a larger mandate to address the needs of North Vancouver residents in the provision of a broad array of recreation opportunities regardless of age, gender, ability or economic status.

##### **Responsibility**

Within the context of this Policy, the Recreation Commission will take a leadership role in:

- Facilitating the provision of neighbourhood-based, after-school recreation programming for nine to twelve year olds and for the provision of drop-in and casual programming throughout the school year, on school non-instructional days and during school breaks;
- The development and facilitation of Recreation Commission programs for school-aged children in consultation with Advisory Committees, users, volunteers, and non-profit partners and service providers;
- Facilitating after school access to schools for recreation and community services; and
- The District in consultation with the NVRC will work to ensure that, as recreation facilities are redeveloped, on-site opportunities for child care, or child minding are maximized.

#### ***North Shore Child Care Resource & Referral Program***

##### **Mandate**

The North Shore Child Care Resource & Referral Program, which operates under the auspices of the North Shore Community Resource Society, provides a unique and wide range of services that enhance child care and the quality of life for children and families on the North Shore. For parents as well as child care providers, the Program offers a range of services from information and referrals on child care facilities to start up and operating information.

The Program also receives provincial funding to register and provide support services to family day cares, including, but not limited to, training opportunities, equipment loans, and information on subsidy assistance. Additional funding is provided by the District of North Vancouver, as well as the other two North Shore Municipalities, to enable the program to provide expanded services under a Contract for Services.

##### **Responsibility**

Within the context of the District's Child Care Policy, the North Shore Child Care and Resource & Referral Program will take a leadership role in:

- Coordinating and administering the North Shore Child Care Planning Committee according to the terms of reference for the Committee, to facilitate and sustain child care services on the North Shore and to review and address priority recommendations from the 2007 North Shore Child Care Needs Assessment;

- Providing networking, consultation, and educational opportunities to centre-based group child care programs;
- Providing child care development and support services including consultations on child care start up, statistics, policy development assistance, fee and wage surveys, etc.;
- Maintaining an up-to-date database of Licensed and Registered License Not Required child care facilities;
- Providing library and equipment resources in response to identified topics and interests in child care programming,
- Being a key participant in the presentation of the North Shore Early Childhood Education Conference,
- Continuing to provide resources and collaboration to respond to diversity issues in our community;
- Collaborating with community partners to enrich training opportunities, respond to identified issues, share information and resources, and to advocate for child care and family support services;
- Representing child care and early learning services at community events and on various committees and tables on the North Shore, and
- Maintaining services mandated by the Ministry of Children and Family Development for Provincial Child Care Resource and Referral Services to support parents and child care providers by providing information and referral, consultation, access to resources, training, professional development, information sharing, networking opportunities and subsidy assistance.

### ***Vancouver Coastal Health Authority***

#### **Mandate**

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority has the legislated responsibility for administering the provincial Child Care Licensing Regulations under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority is therefore involved with all child care services that require a licence.

#### **Responsibility**

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority has an important role to play in:

- Ensuring that all information to applicants regarding the licensing process is up-to-date and includes health and municipal requirements;
- Participating in the development and maintenance of a common child care data base;
- Supporting ongoing caregiver education and training;
- Participating with District staff in the development of guidelines for zoning purposes that promote quality child care, and
- Working with District staff through the licensing process to monitor the **quality** and appropriateness of child care spaces in all forms of development.

### **North Vancouver School District #44**

The mission of the North Vancouver School District is “to promote academic, social and personal development for all learners, to honour diversity, encourage equity and practice democratic governance.”<sup>3</sup> While focussing on their primary mandate, and within the financial constraints dictated by the province. School District #44 recognizes that supporting early learning better prepares young people for further education, and facilitates their transition to the public school system. NVSD support for early childhood education occurs in the following ways:

- StrongStart Programs – StrongStart BC is a free, drop-in early learning program for preschool-aged children accompanied by a parent or caregiver;
- Early Learning Foundations (ELF) Programs – ELF Programs have a unique affiliation with the North Vancouver School District. All ELF preschools adhere to the program Guiding Principles and Practices developed by Early Childhood Educators and the North Vancouver School District, and provide a high quality developmentally appropriate preschool program in a play-based environment. ELF programs have been developed for 3 & 4 year old children;

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<sup>3</sup> At the time that the District’s Child Care Policy was being revised, School District #44 was reviewing their mission statement and vision. The next update of this policy will include this new information.

- Property Leases – In some instances the School District will lease property and/or buildings to child care providers. In the District this occurs, for example at, at Lynnmour, Highlands and Norgate Community School; and
- Lease of Underutilized Space – As enrolment declines the NVSD occasionally finds that it has underutilized school spaces that can be made available for lease. Child care providers are eager to acquire these spaces when they are made available.

### **Responsibility**

Within the context of this Policy, the District of North Vancouver and North Vancouver School District #44 will work collaboratively towards:

- Promoting and facilitating the ELF Programs;
- Exploring options for the location of child care facilities on School District property;
- Locating child care spaces in under-utilized schools; and
- Creating child care hubs in the vicinity of designated Elementary Schools.

### ***Community Service Providers***

Community service providers on the North Shore, particularly those that provide programs and/or services for families and women can play a role in implementing the District's Child Care Policy by:

- Establishing regular information exchanges with the North Shore Child Care Resource Program to share emergent needs and child care resource information;
- Providing childminding services in conjunction with community programs and services for families and women; and
- Giving high priority to the expansion of family support programs including drop-ins, family places, self-help groups, etc.

### **JOINT INITIATIVES**

There are a number of areas where joint initiatives are necessary and beneficial towards the implementation of the District's Child Care Policy. A partnership based approach has many benefits and allows key stakeholders to come together to problem-solve, share information, coordinate resources, plan and leverage funding sources. Current examples of partnerships that the District is currently involved in include:

#### ***North Shore Child Care Planning Committee (NSCCPC)***

The mission of this group, which is made up of representatives from the City of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver and the District of North Vancouver, School District #44, the North Vancouver Recreation Commission, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, the Child Care Resource and Referral Program, the Ministry for Child and Family Development, Capilano University, Supported Child Care BC, as well as child care providers, is to "provide a structure that promotes collaborative planning for child care issues on the North Shore. The Committee has been highly successful in providing a forum for the participants to collectively discuss and plan for child care policy change on the North Shore.

#### ***Early Childhood Network of the North Shore (WECAN)***

WECAN is the early childhood development planning table of the North Shore made up of representatives from the District and City of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, North and West Vancouver School District, the Recreation Commission, the Ministry of Children and Family Development as well as child care providers and non-profit organizations. WECAN is enabled through project and strategy grants from Success by 6 (United Way of the Lower Mainland) and Understanding the Early Years (Human Resources and Social Development Canada). The responsibility of the Committee is to: identify gaps, overlaps and barriers to providing appropriate services to young children and their families; develop and implement research projects that identify children and neighbourhoods that are in need of support; develop and implement programs and services that support the developmental needs of all

young children on the North Shore; and develop and implement programs and services specifically targeted to support those children designated as at risk and vulnerable.

***Middle Childhood Matters (NS MCM)***

The District is a participant on the North Shore Middle Childhood Matters Table along with representatives from the City of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, North and West Vancouver School District, the Recreation Commission, the Ministry of Children and Family Development as well as non-profit organizations. The Table was formed in November of 2006 and is supported by funding from the United Way. The mandate of the Table is to conduct a research project designed to identify the particular needs of school aged children and their families on the North Shore, particularly during out of school time; the resources that are in place to support these needs; and the gaps and barriers that exist preventing universal access to available programs and services.