

Pincher Creek Community Child Care Needs FAQ's

Exploring the Opportunities



Summary

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INTRODUCTION

To better understand the needs of the community related to child care supports and options, the Town of Pincher Creek engaged in a partnership to gather information, review existing child care options and explore space possibilities. This strategy is reinforced with localized research that identified that only 50% of children in Pincher Creek and area are entering school (kindergarten) growing appropriately in all developmental domains. (ECMAP, 2014) In addition, this research is reinforced by the Alberta Benchmark Survey results that identified “Over 85% of respondents agreed that child care providers have as much influence on child development as elementary school teachers and should be trained. It also identified that approximately 60% of respondents indicated that the responsibility for children is both a family and a social responsibility.” (2013).

The most recent strategic plan for the Town of Pincher Creek aims to address economic development, sustainability as well as community and social needs. The following information will provide a snapshot of the current influences that have a direct bearing on the council’s ability to make informed decisions related to the community’s need for quality and affordable child care which is directly related to building strong thriving community.

GATHERING DATA

The Town of Picher Creek secured the services of Motivation to provide the residents of Pincher Creek and area a chance to express their views, concerns and opportunities related to child care needs in the community.

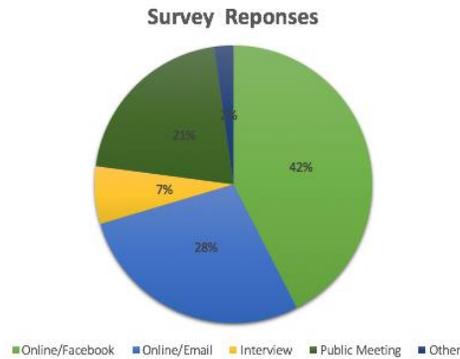
Three different on-line surveys were created to help build a broad understanding of perspective related to the child care needs in the community.

1. General Survey – targeted all residents
2. Child Care Professional Survey – targeted community members that work directly in child care (licensed and unlicensed caregivers were sent the survey)
3. Employer Survey – targeted local business to share their experiences related to child care needs within the community (majority of responses came for phone interviews)

The methods used to gather information from the community included Online/Facebook, Online/Email, Interview, Public Meetings and Self-Selected Interviews.

General Survey	Child Care Professional Survey	Employer Survey
179 See table below for breakdown	3	15

Total Number of General Surveys Collected: 179



Below are the communities that were recommended by the contract administrators for the collection of data. In addition to the online surveys, there were community information sessions held in the town of Pincher Creek and the Hamlet of Glenwood.

Q1 Please indicate your home community

Answered: 130 Skipped: 0



The trends that appeared from the demographic information collected are as follows:

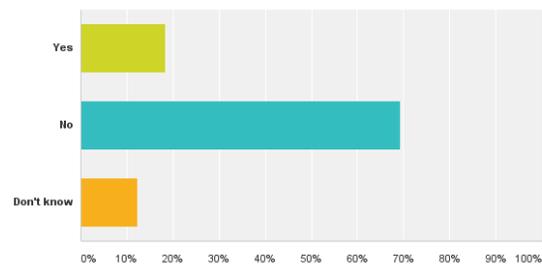
Majority of Respondents:

- Identified as female (89%)
- Live with spouse or partner (81%)
- Have a child(ren) between the ages of 2.5-5 (48%)
- Have combined household income over \$90,000 (40%)

COMMUNITY RESULTS

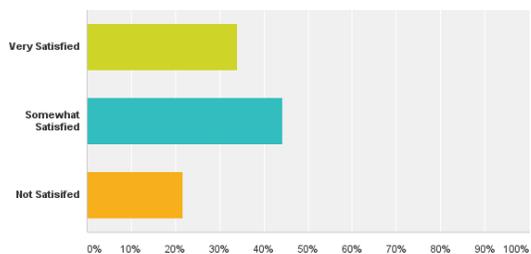
Based on the Early Child Development Mapping Project, there are approximately 500 children ages 0-4 years of age in the Pincher Creek Area. In addition, Alberta has experienced a 20% increase in births over the past four years. This is a significant number of the population that have the potential to serve as the anchor of a community. The following section relates to the data collected from the community based survey and community conversations specific to child care.

Q4: In general, do you think that families in our community have access to adequate child care services?



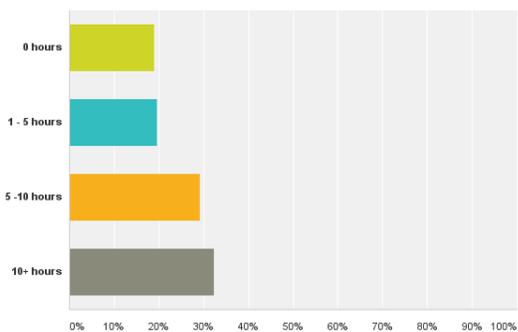
This question helped identify whether the community felt there was an adequate system in place to support the child care needs of the community.

Q14 How satisfied are you with your current child care arrangements?



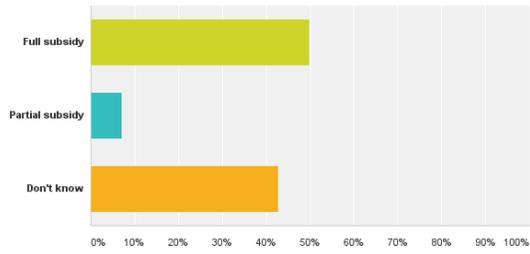
This question identified if the community felt the system in place provided quality experiences for families that accessed their programs.

Q9 How many hours outside of regular daily business hours (8am-6pm) are you and/or your partner employed?

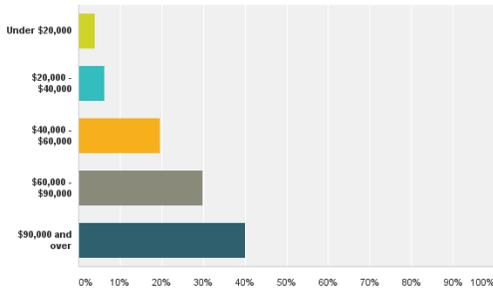


Results suggest that 80% of working families noted needing child care outside of the regular business hours. This translates to more flexibility in hours of operation, additional staff to cover shifts and options for child care programs.

Q13 If you answered “Yes” to question 12 please identify the type of subsidy.



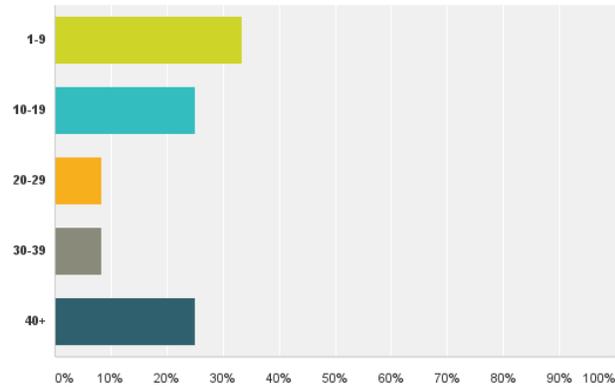
Q3 What is your combine household annual income before taxes?



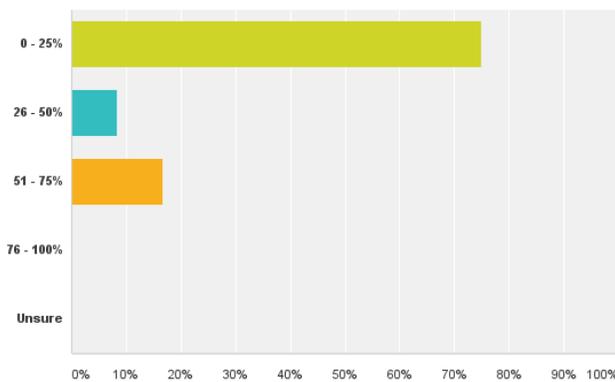
It is significant to note that with the child care subsidy threshold being >\$50,000 per year, 60% of the survey respondents would qualify for full and partial subsidy in licensed childcare.

EMPLOYER RESULTS

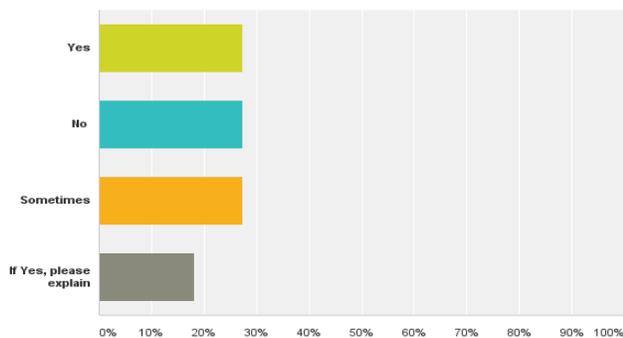
Q1 How many individuals does your organization/business employ? (full & part time)



Q5 What is your estimate of the percentage of employees that require child care within your organization/business?



Q6 Is child care a challenge for employees that results in missed hours of work?



EARLY CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS RESULTS

“An Early Childhood Educator is an individual who is responsible for the development, delivery and evaluation of the care and education of children ages 1-12 years in a variety of age groupings.” (Child Care Human Resource Sector Council, 2010) The interviews provided highly emotional connections to the role of the caregiver, co-worker and leadership within the community of Pincher Creek. It was clear in the feedback, that the community values the quality child care options in their area.

LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finding and keeping quality staff from the community is an ongoing challenge.
SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The unmonitored access and shared public space were identified as a safety risk at one of the daycares.
AFFORDABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A number of families noted that they were considering leaving employment due to the cost for multiple children to attend day care. (some families had already left employment due to child care cost and availability)
FLEXIBILITY ACCESSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of care options such as day homes, kin-care, quality private care and part-time and extended hours care• No part-time spaces available in the community.• Limited access for families that work shift work.• Lack of options for children with special needs.

POTENTIAL CHILD CARE GOVERNANCE AND SPACES

Information gathered from the government website and Child Care Lookup, identifies there are currently two licensed day cares and two licensed out of school care programs within Pincher Creek. *This equates to 147 child care spaces and 93 out of school care spaces.* Reports from both program directors, claim that all spaces are full and additional requests are added to a waitlist. It was also noted that a majority of the spaces are full-time with little to no offering for part-time care. In addition to these spaces, verbal reports suggest that there are a few unregulated day homes in the community, as they do not have to have a license to operate there is not information to support the amount or quality of these spaces.

<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/oldfusion/ChildCareLookup.cfm?s=search&sfid=&sinspd=&sinspc=&show=&sstype=pcode&pname=&pcity=&pcode=TOK&dcaretype=yes&dhometype=yes&oosctype=yes&grpfamilytype=yes&Lookup=Search>

The patterns emerging are similar to issues and limitations that have surfaced in other rural communities in Alberta. The municipalities of Beaumont, Drayton Valley and Jasper have determined the value of quality sustainable child care within their communities and have committed support, funding and resources to support child care options.

It is important to understand what is required to open a child care facility. The following is a list of licensing requirements for opening a new child care facility.

REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR OPENING NEW DAY CARE CENTRE'S	GOVERNING LEGISLATION	SPECIFICS TO CONSIDER (DAY CARE CENTRE)
Municipal Zoning	Municipal Zoning Approval	Dependent on local government requirements and zoning regulations (parking, business license, bylaws etc.)
Safety Inspections	Alberta Safety Code Act	Safety inspection report
Health Inspections	Environmental Public Health – Social Care	Health inspection report
Child & Family Service – Child Care License	Child Care Licensing Act Child & Family Services	Capacity Requirements: Day care programs require 3 square meters of play space per child
Outdoor Play Space	Child Care Licensing Act Child & Family Services	Day care programs are required to have an enclosed outdoor play space
Staff Plan	Child Care Licensing Act Supported by Child Care Staff Certification office	The Program Supervisor must hold a Child Development Supervisor certificate. At least one in every three primary staff working directly with children between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 P.M. must hold at least a Child Development Worker certificate. All other primary staff working directly with children at any time of day must hold at least a Child Development Assistant certificate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As quality and sustainability are key to the economic and cultural longevity of any community, it will be important to use this information as a starting point to learn more about the partnerships, opportunities and realities of what it will take to put children and families at the forefront of any decision.

Key learnings that needs addressed:

1. Safety for all children during hours of care.
2. Add additional spaces to provide options for flexible hours and part-time care
3. Build ECD professional capacity by focusing on staff training and accountability
4. Build a financial structure to maintain quality business practice & maximize government supports

Safety for all children during hours of care

Partner with Southern Alberta Child & Family Services – Licensing – Provide community information session on supervision, maintenance, incident reporting, <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/family-community/child-care.html>

Sponsor parent information session on elements of quality child care and accreditation standards. Partner with Parent Link for local expertise.

Sponsor local delivery of Health and Safety course through Lethbridge College.
http://www.lethbridgecollege.ca/program/early-childhood-education?shared_page=580

Child Care Board of Directors understand clearly the roles, responsibilities and liabilities associated with guiding a non-profit organization. There is no cost training and coaching provided by the government for groups wanting to learn more about the role of board members. <http://culture.alberta.ca/community/programs-and-services/board-development/>

Add additional spaces to provide options for flexible hours, full and part-time care

Support a non-profit agency to apply for newly announced funding for \$25/day child care spaces.
<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/family-community/elcc-centres.html>

Deadline January 20, 2017. Successful programs will be given operating grants of up to \$500,000 in year one, with the potential to receive two more years of funding for a total of three years.

Build/Repurpose a building to accommodate 120 child care spaces. (Details as outline earlier in this report). Use Request for Proposal model to vet agencies that would be interested in partnering with the Town to improve child care options in the community.

Create a focus group to look at ways to enhance existing relationships with existing partners such as Holy Spirit School Division, Town of Pincher Creek, Parent Link Centre and other invested agencies. The focus group could make recommendations on ways they may increase flexibility of hours and create part-time spaces.

Work with Sunshine Kids Day Home Agency (or another interested agency) to increase the number of licensed day homes within the community. Sunshine Kids has been working with Licensing in the past and may just need support to mobilize support. Contact Kathy DeGuinnes – 403-553-3022

Build ECD professional capacity by focusing on staff training and accountability

Research supports that trained early childhood education are the key ingredient to quality programming for children and families. ECD certification is offer from a variety of online formats. However, there is local potential to connect with Lethbridge College, ECE program to arrange local delivery of the ECE Diploma courses. Contact Patricia Lynch Staunton 403-382-6943 for more details.

Create a Professional Learning Community with a focus on learning more about the Early Child Development Curriculum Framework <http://childcareframework.com/play-participation-and-possibilities/>. Funding for this type of professional development is available through Association Early Childhood Educators of Alberta. Must be a Child Development Supervisor working in a licensed child care program to apply for the funds. Maximum of \$5000/Professional Learning Community <http://albertachildcareassociation.com/pd-funding/professional-learning-community-application/>

Municipal support to strengthen the capacity for Parent Link Centre to offer local, no cost Early Child Development training and workshops by partnering with ECD professionals within the community.

Recruit trained professionals to work with child care centers. The government currently has a monetary incentive for Early Childhood trained professionals to return to the field. This incentive could be used to engage locally trained people to build quality programing for children and families in the community. <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/family-community/child-care-providers-staff-attraction-incentive-allowance.html>

Build a financial structure to maintain quality business practice & maximize government supports

Work with existing programs to support administrative needs of the agency (eg. Human Resource, Payroll, Accounting). In addition if child care workers were considered town employees and qualified for benefits and pension it would offer an incentive to build a career in the community.

Connect child care programs with Alberta Child Care Ventures. It is a free support for business practices within child care programs. <http://www.childcareventures.ca/> Work together to put systems in place to ensure good business practice and reporting.

Alberta Child Care Accreditation certification supports wage enhancement to programs that successfully achieve and maintain valid certification. Programs that have achieve accreditation status are issued a certificate, which is valid for a term of three years with an annual administrative review. <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/family-community/child-care-accreditation.html>

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