THE WELL-BEING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN RURAL AND NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA: ACCESSIBILITY TO REGULATED CHILDCARE

by

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Abstract

This study investigates rural women’s access to regulated childcare in British Columbia. Through a mixed-methodology investigation, 36 mothers in focus groups across rural BC revealed the most significant barriers affecting their ability to access childcare in their communities. These included cost and affordability, social stigma, isolation, subsidy eligibility, and a lack of available programs and services. A documentary analysis provided further support to demonstrate the importance of regulated childcare availability on women and children’s ‘well-being status’ and life opportunities. A range of policy options to address these barriers were subsequently evaluated against selected criteria. Interviews with some of the foremost experts on regulated childcare contributed to a careful assessment of these options. This led to a number of recommendations including the formulation of a comprehensive provincial policy framework, an inter-ministerial networking model, followed by targeting provincial investments to new and existing childcare spaces, and creating a centralized monitoring waitlist system.

Keywords: Labour Force, Women, Rural, Early Learning and Childcare, Gender, Socio-Economic Status

Subject Terms: Labour Force Participation, Licensed/Regulated Childcare, Family Resources, Rural Women and Socio-Economic Status
Executive Summary

In 2006, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released *Starting Strong 2*, a report that exposed Canada as having the lowest public expenditures in early childhood education and care among 14 developed countries. This low ranking is exemplified in British Columbia, where the largest and most comprehensive financial cutbacks in the childcare sector have taken place compared to all other provinces in Canada. The implications of these cutbacks became evident in 2005, where the percentage of eligible children for whom there was an available regulated childcare space in BC was determined to be approximately 13.7 percent.

When turning one's attention to the rural and northern communities in BC, the evidence indicates that the recent cutbacks have worsened the 'at-risk' status across various scales of well-being for rural mothers who are more acutely susceptible to any reduction in social services. When childcare barriers prevent rural women from engaging in paid labour, the worsening of social, health and economic security for both mother and child can be witnessed. Further, in order to understand fully how these kinds of experiences are realized in a BC rural context, the current lack of primary data implies a clear need conduct research for rural mothers living in these communities.

This study aims to understand how current regulated childcare policies are negatively influencing BC rural women’s well-being status. In particular, this study explores rural mother’s experiences with negotiating regulated childcare and their overall understanding about the benefits, barriers, and issues surrounding access in their community. Thus, the objectives that underscore this investigation are to identify the most significant barriers that are preventing rural women in BC from accessing regulated childcare and, to create viable policy options to address these barriers.

This study employs a multidimensional methodological process to deduce how current regulated childcare policies are negatively influencing rural women’s well-being status. A mixed-method analysis involving quantitative-based community targeting, demographic surveying, and qualitative interviews provides a well-rounded approach for addressing the policy problem. The primary qualitative data for this project was compiled from two sources:

1. **Focus Group Participants**: Mothers from communities across rural, northern, and remote areas of British Columbia (n=36).
2. **Key Individual Stakeholders**: Individual childcare experts with backgrounds ranging from academic, NGO, government, and community experience within the childcare policy field (n=5).

Results

When it came to accessing regulated childcare, an overwhelming majority of mothers felt that they could not presently acquire a regulated space for their children. Out of the 36 mothers, as many as 55 percent answered in the affirmative of having experienced trouble in finding childcare. Primarily, mothers felt that there was a discernable pressure for them to engage in paid labour; however, they also felt that this was coupled with an inability to make wages that would exceed childcare costs. Many moms stated that they had to make many career sacrifices and that inaccessibility to regulated subsidized childcare and childcare spaces was one of the most
significant barriers for their ability to participate in the labour market. The biggest barriers that were touched upon by mothers included cost of childcare, inaccessibility to childcare subsidies, and a lack of childcare spaces. Their plea to decision-makers involved asking for the creation of conditions that would enable them to purchase care, and further, take into account the distinctiveness of their role, the distance of their community and its diverse needs, and consider the many responsibilities and demands that come with the mothers’ complex roles.

Other key findings:

1. Stigma
   ○ Many rural mothers who were most ‘at-risk’, through their single, low-income, or welfare recipiency status, experienced feelings of social stigma when negotiating access to childcare in their communities due to a number of barriers, and felt they were being treated as a “second-class citizen.”

2. Secondary Barriers
   ○ A secondary list of barriers to regulated rural childcare was compiled from focus groups data. These were mentioned by a small segment of the participants; however, they remain quite informative. These included: a lack of quality among unlicensed childcare centres, ‘trust’ in those providing the care, a lack of training for the caregivers, inability to access subsidies, and hours of operation for childcare centres.

Policy Recommendations

Results of the study and literature review led to the development of five policy options. Careful analysis of these options and subsequent interviews with key individual stakeholders led to four specific recommendations.

1. Five-Year Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan
   Time-Frame: Immediate
   ○ A platform for all other options that identifies and explores the major themes coming out of rural, remote, and northern communities in BC. Outlines a series of goals, benchmarks, and actions, to establish and improve accessible, quality, and affordable regulated childcare spaces in rural communities in the province.

2. Form an Inter-Ministerial Collaboration for Childcare Policy Directives
   Time-Frame: Immediate/Short-Term
   ○ Results of the study show that the current childcare portfolio is administered by four different government agencies, which has led to varied mandates, goals, and tangential spending in early learning and childcare. The option calls for the creation of an inter-ministerial collaboration between the four primary ministerial actors in regulated childcare policy (MCF, MOH, MAE, and MOE), after which, a cost-sharing initiative will be implemented to increase direct funding towards the creation of new spaces in rural communities and operating funding for existing spaces.
3. Establish an Accountability Framework to Monitor Spaces and Waitlists

   Time-Frame: Medium-Term
   ○ Research indicates that there is a need for a mechanism for the effective management and monitoring of the supply/demand of regulated childcare spaces. Accordingly, the monitoring, collecting, and reporting of vacancies would reduce the administrative inefficiencies that are present in the current ad hoc waitlist process, while serving to make policy more responsive to actual measured need.

4. Pursue ECE Incentives & Wage Scales and Address Parental Costs & Affordability

   Time-Frame: Long-Term
   ○ Research indicates the need for the long-term pursuit of financial restructuring and incentive mechanisms that will impact the cost, affordability, and accessibility to regulated childcare in rural BC. Included among these are:
     ▪ reassessment of the current income threshold for subsidies,
     ▪ simultaneous introduction of a cap on parental fees,
     ▪ reevaluation and increase of the current 20-day per month subsidy maximum.
     ▪ mechanisms involving student loan forgiveness, monetary relocation incentives for potential and existing ECEs, and
     ▪ provincially mandated wage scale structure for regulated childcare providers with ECE.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to gain an understanding of rural mothers’ current barriers to accessing regulated childcare in BC, in order to develop policies that can reduce the most significant barriers that are preventing BC’s rural mothers from purchasing childcare. The recommendations represent short, medium, and long-term objectives and measures that should have a positive impact on mothers’ accessibility to regulated childcare in rural communities across BC.

For future research, examinations must focus on better governance for regulated childcare policy in BC, and in particular, undertake the monitoring of outcomes from other jurisdictions, such as Manitoba and Quebec. There is also a clear and pressing need to reassess the public discourse on regulated childcare and examine the underlying roots and possible solutions necessary to reconstruct the way in which policy-makers think about childcare. And lastly, the biggest contribution of this study is the demonstration of the validity and necessity of qualitative methods in order to add valuable insight into the impact and changes necessary for effective public policy.
Dedication

For my mother...

...who inspires me everyday.
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<td>Regulated/ Formal (Licensed) Childcare</td>
<td>Any of the following types of facilities operated under section 11 of the BC’s <em>Community Care and Assisted Living Act</em>: group day care, under 36 months; group day care, 30 months to school age; preschool, 30 months to school age; special needs day care; family childcare; out of school care; emergency care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal (Unregulated) Childcare</td>
<td>BC’s unrecognized modes of childcare not eligible for provincial subsidization or investment: parent in the child’s home, unlicensed facility in neighbourhood, care-giving by a relative or family friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Force Participation</td>
<td>Canadian above the age of 15 who are gainfully employed, that is they are engaging in the labour market on a full or part-time basis or are actively looking for work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Status (SES)</td>
<td>Refers to the relative hierarchical placement of a unit (e.g., an individual, a community) along a gradient stratified by social and economic resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-Being of Children</td>
<td>State of development that is measured through a group-measure tool provided by ‘HELP’. Established to monitor the level of health, social, and economic indicators based on: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-Being of Mothers</td>
<td>Measure is based on socio-economic status, health and economic status as established by the Provincial Health Authorities of British Columbia. The factors included in this state of being include: physical environment, income, educational opportunities, social support networks, employment opportunities, healthy workplaces, and social supports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

In 2006, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released *Starting Strong*, a report that exposed Canada as having the lowest public expenditures in early childhood education and care among 14 developed countries. This low ranking is exemplified in British Columbia since 2001, where the largest and most comprehensive financial cutbacks in the childcare sector have taken place compared to all other provinces in Canada. The implications of these cutbacks became evident in 2005, where the percentage of eligible children for whom there was an available regulated childcare space in BC was determined to be approximately 13.7 percent (CCAABC, 2005). When turning one’s attention to the rural and northern communities in BC, the evidence indicates that these regulated childcare cutbacks have resulted in substantive economic and social hardships for rural families (Sutherns, McPhedren and Haworth-Brockman, 2004). Rural mothers, in particular, are acutely affected by these considerable childcare policy changes and cutbacks due to a number of intrinsic geographic, social, and economic characteristics unique to this population.

Accordingly, the central policy problem that this study addresses is how an increase in rural childcare barriers has resulted in a diminution of rural mothers’ choice to engage in paid labour. Current literature posits that the cost and availability of childcare arrangements may affect almost every aspect of labour market behaviour on women with children (Tekin, 2007). Moreover, when rural mothers are deprived of this choice, this has led to the worsening of social, health and economic security for both mother and child, referred to here as their ‘well-being’ status. This study hypothesizes that the key issues surrounding these barriers are affordability and cost, subsidy eligibility, geographic isolation, and scarcity of childcare resources, each playing a decisive role in preventing rural mothers from accessing regulated childcare.

Research on BC rural women is very limited, which suggests a need to expand the research base. However, it is important to first acknowledge that a select number of national studies have been conducted in fields relating to Canadian rural women. These studies provide an early indication of how the well-being status of rural women is wholly interrelated to women’s gender and rurality. To begin with, one can trace the existence of a distinctive isolation that

---

1 Notably, there are no existing measures nationally or provincially to provide specific data on the demand or supply of regulated childcare spaces.
occurs with rural geography. This aspect stems from the lack of available transportation infrastructure, social seclusion and isolation and difficulties associated with accessing social services (Burns, Bruce, and Marlin, 2007). The increase in obstacles to resources and services, particularly when accessing employment, creates a situation whereby rural women experience greater incidence of poverty and health insecurity than women do in larger urban centres (Burns, Bruce, and Marlin, 2007). Rural women are also known to experience greater inequity in paid wages, as they are often noted as being lower than wages earned by urban women and rural males (Burns, Bruce, and Marlin, 2007). Correspondingly, unstable income, poverty and financial insecurity—deemed primary outcomes of unemployment—have indisputably been identified as the key determinants of health and well-being for rural women and their children in Canada (Sutherns et al., 2004). However, in order to understand fully how these kinds of experiences are realized in a BC rural context, the lack of primary data implies a clear need conduct research for rural mothers living in these communities.

This research project employs a multidimensional methodological process to deduce how current regulated childcare policies are negatively influencing rural women’s well-being status. A mixed-method analysis involving quantitative-based community targeting, demographic surveying, and qualitative interviews provides a well-rounded approach for addressing the policy problem. Furthermore, five major focus groups were held across rural and northern BC to gather information on first-hand experiences and perceptions from mothers on the receiving end of BC’s childcare policy. From this research, major themes are extracted in order to develop feasible policy options aimed at reducing regulated childcare barriers. These options also are intended to render positive well-being outcomes for BC’s rural mothers and their children, and potentially for application in other communities facing these problems. By focusing the analysis on rural mothers, policy can be better formulated to address the barriers that are preventing them from accessing regulated childcare in their communities in rural BC.

1.1 Policy Problem

The recent policy changes relating to the financing of regulated childcare have had significant implications for rural families over recent years. This problem is not new to British Columbia, nor is it something that has gone unnoticed nationally. Other provinces such as Quebec and Manitoba have been implementing a series of childcare planning initiatives involving a number of extensive targets, goals, and benchmarks. Each of these provinces has indicated successful results for families with access to regulated childcare. However, over the past seven years, cutbacks and reductions to regulated childcare services in BC have been the most
significant and comprehensive when compared to all other Canadian provinces since 2001. This is indicated in Table 1 in which BC stands out as having the largest reduction (-14 percent) in regulated childcare services when examined Canada-wide.

Table 1: Allocations for Regulated Childcare 2001 and 2004, by Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2003-2004</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
<td>7,753,000</td>
<td>9,636,300</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>4,229,708</td>
<td>4,681,790</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>12,892,278</td>
<td>19,767,821</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>10,800,000</td>
<td>13,900,000</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>1,092,427,651</td>
<td>1,560,000,000</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>451,500,000</td>
<td>497,400,000</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>62,876,400</td>
<td>73,003,600</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>16,387,911</td>
<td>19,639,000</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>57,500,000</td>
<td>53,600,000</td>
<td>-6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>British Columbia</strong></td>
<td><strong>164,563,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>140,725,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>-14.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Friendly and Beach (2005)

BC’s substantive cutbacks can be argued to have worsened the ‘at-risk’ status across various scales of well-being for rural families in BC who are more acutely susceptible to any reduction in social services (PHAC, 2006). The Public Health Agency of Canada (2006) examined indicators relating to rural women’s health and vulnerability, which is reflected in the following excerpt from *Rural, Remote and Northern Women’s Health: Policy and Directions*:

Growing literature indicates that rural communities have unique characteristics with respect to health determinants, including factors related to demographics, economics, social relationships and the physical environment. There appears to be an inverse relationship between the size of a community and its health status, that is, the more remote or northern a community is, the poorer the health status of its residents is likely to be (p. B5.)

Some of the biggest cutbacks have occurred since the Conservative Party took office in early 2006. The first of these major changes in funding cutbacks for childcare occurred in January 2006 as the Government of Canada gave notice that it would cancel the Bilateral Early Learning
and Childcare (ELCC) ‘agreements-in-principle’. These were agreements in negotiation between the federal government and the provinces through a 2004/2005 initiative by the federal Liberal Party, committing over $5 billion to each of the provinces in order to expand childcare services across Canada in every jurisdiction (CCAAC, 2005). Consequently, in 2007, the Conservatives’ termination of these agreements represented a massive funding loss for early learning and childcare (HELP, 2007). Shortly after this, the BC government announced a series of childcare funding reductions that reflected the loss of these previously anticipated funds from the federal government. These reductions included a 77 percent decrease in the Child Care Resource and Referral service (CCRR) funding (HELP, 2007). The decrease in funding for CCRRs translated to a cut in community services that had previously provided rural families and rural care providers across 140 communities with professional advice and workshops on accessing quality childcare, access to information on childcare grants and subsidy programs, and referrals to community and government organizations in the childcare sector (CCRR, 2008).

The cutbacks also included a reduction in grants for licensed family and centre-based programs for children under six by 27 percent (HELP, 2007). These reductions and the absence of new funding meant that new regulated childcare spaces would not be made available, and many existing rural family and centre-based programs were now unable to continue providing childcare programs and services to families in rural communities. Further, without these investments in childcare, BC’s total public purse for childcare will be 21 percent less than it was previously anticipated for 2008/09 (HELP, 2007). As will be posited throughout this study, these systematic cutbacks can exacerbate the already inequitable health and social status or rural families and have a particularly strong impact on rural mothers who rely on these childcare resources.

1.2 Policy Goals & Objectives

This study subscribes to the cross-jurisdictional research that contends that enabling rural women to gain access to regulated childcare serves as a major catalyst for improving rural women’s labour market participation; and by doing so, increases the well-being status of women and children in rural communities. The information gathered from mother’s first-hand experiences lends itself to the core objective in discovering what current childcare barriers are being faced by rural mothers, and the discovery of what affect this has had on the physical, social, and economic security of mothers in rural communities. Furthermore, this documentary and mixed-method analysis aims to provide a discourse outlining existing linkages between accessibility to regulated rural childcare and rural women’s entry to the paid labour force. Because this study seeks to extract and assess the various factors that enter into the relationship
between these two variables, a major contribution is provided to fill a current literature gap that exists in understanding BC women’s experiences in this context.

A predominant theme in the literature is that for families in which parents are employed, and those in which they are not, stimulating childcare has been proven to have strong and long-lasting effects on child development (Cleveland and Krashinsky, 1998). However, the majority of past studies have failed to thoroughly assess the vast complexities of the effects of regulated childcare on the lives of mothers and particularly rural mothers. This study takes on this task in learning of rural mother’s experiences with regulated childcare and their overall understanding about the benefits, barriers, and issues surrounding their access to regulated childcare in their community. Thus, the objectives that underscore this investigation are as follows:

- To identify the most significant barriers that are preventing rural women in BC from accessing regulated childcare,

- To create policy options to address regulated childcare barriers for rural mothers with the long-term goal of impacting a wider range of Canadian families.

As previously discussed, this study will also provide new information to the childcare policy discourse and, further, will guide regulated childcare policy-makers to a source of information currently unavailable about rural families’ experiences and the implications stemming from existing barriers to regulated childcare.

1.3 Organization of Framework

The first section provides a background of the institutional and structural history and policy changes for regulated childcare in Canada and BC. This will allow for a better understanding of the federal funding mechanisms and the provincial jurisdictions and responsibilities that influence current childcare policy in BC. Additionally, in this section I briefly address how gender has influenced the development of public policy both historically and in present day.

Next, a literature review of studies in the field of women and childcare is presented; with an emphasis on presenting those studies that have previously examined mother’s labour force participation, rurality, and access to regulated childcare. This body of literature demonstrates what is known, and provides the rationale for filling an existing literature and methodology gap with the results of this mixed-method study.

5
Following the literature review, I describe the methodology employed for collecting data. It is here that I explain the basis for choosing a mixed-method approach that incorporates the following methodological instruments: 5 informative focus groups that included interviews with 36 rural mothers in BC, the use of a preliminary survey for rural mothers, neighbourhood socio-economic status (SES) and early childhood development indicator (EDI) results for identifying 'at-risk’ rural neighborhoods in BC, and interviews with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the field of regulated childcare policy across BC and Canada.

Based on the results of the data collected, I propose and evaluate a number of policy options through standard criteria. With the contributions of individual stakeholders, I recommend policy option(s) that serve to reduce rural childcare barriers, improve current SES and EDI outcomes in rural communities, and increase the ability for BC’s vulnerable rural mothers to have the means to enter the paid labour force. Ultimately, the recommendations put forward in this study may inform future policy choices that address childcare in rural areas across BC. They will also contribute to the knowledge base surrounding women’s labour force participation and access to regulated childcare for families in rural, urban and characteristically diverse communities across Canada. As rural BC mothers shared their stories of accessing regulated childcare in unique settings, public policy childcare discourse can be brought closer together with actual need.
2 Background

This section highlights historical developments and major issues of policy contention that have influenced regulated childcare policy in Canada. Included are a brief assessment of how childcare policy functions within Canada's institutional structures, an overview of the most significant childcare policy changes over the past 70 years, and the impact of gender in childcare policy in Canada.

2.1 Federal and Provincial Roles and Responsibilities

Canada is a federalist nation with complex jurisdictional structures entrenched in the constitutional framework. Arguably, this characteristic has greatly affected the development of childcare policy over the years. In Canada, regulated childcare and most other early childhood services such as health, social services, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education fall under provincial jurisdiction. Each of Canada's 13 provincial governments has a program of regulated childcare that has legislative support for the operation of services, defines the operation of services, and provides some type of funding mechanism (Friendly, Beach, Ferns and Turiano, 2007).

Federal jurisdiction in childcare policy primarily involves the transferring of funds to provinces for social programs. Traditionally, funds for childcare programs have been administered through the Canada Social Transfer, previously known as the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). These 'block' transfers to provinces are legislated as lump sum transfers with no accountability measures for how it is spent, sometimes referred to as 'no strings attached' funding; the only condition being that it be spent towards the broad spectrum of provincial social programs. Further programs that are specifically under the auspices of federal jurisdiction involve on-reserve Aboriginal persons and federal taxation programs; included among these are the Aboriginal Head Start program, Childcare Expense Deduction, and the Child Tax Credit. Provincial jurisdiction, on the other hand, includes a more extensive portfolio for ground-level childcare policy and programs.

The provincial role in childcare involves determining the length of maternity and paternity leave, and the development of almost all childcare programs, (subsidy, licensing, and operating funding). Specific programs are developed with a combination of federal and provincial
funding. In BC, these include the Childcare Subsidy, Childcare Capital Funding Program, Childcare Operating Funding Program, and the Childcare Resource and Referral Program. Lastly, provincial responsibility includes the dispersion and prioritization of funds for childcare, as well as the regulation, administration and licensing of childcare facilities, spaces, and programs.

Arguably, the federalist nature of Canadian government continues to have a large impact on the historical development of childcare policy. Specifically, the individual and shared childcare policy jurisdictions that have been discussed here demonstrate a significant grey area when it comes to roles and responsibilities for governing and funding childcare. When one looks at other BC social and health programs, such as Home-care, and Surgical Wait-Time, it is even more evident that the relationship between federal and provincial jurisdiction affect the way that a program is administered. If one takes this a step further, one sees that the range and quality of services - and families' accessibility to them - varies enormously across Canada as a result of this historical dynamic that is ever-changing and multi-dimensional (Friendly et al., 2007).

2.2 The Development of Canadian Childcare Policy

During World War II, the federal government offered funding for the first time for childcare through the establishment of the Dominion-Provincial Wartime Agreement. This start-up and cost-sharing initiative represented a belief that mothers' participation in wartime industries was essential to the war effort; and further, that childcare was a means for enabling their participation (Prentice, 2001). After the war, however, the federal government withdrew the agreement that resulted in the closure of numerous childcare centres (Prentice, 2001).

The federal government’s second form of involvement in childcare policy took place in 1966 through the introduction of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), with the intent to ameliorate poverty and lessen reliance on public assistance (Prentice, 2007). Through a method of 50-50 federal-provincial cost sharing, CAP regarded childcare like most “welfare services” or “items of assistance” at that time (ECEC, 2007). The plan outlined certain federal conditions that included the following: federal funds were available only for “needy, or potentially needy, families,” and that eligibility for funding was based to be on applications for regulated and not-for-profit childcare (ECEC, 2007). As social services fell under provincial jurisdiction, the provinces were not compelled to participate in CAP. However, the provinces all began to use the childcare provisions, and thus CAP spurred the development of childcare services throughout Canada, shaping their evolution as a welfare benefit rather than a universal program (ECEC, 2007).
Next, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed the development of a number of federal tax programs such as the Childcare Expense Deduction (CCED) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC), and the 1990s and 2000s saw the creation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). The amount of the block transfer decreased steadily over the years that followed the CHST, affecting funding for childcare negatively (Prentice, 2001). And arguably, one of the major precipitators for some of these childcare initiatives that took place from 1970 – 2000 came as a result from the findings of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970), a large-scale assessment of Canadian women. The commission found that the socially constructed views of women had an immense impact on public policy and the social and economic inequities that affect the status of rural mothers predating the 1970s (RCSW, 1970). While examining developments over recent years, it becomes evident that some of these social and economic inequalities remain.

The years 2005 – 2007 saw significant changes in childcare policy. In 2005, the Federal Liberals created the Multilateral Framework and Bilateral Agreements with Provinces, developed to provide a nationally funded childcare initiative in collaboration with each of the provincial jurisdictions. However, following the federal election at the end of 2005, the Conservatives cancelled these agreements and replaced Liberal initiatives with an assortment of federal childcare policy changes. A number of these new initiatives included the creation of the National Childcare Benefit, the Childcare Spaces Initiative, and the Universal Childcare Benefit. Despite the introduction of these childcare programs, a number of issues still resonate in childcare policy today. Namely, women with pre-school-aged children are still much less likely than those with school-age children to be employed (Statistics Canada, 2006). Moreover, finding and maintaining employment for rural women remains a significant challenge because regardless of their level of educational attainment, women in BC’s rural communities are still less likely than their male counterparts to be employed (Statistics Canada, 2006). Ultimately, this historical overview is intended to show the wayward development of childcare policy in Canada, and the continued presence of a number of systemic issues that can be traced over decades of childcare policy changes. Table 2 highlights important events in the history of childcare policy in Canada. These landmarks are an important part of understanding the issues and constraints of the national and provincial childcare portfolio.
### Table 2: Summary of Regulated Childcare Policy Developments, Canada and British Columbia

#### History of Regulated Childcare in Canada and British Columbia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1942 (WWII)</td>
<td><strong>Feds sign Dominion-Provincial Wartime Agreement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>BC is the first province to introduce Licensing Legislation for Daycare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Dominion-Provincial Wartime Agreement Withdrawn &amp; Family Allowance Program introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>CAP Funding Introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Royal Commission on Status of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Childcare Expense Deduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>The Report on the Task Force of Childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Progressive Conservatives Develop the National Strategy on Childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>BC Task force on Childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>B.C. NDP introduces the <em>BC Benefits</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Quebec’s Summit on the Economy and Employment *$5 dollars per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Canada’s Child Tax Benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Liberal’s Est. Multilateral Framework &amp; Bilateral Agreements with Provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>Federal Conservatives: Cancellation of Bilateral Agreements / Creation of 'Childcare Spaces Initiative' &amp; UCCB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td><em>B.C. Childcare Subsidy</em> income threshold changed from $21,000 to $38,000 (readjusted reflects previous level witnessed in 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Literature Review

Past studies have examined the costs and benefits of regulated childcare and the externalities that have resulted from greater or lesser degrees of accessibility to this form of care. The common theme among these studies is that they have addressed access to regulated childcare through singular lenses, namely social, economic, or cultural frameworks. What stands out among these is that little attention has been paid to rural mothers, and the complexities of rural communities have yet to be fully captured in childcare evaluations. It becomes apparent that past studies have neglected to integrate the most critical linkages between childcare, access to paid employment and improving the well-being status for women and their children. The studies examined in the following literature review employ a number of methodological techniques that have influenced the methodology employed in this study, while at the same time demonstrating the gaps in the literature that this study seeks to address.

A cost-benefit analysis on Canadian childcare policy was put forward in the study, *The Benefits and Costs of Good Childcare* by Cleveland and Krashinsky (1998). This report serves as a valuable foundation for any research study in this area, as it provides the key economic rationale for public investment in childcare for young children. Cleveland and Krashinsky demonstrated that for every dollar of public investment into childcare, approximately two dollars worth of benefits are generated for children, their parents, and society. Most studies focus on either the parents or the children. However, this study demonstrated the necessity of ensuring three major stakeholders formed the bases of the analysis. By concentrating on the relationship between these parties, namely the parent (rural mothers), the child (rural children), and the policy-makers (BC provincial government), the present study highlights the three key stakeholders necessary for addressing access to regulated childcare.

Halliday and Little (2002) conducted a UK study that examined the social and cultural pressures experienced by rural families with respect to the provision of childcare. The study used a dataset comprised of 100 structured interviews. The authors hypothesized that the integration of cultural and social aspects of rurality would ultimately prove to be linked to childcare decisions. The study showed that demanding responsibilities on rural mothers have a significant impact on their decision-making processes. Some of these responsibilities included juggling paid work,
familial responsibilities, child rearing, and obtaining, purchasing and managing regulated childcare. Halliday and Little's study provides information showing rural mothers feel vulnerable about childcare decisions and feel they must "conform" to their own employment decisions based on 1) "fixed" availability of childcare and, 2) their partner's employment. The authors also demonstrate that the management of childcare can be an "organizational minefield," where constant adjustment and negotiations take place based on family, service providers, community and individual values, and expectations regarding gender roles.

A somewhat different approach was utilized by Tekin (2002), who first estimated a model for the choice of part-time and full-time employment and the decision to pay for childcare among a single-mother population. Tekin's use of a social-cultural framework lends itself to the value in researching a mother's personal experiences and to a greater understanding of the emotional, cultural and social interplay of factors that affect women's ability to access childcare. The results indicate that lower costs for childcare and higher wages often increase full-time employment and the use of paid childcare. What proved invaluable to the present study was Tekin's incorporation of multi-lens techniques centered on having a unique openness to various aspects of cultural, economic, and social factors. Tekin's study helped to conceptualize certain elements of the present paper's hypothesis. In particular, her research summons future childcare studies to be aware that regulated childcare barriers may not be limited to pure social or pure economic causes. On the contrary, the integrative nature of Tekin's study indicated the strong need to envision a new framework that includes many variables that can lead to a clearer understanding of rural mother's potential barriers in accessing regulated childcare.

Connelly and Kimmel's (2002) U.S. study examined effects of childcare costs on the employment decisions of vulnerable single mothers with children under five. This study emphasized the importance of cost on purchasing childcare and gave an indication of a key theme that is addressed in the present study's documentary analysis, data collection, and policy options. By using a National Survey, the authors showed that labour market decisions of mothers with young children are affected by the cost of childcare. Connelly and Kimmel concluded their study by asking if subsidizing childcare can reduce the impoverishment of single mothers; their answer was "unequivocally, yes" (p.514). This study provides a strong rationale for emphasizing aspects of cost, subsidization, and affordability, in studies that examine vulnerable populations negotiating access to childcare.

Press, Fagan and Bernd's (2006) U.S. study provides an understanding of the effects of employment and childcare access on the emotional well-being of low-income mothers. The uniqueness of this study lies within the sizeable survey sample of 707 mothers living in low-
income neighborhoods in Philadelphia. Their use of mixed-method research enables considerable connections between women’s employment and childcare access with the importance of incorporating personal accounts and statistical analysis. This was done in order to understand the psychological impact that stems from the interaction of these variables. By focusing solely on social factors, this research demonstrates that well-being status is something that is intimately connected to childcare cost and access, poverty and related environmental conditions.

This literature review demonstrates that women’s experiences with negotiating childcare involves much more than social, economic, cultural or environmental influences as singular variables. Halliday and Little (2002) and Tekin (2002) provided valuable lessons for integrating a multi-angled lens to address vulnerable women’s access to childcare. These studies have also shown that contextualizing the experiences of mothers have produced limited results when using singular quantitative or qualitative methodologies as opposed to using a mixed-method approach. Cleveland and Krashinsky’s (1998) study indicated that examining the three major actors in childcare is a critical part of examining childcare accessibility. And lastly, Press, Fagan and Bernd (2006) and Connelly and Kimmel (2002) examined broad sweeping populations of mothers through analyses of single mothers or low-income mothers, effectively neglecting the impact of marital status, income, and environmental factors. Their study illustrates a need to incorporate low-income, single, and rural status mothers to fully address the complexities of unique and vulnerable rural women populations. Finally, these studies informed this study’s framework and approach in using a mixed-method strategy and inclusive targeting of a diverse range of rural women through a multi-city rural analysis. Arguably, the following study’s analytical approach has the potential to put forward results that can be used to inform childcare policy discourse and can be applied to a cross-jurisdictional analysis of rural women and childcare—something yet to be fully explored in the literature.
4 Methodology

4.1 Research Design

When planning and conceptualizing the research design of this project, I determined that a mixed-method approach would be the most effective methodology for the type of information required for the study. Many examples of mixed-method research exist on the subject of mothers, childcare, and employment (e.g. Press, Fagan and Bernd, 2006; Halliday and Little, 2001; Reschke and Walker, 2006), suggesting that the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods are common-practice and have significant value in the field. For example, Halliday and Little, (2001) used a mixed-method approach to study childcare roles and responsibilities, suggesting that qualitative and ethnographic studies are valuable for understanding “the wider interpretation of cultural and social pressures” and are an important method for integrating large data sets and service-based assessments (p.424).

Mixed-methods research has been philosophically designated as the “third chair” in the research continuum of qualitative and quantitative designs (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). More formally, mixed-method research has been defined as a process whereby the researcher “mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In trying to maintain inclusiveness at all points in this study, the choice for the design of the project seemed apparent. In that, I subscribe to the argument put forward by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) that mixed-method research is an expansive, complementary, and pluralistic form of research that allows researchers to take an “eclectic” approach to method selection. The specific quantitative and qualitative techniques employed in this study will be discussed in the following section.

Quantitative data are used to contextualize the supplementary research by assessing recent mother and child outcomes in rural BC neighbourhoods. Statistical data pinpointed areas with vulnerable SES and EDI conditions in rural communities in order to ensure effective targeting and analysis of ‘at-risk’ rural areas of BC. These areas were then chosen as the setting for the focus groups in the next phase of the study.

After targeting three rural cities for assessment, quantitative methods were further utilized through the preliminary survey tool to add some clarity about the focus groups sample.
Some of the valuable information collected through this mechanism include: the percentage of mothers who currently had access to care, those who have turned down occupations due to a lack of accessible regulated childcare, and the number of mothers who were currently on regulated childcare waiting lists. It was also possible to learn about the level of annual household income for these mothers, and the number of children, aboriginal status, and the age of their children. By using this method, it became possible to explore the general experiences of the rural mothers in this sample with that of other BC rural mothers who have had similar or different experiences accessing childcare. These statistics are valuable to the analysis in order to describe the sample population and to discuss similarities and differences about the population being addressed.

Focus groups were chosen as the most conducive method for enabling this kind of qualitative assessment. They allowed for an in-depth investigation of the social contexts which shape women’s experiences and within which those experiences occur. With the clear focus of understanding the daily lives of mothers living in rural communities, and specifically, how their experiences differ and how they relate, how they conceptualize regulated childcare and their identities amidst multidimensional demands and social norms, valuable insight can be provided for regulated childcare in isolated and rural communities. This qualitative technique was fundamental to the research design of this study.

Lastly, the research also included a second phase of qualitative interviews with different types of key stakeholders that included the following individuals who specialized in the field of childcare policy: governmental representatives, academic experts, and childcare advocates. These interviews were one-on-one, semi-structured and conducted over the phone, with the sole purpose of obtaining information on each policy option's practicability, strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the interviews were audio-recorded and took place after the signed and verbal consent of the interviewee.

4.2 Quantitative Data

As part of the examination, three cities, namely Prince George, Tofino, and Chilliwack, were selected to be representative of rural and northern BC based on the following five criteria: (a) geography; (b) size of rural population; (d) non-major commuter cities; (d) high vulnerability indicator results for early childhood development; and (e) high socio-economic status inequity statistics for women.
4.2.1 The Setting: Rural & Northern British Columbia

The term ‘rural’ is a residual category made up of all territory not classified as urban. Therefore, the definition can broadly encompass a vast array of geographical, environmental, economic, and social diversity (PHAC, 2002). For the purpose of interpretive ease, a standard domestic definition used for this study is the “rural and small town” definition provided by Statistics Canada, which is “the population living in town and municipalities outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (i.e. outside the commuting zone of centres with population of 10,000 or more)” (Statistics Canada, 2001). This was chosen to ensure that the policy options are applicable to a wider range of communities and has the potential for cross-rural and cross-provincial policy adoption.

The three cities chosen for this study meet in part or in entirety the definition of rurality outlined above. Second, through the contributions of the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), an interdisciplinary research network, various indicators were provided to allow for an assessment of these cities on a neighbourhood scale. The EDI is a validated ‘group-measure’ tool administered by kindergarten teachers to gauge the ‘readiness for school’ of five-year olds as they enter kindergarten (HELP, 2007). The five ‘readiness for school’ categories are as follows:

- **Physical Health and Well-Being**: Child is healthy, independent, ready each day,
- **Social competence**: Child plays, gets along with others and shares, is self-confident,
- **Emotional Maturity**: Child is able to concentrate, help others, is patient, not aggressive or angry,
- **Language and Cognitive Development**: Child is interested in reading and writing, can count and recognize numbers, shapes,
- **Communication Skills and General Knowledge**: Child can tell a story, communicate with adults and children, articulate themselves,\(^3\) (HELP, 2007).

In understanding how the information gathered is interpreted, HELP provides the following explanation:

The questionnaire is scored by the five developmental domains. The bottom 10% of scores on the EDI is used as a cut-off for vulnerability status. This means that children who fall below the 10th percentile are determined to be “at risk” or “vulnerable” in terms of school readiness within a given developmental domain.” Vulnerability” on a particular subscale indicates that the child demonstrated a lower

\(^3\) Supplied online through the Human Early Learning Partnership’s EDI Mapping: ‘About the EDI’. 
than average ability in the skills which are needed to be ready for school within that developmental domain.

The SES indicators, on the other hand, are used to assess the current inequalities, and poor socio-economically based outcomes in BC’s rural communities. The specific indicators that were used in this assessment include the following:

- **Families with children under the age of six who fall below the Low Income Measure (LIM):** a relative measure of low income, set at 50% of adjusted median family income. This measure is categorized according to the number of adults and children present in families, reflecting the economies of scale inherent in family size and composition.
- **Percentage of couples in which mothers are performing more unpaid childcare per week than the father,**
- **Gender Income Disparity:** used to describe inequities in average pay or lower average income for females than males,
- **Gini Coefficient:** a measure of statistical dispersion most prominently used as a measure of inequality of income distribution or inequality of wealth distribution. It is a ratio with values between 0 and 1: a low Gini coefficient indicates more equal income or wealth distribution, while a high Gini coefficient indicates more unequal distribution.

This information is retrieved from data provided by Statistics Canada’s 2001 Census of Population, Semi-custom Area Profile. In the following subsections, the three locations, Prince George, Tofino/Ucluelet, and Chilliwack, are presented in more detail to best understand how each meets certain demographic, social, and economic characteristics necessary for further study and ultimately, how each city has become the setting for this research investigation.

### 4.2.1.1 Profile 1: Prince George

Based on geographic characteristics, Prince George represents both northern and rural characteristics for this exposition. Notably, Prince George is currently experiencing a number of distinctive social, economic, and physical health outcomes for women and children that are the cause for some concern. Through the quantitative EDI and SES indicators, it was possible to decipher the current state of human development and well-being status for Prince George’s 15 designated neighbourhoods. A select number of SES and EDI indictors have been chosen in order to demonstrate the pressing need for regulated childcare availability in this city. Further, because
Prince George is divided into 15 neighbourhood districts of various sizes and characteristics, only those with the most salient conditions emerging over recent years are put forward.\(^4\)

According to the SES data in the neighbourhoods of Hart Highlands and Mackenzie, the gender income disparity stands at 0.60 and 0.61 respectively. When turning one’s attention to Prince George’s families with children under the age of six who fall below the Low Income Measure (LIM), the districts of ‘The Bowl’, Ospika North, and Upper Fraser demonstrate that this population is encroaching towards a 40 percent LIM population.\(^5\) The SES scale also indicates that the percentage of couples in which mothers are performing more unpaid childcare per week than the father stands between 80 – 85 percent in at least three of Prince George’s major neighbourhood districts. Lastly, the Gini coefficient, a useful measure of the inequality of income distribution, shows Prince George as having a significant number of families who are disadvantaged economically.\(^6\) For example, South Fort George, The Bowl, Ospika North and Ospika South were found to have a GINI coefficient ranging from 0.39 to 0.43. Arguably, this figure reinforces what the other SES variables are positing, which is that a significant number of families in Prince George are experiencing inequitable and difficult conditions which affect their ‘well-being’ and livelihood in their neighbourhoods.

When turning the focus to the measurable outcomes of Prince George’s children, it is clear that child development is also showing vulnerable ‘at-risk’ conditions with far-reaching implications. Using variable scales of physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communications and general knowledge, neighbourhoods in Prince George have shown some distressing conditions on one or more scales. In the first and second wave of testing, the status of physical health and well-being of children in South Fort George showed that at any point in time over the past six years, between 33 and 47 percent of children fell within the classification of the 10 percent most vulnerable children for this indicator. Prince George’s neighbourhoods of Upper Fraser and Blackburn show that 25 percent of children are falling below the 10 percent vulnerability cut-off for physical health and well-being. The data indicated that on one or more scales being measured through the

\(^4\) For a more detailed inquiry, these statistics have been provided in Appendix D.

\(^5\) According to Statistics Canada (2006), Low income Measure (LIM) is a relative measures of low income, set at 50% of adjusted median family income. This measure is categorized according to the number of adults and children present in families, reflecting the economies of scale inherent in family size and composition.

\(^6\) The Gini coefficient is a measure of statistical dispersion most prominently used as a measure of inequality of income distribution or inequality of wealth distribution. It is a ratio with values between 0 and 1: a low Gini coefficient indicates more equal income or wealth distribution, while a high Gini coefficient indicates more unequal distribution.
EDI there are at least five major Prince George neighbourhoods with 36 to 54 percent of children categorically vulnerable on one or more EDI measures. This alone can be argued as a strong enough case for taking a closer look at this city.

4.2.1.2 Profile 2: Tofino

Tofino is a small, remote, and somewhat secluded community situated as one of the western-most locations on Vancouver Island. The national Census for 2006 reported 1655 residents in Tofino with a 100 percent rural characteristic. Tofino is part of the Alberni regional district and represents the most remote and geographically secluded area in this study. Furthermore, the neighbourhood districts encompass five defined areas that will be briefly examined through the EDI and SES quantitative-based discourse.

The SES outcomes for Tofino explain, in part, the basis for this city as the second of three exemplar areas for the study of rural BC. The gender income-disparity results for Tofino are significant. Three of Tofino’s neighbourhoods demonstrate that Tofino women are earning 65 to 69 cents on the dollar compared to Tofino men. Secondly, 51 percent of Tofino’s children under age six, living in the neighbourhood of Central Port, are below the Low Income Measure. Further, 57-61 percent of mothers in Tofino, specifically in the neighbourhoods of South Port and North Port, are providing unpaid childcare per week when compared to fathers in the households. These clear inequitable conditions are further reinforced by the GINI coefficient for South Port, Tofino-Ucluelet, and Central Port as a 0.39 to 0.41 outcome was discovered. As the SES measures show, recent dismal outcomes exist for many families in Tofino.

The children in Tofino are also experiencing vulnerable conditions leading to poor development outcomes. For example, 50 percent of children in Bamfield-Alberni Canal are below 10 percent on the vulnerability scale for language and cognitive development. This lag behind other children exists for physical health and well-being measures, as 66.7 percent of these same children are statistically vulnerable and not showing positive outcomes. In the last three years, on one or more scales, children in Tofino have been demonstrating poor outcomes on the 10 percent vulnerability scale for all variables, particularly in the neighbourhoods of Central Port (36.8 percent) and South Port (23.9 percent). When considering the small population in Tofino along with these very poor developmental outcomes, it is clear that Tofino is in a state of hardship and socio-economic instability that requires further attention.

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7 See Appendix D for a more complete list of SES and EDI for Tofino.
4.2.1.3 Profile 3: Chilliwack

The next site chosen was the city of Chilliwack, located in the Eastern Fraser Valley. Chilliwack is a distinctive setting for the study because of the number of past federal and provincial pilot initiatives that have taken place in the city. In 1999, the LNR (License Not Required) Child Care Registration Project was established to test a model for registration of caregivers who are not required to be licensed under the Community Care Facility Act. This pilot was put into effect in order to inform the federal and provincial governments of how to increase affordability of childcare for parents and improve the stability and quality of facilities and services. By choosing Chilliwack as the third city in this study, the poor EDI and SES outcomes discussed in the following profile indicate that past childcare policy developments have been inadequate at improving the well-being status of women and children.8

Chilliwack’s SES results paint a clear picture of a city with troubling socio-economic status discrepancies among the population. To begin with, the gender income disparity rate for Chilliwack is reported as being 0.63 for Sardis East (compared to a threshold of 1.00 for men) and 0.67 for the neighbourhood of Rosedale/Chilliwack East. One of the most striking results measured was the percentage of families with children under 6 below the Low Income Measure variable, as 52 percent of Chilliwack North’s families were categorized as part of this economically vulnerable segment of population.

The mothers in Chilliwack’s Promontory/Ryder Lake (74 percent) and Rosedale/Chilliwack East (73.13 percent) neighbourhood districts were found to provide very high levels of unpaid childcare when compared to the fathers in a family unit. Here, the GINI Coefficient in Chilliwack North (0.41), for example, provides an indication of significant inequality in Chilliwack. And lastly, it is notable that the difference in median family income for families with no children under 18, compared to those families who have children under the age of 6, is found to have one of the highest discrepancies among all of the cities being examined. The most striking results were found in three of Chilliwack’s major neighborhoods where families who have children under age 6 who had a median family income that was -18,400, -15,700, and -12,500 less than that of families in the same three neighborhoods did not have any children under age 18.

As expected, the ECD statistics reinforce the SES variables that have up to this point shown a dismal picture of vulnerability outcomes in Chilliwack. This also serves to present the most challenging developmental outcomes that are coming out of the Early Learning and

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8 See Appendix D for a more complete list of Chilliwack’s SES and EDI results.
Childcare Research Unit's study of Chilliwack's young children. The first of the EDI variables is language and cognitive development, which has shown that 23 percent of children in Chilliwack West and 32.9 percent of children in Fairfield/Little Mountain have shown high levels of cognitive and language development vulnerability in the last 6 years.

In terms of measurements on 'one or more scales', which include language and cognitive development, physical development, communication skills, social competence, and emotional maturity, the most recent collection of data revealed that 56.1 percent of Chilliwack West's children and 54.2 percent of Chilliwack North's children are reported as being part of the 10 percent most vulnerable children within their districts through the measurements of any of the aforementioned EDI variables. In and of itself, Chilliwack is an example of a rural city in need of interventions to reduce a number of poor social, emotional, physical and cognitive outcomes for children. Despite the introduction of pilot initiatives for childcare, Chilliwack continues to demonstrate poor SES and EDI, which along with Tofino and Prince George, draw attention to a greater need for provincial intervention and further research.

4.2.2 Preliminary Survey

A short survey was administered to all mothers who participated in the focus groups. The survey consisted of nine closed-ended questions aimed at collecting demographic and general information about each of the mothers who participated in the focus groups across all jurisdictions.9 The mothers were asked questions pertaining to their household income, current use of childcare, marital status, the number of children they had, their children's ages, and whether they experienced issues with childcare and/or employment. The data collected in the preliminary survey allowed for descriptive statistics to be used in describing the focus group population, as well as to create a picture of the shared characteristics of the rural women within the sample.

4.3 Qualitative Data

4.3.1 Focus Groups

Focus groups were held with 36 mothers across three rural and northern BC communities in order to represent the previously discussed setting criteria. As such, five semi-structured focus groups were conducted over the course of a three-month period from November 2007 to January 2008.

9 See Appendix E for Preliminary Questionnaire.
2008. Because of the remoteness of these communities, it was not possible to create a random sample. However, all efforts were made through recruitment and volunteer prerequisites to ensure a wide range of income demographics, varied cultural or ethnic backgrounds, marital status, positive or negative experiences with childcare access, and varying degrees of employment status. This is evident in the results of the descriptive statistics.

The focus groups were advertised through a number of methods. The first of these was a Prince George and a Tofino ‘Mommies and Babies’ online forum, calling for ‘paid mom volunteers’. As well, word of mouth through non-for-profit community organizations and physically posted advertisements in public community locations, such as childcare centres, drew some of the volunteer participants. The announcement was standardized in all cases and called for ‘moms’ to participate as paid volunteers for a focus group with the intent to discuss childcare in their community for a maximum of two hours at a location to be determined. All participants were rural mothers, with the exception of one, who was an expectant rural mother.

No restrictions were placed on income, age, number of children, or specifically positive or negative experiences with accessing childcare. This was done to allow for greater inclusivity and a wider variation of discussions about personal experiences. Specifically, the researcher questioned whether policy options could be formulated to address childcare barriers without a sound understanding of what reduced childcare barriers for rural mothers who had little to no barriers for regulated childcare. In the end, the focus group consisted of three components: 1) a preliminary survey with closed-ended questions for the purpose of describing the population and gathering general statistics on the participants; 2) a facilitated, semi-structured discussion regarding personal experiences with childcare; and 3) an open discussion about possible policy options.

In terms of location and time, the Tofino session was held during a ‘Family Ties’ morning drop-in. Family Ties is an environment where parents can bring their children to interact with one another for a short period of time once a week. Parents are educated in this setting on everything from nutrition to childbirth to adjusting to parenthood, and guest-speakers are invited to come and present on matters pertaining to health and childhood development. All members of the Family Ties group were informed ahead of time of the visiting facilitator and the focus group that was to take place. Originally, two sessions were to be held in Tofino on this day, one in the morning during the ‘Family Ties’ group, and a later session in the afternoon for those who could not attend. However, the participant turnout for the morning session included almost all expected participants for the two groups; therefore, this led to a cancellation of the later session.
Two focus groups were held consecutively at a local community foundation meeting facility in Prince George. These sessions were held in the evening where the largest number of mothers could attend. This was due to feedback provided from mothers about their demanding daytime schedules, as well as the daytime employment schedule of their partners, family members, or caregivers who could assist in supervising their children for the duration of the session. Participants were contacted through e-mail in order to supply them with specific information regarding location, time, contact information for facilitator, and a reminder notice days before the event.

In the city of Chilliwack, two separate focus group sessions were held. Much like Prince George, one focus group was held during the early afternoon, and the second session was held at night-time in order to accommodate mothers' schedules. The first of these groups was held at a local daycare centre where caregivers provided childcare for the children of the participants. The second group was held at a local Childcare Resource and Referral office in the facility's boardroom.

In all three cities, the facilitator first informed the participants of the purpose of the study, explained the general format of the 2-hour session, and reinforced that participation was voluntary. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any point before or during the focus group. Upon arrival, each participant was handed an 'informed consent form' to sign before the commencement of the session and an anonymous preliminary questionnaire consisting of 9 closed-ended questions. The participants received a $25 honorarium and were reimbursed for childcare, transportation, and parking costs associated with their focus group participation.  

Next, a brief introduction was given by the facilitator that included thanking volunteers for their participation, outlined the rules of interaction, and reinforced the importance of respect for others during the session. The groups were advised that the session would be recorded solely for accuracy, transcription, and analysis. This was followed by an explanation that prepared questions would be presented, that each person would have an opportunity to speak, and that participation is encouraged.  

The last step involved informing the participants that they may be prompted to expand further on certain questions and that clarification of the questions was welcomed. Food and beverages were provided. The focus groups were audio-taped, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using a grounded theory approach.

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10 Partial funding provided by Masters of Public Policy Program, Simon Fraser University.
11 See Appendix C for Focus Group Questions.
4.3.2 Key Stakeholder Interviews

The last method of data collection used in this study was the information gathered from key individual stakeholder interviews. After the development of policy options, five semi-structured interviews took place in order to test the policy options and gain feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the policy options. Creswell and Miller (2000) cite this type of methodology as popular in locating major and minor themes and ensuring validity of the data collected. In addition, the usefulness of relying on multiple forms of evidence, rather than an isolated occurrence or single data points, can be considered strength in ensuring the soundness of a study. The questions presented to these stakeholders were set in a style of conversational exchange in order facilitate the free flow of information, after which their input and observations are applied to the policy options in the evaluation portion of this study.

4.4 Analysis Methods

Focus group digital recordings were transcribed verbatim. Procedures developed for qualitative analysis were primarily built upon the 'grounded theory approach'. Grounded theory is a qualitative research design defined by Creswell et al. (2007) as a process by which the "inquirer generates a general explanation of a process, action, or interaction, shaped by the views of a large number of participants" (p.249). Because the organization of focus groups was set in a semi-structured format, the answers to the 11 original questions underwent a process of first being categorized by question-answer to ensure consistency and then examined later for identification of themes. Here, I implemented a process of open coding the data for major categories of information. From this coding, 'axial coding' emerged, where I identified one or more of the themes and analysed the information to allow for the building of a model around this information core (Creswell et al., 2007).

The grounded theory approach for this analysis (Charmaz, 2000), led to a straightforward interpretation of the transcripts in the following two ways: first, the dialogue was analyzed by 'chunking,' identifying and classifying initial topics; second, the transcripts were organized into words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs connected to specific questions (Brown and Hallam, 2004). Further, any additional information collected, including supporting demographic and follow-up questions, were open-coded and categorized according to existing themes. As these themes materialized, the procedure involved identifying the similarities and differences in the experiences. As the process took shape, a method of interrelating categories was undertaken,
transforming the data to accurately represent northern and rural BC perspectives regarding a
number of experiences, perceptions and themes.

In order to present the findings in a way that represents the original intent and emotional
underscore of the mothers, direct quotes are frequently used to allow the reader to connect to the
evidence. The use of quotes gives a voice to mothers who, as this research has shown, are seldom
heard from in research and public policy. Majority and minority opinions are also incorporated to
enable the reader to gain an understanding of the consensus and the outliers in the answers
provided.

4.5 Data Limitations

There were a few difficulties encountered in the various strategies used to collect data for
this study. These pertain primarily to some logistical methods surrounding the focus groups, and
certain limitations presented themselves with the SES and EDI data. For the focus groups, a few
barriers proved difficult in the recruitment process. This was primarily because of the isolation of
the communities being examined. The difficulties included trying to advertise and recruit mothers
who had limited access to internet, resources, and transportation. As a result, some mothers who
could have potentially participated and provided valuable insights were constrained by these
factors.

I experienced another limitation when selecting the cities that would become the setting
for the focus groups. Due to time and financial constraints, and transportation limitations for
reaching rural, remote and northern areas, only three cities could be visited. Ideally, if more cities
could have been included in this study, more voices and increased regional representation across
BC's diverse landscape would have informed the study.

In terms of the quantitative methods, a barrier was found in the ability to aggregate the
raw data. The data provided by HELP did not present population percentages that could be
weighted to compute the averages for the entire city district. Without having this information, the
data had to remain as representative of specific neighbourhoods. Although microcosmic data is
quite useful to assess specific outcomes and status indicators for neighbourhoods as indicated by
this study, it would have been quite informative to assess the areas on a citywide basis.
5 Results

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

In order to learn more about the population being examined, a general list of characteristics was compiled through the results of the preliminary survey. Out of the 36 mothers, as many as 55 percent answered in the affirmative of having experienced trouble in finding childcare. This number corresponded to the number of mothers who were no longer on maternity leave, as indicated by the age of their child, and who had begun their search for regulated childcare in their community. A significant majority of the focus group population who responded that they had not had trouble accessing regulated childcare (45 percent), had also remarked that this was a result of their child being too young to be eligible for regulated childcare, or they were on maternity leave and had yet to begin their search for regulated childcare. However, their participation was still deemed valuable as they were able to indicate a general rural experience with accessing rural childcare.

The average number of children for the women was 1.92, and the average age of their child was 39 months. The lowest annual income was reported to be $8,000, and the highest was reported as $200,000. The number of women who identified themselves as Aboriginal was 19 percent. When asked about present employment, 53 percent of mothers reported some form of paid employment. The marital status of the participants were as follows: 42 percent of the women were married, 31 percent of participants selected ‘common-law’, and 27 percent of women identified themselves as ‘single’ or ‘divorced.’ This marked a well-rounded sample to demonstrate results from varied familial compositions. Lastly, 44 percent of the respondents reported missing work or school because of inaccessibility to regulated childcare and a slightly higher 47 percent revealed that they had turned down a job because of not having access to childcare. Each of the respondent demography characteristics are further outlined in Table 3 listed below.
Table 3: Preliminary Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Characteristics</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Children:</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age of Children:</td>
<td>39.4 mos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Marital Status of Participant:</td>
<td>42 percent Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31 percent Common-Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22 percent Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 percent Divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Status:</td>
<td>19 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have had trouble finding regulated childcare in the community:</td>
<td>64 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are Presently Employed:</td>
<td>53 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have turned down a job because of not having access to childcare:</td>
<td>47 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have missed work or school because of not having access to childcare:</td>
<td>44 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Annual Income Before-Tax</td>
<td>$51,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Emerging Themes

These results underscore the importance of how the current state of public policy is affecting nearly every aspect of life for women in these remote areas of BC. Although only minimally documented in other cases, these accounts demonstrate that barriers to childcare can and do create significant impacts on a mother’s ability to work, support her family, engage in the public sphere, and feel like a valuable and equal member in society. The analysis of the information collected through focus groups led to the creation of a number of thematic categories including: (a) perceptions of the benefits of regulated childcare; (b) accessing regulated childcare; (c) ‘social stigma’; (d) mothers’ ability to work outside of the home; (e) barriers to childcare; and (f) what should be done?

5.2.1 Perceptions of the Benefits of Regulated Childcare

For this study, it was deemed very important to discover what the overall perceptions were regarding the benefits of regulated childcare. Accordingly, a question of “what do you think are benefits of regulated childcare” was specifically set out to address whether this was something
that they believed to be important or beneficial for the development of their children, as opposed to other forms of care.

Overall, licensed facilities were thought to be important for the socialization of the children through play and interaction. As well, this was expressed as being important for their children’s “autonomy” and “self-confidence”. Some mothers believed that regulated care and professionals in licensed settings could provide added help to children with behavioural issues as well as “keep an eye on the development milestones” for all children in attendance. One of the mothers shared a story about her two children; one of the children was school-aged and had attended licensed childcare many years prior, and the younger child was unable to access regulated care at this time. This is what she shared:

“I think socialization and social environments with other kids are important. [My oldest] is very sociable... I mean his self-confidence is through the roof— he’d walk into a playroom with strange kids and just engage! Where my daughter on the other hand didn’t have the benefit of being in a regulated childcare environment with other kids, was she’s very introverted and shy — she’ll assess the whole situation before she actually gets inside.”

A significant number of participants felt that licensed childcare was held to a certain provincial standard that would give them piece of mind in placing their child there. Further, regulated childcare represented a facility that had mechanisms for ‘accountability’ in quality, and hence, was a highly sought after, but wholly unattainable commodity. A mother who expressed this feeling best stated:

“I like the idea of licensed or registered childcare because they’re more accountable. You kind of have a better idea of what’s going on there, and somebody who’s qualified and trained has resources, whereas if you’re just using Joe Blow you don’t know what they’re really doing.”

The majority of mothers saw regulated childcare as a great benefit to their child’s growth, learning, and development. However, it is important to note that not all mothers ascribed to the more common belief that regulated childcare was most beneficial for their child. Although in the minority, a few of mothers expressed a belief that ‘philosophy of child rearing’ was most important, and that family members or some special cases with unlicensed care could provide a suitable and equal environment to that of regulated childcare. As well, this was reiterated as a small but discernable number of the mothers argued that ‘a license does not always mean quality’.

5.2.2 Accessing Regulated Childcare

In order to determine the current state of regulated childcare, each mother was asked if she currently has her children attending regulated childcare or other forms of care. A large
segment of the mothers cited that the age of their child created a barrier in accessing regulated childcare at this time, with an overwhelming response in the negative. In Tofino, a minimum age of 30 months was cited as the requirement for children's enrollment in care. This was reflected in the answers from mothers with very young children, as one mother explained:

I don't have access to childcare right now because my baby is too young. But, when he is old enough and I have to go to work, I'm probably going to end up going to work in shifts with my partner because there is not a lot of childcare here.

Some mothers described having some form of childcare available to them at this time, but not any licensed care. In many cases, the mothers described relying on extended family, neighbours, private care, and unlicensed facilities while on a waitlist for regulated modes of care. Many of the mothers seemed to be aware of local demand issues with accessing regulated care and many women had planned far in advance of their children's birth. One mother said:

"I have been on a waitlist. I was due to return to work in September and I started the search the beginning of March. And I knew I would have complications because I was looking for infant care for two. And so I just put them both on a waitlist...just because I knew space for care was impossible."

Moreover, it appeared that many of the mothers seemed defeated with the idea of trying to access the care, as a rural mother revealed:

"I was told to not even bother with putting your name on the waitlists. They don’t even call you back. I was just told to call them every couple of months. In fact, I was given a number to call HRSDC and was told that they will try to help."

Despite a preponderance of discouraging experiences similar to these that were relayed to the facilitator, a small segment of mothers expressed that their family network enabled them to have access to regulated care in cases where family members worked in the regulated childcare field. Moreover, some cases were acknowledged by small number of participants where immediate family members living within the community were able to provide informal childcare, and therefore, these mothers were not presently seeking regulated childcare.

5.2.3 Social Stigma

One of the more sensitive themes that came out of the discussion on childcare was a feeling of ‘social stigma’ from outside parties such as family, friends, community, and institutional structures in the communities. The topic stemmed from the discussion on accessing regulated care and was very informative and revealing about the women’s feelings about how society viewed them. The majority of mothers spoke to this theme; however, this was reflected on
primarily from single mothers and mothers who were receiving social assistance. The prevalence of this theme in the discussions warranted a separate subsection.

Following the data that came out of the discussion of whether mothers currently had access to childcare arrangements, many of the focus groups participants segued to a discussion on how this made them feel. The most common feeling associated with having to be put on a waitlist for childcare, or not having access at all to childcare due to a number of barriers, was the feeling of being treated as a “second-class citizen.” As one mother remarked:

"[People] totally say that I’m living off the system and basically I’m trash because I don’t have job and I’m like, well, if I worked then I’m giving all of the money to childcare."

When it came to contacting childcare facilities, approximately 50 percent of the focus group mothers felt that by presenting themselves as a single-parent, or as a subsidy recipient, they were treated as a second choice, or an ‘undesirable’ in the eyes of childcare providers. This aspect seemed to enter into their lives in terms of childcare, welfare status, or looking for housing. Two single mothers currently receiving income assistance revealed the following:

"I’m on the system and people are like okay well you’re a single mom welfare well I think I’m going to pick these two career people before you..."

"We are part of the huge, huge social contribution because we’re raising the next generation and yet we get looked down on. We’re doing the most important job and everyone looks down on us the most!"

This theme entered into many of the topical discussions on childcare and led to an in-depth revelation on how mothers felt they were perceived from other elements of society. The majority of mothers felt that they were at a clear disadvantage due to their current situation with childcare. However, mothers also stressed that these feelings would not lead them to feel sorry for themselves. On the contrary, many mothers expressed that this was something that they would not let stop them from living their lives and that they would do the best that they could for their family. One mother was further prompted with the question, “how do you get past this stigma that you talk about?” her telling reply was:

"We have to, to survive."

5.2.4 Mothers’ Ability to Work Outside of the Home

Mothers were involved in a lengthy discussion about two aspects of participating in the labour force. The first of these was whether they believed they have a choice of whether or not to work, and the second of these was describing experiences where they had to turn down a job, promotion, or make a career decision based on their ability to access childcare.
There were a number of differing opinions offered by the mothers as to whether or not mothers today have a choice, in general, about working. The responses of the mothers were mixed, but most of the participants felt that they had no choice but to work, generally expressed the following:

"You can't really survive [without working] ... If you have a spouse that has a higher income, yes, you can do it as long as your debt load isn't big, but if you are on welfare and your children reach a certain age, you're cut off, you have to work...Poverty to work!"

When childcare was made central to the discussion on the ability for moms to work, a number of interesting results were found. Some of the mothers described their experience as one of weighing the financial costs of childcare with that of paid work. One mother described her quandary with work and childcare in the following:

"I always found a sitter before I found a job I wouldn't even bother looking for a job until I had someone to watch my kids. There is no point looking for a job, getting hired and then you don't have anyone to watch your kids."

Ultimately, many women decided that in terms of weighing the money that would be received from paid work compared to the expense of childcare, it was not financially beneficial to return to their previous jobs. Others had explained situations where they were unable to pursue their previous educational goals or pre-maternity careers because their employers were unwilling to decrease the time demands or make the skills training necessary that are now required for their previous employment roles. Some mothers found that both the old and new employers were unwilling to be flexible with the responsibilities these mothers had at home. One of these shared experiences included:

"I had a job for a month and I got fired because I couldn't have night-time childcare.... I called in once cause I couldn't [go into work] and the next time I went to call in she was like 'you know what, this isn't working you need to be reliable' and she fired me 2 weeks before Christmas...and I'm in debt now."

One mother shared the contingency aspect of the relationship between her ability to work with that of what she called her 'real-life' situation with childcare:

"I could never get a job that wasn't a swing shift, split, evening, weekend that I could be consistent in anyway shape or form that I could have childcare for, that I could do, so it's still useless really useless for me. Then I have worry about my health flare ups and add all the rest of it and that little more stress trying to make it to a job and find childcare."

Some mothers reflected on having to take pay cuts in their jobs because of the dual demands of having to take care of their family and balance this with a career. When one mother was asked if childcare has played a role in her career decision, she offered the following response:
"Definitely to a certain degree, yeah. I'd say. At some point I was going to go back to school – but with no childcare that didn’t happen...you just end up postponing your goals until those kids are older or you have daycare or they are at school age and then these things can be arranged and stuff... it is very hard I find in this community you don’t have a lot of help as our family"

Another mother described a difficult situation that she experienced in her work environment when she returned from maternity leave:

"They refused to let me work part time, even though there was precedent at the time for it. They refused so I went back for 4 months and was forced to leave my job...I think that I've also had to miss work because I couldn’t find childcare...eventually I had to rely on my neighbour who was watching her kids too. This was very stressful to deal with. It was scary. I'm sure people struggle with it all the time."

Overall, 53 percent of mothers assessed their ability to access childcare as a critical factor in these labour force participation decisions. Often the mothers found themselves having to put their own careers on hold in order to watch the children while their partner became the primary income earner. Almost all of the mothers interviewed reported a higher level of anxiety within their household as a direct result of the experience with managing and accessing regulated childcare. Additionally, the majority of mothers described feeling a great deal of stress about having to grapple with not being a significant income contributor, playing a lesser role in the public sphere, and feeling as if they aren’t, as one mother put it, “valued” by society after their children were born.

5.2.5 Barriers to Childcare

Each of the mothers was asked to list their top barriers, if any, to accessing childcare in their community. A number of the barriers put forward by mothers led to the creation of some interesting common themes in this analysis. At the top of this list of barriers were cost and their inability to reach the income necessary to purchase care. Focus group participants described the pricing of regulated childcare as something that was not financially within their reach, often resulting in the consumption of alternate forms of unlicensed care. Some of these financial and institutional barriers expressed by mothers include:

"Cost! Their rates keep going up and subsidy doesn’t."

"We weren’t eligible for any subsidy at all they said that we made too much money. I’m not really sure how they figured that out, I guess they figured that we don’t eat and we don’t have two car payments to make and two insurance payments to make..."
Next, the most popularly cited theme, as common as cost, was the lack of availability for childcare spaces. A number of situations were described where mothers were turned away from more than one childcare facility and were placed on a long-term waitlist. In other cases, mothers described the requirements in age and the municipal restrictions on the number of children in one facility as significant factors that played a part in this. One mother described her biggest barrier with finding a space in the following:

"I used to look for a childcare space and I [was on] a waitlist and I was very diligent about calling people when I saw spots open. Most of the time they said oh we already found something or they never bothered to call me back, you'd leave a message and...hey just never call you back, that's even more frustrating!"

A secondary list of barriers was compiled. These were mentioned by a small segment of the participants; however, they remain quite informative. These included: a lack of quality among unlicensed childcare centres, ‘trust’ in those providing the care, a lack of training for the caregivers, inability to access subsidies, hours of operation for the centres, and social stigma.

All told, the mothers felt there were many factors that affected their ability to purchase regulated childcare. Moreover, they revisited the issues surrounding their inability to return to paid labour, and posed questions surrounding why the government is not encouraging mothers to work and creating policies that enable them to do so. Some of the participants on income assistance reflected this sentiment during this segment of the focus group.

"Increase subsidy. And, let us work; let us make a bit of money [so that we can be self-sufficient]"

By prompting the mothers to think about and discuss what they would like the decision-makers to do for them when it comes to accessing care, it is possible for the reader to see in the next section the mothers’ priorities for resolving their biggest barriers.

5.2.6 What Should Be Done?

The last question posed to mothers was “if anything, what would you like the decision-makers to change about childcare in your community?” Here, the mothers were given the opportunity to take on the role of the advisor to the decision-makers for regulated childcare policy. When the mothers were asked whom they felt was the responsible party for making these changes, the answers were always the same: the government. The “they” in the responses were clarified with each focus group to represent this opinion of ‘they’ as the government body responsible for childcare.

The discussion about ‘change’ and what the mothers thought should be done to change the current state of childcare in their lives prompted many mothers to talk about the financial
aspects surrounding childcare. Suggestions included making subsidies more accessible, placing a cap on childcare prices, and subsidizing the actual spaces in the hopes of creating more spaces for communities. Other moms felt that the biggest priority for decision-makers was simply to put more funds towards any area of childcare reform including subsidies, facilities, the wages of childcare providers, early learning and childcare education programs, and tax breaks for families. One mother suggested a re-evaluation of the pricing formula currently based on the age of the child for childcare to enable mothers with younger children a greater opportunity to purchase licensed care. Another mother summed up her priority of needs in the following:

"I need affordable, qualified, special needs childcare is what I need. Just affordable and qualified, so I can feel safe."

Many of the mothers expressed a strong belief in targeting funding for families with financial insecurity and high need. This was also argued from mothers who vehemently recommended that childcare should be a national priority with the aim of equalizing opportunity for a larger segment of the population who are not able to access care at this time. Two mothers were able to best represent the general sentiments on what they felt their communities needed the most through their reflections:

"I think we just need more because we are a smaller centre, and because we are rural I don’t think we are as paid attention to as a bigger centre. I don’t know a lot about childcare there but I know that [it is] something that government needs to participate in. Providing transportation and providing money – put childcare back into the budget"

"Make more daycare facilities available. I know we are a small community but there is definitely a need for childcare here, and for infant childcare, because a lot of single mothers out there need that and need to work. They don’t have the luxury of having a family member [to help them]."

A married mother of two expressed her openness to change, any change, demonstrated through a number of options she posed to decision-makers:

"I think they should be responsible for giving us a choice, either making childcare more accessible or making subsidy more accessible or making staying at home an actual job, a paid job!"

Another mother addressed the current one-hundred-dollar Universal Childcare Benefit and the incompatibility of this financial mechanism with her needs, as she contented:

"The one hundred dollars per child that they’re giving everybody is great, but it doesn’t help me find childcare for my 7 year old at the same time as my 2 year old if I want to get that other job on evenings and weekends - because there is no childcare except private and that is a lot more than one hundred dollars a month!"
Other mothers made a plea for more consideration to be given to the multiple choices that mothers are faced with, and the creation of policies that cater to the different choices and needs of families, as she stated:

"We're all looking for a break or tax break in some way, whether it's for childcare or subsidy for special programs because some kids need special programs. Maybe that's the common thread of trying to find everybody (if everybody) wants to work, the childcare might be subsidized a bit more [too] so people can afford to go to work and so people can be in childcare too."

Lastly, one mother in particular reiterated the most prevalent theme that the mothers continued to come back to in the discussions. This mother’s words sum up what many of the mothers’ believed should be done, and reflect what the majority of the mothers in these focus groups pose to the decision-makers:

"If we knew that they were safe and they were healthy and they were in a truly regulated daycare all of them no matter who you are or what class you’re in none of us would have anything to worry about we would be all ready for work. They want this to work; they want mothers to work, which is fine, we want to work! We want to be normal! But, we are forced to consider: Is my kid in a garage? Is it dirty? Is my kid getting molested? Can I even afford it?"

5.3 Summary

Overall, these accounts demonstrate that a distinct set of conditions are preventing a significant segment of rural mothers from accessing regulated childcare in BC’s rural communities. While mothers who are living in BC’s rural communities are presented with a number of obstacles, the focus groups demonstrate that overall, the majority of mothers are cognisant of a number of benefits that regulated rural childcare has to offer. When it came to accessing regulated childcare, an overwhelming majority of mothers felt that they could not presently acquire a regulated space for their children. Discussion surrounded the process of putting one’s name down on a waitlist for a space, where in most if not all cases, no space was ever made available. Overall, mothers felt that these institutional regulations made childcare even more unavailable in some cases.

A factor that entered into almost every focus group was the shared feeling of being socially stigmatized, and mothers remarked that this was a large part of the interplay with accessing regulated care. Many mothers felt that they were treated as ‘second-class citizens’ when it came to childcare providers and through interactions with government structures. The participants recognized the social stigma as an ever-present part of their experience in a rural
setting, where oftentimes their circumstance, because of low-income, single-status, or gender discrimination, resulted in this form of stigmatization from others.

Perceptions on the benefits of early learning and childcare were generally quite positive. Mothers felt that their child could benefit from the socialization and interaction dynamic that occurs between children in this type of facility. Moreover, a large number of participants felt that regulated childcare spaces were held to a higher standard of cleanliness, monitoring and accountability from outside parties. This gave mothers a greater peace of mind with leaving their child under the supervision of trained early childhood educators.

The discussion surrounding mothers' ability to work outside of the home resulted in the recounting of a number of shared experiences. Primarily, mothers felt that there was a discernable pressure for them to engage in paid labour; however, they also felt that this was coupled with an inability to make wages that would exceed childcare costs. Many moms stated that they had to make many career sacrifices and that inaccessibility to regulated subsidized childcare and childcare spaces was one of the most significant barriers for their ability to participate in the labour market. The biggest barriers that were touched upon by mothers included cost of childcare, inaccessibility to childcare subsidies, and a lack of childcare spaces. Although varied in their responses, the general sense from mothers was that they wanted mechanisms for accountability and monitoring for space and quality. Their plea to decision-makers involved asking for the creation of conditions that would enable them to purchase care, and further, take into account the distinctiveness of their role, the distance of their community and its diverse needs, and consider the many responsibilities and demands that come with the mothers' complex roles. Clearly, the findings from this study highlight the need for more attention to rural and northern mother's experiences and perspectives regarding childcare.
6 Policy Options

The findings from these focus groups could be essential to future public policy reform in the childcare sector for rural BC, and beyond. Therefore, the following are a set of five policy options related to addressing mothers' accessibility to childcare in rural BC, with potential application to communities beyond the rural borders. These options have been identified and developed from the information collected through this project's documentary analysis as well as the thorough qualitative and quantitative investigations. Because the themes that have emerged from the data analysis have been almost exclusively in the provincial policy domain, the options put forward will apply to the provincial level. The fundamental components of each alternative will be presented; each will include a presentation of its goals, the instruments involved in its creation and implementation, and the actors that will be engaged in its implementation. Each of these options will be followed by a summary detailing the highlights.

6.1 The Five-Year Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan

This option involves creating a Five-Year Policy Framework that identifies and explores the major themes coming out of rural, remote, and northern communities in BC. The framework would outline a series of goals, benchmarks, and actions, to establish and improve accessible, quality, and affordable regulated childcare spaces in rural communities in the province. This policy option would serve as the foundation from which all other options would be constructed, developed, monitored, and measured.

The BC provincial government has previously stated that an action plan would be presented for early childhood development and childcare in order to provide direction for improving the quality, accessibility and affordability of regulated childcare for BC’s families and children (BC ECDAP, 2002). This was evident through the proposal of a “British Columbia Early Childhood Development Action Plan: A Work in Progress” (2002), and later, during the negotiations of the Bilateral Agreements, where an action plan was said to be imminent (CCAABC, 2006). To date, no action plan for childcare exists for BC (CCAABC, 2007).

Arguably, a comprehensive action plan allows the province to “form a series of roadmaps” that help to ensure that specific goals, objectives and policies are created. This process
allow for the establishment of priorities and benchmarks for rural communities, as well as a clearer understanding of the roles and responsibilities of actors involved in the provincial administration of regulated childcare (CCAAC, 2005). By enlisting a concerted effort on the part of the early learning and childcare ministries to formulate a five-year plan, short-term benchmarks would be enlisted to improving the monitoring, creation, and funding for new regulated childcare spaces for BC’s ‘at-risk’ rural communities.

Using the example of “Manitoba’s Five-Year Plan for Child Care” (2002-2007), BC would be able to borrow from and utilize a number of successful principles that are aimed at improving a provincial childcare system. Included within the Manitoba plan are values associated with quality, universal inclusivity, accessibility and child development goals, better known by the acronym ‘QUAD’. Using these principles, Manitoba’s plan set out a number of mechanisms for achieving specific targets, and used each of the four principles as a measurement for ensuring that each target supports the QUAD principles (Government of Manitoba, 2002). Notably, within two years, Manitoba’s childcare field witnessed an increase in operating grants for centres, an increase in funding towards new and existing spaces, increases in childcare subsidies, and the development of online services to parents, providers, and the public.

For a BC Action Plan, the actors responsible for creating the policy framework would include the Ministry of Children and Families (MCF), the Ministry of Health (MH), the Ministry of Education (ME), and the Ministry of Advanced Education (MEA); each of these currently has a separate mandate for childcare, licensing, monitoring, early childhood education, and early childhood learning, respectively. The framework would begin by mapping the next steps for the short- and long-term planning goals in addressing the most pressing rural childcare barriers; the framework’s initial four stages are presented in Table 4 order to demonstrate the preliminary outline that will form a five-year provincial action plan:
Table 4: Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan, Preliminary Stages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Framework</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Create a Sustainable Financial Base</td>
<td>The funding mechanisms used to distribute funds for childcare must be accountable, transparent, and based on need. The mechanisms must be flexible enough to respond to the diverse needs of communities and should consider cost drivers, population growth and the unique characteristics of rural and northern communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Coordinate Programs and Services</td>
<td>This stage of planning would ensure that the numerous existing programs and services involved in the administration and management of rural childcare would be integrated into a continuum of interrelated services for provided quality childcare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Create an Adequate Infrastructure</td>
<td>An infrastructure needs assessment is required to obtain a clear picture of the current situation in BC’s rural communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Create Clear Goals, Benchmarks and Measures</td>
<td>A detailed list of goals, desired benchmarks and their appropriate measures are necessary in order to ensure that goals are met on a timely basis for a progressive and adaptive framework.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the presentation of each policy option, a table has been constructed in order to highlight the major points addressed for this option. Table 5 highlights the goals, instruments, and actors included with the Five-Year Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan:

---

12 Selected Framework Principles have been extracted from the First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Action Plan presented by the First Nations Assembly, 2005.
Table 5: Policy Option (1) Create a Five-Year Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create a Five-Year Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Goals** | • To ensure a short-medium-long term direction and objectives for increasing regulated childcare spaces within BC’s rural communities.  
  • To identify specific priorities for families who currently are unable to access regulated childcare in rural communities.  
  • To create an infrastructure for planning and progress with the goal of enabling access to regulated childcare spaces.  
  • To establish regulated rural childcare accessibility as a priority within the provincial government strategic framework. |
| **Instruments** | • Create a five-year provincial multi-stage policy framework and action play with clear goals and targets for achieving accessible regulated childcare in BC’s rural communities.  
  • Identify specific priorities, objectives, and monitoring for achieving these goals.  
  • Establish measurable targets for tracking progress  
  • Collaborate with childcare policy experts and ensure the monitoring of comparable action plans in other provinces. |
| **Actors** | • BC Ministry of Children and Families  
  • BC Ministry of Health  
  • BC Ministry of Education  
  • BC Ministry of Advanced Education |

6.2 Inter-Ministerial Collaboration

This policy option involves a two-fold strategy which includes the following: first, the creation of an inter-ministerial collaboration between the four primary ministerial actors in regulated childcare policy (MCF, MOH, MAE, and MOE), after which, a cost-sharing initiative will be implemented to increase direct funding towards the creation of new spaces in rural communities and operating funding for existing spaces. Currently, each of these actors has an independent mandate with respect to early learning and childcare, but each ministry shares various jurisdictional roles with the administration, management or implementation of early learning and childcare in BC. This option thus calls for the bringing together the fractured childcare portfolios to create a more cohesive and comprehensive vision for regulated rural childcare policy. This directive would involve creating shared ministerial goals in the
administration and management of regulated childcare. The current allocations of ministerial childcare responsibilities are indicated in Table 6.

Table 6: BC Provincial Ministries' Jurisdiction in Regulated Childcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MCF</th>
<th>MOH</th>
<th>MOE</th>
<th>MAE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➤ Childcare Operating Funding</td>
<td>➤ Assessment of Eligibility for Childcare Licensing</td>
<td>➤ Development &amp; support for tools leading to successful early learning for young children</td>
<td>➤ BC Student Financial Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Childcare Resource and Referral Program</td>
<td>➤ Child Health Passport</td>
<td>➤ Child Health Passport</td>
<td>➤ Filling gaps in ‘underserved’ labour areas in BC: BC Student Loan Forgiveness Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Early Childhood Development Initiatives</td>
<td>➤ Early Learning Responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This option delegates accountability measures among the four ministries to ensure that progress is met at various implementation stages for strategies, goals, and policies to allow for greater accessibility for rural families seeking regulated care. UNESCO\textsuperscript{13} argues that this as an important requirement for successful inter-ministerial model in administering childcare policy (UNESCO, 2004). As is currently the case, these ministries have different perspectives on policy direction for young children, and depending on their portfolio, each ministry has a different means for achieving goals pertaining to the healthy development of children and families. A number of provinces have deemed this type of ministerial division ineffective. For example, Alberta reviewed its \textit{Child Welfare Act} in 2002 and found that strengthening children’s policy necessitates inter-ministerial collaboration; this is reflected in their recommendation:

Children, youth and families dealing with complex treatment-focused issues require multiple services delivered through the mandates of several government ministries, agencies, institutions and service provider...to achieve better outcomes for families, children and youth, collaboration is critical and ministries must be held accountable for working together.

\textsuperscript{13} United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.
Ultimately, the Government of Alberta (2002) report demonstrated that inter-ministry collaboration and co-ordination community was integral to policy and services for children and families. As such, methods for measuring and reporting on inter-ministerial and community collaboration were developed and results were regularly reported (Alberta, 2002). In light of the current piecemeal structure of childcare policy in BC, this is arguably a fitting policy option for achieving the goal of cohesive and directed rural childcare policy.

This policy option also involves shared-cost initiatives among the four ministries to finance new and existing spaces for regulated rural childcare. This would reduce an unmanageable funding burden on any one ministry. This type of initiative can facilitate time and money savings, maximise the utility of resources, and accelerate desired outcomes for early learning and regulated childcare for rural and urban settings between the four ministries (UNESCO, 2004). Hence, one of the fundamental goals with this policy option is to reduce tangential ministerial funding. In doing so, the option calls for the creation of clear childcare policy goals and targets, and the targeted release of early learning funding to funding priority areas, in particular, ‘at-risk’ or vulnerable rural communities.

This policy option would achieve these goals in two ways. First, it would reduce and redirect minor financial contributions currently spent on piecemeal initiatives to creating access to regulated childcare in BC’s rural communities. An example of this tangential funding is the new StrongStart BC program, an early learning drop-in program administered by the Ministry of Education for preschool-aged children accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Key individual stakeholders’ critique of this type of program is that it is “merely a drop in the bucket” in terms of early learning and childcare. By redirecting funding from a piecemeal program like StrongStart towards an initiative to create licensed childcare spaces, early learning and childcare goals can both be achieved. Not only would this policy reduce misdirected funds, it would also reduce the portion of new funding needed from the public purse for increasing regulated spaces.

Secondly, the new and redirected funding for regulated childcare spaces would first be targeted to the neighbourhoods that have the poorest EDI and SES outcomes. This would allow rural mothers, for example, to find an available regulated space for their child and have the option to seek full-time or part-time paid employment. After this initial targeting, operating funding would remain with spaces through the provincial operating funding program, and new funds can then be targeted and dispersed to create spaces in other BC rural and urban neighbourhoods, especially those that currently demonstrate high demand for regulated childcare spaces without the available supply necessary to meet those demands. Table 7 summarizes the various elements found within this option.
### Table 7: Policy Option (2) Inter-ministerial Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Inter-ministerial Collaboration</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create a collaborative ministerial directive for cohesive regulated childcare policy administration for BC’s rural communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Redirect and increase funding towards regulated rural childcare spaces to maximize the utility of regulated childcare resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase number of regulated childcare spaces in ‘at-risk’ rural communities and communities with regulated childcare supply-demand issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create an inter-ministerial childcare policy network and singular mandate across four ministries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create a mechanism for funnelling the piecemeal childcare funding portfolios towards a collaborative streamlined financing approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Share portfolio proposals for new funding to childcare spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• BC Ministry of Children and Families / BC Ministry of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• BC Ministry of Education / BC Ministry of Advanced Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.3 The Accountability Framework: Monitor Spaces and Waitlists

This option calls for one of the first monitoring systems of its kind in Canada for regulated rural childcare spaces. Option 3 has been titled “the accountability framework” because it will create a mechanism to ensure that provincial ministries responsible for BC’s childcare needs accurately monitor the growing demand for childcare and the corresponding supply needed for regulated spaces in rural BC. This option stems from the qualitative data, which suggests that mothers are putting their names on multiple waitlists without receiving notifications for vacant spaces, precipitating feelings of hopelessness and social stigma from receiving little or no response from licensed rural childcare centres. The monitoring, collecting, and reporting of vacancies would reduce the administrative inefficiencies that are witnessed in the current *ad hoc* waitlist process.

Moreover, there is an argument to be made that policy can be more responsive with the availability of research and data. This is part of the ‘evidence-based policy approach,’ put forward to develop government effectiveness through promoting accountability and improvement in policy-making (Sanderson, 2002). Accordingly, this option provides policy-makers with the supply-demand data for rural childcare so that regulated childcare policy can be better formulated to match need. Therefore, this model serves to administratively organize and manage supply-
demand, queue those in need, and improve the transparency, accountability and public responsibility of the actors involved in the supply of regulated childcare spaces in rural communities (Rachlis, 2005).

As a microcosmic model, a childcare accountability framework would include many of the same elements of the Health Canada’s Surgical Waitlist Registry. Some of these include collaboration and information sharing with government bodies, mechanisms for periodical reporting of statistics, centralized registries and prioritization systems, and electronic information systems (Health Canada, 2007). The idea here would be to compile and maintain waitlist data provided by the licensed facilities in all rural communities. While this can be a challenge due to repeated names on various waitlists, a coordinated effort between licensed rural providers, a MCF provincial registry, and the CCRR coordinators, would allow for a coordinated effort information sharing. On a monthly basis, as a condition for being approved for their operating funding from the provincial government, licensed childcare providers would be required to report the names of rural families on their waitlists and the number of current vacant spaces. Next, the provincial registry would provide the data to the CCRR responsible for various catchment areas and increase timely regulated childcare space matching for families. This accountability measure would ensure up-to-date tracking and allow an online registry to be continually updated. Table 8 provides a summary of the main points of this policy option.
The Accountability Framework: Monitor Spaces and Waitlists

**Goals**

- To increase the responsiveness of provincially regulated rural childcare policy.
- To create administrative cohesion while monitoring of the supply – demand of childcare issues in rural, at-risk, and diverse communities.
- To reduce administrative barriers and frustrating waitlist processes for rural mothers attempting to access a regulated childcare space.

**Instruments**

- Create an infrastructure at the Provincial government level that will ensure the networking of CCRR to expand their mandate to include monitoring vacancies and matching families to spaces.
- Duplicate technological framework of Surgical Wait Lists for BC.
- Entrench in BC licensing requirements: Facilities must report vacant spaces and names of families waiting for spaces before receiving monthly Operating Funds from MCF.

**Actors**

- Provincial Government Administrators: Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Child Care Resource & Referral
- Licensed Childcare Providers

6.4 Parental Costs and Affordability

This option involves three restructured financial mechanisms that will impact the cost, affordability, and accessibility to regulated childcare in rural BC. These include the following three mechanisms: one, a reassessment of the current income threshold for subsidies; two, a simultaneous introduction of a cap on parental fees as a result of a current absence of controls on licensed rural childcare fees; and three, a reevaluation and increase of the current 20-day per month subsidy maximum.

The descriptive statistics in this study revealed that 82 percent of focus group mothers whose household income fell below $50,000/year experienced significant financial barriers with accessing regulated childcare and finding or maintaining employment. In addition, these survey results showed that many mothers felt that there was a disincentive for engaging in paid labour, primarily because a higher price for childcare increased the likelihood that the mother’s net
market wage was below her reservation wage\(^{14}\) (Blau and Tekin, 2001). The result was that the mother was less likely to engage in paid employment.

Here, the information suggests that the income threshold would have to be increased beyond the current income threshold maximum of $38,000 to a new $45,000 maximum to facilitate a significant finance-based improvement in rural mother’s regulated childcare access. This figure was chosen because the current $38,000 threshold is consistent with the maximum that was in place predating 2001. Therefore, $1,000 per year since 2001 was added to the maximum threshold in order to account for yearly increases in cost-of-living.

Other aspects warrant consideration when increasing the subsidy threshold. When subsidy increases were proposed to childcare financing experts through a number key individual stakeholder interviews, it was commonly argued that as the subsidies increase, the cost of childcare increases as well. Arguably, this phenomenon negates much of the benefit that would be received in reducing parental expenses for childcare. Therefore, the introduction of a control mechanism, placing a cap on the parental fees charged for regulated childcare at a specific dollar amount for subsidy recipients, would be simultaneously introduced with the childcare subsidy reassessment to prevent this from occurring.

The exact dollar amount, at which a cap for parental fee is placed, would depend on a number of factors. These factors include a provincial assessment of rural vs. urban differential community expenses, an analysis of the current cost of regulated childcare in rural and urban communities, and an up-to-date evaluation of the cost-of-living expenses. The results of this analysis would provide a good indication of what rate the subsidy threshold maximum should be. Furthermore, when determining the set rate for the parental cap, this option proposed that an assessment of the Quebec $7 maximum/day childcare parental fees, and the current Manitoba freeze on maximum fees for subsidized parents, be closely examined by the BC provincial government to assess the effectiveness of current provincial funding cap levels and the resulting outcomes.

The last part of this option would involve a three-day increase in the maximum number of days that a family can receive subsidies within a single month. Currently at a maximum of 20 days, the qualitative data suggests that mothers are having difficulty paying out of their limited income in months where weekday working days exceed 20. When calculating the maximum number of weekday working days in a single month, the days ranged from 20 to 23. Therefore, it is proposed with this option that the current number of days that a family is eligible, would need to be adjusted to 23 days per month within the BC Childcare Subsidy Act.

\(^{14}\) The 'reservation wage' is the lowest wage for which a person would be willing to work.
Table 9: Policy Option (4) Parental Costs and Affordability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Parental Costs and Affordability</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase the number of rural families who can receive fully subsidized regulated childcare and who are currently unable to afford to purchase care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change subsidy threshold to more accurately reflect increases in cost-of-living for single and dual parent households in rural communities and subsequent differences in cross-community expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limit out-of-pocket expenses for rural families who cannot afford extra days of unsubsidized care in regulated childcare settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>BC Childcare Subsidy Act</strong>: Increase number of days (currently maximum 20) that a family is eligible for childcare space subsidization to 23 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>BC Childcare Subsidy Act</strong>: Increase the childcare subsidy income threshold by re-evaluating current cost-of-living expenses for rural vs. urban communities (i.e.: transportation, dental, health, food costs, consumer price index, inflation, etc...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Insert into BC Childcare Subsidy Act</strong>: Assess alternate provincial models for parental fee caps and legislate a parental-fee cap on BC regulated childcare for subsidy recipients to ensure that increasing subsidies are not met with increasing parental fees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministry of Children and Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministry of Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5 ECE: Incentives and Wage Scales

This policy option consists of two mechanisms for increasing, recruiting and retaining current and potential quality early childhood education (ECE) providers in rural communities in BC. These include incentive mechanisms involving student loan forgiveness, monetary relocation incentives, and a provincially mandated wage scale structure for regulated childcare providers with ECE. The fundamental goals for this option are twofold: to increase accessibility to regulated childcare spaces by providing an educated and qualified workforce to supervise new spaces; and second, to encourage potential ECE degree holders to enter the regulated childcare field in rural communities.

Two BC provincial programs currently provide pre-existing frameworks that can be used to incentivize new ECE certification and provide monetary incentives for rural ECE childcare
providers. The first incentive is administered by adding ECE to the list of occupations eligible for the BC Student Loan Forgiveness Program (BCSLFP). According to the program's loan eligibility requirement for loan forgiveness, a candidate must be a recent graduate in a provincially targeted profession that is currently 'underserved' labour area in BC (MAE, 2008). This criterion has been markedly demonstrated in current literature as BC's regulated childcare field is facing one of the most severe labour shortages in the province (Beach and Costigliola, 2004). The sector's recruitment problems, low compensation, and high staff turnover have led to severely understaffed regulated childcare field across BC (Beach and Costigliola, 2004).

As the first part of the option has addressed encouraging new ECE candidates to join the regulated childcare field, the second part of the incentive involves providing a $3000 ECE incentive grant to an unlimited number of new or existing ECEs. These graduates would be required to commit to working in regulated childcare centres in rural BC for a minimum of 2 years. This grant is in addition to the recently introduced applicant-limited $5000 BC ECE Incentive Grant. The existing incentive grant, capped at the first 100 applicants, provides a financial incentive to ECEs who have left the regulated childcare sector for at least two years in order to encourage them to return to this field (MAE, 2008). Therefore, this option introduces an unlimited applicant targeted grant to potential rural childcare ECEs, to encourage and promote growth and the supply of human capital in the labour market for rural childcare in BC.

The third element of this policy option involves introducing BC's first wage scale for regulated childcare ECEs based on acquired education and experience. According to the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (2007), retaining long-term ECEs for regulated childcare is a significant challenge because wages in the sector remain the lowest of all workers in society. Moreover, the literature posits that retaining skilled ECEs provides a consistency in quality regulated childcare that allows parents to participate in Canada's labour force (CCHRSC, 2007). This unstable quality requires the introduction of a wage scale to ensure the long-term sustainability of an ECE labour force. Notably, the current median gross hourly wage for regulated ECE childcare staff is $12.58. (Friendly, Beach, Ferns and Turiano, 2006). By modeling a BC wage scale on Manitoba's recently implemented “Minimum Salary Guideline Scale” (2005), ECEs and childcare assistants will be provided with a five level wage scale that

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15 The Province will forgive an outstanding B.C. student loan debt at a rate of 33 1/3% per year for each year practiced in a predetermined list of underserved community occupations in British Columbia.

16 The current ECE Incentive Grant is intended to recruit certified ECEs who have left the licensed childcare sector for two or more years to return to work in a licensed childcare facility. The first one-hundred recipients may receive up to a maximum of $5,000 over the two-year period. Upon completion of each year of employment in a licensed childcare facility, the recipient will receive a payment up to $2,500.
accounts for various levels of experience and education (Manitoba Childcare Association, 2005). For specific guidelines, the wage scale is provided in Appendix G. The implementation of this element, along with the two-part incentive mechanisms, would serve to ensure a quality, sustained workforce for rural BC’s new and current ECEs.

Table 10: Policy Option (5) ECE: Incentives and Wage Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECE: Incentives and Wage Scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ To encourage potential ECE registered childcare providers to enter (or return to) the childcare field, and fill an “underserved” labour gap in BC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ To provide the labour necessary for new spaces that will be created in rural BC communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ To ensure long-term sustainability of quality/qualified ECEs in the regulated childcare sector for rural BC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Add early learning and education care providers to the list of careers eligible for the BC Student Loan Forgiveness Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Implement a $3000 incentive grant for new and existing ECEs willing to relocate to a rural regulated childcare centre in BC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Create a Wage-Scale structure for ECEs in BC based on the Manitoba 2005-2007 Phase V model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Ministry of Advanced Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Ministry of Children and Families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49
7 Criteria & Measurements

7.1 Criteria

The following five criteria comprise the basis for my analysis: equity, effectiveness, stakeholder acceptability, economic feasibility, and administrative ease. This section will provide a definition of these criteria, followed by an explanation of the measurements that will be used to evaluate the five policy options.

7.1.1 Equity

Equity is of primary importance for consideration, given the vulnerable nature of a considerable segment of the affected population. Gender inequity is of prime importance to the study of mothers' access to regulated childcare. Furthermore, a significant portion of the population affected by policy outcomes demonstrate high vulnerability across a number of previously discussed SES scales. Therefore, in order to be considered equitable, the proposed alternative must lead to the enablement of reasonable access to regulated childcare for mothers who are experiencing barriers in rural communities in BC. This criterion is important because it examines the differential effects of each policy and measures the following: how a mother’s access is improved and in what ways, the impact that this would have in their lives relative to their financial/resource constraints, and their overall state of well-being as a result of the implementation of this policy. Moreover, through the current gender-based evidence, it will be possible to assess how equitable the policy options are in terms of creating a path towards successful employment opportunities for women that would otherwise remain unrealized. This criterion will be assessed through interviews with key individual stakeholders and the supporting literature.

7.1.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness evaluates the policy option’s ability to break down current barriers to accessing licensed childcare spaces and enable mothers to overcome the barriers that prevent their access to childcare in rural communities. Moreover, effectiveness can best be understood as an evaluative mechanism to determine whether the policy is achieving its intended goal or ‘solving’ the problem. The problem, in this case, has mild variations for each city but each option presents
a core or underlying theme to address. In terms of measurement, effectiveness can be considered achieved when the goal of the policy option is reached, the determination of which will be assessed primarily through key stakeholder interviews, previous case studies, and other documentary support.

7.1.3 Economic Feasibility

Cost is a critical consideration in any public policy analysis. This criterion will help determine the impacts of each option on the BC government's public purse and the corresponding ministries that have been implicated in the particular proposal. In this study, the economic criterion examines the financial cost of each policy option, while also assessing feasibility in terms of budget constraints. Each alternative is also assessed for economic feasibility by examining similar policy models adopted in comparable jurisdictions, and measured through the opinions of key individual stakeholders.

7.1.4 Stakeholder Acceptability

Stakeholder acceptability examines the practical aspects of implementing each alternative. This criterion measures the level of acceptability that the policy option would achieve among stakeholders; these include licensed care providers, rural families, the public, NFP childcare organizations, and the provincial government actors. Stakeholder acceptability also considers the consistency with related policies within the existing structures. This is an important aspect as it addresses the extent to which each policy will receive political support from key decision-makers in the provincial public sector. Moreover, through interviews with the key individual stakeholders, each of whom possess a well-rounded and lengthy repertoire of developing and researching childcare policy in BC and nationally, it will be possible to determine the general support found for each of the aforementioned stakeholders for the five policy options.

7.1.5 Administrative Feasibility

Administrative Feasibility measures the administrative complexities involved in implementing, managing, and maintaining the policy option in application. To be considered administratively feasible, the option must demonstrate a level of ease with integrating the policy within existing administrative structures. A low feasibility measurement for this criterion would involve a process of having to construct new administration tools that are complex, timely, and detailed in nature. This criterion will be measured through the feedback provided from key individual stakeholders, as well as case studies demonstrating similar policy properties.
7.2 Criteria Measurements

The table presented in this section provides the criteria measurements and the corresponding scales that will be used to assess each option. Each of the five criteria will be weighted equally, and their order of presentation does not carry any significance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Equity**       | To what extent does the policy reduce inequitable rural barriers for mothers’ accessing care and/or paid labour? | 1 – Option does not improve upon current inequities and creates new sources of inequities for affected parties.  
3 – Option does not address the current ‘status quo’ of inequity for rural families.  
5 – Option reduces current inequities and improves on one or more of the current barriers to accessing rural regulated childcare. Moreover, option does not create new sources of inequities for other parties. |
| **Effectiveness**| Will the policy reach its’ intended goal(s)?                               | 1 – Evidentiary support demonstrates this option as being ineffective at reaching any of the desired goals.  
3 – Evidentiary support demonstrates that this option would be effective for a small percentage of the outlined goals.  
5 – Evidentiary support demonstrates this option as reaching the majority of the desired goals. |
| **Economic Feasibility** | What is the level of financial cost to the public purse for implementing, managing and maintaining this policy? | 1 – Outside of current provincial budget constraints, requires new funding & expensive to implement.  
3 – Does not add new costs or provide a cost savings to the government purse.  
5 – Inexpensive and/or cost-effective to implement within the constraints of the current provincial budget. |
| **Stakeholder Acceptability** | Will the stakeholders support the policy option? (rural mothers, NGOs, BC Prov. Government, licensed childcare providers, general public) | 1 – Policy will be met with rejection from all stakeholders.  
3 – Some of the stakeholders will accept this option.  
5 – The majority of the stakeholders will strongly accept/support this option. |
| **Administrative Feasibility** | How complex is the policy to initially implement, manage, and maintain in the long-run? | 1 – The policy requires the development of new administrative systems or tools.  
3 – The policy requires a small amount of administrative changes.  
5 – The policy can be implemented within the existing administrative structures. |
8 Assessment of Policy Options

8.1 Policy Option Evaluations

This section provides an evaluation for each of the five policy options. As previously discussed, interviews with five key individual stakeholders were conducted within the context of providing input for this study’s policy development, critique, and evaluation.\(^\text{17}\) By applying their diverse childcare policy experience, these individuals contributed evaluative observations and suggestions to be utilized as the primary tool of criteria measurement in this study. Direct quotes from key individual stakeholders are used throughout the assessment section in order to provide the most salient observations that were put forward during these interviews. The key individual stakeholders selected for the evaluation portion of the study were as follows: (1) Dr. Paul Kershaw, Director of the Human Early Learning Partnership, and Co-Director of the Early Learning and Child Care Research Unit, (2) Lynell Anderson, Childcare-Financing Expert and former MCF Manager, (3) Lynne Westlake, Special Advisor, Children’s Policy, Strategic Policy Directorate, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, (4) Dr. Alan Pence, Professor at the School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria, and (5) Barb Presseau, Coordinator, Child Care Resource and Referral Centre.

8.1.1 Evaluation of Policy Option 1: Five Year Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan

Score Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Equity</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Economic Feas.</th>
<th>Stakeholder Acceptability</th>
<th>Admin. Feas.</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five Year Prov. Policy Fmwk. &amp; Action Plan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24/25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of equity and effectiveness, the stakeholder reflected on the successes of Manitoba’s Five-Year Action Plan, that, since 2002 has yielded improvements for rural families.

\(^{17}\) For a more detailed biography of the key individual stakeholders, please see Appendix H.
accessing regulated childcare in this province. Moreover, this type of option in other jurisdictions has ranked relatively high for developing the necessary steps to bridge rural mothers to the services they need, and within the BC provincial context would do the same. Therefore, this framework identifies the specific priorities for families who are in need, and proposes a systematic plan for first targeting the rural mothers and breaking down the barriers for accessing care in short- and medium-term planning. With the incorporation of a number of benchmarks, goals, and measures over a five-year period, the option prioritizes childcare planning within the government agenda and creates mechanisms aimed at facilitating equitable access to regulated childcare for rural families in the province. The strength in creating a more equitable situation for the affected families, and the value that stakeholders placed on this option, is reflected in the following comments:

For rural women and access, this option would have to be the best place to start --- if you can say that you have looked at options and each one appears to contribute to progress, ok, but they are only partial solutions. A comprehensive planning approach is required, because there would be a number of benchmarks, triggers and indicators. (Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)

We have no benchmarks in this province, or in the country...part of the reason we can’t have a dialogue is because we don’t have the benchmarks and don’t have the data! How do citizens get to hold their communities responsible for providing support for young kids? The quest for information does position potential consumer of services to make more informed and compelling arguments down the road to remedy some of the challenges. (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)

The majority of stakeholders felt that this option would be instrumental in achieving long-term sustainable access to regulated childcare in BC. Without this, they argued, other policy options would merely attend to minor issues with regulated childcare access and not address the overarching systemic issues that lie at the root of the problem. Often, Manitoba and Quebec were cited as examples for effective childcare policy planning that could successfully break down a number of barriers to regulated childcare in their respective provinces. As case studies, these two provinces are notably still in their infancy. However, the consensus among the stakeholders was that a five-year provincial plan was the most effective “starting place” for addressing this policy problem. The score assigned to this criteria was ‘4’ because the evidentiary support is still quite limited; stakeholders were only able to observe effectiveness in designing and reaching goals as what they had observed with alternate provincial frameworks. In light of the current limited results, one must leave room for the possibility of inefficiency, both in design or in targeting, that

18 'Short-term' refers to one full term for an elected provincial party (5 years or less). Medium-term refers to the next elected term (5 – 10 years). Long-term refers to any term beyond 10 years.
have yet to be fully assessed in other provincial jurisdictions. This is reflected in the following excerpts from interviews with key stakeholders:

This option would include priorities, planning, and monitoring results and performance against these, and then reporting out – which doesn’t guarantee an improvement, what is does do is it provides us with the opportunity to raise the level of debate beyond the very value-laden and emotional, and highly charged discussions in the public discourse. (Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)

Since the Conservative Government, we have this bifurcation of the early years; it just does not make sense. There does not seem to be a big picture out there, and if there is one, it is not being shared very well in the field. As a result, I think the field is very confused on what is happening. What is this separation between early learning and childcare? It is very flawed and sad to see it being repeated and repeated again. (Interview, Dr. Alan Pence, 02/15/08)

Because this policy option requires no new investment from the public purse, costs associated with creating a provincial action plan would be modest. Stakeholders commented that the only foreseeable costs associated with this option were 'time costs' of paying the wages of senior policy advisors, researchers, or consultants outside of government, in developing the framework and plan.

Interviews revealed strong stakeholder support for this option. This is in part because this option coincides with the current strategies being employed for the BC provincial government. One such example is BC's 'Five Great Goals,' where specific goals, benchmarks, and performance measures have been put forward to assess short-term and long-term progress for medium-term provincial planning and the establishment of priorities. This is reflected in the following stakeholder comment:

This option is very close to where the government is right now with public management approach. (Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)

All stakeholders who provided feedback for this option contended that the general public, childcare lobbyists, academics, and provincial policy makers would support this option.

The majority of stakeholders noted that, as with previous provincial action plans, little to no administrative complexity is associated with implementing or maintaining this new provincial framework. Moreover, stakeholders observed that creating a provincial action plan, both in the short- medium- or long-term could be accomplished within the existing institutional structures. One stakeholder in particular observed that this option also reduces current inefficiencies within the administrative framework of 'piecemeal' policy initiatives for childcare, and further, improves the administration of childcare policy just by the nature of what it intends to do with organizing, planning, and setting goals and targets. The overall high score for this option is
indicative of the overwhelming support for all criteria, reflected through measurable markers discussed throughout this evaluation.

### 8.1.2 Evaluation of Policy Option 2: Inter-Ministerial Collaboration

**Score Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Equity</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Economic Feas.</th>
<th>Stakeholder Acceptability</th>
<th>Admin. Feas.</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Ministerial Collaboration</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20/25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stakeholders generally felt that streamlining initiatives and coordinating childcare mandates between the ministries would ultimately translate to more comprehensive and equitable circumstances for rural families. Moreover, they felt that the current inequities of rural mothers' access could be attributed to the tangential policy drivers and targets that were being put forward by a number of ministries in an 'ad-hoc' fashion. By bringing together the four ministries to a common set of goals for early learning and childcare, the stakeholders cited probable success in creating equity for more vulnerable segments of the population. Other developed countries, such as New Zealand and Australia, were cited as primary examples of refocusing the mandates for early learning and childcare policy, thus enforcing an equalizing affect for lower income and marginalized families.

The stakeholders argued that targeted investments in communities with low EDI and SES scores, when committed to spaces for an extended period of time, increases affordability, quality, and stability for families seeking a space for their children. Moreover, directing funding for childcare spaces, within the framework of shared budgetary mandates, was observed as one of the most practical options for creating equitable access to regulated childcare for rural BC families. Moreover, in doing so, investments were also considered a pivotal component in increasing rural mothers' ability to engage in paid labour. Stakeholder comments demonstrated this through the following remarks:

*Realistically, moving towards an integrating approach has challenges, but it is required... at least these three ministries and advanced education – the quality of these services is an essential component to address the EDI scores that are being used here. (Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)*

*The move to increase spaces in rural communities – with the higher vulnerability results can be seen as a step on the road (many would say it is a first priority) – there*
are current challenges, however, and that is moving from values to facts. (Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)

Moreover, the stakeholders felt that this option is very likely to address several of the goals and key issues identified by this study. Namely,

- Increasing the number of regulated childcare spaces in ‘at-risk’ rural communities;
- Maximizing the utility of regulated childcare resources, and;
- Creating a collaborative ministerial directive for cohesive regulated childcare policy administration.

All stakeholders were supportive of the option’s aim to bring together a childcare inter-ministerial network as a primary mechanism to reach these goals. They felt that ‘across the board’ these two integrative, cost-sharing elements would effectively serve to reduce current regulated childcare barriers, increase spaces for vulnerable families, and reduce wasteful spending for early learning and/or regulated childcare policy. The stakeholder comments demonstrate the level of effectiveness found through this option in the following observations:

Currently, we have a government with very different types of initiatives that can be creating problems in other ministries. So, should they begin to think together? Yes, they should. Something clearly needs to be done across ministries. Right now, it is a bit more problematic than in the past in BC, there is a general move internationally to move early years into MOE, and, we may be in a transition process, but it is unclear because there is no clarity coming from government about that. (Interview, Dr. Alan Pence, 02/15/08)

The province has had this “Strong Start” approach and has previously tried to have ministers trying to work together and bring together ECD comprehensively - bringing the funding together accordingly is the next step. ((Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)

The stakeholders were varied in their opinions about the economic feasibility of this option. Some of the childcare financing experts felt that this option could potentially be costly. In the past, inter-ministerial collaboration has typically required new funding to be put on the table to evoke support from the primary ministerial actors. This new funding place a heavy burden on the public purse. However, other stakeholders felt that current wasteful spending on other tangential childcare or early learning portfolios could (and should) be diverted towards increasing the funding for a collaborative initiative to ‘increase quality childcare spaces.’

Estimating the amount of funding that would be needed to encourage a shared mandate between the four cited ministries can be difficult. Rather than determining specific dollar amounts that would be available from cutting wasteful spending, or estimating the amount of money that
would encourage ministerial support, this option will be mid-ranked, as “this option does not add new costs or provide a cost savings to the government purse” (Table II). These contending views were expressed through the following two comments:

[Inter-ministerial Collaboration] won’t cost anyone any more – there are opportunity costs to consider, however, – who won’t get funds from the past? (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)

Inter-ministerial collaboration in recent years would tell us that the best way to have this is to have additional funding on the table – that means the province or federal governments would have to have additional childcare funding. (Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)

The key individual stakeholders were ultimately supportive of this option. The majority of interviewees felt that the option would be met with widespread support from parents, childcare providers, not-for-profit childcare agencies, and childcare lobbyists. Some interviewees cautioned that this option might be met with little support from the provincial government. While one stakeholder felt that this option coincided with current provincial vision and political momentum, another stakeholder felt that a number of policy levers would have to be present in order to get the provincial government “on board.” When the stakeholders were presented with this option as a combination of its current components and the addition of an established framework and provincial plan (policy option I), all key individual stakeholders now felt that this option would be met with widespread support from stakeholders. The following comments demonstrate the mixture of responses for stakeholder acceptability:

This is the kind of public policy approach that Deputy Ministers would be eager to talk about. Interesting programmatic shift – in line with the current activities of provincial government as they attempt to have a more comprehensive holistic approach to the early years (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)

The issue is getting the BC government to make the financial commitment. If you have the need documented – this is the challenge. With community and parents? Hugely popular. (Interview, Lynne Westlake, 02/12/08)

If you are targeting the money based on EDI and SES…putting money towards communities makes all sorts of sense, but unless there is new money to invest each time, it wouldn’t work. With this option, you must ensure it is a long-term commitment. (Interview, Lynne Westlake, 02/12/08).

Generally, stakeholders felt that the complexity of inter-ministerial collaboration and increased funding would be quite low. Many stakeholders cited BC’s inter-ministerial collaborations in the past as examples of why there would be low administrative complexities with introducing this kind of option into the existing administrative structures.
8.1.3 Evaluation of Policy Option 3: The Accountability Framework: Monitor Spaces and Waitlists

Score Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Equity</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Economic Feas.</th>
<th>Stakeholder Acceptability</th>
<th>Admin. Feas.</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Accountability Framework</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21/25</td>
</tr>
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</table>

In reducing dominant barriers for childcare accessibility, stakeholders generally observed that this option would not garner immediate results in creating greater equity for rural families. Over the long-term, however, it was often remarked that a waitlist could provide valuable information to government decision-makers that could lead to the development of policies to create greater equity for rural families. This general feeling among stakeholders was reflected in the following:

*On the policy continuum, this would be at the end of the continuum and taking what exists and managing it effectively. Managing a waitlist by itself, does not fundamentally address that there are few spaces, and those that exist are unaffordable for people. But, this can help to manage the waitlist at the centre - trying to make existing services more effectively - by doing this would this help to more clearly highlight the gaps in service - conceptually, this addresses an area frequently asked about and sought after. (Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)*

When examining the effectiveness of this policy in reaching its intended goals, some stakeholders felt that the option would be effective for reducing the frustration of parents who are on multiple waiting lists and reduce the delay of matching parents to spaces. Generally, however, stakeholders and secondary literature indicate that a wait list would be most effective for bigger urban cities due to the current lack of spaces to monitor in rural communities. With the development of spaces, moreover, this option would serve to reach the goal of monitoring supply and demand, and depending on political climate, provide policy makers with evidence regarding the profundity of childcare space supply and demand. One stakeholder observed the following:

*A central wait list is something that is helpful in a city, it does not necessarily reduce waiting list - it does reduce inefficiencies around waiting for spaces. (Interview, Lynne Westlake, 02/12/08)*

Due to the existing technology for implementing a wait-list, as seen in BC’s Surgical Wait-Time database and in Ottawa’s central childcare management of waitlists in various
municipalities, the administrative complexities and costs associated with this option are extremely low. The stakeholders reflected this assessment in the following:

_Not very costly. Precisely the type of thing that the provincial government would like._ (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)

_Technology is there that wouldn't be exorbitantly expensive. If in legislation, it would apply to all areas as well, which is probably more effective in seeing that demand and supply nicely lined up in cities._ (Interview, Lynne Westlake, 02/12/08)

In terms of administrative complexities, the stakeholder provided the following responses, which reflects their varied first-hand experience and expertise:

Many CCRR’s know and try to keep tabs on the spaces, we are already doing that work but are not required to do that work. – so when a parent calls, we can give them an effective referral, not just a list in the area you are looking and when they call all 20 of them are full. Many CCRRs do that even through the government is saying we aren’t funded to do that anymore. (Interview, Barb Presseau, 02/11/08)

MCF could find this information quite useful and would be enthusiastic – they wouldn't have to do much at their end to take the info on a monthly basis and take it up online. They are already using the provincial website for their childcare subsidy act. (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)

The primary concern put forward for stakeholder acceptability was that of ensuring that all actors involved in the implementation of the policy would be made accountable for their role. As such, stakeholders remarked that tying the reporting to receiving the operating funding for CCRRs was the most plausible mechanism. This is reflected in the following:

_The proposal has merit, if and only if, it can be tied to the childcare operating fund, because right now, childcare providers have to go through the process of filling out paperwork to track the enrollment at their centre or family childcare program – based on that enrollment is how they get paid their provincial government childcare operating grant. They are already attuned to issues relating to enrollment – so having to take a couple of extra minutes to talk about their waitlists and the information about people on the waitlist I can imagine them getting their head around it at the time._ (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)

In addition, one stakeholder emphasized the need to be cognisant about the issues surrounding how much weight (or requirements) can be linked to receiving operating funding that only covers approximately 10 percent of childcare centre funding. This is quite noteworthy in terms of equity for childcare providers and must be present when requiring these actors to participate in this option. Overall, the score summary of this option reveals that in terms of economic feasibility, stakeholder acceptability, and administrative feasible, this option ranks quite high.

8.1.4 Evaluation of Policy Option 4: Parental Costs and Affordability

_Score Summary_
This option directly addresses issues of cost and affordability through increasing subsidy thresholds, eligible subsidy days and the insertion of parental fee caps. The majority of stakeholders felt that this option was pivotal for creating greater equity for rural mothers accessing regulated childcare. One childcare expert remarked:

*I cannot think it would be other than positive when updating the subsidy system. If anyone is concerned, the one thing to flag is when you have a subsidy system, there is the most tension among those who are close to, but just above the eligibly threshold. No matter where the line is, it is somewhere, and there is someone just above it, unless you raise the threshold to be able to include almost everybody.*

(Interview, Lynne Westlake, 02/12/08)

Notably, this excerpt also demonstrates the need to consider that a subsidy threshold increase, by its very nature, will create a set of winners and losers by creating an artificial line for eligibility. However, for addressing the key barriers of affordability and cost for a population that is most economically vulnerable, this option ranks very high for creating greater equality in access to regulated childcare.

For effectively reaching the policy’s intended goals, the stakeholders put forward a number of different views regarding the criteria of effectiveness. These varied observations reflect concerns about the lack of spaces to subsidize in rural areas, the benefits to families for increased families, and greater considerations that need to be made. These critiques are apparent in the following two excerpts:

*It certainly addresses affordability, assuming that a regulated space is there and to make it affordable. Would it help to help supply? Presumably, yes, it would, if there is a town where it is viable and there is no space, would it be an incentive to set up childcare there? If a subsidy system ensured that someone would use it, it would create an incentive and down the road increase the supply.*

(Interview, Lynne Westlake, 02/12/08)

*I am aware of the broad range of perspectives on this. I think that the one thing to be careful of is that sometimes, increasing subsidy is put forward as a solution as if it would address everything; yet, there are foundational things that are still in place.*

(Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)

*[Up to this point] Increasing subsidy does not achieve the intended result because are no controls on parent fees in BC! And, if you look at history of subsidy of last 15 years, you can track the history of fees - when subsidy goes up, so do fees.*

(Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)
These interviews led to the inclusion of a parental fee cap. By deconstructing the implications of raising a subsidy threshold, it was realized that this option would be most effective if coupled with this type of capping mechanism. After the addition of a cap, stakeholders became exceedingly supportive of this policy option.

In terms of economic feasibility, this option deemed to be the most expensive among all five policy options. Placing parental caps on fees would require the provincial government to be responsible for costs beyond the capped limit. This can be very costly and require significant investment from the provincial purse. However, as previously discussed in the literature review, the Cleveland and Krashinsky (1998) study showed that the return on investments for childcare are more than 2 to 1 for spill-over effects benefiting children, parents, communities, and the provincial government. Stakeholders commented on Manitoba’s current childcare funding initiatives and potential alternate sources of funding to relieve the costs of this large-scale option. This is reflected in the following:

*In Manitoba, the province now covers over half of the costs [for regulated childcare]. This is very effective for affordability, if public funding is available as costs rise, the amount of funding is available base on actual amounts. (Interview, Lynne Westlake, 02/12/08)*

*The provincial government has allocated $25 million more for subsidies than they have actually spent each year. So, one way to achieve subsidy enrichment is to say -- just spend the full amount that is allocated, because the provincial government has often under spent by $25 million a year. (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)*

The support for this option among the childcare experts was widespread. However, when considering how the provincial government would receive this type of option, many stakeholders felt that the provincial support would be quite low. On the other hand, the interviewees felt that all other stakeholders, including the general public, childcare providers, NGOs, and parents seeking to purchase regulated childcare would be supportive of this option. Some of these views were reflected in the following observations:

*I think there is a need for the subsidy increase. And, the re-evaluation of family income needs to looked at. (Interview, Dr. Alan Pence, 02/15/08)*

*There are currently models of parent paying a max of 20% of total cost with a sliding scale -- this is based on international comparisons, and, there are options to look at higher fee level. Still, one of the major barriers is that people have objections to public support for a program that people who are perceived to be able to afford to, can pay for. However, working with fees to make childcare affordable can work. The reality is that some stakeholder support or not enough otherwise the system would be in place. (Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)*

*Stakeholder acceptability will not be high at provincial government level -- although considerable interest will be present at the consumer level. (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)*
Administratively, this option was evaluated as being easily implemented within the existing provincial structures. As the Manitoba and Quebec models have demonstrated over recent years, this option can be effectively introduced with a “fair amount of ease” into existing subsidy, eligibility, and parental fee standards by introducing each element into the respective BC Childcare Subsidy and BC Childcare Licensing Act(s). One stakeholder reflected this view as he stated:

*Capping fees is a very effective if trying to address barriers - capping and lowering fees is without a doubt the key way to pull this off for equity and admin feasibility. (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)*

Despite high scores for equity, effectiveness, and administrative feasibility, this option ultimately receives one of the lowest scores. This is primarily due to the anticipated high costs associated with increasing the subsidy threshold and creating a mechanism that would result in a significant increase in public spending for regulated childcare.

### 8.1.5 Evaluation of Policy Option 5: ECE: Incentives and Wage Scales

**Score Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Equity</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Economic Feas.</th>
<th>Stakeholder Acceptability</th>
<th>Admin. Feas.</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECE Incentives and Wage Scales</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>19/25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This option improves upon existing inequities by providing the necessary increase in ECE labour force needed to supervise new and existing regulated childcare spaces. Not only does this option create greater equity by providing the staff needed to provide quality childcare to families, it also reduces current wage inequities for the women-dominated field of ECE. Key stakeholder observations often reflected this stream of thought; accordingly, these are presented in the following two passages:

*This is partly about showing greater equality to women who go into field and the quality of their work and the social significance of childcare work. (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)*

*During the ‘Childcare Spaces Initiative’ in the north, they said even if they had money for spaces, they wouldn’t be able to do it because of a lack of trained staff, this is even more of an issue in rural and northern areas. So, financial incentives to get individuals*
In rural areas are huge. ECE and loan forgiveness, or an incentive for people to work in northern and rural areas, makes huge sense. (Interview, Lynne Westlake, 02/12/08)

In terms of effectively reaching the intended goals of encouraging ECEs to enter the field and providing sustainable quality services to rural families purchasing childcare, this option ranked very high. As two childcare experts remarked:

*This option is a high winner on effectiveness because part of the shortage is that there are no services! There aren't people willing to provide services. And, people question why to invest in an education where "I will make not much better than minimum wage? I would make more working at Tim Hortons!" Therefore, it will help on that front. People would then say, "at least I won't go into debt to go into that field" – in that aspect, the remuneration challenge is addressed. (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)*

*If the salaries were higher tomorrow, then there would be greater staff retention and quality people coming out to rural areas. If no viable salary in place, the incentive and BCSLP are very short-term. (Interview, Dr. Alan Pence, 02/15/08)*

This incentive portion of the option was deemed not too costly for the public purse.

However, the wage-scale component, which would see the government regulating and providing the funding necessary to increase existing wages for ECE workers in childcare centres, would require a significant increased outlay on the part of the provincial government. Ultimately, the stakeholders were instrumental in providing practical knowledge about the need for a wage scale with this option, and not just simply introducing incentives for ECEs to enter the childcare field. Long-term planning was seen by interviewees as being a central instrument in ensuring that the childcare field was at the high level of quality that it needed to be for sustaining spaces in rural BC. Stakeholders provided the following feedback:

*This is a novel option, I don't think it is that costly to pull off – it is just the sort of policy change that the current government would be enthused about – it would be one more thing they could draw media attention to for taking action – not a big cost policy. This would get people nodding their heads. (Interview, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 02/11/08)*

*I heard a stat last week that 50% of ECE students in Canada have no intention of staying in the childcare field, the reason is obvious, there’s no money to be made once they go out to the workforce. To me, we need proper wages and some kind of a grid, that is where we need to work towards. (Interview, Barb Presseau, 02/11/08)*

In terms of administrative feasibility, incentives would be easy to administer and place no additional complexities for implementation on the provincial government. As mentioned in the policy option section, an incentive program and a BCSLP currently exist within the MOE and MAE program sector. Accordingly, the incentives could easily be introduced into these existing programs. Moreover, for wage scale introduction, the Manitoba model demonstrates that with a significant amount of ease, albeit in a long-term plan, wage scales can be introduced into the pay
structure for ECE workers providing care in childcare centres. One stakeholder reflected on her experience with a similar program in the following:

*I do think that a bonus for moving to rural communities is a practical approach, MCF did that for social workers in the past – sounds like it could be feasible and administratively doable. (Interview, Lynell Anderson, 02/14/08)*

On the other hand, the introduction of wage scales is part of a long-term initiative and as such, stakeholder acceptability within the provincial government was not perceived by interviewees to be very high at this time. This was primarily due to the potentially costly and wage scale portion of the policy option. The incentives, however, do align with current provincial strategies employed for increasing labour force participation. The contradiction of these two elements resulted in the mid-range score assigned to this option for the criteria of stakeholder acceptability.

### 8.2 Summary of Evaluation Scores

"Table 12: Summary of Evaluation Scores for All Policy Options"

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Option 2: Inter-Min. Collab.</td>
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<td>Option 3: The Acc. Framework.</td>
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<td>Option 4: Parental Costs &amp; Afford.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option 5: ECE Incent. &amp; Wage Scales</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>
8.3 Discussion

Based on the information gathered through a compilation of key individual stakeholder interviews and supporting literature, each of the policy options was analyzed, evaluated, and assigned a corresponding score. In evaluating each of the policy options, an aspect that became abundantly clear was the large impact of the economic feasibility and stakeholder acceptability criteria on the scores of the policy options. Arguably, without provincial support or public financing, the majority of the five options would find a significant amount of resistance in being implemented within the BC childcare portfolio. In the absence of a framework or comprehensive plan to add to or clear directives for childcare, a policy lever is necessary for bolstering provincial support for each of these policy options. Here, the importance of integrating BC’s “Five Great Goals” as a policy lever for ensuring a sufficient level of provincial government support, both in terms of political and financial support, is instrumental for breaking through low levels of stakeholder acceptability or economic feasibility.19 Furthermore, as the primary and secondary data in this present study has demonstrated, investments in regulated rural childcare are one of the greatest means for achieving most, if not all, of the current provincial government’s goals.

Arguably, each of the recommendations put forward in this study, when applied, has the ability to improve regulated childcare accessibility that extends past the rural boundaries and into BC’s urban communities. Although past the scope of this study, barriers to regulated childcare are also affecting urban communities, albeit, the acuteness of the problem is much more varied and manifests in different ways outside of a rural setting. However, as I discuss the recommendations for rural BC, it is important to keep in mind that all options have the ability to mark improvements in the barriers that affect mothers in urban communities as well.

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19 For further information on BC’s ‘Five Great Goals’, please refer to Appendix A.
9 Policy Recommendations

The use of valuable key stakeholder interviews with childcare policy experts was critical for adding to the completeness of each of the presented policy options. By providing feedback on these options, the stakeholders used the breadth of their expertise to help mould, critique, and ultimately assign criteria measurements to each of the options. In combining their contributions with the lengthy research provided in this study, a number of recommendations are put forward for addressing the policy problem.

In analyzing the five policy options, the evaluation demonstrated that there is no stand-alone solution to addressing the goal to increase rural mothers’ ability to access regulated childcare spaces in BC. Entrenched throughout the stages of this research discovery is the fact that rural childcare has evolved into a multifaceted policy problem with a number of systemic, economic, and social causes. The following section proposes that a number of policy options be implemented according to a specific timeline. This is done to accomplish two goals: first, to ensure the timely prioritization of improving regulated childcare access for vulnerable rural families; and second, to ensure the sustainability and viability of the option after its introduction into the childcare policy framework.

9.1 Recommendation 1: Create a Five-Year Provincial Policy Framework and Action Plan

Time Frame: Immediate

The most pressing argument that came out of the literature and the supporting accounts by childcare experts is the importance of creating a policy framework and action plan for regulated rural childcare in BC. Without this, experts argue, solutions do not address the systemic and institutional ‘erosion’ of childcare policy, as is currently the case in the province. This option received the highest ranking across all five criteria, resulting in a 24/25 score. Moreover, by implementing this policy option immediately, all other options and their respective goals, targets, benchmarks, and measures can grow from this framework.

As previously discussed, to date, no action plan exists for BC (CCAAC, 2007). However, this was not for a lack of previous provincial endeavours to do so, in both 2002 and 2005. In each
of these cases, early childhood development action plans were proposed, but ultimately, never took form. Within the present day provincial policy climate of “Five Great Goals,” an action plan seems even more necessary and very promising to produce. This is clear through the high results witnessed in the evaluation for the following criteria: the low cost to implement, high stakeholder acceptability, and relatively small administrative complexities.

9.2 Recommendation 2: Form an Inter-Ministerial Collaboration for Childcare Policy Directives

Timeframe: Immediate/Short-Term

The establishment of an inter-ministerial collaboration between the four primary actors involved in early learning and childcare policy, and a subsequent directed funding towards new and existing childcare spaces, would be the first initiative to be inserted into the five-year provincial action plan. Funding for new spaces in an immediate timeframe reflects the fact that rural families, and in particular, vulnerable or ‘at-risk’ rural families are in need of regulated childcare spaces now. This immediacy of need has been demonstrated repeatedly through the first-hand accounts of rural mothers, the childcare literature discourse, and the corresponding EDI and SES outcomes in BC’s rural communities.

Secondly, the way in which this funding is captured and consequently administered is one of the most important factors for sustaining and increasing regulated childcare spaces in BC. This is addressed through the implementation of this option. Often, a single ministry is incapable of diverting funds towards new, long-term spending initiatives. This option allows ministries to pool existing funds and reduce “wasteful spending” that is currently being applied to tangential policies that are only addressing a part of the early learning and childcare story. The collaborative networking of four ministries reduces the burden on any one ministry, and increases the pool of money towards childcare spaces to be established first in ‘at-risk’ rural communities, and second, in all of BC’s communities where shortages in regulated childcare spaces are widespread. As argued by key stakeholders, one of the most significant conditions to this funding is that it be committed on a long-term basis through a continued supply of operating funding, which would be initially covered within the province’s five-year childcare policy plan. This reinforces the sustainability and quality of the childcare space, which can have lasting effects for the families who purchase the space (OECD, 2006).
9.3 Recommendation 3: Establish an Accountability Framework to Monitor Spaces and Waitlists

**Timeframe: Medium-Term**

The Accountability Framework is the third option recommended for addressing regulated childcare accessibility for rural families. This option will enable the first comprehensive database of supply and demand numbers for regulated childcare spaces in BC. The key question that led to the adoption of this policy option for medium-term planning is *'how can the provincial government make continuous policy changes for regulated childcare without having a clear set of supply and demand data indicating what the childcare landscape looks like for BC’s families?'*

The answer is that to sustain long-term change and improvements in childcare availability, it is not easy, but, by inserting a mechanism for monitoring, and subsequently collecting up-to-date childcare data, the following goals for BC’s rural families and provincial childcare policy can be met:

- Reduce the feeling of stigma associated with subsidy-receiving rural families through a queue system, where all families are listed based on the time that the family’s name was added.
- Inform provincial government of higher demand areas with insufficient supply - so that targeting funding to specific rural communities can take place.
- Reduce waitlist redundancy and frustration for BC’s rural families who have to put their names down on multiple waitlists for individual childcare centres.
- Act as a policy lever for demonstrating supply-demand inequities to provincial government, with the intention of leveraging the need for continuous provincial investment in rural childcare spaces.

9.4 Recommendation 4: Pursue ECE Incentives & Wage Scales and Address Parental Costs & Affordability

**Timeframe: Long-Term**

The final recommendation of this project is twofold: 1) to continue to pursue the implementation of a wage scale and ECE incentives to attract quality ECEs to the regulated childcare field and 2) to reassess current subsidy eligibility and further pursue a mechanism for placing parental fee caps on the parent portion of childcare fees. These two multi-dimensional policy options have been placed in the long-term planning spectrum because of the low scores
that each have received for economic feasibility. This project has left no doubt that both of these options are essential, however, in order to ensure that these options are eventually adopted and implemented, long-term planning, both in terms of cost, administrative integration, and increased stakeholder acceptability, must be pursued.

When the provincial government considers the introduction of this final option, it is important that they use thoughtful deliberation, analysis from provinces currently implementing these tools, and a certain level of resourcefulness. An example of a creative implementation method was put forward by a key individual stakeholder who stated that the government should use the entire fund earmarked for subsidies. This childcare expert reported that in the most recent provincial budget cycle $25 million went unused, therefore, using all of the money available would serve as a financial buffer to lead to the increase of the income subsidy threshold without the need to input additional funds immediately. Moreover, by continuing to monitor the results coming out of Manitoba and Quebec, two provinces using wage scales and parental fee caps, BC would benefit from learning the most effective way to implement these new mechanisms. Lastly, with the integration of these final options into the goals, targets, and benchmarks of a provincial framework and action plan, they can ultimately be achieved over time.
10 Conclusion

The goal of this study was to gain an understanding of rural mothers' current barriers to accessing regulated childcare in BC, in order to develop policies that can reduce the most significant barriers that are preventing BC's rural mothers from purchasing this mode of childcare. A review of the current childcare literature revealed that the well-being status of mothers, particularly rural mothers and their children was intricately linked to their ability to access quality, regulated childcare. Moreover, past research studies indicated that in order to assess this problem, one must take into consideration the geographic, social, economic, gender, and cultural factors that can play a key role in the development and implementation of childcare policy. Further still, an exposition of the studies addressing a mother's ability to purchase childcare, and thus her ability to engage in paid labour, was demonstrated to be closely interconnected to her health and economic security, and that of her children. It is in consideration of these elements, and the review of recent funding cutbacks in BC's childcare policy sector, that warranted an in-depth examination of the issues surrounding access to regulated childcare in rural BC.

The mixed-method strategies employed for this study provided a rich source of data for understanding rural mothers' first-hand experiences and perceptions regarding access to regulated childcare. The results from the five community targeted focus groups and preliminary surveys revealed that 55 percent of these rural mothers have had to make employment sacrifices and tradeoffs due to the inaccessibility of regulated childcare in their communities. From these focus groups and surveys, a number of themes emerged. Some of the most notable themes included: 1) the significance of isolation and seclusion in rural settings for mothers; 2) the insufficient level of services available to address their childcare needs; 3) the social stigma associated with negotiating access to regulated childcare; 4) the cost and affordability of regulated childcare; and 5) the adverse affect of the various social demands being placed on rural mothers. All in all, each of these mothers were looking to the provincial government to address their unmet needs and were eagerly waiting to see policy changes implemented in their communities.

After careful consideration of all of the primary data collected, and the supporting literature on women and childcare, five policy options were developed. A detailed analysis of these options revealed that no single option would meet all of the identified goals or address all of
the key issues identified in the study. However, this research led to the discovery that the creation of a provincial framework and action plan will ensure that the childcare needs of rural families are being given prioritization and due attention by the provincial government. As goals, targets, and benchmarks are formed within the five-year plan, it will soon be possible to ensure targeted and methodical improvements in access to regulated childcare in ‘at-risk’ rural communities and over time, many of BC’s rural communities. The inter-ministerial collaboration will go a long way in addressing the immediate vacancy crisis in rural communities. And lastly, the integration of a monitoring and management device, and subsequent reassessments of subsidies, wage scales, ECE labour-pool gaps, and parental fee caps, will ultimately lead to measurable improvements for rural families currently showing poor EDI and SES outcomes in numerous BC rural communities.

For future research, examinations will need to focus on better governance for regulated childcare policy in BC, and in particular, undertake the monitoring of outcomes from other jurisdictions, such as Manitoba and Quebec. While this study has demonstrated the immense value that can be taken from exploring the ‘grassroots’ experiences of regulated childcare policy in BC, the lessons learned from these other jurisdictions will also contribute immensely to BC’s childcare portfolio. These provinces’ progressive childcare changes allow policy-makers to gain a better understanding of promising practices, achievable benchmarks, and the resulting benefits from greater investments in childcare. From this, it will be entirely possible to extract the requisite evidentiary support for implementing policies that allow for greater accessibility to regulated childcare for mothers in BC, both in the rural and urban settings.

This study has also demonstrated the presence of a number of socio-structural factors that run rampant through governmental childcare policy discourse. The characterization of women as ‘consumers’ and not producers, as demonstrated in the works of Tyyska (2001) and Kershaw (2005, 2007), continues to have a major impact on policy development for regulated childcare in Canada. Moreover, gender-based investigations of childcare policy, touched upon here, can continue to provide a great deal of information about the way in which social policy functions in Canada. Accordingly, there is a clear and pressing need to reassess the public discourse on regulated childcare and examine the underlying roots and possible solutions necessary to reconstruct the way in which policy-makers think about childcare. In doing so, one would need to explore the impact of socially constructed views of women within the various facets of childcare programs and services. The biggest contribution, as demonstrated through the focus groups and interviews in this study with rural mothers, is that individuals through a variety of qualitative methods can add a great deal of valuable insight into the impact and changes necessary for
effective public policy. By utilizing this important source, public policy can best be matched to actual need for women and ultimately, for all Canadian families.
Appendices
**Appendix A**

*Table 13: Province of British Columbia’s “5 Great Goals” and Performance Measures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Goals</th>
<th>Performance Measures</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **1. Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent** | - School Readiness  
- Student Literacy Rates  
- High School Graduation  
- Completed Degree |
| **2. Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness**   | - Life Expectancy at Birth  
- Physical Activity over age 12  
- # of Overweight British Columbians  
- British Columbia’s Smoking Rate |
| **3. Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at-risk, and seniors** | - Employment rate for working age British Columbians with disabilities  
- Performance of socio-economic children in school vs. non-disadvantaged child in the same grade  
- Percentage of British Columbians aged 75 or older living in health care or related institutions. |
| **4. Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.** | - Annual average fine particulate (pm 2.5) Concentrations in Major Metropolitan Areas  
- Per capita GHG Emissions  
- Water Quality Trends |
| **5. Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.**              | - Number of new jobs created per 1,000 population compared to other population. |
Appendix B

Figure 1: Childcare in the Governmental Framework

REGULATED CHILD CARE SERVICES
- SHARED JURISDICTION -

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- CANADA SOCIAL TRANSFER
- CC EXPENSE DEDUCTION
- CHILD TAX CREDIT
- ABORIGINAL HEAD START

PRIMARY ROLE:
DEPLOY/REGULATE EMPLOYMENT INS. & TRANSFER OF FUNDS

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

- CC SUBSIDIES
- REGULATION OF CC SERVICES
- CCR&R
- CC OPERATING FUND PROG.
- CC CAPITAL FUNDING PROG

PRIMARY ROLE:
DETERMINES LENGTH OF LEAVE FOR MAT./PAT. BENEFITS & CC PROGRAMS
Appendix C

Figure 2: Sample Focus Group Questions

1. What do you like about living in your rural/northern community?
2. Do you have access to childcare in your community?
3. Have you experienced being on a waitlist for childcare? If so, what was this experience like?
4. What childcare arrangement are you currently using – or have you used in the past?
5. Do you think that your child could benefit from regulated (licensed) childcare; if yes, how so?
6. Do you feel that you are at a disadvantage raising your children in a rural community?
7. Do mothers today have a choice about working or not? Why / Why not?
8. Have you ever had to change your career path because of not having access to childcare in your community? If yes, did it affect your stress level or health?
9. What barriers or main problems are affecting your ability to access childcare?
10. Do you feel that the government is responsible for your childcare needs?
11. Do you feel that your government is trying to address your childcare needs?
12. If you could ask the decision-makers for some key changes to childcare in your community what would they entail?
### Appendix D

**Table 14: Selected Community SES & EDI Results: Prince George, Tofino & Chilliwack**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prince George Mothers (&amp; Families)</th>
<th>Districts with Notable Outcomes</th>
<th>Neighbourhood Districts: Indicated by Highest/Lowest Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Status Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender income disparity (0 - 1.00)</td>
<td>Hart Highlands = 0.60</td>
<td>0.80 &gt; 0.60</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mackenzie = 0.61</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper Fraser = 0.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% families with children under 6, below Low Income Measure</td>
<td>The Bowl = 47.56</td>
<td>47.56 &gt; 13.91</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ospika North = 39.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper Fraser = 39.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% heterosexual couples where male only has employment income</td>
<td>Mud River = 28.68</td>
<td>28.68 &gt; 13.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ospika North = 26.74</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Upper Fraser = 25.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of lone female families</td>
<td>South Fort George = 5.33</td>
<td>5.33 &gt; 1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ospika North = 4.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in median family income, families with no children under 18 compared with families with children under 6 ($)</td>
<td>North Highlands = -$16,300</td>
<td>-$16,300.00 &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pineview/Hixon = -$12,300</td>
<td>-1,500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of couples in which mother performs more unpaid child care per week than father</td>
<td>Ospika South = 85.71</td>
<td>85.71 &gt; 52.27</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mud River = 82.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GINI coefficient, families with children under 6</td>
<td>South Fort George = 0.43</td>
<td>0.43 &gt; 0.26</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Bowl = 0.41</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ospika North &amp; Ospika South = 0.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prince George Children's Early Development Indicators</td>
<td>Districts With Notable Outcomes</td>
<td>Neighbourhood District: Percentage Below 10% Vulnerability Cut-Off (Highest - Lowest)</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Health And Well-Being (Wave 1)&lt;sup&gt;20&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>South Fort George = 41.7&lt;br&gt;Upper Fraser = 25.0&lt;br&gt;The Bowl = 23.1</td>
<td>41.7 &gt; 2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Competence, (Wave 1)</td>
<td>South Fort George = 29.4&lt;br&gt;The Bowl = 24.4</td>
<td>29.4 &gt; 2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Maturity (Wave 1)</td>
<td>The Bowl = 18.2&lt;br&gt;South Fort George = 17.9</td>
<td>18.2 &gt; 3.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language And Cognitive Development (Wave 1)</td>
<td>South Fort George = 25.0&lt;br&gt;Ospika North = 19.4</td>
<td>25.0 &gt; 2.9</td>
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<td>Communications And General Knowledge (Wave 1)</td>
<td>South Fort George = 25.9&lt;br&gt;The Bowl = 15.4</td>
<td>25.9 &gt; 1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Or More Scales (Wave 1)</td>
<td>South Fort George = 54.1&lt;br&gt;The Bowl = 42.7&lt;br&gt;Peden Hill = 41.2</td>
<td>54.1 &gt; 8.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Health And Well-Being (Wave 2)&lt;sup&gt;21&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>South Fort George = 33.3&lt;br&gt;Blackburn = 25.8</td>
<td>33.3 &gt; 5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>20</sup> Wave 1 includes information gathered from 2001/02 – 2003/04.

<sup>21</sup> Wave 2 includes information gathered from 2004/05 – 2006/07.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prince George Children’s Early Development Indicators</th>
<th>Districts with Notable Outcomes</th>
<th>Neighbourhood District: Percentage Below 10% Vulnerability Cut-Off (Highest - Lowest)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Social Competence (Wave 2)</td>
<td>South Fort George = 33.3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ospika South = 28.3</td>
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<td>Emotional Maturity (Wave 2)</td>
<td>South Fort George = 31.7</td>
<td>31.7 &gt; 3.2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pineview/Hixon = 16.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language And Cognitive Development (Wave 2)</td>
<td>South Fort George = 23.8</td>
<td>23.8 &gt; 3.2</td>
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<td>Ospika South = 22.2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Bowl &amp; Pineview/Hixon = 16.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications And General Knowledge (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Ospika South = 26.7</td>
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<td>South Fort George = 47.6</td>
<td>47.6 &gt; 17.1</td>
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<td>Ospika South = 39.1</td>
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<td>Ospika North = 36.8</td>
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<td>Tofino's Mothers (&amp; Families)</td>
<td>Districts with Notable Outcomes</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Districts: Indicated by Highest/Lowest Outcomes</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Socio-Economic Status Variables</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender income disparity (Female income compared to $1.00 for Male counterpart)</td>
<td>Central Port = 0.65</td>
<td>0.78 &gt; 0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% families with children under 6, below Low Income Measure</td>
<td>North Port = 0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% heterosexual couples where male only has employment income</td>
<td>South Port = 0.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of lone female families</td>
<td>Central Port = 4.23</td>
<td>51.12 &gt; 28.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of couples in which mother performs more unpaid child care per week than father</td>
<td>Tofino-Ucluelet = 46.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in median family income, families with no children under 18 compared with families with children under 6 ($)</td>
<td>Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 37.5</td>
<td>37.5 &gt; 20.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of couples in which mother performs more unpaid child care per week than father</td>
<td>South Port = 26.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GINI coefficient, families with children under 6</td>
<td>Central Port = 0.41</td>
<td>4.23 &gt; 2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tofino-Ucluelet = 3.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Port = 3.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Port = -$11,900</td>
<td>-$11,900.00 &gt; $10,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Port = 3.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Port = 61.11</td>
<td>61.11 &gt; 0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Port = 57.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Port = 0.41</td>
<td>0.41 &gt; 0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tofino-Ucluelet = 0.40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Port = 0.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofino’s Children’s Early Development Indicators</td>
<td>Districts With Notable Outcomes</td>
<td>Neighbourhood District: Percentage Below 10% Vulnerability Cut-Off (Highest - Lowest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Physical Health And Well-Being (Wave 1)\(^{22}\) | Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 27.3  
  Central Port = 16.4 | 27.3 > 5.0 |
| Social Competence, (Wave 1) | Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 18.2  
  Tofino-Ucluelet = 7.8 | 18.2 > 6.4 |
| Emotional Maturity (Wave 1) | Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 22.2  
  North Port = 13.2 | 22.2 > 2.0 |
| Language And Cognitive Development (Wave 1) | Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 50.0  
  North Port = 17.4 | 50.0 > 12.1 |
| Communications And General Knowledge (Wave 1) | Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 9.1  
  Central Port = 7.9 | 9.1 > 3.2 |
| One Or More Scales (Wave 1) | Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 50.0  
  Central Port = 32.9 | 50.0 > 18.0 |
| Physical Health And Well-Being (Wave 2)\(^{23}\) | Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 66.7  
  South Port & Central Port = 8.8 | 66.7 > 6.2 |

\(^{22}\) Wave 1 includes information gathered from 2001/02 – 2003/04.

\(^{23}\) Wave 2 includes information gathered from 2004/05 – 2006/07.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tofino Children's Early Development Indicators</th>
<th>Districts with Notable Outcomes</th>
<th>Neighbourhood District: Percentage Below 10% Vulnerability Cut-Off (Highest – Lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Competence (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 40.0</td>
<td>40.0 &gt; 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tofino-Ucluelet = 14.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Maturity (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 50.0</td>
<td>50.0 &gt; 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Port = 15.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language And Cognitive Development (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 40.0</td>
<td>40.0 &gt; 9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Port = 25.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications And General Knowledge (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 50.0</td>
<td>50.0 &gt; 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Port = 14.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Or More Scales (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Bamfield-Alberni Canal = 66.7</td>
<td>66.7 &gt; 23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Port = 36.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Port = 23.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilliwack Mothers (&amp; Families)</td>
<td>Districts with Notable Outcomes</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Districts: Indicated by Highest/Low. Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Status Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender income disparity (0 – 1.00)</td>
<td>Sardis East = 0.63</td>
<td>0.63 &gt; 0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosedale/Chilliwack East = 0.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% families with children under 6, below Low Income Measure</td>
<td>Chilliwack North = 52.62</td>
<td>52.62 &gt; 16.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chilliwack South = 38.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% heterosexual couples where male only has employment income</td>
<td>Chilliwack North = 30.89</td>
<td>30.89 &gt; 15.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chilliwack West = 27.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of lone female families</td>
<td>Chilliwack North = 4.21</td>
<td>4.21 &gt; 1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chilliwack South = 3.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in median family income, families with no children under 18 compared with families with children under 6 ($)</td>
<td>Promontory/Ryder Lake = -18,400</td>
<td>-18,400 &gt; 1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sardis South = -15,700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairfield/Little Mountain = -12,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of couples in which mother performs more unpaid child care per week than father</td>
<td>Promontory/Ryder Lake = 74</td>
<td>74.0 &gt; 42.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosedale/Chilliwack East = 73.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairfield/Little Mountain = 69.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GINI coefficient, families with children under 6</td>
<td>Chilliwack North = 0.41</td>
<td>0.41 &gt; 0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosedale/Chilliwack East = 0.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilliwack Children’s Early Development Indicators</td>
<td>Districts With Notable Outcomes</td>
<td>Neighbourhood District: Percentage Below 10% Vulnerability Cut-Off (Highest - Lowest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Physical Health And Well-Being (Wave 1)\(^{24}\)  | Chilliwack North = 22.1  
Chilliwack West = 21.3          | 22.1 > 0.0                                                                        |
| Social Competence, (Wave 1)                      | Chilliwack North = 22.1  
Chilliwack West = 21.3          | 22.1 > 0.0                                                                        |
| Emotional Maturity (Wave 1)                      | Chilliwack West = 27.9  
Chilliwack South = 19.3          | 27.9 > 0.0                                                                        |
| Language And Cognitive Development (Wave 1)      | Chilliwack West = 23.0  
Chilliwack North = 20.6          | 23.0 > 2.6                                                                        |
| Communications And General Knowledge (Wave 1)    | Chilliwack South = 14.7  
Chilliwack North = 11.8          | 14.7 > 0.0                                                                        |
| One Or More Scales (Wave 1)                      | Chilliwack South = 44.0  
Chilliwack West = 39.3           | 44.0 > 5.1                                                                        |
| Physical Health And Well-Being (Wave 2)\(^{25}\) | Chilliwack North = 35.4  
Chilliwack West = 26.8           | 35.4 > 2.2                                                                        |

\(^{24}\) Wave 1 includes information gathered from 2001/02 – 2003/04.

\(^{25}\) Wave 2 includes information gathered from 2004/05 – 2006/07.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chilliwack Children’s Early Development Indicators</th>
<th>Districts with Notable Outcomes</th>
<th>Neighbourhood District: Percentage Below 10% Vulnerability Cut-Off (Highest - Lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Competence (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Chilliwack North = 41.7</td>
<td>41.7 &gt; 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chilliwack South = 32.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Maturity (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Chilliwack North = 33.3</td>
<td>33.3 &gt; 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chilliwack West = 28.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language And Cognitive Development (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Fairfield/Little Mountain = 32.9</td>
<td>32.9 &gt; 6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chilliwack South = 28.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications And General Knowledge (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Rosedale/Chilliwack East = 25.3</td>
<td>25.3 &gt; 6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chilliwack North = 25.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Or More Scales (Wave 2)</td>
<td>Chilliwack West = 56.1</td>
<td>56.1 &gt; 15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chilliwack North = 54.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Figure 3: Preliminary Focus Group Questionnaire

The Well-Being of Women and Children in Rural and Northern British Columbia: Accessibility to Regulated Childcare

- Thank-you for your participation in the discussion today.

- Please fill in this Focus Group Preliminary Questionnaire:

- This questionnaire is voluntary & anonymous and your name/contact information is not required.

1. How many children do you have? ____.

2. What are their ages? _____, _____, _____, _____ &_____

3. What is your marital status? (circle one please)

   Single / Married / Common-Law / Divorced

4. Are you of Aboriginal decent? Yes or No

5. Have you had trouble finding child care in your community? Yes or No

6. Are you presently employed? Yes or No

7. Have you turned down work/a job because you couldn’t find child care?

   Yes or No

8. Have you missed work/school because you couldn’t find child care?

   Yes or No

9. What is your total household income? Please include the income of all earners in your household. Approx $___________. 00 / year after tax.
Appendix F

Childcare Fees and Subsidy Amounts, 2005

Figure 4: Childcare Fees and Subsidy Amounts, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Care</th>
<th>Mean Monthly Cost of Care in Vancouver 2004</th>
<th>Maximum Childcare Subsidy June 2005+</th>
<th>% of Childcare Costs Covered by Subsidy</th>
<th>Shortfall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre-Infant</td>
<td>$942.00</td>
<td>$618.00</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>$324.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre-over 36 months</td>
<td>$589.00</td>
<td>$394.00</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>$195.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family- up to 18 months*</td>
<td>$777.00</td>
<td>$475.00</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>$302.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family-3-5 years*</td>
<td>$667.00</td>
<td>$415.00</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>$252.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on estimate of 20 days of care per month in family care

Source: Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
Appendix G

Figure 5: Manitoba’s ECE Minimum Wage Scale 2005-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>$45,568.00</td>
<td>$46,957.00</td>
<td>$48,366.00</td>
<td>$49,317.00</td>
<td>$51,312.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.15) %</td>
<td>(2.56) %</td>
<td>(3.25) %</td>
<td>(3.59) %</td>
<td>(4.67) %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>$39,423.00</td>
<td>$40,535.00</td>
<td>$41,720.00</td>
<td>$42,972.00</td>
<td>$44,251.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13.81) %</td>
<td>(19.47) %</td>
<td>(22.96) %</td>
<td>(22.55) %</td>
<td>(21.25) %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Educator II or III</td>
<td>Supervisors or ECE with specialized training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$33,277.00</td>
<td>$34,275.00</td>
<td>$35,303.00</td>
<td>$36,362.00</td>
<td>$37,455.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(16.00) %</td>
<td>(16.48) %</td>
<td>(16.37) %</td>
<td>(17.49) %</td>
<td>(18.03) %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Educator (ECE)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$28,708.00</td>
<td>$29,566.00</td>
<td>$30,453.00</td>
<td>$31,367.00</td>
<td>$32,303.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13.50) %</td>
<td>(14.21) %</td>
<td>(14.54) %</td>
<td>(15.02) %</td>
<td>(15.53) %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Assistant in ECE training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$26,759.00</td>
<td>$27,662.00</td>
<td>$28,623.00</td>
<td>$29,624.00</td>
<td>$30,659.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13.35) %</td>
<td>(13.26) %</td>
<td>(13.95) %</td>
<td>(13.90) %</td>
<td>(13.25) %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$17,907.00</td>
<td>$18,444.00</td>
<td>$18,990.00</td>
<td>$19,597.00</td>
<td>$20,162.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13.61) %</td>
<td>(15.57) %</td>
<td>(17.75) %</td>
<td>(19.54) %</td>
<td>(19.88) %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Wages and Benefits are determined by the Board of Directors and are based on the methodology of funding. MCCA provides the information to our members as a guideline to use when negotiating a wage scale according to their needs and working environment.
- Each increment increases by 3%. Separation of Executive increases by 5%.
- Each position in this job class will be calculated based on the minimum number of weeks. According to that from the Manitoba Child Care Program, the maximum work weeks is 43 if hourly MCCA resources at the minimum wage are used for employees that work 8-10 hours per week. According to the code, the code can be reported.
- Employees at the end of the year will be eligible for a standard increase when they move to a higher position, or the center may provide a cost of living increase of 3% each.
- Refer to footer for each position. View the full document at www.monna.ca and enter "see worksheet".

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Appendix H

List of Key Stakeholder Participants

1. Dr. Paul Kershaw
   - Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) Scholar in Social Care, Citizenship and the Determinants of Health
   - Director: Social Care and Social Citizenship Research Network and Co-Director of the Early Learning and Child Care Research Unit
   - Faculty Associate: UBC Centre for Research on Women Studies & Gender Relations.

2. Lynne Westlake
   - Children's Policy Division: Special Advisor in the SPD Directorate, HRSDC
   - Entered Federal Public Service (1988) Extensive Work in Policy Development for: ECE, All Federal/Provincial Agreements on Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC), Early Childhood Development (ECD), Aboriginal ECE & ECD
   - Executive Director: Canadian Childcare Advocacy Association (1984-1988)

3. Lynell Anderson
   - Project Director: Childcare Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC)
   - Senior Researcher: Early Learning Childcare Research Unit, Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP)
   - Childcare Financing Expert (B.Comm., CGA)
   - Experience working for BC Provincial Government (MCF) as Manager of Finance and Support Services and an Associate Child and Youth Officer

4. Dr. Alan Pence
   - Full Professor at the School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia
   - Former Director of the School of Child and Youth Care: Established three specialized units: Unit for Child Care Research (UCCR); First Nations Partnership Programs for Community-Based Aboriginal Child and Youth Care Education; Early Childhood Development Virtual University
   - Author of over 70 refereed journal articles, book chapters and monographs on a range of education, child care, and child and youth care topics

5. Barb Presseau
   - Coordinator, Chilliwack Childcare Resource and Referral Centre (1990-Present)
   - Coordinator, Family Drop-In Centre (3+ Years)
Bibliography

Works Cited


