



**Early Childhood Learning Agency
Response Form
Expanded Early Learning in British Columbia for Children Aged 3-5**

The Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union, Local 378 (COPE 378) represents over 11,000 workers in the public and private sector in British Columbia.

This response is submitted on behalf of our members who share with British Columbians a desire to see enhanced commitments to early childhood education.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Early Childhood Learning Agency's Consultation Paper "Expanded Early Learning in British Columbia for Children Aged 3-5".

Given the importance of the early childhood years and the clear trends to increase and improve programs in other jurisdictions, the Early Childhood Learning Agency invites your response to the following questions.

Part One

Given the importance of the early childhood years and the clear trends to increase and improve programs in other jurisdictions, the Early Childhood Learning Agency invites your response to the following questions.

1. What are your thoughts on full school day kindergarten for five-year-olds?

COPE 378 believes that a fully funded all-day Kindergarten program should be available to every student in the province.

Funding should also be provided so that children have access to care both before and after the school day when they have both parents working.

- Programs must be universally accessible.
- Programs should focus on the development of the whole child and on the five goal areas of the Primary Program (intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic and artistic, and physical development).
- Programs should be culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate, and child-centred.
- Programs should offer a quality learning experience, recognize the importance of play, feature integrated subject matter, focus on experiential learning and higher order thinking, and be delivered in classrooms with adequate space, sink, and bathroom.
- Programs should be facilitated and supported by teachers with training in early childhood education.
- Programs should be based on the principles of learning and early intervention.
- Programs should be aligned and integrated with other community childcare and government services.
- Programs should be appropriately funded and resourced.

- Kindergarten classes should have consistent support of and timely access to specialized support services for personnel and resources.
- Program delivery should be flexible, in response to community needs.
- Programs should acknowledge the unique needs of the individual students and provide continuity of service.

2. What about parent choice for full-school-day pre-kindergarten programs for four-year olds?

3. What about parent choice for full-school-day pre-kindergarten programs for three-year olds?

Any programming needs to ensure that adequate public funding is secure. Programs also need to ensure that you have trained early childhood educators in place at the outset. In order to get people to take on a career as an early childhood educator, they need to be provided with good working conditions in their workplace, all the resources necessary to educate our young citizens and also a good wage and benefits.

COPE 378 believes that the following policies should guide any expansion of early-childhood education programs in our province.

1. The provincial government must provide adequate funding for preschool education centres (including daycare facilities) to ensure the attraction and retention of well-qualified staff, and government must provide for equitable access to use of facilities by all parents.
2. Early-childhood education experiences may be offered through a home with parents and caregivers, a variety of community-based child programs, and kindergarten programs.
3. All parties must make greater efforts to enhance communications about early childhood programs and issues with parents, childcare providers, and the public school system.

4. What do you think are the most important factors to consider in expanding early learning programs in British Columbia?

COPE 378 believes that the following components are the most important factors in expanding early learning programs in BC:

- The BC government should fund affordable early childcare and education for every child in BC, and commit to staffing daycare centres with certified early childhood educators in not-for-profit centres.
- It is the responsibility of the provincial and federal levels of government to establish and fund daycare.
- Program delivery should be flexible, in response to community needs.
- Programs should acknowledge the unique needs of the individual students and provide continuity of service.