



# SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

May 23, 2024

## **School-Aged Child Care Coming to a School Near You!**

School District No. 5 (SD5) Southeast Kootenay is excited to announce one hundred fourteen (114) new before and after school child care spaces across the District, for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year.

According to Board Chair, Doug McPhee, these spaces are designed to support the well-being of children and the practical needs of families in SD5 and will provide an integrated, community-focused approach to child care and education in the District.

“This has been a massive undertaking”, says McPhee, “and is just the beginning of our journey toward the eventual delivery of wrap-around, full day and before and after school child care throughout our District.”

In 2018, the Provincial Government announced the launch of its ten (10) year ChildCareBC plan to build affordable, inclusive and quality child care in BC. In 2021, the Federal Government committed more than \$27 Billion over a five (5) year period to assist the creation of an early learning and child care system throughout Canada, to be created in partnership with provinces, territories and Indigenous rightsholders. Over the past six years, the combined funding streams of the provincial and federal governments constitute a \$6 billion dollar investment in child care in BC.

To further the goal of universal, ten (10)-dollar-a-day childcare in BC, in April 2022 the Province merged the responsibilities of Kindergarten through Grade twelve (K – 12) education with those of child care into a single ministry, the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) and introduced targeted initiatives, policies, and funding programs geared toward improving access, affordability, and quality of childcare for school boards, municipalities and not-for-profits.

“Following a successful grant application in the spring of 2023, the District completed an Early Learning and Child Care Environmental Scan to better understand the landscape of early learning and child care in our District”, says McPhee. “This scan provided us with the baseline data needed to support a

planned and integrated approach to strengthening capacity in our schools and enabling us to grow early learning and child care on school grounds.”

After reviewing the Scan, the District developed a new position, Early Learning and Child Care District Principal, and hired Laura-Lee Phillips, a former school principal with prior experience as an early child care provider, to champion child care in the District and develop child care projects and initiatives. In her role, Phillips has been responsible for identifying opportunities to integrate child care into the broader learning environment and stay current on child care initiatives in the province. She is also the District liaison to early years’ service providers and not-for-profits, and she continues to grow strong, collaborative working relationships with these providers/organizations while keeping the Board up to date on her progress with monthly reports.

In the spring of 2024, SD5, in partnership with non-profit providers, was successful in their application to the the province’s ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund and received approval of more than \$2.5 million in New Spaces Funding.

As a result of the New Spaces Funding and Ms. Phillips’ relationship building efforts, the Distict has partnered with the *Elkford Women’s Task Force Society* to create twenty-four (24) before and after school spaces at Rocky Mountain Elementary School (RMES) in Elkford and with the *South Country Social Planning Committee Society* to create thirty (30) spaces at Jaffray Elementary Junior Secondary School (JESS) in Jaffray.

In Cranbrook, Steeples Elementary School (SES), in partnership with the *BCG Cranbrook*, is creating thirty (30) spaces and Gordon Terrace Elementary School (GTES), in partnership with *Stay n’ Play Association* are creating an additional thirty (30) before and after childcare spaces.

“Laura-Lee is doing an amazing job for the District”, says McPhee. “While there are many other possibilities and partnerships she continues to explore, we are excited to see the first of her efforts come to fruition in the new school year.”

For more information on early years learning resources in SD5,  
[https://www.sd5.bc.ca/learning/EarlyLearning/Pages/default.aspx#/="](https://www.sd5.bc.ca/learning/EarlyLearning/Pages/default.aspx#/=)

For more information on child care initiatives in BC, visit:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-strategy>

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