



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

February 27, 2025

Lack of government coordination on commitment to increase child care licensing capacity

VICTORIA – The Office of the Auditor General has reported on two audits related to the 2018 ChildCareBC plan’s commitment to increase capacity in health authorities to license new spaces, conduct investigations, and monitor compliance with regulations.

The first audit found that the Ministry of Education and Child Care didn’t coordinate with its health partners responsible for child care licensing to implement the commitment.

The second audit found that Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) didn’t adequately assess its capacity for child care facility licensing as demand has grown.

“Health authority licensing capacity is important for maintaining the quality of licensed child care and the safety of children,” Acting Auditor General Sheila Dodds said. “Health authorities need enough licensing staff to conduct regular inspections, investigate complaints about child care facilities and process licence applications in a timely way.”

Child care licensing by health authorities not only enhances the quality of care, as staff inspect facilities, it also affects child care access and affordability. New facility applications need to be processed in a timely manner to ensure parents can access licensed spaces for their children. Only licensed facilities are eligible for certain provincial subsidies, such as the \$10 a Day child care program and the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care is responsible for implementing the ChildCareBC Plan. Child care licensing programs are governed by the Ministry of Health and delivered by the five regional health authorities.

“Our audit of the ministry found that little has been done in recent years to coordinate and ensure licensing programs in health authorities have capacity to match the growing number of child care spaces,” Dodds said.

There have been 36,000 new B.C. child care spaces funded by the provincial and federal governments since 2018, with a targeted total of about 70,000 new spaces by 2028.

The audit found that the Ministry of Education and Child Care didn’t effectively work with its health partners to coordinate responsibilities, timelines, or funding to increase child care licensing capacity in health authorities. Also, the ministry didn’t monitor or report publicly on the implementation of the capacity commitment.

“As a result, the ministry didn’t know if health authorities had increased their child care licensing capacity to keep up with the expansion of licensed child care,” Dodds said.

The second audit found that VCH didn’t adequately assess its capacity to license, investigate, and monitor child care facilities.

The audit found that VCH tracked child care site inspections, but it didn’t have indicators or timelines for its licensing and investigation activities. VCH also didn’t track how long staff spent on these activities or how long it took to approve new licenses or complete investigations.



This information is key to determining whether VCH has the appropriate number of staff to meet growing demand. VCH last received funding for new child care licensing staff in 2019 and since then the number of child care facilities has increased 19 per cent.

“Better coordination between the Ministry of Education and Child Care and its health partners would help regional health authorities keep up with the growth of child care spaces and maintain the quality of licensed care,” Dodds said.

Each audit includes five recommendations and all of our recommendations have been accepted.

Related links

Report: <https://www.oag.bc.ca/child-care-licensing-capacity/>

Audits at a glance: <https://www.oag.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/963/2025/02/OAGBC-20280227-childcare-final-AAG.pdf>

Acting auditor general’s summary (video): <https://youtu.be/fxXXdhQSt8>

For general questions and interview requests

Nicholas Johnson, Communications Director

Office of the Auditor General

njohnson@bcauditor.com

250-419-6117

Photos

High-resolution images of Acting Auditor General Sheila Dodds:

<https://www.oag.bc.ca/sheila-dodds>

Email alerts

Subscribe to email notifications about reports from the Office of the Auditor General:

<https://e1.invoke.com/ext/pages/9409e28a687e1d46b8f5a733370dd7fd>

About the Office of the Auditor General of B.C.

Find us online at: <https://www.oag.bc.ca>