

Impact Report

Reporting Period: Q1 - March 2026

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Executive Summary

The Kootenay Childcare Initiative successfully launched on October 7, 2025.

At the present time, we are directly supporting 23 childcare providers with tailored assistance to strengthen operations, drive expansion, and reinforce infrastructure for those at-risk.

This quarter, 26 new providers and staff engaged through monthly training only, without one-on-one supports such as business coaching, mentoring, and recruitment assistance. Three of the participants, serving as program coaches or mentors, attend as part of their professional development. An additional 11 facilities have expressed interest in our offerings but have yet to engage in monthly training sessions. They remain connected through supplemental resources, as they fall outside the expanding or at-risk focus.

In early February, we launched a regional campaign video promoting childcare in the Kootenays, now featured on our [homepage](#) to attract early childhood educators to work in the region.

Engagement Snapshot

Total Providers Currently Engaged: 23

Currently receiving coaching & mentoring only: 14

Currently receiving recruitment support only: 3

Currently receiving coaching/mentoring and recruitment support: 6

Providers with Assigned Support - Engagement Pending: 2

Providers Completed Support: 2

Providers & Staff Engaged via Monthly Training Only: 26 (actively participating in training & shared supports; not receiving coaching, mentoring or recruitment services)

Providers Interested but Not Yet Participating: 11

Providers by School District



Key Topics & Concerns Raised

Theme	Observations	Priority
Behavioural Challenges	Managing behaviours is increasingly challenging, despite using strategies that once worked. Support workers report the same issues.	High
Cross-Provincial Collaboration	What cross-provincial collaboration and resources exist to support the recognition and transfer of ECE credentials to BC?	High
Professional Development	Strong demand for basic business and operational training (e.g., grant writing, bookkeeping) and supplemental courses for non-ECE managers	Increasing
Succession Planning	Strengthening staff capacity to ensure operational continuity during absences and build long-term resilience	Increasing
Immigration	Information sessions on sector-specific immigration pathways	Increasing
Administration	Demand for practical tools and benchmarks for scheduling, parent communication, waitlists, and Pro-D Day interest management	Moderate

Supports & Actions Provided

Types of Support	Actions	Number of Providers Supported	Outcomes
Mentorship	Matched with peer mentors	6	Underway
Business Coaching	Matched with business coaches	11	Underway
Recruitment	Matched with recruitment consultant	11	Underway
Recruitment	Job offers currently available on KCI website	5	Underway
Pending Engagement to Assigned Support	Case manager will check-in as per dates discussed with providers	2	On hold as per providers request
Monthly Training: KCI Leadership Sessions	Third session scheduled for March 25 th , 2026	Session 1: 19 attendees Session 2: 9 attendees	Underway until June 24 th , 2026
Monthly Training: WeBC Peer Mentoring for Childcare Providers	First session commenced February 17 th , 2026	6	Cohort Full Underway until June 23 rd , 2026
Monthly Training: KCI Recruitment Series	First session scheduled for March 12 th , 2026		Underway until May 14 th , 2026
Resource Sharing	Linked non-profits to CBT Non-Profit Advisors Training	7	Providers to register with CBT for active support
Resource Sharing	Linked to myCommunityFutures	5	Providers to create myCF accounts to access additional consulting support
Resource Sharing	Newsletter	61	Providers, staff, and interested parties seeking updates, resources, and developments via the Initiative

Emerging Trends

- **Increased demand for flexible online training options**
KCI has adopted a “*come as you are*” approach to monthly training sessions, encouraging providers to participate in a way that works for them (e.g., cameras & microphones off and using the chat function to engage). This has been met with positive feedback from providers & staff
- **Increased demand for access to session recordings and materials**
Providers are seeking post-session access to recordings and resources so they can review and reference content as needed
- **Preference for practical, operational tools over theoretical training**
Many providers are asking: “*What can we do to improve? What benchmarks can we use to know our systems are working?*”
- **Appreciation for regular check-ins**
Providers value KCI’s ongoing check-ins, which help fine-tune coaching and mentoring supports and create space for suggestions around additional resources
- **Growing concern about operational resilience**
There is concern about how existing facilities can remain sustainable particularly given the pause on \$10/day applications
- **Engagement capacity**
Competing priorities within the sector can occasionally affect response rates and timelines for connection which impacts our ability to connect & promptly support providers

Our Response to Key Concerns

Leadership and team management, communication, administration, succession planning, and operations remain high-priority concern areas among the providers we have engaged to date. To address gaps in accessible supports, we launched a new training series this quarter, the “**Kootenay Childcare Initiative Leadership Sessions**” facilitated by Nicky Byres. This series is open to all childcare providers and their administrative and management staff, regardless of direct connection to the Initiative. The sessions are designed to strengthen leadership capacity, build confidence, and equip participants with practical tools to effectively navigate today’s childcare landscape. Sessions began on January 28 and are held on the last Wednesday of each month from 6:30–7:30 PM MT, running through June 2026.

Recruitment and retention continue to be among the most pressing challenges facing providers. In response, we launched the **Kootenay Childcare Initiative Recruitment**

Series, with the first session piloting on March 12th. The series supports providers to hire the right talent, navigate common hiring challenges, and implement practical, sustainable retention strategies. Sessions will take place on the second Thursday of each month from 6:30–7:30 PM MT, running through May 2026. In support of this series, Mia Gardiner, founder and recruitment consultant with Kootenay Talent + Recruitment, has produced videos targeting students at the College of the Rockies and Selkirk College to highlight job opportunities in the region.

Planned Actions

- KCI attended College of the Rockies East Kootenay Career & Job Fair on March 4th to create awareness on employment opportunities for ECE's
- KCI will be attending Selkirk College's West Kootenay Career Fair on March 11th in Nelson and March 12th in Castlegar to create awareness on employment opportunities for ECE's
- KCI will be presenting at the annual ECEBC Conference on May 7th to 9th on the work being carried out through the Initiative
- KCI has expressed interest in participating in the Early Years Conference on May 22nd & 23rd if tradeshow booths are made available

Conclusion

The Kootenay Childcare Initiative will run until March 2027.

Key actions in the next quarter:

- Continue to provide coaching and mentoring for providers, while assessing impacts and adjusting processes as required
- Continue to provide recruitment support for providers and adjust processes as required
- Continue to connect providers to locally available resources, including CCRRs and other training opportunities
- Continue regular check-ins with providers to ensure the Initiative's supports remain responsive as needs evolve
- Continue producing accessible, practical and robust [resources](#) for providers in the region
- Continue outreach with providers in SD 5, 6, 8, 10 and 20, and capture new leads in unrepresented SD 51

