

Snapshot of Child Care Need in Nelson and Area

The child care available in Nelson and area is low, leaving many families without child care, needing to leave the community to find child care or unable to work or go to school.

The child care coverage rate in Nelson and area is 24%. The child care coverage rate is a percentage based on the number of licensed child care spaces available for every 10 children.

The child care space creation targets are the number of child care spaces required to adequately address the needs of families in Nelson and area. The methodology used to determine space creation targets is informed by other child care studies, including the Surrey Child Care Gap Assessment (2011), the Comox Valley Child Care Action Plan (2019) and the Township of Langley Child Care Action Plan (2020). The results from the survey confirm that additional child care spaces are needed. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives defines a child care desert when a least three children are competing for the same space, approximately 33% coverage rate.

Based on these sources, the target children 0 to 5 years is 70% and the target for children 6 to 12 years is 55%.

To meet these targets, an additional 871 child care spaces are needed – 234 spaces for under 3 years, 59 spaces for 3 to 5 years and 579 spaces for 6 to 12 years.

The following tables show the current and projected population of children in both the City of Nelson and surrounding area. The surrounding area is based on the Local Health Area of Nelson - 122 and the Regional District of Central Kootenay's Electoral Area E and F – Central Kootenay. Both population and projection numbers are based on BC Population Projections data, with additional information gathered from the 2016 Census (Age in Single Years Data).

Current Child Care Coverage Rates & Targets

Table 1: Current Child Care Coverage Rates

This table shows the current population of children in Nelson and area from 0 to 12 years old, their access to child care, the child care availability in the community.

Age Group	Number of Children	Number of Child Care Spaces	Current Coverage Rates
Under 3 years	445	78	18%
3 to 5 years	515	302	59%
6 to 12 years	1370	175	13%
Total	2330	555	24%

Source: BC Population Projections 2019, 2016 Census (Age in Single Years Data)

Table 2: Targets for Child Care Coverage Rates

This table shows the targets for child coverage rates and how many new child care spaces are required to meet the targets.

Age Group	Number of Children	Target Coverage Rate	Target Child Care Spaces	New Spaces Required to Meet Targets
Under 3 years	445	70%	312	234
3 to 5 years	515	70%	361	59
6 to 12 years	1370	55%	754	579
Total	2330		1426	871

Source: BC Population Projections 2019, 2016 Census (Age in Single Years Data)

Projected Number of Child Care Spaces Needed

The tables below show the number of child care spaces needed to meet the target coverage rates for each age group. The total targets spaces and net new spaces required are laid out for the current child care population, projections of what the child care population will be in 5 years and in 10 years.

Children Under 3 Years

Target Coverage Rate of 70%				
Year	Number of Children	Current Child Care Spaces	Target Child Care Spaces	Net New Spaces Required (Total Spaces - Existing Spaces)
2020	662	78	463	385
2025	645		452	374
2030	609		426	348

Source: BC Population Projections 2019, 2016 Census (Age in Single Years Data)

Children 3 to 5 Years

Target Coverage Rate of 70%				
Year	Number of Children	Current Child Care Spaces	Target Child Care Spaces	Net New Spaces Required (Total Spaces - Existing Spaces)
2020	715	302	501	199
2025	746		522	220
2030	701		491	189

Source: BC Population Projections 2019, 2016 Census (Age in Single Years Data)

Children 6 to 12 Years

Target Coverage Rate of 55%				
Year	Number of Children	Current Child Care Spaces	Target Child Care Spaces	Net New Spaces Required (Total Spaces - Existing Spaces)
2020	1887	175	1038	863
2025	1947		1071	896
2030	1949		1072	897

Source: BC Population Projections 2019, 2016 Census (Age in Single Years Data)