



Campbell River Early Years Council
Campbell River Area Family Network

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Supported by a Campbell River
Community Foundation grant



The first six years of life set the stage for lifelong learning, behaviour, health and well-being.

~ Dr. Fraser Mustard, renowned early childhood development researcher and advocate

CAMPBELL RIVER State of the Child Report

2022

We respectfully acknowledge the unceded traditional territories of the Laichwiltach, Klahoose, and K'ómoks First Nations. We honour our relationships with these First Nations, Homalco First Nation, and all First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples who reside in these territories.

Our young children

are the future of our community.
What we do today matters.



Many people helped make this report possible.

Thank you to the Campbell River Community Foundation for providing the funding to support preparing this report and their commitment to enriching life in Campbell River.

Thank you to the members of the Campbell River Early Years Council and to other contributors who provided information for the update and helped by reviewing the report.

Thank you to the people and families in the Campbell River area communities who are helping to give our young children a good start in life.

Report designed by Sister Sister Design
www.sistersister.ca





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CAMPBELL RIVER AREA FAMILY NETWORK is a coalition working together to strengthen the capacity within the Campbell River region to support the best possible outcomes for young children as they start on their life journeys.

CAMPBELL RIVER EARLY YEARS COUNCIL is the Network's working group of representatives from local health and social service agencies and government departments who meet regularly to share information and knowledge, identify gaps in services, advocate for solutions, and collaborate on specific projects. The Council defines "early years" as from conception to age 8 which are critical ages for

children's development and their future health and well-being. It is a time when community support and connection is vital for families.

THE COALITION'S VISION guides the Council: *Our community embraces a culture that works collaboratively to coordinate and optimize resources, imagination, and commitment toward the healthy development of all our children.*

THE 2022 CAMPBELL RIVER STATE OF THE CHILD REPORT aims to foster a common understanding of the world our children are living in with the goal of engaging and mobilizing all sectors to take the actions necessary to help our children and their families thrive, and thereby strengthen our local communities as a whole.

The report is not meant to be comprehensive but rather gives highlights for that purpose.





introduction

OUR YOUNGEST CHILDREN'S CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE have their families at the heart, extend to their local communities, and continue to the broader environment ranging from government health, social and economic policies and supports to external events or factors at the provincial, national or world levels that impact the everyday lives and future of children and their families. The report moves from the outer to inner circles and includes context on interconnections.



As possible, the report updates the information in the previous 2018 report, augmented by significant new developments and additional focuses relevant to understanding the current opportunities and challenges for young children and their families living in the Campbell River area.

ABOUT STATISTICS USED IN THE REPORT...

Data across sources can differ in their geographical areas, scope of what is included, definitions, and timeframes – all of which can affect analysis, comparisons, and understanding trends.

Also, data may vary in pertaining to individuals or families or households. Those characteristics are typically noted in the report.

Sources of statistics are referenced and sources for definitions are footnoted. Percentages can be rounded in the source documents and therefore may not always add to 100%.

Key

DEFINITIONS

used in the report

Statistics Canada:

GENDER AND SEX AT BIRTH

E

In the 2021 Census, **gender** is defined as an individual's personal and social identity as a man, woman or non-binary person, while **sex at birth** is typically being assigned at birth based on a person's reproductive system and other physical characteristics.

Given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes deemed necessary in the Census to protect the confidentiality of responses provided.

In these cases, individuals in the category "non-binary persons" are distributed into the other two gender categories and are denoted by the "+" symbol. "Men+" includes males as well as some non-binary persons. "Women+" includes females as well as some non-binary persons.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

F

Include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples.

IMMIGRANT

G

A person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group.

In the 2021 Census, this includes immigrants who were admitted to Canada on or prior to May 11, 2021.

CAMPBELL RIVER CENSUS AGGLOMERATION AREA

A

The agglomeration area is comprised of City of Campbell River, Strathcona D (Oyster Bay to Buttle Lake), Wei Wai Kum First Nation Reserve, We Wai Kai First Nation Reserve, Homalco First Nation Reserve, and Tlowitsis First Nation Nenagwas Reserve (added in 2021 Census). When possible, this geographic area is used in the report.

CENSUS FAMILIES

B

Couples living together with or without children, and single parents living with their children. A couple may be of the opposite or same sex or gender, and may be married or common law. Grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present also are a census family. All members of a census family live in the same dwelling.

CENSUS FAMILIES LIVING IN PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS

C

Families, as defined above, who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada or abroad. A private dwelling has separate living quarters with its own separate entrance.

CENSUS ECONOMIC FAMILY

D

A group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common law union, adoption or a foster relationship. By definition, all persons who are members of a census family are also members of an economic family.

Island Health:

H

GREATER CAMPBELL RIVER LOCAL HEALTH AREA (LHA) 432

is comprised of Campbell River Community Health Service Area 4321 and Rural Campbell River Community Health Service Area 4322.

- [Campbell River Community Health Service Area \(CHSA\) 4321](#) is comprised of Campbell River and the Wei Wai Kum, We Wai Kai, and Homalco First Nation communities.
- [Rural Campbell River Community Health Service Area \(CHSA\) 4322](#) is comprised of Sayward, Quadra Island, Cortes Island and the Tlowitsis, Kwiakah, and Klahoose First Nation communities.

I



Other:

J

LICENSED CHILD CARE AND REGISTERED LICENCE-NOT-REQUIRED CHILD CARE:

Licensed Child Care are facilities that are monitored and regularly inspected by BC regional health authorities – they must meet specific requirements for health and safety, staffing qualifications, record keeping, space and equipment, child-to-staff ratios, and programming.

Registered Licence-Not Required Child Care are unlicensed care providers who must have registered with a BC Child Care Resource and Referral Centre.

- A** www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92f0138m/2019002/tbl-mc/tbla124-eng.htm
- B** www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/dict/az/Definition-eng.cfm?ID=fam004
- C** www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/dict/az/Definition-eng.cfm?ID=households-menage014
- D** www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/dict/az/Definition-eng.cfm?ID=fam011
- E** www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/98-20-0001/982000012021001-eng.cfm and <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/gender-genre-eng.cfm>
- F** www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/dict/az/Definition-eng.cfm?ID=pop144
- G** www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/dict/az/Definition-eng.cfm?ID=pop221
- H** <http://communityhealth.phsa.ca/CHSAHealthProfiles/CHSAHealthReport/Campbell%20River>
- I** <http://communityhealth.phsa.ca/CHSAHealthProfiles/CHSAHealthReport/Campbell%20River%20Rural>
- J** www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/how-to-access-child-care/licensed-unlicensed-child-care

External events & factors



The last few years have included unprecedented and unanticipated external events and factors affecting young children and their families, and our community as a whole, with a few highlighted here.

The Covid-19 pandemic quickly grew to have major, prolonged negative impacts for many families with young children across the province after the first case by community transmission in British Columbia was recorded in early March 2020. On March 18, 2020 the BC Government declared a state of emergency which continued for more than 15 months until being lifted on June 30, 2021.¹ There were 682 total reported Covid cases in the Campbell River Local Health Area for January 2020 - December 2021.²

Many families with young children experienced a range of setbacks, sometimes with continuing adverse effects. Families lost incomes and jobs causing financial instability, uncertainty and hardship, and some family relationships were seriously damaged by resolute differences in views and behaviours concerning

Covid-related policies and restrictions. Parents, caregivers and their young children became increasingly isolated and could not access some community supports including connecting with their peers and participating in play groups, and in other social and learning activities. Some parents delayed or missed routine immunizations for their babies and toddlers to avoid possible exposure to the virus. Hospitals delayed non-urgent but much-needed surgeries. Medical appointments often pivoted from being in person to less personal telephone and virtual approaches.

It was evident in preparing this report that the effects of the pandemic need to be considered in understanding the report's other findings, and that is noted when possible.

Covid impact example: Dental screening of kindergarten children was postponed.

Dental screening of kindergarten children in School District 72 by Island Health's Community Dental Hygienists is usually done every 3 years to provide data on number of children with dental issues such as broken enamel, restored teeth, and requiring urgent dental care, and referrals are made when needed. However, during the pandemic, screening was not carried out due to redeployment of Island Health staff to vaccine clinics and also because of Covid restrictions in the schools. As a result, there is no data for the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years. This is of critical





importance to track as tooth decay is the most common, yet preventable, childhood chronic disease in Canada and around the world, impacting children's overall health, and also the community with associated health care costs, and missed school and work days. Screening has resumed again in the 2022-2023 school year.³

Truth and reconciliation came into full focus for us as individuals, and for our community, province and country with the devastating discovery of 215 children buried in unmarked graves at the former residential school in Kamloops, BC in May 2021, and subsequently at other former residential schools across Canada. The horrors experienced by residential school survivors and continuing intergenerational trauma are being heard with new urgency and resolve to understand and respond. Reconciliation became and continues to be a top priority, bringing the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action to the forefront for all of us to learn what needs to be done.

There is so much more to be done, but we have started.

The Government of British Columbia was the first jurisdiction in Canada to formally adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* on November 28, 2019 and has now released their *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan*^k as an important part of their commitment. City staff, our School District, Island Health, and many agencies, businesses, and citizens in our community are engaged in workshops

and other training to move forward in informed, authentic and effective ways.

Other impacting external events and factors include:

- Wars and displaced families: Campbell River has become the new home for some Syrian families and Ukrainian families who have left their countries because of war.
- Climate change and environmental disasters such as floods and wildfires
- Inflation and sharply rising costs of basic goods and services
- Shortages of family doctors and other health professionals, early childhood educators, and generally the inability to recruit and retain qualified staff for provision of services for young children and their families

^kThe Action Plan can be accessed online at: www.engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2022/03/declaration_act_action_plan.pdf



Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future⁴

"Reconciliation is going to take hard work. People of all walks of life and at all levels of society will need to be willingly engaged. Reconciliation calls for personal action. People need to get to know each other. They need to learn how to speak to, and about, each other respectfully. They need to learn how to speak knowledgeably about the history of this country. And they need to ensure that their children learn how to do so as well."



**All levels of
government impact
affordability,
accessibility,
opportunity, equity,
dignity, safety, sense
of belonging, health,
and hope.**

Government policies & supports

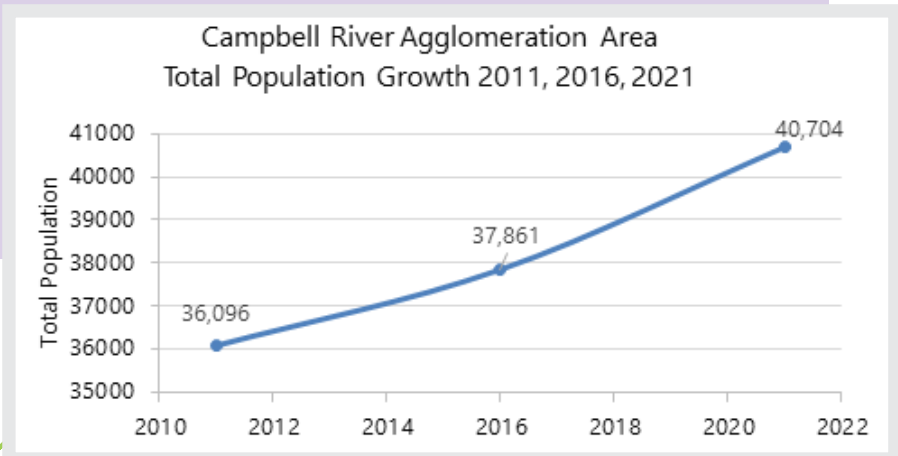
The previous section illustrates that government policies and supports have a uniquely powerful impact and legacy on the well-being of young children and their families, and in both positive and negative directions. There are many other examples, from the positive development of introducing \$10 a day child care to the ongoing negative impact of policies that do not solve inequitable distribution of income.

We need to better understand the different levels of government jurisdictions, mandates, interconnections, and their reach into the daily lives of young children and their families. As a community we can build on our capacity to advocate for children and our capacity to help their families navigate systems and find solutions.

LOCAL COMMUNITY: WHO LIVES HERE?

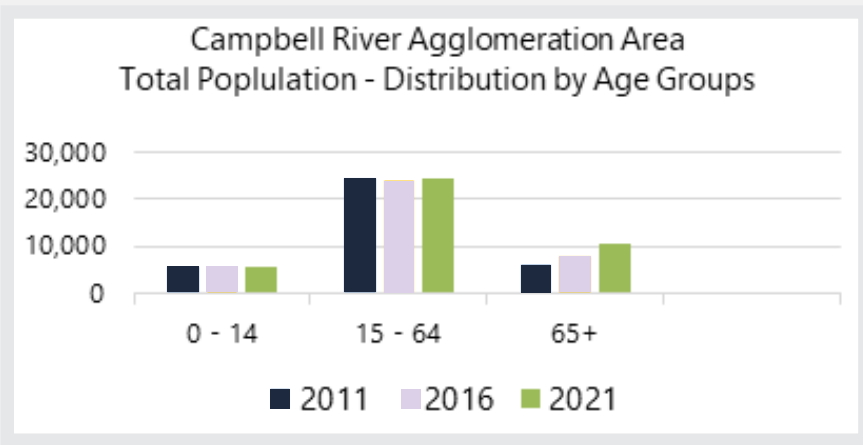
The total population reported in the 2021 Census for the Campbell River agglomeration area was 40,704, ranked as the 13th largest population area in the province that year.

This is an increase of approximately 7.5% over the 2016 Census total population of 37,861, and an increase of about 12.8% over the 2011 Census total population of 36,096, showing steady gradual growth.⁵



The total population reported in the 2021 Census for the Campbell River agglomeration area

40,704



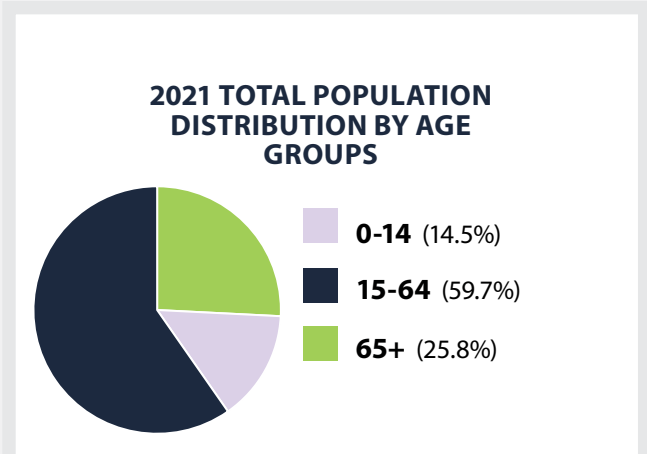
LOOKING AT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE GROUPS^{6,7,8} over the 2011, 2016 and 2021 Censuses makes it evident that the steady increase has largely been in the 65 and older age group, while both the 0 – 14 and 15 – 64 age groups have remained relatively similar over those years.



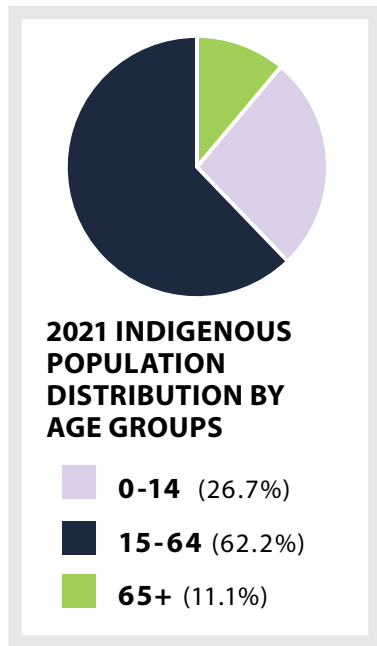
AGE GROUPS

— In the youngest age groups, since 2011 there has been a slight continuing decline in the number of children under age 5, while the number of children ages 5-9 and 10-14 has fluctuated.

AGES	2011	2016	2021
0-4	1,805	1,770	1,675
5-9	1,870	2,085	2,055
10-14	2,040	1,965	2,195



THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION



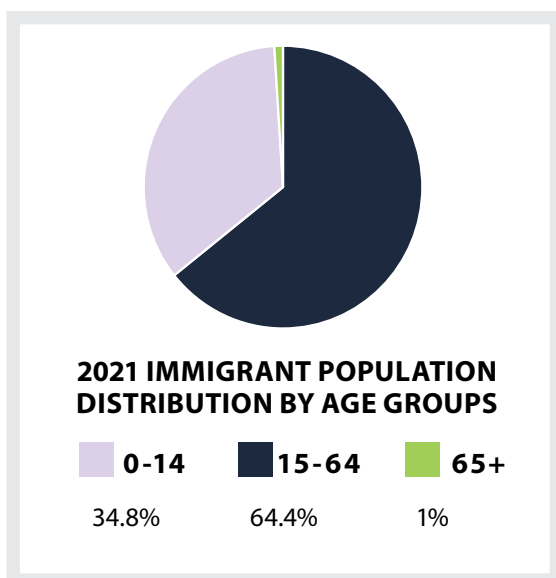
The Indigenous population reported in the 2016⁹ and 2021^{10,11}, Censuses for the Campbell River agglomeration area was relatively similar over the past 5-year period.

In 2021, the Indigenous population as a proportion (12.5%) of the total local area population was slightly more than twice that for the proportion of the total population of BC (5.9%).

In 2021, Indigenous children ages 14 years and under represented 26.7% of the total local area Indigenous population, slightly more than twice the proportion of 13.1% for non-Indigenous children in the total local area’s non-Indigenous population.

POPULATION	2016	2021
Total Indigenous population	4,760	4,975
% of total agglomeration area population	12.8%	12.5%
Indigenous population aged 14 and under	25.9%	26.7%

THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION



In the 2021 Census for the Campbell River agglomeration area, the immigrant population was 4,105 people (10.3% of the total population), including 1,430 children ages 14 and under.

Among these newcomers, 420 settled here between 2016 and 2021, which included 60 children under age 15.

Leading places of birth for newcomers between 2016 and 2021 in the Census were the Philippines, South Korea, Republic of South Africa, India, United States, and United Kingdom.¹²

In 2021-2022 Immigrant Welcome Centre provided 3,954 settlement services to 874 clients from their offices in the Comox Valley and Campbell River.¹³

What does our community offer^L?

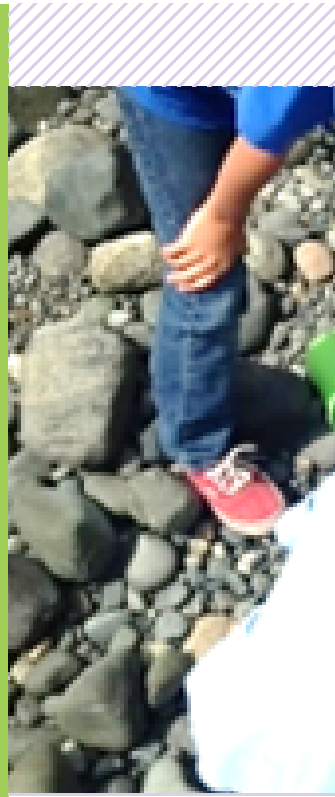
Child Care and Early Learning¹⁴

In Campbell River, there currently are approximately 1,004 spaces licensed for early learning and child care, including preschool programs and before/after school care, as compared to 1,137 spaces in 2017.

About 170 of the current licensed spaces are with Indigenous providers both

on and off reserves, and where early learning opportunities include language and cultural teachings.

The number of spaces licensed **by type of care** is also of importance. As shown in the following chart, licensed Infant-Toddler Group Care for children under 36 months is particularly underserved.^M



TYPE OF LICENSED CARE	CURRENT MAXIMUM LICENSED SPACES
In Home Child Care: 0 – 12 years	188
Group Child Care: infant-toddler: under 36 months	64
Group Child Care: 30 months to school age	283
Group Child Care: multi-age: 0 – 12 years	40
Group Child Care: before/after school: kindergarten and up	260
Group Child Care: occasional drop-in: 18 months and older	20
Group Preschools: 30 months to school age	149
Total current licensed spaces	1,004



Many families continue to have great difficulty finding quality child care and waitlists are long, impacting their ability to return to the workforce or school. As noted, this is particularly the case for licensed child care for children under age 3. Generally, hours of operation are a barrier for shift workers, as are openings for seasonal workers. Ultimately, families not being able to find quality child care has negative economic implications for the community as a whole as organizations and businesses struggle to find employees in order to keep offering their services and products.

For all ages, the number of licensed child care spaces does not reflect the number of spaces actually available to families due to a lack of facilities and critical shortages of qualified staff. There has been a sharp drop in applications to provide licensed In Home Care, while licensed Group Care providers face constant challenges in recruiting and retaining Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) including those with Infant and Toddler Educator certificates, ECE Assistants, and Responsible Adults.¹⁶ Adding more child care spaces does not alleviate the situation unless accompanied by adequate qualified staff.

These numbers will be increasing in the future with potential for 61 licensed spaces to be created by Métis Nation BC in Campbell River (24 for infant-toddler care, 25 for 30 months to school age care, and 12 for before/after school care), and up to 180 additional licensed spaces for before/after school care at School District 72 elementary schools.¹⁵

There are also 10 licence-not-required spaces in Campbell River that are registered with and regulated by PacificCARE Child Care Resource and Referral.

In neighbouring areas, there currently are approximately 60 licensed spaces on Quadra Island, 12 on Cortes Island, 8 in Sayward, and 58 in Gold River.

^L Campbell River Area Family Network's website provides information on many local services, programs and resources available for families with young children: www.crfamilynetwork.ca.

^M A comprehensive report, *Spaces for Children: Planning for Child Care Space Needs in Campbell River*, was published in January, 2020 by Campbell River Area Family Network and City of Campbell River. The report includes an assessment of the state of child care in Campbell River at that time and gives recommendations for short-, medium- (2023-2025) and long-term (2026-2030) space creation by category of care: www.crfamilynetwork.ca/sites/default/files/Campbell%20River%20Child%20Care%20Report%202020FINAL.pdf

Highlights of a waitlists survey

Completed in fall of 2022 by a sample of 13 local licensed child care providers for infant-toddler, up to school age and/or before/after school care

- 10 maintained waitlists and the highest waitlisted number was for a larger centre at 645.
 - * Families sign on to waitlists at multiple centres making it hard to identify actual need.
- Most respondents find it difficult to stay on top of maintaining waitlists. Reasons include:
 - * Not enough administrative time for the number of requests needing to be managed
 - * Families not informing the centre that they should be removed from the waitlist when they have found care elsewhere or their circumstances change
 - * Problems reaching families to offer spaces
 - * Unsure how long to wait after offering space to a family before moving on to next family
 - * Shortage of qualified staff limits how many families can move up the waitlist
- There are different approaches to giving waitlisted families priority ranging from siblings of children attending or having previously attended the centre (9 responses), children of centre staff (2), the top name on the waitlist (1), and families in specified circumstances (1).
- Suggestions included having one community-wide waitlist system, top priority being given to having more qualified full, part-time and on-call ECEs who can be hired and retained, and revisiting zoning restrictions as well as the mix of allocated licensed spaces by age group.



The cost of child care can be another limiting factor for families as noted above, but that is starting to change with the roll out of the BC Government’s \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres. Child care providers with licensed spaces must apply and be selected based on priority criteria. Currently, there are 35 participating centres on Vancouver Island, with 4 in Campbell River operating in 2022¹⁷, and these numbers likely will continue to increase.

Fees for non-\$10-a-day licensed child care vary and can change from year to year. Current fees for one local non-profit provider, as an example¹⁸:

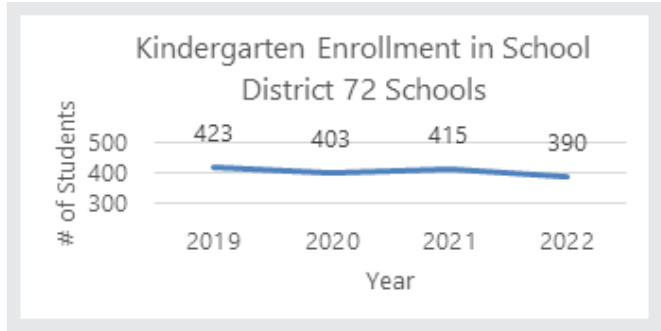
\$64 per day INFANT- TODDLER	\$48 per day AGED 3-5	\$31 per day BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL	\$27 per day PRESCHOOL PROGRAM
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The impact of cost as a barrier for families multiplies quickly by their required number of days and number of children needing care.

Fees can be reduced significantly by subsidies for eligible families such as the province’s Affordable Child Care Benefit, and if their licensed child care provider qualifies and participates in the province’s Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. In some cases, subsidies can mean no cost to families – for example, Laichwiltach Family Life Society’s Qwallayuw Head Start Pre-School Program and, as of this year, their Little Fry Head Start Childcare Centre for Indigenous children (First Nations, Status or Non-Status, Métis, and Inuit).

Elementary Schools¹⁹

School District 72 has 9 elementary schools in Campbell River, and 4 in the outlying areas of Quadra Island, Cortes Island, Sayward, and Read Island. The enrollment numbers for kindergarten students across School District 72 in the fall of 2022 was lower than in recent previous years.



Community-wide programs for young children and their families

Drop-in programs for young children and their parents and caregivers help to support parenting education and skills, encourage the participating families and children to develop friendships, share ideas, and feel more connected in the community – while also contributing to the children’s healthy early development.

Prior to Covid restrictions, in the Campbell River area there were 40+ free or low-cost drop-in opportunities offered weekly for young children and their families. During the pandemic some of these programs were able to continue, but many had to be provided with limiting approaches or on a virtual basis – or just had to stop. With the lifting of restrictions a little more than half-way through 2021, there is an ongoing effort to restore programming.

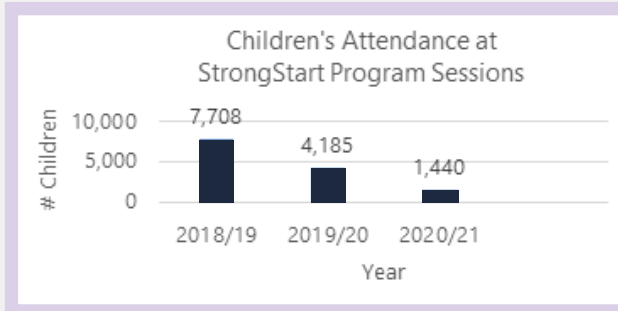
Covid caused major disruptions and isolation for families.

Participation by children and families in 2019 contrasted markedly with participation in subsequent years, as evident in some of the following examples of local drop-in programs, leading to increased isolation and less connection with other families, program staff, and the community as a whole.



StrongStart

Programs for children up to kindergarten age and their parents or caregivers are offered during the school year by School District 72 in four of the District’s elementary schools – Cedar, Georgia Park/Homalco, Sandowne, and Sayward, with a fifth program planned for Quadra Elementary. StrongStart is a free early learning program that helps children gain problem-solving skills, and build self-esteem and the social skills that will help them do well when they enter school. Parents and caregivers learn activities that they can do with their children at home and have the opportunity to connect with other parents and caregivers. The impact of Covid restrictions is clear in the participation levels given in the chart.²⁰



Campbell River Library

Twenty-six children’s programs with 976 children participating were offered by the Campbell River Library in 2021. In-person programs started again that summer and will continue to increase as the severity of the pandemic allows. This differs markedly with the 2019 pre-Covid numbers of 61 programs and 2,988 children attending. Free programming offered includes drop-in story



times, playing with the toys in the play room, crafts and other activities for toddlers, preschoolers, their parents and caregivers.²¹

Family Place

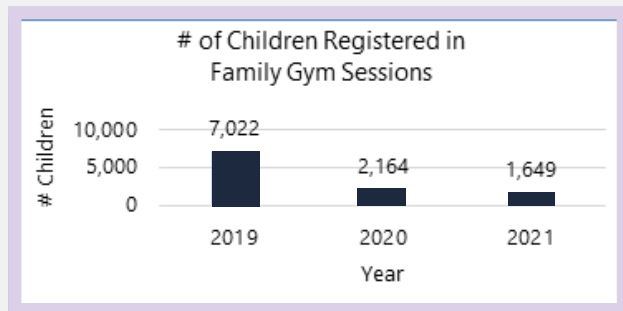
Drop-in programs are provided free for families with young children by Campbell River Family Services Society and the City of Campbell River, with partnerships with the Campbell River Child Care Society. Prior to Covid restrictions, there were 12 regular in-person programs offered at different times and locations in the city that were consistently very well attended. Family Place is also part of several annual community events such as National Child Day and the Campbell River Children’s Health Fair. During the restrictions, in-person programming was quite limited with some programming offered online or cancelled, making it difficult to track some of the registration numbers. With the lifting of restrictions, the programs are now starting to build back up to pre-Covid levels.²²

An impact study of Campbell River Family Place was completed in 2021 by the City in collaboration with Family Services and demonstrated the great value of providing Family Place in our community as a space where parents, caregivers and their young children can form connections, learn from each other and staff, gain confidence, and for many, as a lifeline which was particularly evident during the pandemic.²³



Family Gym

The City’s Recreation and Culture Department offers Family Gym currently on Mondays and Fridays for free, and on Sundays at \$3.00 per child or \$5.00 per family attending with more than one child. The City’s gym facilities provide preschoolers with riding toys, tumbling mats, balls, climbers and more for a fun social outing that develops their physical abilities, confidence, and their sense of belonging. The impact of Covid restrictions is evident as the program had to transition to a registration model with limited capacity, but positive impacts for parents, caregivers and children who participated were substantial. Numbers are now continuing to rise to pre-Covid levels.²⁴



Laichwiltach Family Life Society

Several free drop-in programs for young Indigenous children and their families are provided by the Laichwiltach Family Life Society including the Parent & Child Drop-in program and the Parent & Infant Group program. Parents, caregivers and their children get together weekly, form new connections, and receive information about health, safety, and available resources. In the Parent & Child Cultural Drop-in program, the group explores their values, beliefs, and teachings, and have opportunities to learn from each other in a safe and respectful environment.²⁵

Local services for young children and their families

Local services for young children and their families in the Campbell River area are wide-ranging but many are adversely affected by long waitlists as a result of ongoing funding constraints, the extent of need and the number of referrals along with staffing shortages – all of which have been intensified by the effects of Covid-related illnesses, restrictions, isolation and other hardships over an extended period of time. The window in the early years for the best chance of good outcomes can be missed as children linger on waitlists with potentially lifelong impacts that are difficult or not possible to overcome.



Access to mental health services is a high priority

These limitations are clearly evident in the example of waitlists and gaps for local mental health services and supports for young children, and related services and supports for their families who are in fundamental roles for their children’s well-being. The BC Government’s *A Pathway to Hope: A roadmap for making mental health and addictions care better for people in British Columbia*²⁶ describes their commitment to increasing mental wellness in our province including for young children and youth.

A PATHWAY TO HOPE states...

An estimated 84,000 (12.6%) children aged four to 17 years in B.C. are experiencing mental health disorders at any given time. //

// The neglect of promotion, prevention and early intervention services has contributed to a downward trend in the social and emotional development of young children.

A Pathway to Hope also particularly acknowledges the continuing detrimental effects of colonialism, residential schools, intergenerational and present-day trauma, and forced loss of cultural and languages for Indigenous children and families, including on their mental health and well-being.



Wait times for children referred for autism assessment is another ongoing community concern. The typical wait time for the Island Health region after referral is 12 – 16 months and families are usually required to travel to Nanaimo or Victoria for assessment, with occasional outreach trips to families who are unable to leave their communities.²⁷

When travel costs and accommodation away from home are hardships, supports like Children’s Health Foundation of Vancouver Island’s Bear Essentials program and Jeneece Place in Victoria can help.²⁸

In the words of some local providers:²⁹

Campbell River Family Services Society

“Staff caseloads are continually at capacity. New referrals from Ministry of Children and Family Development’s Child and Youth Mental Health team have an average 6 – 8 month wait time, and the wait time for children and youth referred from other Ministry departments is also 6 – 8 months. Referrals from our community agency partners, schools, health professionals, and calls from parents desperately asking where they can find counselling help for their children are higher than ever before in the Society’s history. Other services we would suggest as options for families who are waiting to access our services have increased wait times as well.”

Kwakiutl District Council Health

“The lack of available mental health services for children and youth under age 12 is creating consistently high referrals, caseloads, and waitlists for counsellors. This is the situation our child and youth counsellor continually faces. As a result, the window of opportunity is missed when services cannot be provided to children and youth needing immediate or preventative help for severe anxiety, depression, isolation, self-harm, suicide ideation and attempts, isolation, or coping with difficult circumstances.”

John Howard Society of North Island - Foundry Campbell River and KidStart Program

“As Foundry Campbell River’s mandate is to provide services and supports to youth ages 12 to 24, the many families calling to seek help for their children under age 12 are having to be turned away. The KidStart mentoring program for ages 6 – 18 is a vital support for children in need, but currently there are more than 155 children and youth in the community on the program’s waitlist. In combination, this points to a serious gap in services in Campbell River for children under age 12 and their families.”

Dogwood Place Child and Youth Development Centre

Early intervention services at the Dogwood Child and Youth Development Centre are an example that highlights the impact of Covid where **services provided in 2021 are in the process of building back up beyond those levels in 2022 and therefore not representative of actual need. In fact, the current need for some services is growing to unprecedented levels.** An example is the Speech and Language Program which now has a caseload of 199 clients including waitlisted children at the third month of their therapy year compared to reaching that level at the ninth month of their last therapy year. The implications are very serious – **in all cases, waitlists can mean children are not able to have the help they need at critical stages of their development.**³⁰

Year	2019	2021		Current Implications of Waitlists
Average Monthly Case Loads and Waitlists	Case Load	Total Case Load	Includes Clients Waitlisted	
Speech and Language	187	172	110	25 new clients=need for an additional full-time speech-language pathologist
Occupational Therapy	121	114	47	16 new clients=need for an additional occupational therapist 3 days/week
Physiotherapy	87	69	12	14 new clients=need for an additional physiotherapist 3 days/week
Infant Development	105	75	32	25 new clients=need for an additional full-time infant development consultant
Total Served	Case Load	Case Load	Includes Waitlist	Ongoing Implications of Waitlist
Supported Child Development Services depend on availability of both spaces for children to attend child care or other programs, and qualified workers/ Early Childhood Educators to support the children.	197	191	37	Children may not be able to attend a child care program or programs in other settings which can lead to families not being able to be employed.

Some other examples of *ESSENTIAL LOCAL EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES AND SUPPORTS* include:

LAICHWILTACH FAMILY LIFE SOCIETY³¹ services and supports for Indigenous children ages 0 – 6 and their families include Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Infant Development, Supported Child Development, Creating Healthier Families Program, the Family Support Program, and Collaborative Planning.

CAMPBELL RIVER FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY²² services and supports for children ages 0 – 6 and their families include New Beginnings, Triple P Parenting, Pregnancy Outreach, Creating Healthy Families Program, Family Place, Family Resource Program, and the Early Years Family Navigation Program.

KWAKIUTL DISTRICT COUNCIL (KDC) HEALTH³³ services and supports for member Nations include Maternal Child and Family Health Program, Precious Beginnings FASD Program, Children’s Oral Health Initiative, and the Community Health Patient Navigator Program.

HOMALCO FIRST NATION³⁴ services and supports for their community members include the Maternal and Child Health Program, Children’s Oral Health Initiative, Community Health Nursing, and the Homalco Language Nest Program which is for children 0 – 5 years old.

IMMIGRANT WELCOME CENTRE³⁵ provides free essential services to newcomers including settlement services such as resources and referrals for employment, housing and health care, school system support, and more, as well as language classes and social programs.

CAMPBELL RIVER AND NORTH ISLAND TRANSITION SOCIETY³⁶ provides shelter, counselling and other supports for women and their dependent children at risk of violence or abuse.

PACIFICCARE CHILDCARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL - CAMPBELL RIVER³⁷ assists families in finding quality child care, provides support in applying for child care subsidies, and provides a toy and resource lending library.

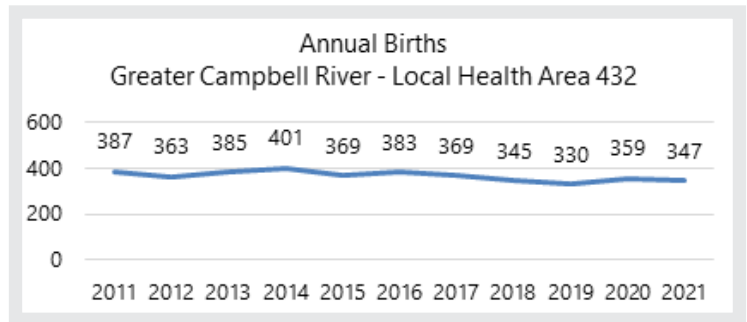
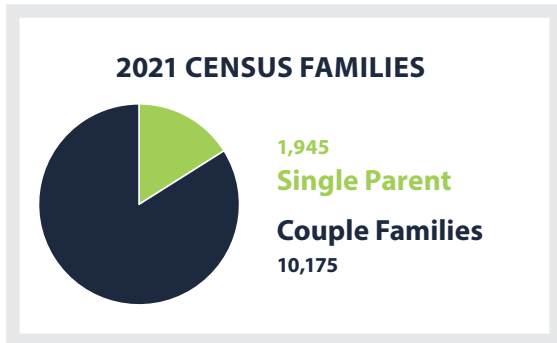


Families

There were a total number of 12,120 census families in the Campbell River agglomeration area reported in the 2021 Census. This compares to 11,270 census families in 2016 and 10,925 in 2011 – a steady increase over the past 10 years. Single-parent families also increased during that time.

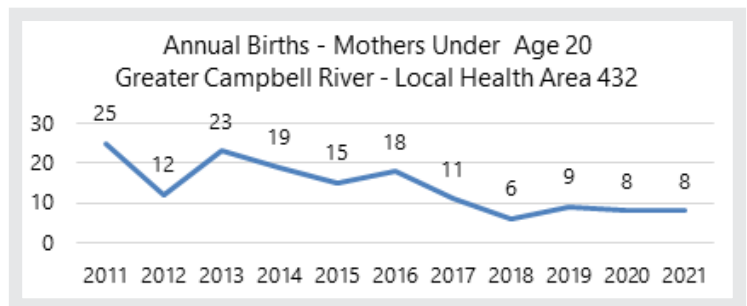
Population	2011 ³⁸	2016 ³⁹	2021 ⁴⁰
Total census families	10,925	11,270	12,120
Single-parent families	1,755	1,795	1,945
Women+N single parents	1,325	1,380	1,460
Men+ single parents	430	415	485

For children ages 0 – 14, in 2021 74.6% lived in two-parent census families (including stepfamilies), and 25.3% in one-parent census families.⁴¹



Annual number of births

in Island Health’s Greater Campbell River Local Health Area has also fluctuated between 2011 and 2021, with the highest number in 2014 at 401 births, lowest at 330 in 2019, and increasing to 359 births in 2020 and 347 births in 2021.⁴²



Over the past decade, there has been a large decreasing trend in the number of births by mothers under age 20.⁴³

^NStarting with the 2021 Census, “+” in “women+” is used to signify including women and some non-binary persons. Similarly, “men+” signifies including men and some non-binary persons. See “Gender and Sex at Birth” in the Definitions chapter.

Infant death rates have decreased during the past ten years and in the most recent years are similar to or less than the rates for Vancouver Island and British Columbia as a whole.⁴⁴

Infant Death Rates	5 Year Periods (per 1,000 live births)						
	2011 to '15	2012 to '16	2013 to '17	2014 to '18	2015 to '19	2016 to '20	2017 to '21
Greater Campbell River	4.72	4.73	4.20	5.36	2.78	3.36	3.43
Vancouver Island	3.74	3.80	4.02	3.96	3.68	3.83	3.75
British Columbia	3.69	3.61	3.46	3.52	3.35	3.40	3.38



PREVALENCE OF LOW AFTER-TAX INCOMES in private households in the Campbell River agglomeration area was 10.1% in 2020 based on Statistics Canada’s Low Income Measure (LIM) on an after tax basis.⁴⁸ This compares with 10.8% for the province as a whole.⁴⁹ Inflation is severely impacting these families’ ability to buy even basic necessities including food. There is no data on a living wage for Campbell River but after-tax living wages^o for nearby communities in 2022 include Comox Valley at \$20.26/hour (up from \$15.97/hour in 2019), Nanaimo at \$20.49/hour (up from \$15.81/hour in 2019), and Powell River at \$23.33 (up from \$16.31 in 2019).⁵⁰

Family Economics and Safety

THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE for the Vancouver Island/Coast region was 5.7% in 2021 compared to 6.5% for the province. That is down from 8.7% in 2020 during Covid restrictions while up from the pre-Covid rate of 4.1% in 2019.⁴⁵

MEDIAN AFTER-TAX INCOME in 2020 for census economic families living in private households in the Campbell River agglomeration area was \$114,000 for couples with children, and dropped dramatically to \$58,800 for single-parent families.⁴⁶ This compares to \$120,000 and \$65,000 respectively for the province as a whole in 2020.⁴⁷

FOOD BANK USAGE is another indicator of family economics. In 2021 the Campbell River Food Bank provided food to individuals and families – 29,564 individuals and families comprising 19,878 adults and 9,686 children which includes coming to the Food Bank more than once to regularly during the year. This year in 2022, the need has increased significantly to about 3,000 services provided each month.⁵¹

Prevalence of household food insecurity for BC in 2021 was 14.9%.⁵²

^o A living wage is the hourly amount that each of two working parents with two young children must earn to meet their basic expenses (including rent, child care, food and transportation) once government taxes, credits, deductions and subsidies are taken into account.



Affordable, safe housing is fundamental to children’s well-being but can be difficult to find for families with low and also middle incomes. For the Campbell River agglomeration area, the 2021 Census indicates that 38.4% of renters and 14.6% of homeowners – combining to 3,605 households – spend more than 30% of their income on housing which very often means struggling to make ends meet. Also, 12.3% of rental households live in subsidized housing, somewhat more than the provincial level of 11%.⁵³

Finding affordable rental housing has been exacerbated by sharply rising costs. To quote the City of Campbell River’s *Housing Needs Report 2021 – 2025*:⁵⁴ “New rental stock that is being developed is subject to increasing land prices and construction costs, resulting in higher costs per units.

Subsequently, current market rates on these new buildings are not providing entry into the housing market for people and families with low, or even mid-level, incomes.” The Report notes, however, that from 2017 to 2020, 970 new multi-family units have been approved, are currently being constructed, or have been completed, and of these 84% are purpose-built rental units compared to only 2.4% for new housing in 2016 – and more is being added going forward.

Hidden homelessness is apparent through anecdotal evidence from local front-line workers who know of families informally sharing accommodation, including ‘couch surfing’, which sometimes can mean living in very unsafe situations, and families with young children having to split up while looking for an

affordable place to live. Some families with young children are not able to stay in Campbell River because they cannot find an affordable, safe place to live.

Domestic violence is a very serious concern for our community as a whole and includes women with young children who are victims. Campbell River and North Island Transition Society report that in August 2022, as an example, 81% of women with children accessing Ann Elmore Transition House experienced abuse by an intimate partner and that “research has shown that living in a home where one parent is abusing the other parent has a negative effect on the children, no matter how old they are, or whether they see and hear it directly or not.”⁵⁵

Campbell River RCMP’s domestic violence reports give some indication for our community but generally police statistics significantly underrepresent the number of victims as incidents of domestic violence often are not reported to them.

Campbell River RCMP Domestic Violence Reports ⁵⁶	For One Month: <i>November</i>		
	2019	2020	2021
Total number of domestic violence files	34	38	31
Number of files of disputes or threats	18	30	18
Number of files defined as assaults	16	8	13



Our Young Children

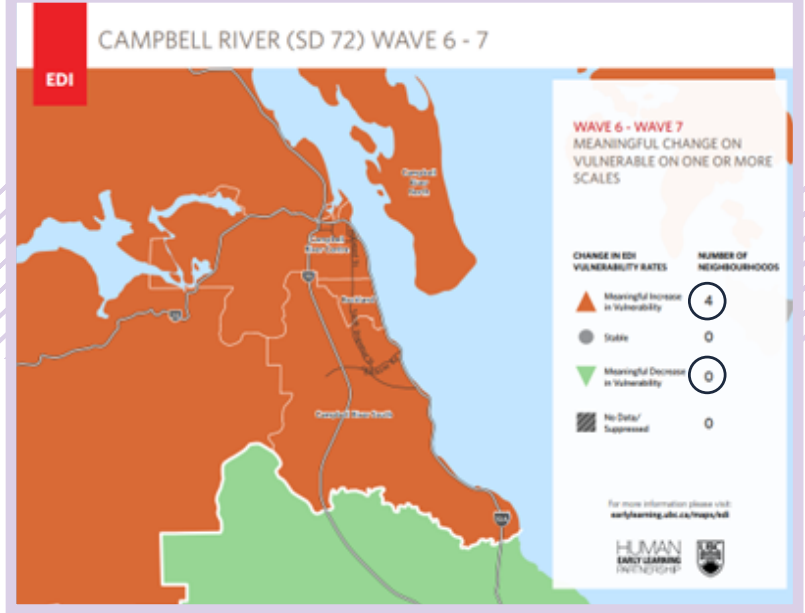
University of BC’s Early Learning Partnership’s research using the Early Development Instrument (EDI) shows that **Campbell River is going in the wrong direction in our young children’s developmental readiness to succeed as they start school** and all that can mean for their subsequent years and success in life. The EDI measures children’s developmental readiness across five domains based on assessments by their kindergarten teachers: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, and communication skills and basic knowledge.

The latest available findings for our School District^P, Wave 7 (2016–2019)⁵⁷, show that in kindergarten, the percentage of children vulnerable on one or more of the EDI developmental scales was 35% on average – **a higher level of vulnerability than the provincial average for Wave 7** of 33.4%. Moreover, 35% is a **7% increase for our area since the Wave 6 finding** of 28%.

Wave 7 EDI findings are a great concern and predate possible added impacts of Covid-19

^PWave 8 EDI findings (2019-2022) for School Districts will be released in early 2023.

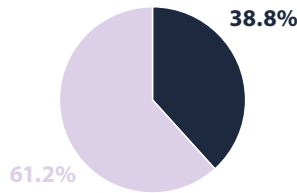
EDI Developmental Domains	% Vulnerable		
	Wave 6	Wave 7	Increase
Physical Health and Well-being	14%	18%	4%
Social Competence	12%	15%	3%
Emotional Maturity	14%	19%	5%
Language and Cognitive Skills	9%	16%	7%
Communication and General Knowledge	8%	12%	4%



As the EDI map here shows, this represents a “meaningful increase in vulnerability” for our young children from Wave 6 to Wave 7 in **all of our neighbourhoods.**

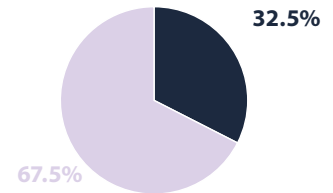
CHILDREN IN CARE in BC has continued to decrease over the past five years but remains highly disproportionate for Indigenous children and youth. There was a total of 5,259 children and youth ages 0 - 18 in care on March 31, 2021 – 3,548 were Indigenous and 1,711 were non-Indigenous children and youth. On March 31, 2016, the comparative numbers were 7,217 with 4,420 Indigenous and 2,797 non-Indigenous children and youth.⁵⁸

BC CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE MARCH 31, 2016



BC CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE MARCH 31, 2021

Non-Indigenous
Indigenous



There was a total of 5,259 children and youth ages 0 - 18 in care in BC on March 31, 2021.

“
It is profoundly disappointing that our 25th annual BC Child Poverty Report Card still shows one in five BC children are still poor.”

Child Poverty remained high at 23.3% for children and youth ages 0 - 17 in 2019 in the Strathcona Regional District, which includes the Campbell River area, as stated in First Call’s 2021 BC Child Poverty Report Card⁵⁹. That is more than 1 in 5 children and greater than 18.0% for the province and 17.7% for Canada that year. Their research also found that overall in 2019, 1 in 2 children in lone-parent families in the province lived in poverty.

For the Campbell River agglomeration area, the 2021 Census indicates that 12.4% (885) of children and youth ages 0 - 17 were living in poverty in 2020 based on Statistics Canada’s Low Income Measure (LIM) on an after tax basis.⁶⁰

References

Note: Personal communications listed in the references took place during fall of 2022.

EXTERNAL EVENTS & FACTORS

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- ² BC Centre for Disease Control. January 2022. *Geographic Distribution of Covid-19 by Local Health Area of Case Residence: Cumulative Cases, January 2020 to December 2021*, page 12
- ³ Personal communication with Island Health Community Dental Hygienist
- ⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*

LOCAL COMMUNITY - WHO LIVES HERE?

- ⁵ Statistics Canada. 2022. *Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population, Campbell River agglomeration*
- ⁶ Statistics Canada. 2012. *Campbell River, British Columbia (Code 944) and Canada (Code 01) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE*
- ⁷ Statistics Canada. 2017. *Campbell River [Census agglomeration], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001*
- ⁸ Statistics Canada. 2022. *Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001*
- ⁹ Statistics Canada. 2017. *Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001*
- ¹⁰ Statistics Canada. *Table 98-10-0265-01 Indigenous identity by Registered or Treaty Indian status: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts*
- ^{11,12} Statistics Canada. 2022. *Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population, Campbell River Census Agglomeration*
- ¹³ Immigrant Welcome Centre, *Annual Report 2021-2022*

LOCAL COMMUNITY - WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY OFFER?

- ¹⁴ PacificCARE Child Care Resource and Referral - Campbell River, personal communication with Child Care Consultant
- ¹⁵ Government of British Columbia, *North Vancouver Island families benefit from new child care spaces – Background: New child care spaces for families in North Vancouver Island*
- ¹⁶ Campbell River Community Care Facilities Licensing Island Health, personal communication with Child Care Licensing Officer
- ¹⁷ Government of British Columbia, *\$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres, Centres by Health Authority*
- ¹⁸ Personal communication with Campbell River non-profit child care provider
- ¹⁹ School District 72, personal communication with Assistant Superintendent
- ²⁰ School District 72, personal communications with Principal Early Learning and Child Care
- ²¹ Vancouver Regional Library - Campbell River Branch, personal communication with Manager



- ²² Personal communications with City of Campbell River Parks, Recreation and Culture Department staff and Campbell River Family Services Society staff
- ²³ City of Campbell River Parks, Recreation and Culture Department in collaboration with Campbell River Family Services, *Impact Study Report - Campbell River Family Place 2021*
- ²⁴ Personal communication with City of Campbell River Parks, Recreation and Culture Department staff
- ²⁵ Laichwiltach Family Life Society, Groups, <http://www.lfls.ca/groups>
- ²⁶ Government of British Columbia, *A Pathway to Hope: A roadmap for making mental health and addictions care better for people in British Columbia*, June 26, 2019
- ²⁷ Personal communication with BC Autism Assessment Network Island Health Region - Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health staff
- ²⁸ Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island, www.islandkidsfirst.com
- ²⁹ Personal communications with Campbell River Family Services Society Team Leader, Kwakiutl District Health Council Health Director, and Foundry Campbell River Program Manager
- ³⁰ Personal communications with Dogwood Place Child and Youth Development Centre staff
- ³¹ Laichwiltach Family Life Society, www.lfls.ca/aboriginal-child-development-centre
- ³² Campbell River Family Services Society, *Early Years Services*, www.crfamilyservices.ca/early-years-services
- ³³ Kwakiutl District Council Health, *Health Initiatives*, www.kdchealth.com/health-initiatives
- ³⁴ Homalco First Nation, *Homalco Health*, www.homalco.com/health
- ³⁵ Immigrant Welcome Centre, *Services*, www.immigrantwelcome.ca/services
- ³⁶ Campbell River and North Island Transition Society, *Ann Elmore Transition House*, www.annelmorehouse.ca/transition-house
- ³⁷ PacificCARE. *Families*, www.pacific-care.bc.ca/?page_id=14

FAMILIES

- ³⁸ Statistics Canada, *Census family structure, presence of children and average number of persons per census family: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations 2011*
- ³⁹ Statistics Canada, *Census family structure, presence of children and average number of persons per census family: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations 2016*
- ⁴⁰ Statistics Canada, *Census family structure, presence of children and average number of persons per census family: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations 2021*
- ⁴¹ Statistics Canada, *Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population, Campbell River Census Agglomeration*
- ⁴² Government of British Columbia, *Births by Community Health Service Area*
- ^{43,44} Personal communication with Island Health Population Health Assessment, Surveillance & Epidemiology Manager
- ⁴⁵ BC Stats, *BC Employment and Unemployment Rate by Region and Metropolitan Area, Table 9*
- ^{46,47} Statistics Canada, *Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001*
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- ⁴⁹ Statistics Canada, *Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. British Columbia*



⁵⁰ Living Wage for Families BC, *Living Wages in BC and Canada 2022*

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⁵² Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA. 2022. *Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021*. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF)

⁵³ Statistics Canada., *Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Campbell River Census Agglomeration*

⁵⁴ City of Campbell River, August 2020. *Housing Needs Report 2021 – 2025*

⁵⁵ Campbell River and North Island Transition Society, Instagram posts, November 4 and 14, 2022

⁵⁶ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Campbell River RCMP Domestic Violence Report November 2020*, and personal communication

OUR YOUNGEST CHILDREN

⁵⁷ Human Early Learning Partnership, University of British Columbia, *Wave 7 Community Profile: Campbell River School District*

⁵⁸ Government of British Columbia, *Children and Youth in Care, March 31, 2021*

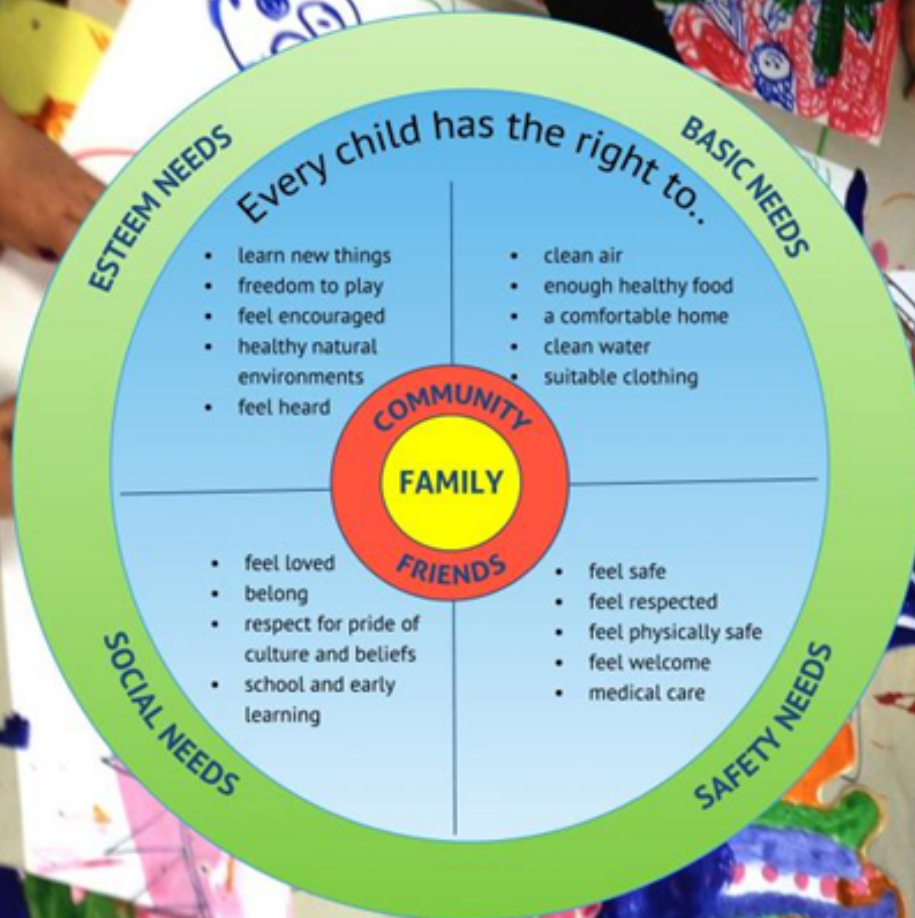
⁵⁹ First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society, November 2021. *2021 BC CHILD POVERTY REPORT CARD*

⁶⁰ Statistics Canada, *Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Campbell River Census Agglomeration*



Cityscape images on page 4/5 and 31 courtesy of SauvAir

Children's Voices Matter



Campbell River Children's Charter

Our community has the responsibility to....

- *Provide experiences for children to learn and grow.*
- *Allow abundant opportunities to play .*
- *Provide ample access to nature.*
- *Honour each child as being unique.*
- *Support diversity to allow children to grow into who they are.*
- *Allow children to be heard, to question, and to make mistakes.*
- *Meet the essential needs of children and their families for a healthy life.*
- *Support families to create loving homes.*
- *Protect children and their families from harm.*

Across Campbell River, 315 children from the ages of 3 to 12 years old shared, through words and drawings, their opinions on children's rights in Campbell River.

This poster is Children Approved.