

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see a letter attached highlighting the current challenges and support of action to aid in providing Daycare places in Whistler.

Kind Regards
Alistair

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General Manager
WHISTLER COOKS | HUNTER GATHER | FRIDGE FULL | CRANKED | MILE ONE

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Mayor and Council
Resort Municipality of Whistler
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September 11th 2023

Dear Mayor and Council,

Re: ongoing Daycare challenges in Whistler

We are writing to you to ensure that the ongoing and acute shortage of Daycare places in Whistler is top of mind during the upcoming UBCM (Union of British Columbia Municipalities) conference starting next week in Vancouver, and urge to you work with the province to ensure more access to Daycare places in Whistler.

As you are aware Whistler has suffered a shortage of Daycare places for many years and as the population of the Municipality has grown this has become ever more acute. A recent survey in a local parents facebook group highlighted the impact of this shortage on the local workforce. 61% of the 74 respondents indicated they were able to return only to part time work or were unable to return to work at all due to lack of Daycare. Conversely only 8% of the respondents were able to return to work as they were able to access Daycare places, with the balance able to return to some form of work as they privately employed a nanny. Whilst a small sample size, this indicates that a potential 45 further residents of Whistler could be supporting the local economy through gainful employment if there were great Daycare resources available.

Compounding this issue, one of the few Daycare providers in Whistler has notified families with children under the age of 3 that they will no longer be able to providing Daycare places for ages 12 months - 3 years old beyond December 31st 2023 citing *"efforts to recruit additional credentialed staff for that program over these past years have been unsuccessful"*.

With a huge draw to a global talent pool of workers, wanting to come to Whistler, it is inexcusable that any local employer is unable to attract the interest of adequately credentialed staff to work for them. However the hurdles workers face when coming from overseas to convert their credentials to Canadian equivalent of the same credentials they have in their home countries is too many. Another recent survey of workers on another Whistler locals facebook group showed that 25% of ECE certified workers who responded from overseas do not have their credentials recognized here in Canada, although they would like to work in the field of childcare. Anecdotally, it takes between 1 year and 18 months of study to qualify for the same qualification many of these works already have in their same country. Whilst the sample size of this survey was small, this could represent 4 or 5 more Daycare qualified staff that local providers could hire, if only it were simpler for their credentials to be transferred.

Further to the challenges faced by incoming workers with their credentials, 20% of respondents in the second survey indicated that they have their ECE certification but would prefer to work somewhere with higher pay. With support of the province through programs such as the Early Childhood Educator Wage

Enhancement there is a mechanism for Daycare providers to increase the rate earned by workers in their employment however this must be fit for purpose. In Whistler for example the posted hourly wage for ECE certified staff is approximately \$18 - \$25 per hour. With a living wage exceeding this, provincial programs must be nimble enough to cater to different locations in the province and support wage enactment to match the economics of the local economy.

We urge you (local Mayor and Council) to make simplifying the process of converting credentials for ECE overseas workers coming to Canada to Canadian Credentials and ensuring that programs designed to support higher wages for ECE workers, are a priority in your conversations with Provincial Ministers at the upcoming UBCM conference.

Yours Sincerely

 

Alistair and Natalie Cray

CC'd:

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Jordan Sturdy - MLA Sea To Sky (Jordan.sturdy.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Rachna Singh - Minister of Education and Childcare BC (ECC.minister@gov.bc.ca)

Katrine Conroy - Minister of Finance BC (FIN.minister@gov.bc.ca)

Louise Walker - Executive Director Whistler Chamber of Commerce (louise@whistlerchamber.com)

Surveys References:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/447730308572719/permalink/7317710618241286/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/whistler/permalink/3570459959939292/>