



Audits at a glance

Why we did these audits

- ChildCareBC is the provincial plan introduced in 2018 to increase child care access, affordability, and quality. The provincial and federal governments have since funded 39,000 new child care spaces. About 31,000 more spaces are expected by 2028.
- To keep up with the growth, the ChildCareBC plan included a commitment to add to the capacity of regional health authorities to license, monitor and investigate child care facilities.
- B.C. separates child care licensing (led by the Ministry of Health and health authorities) from child care planning and funding (led by the Ministry of Education and Child Care). This structure requires effective coordination to implement child care policies and commitments.

About this report

- The Ministry of Education and Child Care leads implementation of ChildCareBC. Vancouver Coastal Health is one of five regional health authorities responsible for licensing, inspecting, and investigating child care facilities.
- Our two audits focused on ChildCareBC's commitment to "increase capacity in health authorities to license new spaces, conduct investigations, and monitor compliance."
 - Our first audit looked at whether the Ministry of Education and Child Care had worked with health partners to implement the commitment.
 - Our second audit considered if Vancouver Coastal Health assessed whether it had capacity to license new spaces, investigate complaints and monitor child care facilities.
- The audits are reported in separate chapters, each with its own conclusion.

Audits at a glance *(continued)*

Chapter 1: An audit of the Ministry of Education and Child Care's commitment to increase the capacity of child care licensing programs

Objective

To determine whether the Ministry of Education and Child Care had effectively worked with health partners to implement the ChildCareBC plan's commitment to increase capacity in health authorities to license new spaces, conduct investigations and monitor compliance.

Audit period

April 1, 2022 – July 31, 2024

Conclusion

The Ministry of Education and Child Care had not worked effectively with health partners (Ministry of Health and/or regional health authorities) to implement the ChildCareBC commitment to increase capacity in health authorities to license new spaces, conduct investigations, and monitor compliance in child care facilities. The ministry had not:

- coordinated with health partners to document expectations for implementing the commitment;
- monitored implementation of the commitment; or
- publicly reported progress on it.

As a result, the ministry did not know if health authorities have increased their capacity to license, investigate and monitor child care facilities.

The ministry has accepted all five recommendations on coordinating with health partners to document expectations for increasing capacity in health authorities' child care licensing programs, and to monitor and report on progress.

What we found

The ministry had not coordinated with health partners to document expectations for increasing capacity in health authorities

- The ministry hadn't coordinated with the Ministry of Health or regional health authorities to establish expectations for implementing the commitment. It hadn't documented:
 - roles and responsibilities;
 - timelines and targets; and
 - how the commitment will be funded.
- The ministry's first meeting with health partners to discuss the commitment was in May 2024 – two years after the ministry was created in April 2022.

Recommendation 1

The ministry had not monitored or publicly reported on health partners' implementation of the commitment

The ministry had not:

- confirmed whether health authorities had plans to increase capacity;
- obtained consistent and timely reporting on health partners' implementation of the commitment;
- identified or managed risks to achieving the commitment; or
- worked with health partners to publicly report on the commitment.

Recommendations 2–5

Audits at a glance *(continued)*

Chapter 2: An audit of Vancouver Coastal Health's child care licensing capacity

Objective

To determine whether Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) assessed if it had the capacity to license new spaces, investigate complaints, and monitor compliance for child care facilities.

Audit period

April 1, 2022 – July 31, 2024

Conclusion

VCH did not adequately assess if it had capacity to license new spaces, investigate complaints, and monitor compliance for child care facilities.

While VCH established and monitored a key performance indicator for inspections, which it could use to help establish resource needs, it did not have key performance indicators or timelines for licensing or investigation activities. It also had not adequately determined the short-term and long-term resources needed to meet key performance indicators or timelines for these three activities.

The health authority has accepted all five recommendations on developing performance indicators, and using that information to determine the number of staff needed to meet program demands.

What we found

VCH had incomplete key performance indicators and timelines for its child care licensing and investigation activities

- VCH set and monitored a key performance indicator for routine inspections of child care facilities.
- VCH didn't have a key performance indicator or timelines for processing child care licence applications or conducting investigations.
- Without a complete set of key performance indicators or timelines to measure against, it's difficult for VCH to know whether it has enough resources to meet its expectations.

Recommendations 1–3

VCH did not adequately assess its resource needs

- VCH didn't effectively evaluate the staffing levels needed to meet key performance indicators and timelines for its main activities.
- VCH had some relevant information to support long-term resource planning, but was missing critical information such as ChildCareBC space projections.
- Budgeted staffing levels haven't changed since 2019, while the number of child care facilities has increased 19 per cent.

Recommendations 4–5