



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **School District 58 Nicola-Similkameen selects YMCA BC as operator of new childcare spaces in Princeton community**

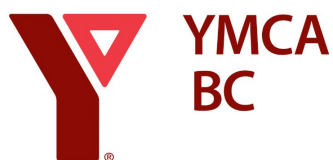
**January 11, 2024, Merritt and Princeton communities, BC** – School District 58 Nicola-Similkameen is pleased to announce that YMCA BC has been selected as the partner and future operator of new childcare spaces at the Riverside Learning Centre. This project is the first between YMCA BC and School District 58 in the Princeton community and is an example of a school district bringing a childcare operator to the table early in the process. This allows the YMCA, as experts in this field, to play an integral role in the planning and design of high-quality childcare spaces and experiences.

As the need for quality childcare services across the province is ever increasing, today's announcement is both exciting and significant for parents and caregivers in the Princeton community. With the addition of these new spaces, which are supported through the ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund, Riverside Learning Centre will provide 24 Infant-Toddler spaces, 50 spaces for Group 30 months to School Age spaces, and 48 Before and After School spaces. These spaces include the existing childcare spaces that are currently provided by the wonderful team of educators at Little Seeds Early Learning Centre.

With the opening of Riverside Learning Centre spaces on the horizon and the ongoing need for accessible and quality childcare in British Columbia, there is no better time to pursue a career in Early Childhood Education. Becoming a childcare educator provides individuals with a unique opportunity to give back to their local communities and make a lasting impact in the lives of children and their families. For those interested in a career as an Early Childhood Educator (ECE), information about certification, the Province of BC's ECE Education Support Fund and other government funding resources can be found [HERE](#). Additionally, anyone who would like to work in a BC licensed childcare facility with school age children must be 19+ and will require the Responsible Adult Certification (RAC). The RAC certification course is currently offered for FREE through the [YMCA Ignite](#) digital platform.

### **Quotes:**

"The school district is very pleased to be working with the current operator Little Seeds Early Learning and the future operator YMCA BC as we plan for both the renovations and addition to Riverside Learning Centre. The expertise and support of both partners will be instrumental in both the continuity of current service and the creation of a high-quality childcare facility for the



families of Princeton and surrounding areas,” said **Stephen McNiven, Superintendent of Schools, School District 58 (Nicola-Similkameen)**.

“We are thrilled to be selected by the school district to operate the new spaces at Riverside Learning Centre. As the largest childcare provider in BC, we know firsthand the impact we can have on communities when committed individuals come together. We look forward to working with the school district and Little Seeds Early Learning Centre on a smooth transition, and being a part of the Princeton community—supporting families and helping children thrive,” said **Heidi Worthington, President and CEO, YMCA BC**.

“I’m excited for the future of childcare in Princeton and how the school district and the Y can bring their resources to create the dream that I have envisioned for children and Early Childhood Educators,” said **Mandy Chapman, Owner & Operator, Little Seeds Early Learning Centre**.

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### **About School District 58**

The Nicola-Similkameen District is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the Nlë?kepmx and Syilx people and we acknowledge our Metis communities and their contributions to the Aboriginal ways of being, doing and knowing in Canada. The District serves approximately 2850 students, including over 800 students that are registered with our Provincial Online School. Students residing in the Nicola and Similkameen Valleys attend one of 12 schools located in Princeton, Lower Nicola, or Merritt. Guiding our work is our commitment to ‘Success for ALL Learners ~ Today and Tomorrow’, and to using the principles of inclusion, innovation, relationship, well-being, honoring the cultures and languages of the traditional territories, and supporting the pursuit of personal excellence. Learn more at [sd58.bc.ca](https://sd58.bc.ca).

### **About YMCA BC**

As a charity dedicated to strengthening the foundations of our community, YMCA BC—the result of the unification of YMCA of Northern BC, Kamloops Community YMCA-YWCA and YMCA of Greater Vancouver—is a powerful association of people joined together by a shared passion to foster connection and ignite belonging. YMCA BC enables everyone in our communities to have equitable access to healthier outcomes and provides vital programs and services that have a positive impact on some of our communities’ most pressing social issues including health and wellness, inequity, affordable childcare, mental health and employment and newcomer settlement. Learn more at [bc.ymca.ca](https://bc.ymca.ca).



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