

COMMUNITY, CONVERSATION AND CONNECTION

**Findings from the Community-Led Collaboration Project
in Richmond, British Columbia.**

Richmond is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish People, including the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Kwantlen and Tsawwassen First Nations.

Image courtesy of Tourism Richmond

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

In fall 2021, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) announced a new framework for service delivery to Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) in British Columbia. The announcement of the CYSN framework was met with confusion and fear by many across the province. It was also met with calls for greater consultation.

Across the province, individuals and organizations demanded that any framework changes be better informed by the experiences and perspectives of families and children and youth with disabilities or support needs.

The Community-Led Collaboration Project defines children and youth with disabilities or support needs as those who are 0-19 years of age, have a disability, diagnosed or undiagnosed, need support, and/or have a possible developmental delay.

Shortly after the announcement, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC), BC Association of Child Development and Intervention (BCACDI), The Federation of Community Social Services and Inclusion BC came together to:

- Identify the potential of the proposed framework;
- Raise concerns that the changes ahead would effectively respond to the needs of children and youth, their families, the organizations that support them and the communities where they live;
- Present a proposal to MCFD to carry out a provincial engagement—from a community development perspective—to better inform the changes coming to B.C.'s system of services and supports.

In response, MCFD gave the organizations (referred to in this report as The Provincial Working Group) a grant to conduct a provincial engagement that would inform the transformation of CYSN services in B.C. The engagement, known as **The Community-Led Collaboration Project**, launched in Fall 2022.

This report details the challenges, hopes and expectations for services and supports that families and community service providers **expressed in conversations in Richmond**, one of six initial communities engaged in the first year of this project.

THE APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT

The Community-Led Collaboration Project's Provincial Working Group partnered with B.C. communities to design a thoughtful, inclusive, culturally safe, and accessible approach to engagement. To guide their work, the group established four project principles:

- **Collaboration.** Engagement is co-designed with community members to inform how B.C. communities can create better networks of services and support for children and youth with disabilities or support needs, and their families.
- **Community-driven change.** The project builds upon the strengths of B.C.'s current system and names the changes needed to best support children and youth with disabilities or support needs and their families.
- **Reconciliation and Decolonizing.** Reconciliation and decolonization guide the project's approach to community engagement, which is designed to be inclusive, accessible, and culturally safe, with an appropriate approach that makes space for historically excluded voices and perspectives.
- **Transparency and Timeliness.** Timely engagement summaries are circulated to keep participants informed and help ensure the perspectives most important to the community are captured.

Inclusive communities are healthier communities. Building inclusive communities is a **shared responsibility**.

The Community-Led Collaboration Project took place over two phases between September 2022 and December 2024. In the first phase, The Provincial Working Group and their community partners worked together to facilitate in-person and hybrid engagements in:

- Campbell River, Gold River, and surrounding communities
- Castlegar and surrounding communities
- Kamloops and surrounding communities
- Port Alberni and surrounding communities
- West Coast of Vancouver Island communities
- Richmond

SAFE SPACES FOR DIALOGUE

In Richmond, The Provincial Working Group built partnerships with local community organizations, including 40 Touchstone Family Association, Aspire Richmond, BC Centre for Ability, City of Richmond, Developmental Disabilities Association, Family Support Institute of BC, The PACE Program, and Richmond School District. These partnerships informed approaches to engagement that best reflected the needs of the community. Local families, youth and service providers were invited to facilitated sessions in several ways, including:

- Information posters (put up in community centres and coffee shops);
- A dedicated community website and registration page (available in English and Mandarin);
- Emails sent directly to families receiving supports and service providers;
- Community service providers sharing event details directly with organizations and families in their networks;
- Local Facebook groups.

Throughout the planning and implementation of engagements in Richmond, steps were taken to ensure cultural safety and accessibility. Participants were offered:

- Childcare honorariums and onsite supported childcare options.
- Support for transportation.
- Quiet space on site and follow-up support for participants;
- Food and gift cards.
- A variety of session formats and locations to enhance safety and inclusion (for example, one family session was facilitated in Mandarin).
- Hybrid session formats for those who preferred to participate remotely via Zoom.



In Richmond, a graphic facilitator supported our conversation with community service providers. Through the engagement, community service providers were able to share their experiences and ideas about enhancing local services and supports.



In each of the six initial communities, the Provincial Working Group and its community partners also conducted a six-step engagement (see Figure 1 below) to:

Understand the strengths, gaps, and the changes needed when it comes to services and supports for children and youth with disabilities or support needs in British Columbia.

Explore what truly collaborative and connected networks of support can achieve for B.C. children and youth, and their families.

Implement engagement that considers the specific circumstances of a community, the young people, and families in need of support, and importantly, the voices of people historically excluded.



Figure 1

In the second phase of the project, the Provincial Working Group:

- Shared outcomes and approaches from the initial community engagements and worked with communities to develop solutions to issues raised.
- Offered up to thirty grants for additional B.C. communities to conduct their own community engagements.

In each session, participants were asked three questions:

- 1 What services and supports for children and youth with disabilities or support needs are working well in Richmond?**
- 2 What gaps in services and support exist?**
- 3 What does a better network of services and supports look like in Richmond?**

In addition to exploring these questions in hybrid sessions, families and service providers were provided a survey link, phone number and email address to share further ideas. The survey invited people to answer the three questions listed above.

ABOUT RICHMOND



Image courtesy of VisitRichmondBC.com

Richmond is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish People, including the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Kwantlen and Tsawwassen First Nations. Richmond has a population of 209,937.¹ Children up to the age of 14 make up 13.3 percent of the population of Richmond. Less than one per cent (0.7%) of the population is of single Indigenous ancestry, of which 61 per cent are First Nations and 39 per cent are Métis.²

According to the Early Development Instrument (EDI) used by the Human Early Learning Project (HELP) at the University of British Columbia (UBC), childhood vulnerability rates vary significantly by community, ranging from 21.8 per cent in some B.C. communities to 72 per cent in others.³

Over 39 per cent of kindergarten children are vulnerable in Richmond compared to **32.9% of kindergarten children** across B.C. being vulnerable.

In Richmond, 39.3 per cent—or 585 out of 1,490 kindergarten children—are vulnerable on one or more scales of the EDI upon entry to kindergarten.⁴ This compares to 32.9 per cent of all kindergarten children across B.C. being vulnerable in one or more scales.⁵

1. Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023, online: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

2. Ibidem.

3. Sourced from the Early Development Instrument (EDI), composed of five scales of vulnerability in children entering kindergarten in British Columbia. The EDI tool has been used by the Human Early Learning Project (HELP) at the University of British Columbia for over two decades to monitor children's development at school entry (<https://earlylearning.ubc.ca>). The EDI looks at five scales of child development including: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communications skills and general knowledge.

4. Wave 7 Community Profile, (2019). Richmond School District (SD38). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, Faculty of Medicine, School of Population and Public Health; February 2020. Available from: [Early Development Instrument, online: https://earlylearning.ubc.ca](https://earlylearning.ubc.ca).

5. Ibidem.

Early Development Instrument research in Richmond further indicates that **the social and emotional needs of children in kindergarten are higher than their needs in other areas of development**, such as physical health, well-being, language, cognition, communication, and general knowledge.⁶

Children are considered vulnerable on the EDI if, without additional support and care, they are more likely to experience challenges in their school years and beyond. Why is this important?

Understanding healthy child development and what is influencing healthy development in your community provides a starting point for conversations and actions that are local, specific to the needs of the children in your community, and led by community champions.⁷

6. Wave 7 Community Profile, (2019). Richmond School District (SD38). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, Faculty of Medicine, School of Population and Public Health; February 2020. Available from: Early Development Instrument, online: <https://earlylearning.ubc.ca>.

7. Ibidem.

WHAT WE HEARD IN RICHMOND

Engagement in Richmond took place in November 2023. Working in partnership with local organizations, 40 Touchstone Family Association, Aspire Richmond, BC Centre for Ability, City of Richmond, Developmental Disabilities Association, Family Support Institute of BC, The PACE Program, and Richmond School District, the community hosted:

- A session with **three local childcare providers** via Zoom on Tuesday, November 14, 2023.
- A session in Mandarin (led by a partner facilitator) with **seven local families** at the Richmond Caring Place on Wednesday, November 15, 2023.
- A session with **24 local community service providers** at Seedlings Early Childhood Development HUB on Thursday, November 16, 2023.
- A session with **12 local families** at Hugh Boyd Secondary on Thursday, November 16, 2023.
- A hybrid session with **eight local families** at East Richmond Community Hall and Seedlings Early Childhood Development HUB on Saturday, November 18, 2023.

“

“I want my daughter to see the world and the world to see her.”

— Richmond family member/caregiver

In all sessions, participants shared what is working well, opportunities for improvement and the ideal vision of what support should look like for families in Richmond. In response to the question “What is working well in Richmond?” participants shared:

- The referral process is working well. Child care providers can refer families to other organizations.
- There is a strong sense of community within community service organizations. Services are easily accessible and central, and staff turnover is low.
- Many people appreciate the Youth Connections Program (run by Aspire Richmond). The program provides care for children and youth with support needs after school and on professional development days. One local community service provider noted, “That doesn’t happen in a lot of other communities.”

- Annual events are held to introduce the service providers to one another, and family events are organized to welcome families into kindergarten and help transition school-aged children into adulthood.
- The local hospital, a pillar of support for families, was praised by a parent who said, "It's a really strong hospital and has a lot going for it. I enjoy teaming with the hospital."
- One parent shared, "I was encouraged to move to Richmond by my daughter's medical team because of their resources and services here. The connection is strong and accessible. I have found a huge help in this community."
- Families feel the advocacy support is strong. One local family member shared, "Advocates through Family Support Institute (FSI) and Inclusion BC are available to accompany parents to meetings with the school to advocate for what their children need."

The following table details participants' thoughts on opportunities for improvement and ideas for meaningful change in Richmond.

Conversation themes	Supporting details
<p>STAFFING, RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>"Our children are suffering in the silos of education, health, social services - these need dismantling and [must be] rebuilt [to be] neurodiverse affirming!"</p> <p>- Community service provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare providers feel there is insufficient staff to support children and believe the 8:1 child care licensing formula needs to be reconsidered. • Service providers also mention the 12:1 after-school care ratio can challenge them to create inclusion for children who need more support. • One community service provider shared, "Staffing is low. We get the funding, and then we can't find educated and experienced people to support us." • Community service providers feel that they lack incentives and financial support for professional development. They are eager to enhance their skills to serve families and children with support needs. • The turnover of staff in school-age childcare is high due to the part-time nature of the work. Several people mentioned that school-aged childcare is generally not considered a long-term career option, it's more temporary, and the pay is lower if staff don't have their Early Childhood Educator certificate. • There is a pressing need to increase knowledge and awareness of neurodiverse affirming practices in schools and organizations serving children and youth.
<p>RESPIRE CARE</p> <p>"[I need] respite services to have my own time to relax, and my daughter benefits from (the) respite worker."</p> <p>- Family member/caregiver</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respite funding is available, but it's difficult to find respite care workers. • One caregiver said, "Respite services definitely help families to cope, so I really hope this can continue."

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One participant shared, “The challenge remains in finding qualified respite workers.”
<p>NAVIGATING SYSTEMS AMBIGUITY</p> <p>“I felt like I was just thrown into the tunnel and then the lid closed and then I was left to figure it all out.”</p> <p>– Family member/caregiver</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families who have been in contact with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) have expressed the need for more family-centred conversations to facilitate decision-making as they feel left out of the decision process. Families find it difficult to locate organized and easily accessible plans and information. One family member shared, “Different places for different services mean confusion and stress for families, and parents get burned out to manage (it all).” The city boundaries are creating a confusing barrier. For instance, a family that lives close to the boundary of one city where daycare is available cannot access specialized services because the agency they are connected with is unable to cross city boundaries. Families and community service providers believe that a paid navigation coordinator position is essential for the community. One family member/caregiver shared, “There needs to be a system of public information related to services for families, community calendars, bulletin boards. A system that is funded and not off the side of somebody’s desk.” A community service provider said, “There used to be a paid coordinator to organize the tours and website. Then MCFD funding was redirected and the position ended, and it moved to others on the side of their desks.” All the systems need to stop working in silos and connect with one another to support families better.
<p>DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL SAFETY</p> <p>“(There’s) diversity in Richmond, but the services don’t match that diversity.”</p> <p>– Community service provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community service providers mentioned the need for families to have “safe places to connect.” Community service providers shared that the language used in the MCFD system can seem harsh and outdated. Diagnosis and labels can be deficit-based, labelling disabilities as a problem and in ways that are perceived as colonial and stigmatized. Families in Richmond recognize the city’s diversity but feel that the available services do not adequately represent that diversity. Online resources are not always presented in an easily accessible way for families. There is a lack of translation support, which causes barriers for families trying to find a community service provider who speaks their language. There is an expressed need for resources to be translated and access to staff that speak multiple languages.

- One parent shared, “I want to see that parents of children/youth with support needs are represented on school parent advisory committees so their voices are heard.”
- One community service provider shares, “At our organization, there was originally funding for an inclusion coordinator, but then it got scrapped.”
- There needs to be more awareness of and discussion regarding neurodiversity and disabilities.

LACK OF RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

“We need more activities that are geared for kids with disabilities so they can play and learn at their own level – wouldn’t have to worry about if [my child] is disrupting the group.”

– Family member/caregiver

- Families want more after-school care for all age groups, including teens, as there is currently a long waitlist for the limited programs available.
- Families want recreational opportunities with more varied times that are geared for children and youth with disabilities or support needs so they can play and learn at their level.
- Families want access to more summer camps and programs, outside of the school year, that are inclusive of and support children with disabilities.
- Families desire more summer activities, outings, and chances for their children to interact with others and enjoy the outdoors.
- One parent shared, “[My child] has access to (funding) but needs more activities with extra support so they can interact with peers.”
- Another parent shared, “I want a network of information about community activities that might offer a break for families, like a planned field trip on a Saturday with support staff that allows mom a few hours of rest.”
- One person suggested using local elementary schools on the weekends to bring the community together and create a greater sense of connection among families.

SCHOOL TRANSITIONS ARE CHALLENGING

“There are excellent services at the elementary level, but they don’t follow as kids grow.”

– Family member/caregiver

- School transitions can be challenging due to decreased funding, limited services, overloaded waitlists and a lack of information.
- Families mentioned the need for facilitated plans to transition students from elementary to high school and into adulthood.
- Regarding transitioning into elementary school, one caregiver shared, “Funding goes down after six years, and our school is supposed to cover [the] support gap, but they don’t have the resources.”
- Another parent urged, “There needs to be a better plan for children and the transitions they will go through.”
- Families mentioned that children over 12 years old don’t have a safe space to go in their schools and the community.
- One participant shared, “There seems to be a gap in inclusive and supportive environments for teenagers with disabilities, especially as they transition into high school. While elementary schools often offer more structured support, it tapers off during the high school years.”

ACCESSIBILITY TO SUPPORTS AND LACK OF FUNDING

"There's insufficient funding for support staff."

- Local childcare provider

- Families and community service providers expressed frustration with the lack of funding.
- Funding is not transparent and is confusing for parents trying to access it.
- Families struggle to find a local physician for their children, and services often require physician referrals to be valid. This requirement can be a roadblock without a family doctor.
- The 12:1 afterschool care ratio creates challenges to include children who need support.
- Families feel there are insufficient services, such as speech and language therapists and occupational therapists, available to meet Richmond families' needs. Families want these therapy services to be offered in schools and across the life span.
- Funding should be offered to all families and not based on diagnosis.
- Families are frustrated that funding does not follow the child when they move to another region in the province. One participant shared, "The practice of tying support funding to a region...creates more vulnerability in an already underfunded system."

SOLUTIONS TABLE SUMMARY

During the in-person engagements in Richmond, attendees explored what is working well in their communities and what are the opportunities for change. They also spent time discussing their hopes for the future and what an ideal network of services and supports for children and youth with disabilities or support needs in their communities could look like for them.

In the sessions, participants shared the following visions for the future of their communities:

- There are paid roles for people to help navigate the system in collaboration with parents.
- There are safe spaces that families can come to and connect on a drop-in basis.
- There are more mental health supports in schools, in all grades.
- Schools are open on weekends to support children, families, and youth and to provide a space for connection.
- There are communication plans and websites for organizations that are clear, user-friendly, regularly updated, and culturally inclusive. Information is available in multiple languages.
- There is better representation of families in the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).
- There is licenced child care for children over the age of 12.

On November 8, 2024, parents, caregivers, family members, community service providers, and community members from Richmond were invited to an online session to discuss solutions for change.

At the meeting, they had the opportunity to explore and workshop one vision of the future, based on in-person feedback gathered in their communities, including:

All families in Richmond have access to supports and services that are culturally safe and reflect the diversity of the community. Families have easy access to the systems, tools, and centralized information they need to help their children thrive.

VISION

All families in Richmond have access to supports and services that are culturally safe and reflect the diversity of the community. Families have easy access to the systems, tools, and centralized information they need to help their children thrive.

WHAT BOLD STEPS OR SOLUTIONS ARE REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION?	WHO MUST BE INVOLVED TO BRING THESE SOLUTIONS TO LIFE?
There is an online database where families and service providers can easily access current information about local supports, services, and family groups.	A collaboration between local community organizations and the team behind www.richmondkids.ca to determine what resources are needed to keep this existing website current and accessible to all. This would also require dedicated funding for a permanent position from the Ministry of Children and Family Development.
Families receive a comprehensive “Tool Kit” (translated in multiple languages and available in multiple mediums) at the time of their child’s diagnosis, regardless of when it occurs. This kit provides accessible information and guidance on understanding the diagnosis, connecting with professionals, services and supports and accessing educational resources.	A collaboration of multiple local community organizations such as Aspire Richmond, Autism Support Network, BC Centre for Ability, Family Support Institute (FSI), The Pace Program, and Touchstone Family Association and local health, community centre and education professionals (who can help distribute the toolkit to families).
There is a Community Facilitator/Navigator in a dedicated, paid position, available to provide information and assistance to families in different languages to serve the full diversity of Richmond community members.	The Ministry of Children and Family Development.
Local businesses receive training and education in inclusion and, specifically, in how to create safe and accessible spaces for all customers and community members.	A partnership between the City of Richmond and the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, informed by the knowledge of local community organizations.

<p>There is a robust, well-trained and well-paid workforce – including early childhood educators and education assistants – in all child care centres and schools who feel valued and respected.</p>	<p>A collaboration between School District #38, Ministry of Education and Child Care, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Advanced Education and the relevant unions.</p>
<p>Communication is clear, and families feel supported during all phases of transition within the school system, including the transition to after-school care, from one grade to the next and on to adulthood.</p>	<p>A collaboration between School District #38, Ministry of Education and Child Care, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and Community Living of BC.</p>
<p>There is an approach to funding that considers the population growth of Richmond and related needs of families in the community.</p>	<p>A collaboration between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development, and the Ministry of Education and Child Care.</p>
<p>Community groups and programs are run by community partners rather than parents, enabling deeper connections among parents and eliminating the parental burden to coordinate.</p>	<p>A collaboration between local community organizations including Aspire Richmond, Autism Support Network, BC Centre for Ability, Family Support Institute (FSI), The Pace Program, and Touchstone Family Association.</p>

FINAL STEPS OF ENGAGEMENT

Throughout 2024, the Provincial Working Group shared preliminary results and project updates with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). In January 2025, the summary reports from the 23 community engagements, including those from community engagement grants and the six initial community engagements, will be submitted to the MCFD. Community contributions have been instrumental in shaping these reports.

In all cases, the outcomes of the Community-Led Collaboration Project will belong to the communities. The hope is that participants' ideas and experiences will:

- serve as a tool for B.C. communities as they work to build and advocate for better networks of services and supports, and
- inform changes in community that best support children and youth with disabilities or support needs and their families.

Please share this report widely – it is not just a reflection of your community, but a catalyst for the changes needed in your community. We believe it holds the potential to inspire a future where every person can thrive and to contribute to the transformation of the CYSN program and other programs and services that better responds to the needs of B.C. communities and, most importantly, of the young people at the centre of this work.

For more ideas and tools to share this report, please visit: <https://inclusionbc.org/conversations-in-richmond/>.

The background image shows a library interior. On the left, there are tall bookshelves filled with books, mostly in the natural sciences and animal-related genres. Some visible titles include 'The Natural World', 'Animals Encyclopedia', 'North American Wildlife', and 'Birds of the World'. The shelves are organized with colorful spines. In the background, there is a study area with a long wooden counter, several black chairs, and more bookshelves. The ceiling has exposed white beams and fluorescent lighting. A semi-transparent white box containing text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

IN SUMMARY

Please find a plain language summary of the Richmond key discoveries on the following pages.

WHAT WE HEARD IN

RICHMOND

Located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish People, including the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Kwantlen and Tsawwassen First Nations.

Over three days in November 2023, 27 families and 27 service providers in Richmond shared their experiences and input with the Community-Led Collaboration Project. Together, we talked about the struggles, hopes, and expectations for services and supports for kids ages 0–19 with disabilities or support needs.

What's working well in Richmond

- There's a strong sense of community within community service organizations. Services are easily accessible and central, and staff turnover is low.
- Child care workers feel that the referral process works well.
- Service providers say annual events help them connect with each other and meet new service providers.
- Many people appreciate the Youth Connections Program run by Aspire Richmond.
- Family events help welcome families into kindergarten and help with school transitions.
- Parents/caregivers see the local hospital as a strong source of support for families.
- Families said they feel advocacy support is strong.

Opportunities for change

Supports and services don't reflect the city's diversity, and there's a lack of cultural safety

Families feel the diversity of Richmond's population isn't reflected in its services and supports.

Families believe there isn't enough translation support in the community and say that, too often, online resources aren't translated. This creates barriers for families as they try to find a community service provider who speaks their language.

Respite services are hard to find

Respite funding is available, but finding respite care workers is hard.

Parents/caregivers said respite helps families cope. Families say these breaks are important not only for parents and caregivers, but also their children.

School transitions and access to school services get harder as children get older

Families said less funding, fewer services, long waitlists, and a lack of information make school transitions more challenging as children grow.

Parents/caregivers want more planning to help students successfully move from elementary school to high school, and from high school into adulthood. Some families said children, over 12 years old, don't have a safe space to go.

"There are excellent services at the elementary level, but they don't follow as kids grow."

— Family member/caregiver

Not enough funding or supports

Parents said there isn't enough funding, and that accessing the funding they do have is confusing.

Families reported difficulty finding a family doctor. This can be a huge barrier as access to services often requires a physician referral. Families also said there aren't enough speech and language therapists (SLPs) and occupational therapists (OTs) to meet the community's needs.

More staff and training is needed

More staff is needed. Child-to-adult ratios in both child care and after-school care need to be reconsidered to ensure they allow for inclusion of all children.

Service providers said they need more incentives and financial support for staff training, particularly around neurodiversity in schools.

"I felt like I was just thrown into the tunnel and then the lid closed and then I was left to figure it all out."

— Family member/caregiver

The system is hard to navigate

Families feel left out of the decision-making process. They want the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to have more family-centred conversations so families feel more informed and involved in decisions.

Families said it's difficult to find and access the information they need to plan and make decisions.

Too few recreational opportunities

Families said they want more recreational opportunities for children and youth with disabilities or support needs.

This includes making available more outdoor summer activities and after-school care opportunities for children with disabilities or support needs of all ages, including teens.

Visions and solutions

Vision

All families in Richmond have access to supports and services that are culturally safe and reflect the diversity of the community. Families have easy access to the systems, tools, and centralized information they need to help their children thrive.

This needs:

- An online database for families and service providers to access information about local supports, services, and family groups.
- A Community Facilitator/Navigator in a dedicated, paid position.
- A comprehensive “Tool Kit” (translated in multiple languages and available in multiple mediums).
- Safe and accessible spaces for all customers and community members.
- A robust, well-trained and well-paid workforce for child care and education.
- Clear communication between families and the school system.
- Funding that considers the population growth of Richmond.
- Community groups and programs are run by community partners rather than parents.

WITH THANKS

The Community-Led Collaboration Project would like to deeply thank everyone who shared their time, ideas, experiences, concerns and hopes with us.

Their words have made all the difference as Richmond looks to best support children and youth with disabilities or support needs so they can thrive now and into the future.



Image courtesy of Tourism Richmond