

Sunflower Childcare Centre

smúk^wa?xń scəcəmallā
itskn snma?maya?tn

Helping Students
and their Families Bloom



Answering the Urgent Call for Childcare

By pursuing higher education, parents can transform their lives and the lives of their families.

Once they graduate, they'll have cultivated skillsets that allow them to improve their employment prospects, fill critical skill gaps and make meaningful contributions to communities throughout the North Okanagan.

However, many parents face barriers that prevent them from going back to school. Their educational aspirations are often delayed (or even halted) by the shortage of local childcare options.

Student parents require childcare support to attend classes and to study. Parents who don't have access to quality care are also more likely to struggle with anxiety and depression, which can lead to poor school performance and higher rates of withdrawal.

What's more, even when offered childcare placements, financial barriers can get in the way. A recent study commissioned by the City of Vernon found that the two leading issues for local parents are lack of childcare availability and cost of care.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, 88% of student parents are living near or at the poverty line. As a result, the cost of childcare deters many from pursuing post-secondary education.

To address these issues, Okanagan College is building the **Sunflower Childcare Centre / smúkwa?xñ scəcəmalla itskn snma?maya?tn** on our Vernon Campus.

The Centre will offer affordable childcare through programs like the \$10-a-Day childcare initiative or the Child Care Fee Reduction initiative. It will be operated by Maven Lane, a well-respected non-profit childcare provider whose certified, experienced staff already have 550 local children in their high-quality care.

We need community support to complete and equip this beautiful new 44-seat childcare centre with furnishings, supplies, and a creative outdoor space where the kids can play and learn.





Time and again, I would have students missing class, missing labs, missing exams because they were struggling to get affordable, reliable childcare. It was an ongoing issue for students who had young children.”

Lloyd Davies,
Leadership Donor and
Former Instructor at Okanagan College

Photo of: Gladys Fraser, Former Chair, Okanagan College Foundation; Helen Jackman, Executive Director, Okanagan College Foundation; Eric Reist, General Manager, Vernon Students' Association at Okanagan College; Athena Grelson, Okanagan College student; Lloyd Davies and Janet Armstrong, Leadership Donors.

What's in a name?

The Sunflower Childcare Centre / **smúkʷaʔx̣n̓ scəcəmalla itskn snmaʔmayaʔtn** was named by leadership donors Lloyd Davies and Janet Armstrong, who were inspired by the symbolism of sunflowers, in particular, the **Okanagan Sunflower / smúkʷaʔxn̓** a vibrant yellow wildflower that dots the hillside on Okanagan College's Vernon Campus. This stunning location overlooks Kalamalka lake, has trails linking to Okanagan College's Indigenous garden, and provides the perfect space for the Centre's curated outdoor play areas.

The Okanagan Sunflower, also known as the Arrowleaf Balsamroot, is a beloved and beautiful marker of spring for many locals. It also carries great significance for Indigenous communities throughout the region. Almost every part of the flower is edible, and its fragrant roots contain anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties that make it a powerful plant medicine. In other words, it carries within its blossoms the power to nourish and within its roots the power to heal.

What better name to give an on-campus childcare centre designed to help students and their families bloom and to support them as they work to cultivate deep roots in communities across the North Okanagan.

Okanagan College respectfully acknowledges that the Sunflower Childcare Centre / **smúkʷaʔx̣n̓ scəcəmalla itskn snmaʔmayaʔtn** on our Vernon Campus is on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan people.



Impact on Students

Access to high-quality childcare will allow parents to improve their lives by pursuing their educational goals.



Impact on Community

After graduation, student parents will help fill roles in fields facing critical staffing shortages, like the skilled trades and health care.

The Centre will serve as a practicum site, providing opportunities for the North Okanagan's next generation of Early Childhood Educators to receive high-quality, real-world education.



Impact on Children

Providing children with high-quality early childhood learning improves their social and emotional development and physical wellbeing.

51%

of parents are waitlisted for childcare services*

2 years

average time spent on childcare waitlists**

3x

more likely to graduate with childcare***

*51% - City of Vernon Child Care Space Action Plan

**2 years - City of Vernon Child Care Space Action Plan

***3x - Institute for Women's Policy Research

“
*I signed up for fourteen
childcare waitlists, and it still
took years to get my daughter
into daycare.*”

Megean Dahms,
Student Parent, Okanagan College
Vernon Campus



“
*I signed up for as many waitlists
as I could, but I was only offered
part-time placements. Not
having full-time childcare has
meant that my schooling has
taken much longer, and I’ve
struggled in my classes because
I haven’t had quiet study time.*”

Halima Shikh,
Student Parent, Okanagan College
Vernon Campus

“
*I’ve really struggled to find
good, licensed childcare
for my daughter. She’s my
everything. I’d almost rather
not go to school than go
and worry she’s not being
properly cared for.*”

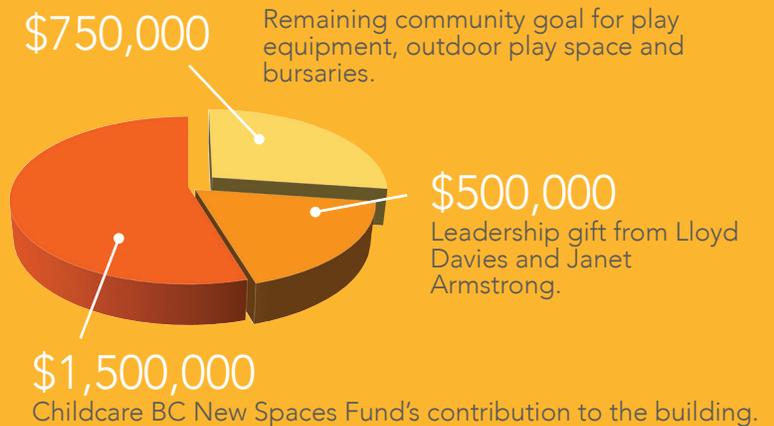
Sarina Parsons,
Student Parent, Okanagan College
Vernon Campus





The Sunflower Childcare Centre / smúkwa?xñ scəcəmalla itskn snma?maya?tn is a \$2.75 million project that will be integrated into the new student housing at Okanagan College's Vernon Campus.

With \$500,000 secured towards our \$1.25 million community goal, we need your help to raise the remaining \$750,000 needed to equip and furnish the space, create a vibrant outdoor play space, and provide bursaries for struggling students.





DONOR RECOGNITION

Gifts of \$100,000 and above	Name one of the four main learning spaces.
Gifts of \$50,000 and above	Recognition in the main corridor.
Gift of \$25,000 and above	Recognition in an indoor or outdoor learning space.
Gifts of \$1,000 and above	Recognition on the donor wall.

We would be pleased to speak with you about how you can support student parents and their children at Okanagan College's Vernon Campus.



Helen Jackman
Executive Director,
Okanagan College
Foundation

hjackman@okanagan.bc.ca
250-215-6029



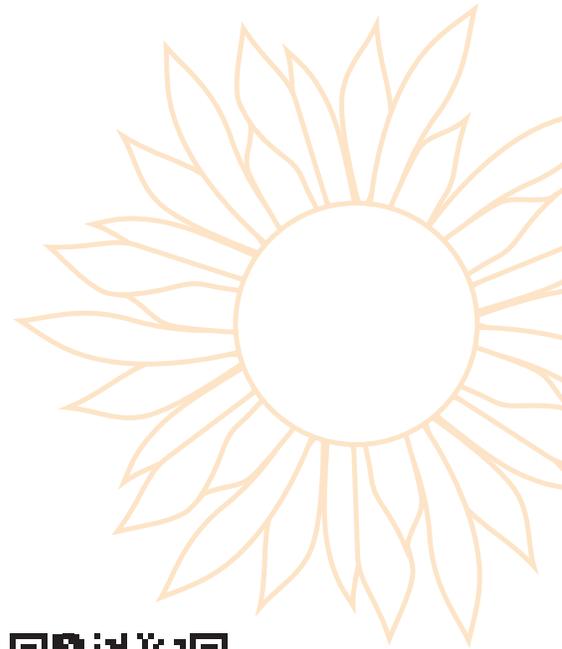
Sasha Carter
Development Officer,
Okanagan College
Foundation

scarter@okanagan.bc.ca
250-469-1594



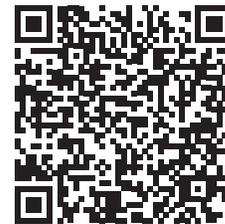
Michael Tindall
Chair, Sunflower Childcare
Campaign Fundraising
Committee

bwgrp@shaw.ca
250-309-1969



To donate or learn more about how you can help students and their families bloom, please visit:

okanagan.bc.ca/sunflowercampaign



Cheques can be mailed to: Okanagan College Foundation
1000 KLO Road, Kelowna, BC V1Y 4X8 | Phone: 250-762-5445 local 4772 | Charitable registration tax number 86248 8194 RR0001