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Big step forward for public childcare

The B.C. government has introduced legislation to empower the province's school districts to expand delivery of childcare on public school grounds.

Last Tuesday, the BCNDP government tabled Bill 19, the school amendment act, that allows school districts to provide childcare to children of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Districts also will be permitted to provide care during non-instructional days, such as professional development days, and winter, spring and summer breaks.

"We are building a seamless childcare system in our province that supports parents from the early years through to graduation," said Premier David Eby when unveiling the new bill. "Using our existing infrastructure and partnering with school districts is a smart, sustainable solution that puts existing resources to their best use for families."

Premier Eby specifically singled out [the advocacy of CUPE BC and CUPE locals for the expansion of seamless public childcare](#) as a key driver for the new bill.

"Better enabling our public schools to deliver quality childcare, and at all times of the year, responds to a critical need among parents for accessible, trusted care for their kids," said Karen Ranalletta, president of CUPEBC.

"CUPE is enthusiastic to work with government and school boards to realize the publicly delivered seamless before- and after-school care sparked by this legislative change," said Ranalletta.

While the legislation does not mandate school districts to provide childcare, if passed the bill will allow districts to add childcare spaces on school grounds, opt into the childcare program subsidies, and recover reasonable costs, like how not-for-profit centres operate, to support sustainable programs or expansions of existing programs.

Bill 19 is an important step forward in expanding public childcare. CUPEBC is continuing its [Seamless Childcare Now](#) campaign calling for all B.C. school districts to offer before- and after- school care staffed by CUPE school support workers. Seamless childcare can provide thousands of much needed childcare spaces and give CUPE members the opportunity to additional hours and higher earning potential.

seamless CHILDCARE NOW