

Education in BC

Resources for Newcomers

Navigating the education system is an important step for families settling into a new community. This document offers an overview of BC's education system, Jewish educational programs, and resources to help you make informed decisions for your family. Finding the right schools and childcare is crucial for your children's development and your peace of mind.

For additional support, contact Aluma Zweifler at areicher@jewishvancouver.com to connect with community connectors and local families who can share their experiences.

Understanding the BC Education System

British Columbia offers a variety of schooling options to meet diverse family needs, values, and learning styles. Here's an overview of the main types:

• Age-Based Education and Care

◦ **Ages 0–5: Early Years**

- **Overview:** The early years are vital for children's growth and development. BC offers programs to support early learning and childcare.
- **Key Options**
 - [Strong Start BC](#): Free, drop-in early learning programs for children aged 0–5 and their parents/caregivers, available at public schools.
 - Preschools and Licensed Daycares: Provide play-based learning and social development for children before Kindergarten.
 - Childcare Subsidies: check if you are eligible for the affordable [Child Care Benefit](#) to help cover costs.
- **Explore the following resources**
 - [BC Child Care](#)
 - [Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre](#) and [Childcare Facilities](#)
 - [Ministry of Education and Child Care](#)

◦ **Ages 5–12: Elementary School**

- **Kindergarten**
 - For children aged 5 by December 31 of the school year.
 - Full-day programs in all public schools are designed to build foundational skills for learning and social interaction.
- **Grade 1 to Grade 7**
 - Focus on core academic subjects, creativity, and critical thinking.

◦ **Ages 13–18: Secondary School**

- **Grade 8 to Grade 12**
 - Students engage in advanced subjects and electives to prepare for post-secondary education or careers.

- **Types of Schools in BC**

- **Public Schools**

- **Overview:** Fully funded by the government, providing free education for children from Kindergarten to Grade 12.
- **Who Can Enroll:** Open to all children residing in BC, regardless of citizenship, except for immigrants without legal status, who are currently ineligible to enroll their children in the public school system.
- **Curriculum:** Follows the BC provincial curriculum, focusing on core subjects, critical thinking, creativity, and Indigenous history.
- **Key Information:**
 - **School Enrollment is Address-Based:** Enrollment is determined by your local school district and the school catchment (enrollment) area based on your residential address.
 - **English Language Learning (ELL) Programs:** Support for students whose first language is not English to develop proficiency while adjusting socially and academically.
 - **Specialized programs** such as French Immersion, arts academies, and sports-focused education.
- **Settlement Workers in Public Schools (SWIS):**
 - Help families with school registration, orientation, and connecting to resources.
 - Eligibility: Available to immigrant and refugee families with children in public schools.
 - How to Access: Contact your child's school or organizations like ISSBC or Mosaic BC for assistance.

- **Independent Schools**

- **Overview:** Privately operated schools that charge tuition, some receiving partial government funding.
- **Key Types:**
 - **Faith-Based and Jewish Schools:** Combine BC's curriculum with religious and cultural teachings (see Jewish Education section to learn about Jewish Schools).
 - **Alternative and Specialized Schools:** Include Montessori, Waldorf, arts-focused, and Indigenous education.
- **Explore resources** like the [Federation of Independent School Associations](#).

- **Homeschooling**

- **Overview:** Parents take full responsibility for their child's education, following BC's curriculum or a custom learning plan.
- **Explore the following resources:**
 - [BC Ministry of Education - Homeschooling Information](#): Legal requirements and guidelines for homeschooling in BC.
 - [BC Home Educator's Association](#) (HEABC): Support and resources for homeschooling families.
 - [BC Learning Commons](#): Access to free and affordable learning materials.
 - **Local Homeschool Groups:** Search for homeschooling communities in your area for support and social activities.
 - [Canadian Curriculum List for Homeschoolers](#)
 - [Curriculum and Resources - The Canadian Homeschooler](#)
 - [Keep Learning](#)



Education in BC

Resources for Newcomers

○ **Online and Distributed Learning**

- Overview: Remote learning programs offer flexible schedules and access to BC's curriculum, provided by public or independent schools.
- Explore the following resources:
 - [BC Online Learning](#)
 - [Guide to Virtual Education and Services](#)
 - [Independent online learning programs](#): A list of accredited online schools offering K-12 programs in BC.
 - [SelfDesign Learning Community](#): A flexible, student-centered online high school program.
 - [Open School BC](#): Access to digital textbooks and resources for students.

● **After-School Care and Activities**

- Overview: Many schools and community centers offer care programs outside regular school hours, ensuring a safe and engaging environment for children.
- Options:
 - Homework help and tutoring.
 - Recreational activities such as sports, arts, and crafts.
 - Enrichment programs focusing on STEM, music, or language learning.
- Contact local community centers or schools to explore available programs and schedules.

● **Additional Resources for Education in BC**

Explore these valuable resources to navigate the British Columbia education system:

- [BC High School Locator](#): Find schools in your catchment area.
- [Vancouver School Board Locator](#): Identify your designated school within the Vancouver School District.
- [Student Success BC](#): A hub for tools, information, and resources to support student success across BC.
- [BC K-12 Education System](#): A comprehensive guide to the K-12 education framework in BC.
- [BCCIE Video about BC's Education System](#): Watch an overview of the British Columbia K-12 education system.

● **Parent Engagement**

- [Parent Advisory Councils](#) (PACs): Allow parents to participate in school decision-making and improve the educational experience. Learn more: [PAC Information](#).
- [District Parent Advisory Councils](#) (DPACs): Represent PACs within a school district, offering input to the school board on district-wide concerns.
- [BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils](#) (BCCPAC): Offers guidance, advocacy, and resources for parent councils and individual parents.
- [Ministry of Education - Parent Engagement](#): Tools for parents for effective engagement.
- Workshops and Training: Schools and districts offer workshops to help parents understand the education system, support learning, and navigate policies.
- Volunteer Opportunities: Parents can volunteer in classrooms, at events, or for extracurricular activities. Contact your child's school for details.

