

## Summer 2025 Sustainability Scholars Program Internship Opportunity

The UBC Sustainability Hub is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the guidance of a mentor from the partner organization, and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing sustainability across the region. The pay rate for the summer 2025 program is \$31.25/hour or \$7,812.50 for a 250-hour project.

- Visit the [Sustainability Scholars Program website](#) to learn [how the program works](#) and to [apply](#).
- Be sure to review the application guide on the Apply page to confirm your eligibility before applying.

**Applications close at 11:59 pm on Sunday January 26, 2025.**

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### **Project title: Research on challenges and opportunities for providing quality childcare for children with disabilities**

#### **Project Background & Overview:**

The first phase of the City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy revealed some qualitative evidence that families have accessibility barriers with childcare physical design elements. Additional anecdotal evidence from news media stories portrays further barriers and struggles of families with children living with disabilities in childcare settings that do not meet their needs and make life harder. The second phase of the [Accessibility Strategy](#) that was Council approved in July 2024 saw the approval of a multi-year action plan and an aligned action for the City to better understand the needs, assets, barriers and challenges that children and families face when it comes to accessible childcare.

While childcare is primarily the responsibility of the provincial government, the City still plays an important role in facilitating, investing in and delivering childcare. There is also a growing need to understand and develop actions to support children and families in the greatest need and who face inequitable barriers. Additionally, as rates of childhood disability have increased from one census period to the next there is a need to better understand this issue and find ways to strengthen what assets the City has and explore ways to reduce inequitable barriers.

The main CoV strategy this project will support is the Accessibility Strategy in tangibly moving forward a key action related to building out more accessible childcare and understanding around it, which also directly relates to the Healthy City Strategy Goal 1: A Good Start and Making Strides: Vancouver's Childcare Strategy.

The City of Vancouver, Social Policy and Projects Team wants to better understand the **benefits**, challenges and barriers of providing quality care to children with disabilities in childcare settings. There is not much specific evidence about childcare accessibility besides news stories, anecdotal evidence and some qualitative findings from the Accessibility Strategy engagement. The City does know that there are some physical design considerations that staff can be

proactive about for City-facilitated childcare, which accounts for approximately 1/3 of all childcare spaces in Vancouver, in making them more universally accessible. This project involves deepening the City's understanding of tangible actions that can be taken within Vancouver that support children with disabilities in childcare settings, along with further identifying challenges, barriers and strategies for reducing and overcoming them.

The outcomes are to better understand the opportunities and barriers and to provide the City and childcare operators in general with recommendations for next steps that ensure social sustainable improvements to enhancing quality care that can be made to:

- accessible and inclusive programming in terms of enhancing quality of care in childcare settings;
- factoring in and enhancing accessible design for childcares in development rather than retrofitting as an after-thought (especially as recommendation for any City-facilitated childcares);
- possible recommendations for operators to consider and integrate into their operators to enhance quality care (e.g., additional training for ECE's, etc).
- possibly establishing regular feedback loops with families
- possible recommendations for the larger childcare sector (all organizations and agencies involved or organization and agency specific)

## **Project description**

This project aims to provide greater understanding of the physical and non-physical benefits/assets and challenges of providing quality care for children with disabilities in childcare settings.

In collaboration with the City's Social Policy and Projects team, the scholar will conduct research exploring the following questions: What are the current assets and challenges of providing quality care for children with disabilities in the childcare setting? How much does the physical design of the childcare facility play into the provision of quality care? How much do other factors, such as Early Childhood Educator (ECE) training and knowledge, play into this? What other factors affect this, from the perspective of ECE's and Operators?

## **Project scope**

To understand the assets and challenges of providing quality care for children with disabilities in childcare settings the Scholar will undertake the following:

1. A brief literature review of relevant academic and grey literature articles that focus or provide focused areas of analysis on understanding children with disabilities' experiences in childcare settings that factor in provision of care and physical design of settings.
2. Scan of other jurisdictions to understand the physical and non-physical practices used to ensure quality childcare for children with disabilities (approximately 3 – 4 leading jurisdictions to be identified in consultation with the project mentor)

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3. Based on the research develop questions and undertake key informant interviews with available and identified childcare sector organizations and agency staff, along with review/analysis of additional materials and data provided from stakeholders (feedback mechanisms, documents, etc).
  - a. This will entail Interviews with 5 to 10 subject experts from child care agencies in Vancouver to understand strengths and barriers of childcare provision to children with disabilities and current data collection to create iterative feedback loops to understand and overcome issues as they arise.
4. Final report summarising the research, including relevant recommendations to the City of Vancouver on identified, and actionable opportunities.

## **Deliverables**

- A final report containing a summary of the work completed
- A final report for the online public-facing [Scholars Project Library](#).
- A brief preliminary literature review
- Qualitative analysis of key informant interviews

## **Time Commitment**

- This project will take 250 hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between May 1 to August 15.
- The Scholar is to complete hours between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 17 to 20 hours per week, working from home four days a week and coming in one day a week into the CoV office on Tuesdays; or an alternative schedule may be proposed by the scholar to be mutually agreed upon between the COV – Social Policy & Projects and the Scholar.
- A list of in-person days beyond a regular day in office will be discussed and agreed to with the scholar for key stakeholder engagement or any other in-person needs during the very beginning of the project.

## **Required/preferred Skills and Background**

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in aspects of social sustainability
- Experience conducting stakeholder engagement events, including facilitation skills, is an asset
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Statistical analysis
- Community engagement experience
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Familiarity with benchmarking methods and tools
- Interest in or familiarity with childcare settings or practices, an asset

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Research background in or familiarity with disability studies, an asset.

Applications close at **11:59 pm Sunday January 26, 2025**

Apply here: [Click here to apply](#)

Contact Karen Taylor at [sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca](mailto:sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca) if you have questions

## Useful Resources

We are holding a special **resume preparation workshop for prospective Scholars** on January 21, 2025.  
[Click here for details and to register.](#)

Below are some links to useful resources to help you with your resume and cover letter (there are many more online). Some of these resources also provide information on preparing for your interview.

<https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/resumes-cover-letters-curricula-vitae>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/graduate-pathways-success>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/cover-letter-cv-resume-templates-ubc-career-services>