

CVCDA set to celebrate opening of Autism Centre

Join the Comox Valley Child Development Association (CVCDA) on Wednesday, Dec. 5 from 4-6 p.m. for the grand opening of the Comox Valley Autism Centre.

Located at 237 - 3rd St. in Courtenay, the centre will be open to the public for the first time for tours. There will be light refreshments and a ribbon cutting with Mayor Bob Wells.

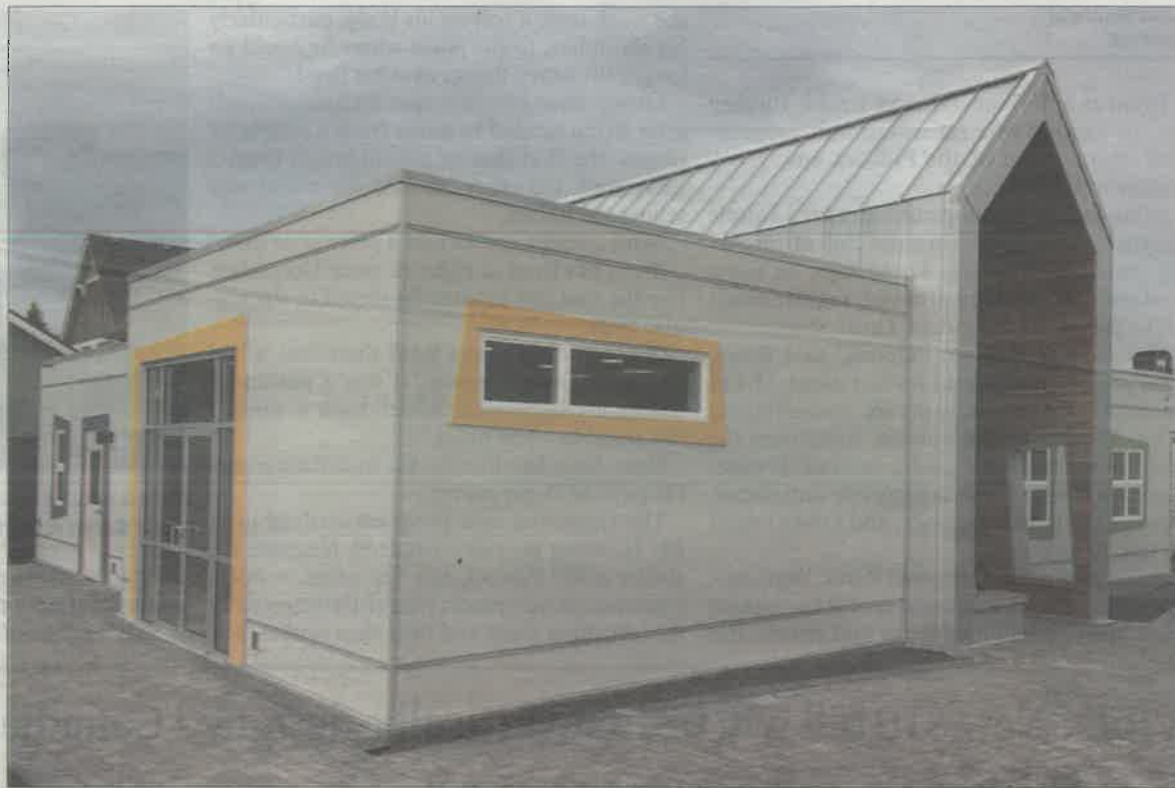
The Autism Centre is a 2,000 square foot addition to existing buildings at the CVCDA. It was designed and equipped specifically for the needs

of children with autism. The new space includes individual intervention rooms, space for social groups and a small gymnasium linked to an outdoor play space/courtyard. There's also a kitchen and laundry to assist older participants in developing skills needed for independence.

The addition of the Autism Centre will build on the CVCDA's capacity to intervene quickly, to focus on each child's needs, and to welcome their families to spend time in the centre, to share ideas with staff and connect with other parents. It will primarily be used to house these services for children with autism and their families, but it will also be available for their other programs and for the use of community groups. The CVCDA will now have the space and equipment needed to offer services to all children.

Much of the funding needed to complete the project came through grants from the provincial government and private donors. Proceeds from the CVCDA's annual Children's Telethon are also assisting with final touches such as furnishings.

Nearly 200 children and youth in the Comox Valley have been diagnosed with autism — or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) — which affects the brain's normal development, impacting on social and communication skills, as well as behaviour.



A view of the exterior, and (left) the front entrance to the new Comox Valley Child Development Association Autism Centre. The public is invited to the official opening Wednesday, Dec. 5.



One in approximately 68 children in B.C. are diagnosed with ASD — a 300-plus per cent increase in the last decade.

The CVCDA has been supporting

children with special needs and their families for over 40 years. In 2017, over 700 Comox Valley children and their families used their services. Specifically, through The Autism Pro-

gram (TAP), they provide services to children and youth who have been diagnosed with autism.

For more information, visit www.CVCDA.ca