

Child Care And Early Years Plan Update 2023



The operation of childcare centres, programs for in home child care, recreational programs, children's developmental programs and child care subsidies.

Children's Services



Affordable housing directly and in collaboration with the district's housing non-profits.

Housing Services



Ontario Works for those in the community that are unemployed and seeking employment.

Income Support & Stability



Programs to address homelessness and violence against women, including the operation and management of a women's shelter.

Women's Services



Our Mission

To foster healthier communities by economically providing caring human services that empower and enable the people we serve to improve their quality of life.

Our Vision

A community where people know they are valued, belong, and have opportunity and purpose.

Our values



Kind

We are patient, understanding, caring, compassionate and trauma-informed.



Integrity

We are honest, transparent and equitable, recognizing the public trust that is placed in us.



Respectful

Our interactions with all people are sincere, considerate and without prejudice.



Collaborative

We work as a team with our colleagues, community partners and the people we serve to achieve the best outcomes.



Inclusive

We embrace the personal values, beliefs, and cultural practices of the people we support.



Dependable

We can be relied on to deliver our services in a consistent, coordinated and professional manner.

Demographics



46,909

In 2021, the enumerated population of Parry Sound (District), was 46,909, which represents a change of 9.5% from 2016. This compares to the provincial average of 5.8% and the national average of 5.2%.



9113 Sq. KM

The land area of Parry Sound (District) is 9,113.92 square kilometres and the population density was 5.1 people per square kilometre.



We deliver services to people living in 22 municipalities and two unincorporated areas within the District of Parry Sound

Township of Seguin
Town of Parry Sound
Township of The Archipelago
Township of Carling
Municipality of Whitestone
Municipality of McDougall
Township of McKellar
Town of Kearney
Village of Burk's Falls
Township of Armour
Township of McMurrich/Monteith
Village of South River
Village of Sundridge
Township of Joly
Township of Machar
Township of Strong
Municipality of Magnetawan
Municipality of Powassan
Corporation of the Municipality of Callander
Township of Perry
Township of Ryerson
Township of Nipissing

Canada - Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC)

The Government of Canada has identified child care as a national priority to enhance early learning and childhood development, support workforce participation and contribute to economic recovery.

Through its 2021 Budget, the federal government committed to investing in a national child care system with all provinces and territories, as well as Indigenous organizations.

Funding under CWELCC will be used to build and leverage the success of Ontario's existing early learning and child care system by increasing quality, accessibility, affordability and inclusivity in early learning and child care, towards achieving the objectives of:

- Providing a 25% fee reduction, building to a 50% reduction in average parent costs for licensed early learning and child care by the end of 2022 and reaching an average parent fee of \$10 a day by 2025-26 for licensed child care spaces.
- Creating 86,000 new high-quality, affordable licensed child care spaces.
- Addressing barriers to provide inclusive child care; and
- Valuing the early childhood workforce and providing them with training and development opportunities.

Eligibility

All licensed service providers with programs serving children under the age of 6 (or turning 6 before June 30) in the District of Parry Sound are eligible to apply to participate in the CWELCC System. Upon approval, providers must enter into an Agreement with PSDSSAB to receive funding related to the CWELCC initiatives and will need to demonstrate financial viability to PSDSSAB.

New licensees must meet the criteria outlined in O. Reg. 236/22: GENERAL (ontario.ca)

- The centre must be licensed and show viability based on financial reports;
- The licensee must provide proof that the premises is zoned appropriately at the time of application;
- The program must be identified as a priority neighborhood (in advance of service system plan submissions);
- The licensee must comply with the legislation as set by the Ministry of Education.

What does this mean locally?

The District of Parry Sound introduced CWELCC applications to licenced operators in June 2022. There was an immediate uptake with 95% of operators "opting in".

Fee reductions were introduced to families on August 1, 2022.
By November 1, 2022, our district had 100% of child care operators opt-in.
A further fee reduction was introduced to families on December 31, 2022.



Workforce Development

Workforce Development was introduced in 2022 and supports the retention and recruitment of a high-quality child care and early years workforce. This funding is to be used to build on existing approaches and/or implement new professional learning strategies for eligible staff and home child care providers in licensed care (centre-based and home-based) and EarlyON Child and Family Centres as well as mentorship opportunities for ECE students and/or staff.

Key objectives of this funding are to:

- Sustain the existing child care and early years workforce to ensure a more stable and high-quality early years and child care system.
- Enhance access to opportunities for the workforce that promote retention and recruitment, including professional development, training, and qualification upgrade programs.
- Grow the number of qualified staff in the early years and child care workforce to increase access to high quality licensed child care for families.
- Attract and support the development of an increasingly diverse workforce to more effectively reflect the children and families accessing early years and child care programs.

What does this mean locally?

In 2022/2023, staff and supervisors were able to access 23 different training opportunities. 23 training events or opportunities (550 front line staff, 49 supervisors)



Become an ECE Campaign

Workforce Development was introduced in 2022 and supports the retention and recruitment of a high-quality child care and early years workforce. This funding is to be used to build on existing approaches and/or implement new professional learning strategies for eligible staff and home child care providers in licensed care (centre-based and home-based) and EarlyON Child and Family Centres as well as mentorship opportunities for ECE students and/or staff.



Hwy 11



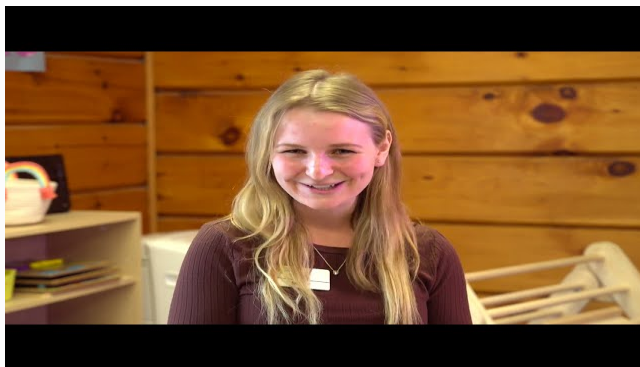
Hwy 124



Town of Parry Sound

What does this mean locally?

- Billboards were installed on major highways throughout the district (Hwy 124 & Hwy 11) and within the Town of Parry Sound.
- A brochure was also designed for this campaign and mailed out to all addresses within the District of Parry Sound. As indicated by our campaign communication plan, we used this method to target the district in general, but specifically the communities that have limited access to internet.
- A website (www.becomeanece.ca) was launched, and a Facebook page created (<https://www.facebook.com/www.BecomeAnECE.ca>).
- A series of 4 videos was created and published to encourage the field of Early Childhood Education.



Access & Inclusion

Ontario's vision for the CWELCC system is that more families in Ontario have access to high quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live. Under the CWELCC agreement with the Government of Canada, Ontario has been funded to support the creation of 86,000 new licensed child care spaces (relative to 2019) by December 2026. Since 2019, 33,000 new spaces have become operational, with another 53,000 spaces to be created.

To ensure that access to affordable child care aligns with the principles above, service system managers will play a role in directing where this growth occurs. The ministry will provide each service system manager with growth targets and allocations for their region and in turn, will be required to incorporate these targets in their local service plans.

Directed Growth

As announced in December 2022, beginning in 2023 the Ministry of Education has shifted child care expansion from open enrolment to a targeted plan to create new child care spaces. A targeted growth approach will ensure funding is available to support new spaces in communities most in need of access to high-quality, affordable child care.

The DSSAB has developed a five-year growth plan that aligns with Provincial directives and space targets while meeting the needs of communities across the region. The DSSAB conducted a survey with licensed child care providers, January 2023, that included a review of current wait list data. 21 licensed child care providers across the district were surveyed for their formal wait list numbers, including the Home Child Care program, Licensed centres and After School Programs. Within the survey, the following priority neighbourhoods were identified: Town of Parry Sound, North East Parry Sound, and West Parry Sound.

The Ministry of Education has provided municipalities with space targets for CWELCC-funded growth. Parry Sound District received the mandate to expand the CWELCC system by 131 spaces in schools and community-based locations between 2022-2026.

- 106 Community based spaces
- Home Child Care Program & Licensed Centres
- 25 School based spaces
- New school build in Parry Sound will include child care centre

25 spaces have already been committed by the Ministry of Education within plans for new school build. Two centers within the Town of Parry Sound are set to expand between 2024 and 2026, adding an additional 66 spaces and the remaining spaces will be promoted within the Home Child Care Program to support the needs in rural communities.

Next Steps

In the Parry Sound District, our focus continues to be on targeted expansion of key age groups by leveraging existing child care centres to expand in place and promote growth in licensed home child care. This plan builds on our existing five-year service plan and will be integrated into our new early learning child care plan currently under development.

EarlyON Child & Family Centres

Having the ability to expand to virtual live and tapped programming during the pandemic has provided staff with the tools and confidence to continue this platform and reach families that are experiencing isolation and is now being offered through the Microsoft TEAMS platform and Facebook. As of November 2023, a full time Virtual Resource Facilitator position has been created and is a full-time focus on enhancing the virtual platforms for the EarlyON program.

A newer addition to the EarlyON Program is offering in-person Francophone programming at various sites during the school year as staff travel permits. The Francophone Resource Facilitator will be visiting each program location monthly to conduct a francophone activity and circle time for the children and families. They will also be contributing to the virtual platform to include french language based programming to the rural and remote families.

Thanks to a new initiative from the Ministry of Education, EarlyON centres are now able to offer parents respite services during pre-scheduled times for 1 – 5 children so parents who have a limited support system can attend appointments that are not suitable for young children knowing that their child is well cared for so they can focus on themselves.

2019 Identified Priorities Update



Priority #1

Improve recruitment, retention and training of qualified staff AND enhance capacity building opportunities based on community needs and to align with the Ministry of Education's vision of pedagogy for the early years.

- Workforce Funding was allocated from MEDU to support the retention and recruitment of a high-quality child care and early years workforce.
- Workforce Capacity and Innovation Fund was allocated to engage and collaborate with local community partners to build and implement innovative strategies to support the recruitment and retention of the child care and early years workforce.
- Developed and implemented Become an ECE Campaign.
- In 2022 – 2023, within the District of Parry Sound all licensed child care staff and supervisors were able to access training opportunities. 23 training events/opportunities – 550 front line staff – 49 supervisors.
- Collaborated with NOSDA and partnered with northern Colleges to offer a FREE Pre-ECE Skills Building Certificate Program. A 10-week program designed to introduce students to child care (opportunity for paid placements and acquire First Aid/CPR, Food Handler and Workplace Health & Safety).



Priority #2

Improve affordability, accessibility and responsiveness of early years programs.

- Implemented Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care – 100% of licensed operators within the District of Parry Sound have enrolled. Families have had fees reduced by 50%. Further reductions will be in place by September 2025.
- Development of Directed Growth Strategy

2019 Identified Priorities Update (continued)



Priority #3

Improve public education and awareness relating to children's services across the district

- Continue to create awareness and build on the Become an ECE Campaign to help generate a public awareness of the importance of registered ECE's and the impact they have on our communities and the families and children we support. In addition, support and educate on the importance of a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning and professional environment.
- Developed messaging/utilizing social media platforms – Facebook, LinkedIn, external webpages for EarlyON.
- Marketing Plan for Home Child Care Program targeting communities in need of providers – flyers, target mail-outs, in-person promotional events.
- Launched new DSSAB website with easy access to fee subsidy applications and search engine functions to assist public in locating child care programs across the district.



Priority #4

Improve use of technology and data for planning and programming

- HiMama App provides directly operated programs with open communication with families, documentation for planning and programming. It also provides a platform for billing, invoices, and automated payments to families.
- EarlyON offers virtual programming through Microsoft Teams platform for Mom's-to-Mom's groups, interactive circle times with children, and wellness calls to families facing isolation.
- Utilize community demographic statistics to offer focused programming in communities with increased populations with diverse cultural and indigenous focus.
- Currently in discussion with third party to develop online portal for licensed providers to collect data that can support planning and programming.



Priority #5

Improve support for children with differing abilities

- Workforce Funding provided training opportunities for educators within the child care sector who support and assist children and families with unique needs and disabilities.
- Licensed providers continue to have the opportunity to access Special Needs Resource funding to support children in program – to support quality inclusion.
- Inclusion Support Services expanded program goals to include supporting and building capacity with licensed child care programs and EarlyON staff with a focus on inclusive environments as a third teacher and programming with class-wide focus to support all children. The program pivoted during COVID to include on-line and telephone consultations with families.