

**Parry Sound District Social Services  
Administration Board**

**Early Years and Child Care  
Service System Plan**

**2025-2030**



*“Our Vision for the Early Years and Child Care: All children and families have access to a range of high-quality, inclusive and affordable early years and child care programs and services that are child- and family-centred and contribute to children’s learning, development and well-being.”*

Government of Ontario Renewed Child Care and Early Years Policy Framework

The data presented in the charts, tables, and maps within this report are sourced from the PSDSSAB Environmental Scan. These visualizations were developed in partnership with **Acorn Information Solutions** at the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre. For comprehensive information on data sources, methodology, and detailed analysis, please refer directly to the Environmental Scan.

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# Land Acknowledgement

We would like to take a moment to acknowledge the Indigenous peoples of all lands that we are meeting on today. We are meeting in the home of the Anishinaabeg/Anishinaabek – Ojibway, Odawa and Potawatomi peoples, and on the territory of the Wasauksing, Shawanaga, Magnetawan, Dokis and Henvey Inlet First Nations.

We also acknowledge that the district of Parry Sound is covered by the Robinson-Huron Treaty.



# Message from the Chair of the Board

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the district of Parry Sound's Early Years and Child Care Service System Plan for 2025–2030. This Service Plan outlines our district's strategic priorities for the next five years with a shared commitment to strengthening early years programs and services that support children and families across our communities.

The past several years has brought both challenges and opportunities, as we navigated the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and responded to significant shifts in provincial policy. These changes have shaped how we deliver services and underscored the importance of resilience, adaptability, and collaboration.

Throughout this period of transition, the continued dedication of our early years and child care partners, along with the unwavering support of our Board, has been instrumental. Together, we have laid important groundwork - and now, we look forward with a clear vision: to build an accessible, affordable, and inclusive system that supports every child and family in the district of Parry Sound.

I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the development of this plan. Your participation - through surveys, engagement sessions, and thoughtful feedback - has helped shape a roadmap grounded in the real needs and aspirations of our communities.

As we move forward, I am confident that our shared efforts will lead to meaningful progress and lasting impact for the early years system in our district.

Sincerely,

Rick Zanussi, Board Chair

District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration  
Board



# Section 1: Introduction

*“Children are  
our greatest  
treasures, and  
it is our duty to  
nurture them  
with love and  
care.”*





## **PURPOSE**

The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) requires Service System Managers (CCSM) to establish a child care and early years programs and services plan (Service Plan) that addresses matters of Provincial interest under the CCEYA. Service Plans allow for an opportunity to analyze the impacts of programs and services, identify progress and service gaps, and foster evidence-based decision making to continue to support CCSM and the early years and child care sector.

Regulations under the CCEYA provide information on procedures and content related to Service Plans and duties of CCSM. These regulations require CCSMs to update their Plans at a minimum every five years and consult with service providers, families and stakeholders in the development and implementation of plans.

The District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) as the designated CCSM is responsible for identifying community needs for licensed child care and EarlyON programming, allocating funding to address child care and early years requirements, and for developing a Service Plan to identify local child care and early years system priorities.

This Service Plan outlines the DSSAB's vision for early years programs and services throughout the district for children 0-12 years of age and is reflective of the needs as identified by families and community stakeholders through consultation.

## **ROLE OF SERVICE SYSTEM MANAGER**

The DSSAB as CCSM, is responsible for setting priorities and delivering programs and services for children and families that are coordinated and responsive to community needs. Ongoing collaboration and consultation with community stakeholders informs the system.

CCSMs possess critical knowledge about community needs, maintain close connections with community partners, and are well-positioned to establish strong links between child care and early years programs and other relevant community and municipal services (e.g. public health, libraries, affordable housing, and other social services). As set out in the act:

- ~ May establish, administer, operate and fund licensed child care and early years programs, including providing assistance to licensees and evaluating and assessing the impact of public funding
- ~ Deliver and administer local policies respecting the operation of child care and early years programs and services
- ~ Coordinate the planning and operation of child care and early years programs and consult and cooperate with school boards and other prescribed persons or entities in the development and implementation of the Service System Plan
- ~ Coordinate the planning and operation of child care and early years programs with the planning and provision of other human services delivered by the service system manager
- ~ Assess the economic viability of child care and early years programs and facilitate changes to make programs more viable

Service planning should be done in the context of the full range of coordinated child care and early years services for children and families.

## ROLE OF THE PROVINCE

As set out in s.53 of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, the province is responsible for:

- ~ Developing and promoting an overview of the system of child care and early years programs and services and aspirational goals for the system
- ~ Supporting the provision of child care and early years programs and services across the province
- ~ Promoting health, safety, and well-being of children
- ~ Coordinating efforts with other ministries in relation to programs and services that support the learning, development, health and well-being of children
- ~ Encouraging high quality experiences that support children's learning, development, health and well-being
- ~ Administering the licensing framework set out in the CCEYA as well as enforcing the CCEYA

*“Our Vision for the Early Years and Child Care: All children and families have access to a range of high-quality, inclusive and affordable early years and child care programs and services that are child- and family-centred and contribute to children’s learning, development and well-being.”*

Government of Ontario Renewed Child Care and Early Years Policy Framework

## PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

In 2017, the province released the renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework with a vision of an early years system that better supports Ontario families and gives children a stronger start in life.

The Renewed Framework includes the following four pillars that were determined based on feedback and consultation:

<b><i>Affordability</i></b> Ensuring early years programs and services are affordable for families	<b><i>Access</i></b> Increasing access to early years programming to give families opportunity to benefit from high-quality early years programs and services
<b><i>Quality</i></b> Enabling safe and reliable programs built on positive, responsive, engaging and meaningful experiences for children and families by educated and supported staff	<b><i>Responsive</i></b> Providing a range of culturally diverse and inclusive programming in schools, workplaces, communities, and homes providing choice for families that best suits their needs





## **CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE AGREEMENT**

The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC), signed by federal and provincial governments on March 27, 2022, aims to make child care more affordable. The framework, established under CWELCC seeks to lower costs while improving the accessibility, quality, and inclusivity of Ontario's child care and early years sector.

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.

## ACCESS AND INCLUSION FRAMEWORK

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.

The goal is for all children, no matter their abilities or background, to fully participate in child care and build strong relationships with peers and educators. This framework aligns with Ontario's commitment to increase access to child care for low-income families, vulnerable children, those from diverse communities, children with special needs, and Indigenous children.

Ontario's inclusion framework is intended to help reduce barriers for vulnerable children and children from diverse populations. It aims to support children to have access to inclusive environments where they can participate and collaborate in meaningful ways and form authentic, caring relationships.

Under the Access and Inclusion Framework, the ministry has developed a model to allocate funding for new spaces for children age 0-5 across CMSMs and DSSABs, with a focus on improving equity of access by working toward a common provincial access ratio of 37%. Through the DSSAB's Directed Growth Plan the focus is to create affordable child care spaces in communities that need them most.

The purpose of Ontario's Access and Inclusion Framework 2022 is to support CMSMs and DSSABs with developing and implementing local service plans with an increased focus on access and inclusion. These plans will be integrated into the broader provincial Access and Inclusion Framework based on the principles of Accessibility, Participation and Belonging and Equity.



*“Children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential. They grow up in families with diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. Every child should feel that he or she belongs, is a valuable contributor to his or her surroundings, and deserves the opportunity to succeed. When we recognize children as capable and curious, we are more likely to deliver programs and services that value and build on their strengths and abilities.”*

How Does Learning Happen?  
Ontario's Pedagogy for Early Years



## WORKFORCE STRATEGY

The province announced enhancements to the workforce strategy in November 2023 building on what was included in the signing of the CWELCC in March 2022 with the federal government. The purpose of the Ontario Child Care Workforce Strategy is to support the recruitment and retention of qualified professionals, help achieve system growth and ensure increased access to high quality licensed child care in the province.

The Ontario Child Care Workforce Strategy supports Ontario's child care and early years professionals by implementing better wages and working conditions, supporting career laddering and entry to the profession, and building the profile of the profession by implementing new programs and building on existing initiatives.

The Workforce Strategy is focused on:

- ~ Workforce compensation
- ~ Professional Development and Mental Health Support
- ~ Innovation Fund
- ~ Expansion of Early Childhood Education Qualifications



Lego Serious Play-East  
Group of Educators

Lego Serious Play-West  
Group of Educators



## DIRECTED GROWTH PLAN

Under the Access and Inclusion Framework the Ministry developed a model to allocate funding for new spaces for children 0-5 years of age with a focus on improving equity of access by working towards a common provincial access ratio of 37%.

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 district. The DSSAB's Directed Growth Plan aligns with the Ministry of Education's expectations for CCSMs, as outlined in Ontario's Access and Inclusion Framework 2023. The Directed Growth framework envisions greater access and inclusion, fostering active participation in child care for all children regardless of abilities or socio-economic backgrounds.

The growth plan includes support for child care operators to enhance access for various groups, including low-income families, vulnerable children, those with special needs, diverse communities, Indigenous and Francophone families, newcomers, and those requiring more flexible care models. The DSSAB strives to create 128 new licensed child care spaces by March 2026, including 25 spaces in schools and 103 community-based spaces (centre and home child care).

Table 1: District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board Allocation

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
School-based Spaces [a]	0	0	0	25	0
Community-based Spaces [a]	1	16	56	0	30
<b>Total Spaces [a + b]</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>





## SECTION 2:

# Setting the Stage



*“Children  
still need a  
childhood  
with dirt, mud,  
puddles, trees,  
sticks, and  
tadpoles.”*

Brooke Hampton

## MISSION, VISION, VALUES



### 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 GOALS

Life Stabilization | Maximize Assets | Demonstrate Value

### OUR VALUES



#### *Kind*

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



#### *Respectful*

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



#### *Inclusive*

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



#### *Integrity*

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



#### *Collaborative*

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



#### *Dependable*

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

## HUMAN SERVICES OVERVIEW



### Ontario Works

Income and Stability Support Services is available to eligible persons to provide financial, employment and life stabilization supports. Integrated System Navigator provide personalized service to help navigate broader supports and services available in the community.

### Housing Services

Housing Services offers a range of housing options to residents of the Parry Sound district including rent-geared-to-income, affordable and market rent housing for families, adults and seniors. Homelessness prevention supports are available for persons experiencing housing issues. Affordable homeownership and home renovation programs are available for eligible persons.



### Early Years Services

Early Years Services is responsible for the planning and delivery of child care and early years programs in the district of Parry Sound for children from 0-12 years of age. Centre-based and home child care options are available across the district. EarlyON programs are available in many communities for children under 6 years of age. Fee subsidies are available for eligible families to support affordable child care options.

### Esprit Place Women's Shelter

Esprit Place Family Resource Centre offers emergency shelter and assistance for women and children in the district of Parry Sound who find themselves in crisis. All services are voluntary, free of charge and confidential.





## LAST 5 YEARS IN REVIEW

### PRIORITIES FROM 2019-2024 PLAN

Strategic Priorities for the Early Years System in the 5-Year Service System Plan 2019-2024 as identified through the data review and emerging from the community consultations, in the district of Parry Sound are:

Priority #1 - Improved recruitment, retention and training of qualified staff

Priority #2 - Improved affordability, accessibility and responsiveness of early years programs

Priority #3 - Improved public education and awareness

Priority #4 - Improved use of technology and data for planning and programming

Priority #5 - Improved support for children with differing abilities



*"We're so excited to expand our program thanks to the financial support through our CWELCC partnership with the Parry Sound DSSAB to create new childcare spaces for families in our community!"*

Sonya McEwen, Owner/Director  
Adventure Academy Inc.

*"We, as Friends Forever Childcare Centre are happy to be enrolled with CWELCC and have had the opportunity to grow both our Home Agency program and our before/after school programs within the District of Parry Sound."*

Melanie Ross, Executive Director/Owner



### IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES UPDATE

Progress has been made over the past 5 years towards improving the delivery of quality, inclusive and responsive early years programs across the district. The Pandemic did pause a number of initiatives as it required the sector to pivot in response to the needs of the community during the pandemic. The impacts have resulted in longer-recovery times in some areas such as recruitment and retention strategies and the increased demand for special needs supports for children.

The following sections provide a summary of the progress and accomplishments achieved over the past 5 years in improving the early years and child care sector in the district.

## Priority #1

Improved 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 early years



### *Accomplished*

Workforce funding was allocated from MEDU to support the retention and recruitment of high-quality child care and early years workforce.

\$392,345 of Workforce Capacity and Innovation Fund (allocation for 2021-2023) 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". Created 4 videos that were shared with partners and are available on the DSSAB social media and website.

In 2022-2024, within the district of Parry Sound all licensed child care staff and supervisors were able to access training opportunities, 30 training opportunities/events – 713 educators participated in professional learning events.

Collaborated with NOSDA and partnered with Northern College 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.)

Created a brochure that was mailed to all residents in the district targeting those without access to internet to promote and build awareness of child care and early years programs.

### *Ongoing*

Established regular meetings with the Parry Sound Friendship Centre to improve Indigenous programming throughout the district.

Professional learning opportunities for early years staff is available ongoing.



## Priority #2

Improved affordability, accessibility and responsiveness of early years programs



### Accomplished

Implemented Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care – 100% of licensed operators within the district of Parry Sound have enrolled. Families had fees reduced by 50% in 2022 and with further reductions effective January 2025 to reduce fees to a maximum of \$22 per day . An average of \$10 per day is planned to be effective by March 2026.

Development of a Directed Growth Strategy. 49 school-based spaces were committed and 78% of community-based spaces were committed by the end of 2024 in alignment with the Directed Growth Strategy and Provincial allocations.

Child Care Resource Library expanded to include Indigenous peoples and cultures (available to child care providers throughout the district).

Directly Operated programs have updated Building Condition Assessments (BCA's) for all owned buildings to improve business planning for repairs and replacement of building components.

EarlyON programs are offered in local outdoor locations as of the summer of 2024.

Created 68 community spaces + 25 school based spaces committed by end of 2025. These are new child care spaces within the district in alignment with the Directed Growth Plan.

### Ongoing

Prepared the system for implementation of cost-based funding approach to child care effective January 2025 reducing parental fees for child care to a maximum of \$22 per child per day improving affordability of child care. Required revision for agreements, policies, practices and procedures related to funding delivery of child care.

Regular meetings with the Parry Sound Friendship Centre.





## Priority #3

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



### *Accomplished*

Continue to create awareness and build on “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.

Developed messaging/utilizing social media platforms – Facebook, LinkedIn, external webpages for EarlyON for promotion of programs and services.

Marketing Plan for Home Child Care Programs targeting communities in need of child care providers – flyers, target mail-outs, in-person promotional events. Resulting in 22 active homes in 2024.

Launched new DSSAB website with easy access to fee subsidy applications and search engine functions to assist the public in locating child care programs across the district.

### *Ongoing*

Support and education on the importance of a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment for early childhood educators and support staff in early learning settings.

Utilizing social media platforms – Facebook, LinkedIn, external webpages for EarlyON.



## Priority #4

Improved use of technology and data for planning and programming



### Accomplished

HiMama App implemented that 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 for families.

EarlyON now 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. 107 virtual events were delivered in 2024.

Implemented use of online portal for registering child(ren) for child care waitlist within the district. The DSSAB conducted a survey with licensed child care providers in January 2023 that included a review of the current wait list data. 21 licensed child care providers across the district were surveyed for their formal wait list numbers including Home Child Care, licensed centres, Before and After School programs.

### Ongoing

Currently in discussion with third party to develop online portal for licensed providers to collect data that can support planning and programming.

Utilization of community demographic statistics to offer focussed programming in communities with increased populations with diverse cultural and Indigenous focus.



## Priority #5

Improved support for children with differing abilities.



### *Accomplished*

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 accessed Special Needs Resources funding to support children in program with differing needs – to support quality inclusion. \$12, 485 provided children with 530 hours of additional supports.

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. In 2024, 114 children were supported through Inclusion Support Services program staff.

### *Ongoing*

Licensed providers continue to have the opportunity to access Special Needs Resources funding to support children in program – to support quality inclusion.

Review of Inclusion Support Program focussing on meeting the needs of families, children and operators.





# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

## EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT



The Early Development Instrument (EDI), developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies, measures a child's ability to meet age-appropriate developmental milestones at school entry. The EDI questionnaire is completed by teachers for children in senior kindergarten across five domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communications skills and general knowledge.

The EDI identifies vulnerabilities within and across groups of children for each of the five domains, as well as an overall vulnerability level. It is important to note that the Cycle VI collection of the EDI questionnaire, originally planned for 2021, was delayed until late in the 2023 school year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that some of the children in this cohort may have experienced isolation due to the pandemic early in their development, it was anticipated that there may be a significant change in vulnerability levels compared to the previous cycle (2018).

**The EDI uses the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile for vulnerability because it captures all the children who are struggling, even those whose struggles may not be apparent.**

The EDI results are a reflection of the qualities of environments children have experienced in their early years from birth to 5 years of age. Children's development at age 5 is a strong predictor of adult health, education and social outcomes later in life.

Good quality stimulation, support and nurturance during early years



Healthy brain development and a strong foundation for future success

Lack of stimulation, support and nurturance during early years



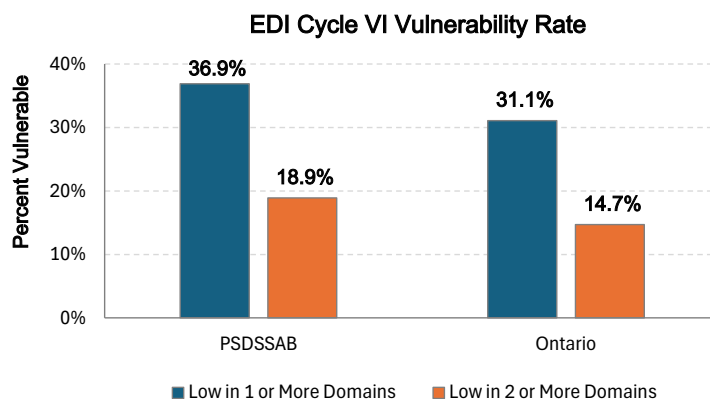
More challenges for these children as they grow

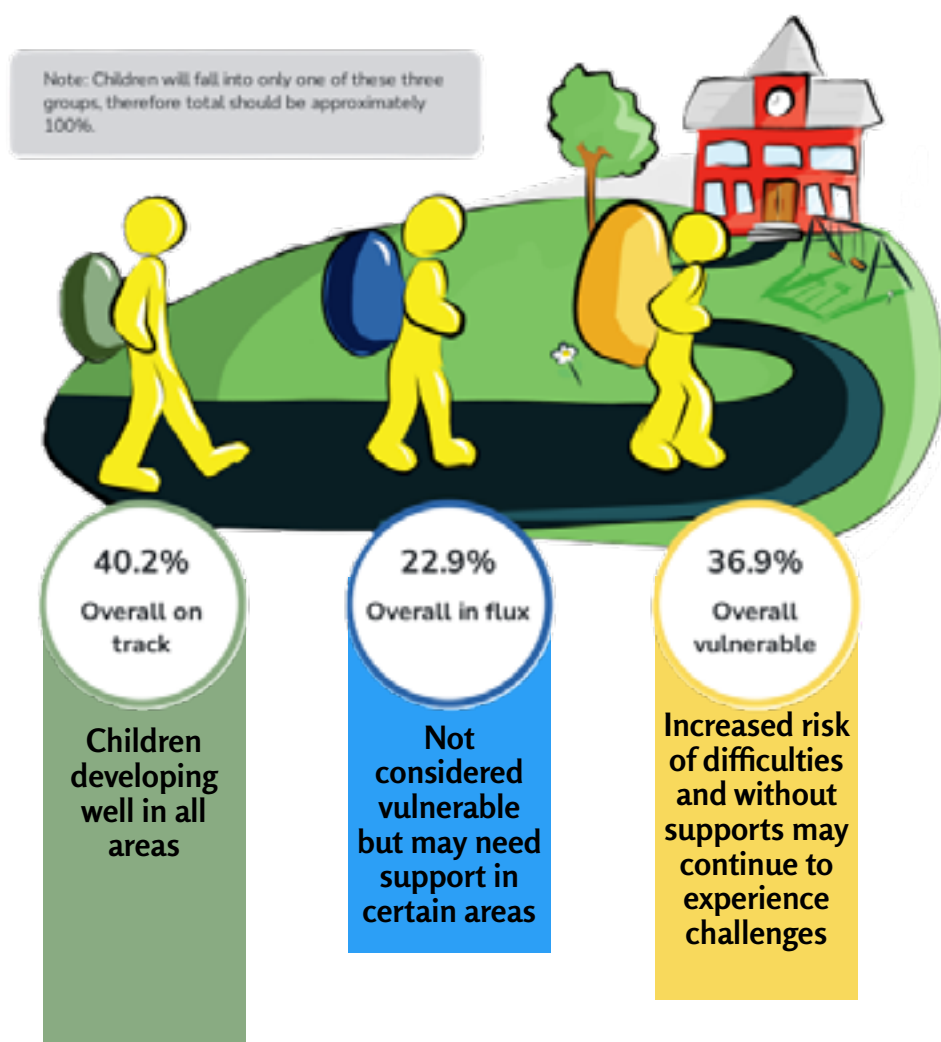
EDI data can help identify the major areas of strength and weakness in a school/ community and can be used to inform decision-making and planning for early development services. Children are considered vulnerable within a domain if they score below the tenth percentile as compared to their peers. Vulnerability means that a child is at an increased risk of difficulties in school years and beyond. When looking at vulnerability rates, a lower percentage is a more favourable result.

## KEY FINDINGS FOR THE PARRY SOUND DISTRICT

Results from the 2023 EDI revealed that the overall vulnerability rate for children in the Parry Sound district was 36.9% a slight decrease compared to the 2017 results of 37.4% and higher than the Ontario average of 31.1% in 2023. (see Figure below).

Children will fall into only one of the three categories of either being On Track, In Flux or Vulnerable based on the EDI assessment. Cycle VI for the Parry Sound district shows that overall 40.2% of our children are On Track, 22.9% are In Flux and 36.9% are Vulnerable. Children are considered Vulnerable within a domain if they score below the 10th percentile.





Parry Sound District	% Vulnerable			Diff. from 2017/18
	2017/18	2022/23	Ontario 2022/23	
PHWB	23.1%	24.1%	17.6%	■ 1.0
SOC	14.6%	13.1%	10.1%	■ 1.5
EMOT	15.6%	18.9%	13.1%	▲ 3.3
LANG	9.9%	10.7%	6.7%	■ 0.8
COMG	10.9%	8.5%	10.5%	■ 2.4
<b>Low in 1 or More Domains</b>	37.4%	36.9%	31.1%	■ 0.5
<b>Low in 2 or More Domains</b>	17.7%	18.9%	14.7%	- -

▲ Increase in Vulnerability    ▼ Decrease in Vulnerability    ■ No Meaningful Change  
 \*Statistically meaningful change based on the Critical Difference Calculation

The DSSAB will be considering the findings from the Cycle VI EDI in their planning for early learning programs in the coming years. Identified areas for improvement based on the scores will provide informed decision making to support children in reaching their full potential.

## PARRY SOUND DISTRICT AT A GLANCE

As service system manager the DSSAB monitors trends to ensure system planning remains current and meets the needs of our communities. The Parry Sound district consists of 22 municipalities, 2 unorganized areas and 5 First Nations communities.

### POPULATION DATA

The population data was taken from Statistics Canada Census data to understand current and future needs of communities. These demographic insights help inform planning, resource allocation, and service delivery to ensure that early year's programs are responsive, inclusive, and equitable.

### PARRY SOUND DISTRICT POPULATION

From 2016 to 2021 the population has increased 9.5% compared to Ontario's growth of 5.8%.



Carling and The Archipelago saw the most significant increase (32.5% and 84.4%) while Dokis 9 First Nation saw a significant decrease in population of 41.6%.



Statistics Canada Census data is projecting the population of Parry Sound district will increase by **12,000** people between 2023 and 2051.

### LABOUR FORCE

#### TOP INDUSTRIES

Health Care & Social Assistance	15%
Construction	14.4%
Retail Trade	13.7%

There are **20,715** employees in the workforce with a **10%** unemployment rate or 2,070 people according to 2021 census data.

#### BUSINESSES

As of June 2022 there were **4,144** businesses in the Parry Sound district with **92.54%** having less than 10 employees.

### EDUCATION

**21.6%** of people in the Parry Sound district hold no certificate, diploma or degree. That is an increase of +0.8% from 2016.

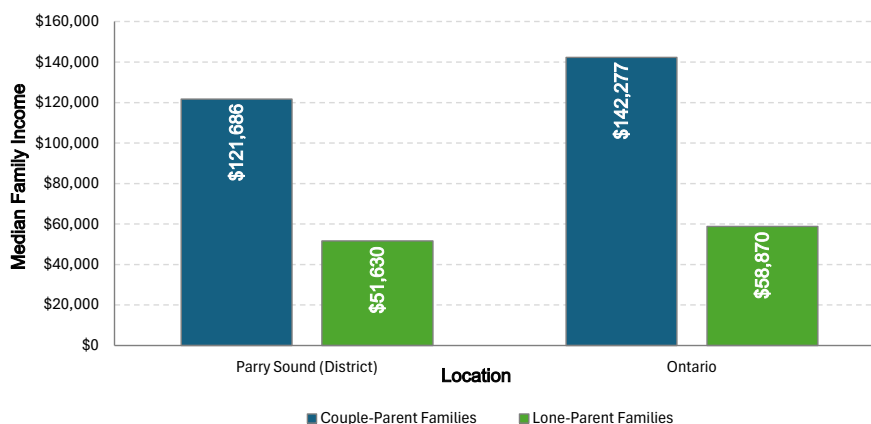
### SOCIOECONOMIC DATA

**49.1%** of Lone Parent families in the Parry Sound district have children compared to 30.1% in 2016 representing a 19% increase according to the 2021 census.

Lone Parent families have an income **42.4%** lower than couple-parent families in the Parry Sound district. Similarly, a higher percentage of lone-parent families are considered low-income (35.4%) compared to couple-parent families (8.4%) as illustrated in the following charts. Despite the move towards an average of \$10 per day child care families will continue to experience affordability barriers in accessing child care in Parry Sound district. Furthermore, studies have suggested children in lone-parent families are at a higher risk for poor behavioral and cognitive outcomes and experience higher rates of poverty.

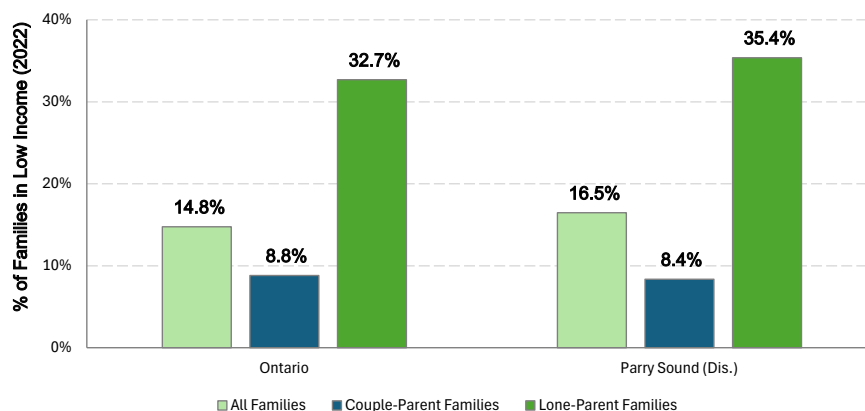


Table 2: Median Family Income by Family Type for the PSDSSAB Area and Ontario, 2022



The percentage of families with low-income has been consistently higher in the Parry Sound district compared to Ontario over the past decade. Statistics Canada maintains that low-income does not measure poverty, rather it reflects a consistent and well-defined methodology that identifies those who are substantially worse off than average.

Table 3: Percent of Low-Income Families in PSDSSAB by Family Type, 2022



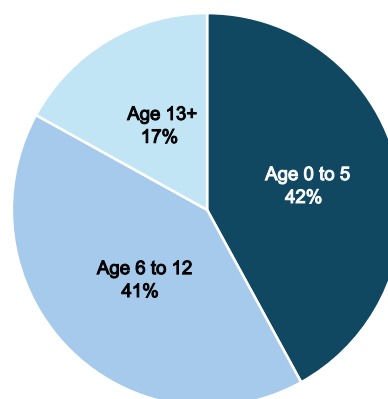
## FAMILIES RECEIVING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Social assistance benefits are any payments received by eligible recipients to assist in covering the costs of shelter and basic daily necessities. The total families in receipt of social assistance have remained consistent over the past decade at 8.6% in the Parry Sound district which is slightly higher than Ontario at 8.4%. The couple-parent families in receipt of social assistance in 2022 was 5.9% and lone-parent families was 26.2% compared to Ontario at 5.8% and 23.3% respectively.

## ONTARIO WORKS CASELOAD

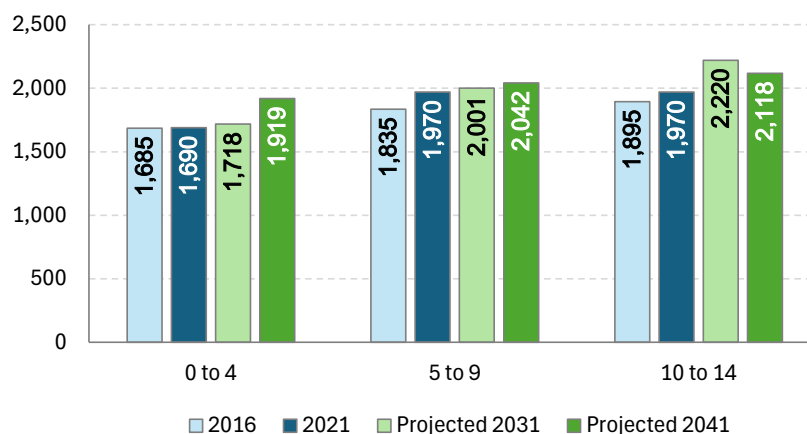
623 households were in receipt of Ontario Works and 161 households having children under 18 years of age at December 2024. 26% of households in receipt of Ontario Works have children as part of the household.

42% of children are between ages of 0-5, 41% of the children on between the age of 6-12 and 17% are aged 13+.



## CHILD POPULATION DATA FROM STATISTIC CANADA CENSUS DATA

Population Projection data can be used for planning purposes for the needs of communities in the Parry Sound district including the needs of early years and child care programs and services over time. Based on the current and projected data it is noteworthy that the population for children 0 to 4 years of age remained relatively constant from 2021-2031 with a 1.4% increase and is projected to see a 13.2% increase by 2041. The school age population between 5 to 9 years of age is projected to see minimal change over the 20 year period with an overall increase projected at 3.7%.



## DEMAND FOR CHILD CARE

Licensed Child Care Services in the community, schools and home-child care options are available in the district of Parry Sound offering a total of 884 spaces for children from birth to 12 years of age as of December 31, 2024.

Child care is available full time and part time for children 0 to 4 years of age not attending school. Before and After school care is available for school age children up to 12 years of age.

The licensed capacity for child care provides 746 spaces across the district which has grown by 76 spaces since 2019. Although the number of licensed spaces has grown in recent years the operating capacity (i.e. the number of child care spaces that can be filled) is lower due to workforce shortages. **As of December 2024, the district is operating at 67.5% of licensed capacity.**

Access to care is calculated by dividing the total licensed capacity by the child population and provides an indication of how many children would have access to child care if they required it. The current access to care ratio for the district of Parry

Sound is approximately 30% which includes centre based, community based and home child care spaces for children 0-4 years of age.

Exploring options to expand child care across the district and to advocate for additional funding to support operating and capital expenses for child care continue to be a priority in the Parry Sound district. The DSSAB continues to work in collaboration with the province in the creation of spaces in alignment with the Directed Growth Plan.

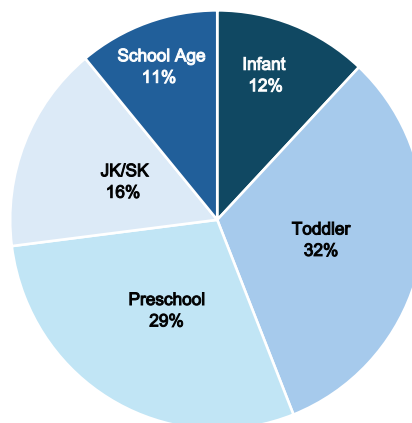


**8 Agencies**  
**17 sites and 746 spaces**



**2 Home Agencies**  
**22 Active Provider Homes**  
**and 138 spaces**

In the first quarter of 2025 child care operators began transitioning their waitlists to an online portal which is expected to be completed by mid-year 2025. As of April 30, 2025 there were **399 unique children** transitioned to the registry looking for a child care space. The pie chart provides a breakdown by age category of the children on the registry. The greatest demand is for **toddler and pre-school spaces** representing **61%** of the demand for child care spaces.



## CHILD CARE AFFORDABILITY

The DSSAB Children's Services Team administers the Child Care Fee Subsidy program that provides financial assistance to support families with the costs of child care. The amount of fee subsidy a family qualifies for is based on a provincially mandated income test using combined net income for the household. To qualify for subsidy the family must live in the Parry Sound district, be employed, attending school, participating in a training program or have a special needs referral.

Despite the 50% reduction in child care fees in 2024 families in the Parry Sound district continue to struggle to afford child care costs. In 2024, \$599,638 in financial assistance through fee subsidies was provided to families to offset costs of child care. Prior to implementation of reduced fee child care through CWELCC in 2019 \$1.57 million in fee subsidies was provided to families to offset costs of child care.

It is important to ensure the fee subsidies continue to remain available to support families in the Parry Sound district with the cost of child care given that many families especially lone-parent families continue to experience affordability barriers in accessing child care.

**\$599,638 in fee subsidies was provided in 2024 to support 100 families per month compared to \$1.57 million in 2019 to offset child care costs for approximately 248 families per month.**



## EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES

EarlyON Child and Family Centres are an initiative by the Province of Ontario that offers free information, programs and services to parents/ caregivers with children birth to 6 years of age. EarlyON programs are available across the district of Parry Sound offering parents/

caregivers welcoming and inclusive environments for children under 6 years of age.



EarlyON centres provide free programs and services for parents/ caregivers and children providing warm spaces to learn, play, laugh, be curious, make friends and engage

with others. A range of in-person and virtual programs are offered and a month at a glance calendar is available on EarlyON website and social media platforms. Specialized Groups and Workshops for parents/ caregivers are available to support development of skills to deal with the joys, challenges and stresses of being a parent/caregiver promoting a positive adult-child relationship.

EarlyON programs are available in 15 communities across the district of Parry Sound with morning, afternoon, evening and weekend sessions operating. EarlyON Child and Family Centres are guided by the following principles:

- ~ Child and family Centered
- ~ Welcoming
- ~ High Quality
- ~ Inclusive
- ~ Integrated
- ~ Community Lead



## EARLYON 2024



total visits 8,810

653 unique adults



total visits 11,250

769 unique children

### IN PERSON SESSIONS

914

### VIRTUAL PROGRAM EVENTS

107

## INCLUSION SUPPORT SERVICES

Inclusion Support Services is an early intervention program for children 0-6 years of age with differing abilities to help children reach their full potential. Strong, positive relationships contribute to healthy child development and are necessary for children's well-being and optimal learning. Every child should feel they belong, are valuable contributors to their environment and deserves the opportunity to succeed.

### Who?

Children who require additional programming or support and attend a licensed Child Care Program or EarlyON Child and Family Centre is eligible for this service.

### How?

Referrals are accepted from families, pre-school programs and any community agency within the district of Parry Sound with parental consent.

**In 2024 114 children were supported by our Inclusion Support Services Team. 81.5% were in licensed child care centres and 18.5% were at an EarlyON program.**

### Inclusion Support Services Team offers:

**S**upport for child and family  
**U**nified approach  
**P**lan of action  
**P**arental involvement  
**O**ngoing inclusion  
**R**espect for child and family  
**T**eam consultants

The Inclusion Support Services Team consists of 6 Resource Consultants who work with children in child care centres, home child care and EarlyON programs applying the following Principles of:

- ~ Participation in community activities
- ~ Continuity of services
- ~ Support for children and their families
- ~ Flexibility in service delivery
- ~ Seamless transitions to other services as deemed appropriate



## QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM

Quality is an essential part of every early learning and child care program and the DSSAB is committed to ensuring that early years and child care services administered by the DSSAB are high quality, accessible, inclusive and responsive to the growing needs of children and their families throughout the district of Parry Sound. DSSAB recognizes the uniqueness of each program as there is not a “one size fits all” model for early years and child care services. The Quality Assurance Program (QAP) was designed to align with the Ministry’s pedagogical document, *How Does Learning Happen?*, which encourages all early years and child care programs to provide a holistic approach to optimal learning and development for every child. Quality Assurance and the principles of *How Does Learning Happen?* are interconnected in early learning and child care programs. The four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?* are at the forefront of optimal learning and reflect value in creating and maintaining conditions that foster positive relationships and continuous practice in supporting children’s growth and development.

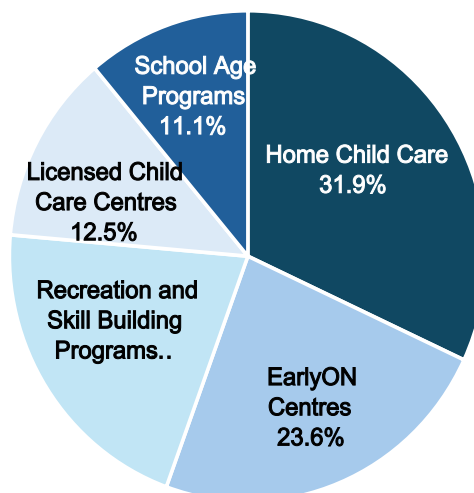


The QAP works with child care educator teams, EarlyON facilitators, recreation and skill building programs, home child care, before and after school programs and supervisors to support quality early learning environments for children and families. The role of the QAP is to mentor, collaborate and support reflective practice and to help programs achieve and maintain quality programming for children. The QAP works with administrators, supervisors, and directors to support the implementation of quality practices within programs and services.

Quality Assurance assessments are used to assist in ensuring programs meet and maintain high standards of care supporting the importance of healthy development and well-being. The assessments help providers identify strengths, areas for improvement and set goals for continuous growth towards meeting, maintaining and providing high quality care. Additionally, the assessments provide a framework for evaluating program effectiveness and accountability.

Quality Assurance visits across the district of Parry Sound include the following sites:

- ~ 9 Child Care
- ~ 15 Recreation and Skill Building
- ~ 17 EarlyON, 23 Home Child Care, and
- ~ 8 Before and After-School Programs





## FRANCOPHONE PROGRAMS

The 2021 census reported a total of 1,430 people who identified as Francophone in the Parry Sound district, representing 3.1% of the total population in comparison to 4.9% of people in the province who identified as Francophone. In 2016, 2.8% of the population in Parry Sound district identified as Francophone representing a slight increase in 2021 census data.

Table 4: Total Francophone Population in the PSSSAB Area, 2021

	Total Population	Francophone Population	% Francophone Population
Ontario	14,031,755	693,870	4.9%
Parry Sound	45,540	1,430	3.1%

The district of Parry Sound is a designated French Language Services (FLS) area where programs and services are available in the French language across the district. There is a commitment to enhance the delivery of Francophone programs and services in early years setting across the district.

## INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS

In September 2017, based on a needs assessment within the Indigenous population in relation to child care, the district of Parry Sound DSSAB, in partnership with The Métis Nation, The Parry Sound Friendship Centre, Georgian Bay Native Non-Profit Housing Incorporated, Parry Sound Non-Profit Housing, and Wasauksing First Nations, submitted a proposal as part of the Journey Together Initiative. The proposal was to develop an Indigenous Led Child Care Centre located in The Sound Early Learning and Child Care Centre to serve Indigenous families living off-reserve, with 15 licensed spaces. The proposal was successful and the new Centre, called Miigwansag, opened in October 2018.

The Hub has been a successful partnership for the Parry Sound district offering child care and early learning programs to support families of Indigenous culture. Broadening the reach of culturally appropriate programs for Indigenous families across the district through strengthening the existing partnership is possible with the revision to funding provided by the province providing greater flexibility. Enhancing culturally diverse programming is one of the areas of focus of our service plan.

The 2021 census shows that 7.2% (or 3,280 households) of the population in the district of Parry Sound identifies as Indigenous with 65% identifying as First Nation of which there are five First Nations within the district.

According to the 2021 census overall, of the total population age 0 to 14 in the Parry Sound district indicates that 11.0% identified as Indigenous with 3.3% between the ages of 0 to 4, 4.4% between 5 and 9 years of age and 3.3% between 10 and 14 years of age.



# Section 3:

## Engagement With Community



## Plan Engagement

Engagement with key parties of the child care and early years system within the district is a key input to this service system plan. An engagement plan was developed to effectively connect and consult with a diverse range of parties interested in and impacted by the DSSAB's child care and early years system. The information collected resulted in a set of data points that reflects the successes, challenges and opportunities with respect to access, inclusion, affordability, responsiveness and quality of the system.

### Key Audiences

The engagement plan involved several key audiences including:

- ~ Licensed Child Care Operators
- ~ Early Years Service Providers and Educators
- ~ Community Partners
- ~ Families (Parents and caregivers with children 0-12 years of age)

## SURVEYS

### LICENSED CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS OPERATOR SURVEYS

A survey was made available to licensed child care and early years operators from March 7 through March 28, 2025. Key groups that took part in engagement survey included licensed child care, EarlyON, Preschool Educators and Inclusion Support Services providers – including management, support staff, frontline staff, school board partners and colleges.



The DSSAB directly operates licensed child care centres and home child care and delivers EarlyON programming throughout the district. External licensed child care centres and home child care providers were included in the survey engagement.

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS

A survey was made available to community partners from March 7 through March 28, 2025. Key groups that took part in the engagement survey included community partners and agencies who provide services and programs or make referrals to services and programs that support families with children 0 to 12 years of age. The purpose of community engagement was to gather perspectives on the strengths, challenges, and opportunities for the early years and child care sector in the Parry Sound district.

### FAMILIES (PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS)

A survey was launched to gather feedback from parents and caregivers who had accessed (or attempted to access) early years and child care services in the district of Parry Sound. The survey was available between March 4 and 31, 2023 and included 30 questions focused on demographic and household considerations, when, where, how, and why respondents access the child care and EarlyON programs, as well as areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement.



## WHAT WE HEARD

### What we heard from our Community Partners and Early Years Providers

40% of Community Partner respondents indicated they had no wait list for services, 20% indicated they had a waitlist between 6-12 months and 40% indicated they had a wait time of longer than 12 months to access services.

- ✓ Respondents expressed a need for additional staff including RECE, support staff and relief staff for the continued delivery of quality programming for our children
- ✓ Respondents emphasized additional support and services for children with differing needs is an area for improvement
- ✓ Overall respondents expressed a desire for networking and professional learning opportunities
- ✓ Overall respondents were aware of services available in the district for children 0-12 years of age and they knew how to find and access information needed
- ✓ Demand for services has increased over the past few years impacting the capacity for the sector to meet the needs in the community and resulting in wait lists for services

### What we heard from our Parents and Caregivers

50% of parent/caregiver respondents indicated they have child care in the community they live. 20% of respondents travel up to 15 minutes, 15.5% travel up to 30 minutes and less than 1% travel up to 1 hour to access child care.

- ✓ Respondents expressed they received regular communication from their child care provider about their child(ren) and activities which they value
- ✓ The majority of respondents indicated they have accessed EarlyON programming and emphasized the value of having programming available for families and children
- ✓ Overall respondents expressed they are aware of child care options available in their community
- ✓ Respondents expressed wanting to have child care and EarlyON programming available within their own communities
- ✓ Respondents indicated being unable to obtain child care in a reasonable time frame due to long wait lists and the lack of care for part-time, evenings and weekends
- ✓ Affordability was cited as a barrier to accessing child care (despite recent reductions in fees by 50% as we move towards \$10 per day child care)

## STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

<i>Key strengths in the Parry Sound District Early Years and Child Care System</i>	
<b>From Community Partners and Early Years Providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Dedicated and knowledgeable staff provide valuable services to families and children for early years development</li> <li>✓ Delivery of quality programming and services provides valuable supports across the sector</li> <li>✓ Information about services is readily available and easy to access</li> </ul>
<b>From Parents and Caregivers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Dedicated, caring and knowledgeable staff provide nurturing environments for children to learn and grow</li> <li>✓ High-quality programming available through child care and EarlyON programs</li> <li>✓ The quality and variety of programming and services available for children 0-5 years of age</li> <li>✓ Fee Subsidy is available to support the affordability of child care for families</li> <li>✓ EarlyON is a valuable social connector for families and children</li> </ul>

<i>Key opportunities for improvement in the Parry Sound District Early Years and Child Care System</i>	
<b>From Community Partners and Early Years Providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Respondents expressed a need for increased availability of Before and After School programming and services for school age children</li> <li>✓ Growing need for support for staff's mental health and well-being across the sector to prevent burnout and support retention of staff</li> <li>✓ Investment in professional learning and training opportunities to strengthen the sector and the continued delivery of high-quality programming</li> <li>✓ Need for increased access to support for children with differing needs and having services more readily available in early learning settings</li> <li>✓ Transportation assistance for families when accessing services</li> <li>✓ Respondents expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of offering services locally for example through creation of shared spaces such as Hubs</li> <li>✓ Respite care for families with children with complex needs was cited as an area lacking in the district to support families</li> </ul>
<b>From Parents and Caregivers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Respondents expressed a need for increased availability of Before and After School programming and services for school age children including summer camps and recreation camps for PD days and school holidays</li> <li>✓ Overall respondents expressed needing extended hours of care to accommodate work hours such as having care available from 6:00am until 6:00pm and on weekends</li> <li>✓ Respondents emphasized the need for part-time child care options to be available in the district</li> <li>✓ Overall respondents indicated that there was a need for more child care spaces as waitlists are very long and they were unable to obtain child care when they needed it during the hours of care they needed</li> <li>✓ EarlyON provides a valuable social network for families with a need to increase programming on weekends and in more remote communities and that greater promotion of EarlyON programming is needed to improve awareness</li> </ul>

# Section 4:

## The Next 5 Years

*Accessible*

*Responsive*

*Quality*

*Inclusive*

*Accountable*















# PRIORITIES

**Priority #1: Accessible:** Families, Early Childhood Educators, Community Partners, Stakeholders and the Public can easily access information, services and programs related to early years and child care settings.

Key Areas of Focus:

- ~ Supporting Operators/Providers by creating environments where they can share and access information and resources easily
- ~ Improving collection, analysis and sharing of data related to early years and child care services
- ~ Provide networking opportunities to strengthen the sector within the district
- ~ Support programs/services for children 0-12 years of age

Objective	Deliverables	Present	Ongoing	Future
<b>1.1</b> Families have access to Early Years and Child Care programs and services where information is available and easy to navigate (for families, educators, community partners, stakeholders and the public).	Explore strategies to improve awareness and access to information about child care and early years programs and services			
	Application processes for fee subsidy are streamlined; enhancing use of online portals			
	Online Portal for child care wait list registry is easy to navigate and promote public awareness			
	Explore opportunities for increased access to programs for school age children			
	Advocate for funding to increase affordability of licensed child care (i.e. fee subsidy for before and after school age programs)			
	Explore delivery of EarlyON programs in underserved communities			
<b>1.2</b> Early Years Providers have access to the resources and tools they need to deliver quality programs and services that meet the needs of families and children.	Create a virtual space to house resources, tools, education opportunities, events for early years educators			
	Early years educators have access to networking opportunities and professional learning events			
	Providers have access to the data and information they need to make informed decisions (i.e. decisions related to business, programs, service quality)			
	Technology is leveraged to streamline processes and pathways to access and share information across the system (i.e. OneHSN modules and templates available on website)			









1.3 Community partners have access to data, resources and tools they need to support decision making and families that reflect local community need(s).	Explore the creation of dashboards and infographics to share data, trends and information with community stakeholders (i.e. monthly or quarterly)			▲
	Strengthen connections through engagement and networking opportunities and events			▲
1.4 Directed Growth Plan guides decisions on new CWELCC spaces in the district targeting vulnerable populations and underserved neighborhoods.	New child care spaces are created in underserved areas/communities		■	
	Advocate for funding for new spaces and to improve physical improvements and accessibility of existing spaces			▲
	Data is available to make evidenced based decisions on allocation of new spaces		■	
1.5 Early Years Educators deliver programs and services to meet the complex needs of children and families.	Explore expansion of Inclusion Support Services through advocating for funding to increase services		■	
	Inclusion Support Services are available in each early years setting that meets the demand for services			▲
	Explore opportunities to support families to easily access professional services to support children with complex needs (i.e. ease of referral processes, minimize wait times, transportation costs, tele-services)		■	













**Priority #2: Responsive:** Strengthening Partnerships, Collaboration and Communication for Families, Stakeholders, Early Childhood Educators, and Community Partners.

**Key Areas of Focus:**

- ~ Develop strategies to strengthen the workforce across all roles (RECE, Administrative, Support staff)
- ~ Raise awareness of Early Years and Child Care within the district
- ~ Improve cultural diversity in Early Years programs
- ~ Programs and services for children with differing needs to support children, families and workers

Objective	Deliverables	Present	Ongoing	Future
2.1 Child Care and Early Years programs are available reflecting the needs of the community and support workforce participation.	Explore and support ways to increase child care during non-standard hours (evenings, overnight and weekends)			
	Explore the expansion of child care hours to reflect workforce (i.e. 6am to 6pm)			
	Explore availability of part-time child care options throughout the district			
	Explore opportunities to increase evening and weekend programs for EarlyON programs			
2.2 Strengthen partnerships and collaboration with Early Years and Child Care providers.	Regular meeting schedules with child care and EarlyON providers			
	Invest in networking opportunities and events with community stakeholders			
	Explore strategies to improve communication for the sector to share information, build awareness and improve access to information channels.			
	Explore opportunities for collaboration and joint initiatives with community stakeholders			












2.3 Sustain and grow the Early Childhood Educator workforce.	Mental health and self-care supports are easily accessible for early years educators and support staff			
	Training opportunities are readily available to support staff working with children with behavioral issues			
	Professional learning opportunities for leadership to strengthen skills and build capacity in the system			
	Support for children with differing needs is available in all early years settings to meet the needs of children and families			
	Explore and support a workforce recruitment and retention strategy			
2.4 The DSSAB as Service System Manager is a leader in the Early Years and Child Care system for the district.	Advocate for funding to support child care and early years settings in delivery of quality programs and to support infrastructure projects to improve physical space and environments			
	Promote the value of Early Years Educators to the community and as a career choice (i.e. part of the workforce recruitment and retention strategy)			
	Explore opportunities to support building a strong collaborative early years system within the district			
	Promote awareness of the DSSAB's role in the early years system as service system manager			
	Collect demographic information to inform improvements to the early years system			










**Priority #3: Quality:** Support and Empower Early Childhood Educators and Leadership in the delivery of quality programs and services in Early Years and Child Care settings.

Key areas of Focus:

- ~ Professional learning opportunities for the Early Years sector across the district
- ~ Networking opportunities and events to build a cohesive and collaborative Early Years system in the district
- ~ Improve programs and services for all ages 0-12
- ~ Support from DSSAB as service system manager across the Early Years system

Objective	Deliverables	Present	Ongoing	Future
3.1 Build capacity in the Early Years system through professional learning and networking opportunities.	Provide no cost training opportunities for educators, support staff and leadership to build capacity and resilience in the early years system			
	Explore continuous learning opportunities for Boards to build capacity in governance within the system			
	Invest in mental health and self-care supports and resources for early years workers			
	Explore opportunities to build capacity for leadership, administrative, finance and management skills to build capacity and nurture a positive workplace culture			
	Explore opportunities for mentorship, intern placements and co-op placements in early years settings			
3.2 Continuous improvement and commitment to quality assurance standards.	Invest in continuous improvement and learning activities and initiatives to support needs of the early years workforce (i.e. soft skills, leadership)			
	Continuous investment in tools and resources to support early childhood educators in the delivery of quality programs and services			
	Continue to partner with school boards to promote school registration and the importance of pre-school readiness programs. Continue to look for strategies to assist educators on improving and enhancing the transition to school for children and families			
	Advocate and support continuous improvement through feedback			

3.3 Increased awareness of Early Childhood Education opportunities in the community for recruitment of qualified staff.	Continue advocacy and awareness building off of the Become an ECE Campaign to support ECE as career to promote the sector and build capacity			
	Attend job fairs and events to promote recruitment and career opportunities while building awareness of early years setting			
	Explore opportunities with Employment Ontario for workforce opportunities (i.e. engagement with schools)			
3.4 Establish a cohesive local partner network focused on seamless family-centered service delivery.	Explore opportunities within the existing local partner network to host events in local communities within the district to build awareness, capacity and quality in system			
	Host networking or engagement events for the community to promote awareness and build collaboration in system			
	Explore opportunities for data gathering and sharing to support informed planning and decision making			
	Explore opportunities for joint initiatives within the Early Years system for improved services benefitting families and children			

















**Priority #4: Inclusive:** People feel a sense of belonging and have access to inclusive environments where they can collaborate and participate in meaningful ways.

**Key areas of Focus:**

- ~ Coordinated Service Planning with seamless access to services
- ~ Flexibility to meet the diverse and complex needs of families and children
- ~ Continuous learning for Early Years Educators and support staff to support children with differing needs and their families
- ~ Family-centred approaches

Objective	Deliverables	Present	Ongoing	Future
<b>4.1</b> There is an established and coordinated framework that supports families and children in connecting to services that meet their unique needs.	Review of policies and processes to ensure they are reflective of inclusive practices and environments			
	Referral pathways are seamless and support practices that are equitable and inclusive for families and children			
	Training opportunities to support differing needs of children are available and accessible to educators and families			
	Support a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation to incorporate culturally safe practices into early years and child care settings			
	Engagement with diverse cultural groups within the district to understand barriers to access and inclusion in early years settings			
<b>4.2</b> Create inclusive environments where children and families feel included and connected.	Support equity and inclusion training for leaders, educators and support staff in early years settings			
	Explore ways to expand Indigenous Led and Francophone programming throughout the district to broaden the reach into communities			
	Explore opportunities for developing and offering inclusive and culturally relevant programs or spaces for culturally diverse populations (newcomers, 2SLGBTQIA+)			
	Explore opportunities to make child care and early years physical spaces inclusive and welcoming to families and children with diverse cultural backgrounds(i.e. newcomers, 2SLGBTQIA+)			








4.3 Programs and services that meet the needs of school age children are supported.	Annual surveys for ongoing engagement and continuous improvement for school age programs			
	Advocate for funding to increase support of school age children with differing needs and culturally diverse backgrounds (i.e. fee subsidy, summer camps and recreation programs)			
	Explore trends in the workforce to better identify initiatives and strategies to support inclusive and equitable practices across the system for school age children			









## Priority #5: Accountable: Responsible Service System Management

### Key areas of Focus:

- ~ Support Early Years Providers with tools and resources to navigate legislative changes impacting program delivery and oversight (i.e. cost-based funding approach, reconciliations, administrative and financial reporting)
- ~ Gathering of data to support evidence informed decision making and system level planning
- ~ Funding and sustainability of the Early Years system

Objective	Deliverables	Present	Ongoing	Future
5.1 Reduce administrative burden while continuing to deliver exceptional services and support.	Streamlined reporting and data gathering processes reducing the time required to performs tasks (i.e. technology, templates, common data points)			
	Creation of clear policies and procedures for seamless service delivery across the early years system			
	Facilitate and use technology (online portals and forms) for funding applications, questions, concerns related to early years programs and services (for families, community partners and providers)			
5.2 Effective use of technology to manage service system.	Maximize the use of OneHSN modules including reporting, child care waitlist registry and communications			
	Implementation of OneHSN for registration for EarlyON programs			
	Establish data sharing practices and create data sharing agreements as required			
	Review and analyze data gathered for trends, gaps, improvements and participation in the early years system for planning purposes and share across the early years system 2026			



5.3 Continuous improvement in the Early Years system to address operational challenges improving transparency and accountability.	Develop a dashboard to share information with the public about early years and child care systems			
	Establish a network to determine data points and information to collect to support decision making through establishing common data points supporting outcomes			
	Explore engagement pathways to inform decision making, program impacts, opportunities for system improvements across the district and among partners			
5.4 Review and update of agreements, policies, processes for effective system management.	Survey providers, partners and parents annually			
	Annual review of policies, agreements and processes to be responsive to legislative and regulatory changes			
	Support development of programs and services to address gaps in the system to meet the changing needs to communities informed from stakeholder input			

## LEGEND

Present



Ongoing



Future



## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Priorities & Outcomes	Performance Measure
<h3>Accessible</h3> <p>Families, Early Childhood Educators, Community Partners, Stakeholders and the Public have seamless access to information, services and programs for early years and child care settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ % change in attendance at EarlyON programs</li> <li>✓ # people accessing information and # of social media posts, activity on social media sites</li> <li>✓ % change programs available and the availability of programs across the district</li> <li>✓ # promotional activities about early years</li> <li>✓ \$ funding allocated to capital improvements of early years settings</li> <li>✓ # networking, training and professional learning activities</li> <li>✓ Participation rate at events</li> <li>✓ # connections and new partnerships</li> <li>✓ # new CWELCC spaces open</li> <li>✓ % change in hours ISS delivered and the hours of SNR approved</li> <li>✓ % change in time on waitlist for families to access child care space</li> </ul>
<h3>Responsive</h3> <p>Families, Stakeholders, Partners and Early Childhood Educators benefit from improved communications, collaborative relationships and strong partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ # of programs offered (variety, program, age)</li> <li>✓ # communities and locations where early years programs are available</li> <li>✓ # connections and new partnerships</li> <li>✓ # organizations represented at networking events</li> <li>✓ # professional learning, networking, training and workshop events and the participation rate at events</li> <li>✓ Vacancy rate and turnover rate for staffing in early years settings</li> <li>✓ Satisfaction rate from providers based on annual survey</li> <li>✓ # promotional events, messages and communications issued</li> <li>✓ # advocacy events and initiatives</li> <li>✓ % change in licensed vs operating capacity</li> </ul>

<h2>Quality</h2> <p>Early Childhood Educators and Leadership in Early Years and Child Care settings deliver quality programs and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Staff retention rate: turnover rate</li> <li>✓ # professional learning, networking, training and workshop events and the participation rate of educators</li> <li>✓ % change in school readiness of children transitioning to school (JK, SK)</li> <li>✓ # mentorship, intern and co-op placements in early years settings</li> <li>✓ # promotional events attended such as job fairs, information sessions, social media posts, communications issued</li> <li>✓ # connections and new partnerships</li> <li>✓ The districts performance on the EDI</li> </ul>
<h2>Inclusive</h2> <p>People feel a sense of belonging and have access to inclusive environments where they can participate and collaborate in meaningful ways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ # of referrals for ISS and SNR and the length of time to complete the referral process</li> <li>✓ % change in children with ISS action plans who achieve goals within 6 months and 12 months</li> <li>✓ Participation rate of educators in diversity, equity and inclusion learning events</li> <li>✓ Satisfaction rate through annual surveys providing opportunity for input and feedback on programs and services</li> <li>✓ Educator diversity</li> <li>✓ % change in school readiness of children transitioning to school (JK, SK)</li> </ul>
<h2>Accountable</h2> <p>Programs and services are delivered through responsible service system management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Satisfaction rate of operators, providers, parents, caregivers, partners, stakeholders based on annual survey</li> <li>✓ # serious occurrences</li> <li>✓ Utilization of tools and technology for administration tasks by operators, partners and stakeholders</li> <li>✓ # reports and documents submitted on time from operators</li> <li>✓ # decisions and enhancements made for programs and services using data</li> </ul>



