



2023 to 2027 Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan

The Regional Municipality of Durham Children's Services Division

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Acknowledgement

The Region of Durham exists on lands that the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg inhabited for thousands of years prior to European colonization. These lands are the traditional and treaty territories of the Nations covered under the Williams Treaties, including the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, and the Chippewa Nations of Georgina Island, Beausoleil and Rama.

We honour, recognize, and respect Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and stewards of the lands and waters on which we have the privilege to live. In our efforts towards reconciliation, we continue to build and strengthen relationships with First Nations, as well as the large Métis communities and growing Inuit communities here in Durham. We commit to learning from Indigenous values and knowledge, building opportunities for collaboration, and recognizing that we are all connected.

Foreword

As the system manager for early learning and child care in Durham Region, the Children's Services Division is pleased to present this Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan. This comprehensive five-year plan focuses on system priorities as identified through consultation with the early learning and child care community, including families. The plan will guide our work, allowing for flexibility to respond to changes that may occur over time.

Throughout the duration of the 2018 to 2022 service plan, we saw significant change and faced extensive external environmental factors that determined the pathways of focus to support the early learning and child care community. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that a strong early learning and child care system is essential to our economic and social systems, and that Durham's early learning and child care community supported children and families when they needed it most.

With the importance of child care at the forefront, history was made through the federal announcement and provincial implementation of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. This plan includes highlights of some of the significant accomplishments that were achieved through this historical time and outlines our plan for the coming five years.

Durham Region continues to grow at a significant rate. As the 2023 to 2027 Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan was developed, the Children's Services Division was invigorated by the meaningful change and recognition that the early learning and child care system has seen. This change enables us to further support Durham Region children and families with affordable, accessible, responsive, and high-quality child care and services.

The hard work and dedication of the early learning and child care community, and its partners, shines across the Region. The Children's Services Division would like to thank the community, its partners and families for your input on this plan. We are proud of the support that the early learning and child care community provides to Durham Region's children and families.



Executive summary

As the Consolidated Municipal Services Manager (CMSM) for early learning and child care, The Regional Municipality of Durham is committed to managing a co-ordinated and responsive early learning and child care system that supports Durham Region children and families in reaching their best potential. The 2023 to 2027 Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan has been developed with this focus at the forefront in conjunction with the Ministry of Education's priorities to create a system that is high quality, accessible, affordable, flexible and inclusive.

In consultation with the early learning and child care community, including Durham Region parents and families, the Children's Services Division has identified four key priorities to continue building a high-quality child care system. The four priorities include:

1. **Support expansion and access to child care.**
 - a. Strengthen access and inclusion to the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system.
 - b. Build capacity within the licensed home child care sector.
 - c. Leverage funding opportunities to expand support programs and services.
2. **Enhance supportive and inclusive child care.**
 - a. Provide mental health and well-being supports for early learning and child care staff.
 - b. Bolster diverse, equitable and inclusive practices.
 - c. Strengthen strategies to support children with special needs.
 - d. Improve wraparound services for children and families.
3. **Increase, attract and retain quality Registered Early Childhood Educators.**
 - a. Implement robust workforce strategies.
 - b. Promote registered early childhood educator (RECE) as a profession.
 - c. Support pathways to becoming a RECE.
4. **Optimize virtual service delivery and technology.**
 - a. Enhance virtual service delivery.
 - b. Leverage technology to promote communication and collaboration.

The early learning and child care system has seen significant change since the development of the 2018 to 2022 Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan. This document will outline some of these changes to showcase the significance of the priorities that have been developed.

The Children's Services Division takes pride in its commitment to supporting the early learning community and Durham Region children and families. This plan is a reflection of that commitment.



Early Learning and Child Care System priorities: 2023 to 2027

2023 to 2027
Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan

Support expansion and access to child care

Enhance supportive and inclusive child care

Increase, attract, and retain quality RECEs

Optimize virtual service delivery and technology

Regional priorities

Provincial and federal priorities

High quality

Accessible

Inclusive

Affordable

Flexible

Early Learning and Child Care snapshot

Since the creation of the 2018 to 2022 Service Plan, the early learning and child care (ELCC) sector experienced unprecedented change.

Reaction to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

While the key priorities identified in the 2018 to 2022 Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan were achieved, the COVID-19 pandemic expanded the workplans that had been established to support the early learning and child care community, and Durham Region children and families.

The pandemic brought unprecedented change that had an immediate and lasting impact on the early learning and child care community. Families in Durham Region experience hardships, like never before. Families with existing financial, housing or food insecurities were further marginalized. Throughout the mandatory closures, reopening phases and now the recovery phase, it became clear that Durham Region's local economy depends on licensed child care.

Throughout the pandemic, Durham Region ELCC operators:

- Remained open during province-wide school board closure periods, offering four rounds of emergency child care to essential frontline workers.
- Maintained compliance with evolving Public Health and Ministry of Education directives by revising and implementing operational policies.
- Ensured the health and well-being of children, families and child care staff by implementing enhanced infection, prevention and control measures.



During this time, many early learning and child care operators faced low enrolment numbers while high turnover of staff increased the need for early learning staff. The Children's Services Division (CSD) was able to support the ELCC community by:

- Supplying Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to licensed child care and EarlyON centres through curbside pick up and deliveries.
- Being available to operators and staff of licensed child care centres and home child care agencies.
- Providing guidance and clarification on key requirements through virtual town halls, newsletters and virtual network meetings for child care staff and management.
- Ensuring licensed operators had access to the most current resources and information.
- Providing financial support to child care licensees.

Despite the many challenges, Durham's ELCC community demonstrated perseverance and commitment to the Durham Region children and families they serve.

Emergency Child Care quote: "We are tremendously grateful to all the staff for providing such wonderful care to our children. They went above and beyond to plan activities based on the kids' interests, and my children were excited to go to daycare each day. We cannot thank them enough for their efforts, and for rising to the challenges presented by this difficult time. Despite all that is going on in the world and all that the kids have sacrificed, they have shared so many wonderful experiences with the staff that will not soon be forgotten. A heartfelt thank you to you all!"

- Parent (comment submitted anonymously)



Federal and provincial priorities

In August 2021, Canada and Ontario renewed their early learning and child care agreement for four years, extending to March 31, 2025. The Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework outlines that the federal and provincial governments recognize the importance of supporting parents, families and communities to ensure the best possible future for their children and the role a quality ELCC system plays in achieving this.

In March 2022, the Ontario and federal governments furthered this commitment by signing the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement, committing to a five-year plan to make child care more accessible and more affordable. On June 19, 2023, the federal government passed Bill C-35, an act enshrining the principles of a Canada-wide early learning and child care system into federal law (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2022).

Bill C-35 builds upon the multilateral framework and allows both the provincial and federal governments “to work towards a long-term vision where all children can experience the enriching environment of quality early learning and child care that supports children’s development to reach their full potential” (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2022). Durham Region’s System Priorities have been built off these five key components.



“Our affordable child care plan is helping to grow the economy, allowing more women to enter the workforce, and helping to give children in Canada the best start in life. We want to ensure that future generations of families across Canada can count on the progress we’ve achieved so far. Introducing this bill is an important step toward making this system a lasting federal commitment, including sustained long-term funding for provinces, territories and Indigenous peoples.”

– Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Karina Gould



Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care System

In March 2022, the Ontario government reached a historic deal with the federal government to lower child care fees for families in Ontario through the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. The five-year agreement aims to reduce child care fees for children under six years of age, to an average of \$10 per day by 2026; increase access to high-quality and inclusive child care through the creation of 86,000 new licensed child care spaces; hire new early childhood educators; and support improved compensation for all RCEs working in licensed child care settings (Trudeau, 2022). Ontario's implementation of CWELCC will focus on five key principles/priorities.

Lowering fees

The average cost of child care for children under six years of age will be \$10 per day by 2026.

Increasing access

Approximately 86,000 new licensed child care spaces for children under six years of age will be operational by the end of 2026. Space expansion will focus on geographic areas and diverse communities where they are needed most.

Enhancing quality

Develop a recruitment and retention strategy to support the child care workforce. Improve compensation for RCEs working with children under age 12 in licensed child care.

Supporting inclusion

Space expansion will support the needs of vulnerable and diverse populations. Indigenous and Francophone children, as well as children from vulnerable families, will have greater access to high-quality, inclusive child care by 2026.

Strengthen data/reporting

Moderize Ontario's data and reporting systems by 2025 to 2026. Evidence-based data will be used to evaluate and improve how the child care system supports children and families.

(Ministry of Education, 2023).

The most immediate impact of this agreement is the reduced cost of child care for families across Ontario. Data collected by Durham Region's CSD indicates that before the implementation of the CWELCC system, the median cost of child care in Durham Region was \$61 per day for infants, \$52 per day for toddlers, and \$47 per day for preschool children. As of January 2023, child care fees have been reduced by an average of 50 per cent across Ontario. The Department of Finance Canada estimated in 2022 that when the average of \$10 per day child care is achieved, Ontario families will save more than \$9,000 gross annually, on average.

Families and children may experience reduced social and economic equity gaps as child care becomes more accessible and more affordable, reducing a significant barrier for parents, particularly mothers, in joining or re-entering the workforce (McCain, 2020). Research indicates that the cost of child care is a primary factor in determining the labour force participation rates of parents, especially that of women with young children (Durham Workforce Authority, 2022).



The importance of quality child care to the broader community and the local economy

The historic Canada-Ontario CWELCC agreement recognizes the importance of child care to support Ontario families, as well as the economy. In Durham Region, there are a multitude of direct and indirect benefits as a result of affordable, accessible, high-quality child care.

Public investment in licensed child care drives economic development in Durham Region. The benefit-cost ratio estimates that for every dollar spent on early childhood education programs, the economy receives approximately \$1.60 to \$5.80 worth of economic benefits in return (Deloitte, 2021).

Access to licensed child care supports residents' ability to participate in educational programs, in the workforce, and become active contributors to the local economy.

"The talent-driven economy requires an increasingly skilled and educated workforce. Economic growth regionally is dependent on successfully attracting, retaining, developing, and deploying people in a way that maximizes their potential in the regional economy" (Planning and Economic Development, 2023).



Women in the workforce

Women in the workforce were disproportionately impacted by the effects of COVID-19 in comparison to their male counterparts, with many having no choice but to leave the workforce to care for their children. According to Statistics Canada, more than 1.5 million women in Canada lost their jobs during the first two months of the pandemic. In Durham Region, unemployment levels spiked for both women and men at the beginning of the pandemic; however, unemployment rates remained significantly higher for women throughout the first, second and third waves of COVID-19 (Durham Workforce Authority, 2022).

Economists referred to this period as the first “she-cession,” where women left the workforce at unprecedented levels. It was reported that 78,000 fewer women were in the labour market as of February 2021 (Deloitte, 2021). This data highlights the importance of child care in supporting women to enter and remain in the workforce. Economists are optimistic about the impact the CWELCC system will have on the workforce participation rates of women.

As a direct benefit to families, child care allows mothers who are increasingly well-educated and skilled to enter the workforce and earn wages to support their families. The ability to access affordable child care and enter or return to full-time employment decreases reliance on government-funded programs, such as Ontario Works, and contributes to a reduction in income inequality. The phased-in implementation of CWELCC allows for greater gender equity and parity by allowing more parents, particularly mothers, to participate in the workforce and achieve greater economic security (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2023).



Supporting children's development

Strong positive impacts on the cognitive and social skills of children receiving high-quality early learning and child care generate lasting improvements in social and economic opportunities, reduced incidence of morbidity, unintended pregnancy, involvement in the criminal justice system, and disordered behaviour (Stanford, 2020). Broader social benefits include stronger social cohesion, more respect for the rights of children and overall improved outcomes.

"If one invests in child care, it creates the opportunity for children to spend more time learning. The gains are maximized if the early learning is delivered by a qualified educator that is delivering a circular-based program. Such programs help children develop essential skills, such as early numeracy and literacy skills, and soft skills, such as better self-control and interaction with others. This makes children more school-ready" (Deloitte, 2021).

Additionally, access to affordable, licensed, early learning child care allows for early intervention opportunities for children who require additional learning support. Not only is early intervention more effective for children's overall development, but it also carries significant cost savings. The Government of Ontario spends billions of dollars per year on special needs education costs, which can be reduced with a decrease in demand for special needs education, because early intervention opportunities are utilized (Deloitte, 2021). As a result of increased access to quality licensed child care and early years programs, children and families can access supports for their children's developmental milestones, reducing the demand, and the expense, of special needs education.

Creation of jobs

The most direct benefit of licensed child care on the local economy is the creation of jobs.

Durham Region saw significant population changes during the pandemic, as hybrid and remote workers moved to the region with their families. This trend of high population growth preceded the pandemic and is expected to continue in the future. The region is forecasted to grow to 1.3 million people and 460,000 jobs by 2051 (Planning and Economic Development, 2023). These trends not only increase the demand for child care within the community, but create job and business opportunities within Durham Region.

"Investing in early learning and child care offers a jobs-and-growth hat trick: it provides jobs for workers, the majority of whom are women; it enables parents, particularly mothers, to reach their full economic potential; and it creates a generation of engaged and well-prepared young learners" (Department of Finance Canada, 2021).



Social Services Department

The Region of Durham’s Social Services Department aims to provide people-oriented services that respond to diverse community needs. The Social Services Department has six divisions committed to delivering professional high-quality services. Many residents across Durham Region will need one or more of these services at some point in their life. The department’s vision of care, excellence, learning and leadership is the foundation of the people-focused programs and services offered.

The department is actively working on the Social Services Integration Plan. This plan aims to improve the client experience through service integration, which may include processes, business support services and client access to service. The overall aim of service integration is to remove system barriers and improve processes that will help clients – even if the client requires services from other divisions within Social Services.

Business Affairs and Financial Management

Business Affairs and Financial Management (BAFM) offers administrative, financial and emergency social services programs. BAFM aims to provide excellent customer service and responsible resource management.

Income, Employment and Homelessness Supports

Income, Employment and Homelessness Supports Division (IEHSD) is the service delivery agent for the Ontario Works program, as well as the service system manager for the Employment Services System and Homelessness. Ontario Works assists individuals who are in financial need and provides basic health benefits to recipients. Ontario Works is responsible for delivering case management services that focus on connecting clients to person-centred supports and services that prepare and enable recipients to participate in employment services and employment.

As the Employment Service System Manager, along with Durham College and Durham Workforce Authority, this consortium provides funding, support and oversight for the region's employment services system. The employment services system aims to be responsive to the needs of job seekers, businesses and local communities within the region. As the service system manager of Homelessness, we develop, co-ordinate and provide oversight of homelessness services and programs across the region. Based on the needs of the community, we work in collaboration with local partners to ensure that the services and programs provided to residents experiencing homelessness are effective, accessible and responsive.

Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors

Durham Region owns and operates four long-term care homes (LTCH) and three Adult Day Programs (ADP), each accredited by Accreditation Canada. Each LTCH provides a wide range of specialized services, supportive care and programs for all residents. The ADPs provide supervised therapeutic, social and recreational programming during the day to adults living with dementia or a wide range of physical and cognitive abilities.

The subsidized Homemaker Program offers a subsidy to residents of Durham Region who are experiencing low income and require homemaking services to stay in their homes.

The Senior Safety Office provides residents of Durham Region information on services in the area. Suspected abuse or neglect of a senior or vulnerable person can also be reported to the Senior Safety Office.



Family Services

The Family Services Division (FSD) improves the quality of life for residents living and working in Durham Region. FSD provides timely and accessible counselling, education and support services.

Housing Services

The Housing Services Division (HSD) supports local community housing providers, manages properties directly owned by The Regional Municipality of Durham Region, and operates the Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) wait-list. HSD funds community housing, administers housing programs, and encourages and supports the creation of affordable housing.

Financial Empowerment Framework

The Social Services Department's six divisions have come together to institute a financial empowerment framework to assist residents living with low-income with locating available funds, support, and services to reduce poverty and improve overall quality of life.



Children's Services

Consolidated Municipal Service Manager

Durham Region's Children's Services Division (CSD) was designated as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) in 2000. This designation outlined the Region's responsibility for planning, managing and funding the early learning and child care (ELCC) system in Durham Region. As CMSM, the CSD is responsible for managing a co-ordinated and responsive ELCC system that supports children and their families in reaching their best potential. Key activities of the CMSM include:

- Creating and implementing a multi-year service plan in collaboration with the ELCC community.
- Implementing the CWELCC system.
- Planning and approving the targeted expansion of child care across the region.
- Managing the child care fee subsidy program.
- Managing a co-ordinated, responsive, high-quality licensed system by:
 - Maintaining Purchase of Service agreements with licensed child care operators and authorized recreation program providers.
 - Facilitating funding streams to support licensed child care.
 - Implementing, co-ordinating and funding capacity-building initiatives to support professional learning for the ELCC community.
 - Managing special needs resourcing services to support licensed child care and authorized recreation programs.
 - Directly operating eight licensed ELCC centres.
 - Operating Children's Developmental and Behavioural

Supports (CDBS), formerly known as Durham Behaviour Management Services (DBMS).

- Responding to new or changing directions from the Ministry of Education.
- Managing EarlyON Child and Family Centres.
- Managing the system through community collaboration, partnerships and evidence-based decision-making.





Child Care Fee Subsidy Program

The Child Care Fee Subsidy Program helps families who qualify cover the cost of licensed child care, up to the age of 12 years. As the CMSM, the CSD provides fee subsidy to eligible families across the region. To be eligible, parents or legal guardians must be working, attending school, receiving Ontario Works benefits while participating in an approved activity, or the parent/guardian or child must have a recognized special or social need.

The implementation of the CWELCC and, by 2026, the reduction of child care fees to an average of \$10 per day for children under six years of age will have substantial financial benefits for Durham Region children and families. However, it is important to recognize the ongoing need for child care fee subsidy for families in Durham Region. Although an average of \$10 per day child care will be a significant decrease in child care fees for some families, many families in our community will require additional financial support offered by the Child Care Fee Subsidy Program.

“I appreciate the professional and timely communication from the department. I am always made aware of any changes to my file and given the appropriate information should I have any questions or concerns.”

“I have an extremely full plate (and ADHD). Often, I forget about responding to emails or handing in necessary documents on time. I am always treated with kindness and understanding; I couldn’t appreciate that more.”

As part of our annual Fee Subsidy Client Survey (2022), clients were satisfied with the customer service, timeliness, communication and helpfulness of the child care fee subsidy program.



4.4 Average satisfaction rating

In 2022, approximately 5,868 Durham Region children were served through fee subsidy

Fee Subsidy Purchase of Service Agreement

The CSD approves or denies new Fee Subsidy Purchase of Service (POS) Agreement applications from licensed child care operators in Durham based on quality and strong community need. This allows the CSD to make sure that growth of the child care system is well planned, ensuring equitable access to fee subsidy spaces and supporting a stable child care sector. As of November 2023, there were 257 licensed child care centres and five licensed home child care agencies with a Fee Subsidy POS, equating to 25,883 fee subsidy spaces.

Local school boards are highly engaged in the ELCC sector and are actively incorporating child care into requests for capital-funded new builds. A POS agreement will be requested from the child care operators contracted by the school boards. Regional staff collaborate with designated school board Early Years leads to co-ordinate new and expanding licensed child care programs on-site in schools.

Special Needs Resourcing

The Regional Municipality of Durham offers services to help early learning and child care professionals to offer inclusive programs that support children's physical, social-emotional and cognitive development. Licensed early learning and child care environments are legislated in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to create Individual Service Plans (ISP) that reflect the special or individualized needs of children enrolled in ELCC sites.

The Region of Durham has partnered with five agencies to provide a holistic and complementary set of Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) services. These partners are funded through the CSD using provincial funding guidelines to provide SNR services.

The SNR agencies work with educators to build capacity within the system to support equity and inclusion of all children in licensed child care. SNR and ELCC teams work together to develop ISPs. Families are also engaged in the development of the ISP to ensure positive and enriched learning experiences. All children in licensed child care have the right to access SNR services, at no cost to families. The five SNR agency partners are:

- Children's Developmental and Behavioural Supports.
- Grandview Kids Children's Centre.
- Infant and Child Development.
- Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth.
- Surrey Place Centre.



Children's Developmental and Behavioural Supports

In 2023, after 41 years of excellent service to families, Durham Behaviour Management Services was renamed to Children's Developmental and Behavioural Supports (CDBS). The new name better reflects the full range of services available to help reduce challenging or interfering behaviours and support the development of key life skills.

CDBS provides behaviour services to early learning professionals in licensed child care, recreation and early years programs. CDBS engages with parents/caregivers of children with developmental delays to create individual plans to help with behaviour challenges and to aid with a parent/caregiver's capacity to support their child's skill development through a play-based model.

Durham Region Operating Criteria Assessment for Quality Improvement

To receive and maintain a Fee Subsidy POS with the CSD, operators must comply with regional quality standards. The Durham Region Operating Criteria Assessment for Quality Improvement (DROC AQI) is based on the Toronto Children's Services Early Learning and Care Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI). The CSD Quality and Contract Compliance Advisors work in collaboration with child care operators to ensure information gathered is utilized to reflect on pedagogy and practice, set program goals, and support continuous improvement. The CSD uses the DROC AQI to ensure the best use of public funds, aligning with validated research and meeting acceptable quality standards of care for children. The measurement tool incorporates six sections: infant program, toddler program, preschool program, before and after school program, playground and nutrition. Additional sections refer to contract compliance requirements, including administration, attendance audit, finance, governance (not-for-profit or commercial), leadership and policy review.



Capacity building

CSD is committed to supporting educators to better serve families by providing high-quality early learning environments. Through connecting with educators during community visits and professional learning opportunities, the Early Learning Team supports educators' experiences and needs. The Early Learning Team provides support to the early learning and child care community through a quarterly newsletter, capacity-building workshops and guidance from Training Specialists.

Training Specialists on the Early Learning team are referred to child care centres based on the Quality Assurance Advisor's DROC assessments. Training Specialists develop individualized training plans and education programs for operators to support high-quality early learning environments.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON Child and Family Centres provide free opportunities for children from birth to six years of age to participate in play and inquiry-based programs, and support parents and caregivers in their roles. These centres offer safe and welcoming environments open to all families across Durham Region, with qualified professionals and quality programs. Families and caregivers will be able to find support, make personal connections and access a network of resources. The Region of Durham has partnered with the Greater Toronto YMCA and Durham Farm and Rural Family Resources to operate EarlyON programs across Durham.

Regional Early Learning and Child Care Centres

The Region of Durham operates eight ELCC programs. The child care centres are positive spaces for both children and families. Programs are geared to all children regardless of race, ability, language, place of origin, ethnic origin or family structure. The centres have incorporated and embedded the foundations of belonging, well-being, engagement and expression. These foundations are the centre point of the provincial pedagogy for early learning, *How Does Learning Happen?*, and strengthens the quality of programs, ensuring high-quality experiences that promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of all children.



Policy and Strategic Initiatives Team

The Policy and Strategic Initiatives (PSI) team collaborates with all CSD teams, internal departments, community partners and stakeholders to:

- Conduct local research and promote the use of evaluation findings to implement data-informed, evidence-driven decisions and initiatives within the ELCC.
- Lead the development of policies, strategies and best practices based on community needs within the ELCC.
- Lead the development and maintenance of new and existing business system software and relevant technology.
- Commit to ongoing research, actively support knowledge mobilization and exchange, and lead continuous quality improvement initiatives through innovative collaboration with key stakeholders and community partners (e.g., local post-secondary schools).
- Monitor, respond to, and advocate for emerging provincial and federal policy initiatives impacting ELCC.
- Implement corporate initiatives.



Durham's Best Start Network

Durham's Best Start Network (BSN) started in 2005 with funds from the Government of Ontario. The BSN is open to all representatives from organizations who work with children from birth to 12 years of age. With more than 85 members from 45 organizations in ELCC, BSN creates a space for developing resources, establishing partnerships and sharing best practices. The network is led by two co-chairs: the Director of the CSD and a representative from a participating community organization.

A primary goal for Durham's BSN is to mobilize community partners and stakeholders together. Each organization delivers programs and services to meet the diverse ELCC needs of Durham Region. The BSN welcomes new members on a regular basis and provides the opportunity to continuously collaborate. Members can provide support and expertise by joining various established sub-committees. Sub-committees include:

Child Care Sub-Committee

Providing members of the ELCC community with an avenue to:

- Receive updates on the current child care environment.
- Network and share strategies for responding to changes in the child care sector.
- Provide feedback to various legislative bodies on how to promote quality child care and deliver services that reflect current research and best practices.

Home Child Care Sub-Committee

Providing members of the home child care sector a method to:

- Build capacity and resources to support the Home Child Care community.
- Create and fostering partnerships and opportunities for community collaboration.
- Raise awareness and recognition around the home child care sector.



Infant and Early Years Mental Health Sub-Committee

Working to improve infant and early years mental health experiences by integrating the science of mental health into professional practice.

Professional Education and Training (PET) Committee

Working to provide professional development opportunities and early learning events to the ELCC community based on input from the community and community need. Members include representatives from a broad focus of organizations providing both direct and indirect services to children.

Research and Knowledge Mobilization Sub-Committee

Working to build a community where research informs practice, and practice informs research. The goal of the committee is to build capacity for research and knowledge exchange in post-secondary institutions, and agencies serving children and families in Durham Region.

Durham's ELCC community partners:

- Licensed child care agencies.
- Licensed home child care agencies.
- Indigenous community partners.
- Special Needs Resourcing agencies.
- Recreation program providers.
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres.
- Public libraries.
- Community health and mental health agencies.
- Durham Region Health Department.
- Local colleges and universities
- Durham Region Social Services.
- School boards and Early Years teams.
- Ministry of Education.



Measuring children's readiness to learn at school

The CSD uses local data and information to inform research, develop policy and plan programs to meet the diverse needs of children. Many common challenges faced by children can be mitigated with the help of early recognition and management. Children who are most vulnerable are disproportionately at risk for long-term chronic health conditions, social isolation, and lower academic and professional achievement. Providing help early on is likely to be more effective and less costly than providing help later in life. As children's brains develop rapidly at a younger age, we have a unique opportunity to make the biggest and most positive impact.

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a validated and reliable questionnaire that is used to measure Senior Kindergarten children's ability to meet age-appropriate developmental expectations at school entry. The EDI measures readiness to learn in school across five key developmental domains:

- Physical Health and Well-Being.
- Social Competence.
- Emotional Maturity.
- Language and Cognitive Development.
- Communication Skills and General Knowledge.

By using the EDI to collect information on children's strengths and weaknesses, we can understand where children need the most help to prepare for school and increase the chance of successful development during the pivotal early years. EDI data drives evidence-based early interventions to effectively help children be ready to learn at school, and therefore reach their greatest potential.

The EDI has provided data and information about children's vulnerabilities for several years across five different time cycles (2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018); and is publicly available for each of the eight municipalities and 50 Health Neighbourhoods in Durham Region.

After a brief pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EDI questionnaire was completed in 2023. Data from the EDI Cycle Six in 2023 will help identify the needs of local communities and allow for a better understanding of the vulnerabilities that currently exist for children in the early years.

Durham's CSD will use the results from the 2023 EDI data to identify and prioritize the expansion of ELCC resources, influence policy and programming decisions, and effectively plan timely interventions to support children and their families. Data Analysis Co-ordinators work in partnership with local school boards and their Early Years teams, public health, child care and other early years partners to disseminate EDI findings to community, build capacity to promote understanding and application of EDI data, and strategize ways to address vulnerabilities through new or existing supports.



Engagement to inform the service plan

The CSD regularly consults with community to inform workplans. The ELCC community and Durham residents were consulted in different ways to support the development of this service plan. Consultations and analysis of the information received ensures that developed priorities align with the priorities of the communities being served.

Consultations were completed with the following key community groups:

- Durham's BSN: Comprised of representatives from 45 organizations from or supporting the ELCC community.
- Supervisor's Network: A networking group available to Durham Region's licensed child care supervisors.
- Early Learning Planning Table: Comprised of representatives from the Region of Durham and the region's six local school boards.
- Parents, families and Durham residents.

Data collection methods included small group discussions, guided discussions of large groups, one-to-one conversations, brainstorming sessions, and a pre-recorded information video and open-ended surveys administered to collect additional feedback on the direction of priorities and strategies. Data was analyzed and summarized into various priorities, strategies and actions/operations. As a result, four main priority areas were established and are outlined in the following section of this service plan.

"Definitely agree with train, attract and retain qualified [RECEs]. The number of children with special needs is increasing and ... we need to provide children the support they need in their earlier years to ensure they are best set up to achieve to their full potential."

– Survey respondent.



2023 to 2027 Early Learning and Child Care priorities in Durham Region

To effectively position the CSD for ongoing transformation and respond to an evolving ELCC system, flexibility has been incorporated into this service plan.

2023 to 2027
Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan

Support expansion and access to child care

Enhance supportive and inclusive child care

Increase, attract, and retain quality RECEs

Optimize virtual service delivery and technology

Regional priorities

Provincial and federal priorities

High quality

Accessible

Inclusive

Affordable

Flexible

Support expansion and access to child care

Equitable access to high-quality, affordable early learning and child care plays an important part in local economic recovery, including workforce participation. Additionally, the benefits of quality child care on children's learning, health, and social development are greatest for communities experiencing high inequities and low-income families.

To support expansion and access to child care, the CSD will focus on the following areas:

- a. Strengthen access and inclusion to the CWELCC system.
- b. Build capacity within the licensed home child care sector.
- c. Leverage funding opportunities to expand support programs and services.



Strengthen access and inclusion to the CWELCC system

In March 2022, the Ontario government reached a deal with the federal government to implement the CWELCC to lower child care fees for Ontario families. The CWELCC system aims to lower child care fees to an average of \$10 per day for families with children under six years of age, increase access to high-quality and inclusive child care (through the creation of an estimated 86,000 new spaces); hire new early childhood educators, and support improved compensation for all RECEs working in licensed child care settings.

The CSD is working directly with the Ministry of Education to support the phased-in CWELCC system implementation in Durham Region.

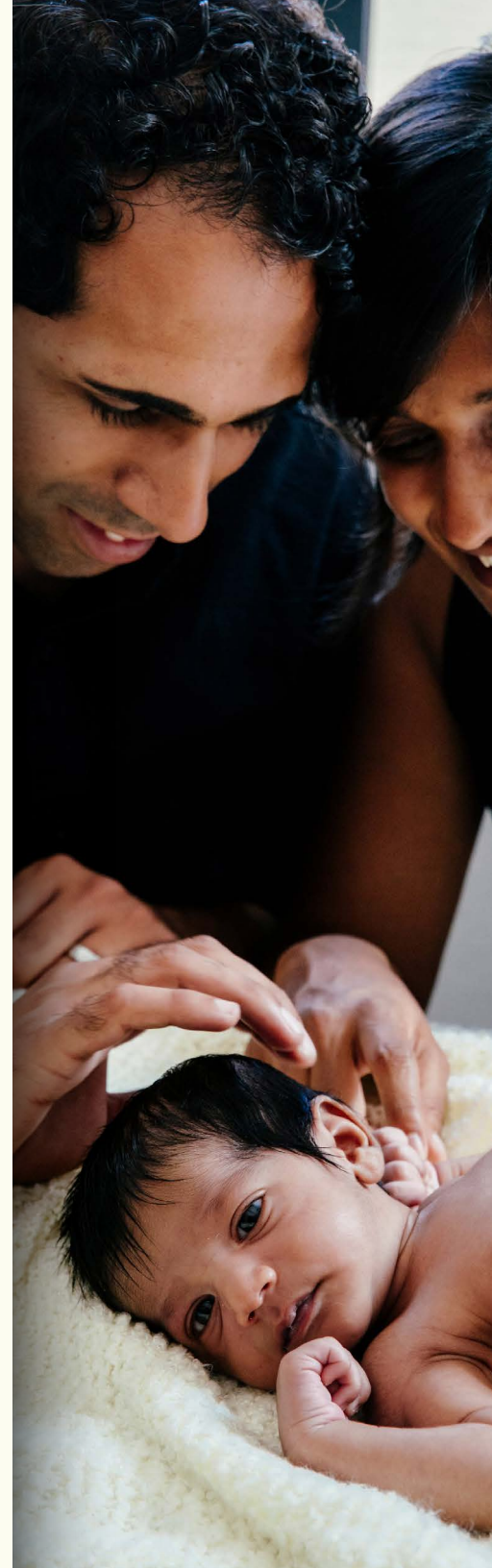
The vision of Ontario's Action Plan is for all families to have access to high-quality, affordable and inclusive child care. The Ministry of Education (2022) has outlined the following objectives of Ontario's Action Plan:

- Reduce child care fees for eligible families.
- Increase access to high-quality, inclusive, licensed child care.
- Address barriers to providing affordable, inclusive and flexible child care.
- Invest in and expand the child care workforce.
- Enhance data and reporting.

The CWELCC system implementation is a phased-in approach over a five-year period, which began in 2022.

The CWELCC application for licensed operators in Durham Region opened for enrolment in June 2022. Licensed operators were required to notify the region of their intent to opt in or out of the CWELCC system by November 1, 2022, as part of Phase 1 of implementation. Operators were required to notify eligible families of their intent to opt in or out of CWELCC within two weeks of notifying the Region of Durham.

Licensed operators who opted into CWELCC began reducing fees by 25 per cent, providing refunds to eligible families in fall 2022; retroactive to April 1, 2022. In January 2023, eligible families experienced a further rate reduction to approximately 50 per cent, with fees reduced to an average of \$10 per day by 2026 (Ministry of Education, 2022).



Actions

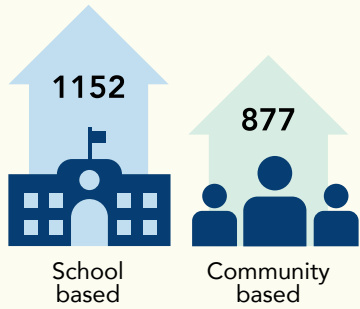
The CSD will support the ELCC community through the phases of implementation of the CWELCC system in Durham Region. Actions will be reported on an annual basis and may include:

- Maximizing funding to support operators.
- Providing templates to support administration (e.g., reporting, policies, communications).
- Ongoing information sessions and training for staff, supervisors and families as needed.
- Streamlining and maximizing efficiencies in CWELCC reporting required by operators.

Directed growth strategy

To support the implementation of CWELCC, the Ministry of Education committed to a province-wide child care expansion of 86,000 spots by 2026. Beginning in 2023, the Ministry of Education shifted child care expansion from open enrolment to a directed growth plan to create new child care spaces. A directed growth approach aims to ensure funding is available to support new spaces in communities most in need of access to high-quality, affordable child care.





As the CMSM, The Regional Municipality of Durham was mandated to expand the CWELCC system by 2,029 spaces in schools and community-based locations between 2022 to 2026. A growth plan has been developed to align with provincial directives and annual allocated space targets, while meeting the needs of communities across the region. Growth will focus on priority neighbourhoods determined by variables that incorporate equity of access, demographics, socio-economic indicators, existing licensed child care capacity and annual growth targets for Durham Region. The directed growth plan will be updated annually as community needs shift.

Through a neighbourhood community analysis process, the CSD consistently reviews local data sources—such as child care capacity and vacancy data; census information; EDI; SNR data; and approved residential construction data—to determine priority neighbourhoods. As community need evolve and updated data emerges, priority neighbourhoods may fluctuate (e.g., changes in available CWELCC eligible spaces or availability of appropriate spaces that can be licensed).

As an appendix to this plan, details of the directed growth strategy have been provided. It includes expanding community and school-based spaces, and will be updated annually to reflect new expansion approvals and data based on in-depth community analysis. The community analysis uses local data to determine priority neighbourhoods to ensure equitable access to the following communities:

- Families experiencing low income.
- Children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports.
- Francophone children.
- Indigenous children.
- Black children.
- Other racialized children.
- New immigrants.
- At least 25% of children vulnerable in two more EDI domains.
- A population that is not served in one or more age group.

School-based targets will be met using the existing Ministry of Education directives as implemented by school boards and include the CSD annual community analysis to determine areas of need.

Build capacity within the licensed home child care sector

A strong, high-quality, licensed home child care (LHCC) sector is a key component to supporting Durham Region families with accessible, flexible and affordable licensed child care.

LHCC offers an opportunity to meet expansion targets without requiring additional capital funding. Expanding the LHCC sector by supporting existing agencies operating within Durham Region can support access to affordable child care in certain neighbourhoods, especially where centre-based child care may not be a viable option.

LHCC also provides flexible hours, including evening and weekend options that most centre-based child care centres do not offer. This helps families who require supports outside of the typical work day.

In the past, a significant challenge to the expansion of the LHCC sector was the ability to attract providers. Home child care agencies have reached out to providers who are operating unlicensed home child care with limited success in recruiting these providers to join the licensed sector.

The implementation of the CWELCC system offers a fresh perspective, encouraging unlicensed providers to reconsider joining a LHCC agency. As access increases and the reduction of fees for licensed child care continues for CWELCC eligible spaces, unlicensed child care providers may consider shifting in order to be able to offer affordable care for their families.

Actions

The CSD will actively work to:

- Increase public awareness of LHCC as a viable option for all families, as well as for families who require non-traditional hours of care and/or who need care for infants and toddlers.
- Develop and implement processes to encourage providers in unlicensed sectors to join the LHCC sector.
- Advocate for and implement processes to reduce the administrative burden for existing home child care agencies operating in Durham Region.



Leverage funding opportunities to expand support programs and services

The CSD continues to maximize financial support for ELCC by supporting the efficient distribution of various funding streams, promotion of fiscally responsible practices, and use of community needs to drive change.

There are several funding streams from all orders of government (regional, provincial and federal) that are targeted at increasing the amount of support for licensed child care. Each of these streams has slightly different mandates and varied requirements as to usage and reporting. While new funding guidelines are provided annually by the Ministry of Education, significant changes to these guidelines are anticipated for 2024 to accommodate changes to the ELCC as a result of the CWELCC.

Actions

The Region of Durham's CSD will continue to focus on initiatives that meet the needs of families, children, educators and operators within Durham. It is important for the CSD to recognize, monitor and implement strategies to address the impact cost drivers may have on quality within the licensed child care sector.

The CSD will communicate changes to operators regarding funding, reporting requirements or decisions clearly and concisely, and provide guidance and support as needed. The intent is to maximize funding and resources within the community by supporting operators, and helping to mitigate impacts due to legislative changes and community pressures.

The CSD will support operators to offer efficient, fiscally responsible programs located in areas where there is a demand. Co-ordinating new programs to locations that support expansion targets is important to allocate funds efficiently and maintain affordability and accessibility for communities. Families are best supported when programs are located within their communities to ensure supports and services are available to all families.





Enhance supportive and inclusive child care

Whether child care staff or children and/or families attending programming, all individuals should feel welcomed, respected and valued in the ELCC community. This allows everyone to contribute, learn and participate meaningfully.

The CSD is committed to enhancing strategies to create supportive and inclusive ELCC environments for all.

Strategies include working to:

- a. Provide mental health and well-being supports for ELCC staff.
- b. Bolster diverse, equitable and inclusive (DEI) practices.
- c. Strengthen strategies to support children with special needs.
- d. Improve wraparound services for children and families.

Provide mental health and well-being supports for ELCC staff

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, a high rate of burnout, stress and mental health concerns have been reported for those working in the sector. Due, in part, to critical staffing shortages, ELCC staff have reported limited opportunities to address their mental health and well-being. Local service planning consultations also highlighted that knowledge, support, skills, and professional learning opportunities to support ELCC staff mental health and well-being is a current local priority.

Actions

Some ways the CSD will continue working to improve mental health and well-being for ELCC staff are by:

- Providing mental health and well-being education, and professional learning opportunities.
- Building capacity to navigate difficult situations in the ELCC environment to mitigate impacts on staff well-being.
- Providing and promoting support opportunities, which may include peer or mentorship programs, communities of practice, etc.



Bolster diverse, equitable and inclusive (DEI) practices

The CSD is committed to supporting an ELCC community where all members feel respected, welcomed and valued.

To advance positive, safe and inclusive working environments, the CSD is committed to using an anti-oppression and equity lens when collaborating with operators, staff, community partners and families to strengthen policies, training, complaints processes and reporting mechanisms.

Additionally, the CSD promotes and enables staff to strengthen their pedagogical leadership and encourage families to implement DEI practices into their daily lives by offering professional learning and ongoing training/information sessions.

Actions

To continue building and implementing a collaborative and sustainable DEI plan—one that supports and reflects the ELCC community—the Region will continue working with staff, families and community partners.

This work will be supported by the Region's DEI team and an external consultant who specializes in this work. Together, they will formulate a plan that will direct staff to conduct a multi-method program evaluation to understand the effectiveness, satisfaction and impact of the plan in achieving its intended goals. Actions may include:

- Training and support for ELCC professionals and families.
- The development of policies and procedures to address barriers and enhance DEI practices.
- Promoting benefits of hiring a diverse workforce.



Strengthen strategies to support children with special needs

The Region of Durham partners with special needs resourcing agencies to support children with special concerns and needs. The Region directly operates two of the five agencies (Infant and Child Development and CDBS); and has service agreements with three additional agencies (Grandview Kids, Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth – Durham Region, and the Surrey Place blind-low vision program).

To encourage a system supportive of children (birth to 12 years) with special needs, there is a need to streamline the process by which needs are identified, and supports are requested and delivered in a timely manner. This requires open communication between families, child care providers and special needs resourcing agencies.

Improve wraparound services for children and families

The CSD is continuously working to improve how children and families access support and services across the Social Services Department and through our community partners. The CSD is examining ways for families, who require multiple programs or services, to access them in a streamlined and efficient way.

Actions

The CSD will leverage strong community relationships and internal partners to collaborate to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement in referral and intake processes, gaps in knowledge, communication and services provided. The CSD is also actively engaged in consultations to support human services integration with Durham Region's Social Services Department to ensure that families receive the supports and services they need, when they need it, and as seamlessly as possible.

Increase, attract and retain RECEs

RECEs play an integral role in helping to create a high-quality early learning and child care system that is inclusive for all families in Durham Region.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a child care staffing crisis; the issue has since been exacerbated. The lack of qualified RECEs available for employment is jeopardizing the expansion of the licensed child care system.

Statistics Canada data suggests that in spring 2022, about one in three (34 per cent) child care centres were looking to fill a vacant position for an employee with early childhood education credentials or training. Furthermore, almost 90 per cent of child care centres reported having difficulties filling vacant positions (Statistics Canada, 2023). The most common reasons included applicant's lack of qualifications, having few or no applicants to choose from, and applicant's lack of related work experience.

As a result of increased affordability, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in demand for child care spaces in Durham Region, further increasing the demand for a qualified child care workforce. Key challenges that the sector currently face – such as increasing, attracting and retaining qualified staff – must be addressed to support the successful implementation of the CWELCC system.

In 2022, The Regional Municipality of Durham contracted the Durham Workforce Authority to complete a workforce planning and analysis scan on the child care workforce in Durham Region.

- In Ontario, including the Oshawa Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), 97 per cent of child care workers are women.
- As of 2022, there are 2,350 RECEs in the Oshawa CMA.
- In the Oshawa CMA, 21.1 per cent of child care workers are visible minorities.
- The number of new Canadians in the child care workforce in Canada is expected to grow over the next several years, with a pre-existing overrepresentation in the workforce compared to other fields.

To increase, attract and retain high-quality RECEs, the CSD will focus on the following strategies:

- a. Promote RECE as a profession.
- b. Implement workforce development strategies.
- c. Increase and promote pathways to becoming a RECE.

Promote RECE as a profession

By raising public awareness of RECEs, the hope is to build public confidence to acknowledge RECE as a professional designation and further attract individuals into the sector.

To improve public perception and increase awareness of the importance of the early learning and child care sector, the ongoing promotion of RECE as a profession will be a priority over the next five years.

Actions

The CSD will continue to build the ELCC community workforce. Some actions may include:

- Providing/promoting mentorship opportunities.
- Promote public recognition of RECEs.
- Corporate communication strategies.
- Collaborate with local high schools, post-secondary institutions and community partners to attract, promote and inform the public about the benefits of the profession.



Implement workforce development strategies

The CSD will continue to build on the work supported with workforce strategy funding to continue to build on strategies to support recruitment activities.

Actions

The CSD will actively promote and train on the Jobs First Durham Child Care hub. This is a virtual centralized job bank for ELCC community positions. This hub will establish and provide training for employers and job seekers that will support workforce data moving forward at a local level.

Through the Knowing our Numbers project, Durham Region has collaborated with other municipalities, and researchers at the University of Toronto and the College of Early Childhood Educations, to gain valuable data about the ELCC workforce. Durham Region will be positioned to have the necessary data about the local workforce to guide the CSD to make informed, data-driven planning discussions, shape viable solutions and support evaluation of investment. The CSD will highlight common trends, review community comparators, share best practices, identify areas of gaps and workforce deserts, understand local strengths, and pinpoint priorities essential in creating a vibrant and healthy ELCC workforce.

The CSD will be commencing a pilot Mentoring Pairs program in 2023 to 2024, pairing supervisors with varied experience to create networking and professional development opportunities, and skills acquisition for all participants. The CSD has also partnered with Durham College to develop and fund a four-part child care leadership micro-credential program. The program launched in September 2023 with high enrolment. This program is intended to provide professional development for current and/or potential supervisors and leaders in early childhood education in the Region of Durham who wish to explore the role and responsibilities of a leader. Topics include financial literacy, human resource management, leadership models, and legislative and policy requirement for the Early Years sector.



Increase and promote the pathways to becoming a RECE

In response to the challenges of recruiting and retaining staff in the sector, the CSD will continue to collaborate with other Service System Managers and post-secondary institutions to increase access and promote the various pathways to becoming a RECE. This would include supporting, promoting, and enhancing paid training and professional development opportunities for the ELCC workforce. Further development and research on ECE grants, and free mentorship or professional development opportunities will be explored and advertised to increase capacity among the workforce.

Actions

The CSD will explore continued partnerships with community agencies to support pathways to becoming a RECE. This may include:

- Considering opportunities for dual-credit programs.
- Promotion and support of Child Care Assistant programs within the local secondary schools.
- Supporting micro-credentialing.

The CSD collaborated with three service system managers and six local community colleges to fund enhanced and expanded opportunities in early childhood education training. The result has provided a fully funded wraparound approach to education. It removes barriers for settlement programs, and people from historically marginalized groups. And it creates compressed streams and increased cohorts with a variety of start dates and times that support full-time and part-time studies. There are also two fully funded Indigenous programs being offered at two local community colleges, which leverage partnerships with Indigenous support agencies to provide culturally relevant wraparound support to remove barriers to participation.



Optimize virtual service delivery and technology

Context

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, leveraging the use of technology became critical to optimize and support service delivery, provide education and training, and maintain ongoing communication, collaboration and engagement with ELCC staff, children and families. Although the implementation of virtual service delivery was largely a result of unprecedented circumstances, in many instances, virtual service delivery was deemed to be an equalizer by providing access to services and information regardless of location. The CSD has embraced this additional method of connecting our communities and will continue to build on this momentum to expand our reach and maximize support for the ELCC community.

To optimize virtual service delivery and technology, the CSD will focus on the following strategies:

- a. Enhance virtual service delivery.
- b. Leverage technology to promote communication and collaboration.

Enhance virtual service delivery

To enhance virtual service delivery and technology, the CSD aims to identify opportunities for efficiencies in processes and opportunities to expand available services. By maximizing the use of technology and access to information through a variety of methods, the CSD will ensure that valuable, pertinent information is readily accessible to families and operators when they need it.

Actions

The CSD will provide flexible options to Durham Region residents, families and ELCC professionals to access information, services and initiatives. The CSD will review internal processes and identify opportunities to streamline efficiencies and improve overall service delivery.



Leverage technology to promote communication and collaboration

The CSD aims to leverage technology to promote communication and collaboration among families and ELCC professionals. This may include leveraging existing platforms, such as the Durham Region website and social media, and exploring new software options and digital platforms.

Actions

The CSD will actively work to increase access to ongoing communication/messaging, relevant data, resources for professionals and families, as well as options for reporting, reconciliation and payment processes for operators. Through the service plan consultation process, innovative ideas and proposals were suggested by the ELCC community. The CSD will continue to review these ideas and engage the collaborators to support the actions within this priority.





Moving the plan forward

This plan provides a starting point, for which Divisional work plans will be created within each priority. The funding provided by the Ministry of Education and the Government of Canada will maintain momentum towards accomplishing goals.

In accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA), this service plan will be presented to Durham Regional Council for approval. Following approval, a copy of the plan will be disseminated to the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the broader community will be updated about the approved plan by publicly posting the plan on the regional website in conjunction with a comprehensive communication strategy targeting licensed child care operators, early years professionals, community partners, students and families.



Performance plan

This plan was developed to align with the federal and provincial ELCC priorities to build a high-quality, affordable, inclusive, accessible and flexible child care system. It also aligns with various goals in the Durham Region Strategic Plan 2020 to 2024:

- Community Vitality
 - To foster an exceptional quality of life with services that contribute to strong neighbourhoods, vibrant and diverse communities, and influence our safety and well-being.
- Social Investment
 - To ensure a range of programs, services and supports are available and accessible to those in need, so that no individual is left behind.
- Service Excellence
 - To provide exceptional value to Durham taxpayers through responsive, effective and fiscally sustainable service delivery.

To bolster transparency and accountability, as well as to showcase accomplishments, an annual year-in-review document will be made available achieving the four regional priorities. Additional measurement indicators will be developed to track milestones and outcomes of specific projects that align with regional priorities.

Ongoing community engagement

The CSD is committed to continuous engagement with community members and service providers throughout the implementation of this service plan. Continued engagement will help:

- Ensure workplans for each of the priorities align with the priorities of the community.
- Enhance service accessibility and inclusion for all children and families.
- Increase support, awareness and recognition of the ELCC community.
- Support local decision-making to enrich programs, facilitate smooth transitions and enhance integration between the ELCC, local schools and support services.
- Regularly collect and analyze feedback from parents, caregivers, children and community partners to inform local programs, services and means of communication.

Contingencies

The accomplishments achieved within the four identified regional priorities outlined in this service plan are contingent on a number of factors:

- Emerging modernization strategies from the Ministry of Education.
- A new provincial funding formula to be introduced to CMSM's in 2024.
- The federal election in October 2025.
- The provincial election in June 2026.
- A municipal election in October 2026.
- Potential changes to allocations of provincial and federal ELCC funds in the next five years.
- Unanticipated changes during the phased-in CWELCC implementation. It is important to note that the service plan term will expand beyond Phase 1 of the CWELCC implementation.



Conclusion

This plan is not meant to be definitive; it is flexible, allowing for changes to timelines or priorities depending on the complex needs of the children, families and the ELCC workforce in Durham Region.

The CSD strives to provide children and families with high-quality early learning and child care programs that meet the individual needs of families, while recognizing and honouring the diversity of local communities. The introduction of the four priorities detailed in this report will strengthen the CSD's role as the CSM to ensure an ELCC system that is affordable, accessible, high-quality and responsive to the dynamic needs of our growing community.



Acronym List

- (ADP) Adult Day Program
- (CWELCC) Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care
- (COPS) Canadian Occupational Project System
- (CMA) Census Metropolitan Area
- (CCEYA) Child Care and Early Years Act
- (CCLS) Child Care Licensing System
- (CDBS) Children's Developmental and Behavioural Supports
- (CSD) Children's Services Division
- (CMSM) Consolidated Municipal Service Manager
- (DOC) Directly Operated Centre
- (DEI) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- (DROC AQI) Durham Region Operating Criteria Assessment for Quality Improvement
- (DWA) Durham Workforce Authority
- (ECEA) Early Childhood Educator Assistant
- (EDI) Early Development Instrument
- (ELAQI) Early Learning and Care Assessment for Quality Improvement
- (ELCC) Early Learning and Child Care
- (LHCC) Licensed home child care
- (LTCH) Long-Term Care Home
- (OCCMS) Ontario Child Care Management System
- (PPE) Personal Protective Equipment
- (POS) Purchase of Service
- (RECE) Registered Early Childhood Educator
- (SNR) Special Needs Resourcing

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