



Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan

The Regional Municipality of Durham
Children's Services Division

2018-2022



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Acknowledgments

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Government
of Canada

Foreword

As the Director of Children's Services for the Region of Durham, I am very pleased to provide this comprehensive multi-year early learning and child care service plan for Durham Region. This plan focuses on system priorities that have been created by our early learning and child care community partners. It will become the pathway for moving forward the collective vision for children and families.

The past eight years have been filled with tremendous change for our sector, as we have worked collaboratively to advance the modernization of early learning and child care. Of key significance has been the establishment of the College of Early Childhood Educators and the professional responsibility for all Early Childhood Educators to adhere to the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice.

Durham Region is growing at a significant rate, and I am very pleased with the provincial and federal financial investments in early learning and child care. It is so very important to focus our attention and to invest in our children, to ensure a vibrant, healthy community.

I want to thank all the dedicated staff of the Children's Services Division and our many community partners across the sector that provided input into the development of this system plan. Your valuable contributions benefit children and families every day.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roxanne Lambert". The script is fluid and cursive.

Roxanne Lambert, RECE

Director, Children's Services Division



Executive summary

The 2018 to 2022 Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan reflects the strong commitment of The Regional Municipality of Durham to the children and families who live within its eight municipalities. The Plan sets out a commitment to the expansion of quality early learning and care programs and services to support children, families and the educators who work with them.

Recognizing the economic, social and educational importance of high quality early child care to the well-being to children, families and the community, this service plan describes how, as the Consolidated Municipal Services Manager, the Children's Services Division will collaborate with the early learning and care sector to expand and strengthen the child care system.

The Ministry of Education has identified four provincial priorities to guide the continued modernization and transformation of the early learning and care sector. It is the intent of the Ministry that early learning and child care be responsive, affordable, high quality and accessible.

The Children's Services Division, in collaboration with the broader early learning and care sector in Durham Region, has established five key priorities to drive the growth of a high quality child care system. The five priorities build on the Ministry priorities and, as they are implemented over the next five years in a planned, collaborative and transparent manner, will build a more responsive, affordable, high quality and accessible child care system. The five priorities include:

- 1. Maximize financial support available to licensed child care.**
 - a. Review and update the operator budget tool and fee request process.
 - b. Incorporate rate and fee elements into the operating funding model.
 - c. Annually review and include new legislation and community components into the community analysis tool and funding models.
 - d. Monitor vacancy levels in licensed child care settings.
- 2. Develop and implement a strategy to support children with special needs.**
 - a. Establish a system vision.
 - b. Implement a transition plan that meets community needs and reflects Ministry of Education (MEDU) requirements.
 - c. Implement capacity building opportunities.
 - d. Institute administrative and procedural modifications.
 - e. Increase the support provided through the Enhanced Staffing program.
- 3. Increase and attract and retain quality Registered Early Childhood Educators.**
 - a. Raise public awareness of the Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) professional designation.
 - b. Provide opportunities for new and existing Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) educators (including RECEs) to improve their knowledge, understanding and use of ELCC best practices.
- 4. Support and expand the licensed home child care sector.**
 - a. Develop and implement a new funding model for the licensed home child care sector in Durham Region that simplifies the existing structure, compensates providers and agencies equitably and is transparent.
 - b. Develop and implement a process to encourage providers in the unlicensed sector to join the licensed home child care sector by affiliating with a licensed home child care agency.
 - c. Increase public awareness of licensed home child as a viable licensed home child care option especially for those families who require non-traditional hours of care or who need care for infants and toddlers.
- 5. Reduce the waitlist for child care fee subsidy.**
 - a. Enhance the information collected when parents/caregivers apply for fee subsidy. This will provide waitlist data to better predict the needs of the community.
 - b. Develop a communication strategy to improve public understanding of the fee subsidy program.

The Service Plan establishes a number of strategies to support achievement of each priority. To further support implementation, an action plan with an accompanying timeline is described. Full implementation of the Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan is dependent on continued provincial and federal funding, as well as, collaboration between the Children's Services Division and an engaged, well resourced child care community. This Service Plan commits the CSD to this collaboration.

Provincial and Regional Priorities: 2018 to 2022

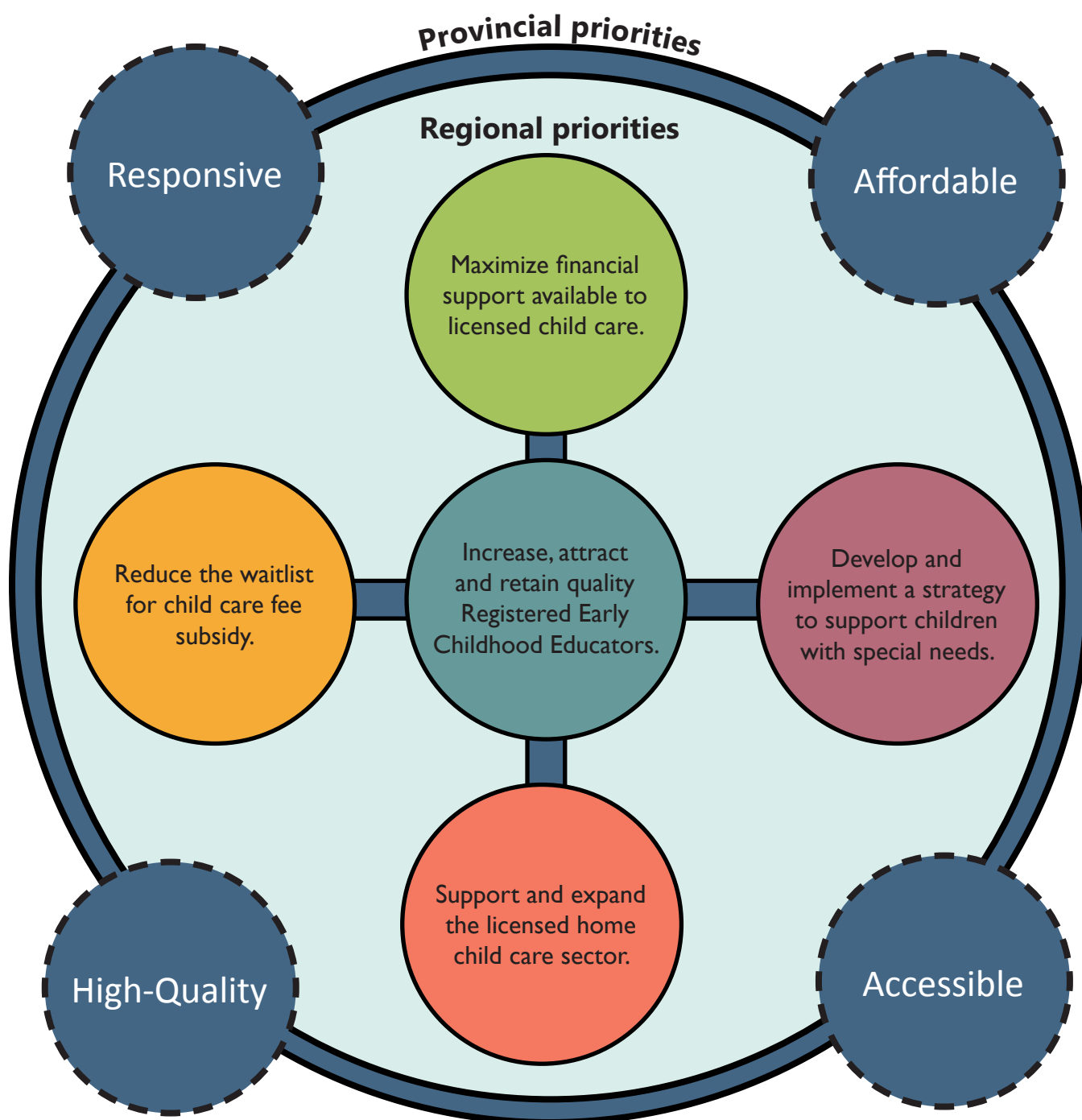




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Introduction

An evolving system

The Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) system is undergoing a period of transformation, modernization and growth. During the past few years, the Region of Durham has experienced substantial expansion across the ELCC sector and engaged in provincially governed modernization initiatives. With the help of strong community partnerships, the Children's Services Division (CSD) has effectively contributed to the provincial vision of a system that is high quality, seamless and responsive to parents' needs.

Since the publication of the 2010 to 2011 ELCC Service Plan, modernization initiatives have included:

- The complete implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten.
- A new funding formula for child care, which increases the capacity of Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs), to use provincial funding to more effectively meet local community needs. This includes the capacity to provide core or base program funding directly to early learning programs.
- Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework, which focuses on: Affordability, Accessibility, Quality and Responsiveness.
- The introduction of How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, as the guiding pedagogical framework for early years programs and child care.
- The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA), which replaced the Day Nurseries Act.
- The introduction of CCEYA Regulation 137/2015 (General) and Regulation 138/2015 (Funding, Cost Sharing and Financial Assistance), which support the CCEYA and are continuing to be refined. These regulations provide specific direction about how the CCEYA, 2014 will be operationalized. They clarify expectations for agencies and organizations, and increase accountability for both the Ministry and the early learning and care sector.
- The provincial promise to create 100,000 new spaces for children birth to four years during a five-year period beginning in 2017, and the provision of Child Care Expansion funds to achieve this.
- The Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and the provision of ELCC funding, which provides funding during the next three years to expand licensed child care services.
- The transformation of family resources programs and Ontario Early Years Centres to EarlyON Child and Family Centres.
- The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and an investment of \$250 million during the next three years for programs and actions focused on reconciliation through early years programming.
- Clarification to the scope of practice for which special needs resourcing (SNR) agencies are funded and operate.
- Bill 148: Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs (2017) to raise minimum wage and equalize pay.
- Provincial Wage Enhancement funding for both licensed group and home child care.
- One-time Fee Stabilization funding to support licensed operators to meet increased minimum wage requirements as of January 2018.



Planning for transformation

The five identified Regional priorities outlined in this service plan are contingent on a number of factors:

- Emerging modernization strategies from the Ministry of Education.
- The provincial election in June 2018.
- A municipal election in October 2018.
- Potential changes to allocations of provincial and federal ELCC funds in the next five years.

This plan follows the expectations for CMSM and DSSAB service plans, as outlined in the Ontario Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan Resource (2017). However, the provincial deadline is June 2019, and the CSD administration has consciously submitted the report before an internal change to leadership. Therefore, changes may be required based upon requests made by the Ministry between 2018 and 2019.

To bolster transparency and accountability, the CSD will publish an annual progress report to describe changes and status of achieving the five Regional priorities. These reports will be widely circulated to the ELCC community and be available on the CSD website at durham.ca/childrensservices.

Child care as an economic driver

Public investment in licensed child care drives economic development in Durham Region.

“Economic development is about more than just jobs and income; it seeks to improve productivity of local resources, encourage business profitability and promote community sustainability and quality of life” (Poole, 1999 as reported by Warner et al., 2004).

In Durham Region, there are direct and indirect benefits of enrollment in licensed child care for families, children and the local economy.

Benefits to families: Women in the workforce

As a direct benefit to families, mothers, who are increasingly well-educated and skilled, are able to enter the workforce and earn wages to support their family. The ability to access affordable child care and return to full-time employment decreases reliance on government-funded program, such as Ontario Works, and contributes to a reduction in income inequality.

The rate of Canadian women in the workforce has risen from 21.6 per cent in 1950 to 82 per cent in 2015. Despite this increase, women’s work experiences continue to be shaped by their role as a caregiver and a lack of affordable child care (Alexander et al., 2017; Moyer, 2017).

In Canada, Québec has the highest rates of mothers with young children in the workforce (Alexander et al., 2017), which is often attributed to universal access to low-fee child care throughout the province (Fortin, Godbout & St.Cerny, 2012). Because of this model, 70,000 mothers are able to sustain employment, which prompts an increase to Quebec’s domestic income by \$5 billion (Fortin et al., 2012). Such investments in the economy have helped stabilize and sustain the funding for universal child care programs (Fortin et al., 2012).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicts that if enrollment in early childhood education were to increase to 93.5 per cent of all children ages two to five years, an additional 76,500 women would enter the Canadian workforce (Alexander, 2018). Statistics Canada estimates 43 per cent of households without a working mother had an average income of below \$36,000 (Alexander, 2018). By providing access to high quality, reliable care, women will be able to confidently enter the workforce and be able to financially support their families.

Benefits to children: Readiness to learn

As a direct impact to children, participation in high quality ELCC increase the likelihood of being ready to learn at school, having greater academic achievement, a higher rate of completion of high school, and being better connected to local community agencies for optimal health and development (Heckman et al., 2010; McCain, Mustard, McCuaig, 2011; The Regional Municipality of Durham, 2012). Best of all, these outcomes apply to all children regardless of household income and/or parent education level.

The Perry Preschool Study is a American-based longitudinal research study observing short- and long-term outcomes of participation in a high-quality preschool program by low-income children (Heckman et al., 2010). Two groups were compared: children in preschool versus children not in preschool. Researchers learned that children enrolled in the preschool program had higher academic achievement, higher IQs, were more likely to graduate high school, and earned more money at age 40 compared to adults who had not attended the preschool as a child (Heckman et al., 2010).

Data from the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and Kindergarten Parent Survey (KPS) have shown children in Durham Region are better prepared to learn at school when they have participated in high-quality early learning programs, such as music, art and dance, recreation programs, library/literacy programs, and play-based learning activities (The Regional Municipality of Durham, 2013). Furthermore, when linked to EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) scores for reading, writing and mathematics, children who are on track with their development according to the EDI in Senior Kindergarten have higher rates of achieving EQAO provincial standards in Grade 3 (Calman & Crawford, 2013).

Enrollment in licensed child care also provides a unique opportunity for children’s health, well-being and development to be monitored by trained professionals on a daily basis. As the CMSM, the CSD allocates Ministry of Education dollars in support for four special needs resourcing agencies, which directly support children in the licensed system. Early interventions provided have a direct benefit for children experiencing difficulties with their behaviours or who have special needs related to speech and language, vision, cognition or physical abilities.

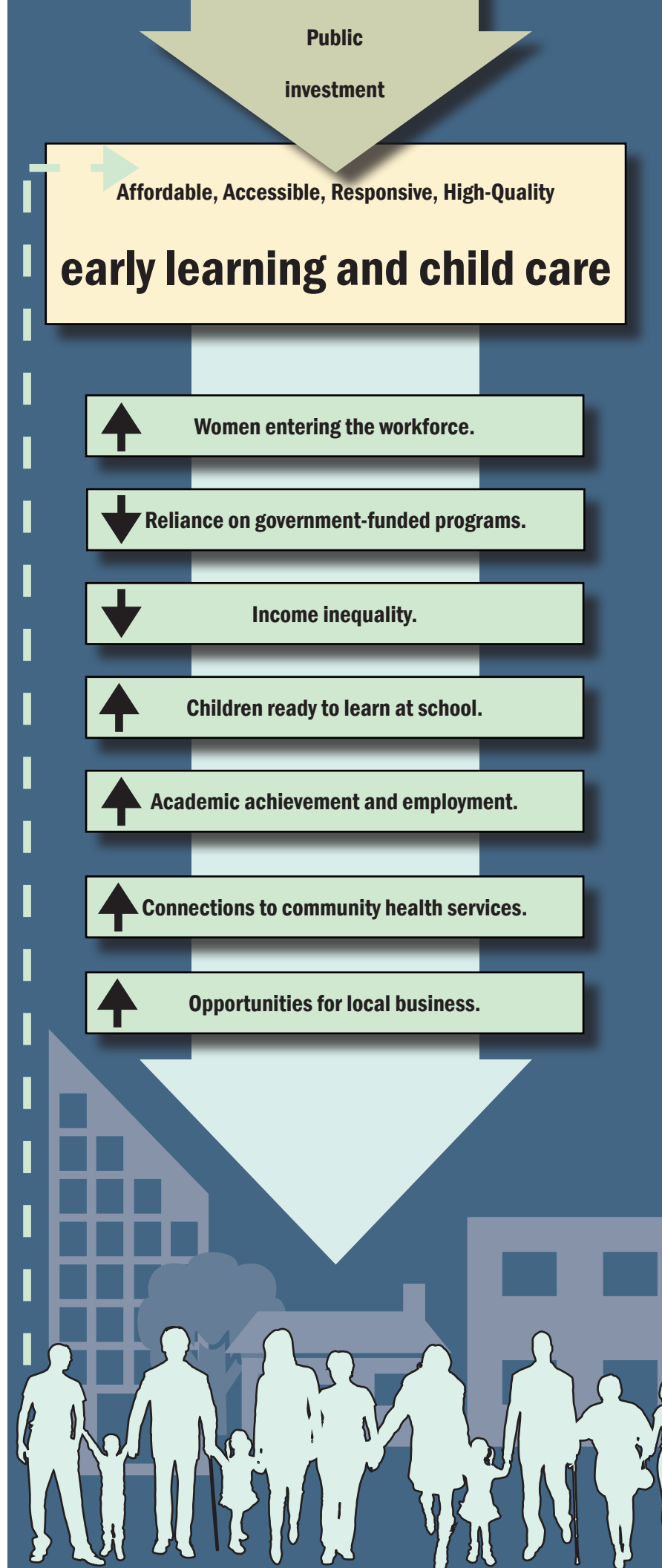
Benefits to Durham Region: Opportunities for business

Every dollar spent expanding the licensed child care system results in economic benefit of approximately \$6 (Alexander et al., 2017).

The most direct benefit of licensed child care on the local economy is the creation of jobs paying fair wages, with variable shifts meeting personal expectations (e.g., part-time, full-time, split-shift). This draws early childhood educators from outside of Durham to come to the region to work or future workers to attend local institutions to receive formal education in early childhood education. Furthermore, parents who are looking to access high-quality, affordable care in communities that are accessible to both home and work will relocate to Durham.

The greater economy supports licensed child care on a daily basis by providing sources of food or catering, leasing of commercial space, toys, equipment and opportunities for children's field trips. This further supports the broader workforce in multiple industries.

Overall, enrollment in high-quality early childhood education supports the next generation of Durham Region residents, and encourages a society of highly skilled and well-educated citizens.



The 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 and 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 are the foundation of the people-focused programs and services offered.

Business Affairs and Financial Management offers administrative, financial and emergency programs. We aim for excellent customer service and responsible resource management. Social Services helps people reach their full potential.

Family Services improves the quality of life for residents living and working in Durham Region. Social Services provides timely and accessible counselling, education and other support services.

Housing Services supports social housing providers and manages properties directly owned by the Region. It also funds programs to prevent homelessness and encourages the creation of affordable housing.

Income and Employment Support delivers the Ontario Works Program. Ontario Works gives financial assistance to people in need. It also supplies basic health benefits. A wide range of employment services are also available to help people find jobs.

Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors provides programs and services in four homes. The Region owns and operates each accredited home. We also provide:

- Respite care.
- Caregiver relief.
- Meals on Wheels programs.

The Children's Services Division plans, manages and funds Durham's ELCC sector. More details about the services provided are given in this report. The CSD works with fellow Social Services divisions on a variety of projects, which all contribute to achieving the 2016 to 2019 strategic goals set by the department. The CSD staff participates in cross-divisional committees, including: Excellence Council, Citizen Engagement Committee, Financial Empowerment Framework Working Group, and iLabs led by the Innovation and Research Unit.



Financial empowerment

The Social Services Department's six divisions have come together to institute a Financial Empowerment Framework to assist residents in locating available funds, support and services to reduce poverty and improve quality of life. The framework includes ten areas of effort: banking, tax filing, realizing disability benefits, Canada Learning Bonds, piloting a benefits eligibility tool, piloting an expansion of Family Support workers, piloting a trustee youth plan, exploring an Oshawa Community Development Plan, Connect for Success internet access project, and Social Investment Fund within the Income and Employment Support Division. The CSD has taken an active role in promoting and participating in actioning the framework and associated pilot projects.

Departmental strategic priorities: 2016 to 2019

The Social Services Department is committed to a continual improvement framework, which is strengthened by our partnership with Excellence Canada. Through this excellence lens, along with our four foundational principles of Care, Excellence, Learning and Leadership; our clients, residents and families receive the best-quality programs and services. The department's strategic priorities for 2016 to 2019 are presented below. The overarching theme of community is woven through the four priorities: living, preparing, promoting and building community.



Quality service delivery

The Framework for Excellence, as developed by Excellence Canada, guides the department's employees, services and programs. The Social Services administration aims to achieve the highest standards for Durham residents. In 2015, the department received the Gold Trophy and the Order of Excellence through the Canada Awards for Excellence (CAE). The Order of Excellence is recognition provided to organizations that significantly improve the quality of life of Canadians and is the most prestigious awards program in Canada.

The Children's Services Division

Consolidated Municipal Service Manager

In 2000, The Regional Municipality of Durham, Social Services Department, Children's Services Division (CSD) was designated as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) to plan, manage and fund the early learning and child care system (ELCC).

In the role of CMSM, the CSD is responsible for managing a co-ordinated and responsive early learning and child care system that supports children and their families in reaching their best potential. Key activities of the CMSM include:

1. Creating and implementing a multi-year service system plan in collaboration with the ELCC community.
2. Managing the child care fee subsidy program by:
 - Managing a waitlist and testing eligibility of families.
3. Managing a co-ordinated, responsive high-quality licensed system by:
 - Maintaining Purchase of Service agreements with licensed child care programs and authorized recreation providers.
 - Facilitating funding streams to support licensed child care, including:
 - ♦ General Operating Funding (formerly wage subsidy).
 - ♦ One-time special purpose funding (e.g. Health and Safety funding, Transformation, Minor Capital, Play-based Toys and Equipment).
 - ♦ Small Water Works funding.
 - ♦ Wage Enhancement funding.
 - ♦ Fee Subsidy Stabilization funding.
 - Implementing, co-ordinating and funding Capacity Building initiatives that support professional learning for the ELCC system.
 - Managing special needs resourcing services to support licensed child care and authorized recreation programs in Durham.
 - Directly operating seven licensed ELCC programs and Durham Behaviour Management Services.
 - Responding to new or changing direction from the MEDU.
4. Managing EarlyON Child and Family Centres:
 - Effective 2018, maintaining Purchase of Service agreements with service providers to offer services for families with young children in Durham.
 - Responding to additional requirements or direction from the MEDU.
5. Managing the system through community collaboration, partnerships and evidence-based decision-making:
 - Early Learning Program funding supporting the Best Start Network.
 - ♦ Facilitating and support sub-committees and working groups.
 - ♦ Participating in community projects with partners (e.g. service providers, school boards, post-secondary institutions etc).
 - Engaging in data initiatives, such as the Early Development Instrument, Municipal Benchmarking Network Canada, Health Neighbourhoods projects, and performing statistically driven community analyses.
 - Participating in the "Journey Together" Indigenous ELCC planning process by supporting the needs and opinions provided by authentic voices in Durham.

Child Care Fee Subsidy Program

The Child Care Fee Subsidy Program helps families who qualify cover the cost of licensed child care for children 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 graph below presents the number of children served through the Fee Subsidy program in 2017, by municipality.

Children served through fee subsidy

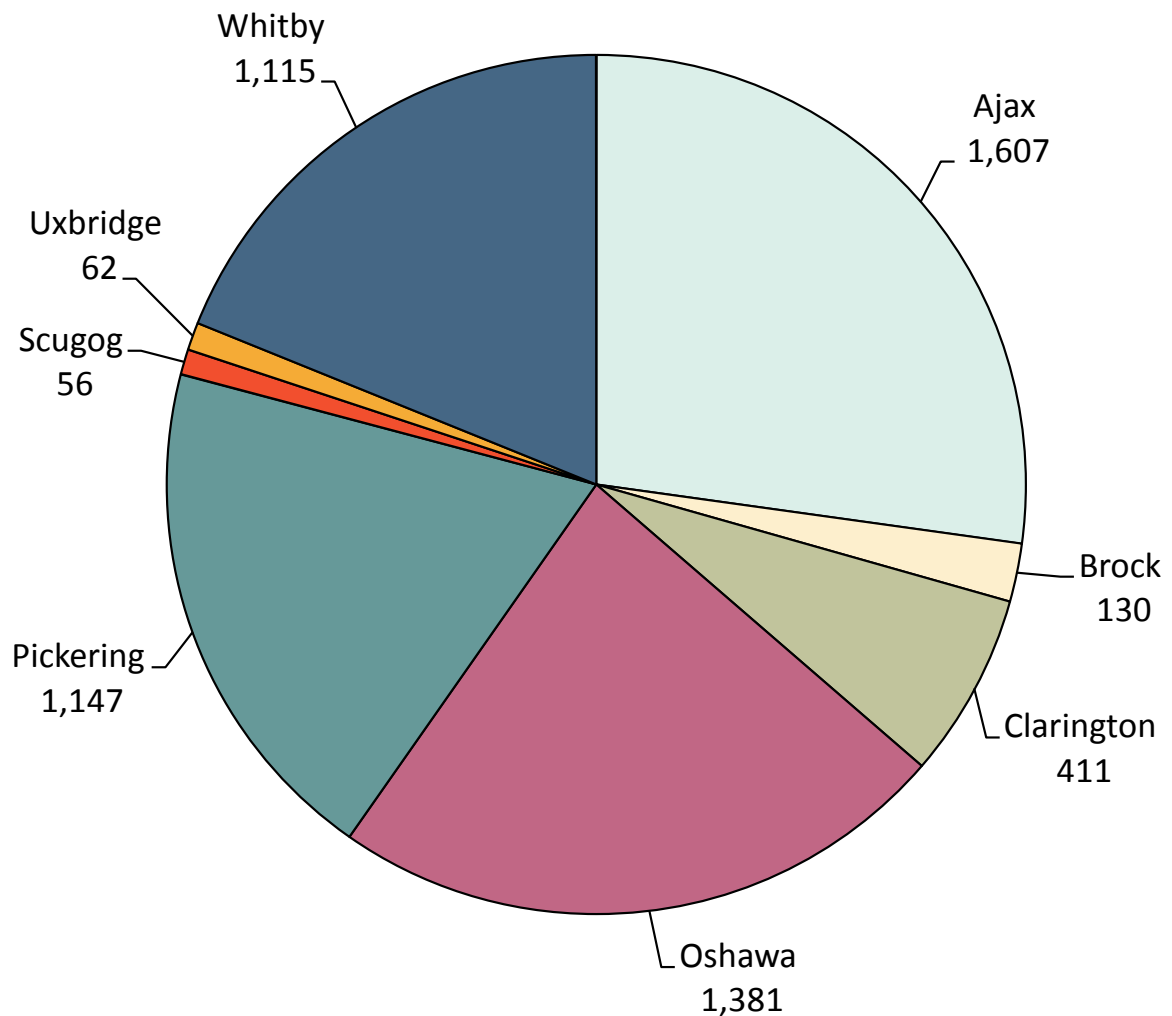


Figure 1: 2017 year end - number of children served by service location



Purchase of Service agreements

A goal of the CSD is to manage the system in a well-thought-out, planned manner. Purchase of Service (POS) agreements are implemented with licensed ELCC programs to support community need demonstrated through community analysis. This process supports parental choice to accessible, viable, high-quality programming in their neighbourhood. As of December 2017, there were 248 licensed child care centres and four licensed home child care agencies with a POS, equating to 23,511 spaces. In addition, there were service agreements with five approved Recreation Service providers.

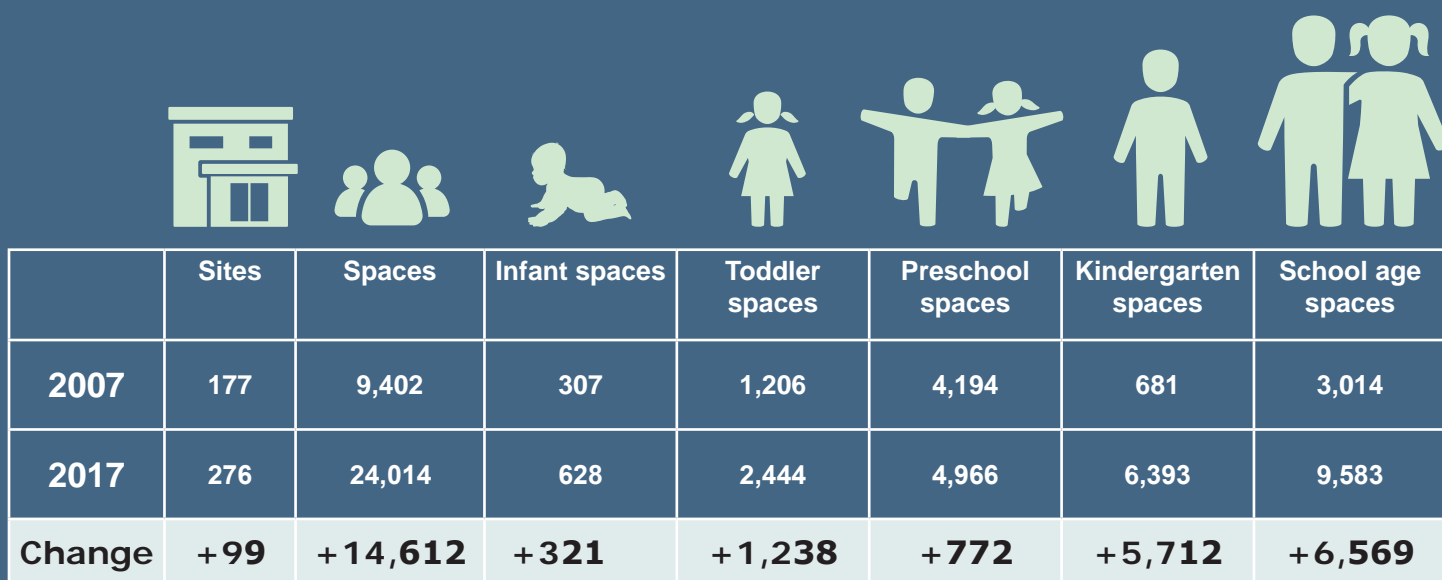
Local school boards are highly engaged in the ELCC sector, and are actively incorporating child care into requests for capital-funded new builds. A POS will be requested from the child care operators contracted by the school boards.

Regional staff work collaboratively with designated school board early years leads to co-ordinate new and expanding licensed child care programs on site in schools. The

CMSM is required to sign off approval on the school board submissions requesting capital funding to construct licensed child care spaces. As such, the CMSM is committed to providing financial supports to the child care operator when the program opens. Through this partnership of providing a POS to child care operators within school boards, the Region aligns with the MEDU Schools First Approach, ensuring all families have access to high-quality care where they live. Since 2013, local school boards have expanded licensed child care in schools by 200 infant spaces, 255 toddler spaces, 616 preschool spaces and four EarlyON Child and Family Centres. Expansion projects commencing in 2018 are highlighted below.

The CSD currently (2017) has a moratorium in place on the application process for operators to obtain a POS agreement. The moratorium allows the CSD to manage the system by ensuring growth is strategically planned and executed throughout the region. In 2017, the CSD began to provide feedback to the Ministry when a new license was

The expansion of child care in Durham Region: 2007 and beyond



Beginning in 2018, school-based licensed child care will expand to include:

- 13 infant rooms (130 new spaces)
- 12 toddler rooms (180 new spaces)
- 18 preschool rooms (408 new spaces)
- 4 family grouping rooms (60 new spaces)

24,014

Number of child care spaces as of December 2017.

requested within one of Durham's municipalities.

Operators are expected to review the Durham Region Operating Criteria and fee subsidy payment policies prior to their application. To apply for a POS, operators must have had a valid license with the MEDU for a minimum of six months. The submitted application undergoes validation through a community analysis with the CSD. This analysis includes a review of licensed child care agencies within a two kilometre spatial buffer, plans for surrounding land use (e.g., new construction of neighbourhoods), Health Neighbourhood demographics (e.g., birth rate, low-income rate, low-income housing, unemployment rate, population growth), as well as indicators predicting community needs (e.g., fee subsidy wait list, vacancy rate, licensed capacity). Findings are compared to a series of cut-off scores and evidence-based recommendations for approval or denial are recorded. Following the review of the application, a budget review and site visit are completed to inspect program viability and quality of services offered.



The Durham Region Operating Criteria Assessment for Quality Improvement

In order to receive and maintain a POS with the CSD, operators must comply with Regional quality standards. The Durham Region Operating Criteria Assessment for Quality Improvement (DROC AQI) is based upon the Toronto Children’s Services Early Learning and Care Assessment for Quality Improvement 2014 (ELAQI), including the 2016 Before and After School Update. 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. In 2017, 31 per cent exceeded expectations and 59 per cent of ELCC programs met expectations (Figure 2). Note that 'does not meet expectations' suggestions operators have multiple areas for improvement related to the pedagogy, and does not mean children are at risk.

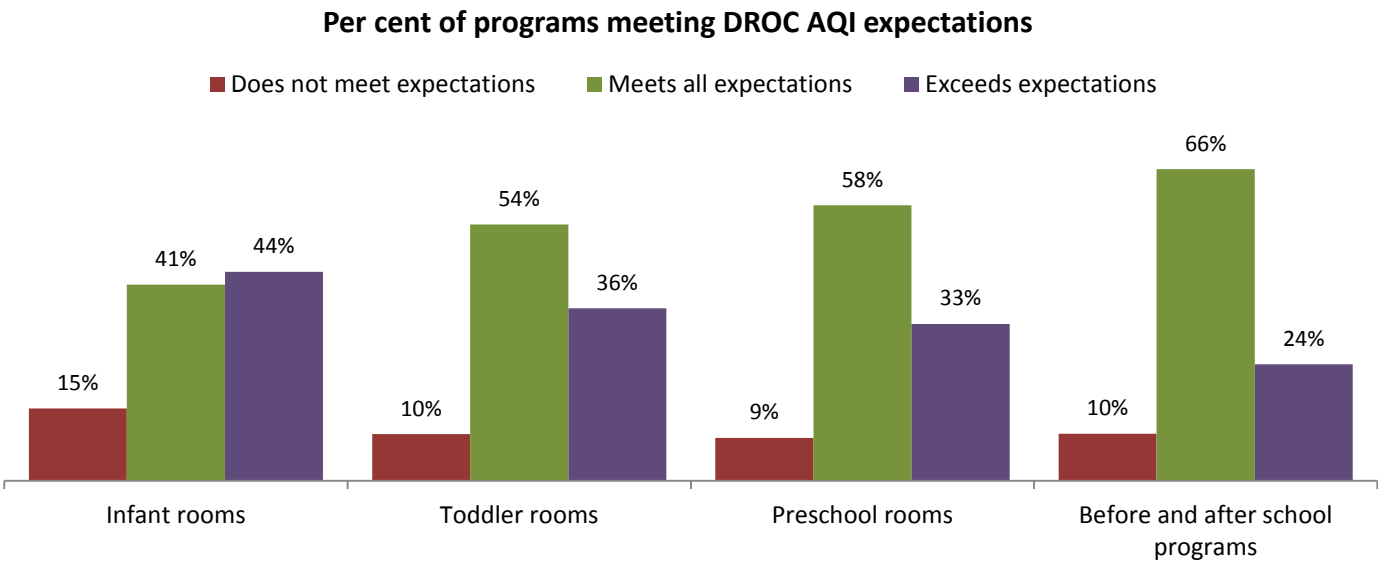



Figure 2: Per cent of programs meeting expectations outlined by the Durham Region Operating Criteria Assessment for Quality Improvement, 2017

When a room does not meet expectations, the site supervisor and educators in the room are charged with reviewing and reflecting on the assessment to determine where and how changes will be made to meet expectations. The CSD Quality and Contract Compliance Advisor assigned to the site discusses the DROC AQI report with the educators, and provides support through coaching and mentoring. Educators are expected to create a work plan to identify how improvements will be made. This report is usually sent to the Quality Advisor, who will return to the site for on-going monitoring, basing conversations and learning on How Does Learning Happen, Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. In addition, the operator is able to apply for one-time funding supports if needed to help improve the quality measure.

In 2018, the DROC AQI scores will be posted on durham.ca/quality. Certificates listing DROC AQI scores per room are signed by the Manager of Early Learning (below). The certificates, along with a peel-and-stick window decal, are expected to be posted within all licensed child care centres with a POS.

By increasing public awareness of DROC AQI scores, operators will be publicly accountable for improving and/or maintaining quality care for all children.



Embracing Quality Early Learning and Child Care

Child care centre name
participates in the Durham Region Operating Criteria; Assessment of Quality Improvement inspection process.

The following results were observed:

Date	Rooms Inspected	Criteria Results

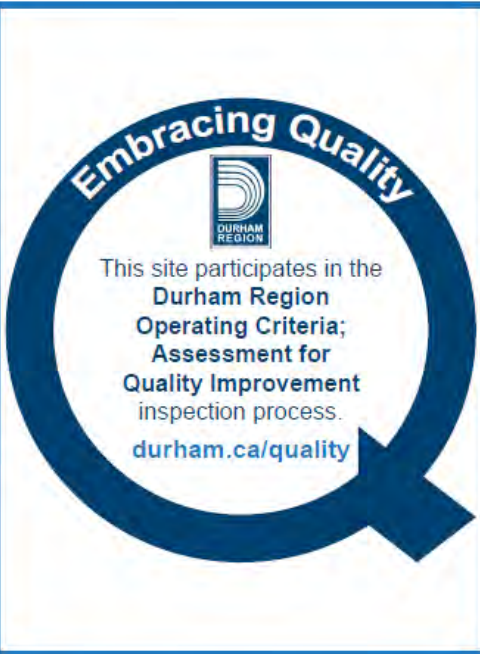
Rating Scale	Assessment for Quality Improvement
1.00 - 2.99	Does Not Meet Expectations The average overall rating did not meet the expectations of the Assessment for Quality Improvement.
3.00 - 3.99	Meets Expectations The average overall rating has met expectations of the Assessment for Quality Improvement.
4.00 - 5.00	Exceeds Expectations School age programs inspected before May 2017 used a four-point rating scale, the 4.0 is the highest rating possible.

The information above represents the observations on the day of the inspection. This certificate is not intended in any way or at any time to guarantee the conditions of an early learning and child care facility and should not be relied upon for any such purpose. For more information about Durham Region Operating Criteria, visit durham.ca/quality

Lisa McIntosh BA, RECE, Manager, Early Learning
Children's Services Division, Social Services Department
Regional Municipality of Durham

Embracing Quality early learning and child care questions in the Regional Municipality of Durham should be directed to The Child Service Division by telephone 1-800-387-0642 or by email childrensservices@durham.ca. The Ontario Ministry of Education is responsible for licensing child care sites in the province. For licensing information please visit <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng>

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-387-0642.



This site participates in the
**Durham Region
Operating Criteria;
Assessment for
Quality Improvement
inspection process.**
durham.ca/quality

Every licensed child care centre has been provided with a completed Embracing Quality Early Learning and Child Care certificate and window decal.

Special needs resourcing

The Regional Municipality of Durham currently directly operates one agency and has service agreements with three additional agencies to offer special needs resourcing (SNR) services to children with special needs (Table 1). Demand for SNR is increasing exponentially. As the MEDU has clarified the model of funding and expectations for service delivery for SNR agencies in 2017, each of the agencies will review their program delivery models in 2018. Further details about the SNR landscape are outlined in Regional Priority 2.

Table 1: Services provided by CMSM-managed SNR programs

	Durham Behaviour Management Services*	Grandview Children's Centre Preschool Outreach Program	Resources for Exception Children and Youth – Durham Region*	Surrey Place Centre Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program
Services for Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations and capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physiotherapy • Occupational therapy • Speech-language pathology • Audiology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation program • Enhanced staffing • Capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention program
Special needs focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with behavioural challenges • Early learning programs supporting children experiencing challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with a suspected or diagnosed developmental disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with an identified need • Early learning programs supporting children experiencing challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with a diagnosed visual impairment
Number of children served in 2017	848	331	6,824	24

*Note: Durham Behaviour Management Services and Resource for Exceptional Children and Youth, Durham Region, receive additional funding from other Ministries for specific services not listed in this table.



Partnerships - Durham's Best Start Network

Best Start was initiated in 2005 by the Government of Ontario to support children and families from birth to Grade 1.

Durham's Best Start Network (BSN) was established when existing service providers came together to plan for the needs of the Durham community. The Regional Municipality of Durham, as the designated CMSM, assumes a lead role by developing and implementing an annual child care service management plan.

Initially, the Best Start funding was used to create and sustain increased licensed child care spaces, additional wage subsidies for staff and enhanced funding for SNR programs. Today, the network has dedicated funds to support programs for Indigenous children and families, as well as Francophone families. In addition, the BSN produces and circulates resources to the early learning community, hosts community meetings regarding current early learning issues, and submits position papers to both the MEDU and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Durham's BSN is co-chaired by Roxanne Lambert, RECE, Director of CSD, and Denise Cashley, Executive Director of Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth, Durham Region. In 2017, there were more than 85 members from 45 organizations that regularly attended and participated in Durham's BSN.

Durham's BSN provides an opportunity for the region's six school boards, child care service providers, local academic institutions, and support agencies to meet and share information and ideas. Many partnerships have developed as a result of BSN activities. The Province of Ontario is in the process of modernizing the early learning and child care system. Durham's BSN is working hard to navigate through the transformation process.

With a diverse group of members at the table, Durham's BSN functions as an advisory board and platform for community agencies to provide regular updates.

Advisory committees:

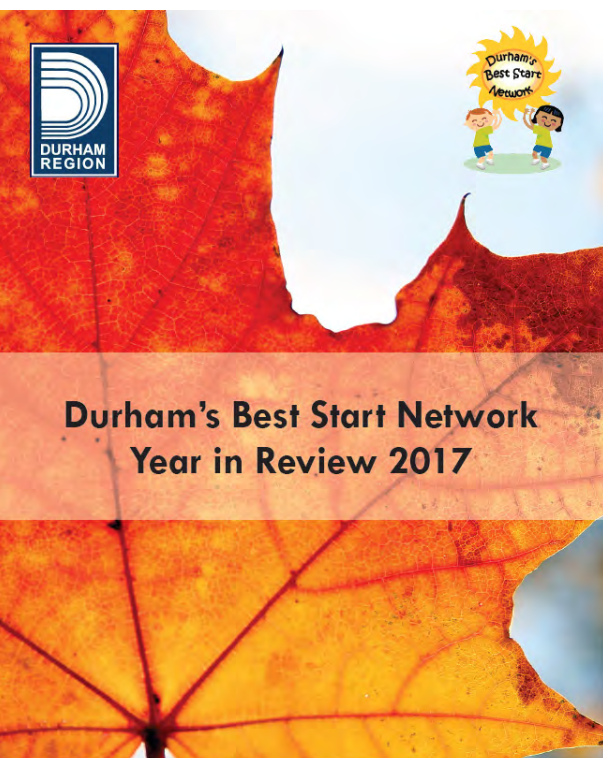
- Grandview Children's Centre - Preschool speech and language program
- Durham Region Health Department - Healthy Babies, Health Children

Community updates:

- Durham Catholic District School Board
- Durham District School Board
- Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board
- Durham's Special Needs Strategy
- Durham Children and Youth Planning Network
- Durham Regional Child Care Forum

Durham's BSN directly funds and supports three important subcommittees:

- Durham's BSN Child Care Subcommittee
- Research and Knowledge Mobilization Subcommittee
- Infant Mental Health Durham Community Table



If you require this information in an accessible format, please call 1-800-387-0642.

Durham's ELCC community partners



Durham Region Children and Youth Charter

In 2009, Durham's BSN members, along with municipal politicians and local families, developed 12 rights for children and youth. When upheld, these rights would ensure all children have what they need to be healthy, prosperous citizens. The charter was widely disseminated and included a detailed adult version and a simplified child version. In 2018, the BSN aims to work with community partners and the public to revisit and update the charter.

Durham's Best Start Network Child Care Subcommittee

Durham's Best Start Network Child Care Subcommittee aims to provide members of the child care 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.

Committee membership and participation

The committee is co-chaired by Lisa McIntosh, RECE, Manager, Durham Region Children's Services Division, and Denise Gilbert, RECE, Executive Director, Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham. Members are from a variety of child care organizations across Durham Region, representing non-profit, commercial, rural, licensed home child care, multi-site and single site providers. Attendance at meetings and participation is open, giving members the choice to join as many meetings as they prefer. Participants can attend with a goal of becoming informed, networking, and/or taking on a role in a task group. The subcommittee has achieved much in the past two years; some initiatives are described below.

In the Know:

The subcommittee created an In the Know banner to keep all licensed child care agencies up-to-date with information from the Ministry of Education, the Grow Newsletter and the Durham Early Learning Update.

Showcasing partnerships:

The subcommittee created a PowerPoint to show the benefits of a partnership between child care and education. The presentation was distributed to all school boards and agencies offering child care in schools.

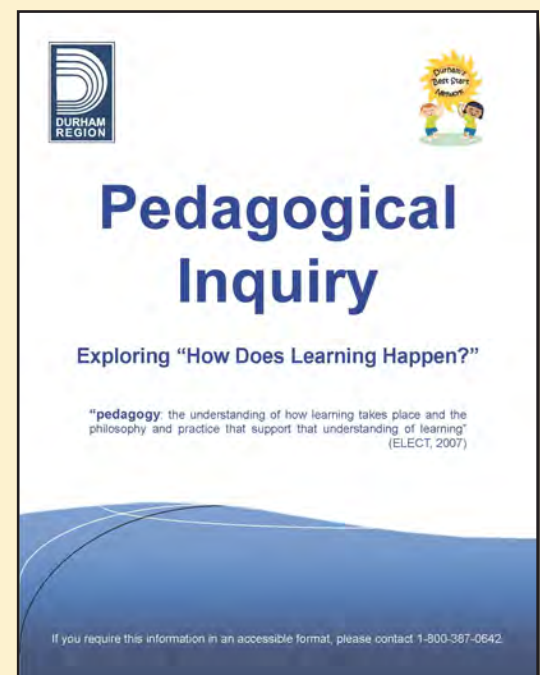
Responding to proposed regulatory changes:

The subcommittee submitted two written responses to the Ministry of Education in regards to the proposed regulated amendments under the Child Care and Early Years Act. Through collaboration, the subcommittee has put forth a united voice for early learning and child care agencies in Durham Region.

Pedagogical Inquiry Tool:

The subcommittee created a Pedagogical Inquiry Tool exploring How Does Learning Happen? The tool is used by:

- Algonquin College (Ottawa)
- Andrew Fleck (Ottawa)
- Simcoe County
- York Region
- Northumberland County



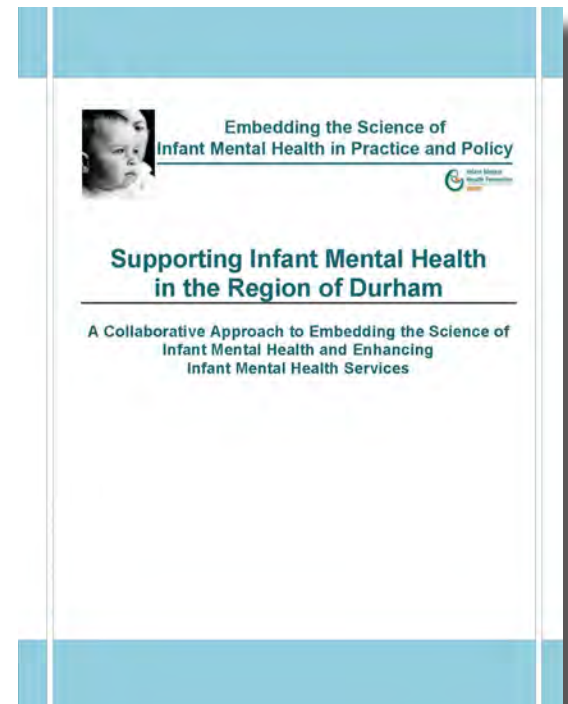
Infant Mental Health Durham Community Table

"Infant and early childhood mental health, sometimes referred to as social and emotional development, is the developing capacity of the child from birth to five years of age to form close and secure adult and peer relationships, experience, manage and express a full range of emotions, and explore the environment and learn - all in the context of family, community and culture."

(Cohen, Oser and Quigley, 2012, page 1).

In 2014, Durham Region was selected as one of six communities to participate in a federal project to better understand local infant mental health initiatives. Through community meetings, the Supporting Infant Mental Health in the Region of Durham report was developed. A community table was struck to embed the science of infant mental health into professional practice within Durham Region.

The community table is comprised of 23 organizations. All members share the goal of improving infant mental health experiences for children and families across Durham Region.



Research and Knowledge Mobilization Subcommittee

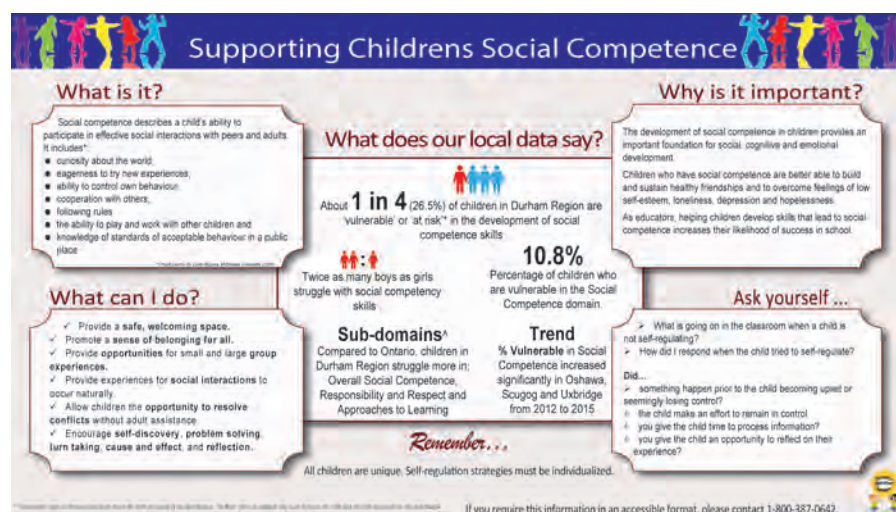
Results of the 2015 Early Development Instrument show that 10.8 per cent of Durham Region Senior Kindergarten students are vulnerable in Social Competence; a child's ability to participate in effective social interactions with peers and adults.

In 2016, the Research and Knowledge Mobilization Subcommittee developed two resources for early learning and child care professionals to address these vulnerabilities. A poster explained social competence and encouraged professionals to reflect on their practices to nurture this skill in children. The two-page handout provided strategies to practice self-regulation with children and strengthen social competence.

2017 focused on disseminating the poster and handout in a thoughtful way.

To date, these resources have been shared with more than 2,000 professionals in early learning and child care programs across the region, including: EarlyON Child and Family Centres, licensed child care centres, libraries, elementary schools and special needs resourcing agencies.

Looking ahead, the subcommittee is going to evaluate the effectiveness of the resources and begin to plan for additional ways to move early childhood development research into practice.



Durham's Indigenous community partners

Durham Region includes an exceptionally diverse network of Indigenous Nations and cultures with traditional territories, including Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Métis Nations as well as Indigenous peoples who have more recently established families and communities in Durham Region, including Inuit, Mi'kmaq and Cree. The estimated Indigenous population in Durham Region projected for 2017 may be as high as 13,000 (Statistics Canada 2015).

Initial research conducted by the Durham Region Aboriginal Advisory Circle (DRAAC, 2011) indicates that existing services in Durham Region are failing to meet the needs of Indigenous peoples. In 2016, a newly incorporated Aboriginal agency in Durham Region called Bawaajigewin Aboriginal Community Circle (BACC) was initiated as an Indigenous community-driven organization to assess and implement the vision of the community. The BAAC has since produced a community needs assessment publication entitled *Gathering Our Voices* and has been an active partner in the Journey Together project, aimed at improving Aboriginal-led and focused early learning programs in Durham.

For 2018, the Journey Together received \$157,575 in funding from the Provincial Government for the creation of an Indigenous Early Years Program Support Co-ordinator, and to enhance two existing EarlyON Child and Family Centre sites that are to be designated as Indigenous culture-based centres.

During the next five years, the CSD will continue to partner with the BAAC and Aboriginal community partners to actively support the development and implementation of culturally-responsive early years programming. All initiatives will be guided by the Durham Region Indigenous Child Care and Early Years Model (Figure 3), which was co-created with Aboriginal service providers, families and children in Durham.

Durham's Aboriginal community (First Nations, Status, Non-Status, on and off reserve, Métis, and Inuit) often prefer the term "Aboriginal" while Durham's municipal services uses the term "Indigenous" to align with provincial and federal terminology.

As such, Indigenous and Aboriginal are used interchangeably throughout the report.



Figure 3: Durham Region Indigenous Early Years Model

The Journey Together

Durham Region's Journey Together project aims to enhance access to culturally relevant, Indigenous-led early years programs and services off-reserve, including child care, and child and family programs.

Background

In February 2017, the Region of Durham Children's Services Division launched the Journey Together project as part of a provincial initiative led by the Ministry of Education's planning process for Service System Managers of Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres. The Indigenous engagement component of the planning process is part of the government's commitment to responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report and calls to action. Early years employees were also consulted to assist with determining the implementation priorities based on their knowledge of policies and procedures for Child Care and Early Years Centres. Four key themes emerged through the collaborative process, each with specific components for effective implementation. According to the community that contributed to the Journey Together report, all four areas must be fully realized, in order for the Durham Region Aboriginal Early Years Model to be actualized.

Project recommendations from the Journey Together report:

1. **A centrally-located, land-based Indigenous Child Care and Early Years Centre of Excellence.** This includes an Indigenous Early Years Centre that offers hands-on learning with a balance of outdoor and indoor learning environments using culture-based approaches.
2. **Enhancing four existing early years sites to be designated as Indigenous Culture-based Centres.** In order to provide accessible Indigenous culture-based early years programming across Durham Region, existing Child Care and Early Years Centres must be provided adequate resources and support.
3. **Indigenous Early Years program support co-ordination.** A focused co-ordination team is necessary for the careful planning, recruitment, support and promotion of the Durham Region Aboriginal Early Years Model. A central co-ordinator must be available to provide training and support to all early years services with Aboriginal families.
4. **Training and certification.** The Region of Durham must commit to supporting the development of, and access to, Indigenous Early Years Certification through close relationships with existing training and college programs across the province, including online Aboriginal Early Childhood Education Diploma Programs, in order to ensure staff is equipped with the skills and knowledge for implementation of the Durham Aboriginal Early Years Model.

Overall, the Journey Together project was a collaborative process with Indigenous people setting the priorities and designing the framework, while non-Indigenous staff worked to effectively operationalize their vision. In February 2018, funding was received to begin working on recommendations.

Community consortium and networks

Representatives from the CSD co-lead, alongside community partners, a number of committees targeted at building capacity with local early childhood educators, and strengthening the quality of child care and early years experiences. Each committee is guided by terms of reference, and projects are prioritized based upon the needs and the recommendations of the community, availability of funding and feasibility of time requirements. As of December 2017, CSD-led networks included:

- Durham's Best Start Network
- Durham's Early Learning Planning Table
- Durham's Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centre Planning Network
- Infant Network
- Toddler Network
- Preschool Network
- School Aged Network
- Supervisor's Network

The CSD is represented on a number of community consortium and networks. These commitments provide valued contributions to the early years sector and help build capacity of CSD staff to better meet the dynamic needs of our community. As of 2017, membership includes:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Advancing Access to Affordable Recreation in Durham | ✓ Planning Network | ✓ Municipal Benchmarking Network Canada |
| ✓ Ajax-Pickering Early Childhood Development Coalition | ✓ Durham College Advisory Board | ✓ OMSSA - Children's Services Network |
| ✓ Association for Applied Epidemiologists of Ontario | ✓ Durham Region Aboriginal Advisory Circle | ✓ Ontario Child Care Management System User Group |
| ✓ Barrie Regional CMSM Network | ✓ Durham Region Child Care Forum | ✓ Provincial Data Analysis Coordinators Group |
| ✓ Community Capacity Building Network | ✓ Durham Special Needs Strategy – Coordinated Service Planning Table | ✓ Professional Development Committee |
| ✓ Community Data Program | ✓ Excellence Canada – Enhancing the Client Experience at Durham Region | ✓ Provincial Special Needs Resourcing Network |
| ✓ Directly Operated Network | ✓ Human Services Integration – MCSS | ✓ Ready, Set, Grow Clinics |
| ✓ Durham's Children and Youth | | |

The CSD is committed to growing and strengthening partnerships during the next five years with community agencies and institutions including, but not limited to:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| ✓ Licensed child care centres and home child care agencies | ✓ Licensed Francophone child care agencies and school boards | ✓ College of Early Childhood Education |
| ✓ EarlyON Child and Family Centres | ✓ Indigenous community | ✓ Ministry of Education |
| | ✓ School boards | ✓ Local colleges and universities |



The College of Early Childhood Educators

The creation of the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) in September 2008 marked the beginning of a formalized structure to regulate the profession of Early Childhood Educators.

The Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007 is the legislation that established the CECE. The Act includes:

- A definition of what constitutes the practice of the profession.
- A requirement to be members, in order to practice the profession.
- The protection of the title “early childhood educators” or “registered early childhood educators,” so that only members of the College may use this designation.
- Roles and responsibilities of the Registrar, as well as the Registration Appeals, Complaints, Discipline and Fitness to Practice Committees.

The College, under the leadership of a Transitional Council, began accepting applications for membership in September 2008. The Act was fully proclaimed on February 14, 2009 and the first elected Council took over the governance functions of this newly formed self-regulatory College.

Within the first six months, there were 20,000 members registered. In 2018, there are more than 55,000 registered members across the province.

Members are guided in their professional practice by the College’s Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Members are also required to participate in ongoing professional learning.

The purpose of the College is to protect the public interest. Anyone can look on the Public Register to view the status of any Registered Early Childhood Educator.

It is important that parents understand that RECEs are held accountable for their professional practice. RECEs understand child development, attend to children’s identified needs, interests and stages of development; plan programs for child to learn through play, maintain safe, healthy and stimulating learning environments, and communicate regularly with parents and caregivers.

Registered Early Childhood Educators work in a variety of early learning settings, such as: licensed child care and home child care programs, Kindergarten classrooms, EarlyON programs, ministry and government services and Special Needs Resourcing agencies that support licensed child care.

Engaging the community

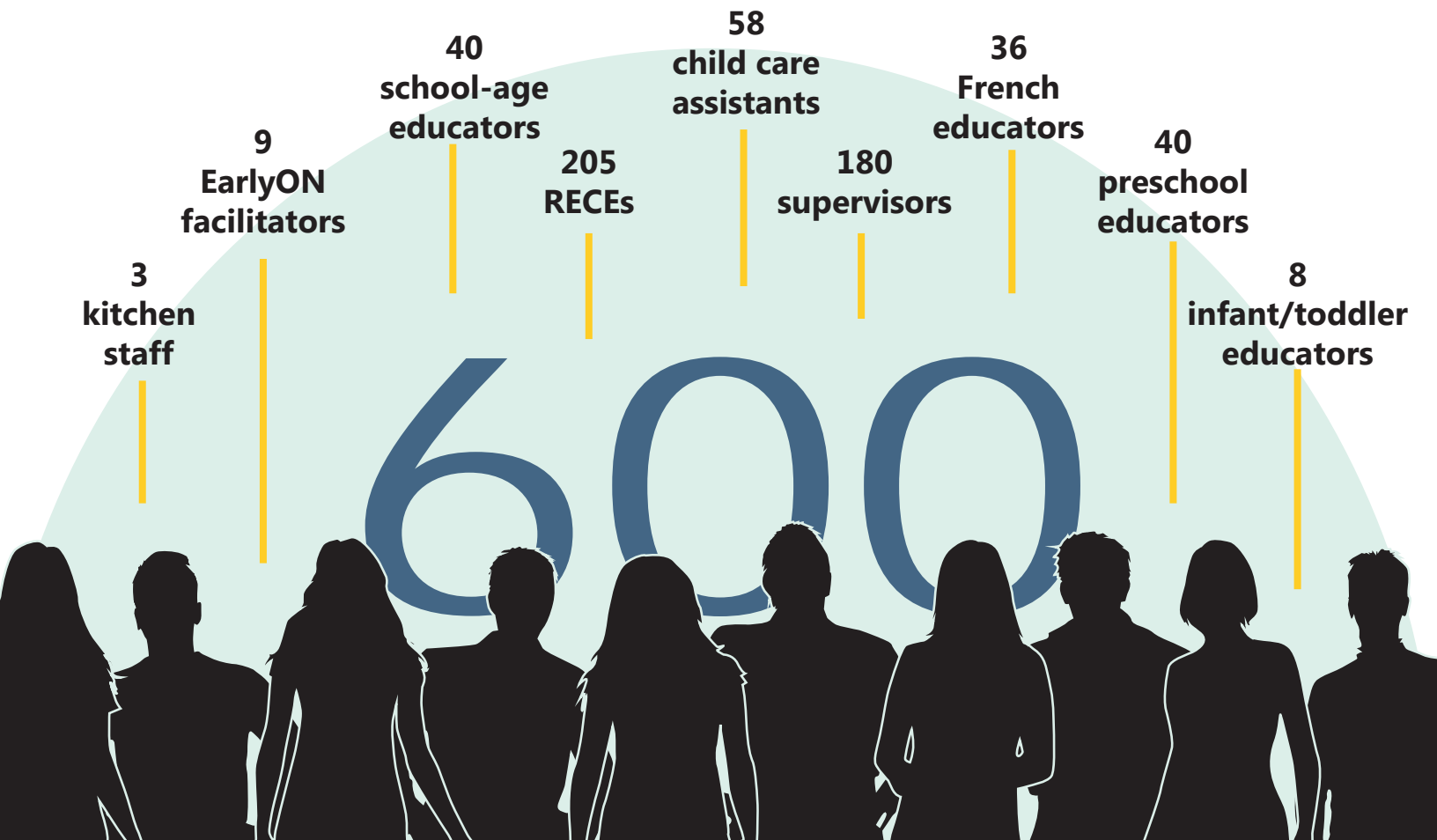
Beginning in 2015, consultations took place with the ELCC community to inform this report. These consultations were thoughtfully planned and executed with the help of an external consultant. Stakeholder groups consulted included:




- Licensed home child care agencies and centre-based providers and educators
- English and French district school boards
- Ontario Early Years (EarlyON) service providers
- Indigenous partners
- Francophone organizations and networks
- Families and caregivers
- Local public health unit
- Special needs resourcing agencies

A combination of activities drew feedback from more than 2,800 participants using surveys, focus groups, small group discussions, large group guided discussions, one-on-one conversations, brainstorming sessions and ranking activities.

“Educators”

There are many titles for those working on the frontlines. Durham Region recognizes the impact all these workers have on the health and development of children. Therefore, throughout this document you will see the word “educator,” which encompasses Registered Early Childhood Educators, child care workers, assistants, program facilitators and operators.



Stakeholder Group	Participant Characteristics	Methods
 56 Child Care Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners • Supervisors • Executive directors • Senior managers • Directors 	Online survey 1 Operator day event
 1,815 Parents and caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mothers • Fathers • Grandparents • Parents with Indigenous heritage • French-speaking families • Representation from all age groups 	Online and paper surveys 9 Focus groups completed in conjunction with the Transformation Planning of Ontario Early Years Centres in Durham.
 252 Indigenous community members	Through the Journey Together planning process.	 163 survey respondents identified as Aboriginal
 85 Community partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed home child care agencies • Licensed child care centres • Ontario Early Years Centres (EarlyON Child and Family Centres) • Indigenous community partners • Francophone organizations • Local public health unit • Specialized community service agencies 	 45 Organizations represented at 8 Best Start Network meetings
 155 Special needs resourcing professionals	Through the special needs resourcing transformation planning process.	 5 in-person planning sessions

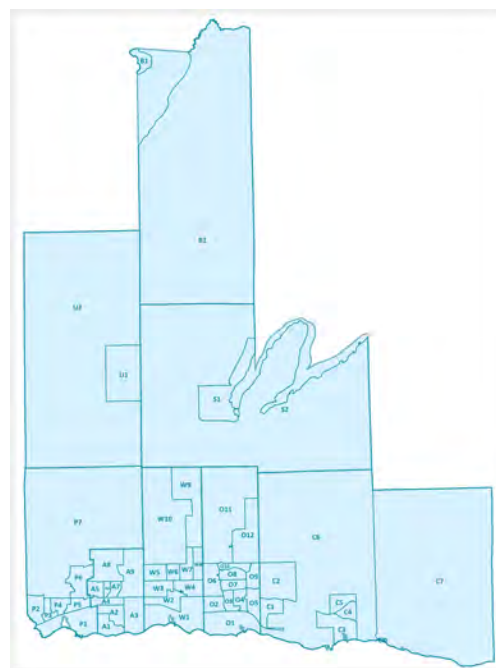
Durham's population

The population of Durham Region has grown rapidly during the past few years, and continues to increase. According to the 2016 census, there are 99,427 children birth to 12 years old in Durham Region.

Most residents (92.6 per cent) speak English in their homes, while less than one per cent (0.6 per cent) speak primarily French. Many residents (6.8 per cent) speak a non-official language; mostly Ajax residents. The most common non-official languages are Urdu and Tamil.

11,850 residents self-identified as Indigenous on the 2016 Census: 59 per cent as First Nations, 29 per cent as Métis and two per cent as Inuk (Inuit). The municipalities with the highest percentages of Aboriginal persons are Oshawa, Clarington, Scugog and Brock. Specifically, Aboriginal persons mostly reside in Downtown Oshawa, Central Park, Courtice South, Brock and Port Perry.

In 2015, 29.7 per cent of Durham Region Senior Kindergarten students were vulnerable in one or more aspects of their development according to the Early Development Instrument.



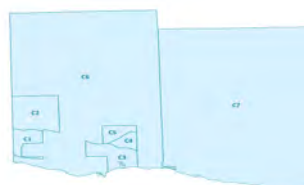
Ajax

- 20,039 children
- Primary non-official language: Tamil
- High population growth



Brock

- 1,614 children
- Primary non-official languages: Korean and Cantonese
- Low population growth and birth rate



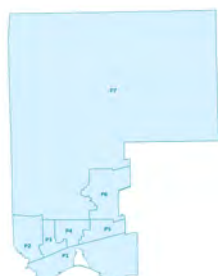
Clarington

- 14,065 children
- Primary non-official language: Spanish
- High rates of early learning vulnerability



Oshawa

- 22,224 children
- Large proportion of French-speaking families
- High rates of poverty



Pickering

- 13,016 children
- Primary non-official language: Urdu
- High population of immigrants



Scugog

- 2,897 children
- Primary non-official languages: German
- Home to the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nations



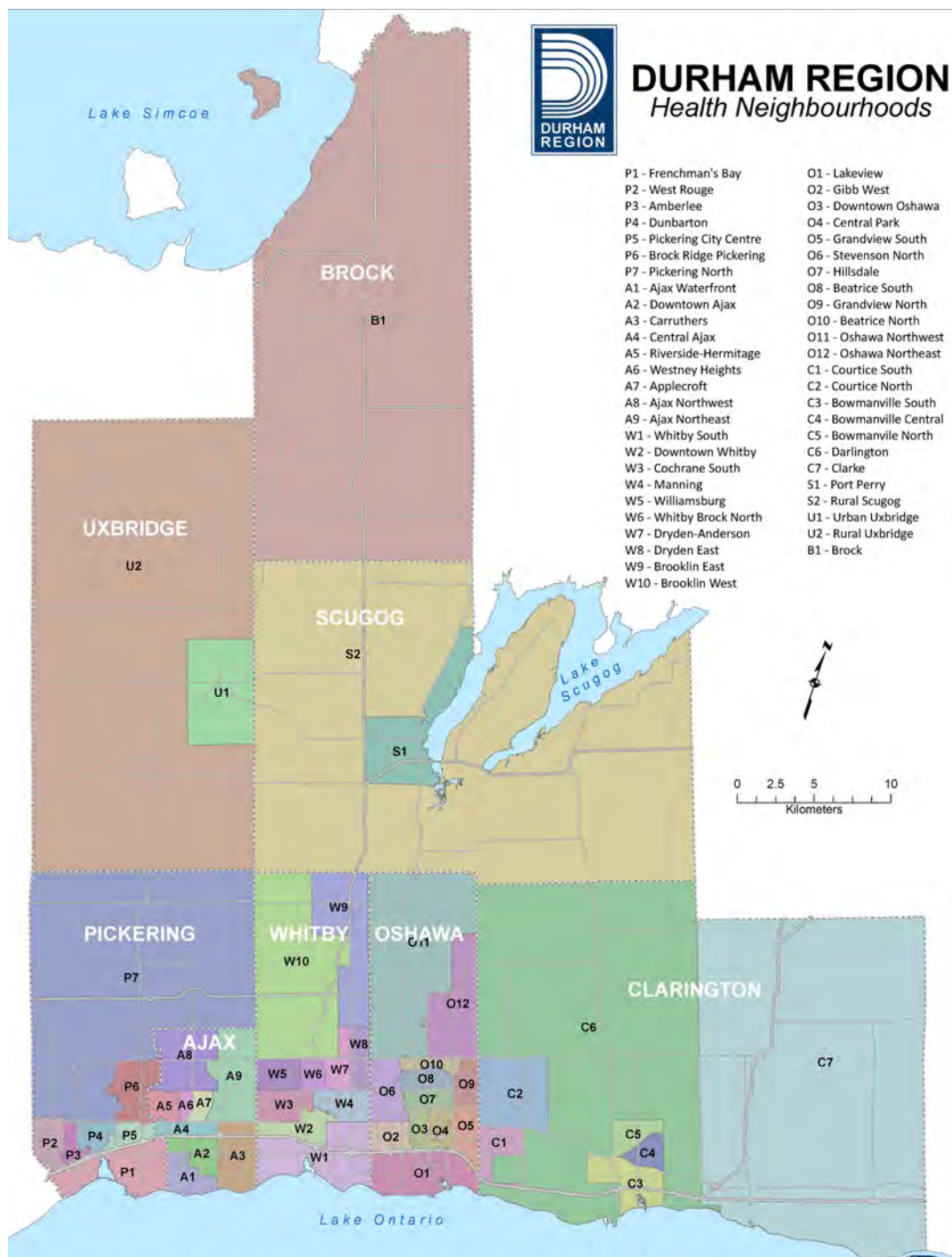
Uxbridge

- 3,010 children
- Primary non-official language: German
- Lower rates of child poverty indicators



Whitby

- 22,562 children
- Primary non-official language: Italian
- High rate of births by older mothers (ages >35 years)



Durham's Health Neighbourhoods

The Health Neighbourhoods initiative examines information from 50 Health Neighbourhoods in Durham Region to better understand patterns of health in our communities. The ultimate goal is to support strong, safe and equitable neighbourhoods that improve the health and well-being of all residents.

Health Neighbourhood reports, including neighbourhood profiles, indicator summaries and an interactive Map Viewer are available at durham.ca/neighbourhoods.

Seven Health Neighbourhoods have been identified as Priority Neighbourhoods requiring focus to build health and well-being. The neighbourhoods are located in Ajax, Oshawa and Whitby and were selected based upon high rates of low income, children living in low-income houses and unemployment. While these neighbourhoods require attention, there are many positive attributes of these communities, including community connectedness.

The CSD uses Health Neighbourhoods to increase equity of early years services across the region.

14%

of parents are lone mothers.

18%

of the 2016 population was children (0 to 14 years).

12.8%

of Durham Region children live in low-income households.

3.6%

Between 2001 and 2011, 3.6 per cent of Durham's population immigrated to Canada.

50%

of 2016 residences live with three or more people per household.

10.6

In 2011, Durham's birth rate was 10.6 per 1,000 live births. The highest rates in Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa, and Bowmanville are predicted areas of increased growth.

Connecting data across sources

The CSD works in collaboration with a number of internal and external groups to collect, analyze and share data. The partnership between Durham's Health Department and CSD allows for information sharing at the Health Neighbourhood level. Data linked to the social determinants of health are often referenced when identifying the priorities of Durham's families. The results help formulate evidence-informed decision making as the CMSM.

The CSD uses data derived from public consultations, internal operator reporting (e.g. budget submissions and Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS) reporting), Durham's Social Services Department, local school boards, contracted providers' service data, Ministry of Education, Statistics Canada, the Community Data Program, McMaster University Offord Centre for Child Studies and scientific research journals.

Measuring children's readiness to learn at school

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a validated questionnaire used to measure the population of Senior Kindergarten children and their abilities to meet age-appropriate developmental expectations at school entry. The Ministry of Education mandates the EDI be completed by Senior Kindergarten teachers on a three-year cycle. Durham Region has participated in all Ontario EDI cycles: 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018. The EDI measures readiness to learn in five domains linked to child psychology and neuroscience.

The EDI identifies vulnerabilities within and across groups of children. To be vulnerable means that children fall within the lowest tenth percentile as compared to their peers. Research demonstrates that vulnerability during the early years can lead to long-term chronic health conditions, social isolation, and reduced academic and professional achievement.

In 2015, 29.7 per cent of Durham Region Senior Kindergarten children were vulnerable in one or more aspects of their development. This number was similar to the rate of vulnerability across Ontario.

The domains of Physical Health and Well-Being and Emotional Maturity have the most amount of vulnerable children in Durham (17.9 per cent, 12.3 per cent respectively).

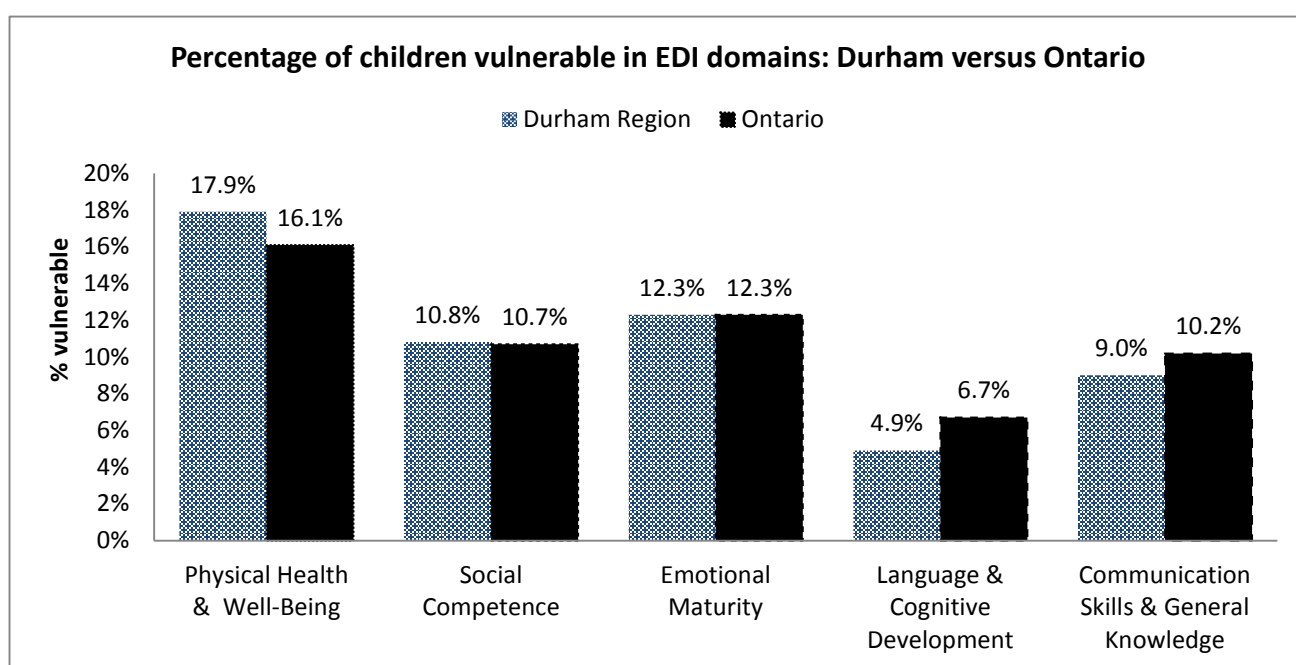


Figure 4: The percentage of children vulnerable in the Early Development Instrument domains (2015, N=6,863)

Across all Health Neighbourhoods, Downtown Oshawa (O3) had the most significant improvement in EDI scores between 2012 and 2015: a 30 per cent decrease in vulnerability. Conversely, Westney Heights (A6) in Ajax had the most significant increase in the number of children vulnerable between 2012 and 2015: a 24 per cent increase in vulnerability.

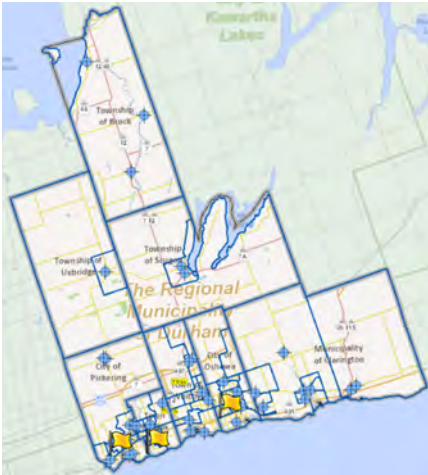
Data from the EDI Cycle 5 in 2018, in conjunction with results of the Kindergarten Parent Survey (2018), will help identify the needs of our community and allow for a better understanding of the environments Durham children are exposed during their formative early years.

Durham's CSD uses vulnerability data, along with other demographic and system-level information, to identify and prioritize expansion of ELCC programming. Data Analysis Co-ordinators work in partnership with local school boards, public health, child care, and early years partners to disseminate EDI findings to the community; and strategize ways to address vulnerabilities through new or existing supports.

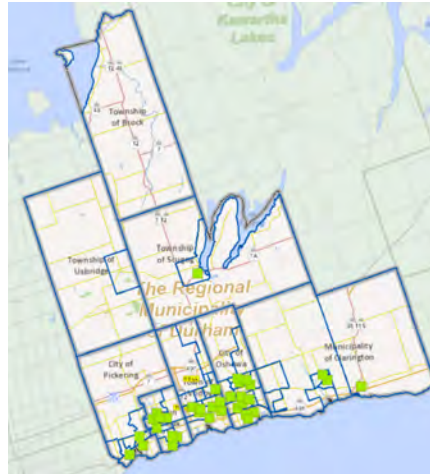
The ELCC sector

The ELCC sector in Durham is responsive to the dynamic needs of the community. Consequently, there has been significant growth in the past decade. Since the implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten in 2010/11, the number of licensed child care centres in schools has risen 157 per cent in Durham, accounting for the addition of 11,725 new spaces. In 2017, there was enough licensed

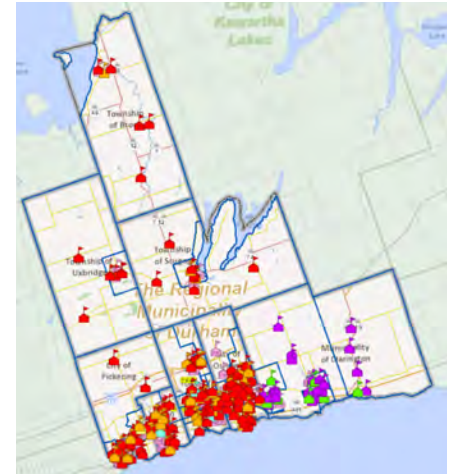
child care available to accommodate 24 per cent of the child population. As of December 2017, all elementary schools in Durham Region have a licensed child care centre within a two-kilometre radius. There are 188 non-profit agencies and 88 commercial sites across the region, together with four licensed home child care agencies regulating 101 homes.



52 EarlyON Child and Family Centres



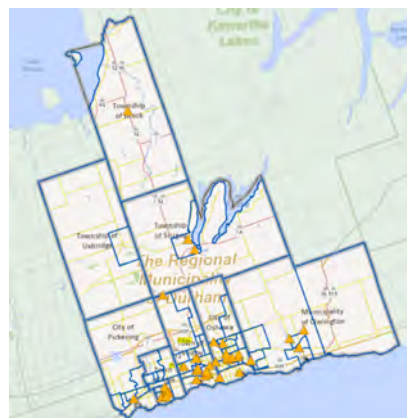
35 after school recreation programs



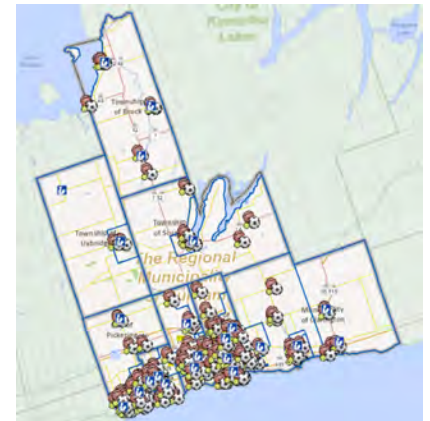
179 elementary schools, 35 secondary schools, 54 private schools



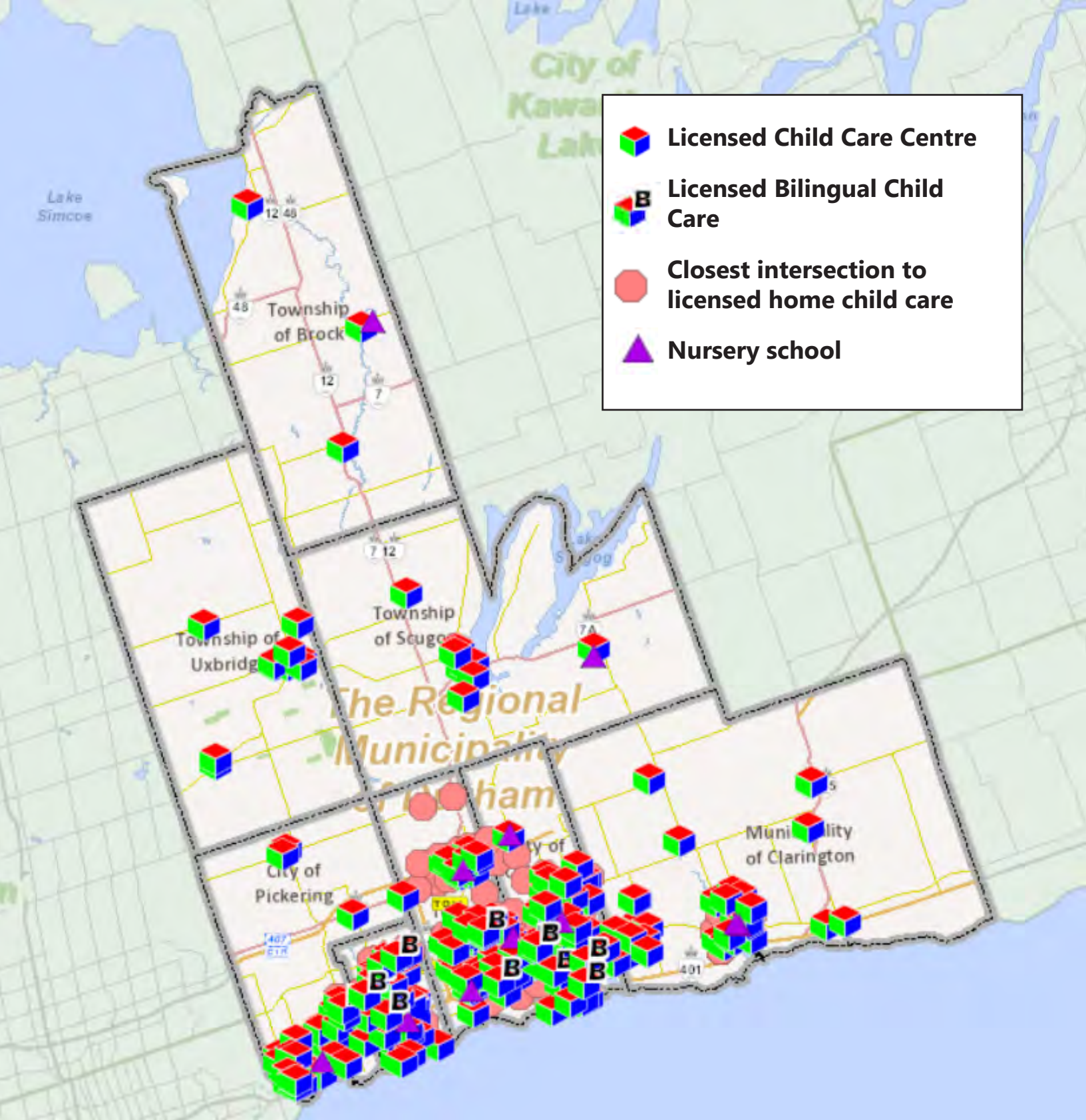
16 health and support program outreach sites



45 agencies and supports for children with special needs



23 libraries and 196 recreation facilities



Locating ELCC programs

Families, educators and service providers are able to locate early learning and child care programs in their local area by using the Children's Program Locator. This online, interactive map can be used on a computer, tablet or phone. By searching with a Durham address, users can identify licensed child care programs, health-related programming and family supports in their neighbourhood. The report feature of the tool allows parents to save, print and share their results with friends and family. Internally, CSD staff use the map, alongside licensed capacity, operating capacity, and vacancy rates to identify system pressures and analyze areas for system growth. The tool can be found at <https://maps.durham.ca/Childcareprograms/>.

The ELCC sector continued

The Regional Municipality of Durham receives funding, as the CMSM, from the Province of Ontario and the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. In 2017, the Region received more than \$55 million from the Ministry of Education to fund the system, which has increased to more than \$65 million in 2018, based on preliminary allocations. This includes funding to support the transformation of Ontario Early Years Centres to EarlyON Child and Family Centres in 2018.

The Province has also committed to providing 100,000 new spaces during the next five years with its Child Care Expansion Plan funding in 2018, and Durham Region has received funding as a result of the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

The Region of Durham has a historical required municipal cost share that is also added into the available funding. In 2017, the Region allocated up to \$9.2 million. The Province continues to confirm that new early years and child care fundings does not require additional municipal cost share. The Region of Durham has consistently supported financial investment in child care.

Table 2: Children's Services Funded Programs (2018)

Program	Purpose
Purchased fee subsidy spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide eligible parents with subsidy for quality child care to support employment, education or a recognized need. • Enter into Purchase of Service Agreements with licensed child care operators to facilitate placement of children, allowing for parental choice. • Reduce the financial impact on income support programs through effective financial management, encouraging employment and supporting educational upgrade.
Directly operated programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide quality ELCC programs, which support parents, including low-income earners and full-fee parents who are working and/or upgrading their education. • Be a leader within the child care community with regard to the provision of child care, including participating on community committees, to improve the image and increase public awareness of the Region's services. • Model quality child care programming to be used as the benchmark for purchase of service.
Ontario Works child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide subsidy for quality child care to eligible Ontario Works recipients to support their participation requirements.
Special needs resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase support, including services of resource teachers for children with special needs in licensed child care and licensed home child care programs. • Flow program operating funds to the four SNR agencies, in order to provide services for children by qualified staff. • Purchase specialized toys and equipment, in order to support an individual child's program plan.
Durham's Behaviour Management Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consultation and training to ELCC professionals and parents/guardians through licensed child care for children with developmental disabilities and/or for children with behavioural concerns. • Work in co-operation with Regional and Provincial governments to provide consultation services to parents and caregivers regarding Intensive Behaviour Consultants.

Program	Purpose
General operating program subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the costs of operating licensed child care programs in order to reduce wait times and fees for service levels, and where funds allow, improve access to high-quality affordable ELCC services for children and their families.
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the CMSM for child care, the principle role of the Children's Services Division is to manage all programs described in this report.
Special purpose projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide funds to licensed child care operators to support daily operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-profit pay equity Capacity building Provider transformation (Transformation expense) Small Water Works Play-based materials and equipment Repairs and maintenance (health and safety) Provider retrofit capital (capital retrofits expense)
Wage enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To close the wage gap between RECEs working in school boards and those in licensed child care; to help further stabilize child care operators by supporting their ability to retain RECEs, Home Visitors or Home Providers.
Child and family supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EarlyON Child and Family Centres: Supporting the transformation from Ontario Early Years Centres to EarlyONs. Data Analysis Coordinator: Supporting early years research, evaluation and knowledge mobilization. Early Learning Planning: Through the Early Years Community Development fund, support Durham's Best Start Network.
Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support access to non-profit licensed child care; for children ages birth to 6 years and birth to 12 years.
Child Care Expansion Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the Provincial initiative to create 100,000 new child care spaces during the next five years: supports funding for children birth to 3.8 years with additional fee subsidies and/or increased access.



Affordability of child care in Durham Region

Between 2014 and 2016, the cost of child care increased by eight per cent in Canada's largest cities – this was three times the rate of inflation at 2.5 per cent. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) has conducted an evaluation of median monthly parent fees in 28 of Canada's largest cities (Macdonald & Friendly, 2016). A comparison of rates for infant, toddler and preschool between Canada's big cities and Durham Region are presented on the next page. The highest rates for all three age groups are reported by Toronto, which serves a similar clientele as families in Durham, although not at the same capacity. In comparison to Ontario-based cities, Durham has one of the lowest parental fees for infants (\$1,128), toddler (\$987) and preschool (\$868). The median monthly cost of school age, before and after school care was \$840 in Durham Region in 2017.

In Durham, the cost of child care is set by individual operators who are responsible for ensuring the CMSM has the current parent fees on file. The per diem rate for child care is driven primarily by the salaries and benefits paid to educators. These costs make up between 75 and 85 percentage of the cost of licensed child care. Rent, program supplies, food and administrative expenses comprise the remainder. This ELCC plan will work towards creating a system that maximizes the financial support for the licensed child care system, while working to improve affordability of care for families.

Of 1,700 parents surveyed in 2017, cost was reported as the biggest barrier to accessing quality child care in Durham Region. In focus groups and through the survey, parents commented that the cost of child care interfered with family planning, long-term saving and ability to access high quality programming for their children. These types of comments were repeated across all municipalities and income levels.

"Cost needs to be lowered.
Would love to have two
children, but can't afford \$1,800
per month in child care."

- Durham Region parent

"Costs
have to go down.
Child care costs are almost
as much as a mortgage leading
to a lot of debt for new families."

- Durham Region parent

"...since I don't qualify for a subsidy,
and cannot afford to pay \$45 a day, I feel as
though I settle for substandard care."

- Durham Region parent

Impact of the increase of minimum wage on licensed child care

The Region is expecting fees to increase in 2018 as a result of Bill 148.

Bill 148, Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, came into effect January 1, 2018. This new legislation raises the minimum wage to \$14 per hour, equalizes pay for casual, part-time, temporary and seasonal employees, and extends access to vacation time and personal emergency leave to specific groups of employees.

As a direct result of Bill 148, child care operators are reporting increased staffing costs, as well as increased indirect costs associated with leasing, food and utilities.

The Children's Services Division will be allocating Fee Stabilization Funds in early 2018 to eligible operators and is actively working with the licensed child care providers to stabilize fees.

Assistance with the daily cost of care is available to Durham families through the fee subsidy program. To qualify, parents must meet one of the following qualifications: working, going to school, receiving Ontario Works or have a special or social need (parent or child). The current wait time for fee subsidy is less than six months. Parents can apply online at durham.ca/childrensservices.

Median rates for child care in Durham Region versus Canada's Big Cities

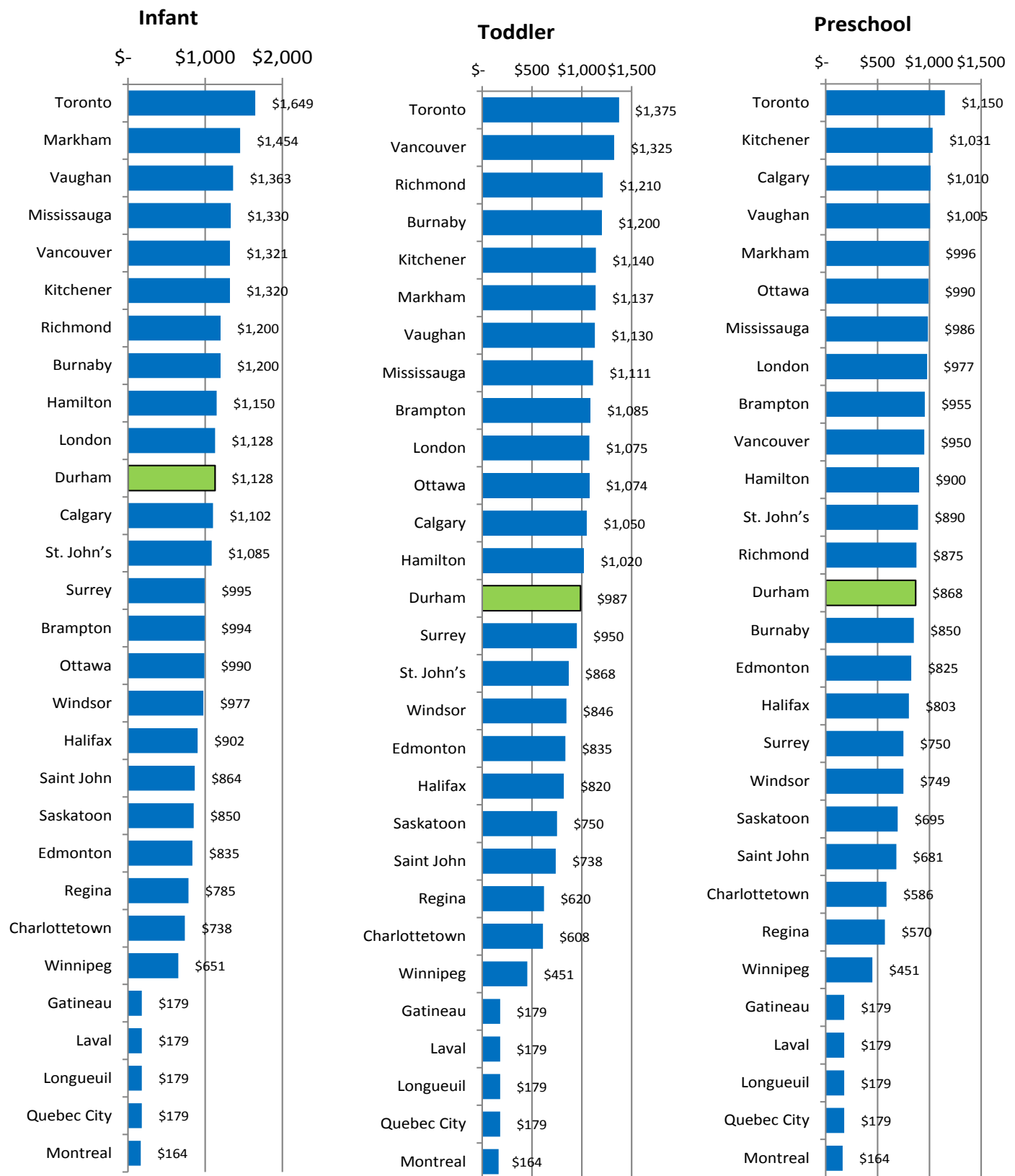


Figure 5: Median cost of child care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers: Durham Region (2017) versus Canada's Big Cities (2016)

Outcomes and implementation Plan

This section lists the proposed strategic priorities and intended outcomes that are responsive to community needs and align with Ontario's vision for child care and early years and provincial interests. This measurable and action-oriented implementation plan describes how the strategic priorities and outcomes will be met.

When developing outcomes for local indicators, the CSD referenced the following documents:

- Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework
- Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centre Guidelines
- Before-and-After School Programs Kindergarten – Grade 6 Policies and Guidelines for School Boards
- Ontario Child Care and Child and Family Program Service Management and Funding Guideline
- How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
- 2016 Census data
- Our children, the future: A trends report of the Early Development Instrument in Durham Region
- Health Neighbourhoods Report

Provincial priorities

Ontario's vision for the early years sees all children and families having access to a range of high-quality, inclusive and affordable ELCC programs that are family-centred and contribute to children's learning, development and well-being. The impact of this transformation will ultimately be measured by the enhanced healthy development of children within the community and throughout the province. The four key components of a strong early years system - accessibility, responsiveness, affordability and quality form the basis for ongoing monitoring and assessment of the early years transformation.

Durham Region System Priorities

Building on the four key components, the Durham Region early learning and child care (ELCC) community has identified five priorities as the focus of the 2018 to 2023 strategic plan. The priorities are:

1. Maximize financial support available to licensed child care.
2. Develop and implement a strategy to build the capacity to support children with special needs from birth to 12 years.
3. Increase, attract and retain quality Registered Early Childhood Educators.
4. Support and expand the licensed home child care sector.
5. Reduce the waitlist for child care fee subsidy.

The forthcoming sections describe each priority, the context and justification as to why these priorities were selected, and measurable and attainable strategies used to accomplish specific sub-objectives within the five-year time period.

Provincial and Regional Priorities: 2018 to 2022

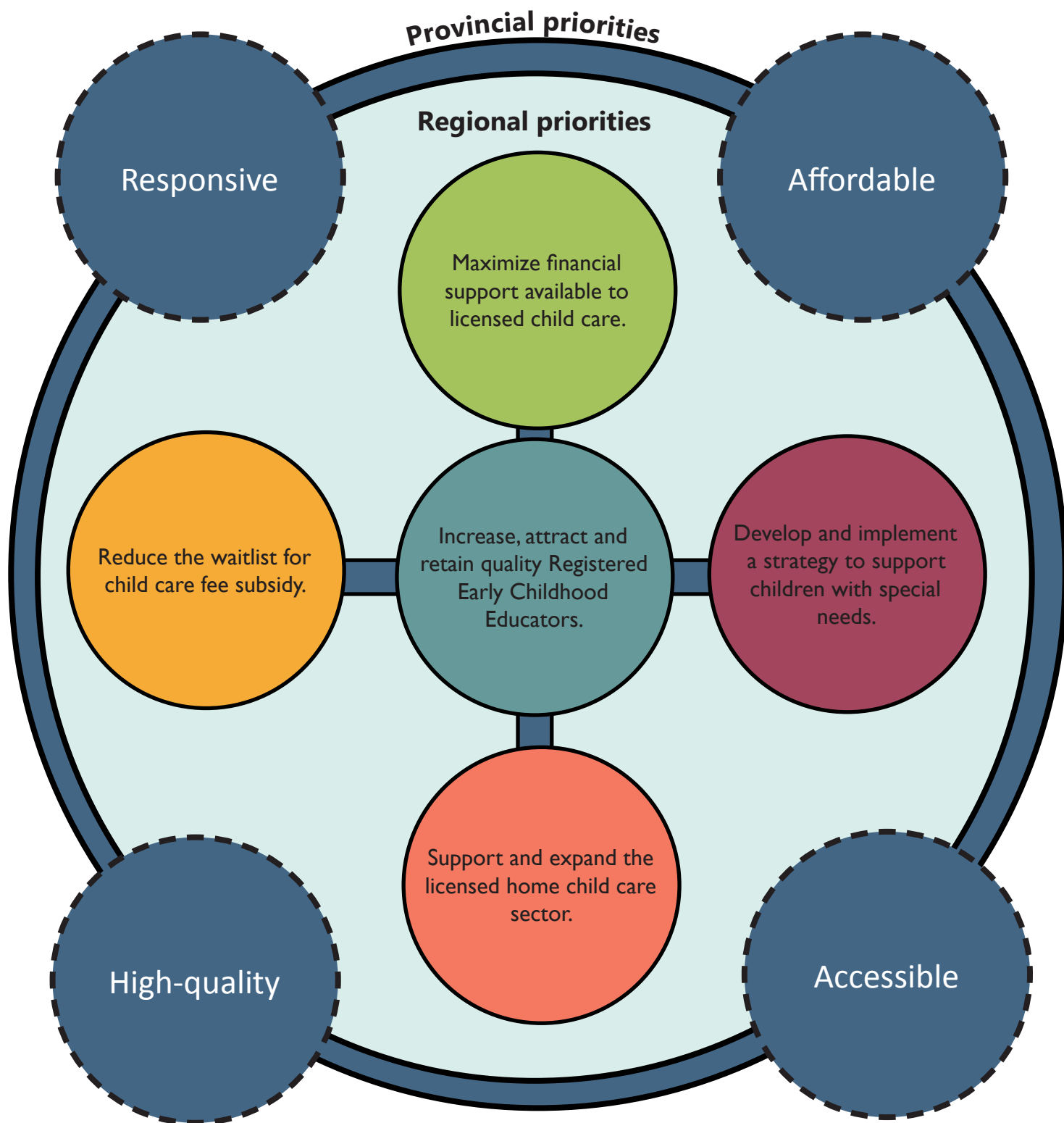


Figure 6: Durham Region Early Learning and Child Care Priorities for 2018 to 2022

1. Maximize financial support for licensed child care

Context

With an increase in provincial and federal funding for Durham Region's ELCC sector during the past few years, the CSD continues to maximize financial support for licensed child care by supporting the efficient distribution of various funding streams, promotion of fiscally responsible practices, and use of community needs to drive change. Recent achievements of the CSD include:

- Embedded a community analysis protocol for every POS application. This ensures data drives decision making for equitable distribution of child care that meets community needs, and minimizes unnecessary and prolonged vacancies.
- Hosted an in-depth financial education day for child care operators who may have had difficulties managing operations. Operators reported the information shared and skills learned helped build capacity to better manage centres/homes.
- Reviewed and amended the General Operating Program (GOP) funding model. By reformulating the GOP funding guidelines, the needs of both single and multi-site child care centres/homes were equitably met.
- Formulated a fee analysis strategy to gather data on the impact of the increase to minimum wage, Fee Stabilization Funding and operating costs on parent fees.
- Begun to redesign and reinstate a Child Care Operator Fee Increase Request Policy. The goal of this policy is to monitor and prevent spikes in parent fees.

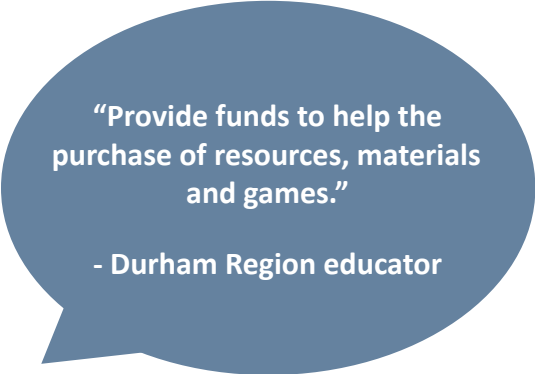
There are currently a number of funding streams from all orders of government (Regional, Provincial and Federal) that are targeted to increasing the amount of support for licensed child care. Each of these streams (pages 27 to 28) have slightly different mandates, and varied requirements as to usage and reporting. The overall intent of all funding seems to be to increase child care funding to support salaries and program operational funding without a corresponding increase in parent fees, and to provide subsidy funding for eligible families.

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

Supporting operators to ensure efficient, fiscally responsible programs located in areas where there is a demand is important to address access to services and maintain affordable fees. Programs that experience high vacancy rates where child/adult ratios do not reflect those regulated through the CCEYA and accompanying regulations drives up the cost of each space.

For example, the ratio for toddlers is one educator for every five toddlers with a maximum group size of 15 children. If a program is licensed for 12 toddlers (perhaps because the physical location is not large enough to accommodate fifteen, three educators will also be required. The cost per child in the second scenario will be significantly higher than the first. The more efficient option in this scenario would be to license the space for ten toddlers.

Co-ordinating new programs to locations that support access and demand is also very important in order to allocate funds efficiently and maintain affordability. Families are supported when programs are located within their communities or on their convenient commuter routes as well funding is best used to support programs when programs vacancies are low. This occurs in programs strategically located within Durham.



"Provide funds to help the purchase of resources, materials and games."

- Durham Region educator

It is a real challenge to promote and support affordable child care simultaneously with increasing salaries and benefits for educators. While there has been a considerable increase in the level of government funding during the past several years, there remains a direct correlation between fees paid by parents (either through the subsidy system or by families paying full fees) and the ability of programs to attract and retain trained, experienced educators. In most programs, salaries, wages and benefits comprise 80 to 85 per cent of the overall operating costs.

The Region of Durham consistently considers research, stakeholder input and potential strategies to proactively support the community. The intent is to mitigate impacts due to legislative changes and community pressures by supporting operators. For example, currently due to the high demand for Registered Early Childhood Educators and the implementation of the Fair Workplace, Better Jobs Act, 2017, it is challenging for operators to recruit and retain educators. In 2018, the CSD will support initiatives to build relationships with post-secondary institutions to try to increase the number and/or the employable readiness of new graduates to support the need in Durham. Funding to support affordability initiatives was also included in the CSD Regionally approved budget.

Measurement indicators

Table 4: Measurement indicators for Objective 1

Indicator	Source
Salaries and benefits	Operator annual submissions
Parent fees	Operator annual submissions
Allocations of special purpose funding to support high-quality programs	DROC AQI scores and special purpose funding tracking
Percentage of vacancies	OCCMS standard reports
Quality of licensed child care	DROC AQI scores

Actions and timelines

Table 5: Timeline for Objective 1

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Review and update the operator budget tool and fee request process.					
Incorporate rate and fee elements into operating funding model.					
Annually review and include new legislation and community components to community analysis tool and funding models (e.g., General Operating, special purpose).					
Monitor vacancy levels in licensed child care settings.					

Additional context

The CSD recognizes the pressures on the system to provide affordable, high-quality child care to all families. In this regard, the CSD recognizes the potential for funding sources and amounts to shift as a result of the Provincial election. We will continue to monitor the cost of care (e.g. parent fees) within the license child care sector as changes occur to minimum wage, availability of fee stabilization funding and other operational costs. In addition, we will begin to monitor the impact of these top-down policies have on the availability and accessibility to publicly-funded EarlyON Child and Family Centres. Monitoring of both licensed child care costs and availability of EarlyON centres will be documented in ELCC annual reports.

2. Develop and implement a strategy to build the capacity to support children with special needs from birth to age 12

Ontario has demonstrated a continuing commitment to supporting the varying needs of children with special needs through the introduction of a number of provincial initiatives, including, but not limited to:

- Moving on Mental Health (Child and Youth Mental Health)
- Ontario Autism Program
- Children's Rehabilitation Services
- Ontario's Special Needs Strategy for Children and Youth
- Developmental Surveillance Process
- Coordinated Service Planning
- Integrated Rehabilitation Services
- Transition Planning
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder prevention, service coordination, and enhanced support
- Healthy Babies, Healthy Children
- Early Years Community Support

The Integrated Rehabilitation Services project is temporarily on hold while each of the other initiatives are at different stages of implementation. Notwithstanding this, there are several key messages to be taken from this provincial work:

1. Working to address the needs of children, youth and their families is best done collaboratively with government, community agencies and stakeholders working together to make the best use of all available resources.
2. Families deserve access to the programs and services that they need with a single point of entry wherever possible and the need to tell their story only once.

These are principles which the CSD supports and implements in all its work on behalf of children, families and the ELCC community. As demonstrated below, the Region of Durham is strongly committed to supporting inclusion of all children into the early learning and child care sector. The Children's Services Division contracted with a number of organizations to support community based service provision and support.

The four Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) agencies contracted to provide services to the licensed child care system in Durham Region include:

- Durham Behaviour Management Services
- Grandview Children's Treatment Centre – Preschool Outreach Program
- Surrey Place – Blind-low Vision Early Intervention Program
- Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth – Durham Region

Historically, some SNR service providers have used SNR funding to offer out-of-scope services directly to families in the community (e.g. home-based consultation and observation to support children not enrolled in the licensed system). This was in part because the agencies had some designated funding to support families not enrolled in licensed child care. Many years ago the Province discontinued the 87/13 funding formula for children with special needs, which allowed for children with special needs to attend half day licensed child care programs. The CMSM funded 87 per cent of the cost of the child care and the parent provided the remaining 13 per cent. This change happened at a time when there were significant demands for child care fee subsidy and lengthy waiting lists. The lengthy waitlist did not enable children with special needs to quickly access services. The significant provincial increase in funding for subsidy placements, together with a review of SNR services, provides an opportunity to ensure that funding to support children with special needs is used as effectively as possible within the bounds of current policy and regulatory expectations. The Regional Municipality of Durham, Children's Services Division is required to allocate a minimum of 4.1 per cent of the provincially provided funding, exclusive of wage enhancement funding, to SNR services.

Currently, the Region allocates approximately 11 per cent of provincial funding to SNR services.* Supporting children and their families is a primary focus of the CMSM. The review of services and recommendations for modifications will focus on the needs expressed during the child care consultation. Strategies for the transformation of SNR services will be based on current funding levels and the scope of the program as described by the Ministry.

Table 6: New allocation of funds for SNR agencies

	2016	2017
SNR funding	\$4,247,245	\$4,944,960
Total subsidy allocation by CMSM*	\$37,028,902	\$45,353,970
Per cent of CMSM subsidy allocation to SNR funding	11.47%	10.90%

*The per cent of spending represents the MEDU funding (exclusive of Wage Enhancement funding). The allocation does not include the Regional contribution of funds. CMSM's must commit 4.1 per cent to SNR supports.

In 2017, 54 of 56 child care operators surveyed had accessed one of the funded SNR agencies, with an average of more than 2,100 children (six years or younger) served per month. This year also marked the beginning of the transformation of SNR services in Ontario, with a more narrow focus on service provision. Through a series of community consultations, five objectives to develop the strategy to support children with special needs from birth to age 12 through licensed child care and EarlyON Centres were identified. These objectives include:

- a. Establish a system vision.
- b. Implement a transition plan that meets community needs and reflects MEDU requirements.
- c. Implement capacity building opportunities.
- d. Institute administrative and procedural modifications.
- e. Increase the support provided through the Enhanced Staffing program.



a. Establish a system vision

Context

The information collected during community consultations demonstrated a need to increase child care organizational leads' and educators' knowledge about SNR services and funding. Currently the Region supports SNR services with approximately 11 per cent of the operating budget. This amount far exceeds the minimum 4.1 per cent spending requirement set out by the MEDU, yet the feedback from the participants in consultation sessions showed participants think SNR services require more funding. A system vision, in-line with the vision of the MEDU, must be created and broadly disseminated.

Measurement indicators

Using proxy measures of enhanced awareness, the CSD, alongside community partners, will develop a communication plan beginning in 2018.

Table 7: Measurement indicators for Objective 2a

Indicator	Source
Number of publications disseminated	Early Learning Secretary distribution list

Actions and timeline

Table 8: Timeline for Objective 2a

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Develop and action a communications plan.					

Additional context

Whenever possible, this system vision will be shared with parents and caregivers, as parents will require straightforward information of why specific programs have ended and how to access similar supports through the licensed child care system.

b. Implement a transition plan that meets both community and Ministry of Education needs

Context

The Region will develop a transition plan to shift the majority of out-of-scope services to in-scope services during 2018. The goal will be to support families that are currently receiving out-of-scope services to access services that are within the funded system (e.g. licensed child care and/or approved recreation programs). The majority of SNR funding will support the licensed child care and approved recreation programs beginning January 1, 2019.

Licensed child care programs and approved recreation programs will continue to receive consultation, access to specialized services, behaviour management, speech language pathology and Enhanced Staffing funding to support successful placements for children birth to 12 years of age.

Measurement indicators

The indicators below provide an overview of how success will be achieved.

Table 9: Measurement indicators for Objective 2b

Indicator	Source
Reduction in out-of-scope services	Number of clients served through out-of-scope services in 2017 retrieved from the four funded SNR agencies.
Increase of in-scope services offered in licensed child care	Establish annual targets for each of the SNR funded agencies/services in collaboration with the agencies/services. Review the plans for increasing the direct connections between licensed child care operators and the numbers of clients who are in scope and evaluate success at year-end.
Review increase of in-scope services currently offered at EarlyON Child and Family Centres	Review the plans developed by each SNR agencies/services to meet the needs of children and families attending EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

Additional context

To strengthen the approach taken, the SNR agencies have agreed to:

- Assign child care sites to the caseload of a SNR agency professional to directly support successful placements of children with special needs.
- Help build the capacity of families and educators.
- Mentor educators.
- Support inclusive practice in the program rooms.
- Co-ordinate access to specialized services.
- Support the development of Individual Service Plans in collaboration with the child care team and families.
- Commit to being regularly present in sites in order to support access to specialized SNR services for room consultation and services for individual children with parental consent as required.

It is anticipated that as SNR professionals spend more time in licensed child care centres, with home child care agency staff and in EarlyON Centres, the capacity of educators in the ELCC sector to effectively support children with special needs will improve.

Through one-on-one training and support, classroom management support, parental engagement and professional development sessions covering topics, such as behaviour guidance, developmental milestones, supporting children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and parent support agencies and organizations funded to provide SNR will use a range of strategies to support children with special needs

Actions and timeline

Table 10: Timeline for Objective 2b

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Services offered by the four current SNR agencies will continue to be part of Durham's SNR system. The CSD will consult with the Ministry about the role for other funded agencies that provide specialized supports to children under six years (e.g. Infant Development Services).					
SNR agencies will work with the CMSM to strategically modify service delivery to ensure that service provision is directed toward licensed child care and early learning programs.					
SNR funding will be prioritized to ensure a focus on in-scope spending.					
SNR service providers will establish intake and triage procedures that focus on providing families with information on licensed child care and early learning programs and community services to meet their needs. SNR funds will be prioritized to support the licensed child care system.					
The data collection process will be modified to gather information from SNR agencies to monitor out-of-scope services.					
Out-of-scope services may support short-term or specialized support for families who do not have any other services in place. The focus will be on supporting the families to receive interim support during crisis or while they gain access to community services to support their child's needs, as necessary.					
Licensed child care and approved recreation programs will have a direct communication link to SNR services.					
A review of the Licensed Home Child Care (LHCC) agencies and providers will occur. Strategies to ensure LHCC have a relationship with and access to SNR services to support inclusion will be implemented.					

c. Implement capacity building opportunities

Context

Front-line educators and operators identified an increase in the number of children with behavioural concerns requiring behaviour management services, as well as an increase in the number of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Although the characteristics of these diagnoses are described to students in the college early childhood education program, recent graduates and non-trained educators have not had an opportunity to develop the skill set required to develop and implement a safe and inclusive program. To address this gap in knowledge, skills and training, professional learning opportunities must be implemented.

In addition to providing direct support to children with special needs attending ELCC programs and services, SNR funded agencies will also provide training and development support to the broader ELCC community. This training is beyond that which happens for individual or small groups of educators who are working directly with children who have been identified as requiring SNR supports.

Measurement indicators

Table 11: Measurement indicators for Objective 2c

Indicator	Source
Number of SNR trainings offered	Training calendars provided by Funded Special Needs Resourcing agencies will provide training sessions to individual sites and on the Durham Professional Training Calendar as applicable.
Number of ELCC professionals participating in trainings	Training numbers provided by SNR agencies.

Licensed child care educators and SNR professionals will participate in professional learning sessions together. Professional learning may include sessions on the general knowledge of children with special needs (e.g. The Angry Aggressive Child, ADHD strategies), leadership or mentoring skills sessions, and/or Pedagogy related sessions (e.g. How Does Learning Happen?, Pedagogical Documentation, legislation). Shared professional learning sessions will provide opportunities to network and collaborate. Participation in pedagogy and child care legislation sessions will increase the SNR professionals' understanding of the child care system, so future strategies are reflective of the context of licensed settings.

By offering such programming, families will have more confidence in the staff and ELCC programs: “Centres needs to be equipped and staffed to support children with special needs” (Durham Region parent).

Table 12: Timeline for Objective 2c

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Consult with SNR agencies to develop training calendars					
Conduct regular SNR-related trainings					

d. Institute administrative and procedural modifications

Context

In 2017, the process by which referrals were made to SNR agencies resulted in a considerable number of referrals for work that was out-of-scope and did not meet the expectations for in-scope service provision. To encourage a system supportive of children with special needs (birth to 12 years), there is a need to streamline the process by which needs are identified, supports are requested and delivered in a timely manner. This requires open communication between families, child care providers and SNR agencies. The CSD will work collaboratively with the SNR funded agencies to develop and implement a streamlined referral and intake process.

“More education and training for staff around working with children with special needs. Do they understand what services are available in the community that they can access for their program?” (Durham Region parent).

Measurement indicators

Table 13: Measurement indicators for Objective 2d

Indicator	Source
Number of referrals to each SNR agency	SNR agency quarterly reporting
Number of children served in licensed child care sector for each SNR agency	SNR agency quarterly reporting

Actions and timelines

Table 14: Timeline for Objective 2d

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Develop and action a communications plan.					
Develop a consent form for on-going information sharing and/or service request form for Durham Region.					
Share consent forms across the ELCC system.					



e. Increase the support provided through the Enhanced Staffing programming

Context

All educators strive to promote inclusion in their programs, but recognize the need for the Enhanced Staffing program in order to engage all children, equitably.

The Enhanced Staffing program is one strategy to support the full inclusion of children with special needs into the licensed ELCC sector. The Enhanced Staffing program involves placing additional staffing into classrooms where the inclusion of children with identified special needs requires the support of additional staff beyond that which is legislated under the CCEYA, 2014.

“We want to do the best for [our children] but need extra hands in the rooms to provide the one on one attention needed” (Durham Region child care operator).

Consultation participants shared ideas to increase the effectiveness of the Enhanced Staffing program in Durham. It is evident that there are some misunderstandings about how the Enhanced Staffing program functions. It is important to clarify requirements to ensure that Enhanced Staffing resources are utilized as effectively as possible.

Measurement indicators

The demand for enhanced staffing is predicted to decrease, with regular participation and support of SNR consultants in programs and an increase in participation of front-line educators in capacity building opportunities.

Table 15: Measurement indicators for Objective 2e

Indicator	Source
Hours of Enhanced Staffing funds paid to operators	Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth – Durham Region quarterly reporting
Unique number of children supported	Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth – Durham Region quarterly reporting

Actions and timeline

Table 16: Timeline for Objective 2e

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
A review of the current application process and approval process should take place in the last quarter of 2018. This timing will allow the effects of the SNR transition plan and opportunities for flexibility to be incorporated into the review.					
Update and implement an application process.					
Monitor demand for enhanced staffing.					

3. Increase, attract, and retain quality RECEs

Provincial changes in legislation and regulations have caused a fast-paced increase in the demand for qualified RECEs. Durham Region operators are experiencing a staffing crisis. The lack of qualified RECEs available for employment is jeopardizing the expansion of the licensed child care system.

Durham Region early childhood educators are intrinsically motivated to enter and remain within the field. They are compassionate, dedicated and innovative thinkers, using creativity to plan programs and solve problems. When asked, “what is the best thing about being an early learning and child care professional?” Responses included helping children learn new things, being part of children’s growth milestones, building relationships with families, making a difference in the lives of children, and having a career that is worthwhile and enjoyable.

This threat applies to ELCC programs including EarlyON Child and Family Centres, licensed home agencies and centre-based child care because there is a lack of quality RECEs. Furthermore, retention of RECEs is difficult for child care operators, as many RECEs leave the licensed sector to work for higher wages with other operators, the municipality or school boards.

In order to increase, attract and retain quality RECEs, the CSD will implement two strategies:

- a. Raise public awareness of the RECE professional designation.
- b. Provide opportunities for new and existing ELCC educators (including RECEs) to improve their knowledge, understanding and use of current ELCC best practices.

Which experiences led you to become an ELCC professional?

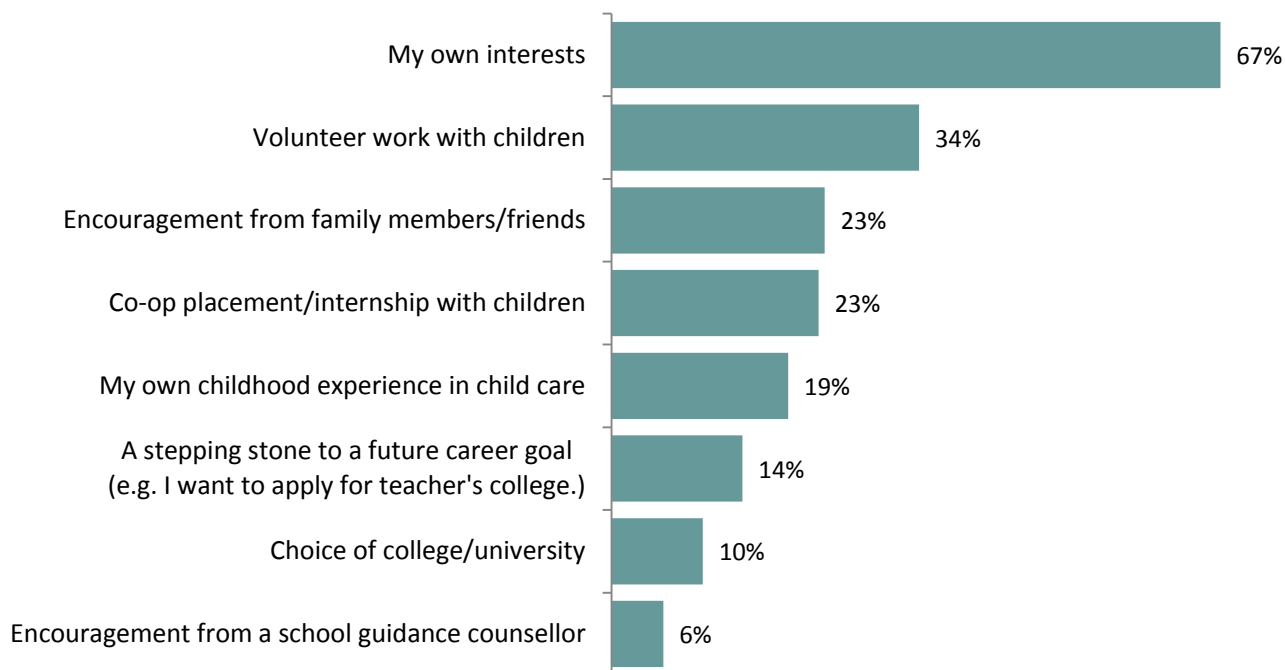


Figure 7: Reasons for selecting a career in early childhood education, ELCC Professional Survey 2017



a. Raise public awareness of the RECE professional designation

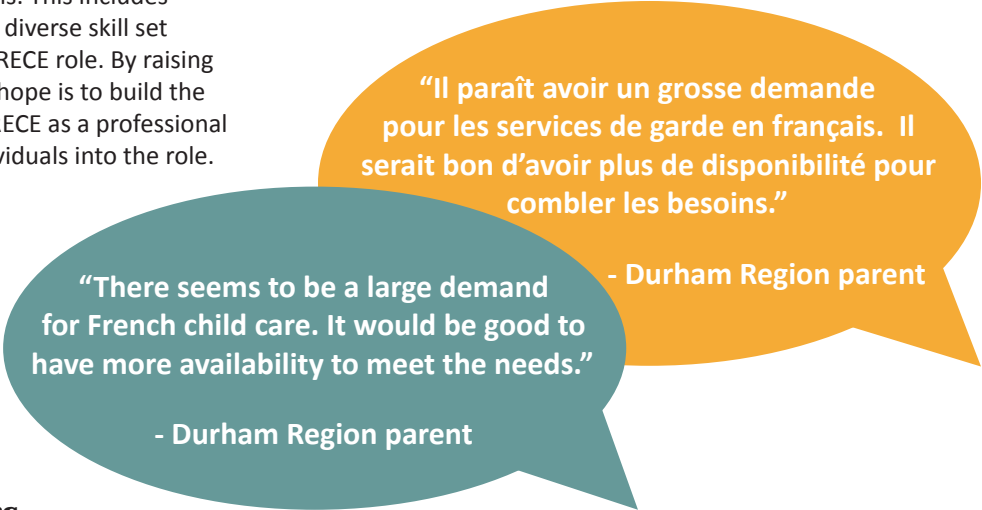
Context

Through community consultations, ELCC executive directors, operators, supervisors, and front-line educators identified that in the public realm, there is a shared perception that RECEs are babysitters. This is not the case. The title of “RECE” is not always viewed as a professional designation or recognized as a legitimate career choice.

There is a need to increase the knowledge of parents, teachers, secondary school counselors and potential RECE students about the importance of ELCC and the critical role of trained and experienced RECEs in the planning and delivery of high quality programs. This includes increasing the understanding of the diverse skill set required to effectively perform the RECE role. By raising the public awareness of RECEs, the hope is to build the public confidence to acknowledge RECE as a professional designation and further attract individuals into the role.

There is a need to increase parents’ knowledge that RECEs are registered members of the College of Early Childhood Educators who are required to practice according to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. RECEs must regularly fulfill their continuous professional learning requirements.

There is also emerging demand for French-language RECEs and for RECEs with Indigenous heritage to deliver ELCC programs.



Measurement indicators

Table 17: Measurement indicators for Objective 3a

Indicator	Source
Number of RECEs in licensed child care centres (including before and after care)	Ontario Early Years Portal: Child Care Licensing
Number of RECEs in licensed home child care agencies (Home Visitors and Home Providers)	Durham Region Annual Child Care Operator Survey
Number of RECEs in EarlyON Child and Family Centres	Education Finance Information System
Number of French-speaking RECEs	Durham Region Child Care Operator Survey
Number of RECEs delivering Indigenous programming who identify as Indigenous	Durham Region Child Care Operator Survey
Number of RECEs as Resource Consultants offering SNR services	Special Needs Resource Agencies’ annual reporting

Actions

In consultation with community partners, the Region of Durham, CSD will develop and implement a comprehensive, multi-pronged media campaign targeted at attracting residents into the field of early childhood education, while raising public awareness of the role of RECEs in ELCC programs.

The campaign will be Durham-centric and focus on the skills required to be an effective early childhood professional. There will be multiple streams to outline how to enter the field from secondary school, having achieved some previous post-secondary education, and a shift from another career. Through the use of social media, web, print ad, newspaper, radio, television and formal presentations, the role of RECEs in fostering healthy growth and development of all age groups will be showcased. Further efforts will be placed to attract French-language RECEs, provide education to help RECEs deliver French-language programming, and attract individuals with Indigenous heritage to enter the early childhood sector.

The campaign will not promote admissions to specific institutions. Instead, those interested will be directed to the Region of Durham website, which will provide valuable links to Ontario-focused resources, such as the MEDU, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario Universities' Application Centre and Ontario Colleges.

Timeline

Table 18: Timeline for Objective 3a

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Establish a working group of community partners.					
Work with communications partners to design campaign.					
Develop campaign content.					
Publicly release campaign (in staged roll-out).					
Host public and targeted presentations.					
Create a sustainability plan for messages disseminated.					

Additional context

The CSD would like to strengthen the relationship between the division and local secondary and post-secondary institutions. By engaging educational representatives in local communities of practice and strategic planning action groups, it is hoped the expectations of child care operators will be mirrored in the promotion of early childhood by secondary school counsellors, and in the skills taught by post-secondary educators through diploma and degree programs. There is existing support from Durham's Best Start Network Child Care Subcommittee to participate in developing and disseminating the campaign, and the opportunity to collaborate with the Durham Region Child Care Forum (DRCCF).

b. Provide opportunities for new and existing ELCC educators (including RECEs) to improve their knowledge, understanding and use of current ELCC best practices

Context

Of the 56 child care operators surveyed, only 58 per cent reported they were “extremely” familiar with How Does Learning Happen, Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years (HDLH); furthermore, operators perceived that 35 per cent of their front-line educators are “extremely” familiar with the pedagogy (Figure 8).

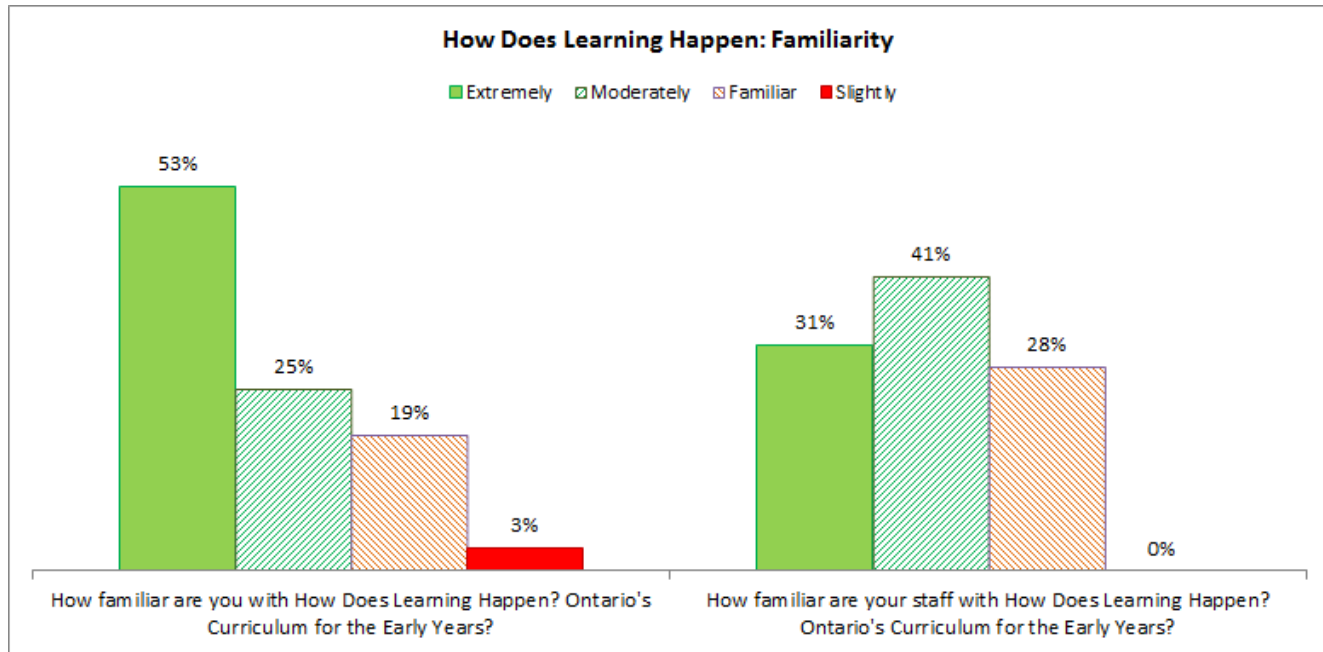


Figure 8: Level of familiarity with HDLH? Source: Durham Child Care Operator Survey 2017

In focus groups with educators, some acknowledged that they were familiar with HDLH, although very few were confident that they had fully implemented the pedagogy into daily practice. When asked to explain the barriers preventing implementation, several participants suggested there was not enough time to learn the pedagogy; the trickle-down from supervisor to staff style of dissemination did not allow for a clear understanding of how to enact the core foundations.

The CCEYA, Section 46 of Ontario Regulation 137/2015 (General) requires that “Every licensee shall have a program statement that is consistent with the Minister’s policy statement on programming and pedagogy issued under subsection 55 (3) of the Act and shall review the program statement at least annually for this purpose.” As the CMSM, the CSD plays a role in supporting all licensed child care programs to ensure program statements are based on HDLH and that the principles are embedded into program plans. This process will begin by addressing a gap in the understanding and application of HDLH with emerging and existing ELCC educators.

To further support the continued use of HDLH in practice, Durham’s Best Start Network’s Child Care Subcommittee developed a “Pedagogical Inquiry: Exploring How Does Learning Happen?” resource for early years educators. The package, which includes Ministry publications, 23 ready to use inquiry sessions, and additional media resources, has been distributed to all licensed child care centres in Durham Region. The documents are available online, in accessible formats, in English and French. Successful uptake of the Tool has been documented outside of Durham, with Algonquin College, Andrew Fleck Child Care Services (Ottawa), Simcoe County, York Region, and Northumberland County. The subcommittee is committed to the continuous promotion and uptake of the tool, and aims to conduct an evaluation of its use and develop content in 2018.

Measurement indicators

Using existing continuous professional learning (CPL) opportunities supported by CSD, the number of training sessions focused on HDLH will be increased and sessions will enhance methods of application in program.

Table 19: Measurement indicators for Objective 3b

Indicator	Source
Number of HDLH trainings/workshops offered	DRCCF: Workshop lists
Number of ELCC professionals participating in trainings	DRCCF: Attendance records
Scores for quality child care programming and parent engagement versus staff attendance to HDLH workshops	DROC AQI scores

Actions

Trainings and/or workshops will be developed in consultation with the DRCCF based upon the needs and preferences of educators. Opportunities will include offering formal presentations (top preference) during weekdays (Monday to Friday), with costs covered by Capacity Building funding. Cost coverage will include the provision of the training sessions and backfill coverage to enable educators to attend sessions during the day. Advertisements for trainings will be disseminated using existing media outlets: GROW newsletter, website, child care e-mail updates and Best Start Network meetings. Sessions will be held on a regular basis to reach the maximum number of ELCC professionals. It is anticipated that each professional development opportunity will comprise of more than one session in order to provide opportunities for participants to explore new ideas and theories, test them in their workplace, and to come back to review and refine their learning.

The CSD will work collaboratively with community partners to ensure that training is being provided by competent, experienced educators who:

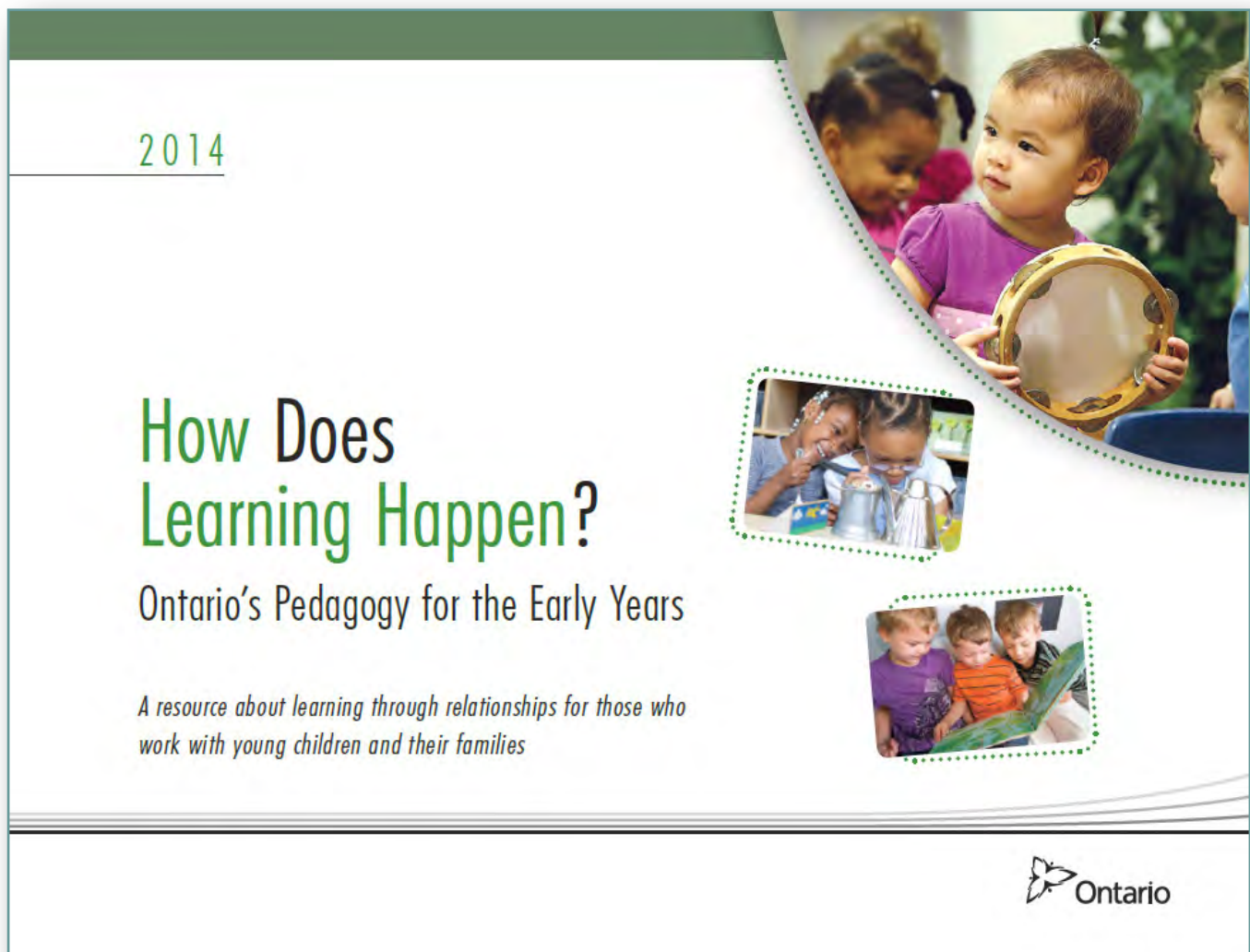
1. Understand the sector.
2. Have a solid understanding of HDLH and how to support the implementation of this pedagogical model across all age groups.
3. Understand and implement the principles of adult education.

Participants will be asked to complete a series of evaluations to measure: knowledge before training, knowledge immediately following training, knowledge six months after training. The results of these evaluations will help re-evaluate the HDLH needs of the ELCC community and inform future directions. Furthermore, by linking demographic information provided by workshop participants (e.g. agency, room, age group) to outcomes of annual DROC AQI assessments, we will have a better understanding of the direct impact on children and families.

Timeline

Table 20: Timeline for Objective 3b

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Develop and/or identify a HDLH training plan					
Schedule and advertise trainings					
Develop a HDLH knowledge evaluation series of surveys					
Host trainings					
Evaluate HDLH knowledge					
Re-evaluate HDLH needs					
Compare outcomes of trainings on DROC AQI scores					



Additional context

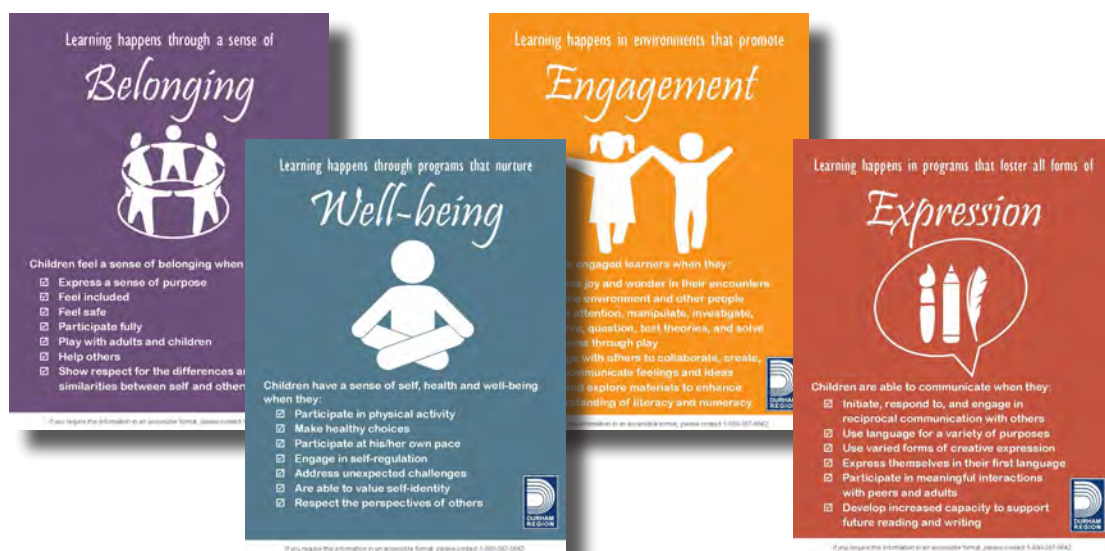
One-hundred front-line educators reported that pedagogical training was the most important type of training offered. Those who had received training previously requested refresher courses, to keep current and to learn new strategies for implementation. Trainings will be open to all ELCC professionals, and trainings offered in French will be explored. Furthermore, the CSD will explore offering HDLH training to current students and new graduates looking to enter the field of early childhood education.

As a deeper understanding of HDLH develops, the opportunity to offer focused trainings will continue with exploration of legislation, such as the EYCCA, ELCC Framework, as well as topics important to staff (e.g. opportunities for advancement, time management, and personal wellness).

In tandem with the development of HDLH training, the CSD has created, and will disseminate, 'How Does Learning Happen in Durham?' resource packages to all licensed child care centres and home agencies. Resource packages include:

- T-shirts for each educator
- Four How Does Learning Happen parent engagement posters
- Four How Does Learning Happen reflection cards
- Learning to Play and Playing to Learn: What Families Can Do
- Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth
- Resource and Reflection Guide
- Professional Advisory: Duty to Report
- Written consent for use of children's image in photographs

This campaign encourages educators to demonstrate how learning happens within their organizations, by submitting stories, photos, videos, displays or any media. All participating centres will be entered into a draw to win a customized gift basket, filled with play-based toys and equipment organized by the Quality Assurance Advisors. Entries will be displayed within CSD events throughout the year, including Week of the Child, and Registered Early Childhood Educator and Child Care Worker Appreciation Day. These events will be promoted in conjunction with information for parents using communications channels (e.g., web, newspaper, social media).



4. Support and expand the licensed home child care sector

Context

The anticipated expansion of the ELCC sector can only be successfully achieved by expanding and fully integrating a strong, high quality, licensed home child care sector as a key component of the licensed child care system in Durham Region. Licensed home child care (LHCC) offers an opportunity to meet the expansion targets without additional capital funding.

The LHCC sector in the Region of Durham is currently comprised of four agencies. There is considerable scope for expansion, particularly in communities where access to licensed group child care is limited, either entirely or for certain age groups (such as infants). Expanding the existing home child care system requires a review and revamp of the current model to align with new legislation, the new provincial funding model, and to simplify an overly complex model.

A new model will be more transparent, simplifying the per diem rate paid to providers and providing agencies with core funding that is stable, consistent and based on the actual costs of supporting affiliated providers to meet or exceed all licensing and regulatory requirements.

One of the advantages of LHCC is flexibility; a major concern of parents on the survey was that child care has to be flexible, to meet the needs of families that do not traditionally work nine to five (157 requests). A solution for these situations would be accessing high-quality LHCC.

A significant challenge to expansion of the LHCC sector is the ability to attract providers. Existing home child care agencies have reached out to providers who are currently operating unlicensed home child care, and have indicated that there is strong resistance on the part of these providers to joining the licensed sector. Perceived barriers include: enhanced monitoring, increased requirements for documentation and financial reporting, a remuneration gap between providers affiliated with the licensed sector and those providing care outside the licensed sector, and the ability to set what the unlicensed providers perceive as competitive prices.

The existing model of home child care no longer reflects the needs of families. Providers must adapt to changing regulatory and licensing requirements. Any change in the model will require education, for both families and providers. Those providers who are currently operating outside of the licensed sector may be encouraged to affiliate with LHCC agencies if the benefits of such a connection are clearly delineated.

“Flexible with shifts. Offer nights and weekends for nurses and other staff that have to work 12 hour shifts.”

- Durham Region Parent



The Ministry of Education announced there will be an innovation fund to support the creation of inventive solutions to increase access to child care. This fund could be accessed to support the development and implementation of an innovative new model of licensed home child care for Durham Region.

Measurement indicators

Table 23: Measurement indicators for Objective 4

Indicator	Source
Number of agencies supporting the provision of licensed home child care	CCLS
Number of providers affiliated with licensed agencies	CCLS (Provider Enhancement Utilization Forms)
The number of families utilizing LHCC	Annual home child care agency reporting
The quality of child care provided in the LHCC sector	Quality assessment tool for home child care

Actions and Timeline

Table 24: Timeline for Objective 4

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Develop and implement a new funding model for the LHCC sector in Durham Region that simplifies the existing structure, compensates providers and agencies equitably and is transparent.					
Develop and implement a process to encourage providers in the unlicensed sector to join the LHCC sector by affiliating with a LHCC agency.					
Increase public awareness of LHCC as a viable option especially for families who require non-traditional hours of care and/or who need care for infants and toddlers.					

5. Reduce the waitlist for fee subsidy

Context

In 2017, the wait time to receive fee subsidy was reduced from 12 to five months; the shortest wait time in a number of years. The CSD recognizes that it may be difficult to reduce the wait list, especially as more families become aware of the program; however, the CSD strives to reduce the length of time families have to wait to receive subsidy.

In 2017, financial reporting data were used to estimate the annual average cost of care for each age-group. The estimated cost to provide full-cost subsidy to all children on the waitlist is approximately \$22 million annually.

In order to be eligible for the fee subsidy program in Durham, parents must meet one of the following qualifications:

- Be working.
- Be going to school.
- Receive Ontario Works (and be participating in an approved program).
- Have a special or social need (parent or child).

As of December 2017, there were 2,456 children on the fee subsidy waitlist: 1,148 have not been offered subsidy and 1,008 have been offered subsidy but were not in need of care at the time of offering. Families have always been encouraged to apply for subsidy support as soon as possible to increase the likelihood that funding will be available when the family needs to access licensed child care. However, they may not require care immediately for reasons including but not limited to:

- The parents are still on parental leave.
- A new employment position has not started.
- A parent attending school is on a break for some reason.

The discrepancy between the number of families on the list and the number of placements that could immediately be made following the release of additional funding, identifies the need to review how the waiting list is managed and what information that is collected at the time of application.

An increase in funding provided by the MEDU and federal government has resulted in significant improvements to the fee subsidy assistance program and a reduction of wait time to access a subsidy. However, in order to sustain affordable care for families, additional and on-going funding is required.

The waitlist for the Fee Subsidy Program is incredibly dynamic, and the needs of the community and demands on the system change on a daily basis. Furthermore, there are misconceptions out in the general public regarding the eligibility to the program and current waitlist times. To better manage the length of time on the fee subsidy waitlist and enhance public understanding of the program, two actions are proposed:

- a. Enhance the information collected when parents/caregivers apply for fee subsidy. This will provide waitlist data to better predict the needs of the community.
- b. Develop a communication strategy to improve public understanding of the fee subsidy program.

Durham's child population versus fee subsidy services

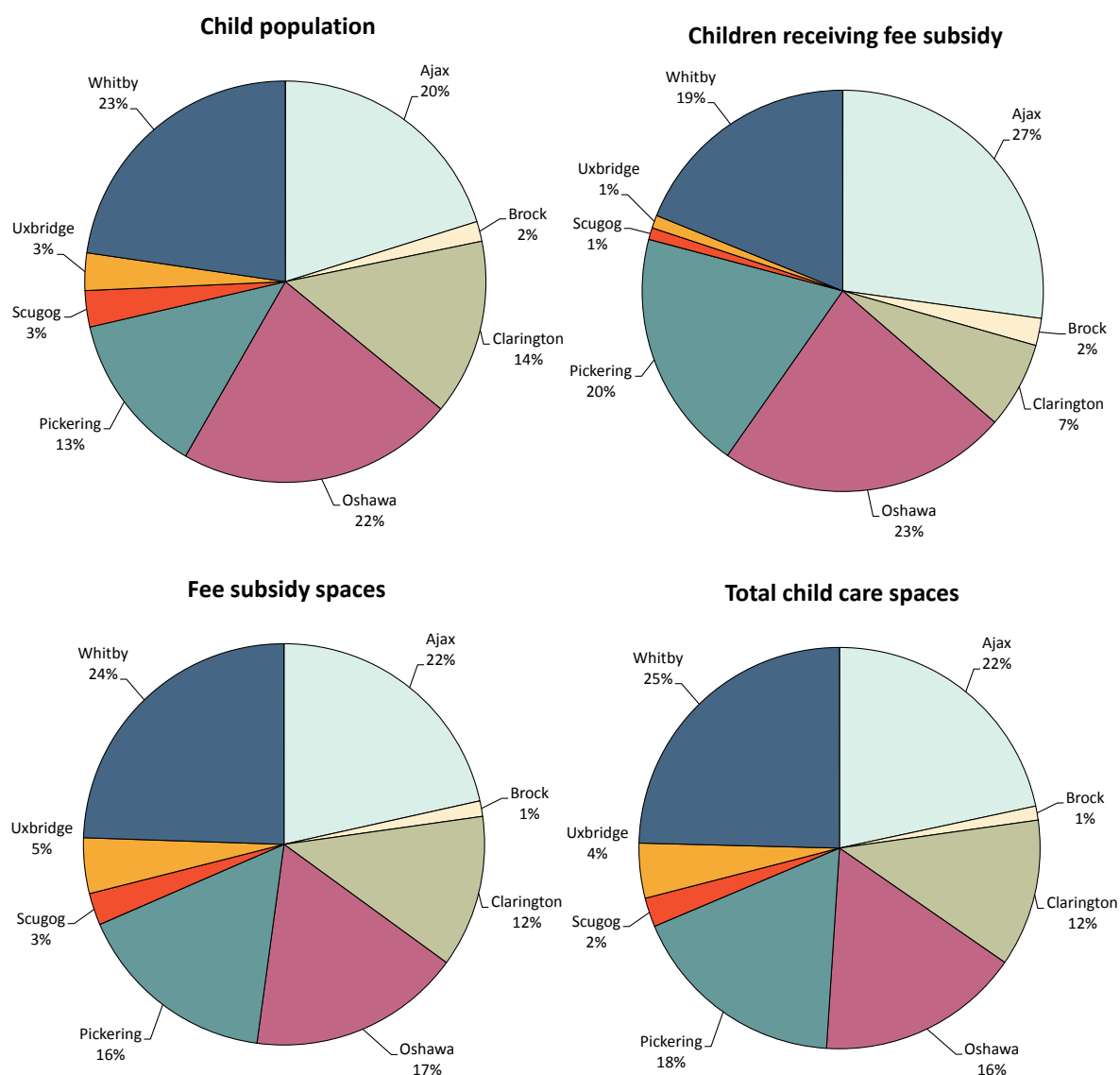


Figure 9: Series of pie charts outlining distributing of Fee Subsidy Service provision versus child population, 2017

The four graphs above demonstrate that the distribution of Durham's child population across the eight municipalities is reflected in the total number of children served through the Fee Subsidy Program, the number of Fee Subsidy spaces available, and the total number of child care spaces, overall. As the child population in Durham begins to grow, especially in Ajax, Pickering and Whitby, the child care system has been, and will continue to be, responsive to the needs of the community.



a. Enhance the information collected when applying to the fee subsidy waitlist to better predict the needs of the community

Context

As of 2017, information collected when parents apply for the fee subsidy waitlist include basic information for the applicant:

- Name
- Gender
- Date of birth
- Marital status
- Source of income
- Reason for child care
- Contact information
- Family’s annual household income
- Spouse information (contact, date of birth, source of income, reason for child care)
- If there are other adults living in the home
- Board of education
- School name preference
- Interest in attending a Directly Operated Child Care Centre, owned and operated by the Region

In order to better forecast fee subsidy spending and match community need to ELCC vacancy and expansion, it would be helpful to extend data collection.

Measurement indicators

Table 25: Measurement indicators for Objective 5a

Indicator	Source
Number of applicants on the fee subsidy waitlist with completed variables of interest	Ontario Child Care Management System

Actions

This process will involve internal collaboration among the fee subsidy managers, clerical staff, caseworkers, and data analysts to identify variables of interest. This project will be view as a quality improvement project by the CSD.

Timeline

Table 26: Timeline for Objective 5a

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Identify technology to support new data collection.					
Update fee subsidy application process.					
Implement and monitor new application process.					

b. Develop a communications strategy to improve public understanding of the fee subsidy program

Context

There appears to be a misconception of the eligibility criteria for fee subsidy. In parent and caregiver focus groups and surveys, participants believed that fee subsidy was only available to very low income and/or young families. Of the 1,558 parents that chose to respond, 20 per cent reported they were ineligible and several parents commented on the need for subsidy regardless of household income.

As fee subsidy funding becomes increasingly available, the CSD will work to broadly promote this service across the Region, using Health Neighbourhood data to create targeted promotions to populations that may benefit the most from subsidy.

“Decrease the cost regardless of the parent’s income!!!! It is not right that parents who have higher incomes are “penalized”. As it is, we pay more income tax, I really don’t think it is right that we don’t receive any “discount” on child care. It’s almost as if we are being penalized for getting a good education, getting a good job and working hard!!!”

- Durham Region parent



Child Care Fee Subsidy Program

What is the Fee Subsidy Program?

Fee Subsidy helps families living in Durham Region pay for licensed child care.

Parents or legal guardians qualify if they:

- Work or go to school or
- Have a special need, or their child has a special or social need

This chart shows approximately how much you will pay for child care.

Annual income	Daily parent fee
\$20,000 or less	\$0.00
\$30,000	\$3.83
\$45,000	\$13.41
\$60,000	\$30.65
\$75,000	\$47.89
\$90,000	\$65.13



Where can I find more information?

For more information about the Children’s Services Division, or if you require this information in an accessible format, please call 1-800-387-0642

or visit

durham.ca/childrensservices



Social Services Department
Children’s Services Division

Measurement indicators

Table 27: Measurement indicators for Objective 5b

Indicator	Source
Number of promotions disseminated to the general public	CSD communications tracking
Number of ELCC community partners promotions are shared with	CSD communications tracking
Correlation between promotions and number of applicants to the fee subsidy waitlist	CSD communications tracking and the Ontario Child Care Management System data

Actions

Working with Corporate Communications, fee subsidy communications will be designed and disseminated to the members of the ELCC sector. Existing partnerships, such as those listed at the beginning of this document, will help diffuse information to the general public.

Timeline

Table 28: Timeline for Objective 5b

Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Develop a communications strategy to promote the fee subsidy assistance program.					
Broadly promote the fee subsidy assistance program.					
Improve transparency of fee subsidy eligibility to the general public.					

Additional context

The development of this communication strategy will also allow time for review of communications provided to families as they enter the waitlist. This may include: Health Department communications (e.g., immunizations schedules), CSD resources (e.g., Children's Program Locator) and materials outlining the shared vision of SNR agencies (e.g., in-scope services).

To promote transparency, the CSD will also launch a "Eligibility Calculator" on its website. This calculator will give a real-time response to families, to let them know if they are eligible to receive fee assistance. Information collected will include: number of children who require care and family income.

Assessment and evaluation

Priority and service outcomes

Regional Priorities		Priorities				Actions	Timeline				
		Responsive	Affordable	Accessible	High-Quality		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Maximize financial support for licensed child care	Maximize financial support for licensed child care.					Review and update the operator budget tool and fee request process.					
						Incorporate rate and fee elements into operating funding model.					
						Annually review and include new legislation and community components to community analysis tool and funding models (e.g. General Operating, special purpose).					
						Monitor vacancy levels in licensed child care settings.					
Build capacity to support children with special needs, birth to 12 years	Establish a system vision.	X		X		Develop and action a communications plan.					
	Implement a transition plan that meets both community and MEDU needs.					Services offered by the four current SNR agencies will continue to be part of Durham's SNR system. The CSD will consult with the Ministry about the role for other funded agencies that provide specialized supports to children under six years (e.g. Infant Development Services).					
						SNR agencies will work with the CMSM to strategically modify service delivery to ensure that service provision is directed toward licensed child care and early learning programs.					
						SNR funding will be prioritized to ensure a focus on in-scope spending.					
						SNR service providers will establish intake and triage procedures that focus on providing families with information on licensed child care and early learning programs and community services to meet their needs. SNR funds will be prioritized to support the licensed child care system.					
						The data collection process will be modified to gather information from SNR agencies to monitor out-of-scope services.					
						Out-of-scope services may support short-term or specialized support for families who do not have any other services in place. The focus will be to support the families to receive interim support during crisis or while they gain access to community services to support their child's needs as necessary.					
						Licensed child care and approved recreation programs will have a direct communication link to SNR services.					
						A review of the Licensed Home Child Care (LHCC) agencies and providers will occur. Strategies to ensure LHCC have a relationship with and access to SNR services to support inclusion will be implemented.					
	Implement capacity building opportunities.					Consult with SNR agencies to develop training calendars.					
						Conduct regular SNR-related trainings.					
	Institute administrative/procedural modifications.					Develop and action a communications plan.					
						Develop a consent form for on-going information sharing and/or service request form for Durham Region.					
						Share consent forms across the ELCC system.					
	Increase the support provided through the Enhanced Staffing program.					A review of the current application process and approval process should take place in the last quarter of 2018. This will allow the effects of the SNR transition plan and opportunities for flexibility to be incorporated into the review.					
						Update and implement an application process.					
						Monitor demand for enhanced staffing.					

Regional Priorities		Provincial Priorities				Actions	Timeline				
		Responsive	Affordable	Accessible	High-Quality		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Increase, attract and retain quality RECEs	Raise public awareness of the RECEs professional designation	X			X	Establish a working group of community partners.					
						Work with communication partners to design campaign.					
						Develop campaign content.					
						Publicly release campaign (in staged roll-out).					
						Host public and targeted presentations.					
						Create a sustainability plan for messages disseminated.					
	Provide opportunities for new and existing ELCC educators (including RECEs) to improve knowledge, understanding and use of current ELCC best practices.	X			X	Develop and/or identify a HDLH training plan					
						Schedule and advertise trainings					
						Develop a HDLH knowledge evaluation series of surveys					
						Host trainings					
						Evaluate HDLH knowledge					
						Re-evaluate HDLH needs					
						Compare outcomes of trainings on DROC scores					
Support and expand the licensed home child care sector	Support and expand the licensed home child care sector.	X			X	Develop and implement a new funding model for the licensed home child care sector in Durham Region that simplifies the existing structure, compensates providers and agencies equitably, and is transparent.					
						Develop and implement a process to encourage providers in the unlicensed sector to join the licensed home child care sector by affiliating with a licensed home child care agency.					
						Increase public awareness of licensed home child care as a viable licensed home child care option especially for those families who require non-traditional hours of care or who need care for infants and toddlers.					
Reduce the waitlist for fee subsidy	Enhance the information collected when applying to the fee subsidy waitlist to better predict the needs of the community	X	X	X		Identify technology to support new data collection.					
						Update fee subsidy application process.					
						Implement and monitor new application process.					
	Develop a communications strategy to improve public understanding of the fee subsidy program.	X	X	X		Develop a communications strategy to promote the fee subsidy assistance program.					
						Broadly promote the fee subsidy assistance program.					
						Improve transparency of fee subsidy eligibility to the general public.					

Implementation supports

The CSD acknowledges that the macro and micro goals outlined in this service plan are lofty to achieve in a five-year period, however, through the existence of strong internal and external partnerships, solid buy-in from community partners and CSD managers, it is believed all five key priorities will come to fruition. It is important to note that this plan provides a starting point, for which work plans will be created to achieve each subgoal within each priority. A new internal Program Manager of Policy and Strategic Initiatives will oversee the implementation of the strategies outlined in this plan. The funding provided by the Ministry of Education and the Government of Canada will maintain momentum towards achieving most goals, and accountability reporting to Regional Council, community partners, and the general public will ensure achievement towards these goals are transparent.

This service plan, however, was prepared in winter 2017/18 based upon information available at the time. There will be a provincial election in June 2018. While the outcome of the election cannot be predicted at the time of plan development, it is important to recognize that the election results may affect funding and policy commitments made within this service plan. If this should happen, the CSD will review the plan and make adjustments accordingly.

On-going community engagement

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

- Enhance service accessibility for all children and families, particularly isolated, newcomer, and low-income families.
- Actively engage Francophone and Indigenous partners in the planning, management and delivery of responsive programs and services.
- Support local decision-making to enrich programs, facilitate smooth transitions and enhance integration between child care and early years services, schools and specialized community services.
- Regularly collect insights from parents, caregivers and children to inform local programs and services and modes of communication.

Accountability

In accordance with the EYCCA, this service system plan will be presented to the Regional Council for approval in early 2018. Following approval, a copy of the plan will be disseminated to the Ministry of Education and the regional child care Advisor within 60 days following approval. Additionally, the broader community will be updated about the approved plan by publicly posting the plan on the CSD website in conjunction with a comprehensive communication strategy targeting licensed child care operators, early years professionals and students, and families.

Conclusion

This plan is not meant to be definitive, but flexible, allowing for changes to timelines or priorities dependent on the dynamic needs of the children and families and those who care for them in Durham Region. As the CMSM, the CSD will voluntarily submit updates to the Ministry regarding the implementation of the plan as changes or updates arise throughout the lifespan of the service system plan. It is hoped that this information will provide the Ministry with valuable information regarding the status of system planning, achieving provincial outcomes, and changes to local priorities.

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 the diversity of our community. The introduction of the five priorities detailed in this report will strengthen the CSD's role, as the CMSM, to ensure an ELCC system that is affordable, accessible, high-quality and responsive to the dynamic needs of our growing region.



Acronyms

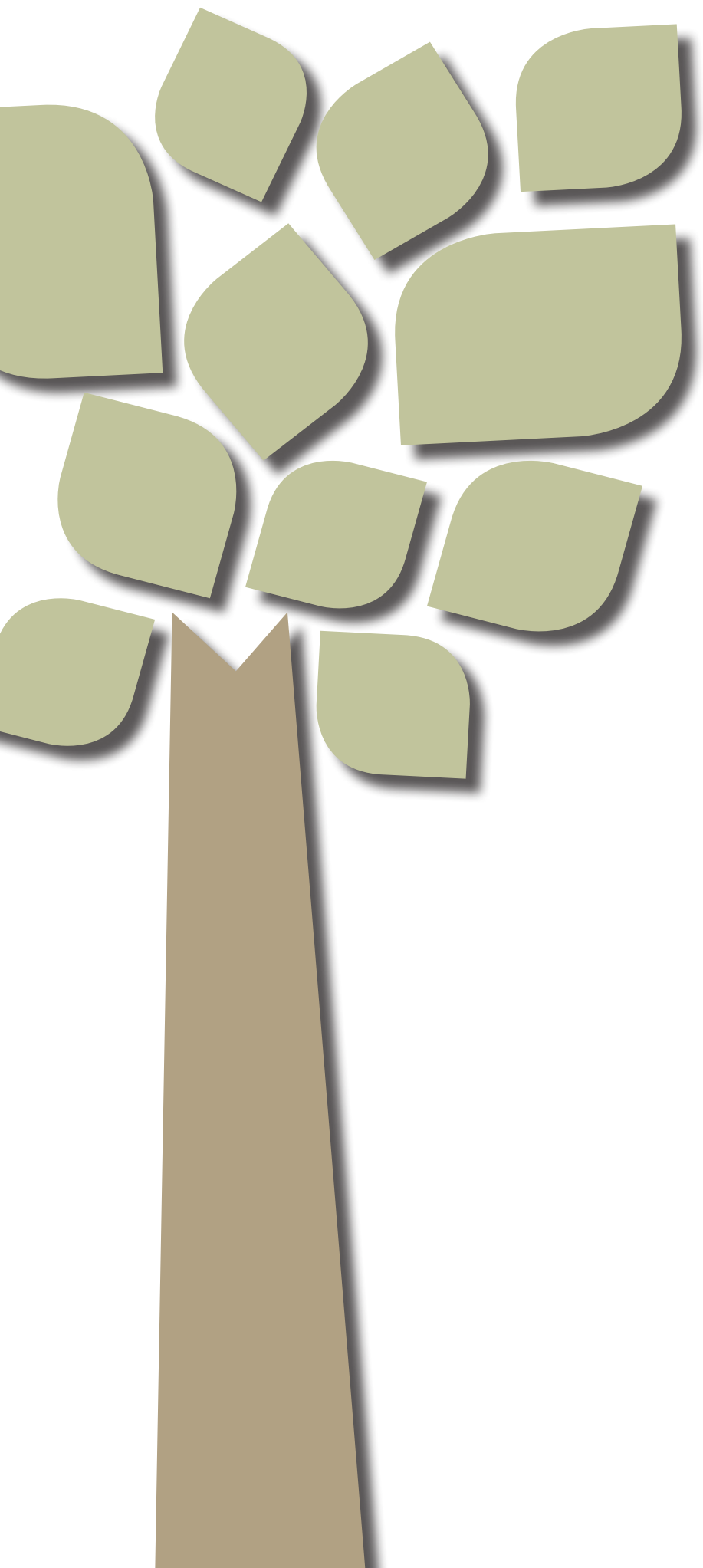
BACC	Bawaajigewin Aboriginal Community Circle
CCPA	Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
CECE	College of Early Childhood Educators
CPL	Continuous Professional Learning
CSD	Children's Services Division
DROC AQI	Durham Region Operating Criteria Assessment for Quality Improvement
ELAQI	Early Learning Assessment for Quality Improvement
ELCC	Early Learning and Child Care
EYCCA	Early Years and Child Care Act
HDLH	How Does Learning Happen
LHCC	Licensed Home Child Care
MEDU	Ministry of Education
OCCMS	Ontario Child Care Management System
POS	Purchase of Service
RECE	Registered Early Childhood Educator
SNR	Special Needs Resourcing

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