



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

CEYD-23-04

To: Chair and Members of the Social Services Committee
From: Mandy Koroniak, Director of Children's Early Years Division
Date: Wednesday, May 10, 2023
Subject: **Wellington Child Care and Early Years Service Plan, 2023-2027**

Background:

The *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* requires that service system managers have a child care and early years programmes and services plan for their service delivery area that addresses matters of provincial interest under the *Act*.

Update:

The Children's Early Years Division is pleased to present the attached Child Care and Early Years Service Plan 2023-2027, which was developed following review of service system data, a community engagement process involving parents and caregivers, a consultation process with early years service partners through the Growing Great Generations Children and Youth Services Forum, and the synthesis of information from research, provincial policy documents, as well as other service system reports.

The plan identifies key service areas for the Children's Early Years Division, with priorities and potential actions developed based on evidence from research, input from service partners, and planned initiatives by the Division. This collaborative process has resulted in a shared child care and early years plan for Wellington. The priorities and proposed actions identified in the plan follow our planning principles of high quality, equitably available, equitably accessible, and affordable child care and early years services, alongside the additional category of leadership and accountability. The 16 priorities identified in the plan are as follows:

High Quality

1. Implement a consistent continuous quality assessment and improvement strategy across the child care and early years services system.
2. Develop and support implementation of a workforce strategy that improves recruitment and retention of qualified child care and early years professionals.
3. Increase access to and participation in professional learning and capacity development opportunities that enhance the child care and early years workforce's knowledge and competences on topics of current focus, relevance and interest within the service sector, including diversity, inclusive practices and cultural competence.

Equitably Available

4. Continue to increase, optimize and stabilize the capacity for licensed child care and EarlyON services, focusing on fair distribution and licensed child space coverage for infants and school-age children.
5. Support the development and delivery of French language child care and early years services.
6. Implement recommendations of the Indigenous Early Years Community Consultations and support the establishment of Indigenous-led child care and early years services.

Equitably Accessible

7. Improve child care and early years service system information, awareness, communication, and service navigation resources to enable parents to make informed decisions about and facilitate access to available services.
8. Advocate for additional funding to implement strategies for increasing flexibility of the service system so that programmes can serve families with diverse needs (including hours of operation, part-time options, and non-standard work schedules.)
9. Improve integration of the child care and early years service system, particularly EarlyON programmes, with other community services.
10. Develop and support implementation of service system requirements to reduce barriers to accessing services, eliminate all forms of systemic marginalization and ensure the service system is welcoming and responsive to all families in the service delivery area.
11. Implement the new Special Needs Resourcing strategy for supporting children with additional support needs that builds on the strength and knowledge of parents and Early Childhood Educators, and makes effective and efficient use of enhanced supports to allow full and meaningful participation of all children in early learning environments.

Affordable

12. Continue to pursue strategies for making child care services affordable for families, including advocating for more public funding of the system, and leveraging any federal and provincial funding initiatives.
13. Improve awareness and facilitate parents' access to child care fee subsidy, including simplifying processes for families applying for and receiving child care fee subsidy.

Leadership and Accountability

14. Develop and implement a framework for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of child care and early years services and programmes that ensures transparency and system accountability, and reinforces service quality.
15. Explore technological options to reduce administrative burden, improve customer service and access to programmes for service partners and families.
16. Guide and assist child care and early years service partners through periods of both anticipated and unforeseen changes to the service system.

Once approved by County Council, the service plan will be submitted to the Ministry of Education and will be made publicly available on the County website.

Attachment:

Wellington Child Care and Early Years Service Plan, 2023-2027

Recommendation:

That the Wellington Child Care and Early Years Service Plan, 2023-2027 be approved for submission to the Ministry of Education.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Koroniak', written in a cursive style.

Mandy Koroniak

Director of Children's Early Years Division