



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Social Services Committee **CEYD-23-07**
From: Mandy Koroniak, Director of Children's Early Years Division
Date: Wednesday, September 13, 2023
Subject: **Wellington Directed Growth and the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System**

Background:

Ontario's Action Plan for implementing the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system includes developing a framework for targeted space creation and providing funding for start-up grants to support the creation of new, affordable licensed child care spaces, prioritizing full day spaces for children from birth to age 4, in targeted locations and for populations most in need. This supports Ontario's vision for the CWELCC system, which is that more families in Ontario have access to high quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live. Also, its vision for access and inclusion that more children (of all abilities and socio-economic backgrounds) can actively and meaningfully participate in child care and be supported in forming authentic, caring relationships with their peers and educators.

Update:

In June 2023, the Ministry of Education released its Access and Inclusion Framework document to support service system managers with planning for the directed growth of affordable child care spaces enrolled in the CWELCC system with an increased focus on access as it relates to inclusion. The Access and Inclusion Framework guides the approach to directed growth by identifying the following principles for access and inclusion:

Principles for Access:

- *Access equity:* Improving access to CWELCC spaces for children from birth to age 5 to a provincial average access rate of 37% by 2026.
- *Directed growth to support underserved and vulnerable populations:* Allocating a target number of CWELCC spaces based on a formula taking into consideration socio-economic indicators to support child care for underserved and vulnerable populations.
- *Francophone spaces:* Meeting or exceeding the proportion of French language spaces for children from birth to age 5, proportional to the population of Francophone people in Ontario.

Principles for Inclusion:

- *Accessibility:* Providing a wide range of opportunities for learning, play, and inquiry in physical and teaching environments across diverse settings and contexts.
- *Participation and belonging:* Providing intentional and instructional intervention approaches that enable children to actively engage in all parts of the day, including play and learning activities and social interactions.
- *Equity:* Making sure everyone has what they need to succeed by removing barriers that disadvantage some groups over others.

The Children’s Early Years Division has developed the attached Wellington Directed Growth Plan, which will support the planning for expansion of affordable child care spaces under the CWELCC system in Wellington County and Guelph. This document details current rates of access to full-day, full-year licensed child care spaces (excluding school age programmes) as well as indicators of vulnerable populations identified by the ministry in its Access and Inclusion Framework, projected population growth, and commuting data for each municipality. Due to its larger concentration of population, it was possible to further present data on current rates of access and the presence of vulnerable populations using planning units for Guelph, which were created using Census Dissemination Areas. Access rates are the key consideration for planning for licensed child care, to support Ontario’s goal of achieving an access rate of 37% across the province.

Wellington Directed Growth Priorities, September 2023

Geography	Access rates	Children (under 6) in low income	Black	Visible minority	Indigenous ancestry	Recent newcomers	Franco-phone
Mapleton	0.0%	18.2%	0.1%	1.4%	1.5%	0.7%	0.4%
Puslinch	0.0%	2.5%	0.8%	12.3%	1.6%	0.4%	1.0%
Wellington North	8.9%	17.2%	0.8%	2.7%	2.5%	0.3%	0.3%
Minto	10.3%	16.0%	0.2%	4.2%	3.4%	0.9%	0.6%
Centre Wellington	15.1%	6.0%	1.0%	4.2%	2.7%	0.7%	0.8%
Guelph	28.8%	9.5%	4.1%	20.9%	2.3%	4.1%	1.4%
Guelph/Eramosa	32.7%	4.8%	1.7%	7.1%	3.2%	0.8%	0.9%
Erin	34.9%	6.0%	1.7%	7.6%	2.6%	0.4%	1.3%
Wellington service delivery area	22.6%	9.9%	2.9%	14.5%	2.4%	2.7%	1.1%

Table shows access rates to full day, full year licensed child care spaces for children from birth up to age 4 (infants, toddlers, preschoolers) and the presence of vulnerable population groups identified in the Ministry of Education’s Access and Inclusion Framework as a proportion of each municipality’s total population.

Following regulatory amendments to O. Reg. 137/15, every applicant in our service delivery area who applies to the Ministry of Education for a new licence to operate a child care centre or home child care agency, or requesting the addition of child care spaces to an existing licence, is now required to provide verification from their Service System Manager that their proposed space creation aligns with the Wellington Directed Growth Plan, and that they have been approved to be enrolled in the CWELCC system as part of their application.

In summary, the Wellington Directed Growth Plan will inform prospective and current child care operators where more licensed child care spaces are needed most in the Wellington service delivery area. It will also be used by the Children's Early Years division to prioritize and approve new enrolments in the CWELCC system as per the ministry's requirements.

Attachment:

Wellington Directed Growth Plan, Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System, 2023-2026

Recommendation:

That the report, Wellington Directed Growth and the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System, be received for information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Koroniak". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "M".

Mandy Koroniak
Director of Children's Early Years Division