



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

Committee Report

To: Chair and Members of the Social Services Committee **CEYD-24-02**
From: Mandy Koroniak, Director of the Children's Early Years Division
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024
Subject: **New Wellington-Guelph Centralized Child Care Application and Waitlist**

Background:

Licensed child care operators in the Wellington service delivery area have historically maintained their own waitlists for their programmes. With the implementation of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System, which is increasing the affordability of licensed child care, the number of children on child care waitlists and families reporting difficulty in finding child care has grown across the country ([Statistics Canada, 2023](#)).

The growth in demand for licensed child care has led to an increasing burden for families who want to apply to a range of child care programmes, which has required them to independently contact each operator to register on their waitlist, as well as for operators to manage their growing waitlists and place children into their programmes. More comprehensive data on demand for licensed child care programmes is also of value to the Children's Early Years division to inform service system planning and, in particular, to plan for the directed growth of affordable and accessible licensed child care spaces in Wellington County and Guelph.

Update:

The Children's Early Years division identified that the above noted pressures related to burden on families seeking to register on licensed child care waitlists, child care operators' management of waitlists, and need for improved data to inform planning could be supported through implementation of a centralized, online waitlist for the Wellington service delivery area.

In April 2024, the Children's Early Years division will launch the online Wellington-Guelph Child Care Application and Waitlist using the OneHSN Child Care Connect platform. This online software is used by more than half of Ontario's child care and early years Service System Managers and will allow families to easily search for and register on the waitlists for multiple child care programmes, support child care operators with waitlist management and child placement, and provide the Children's Early Years division with comprehensive data to support service system planning.

The implementation of this centralized child care waitlist further supports two priorities in the Division's [Child Care and Early Years Service Plan 2023-2027](#):

Equitably Accessible

- Strategic Priority #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.

Leadership and Accountability

- Strategic Priority #15: Explore technological options to reduce administrative burden, improve customer service and access to programmes for service partners and families.

All licensed child care programmes and authorized recreational programmes as defined under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and its regulations will be provided access to the Wellington-Guelph Child Care Application and Waitlist. The Children's Early Years division is working closely with child care operators to support them with the migration of their existing waitlists to the new centralized waitlist and minimize disruption to operators and families.

Data from the Wellington-Guelph Child Care Application and Waitlist will be collected and used by the Children Early Years division's planning and research team to support service system planning, and will also support the work of the Children's Early Years Clerk in their management of the wait list of our Directly Operated Programmes.

Customer and technical support for child care operators and families will be provided directly by the vendor OneHSN as part of its software and service package. The new waitlist is thereby expected to reduce administrative burden on Children's Early Years division staff, and community child care operators, while providing families with a single access point to apply to child care wait lists, and improved data on child care demand and insight into the impacts of the implementation of CWELCC in the Wellington service delivery area. The Children's Early Years division is currently working with the County's Communications team on a marketing strategy to maximize awareness of this new centralized waitlist for families in Wellington County and Guelph.

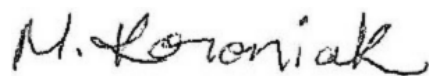
Financial Implications:

The approved 2024 Children's Early Years Budget includes an allocation of \$62,300 for the implementation of the Wellington-Guelph Child Care Application and Waitlist software. Future years of the 10-year plan include a reduced budget allocation (\$56,600) to reflect lower costs once implementation has been completed. The full cost related to this software is funded through 100% federal CWELCC funding.

Recommendation:

That the report, New Wellington-Guelph Centralized Child Care Application and Waitlist, 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, looped initial "M".

Mandy Koroniak
Director of Children's Early Years Division