

CITY OF HAMILTON

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Social Development & Early Childhood Services Division

TO: Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: September 10, 2012	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Update on Early Learning and Care: Child Care Modernization (CS12032) (City Wide)	
SUBMITTED BY: Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community Services Department	PREPARED BY: Jane Soldera 905-546-2424 ext. 2399
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the joint City of Hamilton – Best Start Network Response to the Ministry of Education Discussion Paper “Modernizing Child Care in Ontario; Sharing Conversation, Strengthening Partnerships, Working Together” attached as Appendix A to Report CS12032 be endorsed and submitted by staff to the Province.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 27, 2012 the Ministry of Education announced the release of a discussion paper *Modernizing Child Care in Ontario*. This paper was developed to engage Ontarians in a discussion around forthcoming changes to Ontario’s licensed child care system. The Province, partners, and stakeholders agree that the ‘current legislation (the Day Nurseries Act) governing child care is outdated and needs to be revised in order to reflect current evidence and experience’. Further, stakeholders including municipalities have identified challenges with the historical funding models, quality and accountability measures, and data collection and management.

The government has undertaken this work as their next step in ‘creating a more integrated early learning and care system to ensure children get the best possible start’.

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The discussion paper presents a long term vision for Child Care, guiding principles and proposed medium term actions for comment. The areas for comment are categorized as follows: operating funding formula, capital funding priorities, quality programs, modernized legislative and regulatory framework and, capacity building.

The government has invited individuals and organizations to comment on the discussion paper by September 24, 2012. Responses are also being prepared by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

In the spirit of long standing collaboration across the early learning and care sector in Hamilton, staff partnered with the Best Start Network and community partners to prepare a response to the paper. The full response is attached as Appendix A to Report CS12032.

Highlights of the response include recommendations for the Province related to:

- The need for the new funding model to be developed within an accountability framework that has agreed upon outcomes for children, families and service providers.
- The need for a new funding formula that takes into account equity of access for families to programs and services across the province with the government ensuring that current levels of funding and service in local communities won't be at risk once the new formula is applied.
- Ensuring that capital funding processes consider the broad early years system (including Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Preschool Speech and Language, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, Child Care Special Needs Resourcing, and the proposed Best Start Child and Family Centres, etc.) not just child care and that there is a focus on neighbourhood capacity and meeting community needs.
- Consideration that quality assurance programs such as Hamilton's 'Raising the Bar' be explored as models to be replicated in the new child care system across the Province.
- The need to ensure access to quality services and supports for children with special needs.
- The harmonization of standards such as fire inspections; playground equipment inspection; zoning; lead testing; water testing; public and shared spaces; administrative costs associated with standards; and, shared supports between childcare/schools (e.g. transitioning children with special needs into school) for school boards and child care where appropriate.
- The development of a recreation based before and after school care model for 6 to 12 year olds.

- The need to create a system for monitoring children’s well being at birth in order to inform funders decisions about the effectiveness and impact of current programs and services for children and to inform planning for future services.
- Revisions to legislation pertaining to the collection, linking and sharing of data in order to better monitor the health and well-being of our children.

The response also emphasizes the need for the province to ensure that sufficient investments are made to support the ‘modernization process’ while safeguarding progress local communities have already made. Further, the response reminds the Province that it is imperative that the government ensure that measures taken to modernize child care not happen outside the context of planning for the broader early years system including future development of the Best Start Child and Family Centres.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 8

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: There are no financial implications to Report CS12032.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications to Report CS12032.

Legal: There are no legal implications to Report CS12032.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Summary of Recent Provincial Direction

The Provincial Government remains committed to ‘working towards a high-quality, accessible and co-ordinated early learning and care system for all children in Ontario’.

To that end the government has taken significant steps in transforming existing policies, programs and services including:

- Introducing the Best Start Initiative in 2005 – including the creation of three demonstration sites (including Hamilton) to ‘fast track’ the provincial Best Start vision ‘of an Ontario in which children are ready and eager to achieve success in school by the time they start Grade One’.
- Commissioning Dr. Charles Pascal as Special Advisor to the Premier to inform the creation of a new system of early learning, child care and family supports for children from the prenatal period through to adolescence.

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- Establishing the College of Early Childhood Educators – the first self regulatory body in Canada to over-see a professional membership of early childhood educators.
- Gradually implementing Full Day Junior and Senior Kindergarten with full implementation by 2014.
- Taking preliminary steps towards integrating early years services and Best Start Child and Family Centres – including the release of ‘Innovation Funding’ to encourage inventive local solutions and best practice.
- Transferring provincial responsibility for child care from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education.

New 2012 Provincial Investment in Child Care

On April 20, 2012, the Provincial government announced investments in child care as part of its 2012 budget. The total fiscal investment is \$90 million in 2012-13, \$68 million in 2013-14 and \$84 million in 2014-15. This 100 percent provincial funding relates to the new provincial direction in modernizing child care in Ontario over the next three years.

The City of Hamilton has received \$901,001 **one time** funding for the 2012 calendar year. The province has indicated it will develop a new funding formula and establish an equitable formula for funding distribution in 2013.

Table 1 below provides a summary for the 2012 **one time** City of Hamilton allocation:

Funding Description	Amount
Repairs and Maintenance – Child Care	\$ 87,321
Capacity Funding to Support Transformation	\$ 99,229
Early Learning and Child Development, ELCD Operating	\$575,531
Child Care Transition Minor Capital	\$138,920
Total	\$901,001

A detailed description of each of these provincial funding envelopes and the process to distribute the funding locally is attached as Appendix B to Report CS12032.

Hamilton Continues to Inform and Facilitate On-going Transformation of Early Learning and Care

The City of Hamilton continues to play a critical local role in early learning and care as both the designated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for child care and the lead/manager for Hamilton’s Best Start Initiative and early years services. As one of three provincial demonstration sites, Hamilton’s Best Start Network continues to develop and ‘test drive’ innovation and best practice that informs the provincial government and other communities across Ontario. At the same time, the Municipality and Network have also worked closely to continue to advance Hamilton’s vision of being

'the best place to raise a child' by sharpening our focus on local planning and program development and 'made in Hamilton' solutions. The following summary provides an update on local progress in the early learning and care system over the past twelve to eighteen months and includes an update on the status of the child care fee subsidy waitlist.

Best Start Network Strategic Framework: 2011 - 2016

Since its inception in 2005, the Hamilton Best Start Network (membership list attached as Appendix C to Report CS12032) has modelled a "collective leadership" approach to planning and implementing a bold vision for a comprehensive system of services and supports for children and families. After a period of dialogue in 2011, the Network re-confirmed its vision and created a new strategic framework to guide its work over the next five years.

The framework identifies five areas of strategic leadership that the Network is committed to including:

- Providing leadership in times of change
- Creating environments that improve child outcomes
- Providing parents with pathways to information (now referred to as Pathways to Learning)
- Developing an integrated Early Years system
- Building a Children's Agenda in Hamilton

In 2011/12, the Network identified and began work in three specific 'action areas' of the plan including:

- a) developing "one number" for phone support for families with an integrated seamless system of care behind that number;
- b) defining action that Best Start Network Members can take with respect to understanding and addressing the basic needs of the children and families we serve; and,
- c) improving the pathways to information/learning for parents/caregivers in order to raise the level of understanding and support informed decision making.

Ministry of Children & Youth Services Innovation Fund

In 2011, the City of Hamilton along with the Best Start Network and community partners, responded to a call for proposals from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) to support local communities explore opportunities for service integration. Hamilton's successful submission, under the 'pooled funding' category engaged consultants to develop a case study to explore interest and possibilities, barriers and challenges around service integration efforts between Ontario Early Year Centres and Parenting and Family Literacy Centres. A report summarizing key outcomes (Exploring Integration Strategies: Ontario Early Years Centres and Parenting and Family Literacy Centres in Hamilton) was submitted to the Ministry in April 2012.

The Ministry has recently announced a subsequent call for proposals for The Community Action Research Project, to continue to study and learn from innovative communities. Funding will be made available to continue to support on-going efforts toward service integration. The City, along with the Best Start Network and community partners, have submitted a proposal to support implementation of the recommendations made in Phase I of this work (Exploring Integration Strategies: Ontario Early Years Centres and Parenting and Family Literacy Centres in Hamilton).

The 18 Month Well Baby Visit Campaign

The Best Start Network, along with community partners, launched an extensive public education campaign in spring 2012 to promote the new enhanced 18 month well baby check-up as part of their regular visits to their health care providers. These visits allow families to have a more in-depth discussion about their child with the health care provider, to re-assure families that their child is meeting certain developmental milestones, or to link families up with specialized services in the community if the child needs extra help.

Status of Implementation of Full Day Learning in Hamilton

By September 2012, 49% of schools in Hamilton will be offering full day junior and senior kindergarten. By September 2013, 74% of schools will offer the program and by September 2014, full day junior and senior kindergarten will be offered by all schools in Hamilton. This program is delivered by teaching teams that include a Junior/Senior Kindergarten Teacher and an Early Childhood Educator.

Early Childhood Educator Recruitment and Retention

Community partners in the early years sector in Hamilton are reporting a shortage of qualified Early Childhood Educators to work in their sectors. In response to this need, a community committee, under the leadership of the City of Hamilton, has been established and a recruitment and retention strategy developed and implemented. In the spring of 2012, a community wide survey was launched to gain further understanding of workplace culture and satisfaction. There was a high response rate and analysis of the findings is currently underway. Results will be presented to the community in the fall of 2012 and will be incorporated into the forthcoming City of Hamilton Early Years Community Plan.

Child Care Fee Subsidy Waitlist

Currently, an average of 3,779 children receive fee subsidies monthly in Hamilton. As of July 31, 2012, there were 1,623 children on the wait list including 303 children from families receiving Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program benefits. Demand for subsidy continues to increase, and in the past two years the rate of children leaving the program has decreased resulting in fewer spaces being freed up monthly for new children to access. In accordance with Provincial guidelines, a portion (\$575,531) of the total \$901,001 one time funding received from the Province in 2012

has been utilized to relieve some pressure on the waitlist. Demand continues to grow and still outpaces program capacity.

City of Hamilton Early Years Community Plan

To continue to pro-actively plan for change in the early learning and care system including the 'modernization' of child care, the City has engaged the Directions Evidence + Policy Research Group to develop a three year City of Hamilton Early Years Community Plan. This work has been undertaken in partnership with the Best Start Network and is informed by a community advisory committee. The consultants' final report is due at the end of October and will be presented to Council in the late fall of 2012. The Community Plan report will include:

- An environmental scan of the current system in Hamilton.
- A review of relevant literature/reports.
- Stakeholder consultation and community engagement (including input from parents and school age children).
- Analysis of findings and recommendations.

The plan will provide a clearer understanding of the evolving impact of full day JK/SK on local child care programs, and will take into consideration the proposed 'modernization' of child care within the context of the broader early years system in Hamilton. Recommendations will focus on actions that can be taken locally over the next three years to stabilize and strengthen the early years system in Hamilton during this transition period.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications to Report CS12032.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

A meeting was held on August 1, 2012 with the Best Start Network and community partners to seek input into the creation of a joint response to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services discussion paper. The Chair of the Best Start Network has approved the attached response document.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION)

Response to the Modernizing Child Care in Ontario; Sharing Conversation, Strengthening Partnerships, Working Together Discussion Paper

On June 27, 2012 the Province announced the release of a discussion paper *Modernizing Child Care in Ontario*. This paper was developed to engage Ontarians in a discussion around forthcoming changes to Ontario's licensed child care system.

As mentioned, the government has invited individuals and organizations to comment on the discussion paper by September 24, 2012. The document provides a framework to seek input and is seen as a positive step towards modernization of child care in the Province of Ontario. Responses are being prepared by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

The City of Hamilton met with the members of the Best Start Network on August 1, 2012 to focus on submitting a collective response to the questions from the Ministry of Education through participatory discussions. The joint response is attached as Appendix A to Report CS12032.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Council could decide not to endorse the staff recommendation. The implication of doing so would be a missed opportunity to influence emerging Provincial reform of child care and the broader early learning and care system.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization

- ◆ A culture of excellence
- ◆ A skilled, adaptive and diverse workforce, i.e. more flexible staff
- ◆ More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus
- ◆ Council and SMT are recognized for their leadership and integrity

Financial Sustainability

- ◆ Financially Sustainable City by 2020
- ◆ Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner

Intergovernmental Relationships

- ◆ Influence federal and provincial policy development to benefit Hamilton
- ◆ Acquire greater share of Provincial and Federal grants (including those that meet specific needs)
- ◆ Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies

Growing Our Economy

- ◆ Newly created or revitalized employment sites
- ◆ Competitive business environment
- ◆ A skilled and creative labour pool that supports new employers
- ◆ An improved customer service

Social Development

- ◆ Hamilton residents are optimally employed earning a living wage
- ◆ Residents in need have access to adequate support services
- ◆ People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma

Healthy Community

- ◆ Plan and manage the built environment
- ◆ An engaged Citizenry
- ◆ Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

- Appendix A to Report CS12032: City of Hamilton – Best Start Network Response to the Ministry of Education Discussion Paper “Modernizing Child Care in Ontario; Sharing Conversation, Strengthening Partnerships, Working Together”
- Appendix B to Report CS12032: Description of 2012 One Time Child Care Funding Allocation for the City of Hamilton
- Appendix C to Report CS12032: Hamilton Best Start Network Membership

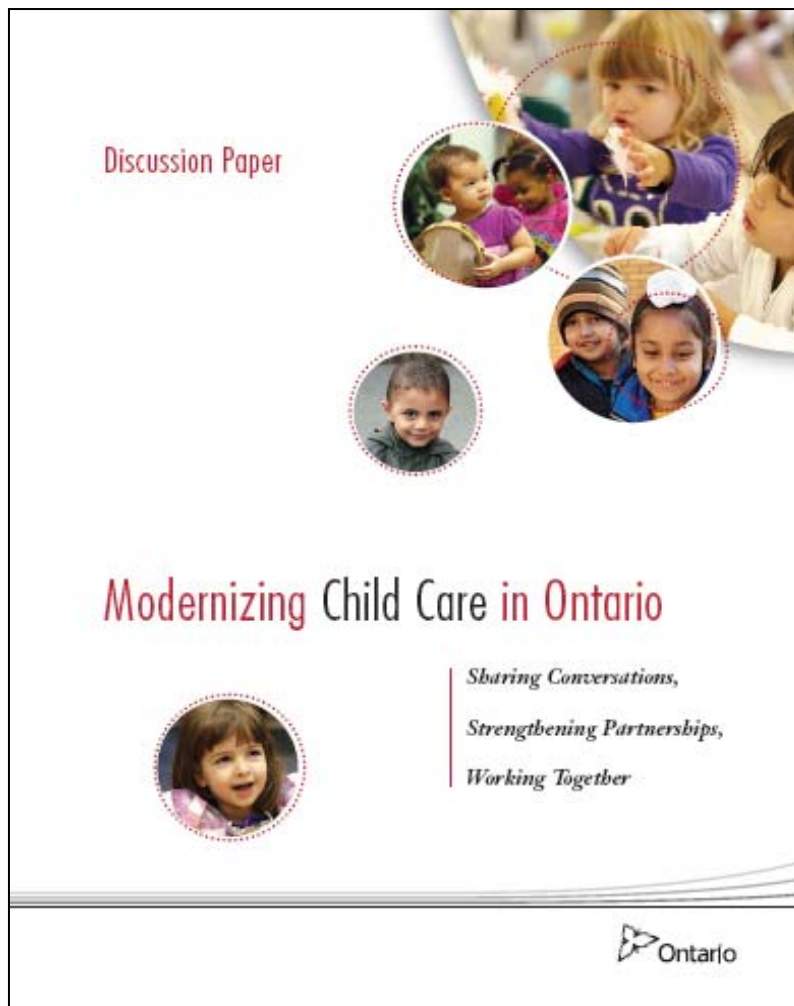
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Hamilton's Early Years Community Response to Modernizing Child Care in Ontario



Background

The Government of Ontario, in their commitment to working with partners and families in modernizing Ontario's child care system, released a discussion paper recently from the Ministry of Education, Early Learning Division: [Modernizing Child Care in Ontario: Sharing Conversations, Strengthening Partnerships, Working Together.](#)

The discussion paper provides an overview of the government's long-term vision for child care and action plans over the next 3 years to support the vision. The Government of Ontario's long-term vision for child care is, "to build a high-quality, accessible and coordinated early learning and child care system for children before they start school and for school-aged children." They note that this system will focus on "learning in safe and caring play-based environments, on healthy physical, social, emotional and cognitive development, and on early identification and intervention for children in need of supports".

To support this vision, the government proposes taking action in the following five key areas over the next 3 years:

- 1) Operating Funding Formula: By developing a new approach to funding that is transparent and informed by evidence and experience to support consistency in approach, accessibility for families and quality for children and child care operators.
- 2) Capital Funding Priorities: By pursuing capital funding that emphasizes child care spaces in schools (a "schools-first" approach).
- 3) Quality Programs: By developing:
 - a) mandatory provincial program guidelines,
 - b) an updated framework to support children with special needs, and
 - c) new resources and information for parents and providers.
- 4) Modernizing Legislative & Regulatory Framework: By reviewing and updating the legislation and regulations that govern the continuum of child care services based on evidence and experience to ensure the health, safety, and quality of child care for children, parents, and providers.
- 5) Support for Accountability & Capacity-Building: By improving data collection, enhance licensing procedures, and develop supports for parents and operators to help better evaluate outcomes, support sector capacity, reduce duplication and improve accountability.

The government requested input on the five key areas and provided questions to guide parents and stakeholders in providing input to the Ministry of Education by September 24, 2012. The following document provides a collective response to the government's appeal for input from the City of Hamilton, Hamilton's Best Start Network, and community partners.

The City of Hamilton, as the local Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), like other municipalities across the province, plays a key leadership role in planning for and managing the local early years system. Further, the City has a strong history in developing community driven approaches to planning for human services in a collaborative and integrated manner.

In our community, the Best Start Network has been the City's 'go to table' to work on integrated human service planning for young children and their families. The Best Start Network is a collaboration of over 50 organizations that come together from various sectors (e.g. child care services, law enforcement, mental health, public health, health providers, child development, etc.) with the common purpose for *making Hamilton the best place to raise a child*.

The Ontario Municipal Services Association (OMSSA) [Moving Forward Hand in Hand](#) document released in May 2012 provides a reference point for the collective response in this report. The City of Hamilton is a member of OMSSA and had previously provided input into the Moving Forward document.

Moving Forward Hand in Hand seeks to support the government in creating the best environment for children and families to have accessible, quality, accountable and sustainable early learning and child care services families deserve.

The following definitions from that report form the foundations for aligning Hamilton's collective response with the government's policy priorities pertaining to children as follows:

- **Accessibility:** Children and families in Ontario can access an integrated and inclusive continuum of early learning and child care services they need when they need them.
- **Quality:** A range of early learning and child care services are provided which demonstrate exemplary standards through evidence informed, age appropriate practices, and services delivered by knowledgeable, skilled, and committed educators working in supportive and rewarding environments as outlined by the Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources in [Investing in Quality 2007 Report](#).

- **Accountability:** A partnership formed between orders of government where leadership and responsibility are shared, while working toward common goals for children and families.
- **Sustainability:** An adequately resourced, publicly funded, organized early learning and child care system that delivers on accessibility, quality and accountability.



We commend the Province of Ontario for initiating the transformation and modernization of child care and believe municipalities are well situated to partner with the Ministry of Education to implement solutions to improve early learning for children and their families.

This collective response from the City of Hamilton, and Hamilton's Best Start Network puts families and children at the forefront of human service planning and builds on the government's child-oriented policy priorities as evidenced through the implementation of full-day learning and the movement towards planning an integrated Best Start Child and Family System as recommended by Dr. Charles Pascal's [With Our Best Future in Mind](#).

Method

The City of Hamilton in their role as Service Manager for Child Care and lead for Best Start initiative gathered together the members of the Best Start Network and the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) Child Care Working Group¹ on August 1, 2012 to focus on submitting a collective response to the questions from the Ministry of Education through participatory discussions.

¹ CMSM Child Care Working Group is comprised of partners that serves as an advisory to the CMSM on Child Care Services in Hamilton.

1) Operating Funding Formula Response

Based on the discussions, the following highlights key advice for the Ministry to consider in developing a new approach to funding. Under the following themes, the government needs to:

Funding Principles

- “Develop the new funding model within an accountability framework that has agreed upon outcomes for children, families and service providers.”
- “Ensure the new funding model is consistent, stable, indexed and multi-year in order to support municipalities to complete long term collaborative planning that best meets the needs of children, families and service providers at the local level.”
- “Consider new models for funding in Ontario based on successful models from other jurisdictions such as Quebec or Manitoba.”
- “Consider replicating the Education model of funding for early learning and care to ensure universal access to early learning and care for all children in Ontario.”
- “Take into account the full spectrum of early learning and care programs when designing funding models.”
- “Streamline funding by eliminating the multitude of funding streams that currently exist to provide municipalities the flexibility necessary to respond to emerging local needs in a timely manner.”

Equity

- “Develop a new funding formula that would take into account ‘equity of access’ to child care by ensuring funding allocations and flexibility of funding that allows communities to address barriers to access that can occur due to demographic and geographic differences (e.g. low-income families, English or French as a second language, population growth, percentage of child population under 6 years, etc.). It will be imperative that the government determines whether additional new funding will be required when applying the formula to ensure that gains made thus far by local communities across the province will not be at risk.”

Base Funding

- “Create a new funding formula that provides a stable, transparent platform of investment that clearly identifies the role of the governance and partners (such as

Operating Funding Formula Response cont'd...

the municipality, school boards, and child care operators) involved in the funding model. This investment should ensure the flexibility needed to address varying operational costs. This investment should also allow adequate funds to be available for fair remuneration of Early Learning and Care Professionals and support their on-going professional development.”

Quality Indicators

- “Ensure that any funding model that is developed fully supports the quality outcomes as outlined by the Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources Panel, [Investing in Quality 2007 Report](#) (e.g. Health & Safety, Accessibility, Equitable and Fair Accommodations, Early Learning and Care Professional Standards & Training, etc.).”

Maximization of Existing Resources

- “Support efforts by local municipalities, school boards and/or service providers to maximize the sharing of resources (e.g. funding/space) or the amalgamation of services to ensure a sustainable level of service delivery.”

2) Capital Funding Priorities Response

The following highlights advice for the Ministry to consider in pursuing capital funding that emphasizes child care spaces in schools (a “schools-first” approach). Under the following theme, the government needs to:

Integrated Human Services Approach

- “Ensure that capital planning processes consider the entire early years system rather than just child care and focus on a neighbourhood and community first approach that takes into account community needs.”
- “Set specific expectations, requirements and accountabilities to support integrated capital planning between municipalities and local school boards.”
- “Take into consideration how third party operating policies at the local School Boards either support or serve as a barrier to emerging government direction related to encouraging community service providers to re-locate to school facilities.”

3) Quality Programs Response

The following highlights advice for the Ministry to consider in developing mandatory provincial program guidelines, updating frameworks for children with special needs, and new resources and information for parents and providers. Under the following themes, the government needs to:

Quality Assurances

- “Ensure there is a process for addressing quality as current licensing process does not take into account all the quality outcomes (e.g. child/caregiver interactions) as outlined by the Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources Panel, [Investing in Quality 2007 Report](#).”
- “Commit to [Early Learning for Every Child Today](#) (ELECT) as a common framework for early learning and ensure the principles of ELECT are embedded in the provincial policy framework.”
- “Make provincial policy include local accountability initiatives, such as Hamilton’s Raising the Bar Quality Assurance Program, that are linked to quality indicators and tied to funding so a process for addressing sub-standard care/programs is at the local level (e.g. closures at the local level).”
- “Develop pay scales for ECEs that should be linked to professional development and educational attainment. Consistent scales should be established at the local level.”
- “Determine who is best suited to take on the role of monitoring program quality and the resources that are associated with the process and procedures needed.”
- “Consider how blending smaller programs together or amalgamating them with larger organizations could better support program quality as smaller programs are unable to address quality due to their lack of resources and infrastructure.”

Professional Standards & Development

- “Work with the College of Early Childhood Educators to adopt standards of quality and recognize the contributions of the Early Learning and Care Professional in quality early learning and care programs as outlined in 2011 [Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice](#).”

Quality Programs Response cont'd...

Parent Engagement

- “Develop a framework for engaging parents to inform them about their choices in child care based on quality and what that means for their children’s development and life-long learning.”

Children with Special Needs

- “Develop consistent and appropriate resourcing that ensures the accessibility of all children.”
- “Support families and their children as they transition across a seamless system of early learning and care and ensure quality of care are standardized, equitable, fair and appropriate to families and children with special needs.”
- “Offer families who have children with special need options and choices based on quality; cost should not be a barrier.”

4) Modernizing Legislative & Regulatory Framework Response

The following highlights advice for the Ministry to take into consideration in reviewing and updating the legislation and regulations that govern the continuum of child care services. The government needs to:

- “Ensure that provincial licensing process aligns with and supports the local service manager planning processes which reflect integrated human services planning principles, is based on local need, and ensures effective use of public funds.”
- “Develop a harmonized system that would provide one ‘best’ standard for both school boards and child care programs in areas such as:
 - Fire inspections for school and child care spaces;
 - CSA standards;
 - Playground equipment inspection;
 - Zoning;
 - Lead testing;
 - Water testing;
 - Public and shared spaces;
 - Administrative costs associated with standards; and,
 - Shared supports between childcare/schools (e.g. transitioning children with special needs into school).”

Modernizing Legislative & Regulatory Framework Response cont'd...

- “Develop a recreation based care model for 6 to 12 years olds that:
 - Includes quality, evidenced-based programming that would be addressed not only in schools and child care but any programs for children 6 to 12 years old that would be regulated and funded under this legislation;
 - Builds on before and after school recreation, arts, and homework programs;
 - Adopts high standards for public accessibility during flexible hours throughout the day (e.g. lunch hour programs, after school, weekends, etc.); and,
 - Adopts flexible staffing approaches to accommodate accessibility for extended hours in the day and week for families who need child care (e.g. parents who work night shift and require child care).”

5) Support for Accountability & Capacity-Building Response

The following highlights advice for the Ministry to take into consideration in developing supports for accountability and capacity-building. Under the following themes, the government needs to:

Accountability measures

- “Partner with municipalities as local service managers to develop an accountability framework that has clearly defined expectations and outcomes for children, families and service providers.”
- “Provide a definition of ‘*risk assessment*’ that would expand on what is outlined in the discussion paper to identify how this type of assessment is different from what is currently happening in organizations that already do risk assessments (e.g. quality assurance measures in the developmental services sector) for public funds and explain how this type of assessment would support quality and accountability.”
- “Develop evaluation approaches that are interactive and take into consideration the quality assurances already used in early years systems, such as Hamilton’s Raising the Bar Quality Assurance Program.”
- “Include flexibility for organizations’ accountability so as to allow organizations to service the additional needs of some neighbourhoods and communities (e.g. placing an extra staff person in a program that has a child with greater support needs related to a child’s special needs).”

Support for Accountability & Capacity-Building Response cont'd...

Tools

- “Develop a system for monitoring children beginning at birth that provides the critical, reliable data for making evidence-based, informed decisions about the extent to which programs and services are optimizing children’s well-being and developmental outcomes so as to ensure “transformative effects” (e.g. economic prosperity) for individuals, society, communities and the province as outlined in the [Early Years Study 3: Making Decisions Taking Action](#) .”
- “Create a common database that would facilitate the efficient collection of, standardization of, sharing of, linking of and storing of data that takes into account (e.g. informed consent) families’ and providers’ right to voluntarily provide information for the purposes of monitoring.”
- “Develop methods and tools for collecting data that are culturally sensitive, accessible and linked across systems as children transition in and out of various services, programs, schools, etc.”
- “Revise legislation and regulations pertaining to the collection, linking and sharing of data based on the [Information Privacy Acts](#) that govern the different authorities to collect and be the custodian of families’ and children’s data.”

Public Reporting

- “Develop reporting mechanisms that are quantitative and aggregated so as to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of families and young children while providing public accountability.”
- “Educate professionals, parents and the general public about the benefits of evaluation that would foster a culture of accountability and capacity-building.”

Concluding Advice

Through a collective response to the government's request for input, Hamilton's Best Start Network, community partners and the City of Hamilton have highlighted our best advice for the Ministry of Education as it relates to child care and the early years system.



Overall, the collective responses suggest that the Ministry's efforts in modernizing child care are warranted and that current examination of the existing child care system needs to inform the future of child care in Ontario.

General consensus among the responses resonated around the need for sufficient funding. There was concern with the potential for reduced funding as a result of applying an equity formula without the infusion of additional funding that would be counter intuitive to modernizing child care in Ontario.

Recognition of the key topic areas for modernizing child care and how they are related to one another needs to be examined as they will impact the nature of how each area is re-engineered to meet the needs of families, children and communities. For example, quality will impact funding; funding will impact the extent to which organizations can be accountable while building capacity; etc.

It becomes problematic when the guiding principles laid out in the Ministry's document outlines expansion through the adoption of a new age category for care built on a "recreation model" when efficiency is a funding expectation.

Further information and ongoing consultation between partners and the government will be needed to continue to determine if the government's plans for modernization are realistic in truly supporting children and families in Ontario.

Finally, it is imperative that the government ensures that measures taken to modernize child care not happen outside the context of planning for the broader early years system including future development of the Best Start Child and Family Centres.

2012 New Provincial Investment in Child Care for the City of Hamilton

Summary of the 2012 **one time** funding received by the City of Hamilton:

Funding Description	Amount
Repairs and Maintenance – Child Care	87,321
Capacity Funding to Support Transformation	99,229
Early Learning and Child Development, ELCD Operating	575,531
Child Care Transition Minor Capital	138,920
Total	901,001

Purpose of funding and process to distribute the dollars:

Repairs and Maintenance:

This funding is to support licensed child care programs that are not in compliance or may be at risk of not being in compliance with the Day Nursery licensing requirements. The City of Hamilton has an established process in place for the distribution of this 100 percent provincial funding and will be calling for applications early in the fall of 2012.

Capacity Funding to Support Transformation:

This funding is intended to assist non profit licensed child care programs address costs related to legal fees and advice to support operators' transformation, mergers and consolidations. Funding can be used for information technology, relocation to schools, administrative and business purposes. The City of Hamilton Early Years Community Plan is currently under development. Consultations with community service providers and stakeholders will provide input and advice on how this funding can be utilized for this year.

Early Learning and Child Development, ELCD Operating:

This funding is for operating expenditures incurred by licensed child care programs. Examples include wage subsidies for staff who work in the programs and fee subsidies for families who access the programs. The City of Hamilton will use these funds to offset the current funding pressures associated with managing the fee subsidy wait list.

Child Care Transition Minor Capital:

With full day kindergarten occurring in 49 percent of schools this September, this funding is to support non profit child care programs re-profile their programs to provide service to the younger age groups as the four and five year olds move into full day kindergarten. The City of Hamilton has an established process

(business case submission from service providers) in place and has received applications for these funds.

The province has made flexibility a priority for service system managers for the 2012 calendar year. This flexibility can be applied in the Repairs and Maintenance – Child Care, Capacity Funding to Support Transformation and Child Care Transition and Minor Capital funding envelopes. The City of Hamilton may exercise this flexibility once all operator applications are received and reviewed in the fall.

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Revised April 13, 2012