

EARLY YEARS COMMUNITY PLAN Implementation Strategy

THE CITY OF HAMILTON /
HAMILTON BEST START NETWORK

2012–2015



THE 2012–2015 EARLY YEARS COMMUNITY PLAN (EYCP) is a multi-year plan to work with families, community partners, and service providers to develop a high quality early years system. The plan is centred on children and families and aligns with our goal of making Hamilton the best place to raise a child.

This implementation strategy reviews the challenges identified in the Early Years Community Plan and highlights opportunities to address needs identified by the community.

The 12 challenges identified in the EYCP are categorized into four themes:

- **Inclusion;**
- **Child Care Stabilization and Transformation;**
- **System Integration; and**
- **Access to Information.**

The early years community is in a transitional period and ready for change. Progress has been made over the last 12 months as shown in the timeline and will continue beyond 2015.

The City of Hamilton/Hamilton Best Start Network 2012-2015 Early Years Community Plan

2013-2015 EARLY YEARS COMMUNITY PLAN TIMELINES		DECEMBER 2015											
THEME	ACTIVITY	2013			2014			2015			2015		
		JAN	APR	JUL	OCT	JAN	APR	JUL	OCT	JAN	APR	JUL	OCT
Inclusion	Special Needs Resourcing Planning												
	Children not identified with special needs review plan												
	Aboriginal, French, Newcomers & Diverse Community Strategies												
Child Care Stabilization & Transformation	Child Care Community Engagement												
	Capital Retrofit & Transformation funding												
	Waitlist Strategy												
	Capacity building to support transformation												
System Integration	Centralized Child Care Registry (One HSN)												
	Funding Framework												
Access to Information	Service integration for individual families												
	New Outcome Measures for the Early Years												
	Data Sharing – Early Years												
Reports	Easy access to information for parents												
	Communicating the vision with Early Years Partners												
Communication Plan	Early Years Implementation Strategy Document												
	Council Reports (as necessary)												
Evaluation Plan	Communication Plan												
	Evaluation Plan												

PROJECT CHARTER – KICKOFF

PLANNING – IMPLEMENTATION

Inclusion

Develop a process for ongoing awareness and education relating to the delivery of service to members of the francophone, Aboriginal, newcomers and culturally diverse communities.

Review services and improve supports for children with special needs.

EARLY YEARS COMMUNITY PLAN

CHALLENGES:

While there is excellent support for children with special needs transitioning from the early years system into the school system, that support does not extend far enough past the initial transition period, or beyond the regular school day.

Children who do not meet special needs criteria may nonetheless require additional support.

Many child care providers are reluctant to accept children with special needs without considerable support from specialized professionals.

Service providers are not always sensitive to the needs of specific communities, such as francophone, Aboriginal and newcomers and culturally diverse communities.

Build on the strengths of Hamilton's early years system.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Review and assess the current approach to delivering supports for children with special needs attending child care programs.

Review how Early Childhood Educators can be supported to provide high quality child care to all children.

Provide early years professionals with the opportunity for additional learning on cultural sensitivity as it relates to the Aboriginal, French, newcomer and culturally diverse community.

Provide alternative professional development opportunities for early years professionals through the use of various modes of learning (i.e. webinars, online learning).

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Strengthened and improved delivery of resources for children with special needs
- Identification and increased capacity for data that supports planning, monitoring and evaluating special needs resourcing
- Equitable experiences and access to early years services for children and families
- Improved capacity among Early Childhood Educators to provide high quality child care
- Increased access to professional development opportunities for early years professionals

Child Care Stabilization and Transformation

With the introduction of full-day kindergarten, licensed child care is shifting focus on providing care to younger children, and supports for older children outside of school hours.

EARLY YEARS COMMUNITY PLAN

CHALLENGES:

Enrolment in full-day kindergarten means there are fewer 4 and 5 year olds in child care.

Commercial service providers feel that their voices are not heard and their contributions to the system are not recognized.

Build on the strengths of Hamilton's early years system.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Develop a new funding model to support high quality licensed child care in Hamilton.

Review the current waitlist strategy to determine if current priorities meet community needs for access to child care fee subsidies.

Build stronger partnerships through a child care community engagement strategy that ensures all service providers' voices are heard.

Provide an online central registry that makes applying and registering for licensed child care programs simple.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Increased understanding of the City and child care operators' roles in child care services
- Improved communication and engagement to enhance trust and build relationships with all child care operators
- Improved access to licensed child care through HamiltonOneHSN.ca
- An equitable process through which families can access fee subsidy
- Improved resources and supports to families and child care operators that will strengthen the quality, sustainability, accessibility and integration of the child care system

System Integration

Working together to develop a seamless system by building connections between providers so that referrals can be made quickly and efficiently for children and families.

EARLY YEARS COMMUNITY PLAN

CHALLENGES:

Communicating the vision of integrated services to new partners, maintaining the continuity of that vision in the face of change in personnel, and ensuring that partner representatives are ones who can ensure that the decisions made are followed up.

Service integration is not happening at the level of individual families.

There is a lack of system-wide outcome measures to monitor the progress and success of service integration. Much of the data that are currently available do not measure outcomes and cannot guide the process of integration or inform the development of best practices.

Data are not always able to be shared among different service providers, hindering research and monitoring effects.

Build on the strengths of Hamilton's early years system.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Identify key indicators that measure outcomes related to the Best Start vision to monitor our improvement.

Develop an inventory of early years services that complements the work that has been undertaken by community networks.

Strengthen system integration to meet the needs of children and families.

Explore the feasibility of developing an interactive tool that would allow service providers to better support children and families.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Increased data sharing between service providers to support evidence based decision making
- Identification and monitoring of outcome measures to evaluate and inform system planning
- Enhanced professional capacity to support families with their transition between services

Access to Information

Working with families and service providers to ensure the community can quickly and easily access information.

EARLY YEARS COMMUNITY PLAN

CHALLENGES:

Communicating the vision of integrated services to new partners, maintaining the continuity of that vision in the face of change in personnel, and ensuring that partner representatives are ones who can ensure that the decisions made are followed up. This challenge represents a real threat to the continued success of service integration efforts.

There remains a widespread perception that it is difficult to find information about the early years services and parents are unaware of the range of services available, despite the fact there is an Information & Referral information line.

Build on the strengths of Hamilton's early years system.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Develop a user-friendly website that is available to parents, professionals and community that provides access to child and family services information in Hamilton.

Work with service providers and families to improve information about access to sources of income supports.

Continue to produce and distribute the annual Best Start magazine to enhance the community's understanding of services available.

Continue to provide decisive information and evidence to the early years community that will inform decision making and program development.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Easily accessible information for parents and professionals through a redesigned website: HamiltonBestStart.ca
- Increased knowledge about income supports available to families
- Improved communication with families and early years community
- Strengthened capacity to share and leverage research that impacts the early years sector

Looking Ahead to the Future



The Early Years Implementation Strategy will ensure child development supports available in our community are equitable, accessible, inclusive, responsive and flexible over the coming years.

The City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Best Start Network are responsible for ensuring the realization of the plan, and supporting Hamilton's vision for its children and families.

For more information and to keep up to date on the progress of the strategy, look for 2012-2015 Early Years Community Plan newsletters and information updates on our website at HamiltonBestStart.ca/EYCP.

Hamilton Best Start



MISSION

Making Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child

VISION

BEST START IS ABOUT CHILDREN

Each child is an active learner, full of curiosity and potential, eager and capable of achieving success in school and beyond. Best Start is about providing the supports to bring out the best in children.

BEST START IS ABOUT FAMILIES

Parents are the first, most important and most lasting teachers in a child's life. Best Start is about supporting parents and families, and collaborating with them to enable them to provide children with the best possible opportunities early in their lives.

BEST START IS ABOUT COMMUNITY AND CONNECTIONS

Community partners view themselves as part of an integrated system of supports for early child development and parenting. Best Start is about strengthening partnerships and enhancing the integration of all community supports for children and their families.

BEST START IS ABOUT OUR FUTURE

A continuous learning environment, a commitment to early child development and parenting are key priorities for our community.

Best Start is about doing what is best for our children and our future.