



# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	August 10, 2016
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Child Care System Special Needs Resourcing (CES16034) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
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<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction:

At the March 9, 2015 Emergency and Community Services Committee meeting, staff were directed to:

“That staff report to the Emergency and Community Services Committee on options and a plan of action to accommodate children with special needs in day care centres in Hamilton”.

## Information:

Children’s and Home Management Services (CHMS) Division, funds special needs resourcing (SNR) to the community through funding provided by the Ministry of Education. The purpose of this funding allocation is to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care settings.

At minimum, the Ministry requires the City of Hamilton to spend 4% of its total child care allocation on special needs resourcing. As additional Ministry funding became available over the years, the special needs resourcing funding allocation has grown in response to identified community priorities. Based on the demand for service, the City of Hamilton has exceeded minimum requirements and is currently spending \$4,083,242, or approximately 9% of the total allocation, on special needs resourcing supports (based on 2014 operating budget).

From 2000 - 2015, special needs resourcing supports were accessed through the Integration Resources HUB. All funds for special needs resourcing were provided to the Integrated Resources HUB via Community Living Hamilton, the lead agency. These

funds were then allocated to a range of programs and supports through the following five community partner agencies that form the Integration Resources HUB:

- Community Living Hamilton;
- St. Matthew's House;
- Hamilton & District Council of Co-operative Preschools;
- McMaster Children's Hospital, Chedoke Site; and,
- City of Hamilton's Red Hill Family Centre.

The Integration Resources HUB is a collaborative service delivery model that provided a single point of access for special needs resourcing services. The services which are available include:

- co-ordinated intake and placement;
- specialized equipment and toys;
- staffing (i.e., Support Facilitators, Resource Teachers);
- training; and,
- social skills program and behavioural consultation.

CHMS Division completed a review of the existing SNR system in 2014 as part of the recommendations in the Early Years Community Plan 2012 – 2015 (Report CES15003). It was identified that one of the strengths of the existing SNR model was the commitment and talent of the frontline SNR staff and managers, as evidenced by their commitment to supporting the inclusion of all children in licensed child care programs. It was however identified that the current model has several inefficiencies and that there are opportunities to improve the model going forward.

More specifically, the review identified that an unwarranted level of administrative resources were expended to support the existing model. The review recommended that while the existing model has a lead agency, shifting to a sole provider model facilitates more comprehensive and simpler oversight activities by the CHMS Division as the service system manager. The new model would ensure that the sole provider will be responsible for all managerial expectations rather than being diffused across a number of agencies. This means that changes to service delivery can be more readily instituted, more consistently applied, and more efficiently monitored through one management team and lens.

Based on the recommendations of this review, CHMS Division created a transition plan to address these inefficiencies. In 2016 as part of our transition plan, the five agencies were funded separately and the Integration Resources HUB was dissolved with City staff taking over the co-ordinated intake and placement. It was determined that a not-for-profit organization would be selected through a request for proposal (RFP) process, allowing all interested organizations to submit a proposal. CHMS staff worked with

Procurement staff and a RFP was released in the spring of 2016 and the sole provider has been selected.

Through the RFP process, it was determined that Community Living Hamilton will be the sole provider for SNR services in Hamilton as of January 2017. Community Living Hamilton is a not-for-profit organization that offers a full range of services to people with special needs. It is one of the largest not-for-profits in Hamilton; each year providing service to approximately 1,000 children, teens, adults and families. Community Living Hamilton is unique in that it provides families access to programs; will offer extended hours of service; and is fully accredited by FOCUS Accreditation, ensuring ongoing quality improvement is embedded into practice. Community Living Hamilton offers a range of services, they have demonstrated experience and expertise supporting individuals through transitions. This organization works with families throughout life and offers the continuity of care that is invaluable to families.

Key aspects of the new service contract with Community Living Hamilton will ensure that SNR is delivered in the following ways:

- Provide support to licensed child care programs for children who meet the special needs criteria rather than directly to the child. This will support programs to build capacity within the classroom.
- Coordinate specialized services with licensed child care programs to meet the unique needs of the child within their program.
- Use the new levels of support tool to assist in determining both the cost and duration of Support Facilitator staff time. This will ensure the needs of the classroom and child are better understood and supported. This will also ensure a mechanism to identify gaps in practice that will inform professional development requirements for licensed child care programs.
- Provide a mechanism for continuous monitoring of quality, performance and outcomes for service delivery and its ability to meet the unique needs of children ages 0 to 12 requiring early intervention services. The new model will expand services to include children 6 to 12 years and new data requirements will ensure ongoing monitoring and tracking of the system.
- Work with licensed child care programs to minimize potential barriers and ensure seamless transitions with other agencies, to school or transitioning out of the system.

The CHMS Division will work with all early years providers to ensure a transition that supports continuity of service to families and sustainability for organizations. The RFP outlined that the City of Hamilton would prefer that all current staffing from the three existing agencies presently providing services directly to licensed child care programs in the City of Hamilton, and who are applying for available positions with the sole provider be interviewed.

A staff project team has been established and communications strategy and implementation plan has been developed. Implementation of the new model is expected to commence January 2017. Staff will work with all early years providers to ensure a seamless transition to the new model.