



Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	April 10, 2017
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centre Planning (CES16029(a)) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
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<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Grace Mater Director, Children's & Home Management Services Division Community and Emergency Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction:

Not applicable

## Information:

### Background

On February 22, 2016, the Ministry of Education announced the provincial plan for moving forward with the integration and transformation of child and family programs. Beginning in January 2018, there will be a transformation of the existing Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYCs) and Parenting and Family Literacy Centres (PFLCs) into a new system of early years programs called the Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (OEYCFCs). The City of Hamilton, in its role as Consolidated Municipal Services Manager, will be responsible for the local planning, implementation, funding, and ongoing management of the new OEYCFCs. The OEYCFC programs will be guided by a provincial framework, a common identity, and a new funding approach.

The OEYCs and PFLCs are drop-in places for parents/caregivers and children, birth to six years of age, to participate in programs and activities together. Parents and caregivers can also get information about their child's development and about other community services to support that development.

OEYCs in Hamilton are currently operated by four non-profit lead agencies. OEYCs include a combination of main sites, satellite sites, and mobile services. Main sites provide drop-in programming for families a minimum of six days a week, including some evening hours. Satellite sites provide programming on a part-time basis, in either temporary or permanent locations. OEYC sites are located in a combination of schools

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and community-based sites (e.g. recreation centres, libraries, faith-based buildings, housing sites, etc.). In addition, there are specific sites focused on providing services to Indigenous and Francophone families.

PFLCs in Hamilton are operated by the two English language school boards. PFLC sites provide half-day drop-in programs located in schools.

In Hamilton, there are currently 45 OEYC sites and 14 PFLC sites. A map of all OEYC and PFLS sites is attached as Appendix A to Report CES16029. Currently, the combined Ministry of Education allocation for the OEYCs and PFLCs is approximately \$4 million.

Approximately 19% of families in Hamilton are currently accessing OEYC sites. One of the challenges with increasing access for families has been the limited funding increases since the OEYCs were first created in 2002. This has resulted in a limited ability for the system to expand hours or locations to meet the changing needs of families (e.g. demand for weekend and evening hours, demand in areas of the city that have experienced rapid population growth, etc.).

#### Planning Process and Stakeholder Engagement

Beginning in June 2016, the City brought together an OEYCFC planning group consisting of representatives from the City of Hamilton (Community & Emergency Services Department and Public Health Services), Ministry of Education, local school boards, professional resource centre, and OEYC agencies currently delivering early years programs, including Indigenous and Francophone operators. The planning group has been meeting regularly to develop a needs assessment and initial plan which is due to the Ministry of Education by May 31, 2017. The planning group has also consulted with families and children to better understand why families use the existing OEYCs and PFLCs and any potential barriers to accessing these services.

The City has committed to building on the strengths and assets of both the OEYC and PFLC systems, as well as looking for new opportunities to better realign services to create a more cohesive system that better meets the needs of the families and children living in Hamilton. Based on the feedback we have heard from families, the new system will include a greater number of full service OEYCFC sites with increased programming and hours to better meet the needs of families. As a result of this change, there will be fewer “satellite” sites which currently operate with limited/reduced services or hours.

The location and operators of the new sites have not yet been determined. A transparent process is being developed to select the physical location and lead agency operator for each new OEYCFC. The process will consider how we can build on existing assets in our community, while also looking for new opportunities to engage

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additional partners and realign services in areas of the city that are currently underserved. This selection process will be led by City staff, based on feedback and input that has been provided by the OEYCFC planning group and feedback received from families through surveys and focus groups. In addition, an outreach strategy is being developed to increase access to OEYCFCs for all families, particularly those groups or communities that currently have lower utilization rates.

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board announced that they will no longer operate PFLCs after June 2018 given that the Ministry of Education will no longer be funding school boards directly for this service. The school boards remain critical partners in the planning and implementation of the new OEYCFCs. The City has committed to maintaining existing PFLC services until June 2018, and is working closely with both school boards to minimize any disruptions to families and staff, and to continue to examine existing and new opportunities to locate OEYCFCs in schools where it makes sense based on neighbourhood needs.

#### Next Steps

The needs assessment and initial plan will be shared with Emergency & Community Services Committee prior to submission to the Ministry of Education.

The initial plan will include:

- a local needs assessment;
- description of the new service delivery model;
- identification of neighbourhoods where OEYCFCs will be located;
- the process for site selection; and,
- the process for operator selection.

The initial plan will not include the specific OEYCFC sites or operators given that the 2018 EDU allocation for the new system is not yet known.

Planning for the new system will continue throughout 2018. Staff will take a phased approach to implementation of the new OEYCFCs beginning in 2018.

Staff are committed to continuing to consult with families, early years staff, and community partners as we move forward with planning for the new OEYCFC system. As we transition to the new system beginning in 2018, every effort will be made to minimize disruptions to families and staff. A communications plan is being developed to continue to keep all key stakeholders, including families, updated on the planning process and implementation of the new OEYCFC system.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix A to Report CES16029(a): Hamilton's OEYC and PFLC Sites By Ward -  
March 2017