

Journey Together Proposal Package

PART 1: COMMUNITY PROFILE

Needs Assessment

**1. *Please describe how you engaged and consulted with partners within your community in this process, as well as your approach to continued engagement.***

The Journey Together Early Years Initiative provides the Indigenous Community in Hamilton with a unique opportunity not only to enhance access to culturally relevant early years programs, but to do so in an Indigenous centred and Indigenous-led Community Hub. Currently Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg is working in partnership with the De dwa da dehs ney>s Aboriginal Health Centre to develop this hub. The vision is that Niwasa early years programs will be co-located with Indigenous community health services in a facility designed to reflect and respect Indigenous culture and practices. The shared intent is to build a space that nurtures the well-being of Indigenous children and families in Hamilton through communal gathering, language revitalization, and strengthening the cultural continuity of the community.<sup>1</sup> This hub, named Biindigen (Anishinaabemowin for 'Come in! Welcome!'), will also be home to other community-based programs - providing opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and providers to work, learn and heal together.

A stakeholder engagement plan was developed based on input provided by the Journey Together Project Team comprised of CMSM Staff, Niwasa's Executive Director, and the Project Consultants. This plan was based on the shared vision articulated above, and the intention to align with and leverage broader service system plan(s) in our region. In collaboration with Niwasa, consultations were conducted with 47 Indigenous service providers, families, and community leaders/Elders to identify local needs, opportunities and priorities for culturally relevant, Indigenous-led early years programs and services. These engaged stakeholders discussed current barriers to accessing services, identified what Indigenous-led means to the community, articulated what difference it has made in the lives of Indigenous children and families to access the Indigenous-led early years programs and services currently offered through Niwasa, and clarified what outcomes they expect regarding the successful implementation of this integrated service model. This feedback is captured in the proposal. (Refer to Question 2 below for a summary of identified needs and gaps).

Additional consultations with key informants were undertaken to explore potential partnerships and opportunities to align with and leverage broader early years' service system plans in Hamilton. There were joint meetings with the Project Team that was working on the Initial Plan to establish Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (OEYCFs) beginning in 2018. There were also sessions with the staff from the De dwa da dehs ney>s Aboriginal Health Centre who are planning for a move to a larger facility. It is proposed that this facility will become an Indigenous Hub (Biindigen Community Hub) and that the Indigenous led Early Years services will be a partner at this hub and be co-located there. Interviews

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<sup>1</sup> Loppie and Wien (2009). Health Inequities and Social Determinants of Aboriginal People's Health. National Collaborative Centre for Aboriginal Health.

were also conducted with Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (a professional resource centre), the Ministry of Education (Early Years Implementation Branch), Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (Board Superintendent), and Mohawk College (ECE Program).

Finally, this proposal was informed by the child and family consultations undertaken for the OEYCFC planning process. These consultations included a collaboratively created survey of parents and caregivers engaged in either school and/or community-based early years' programs in Hamilton. Children's input was sought through mixed method creative activities (e.g. dotmocracy, photographs, graffiti boards, original drawings and artwork, etc.) that elicited children's voices. A total of six artifacts (or 3.2% of the total) were submitted by Niwasa and incorporated into the planning process.

The CMSM and Niwasa are committed to continue to work together and to engage in and contribute to various planning tables that have been convened to:

Advance the Indigenous Hub (in collaboration with the De dwa da dehs ney>s Aboriginal Health Centre); ensure alignment with the Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres and communicate with Journey Together Proposal Stakeholders, engaged in the development of this plan, regarding next steps.

**2. *Who lives in and/or accesses early years programs and services in this region (please support with demographic data if available)? What are the available child care and family programs and services? What are the gaps/needs affecting Indigenous children and families?***

## **INDIGENOUS POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS**

An analysis of local Indigenous population demographics suggests that the current early years' services are not in a position to fully respond to the growing Indigenous population in Hamilton. The Indigenous population in Hamilton was approximately 15,840 or 3% of the total population in 2011.<sup>2,3</sup> The median age of the Indigenous population is 26.62 years with the majority of adults in childbearing years.<sup>4</sup> Children under 14 years of age comprise 28% of the total Indigenous population in Hamilton.<sup>3</sup> Of the 28% of children under 14 years of age, 9% are 0-4 years of age, 10% are 5-9 years of age and 9% are 10-14 years of age.<sup>3</sup>

The greatest numbers and density of Indigenous populations are currently in central lower urban Hamilton and east lower urban Hamilton along the Red Hill Parkway, close to Indigenous family and health services.<sup>5,5</sup> (NOTE: the proposed integrated early years program is looking to locate in one of these neighbourhoods.) Based on projections, the Indigenous child population (under 14 years of age) in Hamilton will be 5,041 by the year 2030 with almost half of these (2,421) living in the lower east

<sup>2</sup> Social Planning & Research Council of Hamilton. (2015). Profile of Hamilton's Aboriginal Residents.

<sup>3</sup> Population values are likely higher as there is a tendency among Indigenous populations to abstain from participating in Census data completion; however, the values do provide some contextual understanding of the Indigenous population and a place to begin to learn and understand more about Indigenous populations.

<sup>4</sup> Morency, J-D., Caron-Malenfant, E., Coulombe, S. & Langlois, S. (2015). Projections of the Aboriginal Population and Households in Canada (91-552-X).

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada. (2011). National Household Survey Focus on Geography Series Hamilton CMA Aboriginal Peoples.

neighbourhood.<sup>3,4,6,7</sup> Indigenous children ages 0-4 years are projected to reach 1,620 city-wide and 778 for Wards 3, 4 and 5 by the year 2030.<sup>3,4,5</sup> These population projections likely underestimate the true size and growth of the Indigenous population in Hamilton. There is a historical tendency among Indigenous populations to abstain from participating in Census data completion.<sup>8</sup> However, these population figures do provide some contextual understanding of the Indigenous population and a place to begin to learn and understand more about the demographics of the Indigenous population in Hamilton. On-going consultation with the respective Indigenous groups is advised to validate the Census data as it relates to the realities of Indigenous peoples' lived experiences.

Among Indigenous families in Hamilton, children of two parent families are 42% and lone parent families are 44% (37% of these being female lone parent families).<sup>3,9</sup> Indigenous residents' poverty rates in Hamilton are 29% and Indigenous children's poverty rates are at 37%. These are higher than Ontario's and Hamilton's general population poverty rates.<sup>1</sup> (See the *Profile of Hamilton's Aboriginal Residents* report<sup>7</sup> for an overview of the demographics of Indigenous Hamilton residents.)

Indigenous children are more likely to suffer poor health than are non-Indigenous children.<sup>10</sup> Addressing Indigenous children's health inequities requires examination of the contexts in which disparities exist (i.e., social determinants such as, destructive legacies of colonization, inequitable access to resources and supports, higher rates of poverty, etc.) and investment in innovative and culturally appropriate means of rectifying those inequities.<sup>10,11</sup>

The early years are a crucial stage in a child's physical, psychological and social development. During this time, the foundation for wellness, life-long learning, and contribution to society is established. The first six years is also an important stage of life in terms of culture and identity for Indigenous children; the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples described early childhood as the foundation on which identity, self-worth, intellect and strengths are built.<sup>12</sup>

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples' recent discussion guide on Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care<sup>12</sup> notes *"As children grow, the biological and environmental factors that determine their development become intertwined. When the environment is a secure, positive one, these factors join*

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<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. (2016). Census Standard Geographies.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada reports that Indigenous populations have projected population growth rates between 2006-2031 that reach between 4.0% and 5.3% (Morency et al., 2015). These growth rates vary by groups of Indigenous populations with North American Indians having larger growth rates than Métis and Inuit. However, for the purposes of making population projections for Hamilton, a rate of 2.2% will be used as a representation of growth that takes into account the constant ethnic mobility and constant fertility for Indigenous peoples (Morency et al., 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Social Planning & Research Council of Hamilton. (2015). Profile of Hamilton's Aboriginal Residents.

<sup>9</sup> Aboriginal Children in Care Working Group. (2015). Aboriginal Children in Care: Report to Canada's Premiers.

<sup>10</sup> Greenwood, ML and de Leeuw, SN. Social determinants of health and the future well-being of Aboriginal children in Canada. *Paediatrics & Child Health* 2012;17(7):381-384.

<sup>11</sup> Loppie C & Wien, F. Health Inequalities and Social Determinants of Aboriginal Peoples' Health. National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care: Urban, Rural and Remote Regional Roundtable. Discussion Guide.

*forces to help maximize children's potential. But when children face enduring obstacles to healthy development, such as poverty, environment and biology may route them on a course to ill health."*

Research has established that participation in a high quality early childhood program – one that reflects the unique cultures, needs and priorities of Indigenous peoples – positively influences a person's developmental trajectory, not only in later schooling, but in subsequent family formation, mental health, and participation in the economy.<sup>12</sup> Research also shows that the affordability and quality of early learning and care programs have an impact on the participation of parents in the labour market and on children's development.<sup>12</sup>

#### **HAMILTON'S INDIGENOUS CHILD CARE AND FAMILY PROGRAMS:**

Over the past decade Niwasa has been committed to helping Indigenous children and families in Hamilton access culturally relevant programs that embrace their culture and values. Niwasa provides the following early years services and programs at three separate locations in Hamilton's central lower and east lower neighbourhoods:

- Child and Family Support Program & Outreach (Ontario Early Years Centre): offered 2 days per week at a downtown recreation centre (Pinky Lewis Recreation Centre) and offered 2 half-days per week at the Delena neighbourhood site in the Wesley Neighbourhood Centre;
- Early Learning and Care Centre (24 licensed preschool spaces) offered at the Delena neighbourhood site in;
- Aboriginal Head Start Preschool (24 spaces) offered in (Main Street East location).

Niwasa is the lead provider of Indigenous led early years' programs in Hamilton. The organization's current funding and organizational capacity is not positioned to meet the needs of the growing Indigenous population in this area. For example, there are no infant or toddler child care spaces, the OEYC programs are offered on part-time basis in temporary space, there is no Indigenous-led after school recreation program offered in the area, etc.

Average participation rates for all Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC) in Hamilton are at 19% of the total population. Participation rates are higher than the city-wide average in the neighbourhood where the Biindigen Community Hub plans to locate, with 21% of the total population attending an OEYC. Indigenous families and providers consulted suggest that current participation rates would be expected to increase significantly when the integrated early years services are implemented because the proposed model addresses existing barriers to access and responds to emerging needs by co-locating with other desirable services and supports (i.e., health care, community programs, etc.). An estimated utilization rate of 29% was used to size the conservative/small scale child and family program in this proposal. This is the highest rate of utilization currently experienced by an OEYC site in the City of Hamilton. The preferred/full scale model takes into account plans for enhanced outreach and transportation and thus draws from the city-wide Indigenous population of children and families.

## GAPS OR NEEDS AFFECTING INDIGENOUS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Hamilton's Early Years Community Plan (2016-2020) consultations were conducted with 'special populations' including: Indigenous, Francophones, diverse communities, established immigrants and newcomers, young parents, LGBTQ parents, and parents of LGBTQ children and youth, revealed that the system needs to be more sensitive to their needs. The findings confirmed the following themes:

- The early years population is not homogeneous;
- There are populations whose needs and perspectives are not well understood or reflected in existing programs/services;
- Finding information about specialized programs/services that are available for diverse populations is difficult; and
- The system needs to be accountable for equitably meeting the needs of all children.

Indigenous families, providers and Elders/community leaders who were engaged in the consultations for the Journey Together Proposal emphasized the following needs and preferences that have informed the proposed model:

- Integrated services under one roof with the goal of building trust and making connections to available early years programs / supports and beyond. Relationships are a key component to building trust between Indigenous families and the education system (and institutions in general).
- Expanded early years services including subsidized child care spaces, full-day Head Start Preschool, school-aged after school program, and on-site full-day kindergarten program.
- Creation of a welcoming, family-centred space where children and families can gather and learn together, cultural beliefs and traditions can be practiced and honoured, and Indigenous languages can be learned and spoken. This Indigenous family-centred space should be built to honour a relational way of being by supporting intergenerational learning and community connectedness, and incorporate green space and land-based elements in its design.
- Strengthened outreach mechanisms to build awareness, trust and connections with existing early years services and supports and beyond.
- Improved transportation supports to ensure Indigenous children and families living outside of the area or those for whom travel to and from a centre is difficult (i.e., full-time work hours, mobility restrictions) can access the available programs and supports.

A more detailed account of the desired enhancements to existing early years services that were voiced during the consultations is provided below.

- INTEGRATED SERVICES (under one roof) : BUILDING TRUST AND MAKING CONNECTIONS

If a wide range of Indigenous-led early years services were located in the same place, families would become familiar with the various programs that are available, have fewer barriers to access these programs (reduce travel time and costs, minimize the number of transitions for

children), and be able to build relationships and trust over time. In the words of one parent, *'If you build it, we will come.'* (NOTE: It was suggested that the expanded services detailed below should also be included in the same location.)

- EXPANDED SERVICES: INDIGENOUS-LED & SERVICES THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

The following additional early years services were identified: Full-day (versus half-day) Head Start Program to be offered to younger children (starting at 2 years), Full Day Kindergarten on-site, school-aged before and after school program, increased child care spaces, and more cultural teaching including storytelling with Elders, and more parent programs/workshops. Indigenous stakeholders also identified the need to work in partnership to bring other services into the space including: Ontario Works, food bank, library (for the whole family, with books by Indigenous authors), recreational programs for older siblings, etc.

- INDIGENOUS PROVIDERS & CULTURAL EDUCATION: BUILDING A SENSE OF BELONGING

In defining what Indigenous-led means, Indigenous stakeholders emphasized the importance of learning from qualified Indigenous providers who understand their worldview, culture and language. This extends to full day kindergarten teachers. They expressed interest in being able to access more culturally relevant learning opportunities for children, parents, and caregivers to support intergenerational learning. Such opportunities reflect the incorporation of traditional Indigenous educational practices that value relational learning, and community involvement.

In the words of parents consulted:

*'As parents, it is important that we get to learn along with our children about our language and culture.'*

*'We need the presence of Elders in ceremonies. It grounds the family and child.'*

*'We should incorporate an Indigenous approach – teach, learn and grow'*

*'We build a sense of belonging when we learn about our culture and traditions – a pride of who we are and where we came from.'*

- LANGUAGE: AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR CULTURE

The ability for children and families to learn their languages was identified as a priority. When families spoke about their culture they emphasized the importance of being able to learn and speak their own language. Indigenous languages are embedded within our teachings, relationships and responsibilities to the natural world and to each other as human beings.

*'It is important to imprint children with their own language early on.'* (Indigenous Elder)

- FAMILY CENTRED CULTURAL SPACE: A WELCOMING PLACE FOR INDIGENOUS FAMILIES TO GATHER

Families talked about the importance of having a welcoming space where they can gather and learn together, cultural beliefs, traditions, and current cultural practices can be practiced and honoured, and Indigenous languages can be learned and spoken. Indigenous stakeholders also talked about the need for access to green space, outdoors. It is important that the space be ecologically focused and incorporate land-based elements in its design (e.g. garden spaces, green spaces, ceremonial spaces, etc.). It was suggested that such a space attends to holistic wellness by providing a connection to mother earth (land) that nurtures the spiritual aspect of mind, body, emotion and spirit. Therefore the space should be one that promotes holistic wellness, embeds Indigenous worldviews in its design, and acknowledges the importance of land-based connection for cultural continuity within the community. Access to green space outdoors provides people with a connection to the land they may not otherwise have. This space is a crucial learning place, and gives a platform to learn about cycles of life, Indigenous ceremonies, languages and songs.

In the words of parents:

*'We need a place for families to be together.'*

*'We have nowhere to go currently to gather and do our ceremonies.'*

*'This is especially important for Indigenous families living in the City. Many have lost their names, language and culture. We need a connection to gardens so that we can have a blessing of the seeds ceremony. Our children get great joy from watching things grow, and picking and eating them.'* (Indigenous Elder)

- OUTREACH: BUILDING AWARENESS, TRUST AND CONNECTIONS

The consultations revealed that many families do not know about the services that are available. It was also suggested that some mixed families where one parent is not Indigenous may not know that they are welcome. Indigenous stakeholders indicated that it will be important to reach out to Indigenous children and families across the City, and to establish liaison/navigator roles whose job is to connect with community members. Word of mouth is particularly important in the Indigenous community given the presence of racism, and the need to establish trusting positive relationships.

In the words of parents:

*'We need to let the community – across the City – know about the services.'*

*'An open house would be helpful so that families can meet the staff and talk to other parents.'*

*'Building trust is important because there is currently a lot of racism against Indigenous people.'*

- TRANSPORTATION: ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Transportation was identified by families as one of the most critical barriers to accessing services and programs. While co-locating early years services will help to address this, families that are working full-time, have other children of different ages, and/or are live far enough away that they can't walk (particularly those that live on the Mountain and don't have a car or money for transit) still face multiple access barriers.

In the words of parents:

*'It is important to provide transportation to reduce barriers to access, and reduce transportation costs for families.'*

*'We need to provide transportation to and from the mountain.'*

Indigenous stakeholders also talked about the importance of ensuring that the physical space is accessible and welcoming for Indigenous children and families. Here are some of the design considerations that were identified:

- Incorporate visual representations of Indigenous cultures and peoples (e.g., traditional carvings, Indigenous art, use of natural materials, etc.)
- Create easy access/flow through between indoor and outdoor spaces
- Ensure lots of windows, light and plants
- Include space for cultural/ceremonial and gathering spaces (indoors and outdoors), including a sweat lodge, healing space, and community gathering space
- Provide access to a community kitchen and community garden for families

A recent survey conducted to inform the OEYCFC planning process included respondents<sup>13</sup> who have attended Niwasa's child and family support programs. These parents responded that for themselves and their children they valued social interactions, access to resources (i.e. toys, activities) or staff, access to food, friendly/inclusive environments, proximity to other services they access and the opportunity to learn and express themselves when they visited centres.<sup>14</sup> Parents also identified the following challenges when accessing centres: not knowing about the centres, proximity to home and other services, using other services, employment, child's schooling and a child's health issue or disability.

Children's voices reinforced the importance of having a sense of belonging and community that is inextricably linked to parents' and children's well-being, engagement during *"active, creative and meaningful"*<sup>15</sup> interactions and expression for the child and parent.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Survey respondents were likely to identify themselves as frequent users with children in the 31 months or older age categories.

<sup>14</sup> City of Hamilton. (2016). Ontario Early Years Child & Family Centre Needs Assessment Survey Data.

<sup>15</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years.



**3. What are the desired outcomes for Indigenous children and families in this region with respect to child care and child and family programs? Short term and long term goals?**

The goals and desired outcomes of the proposed integrated early years' services model are described from the perspective of the Indigenous Community, and the Early Years system.

**INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE:**

Indigenous families, providers and community leaders/Elders engaged in the development of the Journey Together Proposal were invited to speak to what difference it has made in the lives of Indigenous children and families to access Indigenous led early years programs and services currently offered through Niwasa, and clarified what outcomes they expect if we are successful in implementing this integrated service model. Using a Framework for Indigenous Outcomes that is borrowed from Toronto's Raising the Village Project, the outcomes identified by local Indigenous stakeholders are aligned with the following broader Indigenous Outcomes:

<b>INDIGENOUS OUTCOMES (From the Research Framework)</b>	<b>Desired Goals and Outcomes for Indigenous Children and Families in Hamilton (Identified through Community Engagement)</b>
<b>SELF-KNOWLEDGE:</b> <i>Indigenous children and families have knowledge of, take pride in, and have opportunities to express their identity.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a sense of belonging</li> <li>• Nurture a sense of self/identity</li> <li>• Facilitate connection to community</li> </ul>
<b>STRONG FAMILIES:</b> <i>Indigenous families, including all generations, are able to cope with challenges, meet their goals, and foster their culture and identity.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure stronger pathways are built that support children and families to learn and grow together</li> </ul>
<b>VIBRANT COMMUNITIES:</b> <i>Indigenous communities are diverse, vibrant, growing and connected, and provide a source of strength for children and families.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure children and families remain connected to and stay involved with Niwasa (as volunteers/board members, students, and staff)</li> <li>• Indigenous providers and families educate non-Indigenous allies by breaking down myths and creating cultural awareness and understanding</li> </ul>
<b>CULTURAL EQUITY:</b> <i>Indigenous children and families experience their cultural identity and way of being with dignity and respect.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure early years programs and services are accessible to Indigenous children and families, including those that are in the process of reclaiming their heritage (i.e. current system inequities are addressed)</li> </ul>
<b>SELF DETERMINATION:</b> <i>Indigenous communities are able to make decisions that improve the well-being of their children, families and communities as a whole.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Indigenous children and families are engaged in the design, implementation and evaluation of early years' programs and services – on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Hire qualified, Indigenous providers/staff</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> City of Hamilton. (2016). Ontario Early Years Child & Family Centre Children's Voices Data.

**SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE:**

The integrated service model that is proposed in the Journey Together Proposal will contribute to the broader goals and outcomes of Hamilton's early years system as laid out in the *Hamilton's Early Years Community Plan* (2016-2020) and *Ontario's Early Years and Child Care Policy Frameworks* (2013 & 2017). The desired outcome is that Hamilton's '*children and families are supported by a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible, integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development*'.<sup>17</sup>

This Journey Together proposal will help Indigenous child care and child and family programs in Hamilton to meet the broader early years system goals – or areas of action – as outlined in the OEYCFC Planning Guidelines for Service System Managers<sup>18</sup> as well as the Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework.<sup>19</sup> Relevant goals include:

- Indigenous families will find it easier to access high-quality early years programs and licensed child care spaces
- Indigenous families will continue to benefit from high-quality child care and early years programming that is culturally relevant and Indigenous led and offered by engaged and knowledgeable educators
- Indigenous parents and caregivers will have access to high quality services that support them in their role as children's first teachers, enhance their well-being, and enrich their knowledge about early learning and development
- Indigenous families will find it easier to receive support for children with special needs
- Indigenous families will be able to easily access information about programs and services, including licensed child care and child and family programs
- Local service providers will collaborate and integrate services to meet community needs in an efficient, accessible and culturally competent way

**4. *Is there any other relevant information you would like us to know about child care and child and family programs in the local community?***

Niwasa is a well-known and respected organization that is dedicated to providing high quality Indigenous led early years programs and services for children and families in Hamilton. Annual evaluations that were conducted over the past 2 years by the Aboriginal Head Start Preschool Program (offered in Hamilton by Niwasa) indicate that this program is a highly successful and desirable program.<sup>20</sup> As a partner in the local Indigenous and Early Years Communities, they have demonstrated leadership that benefits the larger system and community. The letters of support from Early Years System partners, local Indigenous providers and partners, and other potential partners speaks to both their current and future contributions.

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Education. Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Education. Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres: Planning Guidelines for Service System Managers, July 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Evaluation of Niwasa's Aboriginal Head Start Preschool Program (2015 and 2016).

Through engagement of Indigenous stakeholders in this process, it was suggested that while the programs and services offered by Niwasa are highly regarded, many families do not know about the services. Stakeholders indicated that outreach is necessary to build awareness, trust and connections to services for Indigenous children and families across Hamilton. They also talked about the multiple barriers to access that prevent families from accessing these services, including: distance from services and between various services, lack of transportation (from neighbourhoods that are not proximal to the planned location, and for other services beyond the Head Start Preschool Program), and limited hours and capacity. There was consensus that these services should be enhanced, and integrated, in one-location, with other early years services, including: full day kindergarten, after school recreation care (6-12 years), school break care (4-12 years), and outreach and transportation programs. These findings were replicated in the family consultations undertaken for the OEYCFC planning process.

**5. What program impacts are important to Indigenous children and families? How could these impacts on children, families and the community be measured? (e.g. assessment of developmental health and well-being at school entry, number of children accessing programs in traditional languages).**

As summarized in question #3 above, input provided by Indigenous children and families affirmed the following Indigenous outcomes/impacts as important:

<b>SELF-KNOWLEDGE:</b> <i>Indigenous children and families have knowledge of, take pride in, and have opportunities to express their identity.</i>
<b>STRONG FAMILIES:</b> <i>Indigenous families, including all generations, are able to cope with challenges, meet their goals, and foster their culture and identity.</i>
<b>VIBRANT COMMUNITIES:</b> <i>Indigenous communities are diverse, vibrant, growing and connected, and provide a source of strength for children and families.</i>
<b>CULTURAL EQUITY:</b> <i>Indigenous children and families experience their cultural identity and way of being with dignity and respect.</i>
<b>SELF DETERMINATION:</b> <i>Indigenous communities are able to make decisions that improve the well-being of their children, families and communities as a whole.</i>

To measure these impacts we will utilize existing Indigenous research frameworks and methodologies that are rooted in Indigenous worldviews, place emphasis on relationship building, respect traditional Indigenous values of reciprocity, and utilize storytelling approaches. The evaluation approach will be Indigenous focused and culturally sensitive to assessing outcomes (i.e., will have both quantitative and qualitative data that is mindful of Indigenous contexts).

Niwasa is currently a partner in a number of relevant research projects that utilize participatory, reflective evaluation and learning methods including:

- K-12 Project – Bundled Arrows Initiative. This project aims to identify the level of support Indigenous learners are receiving to help them be successful academically and holistically from kindergarten to grade 12.

- The evaluation of the NYA:WEH elementary program in partnership with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton. This project utilizes monthly sharing circles, art projects, music and storytelling to learn about the program experience and impacts.
- Inclusive Early Childhood Services System Study- Longitudinal project aimed to understand disability in early childhood and school age from the perspective of families. There are several indigenous led communities across Ontario, including Hamilton, engaged in this research.

The measurement of system-wide impacts referenced in this integrated model will comply with the Ministry of Education's proposed outcomes and measurement strategy (to be developed) as referenced in the Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework, 2017.

**6. Please describe how all of the proposed program(s) address the needs and outcomes identified above, and align with the broader service system plan(s) in your region, existing government direction and priorities (e.g. Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres, increased access to child care and services).**

The Journey Together Early Years Initiative provides the Indigenous Community in Hamilton with a unique opportunity not only to enhance access to culturally relevant early years programs, but to do so in an Indigenous led Community Hub. Currently Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg is working in partnership with the De dwa da dehs ney>s Aboriginal Health Centre, De dwa da dehs nye>s, to develop this hub. The vision is that Niwasa early years programs will be co-located with Indigenous community health services in a facility designed to reflect and respect Indigenous culture and practices. The shared intent is to build a space where Indigenous children and families in Hamilton can gather, celebrate their culture and language, and nurture a sense of belonging. This hub, named Biindigen (Anishinaabemowin for 'Come in! Welcome!'), will also be home to other community-based programs - providing opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and providers to work, learn and heal together.

Over the past decade Niwasa has been committed to helping Indigenous children and families in Hamilton access culturally relevant programs that embrace their culture and values. As far back as 2009, Niwasa's Board of Directors and Staff had a vision for the organization that all of the early years programs and services would be located under one roof. In 2010 an Elder shared a vision that Niwasa was a nest (a place to gather, a foundation) where children, youth and families could be together to learn and share their gifts. Protecting that nest was a thunderbird with its wings spread around as the protector. Above the thunderbird was a rainbow which represented positive growth and the path ahead for Niwasa. This aligns with the seven fires prophecy that youth will begin to trace back their lineage and heritage, and Indigenous culture and language will be revitalized. As part of the ceremony, community leaders created eggs for the thunderbird nest that held their dreams and visions for Niwasa. In the words of one, *"My dream is that our children become leaders who bring back our culture and language and who change the world!"* Niwasa has developed an Indigenous early years curriculum that supports learning and development in ways that reflect Indigenous culture and approaches to learning. In the words of an Indigenous parent, *"it is important that we learn along with our children about our language and culture"*. Niwasa has generously shared these learnings with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers and families throughout the community. This has been accomplished within the confines of limited resources and fragmented space.

Today it is evident that Niwasa has outgrown its current physical space and must increase the availability of and access to its program and services to meet the needs of a growing number of Indigenous children and families in Hamilton. Community members and other early years' system providers emphasized the need to eliminate current access barriers and achieve resource equity for Indigenous children and families. This aligns with the Hamilton's Early Years Community Plan (2016-2020) which identified a commitment to ensuring that the early years system is accountable for equitably meeting the needs of ALL children, including Indigenous populations whose needs and perspectives are not well understood or reflected in existing programs/services. It also responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action which highlight specific calls to action in the areas of child welfare, education, language and culture, and health - including the development of culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Indigenous Families. In other words, access to education is a right as designated in the signing of treaties, and in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In addition, it aligns with the ongoing OEYCFC planning process, Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework (2017), the *Child Care and Early Years Act* (2014), and the provincial and municipal commitment to developing community hubs.

A recent longitudinal study focusing on Indigenous children with disabilities found that "Indigenous families were often very engaged in culturally specific services, in addition to accessing disability support services operating from a medical framework. The juxtaposition of these two ideologies often led to conflict for Indigenous families as they sought to maintain their cultural understandings of children and their development while seeking supports for their children."<sup>21</sup> The co-location of early years programs with other Indigenous community health and support services will not only facilitate enhanced access to these services but will also enable young families to receive health and community services reflecting "an Indigenous world view."

The City of Hamilton is located on traditional territory of the Haudensaunee and Anishnaabeg and is half an hour away from the highest populated reserve in Canada. In an urban environment like Hamilton, Indigenous peoples represent various nations and community affiliations, but what is common amongst Indigenous peoples' worldviews, is the importance of protecting, and maintaining a connection to the land. A space that incorporates this aspect supports the broader goals of cultural (including language) revitalization, enhanced community wellness, and improved cultural continuity across multiple generations. Biindigen Community Hub intends to locate within a neighborhood in which Indigenous people comprise 6% of the population (while only 3% in the rest of the City).<sup>22</sup> Enhanced early years services located in an Indigenous hub will close the gaps and remove barriers leading to cultural equity, and a sense of belonging, strong families, stronger pathways for families, self-determination, and a vibrant Indigenous community.

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<sup>21</sup>Nicole Ineese-Nash, Yvonne Bomberly, Kathryn Underwood, and Arlene Hache. Raising a Child within Early Childhood Dis-ability Support Systems Shakonehya:ra's ne shakoyen'okon:'a G'chi-gshkewesiwad binoonhyag bΓσdΓC PQCΓΔΩ <ΔS<sup>o</sup> bΓσdΓC bΔSPQC<sup>b</sup>: Ga-Miinigoowozid Gikendaagoosowin Awaazigish, Ga-Miinigoowozid Ga-Izhichigetan. In submission to Indigenous Policy Journal.

<sup>22</sup> These population figures likely underestimate the true size of the Indigenous population in Ward 4 and in Hamilton overall due to a historical tendency among Indigenous populations to abstain from participating in Census data completion.

The planning for the Biindigen Community Hub involves both the De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre and Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg (Indigenous early years programs), and requires the coordination and support of separate provincial ministries. It provides a unique and important opportunity to align government priorities and leverage available resources/opportunities to equitably address the needs of local Indigenous children and families, AND advance the goals and outcomes described in the Ontario Government's response to the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations. The resources provided through Journey Together Capacity Funding enabled the City of Hamilton, in collaboration with Niwasa, to conduct an extensive community engagement process in order to identify local needs, opportunities and priorities for culturally relevant, Indigenous-led early years programs and services. Indigenous partners and community members appreciated the opportunity to articulate what Indigenous-led means to them, and to design an integrated service delivery model that can achieve and sustain meaningful outcomes for their community. The trust built through this process has enabled local partners to strengthen relationships, and align towards a shared vision and commitment.

This proposal focuses on enhanced early years programs and services (capital, operating and start-up requirements) and is developed based on available benchmarks. It also includes associated capital requirements to create an integrated, Indigenous-led early years hub that can address current barriers to access and ensure cultural equity. It is too important a vision to let this opportunity pass. As one of the members of the Niwasa Board of Directors expressed, "the time is now" .

In summary, based on the needs identified by Indigenous stakeholders (see Question 2 above), the proposed integrated early years' service model would include capital, operating and start-up expenses for the following components:

- Child Care Program (an additional 33 to 64 subsidized spaces requested)
- Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centre (OEYCFC). Currently Niwasa provides child and family support services and programs on a part-time basis in two separate OEYC locations. This proposal includes enhancing this component to a full-service, full-time Indigenous OEYCFC (as part of the Indigenous Hub) in keeping with the Ministry of Education's OEYCFC guidelines and local OEYCFC Initial Plan's definition of a centre.
- Targeted outreach (to be enhanced to build awareness about available services and making connections for Indigenous children and families).
- Transportation (to be enhanced to provide access to the full range of early years services proposed)
- Aboriginal Head Start Preschool Program (24 additional spaces). NOTE: A separate proposal to enhance the current program is being submitted by Niwasa through the Public Health Agency of Canada.

**ADDITIONAL SERVICE COMPONENTS & ASSOCIATED CAPITAL COSTS** (identified through engagement of the Indigenous Community in Hamilton and through discussion with the Project Team):

- A full day kindergarten program through a potential partnership with Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.
- After school recreation program (6-12 years) and school break care (4-12 years) through partnership with a local recreation-based organization.
- System-wide training and development to contribute to cultural awareness and safety in the early years system in Hamilton. Niwasa has developed an Indigenous early years curriculum that reflects Indigenous culture and approaches to learning.

- Infrastructure supports to build Niwasa's capacity to significantly expand existing services (e.g., professional development, management structure, and IT and administrative systems). Historically, Niwasa has not received equitable funding, and as a result they need to be supported to develop high quality programs, and the infrastructure required to achieve and sustain the outcomes of quality.

The above capital, operating and start-up costs have been developed using the relevant guidelines and local benchmarks where available.

**7. Please describe how the proposed program(s) would increase access to services within your region.**

The proposed Indigenous-Led Integrated Early Years Model would significantly increase the number net new spaces available for Indigenous children and families in Hamilton:

- Licensed Child Care Centre – 64 in the proposed model; 33 in the scaled budget;
- Child and Family Program (OEYCFC Family Program) – 440 children and 400 adults in the proposed model; 230 children and 200 adults in the scaled budget;
- Before and After School Programs (4-5 years; 6-12 years and school break) – 172 in the proposed model and 86 in the scaled budget
- Full-day kindergarten program – 52 children in the proposed model and 26 in the scaled budget

In addition, the proposed model would address current access barriers identified by Indigenous families and providers by providing transportation to and from services as well as outreach services that will promote awareness about available programs and services amongst Indigenous families across the region.

- 20 children for child care, plus 10 families for OEYCFC per day would be transported in the proposed model
- 30 children for child care, plus 15 families for OEYCFC per day would be transported in the scaled budget.

Finally, indigenous families and providers emphasized that if a wide range of Indigenous-led EY services were located in the same place, families would become familiar with the various programs that are available, have fewer barriers to access these programs (reduce travel time and costs, minimize the number of transitions for children), and be able to build relationships and trust over time. In the words of one parent, *'If you build it, we will come.'* In the proposed Indigenous (Biindigen) Community Hub, Indigenous early years services would be co-located together with Community Health Services provided by the Aboriginal Health Centre (De dwa da dehs nye>s). The Hub will also be home to other community-based programs - providing opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and providers to work, learn and heal together. These services are likely to include: Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program, Community Gardens, a Food Bank, City Housing, etc. The Hub will be located in an area where a significant percentage of the Indigenous population currently

reside. This integrated model will serve to leverage available services and resources, and significantly enhance access to a broader range of services for the Indigenous community.



## PART 2: PROPOSED PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

### 1. *How will the proposed new or enhanced program respond to the community needs and desired outcomes identified above.*

The Journey Together Early Years Initiative provides the Indigenous Community in Hamilton with a unique opportunity not only to enhance access to culturally relevant early years' programs, but to do so in an Indigenous centred and Indigenous-led Community Hub. Currently Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg is working in partnership with the De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre to develop this hub. The vision is that Niwasa early years programs will be co-located with Indigenous community health services in a facility designed to reflect and respect Indigenous culture and practices. The shared intent is to build a space that nurtures the wellbeing of Indigenous children and families in Hamilton through communal gathering, language revitalization, and strengthening the cultural continuity of the community.<sup>23</sup> This hub, named Biindigen (Anishinaabemowin for 'Come in! Welcome!'), will also be home to other community-based programs - providing opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and providers to work, learn and heal together.

A recent longitudinal study focusing on Indigenous children with disabilities found that "Indigenous families were often very engaged in culturally specific services, in addition to accessing disability support services operating from a medical framework. The juxtaposition of these two ideologies often led to conflict for Indigenous families as they sought to maintain their cultural understandings of children and their development while seeking supports for their children."<sup>24</sup> The co-location of early years programs with other Indigenous community health and support services will not only facilitate enhanced access to these services but will also enable young families to receive health and community services reflecting "an Indigenous world view."

The City of Hamilton is located on traditional territory of the Haudensaunee and Anishnaabeg and is half an hour away from the highest populated reserve in Canada. In an urban environment like Hamilton, Indigenous peoples represent various nations and community affiliations, but what is common amongst Indigenous peoples' worldviews, is the importance of protecting, and maintaining a connection to the land. A space that incorporates this aspect supports the broader goals of cultural (including language) revitalization, enhanced community wellness, and improved cultural continuity across multiple generations. Biindigen Community Hub intends to locate within a neighborhood in which Indigenous people comprise 6% of the population (while only 3% in the rest of the City).<sup>25</sup> Enhanced early years services located in an Indigenous hub will close gaps and remove barriers leading to cultural equity, and

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<sup>23</sup> Loppie and Wien (2009). Health Inequities and Social Determinants of Aboriginal People's Health. National Collaborative Centre for Aboriginal Health.

<sup>24</sup> Nicole Ineese-Nash, Yvonne Bomberry, Kathryn Underwood, and Arlene Hache. Raising a Child within Early Childhood Dis-ability Support Systems Shakonehya:ra's ne shakoyen'okon:'a G'chi-gshkewesiwad binoonhyag bΓσdΓc P9CΓΔQ <ΓSγ bΓσdΓc bΔSP9Cb: Ga-Miinigoowozid Gikendaagoosowin Awaazigish, Ga-Miinigoowozid Ga-lzhichigetan. In submission to Indigenous Policy Journal.

<sup>25</sup> These population figures likely underestimate the true size of the Indigenous population in Ward 4 and in Hamilton overall due to a historical tendency among Indigenous populations to abstain from participating in Census data completion.

a sense of belonging, strong families, stronger pathways for families, self-determination, and a vibrant Indigenous community.

The planning for the Biindigen Community Hub involves both the De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre and Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg (Indigenous early years' programs), and requires the coordination and support of separate provincial ministries and levels of government. It provides a unique and important opportunity to align government priorities and leverage available resources/opportunities to equitably address the needs of local Indigenous children and families, and advance the goals and outcomes described in the Ontario Government's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action. The resources provided through Journey Together Capacity Funding enabled the City of Hamilton, in collaboration with Niwasa, to conduct a culturally sensitive and holistic community engagement process in order to identify local needs, opportunities and priorities for culturally relevant, Indigenous-led early years' programs and services. Indigenous partners and community members appreciated the opportunity to articulate what Indigenous-led means to them, and to design an integrated service delivery model that can achieve and sustain meaningful outcomes for their community. The trust built through this process has enabled local partners to strengthen relationships, and align towards a shared vision and commitment.

This proposal focuses on enhanced early years programs and services (capital, operating and start-up requirements) and is developed based on available benchmarks. It also includes associated capital requirements to create an integrated, Indigenous-led early years hub that can address current barriers to access and ensure cultural equity through working in partnership with other providers, including: after school recreation care (6-12 years) and school break care (4-12 years) in partnership with a recreation based organization; a possible full day kindergarten program in partnership with the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board; outreach and transportation programs to ensure city-wide access; and system-wide cultural awareness training and development to contribute to culturally relevant early years services. It is too important a vision to let this opportunity pass. As one of the members of the Niwasa Board of Directors expressed, *"the time is now!"*.

In summary, based on the needs identified by Indigenous stakeholders, the proposed integrated early years' service model would include capital, operating and start-up expenses for the following components:

- Child Care Program (an additional 33 to 64 subsidized spaces requested)
- Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centre (OEYCFC). Currently Niwasa provides child and family support services and programs on a part-time basis in two separate OEYC locations. This proposal includes enhancing this component to a full-service, full-time Indigenous OEYCFC (as part of the Indigenous Hub) in keeping with the Ministry of Education's OEYCFC guidelines and local OEYCFC Initial Plan's definition of a centre.
- Targeted outreach (to be enhanced to build awareness about available services and making connections for Indigenous children and families).
- Transportation (to be enhanced to provide access to the full range of early years services proposed)
- Aboriginal Head Start Pre-School Program (24 additional spaces requested). NOTE: A separate proposal to enhance this current program is being submitted by Niwasa through the Public Health Agency of Canada.

ADDITIONAL SERVICE COMPONENTS & ASSOCIATED CAPITAL COSTS (identified through engagement of the Indigenous Community in Hamilton and through discussion with the Project Team):

- A full day kindergarten program through a potential partnership with the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board.
- After school recreation care (6-12 years) and school break care (4-12 years) through partnership with a recreation-based organization.
- System-wide training and development to contribute to cultural awareness and safety in the early years' system in Hamilton. Niwasa has developed an Indigenous early years' curriculum that reflects Indigenous culture and approaches to learning.
- Infrastructure supports to build Niwasa's capacity to significantly expand existing services (e.g. professional development, management structure, and IT and administrative systems). Historically, Niwasa has not received equitable funding, and as a result they need support to develop high quality programs, and the infrastructure required to achieve and sustain the outcomes of quality.

**2. *How does the new or enhanced program align with broader service system plan(s) in your region, and existing government direction and priorities (e.g. Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres, How Does Learning Happen?, Ontario Child Care and Family Support Program Service Management and Funding Guideline?)***

The integrated early years' service model proposed in this application aligns with Hamilton's Early Years Community Plan (2016-2020) which identified a commitment to ensure that the early years system is accountable for equitably meeting the needs of all children, including Indigenous populations whose needs and perspectives are not well understood or reflected in existing programs/services. It also responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Recommendations which highlights specific calls to action in the areas of child welfare, education, language and culture, and health - including the development of culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Indigenous Families. In addition, it aligns with the *Child Care and Early Years Act* (2014) and the provincial and municipal commitment to developing community hubs.

This proposed initiative also aligns with the policies and practices to improve health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous residents in Hamilton as outlined in the *Our Health Counts: Urban Aboriginal Health Database Research Project*<sup>26</sup> including the following recommendations:

- That provincial governments engage with urban Aboriginal communities and organisations for the purpose of establishing priorities, resource and funding allocations and action plans to address the critical health inequities in all economic and social conditions affecting Aboriginal health including poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, education, employment, health access, gender equality and social safety.

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<sup>26</sup> Our Health Counts Urban Aboriginal Health Data Research Project. Community Report – First Nations Adults and Children, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. April 2011.

- That municipal, provincial and federal government ensure the provision of adequate funding to the urban community and organisations towards the development and expansion of culturally reflective, community based, long- term traditional family treatment centres, urban aboriginal child, youth and adult mental health funded strategies and maternal health, programmes and services.
- That municipal, provincial and federal governments and health stakeholders develop and initiate policies towards the implementation of cultural competency and/ or cultural safety programmes that are designed and delivered by Aboriginal people that includes the recognition and validation of Aboriginal worldviews and full inclusion of Aboriginal healers, medicine people, midwives, community counselors and health care workers in all collaborative efforts with western medicine.
- That the need for specific urban Aboriginal services and research, given the disparities found in the health status in Hamilton, or urban Aboriginal people be addressed by municipal, provincial and federal governments and urban Aboriginal organizations.
- That where possible more cooperation and coordination amongst urban Aboriginal service providers be encouraged and supported by the municipal, provincial and federal governments in designing and delivering services and identifying and funding research opportunities.

In addition, this proposal aligns with the ongoing OEYCFC planning process and Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework (2017). The OEYCFC Initial Plan will be submitted to the Ministry of Education in September 2017. In the Hamilton community, the development of the Initial Plan was guided by a planning group which included the current directors of OEYCs and PFLCs and the CMSM. The Executive Director of Niwasa participated in this planning group. Niwasa has been identified as one of the full service OEYCFC operators in Hamilton. The Journey Together funding would enable the Hamilton OEYCFC system to have a full service Indigenous OEYCFC site located in the Biindigen Community Hub.

### **3. *How does this program leverage existing services and capital infrastructure?***

The proposed integrated service model provides a unique opportunity to align and leverage existing services and capital infrastructure projects. It proposes to build on the Indigenous-led early years services currently provided by Niwasa, including the Aboriginal Head Start Pre-school Program. Niwasa will submit a separate proposal to the Public Health Agency of Canada to enhance the current Head Start Pre-School Program. As described above (question #2), the model will also provide the opportunity to leverage and enhance services to be provided through existing government directions and priorities, including: an Indigenous OEYCFC (as per Hamilton's OEYCFC Initial Plan to be submitted in September 2017), and the recent announcement of the expansion of child care spaces in Hamilton.

As described above, the De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre has been meeting with Niwasa to plan an Indigenous Hub for Hamilton (Biindigen Community Hub) that would leverage capital infrastructure, allowing the Integrated Early Years' Service Model to be co-located with health services

to be provided by the Health Centre. The Health Centre is set to begin Stage 2 of the Capital Redevelopment Process through the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and Ministry of Health.

The Health Centre will offer culturally sensitive primary health care, traditional healing services, a diabetes clinic, mental health services for children, youth and adults, nutrition clinics, and housing support services. Additional facilities will be shared by Niwasa and the Health Centre, including: a general reception area, outdoor space, meeting space, community kitchen, and recreational and physical activity space. The Hub will also be home to other community-based programs - providing opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and providers to work, learn and heal together. These services are likely to include: Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program, Community Gardens, a Food Bank, City Housing, etc.

**4. *Is there any other information you wish to share about the proposed program?***

The requested capital, operating and start-up costs have been developed using the relevant guidelines and local benchmarks where available. More specifically, the 'conservative/scaled model' child care program request is based on Hamilton CMSM's review of the overall child care space trends and specific trends observed for Indigenous child care in Hamilton, i.e. it reflects local experiences and best practices regarding a viable and sustainable child care centre and takes into consideration the age distribution of the local Indigenous population. The 'proposed/ideal model' represents a 50% increase on the conservative model with the exception of infant spaces. Both models assume new spaces will be 100% subsidized. Niwasa has not applied to be a pilot site for the new child care age groupings. However, the new, purpose-built child care space would provide the flexibility to comply with and adapt to potential changes to the legislation regarding age groupings.

Also, an analysis of current OEYC utilization rates and population growth was used to size the requested resources for the proposed OEYCFC. Average participation rates for all Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC) in Hamilton are at 19% of the total population. Participation rates are higher than the city-wide average in the neighbourhood where the Biindigen Community Hub plans to locate, with 21% of the total population attending an OEYC. Indigenous families and providers consulted suggest that current participation rates would be expected to increase significantly when the integrated early years' services are implemented because the proposed model addresses existing barriers to access and responds to emerging needs by co-locating with other desirable services and supports (i.e., health care, community programs, etc.). We have used an estimated utilization rate of 29% to size the conservative/scaled child and family program in this proposal. This is the highest rate of utilization currently experienced by an OEYC site in the City of Hamilton. The proposed/ideal model takes into account plans for enhanced outreach and transportation and thus draws from the city-wide Indigenous population of children and families.

**PART 3: IMPLEMENTATION**

**Assumptions:**

1. Renovations for the Biindigen Hub will begin in 2019
2. The fully integrated and expanded Early Years component of Biindigen (the Indigenous Hub) will be ready September 2020
3. Niwasa will secure a temporary facility ready for targeted services expansion and some co-location by September 2018
4. Enhancements to organizational capacity to support the development and implementation of this service expansion are required as soon as possible

Milestone	Start Date	End date	Risks and Mitigation
<b>Child Care Expansion</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	
Negotiate temporary location	January 2018	March 2018	Risk: Identified facility (decommissioned school) may not be available Mitigation: Search for other temporary space; Working in partnership with the Aboriginal Health Centre to confirm viable space options.
Relicense 1 toddler and 1 preschool program	Spring 2018	September 2018	Risk: Licensing may take longer than we anticipate, and the temporary space could require significant renovation (if not used for child care previously). Mitigation: Based on past experience, 3-6 months should be sufficient time, especially given that the operator is only changing sites. Priority will be given to finding a temporary space that has previously been used for child care.
Hire and train staff	Spring 2018	August 2018	Risk: Unable to recruit enough qualified Indigenous staff Mitigation: Begin search as soon as possible and work with Mohawk College and other RECE education institutions; Organizational Capacity Building funding request includes management position(s) that will enable organization to undertake targeted recruitment drive

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End date</b>	<b>Risks and Mitigation</b>
Move to identified temporary location	Summer 2018	Sept 2018	
Advertise and communicate about the additional Indigenous child care spaces	Late Spring 2018	Ongoing	
New child care spaces operational	Sept. 2018	Ongoing	Risk: The timing here is dependent on how long licensing takes, and whether the temporary space has been used for child care. Mitigation: Based on past experience, 3-6 months should be sufficient time, especially given that the operator is only changing sites. Priority will be given to finding a temporary space that has previously been used for child care.
Plan move to the new Indigenous Community Hub (Bindiigen Hub)	January 2019	January 2020	
Move to new to Indigenous Community Hub	Summer 2020	Sept 2020	Risk: The Indigenous Community Hub takes longer than planned to build Mitigation: extend lease at temporary space
<b>OEYCFC Expansion</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	
Negotiate Identified temporary location	January 2018	March 2018	Risk: Identified facility (decommissioned school) may not be available Mitigation: Search for other temporary space that will accommodate; remain in existing 2 locations on an interim basis & negotiate expanded hours of operation at existing sites.
Minor retrofit of space at identified facility	March 2018	April 2018	
Hire and train additional staff if required	Spring 2018	June 2018	Risk: Unable to recruit enough qualified Indigenous staff Mitigation: Begin search as soon as possible and work with Mohawk college and other RECE education institutions; Organizational Capacity Building funding request includes management position(s) that will enable organization to undertake targeted recruitment
Design and implement communications plan to inform families	Spring 2018	June 2018	
Full time OEYCFC becomes operational	Q3 2018	Q3 2018	

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End date</b>	<b>Risks and Mitigation</b>
Plan move to the new Indigenous Community Hub (Bindiigen Hub)	January 2019	January 2020	
Move in to the new Indigenous Community Hub (Bindiigen Hub)	Summer 2020	Sept 2020	Risk: The Indigenous Community Hub takes longer than planned to renovate Mitigation: Extend lease at temporary space
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	
Purchase vehicle One	Spring 2018	Sept 2018	
Hire /train driver	Summer 2018	Sept 2018	
Purchase vehicle Two	Winter 2019	March 2019	
Hire /train driver	Summer 2019	Sept 2019	
Purchase vehicle Three ( if required)	Summer 2020	Sept 2020	
Hire /train driver	Summer 2020	Sept 2020	
<b>Organizational Capacity Building</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	
IT system and data management: assessment of needs & specifications	ASAP Q4 2017 / Q1 2018	Q1 2018	
IT system & data management protocols become operational	Q2 2018	Q2 2018	
Hire and orient Project Manager to plan and implement the service integration & expansion (including move to temporary and permanent space)	Winter 2017	Sept 2020	Risk: The current management resources of Niwasa are stretched to capacity. Without additional management support the likelihood of successful planning and implementation is diminished Mitigation: This expansion requires a project manager who can focus on the operational and space planning development and the services and programs outlined in this proposal.
Hire and orient Program Manager to implement and oversee integrated and expanded services	Spring 2018	September 2018	Risk: The current management resources of Niwasa are stretched to capacity. Without additional management support the likelihood of successful planning and implementation is diminished. Mitigation: This expansion requires a program manager to manage



Milestone	Start Date	End date	Risks and Mitigation
			the implementation of the program and supervise staff. This position is required as part of mitigating the risk of not finding qualified Indigenous staff i.e., this position would oversee a recruitment strategy
Hire and orient Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Safety Coordinators /Facilitators	Summer 2018	September 2018	Risk: The current management/coordination resources of Niwasa are stretched to capacity. Without additional Indigenous Cultural Awareness & Safety Coordinators / Facilitators the likelihood of achieving the community-wide goals of enhancing access to culturally relevant Indigenous led services early years in Hamilton are greatly diminished. Mitigation: This expansion requires Cultural Awareness & Safety Coordinators /Facilitators to enhance access to culturally relevant Indigenous early years services in Hamilton
Develop and Implement Ingenious Cultural Awareness and Safety	September 2018	September 2019	Risk: Lack of culturally relevant program and service delivery  Mitigation: The identified Coordinators/Facilitators will work with Early Years Providers in Hamilton to ensure the delivery of culturally relevant Indigenous early years services.
<b>Capital</b>			
Develop governance plan with partners for the capital plan for the Indigenous Hub	In process	January 2018	Risks: Partnership agreement not reached Mitigation: Niwasa is currently meeting with the Aboriginal Health Centre to develop a planning framework for the Biindigen Hub (to include vision setting, development principles and guidelines). In the event that this partnership cannot reach agreement, Niwasa will search for its own permanent facility to expand, co-locate and integrate its early years programs
Secure funding for the capital build plan	In process		Risks: Funding is not secured for the Hub. Niwasa and the local Indigenous Community will lose trust gained through this process (re: provincial commitment to culturally relevant, Indigenous led early

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End date</b>	<b>Risks and Mitigation</b>
			years services). Mitigation: Niwasa will seek out other options for a permanent early years location
Capital build planning process & permits	In process	Winter 2019	
Begin renovation for the OEYCFC Space	Spring 2019	2020	Risks: Renovations are not completed in a timely manner  Mitigation: Niwasa extends its lease in its temporary location
<b>FDK</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>To be determined</b>	
<b>BASP</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>To be determined</b>	