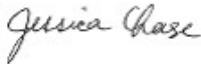




CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Children's and Community Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 20, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	EarlyON Child and Family Centre Service Agreement with Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HSC23027) (Ward 15)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Ward 15
PREPARED BY:	Rachelle Ihekwoaba (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5909
SUBMITTED BY:	Jessica Chase Director, Children's and Community Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the City of Hamilton enters into an Agreement with Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board to operate an EarlyON Child and Family Centre in the St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Elementary School in accordance with the terms and conditions described in this report; and,
- (b) That staff be authorized to contribute \$150 K from the Early Years System Reserve (ID 112218) to Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic School Board to purchase a portable to accommodate school pressures and maintain the EarlyON Child and Family Centre at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Elementary School; and,
- (c) That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or designate be authorized and directed to execute the Agreement in recommendation (a), together with any renewals or ancillary documents necessary, all in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Hamilton is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for EarlyON Child and Family Centres (EarlyON CFC) in Hamilton. In this role, the City

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

oversees all EarlyON CFC to offer free, high quality programs for families and children from birth to six years of age. The City works with community-based organizations to operate these centres at various sites across Hamilton.

In 2023, the City was notified by the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic School Board (HWCD SB) about the need to terminate the existing lease with the EarlyON CFC operator located at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Elementary School in Waterdown as of June 2023. This is due to the school experiencing student accommodation pressures and requiring the use of every classroom for instructional purposes.

Based on an analysis of the area, the City and EarlyON Operator are concerned that if this program is closed and/or relocated it will no longer serve the specific neighbourhood within the Waterdown community. Working with HWCD SB, both parties can meet the needs of the existing pressure to accommodate the increase in student attendance as well as maintain the EarlyON CFC programming through the purchase of a portable at the St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Elementary School. To do this, the City and HWCD SB will enter into a new agreement to protect the investment and confirm space availability for the EarlyON CFC for a seven-year period.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: A total of \$150 K will be paid to Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board to offset costs related to the purchase of a portable to support the ongoing operation of the EarlyON Child and Family Centre at the St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Elementary School in Waterdown. This amount will be processed through the Early Years System Reserve (ID 112218) to ensure the 2023 EarlyON CFC budget is maintained while meeting the unexpected pressure.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: Legal Services will assist with the preparation of an Agreement with Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Building off our early years vision to provide high quality, inclusive, and affordable early years programs and services, the Government of Ontario's "schools-first approach has prioritized schools as the preferred location for early years programs in communities.

Schools are viewed by the community as secure and trusted centres for children, and therefore are natural sites for early years programs. Many children are introduced to the school environment through early years programs, and the transition from early years programs to school can be facilitated by fostering strong connections between programs, providing a continuum of learning and care.”¹

Since the City became the service system manager for EarlyON CFC in 2018, the City collaborates with many community partners to offer programming across Hamilton. Those accessing EarlyON CFCs are provided with easy to access drop in programming, early years professionals and community resources to support the early development of children and foster relationships between child and caregiver. The City and EarlyON partners continue to be responsive to the needs of this community and looks forward to engaging parents and caregivers as co-learners and leaders in influencing positive experiences and outcomes for children, families and the community.

To implement programming, EarlyON service providers often rent or lease space at various community locations across the city. This ensures that programming is situated in areas of need and often within buildings that provide multiple services for children, families and caregivers to access. However, a challenge of renting space for many EarlyON service providers is that as a tenant, space is not guaranteed and often subject to changes in circumstance. The St. Thomas the Apostle EarlyON CFC has experienced this challenge, having moved to various locations within the school throughout occupancy, to accommodate student pressures. The creation of a new service agreement with HWCDSB and purchase of additional classroom space will provide greater security for the St. Thomas EarlyON CFC to continue to offer programming in the Waterdown community.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENT

None

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Consultation with Children’s and Community Services Division staff related to business supports and evaluation, as well Legal, Finance, Procurement, and Public Works have provided input to this Report. In addition, the current EarlyON CFC operator, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Child Centres, was consulted as well.

¹ *Early Years Accommodations in Schools Reference Guide* by Ministry of Education. (2018) Extracted from: <https://files.ontario.ca/edu-accommodations-schools-reference-guide-ey-en-2021-04-21.pdf>

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The City of Hamilton offers EarlyON Child and Family Centres in 35 locations across the city. In Waterdown, the St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Elementary School is in an area that experienced incredible development from 2016 to 2021, seeing 20% growth. Moreover, the geographic areas specific to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Elementary School saw the biggest population changes, specifically for zero to four years of age at 38%².

Understanding that Waterdown community has grown significantly and is expected to continue this growth for years to come, the City must maintain programming in this area. Once notified of the potential closure of the St. Thomas EarlyON, the City investigated other locations within this specific neighbourhood which confirmed that there are currently no other options available in this Waterdown community to accommodate an EarlyON CFC. The City is committed to working with partners over the coming years to ensure EarlyON programming is maintained in this Waterdown community once the seven-year agreement with HWCDSB has expired.

Lastly, in consultation with Public Works, it was confirmed that the cost of a portable is typically \$150 K per unit and lasts up to 25 years. There are additional fees that accompany the installation of the portable which will be covered by the HWCDSB. As part of the agreement between the City and HWCDSB, details regarding the amortization of the asset will be included to ensure that if a break in the contract must occur, that the City will retain part of its investment at that time. It is anticipated that this calculation would include about \$21 K investment per year over the seven-year contract.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement and Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive City where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

² Statistics Canada. (2022 and 2017). Census of Population by Age and Census Tract.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state-of-the-art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None