




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:	September 21, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (HSC22035(b)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Jessica Chase, Director Children's and Community Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the City of Hamilton accept the additional 100% provincial 2023 Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care funding in the amount of \$ 731,687 from the Ministry of Education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The province is in year two of implementing the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care initiative. The goal of this initiative is to ensure more families across Ontario have access to safe, affordable, and high-quality child care. The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care initiative will be phased in by March 2026, with the average cost of child care for eligible children 0 to 6 years reduced to \$12 per day.

In addition to the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care 100 percent base funding, the Ministry of Education has increased allocations to support a directed child care expansion approach, which includes the following:

- Fee Reduction funding for directed growth to support new child care spaces.
- Workforce compensation funding for Early Childhood Educators who work in the new licensed child care programs.
- Start-up grant funding to support the costs associated with opening new child care programs; and,

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.

- Administrative funding.

In 2022, the City of Hamilton achieved the opening of 195 new Canada-Wide Early Learning and child care spaces. The following chart outlines the new child care space targets approved by the Ministry of Education for 2023 to 2026

Year	2023 Target	2024 Target	2025 Target	2026 Target	Total Space Targets
School Based Spaces	107	49	49	-	254
Community Based spaces	381	265	339	302	1433
Total	488	314	388	302	1687

The Ministry also released an Access and Inclusion Framework to support new child care spaces, focusing on increased access to child care for children of low-income families, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities, children with special needs and Francophone and Indigenous children.

As previously identified under Council Information Report HSC22035(a) (Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Update), Children’s and Community Services Divisional staff completed an analysis which demonstrated a need to start with four wards. The Division acknowledges that all wards within the City of Hamilton have diverse child care needs. The Division is planning a deeper review and a phased expansion approach over the next four years to ensure the needs of all wards and neighbourhoods are being met.

To start, in 2023, directed child care growth will focus on:

1. Ward 6: East Mountain
2. Ward 7: Central Mountain
3. Ward 3: Hamilton Centre
4. Ward 4: East Lower Hamilton

Currently, staff are planning engagement with the community. Staff have contacted 27 community agencies that have existing relationships and connections with diverse communities to request they assist the City in gathering input from the families they serve. Staff are meeting with interested agencies to implement the approach that best suits their agency including to identify the tools and resources they require to successfully implement their engagement. The goal is to better understand child care

needs and identify barriers that may exist for these families. Their input will help inform the application process inviting all child care licensees to submit their interest in operating the new child care spaces at various locations in wards 6,7,3 and 4. The application process will be opened up in mid-October with the goal of having 381 new community-based child care spaces open by the end of 2023.

Successful licensees will also be eligible to receive one-time startup funding to support the operating costs associated with opening new spaces. Eligible centre-based applicants will be able to receive a grant of up to \$90.00 per square foot of a new licensed space with a cap of \$350,000 for every 50 child care spaces created. Home child care licensee applications will be able to receive grants of up to \$1,000 per space created to a maximum of \$6,000 per provider. These details will also be included in the application process.

This approach to community engagement is an integral part of implementing Hamilton's Access and Inclusion Framework at a local level, based on:

- Including the voices of the community and families to determine how child care services can meet their needs.
- Cultivating meaningful engagement experiences to authentically hear from the community and families.
- Focusing on the voices of diverse and underserved populations who were identified as priority populations.
- Collaborating efforts, which include engagement through multiple community-based organizations that have existing relationships with identified priority populations to provide authentic, meaningful engagement experiences.
- Embedding guiding principles:
 - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging
 - Charter of Rights for Children and Youth
 - Hamilton's Parent's Charter of Rights
 - How Does Learning Happen, Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
 - Hamilton's Early Years Quality Program

Feedback from engagement with the community and families is valued and will inform child care expansion plans throughout the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care implementation, as well as help to identify and address barriers to accessing child care.

In addition to community engagement, ongoing consultation is occurring with the following early years partners:

- Equity and Engagement Advisory Committee
- Consolidated Municipal Service Manager Advisory Committee
- Special Needs Resource Committee

- School Boards
- Francophone Service Providers
- Indigenous Service Provider

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: In December 2022 it was announced that the City of Hamilton would be receiving \$79,298,169 in Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care funding during the initial 2023 Allocation announcement by the Ministry of Education. There has since been an updated 2023 Allocation announcement received for the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care funding. The City of Hamilton will now be receiving a total of \$80,029,856 to help fund increased space allocations. The total increase of \$731,687 in new Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care funding has been received by the City from the Ministry of Education. These are 100% Provincial funds with no cost sharing requirements for the City.

In 2021, the City of Hamilton received a total funding allocation of \$80,590,378 from the Ministry of Education. With the introduction of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care initiative, the City's funding allocation increased by 43% to \$115,190,460 in 2022, and again by an additional 40.5% in 2023 to \$161,798,759.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

Legal: The 2023 Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement has been received from the Ministry of Education. It has been reviewed and approved by Legal Services.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On March 28, 2022, the Province of Ontario signed the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement with the Federal government. The system is designed to support Ontario's children, families, and the child care sector to provide high-quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive licensed child care programs. The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement will provide funding to reduce child care fees for families with children 0 to 6 years of age to an average of \$12/day by March 2026. Both 2022 and 2023 are considered transitional years while the Ministry works with partners to create a new funding formula across the province. In 2022, the priorities focused on encouraging licensed child care programs to opt into the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care system and reducing fees for families. The City of Hamilton

had 214 out of 223 eligible child care programs choose to opt into the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care system.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The City of Hamilton is the Service System Manager for the Early Years System as required by the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014.

Under the new Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care funding guidelines, municipalities are required to maintain the Ministry's threshold for child care spaces which is currently 80% not for profit and 20% for profit in the City of Hamilton.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The investment of the additional Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care funding aligns with the City of Hamilton's Access and Inclusion Framework and is reflective of extensive ongoing consultation with the Child Care and Early Years sector and the priorities of the Early Years Community Plan. Children's and Community Services divisional staff met with staff in the City Manager's office to ensure this community engagement process aligned with the corporate initiatives of engaging the citizens of Hamilton.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The additional 2023 Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Funding will be allocated based on the Ministry of Education's *Ontario Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Guideline and Ontario's Access and Inclusion Framework 2023*.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION - None

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED - Not Applicable