

# Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan

For

Best Start, Ontario Early Years Centre  
and Child Care



Ontario Early Years Centres



A Place for Parents And Their Children.



**Ontario**

Early Years

***Bringing Out the Best in All of Us***

**June 2007**

## Preface

The importance of early childhood development has long been recognized by early childhood professionals, educators, service providers and academics. In recent years, a preponderance of evidence-based research has placed this topic on the social and economic policy agendas of all orders of government. As a consequence, parents have begun to demand a range of high quality early learning and care programs that are available, accessible and affordable as a means of ensuring that their children reach their full potential regardless of their background, heritage or ability.

The Brantford/Brant community is fortunate that as a result of the financial investments made by the federal, provincial and municipal governments, an integrated system of early learning and care programs is well on its way to being realized. The January 2000 designation of the Corporation of the City of Brantford as the child care service system manager, the establishment of the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant in 2002, and the creation of the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network in June 2005 (building on the foundation laid by the Early Years System Advisory Committee), have all served as key contributors to the growth of the service system.

The success that has been achieved would not have been possible however without the commitment of time, expertise, and experience that has been willingly provided by parents, interested community members and other key service providers from a variety of disciplines. These stakeholders have witnessed first hand that investing in early learning and care *Brings Out the Best in All of Us*.

In recognition of this community effort and in keeping with the planning guidelines issued by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, this *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan* has been prepared in an integrated fashion. The first 'book' of the Plan presents the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan*. The two 'books' that follow – the *2007-08 Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant Service Plan* and the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan* – highlight the respective progress that has been made and identify initiatives and services that support the realization of the Brantford/Brant community's Best Start vision. A Glossary of Terms has also been included to assist the reader in understanding the various terms used. The Plan concludes with a series of Appendices which in many instances, complement the content of each required community plan or service plan.

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**Brantford/Brant  
2007-08 Best Start Community Plan**



***Bringing Out the Best in All of Us***

**June 2007**

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## Progress Towards Achieving the Long Term Vision for Best Start

This section of the Plan begins with a review of the Best Start vision, goals and principles developed by the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network as put forward in the *Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan*. The progress that has been made in responding to identified service gaps, needs and priorities and in meeting the following Phase 1 priorities of Best Start is also detailed in this section of the Plan.

Phase 1 Priorities:

- Enhancing the quality of the early learning and care system
- Improving the accessibility and affordability of the early learning and care system
- Enhancing the system of early identification and intervention

### 1.1 Vision, Goals and Principles

The Network intends to establish a Working Group to review its vision, goals and principles, and to create a mission statement, within the broader context of revising its Terms of Reference – a task that will be completed by March 31, 2008.

The Brantford/Brant Best Start Network endorsed the following vision statement in December 2005:

*Through coordination, collaboration and cooperation an array of supports for children, prenatal to six years of age, and their families will be provided to ensure that all children will have the opportunity to achieve the successful transition to school by the time they start Grade 1.*

While participants at the April 26, 2007 Community Consultation<sup>1</sup> were in full support of this vision, they have recommended that it be made broader in scope to include children up to age twelve<sup>2</sup> with the focus remaining on children from the prenatal period up to age six. This amendment was put forward in recognition of the fact that the Child Care Advisory Committee – whose mandate includes children up to age twelve – now reports directly to the Best Start Network. To account for this extended age range, it was further suggested that the vision be amended to extend the time frame beyond the transition to school and include the notion of achieving success in school and providing children with the opportunity to reach their full potential. Lastly, consultation

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix A lists the organizations and agencies who were represented at the April 26, 2007 Community Consultation session.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of child care service system management only. It was not the intention that the Best Start Network assume planning responsibilities for all programs and services for children aged six to twelve but rather only for those child care services related to fee subsidies, wage subsidies, resource centres and special needs resourcing.

participants recommended that a mission statement be developed to complement any revisions made to the community's Best Start vision.

While the *Integrated Implementation Plan* did not specifically identify goal statements, the following general routes or directions that would be taken to achieve the vision have been drafted from narrative comments made in the *Integrated Implementation Plan*:

- To ensure that Best Start programs are available to all children without barriers resulting from income, transportation or health issues
- To encourage the availability of education programs in all schools
- To engage parents to take an active role in programming
- To provide earlier identification of children and earlier provision of services
- To ensure that resources and services are available with minimal or no waiting lists
- To ensure that early intervention occurs quickly in order to facilitate rapid interventions
- To ensure that Best Start is an integral part of the community
- To ensure that the public, service providers and the media are aware of Best Start services and resources
- To advocate for adequate financial resources, staffing and supports
- To encourage all local and provincial partners to work together

The Network also created several principles that have and continue to guide the planning process and that also serve to inform the delivery of services for young children and their families.

- Based on identified community need
- Services are available, affordable and accessible for all
- Child and parent oriented
- Respect for diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds
- Include participation supports for children with special needs
- Work in partnership with families
- Meet the needs of parents at home, work or in school
- Protect the best interests of children
- Ensure a broad range of input
- Cross-ministerial input and collaboration
- Ensure quality services

## **1.2 Addressing Service Gaps, Needs and Priorities**

The *2006-2009 Brantford/Brant Child Care Service Plan* identified several service gaps, needs and priorities that, for the most part, have been described in earlier local planning documents and research reports. While the *2006-09 Child Care Service Plan* listed these gaps, needs and priorities under the headings of child

care, early years services and more generic services, in hindsight these headings are somewhat arbitrary and in many instances are applicable to more than one provider of early learning and care programs. In recognition of the desire to integrate early learning and care service planning, the existing gaps, needs, and priorities have been re-framed under the headings of availability, accessibility, enhancing quality, public education and awareness, services for specific populations, and community outreach.

From the comments that follow, it is obvious that while progress has been made in lessening the impact of these gaps and in responding to these needs and priorities, others remain and will continue to require the concerted effort of all community stakeholders if they are to be further reduced or eliminated.

### Availability

The early learning and care system has experienced significant growth in the past eighteen months. Not only has the capacity of the licensed child care system increased, but the number and type of structured programs for infants under one year of age and their parents have also grown. Parent/child drop-in programs and parenting programs have also increased in number. While progress has been made in expanding the number of programs focused on literacy, social skills, readiness to learn, emotional development and behavioural development, it has been limited by the lack of new funding.

### Accessibility

Early learning and care programs have been made more accessible to families in a variety of ways – program hours have been adjusted, expansion has occurred in the rural areas<sup>3</sup>, and various forms of assistance have been provided to overcome transportation barriers (e.g. volunteer drivers, bus tickets and the limited use of taxis)<sup>4</sup>. Licensed child care programs have also become more affordable as a result of the introduction of the fee subsidy income test which has replaced the needs test. The accessibility and affordability of leisure, recreation, art, drama and music events and activities has also increased as a result of the Can We Help Program and the funding of recreational programs for school-age children and for children with special needs.

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<sup>3</sup> The number of toddler spaces has increased in Paris; the number of licensed private home child care spaces in Paris has grown; and OEYC: Brant programs, integrated with other community programs, are available in Burford, Paris, Onondaga, Scotland and St. George.

<sup>4</sup> The Children's Aid Society of Brant makes use of volunteer drivers and bus tickets; Ontario Works subsidizes the cost of buses and taxis for LEAP participants; bus tickets are provided for those attending the Room to Grow Program; and the OEYC: Brant fundraises to provide bus tickets and the limited use of taxis.

### Enhancing Quality

The accessibility and affordability of professional development opportunities for early learning and care staff has increased through several means – more partnerships have been developed amongst service providers, the Raising the Bar on Quality initiative has provided the impetus for participation in professional development activities, and the establishment of a Wilfrid Laurier University campus in Brantford has made academic learning possible within the community.

Several positive strides have also been made with respect to the recruitment, retention, recognition and compensation of staff, in part, through the efforts of the Network's Recruitment and Retention Task Force. Staff recruitment efforts have been undertaken in conjunction with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO) and several community-wide recognition events have been held. While wage subsidy and wage improvement grants have assisted in increasing the compensation paid to child care staff, wages remain low as evidenced by the 2006 Annual Salary, Benefits and Child Care Fee Survey.<sup>5</sup> Further, pressures continue to exist in the wage subsidy budget and as such not all licensed programs have received their full entitlement.

### Public Education and Awareness

Several campaigns have been undertaken to educate the public and to increase the awareness of the importance of early learning and care, the factors that contribute to quality care, and the nature of the informal child care system. For instance, the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant held a 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Week April 10-14, 2007 followed by Brantford/Brant Best Start Week April 16-21, 2007. This latter week was proclaimed by both Brantford City Council and by Brant County Council and as such received local media coverage. The public awareness generated by these events will unquestionably contribute to the ever increasing success of the Kids Summer Celebration Day held each June since 1998.

### Services for Specific Populations

The Network's establishment of both an Aboriginal Advisory Committee and a Francophone Advisory Committee, and its allocation of \$300,000 to each Committee, has meant that significant progress is being made in responding to the needs of both specific populations.

The Brant County Best Start Aboriginal Needs Assessment is in the process of being considered by the Network and will, in the near future, be posted on the Best Start website. This comprehensive needs assessment provides options for an Aboriginal Best Start Program including a proposed program design, space

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<sup>5</sup> The survey results can be found on the Brantford/Brant Best Start website at [www.ourbeststart4brant.ca](http://www.ourbeststart4brant.ca).

requirements, a locational analysis, capital and operating estimates, and an implementation plan.

It has been confirmed that the dollars earmarked for the Francophone population will be used in the development of a child care program at École Ste-Marguerite-Bourgeoys anticipated to open in September 2008. It is expected that this program will be licensed for 10 toddler spaces, 16 preschool spaces, 20 before and after school JK/SK spaces, and 15 school-aged spaces.

Several actions have been undertaken to ensure that programs are available and accessible to children with special needs. For instance, dollars were allocated to the special needs resourcing program to expand its staff complement and to purchase additional equipment and resources. It has been reported that the skills of child care staff supporting children with special needs have increased as a result of ongoing educational opportunities and of participation in initiatives such as Reframing Discipline and Raising the Bar on Quality.

Despite all of these accomplishments, further financial investments will be required if continued progress is to be made in responding to the needs of these special populations.

### Community Outreach

Community outreach continues to be required to families who may be at-risk, to teenage parents and to culturally diverse families. While much of the expansion of early learning and care programs has occurred in neighbourhoods known to have a high percentage of at-risk families, ongoing efforts will be required to inform these families and to increase participation. Fortunately, the historically high teenage pregnancy rate in Brantford/Brant has normalized in part through the efforts of many service providers such as the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program, Lansdowne Children's Centre, the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program, the Children's Aid Society, and Aboriginal Services. Little attention has been focused, however, on the needs of Brantford/Brant's culturally diverse population such as those residents of Polish or Vietnamese descent.

Community outreach is a core service provided by the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant and as such the actions that have been taken and that will be taken in the future to respond to this community priority are addressed in further detail in the *2007-08 Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant Service Plan*.

### **1.3 Progress Made on Implementing Phase 1 Components**

As referenced in section 1.2 of this Plan, significant progress has been made in implementing the Phase 1 Best Start components. While Appendix B provides a comprehensive listing of these accomplishments, several highlights that speak to child care expansion, the enhancement of key early identification and intervention programs, and integrating child care with schools are offered.

Child care expansion

The Brantford/Brant community has been extremely successful in increasing the availability of licensed child care over the past eighteen months. In particular, 138 new spaces<sup>6</sup> for children from birth to age six were licensed by September 2006 and an additional five spaces have been licensed since that time. Further, 146 new spaces for school-aged children have been licensed between April 2006 and April 2007.

Table 1 provides a summary of the licensed capacity of day nurseries by location while Appendix C identifies the primary capacity of each of the 31 day nurseries in Brantford/Brant.

**TABLE 1**  
Summary of Licensed Capacity in Day Nurseries

Location	Licensed Programs	Infant Spaces	Toddler Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total Spaces
Brantford	20	38	115	520	96	240	1009
Burford & Scotland	2	0	17	36	12	30	95
Paris	5	0	20	72	40	75	207
St. George	3	0	0	72	0	30	102
Jerseyville	1	0	0	16	0	0	16
TOTAL	31	38	152	716	148	375	1429

Source: Ministry of Children and Youth Services March 31, 2007

Of the 289 new spaces that were licensed between April 2006 and April 2007, 189 are located within elementary schools in keeping with the Government of Ontario's Schools First Policy as seen in Appendix C. As evidenced in Table 2, an additional 189 new spaces are in the planning phase – 165 of which will be opened in elementary schools during 2008.

**TABLE 2**  
Projected Expansion of Licensed Day Nurseries

Program	Anticipated Opening	Infant Spaces	Toddler Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total
A Child's Paradise	September 2007	0	0	0	24	0	24
Bellview School	January 2008	6	10	16	20	0	52
New BHNCDS School (Paris)	September 2008	6	10	16	20	0	52
École Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys	September 2008	0	10	16	20	15	61
		12	30	48	84	15	189

<sup>6</sup> Brantford/Brant was targeted to achieve 230 new spaces for children aged six and under between April 2005 and April 2008 prior to the cancellation of the federal funding of the Multilateral Framework on early learning and child care.

It should also be noted that the Burford Cooperative Preschool has also indicated in writing that it is exploring the possibility of expanding their service to a full child care centre by September 2008 to include five or ten toddler spaces, sixteen preschool spaces, ten JK spaces, 12 SK spaces and 30 school-aged spaces.

The expansion that has occurred to date has been supported and sustained through investments in the fee subsidy, wage subsidy, wage improvement and special needs resourcing programs.

The Brantford/Brant community is also served by two licensed private home child care programs operated by the City of Brantford Child Care Services and by Wee Watch Private Home Day Care. While the licensed capacity of these programs (25 homes each) has not increased in the past eighteen months, the programs continue to provide parents with a choice of care options and with evening and weekend hours of care.

#### Enhancement of key early identification and intervention programs

The enhanced funding that has been provided to the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program, to the Preschool Speech and Language Program, and to the Infant Hearing Program by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services has meant that to varying degrees, wait lists have been able to be addressed, staff lay offs have been avoided, and that operating deficits have been reduced.

Unfortunately, the afore-mentioned programs continue to face challenges in meeting the increased demand for service – staff complements have decreased and service provision has been reduced at some sites in order to ensure a presence at other sites. For example, the Room to Grow Program offered by the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program has redirected service from the main OEYC site to other sites in the community such as the new Ryerson Heights Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre. On a similar note, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit and retain speech pathologists given the competition that exists for the limited number of trained professionals that are working in the field. As such, each staff vacancy, no matter how temporary, has profound implications on the ability to provide timely identification and intervention services.

#### Integrating child care with schools

While the focus of the past eighteen months has unquestionably been on expanding the licensed child care system, several actions have occurred to further integrate child care with schools. For instance, Child Care Construction Task Forces have been established at each site in which a new child care program was (or is in the process of) being established. These Task Forces, comprised of representatives from the applicable school board, the Best Start Network, the OEYC: Brant, the City of Brantford Child Care Services and the

Ministry of Children and Youth Services, have been given the mandate to facilitate the design of the available physical space.

In addition, school board representation is present on the Child Care Advisory Committee to contribute to the planning process for school entry. Local school boards have also actively participated on the Parent Engagement Committee and on the committee tasked with organizing the inaugural Parent Information Fair which took place in April 2007. The local school boards have also sought out and received articles on the community's actions related to Best Start to include in their school newsletters.

While it is recognized that more can and will be done by all concerned to integrate child care with schools, it is regrettable that the withdrawal of federal funding has prevented the establishment of an Integration Coordinator position to serve as the link between the local school boards and the Best Start Network from being created. Having said this, the Brantford/Brant community has greatly benefited from the commitment and active involvement of all three school boards on the Best Start Network and its various Committees and Task Forces.

#### **1.4 Progress Made to Overcome Implementation Challenges**

The *Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan* identified several challenges that may have arisen when attempting to achieve the community's Best Start vision. These challenges have not proven insurmountable and as such, some level of progress has been made in overcoming each of them.

*Sufficient ongoing funding* – Over the past eighteen months community agencies and organizations have coordinated their efforts and collaborated in many activities to make the best use of available dollars. Despite the successes achieved, service providers report that their budgets are fully expended and that an investment of new dollars will be required if programs are to be adequately sustained or expanded. Further, ongoing funding is required to support the continued implementation of the Raising the Bar on Quality initiative.

*Staffing shortages* – While this challenge will remain for the foreseeable future, the establishment of the Network's Recruitment and Retention Task Force has meant that a concerted effort is being taken to address the shortage of early childhood professionals that exists in the community. There is no doubt that the wage improvement funding that was allocated to all child care staff did improve the compensation levels – unfortunately it has only been made available on a one-time basis and thus its may not have a positive impact in the longer term.

*Unionization* – To date, unionization has not been an issue although it has been in the past.

*School board enrolment ratio* – The school-based expansion of licensed child care programs has thus far, not been in keeping with the 3:1 enrolment patterns

that exist between the Grand Erie District School Board and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board. Despite this fact, the intent remains to take this enrolment ratio into consideration in future proposed expansion.

*School stability (long term space)* – In all instances where Best Start capital funding has been provided to establish early learning and care programs, the City of Brantford has entered into ten year agreements for the use of space. In the coming years, therefore, this implementation challenge has been satisfactorily addressed.

*Impact of child care expansion on existing child care programs* – Thus far, the demand for licensed child care has been such that this challenge has not materialized. Further, the new spaces that have been established have not been marketed as Best Start spaces in an attempt to prevent parents from choosing a new program over an existing one should they both equally meet their needs.

*Addressing the needs of Francophone and Aboriginal populations* – The dedication of \$300,000 in Best Start funding to each of these populations has ensured that their respective needs and priorities can at least, in part, be addressed within available resources.

*Geography and transportation* – While the number of locations where early learning and care programs are being offered has increased over the past eighteen months, access to affordable transportation will remain an issue in both the urban and rural areas of Brantford/Brant.

*Potential change in funding arrangements for OEYC and Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre sites in schools* – This implementation challenge has not become an issue given the nature of the Memorandum of Understanding that is in place between the school boards and the operators of early learning and care programs. The partnerships that exist have in fact become strengthened as all concerned have become more aware of the value of the Centres.

*General determinants of health* – Factors such as housing, income, and general health have and will always continue to impact upon child outcomes. For this reason, this systemic challenge will remain in the forefront. The Best Start Network does recognize the access to nurse practitioners for wellness workshops and primary care that are available through the Aboriginal Health Centre, Slovak location, New Beginnings and the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant.

## **Best Start Network Composition, Activities & Community Engagement**

This section of the Plan provides a description of the composition and activities of the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network. In addition, the linkages that have been established with other children's planning, advisory and information sharing bodies is discussed and the community engagement process that has been undertaken to enhance the overall service system is presented.

### **2.1 Network Membership and Structure**

The Brantford/Brant Best Start Network continues to be comprised of a broad cross-section of stakeholders who reside in or who are employed in Brant County – parents, interested community members, senior representatives of agencies and organizations providing early learning and care programs to children and families with children prenatal to age six, and funders. Despite this broad representation, the Network continues to encourage the participation of any and all interested community stakeholders and in particular intends to continue its efforts to more actively engage parents and to include the health sector (e.g. Local Health Integration Network and primary care health professionals) amongst its members.

The Network has convened a number of Committees and Task Forces to assist it in fulfilling its mandate “to plan, implement and monitor Best Start in Brantford and Brant in a way that reflects community priorities...” As illustrated in Appendix D, the following Committees have been established, or in the case of the Child Care Advisory Committee, have recently become directly linked to the Network:

- Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- Francophone Advisory Committee
- Hub Committee
- Parent Engagement Committee
- Child Care Advisory Committee

Further, Task Forces have been created to address recruitment and retention, communications, child care construction, and evaluation. The respective mandates for these Committees and Task Forces may be found in Appendix E.

As stated in section 1.1, the Network intends to convene a Working Group in the coming months to update its Terms of Reference to support a focus on system integration. In the course of this exercise, the vision, goals and principles will also be reviewed and a mission statement will be developed. Once the necessary revisions have been made, the mandates of the Committees and Task Forces will be reviewed to ensure that consistent language is used throughout.

## **2.2 Linkages with the Regional French-language Best Start Network**

While the Central-South-West Best Start Regional French-Language Network has not been directly represented on the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network, the Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique Centre-Sud has had representation on the local Network since its inception and has prepared a submission to the Best Start Network as contained in Appendix F. Further, the Brantford/Brant CMSM, and other CMSMs within the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' Hamilton-Niagara Regional Office have had representation on the Regional French-language Network. It should also be noted that the Ministry has recently hired a French-language Program Supervisor who will in time serve as the link between the two Networks and any other provincial oversight structures that may be established in the future.

Lastly, the minutes of the French-language Network have regularly been distributed to the Brantford/Brant Network and the *Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan* was translated into French to increase its accessibility to Francophone residents.

## **2.3 Linkages with Other Planning Bodies**

The Brantford/Brant Best Start Network has established linkages with other children's services planning bodies through several means. Firstly, as referenced earlier, the Child Care Advisory Committee now reports to the Best Start Network rather than to the Council on Children Youth and Developmental Services (CCYDS).

Secondly, monthly reports (or at minimum quarterly reports) are made to the Network's Hub Committee by the following planning bodies and committees with early years mandates:

- Child Health/Healthy Babies Healthy Children
- Family Literacy Committee
- Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant Advisory Committee
- Talking Tots Preschool Speech and Language
- Brant Community Protocol for Infants Living in At-Risk Environments
- Ready Set Go Calendar Group
- Children's Services Committee (Contact Brant)

Over the coming months, the Network and its Hub Committee will pursue opportunities to further enhance the nature and extent of these linkages particularly given the fact that consideration is being given to changing the name of the Hub Committee to the Service Integration Committee.

Thirdly, the Network regularly provides the CCYDS<sup>7</sup> with an information update under the headings of 'service trends', 'initiatives', 'pressure points' and 'what is happening' and as such a formal linkage has been established between both entities. The Chair of the Best Start Network (currently the Manager of the OEYC: Brant) also serves on the Executive Committee of CCYDS thus further strengthening the linkage between the two planning bodies.

Participants at the April 2007 Community Consultation session identified a number of other sectors or service systems with which to establish and/or to strengthen linkages:

- Business sector
- City of Brantford and County of Brant municipal Councils
- Education including private schools, French-language school, and Six Nations of the Grand and Mississaugas of the New Credit schools
- Justice
- Domestic and Family Violence Network
- Health including the Local Health Integration Network, Brant County Health Unit and mental health service providers
- Children's services including Contact Brant
- Substance abuse service providers (in the absence of a coordinated planning body)
- Brant Community Social Planning Council

A number of strategies were also put forward to support the community in moving towards a more streamlined and integrated planning process:

- Provide information sharing opportunities between parents, front-line staff and supervisors
- Build relationships and trust
- Educate and market to front-line staff and to those in other sectors (e.g. Lunch and Learn, Agency Crawl)
- Ensure the planning process remains task-oriented to keep participants motivated
- Build in results and rewards through the use of evidence-based research (e.g. Early Years Report Card)
- Use integration language with front-line staff who will in turn use it with parents

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<sup>7</sup> As stated in its October 2006 Terms of Reference, CCYDS facilitates the collaboration, cooperation, coordination and communication among member agencies to ensure that the service system (for children and youth prenatal to age 18 and adults with developmental disabilities) is integrated, that duplication of services is minimized and that gaps in services are identified and planned for.

## **2.4 Communication and Community Engagement**

Communication with and the engagement of parents and other community stakeholders continues to be of great importance to the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network and its individual members. For example, some 5,500 parents (a 20% response rate) completed surveys distributed by the Best Start Network in September and October 2005. More recently, those parents, grandparents and caregivers who attended the April 2007 Parent Information Fair were surveyed on a variety of topics such as logistical arrangements; Parent Information Fair components (e.g. parking, workshops, accessibility, location); their current use of early years services; the types of early years services they would use in their neighbourhood; and their preferred method of communication about upcoming events.<sup>8</sup>

As mentioned previously, the Network has also established Aboriginal, Francophone and Parent Engagement Committees to ensure that these key stakeholders are engaged and that their respective needs and priorities are made known and acted upon.

More recently, the Best Start Network, the City of Brantford Child Care Services and the OEYC: Brant collaborated in the planning and coordination of the April 2007 Community Consultation session to share information with community agencies and organizations and to gather input into their respective 2007-08 service plans. Twenty-seven individuals from the agencies and organizations identified in Appendix A willingly shared their expertise, experience and insight.

Service providers for children with special needs are actively engaged in planning and service delivery activities in a variety of ways. First and foremost, the Brantford/Brant community has adopted the principle that “a child is a child” and as such inclusion is paramount to all activities related to the provision of early learning and care programs.

Service providers for children with special needs also serve as members of the Network, the Hub Committee, and the Child Care Advisory Committee. For example, Woodview Children’s Centre, Lansdowne Children’s Centre, the Brant County Health Unit, the Children’s Aid Society of Brant, and Contact Brant are all represented on two or more of these planning committees. As such, the need does not exist for a specific planning table dedicated to service providers for children with special needs. Further, the long standing presence of many of these service providers at the OEYC: Brant sites, the Launch Pad sites, and the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres attests to their high level of community engagement.

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<sup>8</sup> Those service providers who participated in the event or who attended the event were also surveyed about logistical arrangements, Parent Fair components, and their preferred method of communication about future events. The detailed survey results may be found on the Best Start website.

Over the past eighteen months, Aboriginal and Francophone stakeholders and service providers have been the two cultural groups to which specific attention has been paid. Now that planning activities are well underway for these groups, attention can begin to focus on the other culturally and/or linguistically diverse stakeholders who reside in or provide service in Brantford/Brant. Once the results of the 2006 Census are known<sup>9</sup>, community outreach and engagement can begin in earnest.

The Network has also enhanced communication with the general public, parents, service providers and other stakeholders through a variety of means:

- Developing the *Bringing Out the Best in All of Us* slogan and pamphlet
- Establishing a Best Start website [www.ourbeststart4brant.ca](http://www.ourbeststart4brant.ca) and email address [beststart@brantford.ca](mailto:beststart@brantford.ca)
- Creating and posting the Brant Community Services for Families with Young Children inventory on the OEYC website at [www.eycbrant.ca](http://www.eycbrant.ca)
- Issuing of press releases to local media outlets
- Increasing linkages with local elected officials and members of provincial and federal parliament (e.g. the local MP recently included an article on Best Start in his constituent newsletter)
- Utilizing Your Guide Brant to promote Best Start Network events
- Conducting an Aboriginal Gathering for service providers in June 2007

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<sup>9</sup> According to the 2001 Census, only 13% of Brantford/Brant residents were born outside of Canada and of those who recently immigrated, the highest percentages came from India, the United Kingdom and the United States.

## Strategies to Move Forward with the Community Vision for Best Start

This section of the Plan provides an overview of the strategies that will be pursued by the Best Start Network in the coming year in order to move closer to achieving the community's vision for Best Start. While section 1 spoke of the progress that had been made in addressing service gaps, needs and priorities, and in overcoming implementation challenges, this section of the Plan speaks to the strategies that will be taken to further reduce the gaps, to address the needs and priorities, and to lessen the impact of implementation challenges.

### 3.1 Emerging Gaps, Needs and Priorities

The knowledge and experience of the Community Consultation stakeholders led to the identification of a number of emerging gaps, needs and priorities.

*Sustaining community capacity* – Demand now exceeds supply. Services have reached their capacity both in terms of service provision and in terms of dollars able to be dedicated to collaborative ventures. Services must be used by the “most vulnerable” families and services must not be taken away from one neighbourhood to meet the needs evident in other neighbourhoods.

*Research and evaluation* – Program and service delivery must be rooted in evidence-based research and must be evaluated to ensure it is achieving the desired outcomes.

*Culturally sensitive programming* – Brantford/Brant has traditionally had a low percentage of children who speak English as a second language. Despite this fact, the percentage has doubled in four years (2.1% in 2002 and 3.9% in 2006).

*Wage subsidy pressures* – Pressures increase with the licensing of each new program. These pressures may act as a deterrent in the establishment of new programs or in the expansion of existing programs. In addition, as licensed child care becomes more available for JK/SK children, many parents have expressed their desire to enrol their children in licensed school-aged programs. The staffing ratios for school-aged programs are often more financially viable to operate and yet, wage subsidies are not available to these programs through Best Start funding to keep them affordable for parents and to compensate staff appropriately.

*Increasing demand for special needs resourcing* – The child care expansion that is currently being planned for 2007 and 2008 will unquestionably lead to increased caseloads for staff of the Early Integration Program. Similarly, the introduction of new Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres will lead to increased demand for the services. Early identification and intervention through involvement in Best Start programs will result in increased pressures for other community programs not funded through Best Start.

*Aboriginal needs* – The Aboriginal Needs Assessment raises several funding issues related to the establishment of Aboriginal-specific early learning and care programs. The Aboriginal Advisory Committee is presently working on recommendations that will be reviewed by the full Best Start Network.

*Francophone needs* – While the opening of the French-language child care program in September 2008 will in part address the needs of Francophone residents, the need for and costs associated with the provision of other French-language services remains unknown. The Francophone Advisory Committee is presently working on recommendations that will be reviewed by the full Best Start Network.

### Early Development Instrument

In March 2006, the Early Development Instrument (EDI)<sup>10</sup> was administered by all senior kindergarten teachers with the Grand Erie District School Board, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board and the Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique Centre-Sud. Appendix G maps and charts the percentage of children who were rated as “developmentally vulnerable” on two or more EDI domains in both 2002 and 2006.

As can be seen, five neighbourhoods – West Brant County, Fairview-Green Brier, Brantford Core, Shellard Lane and Henderson – experienced a decrease in the percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on two or more EDI domains while the remaining eleven neighbourhoods experienced an increase. Of those experiencing an increase, the largest increases were seen in Eagle Place, Mayfair, Holmedale-William, and South Brant County. While the EDI serves as a valuable tool in improving the outcomes for children and in providing families with vibrant services in their neighbourhoods, caution must be exercised in comparing the two years as research indicates that at least three time points should be available when observing trends or changes. With this caution in mind, participants at the Community Consultation took the liberty of identifying the following factors that may have contributed to the decrease in the percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on two or more EDI domains in the five neighbourhoods referenced above:

- More OEYC: Brant parent/child program which includes integrated community services
- Increases in library services available in West Brant County
- More general availability of services in each neighbourhood

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<sup>10</sup> The EDI is a population based tool used to assess children’s developmental skills on five developmental domains as they enter the formal education system. EDI results are interpreted at the group level (e.g. neighbourhoods) and are not a measure of a school’s performance, but a measure of the community’s ability to support early child development. The 2006 EDI report will be posted on the local Best Start website in the near future.

- Brantford core no longer populated by as many families
- Family mobility (e.g. the closing of the Burford secondary school has resulted in some families moving to Paris)
- Increase in services in Shellard Lane
- Library more active in Brantford core
- Availability of public transportation in Brantford core
- Services in the core offer more flexible hours
- OEYC: Brant main site serves Brantford core despite the fact it is located in the Terrace Hill neighbourhood
- Parenting programs (Family Resource Centre) in some neighbourhoods

Consultation participants also identified the following factors which may contribute to a future decrease in the percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on two or more EDI domains in the various neighbourhoods:

- Future opening of new child care program at Bellview School located in the Eagle Place neighbourhood
- Changing demographics in neighbourhoods
- Parents who can afford programs may access programs situated in other neighbourhoods
- More services being introduced in Eagle Place such as those operated by the Children's Aid Society of Brant
- Eagle Place targeted for specialized services such as Aboriginal services

Once neighbourhood density figures have been compiled and the detailed findings of the 2006 Census become known, this information will be combined with the 2006 EDI scores to paint a more current, in-depth profile of each neighbourhood to assist in the planning process. It is also expected that the EDI will next be conducted during the 2008/09 school year thus providing the community with more data with which to examine possible trends and to identify emerging gaps, needs and priorities.

### **3.2 Strategies to Meet Community Needs**

Section 1 of the Plan identified and discussed several service gaps, needs and priorities that had been reported in previous planning documents and research studies. The strategies that will be undertaken to continue the efforts to close the gaps in service and to meet community needs and priorities, as well as the challenges that may be faced in doing so, are contained in Appendix H.

### **3.3 Overcoming Obstacles and Challenges**

In addition to the challenges described in section 1, participants at the Community Consultation identified several new challenges that may be faced in the coming year – meeting community expectations, public misconceptions about the value of drop-in programs, and the marketing of all services for children from prenatal to age twelve. Appendix I describes both these new

challenges as well as the challenges that are expected to continue. Strategies to overcome all of these possible challenges are also contained in the Appendix.

## **Strategies to Move Forward with System Integration**

As stated at the outset of this Plan, agencies and organizations providing services to Brantford/Brant children and their families have a history of successfully integrating planning activities and streamlining service delivery to improve access and outcomes. This section of the Plan identifies the strategies that will be pursued to further integrate the system of early learning and care services that exist in the community. Given their importance as venues for integration, the existing Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres will be profiled and future plans will be discussed.

### **4.1 Strategies to Move Forward with System Integration**

Key stakeholders attending the Community Consultation were of the opinion that the Brantford/Brant service system has made many positive strides in increasing the level of awareness amongst community agencies and between members of the Best Start Network. For instance, service providers are well aware of each other's programs and services and actively engage in information sharing and communication.

Numerous examples of "small scale and large scale" cooperation are also apparent within the service system as agencies use their knowledge of other services to guide and modify their own service planning. For instance, child care operators, the City of Brantford Child Care Services, the OEYC: Brant, Woodview Children's Centre, Lansdowne Children's Centre, and Mohawk College have partnered in the Raising the Bar on Quality initiative. In addition, numerous community agencies have contributed to the Your Guide Brant publication. This quarterly publication is a quick up-to-date listing of workshops, courses and groups for families, children and teens.<sup>11</sup> By virtue of the content of this guide, contributing agencies have increased their awareness, opened lines of communication and engaged in a cooperative undertaking for the purpose of creating an integrated system of services that is seamless from the community's perspective.

The very fact that the Community Consultation session was jointly planned and coordinated by the Best Start Network, the City of Brantford Child Care Services and the OEYC: Brant, and the fact that this Plan has been prepared in an integrated fashion, speaks to the level of collaboration that exists – all with the aim of providing families with better access to services, of reducing duplication and of making effective use of available resources. As an additional example of collaboration, it should be noted that the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network has partnered with the Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network, the Aboriginal

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<sup>11</sup> In addition to being broadly distributed throughout the community, Your Guide Brant was distributed to every household that has a school-aged child through the Grand Erie District School Board and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board.

Health Centre and the Ministry of Children and Youth Service to host a joint aboriginal planning day titled Reconnecting with Four Seasons in June 2007.

On the topic of collaboration, participants at the Community Consultation were of the opinion that less 'silos' are apparent at the present time as compared to ten years ago. As a means of moving forward with collaboration and of improving the "quality" of cooperation and collaboration, the following suggestions were put forward:

- Market Best Start, child care and the OEYC: Brant with other planning bodies
- Engage in community planning in collaboration with other local planning bodies
- Encourage Network members to share more with each other and to share Best Start, child care and OEYC: Brant information within their respective agencies
- Continue integration efforts between provincial ministries
- Continue to build relationships

Consultation session participants also reflected on how parents would rate the degree of system integration that exists in the community. For the most part, participants perceived that parents are generally more aware and more informed of programs and services and of the importance of early learning and care programs than they have been in the past. Services have also become more transparent and accessible and are more "talked about" by community residents. The growth in the number of agency websites and the increased amount of hyper-links that are available on agency websites have contributed to this increase in parental awareness. Given that the Kids Summer Celebration is in its 10<sup>th</sup> year of operation and the first Parent Information Fair (held in April 2007) drew 100 parents, 300 children and 35 agencies, the message is being spread and is making a difference to all concerned. Similar community events, such as the upcoming Week of the Child and Youth to be celebrated in October, will serve to keep the message in the forefront throughout the Brantford/Brant community.

## **4.2 Hubs as a Venue for System Integration**

The concept of early learning and care hubs is not new to Brantford/Brant. For instance, the Best Start Network, with the endorsement of all concerned, has indicated that five OEYC: Brant satellite sites<sup>12</sup> and all six existing Launch Pad sites will become known as Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres. It is important to note that, prior to the release of the provincial government's School's First Policy, the community recognized the benefits to be achieved by situating these programs in elementary schools. As such, all of these programs

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<sup>12</sup> The main site of the OEYC: Brant at 330 West Street Brantford has elected to retain its name and as such will not become known as a Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre.

have been housed in elementary schools<sup>13</sup> for several years. Further, it has been agreed that the OEYC: Brant will assume overall responsibility for the coordination of the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres.

Through the adoption of this service delivery model, the Brantford/Brant community has built upon its existing strengths and its integrated service delivery model to provide families and caregivers with simplified and convenient access to an array of services. Not only have children and parents benefited from this approach – service providers have also reaped benefits as they are able to take advantage of multiple service delivery sites in family-friendly environments that promote increased awareness, communication, cooperation and collaboration.

As indicated previously the Best Start Network's Hub Committee is responsible "for monitoring and planning for recommendations to the larger Network in matters relating to Hub services and for promoting community collaboration as they pertain to the Best Start initiative". One of the actions the Committee has taken in this regard is the development of a common Memorandum of Understanding (see Appendix J) that is in place at each Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre.

### **4.3 Integrated Planning and Service Delivery**

#### Integration of Child Care With Schools

As referenced earlier, even prior to the implementation of the provincial Schools First Policy, the Brantford/Brant community took several important steps towards the integration of child care with schools.

Participants at the Community Consultation developed numerous strategies that will be pursued to further develop an integrated and seamless day of early learning and care for children in child care and kindergarten. To provide all children with the same opportunities to achieve success in school, these strategies extend themselves to child care centres located within and outside of schools as well as to home child care programs.

#### *Child care programs in schools*

- Location does not necessarily mean affiliation – religious or otherwise
- Cooperation, coordination and collaboration between child care programs and schools (not just co-existing)
- Consent to cross over communication and sharing of information

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<sup>13</sup> OEYC: Brant operates satellite sites at Burford District Elementary School, Onondaga-Brant School, Paris North Ward School and St. Anthony Daniel School in Scotland. The OEYC: Brant satellite site in St. George is currently located at the Lawn Bowling Club. Launch Pad sites are situated in the following Brantford schools: Bellview School, Major Ballachey, Branlyn-Notre Dame, East Dale – Echo Place School, St. Gabriel's School and Centennial-Grand Woodlands.

- Joint ECE/kindergarten professional development
- Quality child care information available at all schools (by Internet at minimum)
- Share resources and experiences
- Maintain space within the schools and access to it outside of school hours
- Use statistical information to target appropriate schools to provide programming
- Collaboration on JK/SK scheduling and programming
- Joint integrated programming for special events, entertainment etc.
- Increase school personnel's awareness of Best Start
- Continued commitment from school boards
- Ongoing planning of next steps beyond 2009
- Promotion of Schools First Policy
- Buy in from Ministry of Education
- Identify a "lead" for further integration
- Changes in *Day Nurseries Act*
- Complimentary curriculum

*Child care programs not in schools*

- Joint ECE/kindergarten professional development
- Quality child care information available at all schools (by Internet at minimum)
- Address transportation issues
- Invite to open houses and parent nights
- Collaboration on JK/SK scheduling and programming
- Transition planning e.g. tours of the school, preparation activities
- Enhance communication to schools with respect to the availability of child care
- Identify a "lead" for further integration subject to available funding
- Ongoing planning of next steps beyond 2009

*Home child care program*

- Home child care providers to attend school-based functions (licensed home child care agencies)
- Develop a home child care provider directory at each school to be shared with parents looking for care (licensed home child care agencies)
- Quality child care information available at all schools (by Internet at minimum)
- Include location of home child care providers on EDI maps
- Get to know the teachers when picking up and dropping off children
- Inform schools of the availability of services in the surrounding area
- Develop more connections to neighbourhood schools
- Provide more training and education to providers (many supports and training opportunities are currently offered by the OEYC: Brant)

Preschool Speech and Language, Infant Hearing, and Blind-Low Vision Early Identification Programs

The availability of enhanced provincial funding for the Preschool Speech and Language Program and the Infant Hearing Program provides an opportunity to integrate planning, strengthen partnerships, and enhance coordination amongst community resources. These same benefits will also be achieved through the introduction of the Blind-Low Vision Early Identification Program announced in the March 2007 provincial budget.

*Preschool Speech and Language Program*

Lansdowne Children's Centre, the lead agency for the Talking Tots Preschool Speech and Language Program, has received Ministry funding to reduce waitlists, to improve training in the areas of language and literacy through integrated planning with other program areas, and to expand service to children with complex needs who do not attend senior kindergarten.

The Talking Tots program intends to continue the following activities in support of the community's Best Start vision:

- A. Increase outreach services in order that hard-to-reach families may access direct services in Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres and in other community locations.
- B. Provide early literacy education workshops for parents and caregivers and programs for children in various community locations. Talking Tots is committed to expanding community partnerships to address literacy development and has made it a priority to participate on task groups mandated to increase community awareness and to expand early literacy knowledge for all Brantford/Brant caregivers.

Talking Tots has also stated its willingness to share the early literacy development evidence-based knowledge and best practices of other communities. For example, Lanark County and the United Counties of Leeds & Grenville have benefited from the introduction of the Sowing the Seeds of Literacy workshop jointly presented by the local preschool speech and language program, early childhood educators and JK/SK teachers. This and other programs can be adapted to meet the needs of Brantford/Brant residents and service providers.

Lastly, clinical treatment of literacy difficulties is presently occurring for identified children in Talking Tots' Phonological Awareness Group and continues to be addressed in therapy sessions.

- C. Decrease the age of referral for children to the preschool speech and language system. Research has shown that children should be referred

before 24 months of age and that intervention for children with language delays (hence literacy delays) must be initiated before 30 months of age. Talking Tots is working toward reaching more children under 30 months and looks towards continuing or expanding the following community partnerships:

- Infant education programs with Brant County Health Unit
  - Prenatal education programs with Brant County Health Unit and others
  - Infant/toddler education in collaboration with community partners at the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres and at other community locations
  - Literacy/early language programs with Brant County Library and Brantford Public Library
  - Early communication screening and programs with the OEYC: Brant, Child Development Program and Early Integration Program
  - Speech and language screenings in child care centres
- D. Increase the number of assessments conducted at Lansdowne Children's Centre, at Brantford General Hospital and at the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres (subject to the availability of private space)
- E. Continue providing services to senior kindergarten aged children who are unable to attend school due to their complex needs.

#### *Infant Hearing Program*

The Central South Infant Hearing Program screened the hearing of 11,460 newborns regionally – 1,388 of those babies born in Brantford/Brant. There are 64 children in active Infant Hearing Program (IHP) service, three of whom are living in Brantford/Brant. At the present time, newborn screenings in Brantford/Brant are completed by the Brant Community Health Services and follow up screenings are completed by Brant County Health Unit staff at the OEYC: Brant. The IHP received enhanced funding to extend services to children identified with a hearing impairment who were receiving communication development services to grade one entry. One child over 2.5 years of age was retained with the extension of the IHP age mandate and received both audiology and communication services. Identified children received either Speech Language Pathology or Auditory Verbal Therapy communication services this year through the Brant Preschool Speech and Language Program or VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children.

The IHP will be training two speech language pathologists from the Brant Preschool Speech and Language Program in Auditory Verbal Therapy (AVT). AVT is a method of direct therapy to promote listening and speech skills in hearing impaired children. This intensive training is scheduled for August 2007. It will allow for more direct therapy to be available to identified children in their home community (children currently travel to Hamilton incurring high costs for travel and gas expenses as well as significant time requirements). It will also

allow for more consultation between the therapist and school board personnel which will support the child's learning.

If hub space is available in more schools, the direct therapy can take place there. This will promote carryover of skills for the child and better consultation as services are in the child's natural environment. In a school-based hub, classroom teachers or educational assistants could be made available to participate in therapy which will further benefit the child.

Regionally this year, Family Support Worker (FSW) time was increased from 0.2 FTE to 0.4 FTE to enable redesign of family support services within our IHP. This has allowed:

- The option of an initial home visit for newly identified children
- Enhanced integration of team services through a child and family centred team model
- The IHP FSW will establish an initial child team meeting in which roles of each team member are clarified with the family, a common set of goals are established and ongoing means of team communication is determined. A team coordinator is also identified at that time. The IHP FSW can provide ongoing team coordination for selected children as appropriate.

In the Hamilton demonstration community the IHP FSW has facilitated the development of guiding principles of integrated team service providers including Auditory Verbal Therapy and Speech Language Pathology, ASL Language and Literacy, school boards and E.C. Drury. This could assist the Brant Best Start Network in the ongoing development of integrated transition to school processes for children who are part of IHP.

#### *Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program*

The Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program for Hamilton, Niagara, Brant and Haldimand-Norfolk is a new program to support the healthy development of young children born blind or with low vision. Services will include family support and counselling, family-centred parent training, child care consultation and specialized interventions. The regional target population for this population is 71 children (Hamilton 31, Niagara 24, Brant 9, and Haldimand-Norfolk 7). An implementation plan was submitted to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services on May 31 2007 and implementation is expected by August 2007.

Planning for this submission was developed through four regional Best Start Networks. A regional Blind-Low Vision advisory group composed of Best Start Network representatives and service provider agencies led the planning process. Lansdowne Children's Centre assumed the lead for this program in Brantford/Brant. Planning included four community service provider focus groups and interviews with parents, physicians, optometrists and advocates. The Brantford/Brant focus group occurred on May 29 2007. A parent focus group was

also held in Niagara. Membership of the Blind-Low Vision advisory group will be expanded for the implementation and ongoing development of the Central South Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program.

### Integration Amongst the Best Network Partners

Earlier sections of the 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan have described the many ways that organizations and agencies providing services to Brantford/Brant children and their parents have embraced the community's vision of improved access for children and families. For instance, the organizational structure adopted by the Best Start Network has resulted in the integration of planning activities for early learning and care programs. Further, the renaming of the OEYC: Brant satellite sites and Launch Pad sites (the majority of which are situated in elementary schools) to Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres serves to increase the public's awareness of the Best Start vision and to streamline access to programs and services.

The City of Brantford Child Care Services, the OEYC: Brant (previously services of the Professional Resource Centre), the Brant County Health Unit and Lansdowne Children's Centre have a lengthy history of joint planning, program development and service delivery. As such, programs such as child care, early years services, preschool speech and language, infant hearing, Healthy Babies Healthy Children and infant development are well integrated. Even prior to the advent of Best Start, local school boards, the libraries and other providers of services to children and their families such as the Children's Aid Society and the Family Counselling Centre were participating in integrated planning and service delivery as evidenced by the establishment of OEYC: Brant satellite sites and Launch Pad sites at elementary schools.

As described previously, the Talking Tots program has identified a number of ways that collaborative service delivery can be enhanced both at the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres and in the community at large. For many of these activities to occur, private dedicated space is required within which to conduct the necessary screening and interventions and appropriate staffing levels must be funded to ensure success.

The Infant Hearing Program has indicated that if space becomes available in more schools, the auditory verbal therapy can occur in this venue thus promoting carryover skills for each child. This venue would also serve to improve the level of consultation with and the participation of classroom teachers and educational assistants in the therapy regime. Once again, for this action to come to fruition, appropriate staffing levels must be in place and funded.

The Brant County Health Unit, through its Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program, is committed to continuing the provision of Room to Grow (well-baby clinics) at the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres based on the principle of providing a single point of access to families with young children. In

addition to the direct clinical activities provided, public health nurses also provide information and support on breastfeeding, parenting, family healthy, nutrition and community services as a means of ensuring that children and families reach their optimal health development.

The Health Unit is also exploring the logistics and frequency of offering immunization as part of the Room to Grow program and/or of having a VPD 9 vaccine preventable disease program available. Oral health education, screening, and referral for treatment are also being considered for expansion into the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres in the Fall of 2007. Lastly, the Health Unit continues to plan for the introduction of a physical activity component into the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres.

By far, the most challenging issue being faced in moving forward with the community's vision for an integrated system of services is adequate, sustainable, ongoing funding to expand service delivery into the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services have indicated that their vision of early learning and care hubs includes access to core early learning and care programs, some specialized services, and links to other specialized services. Further, the Ministry's definition of core services includes quality child care, preschool programs, public health services, well-baby visits, parenting programs, preschool speech and language programs, infant hearing programs, JK/SK programs etc.

The Brantford/Brant Best Start Network would argue that each of eleven Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres that have evolved out of the OEYC: Brant satellite sites and the Launch Pad sites do in fact meet the Ministry definition as they provide access to quality child care. For the purposes of this Plan however, only the Ryerson Heights and the St. Gabriel's Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres have been profiled in Appendix K as existing 'hubs' given that a licensed child care program is available on-site. For this same reason, the Bellview School Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre is named in Appendix L as a hub anticipated to be operational in January 2008 coinciding with the licensing of a 52 space child care program. While additional Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres may be established in the years to come, they are subject to the availability of capital and operating funding and as such are only speculative at this time.

For each of these Ministry-defined hubs, Aboriginal and Francophone children and families are supported with access to hub services by ensuring that programming is inclusive of all Brantford/Brant residents and by continuing to conduct community outreach and public awareness campaigns. Further, as the results of the Aboriginal Needs Assessment and the upcoming exploration of Francophone needs are studied and actioned, additional strategies will be developed to enhance access and participation.

Ontario Early Years Centres



*A Place For Parents And Their Children.*



## **2007-08 Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant Service Plan**

***A Place for Children and Their Parents***

**June 2007**

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## Progress Towards Achieving the Long Term Vision for Best Start

The Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant plays an integral role in supporting parents and the Brantford/Brant community in raising children and helping them reach their full potential. Through its main site, five satellite sites and newly opened Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre, the OEYC: Brant also provides children with a healthy start in life by promoting healthy child development and providing a range of early learning and care activities to help children arrive at school ready to achieve success. Since its inception in April 2002, the OEYC: Brant has also actively participated in system coordination and integration through a variety of partnerships characterized by collaborative planning and service delivery.

This section of the Plan highlights the progress the OEYC: Brant has made in achieving the community's Best Start vision and in closing the gaps in core OEYC services to better meet the needs of Brantford/Brant children and families.

### 1.1 2006-07 Accomplishments

Appendix B of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan* details the many accomplishments that have been made in the past eighteen months towards achieving the community's Best Start vision. As a founding member of the Network and as the current Chair of the Network, the OEYC: Brant has greatly contributed to these accomplishments both in fulfillment of its own mandate and in collaboration with other community organizations and agencies.

The OEYC: Brant chose to develop its 2006-07 workplan using the *Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan* as a starting point. As can be seen from the tables that follow, each of the goals<sup>14</sup> have a direct bearing on one or more of the Ministry's prescribed core OEYC services or in the case of the third goal, to one of the 'unique' core services provided by the OEYC: Brant. The relationship between each goal and the Best Start vision is also described in the tables. In many instances, the accomplishments listed are ongoing in nature and will continue to evolve and expand in the coming months.

It should also be noted that the Best Start Network has stated its intention to convene a Working Group to review its vision, goals and principles and to develop a mission statement. While this exercise is not expected to alter the general intent of the vision or the actions of the Network, it will in all likelihood expand the mandate of the Network to include children up to age twelve with the focus remaining on prenatal to age six.

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<sup>14</sup> The goals are presented in random order of importance.

<p><i>Goal #1 – To continue to prioritize between universal programs and those designed to meet the needs of a specific group</i></p>
<p>Relationship to the Best Start Vision – The Best Start <i>Integrated Implementation Plan</i> identified the need for more specific Aboriginal programming and services, for services to meet the needs of the Francophone community, and for the continued and/or enhanced integration of specialized services for children.</p>
<p>Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OEYC survey printed in September to December newsletter</li> <li>• Collaboration with the Children's Aid Society of Brant's Aboriginal Services in the delivery of the CHOICES Program</li> <li>• Woodview Children's Centre providing staff at five of the seven OEYC: Brant drop-in programs</li> <li>• Lansdowne Children's Centre attending all programs at least one time per month, per time slot or location</li> <li>• Continued ongoing partnerships with Nova Vita, Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program, Lansdowne Children's Centre, Woodview Children's Centre and Roots of Empathy</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant Manager serves as the Chair of the Best Start Network</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant management staff serve on the Best Start Network's Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Francophone Advisory Committee</li> <li>• The OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee<sup>15</sup> now includes representatives from both the Aboriginal and Francophone communities</li> <li>• Knowledge gained from Best Start parent surveys brought forward to the OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Gaps, needs and priorities identified at the Best Start Network, that fall under the mandate of the OEYC: Brant, are responded to</li> <li>• The Best Start Network is informed of OEYC: Brant goals and new partnerships are developed</li> <li>• New French-language resources developed for the lending library</li> <li>• Development of additional Signed English Sign Language Workshop series for parents and caregivers</li> </ul>

<p><i>Goal #2 – To partner with community agencies and organizations to educate key stakeholders on issues related to child protection, failure to thrive, healthy growth and development, neglect, etc.</i></p>
<p>Relationship to Best Start Vision – The integration of services is a priority for the Best Start vision and the <i>Integrated Implementation Plan</i> outlined the core services and specialized services to be linked to neighbourhood sites</p>
<p>Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nurse practitioner housed at OEYC: Brant main site (subject to annual fiscal review)</li> <li>• Roots of Empathy facilitators available at two school sites during the 2006-07 school year</li> <li>• Continued partnerships with Woodview Children's Centre and Lansdowne Children's Centre for drop-in programs, and parent and educator workshops</li> <li>• Continued support in child care training for the Brant Community Protocol for Infants Living in At-Risk Environments</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant Management on all Best Start Network Committees</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant served as a member of the Brant County Health Unit's Healthy Weight Strategies forum</li> <li>• Active participant in the Best Start Network's marketing and awareness campaigns</li> <li>• Ongoing outreach to provide workshops on a variety of topics to secondary school parenting classes</li> <li>• Collaboration with Contact Brant and OEYC: Haldimand-Norfolk to develop and deliver a new community newsletter for courses, workshops and groups for children 0-18 (Your Guide Brant)</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> The OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee consists of two community representatives, two parents, and one representative from each of the following: physician, City of Brantford Child Care Services, Francophone educator, Aboriginal health care provider, Brant County Health Unit, Woodview Children's Centre, Community Living Brant Board of Directors, and the Early Years Data Analysis Coordinator.

<p><i>Goal #3 – To continue to provide programs and services to support early childhood educators, caregivers and others working with young children</i></p>
<p>Relationship to Best Start Vision – The <i>Integrated Implementation Plan</i> identified the importance of trained professionals, the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators, and the need for ongoing training and support</p>
<p>Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OEYC: Brant serves as the lead agency in year two for the Raising the Bar on Quality initiative</li> <li>• Ongoing professional development opportunities (227) offered directly by OEYC: Brant and in collaboration with other community agencies such as Lansdowne Children's Centre, Woodview Children's Centre, Brant County Health Unit, Brantford Police Services, Contact Brant, City of Brantford Child Care Services, Wee Watch, etc.</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant sponsored networks for child care supervisors, front-line early childhood educators, cooks and literacy staff were reviewed resulting in increased participation</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant Management serve as active members on the Best Start Network's Recruitment and Retention Committee and representation on one of the provincial working committees of the Quality &amp; Human Resources</li> <li>• 9<sup>th</sup> annual CHANGE child care conference hosted by OEYC: Brant</li> <li>• Continue to offer a directory and start-up kits to home child care providers</li> <li>• Completion of the Family Child Care Training for home child care providers</li> <li>• 4<sup>th</sup> Supervisor's Symposium all-day training event for child care supervisors</li> <li>• Numerous outreach and consultations to the child care community</li> <li>• Continued field placement site for early childhood education students and student recognition through OEYC: Brant sponsored Mohawk College award</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant management staff serve as an active member on the Association for Early Childhood Education (AECEO), Hamilton Branch</li> <li>• Collaboration with AECEO, Hamilton Branch and the Raising the Bar on Quality Steering Committee to offer a professional development event in Brantford (Sue Minns)</li> <li>• Contact agency for the 9<sup>th</sup> Kid's Summer Celebration Day (community collaboration with 42 agencies, attended by over 700 adults and 1000 children)</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant staff serve as a member and contact agency for the Working Together Symposium which doubled capacity this past year</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant management staff serve as members of the Child Care Advisory Committee and produces an information flyer for the child care community from the Committee's meeting minutes</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant management served as a member of the ECE Banquet Committee in 2006-07 and OEYC: Brant sponsored an Innovation Award</li> </ul>

<p><i>Goal #4 – To continue to monitor the potential for duplication of services while at the same time recognizing that a degree of duplication permits parental choice and responds to the individual needs of each family and community</i></p>
<p>Relationship to Best Start Vision – The <i>Integrated Implementation Plan</i> has identified the need for community agencies to collaborate in service planning and delivery, and the desire for the OEYC: Brant to coordinate services at the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres.</p>
<p>Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of hours of service to core areas completed and shared with the Best Start Network</li> <li>• Reviewed OEYC: Brant membership on community planning, advisory and information sharing bodies</li> <li>• Utilized the Brant Early Years Community Report Card in referrals, information and home child care mapping</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant coordinates all services at the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant management staff serve as members of the Child Care Advisory Committee</li> <li>• OEYC: Brant, through warm line calls, continues to support the community by referring parents to appropriate services (1,313 referrals made in 2006-07)</li> </ul>

## 1.2 Implementation Challenges and Strategies

Section 1.4 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* described a number of implementation challenges that the community expected to face during the past eighteen months. While many of these challenges are generic in nature – in other words, they were applicable to a number of community agencies – those that were directly applicable to the OEYC: Brant are described below in random order of importance.

### Sufficient ongoing funding

*Challenge* – Over the past eighteen months community agencies and organizations have coordinated their efforts and collaborated in many activities to make the best use of available dollars. Despite the successes achieved, the OEYC: Brant and other service providers report that their budgets are fully expended and that an investment of new dollars will be required if programs are to be adequately sustained or expanded.

*Strategies* – The OEYC: Brant has reviewed its participation on planning, advisory and information sharing bodies to ensure that its involvement remains focused on children prenatal to six and on supporting educators. Staff also continue to expand existing partnerships and seek out new ones as a means of making effective and efficient use of human and financial resources.

### Addressing the needs of Francophone and Aboriginal populations

*Challenge* – Despite the fact that early years programs and services were designed and located in such a manner that they would be universally accessible to all Brantford/Brant residents, the funding reality is that a balance must be found between universal programs and those designed for specific populations.

*Strategies* – The dedication of \$300,000 in Best Start funding to each of these populations has ensured that their respective needs and priorities can at least, in part, be addressed within available resources. The OEYC: Brant will continue to pay heed to the knowledge gained through the Aboriginal Needs Assessment and to the upcoming exploration of Francophone needs. In the interim, the OEYC: Brant continues to be represented on the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and on the Francophone Advisory Committee, has recently included representation from the Aboriginal and Francophone communities on its Advisory Committee, has struck partnerships with Aboriginal service providers, and has purchased French-language resources for the lending library.

### Geography and transportation

*Challenge* – While the number of locations where early learning and care programs are being offered has increased over the past eighteen months, access to affordable transportation will remain an issue in both the urban and rural areas of Brantford/Brant.

*Strategy* – The OEYC: Brant continues to utilize the knowledge gained through evidence-based research (e.g. the Early Development Instrument and the Brant Early Years Community Report Card), to maximize the use of satellite sites, and to provide transportation subsidies where funding permits to ensure that its programs and services are accessible to families and caregivers. The OEYC: Brant has also operated on an 'as mandated by MCYS' basis two evenings per week and every Saturday throughout the year to ensure its programs and services are accessible.

Potential change in funding arrangements for OEYC and Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre sites in schools

*Challenge* – This implementation challenge has not become an issue given the nature of the Memorandum of Understanding that is in place between the school boards and the operators of early learning and care programs. The partnerships that exist have in fact become strengthened as all concerned have become more aware of the value of the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres.

*Strategy* – The OEYC: Brant was instrumental in developing and negotiating a common Memorandum of Understanding with the local school boards for the operation of the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres.

General determinants of health

*Challenge* – Factors such as housing, income, and general health have and will always continue to impact upon child outcomes. For this reason, this systemic challenge will remain in the forefront.

*Strategy* – The OEYC: Brant has continued to promote and make use of the evidence-based research that is designed and/or made available to it by the Early Years Data Analysis Coordinator.

**1.3 2006-07 Service Levels**

The following Table contains the 2006-07 projected and actual service levels achieved for the core OEYC: Brant services. For comparative purposes, the projected and actual service levels for 2004-05 and 2005-06 are also included. Comments explaining several of the variances follow the Table.

2007-08 Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant Service Plan

Service Element	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual
Visits by parents & caregivers	9,000	11,426	12,000	13,249	13,250	11,133*
Visits by children	8,000	11,555	10,000	14,039	14,000	11,832
Children served	1,200	1,335	1,500	1,499	1,450	1,545
Parents & caregivers served	1,250	1,230	1,325	1,381	1,350	1,275
Training hours	400	516	550	660	700	N/A**
Learning activities	7	43	43	7	7	N/A**
Questionnaires, feedback forms	500	693	600	843	800	N/A**
Professionals in workshops or seminars	250	1,194	500	740	700	2,500*
Referrals to other early years services	350	731	600	869	700	1,313
Protocols or official linkages	30	74	5	119	75	120
Parents & caregivers in workshops or seminars	1,250	1,154	1,250	621	750	703*

NOTES: \* Denotes a change in the definition of the data being collected

\*\* Denotes the discontinuation of data collection as directed by MCYS

*Visits by parents and caregivers* – The actual service levels achieved for 2006-07 have decreased over the past three years and have decreased from 2006-07 projected levels. This phenomenon occurred for the following reasons:

- Parents and caregivers have become familiar with the OEYC: Brant programs and as such are not regularly 'signing in' when they access services
- The closure of the Central School satellite for six months in 2006
- Resource Library visits were 'signed in' during 2004-2006; these visits are no longer included in this service element
- Visits for the purposes of quality child care are now counted as a referral as opposed to a visit by parents and caregivers

Despite these vary legitimate reasons for the variances seen, actual visits by parents and caregivers are only down 2.55% over the three years.

*Visits by children* – The trends and the variance explanations noted above also apply to visits by children.

*Children served* - The actual number of children served has increased 16% in the past three years.

*Parents and caregivers served* – The actual number of parents and caregivers served has increased b 3.5% in the past three years.

*Training hours* – While the Ministry no longer requires that this figure be collected it should be noted that the number of training hours provided increased 28% between 2004-05 and 2005-06.

*Learning activities* – As a result of the different ways in which this service element was being interpreted and thus reported on across Ontario, the Ministry no longer requires this information to be collected or reported on.

*Questionnaires and feedback forms* – As a result of the different ways in which this service element was being interpreted and thus reported on across Ontario, the Ministry no longer requires this information to be collected or reported on. Having said this, an increase of 22% was experienced between 2004-05 and 2005-06.

*Professionals in workshops or seminars* – The numbers of professionals participating in workshops or seminars has increased by 110% as a result of the ability to now report on the activities associated with the toy lending library. In addition, attendance at the Working Together Symposium which is held every two years is also now recorded and is thus reflected in 2004-05 and 2006-07 figures.

*Referrals to other early years services* – This service level has grown by 80% over the past three years as OEYC: Brant staff become more proficient in capturing data. In addition, the number of Quality Child Care packages issued are now included as a legitimate referral.

*Protocols or official linkages* – The fact that this actual service level has increased by 61.6% in three years is testament to the value the OEYC: Brant places on cooperative and collaborative partnerships.

*Parents and caregivers in workshops or seminars* – Despite the fact that it appears that attendance is down over the past three years, this is not the case. Previously, participation was recorded once during each week the workshop or seminar occurred. As many of these opportunities span multiple weeks, participants are now only counted once for their attendance at any one workshop rather than multiple times.

#### **1.4 Addressing Service Gaps, Needs and Priorities**

Section 1.2 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* described a number of service gaps, needs and priorities (presented in random order of importance) that have been articulated in earlier planning documents and research reports:

- Availability
- Accessibility
- Enhancing quality
- Public education and awareness
- Services for specific populations
- Community outreach

Section 1.1 of this *OEYC: Brant 2007/08 Service Plan* has identified numerous actions that have been taken to respond to the historical gaps, needs and

priorities that have existed in early learning activities; parenting and family supports; pre-post natal resources and information; outreach supports; program effectiveness and child outcome measures; and resource library and educator supports. The commentary that follows provides additional detail on the remaining OEYC: Brant core services – early literacy, speakers' bureau and volunteer recruitment and coordination.

*Early Literacy* – The OEYC: Brant serves as the host agency for early literacy activities that occur in the Brantford/Brant community. The establishment and fostering of partnerships with other literacy providers such as the Brantford and Brant County Libraries, the local school boards and the Literacy Council of Brantford and District have served to reduce duplication and to offer an integrated system of early literacy services to local families.

*Speakers' Bureau* – Community agencies continue to turn to the OEYC: Brant website [www.eycbrant.ca](http://www.eycbrant.ca) and on-site binder to source and reserve speakers from a number of early years related disciplines. In addition, the OEYC: Brant offers a workshop on Powerful presentations twice each year.

*Volunteer Recruitment and Coordination* – The Early Literacy Specialist and the OEYC: Brant management staff have assumed responsibility for recruiting and coordinating volunteers to support the delivery of OEYC: Brant programs and services. Over the past year, recruitment efforts with local secondary schools and with the Brantford campus of Wilfrid Laurier University have been successful and will be continued in the future.

## **1.5 Linkages with the Early Literacy Specialist and Data Analysis Coordinator**

The OEYC: Brant employs a 0.5 FTE Early Literacy Specialist to coordinate and facilitate early literacy initiatives in Brantford/Brant. As mentioned previously, this staff member has successfully established relationships with those other community organizations and agencies that include early literacy in their mandate.

While administrative responsibility for the Early Years Data Analysis Coordinator (DAC) position rests with the Brant County Health Unit, the OEYC: Brant, the Best Start Network, early years service providers and the community at large have benefited from empirical, statistical and evidentiary information that has been provided. For instance, the DAC has collaborated with the DAC serving Haldimand and Norfolk Counties in the presentation of the EDI results, and in the development and maintenance of the Brant Community Services for Families with Young Children database, which serves as the Early Years Community Services Inventory. Through the DAC's membership on the Best Start Network and her leadership on the Evaluation Subcommittee, the community can be assured that her contributions to local planning and service delivery activities are based on sound research methodology and design.

## Activities and Community Engagement Process

This section of the Plan describes how the community has been engaged to provide input on OEYC: Brant services; provides a description of the current OEYC: Brant core and unique services; gives an overview of the operational modifications that have resulted from the establishment of Best Start; and highlights changes and new activities in the areas of information sharing and communication.

### 2.1 Community Engagement

Communication with and the engagement of parents and other community stakeholders continues to be of great importance to the OEYC: Brant. Section 2.4 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* describes in detail the many actions that have been taken to ensure that key stakeholders are engaged and that their respective needs and priorities are made known and acted upon.

For example, the Best Start Network's establishment of an Aboriginal Advisory Committee, a Francophone Advisory Committee and a Parent Engagement Committee ensures that these voices are not overlooked. Further, parent surveys such as those completed on an annual basis by the OEYC: Brant and those distributed at the recent Parent Information Fair, provide parents and caregivers with the opportunity to provide input on the types of services they would like to see in their neighbourhood, the barriers they face in accessing services, and the vehicles they currently use to receive information on upcoming programs and services.

Service providers for children with mental health needs are engaged in program planning and service delivery through their membership on the OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee and service providers for children with special needs are engaged on the Best Start Network and its various Committees and Task Forces. The regular presence of many of these service providers at the OEYC: Brant main site, satellite sites and at the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres speak to the strong partnerships that have been established and have been expanded upon in recent months.

The OEYC: Brant and the Best Start Network and its individual members all agree that further attention must be paid in the coming months to better engage other culturally and/or linguistically diverse stakeholders and service providers now that the engagement of the Aboriginal and Francophone communities is well in progress. In other words, over the coming months, the OEYC: Brant and other service providers are committed to exploring ways and means of ensuring that early learning and care programs are inclusive of all cultures in Brantford/Brant.

## 2.2 Current OEYC: Brant Core and Unique Services

The OEYC: Brant offers numerous drop-in programs, parent child workshops and early literacy programs at various locations throughout Brantford/Brant. In many instances, these core services are led by OEYC: Brant staff while in other cases, they are provided in collaboration with other community organizations and service providers such as the Brantford Police Service, Brant County Library, Launch Pads, the Aboriginal Services Unit of the Children's Aid Society of Brant, and the Brantford Symphony Orchestra. On-site developmental screening is also provided at the OEYC: Brant by the Brant County Health Unit, Talking Tots, Lansdowne Children's Centre, and the Infant Hearing Program. In some situations, child-minding services are available to parents attending workshops while in other instances, 'family support' is offered whereby another individual aged twelve or older accompanies the parent (or educator) to care for their child in the Together Time program while the adult is participating in a workshop.

The OEYC: Brant also continues to operate the Resource Library as one of its unique core services. Formerly known as the Professional Resource Centre for Child Care, the Resource Library provides loan services<sup>16</sup> and on-site services<sup>17</sup> in response to the identified needs of educators, parents and caregivers. Various types of memberships are available to access one or both of these services.

Professional development for professionals, educators and caregivers is also a unique core service provided by the OEYC: Brant. Home child care providers, both those under contract with a licensed home child care agency and those who provide informal care, are supported through the Home Child Care Network, through special events, and through recognition celebrations that include profiling those providers who are enrolled in the Family Child Care Training Program.

Numerous professional development workshops are also available to educators, child care professionals and service providers. These sessions cover a range of topics such as dealing with disruptive behaviours, management training, first aid, sign language and quality improvement. In some instances, these workshops are led by OEYC: Brant staff while in other instances the workshop is provided by staff of the Brant County Health Unit, Lansdowne Children's Centre, or Woodview Children's Centre. As mentioned previously, the OEYC: Brant also hosts several networks for child care centre supervisors, early childhood professionals, cooks, staff working in the early literacy focused field, and for those participating in the Raising the Bar on Quality initiative.

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<sup>16</sup> Toys and equipment geared towards children from birth to age twelve are available for loan. A complete inventory of these materials, available under headings such as science and nature activities, math and numbers activities, dramatic play props, is available at [www.eycbrant.ca/pdf/inventory.pdf](http://www.eycbrant.ca/pdf/inventory.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Access to numerous pieces of equipment such as laminators, button maker, bookbinding machines, colour photocopiers, and internet access, is available on-site.

Detailed descriptions, locations, times and costs of all of these parent and child programs and workshops, and professional development and networking opportunities are available through a variety of written publications and websites.

To ensure that these programs, workshops and opportunities are responsive to the needs of parents, educators, professionals and caregivers, the OEYC: Brant surveys participants at the conclusion of each session. Suggestion boxes (accessible only to management staff) are also available at each of the drop-in programs and at the Resource Library.

### **2.3 Operational Changes**

The OEYC: Brant has undergone several operational changes as a result of the establishment of Best Start. These are described below under the headings delivery of core services, administrative arrangements and location of service delivery.

#### Delivery of core services

The OEYC: Brant satellite site that was previously located at Central School in Brantford ceased operation in July 2006 as adequate space was no longer available for the program. As a result of discussions with the OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee, the Best Start Network and various other planning tables, a decision was made to 'hold' the services for six months pending the opening of the Ryerson Heights Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre. During the six month waiting period, the furniture and equipment used at Central School was stored and additional furniture and equipment for the new Ryerson Heights site was purchased with Best Start funding.

With the opening of the Ryerson Heights Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre in January 2007, outreach services were increased with the offering of several core early learning programs. At the same time, a series of programs were also offered at Paris North Ward School satellite.

Upon the review of service statistics at all of its sites the OEYC: Brant, with the support of its Advisory Committee, found it necessary to reduce programming at its Scotland satellite site by one afternoon a week. The savings achieved from this action allowed the OEYC: Brant to enter into a new partnership with the Brant County Health Unit in May 2007 for the provision of a post-partum depression support group. Lastly, the demand for infant programs led to the reconfiguration of space at the main site in order to expand infant programming.

In all instances, the OEYC: Brant has made the Best Start Network and other planning tables aware of its intended actions and of its need to reassess and redistribute resources to respond to the demand for service and/or to requests for increased programming.

### Administrative arrangements

During the Fall of 2006, the OEYC: Brant, the Grand Erie District School Board and agencies providing parenting programs in local schools met on several occasions to develop a common Memorandum of Understanding<sup>18</sup> that would be utilized by future programs opening in the community where a host agency and lead agency were present. The resultant Memorandum of Understanding has been endorsed by the Hub Committee of the Best Start Network as a means of formalizing cooperative and collaborative partnerships.

As stated previously the OEYC: Brant, at the request of the Best Start Network, has assumed the coordination role for the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres to ensure that services are well integrated. The lack of dedicated Best Start funding for this coordination role has meant, however, that coordination is occurring on a site by site basis rather than on a system wide basis as envisioned in the *Integrated Implementation Plan*. At the present time, under the direction of the Hub Committee, OEYC: Brant management staff have assumed this responsibility with support being provided by OEYC: Brant staff. Examples of the functions that have been provided to date include the coordination of service delivery and the development of weekly calendars of events for the Ryerson Heights and St. Gabriel's Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres. OEYC: Brant management staff also liaise with and coordinates activities with the school principal and school board staff at the Ryerson Heights Centre, given the OEYC: Brant's role as the lead agency. Over the course of time, and as funding permits, this coordination role will evolve.

### Location of service delivery

As indicated previously the OEYC: Brant satellite site at Central School in Brantford was closed due to the lack of appropriate space. This has meant that access to early learning programs has been reduced in the Brantford core, an area previously identified as having a large percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on two or more EDI domains<sup>19</sup>. This service gap remains in the forefront of the Best Start Network's planning activities – in the interim, the Brantford Public Library is exploring the possibility of providing host space for the offering of parenting and family programs and supports.

The *Integrated Implementation Plan* indicated that the OEYC: Brant satellite sites<sup>20</sup> and Launch Pad sites would become known as Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres so that families could identify, by name, a service within their neighbourhood. Each community agency providing service within a Centre would be named within the program space to ensure they remain visible within

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<sup>18</sup> The Memorandum of Understanding is contained in Appendix J of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan*.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix G of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan* for the 2002 and 2006 Early Development Instrument (EDI) scores.

<sup>20</sup> The main site of the OEYC: Brant would retain its name and visual identity.

the community. All of these actions are expected to occur in within the next twelve months.

## **2.4 Information Sharing and Communication**

Several new activities are underway to enhance already effective information sharing and communication activities. Information Haldimand and Norfolk serves as the web master for the Brant Community Services for Families with Young Children database. This database, which serves as the Early Years Community Services Inventory is co-hosted by the OEYC: Brant and the Brant County Health Unit and can be accessed at [www.eycbrant.ca](http://www.eycbrant.ca). Between April 2006 and March 2007, over 700 unique visits were made to the OEYC: Brant main site and over 300 unique visits were made to information pertaining to each of satellite site. The Data Analysis Coordinator and the OEYC: Brant Executive Secretary have the ability to make changes to the information contained on the database and to submit it to Information Haldimand Norfolk to be actioned.

The OEYC: Brant also hosts and maintains the community early years website and has recently added to that website those agencies that are represented on the Best Start Network and yet were not included amongst its agency hyperlinks. The OEYC: Brant website [www.eycbrant.ca](http://www.eycbrant.ca) can currently be accessed from the Brantford/Brant Best Start website at [www.ourbeststart4brant.ca](http://www.ourbeststart4brant.ca). In the near future, a link will be established on the OEYC: Brant website to the Best Start website.

Attention has also been paid in the past year to enhancing public awareness activities. In addition to the progress that has been made, as described in section 1.2 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan*, and the strategies proposed in Appendix H of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan*, the OEYC: Brant continues to conspicuously post any and all information, brochures and posters pertaining to early years services and supports at all of its service delivery sites. The OEYC: Brant has also made great strides in reaching new parents and families by including its service booklet in the Let's Grow packages distributed by local hospitals and midwives. In addition, the OEYC: Brant has collaborated with other community partners in the dissemination of Best Start parent surveys, in the planning for community events such as the April 2007 Parent Information Fair, and in staffing booths for the OEYC, the Raising the Bar on Quality Initiative, and the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario at the Parent Information Fair. While these actions have served to reach many families in Brantford/Brant, increasing public awareness and promoting early learning and care programs will continue to be a focus of activity for the OEYC: Brant.

## **2007-08 Strategies to Move Forward with the Community Vision for the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant and Best Start**

This section of the Plan provides an overview of the strategies that will be pursued in 2007-08 in order to move closer to achieving the community's vision for Best Start. In particular, emerging needs and gaps within the community are identified, the 2007-08 OEYC: Brant's service priorities (goals and objectives) are forecasted, strategies to address the gaps are referenced, and challenges in doing so are mentioned.

### **3.1 Emerging Needs and Gaps**

Section 3.1 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* identified and described the following gaps, needs and priorities<sup>21</sup> (presented in random order of importance) some of which have evolved over the past year and others which were not captured previously.

- Sustaining community capacity
- Research and evaluation
- Culturally sensitive programming
- Increasing demand for special needs resourcing
- Aboriginal needs
- Francophone needs

Further section 3.1 of the *Best Start Community Plan* also speaks to the results of the 2006 Early Development Instrument (EDI) as a means of identifying neighbourhoods in which children may be developmentally vulnerable as they enter the formal education system. Once neighbourhood density figures have been compiled and the detailed findings of the 2006 Census become known, this information will be combined with the EDI scores to paint a more current, in-depth profile of each neighbourhood to assist in the planning process.

### **3.2 2007-08 OEYC: Brant Service Priorities and Strategies**

The OEYC: Brant and its Advisory Committee have chosen to align its 2007-08 service priority forecast with the emerging needs and gaps listed above. These priorities and the strategies specific to the OEYC: Brant<sup>22</sup> are contained in the following Table and are presented in random order of importance.

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<sup>21</sup> The wage subsidy pressures that were identified will not be discussed in this Plan as they have no direct bearing on the programs and services operated by the OEYC: Brant.

<sup>22</sup> The strategies the Best Start Network will use to further close the existing gaps and meet community need are identified in Appendix H of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan*. Many of these strategies are also applicable to the OEYC: Brant.

Priority	Strategy
Sustaining community capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to evaluate the use and effectiveness of programs</li> <li>- survey families not currently accessing services with the Data Analysis Coordinator</li> <li>- review and implement new registration process for highly popular parenting programs requiring pre-registration in the Fall of 2007</li> <li>- continue to contribute funding (through the redirection of parent newsletter funding) and program information to the Your Guide Brant publication</li> <li>- continue to seek media coverage through community sponsor page and explore media possibilities with <i>Vibrant</i> magazine</li> <li>- make connections with service clubs in promoting services and collaborating on mandates where appropriate</li> <li>- utilize segments on Rogers television to profile parenting issues, early years programs, etc.</li> <li>- increased advertising and promotion of other services in the community</li> <li>- increased usage of the Brant Community Services for Families with Young Children database</li> <li>- seek further support for transportation and highlight the service to families in need</li> </ul>
Research and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to use the resources provided by the Data Analysis Coordinator in planning and evaluating programs</li> <li>- examine the March 2007 <i>Early Years Study 2</i> and determine its impact on current programs</li> </ul>
Culturally sensitive programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- review current programs for their cultural sensitivity</li> <li>- utilize the Early Years Services Information System database to determine the number of other languages spoken in Brantford/Brant and by families who access OEYC: Brant services to ensure that their needs are being met</li> <li>- use of new measuring performance tool (Reaching In, Reaching Out) training for staff and community; use of Quality Inclusive Checklist and training for staff and community</li> <li>- have representation from Immigration Settlement on the OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee or Best Start Subcommittee</li> <li>- add multicultural welcome signs at all satellite locations and outdoor logo signage</li> </ul>
Increased demand for special needs resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase the promotion of the Child Development Program at drop-in programs for families waiting for services or trying to access services within the licensed child care system</li> <li>- installation completed in April 2007 of an automatic door in the Resource Library to increase physical accessibility for children with special needs (and for children in strollers)</li> <li>- continue to participate in planning and implementation of the Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program</li> <li>- continue to offer sign language courses to educators and to parents with infants and toddlers</li> <li>- continue to provide Total Communication, Reframing Discipline, and Quality Inclusion Checklist training in partnership with Lansdowne Children's Centre</li> <li>- continue to offer Picture Communication Symbol training and resources</li> <li>- partnership with Lansdowne Children's Centre to offer Hanen training to child care centres</li> </ul>

Priority	Strategy
Aboriginal needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- incorporate the findings of the Aboriginal Needs Assessment</li> <li>- remain abreast of the discussions at various planning tables and advisory committees to ascertain the OEYC: Brant role in service delivery</li> <li>- continue to provide outreach and consultation services, and support for Raising the Bar on Quality initiative, to programs on Six Nations</li> <li>- continue to provide outreach services for educators at both Six Nations and New Credit (e.g. Raising the Bar on Quality, ECERS R Third Party Reviews)</li> <li>- promote cultural profiles resources that are available in the Resource Library</li> <li>- investigate collaborative professional development opportunities for educators</li> </ul>
Francophone needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to participate on the Francophone Advisory Committee</li> <li>- promote and advertise existing French-language resources available in the Resource Library</li> <li>- make effective use of the Francophone representative on the OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee to determine the OEYC's role future role in service delivery</li> <li>- utilize a volunteer who speaks French to assist in the continuing development of new French-language resources as determined by feedback</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Challenges in Addressing Service Gaps

Appendix I of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan* identifies and describes the challenges that exist in addressing service gaps and in moving forward with the Best Start vision, and presents several strategies to be undertaken in the coming year to overcome them. While many of these challenges which were commented on in section 1.3 of this Plan are expected to continue, three new challenges that have become apparent in the past eighteen months are also included in Appendix I (in random order of importance) – meeting community expectations, public misconceptions of the value of drop-in programs, and the marketing of all services for children from prenatal to age twelve. These new challenges are just as relevant to the OEYC: Brant as they are to other providers of early learning and care programs and as such, the OEYC: Brant will do its part to lessen their possible impact by adopting the strategies listed.

## Strategies for System Integration

System integration is a priority under Best Start and as such, the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network is developing plans to move the community further along the continuum of system integration. As a key partner at the Network table, the OEYC: Brant has an integral role to play in this process.

This section of the Plan speaks to the activities that have occurred and that will occur in the future to promote integration amongst the Best Start Network partners and also highlights several integration initiatives that are specific to the OEYC: Brant.

### 4.1 Integration Amongst Network Partners

Section 2.1 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* and Appendices D and E of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan* describes the structure that has been adopted by the Best Start Network to ensure that the planning for early learning and care programs occurs in an integrated fashion. The establishment of the following Committees<sup>23</sup>, all of which include OEYC: Brant representation has meant that programs and services will be better positioned to respond to the expressed needs of the community.

- Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- Francophone Advisory Committee
- Hub Committee (soon to be renamed the Service Integration Committee)
- Parent Engagement Committee
- Child Care Advisory Committee

It must also be noted that the OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee is one of several community committees that provides monthly (or at minimum quarterly) updates to the Hub Committee.

Section 2.3 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* describes the many linkages that have been established with other planning bodies and also identifies several other sectors or service systems with which to establish and/or strengthen linkages. Much of this information and the strategies that will be taken by the OEYC: Brant in support of a more streamlined and integrated planning process have been previously discussed in this Plan.

Earlier sections of this Plan have also described the service coordination and service delivery roles that the OEYC: Brant has assumed with respect to the operation of the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres – both those where licensed child care is available on-site and those where access to licensed child care is routinely provided. This Plan has also made reference to

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<sup>23</sup> Several Task Forces have also been established many of which also contain OEYC: Brant representation.

the common Memorandum of Understanding that has been developed to facilitate collaborative service delivery between the OEYC: Brant and other Best Start partners.

By far, the most challenging issue being faced by the OEYC: Brant and others in moving forward with the community's vision for an integrated system of services is adequate, sustainable, ongoing funding to maintain existing services and to expand programs and services into the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres that are currently operational or that will be established in the future. From the OEYC: Brant's perspective, the fact that the Ministry funding provided to support the early years core services and the unique library services (dedicated to the operation of the Resource Library) has not increased in the past five years, has meant that service provision has not been able to keep pace with community demand and that resources and equipment have remained or fallen behind 2002 levels. In actual fact, the 20% cost-shared funding previously provided by the City of Brantford towards the operation of the Resource Library was withdrawn once the OEYC: Brant was established and became 100% funded by the Ministry.

Further, the OEYC: Brant is aware through its various regional and provincial networks that the desired degree of consistency in the provision of core services across Ontario has not been able to be maintained, primarily due to funding shortfalls and to the lack of capacity to meet the service demands of individual communities.

Lastly, while it is acknowledged that the vast majority of community agencies concur with the research findings and support the service philosophy reported in the April 1999 *Early Years Study*, more must be done to arrive at a common approach to service provision that also takes into account individual agency mandates and funding levels. In so doing, all Brantford/Brant residents, regardless of their culture, place of residence, abilities and background will be ensured access to a consistent, streamlined and integrated system of services that also remains responsive to their particular needs.

#### **4.2 OEYC: Brant Integration Initiatives**

The following description identifies how the roles and work plans of the Early Years Data Analysis Coordinator and of the Early Literacy Specialist continue to assist not only the OEYC: Brant in the achievement of its planned activities but also the community in the realization of its Best Start vision.

Early Years Data Analysis Coordinator

- Member of OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee
- Support in using the Early Years Services Information System (EYSIS)
- Collaborate on community consultations and partner as appropriate (e.g. Understanding the Early Years presentation to Six Nations Social Services winter 2007)

- Collaborate and share information on appropriate evaluation tools and surveys
- Collation of Early Years Report Card information
- Use of Early Years Report Card tool for information and referral at OEYC: Brant
- Responds to incoming calls and inquires regarding early years data

#### Early Literacy Specialist

- Workplan developed and reviewed with OEYC workplan and reviewed for input by the OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee
- Quarterly reports provided to OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee
- Joint professional development for parents and educators
- Professional development by Early Literacy Specialist coordinated with the OEYC: Brant and based on overall feedback from educators and parents
- Literacy Network run jointly once per year with early childhood educators network
- Train the Trainer program of Rhyme Time provided to all staff and individualized training for selected sites to occur 2007-08
- Plans and provides Resource Library literacy kits, supports and other resources in partnership with OEYC: Brant
- New Patta Cake outreach program provided in partnership with Early Literacy Specialist, the OEYC: Brant and the Children's Aid Society of Brant
- Member of Family Literacy Committee that forwards regular reports to the Best Start Network's Hub Committee
- Member of the Ready Set Calendar Group that plans and implements an annual school readiness calendar (this Group also provides regular reports to the Best Start Network's Hub Committee)
- Works with local libraries to jointly deliver services
- Participates in meetings with Talking Tots to discuss future partnerships
- Outreach services coordinated with OEYC: Brant management staff to determine best fit and ensure no duplication of services
- A workplan has been developed that strikes a balance between the needs of the OEYC: Brant as the host agency and the needs expressed by community stakeholders

Finally, as discussed in previous sections of this Plan<sup>24</sup>, long standing relationships are in place between the OEYC: Brant and the City of Brantford Child Care Services, Talking Tots, the Infant Hearing Program, the Brant County Health Unit, and the Child Development Program to support the licensed and unregulated child care system; to share best practices and evidence-based research; to promote healthy development and early learning; and to increase access to early screening and intervention programs.

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<sup>24</sup> Section 4.3 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* also describes the integration initiatives that the OEYC: Brant is engaged in with these community partners as they relate to the services available at the main site, satellite sites and Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres.

**Service Targets for 2007-08**

In accordance with the Service Plan Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the following template listing the OEYC: Brant's 2007-08 service level targets and staff complement is provided. The figures contained in the template have been discussed with the OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee and have been projected on the basis of service levels experienced over the past five years.

	<b>Service Level Target 2007/08</b>
<b>I - Service Provision Targets</b>	
Number of Children Served	<b>1,450</b>
Number of Visits Made by Children	<b>14,000</b>
Number of Parents/Caregivers Served	<b>1,350</b>
Number of Visits Made by Parents/Caregivers	<b>13,250</b>
<b>II - Service Specific Targets</b>	
Parent/caregiver education - Number of Parents/Caregivers in Workshops/Seminars	<b>750</b>
Number of Professionals in Workshops/Seminars	<b>1,200</b>
Information on other early years services – Number of Referrals	<b>1,000</b>
Linkages to the Community and Other Service Providers - <i>Number of Protocols/Official Linkages</i>	<b>115</b>
<b>III - Staff Component</b>	
Number of Full-time Equivalent Staff	<b>13.15 (plus 0.5 FTE Early Literacy Specialist)</b>

## **Process for the OEYC: Brant Service Plan Development**

As previously implied, strong linkages have been established between the OEYC: Brant and the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network. Not only does the Manager of the OEYC: Brant currently serve as the Chair of the Network, but one or more staff of the OEYC: Brant also maintains memberships on the Network's various Committees and Task Forces.

It should also be noted that the OEYC: Brant, the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network and the City of Brantford Child Care Services, jointly planned and coordinated the April 26<sup>th</sup> Community Consultation session to gain stakeholder input into the completion of this Plan. Twenty-seven individuals from twenty-one community agencies and programs willingly gave their time and expertise to ensure that the community's views were made known. In addition, the input of parents and caregivers has been incorporated into this Plan through their completion of surveys, workshop evaluations and unsolicited suggestions. Lastly, the knowledge and experiences of the front-line staff of the OEYC: Brant and members of the OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee has been sought out and has been reflected in the content that has been provided.

The OEYC: Brant Advisory Committee has reviewed this Plan and has made a recommendation that it be approved to the Community Living Brant – the administrative lead agency for the OEYC: Brant. In the coming weeks, this Plan will also be presented to the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network for their information. Pending approval by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, this Plan will also be posted on the OEYC: Brant and Best Start websites for the information of all community stakeholders.



**Branford/Brant**

# **2007-08 Child Care Service Plan**

**June 2007**

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**Progress Towards Achieving the Long Term Vision for Best Start**

In keeping with its designation as the child care service system manager, the City of Brantford Child Care Services plays a key role in promoting healthy child development and helping children arrive at school ready to achieve success. Child care also serves as an essential support for many parents, helping them to balance the demands of career and family while participating in the workforce or pursuing education or training.

This section of the Plan highlights the progress the City of Brantford Child Care Services has made in achieving the community's Best Start vision and in closing the gaps in child care services to better meet the needs of Brantford/Brant children and families.

**1.1 2006-07 Accomplishments**

The priority for Phase 1 of Best Start was to increase access to high quality licensed child care for junior and senior kindergarten aged children and to gradually expand access to licensed child care for children aged four and under. As indicated in section 1.3 of the *Best Start Community Plan*, the Brantford/Brant community has been extremely successful in increasing the availability of licensed child care over the past eighteen months. Given its service system management role, the City of Brantford Child Care Services has focused much of its energy in recent months in supporting and sustaining this expansion.

In particular, 138 new spaces<sup>25</sup> for children from birth to age six were licensed by September 2006 and an additional five spaces have been licensed since that time. Further, 146 new spaces for school-aged children have been licensed between April 2006 and April 2007.

Table 1 provides a summary of the licensed capacity of day nurseries by location while Appendix C of the *Early Learning and Care Plan* identifies the primary capacity of each of the 31 day nurseries in Brantford/Brant.

**TABLE 1**  
Summary of Licensed Capacity in Day Nurseries

Location	Licensed Programs	Infant Spaces	Toddler Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total Spaces
Brantford	20	38	115	520	96	240	1009
Burford & Scotland	2	0	17	36	12	30	95
Paris	5	0	20	72	40	75	207
St. George	3	0	0	72	0	30	102
Jerseyville	1	0	0	16	0	0	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>1429</b>

Source: Ministry of Children and Youth Services March 31, 2007

<sup>25</sup> Brantford/Brant was targeted to achieve 230 new spaces for children aged six and under between April 2005 and April 2008.

Table 2 provides the details of the expansion that has occurred. It should be noted that of the 289 new spaces that were licensed between April 2006 and April 2007, 189 are in located within elementary schools in keeping with the Government of Ontario's Schools First Policy.

**TABLE 2**  
2006-07 Expansion of Licensed Day Nurseries

Program	Infant Spaces	Toddler Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total
A Child's Paradise Too				20		20
Academy Montessori			16			16
North Ward				4	26	30
St. Joseph's Y Childcare Centre			1			1
Ryerson Heights			24	20	30	74
Queens Ward School Age Program				20	15	35
Our Lady Queen of Peace Montessori School			8			8
St. Gabriel's Before & After School Program				20	30	50
Noah's Ark Y Preschool		5				5
Montessori Children's Academy (Paris)		5				5
Summer Adventure Camp					45	45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>289</b>

As evidenced in Table 3, an additional 189 new spaces are in the planning phase – 165 of which will be opened in elementary schools during 2008.

**TABLE 3**  
Projected Expansion of Licensed Day Nurseries

Program	Anticipated Opening	Infant Spaces	Toddler Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total
A Child's Paradise	September 2007	0	0	0	24	0	24
Bellview School	January 2008	6	10	16	20	0	52
New BHNCDS School (Paris)	September 2008	6	10	16	20	0	52
École Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys	September 2008	0	10	16	20	15	61
		12	30	48	84	15	189

It should also be noted that the Burford Cooperative Preschool has indicated in writing that it is exploring the possibility of expanding their service to a full child care centre by September 2008 to include five or ten toddler spaces, sixteen preschool spaces, ten JK spaces, 12 SK spaces and 30 school-aged spaces.

The Brantford/Brant community is also served by two licensed private home child care programs operated by the City of Brantford Child Care Services and by Wee Watch Private Home Day Care. While the licensed capacity of these programs (25 homes each) has not increased in the past eighteen months, the

programs continue to provide parents with a choice of care options and with evening and weekend hours of care.

Appendix B of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan* details the many other accomplishments that have been made in the past eighteen months towards achieving the community's Best Start vision. As a founding member of the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network, the City has greatly contributed to these accomplishments both in fulfillment of its own mandate and in collaboration with other community organizations and agencies. Of importance from the perspective of enhancing the child care system, it should be noted that the City of Brantford Child Care Services also focused its energies on the following activities over the past eighteen months:

- implemented the provincial fee subsidy income test
- updated its website to inform parents of the income testing process
- updated its brochures to include the newly licensed child care programs
- jointly planned and coordinated a Community Information session with the OEYC: Brant and the Best Start Network
- provided \$14,000 in one-time health and safety funding to licensed child care programs
- provided capital funding to the Ryerson Heights Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre and to the St. Gabriel's before and after school program
- provided start-up costs to all new programs
- signed fee subsidy agreements with all new programs
- provided wage subsidy funding to the FTE child care staff associated with the space expansion
- provided wage improvement funding to child care staff equating to approximately \$453 per FTE
- allocated \$77,500 for the special needs resourcing program
- participated in numerous collaborative professional development opportunities, quality initiatives and recognition events
- collaborated in all aspects of Best Start Week including the Parent Information Fair
- dedicated \$300,000 to Aboriginal child care programming
- dedicated \$300,000 to the establishment of a French-language child care program

## **1.2 Addressing Service Gaps, Needs and Priorities**

The *2006-2009 Brantford/Brant Child Care Service Plan* identified several service gaps, needs and priorities that, for the most part, have been described in earlier local planning documents and research reports. While the *2006-2009 Child Care Service Plan* listed these gaps, needs and priorities under the headings of child care, early years services and more generic services, in hindsight these headings are somewhat arbitrary and in many instances are applicable to more than one provider of early learning and care programs. In recognition of the desire to

integrate early learning and care service planning, the existing gaps, needs, and priorities have been re-framed under the following headings:

- Availability
- Accessibility
- Enhancing quality
- Public education and awareness
- Services for specific populations
- Community outreach

Section 1.2 of the *Best Start Community Plan* describes in detail the progress that has been made in addressing these gaps, needs and priorities.

### **1.3 2006 Service Levels and Expenditures**

Section 5 of this service plan provides detailed information on the 2006 service levels achieved and the associated expenditures. With respect to the fee subsidy budget allocation, the City of Brantford Child Care Services continues to monitor service levels and to place children quickly into the licensed child care system. In those instances where a child has been placed on a waiting list, it is as a result of the lack of an age-appropriate space in the parent's preferred location rather than a lack of fee subsidy.

Funding made available for wage subsidy and for Best Start wage improvement was fully expended during 2006. The expansion that has occurred and that is planned to occur will result in increased expenditures to address the compensation of staff employed in the child care system.

The funding allocations for the special needs resourcing program, used to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care system, were fully expended including those funds that were available through the ELCC and Best Start budgets.

Lastly, all those dollars allocated to resource centres were expended as was the approved additional surplus funding that became available within the overall regular cost-shared child care budget.

### **1.4 Wait List Management Strategies**

The City of Brantford Child Care Services has chosen to defer the establishment of a wait list management strategy until such time as discussions have concluded between the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

## Activities and Community Engagement Process

Communication with and the engagement of parents and other community stakeholders continues to be of importance to the City of Brantford Child Care Services. Section 2.4 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* describes in detail the many actions that have been taken to ensure that key stakeholders are engaged and that their respective needs and priorities are made known and acted upon.

For example, the Best Start Network's establishment of an Aboriginal Advisory Committee, a Francophone Advisory Committee and a Parent Engagement Committee ensures that these voices are not overlooked. Further, parent surveys such as those distributed at the April 2007 Parent Information Fair provide parents with the opportunity to provide input on the types of early learning and care programs they would like to see in their neighbourhood, the barriers they face in accessing services, and the vehicles they currently use to receive information on programs, services and upcoming events.

It should also be noted that the April 26<sup>th</sup> Community Consultation session, jointly planned and coordinated by the City of Brantford Child Care Services, the OEYC: Brant, and the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network provided an opportunity to communicate with service providers and to gain their input into the completion of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan*. Twenty-seven individuals from twenty-one community agencies and programs willingly gave of their time and expertise to ensure that the community's views were made know.

Service providers for children with special needs are actively engaged in child care planning and service delivery in a variety of ways. First and foremost, the Brantford/Brant community has adopted the principle that "a child is a child" and as such inclusion is paramount to all activities related to the provision of early learning and care activities.

Through their membership on the Child Care Advisory Committee, and the Best Start Network and its various Committees and Task Forces, service providers for children with special needs are provided with ongoing opportunities to contribute their expertise to program planning and service delivery, and to sustain and strengthen partnerships with other service providers.

The City of Brantford Child Care Services and the Best Start Network and its individual members all agree that further attention must be paid in the coming months to better engage other culturally and/or linguistically diverse stakeholders and service providers now that the engagement of the Aboriginal and Francophone communities is underway.

## **2007-08 Strategies to Move Forward with the Community Vision For Best Start**

This section of the Plan provides an overview of the strategies that will be pursued in 2007-08 in order to move closer to achieving the community's vision for Best Start. In particular, emerging needs and gaps within the community are identified, the service priorities and service management strategies identified in the *2006-09 Brantford/Brant Child Care Service Plan* to address the gaps are referenced, and challenges in doing so are mentioned.

### **3.1 Emerging Service Needs and Gaps**

Section 3.1 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* identified and described several emerging service gaps and needs that are common to all providers of early learning and care programs – sustaining community capacity, research and evaluation, culturally sensitive programming, Aboriginal needs and Francophone needs. Two other emerging needs that were identified at the Community Consultation session are discussed below given their particular relevance to the child care system – wage subsidy pressures and the increasing demand for special needs resourcing.

*Wage subsidy pressures* – Wage subsidy pressures increase with the licensing of each new program as each staff member hired in accordance with staffing ratios contained in the *Day Nurseries Act* is entitled to a wage subsidy. These pressures may act as a deterrent in the establishment of new programs or in the expansion of existing programs.

*Increasing demand for special needs resourcing* – The child care expansion that is currently being planned for 2007 and 2008 will unquestionably lead to increased caseloads for staff of the Early Integration Program. Similarly, the introduction of new Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres will lead to increased demand for the services available through the Child Development Program.

It is also expected that the *demand for licensed school-aged programs* will increase as a result of the introduction of Best Start. In particular, as licensed child care has become more available for JK/SK children, many parents have expressed their desire to enrol their children in licensed school-aged programs. The staffing ratios for school-aged programs are often more financially viable to operate and yet, wage subsidies are not available to these programs through Best Start funding to keep them affordable for parents and to appropriately compensate staff.

Section 3.1 of the *Best Start Community Plan* also speaks to the results of the 2006 Early Development Instrument (EDI) as a means of identifying neighbourhoods in which children may be developmentally vulnerable as they enter the formal education system. Once neighbourhood density figures have been compiled

and the detailed findings of the 2006 Census become known, this information will be combined with the EDI scores to paint a more current, in-depth profile of each neighbourhood to assist in the planning process. In other words, this exercise is expected to point to specific neighbourhoods within Brantford/Brant that should be targeted for child care expansion.

### 3.2 Strategies to Address Service Needs and Gaps

Numerous strategies were proposed in the 2006-09 Brantford/Brant Child Care Service Plan to address the previously identified service delivery and service management strategies. It is important to note that these strategies were developed to be implemented over a three year period and as such they are in various stages of completion and in fact many of them are ongoing in nature.

As can be seen from Appendix H in the Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan, these strategies are closely aligned with and in many cases mirror those developed at the April 2007 Community Consultation session.

Service Delivery Priority #1 – To increase access to high quality child care
<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore options to address transportation barriers faced by parents</li> <li>• Ensure that service providers are aware of the resources available to Brantford/Brant children and families</li> <li>• Partner with community agencies and service providers to ensure that parents have access to up-to-date, user friendly information on programs and services, vacancies and waiting lists</li> <li>• Support community outreach efforts aimed at teenage families, low-income families and families living in at-risk or high-risk environments</li> <li>• Support the development of programming that is culturally sensitive</li> <li>• Survey parents on their satisfaction with the fee subsidy and placement process</li> <li>• Explore the feasibility of entering into reciprocal agreements with neighbouring child care delivery agents</li> </ul>

Service Delivery Priority #2 – To increase the availability of high quality child care programs
<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the expansion of licensed infant, toddler, preschool, JK/SK and school-aged centre-based programs</li> <li>• Facilitate the creation of new licensed child care options in under-served neighbourhoods, in neighbourhoods where children and young families are known to reside, and in neighbourhoods deemed to be at-risk or high-risk</li> <li>• Continue to actively recruit licensed private home child care providers</li> <li>• Conduct annual reviews of the per diems and rates paid to licensed centre-based and home-based child care providers on behalf of subsidy eligible families</li> <li>• Encourage child care providers to provide flexible hours of care</li> <li>• Promote the availability of complementary early learning and care programs such as the child care resource centres, the OEYC: Brant, Launch Pad programs and Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres</li> <li>• Partner with service providers and community agencies in the development of creative models of service delivery</li> <li>• Recruit child care providers willing to expand or provide new child care spaces as part of Best Start</li> </ul>

<p>Service Delivery Priority #3 – To promote the inclusion of children with special needs</p> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore a means of ensuring that funding for special needs resourcing reflects the demand for service</li> <li>• Explore methods of expanding special needs resourcing to informal caregivers, parents caring for children at home and early years programs</li> <li>• Promote the importance of early intervention and prevention</li> <li>• Support information sharing and collaboration amongst those working with children with special needs</li> <li>• Encourage the provision of educational opportunities for child care professionals to further the concept of inclusion</li> <li>• Provide parents of children with special needs with options while they are waiting for specialized services</li> </ul>
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<p>Service Delivery Priority #4 – To recognize the contributions that all caregivers make to early childhood education, care and development</p> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to advocate for and monitor the need for increased wage subsidy funding to address 'pressures' within the wage subsidy program</li> <li>• Continue to ensure that all child care operators are informed of the criteria utilized in the allocation of wage subsidies</li> <li>• Collaborate with community partners in the development of a community-wide plan to address staffing in licensed centre-based programs</li> <li>• Partner with service providers and community agencies in assessing and responding to the professional development needs of child care professionals and caregivers</li> <li>• Continue to publicly recognize the contributions made by child care professionals and licensed home child care providers</li> <li>• Advocate to the Ministry for the granting of equivalency status of child care professionals and for reviewing child/teacher ratios</li> <li>• Provide orientation and ongoing professional development opportunities for Boards of Directors</li> <li>• Promote the early childhood profession as a career choice</li> </ul>
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<p>Service Delivery Priority #5 – To promote the importance of quality early childhood education and healthy growth and development</p> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance public awareness efforts in rural portions of the County</li> <li>• Partner with service providers and community agencies in enhancing the community's awareness of child care issues and the importance it has on ensuring that children have the best possible start in life</li> <li>• Provide parents with the knowledge and skills to select quality child care</li> <li>• Collaborate with the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant in implementing the <i>Raising the Bar Quality</i> initiative</li> <li>• Encourage recreational programs to attain <i>High 5</i> accreditation</li> <li>• Advocate for the enhancement of provincial licensing standards under the <i>Day Nurseries Act</i></li> <li>• Make parents aware of the information, resources and support available through the resource centres, the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant, Launch Pad programs and the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres</li> <li>• Encourage innovation and collaboration in the design and delivery of child care programs</li> <li>• Promote the economic and social benefits of quality child care as a support to families and as an important contributor to healthy growth and development</li> </ul>
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Service Management Priority #1 – To provide a leadership role in the continued development of a coordinated, integrated, inclusive child care system
<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek ongoing advice from the Child Care Advisory Committee on the planning, management, funding and operation of the child care system</li> <li>• Continue to enhance partnerships with the early years service system, the health care system, the education system and other such systems utilized by children and their parents and caregivers</li> <li>• Monitor emerging trends, research, best practices and policy directions</li> <li>• Provide ongoing opportunities to consult with and seek the input of key stakeholders</li> <li>• Participate in local and provincial planning activities that are mandated to address the needs of children, parents and families</li> <li>• Partner with the resource centres and the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant (under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding) in measuring program satisfaction and outcomes once the provincial evaluation template is made available</li> <li>• Utilize demographic, social, health, economic and child related indicators (such as the Early Development Instrument, 2006 Census, Brant Early Years Community Report Card) to assist in establishing community priorities</li> <li>• Complete annual reviews of the Brantford/Brant Child Care Service Plan</li> </ul>

Service Management Priority #2 – To seek opportunities to increase the amount of funding available to support the child care needs of Brantford Brant
<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to monitor program expenditures and service levels</li> <li>• Continue to prioritize and allocate in-year fee subsidy surplus dollars as they become available</li> <li>• Continue to utilize a portion of the National Child Benefit Supplement reinvestment funds to support Brantford/Brant child care priorities</li> <li>• Explore and utilize options (such as Best Start funding) to make available start-up funds or minor capital dollars to promote the enhancement or expansion of child care programs</li> <li>• Participate in local, provincial and federal advocacy efforts for the development of an adequately funded child care system</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Challenges in Addressing Service Needs and Gaps

Appendix I of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan* identifies and describes several challenges that exist in addressing service gaps and in moving forward with the Best Start vision. Several strategies to be undertaken in the coming year to overcome them are also included in the Appendix. While the majority of these challenges were identified in the January 2006 *Integrated Implementation Plan*, several new ones have come to light in recent months. Those that are seen to directly impact upon the ability to address child care service needs and gaps are briefly discussed below.

*Sufficient ongoing funding* – Funding is required to sustain existing programs. While Best Start dollars are intended to sustain child care programs for children aged 0 to 6, these dollars may not be used to sustain the spaces created for children aged 6 to 12. While funding commitments have been made in the recent federal and provincial budgets, it is too soon to tell whether they will be sufficient enough to sustain the system or whether they will continue should a change in government occur. Further, ongoing funding is required to support the continued implementation of the Raising the Bar on Quality initiative.

*Staffing shortages* – The inability to recruit and retain a sufficient number of early childhood professionals continues. This problem has and will continue to become more pronounced given the expansion that has occurred in the licensed child care system and the plans that are being made for future expansion.

*Impact of child care expansion on existing programs* – Over the past eighteen months, it appears that some of those home child care providers who are located near the new JK/SK child care programs may be experiencing a decline in their enrolment. In addition, staff from existing child care programs have in some instances, sought employment in one of the new programs thus creating a staffing shortage in those previously existing programs.

*Geography and transportation* – Many parents in urban and rural areas of Brantford/Brant continue to face barriers caused by the lack of affordable transportation. While some assistance is available for transportation costs, it is typically not able to be accessed for the purposes of attending licensed child care (with the exception of young parents participating in the LEAP program).

*Meeting community expectations* – Parents have come to expect that a similar array of services will be available in each Brantford/Brant neighbourhood. While this is the vision of Best Start, funding realities have meant that resources have been targeted at those neighbourhoods most in need of licensed child care and of other early learning and care programs.

*Marketing of all services for children from prenatal to age twelve* – With the introduction of Best Start, public funding has been directed to early learning and care programs for children under the age of six. The enhancement and expansion of child care programs for children aged six to twelve have not benefited from a comparable investment of new dollars.

### **3.4 Sustaining the New Child Care Spaces**

The City of Brantford Child Care Services continues to make fee subsidy dollars available to parents who have chosen to enrol their children in those child care programs that expanded or were newly licensed as of September 2006. In addition, wage subsidy funding (up to the amount that was available) has been provided to these programs to increase the affordability of the programs and to address staff compensation levels. Best Start funding was also provided to Lansdowne Children's Centre to enhance the Early Integration Program to ensure that the new child care spaces were inclusive to children with special needs. Further, start-up costs were funded under Best Start to assist programs to ensure that programs did not incur deficits in their early days of operation.

### **3.5 Strategies to Address System Pressures**

The City of Brantford is committed to maximize the use of the enhanced Best Start funding that it has been provided with. Other funding envelopes, such as

the regular cost-shared child care budget and the ELCC budget, will be utilized to the extent possible and in accordance with Ministry policy directives, to support those components of the child care system that do not meet the Best Start funding criteria.

## Strategies for System Integration

System integration is a priority under Best Start and as such the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network is developing plans to move the community further along the continuum of system integration. As a key partner at the Network table, the City of Brantford Child Care Services has an integral role to play in this process.

This section of the Plan speaks to the activities that have occurred and that will occur in the future to promote integration amongst the Best Start Network partners. Several integration initiatives are also highlighted that are specific to the City of Brantford Child Care Services.

### 4.1 Integration Amongst Network Partners

Section 2.1 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* and Appendices D and E of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Early Learning and Care Plan* describes the structure that has been adopted by the Best Start Network to ensure that the planning for early learning and care programs occurs in an integrated fashion. The establishment of the following Committees<sup>26</sup>, all of which include City of Brantford Child Care Services representation has meant that programs and services will be better positioned to respond to the expressed needs of the community.

- Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- Francophone Advisory Committee
- Hub Committee (soon to be renamed the Service Integration Committee)
- Parent Engagement Committee
- Child Care Advisory Committee

Section 2.3 of the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* describes the many linkages that have been established with other planning bodies and also identifies several other sectors or service systems with which to establish and/or strengthen linkages.

By far, the most challenging issue being faced by the City of Brantford Child Care Services and others in moving forward with the community's vision for an integrated system of services is adequate, sustainable, ongoing funding to maintain existing services and to expand programs and services into the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres that are currently operational or that will be established in the future. From the perspective of the City of Brantford Child Care Services, the fact that the regular cost-shared child care budget has not increased for at least five years also poses a challenge to system integration given the fact that the child care needs of children aged six to twelve have been largely ignored by senior levels of government. As mentioned previously, the introduction of Best Start has led to an increasing demand for licensed

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<sup>26</sup> Several Task Forces have also been established most of which also contain City of Brantford Child Care Services representation.

school-aged programs – a demand that may not be able to be met within the current cost-shared child care budget. Further, the special needs resourcing program and the resource centre program have also been held at pre-existing funding levels and as such have experienced operating deficits as they respectively attempt to respond to the increased demand for service.

## **4.2 Child Care Integration Initiatives**

### Integrating Child Care and Schools

Even prior to the implementation of Best Start and the provincial Schools First Policy, the Brantford/Brant community took several important steps towards the integration of child care with schools. More recently, Child Care Construction Task Forces have been established at each school site at which a new child care program was (or is in the process of) being established. These Task Forces, comprised of representatives from the applicable school board, the Best Start Network, the City of Brantford Child Care Services, the OEYC: Brant, and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, have been given the mandate to facilitate the design of the available physical space.

In addition, school board representation is present on the Child Care Advisory Committee to contribute to the planning process for school entry. Local school boards have also actively participated on the Parent Engagement Committee and on the committee tasked with organizing the inaugural Parent Information Fair which took place in April 2007. The local school boards have also sought out and received articles on the community's actions related to Best Start to include in their school newsletters.

Participants at the Community Consultation developed numerous strategies that will be pursued to further develop an integrated and seamless day of early learning and care for children in child care and attending elementary school. To provide all children with the same opportunities to achieve success in school, these strategies extend themselves to child care centres located within and outside of schools as well as to home child care programs.

#### *Child care programs in schools*

- Location does not necessarily mean affiliation – religious or otherwise
- Cooperation, coordination and collaboration between child care programs and schools (not just co-existing)
- Consent to cross over communication and sharing of information
- Joint ECE/kindergarten professional development
- Quality child care information available at all schools (by Internet at minimum)
- Share resources and experiences
- Maintain space within the schools and access to it outside of school hours

- Use statistical information to target appropriate schools to provide programming
- Collaboration on JK/SK scheduling and programming
- Joint integrated programming for special events, entertainment etc.
- Increase school personnel's awareness of Best Start
- Continued commitment from school boards
- Ongoing planning of next steps beyond 2009
- Promotion of Schools First Policy
- Buy in from Ministry of Education
- Identify a "lead" for further integration
- Changes in *Day Nurseries Act*
- Complimentary curriculum

#### *Child care programs not in schools*

- Joint ECE/kindergarten professional development
- Quality child care information available at all schools (by Internet at minimum)
- Address transportation issues
- Invite to open houses and parent nights
- Collaboration on JK/SK scheduling and programming
- Transition planning e.g. tours of the school, preparation activities
- Enhance communication to schools with respect to the availability of child care
- Identify a "lead" for further integration subject to available funding
- Ongoing planning of next steps beyond 2009

#### *Home child care program*

- Home child care providers to attend school-based functions (licensed home child care agencies)
- Develop a home child care provider directory at each school to be shared with parents looking for care (licensed home child care agencies)
- Quality child care information available at all schools (by Internet at minimum)
- Include location of home child care providers on EDI maps
- Get to know the teachers when picking up and dropping off children
- Inform schools of the availability of services in the surrounding area
- Develop more connections to neighbourhood schools
- Provide more training and education to providers (many supports and training opportunities are currently offered by the OEYC: Brant)

#### Integrating Child Care with Other Children's Services Providers

The City of Brantford Child Care Services, the OEYC: Brant, the Brant County Health Unit and Lansdowne Children's Centre have a lengthy history of joint planning, program development and service delivery. As such, programs such

as child care, early years services, preschool speech and language, infant hearing, Healthy Babies Healthy Children and infant development are well integrated. Even prior to the advent of Best Start, local school boards, the libraries and other providers of services to children and their families such as the Children's Aid Society and the Family Counselling Centre were participating in integrated planning and service delivery as evidenced by the establishment of OEYC: Brant satellite sites and Launch Pad sites at elementary schools.

As referenced in the *Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan*, a common Memorandum of Understanding has been developed that will be utilized by future programs opening in the community where a host agency and lead agency is present as a means of formalizing cooperative and collaborative partnerships amongst service providers.

Section 4.3 of the *Best Start Community Plan* and Appendices K and L of the *Early Learning and Care Plan* also identify the mechanisms that have been put in place and that are proposed to ensure that children, parents and caregivers have simplified and convenient points of access to early learning and care services. In particular, the eleven OEYC: Brant satellite sites and Launch Pad sites all provide access to quality child care. In the coming year, all of these sites (the majority of which are situated in elementary schools) will be re-named to Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres to increase the public's awareness of the Best Start vision.

For the purposes of the *Best Start Community Plan*, the Ryerson Heights and the St. Gabriel's Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres have been profiled as existing 'hubs' given that a licensed child care program is available on-site. For this same reason, the Bellview School Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre is named in Appendix L as a hub anticipated to be operational in January 2008 coinciding with the licensing of a 52 space child care program. While additional Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres may be established in the years to come, they are subject to the availability of capital and operating funding and as such are only speculative at this time.

**Service Levels and Expenditures Template**

Data Element	2006 Actual			2007 (see Note)		
	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%
Fee Subsidy Expenditures	\$1,295,976.	\$188,805	\$328,616	\$1,593,195	\$271,721	\$476,820
Fee Subsidy # of Children Served	460	75	40	540	75	55
OW Formal Expenditures	\$131,721			\$312,937		
OW Formal # of Children Served	60			75		
OW Informal Expenditures	\$42,029			\$48,361		
OW Informal # of Children Served	42			45		
Special Needs Resourcing Expenditures	\$715,264	\$31,385	\$36,109	\$715,246	\$31,385	\$87,604
Special Needs Resourcing # of Children Served	220	15	5	220	15	12
Special Needs Resourcing # of FTE Resource Teachers	14					1.5
Resource Centres Expenditures	\$439,980			\$436,865		
Resource Centres # of Children Served	1391			1700		
Wage Subsidy NP Expenditures	\$960,694	\$186,101	\$27,014	\$960,693.67	\$195,005.39	\$81,043.46
Wage Subsidy NP # of Contracts	12	6		12	6	3
Wage Subsidy NP CBCC # of FTEs	106.12	33.01	9.97	116.33	11.92	9.97
Wage Subsidy Commercial Expenditures	\$111,556	\$73,188	\$22,357	\$111,556	\$141,165.44	\$28,935.62
Wage Subsidy Commercial # of Contracts	2	3		2	3	2
Wage Subsidy Commercial CBCC # of FTE	17.77	23.34	3	18.11	17.22	3

Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan

Data Element	2006 Actual			2007 (see Note)		
	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%
Wage Subsidy Pay Equity Expenditures 80%	\$57,432					
Wage Improvements NP Expenditures			\$48,909			\$48,909
Wage Improvements NP # of Contracts			11			11
Wage Improvements NP CBCC # of FTEs			106.61			106.61
Wage Improvements Commercial Expenditures			\$15,851			\$15,851
Wage Improvements Commercial # of Contracts			6			6
Wage Improvements Commercial CBCC # of FTEs			30.28			30.28
Wage Improvement Avg. Percentage Wage Increase			N/A			N/A
Planning Expenditures			\$20,240			\$33,300
Total # of new spaces created under Best Start			138			
Total # of new spaces for 0-4 years			25.2			
Total # of new spaces for JK/SK			112.8			
# of new Francophone spaces for 0 – 4 years	N/A		N/A			
# of new Francophone spaces for JK/SK	N/A		N/A			
# of new Aboriginal spaces for 0 – 4 years	N/A		N/A			
# of new Aboriginal spaces for JK/SK	N/A		N/A			
<b>Best Start Start-up:</b>						
Expenditures for Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces			\$69,252.20			

Brantford/Brant 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan

Data Element	2006 Actual			2007 (see Note)		
	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces			94			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces for 0 – 4 years			15.60			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces for JK/SK			78.40			
Expenditures for New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools			\$19317.67			
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools			44			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools for 0 – 4 years			0			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools for JK/SK			44			
Expenditures for New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools			\$49,934.53			
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools			44			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for 0 – 4 years			24			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for JK/SK			20			
Expenditures for New NP Licensed Spaces in French Lang. Centres			NA			
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces in French Lang. Centres			NA			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for 0 – 4 years			NA			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for JK/SK			NA			

Data Element	2006			Projected 2007		
	Cost Shared 50/50	ELCC 50/50	Best Start 100% (N/A) 1	Cost Shared 50/50	ELCC 50/50	Best Start 100% (N/A) 1
Child Care Administration	\$260,820	\$58,600	\$83,346	\$260,820	\$58,600	\$83,346

NOTE: Does not include the recently confirmed \$342,800 in enhanced Best Start funding that will be received for 2007.

## Glossary of Terms

*Accessibility* – The availability of services to all people to the extent that one is able to secure needed services with physical, language, cultural, economic and any other barriers minimized or eliminated. Accessible services are also located nearby and are open during evenings and weekends.

*Affordability* – The degree to which the price of early learning and care programs is a realistic family expense.

*Availability* – The degree to which age-appropriate services exist and are able to meet the demand for service without placing families on a long waiting list.

*Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre* – The term used in Brantford/Brant to describe neighbourhood based 'hubs' that provide access to an array of early learning and care programs, some specialized services and linkages to other specialized services. In some instances, a licensed child care program is available on-site while in other cases, direct access to licensed child care information is available. Many of the Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres began as OEYC: Brant satellite sites or as Launch Pad sites and most are located in elementary schools. Centres are staffed by early childhood educators and are intended to provide families of young children with streamlined access to programs and services.

*Capacity* – The human and financial resources technology, skills, knowledge and understanding required to permit organizations and agencies to do their work and fulfill what is expected of them by stakeholders. The term 'capacity' is also used to denote the total number of children that may be in care at any one time according to the license issued by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

*Caregiver* – An individual who provides care and protection for children in or outside the home. Caregivers may include parents, relatives, child care workers and early childhood educators.

*Child Care Centre* – A facility, licensed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, which provides regularly scheduled care for a group of children one month of age through twelve years of age for periods of less than twenty-four hours.

*Collaboration* – The act of working in partnership, agreement and accord to reach an outcome. Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.

*Co-location* – One or more service providers sharing the same physical space.

*Community* – An area having common geography and/or neighbourhood where people have shared interests. It is a natural catchment area for services that acknowledge linkages, consumer patterns of travel and communication.

*Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM)* – Municipalities and District Social Services Administration Boards to which the Province of Ontario has devolved responsibility for the management and delivery of Ontario Works, child care and social housing. Some CMSMs are also responsible for land ambulance and public health.

*Continuum of Services* – An unbroken, seamless provision of services.

*Coordination* – The adjustment of relations between organizations or parts of organizations to harmonize goals and plans.

*Day Nurseries Act* – Legislation enacted by the Province of Ontario that governs the funding and licensing of nursery schools, child care centres and private home child care agencies.

*Early Identification and Intervention* – A range of programs and services designed to enhance the development of young children with special needs or who are at risk of developmental delay. Such programs and services can improve outcomes and reduce the need for future services.

*Early Learning and Care* – A range of programs and services for children and their parents and caregivers that foster healthy child development. Examples of such programs include parenting support, parent education, and preschool speech and language.

*Fee Subsidy* – Financial assistance that is provided towards the cost of licensed child care. Parents who are “persons in need” (as defined by the Day Nurseries Act) and parents of children with special needs may be eligible to receive a fee subsidy.

*Inclusion* – The practice of supporting the participation of children with disabilities or with special needs to assist them in reaching their full potential.

*Income Test* – Effective January 1, 2007 eligibility for a child care fee subsidy is determined through an income test which is based on a family's net income. Prior to this date, eligibility was determined using a needs test which took into account income, assets and allowable expenditures.

*Informal Care* – The provision of child care through an unlicensed or unregulated private arrangement between a family and the caregiver. Informal care may be provided in the parent's home or in the caregiver's home. These arrangements are not licensed and are not regulated by the Day Nurseries Act. The only requirement is that the caregiver may not care for more than five children, plus their own, at a time.

*Licensed Care* – Also referred to as formal or regulated care, this care may be provided in child care centres or in supervised private homes in accordance with the licensing standards of the Day Nurseries Act.

*Nursery School* – Group programs, licensed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, designed for children aged three to five. Normally they operate for three to four hours per day and from two to five days per week.

*Parental Involvement* – Building strong effective relationships and partnerships with parents to help solicit advice and ideas on the planning and delivery of children's services.

*Parents and Caregivers* – Birth, adoptive, foster, associate family parents, legal guardians or extended family members who provide care for a child.

*Private Home Child Care* – Licensed care typically provided in the home of a provider. Individual caregivers, operating as independent contractor, provide child care for up to five children under 12 years of age in addition to their own children. Providers are supervised by a licensed home child care agency. The agency is responsible for placing children, monitoring the caregiver, providing resources and support, and ensuring that the caregiver and setting meet the regulations outlined in the Day Nurseries Act.

*Quality Child Care* – The provision of a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that provides opportunities for growth, interaction and development. It is responsive to the needs and uniqueness of each child and to the values and needs of parents.

*Respite Care* – Trained parents or professionals who take care of a child for a brief period of time to give families of children with special needs some relief. This type of care can be provided in the child's home or in another location.

*Schools First Policy* – A Government of Ontario policy that states that schools will be the first choice for the expansion of child care spaces and the development of hubs.

*Service Provider* – An individual or agency providing direct service to children and/or their parents or caregivers. The term should be viewed as all encompassing and taking into account a variety of disciplines, educational backgrounds and approaches to service.

*Service System* – A group of service providers so combined as to form a whole and to operate in unison to meet the needs of children and their parents and caregivers. It offers a comprehensive range of services and supports which ideally are organized in a coordinated, integrated and interactive network to meet the multiple and changing needs of those it serves.

*Special Needs* – A child or family who faces barriers to normal development and functioning in one or more functional areas – physical, social, emotional, intellectual, behavioural or in terms of communicating – or who is 'at risk' or likely to be 'at risk' without some form of intervention.

*Special Needs Resourcing* – Services and supports provided by Resource Teachers and Resource Teacher Assistants to encourage the integration and inclusion of children with special needs.

*Stakeholder* – A person who is affected by an issue or problem or who stands to either gain or lose through the resolution of the issue. Stakeholders therefore include children and their families, service providers, caregivers, educators and the community at large.

*System Integration* – An ongoing process whereby local service providers and relevant stakeholders engage in progressively greater degrees of joint service activity along an integrated continuum to provide families with better access to services. An integrated system also builds on existing community capacity and makes efficient use of public resources.

*Wage Subsidy* – Enhances the salaries and benefits of staff who are employed in regulated child care centres, private home child care agencies, resource centres, and agencies that provide supports to children with special needs. They also increase payments made to home child care providers.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Agencies Represented at the Community Consultation**

Aboriginal Health Centre  
Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board  
Burford Co-Op  
City of Brantford Child Care Services  
Children's Aid Society – Aboriginal Services Unit  
Children's Aid Society – Brant  
Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique Centre-Sud  
Contact Brant  
De dwa da dehs nye – DAHC- FASD/CN Program  
Early Years Data Analysis Coordinator Brant  
Grand Erie District School Board  
Just 4 Mom & Kids  
Lansdowne Children's Centre  
Lansdowne Children's Centre – Preschool Speech and Language  
Ministry of Children and Youth Services  
Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant  
Paris Child Care Inc.  
Six Nations Child Care  
W. Ross McDonald School  
Wee Watch Enriched Private Home Day Care  
Woodview Children's Centre

## APPENDIX B Recent Accomplishments

### The Best Start Network

Section	Accomplishments
Establishing the Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brant Early Years System Advisory Team (BEYSAT) evolved into Best Start Network</li> <li>- Terms of Reference developed in September 2005</li> <li>- Monthly meetings of the Network held since June 2005</li> </ul>
Establishing Accountability – General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All Subcommittee and Advisory Group minutes to be included in the official records that document the work of the Brantford/Brant Best Start Network</li> <li>- Need for an Evaluation Task Force identified (to include the EDI Working Group)</li> </ul>
Establishing Accountability – French Language Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSDCCS representative on local Network</li> <li>- Hamilton-Niagara CMSMs represented on Regional French-language Best Start Network</li> <li>- Minutes of Regional French-language Best Start Network regularly distributed to local Network</li> <li>- 2006-2009 Child Care Service Plan translated and available on the Best Start website</li> <li>- Francophone Services Advisory Group established</li> <li>- \$300,000 earmarked for the development of a French language child care program at École Ste-Marguerite-Bourgeoys – program to open September 2008</li> </ul>
Establishing Accountability – Aboriginal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aboriginal Advisory Group established</li> <li>- \$300,000 earmarked for Aboriginal child care programming</li> <li>- Aboriginal Needs Assessment Final Report completed April 2007 and will be posted on Best Start website following submission to Best Start Network</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child Care Service Plan Update and Transition Plan developed in October 2005</li> </ul>

### The Integrated Implementation Plan

Section	Accomplishments
Needs Assessment for Early Learning and Child Care Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5,500 parent surveys distributed in September and October 2005 (20% response rate)</li> <li>- Parent Engagement Subcommittee established</li> <li>- Brant Early Years Community Report Card completed in December 2005</li> <li>- Extensive profiles completed on 16 Brantford/Brant neighbourhoods</li> <li>- EDI data collected in March 2006</li> </ul>
Plan for Early Learning and Care Hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hub Subcommittee established</li> <li>- OEYC: Brant responsible for the co-ordination of Early Learning and Parenting Centres</li> <li>- Seven existing OEYC and six existing Launch Pad sites to serve as Early Learning and Parenting Centres</li> <li>- Early Learning and Parenting Centre opened at Ryerson Heights in January 2007</li> <li>- Standard Memorandum of Understanding between school boards and operators of Early Learning and Parenting Centres developed</li> </ul>
Plan to Implement Child Care - Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Priority given to neighbourhoods where children are at the highest risk of having difficulties in school and to areas experiencing high growth</li> <li>- 138 new centre-based spaces for children aged 0 to 6 licensed by September 2006</li> <li>- 5 new centre-based spaces for toddlers licensed since September 2006</li> <li>- 146 new centre-based spaces for children aged 6-12 licensed between April 2006 and April 2007</li> <li>- 104 additional spaces planned for children aged 0 to 6 during 2008</li> <li>- 61 French-language spaces to be licensed during 2008</li> <li>- Operators selected for the new school-based programs through an Expression of Interest process</li> <li>- \$390,000 in capital dollars provided to Ryerson Heights for the Best Start Parenting Centre and to St. Gabriel's before and after school program</li> <li>- \$69,252 provided for start-up costs at all new programs</li> <li>- \$12,865 allocated in 2006 to existing licensed child care operators for Health and Safety related minor capital items</li> <li>- 120.5 Early Childhood Educators registered with the Brantford Brant Data Base as of April 2006</li> </ul>
Plan to Implement Child Care – Fee Subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fee Subsidy Agreements signed with all existing, new and expanded programs</li> <li>- Income testing introduced in January 2007 in accordance with MCYS regulations and policy directions</li> <li>- City of Brantford Child Care Services went web-based</li> </ul>
Plan to Implement Child Care – Wage Subsidy and Wage Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruitment and Retention survey conducted</li> <li>- Implementation of revised MCYS Wage Subsidy Guidelines in May 2006</li> </ul>

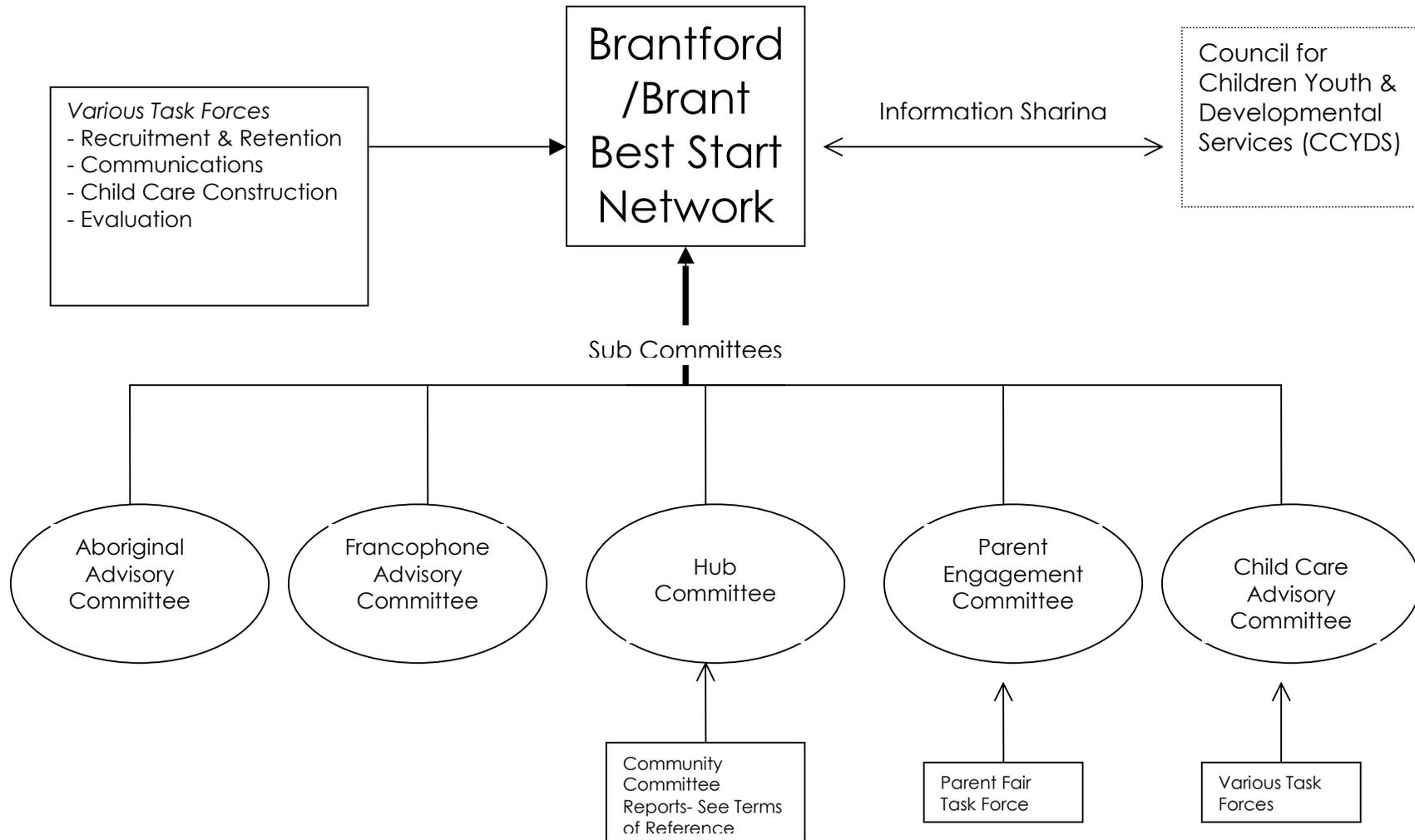
Section	Accomplishments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wage subsidy provided to the FTE child care staff associated with the space expansion that has occurred</li> <li>- Wage improvement funding provided to child care program staff equating to approximately \$453 per FTE</li> </ul>
Plan to Implement Child Care – Special Needs Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total allocation of \$77,500 for the special needs resourcing program</li> <li>- 1.5 FTE increase in staffing</li> <li>- \$20,533 spent on equipment for the special needs resourcing program in 2006</li> <li>- Child Development Program providing consultation and developmental screening to families attending drop-in programs</li> </ul>
Plan to Implement Child Care – Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 16 centres achieve bronze status in Raising the Bar on Quality Initiative during 2005</li> <li>- 19 centres achieve silver status in Raising the Bar on Quality Initiative during 2006</li> <li>- 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> annual CHANGE child care conference held in April 2006 and March 2007 respectively</li> <li>- Numerous collaborative professional development opportunities provided</li> </ul>
Integrated Plan to Enhance Key Early Identification and Intervention Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- \$25,823 in restoration funding received by Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program in 2005</li> <li>- \$21,245 in restoration funding received by Preschool Speech and Language Program in 2005</li> <li>- January 29, 2007 MCYS announcement that additional funding will be provided for the new Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program</li> <li>- Further funding enhancements announced for PSL, IHP and HBHC</li> </ul>
Community's Long Term Vision to Implement Best Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vision and principles developed</li> <li>- <i>Bringing Out the Best in All of Us</i> slogan and pamphlet developed</li> <li>- Best Start website <a href="http://www.ourbeststart4brant.ca">www.ourbeststart4brant.ca</a> and e-mail address <a href="mailto:beststart@brantford.ca">beststart@brantford.ca</a> developed</li> <li>- Brant Community Services for Families with Young Children inventory available at <a href="http://www.eycbrant.ca">www.eycbrant.ca</a></li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan developed January 2006</li> <li>- Child Care Service Plan Update completed in May 2006</li> <li>- Planning for system integration and the 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan begun in November 2006 following the release of the MCYS Addendum</li> <li>- OEYC: Brant celebrates its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary the week of April 10-14, 2007</li> <li>- Best Start Week declared for April 16-21, 2006 in both the City of Brantford and the County of Brant</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX C**  
**Primary Licensed Capacity in Day Nurseries**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Infant Spaces</b>	<b>Toddler Spaces</b>	<b>Preschool Spaces</b>	<b>JK/SK Spaces</b>	<b>School Aged Spaces</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Brantford</b>						
A Child's Paradise	6	15	52	0	15	88
A Child's Paradise Too	0	15	24	20	30	89
A Child's Place Preschool	0	0	24	0	0	24
Academy of Montessori	0	0	16	0	0	16
Banbury Child Care Centre	0	0	32	0	0	32
Beryl Angus Municipal Children's Centre	0	10	32	0	0	42
Boys & Girls Club After School Program	0	0	0	0	60	60
Grandview Child Care Centre	0	0	20	0	15	35
Kiddy Korner Daycare	0	10	16	16	0	42
Kidsworld Y Blueridge	0	0	24	20	0	44
Kidsworld Y Downtown	0	10	32	0	0	42
Noah's Ark Preschool	0	15	36	0	0	51
Our Lady Queen of Peace Montessori Bilingual Centre	0	0	24	0	0	24
Pauline Johnson Child Care Centre	10	10	24	0	0	44
Ryerson Heights Y Childcare Centre	0	0	24	20	30	74
St. Gabriel's Before and After School Program	0	0	0	20	30	50
St. Joseph's Y Child Care Centre	6	10	32	0	0	48
Summer Adventure Day Camp	0	0	0	0	45	45
Three Bears Preschool	6	10	60	0	0	76
West End Y Day Care	10	10	48	0	0	68
<b>Burford &amp; Scotland</b>						
Burford Cooperative Preschool	0	7	8	0	0	15
Just 4 Moms & Kids Co-op	0	10	28	12	30	80
<b>Jerseyville</b>						
Jerseyville-Langford Co-op Nursery School	0	0	16	0	0	16
<b>Paris</b>						
Holy Family Child Care	0	0	16	20	30	66
Montessori Children's Academy Inc.	0	10	24	0	0	34
North Ward School Age Program	0	0	0	0	30	30
Paris Child Care	0	10	32	0	0	42
Queen's Ward School-Age Program	0	0	0	20	15	35
<b>St. George</b>						
St. George Children's Centre	0	0	32	0	30	62
St. George Co-op Nursery School	0	0	16	0	0	16
The Village Playschool	0	0	24	0	0	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>1429</b>

Source: Ministry of Children and Youth Services, March 2007

### APPENDIX D Best Start Network Organizational Chart



## **APPENDIX E**

### **Committee and Task Force Mandates**

#### **Aboriginal Advisory Committee**

The Aboriginal Advisory Committee will be responsible for monitoring and planning for recommendations to the larger Network in matters relating to Aboriginal services as they pertain to the Best Start initiative. This will be achieved through:

- Recommending how best to organize and integrate services to meet its population's needs
- Recommend a system of services that supports Aboriginal children and their parents from prenatal through to the transition into school
- Recommendations for the early learning and care hubs taking into consideration the needs as expressed by the Aboriginal community and any gaps in existing programs
- Monitor the funding allocated for services and make recommendations for its expenditures to the larger Network
- Following target dates and tasks as outlined in the current Best Start workplan
- Recommendation of the Aboriginal parents of the community will be formed through the survey, focus groups, individual parent interviews, and participation of the parent liaison of the Advisory Committee

#### **Francophone Advisory Committee**

The Francophone Committee will be responsible for monitoring and planning for recommendations to the larger Network in matters relating to Francophone services as they pertain to the Best Start initiative. This will be achieved through:

- Recommending how best to organize and integrate services to meet its population's needs
- Recommend a system of services that supports Francophone children and their parents from birth through to the transition into school
- Recommendations for the early learning and care hubs taking into consideration the needs of the Francophone community and any gaps in existing programs
- Monitor the funding allocated for services and make recommendations for its expenditures to the larger Network
- Following target dates and tasks as outlined in the current Best Start work plan

#### **Hub Committee**

The Hub Committee will be responsible for monitoring and planning for recommendations to the larger Network in matters relating to hub services and for promoting community collaboration as they pertain to the Best Start initiative. This will be achieved through:

- Recommending how best to organize and integrate services to meet community needs in the Best Start Parenting Centres

- Recommending a system of services that supports all children and their parents from birth through to the transition to school
- Making recommendations for the early learning and care hubs overall services taking into consideration the needs of specific neighbourhoods
- Following target dated and tasks as outlined in the Best Start work plan
- Encouraging the development of coalitions, partnerships and alliances across all sectors within the community and with Best Start Parenting Centres

### **Parent Engagement Committee**

The Parent Engagement Committee will be responsible for monitoring and planning for recommendations to the larger Network in matters relating to connecting and involving parents/caregivers in the Best Start initiative. This will be achieved through:

- Encouraging parent representatives to serve on the Network and or the Parent Engagement Committee
- Finding ways to engage and inform parents from a wide range of communities and socioeconomic levels
- Reviewing and utilizing the initial parent survey information and making recommendations to the larger Network
- Providing volunteer opportunities for parents
- Following target dates and tasks as outlined in the current Best Start work plan
- Developing and implementing strategies to promote community awareness of Best Start and early learning and child care

### **Child Care Advisory Committee**

The Child Care Advisory Committee is responsible for gathering information, information sharing, and for making recommendations to the larger Network in matters pertaining to an integrated children and family service system for children ages 0-12 years in Brant County. This will be achieved through:

- Identification of community gaps in the provision of child care services
- Providing a vehicle for collaborative planning for child care services
- Making recommendations to ensure that services are consistent with local needs, considering established service and history of service provision
- Acting as a resource and sharing information respecting existing services, research projects and proposed plans relating to child care
- Identifying needs and recommendations for education and training with the child care system
- Providing representation in other community initiatives that pertain to child care services

### **Recruitment and Retention Task Force**

The Recruitment and Retention Committee will be responsible for monitoring and planning for recommendations to the larger Network in matters relating to Early Years Centre Childhood Educator recruitment and retention as they pertain to the Best Start initiative and the Child Care Advisory mandate. This will be achieved through:

- Implementation and maintenance of the ECE database - housed at City of Brantford Child Care Services
- Survey distribution and review regarding matters of recruitment and retention
- Review goals and objectives and update and revise as needed
- Following target dates and tasks as outlined in the current Best Start work plan

### **Communications Task Force**

The Communications Task Force will be responsible for monitoring and planning for recommendations to the larger Network in matters relating to media and public relations as they pertain to the Best Start initiative. This will be achieved through:

- Recommending how best to disseminate information to the media and general public
- Following City protocol for any/all information released to the general public or media
- Developing and making recommendations to the Best Start Network regarding a Communications Protocol
- Following target dates and tasks as outlined in the current Best Start workplan

### **Child Care Construction Task Force**

The Child Care Construction Task Force will facilitate the physical space design of the licensed child care program located in an elementary school. Each Task Force shall consist of one or more representatives from the City of Brantford Child Care Services, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Best Start Network, the Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant, and the respective school board.

### **Evaluation Task Force**

The Evaluation Task Force will exist under the leadership of the Early Years Data Analysis Coordinator Brant and will be responsible for overseeing the completion of the Early Development Instrument and the Brant Early Years Community Report Card.

NOTE: With the exception of the Evaluation Task Force which is in the process of establishing its Terms of Reference, the mandates of the above Committees and Task Forces were all revised between March and May 2007.

## APPENDIX F

### Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique Centre-Sud Submission

1. **Examinez la nature et la structure du processus de planification pour le programme, le service ou l'organisme individuel – quelles occasions y a-t-il de l'intégrer ou de continuer de l'intégrer avec la planification communautaire qui se fait au réseau Meilleur départ, pour aller de l'avant avec le développement d'un système intégré de services locaux?** (Consider the nature and structure of your individual program/service/agency planning process – what opportunities exist to integrate, or further integrate, this planning process with the community planning occurring at the Best Start network table, in order to move forward with the development of a locally integrated system of services?)

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

##### Brantford

Thanks to the agreement signed with the Brantford Region and financial assistance from the CSDCCS, the daycare centre at Sainte-Marguerite-Bourgeois

- Full-time Junior and Senior Kindergarten programs
  - Promotion of daycare centres
  - Joint training of Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators (once a year)
  - Training provided to Early Childhood Educators
  - Coaching provided to Early Childhood Educators
  - Implementation of an educational program for children between the ages of 2½ and 4 entitled "*Pour l'amour des tout-petits*"
  - Meeting of daycare managers (once or twice a year)
  - Administrative support for managers and members of the Board of Directors
  - Shows presented simultaneously to daycare centres and Kindergarten classes
  - Joint field trips for daycare services, preschools and Junior and Senior Kindergarten
  - Kindergarten orientation (children registered in school for the following year visit the Kindergarten class)
  - Policy and Administrative Directive entitled "Garderie en milieu scolaire" ("Daycare Centres in Schools")
2. **Existe-il des possibilités pour le programme, le service ou l'organisme de participer à la prestation de services en collaboration au sein des carrefours de la collectivité qui sont opérationnels ou qui le seront dans les prochaines années? Pour les volets des programmes ou services dans la collectivité, de quelle manière les liens avec les carrefours seront-ils créés ou maintenus?** (Are there opportunities for your program/service/agency to engage in collaborative service delivery within community hubs that are currently operational, or that may be operational in future years? For program/service components delivered within the community, how are or will linkages to the hubs be developed or sustained?)

There are presently no hubs in this region.

Following is a list of services generally provided in English. The services with a checkmark are presently available in French.

- Public Health Department (immunizations)
- CAPC – Community Action Program for Children /PACE – Programme d'action communautaire pour les enfants
- CPNP – Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program/PCNP – Programme canadien de nutrition prénatale
- PSL- Preschool Speech & Language–Services d'orthophonie
- Infant Hearing Programs/Dépistage néonatal des troubles auditifs
- Children's Mental Health/Santé mentale des enfants
- Libraries/ Bibliothèques
- HBHC – Healthy Babies/Healthy Children –Bébés / enfants en santé
- Children's Aid/Aide à l'enfance
- Prenatal/Neonatal - Prénataux/néonataux (EYCO)
- Dental/ Soins dentaires
- Leisure/Loisirs
- Ethnocultural Organizations/Organismes ethno-culturels (e.g./ex. PIDEF ("Francophone School Integration Program"))
- Housing Support/Soutien au logement
- Daycare Services and Before- and After-School Programs/Services de garde & Programmes avant & après école
- Early Learning Programs /Programmes d'apprentissage des jeunes enfants
- Religious organizations/Organismes religieux
- Primary Healthcare (e.g. physicians, nurses)/Soins de santé primaires (ex. médecins, infirmières)
- Resources for Special Needs Children/Ressources pour enfants à besoins spéciaux
- The 18 months Well Baby Visit/Bilan de santé amélioré (18mois)
- ou/or  Well Baby Clinics/Cliniques du bilan de santé
- Other (explain)/Autre (expliquer): (e.g./ex. OASIS) Toronto Foundation for Student Success, Toronto Police Department/Service de Police de Toronto, Knights of Columbus/Les Chevaliers de Colomb:

3. **Existe-t-il des possibilités de créer des mécanismes qui faciliteront la prestation de services en collaboration entre votre programme, service ou organisme et les autres partenaires de Meilleur départ (par ex.: protocoles de communication et de services, protocoles d'entente)?** (Are there opportunities to develop mechanisms that will facilitate collaborative service delivery between your program/service/agency and other Best Start partners (e.g. communication and service protocols, MOUs, etc.)?)

- We need a list of all services in French provided in the Brantford on and available in cooperation with schools, daycare centres and other partners that will be added.

- We need agreement and protocol templates that can be used for agreements between daycare centres, partners and the School Board.
- The new Best Start structure for Francophones and the presence of a program supervisor in each regional office will help to develop and promote services in French.

**4. Y a-t-il des défis à la mise en oeuvre pour que les programmes, services ou organismes aillent de l'avant avec la vision de la collectivité d'un système intégré de services? Veuillez les décrire en incluant une description des stratégies pour les surmonter. (Are there implementation challenges and/or barriers faced by your program/service/agency in moving forward with the community's vision for an integrated system of services? Please describe these challenges and include a description of the strategies to overcome these obstacles.)**

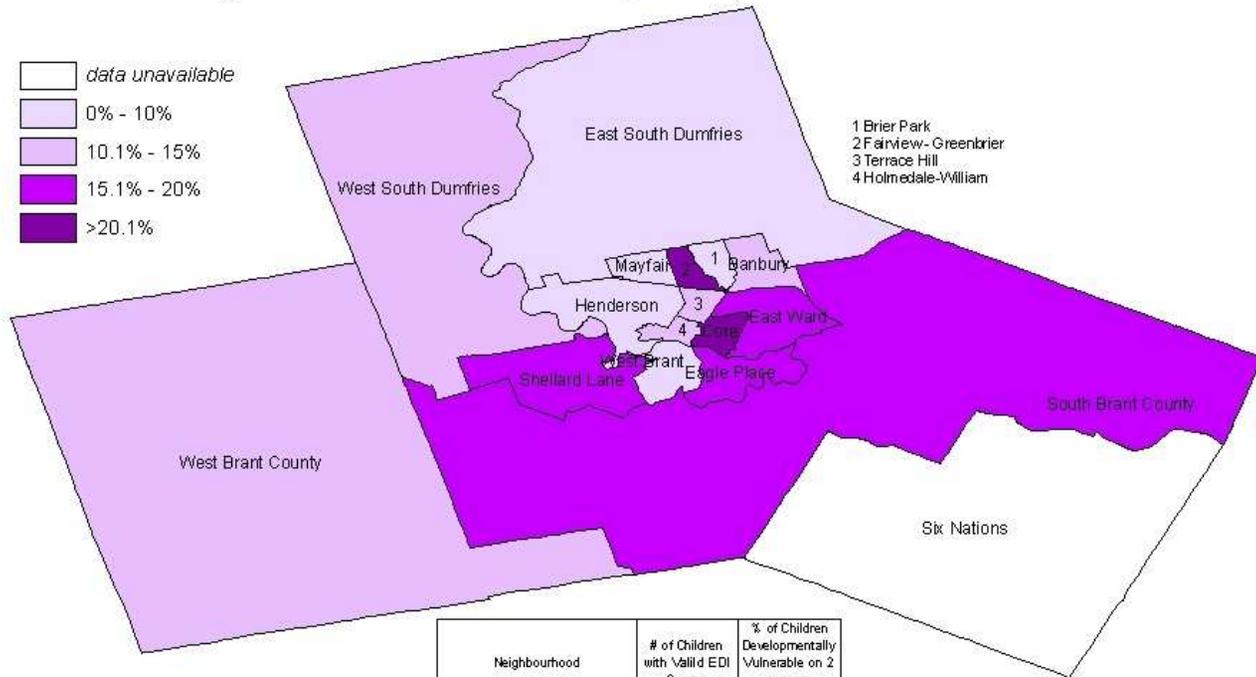
- The structure of Best Start local networks is such that our territory encompasses 13 local networks. We strive to have a presence and involvement in each of them, but distance, limited human resources, the lack of financial resources and scheduling conflicts make it difficult for us to be involved.
- Local networks have also set up different committees to facilitate the implementation of the Best Start vision, and it has become much too onerous for our Board to be actively involved.
- The new structure of the Francophone network makes our job even more difficult, as it requires us to deal with four Francophone networks instead of one. It was verbally announced that a major part of the funding promised to facilitate our involvement in local networks has been lost. This will minimize our involvement in local networks (and we will participate even less in subcommittees).
- At times, the lack of synergy between the different ministries creates significant challenges for the implementation of the Best Start vision. It is clear that this implementation is the responsibility of the MCYS and that the other ministries (Ontario Ministry of Education and/or Ministry of Health) are not sufficiently aware of the initiatives in order to support them.
- Because we must deal with several different regions, it makes it difficult when there are inconsistencies between the requirements of the Ontario Ministry of Education and the MCYS, as well as municipal requirements (e.g. windows, washrooms, ratios, etc.).
- The lack of cooperation from the different municipal departments to facilitate the opening of daycare centres or hubs has created various obstacles. The Health, Planning, Building and Fire Departments, among others, do not seem to subscribe to the Best Start vision. Most renovation and building projects have been delayed due to the various steps and expectations imposed by the municipal departments.
- Physical resources and the distance encompassed by our territory: We would like to open a Francophone hub that would also provide services through satellite sites in daycare centres and schools (we do not like the idea of a hub providing bilingual services). The problem is that we do not have the physical space available to be converted into a hub, and we need to find a central and easily accessible location, given the range of our territory. We must also consider Ministry of Education requirements, such as the maximum capacity of 20 spaces

for preschool classes, Kindergarten classes and primary classes as well as the lack of recognition of spaces used by daycare centres and early childhood services.

- Human resources: we need to recruit people who can communicate and work in French and who can provide specific services (Speech and Language Therapy, Audiology, Specialized ECE, Literacy Consulting, etc.), such as those provided by Early Years Centres or in Anglophone hubs. In most regions, there are no Francophone Health Centres that could play a role in implementing a hub.
- Material resources: those documents that are available in English need to be translated into French (many brochures, etc.)
- Professional development resources: we need to provide workshops in French and to demystify the Best Start vision for all teachers and ECE's. We also need to provide more training for school principals and managers, etc.
- Security system: (City of Toronto mention that the MOE has funded the installation of security systems in all of the schools, but has refused additional funding to enable daycare centres to be connected to the same system?)
- Financial resources to make the Best Start vision a reality.

## APPENDIX G

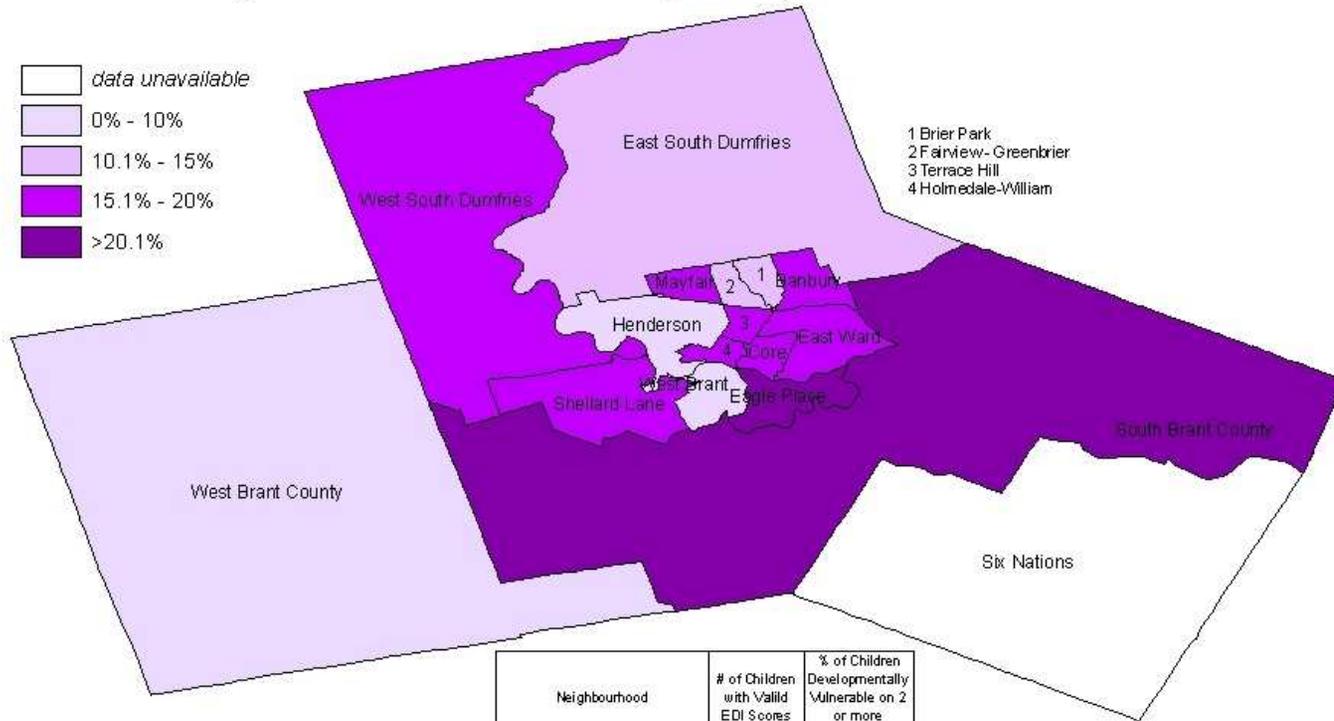
**% of Senior Kindergarten children who were Developmentally Vulnerable on 2 or more EDI Domains - 2002**



Neighbourhood	# of Children with Valid EDI Scores	% of Children Developmentally Vulnerable on 2 or more Domains
East South Dumfries	77	6.5
South Brant-Onondaga	38	18.9
West Brant County	81	14.8
West South Dumfries	119	14.3
Brant County	315	12.7
Banbury	137	12.4
Brier Park	133	9.8
Mayfair	69	21.1
Eagle Place	86	19.8
East Ward	117	16.2
Fairview-Greentrier	55	21.3
Henderson	64	6.3
Holmedale-William	74	12.2
Mayfair	60	8.3
Shellard Lane	45	19.0
Terrace Hill	61	13.1
West Brant	37	2.7
City of Brantford	964	14.0
City of Brantford & Brant County	1279	13.7

Data Source: EDI 2002  
 Created by J. Munro, DAC Brant  
 June 2007

**% of Senior Kindergarten children who were Developmentally Vulnerable on 2 or more EDI Domains - 2006**



Neighbourhood	# of Children with Valid EDI Scores	% of Children Developmentally Vulnerable on 2 or more Domains
East South Dumfries	59	10.2
South Brant County	5	22.5
West Brant County	49	6.1
West South Dumfries	118	16.1
<b>Brant County</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>13.9</b>
Banbury	151	15.2
Brier Park	113	10.6
Com	111	18.0
Edge Place	83	21.2
East Ward	119	16.8
Fairview-Greenbrier	48	14.6
Henderson	64	4.7
Holmedale-William	62	18.2
Mayfair	74	16.2
Shellard Lane	52	15.4
Terrace Hill	53	18.9
West Brant	77	7.8
<b>City of Brantford</b>	<b>1001</b>	<b>15.9</b>
<b>City of Brantford &amp; Brant County</b>	<b>1267</b>	<b>15.5</b>

Data Source: EDI 2006  
 Created by J. Munro, DAC Brant  
 June 2007

## APPENDIX H Strategies to Further Close the Gaps and Meet Community Need

### Availability

Existing Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Increasing the number of licensed child care options and ensuring that fee subsidies are available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support for transportation for clients</li> <li>- having child care in areas not currently serviced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- infant spaces are expensive</li> <li>- transportation</li> <li>- parents will wait for a space at a specific site</li> </ul>
Limited structured programs for infants under one and their parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- need for affordable recreation programs for children from birth to age three</li> <li>- more opportunities to deal with the wait list as the demand is high and classes fill up quickly</li> <li>- education on the balance of structured and unstructured programs and play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- need more dollars to offer more programs as when programs are offered they fill up immediately</li> </ul>
Increase the number and range of parent/child drop ins and parenting programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- community must share responsibility to improve access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schools First Policy is the priority but lack of funding is presenting a barrier</li> </ul>
Programs on literacy, social skills, readiness to learn, emotional development, behavioural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to coordinate, evaluate and monitor the implementation of the three service plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- funding</li> <li>- increased expectations - supply can not address the demand</li> </ul>

### Accessibility

Existing Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Flexible hours of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consider providing flexible hours for both child care and parenting programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- collective agreement barrier</li> <li>- hours of care for children of hospital employees and for other businesses and industries that operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week</li> </ul>
Providing programs at convenient times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- review transportation strategies</li> <li>- locations in every neighbourhood</li> <li>- expansion in County areas</li> <li>- continue promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sustainable funding</li> <li>- location of services</li> <li>- transportation</li> </ul>
Accessibility and affordability of leisure, recreation, art, drama and music events and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to promote availability and affordability to community</li> <li>- continue to expand private sponsors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rural issue</li> <li>- funding</li> <li>- location</li> </ul>
Increasing access particularly in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Burford interest in full day child care</li> <li>- no licensed private home child care in Burford or other rural areas (only in Paris)</li> <li>- evolve through Best Start the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of appropriate space and facilities or rural child care (e.g. Burford)</li> <li>- move to schools in Paris – busing out potential informal care</li> <li>- water and septic issues in Burford</li> </ul>

Existing Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
	early learning and parenting centres to provide more services in rural areas - more rural recreation programs outside of Paris - involve partners with transportation planning - focus on South Brant Onondaga as a result of 2006 EDI scores	
Program affordability	- income testing "grandparenting" - informing government of the need to lower child care fees - expanding partnerships (including service clubs) - using shared spaces	- impact of income testing on potential waiting lists - services are at their limit in terms of what they can provide - cost of mileage for staffing in urban and rural areas
Lack of and affordability of transportation	- new French-language child care program will help families - involve partners to develop a transportation plan	- City bus service is limited - County bus connections to City - larger families to transport - special transportation for special circumstances - rural isolation - transportation for French-language child care program

### Enhancing Quality

Existing Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Accessible, affordable professional development opportunities	- continue to develop skills with professional development opportunities	- evening and weekend professional development sessions tiring after staff have worked all day or all week - difficult to get supply staff to replace staff during program time - budget restraints
Recruitment, retention, recognition and compensation of staff	- continue to work with College of Early Childhood Educators - increase promotion of AECEO - educate the public (parents and other professionals) on the role of early childhood educators - promote professionalism - strengthen connection to secondary school guidance counsellors - collaborate with the Hamilton Recruitment & Retention Committee - provide incentives to encourage people to enter the field - strengthen the connection to the local college	- College of Early Childhood Educators making people aware of what ECEs do and the importance of their role - low wages - not treated as professionals - lack of recognition by community

### Public Education and Awareness

Existing Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Public education and awareness of the importance of early learning and care, factors that contribute to quality, and the informal system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- create opportunities to combine learning opportunities for parents and professionals</li> <li>- create parent-to-parent opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- need more persuasion to involve all partners in human service coordination and integration</li> <li>- reaching those who are not engaged anywhere</li> <li>- sustaining the Aboriginal and Francophone programs</li> </ul>
Expand the number of and range of family-friendly workplace policies and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- family-friendly workplace policies and practices need to be developed</li> <li>- identify legislation</li> <li>- conduct a survey of work places and policies</li> <li>- identify a lead agency to take on the task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- gaining buy-in from employers</li> <li>- location</li> </ul>

### Services for Specific Populations

Existing Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Respect for ethno-cultural and Aboriginal diversity, culture and heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hire an Aboriginal Best Start Coordinator</li> <li>- ensure \$300,000 lasts five years</li> <li>- collaborate with other Aboriginal Centres in the community</li> <li>- continue to recognize the need to increase knowledge of cultural diversity within our community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having Aboriginal access programs – get over own apprehension of attending programs</li> </ul>
Ensuring that programs are available and accessible to children with special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase funding on an ongoing basis</li> <li>- continue to develop the skills of child care staff</li> <li>- revise Reframing Discipline to offer a modified version to families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- funding</li> <li>- prioritizing the needs of clients – serving existing clients and making room for new clients</li> <li>- behavioural issues</li> </ul>

### Community Outreach

Existing Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Outreach to teen parents, isolated families, at-risk families, culturally diverse families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- need strategies to “route” rather than refer some families</li> <li>- Aboriginal Needs Assessment report needs to be finalized and disseminated and strategies planned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of resources for school aged children 6-12 years old</li> <li>- still some concern that high needs families are not accessing services</li> <li>- referrals are not working to bring some families in</li> </ul>

Existing Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Preventing and supporting teenage pregnancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CPNP Aboriginal program to begin again</li> <li>- education</li> <li>- increase infant child care spaces to connect families</li> <li>- Growing Healthy Together Advisory Group to continue with broad representation</li> <li>- provide other teen [programs for teen self-esteem so parents are not having babies as a way of increasing their social network</li> <li>- partner more with school boards</li> <li>- include secondary school volunteer hours in education campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of and cost of infant spaces</li> <li>- demographics of the seasonal and transient population</li> </ul>
Increasing the utilization of post-natal programs for teen parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase community's awareness of programs – elementary and secondary schools, post-secondary schools (Mohawk College, Wilfrid Laurier)</li> <li>- Aboriginal Health Centre starting a pre-natal nutrition program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pregnancy rate</li> <li>- getting clients to utilize or access services (e.g. overcoming barriers)</li> <li>- increasing education pre- and post- pregnancy</li> <li>- communication</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX I Description of Possible Challenges and Strategies to Overcome Them

Implementation Challenge	Continuing Challenge	Strategies
Sufficient ongoing funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- funding required to sustain existing programs and services</li> <li>- uncertainty about future funding</li> <li>- changes in government could signal changes in long term vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provision of sustainability funding</li> <li>- long term funding commitment from senior levels of government</li> <li>- continue to collaborate and strengthen relationships</li> <li>- involve the whole community (e.g. business) in sustaining the system</li> <li>- find 'champions' to tell success stories</li> </ul>
Staffing shortages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- staffing shortages for maternity leaves, vacations and for new programs</li> <li>- wage subsidy pressures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promotion and education of the public and to existing staff</li> <li>- recruitment at secondary schools and colleges</li> <li>- continue to monitor</li> </ul>
Unionization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- impact that any labour disruptions may have on early learning and care programs situated in schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be proactive to ensure that programs do not re-locate to avoid unionization and labour relations issues</li> </ul>
School board enrolment ratios		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to keep school boards at the planning table to maintain and enhance relationships</li> </ul>
School stability (long term space needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- as enrolment declines, some schools may have to close</li> <li>- funding for space in new schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- space may become available in other schools</li> <li>- dedicated space required in new schools</li> </ul>
Impact of child care expansion on existing child care programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- enrolment at private home child care around centres offering JK/SK programs has declined</li> <li>- staff want to move to new centres thus creating staffing shortages in existing centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promote <u>all</u> programs</li> <li>- ensure that parental choice is communicated</li> </ul>
Addressing the needs of Francophone and Aboriginal populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- getting hard and accurate data on population numbers</li> <li>- getting populations to access services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- create user friendly, accessible environments</li> <li>- provide education on the need for early intervention</li> <li>- increase participant's comfort level by offering a variety of programs</li> </ul>

Implementation Challenge	Continuing Challenge	Strategies
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- evaluate ongoing and new gaps to ensure that programs are responsive to the needs of the target population</li> <li>- explore service needs of Francophone families beyond child care services</li> </ul>
Geography and transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cost of transportation</li> <li>- transportation in rural areas</li> <li>- ease of access, hours of operation, routes and transfers of public transportation</li> <li>- car seat legislation</li> <li>- as the size of the City increases, service needs change</li> <li>- some locations close for the summer months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- dollars for transportation to access services</li> <li>- mobile unit to travel to outlying areas</li> </ul>
Potential change in funding arrangements for OEYC and Early Learning and Parenting Centre sites in schools		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to monitor possible future impact</li> </ul>
General determinants of health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- other factors (e.g. housing, income, general health) influence child outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continue to monitor the impact</li> </ul>
Meeting community expectations <b>(NEW)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parents expect a similar array of services in each neighbourhood</li> <li>- parents expect a similar array of services in each community (i.e. expect the same services that are being provided in the demonstration communities)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- target resources to address gaps in a neighbourhood and market the availability of services to neighbourhood residents</li> <li>- collaborate with community partners to offer more services</li> </ul>
Public misconception of the value of drop-in programs <b>(NEW)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parents perceive that only "registered programs" are of value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- need to market the importance of unstructured play and drop-in programs</li> <li>- demonstrate service outcomes</li> </ul>
Marketing of all services for children from pre-natal to age twelve <b>(NEW)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attention has focused on prenatal to age six in recent years thus ignoring programs for children aged six to twelve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- marketing of all services throughout Brantford/Brant, not just on a neighbourhood basis (service location important but not the main issue)</li> <li>- develop Best Start tool kit for schools, parents, service providers and others to bring to life the philosophy of Best Start</li> <li>- use of Your Guide Brant program courses and groups 0-18 years</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX J Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum, made in duplicate is made effective as of "insert date"

BETWEEN:

"insert host agency name"

(hereinafter referred to as the "insert acronym or host agency")

- and -

"insert operating agency name"

Administered by "insert administrating agency if required"

(hereinafter referred to as the "insert acronym or operating agency")

This Memorandum of Understanding is to outline the roles and responsibilities and partnership commitment between the parties.

All involved parties agree to a partnership commitment to the importance of the early years (birth to six years of age) and supporting families and caregivers in their parent and caregiver role.

This agreement is to outline the philosophy behind Early Years Centres and to ensure basic components are protected and understood. It also outlines the roles and responsibilities and partnership commitment amongst the partners.

### **BACKGROUND – Ontario Early Years Centres:**

Ontario Early Years Centres are part of a provincial investment to support children and their families. The "operating agency" is responsible for providing core early years' services.

### **CORE SERVICES – Ontario Early Years Centres:**

- Early Learning and Literacy programs for parents and their children
- Programs to support parents and caregivers in all aspects of early child development
- Programs for new Parents on pregnancy and parenting
- Links to other Early Years programs in the community
- Outreach activities to ensure services are easily accessible

The overwhelming success of pilots and the need for early years programs precipitated the opening of an "operating agency" at "host agency".

All involved parties agree to a partnership commitment to the importance of the early years (birth to six years of age) and supporting families and caregivers in their parent and caregiver role.

This Memorandum of Understanding is to outline the roles and responsibilities and partnership commitment between the parties.

**PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENT:**

*The partners agree to maintain and support the philosophy of the Early Years Centre programs, as outlined in this document.*

- The roles of the partners may evolve but the basic early years vision must be maintained.
- We are open to new partners joining. Terms to be agreed upon by all existing partners.
- Will provide information to and collaboration with the Best Start Network.
- All parties agree to work together to harmoniously fulfill their respective roles and responsibilities

NOW THEREFORE IN CONSIDERATION OF THE MUTUAL COVENANTS HEREIN CONTAINED, IT IS AGREED BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES AS FOLLOWS:

**1. DECISION MAKING:**

The partners will confer and make decisions by consensus regarding the development of new programs, changes in schedule, fund raising and all major decisions which affect the program and its relationship in the school and community.

**2. TERM and TERMINATION:**

- a) This agreement will be in effect upon execution by both parties hereto, and continues in force until "insert date". It shall continue in force from year to year thereafter from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of September each year, unless terminated by notice given in writing by either party to the other, prior to the 31<sup>st</sup> day of May in any year.
- b) The *Operating Agency* will operate the Early Years program one half day per week unless all parties agree otherwise.
- c) The program will be allowed to operate during March, Summer and Christmas breaks, providing the following conditions have been met:
  1. 30 days written notice has been given to both the Principal of the school and to the Assistant Manager of Facility Services responsible for Operations and Maintenance (see e-mail addresses below), and
  2. provided that such continuation of the program will not interfere with school functions or the Board's maintenance plans for the school, and
  3. provided the school is equipped to permit controlled access to the *Operating Agency*.
- d) Despite the foregoing, the terms of this agreement may be reviewed on an annual basis and amended by mutual consent.
- e) The *Host Agency* retains the right to recant consent for the *Operating Agency's* use of its property should it be required for its own need. In such cases, 30 days written notice will be provided to the appropriate supervisory officer of the *Operating Agency*.
- f) Despite the foregoing, this agreement may be terminated by either party where cause exists, immediately, provided that notice has been given by the party alleging cause to the other specifying the complaint and the remedial action necessary to address such complaint, and a period of 30 days has elapsed following such notice, without such remedial action having occurred and this agreement shall terminate accordingly.

### 3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ACTIVE PARTNERS:

The *Host Agency* agrees to:

1. Enter into an agreement with the *Operating Agency* to provide room space including utilities and maintenance, to allow the establishment of a *Best Start Centre* for a period determined by the term of this agreement. The annual cost for this space is estimated at 750 square feet x \$7.00/sq. ft = \$5,250.00
2. Provide the space at no charge during days when regular classes for *Host Agency* students are scheduled, as an in-kind donation to the *Operating Agency* that will facilitate the delivery of their services to the community.
3. Invoice the *Operating Agency* for exclusive use of the room space on days when regular classes for *Host Agency* students are not scheduled for the cost of custodial supplies and services, and with the understanding that custodial services may not be available and further if they are provided the requisite overtime fee will be charged; (at time of contract, custodial costs are estimated at \$100.00 / 5 day week, subject to *Host Agency's* contractual obligations to staff that may change during the term of this agreement;
4. As owner, will make repairs to the structural elements of the room(s) and cover related costs;
5. Permit the *Operating Agency* to make, with the consent of the *Host Agency*, such consent not to be unreasonably withheld, alterations, additions and improvements to the premises that will, in the judgment of the *Operating Agency*, better adapt the location to the purposes of its business; provided, however, that the alterations, additions and improvements shall not impair the structural strength of the building. All fixtures, whether trade fixtures or otherwise, improvements, erections or alterations made to the premises by the *Operating Agency* on behalf of the location shall be made at their own expense and shall remain the property of the *Operating Agency*, and upon, or at any time before the termination of this agreement, shall be removed from the premises by the *Operating Agency*; provided further that if any injury or damage is caused to the premises by removal of the fixtures, the *Operating Agency* shall repair at their expense and if the *Operating Agency* does not make the repairs or cause them to be made promptly, they may be made by the *Host Agency* for the account of the *Operating Agency* and the location
6. Permit the *Operating Agency* to bring community professionals in to deliver workshops and information sessions for the benefit of the parents, children and staff of the location provided such sessions do not interfere with school functions or maintenance and provided at least 24 hours advance notice has been given to the Principal and Secretary of the school. (Agency to deliver activity calendars to the *Host Agency* Business Services department monthly).
7. Notify the *Operating Agency* of any disruptions to their program created by necessary routine or emergency maintenance or repairs made by the *Host Agency*
8. Retain the right to take back the room space allotted to the location should it be required for its own use;
9. Allow signage on and or near the classroom entrance designating it as a *Best Start Centre* (window clings and possibly a sign mounted on the lawn area of the building)
10. Provide computer or network connections, if necessary and feasible, to the location
11. Secure and maintain insurance coverage according to the terms of the Agreement;
12. Encourage *Hosting Agency* staff to participate in the Early Years System; and
13. The entitlement of the *Hosting Agency* to involvement and consultation in cooperative planning and implementation of the location.

The *Operating Agency* agrees to:

1. Pay all costs for alterations to the room to improve services related to the *Operating Agency*
2. Recognize the provision of space at no charge during days when regular use for the *Host Agency* are scheduled, as an in-kind donation to the *Operating Agency* that will facilitate the delivery of their services to the community;
3. Pay *Host Agency* upon notification by invoice, the cost of custodial supplies and services, based on their exclusive use of the room space on days when regular classes for *Host Agency* are not scheduled, and with the understanding that custodial services may not be available and further if they are provided the requisite overtime fee will be charged; the cost of regular custodial services are estimated at \$100.00 / 5-day week, but are subject to change in alignment with the *Host Agency's* contractual obligations to staff that may alter during the term of this agreement;
4. To provide, at its own cost, custodial services and supplies, heat, hydro, water, garbage removal and snow removal related to the *Operating Agency's* designated use of areas as defined by the Memorandum of Understanding if the *Operating Agency* chooses to operate or continues to operate in the event the premises have stoppage, threat of terrorism, or for any other reason;
5. Notify *Host Agency* staff via e-mail of any change in the use of the classroom or school room space or location at "**type in location here**" including:
  - a. the school principal
  - b. the school secretary
  - c. Facility Services Custodial and Maintenance
  - d. Executive Services
6. Relinquish and vacate room space, upon notice by the *Host Agency*, should the *Host Agency* require it for its own use;
7. Be flexible and accommodating in respect to disruptions created by necessary routine or emergency maintenance repairs made by the *Host Agency*
8. Work cooperatively with the *Host Agency* location staff regarding the shared use of the room space
9. Ensure that all core early years services are available to children and families within the located area. Services will be inclusive to all families and caregivers with flexible hours and days to accommodate identified needs;
10. Ensure the coordination and provision of services in conjunction with other community agencies to meet identified needs of families and caregivers with children from birth to six years of age;
11. Purchase and arrange for the installation of signage designating the location as a ***Operating Agency name***
12. Outfit the rooms with necessary furnishing and required satellite resources;
13. Ensure that the interior of the rooms is well maintained;
14. Ensure *Operating Agency* staff participate in and/or support any practices in Fire and Safety Programs that are supported by the *Host Agency* and the *Operating Agency*
15. Provide qualified staffing for the satellite centre as well as staff training and staff support;
16. Secure and maintain insurance coverage according to the terms of the Agreement including CGL and WSIB for employees;
17. *Host Agency* staff involvement in cooperative planning and implementation of the location;
18. Retain the right to final decisions regarding all *Operating Agency* staffing issues; and
19. Encourage *Operating Agency* staff to participate in the Early Years System.

#### 4. INDEMNIFICATION

a) Indemnity of the *Host Agency*

The *Host Agency* agrees to indemnify and save harmless the *Operating Agency*, their servants, agents and employees against all actions, causes of action, suits, claims, assessments, costs, damage and damages of any kind whatsoever, including reasonable legal fees which the *Operating Agency* may suffer as a result of the negligent act or any negligent act or omission of the *Host Agency* or those persons authorized to act on behalf of the *Host Agency* arising as a result of the *Host Agency's* performance of the terms and conditions of this agreement.

b) Indemnity of the *Operating Agency*

The *Operating Agency* agrees to indemnify and save harmless the *Host Agency*, their servants, agents and employees against all actions, causes of action, suits, claims, assessments, costs, damage and damages of any kind whatsoever, including reasonable legal fees which the *Host Agency* may suffer as a result of the negligent act or any negligent act or omission of the *Operating Agency* or those persons authorized to act on behalf of the *Operating Agency* arising as a result of the *Operating Agency's* performance of the terms and conditions of this agreement.

#### 5. INSURANCE

The *Host Agency*, and the *Operating Agency* shall keep in force throughout the term of this agreement the following policies of insurance:

##### **Commercial General Liability Insurance**

A general liability insurance policy with an insurance company licensed to carry on business in Ontario in an amount of **not less than \$5,000,000.00** per occurrence and **inclusive of:**

- a) professional liability coverage
- b) third-party property damage coverage
- c) personal injury coverage

All insurance required under this section shall **show the *Host Agency* and the *Operating Agency* as additional insured** with respect to this agreement only. There must be a cross liability clause included in the insurance. Insurance policies must be applicable to claims that occurred in Canada and the litigation must be done in Canada, under Canadian laws.

The *Host Agency* and the *Operating Agency* will give a minimum of thirty (30) days prior written notice of any material change in, cancellation of, or the termination of any insurance policy required to be maintained under this section.

The *Host Agency* and the *Operating Agency* will submit all certificates of insurance with respect to the insurance required under this section, prior to commencement of this agreement.

#### 6. NOTICE

Any notice required to be given under this agreement shall be given in writing and delivered personally or sent by mail to:

In the case of the *Host Agency*:

**Include mailing address and Attention to? in this section**

In the case of the *Operating Agency*:

**Include mailing address and Attention to? in this section**

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties have hereunto set their corporate seals duly attested by the hands of their proper signing officers in that behalf.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_.

**HOST AGENCY**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent of Business and Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Chair

**OPERATING AGENCY**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

**Signatories have authority to bind their organizations to this agreement.**

## APPENDIX K 2007 Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centres (Best Start Hubs)

**Operator/Lead Agency:** Ontario Early Years Centre: Brant

**Name & Address:** Ryerson Heights Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre  
33 Dowden Avenue Brantford

**Hours of Operation:**

**Projected Opening Date:** January 2007

Location of Hub*		Type of Hub	
Non-school (y/n)	School (y/n)	Francophone Specific (y/n)	Aboriginal Specific (y/n)
No	Yes	No	No

### **Hub Services**

<b>Services to be provided in the Hub on a regularly scheduled basis</b>
Ryerson Heights Y Childcare Centre (licensed capacity of 24 preschool, 20 JK/SK and 30 school aged spaces)
Parent-child drop-in program
Parent information
Early Integration Program (special needs resourcing)

<b>Services to be linked or rotated with the Hub (linked meaning referrals to outside of the Centre; rotated meaning present in the Centre on an as-needed basis)</b>
Infant Hearing Program
Talking Tots (preschool speech and language program)
Primary care provider
Children's Aid Society
Contact Brant
OEYC: Brant
Brant County Health Unit
Lansdowne Children's Centre
Children's mental health services
Access to adult education
Aboriginal services
French-language services
Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program

**Operator/Lead Agency:** Family Counselling Centre

**Name & Address:** St. Gabriel's Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre  
14 Flanders Drive Brantford

**Hours of Operation:**

**Projected Opening Date:** April 2007

Location of Hub*		Type of Hub	
Non-school (y/n)	School (y/n)	Francophone Specific (y/n)	Aboriginal Specific (y/n)
No	Yes	No	No

**Hub Services**

<b>Services to be provided in the Hub on a regularly scheduled basis</b>
St. Gabriel's Before and After School Program (licensed capacity of 20 JK/SK and 30 school-aged spaces)
Parent-child drop-in program
Parent information
Early Integration Program (special needs resourcing)

<b>Services to be linked or rotated with the Hub (linked meaning referrals to outside of the Centre; rotated meaning present in the Centre on an as-needed basis)</b>
Infant Hearing Program
Talking Tots (preschool speech and language program)
Primary care provider
Children's Aid Society
Contact Brant
OEYC: Brant
Brant County Health Unit
Lansdowne Children's Centre
Children's mental health services
Access to adult education
Aboriginal services
French-language services
Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program

**APPENDIX L**  
**Proposed Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centre**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Hub Operator</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>School y/n</b>	<b>Francophone- specific</b>	<b>Aboriginal- specific</b>
January 2008	Children's Aid Society of Brant	Bellview School 97 Tenth Street Brantford	Yes	No	No