

***Building Our Community from the Kids
Up***

**Child Care and Early Years 10 Year Plan
2022 to 2032**

2024 Status Report / Update

Accessibility

All children have the right to fully participate in a quality licensed early learning and care child program. Unfortunately, not all children have access for a variety of reasons including cost, availability, cultural barriers and/or special needs. As the CMSM for child care and early learning, City of Brantford strives to ensure that:

- Families know about available programs and how to access them.
- Families have access to child care and early years' programs that meet their specific needs.
- Families can make informed decisions about early years and child care programs to meet their specific needs.
- The Child Care and Early Years system is responsive to increased demands and the evolving needs of families.

Key Action Update

1.4 Amended

Support growth of the licensed child care system to meet the growing population with licensed child care spaces for 1 in 5 children through 2032.

➤ Amended target:

Support the Ministry funded growth of CWELCC full day child care spaces by 985 by 2026, resulting in 32% of children aged 0-4 having access to CWELCC funding child care (based on 2021 Census population data).

See CWELCC Full Day Space Growth Population Figure 1. Data is based on current child care spaces per census population data.

Growth will be in accordance to Ministry direction regarding percentage of profit-based spaces and in accordance with population in the City and the County. To date, 760 new community and school-based CWELCC spaces have been confirmed in the City and County. See Table 2 CWELCC Full Day Space Growth Projection: Time Frame. An additional 225 CWELCC community-based spaces are required to achieve Ministry directed growth targets by 2026. Future RFP's will be issued to approve additional CWELCC spaces in high need and underserved areas. Space expansion will focus on areas with access rates of less than 30% for children ages 0-4.

The system will grow overall by ~55% of community-based space for children 0-4, over March 2022 baseline. This translates to 847 new site based spaces and 138 new Licensed Home Child Care spaces (27 homes X 5.1 children per home).

Key Action Update

Table 1: CWELCC Full Day Space Growth Projection: Location

	Location	# Spaces
School Based	Banbury Public School Expansion	49
	Cobblestone Public School	64
	GEDSB Public School West Brant	64
	Saint Marguerite-Bourgeoys Expansion	24
	St. Padre Pio Catholic Secondary School	128
Community Based	Central (East of Grand River, South of 403 Hwy, West of Wayne Gretzky Pkwy, North of Grand River)	108
	East (East of Wayne Gretzky Pkwy, South of 403 Hwy)	101
	North (North of 403 Hwy)	222
	West (South of 403 Hwy, West of the Grand River)	144
	Home Based Spaces (located throughout the City and County)	81
	Total	985

Table 1: CWELCC Full Day Space Growth Projection: Location

Table 2: CWELCC Full Day Space Growth Projection: Time Frame

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
School-based Spaces	N/A	N/A	N/A	177	152	329
Community-based Spaces	39	57	232	147	181	656
Total	39	57	232	324	333	985

Table 2: CWELCC Full Day Space Growth Projection: Time Frame

1.7

Leverage opportunities for capital funding through all levels of government to support the creation of additional child care spaces

- Provincial Start Up grants for 2023 and 2024 have been fully allocated to support the approved directed growth.

Key Action Update

- Approve additional Provincial Start Up grants for 2025 and 2026 to support continued directed growth of CWELCC child care spaces.
 - Continued awareness to Province to support capital cost of new / expanded spaces.
- 1.9 Support increased number of licensed home child care providers by 18% by 2027.
- Achieved.
 - Number of licensed homes increased from 44 homes in 2021 Q1 to 62 homes in Q4 2023.
- 1.10 Prioritize and incentivize growth to child care spaces in (a) the 5 identified high growth population areas (b) in under serviced locations (c) offering non-traditional hours such as evenings or weekends (d) for age groups in most need (e) meeting other demand (i.e. French language or indigenous) by 2027.
- 760 community and school-based CWELCC child care spaces in the City and County have been approved.
 - Support the growth of remaining 225 CWELCC community-based spaces to achieve Ministry directed growth targets by 2026. Focus on non-profit growth to achieve Ministry required ratios for not-for-profit and for-profit CWELCC child care spaces.
 - Use the Access and Inclusion Framework as a guide to prioritize further space expansion. Future RFP's will continue to focus on equitable access to child care for children of low-income families, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities, children with special needs and Francophone and Indigenous children. Also focusing on access to flexible child care to support those who work non-traditional hours and in non-traditional locations, such as shift workers.
- 1.12 Align EarlyON Child and Family Centres with City of Brantford and County of Brant community centres.
- New EarlyON centres opened at TF Warren Cainsville Community Centre in 2023.
- 1.15 Further utilize the "Your Guide", and social media such as Facebook pages, "EarlyON Brantford-Brant" and "Your Guide Family Resources for Brantford and Brant" to promote EarlyON programming to families.
- EarlyON providers directly input information to EarlyON Facebook site, providing immediate program updates and increased marketing to young families.
 - Utilizing new on-line "Your Guide".

Affordability

Attending a high-quality licensed child care program comes at a significant financial cost to families. The City of Brantford administers funding to local licensed child care operators to help offset the costs of operating a child care site and reduce daily fees. Financial assistance through the Child Care Fee Subsidy program is available to eligible families to cover part or all of the cost of attending child care.

Key Action Update

2.2

Leverage funding from all levels of government to keep fees affordable.

- Locally, the average cost of full day child care for children aged 0 to 4 decreased from \$12,168 per year in March 2022 to \$5,799 per year in January 2023. By September 2025, the cost is expected to be \$2,610 per year. See Figure 3 for further information.

Table 3: Average Cost of Child Care

	PRE-CWELCC		CWELCC			
	No rate reduction		52.75% rate reduction		Average of \$10 per day	
	Mar 2022		Jan 2023 - present		Sep 2025	
Program Type	Daily	Annual	Daily	Annual	Daily	Annual
Full Day program for children aged 0 to 4	\$46.62	\$12,168	\$22.22	\$5,799	\$10	\$2,610
Before and After School program for 4 and 5 years olds	\$19.00	\$3,686	\$12.00	\$2,328	\$10	\$1,940

Table 3: Average Cost of Child Care

Inclusivity

Children with social or special needs must be welcome and included in child care and early learning programs. Inclusion supports healthy child development and positive self-esteem, facilitates the development of positive social skills, and supports the families of children with special needs. Research shows that all children benefit from inclusive child care, as it promotes respect and celebration of diversity.

Key Action Update

- 3.3** Provide the opportunity to licensed child care to embed Indigenous culture and teaching in programming, supported by Indigenous cultural facilitators.
- Achieved and ongoing, Indigenous Cultural Facilitators reach out to all licensed child cares and EarlyONs to provide programming and support.
 - Fun in the Sun program weekly at Harmony Square in the summer.
 - Six Nations Cultural Facilitators provided weekly “Lunch and Learn” for child care and EarlyON staff to incorporate culture and language into classrooms.
- 3.4** EarlyON Child and Family Centres to work with the Brantford Immigration Partnership to promote EarlyON supports to populations of diverse culture and EarlyON to increase targeted outreach activities to the immigrant / newcomer population by 2023.
- EarlyON internal campaign to promote inclusion and acceptance in centres.
 - EarlyON Open House for YMCA settlement workers and the families they support.
 - Partnership with EarlyON, BIP and YMCA settlement workers to create local champions, to inform cultural programming and events.
 - Translation of EarlyON brochures to top six languages used in Brantford.
 - Cultural Celebrations calendar developed and shared across providers.
 - EarlyON Attendance at Malayalee Association picnic.
- 3.7** Further imbed Indigenous programming into EarlyON programming at all sites.
- Six Nations offers programming on scheduled days at each of TF Warren Community Centre, Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre, TB Costain Community Centre, Family Gatherings Harmony Square and informal visits to all other EarlyONs.

Key Action Update

- Connections between the Metis Nation of Ontario and Six Nations service provision to increase resources available to all EarlyONs.

3.9 NEW

Facilitate stakeholder consultation in 2023 to ensure that all children, including low-income and vulnerable children, Francophone and Indigenous children and children from diverse communities or with special needs have access to inclusive child care and early learning, in accordance with the Ministry of Educations' Access and Inclusion framework.

- Achieved. Stakeholder consultation completed alongside literature review and review of best / promising practices.

3.10 NEW

Develop an assessment and evaluation framework to measure inclusivity.

- Inclusion and Access Pathway for Early Learning and Child Care developed. To be rolled out in 2024 to all child care and EarlyON.

3.11 NEW

Facilitate activities to support increased understanding and implementation of Inclusionary practices in the early learning and child care community.

- Tour offered of Six Nations child care and EarlyON to Best Start Network members.
- Participated, alongside 6 other early learning and child care leaders, in BHCNDSB Professional Learning Series in Anti-Black Racism by Nicole West-Burns.
- Bilingual (French / English) Licensed Home Child Care providers.
- Funding provided to all child cares and EarlyONs to support the purchase of play-based supplies and equipment to support diversity and inclusion.
- Funding provided to Lansdowne Children's Centre to support the costs of specialized equipment that is shared amongst child care settings as needed.

Quality

A strong child care and early years' system is comprised of high-quality programs that provide environments and experiences allowing children to safely explore and learn through play and inquiry. Educators are trained professionals who have experience in early child development and participate in ongoing professional development. High quality programs use materials and teaching styles that are age-appropriate, evidence-based and respectful of children's cultural background. Moreover, high-quality programs continuously look for ways to improve through quality improvement and capacity building initiatives.

Key Action Update

4.1

Make access to funded professional learning and communities of practice available to all licensed child care, including those without a purchase of service agreement with the City of Brantford by 2023.

- Achieved.
- The City of Brantford continues to support all licensed child cares, regardless of participant in CWELCC with free access to the OneList waitlist, Wage Enhancement funding, Capacity building opportunities, and for Licensed Home Child Care, base funding that grows to support increased number of homes.
- New Pedagogical Partnerships program available facilitated by Community Living Brant EarlyON and Lansdowne Children's Centre.

4.5

Develop and implement a local workforce strategy by 2023.

- 2022 Workforce Project developed College bursary program has exceeded expectations, supporting 23 students to date.
- The Best Start Network Recruitment and Retention Taskforce in 2024 will continue recruitment efforts and focus on activities to improve areas noted by educators as lacking in the survey:
 - Youth mentorship workshops in local high schools.
 - "Let's Chat" workshop for current educators to support their learning and mental health.
 - Mentorship program to support newer educators.
 - Supervisor learning needs survey.
- Receive and share the results of the Knowing Our Numbers project, a provincial project led by the Atkinson Centre, University of Toronto to create a sustainable, regional-level child care and early years' workforce data collection process, to support local recruitment and retention efforts.

Key Action Update

4.9 NEW

Align grant funding to support all licensed child care operators with access to the OneList waitlist, Special Needs Resource supports, capacity building opportunities and base funding for the increasing number of licensed home child care providers.

- Achieved. All licensed child care operators have the opportunity to participate in OneList waitlist, receive Special Needs Resource supports, participate in capacity building opportunities and base funding for increased licensed home child care providers.

4.10

Leverage local expertise and existing community mental health resources to support children, families and the workforce.

- Staff from Lansdowne Children's Centre and Child and Family Services of Grand Erie EarlyON trained to facilitate Circle of Security groups to support families and caregivers.
- Development of an EarlyON Podcast for parents and families in 2024.
- Participate in the Infant and Early Years Mental Health Resource initiative led by Dr. Jean Clinton and involving staff from the full child care and early learning system.

Accountability

Early years and child care system management must be future-oriented, responsive and accountable. The CMSM is financially responsible in the distribution of funding to local operators.

Key Action Update

5.2

Grow funded child care spaces through support of school built child cares and through a competitive process open to both current and potential operators, prioritizing those applicants whose proposal meet community need such as:

- 5 identified high growth population areas.
 - In under serviced locations.
 - Offering non-traditional hours such as evenings or weekends.
 - For age groups in most need.
 - Meeting other demand (i.e. French language or indigenous).
- A competitive RFP process was conducted and 281 community-based CWELCC spaces were approved, to be open in 2024 and 2025. Spaces for new operators and existing operators wishing to expand were approved. Approved spaces were a combination of for profit and not-for-profit spaces.
- Informed City of Brantford By-law update to ensure clear and updated terms and provisions, in line with current legislation.

5.3

Update general operating fund practices by 2023 to ensure:

- The funding calculation is equitably applied to all eligible child care operators.
 - The funding calculation is transparent and easy to understand.
 - Funding is pro-rated for sites operating at capacity lower than a pre-determined threshold.
 - The funding calculation includes all age groups.
 - Funding is pro-rated dependent upon hours and days of operation.
- Continues to be on hold. Ministry of Education will be providing updated child care funding formula in 2024 that will align current grant funding with CWELCC system.
- Developed and shared clear procedures and instructions to provide transparent understanding of CWELCC and City requirements.

Key Action Update

- Implemented a transparent funding and reconciliation process until new funding formula is received.

5.4

Optimize the use of technology to ensure operators have access to updated resources by 2023:

- Achieved and ongoing.
- Financial support to operators to purchase up-to-date computer programs.
- Free training provided to operators re: use of computer programs and reporting mechanisms.
- Investigation and support of on-line EarlyON registration system by 2024.

5.5

Look for opportunities to target, leverage and work with other municipal service in the City of Brantford and the County of Brant:

- Working with County of Brant library to support EarlyON in the new library build.
- EarlyON and child cares working with Healthy Kids to support programming that will improve Early Development Instrument (childhood development) scores.

5.10

Implement the use of electronic / online signing and submission of service agreements.

- Achieved.

5.11

Investigate the feasibility of multi-year service agreement with an annual budget schedule by 2024:

- On hold. Ongoing implementation of Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care, along with anticipated new child care funding formula and new data system require annual changes to service agreement expectations.

5.12 NEW

Participate in the consultative process and support the development of the announced new Ministry of Education data system, aligning / replacing current data systems. Projected launch date 2025/2026.

5.13 NEW

Implement LEAN practices to support efficient use of resources:

- LEAN White Belt training participation.
- Project to support operators in completion of required reports to create efficiencies in staff oversight and analysis.

5.14 NEW

Conduct annual Compliance Audits with a sample of CWELCC-participating child care licensees, auditing each operator at least every four years. The purpose of the Compliance Audits are to:

Key Action Update

- Support child care licensee's with adherence to new requirements under the CWELCC Guidelines; and
- Ensure accountability for public funding by verifying that funding has been used for its intended purpose, and the goals of the CWELCC system are being upheld.