The Regional Municipality of Waterloo

Third Party Review of Children’s Centres

Draft Interim Report - Environmental Scan

July 21, 2020
Disclaimer

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Comments in this report are not intended, nor should they be interpreted, to be legal advice or opinion.

KPMG has no present or contemplated interest in the Region of Waterloo nor are we an insider or associate of the Region of Waterloo. Accordingly, we believe we are independent of the Region of Waterloo and are acting objectively.
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Project Overview

Region of Waterloo
Third Party Review of Children’s Centres
Interim Report
Project Overview

Project Objectives

KPMG has been engaged by the Region of Waterloo (the “Region”) to conduct an in-depth program and financial review of the Region’s Children’s Centres. This review will support the Region’s strategic approach regarding the future direction of the Children’s Centres through information, analysis, commentary, recommendations and consideration of a range of options. This review will explore the need for and number of centres in Waterloo Region as a follow up action to the 2019 Service Review completed by KPMG. This Project will include analysis and discussion on the following:

- Current state analysis of the System, including the alignment of the Region’s CMSM role.
- Current state analysis of the service delivery model of the Children’s Centres, including creating an overall service profile and specific analysis of each centre.
- Environmental scan of comparator municipalities that currently directly operate child care or have chosen to discontinue directly operating licensed centre based child care.
- Development of various service delivery options and improvements, including commentary on the advantages and disadvantages for each option.
- Recommendations identified for implementation for changes to services, programs, resources, and responsibilities, including whether specific services should be expanded, reduced, discontinued or delivered in an alternative manner. Recommendations will generally be grouped between immediate, short-term, medium term and long-term. Discussion will include the prioritization of recommendations according to ease of implementation and impact.

This interim report was prepared to present observations and evidence to form a potential case for change arising from research, analysis and interviews with the Region of Waterloo and various stakeholder groups. This interim report will provide the foundation for possible opportunities to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Region’s current service delivery model.

Project Principles

KPMG will leverage the knowledge and expertise of the Region management and employees as a foundation to conduct this review and to arrive at recommended actions though a transparent, participative and inclusive process facilitated by the consultant.

The framework and approach will be based on leading practice from municipal or other levels of government experience and/or private sector.
Project Overview

Region of Waterloo Third Party Review of Children’s Centres

Project Scope

Phase 1: Project Planning

- Kick-off meeting with Project Sponsor & Manager and Project Steering Committee to confirm approach.
- Confirm Project Charter, including project schedule and bi-weekly status reporting structure.

Phase 2: Environmental Scan

- Documentation review.
- Stakeholder engagement:
  - 30 interviews total (estimated 45 minutes each)
  - 10 interviews with other child care operators in the Waterloo Region;
  - 10 interviews with community agencies; and
  - 10 interviews with the local union representatives or staff.
  - 5 focus groups total (estimated 60-90 minutes each)
    - 3 with the parents of children currently/previously enrolled in Children Centres; and
    - 2 focus groups covering the general public.
- On-line survey for other stakeholders.
- Comparator analysis of 6-10 comparator municipalities:
  - 3-5 who no longer directly operate child care; and
  - 3-5 who are similar or greater size and complexity to the Region that directly operate child care.

During this step, KPMG will follow up with these municipalities to gather in-depth information to benchmark against the Children’s Centres. Comparators will to be identified and agreed upon by the Project Steering Committee.

- Interim Report and presentation to the Steering Committee.
Region of Waterloo Third Party Review of Children’s Centres

Project Overview

Project Scope

Phase 3: Current State Analysis

System
- Analyze the environment and system around the Region of Waterloo’s Children’s Centres.
- Perform a complete needs assessment and market analysis of the Waterloo Region’s licensed child care system/market.

Children’s Centres
- Identification and mapping of the current service delivery model for the Region’s 5 Children Centres, in the form of Service Profiles.
- Conduct physical visits of each of the facilities.
- Interim Report and presentation to Steering Committee.

Phase 4: Service Delivery Options and Improvements

- Identification of potential opportunities for innovative service delivery through:
  (i) outright service eliminations;
  (ii) service level changes;
  (iii) changes to the method of delivering services (e.g. community partnerships, process efficiencies, changes to organizational structure, outsourcing or insourcing);
  (iv) improved business processes;
  (v) changes in delivery channels; and,
  (vi) the removal of duplication and overlap in departmental responsibilities.
- Draft recommendations on changes to services, programs, resources, and responsibilities, including whether specific services should be expanded, reduced, discontinued or delivered in an alternative manner.
- Interim Report and presentation to Steering Committee.

Phase 5: Final Analysis and Recommendation

- Draft Final Report, summarizing information gathered, key findings, analysis and opportunities/recommendations.
- Digital copy of all the activities and deliverables created for the review in source format.
- Presentations of the findings and recommendations to the Steering Committee and Regional Council.
After setting a strong project foundation and gathering information through stakeholder consultation and research, we are now moving into performing a current state analysis of the licensed child care system and the Region’s Children’s Centres.

### Approach and Work Plan

#### Objectives
- **1. Project Initiation**
  - Align on project objectives and work plan

- **2. Environmental Scan**
  - Assess current challenges and identify initial improvement opportunities

- **3. Current State Analysis**
  - Perform current state analysis of the system and the Children’s Centres

- **4. Service Delivery Options and Improvements**
  - Identify potential opportunities for innovative service delivery

- **5. Final Analysis & Recommendation**
  - Prepare Final Report and presentation to Steering Committee and Regional Council

#### Activities
- **1. Project Initiation**
  - Kickoff meeting
  - Develop project charter
  - Develop stakeholder plan

- **2. Environmental Scan**
  - Initial data and document review
  - Completed stakeholder consultations
  - On-line surveys
  - Comparator analysis of municipalities (10)
  - Prepare Interim Report #1

- **3. Current State Analysis**
  - Complete needs assessment and market analysis of the Waterloo Region’s licensed child care system/market
  - Identify and map the current service delivery model for the 5 Children Centres, in the form of Service Profiles
  - Prepare Interim Report #2

- **4. Service Delivery Options and Improvements**
  - Prepare Interim Report #3 and presentation to Steering Committee

- **5. Final Analysis & Recommendation**
  - Draft and revise Final Report and presentation
Environmental Scan

Region of Waterloo
Third Party Review of Children’s Centres
Interim Report
Environmental Scan

Stakeholder Engagements reflect our work to date

The stakeholder engagements reflect our work to date, including: interviews with the local union representative and Regional staff; focus groups with parents and general public, and consultations with external commenting agencies, operators and municipalities.

- **Meetings with Local Union Reps. & Region Staff**: 8
- **Focus groups with parents of children enrolled at Children’s Centres**: 5
- **Meetings with Community Agencies**: 8
- **Meetings with Other Child Care Operators within Waterloo Region**: 7
- **General public focus group of parents experience with non-Regional child care centres**: 1
- **Meetings with municipalities currently directly operating childcare**: 5
- **Meetings with municipalities no longer directly operating childcare**: 5

Due to COVID-19, interviews and focus groups were conducted virtually. KPMG validated the intent for engaging each stakeholder group and developed all interview, focus group and survey questionnaires in collaboration with the Region’s Project Team.
Environmental Scan

Stakeholder Engagements reflect our work to date

Four (4) online surveys were issued to various stakeholder groups:

01
Children’s Centre Staff
45 responses

02
Community Child Care Operators
25 responses

03
Parents of Children Currently Enrolled
108 responses

04
Parents of Children Previously Enrolled
36 responses
Stakeholder Consultation

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Environmental Scan

The following slides present a high-level summary of the feedback received by stakeholders during one-on-one interviews, focus groups and surveys.

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The feedback provided in this report is a perception of the stakeholder that was interviewed and meant for discussion purposes only; it does not constitute KPMG’s recommendations.
Stakeholder Engagement
Management, Local Union Rep and Children’s Centres Staff

Includes:
- 8 interviews with Region Staff/local union rep
- 45 survey responses from Children’s Centre Staff

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Environmental Scan – Stakeholder Consultation

Management Staff & Union Representatives: Feedback on Positive Areas

Summary:
– Conducted 8 interviews with Children's Services Management, Children’s Centres Supervisors and Union Representative
– 45 Children’s Centres staff participated in the online survey

OneList Registration Management
– OneList is a registration system used by the whole Region and provides the Region, as a System Manager, a holistic view of child care needs within communities across Waterloo Region.
– Respondents believe the use of OneList supports equity where all families are provided with a consistent approach to obtaining child care services.
– The Children’s Centres have long waitlists; indicating that the Centres offer quality child care that families are looking for. Families are accepted based on the Region’s waitlist policy.

Programs and Services
– The Children’s Centres strive to provide high quality child care services. The key drivers are 1) dedicated and professional staff and 2) clean and safe environment.
– Significant investments are made in Children’s Centres staff both in compensation and professional training. All care givers are RECEs and are required to be certified under the High Scope curriculum. High Scope allows the staff to provide a consistent and guided approach to implementing How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years.
– Leadership and management team value the services that staff provide and support advocating child care providers as a “profession.” Staff compensation levels are higher in comparison to other child care operators.
– The Children’s Centres demonstrate how the Region values early learning and child care services. Facilities are purpose-built and designed for child care needs (e.g. classroom and playground space exceed licensing standards).
– The Region noted that parent fees are on par with market. Families from various financial backgrounds attend the Children’s Centres; some families receive subsidy support.

Impact to Community
– The Children’s Centres provide the community with a model / “best practice example” to child care services. The Centres are often used as pilot Centres for new initiatives (e.g. the nutrition meals program), and provide the Region with front line understanding of child care needs and operations for system management. Other child care operators often reach out to the Children’s Centres for support (e.g. policy and procedure guidance).
– The Children’s Centres have developed strong relationships with elementary schools to support successful transition from pre-school to kindergarten.
– Overall, respondents believe the Children’s Centres provide a positive impact to the community both as a child care operator and as a System Manager.

The Children’s Centres are role models for the child care community; dedicated and professional staff provide high quality child care.
### Survey Results - Children’s Centres Staff

#### Summary

- 45 Children’s Centres staff participated in the review
- 66% of the staff had more than 5+ years of service, 33% had 2-5 years of service
- 87% responses were from teachers of the centres
- Overall, the staff considered
  - ✓ The Region to be a high quality provider of child care
  - ✓ The Region to be role model for the community
  - ✓ The centres Programs and Services to be working very well
  - ✓ The centres facility space served its purpose
  - ✓ Themselves to be appreciated and recognized
  - ✓ The Region to have resources to invest in their professional growth and development
- While most staff is aware of the Region’s Children’s Centres priorities, goals and KPI's, some staff are not aware, or somewhat aware, of these areas
- The Children’s Centre staff generally believed that operations at the Centres were effective, and the direct operation of child care by the Region had a positive impact on the local child care system and the Region’s role as a System Manager

#### Main concerns regarding potential changes to the current operations of Children’s Centres

- Impact of losing employment on the staff and organization
- Negative effect on the teachers, children and families that are currently in the programs
- Losing childcare spaces for families in the community as spaces are already a challenge in Ontario.
- General fear of what will happen to the children and families if the centres were to close “Without our centres they will not have high quality care”
- Loss of access to quality child care services within the Region
  - Parents may have to change to child care that is of reduced quality and another centre may not be as inclusive
- Fear that there will be no role model for quality care in the Region
- The ratios for children are reduced, while the need for quality care has already exceeded the available spaces. Given this situation, more centres need to open up
- There is a need for Universal Childcare; affordable and of high quality for all families
I am familiar with the Region’s Children’s Centres priorities (e.g. vision, mission and Foundations of Learning).

I am aware of the goals, targets or key performance indicators (KPIs) at my Children’s Centre.

While most staff is aware of the Regions Children Centres priorities, goals and KPI’s, some staff are **not aware**, or **somewhat aware**, of these areas.
The Children’s Centre staff generally believed that operations at the Centres were effective, and the direct operation of child care by the Region had a **positive impact** on the local child care system and the Region’s role as a System Manager.
How effective is the Region of Waterloo in its role as a early learning and child care system manager? – 22 responses

The Children's Centre staff considered the Programs and Services, Facility Space and Accessibility at the Centres to be working very well.
Environmental Scan – Stakeholder Consultation

Management Staff & Union Representatives: Feedback on Challenges

OneList Waitlist Status

− Managing the waitlist has been challenging. There are opportunities to streamline and improve this process, and reduce vacancy spots.
− OneList may not fully promote equality; it is more challenging for new comers or vulnerable families to use the system and register or enroll their children in the Children’s Centres. The Region does not actively promote the Children’s Centres and families may not be aware of the Centres for resource and service needs.

Programs and Services

− Managing budget while maintaining high quality services has been the greatest challenge. The highest operating cost item is staff compensation and benefits. Facility maintenance and capital updates also pose budget challenges. The Children’s Centres have looked at various approaches to increase enrollment; maintain staff-to-children ratios; and operate within budget. Increase in enrollment often requires increase in staff hiring.
− There is a shortage of ECEs across Ontario. The compensation levels across the industry have been low; discouraging students from entering the child care and early learning profession. Recruiting and retention of ECEs have been an industry-wide challenge.
− Staff may need to work additional hours (outside Children’s Centres operating hours) to complete administrative tasks or training requirements.

Impact to Community

− There is perception that inequality exists between the Children’s Centres and other child care operators due to different budget models. Two staff noted that the Region could provide more support to child care operators in the community. Staff knowledge and skillsets could also be used more broadly in the community.
− One staff noted that Children’s Centre staff appear disconnected from other child care operators and could attend more professional or community events. Most notably, the Region is the only child care operator that fully adopts the High Scope curriculum and the associated certification requirements.

Main challenges: Managing waitlist, budget (while maintaining high quality services) and promoting inclusion and diversity.
Stakeholder Engagement
Community Agencies

Includes:
- 8 interviews with Community Agencies

Region of Waterloo
Third Party Review of Children’s Centres
Interim Report
Community Agencies: Feedback on Positive Areas

Summary:
– Conducted 8 interviews with Community Agencies selected by the Region (e.g., school boards, Special Needs Resourcing).

Alignment of Mandates and Priorities
– All respondents agree that the mandate and priorities of the Children's Centres are clearly defined and understood, and the Region has been transparent in communicating their priorities. The Region, as System Manager, has demonstrated leadership providing thoughtful and supportive child care services.
– Five respondents noted that the Children’s Centres have built positive and collaborative relationships with community agencies (e.g. aligning special needs resourcing, transitioning to kindergarten, teacher placement opportunities, etc.).

Impact to Community
– At least five respondents acknowledge that Children’s Centres staff are well-trained and contribute to quality care giving.
– Two respondents commented that the Children’s Centres’ facilities are purpose-built and space per child exceed licensing standards, and would like see this expand beyond Regional centres.
– One respondent noted that High Scope curriculum provides a good framework to implement How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years. High Scope was developed based on evidence-based research, which is the key differentiator from other curriculums, specifically on the long term positive impacts to children's development and the prevention of social challenges later in life.
– Four respondents believe the Region is an effective system manager. As System Manager, the Region should continue to collaborate more with the Ministry at the provincial level to address challenges in child care; most notably financial support and ECE shortages.
– Four respondents agree that the Children’s Centres provide the Region with direct insight for more thoughtful planning of children’s services.

The Region is an effective System Manager and has a positive impact on the community. The Region has demonstrated leadership in providing transparent, thoughtful and supportive child care services.
Community Agencies: Feedback on Challenges

System Manager vs. Child Care Operator

– Four respondents (two neutral) believe conflict of interest exists when the Region is both the system Manager and a child care operator. This model is more expensive to operate and creates inequality between the Children’s Centres and other child care operators due to different funding models.
– Agencies working with vulnerable population believe the Children’s Centres’ create a sense of disparity in the community stemming from multiple perspectives. There are perceptions that children enrolled in the Children’s Centres receive higher priority in obtaining subsidy or resource support. Community operators are unable to match the Region’s compensation levels; however, their employees are equally qualified and also provide high quality child care services. In addition, the Children’s Centres are purpose-built “luxurious” facilities and the Centres can afford to run below licensing capacity. This cannot be done by non-Regional child care operators. The Children’s Centres should not position themselves as a “model” for the community.
– One respondent commented that the Region could collaborate more with local school boards to streamline child care as schools are seen as community hubs.

Programs and Services

– The High Scope curriculum is seen as an “elitist” model within the community. Feedback from four respondents noted that the Region often equates high quality child care to the adoption of High Scope. Respondents recognize this is not the Region’s intention, but implementing the curriculum is expensive and seen as a barrier for many child care operators. It also disconnects the Children’s Centres from the community.
– Three respondents noted that Children’s Centre staff are sometimes more challenging to work with given their length of tenure.

Diversity and Inclusivity

– What is the definition of “inclusion?” This is unclear for agencies working with vulnerable population.
– Respondents noted that historically there was not much diversity in the Children’s Centres, and recognizes that the Region is working towards servicing more diverse families.
Includes:
- 7 interviews with Community Child Care Operators
- 25 survey responses

Region of Waterloo
Third Party Review of Children’s Centres
Interim Report
### Other Child Care Operators: Feedback on Positive Areas

#### Summary:
- Interviews conducted with 7 community child care operators (the criteria for selecting operators included: centres from each lower tier municipality, mix of student age group, mix of private and non-profit, mix of multi-location versus single operations)
- 25 Community operators participated in the survey (13 operators were non-profit, 11 were for profit, 80% of the operators had been in business for 10+ years)

#### System Manager Support
- Majority of respondents noted positive interactions with the Region’s Children’s Services for guidance and information. The Region is responsive and transparent with licensed child care operators.
- The Region is efficient in providing policy guidance, training opportunities, and share regulatory updates with community operators. The Children’s Centres often share best practices with large non-profit child care operators.
- The Region’s Quality Initiatives Program supports operators in improving their programs and services. All respondents believe the quality of their child care services are good.
- OneList allows the Region to collect child care information from a single system. OneList information is shared with non-Regional operators. Two respondents noted this information sharing helpful for them to plan their programs and services.
- In addition to provincial grants, all operators appreciate the additional funding support the Region provides.
- All respondents believe it is important to have the Region as CMSM and provide policy guidance and benchmark practices, which maintains the service level standards needed for child care.
- The Children’s Centres are located in communities that are difficult for non-Regional child care centres to operate in (e.g. being financially viable).
- One respondent believe it is important for the Region to be a direct child care operator to support wage enhancement and promote child care as a profession.

### What is working well about the way Children’s Services works with you and provides support
- Continuous, open and effective communication and timely assistance when help is needed
- The website is user friendly
- Children’s Services has always provided whatever information they can and is always willing to help out in any way possible
- Positive feedback on the recent teleconferences and webinar related to Covid-19 and reopening of centres

The Region is an effective leader in providing policy guidance, training opportunities, regulatory updates, and quality initiatives. Working well: Continuous, open and effective communication and support received during COVID-19.
Environmental Scan – Stakeholder Consultation

Other Child Care Operators: Feedback on Challenges

System Manager vs. Child Care Operator

- At least five respondents noted the Children’s Centres present a sense of disparity in wages and increases recruitment challenges when there are shortages of qualified ECEs and professionals trained in special needs support. Operationally, the Children’s Centres should not position themselves as a “model” for the community due to different funding structures and resource support. Perception is that parent fees and staff wages are subsidize by tax levy dollars, and Children’s Centres have first access to funding and resource support.
- All respondents reflected that managing OneList is sometimes challenging as parent data may not be up-to-date and requires additional time to fill vacancy spots. For-profit operators noted that they have their own registration system and requires them to monitor two systems. All respondents acknowledged that communication to parents of OneList waitlist and enrollment status can be improved.
- New licensed child care operators noted that it is challenging to enter into a funding and service contract with the Region, specifically meeting contract requirements and fulfilling a 12-month waiting period. Operators had to turn away families that need subsidy support. It also creates additional financial pressure for new operators in their first year of operation as they are not eligible to participate in OneList and apply for Region funding.
- For-profit operators disagree that non-profit child care centres provide higher quality child care and believe it is unfair that more funding support is provided to non-profit operators.
- Five respondents view the Children’s Centres as competitors and believe the Region should not be a direct child care operator.
- The larger operators indicated they should be given the opportunity to test any new programs or initiatives at their centres (this role shouldn’t be solely performed by the Region).

Programs and Services

- High Scope curriculum is expensive to adopt and inaccessible to some operators. All respondents believe their curriculums are comparable to High Scope in providing quality child care and meeting requirements under How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years. Different perspectives of quality.
- All respondents believe the Region as a System Manager could provide more funding support to operators to increase service levels. The Children’s Centres’ service levels are perceived to be higher that non-Regional operators, most notably the facility space. All respondents interviewed operate in rented facilities. Their use of the rented facilities are subject to lease agreements.

All respondents reflected that managing OneList is challenging and believe the Region as a System Manager could provide more funding support to operators to increase service levels. Half of the respondents believe conflict of interest exists when the Region is both the System Manager and a direct child care operator.
## Survey Results - Community Child Care Operators

### Summary:
- 25 Community operators participated in the survey
- 13 operators were non-profit, 11 were for profit
- 80% of the operators had been in business for 10+ years

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<th>What are three things that are working well within your program?</th>
<th>What are the biggest challenges your program faces?</th>
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<td><strong>Staff</strong>&lt;br&gt;- High quality, qualified, involved, hard working staff who provide quality care to children. Staff are loyal and engaged in their work&lt;br&gt;- Consistent, reliable and caring staff supported by a cohesive team&lt;br&gt;- The staff work well together, parents enjoy the program and space</td>
<td><strong>Key challenges</strong>&lt;br&gt;- 47% responded - ensuring and maintaining sustainable, ongoing and adequate funding options for expansion, hiring additional help so team can focus on planning, Special Needs etc. There is inconsistent funding from year to year&lt;br&gt;- 41% responded - Constant turnover of staff, hiring and retaining qualified staff&lt;br&gt;- 29% responded that low enrollment through the year (families prefer having flexible days for part time care versus set days) has a financial impact&lt;br&gt;- 18% responded - Challenges around COVID-19 (funding, reopening)&lt;br&gt;- 18% responded - Complicated funding applications; lack of direction with funding applications and rationale for any changes</td>
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<td><strong>Good Management/Board of Directors</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Excellent management and Board of Directors (few experienced parents on the Executive board)&lt;br&gt;- Support from the Board of Directors allows the Director to make day to day decision for the organizations</td>
<td><strong>Other challenges identified</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Maintaining the cooperative model, time commitment, higher amount of work for board members and maintaining positive relationships with key stakeholders&lt;br&gt;- RECE’s are paid lower than the Regional counterparts. It’s a challenge providing professional wages while keeping parent tuition rates affordable&lt;br&gt;- Keeping the Staff to Child ratios mandated by the Ministry of Education.&lt;br&gt;- Getting a service agreement from the Region to have more access to families who need care&lt;br&gt;- Qualified staff who speak the main language at the centre (French)&lt;br&gt;- Insufficient regional/provincial support for new operators</td>
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<td><strong>Supports</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Having the support of the Region to navigate funding&lt;br&gt;- Having the support of community of practices to allow for exchange of information and growth&lt;br&gt;- Working with other operators and daycares and sharing ideas and best practices</td>
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<td><strong>Family Engagement/Other</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Parents and family are very supportive&lt;br&gt;- Children are happy and engaged in the program&lt;br&gt;- Building meaningful relationships with children and families&lt;br&gt;- Good community connection&lt;br&gt;- Good development of online teaching/engagement given the &quot;new normal&quot;&lt;br&gt;- Staff programming - encourage extra learning and courses which the centers fully fund&lt;br&gt;- Program meets the needs of the multi-cultural community&lt;br&gt;- Provide a nutritious and diverse menu&lt;br&gt;- Good enrollment, good base (where operator is attached to a school)&lt;br&gt;- Great reputation and excellent curriculum</td>
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**Strengths:** Staff, management/Board of Directors and Regional/Provincial supports  
**Challenges:** Insufficient/inconsistent funding, high turnover, low enrollment, COVID-19 challenges and complicated funding applications
Survey Results - Community Child Care Operators

What could be improved: Funding and education support, more equality (share resources fairly across community), and support for new centres/supervisors

Are there any changes the Region can make in its role as the early learning and child care system manager? - 10 responses

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<td>Yes</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<td>No</td>
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At least half the respondents indicated Region should share resources equally amongst the community.

What could be improved about the way Children’s Services works with you and provides support? – 8 responses

**Funding and Education Support**
38% expressed that supports (funding and education) needs to be equal for all centres within Waterloo Region. Regional Centres should be funded like other non-profit centres. Salaries, especially of RECE’S, should be consistent between the Regional Centres and the community operators. Operators indicated that they should have more funding to access support for special needs children, staff team building and planning time support. All operators should be treated equally.

The operators indicated that the Region needs to increase educational opportunities for their members and ensure they are inclusive and potentially onsite. The operators, especially non-profit operators, can not afford to send staff to day long programs and still pay them. The operators expressed that the Region should share the written policies and procedures required with all centres (not only the Regions Centres), for the parent and staff handbooks required by the Ministry of Education.

**Support for new supervisors/new centres**
38% expressed that the Region should provide more support for new supervisors to understand how to navigate the portal, how to apply for grants and overall support to understand what is expected from the supervisor. It would be valuable to receive support earlier than one year in operation. Requiring operators to prove they are financially feasible while not allowing them access to families to fill their spots seems to not make any sense.

There were equal # of responses from profit and non-profit centres.
Survey Results - Community Child Care Operators

How would you rate your overall satisfaction level with the way Children's Services works with you and provides support? – 12 responses

The Region’s Children’s Centres fit within the landscape of early learning and child care within the Region – 12 responses

What is your knowledge level of the Region of Waterloo’s directly operated Children’s Centres? - 12 responses

How effective is the Region of Waterloo in its role as a child care centre operator? – 10 responses

Community operators were generally satisfied with the supports provided by Children Services. Not all operators were knowledgeable about the Region’s Children’s Centres. There was a neutral response on how the Region’s Children’s Centres fit within the landscape of early learning and child care within the Region and the Region’s role as a child care operator.
The Community Operators believed the Region is somewhat effective in its role as a System Manager. The Community Child Care Operator’s believed that the direct operation of child care by the Region had a neutral impact on the local child care system and had a somewhat positive impact on the Region’s role as a System Manager.
Survey Results - A Comparison of Responses

We asked the same question to Children's Centre Staff and Community Child Care Operators:
Overall, do you feel the direct operation of child care by the Region has a negative, neutral, or positive impact on the local child care system?

Feedback from Children's Centre's Staff
- 22 responses

Feedback from Community Child Care Operators
- 12 responses

The Children’s Centre staff believe that the direct operation of child care by the Region had a positive impact on the local child care system. Half of the community child care operators perceive that the direct operation of child care by the Region had a neutral impact and 42% believed it would have a positive or somewhat positive impact on the local child care system.
We asked the same question to Children's Centre Staff and Community Child Care Operators:
“*The Region's Children's Centres are similar to other child care operators in terms of the following areas:*”

The Children's Centre staff perceive they are different from other community operators. In contrast, the community operators perceive they are similar (specifically in terms of Programs and Services and Affordability) to the Regions Centres.
Stakeholder Engagement
Parents of Children Currently Enrolled at the Children’s Centres

Includes:
- 5 Focus groups
- 108 survey responses

Region of Waterloo
Third Party Review of Children’s Centres
Interim Report
Programs and Services

All parents are highly satisfied with the Children’s Centres, specifically:
- Parents highly praise Children’s Centre staff for being well-trained and dedicated. Low staff turnover contributes to consistent and quality education, and developing strong relationships with parents and children.
- The High Scope Curriculum is simple and not over-bearing for parents to understand.
- Class sizes are under licensing ratio which allows staff to provide greater attention to individual children.
- Facilities are spacious, clean and well-maintained.
- The Children’s Centres quality of care (e.g. curriculum, nutrition meals, facility space) cannot be replicated by other child care operators. Parents highly appreciate the quality of care they receive from the Centres.
- Value for money is high compared to home daycare or other child care operators.
- Child care fees are on par with market or may be less than other child care operators (e.g. for-profit centres).

Impact of Child Development

- High Scope curriculum promotes learning, growth, school readiness, and parents are involved in their child's learning.
- Staff are trained to identify and provide support to children with special needs. The Children’s Centres have higher capacity to accept children with special needs while other child care operators often have limits. In addition, the Children’s Centres connect families to special needs resources (e.g. speech, vision, autism therapy, etc.).
- All parents noted that the Children’s Centres have a positive impact to their child’s physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Staff may be the first to detect potential development issues.

All parents are greatly satisfied with the Children’s Centres and highly appreciate the quality of care they receive at the Centres. Children’s Centres have a positive impact to their child’s physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Dedicated staff with low turnover provides consistency in services and cultivates strong relationships with families.
## Survey Results - Parents of Children Currently Enrolled

### Summary

- 107 survey responses received
  - Christopher Children's centre – 30 responses
  - Elmira Children's centres – 15 responses
  - Edith Macintosh Children's Centre – 17 responses
  - Kinsmen Children's Centre – 20 responses
  - Cambridge Children's Centre – 25 responses

- 66% of the staff had more than 5+ years of service, 33% had 2-5 years of service
- 91 parents had 1 child enrolled and 15 parents had 2 children enrolled
- 83% parents indicated that it was easy to register and rolled their children (95 responses)
- 70% indicated that they were assigned to a waitlist and 30% indicated that they were not assigned to a waitlist (95 responses)

### Was this a preferred Centre for your family? – 95 responses

![Bar chart showing 92% responded Yes]

The parents of children currently enrolled at the Centres spoke strongly about the positive impact the Centres had on their children and family.
The families indicated that the Children’s Centres were working very well, especially the Teachers and Staff and overall Quality of Services, and had a positive impact on their child’s physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.
The families indicated that the Children’s Centres had a positive impact on the children and the family.

What are the overall impacts of the Children’s Centres to your family?
- 94 responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Impact</th>
<th>Somewhat Positive Impact</th>
<th>Neutral Impact</th>
<th>Somewhat Negative Impact</th>
<th>Negative Impact</th>
<th>Please describe any positive...</th>
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<td>100%</td>
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<td>80%</td>
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<td>60%</td>
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</table>

What are the overall impacts of the Children’s Centres to your family?
- 24 responses

- It has an overall positive impact on the family as they have comfort and confidence knowing their kids are in excellent hands as they go to work
- Kids developed socially by having good relationships with teachers and peers
- Children had increased speech and vocabulary, play skills and school readiness
- The children are able to develop ‘outside of their home environment’ allowing them to be more independent
- Development concerns are diagnosed early allowing corrective action to be taken; teachers also provide valuable advice to parents
- The Centres are a ‘stress relief’ place for the children – which parents talk about to relax the children at home
- The Centre helped establish a positive routine in children’s life
- The physical space, food, hygiene is above par along with socialization activities, cognitive development and staff interactions
- Overall, the Centres are an important part of the child’s life

Impact to your family if your child did not attend the Centre – 70 responses

- There would be a negative economic impact as one of the parents would stay home, if their child was going to a different operator – this would not provide their children with the same opportunity to develop physically, socially, and emotionally that they receive at the Centre.
- Parents indicated that they would have been very concerned, disappointed and stressed to send children to a non-Regional Centre. They feared other operators do not provide the same level of service and supports.
- Leaving children with a different operator would not leave parents with a sense of complete trust
- Parents didn’t believe their children would have gotten the same quality of programming and care
- Parents didn’t believe the children, specially with special needs, would obtain the required level of care and support. They also feared their children’s special needs would not have been identified as early on
- The children would not have developed as much cognitive, social, communication and emotional skills at other operators
- Parents feared the children would have more behavioral issues and their overall development would be hampered and delayed

The families were highly satisfied with the quality of care provided by the Centres specifically the Programs and Services, Staffing and the Facility Space. Parents indicated not sending their children to the Region’s Centre would result in negative consequences (like loss of income, emotional distress, delayed development of their child)
### Parent Focus Groups: Feedback on Challenges

#### OneList Waitlist Status

- Majority of parents were confused of their OneList waitlist status. Main comments include:
  - OneList instructions for next steps could be improved.
  - Communication is inconsistent across Children’s Centres. Parents express concern of “missing a phone call” when a space becomes available. There is a perception that parents have to proactively contact the Children’s Centres directly to know of their waitlist status or ensure their child is enrolled.
  - Managing waitlist between licensed child care and home child care was challenging.
  - Waitlist may not be accessible to all types of demographics (e.g. non-English speaking, new comers, or lack of internet access).

#### Diversity and Inclusivity

- Children’s Centres provide great early years education for families that are “lucky” to experience; however, only a small portion of the Region’s population experience this type of service.
- Families have to be resourceful to register and enroll for child care. New comers are at a disadvantage of enrolling their children at the Children’s Centres due to lack of information or being less familiar with the Region’s child care system.
- The Children’s Centres programs should continue to work on improving diversity (e.g. expanding celebration of different cultures).

#### Programs and Services

- One parent group express concern on the affordability of child care fees and loss of subsidies. Changes in fee structure have posed financial challenges to some families (previously there was two types of fees for under or over 6 hours of care).
- Two parent groups wish pick up times could be extended beyond 5:30 pm.

#### Impact of Child Development

- Two parent groups noted they have a hard time understanding the report cards; would also like improvements around feedbacks on how the day went (e.g. electronic communication or daily brief journals).
- One parent group would like more explanation of the recommendations provided by Children’s Centre staff if there are disagreements on a child’s development or children’s behavior.

Parents reflected challenges in finding out their enrollment status. General perception is that parents need to proactively contact the Children’s Centres to get their child enrolled.
## Suggested Areas for Improvement

- Affordability and access to childcare continues to be significant challenges in the community [the waitlist is too long and the fees is too expensive]
- Parents indicated that the Region should consider raising the fees to keep the Centre open
- The Centre should consider keeping the Centre open for a bit longer (for example open until 6pm) and provide the shorten day option (6 hour option)
- Some of the class sizes are becoming big making the space tight
- Parents wished there was better access to washrooms for toddler rooms instead of having to get a teacher to take them across the hall when they really need to go
- Staff shifts should try to reflect on greeting to saying goodbye to the families – parents found this difficult at times to communicate
- The classrooms are full of learning materials and not ideal for active indoor play
- The "report card" need to be simplified and broadened/more communication would be appreciated
- The staff need more options for consequences for children due to aggressive, violent or inappropriate behavior
- Daily sterilization and attention to runny noses needed improvement
Stakeholder Engagement
Parents of Children Previously Enrolled at the Children’s Centres

Region of Waterloo
Third Party Review of Children’s Centres
Interim Report
Survey Results - Parents of Children Previously Enrolled

The parents of children previously enrolled at the Centres spoke strongly about the positive impact the Centres had on their children and family

Summary

- 36 survey responses received
  - Christopher Children’s centre – 17 responses
  - Elmira Children’s centres – 4 responses
  - Edith Macintosh Children’s Centre – 6 responses
  - Kinsmen Children’s Centre – 4 responses
  - Cambridge Children’s Centre – 3 responses
- The length of enrolment between 2-5 years was 47% and between 1-2 years was 25%
- 69% of parents had 1 child enrolled and 25% had 2 children enrolled.
- 66% families indicated that they were assigned to a waitlist and 33% indicated they were not (30 responses)
- 87% families indicated that it was easy to register and enrol their child at the Centre. The other 13% indicated that the process was not easy (long waitlist, registration was complicated, OneList system ineffective etc.)
- 54% families indicated that they moved out of the Centre as child care was no longer required

Was this a preferred Centre for the family?
- 30 responses

The Region’s Children’s Centres met my needs for child care – 27 responses
**Survey Results - Parents of Children Previously Enrolled**

**Thinking about your experience with the Children’s Centres, please rate each of the following options:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Many Improvements Needed</th>
<th>Some Improvements Needed</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Working Well</th>
<th>Working Very Well</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities, programs and...</td>
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<td>Class size</td>
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<td>Facility space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordability / child care...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of services</td>
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</table>

Families indicated that the Children’s Centres were working very well, especially the Teachers and Staff, Activities, Programs and Services and overall Quality of Services, and had a positive impact on their child’s physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.

**What were the impacts of the Children’s Centres on your child directly and their development?**

- Children excelled in social, emotional and speech development
- Learning environment is ideal
- Positive experiences in teaching socializing and problem solving among peers
- Great partnership between Centre and parents
Survey Results - Parents of Children Previously Enrolled

What were the overall impacts of the Children's Centres to your family? – 27 responses

- Overall negative impact
- Children would have to go to school with delay in gross motor ability
- Economic impact as one parent would have to stay home
- Children would have missed a learning experience
- Parents would be stressed sending their children elsewhere

Impact to your family if your child did not attend the Centre - 13 responses

- The staff and teachers are excellent
- The menu and the food offered is amazing and it helps the kids expand their tastes
- Even considering closing any Regional centres is a mistake
- The Region’s quality of care is unmatched
- Parents and kids in the Region desperately need high-quality care that only public child care centres can provide
- The children learn how to deal with situations that stick with them for life. The parents may even learn a few things from the teachers. The teachers are what make these centres

Is there anything else that you think is critical to consider for this review? - 10 responses

Families indicated sending their children to the Region’s Centres had a positive impact on their family.
Stakeholder Engagement
General Public Focus Group

Region of Waterloo
Third Party Review of Children’s Centres
Interim Report
Environmental Scan – Stakeholder Consultation

General Public Focus Group: Feedback on Positive Areas

Summary:
- Due to COVID-19, it was decided to conduct virtual focus groups with the general public.
- Intent was to solicit feedback from parents of children ages 0 to 4 years who are 1) currently enrolled at licensed child care centres or 2) waiting for a space in a licensed child care in Waterloo Region.
- 2 focus groups were scheduled with advertising on social media (Facebook, Twitter) by the Region’s Communications team.
- 1 focus group conducted with 3 participants (second focus group cancelled due to lack of participation).

Programs and Services
- Overall, parents are satisfied with their current child care centre. The centres ECEs and staff have developed collaborative relationships with parents and are able to identify learning opportunities and provide individual focus to their child.
- The Children’s Centres are the preferred choice for some parents. Location and availability of child care space are the main reasons for selecting non-Regional child care centres. Parents prefer the model of operating non-profit child care centres that are attached to public school buildings.
- All respondents believe quality education starts at an early age of life. Families (with less financial challenges) are willing to pay more to obtain quality child care services.
Environmental Scan – Stakeholder Consultation

General Public Focus Group: Feedback on Challenges

OneList Waitlist Status

- New parents or new comers are not aware of the OneList Registration system and are not aware of the Region’s Children’s Centres.
- Child care spaces are difficult to obtain. Parents with experience using OneList noted frustration in managing their waitlist status; specifically inconsistent or delayed communications for securing a child care space (e.g. parents were contacted after their registered dates of child care need). Parents have to contact individual child care centres directly to know of their waitlist status or whether a space is available.
- Certain non-Regional child care centres require parents to register in two systems (OneList and the centres own system). These centres are more proactive in maintaining their own system data versus OneList.
- Regional leadership should monitor and manage OneList more closely. From user standpoint, other than collecting registration data, the system does not help parents obtain child care spaces efficiently.

Programs and Services

- Location, availability of child care space, and quality of child care services are the three main factors that parents value the most in selecting child care providers. The Children’s Centres locations are not convenient for parents and the Centres have long waitlists.
- Some parents enrolled their children in home day care centres while waiting for spaces in licensed child care centres. All respondents prefer licensed child care centres as home day care centres have higher staff-to-children ratios. The facility environment and the lack of staff support in home day care centres are also concerns.
- Respondents believe that more funding and local tax dollars should be allocated to child care services. Funding directly impacts the quality of child care. The Children’s Centres are able to provide higher quality of services due to higher levels of funding support. The Region should invest more in non-Regional centres (if the Region’s continues to operate the current five Children’s Centres) to meet the communities’ child care needs.

Impact of Child Development

- Respondents do not have a preferred curriculum. They believe the most important factor for child development is to have professional and dedicated ECEs that provide a structured and safe environment for children to grow. Staff turnover at non-Regional child care centres have a significant impact to their child’s development and the level of care they experience.

Families that are unfamiliar with the Region’s child care system are at a disadvantage to accessing child care. Parents express frustration with waitlists. General perception is that parents need connections and constant check-ins with operators to get a child care space.
Comparator Analysis

Region of Waterloo
Third Party Review of Children’s centres
Interim Report
### Environmental Scan

**Comparator Analysis - Currently Operating Children Centres**

#### Key Questions and Responses from Current Operators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do you continue to operate child care centres?</th>
<th>What disadvantages does the municipality see in directly operating child care?</th>
<th>Have you considered removing the direct operation of child care centres from the municipal list of services?</th>
<th>Is there anything else that we haven’t discussed that you think is critical to consider for this review?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Providing leadership to the community with respect to operations, policy, practices and setting the standard for quality.</td>
<td>• Incurring high costs to operate the centres (salaries and benefits and capital improvements to buildings)</td>
<td>• Responses varied. In some cases, Councils have not considered divestiture for years; in others, Councils discuss the option of divestiture on a yearly basis.</td>
<td>• 4/5 respondents answered “No”. One respondent noted that any Council must quantify the need for child care in order to justify direct operation, i.e. define the demand and the supply of child care.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Serving at-risk families and children with Special Needs, and proving staff and resources to help them flourish</td>
<td>• 3/5 respondents saw no disadvantages with directly operating child care</td>
<td>• In one case, the municipality performed a review of its child care centres but decided to keep them operational.</td>
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<td>• Advocating for professional wages for staff, and offering them opportunities for professional development</td>
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<td>• Testing and evaluating new practices in-house before making recommendations to other operators across the sector</td>
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<td>• Providing long-term, dependable relationships with parents and children since staff turnover is low</td>
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<td>• Responding quickly to needs in the municipality and emergency situations, e.g. COVID-19</td>
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<td>Key Questions and Responses from Former Operators</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What factors influenced the decision to discontinue directly operated child care?</strong> (e.g. cost savings, funding reduction, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The cost of operating childcare was too high, and Councils anticipated hundreds of thousands to millions in cost savings</td>
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<td>• Full-day kindergarten significantly reduced the demand for the centres</td>
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<td>• Reduction or loss of Provincial funding to subsidize or cover the cost of operations</td>
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<td>• Fostered inconsistency in quality across the Region</td>
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<td>• The desire to eliminate the “us vs. them” mentality between other operators and the Region</td>
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<td>• Staff received top-of-the-line training and wages which was not fair to the rest of the industry</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cost savings were:</strong></td>
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<td>• Reallocated to the tax base, leading to steady or marginal tax increases for the public</td>
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<td>• Used to cover unanticipated expenses (severance packages and consultation with parents);</td>
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<td>• Used to subsidize operators who purchased the centres from the municipalities</td>
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<td>• Used to eliminate the subsidy wait list in the Region</td>
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<td>• Funds from the sale of buildings were put into reserves</td>
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<td><strong>What was the plan for reinvesting the cost savings from no longer directly operating child care and how was it achieved?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>What impact did divesting directly operating child care have on the community and on staff?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• More child care spaces and greater accessibility in the community</td>
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<td>• Provided more funding to other operators</td>
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<td>• The community did not lose access to child care. Other operators already provided quality child care.</td>
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<td>• Loss of quality (meals, program materials etc.) and loss of control over child care</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The majority of staff found employment in similar roles although some were not able to do so</td>
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<td>• Divestiture was emotionally straining for staff and parents of children in the centres</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What impact did divesting directly operating child care have on your municipality in its CMSM role?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Allowed the municipalities to focus and grow their roles as knowledge leaders and child care system-builders</td>
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<td>• Increased collaboration between the municipalities and operators because they are no longer in competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increased the municipalities’ commitment to the success of other operators</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The municipality lost the ability to respond quickly to parental needs. It needs to work hard to incentivize other operators to meet these needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Were the child care spaces maintained in the community?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Generally, all parents and children successfully transitioned to other operators</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In one case, some children with Special Needs were not able to find spaces with other operators</td>
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</table>
Key themes arising from interviews with current and former operators are presented below.
### Summary of Strengths from Collective Stakeholders

#### The Region is an effective System Manager and has a positive impact on the community

**OneList**
- The Region has a holistic view of child care needs across the Region.
- A “one-stop shop” for parents to access child care.

**Staffing Resources**
- Significant investments are made in Children’s Centres staff both in compensation and professional training.
- Low staff turnover provides consistency in services, and cultivates strong relationships with parents and children.
- Stakeholders recognize the Region’s support in promoting wage enhancement and child care as a profession. Some respondents believe it is important for the Region to be a direct child care operator to support this effort.
- Parents noted that the Children’s Centres have a positive impact to their child’s physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Staff may be the first to detect potential development issues.
- Staff provides greater attention to individual children.

**Programs & Services**
- The Children’s Centres are often used as pilot centres for new initiatives, and provide the Region with front line understanding of child care services for system management.
- The Region is efficient in providing policy guidance, training opportunities, and share regulatory updates with community operators. The Children’s Centres often share best practices.
- The Region’s Quality Initiatives Program supports operators in improving their programs and services.
- High Scope curriculum provides a good framework to implement *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years.*
- Facilities are purpose-built and designed for child care needs.

**Diversity & Inclusivity**
- The Children’s Centres have been working towards more diversity of families attending the centres.
- The Children’s Centres cater to families with Special Needs.
- Strong relationships with elementary schools to support successful transition from pre-school to kindergarten.
- The Children’s Centres are located in communities that are difficult for non-Regional child care centres to operate in (e.g. being financially viable).

**Funding Levels**
- Staff directly impact the quality of child care services delivered to the community; hence, the compensation level reflects this value.
- Parent fees are comparable to other operators.
- Parents believe value-for-money is high for the services offered at the Children’s Centres.
- In addition to provincial grants, operators appreciate the additional funding support the Region provides.

Positive feedback, specifically regarding excellent staff and high quality programs and services, at the Children’s Centres came from Management, Children Centre’s staff and parents of children currently and previously enrolled. Community agencies and child care operators also appreciated elements of services provided by the Region (such as promoting child care as a profession, funding support and sharing of best practices).
### Summary of Challenges from Collective Stakeholders

Key challenges are summarized below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OneList</th>
<th>Staffing Resources</th>
<th>Programs &amp; Services</th>
<th>Diversity &amp; Inclusivity</th>
<th>Funding Levels</th>
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<tr>
<td>- New parents or new comers are not aware of the OneList Registration system.</td>
<td>- Industry-wide shortage of qualified ECEs resulting in recruiting and retention challenges for child care operators. The Children’s centres compensation level adds additional challenge to attracting talent.</td>
<td>- High Scope curriculum is expensive and a barrier for child care operators to adopt. Other curriculums are comparable to High Scope in providing quality child care and meeting Ministry requirements.</td>
<td>- What is the definition of “inclusion”? This is unclear for agencies working with vulnerable population. There are perceptions that children enrolled in the Children’s Centres receive higher priority in obtaining subsidy or resource support.</td>
<td>- Children’s centres have a different funding model than non-Regional child care centres. Operationally, hard for non-Regional operators to see the Children’s centres as a “model.” Non-Regional operators are unable to pay staff the same level of compensation and afford purpose-built facilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Parents express frustration with waitlist communication (e.g. parents were contacted after their registered dates of child care need).</td>
<td>- Availability of child care spaces are subject to staff-to-children ratios and licensed capacity requirements.</td>
<td>- The Children’s centres’ facilities are high-end and are difficult to replicate across the community.</td>
<td>- OneList assumes that families have equal access to computers, internet and phone services. This is not the case for many vulnerable families.</td>
<td>- Perception is that parent fees and staff wages are subsidized by levy dollars, and Children’s Centres have first access to funding and resource support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- General perception is that parents need connections and constant check-ins with operators to get their child enrolled at a centre.</td>
<td>- There is a perception that the Children’s Centre staff are disconnected from the child care community.</td>
<td>- New licensed child care operators noted that it is challenging to enter into a funding and service contract with the Region, specifically meeting contract requirements and fulfilling a 12-month waiting period.</td>
<td>- Historically there was not much diversity in the Children’s Centres. Only a small portion of the Region’s population get to experience the high level of services the Children’s Centres offer. There is a sense of disparity in the community.</td>
<td>- Location is a key factor for parents in selecting child care providers. The Children’s Centres’ locations are not convenient for a lot of parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Child care centres have long waitlists. Managing OneList waitlist is time consuming for Children’s Centre staff and child care operators.</td>
<td>- Some operators have their own registration system and requires them to monitor two systems. Parent perception is that these operators’ are more proactive in maintaining their own system data.</td>
<td>- Location is a key factor for parents in selecting child care providers. The Children’s Centres’ locations are not convenient for a lot of parents.</td>
<td>- New parents or new comers are not aware of the Region’s Children’s Centres putting them at a disadvantage in obtaining child care.</td>
<td>- The larger operators indicated they should be given the opportunity to test any new programs at their centres (this role shouldn’t be solely performed by the Region).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What is the definition of “inclusion”? This is unclear for agencies working with vulnerable population. There are perceptions that children enrolled in the Children’s Centres receive higher priority in obtaining subsidy or resource support.</td>
<td>- Some stakeholders believe re-allocating Children’s Centres funding can increase quality, child care space, and geographic coverage across the Region.</td>
<td>- OneList assumes that families have equal access to computers, internet and phone services. This is not the case for many vulnerable families.</td>
<td>- There is a sense of disparity in the community.</td>
<td>- What is the definition of “inclusion”? This is unclear for agencies working with vulnerable population. There are perceptions that children enrolled in the Children’s Centres receive higher priority in obtaining subsidy or resource support.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

OneList waitlist was a key challenge expressed by almost all stakeholders. Staffing, programs and services, diversity and inclusivity and funding challenges were primarily from community agencies and community childcare operators.
Next Steps
The stakeholder engagement will be an integral part as we develop our service delivery options.
Appendix
## Stakeholder Interview Questionnaires

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<th>Interview Guides</th>
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<td>Management staff and Union Reps. <a href="#">PDF</a></td>
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<td>Meetings with Community Agencies</td>
<td>Community Agencies <a href="#">PDF</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings with Other Child Care Operators within Waterloo Region</td>
<td>Community Operators <a href="#">PDF</a></td>
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<td>Focus groups with parents of children enrolled at Children’s Centres</td>
<td>Children Centres aren’t Focus Group <a href="#">PDF</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>General public focus group of parents experience with non-Regional child care centres</td>
<td>General Public Focus Group <a href="#">PDF</a></td>
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</table>
Online Survey Questions

01 Children’s Centre Staff
Staff Survey

02 Community Child Care Operators
Community Operator Survey

03 Parents of Children Currently Enrolled
Current Parents Survey

04 Parents of Children Previously Enrolled
Prior Parents Survey