Highlights of ELCC Service Plan progress

Actions to move the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Service Plan 2016-2020 forward in Waterloo Region have been closely aligned with the vision described in Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework (2017). This vision has four key pillars: access and availability, affordability, responsiveness and inclusion, and quality. This document highlights some of the most significant actions and accomplishments that have been achieved or are in progress as of spring 2019.

Access and availability

“Increasing access to early year’s programs to give families more opportunity to benefit from high-quality early childhood programs and services. 1”

767 new licensed child care centre spaces for children ages 0-4 years opened in 2017 and 2018.

4 new and 3 expanded child care centres are expected to open in schools by December 2020, with licensed capacity for at least 475 children ages 0-4 years.

Over 50 new licensed home child care caregivers received start-up grants to increase access to licensed home child care for children ages 0-4 years.

Affordability

“Ensuring that early years programs and services, including licensed child care, are within affordable reach for families. 2”

The subsidy waitlist was eliminated in 2017.

Daily child care fees in participating programs went down as a result of the Fee Reduction Pilot (starting July 2018).

Average amount parents saved on child care fees:

- Infant: 15%
- Toddler: 8%
- Preschool: 7%

2 new EarlyON sites opened (in Elmira and Kitchener) and 1 site was renovated and relocated (in Cambridge).

4 new EarlyON sites located in schools are scheduled to open by December 2020.

We highlighted [the fee reduction] to prospective families when they were coming in for tours and in many cases it helped with the decision making versus going with [unlicensed] child care that may be less expensive.

- Quote from a Centre participating in the Fee Reduction Pilot

1, 2 Ontario’s Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework, 2017.
Every local licensed child care centre and home child care program received kits with items that support belonging and inclusion of all children in licensed child care.

130 kits

97% of respondents to the 2018 Child Care Survey said their educators respond to their child’s individual needs.

"Providing a range of early years and child care programs that are inclusive and culturally appropriate, located in schools, communities, workplaces and home settings so that parents – including parents who work irregular hours – can choose the options that work best for their family."

Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) funding was increased by 14% to support inclusion of all children.

SNR supports will be offered to licensed child care after-school programs.

My child care center has always been willing to work with [Special Needs Resourcing] to support the needs of my child or any child in their care. They also provide written progress reports and goals for each individual child to support their needs.

- Quote from a parent in the 2018 Child Care Survey

Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) funding was increased by 14% to support inclusion of all children.

The Indigenous-led child and family centre is scheduled to open in 2019. This is the first Indigenous-led early learning program in Waterloo Region.

97% of respondents to the 2018 Child Care Survey said their educators respond to their child’s individual needs.

89 child care sites received One-Time Technology Grants in 2018 to support increased quality in licensed child care programs.

"We were able to purchase a tablet for staff to document learning through photos, videos and learning stories.

- Quote from a Centre receiving a Technology Grant