



Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number:	HS2023-004
Meeting Date:	March 7, 2023
Title:	Children's Services Access and Inclusion Expansion Plan
Description:	Expansion of licensed child care spaces under the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan
Author and Title:	Janine Mitchell, Manager Human Services

Recommendation(s):

That Report HS2023-004, **Access and Inclusion Expansion Plan**, be received;

That this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

Child care is foundational to supporting early childhood developments, learning, well-being and success for our children. It is also a key factor in supporting workforce participation. The City of Kawartha Lakes is committed to providing access to high quality, affordable child care to as many families as possible.

On March 28, 2022, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada signed the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement (CWELCC). The CWELCC program intends to:

- Reduce child care fees for eligible families;
- Increase access to high-quality, inclusive, licensed child care programs;
- Invest in the Early Learning and Child Care workforce.

The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 was amended to designate the City of Kawartha Lakes, as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), to deliver the CWELCC program in the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton. The Children's Services Division of the Human Services Department is responsible for the management and implementation of CWELCC.

Ontario's vision for the CWELCC system is that more families in Ontario have access to high quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live. Under the CWELCC agreement with the Government of Canada, the province has been funded to support the creations of an additional 543 spaces by December 2026.

CWELCC has a five-year phased implementation, which started in April of 2022. Fee subsidies provided to families requiring financial assistance also remain an important component of addressing affordability and continue to be available on top of this program.

All eight (8) service providers, providing care in 24 sites throughout Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton, are participating in CWELCC. They have all received additional funding to support the Ministry established wage floor (the lowest possible wage) for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE's), wage enhancements and funding to offset the fee reductions.

Parents would pay a daily fee, or base rate, for care, based on the age of the child and the amount of time required each day for each child. Parents in receipt of fee subsidy, would be eligible for assistance to pay for care but may have a parental fee based on a set formula and be responsible for paying a portion of the daily fee. As of December 1, 2022, through CWELCC funding child care fees have been reduced by 50%. The table below visualizes the average base rate and reduced rates under CWELCC across our service area.

Table 1: Current Base and Reduced CWELCC Child Care Rates

	Infant (0 to 1.5 years)		Toddler (1.5 to 2.5 years)		Preschool (2.5 years to 6 years) Total	
	Base Rate	CWELCC Rate	Base Rate	CWELCC Rate	Base Rate	CWELCC Rate
County of Haliburton	\$44.00	\$23.21	\$36.48	\$19.24	\$35.47	\$18.71
Kawartha Lakes	\$56.30	\$29.69	\$46.67	\$24.61	\$40.78	\$21.51
Average for all programs in Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton	\$54.20	\$28.59	\$44.22	\$23.32	\$38.50	\$20.30
Parental Fee Example	\$10.00	\$5.27				

In December 2022, the province released the CWELCC Access and Inclusion Framework model to allocate funding for new spaces for children 0 – 5 across the province. For this expansion, funding will focus on improving equity of access by working toward a common provincial access ratio of 37% of licensed spaces to children, over the phased implementation timeframe.

The Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton service area has been allocated Provincial funding for 49 school based and 394 community-based licensed child care spaces to open over the next four years by 2026. The intent is to create spaces in communities who need them most as guided by Ministry criteria. Currently discussions are underway to explore

places where expansion can occur for the creation of potential spaces in communities across the collective region served. The community based spaces may be created in licensed centre or home based programs.

The province requires CMSM's to identify priority neighbourhoods for space creation and are asked to determine space allocations with considerations given to the following provincially established socio-economic factors:

- Low-income families
- Vulnerable communities
- Diverse communities
- Children with special needs
- Francophone families
- Indigenous families
- Families needing more flexible models of care, including evening, weekend, and overnight care

The CWELCC funding to support the expansion of child care spaces includes funding to support minor capital costs for minor renovations. The funding may not be used to build new centres or purchase land or buildings. The maximum funding allocation is \$350,000 per 50 spaces created.

Rationale:

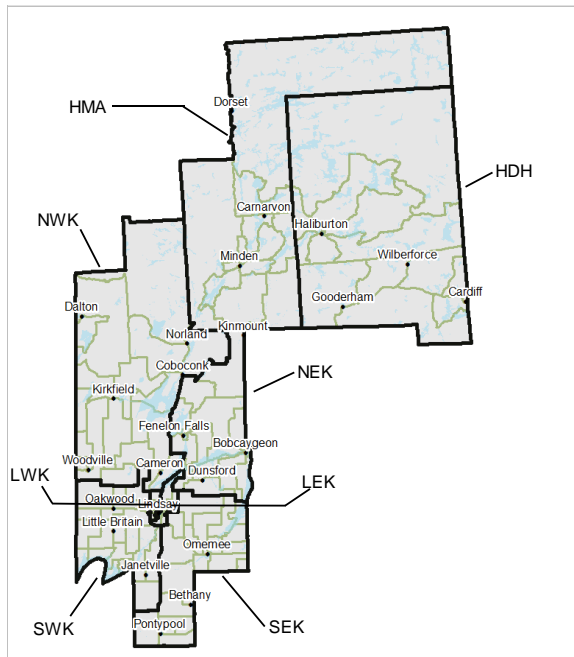
To determine the priority neighbourhoods in our communities, a review of the socio-economic factors was completed to determine which factors would be a factor in our communities. The data was analyzed for each of the factors.

Based on the Census dissemination areas, our service area is divided into eight larger neighbourhoods. This better supports service planning, provides a grouping of communities for data analysis and allows the location of the program to be within that broader neighbourhood area. Diagram 1 below visualizes the larger neighbourhoods and communities associated with them. The neighbourhoods include:

1. HMA – Dorset, Carnarvon, Minden
2. HDH – Haliburton, Wilberforce, Gooderham, Cardiff
3. NWK – Dalton, Kirkfield, Woodville
4. NEK – Fenelon Falls, Dunsford, Bobcaygeon
5. LEK – Lindsay East

6. LWK – Lindsay West
7. LEK – Omemee, Bethany, Pontypool
8. LWK – Oakwood, Little Britain, Janetville

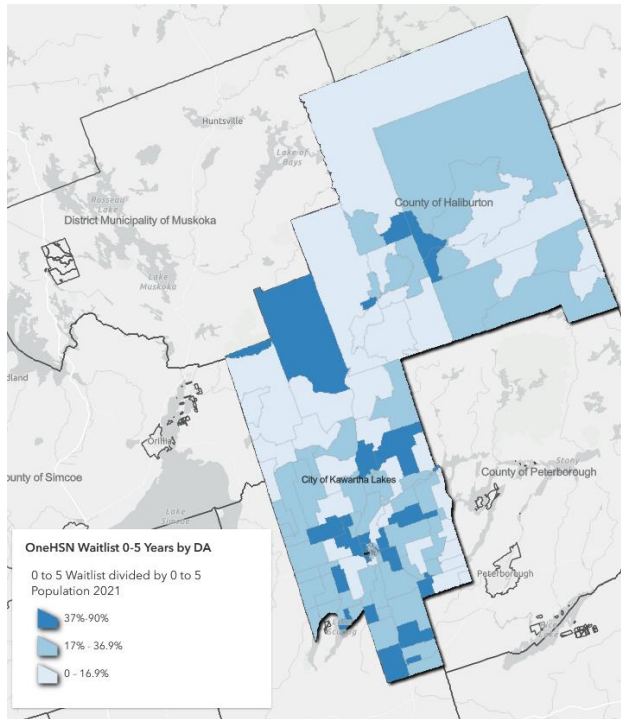
Diagram 1 – Map of Neighbourhoods



The neighbourhoods were then analyzed based on the number of children 0 – 5 on our waitlist to access care, the current number of licensed spaces available, the Low Income Measure, Indigenous, racialized and immigrant populations, and the location of vulnerable children.

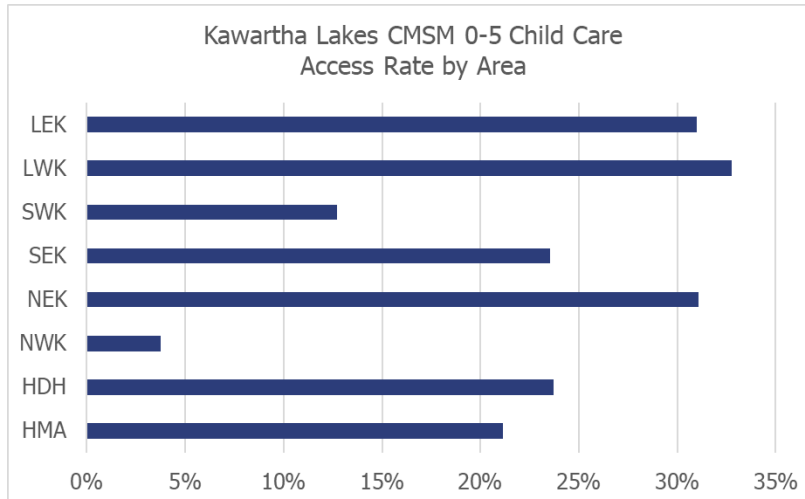
Some examples of the socio-economic factors used are below in diagram 2 and chart 1. The first diagram shows the concentration of children 0 – 5 by census dissemination area. The darker colours represent higher concentrations of children in that area. LEK has the highest concentration of children 0 – 5 on the waitlist for licensed child care with 22%, SWK has 20%, NEK and LWK both have 18%.

Diagram 2 – Waitlist for Licensed Child Care, 0 – 5 Year of Age.



The chart below shows the access rate for licensed child care spaces (number of children 0 – 5 years old as compared to the number of licensed child care spaces available). Knowing the provincial target is 37%, this chart demonstrates that children 0 – 5 years old are underserved throughout our service area. NWK has the lowest proportion of licensed child care spaces to actual number of children at 4% and LEK and NEK have the highest proportion of just over 30%.

Chart 1: Access Rate for Licensed Child Care Spaces for Children 0 - 5



Staff analyzed the eight neighbourhoods against the nine indicators within the Statistics Canada Social Risk Index (SRI). The SRI provides a risk score based on the average characteristics of neighbourhoods within a larger area that relate to social-economic risk factors. These indicators measure education, employment, income, reliance on government-subsidized incomes, unemployment, family structure, mobility, language and immigration.

The highest SRI score a neighbourhood can receive is nine. The nine SRI indicators are compared to the average score for neighbourhoods in Ontario (2021). A risk factor is present when the neighbourhood has a higher percentage score than the average neighbourhoods in Ontario and for this receives one point. A total neighbourhood SRI score is found by analyzing the scores per indicator and adding the points down all nine indicators. Generally, a neighbourhood with a SRI score greater than four are considered to be high on the risk index.

Table 2 shows the analysis of the Social Risk Index for Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton. As outlined in the table, five neighbourhoods within our region scored four or higher including HMA, HDH, NWK, NEK, and LEK. This table also identifies that low-income, lone parent families, high unemployment rates, and reliance on government assistance are high social risk factors in our communities.

Table 2: Social Risk Index

Census Variable	HMA	HDH	NWK	NEK	SEK	SWK	LWK	LEK	Ontario
1 Lone Parent Families (%)	36.1	38.0	33.6	34.6	24.6	25.4	37.3	51.4	17.1
2 Low Income After-Tax (LIM-AT) (%)	11.9	13.7	10.5	11.6	6.2	7.1	8.7	17.5	10.1
3 Non-Official Mother Tongue (%)	5.2	4.5	4.6	4.3	4.1	3.6	5.3	4.1	26.9
4 Recent Immigrants from 2016 to 2021 (%)	1.3	1.2	1.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	2.6	1.4	4.2
5 Renters (%)	10.6	13.6	8.2	14.6	6.9	8.8	23.4	41.3	31.4
6 1-Year Mobility Rate (%)	10.2	11.4	7.6	10.1	7.1	6.8	8.7	11.0	11.6
7 Unemployment Rate (%)	11.3	11.1	11.0	10.5	10.1	11.6	9.4	15.4	12.2
8 Population 25-64 Without a High School Diploma (%)	9.9	11.8	13.7	11.4	8.6	8.7	10.6	14.1	8.8
9 Income from Government Transfer Payments (%)	23.6	24.6	24.0	24.0	17.3	19.2	24.5	28.6	17.1
Social Risk Index	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	6	

To achieve the maximum funding allocation of \$350,000 per 50 spaces, City staff are working with Economic Development to reach out to our business community for the potential of renovating retail space that would meet the strict and regulated requirements under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014. Additionally, we are planning expansion to include licensed home child care.

Based on the provincial implementation over the next four years, staff have identified the following communities and timelines for the expansion of licenced care and home child care spaces (based on the needs of each neighbourhood area).

Table 3: Child Care Expansion Allocation of Spaces Plan

Neighbourhood	Year	Infant 0 – 18 mos.	Toddler 18- 30 mos.	Preschool 30 mos. – 5.11 years	Total
NEK	2023	5	5	5	15
Home Child Care	2023	5	5	15	25
HDH	2024	10	15	6	31
NWK	2025	10	15	24	49
Home Child Care	2025	4	4	12	25
NEK	2025	5	10	19	34
LEK	2026	10	15	24	49
NEK/NWK	2026	10	15	24	49
Home Child Care	2026	4	4	12	25
SEK/SWK	2026	10	15	16	41
TOTAL					394

The planned expansion will improve our overall access rates by 10%. However, at an average of 32%, access rates will remain 5% below the provincial target of 37%. Table 4 shows the current number of licensed spaces and the impact of the increased spaces on access rates.

Some areas, NWK and SWK, will still be well below the goal access rate, however these areas currently have the lowest access rates in the area and it will take a higher proportion of spaces to reach the goal rate. It is also important to keep in mind that the provincial focus right now is to prioritize vulnerable populations, so although some areas may have a better rate than NWK and SWK to start, those areas may have a higher proportion of need.

Table 4: Current and Planned Increase Access Rate

Area	0-5 Population	Current 0-5 Licensed Spaces	Planned CWELCC Spaces	Total Spaces 2026	2026 Access Rate	Current Access Rate
HMA	355	75	59	134	38%	21%
HDH	350	83	72	155	44%	24%
NWK	690	26	100	126	18%	4%
NEK	615	191	59	250	41%	31%
SEK	850	200	69	269	32%	24%
SWK	605	77	15	92	15%	13%
LWK	620	203	10	213	34%	33%
LEK	720	223	59	282	39%	31%
Total	4805	1078	443	1521	32%	22%

Other Alternatives Considered:

The province provided the Access and Inclusion Framework and provided the City with the space allocation in late January with a requirement for the identification of the priority neighbourhoods and space growth plan for each year to be submitted by January 20th, 2023. The province will provide funding as per the space allocations per year, therefore expansion of space to the potential communities must meet our space allocation for the year in order to have allocated funding to support the growth.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

This plan supports a vibrant and growing economy as part of a support system allowing parents with young children to maintain their employment. Access to licensed child care supports people and businesses in our community.

This plan supports an exceptional quality of life by providing high quality early learning and child care available right in the child's community.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

This funding is 100% Federal funding, flowed through the province.

Consultations:

Manager of Economic Development, Kawartha Lakes

Scott Ovell, Director of Economic Development, County of Haliburton

Mike Rutter, CAO, County of Haliburton

CEO, KLH Housing Corp

Finance Coordinator

Data Analysis Coordinator

Program Supervisor, Children's Services

Department Head email: cfaber@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Cheryl Faber