



Council Report

Report Number:	HS2023-007
Meeting Date:	September 26, 2023
Title:	Cross Jurisdictional Child Care
Description:	Cross Jurisdictional Child Care Agreement with the Region of Durham
Author and Title:	Janine Mitchell, Manager Human Services

Recommendation(s):

That Report HS2023-007 **Cross Jurisdictional Child Care**, be received;

That the agreement between the Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes and the Regional Municipality of Durham for the purpose of the provision of cross jurisdictional child care, attached as Appendix A to report HS2023-007, be approved, and

That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute any documents and agreements required by the approval of this agreement.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

Recently, the Ministry of Education has proposed a change in language to the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA, 2014), to improve a family's access to subsidized care by making it a requirement for municipalities to enter into agreements with service providers or neighbouring municipalities for the provision of cross jurisdictional child care.

With that, municipalities continue to have the discretion to develop policies and procedures for the implementation and ensure agreements are in place to support seamless access to children's services.

Under the Signing Authority By-law 2016-009, 6.08 it states, "A contract or agreement between municipalities requires a Council Report recommendation adopted by Council that approves the contract or agreement and authorized the Mayor and City Clerk to sign."

The Children's Services Division in the Human Services Department is requesting approval to sign an agreement with the Regional Municipality of Durham for the provision of cross jurisdictional child care that requires fee subsidy payments to residents accessing care closer to home in an alternate municipality.

Child Care Fee Subsidy is provided to children and families who reside in the City of Kawartha Lakes (City) or the County of Haliburton (County) who meet eligibility requirements as set out in the CCEYA, 2014. Generally speaking, the families supported within the City and County access the licensed care within those boundaries. However, there are circumstances where a family is not able to access care within the City and County due to space availability, or if the location of their work would result in a significant hardship to access care within our boundaries.

For example, a family residing east of Beaverton, within the City boundaries, works in Orillia and requires full day care for their preschool child. The closest available program providing care to preschool aged children within the City is located in Little Britain. Instead of that family accessing care in that location and travelling an additional three hours each day, this agreement would permit them to access the child care program located in Beaverton and reduce their travel time to one hour each day.

Staff support cross jurisdictional child care and currently has agreements directly with our neighbouring service providers located in Peterborough, North Hastings and Orillia. Our current policy supports a maximum of 10 children accessing care outside of the City and County boundaries, as well as reciprocal use of children accessing services within Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton.

Rationale:

The Children's Services Department has families requiring care within the boundaries of the Region of Durham and vice versa. The families have been screened and have met eligibility requirements under the approval process for cross-jurisdictional child care.

Entering into a single overarching agreement directly with the Regional Municipality of Durham will result in families being able to reciprocally access care within any licensed child care program within the appropriate municipality. Administrative work will also lessen and the process will become more streamlined for both Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) to manage thus ensuring families access the right care in the right place.

Cross jurisdictional placements are approved by both municipalities. The municipality where the family lives, "home municipality", approves the child care subsidy and reimburses the "host municipality" where the child care program is located.

The municipality where the child care program is located confirms the child care subsidy start date and makes the subsidized payment directly to the program on behalf of the child.

Other Alternatives Considered:

Instead of an overarching agreement with the CMSM, City staff could enter into individual agreements directly with the service providers, however this is not recommended as it increases the wait time for families to access care, and increases administrative work required to process and maintain those service agreements. Also noted, given the recent changes to the legislation, staff anticipate an increase in applications for subsidized care to additional programs outside of the City and County boundaries, thus increasing the demand for this level of service.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

Supporting cross jurisdictional child care supports an exceptional quality of life and the health and well-being of children supports the family's ability to work or attend school, while making quality child care accessible and available to families within our communities.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

The administration associated with the monthly processing of cross jurisdictional child care is consistent with the administration of fee subsidy for programs within our boundaries. There is no change for the approval process of subsidized child care.

There are pressures within the current capacity within the City and County for child care spaces. We have a low vacancy rate and long wait lists to access care. Increasing access to additional spaces supports a family's abilities to work or go to school, while ensuring they have care for their children. This agreement, plus the continued implementation of the Children's Services access and inclusion plan under the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan (CWELCC) will increase the number of licensed spaces within our boundaries and will improve access to City and County children and families.

The agreement is a five-year agreement and staff will monitor the operationalization of this over that time period. All funding is within the Council approved budget.

Consultations:

City Solicitor

Program Supervisor, Children's Services

Director of Children's Services, Region of Durham

Attachments:

Appendix A – Service Agreement with the Region of Durham



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Department Head: Cheryl Faber