



Council Report

Report Number:	HS2024-006
Meeting Date:	August 27, 2024
Title:	Cross Jurisdictional Child Care Agreement
Description:	Cross Jurisdictional Child Care Agreement with the County of Simcoe
Author and Title:	Janine Mitchell, Manager Human Services

Recommendation(s):

That Report HS2024-006 **Cross Jurisdictional Child Care**, be received;

That the agreement between the Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Simcoe for the purpose of the provision of cross jurisdictional child care, attached as Appendix A to report HS2024-006, 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:

Under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA, 2014) municipalities are required to enter into agreements with service providers or neighbouring municipalities for the provision of cross jurisdictional child care. This supports and improves access for families to subsidized 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 County of Simcoe 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 just this side of Beaverton, within the boundaries of Kawartha Lakes, works in Barrie and requires full day care for their preschool child. The closest available program providing care to preschool aged children within Kawartha Lakes is located in Lindsay, however the child may be on a waitlist for care. The family would be approved to access care in Barrie for their child until a space in Lindsay would become available, or until they are of age to attend a program for school-aged children.

We currently have cross-jurisdictional agreements with the Region of Durham and the City of Peterborough and are finalizing an agreement with Hastings County. The District of Muskoka have chosen not to enter into an agreement with the City directly, but will have an agreement with each individual provider. At this time, we do not currently have an active agreement with a provider within the boundaries served by the District of Muskoka.

Rationale:

The Children's Services Division has families requiring care within the boundaries of the City and County of Simcoe 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 County of Simcoe will result in families being able to reciprocally access care within any licensed child care program within the appropriate municipality. Administrative work will 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 in the specific region, 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. All funding is within the Council approved budget.

Consultations:

City Solicitor

Program Supervisor, Children's Services

Director Children's Services, County of Simcoe

Attachments:

Appendix A – Service Agreement with the County of Simcoe



2024 Cross
Jurisdictional Agree

Department Head email: cfaber@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Cheryl Faber