



Council Report

Report Number:	HS2025-001
Meeting Date:	March 18, 2025
Title:	Children's Services Service Plan
Description:	Children's Services Service Plan to support system management 2025-2029
Author and Title:	Janine Mitchell, Human Services Manager

Recommendation(s):

That Report HS2025-001, **Children's Services Service Plan**, be received; and

That this report be submitted to the Ministry of Education, as required.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

As the legislated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager under the Ministry of Education (Ministry), the City of Kawartha Lakes is required to develop a Children's Services Service Plan for Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton.

The Children's Services Division of the Human Services Department is pleased to present this Early Learning and Child Care Plan (2025-2029). The plan outlines strategic priorities and actions to ensure accessible, affordable, high-quality, inclusive, and responsive early learning and child care services for children and families throughout the service region.

Extensive engagement with children, parents, early learning professionals, and service providers informed this plan. The plan will provide strategic direction to help guide the planning and delivery of our early learning and child care services. This plan is about highlighting our guiding principles, our strategic direction and implementation plan for the ongoing efforts of strengthening child care services.

As staff continue to navigate the implementation of the Canada-wide Child Care Plan (CWELCC), which aims to reduce child care costs, improve access, and ensure quality services, we are working hard to support a robust, equitable, and inclusive child care framework. The approach focuses on making high-quality care more accessible and affordable for families, while maintaining a keen focus on service excellence.

Through continuous collaboration with the local service providers, families and working with our local and provincial governments, staff are striving to build a child care system that will have a lasting impact on the future on Ontario's children. This is an exciting time, and in Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton, staff are committed to maintaining the highest standards of care, service and support.

Excellence in service remains a core pillar of the child care strategy. Over the next five (5) years the focus will be on enhancing the existing services, including: supporting licensed centre and home based child care growth; continuing supports for children with specific needs; ongoing efforts to attract and retain a high-quality professional workforce; and the delivery of responsive and accessible EarlyON Child and Family Centre services.

The Plan focuses on four over-arching strategic themes that emerged from the community engagement. Each theme includes a series of proposed activities specifically designed to improve the health and well-being of children and to ensure a variety of high quality early years and child care services are available for families.

The plan is shaped with a Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles, including:

Vision

Welcoming community where every child belongs, with removed barriers, and families as well as educators receive full support through growth and change.

Mission

Our mission is to collaboratively provide accessible, affordable, and high-quality child care and early years services in partnership with community organizations. We strive to respond to the needs of families, support early learning and development, and build a strong foundation of knowledge for every child to thrive.

Guiding Principles

Affordable, Accessible, Responsive, High Quality and Building Knowledge.

Rationale:

The Children's Services Service Plan 2025 - 2029 (Attachment A) has been developed to describe the context in which local services will be delivered to meet the priorities as defined by the Ministry and informed by our community. The actual program delivery and meeting needs at the local level continues to adapt and change to meet the changes as a result of the continued implementation of the CWELCC Plan. Funding decisions and allocations are determined through the annual budget process or as required throughout the year by Council, if there are provincial program changes.

Over the next five years Children's Services staff will oversee the application of the Service Plan and its priorities through the development of an Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed annually, and will identify the steps Children's Services staff will take to support the achievement of the identified priorities and goals.

Ongoing engagement with families, the child care and early years' community, key stakeholders, and members of the public will continue as an important part of service system planning, review and assessment. Ongoing analysis to identify and strategically respond to changing needs within the sector, as well as the needs of families within Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton, is a vital component of service system planning and to the success of the 2025 - 2029 Service Plan.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

This report aligns with the Strategic Priority of an Exceptional Quality of Life, and specifically the goal of making quality child care available and affordable.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

The Service Plan does not include specific financial decisions related to the delivery of Social Services.

Consultations:

Human Services Staff

Early Learning and Care Network

Community Planning Table for Children and Youth

Early Learning Sub-Committee

Early Years Agencies

Early Learning Quality Initiative

Local School Boards

Families in receipt of fee subsidy

Centralized wait list families

Attachments:

Appendix A – 2025-2029 Children's Services Service Plan



2025-2029 Children's
Services Service Plan.doc

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