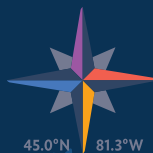


BRUCE COUNTY

Child Care & Early Years

SERVICE SYSTEM PLAN: 2024-2028

WAYPOINT
2024



BRUCE
county

Introduction

Bruce County Children’s Services, a division of the Human Services Department, is pleased to share our Waypoint on the goals and priorities established in our 2024-2028 Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan.

Integral to the development of the five-year Service System Plan was a comprehensive community consultation and engagement process. Based on feedback received from consultations with parents/guardians, community partners and early childhood educators, our strategic direction for 2024–2028 was summarized into five key themes:



We invite you to explore our ‘Waypoint’ document that reflects the actions taken and key performance indicators achieved together with our community in 2024.

Contents

- 04 Inclusion Accomplishments
- 07 Workforce Accomplishments
- 10 Quality Accomplishments
- 11 Accessibility Accomplishments
- 16 Affordability Accomplishments
- 17 Action Plan

“ Service system planning provides us with an opportunity to explore and gather in-depth knowledge about our community’s needs, analyze the impacts of programs and services in our community, identify progress and service gaps, and develop key directions in our journey together.





Inclusion Accomplishments

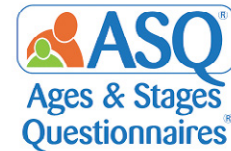
Journey Through the Ages and Stages (ASQ)

Bruce County's Journey Through the Ages and Stages uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ™) to help parents and caregivers understand and guide child development and is currently available to all families attending Bruce County child care and early years programs. This proactive approach allows the child care system to be responsive to children's learning, development, and well-being.

The ASQ helps parents and caregivers celebrate milestones and provides information on what to look for next. Further, it provides important information for children who may require links to community support, have additional needs for developmental well-being, and may require enhancement support.

Data gathered from the ASQ is also valuable in understanding and prioritizing services and programs that meet the needs of children in Bruce County.

Bruce County has partnered with Queen's University to mutually promote family-centered early intervention in infant mental health and early child development. Queen's University supports this initiative through the creation of a secure online database for the ASQ information, provides data analysis support and interpretation, and funds research expenses related to data acquisition.



To learn more
about Journey Through
the Ages and Stages, access
the [Parents & Guardians
Information Package](#)

Do you have concerns about your child's development?

Please reach out to your child care professional or contact Bruce County Children's Services Special Needs Resource Team at [1-800-265-3022](tel:1-800-265-3022) or childcare@brucecounty.on.ca

For resources and learning activities related to the ASQ, please visit:
[Resource Library - Ages and Stages](#)

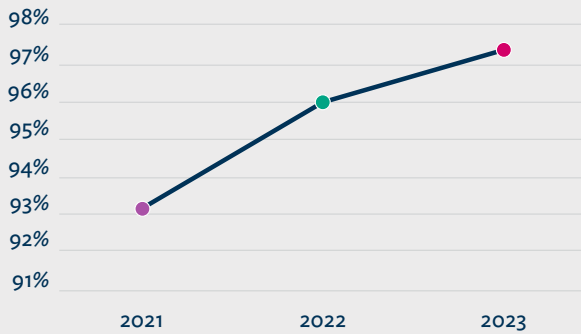
ASQ: SE-2 Survey Findings

Children's social-emotional development may be improving

More children were scoring in the “typically developing” zone on the ASQ: SE-2 in 2023 than in 2022 and 2021. This difference was found to be statistically significant.



Figure 1: Social-Emotional Development:
Percentage of children “typically developing” by year



The ASQ:

SE-2 screens seven areas of social-emotional development: self-regulation, compliance, social communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people.

ASQ-3 Survey Findings

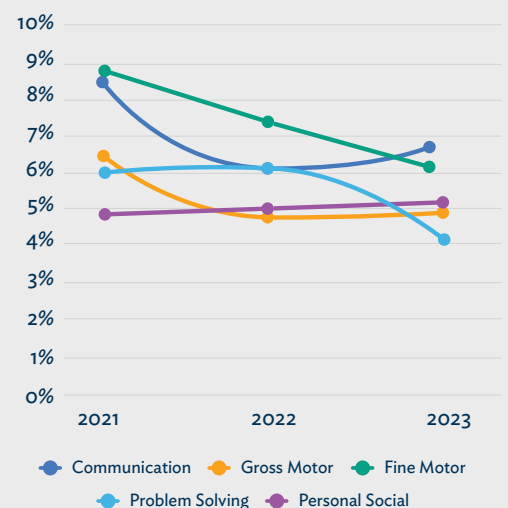
No significant year-over-year trends

No significant differences were found between years for any of the domains screened by the ASQ-3. This means that developmental delays are a normal part of childhood variation, affecting a predictable percentage of children each year across all developmental domains.

Fine motor delays are most common overall

Averaging 7.5% of developmental delays across all screening between 2021 and 2023. Though this difference was not found to be significant, operators in Bruce County may benefit from allocating resources and programming towards enhancing support for fine motor development.

Figure 2: Developmental Delay Rates by Year



Fine motor skills include activities like using scissors, writing, and buttoning clothes. Fine motor delays can affect school readiness.

Based on screenings of 209-338 children per scan. Scans take place in the spring and fall of each year.

In the spring of 2024

504

children participated in the Journey Through the Ages and Stages. A second scan was completed in the Fall of 2024; **497 children participated**. Results from the 2024 scans will be uploaded to the national database and presented in the 2025 Waypoint Report.

Resource Consultants made referrals and connections with **229** unique children. The top three types of referrals were to **Resource Program, Speech and Language Services and Occupational Therapy**.

On average in 2024,

144

children in licensed child care programs were supported by the Resource Consultants.

\$317,141 in Special Needs Resource funding was spent to support inclusion in licensed child care.



For more information on supports offered by the Special Needs Resource Program visit: brucecounty.on.ca/services/human-services/resource-program



Workforce Accomplishments

Recruitment

Early Childhood Education Awards available for Students

In 2024, Bruce County continued its partnership with Fanshawe College and Georgian College to provide Bruce County Early Childhood Education Awards to eligible students.

Students who met the identified criteria were able to apply to encourage students to enter the field of Early Childhood Education at either institution. Eligible students were able to receive a maximum of \$4,000 in total awards, covering approximately half of their tuition costs over the two-year Early Childhood Education diploma program.

In 2024, **34 students** received the Bruce County Early Childhood Education Award.

Bruce County continued its partnership with Fanshawe College offering a local and innovative Early Childhood Education diploma program with timing and location responsive to student needs.

Building Relationships with Students

The encounters you have with students now shape where they want to be and who they aspire to become as educators... it all starts with connection, belonging and relationships.

Bruce County has had the privilege to connect with students at local colleges ([Georgian College](#) and [Fanshawe College](#)) and high schools ([Bluewater District School Board](#) and [Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board](#)) through presentations, experience sharing, invitations to professional learning events and as contacts for any questions they may have while entering the career of Early Childhood Education.

As part of recruitment efforts into the field of Early Childhood Education, Bruce County connected with **58 college students** and **62 high school students**.

For more information on being an Early Childhood Educator in Bruce County visit: brucecounty.on.ca/be-early-childhood-educator-bruce-county



Retention

330

child care educators
appreciated during
**Child Care
Appreciation Day.**

Workforce Compensation

The Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system (CWELCC) provides funding for workforce compensation to support recruitment and retention of Ontario's child care workforce through improved compensation for lower-wage earners. It includes compensation enhancements for Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) staff in the form of a wage floor and annual wage increase.

In 2024, funding was provided to bring RECE program staff wages to the wage floor mandated by the Ministry of Education. In addition, educators were eligible for a \$1/hour annual wage increase.



Professional Development

317

Early Years and Child Care professionals accessed resources and trainings offered on the Community Learning Library (297 in 2023).



4 Training sessions offered to the child care community.
134 participants total.

5 Community of Practices offered.
116 participants total.

\$48,423 flowed directly to operators in 2024 to support capacity building/quality in their child care centres.

An additional **\$44,140** supported training in the areas of mental health, Indigenous and cultural awareness, board governance, programming, diversity, and inclusion.

Full Day Professional Learning Event


An empowering day for child care staff filled with inspiring presentations, interactive activities, and opportunities to connect and grow.




269

Educators from Bruce County attended.

GUEST SPEAKERS INCLUDED:

 **Morning: Natalie Royer**
“Moving Beyond Our Biases to a Place of Belonging”

 **Afternoon: Rebekkah Williams**
“Bringing Our Authentic Self to Work”

Participants are still curious about....

“Knowing when it is a good time to present oneself to their colleagues, and how to incorporate YOU into your daily life with the children.”

“How to help children regain their calm.”

“Teaching children emotional regulation, self-regulation, mental health in children.”

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING REQUESTS FROM OPERATORS FOR 2025

- Developing skills in various aspects of Human Resources
- Motivating Leadership Skills
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)
- Reflective Practice to support Programming and Environmental Development



Quality Accomplishments

Quality Support Plan (QSP)

The QSP is designed to enhance the overall quality of service by setting specific objectives tailored to the program's needs.

Key objectives of a QSP:

- Enhancing Service Quality
- Addressing Specific Needs
- Continuous Improvement
- Team Collaboration
- Monitoring and Evaluation

8 Child Care programs were supported by a QSP in 2024

Bruce County Children's Services 2025 Business Initiative aims to implement the Positive Early Childhood Education Program (PECE). This evidence-based program is designed to support strong foundations, build skills, provide strategies, support personal well-being and job satisfaction within the early learning and licensed child care community.

Mentorship Program

The provincial government's investment in the child care and early years workforce has led to the creation of the Bruce County Mentorship Program. **The goals of the program are to:**

Improve quality by providing tools, resources, and guidance to educators, enabling them to create enriching environments for children.

Enhance skills while receiving support, feedback, and professional development opportunities.

Increase workplace satisfaction by fostering a supportive mentor-mentee relationship. Educators feel valued and motivated, leading to a positive impact on their well-being and performance.

Reducing workplace stress by providing a network of support. Educators can share challenges, seek advice, and collaborate with their mentors, creating a healthier work environment.

Support child development by providing effective guidance to educators. Children benefit from this with enriched learning experiences and nurturing care.

8 Bruce County Educators participated in the mentorship program in 2024.

The mentorship program offered the Curiosity Approach which has 6 elements to support the environment as the 3rd teacher. Elements include Glow, Cozy, Real, Outside, Invite, and Treasure. This program provides educators with numerous benefits that include giving back to the profession, learning from others, and creating meaningful and productive professional relationships.



Accessibility Accomplishments

Bruce County's Directed Growth Plan

Supported by the
Canada-wide Early
Learning and Child Care
(CWELCC) System:

Ontario has
committed to create
86,000
new licensed child
care spaces in
underserved communities
by December 2026.



Under the Access and Inclusion Framework,

the Ministry has developed a model to allocate funding for new spaces for children age 0-5, with a focus on improving equity of access by **working toward a common provincial access ratio of 37%**. This includes providing funding for start-up grants to support the creation of new, affordable child care spaces for children under age six in targeted locations and for populations most in need.

The allocation model is based on available data and incorporates existing child care capacity, demographics, socio-economic indicators, official language minorities and capacity for growth.

**Bruce County
Children's Services
worked with interested
operators** to ensure spaces were opened in communities where there was a low access rate of licensed child care.

In alignment with Ontario’s Access and Inclusion Framework, Bruce County’s Early Learning and Child Care Directed Growth Plan will prioritize child care expansion to:

- Increase access equity** by supporting child care expansion in municipalities with an access rate lower than the provincial average of 37%.

Baseline Access Rates

Municipality	CWELCC Access Rate Pre-Expansion (2023)	CWELCC Access Rate (2024)
Arran-Elderslie	16%	33%
Brockton	31%	33%
Huron-Kinloss	13%	18%
Kincardine	33%	48%
Northern Bruce Peninsula	62%	78%
Saugeen Shores	50%	66%
South Bruce	2%	7%
South Bruce Peninsula	44%	51%
Combined Access Rate	30%	41%

Note this is based on licensed capacity.



- Support child care access** for low-income children, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities, children with special needs, Francophone, and Indigenous children.

- Maintain or improve the proportion of non-profit licensed child care spaces at 70% or higher.**

Baseline auspice ratio: 72% non-profit, 28% for-profit.

2024 Access and Inclusion Achievements

Saugeen Shores, South Bruce Peninsula, as well as North Bruce Peninsula have all met the Bruce County directed growth plan targeted **CWELCC access rate** and are anticipated to retain the number of spaces.

Municipalities **below the 37% access rate** were a priority for further expansion.

Start-up grants are available to support the creation of new spaces in locations and for populations most in need.

**Over
\$1,074,328**

in start-up grant funding was allocated in 2024 to support child care expansion in Bruce County with 148 net new child care spaces created.

For more information on child care expansion and applicable financial supports, please visit brucecounty.on.ca/human-services/early-learning-and-child-care-expansion-toolkit



Successfully recruited

4 new Home Child Care Providers for a total of **22** home child care providers across the County.

Municipality	Number of Providers
Arran-Elderslie	9
Brockton	5
Kincardine	2
Saugeen Shores	2
South Bruce	2
South Bruce Peninsula	2
Northern Bruce Peninsula	0

If you are interested in becoming a home child care provider visit: brucecounty.on.ca/services/human-services/bruce-county-home-child-care-program

2024:
2296 Licensed Child Care Centre Spaces

2023:
2125 Licensed Child Care Centre Spaces

Child care centre operating **capacity increased by 4.3%** (70% in 2023, 64% in 2022) as compared to year end 2023.

OneList

OneList Bruce County

is an online waitlist tool to help simplify the process of finding and applying for child care in Bruce County.



In 2024 there were **1882 Total Active OneList Applications** or Unique Children on the waitlist.

Year	New Child Applications
2019	278
2020	261
2021	447
2022	574
2023	1098
2024	1391

In 2024, there were a total of **1127 new OneList applicants not placed in child care**. In the table, listed by municipality are the total unique children not placed, as well as placed in a program but on the waitlist for another program.

Applicant's Municipality	Total Active Applications 2024
Arran-Elderslie	193
Brockton	262
Huron-Kinloss	135
Kincardine	317
North Bruce Peninsula	77
Saugeen Shores	490
South Bruce	100
South Bruce Peninsula	129
Grey County	98
Huron County	33
Wellington County	9
Other	39
Total	1882

Explore your child care options here: <https://www.brucecounty.on.ca/services/human-services/onelist-bruce-county>

EarlyON



Did you know:

- ✓ 39 jointly facilitated Little Counters and Storytime Adventures programs were offered with Bruce County Branch Librarians?
- ✓ 16 Strong Start Early Literacy Baby Connections programs were implemented?
- ✓ 98 Keystone Child and Family Mental Health programs were supported by EarlyON team members?
- ✓ 17 Grandfriends programs were offered at Long Term Care Homes with an average of 22 residents joining each time?
- ✓ 81 jointly facilitated programs were offered with Bruce County Child Care Caseworkers?
- ✓ EarlyON partners with a wide variety of community partners to provide specialized programs throughout the year? Public Health, Thames Valley Children's Centre, St. John Ambulance, Family Health Teams, School Boards, Child Passenger Safety Association of Canada, Municipal Recreation Departments and more!

EarlyON Child and Family Centre

Program Stats 2024	Total Number
Programs	1277
Unique Adults	968
Adult Visits	6631
Unique Children	1080
Child Visits	8627
Indigenous Led Programs	60
Adult Visits	597
Child Visits	825

EarlyON has **over**
3,500

f Facebook followers

In 2024, we shared **740** promotional posts, with a total reach of **114,800** an increase of **361.5%** from 2023.

Join us at [@EarlyONBruceCounty](https://www.facebook.com/EarlyONBruceCounty)

For more information on Bruce County's EarlyON and Child and Family Centres including a schedule of programs near you, visit: brucecounty.on.ca/human-services/earlyon



Affordability Accomplishments

Fee Subsidy

On a monthly average, **162 children were served** by Fee Subsidy.

The number of children supported through Fee Subsidy continues to decrease as child care becomes more affordable through the CWELCC system.

No fee subsidy waitlist in 2024.

For more information on child care fee subsidy visit:
[brucecounty.on.ca/services/human-services/
child-care-fee-subsidy](https://brucecounty.on.ca/services/human-services/child-care-fee-subsidy)

Increased Affordability through the Canada-Wide Early Learning Child Care Agreement (CWELCC)

In March 2022, the Federal and Provincial governments signed the CWELCC agreement, which aims to make child care more affordable for families. This agreement is part of the Federal Government's commitment to deliver \$10 per day child care by the end of 2026.

In 2024, families of children aged 6 or younger who attend a licensed CWELCC enrolled program continue to receive up to a **52.75% reduction** on their fee compared to the fees as of March 2022.



18 out of 21 of
licensed child care operators in
Bruce County opted in to CWELCC
in 2024, making child care more
affordable for families.

Action Plan

Quality
Inclusivity
Accessibility
Affordability
Workforce Support

2024
2025
2026
2027
2028

Bruce County Strategic Goals	Bruce County Children's Services Goals	Priorities					Actions	Timeline				
1. Build a strong and inclusive community	Collaborate with community partners to support the child care and early years needs of newcomers to Bruce County	●	●			●	Build capacity within the child care and early years system to support the cultural and diverse needs of children and families	●	●	●	●	●
	Increase awareness of Bruce County Children's Services supports and programs		●	●			Promote programs and services to priority populations in Bruce County, including newcomers, using preferred channels	●	●	●	●	●
2. Enhance and grow partnerships	Work together with Indigenous partners to support the needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNIM) families	●	●	●			Work together with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNIM) partners to expand programming	●	●	●	●	●
	Support and enhance the capacity of child care programs	●	●		●	Continue to provide collaborative coaching and mentoring	●	●	●	●	●	
						Offer ongoing professional development initiatives for licensed child care programs	●	●	●	●	●	
						Continue to increase knowledge across the local early learning and child care sector regarding "How Does Learning Happen?"	●	●	●	●	●	
	Collaborate with community partners to attract and retain Early Childhood Educators (ECEs)	●		●	●	●	Continue to collaborate with colleges, high schools, and community partners to implement actions to attract and retain ECEs in Bruce County	●	●	●	●	●
							Continue to offer the innovative Early Childhood Educator (ECE) program with Fanshawe. Continue to explore and support community strategies that address cost and time barriers for those interested in the ECE program	●	●	●	●	●
Build partnerships with agencies offering the ASQ to families	●	●	●			Collaborate with community partners and agencies to make the Journey Through the Ages and Stages accessible to all families in Bruce County			●	●	●	
3. Strengthen County's use of technology and innovative initiatives	Utilize data to drive programming	●	●	●	●	●	Continue the implementation of Journey Through the Ages and Stages (ASQ) to assist caregivers in understanding the strengths and needs of their children	●	●	●	●	●
							Provide relevant data about child care and early years with operators and community partners (ex. BGDISC)	●	●	●	●	●
	Ensure all child care applications are processed through a centralized, on-line registry			●			Explore options to enhance child care registration and wait lists		●	●		

Action Plan

Quality
Inclusivity
Accessibility
Affordability
Workforce Support

2024
2025
2026
2027
2028

Bruce County Strategic Goals	Bruce County Children's Services Goals	Priorities					Actions	Timeline					
4. Promote responsible growth	Provide child care and early learning programs and services at times that support families						Explore partnership opportunities to meet the needs of parents/guardians who require alternative hours of care	●	●	●	●	●	
		●	●	●			Continue to monitor, assess, and respond to community needs regarding EarlyON programing times across Bruce County in accordance with ministry guidelines	●	●			●	
	Increase child care and early years access and options across the County, especially in high need areas							Initiate a review and develop a sustainable business model to support and expand the Bruce County Home Child Care Program	●	●	●		
		●	●	●	●	●		Promote expansion of licensed child care providers in high need areas as per the Access and Inclusion framework	●	●	●		
								Work with authorized camps, children's recreation, and skill building programs to ensure they meet the needs of our community	●	●	●	●	●
								Continue to monitor, assess, and respond to community needs regarding EarlyON programing locations across Bruce County	●	●			●
	Explore cost-saving opportunities							Explore cost effective rental agreements for EarlyON programming	●	●			●
					●	●		Explore group cost share opportunities for licensed child care providers and employees		●	●		
	5. Ensure a positive, inclusive, and accountable work culture	Implement strategies to increase child care workforce satisfaction to attract and retain Early Childhood Educators (ECEs)	●	●	●	●	●	Explore and implement strategies to improve ECE workforce satisfaction	●	●	●	●	●
								Explore opportunities to support diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace	●	●	●	●	●



For more information, please contact:

Human Services

Gillian Andrews

Children's Services Manager

30 Park Street, Walkerton, ON N0G 2V0

Toll free: 1-800-265-3022

childcare@brucecounty.on.ca

For more information on Bruce County Children's Services visit

brucecounty.on.ca/childrens-services