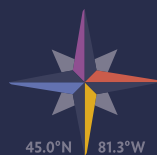


BRUCE COUNTY

Child Care & Early Years

SERVICE SYSTEM PLAN: 2019-2024

WAYPOINT
2020



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 2019-2024 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 parent surveys, key informant interviews, and community provider and partner consultations, our strategic direction for 2019-2024 was summarized into four key themes:



Although the COVID-19 pandemic threw a curve into our journey, together with partners, we navigated to stay the course to ensure high quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive early years and child care programs in Bruce County remained the focus.

We invite you to explore our ‘Waypoint’ document that reflects the actions taken and key performance indicators achieved together with our community in 2020.

Contents

04 Child Care and Early Years During a Pandemic

06 Quality Accomplishments

08 Inclusion Accomplishments

09 Accessibility Accomplishments

10 Affordability Accomplishments

“ Our priority is ensuring the local delivery of early years and child care services is safe, collaborative, effective, efficient, and accountable.





Child Care and Early Years During a Pandemic

MAR.
16
2020

Child Care and Early Years programs ordered to close to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

MAR.
22
2020

The province announced the provision of Emergency Child Care supports for eligible essential workers.

JUNE
1
2020

Bruce County In-Home Emergency Child Care became operational.

JUNE
12
2020

Licensed Child Care Centres permitted to open province wide with limited capacity.

JUNE
26
2020

Emergency Child Care ended as Child Care Centres were permitted to operate.

SEPT.
1
2020

Child Care Centres and Early Years programs permitted to operate at full capacity with enhanced health and safety precautions.



\$1,485,210


provided to operators to support sustainability, salaries, PPE purchases and safe restart.

1 child care centre closed due to decreased enrollment.

38 sites reopened.



280,957

Virtual EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs offered during the 2020 shutdown period reaching 280,957  Facebook users.



Child care centre operating capacity

▼ 35.89%

since year end 2019.



Virtual meetings held with operators and the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit to support a safe reopening of child care.

Licensed child care operators in Bruce County shared their top three concerns since reopening:

- 1** The health and safety of children
- 2** Qualified staff shortages
- 3** Financial sustainability

Bruce County Children's Services is working closely with operators and other organizations to minimize operator concerns.



Quality Accomplishments

“Enabling safe and reliable programs built on positive, responsive relationships, engaging environments, and meaningful experiences for children and families, delivered by educated and well-supported staff.”¹

209

Educators appreciated during Child Care Appreciation Day!



308

children participated in Bruce County's Journey Through the Ages and Stages.

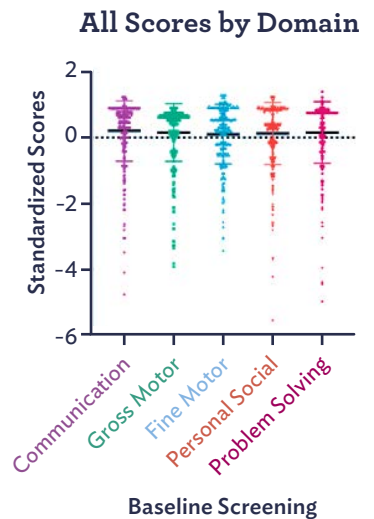
Number of Children at Risk for Developmental Delay by Domain (2019)


24 children
Communication


25 children
Gross Motor


27 children
Fine Motor


22 children
Personal Social




20 children
Problem Solving

¹Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework.



8 Virtual professional development opportunities offered.

5 Quality Scans completed before the COVID-19 shutdowns. Virtual supports provided to all centres.



1:1 support calls pertaining to quality, provided to child care operators and First Nation child care providers.

7

Community of Practice Sessions throughout the County.

+74

Additional Early Childhood Educators needed in order for all sites to operate at full licensed capacity.

- **An ECE Recruitment Group** was developed with local colleges, school boards, operators and Workplace Engagement services to generate an increased awareness of the career opportunity, as well as address cost and time barriers for those interested in the program.

To continue to increase knowledge across the local early learning and child care sector, the County of Bruce has partnered with the Children's Treatment Network, the County of Simcoe and the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre to provide a virtual learning platform for families and professionals called the **Community Learning Library**. Visit cllsy.ca for more information.





Inclusion Accomplishments

“ Providing a range of early years and child care programs that are inclusive and culturally appropriate...”¹

Cultural Awareness & Inclusion Working Group

Focused on developing and maintaining strong working relationships to enhance inclusiveness and cultural awareness of early learning in Grey and Bruce early years.

Grey Bruce Newcomer Settlement Services

Development of focus group to inform the creation of a strategic plan to support newcomers within Grey County and Bruce County.

111

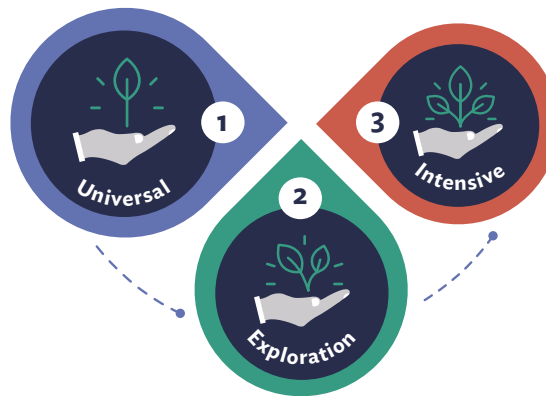
The monthly average number of **children supported** through the Special Needs Resource Program.

22

Resource Bundles purchased for child care operators to support the diversity and inclusion of children.



Review of the Special Needs Resource Program led to the development of 3 levels of service:



Universal

- ✓ Inclusion Support
- ✓ Training and Workshops

Exploration

- ✓ Exploration of Needs
- ✓ Short Term Consultation

Intensive

- ✓ Developmental Screening
- ✓ Individual Support Plans



The Special Needs Resource Team collaborated with the EarlyON Team to offer a series on **Attachment**.



The Special Needs Resource Team **supported children virtually** during the COVID-19 closure period and safely in person when child care centres opened in October.

¹Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework.



Accessibility Accomplishments

“Increasing access to early years programs to give families more opportunity to benefit from high-quality early childhood programs and services.”¹

The onset of COVID-19 led to the cancellation of in-person programs.



EarlyON Virtual programming

was developed with Libraries, the Special Needs Resource Program, Family Health Teams and other community services.

Fee Subsidy Applications can now be completed electronically.

280,957

people were reached by virtual Facebook programs

23,248

engagements beyond views (clicks, likes, shares etc.)

88,282

EarlyON page views

42

parent workshops



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

870 users were surveyed in 2020.
83 users completed the survey (9.6%).

Net increase of

▲ 23 Child Care spaces

▲ 59 spaces
▼ 36 spaces

Net decrease of

▼ 4 Home Child Care Providers



Users were asked how confident they are in using OneList to apply for child care in Bruce County.



34% slightly or not confident

39% somewhat confident

26% fairly or very confident

Account setup experience, look and feel of the application, and ease of use was rated as 3.4/5



The full results of the survey will help inform Bruce County Children's Services on how to best serve families applying for child care.

¹Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework.



Affordability Accomplishments

“ Ensuring that early years programs and services, including licensed child care, are within affordable reach for families.”¹



141

Families served by Fee Subsidy in 2020;

a decrease in ▼65 families from 2019.

219

Children served by Fee Subsidy in 2020;

a decrease in ▼87 children from 2019.

Again in 2020,
no Fee Subsidy
waitlist.



During the COVID-19 shut down period, **emergency child care was provided to essential workers at no cost.**

Stabilizing Child Care Fees with a NEW GOE Funding Approach

In 2020 Bruce County Council approved a new General Operating Expense funding approach based on **operator staffing FTE**. This will ensure operators are receiving equitable funding to help support the stabilization of child care fees.

Full Time Child Care Rates in Bruce County (2020)

Age Group	High Rate (daily)	Low Rate (daily)	Median Rate (daily)	Median Cost per Year*	% increase from 2018**
Infant	\$75.00	\$39.00	\$45.00	\$11,745.00	0.0%
Toddler	\$68.00	\$36.00	\$43.00	\$11,223.00	2.3%
Preschool	\$65.00	\$34.00	\$40.00	\$10,440.00	3.8%

*based on 261 days of care ** based on median daily rate

¹Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework.

County Priorities	Priorities	Actions	Timeline	Quality	Inclusivity	Accessibility	Affordability	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Support the quality of child care programs through ongoing quality scans and training opportunities	●	Continue to provide collaborative quality scans and professional development initiatives for licensed child care programs	✓ ● ● ● ●									
Utilize data to drive programming and inform funding decisions	●	Continue to increase knowledge across the local early learning and child care sector regarding <i>How Does Learning Happen?</i>	✓ ● ● ● ●									
		Continue the implementation of Journey Through the Ages and Stages (ASQ) to assist caregivers in understanding the strengths and needs of the children in their care	✓ ● ● ● ●									
		Define a method with our community partners on how we gather and share aggregate data about the needs of families	● ●									
Collaborate with community partners to attract and retain Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs)	●	Develop a working group with colleges and community partners to attract and retain ECEs in Bruce County	● ✓ ●									
		Support community strategies that address cost and time barriers for those interested in the ECE program	● ● ●									
Enhance the capacity of child care and early years' service providers to support the unique needs of all children	●	Complete a review of our resource program and implement changes based on needs assessment	✓ ✓ ●									
		Collaborate with our community to expand French language programming opportunities	✓ ✓ ●									
Work together with Indigenous partners to support the needs of First Nation, Inuit and Metis families	●	Work together with First Nation, Inuit and Metis partners to expand culturally relevant, Indigenous-led, child care and early years programs and services	✓ ✓ ● ● ●									
		Continue to build meaningful and lasting relationships between the Bruce County and the Indigenous community	✓ ✓ ● ● ●									
Collaborate with community partners to support the child care and early years needs of newcomers to Bruce County	●	Provide educational supports for child care and early years staff to support the cultural and unique needs of children and families	✓ ✓ ● ● ●									
Increase child care spaces and options across the county, especially in high need areas	●	Define a clear process and guidelines to support child care start-ups and expansions	● ● ● ● ●									
		Develop a working group with the school boards to expand spaces within the schools	● ● ● ● ●									
		Initiate a review and develop a sustainable business model to support and expand the Bruce County Home Child Care Program	● ● ● ● ●									
		Together with community partners, develop a strategy to increase the types of Authorized Recreation Programs for children	● ✓ ● ● ●									
Provide child care and early learning programs and services at times that support working caregivers	●	Better understand the needs of caregivers who work alternate hours										
		Continue to monitor and assess times and locations for EarlyON programming across Bruce County to reflect community needs	✓ ✓ ● ● ●									
Ensure all child care applications are processed through the centralized, on-line registry	●	Work together with OneList and child care providers to enhance features and increase usage	✓ ✓									
Ensure licensed child care and authorized recreation program costs are affordable for families	●	Review our model and process of providing financial support for licensed non-profit and profit child care operators to keep rates affordable for all families	✓ ✓									
		Continue to assess and make incremental enhancements to the fee-subsidy program to support families in need	✓ ✓									



For more information, please contact:

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For more information on Bruce County Children's Services visit

brucecounty.on.ca/childrens-services