

Background

The provincial government sets overall policy, legislation, and regulation for the child care and early years sector (ages 0 – 12). Funding for all approved programs and services is either cost-shared with, or wholly funded by the Ministry of Education (MEDU). Cost-shared programs reflect historical agreements with the province, prior to 2011. All new programs announced since 2011 have been funded with 100% provincial dollars. The 2017 Children Services budget, including all MEDU and CGS contributions, is \$21,353,149.

Through their Child Care and Quality Assurance program, the MEDU licenses child care centres and home child care agencies that contract with home child care providers. They also conduct inspections and investigate complaints about licensed and unlicensed child care. While licensing remains a provincial responsibility, there is a well-established system of information-sharing and support with the CGS' Children Services Section, thereby enhancing the quality of our local child care and early years programs.

As the local Service System Manager, the Children Services Section provides the following services, in collaboration with licensed child care providers, family support programs and other early years partners:

Lead community planning and engagement

The Children Services Section provides leadership and support to the Planning Network for Sudbury Families (PNSF) and other planning committees and initiatives. The PNSF is instrumental in ensuring that the City of Greater Sudbury (City) meets its community engagement and consultation mandate in service system planning for child care and early years programs. All required MEDU program and planning proposals are endorsed at this table, ensuring transparency and demonstrating collective leadership in supporting all families with children up to 12 years.

In 2013, the Children Services Section led a local child care system review, in response to the introduction of a new funding model from the MEDU. The resulting provincial funding for the City of Greater Sudbury was reduced at that time, with the potential for a further reduction in future years. In response to this, City Council approved policy changes as well as the closure of the municipally-operated child care centre (Centre des jeunes citoyens/Junior Citizens Day Care) to mitigate the impact of a reduction in provincial funding.

To date, the additional budget reduction has not occurred, and in June 2017, the MEDU announced new provincial funding for increasing access to licensed child care for 100,000 new children, over a five year period. The Children Services Section has committed to plan for this access expansion in consultation with the PNSF and more specifically with local licensed child care providers, families and partners. This work will be carried out as part of a broader service system planning exercise, in response to a

MEDU requirement to submit a 5-year Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan by June 2019.

Planning Network for Sudbury Families

The Planning Network for Sudbury Families (PNSF) has a shared vision of promoting healthy child development by supporting families and children through a progressively responsive, flexible, comprehensive and seamless system.

The PNSF meets monthly and consists of 36 individual senior employees, representing 26 member agencies:

Licensed child care	Family Support/OEYCFC
School Boards	Public Health
Libraries	Preschool Speech & Language
Hospital - Infant Development	Hospital - Children Treatment Centre
Children's Mental Health	Child Protection
Central Access	Ministry of Education
Ministry of Children and Youth	District Social Services Administration Board
City of Greater Sudbury	

Network Priorities:

The current PNSF priorities reflect:

- system and local level planning for child care and early years programs
- development of targets and accountability measures for OEYCFC
- improved communication and access to information for families through community website (sudburyfamilies.ca)
- ongoing professional growth and capacity building for early years professionals

Manage and provide funding for the Licensed Child Care System

Licensed child care is provided as a support to families for employment, education and early learning for children from 0 to 12 years.

Licensed child care centres and licensed home child care providers are operated by community agencies and independent providers. They are funded mostly through parental fees (paid by families, or through child care subsidies) with support from General Operating Grants from the City.

The Children Services Section works with the licensed child care providers to ensure that adequate levels of service are available to meet the needs of the community. The Children Services Section provides funding for approved spaces through a General Operating Grant; promotes program quality improvement; and provides a centralized waiting list and registry service for parents requiring care.

In 2017, the total projected General Operating Grant to be paid out to licensed child care providers is approximately \$6 million.

The licensed child care system currently includes:

- 19 Agencies (17 not-for-profit, 2 commercial)
- 74 individual sites (80% located in schools)
- 1 Home child care agency (licensed for up to 25 homes)
- 1775 spaces for children 0 – 4 years
- 3435 spaces for children 4 – 12 years
- 64 sites offer school age programs (before/after school and school holidays) – including programs offered directly through the French public school board
- 541 Full-time equivalents (FTEs) working in Licensed Child Care (2016)
- 285 FTE Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) working in Licensed Child Care (2016)

Deliver Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy is a program of the City of Greater Sudbury that helps families reduce their child care costs in licensed child care programs and authorized recreation programs. Subsidy is administered by the Children Services Section, and may cover all, or part, of eligible families' child care costs. The amount of subsidy provided is determined by a provincial income test. Families are eligible to apply if they require child care to support their employment or education activities, or where the child or parent has an identified need (medical, social or special needs).

Using the provincial income test, the Children Services Section determines a family's eligibility for child care subsidy based on the following sample table:

Annual family income \$20,000: monthly parental contribution	\$ 0.00
Annual family income \$30,000: monthly parental contribution	\$ 83.33
Annual family income \$40,000: monthly parental contribution	\$ 166.67
Annual family income \$50,000: monthly parental contribution	\$ 416.67
Annual family income \$60,000: monthly parental contribution	\$ 666.67
Annual family income \$70,000: monthly parental contribution	\$ 916.67
Annual family income \$80,000: monthly parental contribution	\$1,166.67
Annual family income \$90,000: monthly parental contribution	\$1,416.67
Annual family income \$100,000: monthly parental contribution	\$1,666.67
Annual family income \$110,000: monthly parental contribution	\$1,916.67
Annual family income \$120,000: monthly parental contribution	\$2,116.67

There is no cut-off income level for eligibility for subsidy, as long as actual child care costs exceed the monthly parental contribution as determined by the income test. The child care subsidy program pays the child care centre directly for any approved child care costs above the "monthly parental contribution".

For example, a family with three children (6 months, 3 years and 5 years) would have licensed child care costs of approximately \$2,400 per month. If their combined family income was \$100,000, the child care subsidy program would pay \$734 of their costs per month.

Examples of factors impacting child care subsidy eligibility include legal custody of children, hours/days of work, type of work (employed vs self-employed), citizenship and residency.

The Children Services Section administers the subsidies, pays the subsidies to the licensed child care providers, and maintains ongoing case management for child care subsidy. This includes an annual and mid-year review of eligibility with parents.

In 2017, the total projected Child Care Subsidy to be paid out to licensed child care providers on behalf of eligible families is \$8.6m.

Child Care Subsidy Program Statistics 2016

- 1724 families served (77% single parent families)
- 2448 children served
- 68% clients working full/part time
- 18% clients attending school
- 14% children are attending based on a special needs, medical or social referral

Manage and provide funding for the Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres – OEYCFC (current Family Support/ Best Start Hubs)

As of January 2018, through the MEDU, the Children Services Section will provide approximately \$3.0m in family support funding and assume full responsibility for the system management of the 15 Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (current Best Start Hubs) in the City of Greater Sudbury.

The Children Services Section works with the 5 existing local service providers to ensure adequate levels of responsive core services are available for families in each neighbourhood catchment. Core services include supporting early learning, engaging parents and caregivers, and making connections for families to other resources.

Best Start Hubs statistics

Five not-for-profit agencies provide 15 school-based Best Start Hubs (OEYCFCs in 2018) with additional programming offered in other school and community locations.

- 1,274 parents served, 2016
- 11,531 adult visits, 2016
- 1,585 unique children served, 2016
- 16,989 child visits, 2016

Types of Best Start Hubs:

- 1 Aboriginal
- 4 Francophone
- 10 Anglophone

Manage and fund Special Needs/ Inclusion Services in Child Care

The Children Services Section provides funding to two different agencies to provide inclusion services for children with special needs who require licensed child care.

Child and Community Resources' Inclusion Program (CCR) provides training to employees, accommodation and support to assist children with social, behavioural and physical needs in licensed child care. CCR's funding also allows them to support child care agencies in building their capacity to provide inclusive care for all children, as well as supporting enhanced staffing, when required, for child care centres to successfully include children with special needs in their programs.

The Children's Treatment Centre, Health Sciences North's SPOT program provides specialized onsite rehabilitation services in child care for identified children with physical disabilities.

In 2017, the total projected Special Needs Resourcing expenditure is \$1.6 million.

Deliver and coordinate Quality Assurance/Improvement and Professional Learning

The Children Services Section ensures quality programming in licensed child care and OEYCFCs using a Collaborative Quality Improvement (CQI) Model, which aligns professional learning to quality improvement and engages community partners as facilitators and participants.

Quality Assurance/Improvement

The Children Services Section CQI Program is a strength-based, agency-lead model which builds leadership skills and improves program quality. Children Services Program Quality Coordinators conduct regular site visits to all licensed child care programs and Best Start Hub/OEYCFCs. In consultation with the child care and early years programs, they establish measurable goals and offer support and professional learning opportunities to help the agencies realize those goals.

Professional Learning

The Children Services Section funds, coordinates, promotes and delivers a range of professional learning opportunities for employees in all licensed child care and family support programs, and for other community partners.

Training and professional development is provided by Children Services Program Quality Coordinators and through community and provincial organizations, including Collège Boréal, Cambrian College and CCR. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) are further supported in their mandatory continuous professional learning requirement.

The Children Services Section produces a community-wide calendar of professional learning opportunities to promote participation and a Learning Management System (hosted through the City's Human Resources and Organizational Development) to collect data on participation. Professional development is available to all child care, early learning and specialized services professionals. Funding is provided through the MEDU for Capacity Building within the early learning field.

In 2017, the total projected Capacity Building (professional development) expenditure is \$100,000.

Professional Learning Statistics (2016)

- 663 participants

Promote early learning services and provide access to high quality early learning resources for families and professionals

The Children Services Section hosts and manages www.sudburyfamilies.ca (including website and social media platforms) which connects families and professionals in the City of Greater Sudbury to information, services and events for children - prenatal to age 12. Most of the information contained on this website is directly provided by the member agencies of the PNSF.

Website

Content for families:

- 57,660 users in 2016 on sudburyfamilies.ca
- 223,110 page views in 2016 on sudburyfamilies.ca

Content for child care professionals:

- 5,676 users in 2014 on sudburyfamilies.ca
- 32,832 of page views in 2016 on sudburyfamilies.ca

Facebook Site (www.facebook.com/sudburybeststart.ca)

- 1662 individuals following (December 2016)
- 1449 people reached per day (on average) Sept. 1st to December 31 2016

Lead provincial initiatives at the local level

The Children Services Section manages provincial initiatives granted to the City of Greater Sudbury, for projects impacting the health and well-being of children.

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge (2015 – 2018) is aimed at reducing childhood obesity through a variety of initiatives: increased physical activity; increased water consumption instead of sugary drinks; increased consumption of fruits and vegetables; and reduced screen time.

The Local Poverty Reduction Fund (2017 – 2020) is aimed at improving the academic success of children living in poverty, by providing access to free extra-curricular activities to Grade 4 students in 8 local schools.

These two projects will help inform policy development at a community, municipal and provincial level.

Next Steps

The Children Services Section will continue to engage and consult with the PNSF, its member agencies and parents/guardians, as it develops the 2019 Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan. This work will support child care policy review and revisions, and will incorporate the OEYCFC transition of 2018.

The 2019 Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan will be brought to the Community Services Committee in the spring of 2019 for approval, before submission to the MEDU. In the interim, the Children Services Section will seek approval from the Community Services Committee on any recommended policy changes impacting families and children in our community.