



# Staff Report to Council - for Information

**Title:** Q1 2024 Licensed Child Care and Early Years Report

**From:** Tina Metcalfe, Director Human Services

**Date:** May 16, 2024

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## Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

## Report Summary:

The Licensed Child Care and Early Years Report provides an overview of community trends and service delivery statistics for Q1 2024.

## Background:

The priority of Bruce County Children's Services, a division of the Human Services department, is to ensure the local delivery of licensed child care and early years services is accessible, affordable, inclusive, and high-quality.

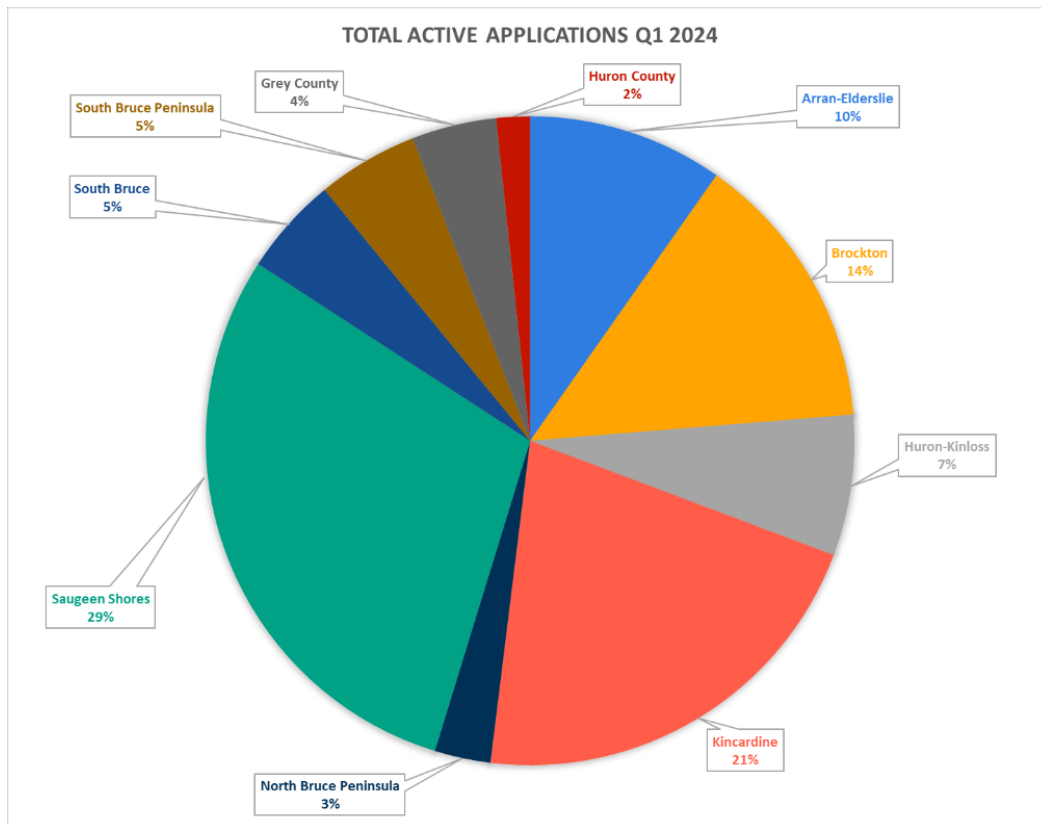
## Licensed Child Care Applications

To better track, monitor, and respond to local system pressures, Bruce County uses OneList, an online child care registration system, to help families locate and apply for licensed child care. In turn, the system's data provides County staff with a snapshot of information, quantifying child care needs by demographic area.

OneList provides details about the number of applications where the child has a placement but continues to wait for an opening at another program as compared to those with no placement. The total of these two is considered active applications.

The total number of active applications in Q1 2024 has increased by 393 as compared to Q1 2023. Detailed information regarding the number of applications by municipality can be found in the following table:

| Applicant's Municipality | Children On Waitlist for Another Program Q1 2023 | Children Not Placed Q1 2023 | Total Active Applications Q1 2024 | Children On Waitlist for Another Program Q1 2024 | Children Not Placed Q1 2024 |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Arran-Elderslie          | 14   | 108                         | 157                               | 21   | 136                         |
| Brockton                 | 27   | 119                         | 225                               | 26   | 199                         |
| Huron-Kinloss            | 18   | 69                          | 113                               | 16   | 97                          |
| Kincardine               | 71   | 219                         | 342                               | 90   | 252                         |
| North Bruce Peninsula    | 2  | 30                          | 45                                | 5  | 40                          |
| Saugeen Shores           | 66   | 277                         | 474                               | 135  | 339                         |
| South Bruce              | 2  | 54                          | 79                                | 6  | 73                          |
| South Bruce Peninsula    | 11   | 60                          | 81                                | 15   | 66                          |
| Grey County              | 3  | 53                          | 68                                | 2  | 66                          |
| Huron County             | 2  | 18                          | 27                                | 1  | 26                          |
| Wellington County        | 0  | 1                           | 7                                 | 0  | 7                           |
| Other                    | 2  | 24                          | 25                                | 0  | 25                          |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>218</b>                                       | <b>1032</b>                 | <b>1643</b>                       | <b>317</b>                                       | <b>1326</b>                 |



The waitlist continues to be impacted by an increase in child care demand along with a shortage of Registered Early Childhood Educators.

Bruce County staff is co-leading a Bruce Grey Registered Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Recruitment and Retention Working Group that includes membership and support from local colleges, boards of education, workplace engagement services and corporate communications, to develop and implement [local ECE recruitment and retention strategies](#).

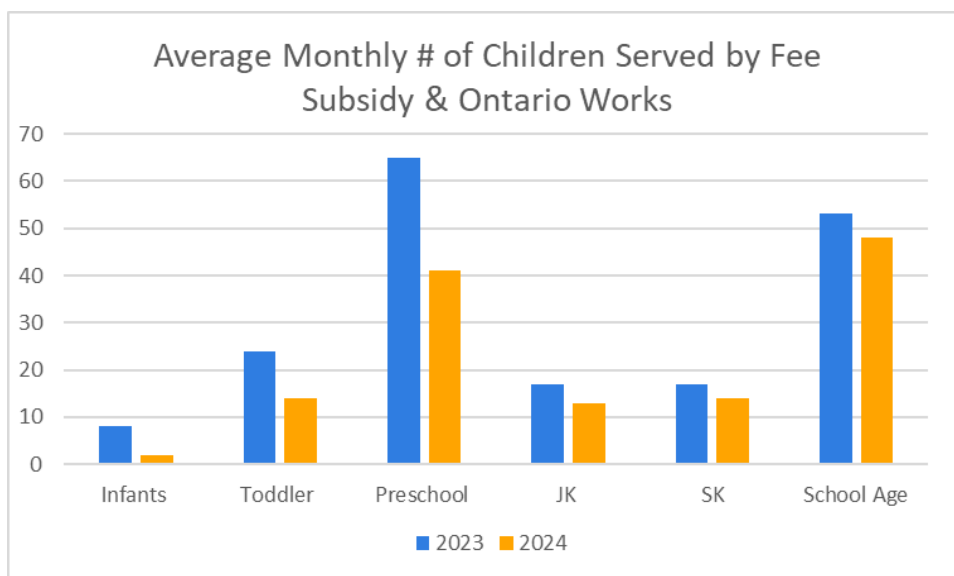
To support the need for more Registered Early Childhood Educators, Bruce County has partnered with Fanshawe College to offer a part-time accelerated Early Childhood Education program, offered locally in Port Elgin. Thirty-two students have enrolled in the program for the 2023/2024 school year.

Fee Subsidy

For eligible families, child care fee subsidy support is available through Bruce County Children’s Services, with priority given to families with income levels lower than \$40,000 per annum.

| Age Group    | Q1 2023    | Q1 2024    |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Infants      | 8          | 2          |
| Toddler      | 24         | 14         |
| Preschool    | 65         | 41         |
| JK           | 17         | 13         |
| SK           | 17         | 14         |
| School Age   | 53         | 48         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>184</b> | <b>132</b> |

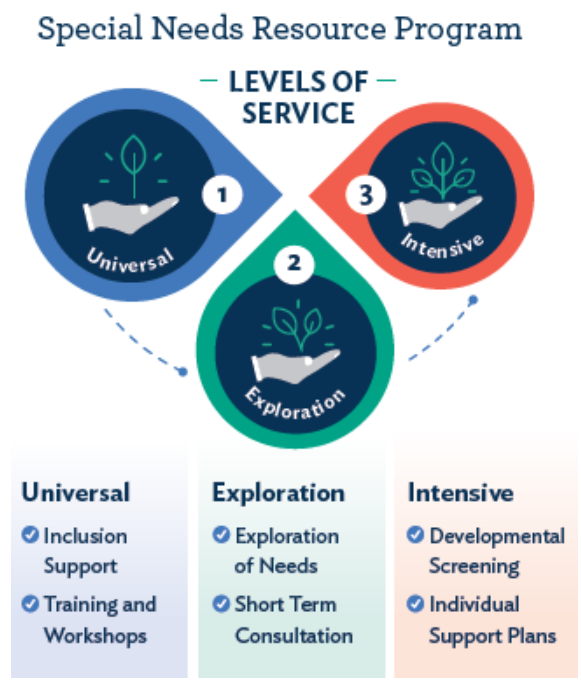
Below is a comparison of the number of children receiving subsidy at Q1 2024, as compared to Q1 2023:



At Q1 in 2024, the average monthly number of children served in Bruce County’s fee subsidy program was 132. This represents a decrease of 52 as compared to Q1 in 2023 and can be attributed to parent fee reductions resulting from the implementation of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system.

Special Needs Resource Program

The Special Needs Resource Program supports the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed childcare programs, camps, and authorized recreation programs at no additional cost to parents or guardians. The three levels of services of the Special Needs Resource Program are summarized below:



The following table outlines the number of child care sites supported through universal supports as well as the number of children supported through exploration and intensive services in Q1 2024 compared to the same time in 2023. Q1 stats reflect children transitioning from the Special Needs Program to school.

| Level of Service                                 | Q1 2023 | Q1 2024 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Level 1: Universal                               | 48      | 48      |
| Number of Children Supported - Level 2           | 38      | 38      |
| Number of Children Supported - Level 3           | 72      | 78      |
| Total number of children supported ((Levels 2-3) | 158     | 164     |

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON Child and Family Centres provide free in-person programs to help strengthen adult/child relationships, support parent education, and foster healthy child development. All families with children from birth to six years of age are encouraged to participate.

In Q1 there were several program cancellations due to weather, low enrollment of participants in registered programs or staff absences. When possible, a virtual session was offered as an alternative. The number of adult virtual participants is higher than children as a virtual adult education program was offered in this quarter.

| EarlyON Child and Family Programs |                                     | Q1<br>2024 | Q2<br>2024 | Q3<br>2024 | Q4<br>2024 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| In Person                         | Total Programs Offered              | 338        |            |            |            |
|                                   | Adult Visits                        | 1861       |            |            |            |
|                                   | Child Visits                        | 2337       |            |            |            |
|                                   | Unique Adults                       | 514        |            |            |            |
|                                   | Unique Children                     | 616        |            |            |            |
| Virtual                           | Facebook Profile Visits             | 9900       |            |            |            |
|                                   | Virtual Registered Program Sessions | 9          |            |            |            |
|                                   | Adult Participants                  | 21         |            |            |            |
|                                   | Child Participants                  | 10         |            |            |            |

**Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:**

Staff monitor subsidy and eligibility closely to ensure compliance. Expenditures are forecasted monthly to ensure participant fee allocations do not exceed the annual budget.

**Interdepartmental Consultation:**

There was no specific interdepartmental consultation required for this report.

**Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:**

Community and Partnerships - Build a strong and inclusive community

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

**Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:**

The coordinated management of Bruce County Child Care and Early Years programs and supports is in alignment with the [Child Care & Early Years' Service System Plan: 2019-2024](#).

**Report Author:**

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**Departmental Approval:**

Tina Metcalfe, Director Human Services

**Approved for Submission:**

Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer