



# Staff Report to Council - for Information

**Title:** 2023 Child Care and Early Years Waypoint

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

**Date:** July 4, 2024

**Report Number:** HS-2024-016

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## Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

## Report Summary:

The attached 2023 Child Care and Early Years Waypoint provides an update on the goals and priorities established in the [Child Care & Early Years Service System Plan 2019-2023](#).

## Background:

The actions and key performance indicators achieved together with our community in 2023 are categorized into 4 priority areas: Inclusion, Quality, Accessibility and Affordability.

### Inclusion

In 2023, the average number of children supported at any given time by Bruce County's Special Needs Resource Team was 163.

Additionally, in the spring, 467 children participated in Bruce County's Journey Through the Ages and Stages initiative to assist parents and caregivers in understanding and supporting their child's strengths and needs early on and throughout their development. Resource consultants made referrals and connections with 209 children.

### Quality

To support the recruitment of early childhood educators, Bruce County continued its partnership with Fanshawe College and Georgian College to provide Bruce County Early Childhood Education Awards to eligible students. In 2023, 29 students received the Bruce County Early Childhood Education Award. These students met the eligibility criteria to receive a maximum of \$4000.00 in awards to help cover about half of their tuition costs.

To inspire educators working in the early years sector on the concepts of well-being, cultural diversity and inclusion, and the natural world, Bruce County hosted its first full day professional learning event in the fall of 2023. 224 educators attended.

## Accessibility

Bruce County's EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs continued to provide a combination of virtual and in-person programming during 2023 to reach more children and families. In addition to programming, a total of 312 engaging activities and educational posts and videos were developed and shared on social media with a total reach of 34,200.

Through the Child Care and Early Years Directed Growth Plan, Bruce County committed \$679,000 in Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) start-up grants.

## Affordability

During 2023, any family who qualified for child care subsidy was provided with this financial support. On average 180 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.

18 out of 20 operators in Bruce County opted into the CWELCC system making child care more affordable for families. In 2023, families of children aged 0-6 who attended a licensed CWELCC enrolled program received up to 52.75% reduction on their fees compared to fees as of March 2022.

2023 concludes the actions and priorities established in the [Child Care & Early Years Service System Plan 2019-2023](#). The priorities and actions are being reviewed and an updated plan is being developed from feedback of over 600 parents/guardians, 18 child care providers, and 17 partnering agencies.

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

There are no financial, staffing, legal or IT considerations associated with this report.

## **Interdepartmental Consultation:**

There was no specific interdepartmental consultations associated with this report.

## **Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:**

### Strategic Goals

Community and Partnerships - Build a strong and inclusive community

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

**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:**

Angela Hopkins, Children's Services Manager

**Departmental Approval:**

Tina Metcalfe, Director Human Services

**Approved for Submission:**

Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer