Committee Report

To: Warden Mitch Twolan
   Members of the Human Services Committee

From: Christine MacDonald
       Director of Human Services

Date: May 2, 2019

Re: Q1 Child Care and Fee Subsidy Report

Recommendation:

The Q1 Child Care and Fee Subsidy Report is for information.

Background:

The Children’s Services Programs supports families to locate and access affordable child care throughout the county.

OneList Child Care Registry

In an effort to better track, monitor and respond to local system pressures, Bruce County uses OneList, an online child care registration system that allows families to locate, register and apply for child care in licensed facilities. In turn, the system’s data provides County staff with a snapshot of information, quantifying child care needs in each demographic area, by municipality.

At the end of Q1, OneList reports 1144 active child care applications for Bruce County, which is an increase over the last fiscal year. The chart breaks down the applications by municipality.

Waitlist applications have increased significantly along the lakeshore. Additionally, there is an increase in applications from families who reside in Grey County but are requesting child care in Bruce County due to work proximity. In order to manage the waitlist, families continue to receive automated notifications on a thirty, sixty, and ninety-day intervals as a reminder to keep their application status current.

Children’s Services staff are working to address system pressures by building strong relationships with new and existing non-profit and for-profit Child Care Providers, solidifying
Service Agreements to increase access for families, and ensuring Cross Jurisdictional Agreements for Child Care are in place with neighbouring counties.

The Learning Academy, with an operating capacity of 58 spaces, recently opened in Port Elgin and another large provider is scheduled to open in Saugeen Shores this fall. Additionally, the Home Child Care Program continues to actively recruit more Home Child Care Providers.

**Fee Subsidy**

For eligible families, child care fee subsidy is available with priority given to families with income levels lower than $40,000 per annum.

Q1 stats report that an average of 313 children per month receive fee subsidy, with the largest financial allocation supporting the placement of preschool age children, as demonstrated in the chart on the left.

**Quality**

Implementation of a Quality Scan Tool 360 (QST) helps County staff look at Child Care Programs through a holistic lens. The review scans eight program areas, with the intent of providing a ‘benchmark’ for staff to visually demonstrate the program areas of strength and priority areas of focus in each Child Care Program. The eight areas include:

1. Site Safety Supervision
2. Relationship - Child to Child
3. Relationship - Child to Educator
4. Relationship - Educator to Educator
5. Relationship - Educator to Supervisor
6. Programming and the Environment
7. Policy and Documentation
8. Connection to Home and Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Average monthly # of children Served (Fee Subsidy and OW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infants</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JK</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>313</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the first quarter of 2019, the QST was conducted with 31 child care programs. Overall, the QST scores increased from 32.50 to 35.25, as compared to last year. The QST process allows the Children’s Services team to better support our child care providers as we continue our journey together towards increased quality and inclusiveness.

Under the direction of the Ministry of Education, the County of Bruce is one of 47 Municipal Managers tasked to manage their local Child Care System. Bruce County staff will continue to work with community partners to coordinate service and prioritize “people” as the foundation of our child care and fee subsidy program.
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.

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

Interdepartmental Consultation:
There was no specific interdepartmental consultation.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:
Although there is no specific link to the Strategic Goals and Elements the coordinated management of the Bruce County Child Care and Fee Subsidy Program is in keeping with our strategic values of efficient, coordinated governance and client centric focus.

Written by: Tina Metcalfe, Children’s Services Manager

Approved by:

[Signature]
Murray Clarke
Acting Chief Administrative Officer