

Modernizing the Early Years

Develop a comprehensive prenatal – age 12 policy framework which includes the goal of:

- 75% of preschool aged children regularly attending an ECE program

Accomplished this by repurposing and building on existing services

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Where are the kids 0-4 years

731,000 children 0-4 years

- 30% have a parent full-time in the home
- 23% parents off-shift to provide care
- 13% receive regular care from relatives
- 22% are in licensed child care
- 12% are with unlicensed child minders

Regardless of their care arrangement, children 0-4 years regularly attend an ECE program

- 95% 4 year olds
- 35% 2 & 3 year olds
- 20% of 0-2 year olds

Sources: ON Ministry of Finance; Lero, Cleveland, NLSY (2011); Survey of Young Canadians (2012) custom runs.

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What parents - at home and in the workforce - want for young children

- Opportunities for their children to play with other children
- Acquire skills and motivation for learning that will help them in school
- Child care - permanent and occasional
- Places to meet other parents and caregivers
- Parenting advice

All children benefit from regularly attending a high quality early education program

Source: Toronto First Duty, Phase 3 Report; Invest in Kids, 2010; Alberta MOH, 2011; EPPE, 2010; 2011 & 2012

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The EY service patchwork

Licensed child care/group and home	Early Learning Division, Edu
Parenting and Family Literacy Centres	Learning Environment Branch, Edu
Ontario Early Years Centres	Regional offices, MCYS
Family Resource Centres	MCYS, CMSMs/DSSABs
Preschool speech and language	MCYS, Various
Data analysis coordinators	MCYS, Various
HBHC and other child and maternal health programs	MCYS, MHLC

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Re-engineering to meet goal

- Mandate every service to provide a regular ECE program - guided by the ELECT curriculum framework and delivered by RECEs.
- Families register with their neighbourhood ECE program; opens potential to assign every child with an Ontario School Number from birth to facilitate program evaluation.
- Public Health and regional service managers collaborate to provide outreach.
- In addition to ECE programming, families receive regular email information on child development and programs in their community.
- Central website and information generation.

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Enhancing ECE quality

Improve qualifications

- Group licensed child care, 2/3 of all educators are RECEs
- Home child care agencies, all consultants are RECEs
- OEYCs, FRCs and PFLCs, the core staff are RECEs
- ECE-related degree required for early childhood provincial and regional advisors, ECE program directors and consultants working in home child agencies
- Consult with College of ECEs to develop minimal professional development requirements
- Mandate training for home child care providers leading to credential

Monitoring

- Adopt a province-wide monitoring tool for all licensed ECE programs (Toronto Operating Criteria) and adapt as necessary for other ECE programs

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Expand licensed ECE options

In response to other public policy initiatives including full year parental leave and full day kindergarten reorganize licensed ECE as follows:

- Children up to 24 months, a ratio of 1:4 with flexibility as in the existing DNA for under age children. Maximum group size of 12.
- Children 25 to 48 months, a ratio of 1:7 with similar flexibility as the existing DNA for under age children. Maximum group size of 21.
- Encourage part-day programs with flexible attendance options to open up licensed ECE as an alternative for more families.
- School age space in schools does not require licensing.
- Develop outcome, in addition to input, measures for licensing.

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Infrastructure changes

Management

- Single ECE policy framework managed by ELD
- Single service plan managed by CMSMs/DSSABs
- Licensing critical to service stability – new programs or expansions require CMSM/DSSAB to sign off

Funding

- Expand school GSN funding to include 0-4 early years space (CC, OEYCs, FRP, PFLC etc)
- Include funded child care spaces under the same funding formula as kindergarten and elementary space
- Review intervention services to align from birth through school

A funded space is included in regional children's services plan; is open to families receiving subsidies and children with special needs

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