



COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	November 27, 2023
SUBJECT:	Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care - Directed Growth Application to Create New Child Care Spaces (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Jessica Chase, Director, Children's and Community Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

The province is in its second year of implementing the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan. The goal of this initiative is to ensure more families across Ontario have access to safe, affordable, and high-quality child care. The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan will be phased in by March 2026, with the average cost of child care for eligible children 0 to 6 years, reduced to approximately \$12 per day.

The Ministry of Education also released an Access and Inclusion Framework to support the creation of new child care spaces, focusing on increased access to child care for children of low-income families, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities, children with special needs and Francophone and Indigenous children. In 2023, the Ministry approved a total of 107 school-based spaces and 381 community-based spaces for children aged 0 to 5 years of age.

Staff have completed an analysis which demonstrated a need to prioritize 2023 community-based expansion in four wards; 6,7,3 and 4. All wards will benefit from new child care spaces over the next four years and additional analysis will be undertaken to ensure the child care needs of all neighbourhoods are considered.

Staff partnered with ten community agencies who have relationships with the priority populations (children of low-income families, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities, children with special needs and Francophone and Indigenous children). These agencies engaged with more than 330 families regarding their child care needs. Their input helped inform the Directed Growth Application and evaluation criteria. All

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licensed child care operators were invited to apply for new community-based spaces through this application process.

As of November 2023, approximately 60% of the 381 community-based spaces have been licensed and are operational as a result of city-wide growth in licensed home child care, as well as growth within existing centre-based programs. The remaining 40% of community-based spaces will be achieved through the directed growth application process and will result in new spaces in wards 7, 4 and 3. The licensing process for these spaces will begin by the end of 2023, however most of the spaces will open in 2024.

As these additional child care spaces become operational, child care access rates will increase from 19% to 22% in ward 7, from 26% to 30% in ward 3 and from 17% to 19% in ward 4. This will result in an overall child care access rate increase from 32% to 33% city-wide, in our infant, toddler and preschool age groups, bringing the City one step closer to the Ministry's goal to achieve a 37% access rate across Hamilton by 2026.

Staff are currently finalizing the priority wards for directed growth in 2024 and [anticipate an additional opportunity for directed growth applications in Q1 of 2024](#). Staff will continue to consult the early years community throughout the process.

Should you require further information on the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care, please contact Jessica Chase, Director Children's Services and Community Services Division at ext. 3590 or via email at Jessica.Chase@hamilton.ca.

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