

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	13 January 2022
Subject / Report No:	SSR-CW-01-22
Title:	2022 Early Years and Child Care Funding Update
Prepared by:	Tara Cockerill, Children's Services Manager
Reviewed by:	Barb Fedy, Director of Social Services
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That report **SSR-CW-01-22 regarding the Early Years and Child Care Funding Update** be received for information.

Executive Summary

The Ministry of Education acknowledges the importance of a stable funding update in 2022 for the early years and child care sector, particularly as the child care system works through the recovery process from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to comments from Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSAB) the Ministry of Education has confirmed that the core allocations for the early years and child care sector will remain unchanged from 2021. Additionally, the ministry will provide a \$441,277.00 one-time transitional grant to help offset and assist with the new 5% administration threshold set to take effect January 1, 2022. This one-time grant will also continue to support the new administration cost share that began in 2021 and can also be used to support child care programs and services and operating costs related to COVID-19 such as reduced capacity, enhanced cleaning, and personal protective equipment.

Background and Discussion

Child Care Allocation - \$8,769,417

The child care allocation supports the delivery of funding and programs to the licensed child care sector through general operating grants, child care fee subsidy, special needs resourcing, capacity building, and special purpose funding. This funding supports quality and accessible child care programs. This allocation is made up of a variety of provincial general and expansion funding as well as federal Early Learning and Child Care funding.

EarlyON Allocation- \$1,123,304

EarlyON child and family centres provide families with access to programs, supports and resources across the county. These programs are responsive to community need and are offered at no cost to families. This allocation is made up of a combination of provincial EarlyON funding and federal ELCC funding. The ELCC funding has seen an increased investment in 2022 of approximately 22%.

Child Care and Early Years Workforce Allocation - \$615,270 (New)

The Child Care and Early Years Workforce Allocation is new for 2022.

In line with the provincial guidelines related to the Child Care and Early Years Workforce Funding, the children's services department has consulted with service providers and community partners to create a flexible and responsive strategy to support local needs. It is anticipated that these strategies may shift and adapt as the early learning sector continues on the path of covid recovery. There are no municipal cost sharing requirements associated with this investment. The activities outlined in this report are subject to approval by the Ministry of Education prior to the expenditure of funding.

This plan will address the workforce priorities of support, enhance, grow and attract as follows:

Sustain the existing child care and early years workforce to ensure a more stable and high-quality early years and child care sector by providing increased opportunities for existing educators to develop skills and emphasize the importance of continued education.

Enhance access to opportunities for the workforce through increased access to professional learning and training for leaders and new staff to the field, including mentoring opportunities that do not currently exist

Grow the number of qualified staff in the early learning sector by providing opportunities to improve or advance skills of non-RECEs in the field to encourage them to pursue formal credentials

Attract new individuals through the field by promoting the profession in an appealing, modern and informative platform.

Professional Learning Strategies

Professional Development Days

Early learning program operators were asked if they preferred to have two professional learning days coordinated by the CMSM, organized on their own, or a mix of both.

45% of respondents preferred that the CMSM organize both days

27% of respondents preferred to organize both days themselves

27% of respondents preferred to have a mix of both options

To respond to these needs, it has been determined that the following will occur over between January 2022 and March 2023:

Direct Funding Applications (1 Application per Operator)

- 1) An application process will be developed to support eligible operators in accessing funds to support professional development of their team.
 - a. Applications will be reviewed and approved by Children's Services Management to confirm alignment with funding guidelines
 - b. Operators will be able to request funding to offset parent fees lost if program closes during regular business hours
 - c. Operators will be able to request funding for staff wages for staff who attend sessions on a weekend and/or relief staff for coverage to attend a weekday session
 - d. Operators will be able to request funding support costs for speakers/resources
- 2) Applications will include:
 - a. Program goals and objectives of the day
 - b. Which priorities are being covered (mental health, anti-racism, inclusion, indigenous learning, special needs)
 - c. Correlation to *How Does Learning Happen?*
 - d. Demonstrate that the training is evidence based with transference to practice
 - e. Total number of program staff and supervisors that would take part in the session
- 3) CMSM will be available to support and consult with programs to help create an appropriate PD Plan

CMSM Planned Professional Learning Activities

As part of our journey towards truth and reconciliation, Grey County will work jointly with Bruce County and our local Indigenous Friendship Centre to plan an Indigenous Learning Day for staff of early learning programs.

Consideration is also being given to planning a full day learning symposium in partnership with Bruce and Huron counties.

Mentorship Pilot Project

The Children's Services Department will hire a contract mentorship lead to assess programs and support staff that are interested in expanding and enhancing their leadership skills. The mentorship lead will provide in person and virtual supports (using our LMS system) to empower individual staff members to become strong leads and advocates in the early learning sector. This position would be 100% funded by the Child Care and Early Years Workforce funding with no municipal cost share requirement.

The focus will be on creating welcoming and supportive learning environments for all staff to learn and grow as educators and leaders in the early learning sector.

Workforce Capacity and Innovation Fund

The following activities will be pursued to provide additional supports to attract and retain qualified quality staff to early learning programs:

Continue the work of the ECE Recruitment & Retention Committee (sub-committee of the Early Learning Planning Committee) including advertising and social media campaigns.

Increase the capacity of the Learning Management System (LMS) program to provide virtual on-demand learning and networking opportunities.

The Child Care and Early Years Workforce Allocation has no cost share or levy requirement to be implemented.

Indigenous-Led Child Care and Child and Family Programs Allocation – \$72,221

These funds are allocated for indigenous-led child care and child and family programs in Grey County. Working with M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre, EarlyON programming is delivered at the Friendship Centre as well as resources provided to our Early Learning Communities across Grey County.

2022 Early Years and Child Care Funding Summary

2022 Allocation Summary The Corporation Of The County Of Grey

2022 Allocation Summary	2022 Allocation
Part D1: Child Care Allocation	\$8,769,417
Part D2: EarlyON Allocation	\$1,124,304
Part D3: Child Care and Early Years Workforce Allocation	\$615,270
Part D4: Indigenous-Led Child Care and Child and Family Programs Allocation	\$72,221
Total Allocation	\$10,581,212
<i>*The purpose of this Allocation Summary table is to provide a summary of the allocations that are further set out in the detailed budget schedule provided. The amounts set out here are for summary purposes only and are not in addition to the amounts in the detailed budget schedule that follow.</i>	

Legal and Legislated Requirements

None

Financial and Resource Implications

All efforts outlined within the report continue to be managed through the approved departmental operating budget. The funding described in this report is included in the proposed 2022 County Budget, as well as the required municipal contribution of \$967,000 for the childcare budgets. The proposed 2022 Child Care and Early Years Planning and Data Analysis and EarlyON budgets contain \$167,500 in 100% municipal funding in addition to the provincial funding.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal
- Social Services
- Finance

External (list)

ECE Recruitment and Retention Committee

Appendices and Attachments

n/a