

Children's Services



service plan 2015-2019



Introduction

Message from the General Manager	1
Executive Summary	2-3
Stakeholder-Driven Service Planning.....	4

A Toronto for All Children and Families..... 5

A

Toronto's Children and Families.....	6-9
Benefits of Investing in Children and Families	10
Service System Vision.....	11
The Child and Family Service System	12
Toronto Children's Services Division	13
Guiding Principles.....	14

The Changing Landscape 15

B

Influences on the System.....	16
Community Priorities	17
Municipal Policy.....	18-20
Provincial Policy.....	21-22
Broader Social Context.....	23-24

The Current Service Sector.....25

C	A Continuum of Services	26
	Funding the System.....	27
	Determining Child Care Demand and Growth	28
	Financial Implications and Growth.....	29
	Early Learning and Care.....	30
	Infant/Toddler/Preschool Programs.....	31
	Capital Strategy for Infants and Toddlers.....	32-33
	Kindergarten Programs.....	34
	Middle Childhood Programs	35-37
	Home Child Care	38
	Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services (TELCCS).....	39
	Aboriginal Child Care	40
	French-language Child Care	41
	The Cost of Care	42
	Child Care Fee Subsidy	43-46
	Child Care Funding Model	47
	The Child and Family Sector Workforce	48-49
	Special Needs Services	50
	Family Support	51-52
	Quality Assurance.....	53-54

Directions and Actions for the Next Five Years...55

D	Access to High-Quality Child Care	56
	Inclusive Support for All Families.....	57
	Engagement, Partnership, and Communication	58
	Systems Change	59
	Leadership.....	60

Appendix and Endnotes

Appendix A: Child and Family Network	61
Appendix B: List of Neighbourhoods	62
Endnotes	63-64

message from the general manager



On behalf of Toronto Children's Services, I am proud to share the new Service Plan for 2015-2019. The Service Plan is an important tool that guides the planning and management of services for children and families in Toronto. With input from many key stakeholders, this Service Plan tells the story of the child and family system in Toronto – how it has changed, where it is now, and where we plan to take it – and lays out concrete actions that advance the well-being of children and families.

In Toronto, we have a rich history of service planning that dates back to our first Council-approved plan in 1992. This practice has benefitted the child and family system in many ways. Each new service plan gives us the opportunity to connect with our partners, review our achievements, respond to change, and set ambitious new goals for the sector. The new *Child Care and Early Years Act* now legislates that all service system managers develop a service plan.

Over the last five years, we accomplished what we had committed to in the last Service Plan, while responding to significant changes in the sector. The child and family system has undergone unprecedented change in terms of the way services are governed, delivered, and monitored. While this is positive, we know it has been challenging for families and service providers to adapt. We have all learned many lessons from this period of change, and will continue to support service providers as our system continues to modernize.

To accompany this Service Plan, Children's Services will develop an annual work plan with specific deliverables, targets, and timelines that move us towards our five-year objectives. These plans will be made available to the public each year.

This Service Plan was developed through broad engagement and consultation with many diverse stakeholders and community partners. I would like to thank the many individuals, families, service providers, community agencies, and City divisions, agencies, boards, and commissions who contributed their time and input. Your valuable ideas and insights helped to create a relevant and dynamic Service Plan that will keep us connected and accountable to the community for the next five years.

Elaine Baxter-Trahair
General Manager

executive summary

The Children's Services Service Plan is a vital document that guides the division in the planning and delivery of services for children and families in Toronto. The division develops a new Service Plan every five years. Each new plan provides the opportunity to assess our accomplishments and challenges over the last five years, take stock of the landscape we're working within, and set ambitious new directions for the next five years. The Service Plan sets a vision for the child and family service system, including early learning and child care, and moves us to action to bring that vision to life.

This Service Plan was built on collaboration. Children's Services worked closely with stakeholders – including families, service providers, and other community partners – to develop a plan that is responsive to their needs and perspectives. Over 3,000 individuals contributed over the course of the service planning process. As a result, this Service Plan is informed by and designed to reflect stakeholder priorities.

The Service Plan has four parts. Parts A, B, and C provide background information and analysis that set the stage for our new strategic directions and actions, which appear in Part D.

Section A: A Toronto for All Children & Families delves into Children's Services' role in building a city that works for all of Toronto's children and families. Investing in services for children and their families contributes to improved health, education, employment, social equality, and poverty reduction outcomes. Children's Services' vision for the service system focuses on meeting the needs of children and families, and of the communities, service providers, and system that support

them. Children's Services has three roles it can leverage to help achieve this vision: service system manager, service provider, and strategic leader.

Section B: The Changing Landscape is an environmental scan of the many influences that are impacting the child and family system in Toronto. The sector has undergone significant change over the last five years, and it is still in flux. These changes are happening at a community level, municipal level, provincial level, and within the broader social context. They present new approaches to support child and family well-being, and provide a new framework for local planning and integrated service delivery. As a champion for children and families, Children's Services must respond to and implement these changes in a way that maintains the stability of the service system, responds to local needs, and reflects Toronto's unique character and diversity.

Section C: The Service Sector provides a snapshot of existing programs and services, with a focus on those programs and services that Children's Services plans, funds, and manages. Service areas include: early learning and care; child care fee subsidies; Aboriginal services; French-language services; special needs services; family support; and quality assurance. Within each of these areas, there are specific planning considerations, including current trends, changes, and challenges. These considerations are directly linked to the Service Plan actions in Part D. Further, we acknowledge that the current service system as it relates to early learning and child care would need to grow significantly through careful planning and long-term investment in order to meet demand in Toronto.

Section D: Strategic Directions & Actions for the Next Five Years sets the agenda for the next five years. It maps out concrete and deliverable actions that reflect the stakeholder priorities, changing landscape, and planning considerations we have described in Parts A, B, and C of the Plan. These actions are organized under five new strategic directions, which move the system towards our vision of an accessible, inclusive, seamless, and resilient system. The new strategic directions are:

Direction 1: Access to high quality child care

Access to child care means that it is available, affordable, and of high quality. Actions under this direction describe the ways in which Children's Services will work with our partners and leverage opportunities to increase the number of child care spaces and fee subsidies in Toronto. Actions also include the way we plan to advance the quality of child care across the system.

Direction 2: Inclusive support for all families

Families are vulnerable when they face significant barriers to accessing services, or when existing services do not meet their needs. Factors that contribute to vulnerability may include: poverty; structural inequalities; discrimination; limited social support; service affordability; and geographic location. Actions under this direction include targeted strategies to make services more accessible and responsive to the unique needs of Toronto's diverse families. System-level actions also describe the ways in which Children's Services will help to alleviate poverty and build a city that is more inclusive and equitable for all families.

Direction 3: Engagement, partnership and communication

The child and family system is founded on strong community partnerships. Communicating with and engaging our partners in the planning process helps Children's Services to stay attuned and respond to the diverse needs of children, families, and service providers. Actions under this direction focus on strengthening relationships with school boards and other community partners. Actions also outline initiatives to improve customer service and communication, emphasizing how information will be shared with and gathered from stakeholders.

Direction 4: Systems change

The child and family system is undergoing significant change. Children's Services will advance the modernization of the child and family system by implementing Provincial legislation and City Council direction in a way that works for Toronto. Actions under this direction include the new child care funding model which will improve the way Children's Services provides funding and other supports to service providers. Other actions focus on consolidating and integrating the planning of services, including middle childhood programs, child and family centres, and other early years programs.

Direction 5: Leadership

Children's Services will champion the needs of children and families in Toronto. Actions under this direction outline the work we will do with all orders of government to grow and strengthen the child and family system, and improve the well-being of children and families. Actions also describe Children's Services' work to advance the sector through innovative research and policy initiatives, support for the RECE workforce, and the promotion of the Assessment for Quality Improvement to other jurisdictions.

stakeholder-driven service planning

This Service Plan is driven by community priorities.

The child and family system is made up of a diverse group of stakeholders – the children and families who use services, the organizations that provide those services, and the decision makers and community partners who plan them. We know that to build a cohesive and effective system, we need to work together.

Children's Services undertook a series of dynamic initiatives to engage stakeholders in the Service Planning process. From the outset, we ensured that their priorities would shape every aspect of the Service Plan. We targeted stakeholders who represented the diversity of families and partners in the service system, and designed engagement opportunities for each unique group. In some cases, this meant partnering with a local organization (i.e. settlement services, community centres, Aboriginal agencies, etc.). Engagement methods included: focus groups; online surveys; telephone surveys; interviews; arts-based activities; games; and others. Over 3,000 individuals participated, including:

- Children
- Families
- Aboriginal families & service providers
- Newcomer families
- LGBTQ-led families & families of trans or gender independent children
- Advocacy & women's organizations
- Academics & local experts
- The Toronto Child and Family Network
- Child care service providers
- French-language service providers
- Family Support practitioners
- Toronto Children's Services staff
- City Divisions, agencies, boards, & commissions
- School boards

Through candid conversation, we gained a deeper understanding of different stakeholders' unique experiences and perspectives. At the same time, we affirmed our shared goals and priorities for how to advance the well-being of children and families in Toronto. We heard about what's working within the existing system, as well as the barriers, challenges, and vulnerabilities faced by different stakeholders.

Ultimately, these conversations produced a collective vision for an inclusive, collaborative, accessible, and resilient child and family system. Children's Services combined this powerful community vision with robust research and data analysis to develop a comprehensive Service Plan that will carry us forward for the next five years.

To read the full report on our stakeholder engagement process, visit: toronto.ca/children/serviceplan.





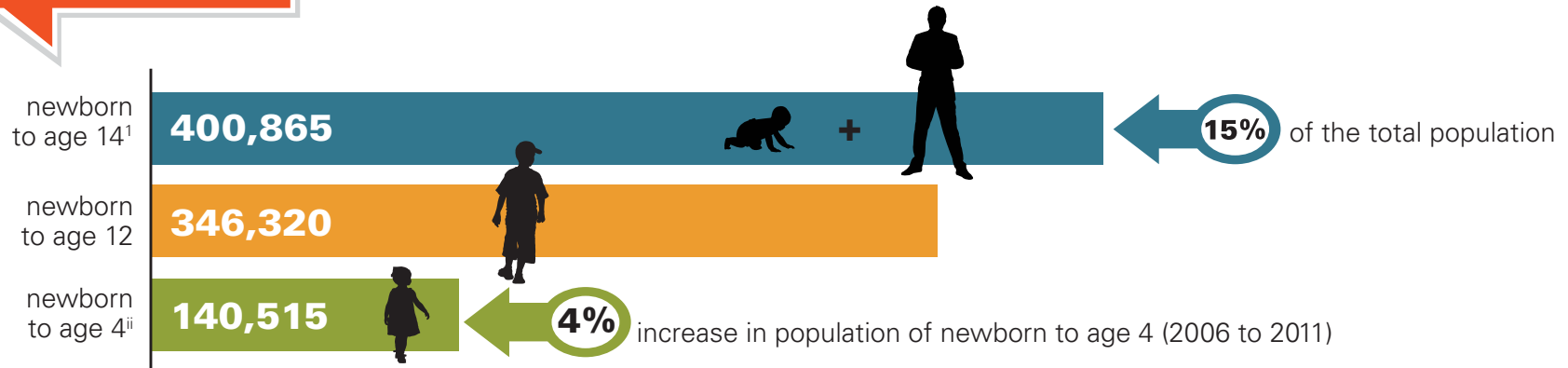
A Toronto for all Children and Families

Investing in children and families is critical to building a vibrant city. This section describes the child and family system, and Children's Services' role in making Toronto a city that works for all children and their families.

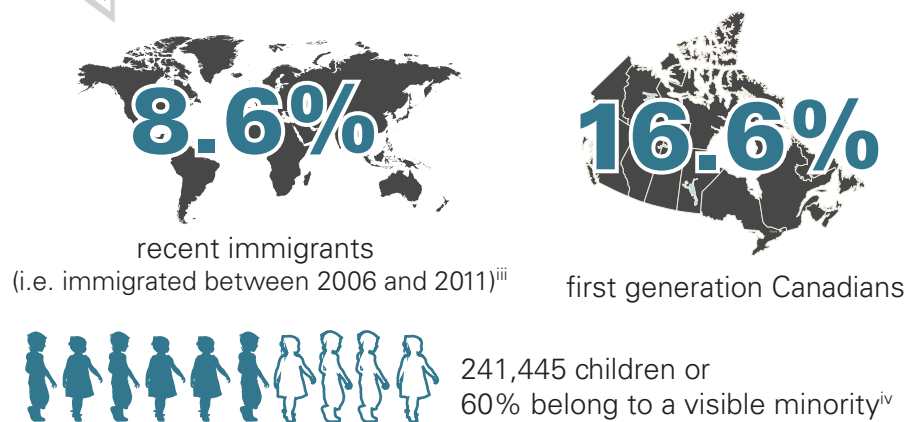
toronto's children and families

Toronto's children and families are diverse. Services planned and delivered to them must capture their different experiences and needs.

Children In Toronto



Children Newborn To 14



Language

FR
1.2%
of children in Toronto
First language is French

121,965
or 30% of children
in Toronto neither
English or French is
first language

ⁱ While Children's Services serves children from newborn to age 12, Census Canada reports data for newborn to 14. We use this data where necessary to make comparisons with other jurisdictions, and where the assumption can be reasonably made that the data is similar for newborn to age 12.

Family - Households



25%

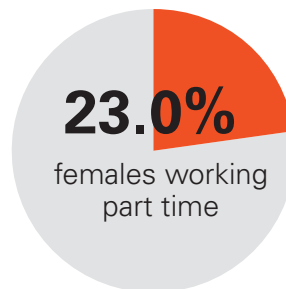
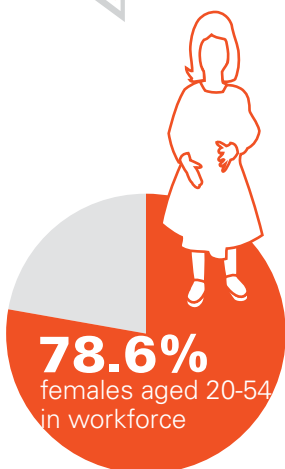
of Toronto's children live below the low income measure²



22%

of children in Toronto live in lone-parent households
55% of them live below the low income measure^{vii}

Employment



Family - Median Income



Ontario: **\$101,715**

vs

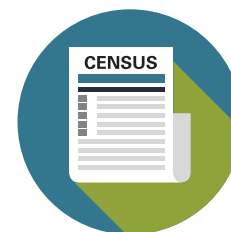
GTA: **\$101,317**

vs

Toronto: **\$89,539**^{viii}

vs

lone-parent families: **\$44,584**^{ix}



Census data under represents Aboriginal population

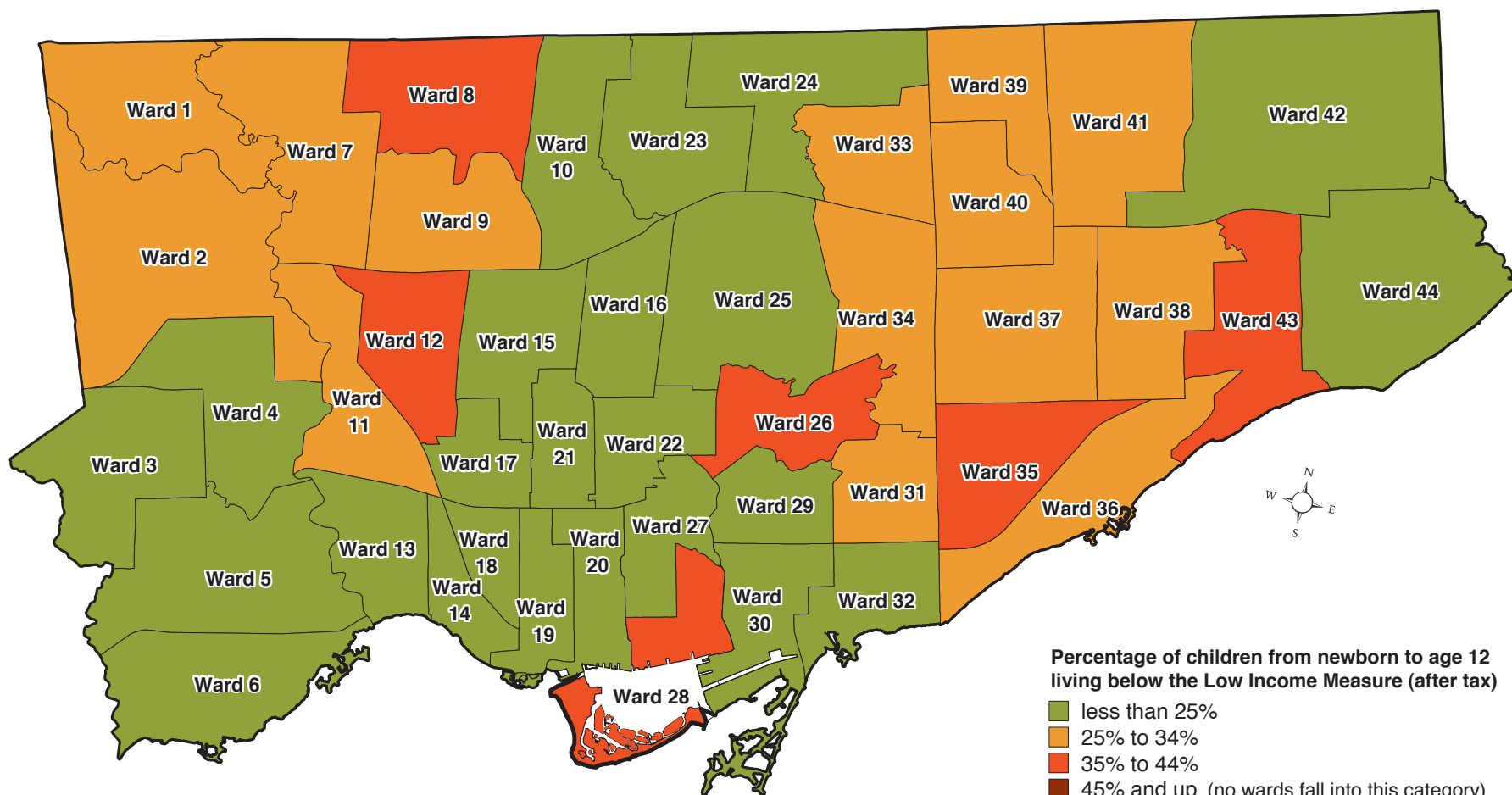
it is estimated that there are between

35,000 and **70,000** Aboriginal people in Toronto.
(Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Metis,
Cree, Mi'kmaq, Inuit and more.^{vi})

² The low income measure (LIM) after tax is a fixed percentage (50%) of median household income, adjusted to account for household needs.

toronto's children and families

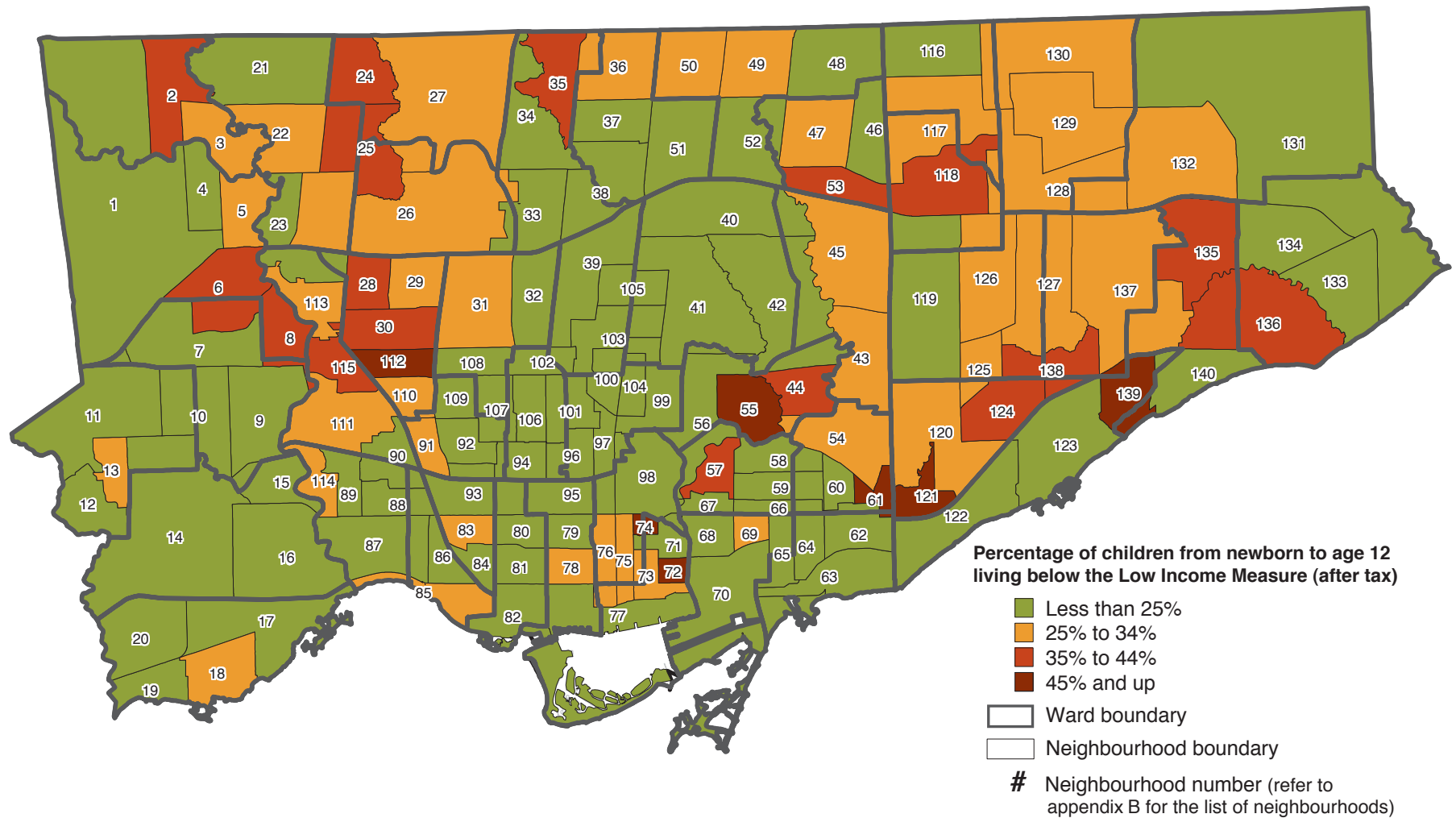
Children living in low income families by ward



On average, 25% of Toronto's children 12 and under are living in low-income families. Low-income is based on the Statistics Canada Low Income Measure (after tax).

Source: 2011 National Household Survey

Children living in low income families by neighbourhood



On average, 25% of Toronto's children 12 and under are living in low-income families. Low-income is based on the Statistics Canada Low Income Measure (after tax).

Source: 2011 National Household Survey

benefits of investing in children and families

Supporting children and families is critical to effective city building. Evidence shows that investing in services for children and families helps to achieve many social, developmental, and economic goals. As a champion for children, Children's Services connects the unique needs of families to broader city-building and system-building objectives.

Benefits to children:

An effective child and family system means that children have positive childhood experiences now, and develop into healthy youth and adults in the future. High-quality programs engage children in meaningful learning, and support their cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development.^{xiii} Programs that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive help to combat inequality from the earliest years of life, and build resiliency as children transition into youths.

Benefits to families:

Families need support to raise children. Local and meaningful programs help families build social support networks, provide them with tools and resources on child and family well-being, and help connect them to other services they might need.^{xiv} Accessible child care makes it possible for parents and caregivers to work or to focus on education or training. For newcomers, child care is often the first social institution families access, and an important gateway to securing employment and accessing other services.^{xvi}

Economic benefits:

An effective child and family system is vital to economic growth and sustainability. Affordable child care is central to the recruitment and retention of a skilled workforce. Further, the child care sector itself is proven to stimulate the local economy through job creation. Overall, child care and other child and family services demonstrate high returns on public investment, by reducing long-term dependence on social assistance and by improving health and education outcomes.^{xvii}

Social benefits:

When we advance the well-being of children and families, we provide them with tools and opportunities to fully participate in social and public life. We reduce systemic inequities by supporting families who face more complex challenges, and promoting the inclusion of diverse communities in Toronto. Child care is widely known to be a key pillar in poverty reduction,^{xviii} and is internationally recognized as a human right for women and children. It contributes to gender equality by increasing women's participation in the workforce^{xix} and in public life.



Children and families are an integral part of a healthy, vibrant, and equitable Toronto. This Service Plan continues the journey towards a cohesive system of services that are accessible, affordable, inclusive, seamless, and resilient. We strive to build a city in which:

- **All children** have access to a continuum of services and programs that support their individual needs;
- **Families** know where to find meaningful and affordable supports and services, and have a say in how these services are planned, regardless of their social, economic or cultural background;
- **Communities** are invested in promoting the well-being of their children and families and are connected to the networks and expertise they need to do so;
- **Service providers** are equipped with the tools they need to provide high-quality services, including innovative learning opportunities and meaningful partnerships;
- **The system** is nimble, responsive, integrated, and accountable.

the child and family service system

The building of a child and family system is a complex undertaking. Children and families in Toronto access a combination of programs and services, delivered by many organizations. An effective child and family system is more than individual programs and services located in a defined geographic area. It is a coordinated and comprehensive network of services and supports that meet the overall health and developmental needs of children and their families. Developing this system requires explicit effort in bringing together key partners from government, school boards, and community organizations.

In 2012, Children's Services came together with our partners to establish the Toronto Child and Family Network³ as the mechanism to build a child and family system that would most effectively benefit Toronto's children and families. The Network, representing over 200 organizations, consists of six substantive committees brought together through the leadership of the Steering Committee – Early Learning & Care, Early Identification & Intervention, Family Support, Health, Aboriginal Advisory, and French Language Advisory. Each of these committees includes representation from a range of different services and supports for children and their families. Within each committee, there is work to be done to integrate and build partnerships across these different services. At the same time, the committees also work collaboratively to promote positive outcomes for children and families. This diagram depicts the interconnected parts that comprise the child and family system.



³ See Appendix A for a full description of the Toronto Child and Family Network

As a champion for Toronto's children and families, Children's Services has three roles:

Service System Manager

Provincial legislation, City Council, and local stakeholders have endorsed Children's Services' role as the "service system manager," designated to manage the planning and delivery of child care and early years programs in Toronto. We work with school boards, other human services, and community partners, to organize a coordinated system of services that provide families with access to the services and supports that they need. Within the system, we specifically manage, plan, and fund the following: child care; fee subsidies; special needs resources; family resource programs; and summer camp programs. We work with our partners to promote and improve quality in programs through assessment, training, and research. We engage in community capacity building, administer local policies, and facilitate change to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and their families.

Service Provider

Children's Services supports families with the cost of child care by administering the child care fee subsidy program to assist Toronto families with the cost of child care. We also directly operate both centre- and home-based child care through Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services (TELCCS). In addition, Children's Services is one of 18 agencies delivering special needs support to licensed child care providers. We work with other City divisions to coordinate services and improve the family experience. Publicly-delivered services are vital because they fill gaps in the service system, reach families who face complex challenges, and demonstrate high standards of quality.

Strategic Leader

Children's Services works with other City divisions and community partners to build a city that works for all children and families. We advance the well-being of children and families by improving positive outcomes in their development, education, health, financial security, culture, and rights. We foster the development of dynamic and inclusive communities where children and families thrive. We pursue sound research, evidence-based practices, and policy development to ensure that decisions are made based on the best information available. We engage the public and provide them with important information on child and family well-being. Finally, we ensure that decision makers are aware of issues and matters that impact children and families.

Children's Services mission

Toronto Children's Services promotes access to high quality early learning, child care and supports for families through a well planned and managed system.

Children's Services vision

All families in Toronto benefit from a range of services that promote healthy child development and family well-being.

guiding principles

Children's Services is guided by eight principles⁴ to build a system that is:

- a.** Centred on children and families, so that they can make informed choices about services
- b.** Planned and delivered in an integrated way, so that as children develop, they experience seamless transitions across a continuum of services
- c.** High quality, through constantly advancing organizational and pedagogical best practices
- d.** Inclusive of children with special needs, as well as vulnerable and marginalized communities
- e.** Equitably delivered across the city and available to children of all ages, based on the practices of age and geographic equity
- f.** Fair, so that fee subsidies for child care are provided on a first-come, first-served basis
- g.** Accountable, through public planning and measured outcomes
- h.** Focused on expansion through public and non-profit service delivery



⁴ principles are updated and consistent with previous principles approved by Toronto City Council on Dec 1, 2, and 3, 2008, and amended in May 2010.



B

The Changing Landscape

There are many changes currently affecting the child and family system in Toronto. These changes are unfolding at a municipal, provincial, and community level. At the same time, advancements within the broader social context are helping to shape new ways of thinking about child and family well-being. This section explores Children's Services' role in advancing and responding to the changing landscape.

influences on the system

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



Engagement with diverse stakeholders including families, service providers, and the broader community provided critical feedback and profoundly influenced the direction for the next five years.

BROADER SOCIAL CONTEXT

Many issues and trends unfold simultaneously on local, national, and international stages. These issues – such as quality and vulnerability – impact the sector at a systemic level, and inform Children's Services' policies and best practices.



PROVINCIAL POLICY

Provincial policy and legislation is driving significant change in the child and family sector. As the service system manager, Children's Services implements provincial policy in Toronto in a way that best meets local needs.

CHILD & FAMILY SYSTEM

MUNICIPAL POLICY

Many city-wide strategies and policy initiatives impact the lives of children and families in Toronto. Children's Services plays an important role in championing the interests of children and families in the development and implementation of these strategies.



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

In the process of developing this Service Plan, Children's Services heard from a range of diverse stakeholders: from families and children to our many partners in the child and family service sector. Stakeholders' priorities are both universal and distinct. As a result, Children's Services' approach to meeting the needs of children and families must be both broad and targeted.

On the one hand, many of the recommendations we heard were specific to the needs of a particular group or population – i.e. newcomer, LGBTQ, and French-language families. This confirmed that the best approach for building diversity and inclusivity into the system is to develop parallel yet distinct strategies that acknowledge and address the unique experience of each community. At the same time, there were common themes related to accessibility, communication, and integration that resonated across different stakeholders' priorities. These included:

- Affordability, availability, and quality of child care
- Multiple waitlists and fees
- Seamless transitions between services
- Accessible information about services
- Ongoing communication and engagement with families and service providers
- Well-paid and trained staff
- A cohesive and coordinated service system

To read the full report on our stakeholder engagement process, visit: toronto.ca/children/serviceplan.

★ Many new actions reflect stakeholder feedback, including specific actions: 7 (pg. 56); 14 (pg. 57); 15 (pg. 57); 16 (pg. 58)

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Through independent engagement with the Aboriginal community, it was determined that the main priority was the need to build cultural capacity across the child and family system. Outside of Aboriginal-specific programs, Aboriginal families don't see themselves reflected in the system. They indicated that every step of the process of gaining access to child care – from outreach to intake to special needs support – should promote and reflect Aboriginal cultures. Other recommendations included:

- “Navigators” to engage and support Aboriginal families
- Cultural considerations related to families' eligibility for fee subsidy
- Voluntary Aboriginal self-identification in a sensitive and positive way
- Home child care options

★ See actions 11 (pg. 57); 12 (pg. 57); 18 (pg. 58)



STRONG NEIGHBOURHOODS STRATEGY

The Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 identified 31 “Neighbourhood Improvement Areas” (NIAs) across Toronto for targeted investment and support. In each NIA, the City will: work with residents and community organizations to deliver and integrate services; address neighbourhood priorities; and work with other funders and businesses to bring in new investments.^{xx} Child care and family support programs are meeting places where families come together, build networks, and connect to the community. Children’s Services will work with NIAs to align child and family services with local planning objectives, increase access to child care spaces and fee subsidies, and build community capacity. We will engage marginalized and hard-to-reach communities in order to better understand and respond to their needs.

★ See action 2 (pg. 56)



HEALTHY CHILD & FAMILY OUTCOMES

In building a child and family system in Toronto, we are moving toward outcomes-based policy and planning. Outcomes describe the desired improvements in the overall well-being of children and families. Outcomes-based policy is important for two reasons. It is evidence-based, drawing on data and research to monitor and understand changes in population well-being over time. Secondly, it articulates a set of common goals that service providers can work towards collaboratively. In partnership with the Toronto Child and Family Network, Children’s Services facilitated a community-driven process to develop 10 outcomes for Toronto – five child outcomes and five family outcomes.^{xxi} These outcomes will be monitored using common indicators and reported to the public regularly. Over the next five years, these outcomes will be used to inform policy and strategic planning, and to evaluate and improve services for children and families.

★ See actions 19 (pg. 58); 35 (pg. 60)

HUMAN SERVICES INTEGRATION

The Human Services Integration Project is a partnership between three City Divisions: Toronto Children's Services, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration, and Toronto Employment & Social Services. The project is focused on the delivery of three income support programs: child care fee subsidies, rent geared to income housing subsidies, and Ontario Works. Over 200,000 Toronto residents access these programs every year, and many access more than one program, often at the same time. Common functions, like application and intake, will be integrated and simplified, to better meet the needs of residents, improve their service experience, and create more time for staff to work with individuals and families.

★ See action 32 (pg. 60)



POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

One in four children in Toronto lives below the Low Income Measure (LIM). Interventions and supports geared towards the early years – including child care and other family services – are proven to alleviate the impacts of poverty on children's quality of life, and help to break the cycle of poverty in the long-term. Addressing child and family poverty is crucial to any poverty reduction strategy.^{xxii} City Council committed to developing a Poverty Reduction Strategy in April 2014. In addition, the Province released an updated Poverty Reduction Strategy for 2014-2019. Children's Services will work with other divisions to develop and implement initiatives that align with provincial and municipal objectives and that will meet the needs of children and families.

★ See action 9 (pg. 57)



TORONTO NEWCOMER STRATEGY

In Toronto, 14 per cent of children from newborn to age 14 are newcomers. Newcomer families face unique and complex barriers to accessing services. The Toronto Newcomer Strategy is designed to improve newcomer settlement through the advancement of a seamless, accessible, and collaborative service system. Child and family services play a vital role in supporting newcomer families as they settle in Toronto. Child care is often the first step for families to access employment, training, and other services.^{xxiii} Family Support programs help them to build social support networks and tap into other community resources. Further, research has shown the many benefits of infusing cultural and linguistic diversity into children's programs.^{xxiv} Children's Services continues to work with the Toronto Newcomer Office to ensure that families can access and navigate meaningful services that are diverse and responsive to their needs.

★ See actions 15 (pg. 57); 16 (pg. 58)

URBAN ABORIGINAL FRAMEWORK

The Urban Aboriginal Framework (UAF) brings together community aspirations and City responsibilities, including a Statement of Commitment to the Aboriginal Communities of Toronto adopted by City Council in July 2010.^{xxv} Children's Services works to fulfill the commitments made in the statement by engaging in collaborative planning with the Aboriginal Advisory and Planning Committee of the Child and Family Network. We continue to build cultural competency within the division and the broader child and family sector, and work to strengthen the capacity of the Toronto Public Service and our Aboriginal partners to meet the needs of the community together.

★ See actions 12 (pg. 57); 18 (pg. 58)



ONTARIO EARLY YEARS POLICY FRAMEWORK

The 2013 *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework* provides strategic direction to all early years partners in the province. It envisions a system that is integrated, responsive, and high quality. As the service system manager, Children's Services applies the framework in a way that makes sense for Toronto. The framework includes key initiatives discussed below.

Legislative Changes

The *Day Nurseries Act* was first introduced in 1946, and licensing standards have not been comprehensively reviewed since 1983. The *Child Care Modernization Act, 2014*, passed in December 2014, updates the legislative framework governing child care by repealing the *Day Nurseries Act* and replacing it with the *Child Care and Early Years Act*. Among other things, the new legislation strengthens the role of the service system manager, and amends the *Education Act* to provide out-of-school-time programs for school-age children in schools where there is demand. It also recognizes the need for age-appropriate programming for older children that may not be licensed child care. Children's Services acknowledges that change will require transitions for child care programs, which will take time, support, and collaboration.

★ See actions 5 (pg. 56); 31 (pg. 60)

Child and Family Centres (CFCs)

Child and Family Centres (CFCs) are a way of organizing services to be simpler, more coordinated, and better integrated. While some commitments were made in the *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework*, Children's Services anticipates further direction from the Province on CFCs. In the meantime, we are working with the Child and Family Network and three model "sites of practice" to develop a shared concept of CFCs that meets community needs. We have consistently identified the importance of municipal authority in planning and managing a more integrated child and family system. This should include responsibility for CFCs, Ontario Early Years Centres, and associated resources like Data Analysis Coordinators.

★ See actions 27, 28 (pg. 59)

How Does Learning Happen? (HDLH)

In April 2014, the Province introduced a new resource to guide pedagogy for early years programs called, *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*. Building on the principles of Early Learning for Every Child Today, the guide is a professional learning resource for anyone working with young children and their families. *HDLH* focuses on how children, families, and educators interact and learn from each other, citing research that demonstrates that children in high-quality programs with supportive relationships are happier and more motivated to learn. Children's Services will work with early years programs across the city to help them integrate the practices and goals of HDLH.

★ See action 8 (pg. 56)

SPECIAL NEEDS & MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIES

Families of children with special needs often face challenges in accessing the right services. Two Provincial strategies are addressing these challenges. *Putting it All Together: A Strategy for Special Needs Services that Make Sense for Families* promises a new developmental screen for children before they enter school; new Service Planning coordinators for children and youth with complex special needs; and more integrated rehabilitation services. *Moving On Mental Health: A system that makes sense for children and youth* aims to increase and simplify access to mental health services for children and youth as well as their families. As these strategies are implemented, they will redefine the role of service delivery agencies and the way in which families access supports. Children's Services will help local agencies to incorporate these changes so that families are well-equipped to take advantage of them.

★ See action 10 (pg. 57)



SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY WITH SCHOOL BOARDS

School boards are key partners in delivering early years services. The *Child Care and Early Years Act* solidifies the importance of the relationship between the City and school boards. Now that child care is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, this relationship will continue to grow. Children's Services works with all four Toronto school boards to plan capital investments, coordinate program development, and implement provincial initiatives. There have been a number of recent successes through City-school board partnerships. For example, implementation of the Provincial Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit Policy will result in a substantial increase in child care spaces for the early years.

At the same time, we know from community stakeholders that there are opportunities to further improve this relationship that will lead to more successful programs and partnerships on the ground. Key areas for improvement include: shared space; capital development; professional learning; and transitions for children with special needs. Clarifying expectations, processes, and roles with each school board will also lead to more effective planning. Currently, Children's Services is working with the Child and Family Network to update and consolidate "Working Together" documents that were first produced in 2005. An updated "Working Together" document will use what we have learned over the last 10 years to provide guidance on enhancing relationships and environments in school settings for the benefit of the children.

★ See actions 20 (pg. 58); 31 (pg. 60)

NATIONAL CHILD CARE INITIATIVES

Lack of access to affordable high-quality child care affects the majority of families across Canada. International organizations such as UNICEF^{xxvi} and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development^{xxvii} have drawn attention to Canada's poor performance in terms of the availability and affordability of child care. Sector experts, professionals, and families have long advocated for a national child care system that would meet families' needs and lift us to a higher international standard.^{xxviii} This would contribute to higher levels of employment, economic prosperity, and equitable determinants of health, education, and social inclusion nation-wide. All levels of government have a role in the planning, funding, and provision of child care. A national policy framework – accompanied by sustainable and predictable funding – would promote a cohesive and equitable child care system. Children's Services continues to support national child care initiatives that support the well-being of children and families across the country.

★ See action 30 (pg. 60)

VULNERABILITY

The concept of vulnerability is unfolding at an international, academic, and municipal level. In recent City Council decisions, the term “vulnerability” has evolved to include many challenges, barriers, and precarious situations an individual or community might face. In consultation with the community, the City has defined vulnerability as “a service gap, context or situation, not a characteristic or feature of a person.”^{xxxi} Factors that contribute to vulnerability may include poverty, structural inequality, discrimination, geographic location, and limited social and personal supports. Throughout our engagement process, stakeholders identified many challenges that families face, and identified steps that Children's Services can take to remove barriers and alleviate vulnerability, including inclusive policies and operational practices.

★ See strategic direction 2 (pg. 57)

broader social context

QUALITY

Thanks to local and international research, there is compelling evidence to illustrate the developmental benefits of child care, family support, and other early learning programs. However, programs are only effective for child development if they are high quality.^{xxix} In this way, universal quality is an equity issue, helping to reduce intergenerational poverty and promote equal educational, economic, and social outcomes for all children.^{xxx} Our understanding of what constitutes quality is constantly evolving. While pedagogy is one of the most important factors, there are also structural components of how services and programs are delivered, as well as socio-economic and cultural considerations. Our concept of quality is informed by global advancements in the field. Children's Services regularly engages in research with academics and community experts to advance a robust discourse on quality and ensure that we are continuously improving.

★ See action 34 (pg. 60)





C

The Current Service Sector

Within the changing landscape, Toronto Children's Services plans, funds, manages, and administers a variety of services for children and families in Toronto. These include child care, family support programs, and special needs resources. This section provides an overview of the existing programs and services that are managed by Children's Services, as well as current considerations for planning them.

a continuum of services

Children's Services is moving towards a model of services that is organized along a continuum defined by a child's stages of development. In this way, we can cater specific programs to children's changing needs and plan for a seamless system of services that moves with children as they grow. Ensuring that children experience a smooth transition between each stage requires integrated planning with school boards and other partners.

EARLY YEARS			SCHOOL AGED	
PRENATAL/ INFANT prenatal-1½	TODDLER 1½-2½ yrs	PRESCHOOL 2½-4 yrs	KINDERGARTEN 4-5 yrs	MIDDLE CHILDHOOD 6-8 yrs 9-12 yrs
<p>A child's development is particularly sensitive in the early years. What happens during the first three years has lifelong implications for everything from health to school success. Programs and services available to children and families provide the opportunity to positively affect a child's development now and into their future.</p> <p>A range of programs are available to families with children in the early years, from pregnancy through infant, toddler, and preschool stages. Programs include pre- and post-natal programs, child care, family support, parenting programs, and a number of special needs and early identification supports.</p>			<p>With the implementation of full-day kindergarten, school now plays an even more significant role in the lives of 4 and 5 year-olds. While their developmental needs are different from those of older "school age" children, both need programs outside of school hours, including during professional development days and school holidays. Integrated before- and after-school programs based in schools provide children with a seamless day with shared pedagogy and fewer transitions.</p>	<p>For 6 to 12 year-olds, high quality out-of-school-time programs have significant positive impacts. Programs run by trained staff who provide planned and purposeful activities can benefit children's physical, social, emotional, and academic development through middle childhood. Recognizing the unique needs of 9 to 12 year-olds is important in keeping them engaged. Meaningful programs for this age group can support their transition to youth, when they face new expectations and challenges.</p>

funding the system

Children's Services' operating budget comes from three sources: funding from the City of Toronto; funding from the Province of Ontario; and user fees.

USER FEES

\$19 million of Children's Services' budget comes from user fees. These fees are the payments made by families who receive a partial fee subsidy for child care.

\$19
million

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

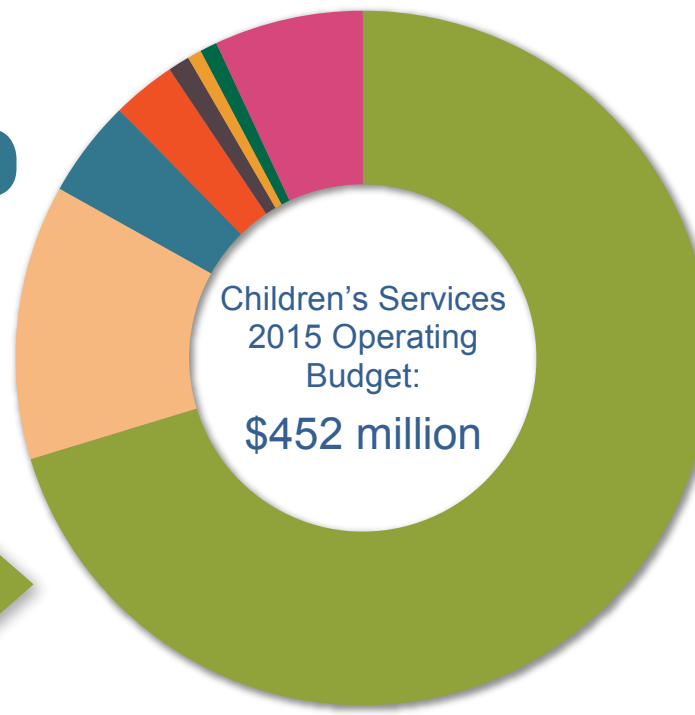
Almost three quarters of Children's Services' budget comes from the Province of Ontario. In 2015, the Province will transfer \$329 million to the City of Toronto for services related to children and families. Recently, provincial legislation gave more authority to each municipality to decide how to best allocate this funding to address local needs.

\$329
million

CITY OF TORONTO

The City of Toronto contributes \$104 million dollars towards the total budget of Children's Services. Approximately \$77 million comes from annual property taxes, and \$27 million comes from the reserve funds, and other sources.

\$104
million



How we spend it:

- Fee subsidy (\$318 million)
- Child care base funding (\$58 million)
- Provincial wage enhancements (\$20.4 million)
- Special needs support (\$13.4 million)
- Other program support (\$4.5 million)
- Capital (\$3 million)
- Family support programs (\$3.6 million)
- Administration (\$31.4 million)

determining child care demand and growth

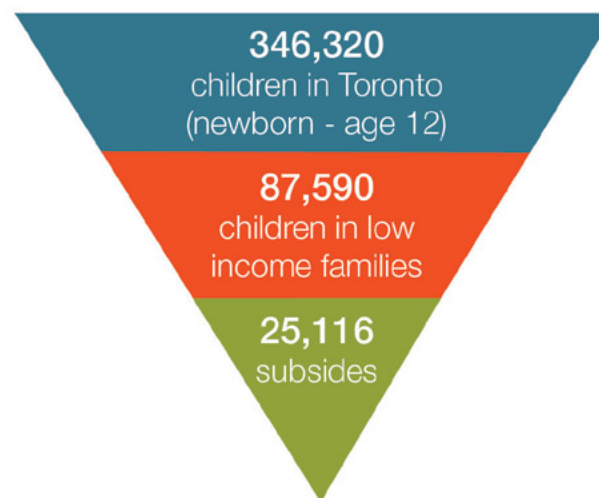
Toronto Children's Services is responsible for planning and managing the second largest child care system in Canada, after the Province of Quebec. Understanding and predicting demand for licensed and regulated child care is necessary for planning the system. Some factors that are used to determine demand include: women's participation in the work force; income levels; population forecasts; and birth rate. All of these methods have limitations. Regardless of the method used, we know that the current supply of licensed child care in Toronto is nowhere near adequate. Over the past two years, through a comprehensive survey of over 6,000 families, we consistently heard that the most significant issues that families face in finding licensed child care is the lack of availability and cost.

In Toronto, where 25 per cent of children live in low-income households, there is additional demand for assistance to help cover the cost of licensed child care. There are 25,116 fee subsidies currently available to help eligible families with this cost. The current supply of subsidies only meets the needs of 7 per cent of the child population from newborn to age 12, or 29 per cent of children living in poverty. There are currently 16,802 children on the waitlist for a subsidy.⁵

Increasing both the physical space and the number of fee subsidies available is critical. In order to demonstrate the magnitude of growth needed in Toronto, we have outlined a number of scenarios, focusing on growth in fee subsidies. Of course, these scenarios would require even greater growth in licensed child care spaces to serve families that are not eligible for fee subsidy.

64,700
licensed and regulated
child care spaces
can only accommodate

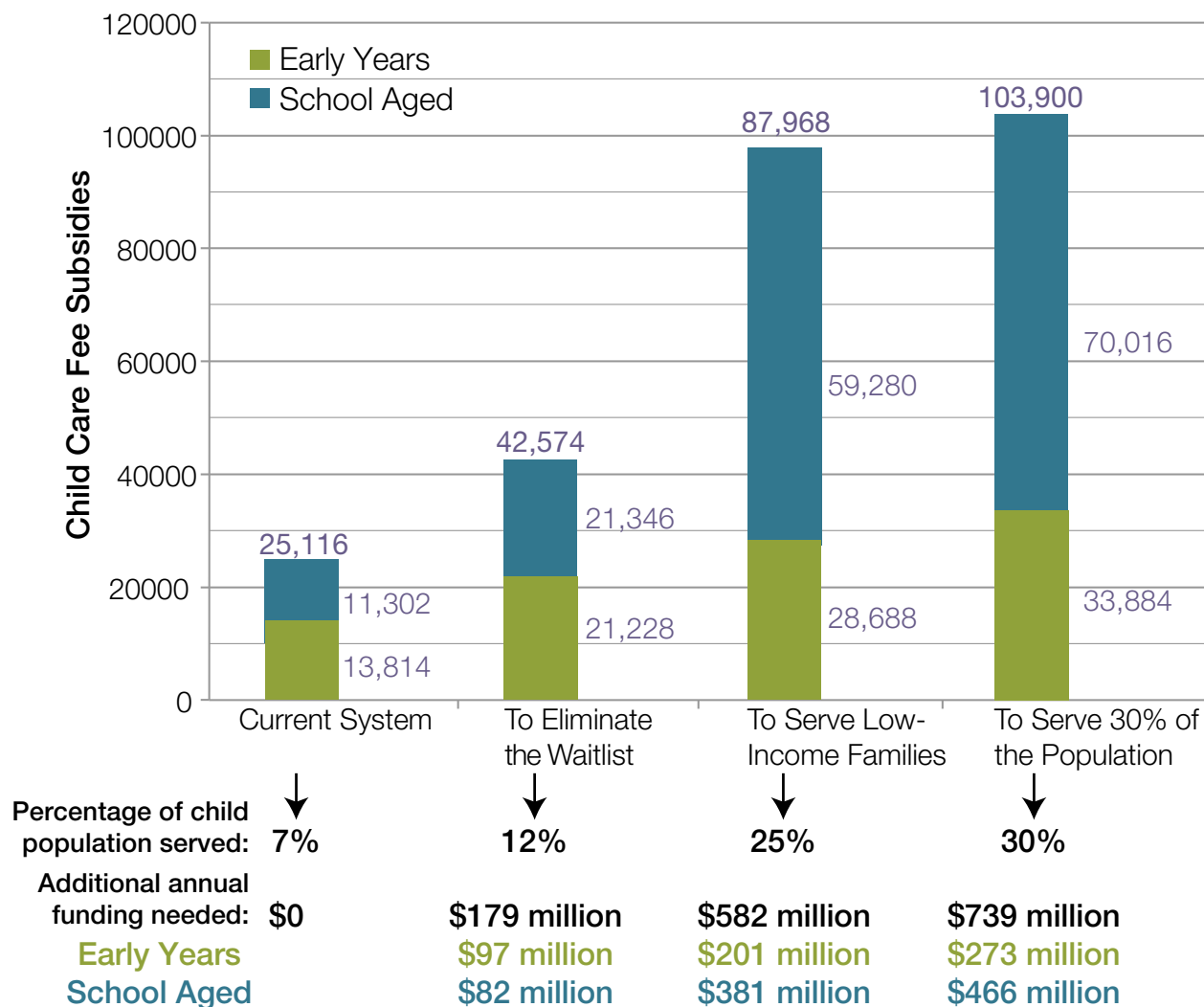
19% **of children from**
newborn to age
12 in toronto



⁵ This number represents waitlist data from Jan 8, 2015

financial implications of growth

This graph illustrates hypothetical benchmarks based on the current child population. For the purposes of these benchmarks, we are focusing on child care fee subsidies. Though this is not reflected in the graph, this would also require corresponding growth in child care spaces.



Due to the high cost of child care, many families need a fee subsidy, not just those who are low income. It is a modest assumption that at least 30% of families need a fee subsidy.

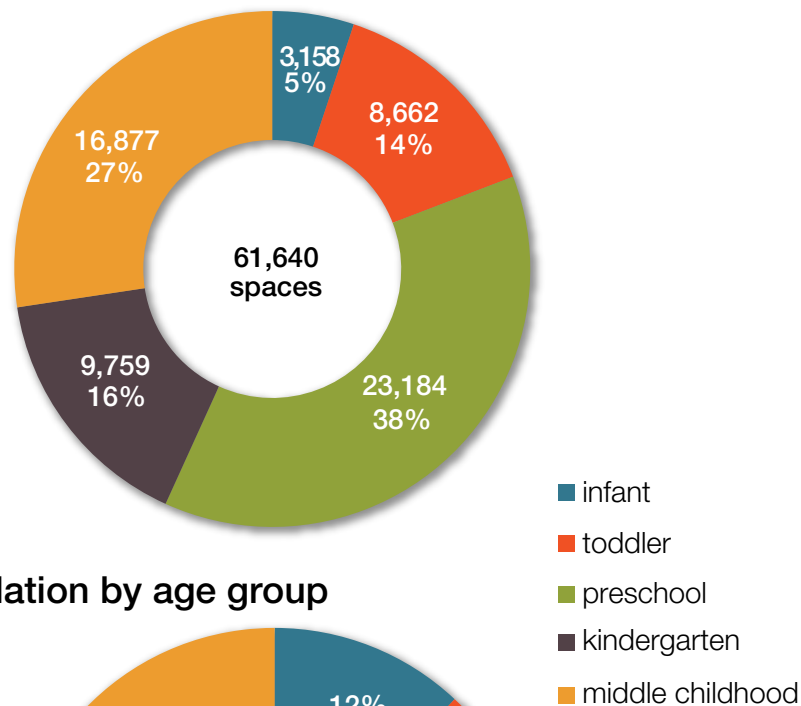
early learning and care

Early learning and child care is central to our work. Toronto's current system includes 946 child care centres and 19 home child care agencies, together offering approximately 64,700 licensed child care spaces. Approximately 69 per cent of licensed programs are operated by non-profit organizations, 25 per cent by commercial businesses, and 6 per cent by the City.

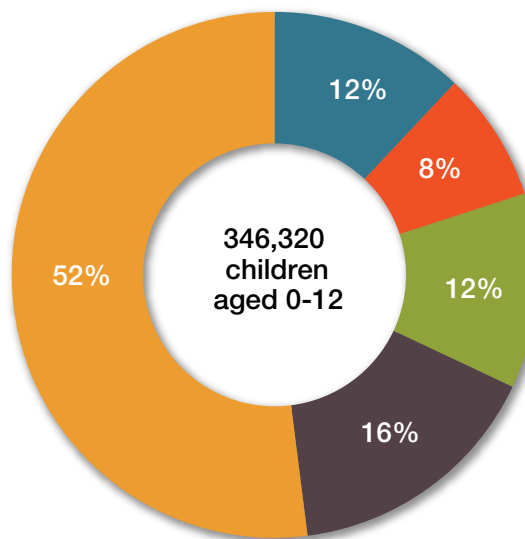
Over the last five years, child care spaces in licensed centres grew by 16 per cent, from 53,203 to 61,640. While any increase is positive, combined with Home Child Care, the system can only serve 19 per cent of the child population from newborn to age 12. Given the limited capacity of Toronto's licensed child care system, a significant unlicensed (informal) sector exists in Toronto. Unlicensed care is not regulated and is not required to meet provincial or municipal standards. The City's priority is growth in the licensed sector.

It is important to note that access to a child care space can vary significantly from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. Some parts of the city have better access than others as a result of decisions made prior to amalgamation. Historically, there has been greater child care capacity in the downtown core. With the slow growth of the system, newer communities have not been able to achieve the same access to child care. Capital planning must take this into consideration.

Licensed centre-based child care spaces by age group



Child population by age group



infant/toddler/preschool programs

Licensed child care for the early years – children up to age 4, including infants, toddlers, and preschoolers – is provided through centre-based care or by a home child care provider who has a contract with a licensed home child care agency.

Child care centres that serve the early years have undergone significant change over the past five years. As four and five year olds moved to full-day kindergarten (FDK), many child care operators adapted their service model to match demand by serving younger children. Since 2010, 3,942 preschool spaces have closed or transitioned to kindergarten spaces as a result of FDK. Recognizing the need to increase spaces for infants and toddlers, Children's Services and the Province provided capital funding to operators to reconfigure the spaces left vacant by kindergarten children. This resulted in an increase of 535 infant and 2,343 toddler spaces since 2010.

As of January 2015, the licensed child care system included:

- 269 centres providing 3,158 infant spaces:
serving 7 per cent of infants or 1 space for every 13 infants
- 523 centres providing 8,662 toddler spaces:
serving 31 per cent of toddlers or 1 space for every 3 toddlers
- 787 centres that provide 23,184 preschool spaces:
serving 55 per cent of preschoolers or 1 space for every 2 preschoolers



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

There is an ongoing shortage of child care for infants and toddlers in Toronto. Despite a modest increase over the last five years, there are not nearly enough subsidized infant spaces to meet demand across the city. For example, 26 per cent of children (or 4,349 children) on the fee subsidy wait list are infants, despite making up only 12 per cent of the child population. In some wards, there are not enough spaces to accommodate the number of subsidies available to infants in that ward. One of the main causes of this shortage is the high cost of maintaining infant vacancies. This risk is a major disincentive to child care providers to develop infant spaces. Children's Services needs to consider capital strategies and other mechanisms to support the growth and viability of infant child care.

★ See action 3 (pg. 56)

capital strategy for infants and toddlers

Increasing the licensed child care capacity in Toronto is a priority for Children's Services over the next five years. A comprehensive Capital Strategy has been created that documents potential resources available to Children's Services and identifies targets that we will strive to achieve over the next five years. The Capital Strategy can be found at toronto.ca/children/serviceplan.

The municipal resources available to Children's Services to increase licensed child care spaces include the financial commitment made in Children's Services 10-year capital plan, which is supported by development charges, Section 37 agreements, and reserve funds. Additional resources are available through provincial funding under the Early Learning Transition Capital Funding Grant (ELT) for the transition to full-day kindergarten and the Schools First Child Care Capital Retrofit funding, which will create 490 spaces in schools. In addition, the provincial funding formula allows for flexibility to redirect operating funds to capital projects.

Children's Services actively pursues partnerships with other City divisions and partners who are planning expansions or capital developments. For example, opportunities in new service hubs and partnerships with school boards and Toronto Community Housing are regularly explored. This helps to address the issue of lack of physical space to develop in Toronto and reduces the cost of development.

As previously identified, a primary focus of the capital strategy will be on creating licensed spaces for infants and toddlers (from newborn to age 3). As a starting point, we will prioritize

wards where the number of fee subsidies available for infants and toddlers is greater than the number of available spaces. We know that as a general rule, families prefer child care close to home. Neighbourhoods within an identified ward will be targeted to improve access to child care where it is most needed. Once we take into account any new spaces that have already been planned and committed to, there is a need for an additional 451 licensed spaces (363 infant and 88 toddler spaces) to align the number subsidies targeted for infants and toddlers in a ward with the number of spaces available.

This is a minimum growth scenario recognizing that the demand for increased spaces is even greater given the needs of families who are not in receipt of a child care fee subsidy. While this target will not address the insufficient supply of child care in Toronto, the City cannot build a child care system through the property tax base alone. In order to meet the needs of Toronto's families, all orders of government must commit to a long-term child care strategy.

By the numbers:

FIVE-YEAR EXPANSION TARGET

490 Schools First

100 Capital Plan
commitments

310 Section 37 and
other capital

200 Early Learning
Transition

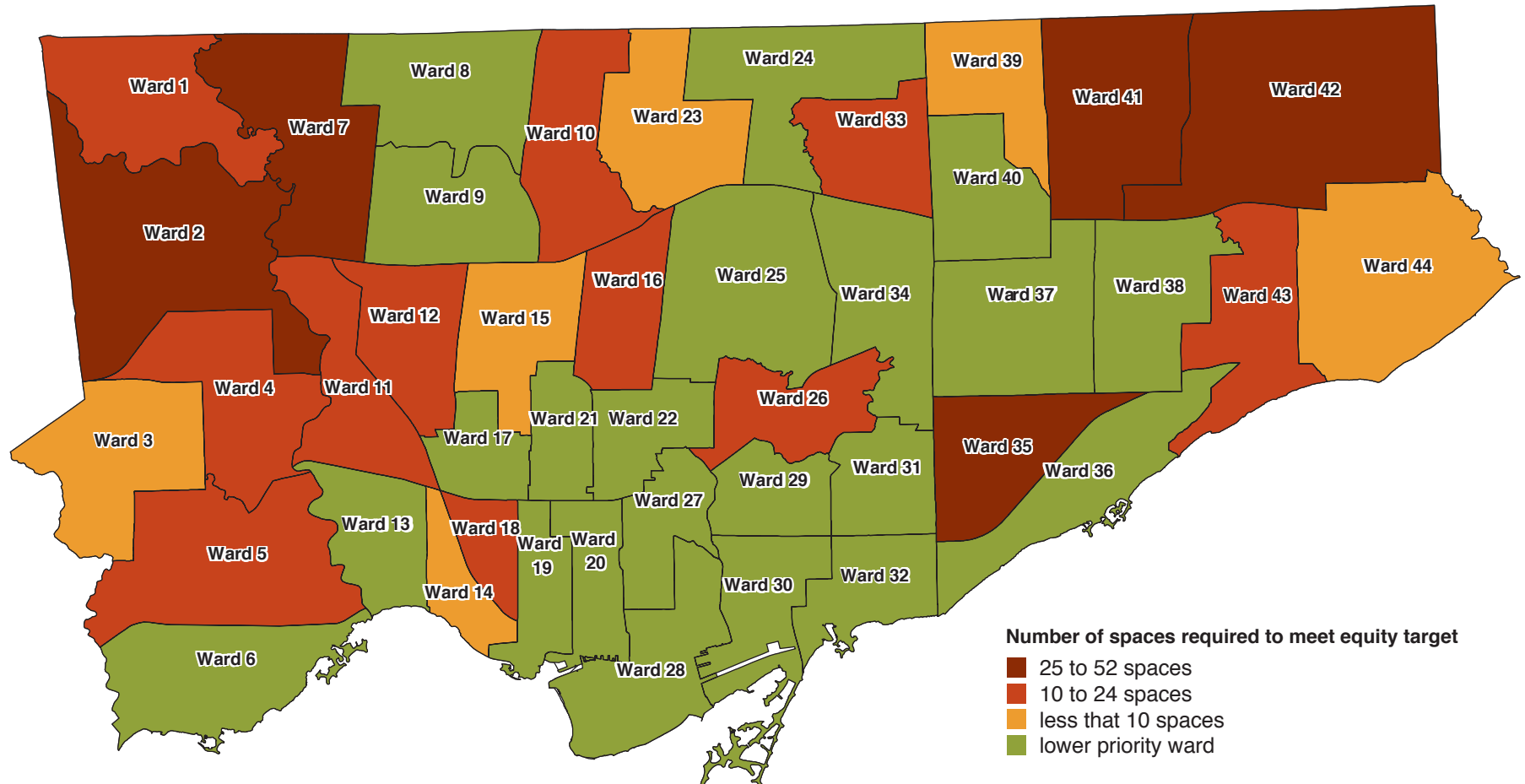
451 additional spaces

**Total: 1,551 infant &
toddler spaces**

★ See actions 2 (pg. 56); 3 (pg. 56); 6 (pg. 56); 20 (pg. 58); 31 (pg. 60)

Ward priority for capital investments

The map below prioritizes the wards that require capital investment in infant and toddler spaces to meet the needs of families in receipt of a child care fee subsidy in the ward.



kindergarten programs

As of September 2014, full-day kindergarten (FDK) is available to four and five year-olds in every elementary school in Toronto. FDK is a play-based educational program, with a blended staff model that includes both a certified teacher and a registered early childhood educator (RECE). A publicly-funded full-day early learning program, supported by a strong child care sector, has obvious benefits on child outcomes and poverty reduction. School boards are also mandated to provide extended before- and after-school programs at schools where there is sufficient demand – i.e. interest from the families of at least 20 kindergarten children – and board capacity. This is intended to extend learning and provide a seamless day for children who require care outside of regular school hours. In Toronto, with the exception of one program operated by a school board, this new model of before- and after-school care is run by third-party child care providers.

Over the past five years, Children's Services has worked with school boards, child care providers, and families to support the transition to FDK. There are now 280 kindergarten before- and after-school programs, with the capacity to serve over 8,200 children. There continue to be 85 licensed child care programs serving 1,559 kindergarten children that have yet to transition to the new model of before- and after-school care. Most are located outside of schools. In total:

- 365 programs providing over 9,759 spaces:
serving 18 per cent of
kindergarteners or 1 space
for every 6 children



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Now that FDK is in every school, the expectation that Children's Services and school boards will work together has grown. However, there are few formal structures in place for sharing space and resources between schools and child care programs. Clarifying roles and responsibilities would help to build a culture of cohesion and create a seamless experience for children.



The current process of assessing demand for before- and after-school programs through family surveys has not been effective at identifying the true demand. Joint planning and data sharing between school boards, principals, Children's Services, and child care providers would help to determine where programs are needed.

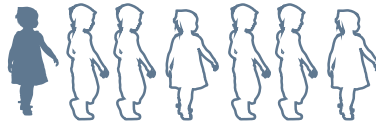
Now that kindergarten is available for the full day, many families only require part time care during the hours before and after school. The cost of care has substantially decreased by approximately \$12 to \$24 per day. These cost savings have presented an opportunity for Children's Services to review, invest, and expand service levels across the system.

★ See actions 4 (pg. 56); 6 (pg. 56); 20 (pg. 58)

middle childhood programs

“Middle childhood” refers to children aged 6-12 (in grades 1-6). There are different options for children in this age group to receive care in out-of-school-time⁶ programs including licensed child care and authorized recreational and skill building programs.^{xxxii} These include programs offered by Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation (PFR), such as 38 After-school Recreation Care (ARC) programs, and five Community Leadership After-School Programs (CLASP) for youth aged 10-15. Currently, there are 463 licensed child care programs, 55 programs run by PFR, and 146 community recreation programs serving this age group. In total:

- 664 programs providing 25,145 spaces:
serving 14 per cent of children
aged 6-12 or 1 space for
every 7 children



There are also 34 summer camps funded by Children’s Services, with a capacity to serve approximately 2,900 children.

Lack of access to middle childhood programs is an acute issue across the city. Through numerous consultation initiatives, middle childhood programs were identified as a top priority. This is a particularly significant issue for newcomer families and families with older children (9 to 12 years). Data demonstrates that the uptake of child care fee subsidy decreases steadily for older children.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The *Toronto Middle Childhood Strategy* and implementation plan describe the program options for this age group. There are many different service providers, funders, and stakeholders. This causes fragmentation in service planning for this age group. We need a more coordinated approach to increase the availability of affordable out-of-school-time programs, particularly in areas that are underserved. High quality across all types of programs can be achieved through shared standards of practice.

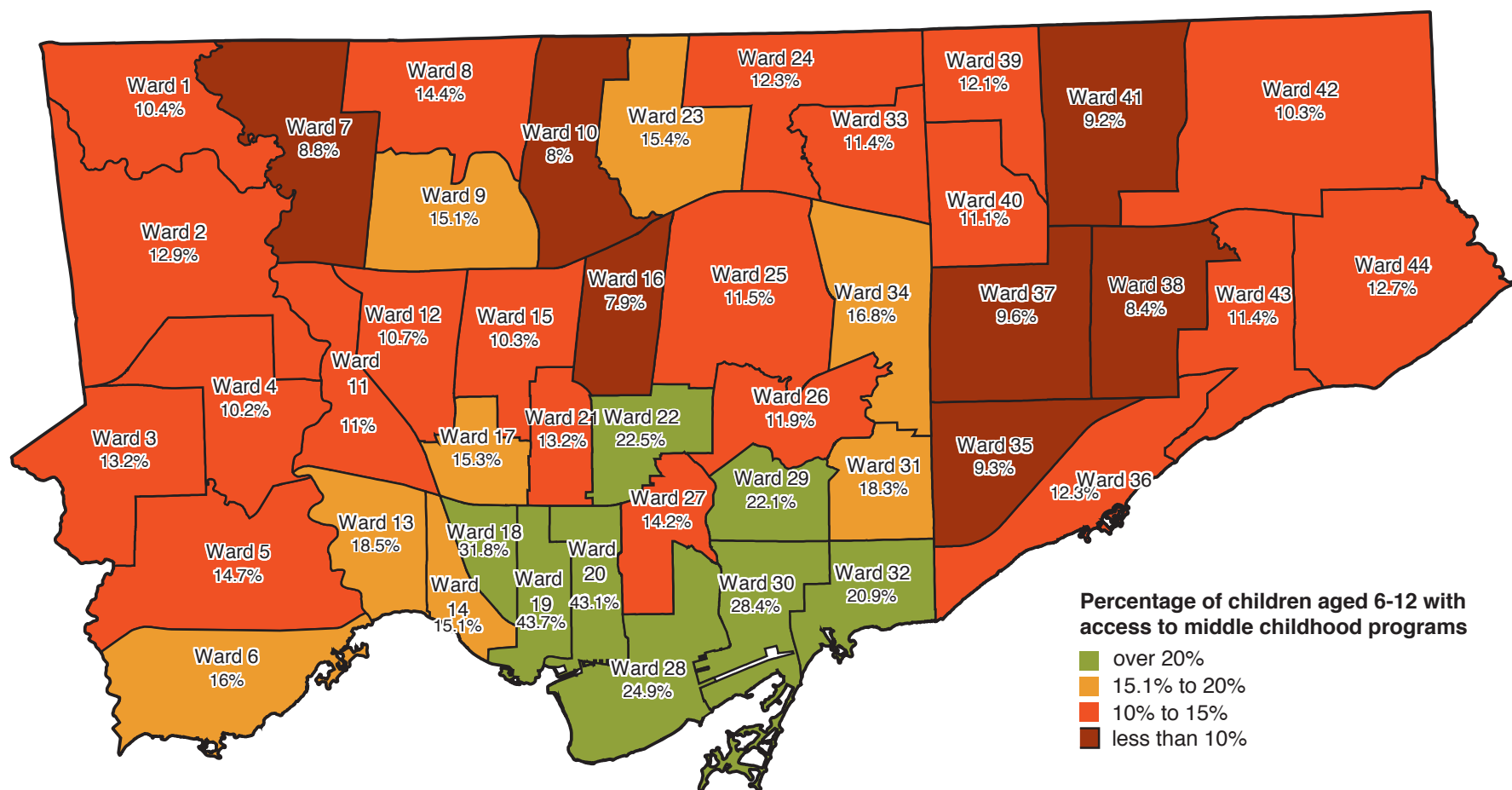
The needs of children aged 6-12 are not always met in licensed child care. Through new regulations, the *Child Care and Early Years Act* will provide clarity around exceptions to licensing for authorized recreation programs. With this clarity, we need to develop program models across this age continuum that are engaging, physically active, and developmentally appropriate, particularly for older children (age 9-12). Developmentally-appropriate programs help older children with the transition to youth.

★ See actions 5 (pg. 56); 20 (pg. 58); 26 (pg. 59)

⁶ “Out-of-school-time” includes before- and after-school, summer holidays, March Break, professional activity days, and other school holidays

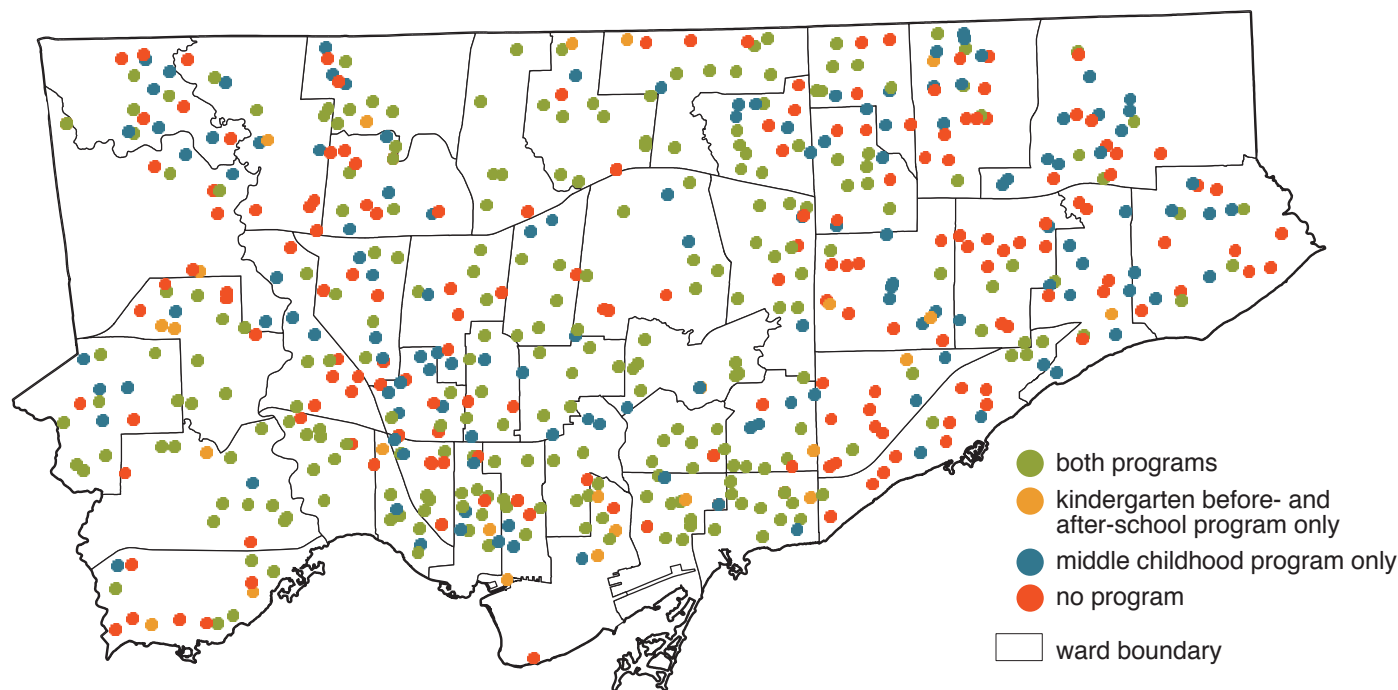
middle childhood programs

Access to middle childhood programs by ward



There are many schools without kindergarten before- and after-school and middle childhood programs. In these cases, families must find alternative arrangements, often outside of the regulated system. It is a priority for Children's Services to provide continuity for children by developing programs for middle childhood in schools that have kindergarten before- and after-school programs. In Toronto, families consistently affirm that schools are their preferred location for programs for school-aged children. Similar to kindergarten, amendments to the Education Act will require school boards to provide an "extended day" program for children in grades 1-6 in schools, wherever there is demand. As this requirement is implemented, Children's Services must continue to help service providers with the transition.

Schools with before- and after-school programs



By the numbers:

48% of schools have a kindergarten before- and after-school program

66% of schools have a middle childhood program

43% of schools have both programs

30% of schools have neither program

home child care

Licensed child care is available for children in approved private homes across Toronto. Approximately 3,100 children ranging from newborn to 12 years old receive care in 1,100 homes. These homes are contracted through 19 licensed home child care agencies, including one agency operated by Children's Services, called Toronto Home Child Care (THCC). Families may choose home-based care for a number of reasons, but it is particularly vital for families who work shifts, part-time or irregular hours, as home providers may have more flexibility to adapt to families' schedules.

Ten of the 19 home child care agencies have a service contract with Children's Services to provide care to children who receive a fee subsidy. Of all 3,100 children served by those agencies, 88 per cent receive a fee subsidy. Of those, 11 per cent are infants, 15 per cent toddlers, 15 per cent preschoolers, 19 per cent kindergarteners, and 40 per cent middle childhood. Home child care agencies with a contract also receive support through an annual assessment process by Children's Services to assist them in identifying opportunities for quality improvement and professional development within the home setting.



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Many home child care providers lack stability and are struggling to remain financially viable. This has been exacerbated by the financial impacts related to the implementation of FDK, as the income generated from providing kindergarten care decreased from full-time to part-time. Children's Services recognizes the need to support home child care and to work with home child care agencies to review their role within the changing landscape of licensed child care. A review will include an examination of rate structures and payment guidelines to support the financial viability of agencies and individual providers.

Home child care must be an equally accessible option for all families. Children's Services will explore how to strengthen the capacity of home child care to provide extra support for children with special needs and cultural programming for Aboriginal, French-language, or newcomer groups.

The safety and quality of home child care is vital. The new Child Care and Early Years Act includes changes to both the total number of children, and the number of children based on age that can be cared for in each home. As the service system manager, Children's Services will ensure that any changes are made in a locally-responsive way that maintains the safety and quality of home-based care in Toronto.

★ See actions 11 (pg. 57); 25 (pg. 59)

toronto early learning and child care services (TELCCS)

Children's Services directly operates 52 child care centres with the capacity to serve 2,794 children. We also operate one licensed home child care agency – Toronto Home Child Care (THCC) – which contracts with 197 home providers who serve approximately 725 children. While TELCCS and THCC serve all age groups, together they serve approximately 396 infants, representing 13 per cent of infant care in Toronto.

TELCCS programs are located across the city, with a mandate to target communities that are underserved and to support families that face multiple challenges. Approximately 68 per cent of children enrolled in TELCCS programs come from lone-parent families, and 95 per cent receive a child care fee subsidy. For those families in receipt of a fee subsidy, the median income is \$20,432 versus a Toronto median household income of \$58,381. There are 15 TELCCS centres located in or adjacent to Toronto Community Housing. TELCCS also works with Shelter, Support & Housing Administration to provide immediate child care to families in the shelter system.

TELCCS also draws on its extensive experience to support community child care providers. It supports non-profit service providers in need of operational and crisis support by providing staff resources and leadership assistance.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

TELCCS and THCC are in a unique position to support families and communities that face more acute vulnerabilities. To this end, there may be opportunities to implement research initiatives that measure the impacts of child care on life-long outcomes, family well-being, and community development. Through pilot projects, TELCCS and THCC are in the position to test new policies and methods of service delivery to help address diverse challenges that many families face. Children's Services will continue to explore how we can leverage TELCCS and THCC programs to support child and family well-being in targeted communities and across Toronto more broadly.

★ See action 34 (pg. 60)

By the numbers:

TELCCS

**52 child care centres,
with capacity to serve:**

- 344 infants
- 600 toddlers
- 1,229 preschoolers
- 230 kindergarteners
- 391 middle childhood

THCC

- 197 home providers
serving 725 children

aboriginal child care

Aboriginal Peoples are the experts on the cultural and political landscapes of their own communities, including urban Aboriginal communities. Children's Services works with First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people living in Toronto, to understand and address the ongoing impacts of colonialism. This includes the intergenerational impacts of residential schools and child apprehension. The Aboriginal Advisory and Planning Committee of the Child and Family Network guides our decision-making and initiates community-based research projects.

There are two Aboriginal child care and three Aboriginal Head Start programs, operated by Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST). The Scarborough Child and Family Life Centre provides child care for up to 56 children from newborn to age 6. It is a model "Child and Family Centre" (see pg. 21) with a variety of cultural programming. Gizhaadaawgamik provides a before- and after-school program for up to 20 kindergarten children. Head Start, funded by the federal government, focuses on the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of Aboriginal children, while supporting their families. Busing participants to the program has contributed to its success, and its 48 spaces are consistently full.

Over the last five years, Gizhaadaawgamik closed its preschool and middle childhood programs. Two other Aboriginal child care centres – Kiiwednong and Awashisuck – also closed due to low enrolment. Children's Services has been working closely with NCFST to ensure the ongoing viability of the remaining culturally-specific child care programs. In this partnership, we have successfully implemented a number of stabilization strategies, including dedicated resources for cultural programming and targeting the placement of Aboriginal families.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

While there is demand for culturally-specific child care, many Aboriginal families face barriers in accessing it. The closure of four programs over the last five years provides insight into the challenges that prevent Aboriginal families from enrolling in available programs. These include: the lack of culturally-targeted outreach; difficulty navigating the system; and fee subsidy eligibility. Further, the Aboriginal population is dispersed across Toronto, making it difficult for programs to remain viable in any one neighbourhood. Building on the success of strategies used with NCFST, Children's Services needs to explore longer-term methods of increasing access to Aboriginal child care that are responsive to community realities (i.e. targeting areas where Aboriginal families use other services). At the same time as supporting culturally-specific programs, we can also enhance relevant programming for Aboriginal families across Toronto by infusing cultural competency within non-Aboriginal child and family services across the system.

Toronto Children's Services gratefully acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation and home to many diverse Aboriginal peoples

★ See actions 11 (pg. 57); 12 (pg. 57); 18 (pg. 58)

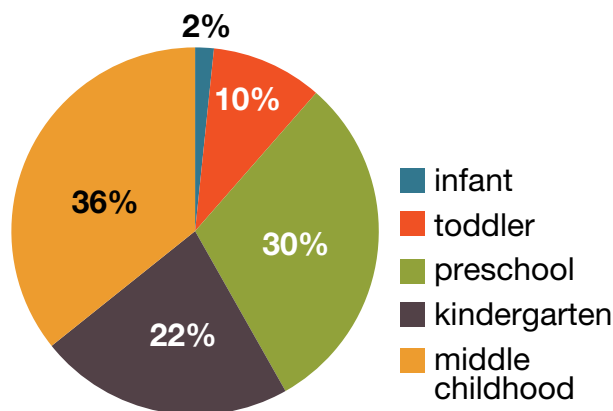
french-language child care

French-language families can access licensed child care in exclusively French speaking environments in locations throughout the city. There are 22 licensed French-language child care centres across Toronto, including three commercial and 19 non-profit centres. Together, these centres have a capacity to serve 1,581 children – an increase of 541 spaces over the last five years. These spaces make up 2.6 per cent of available centre-based child care in Toronto. French-language families currently access less than 1 per cent of available fee subsidies (or 224 subsidies).

With the exception of one centre, all French-language child care is located in a French-language elementary school. There are 18 French-language elementary schools in Toronto, operated by the Conseil scolaire Viamonde (public) and the Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud (Catholic).

Children's Services provides support to licensed French-language child care providers through one dedicated Children's Services Consultant, two bilingual Quality Assessment Analysts, and two Special Needs Resource Educators (SNRs). These SNRs are contracted through the Centre Francophone, a key partner that provides a range of services and programs to the French-language community in Toronto.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE CHILD CARE SPACES BY AGE GROUP



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

French-language families lack access to infant and toddler care. Despite growth in French-language child care, there are only 26 infant and 155 toddler spaces available. New spaces must be developed in new centres, home child care providers or schools, in order to address the needs of families. At the same time, options for a French-language child and family centre will need to be explored with service providers and families, given the limited family services in French, geographic location of schools, and the dispersal of the population across Toronto.

The recruitment and retention of qualified RECEs is especially challenging for French-language programs. While French-language school boards had FDK previous to its implementation across the province, it is a new staffing requirement that all classrooms have an RECE. This has put added strain on an

already limited workforce. Further, French-language service providers lack sufficient training and professional development delivered in French to stay informed of changes in the sector and to advance quality. Children's Services needs to target efforts towards supporting the French-language workforce.

★ See actions 13 (pg. 57); 17 (pg. 58); 36 (pg. 60)

the cost of care

Licensed child care in Toronto is expensive. According to recent research comparing public fees for infant, toddler, and preschool care across large Canadian cities, Toronto has the highest average public fees. The median family income in Toronto is \$58,381. When compared to the median annual cost of licensed child care (see table), it's clear that child care is unaffordable for many families.

Fees for infant care are the highest, ranging from \$48 to \$106 per day, due to the higher ratio of staff to children, equipment costs, and physical environment needs. Fees for kindergarten and middle childhood are lowest, as care is only provided for part of the day, when children are not in school.

Children's Services assists with the cost of child care in a number of ways. One of the most significant ways we can help families afford child care is through the fee subsidy program. We also provide "base funding" directly to child care providers, which helps offset the cost to all families.

Despite both of these funding mechanisms, the system remains vastly underfunded. We continue to prioritize investments in child care that support access and affordability for families.

By the numbers:

AGE GROUP	MEDIAN ANNUAL COST
Infant	\$20,619
Toddler	\$15,921
Preschool	\$12,006
Kindergarten	\$8,091
Middle Childhood	\$5,664

Children's Services funds child care in three ways:

Funding the family:
Fee subsidy

Funding the service provider: Base funding

Funding the system:
Planning, policy, capital, and transition funding

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY

The fee subsidy program – which is managed and administered by Children’s Services – helps families in financial need. There are currently 25,116 subsidies available in Toronto. This is an increase of 1,116 subsidies over the last five years. The fee subsidy program is fluid with children moving in and out on a regular basis. In 2014, approximately 34,963 children from 24,516 families benefitted from a fee subsidy. There are 16,802 children on the waitlist for a fee subsidy.

To be eligible for a child care fee subsidy, families must live in Toronto and parents/guardians must be employed, in school, or in a training program. However, there can be exemptions for families in special circumstances. Families can also appeal a decision about their eligibility. A provincially-mandated test is used to calculate the amount of child care fee subsidy a family qualifies for, based on their income and the number of children they have in care. Currently, 55 per cent of families with a fee subsidy are subsidized for the full cost of care. The other 45 per cent receive a partial fee subsidy and are responsible for paying the remainder of the cost. This is referred to as the “parent contribution” or “user fee”.



child care fee subsidy

Fee subsidies are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. However, since there are a limited number available, the following methods are used to distribute subsidies:

- **Ward of residence:** Each City ward is assigned a percentage of the available fee subsidies based on the proportion of Toronto's low-income children that live in the ward. The purpose of this **ward equity target** is to provide eligible families with equitable access to a subsidy regardless of where they live.
- **Age of child:** Within each ward, fee subsidies are further distributed by age. These **age targets** are meant to create pathways for children to move through the system, based on how long a child spends in each age group. They also take into account factors such as the cost of care for each age group and other options available (i.e. authorized middle childhood programs).

Once allocated a subsidy, a family can use it at any program that has a fee subsidy service contract with Children's Services. We have contracts with 661 child care centres (almost 70 per cent of licensed centres) and 10 home child care agencies (53 per cent of agencies).

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Due to complex factors, it has been challenging to keep each ward within its assigned equity target for fee subsidies. When wards are using more than their allocated ward equity target, this infringes on the number of subsidies available to families in other wards. For this reason, Children's Services strives to bring each ward to within 10 per cent of its equity target. One of the most important factors is the availability of child care spaces within the ward, where families can use their subsidy. Children's Services recognizes the need for new strategies to meet ward equity targets, including increasing service contracts and investing in capital development. At the same time as examining strategies to improve equity at a ward level, Children's Services needs to explore similar mechanisms to improve equitable access to fee subsidies at a neighbourhood level.

★ See actions 1, 2, 6 (pg. 56)

By the numbers:

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY

39% of children in child care received a fee subsidy in 2014

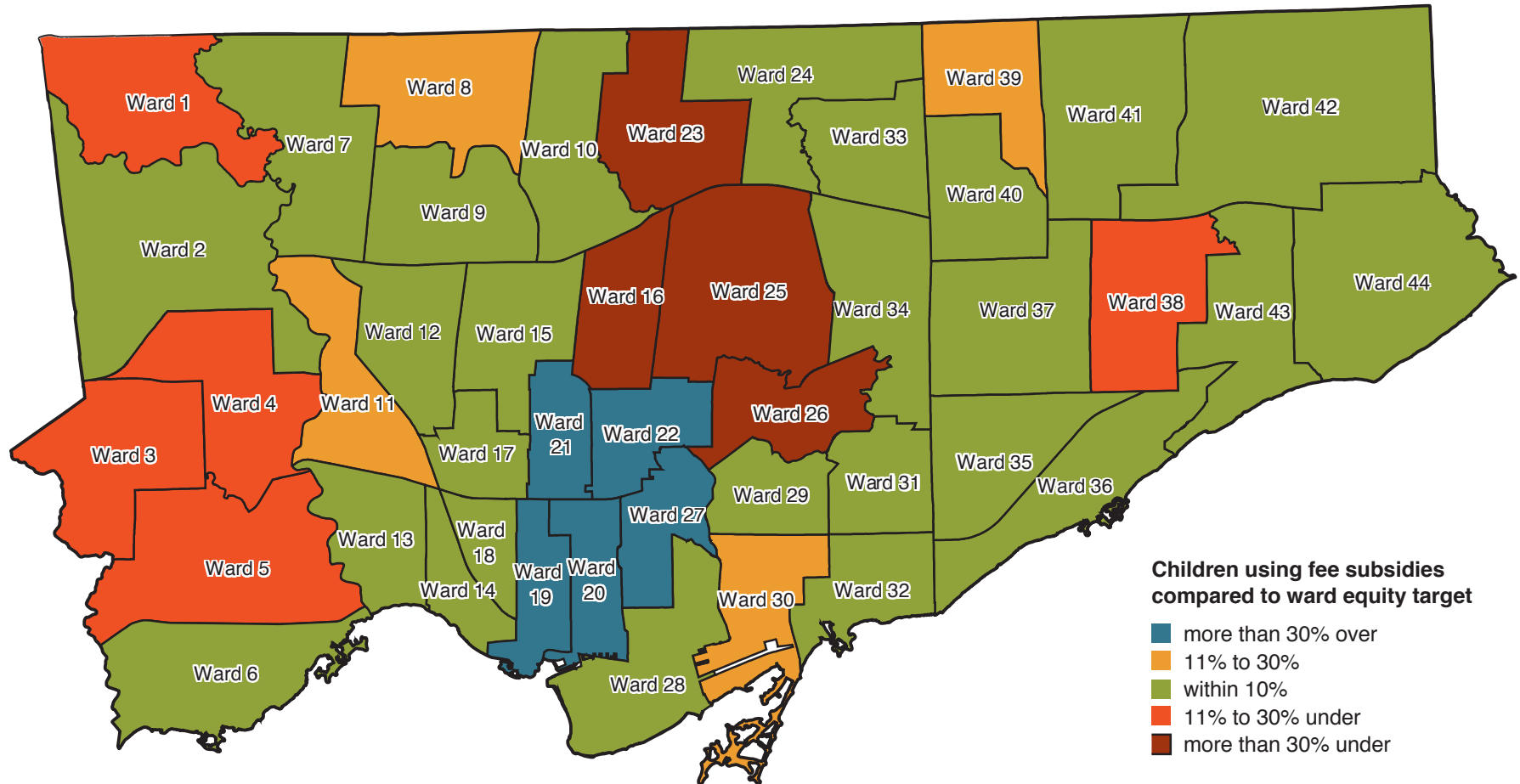
There are enough subsidies for 7% of the child population

23% of families with a subsidy are Ontario Works recipients

65% of subsidies are used by lone-parent families

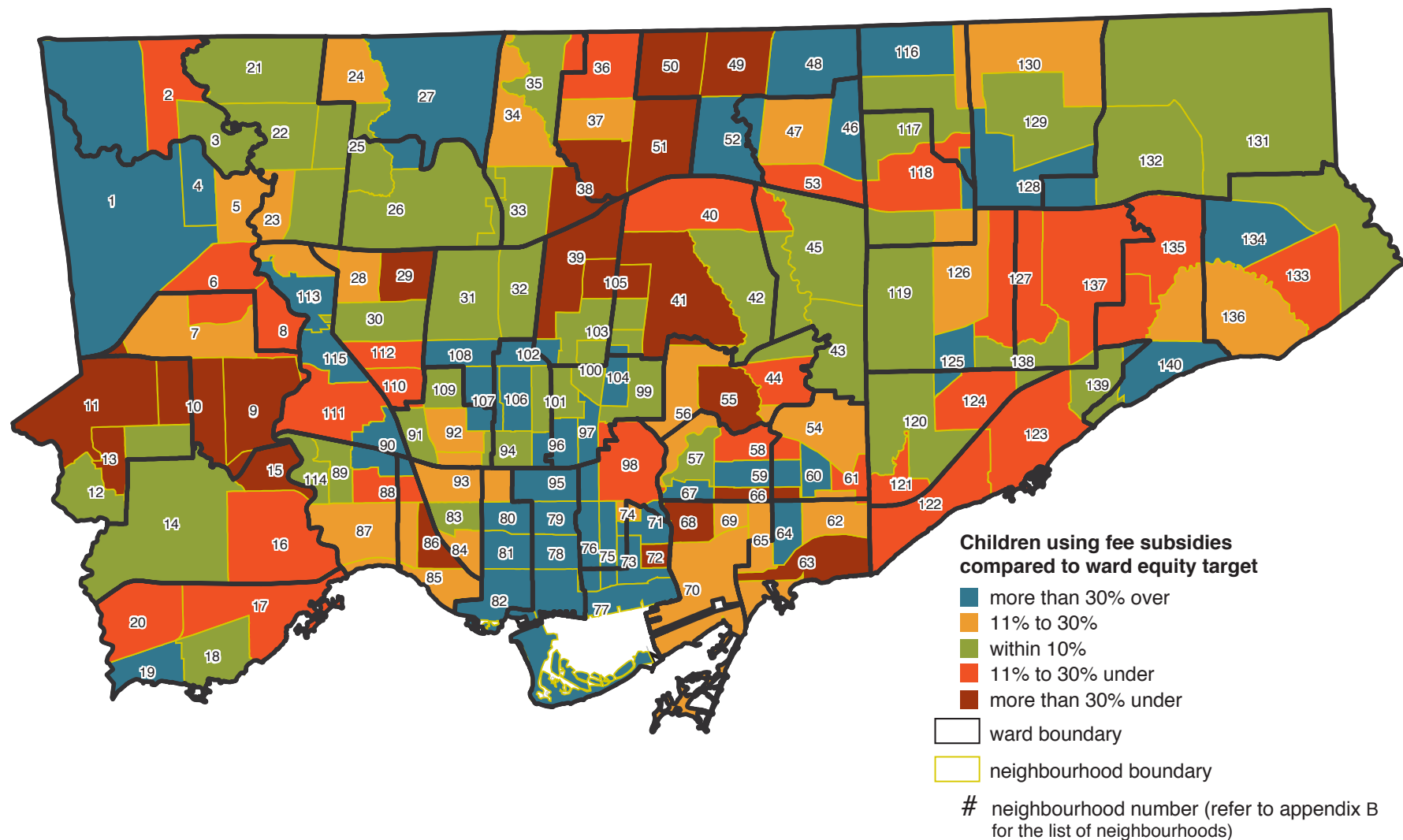
The median annual income of a lone-parent family with a subsidy is \$17,561 and a two-parent family is \$32,596

Fee subsidies used in each ward compared to its ward equity target



care care fee subsidy

Fee subsidies used in each neighbourhood compared to its equity target
(using the ward equity formula applied to neighbourhoods)



child care funding model

While fee subsidies are targeted to individual families, base funding is provided directly to licensed child care providers to help offset the cost of operating programs and reduce the cost to families. The child care funding model defines how Children's Services allocates and administers this funding to child care providers.

Historically, the criteria for distributing funding has been cumbersome, complex, and ultimately inequitable to child care providers. With the introduction of a new and more flexible Provincial funding framework in 2012, Children's Services has been given an opportunity to develop a new child care funding model for Toronto. In consultation with the child care community, we set out to develop a new model that reflects the local context, stabilizes the child care system, begins to rebalance equity, and supports access and affordability for families. The intent is to establish a more equitable, consistent, and accountable formula for distributing funding, without reducing current funding for any service providers, assuming their program offerings remain unchanged.

To find out more about the new funding model, including the full report on stakeholder engagement towards its development, visit: toronto.ca/children/fundingmodel.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The funding model provides a framework for addressing the historical inequities in the system with respect to funding in such areas as salaries, training, and geographic location, setting the stage for focused growth in the public and not for profit sector.

Some child care providers are concerned about the impacts that the new funding model will have on their operations. Service providers have faced unprecedented changes to the system over the last five years, and are still adapting to new expectations and responsibilities. Children's Services recognizes the need to implement the new funding model in a way that provides child care providers with time and resources to transition to the new model without impacting service levels.

The goal of the new funding model is to continue to ensure access to care for our most vulnerable families, while supporting providers and addressing, to the extent possible, affordability for families. It should be noted that the majority of child care costs go towards staff wages. However, the child care workforce continues to be underpaid. Through the new funding model, Children's Services will recognize the need for strategies and methods that offset the cost of child care without lowering wages.

★ See actions 22 (pg. 59); 23 (pg. 59); 36 (pg. 60)

the child and family sector workforce

A skilled, knowledgeable, and stable workforce is critical to the quality of the child and family system, and therefore to the benefits that children and families experience as a result. The workforce includes Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and support staff in licensed child care, home visitors working for a licensed agency, family support professionals, and program supervisors and directors. We have consistently heard from service providers that job satisfaction is closely linked to being able to have a positive impact on children and families. Children's Services can help to provide the right conditions for staff to focus on impactful programming by supporting fair

compensation, good working conditions, and professional learning, and by streamlining administrative responsibilities.

Historically, compensation in the sector has been low. The establishment of the College of RECEs is helping to professionalize and raise the profile of the sector.^{xxxiv} However, low wages continue to detract from recruitment and retention. In licensed child care programs in Toronto, RECE wages range considerably, from \$11.74 to \$43.67 per hour.⁷ The differences can be attributed to a number of factors, including whether a program is public, non-profit, or commercial, as well as historic inequities in the distribution of wage subsidy grants.



⁷ This range is reflective of the 2015 budgets for child care centres that have a fee subsidy agreement with Children's Services

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

At the beginning of 2015, the provincial government announced a wage enhancement program for child care staff, which will be administered in Toronto by Children's Services. Between the wage enhancement and the new child care funding model, there are compensation supports being implemented in the short and medium term. However, the recent transformation of the sector has also been challenging for the child care workforce in other ways. Many RECEs have left child care programs to work for the school boards, which offer higher wages. Meanwhile, for those who remain in child care, there are more part-time and split-shift work arrangements than before. Now that FDK is in every school, we need to address these changes by exploring staffing models and other strategies that create stable, full-time, and desirable opportunities for RECEs. In recent years, service providers have had to adapt to new

quality, financial, administrative, and governance criteria, as well as pedagogical developments through ELECT and How Does Learning Happen? Additional accountability requirements will be included in the Province's new wage enhancement program. Children's Services will review all the requirements that service providers are striving to meet and streamline them where possible, so that staff can find a better balance between administration and program needs.

A key part of this work will involve continuing to partner with service providers and post-secondary institutions to ensure that professional learning supports pedagogical expectations. Policy should ensure that there are resources to support attendance at professional development opportunities and that these opportunities accommodate staff schedules and responsibilities.^{xxxvi}

★ See actions 8 (pg. 56); 20 (pg. 58); 23 (pg. 59); 36 (pg. 60)

special needs services

Many children require extra support to meet their individual needs, including: mental health and behavioural services; developmental services; speech and language services; and more. Every Child Belongs (ECB) is Toronto's model for providing special needs support to child care programs to ensure that all children have the same access to child care.

ECB is a decentralized model, delivered by 18 agencies – including Children's Services – which is focused on supporting child care staff so that they have the capacity to successfully include all children in their programs. ECB services include visits from Special Needs Resource Educators (SNRs) who work with individual children and provide training and program consultation to child care staff. This service is available to all licensed child care programs in Toronto, including: home child care; French-language and Aboriginal child care; and Aboriginal Head Start programs.

An external review of ECB was completed in 2012. While the model was found to be effective, recommendations for improvement included: the development of a centralized data base; a review of SNR caseloads to enhance access; and consolidating the number of agencies delivering services to increase the effectiveness and consistency of services.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The implementation of FDK has introduced new challenges for special needs services. While most children with special needs transitioned to FDK with their peers, some have limited or no

access to kindergarten. The conversion of full-time preschool programs into kindergarten before- and after-school programs means that child care is no longer an option for those children who need care during the day. Children with special needs in particular require a seamless transition between child care and the school system. Overall, there is now a greater need to coordinate and plan services with schools and school boards to ensure access and consistency, and to maximize resources for special needs services.

While ECB is available in all licensed child care programs, the decentralized model does not facilitate consistent service delivery across all programs. Further, the growth of the child care system as a result of FDK has made it even more challenging for SNRs to maintain consistent service levels. More data is needed to properly evaluate and improve service levels in an equitable way so that all child care programs have the same capacity to include and support children with special needs.



See actions 10 (pg. 57); 16 (pg. 58)

By the numbers:

EVERY CHILD BELONGS

In 2014, ECB supported 3,551 children, including:

53 Infant

298 Toddler

1,456 Preschool

1,163 Kindergarten

581 Middle childhood

Family support programs deliver a range of responsive services for parents, caregivers and children (prenatal to age 12). They are guided by principles that focus on building supportive relationships, facilitating growth, respecting diversity and furthering community development.

Programs are flexible, accessible and offered in an informal atmosphere by professional and knowledgeable staff members who work in partnership with families and the community. Opportunities are provided for children, families and caregivers to enhance strengths, build capacity and promote healthy development. They also provide opportunities for parents and caregivers to meet and develop social networks.

The family support sector includes a range of programs and services – including specific programs provided by and for Aboriginal and French-language communities – delivered by many organizations and funded by all three orders of government, as well as foundations. Children's Services specifically funds and manages 45 Family Resource Programs. In 2014, these 45 programs served 18,454 parents/caregivers and 19,403 children.



family support

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The family support sector is characterized by multiple planning, funding, and governance structures. Stakeholders from the sector recognize the need to develop a cohesive and resilient child and family system that includes a unique role for family support programs. Through the Toronto Child and Family Network, Children's Services has the opportunity to facilitate coordinated planning among the different family support programs, to ensure that families across Toronto have equitable access to consistent and meaningful programming, and to create opportunities for family support professionals to learn from each other.

★ See actions 19 (pg. 58); 28 (pg. 59); 29 (pg. 59)



FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS INCLUDE...

- 45 Family Resource Programs (City-funded)
- 24 Ontario Early Years Centres, including Aboriginal and French-language centres, with 125 satellite locations
- 99 Parenting and Family Literacy Centres
- 4 Young Parent Resource Centres
- More than 10 agencies providing the Community Action Program for Children and Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, including Aboriginal programs
- Healthy Babies Healthy Children, including Aboriginal HBHC
- Programs delivered by Toronto Public Health, Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation, and the Toronto Public Library

In order to assess, improve, and promote the level of quality in child care settings, Children's Services developed the Early Learning and Care Quality Assessment, now referred to as the Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI). The AQI outlines clear expectations, service standards, and guidelines for all child care providers who have a service contract with the City. It serves as a self-evaluation and planning tool for child care providers. Most importantly, it helps parents to make informed decisions. Parents should expect that licensed child care will deliver high-quality programs that allow children opportunities for play, socialization, and exploration, and which also include developmentally-appropriate pedagogy in a safe and nurturing environment.

Children's Services has been assessing quality in child care since 1990, and has been publishing ratings online since 2008. In March 2014, we introduced the implementation of an updated AQI for infant, toddler, and preschool care, developed in partnership with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE/UT). The updated AQI incorporates current best practices with new expectations. It is currently the only validated Canadian tool for measuring quality in infant, toddler, and preschool programs.

The AQI evaluates educator/child interactions, learning environments, health & safety, and nutritional components of a child care program.

It also incorporates indicators that support diverse cultural practices. Quality assessments are conducted annually by Children's Services Quality Assurance Analysts (QAAs). The QAAs are experienced RECEs who receive ongoing training and testing to ensure consistency in administering the AQI. Ongoing support is provided by Children's Services Consultants who work with child care service providers to ensure continuous quality improvement. Once assessed, child care operators can display a quality decal on their premises. Families can look for the decal and review assessment ratings online for each licensed centre with a service contract at toronto.ca/families/centres.

Since we began publishing quality ratings in 2008, there has been a marked improvement in scores. Before the ratings were published, approximately 67 per cent of centres met minimum requirements. This increased to over 90 per cent when the ratings were posted on the website. By 2014, 98.7 per cent of centres met minimum requirements.

When compared against demographic and neighbourhood data, AQI is a critical tool in determining whether all children across the city have the same access to high-quality child care. This can identify areas of service excellence; identify areas that need improvement; determine training needs for the child care community; support future planning and allocation of resources; and assist the City in determining the impact of early learning policy changes.



quality assurance

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Improvement in overall quality is seen across all three sectors – public, non-profit, and commercial. However, when you isolate the scores related to educator/child interactions, non-profit and public child care programs perform better. Educators who are responsive, engaged, and who stimulate children's curiosity are essential to high-quality child care. Children's Services is looking more closely at how we can better reflect the higher importance of educator/child interactions in assessments.

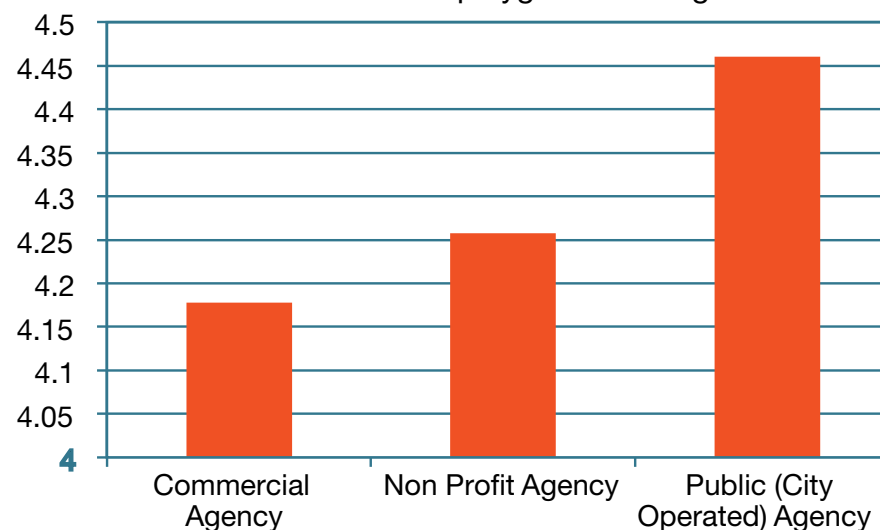
Children's Services is continuing to expand the use of the AQI as a professional development tool to support early learning educators, including all funded programs and Full Day Kindergarten Learning teams. We continue to promote the AQI as a standard for quality assessment across the province, and support other municipalities and service providers (without a contract with the City) wishing to adopt the measure.

In addition to the AQI, Children's Services has four other quality assurance measurement tools: Home Child Care Operating Criteria; Family Support Criteria; Operating Criteria for Special Needs Resourcing Agencies; and School-age Operating Criteria. There is a need to continue to review and update other existing quality assurance measures to ensure ongoing quality improvement in these other program areas.

★ See actions 8 (pg. 56); 33 (pg. 60)

Average Interactions Rating – 2014

*does not include kindergarten, middle childhood, nutrition and playground ratings





Strategic Directions and Actions for the Next Five Years

This section sets the agenda for the next five years, leveraging the existing services and responding to the landscape and planning considerations we have just described. These new strategic directions and actions are intended to move the system towards our long-term vision of an accessible, inclusive, seamless, and resilient system.

1. access to high-quality child care

Access to child care means that it is available, affordable, and of high quality. Capacity is one of the biggest challenges facing Toronto; there simply aren't enough licensed and regulated child care spaces available. Children's Services will work with our partners to leverage opportunities that increase the number of high-quality child care spaces. We will direct available funding to initiatives that will have the biggest impact on access.

ACTIONS:

1. Engage federal and provincial governments in the development and implementation of strategies to facilitate growth in the child care system, including increasing child care fee subsidies in order to incrementally address the waitlist for a subsidy.
2. Ensure all families have equitable access to child care fee subsidies by bringing each ward within 10 percent of its ward equity target, taking into account the needs and requirements of individual neighbourhoods within the ward.
3. Increase the number of public and non-profit child care spaces for infants and toddlers, with a target of 1,500 spaces, focused in wards where there are insufficient spaces for families receiving fee subsidies.
4. In partnership with school boards, expand the number of before- and after-school programs for kindergarten children (age 4-5) in schools.
5. Work with partners to increase the availability of middle childhood programs (age 6-12) by investing new resources across a range of developmentally-appropriate service options, including investing in licensed child care in schools, where appropriate.
6. With the ongoing modernization of child care and the impact of full-day kindergarten on unit costs for all age groups, review service levels to ensure that maximum benefits are generated from available resources.
7. Work with stakeholders to improve intake and waitlist processes in order to simplify access to child care for families, including consideration of a centralized waitlist for child care spaces to maximize efficiencies in the service system.
8. Advance the quality of child care across the system by:
 - Working with educational institutions and other partners to increase access to professional development opportunities for all staff in the sector
 - Reviewing all quality initiatives to ensure that they align with legislation and reflect best practices
 - Expanding the use of the Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI) to all programs with a contract with Toronto Children's Services
 - Emphasizing educator/child interactions and responsive learning environments as key components of quality

2. inclusive support for all families

Families are vulnerable when they face significant barriers to accessing services, or the services available do not meet their needs. Factors that contribute to vulnerability may include: poverty; structural inequalities; discrimination; limited social support; and geographic location. Children's Services will focus on making a broad range of supports and services easier for families to access and making the system as a whole more inclusive of the unique needs of Toronto's families. While there are policies in place that support inclusivity, efforts are needed to implement these policies consistently across the system so all children and families are represented.

ACTIONS:

9. Establish child care and child care fee subsidy as key pillars of the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy, and leverage resources to alleviate child and family poverty in Toronto by:
 - Enabling families to take advantage of employment opportunities
 - Optimizing the uptake of child care fee subsidies reserved for Ontario Works recipients
 - Reducing intergenerational poverty
 - Improving workforce compensation in the child care sector, to the extent possible
10. Strengthen Every Child Belongs (the Special Needs service model) in alignment with provincial policies, to improve consistency, accountability, quality, and transitions between services for children with special needs and their families.
11. Work with the Aboriginal community to increase the number of culturally-specific spaces for Aboriginal children through a variety of approaches, including:
 - Supporting the viability of new and existing Aboriginal child care centres
 - Pursuing opportunities to develop Aboriginal home child care
 - Providing increased support for Aboriginal families in navigating services, including child care fee subsidy application
12. Expand Aboriginal cultural competency across the system by:
 - Partnering with Aboriginal agencies to develop cultural training and tools for non-Aboriginal service providers
 - Partnering with post-secondary institutions to include Aboriginal cultural competency within the core Early Childhood Education curriculum
 - Ensuring special needs programs are responsive to Aboriginal cultures and histories
13. In partnership with the French-language school boards and other community partners, pursue opportunities to increase high-quality infant and toddler child care for the French-speaking community.
14. In partnership with community organizations that work with LGBTQ families, enhance training, policies, and practices across the child and family service system to support all sexual and gender identities so that families are welcome and included in all programs.
15. Partner with organizations that work with newcomer families in order to improve their access to and inclusion in all child and family services.

3. engagement, partnership, and communication

The child and family system is founded on strong community partnerships. Engaging our partners in the planning process helps Children's Services to stay attuned and respond to the diverse needs of children, families, and service providers. Trusting relationships are built through strong, reciprocal communication, which includes how information is shared with and gathered from stakeholders.

ACTIONS:

16. Develop and implement a comprehensive communications, public education, and engagement strategy for service providers, families, and the broader public, including:
 - Reviewing, adapting, and enhancing existing communications channels for service providers
 - Pursuing ongoing initiatives to receive input from families and raise public awareness of the child and family system
 - Implementing targeted approaches for new families, families and children with special needs, newcomer communities, and LGBTQ families and families of trans or gender independent children
17. Improve professional learning for the French-language service sector by:
 - Building networks with French-language school boards, relevant community agencies, and other municipalities, and developing joint training opportunities
 - Delivering training on the Assessment for Quality Improvement in French
18. Strengthen partnerships with the Aboriginal community by providing ongoing support to the Aboriginal Advisory and Planning Committee and regular, targeted engagement initiatives.
19. Support and strengthen the leadership role of the Toronto Child and Family Network in planning and coordinating the system of services for children and families, and in advancing Service Plan strategic directions and actions.
20. Work with all four Toronto school boards to implement structures and mechanisms for:
 - Effective joint Service Planning
 - Effective capital planning and development
 - Advancing a high quality seamless service system
21. Improve customer service to families by increasing automation and diversifying the channels through which services can be accessed.

4. systems change

The child and family system is undergoing significant change. Recognizing that change can be challenging, Children's Services will advance the modernization of the child and family system by implementing Provincial legislation and Council direction in a way that works best for Toronto's service providers, and that responds to the needs of children and families.

ACTIONS:

22. Transition to a new child care funding model with approval from City Council.
23. Review the model used to provide support to child care programs and target supports based on need, in order to ensure that all families receive the same level and quality of service.
24. Streamline and continue automating Children's Services' administrative and reporting requirements of service providers to address efficiencies in the system while maintaining accountability.
25. Strengthen licensed home child care by:
 - Implementing recommendations from the 2015 licensed home child care review
 - Evaluating the current state of quality in home child care
 - Building capacity within home child care agencies to support Aboriginal children, French-speaking children, and children with special needs
26. Consolidate and coordinate the quality, planning, and management of middle childhood programs (age 6-12) within the City to improve families' access to high-quality programs by reducing silos and by strategically aligning City resources.
27. Work with partners to develop and implement an integrated service delivery model for Child and Family Centres in Toronto that is community-based, inclusive, and responsive to families.
28. In order to fulfill our mandate as the service system manager, request that the Ministry of Education transfer the planning and governance of all early years programs identified in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 and the Ontario Early Years Framework to Children's Services.
29. Review the delivery of all family support programs that are funded by Children's Services, within the context of the broader child and family system, to ensure stable and dependable services are available to families.

5. leadership

Children's Services will champion the needs of children and families in Toronto. Recognizing that these efforts fit within a broader policy context, we will work with all orders of government and municipal and community partners to enhance the well-being of children and families. Drawing on research and data analysis, we will continue to be leaders in developing policy and in planning services that improve child and family outcomes.

ACTIONS:

30. Call for predictable, sustainable funding that supports high-quality child care that is accessible and affordable for all families requiring care.
31. Work with the Province to align policies governing schools and child care to:
 - Recognize that the full day experience includes both child care and school programming
 - Commit to funding licensed child care in new schools and replaced schools
 - Commit to the security and tenure of child care in schools
 - Fund occupancy costs for licensed child care in schools
 - Amend the formula for utilization rates
 - Recognize the full community value and use of schools
32. Continue to work with other City divisions to integrate and improve the delivery of City-run human services to children and families, by:
 - Providing families with all the information they want and need about multiple human services at the first point of contact
 - Sharing client information among multiple human services at the City, so that families only have to tell their story once
 - Developing self-service options, including enhanced online services
 - Streamlining and updating eligibility criteria for clients in income-tested programs (i.e. child care fee subsidy, Ontario Works, etc.)
33. Promote the adoption of the validated Assessment for Quality Improvement tool by other jurisdictions in order to promote a consistent approach to assessing child care quality across Ontario and Canada.
34. Initiate and conduct research in partnership with academic institutions, TELCCS, and community organizations to support better service system planning, policy development, and quality. Facilitate data sharing practices among partners, service providers, and other orders of government to support this research.
35. In order to monitor shared child and family population outcomes, report on identified indicators and engage community partners in a collaborative planning process to improve the well-being of children and families.
36. Support a stable child and family workforce by enhancing job quality, by developing recruitment and retention strategies, and by exploring alternative employment models.
37. Continue to invest in the growth of the public and non-profit child care sectors.
38. Work with the Province to update eligibility criteria for child care subsidy.

appendix a: child and family network

The Toronto Child and Family Network plans, coordinates and promotes the broad range of services for children from birth to 12 years of age and their families. The Toronto Child and Family Network is a partnership between a cross-section of agencies and organizations who share the same goal of promoting positive outcomes for new and expectant parents, children and families in Toronto.

Building on the success of the Best Start Network, the Toronto Child and Family Network will contribute to services by:

- Enhancing community engagement at the local and system level
- Organizing and integrating services with the goal of improved outcomes for children
- Aligning provincial, municipal and community planning, policies, processes and programs



For more information, visit: toronto.ca/childandfamilynetwork

THE NETWORK VISION

Every child has the right to high quality, meaningful childhood experiences that respect diversity, are rooted in communities, and support engagement in life-long learning and healthy development. An inclusive, integrated and accessible community service system places children at the centre, appreciates their unique potential, is responsive to families and promotes positive outcomes.

appendix b: list of neighbourhoods

1	West Humber-Clairville	35	Westminster-Branson	71	Cabbagetown-South St.Jamestown	105	Lawrence Park North
2	Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown	36	Newtonbrook West	72	Regent Park	106	Humewood-Cedarvale
3	Thistletown-Beaumond Heights	37	Willowdale West	73	Moss Park	107	Oakwood-Vaughan
4	Rexdale-Kipling	38	Lansing-Westgate	74	North St.Jamestown	108	Briar Hill - Belgravia
5	Elms-Old Rexdale	39	Bedford Park-Nortown	75	Church-Yonge Corridor	109	Caledonia - Fairbanks
6	Kingsview Village-The Westway	40	St.Andrew-Windfields	76	Bay Street Corridor	110	Keelesdale-Eglinton West
7	Willowridge-Martingrove-Richview	41	Bridle Path-Sunnybrooke-York Mills	77	Waterfront Communities-The Island	111	Rockcliffe-Smythe
8	Humber Heights-Westmount	42	Banbury-Don Mills	78	Kensington-Chinatown	112	Beechborough-Greenbrook
9	Edenbridge-Humber Valley	43	Victoria Village	79	University	113	Weston
10	Princess-Rosethorn	44	Flemingdon Park	80	Palmerston-Little Italy	114	Lambton-Baby Point
11	Eringate-Centennial-West Deane	45	Parkwoods-Donalda	81	Trinity-Bellwoods	115	Mount Dennis
12	Markland Woods	46	Pleasant View	82	Niagara	116	Steeles
13	Etobicoke West Mall	47	Don Valley Village	83	Dufferin Grove	117	L'Amoureux
14	Islington-City Centre West	48	Hillcrest Village	84	Little Portugal	118	Tam O'Shanter-Sullivan
15	Kingsway South	49	Bayview Woods-Steeles	85	South Parkdale	119	Wexford/Maryville
16	Stonegate-Queensway	50	Newtonbrook East	86	Roncesvalles	120	Clairelea-Birchmount
17	Mimco	51	Willowdale East	87	High Park-Swansea	121	Oakridge
18	New Toronto	52	Bayview Village	88	High Park North	122	Brickcliffe-Cliffside
19	Long Branch	53	Henry Farm	89	Runnymede-Bloor West Village	123	Cliffcrest
20	Alderwood	54	O'Conner-Parkview	90	Junction	124	Kennedy Park
21	Humber Summit	55	Thornccliffe Park	91	Weston-Pellam Park	125	Ionview
22	Humbermede	56	Leaside-Bennington	92	Corsa Italia-Davenport	126	Dorset Park
23	Pelmo Park-Humberlea	57	Broadview North	93	Dovercourt-Wallace Emerson-Junction	127	Bendale
24	Black Creek	58	Old East York	94	Wychwood	128	Agincourt South-Malvern West
25	Glenfield-Jane Heights	59	Danforth Village East York	95	Annex	129	Agincourt North
26	Downsview-Roding-CFB	60	Woodbine-Lumsden	96	Casa Loma	130	Milliken
27	York University Heights	61	Crescent Town	97	Yonge-St.Clair	131	Rouge
28	Rustic	62	East End Danforth	98	Rosedale-Moore Park	132	Malvern
29	Maple Leaf	63	The Beaches	99	Mount Pleasant East	133	Centennial Scarborough
30	Brookhaven-Amesbury	64	Woodbine Corridor	100	Yonge-Eglinton	134	Highland Creek
31	Yorkdale-Glen Park	65	Greenwood-Coxwell	101	Forest Hill South	135	Morningside
32	Englemount-Lawrence	66	Danforth Village Toronto	102	Forest Hill North	136	West Hill
33	Clanton Park	67	Playter Estates-Danforth	103	Lawrence Park South	137	Woburn
34	Bathurst Manor	68	North Riverdale	104	Mount Pleasant West	138	Eglinton East
		69	Blake-Jones			139	Scarborough Village
		70	South Riverdale			140	Guildwood

- ⁱ Statistics Canada. (2011). 2011 Census.
- ⁱⁱ Ibid.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.
- ^{iv} Ibid.
- ^v Ibid.
- ^{vi} McCaskill, D., FitzMaurice, K., Cidro, J. (2011). *Toronto Aboriginal Research Project: Final Report*. Toronto, ON: Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council.
- ^{vii} Statistics Canada (2011). 2011 Census.
- ^{viii} Statistics Canada (2011). National Household Survey.
- ^{ix} Ibid.
- ^x Economic Development & Culture (2015). Economic Dashboard; Economic Development January 9, 2015. Toronto: City of Toronto.
- ^{xi} Statistics Canada (2013). Labour Force Survey.
- ^{xii} Toronto Social Development, Finance & Administration (2013). 2011 National Household Survey: Labour Force, Education, Place of Work, Commuting and Mobility. Toronto: City of Toronto.
- ^{xiii} Ministry of Education (2012). *Modernizing Child Care in Ontario*.
- ^{xiv} Ministry of Education (2013). *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework*.
- ^{xv} Toronto Employment & Social Services (2012). *Working as One: A Workforce Development Strategy for Toronto*.
- ^{xvi} Toronto Social Development, Finance & Administration (2013). *Toronto Newcomer Strategy*.
- ^{xvii} Isaacs, J.B. (2009). Supporting Young Children and Families; An Investment Strategy That Pays. In First Focus (Ed.), *Big Ideas for Children: Investing in Our Nation's Future* (pp. 102-111). Washington: First Focus.
- ^{xviii} Polanyi, M., Johnston, L., Khanna, A., Dirie, S., kerr, m. (2014). *The Hidden Epidemic; A Report on Child and Family Poverty in Toronto*. Toronto: Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Social Planning Toronto, Family Service Toronto, Colour of Poverty—Colour of Change, and the Alliance for a Poverty-Free Toronto.
- ^{xix} Toronto Employment & Social Services (2012). *Working as One: A Workforce Development Strategy for Toronto*.
- ^{xx} Toronto Social Development, Finance & Administration (2014). Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020. Retrieved February 18, 2015 from the Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 website: <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=42653745ba9a9410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>.
- ^{xxi} Toronto Child and Family Network (2013). *Raising the Village; Measuring the Well-being of Children and Families in Toronto; Part 1: Developing Shared Outcomes*.
- ^{xxii} Polanyi, M., Johnston, L., Khanna, A., Dirie, S., kerr, m. (2014). *The Hidden Epidemic; A Report on Child and Family Poverty in Toronto*. Toronto: Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Social Planning Toronto, Family Service Toronto, Colour of Poverty—Colour of Change, and the Alliance for a Poverty-Free Toronto.
- ^{xxiii} Toronto Social Development, Finance & Administration (2013). *Toronto Newcomer Strategy*.
- ^{xxiv} Chumak-Horbatsch, R. (2010). Toronto Childcare Centres: A Language Profile. In B. Bokus (Ed.), *Studies in the Psychology of Language and Communication* (pp. 289-307). Warsaw: Matrix.
- ^{xxv} City of Toronto (2010). *Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Communities in Toronto (Adopted by Toronto City Council, July 2010, EX 45.5)*.
- ^{xxvi} UNICEF (2008). *The child care transition; A league table of early childhood education and care in economically advanced countries. Report Card #8*.
- ^{xxvii} Organisation For Economic Co-Operation And Development (2006). *Starting Strong II; Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- ^{xxviii} ChildCare2020 (2014). *Child Care in Canada 2020: A Vision and a Way Forward; A discussion paper for Canada's 4th national child care policy conference, ChildCare2020*.

- xxix Childcare Resource and Research Unit (2014). *A national childcare program can address key themes in the 2014 pre-budget consultation*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit.
- xxx White, A., Dragicevic, N., and Granofsky, T. (2014). *What works? Proven approaches to alleviating poverty*. Toronto: Mowat Centre, School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Toronto.
- xxxi City of Toronto (2014). *Toronto Youth Equity Strategy*.
- xxxii *Bill 10, Child Care Modernization Act, 2014* (2014). Retrieved from Legislative Assembly of Ontario website: http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=3002
- xxxiii Macdonald, D. and Friendly, M. (2014). *The Parent Trap; Child Care Fees in Canada's Biggest Cities*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- xxxiv The Centre for Spatial Economics (2009). *Executive Summary; Understanding and Addressing Workforce Shortages in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Project*. Ottawa: Child Care Human Resource Sector Council.
- xxxv Ferns, C. and Friendly, M., (2014) *The state of early childhood education and care in Canada 2012*. Moving Child Care Forward Project (a joint initiative of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Work, Families and Well-Being at the University of Guelph, and the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba). Toronto: Movingchildcareforward.ca.
- xxxvi Halfon, S. (2014). *Canada's child care workforce*. Moving Child Care Forward Project (a joint initiative of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Work, Families and Well-Being at the University of Guelph, and the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba). Toronto: Movingchildcareforward.ca.



Call **3 • 1 • 1**

toronto.ca/children
childcare@toronto.ca