

EarlyON Newsletter – April 2018

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EarlyON Strategic Planning Day

On Thursday February 22nd, EarlyON service providers and partners gathered for the first time under the new EarlyON identity to determine our collective priorities for the coming years. Based on the action areas identified in the Initial Plan, participants broke out in to topical discussion groups to review the current state and brainstorm ideas, actions and priorities for moving forward. This session has given us an extensive amount of invaluable information and provided a number of concrete next steps and objectives for the next few years.

We want to thank you for your participation and your contributions to the vision for Toronto's EarlyON system. Please review the final report detailing the key outcomes from the day.

[Be Part of the Change!](#)

Launching the EarlyON Advisory Committee and Working Tables

The only way we can successfully move forward on the many priorities we identified is through a collaborative approach. As we discussed at the Strategic Planning Day, Toronto Children's Services will launch a number of Working Tables tasked with guiding the development of key strategies, policies, and tools. In addition, we will be establishing an EarlyON Advisory Committee

of system leaders to provide advice on key system priorities and initiatives. A number of Working Tables have been identified to advance our shared priorities, including:

- Planning
- Program Standards & Core Services
- Professional Learning & Development
- Inclusion for Children with Special Needs
- Data & Evaluation

It is expected that additional tables may be struck as needed to support specific initiatives. It also expected that all Working Tables will ensure their work considers the needs of all families, including those with children with special needs, Indigenous families, newcomers, families speaking non-official languages, LGBTQ2S families. In each Table, **equity, access, and quality** will be prioritized as the lens through which to consider the current state and what proposed actions need to be advanced. Determining how to build an equity lens into the work of each Table will be an early priority for the Advisory Committee.



We are keen to begin the work and need your involvement! Please [visit this website](#) for more information about the Advisory Committee and Working Tables, and to register your interest in participating.

Ministry of Education Qualifications Upgrade Program (QUP)

Please also keep in mind that the Ministry of Education has a Qualifications Upgrade Program (QUP) in place to assist individuals with pursuing their Early Childhood Education Diploma. Three streams of support are available to assist individuals pursuing their ECE:

Education Grant: This grant covers a portion of tuition fees related to pursuing an ECE diploma. Applications are processed on a first come, first serve basis. Funding is not guaranteed and is based on the number of applicants per semester.

Travel Grant: This grant assists individuals with daily commute expenses incurred to attend classes or complete the placement portion of the diploma.

Training Allowance: This allowance is available to assist education grant recipient with living expenses and other incremental costs incurred while pursuing an ECE diploma. The allowance is calculated based on how many courses the applicant is taking and whether they are working part-time or full-time.

NEW EarlyON Programs and Services

As was announced at the Strategic Planning Day, Children's Services is excited to leverage additional resources available in our system as a result of the Canada-Ontario Bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. Children's Services is able to add three new EarlyON Child and Family Centres to the system in 2018. These centres will be directed to priority areas that are currently underserved and experience higher inequities and barriers to positive outcomes.

Details about these new programs and how to apply to operate them will be shared in the near future, through a request for expression of interest process. We intend to work closely with the Planning Working Table to finalize the details of the process. Stay tuned!

Operational Updates

RECE Exemptions: As outlined in the Transition Guidelines released in November 2017, Children's Services is treating 2018 as a transition year with respect to the RECE requirement. All staff/centres requiring an exemption in 2018 will be granted one. Children's Services staff are developing the necessary forms and processes for service providers to apply for an exemption and will share this with you in the near future. We are committed to working together through the Program Standards and Professional Learning & Development Working Tables to determine how we, as a system, will meet this new requirement.

We want to remind everyone that **not all employees at an EarlyON need to have their RECE**. The requirement is that **at least one RECE** be present for the delivery of programs that support early

learning and development. The Working Table will be tasked with investigating this further and may propose next steps for the system.

Data Reporting: Please remember to follow all existing requirements to report for the 2017 contract year to your previous funding organization including audited financial statements, year-end reports, etc. If your contract in 2017 was with the Ministry of Education please ensure you provide this information to them, not to Children's Services.

Going forward, all 2018 contract year reporting and contract management will be the responsibility of the EarlyON Team at Toronto Children's Services. As laid out in the Transition Guidelines and Data Manual, the first year-to-date report will be due in July 2018 and will cover service data and financials for the first 6 months of 2018. You will find descriptions of the data elements required in the Data Manual, released in December 2017. Children's Services staff will circulate an updated reporting template in May 2018 to assist you in summarizing and submitting your financial and service data.

Please remember that the new template is not intended to replace any ongoing, day-to-day data collection methods you use within your organization. As previously noted, the reporting requirements are largely unchanged from last year.

This is a transitional year for all of us. Planning for improved data reporting, IT infrastructure and evaluation will be a priority for the Data and Evaluation Working Table.

Branding & Naming: The transition to the new EarlyON brand will take some time, particularly with respect to naming conventions. Given the unique naming practices in the four previous program types, we have some work to do together to determine how to improve the consistency of naming practices going forward. For the time being, organizations are encouraged to retain any naming conventions that are familiar to families, such as geographical or neighbourhood identifiers. However, all references to Ontario Early Years Centres, Better Beginnings, Better Futures, and Parenting and Family Literacy Centres should be removed from branding and replaced with EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

Remember to follow the Province's [EarlyON Visual Identity Guidelines](#). If you have any questions about the logo or creating materials with it, please contact the Early Years and Child Care Division of the Ministry of Education at EarlyON@ontario.ca.



Signage – We have been hearing from many of you that you are still waiting for your EarlyON signs to arrive. We have followed up with the Ministry and have been advised that they are experiencing a slight backlog with the printer. Your signage orders have been received, are being processed and should be arriving soon. Please remember that the Ministry of Education will reimburse your organization for any costs associated with the removal and disposal of old signs, and the installation of new signs. Please submit invoices for these costs directly to the Ministry at EarlyON@ontario.ca or by mail to:

Julia Danos, Director
 Early Years and Child Care Programs and Service Integration Branch
 Ministry of Education
 24th floor, Mowat Block, 900 Bay St
 Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1L2

New Resource! – Local Planning Report

In September 2017, Children's Services engaged students in the Master of Science in Planning Program at the University of Toronto to conduct a research study for the EarlyON system. Through research and consultation with providers, the students developed a community-led planning toolkit for Toronto EarlyON Child and Family Centres – a collection of 6 unique tools or strategies service providers can use to enhance their community development and local planning capacity. They also delivered a series of recommendations to Children's Services staff to enhance the community-led planning capacity of the EarlyON system.

If you would like a copy of the report, please email us at EarlyON@toronto.ca. Thank you to those of you who took time to meet with the students and support their research. We look forward to building on the tools they have identified as we move ahead with the Planning Working Table. For the time being, this is a great resource to help you reflect on what your organization currently does, and what other tools are available to you.

Raising the Village



Check out [Raising the Village's](#) new website to explore data, tools and resources on the well-being of children and families in Toronto. Understand how children in Toronto's 140 neighbourhoods are doing across all the indicators of this initiative by linking to the [interactive indicator map](#).

Raising the Village is an initiative of the Toronto Child and Family Network to provide communities with data and research that measures the well-being of children and families in Toronto. Browse the site and consider the many ways this data might help your organization in carrying out local planning and outreach. A key task of the Data and Evaluation Working Table will be determining how EarlyON programs and services contribute to the child and family outcomes identified in Raising the Village.