



# EARLY YEARS & CHILD CARE SERVICE PLAN

**2024-2034**

District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction .....	6
DNSSAB's Strategic Plan 2022-2042 .....	7
Community Driven Service Planning.....	9
Parent and Caregiver Survey.....	9
Engagement with Providers and Partners.....	11
Jurisdictional Research.....	14
Influences on the System .....	16
Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care.....	16
Workforce Shortage .....	17
Funding the System.....	18
Children & Families in the District of Nipissing.....	20
District of Nipissing Demographic Profile.....	21
Neighbourhood Profiles .....	22
Early Development Instrument.....	24
The Early Years and Child Care Sector .....	27





2024 -2034  
Early Years & Child Care Service Plan

Licensed Child Care Services .....	27
Child Care Demand .....	28
Child Care Affordability .....	31
EarlyON Child and Family Centres.....	32
Francophone Services.....	34
Indigenous Services.....	34
Quality Assurance Achievement Program .....	36
Professional Learning and Development.....	37
Professional Learning Portal .....	39
Inclusion Support Program .....	40
Community Partners .....	42
Planning for the Next Ten Years.....	43
Implementing the Plan and Monitoring Progress .....	60

## Executive Summary

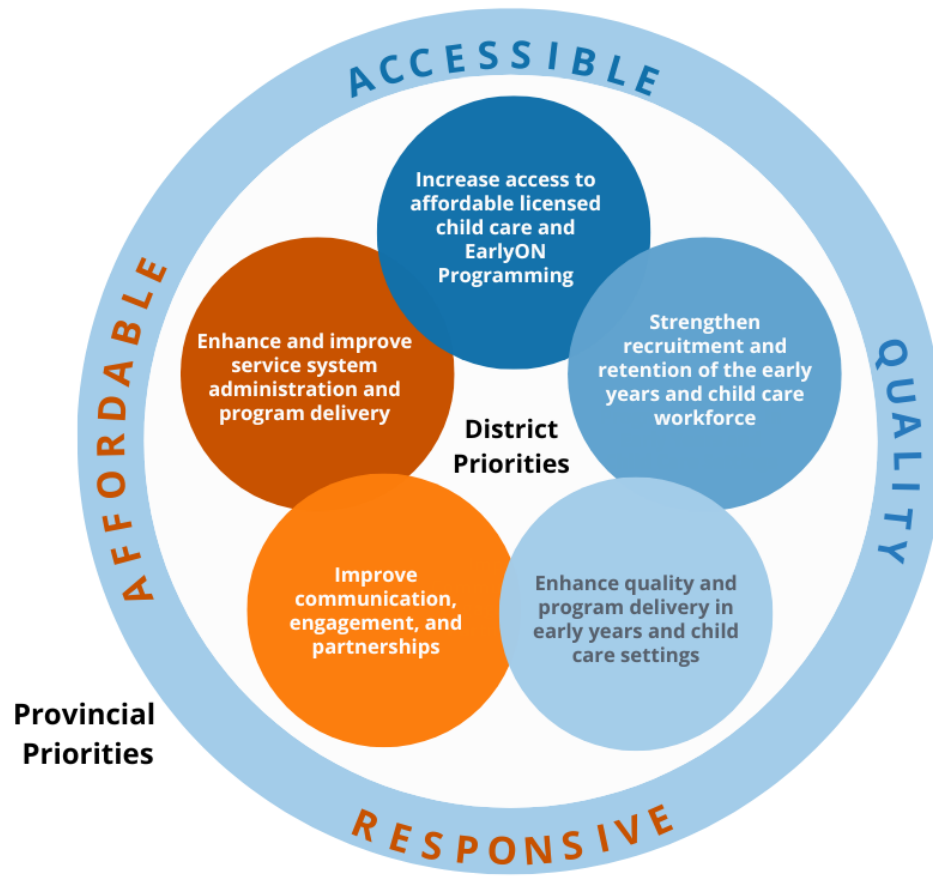
A robust early years and licensed child care system is critical to support thriving individuals, families, and communities. Not only does it lay the foundations during a child's most developmentally significant years, but it allows parents – particularly women – to re-enter the workforce. Early years and licensed child care are vital tools for achieving developmental, social, and economic success across Nipissing District.

As a service system manager, the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) plays an important role in the planning, managing, and funding of early years programming and licensed child care services. DNSSAB has worked collaboratively with service providers and community partners to build and maintain an early years and child care sector that reflects the Ontario Government's priorities for a high-quality, inclusive, affordable, accessible, and data-driven system.

Over the next ten years, DNSSAB is committed to continuing to strengthen this critical system through five key goals:



This plan identifies a range of actions DNSSAB will undertake to achieve each of the identified goals. Many of these are already underway, while some actions are new opportunities for exploration or piloting. This plan also includes a section on how DNSSAB will measure and monitor progress to stay on track over the next ten years. It is important to note that full implementation is dependent on continued provincial and federal funding, as well as ongoing collaboration with early years and child care community partners.



## Introduction

Quality early years and child care programs provide critical opportunities for the educational, social, and emotional development of children across the District of Nipissing. With an estimated 90% of brain growth and development occurring between birth and age five, this is the greatest opportunity to build connections that enable them to be healthy, capable, and successful adults. This is more readily achieved through high-quality children's programs. This also leads to improved social and economic outcomes as it allows parents/caregivers to join or re-enter the workforce. Studies show that, for every dollar invested in Early Years and Child Care Programs, the broader economy receives between \$1.50 to \$6.00.<sup>1</sup>

As service system manager of the early years and child care sector for the District of Nipissing, the Children's Services Department is pleased to provide the Early Years and Child Care Service Plan.



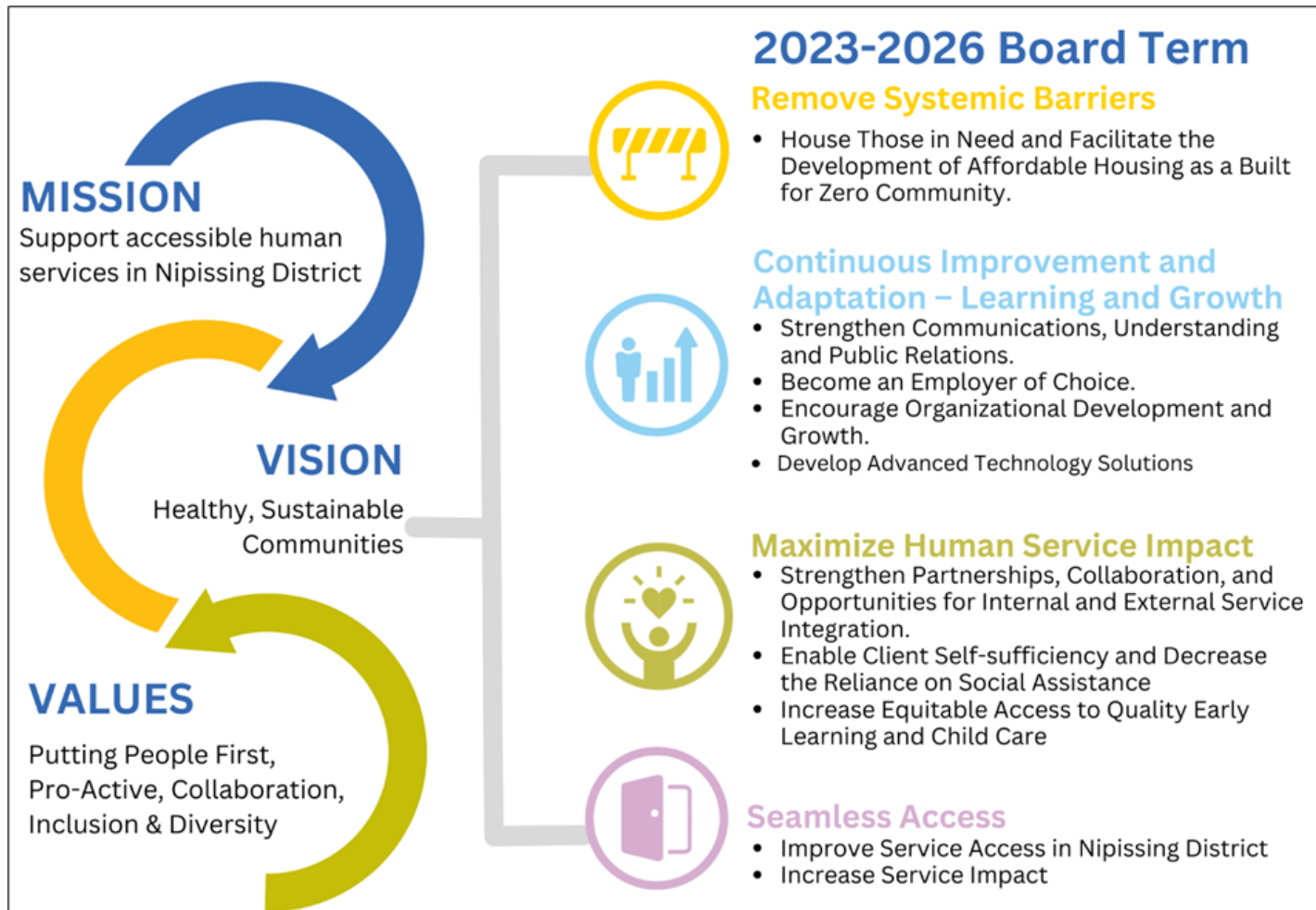
This ten-year plan focuses on system priorities identified through consultations and surveys with families, the early years and child care sector, as well as various community partners. It is aligned with provincial policy, takes into account the transformation underway with the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC), and is tailored to the unique needs of the District.

To support with implementation, measurable targets have been incorporated into the plan to help guide DNSSAB over the next 10 years and provide a mechanism for monitoring and tracking progress toward its important goals.

<sup>1</sup> Early Years Study 4- Thriving Kids, Thriving Society.

## DNSSAB's Strategic Plan 2022-2042

The DNSSAB Strategic Plan illustrated below, approved by the Board in 2022, takes a long-term approach for achieving the corporate goals while the Board priorities are revisited every four years in step with the Board's governance term. Moving forward, the plan will be particularly important for guiding the Board and staff as they serve Nipissing residents and communities.



DNSSAB's mission is to support accessible human services in the district. Its vision is to promote healthy, sustainable communities where residents have social, economic, and environmental conditions and opportunities that enable them to develop to their maximum potential.

As an extension of that, the Children's Services Department, as designated service system manager, is focused on promoting excellence in early learning and child care. It works to create a community of responsive relationships that continue to grow and learn together, and to adapt programs and services to better suit the needs of children and families in the district. Through a collaborative approach with partners, it plans and supports the delivery of a coordinated system of services that fosters the well-being and healthy development of families and children up to 12 years of age in the District of Nipissing.



#### Key Responsibilities as Service System Manager:

- In collaboration with community partners, creating and implementing a multi-year service plan for the District of Nipissing
- Managing the child care fee subsidy program; determining eligibility for families
- Maintaining purchase of service agreements with licensed child care, authorized recreation, EarlyON Child & Family Centres, and Inclusion Support Program Service Providers
- Managing funding streams to support the early years and licensed child care system, including the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System
- Implementing, coordinating, and funding capacity building initiatives to support professional learning for the early years system
- Implementing the Quality Assurance Achievement Program to support the early years system in providing quality services based on the principles of *How Does Learning Happen?*, Ontario's Pedagogy for the early years



# Community engagement has been a fundamental input in developing this service plan.

## Community Driven Service Planning

Community engagement is a key input to this service system plan. From September to November 2023, DNSSAB engaged parents and caregivers across Nipissing District through an online survey and facilitated online working sessions with service providers and community partners.

The purpose of community engagement was to gather perspectives on the strengths, challenges, and opportunities for the early years and child care sector in Nipissing District, including the ideal future state. A number of suggestions for future activities were made by parents, caregivers, service providers, and community partners – many of which have been included in this plan.

### Parent and Caregiver Survey

A survey was launched to gather feedback from parents and caregivers who had accessed (or attempted to access) early years and child care services in the District. The survey was available between November 3

and 14, 2023, and included 55 questions focused on demographic and household considerations, when, where, how, and why respondents access the child care and EarlyON programs, as well as areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.



### Key findings included:

- There were high levels of satisfaction with licensed centre and home-based child care, and EarlyON centres.
- Many respondents were unable to obtain licensed child care by the required date or at their preferred location. This had clear impacts including a longer commute to work and shorter availability of working hours.
- Respondents emphasized the need to increase the availability of child care spaces including part-time, evening and weekend care.
- EarlyON program attendees valued the knowledgeable staff, helpful connections and relationship building provided at the centres.

## Engagement with Providers and Partners

In September and October 2023, DNSSAB engaged with over 80 individuals across 20 virtual working sessions. Key groups that took part in community engagement activities included licensed child care, EarlyON, and ISP providers – including management and frontline staff. School board partners, colleges and universities, municipalities, and the Ontario Government were also engaged. In addition, several sessions were held with DNSSAB Board members, senior leadership, and Children’s Services staff to gather internal feedback.



Community engagement revealed that early years professionals are highly passionate about their roles in supporting children’s development and early education, as well as supporting families in the community. Many have formed strong bonds with individual children and families, and have been a constant source of support, care, and connection through challenging times – including the COVID-19 Pandemic.



### Key strengths of the District's current system included:

- Children are taught critical life skills, including self-regulation and socialization.
- Parents are provided with valuable supports and resources to equip them in their role as their child's first educator.
- Centres provide holistic supports, including nutrition, mental health, school readiness, and comfort with the outdoors.
- EarlyON and licensed child care centres serve as an important point of social connection and relationship-building within the community.
- Newcomers to the District are typically embraced by the early years and child care system, including for the diversity they bring to the community.
- A range of important community partnerships have been formed, including connections with food banks, hospitals, school boards, Friendship Centres, and family support networks.
- DNSSAB is effective in coordinating communication across service providers, including by convening regular group discussions to provide updates and share best practices.





There was broad agreement that early years professionals perform a vitally important role in children's development, as well as in the economic growth of families and communities. Despite this, participants felt that early years professionals are underpaid and undervalued for the work they do, which is often physically, mentally, and emotionally challenging. These challenges have become increasingly significant in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic and increasing costs of living.



### Participants identified a range of challenges, including:

- The growing waitlist of families seeking licensed child care services, with the key challenge being a lack of qualified educators and early years professionals.
- Relatively low compensation and lack of benefits means that centres struggle to recruit and retain educators and early years professionals.
- Clearer career pathways for early years professionals are required to support staff recruitment and retention.
- Many early years professionals feel under-appreciated for the important and challenging work that they do.
- Some feel that the value of EarlyON programming is not well-understood by the community.
- The transition between child care and school could be improved through better processes and communication.
- The number of children with complex needs is increasing, adding pressure to an already-stretched special needs resourcing system.
- Some families in remote communities struggle with travel requirements.

## Jurisdictional Research

A detailed review of seven other service system managers' approaches to the early years and child care sector was conducted to identify key trends and leading practices. This section provides a high-level overview, with further information included in a standalone research report.

The research focused on jurisdictions that are comparable to the District of Nipissing in terms of total population, Indigenous and Francophone population sizes, and service provider model. The research revealed a range of key trends commonly experienced across most or all jurisdictions, which have informed the development of this service system plan.

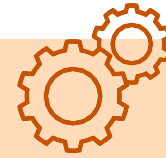
### **ECE recruitment and retention challenges represent a significant barrier to accessible and affordable child care.**



These challenges are being addressed in a number of ways, including by:

- Partnering with universities and colleges to build an ECE graduate pipeline.
- Supporting long-term professionalization of the ECE career path, including by combating stigma or misconceptions surrounding the profession, and raising awareness about the sector's critical social and economic importance.
- Adopting ECE recognition programs that highlight the accomplishments and achievements of ECEs.
- Helping to build ECE capacity through training and mentorship opportunities, many of which focus on specific challenges such as behavioural challenges, outdoor play / engagement with nature, building children's emotional resilience, and managing difficult conversations with families.

### The introduction of CWELCC is impacting early learning and child care in a range of ways, including:



- Severe staff shortages that limit service system managers' ability to meet CWELCC targets.
- Unintended consequences for vulnerable and low-income families by enhancing access for families not relying on child care fee subsidies.
- Service providers struggling with operating costs, particularly where fees were not increased during the COVID-19 Pandemic and are now frozen due to CWELCC.

Other issues impacting children's services include the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic, which severely impacted the ECE workforce. Employment in the child care and early learning sector dropped 21% compared to 3% among other workers during the Pandemic.<sup>2</sup> There is also a greater demand for special needs services and mental health supports post-COVID.

In addition, transportation remains a key issue for rural and remote providers. Many communities profiled in this research were geographically dispersed, with a high rural population. This has impacted the services provided, including hours of operation, location of child care and EarlyON services, and ability to attract and retain staff. While there may be a need to provide additional programming in some remote areas, the cost-to-serve ratio appears out of reach for some providers.

<sup>2</sup> Atkinson Centre, Early Childhood Education Report, 2022.



## Influences on the System

### Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care

In March 2022, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement, committing to a six-year national child care plan. The CWELCC system is a major policy priority of the federal and provincial governments designed to give families access to more affordable and high-quality child care options, focusing on the following priorities:

- **Lowering fees** – the average cost of child care for children under 6 years of age will be \$10 per day by 2026.
- **Increasing access** – creating 86,000 new licensed child care spaces for children under six years of age by the end of 2026.
- **Enhancing quality** – valuing the early childhood workforce and providing them with training and development opportunities. Improve compensation for RECEs working with children under age 12 in licensed child care.
- **Supporting inclusion** – addressing barriers to providing inclusive child care. Increasing access to high-quality child care for Indigenous, Francophone, and vulnerable families.

In the District of Nipissing, **100%** of service providers are participating in the CWELCC system. As a result of the phased approach taken by the Ministry, a 25% fee reduction (retroactive to April 1, 2022) was introduced to families with eligible children in the Fall of 2022, with a further reduction introduced in December 2022.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> CWELCC reduced rates only apply to children under 6 years of age.



The current reduction in fees has been significant for families, equating to approximately **\$5,000-\$6,000** in annual savings for Infant to Preschool care, based on the median child care rate in the District of Nipissing. The increased affordability has led to a higher demand for child care spaces, placing even more pressure on an already taxed child care system.

## Workforce Shortage

The Province-wide shortage of early years and child care workers remains a key challenge across the District. Recruitment and retention of staff in the early years and child care sector has been at an all-time low following the pandemic. It has significantly lowered operating capacity across the system, which is currently operating at approximately **56%** of licensed capacity, minimizing DNSSAB's ability to address the licensed child care waitlist pressures.

As of January 1, 2024, there are approximately 560 staff working across all licensed child care providers in the District of Nipissing, with a need for an additional **200** individuals to operate at full licensed capacity. Even more individuals will be required to operate the expansion of spaces as part of the



CWELCC Directed Growth Plan (described on page 29 and attached as Appendix A).

In recognition of this critical challenge, DNSSAB has put forth much effort and focus on improving recruitment and retention of early years and child care workers. Key initiatives include, but are not limited to, administering grants to help pay for ECE apprenticeships and diplomas, paid Professional Development hours for individuals currently working in early years and licensed child care programs, advocating for enhanced wages and benefits for workers, and establishing a recognition program to show appreciation for the valuable work individuals perform. More information on DNSSAB's support of recruitment and retention efforts across the sector can be found in the Marketing & Communications Plan, attached as Appendix B.

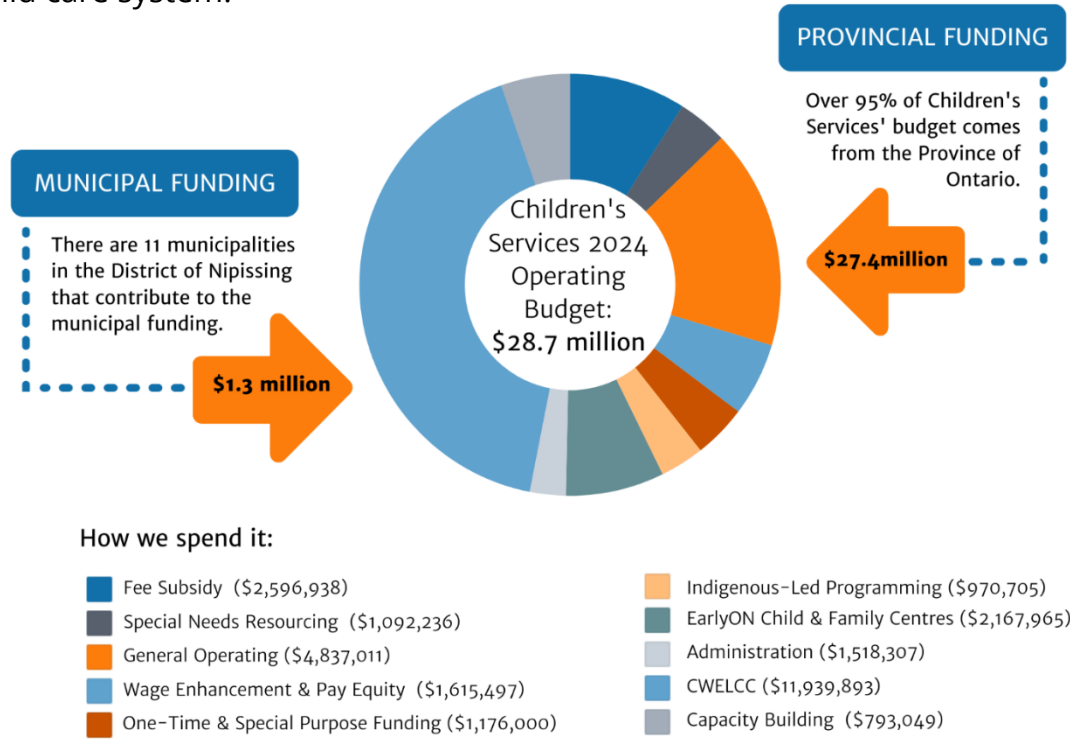
## Funding the System

The Children's Services Operating Budget is approximately \$29 million, with the bulk of the budget funded by the provincial government. Funding to support the early years and child care sector across the province is allocated through the provincial child care funding formula through a transfer payment agreement with the Ministry of Education.

While some flexibility exists within funding allocations, the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education clearly outline the parameters under which the ministry will flow child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres funding to DNSSAB, and describes the requirements of the funding, including obligations which DNSSAB must meet as Service System Manager.

DNSSAB Children's Services Budget is made up of several funding pockets, each with its own purpose, as demonstrated in the visual below. The largest portion of the funding received is for the CWELCC system

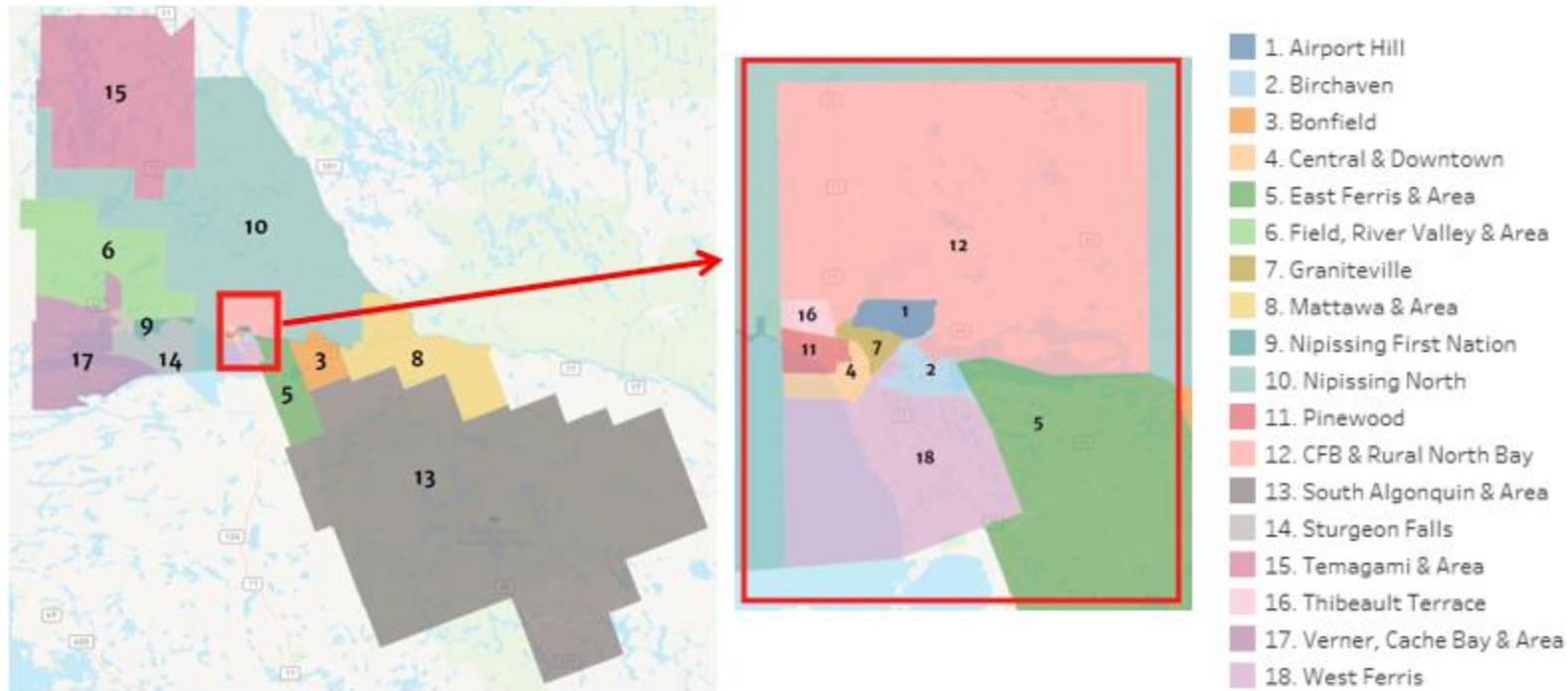
(41%), while the next largest portion (17%) is dedicated to supporting the general operating costs of the licensed child care system.



It is important to note that the funding formula is being revised by the Ministry and a cost-based funding approach is slated to be implemented in January 2025. DNSSAB will update any policies or procedures that may be impacted by the formula change and will work with service providers to support them through the funding changes.

## Children & Families in the District of Nipissing

The District of Nipissing has a population of approximately 85,000 people covering 17,000 square kilometers. This includes 11 municipalities, two First Nations and two unorganized areas: Nipissing North and Nipissing South. Given its vast region, including both small urban cities as well as many rural communities, the plan for services must take into consideration their varying experiences and needs. In order to better understand and address needs, the District was further divided into 18 neighbourhoods, which were formed by joining multiple Census Dissemination Areas (DAs).<sup>4</sup>

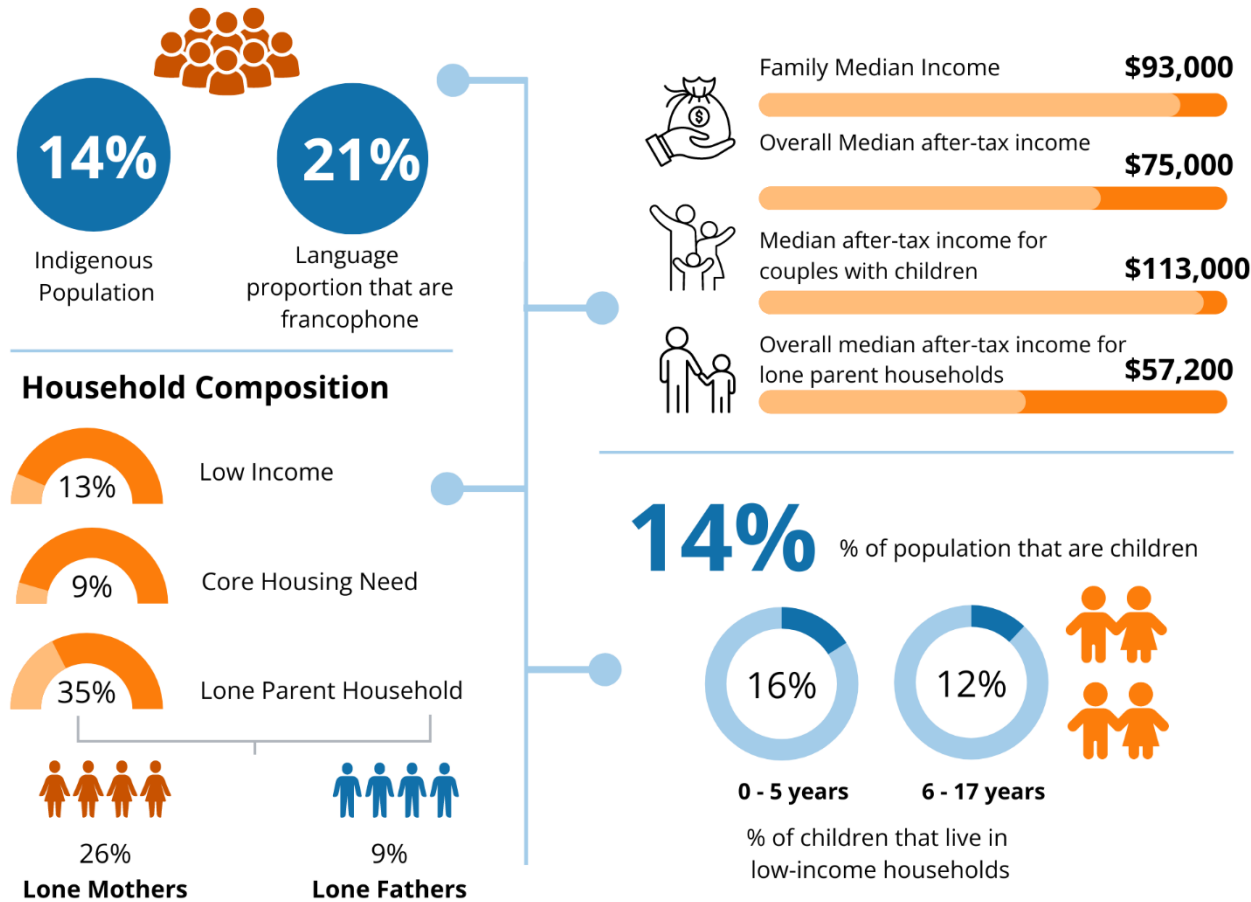


<sup>4</sup> A dissemination area is a small area composed of one or more neighbouring dissemination blocks and is the smallest standard geographic area for which all census data are disseminated.



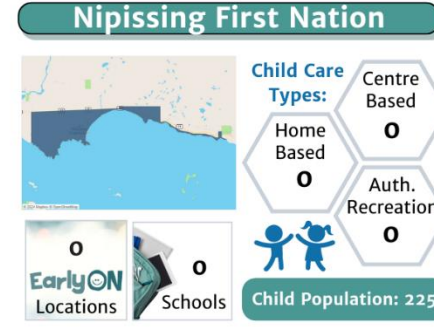
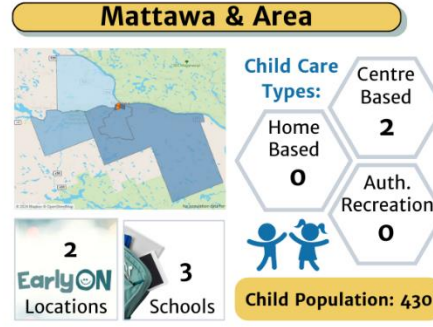
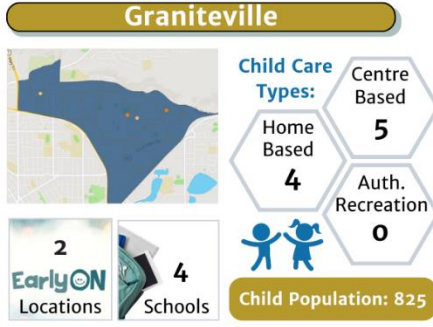
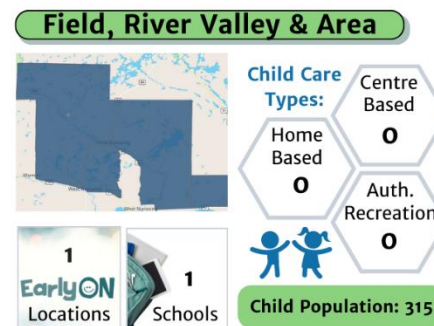
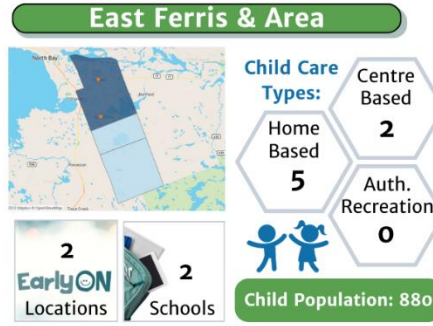
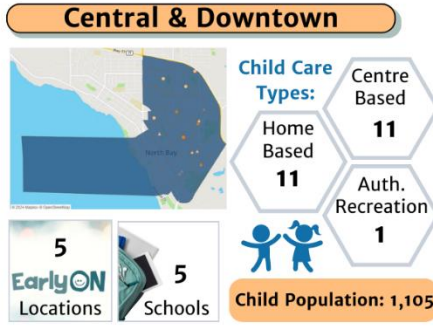
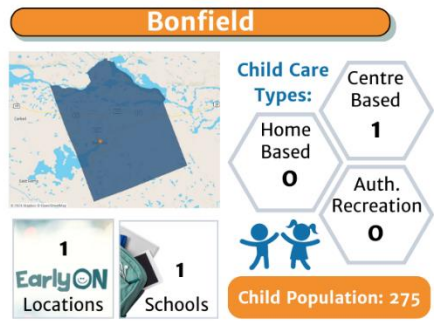
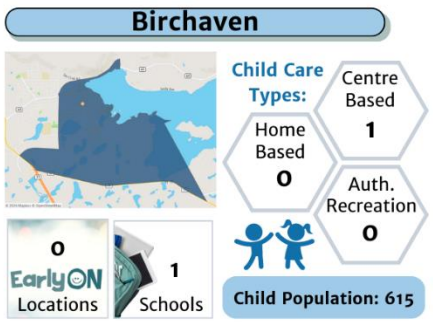
## District of Nipissing Demographic Profile

According to the 2021 Census, there are 10,425 children (0-12 years) in the Nipissing District, with just over one third being in the Infant to Preschool years (0-4 years). The graphic below provides a more detailed look at the District's overall demographic profile, including median income, language, Indigenous identity, and household composition. Of note, 16% of the district's children between 0-5 years old are living in low-income households.




## Neighbourhood Profiles

The following visuals provide a look at the child population (0-12 years) and early years and child care services in each of the 18 neighbourhoods across the District. This information, in combination with other data, is used for planning future services and expansions. The neighbourhood of Nipissing First Nation does have a child care centre, but it is not overseen or supported by DNSSAB; therefore, no services are identified for this purpose.



### Nipissing North




**Child Care Types:**

- Centre Based: 0
- Home Based: 0
- Auth. Recreation: 0

2 EarlyON Locations, 1 Schools

Child Population: 130

### Pinewood




**Child Care Types:**

- Centre Based: 2
- Home Based: 2
- Auth. Recreation: 0

0 EarlyON Locations, 2 Schools

Child Population: 695

### Rural & CFB North Bay




**Child Care Types:**

- Centre Based: 1
- Home Based: 1
- Auth. Recreation: 0

1 EarlyON Locations, 0 Schools

Child Population: 565

### South Algonquin & Area




**Child Care Types:**

- Centre Based: 1
- Home Based: 2
- Auth. Recreation: 0

2 EarlyON Locations, 2 Schools

Child Population: 55

### Sturgeon Falls




**Child Care Types:**

- Centre Based: 6
- Home Based: 2
- Auth. Recreation: 0

4 EarlyON Locations, 5 Schools

Child Population: 860

### Temagami & Area




**Child Care Types:**

- Centre Based: 1
- Home Based: 0
- Auth. Recreation: 0

1 EarlyON Locations, 1 Schools

Child Population: 105

### Thibault Terrace




**Child Care Types:**

- Centre Based: 0
- Home Based: 0
- Auth. Recreation: 0

1 EarlyON Locations, 0 Schools

Child Population: 415

### Verner, Cache Bay & Area




**Child Care Types:**

- Centre Based: 1
- Home Based: 1
- Auth. Recreation: 0

1 EarlyON Locations, 1 Schools

Child Population: 585

### West Ferris



**Child Care Types:**

- Centre Based: 8
- Home Based: 9
- Auth. Recreation: 0

1 EarlyON Locations, 6 Schools

Child Population: 1,760

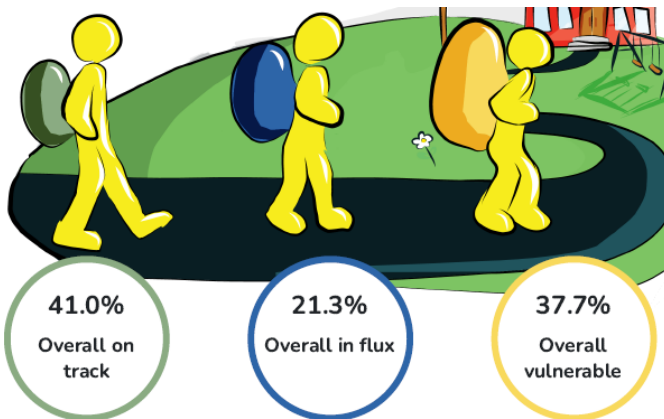


## Early Development Instrument

The Early Development Instrument (EDI), developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies, measures a child's ability to meet age-appropriate developmental milestones at school entry. The EDI questionnaire is completed by teachers for children in senior kindergarten across five domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communications skills and general knowledge.



The EDI identifies vulnerabilities within and across groups of children for each of the five domains, as well as an overall vulnerability level. It is important to note that the Cycle VI collection of the EDI questionnaire, originally planned for 2021, was delayed until late in the 2023 school year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that some of the children in this cohort may have experienced isolation due to the pandemic early in their development, it was anticipated that there may be a significant change in vulnerability levels compared to the previous cycle (2018).



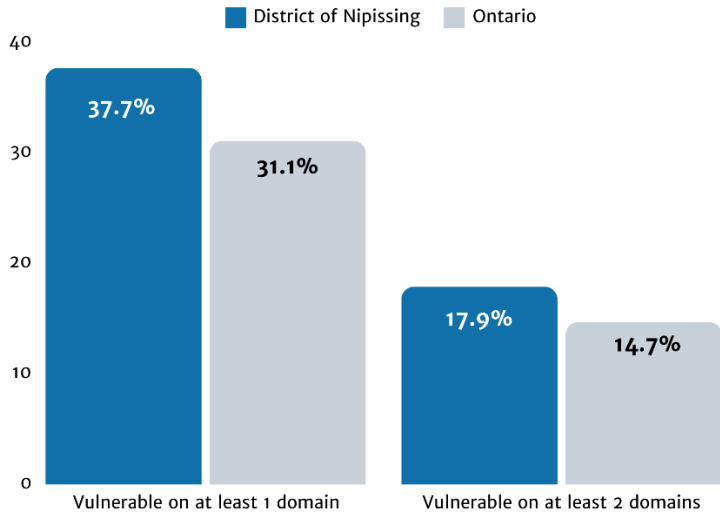
Children are considered vulnerable within a domain if they score below the tenth percentile as compared to their peers. This visual demonstrates the percentage of children in the District of Nipissing that are considered On Track, In Flux, and Vulnerable (see descriptions for each category below). The results indicate that only **41%** of children are considered to be developing well in all five EDI domains.



**On Track** – these children are considered to be developing well in all areas.

**In Flux** – these children are not considered vulnerable, but may need more support in certain areas.

**Vulnerable** – these children are at an increased risk of difficulties, and without additional support, may continue to experience challenges.



Results from the 2023 EDI administration revealed that overall, **38%** of children in the District of Nipissing were considered **vulnerable in at least one domain** of their development, while **18%** were considered **vulnerable in at least two domains** of their development.

Although these results appear to be similar to the results of the province for Cycle VI, this represents a significant increase in the percentage of vulnerable children (on at least 1 domain) compared to the previous cycle for the District of Nipissing (i.e. 30% in 2018).

Research linking EDI findings to later educational data have demonstrated that kindergarten vulnerability predicts ongoing vulnerability in the school system, and may predict a child's lifelong health, learning and behaviour.

DNSSAB will be completing a neighbourhood analysis of the EDI vulnerability data. These results, taken together with other demographic and system-wide information, will help identify the needs in each neighbourhood. This will allow DNSSAB to work with service providers and community partners to develop strategies that will address these vulnerabilities through new or existing supports.



## The Early Years and Child Care Sector

### Licensed Child Care Services

**Licensed home-based child care** providers have a contract with one of 3 licensed home child care agencies in the District. An individual home child care provider can care for up to six children under the age of 13 and can offer a variety of services including full-day care, before and after school care, extended hours and overnight care. Home-based child care often allows for siblings to be placed together and a small group size.

As of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, there were 41 Home Child Care Providers across the district, with the majority operating within North Bay and surrounding areas. This represents 8 new home child care providers opening since the end of December 2023.



**15 Agencies**  
43 Child Care Sites

**Licensed centre-based programs** operate in a range of different locations across the District, including workplaces, community centres, schools and places of worship. Centre-based programs offer full-time or part-time spaces and can include full-day care, as well as before and after school programs. Licensed child care centres typically allow children to be with other children their age,

hire qualified educators and offer activities designed for children at different stages of development. There are currently 15 agencies providing licensed child care at 43 different sites throughout the District. Although extended care services have existed in the past, there are currently no weekend or extended evening care hours available in the District.

## Child Care Demand

The District of Nipissing Child Care Waitlist Registry is designed to make it easier for families to find and apply for licensed child care in the District. By submitting applications in one centralized location, families and caregivers can register for any of the licensed child care programs (home and/or centre-based) in the District that best meets their needs. The system is used to forecast demand for child care by monitoring children that are overdue for care as well as those that require care in the future.

Although licensed child care capacity in centre-based programs has grown to **3,363 spaces** in recent years, operating capacity (i.e. the amount of child care spaces that can be accommodated) is lower as a result of workforce shortages. In fact, the District is currently operating at approximately **56% of licensed capacity** for centre-based programs, placing additional pressures on the child care waitlist.


For this reason, it is important to continue to explore the expansion of licensed home child care spaces, as this type of care is currently providing over 200 additional child care spaces for children and families in need.

### Licensed Centre-Based Spaces

Infant	173
Toddler	350
Preschool	827
JK/SK	629
School Age	1,324
Family Grouping	60







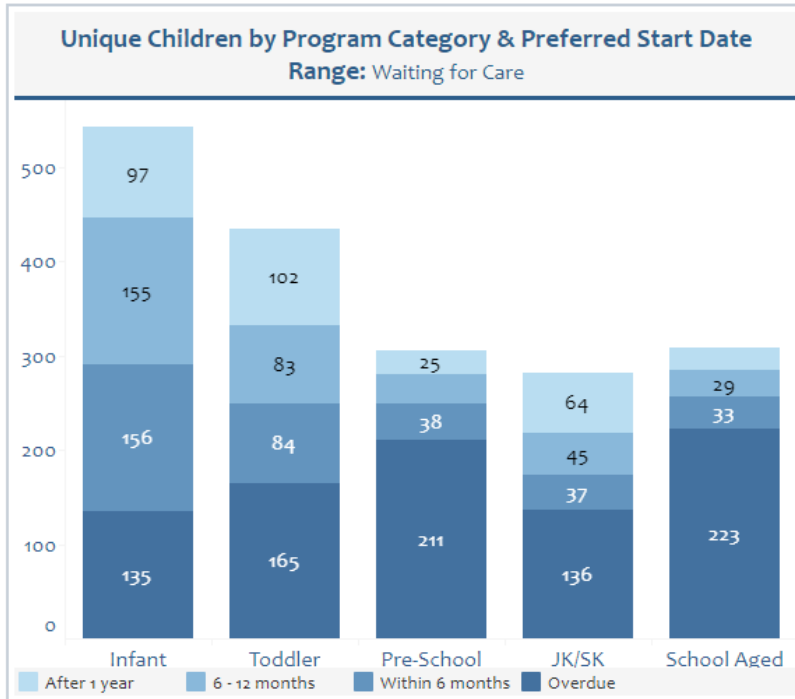
Access to Care, which is calculated by dividing the total licensed capacity by the child population, provides an indication of how many children would have access to child care if they required it. When combining both centre-based and home-based licensed child care spaces, the current **Access to Care** ratio for children in the District of Nipissing (as a whole) is approximately **35%**. However, when considering the lower operating capacity of centre-based programs, the **Adjusted Access to Care** for the District is closer to **20%**.

As part of the CWELCC space expansion plan, Access to Care ratios for children from 0 to 5 years of age were used by the Ministry of Education to allocate new child care spaces to each Service System Manager across the province. The District of Nipissing was allotted 182 new licensed school and community-based child care spaces for children 0-5 years to be created between 2022 and 2026. It is important to note that 73 of those spaces were committed to a previously approved school build in 2022, which was delayed to 2023.

DNSSAB worked closely with the province to identify priority neighbourhoods for space creation within the given allocation, which is detailed in the District of Nipissing Directed Growth Plan (Appendix A). In order to determine priority neighbourhoods, the waitlist was further analyzed by breaking it down into two groups: *Children Waiting for Care* and *All Children*. *Children Waiting for Care* includes children who do not have any type of placement in licensed child care and are considered to be truly waiting for care. *All Children* includes children waiting for care and those that already have a placement but are still on the list for another centre or a different program (e.g., were placed as an infant but are waiting for a JK/SK before school space).



As of April 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, there were **1,480 unique children** waiting for care, with **749** of those children being **passed their preferred start date**. Even if the sector began operating at full licensed capacity, there would still be 452 unique children overdue for care in the Infant to Preschool age groups. That number jumps to over 1,000 within the next year.



In addition to monitoring the 'when', the waitlist also allows DNSSAB to monitor the 'where' children might require care. By connecting waitlist information to the District's neighbourhoods (based on the parent's/guardian's address), it is possible to determine the neighbourhoods with the greatest need. As it currently stands, the top 5 neighbourhoods with the largest waitlist for Children Waiting for Care include: West Ferris (233), Central & Downtown (177), Pinewood (153), Graniteville (142), and East Ferris & Area (108).

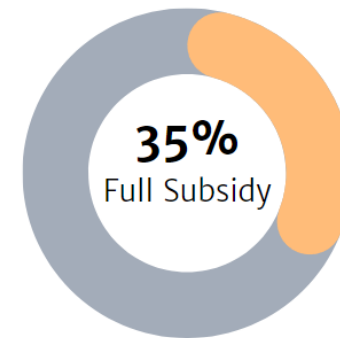
Although the Access to Care ratio was considered in the top 5 for the province, it is clear that the current licensed child care system does not meet the needs of the District and DNSSAB will continue to advocate for additional spaces.

## Child Care Affordability

The Children's Services Department manages and administers the Child Care Fee Subsidy Program, which aims to help families with the cost of their child care expenses. It is an essential support for many parents and caregivers, as it helps to balance the demands of a career and family while participating in the workforce or pursuing education or training. To qualify for child care fee subsidy, families must live in the District of Nipissing and parents/guardians must be employed, in school, participating in a training program, or have a special needs referral (for child or parent). The amount of subsidy that the family qualifies for is based on a provincially mandated income test based on their combined net income which will calculate a daily portion for the family. These daily portions are broken down and applied to each child. The daily parent fee can be further reduced by 50% for children who are eligible for CWELCC fee reductions, i.e. six years of age or younger.

Even with the introduction of the CWELCC system and reductions in child care fees, families in the District of Nipissing still require support with their child care costs. In 2023, DNSSAB provided fee subsidies for **1,154** children (772 families). Approximately 35% of those children were fully subsidized (parents did not pay anything for child care), whereas 65% of children were partially subsidized.

Given that approximately 70% of families receiving fee subsidy have annual income levels below the median for the District, it is important to ensure the fee subsidy system remains intact to continue to support those families in need.



## EarlyON Child and Family Centres

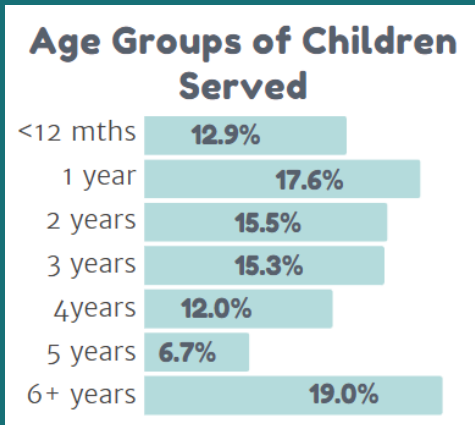
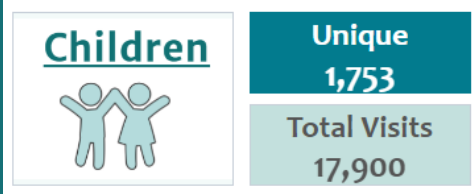
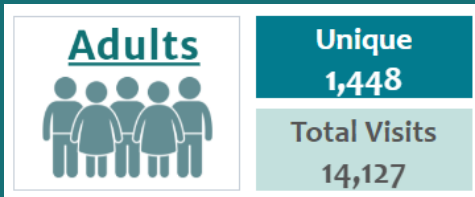
EarlyON Child and Family Centres in the Nipissing District provide parents and caregivers with a warm, welcoming, and inclusive environment for children in the early years (supports prenatal to six years of age). The goal is to provide families with access to high quality services and support them in their role as their children's first teachers, enhance their well-being, and enrich their knowledge about early learning and development. EarlyON Centres are dedicated to supporting the relationships between families and their children by giving them a place where they can come together and engage in positive, responsive, and meaningful experiences. Programs are flexible, accessible, free of any charges, and in many instances, offered in English and/or French.



There are 6 agencies contracted throughout the District of Nipissing to provide EarlyON programming at **26** locations, including a Mobile and Outreach program. The goal of the EarlyON Mobile and Outreach program is to deliver programming in targeted and underserved areas throughout the District. In addition, one EarlyON service provider has developed a partnership with the Transition House and the Crisis Centre in North Bay to deliver EarlyON programming to families using those services. To protect families' privacy, these sites are not listed on the DNSSAB website or open to public attendance.



# EarlyON 2023



EarlyON providers in the District of Nipissing produce monthly calendars that highlight all of the wonderful activities and programs available for children and families, which are accessible on the [Children's Services EarlyON website page](#).

As with many other services during the Covid-19 pandemic, EarlyON Child and Family Centres were forced to cancel in-person programming in 2020. To continue offering services, they pivoted to online programming. As in-person services slowly began to reopen in 2021, service levels gradually increased. In 2023, there was a **38%** increase in children served from 2022, bringing numbers served closer to pre-pandemic levels. Families are also attending multiple sites, with **26%** of families attending 2 or more locations.

Recognizing that outdoor play performs an important role in the development of children's overall well-being, there were **208** outdoor sessions that support outdoor play and learning. In addition to providing physical benefits, these sessions can strengthen functioning in cognitive areas such as perception, attention, creative problem solving, and complex thinking.

In addition, 9 virtual sessions were held as part of a phase-out process following the COVID-19 pandemic. These sessions are offered at rural sites based on requests from families (such as for virtual circle time). Although the focus will be on in-person programming, virtual programs will be continued to be offered when and where there is a need.

## Francophone Services

DNSSAB, as a designated service area under the French Language Services Act, is required to ensure the provision of French-language child care, EarlyON Child and Family Centres, and supports for children with special needs where there is an identified need.



Across the District, there are 12 Francophone child care sites and one bilingual site, while EarlyON has five Francophone and nine bilingual sites. Planning for children's services is based on individual community requirements, which vary across the 18 urban and rural neighbourhoods in the District. Urban and rural neighbourhoods that have a particularly high Francophone population include Sturgeon Falls (62%); Verner, Cache Bay and Area (60%); Field, River Valley and Area (54%); Mattawa and Area (23%); and Bonfield (20%). Each of these neighbourhoods have access to Francophone services, whether it be licensed child care and/or EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

## Indigenous Services



Indigenous-led child care and EarlyON Child and Family programs support Indigenous communities in determining and assessing child care and early years needs while providing direct support to children and families.

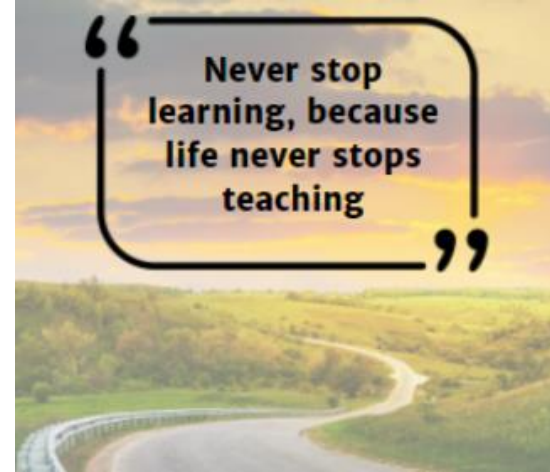
Urban and rural neighbourhoods in the District of Nipissing that have a particularly high Indigenous population include Mattawa and Area (29%); Temagami and Area (28%); Sturgeon Falls (21%); and South Algonquin and Area (20%).



Indigenous-led child care and EarlyON programs are both operating as part of the North Bay Indigenous Hub, which also includes Primary Care and Traditional Healing Services.



Culturally appropriate licensed child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs and services are important for many Indigenous families. It has been noted that Elders, ceremonies and access to traditional medicines encourage and promote well-being amongst Indigenous families and children. With the guidance received from Indigenous partners, service providers and community partners, the goal is to provide appropriate programs and services that demonstrate appreciation and respect of Indigenous families. Cultural awareness and understanding continues to be a key priority in meeting the needs of Indigenous families.



## Quality Assurance Achievement Program

DNSSAB is committed to ensuring that early years and child care services purchased by DNSSAB are of high quality, accessible, inclusive and responsive to the growing needs of children and their families throughout the District of Nipissing.

DNSSAB recognizes the uniqueness of each program as there is not a “one size fits all” model for early years and child care services. However, outcomes are very similar. The Quality Assurance Achievement Program (QAAP) was designed to align with the Ministry’s pedagogical document *How Does Learning Happen?*, which encourages all early years and child care programs to provide a holistic approach to optimal learning and development for every child.

DNSSAB’s Quality Assurance team is made up of Quality Assurance Program Specialists (QAPS) and the Children’s Services Supervisor (CSS). The QAPS works with child care educator teams, EarlyON practitioners, and supervisors to support quality early learning environments for children and families. Their role is to mentor, collaborate and support reflective practice and to help programs achieve and maintain quality programming for children. The CSS works closely with administrators, supervisors, and directors to support with the implementation of quality practices within programs and services.

The QAAP has three main program goals:

- **Build on Relationships** – DNSSAB appreciates the collaborative relationships that have been formed over the years and continues to strive towards open, honest, and transparent connections with all service providers.

- **Build Capacity** - The Quality Assurance Achievement Program has been developed to support with capacity building within the sector so that programs can provide high quality and inclusive family-centre early years and child care settings.
- **Enhance Reflective Practices** - Reflective practice is learning from daily situations and concerns that arise while working in an early years and child care setting.

The QAAP was designed with the intent to support early years and child care programs on their journey to quality services. It has been said that quality is not a destination, but a journey to continuous improvement. With that philosophy and approach in mind, each program's journey will be documented, starting with Assessing the Journey (programs self assessment), followed by the QA Annual Site Visit Report. The Annual Site Visit Report will be updated following each site visit, reflection, and conversation and will assist programs when tracking and assessing progress as well as reflecting on new ideas and implementing innovative strategies as they continue their quality assurance journey throughout the year.



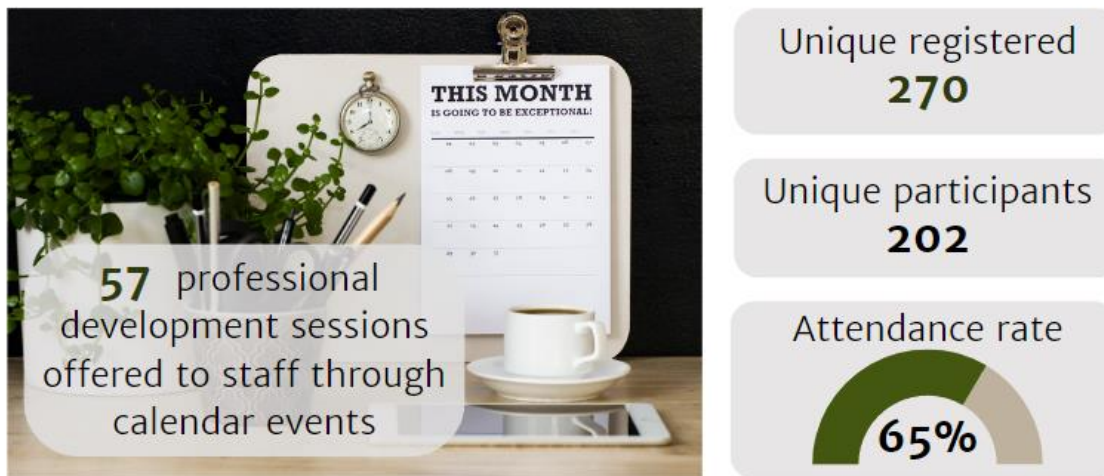
### Professional Learning and Development

As an added support to quality early years and child care services, the Children's Services team plans for and organizes professional learning and development opportunities. These opportunities are based on

the results of the professional learning survey, ongoing provider feedback, and quality assurance observations. The available sessions are listed in a calendar format on the [Professional Learning](#) section of the DNSSAB Children's Services website.

The professional learning and development opportunities are intended to support all professionals working within the early years and licensed child care sector to enhance their knowledge and skills in relation to How Does Learning Happen?, and to build on professional capacity which in turn enables programs to provide high quality services. The following visual provides an overview of the professional learning sessions that were offered in 2023.

## *DNSSAB Planned Professional Learning*



There have already been 33 sessions offered so far in 2024, with many more scheduled throughout the remainder of the year.

## Professional Learning Portal

In addition to offering real-time professional development opportunities, Children's Services has developed a Professional Learning Portal, where early years and child care professionals working in the District of Nipissing can access a variety of learning modules and resources on demand. The modules cover a variety of topics, including How Does Learning Happen?, the Looksee, MEHRIT Centre Self-Regulation Series, Telus Health session, and much more!



The graphic above displays the portal usage and resources that were available in 2023.

In addition to the modules, the portal also includes a Community of Practice section where like-minded early years and child care professionals can come together in a forum style to ask questions, share knowledge and resources related to specific topics, and learn from each other.



## Inclusion Support Program

All early years and child care programs ought to ensure the provision of inclusive services that meet the diverse needs of children and families, helping them to achieve their full potential. To support this objective, DNSSAB has a Purchase of Service Agreement with two community agencies to deliver the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) to every early years and licensed child care program in the District of Nipissing.

With the support of ISP Resource Consultants, the early years and child care professionals in the District remain committed to creating inclusive environments and services where all children can grow, learn, and thrive together. These environments and services ensure that all children and their families have access to the support and resources that they require. The goal of the ISP is to ensure that all children can actively and meaningfully participate in early years and licensed child care programs, and that they are supported to form authentic, caring relationships with their peers and educators/practitioners.

The Inclusion Support Program provides an efficient and focused approach to delivering services and includes the following components:

- Supports programs to develop **high quality inclusion policies and practices**
- Offers **professional development and core training** to program staff
- Supports program staff through **modeling, mentoring, and coaching**
- Focuses on the **individual strengths and skills** of all team members

To support consistency and ensure continuity for the program staff, children, and families, Resource Consultants are assigned to support specific agencies and programs. The supports provided will vary depending on the specific needs of the children and programs, and can include group consultations and/or individual supports (e.g. case management, Individual Support Plan, etc.). The Resource Consultant can also support programs with the completion of developmental screening tools such as the Looksee Checklist and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ).

Furthermore, Resource Consultants support with professional development related to providing inclusive services. This includes mandatory core training (BMST, Looksee/ASQ, Handle with Care) as well as additional program specific training, depending on needs, to build capacity within the educators and practitioners working with children and families in early years and licensed child care programs in the District.

Regardless of the level of support provided, the ISP ensures that experiences and program routines are adapted so that all children can participate actively and meaningfully in programs. When children are together as part of the group, their development is enhanced and positive social attitudes are fostered.



## Community Partners

Fostering community connections is essential to ensuring that services and supports are organized around the needs of children and their families. Not only is it important to continue to foster connections with the early years and child care sector, but to also engage with the broader children’s health and development service sector. The Children’s Services Department has supported district-wide initiatives for many years with a range of partners and will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate on future projects.



## Planning for the Next Ten Years

DNSSAB has identified five high-priority goals to advance over the next ten years, which also align closely with the Ontario Government's child care vision as outlined in the Access and Inclusion Framework 2023. This vision is based on five key pillars – quality, inclusion, affordability, access, and data and reporting.

Each of the goals corresponds to a set of key focus areas, or specific priorities within the five goals, as well as tangible actions DNSSAB commits to undertaking.

The actions have been divided into two groups:

### Underway

DNSSAB is already progressing on these actions and intends to continue to expand efforts where there is a positive impact on the sector.

### New

New opportunities that DNSSAB is committed to exploring, which were highlighted as promising practices through jurisdictional research or feedback received from community engagement sessions.



# 1 INCREASE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE LICENSED CHILD CARE AND EARLYON PROGRAMMING

**Provincial pillars:** Affordability, Inclusion, Access

Key Focus Areas:

- Leverage funding opportunities to enhance access to affordable licensed child care services
- Enhance access to flexible licensed child care options
- Build capacity within the home licensed child care sector
- Expand early years and licensed child care programs to underserved communities

Leverage funding opportunities to enhance access to affordable licensed child care services

## Underway

- Promote the provincial funding via the Early Childhood Educators Qualifications Upgrade Program

## New

- Review Employment Ontario resources for employers to identify potential funding opportunities
- Explore skills development funding opportunities, e.g., via Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)
- Review local labour market and workforce planning boards



## Enhance access to flexible licensed child care options

### Underway

- Advocate for greater provincial funding flexibility

### New

- Work with municipalities to explore opportunities for converting private space for child care facilities
- Explore whether old school buildings could be used for child care
- Explore capital funding opportunities for smaller municipalities
- Work with providers to increase weekend, evening, and part-time child care

## Build capacity within the licensed home child care sector

### Underway

- Hold information sessions in partnership with municipalities to promote home child care set-up
- Promote home child care with newcomers to the District

### New

- Develop and implement processes to encourage providers in unlicensed sectors to join licensed

agencies

- Develop a “Community of Practice” of home child care providers for ongoing and enhanced training, introduction of new skills and approaches
- Advocate for and implement processes to reduce the administrative burden for existing home child care agencies operating in Nipissing District

### Expand early years and licensed child care programs to underserved communities

#### Underway

- Support centre-based facilities in remote communities with funding to ensure ongoing viability
- Conduct a “cost of care” exercise to identify the real cost of operating each centre and advocate for additional funding if required
- Provide EarlyON programs to rural/remote communities via EarlyON Outreach & Mobile services
- Provide access to taxi services for accessing EarlyON programs, where possible

#### New

- Work with service providers to explore incentives for educators to work in more remote communities

## 2 STRENGTHEN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF THE EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE WORKFORCE

**Provincial pillars:** Quality, Access

### Key Focus Areas:

- Increase the pipeline of new early years and child care workers
- Raise public awareness about the critical importance of early childhood education
- Enhance strategic workforce planning across the sector
- Recognize and support early years and child care workers for the valuable work they do
- Advocate for enhanced wages and benefits for early years and child care workers

### Increase the pipeline of new early years and child care workers

#### **Underway**

- Offer grants to help support early years professionals to obtain their ECE through apprenticeships or diploma programs
- Work with local colleges to offer online ECE programs for individuals already working in early years and child care
- Work with child care centres to support ECE students in completing their placement requirements while continuing to work
- Promote the ECE career pathway, including through job fairs, social media campaigns, and high school presentations

### New

- Use labour market information to determine how many qualified early years and child care workers there are in the District to refine approaches for re-attracting them back to the sector
- Explore partnerships with local colleges and universities to provide tuition reimbursement for qualified early years and child care workers who remain in the District and work in the sector for a defined period
- Advocate to allow professionals in child care-adjacent sectors to work in approved roles
- Explore partnerships with colleges, early years and child care partners, and employment partners to provide a Pre-ECE Certificate program
- Work with the Provincial and Federal governments to incentivize newcomers to work in early years and child care in Nipissing District

Raise public awareness about the critical importance of early childhood education

### Underway

- Launch a promotional campaign to attract new students into an early years and child care pathway
- Work with school boards to promote the early years and child care sector as a desirable career choice
- Promote the benefits of attending EarlyON programs, including that there is no cost to families

### New

- Focus on recruitment initiatives targeted at male students to achieve a greater gender balance in the early years and child care sector

## Enhance strategic workforce planning across the sector

### New

- Align ongoing service system planning with the District's economic development strategy
- Convene an early years and child care recruitment and retention committee that meets regularly to review and design future workforce planning initiatives

## Recognize and support early years and child care workers for the valuable work they do

### Underway

- Support an early years and child care recognition program to show appreciation for individuals in a range of ways, including an Early Years and Child Care Appreciation Day and social media campaign
- Provide early years and child care workers with mental health supports, including through professional development training

### New

- Explore opportunities to collaborate with the province to recognize early years and child care workers in new ways



## Advocate for enhanced wages and benefits for early years and child care workers

### Underway

- Collaborate with the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA), and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to lobby the province for more early years and child care sector funding

## 3 ENHANCE QUALITY AND PROGRAM DELIVERY IN EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE SETTINGS

**Provincial pillars:** Quality, Access

### Key Focus Areas:

- Invest in accessible, relevant, and high-quality training opportunities for early years and child care workers
- Work with northern colleges and universities on the continuous improvement of early childhood education training courses
- Maximize access to all key services
- Enhance inclusive practices and mental health supports

## Invest in accessible, relevant, and high-quality training opportunities for early years and child care workers

### Underway

- Provide no-cost professional development and training on an ongoing basis on relevant topics such as behaviour management and mental health<sup>5</sup>
- Promote the Professional Learning Portal, an online platform for accessing training and professional development opportunities, as well as a Community of Practice
- Offer a Positive Early Childhood Education course (PECE) to help mentor and support ECEs
- Offer a leadership program for supervisors and mentors (this is a micro-credential offered in partnership with a college)
- Provide training to early years and child care boards of directors to upskill individuals on key topics such as financial literacy (in partnership with colleges)
- Provide a Child Care 101 manual for new board members
- Modernize professional development training on an ongoing annual basis, utilizing feedback provided through surveys and observations during Quality Assurance site visits
- Develop an early years and child care mental health initiative, which one person from each agency will lead
- Share information about DNSSAB-offered learning opportunities with early years and child care workers, including at monthly centre meetings and online

<sup>5</sup> Any educator who attends on their own time is also paid, for up to 10 hrs max.

### New

- Engage more community partners to offer a larger variety of training options

## Work on the continuous improvement of early years and child care programs

### Underway

- Mobilize a renewed approach to the continuous quality improvement of early years and child care programs and services (i.e. Self-Assessment; additional reflection and goal setting, mentorship and supports, etc.)

### New

- Collaborate with colleges and universities to include more specific training in the ECE program (e.g. EarlyON programs, inclusive services, etc.)

## Maximize access to all key services

### Underway

- Work within the Directed Growth Plan to maximize the number of children that have access to licensed child care in or around their neighbourhoods
- Ensure a variety of EarlyON services that are accessible for families (e.g. time of day, location, etc.)

- Operate a data-informed mobile outreach initiative to ensure remote communities in particular have access to EarlyON programming

### New

- Explore development of a centralized ECE supply list for agencies to use, which may include individuals who are not currently working as full-time ECEs
- Work with child care agencies to offer more part-time slots to accommodate shift work
- Work with child care agencies to ensure care is offered beyond 6pm at some locations
- Evaluate the need for additional EarlyON programming
- Explore options to enhance wheelchair accessibility requirements for centres

### Work with northern colleges and universities on the continuous improvement of early childhood education training courses

### New

- Collaborate with colleges and universities to provide EarlyON-specific training

## Enhance inclusive practices and mental health supports

### Underway

- Provide training through the Professional Learning Portal and PECE program, including on topics that may not have been covered by colleges or universities
- Provide mental health resources online via the Professional Learning Portal
- Provide online resources and references to support families (e.g. mental health, screen guides, and bullying) via the Parent Resources section of DNSSAB's website
- Provide research support services to families living in remote areas to help them access services

### New

- Explore opportunities to hire more ISP resources
- Create ISP career pathing opportunities for ECEs
- Work with agencies to ensure that at least one individual is trained in each key area, e.g., speech development, sharing sensitive news, referrals, etc.

## Develop innovative approaches to meet the community's diverse needs

### Underway

- Leverage the Francophone Centre to strengthen programming, provide Francophone educators with support, and recruit additional early years and child care workers (including newcomers)



- Operate Indigenous-specific programming from an Indigenous Hub

### New

- Explore options to offer more Francophone services, including infant-specific options
- Create specialist roles for priority areas, for example outdoor play or behavioural management experts. These roles may receive certifications
- Partner with the Multicultural centre to ensure families are aware of and can access early years programs

## Explore how technology might help enhance access to early years and child care services

### Underway

- Post all EarlyON Calendars to the DNSSAB website; advertise on social media when new calendars are available

### New

- Work with providers to offer virtual services to improve access for remote and low-income families, e.g., for EarlyON programming, videos or support resources, etc.
- Enhance online system navigation supports to help parents and caregivers find the services they need

## 4 IMPROVE COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

**Provincial pillars:** Quality, Inclusion

**Key Focus Areas:**

- Participate in regular discussions with northern colleges and universities
- Facilitate the sharing of best practices across centres, and with other service system managers
- Help ensure a seamless transition from licensed child care to the school system

**Participate in regular discussions with northern colleges and universities**

### **Underway**

- Participate in regular discussions with the College ECE Advisory Committee to provide updates on the curriculum, programming, and community trends

**Facilitate the sharing of best practices across centres, and with other service system managers**

### **Underway**

- Continue to cultivate strong relationships with service providers, including through individual discussions about quality assurance and key updates, and bi-monthly meetings with all agencies to share best practices (move to a hybrid model to encourage attendance)

- Communicate any changes to service providers regarding funding, reporting requirements or decisions clearly and concisely, and provide guidance and support as needed to maximize resources
- Hold bi-monthly meetings with Inclusion Support Program providers to ensure consistent, high-quality services and access to professional development
- Facilitate a community of practice for educators and leaders as a forum for idea exchange and sharing of best practices
- Work with service providers to set individual performance goals and monitor and track outcomes

### Help ensure a seamless transition from licensed child care to the school system

#### Underway

- Create ISP Transition to School plans for children with exceptional needs. The development of the plan should include participation by the ISP staff, the family, child care staff and the receiving school.
- Reinstate quarterly meetings with school board partners to discuss child care
- Raise awareness with school board partners about what child care centres do and why they are critical to children's development and their transition to school

## 5 ENHANCE AND IMPROVE SERVICE SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAM DELIVERY

**Provincial pillars:** Data & Reporting, Access

### Key Focus Areas:

- Ensure that the program registration, waitlist, and fee subsidy application systems are streamlined and easy to use for families
- Reduce administration burden for centres, while collecting all required data to measure desired outcomes
- Monitor key metrics to measure and deliver desired outcomes

**Ensure that the program registration, waitlist, and fee subsidy application systems are streamlined and easy to use for families**

### **Underway**

- Monitor the demand for child care using OneList – an integrated waitlist management system that allows families to apply for all programs and services in one place (providers can access the data and DNSSAB can monitor inputs in real time)
- Provide and manage online Fee Subsidy application (OLAF) for families
- Link fee subsidy applications and information directly from OCCMS to Tableau to support reporting
- Manage EarlyON attendance through an integrated Event Registration Attendance Manager system (ERAM) to support centralized monitoring and tracking

## Reduce administration burden for centres, while collecting all required data to measure desired outcomes

### Underway

- Manage engagement, including for event registration and scheduling polls, through streamlined technology platforms to help reduce administrative burden
- Develop a new tool allowing providers to produce reports more efficiently, reducing their financial reporting burden

## Monitor key metrics to measure and deliver desired outcomes

### Underway

- Gather information from the community on key programs, including fee subsidy and EarlyON, to inform continuous improvement





## Implementing the Plan and Monitoring Progress

This section supports monitoring of progress against the service system plan over the next ten years. It provides a set of measures and associated annual targets, designed to help track progress toward each of the five goals and focus areas.

The measures should be reviewed annually to ensure that they continue to reflect evolving circumstances and government priorities. New measures may also be added by DNSSAB as necessary. In some cases, the extent to which DNSSAB is able to implement the plan will depend on external factors such as the District’s growth plan and provincial limitations e.g., the funding formula.



### 1 Increase access to affordable licensed child care and EarlyON programming

Provincial pillars: Affordability, Inclusion, Access

	Measures 	Annual targets 
1	Number of licensed child care spaces	As per Directed Growth Plan
2	Number of children and families attending EarlyON	2% Increase
3	Number of children on waitlist to receive ISP services	0
4	Number of children on fee subsidy waitlist	0
5	Number of vacant spaces within licensed capacity	5% Reduction

## 2 Strengthen recruitment and retention of the early years and child care workforce



Provincial pillars: Quality, Access

	Measures 	Annual targets 
1	Number of DNSSAB ECE apprenticeship grants administered	3
2	Number of new early years and child care workers attracted to the sector	3% increase
3	Turnover rate for employees in licensed child care	Overall % decrease
4	Promotion of the ECE career pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 job fairs</li> <li>• 50 Outreach Sessions<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• 24 social media posts</li> </ul>
5	Number of professional development sessions offered on an annual basis	20 sessions

<sup>6</sup> These community outreach sessions might include specific promotional campaigns aimed at newcomers, low-income families, families in specific communities, etc.



# 3 Enhance quality and program delivery in early years and child care settings

Provincial pillars: Quality, Access

	Measures 	Annual targets 
1	Parent and caregiver satisfaction rating	90% satisfaction rating
2	Percentage of staff who are actively using the Professional Learning Portal	4% increase
3	Percentage of staff registered that attend the professional learning sessions offered	75% attendance rate
4	Number of enrolments in PECE course	Minimum of 5 enrolments per course
5	Number of PD participants completing the DNSSAB PD Feedback Survey	10% increase
6	Number of quality assurance site visits and follow-ups	100 visits and follow-ups
7	Percentage of provider goals met each year through quality assurance tool	75% goals met
8	Percentage of programs demonstrating an overall growth in their journey to quality services	90% of programs showing growth



# 4 Improve communication, engagement, and partnerships

Provincial pillars: Quality, Inclusion

	Measures 	Annual targets 
1	Number of responses to community planning surveys	10% increase
2	Promotion of licensed child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 job fairs</li> <li>• 50 Outreach Sessions</li> <li>• 24 social media posts</li> </ul>
3	Number of responses to the Child Care Quality Assurance Survey annually	10% increase
4	Number of responses to EarlyON Quality Assurance Survey annually	10% increase
5	Number of responses to Professional Development annual survey	10% increase

# 5 Enhance and improve service system administration and program delivery

Provincial pillars: Data & Reporting, Access

	Measures 	Annual targets 
1	Parent and caregiver satisfaction with DNSSAB systems and technology	75% satisfaction
2	Provider satisfaction with DNSSAB systems and technology (i.e. OneDrive, Database, etc.)	80% satisfaction
3	Number of database reports submitted by providers within required timelines	Overall % increase
4	Number of reports submitted by providers that are approved on initial submission	Overall % Increase
5	Average number of working days from initial report submission review to final approval <sup>7</sup>	Overall Decrease in Avg. Days to completion

<sup>7</sup> Time between first review and final approval is dependent on providers’ submitting correct and complete information and is outside of DNSSAB’s control. Regardless, an overall decrease in the time between initial review and final approval is targeted.

Note: Some of the targets and measures may be adjusted annually based on the data and information requested from the Ministry. A new provincial system is also expected in 2026, which will impact the measures and targets outlined here.