



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

2024

Appendix to the Early Years
and Child Care Service Plan

**District of Nipissing Social Services
Administration Board**



Children's
Services

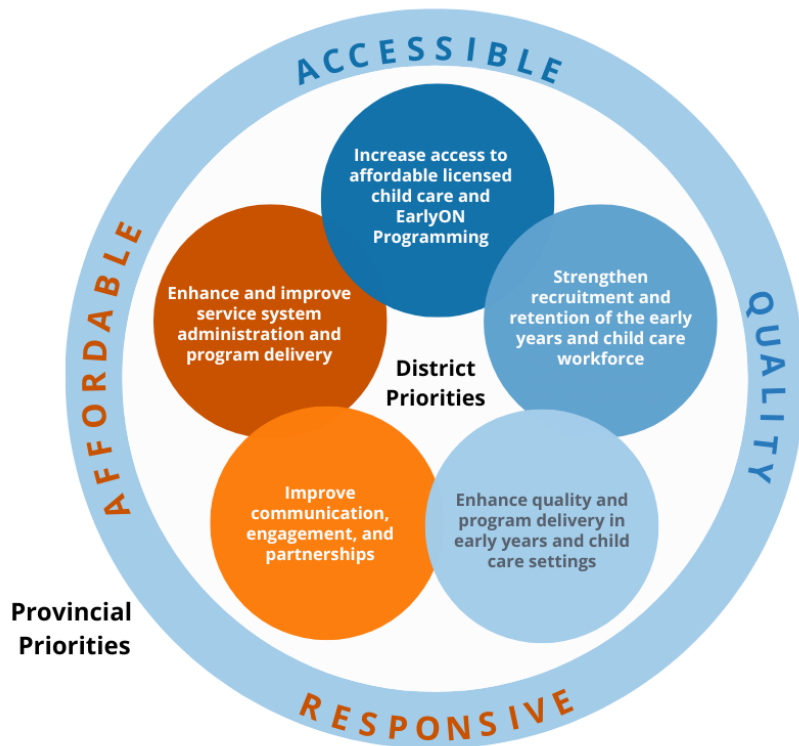
Children's Services
Marketing and Communications Plan

Table of Contents

About Us	3
Purpose	4
Primary Audiences	4
Parents & Caregivers	6
Early Years and Care Service Providers.....	10
Key Messages	12
Communication Tools	13
Goals and Strategies	14
Plan of Action	18
Communication Strategy	18
Web Communication Strategy	20
Social Media Strategy	22
Recruitment & Retention Strategy	24
Monitoring and Metrics	32

About Us

This document forms part and represents Appendix B of the District of Nipissing Early Years and Child Care Service Plan 2024-2034. The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB), as Service System Manager, plays an important role in the planning, managing, and funding of early years and licensed child care programs throughout the District of Nipissing. In line with the Ministry of Education's provincial priorities, DNSSAB is committed to promoting high quality services that are accessible, affordable, responsive, and inclusive.



ELCC Sector at a Glance

- ✓ 43 Child Care Sites
- ✓ 3,609 Licensed Child Care Spaces
- ✓ 3 Home Child Care Agencies
- ✓ 27 EarlyON Child & Family Centres
- ✓ 1 Authorized Recreation Program

Purpose

The world of early years and licensed child care is quickly evolving. Like many other districts, Nipissing's Children's Services team is adapting to the changing environment while continuing to support the district's early years and licensed child care providers in the delivery of services.

The Children's Services (CS) Marketing and Communications Plan supports the Children's Services team as they create, implement, and maintain a variety of initiatives to reach their target audiences.

The plan is updated annually to stay on top of current marketing trends and tools, guide communication, marketing, recruitment, and retention decisions, and provide a course of action that fits within specified budget parameters and respects guidelines.

Primary Audiences

The CS Marketing and Communications Plan has three main objectives: improving communication with families, service providers and community partners; increasing awareness of available services and supports; and supporting strategies for recruitment and retention of the early years and child care professionals, including Registered Early Childhood Educators across the district.



The following table outlines the primary audiences for each of these objectives.

Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and caregivers whose children are enrolled in licensed child care, recreation or EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed child care, and approved recreation service providers • EarlyON Child and Family Centres • Inclusion support service providers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Partners (HANDS, OKP, etc.) • School Board Partners
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who are family planning • Families with children under 13 years of age • Caregivers of children under 13 years of age (i.e. grandparents, nannies, unlicensed child care providers, etc.) • Newcomer families • General public
Recruitment & Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school students via guidance counsellors • Adults considering a new career change • Soon-to-be graduates of the ECE Diploma Program • Existing non-RECE child care staff • Unlicensed child care providers • Caregivers on maternity/paternity leave • Former program staff having left the field
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OW/ODSP Case Workers • Employment Services Agencies • Post-secondary institutions



Parents & Caregivers

The primary target audience for Children's Services programs and services are parents and caregivers in the Nipissing District. This includes parents/caregivers in 11 municipalities, two First Nations and two unorganized areas: Nipissing North and Nipissing South.

Demographics

Age	Adults aged 22- 44, average age of 34 with children (mostly ages 6 years or younger).
Gender	Both male and female, however our target market is predominantly female.
Language	Majority speak English as their first language, although West Nipissing has a large French speaking population. In addition, some are Indigenous language speakers.
Marital Status	65% of families are married/common law, 35% lone parents in 2021.
Education	Majority have post-secondary education.
Employment	A large portion of the target audience is working parents or those on parental leave.
Annual Income	Varies across the District, DNSSAB serves both lower and higher income families.

What They Need to Know

Parents and caregivers may be looking for information related to licensed child care services for their children (i.e. daily rates, hours of care, waitlist information, staffing information, etc.), assurance that childcare locations are high quality (i.e. questions to ask when visiting a potential child care program, licensing information, programming, etc.), and details on EarlyON Child and Family Centres in their community (i.e. days and hours of operation, activities, etc.). They may also be looking for information related to Inclusion Support Services if they have a child with exceptional needs (i.e. waitlist, types of support available, etc.). Parents and caregivers may be specifically looking for information on the District of Nipissing Child Care Registry such as how to apply, when to apply and the application process for putting their child's name on the centralized waitlist for licensed child care services. Many could also be looking for information on Child Care Fee Subsidy supports including eligibility criteria, when to apply, how to apply by telephone or by using the Fee Subsidy On-Line Application Form (OLAF). Parents and caregivers might search for this information online (i.e. social media and websites) and may receive information through their health and/or child care providers, from their peers and via specialized service providers/agencies.

Parents and caregivers may hold a range of different titles such as new parents, lone parents, couple families, grandparents, and parental guardians. Different marketing strategies will resonate with one group over another. For instance, a new parent would be more interested in an advertisement featuring pictures of infants and information on registering early for the Child Care Registry as opposed to someone with school-age children. Therefore, it is important to consider these segments when developing communications programs or materials.

It is also important to think about when each target audience is actively searching for information related to early years and child care and on DNSSAB's services. Many are searching throughout their child's early years; however, there are some key times that may be worthwhile targeting to ensure parents and caregivers are receiving information in a timely manner.

	Child Care Waitlist Registry	Fee Subsidy Program	School Readiness Program	Before & After School Programs	EarlyON Child & Family Centres
Pre-natal	✓				✓
Parental leave					✓
Parents returning to work	✓	✓			
Prior to school entry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
School years		✓		✓	

There is a significant need for early years and full-day child care services when children are under 4 years of age. The need for socialization and learning that early years and is offered in EarlyON Child and Family Centres increases in the years before school-entry (e.g. 2 and 3 years of age) as parents become more focused on school readiness. Parent and caregivers of younger children may also require licensed child care services when returning to work or school. Many parents and caregivers of school- aged children may still be in need of before and/or after-school, full-day child care for PD days and breaks and recreation programs once their child enters school. Licensed child care services are available to families with children up to 13 years of age.



Response to Marketing Programs

Based on today's technology trends, young parents will likely respond well to digital and social media marketing. When parents are looking for information, often their first action is to visit their search engine of choice. Therefore, having an easy-to-reach website with updated information that is easily accessible is crucial. Furthermore, many parents spend more time browsing social media. It is important to reach parents where they are commonly found; therefore, having a presence on these platforms is a good way to inform parents of DNSSAB's services in a parent-friendly manner. Traditional print media will be limited as parents are not likely to read the newspaper (most go to online news sites). Most parents are now from the generation that grew up with the internet, thus DNSSAB must market to their desired standards. An online newsletter could be something parents would be interested in and as such, the development of this should be pursued further.

Parents and caregivers could get information directly to their email quarterly. Thus, providing an easy and effective way to spread word about programs, services and upcoming events.

Early Years and Care Service Providers

In addition to parents/caregivers, Children's Services also communicates with the early years and childcare service providers. This audience includes service providers who deliver licensed child care and approved recreation services, EarlyON Child and Family Centres, and Inclusion Support Programs.

What They Need to Know

Service providers are often looking for information on the following:

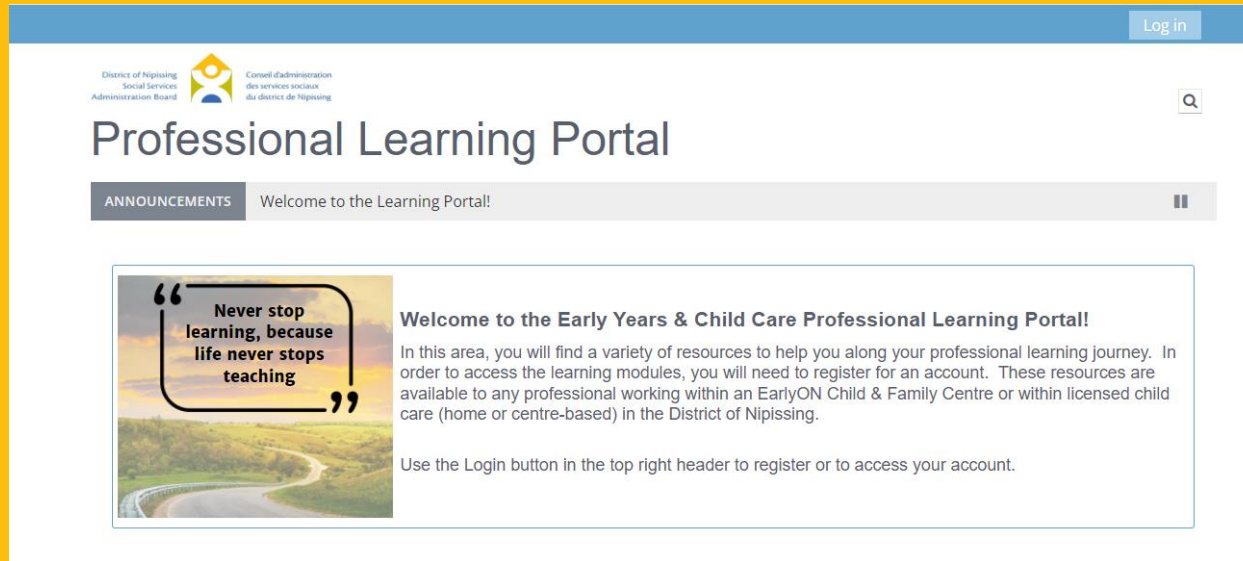
- Funding opportunities, applications and guidelines
- Various billing and payment information
- Updates on policies/procedures/guidelines and best practices
- Quality assurance guidelines, resources, and supports
- Professional development opportunities for themselves and their team members
- Status of the waitlists (i.e. licensed child care services, Inclusion Support Program, fee subsidy, etc.)
- Inclusion support services guidelines and forms
- EarlyON Child and Family Centre guidelines and best practices
- and more



Response to Marketing Programs

To effectively reach this audience, it is important to continue to keep lines of communication open between them and the Children's Services team and ensure an environment where they feel supported and heard. Communication through email, telephone, and meetings (both in-person and virtual) are important to uphold. Furthermore, the creation of a seasonal provider/educator e-newsletter would be a great way to keep this audience informed of updates as well as encourage engagement.

Recently, a separate section of the Children's Services website was created that focuses solely on providers and educators and will make it easier for these individuals to find information in a centralized place. The website also features a Professional Learning Portal, which helps providers access professional development opportunities offered by the Children's Services team.



Key Messages

Key messages represent the main ideas that target audiences will understand about DNSSAB's Children's Services when accessing or receiving information. The below attributes are taken into consideration in developing all Children's Services marketing and communication initiatives to establish a unified and recognizable message and feel.

professional quality
 affordable transparent fair appropriate
 recognition supportive culturally
 empowering
 excellence
 inclusive accessible
 informative collaboration

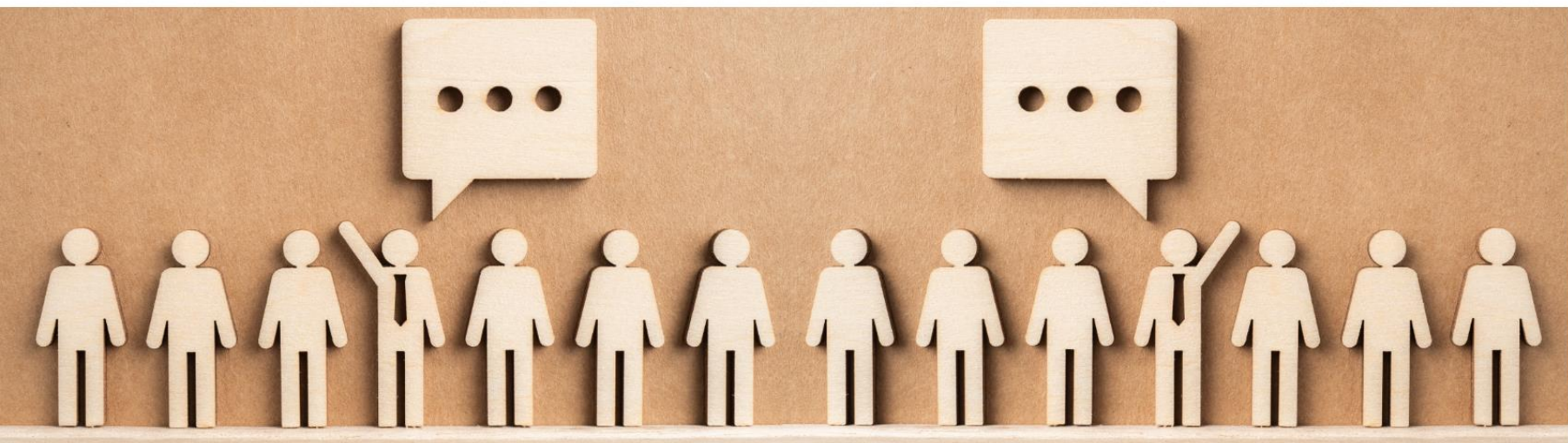
Communication Tools

The Children's Services team uses several methods to communicate, including:

- Program Specific Marketing Materials (flyers, posters, presentations, reports, infographics)
- Website - <https://www.dnssab.ca/childrens-services/>
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/NipissingChildrensServices>
- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/nipissingchildrensservices/>
- Media releases
- User guides
- Funding and Program Guidelines
- Service Provider and Community Partner meetings
- Internal communications, including SharePoint, emails, and meetings

General and initiative-specific feedback is welcome via:

- Social media
- Website
- Telephone, mail, email and surveys



Goals and Strategies

The following strategies will be implemented in collaboration with service providers and community partners to increase opportunities for communication, information sharing, engagement, and recruitment and retention of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs).

Communication

GOAL

Have consistent, timely, responsive, and accessible communication with target audiences.

Strategies

- Identify the type of information and frequency at which it is required
- Identify appropriate communication methods to reach target audiences
- Consistently use DNSSAB's Children's Services branding and protocols on all external communications (ex. font and colour palette)

Awareness

GOAL

Promote licensed child care, approved recreation, Inclusion Support Program and EarlyON Child and Family Centres services.

Strategies

- Attend community events to network and promote services
- Develop and establish key messages to market services
- Strengthen visual identity by implementing and utilizing consistent branding
- Increase social media presence and social media marketing campaigns
- Distribute marketing materials to places frequently accessed by parents/caregivers (i.e. Pediatrician offices, clinics, One Kids Place, etc.)

Recruitment & Retention	
GOAL	Increase the number of registered early childhood educators (RECEs) in the District of Nipissing to ensure the ongoing provision of quality, and accessible licensed child care services.
Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the early childhood education field, with emphasis on the Registered Early Childhood Education (RECE) career option • Develop a social media marketing strategy to professionalize and recognize the ELCC sector and promote the advantages of working in early childhood education in the Nipissing District • Develop innovative and collaborative recruitment initiatives with sector partners • Participate in external ECE marketing campaign • Promote the ECE Apprenticeship program 	
GOAL	Increase the number of homes providing licensed home child care in the District of Nipissing with special attention to rural areas.
Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop marketing campaign to increase awareness of opportunities and benefits of becoming a licensed home child care provider 	
GOAL	Maintain a strong and committed early years and child care sector
Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance the Quality Assurance Program to support the next level of the agency's ongoing journey to quality improvement • Continue to provide a variety of professional development opportunities (English, French and Indigenous) with a focus on the various positions working within the sector • Collaboration (ex. facilitate discussions with providers, create guiding principles) • Promote career advancement pathways, allowing for ECE's to grow professionally • Advocate for maintenance and enhancement of compensation programs 	

- Foster a culture of improvement by continuously seeking feedback from professionals working within the sector and involve them in decision making processes
- By creating an inclusive environment, ECE's will want to contribute to the growth and development of early childhood education programs.

Social Media

GOAL	Increase social media presence and social media marketing to provide proactive, up-to-date, and relevant information to target audiences in a timely and accessible manner.
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Strategies

- Expand social media reach through new and appropriate methods
- Increase engagement with target audiences by creating and sharing relevant content on a regular basis
- Develop a content calendar and update yearly or as goals change
- Implement social media marketing campaigns to promote the early childhood education field, with emphasis on the Registered Early Childhood Education (RECE) career option
- Monitor and track social media metrics



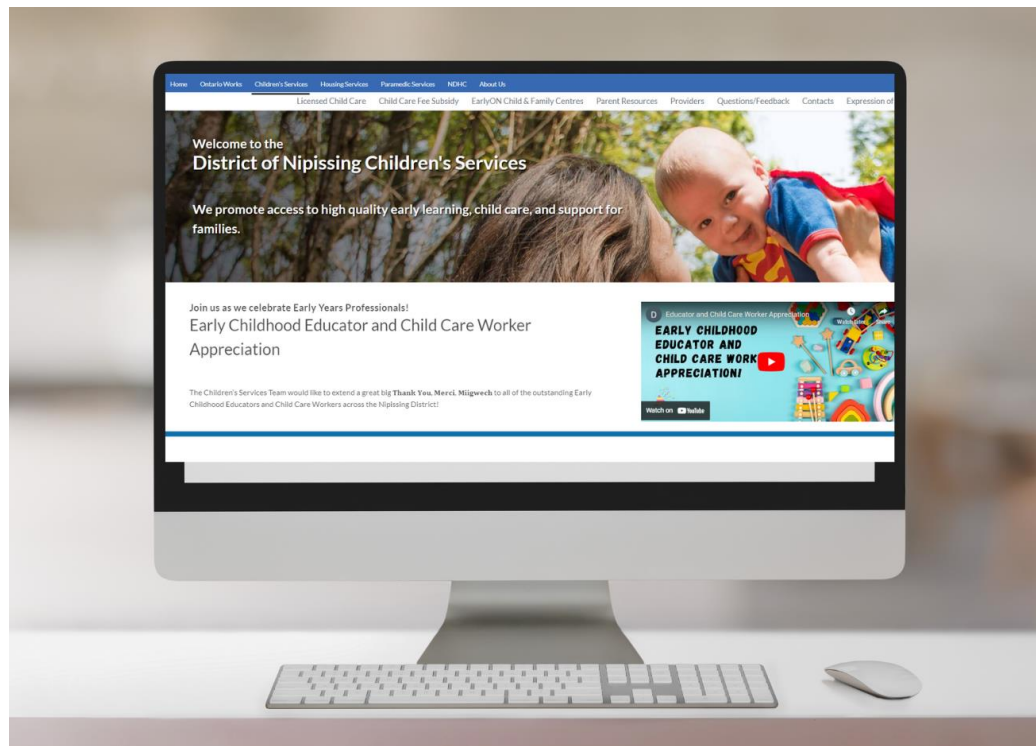
Website

GOAL

Maintain an informative and user-friendly Children's Services website
<https://www.dnssab.ca/childrens-services/>

Strategies

- Maintain distinct "Parent/Caregiver" and "Provider" sections to allow audiences to easily find what they are looking for
- Provide information in both English and French, further explore if additional languages are required
- Update information on a regular and timely basis
- Review user needs, experiences, and feedback regularly
- Restructure the website with drop-down menus so that information is easily accessible.



Plan of Action

Communication Strategy

As part of its communication strategy, Children's Services has identified ways to maintain and enhance communications to ensure external audiences feel supported, well informed and engaged.

These include:

- Acknowledging and responding to email and telephone inquiries in a timely fashion
- Creating and distributing seasonal e-newsletters to parents/caregivers and service providers
- Making programs and services marketing materials available in places parents/caregivers frequent such as pediatrician offices, clinics, community hubs, EarlyON centres, HANDS, in schools, etc., in both print and digital formats
- Regularly updating information on the Children's Services website www.dnssab.ca/childrens-services
- Sharing information through social media platforms
- Facilitating regular and ad hoc service provider and community partner meetings
- Exploring new communication tools and technologies (ex. digital document delivery and signature)
- Follow DNSSAB's Children's Services branding guidelines in all external communications
- Conduct annual reviews of communication strategy to learn from successes and challenges, and to improve future communication efforts.

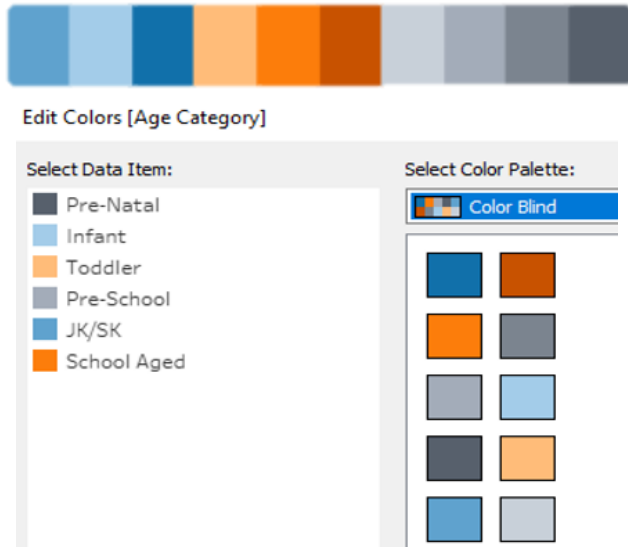


Branding guidelines

Photography: Children's Services aims to capture lively, exciting photographs of local children, families, educators, events, activities, and locations throughout the service area. When appropriate, stock photography may be used.

Font type: Open Sans 12pt when preparing written communication.

Colour palette: The following program-specific palettes will be used.



Light orange - R:255, G:188, B:121 (#ffbc79)

Med. orange - R:252, G:125, B:11 (#fc7d0b)

Dark orange - R:200, G:82, B:0 (#c85200)

Light blue - R:163, G:204, B:233 (#a3cce9)

Med. Blue -R:95, G:162, B:206 (#5fa2ce)

Dark blue - R:17, G:112, B:170 (#1170aa)

Light grey - R:200, G:208, B:217 (#c8d0d9)

Med. grey - R:163, G:172, B:185 (#a3acb9)

Dark grey - R:123, G:132, B:143 (#7b848f)

Darkest grey - R:87, G:96, B:108 (#57606c)



EarlyON:

Dark Teal - 22, 112, 118

Light Teal - 99, 141, 148

Grey - 88, 89, 91

Integration Tools

- DNSSAB Children's Services Branding guidelines and templates
- Official logos, letterhead, PowerPoint and other marketing material templates
- Social media policy
- Social media management software
- Canva
- Camtasia
- Knowmia
- Hootsuite
- Meta Business Suite

Web Communication Strategy

The Children's Services website, www.dnssab.ca/childrens-services, serves as the primary source of information for parents, service providers, community partners and the general public. It is used to outline programs and services offerings, share news updates, and provide feedback opportunities.

Although predominantly managed by the Children's Services Supervisor of Data & Early Years Programs, ensuring that website information remains up-to-date remains a team responsibility. Information, once approved, is ultimately uploaded to the website by the Supervisor or the Children's Services Communications and Marketing Specialist.

The website has been designed with main target audiences in mind, is available in both English and French languages, meets *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* requirements, and is essentially divided into two main sections.



Parent/caregiver section

Focusing on making information easily accessible, this section provides information on programs and services as well as links to corresponding application forms and program calendars. Parents/caregivers also have access to helpful FAQs, parent resources, reports, survey invitations and are welcome to leave questions/feedback for the Children's Services team via a Question/Feedback form.

Provider section

Having a dual purpose, this section provides information and resources to existing professionals and providers while also promoting the many career options in child care. Users can access information on how to become an educator, early years practitioner or provider, the Nipissing Quality Assurance Achievement Program, professional learning opportunities and a number of resources. The team is currently exploring restructuring the website with drop-down menus so that information is easily accessible to the user.

Within this section, the Professional Learning Portal is also available to existing educators and providers. This portal contains a variety of resources to help early years professionals along their professional development journey. The Professional Learning Portal is available to any professional working within an EarlyON Child & Family Centre or licensed child care (home or centre-based) in the District of Nipissing. There are both French and English modules, with categories including applied behaviour analysis, inclusion support program, LookSee and the four foundations of How Does Learning Happen?



Social Media Strategy

Children's Services aims to use the most current and relevant social media tools, including Facebook and Instagram, to communicate, interact and engage with internal and external audiences. Consideration will be given to implementing tools to grow the external audience size through joining additional social media platforms such as TikTok.

The DNSSAB Children's Services social media sites are maintained and operated by the Children's Services team. Care will be taken to ensure messaging and branding is applied consistently, adhering to the DNSSAB's social media policy, and aligning with Ministry guidelines. Additionally, the team will consistently monitor social media sites for comments and questions from spam accounts.

Children's Services aims to post regularly (minimum 1-2 posts per week) to sustain follower interest. Post frequency is expected to fluctuate throughout the year as marketing campaigns are rolled out and in response to unexpected situations, prompting an increased need for communication with families, service providers and community partners. Where possible, social media management software such as Hootsuite will be used to streamline the creating, scheduling, and posting process.

Examples of content that may be shared on social media includes, without being limited to:

- Community Engagement (family-friendly events, community involvement or partnerships)
- EarlyON monthly calendar posts
- EarlyON programming and events
- Information and updates regarding programs and services supported by DNSSAB's Children's Services
- Information on community partners
- Information on How Does Learning Happen?
- Interactive content (polls, surveys)
- Job postings
- Marketing campaigns
- Ministry of Education updates
- National and provincial holidays
- Office closure dates
- Parent/caregiver resources
- Quality Assurance topics (i.e. Professional development opportunities)
- Recruitment posts and videos for Early Years Professionals
- Reports and FAQs
- Safety Reminders
- Staff recognition posts
- Testimonials
- Themed Weeks or Months (ECE Appreciation Month)



Recruitment & Retention Strategy

Early years and licensed child care providers across Ontario, including those operating in the Nipissing District, continue to experience qualified staff shortages. Staffing shortages in turn result in lower operating capacities, which ultimately limits the number of services and child care spaces available to families.

Children's Services has developed the following Recruitment and Retention Strategy based on consultations with the District's early learning and child care service providers, as well as research on the early childhood education sector.

The following strategies will be implemented in collaboration with service providers and community partners and reviewed and updated annually.

Recruitment Strategies

When considering recruitment, it is important to consider high school students who are looking into career options after graduation. These are young people between the ages of 16 and 18 years of age, likely in the upper grades at local high schools, and are nearing graduation. They are likely researching potential career choices and planning their schooling around them. It is important to reach out to these individuals when they are in this important consideration phase to "plant the seed" that early childhood education is a rewarding career path. People who may influence this decision include parents, teachers, and guidance counsellors.

Therefore, it may be wise to reach these individuals as well. Potentially, a member of DNSSAB Children's Services team in collaboration with a local RECE could attend a high school career fairs to describe their career path and answer any questions interested applicants may have about early childhood education.

Recruitment efforts will also focus on individuals who are soon-to-be graduates of the Early Childhood Education Diploma Program. Adults looking for a new career should also be considered as a key recruitment pool, as these individuals are not only experienced in the work force but are looking for a career that may be more rewarding or better suited to their lifestyle and/or skill set.

- Develop and execute marketing campaign – “Why Become an RECE”
- Create and maintain informative webpage
- Attend career fairs
- Pre-ECE Certificate Program (in collaboration with college and employment partners)
- Promote available funding options (i.e. Ontario ECE Grant Program)
- Promote early childhood education career option to potential recruits via high school guidance counsellors, employment agencies, etc.

Retention Strategies

The following strategies will focus on individuals in the Nipissing District who are currently working in the early childhood education field as well as those who have recently left the field. These individuals are likely between the ages of 20 to 35 and predominately female. The primary target is those who have a college education and are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators; however, many of the front-line staff working in licensed child care centres are not RECEs. Therefore, it is also important to work towards encouraging these individuals to upgrade their skills. It is assumed that individuals in both of these segments have a love for children and have personality traits of being nurturing, creative and a team player.

- Develop a social media marketing strategy to professionalize and recognize the ELCC sector
- For Early Years and Child Care Worker Appreciation Day, run a social media campaign encouraging families to nominate an ECE who deserves recognition. They can post their nominations in the chat on Facebook, or email in responses. Flyers can also be printed and distributed at licensed child care agencies throughout the District.
- Once all nominations are in (end of Early Years and Child Care Worker Appreciation Day), we can highlight some on DNSSAB's social media accounts.
- Celebrate Early Years and Child Care Worker Appreciation Day
 - Host an annual event where early years and child care staff from across the District gather for an evening of celebration and socialization
 - Create marketing campaign featuring local early years and child care professionals from across the District
 - Distribute "Thank you ECE's" video on social media platforms
- Collaborate and support service providers' retention efforts
 - Facilitate group brainstorming meeting(s)
 - Create a guiding principles document that offers tips and ideas for employee recruitment and retention
- Create a Career Path chart or 'Road Map' outlining the different roles a person can work towards and their corresponding benefits
- Increase promotion of ECE Apprenticeship Program
- Continue to advocate for sector compensation supports (ex. WEG, Workforce Compensation, etc.)



Francophone RECEs

While the above strategies for recruitment and retention are generalized, special consideration should be given to Francophone educators as there is currently a shortage of qualified French-speaking ECEs across the District. As of July 2023, only 25% of the educators working in Francophone or bilingual child care centres were RECEs. For many families in the District, French-language early years and child care centres are one of the only early learning opportunities available for children to speak French and learn about Francophone culture. To continue to offer these services and expand them to meet demand, it is essential that recruitment and retention efforts be increased for French-speaking RECEs.

Recruitment Strategies

- Create French marketing materials and distribute to key locations
- Promote Francophone ECE program offered at Collège Boréal
- Promote apprenticeship and grant programs.

To attract French-speaking individuals interested in early childhood education, all marketing materials mentioned in the above strategies will be created in both French and English. French versions of recruitment materials can be distributed to guidance counsellors at French high schools in the District of Nipissing, as well as at post-secondary education centres in the District that offer Early Childhood Education programs in order to encourage bilingual graduates to pursue employment at a Francophone child care centre. In addition, print materials should be distributed to employment centres, especially those in predominately French-speaking communities such as West Nipissing. Printable versions of these materials should be added to DNSSAB Children's Services website to ensure community partners have the most current information as well as the ability to print additional copies should they run out. It is also recommended that Children's Services increase awareness and communication regarding the Francophone ECE program offered at Collège Boréal, as well as the apprenticeship and grant programs that are available to support those seeking to become registered ECEs. It would be

be worthwhile to note that Ontario's ECE Upgrade and Leadership Programs have less eligibility restrictions for Francophone individuals, as they are exempt from the required 6 months of employment.

Retention Strategies

- Offer professional learning opportunities in French
- Promote Collège Boréal's new diploma program *Modèle intégré et cheminement personnalisé* (Integrated model and personalized pathway)
 - Request and distribute promotional materials to service providers
 - Have someone from the college present to Francophone ECE professionals in the District

When working towards improving recruitment and retention of Francophone workers, it is important to consider partnerships within the francophone community, both locally and provincially.

DNSSAB Children's Services remains in contact with various French language associations such as the Réseau InterAgir du Nord-Est de l'Ontario, and by attending meetings and building relationships with organizations such as these, Children's Services will be able to stay aware of what is happening and have the option to participate in any opportunities that are brought forward. The Association Francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario (AFÉSEO) is a great advocacy group to pursue partnerships with regarding the recruitment and retention of Francophone workers, as they are the provincial francophone organization that acts for early childhood in Ontario.

The Government of Ontario recently announced that they will be funding two new positions at AFÉSEO to "promote the recruitment, retention and professional development of French-language early childhood educator staff while supporting the provision of high-quality French-language services in child care and early years programs". These positions include a French-Language Liaison and a Communications Liaison. Collaborating with AFÉSEO on recruitment and retention projects such as the above-mentioned Pre-ECE Certificate Program or the ECE Apprenticeship Program could strengthen the francophone aspect of the project and allow for better promotion.

Indigenous RECEs

In the 2021 Census, approximately 20% of children and youth in the District of Nipissing were identified as Indigenous. To meet the needs of Indigenous children and families, culturally appropriate early years and licensed child care programming is important as it has been noted that Elders, ceremonies and access to traditional medicines encourage and promote well-being amongst Indigenous families and children. With guidance received from Indigenous partners, service providers and community partners Children's Services aims to provide appropriate resources and supports that demonstrate appreciation and respect for Indigenous culture.

The North Bay Indigenous Hub provides an EarlyON Child & Family Centre and licensed child care services for children from infancy up to 12 years of age. This agency offers children and their families a culturally safe environment where cultural teachings and traditions are at the center of the programming.

To ensure an authentic cultural experience for families, it is important to have Indigenous RECEs leading these services and supporting families.

Recruitment Strategies

- Create culturally relevant marketing materials and distribute to key locations
- Promote Indigenous post-secondary institutions offering Early Childhood Education programs
- Consult with key partners when developing initiatives to ensure Indigenous teachings are part of the curriculum
- Develop relationships with key partners by attending career fairs and other events
- Promote apprenticeship and grant programs



Marketing materials used for recruitment purposes should be created in collaboration with Indigenous partners. Print materials should be distributed throughout the District to Indigenous Friendship Centers, high schools and post-secondary education centers, as well as employment resource centers. Indigenous post-secondary education centres offering Early Childhood Education programs, such as Anishinabek Educational Institute and the Native Education & Training College, should be featured on marketing materials following approval from these schools, as these programs focus on incorporating cultural teachings intended to meet the needs of Indigenous families and children. These educational institutions, as well as other Indigenous-led organizations, should be consulted in regard to any skills upgrading and workforce enhancement strategies to ensure Indigenous teachings are a part of the curriculum. Furthermore, Children's Services and service providers should consider researching and attending career fairs at these colleges, as well as look for opportunities to present at employment resource centers. Furthermore, mention should be given to Ontario's ECE Upgrades and Leadership Programs, the ECE Apprenticeship Program and other grant or apprenticeship programs that are available.

Retention Strategies

Retaining Indigenous RECEs is also a key planning consideration as DNSSAB and service providers work to ensure the longevity of Indigenous-led programming in the District.

In order to ensure that Indigenous RECEs feel valued and respected across all programs and services throughout the District, service providers must ensure that culturally safe environments are promoted and that there is an understanding and demonstrated respect of teachings and traditions. Continuing education courses or presentations from organizations within the community on cultural sensitivity, as well as Indigenous teachings and traditions, could be a way to increase understanding among staff and encourage brainstorming on how to include culturally safe and relevant programming in centres.

Licensed Home Child Care

Licensed home child care agencies are faced with unique recruitment and retention needs, as they are searching for individuals who are willing to open their homes to offer families child care. This not only requires candidates who have a willingness to do so, but also brings forward additional logistical considerations. Another challenge facing licensed home child care agencies is the recruitment of providers in rural and remote areas where the number of potential candidates may be reduced due to smaller population numbers.

To address these challenges and assist home child care agencies with recruitment and retention efforts, the following strategies are recommended:

- Develop and execute a marketing campaign focusing on the benefits of operating a licensed home child care
- Create engaging Facebook posts and update website with a dedicated page for Licensed Home Child Care
- Promote licensed home child care on the Children's Services website
- Encourage current home providers to promote licensed home child care to their friends
- Hold public information sessions (in-person or virtual)
 - Host at licensed child care agency for interested candidates, as well as at colleges for students or recent graduates looking for child care opportunities



Monitoring and Metrics

When implementing the above strategies, it is important to monitor the success of each strategy or campaign to ensure it is performing as intended and if not, adapt the strategy accordingly. Examples of metrics that could be used include:

- Social media analytics (engagement rate, likes, shares, comments, video views)
- Feedback from service providers (surveys, discussions)
- Feedback from community partners (surveys, discussions)
- Website analytics (i.e. Google Analytics)
- In-person feedback at events such as career fairs (number of flyers taken)
- E-Newsletter statistics (open rate, links clicked, number of subscribers)
- Professional Learning event participation rate and feedback (surveys)
- Pre-ECE Certificate Program participation, graduation, and post-employment rates
- ECE Apprenticeship Program participation, graduation, and post-employment rate

