

BRUCE COUNTY

Child Care & Early Years

SERVICE SYSTEM PLAN: 2019-2024

WAYPOINT
2021



Introduction

Bruce County Children's Services, a division of the Human Services Department, is pleased to share our Waypoint on the goals and priorities established in our 2019-2024 Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan.

Integral to the development of the five-year Service System Plan was a comprehensive community consultation and engagement process. Based on feedback received from parent surveys, key informant interviews, and community provider and partner consultations, our strategic direction for 2019-2024 was summarized into four key themes:



Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the child care and early years sector has shown a tremendous amount of strength and resilience. Because of their dedication, we navigated to stay the course to ensure high quality, affordable, accessible and inclusive early years and child care programs across Bruce County, remained the focus.

We invite you to explore our 'Waypoint' document that reflects the actions taken and key performance indicators achieved together with our community in 2021.

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“ Our priority is ensuring the local delivery of early years and child care services is affordable, accessible, inclusive and of high-quality.





Child Care and Early Years During a Pandemic

353
children
supported



On two occasions the Ontario government ordered the closure of in-person learning for all students enrolled in publicly and privately funded schools. During this time, all licensed child care centres and authorized recreation and skill building providers were prohibited from caring for school-aged children.

Targeted **Emergency Child Care** was implemented for school-aged children of first responders, health care professionals and other eligible workers.

January 4 to January 22, 2021

116 families
supported,
serving **179** children

April 19 to June 2021

118 families
supported,
serving **173** children



Virtual meetings held with child care operators, Bruce County Children's Services staff and the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit to support a safe operation of licensed child care.

385
participants
attended the
virtual meetings

\$264,028

\$252,140.80
provided to child
care operators.

\$11,887.20
provided to home
child care providers.

provided in Safe Restart Funding to child care operators and home child care providers to support sustainability, salaries, and PPE purchases during the COVID-19 pandemic.



@EarlyONBruceCounty

f 359

engaging activities and educational posts and videos were shared, reaching **121,693 Facebook users**.



Virtual registered programs were offered throughout the year to provide activities, programs and support to families and caregivers.



EarlyON to Go!

In 2021, **599 kits** (hands-on activities and virtual experiences) distributed to families in Bruce County through partnerships with Bruce County Libraries and Keystone Child, Youth, and Family Services.

JAN.-FEB.
2021

EarlyON in-person programs paused. Virtual programs offered to families.

MARCH
8
2021

EarlyON in-person indoor programs resumed with **96 children** and **71 adults** participating. Virtual activities/registered programs continued.

APRIL
6
2021

EarlyON in-person programs were paused. Virtual programs resumed.

JUNE
2021

EarlyON developed and implemented a new program called **Outdoor Explorers** with **347 child visits** and **217 adult visits** during July and August. Outdoor professional development, “**Canada Through the Seasons**” was planned and offered to support the EarlyON team in the planning and implementation of outdoor programs.

SEPTEMBER
2021

EarlyON resumed in-person indoor programs. Outdoor and virtual options continued.



Inclusion Accomplishments



ASQ-3

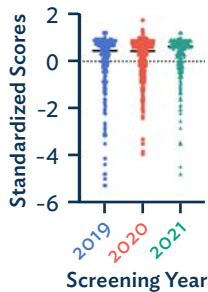
The graphs show the standardized results for each domain of the ASQ-3.
Note: For the ASQ-3, Scores below 1.5 standard deviations are considered at risk for developmental delay.



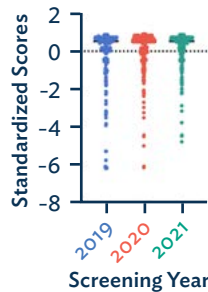
325

children participated in Bruce County's Journey Through the Ages and Stages.

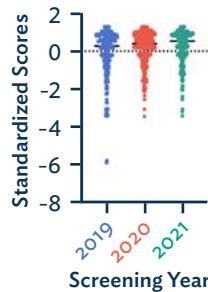
Communication



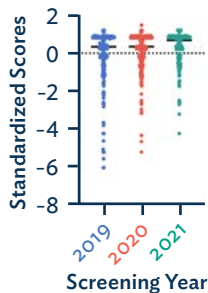
Gross Motor



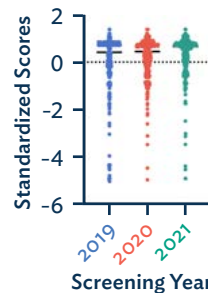
Fine Motor



Personal-Social



Problem Solving



Number of Children at Risk for Developmental Delay by Domain

| Domain | 2019 n(2019) = 400 | 2020 n(2020) = 372 | 2021 n(2021) = 325 |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Communication | 24 | 17 | 18 |
| Gross Motor | 25 | 16 | 16 |
| Fine Motor | 27 | 21 | 16 |
| Personal Social | 22 | 10 | 9 |
| Problem Solving | 20 | 15 | 12 |

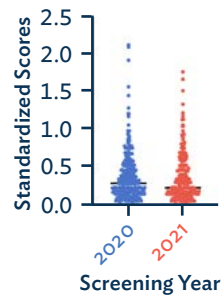




ASQ-SE:2

The graph shows the age corrected or ratio score for the ASQ-SE:2. Note: Age-corrected scores ABOVE 1.00 are at risk for developmental delay.

Social-Emotional



Number of Children at Risk for Social Emotional Delay

| 2020 | 2021 |
|---------------|---------------|
| n(2020) = 359 | n(2021) = 320 |
| 12 | 12 |

Special Needs Resource Program

115

the monthly average of children supported.

Special Needs Program Parent/Guardian Evaluation

An evaluation was implemented to gain a better understanding of how we can support children and families through connection, well-being, inclusion and interaction.





Quality Accomplishments

239

Educators appreciated
during Child Care
Appreciation Day!



201 Members of the Community
Learning Library

EarlyON and Special Needs Resource
collaborated to develop content for the
Community Learning Library Parent Portal.



Capacity Building (Professional Development)
funding allocated to operators in 2021

\$41,595.68

3 Training sessions were
offered to Home Child
Care Providers to support
their well-being.

25 Quality Scans were
completed in licensed
child care centres.



13

Virtual training
sessions offered
to the Child Care
Community with
1,559 participants.

4 Community of
Practices offered
to the Child Care
Community with
94 participants.



Accessibility Accomplishments

OneList Bruce County

is an online tool to help simplify the process of finding and applying for child care in Bruce County.

1,406 unique parents logged into the site.
296 new accounts were created by parents to apply for child care.



Virtual Home Child Care Information sessions for recruitment held with 20 participants.

Development of the Grey Bruce RECE Recruitment and Retention Working Group

The working group is developing strategies to address the shortage of qualified staff and to focus on the recruitment and retention of qualified RECEs in Bruce County and Grey County.

Resources Developed by the Working Group

- ✓ Be an ECE in Bruce County Website brucecounty.on.ca/be-early-childhood-educator-bruce-county
- ✓ Attended the Grey Bruce Virtual job fair
- ✓ Development of a dual credit program
- ✓ Pathways Resource for Early Childhood Education



▲ **14%**



Child care centre operating capacity

2,016
Licensed
Operator Spaces

78
Licensed Home
Child Care Spaces

Net decrease of
**5 Home Child
Care Providers**

Start of 2021 = **18**
End of 2021 = **13**

Child Care and Early Years Workforce Strategy Engagement Survey Results

14 out of 19 child care head offices responded.

74 ECE's needed in Bruce County to operate at full licensed capacity.

100% of responding operators said they would be interested in participating in an **ECE mentorship pilot project.**

92% of operators said their organization would be interested in exploring salary grid alignment to the **Grey Bruce Living Wage.**



Affordability Accomplishments



Again in 2021,
no Fee Subsidy
waitlist.



256

**Families served by
Fee Subsidy in 2021;**

a decrease in ▼ **17 families** from 2020.*

396

**Children served by
Fee Subsidy in 2021;**

a decrease in ▼ **28 children** from 2020.*

“

**Ensuring that early years
programs and services, including
licensed child care, are within
affordable reach for families.”¹**

Full Time Child Care Rates in Bruce County (2021)

| Age Group | High Rate (daily) | Low Rate (daily) | Median Rate (daily) | Median Cost (per Year*) | % increase from 2020** |
|-----------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Infant | \$75.00 | \$38.50 | \$53.69 | \$14,013.09 | 16.1% |
| Toddler | \$75.00 | \$35.50 | \$48.25 | \$12,593.25 | 10.9% |
| Preschool | \$70.00 | \$33.50 | \$46.49 | \$12,133.89 | 13.96% |

*based on 261 days of care ** based on median daily rate

* Decreases can be attributed to the mandatory closure periods for licensed child care, and/or caregivers making alternate arrangements due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework.

| | | Quality Inclusivity Accessibility Affordability | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| | | | | | 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 | | | | | |
| County Priorities | Priorities | Actions | | | Timeline | | | | | |
| Support the quality of child care programs through ongoing quality scans and training opportunities | ● | | | Continue to provide collaborative quality scans and professional development initiatives for licensed child care programs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ● | ● | |
| Utilize data to drive programming and inform funding decisions | ● | | | Continue to increase knowledge across the local early learning and child care sector regarding <i>How Does Learning Happen?</i> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ● | ● | |
| | | | | Continue the implementation of Journey Through the Ages and Stages (ASQ) to assist caregivers in understanding the strengths and needs of the children in their care | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ● | ● | |
| | | | | Define a method with our community partners on how we gather and share aggregate data about the needs of families | ● | ● | | | | |
| Collaborate with community partners to attract and retain Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) | ● | | | Develop a working group with colleges and community partners to attract and retain ECEs in Bruce County | ● | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| | | | | Support community strategies that address cost and time barriers for those interested in the ECE program | ● | ● | ✓ | | | |
| Enhance the capacity of child care and early years' service providers to support the unique needs of all children | ● | | | Complete a review of our resource program and implement changes based on needs assessment | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| | | | | Collaborate with our community to expand French language programming opportunities | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Work together with Indigenous partners to support the needs of First Nation, Inuit and Metis families | ● | | | Work together with First Nation, Inuit and Metis partners to expand culturally relevant, Indigenous-led, child care and early years programs and services | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ● | ● | |
| | | | | Continue to build meaningful and lasting relationships between the Bruce County and the Indigenous community | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ● | ● | |
| Collaborate with community partners to support the child care and early years needs of newcomers to Bruce County | ● | | | Provide educational supports for child care and early years staff to support the cultural and unique needs of children and families | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ● | ● | |
| Increase child care spaces and options across the county, especially in high need areas | ● | | | Define a clear process and guidelines to support child care start-ups and expansions | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| | | | | Develop a working group with the school boards to expand spaces within the schools | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| | | | | Initiate a review and develop a sustainable business model to support and expand the Bruce County Home Child Care Program | ● | ● | ✓ | ● | ● | |
| | | | | Together with community partners, develop a strategy to increase the types of Authorized Recreation Programs for children | ● | ✓ | ✓ | ● | ● | |
| Provide child care and early learning programs and services at times that support working caregivers | ● | | | Better understand the needs of caregivers who work alternate hours | | | ● | ● | | |
| | | | | Continue to monitor and assess times and locations for EarlyON programming across Bruce County to reflect community needs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ● | ● | |
| Ensure all child care applications are processed through the centralized, on-line registry | ● | | | Work together with OneList and child care providers to enhance features and increase usage | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Ensure licensed child care and authorized recreation program costs are affordable for families | ● | | | Review our model and process of providing financial support for licensed non-profit and profit child care operators to keep rates affordable for all families | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| | | | | Continue to assess and make incremental enhancements to the fee-subsidy program to support families in need | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |



For more information, please contact:

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For more information on Bruce County Children's Services visit
brucecounty.on.ca/childrens-services