



# SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION



# EarlyON Child and Family Centres

- Access to free, high-quality drop-in programs and a range of services
- Activities for children aged from 0-6 years, that support healthy child development and early learning
- Advice from professionals trained in early childhood development
- Information about family services in the community
- Participants can connect with other families with young children



# History



1996



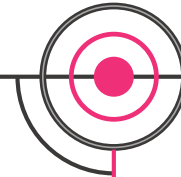
Ministry of Children and Youth Services establishes Family Resource Programs (FRPs).

Ministry of Children and Youth Services funds Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYCs) across province. In Niagara, four agencies operate OEYCs, with service areas delineated by electoral riding.

2002



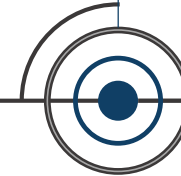
2009



Ministry of Education provides funding to local school board to open Parenting and Family Literacy Centres.

FRPs and OEYCs are transferred to the Ministry of Education.

2010



# History



Province wide consultations with families, educators, municipalities, and other key stakeholders to determine the best way to realize vision.

2013

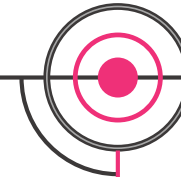


Ministry of Education releases the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework.

2014



2017



Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework

# Transfer of responsibility



**February 2016**

The Province of Ontario announced the plan to integrate and transform existing child and family programs including:

- Ontario Early Years Centres
- Parenting and Family Literacy Centres
- Family Resource Programs

**January 2018**

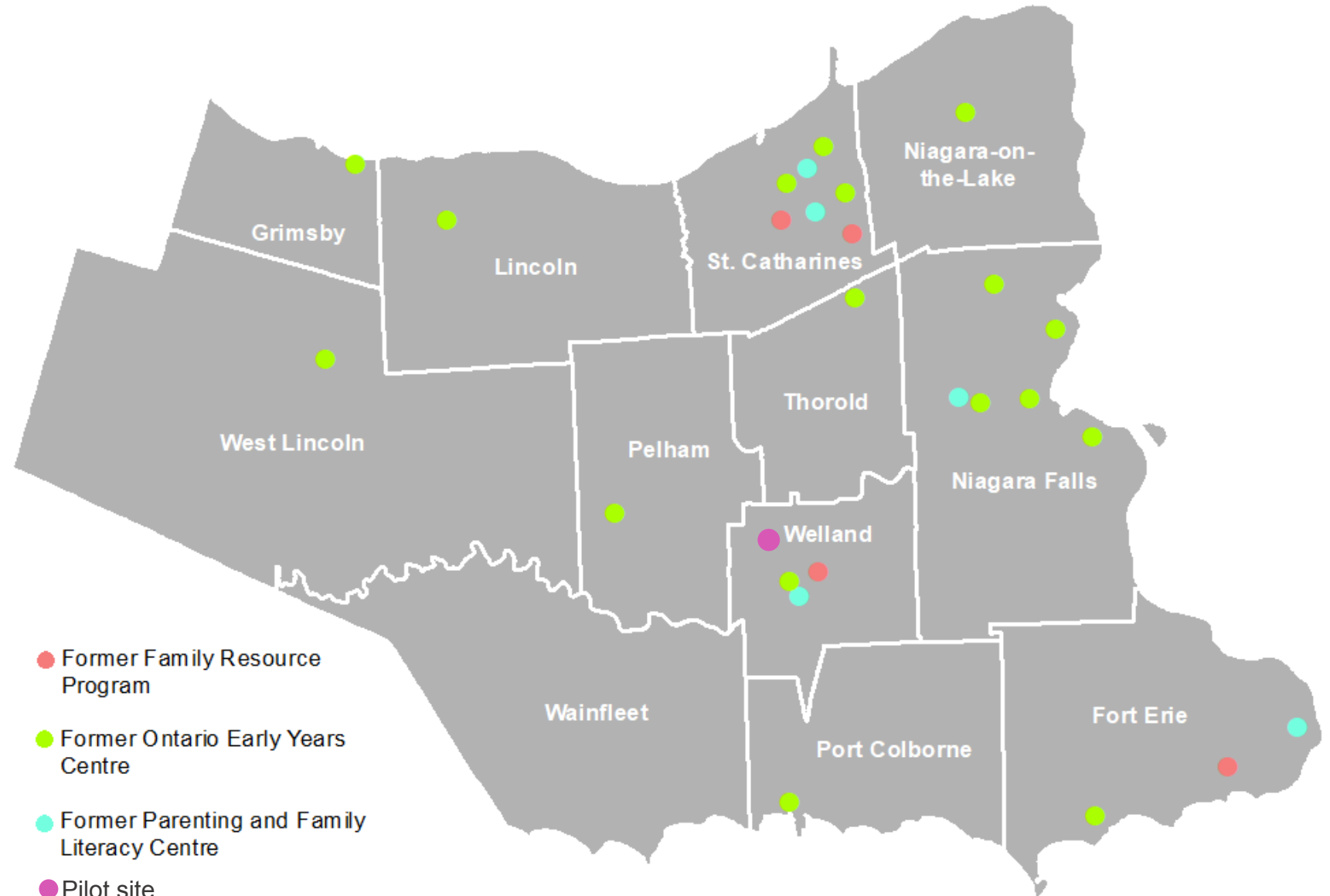
The programs were combined into one program known as EarlyON Child and Family Centres

**January 2018**

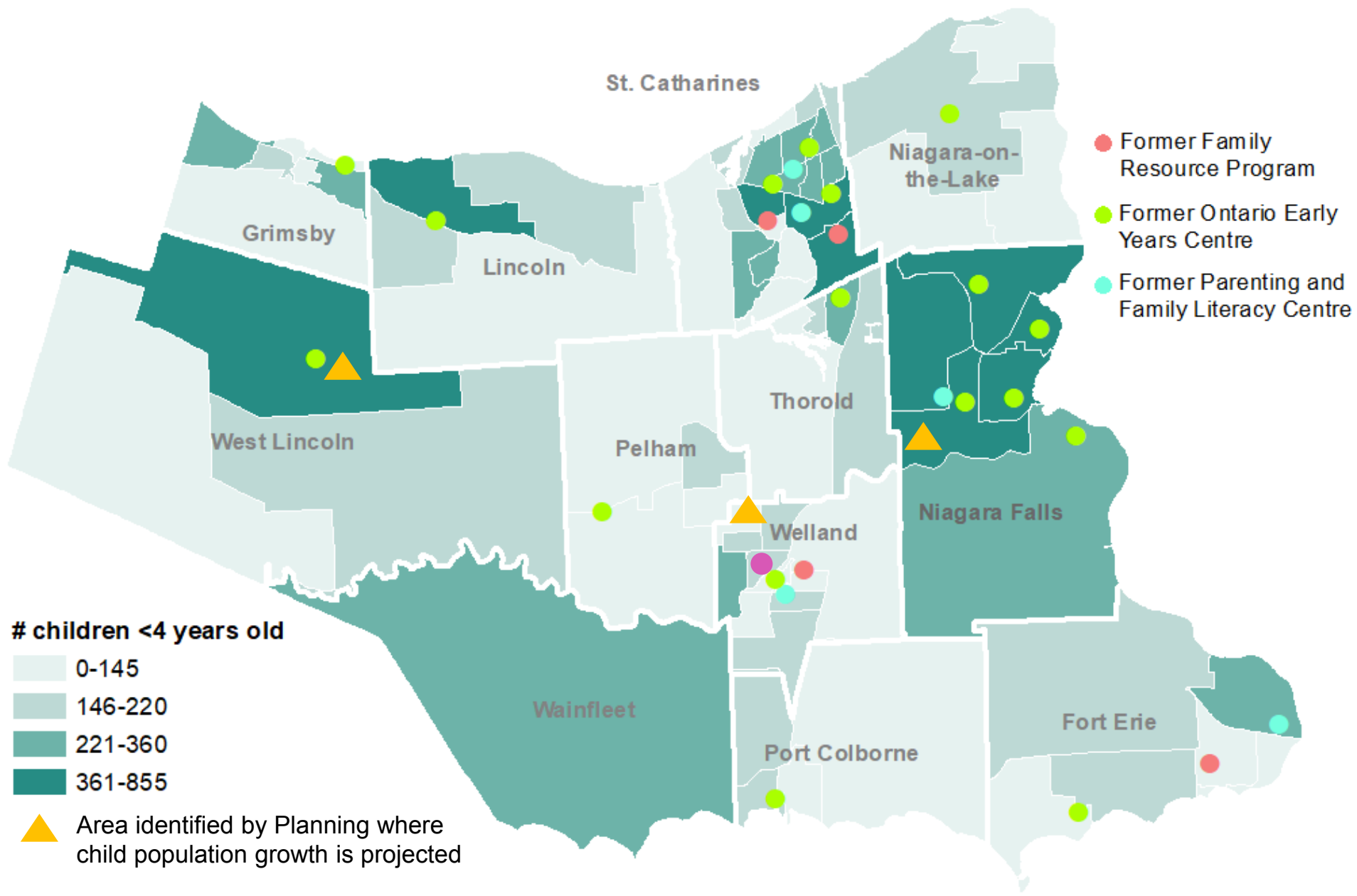
Provincial government identified that Niagara Region Children's Services will assume system management responsibility of the EarlyON system.

# Current state

- Historically established, three different mandates and funding allocations
- Nine different service providers operating 26 locations across Niagara (+1 pilot site)
- Variable hours, programs and services between locations
- Mandated centres to support specific populations







## Population of Children 4 years old and under, with municipal and neighborhood boundaries

Population data source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census of Population

# Development of local plan



Conducted a comprehensive local needs assessment and inventory of existing child and family programs and services



Conducted public engagement to inform the planning and delivery of future EarlyON programs and services across Niagara.



Submitted an EarlyON local system transformation plan to the Ministry of Education





# Ministry system expectations

- Integrated and coordinated early child and family system
- Increased early identification of developmental issues, referrals and linkages to specialized supports
- Collaboration with community services
- Increased parent/caregiver awareness, participation and satisfaction
- Continuous community engagement
- Improved child and parent/caregiver outcomes



# Local feedback

**Based on data from the  
Parent/caregiver survey...**

**46% of survey respondents had never heard  
of centres**

**87% of survey respondents prefer access to  
centres year round**

**59% of survey respondents are willing to  
drive 15 minutes or more to attend**

**56% of survey respondents would like both  
library and Public Health services co-located  
with centres**

**To build upon our current  
strengths, our goals are:**

- Increase awareness
- More flexible hours
- Multiple aspects of accessibility and inclusion
- Co-location with existing community hubs

# Ongoing planning and engagement

- Facilitated sessions to inform mandatory core services
- Facilitated session for feedback on the methodology used to develop service zones
- Two month check-in at Seaway Mall pilot centre
- Facilitated session for input on the accessibility, quality, affordability and responsiveness of the early learning and child care system
- Focus group sessions to gather information on satellite services
- Pilot project



# Strengths of Current System ●●●●●

## **CHOICE:**

Families can attend any EarlyON across Niagara

## **AFFORDABILITY:**

All EarlyON programs are free

## **VALUED:**

Families who attend place a high value on EarlyON services

## **UNIQUE POPULATIONS:**

We serve Indigenous, French language, and vulnerable families

## **PROFESSIONAL STAFFING:**

Qualified teams made up of Registered Early Childhood Educators and additional staff with specialized skill sets



# Opportunities through Transformation

- 1 Enhanced system planning
- 2 One service system
- 3 Data collection
- 4 Service delivery options





# Pilot Learnings

## COMMUNITY HUB LOCATION

Co-location within existing community hub (library, walk-in clinic, other community services)

### Outcomes:

- Increased visibility and participation
- Parent survey comments value convenience. 88% access other services. 71% said more likely to attend due to hub location

## INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE

Accessibility of centre  
Continuous daytime hours  
Evening hours

### Outcomes:

- Inclusive space for all families
- Parents and caregivers attended centres open during the lunch hour
- Co-location is critical to viability of evening hours

## OFFERING COMMUNAL SPACE TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Invite community partners to use communal space

### Outcomes:

- Speech Services, Child Care Fee Subsidy
- Public Health Well Baby Clinics and vaccine clinic feedback: all feel service delivery is viable in shared hub location.
- Families stay and play

# A new system for Niagara

- Negotiated Request for Proposal
- EarlyON Review Panel
- Successful proponents will be invited to enter into contract negotiations with Niagara Region to operate EarlyON Child and Family Centres across Niagara and participate in the transformation to a new integrated system.



The background of the slide is a faded photograph of children in a playroom. A young girl with curly hair is on the left, reaching for something on a shelf. In the center, a child is sitting at a dark table, playing with colorful wooden blocks and a board game. To the right, another child is partially visible, also engaged in play. The overall atmosphere is bright and playful, consistent with the 'Early ON' theme.

# QUESTIONS? Early ON

Child and Family Centre