

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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DEI Committee  
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# Children's Services: Service System Plan (2024-2026) Update

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# Presentation Outcomes:

- Review Children's Services Service System Plan progress
- Review Goals and Objectives with a focus on DEI Considerations
- Seek feedback on additional connections to DEI



# What is a Service System Plan?

- The *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* requires CMSMs to establish a service system plan for their service area
- The Service System Plan will help to set priorities and identify gaps to achieve the best outcomes for children and families
  - Acts as a road map for the Early Years and Child Care Sector
  - Sets collective priorities, goals and objectives

# Components of a Service System Plan



# Who did we engage with?

## Staff

Niagara Region  
Staff

Sector Staff

## Community Partners

NCPC

Agencies  
serving children

## Community Members

Parents

Children

# Pillar 1: Awareness & Customer Service

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Goal	Objectives	DEI Considerations
1. Families and children in Niagara are aware of the programs and services offered	1.1 Families are aware of where and how to access information about the programs and services offered for children in Niagara  1.2 Families and children have opportunities to provide feedback to inform Early Years and Child Care programs and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensuring materials are available in other languages</li><li>• Collecting feedback from priority populations, ensuring we are meeting them where they are</li><li>• Ensuring feedback mechanism is available for Francophone parents and families</li></ul>

# Pillar 2: High-quality

Goal	Objectives	DEI Considerations
<p>2. Early Years and Child Care sector is supported in providing programs and services that are high quality, supporting healthy child development</p>	<p>2.1 The Early Years and Child Care sector has clear expectations and a shared definition of high-quality programs and services</p> <p>2.2 Niagara Region supports the early years and child care sector in attracting and retaining qualified educators and child care workers</p> <p>2.3 Niagara Region is committed to supporting Early years and child care service providers with timely access to the information they need to help them make informed decisions that reflect local community need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supporting the integration of priority population feedback in the definition of high-quality</li><li>• Ensuring professional development for educators includes DEI focused training</li><li>• Recruitment and retention efforts include targeted promotion with agencies that support newcomers and multicultural populations</li></ul>



# Pillar 3: Accessibility & Responsive

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## Goals

3. Programs and services are responsive to the needs of families and children in Niagara and ensure all can access programming where they feel welcome, included and supported

## Objectives

3.1 Programs and services are delivered where, when and how families need them

3.2 Programs and services are delivered with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion to reflect the needs of the changing landscape in Niagara

# Pillar 3: Accessibility & Responsive Considerations

## Activities

3.1.1 Ensure offered hours of EarlyON programming meet the needs of parents and families (ex. evening and weekend hours)

3.1.2 Centre-based and licensed home child care expansion is targeted where there is identified need, in line with our priority neighbourhoods

3.1.3. Explore flexible models of licensed child care to support parents with varying shift schedules, including part-time, evening and weekend care

3.1.4 Modernize service delivery across the sector to meet diverse family needs

3.2.1 Support the implementation of Niagara's Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plan by assisting in building cultural humility

3.2.2 Ensure families and children with special needs have access to tailored supports

## DEI Considerations

- Exploring the offering EarlyON programming and child care that meets the needs of working parents
- Targeting child care expansion in line with priority neighbourhoods (based on child care demand, LIM-AT, material deprivation index)
- Modernization of special needs resourcing program to meet changing needs of diverse children and families

Question: modifications to activity 3.2.1

# Pillar 4: Affordability & Economic Growth

Goal	Objectives	DEI Considerations
<p>4. The Early Years and Child Care System programs are affordable and can meet economic growth and demand to support parents' and caregivers' workforce participation</p>	<p>4.1 Improve access to subsidized early years and child care programming</p> <p>4.2 Facilitate the continued expansion of child care in Niagara, in line with the goals and objectives of CWELCC</p> <p>4.3 Build collaborative relationships with Local Area Municipalities (LAMs), local businesses and public sector organizations to encourage expansion of child care spaces in innovative settings and support Niagara Region's economic prosperity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensuring a DEI lens is taken when improving access to fee subsidy programming (i.e. translating materials, promotion with local partners who serve newcomers)</li><li>• Continue to utilize the Access and Inclusion framework when approving expansion applications; prioritization of applications based on priority neighbourhoods</li></ul>

# Pillar 5: Community Partnerships

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## Goals

5. Niagara Region leverages our relationships with community partners to work towards integrated service delivery

## Objectives

5.1 Continue to collaborate with internal and external partners who serve children and families

5.2 Continue to strengthen relationship with Indigenous and Francophone partners

# Pillar 5: Community Partnerships Considerations

## Activities

- 5.1.1 Strengthen partnership with public health to align programming to support families' well being
- 5.1.2 Engage with primary care physicians, OBGYNs and midwives to explore sharing child care registration information before or at birth
- 5.1.3 Continued partnership with local school boards to promote the early years and child care sector as a profession
- 5.1.4 Continue to facilitate opportunities for on-going connection and collaboration amongst community partners
- 5.1.5 Foster relationships with community agencies who serve newcomers and marginalized populations to reach diverse families
  
- 5.2.1 Support Indigenous and Francophone agencies to provide tailored programming for the communities they serve
- 5.2.2 Engage Indigenous and Francophone partners in the planning of programs and services delivered by Niagara Region

## DEI Considerations

- Developing partnerships with agencies that we have not traditionally worked with (i.e. newcomer agencies, LIP)
- Integration of Indigenous and Francophone lenses when developing new programming
- Allow Indigenous and Francophone partners agency over creating programs that meet the needs of the populations they serve

# Next Steps

- Continue the development of the service plan, including key performance indicators
- Integrate feedback from DEI Committee and Women's Advisory Committee
- Service System Plan to be presented to Council in Fall 2024 for approval



# Appendix A- Draft Service System Plan Recommendations with Activities

# Pillar 1: Awareness & Customer Service Activities

Goal	Objectives	Activities
<p>1. Families and children in Niagara are <b>aware</b> of the programs and services offered</p>	<p>1.1 Families are aware of -where and how to access information about the programs and services offered for children in Niagara</p> <p>1.2 Families and children have opportunities to provide feedback to inform Early Years and Child Care programs and services</p>	<p>1.1.1 Develop a comprehensive communication plan that focuses on both targeted and general multi-modal promotion of early years and child care programs and services</p> <p>1.1.2 Improve the website experience for families</p> <p>1.2.1 Implementation of a customer service strategy</p> <p>1.2.2 Prioritize regular engagement with parents and families to elicit feedback</p>



# Pillar 2: High-quality Activities

Goal	Objectives	Activities
<p>2. Early Years and Child care sector is supported in providing programs and services that are <b>high quality</b>, supporting healthy child development</p>	<p>2.1 The Early Years and Child Care sector has clear expectations and a shared definition of high-quality programs and services</p> <p>2.2 Niagara Region supports the early years and child care sector in attracting and retaining qualified educators and child care workers</p> <p>2.3 Niagara Region is committed to supporting Early years and child care service providers with timely access to the information they need to help them make informed decisions that reflect local community need</p>	<p>2.1.1 Align Niagara Region’s role in quality with the provincial vision (currently under development)</p> <p>2.1.2 Niagara Region directly operated child care centres will enhance the support they provide the sector through mentorship, modelling of best practices and resource sharing</p> <p>2.2.1 Continue to advocate for the Early Years and Child Care sector workforce</p> <p>2.2.2 Strengthen partnerships with local post-secondary institutions and operators to promote the RECE program and associated pathways to prospective students</p> <p>2.2.3 Align professional development offerings to meet sector feedback and needs</p> <p>2.2.4 Support consistent and standardized onboarding practices across the Early Years and Child Care sector</p> <p><u>2.3.1</u>. Engage with Early Years and Child Care sector to understand their information needs</p> <p>2.3.2. Tailor delivery of information to Early Years and Child Care sector to meet their needs</p>

# Pillar 3: Accessibility & Responsive Activities

Goals	Objectives	Activities
<p>3. Programs and services are <b>responsive</b> to the needs of families and children in Niagara and ensure all can <b>access</b> programming where they feel welcome, included and supported</p>	<p>3.1 Programs and services are delivered where, when and how families need them</p> <p>3.2 Programs and services are delivered with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion to reflect the needs of the changing landscape in Niagara</p>	<p>3.1.1 Ensure offered hours of EarlyON programming meet the needs of parents and families (ex. evening and weekend hours)</p> <p>3.1.2 Centre-based and licensed home child care expansion is targeted where there is identified need, in line with our priority neighbourhoods</p> <p>3.1.3. Explore flexible models of licensed child care to support parents with varying shift schedules, including part-time, evening and weekend care</p> <p>3.1.4 Modernize service delivery across the sector to meet diverse family needs</p> <p>3.2.1 Support the implementation of Niagara’s Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plan by assisting in building cultural humility</p> <p>3.2.2 Ensure families and children with special needs have access to tailored supports</p>

# Pillar 4: Affordability & Economic Growth Activities

Goal	Objective	Activities
<p>4. The Early Years and Child Care System programs are <b>affordable</b> and can meet <b>economic growth and demand</b> to support parents' and caregivers' workforce participation</p>	<p>4.1 Improve access to subsidized early years and child care programming</p> <p>4.2 Facilitate the continued expansion of child care in Niagara, in line with the goals and objectives of CWELCC</p> <p>4.3 Build collaborative relationships with Local Area Municipalities (LAMs), local businesses and public sector organizations to encourage their addition of child care spaces in innovative settings and support Niagara Region's economic prosperity</p>	<p>4.1.1 Increase promotion of child care fee subsidy program</p> <p>4.1.2 Increase promotion of EarlyON as a no cost program for families</p> <p>4.1.3 Advocate for increased base funding and new investments to support child care and EarlyON expansion</p> <p>4.1.4 Ensure a portion of child care spaces are prioritized for eligible subsidy families</p> <p>4.2.1 Continue implementation of CWELCC and targeted growth plan to improve access to affordable child care spaces while maintaining Niagara's auspice ratio</p> <p>4.3.1 Net new child care spaces are increased on an annual basis to meet the demand required to support Niagara's workforce and economy</p> <p>4.3.2 Continue to support women's workforce participation by increasing access to affordable child care</p>

# Pillar 5: Community Partnerships Activities

Goals	Objectives	Activities
<p>5.Niagara Region leverages our relationships with <b>community partners</b> to work towards integrated service delivery</p>	<p>5.1 Continue to collaborate with internal and external partners who serve children and families</p> <p>5.2 Continue to strengthen relationship with Indigenous and Francophone partners</p>	<p>5.1.1 Strengthen partnership with public health to align programming to support families' well being</p> <p>5.1.2 Engage with primary care physicians, OBGYNs and midwives to explore sharing child care registration information before or at birth</p> <p>5.1.3 Continued partnership with local school boards to promote the early years and child care sector as a profession</p> <p>5.1.4 Continue to facilitate opportunities for on-going connection and collaboration amongst community partners</p> <p>5.1.5 Foster relationships with community agencies who serve newcomers and marginalized populations to reach diverse families</p> <p>5.2.1 Support Indigenous and Francophone agencies to provide tailored programming for the communities they serve</p> <p>5.2.2 Engage Indigenous and Francophone partners in the planning of programs and services delivered by Niagara Region</p>