



# CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS SERVICE SYSTEM PLAN 2026-2030

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## **Foreword**

As Manager of the Children’s Services Division, I am pleased to introduce our updated **Child Care and Early Years’ Service System Plan**—a strategic document built on years of planning, data analysis, and meaningful collaboration with community partners, child care operators, staff, parents, and caregivers. Much like the building blocks that support a child’s growth and development, this plan represents the next layer in the foundation of our local early years system—one that continues to evolve in response to changing provincial priorities and community needs.

Guided by the transformational goals of the **Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System**, launched in 2022, we are committed to constructing a system where each building block—**Quality, Inclusion, Affordability, Access, and Data Reporting**—plays a vital role in ensuring equitable outcomes for all children and families. This plan outlines our priorities and strategies for **2026–2030**, highlights key achievements, addresses emerging service gaps, and charts a path forward to strengthen the system for years to come.

Developed under the leadership of our local **Early Years Planning Table as well as the Child Care Supervisors Network** and informed by the insights and experience of all our community partners, this plan would not have been possible without their contributions. We extend our sincere thanks to all who shared their perspectives and expertise and acknowledge Francis Racine for his vital role in providing data analysis to support evidence-informed planning. The Children’s Services Division remains firmly committed to working alongside these partners to build a responsive, high-quality, and inclusive early learning and child care system—block by block—for the benefit of all families in our communities.

Links to information and documents that guide our profession:

- [Child Care Modernization Act, 2014](#)
- [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#)
- [Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007](#)
- [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#)
- [Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Registered Early Childhood Educators in Ontario](#)
- [Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework, 2017](#)

## **Early Years Planning Table**

As the system manager for child care and early years services, the Children's Services Division chairs the local Early Years Planning Table, which provides strategic recommendations based on comprehensive neighbourhood profiles. These profiles are developed using a variety of data sources, including Census Canada information, socio-economic indicators, child population statistics, community service inventories, Early Development Instrument (EDI) results, and other relevant data.

The resulting neighbourhood profiles guide our assessment of local child care and early years service needs and inform planning efforts to ensure that programs and resources are effectively aligned with the needs of children and families across our communities.

Membership of the Early Years Planning Table includes a diverse group of community partners dedicated to strengthening early years services across Cornwall and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry (S.D.&G.):

- City of Cornwall Children's Services Division (CMSM), including:
  - Manager of Human Services
  - Program Supervisor
  - Program Coordinator / Capacity Coordinator
  - Operations Coordinator / Data Analysis Coordinator
- Akwesasne Child Care Program
- Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario
- Centre de santé communautaire de l'Estrie
- Children's Aid Society
- Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario
- Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien
- Cornwall Community Hospital – Child and Youth Mental Health Services
- Cornwall Public Library
- Eastern Ontario Health Unit
- EarlyON Operators – The Glengarry Inter-Agency Group (GIAG) and Bien ici
- CHEO – OCTC Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre (Early Childhood Program)
- Inspire Community Support Services
- Métis Nation
- S.D.&G. County Library
- Seaway Valley Community Health Centre
- St. Lawrence College – Early Childhood Education Department
- Tungasuvvingat Inuit
- Upper Canada District School Board
- The Boys and Girls Club

## Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan || 2026-2030

The Early Years Planning Table serves as the primary forum through which community partners collaborate to coordinate and strengthen early years programs and services. Together, members are committed to ensuring that every child and family in our region has access to inclusive, high-quality, and responsive supports. All community partners of the Early Years Planning Table for Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry have also committed to a shared vision and set of guiding principles that inform the work of the Table and its member agencies.

### Vision Statement

*All children and families have access to an early years and child care system that champions the overall well-being of every child and family.*

### Guiding Principles

- We view all children, parents, caregivers, and educators as capable, curious, competent, and full of potential.
- We create and sustain diverse, safe, and inclusive environments where everyone experiences belonging and well-being while accessing services.
- We cultivate caring and respectful relationships with our clients, staff, and community partners.
- We strengthen community partnerships and enhance the integration of supports for children and their families.
- We foster a culture of lifelong learning, ensuring educators have access to current and locally available training opportunities.
- We maintain our commitment to child development and parenting as key community priorities.
- As a community, we support licensed child care as a cornerstone of quality and safety.
- As a community, we embrace the “Every Door is the Right Door” approach—ensuring that all staff are knowledgeable about the services offered by partner agencies and can appropriately refer children and families to the supports they need.

The Early Years Planning Table and its members are united in their commitment to inclusion. We believe that true inclusion is achieved when:

- Programs and services are user-friendly;
- Environments are welcoming and participatory, offering every individual a voice and opportunities to contribute;
- Open and authentic communication is encouraged;
- Positive relationships are fostered and sustained;
- Services are accessible, both financially and geographically;
- Staff, parents, and caregivers are equipped with appropriate skills, training, and resources;
- Strong connections exist among community services; and
- Meaningful opportunities for feedback are provided.

## Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan || 2026-2030

Through this shared commitment, the Early Years Planning Table continues to work collaboratively to provide the best possible services to children and families across Cornwall and S.D.&G., supporting their well-being, development, and success.

### **ONTARIO'S CHILD CARE VISION and LOCAL PRIORITIES**

The Ministry's vision for the Early Years and Child Care states that, *"All children and families have access to a range of high-quality, inclusive and affordable early years and child care programs and services that are child- and family-centred and contribute to children's learning, development and well-being."*

Ontario has developed an action plan with 5 key pillars to achieve this vision:



Through consultation with the Child Care Supervisors Network, staff of the Children's Services Division and the membership of the Early Years Planning Table for Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry the following six local priorities have been identified that build on the five provincial pillars supporting Ontario's vision:



**To review our Special Needs Resourcing services to identify training gaps and to support programs to be able to plan effectively.**

- To achieve a zero refusal and/or enrolment termination rate of families with children who have special needs.

Having trained educators to care for children with special needs ensures no child is refused or removed from the program, providing the support they need for growth and learning. A strong, supported team is essential for high-quality care.



Training opportunities ensure families have access to skilled educators, promoting accessible care for all.



Use information to understand the needs of the workforce and improve training, staff retention, and reduce the risk of refusals or terminations.



Free training programs for educators, ensuring professional care is accessible and affordable for families.



Provide ongoing training for educators to ensure they offer high-quality care.



Build a diverse team that can support children from all backgrounds and needs, making sure every child is included.

**How this aligns with the City of Cornwall's Strategic Plan:**

This priority supports the City's goal of creating an inclusive and vibrant community. It ensures that children with special needs receive the care they deserve, helping to eliminate refusals or terminations. This improves education, well-being, and community involvement for everyone.

# 2

**PRIORITY**

**To promote licensed child care options and to increase licensed child care spaces to reflect the growing and changing population of our communities.**

As our communities grow and change, it's important to have enough licensed child care spaces to support families. Promoting high-quality child care helps children get the best start in life, giving them a strong foundation for their future success.

## **Access:**

Increase the availability of licensed child care spaces, making sure families have access to care where they live.

## **Data and Reporting:**

Use data to track the demand for child care spaces and make informed decisions about where to expand services.

## **Affordability:**

Provide affordable options for families so that everyone can access quality child care.

## **Quality:**

Support high standards in child care to ensure children receive the best care and learning experiences.

## **Inclusion:**

Make sure child care options meet the diverse needs of children, including their abilities and cultural backgrounds.

### **How this aligns with the City of Cornwall's Strategic Plan:**

This priority supports Cornwall's goal of economic development and access to services by increasing licensed child care spaces. It helps meet the needs of a growing community, ensuring that all families can access high-quality, affordable child care.



**3**  
**PRIORITY**

**To attract and retain quality Registered Early Childhood Educators.**

Attracting and retaining Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) ensures more children receive quality education, helps close learning gaps, promotes equality, and increases access to early childhood services for all.



**Access:**

More RECEs in the field means families have more child care options, including in remote or underserved areas, improving access to quality services for everyone.



**Data and Reporting:**

Using data helps identify where additional support is needed, enabling improvements that make child care more effective and accessible for families and children.



**Affordability:**

Free training and support for RECEs ensure there are enough skilled professionals, making child care more affordable and accessible for all families.



**Quality:**

Skilled RECEs provide high-quality care, ensuring children grow, learn, and succeed, meeting the standards of affordable, high-quality care.



**Inclusion:**

RECEs trained to support children with different abilities and backgrounds ensure every child is included and valued, providing care that meets diverse needs.

**How this aligns with the City of Cornwall's Strategic Plan:**

This priority supports Cornwall's goal of building a skilled workforce by attracting and retaining quality Registered Early Childhood Educators. It increases access to high-quality child care, ensuring every child gets the best start in life.



**To identify and address barriers that exist for families in accessing child care fee subsidy.**

Removing barriers to the child care fee subsidy ensures families can afford the care they need. By addressing these barriers, we make child care more accessible, allowing every child to receive the support they need for growth and development.



Solving barriers ensures all families can easily get the fee subsidy, giving fair and equal access to care for everyone.



Using data helps us find the barriers families face, so we can make changes to improve access to the fee subsidy.



Removing financial barriers makes child care more affordable for families, allowing them to access the care they need.



Addressing barriers helps families access the fee subsidy, ensuring children get the best care and learning opportunities.



Identifying and removing barriers ensures all families, no matter their background, can get the fee subsidy and receive equal care.

**How this aligns with the City of Cornwall's Strategic Plan:**

This priority supports the City's goal of building an inclusive and vibrant community. It ensures all families can access affordable child care, improving education, well-being, and community involvement for everyone.



**To develop a data warehouse that will support the identification of needs and trends as well as support service planning.**

A data warehouse will help track community needs and trends, guiding the growth of early childhood services to meet rising demand while maintaining quality and ensuring access for all children.

**Access:**

The data warehouse will pinpoint underserved areas, expanding services to reach more families.

**Data and Reporting:**

It will collect data to monitor service effectiveness and adjust planning as needs change.

**Affordability:**

Data will guide funding decisions, supporting sustainable growth while keeping services affordable.

**Quality:**

The data warehouse ensures services maintain high standards as they grow by identifying areas for improvement.

**Inclusion:**

It helps identify diverse community needs, ensuring services are inclusive and culturally responsive.

**How this aligns with the City of Cornwall's Strategic Plan:**

The data warehouse supports Cornwall's focus on innovation and informed decision-making, guiding sustainable service growth to meet the needs of a changing population.



**To ensure on-going engagement with all relevant community partners to ensure that families and children are receiving all the necessary supports to ensure success. (No door is the wrong door).**

Building strong partnerships with community groups helps improve access, support services, and outcomes for all families, especially those in need.



**Access:**

Partnerships expand access to early childhood services for all families.



**Data and Reporting:**

Data helps improve services and ensure they meet community needs.



**Affordability:**

Working together offers low-cost or free programs for families in need.



**Quality:**

Partnering with trusted organizations ensures high-quality care and education for children.



**Inclusion:**

Collaboration creates services that meet the diverse needs of families.

**How this aligns with the City of Cornwall's Strategic Plan:**

Engaging with community partners supports Cornwall's goal of building a strong, inclusive community and improving child care for all families.

These priorities are a result of an in-depth analysis of our community profiles and the realities of the families requiring child care and/or early years services.

This plan provides details on the following items that were included in our analysis:

- A community profile for each of our communities;
- An overview of the child care fee subsidy system;
- An overview of the EarlyON child and family support programs;
- An overview of the community consultation process, including survey results;
- Local data and geographical characteristics identifying the realities families face when accessing programs and services.

## **The Human Services Department**

The City of Cornwall's Human Services Department is committed to delivering high-quality, people-centered services to residents of Cornwall and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry.

The department is structured around three core service areas: Ontario Works, Children's Services, and Housing Services.

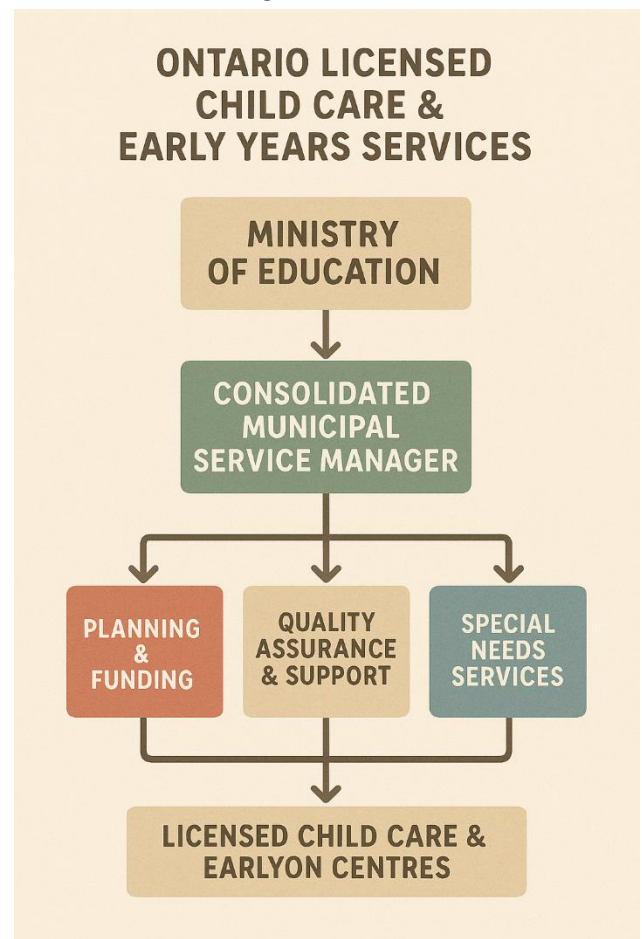
- **Ontario Works** provides financial assistance and employment support to individuals and families in temporary financial need, helping them move toward self-sufficiency.
- **Children's Services** ensures access to inclusive, high-quality early learning and child care programs across the region. This includes oversight of licensed child care providers, administration of fee subsidies, support for children with special needs, and coordination of EarlyON Child and Family Centres.
- **Housing Services** supports individuals with low to moderate incomes, seniors, and individuals with special needs by offering access to a variety of housing programs. These include rent-geared-to-income units, rent supplement initiatives, the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit, and housing stability supports such as the Ontario Renovates and THRIVE programs.

Together, our divisions work collaboratively to meet the diverse and evolving needs of individuals and families in our communities. Human Services Integration is the Province's long-term vision which is intended to ensure all low-income residents (not just those in receipt of social assistance) can access case manager support and a range of local human services.

## **The Role of the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM)**

The City of Cornwall maintains several responsibilities as the Ministry of Education designated CMSM:

- Service system planning, including identifying and addressing service gaps.
- Managing a coordinated, responsive high-quality licensed child care and early years system through evidence-based decision making.
- Engaging in data initiatives to inform decision making including:
  - The Early Development Instrument (EDI)
  - Performing statistically driven community analysis
- Maintaining service contracts with licensed child care operators and EarlyON operators, as well as directly operating Home Child Care services.
  - Supporting expansion projects to increase accessibility for families where there is an identified need.
- Managing the various funding streams and the associated programs to support the system including:
  - CWELCC Cost-Based Funding
  - Local Priorities Funding
    - Wage Enhancement Grants
    - Workforce Compensation
    - Professional Learning
    - Flexibility Funding
      - General Operating Grant
      - Pay Equity
      - Capacity Building
      - Special Needs Resourcing
      - Fee Subsidy
  - Infrastructure Funding
    - Start-Up Grants
    - ELCC Infrastructure Funding
  - EarlyON Funding
  - Supporting licensed child care operators with quality assurance initiatives
- Directly operating Special Needs Resourcing services
- Maintaining community partnerships and collaborating with relevant community partners through:
  - Chairing the Early Years Planning Table for Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry
  - Participating on relevant committees chaired by community partners



## **Our Communities**

Several community-specific factors have played a crucial role in the development of this plan and will remain equally important during its implementation. These considerations reflect the unique characteristics and needs of the families we serve.

### **Francophone Population**

Our municipality is home to a significant Francophone population, due in part to our proximity to the Ottawa/Gatineau region and the Quebec border. A broad range of Francophone services are available locally, including French-language public and Catholic school boards, French child care and EarlyON programs, and health care services offered by the Centre de Santé Communautaire de l'Estrie.

Additionally, many agencies providing services to families with young children operate bilingually, ensuring access to services in either of Canada's official languages. As mandated by the Ministry of Education, the City of Cornwall's Children's Services Division complies with the French Language Services Act (R.S.O. 1990, c. F.32) and its associated Regulation 284/11. Families accessing our services can do so in the official language of their choice.

Within our service area, the following regions are designated by the Province as having a significant Francophone population:

- County of Glengarry
- County of Stormont
- Town of Winchester (within the County of Dundas)

To support continued access and equity, the Children's Services Division submits a French Language Services Plan to the Ministry of Education every three years.

### **Indigenous Population**

The City of Cornwall's Children's Services Division maintains an ongoing relationship with local Indigenous communities. While each group continues to operate independently, we value the opportunities to connect, share resources, and learn from one another.

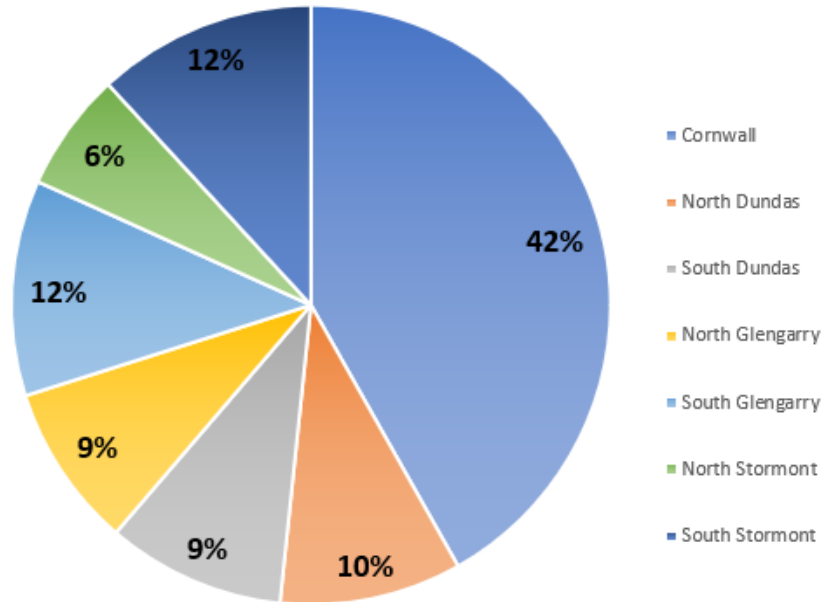
We regularly reach out to offer seats at local planning tables and extend invitations to participate in professional development opportunities. Our goal is to continue fostering respectful, reciprocal relationships that support the inclusion of culturally relevant perspectives in early years programming.

### **Rural Communities**

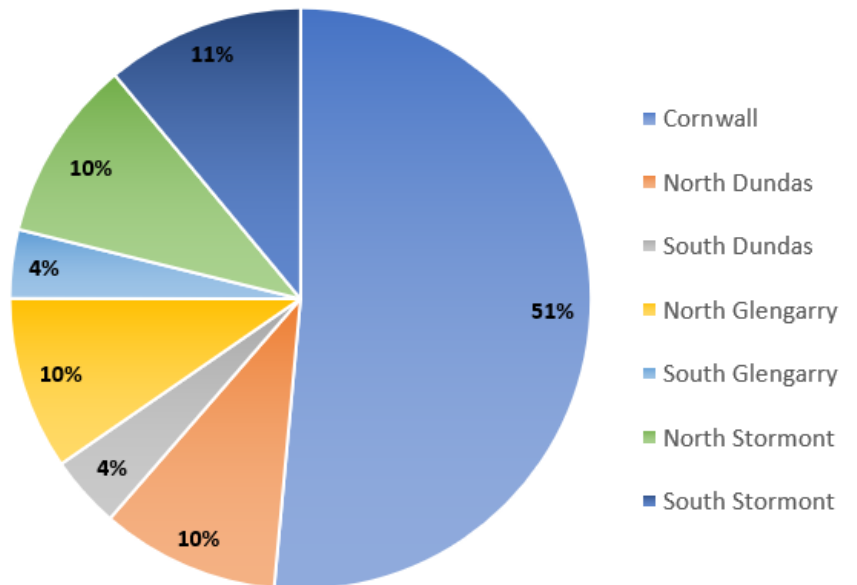
Providing services in rural areas presents unique challenges. Families often need to travel longer distances and face transportation barriers that can limit their access to programs and services. As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), we are committed to collaborating with service providers and community partners to improve access for children and families in rural communities.

The United Counties of Stormont Dundas & Glengarry is a region in Eastern Ontario with seven census subdivisions. According to the 2021 census, the combined population of Cornwall and SD&G is 114,637.

This chart shows the distribution of population by subdivision



This chart shows the distribution of licensed child care spaces by subdivision



### **Children with Special Needs**

Each child and family is unique and should have access to supports that reflect their individual circumstances. Our programs aim to be inclusive, responsive, and designed to foster growth, learning, and connection.

The City of Cornwall's Children's Services Division promotes a "no wrong door" approach, where services work in close partnership to ensure families can access the supports they need, when and where they need them. Strong inter-agency collaboration and timely referrals are essential. We are continuously collecting feedback on our current service model to ensure it effectively supports child care staff in meeting the needs of families.

### **Low-Income Families**

Several areas within our municipality experience higher rates of low income, which can present barriers to accessing early years programs and child care. The City of Cornwall's Children's Services Division remains committed to ensuring services are accessible and affordable for all families, regardless of financial circumstances.

The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system has had a significant positive impact on affordability. As of 2025, child care fees for children aged 0 to 6 are capped at a maximum of \$22 per day, substantially reducing the cost of care for many families in our region.

We continue to offer financial assistance to all families who qualify, based on the Ministry's income scale calculator. We also continue to advocate for this income scale to be updated to reflect current financial realities, with the goal of expanding access to fee subsidies for more families.

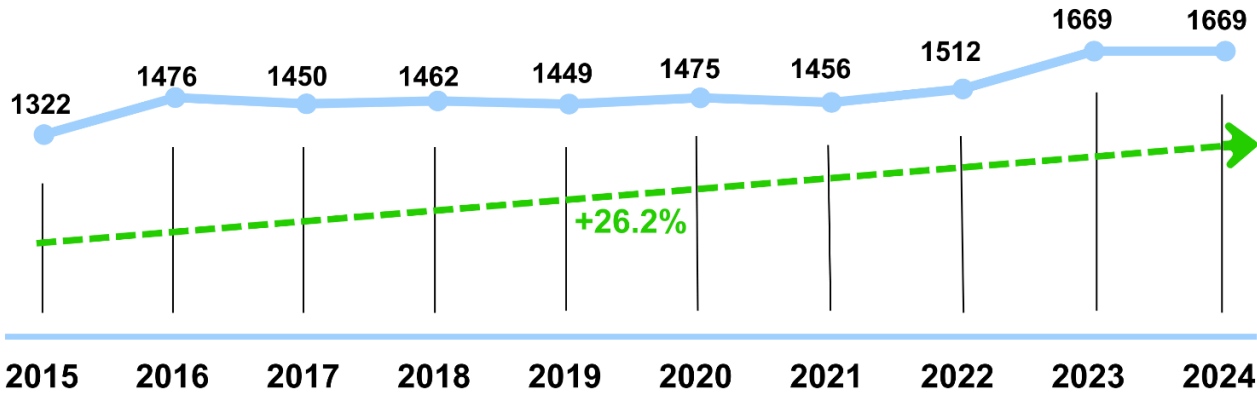
The following community "one-pagers" highlight some of the key statistics from the seven townships. Demographics, labour, & income data has been sourced from the most recent Canadian census (2021) unless otherwise specified.

**City of Cornwall**  
www.Cornwall.ca

Population: 47,845 (46,589 in 2016)  
Population Aged 0-4 Years: 2,335 (2,485 in 2016)  
Population Aged 5-9 Years: 2,595 (2,490 in 2016)

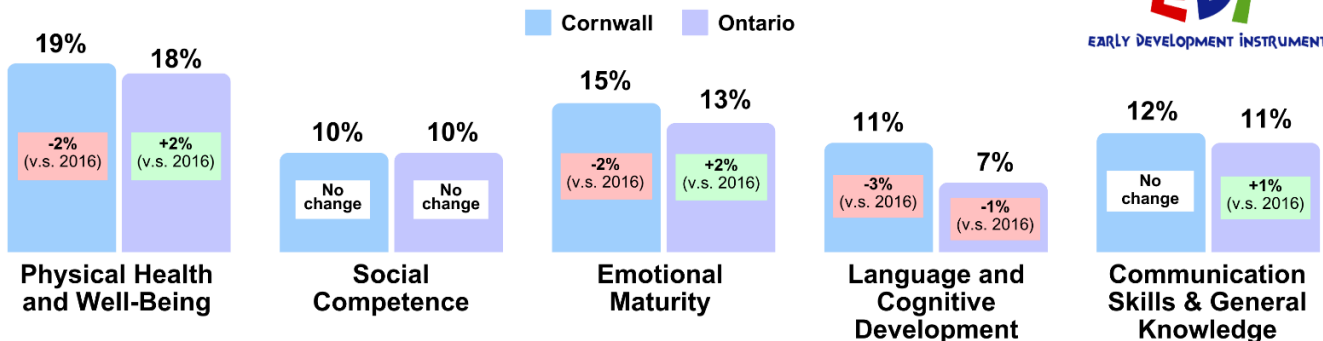
EarlyON Locations	Licensed Child Care Centres	Licensed Home Child Care Agencies	Elementary Schools	Number of French Spaces	Wait List
2	18	1	22	788	1,578

**Number of Licensed Childcare Spaces**



Demographics			Labour and Education		
<b>Francophone Population</b>	9,110 (19.4% of populations)	-14.1% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of two-parent economic families</b>	\$95,000 Ontario: \$121,000	+23% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Indigenous Population</b>	2,610 (5.8% of population)	+27.59% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of lone-parent economic families</b>	\$53,600 Ontario: \$67,500	+41.7% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Two-Parent Families</b>	4,140 (31.6% of families)	-3.1% (v.s. 2016)	<b>% of population aged 25-64 with postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree</b>	50.3% Ontario: 67.8%	46.8% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	3,010 (23% of families)	+6.1% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	12.4% Ontario: 12.2%	+25.2% (v.s. 2016)

**Early Development Instrument Vulnerability by Domain**

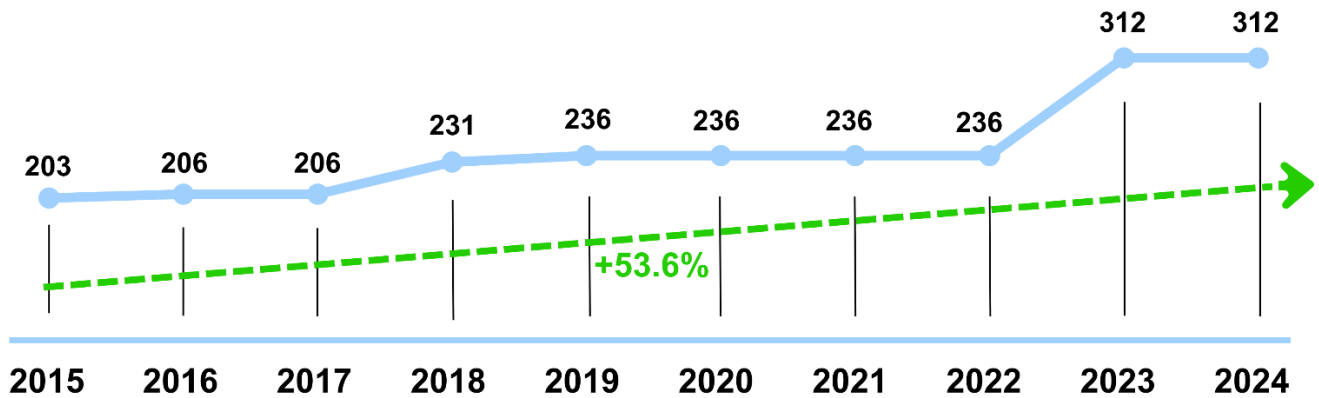


**North Glengarry**  
www.NorthGlengarry.ca

Population: **10,144** (10,109 in 2016)  
Population Aged 0-4 Years: **400** (405 in 2016)  
Population Aged 5-9 Years: **480** (495 in 2016)

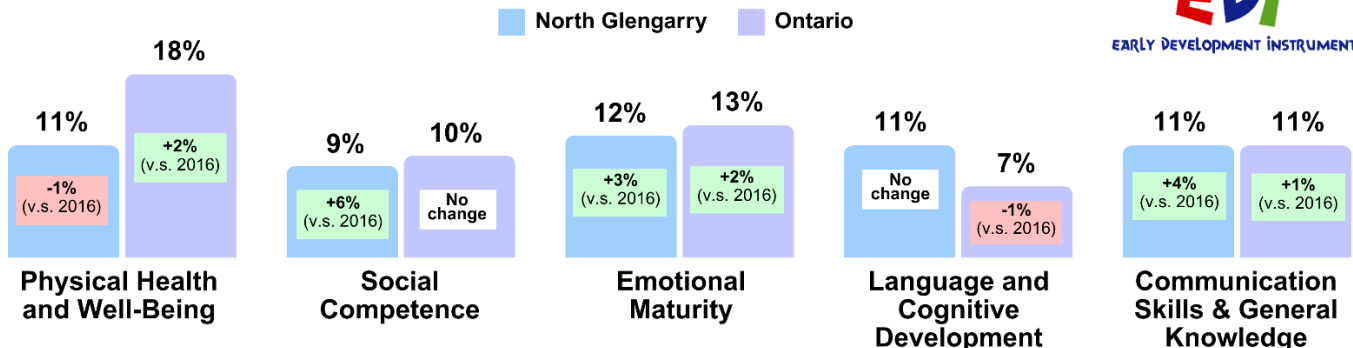
EarlyON Locations	Licensed Child Care Centres	Licensed Home Child Care Agencies	Elementary Schools	Number of French Spaces	Wait List
2	5	1	8	211	95

**Number of Licensed Childcare Spaces**



Demographics			Labour and Education		
<b>Francophone Population</b>	3,480 (34.3% of populations)	-13.5% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of two-parent economic families</b>	\$107,000 Ontario: \$121,000	+23.3% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Indigenous Population</b>	365 (3.6% of population)	+180.7% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of lone-parent economic families</b>	\$55,600 Ontario: \$67,500	+30.8% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Two-Parent Families</b>	995 (33.6% of families)	-5.6% (v.s. 2016)	<b>% of population aged 25-64 with postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree</b>	51.3% Ontario: 67.8%	54.5% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	420 (14.1% of families)	+1.2% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	7.6% Ontario: 12.2%	+5.5% (v.s. 2016)

**Early Development Instrument Vulnerability by Domain**



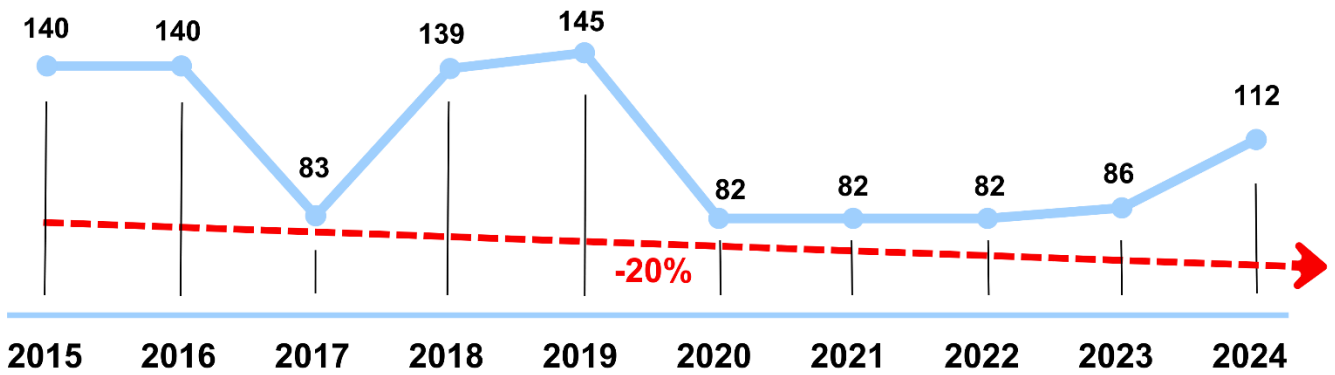
# South Glengarry

www.SouthGlengarry.com

Population: 13,330 (13,150 in 2016)  
 Population Aged 0-4 Years: 610 (515 in 2016)  
 Population Aged 5-9 Years: 665 (620 in 2016)

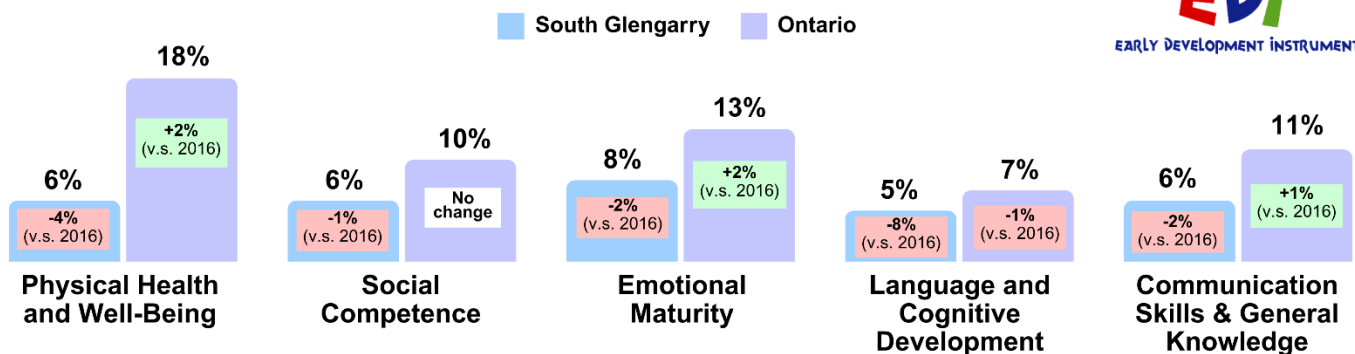
EarlyON Locations	Licensed Child Care Centres	Licensed Home Child Care Agencies	Elementary Schools	Number of French Spaces	Wait List
1	3	1	4	43	0

## Number of Licensed Childcare Spaces



Demographics			Labour and Education		
<b>Francophone Population</b>	3,370 (25.2% of populations)	-10% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of two-parent economic families</b>	\$121,000 Ontario: \$121,000	+23.3% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Indigenous Population</b>	530 (3.9% of population)	+76.6% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of lone-parent economic families</b>	\$66,000 Ontario: \$67,500	+27.3% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Two-Parent Families</b>	1,505 (36.3% of families)	-0.6% (v.s. 2016)	<b>% of population aged 25-64 with postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree</b>	64.3% Ontario: 67.8%	63.1% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	425 (10.2% of families)	+8.9% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	8.6% Ontario: 12.2%	+48.2% (v.s. 2016)

## Early Development Instrument Vulnerability by Domain

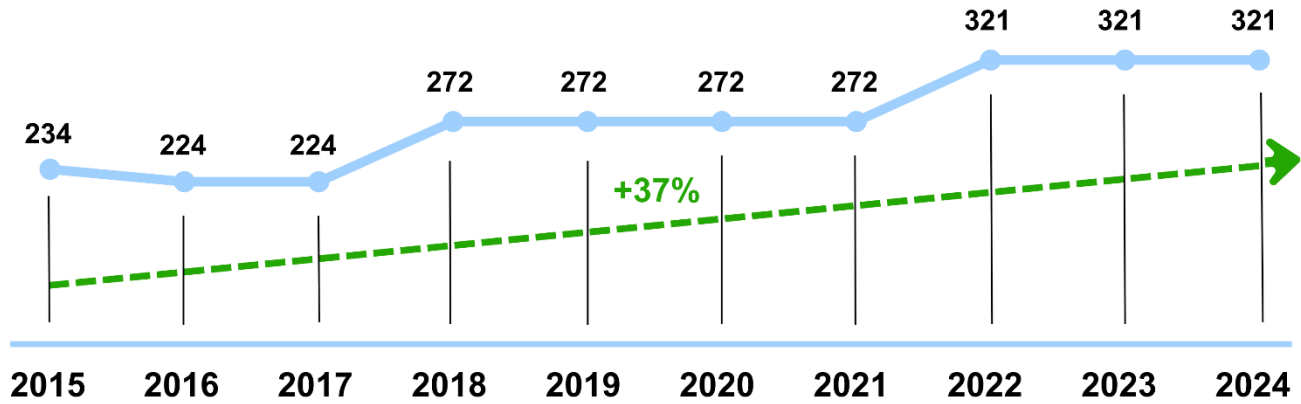


**North Dundas**  
www.NorthDundas.com

Population: 11,304 (11,278 in 2016)  
Population Aged 0-4 Years: 615 (660 in 2016)  
Population Aged 5-9 Years: 690 (635 in 2016)

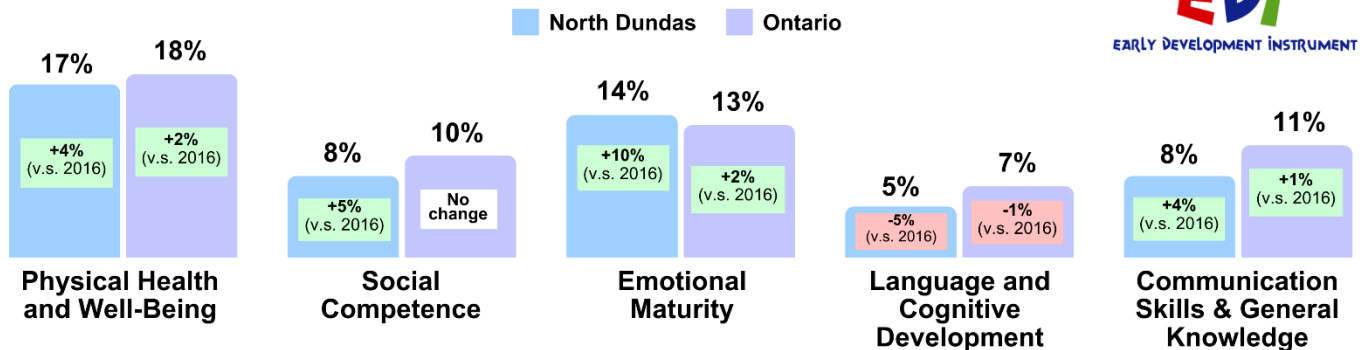
EarlyON Locations	Licensed Child Care Centres	Licensed Home Child Care Agencies	Elementary Schools	Number of French Spaces	Wait List
1	3	1	5	272	305

**Number of Licensed Childcare Spaces**



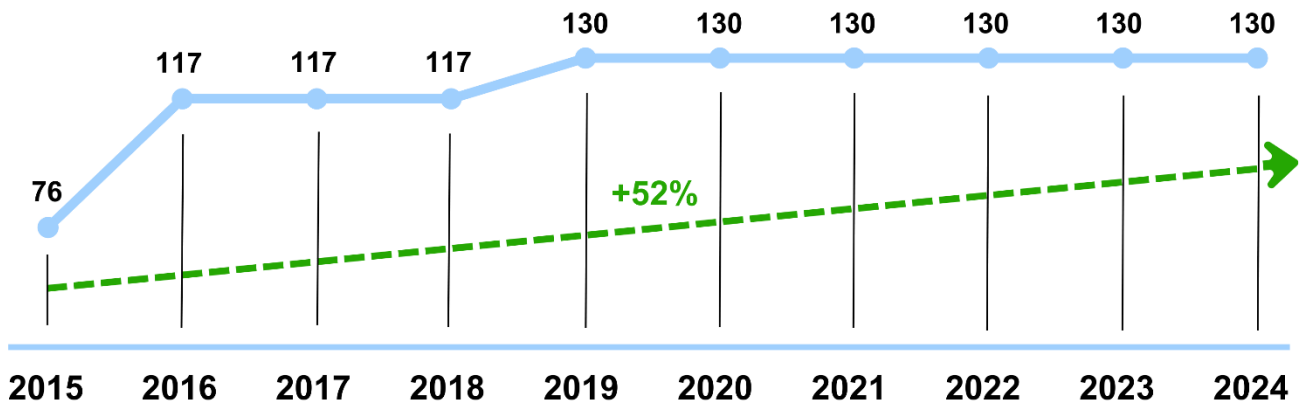
Demographics			Labour and Education		
<b>Francophone Population</b>	835 7.3% of populations	+2.4% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of two-parent economic families</b>	\$114,000 Ontario: \$121,000	+20.2% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Indigenous Population</b>	340 (3% of population)	+33.3% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of lone-parent economic families</b>	\$66,500 Ontario: \$67,500	+27.9% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Two-Parent Families</b>	1,325 (39.4% of families)	-2.9% (v.s. 2016)	<b>% of population aged 25-64 with postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree</b>	61.2% Ontario: 67.8%	59% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	440 (13.1% of families)	No change (v.s. 2016)	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	7% Ontario: 12.2%	+1% (v.s. 2016)

**Early Development Instrument Vulnerability by Domain**



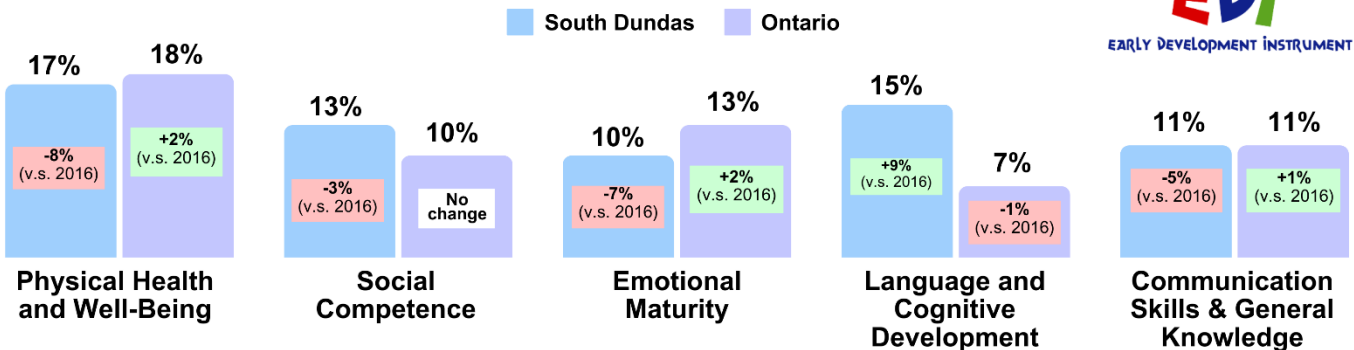
<h1>South Dundas</h1> <p>www.SouthDundas.com</p>		Population: <b>11,044</b> (10,852 in 2016) Population Aged 0-4 Years: <b>470</b> (525 in 2016) Population Aged 5-9 Years: <b>570</b> (590 in 2016)			
EarlyON Locations	Licensed Child Care Centres	Licensed Home Child Care Agencies	Elementary Schools	Number of French Spaces	Wait List
2	2	1	4	102	87

## Number of Licensed Childcare Spaces



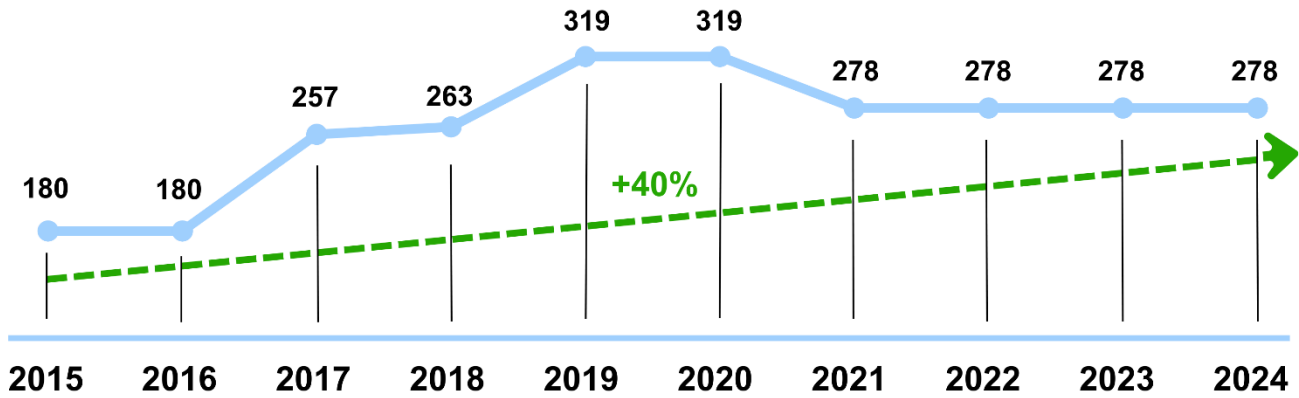
Demographics			Labour and Education		
<b>Francophone Population</b>	455 4.1% of populations	-5.3% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of two-parent economic families</b>	\$108,000 Ontario: \$121,000	+23.6% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Indigenous Population</b>	300 (2.7% of population)	+13.2% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of lone-parent economic families</b>	\$62,000 Ontario: \$67,500	+28.7% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Two-Parent Families</b>	1,125 (33% of families)	-3.0% (v.s. 2016)	<b>% of population aged 25-64 with postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree</b>	54.9% Ontario: 67.8%	51.3% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	455 (13.3% of families)	No change (v.s. 2016)	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	10.1% Ontario: 12.2%	+50.7% (v.s. 2016)

## Early Development Instrument Vulnerability by Domain



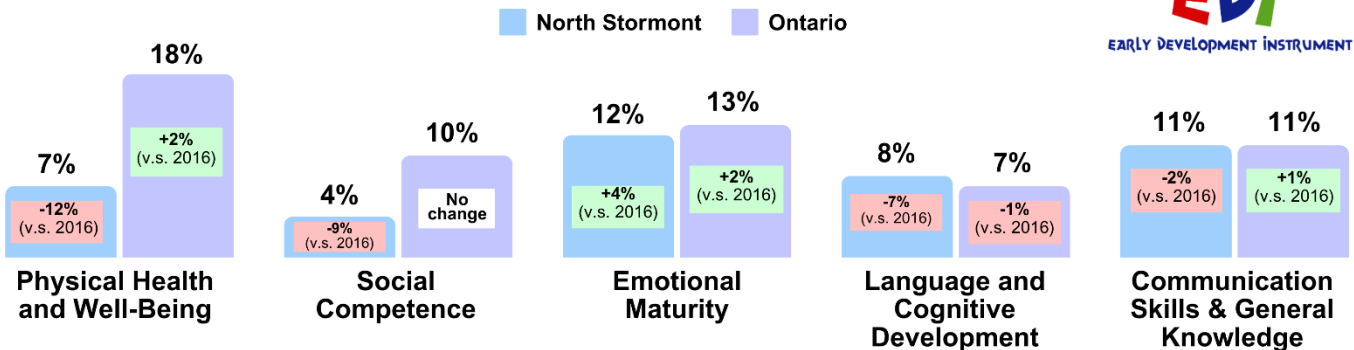
<b>North Stormont</b> www.NorthStormont.ca		Population: 7,400 (6,873 in 2016) Population Aged 0-4 Years: 510 (420 in 2016) Population Aged 5-9 Years: 475 (405 in 2016)			
EarlyON Locations	Licensed Child Care Centres	Licensed Home Child Care Agencies	Elementary Schools	Number of French Spaces	Wait List
2	4	1	5	102	181

### Number of Licensed Childcare Spaces



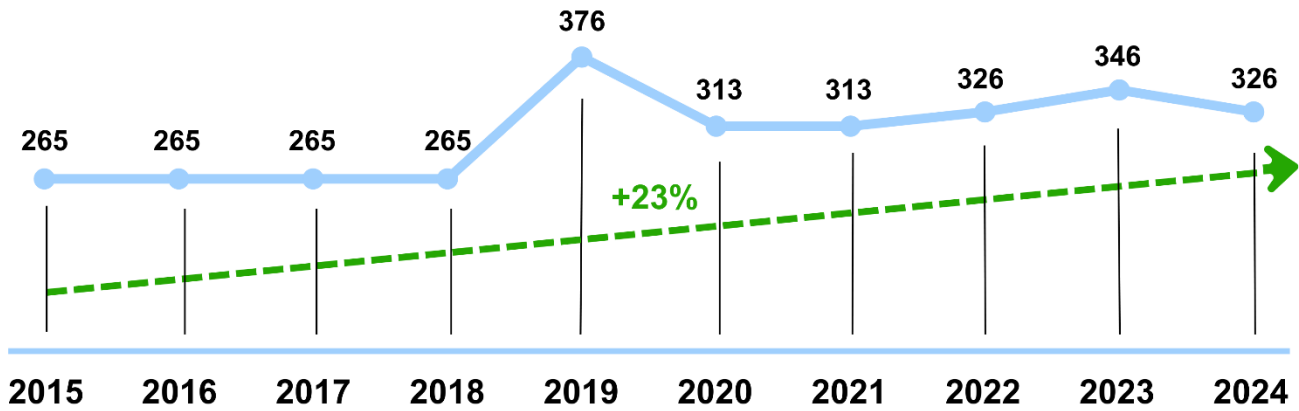
Demographics			Labour and Education		
<b>Francophone Population</b>	1875 25.3% of populations	+2.7% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of two-parent economic families</b>	\$112,000 Ontario: \$121,000	+18.8% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Indigenous Population</b>	340 (4.5% of population)	+106% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of lone-parent economic families</b>	\$63,200 Ontario: \$67,500	+22.3% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Two-Parent Families</b>	935 (42.4% of families)	+1% (v.s. 2016)	<b>% of population aged 25-64 with postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree</b>	60.3% Ontario: 67.8%	59.4% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	270 (3.6% of families)	+35% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	5.9% Ontario: 12.2%	+3.5% (v.s. 2016)

### Early Development Instrument Vulnerability by Domain



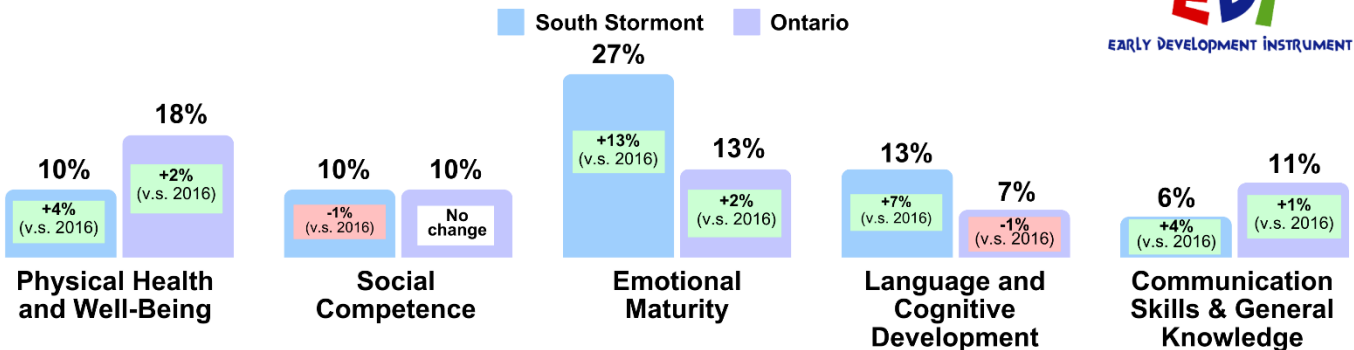
<b>South Stormont</b> www.SouthStormont.ca		Population: 13,570 (13,110 in 2016) Population Aged 0-4 Years: 630 (595 in 2016) Population Aged 5-9 Years: 710 (765 in 2016)			
EarlyON Locations	Licensed Child Care Centres	Licensed Home Child Care Agencies	Elementary Schools	Number of French Spaces	Wait List
1	4	1	5	198	83

### Number of Licensed Childcare Spaces



Demographics			Labour and Education		
<b>Francophone Population</b>	1925 14.1% of populations	-2.2% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of two-parent economic families</b>	\$121,000 Ontario: \$121,000	+23.8% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Indigenous Population</b>	460 (3.3% of population)	-3.1% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Median after-tax income of lone-parent economic families</b>	\$69,000 Ontario: \$67,500	+41.4% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Two-Parent Families</b>	1,610 (37.6% of families)	-1.8% (v.s. 2016)	<b>% of population aged 25-64 with postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree</b>	63.9% Ontario: 67.8%	61.1% (v.s. 2016)
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	485 11.3% of families)	+7.7% (v.s. 2016)	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	6.8% Ontario: 12.2%	-4.2% (v.s. 2016)

### Early Development Instrument Vulnerability by Domain



## Accessibility and Affordability

Access to affordable quality early learning and child care programs not only supports parents and caregivers in their ability to attend work and school but also supports the local economy. As stated within the following video, access to licensed child care increases the purchasing power of families and supports the next generation of citizenry. Here is a link to the video:

[Quality Early Learning and Child Care is Economic Infrastructure](#)

Access to quality affordable child care supports the local economy through:

- Increased labour force participation
- Increased job creation
- Increased productivity of workers
- Increased economic activity
- Helps give children the best start in life thus supporting their future to become productive citizens.

Studies show that for every dollar invested in child care, the immediate economic output is \$2-\$3, with long-term output of \$6-\$7. The long-term benefits of early learning and child care programs can be summarized as follows:

### Children who regularly participate in early childhood education programs:

Have higher graduation rates

Have improved grades and work habits

Are excited to learn

Develop stronger social skills

Make gains in math and reading

Make better decisions



Image taken from the Government of Canada website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/campaigns/child-care.html>

## **Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC)**

On March 27, 2022 the federal and provincial governments signed the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC) aimed at making child care more affordable for families. The new CWELCC system is lowering child care costs and improving access, quality and inclusion across Ontario's child care and early years sector.

Supporting Ontario's child care vision, the CWELCC program provides the following benefits to families and child care staff:

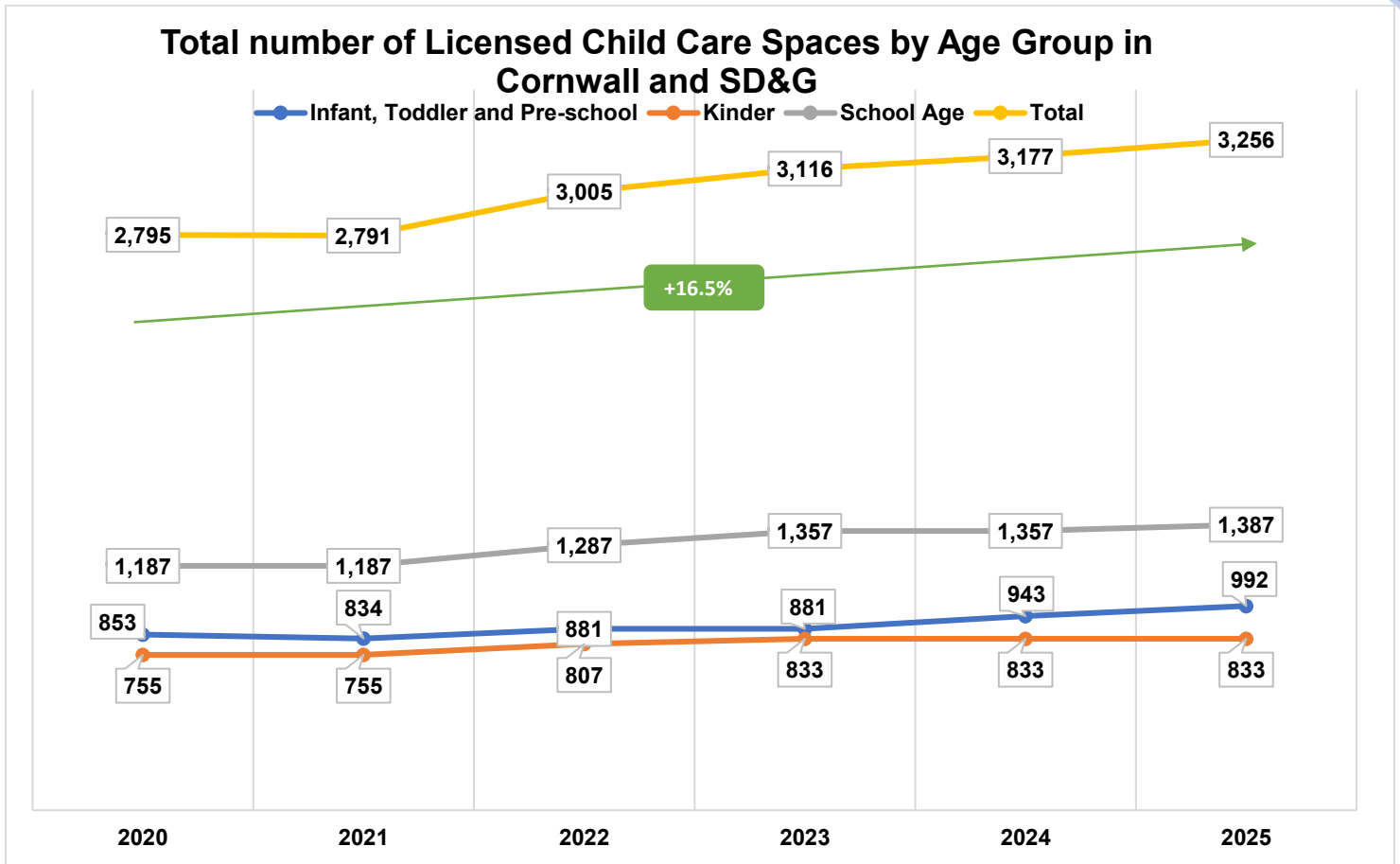
- Families accessing care through a participating program have seen child care fees for children under 6 years old significantly reduced. Beginning on January 1, 2025, families with eligible children in programs enrolled in the CWELCC system saw child care base fees capped at \$22 per day.
- Low earning Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) working in a participating program are now receiving a minimum wage of \$24.86/hour.
  - In 2026, this minimum wage for RECEs will increase to \$25.86/hour

It is important to note that as of January 1, 2025, licensees that do not participate in CWELCC must not directly receive any funding from their CMSM that they may have previously had access to (for example, wage enhancements, general operating) and may continue to set their own parent fees and wages.

To support increased access to affordable licensed child care, Children's Services has developed a local Directed Growth Plan. Child Care operators wishing to create new spaces within the CWELCC system, must meet the requirements as set out within the plan. It is important to note that the Ministry of Education has provided the City with growth targets that ultimately restrict our ability to increase CWELCC spaces beyond this allocation. The plan includes information on Infrastructure Funding that operators of approved expansion projects can apply for to support the costs associated with creating the new spaces.

The Directed Growth Plan is publicly available on the City website: [Child Care Directed Growth Plan 2022-2026](#)

As shown in the chart below, Children's Services continues to support growth of licensed child care spaces in our region. Since 2020 there has been a 16.5% increase in the overall number of available licensed child care spaces. Specifically, there has been a 13.5% increase in the number of CWELCC spaces (spaces supporting children aged 0-5).



**Key Considerations Regarding Child Care Spaces in our region:**

- The City of Cornwall currently has one licensed child care centre that operates 24 hours a day.
- 34% of all licensed child care spaces are offered in French and operated by francophone organizations.
- These figures do not include child care spaces provided through the Licensed Home Child Care Agency, which has up to 10 active homes at any given time.
- There is a shortage of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) in our region

Despite the progress made in increasing the number of licensed child care spaces, our region continues to be in a child care desert. This means that less than 1 in 3 children (who are younger than kindergarten age) have access to licensed child care. Children’s Services remains committed to supporting child care growth, and therefore improving accessibility, in Cornwall and throughout SD&G.

## Fee Subsidy

The Child Care Fee Subsidy program provides financial support to eligible families to help cover the cost of licensed child care for children up to 12 years of age. This essential service enables families to participate in the workforce or pursue education and training, while ensuring their children have access to safe, quality care.

To qualify, parents or legal guardians must be working, attending school or training, or receiving Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits while engaged in an approved activity. A subsidy may also be available if the parent/guardian or child has a recognized special or social need. The amount of subsidy is determined through a Ministry-mandated income test using the Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS), and eligible child care hours are based on the parent's work or school schedule. Families must provide documentation as required under Ministry guidelines, and payments are made directly to licensed child care providers on behalf of eligible families.

### Child Care Fee Subsidy Eligibility Requirement and Parent Fees:

Source of data: Ministry of Education

Category	Eligibility Requirements	Parent Fee After Fee Subsidy
<b>Full fee subsidy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent or guardian receives payment under the Ontario Disability Support Program or Ontario Works; or</li> <li>Annual household income of \$20,000 or less.</li> </ul>	\$0
<b>Partial fee subsidy</b> (as of January 1, 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of fee subsidy is based on an income test.</li> <li>With a maximum parent fee of \$22 per day, annual household income of less than \$70,000<sup>2</sup> may be eligible for a reduced parent fee.</li> </ul>	Less than \$22 per day
<b>Partial fee subsidy</b> (expected by March 31, 2026)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of fee subsidy is based on an income test.</li> <li>With a maximum parent fee of \$12 per day, annual household income of less than \$54,000<sup>2</sup> may be eligible for a reduced parent fee.</li> </ul>	Less than \$12 per day

1. The fee subsidy is determined based on several factors, including the household's adjusted net income and the number of children in the household.

2. Maximum annual household income eligible for the fee subsidy is estimated based on one child in the household and 261 days of child care in a year (which approximates full-time care on weekdays).

Effective April 1, 2022, as part of Ontario's participation in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system, the parental contribution amount was reduced by 50% for families receiving child care fee subsidy for children under the age of 6. This significant reduction lowers out-of-pocket costs for eligible families.

To receive a fee subsidy, families must choose a licensed child care provider that has a service agreement with the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM).

To support equitable access to subsidized child care for residents, the municipality may approve out-of-jurisdiction licensed child care in circumstances where in-boundary care is unavailable, or upon parental request based on employment location, school choice, or custody considerations.

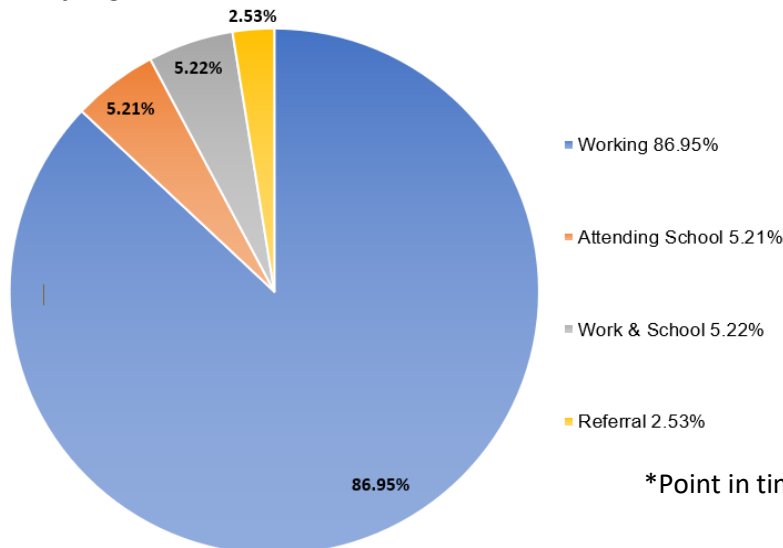
Currently, there is no waitlist for child care fee subsidy. Families are assessed for eligibility as they apply.

If a waitlist becomes necessary in the future, families will be added on a first-come, first-served basis, following the Fee Subsidy Waitlist Management Policy, and prioritized as follows:

1. OW recipients (including LEAP participants) and ODSP recipients engaged in eligible activities
2. Sole-support parents who are working or in school
3. Two-parent families who are working or in school
4. Children with special needs in families who are working or in school
5. Children with social needs referred by a recognized agency or professional
6. Special circumstances at the discretion of the Division Supervisor

Additional factors such as net income, number of children, hours of care needed, availability of licensed spaces, and the date care is required will also be considered when managing a waitlist.

The graph below shows the distribution of families receiving subsidies by reason for using child care. Overall, 93% of families receiving fee subsidies are non-Ontario Works clients who are either working or studying.



\*Point in time stats: September 2025\*

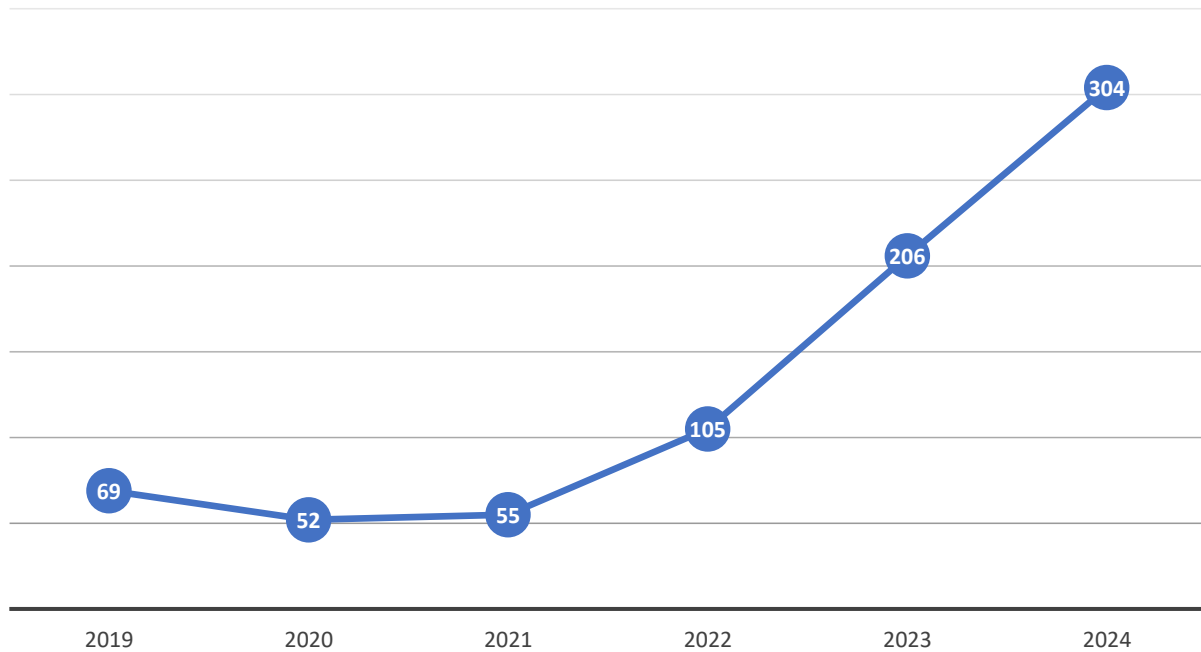
## **Special Needs Resourcing**

Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) funding, provided by the Ontario Ministry of Education, supports the meaningful inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care settings, including home child care. This support is provided at no additional cost to families or child care operators.

Following a change in our service delivery model in 2021, the Children’s Services Division began directly operating the Special Needs Resourcing Program. This transition has significantly expanded our reach, with the number of unduplicated children served increasing from 55 in 2021 to 304 in 2024—a 452% increase. The program continues to advance our commitment to inclusive, high-quality early learning environments that enable every child to fully participate, grow, and thrive.

The trend for the unduplicated number of children served (2019-2024) is as follows:

### **Number of Unduplicated Children Served**



A key focus of the program is building the capacity of child care staff. Through mentorship, consultation, and professional development, educators are supported to confidently integrate inclusive practices into daily routines and programming. Over time, this approach strengthens the ability of early learning environments to meet the needs of all children.

The Special Needs Resourcing Program aligns with the Ontario Ministry of Education’s commitment to inclusive early learning and care, as outlined in the Canada-Wide Early

## Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan || 2026-2030

Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. SNR continues to be recognized as a key funding priority.

### Services Provided Through SNR Include:

- **Child-Specific Consultation:** Support for children identified as having additional needs—diagnosed or undiagnosed. Child Care Advisors work in collaboration with educators, families, and professionals to develop and maintain individualized strategies tailored to the child's specific needs.
- **Room or Program-Level Consultation:** Inclusive support offered to educators to strengthen practices across a classroom or child care program. These consultations are not tied to a specific child and do not require parental consent. The focus is on equipping educators to support the diverse needs of all children in their care.
- **Enhanced Support Funding:** This funding enables child care centres to hire additional staff above the standard child-to-staff ratio. The funding is not intended for one-to-one staffing, but rather to increase the overall capacity of the program to support inclusion effectively.
- **Resource Library:** Access to specialized and adaptive equipment and materials is available to child care programs based on identified needs. These resources support inclusive programming and individualized accommodations where required.
- **Professional Learning and Training:** Opportunities are offered to child care staff to build their knowledge, skills, and confidence in supporting children with special needs in inclusive settings.
- **Mentorship and Coaching:** Ongoing support from Child Care Advisors to guide and mentor educators in implementing inclusive practices and strategies within their programs.



## **Early Development Instrument**

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) was developed to create a uniform methodology to assess children's level of development in their first year of schooling. The results are used by service system managers and relevant community partners to identify areas of special need, as well as to plan and locate timely interventions such as early childhood programs.

The early years of a child's life are critical for long-term health and well-being. Accessibility to relevant quality early childhood programs and services can have a major impact on these formative years. The EDI results help to inform service system managers as to the needs of children and families living in the communities within their municipality. Together with the Early Years Planning Table, the Children's Services Division has reviewed our local EDI results and used the results to inform the early years' service system planning for our communities.

A separate analysis of the EDI results is undertaken for children who are identified as having special needs. These results are given special consideration when determining the amount of Special Needs Resourcing support for licensed child care setting required within our community.

The Early Development Instrument, a 103-item checklist that determines children's well-being, has the following five domains and corresponding sub-domains.

The information below is provided by the Offord Center; please refer to their website for more information: <https://efts.offordcentre.com/outcomes/>

EDI Domains	EDI Sub-Domains
<p><b>Physical Health and Well-Being</b></p> <p>Includes gross and fine motor skills, adequate energy levels, independence in looking after own needs, and daily living skills</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Physical Readiness for School Day</li> <li>2. Physical Independence</li> <li>3. Gross and Fine Motor Skills</li> </ol>
<p><b>Social Competence</b></p> <p>Includes curiosity, eagerness to try new experiences, knowledge of acceptable public behavior and ability to control behavior, respect for authority, cooperation, and rule following</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overall Social Competence</li> <li>2. Responsibility and Respect</li> <li>3. Approaches to Learning</li> <li>4. Readiness to Explore New Things</li> </ol>
<p><b>Emotional Maturity</b></p> <p>Includes ability to think before acting, balance between too fearful and too impulsive, ability to deal with feelings in an age-appropriate manner, and empathetic response</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pro-Social and Helping Behavior</li> <li>2. Anxious and Fearful Behavior</li> <li>3. Aggressive Behavior</li> <li>4. Hyperactivity and Inattentive Behavior</li> </ol>
<p><b>Language and Cognitive Development</b></p> <p>Includes reading awareness, age-appropriate reading, writing, and numeracy skills, ability to understand similarities and differences, and ability to recite information from memory</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Basic Literacy</li> <li>2. Interest Literacy/Numeracy and Memory</li> <li>3. Advanced Literacy</li> <li>4. Basic Numeracy</li> </ol>
<p><b>Communication Skills and General Knowledge</b></p> <p>Includes skills to communicate needs and wants in appropriate ways, symbolic use of language, storytelling, and age-appropriate knowledge of the world</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication and General Knowledge</li> </ol>

The Early Development Instrument is conducted in a child’s first year of school and therefore is administered by the Kindergarten teachers from participating school boards. It is important to note that the EDI is not conducted with children who are home schooled or who attend private schools.

## Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan || 2026-2030

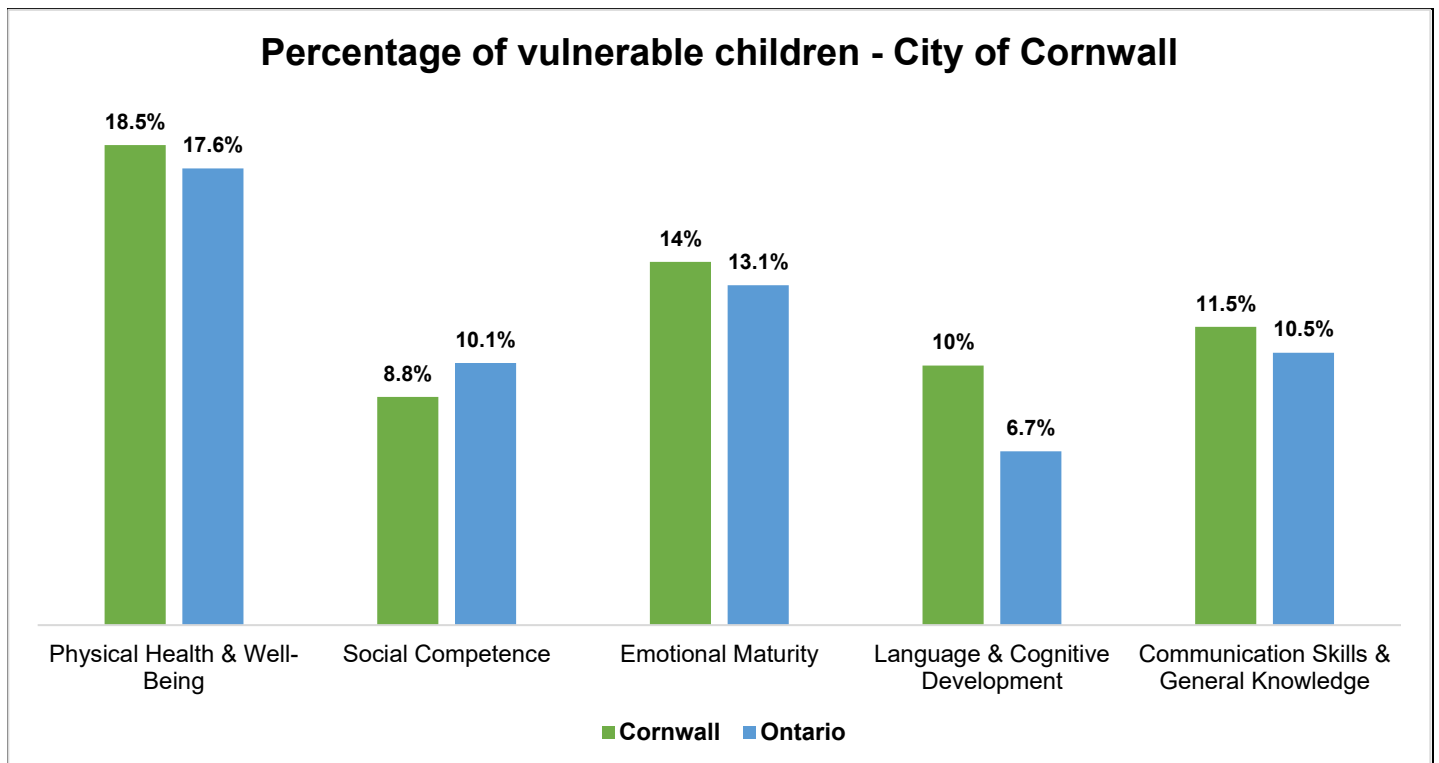
The EDI is implemented in 3 year cycles:

- Year 1 – Knowledge mobilization and planning for the next cycle
- Year 2 – Data Collection
- Year 3 - Results are reported back to the school boards and the service system managers to support local collaboration, planning and monitoring.

There have been 6 cycles completed to date, the latest of which concluded in 2023.

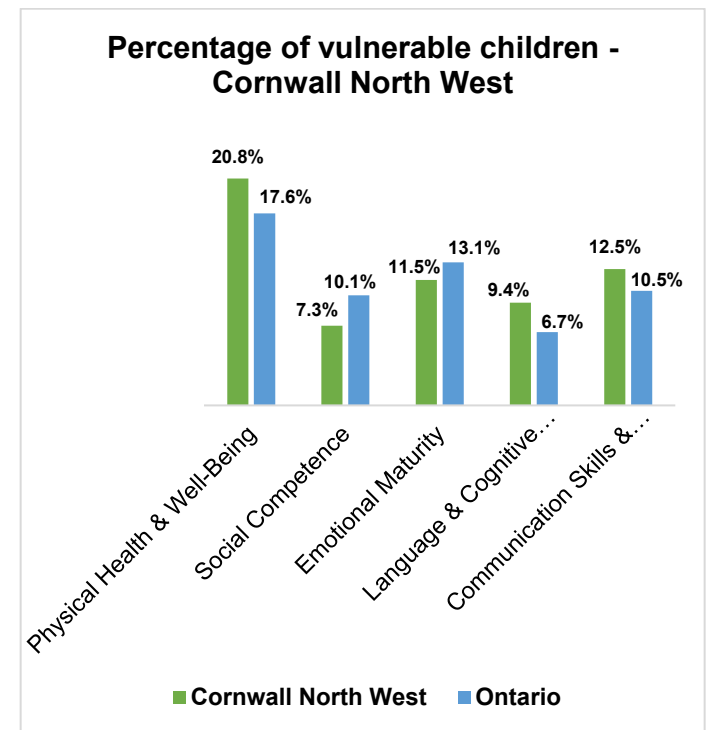
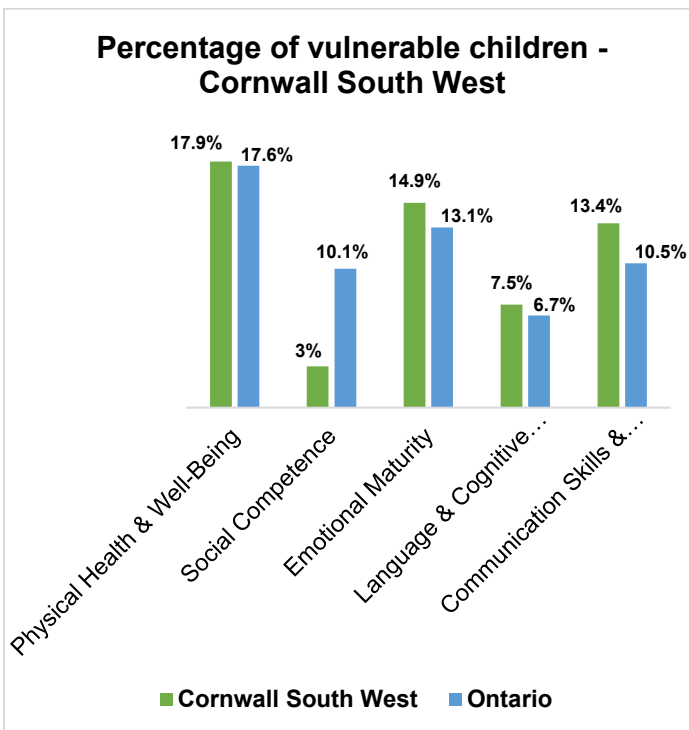
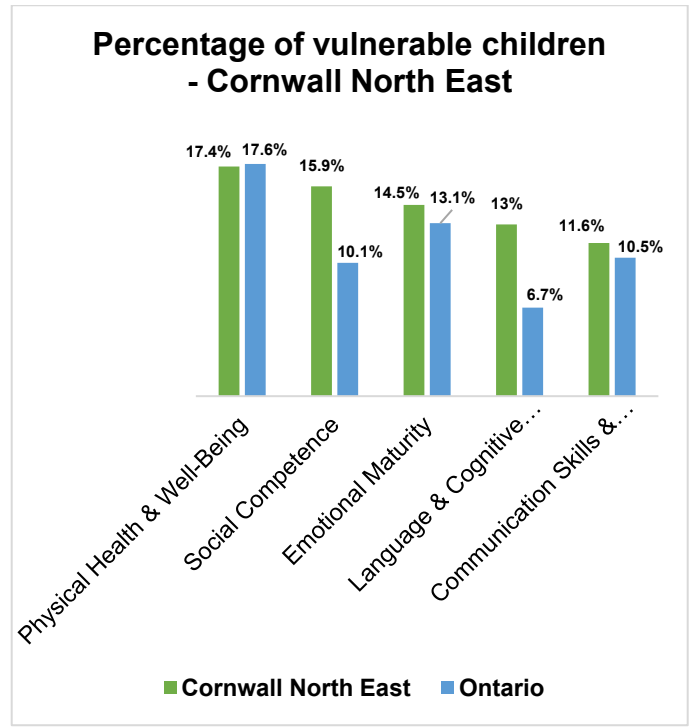
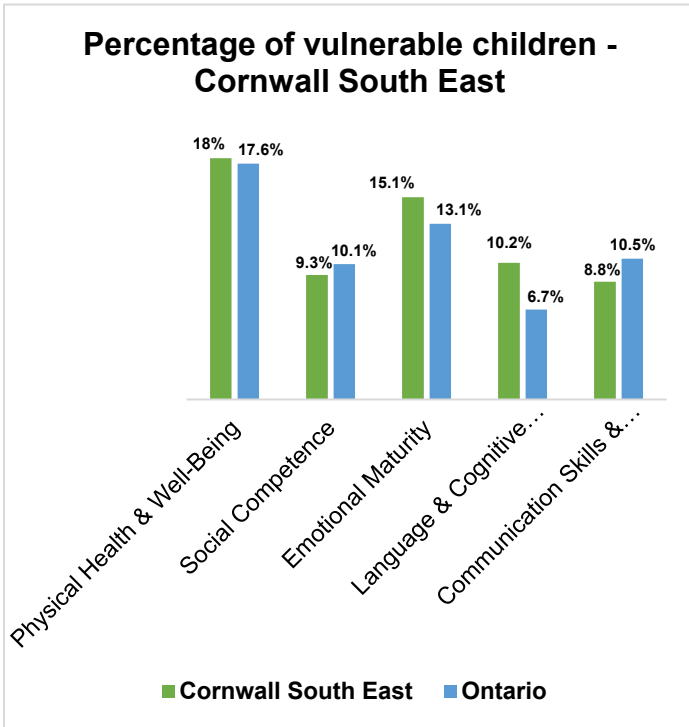
The EDI scores classify children as being “vulnerable”, “at-risk” or “on track” in the five domains as listed above. Children who score in the bottom 10<sup>th</sup> percentile in the province are classified as being “vulnerable” while those who score between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentile are classified as being “at-risk”. Both “vulnerable” and “at-risk” children are classified as being “not on track” and special attention is paid to the analysis of those scores.

The charts below show the percentage of children vulnerable by EDI domain for each of the seven subdivisions for children identified as not having special needs. This breakdown enables the programs in each area to provide targeted support based on identified needs.

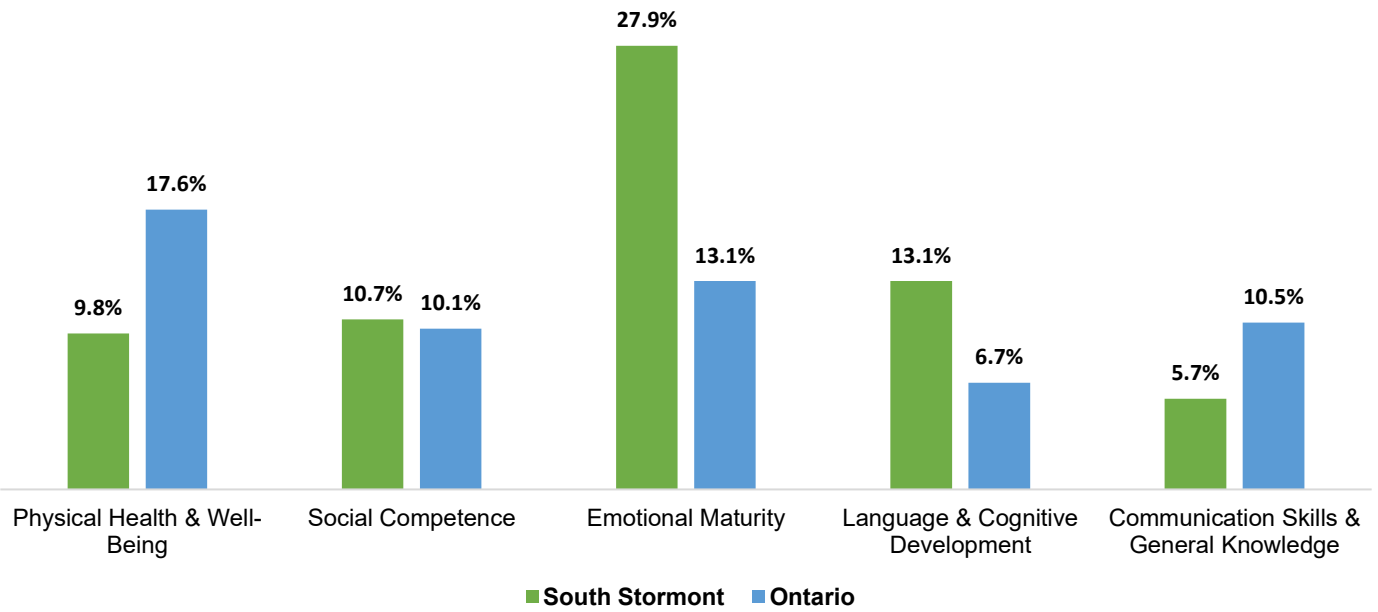


# Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan || 2026-2030

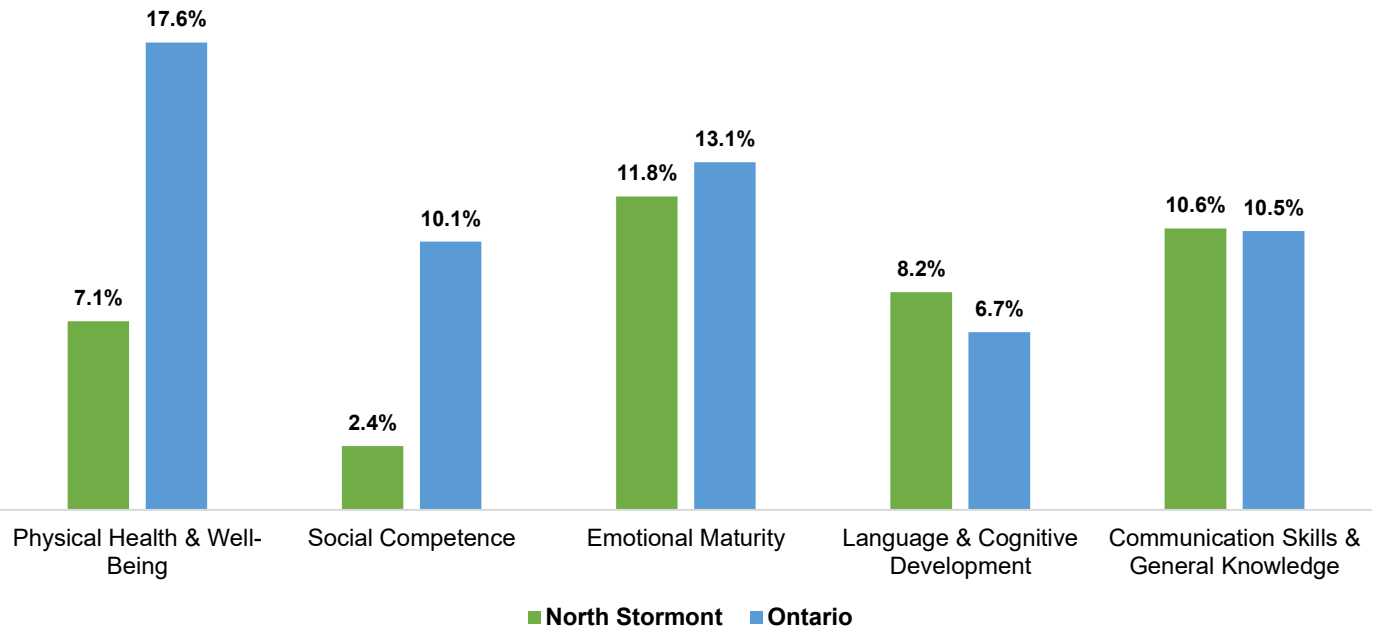
As the City of Cornwall is the largest population size, the data has been further broken down by quadrants using Ninth Street to divide the City by North and South, and using Pitt Street to divide City by East and West.



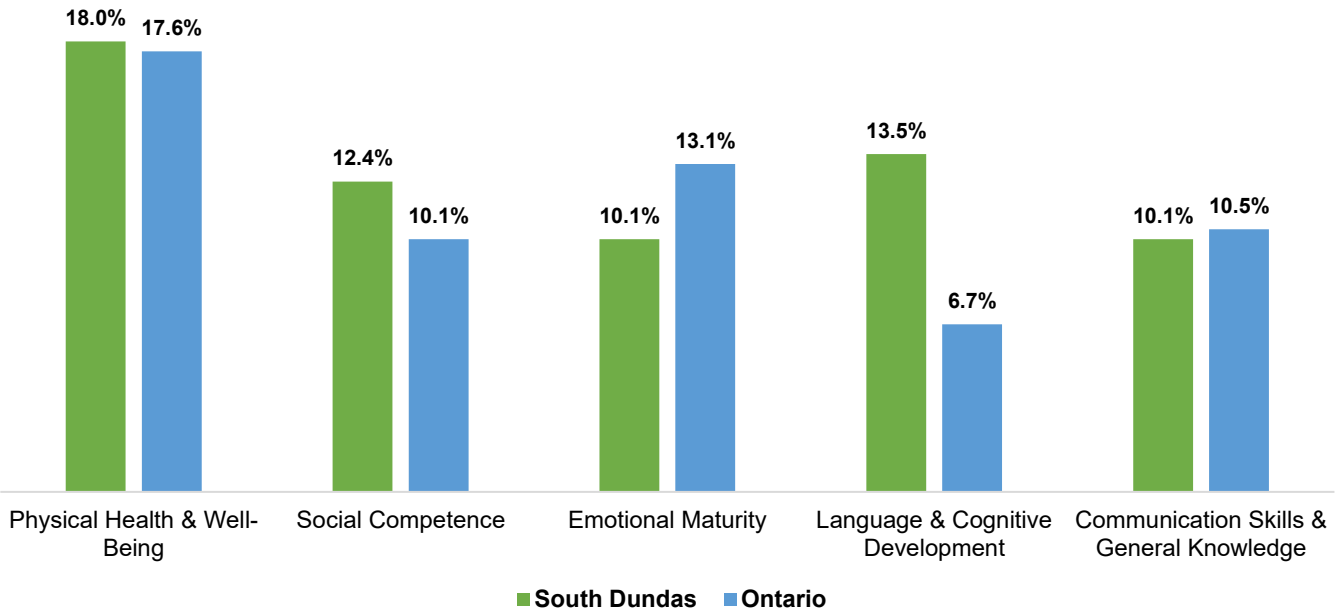
### Percentage of vulnerable children - South Stormont



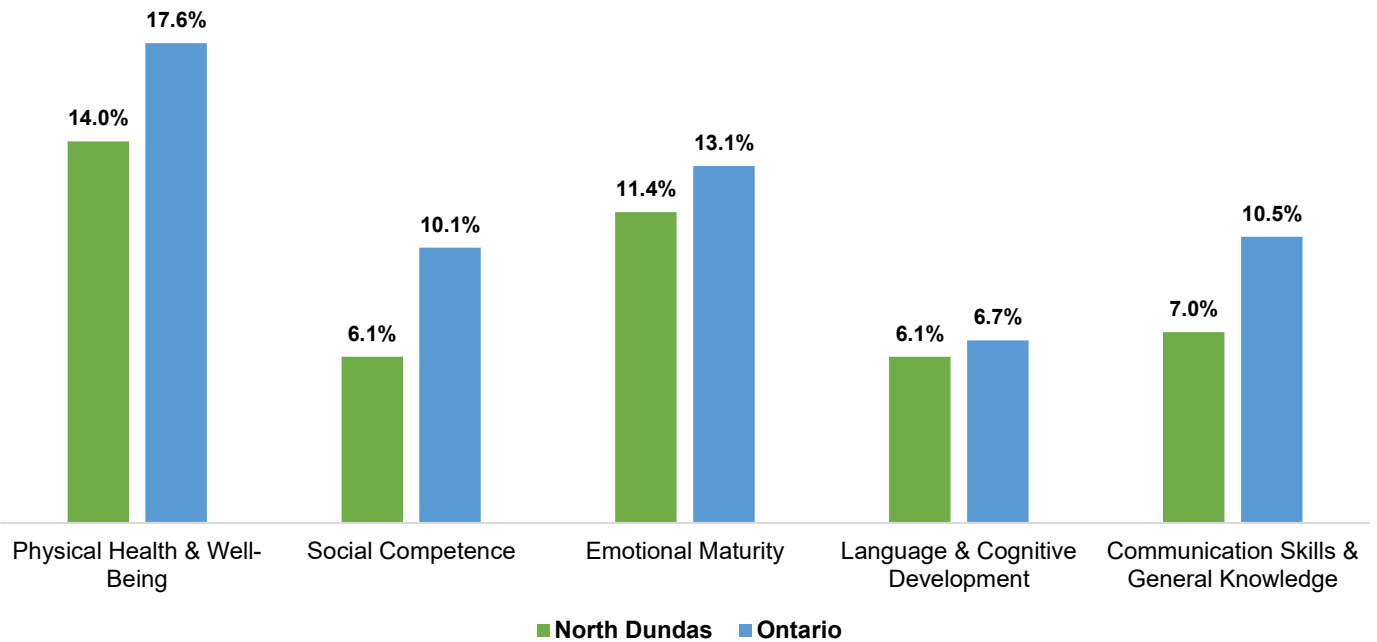
### Percentage of vulnerable children - North Stormont



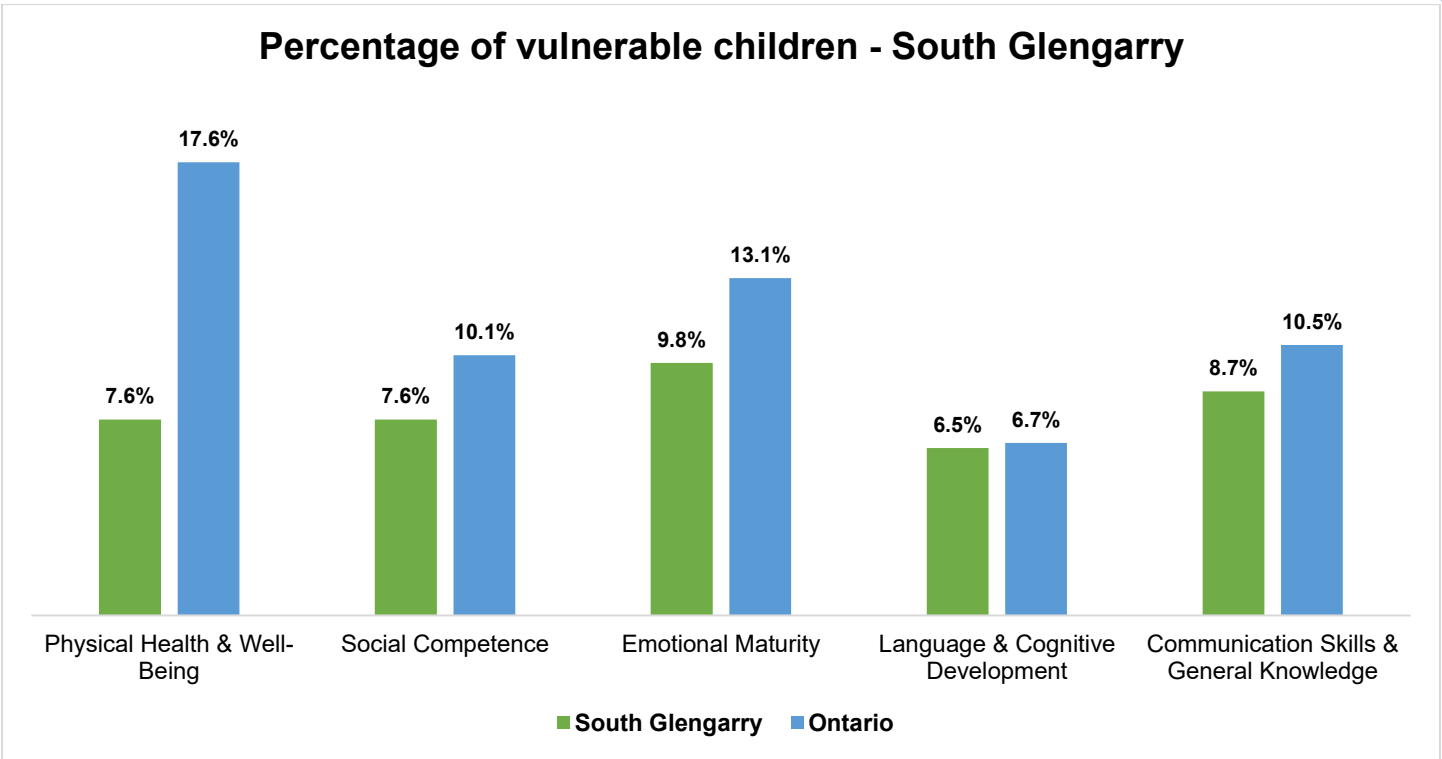
### Percentage of vulnerable children - South Dundas



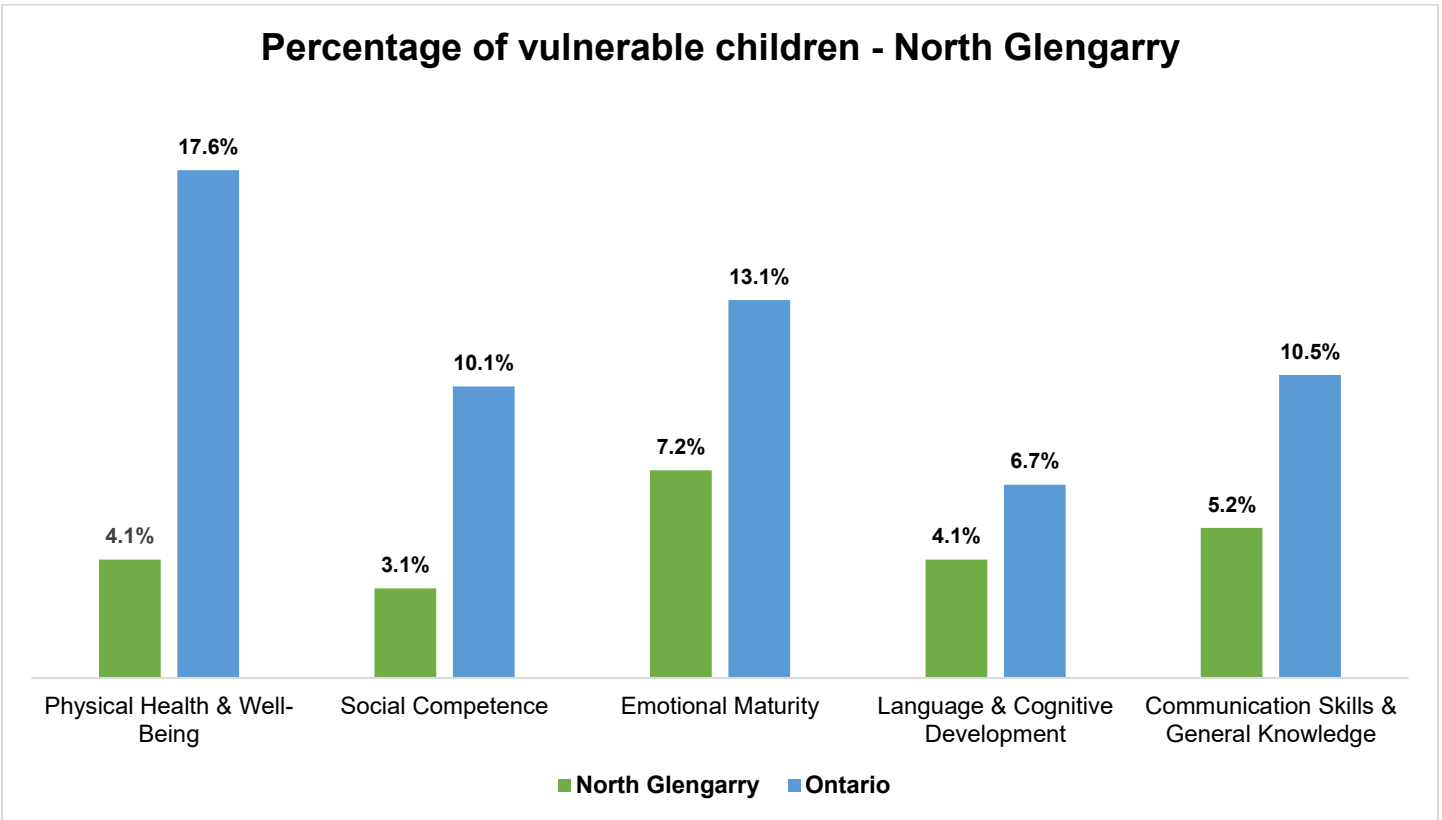
### Percentage of vulnerable children - North Dundas



### Percentage of vulnerable children - South Glengarry



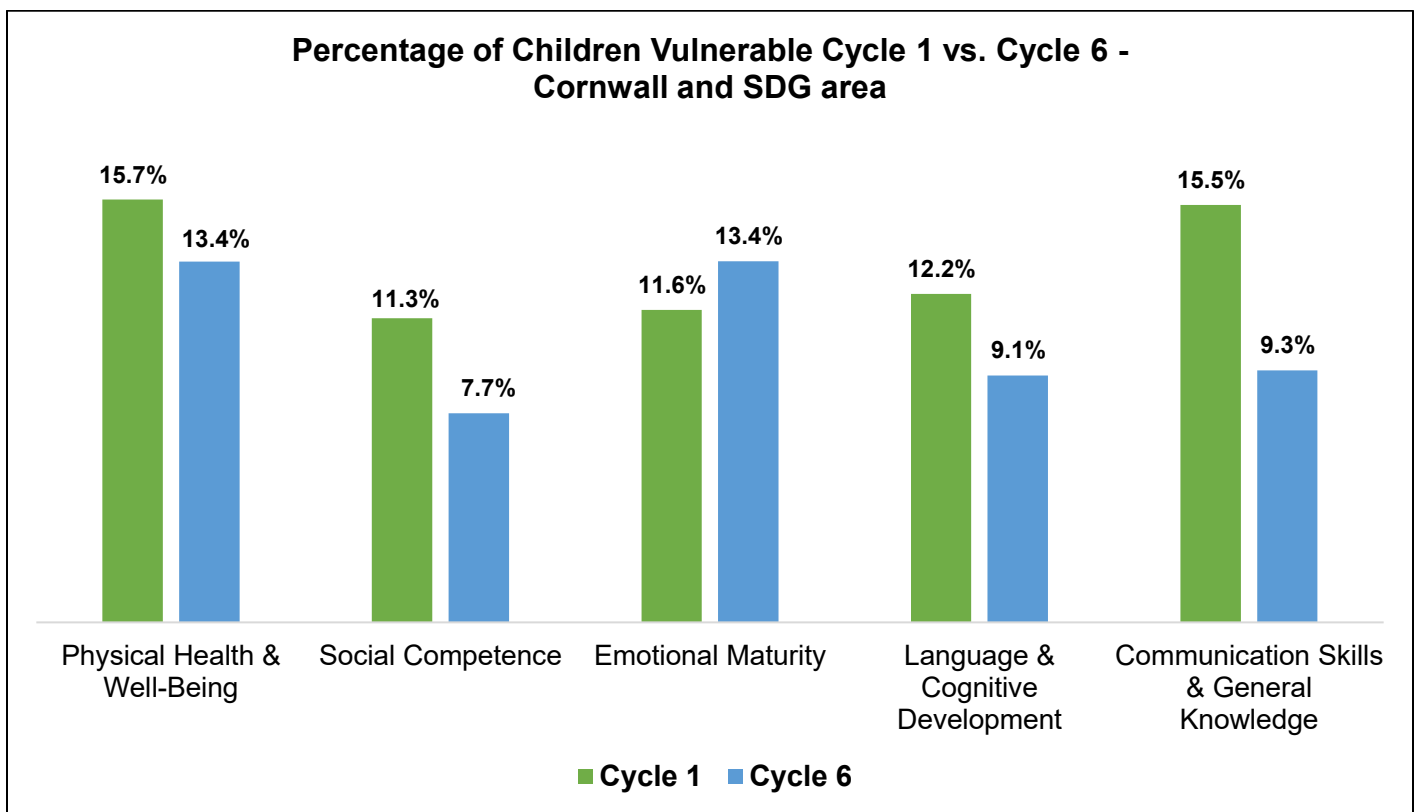
### Percentage of vulnerable children - North Glengarry



The EDI scores for our communities give us a general understanding of how well the children who grow up here are developing and provides evidence of the need for additional measures to ensure there are quality, accessible child and family supports in our community and that all children and families have equal access to programs and services that are offered in welcoming, inclusive environments. While the scores for our region have shown marked improvement over the 6 cycles, there is still room for improvement.

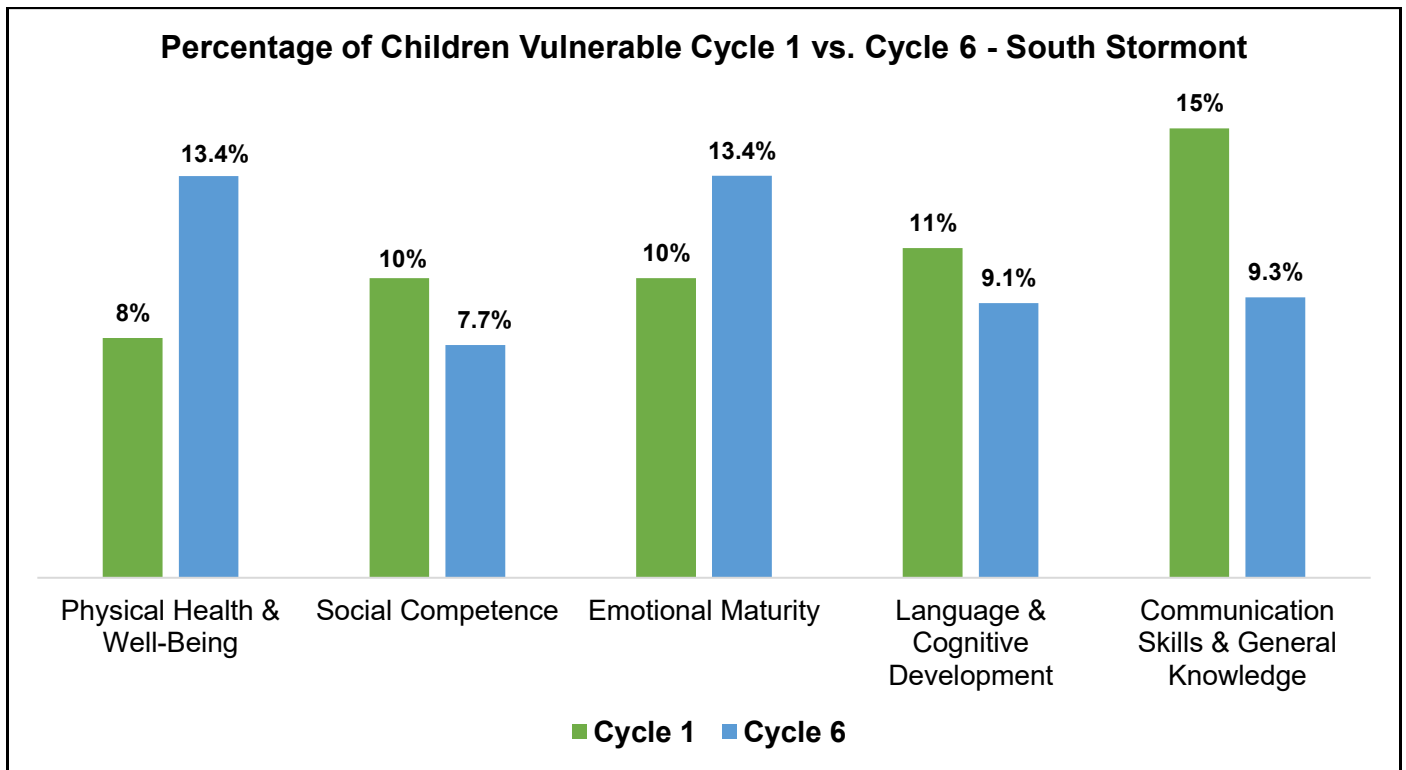
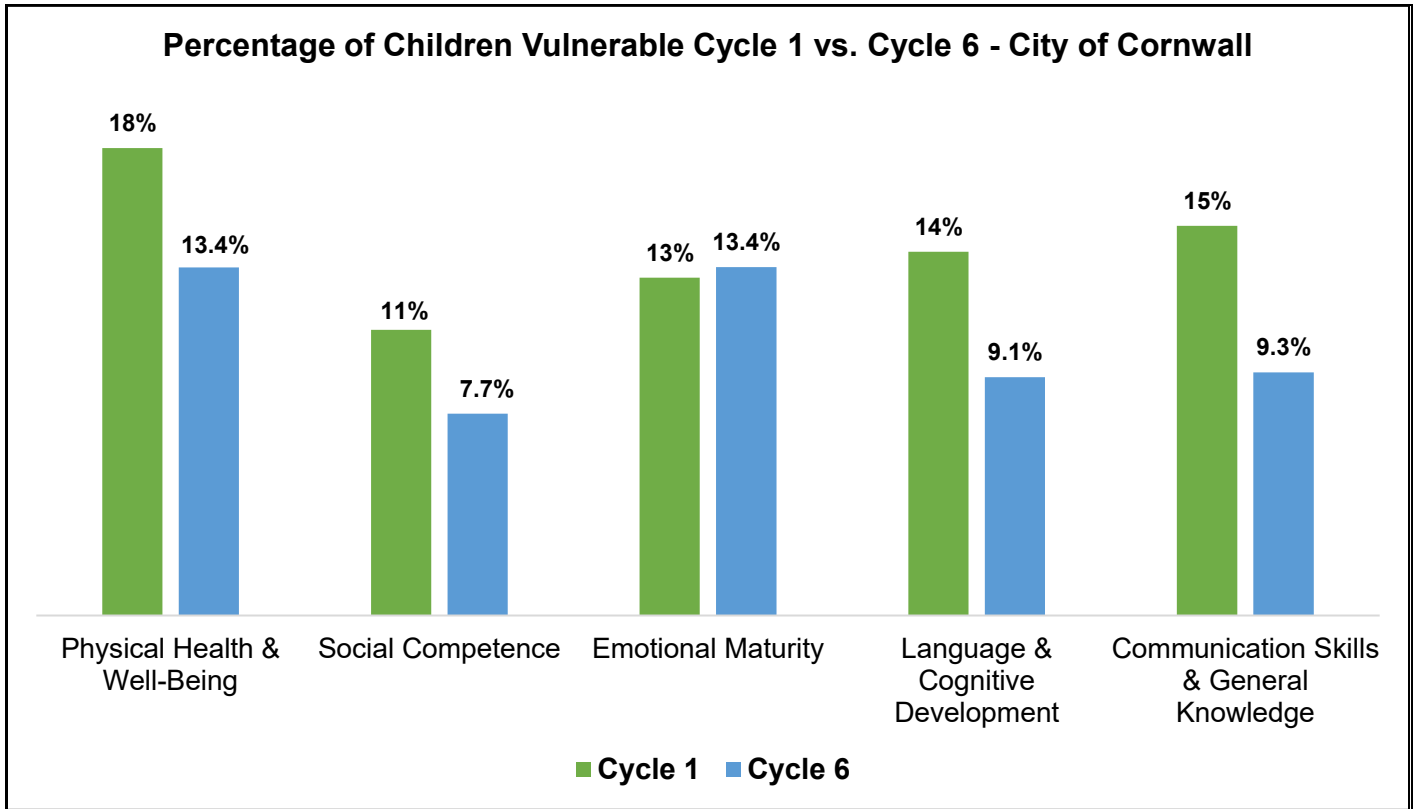
**EDI: CYCLE 1 VERSUS CYCLE 6**

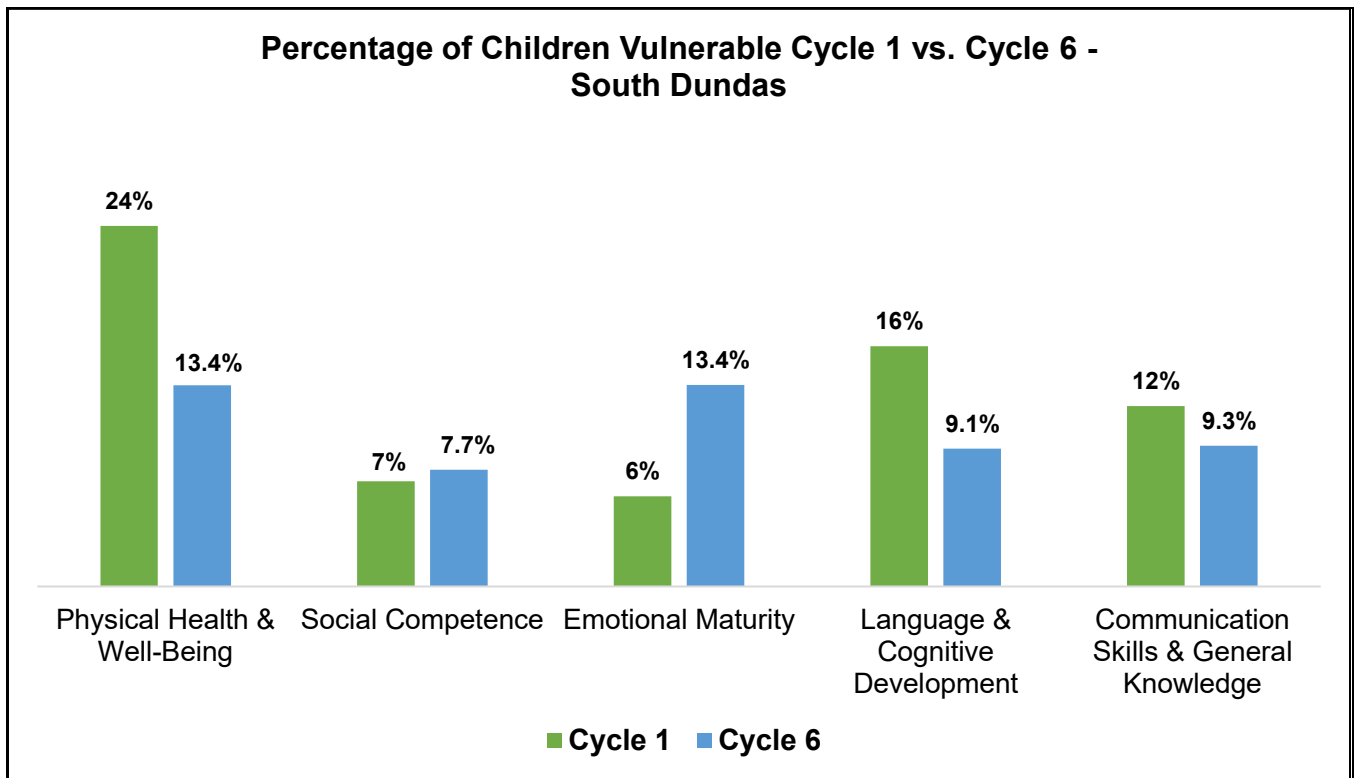
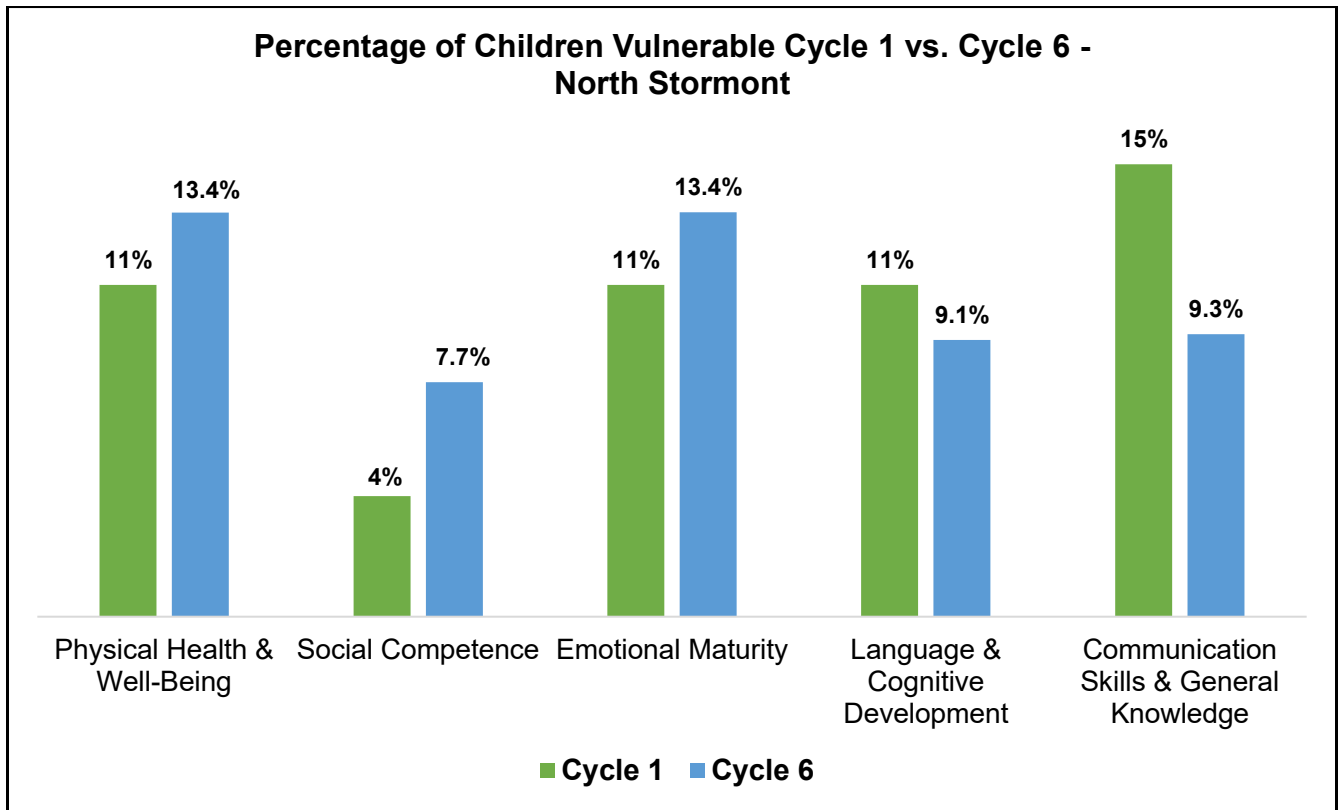
The chart below contrasts the EDI scores for our entire region between Cycle 1 and Cycle 6.

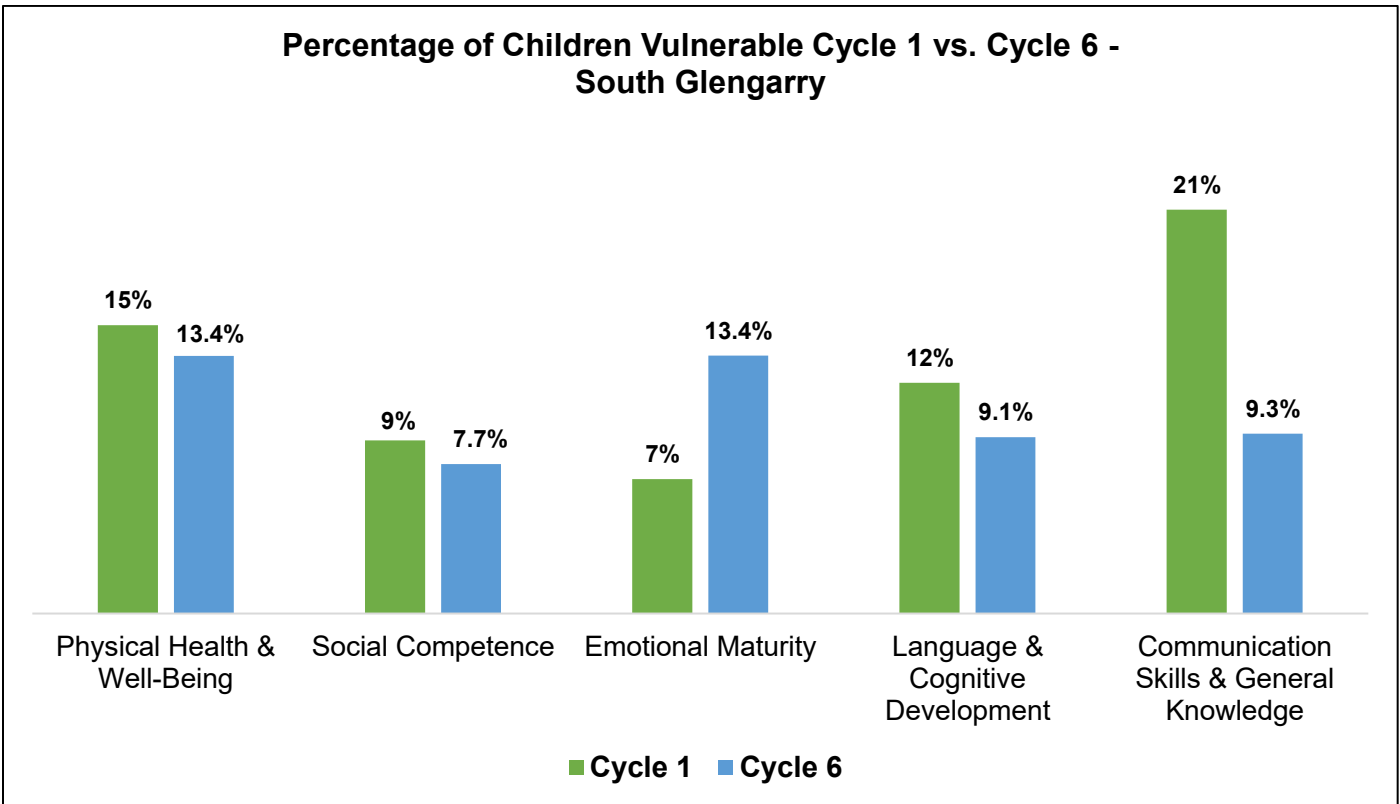
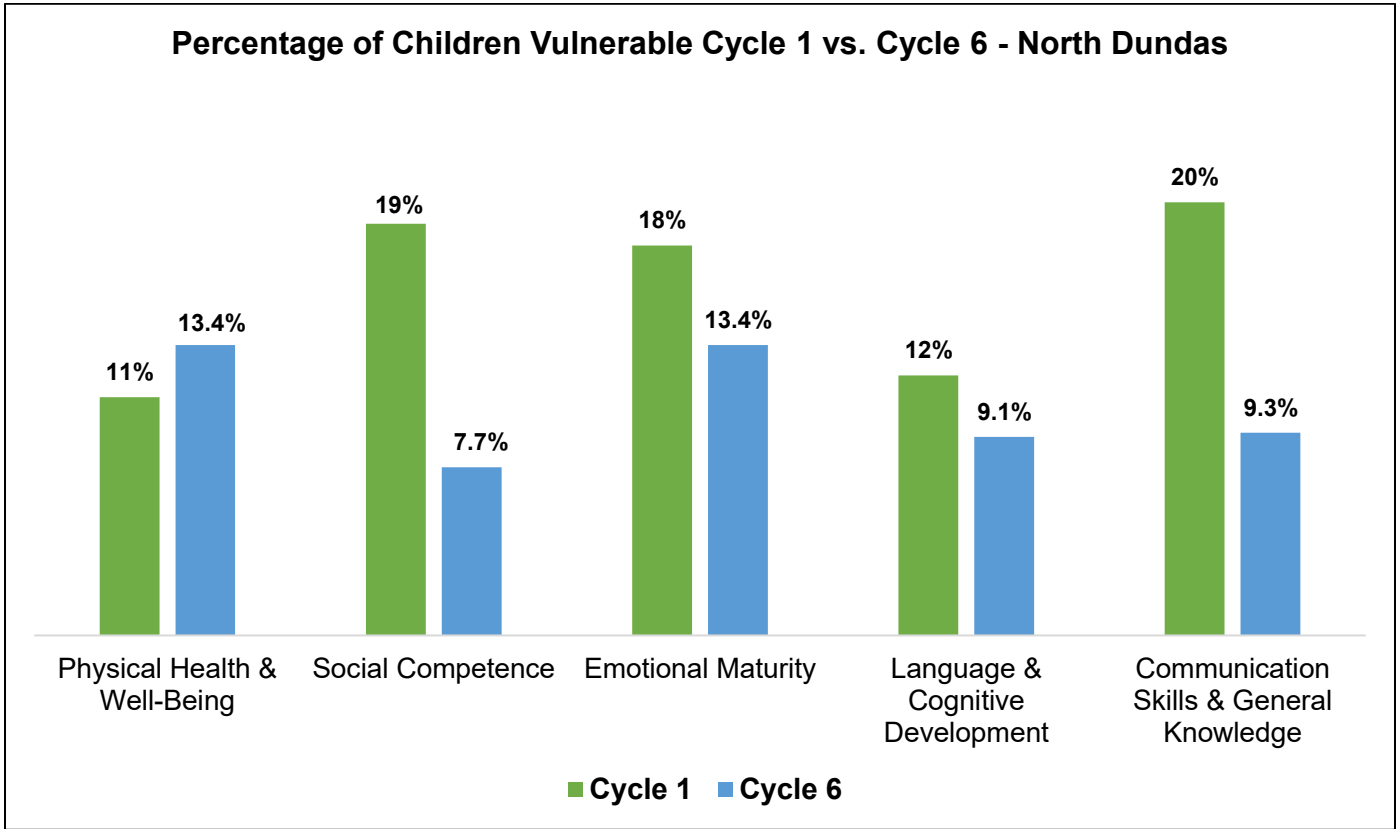


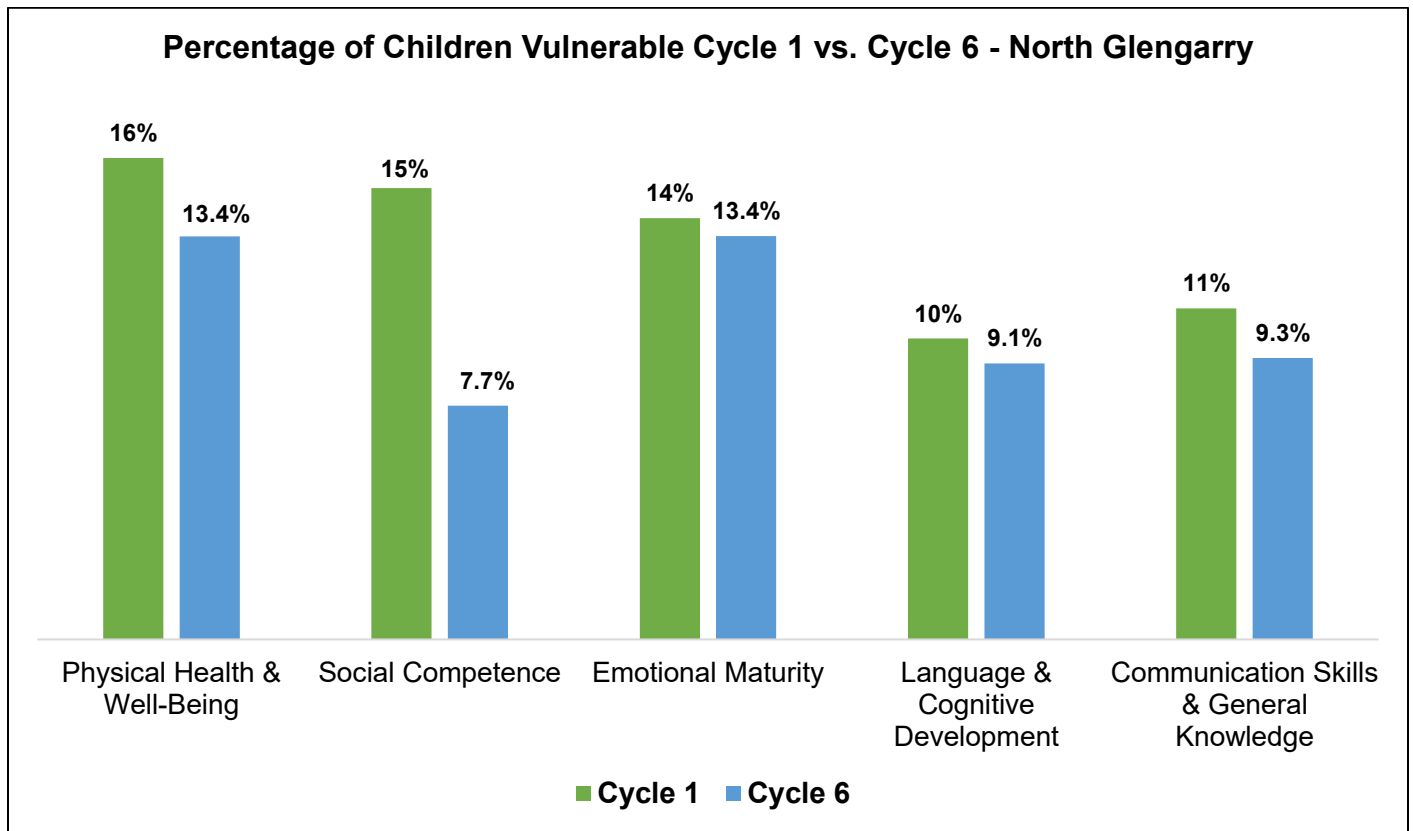
The chart above shows that four of the five domains (Physical Health & Well-Being, Social Competence, Language & Cognitive Development, Communication Skills & General Knowledge) experienced improvements in the percentage of children classified as “vulnerable” while one domain (Emotional Maturity) experienced a slight regression.

Below are charts for each of the subdivisions for our region, comparing Cycle 1 results to Cycle 6 results.









While there are variances by subdivision as to where domains have improved or regressed, it is worth noting that 2 of the domains have shown improvement for all the subdivisions. Language and Cognitive Development as well as Communication Skills and General Knowledge have improved across all the subdivisions.

Of the five domains, greater focus and consideration needs to be put into “Emotional Maturity”, where five of our seven subdivisions have a higher percentage of children found “vulnerable” than the Ontario baseline (North Dundas & North Glengarry scored slightly below the Ontario baseline). Although it is apparent that further work needs to be done to bring “vulnerability” down, it is important to recognize achievements of the early years programs in lowering “vulnerability” through the six EDI cycles and undertake initiatives to continue the progress.

Although an analysis of this raw data can show how the vulnerability rate may have changed over time in an area, the level to which this shows a change that is meaningful cannot be gleaned from the raw data alone. To measure if the change in vulnerability rates is meaningful, we must use a tailored statistical tool called “critical difference”. For a change to be meaningful, the critical difference in the rates over two points of time must be large enough to conclude that it is devoid of significant uncertainty due to sampling and measurement issues.

The results of an analysis of critical difference values is presented below. If the absolute value of the observed change is greater than the average critical difference, we can conclude that the vulnerability rate has experienced meaningful change, and vice-versa.

	Average Critical Difference	Observed Change	Absolute Value of Observed Change	Meaningful Change
Physical Health & Well-Being	2.22%	-2.3%	2.3%	No Critical Change
Social Competence	1.50%	-3.6%	3.6%	No Critical Change
Emotional Maturity	1.61%	+1.8%	1.8%	No Critical Change
Language & Cognitive Development	1.45%	-3.1%	3.1%	No Critical Change
Communication Skills & General Knowledge	1.82%	-6.2 %	6.2%	Critical Decrease

Based on this analysis, although all five domains experienced changes in vulnerability rates from Cycle 1 to Cycle 6, only one domain experienced changes that were statistically meaningful — Communication Skills and General Knowledge. This level of analysis allows us to identify areas where to refocus our efforts to provide early years support that is as well-balanced as possible.

EDI results are shared with relevant community partners including the membership of the Early Years Planning Table, the Child Care and EarlyON Supervisors Network and with our special needs resourcing team as well as with various committees that our team are members of. These results allow all relevant parties to make informed decision regarding the various early learning programs offered throughout our region. By having a thorough understanding of our EDI scores across our region, programming can be targeted to address the domains that have the highest vulnerability rates.

It is also important to understand that access to affordable quality early learning programs has a direct impact on the EDI outcomes for any given region or neighborhood. EDI scores are critical factors to consider when deciding on locations for new or increased programming.

Note: On November 3, 2025 the Ministry of Education announced that the data collection for Cycle 7 will take place in February and March 2026; specifically, that teachers will complete the EDI for all Year 2 of Kindergarten (SK) students in their class. The EDI results are expected to be released to service system managers in Winter/Spring of 2027.



## EarlyON Child and Family Centers

The Children’s Services Division, as the service system manager, maintains service contracts with the Glengarry Inter-Agency Group (GIAG) and Bien ici (formerly l’Équipe Psycho-Sociale (EPS)) for the delivery of child and family support programs across Cornwall and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (S.D.&G.).

The Children’s Services Division updates and publishes the document “*Policies and Guidelines for EarlyON Service Operators*” on an annual basis. This document outlines the operational guidelines for EarlyON Child and Family programs.

In addition, the Children’s Services Division is responsible for updating information related to the locations and program schedules of local EarlyON centres on the Ministry of Education’s website, available at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>

EarlyON Child and Family Centres are free, welcoming spaces designed to support families with children from birth to age six. These centres offer high-quality, play-based programs that promote early learning, healthy development, and strong family relationships.

## Key Features of EarlyON Programs

- **Free and Accessible:** There are 2 main sites in Cornwall and 10 satellite sites throughout SD&G. In addition, programming is offered in parks during the summer months.
- **Play-Based Learning:** Activities include storytelling, sing-alongs, games, sensory play, and exploration, all aligned with How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years, which emphasizes belonging, well-being, expression, and engagement.
- **Support for Parents and Caregivers:**
  - Access to early childhood professionals for advice and guidance.
  - Parenting workshops and child development sessions.
  - Opportunities to connect with other families and build community support networks.
- **Flexible Participation:** Most locations offer drop-in programs, as well as scheduled sessions both in-person and virtually. Weekend hours are available within the City of Cornwall.
- **Inclusive and Diverse:** Centres reflect the diversity of our communities and aim to be culturally responsive and inclusive.

## EarlyON Mandatory Core Services

Below is a summary of the required suite of mandatory core services, as identified by the Ministry of Education, that contribute to the objectives of early years programs as set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014.

### SUPPORT EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Through drop-in programs and other programs and services that build responsive adult-child relationships, encourage children’s exploration and promote play and inquiry, based on the pedagogy in *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

### ENGAGING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

- Through inviting conversations and information sharing about children’s interests, child development, parenting, nutrition, play and inquiry-based learning, and other topics that support their relationship with their child(ren).
- Through providing targeted outreach opportunities that are responsive to community needs; including connecting with parents and caregivers who could benefit from accessing services but are not due to a variety of reasons.
- Through collaborating with other support programs to enhance parent and caregiver well-being, enrich adult-child relationships, and to support parents in their role(s).
- Through ensuring Child and Family Centre staff have relationships with community partners and an in-depth knowledge of their community resources to allow for simple transitions (warm hand-offs) for families who may benefit from access to specialized or other services.
- Through responding to a parent/caregiver concern about their child’s development through conversations and observations. In some cases, staff may direct parents/caregivers to seek additional support from primary care or other regulated health professionals.
- Through sharing information and facilitating connections with specialized community services, coordinated service planning, public health, education, child care, and child welfare, as appropriate.
- Through providing information about programs and services available for the whole family beyond the early years. \

### MAKING CONNECTIONS FOR FAMILIES

## Pedagogy and Professional Development

The City of Cornwall Children's Services Division works with and supports child care operators as well as EarlyON operators to maintain quality programs in their centres. Quality in early childhood programs has many definitions depending on the lens you are looking through. For children, quality can be defined as a program where they feel safe, accepted, engaged, and as a place where they can have fun and make friends. For parents, quality is often defined as a program that is educational, nurturing, safe, and as a place where they can have peace of mind when bringing their children. For early childhood staff, quality is often defined as a program that offers play-based learning opportunities where children are actively engaged in their environment, and where parents and staff work together to support the overall development of the children. Quality includes all these definitions as well as many other factors.

The Minister's policy statement on programming and pedagogy made under the CCEYA, 2014 names *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)* as the document to be used for the purpose of guiding licensed child care programs.



*The How Does Learning Happen?* document guides early childhood educators on:

- The importance of creating a **sense of belonging** through fostering relationships and connections
- How to create environments and experiences to **engage** children in learning through play and inquiry
- The importance of supporting children's sense of self, health and **well-being**
- How to support positive **self-expression** and communication in all forms

Our Child Care Advisor staff provide on-going support to our early years' programs by conducting site visits to the programs. Based on the observations made and the conversations they have with the staff, recommendations are made to enhance the quality of the program. They work with our internal capacity building staff (Program Coordinator) to ensure staff have the necessary training and supports to improve the quality of the programs they deliver.

Support offered via Children's Services to the ECE community include:

- Gathering and disseminating information about professional development opportunities as well as about the Ministry of Education's vision and directives
- Planning and implementation of an annual Profession in Play conference for early years professionals.

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- Gathering and disseminating information about trends in the field of early childhood education.
- Planning and implementation of various professional development events based on identified needs within the sector.
- Maintaining collaborative relationships and providing networking opportunities.

Capacity building funding is available for child care operators to allow their staff to participate in professional learning and development opportunities that enhance their ability to provide high-quality, inclusive programs and services.

When possible, other early years professionals from our community, are invited to participate in the professional development events as hosted by our department.

Our department regularly gathers feedback and input with respect to the professional development needs of the early years professionals in our community. This allows us to plan professional development events that include needs directly identified by our front-line workers.

### **Early Childhood Professionals**

Our system of early learning and child care is supported by a network of early years professionals. As of March 2025, approximately 402 early years professionals work in licensed child care settings and EarlyON child and Family centres throughout Cornwall and SD&G. Of these staff, approximately 153 are Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs). RECEs have specialized training, knowledge and competencies that are distinct and unique from other professions. The Early Childhood Educators Act defines the practice of early childhood education as “the planning and delivery of inclusive play-based learning and care programs for children in order to promote the well-being and holistic development of children, and includes:

- Delivery of programs to children 12 years or younger
- Assessment of the programs and of the progress of children in them
- Communication with parents or persons with legal custody of children in programs to improve the development of the children
- such other services or activities as may be prescribed by the regulations

RECE’s are College or University graduates who have specialized knowledge in early childhood development. They are registered members of the College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario and therefore adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice ([https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Documents/Code\\_and\\_Standards\\_2017.pdf](https://www.college-ece.ca/en/Documents/Code_and_Standards_2017.pdf)) including mandatory participation in the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Program. The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) dictates a minimum number of RECE’s per group of children as well as maximum group sizes for each age category.

Only member of the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) can use the protected titles “Early Childhood Educator” and “Registered Early Childhood Educator” along with the professional designations ECE, RECE and their French equivalents. The purpose of the

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protected title is to assure the public that any person who uses it has met the education and other requirements for entry into the profession. The protected title also assures the public that any person who uses it is accountable to practice the profession of early childhood education in accordance with the ethical and professional standards set by the College of Early Childhood Educators.

### **ECE Recruitment and Retention**



In alignment with priority 3, there is an identified need for more Registered Early Childhood Educators not only in Cornwall and SD&G, but across Ontario as a whole. According to the [Licensed Child Care in Ontario](#) report on the College of Early Childhood Educators' website, the number of ECE College graduates who register with the College has been steadily declining every year since 2014, and only 55% of its employed members work in licensed child care settings. In addition, members of the College who work in licensed child care have the lowest retention rate compared to other employment settings.

There are several factors to consider when analyzing the issue of recruitment and retention of Registered Early Childhood Educators including:

- Salaries and Benefits
- Effective recruitment strategies
- Local ECE programs (Colleges and/or Universities)
- Geography, rural versus urban and associated travel needs
- Language requirements (we have several French operators)

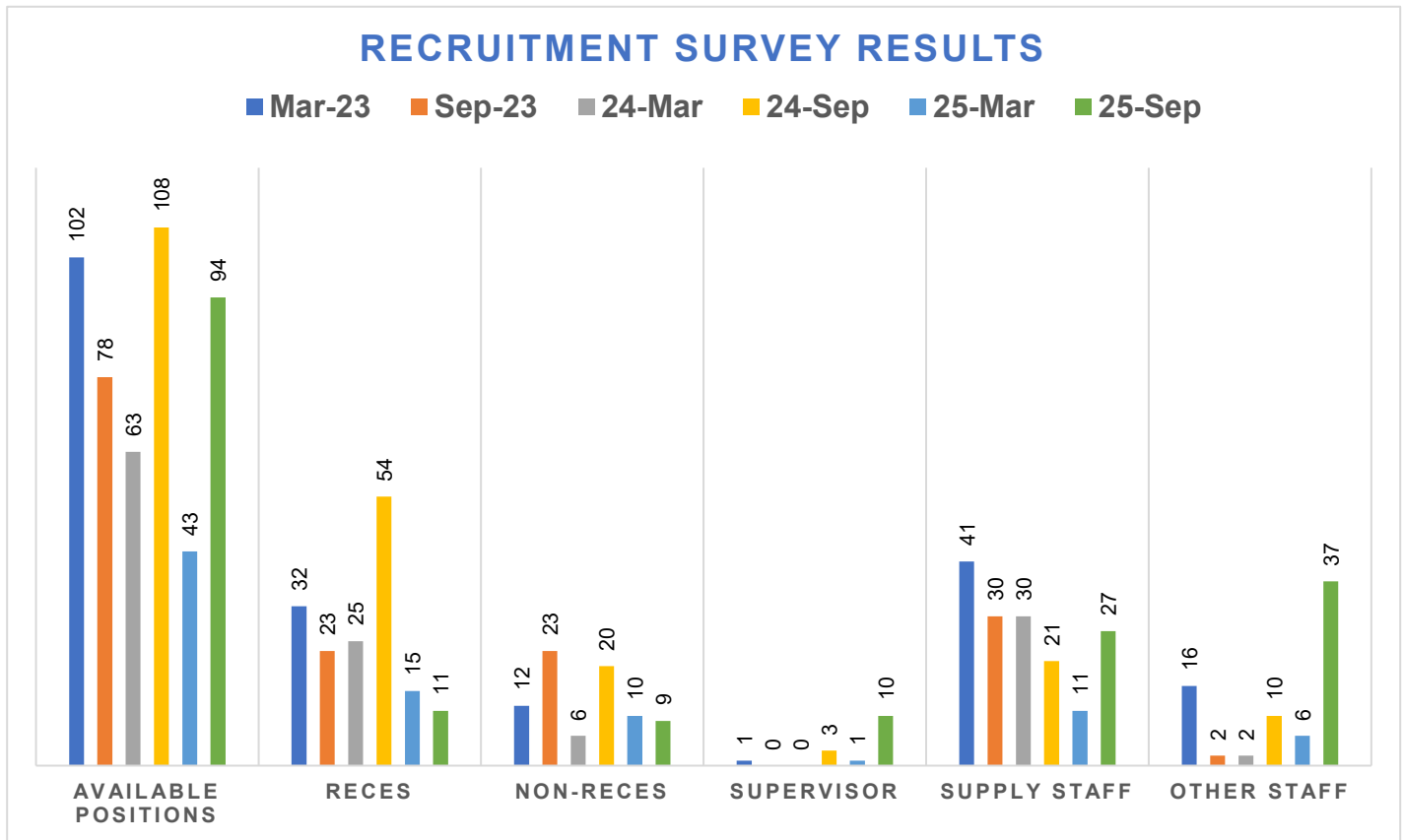
Salaries and benefits offered to RECE's and other child care and early years staff are a strong driver when it comes to recruitment and retention of qualified staff. RECE's who work for a municipality or a school board are paid significantly higher than those working in other child care settings. Within Cornwall and SD&G in 2025 RECE's working for either the municipality or a school board earn an average of \$33.71 per hour while those working in licensed child care settings earn a minimum of \$24.86 per hour, with the average being between \$25.17 per hour and \$26.96 per hour. Furthermore, non-RECE's working in child care settings earned considerably less, averaging between \$20.31 and \$22.56 per hour with some earning as little as \$19.60 per hour. These wages include the Provincial Wage Enhancement Grant as well as the CWELCC Workforce Funding which are intended to help bridge the gap between wages paid to school board employees and those paid in other child care settings. While this support is valued, it does not come close to closing the gap. Furthermore, according to the Ontario Living Wage Network, the 2024 living wage for the Cornwall and SD&G region is \$21.65 per hour. There are far too many staff working in licensed child care who earn less than a living wage which contributes to the challenges with workforce recruitment and retention. It is also important to note that staff working in licensed child care settings often do not receive medical and dental benefits through their employer.

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Only half of our local child care operators offer medical and dental benefits to their employees.

When a child care centre is unable to fill a role that is mandated for a Registered Early Childhood Educator, they may apply to the Ministry of Education for a non-RECE (unqualified) staff person to work in the role with a temporary exemption referred to as “Director’s Approval.” As of October 2025, the Ministry of Education has granted 65 Director Approvals throughout licensed child care centres in Cornwall and SD&G, 12 of which are for Supervisors. This is a 19% increase compared to the number of Director’s Approvals that were granted the year prior. While a “Director’s Approval” solves the temporary need for staff, it does not solve the root problem of the lack of Registered Early Childhood Educators who are available to work. In addition, the lack of qualified trained staff has a direct impact on the quality of care.

As new child care spaces continue to be created under the CWELCC program, the demand for more RECEs and child care staff will only continue to increase. Beginning in March 2023, Children’s Services began monitoring the staffing needs of our local licensed child care centres and EarlyON centres through a survey conducted every 6 months. As seen in the chart below, there continues to be a significant need for more RECEs and child care workers in order to meet the demand.



**Note:** In March 2023, 92% of respondents indicated that they were not operating at licensed capacity. That number decreased to 73% in September 2023 and 57% in March 2024. It increased in September 2024 to 85% and 93% in March 2025 but then drastically decreased again to 57% in September 2025.

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Children's Services is a member of the ECE Advisory Committee that is chaired by the Early Childhood Education department at St. Lawrence College. Through this committee we are working on strategies to address the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators in our region. Despite RECE's working for the school boards earning a higher wage, school board representatives have confirmed that they are also struggling with having a shortage of RECE's for their programs. This is a provincial issue that is also discussed regularly at the Provincial level and through advocacy groups such as the Association of Early Childhood Educators ([Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario \(aeceo.ca\)](http://aeceo.ca)), the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care ([The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care \(childcareontario.org\)](http://The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (childcareontario.org))) as well as at the Children's Services Network group through OMSSA (Ontario Municipal Social services Association).

Annually, as a part of these meetings, St. Lawrence College shares enrolment statistics for the early childhood education program. The chart below shows the enrolment and graduation trends from 2022 to present for the Cornwall campus:

School Year	Number of 1st year students enrolled in the ECE program	Number of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year students enrolled in the ECE program	Number of ECE Graduates
2025-2026	47	50	TBD
2024-2025	66	24	21
2023-2024	39	17	16
2022-2023	26	18	11

As is evident in the chart above, there are a limited number of early childhood education students graduating annually from our local community college. It is also important to remember that not all graduates will choose to work in licensed child care or EarlyON settings or stay within our region and some may choose not to work in the field at all (for example: it is common for ECE graduates to continue their education to work in other related fields such as teaching).



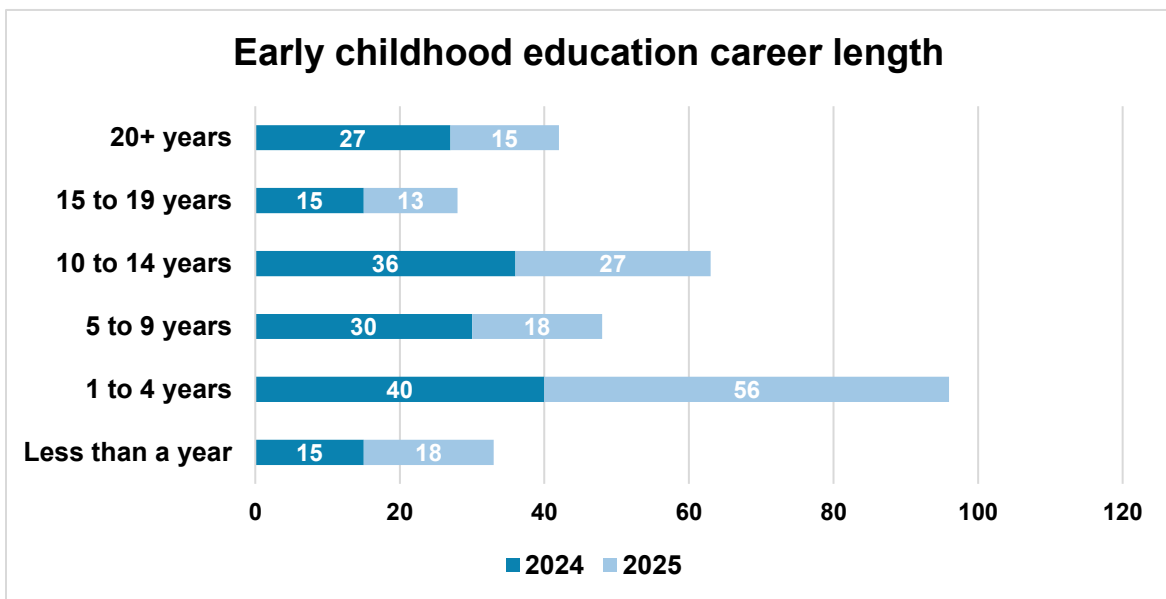
## Profession in Play

In late 2022, Children’s Services engaged “Spark Creative Communication” through the St. Lawrence College Marketing department and created a local marketing campaign for the recruitment and retention of RECEs which was released in 2023. The slogan for our campaign is “*Profession in Play: Shaping the Minds of Tomorrow*”. This campaign speaks to the professionalism of the field and places value on the work that RECEs and child care workers perform on a daily basis. As part of the campaign we added a section on the City website titled [Become an ECE Today!](#) and we use this material in our annual ECE Appreciation campaign every October. This branding has become an integral part of all our communications.

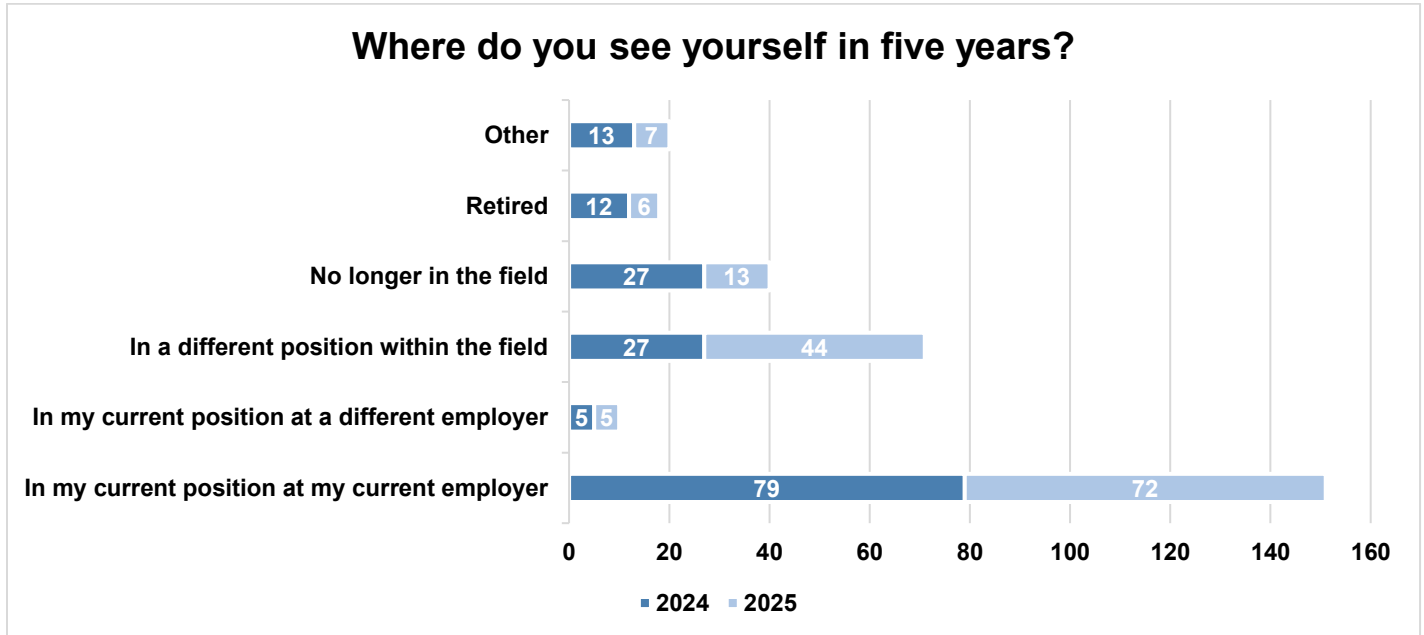
Also in 2022, we launched the Early Years Professional of the Year award. This award is designed to recognize not only an ECE professional who has exemplified the values of being a professional in play, but also to recognize the value of the profession as a whole. Annually, Children’s Services recognizes an outstanding and innovative Early Years Professional for their leadership, exemplary early childhood education practices, and their commitment to help build the foundation children need to make the best possible start in life, in particular focusing on the inclusion of all children.

## Current ECE Workforce

In order to gain a better understanding of the current workforce, Children’s Services began conducting an annual workforce survey in 2024. In 2024 34% of the respondents (55 of the 163 respondents) indicated that they had less than 5 years of experience working in the field. In 2025 this number increased to 50% (74 of the 147 respondents).



In addition this survey revealed that in 2024 24% of the respondents indicated that they would be retired or leaving the field within the next 5 years. In 2025, this number increased to 34% of the respondents indicating that they would be retired or leaving the field within the next 5 years.



With such a high percentage of the workforce planning on leaving the field within the next 5 years, it is anticipated that there will be an even higher number of staff with limited experience and possibly limited qualifications working within the programs. Not only will this add to the workforce recruitment needs but will require additional supports for these staff to gain the experience and skills needed to provide top quality programs for the children and families.

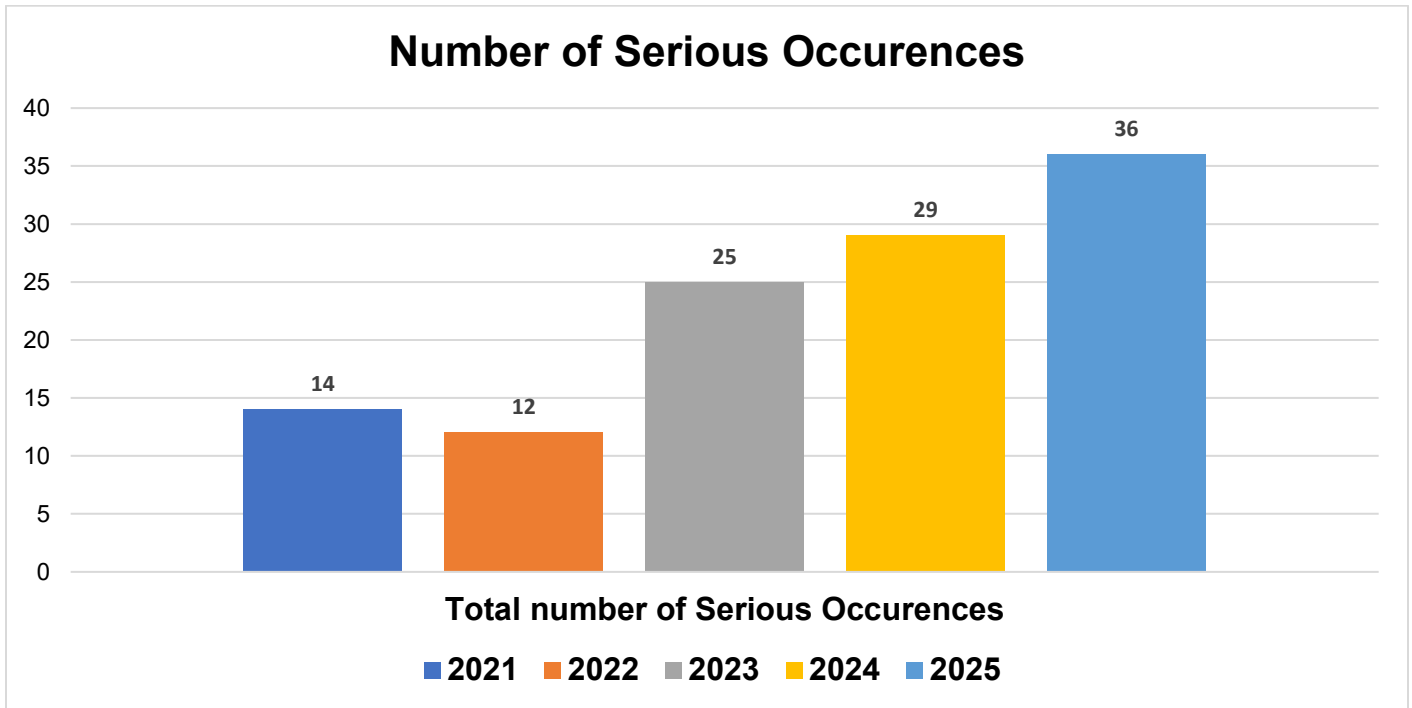
Additional information gathered through this survey included details about their education, employment status, as well as their background, such as ethnicity, gender and disabilities.

The full survey results can be found on the City of Cornwall website:

<https://www.cornwall.ca/en/live-here/early-years-professionals.aspx>

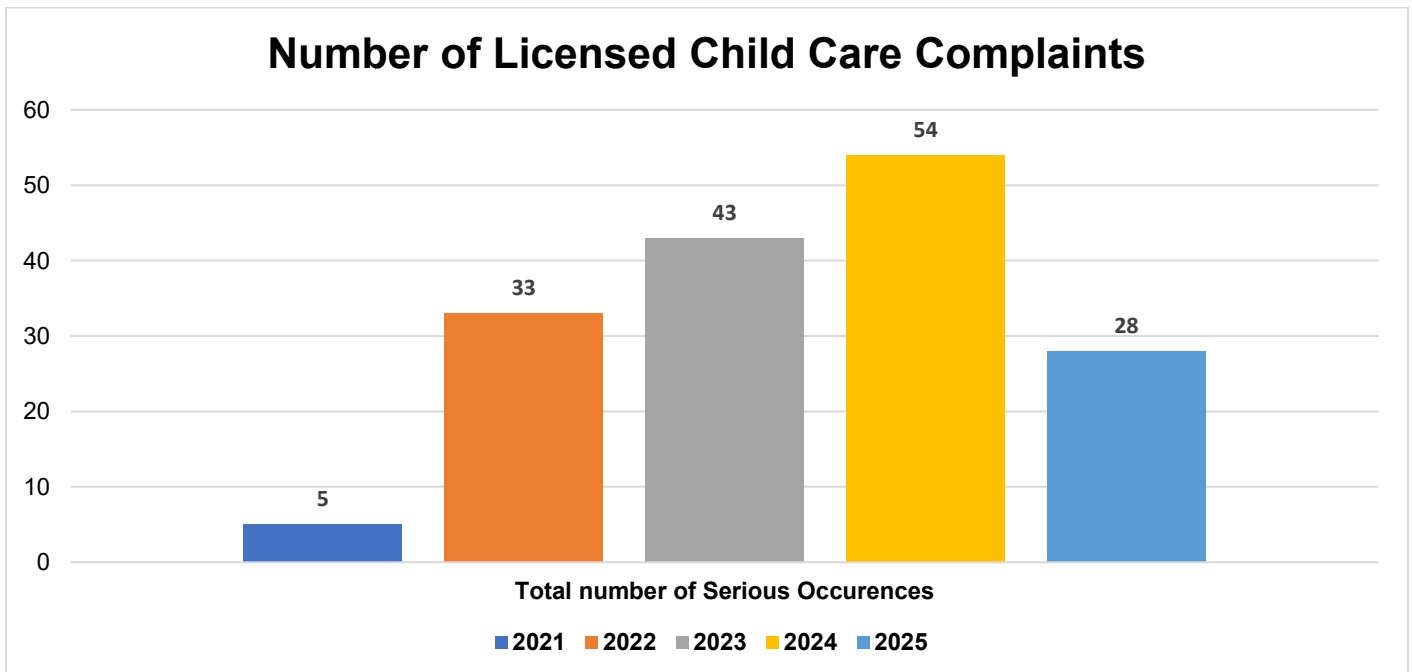
### **Workforce Impacts on the Quality of Care**

Quality child care and early years programs are highly dependent on having qualified and dedicated early childhood professionals. As noted above, there is a significant lack of qualified RECEs in our region with 65 positions having Director’s Approval, as well as a lack of experience in the staff that are working with a high number having less than 5 years of experience. This is having a direct impact on the quality of care that is being offered and is reflected in the number of serious occurrences that are being reported.



**Note:** For 2025, the number of serious occurrences is only for January to September. For the 2021 to 2024 years the data represents the full year.

It is also important to look at the number of complaints that the Ministry receives about licensed child care programs in our region:



**Note:** For 2025, the number of complaints is only for January to September. For the 2021 to 2024 years the data represents the full year.

Another statistic that shows the impact on the quality of care is increase in the number of child care violations for our region. The child care violations registry shows child care providers with confirmed violations under the law and can be searched by the public. From 2021 to 2023 there was 1 (one) violation per year for our region, this increased to 4 in 2024 and 6 in 2025 (up to September 2025).

Children's Services is committed to working with our community partners on strategies to support the recruitment and retention of RECEs. As stated in the sections above, Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) are essential to both individual and societal well-being. Their specialized knowledge in child development enables them to create nurturing, play-based learning environments that support children's cognitive, emotional, and social growth during the most critical years of development. By fostering strong foundations for lifelong learning and well-being, RECEs contribute to improved early childhood outcomes. Economically, their work allows parents to participate in the workforce, reduces future costs in education and social services, and strengthens the overall productivity of communities. Investing in RECEs is not only a commitment to children's futures but also a strategic investment in the economy.



## **Community Consultation**

As the service system manager, Children's Services has been, and will continue to be, in consultation with key community partners and families for the planning of our local child care and early years system. Strong partnerships and active community engagement are key to the planning process. It is through collaboration, focused conversations, and data collection that we can ensure the local needs of the communities we serve can be met.

Throughout the implementation of the previous service system plan as well as throughout the development of this plan, Children's Services has been engaged with community partners through various means including:

- Regular meetings of the Early Years Planning Table for Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry as well as of the Child Care and EarlyON Supervisors Network.
- Various surveys to gain the perspectives of parents/caregivers, early years professionals, and other community members
  - Survey results can be found on the City website here:  
<https://www.cornwall.ca/en/live-here/early-years-professionals.aspx>
- In-person community consultation sessions
- Participation on relevant community partner committees

**Moving forward**, the City of Cornwall Children's Services Division will continue meeting and working with the Early Years Planning Table to track the progress of the priorities set out in this plan and develop further action plans. We will continue to update and adjust our plan as the needs of the community continue to change over time.

The Children's Services Division is active within the community, and through membership on many committees and working groups maintains connections with relevant community partners. Participation in these groups also facilitates a greater understanding of the community as a whole and enables each group to be aware of and support the priorities set by each group.

The Children's Services Division chairs several committees as follows:

- Child Care Supervisors Network
- EarlyON Operators Network
- Early Years Planning Table

In addition, the Children's Services Division is an active member on the following community-based committees:

- Infant and Toddler Mental Health Strategy
- Child and Youth Mental Health Strategy
- Advisory Committee for St. Lawrence College ECE Program
- TLC (Teach and Learn with your Child)
- Vibrant Communities

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Broader groups that the Children's Services Division participates in:

- OCCMS Working Group
- South-East Region DAC Network
- OMSSA's Children's Services Network
- East Region CMSM Network
- East Region Capacity Building Network
- Data Analysis Coordinator Network of Ontario
- Association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario (AFÉSEO)
- Réseau Régionale de Langue Française (RRLF)
- Home Child Care Association of Ontario

### **Conclusion**

The City of Cornwall Children's Services Division recognizes the contributions of all our community partners in the development of this child care and early years' service system plan. Through the many conversations, meetings, surveys, and consultations everyone has influenced the development of this plan. The partnerships that have formed and the collaborative efforts of all involved will continue to be invaluable as we forge forward in the implementation of the identified priorities.

The Ministry of Education continues to modernize Ontario's child care and early years system to better support families. Since the launch of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement in 2022, the province has worked toward lowering licensed child care fees and expanding access through 86,000 new spaces for children under five. These changes aim to reduce administrative burden for operators and allow more focus on quality programming and daily operations. Quality early learning experiences have lasting benefits for children's development, well-being, and future success. As the system continues to evolve, we will remain flexible and responsive to provincial priorities.

Our intent as the service system manager is to move forward with further community engagement and partnerships that will undoubtedly influence the implementation and continued development of this plan to best meet the needs of our municipality. This plan is a living, breathing document that is subject to change as the needs of our communities' change, as local initiatives evolve, as Ministry guidelines change, or as new strategies are developed.

We look forward to the future of child care and the early years in our municipality and to the continued collaboration with the service providers and key stakeholders within our community.