



## **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE ADDENDUM**

**Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.**

**By video conference** – The meeting will be live streamed on YouTube at the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCx9vXkywflJr0LUVkKnYWQ>

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### **REPORT**

4. HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES – May 27, 2021 – ITEM #4

EarlyON Service Review Update #5

As Listed  
on Agenda

A report from the Director of Community Services, dated May 27, 2021, to share with Council the ongoing changes to Service Delivery within the EarlyON service, findings from the Service Review and to seek approval for next steps.

**Recommendations:**

**THAT the report of the Director, Community Services dated May 27, 2021, titled EarlyON Service review Update 5, be received;**

**AND THAT Council direct staff to review the EarlyON staffing skills compliment to best match service requirements for the new Work Plan;**

**AND THAT Council direct staff to transition permanently to the new service model, by June 25, 2021, reducing the EarlyON staffing compliment by eight (8);**

**AND THAT Human Resources Support be provided to staff impacted by the transition;**

**AND THAT Staff redirect the available budget allocations created by transition to the new service model to Child Care Fee Subsidy, i-CAN and General Operating Grants;**

**AND THAT any shortfall as a result of the transition, specifically to cover costs for severance packages come from in-year savings and the Children's Services Reserve Fund (CSRF) to remain within the Council approved 2021 Budget.**



## **REPORT TO COMMITTEE**

**To:** Chair Ryan and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee

**From:** Anna McGregor, Director of Community Services

**Meeting Date:** May 27, 2021

**Subject:** **EarlyON Service Review Update 5**

**In Support of Strategic Plan Priorities and Objectives:**

**Good Governance** - ensure transparency, clear communication, prudent financial management

**Inclusive and Supportive Community** – support efforts to address current and future needs for a livable community

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### **Purpose**

This purpose of this report is to share with Council the ongoing changes to Service Delivery within the EarlyON service, findings from the Service Review and to seek approval for next steps.

### **Background and Discussion**

The County is the designated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the delivery of Child Care and Early Years. Municipal funding and funding from the Ministry of Education (EDU) support the County's mandated responsibility as the Service Manager for child care and early years.

The priority has been and continues to be to meet the needs of the children and families in Dufferin County by providing the best resources available during the COVID crisis and beyond, while ensuring the County continues to provide mandatory core EarlyON services, including: supporting early learning and development; engaging parents and caregivers; and making connections for families.

### Current Staffing

For the EarlyON service, the full staffing complement had remained at seventeen (17); twelve (12) front facing and five (5) behind the scenes. For further details see report CC 2020-08-13 EarlyON Service Delivery Review Update (Council Agenda Item 7.5) and report CC 2020-09-10 EarlyON Service Delivery Review Update 2 (Council Agenda Item 7.4). One member of staff resigned in 2020 and another moved to a different division in 2021. The staffing complement is currently fifteen (15).

As work continued in 2020, to develop and deliver services during the pandemic, staff anticipated it would be done through a mix of virtual and in-person programming. However, in line with the Provincial direction regarding the Provincewide Shutdown, EarlyON Child and Family Centres had to close to the public beginning Saturday, December 26, 2020. This meant that neither indoor nor outdoor programming could be offered during the shutdown. EarlyON Centres were advised to continue to offer virtual programming during the shut down. Therefore, contrary to report CS 2020-11-26 EarlyON Service Delivery Review Update 3 (Committee Agenda Item 4), one (1) more member of staff was not recalled from leave.

Five (5) staff have been and continue to operate a model of virtual service delivery. Ten (10) members of staff are on the Infectious Disease Emergency Leave (IDEL). The IDEL was due to end on January 2, 2021. However, on December 17, 2020, the Ontario government extended the temporary relief measures, including the IDEL regulation until July 3, 2021, as noted in report HHS 2021-01-28 EarlyON Service Delivery Review Update 4 (Committee Agenda Item 2).

On April 1, 2021 the provincial government imposed provincewide emergency brake as a result of a surge in case numbers and COVID-19 hospitalizations across the province, effective Saturday, April 3, 2021, at 12:01 a.m. The provincial government intends to keep this in place for at least six weeks. The provincewide emergency brake does mean that all EarlyON services are to continue virtually. (Staff had been able to do limited 'outdoor' programming before the emergency brake, when in the 'Orange' zone.)

### Service Review

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic the Children's Service Division continued with its Service Review of the EarlyON Service.

The review was conducted over the first quarter of 2021, by an external consultant who conducted surveys, help facilitate discussions and gathered information, from families, local partner agencies and staff. The review considered:

- service delivery/programming offered
- full use of the provincial funding
- level of municipal contribution required to provide mandatory core EarlyON services including: supporting early learning and development; engaging parents and caregivers; and making connections for families
- how funding could be realigned to address areas where financial challenges still exist, for example, child care funding

Based on feedback from clients, local partner agencies and feedback from the current working compliment of EarlyON staff, the EarlyON Service has been re-imagined. The attached Proposed 2021 Onwards Work Plan details the areas of focus within the review and how those areas could move forward. Please see attached EarlyON Service Review Update 5 – Appendix 1 Results from Service Review - Proposed 2021 Onwards Work Plan.

The reduced staffing model currently in place as a result of COVID-19 restrictions has been working well. Using the reduced staffing model the County could continue to meet its mandated core services, after COVID-19, with little municipal funding required.

However, to follow the proposed Work Plan, created as a result of the Service Review (when COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted) another two (2) members of staff would need to be recalled from leave to increase the staffing level to seven (7). The service would then, when able, re-introduce in-person programming while also maintaining virtual and outdoor offerings. This does mean that there would be eight (8) members of staff with no work to return to once the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted; a mix of full time and part time positions.

### Funding

The 2021 municipal contribution to the EarlyON Service is approximately \$503,000 with total costs of \$1.28 million offset by provincial funding of \$777,000 and partner contributions of \$4,800. Unlike other programs there is no requirement to cost share any portion of this service, i.e. the municipality is not required to match any of the provincial funding.

## Financial, Staffing, Legal, or IT Considerations

The County as a municipality is experiencing increasing demand and decreasing funding, irrespective of COVID-19. This does impact the municipality's contribution which ultimately comes from the tax levy. The change in service delivery has resulted in a more modern and responsive service delivery model.

Adopting the new Work Plan with a staffing complement of seven (7) will make full use of the provincial funding and will reduce the municipal contribution to the EarlyON service to around \$165,000, as noted in the table below. The County could realise savings of around \$338,000; that could be diverted to the Child Care side to help alleviate pressure on the Child Care Subsidy Wait List, provide additional support to the local Dufferin Child Care Sector in the form of General Operating Grants (GOP) and enhance the programming support for iCAN (Inclusion for Children with Additional Needs).

	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget	2021 Revised*
Revenues	779,884	892,614	782,220	782,220
Expenses	1,123,487	927,989	1,285,145	947,410
<b>Municipal Contribution</b>	<b>343,603</b>	<b>35,375</b>	<b>502,925</b>	<b>165,190</b>

*\* For illustration purposes only, based on whole year adjustment*

These changes, while highlighted by the pandemic, are not as a result of COVID-19. This is not about taking away the EarlyON services, it is about providing services in a more responsive way. The changes provide savings that can be targeted to areas where there is recognised ongoing need. The County would continue to provide mandatory core EarlyON services, including: supporting early learning and development; engaging parents and caregivers; and making connections for families.

This service realignment would also address the requirements of the County's Strategic Action Plan, Section ISC 5: Improve Access to Community Childcare Programs.

## Recommendations

**THAT the report of the Director, Community Services dated May 27, 2021, titled EarlyON Service review Update 5, be received;**

**AND THAT Council direct staff to review the EarlyON staffing skills compliment to best match service requirements for the new Work Plan;**

**AND THAT Council direct staff to transition permanently to the new service model, by June 25, 2021, reducing the EarlyON staffing compliment by eight (8);**

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Respectfully Submitted By:

Anna McGregor  
Director, Community Services

Attachment:  
EarlyON Service Review Update 5 – Appendix 1



**EarlyON Service Review Update 5 – Appendix 1**

**Results from Service Review - Proposed 2021 Onwards Work Plan**

Area of Focus	Actions
<b>Leverage Partnerships</b>	Embed iCAN (Inclusion for Children with Additional Needs) in all EarlyON programs and services
	Continue the EarlyON partnership with Public Health for ‘Healthy Babies Healthy Child’ wellness calls and check ins
	Further develop a partnership with licensed child care providers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness of EarlyON programs and services (email, poster, postcard, share on “HiMama” platform)</li> <li>• Information about/access to licensed child care</li> <li>• Use RCs that are in child care to plant seeds about EarlyON</li> <li>• iCAN share information with new families</li> <li>• Partnership with child care centres (events/activities, fun days, share field trips)</li> </ul>
	Continue to explore partnership with CS Viamonde to provide French language EarlyON programs
<b>Re-Imagine the Quality Initiative</b>	Link quality and inclusion as licensed child care providers view iCAN as a support to building a high quality experience
	Leverage Special Needs Resourcing funding envelope (iCAN)and capacity building funding envelope to include EarlyON
	Re-design the quality initiative, including continuing to enhance its collaborative nature (i.e. Quality Leadership Collaborative)
	Increase number of visits to child care centres
	Increase online professional learning opportunities/resources and/or offer recorded versions (potential topics: staff morale, programming ideas, children’s mental health, challenging behaviour)
<b>Refine the EarlyON Transportation Program</b>	Introduce a taxi voucher system providing transportation to EarlyON and/or approved activities
	Explore best fit for this program - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with EarlyON mandate? (Transportation is provided to and from a variety of agencies within the County, including EarlyON Sites, Food Bank, Dufferin Child and Family Services and Family Transition Place)</li> </ul>



Area of Focus	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of service utilization is in Orangeville</li> <li>• At a later date could also link to results from County of Dufferin Transit Feasibility Study</li> </ul>
<b>Create an EarlyON program plan for 2021 onwards</b>	Create a 2021 and onwards EarlyON program plan
	Continue with outdoor programming, offer more, including walks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evening workshops for parents/ caregivers (outdoor walks – no kids)</li> </ul>
	Increase number of children’s virtual programs (one-time activities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Virtual and in-person programs for infants</li> </ul>
	Increase awareness about EarlyON programs and services
	Increase communication via Facebook and email (i.e. activities to do at home, tips, etc.) Seek assistance from new Communications Manager
	Create a targeted outreach strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase targeted outreach activities (provide info about EarlyON or child development in the drop)</li> <li>• Start providing pop up activities in different communities (outreach)</li> <li>• Make take home kits/activity sheets available (i.e. craft kits) for families to use at home</li> </ul>
	Re-introduce a dads program (late afternoon, evening or weekend)
	Start an in-person outdoor support group
	Identify other ongoing programming opportunities for the EarlyON (for example: yoga/meditation instructor, speech and language, etc.)
	Re-invent the Kids First Program – explore its purpose and ensure it is accessible and nimble (throughout Dufferin County)
<b>EarlyON Locations</b>	Continue to use the current locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orangeville: Rotary Park and Fellowship Church</li> <li>• Grand Valley: Lions Park</li> <li>• Shelburne: Mel Lloyd Centre</li> </ul>
	Move outdoor programs between locations (not just offered at one location)
	Currently assessing a new French language satellite location at Quatre Rivières
<b>EarlyON Days and Hours of Operation</b>	Move back to offering a variety of times for EarlyON programs (mornings, afternoon, weekend or evening hours)
	Provide more than one day a week for outdoor programming in each location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hours of programs – evenings and weekends? Expand choice/options</li> </ul>



Area of Focus	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Re-think our view on consistency</li> <li>○ Merge: travelling EarlyON + consistent programming</li> <li>○ Multiple locations and adjust times</li> <li>○ Dads! – evening play in the park</li> </ul>
<p><b>Modify the staffing structure</b></p>	<p>Operational Staffing model for 2021. 6 staff: 1 Supervisor, 1 Early Learning and Quality Coordinator, 1 Program Coordinator and 4 Resource Workers.</p> <p>Have the Quality Assurance Coordinator encompass all aspects of quality, including inclusion, capacity building (funded through child care capacity building), supporting licensed child care and EarlyON</p> <p>Children’s Services Supervisor to be responsible for partnerships/engagement</p> <p>Continue to have iCAN staff work alongside EarlyON staff in programs and activities</p>
<p><b>Access Issues</b></p>	<p>Access to the internet is a challenge for some parents and impacts their ability to access virtual programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increased awareness by child care providers (poster, post on High Mama)</li> <li>○ How to connect to people who don’t have the internet? Let them know about library lending of internet</li> <li>○ Radio ad, newspaper ad</li> <li>○ Posters (doctors’ offices, libraries, grocery stores)</li> <li>○ Contact list</li> <li>○ Reach people who we aren’t reaching, equity lens (language, culture, transportation etc.)</li> <li>○ Municipal message boards</li> <li>○ Canada Post ad mail</li> <li>○ Leverage partnerships</li> </ul> <p>Continue to work with the library on signing out MiFi hubs</p>