

Report to Council

Report Title:	Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System Funding (CWELCC)		
Prepared By:	Sharon Bross, Brockton Child Care Centre Supervisor, Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer, and Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer		
Department:	Child Care		
Date:	June 21, 2022		
Report Number:	BCCC2022-03	File Number:	C11BR

Attachments:

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number BCCC2022-03 – Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System Funding (CWELCC), prepared by Sharon Bross, Brockton Child Care Centre Supervisor, Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer, and Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer, and in doing so supports staff initiating the process required with the County to offer the CWELCC program and acknowledges the Brockton Child Care Centre and School Age program closure on October 28th, 2022 to ensure ongoing staff training is a priority in offering quality child care services to the community.

Report:

Background:

On March 28, 2022 the Province of Ontario announced that an agreement had been reached with the federal government to support Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program (CWELCC). The aim of the investment of \$13.2 billion dollars is to lower child care costs for families and increase access to quality licensed child care over the next three years.

In Ontario the CWELCC program will be taking a phased-in approach based on five pillars, as follows:

1. Affordability

- The Ministry of Education implemented a Fee Freeze for all licensed child care programs prohibiting the increase of fees charged to parents of children in licensed child care under the age of 6 years.
- A graduated approach to fee reductions will begin in Spring 2022 for children under six years old by June 30th in that calendar year
 - o 25% in 2022 retro active to April 1, 2022
 - o Up to 50% by the end of December 2022
 - o Average of \$10/day by 2025-26

- Rebates to parents of operators who have 'opted-into' the CWELCC program will be retroactive to April 1, 2022 for families who were using eligible licensed child care programs during that time period. The refunds must be processed within 60 days of enrollment.

2. Access

To provide families with more child care options and address increasing demand for child care. The creation of approximately 86,000 new licensed child care spaces provincially by the end of 2026

3. Quality

The Ministry of Education will begin consultations on measures to support and recognize the dedication of the child care workforce, including professional development training and initiatives.

4. Inclusion

Future space expansion plans and programming will support the need for child care access for low-income children, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities, Francophone and Indigenous children.

5. Wages

The CWELCC provides a wage floor for qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators. CMSMs and DSSABs will receive funding to raise the wage floor to \$18 per hour for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and \$20 per hour for RECE Supervisors to improve recruitment and retention in the child care workforce. Going forward, RECE program staff and supervisors will receive a \$1 per hour wage increase each year from 2023 to 2026, up to a maximum of \$25/hour.

On June 2, 2022 The County of Bruce brought forward the CWELCC funding program to Council for the approval to enter into and execute the updated Purchase of Service Agreements with licensed child care providers.

Analysis:

The Brockton Child Care Centre is currently participating in a Service Agreement with the County of Bruce for multiple grant funding opportunities, such as Cross Jurisdictional Agreements, Operator Service Agreement, Wage Enhancement, General Operating Expense funding & Play-based Material and Equipment Funding as well as many others as they are required.

The CWELCC funding program will provide the families at the Brockton Child Care Centre with the financial relief for children under the age of 6 as of June 30th each year. To participate in the program, the Municipality must advise their service system manager by September 1, 2022 of their intention to participate. The Municipality must meet the following requirements in order to participate:

- In receipt of an existing or new purchase of service agreement with the service system manager
- Demonstrate financial viability
- Maintain the child care fees for Licensees who were in operation as of March 27, 2022 unless a fee increase was communicated to families/parents prior to the announcement of the CWELCC System on March 28, 2022.
- Maintain existing licensed spaces for ages 0-5 (pre-CWELCC announcement on March 28, 2022). Licensees may not convert existing 0-5 spaces to other age groups

- Other specific requirements outlined in the [CWELCC Addendum](#)

All licensees who wish to participate in the CWELCC System will be required to work with their service system manager to ensure that they meet provincial requirements and agree to the terms and conditions associated with the CWELCC System.

As noted above, there is a phased in process for the fee reduction. Phase one will consist of a 25% rebate as of April 1, 2022. Phase two will consist of an **average** reduction of 50% as of December 31, 2022; with the final phase being completed by 2025 with an **average** rate of \$10-a-day. Rebates to parents will occur once the operator opt-in application processes have been completed. Families will receive rebates once agreements have been signed with individual licensed child care operators. Any programs that enroll AFTER December 31, 2022, will not be eligible for retroactive enrollment and will only be expected to reduce fees on a go-forward basis.

Given the administrative requirements to operate under the CWELCC System, the Ministry of Education has also advised that previously announced administrative funding cuts will be restored.

Staff are currently working on the notice of interest report that will be submitted to the County for review. Once the County has completed their review and confirmed the base funding requests, staff will bring forward an update to Council and seek authorization to enter into a new Purchase of Service Agreement with the County and recommend the Municipality opt-in to the CWELCC program.

As per the five pillars noted above quality child care remains a priority. With this in mind the County of Bruce is arranging County wide employee training on October 28th, 2022. This will require closing the Centre and School Age Program. Operators can apply to the County of Bruce for funding to off-set lost revenue. Lost revenues, wages for additional staff (i.e. supply staff not scheduled daily) and mileage for staff to attend will be covered. Families will not be charged for October 28th, 2022. Families will be given advanced notice of closure of the programs.

Strategic Action Plan Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

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| • Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance | Yes |

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

The CWELCC program will assist families and provide financial relief for child care expense. There is no lost revenue to the Municipality as the financial relief funding opportunity will be administered by the County, but funded by Federal and Provincial Governments. There are increased administrative tasks with the CWELCC

program, however there is also funding opportunities available to support the increased administrative reporting requirements. This will require further evaluation as we proceed.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Sharon Bross, Brockton Child Care Centre Supervisor



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer