



Brockton Child Care Centre Organizational Review

Final Report

August 2024

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Introduction

In the spring of 2024 the Municipality of Brockton launched an organizational review at the Brockton Child Care Centre (BCCC). BCCC is a municipally operated child care centre located in Walkerton, Ontario.

The child care sector has seen transformational change in the last ten (10) years, including ongoing legislative changes, pressures related to the availability of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs), implementation of the new Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) initiative, the new financial formulas related to CWELCC funding, and an increased number of families seeking BCCC services. Based on these changes, the timing was appropriate for an organizational review. Further changes are coming in 2025, with the provincial announcement of a new child care funding approach.

The focus of the organizational review was to gather data, information and feedback in order to make informed recommendations in the following areas:

1. Organizational Culture / Staff Experience
2. Quality / Customer Experience
3. Organizational Structure / Management Support
4. Operational Structures and Business Viability / Future Supports

Overall, BCCC is offering programs and services that are of value to the community, and the families being served by the organization are satisfied with the quality and overall operations.

BCCC has experienced significant growth since its inception, evolving from a small child care centre to a large three-site child care operation. This rapid growth, along with increased Ministry Regulations, altered funding programs, and current organizational dynamics, now necessitates some shifts in how the organization does business and how the organization supports the people that work there. There is a need to modernize and re-structure to catch up to this growth, and a need to put an emphasis on the capacity to ensure the creation of a positive and supportive work environment.

Methodology

A mixed methods research design was used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data for the organizational review, including:

- Data review
- Document review
- Online survey
- One-on-one interviews
- Focus groups
- Environmental scan

- Benchmarking with comparator child care centres

The following stakeholder groups were involved in the project:

Stakeholder Group	Number of Participants
Current and former staff of BCCC	23
BCCC management and administration staff	4
Families/parents who use BCCC	69
Municipality of Brockton CAO and HR Generalist	2
Child Care Committee	4
Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (County of Bruce)	6
Other Municipally Operated Child Care Centres	3
Other licensed child care centres	10
TOTAL	121

Overall findings and recommendations of the review are contained in the main body of the report, and more detailed data and information can be found in the appendix to the report.

BCCC 50+ Year History

Brockton Child Care Centre (BCCC) is located at 81 Cemetery Road in Walkerton. The child care centre is directly operated by the Municipality of Brockton and has been in operation since 1971. BCCC moved to its current location in September 2014.

BCCC has a Child Care Manager of 38 years and a Child Care Supervisor who just retired after 34 years that have provided administrative and operational oversight to the organization through significant growth in spaces, regulatory changes, and an increase in staff and children over the years and through the COVID-19 pandemic. BCCC is an organization that has seen substantial growth since it opened over fifty years ago, growing from 25 to 117 spaces. See the historical timeline below.

BCCC History

1971 - Founding Date

The child care centre was established and licensed for 25 children. It then expanded to the second floor and was licensed for 45 children.

1990 - Expansion

The centre expanded to include toddlers, increased licensed capacity to 55 children and added a before and after school program.

2011 - New Facility Discussions

Began discussions to find a new facility.

2012 - School Age Program Expansion

Expanded to include before and after school programs at Mother Teresa and the new Walkerton District Community School.

2014 - New Centre Opened

New centre completed and began operation, licensed for 78 children. Centre moved to the current location.

2019/2020 - After School Program Expansion

Expanded the after school program at St/F to 56 children (previously licensed for 43).

2020 - Further Expansion

Added two more classrooms and an office for the Assistant Supervisor (now titled Supervisor). Centre now licensed for 117 children.

2024 - Licensed Capacity

45 Toddler Spaces
72 Preschool Spaces
106 School Age Spaces

Overall Findings and Recommendations

Being a municipally operated child care centre, and thus part of a municipality, is a rarity in Ontario. This unique governance structure offers a number of advantages to BCCC, including higher than average sector staff salaries and benefits, the ability to leverage corporate supports through the Municipality of Brockton and an annual Municipal financial contribution from the municipality's tax rate.

BCCC has experienced significant growth and expansion in terms of number of licensed spaces/ children served and number of staff since its inception. Through this growth and constant change, there has been solid administrative performance, with operations continuing satisfactorily. Although the performance of BCCC has been adequate over this period, there have been limited actions to support this growth and ensure a solid foundation upon which to continue to thrive as an organization. In order to continue to be a leader in the child care sector, BCCC needs to be supported with vision, leadership and capacity.

Overall, families are relatively satisfied with the programs and services offered through BCCC, expressing satisfaction with the quality of the programs, the staff working at BCCC and the convenience and hours of operation. They would like to see some enhancements in the playground and menu.

Various factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, staff shortages, industry recruitment challenges, significant organizational growth, and leadership have contributed to cultural challenges that need attention. Organizational changes are required to support a shift in culture and modernization of the organization.

As BCCC is offering a consistent level of service for which parents are satisfied, now is the time to focus on modernization and enhancements across a number of areas to ensure that the organization increases its level of performance and is poised for future success. These areas of focus include:

1. Current Programs
2. Operational Supports
3. Quality
4. Customer Experience
5. Organizational Structure and Staffing
6. Organizational Culture
7. Business Viability

Each of these areas are outlined in further detail below, including recommendations for moving forward. Note: An internal focus should be the first priority to ensure leadership capacity, structure, and collaboration amongst the staff unit is effective and efficient for ongoing success.

1. Current Programs

BCCC operates a child care centre that serves toddler and preschool children, has a school age program at two (2) sites, and offers a summer program. This programming is the backbone of BCCC and must be tailored to align with the current Ministry guidelines and needs of the community.

Key Findings

- BCCC has seen significant growth in the number and type of programs it provides and the number of licensed spaces offered and supported, with further extensive need identified with over 340 children on a waiting list
- The current location of the child care centre is secure until 2051, with a strong partnership with the BGCDSD
- The child care centre program is operating at full capacity, with a substantial waiting list, mainly for toddler spaces. However, this can vary due to lack of staffing
- School age programs are not operating at licensed capacity due to a lack of staff. There is a waiting list for these programs, mainly at the St. Teresa school location
- The fees charged in the school age program are slightly less than the comparator municipally operated child care centres and lower than a local comparator child care centre
- The fees charged in the summer program are substantially lower than the comparator municipally operated child care summer program
- The centre's hours of operation work well for parents, and drop off and pick up procedures are reported as being very easy
- Parents have a high level of satisfaction with the programming at the centre, reporting the programs are age-appropriate and stimulating for their child
- Parents feel that their child's needs are supported through the Municipality of Brockton's summer child care programs
- There is not adequate shade or enough natural elements in the playground
- There is a need for larger climbing equipment in the playground
- There are some concerns about menu options and the quality and variety of food served for lunch and snacks
- The level of support provided through the Bruce County Special Needs Resourcing Program is not adequate to meet the needs of children in the centre and support teachers

Recommendations

- 1.1 Explore growing the school age program, as staffing permits, so that it is at capacity to meet community need and increase BCCC revenue
- 1.2 Explore increasing the parent fees charged in the school age programs
- 1.3 Explore increasing the parent fees in the summer programs
- 1.4 Advocate to Bruce County for additional support for children with differing abilities

2. Operational Supports

The current operational processes and infrastructure at BCCC need to be modernized to increase overall efficiency in the organization. Technology and automation can help create more capacity for management staff.

Policies and procedures need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Updated and clearer policies and procedures that are implemented consistently will make it easier for staff to do their jobs.

Key Findings

- Many of BCCC's administrative processes are manual
- BCCC has a comprehensive policy and procedure manual that is inspected by the Ministry yearly and reviewed by staff through yearly meetings and at child care monthly meetings
- Some of the BCCC policies do not include a date and require updating
- While a yearly review of BCCC policies occurs, some policies have not had updates for the past nine years
- Some staff report some policies are not being consistently implemented
- The Child Care Staff are not included in the existing Municipal Clothing Allowance Policy
- Staff would like to see the closed toe shoes policy revoked. This is supported by the policies of comparator child care centres but should be evaluated based on severity of past Health and Safety occurrences

Recommendations

- 2.1 Explore the use of a software package (i.e. Digibot) to assist with child care centre administration
- 2.2 Update those policies and procedures which have not been reviewed in the last two (2) years. A full review by an external consultant specific to the child care field would be recommended
- 2.3 Create a cycle to review policies (x number per year, starting with the oldest)
- 2.4 Always document the date each policy is reviewed and revised
- 2.5 Review and consider removal of the policy that requires staff to wear closed toe shoes
- 2.6 Explore the provision of a clothing allowance for BCCC staff

3. Quality

Parents are satisfied with the overall program quality. There are opportunities to continue to enhance quality by creating a culture of learning in the organization, focusing on the practice of pedagogy and supplementing the current program resources.

Professional learning and practice are key to enhancing quality. Staff can learn from each other and engage in further professional learning to continue to evolve and grow their practice in this

area (i.e. staff meetings as a collaborative learning opportunity or Community of Practice¹, mentors from other child care centres). Learning can take many forms. It can come from reading a book or article, watching a podcast, talking to a colleague or attending a training session. The College of ECEs have a [resource](#) that outlines a range of professional learning activities.

Although many feel the program quality at BCCC is good, there is still work to be done to fully embrace the concept of child-led programming/emergent curriculum. BCCC needs to continue to focus on HDLH and child-led programming. Management needs to be a leader for this. This includes working on pedagogical documentation which needs to be better defined and then practiced consistently across BCCC.

The environment, including the outdoor space, needs to be seen as the third teacher. The playground needs adjustments and additions to be a positive experience for staff and children. In addition to the outdoor space, there are some concerns about menu options and the quality and variety of food served for lunch and snacks.

School age programs require a different focus as they serve children aged 6 to 12 years. Children in the middle years² require different developmental supports to support optimal development. Programming for this group needs to reflect that. The Ministry of Education has released a developmental framework to assist with this ([On MY Way: A Guide to Support Middle Years Child Development](#)). BCCC school age programs should reflect the developmental needs of 6 to 12 year olds.

Inclusion is also an important aspect of quality. The level of support provided through the Bruce County Special Needs Resourcing Program is not adequate to meet the needs of children in the centre and some staff do not feel supported by this program.

Key Findings

- Overall, program quality is rated as good, with parents being satisfied with the overall quality of the child care centre, BCCC staff and management rating it as good, and external focus group participants rating it as satisfactory to good
- Parents recognize and value the quality and characteristics of the educators working at BCCC, along with the safety and cleanliness of the centre and the affordability of care
- Parents are very likely to recommend the BCCC to other parents
- Some classrooms are performing better than others in terms of quality
- The perceived quality of school age programs is lower than the perceived quality in the child care centre

¹ The [College of ECEs](#) defines a Community of Practice as, “A group of professionals who share a concern or passion about a practice topic and who wish to learn how to improve this area of practice by communicating and collaborating with each other regularly over time. Communities of practice are examples of reflective practice and collaborative inquiry.”

² The middle years refer to the period in life between early childhood and adolescence. Generally, child development experts consider children between the ages of 6–12 as being in their middle years.

- Some child-led programming (emergent curriculum) exists, but it is not fully integrated at BCCC
- Feedback from stakeholders about how to improve quality suggests the following areas of focus:
 - Professional Development and Growth
 - Staff Morale and Team Dynamics
 - Communication and Engagement
 - Operational Efficiency and Modernization
 - Resource and Support Enhancement
 - Environment and Facilities Improvement
 - Food and Nutrition
 - Appreciation and Recognition
- Most comparator child care centres do not have a mandatory template that needs to be completed for program planning
- Staff require more dedicated time for planning and preparation outside of sleep time
- Some comparator child care centres provide a longer amount of time for prep/program planning (i.e. 90 minutes per month, one hour per week) and others provide time to staff when they are over ratio
- The pedagogical documentation being implemented at BCCC is rudimentary and needs to evolve
- Comparator child care centres use technology (apps) to support the sharing of pedagogical documentation with parents
- Parents like the Daily Program Documentation provided and prepared by teachers in toddler rooms
- Parents miss the daily email documentation that was previously provided during the COVID-19 pandemic
- BCCC has had two behaviour guidance complaints since 2022
- Communication about serious occurrences and other incidents needs to be improved

Recommendations

- 3.1 Remove the use of the current program plan template
- 3.2 Discuss a component from HDLH at every staff meeting
- 3.3 Enhance the use of staff meetings as a mini Community of Practice for reflective practice
- 3.4 Continue to review and discuss the practical implementation of the BCCC Program Statement on a regular basis
- 3.5 Create a different process to identify staff to attend training sessions (i.e. based on goals)
- 3.6 Provide and create more opportunities for learning activities either in-house or externally
- 3.7 Create a consistent practice for pedagogical documentation, including how it is done and how often, and share these expectations with families

- 3.8 Create more shade in the playground
- 3.9 Add more natural elements to the playground and/or explore moving or expanding the playground to an area with natural elements (i.e. grass, trees, flower beds, gardens, etc.)
- 3.10 Add larger climbing equipment in the playground
- 3.11 Develop a set of four (4) to five (5) week menu rotations and have the menus reviewed by a dietician/nutritionist from the local Health Unit. Use the [ODPH child care menu planning guide](#) to help develop the menus
- 3.12 Ask Bruce County to convene a quarterly meeting of all licensed child care centre cooks and the Health Unit as a Community of Practice for nutrition staff in licensed child care settings
- 3.13 Review programming in the school age programs to ensure they reflect the Ministry of Education's developmental framework, [On MY Way: A Guide to Support Middle Years Child Development](#)
- 3.14 Advocate to Bruce County for additional support for children with differing abilities
- 3.15 Hold an in-house training session with a behaviour therapist to train staff on behaviour guidance
- 3.16 Create a dedicated space on the BCCC website to provide information about what a serious occurrence is and the BCCC protocol for communication about serious occurrences

4. Customer Experience

Parents would like to receive more frequent and detailed communication from BCCC using a centralized communication channel. They would like to see technology used (i.e. an app) as the communication channel. For the most part, at present, parent engagement is limited to communication

Key Findings

- BCCC has a public website with information about the child care programs. It also has a Parent Handbook that is provided to parents upon enrolment
- The registration form and other required documents are for the most part completed or provided in paper form. The registration form is available online
- Much of the engagement and communication with parents is done manually, where content is created and then emailed or posted in the centre
- Comparator municipalities are using software applications as tools to support parent engagement
- Although parents seem satisfied with the current communication about their child's progress and daily activities, they would like to have more regular and detailed updates (daily), would like to see technology used (i.e. an app), and would like to have a centralized communication channel
- Parent engagement is limited to communication
- Engagement and communication with parents is traditional (i.e. adhering to established practices and methods that have been used for a long time) and may be outdated and not

desired or useful for centre families (i.e. not current, no longer in use in most modern contexts)

- Overall, parents feel that BCCC offers a nurturing, high quality experience for their children. They feel that the positive relationships the staff have with them and their children is the best thing the centre does
- Parents would like to have better communication that is timely, clear and comprehensive
- Parents would like to see adequate staffing at the centre
- Parents support the introduction of an app for advanced communication purposes
- There is a need for more child care spaces to decrease long wait times
- The menu for lunch and snacks could include more variety and healthier options
- There is a need for better shade in the playground

Recommendations

- 4.1 Explore the use of a software package (i.e. Digibot) to assist with parent communication and engagement, this should include attendance tracking, billing and payments, as well as the sharing of pedagogical documentation, centre information and other regular parent communications. Note: the implementation of a software package will require the development of policy and clear expectations for staff
- 4.2 Create a consistent practice for pedagogical documentation, including how it is done and how often and share these expectations with families
- 4.3 Explore other ways to engage parents in the child care centre (i.e. social events, meet the teacher events, etc.)
- 4.4 Create a central place or expanded website area for information related to Serious Occurrences and process

5. Organizational Structure and Staffing

The organizational structure and staffing at BCCC needs to be re-visited to support the growth in the organization and to create a succession plan for the future. The current span of control is too wide and with the constant lack of supply staff, office staff are pulled from their duties for coverage.

Organizational structure is also one of the key levers for creating culture in an organization. The organizational structure should reflect and support the culture the organization is trying to create.

Key Finding

- BCCC's current organizational structure needs to be updated to align with the growth that has occurred in the organization and to focus on succession planning for the future
- The Brockton Child Care Committee's advisory role needs to be further defined and training should be provided to help Committee members feel more comfortable in their role.
- The Municipality of Brockton has corporate supports that BCCC can continue to leverage (i.e. Information Technology support to assist with automation, etc.)

- The Child Care Manager reports directly to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). With the CAO overseeing seven (7) departments and 10 staff in total, the span of oversight to support the Manager of the BCCC to effectively advance change and recommendations as a result of significant growth will be a challenge
- The Manager of BCCC has a wide span of control with up to 33 direct reports. In addition to this, the Manager sits as a member of the Municipality's Senior Management Team and must cover in the classrooms to ensure ratios and as cook periodically during staff absences. This takes administrative staff away from their prime role and work required. This makes it challenging to manage effectively
- Two of the comparator municipally operated child care centres are structured differently. Their child care programs report to a Recreation Manager/Director who sits on the Municipality's Senior Management Team. They also have a Supervisor for the School Age Program and a Supervisor for the child care centre programs and a full-time cook at each centre

In the interest of consistently ensuring staff ratios and a lack of staff available in the ECE field further flexibility can be a challenge. However, the following findings about staffing should be further examined:

- Staff shifts are not consistent in length leading to challenges with scheduling
- The start time for staff shifts changes from week to week. There is an opportunity to build more stability into the shift schedule
- There may be an opportunity to adjust the before school program staff shifts to help provide further coverage in the child care centre for prep/planning time, meetings, lunch, training, etc.
- The Manager and/or Supervisor positions could cover a wider expanse of time when the centre is open (i.e. one position starting at 6:30 am when the centre opens and the other position starting later and staying until the centre closes)
- BCCC has a slightly lower number of paid sick/personal days compared to other licensed child care operators and the comparator municipally operated child care centres
- BCCC has comparable vacation days and has a wide range of benefits that many licensed child care centres do not provide
- Professional learning does not appear to be tied to employee goals and the process to select staff to attend professional learning opportunities is random
- BCCC staff do not receive ongoing one-on-one formal supervision due to the number of employees supervised
- Current team meetings are used primarily to convey one-way information, with limited opportunities for discussion and feedback
- Recruiting supply staff is an ongoing challenge
- BCCC may do well with staff retention due to the high level of wages and benefits it provides. The organization also needs to focus on the other key retention levers such as: working conditions, career advancement, and capacity and training to ensure effective management

- The main employer BCCC loses staff to is the education system in the form of Educational Assistants

Recommendations

- 5.1 Explore restructuring BCCC to address capacity concerns and span of control
- 5.2 Change the length of staff shifts (for full time staff) to a consistent number of hours per day
- 5.3 Explore the options of either rotating through shifts or having permanent shifts for staff
- 5.4 Explore adjusting the before and after school program staff shifts to help provide further coverage in the child care centre for prep/planning time, meetings, lunch, training, etc.
- 5.5 The Supervisor position should cover a wider expanse of time when the centre is open (i.e. one position starting at 6:30 am when the centre opens and the other position starting later and staying until the centre closes)
- 5.6 At the beginning of each Council term, provide the Brockton Child Care Committee with an orientation to BCCC and their role
- 5.7 Expand the role of the Brockton Child Care Committee to support fundraising initiatives and a yearly event planning to engage parents in the centre and support playground updates
- 5.8 Work with the Municipality of Brockton Information Technology supports to assist with BCCC's technology, automation and software requirements to implement a new app and communication tool
- 5.9 Examine the benefits provided to Educational Assistants with the School Boards and determine any gaps that can be minimized to support the retention of staff
- 5.10 Examine the option of reducing the number of children served at BCCC to ensure adequate staffing and coverage in the child care centre
- 5.11 Develop a custom recruitment strategy for BCCC which could include the exploration of:
 - The provision of signing bonuses for new staff
 - Employee referral bonuses where current employees can earn bonuses for referring qualified candidates who are hired and stay for a certain period
 - Clearly outlining potential career advancement opportunities within BCCC

6. Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is the most important area of focus, as a positive organizational culture leads to staff job satisfaction and higher organizational performance. Staff job satisfaction leads to a better customer experience. An organizational culture that is open, transparent, respectful and supportive needs to be created at BCCC - a culture where staff feel supported and valued, and feel like they are part of a team.

Key Findings

- There are some current challenges in the organizational culture at BCCC

- Staff would like to have a supportive and positive environment, fostering teamwork, and ensuring mutual respect among staff

Recommendations

- 6.1 Engage an external consultant to design and implement a strategy to shift the culture at BCCC. This strategy should be designed as a living document that is co-created with staff and is reflected on, discussed and practiced regularly in the organization
- 6.2 Support and provide capacity to the management team to create a new organizational culture
- 6.3 Maintain six (6) sick days per year with consideration for an addition of three (3) wellness days
- 6.4 Provide additional planning/documentation time to staff (i.e. 90 minutes per month)
- 6.5 Implement one-on-one staff supervision meetings between staff and their direct supervisor, with a goal of having a minimum of four (4) per year
- 6.6 Create activities and environment for overall team building in the organization

7. Business Viability

The fiscal performance of BCCC needs attention. As BCCC provides higher than average wages and benefits to its staff, the organization is not breaking even at year end and the Municipality of Brockton is covering this deficit on an annual basis. This is a balance and choice that the Municipality is making. The higher wages and benefits are helping to attract and retain high quality staff, but it comes at a cost that is not covered through existing funding. The Municipality is contributing financially to assist with this.

Opportunities to increase revenue are limited. The only other option is to increase revenue is through the school age program. This may be challenging due to the difficulty in recruiting staff to work in this program.

BCCC is operating at full capacity in its 0-4 year old programs, with a waiting list (demand is high for BCCC child care programs). Based on the Bruce County directed growth plan there are opportunities for the Municipality to play a lead role in child care expansion in Brockton.

Key Findings

- BCCC has limited opportunities to increase its revenue from existing sources. There will be an opportunity beginning in January 2025 to potentially increase CWELCC funding through the new cost-based funding approach
- The fiscal performance of BCCC is below industry standard and is lower than the other comparator child care centres. This is due to the lack of inclusion of all funding in the BCCC budget (i.e. Municipality of Brockton funding, one-time play-based materials funding from Bruce County)
- Most of the comparator municipally operated centres are able to break even at year end without any one-time operating revenue from the municipality that operates the centre(s)

- Due to CWELCC limiting the opportunity to increase revenue, the school age program is one area which can be looked at for additional revenue. This may be a challenge due to the inability to recruit enough staff for the current licensed capacity of the school age program
- Being a municipally operated child care centre is of value
- There is an opportunity to expand BCCC and meet the growing child care needs in Brockton. Expansion should be considered vis-à-vis the need to address the items identified in this organizational review. BCCC, as it stands as an organization today, should be on solid footing before expanding
- There are many available software platforms that can assist BCCC with automation, administration and parent engagement

Recommendations

- 6.1 The Municipality of Brockton should expand on the BCCC budget detail with the implementation of CWELCC and various grant funding administered by the County of Bruce and associated expense allocations to be able to further analyze year over year variances to get to a revenue neutral budget. This should include formalizing the Municipality's annual financial contribution to BCCC
- 6.2 Explore growing the school age program as staffing permits so that it is at capacity to increase revenue
- 6.3 Explore increasing the parent fees charged in the school age programs
- 6.4 Explore increasing the parent fees in the summer programs
- 6.5 Have the Brockton Child Care Committee support fundraising initiatives for certain project based items or events
- 6.6 Explore the feasibility of creating a new 69 space child care centre in Brockton, through exploring a further partnership with the BGCSB and the County of Bruce as partners in a capital build application through the Ministry

Appendix

1. Current Programs
2. Operational Support
3. Quality
4. Customer Experience
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8. Financial Information
9. Opportunities for the Future

Current Programs

BCCC operates a child care centre that serves toddler and preschool children, has a school age program at two (2) sites, and offers a summer program. Details about each of these programs are provided below.

Child Care Centre Programs

In its child care centre programs, BCCC is licensed for 117 children (45 toddlers, 72 preschool), operating three (3) toddler rooms and three (3) preschool rooms. These programs typically operate at full licensed capacity. However, recruitment of available ECEs continues to create real challenges in continually operating at full capacity.

This program is situated within St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School and was built based on a new addition to the easterly end of the former Mother Teresa School building located at 81 Cemetery Road, Walkerton (4,350 square feet) and the renovation of two (2) existing classrooms (2,050 square feet).

The operational hours of the child care centre programs are Monday to Friday from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm.

The following is the schedule of parent fees for the child care centre programs:

Category	2023 Fee	2024 Fee	Year over Year Change
Toddler Program – <i>full day</i>	\$47.00	\$46.00	(2.1%)
Preschool Program – <i>full day</i>	\$45.00	\$44.00	(2.2%)

Additional charges include:

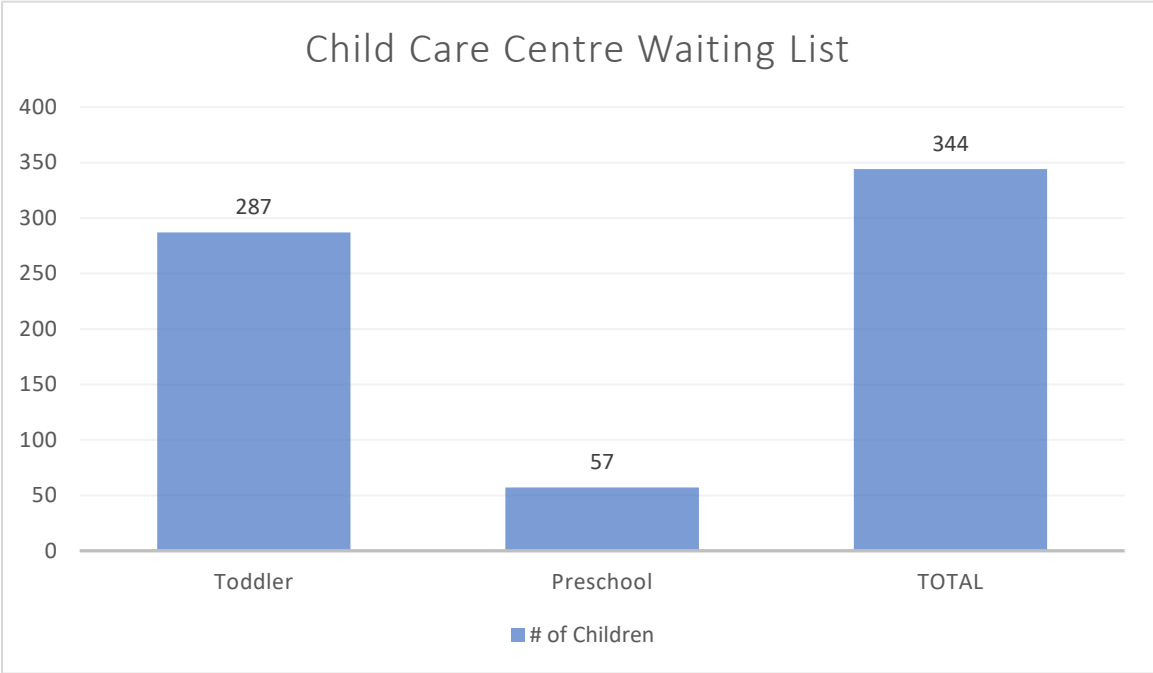
- Registration fee - \$10.00
- “No call” admin fee - \$5.00
- Late fee - \$5.00 every 15 minutes after centre closes
- Sunscreen - \$8.00 per season for a child attending program two (2) to three (3) days per week and \$10.00 per season for a child attending program four (4) to five (5) days per week. The season is May 1 to September 30

Notes:

BCCC is enrolled in the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) initiative, meaning the fees parents pay directly to the centre have decreased by up to 62% since 2022, with the County of Bruce, as Service System Manager, offsetting this reduction. As part of this initiative, there is limited ability to increase parent fees.

The provincial government has announced a new child care funding approach to begin January 1, 2025 which will provide cost-based funding.

At present there is a waiting list for the child care centre programs. There are a total of 344 on the waiting list (up to 2026). See the graph below for details.



By-law #2014-006 outlines the terms of a Sub-lease Agreement for the child care centre between the Municipality of Brockton and the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of the Diocese of Hamilton and the Bruce Catholic District School Board. This agreement contains the terms and conditions for the leasing of two (2) existing classrooms and a new addition to the former Mother Teresa School.

The term of the lease is 22 years, renewable by BCCC upon notice to the Board given at least six (6) months prior to the end of the term for a further three (3) terms of five (5) years each. This means that BCCC can operate at these premises until 2051.

As part of this agreement, BCCC pays the sum of one dollar (\$1.00) per annum payable in advance on the first day of the term and on each annual anniversary date thereafter. BCCC also pays to the Board the following expenses related to the premises as additional rent:

- i. Business taxes and licenses associated with the operation of the Day Care facility;
- ii. Utilities (including but not limited to gas, electricity, water, heat, air conditioning as metered to or apportioned to the Day Care facility);
- iii. Services supplied to the Premises, provided that this does not in any way oblige the Board to provide any services, unless otherwise agreed in this Lease;
- iv. Property taxes and rates, duties and assessments levied on the Day Care facility;
- v. Maintenance as apportioned by this lease;

- vi. Snow removal;
- vii. Insurance premiums as apportioned by this lease;
- viii. Sales tax, and any other taxes imposed on the Board respecting the Rent;
- ix. All other charges, impositions, costs and expenses of every nature and kind whatsoever;

Expenses relating to the whole school site, including but not limited to, maintenance, custodial services and snow removal are prorated on the basis of the square footage of the space occupied by the child care centre to the total square footage of the total school building.

In 2024, the amount paid to the Bruce Catholic District School Board for the child care centre is \$4,758.00 per month (\$57,096.00 per year).

School Age Programs

BCCC operates two (2) school age programs. One is located at St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School and the other is located at Walkerton District Community School. BCCC has service agreements with the respective School Boards to provide Extended Day/School Age programs in these two schools. See the table below for further details.

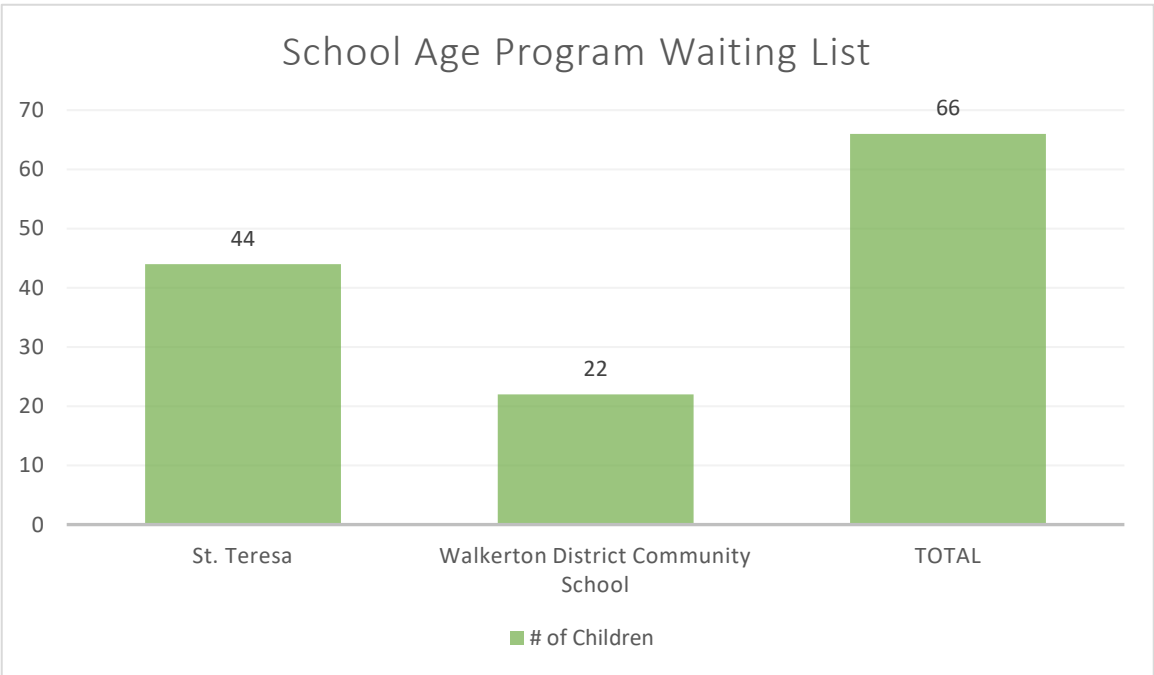
St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School	Walkerton District Community School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service agreement with the Bruce Catholic District School Board to operate a School Age/Extended Day Program at St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School • The agreement with the Bruce Catholic District School Board allows for the use two (2) former classrooms at no cost for the duration of the time agreed to by the parties; therefore, there is no cost for the school age program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service agreement with the Bluewater District School Board to operate a School Age/Extended Day Program at Walkerton District Community School • The agreement was executed on May 28, 2018 • The agreement notes that the key components of the After School Program may include, but are not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Academic assistance or time for students to complete school work ii. Arts and cultural activities that promote inclusion, knowledge of other cultures, or creative pursuits iii. Personal health and wellness education (e.g. anti-bullying, body image, fostering, resilience) iv. Community involvement v. Providing snacks for students participating in the Program vi. Literacy and Numeracy Activities vii. Unstructured time to allow children to develop interests, engage with

St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School	Walkerton District Community School
	<p>their peers, play independently and make choices and decisions for themselves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agreement notes the following about snacks: Provide snacks, daily should the Before School Program be greater than one (1) hour long. All After School Programs shall offer a snack. Snacks shall include both a food and beverage option, which at a minimum will comply with the Board’s Policy BP 6803-D – School Food and Beverages, the Board’s Administrative Procedure AP 6803-D – School Food and Beverages, the Board’s terms and conditions and the Ministry of Education’s School Food and Beverage Policies and Programs PPM150. It is the responsibility of the Operator to ensure that a designated area for snacks is established ensuring suitable preparation and storage and that proper cleanup takes place afterwards • The agreement notes the following about children with special needs: Ensure that children with special needs are included in the Childcare Program. The Operator will work with the School’s team to ensure a smooth transition between the School Day and the Childcare Program and that common strategies are implemented in both Programs • \$0.00 is paid for this one classroom to offer before and after school programming

In total the school age programs are licensed for 106 children. The programs typically do not operate at full licensed capacity due to the number of staff scheduled for the programs. See the table below for details.

Type of Program	St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School (56 licensed spaces)		Walkerton District Community School (50 licensed spaces)	
	Typical Attendance	% of Licensed Capacity	Typical Attendance	% of Licensed Capacity
Before School Program	30	53.6%	15	30.0%
After School Program	52	92.9%	28	56.0%

At present there is a waiting list for the school age programs. There are a total of 66 on the waiting list (up to 2026). See the graph below for details.



The following table provides further details about each of the school age programs.

St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School	Walkerton District Community School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers a before and after school program Licensed for 56 children Operational hours are Monday to Friday from 6:30 am to 8:30 am and 3:15 pm to 6:00 pm This program was initiated in this location in 2012 The before school program averages 28 to 30 children a day (note: numbers are limited due to staffing. BCCC only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers a before and after school program Licensed for 50 children Operational hours are Monday to Friday from 7:00 am to 8:30 am and 3:15 pm to 5:30 pm This program was initiated in this location in 2012 The before school program averages 11 to 15 children a day (note: numbers are limited due to staffing. BCCC only)

St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School	Walkerton District Community School
schedules two teachers for the before school program) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The after school program averages 40 to 52 children a day (note: there are four teachers in this program) 	schedules one teacher for the before school program) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The after school program averages 25 to 28 children a day (note: numbers are limited due to staffing. BCCC only schedules two teachers for the after school program)

The following parent fees are charged for the school age program:

Category	2023 Fee	2024 Fee	Year over Year Change
School Age (Grade 1 and up) - Before and After School – <i>per program</i>	\$10.00	\$10.00	0.0%
School Age (Kindergarten) - Before and After School – <i>per hour</i>	\$10.00	\$10.00	0.0%

Two comparator municipally operated child care centres and another local comparator child care centre charge the following for school age programs:

Category	Municipal Comparator #1	Municipal Comparator #2	Local Comparator
School Age (Grade 1 and up)			
○ Before School	\$11.44	\$11.00	\$12.00
○ After School	\$11.44	\$11.00	\$15.00
○ Before and After School	N/A	\$22.00	N/A
School Age (Kindergarten)			
○ Before School	\$11.96	\$11.00	\$12.00
○ After School	\$11.96	\$11.00	\$15.00
○ Before and After School	\$23.92	\$22.00	N/A

Summer Program

BCCC also operates a summer program. The program is held at St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School and is licensed for 56 children.

In summer 2024 there will be between 45 to 56 children per day. There are four teachers in this program.

The following parent fees are charged for the summer program:

Category	2023 Fee	2024 Fee	Year over Year Change
School Age (Grade 1 and up) - Before and After School – <i>full day</i>	\$28.00	\$29.00	3.6%
School Age (Kindergarten) - Before and After School – <i>full day</i>	\$32.00	\$31.00	(3.1%)

Sunscreen is an additional charge. It is \$8.00 per season for a child attending program two (2) to three (3) days per week and \$10.00 per season for a child attending program four (4) to five (5) days per week.

A comparator municipally operated summer program charges \$39.00 and \$42.00 per day for its two summer camp programs. BCCC summer camp programs charge \$40.00 per day (2024).

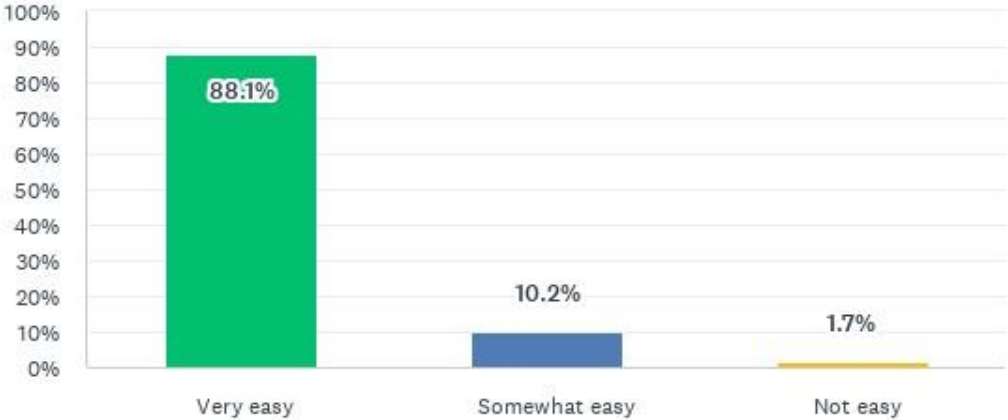
Note: The Recreation Summer Camp Program is operated by the Municipality of Brockton’s Recreation Department and has enrollment beyond this summer program detail.

Parent Feedback about Programs

84.7%

A majority of parents feel that the centre's hours of operation are very convenient for their schedule. 15.3% feel that the hours are somewhat convenient.

A majority of parents (88.1%) report that the drop-off and pick-up procedures are “very easy.” See the graph below for further details.



A majority of parents are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the learning activities (programming) offered at the child care centre.

62.5% very satisfied

30.4% satisfied

7.1% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

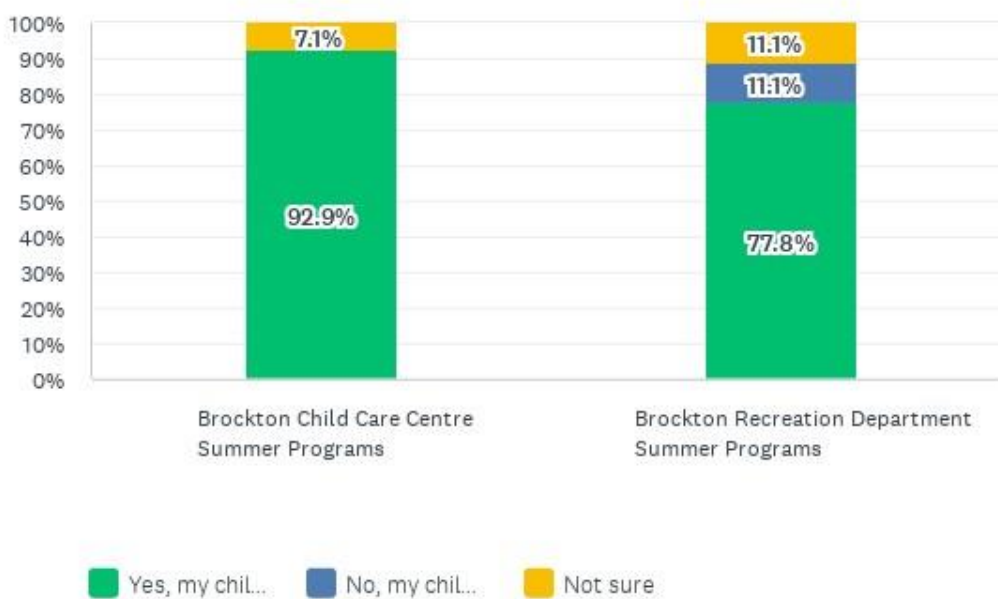
The 7.1% of respondents who are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied have preschool and school age children attending programs at the centre.

93.2%

A majority of parents feel that the learning activities (programs) are age-appropriate and stimulating for their child.

A majority of parents feel that their child’s needs are supported through the Municipality of Brockton’s summer child care programs through the Brockton Child Care Centre and the Recreation Department.

A higher percentage of respondents (92.9%) feel that their child’s needs are supported through the child care centre’s summer child care programs than through the Recreation Department summer programs (77.8%). The survey did not provide an opportunity for the reasons associated with this outcome. See the graph below for further details.



Playground

As per requirements in the *Child Care and Early Years Act*, BCCC has outdoor space (a playground) for the children who attend the child care centre. The outdoor space is split into two areas so that two groups can be outside at the same time. The playground is a fenced area that has a shed to store outside toys and equipment. There are no natural features (including grass) in this space.

Feedback about the Playground

BCCC staff report that the current playground set-up is inadequate, with a need for larger climbing equipment, shade, and natural elements. BCCC management and the participants in the external focus group echo the need for additional shade in the outdoor area.

Although almost all parents (94.9%) report that the centre's facilities and equipment are adequate for their child's needs, comments provided by parents focus on the playground and outside play, including the need for more shaded areas, a bigger sandbox, and more safe-risk items to climb and jump off.

Note: Staff have met with various providers and the school board on shade options. Sandboxes with shade structures were approved by Council at the August 13th meeting and will be installed in the near future. Further, work on shade structures should occur for inclusion in the 2025 budget.

Nutrition

As part of its programming, BCCC provides a meal and a morning and afternoon snack to the children attending the child care centre programs (117 children) and a morning and afternoon snack to the children attending the school age programs (on average 45 children in the morning and 80 children in the afternoon).

BCCC employs a part-time cook who works Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 1:15 pm supporting the meal and snack components of the programs. At the time of this review, the individual working in this position also works in the child care centre. When the cook is not available (i.e. sick, on vacation) a Management staff person or teacher (if available) provides coverage for this position.

The cook position designs a monthly menu for lunch and morning and afternoon snacks, orders groceries, prepares/cooks the meals and snacks and does the dishes. The morning snack is prepared the day before.

A sample menu for a week is provided below.

BROCKTON CHILDCARE CENTRE

MENU TWO	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
AM SNACK Water	Toast/Jam Fruit	Cereal/Milk Fruit	English Muffins/Wow Butter Fruit	Pancakes And Fruit	Yogurt/Granola And Fruit
LUNCH Milk	Spaghetti & Meat Sauce Hot Vegetable Raw Vegetable Fruit	Sloppy Joe Hot Vegetable Raw Vegetable Fruit	Soup/Sandwich Hot Vegetable Raw Vegetable Fruit	Sausage Penne Hot Vegetable Raw Vegetable Fruit	Chicken/Broccoli Casserole Hot Vegetable Raw Vegetable Fruit
PM SNACK Water	Rice cakes/ Wow Butter Fruit	Bread Sticks Vegetables Dip Fruit	Graham Crackers Fruit	Tostitos/ Cheese Fruit	Animal Crackers Fruit

Environmental Scan

Comparator municipally operated child care centres have their Health Unit or a nutritionist review their menus periodically to ensure that the meals and snacks are creating a supportive nutrition environment.

In terms of emerging practices, some centres have four (4) to five (5) week rotations of menus with sets of menus for the different seasons. For example: A five (5) week menu that rotates January to April, a different five (5) week menu that rotates May to August and a final five (5) week menu that rotates September to December.

In another Service System Manager area, cooks from all of the licensed child care centres have a joint quarterly meeting with a dietician from the local Health Unit.

[Ontario Dieticians in Public Health](#) offer online resources, including a Child Care Menu Planning - Practical Guide and resources on responsive feeding, the physical and social environment and ways to help children enjoy vegetables and fruit.

Feedback about Nutrition

Although a majority of parents (81.4%) report that the variety of snack and lunch options and menu provided meet their family's needs, BCCC staff and external focus group participants feel that improvements in food quality and variety are needed.

These groups note the current offerings are insufficient in quantity and diversity and that menu options should be expanded and a variety of textured foods should be introduced in the menu. One staff person suggested the need for a permanent, full-time chef to handle meal preparation and planning.

Parents who provided comments would like to see less pasta/noodles and more variety in terms of offered fruits and vegetables.

Special Needs Resourcing Supports

Bruce County, as the Service System Manager, provides a Special Needs Resourcing Program to support the early years and child care sector. This program provides service and support for children 0 to 12 years of age that reside in Bruce County and attend licensed child care settings, EarlyON programs, and camps and children's recreation programs. The program provides three levels of support:

1. Universal
 - Inclusion Support
 - Training and Workshops
2. Exploration
 - Exploration of Needs
 - Short Term Consultation
3. Intensive
 - Developmental Screening
 - Individual Support Plans

Resource Consultants from the County attend BCCC one to two times a week for half a day to provide services and support. In addition, the County can provide funding for enhanced staff so that BCCC can hire an extra set of hands to help in the centre.

Feedback about Special Needs Resourcing

Of those requiring accommodation or resource support, a majority of parents (94.9%) report that the needs of their child are being met. Although parents report this, BCCC staff and management as well as participants in external focus groups feel that the level of resource support could be enhanced. Staff would like to have increased access to Resource Consultants, more frequent visits from them, and better solutions for managing challenging behaviours.

Operational Supports

Policies and Procedures

Overall, policies and procedures are foundational to the operation of a child care centre, ensuring that it provides a safe, nurturing, and high-quality environment for children, supports the professional development of staff, and maintains effective communication with parents and regulatory bodies. While policies are reviewed with staff through regular staff meetings and through individual meetings twice per year and updates to certain key policies have occurred, a comprehensive review of all policies should be conducted.

With specific events, regulatory changes, or feedback policies are continually evolving and require ongoing updates. Regular reviews ensure that the centre’s operations remain effective, compliant, and aligned with best practices.

At present, BCCC has the following policies:

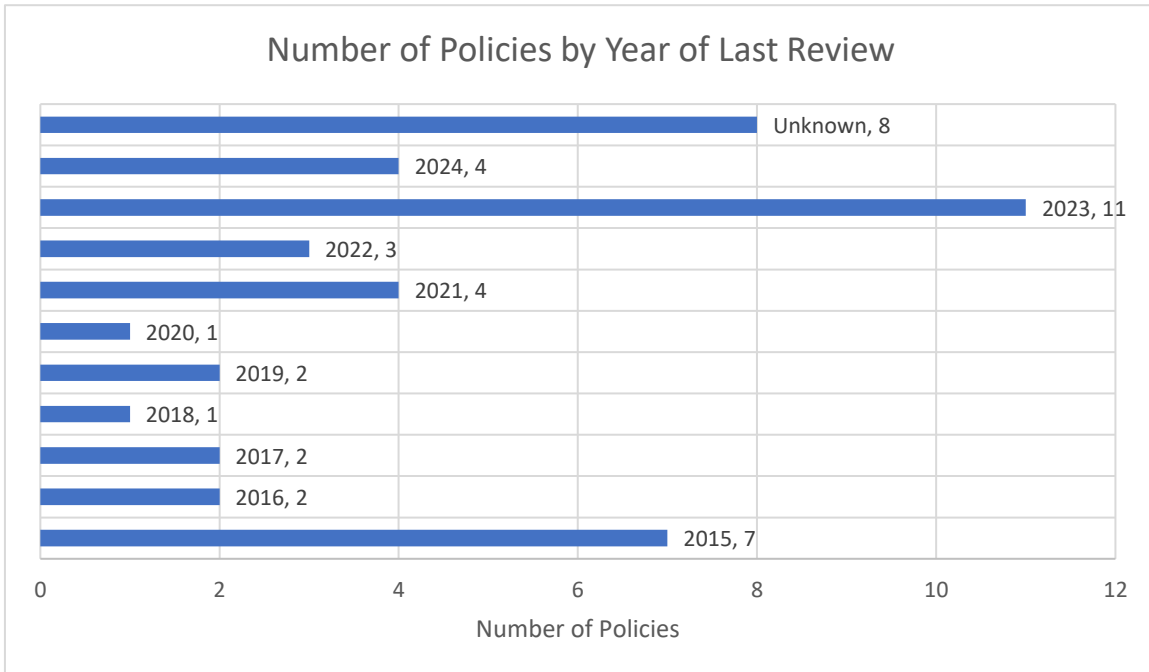
Name of Policy	Date Last Revised
Anaphylactic Allergy Individual Plan	Unknown*
Cell Phones	October 2023
Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting	February 2016
Child Care Centre Program Statement	January 2024
Children’s Immunization/Illness	August 2015
Closure Due To Winter Weather	August 2015
Drinking Water Flushing and Testing	August 2015
Emergency Situations With Fire Plan	January 2019
Employee Exclusion (Illness)	January 2018
Hot Drinks	October 2023
Individual Plan For Children With Medical Needs	October 2021
Individualized Plan for a Child with Medical Needs	Unknown*
Keys	October 2023
Lockdown Outside the School	Unknown
Lockdown	Unknown
Maintaining Child-Teacher Ratio	August 2015
Medication Administration	June 2023
Missing Child	August 2015
Monitoring of Compliance and Contraventions	Unknown
Municipal Social Media Policy	October 2016
Offence Declaration Form	Unknown*
Overtime	October 2023
Parent Issues and Concerns	Unknown
Performance Appraisals	September 2023
Playground Safety	January 2019

Name of Policy	Date Last Revised
Termination from School Age Program	November 2021
Prohibited Practices	October 2022
Records for Staff and Children	January 2024
Safe Arrival/Dismissal Policy	January 2024
Safety Plan as a Result of a Prohibited Practice	October 2022
Sanitary Practices	August 2015
Serious Occurrences	January 2022
Shared Information Summary	August 2015
Shift Responsibilities	October 2023
Sleep Rooms	October 2021
Staff Social Fund	January 2024
Staff Training and Development	October 2023
Supervision of Students and Volunteers	Unknown
Supervisors Expectations for Programming	October 2023
Support for Children With Physical Aids	September 2017
Tap Out Procedure	November 2022
Termination of a Toddler or Preschool Child	November 2021
Vacation Practices	October 2023
Waiting List	December 2020
Working Conditions	October 2023

*This is a form and not a policy

The following graph outlines the years when BCCC’s policies were last updated. While reviews occur yearly further updates may be required, and a comprehensive review should occur (by number of policies). Of note:

- 17.8% of the policies (8) do not include a date
- 33.3% of the policies (15) have been reviewed since 2023
- 15.6% of the policies (7) have not been reviewed since 2015 (nine years ago)
- All reviews and updates may not have been dated in the policies listed above. Time is a consistent concern in ensuring regular updates



BCCC Staff and Management Feedback about Policies and Procedures

Staff frequently mentioned inconsistency in the application of rules and management decisions, leading to confusion and stress. There is a need for clearer rules and processes. Some policies and rules are seen as outdated, unclear or inconsistent.

Staff would like to be able to wear open toed shoes at work again. There have been reported foot injuries in the past that have led to this health & safety requirement. Comparator child care centres do allow staff to wear open toed shoes at work.

Management report that improvements in organizational policies and procedures are needed, such as a comprehensive review and a determination between Policy and departmental procedure. Being a Municipal Child Care all policies should be provided to and approved by Council. The Ministry regularly reviews the Brockton Child Care policies and they meet inspection requirements and legislative updates have been implemented.

Quality

Creating quality in a child care centre involves several key components. Some of these components include:

1. Qualified and Well-Trained Staff

- **Qualifications:** Staff should have relevant qualifications in early childhood education
- **Ongoing Training:** Continuous professional development and training opportunities to keep up with the latest best practices in child care and education
- **Low Staff Turnover:** Consistent educators help children feel secure and build strong relationships

2. Safe and Stimulating Environment

- **Safety Standards:** Adherence to safety regulations and protocols to ensure a secure environment
- **Cleanliness:** Regular cleaning and maintenance of facilities
- **Stimulating Materials:** Age-appropriate and diverse materials and toys that stimulate learning and development

3. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

- **Play-Based Learning:** Emphasis on learning through play to promote cognitive, social, and emotional development
- **Child-led Learning:** Tailoring activities to meet the individual needs and interests of each child
- **Environment as Teacher:** Children thrive in indoor and outdoor spaces that invite them to investigate, imagine, think, create, solve problems, and make meaning from their experiences
- **Holistic Approach:** Incorporating various areas of development, including physical, cognitive, social, and emotional

4. Positive Relationships and Interactions

- **Child-Teacher Interaction:** Warm, responsive, and nurturing interactions between staff and children
- **Peer Interaction:** Encouraging positive social interactions among children
- **Parent Involvement:** Building strong partnerships with parents through regular communication and involvement in the child care program

5. Effective Leadership and Management

- **Strong Leadership:** Competent and effective leadership to guide the child care centre
- **Clear Policies:** Well-defined policies and procedures that ensure consistency and quality
- **Financial Management:** Efficient financial management to ensure resources are available to maintain high standards

6. Health and Nutrition

- **Healthy Meals:** Provision of nutritious meals and snacks that meet dietary guidelines
- **Health Policies:** Policies to manage illness, allergies, and overall health
- **Physical Activity:** Opportunities for regular physical activity to promote physical development and health

7. Family and Community Engagement

- Open Communication: Transparent and regular communication with families about their child's progress and centre activities
- Community Resources: Utilization of community resources and partnerships to enhance the program
- Cultural Inclusivity: Respect and inclusion of diverse cultures and family backgrounds

8. Regulatory Compliance

- Licensing: Compliance with local and provincial regulations and licensing requirements

9. Assessment and Improvement

- Regular Assessments: Ongoing assessment of children's development and program effectiveness
- Feedback Mechanisms: Systems for gathering feedback from parents, staff, and children
- Continuous Improvement: Commitment to continuous improvement through reflection and adaptation of practices

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years

In June of 2015 the Minister of Education issued a policy statement that named "*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 under subsection 55 (3) of the *Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)*. This policy statement, together with the regulations that guide program development, pedagogy and practice in licensed child care settings, was intended to strengthen the quality of programs and ensure high quality experiences that lead to positive outcomes in relation to children's learning, development, health and well-being.

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years is a professional learning resource guide about learning through relationships for those working with young children and families. It is intended to support pedagogy and curriculum/program development in early years programs. *How Does Learning Happen?* (HDLH) is organized around four foundational conditions that are important for children to grow and flourish: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression. These foundations, or ways of being, are a vision for all children's future potential and a view of what they should experience each and every day.

According to HDLH (p.11), recurring themes from research, theory, and practice suggest that high-quality early childhood programs:

- Establish positive, responsive relationships with children and their families
- Value children as individuals and as active and competent contributors with their own interests and points of view
- Recognize the connection between emotional wellbeing and social and cognitive development and the importance of focusing on these areas holistically
- Provide environments and experiences for children to explore ideas, investigate their theories, and interact with others in play

- Engage with families and support each child within the context of their family, recognizing that family and child well-being are inextricably linked
- Provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth

Pedagogical approaches that nurture learning and development in the early years include (HDLH, p.16):

- Establishing positive, responsive adult-child relationships
- Providing inclusive learning environments and experiences that encourage exploration, play, and inquiry
- Engaging as co-learners with children, families/caregivers, and others
- Planning and creating environments as a “third teacher”
- Using pedagogical documentation as a means to value, discuss, and make learning visible
- Participating in ongoing reflective practice and collaborative inquiry with others

Parent Feedback about Overall Quality

Overall, parents are satisfied with the overall quality of the child care centre, with 48.4% rating their level of satisfaction as “satisfied” and a further 46.8% rating their level of satisfaction as “very satisfied.”

95.2%

satisfied or very satisfied

Parents were provided with a list of factors and asked to select all of the factors from the list that were important to them when selecting the Brockton Child Care Centre. The following table lists the five most important and five least important factors.

Ranking	Most Important	Least Important
1.	Educators are trustworthy, warm, nurturing (90.3%)	Staff and families at the centre reflect the diversity of the community (4.8%)
2.	Quality of educators (87.1%)	Programming is responsive to the diverse cultural backgrounds of children and families (6.5%)
3.	Safety of the centre (87.1%)	Accommodates my child with special needs (9.7%)
4.	Cleanliness of the centre (72.6%)	Providing assistance to connect with outside agencies or resource supports (19.4%)

Ranking	Most Important	Least Important
5.	Affordable cost of care (64.5%)	Individualized attention provided to each child (19.4%)

Based on the responses, it appears that parents recognize and value the quality and characteristics of the educators working at the Brockton Child Care Centre, along with the safety and cleanliness of the centre³ and the affordability of care.

85.5% of respondents are very likely to recommend the Brockton Child Care Centre to other parents

Word of mouth is an important marketing tool and lends to the overall credibility of the centre.

People listen to people they trust.

Seeing no respondents report that they “are not likely” or “won’t recommend this centre” speaks to the overall satisfaction parents feel about the centre.

Focus Group Feedback about Overall Quality

Satisfactory to Good

Overall, the program quality at BCCC is rated from satisfactory to good by focus group participants.

Some of these participants feel that there is a need for further consistency in expectation around programming and a clear standard of care that is enforced, monitored and reviewed.

Focus group participants provided a number of suggestions as to how the program quality could be increased. The themes that emerged from the responses include:

- **Foster a Culture of Modernization, Learning and Growth:** Collaborate with other centres, join a Community of Practice, and consider having a mentor from a larger centre to provide guidance
- **Increase Staff Morale and Address Staff Dynamics:** Improve staff morale, and foster a cohesive team environment. Strengthen relationships and foster a team spirit among staff members

³ In the parent survey, all parents rated the cleanliness and safety of the centre as either “excellent” or “good” (59.3% excellent and 40.7% good).

- **Professional Learning and Training:** A need for additional ongoing professional development and training to help staff and management grow and stay updated with new methodologies and practices
- **Update Systems and Tools and Streamline Processes:** Modernize attendance systems, communication tools (e.g., Lillio), and further leverage Information Technology (IT), Human Resource (HR), and Finance departments to support the centre. Streamline and automate processes to reduce administrative burdens
- **Interactive Tools and Technology:** Use interactive tools and technology to engage children and enhance programming
- **Expand Menu Options:** Introduce a variety of textured foods in the menu
- **Summer Programming Partnerships:** Consider partnering with the Municipality of Brockton’s Parks and Recreation Department for summer programming
- **Support for Additional Specific Needs:** Improve resources and support for children with greater needs
- **Use of Space and Materials:** Look at outside spaces as additional learning environments and ensure classrooms have the necessary materials
- **Improve Communication:** Enhance communication between the centre and parents, including customer service interactions. Make the Parent Handbook shorter and more readable, with clear guidelines on the enrollment process, fees, and contact information. Provide resources and strategies for parents to ensure a smoother drop-off transition and engage them in their child's development

BCCC Staff and Management Feedback about Overall Quality

Good

A majority of staff (66.7%) feel that the overall quality of the programs offered at BCCC is “good.”

The responses by staff provide a mixed, but generally positive view, of the current state of the overall quality of BCCC’s programs. Key points include efforts to place a focus on outdoor play and a shift towards child-led learning, though this change has been challenging and varies by individual and room. The variety in staff experience and educational background leads to differing approaches and ideas.

Despite some limitations, such as small playgrounds with artificial turf and a general sense of burnout among staff, the program is perceived as being well-equipped with materials and toys, and staff are seen as engaged and excited.

Staff feel that the following could increase the overall quality of the programs offered:

1. **Professional Development and Training:** More training opportunities for staff, including specific areas such as self-regulation, cognitive load theory, and emergent curriculum. Staff would prefer training to occur during the work day. Lack of staff affect this
2. **Program Planning and Prep Time:** More dedicated time for planning and preparation. The current allocation of 45 minutes per month is insufficient for creating program plans, preparing activities, and organizing the classroom. Lack of staff affect this
3. **Resource Support:** More support to handle behavioural challenges and development needs in children. This includes both internal and external support to ensure that children receive the necessary assistance. Lack of qualified support staff affect this
4. **Program Supplies:** More supplies, including updated and relevant toys and craft materials. Staff sometimes use their own money to purchase items. Some staff would like to have a classroom budget and be able to make their own decisions about purchasing items for their classroom. County funding is available to support this area and should be fully utilized
5. **Emergent Curriculum:** A consistent focus on emergent curriculum and child-led learning is needed. There is a mix of child-led and theme-based approaches within the centre, with some staff resistant to change. More emphasis on emergent curriculum, along with relevant training, is required
6. **Outdoor and Nature-Based Learning:** Enhancing outdoor play and nature-based learning is seen by some staff as a priority. The current playground set-up is inadequate, with a need for larger climbing equipment, shade, and natural elements. Staff also want to see more of a focus on programming for outdoor activities and connection to nature
7. **Classroom Environment and Layout:** Improvements in the classroom environment and layout are necessary. Suggestions include redesigning the layout, adding more space, and incorporating warm colours and natural toys to create a more inviting and conducive learning environment. Being in a leased space may restrict the ability to do some of this
8. **Food and Nutrition:** Improvements in food quality and variety are needed
9. **Appreciation and Recognition:** There is a desire for positive feedback and acknowledgement of hard work on a more routine basis

Good

Management feel that the overall quality of the programs offered at BCCC is “good.”

BCCC Management report that program quality can be improved by fostering better teamwork and communication among teachers, providing mental health training, focusing on emergent curriculum, and obtaining more resources and support from the County.

Program Statement

As per the *Child Care and Early Years Act* (Ontario Regulation 137/15, Section 46), every licensed child care provider must have a program statement that aligns with *How Does Learning Happen?*, the Ministry of Education's framework to guide programming and pedagogy, and that the program statement must be reviewed at least annually for this purpose.

This requirement is in place to make sure everyone in the centre and parents know:

- How the centre delivers its programming and activities so that they are consistent with HDLH
- How staff will do things, interact with and speak to children and families so that the staff's actions are consistent with the centre's program statement and HDLH

An annual review of the program statement is required to make sure there is an ongoing check that the program statement is consistent with HDLH and the approaches/practices in the child care centre. The annual review gives child care providers a chance to reflect on the program statement and to think about whether the program statement needs to be updated to address feedback from staff and/or parents and/or to add information about new research and best practices.⁴

In its Parent Handbook, BCCC notes the following about its Program Statement:

- All employees and students shall review the Program Statement prior to interacting with children
- This statement will be reviewed annually by Supervisors, Employees, Students and the Chief Administrative Officer of the Municipality of Brockton, in addition to more frequent and regular intervals as necessary or to align with specific training priorities or matters of compliance and contraventions
- Any modifications will be reviewed and implemented by supervisors and employees to ensure timely implementation
- The Brockton Child Care Centre will ensure the approaches set out in the Program Statement are implemented through regular meetings, training, coaching opportunities and monitoring

⁴ Source: [Child Care Centre Licensing Manual](#), 2024.

- The Program Statement will also be discussed once a year at a staff meeting to ensure the Program Statement is reflecting the implemented programming at the centre by employees, and as may be relevant to ongoing training
- The Program Statement will be reviewed more frequently should compliance or contravention occur

Preparation and Program Planning

At present, BCCC educators are provided with one work period (45 minutes per month) to prepare for their activities and conduct program planning. In addition to this, each team has a meeting once per month (one hour) to do classroom planning.

Each classroom must complete and post a curriculum plan each week (see the sample below).

PROGRAM CURRICULUM PLAN Week Of: _____

OBSERVATIONS:

INTERESTS: _____

Fine Motor / Creative	Gross Motor	Group Activity	Cognitive	Outdoor Exploration
Sensory	Social / Emotional	Literacy / Communication	Extra	

Environmental Scan

Comparator child care centres have the following approaches to prep/program planning:

Comparator #1	Comparator #2	Comparator #3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no mandatory template that needs to be completed for program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no program plan template. It is all about documentation – writing in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a program plan template

Comparator #1	Comparator #2	Comparator #3
<p>planning. Some staff will use an old template and some do not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each staff does it differently as it's based on HDLH • There is no scheduled time or amount of time for prep/planning. The centre provides time to staff when they are overstaffed (over ratio). The staff are rotated through this 	<p>the children's portfolios, learning stories, stories to send to parents, buying supplies, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each staff person gets 90 minutes per month. Staff are provided with coverage for this time or the time is paid as overtime if done at home) • The centre uses school age program staff for coverage (before school staff work 6:30 to 11:30 am and after school staff work 1 to 6 pm) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The template is completed weekly and posted in the centre • Staff have one hour per week for program planning

BCCC Staff and Management Feedback about Preparation and Program Planning

BCCC staff and management highlight the need for more dedicated time for planning and preparation. They feel that the current 45 minutes per month and the expectation to use sleep time for planning is insufficient for creating program plans, preparing activities, and organizing the classroom. Additional work periods and structured planning time are requested to help improve overall program quality.

Pedagogical Documentation

HDLH notes that using pedagogical documentation as a means to value, discuss, and make learning visible nurtures learning and development in the early years and contributes to a high quality child care centre.

The [Child Care Centre Licensing Manual](#), 2024 reports that,

“Pedagogical documentation is a process – it is not simply a wall display of children’s drawings or photos of what they made at the centre that day – these are the end-products of a process. Pedagogical documentation is a process that records (or documents) how a child’s learning progressed or how their knowledge grew while the child was doing a particular activity or task. Pedagogical documentation shows – through photos, videos, notes, etc. – what happened during the activity/task that led the child to:

- *learn something*
- *figure something out*
- *solve a problem*
- *work with other people to build something*
- *use their creativity.”*

At present, BCCC practices the following types of documentation:

- Program plans for each classroom are displayed on doors or wall for parents to see what is planned for the week
- Teachers post art for parents to see weekly
- Toddler rooms keep a chart posted on diapering, sleep time, food intake. This is updated daily (see sample chart below)

TODDLER DAILY SHEET							
DATE:							
Name	Diapers	Lunch	Sleep	Name	Diapers	Lunch	Sleep

The BCCC Parent Handbook notes the following about documentation,

“The Brockton Child Centre uses documentation to share the children’s learning and development. On a daily basis, each playroom writes a piece of documentation that draws attention to what is happening in each learning environment. This documentation is:

- *A way to share what the children have learned with their peers, families and other staff;*
- *A way to show the children what they have learned and that we value their experiences;*
- *A way to show developmental growth over a period of time;*
- *A way for Employees to co-plan with the children.*
- *A way to enhance communication with families and include them in the programming by adding the parents own documentation.”*

Note: In the past daily emails were sent to parents with pictures regarding what the children did that day (regarding programming). This was also posted on the walls. BCCC is currently reviewing how it will share its documentation.

Environmental Scan

Comparator child care centres have the following approaches to pedagogical documentation:

Comparator #1	Comparator #2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing in the children’s portfolios • Writing learning stories to share with the parents. Once a month every child gets an individual learning story • Once a week there is a group email with a photo of everyone in the classroom engaged in a learning experience • The centre uses Digibot to support this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily documentation for parents about toddler routines (i.e. eaten, bathroom, sleep, general mood), provide photos, and learning stories for HDLH documentation • Use a FaceBook group for documentation for preschool (learning stories). Each child also has their own learning binder (documentation binder). Parents can take the binder home when they want to. Staff also send it home when it has not been accessed in awhile • Documentation is done when over ratio (i.e. children have left early and the staff person’s scheduled shift is not over, sleep time, etc.) • The centre uses Lillio to support this

Feedback about Documentation

93.0%

A majority of parents report that the Daily Program Documentation provided and prepared by teachers in toddler rooms is a useful communication tool for them and is reviewed.

Many parents report missing the daily email documentation that was previously provided during the COVID-19 pandemic.

BCCC management report that a better understanding of what documentation looks like needs to be created and communicated to staff.

Serious Occurrences

Another aspect of quality in child care programs are the number of incidents of serious occurrences. A child care centre’s program statement and the consistent application of it are key to minimizing these types of occurrences.

All licensed child care programs located in Ontario are required to report Serious Occurrences as outlined in the *Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)*. Ontario Regulation 137/15 1 sets out the reportable serious occurrences. These include:

- (a) the death of a child who received child care at a home child care premises or child care centre
- (b) abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at a home child care premises or child care centre
- (c) a life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives child care at a home child care premises or child care centre
- (d) an incident where a child who is receiving child care at a home child care premises or child care centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised
- (e) an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a home child care premises or child care centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving child care at the home child care premises or child care centre

The Knowing our Numbers⁵ report (p. 69) provides the following information about serious occurrences:

“Key Informant interviews across regions indicate a rise in serious occurrences, primarily concerning the behaviour guidance by staff. Data from the College of Early Childhood Educators(CECE) also demonstrate an upward trend between 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 in complaints and disciplinary processes of behaviour guidance as a per cent of all professional infractions.”

A serious occurrence of behaviour guidance means that the involved RECEs do not know how to deal with diverse child behaviours, exhibiting frustration, and may forcefully be redirecting children’s behaviour.

The following table details the number of behaviour guidance complaints to the CECE from across the Province as a percentage of all complaints (2018 to 2023).

2018 -2019	2019 -2020	2020 -2021	2021 -2022	2022 -2023
23%	23%	37%	25%	32%

At BCCC, in the past three years two (2) serious occurrences have been documented and reported to the Ministry of Education (one in 2022 and the other in 2024). Each of these serious occurrences was reviewed by the Ministry of Education and a report provided (Summary of Child Care Centre Licensing Requirements and Recommendations). Both of these serious occurrences were related to a prohibited practice as outlined in the CCEYA and would be

⁵ Source: Akbari, E., McCuaig, K., Schurter, M. Varmuza, P., Akbari, S., Mudie, S. (2024). Knowing Our Numbers: A Provincial Study with a Local Lens on the Early Childhood Education Workforce in Ontario.

considered a serious occurrence of behaviour guidance. The Municipality and BCCC outlined a series of actions to be followed as a result of these serious occurrences.

Feedback about Handling Serious Occurrences

Parents highlighted the need for better communication across various aspects, including daily major and minor occurrences.

Some BCCC staff expressed frustration with poor communication and a lack of transparency, particularly regarding incidents and management decisions about the incidents.

Participants from the external focus group suggested that the communication on handling situations of misconduct and reporting concerns could be improved.

I think it should be noted here that the privacy related to such instances may only involve those directly involved and therefore lead to concerns around communication that cannot be avoided but mitigation measures and expectations can be established through Policy that will aid Management, staff and families pending a future occurrence.

Customer Experience

Enrolment, Registration and Orientation

The Brockton Child Care Centre (BCCC) has a [public website](#) that can be accessed by parents to gain information about BCCC and its programs.

Parents must attend an intake visit, an appointment which is made in advance of attendance at BCCC, to familiarize themselves with the centre. The parents' needs for child care and BCCC policies and procedures are discussed at this visit to ensure a good match of parent to centre.

Prior to admission parents must provide BCCC with the following:

1. Immunization record for the child
2. Medical clearance to participate
3. Registration form completed and signed
4. Payment structure
5. Current home and work phone numbers for themselves and one other person

Visits prior to the child's starting date are encouraged.

Once accepted into the centre, parents complete an online enrolment form which includes information for the teachers about the child, consent to receive the monthly newsletter, permission for outings/trips and photo consent.

If required, the following forms may be completed by parents:

- Special Needs Resource Referral Form
- Special Dietary Requirements
- Individualized Plan for a Child with Medical Needs
- Anaphylactic Allergy Individual Plan
- Anaphylaxis Parent Training Record
- Over the Counter Product Authorization
- Medication Authorization
- Consent for Release of Information

In addition to the above, parents receive a copy the [Parent Handbook](#) which outlines the program statement and BCCC policies. *The Child Care and Early Years Act* (Ontario Regulation 137/15, Section 45) requires licensed child care operators to have a parent handbook for each child care centre or home child care agency it operates.

The intent of the Parent Handbook is so that parents have important information about the operations of the child care centre, the rules that need to be followed by everyone and the various activities and programming that happen in the centre. The Ministry of Education notes

that information in parent handbooks should be detailed but also easy to understand so that parents who are considering whether to enroll their child(ren) at a specific centre have enough information to make the right choice for their child.⁶

Billing and Payment

Parents are billed the first week of every month for the previous month. Parents can make a payment in a number of ways:

- Through their bank as a bill payment
- Drop off a cheque at BCCC
- Drop off cash in a labelled envelope with the child's name and the amount on the envelope at BCCC

Parents can receive bills via email or regular mail.

Ongoing Communication

Parents at BCCC receive the following types of communications:

- Monthly newsletters - each group prepares their own newsletter informing parents what is happening in the classroom for the month. The Manager also adds information "office news" for all the parents to send with the newsletters
- Emails - sent daily/weekly/monthly depending on what information needs to be shared (i.e. accident report sent to parents when occurs)
- Emails - from office administrators as required (i.e. overdue accounts)
- Teachers touch base with parents every morning at drop off (in person) checking on children's night/information sharing
- Teachers touch base with parents every day at pick up (in person) to give information on how the child's day went
- Teachers post on children's lockers when diapers, clothing, etc. are needed or if child had a bathroom accident and the soiled clothes are in the locker
- Office sends fee statements to parents monthly via email
- Office sends registration packages to parents via email
- Office contacts families by email/phone regarding space availability
- Teachers contact parents via phone if the child is sick

Emerging Practices in Parent Engagement

The emerging practices for parent engagement in child care centres focus on leveraging technology, fostering communication, and creating inclusive and collaborative environments. Some of these key practices include:

⁶ Source: [Child Care Licensing Manual, 2024](#).

Emerging Practice	Brief Description
Technology Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Apps: Use of mobile apps for daily updates, sharing photos, videos, and activities, as well as for communication between parents and educators • Digital Portfolios: Maintaining digital portfolios of children's work and development that parents can access anytime • Online Parent-Teacher Meetings: Virtual meetings to discuss children's progress, making it easier for busy parents to participate
Flexible Communication Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multichannel Communication: Offering various ways to communicate, including emails, text messages, social media, and newsletters, to cater to different preferences • Real-Time Updates: Providing real-time updates on children's activities, meals, and naps through digital platforms • Individualized Communication: Tailoring communication and engagement strategies to meet the unique needs and preferences of each family.
Parent Education and Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Workshops: Offering workshops on child development, parenting strategies, and early childhood education • Resource Sharing: Providing access to resources, articles, and videos on relevant topics to support parents' knowledge and skills
Collaborative Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Committees: Establishing parent committees to involve parents in decision-making processes related to the child care centre's policies and activities • Surveys and Feedback: Regularly seeking feedback through surveys and questionnaires to understand parents' needs and preferences
Flexible Scheduling and Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Events: Hosting social events such as family picnics, potlucks, or game nights to build a sense of community among families
Enhanced Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Communication: Ensuring transparency about the centre's policies, curriculum, and any changes or developments • Regular Reports: Providing regular reports on children's progress

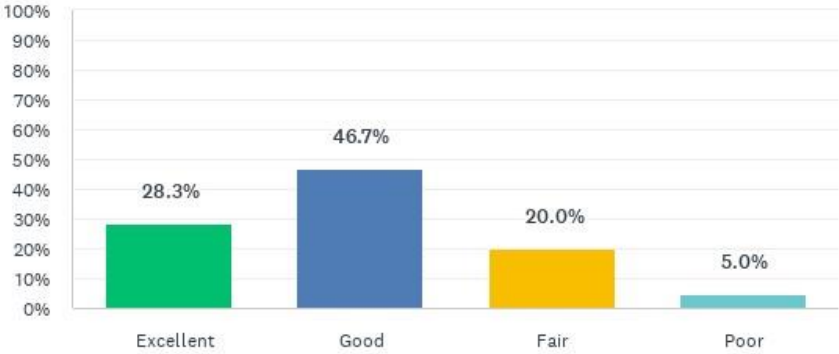
Environmental Scan

Comparator child care centres have the following approaches to parent engagement:

Comparator #1	Comparator #2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The centre uses Digibot as their main tool to communicate with parents Parents can access Digibot and mark their child absent (attendance system). Digibot will send an email to a parent automatically if a child is not in attendance and not marked as absent by the parent. Each classroom has an iPad to support this Digibot is used for the daily form for infants and toddlers every day (i.e. reporting on eat, sleep, diapers and a short note for parents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The centre uses Lillio for infant and toddler programs (not the preschool program) Daily documentation is provided to parents through this platform Preschool parent communication is done via face to face conversations, offering a communication book There is a public Facebook group for the centre
Comparator #3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The centre uses Lillio for infant, toddler and preschool programs 	

Parent Feedback about Communication

Overall, parents feel that the level of communication with them about their child's progress and daily activities is "good" (46.7%) or "excellent" (28.3%). See the chart below for details.



Of note, 25.0% of respondents rated is as "fair" or "poor." Respondents with preschool and school age children were more likely to rate the level of communication as "fair" or "poor."

When asked how communication about their child's progress and daily activities could be improved, 24 parents (34.8%) provided suggestions. The themes from these responses include:

1. Consistent and Detailed Communication

- Parents expressed a need for more regular and detailed updates about their child's day, including specific activities, bathroom habits, food intake, and developmental milestones. This includes both verbal and written communication, ensuring parents are informed even when teachers are not available at pick-up times

2. Use of Technology for Communication

- There is a strong desire for the use of technology, such as app-based communication, to provide updates and facilitate easier information sharing between staff and parents

3. Daily Updates and Photos

- Parents miss receiving daily emails with photos and updates about their child's day, which were previously provided in toddler rooms. They look forward to these updates and find them important for staying connected with their child's experiences at the centre

4. Feedback on Child's Development

- Parents want feedback from educators regarding their child's developmental milestones and progress. This could include a non-intensive report card every six months to provide an overview of their child's mental, social, and physical development

5. Classroom-Specific Information

- Parents find it challenging to gather information about their child's day when drop-off and pick-up occur in a different classroom with different teachers. They suggest having information available in these classrooms to facilitate better communication

6. Positive Feedback and Transparency

- There is a concern about receiving only negative feedback. Some parents would appreciate more positive feedback and open communication, especially during ongoing investigations or other significant events at the centre

7. Parental Involvement and Communication

- Some parents note that they receive more information due to their proactive communication with staff, indicating a need for the centre to ensure all parents, regardless of their ability to engage regularly, receive consistent updates

8. Office Staff Involvement

- Some parents suggest that office staff should handle certain communications, such as informing parents about their child's absence, to reduce the burden on teachers who are busy with other children

76.3%

A majority of parents are satisfied with the methods of communication (i.e. parent information board, emails, in person updates, newsletters, etc.).

18 respondents (26.1%) provided comments about how they would like to receive communications/updates from BCCC. The themes from the responses include:

1. **Centralized and Consistent Communication**

Parents prefer a unified communication system that consolidates all updates and information into one easily accessible format. They find it challenging to keep track of important information when it's dispersed across emails, physical postings, and verbal updates. An online portal or a centralized communication method would help streamline the flow of information and ensure that all parents, regardless of their schedule or involvement, receive consistent and comprehensive updates about their child's activities and the centre's plans

2. **Emails and Daily Updates**

Regular updates about a child's daily activities, behaviour, and any notable changes are important to parents, especially when they cannot have direct contact with teachers daily. Daily emails and updates with photos are highly valued by parents, as they provide a window into their child's daily experiences and progress. Many parents miss these daily communications, which were previously more consistent. Regular email updates, including daily sheets, photos, and summaries of activities, help parents stay connected and informed, even if they are unable to review physical postings or engage in person regularly

3. **Timely and Clear Communication of Escalated Concerns**

Some parents expressed concerns about the delayed and insufficient communication regarding escalated incidents affecting staff and children. They expect timely and direct notifications about significant events to be able to advocate for their children and ensure their well-being. Improving the speed and clarity of communication about serious matters is essential for maintaining trust and transparency between the centre and the parents. Establishing a process and expectation on how this information will be shared while ensuring families understand there are privacy issues with such matters is a balance to find.

4. **Parent Engagement**

While some parents are able to engage with staff regularly to get updates and make requests, not all parents have this opportunity. There is a need to ensure that all parents receive the necessary information about their child, regardless of their ability to engage at pick-up and drop-off times. This includes having systems in place to provide consistent updates and address concerns for those who may not have the time or ability to interact frequently with staff

Focus Group Feedback about Parent Communication

Participants who attended the external focus groups would like to see enhanced communication between the centre and parents, including customer service interactions. They would also like BCCC to provide resources and strategies for parents to ensure a smoother drop-off transition and engage them in their child's development and make the Parent Handbook shorter and more readable, with clear guidelines on the enrollment process, fees, and contact information.

Participants who attended the external focus groups suggested that more parental engagement could be offered, such as a designated day for parents to drop-in and observe their child at the centre to understand the day-to-day. Participants discussed the thematic curriculum and the difference in communication during the COVID-19 pandemic where a daily email was sent to parents identifying the child's meals, sleep habits, and a collage of what had been completed that day. Following the pandemic, parents have felt a lack of communication.

Participants suggested that communication could be sent to parents electronically, perhaps through an app, allowing parents to login and stay updated. Participants discussed the challenges associated with the current paper format of posting information about the child's day on a wall outside the classroom such as:

- The parent picking up/dropping off their child may not have time to view the printed materials due to the overwhelming atmosphere
- A guardian may be involved in the pickup/drop off and the parent is not able to view the materials
- Parents may be separated and feel uninvolved if the materials are not sent to both parents

Having the information sent electronically allows parents to access it at a time that works best for them and stay updated on what is happening with their child in a more accessible format.

Staff Feedback about Interactions with Parents

Overall, BCCC staff responses indicate a mix of perspectives regarding their interactions with parents and families. Many staff feel that their interactions are positive and effective, fostering good relationships with parents. However, others feel that there is room for improvement, citing issues such as insufficient communication and a need for more consistent and meaningful engagement.

BCCC staff were asked to identify communication tools/methods, resources or training that would support their work with parents/families. Based on their responses, there is a clear preference for modern, real-time communication apps (for example: Lillio, Digibot or Wee-markable), which can provide daily updates, photos, and videos of children's activities, making parents feel more connected.

Additionally, staff emphasize the need for balanced communication that doesn't overwhelm them or detract from classroom time. Suggestions include inviting families to special events,

having clear expectations for communication, and delegating and establishing a procedure for administrative tasks like attendance calls to office staff. There is also a call for quicker and more transparent communication during incidents to prevent rumours.

What Parents Think the Child Care Centre Does Well

Parents were asked what the child care centre does well. Overall, parents emphasized the importance of a nurturing environment, effective communication, and a focus on child development as the strengths of the child care centre.

The themes (in order of priority) and a brief description of each are provided below.

1. **Warm, Caring, and Welcoming Staff**

The most frequently mentioned theme is the positive relationships between staff and children, as well as with parents. Words like "warm," "caring," "welcoming," and "supportive" were reported, highlighting the emotional connection and comfort provided by the educators. Parents appreciate that the staff know their children's names, provide a nurturing environment, and go above and beyond to make children feel safe and loved.

2. **High-Quality Child Care and Safety**

Parents frequently mention the excellent care their children receive, describing the centre as a clean and safe environment. The focus on providing a secure and hygienic setting, along with attentive and dedicated care, reassures parents about their children's well-being at the centre.

3. **Communication and Transparency**

Effective communication, particularly at the toddler level, is highlighted as a key strength. Parents appreciate timely updates about their children, including accident reports, daily activities, and any issues that arise. Communication about child injuries and ongoing activities is also valued.

4. **Structured and Stimulating Activities**

Many parents appreciate the variety and quality of activities provided, which help stimulate and develop their children's skills. The centre's efforts in offering structured programs, sensory play, and activities based on children's interests are noted as important contributors to their children's growth and happiness.

5. **Encouragement of Independence and Emotional Support**

Encouraging children's independence and providing emotional support are also commonly mentioned. Parents note that the centre helps children develop important skills, such as toileting and hand washing, and supports their emotional needs, fostering a sense of independence and self-reliance.

6. Positive Relationships and Community Feel

The sense of community and strong bonds formed within the centre are highly valued. Parents feel like important and valued members of the community, and they appreciate the lasting relationships their children build with the educators, which continue even after moving to school age programs.

7. Educational Focus and Development

The educational focus of the centre, including preparing children for school and modeling positive behaviour, is appreciated by parents. The staff's dedication to the educational and developmental needs of the children is recognized and valued.

8. Outdoor and Physical Activities

The emphasis on outdoor play and physical activities is appreciated by parents. The centre's commitment to providing ample outdoor time and engaging children in physical activities is noted as a positive aspect of their program.

9. Healthy Meals and Snacks

Providing healthy snacks and lunches is another important theme. Parents value the centre's efforts to ensure their children receive nutritious meals, contributing to their overall well-being.

10. Flexibility and Convenience

The centre's flexible hours and accommodating nature are appreciated by parents, making it a convenient option for families with varying schedules.

Areas for Improvement

Parents were also asked about areas they feel could be improved. Overall, parents emphasized the importance of effective communication, adequate staffing, and support for both children and educators.

The themes (in order of priority) and a brief description of each are provided below.

1. Communication

Parents highlighted the need for better communication across various aspects, including daily reports, major and minor occurrences, entry waiting lists, and progress updates. They expressed the need for timely, clear, and comprehensive communication to keep them informed about their child's day, any incidents, and overall progress. Many parents miss the daily email documentation that was previously provided. They find it challenging to receive updates during busy pick-up and drop-off times and suggest continuing with daily pictures and communication about their child's day.

2. Availability and Wait Times

The availability of child care spaces and the length of waiting lists are significant concerns. Parents desire better transparency about their position on the wait list and express

frustration with the long wait times and perceived preferential treatment for certain families.

3. Quality and Variety of Food

The menu and quality of food provided at the centre are common topics. Parents suggest more variety and healthier options, noting that the current offerings, like beans and hamburger buns, are not satisfactory. They also mention specific instances of poor food quality affecting their child's eating habits.

4. Support for Teachers and Staff

There are calls for better support for teachers, including increased pay, classroom support, and adequate materials. Parents recognize the demanding nature of child care work and advocate for better compensation and resources to ensure high-quality care and staff retention.

5. Program Structure and Planning

There is a desire for more structured play and intentional program planning. Parents suggest improvements in the supervision and learning opportunities, especially in the before and after school programs, and advocate for separating primary and junior age groups for better program alignment.

6. Flexibility in Scheduling

Parents expressed the need for more flexible drop-off and pick-up schedules. They find the current restrictions challenging and suggest more accommodating options to better fit their varied schedules.

How Parents Think the Child Care Centre Can Better Meet Children's Needs

Parents were asked if they had any specific suggestions as to how the child care centre could better meet their child's needs. The themes (in order of priority) and a brief description of each are provided below.

1. Communication

Parents desire better communication regarding their child's interactions, areas needing improvement, and overall progress. Suggestions include using an app for communication and scheduling quick meetings with educators periodically, similar to parent-teacher interviews.

2. Staffing and Educator Consistency

Consistent staffing in classrooms is seen as beneficial for children's development. Parents also express the need for more educators in classes to ensure a lower child-to-educator ratio, improving the quality of care and attention each child receives.

3. Food Variety and Meal Options

Providing more meal options, especially alternative protein sources for children who do not like or eat meat, is a common request. Parents want greater variety and healthier food choices for their children.

4. Outdoor Environment

There is a call for better shade in the outdoor play areas to ensure children are protected from the sun while playing outside. This is seen as important for the children's comfort and safety.

5. Support for Special Needs

Parents emphasized the importance of support for children with special needs. They suggest working collaboratively with community agencies and incorporating new ideas from recent graduates to enhance the care provided.

6. Staff Well-being and Engagement

Supporting staff mental health and ensuring their ideas are heard and valued is crucial. Parents believe that happy and healthy educators are better equipped to provide high-quality care for their children.

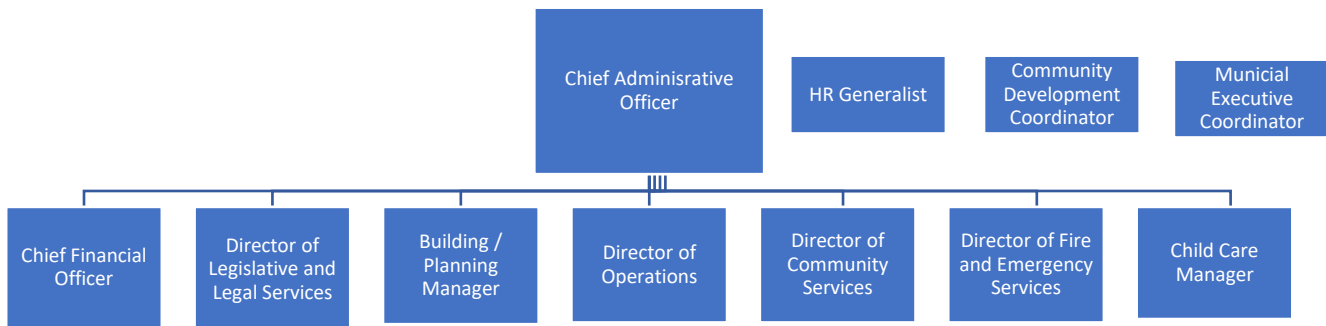
7. Preparation for Junior Kindergarten

Parents want more support in preparing their children for junior kindergarten (JK). This includes helping children develop necessary skills and providing updates on their readiness for the next educational stage.

Organizational Structure

Governance and Corporate Supports

The Child Care Manager is a member of the Municipality of Brockton’s Senior Management Team and reports directly to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). See the organizational chart below.



As the governing body for the Municipality of Brockton, Municipal Council has the ultimate responsibility and authority for BCCC. The CAO reports directly to Council.

Through the enactment of By-law 2023-055, the Council for The Corporation of the Municipality of Brockton established the current members of the Brockton Child Care Centre Committee to support the goals of the Brockton Child Care Centre in creating an environment which helps young children get the best start in life by ensuring high quality early learning experiences. This committee has been in place for a number of years supporting the BCCC.

The committee acts in an advisory and promotional capacity to the administration, in working with all levels of government and in building links with education, public health, the community and parents, with the aim of helping children to be successful in school and later in life.

The Child Care Centre Committee consists of no less than three (3) and no more than seven (7) voting members appointed by By-law that are Brockton residents over the age of 18. The majority of Committee members (up to five (5) members) must consist of parents of children attending the Brockton Child Care Centre, and at least one (1) member of Council sits on the Committee. Council may allow for at least one (1) other member at large. BCCC’s Manager and Supervisor attend all Committee meetings and act as staff resources on the Committee in a non-voting capacity.

At its focus group, the Committee suggested that additional training could be provided to them so they feel more comfortable in their role, and additional guidance could be provided on legislative governance.

Being a Municipally Operated Child Care Centre BCCC has a number of corporate supports that can be leveraged further to support its operations. These include Human Resources (HR), Finance, and Information Technology (IT). The following supports are currently being provided by these corporate supports:

- HR - Full HR support for entire hiring process for all hires, recruitment initiatives, investigations, terminations, discipline, Regular HR hours, HR support for staff, etc.
- IT - Full support for all computerized and software equipment in the centre. Support for filing systems, document management, municipally issued IT and phone issued
- Finance - Support for all A/R and A/P and budgeting. Additional supports for CWELCC funding and grant programs and monthly billings could be established

Service System Manager

As part of its governance structure, BCCC also has a contractual relationship with the County of Bruce. BCCC has a Service Agreement with the Corporation of the County of Bruce as the Service System Manager (SSM) for Bruce County. As the SSM, the County administers delivery of financial assistance provided by the Ministry of Education and the County with respect to licensed child care services within its geographical area. The current Service Agreement was signed on November 1, 2022 and is a five (5) year agreement which may be renewed by mutual written agreement by both parties.

By signing the Service Agreement, BCCC agrees to:

- Provide child care services as defined in the *Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)* and the Schedules attached to the service agreement within the County's geographical area in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in the Agreement
- Provide services that are high-quality, inclusive, accessible, and affordable
- Comply with any recommendations provided by the County with respect to the services
- Actively participate in County led initiatives related to quality, child development, inclusion, and sector training and education
- Maintain a registration and application list for licensed child care, if required by the County
- Follow all policies and procedures outlined in the Child Care Operator Handbook, and in the Funding and Reconciliation Schedules and Tools

The following Schedules are included in the Service Agreement:

- Schedule A - Fee Subsidy
- Schedule B – Wage Enhancement Grant
- Schedule C – General Operating Grant
- Schedule F - Enhanced Program Staff
- Schedule H - Special Purpose Funding
- Schedule J – Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care System Funding

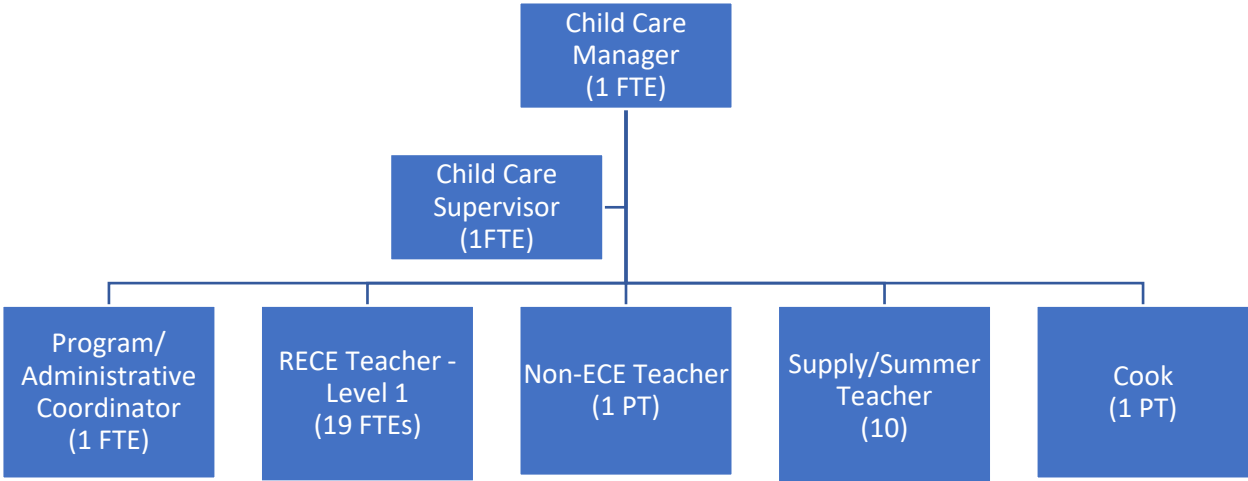
Each of the Schedules outlines the purpose and specifics for the funding in each of these envelopes.

Staff Complement

As of May 2024 the following is BCCC’s staff complement:

- 22 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions (noting five (5) were added in 2024)
- 2 permanent part-time positions
- 1 contract position
- 10 supply/summer teachers

See the organizational structure below for further details.

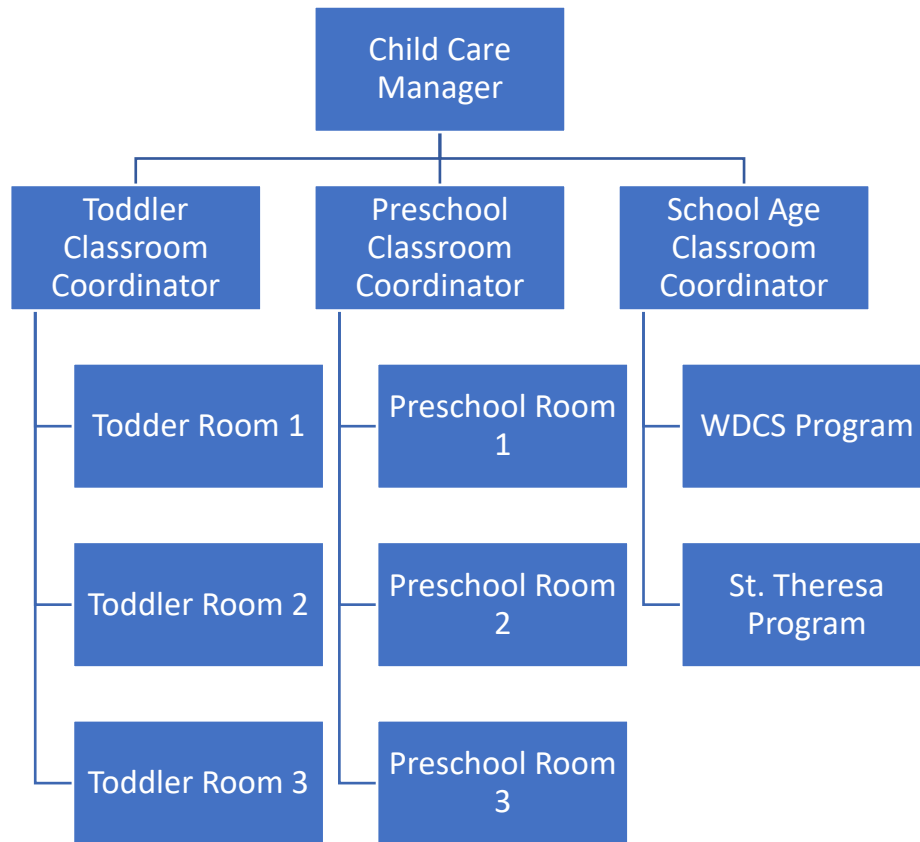


The staff complement has increased in size as the number of spaces at BCCC has grown. For example, only ten years ago, in 2014, the organization had six (6) FTEs, five (5) part-time staff and one (1) supply staff.

The management and administrative positions at BCCC have the following roles:

Position	Summary of Position
Manager	The Manager oversees and maintains a high standard of preschool education for children 15 months to 12 years. Providing the necessary support, resources, supervision and leadership to ensure the nurturing care and education in accordance with the goals, curriculum, philosophy and policies of the Centre. The Manager is responsible for the strict compliance with the <i>Child Care and Early Years Act</i> , the Ministry of Education, County of Bruce Children Services, Public Health and other regulatory bodies, as applicable. The Manager is responsible for the yearly budget and human resource activities for the Brockton Child Care.
Supervisor	The Child Care Supervisor supports the Child Care Manager with the direction, supervision, management and coordination of the Brockton Child Care Centre operations. This position works with the Manager to mentor centre staff to create a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment to ensure children are provided with optimal learning and development opportunities. This position assists with staff supervision and ensures adherence to applicable legislation and policies and procedures for the Municipality of Brockton.
Program/Administrative Coordinator	The Coordinator is responsible for supporting the planning, coordination and implementation of programs and initiatives in the child care centre. This position supports the Child Care Supervisor and Manager to ensure Ministry of Education licensing requirements are met. Responsible for supporting the child care teachers related to classroom duties, mentoring, program planning and collaborative assistance to execute a full range of programs and initiatives to support child care services to children from the ages of 18 months to 12 years of age. Assists the Manager and Supervisor with administrative tasks related to licensing, community engagement and communications, and child care centre operations.

In order to better manage communication in the centre and stay connected to the classrooms, the Manager has developed a Classroom Coordinator position. This position is the lead for each of the classrooms/programs (see visual below).



Note: None of the comparator child care centres has a similar position. These types of functions are managed through each site’s Supervisor and/or Assistant Supervisor positions.

Span of Control

Span of control, also known as span of management, refers to the number of subordinates or direct reports that a manager or supervisor can effectively manage. It is a crucial concept in organizational design and management because it affects both the efficiency of the organization and the manager's ability to lead effectively.

Positions completing tasks that are regulated by many rules and are highly standardized require less supervision and, therefore, the span of control can be wider for this type of work, while positions with fewer rules and a lower level of standardization would require closer supervision and a narrower span of control.⁷

⁷ Source: Albert J. Mills et al., *Organizational Behaviour in a Global Context*, Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007

The decision to adopt a narrow or wide span of control in an organization depends on several factors, including:

- **Nature of the Work:** Routine and standardized tasks often allow for a wider span of control, while complex and variable tasks require a narrower span
- **Employee Skill Level:** Highly skilled and experienced employees require less supervision, enabling a wider span of control
- **Geographical Dispersion:** If employees are geographically dispersed (i.e. working in different locations), a narrower span of control might be necessary to ensure effective supervision
- **Managerial Style:** Some managers are more comfortable with a wide span of control, while others prefer a narrower span to maintain closer oversight.

The following table outlines some considerations for each approach:

	Narrow Span of Control (A manager supervises a small number of employees)	Wide Span of Control (A manager supervises a large number of employees)
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closer Supervision: Ensures that teachers and staff are closely monitored, which is crucial for maintaining high standards of child care and safety • Better Communication: Easier to provide direct feedback and support, helping staff improve their practices and address issues quickly • Enhanced Training: Facilitates more hands-on training and mentoring, which is beneficial for new or less experienced staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost Efficiency: Fewer managers are needed, reducing administrative costs • Empowerment: Encourages staff to take more responsibility and make decisions independently, which can improve job satisfaction and innovation • Faster Decision-Making: Fewer layers of management can lead to quicker decisions and more agile responses to issues
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Costs: More supervisors or managers are needed, which can increase operational costs • Potential for Micromanagement: Excessive supervision might lead to micromanagement, reducing staff autonomy and job satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced Supervision: Less direct oversight might lead to inconsistent practices and standards, which could impact the quality of child care • Managerial Overload: Managers may become overwhelmed with too many direct reports, leading

	Narrow Span of Control (A manager supervises a small number of employees)	Wide Span of Control (A manager supervises a large number of employees)
		to burnout and decreased effectiveness

In a child care centre, a balanced approach with a moderate span of control is often ideal. This level of span of control allows for effective supervision without excessive micromanagement. For example, one director or manager overseeing a few supervisors, with each supervisor managing a group of teachers and other staff. While the specific number can vary, a common range for the span of control for a supervisor working with ECEs is typically between 5 and 10 employees. However, it's important to consider the unique circumstances of the organization, the requirements of the role, and the individual capabilities of the supervisor.

In order for this type of organizational structure to be effective, BCCC would need:

- **Clear Roles and Responsibilities:** Define clear roles and responsibilities to ensure that each manager and staff member knows their duties and the chain of command
- **Support Systems:** Implement support systems such as regular meetings, training sessions, and open communication channels to assist staff and maintain high standards of care
- **Flexibility:** Be flexible and adjust the span of control as needed based on the centre's size, staff experience levels, and any changes in regulations or best practices

Understanding and implementing the appropriate span of control is essential for achieving a balance between effective supervision and organizational efficiency.

Ultimately, the goal of the organizational structure is to ensure that the child care centre operates smoothly, maintains high standards of quality, care and safety, and fosters a positive and supportive working environment for all staff.

In terms of current span of control, the Child Care Manager has 21 FTE direct reports, 2 part-time direct reports and up to 10 supply/summer direct reports, meaning an incredibly wide span of control that can be unmanageable resulting in departmental challenges.

Environmental Scan

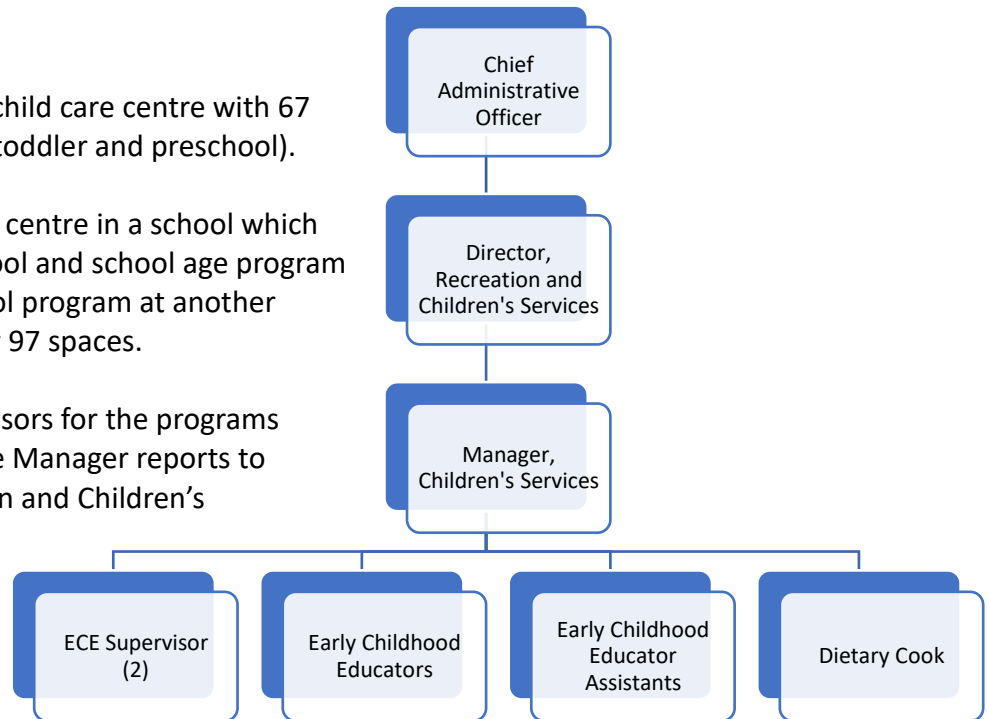
The municipalities of North Huron, North Perth and Goderich also directly operate child care centres. Their organizational structures are provided below.

North Huron

North Huron has a main child care centre with 67 licensed spaces (infants, toddler and preschool).

They also have an off site centre in a school which offers 60 toddler, preschool and school age program spaces and an after school program at another school that is licensed for 97 spaces.

There are two (2) Supervisors for the programs and one (1) Manager. The Manager reports to The Director of Recreation and Children's Services.



North Perth

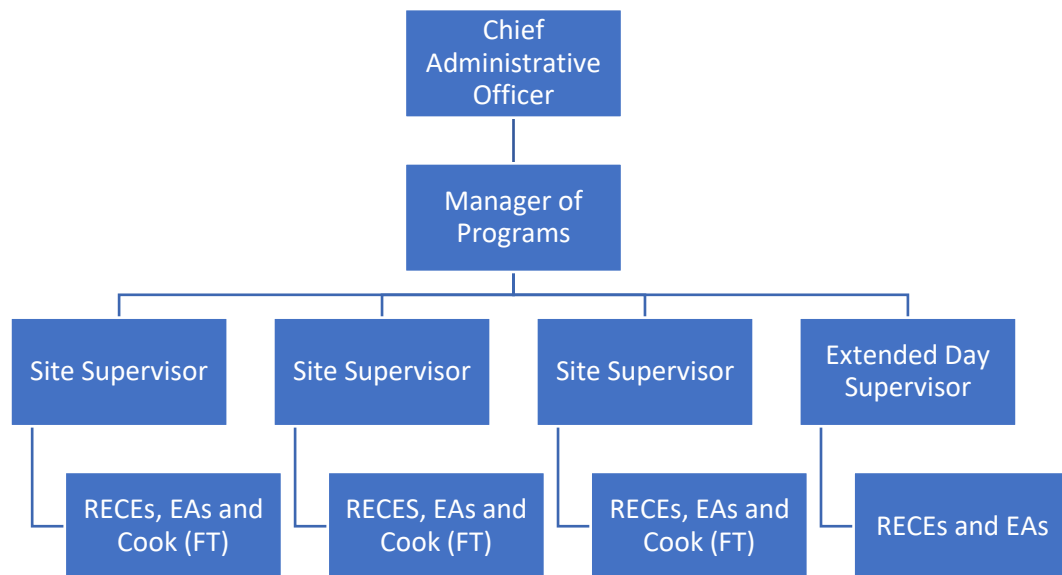
North Perth operates three (3) child care centres (soon to be four) and extended day care at three schools.

- One centre is licensed for a total of 133 spaces (10 infant, 15 toddler, 48 preschool, 60 school age)
- The second centre is licensed for a total of 94 spaces (10 infant, 15 toddler, 24 preschool, 30 school age, 15 family age group)
- The third centre is licensed for a total of 30 spaces (15 family age group, 15 school age)
- The standalone school age program is licensed for 60 spaces

Most centres open at 6:30 am and close at 5 pm

There are four (4) supervisors with approximately 60 RECEs and ECE Assistants (part time and full time) divided amongst the centres.

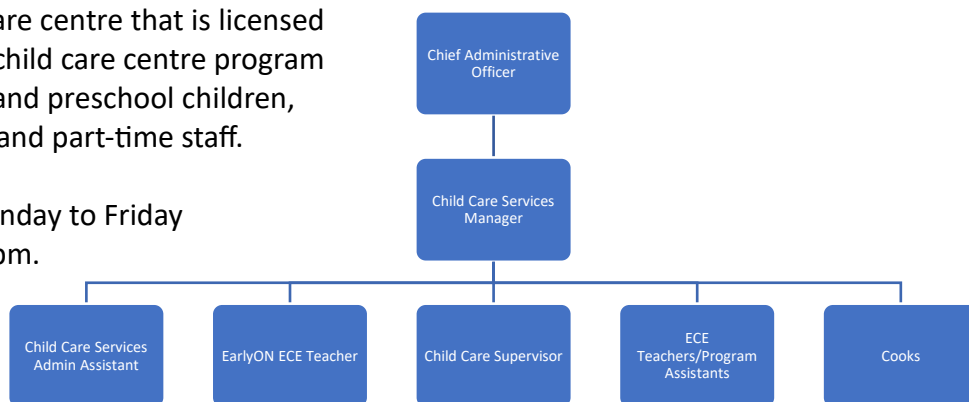
The Manager of Programs reports directly to the CAO and is also considered a senior manager. This position oversees Children's Services (Child Care and EarlyON) as well as all community programming (i.e. Camp, Aquatics, recreation programs and events).



Town of Goderich

Goderich has a child care centre that is licensed for 103 children. The child care centre program serves infant, toddler and preschool children, with over 40 full-time and part-time staff.

The centre is open Monday to Friday from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm.



The Child Care Services Manager is a member of the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) and reports directly to the CAO.

BCCC Management Feedback about Organizational Structure

BCCC management report that BCCC’s organizational structure needs enhancement to support its significant growth, including better succession planning, management support, formalized supervision, consistent staff hours, improved scheduling tools, and more resources for children with great needs. Some of the items that were mentioned include:

- The organization has grown significantly from 25 children in 1971 to 177 children, necessitating a restructuring to better support this expansion and growth. In 2024, the need

for more full-time staff to reduce reliance on part-time staff was identified and five (5) full-time positions were created with one being solely a "floater" position to cover staff absences. There is still a need for certain part-time and supply staff to cover gaps and absences. Recruitment of staff remains an ongoing and continual challenge and this is evident across the child care sector and not unique to the BCCC.

- It is challenging to recruit and retain an adequate number of staff to operate at full capacity in the school age program
- There is a lack of formal one-on-one supervision and insufficient time for staff at the management level to focus on important administrative tasks, with a need for more administrative support for the manager, and a need for some tasks to be re-distributed between the Manager and Supervisor positions
- There is a need for a clear structure and a succession plan for BCCC
- Improvements are needed in scheduling, with a call for better scheduling software and standardized working hours for staff. Additionally, a more structured approach to gathering and implementing staff feedback is suggested

Focus Group Feedback about Organizational Structure

Participants in the external focus groups feel that BCCC could leverage IT, HR, and Finance departments to further support the centre.

Staffing

Minimum Staff-to-Child Ratios

In Ontario, child care providers must follow the rules set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA) and its regulations. The CCEYA details the following **minimum** staff-to-child ratios. Centres may choose to have more staff, but may not have less staff than set out in the table below.

Age Group	Age Range	Ratio of Staff to Children	Maximum Number of Children in Group
Infants	Younger than 18 months	3 to 10	10
Toddlers	18 to 30 months	1 to 5	15
Preschool	30 months to 6 years	1 to 8	24
Kindergarten	44 months to 7 years	1 to 13	26
Primary and Junior School Age	68 months to 13 years	1 to 15	30
Junior School Age	9 to 13 years	1 to 20	20

Staff Shifts

At present, child care centre staff work either a seven (7) or 7.5 hour shift. There are 14 shifts over the course of a day. The following are the shifts (note: the shifts include a one hour unpaid lunch break):

- 7:00 am to 3:00 pm
- 7:00 am to 4:00 pm
- 7:30 am to 4:30 pm
- 7:45 am to 4:15 pm
- 8:00 am to 4:00 pm
- 8:00 am to 4:30 pm
- 8:15 am to 4:15 pm
- 8:15 am to 4:45 pm
- 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
- 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
- 8:45 am to 4:45 pm
- 8:45 am to 5:15 pm
- 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
- 9:30 am to 5:30 pm

Current after school program staff shifts vary, with some shifts being shorter in length and solely supporting the school age program and some after school program shifts being longer in length in order to provide coverage in the child care centre programs. The staff shifts are outlined in the table below.

Program	St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School	Walkerton District Community School
Before School Program	Teacher #1 – 6:30 to 9:30 am Teacher #2 – 8:00 to 8:30 am	Teacher #1 – 7:00 to 8:30 am
After School Program	Teacher #1 – 1:30 to 6:00 pm	Teacher #1 – 3:00 to 4:45 pm

Program	St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School	Walkerton District Community School
	Teacher #2 – 1:30 to 4:30 pm Teacher #3 - 3:00 to 4:45 pm Teacher #4 – 3:45 to 4:45 pm Note: Teachers 1 and 2 cover sleep rooms, work periods, team meetings from 1:30 to 3:00 pm	Teacher #2 – 12:30 to 5:30 pm Note: Teacher 2 covers sleep rooms, work periods, team meetings from 12:30 to 3:00 pm

Environmental Scan

Comparator child care centres have the following staff shifts:

Comparator #1	Comparator #2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shifts are 7.5 or 8 hours with a one hour unpaid break • Staff have permanent schedules. They can switch shifts with other staff if they have appointments • The centre uses a split shift reduction program for the school age program staff, making it a 10 hour day vs. a split shift 6 hour day (hire for a 6:30 am to 11:30 am shift and a 1 pm to 6 pm shift) • Before and After School staff help with planning time and lunch time, CWELCC doesn't cover planning time • The centre Supervisor starts at 6:30 am or 7:00 am and the Assistant Supervisor covers the later end of the day. This means that staff spend a very limited amount of time without a Supervisor at the centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shifts are 8 hours with a one hour unpaid lunch • The Supervisor does the scheduling of the shifts, though most people have a regular shift for the year
	Comparator #3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shifts are 7.5 hours with a one hour unpaid lunch • The staff schedule is completed 2 to 3 weeks at time • Staff do a two (2) week rotation through each of the shifts

The shift schedule is prepared on a weekly basis by the Child Care Manager and emailed to staff. Each day, a daily schedule is prepared and sent to staff. This schedule outlines the coverage for lunch breaks, preparation time and team meetings. This extensive process is conducted manually by the Manager.

Challenges with the current staff shifts include:

- There is not a consistent shift length. Some teachers work seven (7) hours, some 7 ½ hours and some eight (8) hours. This becomes a challenge when a seven (7) hour shift person

needs an early or later shift due to personal reasons and the only shift to switch with are 7 ½ or eight (8) hour shifts or vice versa or when teachers are off unexpectedly, and supply teachers are not available. The rotation of shifts would flow easier and switching shifts would work better if all staff worked a consistent length (i.e. 7 ½ hours)

- Each room has specific shifts they rotate in their room providing the staff work the same length of hours
- The Manager has a template with all the shifts and rotates the teachers (in their groups providing they work the same shift length)
- Some teachers have requested permanent shifts
- There is a lack of supply staff to cover absences
- Parents changing hours for drop off/pick up without asking. This means shifts have to be revisited to ensure proper coverage

Staff Benefits

As BCCC is operated by the Municipality of Brockton, the staff that work there are entitled to the same benefits as other municipal employees. These benefits include:

- Sick days – six (6) days per year
- Vacation days
- Bereavement days
- Pension
Life insurance
- Extended health care
- Dental care
- Short Term Disability
- Long Term Disability

In addition to the above, staff that work at BCCC receive priority for a child care space at the centre.

Benchmarking

The following table outlines the sick days, vacation days and other benefits (beyond a pension and extended health benefits) offered by other licensed child care operators across Ontario (n=10).

Paid Sick Days	Paid Vacation Days	Other Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All comparator child care organizations offer paid sick days to employees • The average number of paid sick days at the comparator organizations is 10.8 per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All comparator child care organizations offer paid vacation days to employees • The average number of paid vacation days at the comparator organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two personal days a year • Three paid Family Responsibility Leave days • Special leave days at 10 per year Paid bereavement • Child care fee discount

Paid Sick Days	Paid Vacation Days	Other Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minimum number of paid sick days at the comparator organizations ranges from a low of 8 days per year to a high of 10 days per year There does not appear to be a correlation between lower salaries and a higher number of paid sick days provided by an organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ranges from a low of 12.22 days per year to a high of 28.75 days per year The minimum number of paid vacation days at the comparator organizations ranges from a low of 10 days per year to a high of 20 days per year There does not appear to be a correlation between lower salaries and a higher number of paid vacation days provided by an organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 Professional Development hours compensated

The comparator group of municipally operated child care centres offer the following benefits to their staff.

Paid Sick Days	Paid Vacation Days	Other Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All comparator municipally operated child care centres offer paid sick days to employees Both of the comparator centres provide nine (9) days per year to full time employees One comparator provides nine (9) sick days One comparator provides six (6) sick days and three (3) personal days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All comparator municipally operated child care centres offer paid vacation days to employees Full time employees start at three (3) weeks vacation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OMERS pension Full time staff get a small clothing allowance (\$75 per year) The centres are closed over Christmas (part of regular scheduled vacation) Health benefits basic package (full coverage) Employee Assistance Program

Staff Orientation and Training

When initially hired, staff at BCCC are provided with a half day orientation session by the Municipality of Brockton. The topics covered include:

- My Brockton
- Policy Overview:

- Employee Code of Conduct
- Employee Discipline
- Employee Recognition
- Dress Code
- Social Media
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Municipal Vehicle Use
- Video Surveillance Policy (P File)
- Hours of Work/Disconnecting from Work
- Complaint Policy
- Plans Overview:
 - Brockton Accessibility Plan
 - Energy and Demand Management Plan
 - Organizational/Operational Review
 - Municipal Services Review Report
 - Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan
 - Sustainable Strategic Plan 2013
- OMERS Non-Full-Time
- Employee and Family Assistance Program
- Accessibility
- Emergency Management
 - Masking Considerations Policy (H File)
- Ceridian Day Force for Employee
- Workplace Violence and Harassment
- Health and Safety:
 - General Safety Rules
 - Health and Safety Training
 - Responsibilities
 - Personal Protective Equipment
 - Employee Accident/Incident Reporting Guidelines
 - Emergency Procedures
 - Hazardous Conditions
 - Refusal to Work
 - Emergency Response (Office)
- WHMIS
- Sharps
- Working in close proximity procedure
- Donning, doffing and cleaning face masks
- Asbestos
- Management/Supervisor training (if necessary)
 - Asbestos
 - Sharps

- Employee Accident/Incident Reporting Guidelines
- Working in close proximity procedure
- Donning, doffing and cleaning face masks

New staff are also provided with an orientation to the centre. BCCC has a new staff checklist that outlines all of the topics to be covered during this orientation.

In addition to this, each position at BCCC has a task list, which outlines the tasks that are the responsibility of the position.

Ongoing Training

Professional learning is a key component of creating a quality child care setting. All Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) in Ontario are required by the College of ECEs to complete a Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Portfolio each year. The steps and components that must be completed in each one year CPL Portfolio cycle are:

1. Complete the Reflection and Planning Tool, which includes setting a minimum of one professional learning goal.
2. Engage in professional learning activities related to the goal.
3. Track progress, collect evidence and document learning on the Record of Professional Learning.
4. Declare completion of CPL requirements for the membership year upon annual membership renewal

At BCCC, when a professional learning opportunity is identified, staff submit their name if interested in attending. Two staff names are randomly selected to attend the session.

The training that is provided to BCCC staff includes:

- One County organized training session per year paid for by the Ministry of Education for all staff to partake in (Child Care Professional training day). This is a paid work day for staff and the BCCC closes on this day
- All Child Care Supervisors/Management attend a County organized meeting to review and discuss Ministry updates, policy, programming, etc. two times per year
- A monthly Child Care meeting is held with all staff in attendance to review policy, specific areas of practice, and classroom ideas or changes. Feedback from staff is sought and encouraged at this meeting. This meeting is held after work but paid hours
- BCCC supports Continuing Professional Learning opportunities to support RECE designations during the work day
- Staff are allocated to attend training opportunities offered by the County or otherwise, based on available spots and interest of staff
- Support individualized coaching opportunities
- Support staff leaves for placements to complete ECE
- Create growth opportunities through partnering new teachers with RECEs

- Provide leadership training to management staff for continuous growth and development

Performance Management

The Child Care Manager conducts an annual performance appraisal with the staff at BCCC. The Municipality of Brockton performance appraisal form is used for this purpose. The performance appraisal form includes an Individual Development Plan which identifies goals and objectives for the year. In addition to the annual performance appraisal, BCCC staff attend a team meeting once a month and the Child Care Manager meets with staff individually, as required. There are bi-monthly Senior Management Team meetings and regular check-ins between the CAO and the Manager/Supervisor as required.

Environmental Scan

Comparator child care centres approach performance management in the following ways:

Comparator #1	Comparator #2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a monthly staff meeting (not one in July or December) • Provide team meeting time (30 minutes for the classroom after their staff meeting) • Have a closed Facebook group where staff can ask each other questions and share ideas • Provide in-house professional development • Conduct an annual performance appraisal • Built a strong workplace culture with a level of autonomy in the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the centre’s program statement and HDLH and talk about it at staff meetings • Hold monthly staff meetings where staff break off and have smaller group discussions • Hold Supervisors meetings • Meet with staff about Ministry reports and compliance • Conduct performance appraisal meetings with staff once per year

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment and retention of ECEs is an ongoing challenge faced by the child care sector in Ontario. According to the [Early Childhood Education Report](#)⁸, attracting and keeping qualified staff in regulated child care are major challenges for the sector.

- Of the 58,867 ECEs registered with Ontario’s College of Early Childhood Educators, 44% do not work in licensed child care
- Employment in child care dropped 21% during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to 3% among other workers

⁸ Source: McCuaig K., Akbari, E., Correia, A. (April 2022). Canada’s children need a professional early childhood education workforce. Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

- 32,000 additional educators are needed to meet the goal of serving a minimum of 59% of Canadian preschool-aged children within the next five years
- 30% of positions in licensed child care requiring an early childhood education credential are filled by staff without the necessary qualifications
- 62% of child care centre operators in Canada had to recruit staff in the last two years
- 82% had difficulty hiring staff with the necessary qualifications
- 6% had unfilled staff vacancies lasting over four months
- Among ECEs who resigned their position in Ontario, the majority sought other employment outside of licensed child care
- In 2021, the median hourly wage for staff working in licensed child care in Canada was \$20
- One-third of the licensed child care workforce receive no health benefits
- 41% receive no paid personal leave
- Only 17.7% have access to RRSPs or private pensions through their workplace

This report also notes that the following issues need to be addressed to better support ECE recruitment and retention:

- **Wages:** Half the licensed child care workforce barely earn above the minimum wage. The COVID-19 pandemic brought additional hardships. Declining enrolment resulted in layoffs and unpredictable hours. Many educators took jobs elsewhere where they earn more. Getting these educators back into child care will take bold action
- **Benefits:** Paid leave and decent health and pension benefits are essential recruiting tools, particularly for a young workforce with its own family responsibilities. Among child care staff with benefits, half cited access to benefits as a reason for staying with their employer
- **Working Conditions:** Staff want decent pay, but they also want the support needed to do their jobs well. This includes paid time for planning and professional development, as well as pedagogical leadership and access to other specialists who can assist children and families in distress or with greater needs
- **Professional Density:** Fewer than half the staff working in regulated child care have post-secondary credentials in early childhood education. Increasing the density of trained staff contributes to a more professional learning community
- **Career Advancement:** Educators need career opportunities and an infrastructure that supports professional practice. Similar to teachers in public education, early childhood educators need the option of working directly with children or pursuing related career paths. This enables programs to attract and retain professional staff with the experience, education, and longevity that enhance program quality

- **Effective Management:** Positive organizational culture and professional working conditions depend on program leaders. Yet few jurisdictions require additional qualifications for centre directors, and directors themselves have few resources to support their work

The Knowing our Numbers report⁹ also states that,

“Colleges are enrolling sufficient students to meet demand, but new graduates are not moving into licensed care in sufficient numbers. About 4,200 students enroll in college early childhood education programs each year, with an average graduation rate of 72%. Of those who do graduate, less than 60% begin work in licensed child care. In addition, their likelihood of remaining in the sector decreases over time, dropping to just over 40% still working in licensed child care by year five. ECE recruitment and retention are bigger problems in Ontario compared to the rest of Canada (p. 43).”

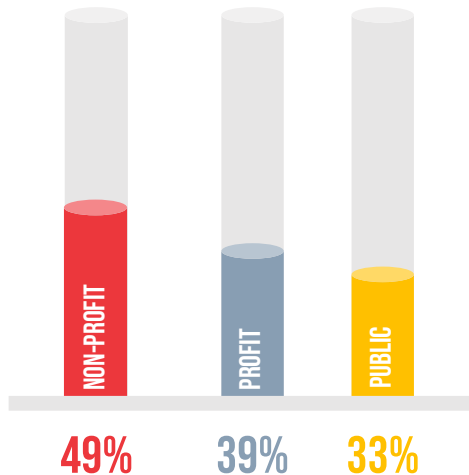
Job satisfaction is one of the key factors related to retention. The Knowing our Numbers report provides information revealing that RECEs working in public child care centres have a higher level of satisfaction than those working in for profit and non profit child care centres. See the table below (Note: 1 is low satisfaction and 5 is highest satisfaction).

Geographic Area	For Profit	Non Profit	Public	Total Across Auspice
West	2.5	2.6	3.4	2.7
Ontario	2.4	2.7	3.2	2.7

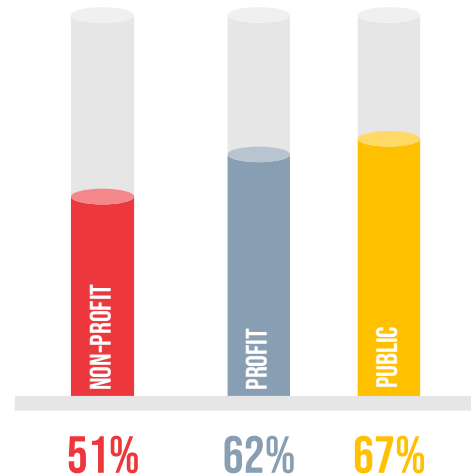
The report goes on to note that RECEs working in public child care centres are less likely to leave the profession in the next five (5) years and are more likely to have plans to stay in the profession. See the graphs below for further details.

⁹ Source: Akbari, E., McCuaig, K., Schurter, M. Varmuza, P., Akbari, S., Mudie, S. (2024). Knowing Our Numbers: A Provincial Study with a Local Lens on the Early Childhood Education Workforce in Ontario.

Plans to Leave in Next 5 Years/Unsure



Plans to Stay



This is good news for BCCC, and one of the benefits of running a municipally operated child care centre.

Through the Knowing our Numbers research, the top ten (10) reported factors that would improve workforce job satisfaction are:

1. Appropriate salary (62%)
2. Respect for the work (61%)
3. Support for children with emotional and behavioural needs (52%)
4. Supports for children with disabilities (51%)
5. Improved benefits (51%)
6. Lower child to educator ratios (49%)
7. Paid preparation time (44%)
8. Improved career opportunities (40%)
9. More full-time positions (37%)
10. Educator mental health support (36%)

Local Recruitment and Retention Strategies and Tools

At present, there is a collaborative effort underway to focus on the recruitment and retention of ECEs in Grey and Bruce. The Municipality of Brockton is a member of the Grey Bruce Early Learning Educator Recruitment and Retention Working Group. The purpose of this group is to develop strategies to:

- Sustain the existing workforce to ensure a stable and high-quality child care system

- Enhance access to opportunities to promote retention and recruitment, including professional development, training and qualification upgrades to promote career growth and development
- Develop strategies to grow the number of qualified staff in the workforce to increase access to families
- Attract and support the development of a diverse workforce to reflect the children and families accessing programs (Source: Working Group Terms of Reference)

The membership of this working group is diverse, representing different sectors that can support recruitment and retention. Members include representatives from:

- Bruce County Children’s Services (min. 1 representative)
- Grey County Children’s Services (min. 1 representative)
- Licensed Child Care and Early Years Programs (min. 3 representative)
- Georgian College (min. 1 representative)
- Fanshawe College (min. 1 representative)
- Bluewater District School Board (min. 1 representative)
- Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board (min. 1 representative)
- CSC Providence (min. 1 representative)
- Human Resources (min. 1 representative)
- Economic Development/Planning/Workforce (min. 1 representative)

In addition to this ongoing strategy, Bruce County has developed two (2) tools to support recruitment and retention. These tools are:

- Bruce County Child Care and Early Years Recruitment Toolkit
- Bruce County Child Care and Early Years Retention Toolkit

These toolkits offer tips, resources and activities to support local child care providers with recruitment and retention efforts.

Actions Taken by BCCC

In addition to actions noted above, BCCC has:

- Advocated for a satellite Fanshawe College site in Walkerton to support local ECEs
- Developed an Early Investment in Education and Skills program which has a component that supports Early Childhood Education for Licensed Daycare Providers in Brockton through:
 - Opportunities for funding to assist in providing learning experiences and educational resources based on science, math, environment, or technology. Examples can include investments in outdoor learning resources to encourage movement, science, math (counting, adding, subtracting), literacy (phonics, site words, etc.), coding kits, building materials, sensory activities, etc.
 - Organization must be a licensed child care/daycare centre

- Maximum funding up to \$500 per registered child care centre
- Changed the majority of part-time positions at the centre to full-time positions in 2024
- Share and participate in County of Bruce initiatives related to recruitment and retention
- The centre closes to allow all staff to attend training coordinated by the County of Bruce and create networks
- County organized training day to support ongoing professional development
- Provide individualized one-on-one coaching opportunities for staff development
- Support staff leaves for placement to obtain ECE certification
- Made a BCCC recruitment video
- Have a permanent posting on the Brockton careers website
- Attend job fairs where ECE positions are promoted
- Provide funding of up to \$1,000 towards Brockton residents who are seeking ECE training through the NWMO- EIES program
-
- Implemented regular office hours of the HR Generalist to be available in the centre to support staff
- Participated in the Bruce County working groups that have resulted in added funding and grants towards ECE training
- HR participates on the ECE Recruitment and Retention Committee with Bruce and Grey County
- Work with VPI on recruitment
- Jobs are posted on Connect2Jobs – Bruce County, through newspaper ads with Walkerton Herald and Hanover Post, posted on the Postmedia website, social media blasts, internal postings with staff to assist with spreading the word and posted with Conestoga and Fanshawe College

Parent Feedback about Staff

93.2%

A majority of parents rate the quality of care provided by staff as “excellent” (66.1%) or “good” (27.1%).

The 6.8% that rated the quality of care as “fair” have preschool and school age children at the centre.

91.5%

A majority of parents are confident in the staff based on their interactions and their child’s interactions with the child care professionals in the centre. 8.5% report as being “not sure.”

Focus Group Feedback about Staffing

Participants in the external focus groups noted the challenge associated with staffing during the summer program and suggested that Educational Assistants could be approached to assist in the summer.

BCCC Staff and Management Feedback about Staffing

BCCC management report there is a critical need for more supply staff and evolving recruitment strategies. Hiring is a significant challenge due to a limited pool of qualified candidates. Staff also desire more sick time and slightly higher wages to improve job satisfaction and retention.

While staff shortages continue to create challenges some staff are requesting more paid holidays, sick days, and other incentives to feel valued and supported. There are issues with the process of requesting days off and some staff would like more flexible work arrangements, such as a four-day work week.

There is also a call for better handling of overtime and the ability to choose when to take lieu time and more flexibility and transparency in choosing vacation days, with a fair system for selecting summer holidays. Staff challenges will also greatly affect the items noted here.

Staff expressed a need for more professional development opportunities, including training on relevant topics, such as self-regulation, cognitive load theory, and emergent curriculum. Staff expressed a need for hands-on, practical training that can be applied directly in the classroom, as well as refresher courses on child-led approaches. The current selection process for professional development sessions is seen as ineffective and needs improvement. They would prefer training to occur during the work day. Some of these opportunities and training during the workday can only be addressed with consistent staffing levels.

Staff have concerns about the current scheduling process. Staff request more timely and consistent communication regarding their shifts and lunch schedules. They also would like a longer-term schedule to better plan their personal time.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is, “The dominant ways of doing things in an organization that are reflected in the regular activities of its members and the various things or artifacts that symbolize those activities.”¹⁰ Organizational culture is like the personality of a company. It’s the way things are done, the values, beliefs and assumption everyone shares, and the atmosphere that people work in. It is socially constructed by all organizational members.

When assessing organizational culture in a workplace, you look at:

Shared Values	<i>What Matters Most</i> The principles and beliefs that everyone in the organization believes in, like honesty, teamwork, or customer satisfaction.
Behaviours and Norms	<i>How People Act</i> The typical way people behave and interact with each other, like whether they dress casually or formally, or if they use first names or titles.
Workplace Traditions	<i>Regular Practices</i> The regular activities and rituals that happen in the workplace, such as team lunches, annual parties, or morning meetings.
Work Environment	<i>Feel of the Place</i> The overall atmosphere and vibe in the organization, like whether it feels relaxed and fun, or serious and formal.
Communication Style	<i>How People Talk</i> The way people communicate with each other, whether it's through emails, meetings, is respectful or formal or informal.
Leadership Style	<i>Management Approach</i> How leaders and managers run the organization and interact with employees, whether they are approachable and supportive or distant and authoritative.
Employee Relationships	<i>Getting Along</i> The way employees relate to each other, whether they feel like a close-knit family or just work colleagues.

Organizational culture is important as it leads to job satisfaction and can make employees feel happy, valued, and motivated. It can also contribute to the overall success of the organization by aligning everyone towards common goals.

¹⁰ Source: Albert J. Mills et al., *Organizational Behaviour in a Global Context*, Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007.

BCCC Staff Feedback about Culture

In the on-one-one interviews with BCCC staff, individuals were asked a series of questions about the current organizational culture. Overwhelmingly, the one thing staff report enjoying the most about working at BCCC is the children. They all report having a passion for the work that they do and show genuine care for the children.

Due to growth in the organization resulting in a lack of administrative capacity and changes and demands in the child care sector, there are a number of aspects of workplace culture that staff find challenging or would like to see improved. Staff would like to have a supportive and positive environment, fostering teamwork, and ensuring mutual respect among staff

Financial Information

Sources of Revenue

BCCC has two (2) main sources of ongoing revenue. These include:

- Bruce County, as the Service System Manager
- Parent fees

In addition to the above, in some years, BCCC receives a minimal amount from donations.

Bruce County provides the following types of funding to BCCC:

- Fee Subsidy
- Wage Enhancement Grant
- General Operating Grant
- Enhanced Program Staff
- Special Purpose Funding
- Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care System Funding

The amount of funding provided to BCCC through the General Operating Grant has remained fairly consistent for the last three (3) years. See the table below. This is because the County receives a similar allocation from the Province each year. Due to this there is no ability to obtain more funding from this source. If the funding formula changes and Bruce County receives a higher allocation there may be an opportunity to present a case for further funding.

2021	2022	2023
\$336,114.04	\$337,927.05	\$347,936.53

The CWELCC initiative, which offsets the reduction in parent fees has limited the amount of funding that can be raised through parent fees for child care spaces governed by this initiative (toddler and preschool spaces). With CWELCC, BCCC has limited opportunities to increase its amount of revenue. One avenue to explore are the parent fees and capacity in the school age program as this program is not a part of CWELCC.

Note: The provincial government has announced a new child care funding approach to begin January 1, 2025 which will provide cost-based funding.

Fiscal Performance

Fiscal performance (the organization’s financial bottom line) is an important aspect of financial viability and sustainability. The industry standard for fiscal performance is 1.0 or higher (meaning the organization is breaking even or has a surplus at year end versus having a deficit at year end).

When reviewing BCCC’s financial information since 2020, the centre has realized a deficit at year end in each of the years. Of note is the COVID-19 pandemic which would have largely contributed to this higher deficit due to increased staffing needs and less children due to regulations at the time.

The fiscal performance of BCCC has been improving each year (0.89 in 2020 to 0.95 in 2023), though the centre is still running a deficit at the end of each year. This deficit, which was \$62,947 (2.9% of the operating expenses) in 2024, is being funded from the Municipality of Brockton’s tax rate. This deficit is Brockton’s financial contribution to the child care centre through the tax rate. Between 2015 and 2019 this funding was \$70,774. From 2020 to 2023 this funding fluctuated between \$85,538 in 2020 to \$49,046 in 2023 (providing less funding in 2023 than the last nine years).

See the table below.

Note: Although the Municipality of Brockton is a funding source for BCCC, it is not included in the centre’s annual budget. Neither are one-time payments from the County of Bruce for play based materials. This results in the perception of a year end deficit.

Fiscal Year End	Dec 2020 Actual	Dec 2021 Actual	Year over Year Change	Dec 2022 Actual	Year over Year Change	Dec 2023 Actual	Year over Year Change	Dec 2024 Budget
Total Operating Revenue	\$904,599.33	\$1,611,039.40	78%	\$1,595,648.87	-1%	\$1,846,747.50	16%	\$2,079,150.00
Total Operating Expense	\$1,029,016.12	\$1,792,305.80	74%	\$1,697,002.70	-5%	\$1,937,082.34	14%	\$2,142,097.00
Revenue Over/Under Expenses	-\$124,416.79	-\$181,266.40	46%	-\$101,353.83	-44%	-\$90,334.84	-11%	-\$62,947.00

Note: The COVID-19 pandemic affected revenue in child care operations across the Province, with a slow recovery from this impact.

The challenge with identifying savings in BCCC’s budget is that the staffing costs (wages and benefits) comprise more than 90% of the total operating expenses (91.4% in 2023 and budgeted as 92.8% in 2024). Although BCCC is similar to other municipally operated child care centres, it pays more in terms of an hourly wage/salary and provides more benefits than other licensed child care centres. Most centres allocate approximately 80% of their budget to staff wages and benefits.

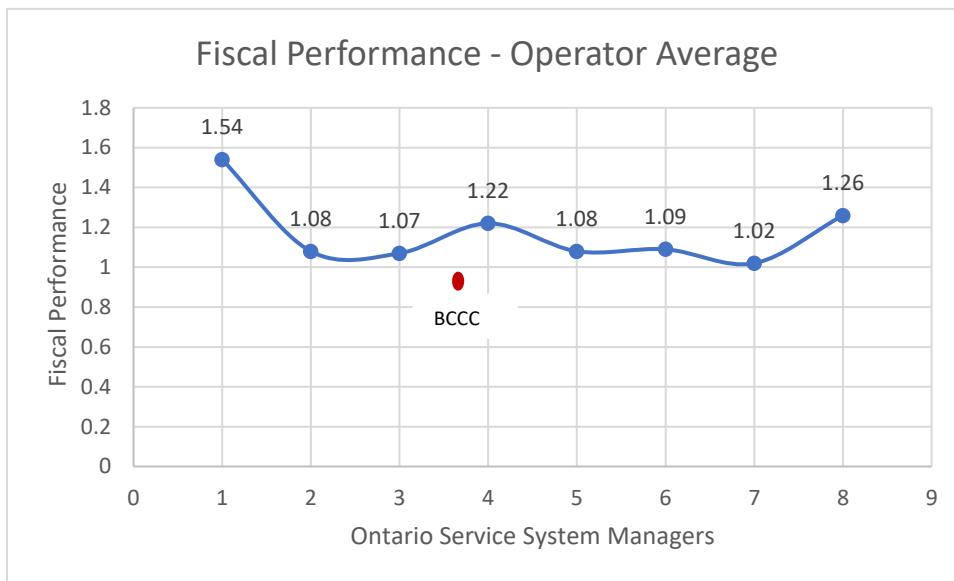
In addition to the challenges with fiscal performance, BCCC needs to conduct some housekeeping in the budget in revenue and expense lines where the actual has been substantially different from the budget for a number of years (for example: the expense lines SUPPLIES – PROGRAM and MAINTENANCE & PURCHAS, the revenue lines for Fees from County CWELCC and Parents).

Benchmarking

- 75% of licensed child care operators in Bruce County meet or exceed the industry standard in fiscal performance (1.0 or higher)

- The comparator municipally operated centres do not receive any operating revenue from the municipality that operates the centre(s)
- From nine (9) Service System Managers representing 162 child care operators, the average fiscal performance of licensed child care operators is 1.37. The range is from a low of 1.02 to a high of 1.54

See the graph below for a depiction of BCCC versus the Service System Manager averages.



Parent Feedback about Value for Money

96.6%

Almost all parents report feeling that the child care centre provides good value for the fees being charged.

98.3%

Almost all parents report that there have not been any additional costs of which they were not initially aware.

Focus Group Feedback about Financial Information

Participants in the external focus groups feel that BCCC has efficient fund management, reporting that the centre effectively manages and reconciles Ministry funding.

Opportunities for the Future

Municipally Operated Child Care Centres

A recent report (May 2024) by the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance ([The Municipal Role in Child Care](#)) offers a series of papers in which authors examine the ability of municipalities to fund, manage, and deliver child care in response to the increased demand. This report notes that municipally operated child care centres offer a crucial solution to the growing demand for early learning and child care services. Following are some highlights from this report.

Historically, municipalities in Ontario have operated or overseen child care centres since the 1940s. As of 2021, 16 Ontario municipalities operated 109 child care centres, totalling 6,173 spaces (out of a provincial total of 464,538 spaces for children 0–12 years, including before and after school programs). These numbers have declined dramatically in recent decades, down from 18,143 spaces in 1998.

See the table below.

Province	Municipally Operated Centres (% of provincial total)	Spaces (% of provincial total)
Ontario	109 (2%)	6,173 (1%)

As recently as 1998, 18% (18,143 spaces) of Ontario’s child care supply was municipally operated. This number has since diminished very substantially, as both the non-profit and for-profit sectors grew and many municipally operated services closed. For example, all of Peel Region’s 12 regional centres closed in 2012, all five (5) of the Region of Waterloo’s centres closed in 2020, and by 2023 even the City of Toronto was only operating 39 centres and one family child care agency, down from 56 centres only a few years earlier

Despite the reduction from 18,143 spaces in 1998 to just 6,173 in 2021, the importance of these centres remains undiminished. Countries with advanced child care systems like Sweden, Denmark, and Germany demonstrate the efficacy of municipal management in providing accessible and high quality child care services. Municipalities are well-positioned to address local needs, plan, locate, and design child care services that cater to the specific requirements of their communities, including cultural considerations and non-standard hours. This responsiveness and equity are harder to achieve in market-driven models, underscoring the potential benefits of increased municipal involvement in child care.

The advantages of municipally operated child care are evident in several key areas:

- Early childhood educators (ECEs) and other staff in these centres typically enjoy better working conditions, including pensions, benefits, salary scales, pay equity, and transparent

human resource policies. This has a direct impact on the quality of care provided, as better-compensated and supported educators can focus more effectively on their roles

- Municipal centres also offer more opportunities for professional development and career growth, which are less accessible in standalone private centres
- Municipalities can address child care shortages in underserved areas, particularly in rural and northern regions where private markets fail to provide reliable services

A 2021 external review of the City of Toronto’s directly operated child care centres found that these programs:

- Have a larger number of educators who are qualified compared to both the for-profit and non-profit sectors
- Provide staff with more hours of professional development, and
- Offer career development and career pathways within directly operated child care and other City divisions

As a result, Toronto’s directly operated programs

- Do not experience the staff turnover challenges that are frequent in the private sector,
- Have better quality scores and less variability in Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI) rankings, and
- Have fewer licensing infractions compared to other centres

Canada has mostly relied on the third sector to initiate and deliver child care – part of a long tradition of voluntary sector delivery of social and personal services, with mainly small or midsize entrepreneurs playing a sizable service-provision role in some regions and child care from “big box” corporations and sizable chains growing in the last decade or so. Given the pressure to expand child care in every part of Canada (with CWELCC), there is substantial room for municipal governments to become more significant players in boosting access to early learning and child care, considering both public management and public provision as opportunities

The report notes that it would be logical at this time – in which a substantial, equitable expansion of regulated child care is urgently needed – for Canadian municipalities to undertake to operate more public child care services than the relatively few currently available across the country.

The Township of Russell in Eastern Ontario is an example of this. As a lower-tier municipality, Russell Township has no obligation to operate child care or even a mandate as a service manager. The Mayor of the Township sees their work in this area as “an invaluable necessity for the continued growth of our community. This step is part of the Township of Russell’s plan

to attract and maintain personnel in a field of work currently facing significant labour shortages while increasing daycare spaces in our Township.”

The child care initiatives are part of the Township’s response to growth, including a 21.6% percent increase in children aged nine and under between 2016 and 2021. The Township’s current plans for child care include:

- Taking over the operation of one closed and one struggling private child care centre and expanding them to create 456 new spaces, bringing the total number of directly operated spaces to 831
- Helping non-graduate educators with the cost of schooling toward obtaining a Registered Early Childhood Educator designation

Public child care, particularly offered by municipalities, has a mostly untapped potential to reach the provinces’ child care expansion goals. Instead of hoping for private providers to decide to open a child care centre in underserved areas, municipalities can take a lead role in steering the public planning and implementation of child care expansion by building and operating their own centres.

The Knowing our Numbers report (2024)¹¹ also speaks to the value and benefit of public child care, noting that

“As part of a public infrastructure, staff are generally better paid and have enhanced access to benefits, professional learning opportunities, and career advancement. Publicly operated centres tend to have higher concentrations of ECE-qualified staff and enjoy sufficient staffing levels to allow educators to focus on their professional duties.”

Some examples of municipally operated child care centres from this report are provided below.

Hamilton

Hamilton’s directly operated Red Hill Centre sets a benchmark for wages and working conditions, as well as modelling best practices for community operators, particularly when working with vulnerable and diverse communities. Fees at Red Hill have long been comparable to other Hamilton centres, yet RECEs are paid approximately \$10 per hour more than staff working in community centres.

Rainy River

Since assuming direct operations of four child care centres and two EarlyON centres, Rainy River has been able to pay wages in licensed child care on par with RECEs working in full-day Kindergarten. As public sector employees, child care staff are enrolled in the OMERS pension and benefit plans. Staff also benefit from standardized human resource supports and

¹¹ Source: Akbari, E., McCuaig, K., Schurter, M. Varmuza, P., Akbari, S., Mudie, S. (2024). Knowing Our Numbers: A Provincial Study with a Local Lens on the Early Childhood Education Workforce in Ontario.

policies. A pool of resource teachers and supply staff is available to cover staff absences or leaves for professional training, as well as offer extra support for children with exceptional needs.

The DSSAB has a single public governance model, with parent advisory councils at each centre. The district prioritizes adapting operating hours to address families working shifts or with non-standard schedules.

Peterborough

There are reoccurring proposals to privatize the city's four directly operated child care centres. During the last attempt, community operators told city council that they would not take over the city's programs. The CEO of Compass Early Learning and Care, a large non-profit agency, was among those in support of city-operated child care:

"There is value in having decent jobs in child care in this community. The city centres have the salaries and working conditions we aspire to," she said.

Advocates appreciate that local governments face hard choices in an era of provincial constraints, but note that the prime outcome of divestment today and historically "... has been the elimination of good jobs for women and poorer services for poor people."

BCCC Management Feedback about Municipally Operated Child Care Centre

Being municipally operated is viewed positively by management, with several key benefits highlighted. These include:

- Municipal involvement ensures top-quality education and well-paid teachers, leading to a well-run centre
- The municipality provides substantial support, including budget assistance, Legal, HR, IT and finance services, and advocates for the centre
- This involvement is appreciated by parents, who feel confident in the quality of care and are willing to allocate their taxes towards it
- Benefits and pay for teachers are good, contributing to a secure and supportive work environment

Expansion

As part of the CWELCC initiative and the Province's goal to create an additional 53,000 new, affordable licensed child care spaces by December 2026, Bruce County, as the Service System Manager for child care, has developed an Early Learning and Child Care Directed Growth Plan.

Bruce County needs more child care spaces to meet the needs of its communities and child care operators are an essential part of the expansion within Bruce County's Early Learning and Child Care Directed Growth Plan.

Based on an interview with County of Bruce staff, Brockton is a priority for child care expansion.

The County has identified the need for an additional 69 licensed child care spaces for that area. Being part of the CWELCC initiative, the focus of these new spaces is for children aged 0 to 4 years (infants, toddlers and preschoolers). School age spaces can also be included in an expansion, but are not eligible for CWELCC funding.

These new spaces would need to be in place by the end of 2026 to receive CWELCC funding. In terms of funding for new spaces the following would be available:

- Eligible for operating funding for the new spaces through CWELCC. If approved for expansion, the child care operator would be guaranteed funding through the CWELCC program if operational by the end of 2026
- \$350,000 for up to 20 new spaces for the 0 to 4 age group to renovate or retrofit a physical location, for play-based materials, and a playground (for community based spaces). There is funding available from other child care envelopes if want to expand in the school and need to renovate or retrofit a physical location (school based spaces)
- Note: No capital funding is available for a build, so the most effective option would be to find a space and retrofit it. The County's Planning Department may have a list of potential locations. Also, Bruce Power may be interested in partnering in the development of a new child care centre to better support their employees' needs

More information about this process can be found in the County's [Early Learning and Child Care Expansion Toolkit](#).

If BCCC wants to explore expansion, there may be an opportunity to work with the BGCDSB and the County of Bruce on a capital expansion opportunity through the School Board's Capital Priorities program. This capital priorities program allows school boards to request child care capital funding for child care projects associated with a larger capital priorities project.

BCCC will want to consider and balance the priority of expansion vis-à-vis the need to modernize and ground its current operations after such a significant period of growth and change.

Technology

Child care centres are increasingly using software platforms to assist with management/administration duties and parent communication and engagement. The following are some examples of platforms being used:

1. **Digibot:** Over 2,000 licensed child care locations in Ontario currently use this child care management software. These organizations range in size, some with one or two locations and others with up to 100+ locations; including several Ontario school boards. Digibot works directly with compliance partners across all regions in Ontario to ensure the software remains up to date with the latest guidelines. Digibot offers a full HR suite, child attendance

system (including a safe arrival feature), and have parent, staff and admin portals. The price charged is by user

2. [Lillio \(formerly HiMama\)](#): This popular platform allows child care centres to communicate with parents through daily reports, photos, and updates. It also includes features for attendance tracking, billing, and lesson planning
3. [Brightwheel](#): Widely used in North America, Brightwheel offers parent communication tools, daily reports, photo and video sharing, digital check-in/check-out, and billing management
4. [Procare](#): Procare provides a comprehensive solution for child care management, including parent engagement tools, billing, attendance tracking, and compliance reporting
5. [Storypark](#): This platform focuses on creating a shared learning environment by allowing educators to document and share children's learning experiences with parents through photos, videos, and stories
6. [Sandbox](#): Sandbox offers a range of features including parent communication, attendance tracking, billing, and reporting. It helps centres manage their operations while keeping parents informed and engaged
7. [Kangarootime](#): This platform provides tools for communication, billing, attendance tracking, and classroom management, enabling child care centres to keep parents connected and informed
8. [KidKare](#): KidKare offers parent communication tools, meal tracking, attendance, and billing features, helping child care centres manage their daily operations and engage parents effectively
9. [Tadpoles](#): Tadpoles is designed to enhance parent engagement by providing daily reports, photos, and videos of children's activities, along with attendance tracking and health monitoring

Note: Pricing for the software platforms was not made available by the companies approached.