

Section: SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT	Name of Policy CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS SERVICE SYSTEM PLANNING
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Page 1 of 2

APPROVED BY: Director, Children's Services **DATE:** February 21, 2014

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 21, 2008 **LATEST REVISION:** November 20, 2017

Authority: Child Care Service Management Guidelines, 1999
Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres Business Practices and Funding Guidelines for Service System Manager (2018)

Intent: To outline requirements and expectations from both Regional Council and the provincial government of Niagara Region Children's Services for systems management and service system planning of licensed child care and early years programs and services in Niagara.

Rationale: To comply with Regional Council and the Ontario Ministry of Education requirements for planning since the transfer of Child Care systems management from the province to the regional municipality in 1999. To comply with Regional Council and the Ontario Ministry of Education expectations with the transfer of responsibility for systems management of early years programs and services (i.e. child and family centres) from the province to the regional municipality on 2018.

Niagara Region Children's Services, as the Consolidated Municipal Services Manager (CMSM), is the designated service system manager responsible for planning and managing licensed child care services and early years programs at the local level and is required to develop or revise service system plans in order to address requirements as set out in the legislation, regulations and provincial policy.

Definitions: Service Planning is the process through which delivery agents will determine the mix and level of licensed child care and early years programs and services appropriate to local needs and priorities within a framework of provincial legislation, regulations, standards, policies and priorities.

Policy: This policy addresses service system planning requirements for the licensed child care and early years system as related to Regional Council and the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Scope: Child care and early years service system planning is specific to licensed child care and early years programs services for which Niagara Region Children's

Section:
SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT
Name of Policy
CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS SERVICE
SYSTEM PLANNING

Page 2 of 2

Services receives funding from the provincial government for services for children under age twelve in Niagara.

Procedure: Niagara Region Children's Services is required to develop plans that are in keeping with Regional Council's planning cycle.

Service planning will be done in context of the full range of coordinated early years and care services for children and families. This planning includes engaging and consulting with children and families, service providers, school board and community agencies in order to deliver and implement a Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan.

The ministry of Education has identified the following priorities:

- Ensure the active engagement of Indigenous and Francophone partners in the planning, management and delivery of responsive programs and services.
- Facilitating smooth transitions and seamless care for children and families.
- Solicit advice and support local coordination and planning to enhance integration between early years services, schools, and specialized community services.
- Increasing access to address unmet demand for child care and early years services

Compliance: Niagara Region Children's Services Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan must be in keeping with priorities set in Regional Council's Business Plan and be approved by Regional Council. Niagara Region Children's Services must develop a Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan reflective of provincial interests set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.