
MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 10, 2023
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Darren Barkhouse - Manager of Children's Services
Report #: SOC23-001
Attachments: None

Title: Children's Services Division Overview – 2023 Outlook

Objective: Provide Council with an update and overview of the programs and services provided by the Children's Services Division and our outlook for 2023.

Background: The Children's Services Division consists of seven full time staff, including the Manager of Children's Services, one Early Years Coordinator, four Special Needs Resource Consultants, and one Administrative staff. Together we serve the children and families of Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County in licensed child care centres, before and after school programs, EarlyON family centres, and community-based programming and partnerships. We are one of the Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM), for the 47 provincial leads. We act as the funding administrator for eight service providers across 25 licenced child care sites distributing a number of supports such as fee subsidy, wage enhancement, Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) and Workforce Funding to support the day-to-day operation of these centres.

Analysis: Currently we are working through a number of objectives for 2023, including the implementation of CWELCC and extended Workforce Funding to support to ongoing recruitment and retention of qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) to the child care sector. We are also expanding our Resources Consultant reach into more community-based programs to support families without access to child care due to the current waitlists and capacity concerns facing the industry province-wide. We are also considering providing funding for four to five new community capital projects to expand child care capacity and utilize recently announced provincial funding to help offset costs. A review to bring licensed home child care in house with existing provincial funding to support further expansion of child care is under review.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget: The 2023 Budgets have been submitted and are aligned with federal and provincial funding supports. The new CWELCC and Workforce Funding lines have been added and are now actively used to support operations. As such, there are no financial implications from this report.

Financial impact on future year operating budget: New proposals for capital-based builds to support child care expansion plans will be developed (four-five sites proposed for 2023). The funding allocations, supports and partnerships will be worked into these new proposals, but exact financial implications to the City and its partners are unknown at this time.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Developing our Resources

Optimizing Stratford's physical assets and digital resources. Planning a sustainable future for Stratford's resources and environment.

Widening our Economic Opportunities

Strengthening Stratford's economy by developing, attracting, and retaining a diversity of businesses and talent.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities, and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Children's Services Division Overview – 2023 Outlook" (SOC23-001), be received for information.

Prepared by:

Darren Barkhouse, Manager of Children's Services

Recommended by:

Kim McElroy – Director of Social Services

Joan Thomson – Chief Administrative Officer