



**November 23, 2022**

Holly Moran  
Assistant Deputy Minister,  
Ministry of Education  
11th Floor, 315 Front St W,  
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

**Re: Canada-Wide Early Learning & Child Care (CWELCC) Implementation**

Dear Assistant Deputy Minister Moran,

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) is a non-profit association whose members are Ontario's Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs). In Ontario, Service System Managers play a central role in the planning, funding, administration and operation of early years and licensed childcare services.

On October 20, OMSSA held an in-person meeting with the 47 Leadership Table made up of Commissioners of Human Services at CMSMs and CAOs at DSSABs. During the policy discussion, issues came up related to the implementation of the CWELCC agreement in Ontario, these include:

- Workforce challenges was the focus for most of the discussion around early years and childcare. Programs are having difficulty with recruiting and retaining staff. The lack of staffing is leading to room closures, especially in before and after school programs where the working hours are split, making the working conditions less desirable.
- The focus has been on encouraging operators to opt-in to the system this year rather than being transparent about the accountability that will be required for taxpayer money provided through CWELCC so that this program is successful in the long term.
- Capacity concerns and the need to create new spaces to address expected demand from \$10 per day early years and childcare within Ontario.

OMSSA and its members have an interest in working with the Ministry of Education to find solutions to these issues and work together to ensure successful implementation of CWELCC in Ontario. During our discussion at the 47 Leadership Table meeting, several potential solutions were proposed for the Ministry of Education to consider, they include:

***Improved Communication***

- Increased regular communication between the Ministry of Education, OMSSA Children's Services Leads, and OMSSA's 47 Leadership Table.
- Increased meetings and communication at the Provincial Municipal Early Years and Child Care technical table.
- Avoid communication with operators and service managers at the same time as this can cause confusion. Where possible please provide more notice to service managers on guidelines, policies, and funding allocations.

### ***CWELCC Program***

- Profit caps should be considered to ensure taxpayer money goes to fee reductions and not enhancing profits.
- A balanced approach is needed between non-profit and for-profit to avoid them competing.
- Funding for 2023 was recently released (cost recovery model will continue for operators (CMSMs will provide funding to cover fee reductions), but the Ministry has advised of a funding formula change for 2024. Additional notice of funding changes and clarification for 2024 and beyond will provide more confidence for service managers and operators about the sustainability of the program.
- Reconciliation for 2022 and 2023 needs to be defined for CMSMs and DSSABs so that there is an understanding of how to allocate and recover funding not used as part of CWELCC.

### ***Prioritizing the Recruitment and Retention of Child Care Workforce***

- A Province wide recruitment strategy is required to address RECE and workforce shortages. A recruitment approach modelled after the health sector with nurses and PSWs should be considered.
- The wage floor is insufficient to recruit and retain Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) in the current labour market. The province should provide funding so that wages are on par with those offered at school boards within their ministry. This also has an impact on quality.
- Continue the one-time funding meant to assist municipalities with recruitment, retention, and professional development.
- Before and after school programs need to be looked at to find ways to make the positions more attractive; consider partnerships with school boards, EarlyON operators, etc., to try and address split shifts.
- Consult with CMSMs and DSSABs on how the province can design a RECE recruitment and retention strategy for the Province of Ontario. This could include greater provincial recognition of the importance of RECEs and collaboration with key partners.

### ***Child Care Expansion and Growth Plan***

- Capital funding is required to support childcare expansion. This funding should be balanced between school-based and community-based locations to meet local needs and reduce risks.
- A provincial capital strategy to ensure capacity meets expected demand.
- Local quality programs should be supported by the ministry to ensure that new childcare centres are providing high quality experiences for children. Municipalities should have the discretion to make local quality programs a requirement of operators participating in funding agreements.
- The Ministry of Education should consult with municipalities prior to developing childcare expansion plans to ensure that the plans address local needs, including the needs of diverse communities and families.

OMSSA members appreciate our relationship with the Ministry of Education and look forward to a continued government to government partnership on finding solutions to challenges with implementing CWELCC.

Service Managers want to partner with the province, work towards a clear vision for \$10 per day early years and childcare while ensuring a smooth transition and implementation within local communities.



OMSSA appreciates the Ministry of Education listening to Service Manager concerns and look forward to working collaboratively to find solutions that would improve quality, affordability, equity, and access for children's services within the Province of Ontario.

Sincerely,

**Cathy Cousins**  
**President**

**Doug Ball**  
**Executive Director**