



## BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2023-33

MEETING DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

SUBJECT: CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS' SERVICE PLAN 2023-2028

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### RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2023-33 (Integrated Social Services Division) we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, approve the draft 2023-2028 Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan as presented;

AND THAT the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to submit the approved 2023-2028 Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan to the Ministry of Education.

### REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with information regarding the proposed 2023-2028 Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan.

### BACKGROUND

The *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* requires Service System Managers to establish a Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan for their service area that addresses matters of provincial interest under the Act. The current TBDSSAB plan was presented to the Board at the July 27, 2017 meeting (Report No.: 2017-50) and was established to prepare for TBDSSAB assuming responsibility for service delivery and management of the Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres as of January 1, 2018. An updated plan was initially requested by the Ministry of Education but was deferred until 2023 due to the changes brought about by the Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care program.

Building on the provincial interest under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, the 2023-2028 Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan assesses community need, is reflective of engagement with community partners, establishes key priorities and outcomes, and outlines steps for implementation.

The proposed plan is intended to be fluid and flexible to adapt to the ongoing implementation of the Canada Wide Child Care and Early Years System implementation over the next five years.

Service plans are required to include the following key elements:

- environmental scan results that assess current and future child care and early years' service gaps and opportunities;
- a description of the community planning processes used to inform the development of the plan and a commitment to consult, at regular or relevant intervals, through the life of the plan;
- strategic priorities and intended outcomes that are responsive to community needs and align with Ontario's vision for child care and early years and provincial interest;
- a measurable and action-oriented implementation plan that describes how strategic priorities and outcomes will be met; and
- accountability methods including the public posting of plans and reporting in accordance with the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. In addition to the key areas identified, Service System Managers should also identify any other programs, needs, opportunities and/or challenges that may exist in their communities in their service system plan to support the ongoing reporting and planning process.

Administration held three consultations sessions with key stakeholders and community partners to gather feedback and input into the plan. Consultations included the Child Care Supervisors Network, EarlyON Children and Family Network and Children and Youth Community Partners Table. On July 20, 2023, the plan was presented to TBDSSAB's Child Care and Early Years Advisory Table where it was reviewed and endorsed to bring forward to the Board.

## COMMENTS

The plan includes internal information and external data obtained through broad research and review. The data is an important component of service system planning as Administration endeavors to maintain an understanding of the environmental factors that influence the delivery of child care and early years' services in The District of Thunder Bay.

The plan will guide the service delivery and management of the sector and ensure that key priorities are addressed. The communication of the plan throughout the sector will support open understanding and promote a system-wide focus.

An annual review of the plan will be conducted to measure progress and identify new additions that may come forward in a given year. The commitment to have the plan be flexible is important to the transformation of the Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care System.

### STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

This Report supports the Strategic Plan vision of establishing flexible, inclusive services through enhanced Child Care and Early Years' Programs. Decisions made as part of the plan will continue to support the Strategic Plan.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



There are no immediate financial implications related to the approval of the Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan, however, the plan will guide ongoing investment in sustaining the child care and early years system. Any future implications will be presented to the Board as part of the TBDSSAB annual budget process.

### CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the draft 2023 – 2028 Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan be approved as presented and submitted to the Ministry of Education.

### REFERENCE MATERIALS

Attachment #1 [DRAFT Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan 2023-2028](#)

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SIGNATURE	
APPROVED BY	Ken Ranta, Director, Integrated Social Services Division
SIGNATURE	
SUBMITTED BY:	William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer



**THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD**

# Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan

**2023 - 2028**

## Message from the Manager

We are pleased to introduce The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board's Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan for 2023-2028.

The *Child Care and Early Years Act* legislates that all Service System Managers develop a service plan. This plan sets the path for how The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) will continue to build and grow a child care and early years system that is responsive to the current and future needs of children and families in the District of Thunder Bay.

High-quality licensed child care and early years programs are necessary for supporting a robust economy, addressing the impacts of poverty, increasing women's workforce participation, and for the wellbeing of all children.

The March 2022, Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC) announcement that would see child care fees reduced to an average of \$10 per day by 2026 has created a climate of transformative change. This plan has been developed to consider these significant changes and to adapt, where necessary, to new requirements as they are presented.

Through our research and broad community engagement, we have developed a plan that is focused on five key priorities to meet the province's goal of child care being Accessible, Affordable, Inclusive, Quality and Accountable. Achievement of these priorities will depend on the ongoing collaboration and shared commitment from all our many community partners, families, service providers, and the Ministry of Education.

I would like to thank the many individuals who contributed their time and input to develop this plan. Your valuable insight and thinking helped to create a plan that will keep us connected and accountable. Through our continued collaboration, this plan will set the path for how we manage the child care and early years service system for children and families in the District of Thunder Bay.

Thank you

**Louise Piercey, Manager**

Child Care & Early Years Programs

Integrated Social Services Division

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

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## The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

### **Mission:**

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board delivers provincially mandated services on behalf of the citizens of the District of Thunder Bay in an equitable and cost-effective manner.

### **Vision:**

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board provides quality services within the context of a commitment to social justice and recognition of people's potential to achieve self-sufficiency and to break the cycle of social assistance.

### **Values:**

At The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, we:

1. Acknowledge that all people have the right to dignity, respect, and quality of life.
2. Respect the diversity of cultures, skills, and abilities of all people.
3. Work in partnership with stakeholders to find innovative solutions.
4. Provide opportunities for life-long learning that are responsive to people's needs.
5. Embrace open communication.
6. Effectively manage our human and financial resources.

### **Ontario's Vision for the Early Years**

"Ontario's Children and families are well supported by a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible, and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/renewed\\_early\\_years\\_child\\_care\\_policy\\_framework\\_en.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/renewed_early_years_child_care_policy_framework_en.pdf) pg.4



## Introduction

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) values the importance of investing in the physical, social, emotional, and economic health of our communities by supporting child care and early years programs that are accessible, affordable, inclusive, responsive and of high quality. As the Service System Manager for the District of Thunder Bay, TBDSSAB leads the process to ensure that community needs are addressed.

The Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan (Plan), while flexible and able to adapt to local circumstances, will guide the work of TBDSSAB as it relates to child care and early years services for 2023 and beyond.

Ongoing service planning provides TBDSSAB with an opportunity to work collectively with families, service providers and community partners to gather information about our district's needs, analyze the impact of programs and services, and identify any gaps in services within our service area.

This plan aligns with TBDSSAB's objective to address the following five key priorities: Accessibility, Affordability, Inclusivity, Quality and Accountability in addition to aligning with our strategic vision of effective communication through continued feedback from internal and external sources. Achievement of these priorities will depend on the ongoing collaboration and shared commitments from families, service providers, community partners, and the Ministry of Education.



## Consultations

A key responsibility of the Service System Manager is to be in ongoing consultation with families, child care and early years' service providers and community partners for the planning of the Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan.

In the spring of 2023, TBDSSAB held three Child Care and Early Years' consultation sessions. The purpose of these sessions was to gather input to assist with the development of this plan and to identify key challenges and solutions facing TBDSSAB and the child care and early years community.

With a commitment to consult at regular intervals throughout the life of the plan, this collaboration, intentional dialogue and data collection ensures service system changes reflect the diverse experience of child care and early years providers across the District of Thunder Bay and provides insight on system needs, opportunities and challenges. Through membership on different committees and working groups TBDSSAB maintains connections with many relevant partners.

Participation in these groups also facilitates a greater understanding of the child care and early years sector, both locally and provincially.

- TBDSSAB Child Care and Early Years Advisory Table
- Child Care Supervisors Network
- EarlyON Hub Coordination Group
- District of Thunder Bay School Boards - Early Years Leads Group
- Early Childhood Education Program Advisory Committee – Confederation College
- Children and Youth Community Partners Table
- Child and Youth Mental Health and Addiction Community Planning Table
- NOSDA Children's Services Working Group
- OMSSA's Children's Services Network
- Data Analysis Coordinator Network of Ontario
- KeyON Provincial User Group

## Knowing Our Numbers Research Project

Child care expansion requires more educators, and the quality of Early Learning Child Care services depends heavily on qualified educators. Attracting and retaining educators can only occur if the profession is valued and properly supported. In the absence of a provincial workforce strategy, TBDSSAB, along with 42 other CMSM/DSSABs, are currently working with the Atkinson Centre at the University of Toronto on the *Knowing Our Numbers (KON)* research project.

Seeking to address a critical data gap across the province, this research project will aim to create a community-level child care and early years workforce data collection tool that enables ongoing planning and policy action toward a robust and healthy child care system. The insight from this project will shed light on the local workforce in communities across Ontario - driving forward planning discussions, shaping solutions, and supporting evaluation of investment.

Upon completion of the project, TBDSSAB will analyze the final reports and develop recommendations.

### Key Messages



Capturing the voices of the workforce across Ontario to better understand challenges faced today



Within child care, FDK, EarlyOn, home providers, supervisors and directors, RECEs/non-RECEs



Cross-provincial 43/47 Ontario regions have signed on to KON to support evidence-based policy planning



A local lens  
The unique regional challenges will be captured in the report

## Early Development Instrument

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a population-level research tool that measures developmental change or trends in populations of children at different levels of geography (e.g., provincial, regional and neighbourhood).<sup>2</sup>

The EDI, completed by kindergarten teachers in the second half of the school year, measures children's ability to meet age-appropriate developmental expectations in 5 general domains:



### **Physical Health & Well Being**

Children are healthy, independent, and rested each day.



### **Social Competence**

Children play and get along with others, share, and show self-confidence.



### **Emotional Maturity**

Children can concentrate on tasks, help others, show patience and are not often aggressive or angry.



### **Language and Cognitive Development**

Children are interested in reading and writing, can count, and recognize numbers and shapes.



### **Communication Skills & General Knowledge**

Children can tell a story and communicate with adults and other children.<sup>3</sup>

The EDI scores for the District of Thunder Bay provide a general understanding of how well the children in the area are developing. It also provides evidence of the need for additional measures to ensure there are quality, accessible child and family supports available and that all children and families have equal access to programs and services that are offered in welcoming, inclusive environments. EDI data helps provide a clearer picture of the strengths and needs of our child care and early years' community, to support positive impact in areas such as policy, programming, and community planning.

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<sup>2</sup> "What is the EDI?" Offord Centre for Child Studies. <https://edi.offordcentre.com/about/what-is-the-edi/>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The (EDI) Cycle 6 Data Collection began in the spring of 2023. TBDSSAB acts as a resource for early years research and data collection and incorporates this data into service planning and knowledge mobilization in the community. Once data has been collected and analyzed, it will be shared with the community.

## Child Care and Early Years Act

In Ontario, the legislation governing child care systems was established as the *Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA), 2014*. The CCEYA aims to ensure the health and safety of children and child care providers by applying rules to regulate child care environments as well as setting out the responsibilities of all parties. The CCEYA also sets out requirements in relation to the funding and resourcing of child care and early years programs and services.

## Role of TBDSSAB

TBDSSAB is responsible and accountable for managing a coordinated and responsive child care and early years system, as outlined under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.

As the service system manager of child care and early years, TBDSSAB:

- Manages local child care and early learning funding.
- Oversees professional learning supports for service providers and early learning professionals.
- Develops policies that support local and Provincial goals.
- Administers the child care fee subsidy program.
- Supports and monitors quality across the child care and early learning system.
- Provides oversight of child care and early learning providers through monitoring and management of service contracts.
- Supports and monitors Special Needs Resourcing.
- Develops the Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan to address community need and Provincial priorities in collaboration with children, families, early learning professionals and community partners.

The 10 key children's service areas TBDSSAB has the responsibility to administer are:

- 1 Fee Subsidy
- 2 Online Child Care Applications/Waitlist
- 3 Special Needs Resourcing
- 4 Quality Assurance
- 5 EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- 6 Journey Together – Indigenous Led EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- 7 Licensed Home Child Care
- 8 Ontario Works Informal Child Care
- 9 Wage Enhancement Grants
- 10 Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care

## Fee Subsidy

Child Care Fee Subsidy is an essential support for many families. Fee subsidy helps parents or legal guardians pay for child care costs at licensed child care programs or licensed home child care providers in the District of Thunder Bay.

To qualify for fee subsidy applicants must be working, going to school, receiving Ontario Works (and registered in an activity) or have a special or social need (parent or child). For special needs or social needs, a referral is required by a third-party professional. Referral forms are available on the TBDSSAB website. Based on eligibility, parents could qualify for full costs or pay a portion of the daily cost of child care to the child care centre and TBDSSAB pays the balance of the daily cost, directly to the centre on their behalf.



**789** unique children received fee subsidy assistance in 2022



**1,718** unique children are currently waiting for a child care space as of May 2023

## Online Child Care Applications/Waitlist

TBDSSAB provides a centralized online application process and registry for all families seeking licensed child care spaces in the District of Thunder Bay.

Parents and caregivers can register their child(ren) for licensed child care online at [www.thunderbaychildcare.ca](http://www.thunderbaychildcare.ca) and child care centres will contact them directly when a space becomes available.

## Special Needs Resources

Special Needs Resource funding promotes and supports the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care and early years settings at no additional cost to parents/caregivers. TBDSSAB has a purchase of service agreement for the provision of special needs resourcing (SNR) with Children's Centre Thunder Bay. Resource Consultants work with all child care programs, using a consultative model that provides support and education to all licensed child care and





licensed home child care programs to build capacity to support the success of all children in child care.

Resource Consultants, as part of the Child Care Support System (CCSS) team at CCTB, provide a wide range of services and supports for children with special needs and their families. These supports may include, but are not limited to supporting children in multiple locations, providing professional learning experiences for individuals working with children with special needs in licensed child care and early years settings, providing educators and child care staff with program adaptation strategies, supporting the development of individualized support plans (per Ontario Regulation 137/15 – Section 52), conducting developmental screenings, providing referrals to community agencies, providing information and resources for parents and obtaining specialized equipment as required.

TBDSSAB will continue to work with CCTB as well as community partners to address ways in which program supports are employed to ensure that all children have equitable access to early learning opportunities to help them succeed.



**137** unique children were assisted through the Special Needs Resourcing program at Children's Centre Thunder Bay in 2022

Principles of SNR service delivery include:

- **Inclusion:** All children are able to actively and meaningfully participate in licensed child care and early years programs and are supported to form authentic, caring relationships with their peers and educators (e.g., a class-wide approach which does not separate or exclude children with individualized 1:1 treatment/actions).



- **Capacity Building:** Research demonstrates that supporting educator capacity to increase their skills and knowledge helps address the needs of all children in their programs and fosters effective inclusive practices<sup>4</sup>.
- **Integrated Supports:** Children and families benefit from the intentional efforts of educators who collaborate and make relevant, timely referrals and connections to other programs and services to support their needs.
- **Foundational Conditions:** Ontario's pedagogy for the early years, *How Does Learning Happen?*, articulates a strength-based view of children, families and educators supported by four foundations that are essential for all children to grow and flourish: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression.<sup>5</sup>

## Quality Assurance

TBDSSAB's commitment to quality assurance focuses on high quality support and assistance provided to all TBDSSAB funded child care and early years service providers.

In 2019, TBDSSAB adopted a Pedagogical Model approach to quality child care and early years programming. TBDSSAB's team of (3) Child Care and Early Years Program Officers (POs) work alongside child care and early years staff to co-create, co-think and co-learn with respect to the unique needs, interests, and strengths of each individual program.

The goal of the Model is to effectuate high quality early years programs that will foster a strong, healthy start for children and aid in breaking the cycle of social assistance. Implementation of TBDSSAB's Pedagogical Model was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, POs were permitted back into programming sites and have since been working closely with all TBDSSAB funded child care and early years programs. Implementation of the Pedagogical Model is now on track and expected to be fully carried out by the end of 2024.

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<sup>4</sup> "Ontario Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service Management and Funding Guideline 2023." Ministry of Education. 2023. Pg 56.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

In early 2023 a new Capacity Building Process was developed to reinforce the Model and support child care and early years educators in their work with children, colleagues, and families. The purpose of this new process is to work with intentionality to ensure alignment with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* and encourage reflective practice in child care and early years programs. Through a phased-in approach, TBDSSAB POs will engage with programs to introduce and implement the Capacity Building Process with them. Once leadership teams have reviewed the "Grows and Glows" with the PO they will be responsible for setting commitments for their organization. POs will regularly follow up with leadership teams to review progress and provide support as needed.



A rubric has been developed to assess the quality of early years programming using factors outlined in *How Does Learning Happen?* This rubric will be used as a pre-measure to determine where a service provider is on the pedagogical spectrum and to inform discussions of continued commitments to improvement and quality. The Child Care and Early Years team will reassess using the same rubric to show changes in quality over time.

### **The Capacity Building Process will:**

- Create visibility of the Program Officers in the community, building relationships with educators and leadership teams in support of enhanced quality programming.
- Provide insight into what types of professional learning and capacity building initiatives programs need. What is happening in programs; what is the climate in child care and early years programs and what are children and families experiencing?
- Increase access to a range of continuous quality enhancement supports for educators and leadership teams.
- Build capacity through leadership and mentorship opportunities.
- Create a shared direction for child care and early years programs to align with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.
- Increase opportunities to engage in pedagogical conversations with educators.
- Support and celebrate strengths in programs.

## EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer free, high-quality programs for families and children from birth to 6 years old.

They provide opportunities for children to participate in play and inquiry-based programs with other children. Families and caregivers can get advice and support from professionals trained in early childhood development, as well as make connections with other families with young children.



### **Mandatory Core Services:**

- Supporting early learning and development
- Engaging parents and caregivers, and
- Making connections for families.

## Journey Together – Indigenous Led EarlyON Child and Family Centres

TBDSSAB, through the Ministry of Education Indigenous Early Learning funding, has service agreements with five Indigenous service providers. Indigenous Led EarlyON Child and Family Centres provide access to culturally relevant early years programming for children and families and foster opportunities for all children and families to learn about Indigenous culture and language from an early age.



**1,516** unique children  
served at EarlyON Child  
and Family Centres in 2022



**577** unique children served at  
Indigenous-Led EarlyON Child  
and Family Centres in 2022

## Licensed Home Child Care

Effective August 31, 2022, Our Kids Count became the Licensed Private Home Child Care Agency for the District of Thunder Bay. As a Licensed Private Home Child Care

Agency, Our Kids Count is responsible for coordinating and overseeing individual private home child care programs and services. At the time of this plan there are currently four licensed private home child care providers under this program.



**45** unique children served in Licensed Private Home  
Child Care in 2022

“Licensed private home child care is an essential part of the Child Care and Early Years service system. Our Kids Count has been a critical resource for children and families in the community for many years, and we’re confident that licensed home child care is in good hands with OKC. We are looking forward to working with OKC, and hopefully the expansion of private home child care offerings to other communities in the District of Thunder Bay.

**– Lucy Kloosterhuis, Board Chair, TBDSSAB (2022)**

## Ontario Works Informal Child Care

Child care funding is offered by TBDSSAB to Ontario Works participants through formal (licensed child care centers) and informal child care. Informal child care provides financial assistance with the cost of child care to remove child care as a barrier to employment and educational upgrading.



## Wage Enhancement Grants

The Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) benefits program staff in the licensed child care sector, helps retain registered early childhood educators (RECEs), and supports access to stable, high-quality child care programs for children. The WEG is also designed to help close the wage gap between RECEs working in full-day kindergarten (FDK) programs and RECEs and program staff working in licensed child care settings. In 2023, the WEG will support an increase of up to \$2 per hour, plus 17.5% benefits. In addition, the Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (HCCEG) will support an increase of up to \$20 per day for home child care providers.



**29** unique children served  
with Ontario Works Informal  
Child Care in 2022



**286** educators were in receipt  
of Wage Enhancement Grants  
in 2022

## Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC)

The Government of Canada has identified child care as a national priority to enhance early learning and childhood development, to support workforce participation, and to contribute to the economic recovery.

In early 2022, the Provincial and Federal Governments signed the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement. Funding under the CWELCC System will be used to build and leverage the success of Ontario's existing Early Learning and Child Care System by increasing quality, access, affordability, and inclusivity in early learning and child care.

TBDSSAB is committed to ensuring that the CWELCC System is planned and implemented in



accordance with the agreement and guidelines through a process that is fair, accountable, and transparent.

At the time of this report 100% of licenced child care operators, in the district of Thunder Bay have opted-in to the CWELCC system, and TBDSSAB served 2,280 children with CWELCC funds in 2022.

### Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan Actions<sup>6</sup>

Enhance the use of **evidence-based data** to evaluate and improve how the child care system supports children and families.

Improve compensation for low-wage Registered Early Childhood Educators through the **introduction of a wage floor**.

By September 2025, **lower licensed child care fees** to an average of \$10 per day.

**Create new licensed child care spaces**, targeting new child care spaces in geographic areas and diverse communities where they are needed most.

Gather data and **assess the barriers** to access for children of diverse populations and children with varying abilities.

Ensure space expansion plans and programming **support the needs of vulnerable and diverse populations**.

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<sup>6</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education. "Canada-Ontario early years and child care agreement explainer."  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/canada-ontario-early-years-and-child-care-agreement>

## TBDSSAB Service Delivery Sites

TBDSSAB has a vast geographic service area of 102,896 square kilometers<sup>7</sup> comprising 15 member municipalities and unorganized areas. Due to the geographical distances between communities of small sizes, TBDSSAB is not able to achieve the economies of scale in service delivery as would most CMSMs across the province, and thus service delivery within the District of Thunder Bay is more demanding upon human and financial resources.



TBDSSAB delivers services through eight offices throughout the District of Thunder Bay.

Each office is able to respond to the needs of the community in processing child care subsidy, responding to high-level program questions, and referrals to external agencies.

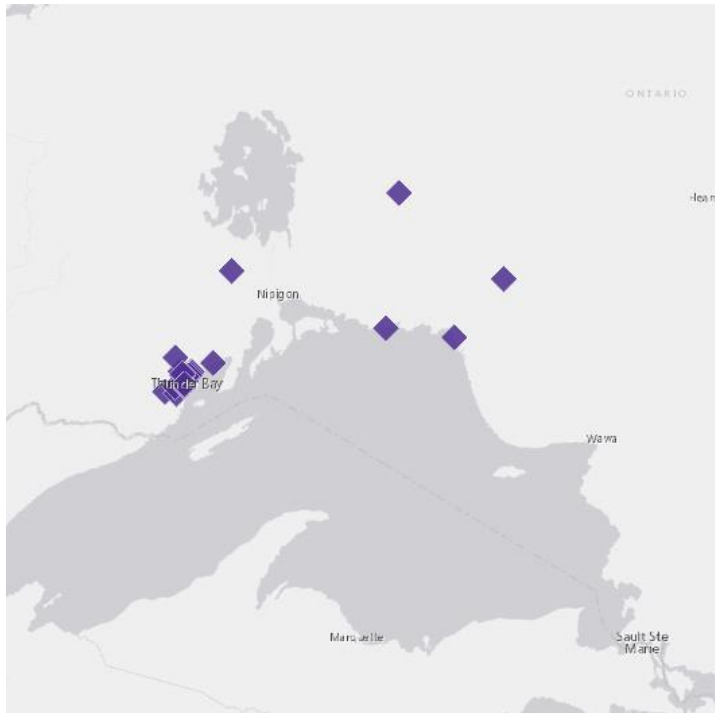
Currently, TBDSSAB has service agreements with 22 licensed child care service providers, 7 EarlyON service providers and 5 Indigenous-Led EarlyON service providers.

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<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). *Census Profile*. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed June 15, 2023).

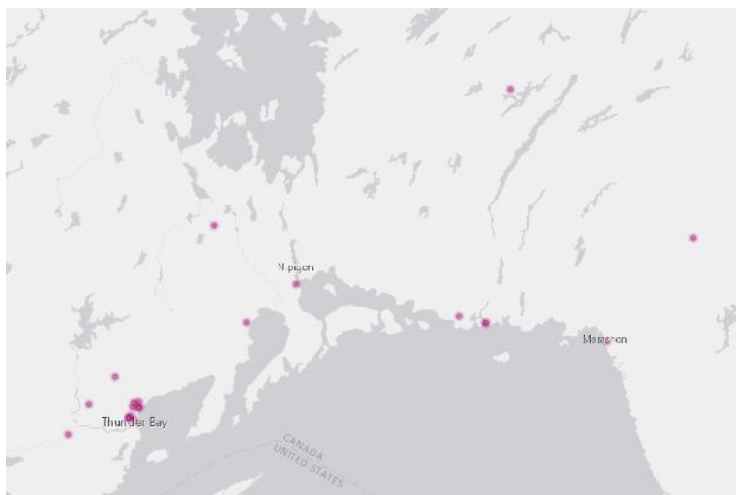


## Child Care Locations in The District of Thunder Bay<sup>8</sup>



- **49** licensed child care centres, serving 2,924 licensed spaces
- **62.3%** of spaces are non-profit
- **9.9%** of spaces are in Indigenous-led centres
- **2.5%** of spaces are served in French

## EarlyON Locations in the District of Thunder Bay<sup>9</sup>



- **7** EarlyON Child and Family Centre agencies
- **5** Indigenous-led EarlyON Child and Family Centres, offering programs at **21** sites. In 2022, there were **9,534** unique in-person visits by families

<sup>8</sup> TBDSSAB internal data

<sup>9</sup> TBDSSAB internal data



## TBDSSAB Snapshots



**1** Licensed home child care agency, with **4** licensed homes supported in the District of Thunder Bay



**137** children supported by the Special Needs Resourcing Program through Children Centre Thunder Bay in 2022.

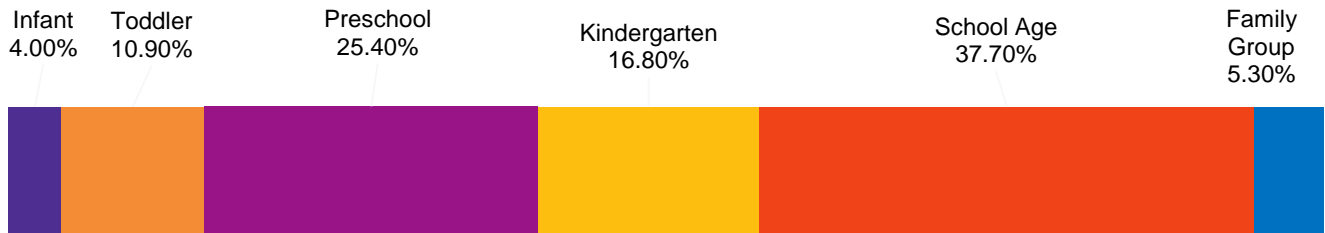


**355** educators working with children in child care and EarlyON centres in the District of Thunder Bay.



Only **48%** of educators working in program are qualified as Registered Early Childhood Educators.

### Distribution of Licensed Child Care Spaces



## Specialty Programs

### SAM MISOL (Single Adolescent Mothers/Mothers in Search of Learning)

This program is designed for students who are pregnant and/or single mothers under the age of twenty-one, offering an alternative program to obtain credits needed for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. TBDSSAB supports the program in partnership with Ontario Works and Lakehead Public Schools to offer on-site child care while parents attend class. The program is offered through Confederation College Children and Family Centre. Services include child care during class hours, transportation, parenting instruction, pre-natal education, nutrition education, enhanced academic supports, and family finance/budgeting programs.

### JSL - June Steeve Lendrum

Little Lions Waldorf Child and Family Centre operates a child care program daily out of June Steeve Lendrum Court. This housing program supports young mothers between the ages of 16-24 years who are pregnant or who have a child less than six years of age. Child care allows for these young mothers to work, go to school, or participate in learning opportunities such as parenting classes or various other life skills courses. Various community partners work to provide programs and services to the children and mothers within the building. These community partners include: TBDSSAB, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care (youth outreach, family service worker, residential council), Thunder Bay District Health Unit (Healthy Families, Healthy Communities, Street Nurses, nurse practitioner), and Faye Peterson Transition House.

### Before and After School Programming

The availability of before and after school programs is dependent upon whether there is sufficient demand and viability for a program. School boards determine sufficient demand at a local level by engaging with community partners, including parents with children who are enrolled or intend to enroll in kindergarten – Grade 6 with the school board. School boards are required to work with their local service system manager to assess if there is sufficient demand and whether a proposed before and after school program is viable.

School boards, working with community partners and families, can decide how they will provide before and after school programs. These programs can be offered by school

boards or third-party providers, such as a licensed child care centre or an authorized recreational and skill building program provider.

## French Language Services

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board's French Language Services Committee is responsible for advising the Board on the development and implementation of the French Language Services Plan for Child Care and Early Years programs and on issues relating to the provision of services in French.

The French Language Services Plan outlines the strategies used to ensure that the content and the intent of the French Language Services Act are followed in the delivery of services.

## COVID-19



**142** unique children served in Emergency Child Care  
for COVID-19 pandemic closures in 2021

Child care and early years service providers, across the District of Thunder Bay, worked hard to keep child care and early years services running safely throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic introduced many challenges for children, families, educators, and service providers. Notably, enrolment in child care dropped and impacted the financial stability of the child care sector. Families had to navigate programs and services with enhanced safety measures, while service providers faced continuous difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified educators to work in programs. In some cases, because of this workforce shortage, programs were forced to close or reduce program hours.

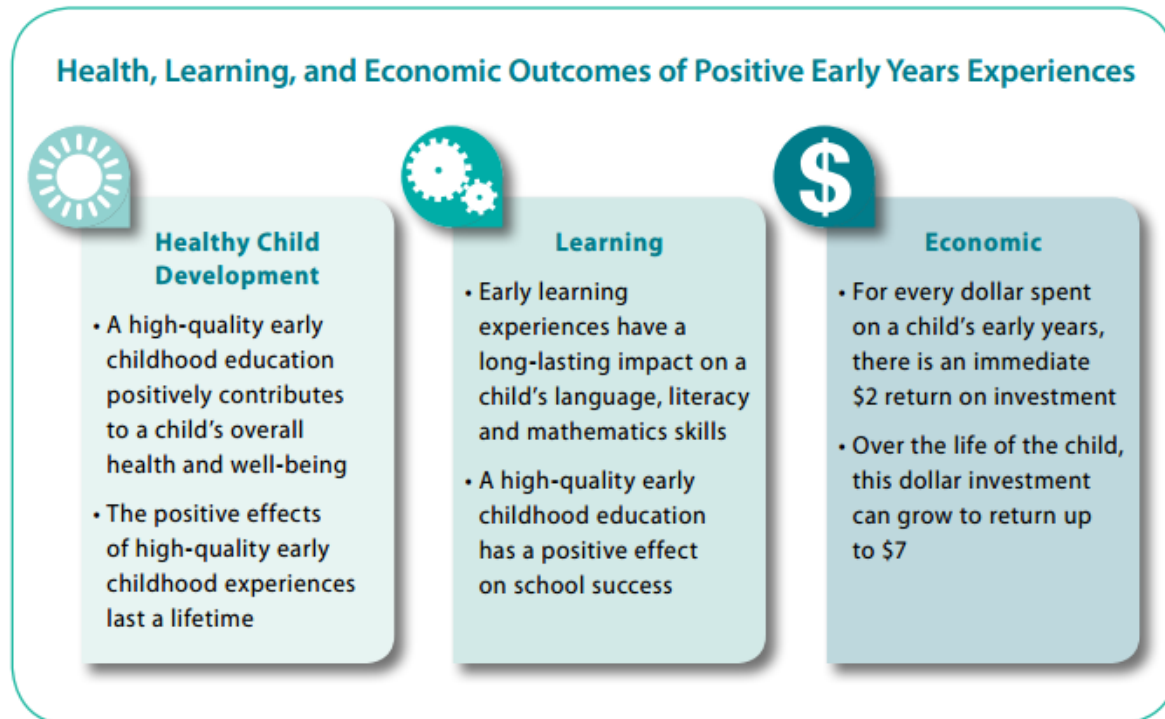


Together with local child care providers, TBDSSAB worked to ensure essential service workers had emergency child care during province-wide school and child care closures.

Child care is an essential service that allows parents and caregivers to work and contribute to our economy. The pandemic enhanced our understanding of the importance of early learning and child care as a key to economic growth and recovery in the years to come.

## Benefits of Child Care and Early Years Programs

Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework, 2017<sup>10</sup>



High-quality licensed child care provides Ontario's children with safe, responsive, and caring interactions that build a strong foundation for development and well-being. When children are nurtured in environments where their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical health is considered, they thrive in countless ways.<sup>11</sup>

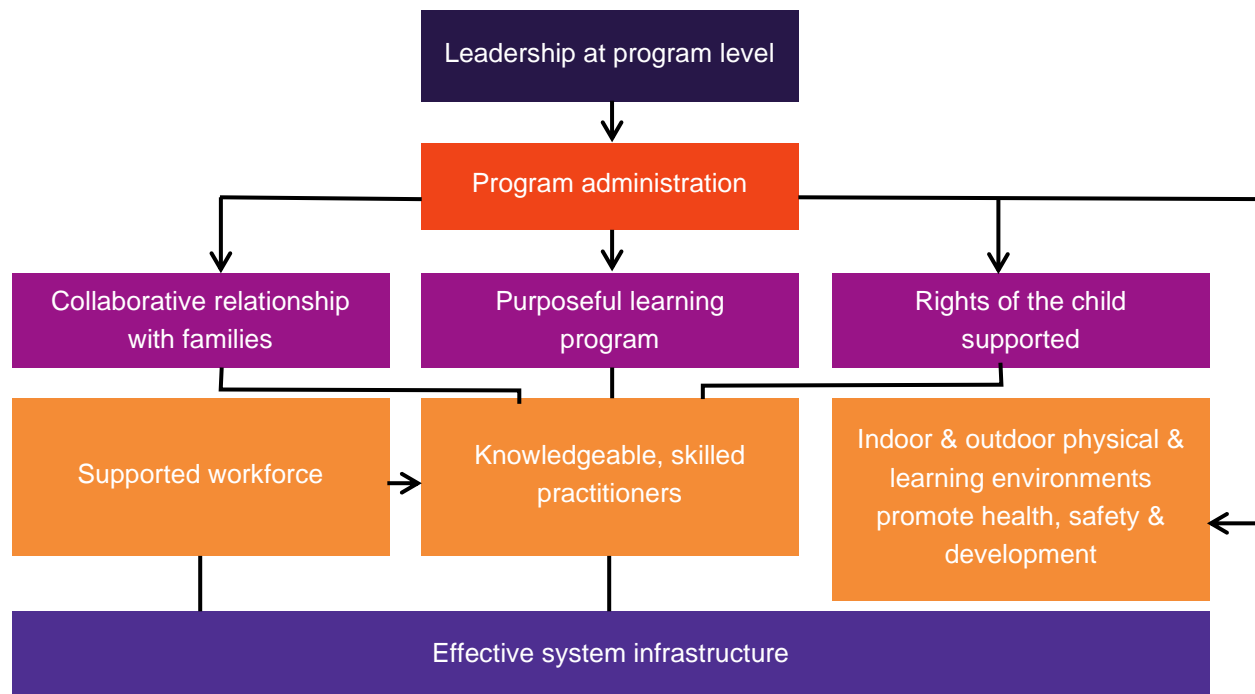
<sup>10</sup> Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework, 2017, p. 9

<sup>11</sup> "Our Values: What is Quality Child Care?" Canadian Child Care Federation 2023. <https://cccf-fcsge.ca/about-canadian-child-care-federation/values/quality-child-care/> (Accessed June 26, 2023)

High-quality licensed child care helps children develop vital skills during their first five years, which marks a critical developmental period in a child's life. Early childhood educators (ECEs) provide children with the foundation they need to grow into future leaders. ECEs use their extensive knowledge of learning and child development to create high-quality learning opportunities through play and exploration.

High quality early learning and child care (ELCC) also supports the family in its role as the child's primary caregiver and maintains collaborative working relationships with other community services working with the child.

### Interaction of the Nine Crucial Elements of Quality Learning and Child Care<sup>12</sup>



In a quality program, each child feels accepted, understood, supported, and respected by the adults, enjoys positive relationships with the other children and generally finds the activities interesting, engaging, and satisfying. Each family feels confident that the program promotes their child's well-being and optimal development and experiences its

<sup>12</sup> "Our Values: What is Quality Child Care?" Canadian Child Care Federation 2023. <https://cccf-fcsge.ca/about-canadian-child-care-federation/values/quality-child-care/> (Accessed June 26, 2023)

relationship with the program as respectful of its culture, traditions, values, and goals for its child, supportive of its parenting role and collaborative.

**Educators are trained to:**

- Understand brain development and how to support healthy growth.
- Identify children’s developmental stages and capabilities in social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and physical domains.
- Build partnerships with families to support children’s well-being.
- Plan activities that promote learning and build on children’s current abilities and interests.

**Benefits to Children:**

- Improved physical and mental well-being
- Decrease in chronic health problems
- Increased self confidence
- Improved outcomes in literacy, math, and science
- Higher rates of completing high school
- Increase in conflict resolutions skills

**Community Benefits:**

- Increases the number of women in the workforce
- Decreases the need for social assistance
- Increases household income
- Decreases participation in criminal activity

## How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy For The Early Years

*How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years* is the foundation for early learning and child care.

The pedagogy identifies the child at the centre of learning and development through meaningful connections such as relationships between children, families, and educators.

There are four foundations to ensure optimal learning for children include:

- **Belonging**  
Creating a sense of belonging through fostering relationships and connections.
- **Wellbeing**  
Supporting children's sense of self, health, and wellbeing.
- **Engagement**  
Creating environments and experiences to engage children through play and inquiry.
- **Expression**  
Supporting positive self-expression and communication in all forms.<sup>13</sup>

Within the pedagogy children are viewed as competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential and experience. Moreover, parents and caregivers are co-learners and leaders in influencing positive child, family and community experiences and outcomes.

Quality child care and early years programs are built on positive, responsive relationships, engaging environments, and meaningful experiences for children, delivered by qualified and supported staff.



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<sup>13</sup> Ontario Government. Ministry of Education. 2014. How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. <https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>



## Access and Inclusion Framework

Ontario's vision for access and inclusion is that more children of all abilities and socio-economic backgrounds can actively and meaningfully participate in child care and be supported in forming authentic, caring relationships with their peers and educators.

The purpose of the Access and Inclusion Framework is to support CMSMs and DSSABs develop and implement local service plans with an increased focus on access as it relates to inclusion.

Funding for growth will be allocated to ensure equitable access to child care for low-income families, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities, children with special needs and Francophone and Indigenous children. To support families who are shift workers, service managers must also take into consideration opportunities to increase the availability of flexible models of care, to include evening, weekend, and overnight child care.

To ensure that all children, despite their differing needs, have equal opportunity to succeed, child care and early years programs will be supported by the Child Care Support Services team at Children's Centre Thunder Bay, to adopt inclusive practices to support the principles of accessibility, participation, belonging, and equity. This vision is supported by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In January 2023, TBDSSAB met with child care licensees to discuss the possibility of expansion. The result of this discussion was a unanimous opinion that the existing child care programs were not able to consider the opening of more spaces currently due to a shortage of qualified staff. There was consensus among operators that there is a need to attract new educators to meet the Ministry's proposed growth targets as the most significant impediment to growth that exists within the child care system is the lack of a qualified workforce.



**290** full time equivalent  
(FTE) program staff  
required to operate at full  
capacity.



**48%** of program staff are  
Registered Early Childhood  
Educators



## What is being done to address this shortage?

### Early Childhood Education Diploma Program

A 2-year Early Childhood Education Diploma program is offered at Confederation College.

Of the 35 new ECE graduates in 2023, 29 have already secured employment in the sector either on a part-time or full-time basis. As well, most first year students have secured employment within the child care sector for the summer of 2023.

Confederation College projects 30 graduates from the ECE program in 2024 and currently has 40 domestic and 20 international students who have applied for the September 2023 ECE program.

Year	# of Graduates
2021	34
2022	18
2023	35

In 2022 and 2023, TBDSSAB received Workforce Funding from the Ministry to support recruitment, development and retention of the child care and early years workforce.

The strategies developed for this effort align with the following objectives:

- Sustain the existing child care and early years workforce to ensure a more stable and high-quality early years and child care system.
- Enhance access to opportunities for the workforce that promote retention and recruitment, including professional development, training, and qualification upgrade programs.
- Grow the number of qualified staff in the early years and child care workforce to increase access to high quality licensed child care for families.
- Attract and support the development of an increasingly diverse workforce to reflect the children and families accessing early years and child care programs more effectively.

## **Pre-Early Childhood Education Certificate Program**

In response to challenges in workforce shortages and recruitment efforts in the child care and early years sector across Northern Ontario, Confederation College partnered with several Northern Ontario colleges and Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) in 2022 to create free access to training for a new Pre-Early Childhood Education Certificate program.

The goal of the program is to attract more individuals to the child care and early years sector and increase local candidate pools.

The 10-week program is delivered online and is intended to be a stepping-stone to introduce individuals to the field of early childhood education. With no prerequisites required, the program gives participants the basic skills and knowledge required to start working in an early years and childcare setting.

There was a total of 15 students who completed the Pre-ECE Certificate Program at Confederation College in 2022/2023.

## **Bursary Fund**

To enhance access to opportunities for the workforce that promote recruitment and retention of Registered Early Childhood Educators in the District of Thunder Bay, TBDSSAB, in partnership with Confederation College, has established a 2023 bursary fund for all first and second-year domestic students in the 2023/2024 Early Childhood Education program (ECE).

At the time of this report, it is anticipated that 60 first-year domestic students and 42 second-year domestic students will be in receipt of these bursary funds to support them with their education.

## **Fast-Track Early Childhood Education Program**

This 1-year program which is being offered at Confederation College in partnership with TBDSSAB is designed to give individuals currently working in child care settings, who are interested in becoming qualified Early Childhood Educators, the ability to complete their diploma studies combining prior learning assessment opportunities, professional portfolio development, as well as critical course and placement experiences. Successful participants of the program will receive a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and be

eligible to become Registered Early Childhood Educators with the College of Early Childhood Educators.

The fast-track program commenced in June 2023 and is expected to end in August 2024.

## System Wide Professional Learning

In response to the Professional Learning Strategy requirements under the Child Care and Early Years Workforce Funding, TBDSSAB was pleased to facilitate two system-wide professional learning days in 2022/2023. Coming together with over 340 educators at each session provided a wonderful opportunity to foster community, engage in reflective practice and support professional growth, while promoting meaningful experiences for educators working with children and families in the child care and early years community.



## Other areas being explored at this time include:

- Joint recruitment campaign and marketing opportunity to develop a video to promote the attract attention to the ECE profession.
- Dual credit course in partnership with high schools throughout the district and Confederation College to deliver credits which may be applied towards an ECE diploma upon graduation. This would give high school students the opportunity to take specific ECE courses in their school. It would also give high school students an opportunity to acquire knowledge of the ECE Program and attract students into the ECE program as a career path.

TBDSSAB will continue to engage and collaborate with local community partners to build and implement innovative strategies to support the recruitment and retention of the child care and early years workforce.

## The Current TBDSSAB Child Care Landscape

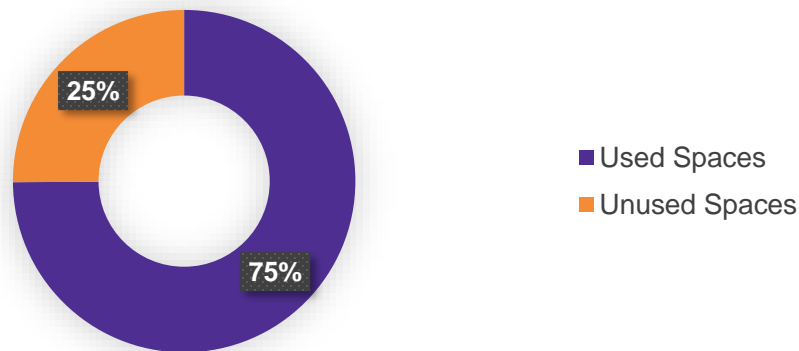
To identify and address the potential for directed growth of child care spaces for the birth to preschool age group in the District of Thunder Bay, the current landscape must first be explored.

The following data outlines the difference between licensed versus actual spaces. Licensed spaces are the maximum child care spaces that the Ministry allows for based on the square footage of each centre. The Ministry may allow for alternate capacities in the same spaces (for example, 2 toddlers with 10 preschool children) if appropriate. Actual spaces are the current spaces being filled in the system.

The following graphs illustrate the current infant, toddler, and preschool system.

Illustration #1 shows the percentage of used and unused spaces based on the Ministry's licensed spaces of 1,128.<sup>14</sup>

**Operating Capacity of Licensed Spaces  
Infant, Toddler and Preschool  
May 2023**

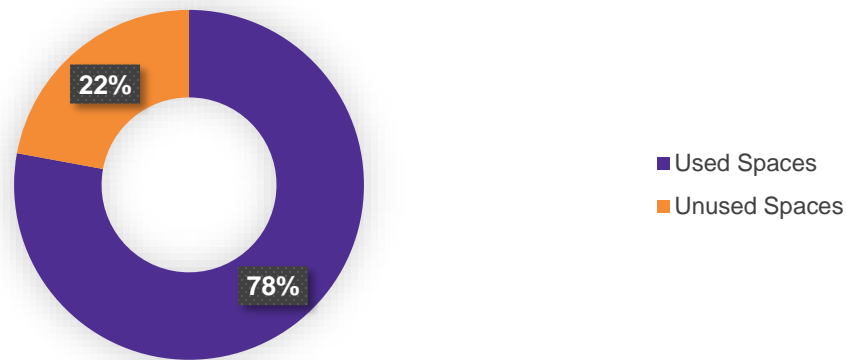


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<sup>14</sup> TBDSSAB monthly reporting. Note – specialty programs like SAM/MISOL, Licensed Home Child Care, and June Steve Lendrum are excluded from this count.

Illustration #2 shows the percentage of used and unused spaces of actual reported capacity of 1,082.

**Operating Capacity of Actual Reported Spaces Used  
Infant, Toddler and Preschool  
May 2023**



As of May 2023, the licensed home child care system had a licensed capacity of 156 spaces in 26 homes but is currently operating at 24 occupied spaces in 4 homes.

The current child care system requires an additional 130 educators to allow the system to operate at full capacity of 2,756 licensed spaces. The child care system operates on an educator to child ratio, as outlined in the CCEYA.

The ratios are as follows:

- Infant: 1 educator for every 3 children
- Toddler: 1 educator for every 5 children
- Preschool: 1 educator for every 8 children

Also, within the CCEYA, programs are allowed to operate under an age group mix where there is a 20% mix of infant to toddlers, 20% mix of toddler to preschool and a 25% mix of preschoolers to kindergarten. Licenses also include alternate age group capacities for some spaces. These options assist in flexibility for service providers but create an environment where 100% occupancy of licensed child care spaces as reported is impossible.



TBDSSAB has worked to increase the number of licensed spaces over the past 6 years through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. This process generated 10 EOI's being submitted by interested parties. This resulted in the opening of 1 new non-profit child care program with 6 infant, 10 toddler, and 16 preschool spaces as well as 3 expansions of existing programs adding 9 infant, 5 toddler, and 16 preschool spaces.

The feedback received from those that retracted their submissions concerned the availability of educators. In the same period, two programs closed resulting in the loss of 18 toddler and 49 preschool spaces. This contributed to a net gain of 15 infant spaces, a net loss of 3 toddler spaces and 17 preschool spaces.

## Directed Growth Plans

To expand and strengthen the child care and early years system in the District of Thunder Bay we must ensure the system:

- Is responsive to the changing needs of the child care and early years landscape.
- Has the appropriate work force.
- Maximizes opportunities for placement of children.
- Ensures children requiring special needs resources are supported.
- Is sustainable well into the future.
- Supports the development of intentional practices that align with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.
- Establishes a common understanding of best practices across the early year's settings.
- Participates in on-going consultation with all stakeholders.

Total notional growth targets proposed by the Ministry included spaces to be created in schools as well as those in communities.

To ensure improved access to licensed child care, TBDSSAB identified the attached priority neighbourhoods/areas for targeted expansion as part of TBDSSABs Directed Growth Plan. **See APPENDIX A.**

TBDSSAB will endeavour to open 223 total spaces between 2022 and 2026 under the CWELCC system, consisting of 49 school-based spaces and 174 community-based spaces.

The Ministry has committed to work with TBDSSAB to meet our overall space expansion targets and acknowledges that the targets may shift from year to year to align with emerging needs within communities.

Pending on-going monitoring, the expansion of spaces will be dependent on many factors but the most important will be availability of the workforce.

## Child Care Licensing System

### Updated Regulations

To support the transition from open enrolment to directed growth, new regulations and changes to the licensing process have been introduced. New applicants for child care licences, and applications for expansions to existing child care licensees, will be required to seek early confirmation that their program will be eligible for CWELCC funding from TBDSSAB, prior to beginning a licensing application or applicants will need to confirm that they do not intend to enrol in CWELCC.

TBDSSAB will be asked to confirm with the Ministry that any new applications align with the Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan. This change is intended to streamline the licensing process and ensure that applicants, providing centre-based programs serving children under six have early confirmation related to whether their program will be eligible for CWELCC funding as part of their licensing application. All prospective licensees will also be required to secure local zoning approval (permitted use) prior to applying for a licence.

## Key Priorities 2022-2028

The TBDSSAB Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan builds on a vision of ensuring all families in the District of Thunder Bay have access to affordable, inclusive, high-quality, early learning and child care. This vision will guide TBDSSABs early learning and child care sector, including the many early learning professionals in our community.



The following section identifies TBDSSABs key priorities, intended outcomes, and actions for child care and early years in the District.

These five priorities are responsive to community needs and align with Ontario's vision for child care and early years.

All proposed actions outlined in the 2023-2028 Child Care and Early Years' Service Plan are subject to change based on ongoing funding allocations and local needs.



## Service Plan Objectives and Ongoing Priorities

### Accessible

Action	Timeline	Expected Outcomes	Measurable
Engage and collaborate with local community partners to build and implement innovative strategies to support the recruitment and retention of RECEs in the child care and early years workforce	Ongoing	Increase the number of qualified RECEs in the child care and early years workforce  Maximize occupancy in licensed child care programs	An occupancy rate of 75% is established for all centre-based child care programs by end of 2025
Identify applicable supports to grow Licensed Home Child Care	Ongoing	Increased number of available licensed home child care spaces	# of new LHCC providers
Prioritize expansion of CWELCC growth targets through continued collaboration and engagement with the child care community	Ongoing	Increased number of affordable child care spaces	# of new child care spaces
Communicate the availability of Qualifications Upgrade Grants (ECEQUP) for educators	Ongoing	Increase the number of qualified RECEs in the child care and early years workforce	# of educators in receipt of ECEQUP
Implementation of Confederation College ECE Fast Track Pilot Program	2023	Increase the number of qualified RECEs in the child care and early years workforce	# of individuals supported through the Fast Track Program  # of individuals graduated from Fast Track Program
Support of 1 <sup>st</sup> Year and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year ECE students at Confederation College through Bursary Award	2023	Increase the number of qualified RECEs in the child care and early years workforce	# of 2023 1 <sup>st</sup> year bursary recipients  # of 2023 2 <sup>nd</sup> year bursary recipients

Action	Timeline	Expected Outcomes	Measurable
Promote the ECE program as a potential career path for high school students	2024-2025	Increase number of students interested in ECE as a career path	# of CCEY Program Officer visits to local high schools  # of outreach engagements
Explore opportunities and work with child care and early years providers to examine the possibilities of offering programming that supports families who work non-traditional hours	2024-2025	Increase the availability of flexible models of care, to include evening, weekend, and overnight child care  All EarlyON programs offering flexible early years programming - (evenings, weekends, holiday closures, summer)	# of programs offering flexible models of care  # of families who have accessed flexible models of care # of EarlyON programs offering flexible programming
Explore opportunities for EarlyON service providers to provide community-wide outreach programming – libraries, mall, pop-ups, community events, social housing	2024-2025	Convenient and accessible child and family support available for families	# of EarlyON mobile programs
Explore opportunities to reduce barriers to fee subsidy application process	2025	Increased opportunity for eligible families to access child care	# of eligible families accessing fee subsidy

While TBDSSAB engages and collaborates with local community partners to build and implement innovative strategies to support the recruitment and retention of RECEs in the child care and early years workforce, initiatives will include:

- Work with Confederation College to explore opportunities to offer more diverse delivery of the ECE program
- Work with Confederation College on ECE Recruitment Media Campaign
- Support workforce retention through possible academic upgrade opportunities with Confederation College

- Explore Dual credit course in partnership with high schools throughout the District and Confederation College to deliver credits which may be applied towards an ECE diploma upon graduation
- Work with school boards and child care service providers to explore opportunities to increase student co-operative placements in child care programs

It is of note that if the current workforce shortage continues despite efforts to increase capacity, adding additional licensed spaces will lower operating capacity in the District of Thunder Bay.

## Affordable

Action	Timeline	Expected Outcomes	Measurable
Continued implementation of CWELCC to reduce the cost of child care	Ongoing	Average cost of \$10 per day for child care	Average daily cost
Continue to provide Child Care Fee Subsidy for eligible families	Ongoing	Continued assistance for low to moderate income families	# of eligible families in receipt of fee subsidy
Leverage funding from all levels of government to keep fees affordable	Ongoing	Affordable child care programs in the District of Thunder Bay	

## Inclusive

Action	Timeline	Expected Outcomes	Measurable
<p>Continued work with Indigenous partners in support of reconciliation</p> <p>Support professional learning opportunities that reflect reconciliation calls to action</p>	Ongoing	Increased number of licensed child care and EarlyON programs providing culturally relevant programming	<p># of child care and EarlyON programs providing Indigenous programming</p> <p># of child care and early years staff participation in Indigenous-led professional learning</p>
Support professional learning opportunities for the child care and early years system to learn about safe, inclusive, and respectful practices in support of LGBTQIA2S+ families	Ongoing	Programs and services reflect the diverse needs of children and families in the community and support people from a variety of different family dynamics and backgrounds	# of child care and early years staff participation in equity, diversity, and inclusion training

Action	Timeline	Expected Outcomes	Measurable
<p>Continued collaboration with Children's Centre Thunder Bay (CCTB) for Special Needs Resourcing Services (Child Care Support Services)</p> <p>Continued collaboration with community partners to build better awareness of the resources that are available for child care and early years providers to support children with special needs</p>	Ongoing	Enhance capacity of child care and early years' service providers to support the unique needs of all children	<p># of programs supported by CCTB</p> <p># of unique children directly served by CCTB Child Care Support Services</p>
Support collaborative community partnership between child care and early years community and Thunder Bay Multicultural Association (TBMA)	2023 - Ongoing	<p>Increase capacity of educators to support the needs of populations of diverse culture, as well as immigrant/newcomer populations in the District of Thunder Bay</p> <p>Enhance linguistic and cultural inclusivity in child care and early years programs</p>	# of programs engaged with TBMA
Support the coordination of mental health and professional learning support for children, families, and staff in early years programs	2023-2025	Increased Mental Health awareness and support for children and families participating in EarlyON programs	# of early years programs supported by mental health initiatives
Continued support of expansion of child care spaces at Consiel scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario	2025-2026	Expansion of French language child care	# of new French language child care spaces

## High Quality

Action	Timeline	Expected Outcomes	Measurable
Continued implementation of the Pedagogical Model through the introduction of the Capacity Building Process	Ongoing	To effectuate high quality early years programs that will foster a strong, healthy start for children  Improvement in quality of programs with increased implementation of <i>How Does Learning Happen?</i>	# of child care and early years programs who have been supported through the Capacity Building Process and have identified Program Commitments  % of providers showing improvement over time using Capacity Building Rubric as pre- and post-measure  # and % of child care and early years programs implementing Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, <i>How Does Learning Happen?</i>
Continued support of the Pedagogical Network in the District of Thunder Bay	Ongoing	Increased understanding of Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, <i>How Does Learning Happen?</i> and the connections between theory and practice	# of educators participating in Pedagogical Network  # of and % of programs using observation and pedagogical documentation to support their planning
Support opportunities for child care and early	Ongoing	Increased staff capacity	# and % of child care and early

Action	Timeline	Expected Outcomes	Measurable
<p>years workforce to access professional learning</p> <p>Build on a collaborative approach to offering professional learning opportunities in partnership with community partners</p>			<p>years' staff and # and % of child care and early years' providers actively participating in professional learning opportunities offered through TBDSSAB</p> <p>% of service providers reporting the training they accessed met their needs</p>
<p>Communicate the availability of Leadership Education Grants and Leadership Travel Grants for supervisors</p>	Ongoing	<p>Increased pedagogical leadership ECE administration, management, facilities management, fiscal responsibility, governance, human resources, employment standards, and labour relations</p>	<p># of supervisors in the District of Thunder Bay in receipt of Leadership Education and Leadership Travel Grants</p>
<p>Build on a collaborative approach to shared space agreements with local school boards and child care and early years providers through an increases awareness and understanding of the reciprocal agreements</p>	Ongoing	<p>Improved relationships in shared spaces in support of working together to contribute to the healthy development of children and families</p>	
<p>Develop a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the CCTB Child Care Support Services Team and the TBDSSAB Program</p>	2023	<p>Increased alignment of program supports</p> <p>Improved communication</p> <p>Increased accountability from service providers</p>	

Action	Timeline	Expected Outcomes	Measurable
Officers as they relate to supporting programs			
Support learning opportunities for child care supervisors to enhance the development of leadership and administration duties	2024	Increased leadership capacity	# of supervisors supported through leadership opportunities
Support the development of a mentorship program with community partners	2025	Increased knowledge and understanding of best practices in the early years for educators in the workforce and new ECEs  Increased staff retention	

## Accountable

Action	Timeline	Expected Outcomes	Measurable
Continue to meet bi-annually with the TBDSSAB Child Care and Early Years Advisory Table	Ongoing	Continued engagement of community partners, stakeholders, and service system users, in the on-going development of child care and early years services	
Expand quality assurance to include Governance, Administrative and Financial Reviews (GAFs)	Ongoing	Increased oversight of governance, administrative and financial accountability	# of GAFs administered each year
Share annual updates of Service Plans	Ongoing	Increased communication with CCEY stakeholders	
Development of Budget and Audit	2023	Increased accountability	Completion of guidelines



guidelines for service providers			
Development of CCEY Service Agreement Guidelines	2023	Increased administrative capacity	Completion of guidelines
Development of a survey to determine the overall satisfaction of experiences of families in the child care and early years sector	2024	Respectable, supportive environments for all families	Deliverable – community report upon completion of research
CWELCC 2024 Funding Approach – Financial Restructuring; ensure the funding calculation is transparent and easy to understand	2024	Maximize financial support available to child care and early years’ service providers	

## Conclusion

TBDSSAB is committed to on-going collaboration with our local child care and early years community along with our community partners in support of promoting comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated programs and services for families in the District of Thunder Bay.

Annual reviews of the Child Care and Early Years Service Plan will include ongoing consultation with stakeholders to monitor the impact of changes made and to ensure that the Plan is adaptive to emerging issues.

Achievement of our key priorities will require a shared commitment from all partners.

## Appendix A: Proposed Notional Spaces

### **2022 - School Based Spaces**

Geraldton Day Care in BA Parker School - These spaces (49) already existed in TBDSSAB's overall licensed system.

### **2023-2026 - Licensed Home Child Care Expansion**

Administration proposed that the Ministry consider the expansion of any new Licensed Home Child Care (LHCC) be a part of the community based notional space allocation. The expansion of spaces in LHCC will dependant upon the increase of LHCC providers and would include an allocation of 30 spaces in 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026.

### **2025/2026 - Kakabeka Falls Public School**

In 2018, the child care program at Kakabeka Falls Public School closed due to a staffing shortage which has left the community without a child care centre. This will be considered a priority area under the access and inclusion framework. The child care space is ready in this school and would only require funding for start-up and minor repairs and maintenance.

Expansion of space at Kakabeka Falls Public School will be dependent upon demand in the community and number of qualified Early Childhood Educators and would include an allocation of 5 toddler, 8 preschool, and 13 kindergarten spaces.

### **Consiel scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario**

This location would require capital that would be accessed through the Ministry's School Capital Fund. Administration has been in contact with the Board and have encouraged them to reach back to the Ministry of Education for details on establishing a new centre. The expansion of spaces at Consiel scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario will be dependent upon demand, availability of physical space and the number of qualified francophone Early Childhood Educators and would include an allocation of 5 toddler, 8 preschool, and 13 kindergarten spaces.

### **Township of Terrace Bay**

In December 2022, the Township of Terrace Bay reached out to Administration inquiring about child care in their community. Administration has shared with the township the most current Ministry criteria for new licensed spaces under the CWELCC System. The Township of Terrace Bay is expected to have a Child Care Needs Assessment completed in November of this year.

The expansion of child care in the Township of Terrace Bay will be dependent upon demand, availability of physical space and the number of qualified Early Childhood Educators and would include an allocation of 5 toddler, 8 preschool, and 13 kindergarten spaces.

## Appendix B: Environmental Scan

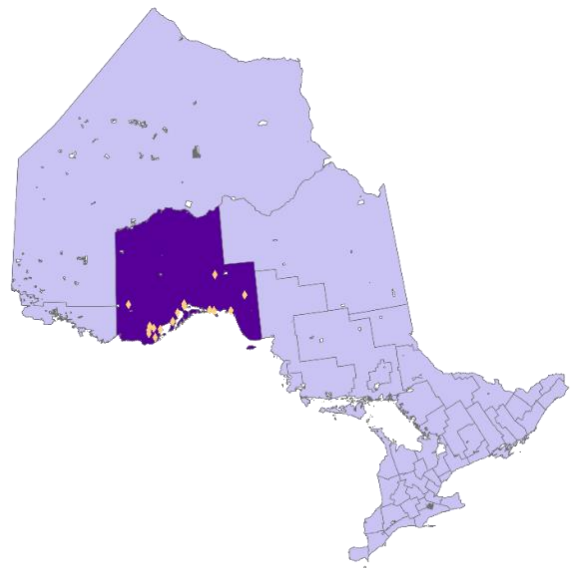
The Canadian Public Health Association defines the social determinates of health as, “the social and economic factors that influence people’s health.”<sup>15</sup> According to the World Health Organization, “social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities – the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries.”<sup>16</sup> Social determinates of health typically include Aboriginal status, gender, race, early childhood development, disability, employment/unemployment, income, housing, social safety net, food insecurity, health services, social exclusion, and education.

### Political

In accordance with the *District Social Services Administration Board Act 1990*, TBDSSAB represents 15 member municipalities and the unincorporated areas. The Board is comprised of 14 board members appointed by the municipalities, and one elected member representing the Territories without Municipal Organization (TWOMO).

The District of Thunder Bay encompasses the following member municipalities:

- Township of Conmee
- Township of Dorion
- Township of Gillies
- Municipality of Greenstone
- Township of Manitouwadge
- Town of Marathon
- Municipality of Neebing
- Township of Nipigon
- Township of O’Connor
- Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge
- Township of Red Rock
- Township of Schreiber
- Municipality of Shuniah
- Township of Terrace Bay
- City of Thunder Bay
- Territories without Municipal Organization (also Thunder Bay, Unorganized)



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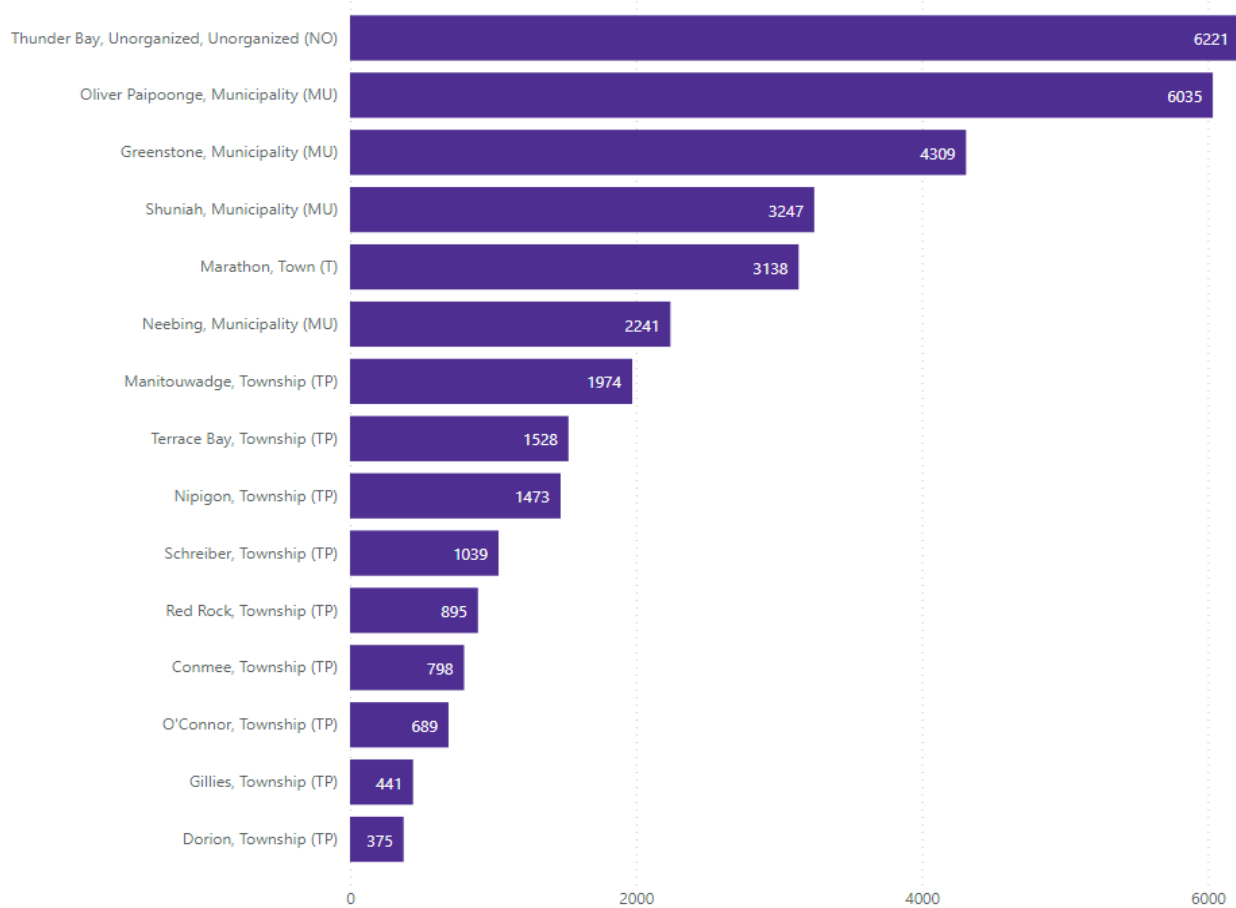
<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cpha.ca/what-are-social-determinants-health>

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/sdh\\_definition/en/](https://www.who.int/social_determinants/sdh_definition/en/)

## Population & Demographic Shifts

TBDSSAB’s service area spans a geographic area of 102,896 square km and covers a population of 146,862 persons<sup>17</sup>. The largest municipality is the City of Thunder Bay, with 108,843 people at the time of the 2021 census. TBDSSAB’s other member municipalities range in population from 375 people to just over 6,000, and the Territories Without Municipal Organization in the district encompass 6,221 people.

**Figure 1: TBDSSAB Member Municipalities Population (excluding City of Thunder Bay)**



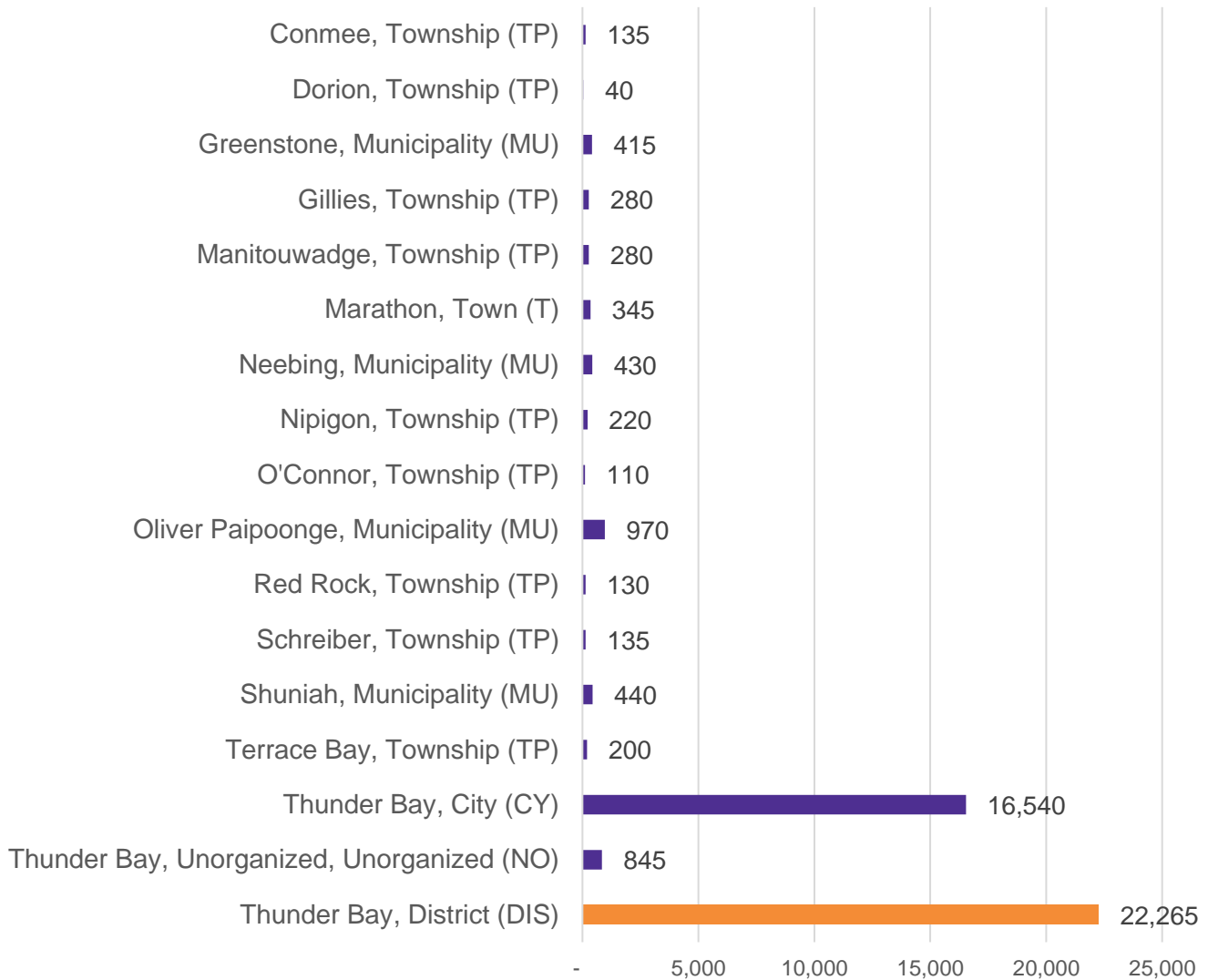
According to 2021 Census data, the District of Thunder Bay’s population remained stable, with a slight increase of 0.6% from 2016. During this same period, the population of Ontario during the same period increased by 5.8%.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>18</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

As of the 2021 Census, there were 22,265 census families with children in the District of Thunder Bay. This count excludes persons living in single households.

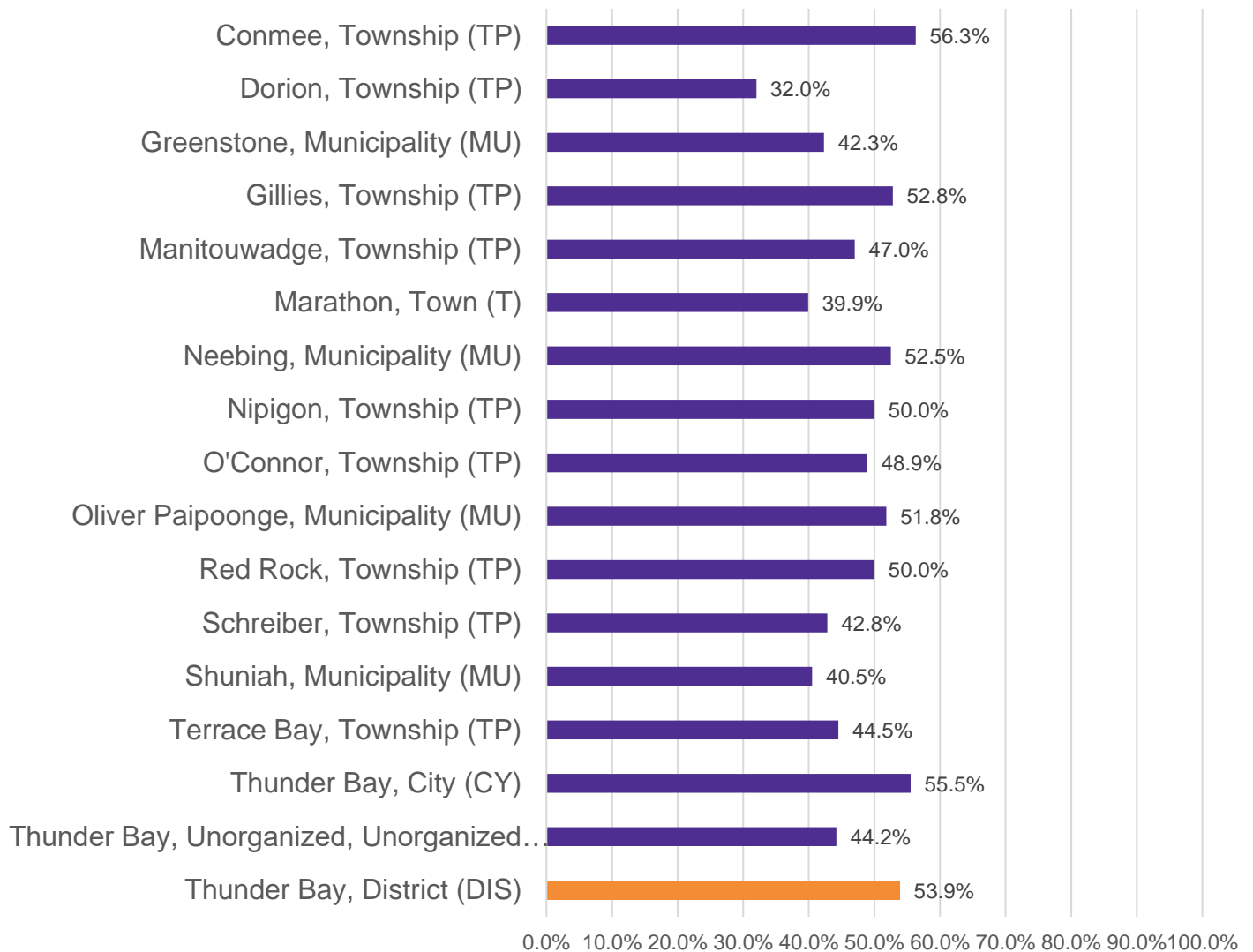
**Figure 2: Total Families with Children by Municipality**



Of the census families (defined as 2 or more people in a family unit sharing a household), 53.9% had children; census families in the District of Thunder Bay have average of 1.7 children.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

Figure 3: % of Census Families that have Children<sup>20</sup>



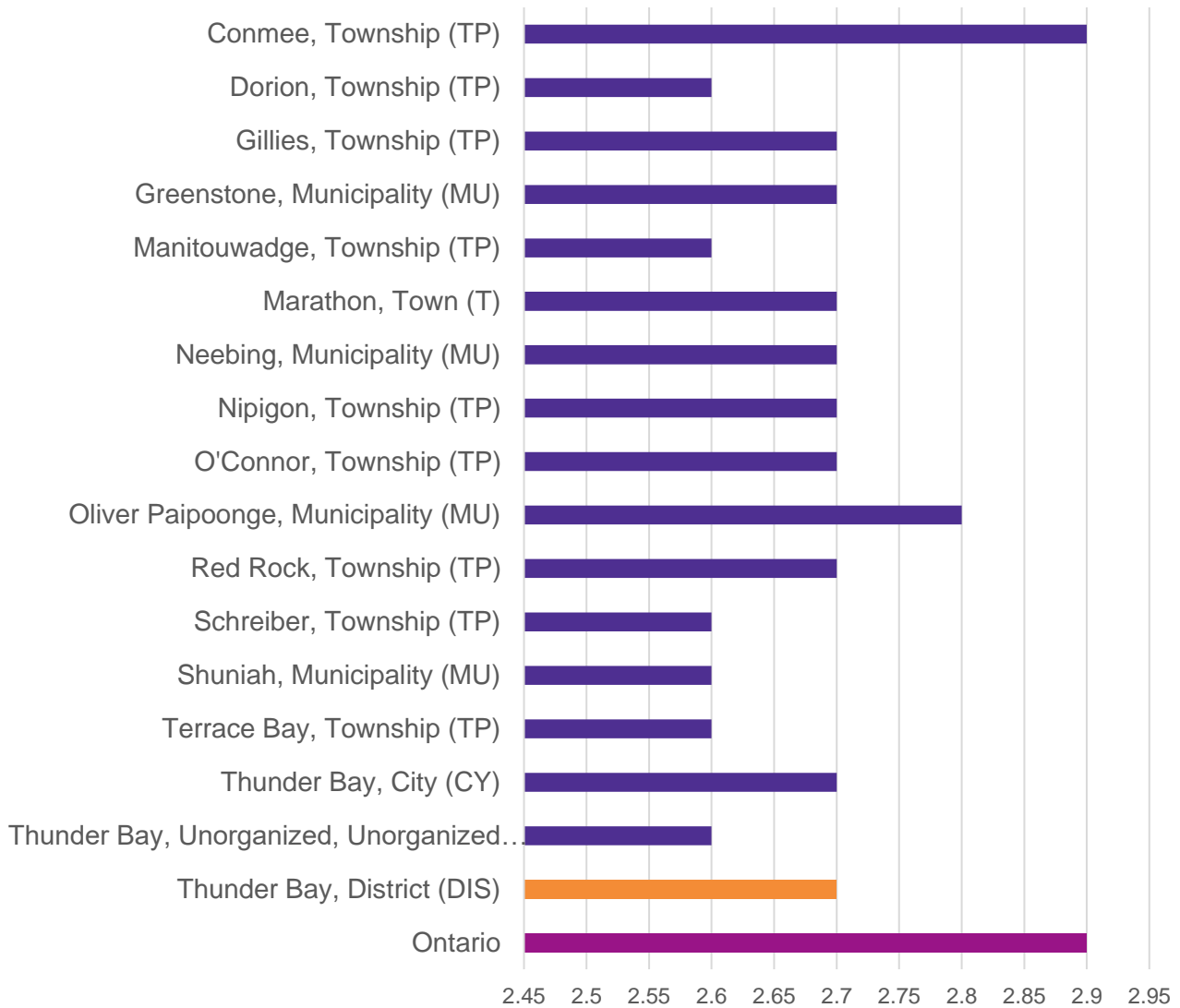
There is very little variance on family size in the District of Thunder Bay; the average for the District is 2.7 people. All member municipalities have a lower rate than Ontario except for Conmee, which matches the provincial average at 2.9.

<sup>20</sup> Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). *Census Profile*. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 13, 2023).

Note – excludes Persons in private households that are not a part of a census family.

**Figure 4: Average Size of Census Families in the District of Thunder Bay**



Census information shows an aging population for the North. The percentage of the population aged 65 and older in Ontario was 18.5% in 2021, while in the District of Thunder Bay this demographic represented 21.9% of the population, which is a 12.9% increase from 2016.<sup>21</sup>

The Ministry of Finance projects the senior population will continue to grow into 2046 with the aging of the boomer generation; by 2032, the 65+ population is predicted to

<sup>21</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.



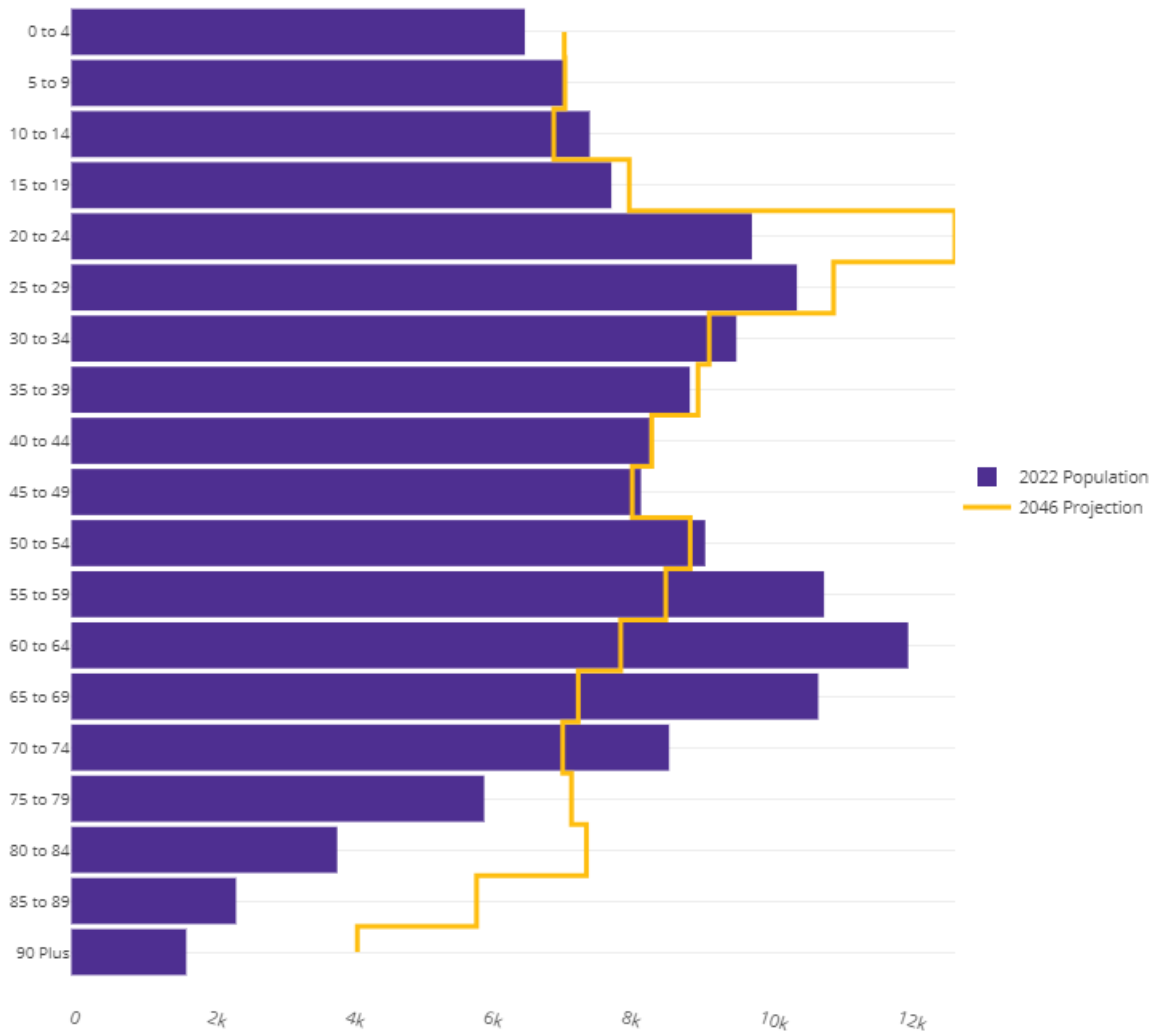
make up 26.7% of the population of the District of Thunder Bay and decrease to 25.6% by 2046.<sup>22</sup>

Children ages 0 to 12 made up 12.1% of the population of the District of Thunder Bay in 2022. This proportion is projected to decrease to 11.4% by 2032, then increase back to 12.1% by 2046. 51% of children are between the ages of 0 to 6. The proportion of the population between the ages of 0-6 is projected to remain stable through to 2046. In 2022, 6.2% of the population of the District of Thunder Bay was children 0-6, and it is projected to be 6.6% of the population in 2046. The proportion of the population that is children ages 7 to 12 is projected to decrease slightly from 5.9% in 2022 to 5.5% by 2046.

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<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Finance Population Projections 2021-2046, July 2022.

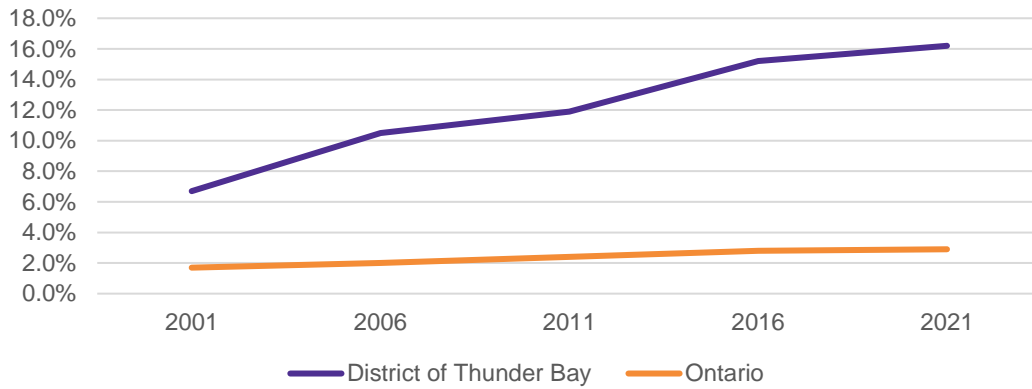
**Figure 5: Ministry of Finance Population 2022 and 2046 Projections**



Although the population in Northwestern Ontario is stable overall, the Indigenous population is increasing, is younger than the overall population in the District of Thunder Bay and represents a considerable percentage of Northwestern Ontario’s population. The percentage of persons in the District of Thunder Bay reporting Indigenous Identity was 16.2% in 2021, a 6.4% increase from 2016, and significantly higher than the overall Ontario percentage of 2.9%.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

**Figure 6: Indigenous Identity - District of Thunder Bay and Ontario**



It is of note that while the number of people with Indigenous Identity has increased in the District of Thunder Bay, it is possible that could be attributed to more participation in the census or more people identifying as Indigenous. “Two main factors have contributed to the growing Aboriginal population: the first is natural growth, which includes increased life expectancy and relatively high fertility rates; the second factor relates to changes in self-reported identification. Put simply, more people are newly identifying as Aboriginal on the census—a continuation of a trend over time.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Key Results from the 2016 census.

**Figure 7: % of Population Identifying as Indigenous<sup>25</sup>**

Municipality	2016	2021	% change from 2016-2021
Conmee	4.30%	8.10%	88.40%
Dorion	16.40%	14.60%	-11.00%
Gillies	7.60%	11%	44.70%
Greenstone	31.80%	32.90%	3.50%
Manitouwadge	10.90%	9.90%	-9.20%
Marathon	12.70%	17.90%	40.90%
Neebing	4.10%	8.70%	112.20%
Nipigon	28.30%	25.20%	-11.00%
O'Connor	1.60%	4.80%	200.00%
Oliver Paipoonge	8.40%	7.00%	-16.70%
Red Rock	18.30%	21.10%	15.30%
Schreiber	7.60%	7.60%	0.00%
Shuniah	4.90%	8.80%	79.60%
Terrace Bay	9.10%	12.70%	39.60%
Thunder Bay City	12.80%	14.10%	10.20%
TWOMO	10.50%	13.00%	23.80%
District of Thunder Bay	15.20%	16.20%	6.60%
Ontario	2.80%	2.90%	3.60%

As of the 2021 Census, 57.9% of the District of Thunder Bay's Indigenous population is under the age of 35, compared to 52.5% in Ontario overall.<sup>26</sup> The average age of the Indigenous population in the District of Thunder Bay is 32.4 years compared to 42.5 years average for the non-Indigenous population.

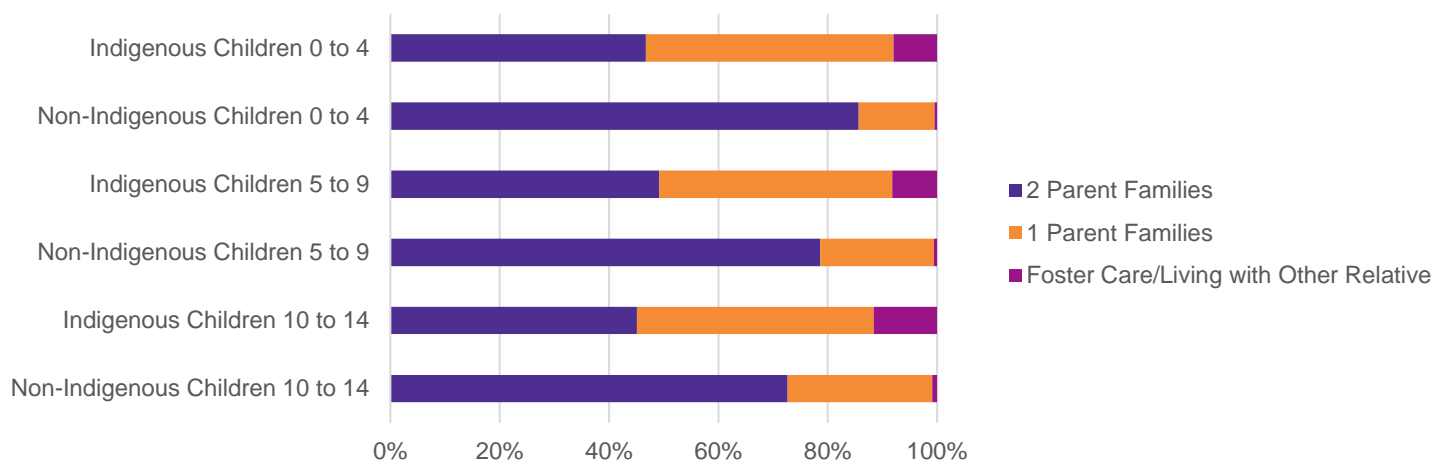
It is of note that municipalities in the District of Thunder Bay experience high in-migration of persons from First Nation communities, with adults seeking education, employment, and other opportunities. This is a known variable in Early Years programming, especially through Indigenous-led EarlyON centres.

<sup>25</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>26</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

In the Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), 26.1% children ages 0 to 14 identify as Indigenous.<sup>27</sup> Of these children, 82.4% identified as First Nations, and 17.7% identified as Métis. The rate of children ages 0 to 14 in foster care/living with another relative for Indigenous identifying children is 81.4%, while those without Indigenous identity is 17.5%. Family style and age categories are broken down below.<sup>28</sup>

**Figure 8: Household Characteristics for Children with Indigenous Identity by Age Group<sup>29</sup>**



In the District of Thunder Bay, 85.6% of people declared English as their mother tongue in the 2021 Census, 2.8% responded French, 0.9% declared an Indigenous language, and 8.5% reported multiple mother tongues.<sup>30</sup>

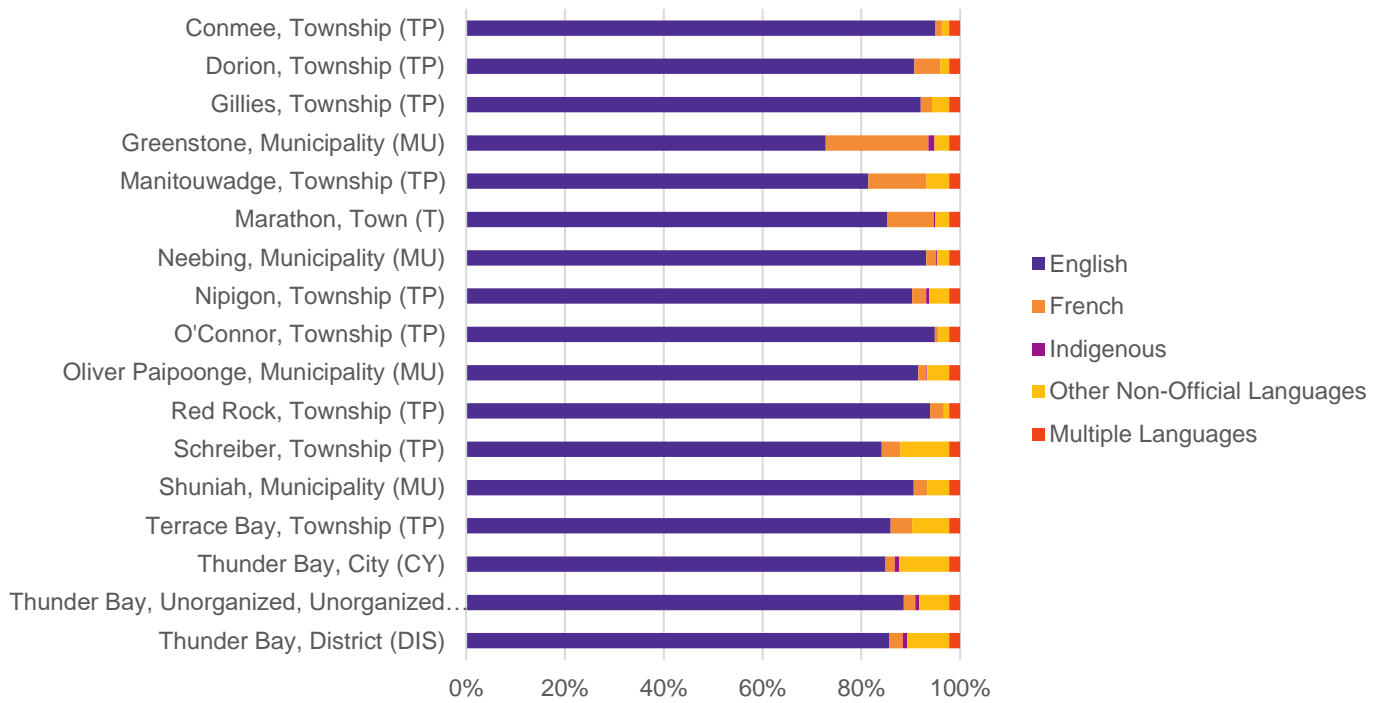
<sup>27</sup> Note – some statistics are unavailable for all member municipalities through Statistics Canada. Thunder Bay District or CMA is used in these instances.

<sup>28</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>29</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 9: Mother Tongue in the District of Thunder Bay**



TBDSSAB’s member municipalities with the highest rate of French first language are Greenstone (20.8%), Manitouwadge (11.7%), and Marathon (9.4%). The City of Thunder Bay has the highest rate of other non-official languages (10.1%), while Greenstone has the highest rate of Indigenous languages as a first language (1.2%).<sup>31</sup>

## Child Care and Early Years Services in the District of Thunder Bay

### Child Care

As of June 2023, TBDSSAB has service agreements with 22 licensed child care service providers, with 49 child care centres/sites in the District of Thunder Bay, serving 2,924 licensed spaces. The locations of the centres are shown on the map below.

<sup>31</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

Figure 10: Map - Location of Child Care Centres in the District of Thunder Bay



TBDSSAB has 1 Francophone child care centre, representing 2.5% of licensed spaces. There are 5 Indigenous-led child care programs throughout the District of Thunder Bay, accounting for 10% of licensed spaces. There is 1 licensed home child care agency with 4 homes currently active. Non-profit spaces account for 62% of the licensed child care spaces in the District of Thunder Bay.<sup>32</sup>

Municipality, programs offered, non-profit status, and population indicators for each centre are outlined in the table below.

Figure 11: Centre-Based Child Care Program Information

Child Care Centre	Programs Offered <sup>33</sup>	Municipality	Profit Status	Indigenous led	Franco-phone
<b>Greenstone - Geraldton</b>	T/P/SA	Greenstone - Geraldton	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Greenstone - Friends of the North</b>	T/P/SA	Greenstone - Longlac	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Manitouwadge</b>	P	Manitouwadge	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Marathon Children and Family Centre</b>	I/T/P/SA	Marathon	Non-Profit	No	No

<sup>32</sup> TBDSSAB internal data

<sup>33</sup> I = Infant, T = Toddler, P = Preschool, K = Kindergarten, SA = School Age

<b>Brass Bell - The Family Place Child Care Centre</b>	T/P/K/SA	Nipigon	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Lions - Valley Central</b>	T/P/K/SA	Oliver Paipoonge	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Lions - McKenzie</b>	T/P/K/SA	Shuniah	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Centre Grandir en francais</b>	P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	Yes
<b>City - Algoma</b>	T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>City - Ogden</b>	T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>City - Remus</b>	T/P/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>City - Woodcrest</b>	P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>College</b>	I/P/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Footsteps - Five Mile</b>	K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Footsteps - Holy Cross</b>	K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Footsteps - Our Lady of Charity</b>	I/T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Grenville - Wee Wonders Day Care</b>	T/P/SA	Thunder Bay	For Profit	No	No
<b>Harbourview - CD Howe</b>	I/T/P/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Harbourview - St. Bernard</b>	SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Kinderplace - Ecole Gron Morgan</b>	K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Kinderplace - Vance</b>	I/T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No



<b>Little George - George Jeffrey</b>	T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Lions - Clarke</b>	P	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Lions - Claude E. Garton</b>	I/T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Lions – Elsie MacGill</b>	K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Lions - JSL</b>	*for residents of supportive housing program	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Lions - Kingsway</b>	I/T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Lions - McKellar</b>	I/T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Lions - St. Paul</b>	I/T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Lions - St. Pius X</b>	K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Little Turtles</b>	I/T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	Yes	No
<b>Mahmowenchike - St. Anns</b>	T/P/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	Yes	No
<b>Mahmowenchike - St. Elizabeth</b>	SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	Yes	No
<b>Mahmowenchike - St. Vincent</b>	I/T/P/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	Yes	No
<b>Nanabijou</b>	I/T/P	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Rural Roots - Norwesterview</b>	T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Schoolhouse - Corpus Christi</b>	SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Schoolhouse - Elsie MacGill</b>	I/T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No

<b>Schoolhouse - St. James</b>	I/T/P/K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Schoolhouse - St. Martin</b>	K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Schoolhouse - St. Thomas</b>	SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Schoolhouse – Westmount</b>	K/SA	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Shkoday Aboriginal Head Start</b>	T/P/K	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	Yes	No
<b>Sleeping Giant Child Care Services</b>	T/P	Thunder Bay	Non-Profit	No	No
<b>Step by Step – Arthur</b>	I/T/P/K	Thunder Bay	For Profit	No	No
<b>Step by Step - Northwood</b>	I/T/P/SA	Thunder Bay	For Profit	No	No
<b>Footsteps - Gorham &amp; Ware (Lappe)</b>	K/SA	TWOMO	Non-Profit	No	No

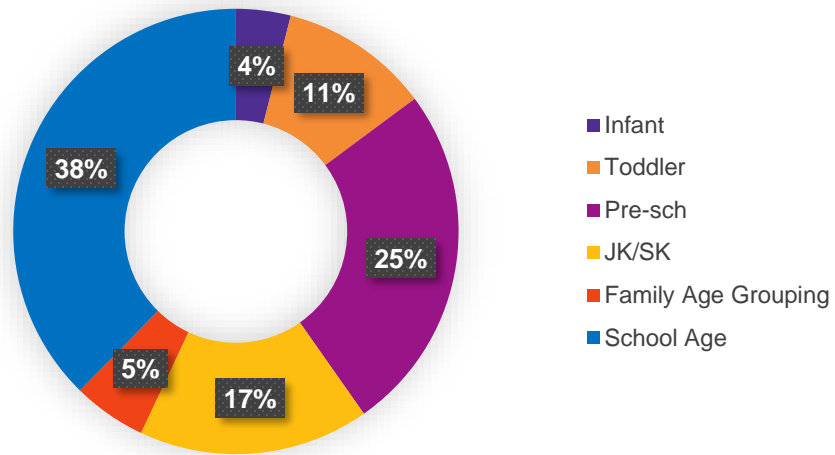
Child care centres in the District of Thunder Bay are licensed for 2,924 spaces. Approximately 62% of licensed spaces are eligible for the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program (CWELCC).<sup>34</sup>

Due to staff shortages and alternate licenses, child care centres in the District of Thunder Bay are not necessarily operating with their listed licensed capacity. TBDSSAB tracks this as actual operating capacity. Of the 2,924 licensed spaces in the District of Thunder Bay, the actual operating capacity is 2,450 spaces.

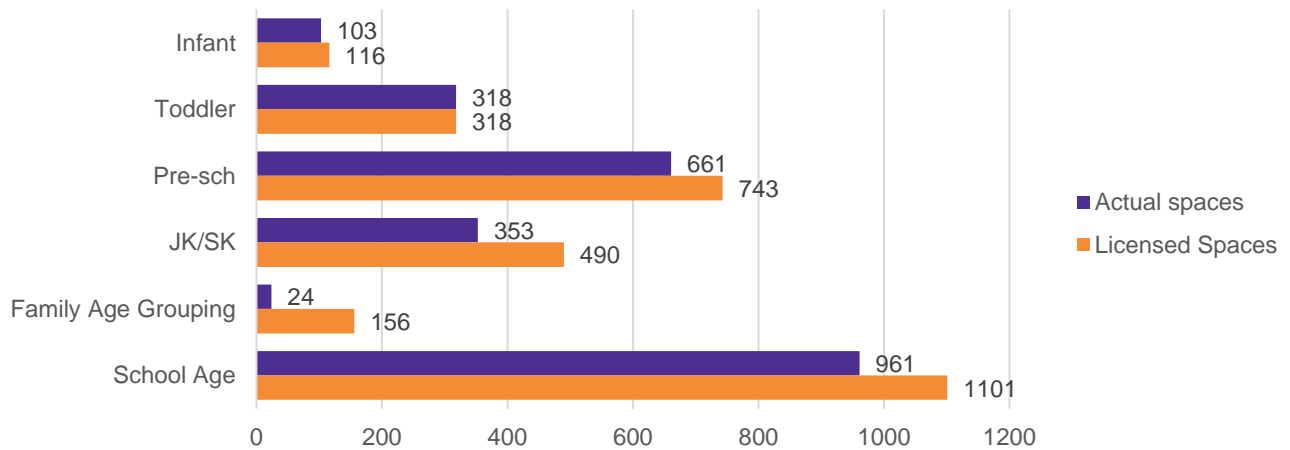
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<sup>34</sup> TBDSSAB internal data.

**Figure 12: Licensed Spaces by Program Age Category**

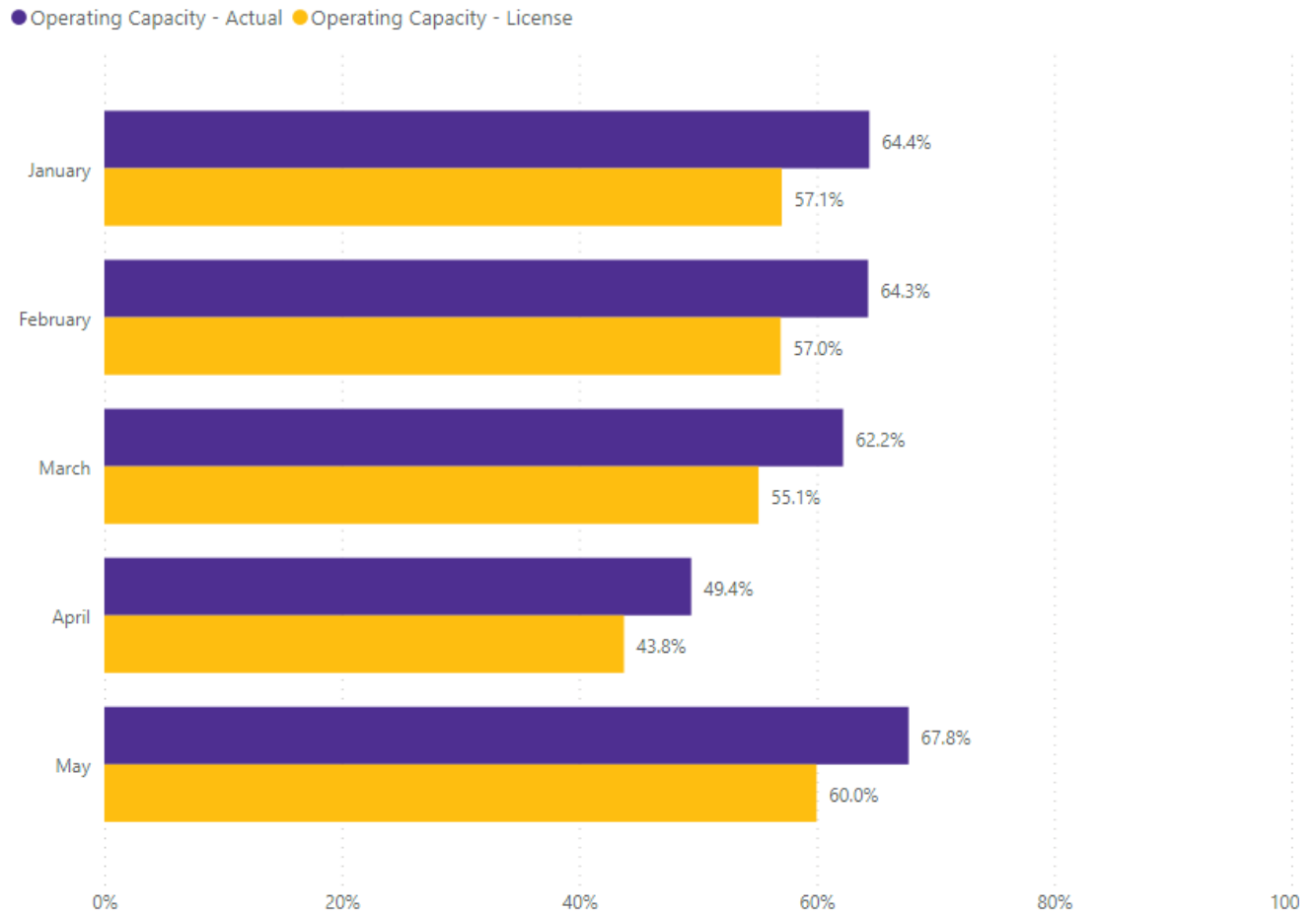


**Figure 13: Licensed vs Actual Spaces Available**



In 2023, the average operating capacity of the full licensed spaces is 54.6%; the actual operating capacity has averaged 61.6%.

**Figure 14: Operating Capacity using Actual and Licensed Capacity**



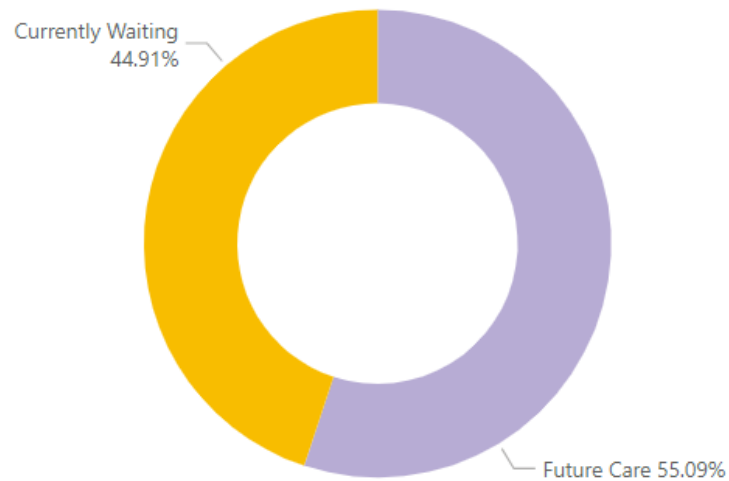
In 2022, 3,133 unique children were served in the licensed child care system. 2,280 children were in receipt of CWELCC refunds. To end of June in 2023, 2,388 children have been served, with 1,677 unique children benefiting from CWELCC.<sup>35</sup>

TBDSSAB uses the OneHSN centralized waitlist for child care services in the District of Thunder Bay, allowing families to easily apply for multiple programs at one time. Wait time begins at preferred start date; TBDSSAB tracks both the currently waiting list and the waiting for future care lists. The waitlist has increased 23.8% since the announcement of \$10/day child care in March 2022.

<sup>35</sup> TBDSSAB internal data.

As of June 30, 2023, 3,234 children are on the waitlist for child care. 1,704 children are currently waiting for care, while 2,090 have a future preferred start date.<sup>36</sup>

**Figure 15: Proportion of Waitlist Currently Waiting for Care vs Waiting for Future Care**

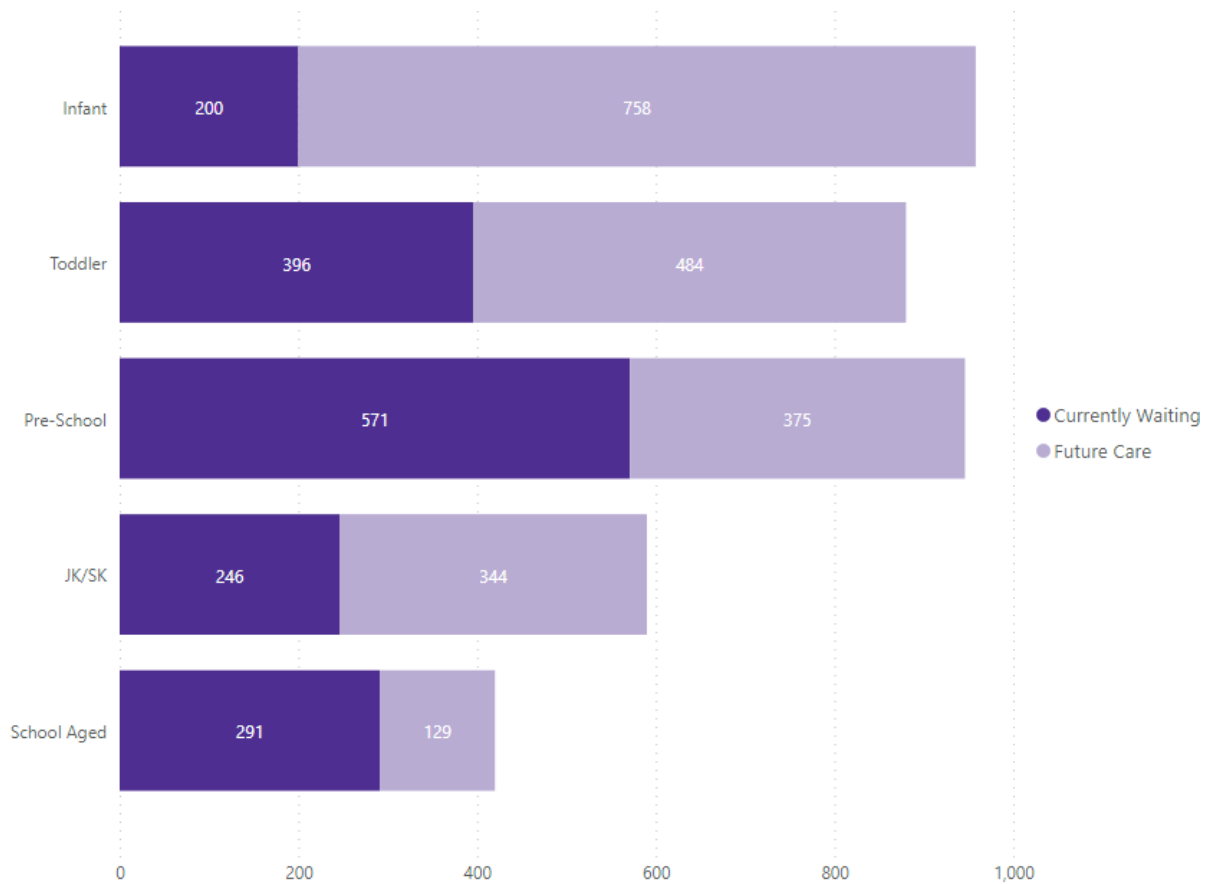


Infant care has the most applications looking for care in the future. As many children move through the system from infancy, it becomes more difficult to be placed in a preschool space.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 16: Child Care Applications by Age Category and Waitlist Status**



Another bottleneck exists at the kindergarten/school age level as there are not enough spaces in these categories to sustain the 8 years children are eligible for this care.

Placed families wait an average of approximately 90 days from their preferred start date when obtaining a space.<sup>37</sup>

## EarlyON Child and Family Centres

TBDSSAB has 7 EarlyON Child and Family Centre agencies and 5 Indigenous-led EarlyON Child and Family Centre agencies that operate 21 sites across the District of Thunder Bay. One program is a Francophone *On y va Centre pour l'enfant et la famille* in the city of Thunder Bay.

<sup>37</sup> Note – takes into account all placed families for 2023 placed up to 90 days before their preferred start date.

**Figure 17: Locations of EarlyON Centres in the District of Thunder Bay**



Municipality and population indicators for each EarlyON centre are outlined in the table below.

**Figure 18: EarlyON Centre Information**

EarlyON Centre	Municipality	Indigenous led	Francophone
<b>Brass Bell Family Resource Centre - Dorion</b>	Dorion	No	No
<b>Greenstone - Geraldton</b>	Greenstone - Geraldton	No	No
<b>Thunderbird Child and Family Centre - Longlac</b>	Greenstone - Longlac	Yes	No
<b>Brass Bell Family Resource Centre - Manitowadge</b>	Manitouwadge	No	No

EarlyON Centre	Municipality	Indigenous led	Francophone
<b>Marathon Children and Family Centre</b>	Marathon	No	No
<b>Brass Bell Family Resource Centre - Nipigon</b>	Nipigon	No	No
<b>Rural Family Centre - Murillo</b>	Oliver Paipoonge	No	No
<b>Brass Bell Family Resource Centre - Red Rock</b>	Red Rock	No	No
<b>Brass Bell Family Resource Centre - Schreiber</b>	Schreiber	No	No
<b>Brass Bell Family Resource Centre - Terrace Bay</b>	Terrace Bay	No	No
<b>Abiinojiishiik-amino-yawook</b>	Thunder Bay	Yes	No
<b>Anishnawbe Mushkiki</b>	Thunder Bay	Yes	No
<b>Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek</b>	Thunder Bay	Yes	No
<b>Centre Grandir en francais</b>	Thunder Bay	No	Yes
<b>Child and Family Centre - College</b>	Thunder Bay	No	No
<b>Child and Family Centre - Algonquin School</b>	Thunder Bay	No	No
<b>Child and Family Centre - Our Lady of Charity</b>	Thunder Bay	No	No
<b>Communities Together for Children - Northwood</b>	Thunder Bay	No	No
<b>Waabogonee</b>	Thunder Bay	Yes	No
<b>Rural Family Centre - Gorham And Ware School</b>	TWOMO	No	No
<b>Rural Family Centre - Whitefish Valley School</b>	TWOMO	No	No

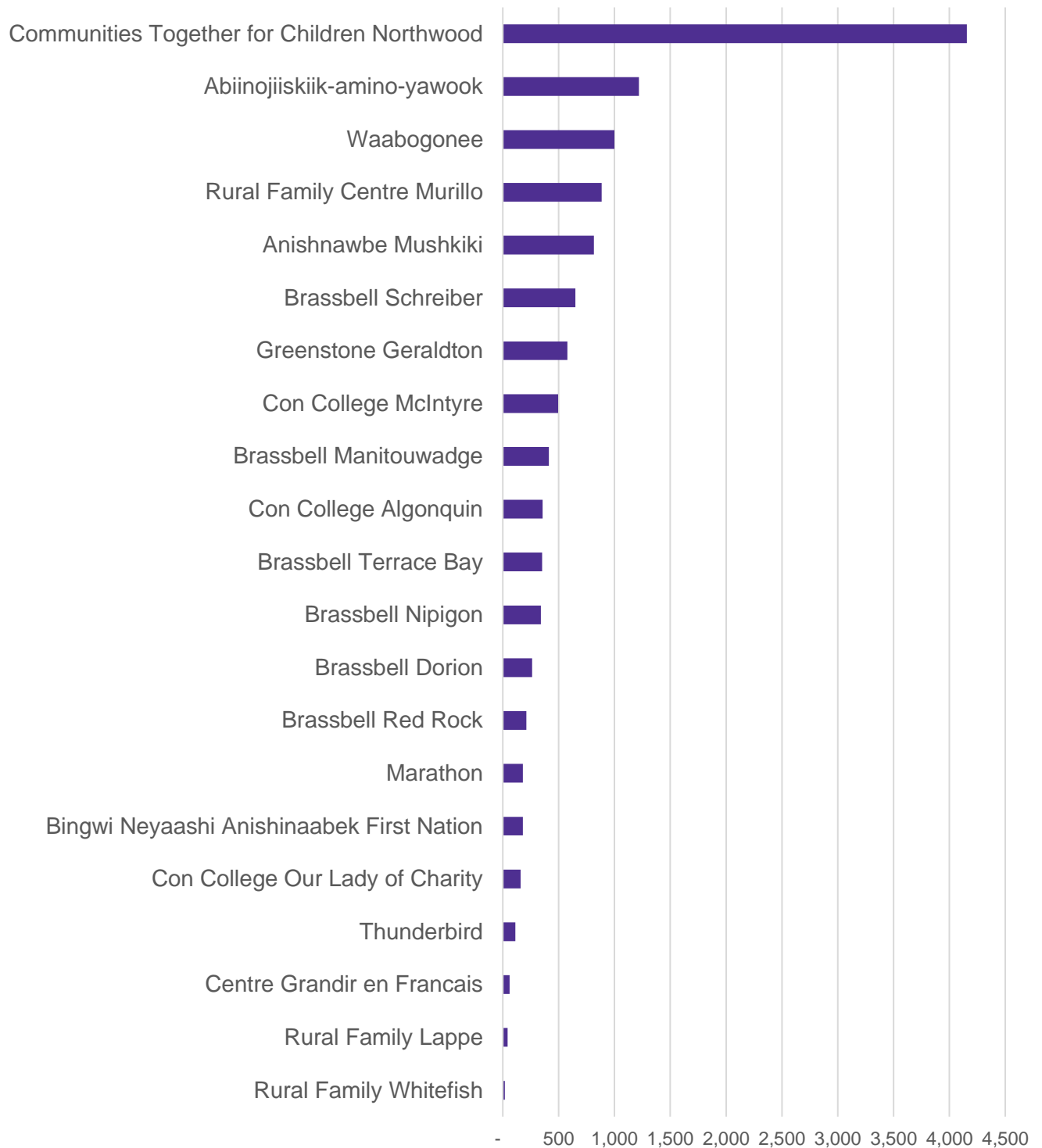
In 2022, the EarlyON centres collectively served 1,396 unique families, and 1,844 unique children. Communities Together for Children – Northwood EarlyON location has a large indoor play space that attracts many families to the centre and tends to be the most visited centre. In 2022, they had 4,156 visits.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> TBDSSAB internal data

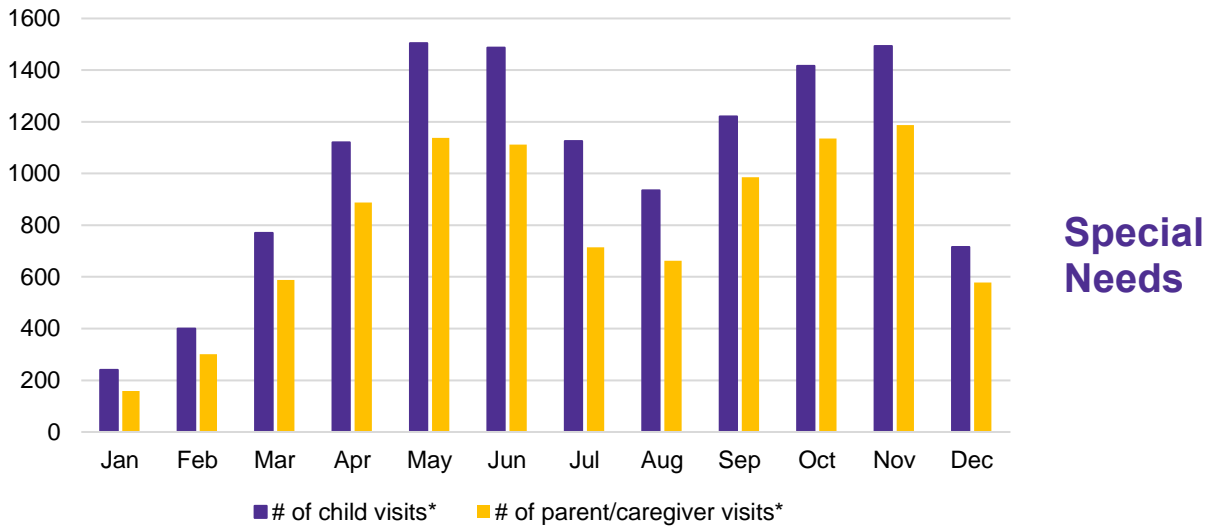


**Figure 19: Child Visits by EarlyON Site for 2022**



EarlyON visits tend to increase in May and June, decrease for the summer, and increase again in the fall.

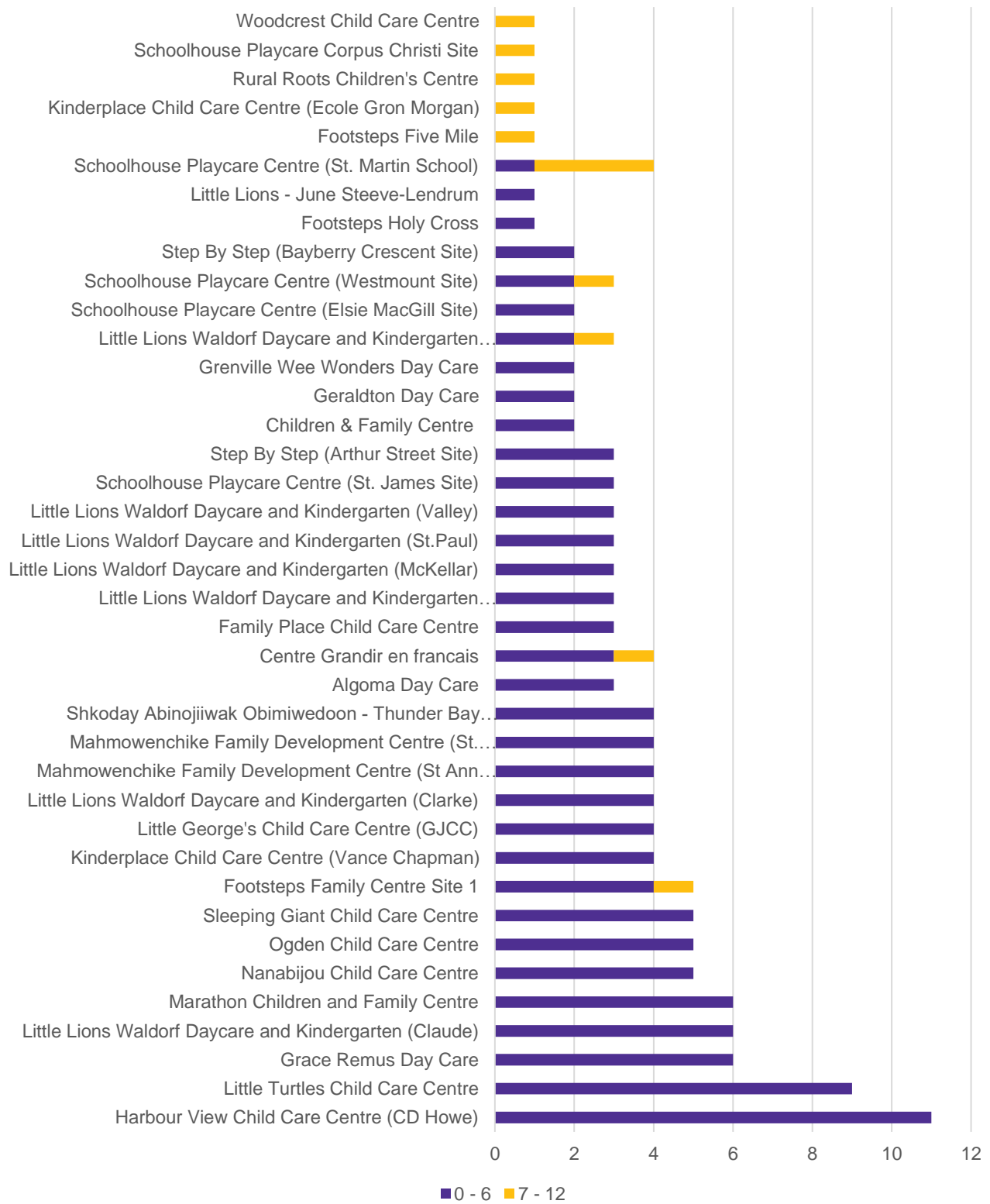
**Figure 20: EarlyON Visits per Month for 2022 in the District of Thunder Bay**



## Resourcing

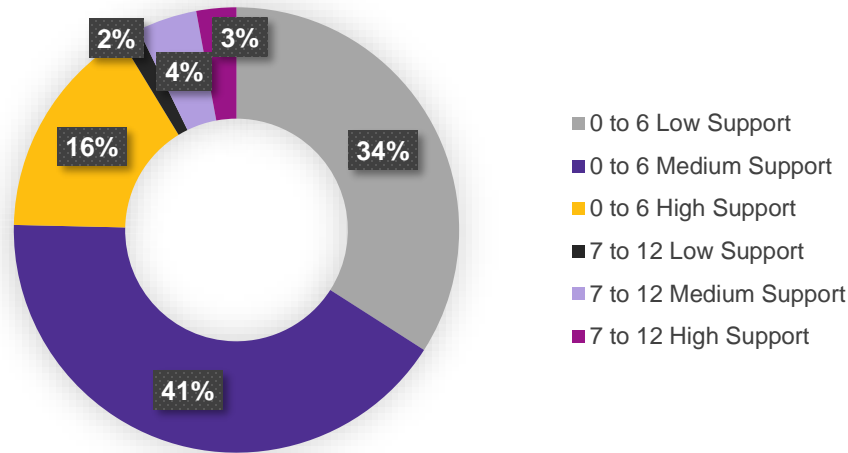
TBDSSAB has a purchase of service agreement for the provision of special needs resourcing (SNR) with Children’s Centre Thunder Bay (CCTB). CCTB served 137 unique children through their Child Care Support System (CCSS) team and supported all child care centres in the District of Thunder Bay to build capacity for supporting the success of all children in child care.

**Figure 21: CCSS Caseload by Age Group for 2022**



It is of note that only 4 child care locations outside of the City of Thunder Bay had children on the CCSS caseload in 2022. 91.3% of children supported by the CCSS team in 2022 were between the ages of 0 and 6, and 41.3% of those children require a medium level of support.<sup>39</sup>

**Figure 22: CCSS Caseload**



## Fee Subsidy

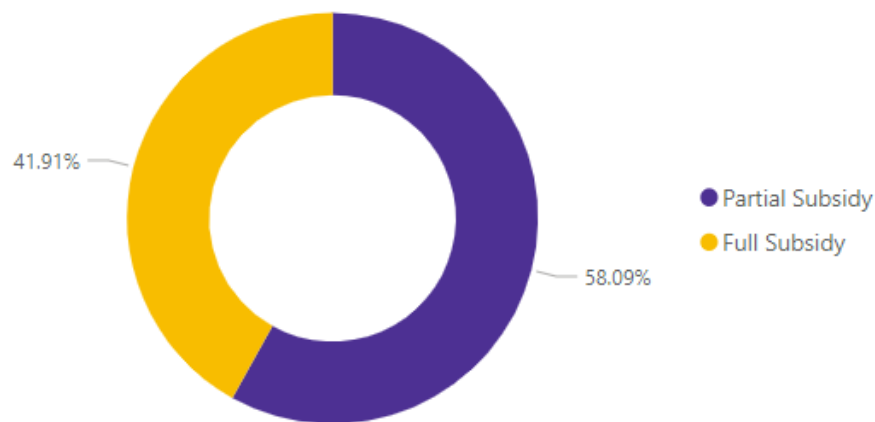
The fee subsidy program provides financial assistance to families to pay child care fees. To qualify for fee subsidy applicants must be working, going to school, receiving Ontario Works (and registered in an activity) or have a special or social need (parent or child). Based on eligibility, parents could qualify for full costs or pay a portion of the daily cost of child care to the child care centre while TBDSSAB pays the balance on their behalf. Currently, families are fully subsidized if they have an adjusted income of up to \$20,000. Parental contributions are calculated at 10% of adjusted income over \$20,000, plus 20% of adjusted income over \$40,000. It is important to note that the Low-Income Workers Tax Credit in Ontario is provided to families with an adjusted net income below

<sup>39</sup> TBDSSAB internal data

\$65,000<sup>40</sup>, but increased income thresholds for fee subsidy assistance have not been updated in the CCEYA since 2014.<sup>41</sup>

789 unique children received fee subsidy assistance in 2022; 427 children were in receipt of partial subsidy at some point in the year, while 381 children were in receipt of full subsidy at some point in the year.<sup>42, 43</sup>

**Figure 23: Proportion of Children Receiving Full and Partial Fee Subsidy Assistance**



## Child Care and Early Years Workforce in the District of Thunder Bay

According to the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE), in 2021, there were 505 members in good standing in the District of Thunder Bay. This makes up 0.8% of the Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) registered with the CECE.

<sup>40</sup> Low Income Workers Tax Credit. Ontario Government. (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/low-income-workers-tax-credit#:~:text=your%20individual%20adjusted%20net%20income,years%202019%2C%202020%20and%202021>)

<sup>41</sup> O. Reg. 138/15: FUNDING, COST SHARING AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE under Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11, Sched. 1 <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/150138#BK10>

<sup>42</sup> TBDSSAB internal data.

<sup>43</sup> Note – full and partial subsidy categories are not mutually exclusive. Some children who received full subsidy in 2022 may have dropped to partial subsidy at some time in the year or vice versa.

According to their report:

Similar to the overall membership, members working in the Thunder Bay Region are predominantly female (98 per cent). Thunder Bay members self-identify as francophone at a lower rate (approximately one per cent) than the overall membership but were twice as likely to self-identify as [having] Indigenous Heritage when compared to the general membership.<sup>44</sup>

CECE membership in the District of Thunder Bay in 2021 was slightly younger at 38 years, compared to the general membership at 41. 10% of the District of Thunder Bay ECE workforce fell into the 55 to 64 age range, which will likely put further strain on the ECE workforce throughout the next ten years due to impending retirements.<sup>45</sup>

77% of CECE members reported being employed full-time (compared to 81% of the general membership). “Members in Thunder Bay also report significantly lower rates of unemployment (3.5 per cent) when compared to the general membership (8.1 per cent).”<sup>46</sup> 53% of the members in the District of Thunder Bay report working in licensed child care, while 33% report working in education settings.

Also of note, 25% of members in the District of Thunder Bay have chosen to resign their Certificate of registration; 40% of these resignations were because the former member was no longer working in the RECE field. “Former members from Thunder Bay resigned, on average, after seven years of membership.”<sup>47</sup>

Approximately 100 RECEs are employed with schoolboards in the District of Thunder Bay as of June 2023. TBDSSAB estimates 290 full-time equivalent RECEs are required for the current child care system to operate at the full licensed capacity of 2,756 spaces. In order to be fully staffed to accommodate all licensed spaces, the system requires an additional 130 RECEs to be employed in child care centres in the District of Thunder Bay.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> “Membership Data for The Thunder Bay Region”. College of Early Childhood Educators. October 2022.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> “Membership Data for The Thunder Bay Region”. College of Early Childhood Educators. October 2022.

<sup>48</sup> TBDSSAB internal data.

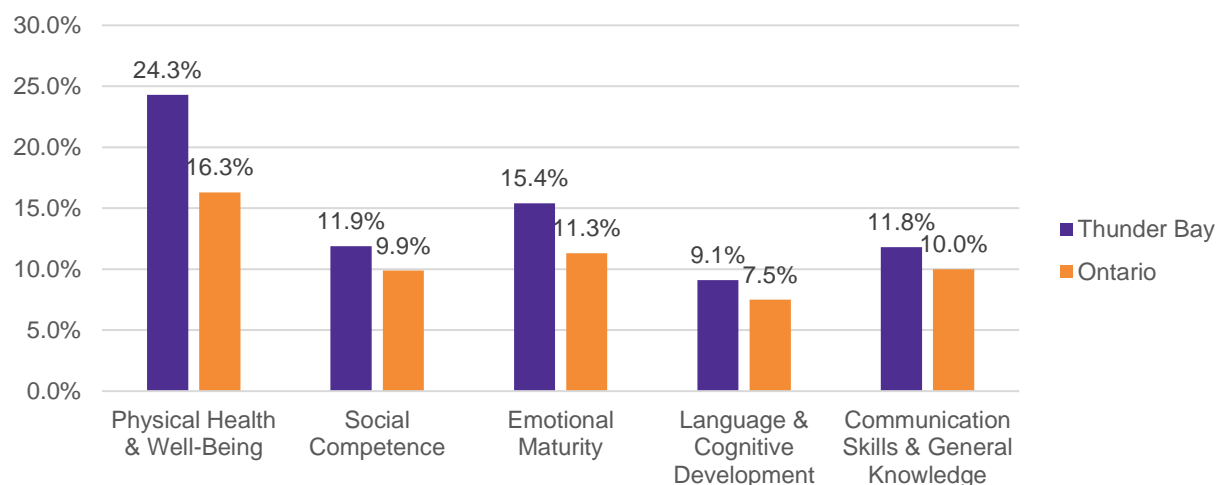
## Early Development Instrument

The EDI is a teacher-completed survey tool that measures children’s ability to meet age-appropriate developmental milestones before entering Grade 1. The EDI is completed by kindergarten teachers for all senior kindergarten students and assesses children in 5 domains: Physical Health and Well-Being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language and Cognitive Development, and Communication Skills and General Knowledge. Children with scores below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile for a domain are considered to be vulnerable. Children with scores between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentile are considered to be at risk, while children with scores above the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile are on track. Children with identified special needs are reported separately.<sup>49</sup>

The last EDI cycle was completed in 2018. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other delays, the next cycle was postponed until the 2022-2023 school year and is currently in the analysis phase. Results are expected to be shared in 2024.

In the 2018 cycle, the proportion of children showing vulnerabilities in every domain was higher in the District of Thunder Bay than the provincial average. Of note, children in the District of Thunder Bay were much more vulnerable in the physical health and wellbeing domain than the Ontario average.

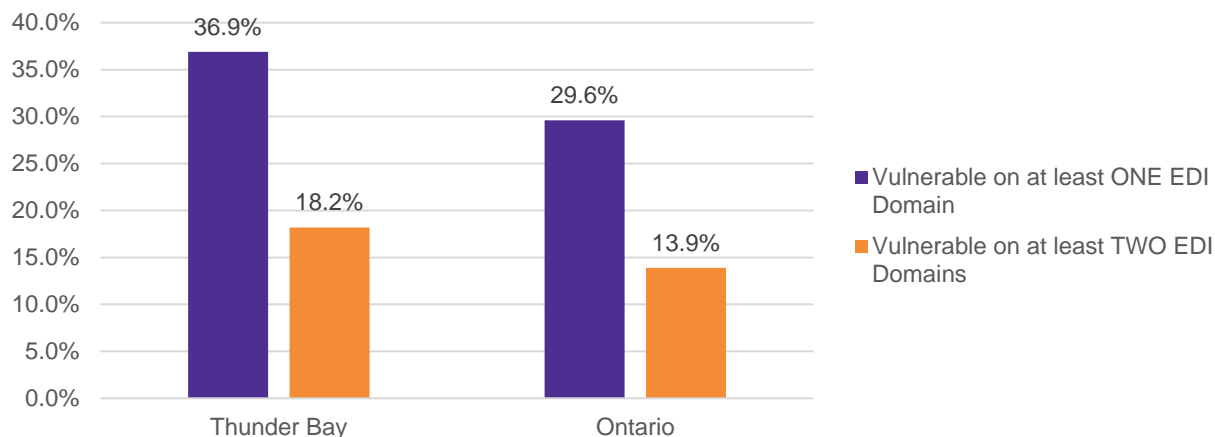
**Figure 24: Percentage of Children Vulnerable by Domain**



<sup>49</sup> Offord Centre. Summary Report – Senior Kindergarten Students in the province of Ontario – Thunder Bay School year 2017-2018. 2019.

The proportion of children in the District of Thunder Bay that were vulnerable in one or more EDI domain was also higher than the Ontario average<sup>50</sup>.

**Figure 25: Percentage of Children Vulnerable in More Than One Domain**



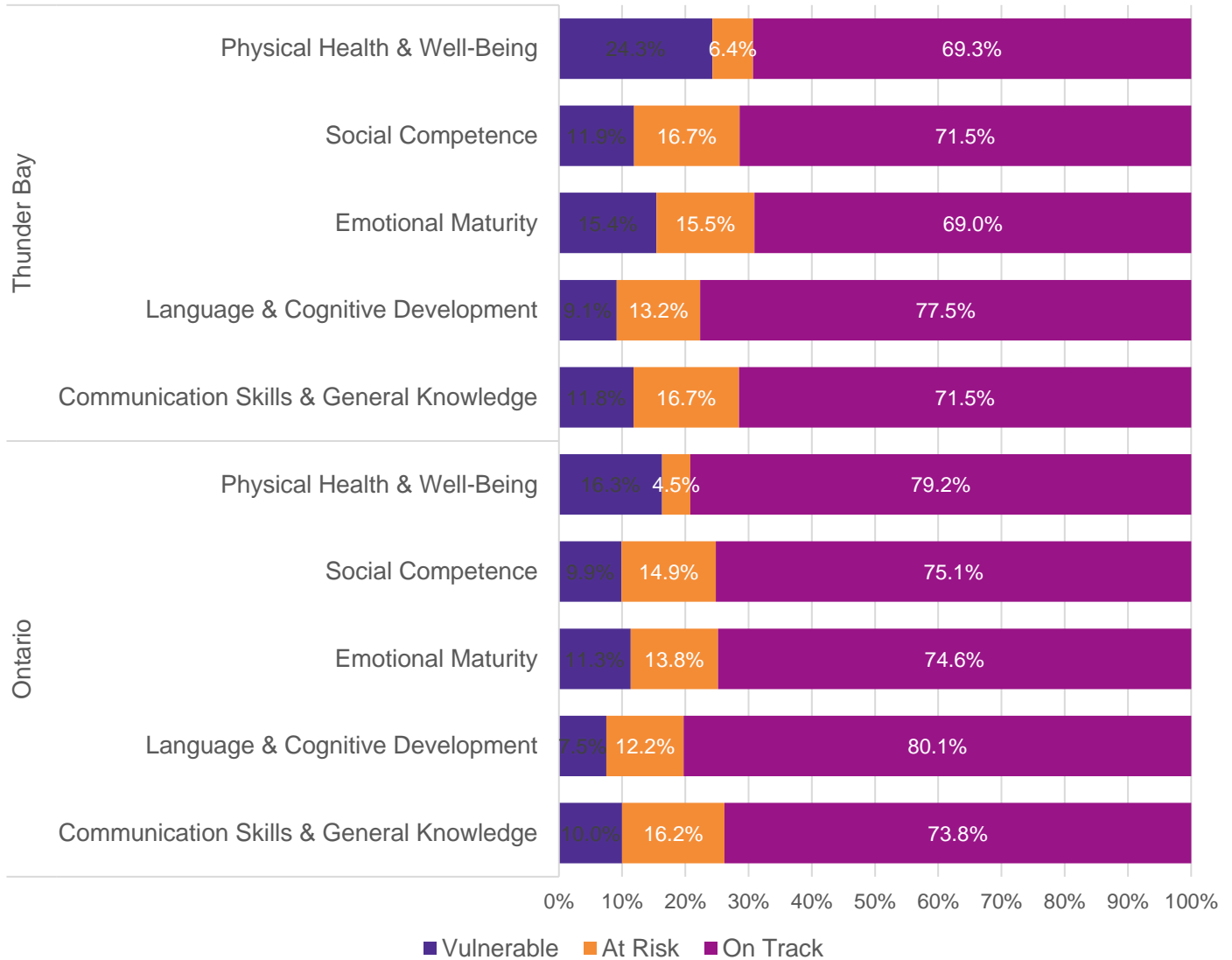
Boys tended to be more vulnerable than girls across all domains, especially Emotional Maturity and Social Competence.<sup>51</sup> When looking at children at risk, those with scores between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, children in the District of Thunder Bay were still more at risk than the provincial average.

<sup>50</sup> Offord Centre. Summary Report – Senior Kindergarten Students in the province of Ontario – Thunder Bay School year 2017-2018. 2019.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

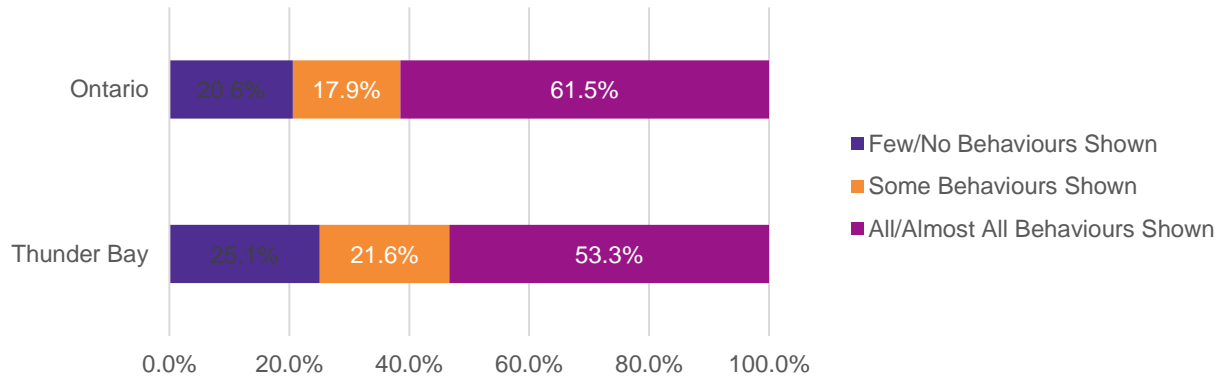


**Figure 26: Domain Scores – District of Thunder Bay and Ontario**



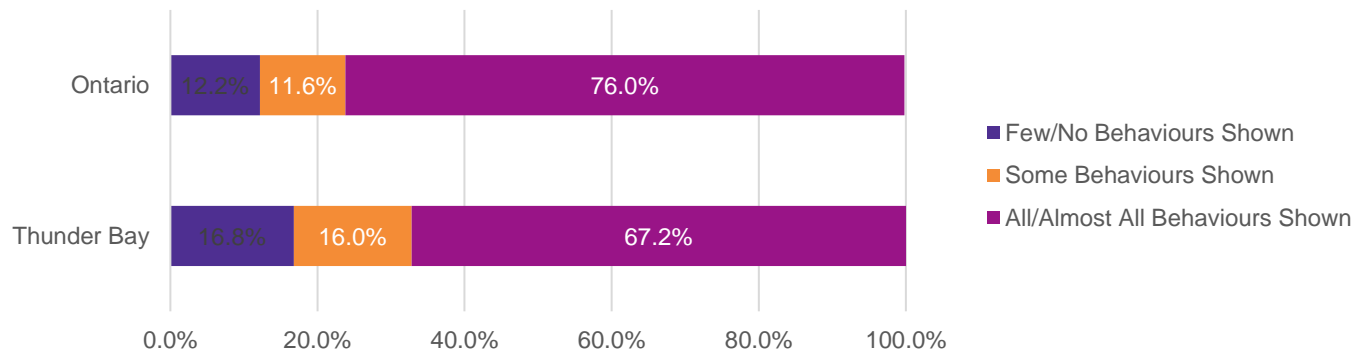
Within these 5 main domains, there are a number of subdomains. In the subdomains, behaviours are observed and noted as Few/None, Some, and All/Almost All. While all subdomains were at least slightly higher for the Few/None category, of note, responses of Few/None were reported more often in children in the District of Thunder Bay in the following areas compared to the Ontario average:

**Figure 27: Physical Health and Well-Being - Gross & Fine Motor Skills<sup>52</sup>**



Children who have an excellent ability to physically tackle the school day and have excellent or good gross & fine motor skills.

**Figure 28: Emotional Maturity - Hyperactivity & Inattention<sup>53</sup>**

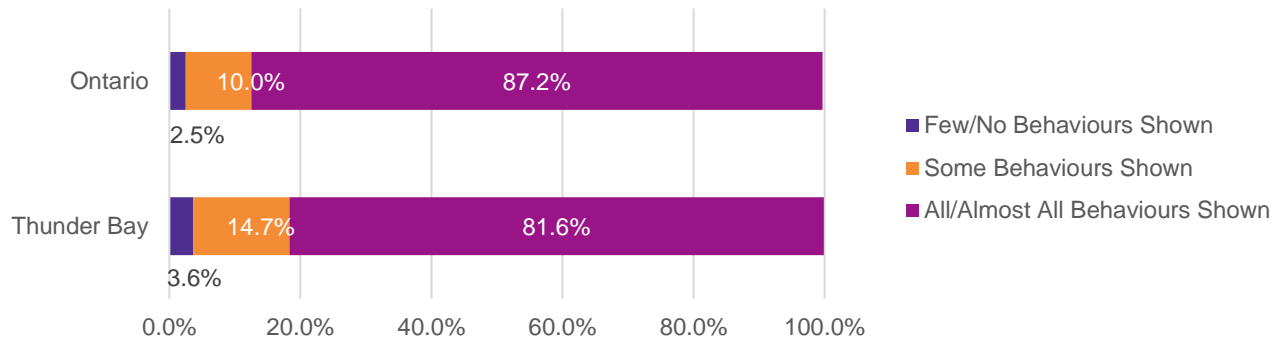


Children who never show most of the hyperactive behaviours; they are able to concentrate, settle in to chosen activities, wait their turn, and most of the time think before doing something.

<sup>52</sup> Offord Centre. Summary Report – Senior Kindergarten Students in the province of Ontario – Thunder Bay School year 2017-2018. 2019.

<sup>53</sup> Offord Centre. Summary Report – Senior Kindergarten Students in the province of Ontario – Thunder Bay School year 2017-2018. 2019.

**Figure 29: Emotional Maturity - Anxious & Fearful Behaviour<sup>54</sup>**



Children who rarely or never show most of the anxious behaviours; they are happy and able to enjoy school and are comfortable being left at school by caregivers.

## Economic Profile

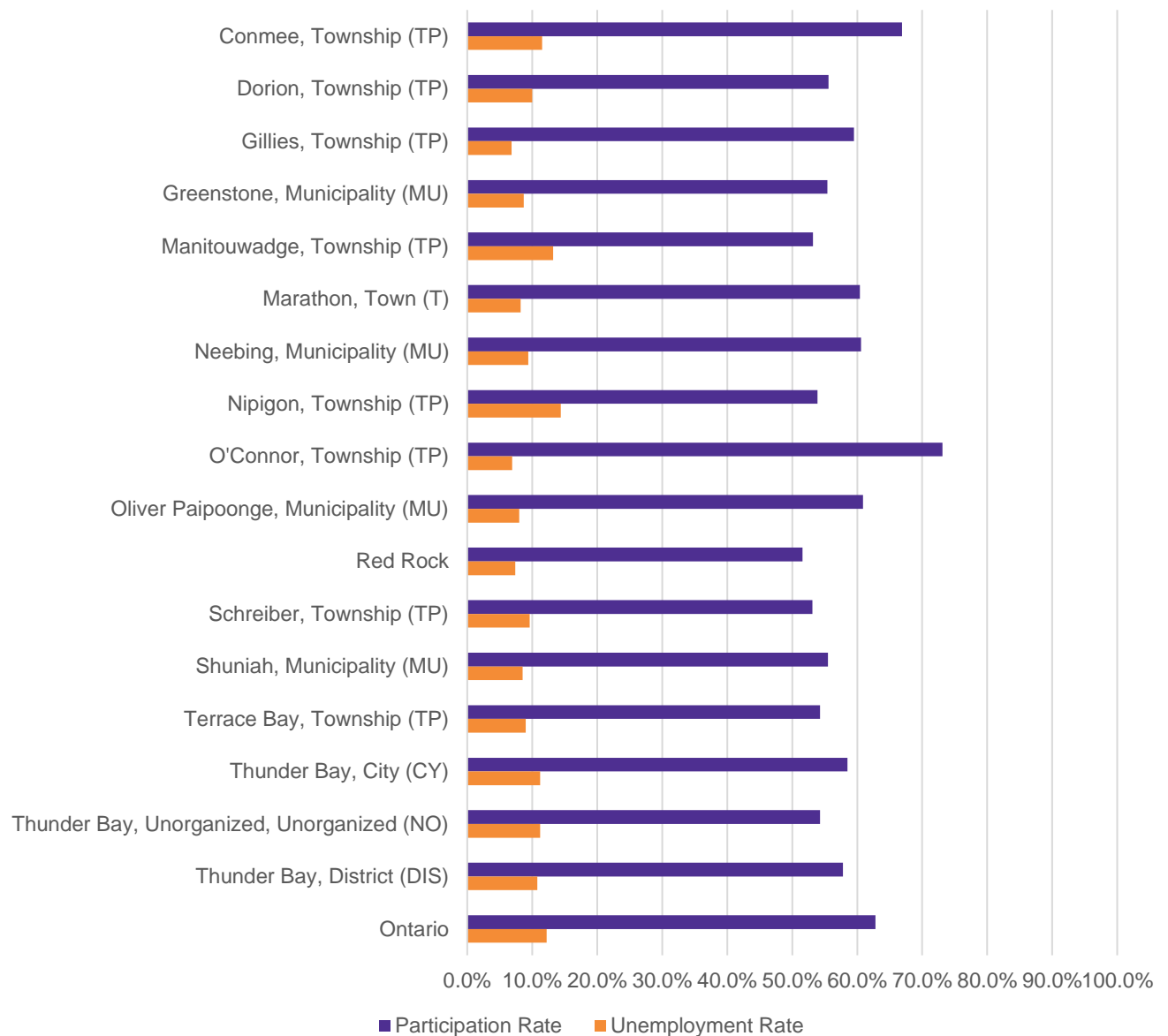
### Labour Market Participation

As of the 2021 census, the unemployment rate for the District of Thunder Bay was 10.8%, compared to the overall Ontario rate at 12.2%. The Labour Force participation rate in the municipalities of the District of Thunder Bay has increased since 2016, and ranges from 51.6% to 73.1%; overall, 57.8% of adults 15-64 are participating in the workforce in the District of Thunder Bay, compared to the provincial average of 62.8%.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

**Figure 30: Unemployment and Participation Rates – 2021 Census**



The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Economic Region of Thunder Bay CMA is 4.4%, and 6.7% for Northern Ontario, compared to Ontario’s 5.7% for June 2023, however, Thunder Bay CMA has a participation rate estimate of 62.4% and an employment rate of 60.0%. As in the past, these are lower than provincial labour force statistics; Ontario’s June 2023 participation rate estimate is 65.7%, and employment rate is 62.1%.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Statistics Canada Labour force characteristics, three month moving average, seasonally adjusted. Table 14-10-0380-02 June 2023

## Local Labour Market and Economic Development

### The District of Thunder Bay

According to the Ontario Ministry of Finance, the population of the District of Thunder Bay is expected to slowly increase over the longer term. Like other locations in Ontario and in most developed nations, the aging of the post-World War II baby boom will result in the aging of the overall population. The projections for the District of Thunder Bay show that over time the age distribution of the population will change with more people being in the senior (65-74) or older senior (75+) age categories. Most significantly, the population 65+ is projected to increase to 26% of the population by 2046; the overall population is projected to increase approximately 1.7%, but the population in the workforce (15-64) will have decreased 3.5% in this time.<sup>57</sup>

As of 2022, residents 65 or older years of age made up 22.2% of the total population of the District of Thunder Bay. The updated population projections from the Ontario Ministry of Finance continue to predict that this will increase to 27% of the total population by 2036 and remain steady from there into 2046. The total population of the District of Thunder Bay is expected to continue to increase slightly by 1.7% from 2022 to 2046.<sup>58</sup>

There are 22,265 census families with children in the District of Thunder Bay; 74.3% of those families are located in the City of Thunder Bay, along with 83.3% of licensed child care centres and 47.6% of EarlyON Child and Family Centres. The population of children ages 0 to 12 is projected to decrease approximately 1% between 2022 and 2032 but increase again to 12.1% of the population by 2046.<sup>59</sup>

According to the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) and Local Employment Planning Council, the jobs with the highest projected retirement rates between 2016 and 2026 in the District of Thunder Bay are managers in transportation, corporate sales managers, contractors, and supervisors for industrial, electrical and construction trades and related workers, motor vehicle and transit drives, and other service support jobs.

The lack of economic recovery from the decreases in the forestry sector since 2006 continue to affect the District of Thunder Bay. There has been renewed interest in

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<sup>57</sup> Ontario Ministry of Finance Population Projections - July 2022 (link to dataset)

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

mining and exploration with the world price of gold and other metals consistently high over the past ten years; gold mines which closed or were close to shutting down are now being explored as viable. Of particular note is the potential for the mining of chromite in the Ring of Fire which could lift the economy of the District by adding new infrastructure and jobs. It is important to note that discussions surrounding the mining of the Ring of Fire have been held for more than a decade with little progress. The development of the Ring of Fire has seen many delays and has still not come to fruition as of the April 2023, despite the Ontario Government committing to pushing the project along since 2018.<sup>60</sup>

Regarding pandemic recovery, the NSWPB comments that the impacts of job losses year-over-year have been more severe for women, low-wage earners, and those without a post-secondary degree, and that these groups will continue to feel impacts disproportionately over the next several years.<sup>61</sup> Pandemic recovery continues to be a factor in the loss of RECEs in the District of Thunder Bay, as pay is stagnant on a low scale and recognition for being an essential service is lacking.<sup>62</sup>

According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development in 2020 with the Local Employment Planning Councils, the District of Thunder Bay has demand for the following skilled trades: cement finisher, construction craft worker, general carpenter, sheet metal worker, general machinist, instrumentation and control technician, metal fabricator, powerline technician, welder, truck and coach technician, millwright, and electrician.<sup>63</sup> Due to the shortage of ECEs, TBDSSAB also considers this workforce to be in demand.

According to North Superior Workforce Planning Board, 76.2% of employment in Northwestern Ontario is in sectors with relatively low potential for automation, with approximately 37.2% in education, health care and public administration.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Northern Ontario Business. "Cutting Red Tape Extends to Ring of Fire." Northern Ontario Business. Nov 16, 2018. <https://www.northernontariobusiness.com/industry-news/mining/cutting-red-tape-extends-to-the-ring-of-fire-1125688> (accessed December 12, 2018).

<sup>61</sup> North Superior Workforce Planning Board. "Setting the Course: Navigating the North Superior Workforce in 2022-2023." <https://www.nswpb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/NSWPB-LLMP-for-2022-2023-22.03.16.pdf> (accessed April 14, 2023).

<sup>62</sup> Knowing Our Numbers Focus Group Feedback. Thunder Bay. May 2023.

<sup>63</sup> Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, In-Demand Skilled Trades Project. November 2020 (<https://www.nswpb.ca/research-reports/>)

<sup>64</sup> North Superior Workforce Planning Board. Are Robots Coming for Our Jobs? The Economic Impact of Automation on Northern Ontario's Economy, 2019.

Of note, there has been an increase to the proportion of people who report working from home at least some of the time between the 2016 census (4% in 2016) and the 2021 census (16% in 2021) post-pandemic.

Due to the vast geography of the District of Thunder Bay, many residents are unable to commute outside their municipalities for employment opportunities unless a secondary residence is found or provided.

## **District Population and Economic Profiles**

### **Conmee**

Conmee is a rural township with large acreages located approximately 40 kilometers northwest of the City of Thunder Bay. Between 2016 and 2021, the Township of Conmee population decreased 2.6%, after being one of the few communities who saw growth in 2016. The median age of the population of Conmee is 40 as of the 2021 census, the lowest median age in the District of Thunder Bay, and has remained the same since 2016. 15.7% of the population of Conmee is 65 or older, while 65.4% fall into the 15-64 workforce range. 135 census families in Conmee have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>65</sup>

In 2021, 16.9% of the employed work force reported working from home, an increase of 8.6%. 100% of the active labour force report travelling to a different community in the District of Thunder Bay for work, indicating a number of hybrid work arrangements in the area. Conmee's employment participation rate was 66.9% in 2021, slightly declined from 67.9% in 2016. 28% of the labour force works in trades, transport, and equipment operators.<sup>66</sup>

There are no child care centres or EarlyON Child and Family Centres located in Conmee Township at this time. The closest programs are located in Oliver Paipoonge, or the City of Thunder Bay.

### **Dorion**

The Township of Dorion historically experienced a significant decline in population since 1996, but between 2016 and 2021, the population increased 18.7%. The aging of the population in Dorion will result in an increase in seniors over the mid-term, but the lack of support services in the community will likely result in out-migration to Nipigon or

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<sup>65</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

Thunder Bay. The median age of Dorion residents has increased to 56. 29.3% of the population of Dorion is 65 or older, while 57.3% fall into the 15-64 workforce range. 40 census families in Dorion have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>67</sup>

Dorion's economic base consists of employment in emerging mining exploration, private contracting, forest harvesting, municipal government, education, agriculture, and tourism-based business. The emerging mining exploration industry, tourism, agro-forestry, and wind energy are felt to have the greatest prospects for future economic growth, and the township is pursuing opportunities in cottage development, regional bio-economic initiatives, agricultural revitalization, tourism, marketing, and alternative energy development.

The employment participation rate has decreased slightly from 57.1% in 2016 to 55.6% in 2021. 52% of the active labour force travel to a different community in the District of Thunder Bay; due to the proximity of Dorion to the municipalities of Thunder Bay, Nipigon, and Red Rock, the residents have several options for work in other areas.<sup>68</sup> There is an EarlyON Child and Family Centre located in Dorion Township, but no licensed child care services. The closest licensed child care services are in Nipigon or the City of Thunder Bay.

In December 2020, the Ontario government awarded a contract to Teranorth, a Sudbury based company, for twinning an 8.6km stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway between Superior Shores and Dorion, which is expected to be completed in September 2023, bringing temporary construction jobs to the area.

## **Gillies**

The Township of Gillies is a rural community approximately 40 kilometers southwest of the City of Thunder Bay. The population of Gillies has decreased 7% since 2016 and has historically been declining. There are various local small businesses and farms in the area, but most people commute to the City of Thunder Bay for work. As the median age of the population of Gillies is 50, which has increased since 2016, aging will become a factor with out-migration to the City for increased services. 22.7% of the population of Gillies is 65 or older, while 65.9% fall into the 15-64 workforce range. 280 census families in Gillies have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.



Gillies defines itself as “a small, rural community with residents enjoying the advantages of living close to a large economic centre.”<sup>70</sup> Of the active labour force, 88.9% commute to another community within the District of Thunder Bay, and 30% report working from home at least some of the time<sup>71</sup>.

There are no child care centres or EarlyON Child and Family Centres located in Gillies Township at this time. The closest programs are located in Oliver Paipoonge, or the City of Thunder Bay.

### **Greenstone**

The Municipality of Greenstone was formed through the amalgamation of the former towns of Geraldton, Longlac, Nakina, Beardmore, Caramat, Jellicoe, Orient Bay, and MacDiarmid. Historically these towns were known for gold mining, forestry, commercial fishing and wilderness tourism.

The population of the communities comprising Greenstone have seen a significant decline, decreasing 29% from 1996 to 2016, and a further 7.1% to 2021. The median age has increased to 47 (from 43 in 2011), leading to the assumption that the demand for supports will continue to increase. 21.2% of the population of Greenstone is 65 or older, while 61.8% fall into the 15-64 workforce range. 415 census families in Greenstone have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>72</sup>

While employment fell in most industries, the resource sector was hardest hit falling by over a third of total employment in the sector in 2006. Like the situation in Dorion, even with the substantial decline, the percentage of employment in resource-based industries was significantly higher than the average for Ontario.

The “Ring of Fire” is a major new source of chromite used in making stainless steel. When developed, it is expected that 300 jobs will be created in the Greenstone area. A new rail line will join the present East-West line at Nakina. The project is expected to have a 100-year life span and will require major road and rail construction.<sup>73</sup> As of

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<sup>70</sup> Gillies Township. “About Us.” <https://www.gilliestownship.com/en/living-here/about-us.aspx> (Accessed August 12, 2021).

<sup>71</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> <https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/news/resource/2018/12/marten-falls-first-nation-noront-suggest-ring-fire-timetable>

March 2023, a plan for an all-season road connecting Matawa First Nations to the provincial highway and the Ring of Fire was approved but is being protested.<sup>74</sup> Greenstone Gold Mines is currently constructing a mine on the former Hardrock Gold Mine in the Municipality of Greenstone. The construction is expected to take 2 years, using as many local contactors as possible; 450 direct jobs per year are expected to be directly associated with the project; 1,000 jobs during construction and pre-production.<sup>75</sup>

The labour force participation rate in the Municipality of Greenstone has dropped significantly from 64.2% in 2011 to 55.4% in 2021, with the employment rate also dropping to 50.6%.<sup>76</sup>

Licensed child care services and EarlyON Child and Family Centres are available in Longlac and Geraldton and serve the entire Municipality of Greenstone.

### **Manitouwadge**

The population in Manitouwadge increased 1.9% between 2016 and 2021; though the median age has remained stable at 49, indicating an increase of younger people in the area. It is still one of the older communities in the District, as 23.5% of the population of Marathon is 65 or older, while 62% fall into the 15-64 workforce range. 280 census families in Manitouwadge have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>77</sup>

While mining had always been at the forefront of economic activity, forestry has also played a significant part in Manitouwadge's economy, specifically logging. While Manitouwadge continues to have some of the lowest housing prices in the country, prices now range from \$45,000 to \$230,000, indicating recent higher demand. Hunting and fishing are the main tourist attractions along with hiking, snowmobile trails, and downhill and cross-country skiing; however, the lack of motel space is hindering the development of the tourism industry.

The labour force participation rate in Manitouwadge has increased to 53.2% but unemployment has also increased to 13.2%.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ontario Government. "Ontario Approves First Nations-led Plan for the Road to the Ring of Fire." <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1002784/ontario-approves-first-nations-led-plan-for-the-road-to-the-ring-of-fire> (accessed April 14, 2023)

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.northernontariobusiness.com/industry-news/mining/new-mines-hundreds-of-jobs-loom-on-the-horizon-for-northern-ontario-4205579>

<sup>76</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

Manitouwadge has both a licensed child care centre and an EarlyON Child and Family Centre to serve families in the surrounding area.

As of July 2021, Hemlo Explorers reported finding a gold pocket near Manitouwadge north of the Hemlo Gold Mine. This may bring future mining projects back to Manitouwadge.

## **Marathon**

Between 1996 and 2016, the population of Marathon has declined by 30%; this had been accelerated between 2001 and 2011 because of the ongoing mill and mine closures. As of 2021, the population has decreased another 4.1%. The median age in Marathon is now 43 (slightly decreased from 2016). The continued decline in employment opportunities has amplified these trends. 16.1% of the population of Marathon is 65 or older, while 68.3% fall into the 15-64 workforce range. 345 census families in Marathon have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>79</sup>

Marathon's economy was initially built on the pulp industry but has expanded to include gold mining operations. The gold deposit discovered at Hemlo (40 km east of Marathon) was the richest ever to be found in Canada and is one of the world's richest outside of South Africa. In October 2020, Barrick Gold Corporation announced transitioning and expanding Hemlo open pit mine to a Tier Two underground operation with an expected life of at least 10 years.<sup>80</sup> It currently employs 500 direct employees and 200 contractors.<sup>81</sup>

Employment levels fell after 2001; in comparison to other municipalities in the district, the decline was relatively small due to an upsurge in employment in health and education services. Employment in the resource-based industries fell especially after Marathon Pulp Inc. announced a shutdown of its pulp mill which affected hundreds of jobs and dealt a severe blow both to Marathon's tax base and its local economy, but the employment in the sector was still over eight times the level for the province as a whole. This may mean that Marathon is vulnerable to further declines in the resource industry. 28.9% of people in Marathon are now employed in sales and service occupations, a shift from the historical lean on natural resources.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.barrick.com/English/news/news-details/2020/modernized-hemlo-transitions-to-underground-mining/default.aspx>

<sup>81</sup> Clutchey, Carl. "Hemlo mine could live longer." The Chronicle Journal. March 12, 2017. [http://www.chroniclejournal.com/business/hemlo-mine-could-live-longer/article\\_9618dc62-072c-11e7-8a0a-bfd9e205a657.html](http://www.chroniclejournal.com/business/hemlo-mine-could-live-longer/article_9618dc62-072c-11e7-8a0a-bfd9e205a657.html) (Accessed December 13, 2018).

As of July 2021, Sienna Resources announced the second phase of surface exploration work for their Marathon North Platinum-Palladium Property, with the potential for future mining activities.<sup>82</sup> In early 2023, Generation Mining released a new feasibility study for their palladium mine bordering Sienna Resources, anticipating the creation of 800 construction jobs, and 400 jobs in mining operations when construction is complete.<sup>83</sup> From 2016 to 2021, Marathon's labour force participation rate decreased to 60.4%; the top three occupations are sales and service (28.9%), trades, transport, and equipment operators (19.2%) and education, law, government services (11.9%).<sup>84</sup>

Marathon is home to both a licensed child care centre and an EarlyON Child and Family Centre.

### **Neebing**

The Municipality of Neebing is a community approximately 35 kilometers from the City of Thunder Bay. Its population has more than doubled between 1996 and 2016, increasing 101%, and increased a further 9.1% to 2021. The increase trend is likely due to people moving from the City of Thunder Bay to the outskirts into newer developments. The median age has remained stable at 49 since 2016. 430 census families in Neebing have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>85</sup>

The main industries in Neebing are tourism and service. Located just south of the City of Thunder Bay and along the shores of Lake Superior, the location is ideal for boat launches, parks and recreation, and fishing. However, 87.9% of the labour force of Neebing travels to a different community within the District of Thunder Bay; likely the City of Thunder Bay. 20.3% of residents report working from home some of the time.<sup>86</sup> Neebing no longer has a licensed child care centre due to staffing shortages; the closest Early Years services are in the City of Thunder Bay or Oliver Paipoonge.

### **Nipigon**

The population of Nipigon fell 26% between 1996 and 2016 because of the ongoing industry closures and fell a further 10.3% to 2021. Like other communities in the area, the decline in population has been concentrated in the age groups under 45. The

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<sup>82</sup> <https://www.juniorminingnetwork.com/junior-miner-news/press-releases/1925-tsx-venture/sie/105112-sienna-commences-phase-2-surface-exploration-program-marathon-north-platinum-palladium-project-ontario.html>

<sup>83</sup> Ross, Ian. "Marathon mine builder waits on permits." Northern Ontario Business. March 21, 2023.

<https://www.northernontariobusiness.com/industry-news/mining/marathon-mine-builder-waits-on-permits-6790758>

<sup>84</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population

<sup>85</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

decline in employment opportunities is likely a major contributor to these trends. Nipigon is the oldest community in the District of Thunder Bay, as 28.5% of the population is 65 or older. The residents continue to age as the median age is now 52, with only 56.9% of the population in the 15-64 workforce range. 220 census families in Nipigon have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>87</sup>

The main industries in Nipigon are forest products, fishing, and tourism, including big game hunting for bear, moose, and deer. The town is trying to diversify its economy by encouraging small manufacturing companies and First Nations to expand their businesses in the area.

There was a major decline in levels of employment between the 2001 and 2006 census years; particularly significant decreases were felt in the resource sector, wholesale and retail trade, and in manufacturing and construction. On February 6, 2007, a devastating fire destroyed the Multiply Forest Products mill; the plant employed 7% of the population of Nipigon. The mill has not been rebuilt and the property remains for sale.

Despite the aging population, the participation rate for Nipigon increased slightly to 53.9%; the main occupations are sales and service, and trades, transport, and equipment. The unemployment rate is 14.4%, the highest in the District of Thunder Bay. Nipigon has both a licensed child care centre and an EarlyON Child and Family Centre that service families in Nipigon and the surrounding area, including Dorion.

On January 25, 2019, the Ontario government announced approval for a new plant in Nipigon to convert natural gas into a liquid form. In the announcement, they project between 700 and 2,800 jobs to be created. The second phase of the plan will extend natural gas access to the other communities in the District of Thunder Bay, including Manitouwadge, Marathon, Schreiber, and Terrace Bay. This project is still in the planning phases.

### **O'Connor**

The population of the Township of O'Connor, a rural farming community approximately 30 kilometers to the west of the City of Thunder Bay, increased 3.9% since 2016. It is also an aging community as the median age has increased to 46 in 2021 from 42 in 2011. 18.8% of the population of O'Connor is 65 or older, while 64.5% is in the 15-64

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

workforce range. 110 census families in O'Connor have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>88</sup>

O'Connor is a rural and agricultural community with a labour force participation rate of 73.1%. Due to the township's proximity to the City of Thunder Bay and other surrounding communities with established businesses and infrastructure, 94.5% of the active work force commutes to a different community within the District of Thunder Bay.<sup>89</sup>

There are no child care centres or EarlyON Child and Family Centres located in O'Connor Township at this time. The closest programs are located in Oliver Paipoonge, or the City of Thunder Bay.

### **Oliver Paipoonge**

The Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge, the largest community bordering the City of Thunder Bay to the west, saw a population increase of 1.9% between 2016 and 2021. This is likely due to the movement of the older population into the City of Thunder Bay to take advantage of more long-term care services, offset by younger families purchasing homes. The median age of the population is 46, with 20.9% of the population 65 or older. 62.2% of the population of Oliver Paipoonge is in the 15-64 workforce range. 970 census families in Oliver Paipoonge have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>90</sup>

Oliver Paipoonge's primary economic sectors include agriculture, tourism, construction, forestry, and manufacturing. It has the largest town centre of the rural communities within the Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area. Despite this, 77.2% of the active labour force still commute to a different community within the District of Thunder Bay for work.<sup>91</sup>

Oliver Paipoonge is home to both a licensed child care centre and an EarlyON Child and Family Centre, who also serve families in nearby Conmee, Gillies, O'Connor, and Neebing Townships.

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<sup>88</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

## **Red Rock**

As a result of the decline in employment through the loss of its main employer, the population of Red Rock saw major decline between 2001 and 2016. It has now stabilized, with no movement between 2016 and 2021. The median age is 48, with 26.3% of the population 65 or older, and 57.5% in the 15-64 workforce range. 130 census families in Red Rock have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>92</sup>

Red Rock's main source of employment was a kraft paper mill owned by Norampac. It originally consisted of two kraft paper machines, but in late 2005, the mill was reduced to running only one. On August 31, 2006, Norampac announced the indefinite cessation of container board production due to unfavourable economic conditions such as the rising price of fibre, energy costs and the strengthening Canadian dollar. This resulted in the loss of over 300 jobs, and the out-migration of much of the population.

Red Rock has a labour force participation rate of 51.6% and an unemployment rate of 7.4%. The majority of the population work in trades, transport, and equipment operator occupations. 60.8% of the active labour force commutes to a different community in the District of Thunder Bay;<sup>93</sup> it is likely that many people travel to Nipigon or the City of Thunder Bay because of the proximity.

Red Rock is home to an EarlyON Child and Family Centre but has no licensed child care services at this time. The closest child care centre is located in Nipigon.

## **Schreiber**

Schreiber's population fell by 1.9% in the years between 2016 and 2021. The median age in Schreiber is now 54. 24% of the population is 65 or older, and 63% fall into the 15-64 workforce range. 135 census families in Schreiber have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>94</sup>

The Canadian Pacific Railway remains one of Schreiber's biggest employers; much of the town's population is also employed by a pulp mill in nearby Terrace Bay. The magnitude in the decline in employment indicates how quickly the local economy declined and, consequently, the rapid de-population of Schreiber.

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.



Total employment fell by 42.8% between 2001 and 2006, with declines experienced in all industries; even after the significant decline in employment, local industries still could not support the remaining work force. Following the decline in employment, the unemployment rate stood at 18% in 2006.

Schreiber is home to an EarlyON Child and Family Centre but no licensed child care services at this time due to staff shortage and low demand.

As of September 2018, an Australian-based company has been conducting testing at the former Inmet zinc mine at Winston Lake. The price of zinc is significantly higher today than when operations at the mine ended in 1998.<sup>95</sup> While outside of the townships of Schreiber and Terrace Bay, if this project goes ahead, it will bring jobs back to both communities. As of 2022, this project is in the planning phase, hoping to be operational in late 2023.

Schreiber's work force participation rate has dropped to 53.1%; the unemployment rate has remained stable at 9.6%, suggesting instability continues to plague the Schreiber employment environment.<sup>96</sup>

## **Shuniah**

The Township of Shuniah saw a population increase of 16% between 2016 and 2021. This may be due to building new homes and moving out of the City of Thunder Bay. The median age of the population is 55, with 29.7% of the population 65 or older. 58.7% of the population of Oliver Paipoonge is in the 15-64 workforce range. 440 census families in Shuniah have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>97</sup>

Shuniah's labour force is primarily employed in the health care and provision of social assistance, construction, and retail trade economic sectors. 83.7% of the active labour force still commute to a different community within the District of Thunder Bay for work.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Rinne, G. "Schreiber awaits potential reopening of zinc mine." TbnnewsWatch. September 28, 2018. <https://www.tbnewsWatch.com/local-news/schreiber-awaits-potential-reopening-of-zinc-mine-1062779> (Accessed December 17, 2018).

<sup>96</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.



Shuniah is home to a licensed child care centre but no EarlyON Child and Family Centres. The closest EarlyON centre would be located in the City of Thunder Bay, or in Dorion.

### **Terrace Bay**

The population of Terrace Bay decreased 30.5% between 1996 and 2016, and a further decrease of 5.2% to 2021. The median age in Terrace Bay is currently 48, with 24% of the population 65 or older, and 59.8% of the population in the 15-64 workforce range. 200 census families in Terrace Bay have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>99</sup>

The Township of Terrace Bay has had a stable economy with the operation of the Terrace Bay Pulp Inc. mill, the McCausland Hospital and a service industry for local residents and tourists. The Terrace Bay Mill was reopened in late 2012 as AV Terrace Bay and currently employs over 360 people from the area.

The labour force participation rate has dropped to 54.3%, while unemployment in Terrace Bay is 9%.<sup>100</sup>

Terrace Bay has an EarlyON Child and Family Centre but no licensed child care services at this time. There is demand, however, and the possibility for home based licensed child care is being explored with the local agency.

### **Territories Without Municipal Organization (TWOMO)**

The population of TWOMO increased 6% between 2016 and 2021, however, it continues to age as the median age increased to 52. 25.2% of the TWOMO population is 65 or older, while 60.1% of the population falls into the 15-64 workforce range. 845 census families in TWOMO have children between the ages of 0 to 17.<sup>101</sup>

Since 2016, TWOMO has seen notable growth in the information and cultural industries (100% increase), the professional, scientific, and technical services industry (52.4%), and in wholesale trade (58.3%). There were large losses in the accommodation and food services industry (-50%), and in the manufacturing industry (-48.8%).<sup>102</sup> This is consistent with other municipalities and likely reflects the decline in the pulp and paper industry, and with it, the decline in demand for accommodations outside the City of

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

Thunder Bay. In response, there is an increase in commuting where the service sector has grown considerably.

As TWOMO encompasses 97,010 square kilometers of the District of Thunder Bay, 88.2% of the active labour force travel to a different community within the district for work. As it borders Rainy River District, Kenora District, Algoma District and Cochrane District, 3.7% of working TWOMO residents travel to a different district for work. 13.2% of working TWOMO residents commute for over an hour.<sup>103</sup>

The labour force participation rate in TWOMO as of the 2021 census has decreased to 54.3%; the unemployment rate increased to 11.2%.

There is a licensed child care centre located in a school in TWOMO, and 2 EarlyON Child and Family Centres. These sites are all relatively close to the City of Thunder Bay, however, leaving a possible service gap for families who live further away toward the Rainy River District. It is noted, however, that there are sites throughout the North Shore that TWOMO families can access if closer to another municipality.

## Employment

As of the 2021 census, there were 70,930 workers in the workforce (decreased 3% from 2016) with an employment rate of 51.5% and a participation rate of 57.8% for the entire District of Thunder Bay.<sup>104</sup>

A total of 26.6% of the labour force of the Thunder Bay CMA (which includes Conmee, Gillies, Neebing, O'Connor, Oliver Paipoonge, and Shuniah) work for the 9 major employers. Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre remains the largest employer and now employs 4.6% of the labour force of the Thunder Bay CMA.

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<sup>103</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 31: Major Employers in the City of Thunder Bay<sup>105</sup>**

<b>Employers</b>	<b>Business Type</b>	<b># of Employees 2017</b>
<b>Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre</b>	Acute Care Hospital	2,824
<b>Lakehead District School Board</b>	Elementary & Secondary Education	2,200
<b>St. Joseph's Care Group</b>	Complex Care, Rehabilitation, Mental Health & Addiction Services, Long Term Care	2,200
<b>Lakehead University</b>	Education	2,100
<b>City of Thunder Bay</b>	Municipal Government	1,855
<b>Government of Ontario</b>	Provincial Government	1,849
<b>Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board</b>	Education	1,500
<b>Confederation College</b>	Education	785
<b>Alstom</b>	Mass Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	400

The major industries in the District of Thunder Bay are health and education, wholesale and retail trade, and manufacturing and construction. This is a shift away from the resource-based pulp and paper industries of the past, moving towards more public sector jobs and seasonal labour.

<sup>105</sup> City of Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission, July 2021

**Figure 32: Major Industry in the District of Thunder Bay<sup>106</sup>**

Municipality	Agriculture & Other Resource Based	Manufact. & Construct.	Wholesale & Retail Trade	Business Finance & Real Estate	Health Care, Education & Social Services	Art, Culture, Recreation & Sport	STEM
Conmee	6.80%	30.70%	15.90%	11.40%	25.00%	0.00%	4.50%
Dorion	15.40%	30.70%	14.90%	15.40%	15.40%	0.00%	0.00%
Gillies	11.60%	32.60%	20.90%	18.60%	14.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Greenstone	5.40%	30.00%	19.00%	12.30%	28.70%	0.50%	3.30%
Manitouwadge	19.20%	25.20%	22.00%	8.80%	18.10%	0.00%	2.70%
Marathon	11.30%	22.70%	28.90%	10.40%	18.20%	1.30%	6.00%
Neebing	4.30%	31.20%	17.10%	13.20%	18.80%	2.60%	10.30 %
Nipigon	3.80%	29.50%	25.80%	9.10%	21.90%	1.50%	2.30%
O'Connor	5.70%	39.10%	13.80%	23.00%	11.40%	2.30%	4.60%
Oliver	7.70%	25.40%	16.50%	15.80%	23.80%	1.30%	6.30%
Paipoonge							
Red Rock	7.40%	26.00%	22.20%	13.60%	21.00%	0.00%	6.20%
Schreiber	3.20%	31.90%	31.90%	10.60%	18.10%	0.00%	3.20%
Shuniah	2.80%	27.80%	17.40%	11.10%	29.40%	0.60%	6.30%
Terrace Bay	3.00%	39.80%	21.80%	9.80%	16.60%	1.50%	6.80%
Thunder Bay City	2.20%	19.30%	26.00%	14.60%	27.20%	1.90%	6.00%
TWOMO	5.10%	32.60%	18.30%	11.50%	23.00%	1.10%	6.40%
District of Thunder Bay	3.30%	21.70%	24.50%	14.10%	26.10%	1.70%	5.90%
Ontario	2.00%	20.50%	23.50%	17.90%	19.10%	3.10%	9.30%

Unemployment rates have increased in 10 of 15 member municipalities in the District of Thunder Bay between 2016 and 2021, illustrating continued impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

<sup>106</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population

**Figure 33: Unemployment Rates for the District of Thunder Bay<sup>107</sup>**

Municipality	2016	2021	% Change since 2011
Conmee	6.70%	11.50%	71.64%
Dorion	10.70%	10.00%	-6.54%
Gillies	5.20%	6.80%	30.77%
Greenstone	10.60%	8.70%	-17.92%
Manitouwadge	10.10%	13.20%	30.69%
Marathon	7.40%	8.20%	10.81%
Neebing	11.50%	9.40%	-18.26%
Nipigon	11.90%	14.40%	21.01%
O'Connor	6.90%	6.90%	0.00%
Oliver Paiponge	5.60%	8.00%	42.86%
Red Rock	8.10%	7.40%	-8.64%
Schreiber	9.60%	9.60%	0.00%
Shuniah	6.30%	8.50%	34.92%
Terrace Bay	10.30%	9.00%	-12.62%
Thunder Bay City	7.70%	11.20%	45.45%
TWOMO	9.20%	11.20%	21.74%
District of Thunder Bay Total	8.20%	10.80%	31.71%
Ontario	7.40%	12.20%	64.86%

The education levels of Northern Ontario residents tend to be lower than Ontario residents as a whole as there are more job opportunities in trades than in the south; Northern Ontario residents have a higher percentage of people with less than a high school diploma as 20.7% of people in the District of Thunder Bay have no certificate, diploma or degree, compared to 16.7% of people within Ontario, and a lower percentage of people with a university degree (20.6% in the District of Thunder Bay compared to 29.9% in Ontario as a whole).<sup>108</sup> Given the increasing pool of persons looking for work, there is a tendency for employers to look beyond basic qualifications, causing people without basic education to have limited opportunities and to face the greatest barriers to accessing the work force.

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<sup>107</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population

<sup>108</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population

## Income

### Income Source Distribution

6.2% of people with an income in the District of Thunder Bay received some sort of Social Assistance compared to 4.4% in Ontario. 66.6% report having an employment income in the District of Thunder Bay compared to Ontario with 69.2%. This illustrates the continuing lack of employment opportunities and lower level of education in the District of Thunder Bay.<sup>109</sup> Of note, a higher proportion of residents of the District of Thunder Bay receive CPP and OAS/GIS than greater Ontario, again illustrating the aging population in the north.

**Figure 34: Income Sources as a Share of Income for Thunder Bay and Ontario**

Income Type	Thunder Bay District	Ontario
Wages/Salaries	60.20%	63.60%
Self-Employment	2.00%	3.70%
<b>Total Employment Income</b>	<b>62.00%</b>	<b>67.40%</b>
Employment Insurance	1.40%	1.10%
OAS/GIS	3.90%	3.10%
CPP	5.30%	3.60%
Child Benefits	1.70%	1.60%
Workers Compensation	0.90%	0.30%
Social Assistance	1.30%	0.90%
Other Government Transfers	5.30%	6.00%
<b>Total Government Transfers</b>	<b>20.40%</b>	<b>17.10%</b>
Private Pensions	11.30%	7.50%
Investment	3.80%	5.50%
Other Income	2.90%	3.10%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Incidence of Low income and Core Housing Need

Statistics Canada uses a standard measure called the Low-Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) to determine those households that can be identified as low-income earners. Those who earn less than half the median income for the area after tax are considered to be low-income earners.

<sup>109</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0070-01 Income statistics for detailed income sources and taxes: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions

From 2016 to 2021, there was decrease in the prevalence of low income in the District of Thunder Bay, although it remains higher than the provincial incidence of low income. 53% of the member municipalities of the District of Thunder Bay have a higher incidence of poverty than the province. Manitouwadge experienced the highest level of poverty at 17.3%.

**Figure 35: Incidence of Low Income based on the LIM-AT in the District of Thunder Bay<sup>110</sup>**

Municipality	2021	2016	% Change
Conmee	4.80%	9.80%	-51.00%
Dorion	10.80%	11.30%	-4.40%
Gillies	10.00%	13.80%	-27.50%
Greenstone	15.50%	18.80%	-17.60%
Manitouwadge	17.30%	16.90%	2.40%
Marathon	9.40%	11.30%	-16.80%
Neebing	4.60%	7.10%	-35.20%
Nipigon	11.70%	17.80%	-34.30%
O'Connor	4.40%	5.30%	-17.00%
Oliver Paipoonge	5.30%	4.90%	8.20%
Red Rock	13.40%	12.90%	3.90%
Schreiber	12.40%	11.40%	8.80%
Shuniah	4.00%	4.50%	-11.10%
Terrace Bay	6.80%	9.40%	-27.70%
Thunder Bay City	11.60%	14.70%	-21.10%
TWOMO	11.60%	12.00%	-3.30%
District of Thunder Bay Total	11.60%	13.80%	-15.90%
Ontario	10.10%	14.40%	-29.90%

The City of Thunder Bay continues to have a higher prevalence of low income than the province, due to in-migration and the number of low-paying service jobs that are currently available.

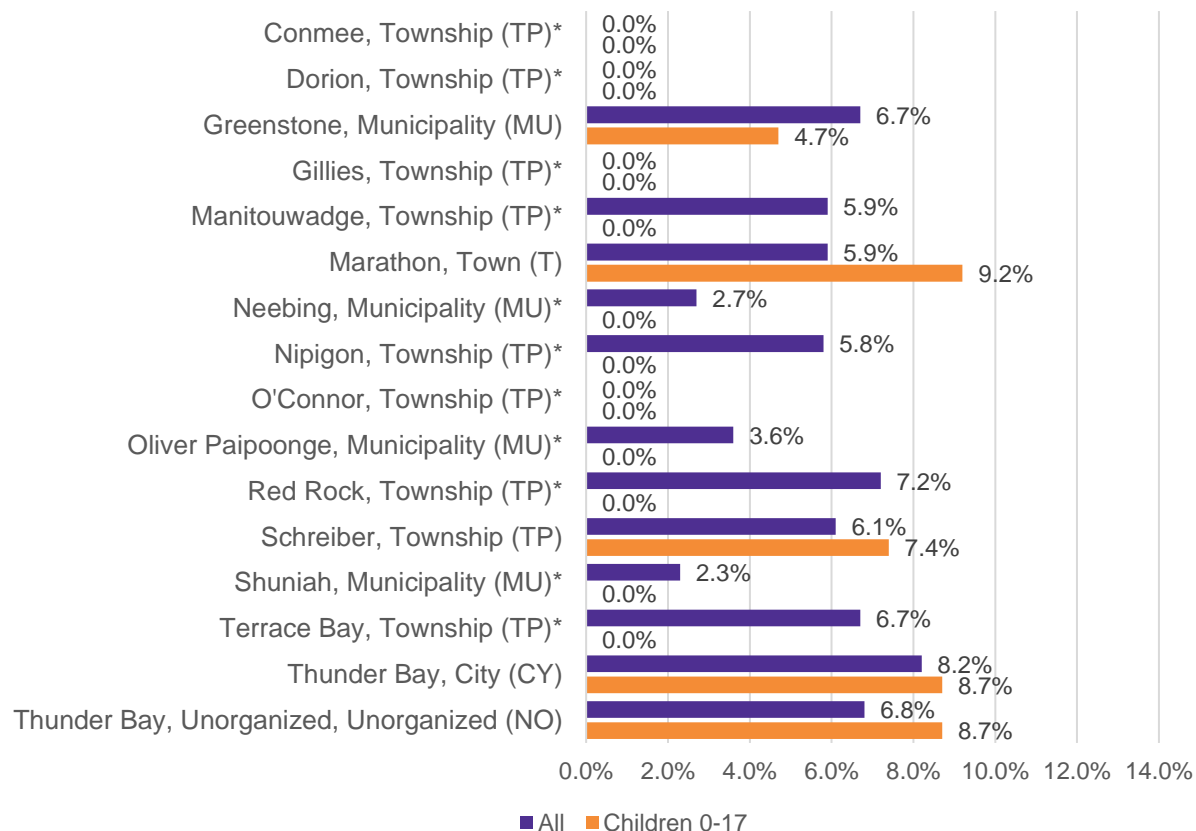
Using the Individual Market Basket Measure as a Poverty Rate indicator, the poverty rate ranges from 2.3% to 8.2% throughout the District of Thunder Bay. When looking at

<sup>110</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

children between the ages of 0 and 17, Marathon has the highest rate of child poverty at 9.2%, with the City of Thunder Bay and TWOMO with 8.7%. Figure 30 shows the poverty rate for TBDSSAB’s member municipalities.

Of note, if a municipality shows 0% it is due to a data quality or quantity issue and data is suppressed.<sup>111,112</sup>

**Figure 36: Poverty Rate by Member Municipality for Total Population and Children 0-17**



Households that are spending more than 30% of their before-tax income on shelter costs and are residing in unsuitable/inadequate accommodations are said to be in core

<sup>111</sup> Statistics Canada. Municipal Quality of Life Dashboard. Individual Market Basket Measure. [https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2023025-eng.htm?utm\\_source=mstatcan&utm\\_medium=eml&utm\\_campaign=statcan-statcan-mstatcan](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2023025-eng.htm?utm_source=mstatcan&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=statcan-statcan-mstatcan)

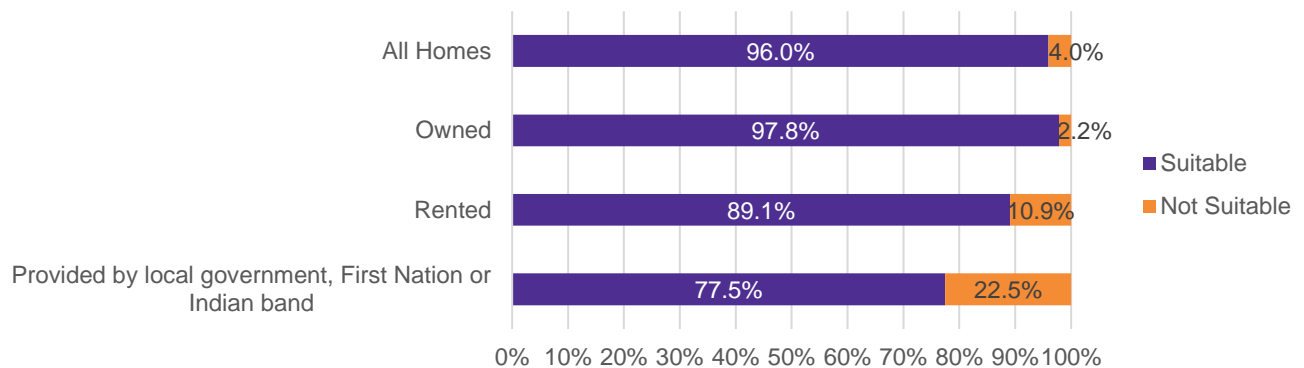
<sup>112</sup> Note – municipalities with a 0% poverty rate likely had their data suppressed due to data quality or quantity. This does not mean they have a 0% poverty rate.



housing need. In the District of Thunder Bay in 2021, 9% of all households were in core housing need. 19% of all tenant households were in core housing need, while 5% of owner households were in core housing need. <sup>113</sup>

4% of census families reported living in not suitable accommodations (where there are not enough bedrooms for the composition of the family). When looking at housing tenure, the proportion of not suitable housing increases for renters and for dwellings provided by local government, First Nation or Indian band. <sup>114</sup>

**Figure 37: Suitability of Housing for Census Families in the District of Thunder Bay**



### Ontario Works Caseload Composition

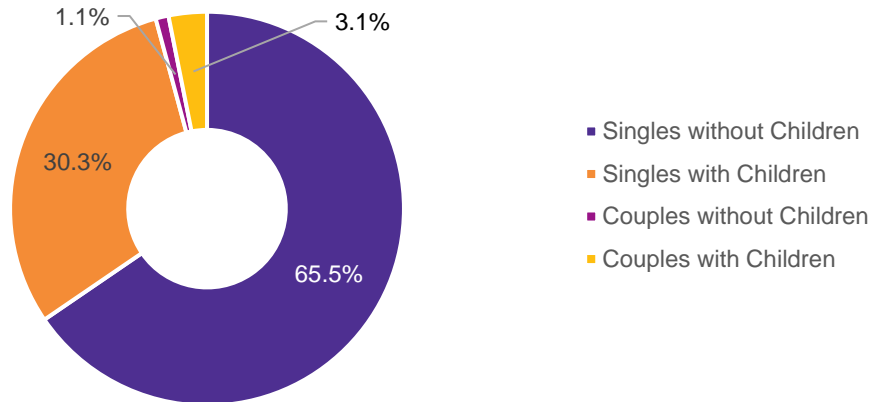
The Ontario Works (OW) caseload composition for TBDSSAB has remained relatively stable over the last 5 years. <sup>115</sup> Single individuals comprise the majority of participants, increasing slightly to 65.5% of the caseload at the end of 2022, but single parent families with children comprise 30.3% of the caseload, with another 3.1% representing couples with children.

<sup>113</sup> Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>114</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0238-01. Housing suitability by tenure, with household type including census family structure: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810023801>

<sup>115</sup> From SAMS OW at a Glance Report – June 2021

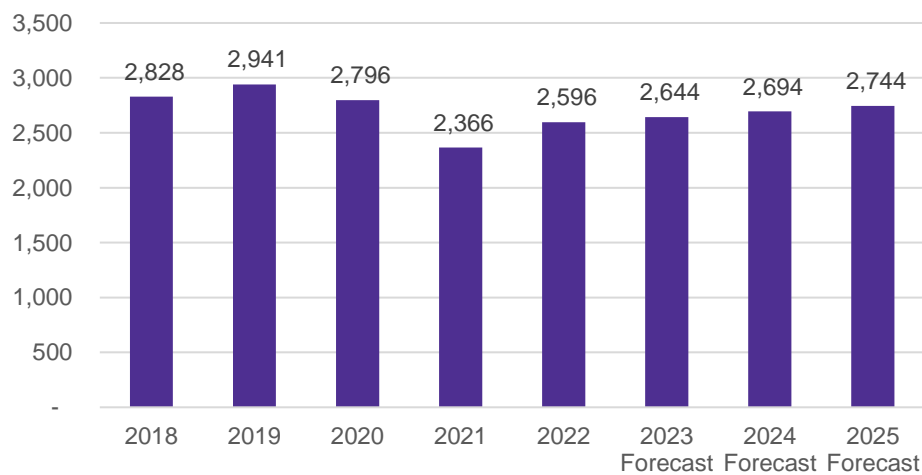
**Figure 38: Family Status of TBDSSAB OW Caseload – December 2022**



An average of 51.9% of TBDSSAB caseload in 2022 had not achieved a grade 12 education level, much higher than the provincial average of 36.2%, which contributes to an inability to find and maintain sustainable employment. Given recent employment trends within the District of Thunder Bay, most jobs demand a grade 12 education as a minimal requirement for employment.<sup>116</sup>

Based on the trends of the last five years, TBDSSAB anticipates that OW will see small increases of around 1.9% per year for the next three years. Recently, the ending of pandemic income programs has led to an increase in the caseload closer to pre-pandemic levels, with average caseloads trending upward.

**Figure 39: OW Caseload Averages and Forecast**



<sup>116</sup> From SAMS OW at a Glance Report – June 2021

## Other Social Influences

The following sections outline other social influences and risk factors in the District of Thunder Bay that may have an impact on families and children.

### Access to Health Care and Healthy Food

The District of Thunder Bay's residents face many health inequities due to numerous and interconnected issues including access to health care.

Health services are provided primarily Ontario Health (previously the North West Local Health Integration Network – NWLHIN). There is 1 regional hospital, and 1 rehabilitation hospital in Thunder Bay, and 5 community hospitals located in Geraldton, Manitouwadge, Marathon, Nipigon, and Terrace Bay.<sup>117</sup>

As of 2019, in the Ontario Health service area only 27.7% of people 16 years or older were able to see their family doctor (or someone else in the office) on the same day or the next day when sick; this is 12.9% lower than the provincial average. 88.3% of people 16 years or older have access to a family doctor or other primary care provider (decreased from 91.5%); 5% lower than the provincial average. Both of these statistics rank the second lowest in Ontario.<sup>118</sup> The NWLHIN had reported 7.02 practicing psychiatrists per 100,000 people, compared to 15.2 per 100,000 for Ontario as a whole, and Toronto with 61 per 100,000 people in 2013.<sup>119</sup>

According to the NWLHIN's Integrated Health Services Plan 2016-2019, in the NWLHIN boundaries, mortality rates from all causes are the second highest in the province. Smoking rates are 5.6% higher than the provincial average, alcoholic consumption rates of those who are categorized as 'heavy drinkers' are 8% higher than the provincial average, and suicide is the leading cause of death among Aboriginal youth and adults up to 44 years of age.<sup>120</sup> According to the TBDHU in 2016, nearly half of adults 19+ reported drinking in excess of the Low Risk Drinking Guidelines, and 1 in 3 high school students in Northern Ontario reported binge drinking.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> <http://www.northwestlhin.on.ca/>

<sup>118</sup> <https://www.hqontario.ca/System-Performance/Primary-Care-Performance>

<sup>119</sup> Thunder Bay District Health Unit. "Opiate Use and Impacts in Thunder Bay District."

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.northwestlhin.on.ca/goalsandachievements/IntegratedHealthServicesPlan.aspx>

<sup>121</sup> <https://www.tbdhu.com/sites/default/files/files/resource/2016-10/Community%20Report%20on%20Alcohol.pdf>

## Crime

Challenges in obtaining employment are significant for those with criminal records and this challenge is compounded by the presence of substance use issues or concurrent disorders. The crime severity index (CSI) includes all Criminal Code violations including traffic, as well as drug violations and all Federal Statutes, and is weighed based on severity of crimes. The Thunder Bay census metropolitan area (CMA) CSI value for 2021 is 45.1 points higher than the overall province of Ontario and 27.61 points higher than the national score. Thunder Bay CMA recorded the highest violent CSI among Canadian CMAs in 2021 at 176.3.<sup>122</sup>

**Figure 40: Crime Severity Index Over Time**

Year	Crime Severity Index			% Change
	Thunder Bay	Ontario	Canada	Thunder Bay
2016	83.84	53.29	72.0	+4.68
2017	86.55	56.35	73.6	+3.23
2018	99.09	60.4	75.6	+14.49
2019	101.79	60.99	79.8	+2.72
2020	94.86	55.47	73.4	-6.81
2021	101.31	56.21	73.7	+6.8

While the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on police reported crime across Canada, in 2020,<sup>123</sup> the CSI for the Thunder Bay CMA increased 6.8% from 2020 to 2021 with the end of pandemic measures.<sup>124</sup>

Within the context of family violence, in 2021, the Thunder Bay CMA had a rate of 395 victims of police-reported family violence per 100,000 residents: the seventh highest rate of CMAs in Canada. This has increased from the 2019 rate of 289 victims per 100,000 residents and puts Thunder Bay CMA above the Canadian average of 337 victims per 100,000. When split by reported gender, the rate of family violence is 562 per 100,000 women and 225 per 100,000 for men; women are 2.5 times more likely to be the victims of police-reported family violence in Thunder Bay.<sup>125</sup> Police-reported family

<sup>122</sup> Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0026-01 Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas

<sup>123</sup> Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. "Police Reported Crime Statistics in Canada 2020." <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00013-eng.htm#a7>

<sup>124</sup> Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0026-01 Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas

<sup>125</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0200-01 Family and non-family victims of police-reported violent crime and traffic offences causing bodily harm or death, by age and gender of victim

violence overall has increased slightly (4.4%) since before the pandemic for Canada overall in 2021, while it increased 36.7% in the Thunder Bay CMA.<sup>126</sup>

In 2021/2022, Indigenous adults were overrepresented in admissions to provincial and territorial correctional services, as they accounted for 31.1% of admissions to provincial/territorial correction services, an increase from 30.4% in 2018/2019.<sup>127</sup> There are two provincial correctional facilities in Thunder Bay. In the 2021 census, the census metropolitan area of Thunder Bay had 14.1% of the population that identify as Indigenous,<sup>128</sup> which is less than half the rate Indigenous adults are admitted to correction facilities.

### **Opioid Use**

As of 2021, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) has among the highest rate of opioid-related deaths in Ontario (78.8 per 100,000 residents compared to the Ontario average of 19.2), which increased 82.1% from 2020.<sup>129</sup>

In 2021, the number of emergency department visits for opioid-related illness in the Northwest LHIN (now Ontario Health) area increased 76.6% from 2020; opioid-related deaths increased 79.5%.<sup>130</sup> In the District of Thunder Bay, paramedic calls for opioid overdoses have been increasing over time but saw a sharp 52.8% increase in 2021.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Adult Correctional Services Survey, Integrated Correctional Services Survey and Canadian Correctional Services Survey, 2021/2022.

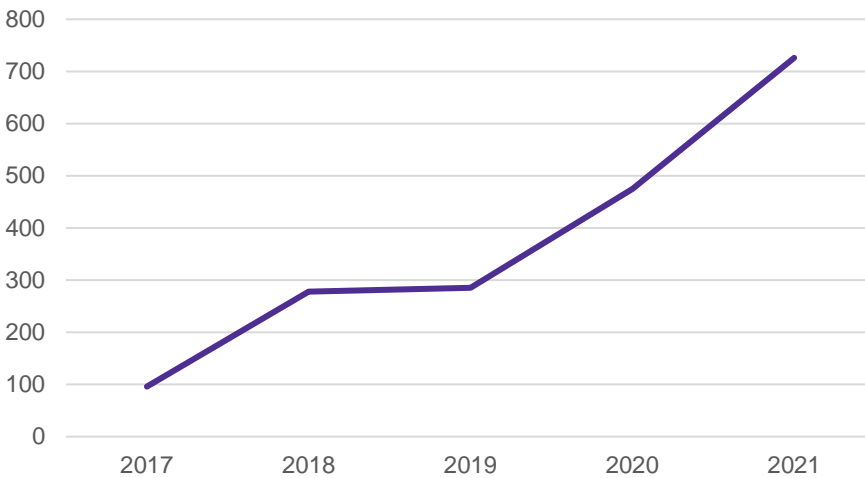
<sup>128</sup> Statistics Canada. Census profiles 1996-2021

<sup>129</sup> Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Interactive Opioid Tool. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/substance-use/interactive-opioid-tool>

<sup>130</sup> Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Interactive Opioid Tool. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/substance-use/interactive-opioid-tool>

<sup>131</sup> The District of Thunder Bay Health Unit Opioid Information <https://www.tbdhu.com/opioidinfo>

**Figure 41: Attended Suspected Opioid Overdose Calls to Superior North EMS**



According to a TBDHU report in 2018, social exclusion and traumatic events are strongly predictive of future drug use. For example, individuals who have experienced more than five adverse childhood experiences like abuse, neglect, or caregiver mental illness are seven to ten times more likely to use drugs than individuals who did not have these experiences.<sup>132</sup>

The report also notes that drug use in youth is a current knowledge gap in the District of Thunder Bay.

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<sup>132</sup> Sawula E, Greenaway J, Olsen C, Jaun A, Flanagan Q, Leiterman A, Groot E. Opioid Use and Impacts in Thunder Bay District. Thunder Bay, ON: Thunder Bay District Health Unit; 2018