



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2025-23

MEETING DATE: JUNE 19, 2025

SUBJECT: CHILD CARE DIRECT GROWTH PLAN UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with information on the recalibration of direct growth plan spaces under the Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC) system.

BACKGROUND

On March 28, 2022, the Ontario government announced participation in the CWELCC program, a national child care program aimed at lowering child care fees for parents of children under the age of six, increasing child care spaces and supporting and growing the child care workforce. On April 20, 2022, the Ministry of Education announced the implementation and details of CWELCC and how Ontario's child care service managers would participate in the delivery of CWELCC.

Through the implementation of the CWELCC program, TBDSSAB was provided with a direct growth plan space allocation. The intention of these spaces is to continue the expansion of licensed child care spaces from 2023 to 2026.

In October 2024 the Ministry requested updated information from DSSABs on growth and the use of spaces that were in the original approved provincial plan. This was requested to support Ontario in achieving the overall space creation target of 86,000 spaces. The information collected created an informed recalibration of spaces for the entire province.

COMMENTS

The charts below indicate the original number of spaces allocated and approved for TBDSSAB by the province as well as the number of spaces provided with the

recalibration. School-based spaces are defined as operating out of a school and community-based spaces are operated anywhere within the community. These spaces can be shifted from one column to the other to ensure the needs of the community are met.

School-based Spaces				
	2024	2025	2026	Total
Original	0	0	0	0
Recalibration	0	78	0	78

Community-based Spaces				
	2024	2025	2026	Total
Original	53	56	30	139
Recalibration	53	18	47	118

The original allocation of spaces was 139 with the recalibration growing this number to 196. The province has provided TBDSSAB with 62 more spaces in total from 2024 to 2026.

A new funding initiative, Early Learning Child Care (ELCC) Infrastructure Funding, was provided to support the growth through infrastructure projects with a goal of increasing inclusion in child care for underserved communities through the creation of new, licensed child care spaces. The ELCC Infrastructure Fund supports not-for-profit licensed child care centres in alignment with Ontario's Access and Inclusion Framework.

The ELCC Infrastructure Fund is approximately \$135.1 million for 2025 and will be distributed to CMSMs/DSSABs as follows:

- **Base Allocation:** \$70.5 million distributed equally across all CMSMs/DSSABs (a flat amount of \$1,500,000 per CMSM/DSSAB)
- **Proportional Allocation:** \$64.6 million distributed proportionally based on each CMSM's/DSSAB's share of the revised 2025 and 2026 community-based child care space targets.

In July 2025, TBDSSAB will be required to report to the ministry on the status of the ELCC Infrastructure Fund funding.

To provide an equitable process for supporting the growth in not-for-profit licensed child care, an Expression of Interest will be posted throughout the District to ensure all organizations interested will have the opportunity to apply to receive the growth in CWELCC spaces.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

This report supports the Strategic Plan vision of establishing flexible, inclusive services through the enhanced early years and child care programs. Decisions made due to the recalibration of direct growth target spaces will continue to support the Strategic Plan and provides direction that is responsive to the needs of the community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The direct growth target recalibration aligns with the funding allocations provided by the province to support the expansion of child care through CWELCC spaces. The increase in spaces is supported with the appropriate funds to continue to provide the current cost of \$22/day to families accessing licensed child care.



Funding under the ELCC Infrastructure Fund is provided through 100% provincial investment.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with information related to the recalibration of the direct growth plan as directed by the province and the expansion of CWELCC spaces for the District of Thunder Bay by providing funding and spaces to continue to grow the sector to support families in the community waiting for affordable, inclusive, high quality and accessible child care.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

None

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