



Report To:	DSB Program Planning Committee
From:	Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services and Ray Hannah, Children's Program Supervisor
Date:	March 26, 2014
Re:	Ontario Early Years Centres - Issue Report

Recommendation:

The DSB staff are recommending that the Ministry of Education continue to build on the [Ontario Early Years Policy Framework](#) with the intent to fulfill the vision for the integration of family support programs into Best Start Child and Family Centres.

CMSM's and DSSAB's have been identified in the Early Years Policy Framework as key municipal partners in child care service system management.

The current administration and funding allocation for Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC's) was established based on provincial ridings rather than CMSM's and DSSAB's jurisdictions.

The DSB staff are recommending that the Ministry of Education recognize CMSM's and DSSAB's as the lead municipal partners for the service system management of OEYC's and Best Start Child and Family Centres. OEYC's should be realigned according to CMSM/DSSAB jurisdictions and the contract management for OEYC's should be transferred to CMSM/DSSAB's, including Data Analysis Coordinators (DAC's) and Early Literacy Programs.

Report:

In the Early Years Policy Framework, the Ministry of Education states that one of the key areas for action is to create an effective approach to implementing Best Start Child and Family Centres by September 2014. The end result of this vision shall see an integration of various family support programs which include OEYC's, Family Literacy Centres, Family Resource Centres, and Better Beginnings Better Futures. With this in

mind, it is important to highlight the current fragmented funding arrangements and the importance of realignment, of these family support programs, to the DSB as the Service System Manager for children's services programs. While the DSB acknowledges the January 1, 2014 transfer of the family support programs from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) to the Ministry of Education (MEDU) was a positive first step, consultations with the Ministry are encouraged, and anticipated, in order to effectively move ahead with the creation of Best Start Child and Family Centres.

In the DSB jurisdiction, Best Start Hubs operate using funding from two envelopes, Family Resource Program (FRP) funding, which has been transferred to the Ministry of Education on January 1, 2014, and OEYC funding, which remains with MCYS until April 1, 2014. To date, the OEYC program has been funded by MCYS to agencies outside of our catchment with the intent that some of these funds would service our district. As a result, the administration and funding of these programs has been fragmented and therefore incongruent with the recognition of CMSM's and DSSAB's as municipal partners and service system managers. The result of this framework is that the Best Start Hub provision agencies currently report financially and statistically to the DSB, and to the out of district Transfer Payment Agencies (TPA). Although it is not clear how the OEYC funding level was originally determined, it is clear that the Best Start Hubs require both the FRP funding received from the DSB, and the OEYC funding to operate viably.

While community planning through the Best Start Network has long been established to clearly recognize CMSM/DSSAB's as service system managers, the current framework has left the management of OEYC funding and data analysis coordination funding to be administered by out of district Transfer Payment Agencies. Since the Ministry of Education has declared that 2014 is a transition year, in which funding and programming will remain status quo, this is an important time to acknowledge the current framework's incongruences. The realignment of OEYC funding and the municipal service system management role, has long been an issue for this DSB and the Northern Ontario Service Delivery Association (NOSDA). Therefore, with the recent transfer to MEDU, and their recognition that improved system integration will depend on municipalities as the leads, the timing is now to address the request that CMSM/DSSAB's be recognized and funded as the service system managers.

There are also cost-sharing inconsistencies as the Province and CMSM/DSSAB's fund Family Resource Centres at an 80/20 cost share while the province directly funds Transfer Payment Agencies at 100% to operate Ontario Early Years Centres. If the OEYC's and FRP's are going to be transformed into Best Start Child and Family Centres, these funding inconsistencies need to be dealt with.

Conclusion

The DSB staff are recommending that the Ministry of Education recognize CMSM/DSSAB's as the lead municipal partners for the service system management of OEYC's and Best Start Child and Family Centres. OEYC's should be realigned according to CMSM/DSSAB jurisdictions and the contract management for OEYC's should be transferred to CMSM/DSSAB's, including Data Analysis Coordinators (DAC's) and Early Literacy Programs.

The province needs to address the funding inconsistencies between Family Resource Programs and Ontario Early Years Centres once they are transformed into Best Start Child and Family Centres.