



Summer 2003

Child Care Chit Chat

A Newsletter from Family and Children's Services for Child Care Operators



Record of Attendance to hit the Internet

Howard Dayton
Manager, Licensing and Program Management

Web-enabled Record of Attendance is on the horizon! York Region is pleased to announce that planning for this new service is well underway and that we will be looking to operators for input and feedback in the weeks to come.



Web-enabled Record of Attendance will let you update your records on-line.

The intent of Web-enabled attendance processing is to allow operators the opportunity to complete their record of attendance from their own desktop by using a secure Website address, login and password. The on-line attendance form can be updated as many times as you like throughout the month until required by York Region, in order to process your payment.

You will also be able to view the Cash Payment Detail Summary on the same site, once York Region has processed your billing information. All told, this service will replace the fax/mail option for those sites signed on as "Web operators" and reduce the amount of paper that is generated for attendance and billing.

If you don't have access to the Internet, don't worry. We will continue providing operators the fax/mail option for the foreseeable future. Signing up as a web-operator is completely voluntary.

A recent survey of child care operators in York Region indicated approximately 50% of those responding would be Internet-ready by the fall of 2003 and able to participate in this new service once it is launched (anticipated for late 2003). So, stay tuned for more information on this exciting project!

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From the Director's Desk

Elizabeth Wagle
Director, Family and Children's Services

Earlier this year we were pleased to hear the federal government announce \$900 million for child care. Now that the provincial governments have signed the multilateral agreement we are awaiting an announcement about the allocation of this child care funding in Ontario.

While the child population of York Region has increased substantially over the last five years, the level of provincial funding for child care fee assistance, child care special needs resourcing and wage subsidy has either remained the same or, in the case of fee assistance for Ontario Works participants, has been reduced. This results in wait lists for services and approximately one third of child care operators not receiving wage subsidy.

In the budget submission to the province in 2003, York Region has requested an increase in funding for child care fee assistance, special needs resourcing and wage subsidy.

York Region continues to support increased enrollment in family strengthening programs, including summer camp programs for children of Ontario Works participants and residents of subsidized housing, as well as overnight camp and leader-in-training programs for adolescents.

Collaborative and integrated opportunities continue to be developed. Recently we have been involved in three such initiatives: an educational program which involved The University of Toronto School of Medicine, The Hospital for Sick Children and EIS, where medical students completed a work rotation with EIS; one-time funding to help establish two new and dedicated outreach Early Years sites in social housing communities; and Books For Babies - an early literacy initiative.

Regional Council recently approved a fifth annual rate increase for child care operators to address the need for a stable child care system which is so important in the lives of children and their families.

We hope York Region will receive additional provincial child care funding which will enable us to make a meaningful difference in the lives of more York Region children and their families.

Important Reminders

Serious Occurrence Reports

Please forward ALL copies of Serious Occurrence reports to Child Care Services at (fax) 905-895-5045.

Approved Start Dates

You MUST have confirmation of a child's approved start date, the child's absentee allowance and the parental contribution PRIOR to enrolling or re-enrolling a fee-assisted child in your program.

No Backdating Fees - Effective Immediately!

Child Care Services can no longer backdate child care fee assistance for initial enrollment, or for eligibility reviews. Parental contributions will be effective the date of enrollment or the date of the eligibility review.

Child Care Operators Billing Policies

Family and Children's Services hosted an Operators Information Session in December 2002. Issues surrounding fee-assisted families not paying their portion of their fee were discussed. Please be reminded that it is your responsibility to collect the parental portion of their child care fee in accordance with your billing policy.

West Nile Virus Information Enclosed

Enclosed in this newsletter are three inserts containing information on protecting yourself from the West Nile Virus. If you did not receive any of the following, please contact Sherri Washington at 905-830-4444, ext. 2032.

- York Region: **Don't get bitten**
- Province of Ontario: **What you need to know and what you can do about West Nile Virus**
- Health Canada: **Safety Tips on Using Personal Insect Repellents**



To see further information about the West Nile Virus in York Region, go to:

www.region.york.on.ca

An Update and Thank You From EIS

We at Early Intervention Services (EIS) would like to thank all child care operators for their patience and understanding during the SARS emergency in York Region.

During this period, all EIS staff stopped their normal duties to join the Regional response. Twenty-eight EIS staff had active emergency response roles during the crisis while others remained on standby.

During the emergency, EIS cancelled approximately 307 child care visits and 566 home visits. With SARS screening in place, EIS provided 25 Initial Service Planning Meetings and 10 emergency child care support meetings. Additionally, EIS staff provided 781 telephone consults with families and child care staff.

School-age Summer Program Costs

In 2003 Family and Children's Services distributed a survey regarding summer school-age program costs. This survey is currently being analyzed.

We will keep you apprised of any changes in practices resulting from this analysis.

Any changes in practice require Council approval and must be managed within the Provincial budget approved in 2004.

Manager's Message

Connie Wilson
Manager, Child Care Services

As you can see, we have improved the look of our *Child Care Chit Chat* newsletter. I hope you like it and continue to read the important articles and updates we send to you. We began issuing *Child Care Chit Chat* in April of 1995, which is eight full years of hot-off-the-press child care updates and information. We plan to continue producing *Child Care Chit Chat* for child care operators in York Region for many more years.

Increased number of children served

Much has happened since the Winter 2002 newsletter was issued. First of all, the new Child Care Unit Service Delivery model has been fully implemented resulting, in part, to an increase in the number of children we serve on a daily basis.

Welcome

We want to welcome the following staff members to the Child Care Team:

- ♦ Betty Riddle, Administrative Clerk - South Service Centre
- ♦ Karen Ball, Operations Support Clerk - 62 Bayview Parkway

Satisfaction Survey 2002

It is apparent from our 2002 Customer Satisfaction Survey that fee-assisted families appreciate the service that you provide. Sixty-nine percent of our survey respondents strongly agree and twenty-six percent agree with the following statement: My child(ren) is/are well cared for at the centre based/home based program.

New Child Care Training

York Professional Care and Education Inc. was awarded a Regionally-funded project to provide training to unregulated child care providers in York Region. The training is based on the Family Child Care Training Project, a first time effort of both the regulated and unregulated child care sectors to enhance and support the delivery of training to family child care providers. York Professional provided training to 140 providers in the first half of 2003. Congrats York P! *See the full article and photo on page 4.*

Translation Services

We continue to enhance services to non-English-speaking families (in Italian, Russian, Chinese, Farsi and Tamil) by supporting their efforts to access child care fee assistance and quality child care programs. We have translated a number of forms and letters to support these families. If you wish copies of the Child Care Translation Language Line posters, please call Sherri Washington at 905-830-4444 or 1-877-464-9675, ext. 2032.

2003 Regional Schedule of Rates

Regional Council approved an increase to the Regional Schedule of Rates for Child Care Fee Assistance. The rate schedule is effective January 1, 2003 and rate increases will be issued with the June and July billing cheques.

Family Child Care Training Program a Great Success

On June 11 and June 17, 2003 graduation ceremonies took place for over 140 caregivers from across York Region who had attended the Family Child Care Training Program. Components of the 12-week program included:

- ♦ Your Child Care Home
- ♦ Safety
- ♦ Health
- ♦ Nutrition
- ♦ Child Development
- ♦ Child Guidance
- ♦ Helping Children Grow And Develop
- ♦ The Child Care Day
- ♦ The Business of Family Child Care
- ♦ Partnerships With Parents
- ♦ Connecting with Your Community

Despite the terrible weather this winter and spring, over 90% of the caregivers who started the program completed it.

The ceremony was a great success and eight caregivers were chosen as valedictorians for their group. Some of these caregivers had never spoken to a large group before and all did an amazing job.

This training program, aimed at caregivers providing unregulated family child care, was funded by York Region, Community Services and Housing Department and delivered by York Professional Child Care with assistance from G & F Home Child Care Agency.

This training program responds to a priority identified by the child care community in York Region and captured in [Child Care Matters](#), which aims to "work with community partners to provide supports to informal (and licensed) home child care providers."

Did You Know?

There are an estimated 170,000 family child care providers in Canada. Approximately 15,000 caregivers participate in a regulated family child care system while an estimated 155,000 provide unregulated family child care.



Celebrating Success!

The graduation ceremony of the Family Child Care Training Program - Level One.

Child Care Chit Chat is produced by the Community Services and Housing Department's Family and Children's Services Division. For more information about any of the articles within, or about any issues relating to Child Care Fee Assistance, call Connie Wilson, Manager of Child Care Services at 905-830-4444, ext. 2050. You can also access more information about York Region's Children's Services at:

www.region.york.on.ca