

Update 2003

Child Care Matters Child Care Service Plan for 2001 to 2003

March 2004



York Region

Community Services and Housing Department
Family and Children's Services

Introduction

This report provides an update of Child Care Matters, May 2001 – the Local Child Care Service Plan for York Region.

Changing Roles and Responsibilities

The provincial government's Services Improvement Act legislated the realignment of local services and resulted in amendments to the Day Nurseries Act, (the Act), that impacted on the Regional Municipality of York's, (York Region), roles and responsibilities in the area of child care services.

As a result of changes to the Day Nurseries Act, (the Act), in addition to retaining its existing responsibilities for the administration of fee assistance for residents who qualify for assistance under the Act and for delivery of services for children with special needs, York Region became responsible for service system management and service delivery in July 1999, including:

- Service system planning
- Allocation/reallocation of available resources
- Quality assurance
- Governing the service delivery organizations
- Administering the program
- Delivering services to clients¹.

The changes to the Act expanded York Region's child care service system management responsibilities to include:

- Wage Subsidy
- Resource Centres
- Child Care Special Needs Resourcing
- Administration of child care fee assistance previously administered by approved corporations²

The Ministry refers to its municipal partners, such as York Region in its child care service system management role, as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs). Within York Region, the Family and Children's Services Division of the Community Services and Housing Department is responsible for the Region's child care service system management.

Child Care Service Plan

Effective 2001, the Province requires CMSMs to submit an annual update to the Local Child Care Service Plan.

¹ Roles and Responsibilities, Provincial – Municipal Services Realignment, Social and Community Health Services, January 1998, Extract of pages 1, 2, 3, 22 and 23, Appendix 7.1.

² Ibid

York Region's Child Care Service Plan – Child Care Matters, May 2001 which was approved by Regional Council and the Province, provides the context, framework and direction for the planning and management of the child care service system and service delivery in York Region for 2001 – 2003. In addition to building on previous York Region child care planning initiatives, the development of the 2001 – 2003 York Region Child Care Service Plan included processes for community input and processes to solicit information and advice specific to its development as well as drawing on a number of other recent planning, consultation and/or information gathering initiatives including service provider round tables.

Summary Analysis

Child Care

Since the beginning of 1999, the number of licensed spaces grew by 54% or 7,203 spaces to 20,397 at the end of 2003. However, as a result of the growth in the child population in York Region, there are only sufficient licensed spaces to accommodate approximately 14.9% of children 0 - 12 years. The level of provincial funding for child care fee assistance has remained the same since child care responsibilities were downloaded in 1999 and was reduced in 2003 resulting in a decline in both the percentage of licensed spaces which are subsidized from 17% in 1999 to 10.6% in 2003 and the percentage of children for whom child care fee assistance is available.

Children with Special Needs

Early identification and assessment are important in ensuring that children with special needs receive the support services they require during the critical period from birth to 6 years. Research indicates that at least 5% of children 0 - 6 years (3,334 children) have some special need and would therefore benefit from Early Intervention Services. However, since provincial funding has not kept pace with the child population growth in York Region, an average of only 1.3% of all children 0 - 6 years are in receipt of Early Intervention Services monthly.

Wage Subsidy

Wage Subsidy is the combination of several provincial funding initiatives introduced in 1987 and 1993 in response to low levels of compensation in the child care field and to address issues of affordability and stability in the service sector. The provincial wage subsidy funding approval to York Region has not increased since 1999, when responsibility for administering this program was downloaded from the province to York Region. During the same period, the number of licensed child care spaces which are eligible for wage subsidy, should funding become available, has increased by 54%, resulting in a significant shortfall in funding and 36% of child care operators not receiving any wage subsidy.

Provincial funding has not kept pace with the child population growth in York Region resulting in York Region's funding for child care fee assistance, special needs resourcing and wage subsidy being 64% of the provincial average in 2001³.

³ Towards a New Model for Social Services Funding in York Region, Human Services Planning Coalition 2003.

Demographics

Current and Projected Population

According to Census 2001 data, York Region's population reached 729,254⁴ with an increase of 23.1% between 1996-2001. This represents a growth rate 4.6% higher than the growth rate for the 1991 to 1996 period. The Region of York's Planning and Development Services Department's population estimate for the Region, as of December 2003, was 866,833.

York Region experienced an increase of 18,759 children, 0 – 14, from 1996 to 2001 and a further increase of 39,859 children is projected to 2026, an overall increase of 43%, (58,618), in children, 0 – 14, from 1996 – 2026. Of the 2001 to 2026 increase, 37.8% is projected to occur in the 0 – 5 age grouping, 27.6% in the 6 – 9s, 20.9% in the 10 – 12s and 13.7% in the 13 – 14 age grouping.⁵

In 2001:

- 155,710 children between the ages of 0 – 14 resided in York Region.
- 133,110 children between the ages of 0 – 12 years resided in York Region.
- The highest proportion of children age 0 – 12 years lived in Vaughan, 26.4%, (35,185), followed by Markham, 24.9%, (33,155), and Richmond Hill, 17.5%, (23,250).⁶

The 2001 census reports that within York Region, 47% of employed persons live and work in the Region while 53% work outside the Region. In 1996, 9% of children in York Region, aged 0 – 12, (9,885 children), lived in single-parent families, compared to a provincial average of 16%. The 2001 census reports that in 2001, 12,140 children age 0 – 12 lived in single parent families an increase of 2,255 (22.8%) children over 1996.

Between 1996 and 2001 a 47% increase in lone parent families occurred.⁶ A 171% increase in lone parent families is projected to occur between 1996 and 2026.

Income

In 2000, York Region households had the highest median income in the GTA. However, at the same time, 10% of the total population of York Region were living below the low income cut off.

In 2001, 10.5% of all children aged 0-12 years were living in low income families. This represents 13,910 children.

Family composition determines different income profiles. Over 21% of employed lone-parent families have incomes that are below LICO as compared to 5% of employed two-parent families.

⁴ In July 2001, York Region's Planning and Development Services Department estimated the Region's population at 771,057, when adjusted for the census undercount.

⁵ York Region, Planning and Development Services Department

⁶ Statistics Canada, Census 2001

York Region Children Aged 0-12 Living in Low Income Families
with Employed Parent(s), Census 2001

	Total Children	Total Low Income	Incidence of Low Income %
Age 0-12			
Number of children with both parents employed	81,855	4,055	5.0
Number of children with lone parent employed	9,425	1,990	21.1

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Tabulation, Census 2001

Diversity

York Region is home to children and their families from a significant number of countries and cultures. In the 2001 census, 38% of York Region's population reported a non-official language as their mother tongue. In York Region this is an increase of 5% (83,360) since 1996.⁶ Information received from the Ministry of Community and Social Services indicates that in 1996, York Region was the third highest area in the Province for households where neither official language was spoken at all, with 10.4% of York Region children 0 - 12 years of age, (12,010 children), living in households where neither official language was spoken⁷. In 2001 18% of the population reported having a mother tongue other than English or French, up from 16.6% in 1996.

York Region has been historically viewed as a Region that is rich in resources and wealth. It is still rich in these but the social fabric of the community is changing. There are growing waiting lists for vital services such as child care, programs for children with special needs, affordable housing and long-term care placement.

⁷ Children, 0 – 12 Years, in Non-Official Language Speaking Households and Ages of Children in Non-Official Speaking Households, by Service Manager, 1996, Appendices 7.9.15 and 7.9.16.

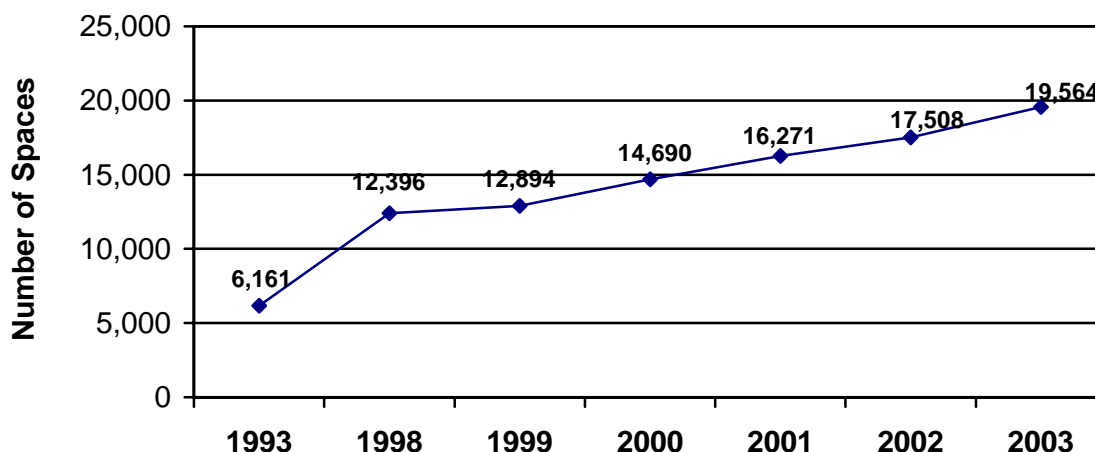
Licensed Child Care Spaces

There were 6,036⁸ licensed centre-based child care spaces in York Region in 1988. In 1993, York Region had approximately 6,161⁹ licensed centre-based child care spaces, a 2% increase over 1988. The number of licensed centre-based child care spaces increased to 12,396 by 1998¹⁰, a 105% increase in 10 years, (i.e. 1988 to 1998). The number of licensed centre-based spaces increased by 4% in 1999, (to 12,894)¹¹, by 14% in 2000, (to 14,690)¹² by 10.8% in 2001 (to 16,271), by 7.6% in 2002¹³ (to 17,508) and by 11.8% (to 19,564) in 2003.

The total estimated number of spaces in use by licensed home child care agencies in 2003 was 651, a decrease of 2.8% over the 670 estimated number of spaces in use in 2002.

In 2003, York Region had an estimated total of 20,215 licensed child care spaces including both centre-based and home-based child care spaces.

Growth in Licensed Centre-Based Child Care Spaces in York Region – 1993, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003



Source: Child Care Study in York Region, 1989; York Region Child Care Management Plan Framework, September 1993: Total Licensed Capacity; Child Care Fee Assistance Update, Report to Regional Council, June 29, 1999; Child Care Fee Assistance Update, Report to Regional Council, June 29, 2000; York Region Child Care Licence Tracker

⁸ Child Care Study in York Region, 1989.

⁹ York Region Child Care Management Plan Framework, September 1993: Total Licensed Capacity (Thornhill Commercial School-age not available).

¹⁰ Child Care Fee Assistance Update, Report to Regional Council, June 29, 1999.

¹¹ Child Care Fee Assistance Update, Report to Regional Council, June 29, 2000.

¹² York Region Child Care Licence Tracker

¹³ Ibid

An analysis of the total 19,564 licensed centre based spaces, based on the licensed capacity by type of space, ranges from a high of 41.43% for school age children to a low of 1.52% for infant care.

Since 2001, the number of licensed centre-based:

- infant spaces has increased by 75 (33.9%),
- toddler spaces has increased by 366 (35.2%),
- preschool spaces has increased by 1,328 (25%),
- kindergarten spaces has increased by 216 (14.2%),
- school-age spaces has increased by 1,629 (25.3%),
- nursery school spaces has decreased by 321 (18.4%).

**York Region Licensed Centre-Based Child Care Spaces, by Type of Space
2001, 2002, 2003**

Type of Centre	Total Licensed Spaces 2001	% of Total Licensed Spaces 2001	Total Licensed Spaces 2002	% of Total Licensed Spaces 2002	Total Licensed Spaces 2003	% of Total Licensed Spaces 2003
Total Commercial and Non-Profit:						
• Infant	221	1.4	223	1.27	296	1.52
• Toddler	1,040	6.4	1,117	6.38	1,406	7.18
• Preschool	5,312	32.6	5,994	34.24	6,640	33.67
• Kindergarten	1,525	9.4	1,374	7.85	1,741	8.90
• School-age	6,428	39.5	7,198	41.11	8,057	41.43
• Nursery School	1,745	10.7	1,602	9.15	1,424	7.30
Total	16,271	100.0	17,508	100.0	19,564	100.0
Total Commercial						
• Infant	54	0.3	70	1.40	155	2.54
• Toddler	391	2.4	455	9.12	758	12.42
• Preschool	1,773	10.9	2,300	46.12	2,829	46.34
• Kindergarten	441	2.7	415	8.32	597	9.78
• School-age	1,174	7.2	1,204	24.15	1,269	20.78
• Nursery School	637	3.9	543	10.89	497	8.14
Sub-Total Commercial Centres	4,470	27.4	4,987	100.0	6,105	100.0
Total Non-Profit						
• Infant	167	1.1	153	1.22	141	1.05
• Toddler	649	4.0	662	5.29	648	4.82
• Preschool	3,539	21.7	3,694	29.50	3,811	27.92
• Kindergarten	1,084	6.7	959	7.66	1,144	8.50
• School-age	5,254	32.3	5,994	47.87	6,788	50.79
• Nursery School	1,108	6.8	1,059	8.46	927	6.92
Sub-Total Non-Profit Centres	11,801	72.5	12,521	100.0	13,459	100.0

Market Rate

The average annual market rate of full day centre-based licensed child care in York Region based on the rate charged to the public by child care operators for a full day licensed child care space in 2003 was \$9,266, an increase of 16% over the 1999 average annual market rate of \$7,991 and an increase of 3.3% over the 2002 average annual market rate of \$8,978.

Average Annual Market Rate of Full Day Centre-Based Licensed Child Care in York Region – 2001, 2002, 2003

Age Group	2001	% increase	2002	% increase	2003
Infant	\$11,745	2.2	\$12,006	3.3	\$12,398
Toddler	\$ 9,448	2.2	\$9,657	1.4	\$9,788
Preschool	\$ 7,830	3.3	\$8,091	3.2	\$8,352
Kindergarten	\$ 7,439	5.2	\$7,830	3.3	\$8,091
School Age	\$ 7,073	3.3	\$7,308	5.3	\$7,699
Average	\$ 8,707	3.24	\$8,978	3.3	\$9,266

Source: York Region Survey of Rates Charged to the Public by Child Care Operators – 2001, 2002, 2003

The average annual market rate of full day licensed home-based care in York Region, based on the rate charged to the public by child care operators of licensed home child care agencies in 2003, was \$8,711, an increase of 27.1% over the 1999 average annual market rate of \$6,851 and an increase of 1.7% over the 2002 average annual market rate of \$8,548.

Average Annual Market Rate of Full Day Licensed Home-Based Child Care In York Region – 2001, 2002, 2003

Age Group	2001	% increase	2002	% increase	2003
Infant	\$9,396	2.7	\$9,657	1.45	\$9,788
Toddler	\$9,135	2.8	\$9,396	1.49	\$9,527
Preschool/ Kindergarten	\$7,647	2.4	\$7,831	2.6	\$8,091
School Age	\$7,073	3.2	\$7,308	1.3	\$7,439
Average	\$8,313	2.8	\$8,548	1.7	\$8,711

Source: York Region Survey of Rates Charged to the Public by Child Care Operators - 2001, 2002, 2003

Purchase of Service Agreements

York Region enters into Purchase of Service Agreements with operators to enable fee assistance to be paid for child care services for York residents who qualify for assistance in accordance with provincial legislation and York Region policy.

Of the 19,564 licensed centre based spaces, 15,390 (79%) were covered by Purchase of Service Agreements with York Region in 2003.

Of the estimated 651 home child care spaces in use by home child care agencies, 578 (89%) were covered by Purchase of Service Agreements with York Region in 2003.

Licensed Child Care Spaces Covered by Purchase of Service Agreements (POS) With York Region 2001, 2002, 2003

Centre Based

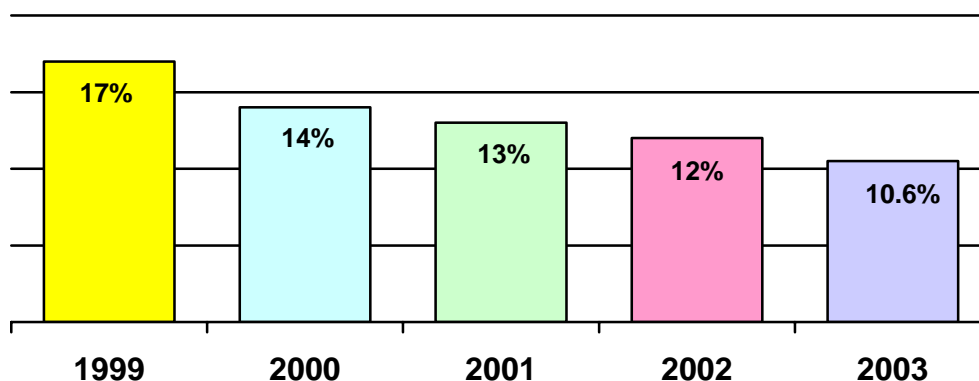
Spaces Covered by POS 2001	% increase	Spaces Covered by POS 2002	% increase	Spaces Covered by POS 2003
12,538	9.0	13,850	11	15,390

Home Child Care

Spaces Covered by POS 2001	% increase	Spaces Covered by POS 2002	% decrease	Spaces Covered by POS 2003
476	20	595	2.8	578

As a result of growth in the child population and an increase in the number of low income families, the current level of provincial funding for fee subsidy does not meet the community need. The percentage of all licensed spaces for which provincial subsidy is available has decreased from 17% to 10.6% between 1999 and 2003.

Subsidized Spaces as a Percentage of All Licensed Spaces



Provincial funding for child care fee subsidies is available to less than 15% of families with children birth to 12 years whose income is below the Low Income Cut Off established by Statistics Canada.

Child Care Fee Assistance

Profile of Households Receiving Fee Assistance

DNA

Lone parents utilize over 70% of all child care fee assistance. The majority of families in receipt of child care fee assistance are employed (78%) or are full-time students (11%).

In York Region, at December 31, 2003:

- 1,628 households were in receipt of child care fee assistance for a total of 2,760 children (excludes summer camp)
- 72% were single-parent families, 28% were two-parent
- 78% were working, 11% were in school
- 3% were unemployed single parents or two-parent families where both parents were unemployed and looking for work
- 8% were for other reasons such as emergency care, children with special needs¹⁴
- A monthly average of 2,710 children (excludes summer camp) were in receipt of child care fee assistance

Ontario Works

In 2003 in York Region, fee assistance with the cost of child care was provided for persons in receipt of Ontario Works as follows:

- Fee assistance was provided for a total of 772 children of OW participants
- Of the total of 772 children, fee assistance for formal licensed child care was provided for a total of 649 (84%) children of OW participants
- Of the total of 772 children, fee assistance for informal licensed child care was provided for a total of 123 (16%) children of OW participants
- Ministry approval of fee assistance funding for formal licensed child care for OW participants totalled 39% of the total OW child care fee assistance expenditure. Ministry one-time approval in 2003 totalled 18% of the total OW child care fee assistance expenditure. The remaining 43% was funded under the Day Nurseries Act. Additional provincial funding to support child care for OW participants was requested and denied in 2003.
- Provincial funding was reduced by 43 spaces in 2003.

¹⁴ Ontario Child Care Management System – Service System Managers Module Report December 2002.

Wait List

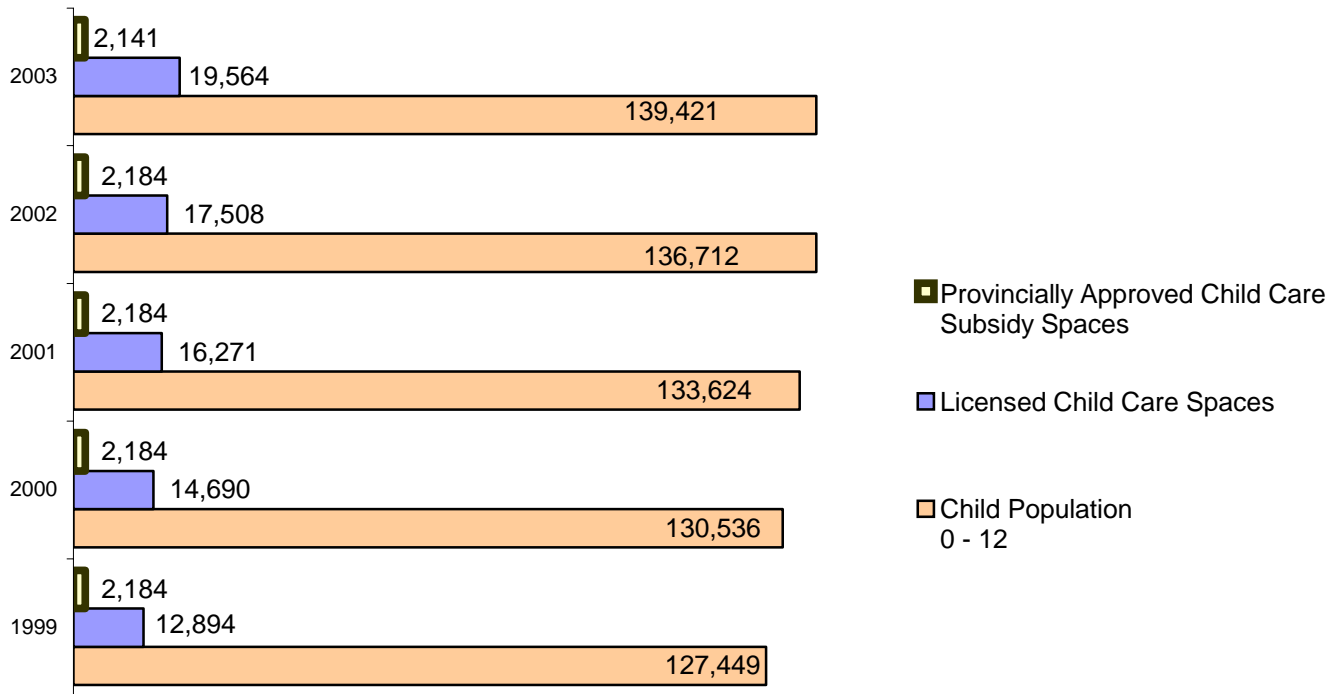
Although York Region expended the total provincial approval for fee subsidy in 2003, the wait list continued to grow. The increasing wait list in 2003 reflects an increase in sole support and low income families requiring child care fee assistance and the fact that the level of provincial funding does not meet the community need for child care fee assistance.

**York Region Wait List for Fee Assistance, by Type of Space
December 2001, 2002, 2003**

Type of Space	2001	2002	2003
Infant	145	209	281
Toddler	104	141	262
Pre-school	290	434	683
School-age	198	293	455
Other	10	6	13
Total	747	1,084	1,694

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**Child Care Population and Licensed Centre Based Child Care Spaces
and Provincial Subsidy 1999 - 2003**



- Between 1999 and 2003, the child population (birth to 12 years) is estimated to have risen by 11,263 or 8.75%.
- Between 1999 and 2003, the number of children with mothers in the labour force is estimated to have risen by 8,050 or 8.75%.
- Between 1999 and 2003, the number of licensed centre based spaces has increased by 7,203 or 54%.
- In York Region, licensed care meets the needs of 19% of families who are in the paid workforce compared to 20% in Toronto.* (**Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto: Final Report May 2002*).
- Between 1999 and 2003, the level of provincial child care subsidy remained the same. In 2003, the level of provincial child care subsidy was decreased by 43 spaces resulting in:
 - A decrease in the percentage of licensed centre based spaces, which are subsidized from 17% in 1999 to 10.6% in 2003.
 - 9% decrease in the percentage of children of working parents for whom subsidy is available.
- In order to bring the level of provincial subsidy to the 1999 level of 17% of licensed spaces, an increase of approximately \$10 million in provincial subsidy approval is required for an additional 1,326 spaces.
- Child Care fee subsidies are available to less than 15% of families with children birth to 12 years whose income is below the Low Income Cut Off established by Statistics Canada.

Priorities Identified Through the Local Child Care Planning Process (2001 – 2003) Include:

- Increase the number of fee-assisted spaces available to York Region residents.
- Increase per diems paid to operators over the next three years to respond to higher operating costs and promote stability.
- Increase the number of child care spaces and child care operators covered by Purchase of Service Agreements.
- Enter into Purchase of Service Agreements with approved Parks and Recreation Departments offering programs for school-age children, age 6 – 12 years.
- As part of OW/DNA Integrated Child Care Delivery, ensure that Advance Child Care and STEP funds are fully utilized.

Priorities Addressed by York Region by March 2004

- Regional Council approved 20% funding share for additional fee assisted spaces.
- Monthly average subsidized days of care increased from 49,547 in 2001 to 53,098 in 2002 an increase of 9.8% and remained stable at 53,011 in 2003.
- Additional Provincial funding requested annually from 2000 to 2003, under the Day Nurseries Act (DNA) and Ontario Works Act (OWA) was not approved by the Province.
- An additional 2,852 centre based child care spaces covered by Purchase of Service Agreements since 2001.
- An additional 102 home child care spaces covered by Purchase of Service Agreements since 2001.
- Per diems paid to operators increased effective January 1, each year since 1999.

- York Region entered into Purchase of Service Agreements with three approved Parks and Recreation Departments offering programs for school-age children, age 6 – 12 years.
- Advance Child Care will be fully utilized in 2004.

Wage Subsidy

Over a number of years, the Ministry introduced several funding initiatives in response to low levels of compensation in the child care field and to address issues of affordability and stability in the service sector. The combination of these is now referred to as the Wage Subsidy Program and includes the former:

- Direct Operating Grants (DOGS) – introduced 1987/88
- Provider Enhancement Grants (PEGS) – introduced 1992
- Wage Enhancement Grants (WEGS) – introduced 1991
- Pay Equity funding – introduced 1994/95

The child care operator is responsible for the distribution of wage subsidy funds to staff and is required to meet reporting requirements concerning the utilization of those funds.

The increase in licensed spaces since 2000 has resulted in an increase in licensed child care centres (sites) eligible for wage subsidy.

A Comparison of Wage Subsidy Paid to Licensed Centre-based Centres, Against the Ministry Formula and Calculations, in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total number of sites eligible	273	302	321	342
Number receiving amount for which they are eligible	91	100	93	101
Number receiving less than the amount for which they are eligible	69	90	131	118
Number receiving no funding	113	112	97	123

There are significant costs associated with bringing eligible programs up to the funding levels specified in the Ministry's guidelines. These costs increased in 2001, 2002 and 2003 as a result of the increase in licensed spaces. Using the licensed centre-based wage subsidy underfunding as an example:

- The cost should new funding become available to bring all commercial operators up to the Ministry funding formula for commercial centres established in the Ministry's 1995 Wage Subsidy Guideline is estimated at \$1,193,733 per year in 2003, an increase of \$843,733 (241%) over the estimated cost of \$350,000 per year in 2000.
- The cost should new funding become available to bring all non-profit centres up to the Ministry's 1995 Wage Subsidy guideline is estimated at \$1,715,640 per year in 2003, an increase of \$85,640 (5.3%) over the estimated cost of \$1,630,000 per year in 2000.

The Cost to Bring All Operators to the Ministry 1995 Wage Subsidy Guideline

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Cost to bring all commercial operators to Ministry funding formula	\$350,000	\$521,897	\$784,006	\$1,193,733
Cost to bring all non-profit operators to Ministry funding formula	\$1,630,000	\$1,885,119	\$1,803,914	\$1,715,640
Total	\$1,980,000	\$2,407,016	\$2,587,920	\$2,909,373

- The cost to implement the balance between the commercial and non-profit sectors, as outlined in the Ministry's 2000 Guideline should new funding become available, is an estimated \$6,795,629 per year to achieve funding for all at the non-profit funding formula level, an increase of \$3,245,629 (91%) over the 2000 estimate of \$3,550,000.

The Cost to Bring All Operators to the Ministry 2000 Wage Subsidy Guideline

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Cost to implement the balance between the commercial & non-profit sectors	\$3,550,000	\$4,491,299	\$5,468,377	\$6,795,629
Total	\$3,550,000	\$4,491,299	\$5,468,377	\$6,795,629

The provincial wage subsidy funding approval to York Region has not been increased since responsibility for the administration of wage subsidy was downloaded from the Province to the Region in July 1999 while the number of licensed spaces has increased by 54% since 1999.

Priorities Identified Through the Local Child Care Planning Process (2001 – 2003) Include:

- Proceed with redistribution of existing underspent wage subsidy funding to the priority areas of licensed centre-based and home-based child care infant, toddler and pre-school programs where no wage subsidy was in place in 2000.
- Proceed with in-year, one-time reallocation of underspent funds to address health and safety concerns in licensed child care programs and Resource Centres, and staff training.
- Establish a Wage Subsidy Reference Group to provide ongoing input and advice on utilization of the wage subsidy funding envelope.
- Implement business practice changes to delineate funding payments and implement phased technology solutions to streamline invoicing and payment processes.
- Develop an options paper to address wage subsidy gaps and needs and funding implications.
- Maintain status quo on pay equity funding to meet the requirement to continue to flow funds as received at the time of transfer of responsibility from the Ministry. Provide input to the Ministry, from a policy perspective, on issues faced by Service Providers related to pay equity.
- Undertake a Wage Subsidy Utilization and Impact Survey.

Priorities Addressed by York Region by March 2004

- Additional Provincial funding requested in 2003 was not approved by the Province.
- Closures and reductions in licensed and/or operating capacity in 28 child care programs has enabled redistribution of:
 - \$403,000 unspent annualized wage subsidy funds to infant and toddler programs not in receipt of wage subsidy in 2001.
 - \$326,816 unspent annualized wage subsidy funds to infant, toddler and preschool programs in 2002.
 - \$38,280 unspent annualized wage subsidy funds to infant programs in 2003 / 2004.
- Implemented in-year one-time reallocation of underspent fiscal funds to address health and safety concerns in 36 licensed child care programs in 2001, 34 licensed child care programs in 2002 and 25 licensed child care programs in 2003.
- Status quo on Pay Equity funding maintained.
- Wage Subsidy Reference Group established in 2002.
- Gaps and funding implications identified through a Wage Subsidy Survey.

Early Intervention Services

York Region Early Intervention Services (EIS), comprised of Infant Development funded under the Child and Family Services Act and Child Care Special Needs Resourcing Programs funded under the Day Nurseries Act, directly delivers programs that serve families with children under the age of six who have special needs or who are at risk for poor outcomes as a result of delayed development, specific diagnosed conditions, injury or health factors.

In 2003, the actual service level provided for Infant Development and Child Care Special Needs Resourcing exceeded the targets set by the Ministry by 58%. A (30%) program budget overage occurred as a result of service levels exceeding Ministry targets and interim measures to mitigate the negative impact on waiting for service. The program budget overage was managed, in year, within the Family and Children's Services budget approved by York Region. This approval from York Region enabled York Region to serve approximately 300 additional children with special needs who would otherwise be on the wait list for Early Intervention Services.

Infant Development and Child Care Special Needs Resourcing Programs in York Region – 2001, 2002, 2003

Early Intervention Services	Ministry Target for # of Children to be Served 2001	Actual # of Children Served 2001	% Above/ (Below) Ministry Target 2001	Ministry Target for # of Children to be Served 2002	Actual # of Children Served 2002	% Above/ (Below) Ministry Target 2002	Ministry Target for # of Children to be Served 2003	Actual # of Children Served 2003	% Above/ (Below) Ministry Target 2003
Infant Development (Child and Family Service Act)	210*	385	83	265	436	64.5	300***	616**	105
Child Care Special Needs Resourcing (Day Nurseries Act)	661**	757	14.5	661	728	10	661****	903****	36.6
Total	871	1,142	31.1	926	1,164	25.7	961	1,519	58

* Ministry target was increased in 2001 due to the approval of additional provincial funding.

** Ministry target was increased in 2001. No additional provincial funding approved.

***Includes expansion of Infant Development to children over 2 years.

****Includes contracted service, i.e. Pre-school Speech and Language, Visually Impaired and Seating Clinic.

Early identification and assessment are important in ensuring that children receive the appropriate support services they require during the critical early development period from birth to 6 years. On average, 1.3% (889) of all children 0 - 6 years are in receipt of Early Intervention Services monthly. Research indicates that at least 5% of children 0 - 6 years (3,334 children) have some special need and would therefore benefit from Early Intervention Services. An increase of approximately \$13.3 million in provincial funding approval would be required in order to provide Early Intervention Services to 5% of children 0 – 6 years of age in York Region.

In reviewing changes that have occurred in relation to the Early Intervention Services Caseload:

- From 1997 to 2003, the total number of infants and children served each year has increased by 47% - from 819 in 1997 to 1,204 in 2003.
- The increase in caseload has resulted in a reduction in the percentage of service time spent per child.
- The monthly average wait list has increased – from an average of 50 in 1997, increasing to an average of 62 in 2000, a 24% increase, with 71 on the wait list at year-end 2000, a 14.5% increase over 1999. The monthly average wait list in 2001 was 85, a 37.1% increase over 2000; the monthly average wait list in 2002 was 85, a 1% decrease over 2001; the monthly average wait list in 2003 was 91, a 1.2% increase.
- The monthly average wait list has increased by 29 children (46.8% increase) since 2000.

York Region Early Intervention Services Caseload Comparison – 2001, 2002, 2003

	2000	% Inc/ (Dec) over Previous Year	2001	% Inc/ (Dec) over Previous Year	2002	% Inc/ (Dec) over Previous Year	2003	% Inc/ (Dec) over Previous Year
# Enrolled at Year-End	717	3.9	727	1.3	784	8.0	970	23.7
# New Enrolments in Year	312	(2.2)	429	37.5	433	1.0	483	11.5
Monthly Served Average	728	10.6	719	(1.2)	727	1.0	936	28.8
Monthly Wait List Average	62	34.8	85	37.1	87	2.0	91	1.2
Total Served in Year	1002	(0.1)	1,142	14	1,164	2.0	1,204	3.43

Priorities Identified Through the Local Child Care Planning Process (2001 – 2003) Include:

- Increase funding levels to begin to address the wait list and to ensure that children with special needs receive optimal services, which fully support their optimum development.
- Request increased provincial funding to support licensed and approved child care providers who provide programs to school-age children (6 – 12 years) with special needs.
- Implement an annual evaluation survey of Early Intervention Services for child care operators and staff of programs which include special needs children supported by Early Intervention Services.
- Implement an annual customer satisfaction survey for parents of children receiving Early Intervention Services.
- Increase and enhance parent awareness of programs through various communication and outreach mechanisms.
- In collaboration with service providers, enhance prevention outreach awareness and programs.
- Implement a “hub” service model in Newmarket, including Early Intervention Services, Pre-school Speech and Language, Licensed Child Care and Early Development and Parenting Program.

Priorities Addressed By York Region By March 2004:

- Regional Council approved 100% funding to address the wait list – resulting in approximately 300 more children being served than those funded by the Province in 2003.
- Total number of children served in year increased by 201 (20%) between 1999 and 2003.
- Monthly average of children served increased by 278 (42%) between 1999 and 2003.
- New enrolments increased by 51.4% between 1999 and 2003.
- Additional provincial funding requested and denied for child care special needs resourcing each year 2000 to 2003.
- Additional provincial funding requested and approved for Infant Development (\$258,000) in 2001, (\$128,100) in 2002, and (\$5,328) in 2003.
- Hub Service Model in 2004 will include Child Care Fee Assistance, Early Intervention Services, Preschool Speech and Language and Housing and Residential Services.
- Service delivery model implemented which supports principles of equity and fairness
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys implemented in 2002.
- Collaborated with York Region District School Board to facilitate transition to school for children with special needs.
- Autism Services Beyond ABA/IBI.
- Diagnostic Services In Year.
- Collaborated in the development of a proposal for a Children's Treatment Centre.

Child Care Special Needs Program

In addition to direct services provided by Early Intervention Services, York Region administers:

- The funding and program relationship with agencies that provide the following services to eligible children and their families:
 - speech and language services
 - services to children who are visually impaired
 - a seating clinic
- The funding relationship for community-based supports to licensed child care centres, (Enhanced Funding), to enable the inclusion of identified children with exceptional special needs. A community-based committee makes recommendations to York Region for the allocation of this program enhancement funding.

In 2003, the actual service level for child care special needs programs funded by purchase of service agreements with York Region exceeded Ministry targets by an average of 35.3%, as described in the chart below. The service level was managed within the existing budget allocation.

Child Care Special Needs Programs Funded Through Purchase of Service with York Region – 2001, 2002, 2003

Program Funded	2001 Ministry Target for # of Children to be Served*	2001 Actual # of Children Served	2001 % Above/ (Below) Ministry Target	2002 Ministry Target for # of Children to be Served*	2002 Actual # of Children Served	2002 % Above/ (Below) Ministry Target	2003 Ministry Target for # of Children to be Served*	2003 Actual # of Children Served	2003 % Above/ (Below) Ministry Target
Speech and Language Services	155	300	93.5	155	300	93.5	264	264	0
Services for Visually Impaired Children	13	12	(.7)	13	14		13	15	15.3
Paediatric Seating Clinic	36	40	11.1	36	51	41.6	30	36	20
Total	204	352	72.5	204	365	78.9	307	315	35.3

* Target prorated over direct service and purchased services.

Enhanced Funding

Enhanced Funding is provided to child care operators to address their staffing needs in order to support the inclusion of children with significant special needs. The ministry does not set targets for Enhanced Funding. In 2003, Enhanced Funding was provided, on average, to 33 licensed child care centres per month, serving on average, a total of 23 children and 15 groups each month. Enhanced Funding was provided to children of a total of 90 families in 2003. There were 8 children and 8 groups on the wait list for service at the end of 2003.

Priorities Identified Through the Local Child Care Planning Process (2001 – 2003) Include:

- Increased funding to address wait list.
- Service coverage cap increase – from 12 weeks to a maximum of 6 months – Enhanced Funding.
- Program and service supports, such as staff training to address behavioural management.
- Prevention outreach programs.
- Address service restrictions; e.g. provision of physio services in licensed child care settings.
- Ensure service provider participation in case management/feedback “loops”.

Priorities Addressed by York Region by March 2004:

- Additional provincial funding requested in 2002 and 2003 was not approved.
- Regional Council approved one-time additional funds for Enhanced Funding in 2001 and 2002.
- Regional Council approved additional ongoing Enhanced Funding of \$20,000 effective January 1, 2002. This funding will address the wait list and support an increase to the approved hourly rate.
- Enhanced Funding service coverage cap increased.

Early Child Development and Parenting Supports

Ontario Early Years Centres/Resource Centres

- *Connections - November 2001*, the Ontario Early Years Centres Community Plan for York Region recommended the redistribution of resource centre funding according to the child population birth to 6 years.
- The Province determined that its 80% share of Resource Centre funding would be redirected to Ontario Early Years Centres.
- York Region terminated its service agreement with 5 of the 6 resource centres effective April 30, 2002.
- York Region maintains its service agreement with Rose of Sharon Resource Centre as it was determined to be a “unique service” by the Ontario Early Years Centres Planning Group for York Region.

Core Services* Available in York Region Resource Centre Site 2002

Municipality	Lending Library	Child Care Registry	Warmline	Child Care Respite / Relief	Drop-in Centre	Playgroup	Caregiver Education	Total
Newmarket	X	X	X**	X	X	X	X	6

** Based on historical reporting of telephone contacts by teen mothers.

Priorities addressed by York Region by March 2004:

- Provincial approval of one-time funding of toys, books and equipment in 2001.
- Professional development workshops held for front line staff in 2001 and 2002.
- Regional Council approved one-time funding of 16 AOK Early Child Development and Parenting Support Sites for 2002 and 2003.
- Additional base funding approved for Resource Centre for 2002/2003.

KidsLine

The Toll-Free KidsLine (1-888-703-KIDS) is a central access and intake number which provides York Region residents with one-stop access to information, intake or access to Child Care Fee Assistance, Early Intervention Services, Pre-school Speech and Language, Infant Hearing, and Child Care Information. The KidsLine responds to an average of 1,200 calls per month.

Fiscal Strategies

The Child Care Plan includes Fiscal Strategies which support the effective disbursement of current funding, a request to the province for increased funding support, and the application of York Region's NCB Reserve funding strategy. York Region shares the cost of child care with the provincial government and the Region's share of 20% is subject to approval by Regional Council.

Disbursement of Current Funding

One-time unspent funds will be applied to minor capital costs in licensed child care programs including repairs, e.g. playgrounds, subject to Provincial and Regional approval. Unspent wage subsidy funds in 2003, will be redistributed to programs not in receipt of any wage subsidy. Unspent annualized wage subsidy funds of \$403,000 in 2001 and \$326,816 in 2002 were redistributed to infant, toddler and preschool programs not in receipt of wage subsidy. Unspent annualized wage subsidy funds of \$38,280 were redistributed to infant programs in 2003 / 2004. Regional Council approved the reallocation of the municipal 20% share of resource centre funding to address child care needs including children with special needs.

Requests to the Province for Increased Funding Support

Provincial funding requests included:

- funds to support fee assistance in an additional 415 spaces in 2003,
- staffing costs to address the wait lists of children with special needs,
- Ontario Works fee assistance funds to address the 123% increase in demand for Ontario Works Child Care, which is currently being funded through the Day Nurseries Act and the National Child Benefit Strategy, and
- funds to support the equitable distribution of wage subsidy according to Provincial Guidelines.

Response to Requests for Increased Funding Support

Requests to the Province for increased funding to support child care fee assistance, child care special needs resourcing and wage subsidy were denied. Provincial Ontario Works Child Care Fee Assistance Funding approval was reduced by 43 spaces in 2003.

National Child Care Benefit Strategy

The strategy includes:

- Child care fee assistance for children of Ontario Works participants in approved child care programs and summer recreational programs.
- Program costs for early child development and parenting programs.
- Enhanced funding to child care operators to support the inclusion of an increased number of identified children with exceptional special needs with working parents.
- Food for Learning programs in 26 elementary schools.
- An initiative to assist at risk youth in obtaining and maintaining employment.
- Program costs for children of social housing residents in summer camp programs.
- An overnight recreational camp for adolescent children in need.
- One time funding of furnishings and equipment for programs for young children and their parents in social housing developments and an emergency shelter.
- After school programs in 4 social housing sites.
- Fee Assistance for children of Ontario Works participants attending year-round recreation programs.

New Funding Announcements

Recently there has been increased awareness of the importance of the early years, from birth to age 6 and the need to provide a wide range of supports and opportunities for all children.

Multilateral Agreement 2003

On March 13, 2003, the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care was released by federal, provincial and territorial social services ministers. Over the next five years, \$900 million in federal funds will flow to the provinces and territories for regulated early learning and child care programs for children under the age of six.

The objective of the initiative is to promote early childhood development and support the participation of parents in employment or training by improving access to affordable, quality early learning and child care programs and services.

The federal government began to flow funds in November 2003 through the Canada Health and Social Transfer. The Ontario government's share of the Federal Early Learning and Child Care Funds in 2003 / 2004 is \$9.7 million.

On January 7, 2004, the Ontario Minister of Children's Services announced that the Ontario government will strengthen child care and early learning by making \$9.7 million in federal funds available to municipalities. York Region will receive \$753,146 of this funding to address health and safety improvements and the purchase of new equipment by licensed non-profit child care operators serving children under six.

Pay Equity Memorandum of Settlement

As a result of a settlement that was reached between the Government of Ontario and five unions, funding will be available in 2004 to assist eligible child care proxy agencies with their pay equity obligation. The province will provide a base increase equivalent to 1% of the child care operator's previous year's payroll for 2003 and 2004 and .75% in 2005. The province will determine the distribution of additional base and one-time funding for the period 1999 - 2002 through an assessment based on information collected from child care operators.

Fiscal Impact

Provincial funding has not kept pace with the population growth in York Region, resulting in the historical underfunding of many services in York Region – including child care services. As advocated in the Human Services Strategy, adequate and timely funding of human services is needed in York Region. Our funding and policy making partners in the provincial and federal levels of government are requested:

- to increase the total dollars flowing into York Region for human services; and,
- to immediately increase base funding for all human services in York Region to be, at a minimum, on par with provincial per capita averages.

It is important to note that, in particular, provincial funding has not kept pace with the child population growth in York Region resulting in York Region's funding for child care fee assistance, special needs resourcing and wage subsidy being 64%¹⁵ of the provincial average. In order to bring the level of child care funding to the 1999/2000 level, an increase in provincial funding approval of \$17 million would be required. In addition, an increase in provincial funding approval of \$13.3 million would be required in order to provide Early Intervention Services to 5% of children 0 – 6 years of age in York Region.

In the case of child care fee assistance, wage subsidy and special needs resourcing, a substantial increase in funding of the child care service system in York Region would result if the system were funded on par with the provincial per capita funding average for child care.

¹⁵ Towards a New Model for Social Services Funding in York Region, Human Services Planning coalition 2003.

Notes

March 2004

Notes

If you would like further information, a copy of the complete 233-page report - Child Care Matters, May 2001, or further copies of this update, please call 905-830-4444, ext. 2112.