



Child and Family Centre



Centre pour l'enfant et la famille

**The Regional Municipality of York**

# FUNDING GUIDELINE FOR EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY PROGRAMS IN YORK REGION

**Effective January 1, 2023**

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

1-877-464-9675  
[york.ca/Children](http://york.ca/Children)

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# 1. Introduction

The Regional Municipality of York (the Region) is pleased to release the 2023 Funding Guideline (guideline) for EarlyON Child and Family programs in York Region. The guideline is for EarlyON agencies providing local EarlyON programs and services to families in York Region.

## OVERVIEW

The 2023 Funding Guideline for EarlyON Child and Family programs in York Region provides agencies with an overview of program expectations, operational guidelines and reporting requirements for delivering EarlyON Child and Family programs and services in York Region, in accordance with the [Ministry of Education's Ontario Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service Management and Funding Guideline 2023](#). These programs contribute to children's learning, development, and well-being. Our role is guided by the Ontario Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service System Management and Funding Guidelines.

EarlyON Child and Family programs (EarlyON Centres) offer high-quality, free drop-in and virtual programs for children from birth to age six and their families where they can learn, grow and connect, together.

EarlyON providers must follow health and safety measures, including cleaning and disinfecting, following hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and self-screening.

### **EarlyON Child and Family programs are supported by:**

- A legislative framework that recognizes the role of service system managers
- Increased investments in EarlyON Child and Family programs
- A provincial pedagogy for the early years to guide programming: [How Does Learning Happen, Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014 \(HDLH\)](#)

### **The 2023 Funding Guideline for EarlyON Child and Family programs in York Region includes the following updates:**

- York Region's EarlyON Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Framework
- Service Delivery Methods
- Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS) EarlyON Operators and EarlyON Registration Portal
- EarlyON Collaborative Committee- updated Terms of Reference
- RECE Exemption extension
- Mental Health Funding

If you have any questions about the information included in this guideline, please contact your Community Program Coordinator (CPC).

# MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

## Ministry of Education EarlyON Child and Family Programs Objectives

- EarlyON Child and Family programs must be designed and delivered to achieve the following key goals and objectives: Children have access to play and inquiry-based learning opportunities alongside their parents and caregivers, and experience positive developmental health and well-being.
- Parents and caregivers have access to high-quality services that support them in their role as their children's first educators, enhance their well-being, and enrich their knowledge about early learning and development
- Parents and caregivers have opportunities to strengthen their relationships with their children through play
- Services and supports are responsive to community needs
- Francophone children and families have access to French language programs and gain enhanced knowledge about language and identity acquisition
- Indigenous children and families have access to culturally responsive programs and services
- Parents and caregivers are provided with timely, relevant, and up-to-date information about community and specialized services
- EarlyON agencies and other community partners work in collaboration to strengthen partnerships, coordinate access to services and ensure that EarlyON Child and Family programs are an integrated part of the Ontario Early Years System

## Vision and Guiding Principles

EarlyON Child and Family programs are intended to support children, parents and caregivers in learning, growing and connecting – together.

It is expected that agencies will be guided by the following principles when developing, delivering and evaluating EarlyON Child and Family programs and services:

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
Child and Family Centred	All programs and services are designed and delivered to meet the unique needs of parents, caregivers and young children to support their learning, development and well-being.
Welcoming	EarlyON Child and Family programs provide a warm and welcoming environment based on the foundational conditions for supporting growth and long-term success (belonging, well-being, engagement and expression). See below for more information on <a href="#"><u>How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years.</u></a>

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
High quality	Programs and services are designed to support positive experiences and outcomes and foster nurturing relationships between children, parents and caregivers, and are based on the latest evidence and research.
Inclusive	Programs and services are accessible and responsive to children, parents and caregivers with varying abilities and cultural, language, socio-economic, sexual orientation and religious backgrounds.
Integrated	Programs and services are developed, coordinated and delivered in a cohesive manner in collaboration with broader community services, school boards, early years partners, primary care providers, parents and caregivers.
Community-led	Communities, educators, parents and caregivers are engaged in designing EarlyON Child and Family programs and services that embrace and build on their strengths, address identified gaps and meet their unique needs on an ongoing basis.

## Pedagogical Framework for EarlyON Child and Family Programs

EarlyON Child and Family programs are required to provide programs that reflect the view of children, parents, caregivers and educators as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential and experience. Guided by [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014 \(HDLH\)](#), EarlyON Child and Family programs provide an environment that engages parents and caregivers as co-learners and leaders in influencing positive experiences and outcomes for children, families and the community.

Agencies offering EarlyON Child and Family programs and services are required to apply the principles of HDLH to guide the development and delivery of local programs. HDLH supports the adoption of cohesive pedagogical approaches across early years settings, based on the four foundations for learning: belonging, well-being, engagement and expression.

The following documents are available to help strengthen program quality in early years settings, including EarlyON Child and Family programs:

- [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#)
- [Think, Feel Act: Lessons from Research about Young Children](#)

- [Building on How Does Learning Happen? Pedagogical approaches to re-opening early years and child care programs in Ontario](#)

## Mandatory Core Services

To achieve the intended goals and outcomes of EarlyON Child and Family programs, the Ministry of Education has identified a set of mandatory core services that must be available to children and families across the province. The Region is required to manage the local delivery of these core services related to supporting early learning and development, engaging parents and caregivers and making connections for families.

EarlyON Child and Family programs must ensure the provision of consistent, high-quality core services at no fee to participants. The mandatory core services include:

### **Supporting early learning and development**

EarlyON Child and Family programs must offer drop-in programs and other programs and services that build responsive adult-child relationships, encourage children's exploration, and promote play and inquiry, based on the pedagogy in HDLH.

Early learning and development programs are most effective when the context for learning is foregrounded in relationships and focused on supporting the development of strategies, dispositions, and skills for lifelong learning through play and inquiry.

### **Engaging parents and caregivers**

EarlyON Child and Family programs must actively work to develop programs that cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections that create a sense of belonging. This means that wherever possible, engagement with parents and caregivers should occur with children present. Engaging with parents and caregivers also includes:

- Inviting conversations and information-sharing about children's interests, child development, parenting, nutrition, play and inquiry-based learning, and other topics that support their relationship with their child(ren)
- Providing targeted outreach opportunities that are responsive to community needs. This includes connecting with parents and caregivers who could benefit from EarlyON Child and Family programs and services but are not currently accessing services for a variety of reasons
- Collaborating with other support programs to enhance parent and caregiver well-being, enrich adult-child relationships, and support parents and caregivers in their role(s)

Parent and caregiver engagement may take place in a variety of formats, depending on the needs of individuals within the community. Engagement may include group discussions, informal one-on-one engagements, printed and electronic resources, virtual or other engagement opportunities as appropriate.

### **Making connections for families**

EarlyON Child and Family programs must continuously look for opportunities to facilitate stronger relationships within their local community and assist parents and caregivers in accessing services and supports that respond to a family's unique needs. This includes:

- Ensuring EarlyON Child and Family programs staff have relationships with community partners and an in-depth knowledge of their community resources to allow for seamless transitions (warm hand-offs) for families who may benefit from access to specialized or other services
- Responding to parent or caregiver concern(s) about their child's development through conversations and observations. In some cases, staff may direct a parent or caregiver to seek additional supports from primary care or other regulated health professionals
- Sharing information and facilitating connections with specialized community services (such as children's rehabilitation services), coordinated service planning, public health, education, child care, and child welfare, as appropriate
- Supporting the coordination of regional mental health supports for children, parents/caregivers, and staff
- Providing information about programs and services available for the whole family beyond the early years

## 2. Branding, Communications and Media

### BRANDING

#### Logos and Templates

EarlyON service system managers and agencies are required to follow the Ministry of Education's EarlyON branding strategy and renewed visual identity designed to resonate with families and stakeholders. The strategy incorporates an integrated brand that includes English, French and bilingual EarlyON logos, templates and Visual Identity Guidelines, which provide direction on the use of the brand in a way that is consistent across different platforms and public communications, such as newsletters, social media and websites.

All EarlyON agencies must use the brand in accordance with the [Visual Identity Guidelines](#). The Ministry of Education's EarlyON [Dropbox](#) contains the following information for download (in English and French):

- **EarlyON Visual Identity Guidelines**
- **Ontario Logo Guide**
- **EarlyON templates**
  - Business card, envelope, postcard, letterhead and newsletter
- **Logos**
  - EarlyON logos (stacked, horizontal) in English, French and bilingual
  - Ontario logo available in black and white
- **Promotional materials**
  - EarlyON poster
  - EarlyON bookmark

- EarlyON brochure

EarlyON agencies are required to display the provincial EarlyON logo at sites delivering the mandatory core services and adhere to Provincial and Regional direction provided to ensure consistency.

## French Language Services

The City of Markham is designated under the [\*French Language Services Act\*](#), and therefore required to provide French-language child and family programs and services in accordance with its legislated responsibilities.

EarlyON agencies operating in the City of Markham are encouraged to display the bilingual logo at sites delivering the mandatory core services and adhere to Provincial and Regional direction provided to ensure consistency.

## The Regional Municipality of York (York Region) Logo Use

Agencies cannot use or display the York Region logo in any communications or promotional materials as York Region EarlyON Child and Family Programs is 100% funded by the Government of Ontario.

## Ordering EarlyON Branded Products

In an effort to increase the public's awareness of EarlyON Child and Family programs and services, EarlyON agencies may order EarlyON branded products. The Region must approve all EarlyON branded products. Please send proposed EarlyON branded products to the agency's respective Community Program Coordinator (CPC). The review and approval turnaround time is **15 business days**.

## Co-branding

The Visual Identity Guidelines state that only organizations that contribute 20% or more of their program's child and family funding can include their logo with the EarlyON logo on all signage. Organizations that contribute space to operate child and family programs that is equal to 20% or more of the program's funding may also include their logo on EarlyON signs for those sites.

## EarlyON Signage

To increase public awareness of EarlyON Child and Family Programs. EarlyON agencies will produce EarlyON signage for their programs by utilizing EarlyON funding to cover the costs. EarlyON signage must be produced in alignment with the Ministry's Visual Identity Guidelines.

The Region will work with agencies to confirm and approve signage. Following approval, agencies must work with their own vendor for the production and shipment of their signs. Agencies are also required to arrange removal and/or installation of permanent signage.

York Region is required to submit mock-ups of customized signage to the Ministry for approval, prior to production.

For further information on EarlyON signage or to submit a request, please contact the agency's respective CPC, with copy to [EarlyON@york.ca](mailto:EarlyON@york.ca)

# COMMUNICATIONS

## Websites

There are various websites that provide families with information about EarlyON Child and Family programs, community resources and tools. There are three levels of EarlyON websites:

**Provincial website:** The [ontario.ca/earlyon](http://ontario.ca/earlyon) webpage provides information about EarlyON programs across the province. This website is managed by the Ministry of Education and contains resources and tools connecting families to a range of early years programs.

**Regional website:** The [york.ca/EarlyON](http://york.ca/EarlyON) webpage provides information about EarlyON programs and services in York Region, in particular:

- How to find an EarlyON program using the [Early Years Program Finder](#)
- Community engagement activities and the transformation of the early years system

Agencies must use the appropriate **EarlyON Business Change Request Form** (see page 19) to notify the Region whenever there are operational changes, such as changes in days and times of operation, location and so forth. This will enable the Region to update the Early Years Program Finder and Provincial website's calendar.

**Agency website:** All EarlyON agencies in York Region are required to have an EarlyON webpage on their websites. This webpage must, at a minimum, include the following information:

- Description of EarlyON Child and Family programs
- A link to the Region's EarlyON webpage: [york.ca/Early ON](http://york.ca/Early ON)
- Program locations (permanent sites and mobile sites)
- contact information (address, phone number and email address)

Agencies are required to update their webpages regularly.

## Pictures and Images

Agencies are encouraged to use vibrant imagery when communicating EarlyON programs to their communities, particularly images that include diverse families that truly reflect York Region residents. Using visually impactful, striking and memorable pictures helps communicate EarlyON Child and Family programs as a family-friendly place for young children and their families.

- If using pictures from **websites**, please only use royalty-free pictures from websites such as:
  - Unsplash: [unsplash.com](http://unsplash.com)
  - Pexels: [pexels.com/royalty-free-images/](http://pexels.com/royalty-free-images/)
  - Shutterstock: [shutterstock.com/explore/royalty-free-images](http://shutterstock.com/explore/royalty-free-images)
- If using pictures from **EarlyON programs** featuring York Region families, please make sure families provide written consent for their pictures to be used in the agency's communications and marketing

## **Outreach**

Agencies can implement their own outreach and engagement strategies in their communities to increase family participation in EarlyON programs. Outreach activities involving communications (online, printed materials) must align with the provincial branding strategy.

### **Examples of outreach activities include:**

- **Social media** posts where agencies post information about their EarlyON programs and direct families to the EarlyON webpage on their website. Remember to always include a call-to-action in your social media posts such as:
  - Visit your local EarlyON Child and Family Centre and enjoy free drop-in programs for you and your child to enjoy
  - Visit our website or call us to learn more/for more information
- **Printed communications** such as awareness-raising flyers about specific EarlyON programs
- **Open houses** where families and children can visit and learn about EarlyON programs

Agencies are encouraged to inform and work with their respective CPCs when developing outreach plans for feedback and ideas.

## **Approval Process for Communication Materials**

Agencies are requested to strictly use EarlyON branding assets (logos and templates) as stipulated in the Visual Identity Guidelines. All public-facing communications, particularly flyers or brochures, must be shared with the agency's CPC for review and approval. The review and approval turnaround time is **15 business days**.

## **MEDIA**

All public announcements regarding provincial and federal investments in Ontario's child care and early years system are potential joint communication opportunities for the provincial government, federal government, Consolidated Municipal Service Manager Board (CMSM), municipalities and community partners.

To better facilitate media opportunities and special events, each agency is encouraged to designate a media person, who can:

- Act as the agency's spokesperson during media engagement opportunities and special events
- Be responsible for keeping the Region up to date regarding any media opportunities and/or special events and get the Region's approval as required

## **Public Communications**

Specific communications protocol must be followed for media-focused public communications opportunities and special events.

Agencies must work with the Region when preparing and issuing any public announcements, press releases, media opportunities, videos or other public communications materials regarding the delivery and funding of EarlyON Child and Family programs in York Region.

### **As service system manager, the Region will:**

- Work directly with EarlyON agencies in all public communication opportunities directed at media regarding early years investments, such as including news releases or events
- Liaise with the Ministry of Education about plans to publicly communicate early years investments (including official openings) and make sure public recognition of the Ministry of Education's role in providing funding is provided

The Ministry of Education may also choose to issue its own news release and/or hold events about investments in child care and early years projects, in addition to those prepared by municipalities, school boards, CMSMs and DSSABs and community partners.

### **Media Engagement and Inquiries**

For media inquiries or engagement requests (such as interviews) related to the agency's EarlyON programs, agencies are asked to complete the [\*\*Media Brief for EarlyON Agencies Form\*\*](#) to identify the type of media engagement (interview with staff or clients, photography, profile of programming) and proposed date and time. This brief should be submitted to the Manager of EarlyON Programs at the Region.

When engaging the media, agencies can refer to the [\*\*Media Tips for EarlyON Agencies\*\*](#) for some dos and don'ts.

### **Major Announcements and Events**

For major announcements and special events such as official/grand opening ceremonies or events involving dignitaries, including politicians and other partners, agencies will work closely with the Region to plan the event, including identifying dates, roles and responsibilities, invitation list (including the province and any other dignitaries).

For media opportunities including major announcements and special events, the Region will take the lead in following the Ministry of Education's protocol:

- Contacting the Ministry of Education about any major announcements and events
- Publicly recognizing the Ministry of Education's role in providing funding
- Inviting the Minister of Education

The Region requires at least **seven to nine weeks** (two to three months) for planning purposes. If the Minister of Education is unavailable, the invitation may be shared with a government representative who will contact the Region to coordinate the details. The primary goal is to make sure that the Minister is aware of the announcement opportunity.

A special event will only be held on a date that is mutually acceptable to the Region and the agency.

For all other media-focused public communications opportunities, such as sod turnings, the same protocol is followed, with at least **five weeks'** notice.

If there are any event date changes, the Region will inform the Minister of Education.

Agencies are asked to complete the [\*\*Event Brief for EarlyON Agencies Form\*\*](#) to identify the event information, planned schedule of events and preferred dates for any official opening ceremony events. This form should be submitted to the Manager of EarlyON Programs at the Region. The Region will respond to agencies regarding special event requests within **five** business days.

## Acknowledgement of Support

Announcements regarding EarlyON Child and Family programs are communications opportunities for the federal government, the provincial government and service system managers, such as the Region.

The support of the Government of Ontario must be acknowledged in media-focused communications of any kind, written or oral, relating to new investments. This acknowledgment could include but is not limited to, any report, announcement, speech, advertisement, publicity, promotional material, brochure, audio-visual material, web communications or any other public communications.

For minor interactions on social media, or within social media such as Twitter, where there is a limited restriction on content, municipalities, CMSMs and community partners are not required to include government acknowledgement.

## 3. EarlyON Child and Family Programs in York Region

Across Ontario, EarlyON Child and Family programs are intended to support all children, parents and caregivers in learning, growing and connecting – together. This aligns with Ontario's renewed vision for the early years and child care, where all children and families have access to a range of high-quality, inclusive and affordable early years and child care programs. These services must be centred on the child and family and contribute to children's learning, development and well-being.

The vision for York Region EarlyON Child and Family Programs is a system that supports children's learning and development and overall well-being of families.

York Region EarlyON Child and Family Programs mission: Early Learning professionals have the opportunity to learn, grow and connect with one another to provide inclusive, welcoming, high-quality core services that support all children, parents and caregivers in the EarlyON Child and Family Programs through:

- Programs that are family-centred and engage parents and caregivers in ways that create a sense of belonging and well-being
- Build strong relationships within early learning environments that are responsive to local needs
- Support early learning development with the principles of the *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*, which are responsive to adult-child relationships, encourage children's exploration and promote play and inquiry

## KEY PARTNER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In York Region, the EarlyON management and delivery system includes the following partners:

- The Region as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM)
- The Region's Community Program Coordinators (CPCs)
- Agencies providing local EarlyON Child and Family programs

## **The Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) – The Regional Municipality of York**

Under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, York Region is responsible for planning, overseeing and managing the system of services for children aged 0 to 12 years at the local level. Required responsibilities in legislation include policy development, local system planning, administering provincial funding and accessing and supporting economic viability of licensed child care programs.

York Region takes a holistic approach to planning services that meet the needs of children, families and service providers. York Region directly delivers a range of services that support child development and help families better participate in their communities and the economy. York Region is people-centred and works hard to make sure its services are integrated and personalized to support families' diverse needs.

As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), the Region manages the system of EarlyON Child and Family programs in York Region. The Region's role is to provide oversight of EarlyON Child and Family programs and services in York Region and ensure that programs and services are delivered in accordance with the Ministry of Education's Management and Funding Guidelines.

### **The Region's responsibilities include:**

- Determining how and by whom services will be delivered to ensure equitable access
- Conducting an assessment to better understand community needs, identify gaps or duplication of services, and plan services that effectively meet the unique needs of children, parents and caregivers
- Engaging and consulting with early years partners, including service agencies, community partners, stakeholders, and parents and caregivers to inform the planning process
- Managing the delivery of mandatory core services
- Integrating the planning for EarlyON Child and Family programs into a community-based, system-wide planning process for children's services
- Providing oversight and accountability of provincial funding
- Developing and implementing system-wide standards
- Reporting to the Ministry of Education and Regional Council on performance measurements

## **Community Program Coordinators (CPCs)**

Community Program Coordinators (CPCs) are part of the EarlyON programs team at the Region. Their role is to provide collaborative support and services to EarlyON Child and Family programs to enhance access, equity and quality within York Region's early years system.

### **The CPCs' responsibilities include, but are not limited to:**

- Consulting, supporting and building capacity of EarlyON Child and Family programs in York Region

- Acting as a resource to EarlyON agencies, facilitators, parents and caregivers attending EarlyON Child and Family programs and connecting agencies to outside services and programs while staying informed with current trends and research in the early years sector
- Providing program support and assisting service agencies to better understand [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#) to guide the development and delivery of programs and incorporate evidence-based, current research into daily practice
- Determining and developing appropriate system-wide professional development opportunities for EarlyON agencies
- Conducting regular community visits to EarlyON Child and Family programs to support agencies in meeting the Ministry of Education requirements
- Completing all responsibilities relating to management of contracts, amendments, payments and ongoing reporting analysis
- Ensuring program progress, outcomes and results are met
- Supporting agencies with data to understand [neighbourhood](#) needs and underserved areas across the Region
- Assisting in the promotion of EarlyON Child and Family programs across York Region
- Supporting agencies with new signage and future signage orders with the Ministry of Education
- Supporting agencies with establishing program standards and enhancing inclusion and diversity in the EarlyON Child and Family programs

## **EarlyON Agencies**

### **To deliver EarlyON programs, you must:**

1. Be a not-for-profit organization that can enter into a signed agreement with the Region to deliver EarlyON programs.
2. Meet contractual obligations
3. Meet Ministry of Education guidelines, including Visual Identity
4. Delivery of mandatory core services.
5. Meet Financial and service data reporting
6. Adherence to Regional policies, procedures and guidelines and applicable laws

EarlyON agencies play a vital part in achieving the Ministry of Education's EarlyON Child and Family Centres goals and objectives. The role of agencies is to work in collaboration with the Region to strengthen partnerships, coordinate access to services and ensure EarlyON Child and Family programs are an integrated part of meeting local community needs within York Region.

### **The responsibilities of EarlyON agencies include:**

- To design and deliver programs so children have access to play and inquiry-based learning opportunities alongside their parents and caregivers, and experience positive development, health and well-being.
- Providing parents and caregivers with access to high-quality programs that support them in their role as their child's first educator. Programs designed to enhance their well-being and enrich their knowledge about early learning and development and strengthen their relationships with their children.
- Providing parents and caregivers with up-to-date information about community supports and resources for the whole family.

- Implementing the local delivery of EarlyON Child and Family programs and services to meet the identified community needs of children from birth to age six and their parents and caregivers
- Creating community partnerships to support mandatory core service delivery
- Fulfilling all requirements in the EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service Agreement and Funding Guideline for EarlyON Child and Family programs in York Region. Agencies will work in partnership with the Region to ensure that mandatory core services and the Region's service objectives are met
- Meet Ministry of Education guidelines, including visual identity

## **PILOT CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Pilot EarlyON Child and Family program Continuous Quality Improvement Plan will serve as an overarching quality framework to support EarlyON agencies, educators and community partners in building consistent quality programs and services that achieve the intended goals and outcomes set by the EarlyON Child and Family Centre Standards Framework, Ministry of Education and York Region. It will be used to guide EarlyON Child and Family Programs in demonstrating accountability and commitment to continually improve outcomes for children and families, while ensuring mandatory core services are met. The York Region Continuous Quality Improvement Plan will be piloted throughout 2023, allowing for feedback from EarlyON agencies to ensure the framework meets the overall York Region EarlyON Child and Family Programs vision and mission.

### **York Region EarlyON Child and Family Centre Standards Framework**

The York Region EarlyON Child and Family Centre Standards framework provides clear and consistent program and service expectations for EarlyON agencies, educators and York Region, through the vision, mission, program standards, principles and elements to ensure parents, caregivers and children have access to high-quality programs and services that support them in learning, growing and connecting together.

### **Pilot EarlyON Child and Family Centre Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Portfolio**

The program CQI Portfolio is a quality service self-assessment tool to support EarlyON agencies and educators to reflect and better understand how their current policies and practices relate to the EarlyON Child and Family Centre Standards Framework: vision, mission and program standards, principles, elements and identify successes and areas of growth using a self-service evaluation and goal-setting process.

The program CQI Portfolio was developed using a Continuous Quality Improvement approach: Reflect, Evaluate and Plan and Monitor. The Centre CQI portfolio has three components, including reflection journal, self-service evaluation and learning plan:

#### **Reflection Journal**

The EarlyON Child and Family reflection journal will support EarlyON programs to engage in the use of “critical reflection practices and to consider new approaches and ways of thinking about their current best practices and work. As, described by John Dewey, learning happens through ‘reflective action’

(action given careful consideration and justification) as opposed to ‘routine action’ (action driven by habit and routine).” (Page 20, *HDLH*).

### **Self-Service Evaluation**

The self-service evaluation uses a rating scale to support EarlyON program to objectively reflect on and rate the status of the principles and elements present in their EarlyON program and service delivery using the following indicators: establishing, developing and leading.

### **Learning Plan**

The learning plan is designed to be a self-reflective tool that EarlyON Centres use to set goals and develop strategies that will support the EarlyON Child and Family Centre Standards framework.

Throughout the development of the EarlyON Child and Family Centre Continuous Quality Improvement Portfolio, the EarlyON Centre and educators will engage with each other and key stakeholders in critical reflection and collaborative inquiry to question theory and practice, discuss ideas, test theories and share learnings. This process becomes a **shared** responsibility between the EarlyON Centre, educators, parents/caregivers, children, community partners and The Regional Municipality of York to ensure the EarlyON Child and Family Centre Standards Framework is embedded within the EarlyON Centre’s practices, programs and services.

## **Pilot York Region EarlyON Child and Family Programs Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Portfolio Reporting**

<b>REPORTING PERIOD (QUARTER)</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>WHAT TO REPORT</b>
Q1	<b>January 2023</b>	EarlyON agency engages in the collaborative inquiry process with staff and stakeholders to introduce the York Region EarlyON Child and Family Centre Standards Framework and CQI Portfolio.
Q1	<b>February to March 2023</b>	EarlyON agencies will develop their CQI Portfolio for the current year.  <b>Q1 CPC community visit consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engage in collaborative inquiry regarding EarlyON Child and Family Centre CQI Portfolio and determine support required from York Region for the current year</li></ul>
Q2	<b>April to June 2023</b>	EarlyON agency will implement the CQI Learning Plan  <b>Q2 CPC community visit consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review EarlyON Child and Family Centre Continuous Quality Improvement Portfolio: Refection Journal, Self-Service Evaluation and CQI Learning plan</li></ul>

REPORTING PERIOD (QUARTER)	TIMELINE	WHAT TO REPORT
Q3	<b>July to September 2023</b>	<p>EarlyON agency will submit EarlyON Child and Family Centre Continuous Quality Improvement Portfolio: Refection Journal, Self-Service Evaluation and CQI Learning plan with the mid-year financial report by July 31</p> <p><b>Q3 CPC community visit consultation (August):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPC and agency review Continuous Quality Improvement Portfolio</li> <li>• Support agency to implement CQI Learning Plan</li> </ul>
Q4	<b>October to December 2023</b>	<p>Agency continue to implement or adjust CQI Learning Plan and begin working on the Year-End (Q4) EarlyON Child and Family Continuous Quality Improvement Portfolio status reflection.</p> <p><b>Q4 CPC community visit consultation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative inquiry regarding progress status on agency CQI Learning plan</li> </ul>
Q4	<b>December 2023</b>	EarlyON agency (all staff and key stakeholders) complete survey and reflect on the Continuous Quality Improvement Portfolio process.

## MANDATORY SERVICE DELIVERY REQUIREMENTS

To meet the unique needs of families in the community, York Region EarlyON Child and Family Centres must offer centre-based programs, four season outdoor programs and virtual programs as part of a hybrid service delivery model. All guiding principles are incorporated and must be followed in each service delivery method.

### Centre-based Core Services (In-person Programs)

- Offer services year-round and at least five days per week, including Saturday or Sunday. Based on parent and caregiver needs, centres may operate at different times and on different days of the week. Evening services may also be offered to expand access to working parents and caregivers. However, this should be based on identified community needs
- Have **physical program sites** where children, parents and caregivers can participate in child and family programs and services in person. Centres may be located within schools or community buildings or may stand alone. The Ministry of Education encourages the use of a schools-first approach in alignment with other child care and early years initiatives whenever possible. This includes locating EarlyON child and family centres within schools and

encouraging the integration of child and family centres and school communities (such as connected with other educators and school administration)

## Four-Season Outdoor Programs

- Programs may have regular or irregular days or times and be in a variety of outdoor locations. Agencies must establish an appropriate mechanism to communicate to parents and caregivers about these services and their locations, dates, and times of operation. The “Walking Together Through the Four Seasons” framework will be implemented throughout 2022 and 2023.
- EarlyON agencies are required to have at least one identified outdoor mobile location for every EarlyON Child and Family Centre

## Virtual Programs

Virtual EarlyON programs have become a key service delivery option for families accessing early years supports. EarlyON Child and Family centres are required to provide virtual programs, services, resources and information for children, parents and caregivers related to: supporting early learning and development, engaging parents and caregivers, and making connections for families.

A Virtual EarlyON Program is facilitated by staff and ensures participation and engagement with children, parents/caregivers through web-based applications. Engagement is defined as follows: The virtual program is interactive; for example, there is a two-way flow of information or conversation between two or more people.

## Virtual Legal Liability

Under the EarlyON agreement, EarlyON agencies must comply with all legislation, regulations, bylaws, rules, orders, policies and guidelines, and other requirements enacted or imposed by federal, provincial, municipal or other government bodies, agencies, tribunals or other authorities, which may be applicable to the EarlyON services. This includes copyright laws.

### **It is the responsibility of all EarlyON agencies to:**

- Ensure all virtual programming adhere to Ontario and Canadian laws
- Ensure adherence to the Terms of Use of websites used as links and resources
- Ensure that copyrighted works are legally protected and are not placed online without the permission from the author/creator or authorized copyright holder
- Once EarlyON agencies receive permission to use material, they must adhere to all the requirements asked by the author and/or publisher, and at the beginning of the reading, please mention the author, illustrator, and publisher of the work you are about to read from. Please also state that you are presenting your reading “with permission from the author on behalf of the publisher. As well, remind families that they are unable to record or post EarlyON Child and Family programs story readings
- Post your reading through your EarlyON agency password-protected platform. If you were wishing to livestream a reading, please contact the rights holder of the work directly to request permission
- Have a process/policy in place for a security breach

- Provide virtual supports through online resources, such as live online programs and pre-recorded videos to support parents and caregivers with information related to meeting the mandatory core services

EarlyON agencies are required to ensure that best practices are being followed when hosting a virtual program. The list below provides helpful tips for securing a virtual session as well as ways to exercise caution when facilitating these sessions. Please note that this list is not an all-encompassing and may not apply to all online platforms.

**Helpful tips include:**

- Offer pre-registered programming
- If applicable in the application, turn on pre-meeting setting features such as view and admit participants, remove participants and turn on virtual waiting room
- Disable features such as chat box, file share and screen-sharing
- Provide a password for each meeting session
- Limit the reuse of access codes

## OPTIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY METHODS

In addition to the mandatory service delivery (centre-based, four-season outdoor and virtual programs), agencies are encouraged to deliver optional services based on the local needs of children and families in York Region.

Agencies must seek approval from the Region to deliver any of the optional services listed below and work with the Region to determine locations and hours of operation as applicable. To request approval, please complete the appropriate EarlyON Business Change Request Form.

### Mobile Services

Agencies can offer programs and services outside of centres to further integrate EarlyON Child and Family programs with broader community services and to enhance service access, such as mobile programs for residents living in high-density areas or weekly programs in libraries in rural communities. Mobile programs often involve set-up and take-down and operate in a shared space.

Mobile programs may have regular or irregular days, times and locations of operation. Agencies must establish an appropriate mechanism to communicate to parents and caregivers about these services and their locations, dates and times of operation.

### Local Phone Lines

Agencies may provide information and other services for parents and caregivers related to child development, parenting supports and play and inquiry-based learning over the phone.

## **Customized Community Connections**

Customized community connections should only be considered once the EarlyON Child and Family programs core service expectations are being met on a regular and consistent basis.

The agencies can work together with their CPCs to build customized community connections. Joint community-based planning supports greater integration resulting in easier access and better client experiences for children and families.

### **Customized community connections include:**

- **Building community partnerships to support mandatory core service delivery**

The Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of integrating EarlyON Child and Family programs within the broader context of local community services, to meet its core service requirements (such as child care, public health, employment and training programs, recreation programs, public libraries, schools and specialized services). Joint community-based planning supports greater integration resulting in easier access and better client experiences for children and families.

- **Leveraging partnerships to create customized programs and services**

For EarlyON Child and Family programs to be effective, supports related to early learning and development must be developed with an understanding of the unique characteristics needs and priorities of the community that is being served.

## **Mental Health Support**

The Ministry of Education recognizes that over the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on children and families. The COVID -19 Pandemic and associated lockdowns have negatively impacted the mental health of children, families and caregivers, by increasing stress, and other mental health symptoms including irritability, hyperactivity, inattention, depression and anxiety... Early identification of mental health challenges and providing supports as early as possible is critical and can lead to improved achievement in school and better health outcomes in life.

York Region and EarlyON Child and family programs will build further capacity in the system for mental health initiatives by:

- Supporting the coordination of regional mental health supports for children, parents, caregivers, and staff
- Enhancing current professional learning supports to include mental health information for the child care and early years sector

Supporting the alignment with Ontario's provincial pedagogy for early years and child care settings: [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years.](#) Coordinated service planning also helps to ensure that children, parents and caregivers have easy and efficient access to the services they need.

## French Language Services

The City of Markham is designated under the [\*French Language Services Act\*](#), and therefore required to provide French-language child and family programs and services in accordance with its legislated responsibilities.

Priority is given to French-language school boards or agencies that have the capacity to deliver high-quality French language child and family programs and services wherever possible.

French language school boards and agencies offering services in French are required to be members of Regional French language networks that:

- Network with other Francophone organizations/professionals sharing resources and policies
- Collaborate on French professional learning
- Collaborate with other organizations offering services in French in relation to the “Making Connections for Families” Core Service

The intent of these groups is to:

- Strengthen partnerships between French language service agencies, school boards and service system managers to support the provision of high-quality French language services across the province
- Identify emerging and established promising practices related to the delivery of French language services in minority and majority language settings
- Identify service gaps and work within local early years community planning processes to create innovative solutions to address the gaps

For more information regarding Regional French Language Networks, please connect with your EarlyON Community Program Coordinator.

## Child Minding

EarlyON Child and Family programs may offer child minding services during parent or caregiver programs to allow parents to access other community services (such as postpartum depression support programs, employment and training services), provided that parents or caregivers remain onsite in accordance with requirements under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.

## Respite

Respite child care is intended to support parents who require emergency short-term and/or occasional care for their children. The Region will not engage in this option due to legal and liability concerns.

## CHANGES TO SERVICE DELIVERY METHODS

EarlyON agencies are required to inform the Region about business changes and proposed expansions to centres and mobile sites. Some changes require the Region’s approval before the change can be implemented as they may impact the balance of program offering across a geographical review area and potential budget implementations.

To inform the Region about any changes to service delivery methods and expansion, including temporary program closures, please complete the appropriate **EarlyON Business Change Request Form**.

- **YR EarlyON1A Business Change Request Form**: to request operational changes to service delivery methods, temporary program closures. (Does not impact or involve any changes to EarlyON Budget/ Schedule B)
- **YR EarlyON1B Business Change Request Form**: Business changes impacting EarlyON Budget (Schedule B). This could include operational changes, such as closure or programs, adding new programs, proposed new EarlyON programs/sites that have an impact on Agencies' Budget /schedule B)

## RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF EARLYON PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN YORK REGION

The following programs, services and networks are available to support the delivery of EarlyON Child and Family Programs in York Region.

### EarlyON Collaborative Committee (EOCC)

Please contact your CPC or [EarlyON@york.a](mailto:EarlyON@york.a) to receive the updated list of resources to support children and families with extra support needs

### Resource List of Community Partners to Support Children With Extra Support Needs

The EarlyON Collaborative Committee (EOCC) is responsible for advising, recommending and developing system-wide program offerings, services and capacity building to ensure EarlyON Child and Family Programs are designed and delivered to achieve the Ministry of Education Mandatory Core Services and ensure consistent Service Delivery Methods across York Region while meeting the unique needs of local communities.

The purpose of the EarlyON Collaborative is to:

- Ensure the Ministry of Education and York Region program requirements are being consistently implemented across all EarlyON programs.
- Develop EarlyON system wide programs, services, and capacity building opportunities
- Review, develop and make recommendations for Program Offerings to be added as system wide programs which will be made available through OCCMS calendars.
- System wide Program Offerings will ensure consistent naming conventions and common outcomes across the Region while meeting the unique needs of communities.

The committee will implement the requirements within the [Terms of Reference](#) and use the [Program Offering/Capacity Building \(system-wide\) Request form](#)

### Capacity Building Competencies

Capacity building will support professional learning and development opportunities that build the capacity of educators and administration staff to provide high-quality, inclusive EarlyON Child and Family programs.

## **Goals:**

1. Capacity building will be responsive to children and families in consultation with the local community and based on evidence.
2. Capacity building will support EarlyON Child and Family programs in promoting inter-professional learning opportunities.
3. Capacity Building will enhance current professional learning supports to include mental health information for the early years sector
4. York Region will use consultations and evidence-based information to prioritize the capacity building opportunities (how we do business).
5. Professional learning and development opportunities for educators related to core delivery and well-being of children and families
6. Professional learning related to EarlyON business administration

## **EarlyON OCCMS Operators**

The Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS) is a comprehensive software application that supports Service System Managers with overseeing and managing a system of services for children from birth to age 12. OCCMS supports the administration of provincial funding, such as Child Care Fee Subsidy, General Operating Grant, Wage Enhancement and Special Purpose funding, Contract and Financial Management and EarlyON Child and Family Programs.

EarlyON OCCMS operators enable EarlyON agencies to manage information regarding EarlyON participants, calendars, pre-registration, EarlyON attendance, set up site devices for check in/out and record staff positions.

EarlyON agencies are required to use EarlyON OCCMS operators to create monthly calendar of program offerings for children and families in York Region. EarlyON agencies will ensure that the next month calendars have been generated on the third Friday of every month so as to give families time to review and attend program offerings.

EarlyON agencies will use the York Region OCCMS-EarlyON Manual to support their use in the EarlyON OCCMS operators database.

## **Children's Services Portal**

EarlyON agencies will use the [Children's Services Portal](#) to support families when registering for EarlyON Programs .

## **Virtual Resources**

EarlyON agencies can post or facilitate activities and resources appropriate to children from birth to age six that support all areas of development. Activities and resources must support the needs of parents and caregivers and connect them to services in the community.

- YouTube Creator Academy: [creatoracademy.youtube.com](https://creatoracademy.youtube.com)

- Government of Canada – Copyright: [canada.ca/copyright](http://canada.ca/copyright)
- Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) – Copyright Matters!: [cdnsba.org/Canadian-copyright-reform](http://cdnsba.org/Canadian-copyright-reform)
- EPIC!: [getepic.com](http://getepic.com)

This list of resources is not an endorsement or recommendation but is for informational purposes only and intended to be a resource. You may wish to conduct your own due diligence to determine what resource will meet the needs of your organization.

## Early Years Program Finder

The [Early Years Program Finder Tool](#) is a mapping tool that allows agencies to search for licensed child care or EarlyON programs in York Region. Agencies are required to update the Region regarding business changes that impact the data collected on the Early Years finder tool.

To access the Early Years Program Finder, visit [york.ca/EarlyON](http://york.ca/EarlyON)

## Qualifications Upgrade Program

The Ministry of Education funds the Early Childhood Education Qualifications Upgrade Program (ECE QUP), which supports individuals working within the early years sector who have been accepted to an Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology to pursue their Early Childhood Education (ECE) diploma and become eligible to apply for membership with the College of Early Childhood Educators. Support is provided through education grants, travel grants and training allowances. Francophone and First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities have identified challenges recruiting and retaining qualified ECEs to deliver culturally responsive programs. In an effort to support staff in child care and early years settings in upgrading their skills, ECE QUP prioritizes applicants living and/or working in these communities in obtaining their ECE qualifications.

ECE QUP also includes a Leadership Grant Stream, which was established to support professional development opportunities for program staff, including RECEs designated to leadership positions and/or responsibilities.

For more information about ECE QUP, please visit the program's website at [ecegrants.on.ca/qualifications-upgrade](http://ecegrants.on.ca/qualifications-upgrade)

## STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

### Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) Requirement

Programming in EarlyON Child and Family programs should be designed to foster positive outcomes and support nurturing relationships for children, parents and caregivers based on the latest evidence and research. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) play a critical role in delivering early years programs. RECEs have specialized knowledge and expertise related to child development and play and inquiry-based learning that is essential to delivering high-quality early years programs and services, such as drop-in programs in EarlyON Child and Family programs. As regulated professionals, RECEs are required to practice in accordance with a [Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice](#), which guide their relationships with children and families.

## **The EarlyON Child and Family programs staff requirements are as follows:**

- At every program delivering mandatory core services, a qualified team must include at least one RECE to deliver mandatory core services related to supporting early learning and development
- RECEs must be members in good standing of the [College of Early Childhood Educators](#)
- The Ministry of Education recommends RECE qualifications for all staff teams delivering services related to early learning and development beyond the above minimum requirement
- It is expected that staff will engage in continuous professional learning opportunities to keep informed of the latest research on adult education, child development, play and inquiry-based pedagogy and other relevant topics

## **RECE Temporary Exemption**

The Ministry of Education is providing a one-year extension to the exemption on the requirement for EarlyON Child and Family Programs to employ at least one RECE at every centre in recognition of the current RECE shortages. Where an EarlyON Child and Family program is unable to recruit at least one RECE to oversee mandatory core services related to supporting early learning and development, the Region may grant a temporary exemption from the requirement, while the centre actively works to fill the vacancy.

This RECE exemption does not apply to persons that have been members of the College of Early Childhood Educators in the past but have resigned or had their membership suspended, cancelled or revoked, or who have let their membership lapse, or who have satisfied the educational requirements to be registered as members of the College but have not become members.

In determining whether to grant an exemption, the Region will consider the proposed action plan and whether the centre plans to actively recruit or retrain existing staff. Existing staff's experience and expertise, including previous experience in child and family programs, membership in another relevant regulated profession (such as social work and nursing) and any other factors the Region deems relevant in consultation with the centre will be considered during the approval process.

Approved exemptions are valid for a period of six months. If an exemption continues to be required beyond the six-month period, reapplication may be required, and the Region will work with the agency to identify challenges and develop strategies to support agencies in meeting this requirement. This may include transition planning, ensuring capacity to deliver core services related to early learning and development and human resource approaches, such as recruitment and staffing strategies and qualifications upgrading. Exemptions are not meant to be extended indefinitely.

The Region will document the reasons for providing an exemption and is required to report the number of agencies and number of staff that have been provided an exemption to the Ministry of Education annually.

To request an RECE temporary exemption, please complete the [EarlyON RECE Temporary Exemption Request Form](#).

## **Grand-Parenting Provision**

The Region may grant agencies an exemption from the RECE requirement for EarlyON Child and Family programs that employ a staff member to oversee mandatory core services who is not an RECE but who has at least 10 years of experience working in a child and family program setting as of January

1, 2019. This grand-parenting provision is intended to support the retention of long-tenured child and family program staff in their positions, including the rehiring of staff who have recently left their position, but where that position has not yet been filled.

In addition, this provision does not apply to new hiring for positions that will oversee the delivery of mandatory core services related to supporting early learning and development. For any new hiring for such positions, EarlyON agencies are required to recruit an RECE. Where they are unable to do so, the Region may be able to grant an RECE exemption.

In order to qualify under this grand-parenting provision, a staff member must have been employed for a total of 10 or more years, as of January 1, 2019, in one or more of the following child and family programs:

- Ontario Early Years Centres
- Parenting and Family Literacy Centres
- Child Care Resource Centres
- Better Beginnings, Better Futures

This provision does not apply to persons that have been members of the College of Early Childhood Educators in the past, but have resigned or had their membership suspended, cancelled or revoked, or who have let their membership lapse, or who have satisfied the educational requirements to be registered as members of the College but have not become members.

The Region is required to report the number of agencies and staff that have been provided an extension or qualify under the grand-parenting provision to The Ministry of Education annually.

Please refer to section 4 - **Supporting Programs and Services** - for the qualifications upgrade program to support staff acquiring ECE qualifications.

To request a grand-parenting exemption from York Region, please complete the [EarlyON RECE Grand-Parenting Exemption Request Form](#).

## 4. Business Practice Requirements

### OVERVIEW OF THE EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES AGREEMENT

The EarlyON Child and Family Centres Agreement allows The Regional Municipality of York (the Region) to make payments to EarlyON agencies for one or more of the following expenses: operating, professional learning and capacity building and administration.

EarlyON agencies must enter into an EarlyON Child and Family Centres Agreement with the Region. The funding provided through the agreement allows agencies to operate programs for children from birth to age six and their parents and caregivers. The agency must meet all the requirements outlined in the agreement.

**The priorities of this agreement are to:**

- Set out expectations, terms and conditions of funding to support good governance, value for money, and transparency in the administration of payment funds
- Document the respective rights, responsibilities and obligations of the Region and agencies
- Include specific, measurable results for the funding received, reporting requirements and any corrective action the Region is entitled to take if agreed upon results are not achieved
- Subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and other relevant legislation, allow for inspection by the province and/or independent professionals identified by the province, such as the Region, of any relevant financial and non-financial documents relating to the program to verify program progress and financial information including the recipients' allocation and expenditure of funds. In addition, the agreements do not limit the power or authority of the Auditor General of Ontario.

## ADDITIONAL EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY PROGRAMS REQUIREMENTS

### Policies and Procedures

Agencies must have appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that EarlyON Child and Family Programs are delivered in a way that promotes the health, safety and well-being of children and families they serve. This includes ensuring that the following policies and procedures are in place:

- Vulnerable sector screens
- First aid
- Emergency plans
- Sanitation and maintenance
- Workplace health and safety relating to staff
- Complaints and resolutions processes
- Reporting serious incidents to York Region and processes for determining appropriate response if required
- Privacy/Breach protocols

### Collecting, Storing and Sharing of Client Information

The personal information of children and families must be kept in a secure location to maintain privacy and confidentiality. Agencies will respect the confidentiality of personal information given by children and families and not discuss individual cases with other participants or third parties without consent.

Under Section 15.2 of the EarlyON Service Agreement, during the term (or any renewal term) of the agreement, the agency is obligated to keep confidential and not disclose or release to any person other than the Region any information that identifies any individual in receipt of services without obtaining the prior written consent of the individual or the individual's parent/guardian.

In some instances, exceptions to the confidentiality practice may be required by applicable laws, such as when refusing to provide personal information could endanger the safety of another individual or group of individuals; for example, if a client has disclosed to the agency that they have, or suspect that they have a communicable disease and the client has requested medical assistance. Disclosure is required by the *Child and Family Services Act*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of*

Privacy Act, or the Personal Health Information Protection Act. Disclosure is required as per a court order or other applicable law.

## Duty to Report

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. Anyone with reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must report it to a [children's aid society](#).

More information about the duty to report, what happens when a report is made and how to recognize signs of abuse and neglect can be found [online](#).

## Serious Incidents

The Ministry of Education requires the Region to ensure EarlyON Child and Family Programs have appropriate policies and procedures in place that ensure the promotion of children's and families' health, safety and well-being.

EarlyON agencies are required to inform the Region about any serious incidents within 24 hours of a serious incident. Types of serious incidents include:

- Death of a child
- Allegation of abuse and/or neglect by a staff member
- Missing or unsupervised child(ren)
- Unplanned disruption of service (not including inclement weather)
- High potential for public criticism or media attention
- Life-threatening injury
- Life-threatening illness (such as severe allergic reaction, threat of communicable disease)
- Cyber security incident

Cyber security incident will require some additional information:

- Who is involved?
- What is the domain of the impacted party? (email address of the impacted individual, such as [noname@companyname.ca](#))
- What is the domain and threat actor (if known)?
- What has taken place?
- What is the third party requesting (if able to disclose)?
- When did the incident happen?
- What steps have taken place to resolve the incident?
- Was personal information was compromised? Does this affect staff and/or families?
- How might this affect York Region?

To inform the Region, please complete the [EarlyON Serious Incident Reporting Form](#) and send it by e-mail to [EarlyONSeriousincident@york.ca](mailto:<u>EarlyONSeriousincident@york.ca</u>)

**Where an incident has occurred that may result in media attention or police investigation, agencies are required to report it to the Manager of EarlyON Programs at the Region immediately at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72014.**

## EARLYON FINANCIAL REPORTING

The Region promotes the delivery of high-quality, accountable and cost-effective services for children and families. As stated in the EarlyON Child and Family Centres Agreement (Section 3 – Payment), agencies will provide the following submissions to the Region per the following cycle:

- Agencies must complete the EarlyON Year-End Reporting Financial and Service Data Tool as well as the Continuous Quality Improvement Portfolio for January 1 to December 31 of each calendar year, by the date specified in the EarlyON Child and Family Centres Agreement.
- Agencies must provide the Region with a copy of their annual Audited Financial Statements or a Review Engagement within 120 days of the agency's fiscal year end.
- Agencies are required to submit EarlyON Mid-Year Financial Reporting and Continuous Quality Improvement Portfolio document by the date specified in the agreement (please refer to Schedule C in the EarlyON Child and Family Centres Agreement for due dates)
- Agencies must maintain books of accounts and other financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
- All financial records and client files will be maintained in accordance with Canada Revenue Agency regulations, in a secure manner in compliance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and the *Personal Health Information Protection Act* for audit purposes
- Agencies must report financial information using the modified accrual basis of accounting for mid-year and year-end reporting to the Region
  - Modified accrual accounting requires the inclusion of short-term accruals of normal operating expenditures in the determination of operating results for a given time period. Short-term accruals are defined as payable or receivable usually within 30 days of year-end. Under modified accrual accounting, expenditures that would be amortized under full accrual accounting must be recognized as expenditures in the budget year the goods or services are received

## EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY PROGRAMS ELIGIBILITY EXPENSES

The annual EarlyON budget process as a joint planning tool to provide an overview of budgeted cost information and operations within an organization.

**The following chart describes eligible expenses:**

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES	
Expense category	Description
Direct Program Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Salary and benefit expenses that are entirely (100%) EarlyON staff to deliver core services, including Facilitators, RECEs, Family Support, Community Outreach, Program Manager/Supervisor</li><li>• Hiring or acquiring the services of a special needs resource consultant to support the delivery of core services to children with special needs and their families/caregivers, specifically making connections for families to specialized services.</li></ul>
Direct Program Operating Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Occupancy costs including centre lease/rental/permit fees/school board charges/utilities</li><li>• Program-related supplies, equipment and resources</li><li>• Staff transportation costs for employee travel, vehicle expenses to support outreach and participation in programs</li><li>• Maintenance and repairs of EarlyON vehicles, if applicable, such as oil changes, gas, general repairs, wiper fluid, tires</li><li>• EarlyON vehicle insurance</li><li>• Translation and interpretation</li><li>• Communication and advertising</li><li>• Office expenses – supplies, insurance, equipment, IT equipment and maintenance, branding and marketing, audit costs to support accounting for funding used for the purposes intended</li></ul>
Administration Costs that are Head Office Related  A maximum of 10% of actual direct program and operating costs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Salaries and benefits</li><li>• Professional services</li><li>• General office expense</li><li>• Advertising costs</li><li>• Finance</li><li>• Insurance</li><li>• Occupancy costs</li></ul>

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES	
Expense category	Description
which may be adjusted at year-end reporting.	
Special Purpose Expenditures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building – professional development and training costs</li> <li>• Repairs and maintenance (standard repairs and maintenance for general upkeep, safety and minor repairs)</li> <li>• Miscellaneous (signage)</li> </ul>

**Note:** This is not a thorough list. Any other expenses not listed under the allowed expenses section are non-admissible without our express permission. For questions about eligible and ineligible expenses, contact your Community Program Coordinator.

## PAYMENT

### Budget Schedule

The Budget schedule reflects agencies' allocation related to the operation of the EarlyON Child and Family programs and services. Generally, the allocation is divided into 12 payments for each year.

### Reconciliation

The Region's reconciliation process allows the Region to reconcile actuals against allocation, assist in recovering unused funds as indicated below and provide supporting documents for audit purposes. This process is outlined in the **EarlyON Child and Family Centres Agreement Section 3 - Payments**.

### Recoveries

Identified unspent funds must be recovered from agencies within 90 days of the claim being discovered. This process is outlined in the **EarlyON Child and Family Centres Agreement Section 3 - Payments**.

## 5. EarlyON Service Delivery Data Reporting

The Regional Municipality of York (the Region) is required to submit reports to the Ministry of Education to ensure appropriate oversight of transfer payment activities, track achievement of program and policy objectives, support provincial level analysis and inform provincial report backs to the Government of Canada regarding federal investments.

## DATA REPORTING

In addition to reporting expenditures by expense categories set out in the EarlyON Child and Family Centres Agreement, the Ministry also collects service data to monitor the impact of EarlyON Child and Family programs.

### OCCMS Operators

Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS) is a cloud-based tool with custom-built features for data management. OCCMS adheres to all applicable privacy legislation and will only store data needed to operate EarlyON programs and fulfill Regional and Provincial reporting requirements.

### EarlyON Child and Family Programs – Report R131a

EarlyON agencies are required to ensure that the EarlyON Registration check-in feature is being used to ensure data collection is completed.

EarlyON agencies will provide a copy of the R131a/b and R136 at each agency quarterly meeting to reflect on local community service delivery need.

- Number of children served
- Number of visits made by children
- Number of parents/caregivers served
- Number of visits made by parents/caregiver

OCCMS Report 131a is being updated to capture the number of virtual children, parents/caregivers served and the number of virtual visits made by children, parents/caregivers. The CPCs will work with agencies to gather the numbers prior to the new version of OCCMS.

### EarlyON Child and Family Programs Staffing – Service Data

EarlyON agencies are required to complete the Direct Program Staffing and Administration Cost up to 10% tabs within the York Region Financial and Service Data Reporting Tool, which will populate the staffing field under the Service Delivery Data tab.

FTE: Full-time equivalent is based on a minimum of 35 hours per week

Direct program support staff are all staff who are involved in the development, design and delivery of EarlyON programs and services

Non-Program Staff are considered administration staff who provide administration support and funded under the 10% admin line, (clerical, financial staff, and includes staff involved in planning and data analysis services.

- Number of FTE non-program staff (supported through the 10% admin line)
- Number of FTE management staff supporting program development, design and delivery
- Number of FTE direct program support staff supporting program development, design and delivery
- Number of FTE program staff who are RECEs

- Number of FTE program staff receiving RECE exemptions (excluding the grand-parenting provision)
- Number of FTE program staff receiving an RECE exemption through the grand-parenting provision
- Using the Continuous Quality Improvement Portfolio tool, identify lessons learned and progress achieved in supporting the York Region EarlyON Child and Family Standards Framework.

### **EarlyON Child and Family Continuous Quality Improvement – Service Evaluation Data**

EarlyON Agencies will use the Pilot Continuous Quality Improvement Portfolio tool to identify lessons learned and progress achieved in supporting the York Region EarlyON Child and Family Standards Framework.

## Appendix A: Data Elements and Definitions

The below data elements will be required for mid-year reporting, due June 30 of the current calendar year, and year-end reporting, due January 15 of the following calendar year, with a Review Engagement or Audited Financial Statement within 120 days of the agency's fiscal year end. As further information is provided by the Ministry of Education, financial and statistical reporting requirements may be updated. The Region will provide a form that agencies are required to use. Training on the reporting form will also be offered by the Region.

### EARLYON FINANCIAL REPORTING AND SERVICE EVALUATION

#### Total Expenditures, Forecasting and any Non-Recoverable HST as Applicable

Definition: Total expenditures and expenditures forecast by category

- Salaries and Benefits
- Program Costs
- Administration Expenses (up to a maximum of 10%)
- Professional Learning and Capacity-Building
- One-time Funding

### EARLYON SERVICE DELIVERY EVALUATION REPORTING

#### Service Data

- **Number of Children Served – All Programs**

Definition: Number of children from birth to age six that received services at some point during the calendar year and is only counted once during the calendar year. This data element is used when a child participates in an in-person (outdoor or indoor program) and virtual early learning activity

- **Number of Visits made by Children – All Programs**

Definition: Total number of visits made by children from birth to age six to EarlyON Child and Family programs to an in-person (outdoor or indoor program) and/or virtual program

- **Number of Parents or Caregivers Served – All Programs**

Definition: Number of parents or caregivers who actively participated in an in-person (outdoor or indoor program) and a virtual program, with their children or separately, and is counted only once during the calendar year.

- **Number of Visits made by Parents or Caregivers – All Programs**

Definition: Total number of visits that parents or caregivers made to EarlyON Child and Family programs to an in-person (outdoor or indoor and/or virtual program).

- **Number of Children Served – Virtually**

Definition: Number of children from birth to age six that received services at some point during the calendar year and is only counted once during the calendar year. This data element is used when a child participates in a virtual early learning activity.

- **Number of Visits Made by Children - Virtually**

Definition: Total number of visits made by children from birth to age six to EarlyON Child and Family programs

- **Number of Parents or Caregivers Served - Virtually**

Definition: Number of parents or caregivers who actively participated in a virtual program, with their children or separately, and is counted only once during the calendar year

- **Number of Visits Made by Parents or Caregivers – Virtually**

Definition: Total number of visits that parents or caregivers made to EarlyON Child and Family programs to a virtual program.

## Mandatory Core Services and Customized Community Connections

- **Number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Program Staff**

Definition: The number of FTE staff who are involved in the development, design and delivery of EarlyON Child and Family programs and services. FTE is based on a minimum of 35 hours per week.

- **Number of FTE Non-Program Staff**

Definition: The number of FTE non-program staff (including cooks, drivers, housekeeping, clerical and financial staff and chief administrators) employed by EarlyON agencies. FTE is based on a minimum of 35 hours per week. This excludes FTEs that deliver planning and data analysis services.

- **Number of FTE Program Staff that are Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE)**

Definition: Number of FTE program staff who hold an RECE. FTE is based on a minimum of 35 hours per week.

- **Number of FTE Program Staff who Received a RECE Exemption (excluding the grand-parenting provision)**

Definition: The number of FTE program staff exemptions that were granted exemptions from the RECE requirement (excluding the grand-parenting provision). Full-time equivalent is based on a minimum of 35 hours per week.

- **Number of Agencies that Received an Exemption from Requiring a RECE**

Definition: The number of agencies that have been granted an exemption from the requirement of having an RECE at the centre to provide core services related to early learning and development.

- **Number of FTE Program Staff Receiving an RECE Exemption through the Grand-parenting Provision**

Definition: The number of FTE program staff that have been granted an exemption from the requirement of having an RECE because they have 10 or more years of experience working in

one or more of the following: Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Child Care Resource Centres, and/or Better Beginnings, Better Futures.

- **Programming Guided by *How Does Learning Happen?***

Definition: Confirmation that EarlyON Child and Family programs and services are guided by and align with the foundations in [\*How Does Learning Happen?\*](#)

## Administration

- **Number of FTE Staff by Position**

Definition: Total number of FTE staff by position supported through administration funding. FTE is based on a minimum of 35 hours per week.

- **Number of Staff (head count) by Position**

Definition: Total number of staff by position supported through administration funding.

- **Service Evaluation**

Definition: Identify lessons learned and progress achieved in meeting the York Region EarlyON Child and Family Standards Framework..

- **Website**

Definition: is a location connected to the Internet that maintains one or more webpages.

- **Social media**

Definition: is a web communication tool that can be used to build awareness of EarlyON programs and support community connections. Social media includes web-based and mobile technologies used to turn communication into interactive dialogue. Social media tools include blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Posts and tweets are terms used, for the information uploaded or shared on the social media platform.

- **Post**

Definition: is a piece of writing, image, or other item of content published online, typically on a blog or social media website.

- **Tweet**

Definition: is a message sent on the Twitter platform that can contain links, photographs, GIFs (animated image) or videos; text tweets are limited to 280 characters.

- **Web-based voice and video conferencing platforms**

Definition: are cloud-based video conferencing services that allows you to virtually meet with others, such as Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, WhatsApp, GoToMeeting, Webex, etc.

## CONTACT

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