

3

REQUEST TO TRANSFER THE PROVINCIAL EARLY YEARS PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS MEASUREMENT PROGRAM TO YORK REGION

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, November 27, 2007, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council approve the transfer of the Early Years Program Effectiveness Measurement Program to the Community and Health Services Department.
2. Council authorize the Commissioner of Community and Health Services to execute agreements with the Ministry of Community and Social Services to implement the Early Years Program Effectiveness Measurement Program, subject to 100 percent provincial funding and prior review by the Regional Solicitor.
3. Council approve two additional full-time equivalent positions to support the provincial Early Years Program Effectiveness Measurement Program.

2. PURPOSE

This report requests Council to approve the transfer of the Early Years Program Effectiveness Measurement Program, administered by Ministry of Community and Social Services and currently operated by a community agency, to the Community and Health Services Department, subject to 100 percent funding by the Province, and to approve two additional full-time equivalent positions within the Family and Children's Services Branch of the Community and Health Services Department to implement the Program.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Measurement Program is part of Ontario's 2001 Early Years Plan

The Early Years Program Effectiveness Measurement Program was among the services announced as part of Ontario's Early Years Plan in 2001. The Program collects and analyzes early years data from the five Ontario Early Years sites and their 29 satellite sites in York Region in order to track progress in improving early years programs and undertake future planning. The results of this analysis are made available to the early years community in York Region, and province-wide.

Since 2002, the Province has funded a community agency in York Region to operate the Program with two Data Analysis Coordinators. In some other jurisdictions (e.g. Halton) this program has always been operated by the Regional Municipality.

3.2 Transfer Program to York Region

The community agency and the Province have requested that York Region's Family and Children's Services Branch, in its role as the Child Care Service System Manager, assume responsibility for this program and the two full-time equivalent positions associated with it, effective January 1, 2008. CUPE 905 supports this transfer of positions and incumbents to York Region.

In assuming this responsibility, York Region will manage the Program's activities and monitor outcomes on behalf of the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 York Region will provide necessary supports to the Program

Provincial consultations with community programs have concluded that local programs typically lack the necessary staff, systems and expertise to properly record, report and monitor their activities.

The Measurement Program, staffed with two Data Analysis Coordinators, provides this necessary support.

4.2 Program objectives

The Early Years Program Effectiveness Measurement Program will:

- Strengthen, support and promote:
 - Effective methods for tracking and monitoring early years programs in communities.
 - The community's capacity to assess its early years needs and capacities.

Assist agencies that operate early years programs in monitoring child and parent outcomes in their programs and responding to the results.

4.3 Key activities of the Data Analysis Coordinators

The two Data Analysis Coordinators will:

- Train and support staff in early years programs in recording, monitoring and reporting on their programs.
- Conduct training sessions for early years practitioners.
- Develop and maintain a community inventory of early years programs.
- Support the implementation of the Early Development Instrument in York Region.
- Analyze and interpret data.

Organize annual planning sessions with early years practitioners to identify gaps in program effectiveness and/or child outcomes and seek solutions.

4.4 Outcomes of the Early Years Program Effectiveness Measurement Program

The Program will enable:

- Improved ability for agencies to describe their key program activities and outcomes objectives.
- Greater consistency in agency recording/tracking systems.
- Increased ability to track participation in early years programs.
- Improved agency capacity for monitoring parent satisfaction with early years programs.
- Improved ability to evaluate programs and program impact.
- Information to support future early years planning based on identified needs and gaps.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Effectiveness Measurement Program is a component of the provincially funded and managed Early Years Program. Early Years operators are directly accountable to the Province for the Early Years Program. It is the only the Effectiveness Measurement Program component of the Early Years Program that the Province has requested to be transferred to York Region.

The annual gross expenditures for this piece are approximately \$180,000 and will be funded 100 percent by the Ministry of Community and Social Services through Ontario Early Years and Best Start funding. There is no net regional tax levy impact. The two Data Analysis Coordinators will be accommodated within the square footage currently allocated to Family and Children's Services.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Early years programs for children in all municipalities will benefit from the Early Years Program Effectiveness Measurement Program. The analysis of data obtained from community agencies will support future planning in municipalities across York Region.

7. CONCLUSION

The transfer of the provincial Early Years Program Effectiveness Measurement Program to York Region will enable the collection and analysis of data needed to track progress in improving early years programs and undertake future planning. As the host agency, York Region will provide an opportunity for increased collaboration among individuals

responsible for planning, monitoring and evaluating early years programs for children from prenatal to six years of age.

For more information on this report, contact Elizabeth Wagle, Director, Family and Children's Services Branch in the Community and Health Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.