

2

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES 2008 ACTIVITY UPDATE

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends:

- 1. staff report back on a strategic approach to assist with prioritizing of programs in the event of diminished funding and increasing need; and**
- 2. adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated May 1, 2009, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides an update on the activities and initiatives of Early Intervention Services in 2008. Early Intervention Services, a unit within the Social Services Branch of the Community and Health Services Department, provides services to children with special needs from birth through to six years of age.

3. BACKGROUND

Early Intervention Services are provided under both the *Day Nurseries Act* and the *Child and Family Services Act* and are directly delivered from six offices located across the Region.

Early Intervention Services supports the development of children with special needs

Our clients are children aged birth through to six years of age who have, or are at risk for having, delays in development due to established or biological risk factors. In 2008, Early Intervention Services served 2,069 children. Approximately 56% (1,162) of children enrolled had a diagnosed developmental special need, approximately 19% (387) had some form of autism, and 22% (453) were born premature.

In addition to the children, family members of children enrolled in Early Intervention Services, child care operators, and community programs accessed by children enrolled in Early Intervention Services, (e.g. All Our Kids, Child Development and Parenting Programs and Ontario Early Years Centres), are provided with assistance to maximize the child's development in the natural routines of their environment. Public, separate and private school staff are supported in meeting children's needs related to the transition from home or child care to the school environment through Early Intervention Services' facilitation.

Early Intervention Services provides a continuum of care through various services

The Social Services Branch operates a toll free telephone line, 1-888-703-KIDS (5437) for information and referral to Early Intervention Services, as well as the Preschool Speech and Language, Blind, Low Vision and the Tri-Regional Infant Hearing Programs, delivered by Markham-Stouffville Hospital.

Once Early Intervention Services are accessed, children receive ongoing developmental assessments provided by cross-disciplinary teams, including parents, early interventionists, speech-language pathologists, and occupational therapists and physiotherapists. All six Early Intervention Services' offices house co-located staff from Markham-Stouffville Hospital's Child Development Programs and the Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe-York.

Individual Family Support Plans are developed based on the assessment results. Individual and/or group child development programming is provided in the child's home, in the child care setting in which the child is enrolled, in the therapy suites of the Early Intervention Services offices, and in other community settings, as appropriate.

Through a funding contract with the Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe-York, service coordinators, occupational therapists and physiotherapists provide direct treatment for children enrolled in Early Intervention Services who experience severe motor and complex developmental needs.

Families are assisted in understanding and navigating the system of services that exist to address the special needs of their child and family through service coordination and case management. Referrals for other appropriate services are facilitated and joint service planning meetings are conducted to maximize efficiency and minimize duplication.

Early Intervention Services staff also support capacity building among other service providers by delivering training to staff of child care centres, community based programs and school boards.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Growth in demand for Early Intervention Services exceeds the rate of child population growth in York Region

According to census data for York Region, the rate of population growth between 2001 and 2006 for children birth to four years of age was 16.5% and for children five through nine years of age was 10.1%. Early Intervention Services experienced significant increases in service demand between 2001 and 2006 which exceeded the rate of child population growth. This included a 68.8% increase in referrals, a 56.1% increase in monthly averaged served and 37.2% growth in total served in-year. This trend to increased service demand continued between 2006 and 2008 as seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Increase in Service Demand and Delivery, 2006-2008

	2006	2008	Difference	% Increase
Total Referrals	709	830	121	17.1%
New Enrolment in Year	602	692	90	14.9%
Monthly Average Served	1,122	1,472	350	31.2%
Total Served in Year	1,574	2,069	495	31.4%
Monthly Average Wait List	121	147	26	21.4%

Early Intervention Services implemented various strategies to address service demands in 2008

- Office based service delivery hours increased by 37.5% (4,188 to 5,761 hours) between 2007 and 2008 through more efficient in-office bookings to reduce travel time while still maintaining strong customer service.
- Early Intervention Services developed and implemented a Pathway (clinical decision guides) for Siblings of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- Early Intervention Services developed and implemented Clinical Assessment and Referral Pathways for Occupational Therapy to facilitate access to treatment.

Three year accreditation and participant surveys demonstrate high quality of Early Intervention Services

Early Intervention Services received a three year accreditation with a citation for “exemplary” practice across various aspects of program delivery from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. Early Intervention Services is the first program of its type to receive accreditation from this international organization in Ontario.

Early Intervention Services regularly seeks customer feedback from families to determine their needs and satisfaction with the services provided. Responsive changes in intervention approaches have resulted in the ongoing maintenance of high customer service satisfaction ratings in the face of increased service demand.

Table 2 outlines the results of customer satisfaction surveys conducted in 2008.

Table 2
Customer Satisfaction Survey Results, 2008

Type of Survey	Items Rated	% of Ratings Satisfied/ Very Satisfied
Initial Service Plan Meeting Survey Based on return rate of 60% (415/692)	Information received was helpful	93%
	I left this meeting feeling encouraged and connected to services	94%
	My questions were answered	95%
End of Service Survey Based on return rate of 19.5% (136/684)	Family Centered philosophy	98%
	Child Care consultation services	92%
	Quality of staff	100%
	Would recommend to others	98%
	Child made gains due to EIS	95%

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total cost of delivering Early Intervention Services in 2008 was \$7,409,500 gross and \$736,934 net. Included in the overall funding is \$2,358,000 in provincial funding provided at 100% under the Provincial Best Start Program, which enabled York Region to serve 400 additional children in 2008.

While further information is being sought by consolidated municipal service managers around the province on the status of Best Start funding in the future, there is concern the funding could end in March 2010. A report on Best Start, including experience to date and future potential funding implications will be coming forward to Council in June 2009.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Early Intervention Services are delivered in all local municipalities, therefore, residents of all municipalities in York Region benefit from the increased level of service. The reconfiguration of Early Intervention Services teams has responded to child care population growth in local municipalities while the addition of a central office at the Oak Ridges site has improved access to residents of central York Region.

7. CONCLUSION

The Early Intervention Services Unit in the Social Services Branch of the Community and Health Services Department has met increased service demands through increased service levels and enhanced service delivery which is responsive to customer needs.

For more information on this report, contact David Rennie, General Manager of Social Services at Ext. 2013.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.