

support every child
reach every student

**CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION
& PATH TOWARDS A
RENEWED POLICY
FRAMEWORK**

November 10, 2016

Purpose

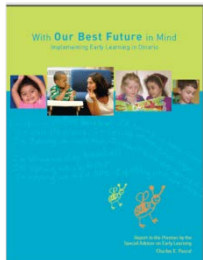
- To provide an overview of Ontario's child care modernization journey to date and next steps.



Child Care in Ontario – Modernization Timeline

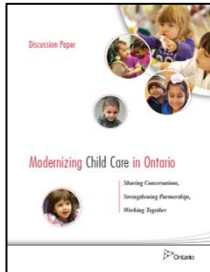


2009



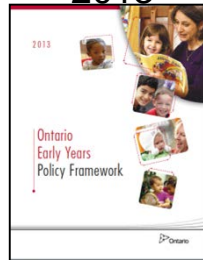
Dr. Charles Pascal, Premier's Advisor on Early Learning releases *With Our Best Future in Mind*, with recommendations for a more integrated system, including FDK

2012



Province-wide engagement via *Modernizing Child Care in Ontario* discussion paper

2013



The *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework* sets the vision for a responsive, high-quality, accessible and integrated child care system

2013



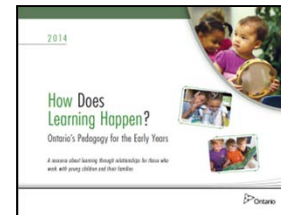
Ministry introduces a new, transparent funding formula

2014



Recommendations from the province's Auditor General and Ombudsman help shape modernization

2014



How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the Early Years is released

2015



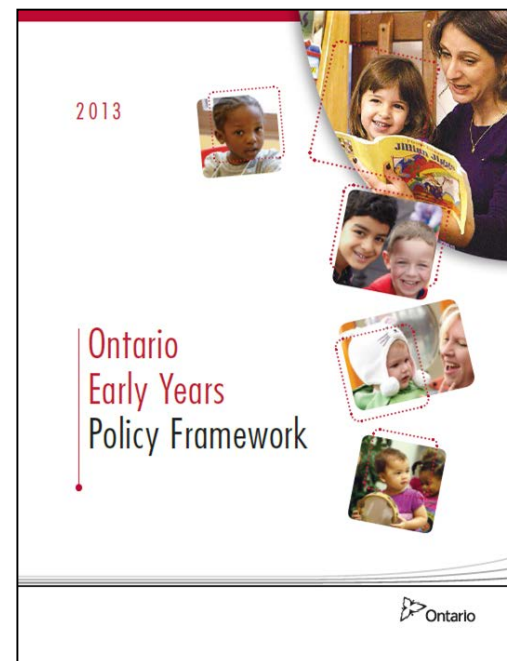
On August 31, 2015, the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA) comes into force, replacing 70 year old legislation

Child Care Modernization

- In 2011, the government engaged with Ontarians to modernize childcare, resulting in helpful advice and recommendations to support the transformation of Ontario's child care and early years system.
- After province wide consultations, the government released the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework in 2013, setting out the following vision that:

Ontario's children and families are well supported by a system of responsive, high quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow.

- The framework identified a number of priority areas for action including:
 - Implementation of **full day kindergarten** by September 2014
 - Creating an effective approach to implementing **Best Start Child and Family Centres** and;
 - **Stabilizing and transforming the child care sector**



Implementation of Full-day Kindergarten

- **Full-day kindergarten (FDK)** has been made available to all of Ontario's four- and five-year olds in publicly funded schools.
 - FDK reaches approximately 260,000 students annually throughout the province.
 - The five-year rollout began in the 2010-11 school year and was completed in the 2014-15 school year.
- Since the introduction of FDK, licensed child care spaces for 4- and 5-year old children located in schools has more than quadrupled from 15,000 in 2010-11 to 74,000 in 2015-16.
- The government provided \$1.5B in capital funding to support school boards in building and/or renovating classrooms for FDK.
- Although the full social impact of full-day kindergarten has not been measured, research shows a link between full-day kindergarten and improved literacy and numeracy scores, increased readiness for grade 1, and better wellness indicators for children.

Stabilizing and Transforming the Early Years and Child Care Sector

- Ontario has made significant investments in child care and early years. It has doubled funding to more than \$1 billion dollars per year which has increased the number of licensed child care spaces from 187,131 (2003-04) to 389,286 (2015-16).
- Some examples of these investments include:
 - \$63.5 million dollars for child care per year, when the federal government ended its responsibility for child care in 2010.
 - \$120 million to create an additional 4,000 new child care spaces in schools for Ontario families.
 - \$100 million, per year, in child and family programs and a commitment to transform early years supports for families by 2018.
- Also, we have increasingly recognized the expert role of Early Childhood Educators by providing wage enhancements to all staff working in licensed child care settings.

A Modern Legislative Framework

- In August 2015, the first new child care legislation in the province in almost 70 years was enacted: *the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.
- This Act strengthens compliance and health and safety in early years settings, while helping parents make informed choices about their child care options.
- To ensure children were receiving the highest-quality care available, the government also released a dedicated teaching resource for child care settings called *How Does Learning Happen?*
- To emphasize the importance of intentional, inquiry-based learning instruction, all child care settings are now required to have a program statement that focuses on how they are working to create high-quality experiences for children.



A Modern Legislative Framework

- The ministry has taken a staged approach to the development and implementation of new regulations:
 - In August 2015, a first round of amendments came into effect including many that were carried over from the DNA, changes to strengthen health and safety, enable the use of new enforcement tools.
 - In May 2016, a second round of regulations were filed including changes to support system planning, tiered licensing, child care access and viability, and before/after school care for 6-12 year olds.
 - Most recently, the government made a regulatory change to ban wait lists, making it easier for parents to access child care.



Next Phase of Modernization

- Over the past four years, the government has taken significant steps to improve children's experiences through achieving the key priorities in the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework.
- The Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework focus on the key pillars of access, responsiveness, affordability and quality and build on existing commitments in child care and early years programming including:
 - The integration of four child and family programs into a cohesive, provincial system of services and supports known as **Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres by 2018**.
 - As part of the government's broader response to the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action**, Ontario has committed to invest up to a total of \$150 million over three years on a group of initiatives that seek to close gaps and remove barriers, including increased funding to **expand access to culturally relevant child and family programs on reserve, and child care and child and family programs off reserve**.
 - Partnership with the federal government to support the development of a **National Early Learning and Child Care Multilateral Framework**.
 - Beginning in September 2017, building on the successful implementation of FDK, the province is **expanding the current duty to require school boards to ensure the provision of before and after school program for children 6-12 year olds** in all publicly-funded elementary schools serving students to grade 6 where there is sufficient demand.
 - The requirement that all CMSMs and DSSABs have an **approved Child Care and Early Years Programs and Services Plan** for their service area by January 2019.

Why Now?

- We know we have more work to do in ensuring that all children have access to quality child care and early years experiences.
- This is important because positive outcomes for children are most likely when:
 - Educators foster caring relationships with children and initiate positive and responsive interactions;
 - Programs provide stimulating materials and experiences that engage children’s curiosity and thinking through play-based approaches and;
 - Educators have higher levels of education and opportunities to participate in ongoing professional development.
- Research demonstrates that quality child care and early years programs improve child readiness for full-day kindergarten, grade one and success beyond the classroom and that investments in quality early learning and child care programs produces a **7:1 return on investment**.

Why Now?

- Even with continued growth, demand for child care exceeds supply and the **demand is increasing for licensed child care** for children 0-4 years old.
 - It is estimated that demand for child care for children 0-4 is approximately **45%-50%**.
 - The **0-4 child population is anticipated to grow** by approximately 1% per year over the next 5 years or at least 5,000 additional children per year.
 - **Parents are experiencing particular challenges accessing infant and toddler spaces** due to changes in parental work patterns and the demographics of communities which have altered the availability and use of child care services across the province.
 - While there are regional child care variations, access and affordability issues are consistent across the province. Ontario's urban centres have the highest child care costs in Canada.

Throne Speech Commitment

- On September 12, 2016, the Throne Speech committed to **creating 100,000 new child care spaces for children aged 0-4 over the next five years.**
- Creating 100,000 spaces requires both operating and capital funding to support expansion through schools, communities and home based child care.
- The **five-year roll plan will be phased** and will be informed by the engagement process, including phased capital expansion as well as recruitment and training of staff.



Key Pillars

Access

Increasing access to licensed child care and early years programs by expanding the number of licensed child care spaces and transforming child and family programs

Supports work force participation; helps narrow gender wage gap

Responsiveness

Meeting the needs of families and children through early years programs and child care in schools, communities, workplaces, and at home.

Support for work force participation in all regions of the province

Affordability

Recognizing the connection between access and affordability at different income levels, increase the funding for fee subsidies to support parents seeking child care

Supports the province's Poverty Reduction Strategy

Quality

Ensuring licensed child care and early years programs are high quality through outcome measurement, pedagogy for healthy child development, and well-trained and compensated staff

Inclusivity

Proposed Engagement Plan

- **Minister's Early Years Advisory Committee**
- **Public Discussion Paper**
- **Digital Engagement**
- **Regional Sessions**
- **Parent Outreach**
- **Partner and Stakeholder Engagement**
- **Employer Engagement**

Key Discussion Questions

1. **Access:** In your experience, what are the strengths of the current system and what are the biggest barriers to parents accessing licensed child care and early years programs in your community?
1. **Responsiveness:** What are the strengths of the current system and options available? What can be done to provide families with more choice and flexibility?
1. **Affordability:** What are the most important things governments, communities, providers and employers should do to make early years programs in Ontario more affordable?
1. **Quality:** What role should the province play in ensuring high quality early learning and child care programs?