

# Child Care and Early Years

Service System Plan 2020-2024



## *A Message from the Warden*



Lambton County Council is committed to a caring, growing, and innovative community. It believes in a healthy community and values learning, caring, and building safe communities that meet the needs of all its residents.

Positive early years' experiences support healthy growth and development that have lasting impacts and develops resiliency in children and families. Investing in the early years improves children's health and educational outcomes, leading to less reliance and need for supports and services later in life. Supporting early childhood development has a high return on investment.

For parents and caregivers, a strong childcare and early year's system is critical to promote economic independence. It gives families an opportunity to participate in skills development, education and training, and participation in the labor market.

Together with our community partners, the County of Lambton is committed to building a high-quality child care and early year's system that is accessible, affordable, and responsive. This plan aligns with our objective to promote healthy community development, develop partnerships, and promote a high quality of life for the residents of our community.

Kevin Marriott

Lambton County Warden



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*Acknowledgements*

Lambton County Family Network, Lambton County Social Services Division, Child Care Operators, Early ON, and Community Members.



## Executive Summary

The Child Care and Early Years' Service System Plan for 2020-2024 sets the path for how Lambton County will continue to build and grow an early years and child care system that is responsive to the current and future needs of children and families in Lambton County. The System Plan allows an opportunity to analyze the impacts of programs and services, identify progress and service gaps and foster evidence-based decision making to continue to support Service Managers and the early years and child care sector.

Further, the plan will guide the planning and delivery of programming and meet the proposed outcomes associated with each of the four pillars of the Ministry of Education's vision for early years' programs:

Accessibility	Responsiveness	Quality	Affordability
Increased access to early years programs to give families more opportunity to benefit from high quality programs and services.	Provides a range of services that reflect the diverse needs of families so that parents can choose the options that work best for their family.	Promotes safe and reliable programs for children and families that are delivered by highly educated professionals.	Ensures early years programs and services are within affordable reach for families within Lambton County.

The County of Lambton, in collaboration with the early years and child care sector in Lambton County, has established key priorities to support the achievement of each priority and to drive the growth of a high quality child care system. To further support implementation, an action plan and evaluation indicators have been highlighted throughout the System Plan. The priorities established in this plan will build a more responsive, affordable, high quality and accessible child care system for Lambton County.



## LANDSCAPE

### LAMBTON COUNTY AT A GLANCE

Understanding Lambton County's children and their families is critical to helping us plan services that meet their needs. This snapshot, using 2016 census data, provides an overview of some of the characteristics used to inform our planning.

Lambton County was home to 16,969 children age 0 to 12 years. This represents 13% of Lambton County's population.

- Lambton County was home to 16,969 children age 0 to 12 years. This represents 13% of Lambton County's population.
- Since 2011, the number of births per woman has decreased from an average of 0.198 to 0.18 in 2016. Based on the birth rate assumptions, the birth rate between 2017-2022 is expected to decline by -4.9%.
- According to the 2016 Census, there are 2,200 people who identify French as their official language of choice. This is 1.8 % of the total population.
- In 2015, 17% of Lambton County children and youth (0-17 years old) lived in low income households.
- Since 2011, the greatest percentage increases in Lambton County population were in Petrolia (3.9%) and Plympton-Wyoming (2.9%).
- Within Lambton County the Indigenous population has a younger demographic than those of the non-Indigenous population, with a particularly high proportion of children 0-14 years of age. The average age of the Indigenous population in Lambton is 33.9 years compared with 43.9 years for the non-Indigenous population.
- In 2016, there were 12,390 immigrants living in Lambton County, representing approximately 10% of the population.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

## *Section One: Background and Information:*

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### *The Role of the Consolidated Service System Manager*

Under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) the County of Lambton as a Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) is designated to manage child care and early years' services across the County. These services include the planning and funding of licensed child care programs, administering financial assistance for eligible families through fee subsidy, and allocating additional resources to families and programs that provide care to children with special needs. Additionally, CMSM's are responsible for the oversight of EarlyON Child and Family Centres and Indigenous-led child care and early years' services.

The CCEYA outlines that each service system manager shall have a child care and early years' service plan for its service area. The plan should be reviewed and approved by Council and reflect local priorities as well as align with Provincial interests and policy statements. The child care and early years' service system plan should:

- (a) Focus on Ontario's children and families;
- (b) Promote the health, safety and well-being of children;
- (c) Provide high quality experiences and positive outcomes for children;
- (d) Include knowledgeable, self-reflective and qualified professionals and staff, including members of the College of Early Childhood Educators;
- (e) Respond to communities' needs
- (f) Respect equity, inclusiveness and diversity in communities
- (g) Provide for strong and sustainable partnerships among the Province, service system managers and others in the community;
- (h) Be coordinated with other community and human services;
- (i) Be flexible and able to adapt to local circumstances;
- (j) Support the social and economic well-being of Ontarians;
- (k) Ensure appropriate accountability for public funding;
- (l) Support the transition from child care and early year's programs and services to school.

# *The Lambton Child and Family Network (LCFN)*

The LCFN is a strategic, collaborative and integrated planning infrastructure which allows members to work together and independently meet the shared vision of the network to improve the present and future well-being of children and families.

Chaired by the County of Lambton, the LCFN includes representatives from the following organizations:

- St. Clair Child and Youth Services
- Child Care Supervisors Network
- Sarnia-Lambton Children’s Aid Society
- Conseil scolaire Catholique Providence
- Conseil scolaire Viamonde
- County of Lambton Social Services
- Lambton County Library
- Urban Indigenous partners
- EarlyON Centres
- First Nations Community Members
- La Ribambelle
- Lambton Kent District School Board
- Lambton Public Health
- Pathways Health Centre for Children
- Sarnia-Lambton Rebound for Youth
- St. Clair Catholic District School Board



Outlined below is a timeline of key initiatives that have served to reinforce and shape the Ministry of Education funded programs and how these initiatives have impacted Lambton:

When	Initiative	What it Means for Lambton County
2013	Full Day Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Enhanced collaboration with education partners.</li> <li>✓ Enhanced supports for children in child care.</li> <li>✓ Children age 4-5 no longer require access to child care centers.</li> </ul>
2014	How Does Learning Happen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A new framework for child care and early years' programs.</li> <li>✓ Aligns with what we know about how children learn.</li> <li>✓ The approach is built around four foundational conditions for children to grow and flourish: belonging, well-being, engagement and expression.</li> </ul>
2015	<i>Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provides new rules for governing child care in Ontario.</li> <li>✓ Strengthened health and safety regulations.</li> <li>✓ Helps parents to make informed decisions about their options.</li> </ul>
2016	Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provides a cohesive system of services and supports for children 0-6.</li> <li>✓ A focus on quality, access, affordability and responsiveness.</li> <li>✓ An emphasis on integration of early years and child care programming for families</li> </ul>
2017	Special Needs Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coordinated service planning and the integrated delivery of rehabilitation services.</li> <li>✓ Connect children to services as early as possible.</li> <li>✓ Provide supports more efficiently and make service delivery as seamless as possible.</li> </ul>
2018	Moving on Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Creating and supporting a pathway to care.</li> <li>✓ Community partners have the opportunity to maximize linkages through cross sector for the benefit of children and families</li> </ul>



## Child Care and Early Years Programming in Lambton County

Research has shown that early childhood education programs have beneficial developmental effects if program quality is high. Further, research indicates that children's involvement in high quality childhood education programs contributes to higher educational outcomes, a higher rate of grade retention, and lower rates of those needing educational supports. At its greatest potential, child care and early childhood education is known to influence individuals' health, and their cognitive, social and financial status.

### Children in Lambton County aged 0 to 12 years:



There are over 5,300 licensed child care centres in Ontario with over 406,000 spaces for children 0-12 years. Approximately 161,000 of these centre spaces are for children 0-3 years. Across Ontario, there are enough licensed spaces in centres and homes to accommodate approximately 23% of all children 0-3 years of age. Within Lambton County, approximately 25% of children, age 0-3, have access to licensed child care programming within the community. In comparison to a provincial context, Lambton County has <1% of the combined provincial total of children in receipt of child care within Ontario.

57   
Licensed Child  
Care Centres  
in Lambton  
County

3,217   
children are  
enrolled in  
licensed care

## Licensed Child Care Spaces in Lambton County

As of 2018, there were 57 licensed child care centres in Lambton County with a cumulative total of 3,367 licensed child care spaces for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and children of school age program age.

**Table 1: Child Care Spaces within Lambton County**

	Sites	Spaces	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
<b>Lambton County</b>	57	3,367	112	280	837	2,163
<b>Province</b>	5,437	427,032	12,755	44,529	108,375	162,901

In Lambton County, the greatest need for licensed child care space is in the infant, toddler, and preschool age groups. In order to offer licensed child care to more children ages 0-3 years old, Lambton County will need to add:

- 240 More spaces to support 30% of children age 0-3 years
- 733 More spaces to support 40% of children age 0-3 years
- 1223 More spaces to support 50% of children age 0-3 years

## Access to Child Care Programming

The County of Lambton utilizes a web-based software program where families can enroll and manage their child care applications through OneHSN- OneList. This is a centralized application system and waitlist website. The OneHSN system allows families to research programs, locate licensed child care in the community, and apply for licensed child care programs.

## Home Based Child Care

Within Lambton County, there are two home based child care agencies that provide a cumulative capacity of 252 licensed spaces. Both agencies have the ability to offer extended care options, including overnight and weekend care. A total of 42 families use child care from the licensed home based agencies. However, both home care agencies have a wait list for care.

## *Indigenous Programming within Lambton County*

In Lambton County, a continuous effort is made to ensure that Indigenous children and families have access to culturally relevant programs. Licensed child care and EarlyON programs offer opportunities for the mainstream population to participate in and grow their awareness of Indigenous culture and language. Within the City of Sarnia programming is available to the community through three programs:

The Nwijiwiensag EarlyON Child and Family Centre is an Indigenous culturally based site with the objective to share a holistic way of learning and to incorporate Indigenous culture and language into the content of programming. This setting provides a natural space for children, parents and caregivers to engage in learning through exploration and discovery.

The Ska:na Family Child and Family Centre is an urban Indigenous organization which oversees Little Friends Child and Family Development Centre. Little Friends is a child care centre for children ages 3 months to 5 years that offers services to meet the cultural and environmental needs of urban Indigenous children and their families. The child care centre is licensed for 52 children and is 1 of 25 Indigenous led child care centres in Ontario. Additionally, as a separate entity, Ska:na Family Learning Centre offers a before and after school program at a local public school for children ages 4-12 and incorporates Indigenous culture and language.

## *Services for French Children and Families*

La Ribambelle offers two child care centres for French speaking families at École élémentaire Les Rapides and as École élémentaire catholique Saint-Thomas d'Aquin. In addition, they also offer an EarlyON Centre at École élémentaire catholique Saint-Thomas d'Aquin and a mobile service that travels to various neighborhoods to offer further access to French speaking families.

## *Services for Newcomers to Lambton County*

While the percentage of immigrants in Lambton County is relatively low in comparison to the rest of the province, there has been considerable effort made to provide a full range of settlement service, including child care. As part of a specific program at the YMCA Learning & Career Centre, the YMCA offers five child care spaces designated for use by the children of immigrant services.

## *Resources for Children with Special Needs or Mental Health Concerns*

Service System Managers and First Nations Communities are provided with special needs resourcing funding that supports the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care settings, including licensed home child care settings, day camps and authorized recreation programs. Within Lambton County's child care system, 769 children with a special need(s) receive supports and services. Highlighted below are distinct programs within Lambton County that offer services and supports to children with special needs or mental health concerns:

- a) Pathways Health Centre for Children: assist children to participate successfully within childcare centres among Lambton County. These services support families to utilize strategies within their home environment and to connect with other service providers in the community. Early Learning Resource Teachers work with community child care centres and Pathways staff to support children with special needs in licensed child care settings.
- b) St. Clair Child & Youth Services: offers Early Years mental health services, Infant & Child Development Program, individual or family therapy, St. Clair EarlyON Child & Family Centre.

## *Parent & Professional Resource Centre (PPRC)*

A significant resource that supports the delivery of quality child care and early years' programs within Lambton County is the Parent and Professional Resource Centre (PPRC). Funded by the County of Lambton, this program offers professional learning opportunities to all Registered Early Childhood Educators, Early Childhood Education students, home child care providers, parents, teachers, and other community partners working with children and youth.

***The goal of the PPRC is to offer learning experiences that align with current practices and are built upon the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) Code of Ethics and ministry funded initiatives.***

A pivotal component of the PPRC is professional learning opportunities. From January 2016 – December 2018 the PPRC offered 112 Professional Learning events to early year's partners. Professional learning opportunities are planned with the support of an Advisory Committee, which is comprised of early learning staff from the community such as Supervisors/Directors,

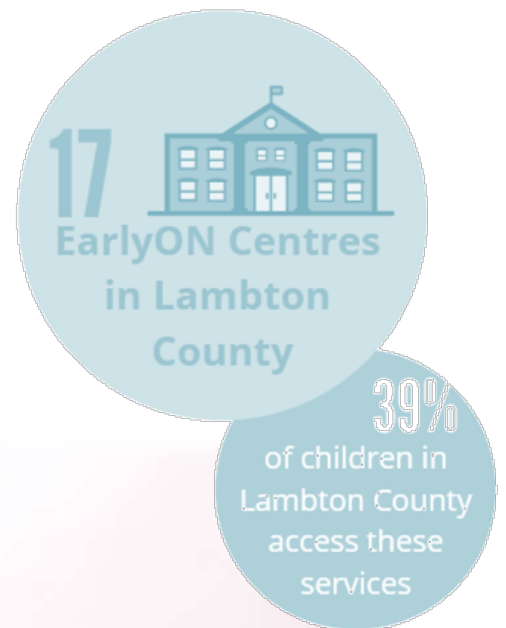


Registered Early Childhood Educators, EarlyON staff, Licensed Home Child Care Providers, Speech and Language Specialists and other community stakeholders.

## Early Years Services

EarlyON educators are able to refer and connect families with a mental health professional from St. Clair Child and Youth Services for issues regarding attachment, relationships, behaviour, child development and postpartum adjustment concerns. Additionally, a SoundStart Speech-Language Pathologist from Pathways Health Centre for Children is available at EarlyON Centres to support families with communication skills for their children.

There are 17 EarlyON Centres in Lambton County, which provide services to families and children aged birth to 6 years. Data indicates that 39% of children in Lambton County access services through EarlyON Centres, 20% higher than the provincial average. In addition, Lambton Public Health has 20 Parent Drop-In locations throughout Lambton County, many of which operate in partnership with EarlyON Centres.



## *Section 2: Planning and Community Engagement*

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### *Objective*

The planning and development of the Child Care and Early Years' Service System Plan has been led by the County of Lambton, as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, and the Lambton Child and Family Network. The planning process has been guided by established values and objectives, intended to ensure that the recommendations reflect the priorities of families, caregivers, service providers and broader community partners and stakeholders. The following aligns with provincial requirements and expectations for a Child Care and Early Years' Service System Plan and the County of Lambton's planning strategy:

- Establish a Child Care and Early Years' Service System Plan guided by mandated provincial requirements and expectations;
- Implement a community planning and engagement process that includes multiple approaches and sources of data gathering (surveys, focus groups, key informant interviews, relevant data sources);
- Complete an environmental scan and local needs assessment;
- Complete a literature review; and
- Analyze aggregated data to identify system pressures, challenges and opportunities.

Lambton County's Child Care and Early Years' Service System Plan reflects a demonstrated commitment to a transparent, respectful, and inclusive planning process and collaboration with a range of service providers and broader community partners. Further, the plan reflects the following strategies and recommendations:

- Comply with municipal and provincial legislation, regulations, policies and standards;
- Position the needs of children and families as central to program and service delivery;
- Support a range of program options with the highest respect for parental choice;
- Respect the diverse demographic profile of Lambton County including francophone children and families and First Nation and Indigenous individuals;
- Provide support for marginalized families;
- Respect service provider input; and
- Address identified priorities.

## *Engagement Strategy*

A comprehensive community engagement strategy was initiated to facilitate outreach in the community. Steps to ensure that the voices and needs of all Lambton County residents were reflected in the research and special effort was made to hear from recent immigrants, low income families and families that have children with special needs. Community engagement was central to the development of the system plan and the County of Lambton is committed to continued engagement over the next five years through ongoing discussions, surveys and conscious outreach to our community.

During the spring and summer of 2019, over 500 parents, caregivers, partners and service providers provided feedback on community needs, gaps and opportunities to build an integrated system for children and families. The feedback demonstrated that parents are looking for more options that are relevant to their specific needs and unique family dynamics. The common themes that emerged through the engagement process determined the priorities of this plan. The following outlines the feedback we received from families and service providers regarding the accessibility, responsiveness, quality and affordability in relation to child care and early years programming within Lambton County:

### *What the community reported regarding EarlyOn services and programs*

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#### *What we wanted to know:*

- The needs of families with children 0 to 6 years of age with respect to EarlyON services, locations, and time availability.
- Current gaps, barriers and challenges associated with existing EarlyON programs

#### *What was Reported:*

##### *What Families Reported:*

- 73% of survey respondents indicated that EarlyON Centres are conveniently located.
- 64% of survey respondents indicated that the hours of operation support the needs of their families.
- 50% of families feel that programs are sensitive to cultural differences.
- 71% of survey respondents agreed that staff give valuable advice about early childhood

development.

- 80% of respondents felt they welcomed by staff.

#### *What Service Providers Reported:*

- Service providers reported that the EarlyON providers work well together and take a systems approach to ensure that there is access to their services.

### *What the community reported regarding child care services and programs*

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#### *What we wanted to know:*

- Typologies and frequency of programming use.
- Families' perceptions of quality child care programs.
- Families' perceptions on accessing child care programming within Lambton County.

#### *What was Reported:*

##### *What Families Reported:*

- 53% of survey respondents felt that their family could not easily access a range of childcare options.
- 30% reported a range of child care options were not easily accessible for children with special needs.
- 43% of survey respondents indicated that their child care arrangements had caused them to miss work.
- 53% of survey respondents indicated that they did not have easy access to a range of child care options.
- 42% of survey respondents agreed that child care settings offer programs that are culturally appropriate.
- Respondents who participated in work that was scheduled beyond 'traditional hours' found after school programs were not sufficiently flexible to be accessible to them.
- 50% of families feel that programs are sensitive to cultural differences.
- 62% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of child care that they received.



- 62% of respondents indicated that they would not want to place their children in another option whereas, 38% indicated they would if they had an option.
- 53% of survey respondents indicated that child care costs were not manageable for their family.
- Access to before and after school services are often impacted by the cost of service provided.
- 56% indicated that subsidies were not available to help them manage the cost of child care.

#### What Service Providers Reported:

- Service providers report their operating costs as a major barrier to reducing child care fees for families.
- Service providers reported that parents often seek out supports and services that are free or affordable, for instance, the Pre-School Early Learning Program (PELP) has high enrollment, despite its location.
- Service providers also reported that due to the local landscape, inconsistent use patterns make it difficult to implement programming in more flexible manner.
- Service providers report significant challenges in the recruitment and retention of qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators; this is seen to create challenges to maintain the viability and stability of centres, which impacts quality.
- Licensed home providers indicated that there are financial disincentives built into their system that militates against their ability to attract unlicensed providers to become part of their system.
- Service providers reported that ongoing inclusivity training is a requirement to support the diverse needs of the early year's population.
- Service providers reported that not all physical settings in schools are conducive to supporting children 6-12 year olds in programs that meet their needs.



# Section 3: Our Priorities

This section describes the strategic priorities, intended outcomes, and actions that are responsive to community needs and align with the Province’s vision for early years and child care. It includes a measurable and action-oriented implementation plan and describes how the strategic priorities and outcomes will be met.

All proposed actions outlined in this section are subject to change based on ongoing funding allocations and local needs. The actions are intended to move Lambton County toward our vision of improving the current and future well-being of children and families within the community.



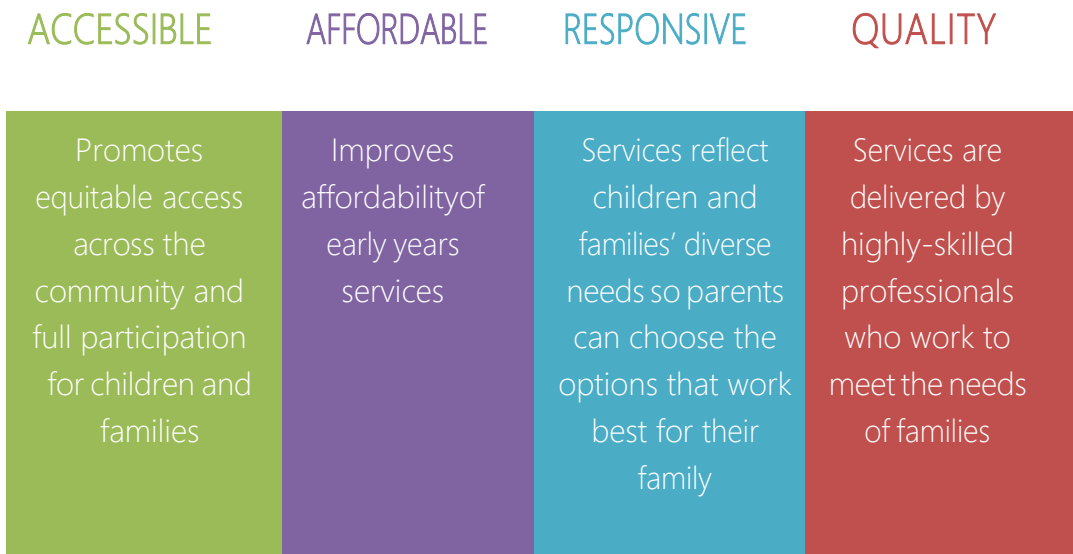
Four key priorities have been identified based on the research and an extensive community engagement process to guide Lambton County's Child Care and Early Years programs from 2020-2024. These priorities will guide the work over the next five years and are the foundation of our implementation plan. In addition, objectives and indicators have been developed to assist in assessing and demonstrating the impact of the outcomes:

- Build capacity to continue the inclusion of all children in high quality, early learning and child care experiences.
- Improve the delivery of before and after school care.
- Increase access to licensed child care for families working non-traditional hours
- Improve the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators

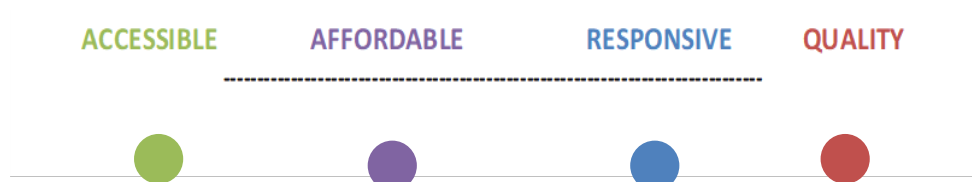
This plan also establishes services for children based on four pillars: accessibility, affordability, responsiveness and quality. These pillars reflect the Province's mandate to the County of Lambton and set the foundation for our priorities and actions. Each priority is aligned with multiple pillars. As we make progress on our priorities over the next four years, we will build a more accessible, affordable, responsive and high-quality child care and early years system.

**PROVINCIAL  
PILLARS**

What they mean for Lambton County



Alignment with Provincial Indicators



# 1

Build capacity to continue the inclusion of all children in high quality, early learning and child care experiences.

OUTCOME	INDICATORS
Children with special and diverse needs are included in high quality, early learning and child care experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of children with special needs in programs.</li><li>• Number of children from diverse backgrounds (Indigenous, Francophone, and newcomers) in child care and early years programs.</li><li>• Number of training opportunities for staff.</li><li>• Number of staff who attended training opportunities.</li></ul>

## How will we get there?

- Provide training to child care and early years' stakeholders that focuses on holistic and strength based views of children, families and community professionals.
- Expand on opportunities to increase knowledge, understanding and approaches to support the many diverse elements of Lambton County.
- Monitor the efficiency of current approaches and modify accordingly to meet the changing needs of our community.

### Alignment with Provincial Indicators





# 2

## Improve the Delivery of Before and After School Care

OUTCOME	INDICATORS
Before and after school programs offer more programs that are designed to meet the needs of a range of children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of staff who are experienced in working with older children.</li><li>• Number of additional resources added to after school programs to support children with special needs or needs related to diversity.</li><li>• Number of families who are able to access extended hour arrangements.</li></ul>

### How will we get there?

- Convene a working group to review current challenges with Before and After School Care and address options to alter system to better serve children; specifically for the following identified challenges:
  - Educators who are not trained to work with older children;
  - Physical space that is not conducive to accommodating children of different ages;
  - Lack of resources to support children with special need;
  - The potential role of staff trained in recreation rather than early childhood education; and
  - Increase access to licensed child care for families working non-traditional hours.

### Alignment with Provincial Indicators



# 3

## Increase access to licensed child care for families working non-traditional hours.

OUTCOME	INDICATORS
Families have more access to licensed child care services during 'non-traditional' hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of new extended hour opportunities created.</li><li>• Number of families who are able to access extended hour arrangements.</li></ul>

### How we will get there?

- Evaluate the current delivery model of licensed home child care.
- Promote the value of licensed child care and its impact on the well-being and positive development of children.
- Identify applicable supports for unlicensed providers that may lead to the possibility of increased capacity.
- Review the potential of a base funding model which provides core funding that covers all fixed administrative costs as demonstrated initially by a budget submission and as confirmed through the submission of audited financial statements.

### Alignment with Provincial Indicators



# 4

Improve the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators.

OUTCOME	INDICATORS
Early Childhood Educators are being retained and recruited more successfully.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention rate has increased.</li> <li>Turnover rate has been reduced.</li> <li>Number of staff vacancies have been reduced.</li> </ul>

## How will we get there?

- Lead a public education campaign about the importance of Early Childhood Education and the value of careers within early years programming.
- Collect and analyze data related to staff retention including the reasons for departure and destination point for departed professionals.
- Work with Lambton College to ensure that graduates understand the nature of different employment options.
- Work with Lambton County's district school boards to identify the demographics of students being encouraged to apply for the Early Childhood Education Program.
- Identify the retention rate for Early Childhood Educators.
- Ensure that opportunities exist for Child Care and Early Years staff to apply for the ECE Education Grant and Leadership Grant.
- Analyze recruitment process to ensure the strategies and processes being used are effective.
- Work with the Workforce Development Board to identify opportunities for collaboration with employers.
- Work with Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership to include early childhood educators as part of their 'skilled shortages' strategy.
- Develop a referral program with a retention bonus.
- Encourage child care providers to work together on recruitment initiatives.
- Consider incentive packages for staff to train, relocate and work in the early childhood education sector.

Alignment with Provincial Indicators





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## Accountability Methods

Reporting on progress is imperative to our success because it evaluates how we are achieving the goals and objectives outlined in this plan. We will continue to evaluate progress under each priority and monitor performance measures throughout the five years of this plan. We will make sure that methods are in place to measure our success and work with key partners as needed to report on our actions. At the mid-point and at the end of the plan, we commit to reporting on the progress we have made and the results achieved.

In accordance with the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, the 2020 to 2024 Child Care and Early Years' Service System Plan is approved by the County of Lambton Council and is made publically available on Lambton County's website:

<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/index.aspx>

## Conclusion

Our child care and early years system must continue to evolve in a way that reflects residents' needs so we can support children's learning and development and families' overall well-being.

Investing in the early years is important. By helping parents participate in the work force and promoting children's learning and development, we are supporting a strong economy and healthy, vibrant communities.

This is Lambton County's Child Care and Early Years Plan. It will continue to be an important guide in shaping service delivery and bringing the community together to work as a system. This plan is flexible and will allow us to continue to adapt to children's and families' changing needs, as well as shifts in provincial priorities. We will continue to keep children and families at the centre of our planning.

This plan will enable us to continue strengthening our role as Service System Manager. Lambton County is well-positioned to manage the child care and early years system and we will use our position and expertise as a Regional government to build partnerships with other levels of government and sector leads, such as school boards and children's mental health organizations. Working together as a system, we will build services that are accessible, affordable, responsive and high-quality to benefit all children and families across Lambton County.



## Appendix One: Lambton County Census Data

From 2011 to 2016, the County's population increased from 126,199 to 126,628 an increase of 0.3%. In comparison, the population of Ontario increased by 4.6% over the same period. As identified in Table 3, the greatest population growth occurred in Petrolia where a declining population was observed in several smaller rural municipalities.

Table 3: Population and Population Growth and Decline 2016

	Population	Population Growth/Decline
Ontario	13,448,494	4.6%
Petrolia	5,742	3.9%
Plympton-Wyoming	7,795	2.9%
Lambton County	126,638	0.3%
Point Edward	2,037	0.1%
Lambton Shores	10,631	-0.2%
Warwick	3,693	-0.7%
Sarnia	71,594	-1.1%
St. Clair	14,086	-3.0%
Dawn-Euphemia	1,967	-4.0%
Enniskillen	2,796	-4.6%
Brooke-Alvinston	2,411	-5.4%
Oil Springs	648	-8.0%

### Decline in Birth Rates

The 2016 Census data demonstrates the number of births per woman has decreased from an average of 0.198 in 2011 to 0.18 in 2016. Based on the birth rate assumptions, the birth rate is expected to decline as outlined below.

Table 4: Birth Rate Assumption

Year	Birth Rate Assumption
2017-2022	-4.9%
2022-2027	-5.2%
2027-2032	-5.4%

Source: LKDSB Pupil Accommodation Report 2018/2019 October 9, 2018

### Population Projections by Age Distribution

Based on population projections, Lambton County's total population is expected to remain relatively stable over the next 20 years, with a projected decrease of 1% by 2036. While the total population of Lambton is expected to remain stable, the age distribution is expected to change as a result of aging baby boomers.

Table 5: Population projections by Age Distribution

Age Cohorts	2016	2026	2036
75+	9%	13%	19%
65 - 74	12%	15%	13%
45 – 64	29%	24%	22%
20 – 44	28%	27%	26%
0 - 19	21%	20%	20%

### *The Indigenous Population*

In 2016, there were 6,890 individuals of Indigenous heritage living in Lambton County. This is a comprised total of 5.5% of Lambton’s total population, which is higher than the provincial proportion of 2.8%. Within the boundary of Lambton County, there are three First Nations communities: Kettle and Stony Point, Bkejwanong Walpole Island First Nation and Aamjiwnaang.

It is of note that within Lambton County the Indigenous population has a younger demographic than those of the non-Indigenous population, with a particularly high proportion of children 0-14 years of age. The average age of the Indigenous population in Lambton is 33.9 years compared with 43.9 years for the non-Indigenous population.

Table 6: The Indigenous Population in Lambton County

<b>Total</b>	<b>6,890</b>
<b>Metis</b>	<b>1,290 (18%)</b>
<b>Inuit</b>	<b>35 (&lt;1%)</b>
<b>First Nation</b>	<b>5, 385 (78%)</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

### *The French-Speaking Population in Sarnia-Lambton*

According to the 2016 Census, there are 2,200 people who identify French as their official language of choice. This is 1.8 % of the total population.

### *Family Composition*

Of the family compositions within Lambton County, 63% of households are two parent households, 12% are blended households and 23% constitute a lone parent arrangement. It is of note that 83% of lone parent families are female-led.

### *Immigration*

In 2016, there were 12,390 immigrants living in Lambton County, representing approximately 10% of the population. The percentage of immigrants living in Ontario at 29% is much higher comparatively.

### *Language*

With respect to languages spoken at home, 94% of Lambton County residents speak English, 6% know both English and French and 0.2% know neither English nor French. The top three non-official languages spoken at home are Italian, Spanish and Gujarati, a language native to the Indian province of Gujar.

### *Education*

Data shows that 84% of Lambton County residents have completed secondary school, a trade school or apprenticeship and/or completed a community college program. Only 16% of the population has obtained a university degree, which is 16% lower than the Ontario average of 32%.

### *Income*

- In 2015, the median total income of households in Lambton was \$70,022, a 3.6% increase from 2005;
- 33% of lone-parent families were low income;
- In 2015, 17% of Lambton County children and youth (0-17 years old) lived in low income households.

The 2016 census identified that Lambton County has 13% of all families living in a low household; the City of Sarnia reported the highest proportion of individuals living in a low income household at 16%. Lambton County compares relatively to the Province of Ontario with 14.4% and on a national scale, 14.2% of families lived in a low income household within Canada.



### Employment

The employment rate in Lambton County was 54% in 2016, which is lower than the provincial rate of 60%. The top occupations for Lambton residents 15 years and older includes sales and services, trades and business.

Table 7: Occupations and Percentage of Labour Force

Occupations	% of Labour Force
Sales & Service	24
Trades	19
Business	12
Management	10
Education, Law, Social, Government	10
Health	8
Natural & Applied Sciences	7
Manufacturing & Utilities	6
Natural Resources & Agriculture	3
Arts, Culture & Recreation	2

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

Table 8: The Top Ten Occupations with Shiftwork in Lambton County

National Occupational Classification, 2016	Employed
Retail Sales	2025
Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations	1560
Managers in agriculture	1295
Retail and wholesale trade managers	1270
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	1170
Cashiers	1165
Transport truck drivers	1165
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	1140
Janitors, caretakers, and building superintendents	890
Central control and process operators, petroleum, gas and chemical processing	865

Source: Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board, 2019