

February 19, 2016

Transformation of Children and Family Services

Today, AMO's President Gary McNamara joined Premier Wynne, Deputy Premier Deb Mathews, and the Minister of Education Liz Sandals as the Province announced a new approach to transform child and family programs through the creation of Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres. These hubs are currently known as Best Start Child and Family Centres. The centres are intended to offer parents and children a range of early years programs, as well as local community services.

As part of the transformation, the Province is combining four child and family programs into one set of integrated services. These programs are:

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

Some municipal governments and District Social Services Administration Boards have responsibility to deliver some of these programs. Further, all municipal service system managers play a leading role in local early years service planning which includes these programs.

Today's announcement is noteworthy for the municipal sector as it stated that municipal governments and District Social Services Administration Boards, that are already managing child care, will be transferred management responsibility for the delivery of programs and core services of Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres by 2018. The provincial government has committed that it will maintain its current investment in child and family programs and will develop a new transparent and responsive funding approach that will redistribute funding by 2018. AMO expects that the ongoing program costs will be 100% funded by the Province and not constitute a new cost-shared program.

Going forward, the Ministry of Education will work collaboratively with municipal governments, District Social Service Administration Boards, and the early years sector to facilitate this transformation in a way that works best for the children and families of communities across the diversity of Ontario. Enabling flexibility to meet local community needs will be the key to achieving best results and outcomes for residents. AMO will be involved in representing the municipal interest to make sure that appropriate governance and funding arrangements are put into place.

Further details are found in the Ontario government News Release "[Improving Access to Services for Young Children and Their Families](#)", and the document "[Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres: A Public Plan](#)."

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