

**Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Section: H. Ontario Works	Effective Date: September 1, 2016
Topic: 10. Local Programs	Replaces: March 1, 2016
Subject: 10.2 Our Kids Count	
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POLICY

The Our Kids Count program is a Social Assistance Reinvestment program that assists all low-income families by:

- Supporting parents on social assistance as they move into employment with improved access to essential benefits and services for their children;
- Providing much needed support to parents who are employed in low-income jobs to stay employed.

The underlying premise is that in the long term, child poverty will be reduced if parents on social assistance enter the workforce and remain in it.

The strategy of the Social Assistance Reinvestment is to reduce child poverty by providing income supplements and other assistance outside of social assistance so that families can keep those supports as they move into jobs.

The program is comprised of three separate components:

Recreational Bursaries

- Recreational bursaries for children ages 0 to 12. Exceptions maybe made for bursaries over this amount and for bursaries for children aged 12 – 17.

Early Childhood services & Supplementary Health Benefits

- Early Childhood services and supplementary health benefits for children ages 0 to 12. Exceptions maybe made for assistance over this amount and for assistance for children aged 12 – 17.

Informal Child Care Subsidies

- To support parents as they move from social assistance to employment in areas where licensed childcare is not available, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has created informal childcare subsidies. The maximum available for informal subsidies will be established based on local market conditions at the discretion of the Director of Integrated Social Services.

Eligibility for these benefits will be based on the most recent Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) for the appropriate family size based on Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut Offs After Tax Table.

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Families in receipt of OW and/or ODSP will automatically qualify under the assumption that there is no additional income. Should the Household have additional income, then the LICO chart will be used to determine the net family income.

PROCEDURE

Recreational Bursaries

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB will cover a portion of the registration fee for children in low-income families residing within the DSB's catchment area to participate in recreational or summer/after school programs – organized sports like soccer, baseball, skating, etc.

Other programs such as music lessons, swimming lessons, camp fees, school trips, and equipment for sports (i.e. skates, etc.) scouts'/girl guides uniforms / trips can also be covered.

Age Group: Available for children aged 0 – 12.
Exceptions will be made for children aged 12 – 17. Case Managers may want to consider programs for this age group which may lead to future employment for the teenager like babysitting courses, swimming levels, teaching certificate programs etc. that are not currently covered through OW.

A **maximum of \$400** per child/year is available for children ages 0 to 12. Exceptions will be made for bursaries over this amount and for bursaries for children aged 12 – 17.

Process

1. To determine eligibility:
 - If the applicant is an **Ontario Works or ODSP** recipient, the child qualifies for the DSB's Recreation Bursary program.
 - If the applicant is **moving from Ontario Works** to employment, the child qualifies for the DSB's Recreation Bursary program.
 - If the applicant is "**low-income**" please obtain a copy of the client's most recent net taxable family income. Confirm their net taxable family income as being below the most recent Low Income Cut-Offs

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(LICO) from Statistics Canada, and that their financial situation has not changed since the assessment. Where the applicant has experienced a significant income change as compared to their most recent net taxable family income, their current income will be taken into account to assess eligibility. For first time applicants where the previous year's income tax has not been filed, we will use current income to determine eligibility.

Statistics Canada	
After Tax Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO), 2017	
Family Size	Income
1 person	\$ 15,719
2 persons	\$ 19,133
3 persons	\$ 23,823
4 persons	\$ 29,722
5 persons	\$ 33,845
6 persons	\$ 37,535
7+ persons	\$ 41,225

Reference:

www.statcan.gc.ca – Search for 'Low income cut-offs'

2. Applicants may complete the Our Kids Count self-application or meet with a Case Manager to complete the Our Kids Count application.
3. Verify the cost of the program. If applicant has prepaid ensure a copy of the receipt is attached, the receipt must be dated within 30 days of the client's application. Verification can include a copy of the registration papers, newspaper clipping, etc.
4. Bursary cheques will be made payable to the recreation or sport organization where feasible, unless the client has prepaid and can produce a valid receipt
5. Please scan request into Client's electronic file in the 'OW Supervisor/Benefit Requests' folder.
6. Once approved the Supervisor will move the approved document into the appropriate 'Approved Benefit' caseload in the client's electronic file.

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7. If application is **NOT approved**, Supervisor will move the denied request into the appropriate 'For Review' folder in the electronic filing system and a note will be input in the social assistance computer system where appropriate.
8. If approved appropriate IPA/CM will issue payment via the social assistance computer system for OW and ODSP clients. Payment for non-OW clients will be issued via manual cheque by Espanola IPA.
9. Once payment is issued, IPA/CM will move the document to the AA folder in the electronic filing system. The AA will update the Our Kids Count log and files into the OKC folder in the electronic file system according to year and type of benefit.

Early Childhood services & Supplementary Health Benefits

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB will assist families with the cost of items related to a child's health and safety.

It could include: child safety crib, layettes, strollers, car seats, emergency formula and diapers, etc.

Age Group: This benefit is directed towards younger children ages 0–6; however, exceptions can be made for extenuating circumstances.

- A **maximum of \$300 per child/year** is available for children ages 0 to 12. Exceptions will be made for bursaries over this amount and for bursaries for children aged 12 – 17.

Process

1. To determine eligibility:
 - a. If the applicant is an **Ontario Works or ODSP** recipient, the child qualifies for this program.
 - b. If the applicant is **moving from Ontario Works** to employment, the child qualifies for this program.
2. Applicants may complete the Our Kids Count self-application or meet with a Case Manager to complete the Our Kids Count application.

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3. Verify the cost of the item. If applicant has prepaid ensure a copy of the receipt is attached, the receipt must be dated within 30 days of the client's application.
4. Bursary cheques will be made payable to the supply company where feasible, unless the client has prepaid and can produce a valid receipt
5. Please scan request into the electronic filing system in the 'OW Supervisor/Benefit Requests' folder.
6. Once approved the Supervisor will move the approved document into the appropriate 'Approved Benefit' caseload in electronic filing system.
7. If application is **NOT approved**, Supervisor will move the denied request into the appropriate 'For Review' folder in the electronic filing system and a note will be input into the social assistance computer system where appropriate.
8. IF approved appropriate IPA/CM will issue payment via the social assistance computer system for OW and ODSP clients. Payment for non-OW clients will be issued via manual cheque by Espanola IPA.
9. Once payment is issued, IPA/CM will move the document to the AA folder in the electronic filing system. The AA will update the Our Kids Count log and files into the OKC folder in the electronic filing system according to year and type of benefit.

Informal Child Care Subsidies

To support parents as they move from social assistance to employment in areas where licensed childcare is not available, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has created informal childcare subsidies.

The applicants must qualify for subsidy as per the DSB's fee subsidy eligibility assessment; and be living in areas that do not currently support licensed programs nor can they access licensed programs in adjacent communities. Areas such as: Sudbury East, Gogama, and Foleyet would qualify. Some remote areas within the DSB's other catchment areas may also qualify, please discuss these gaps in licensed service with the Children's Program Supervisor.

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The following chart provides the **maximum** dollars available for informal childcare:

		Number of children		
		1	2	3 or more
Hourly Maximum (up to 2 hours)		\$5.00	\$7.00	\$9.00
Half Day Maximum (2-6 hours)	0 - 5 years	\$15.00	\$21.00	\$27.00
	6 - 12 years	\$15.00		
Full Day Maximum (6 hours or more)	0 - 5 years	\$30.00	\$42.00	\$54.00
	6 - 12 years	\$30.00		

Monthly Maximum \$600.00

Clients are required to pay for the informal care they require to support employment and submit a receipt for reimbursement through the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB.

This program is intended to provide childcare subsidies to parents until licensed care can be established in the community, hence Our Kids Count informal childcare subsidies are available for a **three to six-month period** or until licensed care is established whichever is sooner.

Process

- To determine eligibility:
 - The applicant must be living in a location within the DSB's jurisdiction where licensed childcare is not available; **AND**
 - The applicant must qualify for Fee Subsidy as per the DSB's eligibility assessment; **AND**
 - The applicant **cannot** be a recipient of Ontario Works or ODSP, if so, please refer to the DSB's regular OW childcare programs;

The applicant must be moving from Ontario Works to employment, or had moved from Ontario Works within the last year; **AND**

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- The applicant has exhausted the OW informal care grace period;
AND
 - The individual providing informal child care is **NOT**
 - Any person who has a legal obligation to support the child(ren).
 - Any beneficiary of the participant (i.e. dependent child or dependent adult of the participant) **OR**
 - Any individual whose resides with the participant.
2. Case Managers are required to complete the Our Kids Count application form as well as a **FULL fee subsidy application** indicating the applicant's eligible hours of care. Client is required to submit verification of cost.
 3. Please scan request into the electronic filing system in the 'OW Supervisor/Benefit Requests' folder.
 4. Once approved, Supervisor will move the approved document into the appropriate 'Approved Benefit' caseload in the electronic filing system.
 5. If application is **NOT approved**, Supervisor will move the denied request into the appropriate 'For Review' folder in the electronic filing system and a note will be input in the social assistance computer system where appropriate.
 6. IF approved appropriate IPA/CM will issue payment via the social assistance computer system for OW and ODSP clients. Payment for non-OW clients will be issued via manual cheque by Espanola IPA
 7. Once payment is issued, IPA/CM will move the document to the AA folder in the electronic filing system. The AA will update the Our Kids Count log and files into the OKC folder in the electronic filing system according to year and type of benefit.

Request for Internal Review

If an applicant or recipient disagrees with a decision, he/she must request an internal review within 30 calendar days from the day the decision is received or deemed to be received. The request must be made in writing.

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Written requests for internal reviews may be submitted by letter/note signed by the applicant or recipient.

The letter/note should include:

- a statement indicating that the applicant or recipient wishes to have the decision reviewed;
- the reason he/she disagrees with the decision; and
- the name, case identification and signature of the applicant or recipient requesting the review.

The Eligibility Review Officer/Family Support Worker will review the letter and decide based on our local policy whether or not the applicant or recipient's request is approved or denied.