

## **Early Years Community Plan (EYCP) Update: March 2022**

As a follow up to our community meeting in December 2021, we are pleased to provide the following status report on the committees and activities relating to our Early Years Community Plan.

### **CMSM Advisory**

This committee has broad representation and is scheduled to meet monthly. The purpose of the CMSM Early Years Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice to the City of Hamilton regarding the implementation of Hamilton's Early Years Community Plan (EYCP) specifically as it relates to those areas where the City has service system management responsibilities. We want to thank the committee for their input into the development of our Early Years workforce strategy

### **Early Years HR Workforce**

The province has provided one-time funding to support community initiatives that sustain, enhance, grow and attract a diverse and high-quality workforce. We are working on establishing an operational committee to support this work and will be inviting community representation in the coming weeks.

Planning is underway to support a system wide professional development day for April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. A second professional development day will be planned for the fall with a focus on equity, diversity and inclusion.

To sustain the existing system, we are exploring opportunities for the provision of a workforce grant to support costs of child care for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) working in child care and early years system. We are also exploring how to support new Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) graduating from Mohawk College with an onboarding grant during last placement that will lead to employment in the child care and early years system. Additional information will be shared in the coming months.

### **Equity and Engagement Advisory**

The purpose of the Equity and Engagement Advisory Group (EEAG) is to ensure that the EYCP is responsive to and inclusive of the needs and interests of a diverse early year's community by providing ongoing feedback/input, helping to flag issues, and identify opportunities related to equity and engagement. In December 2021 and January 2022, consultants, Heather Graham, Donna Forde and Lisa Villeneuve, began working with the Equity and Engagement Advisory Group (EEAG) to collaboratively design a

system-wide plan and pathways to strengthen equity and belonging for all families in Hamilton's Early Years System.

To support our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) learning journey, the City in partnership with Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) invested and distributed over **47,000** books that promote stories of equity, diversity and inclusion to our early years programs and families. ASCY is facilitating several professional learning opportunities to explore the EDI book collection in the coming months. They are also excited to explore the collection of new EDI books with the community as we collectively discuss the connection to *How Does Learning Happen?*, and strategies on how to introduce the books and consider the learning for educators, children, and families.

### **EarlyON Child and Family Centres**

Beginning the week of February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022 our EarlyON Child and Family Centres (EOFC's) began a gradual and phased reopening of indoor and outdoor programming along with a continuation of virtual programming. We look forward to welcoming families back into our centres.

Our EarlyON Operations committee is actively meeting and will continue to provide feedback and support to ensure a smooth transition to resuming all programming within the EarlyON system.

A full list of locations, dates of reopening and hours of operation is located on our website [www.hamilton.ca/earlyoncentres](http://www.hamilton.ca/earlyoncentres)

### **Infant and Early Years Mental Health**

The committee is finalizing an Infant and early years mental health care pathway for children 0 to 3.8 years. This pathway will act as a guide to support families, health care and early years service providers with connecting and streamlining referrals for children to the most appropriate mental health supports. A website is also near completion where additional tools and resources will be available for community use. This website will be housed by ASCY, further information will be shared in the coming weeks.

Stay tuned for details on the annual Infant and Early Years Mental Health Forum taking place this spring.

### **Special Needs Resourcing**

The operational committee is reconvening at the end of March. This committee is inviting two professional members from the Licensed Child Care and Early Learning Programs to join the committee through an expression of interest. To access resources and services, please visit web page : <https://www.hamilton.ca/operating-business/child-care-operators/early-years-system>

### **Hamilton's Early Years Quality program**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 2022, sixteen child care and early years programs shared their 2021 quality journey with approximately 125 community partners. Presenters shared their quality journey focusing on the following themes;

- Outdoor Classrooms/Experiences
- Family Engagement
- Children's Resiliency and;
- Educator/Staff Well-Being.

Planning is underway for the 2022 quality journey. System priority templates are due in April and quality visits will begin in May.

### **Research Evaluation Network**

The purpose of the Research Evaluation Network is to broaden the network and bring together researchers and practitioners to build capacity in research, evaluation and knowledge sharing activities/issues.

Plans are underway to reactivate the network in 2022. Stay tuned for details.

We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with our early years partners to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all children and families that we serve. While we know that there will be considerable work to do in the coming year to support the early years system with recovering from the pandemic and preparing and implementing a National Child Care Plan we are confident that we can accomplish our goals as an early years system by working together towards our common vision of making Hamilton "The best place to raise a child and age successfully"