



Ontario's Early Childhood Development and Early Learning and Child Care Investments

2003/04 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Best Start: A New Vision for Young Children.....	1
Early Childhood Development Initiative.....	2
Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care.....	2

Ontario's Early Childhood Development Programs

Promoting Healthy Pregnancy, Birth and Infancy.....	3
Improving Parenting and Family Supports.....	5
Strengthening Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care.....	7
Strengthening Community Supports.....	10
Ontario's 2003/04 ECD Breakdown of Expenditures by Action Area.....	11

Ontario's Early Learning and Child Care Programs

Background on Ontario's Early Learning and Child Care System	12
2003/04 Investments.....	12
Outcomes.....	12

Child Care System Indicators

Quality Indicators.....	14
Staff/Child Ratios and Group Sizes.....	14
Staff Qualifications.....	15
Availability Indicators.....	16
Affordability Indicators.....	16

INTRODUCTION

"How we care for children is not only a reflection of our shared values, it is critical to the future social and economic success of our province. If a child benefits from good parenting and quality child care, then we all benefit in the future."

Premier Dalton McGuinty, October 2003

Best Start: A New Vision for Young Children

In 2004, Ontario announced Best Start, a comprehensive new strategy to increase the quality and stability of the current system for young children, and minimize organizational, professional, technical, and jurisdictional barriers.

Best Start will reshape and integrate our existing system of services, programs and resources for our children to help them learn, grow, and enjoy success in school and ultimately in the workforce and society. It will support the crucial relationships that have already been forged between and among children and their families, caregivers and the community, while also helping children to receive specialized services and supports as needed by:

- Bringing together early learning and child care
- Providing parenting supports for all families who want them
- Improving access to early learning and child care, recreation and other community programs through local integration
- Helping identify and support children at risk of development problems.

Early Childhood Development Initiative

In September 2000, Canada's first ministers reached agreement on an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Initiative that demonstrates the long term commitment of the federal, provincial and territorial governments to help all young children reach their potential and to help families and communities to support them.

Under the ECD Initiative, the federal government committed to transfer incremental and predictable funding to the provinces, so they can improve and expand Canada's early childhood development programs and services for young children and their families. Ontario received \$193.4 million in 2003/2004 to support this initiative. Provinces are committed to allocate this funding for children from the prenatal period up to six years of age.

Since 2001, Ontario has invested its share of federal ECD funding in a number of initiatives across the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

These ECD programs complement or expand upon existing programs and services, and include universal programs available to all children as well as programs and services that support the healthy development of children with special needs.

Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care

In March 2003, federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for social services agreed to the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care. They agreed to invest this funding in regulated early learning and child care programs for children under age six.

Under the 2003 framework, the federal government committed \$1.05 billion to provinces and territories over five years¹, beginning in 2003/04. Ontario's share of this funding is \$9.7 million in the fiscal year of this report - 2003/04 - and will grow to \$58.2 million in 2004/05, and approximately \$137.3 million by 2007/08.

This report accounts for the expenditure of the \$9.7 million in federal funding allocated to Ontario for early learning and child care for the 2003/04 fiscal year, and also provides an update on quality, availability and affordability indicators.

Ontario's commitment to early childhood development and early learning and child care far exceeds these federally-funded programs and services. The government invests in excess of \$2 billion more on children's services, such as the \$532 million it spent in 2003/04 on child care services.

1 The federal government has committed to flow an additional \$45 million for aboriginal early learning and child care programs over four years, beginning in 2004/05. The funding will be invested directly by the federal government into programs on reserves, and will not be flowed as a transfer payment to the provinces/territories.

ONTARIO'S EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) framework directs governments to focus their efforts on the following four key areas for action:

- *Promoting Healthy Pregnancy, Birth and Infancy* - initiatives to help families and children get the best start in life
- *Improving Parenting Supports* - initiatives that provide families with support and information to become the best parents possible
- *Strengthening Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care* - initiatives that help children develop the competencies and coping skills they will need to reach their full potential
- *Strengthening Community Supports* - initiatives that provide evidence and research to inform policy and program decisions about children and youth.

This year's annual report groups ECD programs related to the health and well-being of young children and their families into these four categories based on Ontario's Best Start strategy as well as the ECD framework. A breakdown of Ontario's 2003/04 ECD expenditures by action area can be found on page 11.

The Government of Ontario, along with all other provinces and territories, agreed to measure, monitor and report to Canadians every two years on how its young children are doing on 11 common key indicators of physical health and early development. This information is internationally recognized as key for assessing and evaluating our progress in improving the lives of our children. As Ontario provided this information in its 2002/03 report back to families, indicators will not be included in this report.



PROMOTING HEALTHY PREGNANCY, BIRTH AND INFANCY

Pregnant women who take care of their own health are more likely to have healthy pregnancies and give birth safely to healthy babies. These programs support parents, caregivers and infants in getting the help they require with the goal of increasing the number of healthy births in Ontario and lowering our infant mortality rate.

Aboriginal Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effects (Aboriginal FAS/FAE)

This program, delivered by 19 Aboriginal organizations and offered in coordination with the Aboriginal Child Nutrition program, draws upon the strength of traditional Aboriginal teachings about pregnancy, birth and parenting to support Aboriginal children and their families living on and off reserves. It provides health promotion, prevention education, family support services and advocacy, prenatal and postnatal support groups and information about FAS/FAE at schools, child care and social service agencies.

2003/04 activities:

- Provided screening assessment and monitoring, counselling, treatment and crisis intervention services
- Enhanced service coordination, linkages and networking
- Conducted outreach services via street patrols and home visits
- Continued to increase community awareness of supports and services in communities through a range of activities including displays at community events, fairs and shopping centres
- Continued to build connections to community support groups and educate the public about FAS/FAE.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children

This program, offered by Ontario's 37 Public Health Units, screens and assesses the health of pregnant women and families with children up to age six. A Healthy Babies Healthy Children nurse visits all consenting families at home, soon after the birth of their child. They provide the family with counselling and education to promote healthy child development. Families who need additional support can arrange for additional visits at home by a public health nurse and family home visitor.

2003/04 activities:

- Completed approximately 17,242 prenatal screens on pregnant women to identify risk factors
- Screened 122,503 families with children up to age six for risks to healthy child development
- Continued prenatal care and care for families with children from six weeks old to age six
- Allocated funding to the Ontario College of Family Physicians to continue collaboratively developing a Continuing Medical Education (CME) program. The CME used this funding to implement training sessions in healthy child development for family physicians, public health nurses and other professionals working with children in communities.

Infant Development

This family-centred program is for children up to age six who have or are at risk of developmental disabilities and their parents or caregivers. It provides assistance with motor development, communications skills and social interaction.

2003/04 activities:

- Served over 11,500 children through 49 programs across Ontario.



Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre

This centre supports health promotion initiatives that enhance the health of mothers, babies and young children. It trains, counsels, educates and brings together health care providers and community professionals from across the province, including staff and volunteers at Public Health Units, non-governmental organizations, Community Health Centres, Ontario Early Years Centres, hospitals, First Nations and medical professionals.

The Early Childhood Development funding allowed the Centre to expand its services in early child development. Program priorities under the ECD initiative include fetal alcohol syndrome, violence against women, poverty and reproductive health.

2003/04 activities:

- Provided customized, timely and responsive consultations and advice in French and English
- Organized and hosted a provincial conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder for 400 participants, plus an annual conference for 275 participants
- Hosted four regional forums on postpartum disorders
- Researched and developed a Preconception Health Campaign and an awareness campaign on alcohol use during pregnancy; for implementation in 2004/05
- Developed five new brochures on topics such as breastfeeding and feeding preschoolers, plus a guide to helping program managers support staff working with pregnant women who live in poverty
- Delivered seven workshops on a range of topics, including working with parents from diverse communities, supporting pregnant women who live in poverty, and reducing the impact of fetal alcohol exposure.

Prenatal and Postnatal Nurse Practitioner Services

This service is available to pregnant women without family physicians, women planning a pregnancy, and women whose children are age six and younger. Clients include women at risk of poor prenatal and postnatal care because they live in geographically isolated areas or places short of family physicians or obstetricians/gynaecologists. Nurse practitioners operated out of Public Health Units in Algoma District, Brant County, Elgin St. Thomas, Haldimand-Norfolk, Huron County, Perth District, Porcupine, Sudbury & District, and Windsor-Essex County to help these women find high quality, consistent care.

2003/04 activities:

- Nurse practitioners saw over 1,500 clients from across the province
- Participating Public Health Units conducted ongoing and comprehensive evaluations of nurse practitioner services.

Prenatal Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Testing

This program for pregnant women, women contemplating pregnancy and prenatal care providers increases awareness of the importance of HIV testing in pregnancy as a part of routine prenatal care, and also promotes early HIV intervention for mothers and infants. It supports public awareness campaigns, as well as program evaluation and research into strategies to reach pregnant women who do not currently receive HIV testing. Approximately 13 per cent of pregnant women in Ontario do not currently receive HIV testing.

2003/04 activities:

- Distributed promotional materials designed for health care providers and the public to increase awareness of and promote early diagnosis of HIV in pregnant women and infants
- Increased provincial prenatal HIV testing rates from approximately 82 per cent in 2002/03 to over 87 per cent.

IMPROVING PARENTING AND FAMILY SUPPORTS

These programs support parents and children so they can help build strong families and vibrant communities. Workshops and programs for parents and caregivers, for instance, improve our children's physical health and emotional well being, while strengthening their language, social and cognitive skills.

Children's Mental Health

Ontario's child and youth mental health program provides services and supports to children, youth and their families that are designed to alleviate a range of social, emotional, behavioural, and/or psychiatric problems. Mental health services and supports funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services are available to children and youth up to the age of 18. Specific services to enhance early identification, intervention and treatment for children from birth to age six are delivered through community-based transfer payment agencies.

2003/04 activities:

- Early childhood development funding supported Children's Mental Health services for over 5,600 children, compared to over 4,800 children in 2002/03.

Community Health Centres (CHC)

Community Health Centre (CHC) early child development programs are tailored for two groups:

- Prenatal, Postnatal and Infant Care programs are for pregnant women, children up to age three and their parents. These programs improved access to prenatal and postnatal care, early identification of at-risk children, referrals to other service providers, increased supports for breast feeding, and improved assessments for nutrition and child development milestones.

- Integrating Services and Building Community Capacity programs are for pregnant women, parents and children aged two to six, caregivers, service providers and relevant community members who participate in early years activities - especially at-risk and disadvantaged populations such as homeless women, new immigrants, low-income families and people living in rural, northern and inner-city areas. The programs identify early health risks, increase supports to parents, improve access to early child development resources, strengthen neighbourhood services and increase community capacity.

2003/04 activities for Prenatal, Postnatal and Infant Care Programs:

- 34 CHCs operated 239 programs in 107 different sites
- Served approximately 3,150 pregnant women, 6,400 children, 5,900 parents, 5,600 families, and 3,700 others.

2003/04 activities for Integrating Services and Building Community Capacity Programs:

- 24 CHCs operated 231 separate programs in 117 different sites
- Served approximately 3,900 children, 3,750 parents, 3,200 families, and 875 others.

Early Years Challenge Fund

This fund provided matching grants to businesses, volunteer, charitable and other groups for initiatives that meet local community needs. It supported programs and services that foster cognitive, physical and emotional development in children up to age six, and also educated parents and caregivers.

2003/04 activities:

- 419 contracts for projects that provide targeted nutrition for pregnant mothers and newborns, training workshops for fathers, and transportation service for early years services
- Individual project funding ranged from \$700 to \$1 million
- Since 2001, four calls for proposals have resulted in over 500 funded projects.

Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) (Ontario Works)

LEAP is part of the Ontario Works program, which provides those in temporary need with financial and job-hunting assistance. LEAP is tailored for young parents on social assistance who need to complete their education, improve their parenting skills and search for employment. It provides Ontario Works participants between 16 and 21 years of age who are seeking work with literacy screening and training, community participation to build skills and gain on-the-job experience, basic education and training, job skills training and employment placement services. Participation in LEAP is a requirement for 16 and 17 year-old parents and voluntary for 18 to 21 year-old parents whom have not completed high school.

2003/04 activities:

- Approximately 6,500 young parents participated
- Strengthened community partnerships to develop more integrated services at the local level for families and children. For example, LEAP participants and LEAP delivery agents were consulted in order to build stronger ties with Ontario Early Years Centres and Public Health Units and to develop other improvements and refinements
- Provided counselling, school clothing, and transportation costs to help young parents go to school and do homework
- Continued to develop and distribute marketing material to support the program and voluntary participation, as well as initiatives to help parents continue their education.

Ontario Child Welfare Program

This program funds Children's Aid Societies, which protect children at risk of abuse or neglect. Children's Aid Societies provide counselling and support to children who are in need of protection and their families, investigates allegations or evidence that a child may be in need of protection and provides residential services for children unable to remain in family homes. Approximately 20 per cent of children in the program are under age six.

STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT, LEARNING AND CARE

Recent research has shown loving care, positive attention, new experiences and healthy habits such as good nutrition and adequate sleep are crucially important in the first years of a child's life. These programs help children get a good start at healthy development by encouraging stimulation through play and interaction and by preparing children for school.

Aboriginal Child Nutrition

This program, offered through the 19 organizations that also deliver the Aboriginal Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects initiative (page 3) is for Aboriginal children and families in Ontario living on and off reserve. It provides interactive nutrition, healthy lifestyle education, and counselling on food and menu preparation. It also provides healthy breakfasts and lunches for children through schools and child care programs, as well as workshops and support groups to promote positive parenting practices.

2003/04 activities:

- Continued to support parents and families and increase awareness of the important role good nutrition plays on healthy child development
- Conducted family nutrition risk assessments through screening, assessment and monitoring services
- Provided prenatal and well-baby nutrition education, cooking classes and workshops
- Provided preschool screening and follow-up assessment on children's health and nutrition
- Offered service provider and lay training workshops in cooking, menu development, food handling and cultural awareness.

Early Literacy Initiative

This program strengthens, supports and promotes effective literacy and language development in children under age six and their families. It engages Early Literacy Specialists to provide early literacy training to early years professionals, and provides early literacy kits through community-based early years programs such as the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, Ontario Early Years Centres, child care centres, libraries and parent-child drop-in programs.

2003/04 activities:

- Provided early literacy services to nearly 48,000 community participants and almost 17,000 workshops/seminars to early years professionals
- Distributed newborn literacy kits through the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, Ontario Early Years Centres and Early Literacy Specialists that encourage parents to read to their children.
- Continued distributing the Ontario Early Years Book Collection to each Ontario Early Years Centre and to communities across Ontario. The Collection's 56 titles represent Ontario's diverse population and include multi-language books, books for children under age six and resource books for parents and staff.

Universal Newborn Hearing Screening, Infant Hearing Program and Public Awareness and Education Strategy (Speech and Hearing)

The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening program screens the hearing of all Ontario newborns before they leave the hospital. The Infant Hearing Program provides follow-up and communication development support for newborns identified as deaf or hard of hearing, or who are at risk of early childhood hearing loss. The Public Awareness and Education Strategy encourages new parents to participate in these programs and develops resources for parents, health and social service professionals, and the public about early childhood hearing and hearing loss.

In 2003/04, activities included:

- 60,000 newborn screening procedures in Ontario hospitals
- Booklet and video resource development
- A Language Evaluation Study to determine outcomes of the program.

Promote Healthy Pregnancy and Prevent Injury and Family Abuse

A number of initiatives focus on providing services that promote health pregnancy and child and family safety. These include two comprehensive health promotion programs led by Public Health Units: Injury and Family Abuse Prevention and Promoting Healthy Pregnancy and Child Development. These two programs support local initiatives and develop and implement projects to address identified needs to promote healthy pregnancy, child growth and development, parenting capacity, and prevention of infant and childhood injuries and family abuse.

In addition, programs such as Prenatal and Postnatal Nurse Practitioner Services, Pregnant Women with Addictions, and Support for At-Risk Pregnant Women provide health services that target young children and women at risk of poor prenatal and postnatal care because they live in geographically isolated areas, places short of family physicians or obstetricians/gynaecologists, are highly transient or otherwise at-risk.

2003/04 activities:

- Served over 1,500 clients from across the province
- Educated the public and worked with other community and health care professionals to ensure that parents and children receive consistent information and care on healthy pregnancy, parenting, child development, child safety and prevention of family abuse
- Supported direct treatment for pregnant women and women with young children
- Implemented specialized substance abuse treatment services for pregnant women
- Served homeless and pregnant/parenting young women
- Evaluated program delivery to determine how best to deliver services.

Ontario Early Years Centres

Child development and early years professionals and volunteers at each centre welcome children up to age six, their parents, other family members including grandparents and siblings. Staff and children from childcare centres and home care also attend. Staff promote children's readiness to learn and healthy child development through formal and informal drop-in programs and services that enhance cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional child development. They offer programs in literacy, numeracy, health and nutrition as well as information about parenting programs and services.

2003/2004 activities:

- Opened 61 centres, bringing the total number of Early Years Centres to 103 - plus hundreds of satellite and mobile programs that serve smaller and isolated communities
- Welcomed nearly 1.5 million visits by children and more than 1 million visits by parents and caregivers
- Translated "Making A Difference," a series of brochures on healthy child development, into 22 languages, and made them available on the website at www.ontarioearlyyears.ca.



Services for Children with Autism- Preschool Intervention Program

This program provides children between the ages of two and five, who have autism or a disorder at the severe end of autism spectrum disorder, with Intensive Behavioural Intervention and associated services. A 2003/04 funding increase allowed the existing Preschool Intervention Program for Children with Autism (formerly known as Intensive Early Intervention Program for Children with Autism) to increase access to services for children with autism.

2003/04 activities:

- Delivered the Preschool Intervention Program for children with autism in nine regional centres across the province.

Sexual Assault Treatment for Children

The program treats children up to age 16, particularly children under age six, who have been sexually assaulted or abused. Before 2001/02, only six of the 31 hospital-based Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centres (SADVs) in Ontario provided services to children. By 2003/04, 17 more SADVs provided services to children.

2003/04 activities:

- Treated or helped approximately 500 children
- Trained or held information sessions for 1,700 physicians, nurses, police officers, and staff from Children's Aid Societies and other community agencies
- Developed protocols to better integrate services for victims with the police and Children's Aid Societies
- Provided a three-day training session developed for pediatric Sexual Assault/Abuse staff by the SADV Network to designated pediatric nurses and physicians from 26 SADV programs
- Designated Sudbury, Ottawa, Hamilton, and London SADVs as regional pediatric leads, and Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children as provincial coordinator
- Along with emergency departments, police, Children's Aid Societies and community agencies, began planning for seven sites that will provide fully operational children's services by 2004/05.

Services for Children with Special Needs

This program helps families and children whose communities cannot meet the complex needs associated with one or more of the following: chronic and severe illness, degenerative and/or terminal illnesses, intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and/or acquired brain injury. The children with these disorders are considered "most in need" because they pose risks to themselves and/or to others.

2003/04 activities:

- Provided respite support for primary caregivers and families; residential care; and in-home support to help with activities of daily living, including bathing and toileting; and 24-hour supervision and care, for requirements such as tube feeding and bed turning.



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Communities need co-ordinated services for families, and families need easy access to available services. The goal of these programs is to provide a seamless and integrated system of services for children and families in Ontario. By building bridges between and among sectors, these programs ensure that the health, education, and care of our children are our first priority.

Child Outcome Measurement

Outcomes are measurements of a child's readiness to learn as he or she prepares to enter grade school. This program provides statistical information about the outcomes of children up to age six to agency executive directors and program personnel, provincial and municipal health and social service policy planners.

2003/04 activities:

- Funded the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University for the ongoing development and analysis of the Early Development Instrument
- Supported boards of education in using the Early Development Instrument with approximately 30,000 children. The Early Development Instrument provides results about a child's readiness to learn in five general domains (physical health and well-being; social knowledge and competence; emotional health/maturity; language and cognitive development; general knowledge and communication skills) that boards can use for local and provincial planning for children under age six and their families.

Program Effectiveness Measurement/Early Child Development Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

This program helps agency executive directors and program personnel, provincial and municipal health and social service policy planners plan for the future. It collects and analyzes data that allows them to track progress in improved programs for young children. Its Data Analysis Co-ordinators support the implementation of child outcome measures such as the Early Development Instrument, the Early Years Community Services Inventory, and community efforts in reporting on child outcomes.

2003/04 activities:

- Funded Data Analysis Co-ordinators across Ontario
- Funded the Early Years Monitoring/Evaluation Strategy, which began to develop a joint evaluation framework for early childhood development initiatives
- Developed an overarching logic model, including individual program logic models, for 25 Early Childhood Development initiatives
- Began to inform program evaluation planning.



Ontario's 2003/04 ECD Breakdown of Expenditures by Action Area

In October 2003 the new Ministry of Children and Youth Services was created to place a greater priority on children, youth and families. The ministry's initial budget (2004/05) was \$2.8 billion. The federal ECD funding was directed to the following programs.

\$ Million

Promoting Healthy Pregnancy, Birth and Infancy

19.70

Includes:

- Aboriginal Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects
- Healthy Babies Healthy Children
- Infant Development
- Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre
- Prenatal HIV Testing

Improving Parenting and Family Supports

53.50

Includes:

- Children's Mental Health
- Community Health Centres
- Early Years Challenge Fund
- Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP)
- Ontario Child Welfare Program

Strengthening Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care

107.10

Includes:

- Aboriginal Child Nutrition
- Early Literacy Initiative
- Speech and Hearing
- Injury and Family Abuse Prevention
- Promote Health Pregnancy and Child Development
- Prenatal and Postnatal Nurse Practitioner Services
- Pregnant Women with Addictions
- Support for At-Risk Pregnant Women
- Ontario Early Years Centres
- Services for Children with Autism - PreSchool Intervention Program
- Sexual Assault Treatment for Children
- Services for Children with Special Needs

Strengthening Community Supports

4.20

Includes:

- Child Outcome Measurement
- Program Effectiveness Measurement
- Early Childhood Development Monitoring/Evaluation Strategy

ONTARIO'S EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Background on Ontario's Early Learning and Child Care System

The Government of Ontario works in partnership with 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards to provide child care services. The province provides 80 per cent of the cost of prescribed child care services, while Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards provide the other 20 per cent. They are also service system managers at the local level.

Parents in Ontario can choose among three types of child care arrangements - licensed centre-based care; licensed home child care; or informal (unlicensed) child care.

Ontario supports the child care system through:

- Fee subsidies
- Wage subsidies
- Special needs resources
- Resource centres
- Tax credits for parents.

Ontario's Baseline Report on Early Learning and Child Care can be found on the Ministry of Children and Youth Services website at www.children.gov.on.ca. This report provides greater detail on Ontario's child care system.

2003/04 Investments

In accordance with the terms of the *Multilateral Framework*, the province directed the \$9.7 million in early learning and child care funding for 2003/04 towards initiatives that improved quality by addressing health and safety needs related to licensing standards, improving the physical environment of child care programs and enabling operators to purchase toys and equipment, thereby providing children with more enriching and stimulating child care experiences.

In a few instances, the funding also increased

accessibility by increasing the number of licensed child care spaces.

This one-time investment went directly to Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards to strengthen and maximize the capacity of Ontario's existing child care network, and help lay the foundation for future expansion of the regulated child care system. They in turn directed the funds to eligible licensed non-profit child care centres and licensed non-profit home child care agencies.

Child care operators were permitted to use the new funding:

- **To pay for costs associated with meeting and maintaining licensing requirements, such as health and safety standards.** They could, for instance, fix a leaky roof, replace old appliances or playground equipment, and repair major systems such as heating or ventilation.
- **To pay for costs associated with minor renovations, as well as purchasing furnishings, supplies or equipment that would enable operators to maintain or increase service capacity.** They could, for instance, apply for funds to convert an infant room in a child care centre to a room for older children, purchase additional cribs or strollers, or make their programs more accessible to children with special needs.

Outcomes

The \$9.7 million in early learning and child care funding made available in 2003/04 went to a total of 1,270 licensed, non-profit child care programs. Of these 1,205 were child care centres with a total licensed capacity of 70,900 spaces, and 65 were licensed home child care agencies, representing a total of 2,654 homes.

The new funding paid for repairing/replacing or buying new/additional:

- Playground equipment (indoor and outdoor)
- Appliances (dishwashers, stoves, refrigerators, dryers)
- Fixtures (sinks, toilets, laundry tubs)
- Shelving, counters, cabinets
- Flooring, carpets, playground surfaces
- Windows, doors, walls
- Roofs

- Fencing
- Heating/cooling systems
- Plumbing/septic systems
- Electrical systems
- Furniture (chairs, tables, cots, cribs)
- Health/safety equipment (fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, first aid kits)
- Equipment to support children with special needs
- Strollers
- Toys and supplies.

The licensing status of 59 child care centre operators improved as a result of the new funding. A number of operators with provisional licences due to health and safety issues had their licences upgraded to regular status, and operators with terms and conditions on their licences due to health and safety issues had those terms and conditions removed.

The new funding directly contributed to the expansion of child care programs in the following two instances, adding a total of 37 new spaces:

- Bruce County used the funds to pay for kitchen renovations, flooring, lumber, drywall, paint and labour to meet the licensing requirements for opening a new child care centre with 32 spaces
- A Huron County child care centre used the funding for plumbing, a counter and sink, kitchen cabinets and windows, which allowed it to increase its capacity by five extra spaces.

CHILD CARE SYSTEM INDICATORS

Quality Indicators

The Day Nurseries Act sets out the minimum requirements for licensed child care, including the ratio of adults to children, the number of children in groups, and the qualifications of staff.

Staff/Child Ratios and Group Sizes

In licensed home child care locations, the maximum number of children a provider may care for at one time is five children in addition to their own. The regulations also limit the number of children a provider may care for at any one time based on the children's ages and whether any of them have special needs:

- No more than five children under the age of six (including the provider's children)
- No more than:
 - Two children under two years of age
 - Three children under three years of age
 - Two children with special needs
 - One child with special needs and one child under two years of age
 - One child with special needs and two children who are over two years of age but under three years of age.

Centre-Based Child Care		
Age of Children in Group	Ratio of Employees to Children	Maximum Number of Children in Group
Under 18 months of age	3 to 10	10
18 months of age and over up to and including 30 months of age	1 to 5	15
More than 30 months of age up to and including five years of age	1 to 8	16
Over five years of age and younger than six years of age	1 to 12	24
Six years of age and over up to and including 12 years of age	1 to 15	30

Staff Qualifications

The following chart outlines the required qualifications for staff employed by child care centres and licensed home child care agencies. Licensed home child care agencies employ home visitors to monitor and support the caregivers who are affiliated with them.

Staffing Requirements for Child Care Centres and Licensed Home Child Care Agencies	
Child Care Centres	Licensed Home Child Care Agencies
Operators of child care centres are required to hire at least a minimum of one qualified staff person per group, who: • Holds a diploma in Early Childhood Education from an Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology or • Holds an academic qualification that the ministry considers equivalent to the above or • Is otherwise approved by the ministry. Supervisors are required to: • Hold a diploma in Early Childhood Education from an Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology or • Hold an academic qualification that the ministry considers equivalent to the above and • Have at least two years of experience working in a child care centre with children who are at the same ages and developmental levels as the children in the child care centre where they will be working and • Be deemed capable by the ministry of planning and directing the program of the child care centre, being in charge of children, and overseeing staff. All staff and volunteers who have direct contact with children must provide a criminal reference check.	Licensed home child care agencies are required to employ at least one home visitor for every 25 homes. Home visitors must: • Have completed a post-secondary program of studies, approved by the ministry, in child development and family studies • Have at least two years of experience working with children who are at the same ages and developmental levels as the children enrolled with the licensed home child care agency where they will be working or • Be deemed by the ministry to be capable of providing support and supervision in locations where licensed home child care is being provided. All staff, volunteers and licensed home child care providers, as well as all members of the household over the age of 18 who have direct contact with children, must have a criminal reference check.

Availability Indicators

The estimated licensed capacity (206,969 children) for Ontario comes from adding together day care centre capacity and licensed home child care enrolment (in lieu of licensed home child care capacity). There is no licensed capacity for licensed home child care as the maximum number of children per home can vary. Although generally five children per home are permitted in addition to the provider's own, the maximum can be lower if any of the children are younger than age six, or if any of them have special needs. The actual capacity of the system as a whole could be higher than 206,969 if some licensed home child care providers are not caring for the maximum number of children permissible.

Availability Indicators: Capacity and Enrolment Within Ontario's Regulated Child Care System			
	Number of Agencies	The Number of Children Agencies are Licensed to Care For (licensed capacity ¹)	Enrolment
Child Care Centres	3,874	Infant (<18 mos.) = 5,988 Toddler (18-30 mos.) = 18,900 Preschool (30 mos.– 5 years) ² = 99,554 School Age (6-12 years) = 62,689 Total capacity = 187,131	Infant (<18 mos.) = 5,881 Toddler (18-30 mos.) = 19,463 Preschool (30 mos.– 5 years) ² = 114,721 School Age (6-12 years) = 59,128 Total enrollment ³ = 199,193
Licensed Home Child Care	140 agencies (7,765 homes)	N/A	Total enrolment = 19,838
Total	4,014	206,969	219,031

This chart is accurate as of March 31, 2004.

Notes:

1. Licensed capacity means the maximum number of children allowed to be in attendance in a child care centre at one time, as set out in the licence.
2. Preschool category includes groups of children from 30 months to 5 years of age, as well as children in junior kindergarten groupings (4 year-olds) and children in senior kindergarten groupings (5 year-olds).
3. Enrolment is higher than licensed capacity because more than one child can use a licensed space (e.g., two or more children attending on a part-time basis).

Affordability Indicators

The information below is accurate as of March 31, 2004¹. There are more children who receive fee subsidies than full-day equivalent subsidized space because many children who receive regular fee subsidy are in part-time child care. The number of full-day equivalent spaces is lower than the number of children served because more than one child may occupy a full-day equivalent space. Most children do not attend all day, every day, all year.

Subsidized Child Care in Ontario		
	Number of Children Who Receive Fee Subsidies ²	Full-Day Equivalent Subsidized Spaces
Regular Fee Subsidy	90,499	49,893 ³
Ontario Works Formal (Licensed care)	14,033 ⁴	N/A ⁵
Ontario Works Informal (Unlicensed care)	11,387	N/A ⁵
Total	115,919	

Notes:

1. Information is for the time period of January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003.
2. Includes First Nations child care fee subsidies.
3. This figure assumes one space equals 248 days per year of full-day equivalent service (i.e., six or more hours per day), and that a space is occupied every day outside of weekends and statutory holidays.
4. As a result of a restatement of Ontario Works formal child care numbers, the number of children who received fee subsidies under Ontario Works formal (licensed care) increased to 17,420, increasing the total number of children receiving fee subsidies.
5. The ministry did not track information on full-day equivalents in 2003/04 for Ontario Works Formal and Informal.