

OMSSA's submission: Ontario's five-year review of the Child Care and Early Years Act ^[1]

Author:

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Excerpted from letter

Re: Ontario's Five-Year Review of the Child Care and Early Years Act

Dear Minister Lecce,

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) is a non-profit association whose members are Ontario's Service System Managers – Consolidated Municipal Service System Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs). In Ontario, co-social services like income support, child care and early years services and community housing are planned, managed and co-funded by Service System Managers.

Service System Managers appreciate the opportunity to engage with the Ministry of Education through our Children's Services Network, Children's Services Leads table and municipal-provincial technical tables. OMSSA and its members appreciate the strong partnership between the provincial and municipal levels of government on early years and child care.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Service System Managers acted quickly to deliver emergency child care to support front-line workers. CMSMs and DSSABs also worked closely with the Province during the recovery and reopening periods. Service System Managers and the Ministry continue to work closely to sustain the early years and child care system and enable a return to full capacity.

Ontario's Child Care and Early Years Act was passed in 2014. Since that time, there have been major capacity gains within the system and OMSSA supports the legislation. OMSSA looks forward to working with our provincial partners to build on system gains in recent years by expanding access to high-quality licensed spaces, increasing affordability, and ensuring parents are able to make choices in the best interests of their children.

The Child Care and Early Years Act recognizes the essential role of CMSMs and DSSABs as the local Service System Manager in ensuring an increasingly integrated, high-quality child care and early years system. Early years and child care services are crucial in the early stages of child development, and during the pandemic, we have seen first hand that child care is crucial to economic recovery in Ontario and Canada.

Public investment in child care has a multiplying or "ripple" effect in terms of positive economic benefits. In Ontario, the multiplying effect of investing in child care is approximately 2.27, meaning that every dollar invested in child care results in an economic output of \$2.27.

OMSSA appreciates the increased funding for child care and resources allocated for personal protection equipment (PPE) and to assist operators with fixed costs such as rent to sustain the sector during the pandemic. OMSSA also appreciates new federal investments through the ELCC funding and Safe Restart Agreement.

Ontario has a unique model for early years and child care in Canada. Many Service System Managers have invested their own dollars into delivering child care services within their local communities. All three levels of government must work together to strengthen the child care system and ensure sustainability well into the future.

OMSSA appreciates the opportunity to provide consultation on the Province's five-year legislative review of Ontario's Child Care and Early Years Act. Following the 2018 provincial election, OMSSA shared its priorities for Ontario's early years and child care sector with the incoming Minister of Education. Following our Children Services Summit in January 2019, OMSSA submitted further input to the Province related to the development of its new child care plan. OMSSA hosted a follow-up virtual summit focused on early years and child care issues on August 13, 2020 to gain members' input for this submission.

The focus areas of Ontario's new child care plan include affordability, access, quality, choice and reducing administrative and reporting burdens. As we work together to recover from the COVID19 pandemic, OMSSA members have put forward the following input and recommendations to support the Province in the development of its new child care plan.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: legislation and regulation ^[4]

municipal ^[5]

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