What direction now? Ontario's Funding and Management Guidelines for 2023 and beyond [1]



Gordon Cleveland, University of Toronto Scarborough. October 19, 2022.

The context for this briefing note is the 2021 Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan (CWELCC). In 2021, the Government of Canada committed to substantially augmenting existing child care funding, accompanied by ambitious policy commitments, to build a Canada-wide child care system. The plan has the goal of building high quality, affordable, universal early learning and child care for all in a primarily not-for-profit system.

As specific design and implementation of ELCC provision is a provincial responsibility in Canada, a CWELCC Agreement was negotiated between federal and each provincial/territorial government to cover the period through fiscal year 2005-2006, with the understanding that federal funds will be ongoing. An Action Plan specific to each province/ territory was negotiated to cover fiscal years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, with subsequent Action Plans to be developed prior to further fiscal years based on the Agreements and goals.

This document applies specifically to Ontario's implementation under the CWELCC.

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The purpose of this document is to propose what some key objectives and essential elements of Ontario's funding and management arrangements should be for 2023 and beyond. Crucial decisions about these new funding and management rules will have long-run implications for how the new CWELCC system develops.

Based on the CWELCC Agreement, the long-run objective of the new funding and management arrangements in Ontario should be to establish child care as a publicly managed and largely not-for-profit service similar to health and education. Early learning and child care services would be affordable for families; accessible for families no matter where they live or what their circumstances; inclusive of children no matter what their capabilities; flexible enough to meet different parent and child needs; and of high-quality with qualified staff to foster and support children's development. This is the vision to which Ontario agreed in signing the Canada-Wide Canada-Ontario ELCC Agreement on March 28, 2022.

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In this briefing note, Dr. Gordon Cleveland proposes some key objectives and essential elements of Ontario's funding and management arrangements for 2023 and beyond. Cleveland argues that Management and Funding Guidelines for early learning and child care in Ontario must keep in view the long-run objective of creating a publicly managed and predominantly not-for-profit system.

Attachment Size

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