

COUNTY OF
LAMBTON

CHILDCARE SERVICE PLAN

(2002 – 2004)

December 2001

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Provincial Government announced with devolution that the management of childcare would be transferred to the municipal level. Part of the devolution process required the County to create a local business plan for Childcare that meets the Ministry's vision, principals and objectives as detailed in their Service Planning Guidelines (Appendix – A.1). As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the County of Lambton, the Social Services department has developed a Childcare Service Plan that covers a three year period that will be updated annually. The plan will determine the mix and level of childcare services appropriate to meet local needs and priorities within a framework of provincial legislation, regulations, standards, policies and priorities.

1.1 PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES OF PLANNING PROCESS

The County of Lambton Social Services department Mission Statement states:

Lambton County Social Services manages, plans and delivers quality human and financial service programs to enhance the quality of life of individuals, families and children within the County of Lambton.

With this in mind the following principles and objectives guided the development of the service planning process:

PRINCIPLES:

- Accountability to community
- Integrated services
- Fairness
- Community builders
- Self-reliance

OBJECTIVES:

- Attain community input
- Within laws
- Provide for those in need
- Partnerships

1.2 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Social Services department utilized a ten step planning process (appendix – B.1) in the development of this service plan. The planning process provided a vehicle that encouraged and facilitated community participation. As part of the process, managers of Social Services developed a skeleton critical path and provided their input from the onset as well as establishing a staff committee to work on this initiative. The staff committee created a terms of reference, laid out the critical path and identified key stakeholders (appendix -B.2) in the community to be involved.

Steps three, four and five in the process were information gathering. Information was collected during a number of forums that included: focus group meetings of staff, public, clients, agencies; completion of a needs assessment both internally and externally that included the Environmental Scan; and identification of partnership opportunities, potential policies and procedures. A draft service plan was written that the staff committee reviewed. Input resulted in a rewrite and a final version was presented to the Social Services management team. Upon approval, the service plan was presented to the Social Services committee for input and approval. The final Childcare Service Plan required County of Lambton Council approval before being implemented. This formal planning process will be initiated every three years for the purpose of rewriting the plan with reviews of the plan being conducted annually and on an as needed basis.

1.3 LOCAL APPROVAL PROCESS

The Childcare Service Plan requires County Council approval before being implemented and budgetary approval as part of the County budget annually. This will require staff to annually review the plan, a process that will include review with local stakeholders on childcare needs and services, and making adaptations to the plan to address identified gaps in service. This process will also be followed when local childcare issues, not addressed in the plan, are brought to the attention of the childcare manager. Adaptations will be brought to Social Services Committee for approval before implementation.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

2.1 LOCAL SERVICES

The following chart provides a summary of the programs being offered in partnership in the County of Lambton. Overall there are forty-one different service providers of child care programs from infant to school age (appendix C.1) providing 1555 spaces, with an additional 225 licensed in – home childcare spaces (40 homes) through Lambton Rural Childcare. There are 3 for profit centres and 28 not for profit centres. For a further summary of Childcare Services see Appendix C.2.

Program area	Program description	Number	
Fee Subsidy	Subsidized childcare services in licensed centre or home-based care. A needs test is administered to determine eligibility. Fee subsidies are primarily to support to employment or education	Regular Child Care Formal Care # families - 331 # children – 435 1 Agency 40 Homes	Ontario Works Formal Care # families: 159 # children 239 <i>Informal Care</i> # families: 28
Special Needs	Supported by trained resource teachers and resource teacher assistants to children with special needs in licensed childcare centre and home-based programs. Itinerant in-centre resourcing provided by St. Clair Child and Youth Centre and Lambton College	# of children served 170	
Child Care Agency Contract Administration		# of contracts - 34	
Wage Enhancement Grant Administration		# of contracts - 26	
Resource Centres	Support to parents and caregivers including travelling lending libraries, caregiver education, drop-in, playgroup, warmline, child care registry, and relief/respite Provided by: St. Clair Child and Youth Centre Sombra Township Child Care North Lambton Child Care Lambton Rural Child Care	# of contracts – 4	

Other Local Services

A survey by the Sarnia-Lambton Prevention Services Initiative (Appendix G.1) provides a snap shot of related agencies and their programs in the community. The program categories included childcare, community agency, church, government, health and other. The survey identified current barriers, opportunities and other considerations for these program areas. It is also identified that overall “grass root” recreational programs in the community did not identify themselves as preventive service agencies and did not respond.

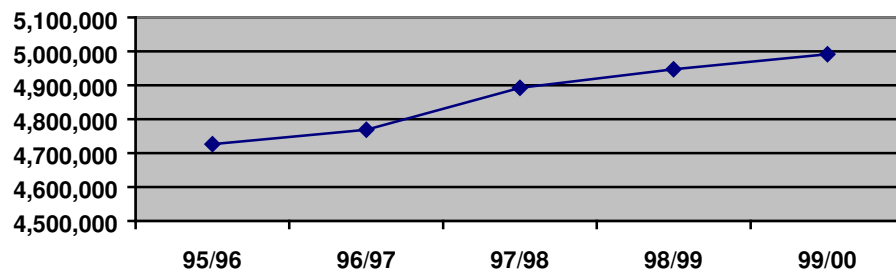
There are numerous “grass root” programs (sports/leagues) throughout the community. Many are located through out the various towns and cities in Lambton. The YMCA and Sarnia’s recreation department are both recognized as the main providers of recreational programs in the city.

2.2 HISTORICAL REVIEW OF CHILD CARE SERVICE PROVISION

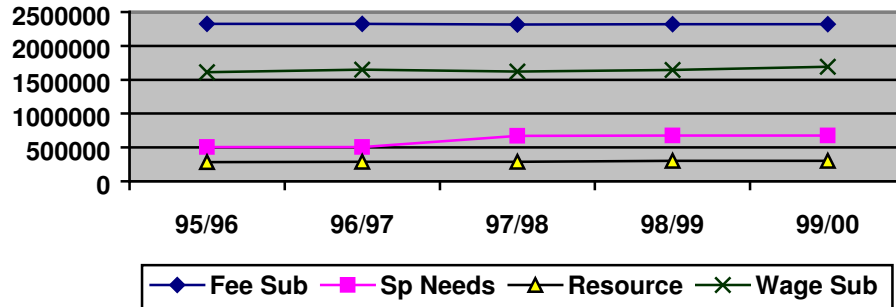
2.2.1 Spending and Service Levels

The following chart represents the historical spending in Childcare for Lambton County with data provided by MCSS. Further breakdowns of spending with actual dollar amounts are in Appendix H.1.

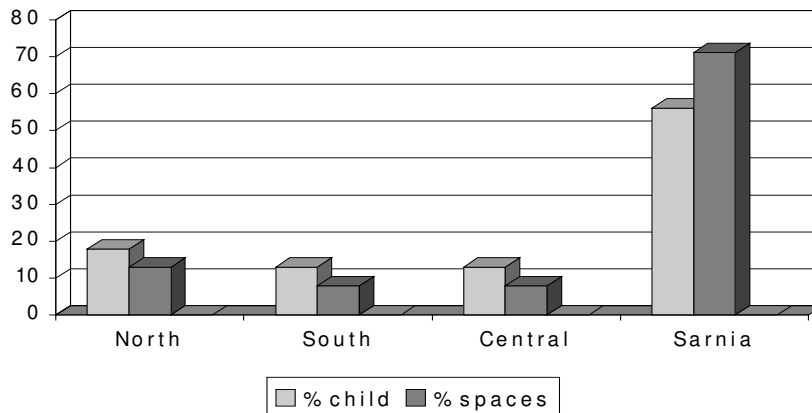
Historical Annual Funding Totals



Annual Historical Funding By Program



The following chart depicts the percentage of children in Lambton by zone compared to the percentage of childcare spaces in Lambton by zone during the past year.



2.2.2 Issues of Under and Over Expended Programs

Four main programs of the child care system are managed by the County of Lambton in support of the child care service system including wage subsidy, fee subsidy, special needs and resource centres. Each of these areas has its own unique characteristics and/or issues.

- **WAGE SUBSIDY** – There appears to have been no rationalization of the subsidy by the Province as programs were introduced. This has resulted in:
 - An inequitable distribution of funds in the County of Lambton with non profit and commercial operators being treated differently, and new operators not receiving any funding.
 - A lack of transparency resulting from pay equity funding being lumped into wage subsidy without explanation of a calculated formula by the Ministry. Agencies are not able to determine what funds are attributed to pay equity. Further, pay equity is now cost shared 80/20 with CMSMs.

CONCLUSION - The current overall situation is that some operators are over funded, some under funded, and some not funded at all.

- **FEE SUBSIDY** – The issue is arbitrary, random, non-transparent and unexplained changes by the Province of Ontario regarding funding levels has resulted in:
 - A \$5,800 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) calculation (\$26.75 per diem) per space by MCSS which is not reflective of the County's average per diem of \$28.80.
 - Parent revenue is reduces from the gross expenditures.
 - The criteria for FTE subsidy have changed unexpectedly resulting in CMSMs dictating agency's operating costs.
 - The funding shortfall covered by MCSS in 1999 was not recognized by MCSS in the 2000 budget.

CONCLUSION – The historical changes in calculations and criteria for fee subsidy and the lack of recognition by MCSS of actual per diems and annual expenditures has resulted in negative impacts (under funding) for clients and the County.

- **SPECIAL NEEDS** – The issue of concern is the growing number of special needs children utilizing the childcare system. The result of recently introduced early identification programs.

This has resulted in:

- A concern that with increasing numbers of special needs children resulting from early identification programs and a lack of adequate funding children with special needs will not be able to be integrate successfully into the childcare system.
- An unclear or open definition of what is special needs

CONCLUSION –The creation of early identification programs for special needs coupled with the lack of funding and programs to provide service to these identified children has resulted in tremendous pressure on the existing childcare system.

- **RESOURCE CENTRES** – The issue in this area is increased in demand for service at a time when funding support was decreased. This has resulted in:

- A concern that the increasing number of parents and special needs children resulting from early identification programs (i.e. Sound Start, Healthy Babies Healthy Children) will not be able to be integrate successfully into the resource centre programs.

CONCLUSION –The creation of early identification programs for special needs coupled with the lack of programs to service these identified children has resulted in tremendous pressure and reliance on the existing childcare system.

- **OVERALL** - All providers were affected by a change in the safety standards regarding playground equipment in the past two years. This has resulted in:

- Many centres had to remove equipment that they were unable to replace.
- Some centres have repaired or replaced equipment at substantial unplanned financial cost.

CONCLUSION – The result of the unplanned changes in playground standards have left many centres struggling to provide the same standard of quality childcare the community was accustomed to before the implementation of the legislation. The lack of funding to offset the change in standards has put many providers in an under funded position.

2.2.3 Historical Childcare Needs and Issues in the County of Lambton

Along with the issues identified in the previous section, the following details the various historical issues and needs in the County of Lambton as related to the Childcare system. Together the issues provide a clear picture of the current situation in the County of Lambton.

- **RURAL/URBAN:** There have always been issues in Lambton related to the sheer vastness of the county and trying to provide equitable access to childcare. This has included issues related to transportation and providing service over such a large area, as well as the need for seasonal childcare for farmers and service workers in the tourism sector with non traditional work hours. There exists an historical perception that the large urban area (Sarnia) receives disproportionate funding and has more services than the rest of the surrounding area.
- **RECESSION:** The County of Lambton was also one of the hardest hit communities in the last recession. In the past year there has been recovery in the local economy with the addition of over eight hundred low wage jobs. This recent combination of a high caseload in Ontario Works and an influx of low paying jobs have created a growing need for subsidized childcare.
- **APPROVED CORPORATION:** The County of Lambton has an approved corporation that was not dealt with during the Provincial download, but operates as a purchase of service. This skews Provincial numbers and inflates the per diem cost in purchase.
- **SPECIAL NEEDS EQUITY:** Funds allocated by the Province for special needs children are to be based on population, however, in the Tri-County area equity has never been achieved. Thus a child living in one county may have greater access to resources than a child in another County.

- **SERVICE SYSTEM MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION DOLLARS:** The transfer of responsibility from the Province to the CMSM for the management of childcare naturally increased workloads and budget responsibilities for the CMSM yet the CMSM did not receive increased funding for administration in acknowledgement of the increased service system management responsibilities.
- **FULL TIME EQUIVALENT FUNDS:** The ministry calculation of \$5800 for a full time equivalent (FTE) has not change despite inflation of over 6.5% in the past three years.
- **RESOURCE CENTRE FUNDING CUT:** The 20% Provincial funding cut to Resource Centres prior to devolution, coupled with the request for greater service to be provided (due to Provincial early identification programs) by resource centres is causing extreme pressures to these providers.
- **LICENSING RECONCILIATION:** The historic management of licensing of child care centres and the lack of co-ordination with Service System Managers has left agencies in some cases with reduced number of spaces, but retaining funding for a larger number of spaces.
- **PARENT FEES:** The use of parent fees in the County of Lambton results in an inequity with parents in neighbouring area where CMSMs who pay actual fees.

2.3 ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL NEEDS:

2.3.1. Demographic Information

The following information is taken from information provided by MCSS and Statistics Canada 1996 census. (Appendix D.1) The attached appendixes also include additional demographic tables for the Lambton County area (appendix D.2) and the school district (appendix D.3).

CATEGORY	ACTUALS		PERCENTAGES		TOTALS	
	0-5 years	6-12 years	0-5 years	6-12 years	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE
Number of children	9615	12995			22,610	
Population density					2,840.69km ²	7.96 per km ²
Low birth rate (1991 to '95)					460 of 7826	5.88%
Children of low income house holds	2015	1945	20.95%	14.97%	3960	17.51%
Children of single parent house holds	1405	1965	14.61%	15.12%	3370	14.9%
Children in non-official speaking households	145	170	1.51%	1.31%	315	1.39%
Children of parents with low education	120	195	1.25%	1.50%	315	1.39%

The following may assist in the interpretation of the data above:

“Low income households - have less income than the low-income cut-off (LICO). The low-income cut-off is 120% of the average amount that households of the same size in similar communities spend on the basics (food, clothing and shelter)”

“LICO - measures straitened circumstances, not poverty. LICO is a relative measure that does not account for lifestyle choices that some households make in the quality of goods and services they purchase.”

“Low education - is defined as all parents in a household having no more than a grade nine education.”

2.3.2 Local Labour Market

The “Labour Market Review” (appendix E.1) is a quarterly report analysing the Sarnia – Lambton labour market produced by Human Resource Development Canada. Key trends for the County of Lambton in labour that can have an impact on childcare include:

- Non-standard forms of work will not disappear (standard = one full time employer for life)
- Weekend work is increasing
- Businesses operating 24 hours a day is on the increase
- Two new companies opening in the year 2000 will create over 800 low wage jobs

2.3.3. Focus Group Information

The following needs and issues were identified by members of the community at two different focus group sessions with each session focussing on a particular aspect of the management system (appendixes F.1, F.2). At each session four representatives from the various key stakeholders groups were invited to attend and included a Parent, Board Member, Frontline Staff and a Manager.

Resource Centres

Needs and Issues

1. There is a lack of funds to provide expanded staffing hours to meet the identified needs for early morning, late evening and weekends service.
2. There is misunderstanding of what a Resource Centre does and who they serve by the general public.

3. Locally there is a lack of parent/caregiver educational opportunities
4. There is a fear the funding base will be reduced.
5. The cost of providing transportation is too costly.
6. The municipal political annual budget process is incompatible with the payback from prevention services
7. Community charitable dollars are spread thin.

Strengths

- 1) the centres help build strong families;
- 2) they provide a natural link to other services;
- 3) they are accessible to all and
- 4) They are flexible to meet local and individual needs of children and families.

Special Needs

Needs and Issues

1. There exists three different models of delivery for Special Needs services in the County of Lambton which can be classified and defined as follows:
 - A) On-site worker (a dedicated full-time staff works at one child care centre)
 - B) Reverse integration (majority of participants have a disability)
 - C) Support worker (a staff goes site to site working with the child care's staff as needed)
2. There is informal co-operation among the service providers in the community.
3. There are limited hours of service available in the community.
4. There is a need for increased outreach therapeutic services.
5. The uncertainty of funding year to year is a concern.
6. The application for parents to receive funding is viewed as intrusive.
7. The lack of increased funding with the growth of services has become an issue.

Strengths

1. There is significant expertise in the community in the provision of special needs services
2. The system (three differing models) allows for a variety of options for the consumers.

3. The system's ability to accommodate Special Needs children with a variety of needs.

The needs and issues around the subsidy programs were obtained through discussions with representatives from local service providers over a six-month period.

Wage Subsidy

Needs and Issues

The issue in this area appears to be the lack of co-ordination of the many programs introduced over time by the Province. This has resulted in:

1. An inequitable distribution of funds in the County of Lambton, with non profit and commercial operators being treated differently, and new operators not receiving any funding.
2. Pay equity being lumped into wage subsidy resulting in CMSMs now funding pay equity on an 80/20 basis.

The historic management of licensing of childcare centres and lack of reconciling has left agencies in some cases having reduced number of spaces but retained funding.

Fee Subsidy

Needs and Issues

The issue in this area has been created from the random and non-transparent unexplained Provincial changes regarding funding formulas and calculations. This has resulted in:

1. A \$5,800 FTE calculation (\$26.75 per diem) by MCSS which is not reflective of the County's local average per diem of \$28.80.
2. The use of parent fees in the County of Lambton results in an inequity with our neighbouring CMSM who pay actual fees. Agencies are requesting the County of Lambton to pay actual costs or allow user fees to cover actual difference.
3. The per-diem definition for eligibility for FTE subsidy was changed unexpectedly. (6 hours and under is now part time)
4. The shortfall of funds that MCSS covered in 1999 was not recognized by MCSS in the 2000 budget.

2.4 Summary of Environmental Scan

The environmental scan paints a picture of childcare services, in the County of Lambton today. The reader is provided specific information where possible and in some cases referred to more detailed community information.

The statistical information provided demonstrates that only one-third of our low-income families can access subsidized licensed childcare. With 1780 licensed spaces in the entire County of Lambton and over 2000 of children requiring subsidy even if funds were available to subsidize all low-income families it would be impossible to do so. This may explain why the number of groups, committees, organizations, etc. trying to all service the youth of our community. The groups for the most part operate in isolation or at best, some form of mismatched co-ordinated effort. The geographic size of the community only compounds the difficulty of past attempts to co-ordinated efforts and the perception less service in rural verses urban centres. The information does demonstrate that in the area of childcare spaces, the City of Sarnia has a disproportionate number of spaces when compared to the overall percentage of children. While the rural area of the county has a lessor percentage of spaces to the percentage of children living there.

The environmental scan highlights even further inequities beyond the area of childcare spaces. There is wage subsidy inequities from provider to provider, which has, have evolved over time, as policies have changed. There is an inequity in funds received by the CMSM in relation to neighbouring CMSMs in the area of Special Needs. In the area of fee subsidy there is little equity as the CMSM does not fund service provider's actual costs and allows each agency to decide whether to charge a user fee up to a capped upset limit. This historical pressure in the system over the past five years has not been addressable with the stagnation of funds into the system.

The environmental scan brings to the forefront two other significant issues for this CMSM which is likely true in all CMSMs. First, changes in Provincial policy have had a negative impact on families qualifying for subsidy forcing them to rely on alternative childcare services (e.g.. FTE criteria change to six hours). Second, the long needed creation of early identification programs like Healthy Babies Healthy Children and Sound Start is creating a significant pressure on Special Needs Services and Resource Centres. With stagnant or decreased funding agencies are trying to cope with the increased

numbers resulting from these programs. Parents are forced to rely on existing services in the community.

Forecasting the needs over the next three years from the information in the environmental scan is provided in point form with no order of priority.

Forecasted Needs/Goals

- ❑ To increase the flexibility of providers to provide extended hours of operation and out-reach programs.
- ❑ To establish fair, equitable and transparent funding formulas in subsidy areas of the service plan that are easily adaptable to future mandated policy changes.
- ❑ To eliminate the use of parent fees in the system.
- ❑ To address the community's childcare needs with the shift in employment in the area to non-standard forms of work. (24 hours, weekends)
- ❑ To lobby for equitable Special Needs funding for the CMSM and increased administration funding to match the increased responsibility from devolution.
- ❑ To increase accountability of service providers.

3. SERVICE GAPS/OVERLAPS ANALYSIS

3.1 CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDIES

□ Local Needs

- Over 20% of children up to age five are from low-income households totalling over 2000 children requiring subsidized child care
- Needs testing is intrusive and an alternative measurement is desired
- User fees are used, but not wanted by service providers
- 800 new low wage jobs will increase demands of working poor for more subsidy spots.
- 15% of children are children of single parent households that require flexible child care
- Local labour market trends of an increase in non-standard forms of work (more than one employer), an increase in 24-hour employers and weekend work requires flexible childcare.
- Service providers have determined their hours of operation are restrictive.
- 43% of the children live outside of Sarnia with 29% of the childcare spaces – while Sarnia has 57% of the children but 71% of the child care spaces.

□ Provincial Priorities Fee Subsidies

- Regular fee subsidy funds can only be used to support full and part-time child care in the licensed system as per the Day Nurseries Act (DNA)
- Ontario Works child care funding can be used to support both licensed and unlicensed child care
- Delivery agents are encouraged to provide subsidies for a flexible mix of full and part-time care, across all age ranges that reflect the range of service needs at the local level.
- Subsidised care should be provided to support the employment, training and educational needs of parents. Ontario Works participants making the transfer to employment and families most in need are a priority group for childcare services.
- LEAP participants are a priority group for childcare.

- Delivery agents are discouraged from adopting parent fee practises that cause subsidized parents to pay fees that may exceed their ability to pay as determined by the needs test.

Analysis

With 1780 licensed childcare spaces in the County of Lambton of which 674 are subsidized; only 33% of the children from low-income families can be provided licensed childcare. While current needs testing is considered to be intrusive, there is a need for ensuring the parent's with the greatest needs are being met especially when only a third of the population can be served.

The implementation of “user fees” in its current form does little to help parents and providers in the system. It falls short of the financial needs of many providers regarding actual costs, and adds financial burden to clients who have been needs tested and proven unable to pay the fee.

Current labour trends in the County of Lambton toward non-standard forms of work and service provider's restrictive hours of operation place pressures on parents in finding appropriate childcare. Since provincial guidelines do not allow flexibility in the provision of regular fee subsidy funds to unlicensed childcare, even greater pressure is placed on parents employed in non-standard forms of employment.

3.2 WAGE SUBSIDY

□ Local Needs

- Equitable distribution of funds in the County of Lambton with new and existing non-profit and commercial operators being treated the same regarding funding.
- A transparent formula for the calculation of wage subsidy that is fair and equitable for all providers.

□ **Provincial Priorities Wage Subsidies**

- Funds are to be used for increasing salary and benefits of staff in licensed childcare services, funded childcare resource services and funded support services for children with special needs
- Service providers can use a portion of wage subsidy funding to cover mandatory employer contributions resulting from increased costs related to implementation of wage subsidy funded salary and benefit increases.

Analysis

The area of wage subsidy has developed over time into a complex, inequitable allocation of funds; the result of several programs over time layered over top of each other. Calculations and formulas apply differently to providers based on certain factors such as commercial verses non-profit operator and date of agency application for funding.

3.3 SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCING

□ **Local Needs**

- A total of 170 children (almost 40% of the low birth rate population) which is over 5% of the children born from 1991 – 1995 utilize the services in the community.
- An increase in therapeutic outreach programs for accessing services is needed
- There is need to increase networking and resource sharing for program delivery
- There is desire to maintain three models of delivery for options and parental choice
- The definition of special needs does not include environmental factors.

□ **Provincial Priorities Special Needs**

- To encourage the integration of children with special needs into community-based child care services with their peers; children should be placed in segregated settings only when no other appropriate or safe placement is possible for them.
- No parent should be made to pay a higher child care fee for a child with special needs; special needs resource services should be made available at no additional cost to parents

- Special needs resource funds are to be used primarily to purchase the services of resource teachers for children with special needs.
- Parents on social assistance should have access to special needs resources.

Analysis

There have been three distinct programs of service delivery in the area of Special Needs in the County of Lambton, which has evolved over the years. The three models include 1) a segregated reverse integration model 2) an on site resource teacher in an integrated setting and 3) a resource teacher that goes site to a site wherever the need is. The view is that the differing models provide parental choice and flexibility in service and these aspects should be maintained.

Although the service models are seen as being good there is a desire for more co-ordination among the providers and for increased flexibility for program delivery. This flexibility is in the areas of both outside traditional business hours and outreach type programs.

There is an identified need for increased funding.

3.4 RESOURCE CENTRE OBJECTIVES

□ Local Needs

- There are under 1800 licensed child care spots for the 22,610 children of the County of Lambton
- There are less than 8 people per square kilometre which restricts the viability for child care service providers to locate in the non-dense populated areas
- There is a need to improve networking, communications and marketing of the centres.
- There is need for more parent/caregiver information
- There is need for alternative outreach type programs and alternative funding strategies.

□ Provincial Priorities Resource Centres

- To enhance the quality of care provide in unlicensed child care arrangements;

- To provide information necessary for parents and other caregivers to make informed choices about child care arrangements and options;
- To enhance early child development and parenting skills for children, their parents and other caregivers.

Analysis

The Resource Centres in the County of Lambton historically have all provided service independently of each other and within the confines of their own facilities. There is a need and desire for the service providers to work in a more co-operative manner, which includes the creation of a formal marketing plan for Resource Centres in Lambton. The geography of the County of Lambton lends itself to the need to creative service delivery in the form of outreach programs.

4 SERVICE PRIORITIES

The following service priorities are based on the information provided in the preceding sections of this service plan and utilizing information gathered through service providers, parents and other stakeholders in the community contacted during the planning process. This information combined with County of Lambton policy and mission has led to the establishment of the following service priorities.

To provide fair and equitable access to fee subsidy dollars

Goals and Objectives

- ❑ To ensure fee subsidy dollars are directed to the parents in greatest need
- ❑ To eliminate user fees for fee subsidy parents.
- ❑ To create a transparent funding formula for fee subsidy that allows for MCSS mandated priorities (e.g. Ontario Works and LEAP)

To provide fair and equitable access to wage subsidy dollars

Goals and Objectives

- ❑ To ensure wage subsidy dollars are equally directed to all providers
- ❑ To develop a transparent funding formula for wage subsidy.

To ensure the range of quality childcare options available throughout the County of Lambton

Goals and Objectives

- ❑ To provide rural and non-farm families with access to quality childcare programs
- ❑ To support the concept of outreach programs for providing service
- ❑ To lead a CMSM wide planning committee for the childcare service plan ensuring co-ordination with various community groups and services
- ❑ To identify areas of under service and training needs of childcare service providers

To increase flexibility of service delivery and funding

Goals and Objectives

- ❑ To promote the concept of flexible hours for providing service
- ❑ To support the concept of outreach programs for providing service
- ❑ To provide families with flexible licensed child care options that meet their needs.
- ❑ To eliminate “silo” funding

To increase supports to informal care

Goals and Objectives

- ❑ To provide service to the growing non-standard work population

To provide a co-ordinated range of services for special needs

Goals and Objectives

- ❑ To ensure access to a range of quality programs that enable individuals to maximize their potential.
- ❑ To provide information and support to families with special needs children
- ❑ To provide information and support to providers working with children with special needs.

5. SERVICE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The following strategies will ensure the successful implementation of this childcare service plan.

Strategy: To develop policy statements with which to manage the child care system

Goals and Objectives

- ❑ Development of specific policies and procedures to address the needs of the child care management system
- ❑ Development of specific business plans for each of the four major components of the childcare system, ensuring that federal and provincial policies and objectives are taken into account and the service priorities identified in this service plan.
- ❑ To ensure the management of the childcare system is reflective of community needs.
- ❑ To ensure the childcare service plan is integrated into the overall County of Lambton business plan, which emphasizes horizontal integration.

Strategy: To provide accountability for quality childcare provision to the community.

Goals and Objectives

- ❑ Development of program audits for ensuring delivery of quality child care services
- ❑ Development of financial audits, ensuring financial accountability for delivery of childcare services.
- ❑ Development of training modules for identified training needs of childcare service providers.

Strategy: To maintain a leadership role in the co-ordination and networking of service providers.

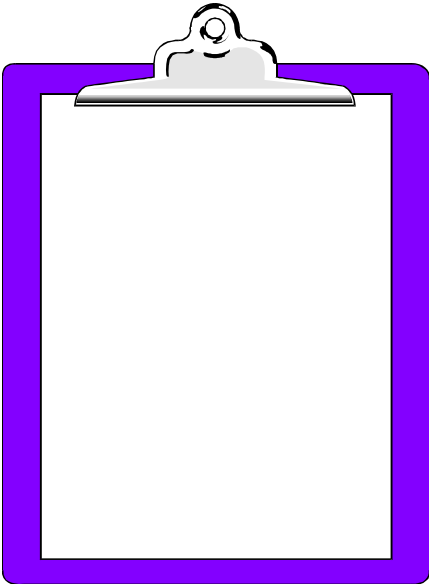
Goals and Objectives

- ❑ To pursue the development of partnership opportunities for the delivery of quality childcare services.
- ❑ To identify areas of under service and create potential solutions and alternatives for those areas.

6. ANALYSIS OF FISCAL IMPACT

It is anticipated that the fiscal impact in year one of this plan will be minimal at most as service levels will be maintained as the development of the specific business plans proceeds for each of the four main areas of childcare. Once the business plans are completed it is anticipated that year two would see a redistribution of the allotted funds based on those plans as service priorities of fairness and equity are implemented. Until development of the specific business plans, year three estimates can not made. The Childcare Service Plan will require County Council approval before being implemented as will any budgetary increases This will require staff to annually review the plan with local stakeholders and make adaptations to the plan to address identified gaps in service. This process will also be followed when local childcare issues, not addressed in the plan, are brought to the attention of the Childcare manager. Changes will be brought to Social Services Committee for approval before implementation.

APPENDIXES



APPENDIX – A.1

Child Care Service Management Guidelines

APPENDIX - B.1

PLANNING PROCESS MODEL

PLANNING PROCESS MODEL

STEPS	ACTION	ACTION STEPS
1	Manager's Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify staff committee - develop critical path - receive input from Managers
2	Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create Terms of Reference - lay out critical path - identify key stakeholders
3	Focus Group Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staff - community - stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gather information via these sessions
4	Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - internal - external - * include recommendations*
5	Review Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify partnerships, policies, procedures, etc.
6	Write Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - include background info, details, recommendations, - - design flow of document
7	Staff Committee Review 1 st Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - critique with suggested changes - rewrite draft
8	Manager's Review 2 nd Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - critique with suggested changes - rewrite changes, approve 2nd draft
9	Report to SS Committee	-
10	Report to Council	-
Implement Plan		

APPENDIX – B.2

Key Stakeholders

APPENDIX - C.1

List of Providers

APPENDIX - C.2

Summary of Child Care Services

APPENDIX - D.1

Census Data of 1996

APPENDIX – D.2

Census Data of 1996 by MCSS

APPENDIX – D.3

School Board Data

APPENDIX – E.1

Labour Market Review of Sarnia- Lambton

APPENDIX – F.1

FOCUS GROUP – RESOURCE CENTRES

COUNTY OF LAMBTON
CHILDCARE SERVICE DELIVERY FOCUS GROUP – RESOURCE CENTRES
Notes From April 28, 2000

Preamble: On April 28, 2000 the County of Lambton Social Service’s Childcare Division held an information gathering session on Resource Centres to attain community input into the development of its Childcare Service Delivery Model. Ken Dick, Director of Social Services, explained the reason for the session was due to the Provincial Government devolving the management of Childcare services to the municipal level of Government across the Province. He further explained that in developing a service model for the County of Lambton that the department wanted to seek and provide opportunity for community input into the plan. Sue O’Brien, Manager of Childcare Services for the County of Lambton, presented background information to the group on current childcare services, demographical trends and statistical data for the County of Lambton. Doug Ball, Co-ordinator of Social Planning, then led the group through a SWOT analysis of Resource Centres for the County of Lambton. A total of ten different agencies and organizations were invited to the session and were requested to bring an additional four people to the session. Those present were to be a representative of each of the following: Consumer (parent), Frontline staff, Manager and a Board of director. In total twenty-eight people were in attendance with representation from each of the requested categories.

SUMMARY:

The following is a summary of the notes and comments made at the session and are followed by detailed notes put onto flip charts during the session.

- ◆ A major strength of the resource centre is that it helps build strong family units and that resource centres provide a natural first link to other services in the spectrum to those families. From the weaknesses and opportunities identified though, more could be done in the way of communication and partnership building to enhance this “natural first link”.
- ◆ Accessibility (open to all) as a strength was also seen as a weakness due to the misperception of the public as to who can use a resource centre and who they are for. This strength provides an opportunity in the form of marketing it (accessibility) to the public.
- ◆ Three out of the four weaknesses identified by the group relate to marketing in some form or another. A clear marketing plan with a communications strategy could help eliminate these weaknesses and provide the opportunity to provide grassroots information to the community as was identified as an opportunity.
- ◆ A major opportunity identified by the group focuses around the sharing of resources amongst resource centres and “doing more together”.
- ◆ From a direct program perspective, it was identified more needs to be done in the area of parent/caregiver education and peer-modelling opportunities (high, med., low risk learning together). Direct program delivery as out-reach programming was identified as a solution to the transportation threat.
- ◆ A theme of increasing communication with the County of Lambton and politicians was prevalent in solutions to various identified threats. Other funding threats may provide the basis/need for innovative partnered funding alternatives and a co-ordinated strategy amongst the resource centres.

FLIP CHART NOTES:

STRENGTHS (Things we do and do well)

The following were identified as strengths of the Resource Centre program:

- The centres help build strong family units
- Resource Centres provide a natural first link to other services in the spectrum
- Accessibility – open to all
- Flexibility – to meet local & individual needs of children and families

WEAKNESSES (Things we do but need improvement) The following weaknesses were identified at the session and are followed with potential solutions identified by the group that day.

WEAKNESS	SOLUTIONS	ISSUES
A lack of funds to provide staffing from early morning to late night and weekends which is the ideal situation.	Rotating of shifts could be explored. It was also presented that through Ontario Works placements Resource Centres could be a place of training for taking care of children (use volunteers at the Centres) but that this is not to replace qualified ECE personnel.	A caution was stated not to increase the child to staff ratios to free up funds. It was identified that Resource Centres not be providing sleep rooms also and so services should not be provided during those hours (i.e. late night).
Lack of Marketing (general public's understanding of what a Resource Centre is)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Free public service advertising. 2. Community events section of local papers. 3. Health Unit - Healthy Babies Healthy Children (provide information to all new parents) 4. Flyers, posters, web-sites, newsletters. 	
Misperception of target population served – i.e., only high risk and not available for all children and vice-versa	Public awareness- marketing – free publicity - fun day – community/county Internal advocacy – brag ourselves Integration : Zones amalgamate for activities Get rid of labels (change the label) – everyone welcome – no labels Use schools – Child youth workers	
Lack of public awareness and parent/caregiver education	- provide education to County Council to increase understanding	- County Council understanding - Lack of cost/benefit info.

	- develop enhanced educational programs - improve public awareness	- Shortage of educational opportunities for parent/caregivers
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OPPORTUNITIES (things we are not doing but could be) The following opportunities were identified at the session and are followed with potential solutions identified by the group that day.

OPPORTUNITIES	SOLUTION	ISSUES
To provide the grassroots information to the community.	- Speaker pool; Internet access; - More pooling of resources between centres - Networking with churches, schools, community activities like cubs, sports, Fast track. Working with community areas. - Volunteer pools, volunteer training - Liaison with college – to prepare ECE students for working in community	
Resource sharing/specialization (4 centres trying to do too much)	Web site ⇒ listing available resources, materials, personnel, videos, events, work-shops for providers & resource centre personnel – Newsletters for those who can not access the web site Meetings	need to balance or equalize resources (materials, human resources – e.g. Music, culture, health)
Consistency & availability to children & families	Being open more often will result in restructuring hours and staffing; solution to use HRDC, college placements, high school placements, Ontario Works, Parent central volunteer registry.- Public awareness (all resources under one umbrella / volunteer work fair –parent central volunteer registry)- Location (neutral; lack of permanent facility and settings; use unused facilities)Internal review (co-ordination, networking, sharing services & ideas with other agencies; constructive: stop being territorial)	
Enhance and build on peer-	-increase capacity with multiple	one centre serving 57% of kids

<p>modelling opportunities by having a more global target group (i.e. having high, medium and low risk moms & children learning together</p>	<p>sites – increase public awareness of benefit of resource centre for all - re-evaluate core mission/program</p>	<p>(this centre at over capacity) location prevents mix of users - resource/fiscal restraint Sarnia issue – less so in County</p>
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THREATS (Definition: things that could cause failure)

<p>THREATS</p>	<p>SOLUTION</p>	<p>ISSUES</p>
<p>Municipal political horizon incompatible with long payback from prevention services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - think business/strategic plan direction - keep records available for public info./facts - mobilize political awareness of importance of prevention services & parenting - lobby groups with parent involvement - municipalities to be proactive : using scare tactics to get \$ to keep programs 	
<p>Reduction in funding base.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - need more continuing communication with County of Lambton - continued input – i.e. funding needs - NCB dollars to resource centres (as they reduce child poverty) - Lobbying to expand Healthy Baby/Healthy Children to include resource centres - Training in writing proposals - Collaborate efforts with all centres (i.e. Trillium grant) 	
<p>Cost of transportation to get participants there (insurance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - volunteer driver program - encourage car pooling - outreach programs (backyard/park locations : resourced by professionals but run by families) 	
<p>Charitable \$ spread thin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advocacy re. Gaming revenue - develop other means of fundraising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service club concerns re. Government cuts/expectations to fill in

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- adequate government funding to address needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Government is biggest competitor locally for charitable dollars (slots, casino, lotteries)- Decline in enrolment in service clubs
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APPENDIX – F.2

FOCUS GROUP - SPECIAL NEEDS

COUNTY OF LAMBTON
CHILDCARE SERVICE DELIVERY FOCUS GROUP – SPECIAL NEEDS
Notes From June 15, 2000

Preamble: On June 15, 2000 the County of Lambton Social Service's Childcare Division held an information gathering session on Special Needs to attain community input into the development of its Childcare Service Delivery Model. Doug Ball, from the County of Lambton, explained the reason for the session was due to the Provincial Government devolving the management of Childcare services to the municipal level of Government across the Province. He further explained that in developing a service model for the County of Lambton that the department wanted to seek and provide opportunity for community input into the plan.

Sue O'Brien, Manager of Childcare Services for the County of Lambton, presented background information to the group on current childcare services, demographical trends and statistical data for the County of Lambton. Doug Ball led the group through a SWOT analysis of Special Needs for the County of Lambton. Three agencies that deliver Special Needs programs in the County of Lambton each presented on their program (Lambton College, Sarnia-Lambton Children's Treatment Centre, & Sertoma Child and Youth Centre).

A total of 40 different agencies and organizations were invited to the session and were requested to bring three people each. The people were to be a representative of each of the following: consumer (parent), staff, and a Board of Director. In total twenty-four people were in attendance.

SUMMARY:

The following is a summary of the notes and comments made at the session and are followed by detailed notes put onto flip charts during the session.

- The three models of delivery provide a wide range of services to a wide range of clients and this is seen as a strength of the overall special needs program, as it allows for parental choice in servicing their families needs.
- The informal co-operation among the service providers in the community was seen as a strength but was also viewed as an opportunity to further establish partnerships in service and program delivery
- The identified solution to both the *weakness* of restrictive hours of operation and the *opportunity* for increased outreach therapeutic services was an adoption of flexible work hours for employees.
- Funding issues are seen as both a threatening and an issue of weakness. The uncertainty of funding year to year, the intrusive application for parents to obtain funding, the change in the funding environment, and the lack of growth of funding with the growth of service are examples of the complicated issues related to funding.

FLIP CHART NOTES:

STRENGTHS (Things we do and do well)

The following were identified as strengths of the Special Needs program:

- ❑ Lots of expertise and variety of options for the consumer in Lambton
- ❑ Systems ability to accommodate Special Needs children with a broad variety of needs
- ❑ Informal co-operation and collaboration between three agencies and other service providers

WEAKNESSES (Things we do but need improvement) The following weaknesses were identified at the session and are followed with potential solutions identified by the group that day.

WEAKNESS	SOLUTIONS	ISSUES
Access with both place and time. Parents not able to access services due to 7:30am to 5:00pm times for opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Agencies adopt flex times for their employees (evenings & weekends) 	
Base funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County to recover costs from sliding scale for parent fees - Base budget on capacity not on number of children served and add cost of living each year - Capital costs for equipment replacement covered by County - Do income testing not needs testing (too intrusive) - Integrated Centre’s \$ for resource teachers – D.N.A.. definition 	<p>Planning is difficult to do without knowing the dollars that will be involved because many factors influence the funding.</p>
Access to what parents/families need and want	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing feedback from parents and families.(advisory committee, focus groups, face to face, satisfaction surveys,) - Enhancing informal programs (parks & rec., drop-in centres) - Flexibility in funding 	

Waiting lists time too long for service in some instances.	- No solution provided	
Informal network of all services for children in the community.	- No solution provided	

OPPORTUNITIES (things we are not doing but could be) The following opportunities were identified at the session and are followed with potential solutions identified by the group that day.

OPPORTUNITIES	SOLUTION	ISSUES
Central point of access (S.T.A.R.R.T.I.N.G. Point)	- become a part of this	Family Counselling Centre has access for residential information right now, soon to be for all services.
Provision of increased outreach therapeutic services.	- Agencies adopt flex hours for employees.(support services)	Inter-agency teamwork means the therapist can maintain the same caseload. (ECE & family maintain therapy; costs stays the same; therapist caseload stays the same)
Current research (“brain development”) reinforces but needs to link with value of services provided in pre-school settings	- React and promote follow through to Professor Mustard regarding community education & bring him back. Community leaders put up \$.	
Build bridges rather than turf wars around services provided by big three.	- increase planned information and networking - improve awareness to collaborate & working towards opportunities to partner programming & services. - Integrate Provincial Policy - Promote child focused community	

THREATS (Definition: things that could cause failure)

THREATS	SOLUTION	ISSUES
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no solutions provided 	No growth; no new funding; uncertainty; legislative definitions; silos; funding formulas; application for parents cumbersome/intrusive.
Change in funding environment (competing with sewers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - political advocacy by joint community providers showing the value of investing in children to local and provincial government - increase public awareness (human interest stories) 	
Break in Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobby for legislative changes 	No special needs subsidy once in F. C.
Political push to centralize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - funding body recognizes the value of having three different/same service models - someone in this room run for County Council - recognize LCCCPG as an official advisory board to the County 	Do we need a childcare advisory group? Can a community member join Social Services committee?

APPENDIX – G.1

REVIEW OF SURVEY RESULTS - PREVENTIVE SERVICES INITIATIVE

APPENDIX – H.1

Childcare Funding