

District of Nipissing Early Years & Child Care Services Report

Presented by:

District of Nipissing Social Service Administration Board – Children’s Services

September 2022

District of Nipissing
Social Services
Administration Board



Conseil d'administration
des services sociaux
du district de Nipissing

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PURPOSE

This report was prepared to address questions and respond to requests for data brought forward by different individuals seeking to better understand early years and child care programs and services available in the District of Nipissing, as well as pressures that exist in the sector.

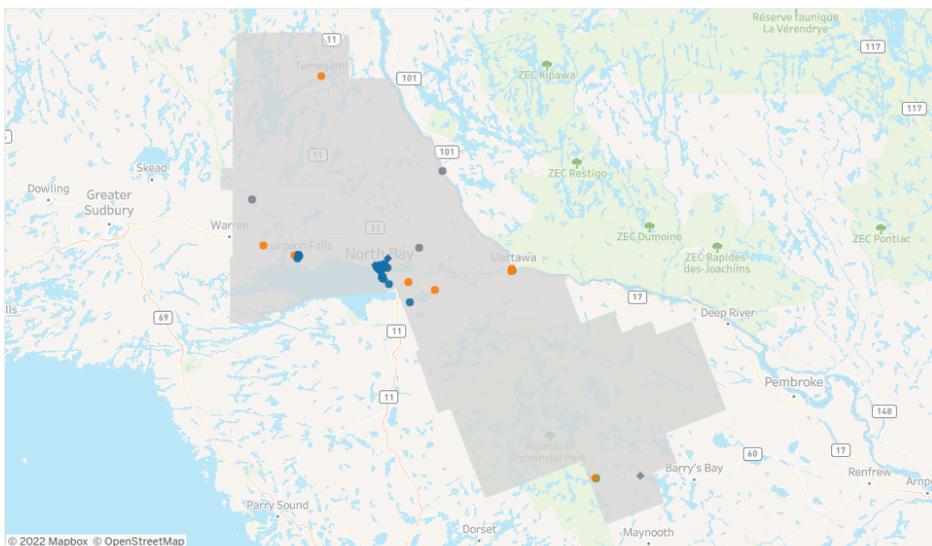
DISTRICT OF NIPISSING EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE SERVICE OVERVIEW

Note: All of the Children’s Services data and information is divided into neighbourhoods that have been created by grouping Statistics Canada Dissemination Areas (DA). We can then further combine DAs to match the municipalities of our district.

Early Years & Child Care Services Overview



Early Years & Child Care Services - District Map



Services

- Child Care (CC)
- EarlyON (EO)
- CC & EO

Building Type

- ◆ Public
- School

Select a Quarter

Q3 2022

Select a Neighbourhood

Nipissing District

OR

Select a Municipality

All

Child Population

Children Ages 0-4	3,880
Children Ages 0-6	5,615
Children Ages 5-12	6,790
Total Children Ages 0-12	10,670

Population data from the 2016 Census



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The graphic above demonstrates the Early Years and Child Care Services that are available in the District of Nipissing. There are currently 42 licensed child care sites, 3 Home Child Care Agencies, and 24 EarlyON Child & Family Centres operating in the district. The Child Population information is based on the 2016 Census information.

LICENSED CHILD CARE SERVICES

In order to provide licensed child care services, an agency must be licensed by the Ministry of Education and follow the rules set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) and its regulations. At least once a year, Ministry of Education program advisors conduct inspections of all licensed child care centres and home child care agencies.

The CCEYA sets out the standards, rules and regulations that agencies must meet to ensure the safety and well-being of children. The following provides a general overview of the requirements that all licensed child care service providers must meet in order to maintain a license to operate:

- Maintain staff to child ratios
- ensure compliance with health and safety standards and building code
- nutrition (for example, provision of meals, posting of menus and allergies)
- health and medical supervision (for example, immunization, serious occurrence reporting, anaphylaxis policies, administration of medication)
- programming for children (for example, parent handbook, program statement, rest and play periods, individual support plans)
- staff qualifications and screening (for example, supervision, program staff, first aid, registered early childhood educator qualifications, vulnerable sector check)
- emergency preparedness (for example, emergency contact information, fire safety procedures)
- administration (for example, insurance, children's records and attendance)

In addition, agencies must also have a program statement that aligns with “How does learning happen?” the Ministry of Education's framework that supports pedagogy and program development within the early years and child care sector.

Staff Ratios and Proportion of Qualified Employees

Age Category	Age Range	Employee: Child Ratio	Maximum Number of children in group	Proportion of Qualified Employees*
Infant	Infancy up to 18 months	3:10	10	1:3
Toddler	18 months up to 30 months	1:5	15	1:3
Preschool	30 months up to 6 years	1:8	24	2:3
Kindergarten	44 months up to 7 years	1:13	26	1:2
Primary/Junior School Age	68 months up to 13 years	1:15	30	1:2
Junior School Age	9 years up to 13 years	1:20	20	1:1

*The CCEYA specifies that the number of program staff required is the minimum number needed to supervise and care for the children and provide quality programming.

For additional information related to the licensing requirements please visit [Operating a licensed child care program | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/operating-a-licensed-child-care-program).

Licensed Child Care Waitlist for the District of Nipissing

The Licensed Child Care Waitlist data presented below represents data as of August 31, 2022 for the entire District of Nipissing. The number of **Unique Children** represents the unique count of children on the list, while the **Total Applications** represents all applications that are active on the waitlist. For instance, a child in the JK/SK age group may have 3 applications active at once – one for a before school program, one for an after school program, and one for a PD Day/March break full-day program.

Nipissing District Child Care Waitlist Breakdown - August 2022

1. Select Applicable Filter(s)

Select a Waiting Category:

Select a Municipality:

Select Preferred Date Range:

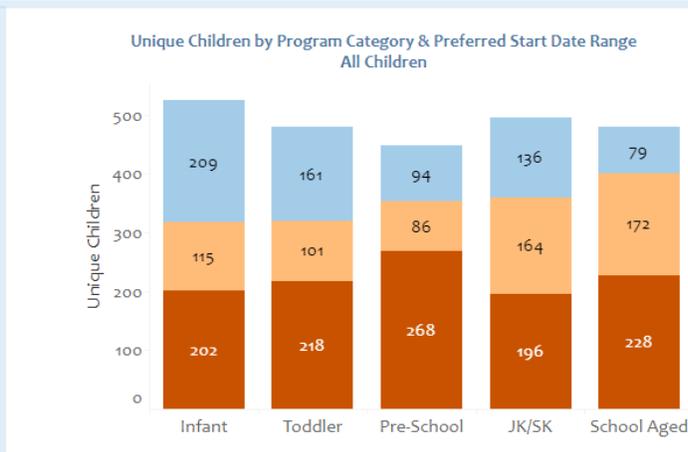
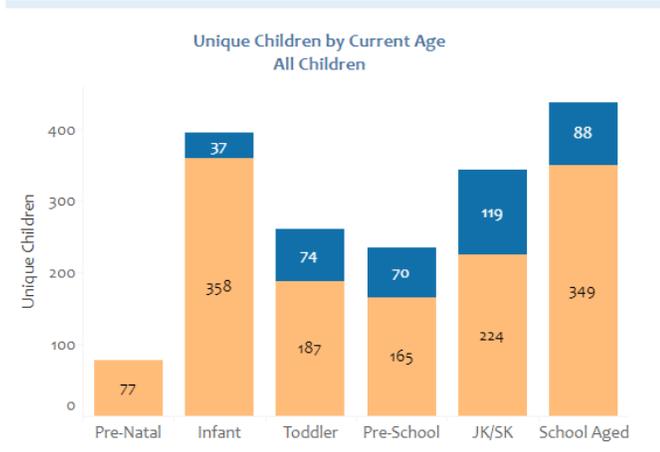
Select a Neighbourhood:

Select a Care Provider:

Notes:

- * **Waiting for Care** - includes children who do not have a placement and are truly waiting for care.
- * **All Children** - includes children waiting for care and those who have a placement, but are still on the list for another centre or a different program (e.g. were placed as an infant but are waiting for a JK/SK space).
- * Children may have an application to multiple age groups, but will only be counted once in the Unique Children box. As such, the total for each graph may be higher than the number of unique children.

Waiting Category	Unique Children (All Children)	Total Applications (All Children)	Unique Children - Overdue (Only includes children waiting for care)	Preferred Start Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placed + waiting for another program Waiting for Care 	1,748	8,932	595	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After 3 months Within 3 months Overdue



The graph on the left demonstrates the current age level for those on the waitlist, and further divides them into those waiting for care and those who may have a placement elsewhere but are still on the list for services at other child care centres. There are **1,748 unique children** on the waitlist, and of those, **388** children have a placement elsewhere but are still on the list for services. This represents children that have a placement and are awaiting a preferred program, or perhaps children placed in a preschool program, but are still waiting for a JK/SK program.

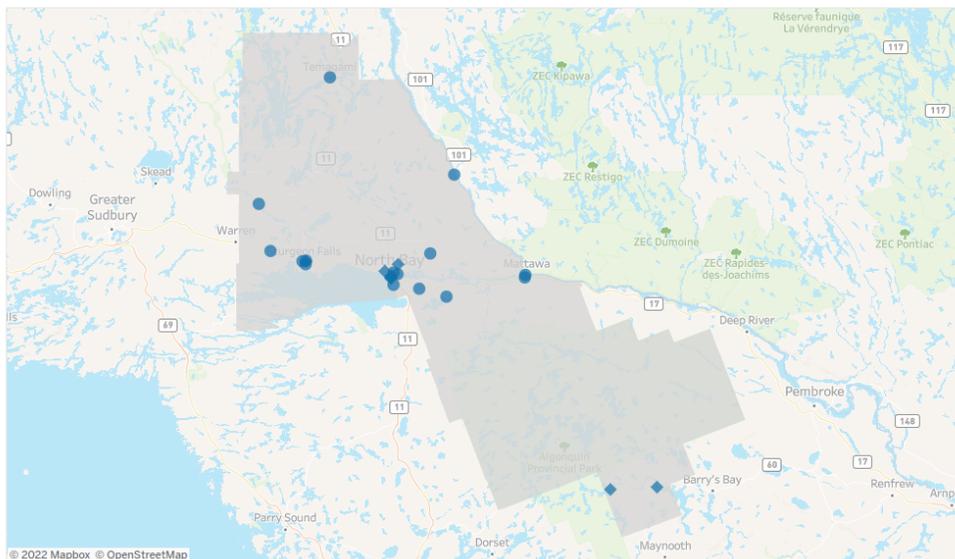
The graph on the right represents the program category applied to, and further indicates the care date needed into categories of when care is required: overdue (past care date required), within 3 months, and after 3 months. As of August 31, 2022, there were **595 unique children** past their care date needed (includes those waiting for care only), and a total of **1,112** applications that were passed the date they required care to begin (also includes those who have placements elsewhere).

EARLYON CHILD & FAMILY CENTRES

EarlyON Child & Family Centres

 24 EarlyON Sites	 15 Located in Schools	 12 French/Bilingual Sites	 5 / 3 Evening/Weekend Programs
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EarlyON Child & Family Centre Locations



Select a Quarter
Q3 2022

1. Select A Region
Select a Neighbourhood
Nipissing District

OR
Select a Municipality
All

2. Select an Agency
Select an Agency
All

All/Other Agencies
 Selected Agency

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EarlyON Child and Family Centres in the Nipissing District provide parents and caregivers with a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment for children in the early years. The goal is to provide families, with children from infancy up to 6 years of age, with access to high quality services and support them in their role as their children's first teachers, enhance their well-being, and enrich their knowledge about early learning and development. EarlyON Centres are dedicated to supporting the relationships between families and their children by giving them a place where they can come together and engage in positive, meaningful experiences.

Agencies delivering EarlyON programs and services believe in a family-centred, strength-based and holistic approach to children's health and development, and work collaboratively to ensure families are informed about, and connected to, other community services they may require.

EarlyON programs are delivered through permanent centres and mobile sites (such as local libraries, community centres and parks) and are operated by six agencies throughout the district.

All EarlyON programs and services are delivered at no cost to families and caregivers.

For more information related to the EarlyON Child and Family Centres, please visit [DNSSAB | EarlyON Child & Family Centres](#).

EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY

The biggest challenge that the early years and child care sector is currently facing is the inability to recruit and retain program staff. This was a significant issue prior to COVID-19 and has only worsened since the pandemic began, with Nipissing's licensed child care agencies operating between 48% and 100% of their licensed capacity.

It is recognized that investments need to be made to stabilize and strengthen the current sector in order to move forward with expanding programs and services across the district. The Children's Services department is currently exploring new and creative solutions in order to enhance the recruitment and retention strategy for the district and will produce a final report summarizing its findings and recommendations. The report will respond to the DNSSAB's Board request for an Early Years and Child Care Recruitment and Retention Strategy that addresses the need to attract more professionals to the sector.

While the needs for additional staff varies from one early years and child care agency to another, the service providers in the sector have indicated a need for well over 100 individuals (i.e. RECEs, non-qualified staff, support staff) who are willing to regularly work full-time and part-time hours.

There are a number of strategies currently in place to help with recruitment and retention efforts:

- DNSSAB ECE Apprenticeship Grant – for those individuals currently working in the field, DNSSAB will provide funding to support the cost of the ECE Apprenticeship course (up to \$3000/apprentice).
- Professional Learning for Early Years and Child Care Staff – paid professional development hours (up to 15 hours) and a variety of professional learning opportunities available throughout the year.
- Wage Enhancement Grant & Workforce Compensation – wage enhancement grant available for eligible program staff and annual wage increases for eligible RECEs.
- Pre-ECE Certificate Program – a free 10-week micro-credential program will be offered in October 2022 and January 2023 to those interested in working within the early years and child care sector. The program will provide a stepping-stone into the field, where participants would then be further supported into continuing their education to becoming RECEs.

In addition, there are several activities in the planning stages that will further help with recruitment and retention in the district:

- Accelerated ECE Program – currently examining with college partners the possibility for an online delivery of an accelerated ECE Program (16-18 months for completion), where DNSSAB would sponsor students to complete the program.
- Leadership Series – currently examining with college partners the possibility for an online delivery of a micro-credential series intended to support and enhance leadership, coaching, governance and business administrative skills within the early years and child care sector.
- Mentoring Series for Educators - currently examining the possibility of delivering a series of workshops intended to support and enhance leadership, coaching and mentoring skills of Educators within the early years and child care sector.
- Licensed Home Child Care Campaign – social media campaign to recruit additional home child care providers.
- ECE Recognition & Recruitment Campaign – social media and marketing campaign to recognize the contribution of Early Childhood Educators and to attract people to the field.
- Working with various community partners including secondary school board partners, employment agencies, etc. – campaign to promote the sector; promote co-op opportunities within the early years sector.

EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE CAPITAL STRATEGY

As service system manager for the early years and child care sector in Nipissing, DNSSAB Children's Services through DNSSAB Board approved planning, is responsible for managing growth in the sector in collaboration with early years and child care partners, local school boards, municipalities and other community partners and stakeholders who make up the system.

Through consultations, surveys and feedback received, DNSSAB has heard from parents and caregivers that the current system is not meeting their needs due to the lack of child care spaces available near home, school or work.

The Children's Services department is currently working on a strategy to address these concerns throughout the district. The report will respond to the DNSSAB Board's request for an Early Years and Child Care Capital Strategy that addresses the need for more licensed child care spaces, and assesses the need for additional EarlyON services within the District of Nipissing. This report will be brought to the DNSSAB Board late Fall and will highlight early years and child care services currently available in each neighbourhood/community throughout the district and will outline recommendations that address the demand for quality early years and child care services in each area.

It is important to note that while the data demonstrates a need to expand licensed child care services in many neighbourhoods/communities throughout the district, significant investments will be needed to expand the system as capital and operational funding for program expansions is not readily available in the current budget. Furthermore, recruitment and retention investments will be required to ensure that agencies have sufficient staffing levels to operate at the full licensed capacity.

FINANCIAL SUPPORTS FOR THE EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE SECTOR

Consolidated Municipal Service Manager/District Social Services Administration Board (CMSM/DSSAB) are designated as Service System Manager and are responsible for planning and managing licensed child care services and EarlyON Child and Family Centres in their communities. Legislation sets out the requirement that CMSMs and DSSABs develop local plans that reflect the “provincial interest” for child care and early years programs and services established in the legislation of the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA). Funding to support the early years and child care sector across the province is allocated through the provincial child care funding formula through a transfer payment agreement with the Ministry of Education.

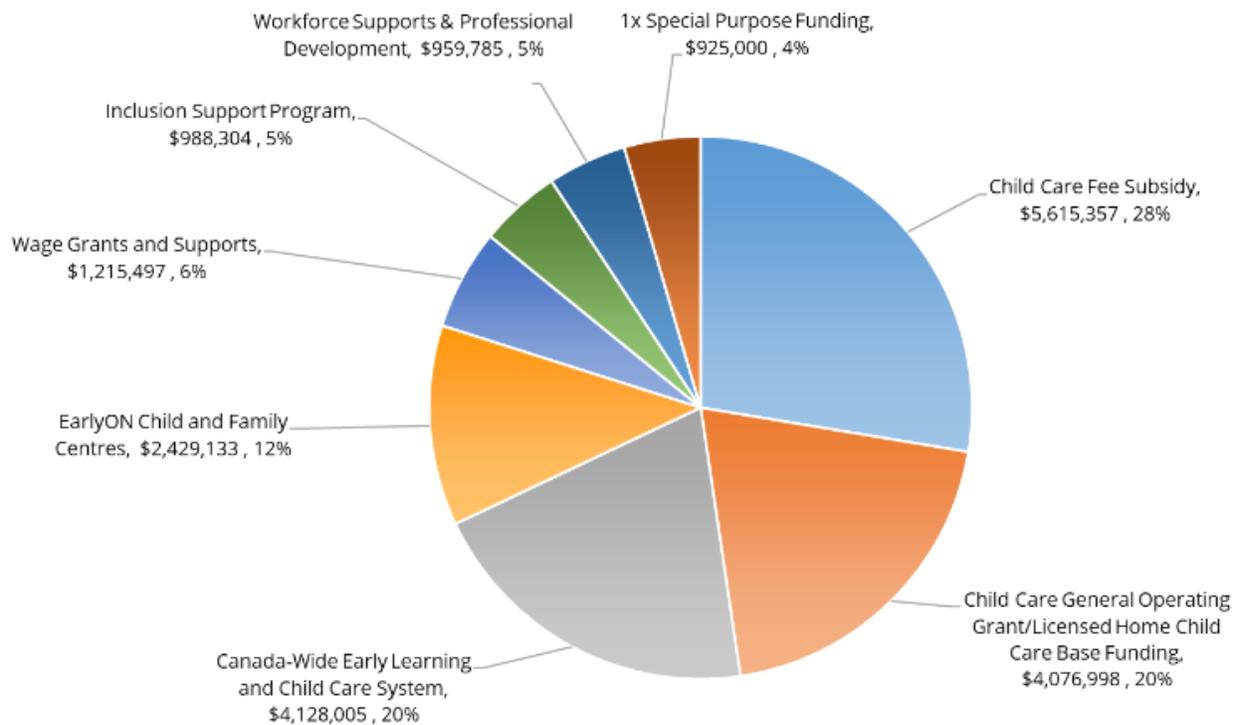
While some flexibility exists within funding allocations, the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education clearly outline the parameters under which the ministry will flow child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres funding to DNSSAB, and describes the requirements of the funding, including obligations for which DNSSAB must meet as Service System Manager.

DNSSAB Children’s Services Budget is made up of several funding pockets, each with its own purpose.

The following chart provides an overview of the 2022 estimated¹ budgeted expenditures.

¹ Because of the funding flexibility that exists between some funding pockets, the year-end expenditures may vary. For example, while child care fee subsidy is used to support families in accessing affordable licensed child care services, any surplus or slippage in the this area is being reinvested to further support quality, affordable and sustainable licensed child care services.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES ESTIMATED PROGRAM BUDGET EXPENDITURES - 2022



Child Care Fee Subsidy: Child care plays a key role in helping to promote healthy child development and helping children to reach their full potential. It is an essential support for many parents, helping them to balance the demands of career and family while participating in the workforce or pursuing education or training.

This funding allows eligible families to access affordable licensed child care services by providing support towards the daily cost of care. The eligibility criteria for child care fee subsidy is provincially mandated.

Child Care General Operating Grant: This funding is intended to support the costs of operating licensed child care programs in order to reduce fees for services, stabilize service levels, and (where funds allow), improve access to high quality affordable early learning and child care services for children and their families. This funding supports with (but not limited to) staff wages and benefits, lease and occupancy costs, utilities, administration, maintenance, etc.

To ensure a fair, equitable and transparent approach, this funding is allocated by using a funding formula that takes into the account (but not limited to) the following data elements: licensed capacity, operating capacity, rural/remote services, francophone services, staffing requirements, etc.

Licensed Home Child Care Base Funding: This funding is provided through a base funding model for licensed home child care agencies. The agencies receive this allocation to support the provision of stable, predictable funding to assist agencies with forecasting, planning, and actively recruiting more providers.

To ensure fair, equitable and transparent approach, this funding is allocated to agencies on a per home basis.

Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System: In 2022, the funding under this system will be used to build and leverage the success of Ontario's existing early learning and child care system by providing a 25% fee reduction to eligible families with children from infancy up to 6 years of age retroactive to April 1st. Furthermore, funding is available to support the licensed child care sector with workforce compensation supports.

The eligibility criteria for this funding is provincially mandated. It is used for revenue replacement to offset lost revenue from reduced parent fees and to support with actual cost of care and workforce compensation for eligible staff.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres: EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer high-quality, free drop-in and virtual programs for families and caregivers with children from infancy up to 6 years of age. The centres offer programs and services where families and caregivers can learn, grow and connect, together.

This funding is provided through a base funding model to support with the delivery of EarlyON Child and Family programs and services.

Wage Grants and Supports: Child care program staff play a key role during the critical years of a child's development. However, there is a significant wage gap between RECEs working in the publicly funded education system and those in the early years and licensed child care sector.

This wage gap creates challenges in retaining qualified pedagogical professionals to deliver affordable, high quality services. The funding that is provided through these allocations is intended to directly support licensed child care agencies with salaries and benefits.

For example, the Wage Enhancement Grant supports an increase of up to \$2 per hour, plus 17.5% benefits for eligible licensed child care program staff and home visitors. In addition, the Home Child Care Enhancement Grant supports an increase of up to \$20 per day for eligible home child care providers contracted with a licensed home child care agency.

The eligibility criteria for this funding is provincially mandated.

Inclusion Support Program: Services and supports purchased through this funding are for the inclusion of children with exceptional needs under 13 years of age in licensed child care centres and licensed home child care settings, and for children with exceptional needs in camps and children's recreation programs (age 4 years and up), at no additional cost to families or caregivers.

Funding under this category will support with costs related to (but not limited to) targeted professional development, Enhanced Staffing, obtaining specialized equipment, etc.

This funding is provided through a base funding model that takes into account the licensed childcare spaces and EarlyON Child and Family Centres served.

Workforce Supports and Professional Development: This allocation supports professional learning and development opportunities that build the capacity of professionals and volunteers working within the early years and licensed child care sector. Professionals working or volunteering within the sector can participate in multiple professional learning opportunities (i.e. workshops, seminars, continued education, etc.). Early years and child care professionals directly benefit as many participation barriers are eliminated through this funding which supports with the enrolment cost, hourly compensation for up to 15 hours of professional development, support with costs linked to participating in continued education opportunities, and more.

This funding also supports with recruitment and retention strategies described earlier in this report.

To ensure a fair, equitable and transparent method of funding, these monies are allocated to all agencies through a consistent approach, allowing all professionals working in the early years and child care sector to have equal opportunity to participate in professional learning opportunities (i.e. Agency-Led PD day, access to free seminars/workshops/webinars, hourly compensation for up to 20 hours of PD, etc.).

1x Special Purpose Funding: These allocations permit licensed child care agencies to address specific elements that need attention in the programs and services that are being delivered. The funding is intended to support the delivery of safe, secure, high quality, and affordable services.

Available funding will support the child care sector with business transformation, repairs and maintenance, as well as play-based materials and equipment.

This funding is allocated through an application process.

Overall System Allocations

Due to the nature of the funding available to the sector (described above) and tracking mechanisms currently in place, it is difficult to determine and provide the actual funding provided to individual sites or in accordance to licensed child care spaces. Depending on the funding type, allocations may be clustered as an agency allocation or at a program level. In some instances, service providers may request funding to address a specific need within an agency, while in other instances funding may be requested to address specific needs within a program area.



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