



Rainy River District  
Social Services  
Administration Board

# Child Care Service Plan 2007-08



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## CHILD CARE SERVICE PLAN 2007/08

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**Child Care Section 1: Progress Towards Achieving the Long-Term Vision for Best Start**

*In completing this Section of the 2007/08 Child Care Service Plan, please provide any additional child care service information that was not provided in Section 1 of the 2007/08 Best Start Community Plan. Where appropriate, please provide reference to the appropriate page of the 2007/08 Best Start Community Plan. Include information that relates to child care service.*

*Accomplishments and progress made to date that support the community Best Start vision:*

Gap/Identified Need	Progress/Accomplishments to Date
<p>1. <i>Child care in the West End of the Rainy River District.</i></p>	<p>In 2007, this gap was addressed through the development of the <i>Learn, Laugh &amp; Play Children's Centre</i> in the community of Rainy River. This new Child Care Centre is licensed for ten (10) toddlers and sixteen (16) preschool children, and is temporarily located in the Evangelical Church, until permanent space can be completed in the Riverview Elementary School.</p> <p>Initially, the quotes to build the proposed site came in substantially higher than the approved allocation. Subsequently, the School Board, Operator and Ministry revised the drawings in an attempt to work within the capital allocation.</p>
<p>2. <i>More supports for children with Special Needs.</i></p>	<p>An increase in the number of Special Needs Resource Teachers in the District has allowed us to serve more children with special needs. The FTE will increase in the fall of 2007, when a Resource Assistant is hired by the United Native Friendship Centre under the Best Start expansion of the <i>Aboriginal Head Start Program</i>.</p> <p>Some Resource Teachers have been provided specific training to support children with special needs including <i>Handwriting Without Tears</i>, <i>The Alert Program (How Does Your Engine Run?)</i>, and other specialized curriculum such as autism training. Training opportunities continue to be identified and offered to Resource Teachers throughout the District.</p> <p>Resource Teacher meetings are being coordinated</p>

	<p>by Child Care/Resource &amp; Training Coordinators from the Lake of the Woods Child Development Centre to develop stronger linkages between Resource Teachers in the Municipal sector. The intent of the Resource Teacher Educational &amp; Support Committee is to develop a common philosophy and consistent approach in the delivery of special needs resourcing; this includes identifying professional development as well as promoting a greater awareness and sensitivity toward inclusion within the early childhood education system.</p>
<p>3. <i>Professional development &amp; training to support Child Care staff and to enhance quality in early learning environments (better quality Early Learning and Care).</i></p>	<p>Training dollars have always been a pressure for Child Care service providers. The Ontario Early Years Centre has held discussions with service providers to determine specific training requirements for those working in Child Care environments, most specifically for professionals working in OEYC/FRPs. Through this process, the OEYC has arranged several training opportunities for staff.</p> <p>The Network is looking at ways to maximize training opportunities for all partners providing services to children and their families. This includes information-sharing regarding upcoming training and the possibility of pooling training dollars to bring in speakers and instructors. This will allow for a greater number of people to be trained in the District, rather than sending one or two people from organizations to locations outside the District. It is more cost effective and increases the number of those being trained.</p>
<p>4. <i>Improved affordability of child care for parents.</i></p>	<p>With the newly-mandated <i>Income Testing</i> for Child Care Fee Subsidy, families who may not have qualified in the past due to liquid assets or low debt may now qualify for partial subsidy, thus improving affordability for some families. Families who qualified for full subsidy under the previous <i>Needs Test</i> and have children turning six years of age will have an increase in child care fees. This is causing financial hardship for some families who experience an increase based on the 'grandparenting calculation' which is mandated by the Ministry. The Network, through the Children's Service Manager, Rainy River</p>

	DSSAB, will continue to monitor outcomes of the new <i>Income Test</i> .
5. <i>Enhanced linkages between education and child care and all other related services for children and families or caregivers.</i>	In the summer of 2007, a joint educational opportunity for education, child care, and early learning staff is being offered in the Rainy River District. The goal of this event is to enhance relationships between education and early childhood staff to work toward integrated service and ease of transition for children from the preschool to school environments.
6. <i>Adequate funding to address ongoing issues of viability and quality of Child Care services such as Child Care Centres, Resource Centres and Nursery Schools.</i>	Inadequate funding for the overall child care system including <i>Wage Subsidy, Special Needs Resourcing, and Resource Centre Programming</i> continues to be an ongoing pressure and does impact the quality of services. This issue will continue to be at the forefront of discussions between the RRDSSAB, as Service System Manager, and the Ministry, in order to ensure a high quality of service and affordability for District families.
7. <i>Wage Improvement of Early Childhood Educators working within the Child Care System.</i>	With the provision of Wage Improvement to Staff working in Licensed Child Care settings through Best Start, staff received a small bonus to their annual salaries. This funding has not been annualized and will vary in individual amounts provided to staff on an annual basis due to increasing staff. Unfortunately, this sets up disparity between some programs, as it does not allow Wage Improvement for Staff working within the Family Resource Programs under the DSSAB portfolio. It is imperative that all Early Childhood Professionals receive annual increments to salaries, in order to attract and retain high quality staff who feel valued as professionals.
8. <i>Lack of subsidized care throughout the District.</i>	Fee Subsidy was expanded to all Child Care sites including existing and new programs, as well as Nursery Schools within the District. With the increase in Best Start Fee Subsidy, pressures have decreased and subsidy is more available throughout the District.
9. <i>More Public Education regarding available</i>	Linkages between the Network and community have made more agencies and partners aware of services available to families. We are currently updating our

<i>services.</i>	<i>Directory of Child Care Services</i> to include the new sites funded under Best Start.
<i>10. Stabilize and enhance the current Child Care system.</i>	Although one-time funding was announced recently to address pressures in the current child care system, we need annualized funding to ensure existing child care services including Day Care Centres, Nursery Schools and Family Resource Centres/OEYCs remain in place to support children and their families. The RRDSSAB is willing to work with the Ministry to develop an alternate funding model which supports ongoing viability of Child Care services.
<i>11. Expand/enhance the RRDSSAB role as Service System Manager including strengthening partnerships with School Boards and publicly funded schools.</i>	Relationships between the RRDSSAB and community partners, such as education, have been strengthened and enhanced. Through the regularly scheduled Best Start Network meetings, the DSSAB has had the opportunity to become familiar with various community agencies and their representatives and mandates. These partners are now more familiar with the services and supports offered by the RRDSSAB.
<i>12. Re-assess local priorities for the upcoming year and examine performance measures.</i>	Through ongoing service planning for Child Care and Best Start, the RRDSSAB will continue to work with partners to identify needs and priorities for the District. Ongoing service planning provides us with the opportunity to assess gaps in service, set priorities for the upcoming year and address the priorities when possible; thus improving services for children and their families.

***Closing the gaps in child care service and better meeting the needs of the community, including the needs of Francophone and Aboriginal children and families, children with special needs and their families, and culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and families:***

<b>Gaps</b>	<b>Progress to Date</b>
<i>1. Increased Aboriginal child care spaces.</i>	The United Native Friendship Centre's <i>Zaagi-idiwin Aboriginal Head Start Program</i> has expanded its licensed capacity by nine (9) additional child care spaces, in order to address an ongoing wait-list for this very successful early intervention program. Program start-up is scheduled for August, 2007.
<i>2. Additional supports</i>	Although there have been no specific needs

<p><i>for Francophone families.</i></p>	<p>identified from the Regional French Language Network specifically for the Rainy River District, additional supports are available for families wishing to enhance French language skills of their children. In 2006, the Canadian Parents for French in partnership with the Fort Frances Nursery School Inc, commenced operations of a one day per week French Nursery School program. The Program exposes children to the French language and prepares children for a successful entry into the school system.</p>
<p>3. <i>Early Learning &amp; Child Care Settings more inclusive of and responsive to the needs of children with differing abilities.</i></p>	<p>With the recent announcement of new one-time funding for Child Care, this service need will be somewhat addressed through an infusion of funding for <i>Special Needs Resourcing</i>. Funding will assist in the purchase of resources, supplies and equipment, and will offset some long-standing pressures. Unfortunately, one-time funding is only a temporary fix. Annualized funding is crucial to ensure that this need can be addressed fully. Until then, full inclusion and responsiveness cannot be achieved.</p>

*Meeting the needs of Aboriginal Children and their families, Francophone children and their families and families that are culturally and/or linguistically diverse:*

**Child Care Service Providers attempt to meet the needs of Aboriginal children & their families by:**

- providing culturally appropriate literature, books/stories, toys, puzzles, puppets, etc;
- providing resource material, posters and resource literature;
- incorporating the culture into planning (artwork, literature, gross motor, language activities, etc);
- inviting special visitors to the centre such as drummers/dancers, organizing on- site Pow Wows, and inviting elders to the centre to tell stories and provide cultural activities;
- providing referrals to agencies serving Aboriginal children and their families;
- working with area Band Offices to ensure needs of Aboriginal children are met; and
- providing support and guidance to Aboriginal families accessing services.

Currently, Country View Child Care Centre is in a contractual agreement with two First Nations Communities to provide spaces specifically for their children.

### **Meeting the needs of Francophone children & their families:**

Although many sites identified that they do not have Francophone children attending their programs, Service Providers do attempt to meet the needs of Francophone children and their families through the provision of the following supports and activities:

- books, poetry, posters and literature; and
- linkages with French support services.

The Fort Frances Nursery School provides a French Nursery School session one day per week. Programming includes language, gross and fine motor and cognitive skill development.

Service Providers report that they have limited supplies and resource material for Francophone children.

### **Meeting the needs of children with special needs & and their families:**

Children's Service Providers meet the needs of children with special needs and their families through the following:

- Special Needs Resourcing and Resource Teachers are available at most Child Care Centres and Nursery Schools;
- Many sites are accessible, however some sites have stairs which makes it difficult for some families and is a barrier to children who require a wheel- chair or walking device;
- Space is provided for specialized services to offer programming, assessment and supports to special needs children;
- Linkages and referrals are available for specialized services;
- Equipment and supplies, such as a Busy Box donated by NWHU, Sensory Integration Kit donated by FASD Northwest, Sign Language DVD and specialized equipment are available to families;
- Specialized services develop IPPs/IDPs for special needs children; and
- Toys, equipment and parent resources are available at all FRP/OEYC sites.



*Description of 2006/07 Service Levels including:*

- *child care fee subsidy*
- *wage subsidy*
- *Best Start wage improvement*
- *special needs resourcing*
- *resource centres.*

Service Name	2006 Funding Levels	Service Levels
<b>*See Template #1 pg. 28</b>		

- *Over/under expended services, including services*
  - *child care fee subsidy*
  - *wage subsidy*
  - *Best Start wage improvement*
  - *special needs resourcing*
  - *resource centres.*

Services	Under/Over expended	Explanation
Fee Subsidy (DNA)	Over expended \$21,818	*Paid from Best Start Fee Subsidy.
Administration (DNA)	Over-expended \$10,877	Over-expenditure was paid 100% by RRDSSAB.
Administration (Best Start)	\$64,000	This identifies the amount paid from the unconditional grant to cover the cost of administration (Best Start Coordinator).

***Progress made towards developing a wait list management strategy for Child Care Fee Subsidies:***

Currently using Rainy River DSSAB *Child Care Policy CC-6.7: Priority Waiting List for Subsidized Spaces* as follows:

**Purpose**

The Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board (RRDSSAB) develops criteria to determine assignment of subsidized Child Care spaces.

**Policy**

Assignment of subsidized Child Care spaces is based upon the following criteria, in rank order of priority:

1. Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) participants;
2. Sole support parents on social assistance, who are working, attending school or participating in a training program;
3. Sole support parents not on social assistance, who are working, attending school or participating in a training program;
4. Referrals from child welfare, Children's Mental Health, Child Development, etc. for children with special care needs;
5. Two-parent families who are working, attending school or participating in a training program.

Exceptions to the above will be considered, at the discretion of the Children's Services Manager.

**Child Care Section 2: Activities & Community Engagement Process**

*In completing this Section of the 2007/08 Child Care Service Plan, please provide any additional child care service information that was not provided in Section 2 of the 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan. Where appropriate, please provide reference to the appropriate page of the 2007/08 Best Start Community Plan. Include information that relates to the communication of the Best Start vision and community engagement related to child care services for the following stakeholders:*

*Parents (including Francophone and Aboriginal parents, as well as parents of children with special needs, and other culturally and/or linguistically diverse parents):*

Child Care Service Providers invite all parents to be engaged in the planning processes. Many Service Providers have *parent feedback boxes* located in their Centres to allow parents to voice concerns, ask questions and provide feedback on programming and services. Child Care sites are operated by parent volunteers sitting on respective Boards of Directors and have utilized parent's expertise for program operations. Annual general meetings and special events such as BBQ's, family events and activities are planned throughout the year to provide opportunities for parents to offer suggestions to the various Service Providers. Many Child Care Service Providers send out surveys for parents and the broader community to assist them in evaluating their programming and ensuring the needs of all families are met.

The engagement of parents is considered paramount to the success of children's services. The utilization of past and ongoing consultations conducted by the Best Start Network is identified on *pages 27 – 31* of the *2007/08 Best Start Community Plan*. Information collected from parents is used for Child Care Service Planning and assists us to identify gaps, set priorities and create strategies to reach the Best Start vision.

### **Child Care Section 3: 2007/08 Strategies to Move Forward with the Community Vision for Best Start**

*In completing this Section of the 2007/08 Child Care Service Plan, please provide any additional child care service information that was not provided in Section 3 of the 2007/08 Best Start Community Plan. Where appropriate, please provide reference to the appropriate page of the 2007/08 Best Start Community Plan. Include a description of:*

*Any emergent child care needs or gaps within the community including a forecast of local child care needs.*

1. **Transportation** continues to be a major gap in service for the Rainy River District. Child Care Service Providers have many families without their own vehicle which makes it difficult for them to attend the Child Care facility, especially during winter months and bouts of inclement weather.

It has also been noted that transportation from the Child Care Centres to school and back to the Child care Centre is difficult, as some Boards of Education are not able to provide this service.

2. **Fee Subsidy:** An increased demand for subsidized child care has been experienced in the Rainy River District, since the inception of Best Start. An increasing awareness of the benefits of early learning (including distribution of the Ministry Policy Statement: *Improving Access to Subsidized Child Care*) has created a significant increase in families accessing subsidy. *Day Nurseries Act (DNA)* funding provided to the RRDSSAB for fee subsidy was fully expended in the early fall of 2006. It is anticipated that the demand will increase throughout 2007, due to the new *Income Test* which allows more families to qualify for a partial subsidy. The Children's Services Manager, RRDSSAB, will review the demand on a monthly basis. It is anticipated that a wait-list will be established for fee subsidy dollars in 2007.
  
3. **Constructions Costs** for expansion have come in substantially higher than estimated, causing undue funding pressures and late start dates for new Child Care Centres. In particular, tenders for child care spaces in Riverview School, Town of Rainy River (Rainy River District School Board), have come in significantly higher than originally allocated. This issue has been brought to the attention of both the Ministry of Education and MCYS, in order to pursue additional capital funding to complete the much-anticipated project. The new Child Care facility is currently housed in the Evangelical Church, until the school space can be completed. We are currently awaiting a response from MCYS regarding the availability of additional capital dollars to ensure that the new Child Care facility has a permanent location in Riverview Elementary School, per the '*Schools First policy*' and results of the initial community consultation conducted in Rainy River for *Phase One of Best Start*.
  
4. **Wage Improvement** allocated through Best Start has provided an increase to early childhood professionals working in Child Care Centres and Nursery Schools. Although this increase is welcomed, it cannot be used to increase actual salaries which are necessary to attract and retain professionals. The uncertainty of annualized funding and the effect of changes to the number of FTEs cannot guarantee staff raises. Unfortunately, the funding that was provided excluded ECEs working in our Family Resource Centres and OEYCs, which only served to perpetuate more inequity in the Child Care System.
  
5. It is necessary to develop **formal protocols for referrals** between existing service providers in the District. This will serve to strengthen connections between the services and provide a seamless transition from one service to another.

6. There is a need for a **JK/SK Program to be located in Devlin at the Crossroads School**. The Program would be operated by the current Non-Profit Child Care Operator, Country View Child Care Centre. This integrated program is currently licensed for toddlers, pre-school and school-aged children. The Operator is willing to address the need for JK/SK children. (*See Appendix #1.*)
7. The need for a thorough **assessment of Child Care Services in the community of Fort Frances** must be completed. (*See Appendix #2.*) There is a definite need for an Infant care program, as the community of Fort Frances has a number of children 18 months and younger on the wait-list. This Child Care Centre currently operates at full capacity for all age groups, however, this can fluctuate. The Private Home Child Care Program through the Town of Fort Frances is also experiencing a need for more Private Home providers. It has been extremely difficult attracting providers due to the rate of pay, policies and procedures, and the amount of paper work to be completed. An in-depth needs assessment will ensure that there is a present and future need for Infant Care, and that the program can remain viable over the long term.

Several families in the community of Stratton are inquiring about licensed Child Care in their community. The Child Care Centre of Rural Stratton Inc. is a Family Resource Centre/OEYC who has identified this need and stated that they would be willing to conduct a needs assessment through the distribution of surveys to community members.

8. **Sustainability of Child Care Services** is an on-going issue for all services within the Rainy River District. Financial issues have been identified and will present challenges in moving forward with the long term vision of Best Start. Ongoing, adequate funding for Child Care Service Providers is essential to the success of *Best Start* and to address viability issues of existing Child Care Services including Family Resource Centres/OEYCs and new Child Care facilities developed through *Best Start*. Child Care Services have not seen any significant funding increases to their programs since initial funding was allocated; this has placed substantial financial burden on the various programs, threatening the viability of present service levels. Uncontrollable costs such as utilities, insurance, food and supplies, audits, rental space, taxes, etc. are ever-increasing and there is no mechanism in place to increase funding to offset these costs. Child Care Services have taken funding from training, memberships, supplies and equipment, in order to address the increasing costs at the expense of these valuable supports to the program. Some sites have had to decrease hours of operation, in order to apply cost savings from the reduction in hours to cover

uncontrollable costs that have arisen. At this time, there is nowhere else within their program to realize efficiencies and to address increasing fixed expenses. Existing operational budgets are already stretched to the limit.

The RRDSSAB is willing to work with MCYS to develop an alternative funding model for Child Care Services which supports ongoing provision of services. It is recommended that the MCYS consider an alternate funding model which guarantees ongoing, sufficient, sustainable funding with an escalation factor to address fixed costs.

***Strategies that the community will undertake to further close the gaps in child care service in order to meet community needs, including the needs of Francophone and Aboriginal children and families, children with special needs and their families, and the needs of other culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and families.***

***Aboriginal/Francophone/ culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and their families:***

- Provide cultural sensitivity training and workshops for staff working in Child Care Services;
- Encourage and/or enhance community partnerships with area Bands, Aboriginal Service Providers, Francophone groups and Service Providers;
- Ensure Board of Directors make-up represents the population served including Aboriginal and Francophone and those that are culturally and linguistically diverse;
- Pursue funding to purchase equipment and supplies which are culturally and linguistically appropriate, ensuring that the needs of all families are met including Aboriginal and Francophone;
- Ensure a variety of culturally appropriate programming including provision of activities in Ojibwa and French;
- Incorporate cultural activities in daily programming at all child care sites;
- Partner with experts in Aboriginal and Francophone services to assist in developing appropriate programs and support services;
- Invite special visitors to the Child Care facility to promote and enhance cultural programming including crafts, ethnic food preparation, language and gross motor activities;
- Share/rotate employees to provide cultural activities on occasion at other sites; and

- Work with Boards of Education to streamline entry into the school system and enhance Teacher and ECE partnerships. (See *page 41* of the *2007-08 Best Start Community Plan*.)

***Children with Special Needs and their families:***

- Incorporate activities for all children with special needs enrolled in the Centre;
- Alter programs to be more inclusive of all children;
- Secure additional funding to purchase specialized equipment for enhancing fine and gross motor skills, speech/language, hearing, cognitive resources etc;
- Secure additional funding for children who require one-on-one programming and support (children who require a one-to-one worker i.e. Program Aid). Some Special Needs programs have had to turn away children who have high needs requiring one-to-one support, as their existing staffing cannot accommodate this request;
- Develop and/or enhance relationships with specialized services;
- Ensure ongoing training dollars are available for staff working with children with special needs;
- Work with Boards of Education to streamline entry into the school system;
- Enhance ECE and Kindergarten relationships (See *page 41* of the *2007-08 Best Start Community Plan*); and
- Continue to welcome specialized services to attend the sites for screening and assessment, and to conduct team meetings for support of individualized program planning.

***Obstacles and challenges to closing existing child care gaps and moving forward with the Best Start vision that continues to exist within the community and what is proposed to address these challenges. (These challenges may be related to funding, legislation, program mandates, human resources, etc.).***

Many of the gaps and challenges in Child Care services are directly related to the lack of adequate funding to sustain and enhance programs, as outlined in the *2007/08 Best Start Community Plan*.

**Funding:** As identified on *page 40* of the *2007/08 Best Start Community Plan*, ongoing, adequate funding is essential to the success of *Best Start*. Family Resource Programs/Ontario Early Years Centres (FRPs/OEYCs) which are transitioning into Hubs have long-standing funding issues which need to be addressed so that these valuable services remain available to children and to the partners providing services within Hubs. FRPs/OEYCs

have not seen a significant increase to their programs since initial funding was allocated; this has placed substantial financial burden on the various programs, threatening the viability of present service levels. Uncontrollable costs such as utilities, insurance, food and supplies, audits, rental space, taxes, etc. are ever-increasing and there is no mechanism in place to increase funding to offset these costs. FRPs/OEYCs have taken funding from training, memberships, supplies and equipment, in order to address the increasing costs at the expense of these valuable supports to the program. Some sites have had to decrease hours of operation, in order to apply cost savings from the reduction in hours to cover uncontrollable costs that have arisen. At this time, there is nowhere else within their program to realize efficiencies and to address increasing fixed expenses. Existing operational budgets are already stretched to the limit.

This funding issue is not exclusive to our FRPs/OEYC but is a long standing issue for all child care programs. The DSSAB looks to MCYS to consider an alternate funding model which guarantees ongoing, sufficient, sustainable funding with an escalation factor to address fixed costs. We are willing to work with MCYS to address this funding pressure.

**Human Resources:** Child Care Service Providers in the Rainy River District have difficulty recruiting and maintaining qualified ECE professionals. Wage Subsidy is provided as an enhancement to salaries and benefits for employees of day nurseries, private-home day care agencies, resource centres, special needs programs and payments to home child care providers. The Wage Subsidy calculation developed by MCSS prior to the transfer of Child Care to the DSSABs must be revised to reflect current times, as its number/point system were developed in 1991 to 1993. At a minimum an escalation factor which reflects the cost of living increases should be applied to ensure staff working in early learning environments receives a more competitive salary.

**Transportation:** Transportation continues to be an issue for families accessing supports and services within the Rainy River District. This need has been identified year after year in service planning for Child Care, Best Start and is a common thread outlined in the service plans of all community partners. It is a gap in service which impacts most negatively on low-income or rural families within our District. In order for families to access Child Care services and the services of the *Hub*, a transportation strategy must be developed. Bus and train service no longer exists in the District, and taxi service is not available or affordable for many families and, in most instances, is not the preferred method due to safety issues. Most taxis do not come equipped with proper child restraints and/or car seats.



The Province must also recognize transportation as a major gap in service, in particular for families accessing Child Care and other Hub services, and they must be willing to contribute financially to resolve the transportation problem in this rural area. It is recommended that MCYS allocate specific funds to address *Best Start* transportation issues.

The DSSAB, with the Best Start Network will continue to explore partnerships with District school boards, and volunteer and service organizations. We will attempt to create solutions to the problem by exploring various alternatives for addressing transportation. However, in order to be successful, financial backing is necessary. Additional funding may be utilized to pay drivers to transport children and their families to and from services, by partnering with agencies that currently have vehicles and, where there are no vehicles, to purchase or contract with transportation providers in the community. Partners have used temporary solutions to address transportation for some families, however, this certainly does not address the needs for all District families.

**Needs Assessment:** In order to move forward with the Best Start vision, the Town of Fort Frances has submitted a proposal requesting additional funding to conduct an in-depth needs assessment (See Appendix#2). There is a definite need for an Infant Care program, as the community of Fort Frances has a number of children 18 months and younger on the wait-list. This Child Care Centre currently operates at full capacity for all age groups, however, this can fluctuate. The Private Home Child Care Program of the Town of Fort Frances is also experiencing a need for more Private Home providers. It has been extremely difficult attracting providers due to the rate of pay, policies and procedures, and the amount of paper work to be completed. An in-depth needs assessment will allow the Town of Fort Frances to identify the specific current and future needs, thus ensuring the program will remain viable.

**Small Water Works Legislation:** Quality of water in some communities may not meet the standards; this is a health and safety issue that must be addressed to ensure the safety of those consuming the water. The issue restricts where services are located, thereby leading to sites which may not be considered convenient for children and their families.

**Confidentiality/Information Sharing:** The development of an *information sharing protocol* is important to ensure that information can be shared in the circumstance of a child transitioning from child care to elementary school. At this time, a protocol is not in place. In partnership with child care, education, parents and the Best Start Network, a protocol and policies will be developed to support information sharing and a more seamless transition for children.

**Enhancing ECE & Kindergarten Strategies:** The Network will bring ECEs and kindergarten teachers together, in order to move closer to the vision of Best Start. The Network has prioritized this goal to aid in streamlining entry from early learning programs to the school system. This will ensure that children are ready to achieve success, as they enter into grade one. Fostering the ECE-Teacher relationship is directly related to the success of the Best Start vision.

The Network has already begun to address this challenge. In August of 2007, the Network is planning a *Summer Celebration* for ECEs, teachers and other early learning professionals. The event will celebrate the importance of professionals working together to provide an integrated approach to serving children and will ensure that children have a seamless entry into the school system, ready to achieve success. The Network intends to promote the *Summer Celebration* as an annual event which will lead to a better understanding of roles, a celebration of the values of each profession and an understanding of what each program has to offer. Priorities for future years will be joint training, a streamlined transition into school, and the identification of best practices to ensure that children are prepared for entry into the school system.

To date, there is a great deal of enthusiasm amongst ECEs and teachers for the *Summer Celebration*. The Network will look to this group to direct the agenda for future meetings and will support annual planning, as dollars are available.

**One Time Capital Funding:** Construction costs for expansion have come in substantially higher than estimated, causing undue funding pressures and late start dates for new Child Care Centres. In particular, tenders for child care spaces in Riverview School, Town of Rainy River (Rainy River District School Board), have come in substantially higher than originally allocated. This issue has been brought to the attention of both the Ministry of Education and MCYS, in order to pursue additional capital funding to complete the much-anticipated project. The new Child Care facility is currently housed in the Evangelical Church, until the school space can be completed.

*The 2007-08 Best Start Child Care Allocation is comprised of two components:*

- *Sustainability funding to help support the almost 15,000 child care spaces created across the province under Best Start which became operational by end of September 2006; and*
- *Enhanced funding to help address pressures in the delivery of child care services across the early learning and care system.*

*Please provide a description of the:*

- *Processes underway to help sustain the child care spaces identified for your community under Best Start which were operational by September 2006:*
  - Utilize the Best Start unconditional grant (excluding the portion committed for capital and one-time start-up) to supplement operations until MCYS commits adequate, annualized, ongoing funding at 100%.
  - Through the work of the Best Start Network, continue to promote the benefits of early learning and child care to families.
  - Promote/advertise Fee Subsidy availability to families and to agencies serving families.
  - Currently attempting to secure additional capital dollars from MCYS to ensure the new Child Care Centre in Rainy River (Learn, Laugh and Play Children's Centre), is developed within the Riverview Elementary School complying with the School's First Policy and based initial community consultations. \*See page 32 of the *2007/08 Best Start Community Plan*.
- *Strategies that the CMSM/DSSAB will undertake to address pressures in the delivery of child care services across the early learning and care system:*
  - Work with MCYS to develop and alternate funding model for existing Child Care Centres currently funded through DNA/ELCC including Child Care Resource Centres/OEYCs.
  - Continue to realize efficiency within funding lines for Child Care Service Providers.
  - Continue to monitor funding pressures within the system and strategize to address these pressures.
  - Address issues related to funding as additional resources are available.

## Child Care Section 4: Strategies for System Integration

*System integration is an on-going process whereby local service providers and relevant stakeholders engage in progressively greater degrees of joint service activity along an integration continuum in order to provide families with better access to services*

### *I. Integration Amongst Best Start Network Partners*

*In completing this section of the 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan, please provide any additional child care service information that was not provided in Section 4 of the 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan. Where appropriate, please provide reference to the appropriate page of the 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan. Please describe how child care will contribute to the local vision and plan for system integration completing the following questions:*

*Consider the nature and structure of your individual program/service/agency planning process – what opportunities exist to integrate, or further integrate, this planning process with the community planning occurring at the Best Start Network table, in order to move forward with the development of a locally integrated system of services?*

Child Care Service Providers would like to continue to participate in planning processes occurring through Best Start. Once established, community Hub Planning Committees will include all partners for the respective community including staff of Child Care, Nursery School and Family Resource Centres/OEYCs. This will allow Service Providers to conduct their planning in line with the Best Start Vision and also allow for their expertise to be shared at the various planning tables.

Child Care Services including Day Care Centres, Nursery Schools, Aboriginal Head Start Program and FRCs/OEYCs currently have representative sitting at the Network Table. The expertise shared at the Network Table and through various other community planning tables is valuable and important to the success of service integration for families.

Child Care Service Providers have stated that they would like to streamline the planning process with District schools. The *Summer Celebration* scheduled for August of 2007 will allow ECEs and teachers to make connections and build ongoing relationships for the purpose of sharing expertise, ensuring a seamless transition from early learning programs to

the school system, and ensuring that children enter into the school system more ready to learn and achieve success.

The Zaagi-idiwin Aboriginal Head Start is already operational as a hub for Aboriginal low-income, higher-risk families. Networking with JK/SK teachers will benefit children moving from the school readiness program to an elementary school. The Head Start Program suggests that they can share information regarding their curriculum and gather appropriate information from other partners to enhance the curriculum.

***Are there opportunities for your program/service/agency to engage in collaborative service delivery within community hubs that are currently operational, or which may be operational in future years? For program/service components delivered within the community, how are or will linkages to the hubs be developed or sustained?***

Child Care Service Providers will have the opportunity to sit at the Community Hub Planning Committees and provide information to ensure collaborative service delivery between their services and that of the Hubs.

The *2007/08 Best Start Community Plan* identifies that the five FRC/OEYC sites are transitioning into Hubs. In areas that do not have convenient or close access to Hubs, outreach may be an option for the delivery of services and supports. Through the work of the Best Start Network and the Community Hub Planning Committees, processes will be developed for the delivery of services and linkage of service deliverers. Once established, Hub service providers will continue to meet to support programs and supports, and problem solve issues as they arise.

***Are there opportunities to develop mechanisms that will facilitate collaborative service delivery between your program/service/agency and other Best Start partners (e.g. communication and service protocols, MOUs, etc.)?***

- Service providers will be invited to sit on their respective communities Hub Planning Committee;
- Service Providers and Best Start Partners could develop service protocols and *Memorandums of Understanding* for the delivery of services and supports to families as well as for the provision of spaces, equipment and supplies, parent education etc;
- UNFC protocols would be developed to ensure that all Hub sites have information, supports and services available or linkages to

- supports which meet the needs of Aboriginal Children and their families throughout the District; and
- Shared training opportunities will be pursued and established amongst Network partners including child care and education.

***Are there implementation challenges and/or barriers faced by your program/service/agency in moving forward with the community's vision for an integrated system of services? Please describe these challenges and include a description of the strategies to overcome these obstacles.***

CHALLENGES/BARRIERS	STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES/BARRIERS
Parents needing to tell their story to several service providers.	Develop common consent amongst service providers delivering services to families which is supported by parents requiring services.
Needs assessment required for the Town of Fort Frances prior to enhancing its current location to accommodate ultimate space for a fully functioning Hub which could include Infant Child Care and a larger space for the FRP/OEYC to conduct full services of the Hub.	Request additional funding from MCYS to ensure a full assessment is complete, prior to investing capital dollars. This will ensure that all services are considered and will study the potential impacts to the overall Child Care Program and long term viability of expansion is considered prior to development.  <i>*See Appendix #2</i>
Keeping all partners including Child Care, Nursery Schools, FRPs/OEYCs and Aboriginal Head Start engaged in the planning and implementation of Best Start and up to date on the development of Hub Services.	Ensure all partners have a voice at the Network table and are invited in planning and implementation through Network membership, planning committees, etc.  Circulation of the <i>Best Start Newsletter</i> which will provide updates for Best Start, training opportunities, information of services available, and upcoming events.  <i>Annual Best Start Information Forums</i> for communities (could be conducted at trade shows, health fairs, etc.)
Sustainability/Viability of Services	Work with MCYS to develop an alternative funding model for Child Care Services which supports ongoing provision of services.  Pursue additional funding to ensure services are sustained.

	<p>Monitor pressures in service due to possible increase in demand and work with appropriate funding agency to ensure adequate funding.</p>
Technology	<p>Some Child Care Service Providers have identified that their current technology is not adequate. These sites have dial up connections for the internet and use the same line for their fax and telephone services. Unfortunately, there is no room in their current budget to eliminate this problem. It is hoped that MCYS will consider this funding issue and provide increases to Child Care funding to address the issue.</p>
Adequate Funding to Support Hub Development and On-going Viability	<p>Annualized planning dollars must be maintained to provide ongoing support for Hub development.</p> <p>Annualized funding must be provided to increase staff hours to ensure Hubs are staffed fully and therefore available for the provision of supports to all families.</p> <p>Network will look at pooling resources to provide joint training opportunities, marketing and publicity, and, in some cases, to provide resources, supplies and equipment to be utilized at the Hub.</p> <p>It is necessary that the Ministry provide funding for major equipment and supplies to enhance Hub services, as this is currently a component of service provider budgets that are already stretched to the limit.</p>
Transportation	<p>In order to ensure children and their families have access to the system of services and supports available through Hubs, a transportation component must be considered. MCYS must consider providing funding specifically for transportation.</p>
High Staff Turn-over	<p>The Rainy River District continues to experience a high turn-over within the early learning and care profession. The point system for <i>Wage Subsidy</i> must be increased to reflect at minimum the cost of inflation to assist in keeping a competitive</p>

	salary for ECEs.
Address Racism	Provide public education on culture and organization cultural competency training.
Public Relations	Provide ongoing communications and good-will ambassadors.
Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Network Sub-Committee will work on Monitoring &amp; Evaluation and report its findings back to the Network.</p> <p>Utilized the Data Analysis Coordinators (DACs) to assist in developing a tool for monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>Utilize the DACs to measure results and report findings to the Network.</p> <p>Use <i>EDI</i> results to ensure proper services and supports are available in areas of the District which demonstrate a need for enhancements.</p> <p>Implement strategies for improvements in the system and develop best practices for Hub services.</p>

***II. Integration Initiatives***

***Include a description of integration initiatives between child care services and:***

***Schools, including improving access to seamless day and before and after school care.***

As identified in the *2007/08 Best Start Community Plan*, it is a priority for the Network to bring ECEs and kindergarten teachers together, in order to move forward with the vision of Best Start. The Network has prioritized this goal to aid in streamlining entry from early learning programs to the school system. This will ensure that children are ready to achieve success as they enter into grade one. Fostering the ECE-Teacher relationship is directly related to the success of the Best Start vision.

The Network has already begun to address this challenge. In August of 2007, the Network is planning a *Summer Celebration* for ECEs, teachers and other early learning professionals. The event is intended to celebrate the importance and value of professionals in working together to provide an integrated approach to serving children and to ensure that children



have a smooth, seamless entry into the school system, ready to achieve success. It is intended that the *Summer Celebration* be an annual event which will initially allow a better understanding of roles, celebrate the values of each profession and provide overviews of other programs. Priorities for future years include the examination of joint training opportunities, streamlined processes for transitioning from early learning programs to school, and an assessment of the curriculum to ensure best practices are used to prepare children for entry into the school system.

To date, there is a great deal of enthusiasm amongst ECEs and teachers for this event. The Network will look to this group to direct the agenda for future meetings and will support annual planning, as dollars are available.

- Child Care Service Providers provide child care for JK/SK and school age children;
- Some School Boards currently bus children to and from the Child Care Centre. Child Care sites work with those Boards to ensure this transition is smooth;
- The Child Care site currently located in Crossroads Community School has ongoing communication with the school and kindergarten teachers, and implement the child care curriculum created by the Ministry of Education; and
- FRCs/OEYCs provide some activities and programs for school aged children.

***Other children's service providers including Ontario Early Years Centres, Resource Centres, Preschool Speech and Language, Infant Hearing, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, and Infant Development Program to support:***

- ***strategies for integrating and/or sharing best practices on early learning and care activities and***
- ***establishing access to simplified and convenient points of access to services for children in the early learning and care system.***

Child Care providers connect with a variety of agencies providing services for children. Although linkages may differ for each Child Care site, all sites can make referrals; offer space for on-site assessments and observations; provide information to caregivers on a variety of community services such as Northwords Speech & Language, Infant Hearing, FACs, ISN, child care, autism programs, health care facilities, and schools; and offer field trips for children

and parents to familiarize them with services and activities within their home communities.

Child Care providers can plan with other children's services and parents in several ways to ensure that the unique needs of a child are identified and addressed, including *Individual Program Plans (IPPs)* and/or *Service Plans (ISPs)*. In order to integrate planning and streamline the process even further, service providers can share the plan and gather input from other relevant organizations, businesses and schools.

For many Child Care service providers operating FRPs/OEYCs, the consensus is that these providers have been providing many Hub services and supports to children and their families. They have been involved in Best Start Service Planning and have had and continue to have representation at the Network table. Strong partnerships have been developed and will be further fostered through continued participation in the planned activities and strategies the Network has set forth in this document.

Child Care will facilitate collaborative service delivery between themselves and the other Best Start partners by continued participation at the Network table and its working groups, and through improved communication. Information on services available through the child care site will be disseminated to partners and the broader community by newsletter, information sessions such as open houses, trade shows, health fairs etc. Child Care plays a vital role in the provision of Hub services.

### **Child Care Section 5: Service Targets for 2007- 08**

*Please include one of the following:*

- a) Template #1 requires data to be entered for non-demonstration sites for both the 80/20 approved costs and Best Start funding at 100%. This template is to be competed by CMSMs/DSSABs that are not demonstration sites.*
- b) Template #2 requires data to be entered for demonstration sites for both the 80/20 approved costs and Best Start funding at 100%. This template is to be competed by CMSMs/DSSABs that are demonstration sites only.*

*c) A copy of the service target template submitted as a part of the 2007 budget submission package.*

## Child Care Service Plan 2006/07 Update: Template 1 for Non-Demo Sites

Data Element	2006/07 Actuals (2006)			2007/2008 (2007)		
	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%
Fee Subsidy Expenditures	\$246,995	\$45,150	\$23,356	\$246,995	\$45,150	\$143,691
Fee Subsidy # of Children Served	123	15	23	109	16	63
OW Formal Expenditures	\$3,509	n/a	n/a	\$13,000	n/a	n/a
OW Formal # of Children Served	12	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a
OW Informal Expenditures	\$5,282	n/a	n/a	\$7,000	n/a	n/a
OW Informal # of Children Served	12	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	n/a
Special Needs Resourcing Expenditures	\$218,351	\$38,816	\$45,6000	\$218,351	\$38,816	\$63,705
Special Needs Resourcing # of Children Served	32	40	5.51	35	38	6
Special Needs Resourcing # of FTE Resource Teachers	3.52	4.27	.77	3.52	4.27	1.11
Resource Centres Expenditures	\$413,028	n/a		\$413,028	n/a	\$29,633
Resource Centres # of Children Served (CCDVISIT#)	9486	n/a		9500	n/a	9500
Wage Subsidy NP Expenditures	\$212,063	\$30,640	\$12,900	\$212,063	\$30,640	\$24,934
Wage Subsidy NP # of Contracts	7	8	1	8	6	2
Wage Subsidy NP CBCC # of FTEs	32.2	26.52	4.07	35.78	23.96	3.72
Wage Subsidy Commercial Expenditures	\$14,276	\$2,395	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wage Subsidy Commercial # of Contracts	1	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wage Subsidy Commercial CBCC # of FTE	1.34	1.35	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wage Subsidy Pay Equity Expenditures	\$11,379	n/a	n/a	\$11,379	n/a	n/a

## Child Care Service Plan 2006/07 Update: Template 1 for Non-Demo Sites

Data Element	2006/07 Actuals (2006)			2007/2008 (2007)		
	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%
Wage Improvements NP Expenditures	n/a	n/a	\$25,482	n/a	n/a	\$34,367
Wage Improvements NP # of Contracts	n/a	n/a	7	n/a	n/a	7
Wage Improvements NP CBCC # of FTEs	n/a	n/a	23.29	N/A	n/a	33.83
Wage Improvements Commercial Expenditures	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wage Improvements Commercial # of Contracts	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wage Improvements Commercial CBCC # of FTEs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wage Improvement Avg. Percentage Wage Increase						
Planning Expenditures	n/a	n/a	\$15,697	n/a	n/a	\$20,929
Total # of new spaces created under Best Start	n/a	n/a	35			
Total # of new spaces for 0-4 years	n/a	n/a	35			
Total # of new spaces for JK/SK	n/a	n/a	n/a			
# of new Francophone spaces for 0 – 4 years	n/a	n/a	n/a			
# of new Francophone spaces for JK/SK	n/a	n/a	n/a			
# of new Aboriginal spaces for 0 – 4 years	n/a	n/a	9			
# of new Aboriginal spaces for JK/SK	n/a	n/a	n/a			
<b><u>Best Start Start-up:</u></b>						
Expenditures for Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces	n/a	n/a	\$47,700			
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces	n/a	n/a	35			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces for 0 – 4 years	n/a	n/a	35			

## Child Care Service Plan 2006/07 Update: Template 1 for Non-Demo Sites

Data Element	2006/07 Actuals (2006)			2007/2008 (2007)		
	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Best Start 100%
# of New NP Licensed Spaces for JK/SK	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Expenditures for New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools	n/a	n/a	\$43,000			
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools	n/a	n/a	26			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools for 0 – 4 years	n/a	n/a	26			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools for JK/SK	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Expenditures for New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools	n/a	n/a	n/a			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for 0 – 4 years	n/a	n/a	n/a			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for JK/SK	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Expenditures for New NP Licensed Spaces in French Lang. Centres	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces in French Lang. Centres	n/a	n/a	n/a			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for 0 – 4 years	n/a	n/a	n/a			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for JK/SK	n/a	n/a	n/a			

Data Element	2006/07 (2006)			Projected 2007/08 (2007)		
	Cost Shared 50/50	ELCC 50/50	Best Start 100% (N/A) <sup>1</sup>	Cost Shared 50/50	ELCC 50/50	Best Start 100% (N/A) <sup>1</sup>
Child Care Administration	\$99,845	\$12,000	\$86,836	\$100,968	\$12,000	\$53,280

**Notes:**

1. Expenditures refer to gross expenditures.
2. NP means Non-profit.
3. CBCC means licensed Centre-Based Child Care.
4. New Francophone and/or Aboriginal spaces included in total number of child care spaces created under Best Start.
5. The Ministry of Education provides funding new non-profit licenced child care spaces created in existing schools, new schools and outside schools, for children up to and including 5 years of age, using Best Start capital funds.
6. The year 2006/07 refers to January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006.

2007 Service Target Template

Project Code	Description	Year End Target MCSS
<b>A371</b> <b>CC Del. Agent</b> <b>Fee Subsidy</b>	AVGINFSER#	2
	AVGTODSER#	12
	AVGPRESER#	19
	AVGJKSER#	6
	AVGSKSER#	5
	AVGSCHSER#	16
	CHISER3#	109
<b>A375</b> <b>CC Repairs/Maint.</b>	CCRPRMNT#	7
<b>A376</b> <b>CC Delivery</b> <b>Agent</b>	CHISER4#	35
	FTESTAFCC#	3.52
	CCRECREAT#	N/A
	ANSO-SK#	23
	AVGSCHSER#	3
<b>A386</b> <b>Child Care</b> <b>Resource</b> <b>Centre</b>	PARVISIT#	7000
	CCSCHDSER#	800
	CHDVISIT#	9500
	PARCARSER#	800
	PROFSER#	90
	REFERRALS#	40
	PROTLINKS#	5
	CCSPARTSER#	340
<b>A390</b> <b>CC Del. Agent</b> <b>Wage Sub.</b> <b>Non-Profit</b>	CCFTE0-5#	26.19
	CCFTE6-12#	4.93
	CCNONPSTA#	4.66
	CCCONTRCT#	8
<b>A400</b> <b>Ontario Works</b> <b>Formal</b> <b>Child Care</b>	CHISERF#	14
	PARTSERV1#	12
	AVGINFSER#	-
	AVGTODSER#	-
	AVGPRESER#	-
	AVGJKSER#	-
	AVGSCHSER#	8

2007 Service Target Template

Project Code	Description	Year End Target MCSS
<b>A401</b> <b>Ontario Works</b> <b>Informal CC</b>	CHISERF# PARTSERV2# AVGSCHSER#	2 2 1.5
<b>A429</b> <b>Fee Subsidy</b> <b>ELCC</b>	AVGINFSER# AVGTODSER# AVGPRESER# AVGJKSER# AVGSKSER# ELCCFAM# ELCCCHILD#	1 3 4 2 2 13 16
<b>A430</b> <b>Special Needs</b> <b>Resourcing</b>	CCFTESNR# CCHCHDSNR# ANS0-SK#	4.27 38 24
<b>A431</b> <b>Wage Subsidy</b> <b>Non Profit ELCC</b>	CCFTE0-5 CCNONPSTA# CCCONTRCT#	19.37 4.6 6
<b>BEST START</b> <b>A446</b> <b>BS Wage Imp.</b>	CCFTE0-5# CCFTE6-12# CCCONTRCT#	29.48 4.35 8
<b>A447</b> <b>BEST START</b> <b>PLANNING</b>	BESTRANSL\$ BESMEETING\$ BESOTHER\$	0 \$10,465 \$10,464
<b>A661</b> <b>BEST START</b> <b>OPERATING</b>	FSANSINF# FSANSTOD# FSANSPRE# FSANSJK# FSANSSK# FSFAMSE# FSCHILDSE# ANS0-SK# SNFTE# WSNFP0-5# WSNONPST# CCCONTRCT#	0 7 29 3 3 53 63 6 1.11 3.58 2



# Appendices:

#1 JK/SK Child Care Expansion Proposal

#2 Child Care Assessment Proposal