

Brantford-Brant Best Start Network
OEYCFC Engagement Session
April 3, 2017

Present: Michelle Connor , COB, Jane Angus, Contact Brant, Flora Ennis, Woodview, Ronda Manning, BCHU, Zile Ozols, Brantford Public Library, Jennifer Macdonald, GEDSB, Kim Romano, COB, Luisa Pappert, Wee Watch, Barb Vanry OEYC: Brant, Laura Bergeron FCCB, Maria Timpener YMCA HBB, Sarah Robertson, BFACS, Jill Esposto, BFACS, Karen Bulmer, BFACS, Kathryn Dubicki, Community Living Brant, Ellise Paltser COB, Karen Calligan Edu., Barb Mitchell, PFLC, Cathy Medway (Recorder).

1. Welcome and Introductions

Michelle welcomed planning group and introductions were made around the table. Jennifer took a moment to review previous meeting highlights and reviewed today's agenda

2. OEYCFC Model

The group brainstormed attributes of the OEYCFCs and elements of common experience which parents and children would have if the new model was described to them.

According to Ministry guidelines there are mandatory service delivery methods and expectations for OEYCFCs Brantford/Brant model which includes core services/functions, locations and hours of operation (See handout chart). Model sites include **universal sites, intentional sites, pop up sites** and may include virtual sites.

Some ideas include, to mirror provincial language and core services, the value or importance of physical/main sites vs. satellite sites, how would a rural or urban model look/differ?, play based, inquiry based, drop in, one door access to information or referrals, welcoming, sense of belonging, inclusiveness, programs are free, facilitator of integrated services, family support beyond early years, flexible space, relationship based, responsive, affordable, accessible

Review child care framework and incorporate four foundations of HDLH considering belonging, well being, engagement and expression. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>

HDLH pedagogy framework, facilitating services for older children 7 to 12 years and whole family Role of OEYCFCs to act as facilitator in the community, child's rites as citizens, elevating focus on the child, cherishing and understanding, parents are competent and capable, role of parent/educator/child is learning together as researchers, seamless.

3. Potential locations

The group broke down geography and reviewed neighborhoods in Brantford/Brant County. Two neighborhoods Brier Park and Henderson have been identified as having no OEYCFCs sites. They are viewed as transitioning neighborhoods, there has not been a big shift in population growth. We also must be mindful of how parents use geographical areas vs. planning with neighborhood boundaries.

We will be using data and current stats to help with planning.

Jennifer reviewed the number and types of sites in each neighborhood: Intentional, Universal, Satellite (mobile) and Pop up. Future location considerations may be libraries, senior centres, senior homes, community events, arenas and rec. centres. Hours of operations are outlined in the handout and cost of current and potential sites including space, amenities and other costs will be determined at a future date.

Ministry funding allocations will be determined in the near future and will inform the number of locations.

4. OEYCFC Service Delivery Methods

Core services and functions are outlined in the **Serviced Delivery Method** handout. Discussion followed about how optional services (virtual and local phone line) fit into the service delivery model.

Some thoughts included 211 for info and referrals, website with calendars, social media, texting, links to key documents, blogs webinars, one list, go back to parent surveys to find out what they need/prefer.

Considerations: not “re-inventing the wheel”- what information is already available on-line, how do we tap into it, how to we verify the info?

We want to be mindful and keep the interaction/connection/accessibility and face to face actual connection. Look at what exists already, offer virtual tours of spaces led by parent champions or Facebook live may be a potential option.

Existing phone line services includes 211, Contact Brant, telehealth, OEYC, Health Unit Family line, Children’s Services line, BrantFACS after hours.

5. Creating a common experience, attributes of the centre

Consider what the child/family experience will be when they walk in the door: Is it welcoming, customer service, knowledgeable staff (hiring practice), leave feeling connected, want to come back, happy kids, enjoyable, fun, facilitator connections, sense of belonging ownership by community, homelike, culturally relevant, appropriate equipment, range of toys, snacks for everyone, competent staff, curious researchers, family lead, good relationships with partnering agencies, evaluation and feedback tools, what’s working? what’s not?, long term, short term goals, open dialogue, consider HDLH, welcoming package, creating a culture of “our place”, commonality and difference

6. Next Steps

Jennifer and Michelle will be meeting with both city and county councillors to receive input regarding needs and strengths of particular neighbourhoods or wards.

Jenn will be meeting with a focus group of parents from Central P/S on April 18th.

We are continue to wait for provincial funding allocations.

Once the funding framework is made available, a report will be developed, taken to both City and County councils for approval and submitted to Ministry.

Of note: The original time line for reports due to MinEd was May 31st. Without available funding formula or commitment, the City has requested an extension to the end of September 2017.

Concurrently, the Indigenous-led learning plan is being developed. It will align with the OEYCFC plan. Michelle and Jenn are meeting with Lana Brasher (Brant Native Housing, lead on that report) and their consultant, to ensure that the plans align.

It is understood that there are other privately funded community agencies, casual groups or church programs that offer early learning within the community. Overtures have been made to the formal programs for input into the plan. As non-MinEd funded programs are outside of the scope of the planning process, they will be considered in terms of location (not putting similar programs in same place, but cannot be considered in regard to overall plan or program expectations.

This is a process of referring to guidelines, look at assets, gather data, building on current capacity, existing partnerships, opportunity to partner with system services.

We want to support changes through consistent messaging and consider a communication strategy with service providers and parents i.e. Best Start Magazine (information articles), Hamilton has key messaging that could inform our process. Of note, the City of Brantford cannot commit to any funding of any program until they receive a commitment of funding from MinEd. It was noted that MinEd is similarly awaiting such a commitment.

It is understood that funding allocations will determine next steps (process).

Karen Calligan advised that This not a cost saving reduction process. In terms of resources Brantford is currently rich in resources regarding child care funding. However, the only guarantee

right now is that money is coming (no certainty of how much). Edu is mindful of new issues. Funding will be used to stabilize the community and the new dollars may be used to transition into a new model. Federal gov't announced they will be releasing 500 million dollars to provinces and territories. Provincial Gov't is expected to table their budget in April or May but right now only when funding allocations are released will we be able to plan the next steps.

It was noted that the openness and transparency of this process has been appreciated and BSN members feel comfortable asking difficult questions, however there are concerns from service providers regarding lack of commitment or stated intent past January 1, 2018. This is creating some staffing anxiety and may have collective agreement impacts.

Michelle advised that the City recognizes the situation within which service providers are now in and that it is the City's intention to be open about the process as it continues to evolve. She indicated that without a funding commitment from Min Ed, the City is unable to provide any type of indication of intention. There was recognition from the group that given the timelines, there may be need to be some type of transition plan.