

Success by 6 Peel and the Peel Children and Youth Initiative, and its partners including the Region of Peel, Peel Best Start Network, specialized services for children with special needs, community and neighbourhood and the early learning and child care providers in Peel are supportive of the over-all vision and direction outlined in the report “With our Best Future In Mind.” Substantial and thoughtful investment in the early learning and healthy development of our children is an essential contribution to the long-term quality of life for the residents of Ontario.

Success by 6 Peel and all our partners welcome the opportunity to pilot the Best Start Child and Family Centres in Peel, and are ready to provide a leadership role in their creation. This could be done concurrently with the concrete steps needed to stabilize the current system for children 0-3.8, with the development of a policy framework for implementation and funding for the new system. The following suggested recommendations address these areas in need of improvement:

Success By 6 Peel’s Recommendations to the Early Learning and Child Care vision:

- 1. The Stabilization of the current child care system for children 0 to 3.8 years** - We urge the government to address the current de-stabilization of current child care programs for children 0 to 5, so that the current number of child care spaces are at least maintained in the system until there are suitable alternatives available under the new system.
- 2. The pace of change to implement the full set of recommendations for a new Early Learning and Child Care System in the province** - We recommend that the Province host designated pilot project areas in various municipalities, with the provision of support to help them develop, implement and evaluate a local plan for the vision, starting in September 2011.
- 3. The development and introduction of a new funding structure for Early Learning and Child Care Services** - The revisions to the funding framework should provide a stable base of funding for all Child and Family Centres and should take into account the funding for the specialized and supportive services for children with special needs, rooted in principles of equity and fairness for all children.
- 4. A dedicated, integrated and well-resourced plan for children with special needs aged 0-12** - The development of this plan will complement the Early Learning and Child Care Plans for Full Day Learning and the Best Start Child and Family Centres, and ensure fair and timely access to identification, prevention, treatment and ongoing support services for children with special needs.
- 5. Further Support for community-based options for Best Start and Child and Family System, and more flexible and complementary policy for community hubs and community access to space in schools** - Capital funding and incentives need to be made available to Boards of Education and/or local municipalities to promote cross-jurisdictional planning and multi-sector use of different public resources.

Success By 6 Supports:

- ✓ The over-all direction, philosophy and investment in Early Learning and Child Care.
- ✓ Full day learning for four and five year olds including the partnerships of School Boards and community-based agencies to provide a seamless program.
- ✓ Integrated, play-based curriculum to maximize childrens’ developmental opportunities, social and cognitive skills in a safe, nurturing and fun environment.
- ✓ Training in child development to ensure that all professionals obtain current and relevant knowledge about early learning and child development from 0 to 12.
- ✓ Parental choice based upon a range of high quality options of child care to choose from, according to their economic, social and cultural needs and preferences.
- ✓ Improved parental leave provisions to promote attachment and healthy bonding between child and parent in the first 18 months of life.
- ✓ Best Start Child and Family Centres fully connected with neighbourhood services and responsive to local needs within a system managed by the Municipality.
- ✓ Increased Accessibility to Child Care for Children 0 to 3.8 years to ensure the availability and the fair distribution of subsidized spaces, as the system moves toward full capacity.