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Ministry of Education  
*Informed by the Working Group  
on Early Years Accommodation Costs in Schools*



Ministry of Education

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*Ontario's vision for the early years and child care is that all children and families have access to a range of high quality, inclusive, and affordable early years and child care programs and services that are child and family centred and contribute to children's learning, development and well-being.*

- Ontario Renewed Early Years and Policy Framework, 2017

The government's schools-first approach has prioritized schools as the preferred location for early years programs in communities. Schools are viewed by the community as secure and trusted centres for children, and therefore are natural sites for early years programs. Many children are introduced to the school environment through early years programs, and the transition from early years programs to school can be facilitated by fostering strong connections between programs, providing a continuum of learning and care.

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CMSMs and DSSABs, and early years service providers work in partnership to deliver high quality and inclusive early years programs that are child and family centred and contribute to children's learning, development, and well-being. In keeping with the provincial government's schools-first approach, school boards also have a role to play in ensuring the success of programs

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The school and early years programs are intended to complement one another, providing a seamless day for children and their families, embracing the following five overarching principles to early years accommodation costs in schools.

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Early years service providers should aim to offer accessible, affordable, high-quality, child-centred services. Early years accommodation costs should recognize costs to

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School boards are encouraged to use the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) developed model, or another similar mechanism, to provide evidence-based, transparent costs of occupying school buildings or premises for early years programs.

This model or another tool developed by a school board should be discussed and shared with the early years partners in advance of implementation. If another tool is used to determine the cost of using the space, the guiding principles for school-based early years programs in schools (page 5) should be observed. It is recommended that a school board-wide approach be used rather than a school-level approach. Furthermore, to assist with long-term planning, it is also beneficial for school boards to provide early years service providers with a multi-year horizon (e.g., a minimum of three to five years) for the cost of occupying school buildings or premises.

The Ministry of Education's *Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (2015)* established that school boards are not expected to take on additional costs to support facility partnerships. There are some school boards which, based on their local student achievement strategy, financially support some partnerships, including but not limited to early years programs. The *Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline* as well as this reference guide does not seek to alter these arrangements. However, when school boards seek to cover costs in the fees charged to early years service providers, fees should cover the operations and facility renewal costs, including administrative costs and property taxes (if applicable), to the school board of the space occupied by the early years service provider. Regardless of whether a school board financially supports early years programs operating in its schools, the school board should calculate its cost for the early years program occupying the school space in order to ensure transparency in the fees charged and expenses incurred.

Representatives from the OASBO, building on work from the 21st Century School Fund and the University of California-Berkley's Center for Cities and Schools, developed a Community Use of Schools School Facility Cost Recovery Pricing Model (herein referred to as "the model") to support the determining of evidence-based lease rates that are transparent and accountable. The model uses individual school boards' data which considers direct and indirect costs that are associated with the use of space, using valid, reliable, and consistent data reported by school boards to the ministry. The rate generated illustrates the annual cost per square foot per year, and is customizable, using individual school boards' data and policies.

The model is currently used by a number of school boards to calculate the cost to the school board of using or sharing space in schools, for both early years service providers and other community groups. The rate determined by the model provides evidence to

The initial set-up for the model may be time consuming, and some time-lag exists. Additional information about the model is available within the 'Instructions' tab of the tool itself, which can be accessed at: [Limestone District School Board](#), and [Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board](#).

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- How does your school board's facilities-related decisions reflect the Ministry's vision for the early years? How do your school board's decisions reflect its student achievement strategy?





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Cooperative and collaborative relationships among staff at the school, early years service providers, and other community programs encourage consistency and continuity for children and families.

- Provide as much advanced notice as possible if an early years program is required to relocate from a school location (e.g., during the summer months or school holidays due to construction or maintenance work, due to a fire or a pupil accommodation review, etc.).
- Include early years partners, including CMSMs and DSSABs, in processes related to pupil accommodation reviews, where appropriate.

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A number of school boards and CMSMs and DSSABs have developed local policies, handbooks, resource manuals, and reference guides to support early years partnerships and accommodations in schools. Many of these documents can be found publicly on school board, and CMSM and DSSAB webpages.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education has policies, regulations, and supporting resources, including:

The ***Child Care and Early Years Act (2014)*** is legislation that regulates child care in Ontario. Regulations under this Act includes: child care licensing standards including age groupings, ratio group size, staff qualifications. Provisions regarding local service system planning and funding for early years programs are also set out in regulation. Regulations under this Act can be found at: [Ontario Regulation 137/2015: General](#), [Ontario Regulation 138/2015: Funding, Cost Sharing, Financial Assistance](#).

The ***Education Act*** and its regulations set out duties and responsibilities of the Minister of Education and the duties and responsibilities of school boards, school board supervisory officers, principals, teachers, parents, and students in the province of Ontario. [Ontario Regulation 221/11 Extended Day and Third Party Programs](#) outlines the regulations for before-and-after school programs for students in junior kindergarten to Grade 6. It also sets out requirements with regard to reporting and program content for before-and-after school programs and additional considerations to support the implementation of these programs. [Policies and Guidelines for School Boards: Before and After School Programs Kindergarten to Grade 6, 2017](#).

***Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (2015)*** is a guideline which assists school boards in establishing more facility partnerships, and to support effective planning with community partners

program development in the early years. As set out in the Minister's policy statement issued in June 2015, all licensed child care programs are required to have a program statement that is consistent with this resource.

***Putting How Does Learning Happen into Practice: Program Expectations for Licensed Child Care*** is an e-module intended to support child care programs in meeting the program requirements under the *Child Care Early Years Act, 2014*. It is divided into five segments with modules available in both English and French.

***Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research About Young Children (2013)*** is a compilation of research briefs that highlight key research findings related to seven elements of early years program quality from leading experts in the field of early childhood. Accompanying video segments are also available.

The new ***Child Care and Early Years Act: What Providers and Parents Need to Know Factsheet*** answers questions about key changes that will affect licensed and unlicensed child care providers in Ontario regarding the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.

The ***7 \]X'7UfY'@]WYbg]b[ ' KYVg]hY'*** is designed to support child care providers, licensees and early years professionals and anyone who is interested in learning more about provincial requirements for licensed child care centres. It provides an overview of Child Care Licensing System, *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* Licensing Standards, an interactive *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* self-test, resources, sample forms, helpful links, and more.

The ***Kindergarten Program (2016)*** provides the pedagogical approaches and program considerations for kindergarten in Ontario. Overall expectations are provided in the context of four frames: Belonging and Contributing, Self-Regulation and Well-Being, Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours, and Problem Solving and Innovating. ***Growing Success: The Kindergarten Addendum (2016)*** describes the policy for assessment, evaluation, and reporting for kindergarten and how relates it to the policy for Grades 1 to 12, as set out in *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010*.

The ***Before-and-After School Programs Kindergarten-Grade 6: Policies and Guidelines for School Boards*** summarizes the provisions set out in the *Education Act* and regulations for before-and-after school programs for students in kindergarten to Grade 6. It also sets out requirements with regard to reporting and program content for before--

