

ElginCounty

St. Thomas-Elgin

Social Services: Children's Services

ONTARIO EARLY YEARS CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE
COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND INITIAL PLAN

AUGUST 2017



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Acknowledgements.....4
- 1.0 Introduction.....6
- 2.0 Developing Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (OEYCFCs).....7
- Role of the City of St. Thomas as CMSM.....10
- Methodology.....10
- 3.0 Community Profile.....11
- Elgin Children’s Network (ECN).....13
- 4.0 Engagement Process/Strategy.....14
- Parent/Caregiver Engagement.....14
- Engagement of Children.....15
- Service Provider Engagement.....16
- Current Ontario Early Years Centre (OEYC) and Parenting and Family Literacy Centre (PFLC) Service Providers.....18
- Indigenous Service Providers.....18
- School Board Engagement.....18
- Data Collection and Profiles.....18
- 5.0 Summary of Community Needs Assessment.....19
- Summary of What Families Said.....19
- The Voices of Children.....23
- What Service Providers Said.....24
- Our Families and What they Need.....27
- Family Demographics.....28
- Number and Location of Children Aged 0 to 6 Years.....28
- Language.....30
- Indigenous Families.....31
- Francophone Families.....34
- Potential Risk/Vulnerability Indicators.....35
- Social Risk Index (2006).....35
- Number of Children Under the Age of Six Living in Low Income.....37
- Early Development Instrument (EDI) Vulnerability.....39
- Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Vulnerability.....41
- Children Living in Households Receiving Support through Ontario Works.....43
- Children Living in Social Housing Family Units.....43
- Demand for Child and Family Programs and Services.....44
- Current Child and Family Programs.....44
- Information about Parenting.....48
- Child Participation in Programs Prior to Kindergarten.....48

Indigenous Programming and Programming for other Cultural/Linguistic Groups.....	49
Existing Community Resources.....	50
Schools with Available/Potential Space.....	52
Potential Locations for OEYCFCs.....	53
Universal Factors.....	53
Intentional Factors.....	53
Results of Rankings.....	53
Groups identified for Targeted Outreach.....	54
Online Resources and Local Phone Lines.....	56
6.0 Initial Plan.....	57
Planning Principles.....	57
System Management.....	57
Planning.....	57
Contracts and Funding.....	57
System Management and Support.....	58
OEYCFC Service Model.....	59
Services to be Provided.....	68
Indigenous Programs and Services.....	60
French Language Programs and Services.....	61
Service Delivery Mechanisms.....	71
Locations of OEYCFCs.....	62
Main Sites.....	63
Satellite and Mobile/Outreach Sites.....	63
Pop Up Sites.....	63
Targeted Outreach.....	63
Online Services and Resources.....	64
Local Phone Lines.....	64
Selection of OEYCFC Service Provider(s).....	64
Transition Plans.....	65
Contracts and Funding.....	65
Sites and Services.....	65
Further Planning.....	66
Communication Strategy.....	66
7.0 Moving Forward!.....	67

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A special thanks to the parents/caregivers and children who provided us with their thoughts, opinions, and experiences and allowed us to share their voices in this planning document.

Thanks to the members of Elgin Children's Network (ECN) for their thoughtful advice and active engagement in developing a model for OEYCFCs that reflects the needs of families and children and is responsive to the St. Thomas-Elgin context. Members of ECN include:



Ontario Early Years Centres



A Place For Parents And Their Children.



Oxford-Elgin Child & Youth Centre



SouthWesthealthline.ca

St. Thomas Co-operative Nursery School



ST. THOMAS · ELGIN Local Immigration Partnership Building Welcoming, Caring, and Inclusive Communities



Thames Valley Children's Centre



The service providers of the current child and family programs in St. Thomas-Elgin were generous in sharing their data, current experiences, and information, ensuring the process authentically captured the existing service system.

Finally, thanks to Karen Calligan, Program Advisor with the Ministry of Education for her guidance, support, and expertise throughout the process.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In February 2016, the Ministry of Education announced its intention to transform Ministry-funded child and family programs into an increasingly integrated, cohesive system of services and supports for children ages 0 to 6 and their parents¹ /caregivers² known as Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (OEYCFCs). On January 1, 2018, the City of St. Thomas will become responsible for the local management of OEYCFCs as part of its responsibility for the service system management of child care and other human services. As part of this process, the City is required to submit a Council-approved community needs assessment and initial plan to the Ministry of Education.

Currently, the Ministry of Education funds four child and family programs, including Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYCs), Parenting and Family Literacy Centres (PFLCs), Child Care Resource Centres, and Better Beginnings Better Futures programs. Two of these programs (OEYCs and PFLCs) operate in St. Thomas-Elgin.

The City of St. Thomas, as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for St. Thomas and Elgin County, has a long history of working collaboratively with its community partners to plan for an increasingly integrated system of services for families and children. Elgin Children's Network, as the local planning table, has been instrumental in this process.

The development of a community needs assessment and initial plan for OEYCFCs in St. Thomas-Elgin has been a continuation of this valuable work.

This document provides a summary of the community needs assessment that was undertaken to inform the development of the OEYCFC initial plan. This needs assessment involved the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including parents/caregivers, children, service providers, school boards, current child and family program providers, and other community partners. The needs assessment resulted in a clear identification of need and created a blueprint for the development of the OEYCFC initial plan.

As a community we are excited to move this plan to implementation; building on the strengths of our current system of supports, we will continue to create a seamless service experience for families and children that is responsive to their needs.



¹The term 'parents' is used to describe both parents and/or legal guardians

² The term 'caregivers' is broadly defined as all adults that care for young children including home child care providers, grandparents, informal caregivers and/or other family members.

2.0 DEVELOPING ONTARIO EARLY YEARS CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES (OEYCFCs)

The Ministry has provided CMSMs with a number of key documents to assist with the planning for and implementation of OEYCFCs in their local communities. These documents include:

- » Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (2018), Business Practices and Funding Guidelines for Service System Managers
- » Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres, Planning Guidelines for Service System Managers
- » Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework
- » How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
- » Child Care and Early Years Act

These documents outline the key expectations and planning guidelines for the programs and services delivered in OEYCFCs.

OEYCFCs are one of the key pillars in supporting the realization of Ontario's vision for the early years. This vision states,

“Ontario’s children and families are well supported by a system of responsive, high quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow.”

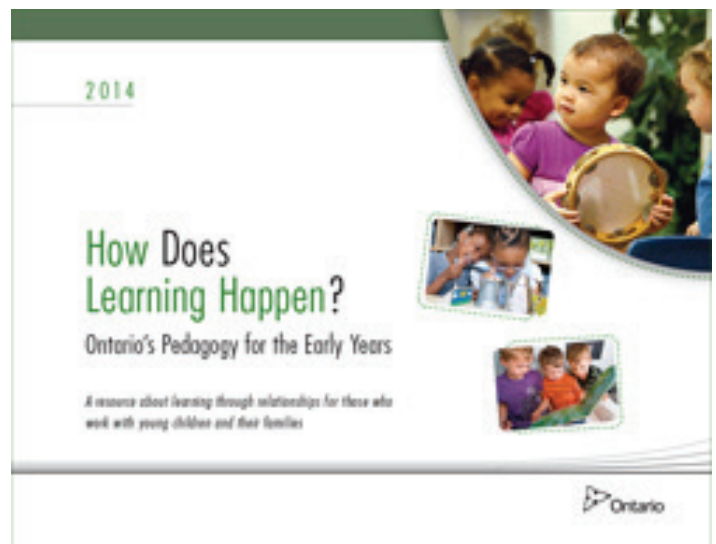
To support the achievement of this vision, the following guiding principles will be used for developing, delivering and evaluation OEYCFC programs and services:

- » **Child and Family Centred:** *All programs and services are designed to meet the unique needs of parents, caregivers and young children to support their developmental health and general well-being.*
- » **Welcoming:** *OEYCFCs provide a warm and welcoming environment based on the foundational conditions for supporting growth and long term success (belonging, well-being, engagement and expression).*
- » **High Quality:** *Programs and services are designed to foster positive outcomes and support nurturing relationships for children, parents and caregivers based on the latest evidence and research*
- » **Inclusive:** *Programs and services are accessible and responsive to children, parents and caregivers with varying abilities and cultural, language, socio-economic, sexual orientation and religious backgrounds.*
- » **Integrated:** *Programs and services are developed, coordinated and delivered in a cohesive manner in collaboration with broader community services, school boards, early years partner, primary care providers, parents and caregivers.*
- » **Community Led:** *Communities, educators, parents and caregivers are engaged in designing OEYCFC programs and services that embrace and build on their strengths, address identified gaps and meet their unique needs.*

The pedagogical framework detailed in *How Does Learning Happen?* will guide the programs, services and environments created by OEYCFCs, with OEYCFCs viewing the children, parents, caregivers, and educators as competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential and experience. The OEYCFC environment will also view parents and caregivers as co-learners and leaders in influencing positive child, family and community experiences and outcomes.

In accordance with Ministry expectations, OEYCFC programs & services will be designed & delivered to meet the following key goals & objectives:

- » Parents and caregivers have access to high quality services that support them in their role as children's first teachers, enhance their well-being, and enrich their knowledge about early learning and development
- » Children have access to play and inquiry-based learning opportunities and experience positive developmental health and well-being
- » Parents and caregivers have opportunities to strengthen their relationships with their children
- » Francophone children and families have access to French language programs and gain enhanced knowledge about language and identity acquisition
- » Indigenous children and families have access to culturally responsive programming
- » Parents and caregivers are provided with timely, relevant and up to date information about community and specialized services
- » Local service providers collaborate and integrate services to meet community needs in an efficient and accessible way



To achieve the goals and objectives, the Ministry of Education has identified **three mandatory core services** for all OEYCFCs that must be provided at no fee to the participants. These include:

<p>ENGAGING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Discussions and information sharing about child development, parenting, nutrition play and inquiry-based learning, and other topics that support their role » Pre- and post-natal support programs to enhance parent and caregiver well-being and to support them in their role(s) » Targeted outreach activities directed at parents and caregivers that could benefit from OEYCFC programs and services but are not currently accessing services for a variety of reasons
<p>SUPPORTING EARLY LEARNING DEVELOPMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Drop-in programs and other programs and services that build responsive adult-child relationships and encourage children’s exploration, play and inquiry, supported by <i>How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years</i>
<p>MAKING CONNECTIONS FOR FAMILIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Responding to a parent/caregiver concern about their child’s development through conversation and observation supported by validated tools and resources » Information sharing about and facilitating connections with specialized community services, coordinated service planning, public health, education, child care, and child welfare, as appropriate » Information sharing about programs and services available for the whole family beyond the early years

ROLE OF THE CITY OF ST. THOMAS AS CMSM

Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) are responsible and accountable for managing local child care and early years programs and services. Beginning in 2018, municipal service managers will also be responsible for the local management of OEYCFCs. As outlined in the Child Care and Early Years Act, service system managers are mandated to:

- » Establish, administer, operate and fund early years programs, including providing assistance to operators and evaluating and assessing the impact of public funding
- » Deliver and administer local policies respecting the operation of early years programs and services
- » Coordinate the planning and operation of early years programs and consult with school boards and other prescribed persons or entities in accordance with legislation
- » Assess the economic viability of early years programs and facilitate changes to make programs more viable

To achieve the intended outcomes for OEYCFCs, CMSMs must:

- » Conduct local needs assessments and facilitate meaningful engagement with key community partners, parents, and caregivers to integrate OEYCFCs into local service system plans for early years programs and services
- » Enhance, relocate and/or reconfigure OEYCFC programs and services to meet community needs, as required
- » Manage provincial funds and any third party contracts associated with the delivery of OEYCFC programs and services
- » Manage provincial funds related to early years community planning groups

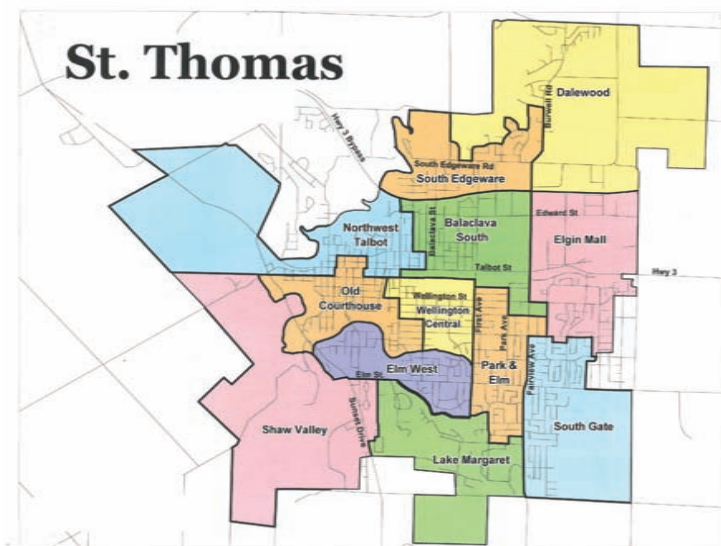
METHODOLOGY

The St. Thomas-Elgin community needs assessment utilized a mixed methodology approach; a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, supplemented with family, child, and service provider experience. Historical service plans, community reports and program evaluations were also reviewed and incorporated into the Needs Assessment and Initial Plan. A community profile was developed to better understand the state of affairs that may influence target demographics. Neighbourhood profiles for the City of St. Thomas were also created to inform the plan.

3.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Elgin County is located in the heart of Southwestern Ontario. Elgin County is comprised of seven Towns, Municipalities and Townships, and one city, with St. Thomas being the most highly populated urban area. St. Thomas is situated in Central Elgin, but is a politically separate entity of the County. Elgin County is comprised of a mix of rural and smaller urban areas and towns. The large concentration of people in St. Thomas has centralized many of the services that are offered across the county in St. Thomas. Also to note, a number of agencies that provide services and programs in St. Thomas-Elgin are located regionally in London.

St. Thomas divides Elgin County into an east and a west, with Southwold, Dutton/Dunwich, and West Elgin lying to the west of St. Thomas, and Central Elgin, Aylmer, Malahide, and Bayham being situated east of St. Thomas (see the map below).



St. Thomas, as the largest urban area in Elgin County, is comprised of 12 neighbourhoods (see the map for further details). The community needs assessment was conducted at the neighbourhood level in St. Thomas.

Elgin County borders four other Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) catchment areas:

- » Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- » City of London
- » County of Oxford
- » County of Norfolk

The community needs assessment for OEYFCs has also looked at the opportunity to work collaboratively on joint community needs with other CMSMs.

Elgin County is growing at a slow pace. It experienced a 1.7% increase in its overall population from 2011 to 2016. As of 2016, 88,978 individuals live in Elgin County. St. Thomas is the most populated area in the county, with 38,909 individuals. As a city, St. Thomas is growing at a faster pace than the overall county. It realized a 2.6% increase since 2011.

In terms of growth, Bayham and Aylmer are also growing at a faster rate than the overall county. From 2011 to 2016 Bayham saw a 5.8% increase in its overall population, and Aylmer a 4.7% increase.

Central Elgin, Southwold, Dutton/Dunwich, and West Elgin all experienced a decline in overall population from 2011 to 2016.

Over the same time period, the child population (0 to 6 years) in Elgin County decreased. In 2016, 7,467 children aged 0 to 6 years lived in Elgin County. This is a decrease of 2.9% from 2011. This population comprises 8.4% of the overall population.

In terms of its cultural-linguistic context, Elgin County is home to many Indigenous and Low German speaking children and families,

Elgin County is home to 10,935 immigrants (12.7% of the population), with 0.9% of Elgin's total population being recent immigrants (2011). According to the 2016 Statistics Canada census data, almost 5% of the population (4,335 people) speak a non-official language as their language spoken most often at home.

The most common non-official language spoken in Elgin County is German, with 3,045 individuals reporting this as the language they speak most often at home (2016). German being spoken at home is most prevalent in east Elgin, in Bayham and Malahide. This figure may be under-reported, as other studies have stated that Elgin County is home to 12,000 to 15,000 Low German speaking families. Francophones are not prevalent in Elgin County, with only 135 individuals report speaking French most often at home (2016).

With its proximity to three First Nations (Oneida Nation of the Thames, Chippewas of the Thames, Munsee-Delaware Nation), Elgin County is home to a number of Indigenous persons. The 2011 Statistics Canada census reports that 1,560 persons of Indigenous identity reside in Elgin County.

23.3% of children under the age of 6 live in low-income families. Many of these children live in St. Thomas (655 or 43.8%). Populations at a higher risk of low income include: new immigrants, children and youth, lone parents, single individuals (particularly senior women), persons with work-limiting disabilities, Indigenous persons, visible minorities, and women.

Elgin County's overall scores on the Early Development Instrument (EDI) are comparable to the provincial averages. Although Elgin County, as a whole, is comparable to Ontario, 33.4% of children in St. Thomas are vulnerable on one or more domain (EDI, 2015). This is higher than the St. Thomas-Elgin average (29.0%) and higher than the provincial average of 29.4%.

Further and more detailed information about Elgin County is presented in the Needs Assessment section of this report.



Elgin Children's Network

ELGIN CHILDREN'S NETWORK (ECN)

In early 2007, as part of planning for Phase 2 of the Best Start Initiative, Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families (EACYF) was approached to provide input into the *2007-08 Best Start Community Plan*. Not only was the Advisory Committee agreeable to performing this function but it also agreed to assume an ongoing planning role in the implementation of Best Start – a role that included reviewing its Terms of Reference and expanding its membership. The Committee changed its name to Elgin Children's Network (ECN) in October 2009 to better reflect its broadened mandate.

ECN is still in existence today and acts as the planning body for services for children aged prenatal to 12 years of age. ECN is a local collaborative of agencies and individuals representing the education, health and social services sector. Membership is comprised of 24 organizations that span a number of sectors and is representative of the wider service provider system that supports children and families across Elgin County.

ECN membership includes the City of St. Thomas, County of Elgin, Elgin St. Thomas Public Health, Family and Children's Services St. Thomas & Elgin, Thames Valley District School Board, London District Catholic School Board, Mennonite Community Services, Merrymount Children's Centre, the Ontario Early Years Centre, the YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin, Thames Valley Children's Centre, the Oxford-Elgin Child & Youth Centre, St. Thomas – Elgin Local Immigration Partnership, St. Thomas Public Library, Elgin County Libraries, Thames Valley Children's Centre, tykeTALK, West Elgin Community Health Centre, the YMCA St. Thomas-Elgin, Eat2Learn Ontario Student Nutrition Partnership Elgin, SouthWesthealthline.ca, Fanshawe College, Oneida – Life Long Learning division, and every licenced child care centre in Elgin: YMCA Cornerview Child Care Centre, Dutton Child Care, the Early Learning Centre, Milestones Children's Centre, Next to Mom Inc., Robin's Nest Early Childhood Education Centre, St. Thomas Co-operative Nursery School, and Tiny Tots Cooperative Nursery School.

The current ECN 2016 to 2018 Strategic Plan notes that its vision and mission are:

VISION	Every Child: Thriving. Engaged. Empowered.
MISSION	An Elgin County collaborative that plans and implements strategies to strengthen communities for children and families.

This community planning table was instrumental in developing the plan for OEYCFCs in St. Thomas-Elgin. You can learn more about ECN by visiting <http://www.elginchildrensnetwork.ca/>

4.0 ENGAGEMENT PROCESS/STRATEGY

The City of St. Thomas, as the CMSM for St. Thomas and Elgin County, undertook a comprehensive and inclusive engagement process to better understand and articulate the needs of children and families living in its neighbourhoods and communities. Existing data and research about the communities were utilized, where available, and further data and information were gathered. The groups that were involved in the engagement process include:

- » Parents/caregivers
- » Children
- » Service providers
- » Current OEYC and PFLC service providers
- » Indigenous service providers
- » School boards

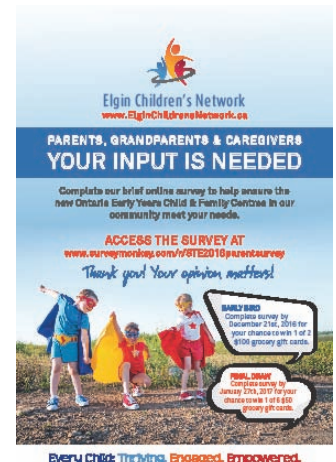
PARENT/CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

St. Thomas-Elgin has a strong history of using a community development approach to develop programs and services for children and families. As part of the community needs assessment for the OEYCFCs, parents/caregivers were approached directly to provide input into the development and design of the new service system. In addition to this, information from other recent engagement strategies was used to help inform community need.

Information was collected from parents/caregivers through a survey that was distributed in late 2016 and ran through the early part of 2017. This survey was available online and in hard copy. A total of 475 surveys were completed. Based on the total population with children at home in St. Thomas-Elgin, the confidence interval of the sample is 4.42 at a 95% confidence level.

The parent/caregiver survey was advertised in a number of ways, including:

- » Distribution of a “postcard” through schools and service providers (15,005 postcards were distributed)
- » Distribution of a “postcard” at the Soup with Santa event
- » Postings on the Elgin Children’s Network website and Facebook page
- » Child care centres emailed their families a clickable jpg image of the survey
- » The use of Facebook ads
- » A link to the survey was emailed to all City of St. Thomas Social Services staff
- » Elgin Children’s Network membership (requested to share with families, post to their websites/Facebook)
- » A link to the survey was emailed to Community Action Network membership (requested to share with families, post to their websites/Facebook)
- » The survey was noted in the Southwest Healthline media release on December 14, 2016



The validity of the parent/caregiver responses was further confirmed by the profile of people who responded to the survey. Of note:

- » Parent responses were received from every municipality in St. Thomas-Elgin
- » The municipalities with the highest percentage of responses include: St. Thomas, Aylmer, and Central Elgin
- » A cross section of parents with children of different ages responded to the survey
- » Parents responding to the survey had a range of one to six children, with the average number of children per parent being 1.8

Further parent/caregiver engagement was conducted at the Soup with Santa event in St. Thomas in December 2016. 150 people participated by providing information about what would help them try new programs.

Other recent initiatives in St. Thomas-Elgin that have gathered information from families include:


INITIATIVE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ENGAGEMENT PROCESS	YEAR	NUMBER OF PARENTS/ CAREGIVERS INVOLVED
OEYC Participant Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Survey of participants of the OEYC (Family Resource Program survey) » Surveys were completed in St. Thomas (at the main OEYC centre) and in outreach/satellite sites » Survey asks about program experience, demographic information, parenting, and child development 	2015	91
Northside Neighbourhood Hub Participant Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Survey of participants of the Northside Neighbourhood Hub (Family Resource Program survey) » Survey asks about program experience, demographic information, parenting, and child development 	2015	19
Doable Neighbourhood Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » South Edgeware neighbourhood in St. Thomas » Small engagement groups and information sessions for community member 	2014-2015	40
Family Involvement Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Study identified assets, needs, barriers and neighbourhood social capital, social cohesion » Focus groups with residents from three priority neighbourhoods in St. Thomas (Balaclava, Courthouse, South Edgeware) » Community survey asked what places, supports and programs parents in St. Thomas felt were important in their neighbourhoods and whether they had access to them 	2012	305


In order to continue to refine the plan for OEYCFCs and ensure that they meet all families' needs, further parent/caregiver engagement is planned for the fall of this year. Focus groups will be conducted with parents living in low income, parents of children with special needs, and parents living in the South Gate neighbourhood.


ENGAGEMENT OF CHILDREN

The voice of the child is key to the development of Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres. In order to capture this voice, children completed "Children's Activity Sheets" telling us what they like to do. The following table outlines the events at which children were engaged in this activity.

What do you like to do? Tell us with words and pictures!







First Name: _____ Age: _____

EVENT	NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN ATTENDANCE	NUMBER OF PARENTS/ CAREGIVERS IN ATTENDANCE
Soup with Santa, St. Thomas (December 2016)	200	150
Canadian National Film Day, Aylmer (April 2017)	25	15
Teddy Bear Picnic, St. Thomas (June 2017)	625	368
Teddy Bear Picnic, Straffordville (July 2017)	152	85
Teddy Bear Picnic, Rodney (August 2017)	TBD	TBD

St. Thomas-Elgin has a long history of engaging children in the development of programs and services in which they will be participating. In addition to the OEYCFC engagement process, children have been engaged as part of the planning and ongoing evaluation of other neighbourhood/community initiatives and projects. Other recent projects in which children were engaged include:

- » Northside Neighbourhood Hub (South Edgeware neighbourhood), Kids Network 2015 and 2016 (15 children participated)
- » Doable Neighbourhood Project (South Edgeware neighbourhood), 2014 (over 150 children participated)
- » Blue Hippo Snack Party (South Edgeware Neighbourhood), 2013 and 2014 (18 children participated)
- » Ontario Early Years Summer Fun Mobile (6 neighbourhoods across St. Thomas and 3 locations in Elgin County), engagement activities 2014 to 2016 (105 children participated)

The information collected through these engagement processes has also been used to help inform the development of the OEYCFC initial plan.

SERVICE PROVIDER ENGAGEMENT

Service providers provided input into the community needs assessment and development of the OEYCFC service delivery model in a number of ways. Elgin Children's Network (ECN) played a pivotal role in this regard. As noted, earlier in this report, ECN is a committee consisting of a broad range of community partners involved in children's services for St. Thomas and Elgin County, supporting children prenatally to age twelve. ECN participated in three full day engagement sessions. The following table details the dates and purpose of each of the sessions.

ECN ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS	PURPOSE																				
<p>February 24, 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Review the data to be collected for the neighbourhood/ community profiles » Discussion about factors and weighting to use to prioritize neighbourhoods/communities for OEYCFC locations 																				
<p>March 27, 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Review of OEYCFC foundational pieces/guidelines » Presentation and discussion of results of the factors and weighting analysis » Identification of further contextual information about each neighbourhood/community » Presentation and discussion of the results from the parent/caregiver survey » Identification of potential locations for OEYCFCs » Discussion about optional service delivery methods for OEYCFCs – virtual services, local phone line <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;"> Summary of Service Delivery Methods and Expectations for Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (OEYCFC's) Created March 2017 for Discussion Purposes within OEYCFC Planning for St. Thomas-Elgin </p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: x-small;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Service Delivery Method</th> <th>Mandatory/Optional</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Examples</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Hours of Operation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="3" style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Core services</td> <td rowspan="3" style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Mandatory</td> <td> 1. Engaging parents and caregivers (including support, research activities) </td> <td> Drop-in programs Information sharing (i.e. child development, parenting, nutrition, play and inquiry-based learning, etc.) Pre/post-natal supports Targeted outreach to non-users </td> <td> Permanent physical site located in schools, community buildings or shared space </td> <td> Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) overall must offer service-based core services on a year-round basis and at least 3 days per week including either Saturday or Sunday across the county as a whole CMSMs can have several centres operating at different times and on different days of the week Evening hours to meet needs of working families are optional and should be based on identified community need </td> </tr> <tr> <td> 2. Supporting early learning and development </td> <td> Programs and services that build responsive adult-child relationships and encourage children's exploration, play and inquiry. supported by <i>How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years</i> </td> <td></td> <td> Other considerations: CMSMs must ensure the provision of core OEYCFC services as they have to participate </td> </tr> <tr> <td> 3. Making connections to other family services </td> <td> Responding to early child development concerns and supporting families to seek additional support Information sharing and facilitating connections to: • other early years services (including specialized services), and • programs and services available for the whole family beyond the early years </td> <td></td> <td> Qualified staff teams must include at least one Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) to deliver mandatory core services at each centre </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	Service Delivery Method	Mandatory/Optional	Description	Examples	Location	Hours of Operation	Core services	Mandatory	1. Engaging parents and caregivers (including support, research activities)	Drop-in programs Information sharing (i.e. child development, parenting, nutrition, play and inquiry-based learning, etc.) Pre/post-natal supports Targeted outreach to non-users	Permanent physical site located in schools, community buildings or shared space	Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) overall must offer service-based core services on a year-round basis and at least 3 days per week including either Saturday or Sunday across the county as a whole CMSMs can have several centres operating at different times and on different days of the week Evening hours to meet needs of working families are optional and should be based on identified community need	2. Supporting early learning and development	Programs and services that build responsive adult-child relationships and encourage children's exploration, play and inquiry. supported by <i>How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years</i>		Other considerations: CMSMs must ensure the provision of core OEYCFC services as they have to participate	3. Making connections to other family services	Responding to early child development concerns and supporting families to seek additional support Information sharing and facilitating connections to: • other early years services (including specialized services), and • programs and services available for the whole family beyond the early years		Qualified staff teams must include at least one Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) to deliver mandatory core services at each centre
Service Delivery Method	Mandatory/Optional	Description	Examples	Location	Hours of Operation																
Core services	Mandatory	1. Engaging parents and caregivers (including support, research activities)	Drop-in programs Information sharing (i.e. child development, parenting, nutrition, play and inquiry-based learning, etc.) Pre/post-natal supports Targeted outreach to non-users	Permanent physical site located in schools, community buildings or shared space	Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) overall must offer service-based core services on a year-round basis and at least 3 days per week including either Saturday or Sunday across the county as a whole CMSMs can have several centres operating at different times and on different days of the week Evening hours to meet needs of working families are optional and should be based on identified community need																
		2. Supporting early learning and development	Programs and services that build responsive adult-child relationships and encourage children's exploration, play and inquiry. supported by <i>How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years</i>		Other considerations: CMSMs must ensure the provision of core OEYCFC services as they have to participate																
		3. Making connections to other family services	Responding to early child development concerns and supporting families to seek additional support Information sharing and facilitating connections to: • other early years services (including specialized services), and • programs and services available for the whole family beyond the early years		Qualified staff teams must include at least one Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) to deliver mandatory core services at each centre																
<p>April 27, 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Design of the St. Thomas-Elgin OEYCFC model » Review of and feedback on list of potential locations for OEYCFCs » Discussion about what should be provided in every main OEYCFC in St. Thomas-Elgin (mandatory core services) » Discussion about ideas about how to create a common experience for children and families, regardless of the OEYCFC they choose to attend 																				

In addition to the above, a service provider online survey was conducted specific to OEYCFCs. 26 service providers completed this online survey.

Community planning for services for children and families is not a new concept in St. Thomas-Elgin. In recent years a number of neighbourhood/community initiatives and projects have been discussed, researched and implemented. The feedback and information provided by service providers and other community partners through these engagement processes was also utilized in the development of the OEYCFC initial plan.

CURRENT ONTARIO EARLY YEARS CENTRE (OEYC) AND PARENTING AND FAMILY LITERACY CENTRE (PFLC) SERVICE PROVIDERS

A number of meetings were held with the current OEYC and PFLC service providers to discuss service system planning and transition plans. Three meetings were held with senior management at Community Living Elgin, the current OEYC host agency/service provider, and two meetings specific to the PFLCs were held with the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB).

In addition to the above meetings, staff from Community Living Elgin participated in all of the OEYCFC planning discussions and engagement sessions held with Elgin Children's Network.

INDIGENOUS SERVICE PROVIDERS

The Journey Together St. Thomas Elgin Project has been working with families and service providers in St. Thomas and Elgin to develop a plan to increase access to culturally relevant early years services for Indigenous children and families. While there are no service providers in St. Thomas and Elgin dedicated to serving only the Indigenous community, the Journey Together project has worked with more than 50 organizations which provide services to Indigenous families. There has also been feedback regarding early years services from Indigenous children and families. This information will be used to create a community focused plan in September of 2017.

SCHOOL BOARD ENGAGEMENT

The City of St. Thomas, as the CMSM, understands the important role that schools play in the OEYCFC initiative. With the Schools First policy, local school boards have been a key player in the OEYCFC engagement process. The City of St. Thomas has held numerous meetings with the local school boards: Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) and London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB). Since August 2016, the CMSM has held 17 meetings with the TVDSB and 11 meetings with the LDCSB. The focus of these meetings has been community planning, capital planning, and annual planning.

In addition to the above meetings, the Early Years Leads from the two school boards participated in many of the OEYCFC planning discussions and engagement sessions held with Elgin Children's Network.

DATA COLLECTION AND PROFILES

To supplement the data and information gathered from stakeholder groups, existing data were used to create neighbourhood and community profiles. Other sources of data used in the community needs assessment include:

- » Statistics Canada
- » EDI, EQAO, OSSLT
- » School boards (Kindergarten Parent Survey, enrolment projections)
- » Municipal data about community/neighbourhood infrastructure

Using the collected data, data profiles were developed for each of the communities/ neighbourhoods in St. Thomas-Elgin. These profiles contain the following data:

- » Population/Number of Children
- » Elementary School Enrolment Projections
- » Language Spoken Most Often at Home
- » Indigenous Identify
- » Early Development Indicator (EDI) Results
- » Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Results for Grades 3 and 6, Grade 9 Achievement Results, and Grade 10 OSSLT Achievement Results
- » Other Child/Family Risk Factors (% of children living in low income, Social Risk Index, number of lone parent families)
- » Data from the Kindergarten Parent Survey (TVDSB schools only) re: accessing information about parenting, child participation in programs/activities
- » Neighbourhood Infrastructure

5.0 SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The St. Thomas-Elgin community needs assessment utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, supplemented with family, child, and service provider experience. The Statistics Canada data utilized for the community needs assessment is 2011 data. Profiles will be updated once 2016 data are fully released.

The needs assessment was conducted, where possible, at the neighbourhood level in St. Thomas (12 neighbourhoods) and at the municipal level in Elgin County (7 municipalities/ townships/towns).

SUMMARY OF WHAT FAMILIES SAID

The voice of families, including their needs and experiences, are a critical aspect of developing the OEYCFCs. In order to capture the input provided by families through the engagement process, the four pillars of the early years and child care system have been used.

Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework (2017) is the Province's plan to transform Ontario's early years and child care system. This framework identifies four pillars of the early years and child care system:

AFFORDABILITY	ACCESS	QUALITY	RESPONSIVENESS
Ensuring that early years programs and services, including licensed child care, are within affordable reach for families	Increasing access to early years programs to give families more opportunity to benefit from high-quality early childhood programs and services	Enabling safe and reliable programs built on positive, responsive relationships, engaging environments, and meaningful experiences for children and families, delivered by educated and well-supported staff	Providing a range of early years and child care programs that are inclusive and culturally appropriate, located in schools, communities, workplaces and home settings so that parents – including parents who work irregular hours – can choose the options that work best for their family

Some of the common themes which emerged over the course of the engagement and through prior engagement strategies with families are presented in each of the four pillars below.

ON AFFORDABILITY

- » Many parents would try new programs if they are free
- » There is a need for affordable recreation programs

ON QUALITY

- » Many parents would try new programs if the staff were perceived as being welcoming
- » Staff are one of the main reasons why parents like attending the current OEYCs/PFLCs. They like that staff are friendly, welcoming, helpful, supportive, excellent, and knowledgeable

ON ACCESS

- » Many parents/caregivers are not aware of the programs and services that are available to them and their children. They need to know where to access information about these programs and services
- » Provide multi-age children programming at the same time and location (i.e. programming needs to be organized so that whole families with children of various ages can attend programming together)
- » Almost 50.0% of parents do not currently use the OEYCs and PFLCs in St. Thomas-Elgin
- » Transportation is a challenge for some families, even in St. Thomas where parents report that children get around by walking or biking
- » Parents/caregivers like to hear about programs and services through social media, internet/websites, school, and family/friends
- » Parents/caregivers would like to access programs and services at an existing early years program site, library, community/ recreation centre or school

ON RESPONSIVENESS

- » Parents/caregivers want programs and services to be provided on weekday mornings, weekday evenings, weekends, holidays, and PA Days to better support their schedules and their children's schedules. The hours of operation need to be aligned with children's routines and parents' working hours
- » Parents with children in the younger age groups (prenatal to six years) would like to see the following programs offered in their town/neighbourhood free of charge: parent and child playgroups, information and tips for parents on children's development, behaviour, safety, and nutrition, and story time programs
- » Parents with children 7 to 12 years would like to see tutoring or homework help offered in their town/ neighbourhood free of charge
- » Many parents/caregivers are likely to use services offered periodically in parks and other non-traditional spaces
- » Many parents/caregivers are likely to use virtual services and resources
- » Parents/caregivers are interested in attending Indigenous programs or sites
- » Programs need to be accessible by people of various abilities, including children with special needs
- » Families appreciate being engaged and would like there to be an ongoing process for engagement

In their own words...

"Mostly inconvenient times...I am very interested...and would love to attend."

"I would attend if it was low cost."

"There are so many things we can't access as they are far away, offered daytime only, very small groups, etc. We need local hubs for our children to play, learn and socialize with less cost."

"I love the staff! Everyone is so friendly and has genuinely helped me with having a baby, toddler and now kindergartener."

"For us it would depend greatly on the time it was offered and how welcoming the staff were to special needs kids."

"I am unaware of what they offer."

"The OEYC is on the other side of the city and I don't always have a car."

"Have never heard of any of these programs."

"I cannot afford to drive to Straffordville, Aylmer, St. Thomas for programs because of gas expenses."

"Most baby story times are in the morning, and that isn't a good time for us."

"I home school my boys and need a group that I can take my 7 and 4 year old."

In 2015, surveys were also conducted with the participants at the OEYCs in St. Thomas-Elgin and at the Northside Neighbourhood Hub. Highlights from the results of these surveys that can help inform the design and implementation of the new OEYCFCs include:

- » OEYC and Northside Neighbourhood Hub participants rate their experience at the current centres/programs highly
- » Some suggestions for changes to the program were made such as making sure staff are always available and clearly identified, using more social media to keep parents informed, providing tours of the facility when new to the centre, more circle/sharing time for parents, offering snacks, providing more hours of service in Aylmer, providing more activities for older children, and being open later in the day and on weekends
- » The majority of people using the OEYCs have lived in Canada more than ten years, speak English at home, heard about the OEYC from family/friend, have a college diploma or university degree, are female, are between the ages of 26 and 40 years, and visit the centre three to five times a month
- » Participants cite benefits of attending the centre for both themselves as a parent and for their child(ren)

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Programs and services need to be affordable or free for families. This will help with getting families to try new programs. Affordable recreation activities were frequently mentioned as desired by parents/caregivers for their children.

Information about available programs and services needs to be easier to find and access for parents/caregivers. Internet-based information sources (i.e. website, social media, etc.) work well for families in St. Thomas-Elgin. Parents/caregivers would also like to access information about programs and services through their school and from family and friends.

In terms of locations of OEYCFCs, many parents/caregivers in St. Thomas-Elgin like the existing early years sites. Alternate locations for OEYCFCs would be libraries and community/ recreation centres or schools. The location of OEYCFCs must take into consideration that transportation is a challenge for families living both in St. Thomas and in the county.

According to parents/caregivers, staff are key to creating a positive program experience. In addition to this, parents/caregivers should be engaged in designing the program experience and providing input into programming on a regular basis.

Programs and services must be offered beyond the traditional day time hours. This includes after school, evening, weekend, PA Day and holiday options.

Programs and services must be inclusive and diverse, reflecting the many communities they serve. This includes creating space that is welcoming for all, and offering culturally responsive programming options. Many parents/caregivers are interested in attending Indigenous programs and sites and learning about Indigenous cultural teachings.

In terms of programming, parents/caregivers with younger children would like free parent and child playgroups, information and tips for parents on children's development, behaviour, safety, and nutrition, and story time programs.

THE VOICES OF CHILDREN

42 children completed the Children's Activity Sheets at the various locations/events including: Teddy Bear Picnics, Soup with Santa, and Canadian National Film Day. As collected through art and conversation, many of the children's favourite things to do is to PLAY!

- » Half of the drawings were of children playing with toys, friends, playdough, paw patrol, and tractors
- » Some drawings were about colouring
- » Some were about being active by swimming, playing in snow or just being outside
- » One was about cooking and gardening

In addition to the completion of the Children's Activity Sheets, parents/caregivers who completed the parent survey were asked to share their children's favourite programs and activities. 313 parents listed an average of two to three different favourite activity types for their children. For example, many parents identified that their children's favourite activities included a mix of physical, creative, learning and social activities. Almost 7.0% of parents said that their children's favourite activity was "recreation" or "play" in general.

Simply looking at the words used, the most favourite activities for children are playing, reading, crafts, swimming and sports. They like the library and programs.

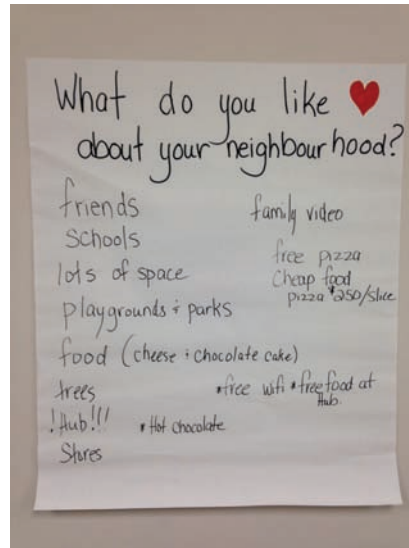
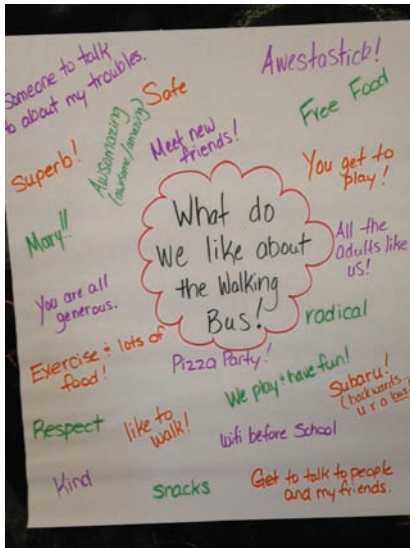
Exploring these words further, seven key themes emerged. These are identified below, and described in rank order based on the number of parent respondents.

- 1. Getting Active** (33.7% of all parents): According to parents, being physically active and playing sports is a top favourite activity for children. Swimming, sports, soccer, gymnastics, baseball, hockey, and skating are mentioned most often.
- 2. Going to Places and Programs** (27.8% of all parents): Going to places and programs like the library, the Neighbourhood Hub, early years and literacy centres is another favourite activity for children. In some cases, specific programs and locations were identified. For example, parents mentioned Pyjama Rama at Port Stanley library, Baby Time at the early years centre, YMCA, PFLC at Locke's School, and the Ontario Early Years Centre on Morrison Dr.
- 3. Literacy-Based Activities** (23.6% of all parents): Reading and books is a favourite activity for many children. Additionally, parents listed activities like video gaming, science, computer, learning, experiments, and math among their children's favourites.
- 4. Arts-Based Activities** (22.7% of all parents): Being creative is a favourite activity for many children. This includes music and dance, playing instruments, painting, colouring, art classes, doing arts and crafts, and cooking.
- 5. Playing with Games, Toys, and Equipment** (18.1% of all parents): Children like building and playing with blocks and Lego. They like board games and puzzles, and playing with trains, cars and trucks. Parents talked about their children liking free play time, imaginative play, and sensory play (i.e. water table and sand).
- 6. Outdoor Activities** (10.9% of all parents): Children like hiking, exploring, going to the park, nature, and playing in the woods.
- 7. Relational** (6.5% of all parents): Children like spending their time with family and friends, and participating in activities that allow them to socialize and play with other people.



activity anything arts baby bats baseball basketball bikes blocks board books
building care centre child children class colouring computer cooking
crafts dance daughter drawing drop in early events exploring family free
play friends gaming going groups gymnastics hockey imagination karate kids
learning Lego lessons library literacy Lockes loves movies music OEYC
outdoor outside painting parent PFLC playgroups
playing program puzzles reading
running school science sensory singing skating soccer social special sports
story summer swimming things time tiny tots toys trucks video
walking watching work Years YMCA

Child Engagement



IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

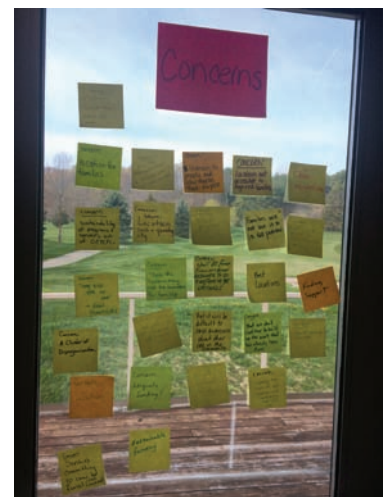
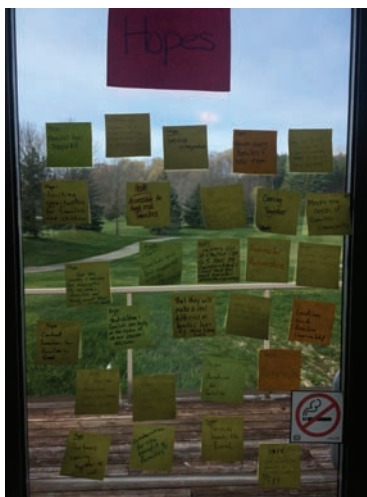
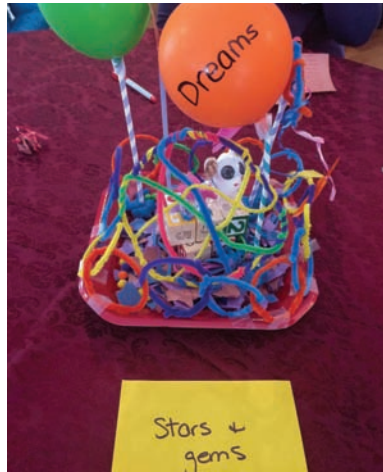
The programming provided at the OEYFCs needs to reflect what children like to do. Children in St. Thomas-Elgin like to be physically active and to play!

WHAT SERVICE PROVIDERS SAID

Elgin Children's Network (ECN) is the planning table for families and children in St. Thomas-Elgin. This table includes service delivery organizations, school board representatives and other community partners. This group has been invaluable in terms of designing the approach to the OEYFC community needs assessment and developing the initial plan.



Service Provider Engagement



Some of the language/concepts about the new service model provided by ECN includes:

- » Collaboration – connection
- » Safe
- » Welcoming, warm
- » Diversity, inclusivity
- » Authenticity
- » Openness, truly listening
- » Family-centred, child-centred, community-centred
- » Virtual piece – connected anywhere
- » Responsiveness, genuine openness to feedback, reflective of need
- » Moving away from traditional learning
- » Variety of services – continuum
- » Imagination
- » Empowerment of children and families
- » Non-judgemental
- » Flexible
- » Incorporating the outdoors
- » Authentic play
- » Joy

In addition to the engagement sessions with the ECN, service providers in St. Thomas-Elgin also completed a survey about OEYCFCs. Highlights of this input include:

- » More than 70% of service providers feel that the following existing physical locations of OEYCs/PFLCs are in the right locations:
 - » OEYC Main Centre, 7 Morrison Drive, St. Thomas
 - » OEYC, St. Thomas Public Library site
 - » OEYC Northside Neighbourhood Hub site
- » Other areas identified for possible OEYCFC sites include: Belmont, West Elgin, Dutton/Rodney, East Elgin (i.e. Port Burwell), St. Thomas core/downtown, Southwest end of St. Thomas, and Straffordville
- » Service providers feel that the optional OEYCFC services should be a part of the OEYCFC service delivery model in St. Thomas-Elgin (see the table below for further details). The provision of mobile/satellite services was cited as being beneficial to service more rural/less populated areas and to support high risk areas and housing developments. Virtual services and resources are needed, and we need to keep in mind that not all Elgin County residents currently have access to high speed internet

OPTIONAL SERVICES	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Mobile services (programs and services that can be offered outside of the physical centres to further integrate OEYCFCs with broader community services and to enhance service access)	73.1%	7.7%	19.2%
Virtual services and resources (online resources, information and other services like websites, social media and Skype services)	84.0%	8.0%	8.0%
Provision of a local phone line (for example: using 211 to provide information about OEYCFC programs and services, and information about child development, parenting supports and play and inquiry based learning).	70.8%	16.7%	12.5%

In their own words...

“Absolutely YES! In high risk areas, housing developments, areas where a geographic or social reason why it is difficult for families to access support and services.”

“However, access to the internet is not available to everyone, especially high speed internet. There are pockets within Elgin county that high speed internet is not available. And if transportation is an issue, you can't even get to places where high speed internet is available. Virtual services are great, if the capacity is there for the low income people...and if they speak English.”

“One dedicated website which helps families to know the locations, services, programs, and supports available in Elgin-St. Thomas. Online resources such as calendar of events, schedules, etc. could be placed on the website. The potential for online registration for programs could also be explored. There could be some merit in joining social media to help promote programs and services.”

“211 is already available in St. Thomas - Elgin and is populated by the healthline. This is a tertiary form of service delivery and the inclusion of an app or texting line would be more relevant to families of this generation and of decades to come.”

- » Service providers feel that OEYCFCs should be open on weekday mornings, afternoons and evenings, and on Saturdays

In January/February of 2013, organizations that provide services to children and their families in St. Thomas/Elgin County were asked to complete an online survey. This survey asked questions about barriers to accessing services, most urgent gaps in programs and services, unique characteristics that require closer attention and thoughts about creating an integrated system of child and family services. 37 Surveys were completed and analyzed.

Top three barriers to children and families accessing the services they needs and want are:

1. Transportation
2. Wait lists, access to services, availability of services
3. Knowledge of available services

The most urgent gaps in programs and services for children and families are:

1. Mental health services
2. Services for youth
3. Supports for parents
4. Coordination of services

Key characteristics that require closer attention in the planning process include:

- » Youth, including young parents
- » The rural aspects of the county, including isolation
- » Poverty
- » Children unprepared for school, not being successful in school
- » Unemployment
- » Access to information, knowledge about available services and access to services
- » Addictions
- » Mental health
- » Cultural and language differences, including Mennonite and Indigenous people

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Like parents/caregivers, service providers report that OEYCFCs should be open evenings and on weekends.

Transportation is a reported challenge and service providers state that the use of satellite/mobile sites may help with access in this regard.

Many service providers also feel that virtual services and resources would be a good addition to the OEYCFC service delivery model. This type of service would appeal to the current generation of parents/caregivers. The OEYCFC model also needs to take into consideration that not all families have access to high speed internet. Alternatives to sharing information about programs and services will need to be explored to cover geographic areas with this reality.

OUR FAMILIES AND WHAT THEY NEED

A number of indicators were looked at to develop a profile of children and families in St. Thomas-Elgin, and to assist with the assessment of community need.

Family Demographics

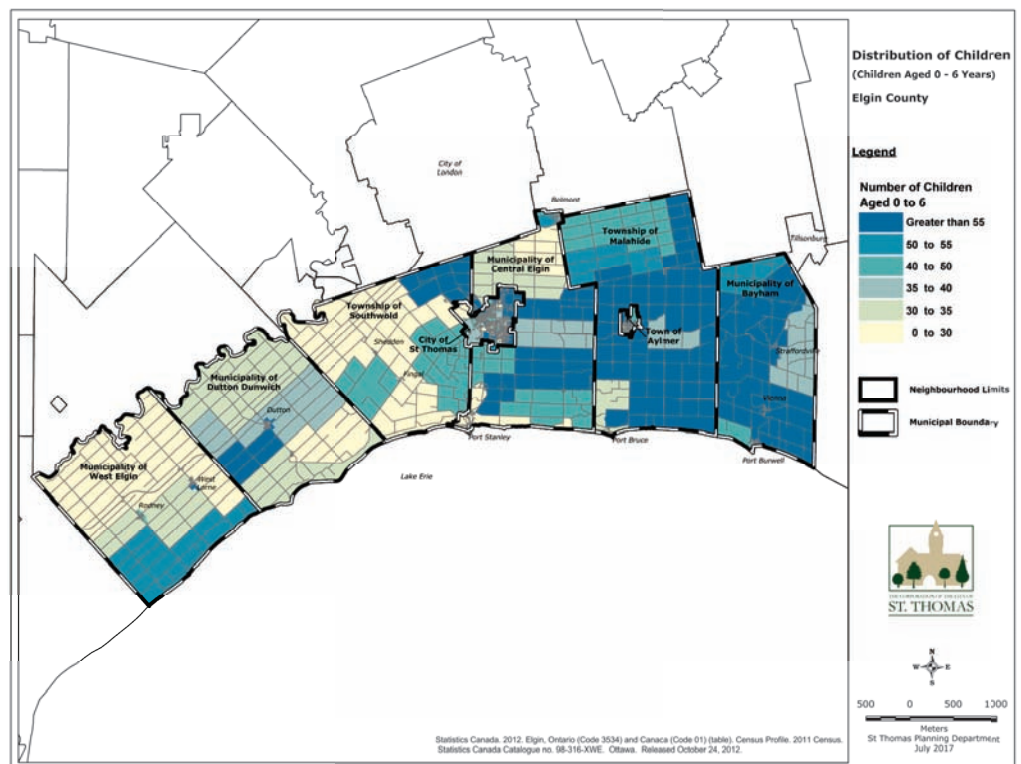
Number and Location of Children Aged 0 to 6 Years

- » In 2011, there were 7,689 children aged 0 to 6 years in St. Thomas-Elgin, comprising 8.8% of the total population
- » In 2016, there were 7,467 children aged 0 to 6 years in St. Thomas-Elgin, comprising 8.4% of the total population
- » There was a slight decrease (222 or 2.9%) in the number of 0 to 6 year olds from 2011 to 2016, although there was a slight increase (1.7%) in the overall population
- » Municipalities which experienced a growth in the number of children aged 0 to 6 years from 2011 to 2016 include: Aylmer, Bayham, West Elgin and Dutton/Dunwich

See the table below for further details.

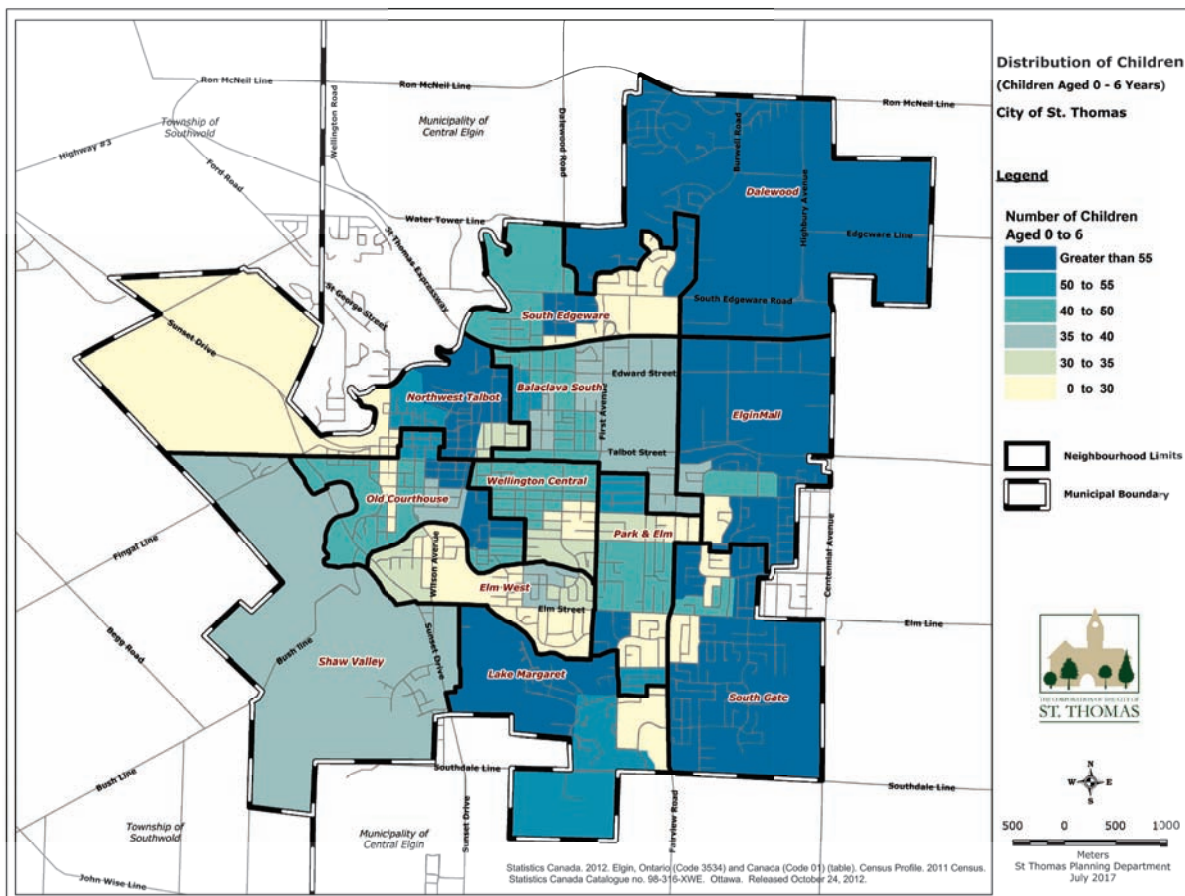
Town/Township/ Municipality	Number of Children 0 to 6 (2011)	Number of Children 0 to 6 (2016)	% Change (2011 to 2016)
West Elgin	322	333	3.4%
Dutton/Dunwich	257	282	9.7%
Southwold	319	313	-1.9%
Central Elgin	911	811	-11.0%
St. Thomas	3,292	3,059	-7.1%
Aylmer	667	749	12.3%
Malahide	1,079	1,048	-2.9%
Bayham	842	872	3.6%
TOTAL	7,689	7,467	-2.9%

The following map shows where children aged six and under live by Municipality or Township.



» Neighbourhoods in St. Thomas with a higher number of children aged 0 to 6 years include: South Gate, Dalewood, Park & Elm, South Edgeware, Old Courthouse, and Elgin Mall. See the table and map below for further details.

St. Thomas Neighbourhood	Number of Children 0 to 6 (2011)	% of Children 0 to 6 in St. Thomas
Balaclava South	195	6.7%
Dalewood	308	10.5%
Elgin Mall	255	8.7%
Elm West	144	4.9%
Lake Margaret	203	6.9%
Northwest Talbot	213	7.3%
Old Courthouse	296	10.1%
Park & Elm	308	10.5%
Shaw Valley	39	1.3%
South Edgeware	298	10.1%
South Gate	510	17.4%
Wellington Central	168	5.7%



IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Neighbourhoods and municipalities/townships/towns with a higher number of children aged 0 to 6 years should have access to child and family programs. Areas in the county with high numbers of children (greater than 55 per dissemination area) and no current OEYC/PFLC located in the community include: Central Elgin.

Neighbourhoods in St. Thomas with high numbers of children (greater than 55 per dissemination area) and no current OEYC/PFLC located in the neighbourhood include: South Gate, Dalewood, Old Courthouse, and Elgin Mall.

Language

- » According to 2016 Statistics Canada data, the east area in Elgin County has a higher percentage of residents speaking a non-official language most often at home (Aylmer, Malahide, Bayham), with 9.9% or higher of the population speaking a non-official language most often at home
- » The top language spoken most often at home in this area of Elgin County is German
- » Other top languages spoken at home in other municipalities/townships/cities include: Portuguese (West Elgin), and Polish, Croatian and Spanish (St. Thomas)

Town/Township/ Municipality	Total Population (2016)	Number Speaking Non-Official Language Most Often at Home	% of Population Speaking Non-Official Language Most Often at Home
West Elgin	4,995	145	2.9%
Dutton/Dunwich	3,866	35	1.0%
Southwold	4,421	30	0.7%
Central Elgin	12,607	160	1.3%
St. Thomas	38,909	630	1.6%
Aylmer	7,492	740	9.9%
Malahide	9,292	1,450	15.6%
Bayham	7,396	1,150	15.5%
TOTAL	88,978	4,340	4.9%

- » In 2011, the neighbourhoods in St. Thomas with a higher number of people speaking non-official languages most often at home are Elgin Mall, Dalewood, and South Gate, all with more than 100 people speaking non-official languages most often at home
- » The only neighbourhood in St. Thomas with a higher percentage of residents speaking one non-official language is Elgin Mall, with 25 individuals reporting this is the language spoken most often at home (see the table below for further details)

St. Thomas Neighbourhood	Number Speaking Non-Official Language Most Often at Home	% of Population Speaking Non-Official Language Most Often at Home
Balaclava South	25	0.9%
Dalewood	130	3.9%
Elgin Mall	140	3.6%
Elm West	10	0.4%
Lake Margaret	45	1.8%
Northwest Talbot	30	1.0%
Old Courthouse	45	1.1%
Park & Elm	85	2.0%
Shaw Valley	0	0.0%
South Edgeware	65	2.1%
South Gate	100	1.8%
Wellington Central	5	0.2%

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

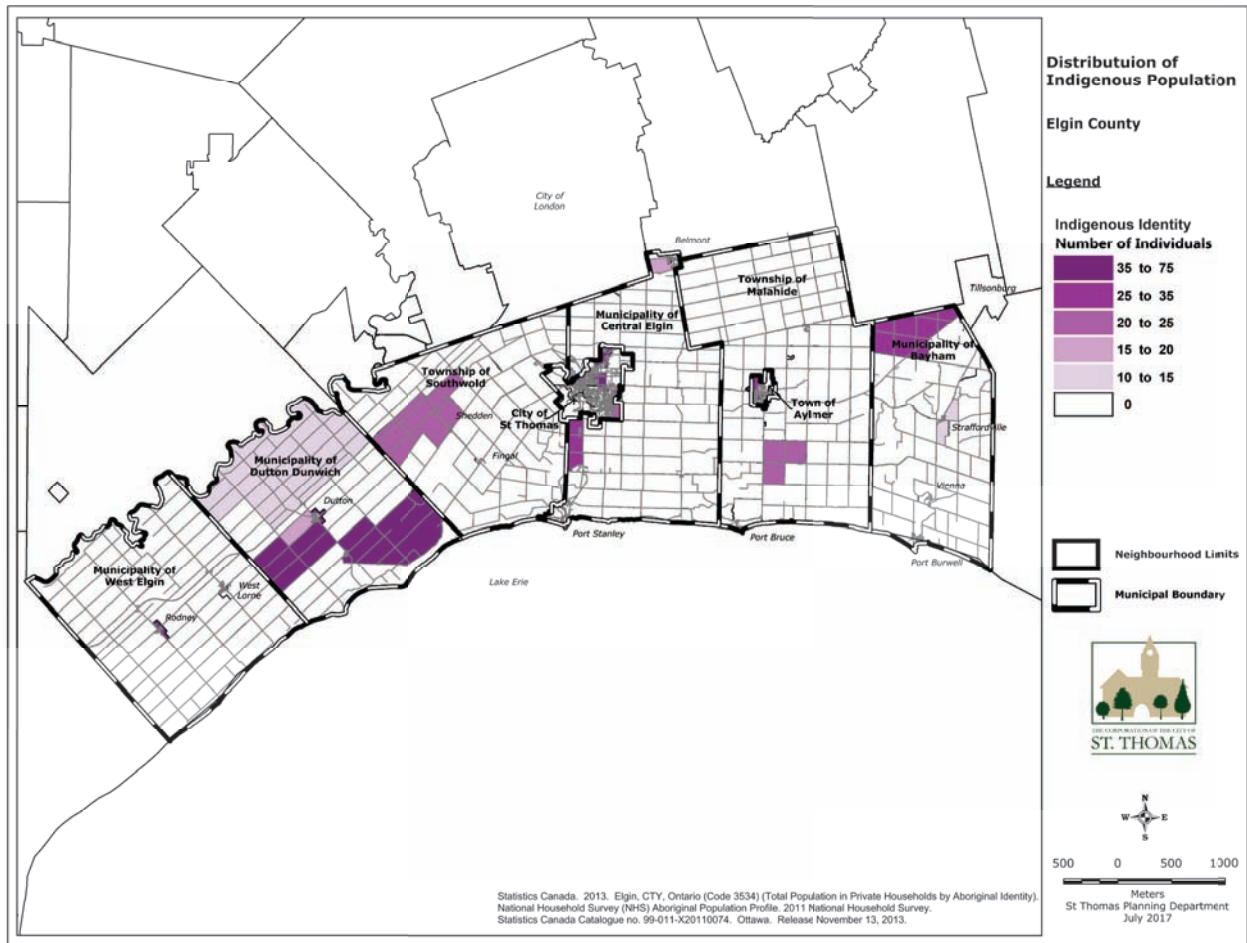
OEYCFCs need to reflect the community they serve in terms of culture and language, and create an environment that is welcoming and in which children and families can see themselves.

The east area of Elgin County has a large German speaking population. The OEYCFCs should work with the families and children in this area to ensure the centre reflects their language and cultural needs, including providing information in different languages, and ensuring the provision of culturally responsive programming.

St. Thomas has a very small percentage (1.6%) of its population speaking a non-official language most often at home, and only one neighbourhood has more than 1% of its population speaking one language (Spanish in Elgin Mall). The need to provide services and programs in the city in other languages is not necessary. Although there is limited cultural diversity in the city, the OEYCFCs should work to ensure that all families feel welcome at the centres and in its programs.

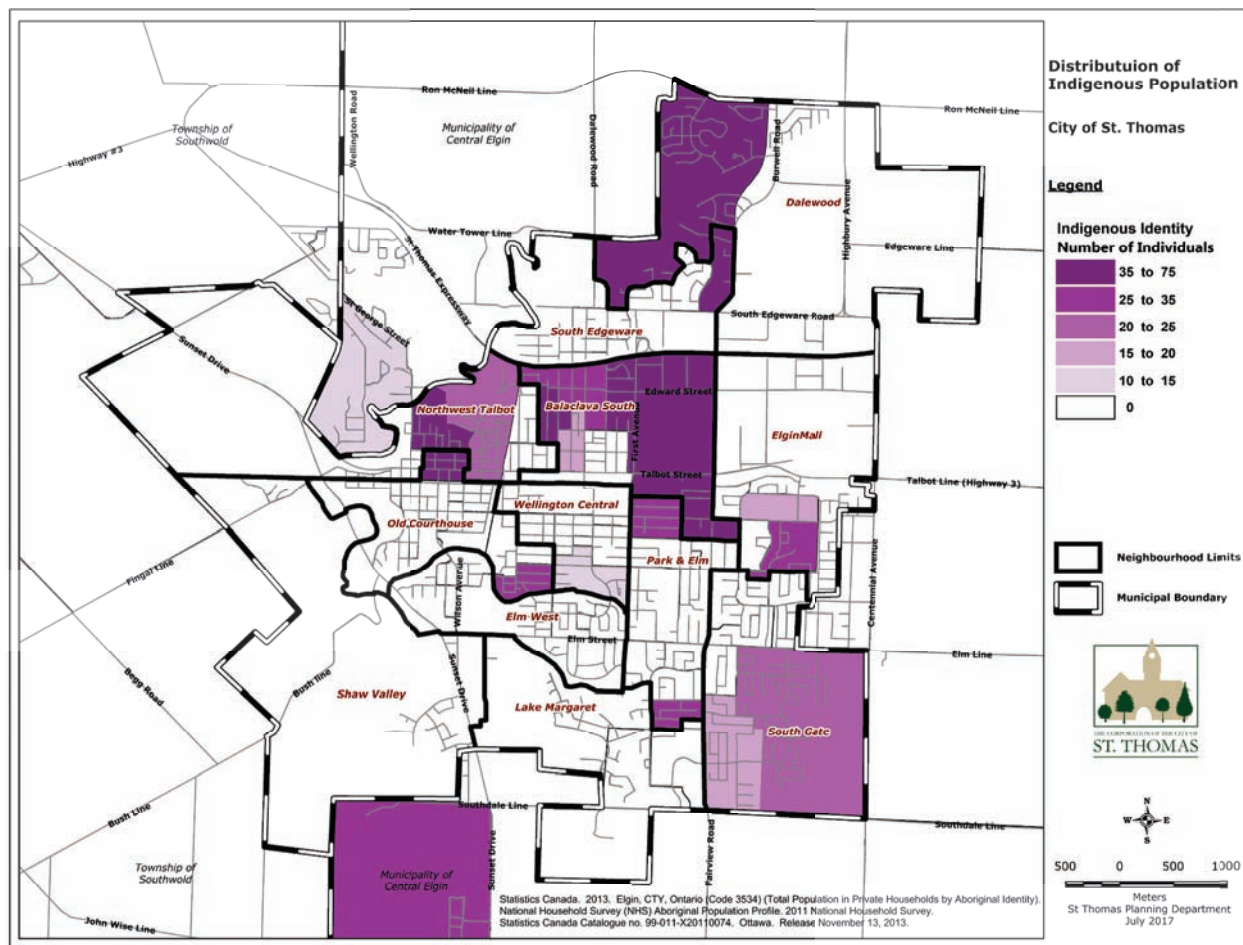
Indigenous Families

- » In 2011, 1,565 Indigenous persons lived in St. Thomas-Elgin
- » Indigenous persons comprise 1.8% of the total population
- » The majority of Indigenous persons live in St. Thomas (820)
- » Other municipalities/townships/towns with higher number of Indigenous persons include: Aylmer, Central Elgin, Dutton/Dunwich, and West Elgin (see the map below)



Neighbourhoods in St. Thomas with higher numbers of Indigenous persons include: Balaclava South, Old Courthouse, Northwest Talbot, Park & Elm, and South Edgeware (see the table and map below)

St. Thomas Neighbourhood	Number of Indigenous Persons (2011)	% of Total Indigenous Population in St. Thomas
Balaclava South	125	23.6%
Dalewood	50	9.4%
Elgin Mall	45	8.5%
Elm West	0	0.0%
Lake Margaret	0	0.0%
Northwest Talbot	65	12.3%
Old Courthouse	90	17.0%
Park & Elm	55	10.4%
Shaw Valley	0	0.0%
South Edgeware	55	10.4%
South Gate	35	6.6%
Wellington Central	10	1.9%



In addition to the Statistics Canada data provided above, the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC) promotes traditional and western health practices to enable people to live in a more balanced state of well-being. The Centre services on and off-reserve, status, non-status, and Metis populations of the Southwest Ontario region and associated First Nations with the mandate of ensuring that health services are accessible, of high quality and culturally appropriate. The centre has two London locations and one Chippewa location on the Munsee reserve.

In 2013, 141 children aged 0 to 12 years from St. Thomas-Elgin were served by SOAHAC (see the table below for further details).

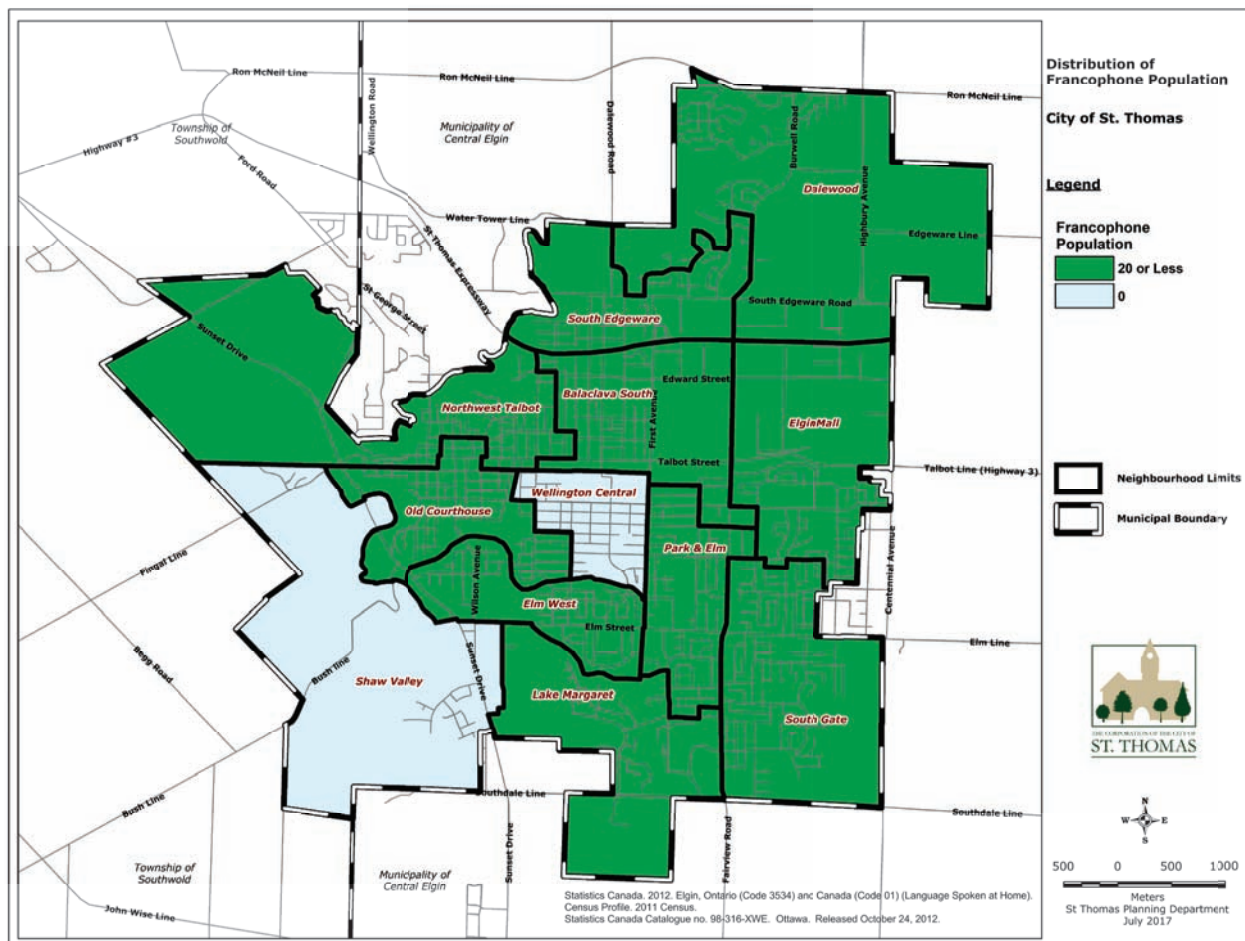
Age	Number Served at London SOAHAC Location	Number Served at Chippewa Location	TOTAL Served
0 to 5 years	4	57	61
6 to 12 years	5	75	80
TOTAL	9	132	141

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

OEYFCF programs and services must be offered that reflect local Indigenous cultures, and that are culturally responsive. St. Thomas has the highest number of Indigenous persons across the county. The OEYFCF service model must reflect this population in its offerings and environment.

Francophone Families

- » In 2016, 135 individuals in St. Thomas-Elgin identified French as the language spoken most often at home. This is 0.2% of the total population
- » Every town/township/municipality in St. Thomas-Elgin has some individuals living there who identified French as the language spoken most often at home
- » 55 of these individuals (40.7%) live in St. Thomas, representing 0.1% of St. Thomas' total population
- » There are no neighbourhoods in St. Thomas with a high concentration of Francophones (<20 in every neighbourhood). See the map below for further details



- » Outside of St. Thomas, in 2016, the number of individuals who identified French as the language spoken most often at home is small, ranging from a high of 20 in Central Elgin to a low of 5 in Aylmer and West Elgin

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

In St. Thomas-Elgin, there is a very small Francophone population. Based on this, and the fact that parents/caregivers have not requested this service, at this time, French language OEYCFC services may be considered but do not need to be offered in St. Thomas-Elgin.

Potential Risk/Vulnerability Indicators

Members of the ECN identified factors and criteria to assist with prioritizing neighbourhoods for programs and services. The risk/vulnerability factors and criteria that were identified by this group include:

FACTORS	CRITERIA
High score on the social risk index	Social Risk Index (Source: 2006 Census)
High rate of children living in low income	% of children <age 6 living in low income (Source: 2011 Census)
	% of children ages 6 to 18 living in low income (Source: 2011 Census)
High degree of vulnerability on the EDI	% of children vulnerable on one or more domain (Source: 2014-2015 EDI)
High number of Indigenous persons	Number of Aboriginal persons (Source: 2011 Census)

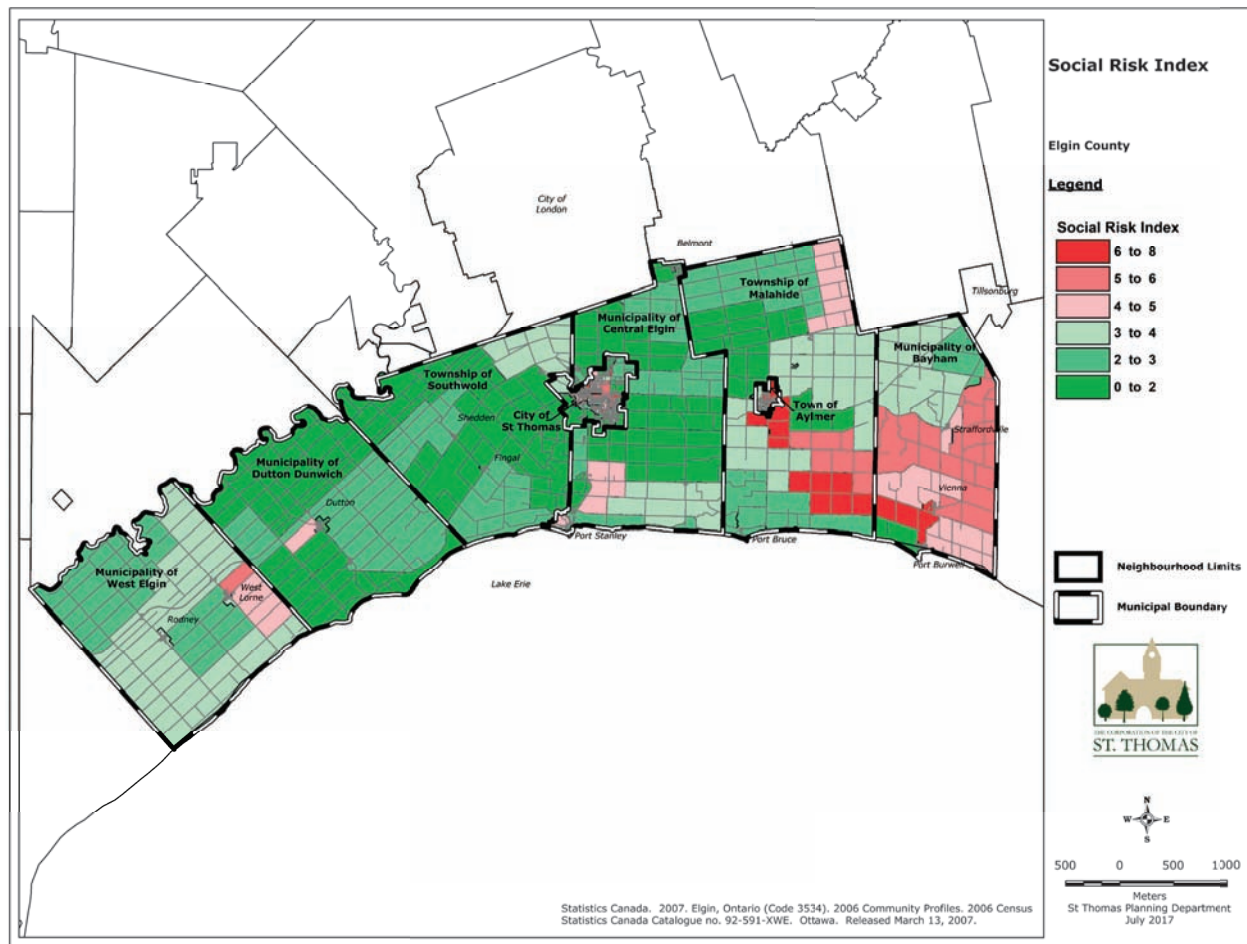
In addition to these factors, data pertaining to children living in households receiving support through Ontario Works and children living in social housing family units was reviewed.

Social Risk Index (2006)

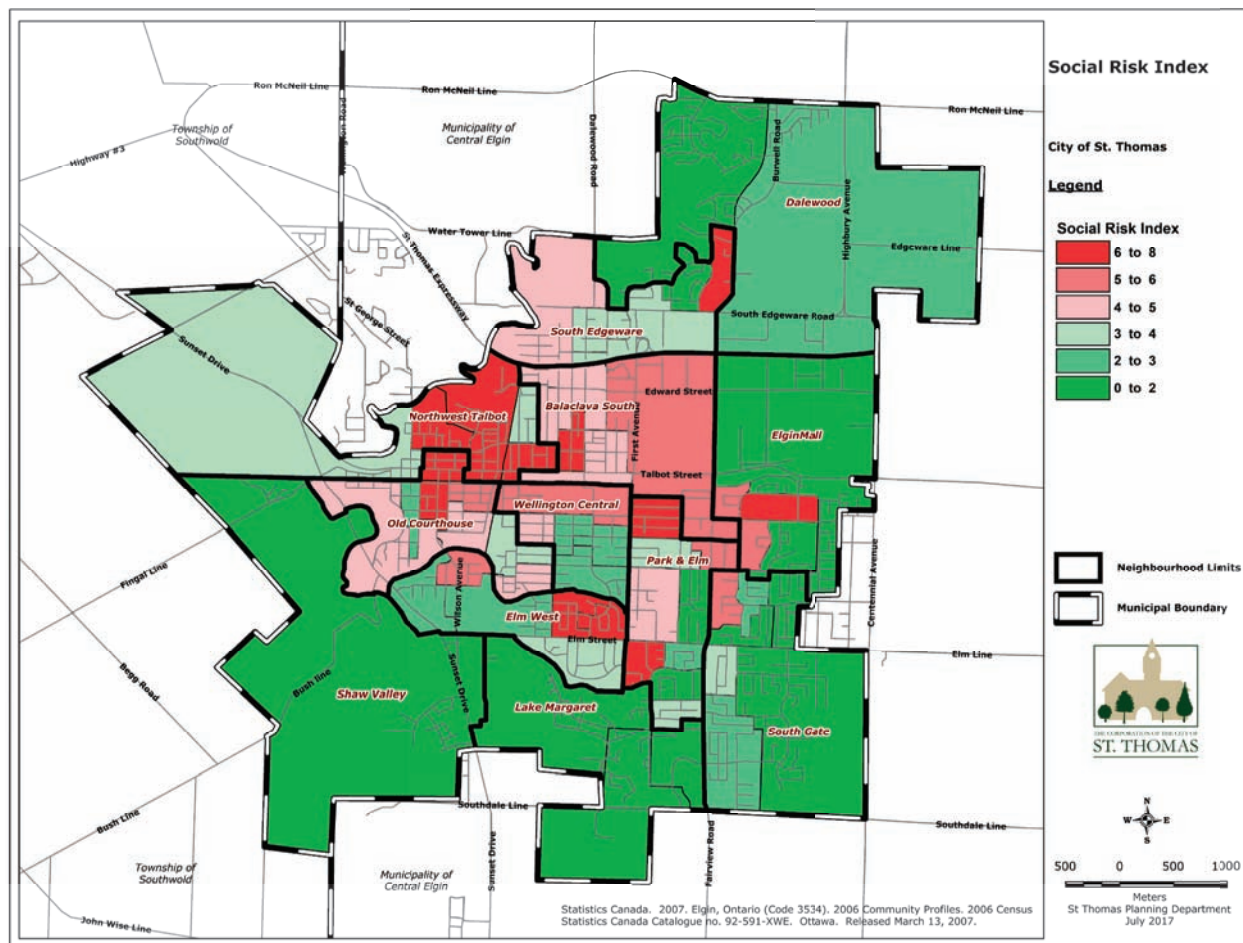
The Social Risk Index (SRI) is a composite index that measures the socio-economic risk of communities by looking at nine different indicators. SRI scores range from zero to nine, with higher scores indicating higher levels of risk. The level of potential risk for the municipalities/townships/towns in St. Thomas-Elgin can be seen in the following table.

CATEGORY OF RISK	NUMBER OF INDICATORS	MUNICIPALITY/TOWNSHIP/TOWN
High Risk	7 to 9	» None
Somewhat High Risk	5 to 6	» St. Thomas
Somewhat Low Risk	3 to 4	» Aylmer » Bayham » Malahide
Low Risk	0 to 2	» West Elgin » Dutton/Dunwich » Southwold » Central Elgin

- » Overall, none of the municipalities/townships/towns in the county are at high social risk
- » As can be seen in the map below, there are areas within Bayham, Malahide, and West Elgin that are rated as “Somewhat High Risk” or “High Risk”



- » In terms of St. Thomas neighbourhoods as a whole, none were categorized as “High Risk”, and those categorized as “Somewhat High Risk” include: Balaclava South, and Northwest Talbot
- » As can be seen in the map below, there are areas within neighbourhoods that are rated as “High Risk”. These neighbourhoods include: South Edgware, Northwest Talbot, Balaclava South, Old Courthouse, and Elm West

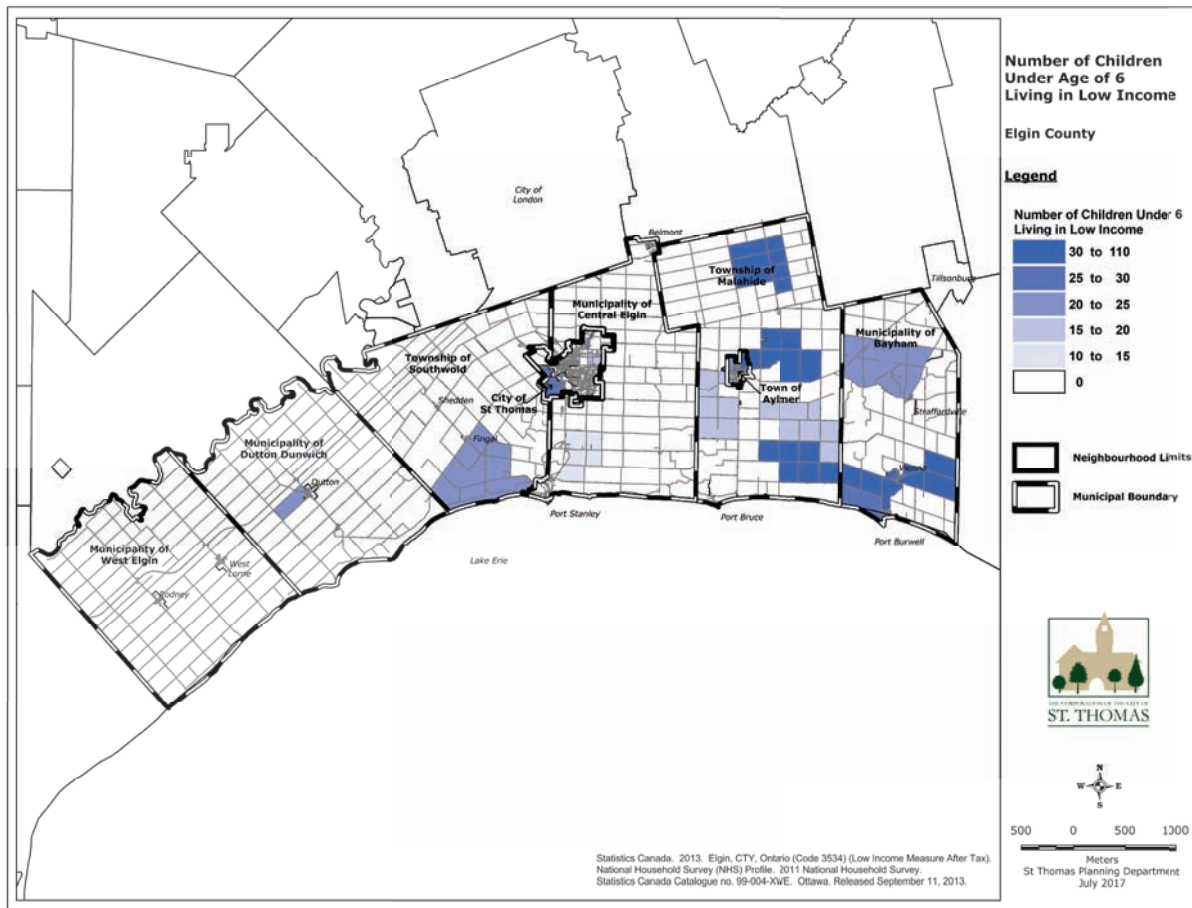


NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF SIX LIVING IN LOW INCOME

- » In 2011, 1,495 children under the age of 6 years in St. Thomas-Elgin were living in low income. This is 23.3% of all children under the age of 6
- » Many of these children live in St. Thomas (655 or 43.8%)
- » Other municipalities with a higher number of children under the age of 6 living in low income include: Malahide, Aylmer, and Bayham

See the table and map below for further details.

Town/Township/ Municipality	Number of Children <6 Living in Low Income	% of Total
West Elgin	40	2.7%
Dutton/Dunwich	65	4.3%
Southwold	45	3.0%
Central Elgin	60	4.0%
St. Thomas	655	43.8%
Aylmer	195	13.0%
Malahide	255	17.1%
Bayham	180	12.0%
TOTAL	1,495	99.9%

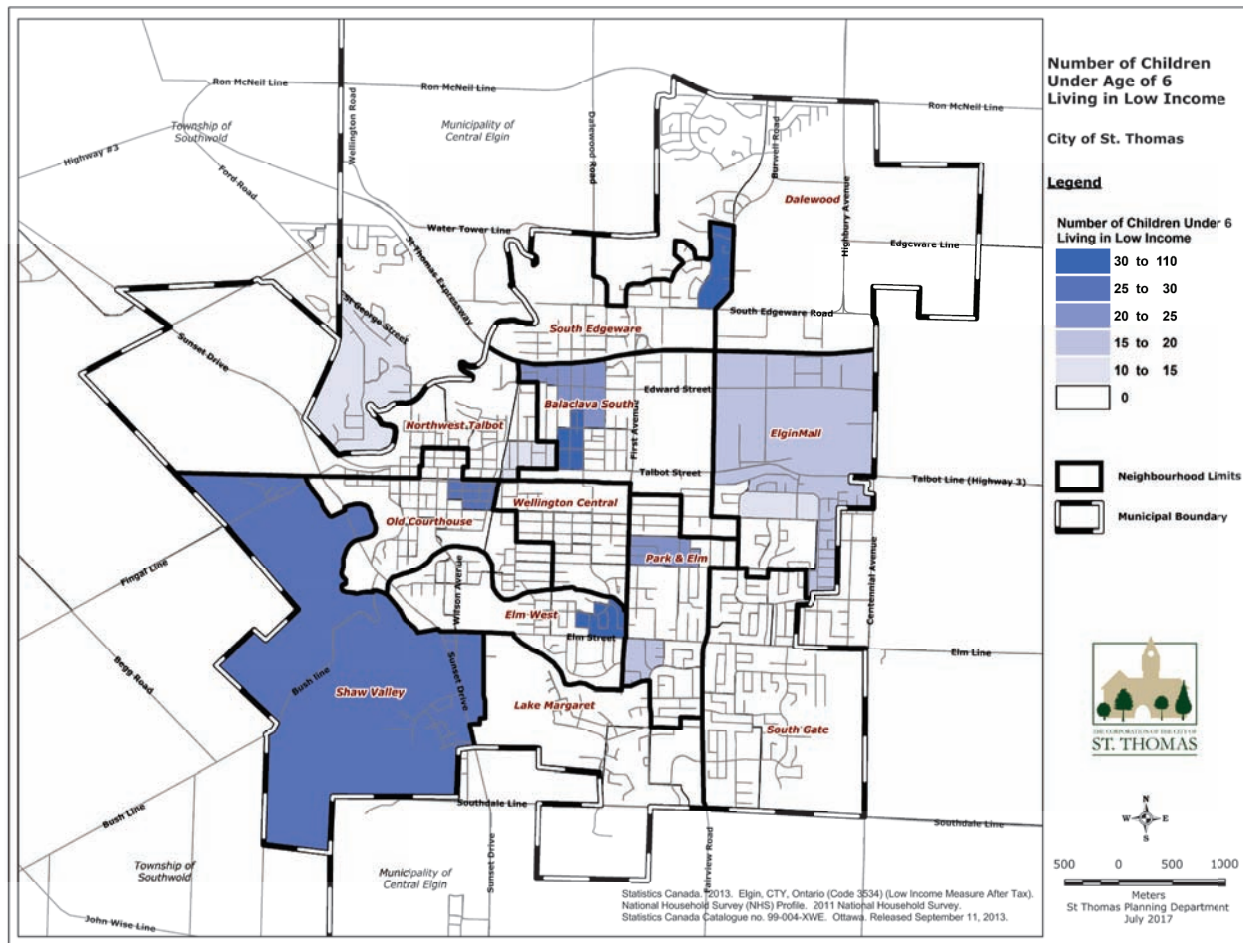


» The neighbourhood in St. Thomas with higher numbers of children under the age of 6 living in low income is South Edgeware (340)

See the table and map below for further details.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN <6 LIVING IN LOW INCOME IN ST. THOMAS NEIGHBOURHOODS

St. Thomas Neighbourhood	Number	% of Children in St. Thomas
Balaclava South	70	12.3%
Dalewood	0	0.0%
Elgin Mall	25	4.4%
Elm West	40	7.0%
Lake Margaret	0	0.0%
Northwest Talbot	10	1.8%
Old Courthouse	25	4.4%
Park & Elm	35	6.1%
Shaw Valley	25	4.4%
South Edgeware	340	59.6%
South Gate	0	0.0%
Wellington Central	0	0.0%

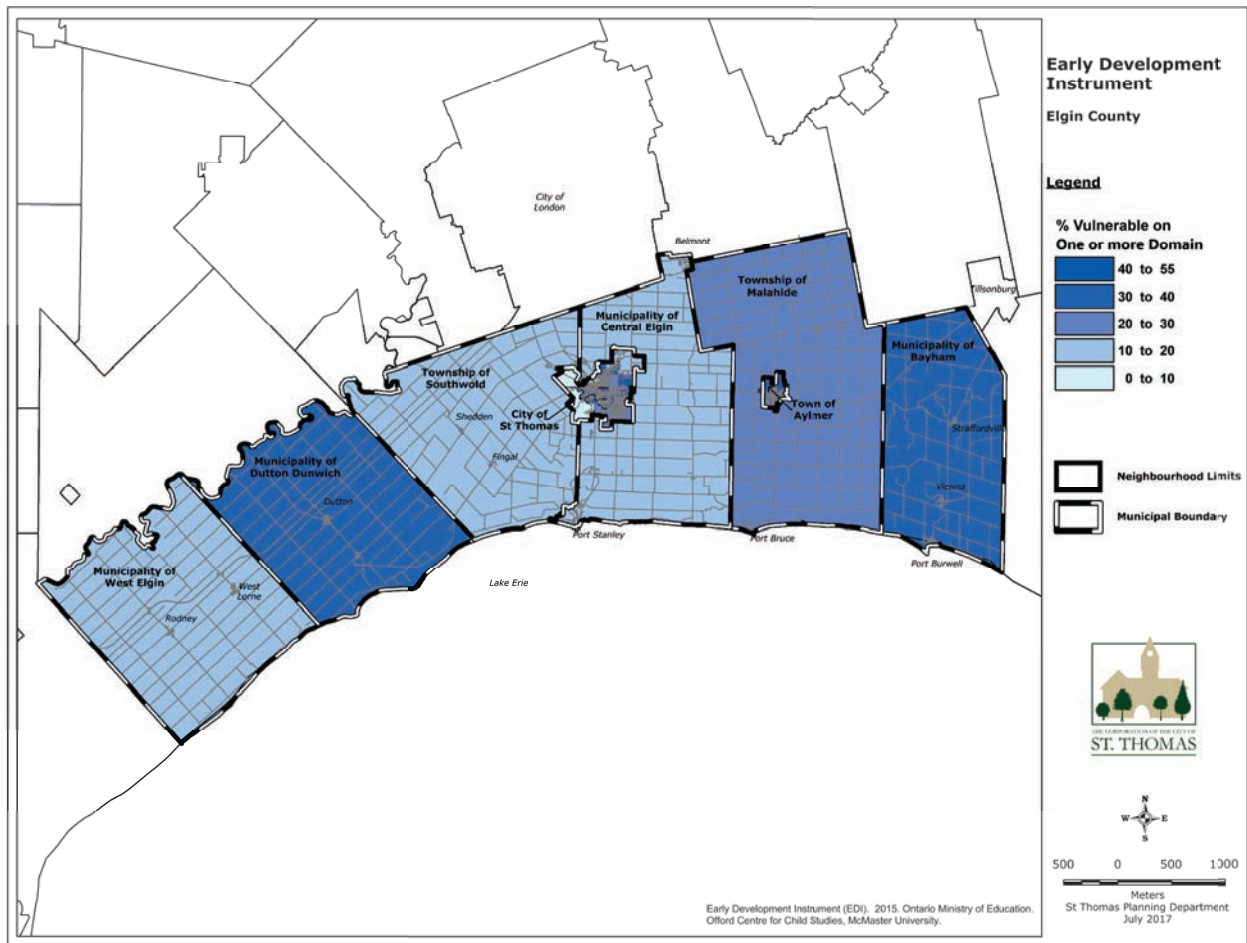


Early Development Instrument (EDI) Vulnerability

The Early Development Instrument is a population measure of children’s ability to meet age appropriate developmental expectations in five general domains: Physical Health and Well-Being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language and Cognitive, and Communication Skills and General Knowledge.

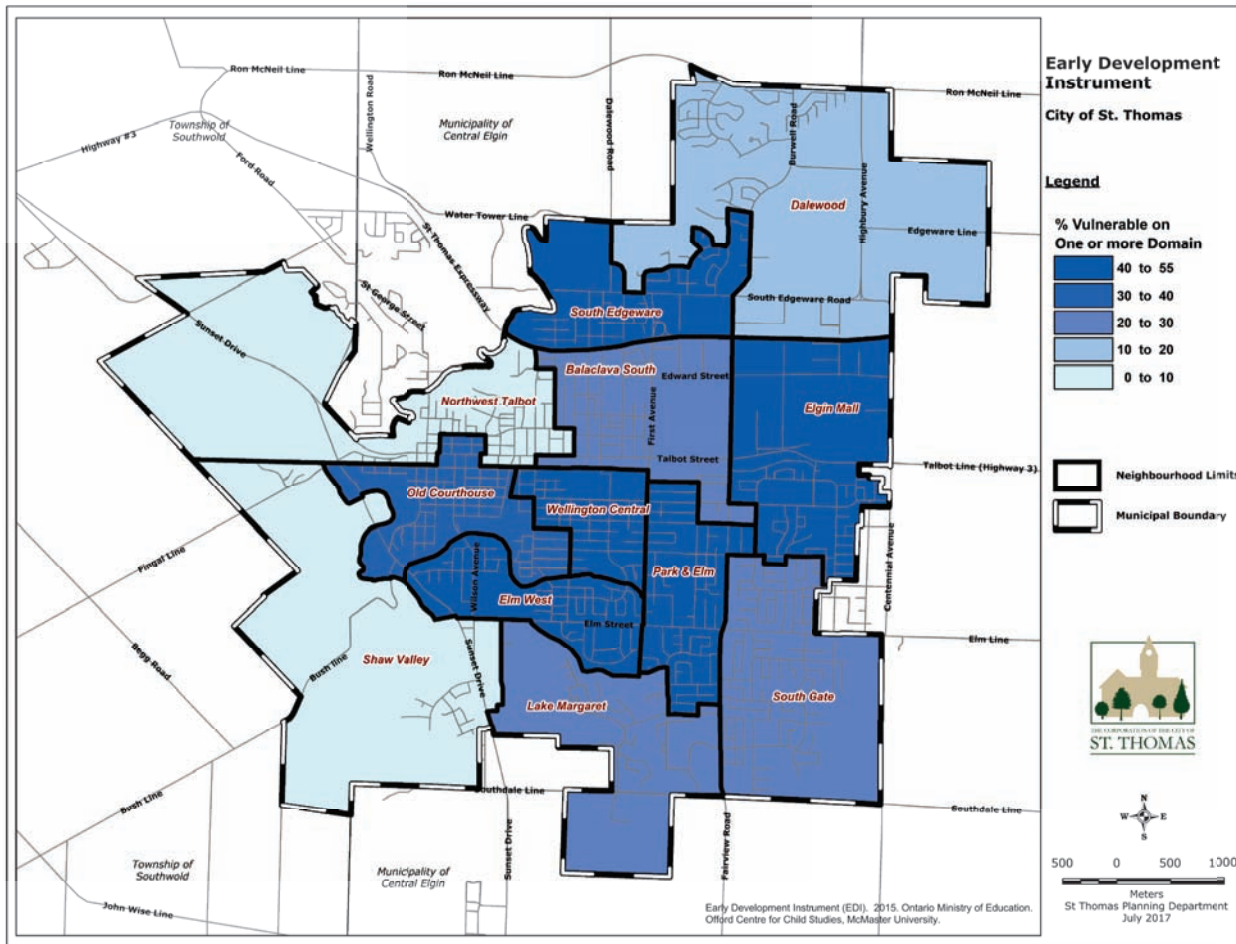
- » 29.0% of children in St. Thomas-Elgin are vulnerable on one or more domain (EDI, 2015). This is comparable to the provincial average of 29.4%
- » Municipalities with a higher than average percentage of children vulnerable on one or more domain include: Dutton/Dunwich, St. Thomas, Aylmer, Malahide, and Bayham

The following map shows the EDI results by municipality.



- » 33.4% of children in St. Thomas are vulnerable on one or more domain (EDI, 2015). This is higher than the St. Thomas-Elgin average (29.0%) and higher than the provincial average of 29.4%
- » Neighbourhoods with a higher than average percentage of children vulnerable on one or more domain include: South Edgware, Park & Elm, Elm West, Elgin Mall, Wellington Central, and Old Courthouse

The following map shows the EDI results by neighbourhood in St. Thomas.



Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Vulnerability

EQAO assesses how well Ontario's public education system is developing students' reading, writing and math skills. The Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) and London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB) grade three average EQAO achievement results are lower than the provincial average in reading, writing, and math. See the table below for details

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	AT OR ABOVE PROVINCIAL AVERAGE GRADE 3 READING	AT OR ABOVE PROVINCIAL AVERAGE GRADE 3 WRITING	At or Above Provincial Average Grade 3 Math
TVDSB	59%	60%	54%
LDCSB	67%	70%	59%
Ontario	72%	74%	63%

- » TVDSB schools in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 3 reading (10% or more lower than the TVDSB average) include: John Wise Public School (catchment area includes: Old Courthouse, Wellington Central, Shaw Valley, Elm West, Lake Margaret neighbourhoods and part of Southwold municipality), Springfield Public School (Malahide), and Straffordville Public School (Bayham)
- » TVDSB schools in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 3 writing (10% or more lower than the TVDSB average) include: Aldborough Public School (West Elgin), Dunwich-Dutton Public School (Dutton/Dunwich), Elgin Court Public School (Park & Elm, Lake Margaret, and Elm West neighbourhoods), John Wise Public School (Old Courthouse, Wellington Central, Shaw Valley, Elm West, Lake Margaret neighbourhoods and part of Southwold municipality), McGregor Public School (Aylmer & Malahide), and Port Stanley Public School (Central Elgin & south east St. Thomas)
- » TVDSB schools in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 3 math (10% or more lower than the TVDSB average) include: Aldborough Public School (West Elgin), John Wise Public School (Old Courthouse, Wellington Central, Shaw Valley, Elm West, Lake Margaret neighbourhoods and part of Southwold municipality), Springfield Public School (Malahide), and Straffordville Public School (Bayham)
- » LDCSB schools in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 3 reading (10% or more lower than the LDCSB average) include: Assumption (Aylmer, Malahide and Bayham), Monsignor Morrison (most of Southwold, north half of Central Elgin, north half of St. Thomas), and St. Anne's (south St. Thomas, Central Elgin and south half of Southwold)
- » LDCSB schools in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 3 writing (10% or more lower than the LDCSB average) include: Assumption (Aylmer, Malahide and Bayham), Monsignor Morrison (most of Southwold, north half of Central Elgin, north half of St. Thomas), and St. Anne's (south St. Thomas, Central Elgin and south half of Southwold)
- » LDCSB schools in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 3 math (10% or more lower than the LDCSB average) include: Assumption (Aylmer, Malahide and Bayham), Monsignor Morrison (most of Southwold, north half of Central Elgin, north half of St. Thomas), and St. Anne's (south St. Thomas, Central Elgin and south half of Southwold)
- » The TVDSB grade six average EQAO achievement results are lower than the provincial average in reading, writing, and math. The LDCSB average grade six achievement results are similar to the provincial average

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	AT OR ABOVE PROVINCIAL AVERAGE GRADE 6 READING	AT OR ABOVE PROVINCIAL AVERAGE GRADE 6 WRITING	AT OR ABOVE PROVINCIAL AVERAGE GRADE 6 MATH
TVDSB	73%	69%	44%
LDCSB	82%	82%	52%
Ontario	81%	80%	50%

- » TVDSB schools in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 6 reading (10% or more lower than the TVDSB average) include: Davenport Public School (Aylmer, Malahide, Central Elgin), and Forest Park Public School (Park & Elm, Elm West, Wellington Central, Elgin Mall, South Gate and Balaclava South neighbourhoods)
- » TVDSB schools in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 6 writing (10% or more lower than the TVDSB average) include: Sparta Public School (Central Elgin and Malahide), Aldborough Public School (West Elgin), and Forest Park Public School (Park & Elm, Elm West, Wellington Central, Elgin Mall, South Gate and Balaclava South neighbourhoods)
- » TVDSB schools in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 6 math (10% or more lower than the TVDSB average) include: John Wise Public School (Old Courthouse, Wellington Central, Shaw Valley, Elm West, Lake Margaret neighbourhoods and part of Southwold municipality), Straffordville Public School (Bayham), Aldborough Public School (West Elgin), Davenport Public School (Aylmer), Dunwich/Dutton Public School (Dunwich/Dutton), and Forest Park Public School (Park & Elm, Elm West, Wellington Central, Elgin Mall, South Gate and Balaclava South neighbourhoods)
- » The LDCSB school in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 6 reading (10% or more lower than the LDCSB average) is Assumption (Aylmer, Malahide and Bayham)
- » The LDCSB school in St. Thomas-Elgin with a lower achievement in grade 6 writing (10% or more lower than the LDCSB average) is Assumption (Aylmer, Malahide and Bayham)
- » None of the LDCSB schools in St. Thomas-Elgin have a lower achievement in grade 6 math (10% or more lower than the LDCSB average)
- » The TVDSB grade nine average achievement results for applied and academic math are 44% and 82% respectively (testing at or above the provincial standard). These results are comparable to the Ontario results (45% and 83%)
- » The LDCSB grade nine average achievement results for applied and academic math are 39% and 80% respectively (testing at or above the provincial standard). These results are comparable to the Ontario results (45% and 83%)
- » The percentage of TVDSB First Time Eligible Students Who Were Successful on the OSSLT (literacy test) is 74%. The average Ontario result for this test is 81%
- » The percentage of LDCSB First Time Eligible Students Who Were Successful on the OSSLT (literacy test) is 77%. The average Ontario result for this test is 81%

Children Living in Households Receiving Support through Ontario Works

Across St. Thomas- Elgin, more than 1,000 children aged 0 to 12 years live in households receiving support through Ontario Works . The majority of these children (658) live in St. Thomas. Key highlights about these data include:

- » In addition to St. Thomas, towns/townships/municipalities with a higher number of children aged 0 to 12 years living in households receiving support through Ontario Works include: Aylmer (229), and Bayham (108)
- » Neighbourhoods in St. Thomas with a higher number of children aged 0 to 12 years living in households receiving support through Ontario Works are: South Edgeware (126), Park & Elm (111), Old Courthouse (86), and Northwest Talbot (79)

Children Living in Social Housing Family Units

Standardized data collection for Social Housing across Elgin County is currently unavailable. The data described below is only that of units owned by the Corporation of the City of St. Thomas (St. Thomas-Elgin Housing Services), which was available at the time of this needs assessment. Further efforts will be made to collect and report statistics from other social housing units across Elgin County.

St. Thomas-Elgin Housing Services has seven housing family units located in three St. Thomas neighbourhoods and one social housing family unit in Aylmer. As of December 31, 2016, St. Thomas-Elgin Housing Services recorded 238 children aged 0 to 12 years lived in these housing units. Of note:

- » Almost half of these children live in three social housing family units located in the Park & Elm neighbourhood in St. Thomas. A total of 111 children aged 0 to 12 years live in these housing units. 54 are aged 0 to 6 years, and 57 are aged 7 to 12 years
- » A further 83 children aged 0 to 12 years live in two social housing family units located in the Elm West neighbourhood in St. Thomas. 33 of these children are aged 0 to 6 years, and 50 are aged 7 to 12 years
- » The South Edgeware neighbourhood in St. Thomas has 29 children aged 0 to 12 years living in a social housing family unit
- » 15 children in Aylmer aged 0 to 12 years live in a social housing family unit

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

ECN identified that one of the factors that must be considered when identifying locations for OEYCFCs is the level of family risk/vulnerability.

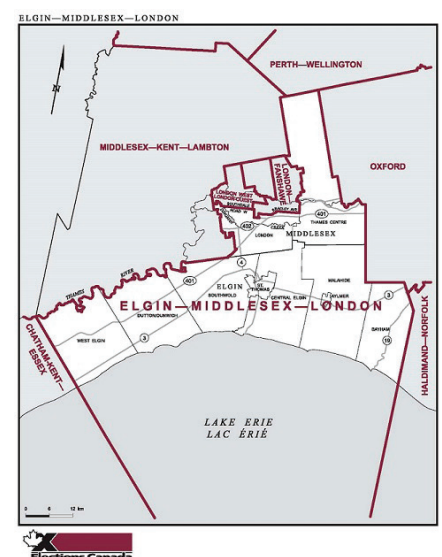
Based on a ranking of the factors noted above, municipalities/townships/towns with a higher level of overall risk and vulnerability are: St. Thomas, Aylmer, Bayham, and Malahide. Current OEYC/PFLC programs are currently operating in all of these locations.

Neighbourhoods in St. Thomas with a higher level of overall risk/vulnerability are: Balaclava South, South Edgeware, Old Courthouse, Park & Elm, Elm West, Elgin Mall, and Northwest Talbot. Current OEYC/PFLC programs are currently operating in South Edgeware (2 sites), Northwest Talbot (2 sites), Park & Elm.

Demand for Child and Family Programs and Services

Current Child and Family Programs

The current early learning family support model in St. Thomas-Elgin serves three geographic areas – Elgin, Middlesex and London (see map to the right). It is a primarily a satellite/mobile based model due to the rural nature of the communities served. At present in St. Thomas-Elgin, there are two main Ontario Early Years Centre (OEYC) sites⁴ (one in North St. Thomas and one in South St. Thomas), one satellite⁵ OEYC location in Aylmer and six OEYC mobile/outreach⁶ sites.



⁴Main site refers to a permanent, full-time location open more than 35 hours per week.

⁵Satellite site refers to a permanent, part-time location. Outreach site refers to a part-time 'mobile' location in rented/borrowed space with regular or irregular days or times.

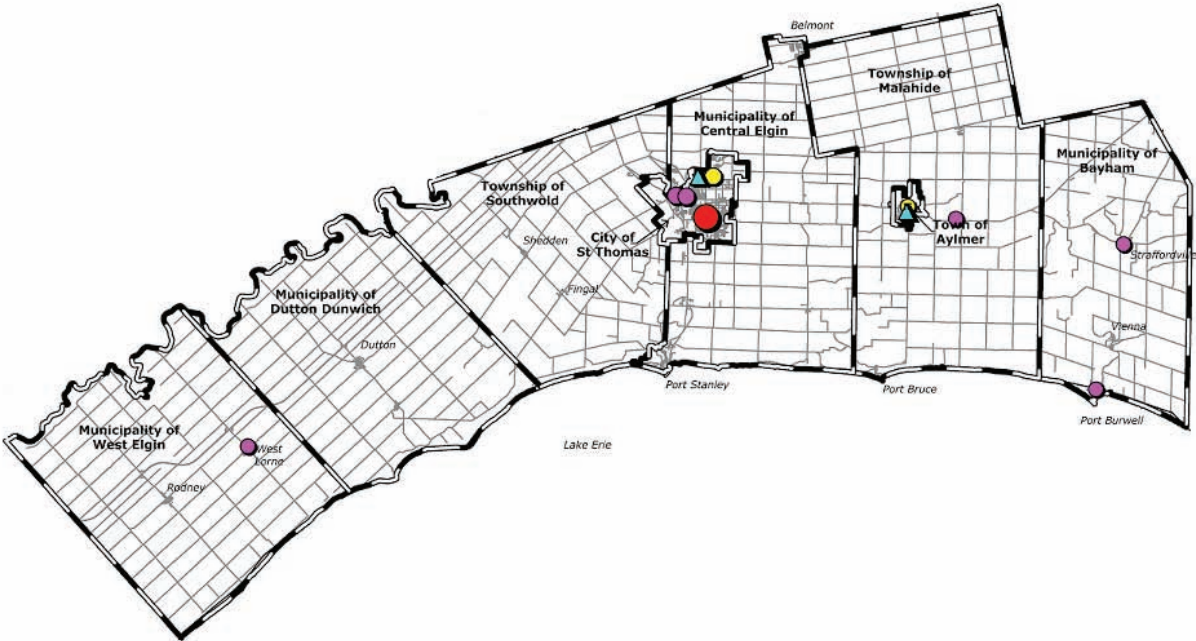
⁶Outreach site refers to a part-time 'mobile' location in rented/borrowed space with regular or irregular days or times.

The OEYC sites are managed and operated by host agency Community Living Elgin. The current Early Literacy Specialist (ELS) position is also currently housed at Community Living Elgin. There are also two Parenting and Family Literacy Centres (PFLCs) located in St. Thomas-Elgin. These sites are managed and operated by the Thames Valley District School Board. In addition to the above sites, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) has funded the operation costs (staffing provided by Community Living Elgin) for Northside Neighbourhood Hub since 2015. The OTF funding for this hub will end as of August 31, 2017.

Locations of these current program sites are noted in the tables and maps presented below.

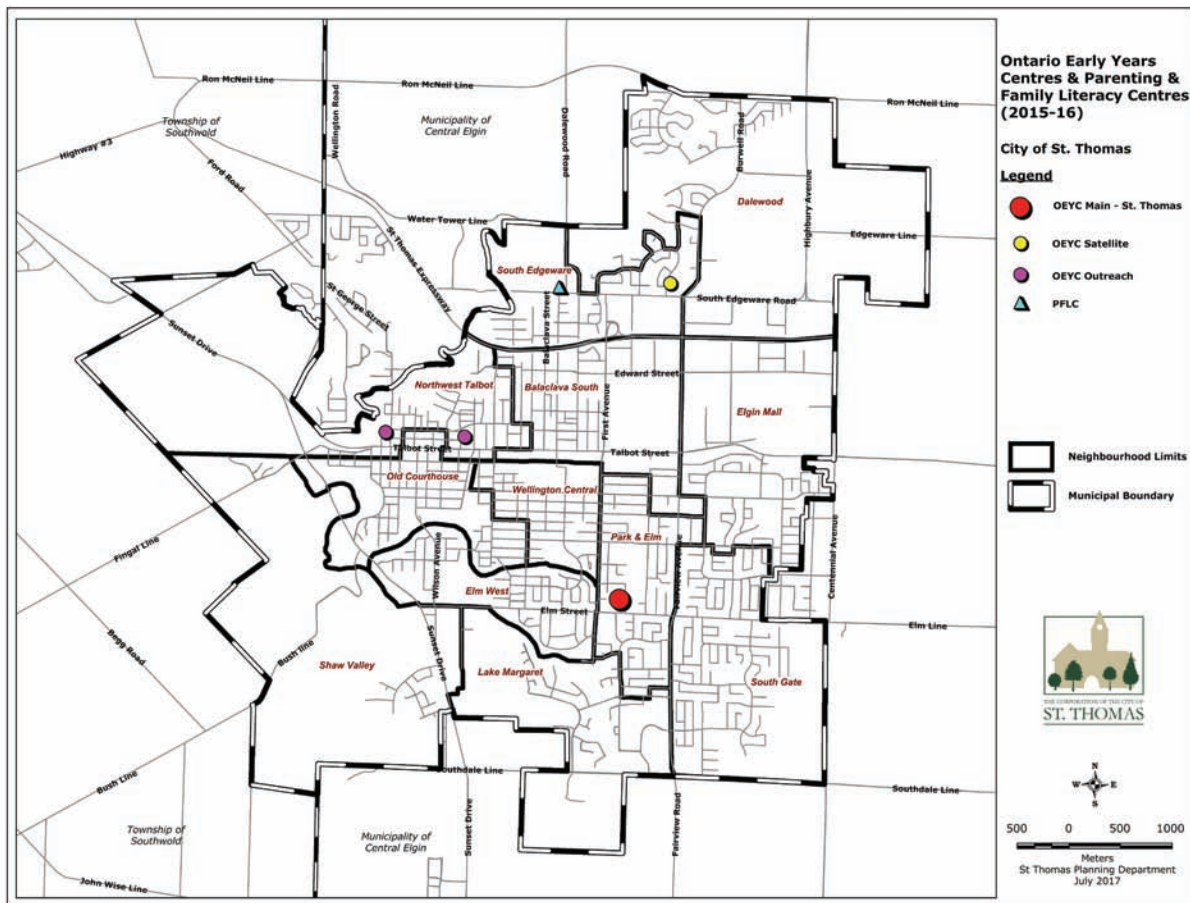
Locations of Current Child and Family Centres in Communities across Elgin:

CURRENT PROGRAM	MUNICIPALITY/TOWNSHIP/TOWN
Ontario Early Years Centre – Aylmer Satellite	Aylmer
Parenting and Family Literacy Centre – McGregor Public School	Aylmer
OEYC outreach – Straffordville Public School	Straffordville in Bayham
OEYC outreach – West Elgin Community Health Centre	West Lorne in West Elgin
OEYC outreach – Summer’s Corners Public School	East of Aylmer in Malahide
OEYC outreach – Port Burwell Library	Port Burwell in Bayham



Locations of Current Child and Family Centres in the City of St. Thomas:

CURRENT PROGRAM	ST. THOMAS NEIGHBOURHOODS
Ontario Early Years Centre (main site)	Park & Elm
Northside Neighbourhood Hub (main site)	South Edgeware
Parenting and Family Literacy Centre – Locke’s Public School	South Edgeware
OEYC outreach – First United Church	Northwest Talbot
OEYC outreach – St. Thomas Public Library	Northwest Talbot



A total of 99 hours of direct service are being provided to children and families through the current OEYC and PFLC program sites. With the addition of the Northside Neighbourhood Hub, 139 hours of direct service are currently being provided.

The busiest site is the main OEYC site in St. Thomas (7 Morrison Drive), recording the most number of unique children served and the most number of child visits in 2015-2016. The two PFLC sites and the Northside Neighbourhood Hub are the next most active sites, with more than 2,600 child visits per year (see the table below for further details).

PROGRAM LOCATION	NUMBER OF UNIQUE CHILDREN SERVED (2015-2016)	NUMBER OF CHILD VISITS (2015-2016)	NUMBER OF DIRECT SERVICE HOURS PER WEEK
OEYC – Main Site, St. Thomas	1,013	6,543	36
OEYC – Satellite Site, Aylmer	118	665	6
OEYC – Outreach Site, First United Church, St. Thomas	106	561	5
OEYC – Outreach Site, Straffordville Public School	47	238	2.5
OEYC – Outreach Site, West Elgin Community Health Centre, West Lorne	63	425	2.5
OEYC – Outreach Site, Summer's Corners Public School, Aylmer	43	289	3
OEYC – Outreach Site, St. Thomas Public Library	107	233	2.5
OEYC – Outreach Site, Port Burwell Public Library	19	124	1.5
PFLC - Locke's Public School, St. Thomas	226	2,654	20
PFLC - McGregor Public School, Aylmer	273	3,154	20
Northside Neighbourhood Hub (OEYC Main Site)	298	2,963	40

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

The current suite of child and family programs will need to be reviewed vis-à-vis the analysis for potential locations of OEYCFCs. There is a strong foundation to build on in terms of infrastructure and direct hours of service, and these must be reviewed to ensure they meet identified community need.

Information about Parenting

The Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) conducts a Kindergarten Parent Survey. The fall 2014 results for St. Thomas-Elgin schools about accessing information about parenting are provided below.

- » A minimum of 66% of parents of Kindergarten students in all municipalities/townships/ towns and St. Thomas neighbourhoods have accessed information about parenting to help them in their role as a parent. Parents of Kindergarten students attending feeder schools for Parkside Collegiate Institute and West Elgin Secondary Schools have the highest percentage, with 75.6% and 78.0% of parents of Kindergarten students having accessed information about parenting to help them in their role as a parent
- » The ways parents have accessed or are interested in accessing information about parenting include: internet, reading books, face to face discussion with a trusted professional, and meeting with people who have children the same age as their child(ren)
- » The majority of parents are not interested in accessing information about parenting in the following ways: using a telephone hotline, attending a workshop/event, and being part of a small group learning with other parents

Child Participation in Programs Prior to Kindergarten

The TVDSB Kindergarten Parent Survey also captures information about child participation in programs six months before Kindergarten. The fall 2014 results on this topic for St. Thomas-Elgin schools are presented below.

- » Programs/activities with more frequent use by children include: organized team sports, and physical activity and recreation programs
- » Many parents have never used play-based children's programs (31% to 51%), literacy/family reading programs (53% to 68%), ESL programs (95%+), children's clubs (90+%+), arts programs (63% to 81%), faith-related programs for children (63% to 87%), cultural/language/ethnic programs (95%+), and programs at a public library (46% to 57%)

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Many parents are or have accessed information to help them in their role as a parent. They are not interested in accessing information via telephone hotlines and/or attending workshops/events or small groups with other parents.

Resources for parents should be provided via the internet, by providing links/referrals to books, and providing opportunities for face to face discussions with a trusted professional, and people who have children the same age as their child(ren).

Organized team sports and physical activity and recreation are the type of programming many parents are currently accessing for their pre-Kindergarten child. Due to lower utilization of many of the other available child and family programs, focus may need to be placed on raising awareness about the availability and value of the current array of programs.

Indigenous Programming and Programming for other Cultural/Linguistic Groups

In 2013, a survey was conducted with service providers about the types of programs and services being provided to children and their families. This survey provided a snapshot in time of which organizations provide services to Indigenous persons and other cultural/linguistic groups. Highlights from this survey include:

- » 17 organizations reported that they provide services to other cultural and linguistic groups. The most prominent groups being served are: Low German Mennonites and Amish. The following organizations provided information about numbers of Low German Mennonite children served per year:
 - » Focus Fairview Community Centre (no number provided)
 - » Family and Children's Services of St Thomas and Elgin (25 children per year)
 - » YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin (no number provided)
 - » Family Education and Support Project of Aylmer (A program of Mennonite Community Services) (see above data)
 - » Home Visiting Programs for Infants (CPRI) (5 to 10 children per year)
 - » East Elgin Family Health Team (20 children per year)

- » 17 organizations reported that they provide services to Indigenous children, youth, and their families. The following organizations provided information about numbers of Indigenous children served per year:
 - » OEYC (15 to 20 children per year)
 - » Focus Fairview (7 children per year)
 - » Family and Children's Services of St Thomas and Elgin (10 children per year)
 - » Elgin Counselling & Mediation Centre, Inc. (5 children per year)
 - » Milestones Children's Centre (2 children per year)
 - » Home Visiting Programs for Infants (CPRI) (5 to 10 children per year)
 - » Fresh Start Maternity Supports (1 child per year)

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Although there are no service providers specifically working with Indigenous children and families, and no Indigenous led programs and services in St. Thomas-Elgin, a number of organizations are providing services to these families.

This speaks to the need to ensure service providers working with Indigenous children and families have the capacity to provide culturally responsive programs and services, including the OEYCFCs.

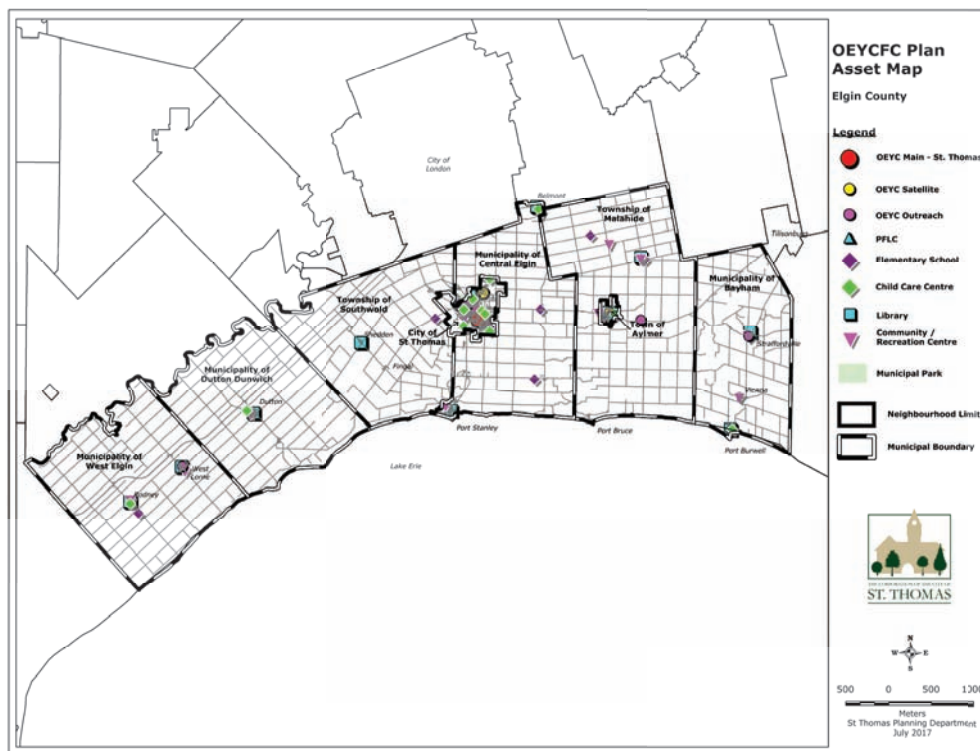
There is also a significant group of Low German speaking children and families in St. Thomas-Elgin. Providing culturally responsive programs and services to this group through the OEYCFCs is also important.

Existing Community Resources

In order to better understand and distribute resources in St. Thomas-Elgin to cover geographic areas that have fewer options, an inventory of existing community resources was created. The resources included in the inventory are: schools, licensed child care centres, libraries, neighbourhood resource centres, and recreation/community centres, and OEYCs/PFLCs. Of note in the county:

- » All municipalities/townships/towns and cities have some community resources
- » St. Thomas, as the most populated area in Elgin County, has the highest number of community resources
- » The municipalities/townships west of St. Thomas have community resources clustered in main centres (Rodney, West Lorne, Dutton, Shedden)
- » The community resources found in the municipalities/townships east of St. Thomas are more dispersed
- » Southwold has the lowest number of community resources, with a library located in Shedden

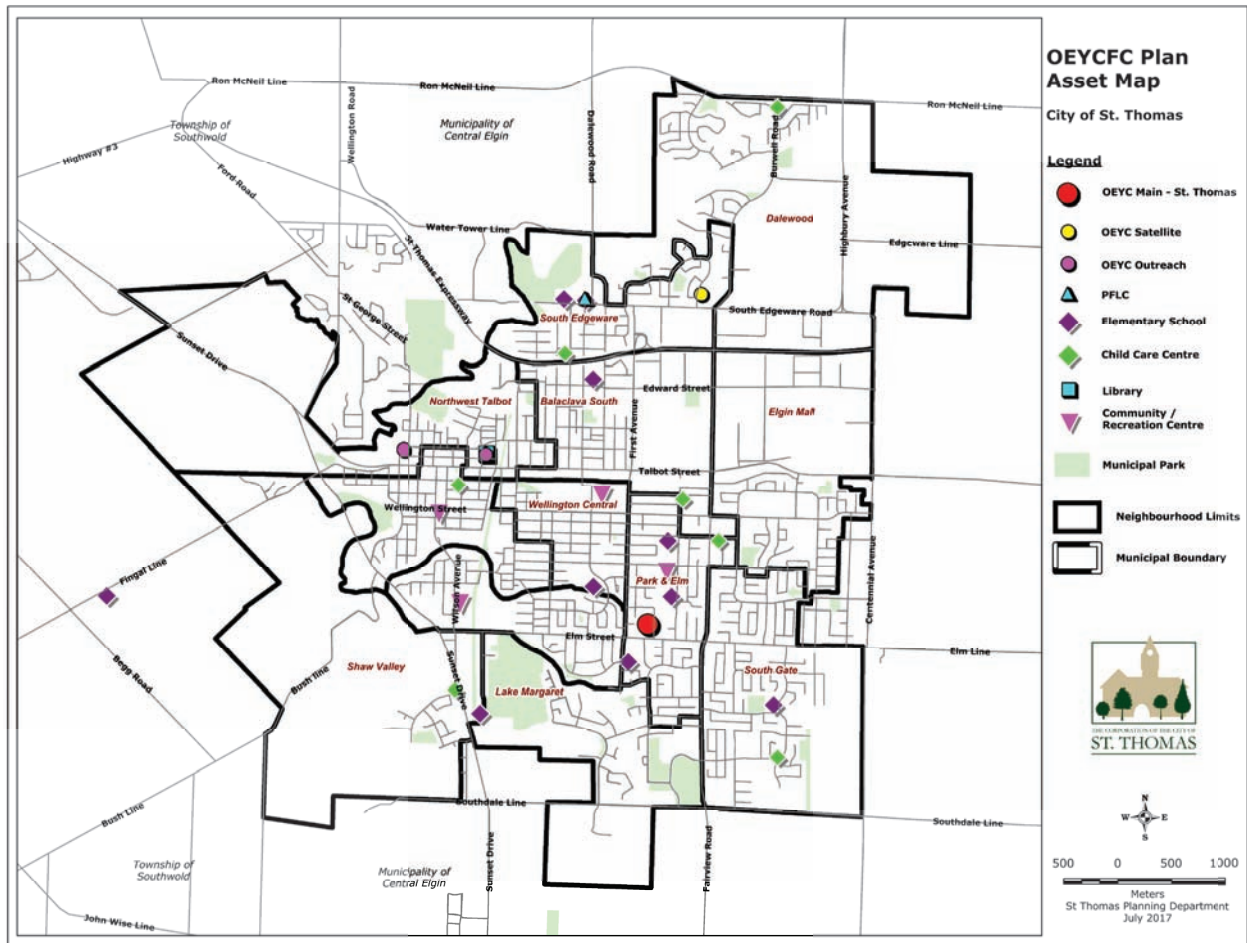
See the map below for further details.



Of note in St. Thomas:

- » Most neighbourhoods in St. Thomas have at least one community resource
- » Elgin Mall is the only neighbourhood with no community resources
- » Park & Elm has the highest number of community resources

See the map below for further details



IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

The number of existing resources should be analyzed vis-à-vis the number of children and level of risk/vulnerability in the neighbourhood to determine if locations for programming should be added.

Schools with Available/Potential Space

The City of St. Thomas, as the CMSM, works collaboratively with the school boards in its area (TVDSB, LDCSB) to identify sites for OEYCFCs within priority communities/neighbourhoods. This is an ongoing communication.

At present four OEYC/PFLCs are located in schools. These include:

1. Straffordville Public School, Bayham (OEYC outreach site)
2. Summer's Corners Public School, Aylmer (OEYC outreach site)
3. Locke's Public School, St. Thomas (PFLC site)
4. McGregor Public School, Aylmer (PFLC site)

Other schools with available/potential space identified by the school boards include:

LDCSB	TVDSB
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Monsignor Morrison, South Edgeware» St. Mary's, West Elgin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» McGregor PS, Aylmer» Davenport PS, Aylmer» Locke's PS, South Edgeware» Port Stanley PS, Central Elgin» Straffordville PS, Bayham» Summer's Corners PS, Malahide

New child care and child and family centre projects are currently underway in Aylmer and Rodney. Both of these schools will house a future OEYCFC. The child care and child and family centre at Aldborough Public School in Rodney is anticipated to be opening in the fall of 2018. The opening of the child care and child and centre at Assumption School in Aylmer is anticipated in late 2018 or early 2019.

There are also two anticipated new schools for St. Thomas-Elgin. One to be located in Belmont and the other in Southeast St. Thomas. These may be future opportunities for OEYCFCs.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

The CMSM has strong working relationships with the local school boards. The City of St. Thomas will continue to have ongoing discussions with each of the boards about potential school sites for priority OEYCFC locations.

The new OEYCFC builds in schools in Rodney and Aylmer will be built into the OEYCFC plan

Potential Locations for OEYCFCs

In order to prioritize St. Thomas neighbourhoods for potential OEYCFC locations, Elgin Children's Network identified factors, criteria and weights. A list of factors were developed for "universal" OEYCFC locations, and a separate list of factors were identified for more "intentional" locations of OEYCFCs (those with higher risk/vulnerability). The factors, criteria, and weights used in this analysis are outlined below.

Universal Factors

FACTORS	CRITERIA	WEIGHT	
HIGH CHILD POPULATION	Number of children 0 to 4 years (Source: 2011 Census)	100	60
	Number of children 5 to 12 years (Source: 2011 Census)		40

Intentional Factors

FACTORS	CRITERIA	WEIGHT	
HIGH SCORE ON THE SOCIAL RISK INDEX	Social Risk Index (Source: 2006 Census)	45	
HIGH RATE OF CHILDREN LIVING IN LOW INCOME	% of children <age 6 living in low income (Source: 2011 Census)	30	70
	% of children ages 6 to 18 living in low income (Source: 2011 Census)		30
HIGH DEGREE OF VULNERABILITY ON EDI	% of children vulnerable on one or more domain (Source: 2014-2015 EDI)	20	
HIGH NUMBER OF INDIGENOUS PERSONS	Number of Aboriginal persons (Source: 2011 Census)	5	

Results of Rankings

Based on the above factors, criteria, and weights, St. Thomas neighbourhoods were prioritized in the following way. The yellow highlights outline in what neighbourhoods current OEYC/PFLC programs are located.

POTENTIAL UNIVERSAL OEYCFC SITES		POTENTIAL INTENTIONAL OEYCFC SITES	
1.	South Gate	1.	Balaclava South
2.	Old Courthouse	2.	South Edgeware
3.	Dalewood	3.	Old Courthouse
4.	Park & Elm	4.	Park & Elm
5.	South Edgeware	5.	Elm West
6.	Elgin Mall	6.	Elgin Mall
7.	Northwest Talbot	7.	Northwest Talbot
8.	Lake Margaret	8.	Wellington Central
9.	Balaclava South	9.	South
10.	Wellington Central	10.	Shaw Valley
11.	Elm West	11.	Dalewood
12.	Shaw Valley	12.	Lake Margaret

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Based on the rankings of the St. Thomas neighbourhoods and the location of existing OEYCs/PFLCs, some neighbourhoods should be given strong consideration for the offering of additional child and family programs and services. These neighbourhoods include: South Gate, Old Courthouse, Dalewood, Balaclava South, Elgin Mall, and Elm West.

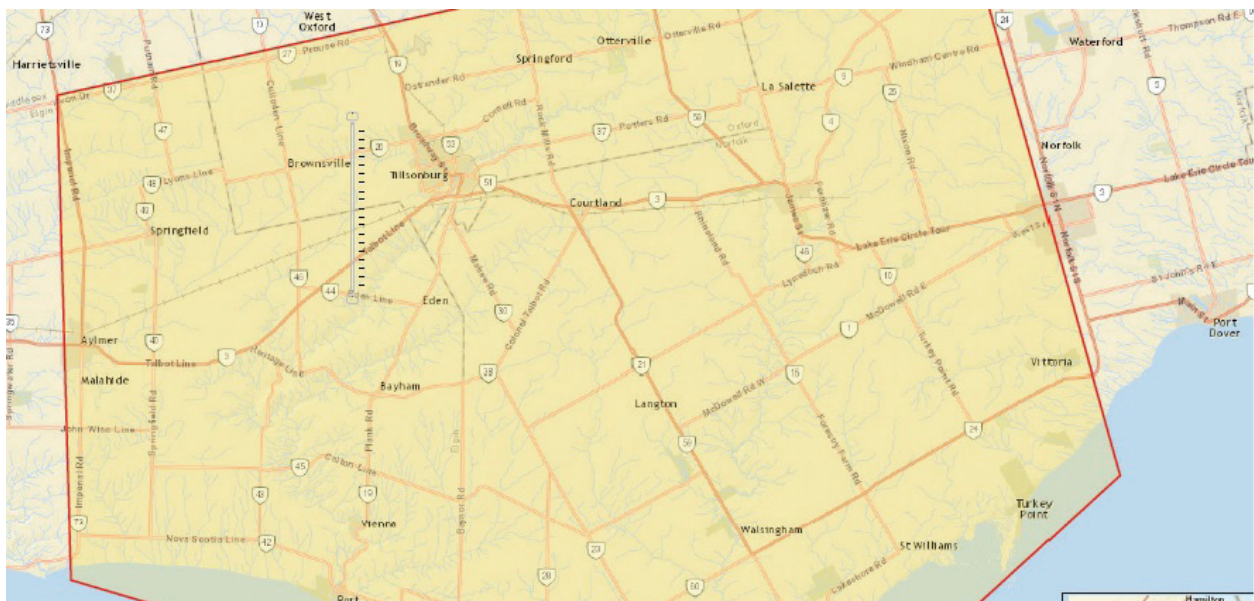
Due to the distribution of current OEYC/PFLC services across Elgin County, further program sites should be explored in Dutton/Dunwich, Southwold, and Central Elgin.

Groups identified for Targeted Outreach

In addition to the potential locations for universal and intentional OEYCFC sites, ECN reviewed demographic data and discussed what groups could benefit from a targeted outreach approach. As per the July 2016 *Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres: Planning Guidelines for Service System Managers*, a component of the mandatory core service, Engaging Parents and Caregivers, is to provide “Targeted outreach activities directed at parents and caregivers that could benefit from OEYCFC programs and services but are not currently accessing services for a variety of reasons.”

ECN identified the Low German speaking population in east Elgin as a group for targeted outreach. This group is comprised mainly of Mennonite families from Mexico and many are not currently accessing available programs and services. Through collaborative discussions with its adjoining CMSMs, the City of St. Thomas was able to identify that this group of families and children is also a focus for Oxford County and Norfolk County. A Tri-County initiative was borne out of these discussions. This Tri-County group has met three times to discuss this joint initiative.

The area of focus for the targeted outreach is a triangular area which encompasses the east side of Elgin County (east of Aylmer), the west side of Norfolk County, and the south side of Oxford County (see the map below).



There is limited documented information about this group of families and children, so much of the information collected to date is anecdotal in nature, and is based on service provider experiences with this population. A report written in 1993, “*A Profile of the Mennonite Community in Elgin County*,” notes that this group could benefit from parenting programs that include components of normal growth and development.

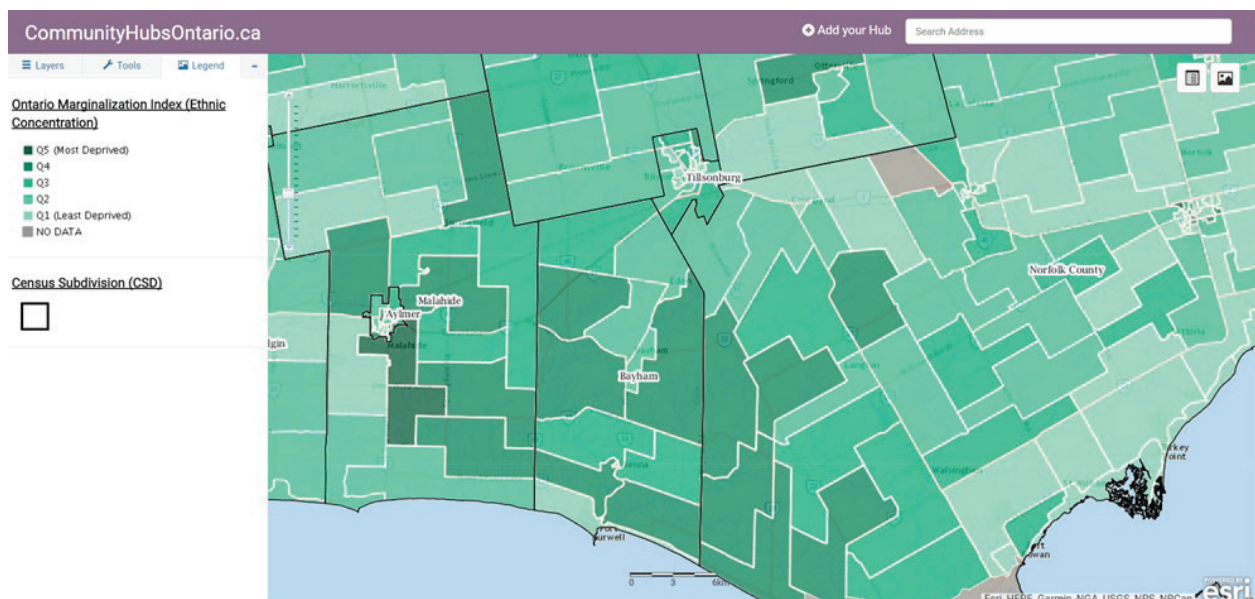
In addition to the Statistics Canada data about language spoken most often at home shared in the Needs Assessment section of this report, data from the Family Education and Support Project of Aylmer (FESPA) operated through Mennonite Community Services, and the Norfolk Community Help Centre has assisted with identifying this population.

In 2016-2017, FESPA served 57 mothers. The majority of these mothers live in Elgin County, with 1% living in Oxford County. The average age of these mothers is 38 and they have an average of four children each. The majority were born in Mexico and have six to eight years of education.

In 2016-2017, the Norfolk Community Help Centre served 30 children in its Mom and Tots program in Frogmore. 26 of these children live in Norfolk County, two in Oxford County, and two in Elgin County. The majority of the mothers attending the program attended school until they were 12 years of age. Family income is typically less than \$50,000 per year.

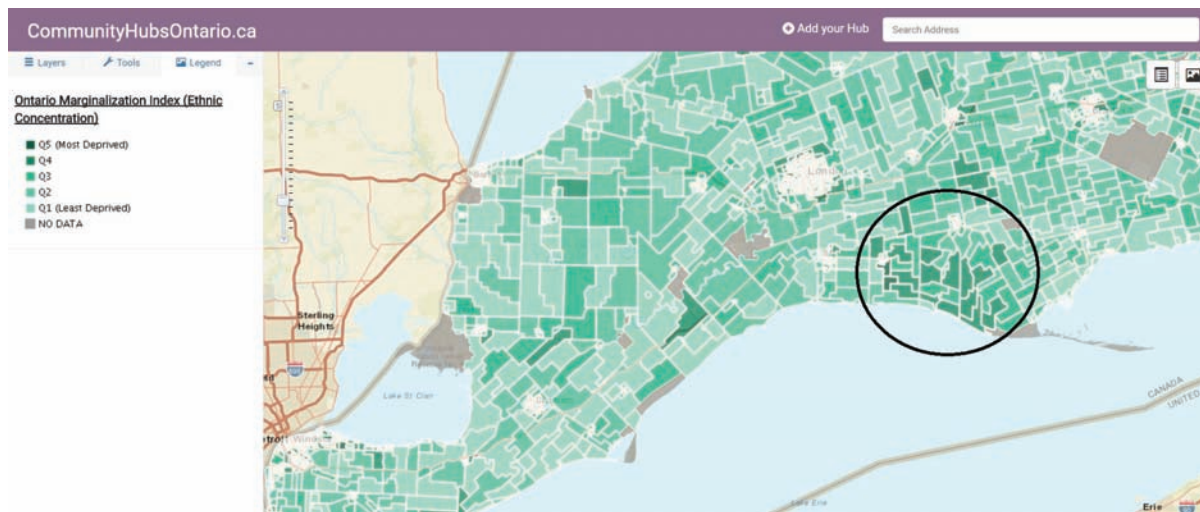
The **Ontario Marginalization (ON-Marg) index** allows the exploration of how factors like residential instability and material deprivation are concentrated at local level and how this is affecting health outcomes.⁷ ON-Marg was created by researchers at the Centre for Urban Health Solutions at St. Michael's (C-UHS). ON-Marg uses census data from 2001 and 2006 to illustrate levels of marginalization across the province. ON-Marg focuses on four dimensions that contribute to the process of marginalization: residential instability, material deprivation, dependency and ethnic concentration.

When census variables related to the process of marginalization were analyzed through factor analysis, two came out as particularly relevant to area-level marginalization: proportion of recent immigrants and proportion of people identifying as visible minorities. We called these two variables together 'ethnic concentration.' See ON-Marg Index (Ethnic Concentration) map below for the same triangular area as noted in the previous map, as reported using the *Community Hubs Ontario* GIS Mapping tool.



⁷EC Matheson et al. "Development of the Canadian Marginalization Index: a new tool for the study of inequality." Canadian Journal of Public Health, 2012;103(Suppl. 2):S12-S16.

Across southwestern Ontario (see map below), the ON-Marg Index for Ethnic Concentration reveals a rather unique situation for the rural Tri-County area.



IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

The Low German speaking population in Oxford, Norfolk and Elgin Counties is a cultural community that the three CMSMs would like to engage with and learn more about. Given the high Ethnic Concentration On-Marg Index, complemented with the Language Spoken Most Often At Home descriptive statistics and the reported low engagement with current service providers, this population has been identified for targeted outreach as part of the initial plan of all three CMSMs.

Online Resources and Local Phone Lines

There are a number of existing online resources and local phone lines which can be accessed by parents/caregivers. These include:

- » ECN website/portal (<http://www.elginchildrensnetwork.ca/>)
- » ECN Facebook page
- » Thehealthline.ca (<http://www.thehealthline.ca/>)
- » 211



IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

The current online resources and local phone lines should continue to be leveraged for use in the OEYCFC model.

6.0 INITIAL PLAN

The plan for OEYCFCs in St. Thomas-Elgin has been designed based on the results of the community needs assessment. The data collected about the neighbourhoods and communities in our geographic area, along with the voices and experiences of parents/ caregivers, children, and service providers have resulted in a clear road map for OEYCFCs. This initial plan for OEYCFCs is just that – initial. The results of the community needs assessment have provided the information needed to create a strong foundational base for these centres informed by evidence. This work will continue to evolve through ongoing engagement with key stakeholders and the review of updated community and demographic data.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The planning for the St. Thomas-Elgin OEYCFCs was based on a number of design principles, including minimizing disruption to the service system, ensuring overall system stability, leveraging current resources and relationships, and meeting the current and future needs of families and children. This work was also guided by ECN’s values of:

<p>Accountability We are evidence-informed, responsive and transparent.</p>	<p>Strength Based We empower children and families and build on their potential.</p>	<p>Integrity We adhere to high moral and ethical standards.</p>
<p>Inclusion We celebrate all children and families.</p>	<p>Collaboration We partner to achieve shared goals.</p>	<p>Connectedness We bring people together through trusting relationships.</p>

As noted earlier in the report, Ontario’s vision for the early years, the Guiding Principles for developing, delivering, and evaluation OEYCFC programs and services, and *How Does Learning Happen?* (as a pedagogical framework) are also central to the design of St. Thomas-Elgin’s OEYCFC model and will be encapsulated in the evaluation framework of the programs and services.

SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Planning

As the CMSM, the City of St. Thomas is mandated to manage the early years, as designated through the *Child Care and Early Years Act* (CCEYA). The City recognizes the value of community partners’ contribution to an integrated community plan for families and children and will continue to utilize Elgin Children’s Network as a planning advisory for OEYCFCs.

Contracts and Funding

The City of St. Thomas will work to establish a common contract template for service providers of OEYCFCs. The contracts will include a core “evergreen” contract to which schedules can be added to accommodate specific functions. At a minimum, the schedules will include the types of sites, services, and supports to be provided.

System Management and Support

The allocation for Data Analysis Services became the responsibility of the CMSM beginning in 2017. This position plays a key role in supporting the planning efforts for OEYCFCs and to enable the broader collection and mobilization of quantitative and qualitative data to inform ongoing early years community planning processes. The intended outcomes for data analysis services are:

- » Ensuring early years service system planning decisions are responsive to regularly reviewed community needs and priorities
- » Ensuring that local early years programs and services are reflective of relevant, current research and evidence
- » Actively supporting knowledge mobilization and exchange within the early years sector to support service enhancements

Data Analysis Services are being provided by the City of St. Thomas through a dedicated staff person.

The allocation for Early Literacy Services becomes the responsibility of the CMSM on January 1, 2018. This function will be included in the functions provided by the OEYCFCs.

In addition to the above system support services, the City of St. Thomas will require two new positions to support the early years system - an Early Years System Coordinator and Early Years Administrative (Clerical) Support. These positions will facilitate the planning for and delivery of early years services to meet identified community needs. Functions to be provided include: standards/quality, evaluation and data management, service system planning, budget oversight, contract management, marketing/communication, community partnerships and community capacity building, and planning for culturally responsive programs and services.

OEYCFC SERVICE MODEL

In order to provide universal access to OEYCFC programs and services, and to be responsive to the families and children with higher levels of risk and vulnerability, the St. Thomas-Elgin OEYCFC service model is based on the analysis of two types of OEYCFC sites – universal sites and intentional sites. This model allows for universal access to programs and services in highly populated areas, and ensures that those with higher levels of risk and vulnerability in less populated areas also have access to needed programs and services. The analysis of factors and resulting ranking of neighbourhoods in St. Thomas has ensured that OEYCFC sites are located in a mix of universal and intentional locations (see the table below for the lists of potential universal and intentional OEYCFC sites).

POTENTIAL UNIVERSAL OEYCFC SITES		POTENTIAL INTENTIONAL OEYCFC SITES	
1.	South Gate	1.	Balaclava South
2.	Old Courthouse	2.	South Edgeware
3.	Dalewood	3.	Old Courthouse
4.	Park & Elm	4.	Park & Elm
5.	South Edgeware	5.	Elm West
6.	Elgin Mall	6.	Elgin Mall
7.	Northwest Talbot	7.	Northwest Talbot
8.	Lake Margaret	8.	Wellington Central
9.	Balaclava South	9.	South
10.	Wellington Central	10.	Shaw Valley
11.	Elm West	11.	Dalewood
12.	Shaw Valley	12.	Lake Margaret

Based on the results of the community needs assessment, the St. Thomas-Elgin OEYCFC model will be a school-based and non-school-based model. When parents were asked to name one place they would go in their neighbourhood/community to access programs and services for their child(ren) the most frequently mentioned program sites were: existing child and family programs, libraries, community or recreation centres, and schools. The table below details the number one site to access for child and family programs by municipality/ township/town.

NUMBER ONE SITE	BY MUNICIPALITY/TOWNSHIP/TOWN
Early years program, resource centre, hub	St. Thomas, West Elgin
Library	Bayham, Central Elgin, Dutton-Dunwich
Recreation/community centre, YMCA, YWCA	Malahide, Southwold
School	Aylmer

As part of the implementation strategy the CMSM will work with each neighbourhood/ community to ensure the appropriate location of the OEYCFC. This includes continuing to engage with local school boards and working collaboratively to identify school-based locations for OEYCFCs.

As part of the OEYCFC service model all of the mandatory core services will be provided at the main OEYCFC sites, and one location will be open five days per week, including a Saturday and Sunday, and at least one evening per week. OEYCFC locations will collaborate to ensure alignment of hours of service to maximize number of days and time of day that programs and services are available. Centre-based core services will operate on a year round basis. Services will be offered across the geographic area as a whole. Qualified teams and Registered Early Childhood Educator staff requirements will be adhered to, as prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

Services to be Provided

The three mandatory core services will be provided through the OEYCFCs.

1. ENGAGING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

- » Discussion and information sharing about child development, parenting, nutrition, play and inquiry-based learning, and other topics that support their role

The community needs assessment identified parents are interested in information and tips on children's development, behaviour, safety and nutrition, and are interested in the following topics: growth and development, play-based learning, sleep, nutrition/feeding, no cost ideas/games, school readiness, managing meltdowns, children's mental wellness, self-esteem/self-respect, and cooking for/with kids.

- » Pre- and post-natal support programs to enhance parent and caregiver well-being and to support them in their role(s)

The community needs assessment identified that parents of young children are interested in pregnancy and new baby support, including breastfeeding.

- » Targeted outreach activities directed at parents and caregivers that could benefit from OEYCFC programs and service but are not currently accessing services for a variety of reasons

The community needs assessment identified the Low German speaking population in east Elgin as a group that is currently not accessing child and family programs. Children residing in social housing units have also been identified as a potential group to work with through targeted outreach activities.

In addition to this, areas of higher need related to low income and high percentage of vulnerability on the EDI have been identified as locations for OEYCFCs.

2. SUPPORTING EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- » Drop-in programs and other programs and services that build responsive adult-child relationships and encourage children's exploration, play and inquiry, supported by *How Does Learning Happen?*

The community needs assessment identified that parents of young children are very interested in attending parent and child playgroups. In addition to this, parents are interested in programs to stimulate and support development in many areas, including introducing children to math, science, and reading.

Play-based learning will be the primary vehicle in OEYCFCs that supports relationships with parents and facilitates opportunities for discussion and learning. Early years activities within the OEYCFCs will be based on the four foundations of Well-being, Belonging, Expression, and Engagement. These programs will be led by qualified facilitators RECEs, where appropriate.

Drop-in programs will be provided in every OEYCFC location, whether it be a main site, satellite site or mobile/outreach site.

Capacity building around inclusion will be provided to all OEYCFC sites/staff. This will ensure that all OEYCFCs are welcoming and accessible to children of varying abilities.

Early literacy, as a function, will also be incorporated in OEYCFC programming.

3. MAKING CONNECTIONS FOR FAMILIES

- » Responding to a parent/caregiver concern about their child's development through conversation and observation supported by validated tools and resources
- » Information sharing about and facilitating connections with specialized community services, coordinated service planning, public health, education, child care, and child welfare, as appropriate
- » Information sharing about programs and services available for the whole family beyond the early years

The community needs assessment identified that, overall, there is a lack of awareness by parents of available programs and services for their child(ren). In addition, a number of parents made comments about requiring services and supports for children with special needs.

The OEYCFCs will align and coordinate their work with the key services identified in Ontario's Special Needs Strategy. Future capacity building will also be a focus for OEYCFC staff on provincially developed screening tools when ready, and referral and intake related to specialized services.

To better understand the needs of children with special needs as they relate to participating in OEYCFCs, a focus group will be held with parents of these children in the fall.

One of the clear pieces of input from parents/caregivers through the community needs assessment was that they would like a place to go that does not have age restrictions for their children to attend. Almost 50% of parents reported that they would go to a program if services for children of various ages were located together.

Service coordination is a key component of the OEYCFC model. The design of the model will ensure that:

- » Parents and caregivers are provided with timely, relevant and up to date information about community and specialized services
- » Local service providers collaborate and integrate services to meet community needs in an efficient and accessible way
- » Early years programs and services coordinate with other community and human services
- » Coordination with Parks and Recreation and libraries for programming

Service coordination is another key function of the St. Thomas-Elgin OEYCFCs. In addition to providing direct service for children aged 0 to 6 years, OEYCFCs will facilitate collaboration amongst service providers and coordinate the provision of services in OEYCFC space for children beyond the age of six that align with the needs and priorities of the community/neighbourhood.

Indigenous Programs and Services

In order to support the delivery of culturally responsive early years programs and services, an Indigenous Program Delivery Coordinator/ Systems Navigator will work with all OEYCFC sites and staff to build the capacity of programs to reflect local Indigenous cultures.

The community needs assessment identified that St. Thomas-Elgin is in close proximity to three First Nations (Oneida Nation of the Thames, Chippewas of the Thames, Munsee-Delaware Nation), and is home to 1,560 Indigenous persons.

In the parent survey, almost one-quarter of all parents reported that they would attend Indigenous programs or sites. This percentage was much higher than the number of parents that self-identified as Indigenous.

This facilitator position will be further documented in the Journey Together plan.

French Language Programs and Services

The community needs assessment identified a very small number of Francophone individuals in St. Thomas-Elgin. Due to this and the lack of input requesting services, at this time, specific French language programs and services will not be offered at the OEYCFCs. This need will be assessed on an ongoing basis.

SERVICE DELIVERY MECHANISMS

OEYCFCs in St. Thomas-Elgin will be more than just physical buildings that you open the door and walk into. OEYCFC programs and services will be provided in buildings, parks, online, and in many other locations. In order to address the varying needs across St. Thomas-Elgin, OEYCFC services will be delivered in multiple ways, including:

Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres



SERVICE DELIVERY MECHANISM	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Main Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Dedicated physical space for the OEYCFC » OEYCFC services offered on a more full-time basis » Mandatory core services offered » Located in libraries, schools, standalone spaces and other “natural” gathering spots
Satellite Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Dedicated physical space for the OEYCFC » OEYCFC services offered on a part-time basis » Mandatory core services offered » Located in libraries, schools, standalone spaces and other “natural” gathering spots
Mobile/Outreach Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Set up/take down space for the OEYCFC » OEYCFC services offered on a part-time basis » Drop-in programs offered, as a minimum level of service » Located in libraries, schools, standalone spaces and other “natural” gathering spots
Pop Up Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Situated in non-traditional spaces, like parks or for events/activities » Based on identified community need <p>Note: The community needs assessment identified that 87% of parents are likely or very likely to use a service offered periodically in parks and non-traditional spaces.</p>
Targeted Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Situated in neighbourhoods/communities to build trust and relationships » Based on a community development approach » May include the gathering of further information about need
Online Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provision of online resources, information, or other virtual services related to the suite of core OEYCFC programs and services » Vehicles to include website and social media <p>Note: The community needs assessment identified that 67% of parents are likely or very likely to use an online service and/or resource. Through the Kindergarten Parent Survey more than 68% of parents reported that they currently access or have accessed information about parenting using the internet.</p>
Local Phone Lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Information about OEYCFC programs and services that can be embedded in existing community phone-based information services <p>Note: Through the Kindergarten Parent Survey more than 74% of parents reported that they are not interested in accessing information about parenting using a telephone hotline.</p>

LOCATIONS OF OEYCFCS

Through the community needs assessment it was identified that the following St. Thomas neighbourhoods were ranked higher in priority for OEYCFCS: Park & Elm, South Edgeware, Old Courthouse, Northwest Talbot, South Gate, Dalewood, Balaclava South, Elgin Mall, and Elm West. Main, satellite and mobile/outreach sites have been identified for all of these neighbourhoods (noting Elm West is identified for potential targeted outreach).

Based on the rural geography and wide distribution of families and children across the county, an OEYCFC site is planned for the west part of Elgin, and one for the east part of Elgin. The rest of the county will be serviced through mobile/outreach and/or pop up sites. See the sections below for further details.

Main Sites

It is proposed that we consider the following locations for OEYCFC Main Sites (see table below). The Rodney site in West Elgin will be located in the child and family centre being built at Aldborough Public School. It is anticipated to be open in the fall of 2018. The site in east Elgin (in Aylmer) will be located in the child and centre being built at Assumption School. It is anticipated to be open in late 2018 or early 2019. In the case that all of the Main Sites identified cannot be funded within the OEYCFC allocation for our community, the below locations should be strongly considered for Satellite or Mobile/Outreach sites.

ST. THOMAS NEIGHBOURHOODS	ELGIN COUNTY LOCATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Park & Elm » South Edgeware (2 sites) » South Gate » Old Courthouse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Rodney » Aylmer » Belmont

Satellite and Mobile/Outreach Sites

Due to the rural composition of Elgin County and the size of St. Thomas, there are some communities/neighbourhoods that could benefit from OEYCFC programs and services but do not have the numbers and need to support a main site. In these instances, a satellite or mobile/outreach site has been identified, which will operate on a part-time basis and offer, at a minimum, drop-in programs. All other site locations (beyond those listed in the below table) will be identified by the selected OEYCFC service provider(s) for approval by the CMSM, and will be based on available resources and ability to meet community need.

The potential locations for OEYCFC satellite or mobile/outreach sites are:

ST. THOMAS NEIGHBOURHOODS	ELGIN COUNTY LOCATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Balaclava South » Elgin Mall » Dalewood » Northwest Talbot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » West Lorne » Dutton » Shedden » Straffordville » Port Burwell

Pop Up Sites

Pop up OEYCFC sites will be used to supplement the programs and services being offered through the main and satellite sites. The locations of these sites will vary based on community need and other activities/events that can be leveraged.

Targeted Outreach

As identified through the community needs assessment, the Low German speaking population in east Elgin will be the focus of a targeted outreach strategy. This is a tri-county initiative being undertaken with the Counties of Oxford and Norfolk. The targeted outreach approach for 2018 includes:

1. Initiate a community development approach to build trust and relationship within the communities of Low German speaking families, and to make connections to current community services/resources
2. Develop overall system capacity to support current programs that provide services to the Low German speaking population (FESPA, Norfolk Community Help Centre)
3. Build service capacity to provide child and family programs to the Low German speaking population living in Oxford County (i.e. transportation to current services, provision of mobile/outreach services)
4. Build an evaluation framework for the initiative, and conduct a year one, formative evaluation
5. Share learnings with the broader system of service providers

It is also anticipated that a targeted outreach approach will be undertaken with families and children living in social housing units in St. Thomas. This opportunity is being explored with City of St. Thomas Social Housing Services.

ONLINE SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Accessing information via the internet is something that families currently do. Ensuring they have access to high quality, accurate information in one spot is important. A website is a critical landing pad for parents to access information. The current ECN website (<http://www.elginchildrensnetwork.ca/>) will be enhanced to further meet this need. In addition to this, the OEYCFC service provider(s) will be responsible for planning an online strategy. ECN envisions this having components such as:

- » Webinars, virtual vignettes, blogs and forums, podcasts, interactive sessions, TED talk video links available on the website
- » Facebook page, using Facebook live for Q and A sessions/learning labs
- » Aylmer Low German radio station
- » Social media
- » Live chat
- » App – services, parent supports

LOCAL PHONE LINES

As noted above, parents have limited interest in accessing information via the telephone. Although this is true, Elgin County has some areas with very limited access to high speed internet, which means some parents may not be able to access online resources as an option. There may be opportunities to work with the SouthWest Integrated Fibre Technology Initiative to expand internet access for rural families.

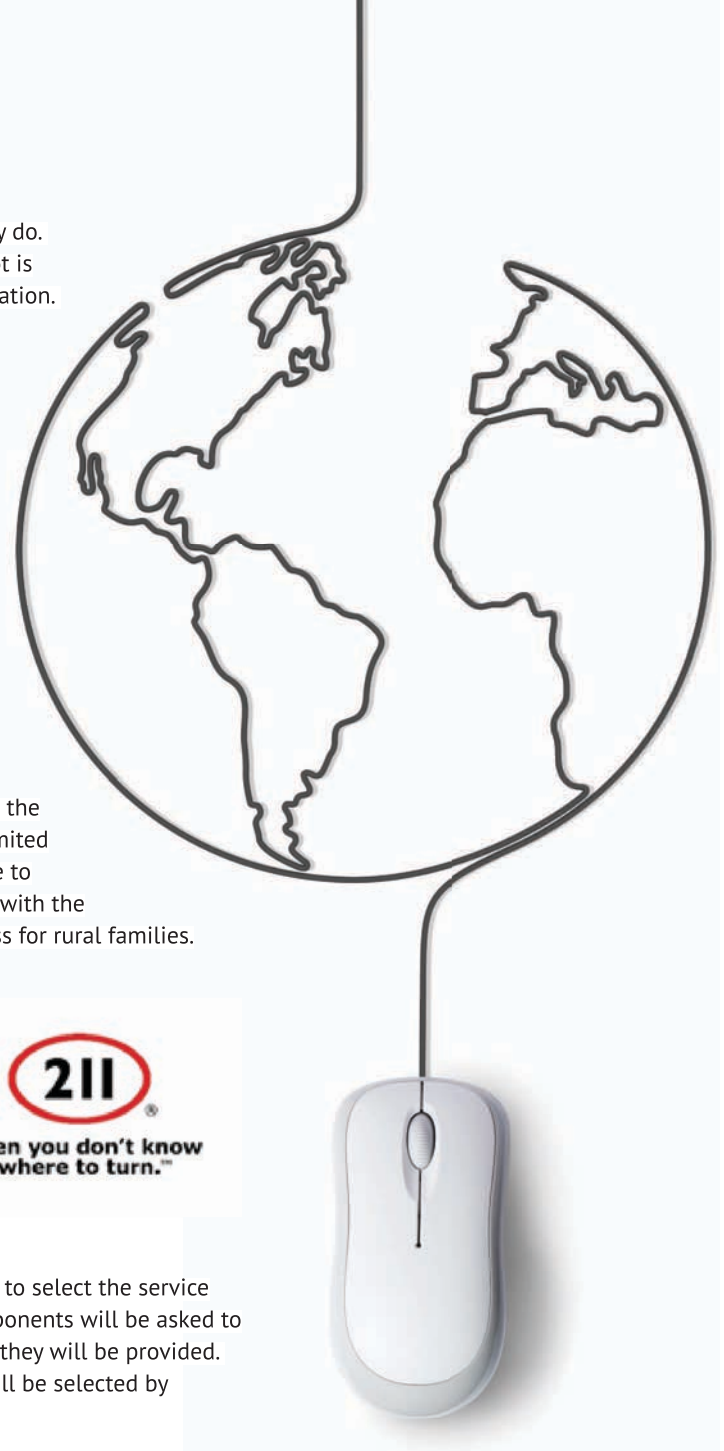
Current phone lines, such as 211, will be promoted through the OEYCFCs to ensure that parents with little internet access have an option to find information about programs and services for their child. 211 is member of ECN and the CMSM will work with 211 to provide information and promote OEYCFCs as opportunities for families to get connected to quality, integrated early years services in their community.

SELECTION OF OEYCFC SERVICE PROVIDER(S)

A Request for Proposal (RFP) process will be conducted in the fall of 2017 to select the service provider(s) for the St. Thomas-Elgin OEYCFCs. As part of this process, proponents will be asked to identify which aspects of the OEYCFC they would like to provide and how they will be provided. Collaborative submissions will be encouraged. The OEYCFC provider(s) will be selected by December 31, 2017.

Selection criteria for the OEYCFC service provider(s) will ensure that the not for profit organization(s) have:

- » The capacity to deliver high quality early years programs that align with the pedagogical approach described in How Does Learning Happen?
- » The ability to collaborate and integrate services with community partners
- » The existing capacity, knowledge, and expertise to address the diverse needs of all children, parents and caregivers, including qualified staff teams to deliver OEYCFC programs and services at every centre. It is the CMSM's expectation that OEYCFC staff will engage in professional learning opportunities to keep informed of latest research on adult education, child development, play and inquiry-based pedagogy, and other relevant topics



TRANSITION PLANS

The work to implement OEYCFCs in St. Thomas-Elgin will not happen overnight. Over the course of 2018, the CMSM will lead the transition to the vision captured in this initial plan. Once an OEYCFC service provider(s) is selected, the CMSM will work with them to develop a transition plan so that there is minimal disruption to the service system, families and children.

Contracts and Funding

The primary transition challenge in the short term is addressing the impacts of shifting responsibility and resources from the Province to the CMSM to manage locally. As of December 31, 2017, the provincial contracts with existing OEYCs and PFLCs will cease to exist.

The CMSM is working with the two current OEYC and PFLC service providers (Community Living Elgin and the TVDSB) to enter into one-time, six month contracts to ensure continuity of services in the short-term, and so that service provider(s) for the OEYCFCs can be selected and a transition plan developed. These contracts will be for the time period of January to June 2018.

Sites and Services

During the January to June 2018 transition period it is anticipated that the current OEYC and PFLC sites and services will be maintained with service hours as close to current levels as possible (as noted in the table below).

PROGRAM LOCATION	NUMBER OF DIRECT SERVICE HOURS PER WEEK
OEYC – Main Site, St. Thomas	36
OEYC – Satellite Site, Aylmer	6
OEYC – Outreach Site, First United Church, St. Thomas	5
OEYC – Outreach Site, Straffordville Public School	2.5
OEYC – Outreach Site, West Elgin Community Health Centre, West Lorne	2.5
OEYC – Outreach Site, Summer's Corners Public School, Aylmer	3
OEYC – Outreach Site, St. Thomas Public Library	2.5
OEYC – Outreach Site, Port Burwell Public Library	1.5
PFLC - Locke's Public School, St. Thomas	20
PFLC - McGregor Public School, Aylmer	20

In addition to the above OEYC and PFLC locations, the Northside Neighbourhood Hub will be funded to provide 40 hours of direct service each week at its existing location. The Northside Neighbourhood Hub is part of the current child and family service system (currently funded through Ontario Trillium Foundation in partnership with Community Living Elgin), and the services provided through this location need to be factored into the broader OEYCFC model.

The TVDSB has indicated that they will no longer be providing PFLC services following December 2017 but that the current site locations will be available for use in the OEYCFC system.

St. Thomas – Elgin Social Services has been meeting with both the TVDSB and Community Living Elgin to determine the transition plan from PFLCs and OEYCs to OEYCFCs and will continue to do so through the fall of 2017 and early 2018.

Further Planning

In order to fully develop the new OEYCFC model, over the course of the fall 2017, a number of areas will be further explored. These include:

- » Holding focus groups with parents/caregivers of children with special needs
- » Holding focus groups with parents/caregivers of children that live in social housing units
- » Continuing to gather information about the experience of Low German speaking families and children

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Over the course of the fall 2017, a comprehensive communication strategy will be developed for the multiple phases of the initiative. Key audiences for the communication strategy are parents, staff, and service providers. The three phases of the initiative include:

PHASE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	TIMING
Phase 1	Communication about the Council approval of the Community Needs Assessment and Initial Plan and submission to the Province	September 29, 2017
Phase 2	Communication about the OEYCFC provider(s), transition approach and any site closures	January 2018
Phase 3	Communication about the new OEYCFCs	April 2018

A multi-pronged communication strategy will be developed for each of the phases noted above.

7.0 MOVING FORWARD!

The City of St. Thomas, as CMSM for St. Thomas and Elgin County, is excited to begin implementation of OEYCFCs in its communities. The transformation of existing Ministry-funded child and family programs into an increasingly integrated, cohesive system of services and supports for children ages 0 to 6 and their parents/caregivers means that families and children are going to have easier access to quality programs and services that are more affordable and responsive to their needs.

By conducting a comprehensive community needs assessment which engaged the voices of many stakeholders, an initial plan has been developed which paints a clear direction for OEYCFCs in St. Thomas-Elgin. Some of the initial action steps to move forward with this plan include:

- » Developing a communication strategy for phase one
- » Ensuring a smooth transition for the Northside Neighbourhood Hub and the OEYCs and PFLCs
- » Assessing the City of St. Thomas' Children's Services Department to ensure sufficient capacity to manage OEYCFCs
- » Issuing an RFP to select a service provider(s) for the OEYCFCs
- » Continuing to gather information from identified groups for further planning

Now it's time to move to action!

