



City of St. Thomas
Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan

June 2021

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Introduction

A comprehensive planning process was undertaken in St. Thomas and Elgin County to develop this Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan. This is a three year plan, outlining priorities for January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2023, with short-term actions identified for 2021. This document provides community profiles of each of the lower tier communities in St. Thomas and Elgin, along with a summary of what was heard during the community planning process.

The community planning process involved the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including parents/caregivers, service providers, school boards, current child and family program providers, and other community partners. The community planning process resulted in a clear identification of priorities and created a blueprint for the development of this Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan.

The Provincial Context

Programs and services offered through the child care and early years service system are key 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."

The Ministry of Education (EDU) is developing a new plan for child care intended to make life easier for families by:



This plan is designed around these four pillars.

The Province has also indicated changes to child care funding over the period of 2020-2022. These funding changes include:

January 1, 2020	Expansion Plan operating funding provided at a rate of 80% Recommended municipal cost-share of 20%
January 1, 2021	Expansion Plan operating funding provided at a rate of 80% Mandatory cost-share on all administrative funding at a rate of 50/50
January 1, 2022	Ongoing cost-sharing requirements (as noted above) Reduction in the allowable administrative threshold from 10% to 5%

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. As outlined in the Child Care and Early Years Act (2014), 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

This plan is our blueprint for the child care and early years system for the next three years. Building on the strengths of our current system of supports and services, we will continue to support a high quality system that is responsive to the needs of families and children.

Methodology and Engagement Process

The process to develop the Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan utilized a mixed methodology approach. This approach encompassed 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 plan. A community profile was developed to better understand the state of affairs that may influence target demographics. Community subzone profiles for the City of St. Thomas were also created to inform the plan.

The City of St. Thomas actively engaged with a wide range of local stakeholders and community partners to ensure its Child Care and Early Years Plan was responsive to community needs, existing service capacity, and community goals and priorities. The groups that participated in this planning process are:

- Parents/caregivers
- Service providers
- School boards
- Current child and family program providers
- Other community partners

The engagement strategy employed with each of these groups is outlined below.

Parent/Caregiver Engagement

Information was collected from parents/caregivers through a survey that was distributed in the fall of 2018. This survey was available online and in hard copy. A total of 443 parent/caregiver surveys were completed. Based on the total population with children at home, the confidence interval of the sample is 4.58 at a 95% confidence level.

- The validity of the responses to the parent/caregiver survey was further confirmed by the profile of people who responded to the survey. Of note:
- Parent/caregiver responses were received from every town, township, city, and municipality across the county
- The highest percentage of responses were from parents/caregivers residing in St. Thomas (56.9%), West Elgin (10.1%), Central Elgin (9.9%), and Aylmer (9.0%)
- A cross section of parents with children of different ages responded to the survey

Service Provider Engagement

An online survey was utilized to collect information from service providers. A total of 94 service providers responded to the survey. A range of service providers responded to the survey, with 77.7% of respondents from the licensed child care sector. See the table below for the types of service providers who responded to the survey.

Type of Service Provider	# of Responses	% of Responses
Licensed, non-profit child care, centre-based program	39	41.5%
Licensed, for profit child care, centre-based program	5	5.3%
Licensed, private home day care program	20	21.3%
Licensed, non-profit school age program (before/after school care)	9	9.6%
Licensed, for profit school age program (before/after school care)	0	0.0%
Summer camp	0	0.0%
EarlyON Child and Family Centre	5	5.3%
Special Needs Resourcing program (funded by the CMSM)	5	5.3%
School	2	2.1%
Other early years programs	9	9.6%

In addition to the online survey, an engagement session was held with service providers to inform the development of the Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan (see below for further details).

Name of Group	Date of Engagement Session	Purpose of Engagement Session
Elgin Children's Network (ECN)	November 19, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of shared models of visions for the child care and early years system • Review of survey responses and data related to licensed child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres • Identification of potential areas of focus for the plan

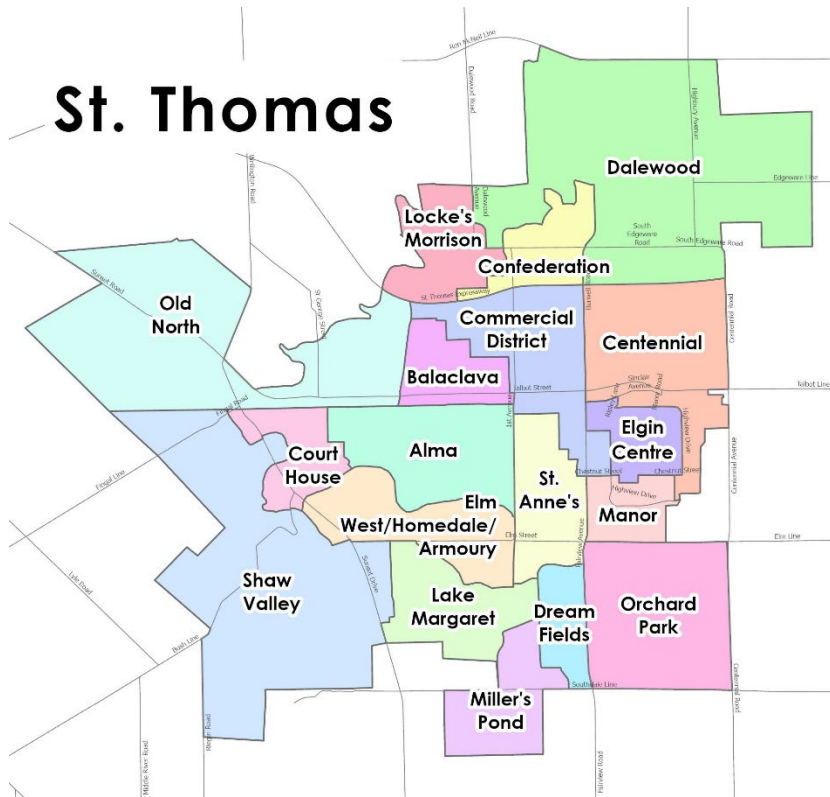
Community Profiles

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.

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



St. Thomas, as the largest urban area in Elgin County, is comprised of 18 Community Subzones (see the map for further details).

General Trends

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 12 years) in Elgin County increased slightly. In 2016, 14,480 children aged 0 to 12 years lived in Elgin County. This is an increase of 1.0% from 2011 (see the table below). This population comprises 16.3% of the overall population.

Municipality	Age 0-12 (2011)	Age 0-12 (2016)	% Change (2011 to 2016)
Bayham	1,525	1,660	8.9%
Malahide	2,060	2,015	-2.2%
Aylmer	1,165	1,300	11.6%
Central Elgin	1,790	1,715	-4.2%
St. Thomas	5,960	5,930	-0.5%
Southwold	630	660	4.8%
Dutton/Dunwich	535	550	2.8%
West Elgin	670	650	-3.0%
Elgin County Total	14,335	14,480	1.0%

There are significantly more children aged 0 to 12 years living in St. Thomas than in other areas of Elgin County (41.0% of all children aged 0 to 12 years). The next most populated areas include: Malahide (13.9%), Central Elgin (11.8%), and Bayham (11.5%). See the table below for further details.

Municipality	Total Population	Average Age of Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children Age 0-12 in Elgin County
Bayham	7,395	35.8	590	680	390	11.5%
Malahide	9,290	36.3	710	840	465	13.9%
Aylmer	7,495	40.0	550	485	265	9.0%
Central Elgin	12,605	43.6	530	720	465	11.8%
St. Thomas	38,910	42.0	2,065	2,460	1,405	41.0%
Southwold	4,425	42.4	225	240	195	4.6%
Dutton/Dunwich	3,865	42.8	210	205	135	3.8%
West Elgin	4,995	44.6	235	240	175	4.5%
Elgin County Total	88,980	41.1	5,115	5,870	3,495	100.0%

Between 2021 and 2031 the child population (aged 0 to 14 years) in Elgin County is projected to decline by 2.5%. Over this same time period, the child population in St. Thomas is expected to increase by 5.8%.

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. German being spoken at home is most prevalent in east Elgin, in Bayham, Malahide, and Aylmer. 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.

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 2016 Statistics Canada census reports that 1,985 persons of Indigenous identity reside in Elgin County, with 52.9% of these individuals (1,050) living in St. Thomas.

21.4% of children under the age of 6 (1,335 children) live in low-income families. Many of these children live in St. Thomas (565 or 42.3%). In addition to St. Thomas, areas with a higher than average percentage of children living in low-income families include Bayham, Aylmer, and Malahide.

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, a number of municipalities have a higher percentage of children that are vulnerable on one or more domain. These include Dutton/Dunwich (40.5%), Aylmer (36.5%), Malahide (32.8%), and Bayham (43.3%). These rates are higher than the St. Thomas-Elgin average (28.5%), and higher than the provincial average of 29.6% (EDI, 2018).

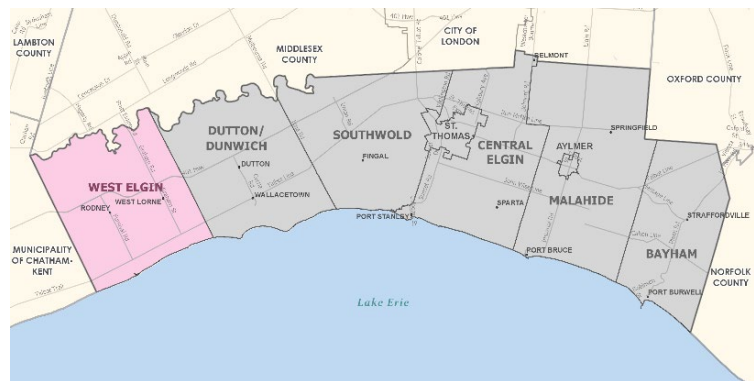
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted both licensed child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres, with periods of mandated closure and limited reopening. In the sections that follow, 2019 data is referenced in some instances to reflect the state of the system prior to the impacts of COVID-19.

A more detailed profile of each of the Towns, Municipalities and Townships, and City are provided below.

West Elgin

West Elgin is the most westerly municipality in Elgin County. It borders Dutton/Dunwich to the east and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent to the west, with Middlesex County to its north and Lake Erie to its south.

West Elgin has two main communities – Rodney and West Lorne.



4,995

Population

5.6%

% of Elgin County's population

44.6 years

average age

650

of children aged 0 to 12 years

4.5%

% of all children aged 0 to 12 years

West Elgin has a total population of 4,995. This represents 5.6% of the population of Elgin County. The average age in West Elgin is 44.6 years, higher than the county average of 41.1 years.

There are 650 children aged 0 to 12 years living in West Elgin. This is 4.5% of all children aged 0 to 12 years in Elgin County. The number of children decreased 3.0% from 2011 to 2016, and is projected to continue to decline through to 2031.

Municipality	Total Population	Average Age of Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children Age 0-12 in Elgin County
West Elgin	4,995	44.6	235	240	175	4.5%
Elgin County Total	88,980	41.1	5,115	5,870	3,495	100.0%

Portuguese	Top non-official language spoken at home
2.8%	% speaking non-official language most often at home
0.2%	% speaking French at home
170	# of Indigenous persons
8.6%	% of all Indigenous persons in Elgin County

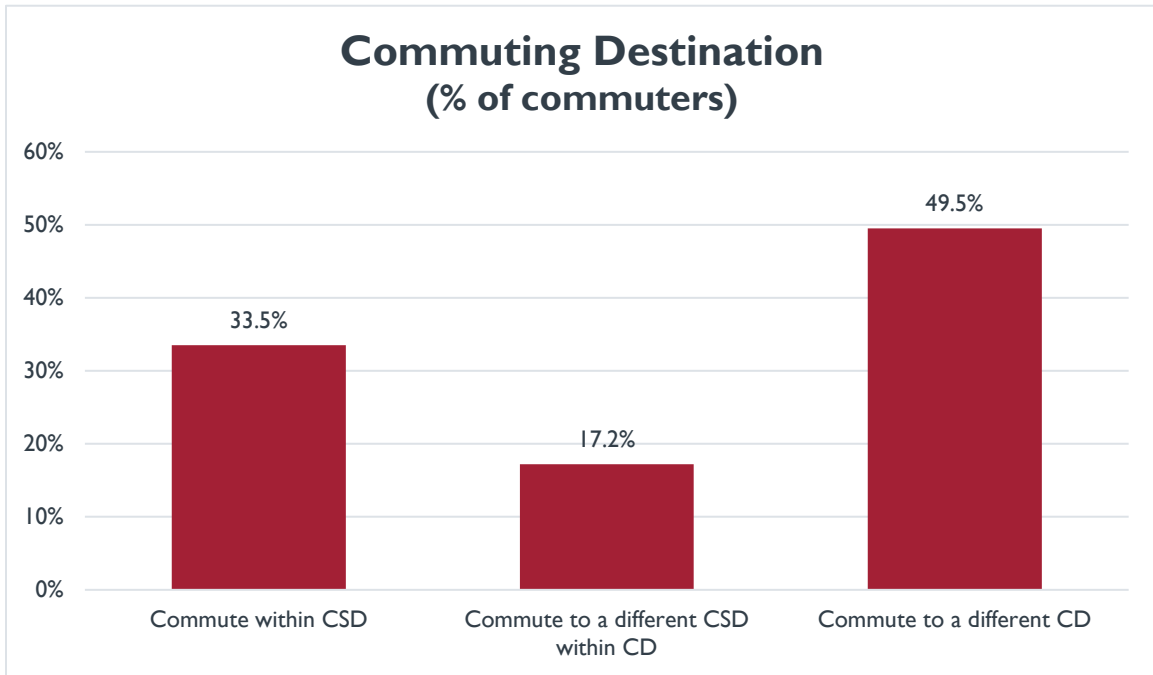
The majority of people living in West Elgin speak English at home. A small percentage of the population (2.8%) speak a non-official language at home, with Portuguese being the most common non-official language spoken at home. A very small percentage (0.2%) of the population speak French at home.

West Elgin is home to a number of Indigenous persons. This municipality has the fourth largest number of Indigenous persons residing in it compared to other towns, townships, municipalities, and cities in Elgin County.

60	# of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
21.1%	% of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
710	# of families with children
215	# of lone parent families
30.3%	% of all families that are lone parent families

West Elgin has a smaller number of children living in low income than St. Thomas and three of the towns/municipalities in east Elgin. The percentage of children aged 0 to 5 living in low income is comparable to the average for Elgin County (21.4%).

The west portion of Elgin County is home to a smaller number of families with children. This includes the number of lone parent families.



Many individuals that live in West Elgin are commuting to a different census division (municipality) for work (49.5%), spending 30+ minutes commuting each way to their place of employment.

2	# of licensed school age programs
45	# of spaces (operating capacity)
0	# of licensed child care centres
1	# of nursery schools
16	# of spaces (operating capacity)
2	# of EarlyON sites

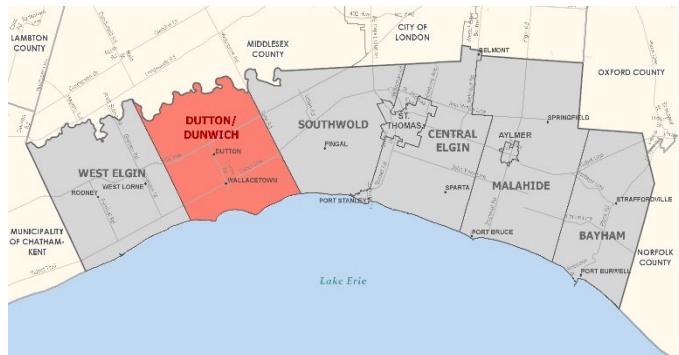
Data as of January 2019

There are no full-day licensed child care centres in West Elgin. There is one nursery school that operates half days, and two before and after school programs. Eleven hours of service are provided in by the EarlyON Child and Family Centre at two locations in West Elgin (Rodney and West Lorne).

Dutton/Dunwich

Dutton/Dunwich is located in the western portion of Elgin County. It borders Southwold to the east and West Elgin to the west, with Middlesex County to its north and Lake Erie to its south.

Dutton/Dunwich has two main communities – Dutton and Wallacetown.



3,865	population
4.3%	% of Elgin County's population
42.8 years	average age
550	# of children aged 0 to 12 years
3.8%	% of all children aged 0 to 12 years

Dutton/Dunwich has a total population of 3,865. This represents 4.3% of the population of Elgin County. The average age in Dutton/Dunwich is 42.8 years, higher than the county average of 41.1 years.

There are 550 children aged 0 to 12 years living in Dutton/Dunwich. This is 3.8% of all children aged 0 to 12 years in Elgin County. The number of children increased 2.8% from 2011 to 2016.

Municipality	Total Population	Average Age of Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children Age 0-12 in Elgin County
Dutton/Dunwich	3,865	42.8	210	205	135	3.8%
Elgin County Total	88,980	41.1	5,115	5,870	3,495	100.0%

N/A	Top non-official language spoken at home
1.0%	% speaking non-official language most often at home
0.3%	% speaking French at home
70	# of Indigenous persons
3.5%	% of all Indigenous persons in Elgin County

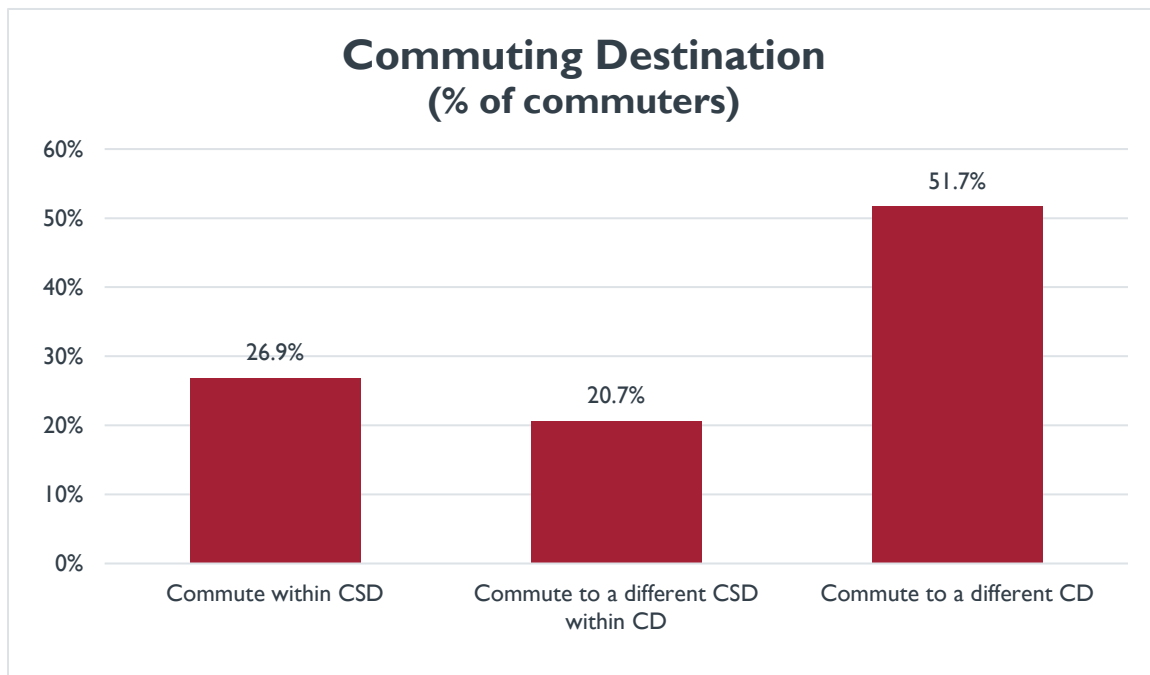
The majority of people living in Dutton/Dunwich speak English at home. A small percentage of the population (1.0%) speak a non-official language at home. A very small percentage (0.3%) of the population speak French at home.

Dutton/Dunwich is home to a small number of Indigenous persons. This municipality has the second lowest number of Indigenous persons residing in it compared to other towns, townships, municipalities, and cities in Elgin County.

30	# of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
12.2%	% of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
605	# of families with children
135	# of lone parent families
22.3%	% of all families that are lone parent families

Along with Southwold, Dutton/Dunwich has the lowest number of children living in low income in Elgin County. The percentage of children aged 0 to 5 living in low income is much lower than the average for Elgin County (21.4%).

The west portion of Elgin County is home to a smaller number of families with children. This includes the number of lone parent families.



Many individuals that live in Dutton/Dunwich are commuting to a different census division (municipality) for work (51.7%), spending 30+ minutes commuting each way to their place of employment.

1	# of licensed school age programs
43	# of spaces (operating capacity)
1	# of licensed child care centres
58	# of spaces (operating capacity)
0	# of EarlyON sites

Data as of January 2019

There is one licensed child care centre in Dutton/Dunwich, and one licensed school age program. The EarlyON Child and Family Centre does not have a delivery site in Dutton/Dunwich.

The following characteristics of Dutton/Dunwich were highlighted in a conversation with our local municipal partner:

Strengths/Assets	Issues/Challenges/Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service groups • Integrated campus with seniors home and child care centre • Focus on practical solutions • Good internet service • Close community • Safe community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma associated with economic and social problems • People live in Dutton/Dunwich, but work elsewhere • Difficult to find housing • Need activities for 12 to 16 year olds
Unique Characteristics	Available Community Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a great deal of diversity • Municipal Council understands what residents want 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small theatre on upper floor of municipal building • Room in community centre • South Dunwich Hall

Southwold

Southwold is located in the western portion of Elgin County. It borders St. Thomas and Central Elgin to the east and Dutton/Dunwich to the west, with Middlesex County to its north and Lake Erie to its south.

Southwold has one main community – Fingal.



4,425	population
5.0%	% of Elgin County's population
42.4 years	average age
660	# of children aged 0 to 12 years
4.6%	% of all children aged 0 to 12 years

Southwold has a total population of 4,425. This represents 5.0% of the population of Elgin County. The average age in Southwold is 42.4 years, higher than the county average of 41.1 years.

There are 660 children aged 0 to 12 years living in Southwold. This is 4.6% of all children aged 0 to 12 years in Elgin County. The number of children increased 4.8% from 2011 to 2016.

Municipality	Total Population	Average Age of Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children Age 0-12 in Elgin County
Southwold	4,425	42.4	225	240	195	4.6%
Elgin County Total	88,980	41.1	5,115	5,870	3,495	100.0%

N/A	Top non-official language spoken at home
0.8%	% speaking non-official language most often at home
0.3%	% speaking French at home
80	# of Indigenous persons
4.0%	% of all Indigenous persons in Elgin County

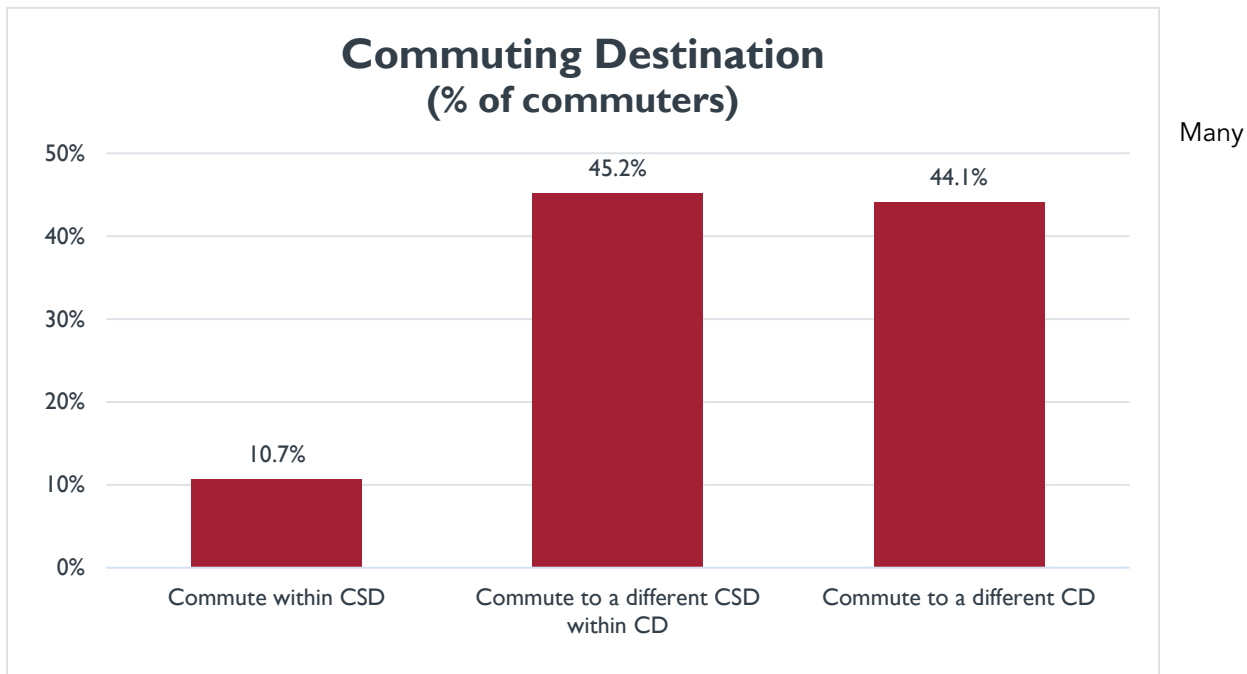
The majority of people living in Southwold speak English at home. A small percentage of the population (0.8%) speak a non-official language at home. A very small percentage (0.3%) of the population speak French at home.

Southwold is home to a small number of Indigenous persons. This municipality has the third lowest number of Indigenous persons residing in it compared to other towns, townships, municipalities, and cities in Elgin County.

30	# of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
12.0%	% of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
730	# of families with children
135	# of lone parent families
18.5%	% of all families that are lone parent families

Along with Dutton/Dunwich, Southwold has the lowest number of children living in low income in Elgin County. The percentage of children aged 0 to 5 living in low income is much lower than the average for Elgin County (21.4%).

The west portion of Elgin County is home to a smaller number of families with children. This includes the number of lone parent families.



Individuals that live in Southwold are commuting to a different census subdivision within their census division (municipality) or a different census division (municipality) for work (89.3%), spending between 15 and 44 minutes commuting each way to their place of employment.

1	# of licensed school age programs
56	# of spaces (operating capacity)
0	# of licensed child care centres
0	# of spaces (operating capacity)
0	# of EarlyON sites

Data as of January 2019

There are no licensed child care centres in Southwold, and one licensed school age program. The EarlyON Child and Family Centre does not have a delivery site in Southwold.

The following characteristics of Southwold were highlighted in a conversation with our local municipal partner:

Strengths/Assets	Issues/Challenges/Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation and cultural programs, lots of activities and parks • Rural lifestyle • New seniors group • Largest availability of industrial land in Elgin County • Active Facebook page for promoting programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People work in other communities • Difficult to retain youth • Development and growth • Lack of affordable housing • Not a diverse community • Need affordable child care • Lack of transportation • Need stronger internet service
Unique Characteristics	Available Community Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly rural, farming community • Large volunteer base • Low tax rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keystone • Potentially a new fire station with a community room

St. Thomas

St. Thomas is located in middle of Elgin County. It borders Southwold to the west and Central Elgin to the east.

In addition to Aylmer, St. Thomas is the only urban centre in Elgin County.



38,910	population
43.7%	% of Elgin County's population
42.0 years	average age
5,930	# of children aged 0 to 12 years
41.0%	% of all children aged 0 to 12 years

St. Thomas has a total population of 38,910. This represents 43.7% of the population of Elgin County. The average age in St. Thomas is 42.0 years, higher than the county average of 41.1 years.

There are 5,930 children aged 0 to 12 years living in St. Thomas. This is 41.0% of all children aged 0 to 12 years in Elgin County. The number of children decreased 0.5% from 2011 to 2016.

Municipality	Total Population	Average Age of Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children Age 0-12 in Elgin County
St. Thomas	38,910	42.0	2,065	2,460	1,405	41.0%
Elgin County Total	88,980	41.1	5,115	5,870	3,495	100.0%

Polish, Khmer	Top non-official language spoken at home
1.7%	% speaking non-official language most often at home
0.1%	% speaking French at home
1,050	# of Indigenous persons
52.9%	% of all Indigenous persons in Elgin County

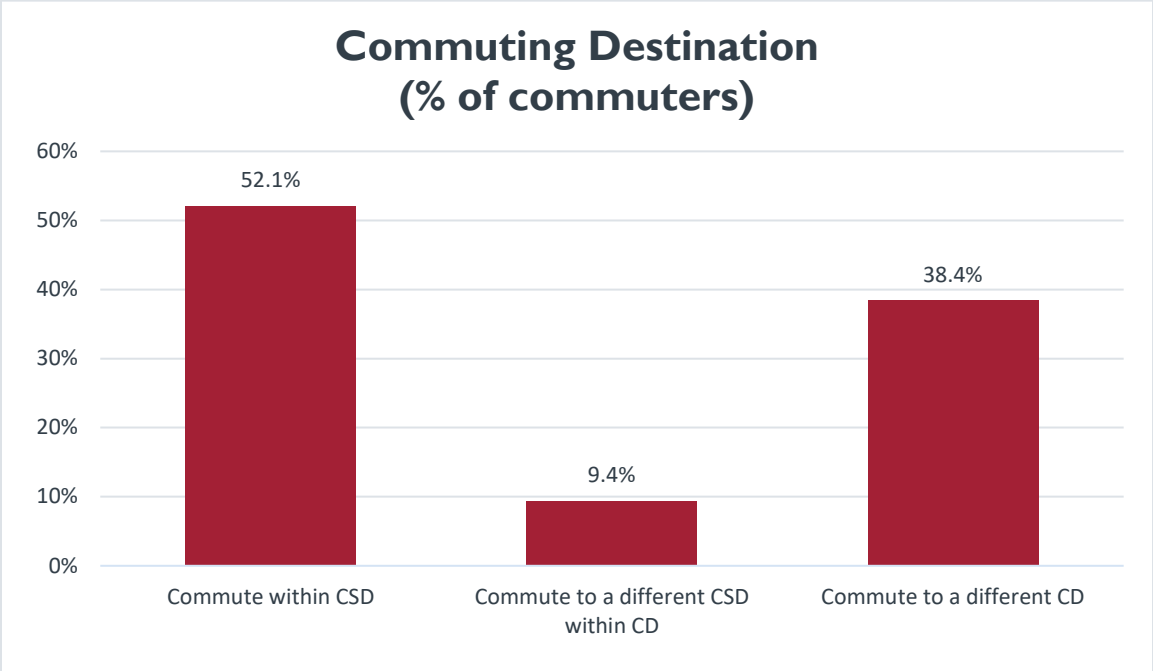
The majority of people living in St. Thomas speak English at home. A small percentage of the population (1.7%) speak a non-official language at home. A very small percentage (0.1%) of the population speaks French at home.

St. Thomas is home to a large number of Indigenous persons. This municipality has the highest number of Indigenous persons residing in it compared to other towns, townships, municipalities, and cities in Elgin County.

565	# of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
22.2%	% of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
6,210	# of families with children
2,185	# of lone parent families
35.2%	% of all families that are lone parent families

St. Thomas has the highest number of children living in low income in Elgin County. The percentage of children aged 0 to 5 living in low income is slightly higher than the average for Elgin County (21.4%).

St. Thomas is the municipality in Elgin County with the highest number of families with children, and the highest percentage of lone parent families.



Compared to other areas in Elgin County, a higher percentage of individuals that live in St. Thomas are commuting to work within their census subdivision, spending less than 15 minutes commuting each way to their place of employment.

9	# of licensed school age programs
630	# of spaces (operating capacity)
8	# of licensed child care centres
464	# of spaces (operating capacity)
7	# of EarlyON sites

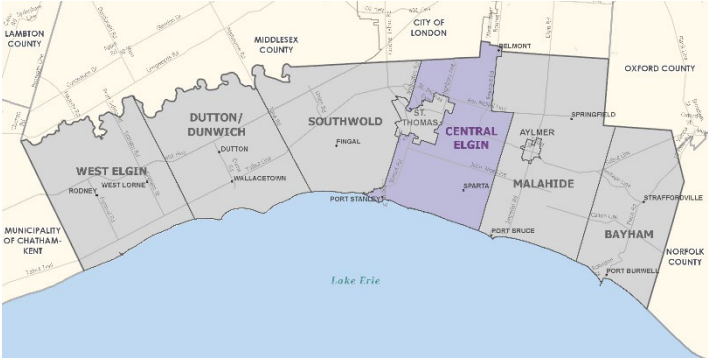
Data as of January 2019

There are eight licensed child care centres in St. Thomas, and nine licensed school age program. There are also seven EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations, offering 100.5 hours of direct service delivery each week.

Central Elgin

Central Elgin is located in the eastern portion of Elgin County. It borders St. Thomas and Southwold to the west and Malahide to the east, with the City of London to its north and Lake Erie to its south.

Central Elgin has two main communities – Sparta and Port Stanley.



12,605	population
14.2%	% of Elgin County's population
43.6 years	average age
1,715	# of children aged 0 to 12 years
11.8%	% of all children aged 0 to 12 years

Central Elgin has a total population of 12,605. This represents 14.2% of the population of Elgin County. The average age in Central Elgin is 43.6 years, higher than the county average of 41.1 years.

There are 1,715 children aged 0 to 12 years living in Central Elgin. This is 11.8% of all children aged 0 to 12 years in Elgin County. The number of children decreased 4.2% from 2011 to 2016.

Municipality	Total Population	Average Age of Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children Age 0-12 in Elgin County
Central Elgin	12,605	43.6	530	720	465	11.8%
Elgin County Total	88,980	41.1	5,115	5,870	3,495	100.0%

German	Top non-official language spoken at home
1.2%	% speaking non-official language most often at home
0.1%	% speaking French at home
305	# of Indigenous persons
15.4%	% of all Indigenous persons in Elgin County

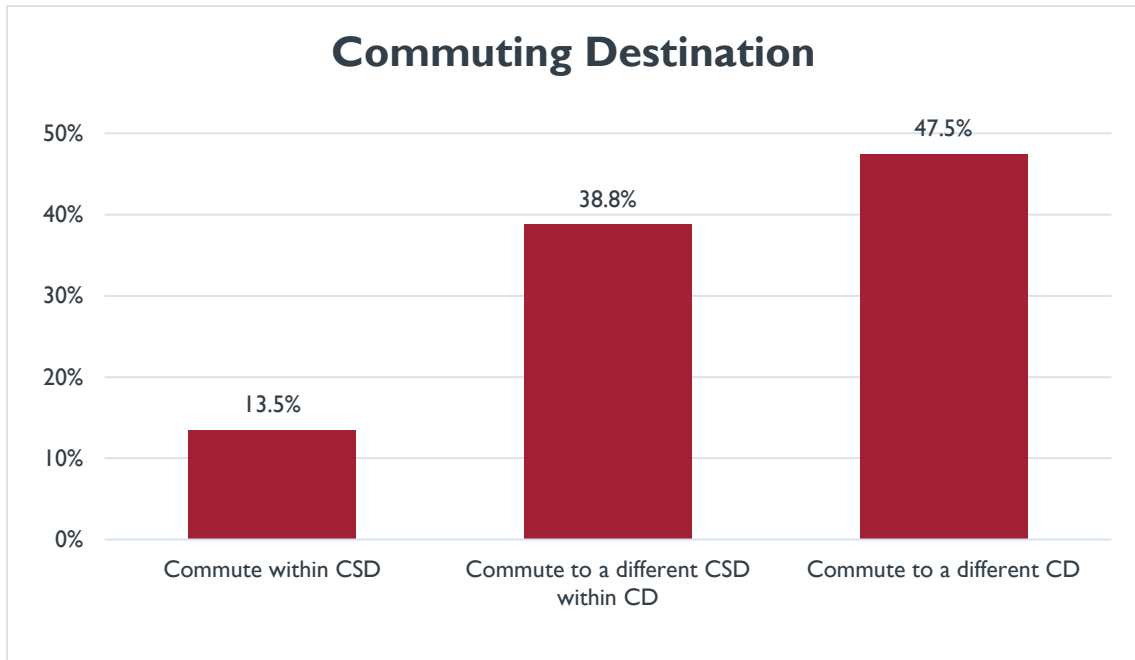
The majority of people living in Central Elgin speak English at home. A small percentage of the population (1.2%) speak a non-official language at home. German is the most prevalent non-official language that is spoken at home. A very small percentage (0.1%) of the population speak French at home.

Central Elgin is home to a number of Indigenous persons. This municipality has the second highest number of Indigenous persons residing in it compared to other towns, townships, municipalities, and cities in Elgin County.

55	# of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
8.3%	% of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
1,935	# of families with children
385	# of lone parent families
19.9%	% of all families that are lone parent families

Central Elgin has a small number of children living in low income compared to other areas in Elgin County. The percentage of children aged 0 to 5 living in low income is the lowest in Elgin County, much lower than the average for Elgin County as a whole (21.4%).

The east portion of Elgin County is home to a larger number of families with children. This includes the number of lone parent families.



Many individuals that live in Central Elgin are commuting to a different census subdivision within their census division (municipality) or a different census division (municipality) for work (86.3%), spending between 15 and 44 minutes commuting each way to their place of employment.

3	# of licensed school age programs
73	# of spaces (operating capacity)
1	# of licensed child care centres
68	# of spaces (operating capacity)
0	# of EarlyON sites

Data as of January 2019

There is one licensed child care centre in Central Elgin, and three licensed school age programs. The EarlyON Child and Family Centre does not have a delivery site in Central Elgin.

Aylmer

Aylmer is located in the eastern portion of Elgin County. It is situated in the middle of Malahide Township.

Aylmer is the only full urban centre in Elgin County outside of St. Thomas.



7,495

population

8.4%

% of Elgin County's population

40.0 years

average age

1,300

of children aged 0 to 12 years

9.0%

% of all children aged 0 to 12 years

Aylmer has a total population of 7,495. This represents 8.4% of the population of Elgin County. The average age in Aylmer is 40.0 years, lower than the county average of 41.1 years.

There are 1,300 children aged 0 to 12 years living in Aylmer. This is 9.0% of all children aged 0 to 12 years in Elgin County. The number of children increased 11.6% from 2011 to 2016.

Municipality	Total Population	Average Age of Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children Age 0-12 in Elgin County
Aylmer	7,495	40.0	550	485	265	9.0%
Elgin County Total	88,980	41.1	5,115	5,870	3,495	100.0%

German

Top non-official language spoken at home

10.0%

% speaking non-official language most often at home

0.0%

% speaking French at home

185

of Indigenous persons

9.3%

% of all Indigenous persons in Elgin County

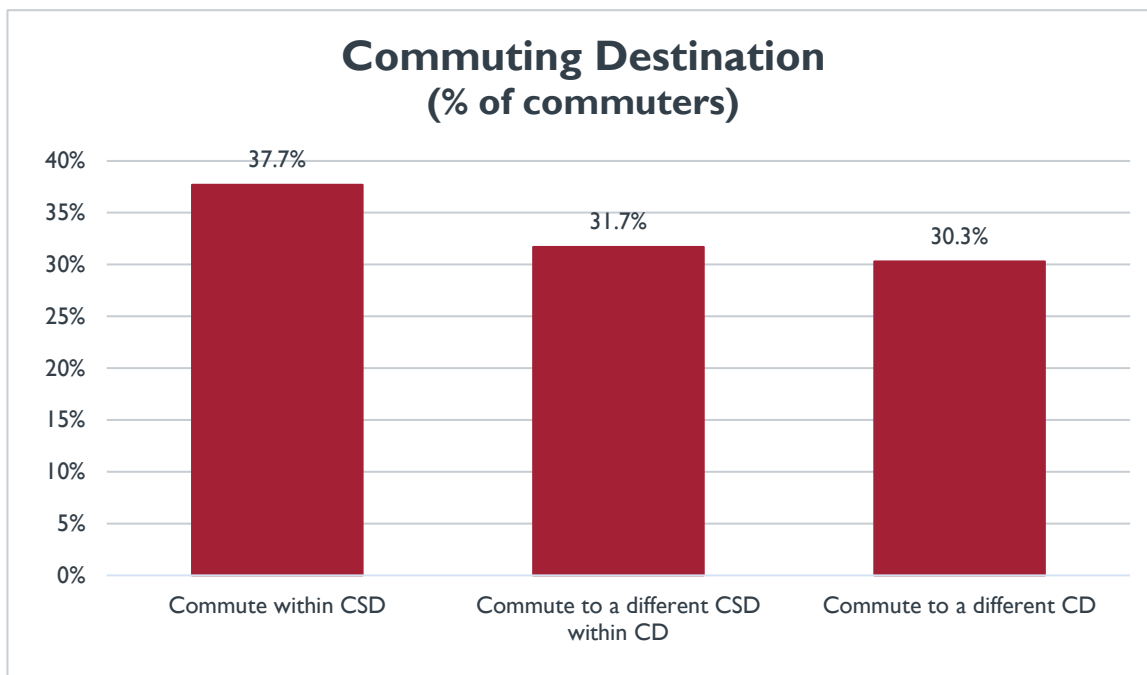
The majority of people living in Aylmer speak English at home. Along with Bayham, a higher percentage of the population (10.0%) speak a non-official language at home. No individuals speak French at home.

Aylmer is home to a number of Indigenous persons. This municipality has the third highest number of Indigenous persons residing in it compared to other towns, townships, municipalities, and cities in Elgin County.

175	# of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
26.5%	% of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
1,200	# of families with children
345	# of lone parent families
28.8%	% of all families that are lone parent families

Aylmer has the fourth highest number of children living in low income in Elgin County. The percentage of children aged 0 to 5 living in low income is much higher than the average for Elgin County (21.4%).

The east portion of Elgin County is home to a larger number of families with children. This includes the number of lone parent families.



Compared to other areas in Elgin County, a higher percentage of individuals that live in Aylmer are commuting to work within their census subdivision, spending 29 minutes or less commuting each way to their place of employment.

2	# of licensed school age programs
82	# of spaces (operating capacity)
1	# of licensed child care centres
41	# of spaces (operating capacity)
1	# of EarlyON sites

Data as of January 2019

There is one licensed child care centre in Aylmer, and two licensed school age programs. There is also one EarlyON Child and Family Centre, offering 21.5 hours of direct service delivery each week.

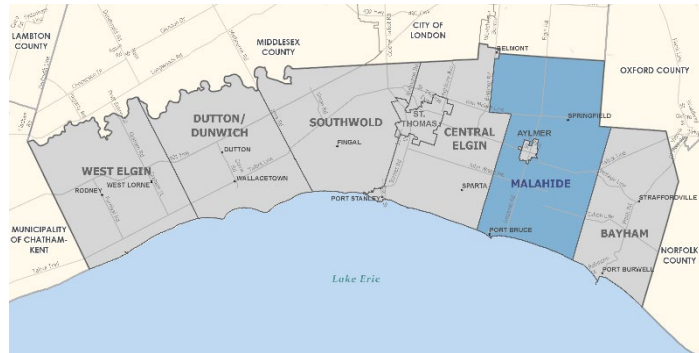
The following characteristics of Aylmer were highlighted in a conversation with our local municipal partner:

Strengths/Assets	Issues/Challenges/Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly, caring community • Many cultural programs • Good recreational facilities • Full service community • Excellent internet service • Growth, new industrial park and subdivision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of affordable housing • Lack of family physicians • Significant poverty amongst Low German speaking families • Lack of public transit • Level of property taxes • Retaining youth
Unique Characteristics	Available Community Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only urban area in Elgin County outside of St. Thomas • Large Mennonite community, Low German speaking population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Elgin Community Complex • Old Town Hall • Bandshell Park (Palmer Park) • Park space (136 acres)

Malahide

Malahide is located in the eastern portion of Elgin County. It borders Central Elgin to the west and Bayham to the east, with Middlesex County to its north and Lake Erie to its south.

Malahide has two main communities – Springfield and Port Bruce.



9,290	population
10.4%	% of Elgin County's population
36.3 years	average age
2,015	# of children aged 0 to 12 years
13.9%	% of all children aged 0 to 12 years

Malahide has a total population of 9,290. This represents 10.4% of the population of Elgin County. The average age in Malahide is 36.3 years, lower than the county average of 41.1 years.

There are 2,015 children aged 0 to 12 years living in Malahide. This is 13.9% of all children aged 0 to 12 years in Elgin County. The number of children decreased 2.2% from 2011 to 2016.

Municipality	Total Population	Average Age of Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children Age 0-12 in Elgin County
Malahide	9,290	36.3	710	840	465	13.9%
Elgin County Total	88,980	41.1	5,115	5,870	3,495	100.0%

German	Top non-official language spoken at home
15.8%	% speaking non-official language most often at home
0.1%	% speaking French at home
85	# of Indigenous persons
4.3%	% of all Indigenous persons in Elgin County

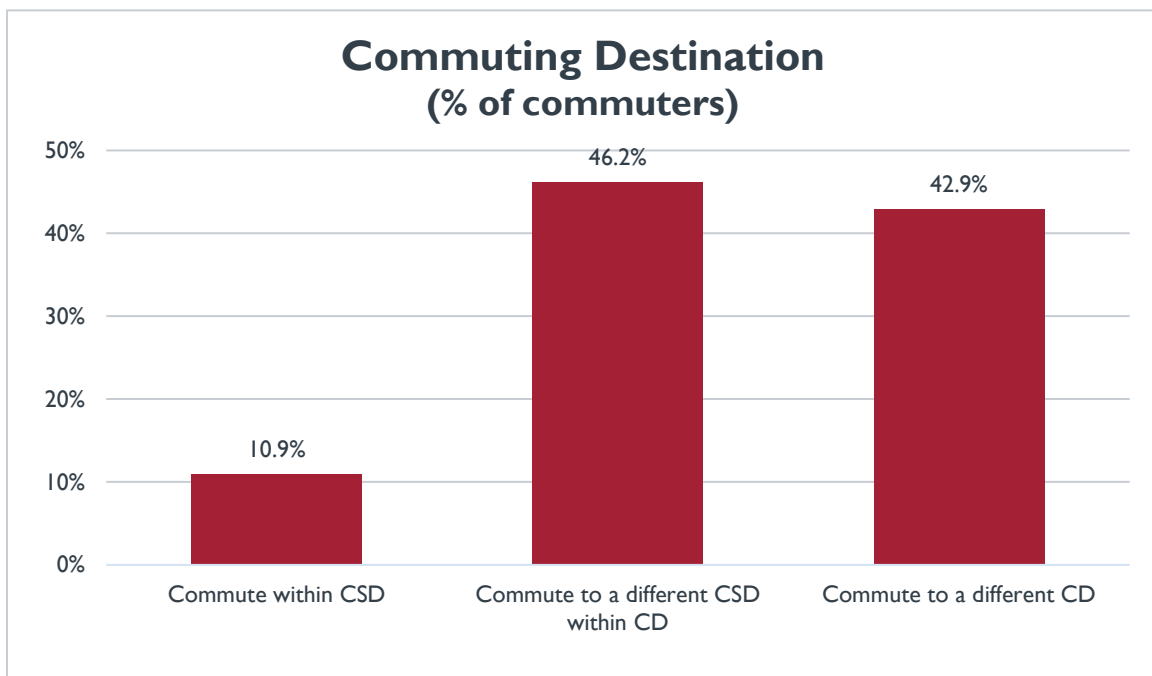
The majority of people living in Malahide speak English at home. Along with Bayham, a higher percentage of the population (15.8%) speak a non-official language at home. A very small percentage (0.1%) of the population speak French at home.

Malahide is home to a small number of Indigenous persons. This municipality has the fourth lowest number of Indigenous persons residing in it compared to other towns, townships, municipalities, and cities in Elgin County.

235	# of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
27.2%	% of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
1,445	# of families with children
210	# of lone parent families
14.5%	% of all families that are lone parent families

With the exception of St. Thomas, Malahide has the highest number of children living in low income in Elgin County. The percentage of children aged 0 to 5 living in low income is much higher than the average for Elgin County (21.4%).

The east portion of Elgin County is home to a larger number of families with children. This includes the number of lone parent families.



Many individuals that live in Malahide are commuting to a different census subdivision within their census division (municipality) or a different census division (municipality) for work (89.1%), spending 29 minutes or less commuting each way to their place of employment.

2	# of licensed school age programs
13	# of spaces (operating capacity)
0	# of licensed child care centres
0	# of spaces (operating capacity)
0	# of EarlyON sites

Data as of January 2019

There are no licensed child care centres in Malahide, and two licensed school age programs. The EarlyON Child and Family Centre does not have a delivery site in Malahide.

The following characteristics of Malahide were highlighted in a conversation with our local municipal partner:

Strengths/Assets	Issues/Challenges/Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture is the strongest industry • Ontario Police College is located here • Low crime rate • Very family-oriented • Small community, everyone knows one another • Lots of activities, adequate recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High taxes • Need for affordable housing • Poor internet service • Lack of transportation
Unique Characteristics	Available Community Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely rural community • Large population of Low German speaking Mennonites • Younger population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Elgin Community Complex • Malahide community building • Library • South Dorchester Community Hall • Port Bruce Pavilion

Bayham

Bayham is located in the most easterly portion of Elgin County. It borders Malahide to the west and Norfolk County to the east, with Oxford County to its north and Lake Erie to its south.

Malahide has two main communities – Straffordville and Port Burwell.



7,395	population
8.3%	% of Elgin County's population
35.8 years	average age
1,660	# of children aged 0 to 12 years
11.5%	% of all children aged 0 to 12 years

Bayham has a total population of 7,395. This represents 8.3% of the population of Elgin County. The average age in Bayham is 35.8 years, lower than the county average of 41.1 years.

There are 1,660 children aged 0 to 12 years living in Bayham. This is 11.5% of all children aged 0 to 12 years in Elgin County. The number of children increased 8.9% from 2011 to 2016.

Municipality	Total Population	Average Age of Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children Age 0-12 in Elgin County
Bayham	7,395	35.8	590	680	390	11.5%
Elgin County Total	88,980	41.1	5,115	5,870	3,495	100.0%

German	Top non-official language spoken at home
15.6%	% speaking non-official language most often at home
0.2%	% speaking French at home
40	# of Indigenous persons
2.0%	% of all Indigenous persons in Elgin County

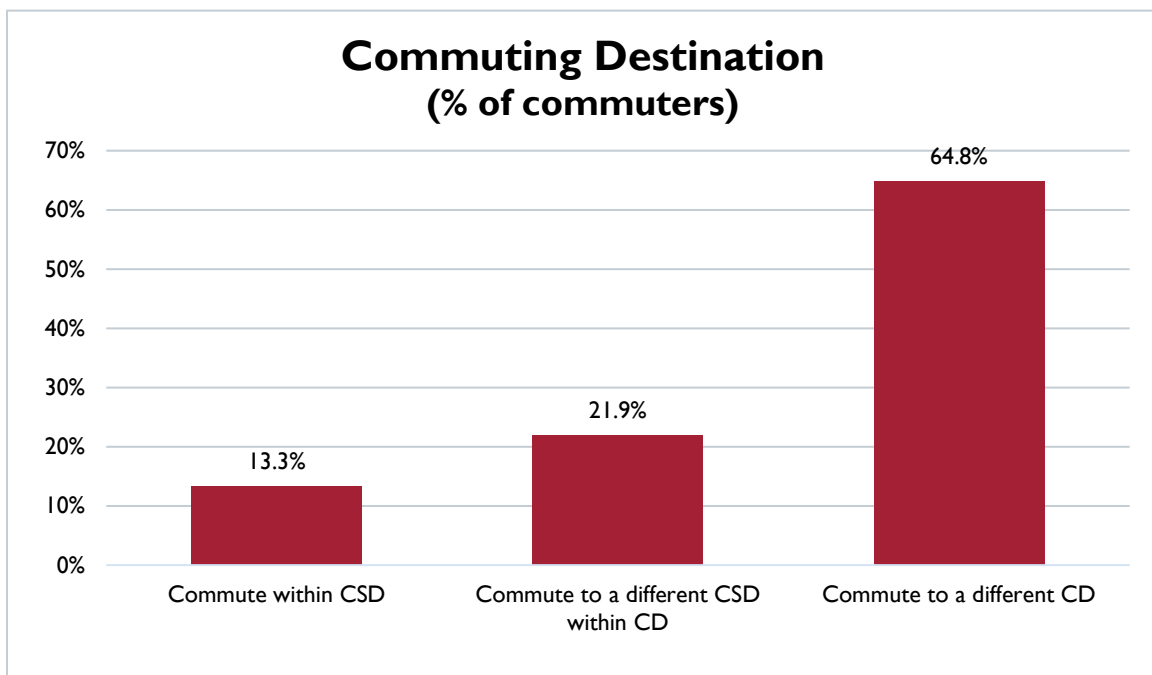
The majority of people living in Bayham speak English at home. Along with Malahide, a higher percentage of the population (15.6%) speak a non-official language at home. A small percentage (0.0%) of the population speaks French at home.

Bayham is home to a small number of Indigenous persons. This municipality has the lowest number of Indigenous persons residing in it compared to other towns, townships, municipalities, and cities in Elgin County.

185	# of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
25.0%	% of children aged 0 to 5 years living in low income
1,115	# of families with children
180	# of lone parent families
16.1%	% of all families that are lone parent families

Bayham has the third highest number of children living in low income in Elgin County. The percentage of children aged 0 to 5 living in low income is much higher than the average for Elgin County (21.4%).

The east portion of Elgin County is home to a larger number of families with children. This includes the number of lone parent families.



Compared to other areas in Elgin County, a higher percentage of individuals that live in Bayham are commuting to work in a different census division (municipality), spending 15 minutes or more commuting each way to their place of employment.

1	# of licensed school age programs
28	# of spaces (operating capacity)
0	# of licensed child care centres
0	# of spaces (operating capacity)
1	# of EarlyON sites

Data as of January 2019

There are no licensed child care centres in Bayham, and one licensed school age program. There is also one EarlyON Child and Family Centre, offering 1.5 hours of direct service delivery each week.

The following characteristics of Bayham were highlighted in a conversation with our local municipal partner:

Strengths/Assets	Issues/Challenges/Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of community • Recreation programs • Social programming at the library • Service organizations • Quality of place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of services • Lack of transportation • Outreach is difficult • Lack of access to doctors and other health services • Travel to Aylmer for secondary school • Lack of emergency services (volunteer run) • Poor access to broadband internet
Unique Characteristics	Available Community Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low German speaking population • Agricultural tax base • Lots of festivals and parades in the summer • Larger household sizes • Lots of seasonal labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straffordville Community Centre • Church locations

Community Planning

Summary of what we heard from parents/caregivers

Some of the common themes which emerged over the course of the engagement with parents/caregivers are presented below.

Making child care more affordable

- The cost of child care is a challenge for many families in Elgin County
- Of those parents/caregivers not using their first choice of care for their child(ren), many report that the cost of care is a barrier to this
- 66.1% of parents/caregivers reporting a child care related problem stated that the high cost of care was an issue for them in the past year

In their own words...

"Cannot afford to work and pay child care. I am self employed and the paperwork is a nightmare."

"Prefer licensed but cannot afford the pricing."

"I could not afford daycare for all my children so I decided to not return to work."

"I would love to be able to afford before and/or after school program for her."

"We cannot afford licensed before school care and only barely missed the income cut off for subsidy."

Increasing choice and availability for families

- Many parents/caregivers main type of care for their child(ren) is their first choice
- For some, the lack of availability of licensed child care centres/homes in their community or the lack of spaces in existing centres/homes is a challenge
- Of those parents/caregivers not using their first choice of care for their child(ren), many report that there is no care/limited options in their area, there are no spaces available at the licensed centre/home in their area, or the hours of care they require are not available
- Parents/caregivers report that the following were issues for them in the past year:
 - Emergency care (32.7%)
 - Part-time care (30.0%)
 - Care for PA days/summer (22.4%)
 - Non-traditional work hours (21.7%)
 - Temporary/short-term care (18.4%)
- The traditional, licensed child care system is not working for all families. Some parents/caregivers need licensed child care that matches their working hours and other caregiving needs
- Of those parents/caregivers not using their first choice of care for their child(ren), some report that the hours or type of care they need is not available
- 53.3% of parents/caregivers have seen the EarlyON logo in their community
- 36.7% of parents/caregivers have not heard of EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- Parents/caregivers want EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs and services to be provided during the day, on 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
- Of those parents/caregivers who don't use or have stopped using an EarlyON Child and Family Centre 27.7% report that the times and days don't work for them

In their own words...

"Expensive, inconvenient, stressful, hassle, hours of operation not suitable to working hours, etc."

"I would like to go back to work part time but no centres have enough room for full time child care let alone part time."

"No room in licensed daycare and no home daycare offered in the area. Have been on Dutton daycare waitlist for one year."

*"Want a licensed facility * START TIME 0600."*

"There are no walkable [EarlyON] locations for us. There needs to be easy access for all especially in the winter."

"Would be nice to see the [EarlyON] hours of service reflect families who work non-traditional hours."

"I don't know anything about the program [EarlyON]."

Improving quality and delivering high standards of care

- The top reason parents/caregivers choose their current type of care for their child(ren) is quality of care/staff
- Parents/caregivers like the socialization opportunities (for their children and themselves), the programs and activities offered, the staff, and the opportunity to get out of the house/have a change of scenery offered by the EarlyON Child and Family Centres (see word cloud below)

In their own words...

"I am very happy and impressed of the quality of care at the licensed daycare my daughter attends. I



find her development is a lot further than children that don't attend a daycare. I love the variety of foods offered as well. Overall I am very happy with having my daughter in full time daycare."

"I love that the centre uses the HiMama app so I can see what my little guy is up to for the day, know how long he slept and what he ate."

"My daughter goes to {name of child care centre} and the staff there are AMAZING! She loves going to daycare and she is always happy and smiling when I drop her off and pick her up. Great work ladies and thank you! 😊"

"I loved going and taking my children when they were young enough."

"Lovely and clean, excellent staff and programming. Utilized much more while on Maternity leave. Really appreciated Well Baby checkups too."

"We love them and hope they are able to continue with all the wonderful things they do!"

What we heard from service providers

Licensed Child Care

In the online survey, service providers identified the following as the top issues facing licensed child care in Elgin County:

- Lack of licensed child care spaces for infants, toddlers, or preschoolers
- Recruiting and retaining RECEs
- Need for more support for children with special needs
- High cost of child care for parents
- Parents' lack of knowledge about the value of licensed child care
- Staff workload

Most licensed child care providers (90.6%) report being able to provide inclusive services for children with special needs in their centre, home, or program. Some providers report challenges with having adequate resources/staff to support children with special needs.

"There needs to be more support hours provided from All Kids Belong."

"We don't feel that more Consultant hours are needed...Our greatest need is more Educators in the classroom to provide hands on assistance with the high volume of special needs children with complex behaviours. Therein lies our dissatisfaction with the AKB program. We are significantly underfunded of our actual need."

The most frequently mentioned topics/subjects that would help licensed child care providers create a more inclusive environment in their classroom/centre/home include:

1. Behaviour management
2. Autism
3. Strategies/activities
4. Inclusive environment
5. How to talk to parents
6. Children's mental health

The majority of licensed child care providers, Special Needs Resourcing staff, and EarlyON Centre staff (94.7%) feel supported in their professional development learning opportunities. Most frequently mentioned topics/subjects for further training information include:

1. Behaviour management
2. Children with special needs
3. Children's mental health
4. Administrative topics (HR, policy development, leadership)
5. Outdoor/risky play
6. Self-regulation
7. Autism
8. Working with parents

Overall, service providers identified the following potential areas of focus for the licensed child care sector:

- Affordability – awareness and access to fee subsidy
- Equitable access to licensed child care across the county (including spaces, transportation, supports for children with special needs)
- Expansion of child care spaces
- Innovation in child care
- Increased community awareness
- Recruitment and retention of RECEs

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

In the online survey, service providers identified a number of potential service enhancements for EarlyON Child and Family Centres in Elgin County. These include:

- Providing access to EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs and services in more communities (i.e. other locations in St. Thomas, West Elgin, east part of the county, Aylmer, Dutton, Rodney)
- Focusing on certain groups as part of a targeted outreach strategy (i.e. low income families, Mennonite and Low German speaking families, new/young parents, parents who are not using child care, etc.)
- Raising awareness of the programs and services offered at the EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- Working collaboratively with other community agencies

Many service providers (64.8%) rate their level of awareness of the programs and services offered at the EarlyON Child and Family Centres as excellent or good. Providers more likely to rate their level of awareness as fair are: licensed, non-profit child care, centre-based programs, licensed, non-profit school age programs, licensed, private home day care programs, All Kids Belong program, and other early years programs.

Overall, service providers identified the following potential areas of focus for the EarlyON Child and Family Centres:

- Accessibility in terms of hours, transportation, special needs, equitable access across the county
- Community awareness
- Partnerships and opportunities to collaborate
- Measuring quality

What we know about families and children

Family Demographics

Number and Location of Children Aged 0 to 12 Years

- In 2011, there were 14,335 children aged 0 to 12 years in Elgin County. This increased to 14,480 in 2016 (a 1.0% increase)
- Municipalities which experienced a growth in the number of children aged 0 to 12 years from 2011 to 2016 include: Aylmer (11.6%), Bayham (8.9%), Southwold (4.8%), and Dutton/Dunwich (2.8%)

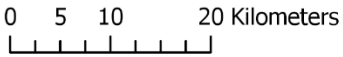
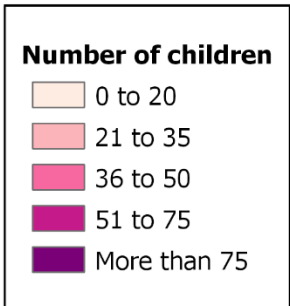
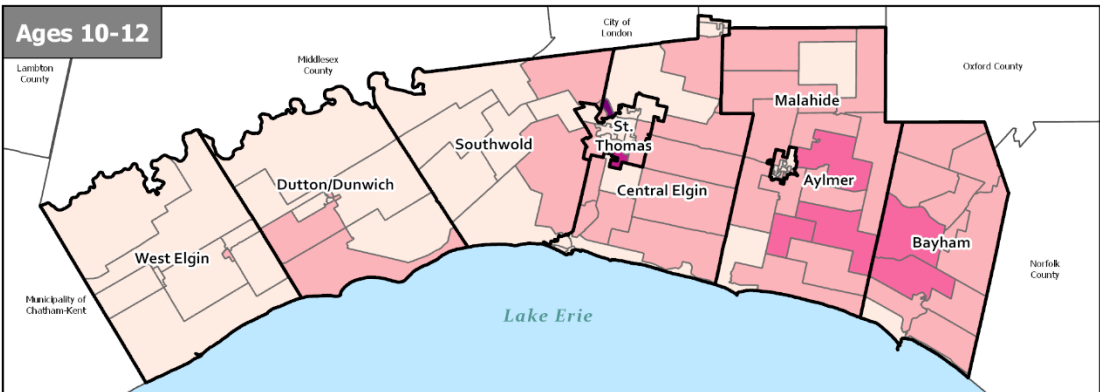
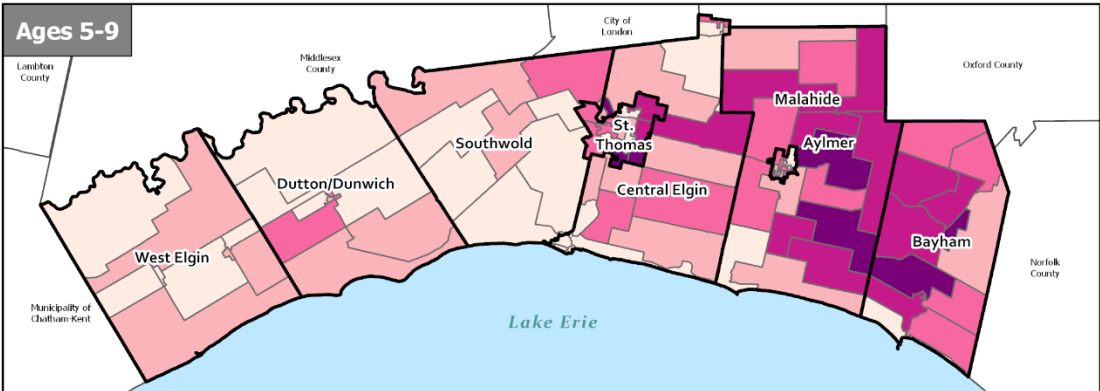
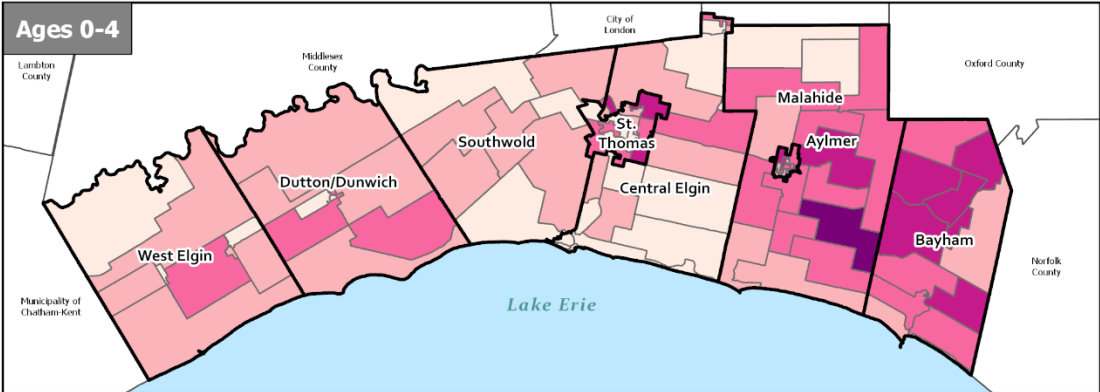
Municipality	Age 0-12 (2011)	Age 0-12 (2016)	% Change (2011 to 2016)
Bayham	1,525	1,660	8.9%
Malahide	2,060	2,015	-2.2%
Aylmer	1,165	1,300	11.6%
Central Elgin	1,790	1,715	-4.2%
St. Thomas	5,960	5,930	-0.5%
Southwold	630	660	4.8%
Dutton/Dunwich	535	550	2.8%
West Elgin	670	650	-3.0%
Elgin County Total	14,335	14,480	1.0%

- Many children aged 0 to 12 years live in St. Thomas (41.0%)
- The east part of Elgin County is more highly populated with children than the west. In addition to St. Thomas, other large population centres for children include Malahide, Central Elgin, and Bayham

The following table and maps show where children aged 0 to 12 years live by Municipality, Town, City or Township.

Municipality	Total Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children Age 0-12 in Elgin County
Bayham	7,395	590	680	390	11.5%
Malahide	9,290	710	840	465	13.9%
Aylmer	7,495	550	485	265	9.0%
Central Elgin	12,605	530	720	465	11.8%
St. Thomas	38,910	2,065	2,460	1,405	41.0%
Southwold	4,425	225	240	195	4.6%
Dutton/Dunwich	3,865	210	205	135	3.8%
West Elgin	4,995	235	240	175	4.5%
Elgin County Total	88,980	5,115	5,870	3,495	100.0%

Distribution of Children (2016) Elgin County

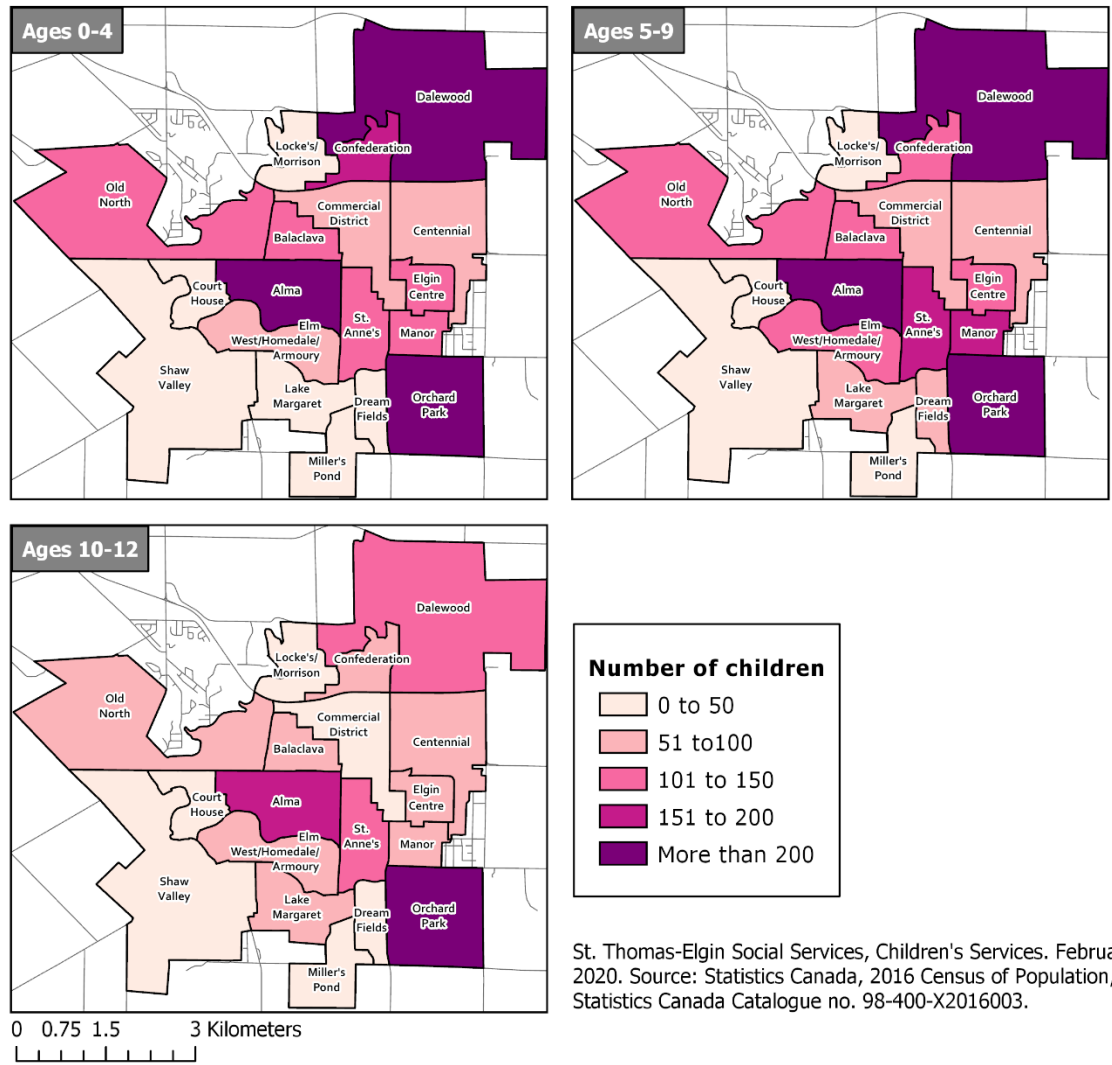


St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services, Children's Services. January 2019.
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016003.

- Community Subzones in St. Thomas with a higher number of children aged 0 to 12 years include: Alma, Dalewood, and Orchard Park. See the table and maps below for further details.

Community Subzone	Total Population	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-12	% of Children 0-12 in St. Thomas
Alma	4,705	250	295	165	11.9%
Balaclava	2,190	130	145	80	5.9%
Centennial	1,475	70	80	65	3.6%
Commercial District	1,710	70	95	40	3.4%
Confederation	2,100	160	150	95	6.8%
Court House	910	35	50	25	1.8%
Dalewood	3,950	295	285	135	12.0%
Dream Fields	1,075	45	70	35	2.5%
Elgin Centre	2,260	130	130	75	5.6%
Elm West/ Homedale/Armoury	2,345	70	110	95	4.6%
Lake Margaret	1,470	45	95	75	3.6%
Locke's/Morrison	965	45	50	35	2.2%
Manor	2,265	135	160	65	6.0%
Miller's Pond	745	35	30	20	1.4%
Old North	2,835	130	135	75	5.7%
Orchard Park	4,005	265	375	205	14.1%
Shaw Valley	935	40	50	30	2.0%
St. Anne's	2,935	135	165	105	6.8%
St. Thomas Total	38,875	2,085	2,470	1,420	100%

Distribution of Children (2016) St. Thomas



St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services, Children's Services. February 2020. Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016003.

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 10.0% 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 and Khmer (St. Thomas)

Municipality	Total (n)	Non-Official Language (n)	Top Non-Official Language	% Speak Non-Official Language Most Often
Bayham	7,400	1,155	German	15.6%
Malahide	9,170	1,450	German	15.8%
Aylmer	7,430	740	German	10.0%
Central Elgin	12,550	155	German	1.2%
St. Thomas	38,260	635	Polish, Khmer	1.7%
Southwold	4,335	35	n/a	
Dutton/Dunwich	3,810	35	n/a	
West Elgin	4,995	140	Portuguese	2.8%
Elgin County Total	87,950	3,045	German	3.5%

- In 2016, the Community Subzones in St. Thomas with a higher number of people speaking non-official languages most often at home are Dalewood, Elgin Centre, Orchard Park, and St. Anne's, all with 55 or more people speaking non-official languages most often at home
- Khmer, Polish, and Vietnamese are the top non-official languages spoken at home in St. Thomas (see the table below for further details)

Community Subzone	Total (n)	Non-Official Language (n)	Top Non-Official Languages	% Speak Non-Official Language Most Often
Alma	4,655	35	Polish	0.8%
Balaclava	2,185	15	n/a	0.7%
Centennial	1,450	40	Khmer	2.8%
Commercial District	1,670	25	n/a	1.5%
Confederation	2,085	35	Vietnamese	1.7%
Court House	880	0	n/a	0.0%
Dalewood	3,820	125	Khmer, Vietnamese, Spanish	3.3%
Dream Fields	1,080	15	n/a	1.4%
Elgin Centre	2,100	55	Croatian	2.6%
Elm West/ Homedale/Armoury	2,280	5	n/a	0.2%
Lake Margaret	1,470	25	n/a	1.7%
Locke's/Morrison	965	15	n/a	1.6%
Manor	2,260	40	Khmer	1.8%
Miller's Pond	740	25	n/a	3.4%
Old North	2,805	20	n/a	0.7%
Orchard Park	4,005	75	Khmer, Vietnamese, Spanish	1.9%
Shaw Valley	940	5	n/a	0.5%
St. Anne's	2,875	65	Croatian, Polish, Italian, Korean	2.3%
St. Thomas Total	38,265	620	Khmer, Vietnamese, Polish	1.6%

Indigenous Families

- In 2016, 1,985 Indigenous persons lived in Elgin County. This is an increase of 26.8% from 2011
- Indigenous persons comprise 2.3% of the total population
- The majority of Indigenous persons live in St. Thomas (1,050)
- Other municipalities/townships/towns with higher number of Indigenous persons include: Central Elgin, Aylmer, and West Elgin (see the table below)

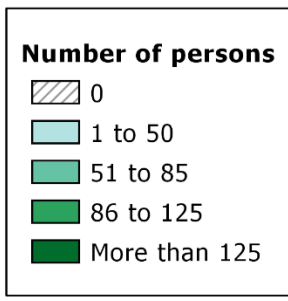
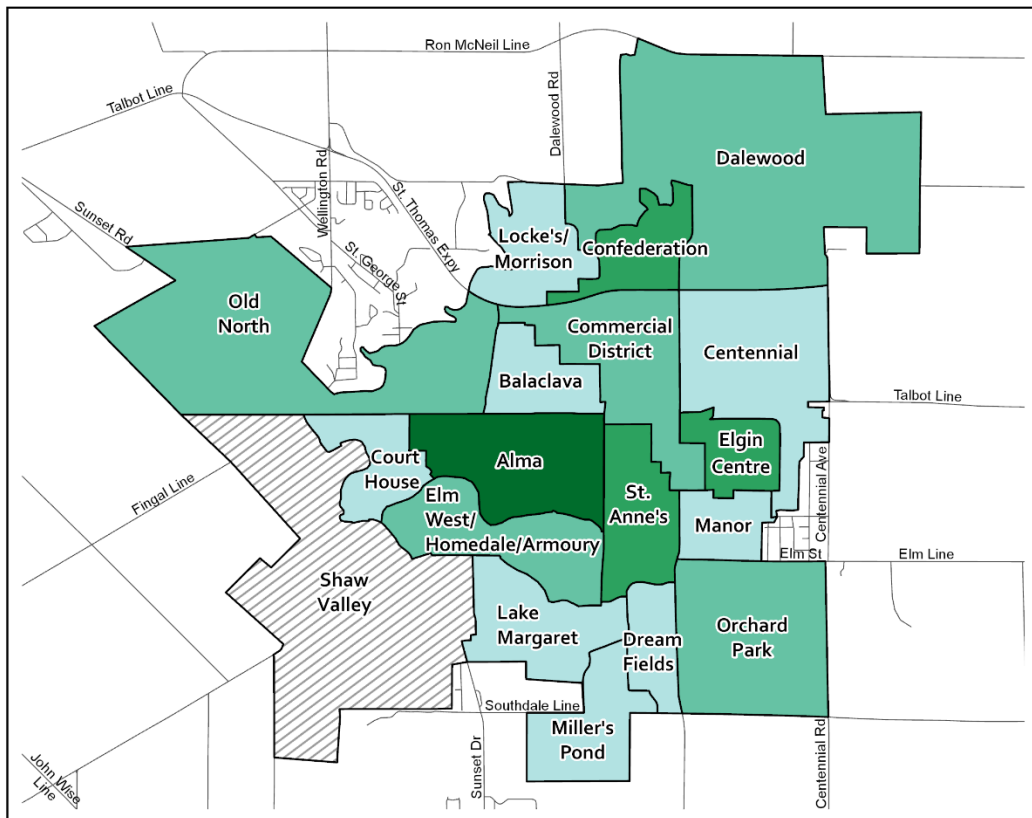
Municipality	Aboriginal Identity	% Aboriginal Identity
Bayham	40	0.5%
Malahide	85	0.9%
Aylmer	185	2.5%
Central Elgin	305	2.4%
St. Thomas	1,050	2.8%
Southwold	80	1.8%
Dutton/Dunwich	70	1.9%
West Elgin	170	3.5%
Elgin County Total	1,985	2.3%

- Community Subzones in St. Thomas with higher numbers of Indigenous persons include: Alma, Confederation, Dalewood, Elgin Centre, and St. Anne's (see the table and map below)

Community Subzone	Aboriginal Identity	% Aboriginal Identity
Alma	200	4.5%
Balaclava	45	2.1%
Centennial	35	2.4%
Commercial District	60	3.8%
Confederation	120	5.6%
Court House	10	1.1%
Dalewood	85	2.2%
Dream Fields	10	0.9%
Elgin Centre	95	4.5%
Elm West/ Homedale/Armoury	65	2.8%
Lake Margaret	20	1.4%
Locke's/Morrison	25	2.7%
Manor	30	1.3%
Miller's Pond	10	1.3%
Old North	75	2.7%

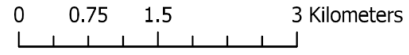
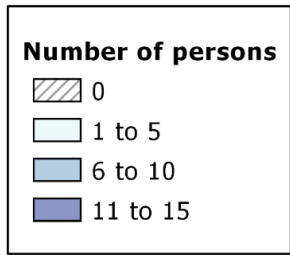
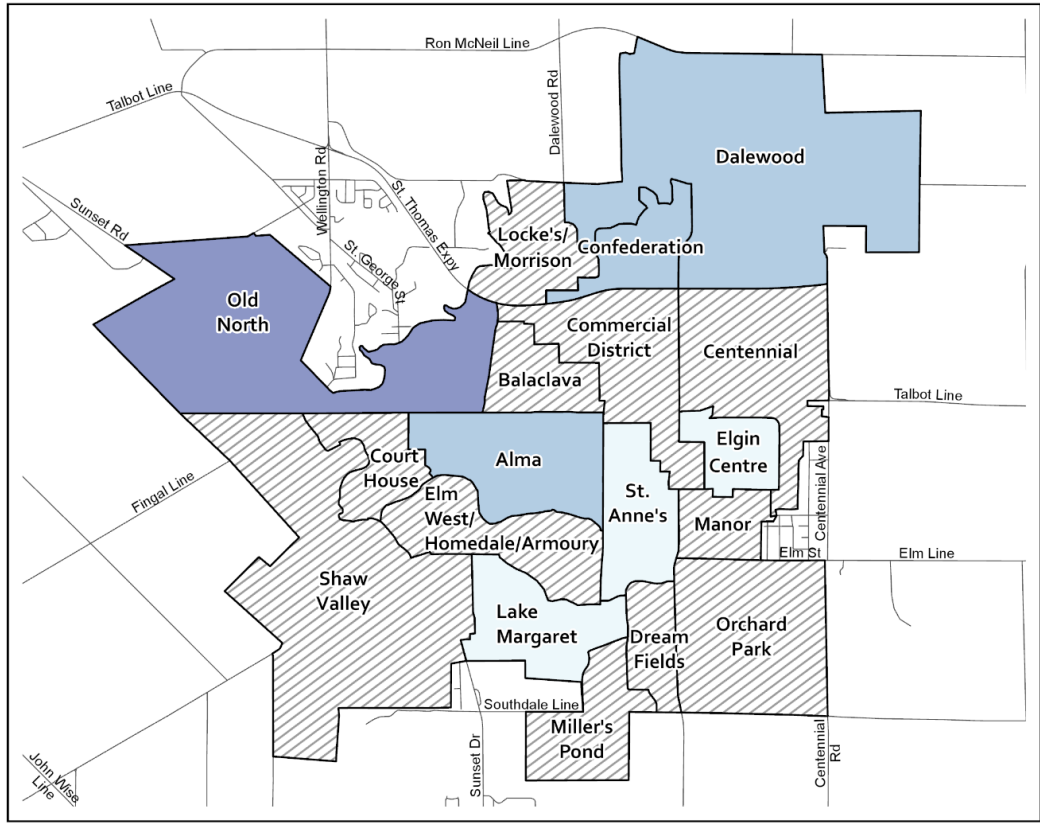
Orchard Park	75	1.8%
Shaw Valley	0	0.0%
St. Anne's	100	3.3%
St. Thomas Total	1,060	2.8%

Distribution of Persons Reporting Aboriginal Identity (2016) St. Thomas



St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services, Children's Services. February 2020.
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.

Distribution of Persons Reporting French as the Language Spoken Most Often at Home (2016) St. Thomas



St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services, Children's Services. February 2020.
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.

Francophone Families

- In 2016, 130 individuals in Elgin County identified French as the language spoken most often at home. This is 0.1% of the total population
- With the exception of Aylmer, every town/township/municipality/city in Elgin County has some individuals living there who identified French as the language spoken most often at home
- 55 of these individuals (42.3%) live in St. Thomas, representing 0.1% of St. Thomas' total population
- There are no Community Subzones in St. Thomas with a high concentration of Francophones (<15 in every Community Subzone). 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 15 in Central Elgin and Bayham to zero in Aylmer

Percentage of Children Living in Low Income

- Communities with higher rates of children living in low income (LIM - after tax¹) include: Malahide, Aylmer, Bayham, and St. Thomas (see the table below)
- In terms of number of children living in low income, St. Thomas has the largest number of children as compared to the rest of the county (42.3% of all children living in low income)

Municipality	Children 0-5 living in low income (n)	Prevalence of children 0-5 living in low income (%)	Children 0-17 living in low income (n)	Prevalence of children 0-17 living in low income (%)
Bayham	185	25.0%	480	20.8%
Malahide	235	27.2%	615	22.0%
Aylmer	175	26.5%	420	23.5%
Central Elgin	55	8.3%	215	8.9%
St. Thomas	565	22.2%	1,670	20.4%
Southwold	30	12.0%	110	12.0%
Dutton/Dunwich	30	12.2%	75	9.8%
West Elgin	60	21.1%	195	20.5%
Elgin County Total	1,335	21.4%	3,780	18.8%

- The Community Subzones in St. Thomas with higher numbers of children living in low income are Confederation, Old North, and Balaclava (all with more than 35% of children age 0-17 living in low income). See the table below for further details.

¹ The Low-Income Measure after tax (LIM-AT) amounts for 2017 (Source: Statistics Canada, 2019) are: \$25,513 for a one person household, \$33,252 for a two person household, \$40,726 for a three person household, \$47,026 for a four person household, \$52,577 for a five person household, and \$57,595 for a six person household.

	Children 0-5 living in low income (n)	Prevalence of children 0-5 living in low income (%)	Children 0-17 living in low income (n)	Prevalence of children 0-17 living in low income (%)
Alma	85	26.2%	255	26.8%
Balaclava	70	43.8%	165	35.9%
Centennial	5	7.1%	20	6.6%
Commercial District	10	12.5%	45	17.3%
Confederation	90	50.0%	240	45.7%
Court House	5	10.0%	15	8.6%
Dalewood	15	4.2%	50	5.3%
Dream Fields	10	14.3%	35	14.9%
Elgin Centre	45	32.1%	130	30.6%
Elm West/Homedale/Armoury	40	36.4%	130	33.3%
Lake Margaret	5	8.3%	15	4.8%
Locke's/Morrison	10	16.7%	40	20.0%
Manor	15	9.7%	75	15.0%
Miller's Pond	0	0.0%	10	6.7%
Old North	55	36.7%	165	37.1%
Orchard Park	20	6.0%	95	8.6%
Shaw Valley	5	9.1%	20	11.8%
St. Anne's	60	38.7%	170	27.6%
St. Thomas Total	545	21.3%	1,675	20.5%

Households with Children and Lone-Parent Families

- In the county, St. Thomas has the largest number of households with children, and the largest number of lone-parent families (see the table below)

Municipality	Total number of census families in private households	One-census-family households with children	Lone-parent census families in private households
Bayham	1,950	1,115	180
Malahide	2,480	1,445	210
Aylmer	2,085	1,200	345
Central Elgin	4,020	1,935	385
St. Thomas	11,245	6,210	2,185
Southwold	1,340	730	135
Dutton/Dunwich	1,155	605	135
West Elgin	1,535	710	215
Elgin County Total	25,810	13,960	3,790

- In terms of where families with children live in St. Thomas, the highest number reside in the Community Subzones of Alma, Orchard Park, and Dalewood.
- The Community Subzones in St. Thomas with the largest number of lone-parent families are Alma, Confederation, and St. Anne's (all with 200 or more lone-parent families)

See the table below for further details.

Neighbourhood	Total number of census families in private households	One-census-family households with children	Lone-parent census families in private households
Alma	1,290	750	315
Balaclava	615	360	170
Centennial	440	240	60
Commercial District	470	255	90
Confederation	615	410	215
Court House	275	140	40
Dalewood	1,205	635	105
Dream Fields	355	190	70
Elgin Centre	600	345	155
Elm West/Homedale/Armoury	680	345	160
Lake Margaret	440	235	50
Locke's/Morrison	300	145	55

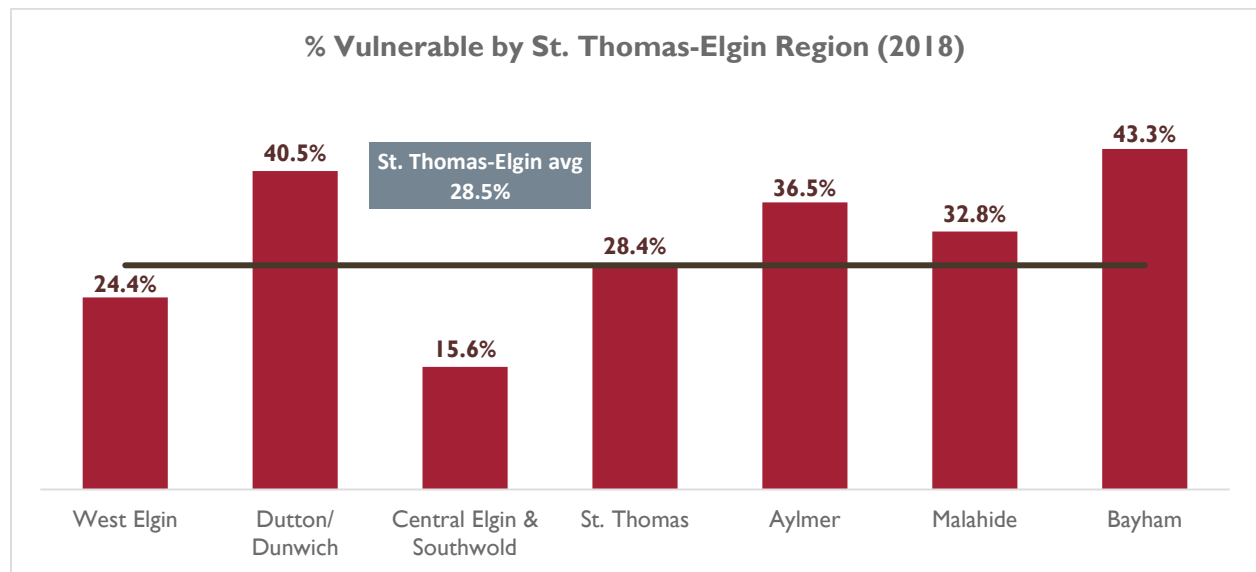
Manor	710	375	115
Miller's Pond	235	110	15
Old North	695	380	185
Orchard Park	1,220	710	150
Shaw Valley	290	130	30
St. Anne's	820	465	200
St. Thomas Total	11,255	6,220	2,180

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.

- 28.5% of children in St. Thomas-Elgin are vulnerable on one or more domain (EDI, 2018). This is comparable to the provincial average of 29.6%
- Municipalities with a higher than average percentage of children vulnerable on one or more domain include: Dutton/Dunwich, Aylmer, Malahide, and Bayham

The following graph shows the EDI results by municipality.

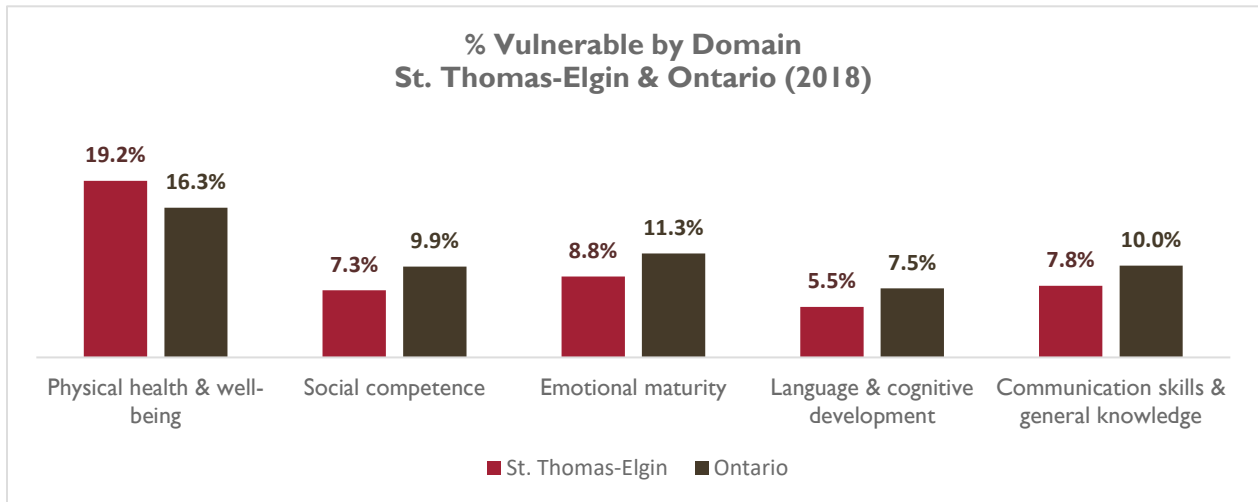


- Since the 2006 EDI cycle, there have been decreases in the percentage of children in St. Thomas-Elgin that are vulnerable in each of the five domains, with the exception of Physical Health and Well-Being (see the graph below)

Vulnerability by domain over time (St. Thomas-Elgin)

Cycle	Physical health & well-being	Social competence	Emotional maturity	Language & cognitive development	Comm. skills & general knowledge
Cycle I (2006)	15.1%	7.5%	8.5%	8.1%	11.5%
Cycle II (2009)	12.1%	7.0%	10.3%	5.4%	8.8%
Cycle III (2012)	15.0%	7.1%	8.9%	5.1%	8.3%
Cycle IV (2015)	18.8%	11.1%	11.8%	6.7%	9.8%
Cycle V (2018)	19.2%	7.3%	8.8%	5.5%	7.8%
Critical Difference Cycle IV-Cycle V	No	Yes ▼	Yes ▼	No	No
Trend Cycle I-Cycle V					

- St. Thomas-Elgin’s percentage of children vulnerable in the Physical Health and Well-Being domain is higher than the provincial average (see the graph below)

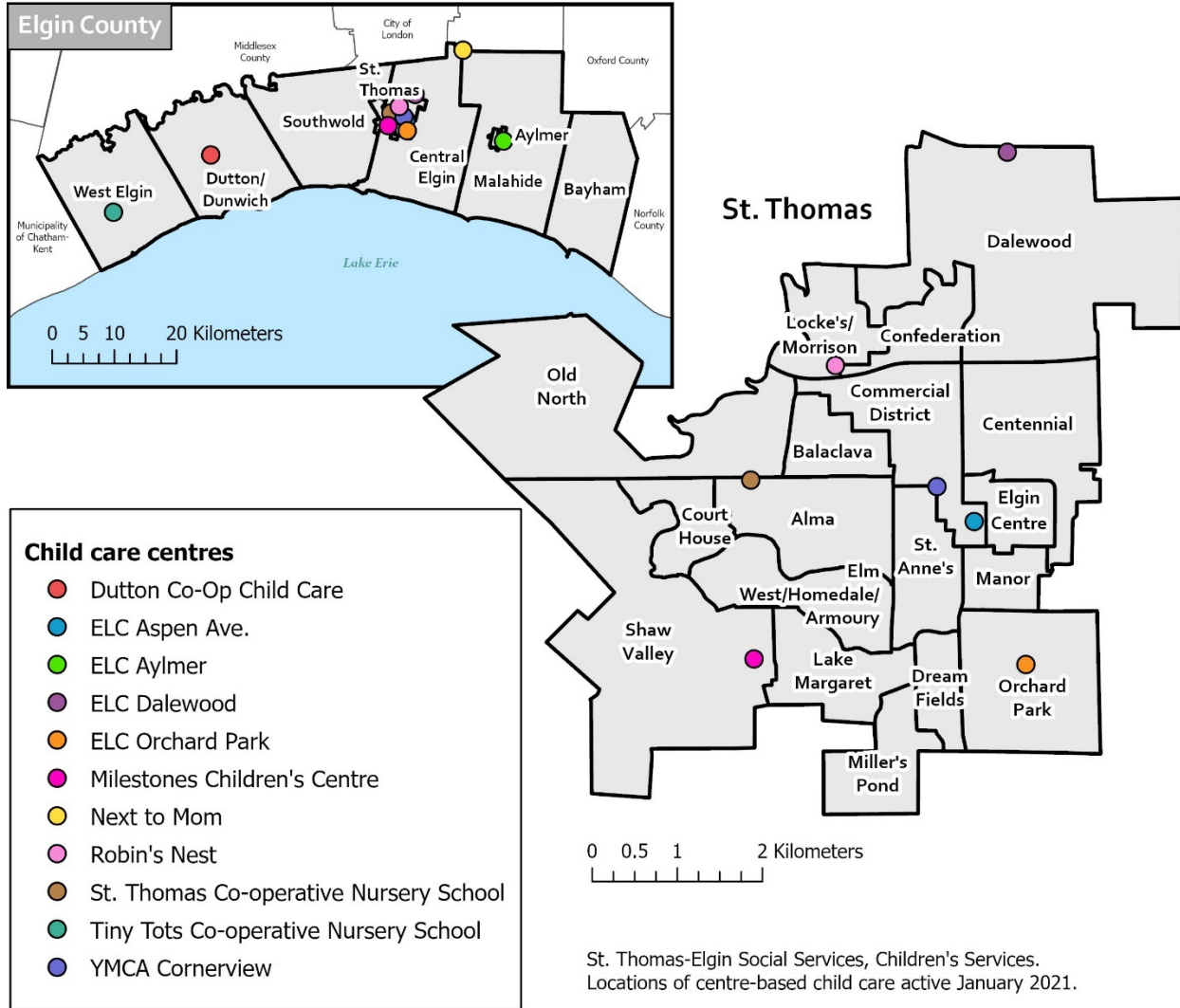


Child Care and Early Years System Capacity

Current Licensed Child Care Programs

As of January 2021, there are seven licensed child care centres in St. Thomas, and four licensed child care centres in the other municipalities. Aylmer, Central Elgin, Dutton/Dunwich, and West Elgin each have one licensed child care centre. Southwold and Bayham do not have a licensed child care centre (see map for details).

Locations of Centre-based Child Care in St. Thomas and Elgin County



Based on the current licensed capacity in the centre-based child care system:

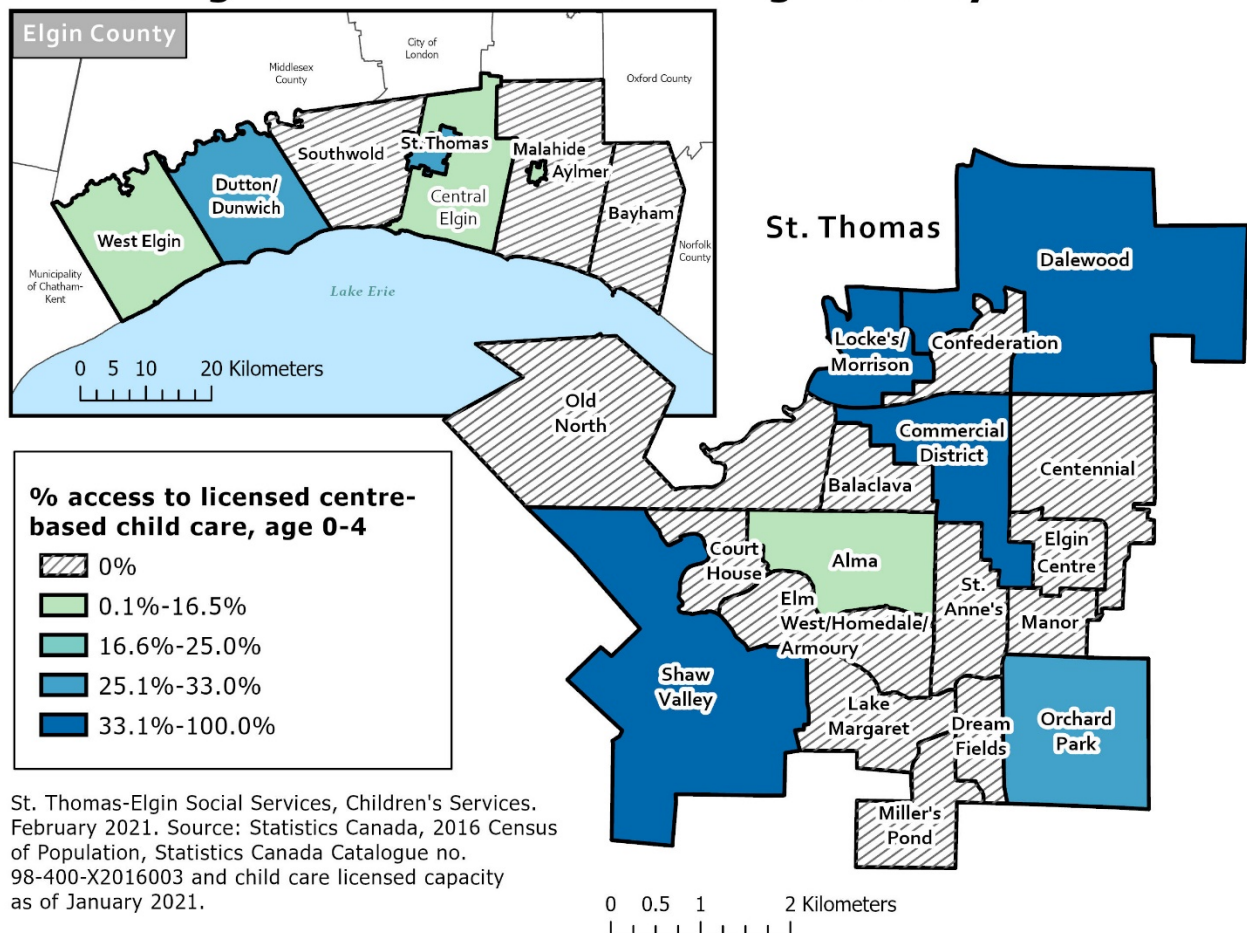
13.6% of children aged 0 to 4 have access to a licensed child care space. This level of access to a licensed child care space is well under the current Provincial average of 20%.

Potential access to centre-based licensed child care for children aged 0 to 4 years varies by municipality. Dutton/ Dunwich has the highest potential access to a licensed child care space, and Southwold, Malahide, and Bayham have no access to licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 4 years.

Municipality	% Access
West Elgin	6.8%
Dutton/Dunwich	27.6%
Southwold	0.0%
St. Thomas	24.7%
Central Elgin	12.8%
Aylmer	8.0%
Malahide	0.0%
Bayham	0.0%

See the table and map for further details.

Potential access to centre-based licensed child care for children age 0-4 in St. Thomas and Elgin County



Licensed Home Child Care

In addition to the centre-based licensed child care programs, the current home child care agency is able to license up to 50 homes in Elgin County. As of January 2021 there are 21 licensed home providers. 15 of these providers (71.4%) are located in St. Thomas (see the table below).

Municipality	# Homes
St. Thomas	15
Aylmer	4
Central Elgin	1
West Elgin	1
Total	21

Waitlist

There is unmet need in the licensed child care system. In 2020, the average number of children in current need of care monthly was 344 (see the table below). The majority of these children live in St. Thomas. There is unmet need for licensed child care across all age groups.

Age Group	West ²	Central ²	St. Thomas	Aylmer	East ²	Out of County
Infant	7.1	4.8	50.9	5.2	1.6	6.5
Toddler	11.9	4.8	41.8	6.9	4.3	6.8
Preschool	8.3	4.9	51.3	10.8	1.4	7.8
JK/SK	3.4	1.7	29.3	5.3	1.7	2.8
School Age	2.7	4.0	42.9	9.0	2.4	1.4
Total	33.3	20.2	216.3	37.2	11.4	25.3

² Regional groupings: West: West Elgin and Dutton/Dunwich, Central: Southwold and Central Elgin, East: Malahide and Bayham.

Fee Subsidy Program

From 2015-2019, there was a 18.7% increase in the number of children served through the fee subsidy program. Fewer children were served through the fee subsidy program in 2020, likely related to the mandated closures of licensed childcare due to COVID-19.

Year	Children Served	Families Served
2015	835	533
2016	915	589
2017	870	587
2018	926	627
2019	991	658
2020	773	526

Special Needs Resourcing Program

The average monthly number of children served through the Special Needs Resourcing program increased every year from 2015-2019. There was a 44.4% increase in this time period. There was a small decrease in the numbers of children served in 2020, likely related to the impacts of COVID-19. See the table below.

Average Monthly Number of Children Served				
Year	0 - 5.8 years	5.8 - 12 years	Recreation	Total
2015	38.8	20.6	0.0	59.3
2016	44.8	23.1	0.3	68.1
2017	45.7	20.9	0.5	67.1
2018	50.1	20.8	0.5	71.4
2019	56.3	29.3	0.0	85.6
2020	53.2	27.4	0.0	80.6

The total number of unique children served through the Special Needs Resourcing program has also increased during this time period. There was a 15.8% increase in the total number of unique children served from 2015-2019. The majority of children served through this program are under the age of 6 (see the table below.)

Total Children Served				
Year	0 - 5.8 years	5.8 - 12 years	Recreation	Total
2015	72	42	0	114
2016	84	46	1	131
2017	87	34	1	122
2018	87	42	3	132
2019	100	32	0	132
2020	98	28	0	126

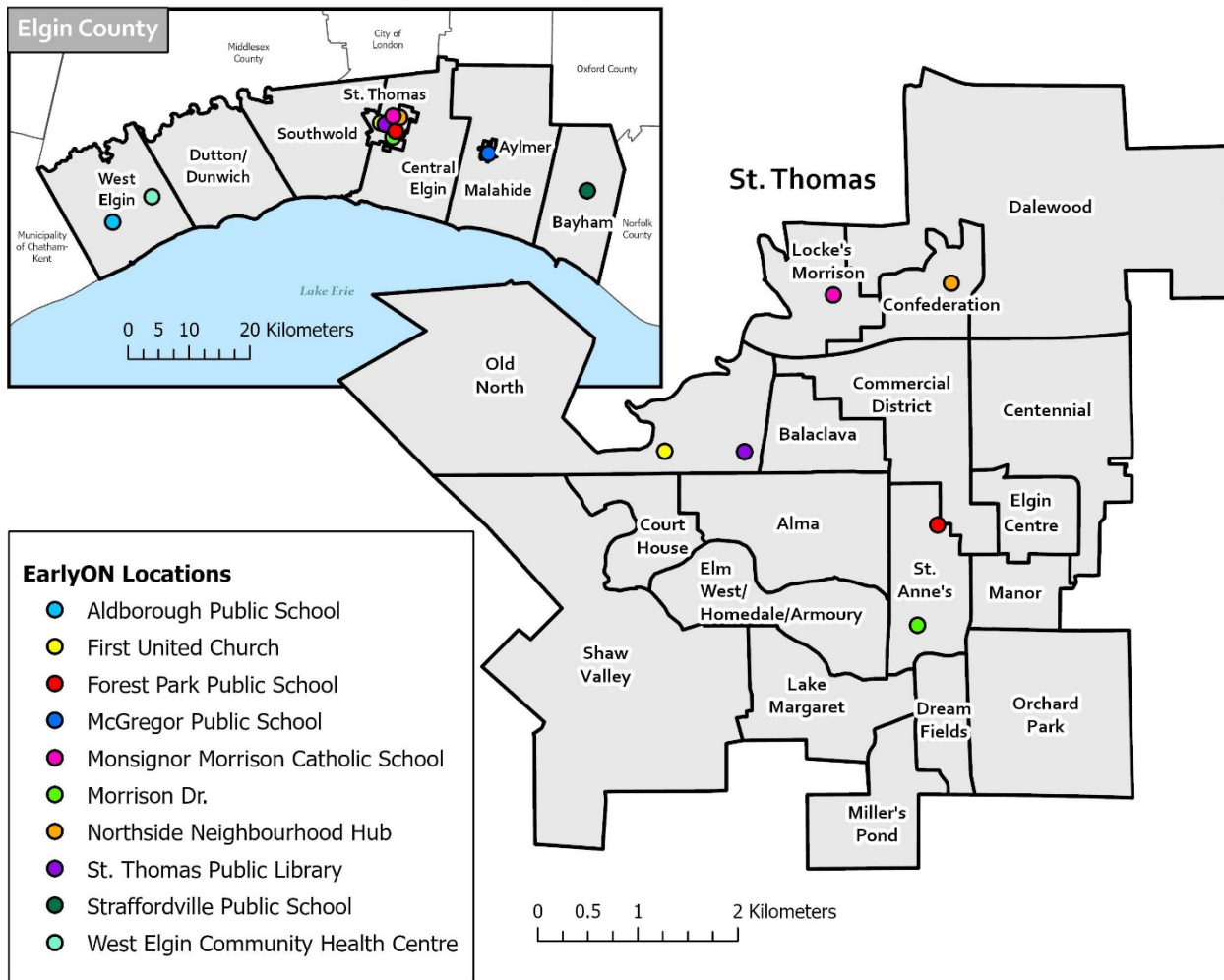
EarlyON Child and Family Centre Sites

Due to the impacts of COVID-19, there has been limited in-person service delivery of EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs and services since March 2020. Locations and service data for EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs that were active in 2019 are described below:

- St. Thomas (seven sites)
- West Elgin (two sites – Rodney and West Lorne)
- Aylmer (one site)
- Bayham (one site – Straffordville)

See the maps below for EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations.

Locations of EarlyON Child and Family Centres in St. Thomas and Elgin County



St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services, Children's Services.
Locations of EarlyON Child and Family Centres active November, 2019.

In 2019, an average of 122.5 hours of direct service were offered weekly to parents/ caregivers through the EarlyON Child and Family Centres. 86.5 of these hours (70.6%) were provided at sites located in St. Thomas.

In 2019, 2,652 unique children age 0-6 and 1,883 unique parents/caregivers accessed EarlyON Child and Family Centres. In total, there were over 18,000 visits from children age 0-6 and 12,454 visits by parents/caregivers.

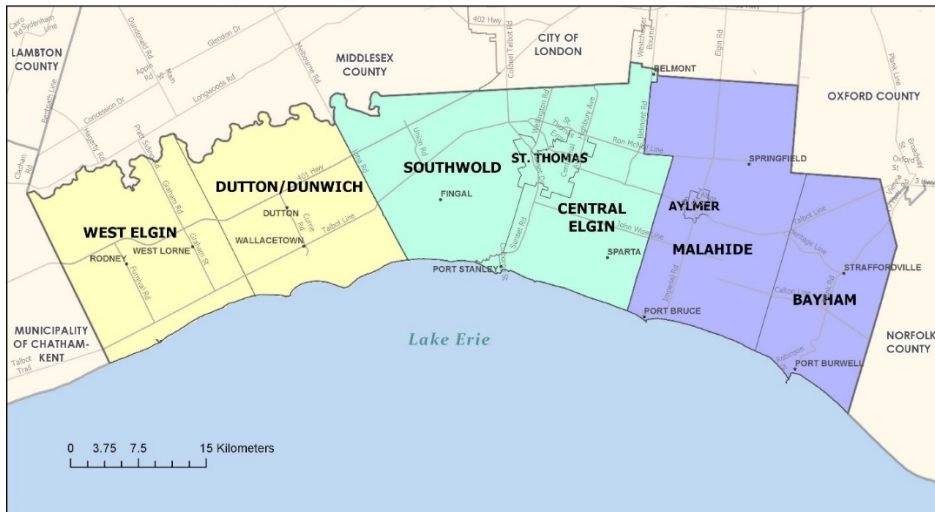
The EarlyON Child and Family Centre sites with the highest number of visits in 2019 were the Main Site and the Northside Neighbourhood Hub, both located in St. Thomas.

Transition of EarlyON Child and Family Centres in 2021

Effective March 15, 2021, EarlyON Child and Family Centres in St. Thomas-Elgin will transition to a new model of service delivery with 3 Service Delivery Zones. This new system has been designed to enhance system responsiveness and targeted service delivery across these distinct regions of St. Thomas and

Elgin County. Collaboration among Service Delivery Zones will ensure a consistent approach to service delivery across the system of EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs and services.

St. Thomas-Elgin EarlyON Service Delivery Zones



Service Delivery Zones

- West Zone
- Central Zone
- East Zone

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Strategic Priorities and Actions

Four strategic priorities will be the focus of the January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2023 Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan. These strategic priorities are:




1. Increase access to licensed child care
2. Build a responsive EarlyON Child and Family Centre system of services
3. Enhance the understanding and connectedness of the child care and early years system
4. Increase efficiencies in the child care and early years system

Actions that will be implemented in Elgin County to implement these strategic priorities are outlined below, with associated timelines across the four years of the plan.

Strategic Priority #1: Increase access to licensed child care

Actions	Timelines		
	2021	2022	2023
1. Advocate to the Provincial Government for affordable child care			
2. Ensure financial viability of licensed child care centres			
3. Increase number of licensed home child care providers in rural areas			
4. Expand licensed child care, with a focus on West Elgin			
5. Explore ways to increase the number of non-traditional hours of care available to parents/caregivers			
6. Survey ECEs/educators to better understand the recruitment and retention challenges specific to Elgin County			

Strategic Priority #2: Build a responsive EarlyON Child and Family Centre system of services

Actions	Timelines		
	2021	2022	2023
1. Review and support the new EarlyON Child and Family Centre service delivery model to ensure equitable access across the County and in the City			
2. Collaborate with partners and other communities to better engage and serve the Low German population			
3. Conduct targeted outreach to identified priority populations based on community data			

Strategic Priority #3: Enhance the understanding and connectedness of the child care and early years system

Actions	Timelines		
	2021	2022	2023
1. Explore partnerships and collaboration opportunities with lower tier municipal partners (for example: libraries, recreation, facilities, etc.)			
2. Create further opportunities for collaboration amongst child care providers, school boards, and EarlyON Child and Family Centres			
3. Promote licensed child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres			
4. Increase understanding of the role and support of CMSM			
5. Build capacity and develop partnerships to support the delivery of culturally responsive and inclusive Indigenous programming and opportunities			

Strategic Priority #4: Increase efficiencies in the child care and early years system

Actions	Timelines		
	2021	2022	2023
1. Leverage opportunities to work collaboratively with other CMSMs facing the same challenges			
2. Review and explore the Special Needs Resourcing program model			
3. Review General Operating Grant funding formula			
4. Continue to explore human services integration			