

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
Coalition ontarienne pour de meilleurs service éducatifs à l'enfance



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Presentation to Peel Region

Early Learning and Child Care Task Force

June 7, 2012

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My name is Andrea Calver and I am the Coordinator of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. Thank you for your invitation to speak to the Task Force today.

On January 26, 2012, Peel Regional Council voted to form a task force on early learning and child care and was charged with the mandate to explore options for the region including but not limited to:

- a) Looking at leasing our centres to an external operator and remain as landlord and system manager
- b) that centres refocus to serve more special needs children and low-income families and after care centres
- c) other cost-saving measures such as fee increases, salary adjustments, etc.,
- d) the possible phased-in closure

The Task Force is more than half way through it's work without being any closer to answering any of the options set out in Council's resolution.

In fact, in over 6 hours of public meetings, there has barely been a mention of the Learn Play Care centres.

Vital information needed to make an informed decision is absent.

Over the years, the Region of Peel has been a leader in delivering high quality child care – both through direct delivery and as system manager.

To be able to answer the questions that formed a part of the mandate, the staff in the Region of Peel ought to be sharing the wealth of data and information on the child care system in Peel, to allow Task Force members to make informed decisions on the future of the Learn Play Care Centres.

1. Why Does Peel run Learn Play Care Centres?

The majority of regional governments in Ontario have directly run programs. Over the years, regional and municipal governments have chosen to operate programs in order to provide services in underserved areas. That need continues today. In many northern communities virtually all the child care programs are municipally delivered.

Many larger communities, like Peel, have larger systems of directly operated child care. Ottawa has 17 directly operated centres. Toronto continues to operate more than 50 municipal child care programs. In fact, the City of Toronto just opened a new municipal child care centre in a low income, underserved neighbourhood. The program, O'Connor Child Care Centre, is a pilot by the City of a Child and Family Centre - the current initiative of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

The City of Toronto just build a replacement municipal child care centre in Regent Park. Over the past several years, they have both opened and closed programs, maintaining a viable system that is responsible to and reflects the needs of the community.

This is especially important for Peel Region. As you know, Edleun, Canada's first child care corporation traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange has bought centres in Peel. Did they go to low income or marginalized communities? No.

There are two unique aspects about child care in Peel – both which speak to why the LPC's are so important to your child care system.

- The Region of Peel has a much higher percentage of for-profit child care than Ontario as a whole. Peel has double the provincial average of for-profit providers for younger children. Your centres are an alternative, especially for low-income parents, to for-profit child care where quality is, on-average, lower than child care in not-for-profit and regional centres.

- The other unique aspect of child care in Peel is the amazing job your region has done in providing licensed child care to school aged children. PLASP operates after school programs in 184 elementary schools – and is the largest program in Ontario. However, many of the statistics presented by the Region about the child care sector in Peel are not direct comparisons of specific age groups. The single largest cost for child care is related to the age of the child. Younger children are more expensive to care for than older children. Regional centres specialize in younger children whereas many other providers specialize in older children.

Is Being a Service Manager in Conflict with Direct Delivery?

The “Proposal to Redirect Funding” raises a the issue that being the service manager may be in conflict with directly providing child care services through regional centres.

Our experience is the opposite. Being a direct service provider means that Peel Regional staff have an intimate knowledge of the challenges facing child care programs.

Early learning and child care programs experience common difficulties in balancing affordability with providing the highest quality of care, dealing with mandatory regulations from provincial and regional governments and challenges meeting the needs of changing and diverse families in innovative ways.

We believe the Region is more aware of the trends and problems facing child care operators because they are an operator as well.

On top of that, the Peel Regional centres have led the way in innovation and new programs to meet the needs of changing families. From the commitment to a Highscope curriculum, to evening care, to the integrated nursery school program for special needs children, the LPC centres have been a model for Peel Region and across the province.

2. What Information Does the Task Force Need to Make an Informed Decision?

The Region of Peel has been a leader as system manager. Over the past couple of years, the Region has amassed a huge amount of data. The Task Force and public need to be able to consult this data in order to evaluate the role played by the LPC's.

One of the core statistics used by the Region to question the "value for money" provided by LPC's is the statistic that a space in the LPC's costs \$82 to deliver while the fees are closer to \$40 in the community.

In child care, a legitimate comparison must consider the costs by age group. It is significantly more expensive to care for infants and school-aged children.

But the overwhelming majority of licensed child care spaces in Peel are for school aged children. LPC's specialize in care for younger children.

Comparing the average cost in LPC's to other child care providers who serve older children is both misleading and irrelevant.

In December 2009, Peel Region did an on-line survey of child care programs to look at impacts to child care from full-day kindergarten. The "Full-day Early Learning Cost Analysis Toolkit" collected information from programs including the real costs of delivery per age group.

In order to have a fair comparison between the costs of care, the Region must release the results of the "Full-day Early Learning Cost Analysis Toolkit" survey to the Task Force and the public.

3. Addressing the key concern of Parents – how to measure Quality in Peel’s child care programs?

CDRCP was asked to come to the Task Force to present on the “Raising the Bar” program. Peel Region is incredibly fortunate to have an organization like CDRCP that is dedicated to sharing information, resources and training in the community.

The focus on Raising the Bar is to encourage “Best Practices” and engage staff in Professional Education, Mentoring and Reflective Practice. However, Raising the Bar is not a Quality Assurance Program.

To ensure quality, every licensed child care program operates under the Day Nurseries Act. Most municipal and regional governments, including Peel, run a mandatory quality assurance program aimed at higher standards for quality than the regulated minimum’s in the Day Nurseries Act.

In Peel, the Region uses the “Operating Criteria”. Speaking frankly, the Region ought to have done a presentation on the “Operating Criteria” side by side the presentation on Raising the Bar. Given that quality ratings for child care programs was the single largest concern of parents it is inexplicable that Task Force has not even heard of the Quality Assurance Program that is mandated for all child care centres with a purchase of service agreement in Peel.

In Toronto, the quality ratings and results of inspections are posted on-line so that parents and the broader community can see the quality in individual child care centres.

In order to have a fair discussion of the relative quality ratings of child care centres in Peel, the Region must release the results of quality inspections to the Task Force and to the public.

4. Is it true that the implementation of full day kindergarten means there is less need for child care spaces?

No. The closing of the LPC's would cost the Region of Peel 850 child care spaces.

The loss of these spaces would intensify the current child care crisis in Peel. The programs would be gone, the spaces would be gone, and the amazing purpose-built infrastructure would be gone.

Did you know the LPC's alone provide almost 10% of the total number of spaces for infants, toddlers and preschoolers (0-4 years) in all of Peel?

The Task Force had a wonderful presentation from Peel's largest not-for-profit, multi-site child care providers – Family Day, PLASP and the YMCA. Peel is very fortunate to have these terrific programs.

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Kindergarten	School Aged	Total
Large Providers- 47 Centres	10	150	1,495	793	9,345	11,993
LPC- 12 Centres	10	150	650	24	30	964

84% of the spaces in Family Day, PLASP and the YMCA are for school aged children. In fact, the 12 LPC centres provide as many infant and toddler spaces as the 47 Early Learning Programs operated by the large community providers.

For infants and toddlers, losing the LPC Centres is the equivalent of losing all services to those age groups from Family Day, PLASP and the YMCA.

In addition, the three largest community providers report a vacancy rate of 3,440 spaces or 29%. Many of these vacancies must come from within the school aged population, not younger age groups.

Child care centres across the province report that vacancies are a growing problem for programs. High child care fees, especially for younger children mean many families can't afford the cost of licensed child care.

But given Peel Region's growing population of young families, the single most significant program is the lack of child care spaces for younger age groups.

5. Trends in Early Learning

Impacts from Full-day Kindergarten

Recent changes to legislation allow school boards to enter into contracts with community based not-for-profit child care providers to run the extended day portion of the full-day kindergarten program. While the extended day has been slow to get up and running, at full implementation parent demand will mean many current child care providers expand to meet the need for extended day programs. That means that some providers, instead of expanding programs to younger children because of full-day kindergarten, will instead be expanding programs for older children in the schools.

If anything, full-day kindergarten opens up greater opportunities for the Region of Peel to strengthen it's capacity to provide services for younger children – especially infants and toddlers

Funding to retrofit classrooms to provide the necessary environments to serve younger children is available, and the province has recently announced a new allocation of \$242 to stabilize existing child care programs.

Opening up services to younger children allows more parents who may not have previously had access to infant care to immediately re-enter the workforce

6. Recent Census Shows Growth of Children Under Four

Peel is one of the fastest growing Regions in Ontario – between 2001 and 2006, 80% of the Region's population growth was a result of immigrant citizens (Portraits of Peel)

Peel's rate of population growth in children is not slowing; "Peel's rate of newborns is the highest in Ontario. In 2007, 16, 340 babies were born," (Portraits of Peel)

In Peel Region there is a severe lack of available spaces for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in Peel. Many neighbourhoods are underserved; especially in infant and toddler care.

Of the people on the waitlist, are there even services available in those neighbourhoods? Who is waiting, and where are they? What kind of care are they looking for?

Many neighbourhoods do not have a full range of available care options for families; many centres operate with faith-based philosophies, are half-day nursery programs, are not centre-based, or are commercial.

Consider Peel's infant population and the available centre-based infant care available:

- According to 2011 census data, Peel has 29,910 children under 2 years. Children under 18 months are at the age to be enrolled in infant care programs.
- Of those roughly 20,000 children (roughly adjusted to remove 18-24 month olds), there are only 540 centre-based, purchase of service infant care spaces available in Peel. (Appendix II of Report to Council, Jan 18, 2012). That's only 2.3% of the total number of spaces, when the infant population of all Peel's children aged 0-4 is 31.3%.
- Even after factoring in maternity leave, children are still of age to need infant care for 6 months (12-18 months old) before they are old enough to be enrolled in toddler programs. Peel needs infant care.

- There are over 15,400 toddlers in Peel (2011 census), and there are only 2,231 centre-based, purchase of service toddler spaces available in Peel. That means a space for less than 1 in 10 Peel toddlers.

What are the demographics and what are the trends in every neighbourhood where there is an LPC?

What are the top ten neighbourhoods that are underserved by child care programs?

Which centres have applied to change to re-license a room to serve younger children?

Which centres have been or are likely to be approached to be third party providers for the extended day?

What other underserved neighbourhoods in Peel region might be candidates for expanded services?

Is there a service gap in Caledon?

7. Are LPC's really "gold plated services" where 97% of Peel residents don't benefit?

Two realities:

- 1) Good quality child care is expensive. The average cost per day of \$82 in LPC's is not out of line with comparable centres who specialize in care for younger children.

- 2) 4 out of 5 children in Ontario don't have access to a licensed child care space. That's 80% of all children. You can't blame the LPC's for the lack of licensed child care in Peel. That rests at the feet of the Province of Ontario where early learning and child care programs remain underfunded.

By closing 850 child care spaces in Peel, the Region would make the problem worse, not better.

- 3) The Task Force was specifically asked to look into raising funds through increased parent fees. Over the years, as costs have increased, the amount charged to parents has not increased.

The Region of Peel should survey parents on what they would be willing to pay for high quality care.

Should families without subsidy transition to pay the full cost of child care?

The Region of Peel has 9% children with special needs. How does that compare to other centres in Peel?

What are the wage rates of Peel Regional staff? How does that compare with staff in community based programs?

How does the education and training of Peel Regional staff compare to staff in community based child care programs?

How does the turnover rate of Peel Regional staff compare to staff in community based child care programs?

8. There are over 4000 children on the subsidy waitlist. How does that compare to other regions?

Most regions have a subsidy wait list. Those lists are growing. Like the amount of child care, the issue of affordable child care is a problem that can't be solved in Peel Region. Additional subsidies are a matter of provincial funding.

KPMG's report uses the example of three jurisdictions that have closed directly operated centres, including the region of Durham.

However, like the Region of Peel, Durham has over 4000 children on the subsidy wait list. In fact, Durham has more children waiting for a subsidy that has subsidies available.

Closing the LPC's will have a minimal impact on minimizing the subsidy waiting list – but will mean that Peel has less child care now and in the future.

The core of the Financial Implications as presented by KPMG are that by closing the LPC's the region will reinvest \$10.2 million in new fee subsidies, "including 582 new subsidized space to help address the growing waitlist for subsidies". Considering there are 393 subsidies within the LPC's, most subsidies will take from one child and give to another.

9. Early Learning and Child Care: Moving Forward

The answer is advocacy for more provincial funding for early learning and child care. On Friday April 20th Premier Dalton McGuinty made an announcement for new funding as part of the 2012 / 2013 budget (which is anticipated to pass later this month).

The funding comes after significant pressure from the child care sector that the government address the child care crisis in this year's budget.

The funding is *new* money and will be on top of the transitional funding announced two years ago that is "growing to \$63 million" by 2015.

- \$90 million in 2012-13; \$68 million in 2013-14; \$84 million in 2014-15

The consensus in the child care sector remains that \$287 million per year is the amount needed to stabilize our current programs. With this new announcement, next year will see stabilization funding of about \$150 million .

This new funding does not solve the child care crisis, it does not "save" all child care programs, however, it will go a *long* way towards stabilizing existing programs.

The early learning and child care sector will be going through major changes. Over the next few years, we will see discussions on "modernization" of child care. The Region of Peel should maintain its commitment to direct delivery based on the needs of children, families and neighbourhoods. The Region of Peel should play a leadership role in raising funding of early learning and child care at the Association of Ontario Municipalities (AMO). Finally, the Region of Peel should continue to lobby Federal and Provincial governments for adequate funding to support and expand our programs and services for children in Peel.

Appendix 1: Descriptions Raising the Bar; Operating Criteria

Raising the Bar: Developed by ASCY in Hamilton, description from website:

http://www.ascy.ca/raising_intro.htm

“Raising the Bar On Quality”

General information:

Raising the Bar is an ASCY, Community Initiative that was developed to promote and support observance of community standards in a variety of early learning and child care programs. The program provides a framework for best practice to guide early learning and child care operators in delivering high-quality services for children and families. In addition to the best practice framework, Raising the Bar helps to ensure practices are current and responsive to family and community needs by engaging educators in ongoing Professional Education, Mentoring and Reflective Practice.

Raising the Bar was developed and introduced in Hamilton, Ontario to promote and support observance of community standards in:

- Licensed, centre-based Early Learning and Child Care programs
- Licensed School-Age Child Care programs
- Special Needs Resource Agencies
- Licensed Home Child Care Agencies
- Early Learning and Parenting Centres.

Operating Criteria

http://www.toronto.ca/children/quality_description.htm

The Toronto Operating Criteria is a tool used to evaluate the City's expectations of quality for child care programs. It draws on the following key elements that are essential for a high quality child care program:

- Program content and development
- Health & Safety standards of the physical facility
- Training, experience and stability of caregivers
- Group size; ratio of children to caregivers
- Family involvement in the program
- Sound management practices

Important Notice:

The information derived from this toolkit provides only an estimate of cost and revenue implications. In planning programming changes, it is recommended that you complete a full business analysis.

How to use this toolkit

These directions provide a general introduction to the contents of each worksheet in the toolkit. More detailed directions are provided in the specific worksheet when you click in the input cell. To move the instruction box out of your way, click and drag the instruction box to another area of the spreadsheet.

In addition, cells are shaded to help you identify:



Input Cells



Calculated Cells

<u>Intro:</u>	This sheet
<u>Step 1: Assumptions</u>	Please review assumptions made developing this toolkit. This worksheet also provides additional resources to assist you with potential programming.
<u>Step 2: Data</u>	This worksheet is your initial data input sheet. Figures you input here will be used for calculations throughout the toolkit.
<u>Step 3: Data Summary</u>	Some of the results from the data you input in Step 2 is summarized here
<u>Step 4: Cost By Program</u>	This worksheet provides cost estimates on potential program options
<u>Step 5: Revenue</u>	This worksheet allows you to see changes in revenue based on new programs
<u>Step 6: Summary</u>	An overview across the various programs and the variance between revenue and expenses
<u>Glossary</u>	Provides an explanation of words and terms used in this toolkit

To move between worksheets you can click on Next and Previous text found at the bottom of each worksheet or by clicking the worksheet tabs at the bottom of the page.

Version: December 2009

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This toolkit is based on Full-day Early Learning information as at September 2009. As more information becomes available from the Province, the Region of Peel will commit to review and make changes to the toolkit as required.

Assumptions

Please take a moment to review the following assumptions:

- A. You are currently at operating capacity now and will be after the change to the new program
- B. This analysis only includes salary (with benefits) and non fixed operating costs as it is assumed that the variance to other operating costs (e.g. rent, telephones, computers) would be small
- C. Wage subsidy/improvement/enhancement grants remain with the position, therefore these grants would remain in the child care system
- D. Capital costs are the initial costs for the establishment or expansion of a program. How you amortize this cost is not factored into this analysis as it will vary depending on accounting practices for amortization.
- E. Staffing ratios and group sizes according to the Day Nurseries Act will remain the same

Additional Resources To Assist You

To assist you in planning alternative programs to replace your JK or SK program, the following resources will provide you with some guidance:

<u>Day Nurseries Act for Child Care Supervisors of Ontario</u>	(external website)
<u>Planning & Design Guidelines for Child Care Centres</u>	(external website)
<u>Service Provider Handbook</u>	(external website)

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Content

To use this tool, preliminary figures need to be input to assist with scenario building.
The financial figures can be obtained from your payroll, financial statements, budget for JK/SK and available capital. In addition the length and width of the room is needed.
When entering amounts, you should round to the nearest figure.

How to Calculate Your Annual Operating (Non-fixed) Cost Per Child

For this calculation, you will need your budget for 2010.
Note: if you do not have a budget for 2010 please estimate based on actual costs incurred for 2009

Operating Expenses

To determine your annual operating cost per child in your centre, it may be completed one of two ways:

Option A: Enter your budget costs by line item, or

Option B: Enter your total budget (excluding Salary & Benefits and Occupancy Costs) on Line 46

Note: Line items below are suggestions only and will vary by operator based on individual accounting practices.

Food	<input type="text"/>	Option A
Insurance	<input type="text"/>	
Office Supplies/Expenses	<input type="text"/>	
Program Supplies	<input type="text"/>	
Utilities	<input type="text"/>	
Other	<input type="text"/>	
Other	<input type="text"/>	
Other	<input type="text"/>	
Total (Line 46)	<input type="text" value="\$0"/>	Option B
Number of Children in Entire Centre	<input type="text"/>	
Cost Per Child	<input type="text" value="-"/>	

Data Input

Please enter the following information:

A. Impacted Room Size	<input type="text"/>	square feet
B. Number of Children in JK/SK program	<input type="text"/>	
C. Number of Children in Entire Centre	<input type="text"/>	
D. Number of Operating Days per Year	<input type="text"/>	
E. Annual Cost Per Child	<input type="text" value="-"/>	
F. Avg Salary & Employer Paid Benefits for a JK/SK ECE	<input type="text"/>	
G. Your Daily Fee	Infant <input type="text"/>	
	Toddler <input type="text"/>	
	Preschool <input type="text"/>	
	JK/SK <input type="text"/>	
	School Age (before & after) <input type="text"/>	

Results

The following results will help you with your review of potential programs to replace your JK/SK program.

Room Size

Based on your room size and the requirements of the DNA act you may wish to consider the following programs:

Program	# of Children Room Can Hold	Comments
Infant (*)	0.0	-
Toddler	0.0	-
Preschool	0.0	-
School Age	0.0	-

(*) This calculation includes a separate sleep area required for infants

Salary Costs Based On Program

Using the ratio of employees to children as per the DNA requirements, the salary cost per child are as follows:

Infant	\$0.00
Toddler	\$0.00
Preschool	\$0.00
School Age	\$0.00

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Program options below provide an estimate on what a new program may cost

To get an estimate:

- i. Go to the option you wish to consider
- ii. Enter the number of children your program will accommodate
- iii. Enter the estimated capital cost per child needed for this program
- iv. The costs will be provided as a breakdown, by child and by program

Option A: Infants

Enter number of Infants:

Enter Capital Cost per Infant:

Costs	Non Fixed Operating Costs	Salary & Benefits	Capital	Total Cost
Per Infant	- <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00
Infant Program	- <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00

Option B: Toddlers

Enter number of Toddlers:

Enter Capital Cost per Toddler:

Costs	Non Fixed Operating Costs	Salary & Benefits	Capital	Total Cost
Per Toddler	- <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00
Toddler Program	- <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00

Option C: Preschool/Nursery

Enter number of Preschool/Nursery Children:

Enter Capital Cost per Preschool/Nursery Child:

Costs	Non Fixed Operating Costs	Salary & Benefits	Capital	Total Cost
Per Preschool/Nursery Child	- <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00
Preschool/Nursery	- <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00

Option D: School Age (SA)

Enter number of SA Children:

Enter Capital Cost per SA Child:

Costs	Non Fixed Operating Costs	Salary & Benefit	Capital	Total Cost
Cost Per SA Child	- <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00
SA Program based on:	- <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00	<input type="text"/> \$0.00

To see the changes to your revenue based on the number of children you have entered above, click Next.

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This worksheet allows you to get an estimate regarding potential revenue generated from a new or expanded program as well as the impact on your current revenue.

Note: The table below is prepopulated based on figures you entered under Step 3 Cost By Program. If you would like an estimate based on a different number of children, enter the figure on Line 19 under the corresponding option.

	Current Revenue	Proposed Revenue			
	JK/SK	Option A Infant	Option B Toddler	Option C Preschool/ Nursery	Option D School Age
Number of Children (Line 19)	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Fee	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Daily Revenue	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Gain/Loss (Per Day)		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Annual Revenue	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Gain/Loss (Per Year)		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

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The estimated cost implications based on potential programs to replace your JK/SK are provided in the table below.

Note: The table is prepopulated based on figures you entered under Step 3 Cost By Program and Step 4 Revenue

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Annual Revenue	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Annual Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Variance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Number of children analysis based on	0	0	0	0
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Important Notice

The information presented here provides only an estimate of cost and revenue implications. In planning programming changes, it is recommended that you complete a full business analysis.

A	B	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	E	F	G	H	<u>I</u>
J	K	L	M	<u>N</u>	O	<u>P</u>	K	<u>R</u>
<u>S</u>	I	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

Capital Costs	One-time set up cost of a program after which there will only be operating costs
DNA	Day Nurseries Act
Infant	Age: Under 18 months of age Ratio of Employees to Children: 3 to 10 Maximum Number of Children in a Group: 10
JK	Junior Kindergarten
Number of Operating Days	Number of days centre is in operation (maximum is 261)
NS	Nursery School Age: More than 30 months of age up to and including 5 years of age Ratio of Employees to Children: 1 to 8 Maximum Number of Children in a Group: 24
Preschool	Preschool Age: More than 30 months of age up to and including 5 years of age Ratio of Employees to Children: 1 to 8 Maximum Number of Children in a Group: 24
Revenue	Is the total income from parent fees paid, based on the projected number of children and the parent fee rate
Room Size	The DNA requires that a play activity space of at least 30 square feet (2.8 square metres) of unobstructed floor space for each child. However, to accommodate any obstructions, 35 square feet per child is used in this toolkit. In addition, for infants and toddlers a sleep room is required. 15 square feet per child is used in this toolkit.
SK	Senior Kindergarten
School Age	Age: 68 months of age or over as of August 31 of the year and up to and including 12 years of age Ratio of Employees to Children: 1 to 15 Maximum Number of Children in a Group: 30
Toddler	Age: 18 months of age and over up to and including 30 months of age Ratio of Employees to Children: 1 to 5 Maximum Number of Children in a Group: 15

Operating Criteria

for Child Care Centres Providing Subsidized Care

Prepared by:

Operating Criteria Committee
Children's Services Division

Editorial assistance:

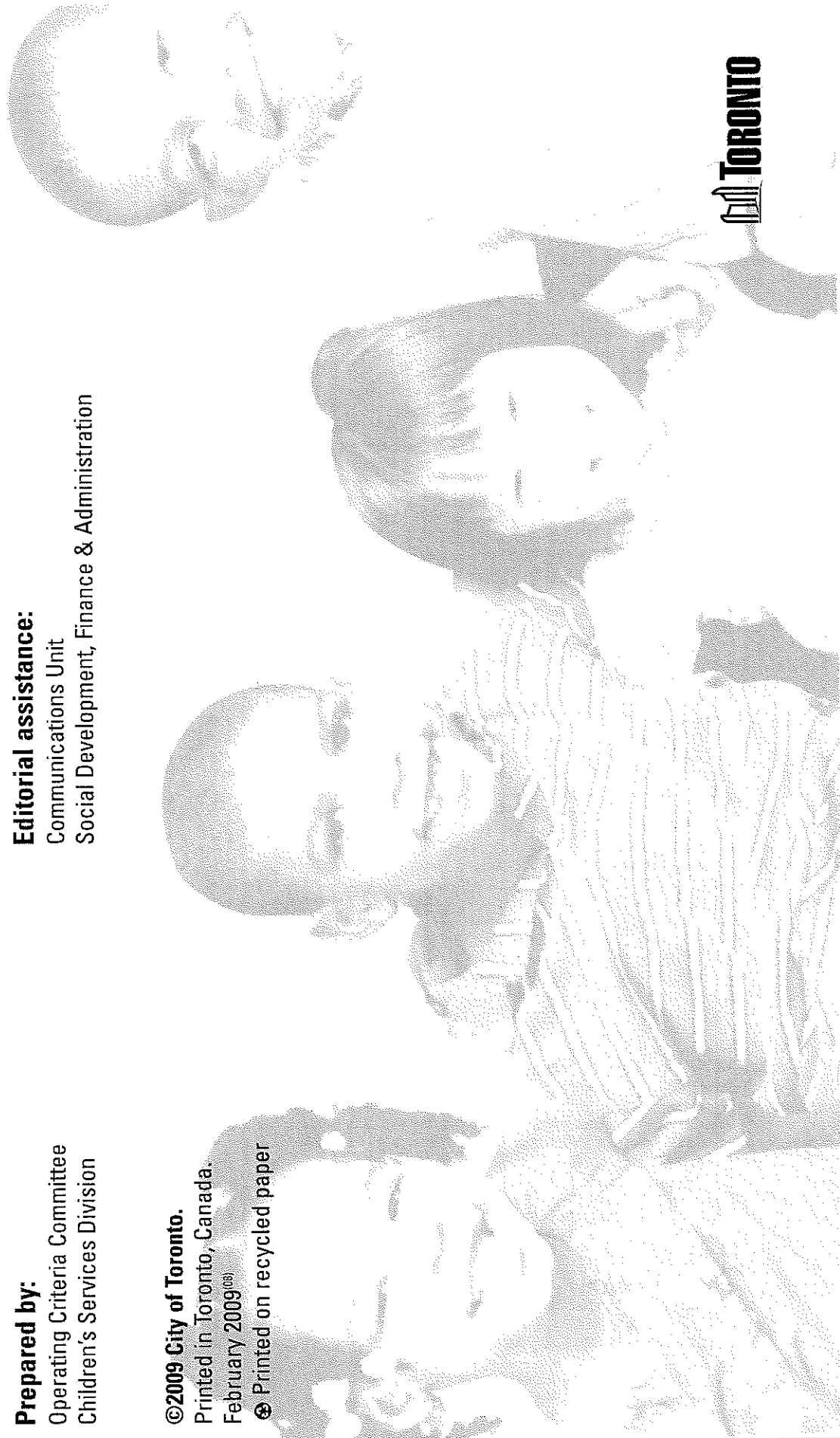
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Introduction:

1. Introduction

- Children's Services Mission Statement, Principles and Values
- Key Determinants of Quality

2. Using the Operating Criteria

- a) Assessment Steps
- b) Centre Score Sheet
- c) Compliance Items
- d) Operator Quality Monitoring Chart

Section 1:

Infant Program

Section 2:

Toddler Program

Section 3:

Preschool Program

Section 4:

School Age Program

Section 5:

Playground

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Nutrition

Section 7:

Administration

Section 8:

Financial Management

Section 9:

Working Together

Appendix

Appendix I: The Service Contract

- Eligibility
- Requirements
- Non-compliance
- Appeals

Appendix II :

- Fee Subsidy
- Enrolment Policies

Appendix III

- Racism Definitions

Appendix IV

- Clarification Note Glossary

Introduction

Toronto Children's Services is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the City and has responsibility for planning and managing a broad range of child care services, including licensed child care. Children's Services is therefore responsible for supporting child care arrangements that meet acceptable standards of care for families.

Toronto Children's Services values quality child care experiences for children as well as stable and dependable child care operations. To this end, the Operating Criteria outlines the City's operating standards and practices as well as financial practices that programs with a Service Contract must meet.

Mission Statement

- COMMITTED TO CHILDREN
- SUPPORTIVE OF FAMILIES
- BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Principles and Values of Toronto Children's Services

In partnership with the community, the Division promotes equitable access to high quality care for children and support for families and caregivers.

An integrated approach to planning and management ensures that services to children promote early learning and development, respond to families' needs and choices, and respect the diversity of Toronto's many communities.

Toronto Children's Services believes that:

1. Children come first and the best interests of the child must always be of paramount importance in any service decision.
2. Children's individual differences must be recognized and respected, and the value of diversity needs to be celebrated.
3. Children have the right to quality child care services in a safe and healthy environment that provides opportunities to reach developmental milestones that are in line with their unique growth and development patterns.
4. Children have the right to be free from corporal punishment, isolation, physical confinement and all forms of abuse.
5. Informed parental choice about children's services is a fundamental right.
6. Eligible families have the right to equitable access to service that meets the unique needs of their children.

Toronto Children's Services values:

1. Service quality and working in partnership with the community.
2. Community and consumer involvement in service planning.
3. Excellence in customer service and recognition that staff are pivotal in this pursuit and will be viewed as the organization's most valuable resource.
4. The strength of diversity and the inherent value of a workforce that reflects the community it serves.
5. Planning that allows resources to be used in a way that is optimally efficient and has maximum impact.
6. Its historic contribution to the field of child care and a commitment to preserving its leadership role.

A Shared Approach to Quality Assurance

Quality child care is both a developmental and inclusive service. Principles of quality child care have traditionally been defined by a set of factors that include caregiver training and experience, program content, ratios of children to caregivers and environmental factors.

The inherent value of a shared approach to criteria assessment that includes consultants, agency supervisors, directors, operators, home child care visitors, providers and parents is seen as an important component of quality assessment.

To this end, the Operating Criteria outlines clear expectations, service standards and guidelines to child care providers with a service contract. It serves as a self-evaluation and planning tool for child care operators, supervisors and front-line staff. In addition, it is used by Children's Services Consultants to measure quality and contract compliance.

Every Child Belongs

Children's Services shares the City of Toronto's belief that there is strength in diversity. The quality assurance measures set out in the Operating Criteria and service contract emphasize the importance of respect and sensitivity for diversity.

Toronto Children's Services is committed to an inclusive child care system that promotes positive and healthy environments for children. Inclusive child care means the provision of quality services for all children regardless of race, age, ability, language, culture, ethnicity or family structure.

There is a consensus in the child care community that access and equity must be a reality for all families. Quality assurance measures set out in the criteria and the City of Toronto's requirements for inclusion support this goal.

To this end, all child care programs with a service contract have developed anti-racist and anti-bias curriculum and policies and are expected to provide child care services to all children. Toronto Children's Services supports this

development by providing support services, ongoing training, conferences, workshops and regular communication with service providers.

Key Determinants of Quality

Research in the area of child care indicates that there are key elements that are essential for a high-quality child care program. These elements are described within six key determinants of quality and include:

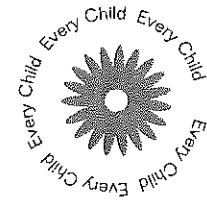
1. Sound management practices
2. Training, experience and stability of caregivers
3. Group size; ratio of children to caregivers
4. Family involvement in the program
5. Health and safety standards of the physical facility
6. Program content and development.

Philosophical differences exist in the content and development of child care programs. However, all child care programs should be viewed as developmental services, and therefore must be based on the following accepted principles of child development:

- each child's growth follows a universal developmental sequence with individual differences in rate and timing
- play is a child's natural way of learning
- children learn best through active involvement with their environment

Given these principles, high-quality programs for young children must provide:

- equal opportunities for children to participate and benefit from their experiences in ways that promote individual development and learning
- appropriate learning experiences based on the interests, strengths, abilities and needs of the individual child
- opportunities for growth in all areas — emotional, social, physical and intellectual
- a rich environment that offers continuous opportunities for exploration, discovery, choice and decision making
- a nurturing and secure environment.



The Role of the Supervisor

It is commonly accepted, and supported in research, that the Supervisor plays a pivotal role in the quality of a child care program. In fact, the leadership abilities of the Supervisor are a **key determinant of quality** within a child care program. Therefore, a Supervisor must demonstrate:

- Knowledge of the *Day Nurseries Act*, the Children's Services Operating Criteria and all other required legislation that governs the operation of a child care program
- Evaluation skills to ensure that a high-quality program for all children is achieved and maintained
- Effective communication with children, staff, parents and the community
- Good supervision of staff
- Well-developed leadership skills
- Awareness of and the ability to use resources within the community
- Commitment to their own professional development
- Sound financial management skills
- Ongoing maintenance of accurate records
- Appropriate maintenance of the physical plant.

Role of the Children's Services Consultant

Child care programs with a service contract will receive a detailed Operating Criteria assessment annually. This assessment will be completed by a Toronto Children's Services Consultant.

This will typically be done in consultation with the child care program to ensure the development of long and short-term program goals. The Consultant may provide additional support and consultation by visiting the program more frequently throughout the year to help child care programs meet their goals.

In addition, the Consultant conducts regular reviews of the program's operating budget to ensure that the child care service is both financially stable and cost efficient.

Operating Criteria History

Now in its seventh edition, the essence of the document is unchanged; however, the tool has been refined and improved based on operator feedback and new research.

In 1997, the Operating Criteria developed into a checklist format that supported operator self-assessment and promoted a continuum of quality improvement.

Between 2004 and 2006, Toronto Children's Services embarked on a complete review of the Operating Criteria. A two-year comparative research project between the Operating Criteria and the Harms and Clifford Environmental Rating Scale guided the revision, and helped determine that an assessment using the revised Operating Criteria would be a reflection of the quality within a child care program.

The resulting 2007 edition of the Operating Criteria is a streamlined document based on a 1 – 4 progressive measurement scale. Sections related to health and safety, human resources, interactions, parent involvement and inclusion have been embedded within the core components that have been expanded to include financial management and community partnerships.

Using the Operating Criteria

There are nine core components included in the Operating Criteria:

1. Infant Program
2. Toddler Program
3. Preschool Program
4. School Age Program
5. Playground
6. Nutrition
7. Administration
8. Financial Management
9. Working Together.

Each item is measured on a progressive 1 – 4 measurement scale:

- 1 = Does Not Meet Expectations
- 2 = Needs Improvement
- 3 = Meets All Expectations
- 4 = Exceeds Expectations

☐ = Indicates a respectful question may be required to score the item.

The assessment of a child care program using the Operating Criteria is a “snap-shot” of the environment and events that children are experiencing on the day and time of the assessment.

An Assessor must be able to observe or confirm by enquiry, each individual descriptor. If they are unable to do so, they cannot score the item.

Assessment Steps

The Assessor reads the expectations of the item and then moves across the measurement scale starting at 1 by checking the boxes when the descriptors are observed or confirmed by staff.

Measurement Scale #1:

- The Assessor must be able to observe or confirm all of the descriptors in the measurement scale to score
- When the Assessor has observed or confirmed each descriptor, they place a check in the individual box(es) in each of the measurement scale
- If the Assessor is able to check the box(es) in measurement scale #1, the item does not meet Expectations (Criteria) and the assessment stops

Score	1	2	3	4	Score
Playground	Does Not Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Score
2. Playground Surfaces <small>*Please note: This is a safety criteria. If any surface is not safe for children, the assessor is not able to participate because of the safety of the children. If the assessor is not able to participate, the assessor should not complete this item.</small>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground surfaces are not suitable for the participation of all children.*	<input type="checkbox"/> One playground surface available*	<input type="checkbox"/> Two different playground surfaces available that provide for the participation of all children and allow for a variety of activities*	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground includes seating area	1
					2

- The Assessor circles a score of 1 on the far right.
- If the Assessor is not able to check the box(es) in measurement scale #1, the Assessor can move on to Measurement Scale 2.

Measurement Scale #2:

- The Assessor must be able to observe or confirm all of the descriptors in the measurement scale to score
- When the Assessor has observed or confirmed each descriptor, they place a check in the individual box(es) in each of the measurement scale

- If the Assessor is not able to check all of the box(es) in Measurement Scale #2, the assessment stops
- The Assessor circles the score of the last measurement scale where all the descriptors were achieved (all the boxes are checked). In this example the score would be a 1
- If none of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #1 and all of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #2, the Assessor can move on to Measurement Scale #3.

Measurement Scale #3:

- The Assessor must be able to observe or confirm all of the descriptors in the measurement scale to score
- When the Assessor has observed or confirmed each descriptor, they place a check in the individual box(es) in each of the measurement scale
- If the Assessor is not able to check all of the box(es) in Measurement Scale #3, the assessment stops
- The Assessor circles the score of the last measurement scale where all the descriptors were achieved (all the boxes are checked). In this example the score would be a 2

Score	1	2	3	4	Score
Playground	Does Not Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Score
5. Small Toys and Equipment <small>*Please note: This is a safety criteria. If any equipment is not safe for children, the assessor is not able to participate because of the safety of the children. If the assessor is not able to participate, the assessor should not complete this item.</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> No variety of equipment that is suitable for the amount of children*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some equipment is in good condition. Some equipment is seasonally adjusted*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Variety of small toys, in good condition available, e.g. balls, balls and mallets, sports equipment, etc.*	<input type="checkbox"/> Each age group has their own set, toys and equipment.	1
					2
					3
					4

- If none of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #1 and all of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #2 and Measurement Scale #3, the Assessor can move on to Measurement Scale #4.

Measurement Scale #4:

- When the Assessor has observed or confirmed each descriptor, they place a check in the individual box(es) in each of the measurement scale
- If the Assessor is not able to check all of the box(es) in Measurement Scale #4, the assessment stops
- The Assessor circles the score of the last measurement scale where all the descriptors were achieved (all the boxes are checked). In this example the score would be a 3

Criterion	Does Not Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Score
2. Playground Surfaces <small>1. Does the child/supervisor have a choice of play surface for multiple children to use? (e.g. sand, rubber mat, wood chips, etc.) 2. Are 2-3 different play surface areas available for children to use? 3. Are there any other play surface areas available? 4. Are there any other play surface areas available?</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground surfaces do not provide for the participation of all children*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One play/surface available*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two different play/surface areas available that provide for the participation of all children and allow for a variety of activities*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground includes play area	1 2 3 4

- If none of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #1 and all of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #2, #3 and #4, the item has achieved a maximum score of 4.

At the end of each sub-section the Assessor will add up the total score of the assessed items. Once the section is complete, these scores are transferred to the score sheet at the end of the section.

Once each section of the Operating Criteria has been assessed, the Assessor will calculate an overall rating for the child care program by adding the score of each and dividing by the total number completed.

Section	Playground Score Chart		
	A	B	C
Playground	Number of items scored from 1-7: 7	Total Score (sum of level numbers scored): 21	Average Score: B Divided By A: 3

Included in the 2007 Operating Criteria is a three-year planning tool to monitor your Criteria Assessments and to help with Goal Setting. This tool can be found after the Overall Centre Score Sheet.

Minimum Requirements:

Measurement Scale 3 – Meets All Expectations is the minimum requirement for child care operators with a City of Toronto service contract.

Child care programs with a rating of 1 or 2 in any item will be required to address the deficiency by a targeted compliance date determined by the Consultant.

Child Care programs are encouraged to focus on program improvement and may find the area of Exceeds Expectations (4) helpful in goal setting, long-range planning and program development.

Note: The Financial Management section is designed on a progressive 1 – 2 measurement scale

- 1 = Does Not Meet Expectations
- 2 = Meets Expectations.

Toronto Operating Criteria: Centre Score Sheet

1. Input the scores from each section into the corresponding box below.
2. Add all scores together for the total score.
3. Divide the total score by the number of sections scored for your centre's overall average score.



Toronto Operating Criteria Section Score Sheet:		
Criteria Sections:	Date Section Assessed	Score
1. Infant		
2. Toddler		
3. Preschool		
4. School Age		
5. Playground		
6. Nutrition		
7. Administration		
8. Financial		
9. Working Together		
Total (All sections added together)		
Average Score (Total divided by number of sections scored)		

Time taken to complete Assessment: _____

Consultant Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor/ Designate Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Toronto Children's Services Operating Criteria: Non-Compliance Items

The minimum requirement for child care operators with a service contract with Toronto Children's Services is a 3 (Meets Expectations).

Child care programs with a rating of 1 or 2 in any item will be required to address the deficiency by a targeted compliance date determined by the Consultant.

Date: _____ **Name of Centre:** _____

Loc #: _____ **Agency ID:** _____ **Visit ID:** _____

Consultant signature: _____ **Supervisor/designate signature:** _____

Total # of Pages: _____

Sections that did not meet expectations						
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified	
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
Comments: _____ Supervisor Initial: _____						
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified	
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
Comments: _____ Supervisor Initial: _____						
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified	
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
Comments: _____ Supervisor Initial: _____						

Sections that did not meet expectations						
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9						
Comments:						
Supervisor Initial: _____						
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9						
Comments:						
Supervisor Initial: _____						
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9						
Comments:						
Supervisor Initial: _____						
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9						
Comments:						
Supervisor Initial: _____						

Toronto Operating Criteria: Operator Quality Monitoring Chart

1. Input the year and month of the Criteria Assessment.
2. Input the final score from each section of the Criteria Assessment.
3. Total the scores and divide by the number of sections completed to get an overall score.

Year/Month	Score	Year/Month	Score	Year/Month	Score
1. Infant		1. Infant		1. Infant	
2. Toddler		2. Toddler		2. Toddler	
3. Preschool		3. Preschool		3. Preschool	
4. School Age		4. School Age		4. School Age	
5. Playground		5. Playground		5. Playground	
6. Nutrition		6. Nutrition		6. Nutrition	
7. Administration		7. Administration		7. Administration	
8. Financial		8. Financial		8. Financial	
9. Working Together		9. Working Together		9. Working Together	
10. Total Score:		10. Total Score:		10. Total Score:	
11. Average Score (total score divided by # of sections scored)		11. Average Score (total score divided by # of sections scored)		11. Average Score (total score divided by # of sections scored)	

Toronto Operating Criteria: Operator Quality Monitoring Chart

4. Take the scores from each section, e.g., infant, toddler, etc., and make a dot on the graph corresponding to that number.
5. Connect all of the dots with a line.
6. Next year, repeat the above steps, use a different color pen to mark your scores and look for changes.

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
Year/Month		Year/Month		Year/Month	
Overall Centre Score:		Overall Centre Score:		Overall Centre Score:	
Colour Used:		Colour Used:		Colour Used:	

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School-Age	Playground	Nutrition	Administration	Financial	Working Together
4									
3.5									
3									
2.5									
2									
1.5									
1									

Toronto Operating Criteria: Operator Quality Monitoring Chart

7. Use the changes chart to indicate what you feel made the difference in your score and use this information to set continuous improvement goals.

Year/Month	Changes (what areas, what do you attribute to the change in score, etc.)	Goals:

Year/Month	Changes (what areas, what do you attribute to the change in score, etc.)	Goals:

Year/Month	Changes (what areas, what do you attribute to the change in score, etc.)	Goals: