

Hamilton Access and Inclusion

Community Engagement

In Hamilton, the city wants to expand child care. They asked local community-based services who knew many diverse families to find out what their child care needs are and barriers they experience when accessing child care. Families feedback will directly impact child care options for all families in different parts of the city.

60 diverse families...

Children living in low-income families, children of newcomers to Canada and official language minorities (Francophone), children with special needs and needing enhanced or individual supports, Black and other racialized children



Cultural Responsiveness

Families want child care programs that respect and honour diverse cultures. Having staff from different backgrounds is important to families. Offering food choices that are inclusive of all cultures helps to support families. Programs that represent different cultures makes everyone feel welcome. It also creates chances to practice and respect various traditions.

Inclusion

Families feel included when they can share about their culture. Communication between caregivers and child care staff is important to create a sense of belonging. Having empathic staff that recognize and respond to children's unique needs is very important to families. Many families would also appreciate language translation for those who need it.

Well-being refers to the importance of physical and mental health, incorporates capacities such as self-care, sense of self, and self-regulation skills.



Belonging is being seen, heard, and valued without needing to change who you are.

Needs

Safe, clean and welcoming environments are key factors for families when selecting a child care program. Flexible hours would support families' child care needs. Staff that are qualified and caring, with more resources for children with special needs is important. Having staff who speak different languages and more Francophone child care providers available in Hamilton is needed. Many families prefer centre-based child care because it provides more chances for diversity and to make connections with others.

Barriers

Access to child care remains a challenge for most families, especially the long wait lists and high costs. Offering printed and accessible resources to find and select child care options is preferred by families. It would be helpful if this information was easy to find in the community.

NEXT STEPS

➤ Community Engagement feedback will continue to support the evaluation process until all remaining 641 child care spaces are approved into 2026



2024 Community Engagement is a smaller sample size than previous engagement, however, feedback aligns and continues to build off what we heard from the 330+ diverse families that engaged in 2023. Please note, the Indigenous community continues to be part of our priority populations, however, for this round of Community Engagement, engagement efforts were not guided by an Indigenous-led organization.

