Introduction

The Ottawa community has enthusiastically embraced the approach and service philosophy behind the Provincial Best Start initiative. The first year of planning and implementation of Best Start in Ottawa has been a success on many fronts. The Ottawa Best Start Network has been very active refining its structure, setting the foundation for solid community planning and ensuring an atmosphere of cooperation and trust permeates all activities. Awareness has been developed between key agencies serving children in the fields of health, social services, child care, and education in Ottawa.

The Best Start Network built upon the strength of local child care programs to open 788 new licensed child care spaces for children in the target age groups. This growth in child care spaces is providing more service but has exacerbated system pressures around funding and human resources. Waiting lists have become longer for children with special needs to access licensed child care programs. Additional provincial funding to restore service levels for Preschool Speech and Language, and Infant Hearing Programs has been implemented during 2006. Additional provincial base funding and a one time grant has allowed Healthy Babies Healthy Children to maintain services however they still face challenges in addressing the universality of the program. To complement these early identification and intervention programs a new program is currently being planned for blind and low vision children. This new program is being funded by the Province, with planning to be completed by June 30, 2007. The foundations for planning at the neighbourhood level were also laid during 2006 enabling local planning efforts to move forward in 2007.

The Best Start Network experienced much success during 2006 and is ready to build on that success in 2007. The Ottawa Best Start Network laid the planning and structural foundations during 2006 necessary to support the new priorities in 2007. Success By 6, a community wide initiative designed to ensure that early childhood development is a priority in Ottawa, will continue to host the Best Start planning as part of the role of the Ottawa Network for Children, formerly the Community Advisory Action Group. Terms of Reference for the Ottawa Network for Children, an amalgamation of planning tables for children's services in Ottawa, which includes the Ottawa Best Start Network, were approved in April 2007. The Network is ready to shift focus from the key 2006 provincial objective of the creation of new child care spaces. The implementation of system integration by mobilizing strategic levers in the community will be the focus for 2007 across the Province. As always, with no new funding identified for this process it is challenging to implement change and enhance services especially amongst agencies that currently have scarce resources.

This Community Plan refers to activities that took place both before April 2007, when the Network was still the Best Start Network and after April 2007 when the Ottawa Network for Children was approved. For clarity in this Community Plan the term Ottawa Network for Children will be used throughout the document even when references are made to the

Network before April 2007. The Best Start initiative continues as a planning strategy that is the responsibility of the Ottawa Network for Children.

There are many agencies, names and acronyms used in this document. The Network has endeavoured to use full names with its acronym following in brackets the first time they appear in the report. At the end of this Community Plan is a Glossary of Terms that includes all acronyms used in the report.

Ottawa Best Start Vision

Overview of Phase One Implementation Plan Vision

Every Best Start Network in Ontario was required by the Province to develop a Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan by the end of January 2006. The Ottawa Best Start vision is included in the Ottawa Best Start Network Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan. The vision developed in 2006 reflects the first year focus of the Best Start initiative on the creation of new licensed child care and the creation of an integrated seamless day of learning for children aged 4 and 5 years. The Best Start vision continues to evolve as community planning and system integration changes the focus of activities and clarifies priorities. The Best Start vision as articulated in the Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan for the integration of services for children and families is as follows:

The Best Start vision in Ottawa includes an integrated early learning environment and seamless day for all children in junior and senior kindergarten where there is an available space for every child from 7 a.m. to 6 pm. To achieve this, the four Ottawa school boards and child care programs will work together to implement a seamless day for all children with support and guidelines from the Province.

As part of its vision, the Network also developed in 2006, broad vision statements regarding neighbourhood hubs, integrated and expanded child care services and early intervention services. These categories were areas the Province asked the local Best Start Networks to focus on and are outlined below under the three headlines.

Neighbourhood Hubs

- Neighbourhood hubs are located across the City and become **dynamic integrated service providers**;
- Hubs are central access points for all **information** for services for children 0-6;
- Hubs are **easily accessed** by parents including the most high-risk families;
- Hub sites are **funded** by the Province along with new services to address gaps that are identified by the Network;
- Access to services that support children to participate in grade 1 at their full potential;
- Identify children's barriers to learning through the **early identification and intervention** programs available through the Best Start Hubs;

- **Francophone and Aboriginal families** receive services that meet their unique needs in a manner that supports and sustains their culture and language.

Integrated and Expanded Child Care Services

- **Enhance availability** of licensed home child care to provide **flexible** evening, overnight, and weekend hours;
- Enhance **linkages** between the extensive child care sector and the early identification and intervention network of services;
- Group child care programs located in schools are **fully integrated** with Kindergarten programs;
- Child Care and school **staff work collaboratively** to provide high quality early learning experiences for 4 and 5 year old children.

Early Intervention

- Enhance **integration of primary care and health promotion** programs within the children's services system;
- Provide **supports to parents** and families related to healthy early childhood development and growth and support early identification and referral services.

Success By 6, Best Start and the Ottawa Network for Children (ONC)

A major goal of the Best Start initiative has been to streamline the planning process, minimize duplication and amalgamate organizations and planning groups where possible. The Ottawa community has worked diligently in this area. When the original structure for the Best Start Network was established in the Fall of 2005, the Ottawa community chose not to create an entirely new structure. It was decided that Best Start Planning should build on an existing planning body and that Success By 6 would host the Best Start Network and champion the Best Start goals in the Ottawa community. The Success By 6 Community Advisory Action Group (CAAG) was to act as the Best Start Network in Ottawa, and assume the responsibilities of Best Start planning. Some additional members were invited to join the CAAG to ensure representation of all groups needed for Best Start planning.

The Best Start Initiative is one part of the overarching goals of Success By 6, which is a community wide initiative designed to ensure that early childhood development is a priority in the Ottawa community. It works to increase the awareness in our community about the important impact the first six years have on a child's life. Success By 6 brings to the Best Start Initiative the community leadership, established partnerships and integration needed to carry out its work. It provides structure to support the implementation of the Best Start goals.

<u>Ottawa Network for Children Terms of Reference and Structure</u>

During 2006 further work was undertaken to streamline the planning process among organizations serving children and an agreement was reached to amalgamate the Ottawa Best Start Network, Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Advisory Group and the Community Advisory Action Group. This resulted in the Ottawa Network for Children (ONC). The Ottawa Network for Children is functionally part of the Success By 6 structure and will eliminate duplication and allow all sector representatives to work together to plan and develop services for children 0-6 years in Ottawa. With united community efforts, all children in Ottawa can have a good start in life so that when they reach the age of six and begin grade 1, they are physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally healthy and ready to reach their potential and succeed at school.

The vision for Best Start outlined in 2006 has been modified and is now a broader vision that is compatible with the earlier more focused vision. The new vision will serve the goals of system integration and the goals of the 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan. The new overarching vision of the Ottawa Network for Children is:

> *A collaborative community engaged in ensuring that ALL children have the best and equitable opportunity to achieve their full potential*

The Ottawa Network for Children has developed a new Terms of Reference to guide its work. The new Terms of Reference is included as Annex A of this 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan. The Ottawa Network for Children will develop an annual work plan which will incorporate any requirements for the Best Start initiative. The 2007 work plan is attached as Annex B. The Best Start Steering Committee has been phased out because of the new structure of the Ottawa Network for Children.

The Ottawa Network for Children's membership will continue to include the key stakeholder groups that were members of the Best Start Network as well as additional members. Ottawa Network for Children membership will be comprised of representatives from the following sectors:

- Parenting programs
- Early Identification and Intervention Programs
- School Boards
- Health and Specialized Intervention Programs
- Income Security Programs
- Population Specific Services (Francophone and Aboriginal Communities)
- Early Learning and Care Programs
- Community Services
- Policy Makers
- Funders
- Primary Health Care Providers

- Child Protection/Child Welfare
- Recreation

A membership subcommittee will review the membership composition every two years and recommend any changes that are required. The goal of the review is to ensure that the Network has diverse community representation to achieve service planning and system integration. Gaps in membership have been identified by the Network and the membership subcommittee met in the spring of 2007 to establish a workplan to address these gaps.

The first gap is adequate representation by the Aboriginal and Inuit community at the Network. The Aboriginal and Inuit community was not represented at the community consultation sessions to begin the Best Start initiative. In the past there has not been much interconnection between programs serving the Aboriginal and Inuit community and those serving other populations that are provincially and municipally funded. The Network has worked diligently during 2006 to identify appropriate individuals to lead the Best Start process within the Aboriginal and Inuit community.

Individuals have now been identified to represent the Aboriginal and Inuit community. An Overview Session was held in March to begin Phase 2 of the Best Start planning process with this community. The first Aboriginal and Inuit Planning Table session was subsequently held at the end of March. The information from these sessions has also been incorporated in the development of this community plan. The Network is encouraged by this progress and will continue to make engagement of the Aboriginal and Inuit communities a priority in the process of system integration.

The second gap in membership relates to adequate representation of immigrant and newcomer groups. This issue was raised in the Integrated Implementation Plan and will be addressed more fully later in this Community Plan. The Network will continue to endeavour to ensure this group has representation so their needs are incorporated into Best Start planning.

The third gap relates to appropriately engaging parents in the Best Start initiative. Engaging parents is one of 8 goals in the workplan for 2007 -08. To address this, a sub-committee will be struck to specifically address this issue.

Task oriented sub-committees will be struck yearly to aid the Network in undertaking its work plan. To support the 2007-08 work plan activities the following subcommittees will be struck:

- Membership
- Francophone Services
- Aboriginal and Inuit Services
- Parent Engagement
- Seamless day (Child care integration with JK/SK)
- Communications and Marketing

- Children With Special Needs

Participation of the Regional French-language Best Start Network

The Ottawa Network for Children has a significant number of representatives from the Francophone community representing different service sectors. A number of these members are also members of the Regional French-language Best Start Network. This cross-over in membership has facilitated information sharing and input at both planning tables.

Ottawa has undertaken significant planning in regards to programs serving Francophone children and how best to facilitate Francophone neighbourhood hubs and integrated services. The Regional French-language Best Start Network has been advised of planning and community consultation sessions within the Francophone community. The Eastern Ontario Regional French-language Best Start Network also has been advised of the work plan for the development of the 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan to ensure timely and meaningful input is received by them.

Community Engagement

The Ottawa Network for Children has endeavoured to create an inclusive planning process where representatives from many different groups are welcomed and encouraged to actively participate. There are many Francophone stakeholders and service providers at the Network planning table. Aboriginal and Inuit representatives have now been identified to join the Network and lead the Aboriginal and Inuit community planning process. Information sessions targeted to both these demographic groups have been held in 2007. A planning table to develop an integrated system of services has been established for each of these groups.

Service providers of children with special needs and other special needs stakeholders have been invited to community information sessions and planning table meetings throughout the Best Start planning process. Some Network members do provide services to special needs children. The Network includes agencies that serve the diverse immigrant and newcomer community in Ottawa, but the agency representatives at the Network are not immigrants or newcomers themselves. The Network has reached out to a broader representation through community information sessions to ensure the views and needs of the immigrant and newcomer community are included in the planning process.

Parental Involvement

Parents have not been directly engaged in the Best Start planning process. However, many of the agencies, organizations and service providers active in Best Start do have parent boards and have been formally or informally advising parents about the Best Start initiative. Engaging parents in a meaningful way is a challenging endeavour.

The Ottawa Network for Children will established a sub-committee for 2007-08 to examine the best ways to engage parents. The subcommittee will build on the best practices of community agencies and identify options to involve parents in the development of services for children 0-6.

Implementing Key Phase One Best Start Components

Child Care Expansion

In August 2005, the City of Ottawa was allocated $32.5 million in Best Start funds over three years for the creation of new licensed child care spaces. In 2006 the Federal government terminated the previous child care funding agreement with the provinces. As a result the Province of Ontario had to limit the previously announced funding, and set the priority for on-going operating funding to support the spaces created in 2005.

The City of Ottawa implemented the 2005 child care expansion plans, with the partnership of all four school boards as well as community child care programs. In Ottawa $6,050,000 was used for the 2005 Best Start Child Care capital expansion. A total of 33 programs participated in the expansion, creating 788 new licensed child care spaces. There are now 382 new child care spaces for children aged 0-4 and 406 new spaces for kindergarten children aged 4-5 years.

Breakdown of Total New Spaces

0 – 4	JK/SK	TOTAL IN SCHOOLS	IN NEW SCHOOLS	IN NON-SCHOOLS	ABORIGINAL TOTAL	FRANCOPHONE TOTAL	TOTAL
382	406	559	175	229	0	314	788

The creation of new child care spaces located in schools is a priority under the Best Start initiative. The Best Start initiative in Ottawa has been very successful in implementing the province's "Schools First" policy through partnerships with the four area school boards. In Ottawa 559 of the 788 new spaces are located in schools, representing a total of 71% of the new child care spaces. Of the total number of new spaces in schools, 175 spaces are located in newly constructed schools.

There was also a significant commitment to create Francophone child care spaces through the Best Start Capital expansion. Of the 788 total spaces created, 314 spaces are in Francophone child care programs. This expansion of Francophone child care represents approximately 40% of the total Best Start expansion.

The following chart provides the names of the 33 programs where spaces were created through Best Start Child Care Capital Funding. It also provides details on the number of

spaces created at each site, the age group the spaces serve and whether they are located in a school. Two programs, Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School (#16) and Queensway Preschool (#25) previously operated morning-only Headstart programs. Best Start funding added 5-day a week afternoon programs at each site. The actual licensed capacity did not increase in either program because it is the same licensed space, but the programs are serving 15 and 24 more Headstart children respectively.

Best Start Expansion By Program

Site	Program Name and Location	Total Spaces	0 – 4 Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	Located In School
1	**Service a l'enfance Aladin Child Care Services – Hawthorne** **2158 St. Laurent Blvd., Ottawa K1G 1A9**	**20**	**0**	**20**	**Yes**
2	**Annavale Headstart Nursery School** **250 Anna Ave, Ottawa K1Z 7V6**	**8**	**8**	**0**	**Yes**
3	**Canadian Mothercraft Elmdale School Age Program** **49 Iona Street, Ottawa K1Y 3L9**	**20**	**0**	**20**	**Yes**
4	**Carleton Heights Child Care Centre Inc.** **1660 Prince of Wales Drive, Ottawa K2C 1P4**	**8**	**6**	**2**	**Yes**
5	**Centre préscholaire la Coccinelle – Arc-en-ciel** (CECLFCE) **1830, prom. Portobello, Orleans K4A 3T6**	**34**	**24**	**10**	**Yes**
6	**Centre educatif la Clémentine - La Source** (CECLFCE) **1550, rue Verchere, Orleans K1C 7C7**	**Subsidy spaces only**			
7	**Centre parascholaire des Pionniers** (CECLFCE) **720, rue Merkley, Orleans K4A 1L8**	**26**	**26**	**0**	**Yes**
8	**Le Carrefour d'Ottawa – Arch** (CECLFCE) **2198, rue Arch, Ottawa K1G 2H7**	**24**	**24**	**0**	**Yes**
9	**Centre Educatif Cooperative Le Manege-Stittsville** (CECLFCE) **5473 Abbott St., Stittsville K2S 2C5**	**46**	**26**	**20**	**Yes**
10	**Le Petit Pinceaux - Sainte Marie** (CECLFCE) **2599 Innes Rd, Gloucester K1B 3J8**	**24**	**14**	**10**	**Yes**

Site	Program Name and Location	Total Spaces	0 – 4 Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	Located In School
11	**Centre Parascholaire Alpha 3-12 d'Orleans (CEPEO)** 1917, chemin Gardenway, Orleans K4A 2Y7	10	10	0	Yes
12	**Garderie Coccinelle de l'école Le Prélude (CEPEO)** 6025, prom. Longleaf, Gloucester K1W 1G3	26	16	10	Yes
13	**Fallingbrook School Age Program (OCDSB)** 679 Deancourt Cres., Orleans K4A 3E1	18	0	18	Yes
14	**Agence de garde La Maisonnee (Grandir Ensemble)** 5, avenue Myrand, Ottawa K1N 5N7	55	55	0	No
15	**MFRC Kinder Klub - Uplands** 15 DeNiverville Drive, Gloucester K1V 7N9	Subsidy Spaces only			
16	**Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School** 755 Somerset St.W., Ottawa K1R 6R1	15	15	0	No
17	**Elmridge School Age Program (OCCSB Brother Andre)** 1923 Elmridge Drive, Ottawa	20	0	20	Yes
18	**Heron Gate School Age Program (OCCSB Prince of Peace)** 1620 Heatherington Road, Ottawa	20	0	20	Yes
19	**Beaconwood School Age Program (OCCSB TD McGee)** 635 LaVerendreye Drive, Ottawa	20	0	20	Yes
20	**Lynwood School Age Program (OCCSB Our Lady of Peace)** 3877 Richmond Road, Ottawa	20	0	20	Yes
21	**Roch Carrier Kindergarten School Age Program** 401 Stonehaven Drive, Kanata	40	0	40	Yes
22	**York Street Kindergarten School Age Program (OCDSB)** 310 York Street, Ottawa	20	0	20	Yes
23	**Overbrook Kindergarten Day Care (OCDSB)** 557 Queen Mary Street, Ottawa	6	0	6	Yes

Site	Program Name and Location	Total Spaces	0 – 4 Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	Located In School
24	**Pinecrest Queensway Nursery School** **2860 Ahearn Ave., Ottawa K2B 6Z9**	**20**	**20**	**0**	**Yes**
25	**Queensway Preschool** **429 Parkdale Ave., Ottawa K1Y 1H3**	**24**	**24**	**0**	**No**
26	**REKSAP Kindergarten School Age Program (OCDSB)** **2599 Regina St., Ottawa K2B 6X4**	**20**	**0**	**20**	**Yes**
27	**Severn Kindergarten School Age Program (OCDSB)** **2553 Severn Avenue, Ottawa K2B 7V8**	**20**	**0**	**20**	**Yes**
28	**St. Mary's Daycare** **2 Canfield Road, Ottawa K1T 3J6**	**66**	**36**	**30**	**No**
29	**YM-YWCA Nursery School, Day Care Centre and School Age Program** **180 Argyle Ave., Ottawa K2P 1B7**	**18**	**8**	**10**	**No**
30	**YM-YWCA Orleans Child Care** **265 Centrum Blvd., Orleans K1E 3X7**	**51**	**31**	**20**	**No**
31	**Youville Centre** **150 Mann Ave., Ottawa K1N 8P4**	**Subsidy spaces only**			
32	**Crestway/ Chapman Mills School Age Program (OCCSB)** **201B Crestway Drive, Nepean**	**20**	**0**	**20**	**Yes**
33	**Centre de l'enfant Aux 4Vents – Barrhaven** **11 Claridge Street, Barrhaven**	**69**	**39**	**30**	**Yes**
	TOTAL	**788**	**382**	**406**	**559**

The City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Network for Children has successfully used its entire 2005 allocation for child care expansion through the Best Start initiative. Throughout 2006, a total of 788 new child care spaces were opened in the community that are now serving families and children.

Enhancement of Key Early Identification and Intervention Programs

Infant Hearing Program

The mandate expansion to the Infant Hearing Program (IHP) included assessing, monitoring and providing communication development services to children from birth to their eligibility to enter Grade 1. This was an expansion of 4 years of services to the children and families as the previous mandate ended once the child turned 2 years of age. In order to meet this expansion, the purchase of further audiology services as well as communication development services was necessary. The specialized audiology services must be conducted in specific environments therefore they remain at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. Every attempt is made to offer the communication development services in a location convenient for parents. At present, sign language instruction can be offered in the parents' choice of locations (e.g. home, community agency), however due to the shortage in number of Auditory Verbal Therapists in the region, this communication option remains located at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

Preschool Speech and Language Program

This was an expansion of 1 year of services to the children and families, where the children have complex needs and do not attend senior kindergarten, as the previous mandate ended once the child was eligible for Senior Kindergarten. In order to meet the mandate of this expansion, additional Speech and Language Pathologists, Communicative Disorders Assistants and Community Educators were hired. Wait list reductions are well underway and are focused on children between birth and age of 3 as the research demonstrates the window of opportunity being the highest for that age group. Children are being served up until they are eligible to enter Grade 1 when, due to complex needs and medical reasons, they are unable to enter Senior Kindergarten.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC)

HBHC continues as a universal, voluntary, prevention/early intervention program. Some budgetary challenges have affected some of the service delivery, however, the following 2006 statistics reveal the extent of the programs ongoing service to the community:

- 99.6% of all City of Ottawa births were screened and referred to HBHC, 97% of these received a postpartum contact (91% within 48 hours of discharge), 56 % received a post partum home visit and 13 % went on to long term visiting;
- over 75% of clients identified as being at high or moderate risk, were referred to other community agencies;
- over 14,800 visits were done by Public Health Nurses and Family Visitors;
- over 9,000 consultations occurred at Well Baby Drop Ins;
- Protocols were reviewed with partner agencies;

- A Public Health Nurse from either HBHC, Early Years Health Promotion, or Reproductive Health has represented Public Health programs at all of the Ottawa Network for Children planning tables;
- Ongoing discussions continuously evolve regarding integration opportunities (e.g. Community Health and Community Resource Centres (CHCRC's), Young single parent agencies, hospitals, etc).

Phase One Implementation Challenges

The Ottawa community has overcome challenges identified in the Phase One Plan through effective planning, a strong community commitment to contribute human resources and the targeting of limited additional local funds. There remain many implementation challenges that were first identified in the Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan. These are discussed below.

Child Care

The Francophone child care catch-up plan was developed to address the gap in Francophone subsidized child care services. The plan outlines principles for the development of further subsidized Francophone child care spaces as well as the types of programs that will be given priority. The cost to implement the Francophone catch up plan is $2.3 million. The Health Recreation and Social Services Committee of the City of Ottawa supported a 3 year implementation option and deferred the approval of funding to the 2007 budget process.

During the 2007 City of Ottawa budget deliberations the three year implementation option for the Francophone catch up plan was adopted and 100% municipal funds were allocated for the first year of implementation. The three year plan requires the allocation of an additional $765,000 to the base budget each year for three years, to create additional Francophone subsidized child care spaces in each of the three years. Funding for the implementation of years two and three are subject to the City of Ottawa budget review process each year. The City of Ottawa is experiencing significant budget pressures, which could jeopardize the allocation of funds for the second and third year of implementation. Provincial cost-sharing of these spaces would help to alleviate this financial pressure.

Although there are 788 new Best Start licensed spaces available to serve more children and families, Ottawa's child care system is seriously under funded. The expansion has further stretched existing resources. Stabilization of the child care system has been an issue for a number of years but the Best Start expansion has brought this to a crisis level in Ottawa. There has been little or no increase to Per Diem rates for years and programs have had to absorb the cost of inflation year after year. Child care programs are now at the point of not being able to absorb these incremental cost increases any longer. Funds are also seriously required to address minor capital and health and safety issues.

The Best Start child care capital expansion created 788 new spaces however many challenges still remain or have been compounded with the expansion. There still remains a serious shortage of subsidized child care spaces in Ottawa. The goal to deliver high quality accessible child care to all who want a licensed space is far from being achieved. With Best Start expansion there is now an even greater shortage of trained staff to run child care programs. Appropriate trained staff is one of the key indicators of quality in child care and ensures a stimulating learning environment for children.

The first year of Best Start capital expansion was undertaken very rapidly due to provincial funding requirements. The timelines made it challenging to identify local programs for the first year of capital expansion. To meet the deadlines, programs that could be expanded quickly were chosen for year one (e.g. they had additional space available or could be part of new school construction underway). It was expected that other programs could be expanded in later years that would address gaps in the system. As a result of the very short timelines year one programs did not always address the highest needs in the community. The Aboriginal and Inuit community did submit one proposal but it was moved to year two of Best Start capital expansion because the project could not meet the construction deadlines for year one. The cancellation of subsequent years of capital expansion has now eliminated the ability of Best Start to address these service gaps without additional capital funds from the Province.

Flexible Child Care

These short planning deadlines also did not make it possible to address the provision of flexible child care hours for families as part of Best Start capital expansion even though it has been identified as the greatest gap in child care services. It is a high priority to identify options to address this need and implement the appropriate child care services. Licensed Home Child Care is seen as an effective service option to provide flexible child care in the community. For Licensed Home Child Care to provide a solution to the provision of flexible child care the Province and the City of Ottawa as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for child care must address the issue of low provider rates and recognize that flexible care is more expensive to deliver.

Child Care and Children with Special Needs

The focus of the Best Start Initiative in 2006 was the expansion of the child care system. The Best Start Initiative has also focused on ensuring that services for specific demographic groups are appropriate and responsive. The Ottawa Network for Children was required to address children with special needs through its planning process. The Ottawa community has a well developed integrated system of services to support children with special needs accessing licensed child care. Although the Best Start Initiative placed a high priority on ensuring children with special needs could access child care, funding pressures in the child care system precluded the CMSM from allocating enough funds to meet the increased need.

The waiting list for children to be assessed and then supported so they may be integrated into child care programs has been increasing. There is now a critical need for additional funds to support special needs resourcing in the community. The City of Ottawa as the CMSM for child care will consider this service need in the development and approval of the 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan.

2007-08 Strategies to Move Forward with the Community Vision for Best Start

Neighbourhood Hubs and the Creation of Planning Tables

The Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan introduced the concept of neighbourhood hubs that would provide a location for parents and children to access information and services related to the Best Start initiative. Some services may be directly offered at the neighbourhood hub while in other cases information may be provided at the neighbourhood hub to access services provided at other locations. There has been no provincial funding identified for the creation of neighbourhood hubs or to support the operation of these hubs.

In The Network's Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan 21 hub areas were identified. The Phase One Plan identified 19 geographic hub areas based on census tract data that together included all neighbourhoods in the City of Ottawa. Two additional hub areas were also identified based on cultural and linguistic criteria; one to serve the Francophone community and the second to serve the Aboriginal and Inuit community.

During 2006 and early 2007 the Ottawa Network for Children has undertaken discussions among Network members, held community consultations and planned to further develop the concept of the hub model. This process was undertaken to support the planning and implementation process, clarify the concepts of a hub location and a hub area and address the lack of funding to support the creation and operation of these hubs.

The first issue that the Network addressed revolved around clarifying the concept of a hub location and how that concept differed from a hub area. The community found the terminology of neighbourhood hubs particularly confusing as it related to the hub areas since more than one hub location may be identified to serve an entire hub area. The hub areas that were based on cultural and linguistic criteria and meant to provide city wide services at more than one site was also confusing when using the neighbourhood hub terminology.

To clarify these concepts the Ottawa Network for Children has identified community planning tables that will take the place of what in the past has been referred to as neighbourhood hub areas. When the Network now refers to hubs, they are describing locations that are service access points to be planned, coordinated and opened by each planning table. The Ottawa Network for Children also believes that the term 'planning table' better describes the process of bringing all service providers to a shared table to plan for integrated services for children aged 0-6 within a neighbourhood hub area.

The second issue was the large number of neighbourhood hub areas, now planning tables and the lack of funding and human resources to continue the development process. To facilitate the development of the planning tables the Ottawa community decreased the number of planning tables based on geographic criteria, but did not change the two planning tables that are based on cultural and linguistic criteria. The Francophone as well as the Aboriginal and Inuit 'hubs' have not changed in this process, but are now referred to as planning tables. The 19 geographically based original 'hub areas' have been amalgamated into a total of 7 geographically based planning tables.

The Ottawa Network for Children now has a total of 9 planning tables:

- 7 geographically based planning tables;
- 1 Francophone planning table; and
- 1 Aboriginal and Inuit planning table.

For the 7 geographically based planning tables, the boundaries of the Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC's) were used to guide the creation of the 7 new boundaries. The 7 new Best Start planning table boundaries and OEYC service boundaries do not match exactly, since the OEYC service areas are based on political ridings. The Best Start planning areas are rationalized to acknowledge natural neighbourhoods in Ottawa.

The Ottawa Best Start Network is moving forward with system integration through the establishment of the nine Planning Tables. The approach has evolved over the last year of community planning in Ottawa. The Ottawa Network for Children worked hard to develop a functional well-designed system of planning tables. These planning tables have now begun planning for integrated services including the creation of hubs for either a geographic service area or for the Francophone or Aboriginal and Inuit communities. The Planning Tables will develop linkages among each other and all created hubs, increase awareness of services, foster information sharing and share best practices as part of their work.

The activities of the nine Planning Tables began in the spring of 2007 with the development of guidelines from the Network for the creation of the Planning Tables. To facilitate the development of the planning table process a Community Information Session was held for each planning table during February and March 2007. There was an open invitation extended to each relevant community to attend each information session. This was done to ensure that any service providers that had not yet participated in the Best Start process had a new opportunity to enter the planning process. The information sessions were held to provide and update to the community on the Best Start Initiative as well as future plans so that all service providers could participate in the next step in the process with common information and a shared understanding.

The information sessions were followed by an inaugural meeting during either February or March 2007 to establish each Planning Table and create an inclusive community process. The 7 Ontario Early Year's Centres helped to co-ordinate the first 7

geographically based planning table meetings. Grandir ensemble helped to co-ordinate the Francophone planning table and together Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start Inc and the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre helped to coordinate the Aboriginal and Inuit planning table. There was a facilitated full day inaugural meetings for each of the nine Planning Tables. A template was used to guide the discussion with a series of questions that was developed to ensure the required information was garnered from the meetings. This information has been incorporated into the 2007 -08 Community Plan to identify further service gaps and inform the work of the planning tables.

Summary of Planning Tables All Day Events

The following information summarizes key recommendations derived from the nine Best Start Planning Tables all day events held during February and March 2007 across the City of Ottawa.   The following information represents the most common comments made in response to each question to provide highlights of the combined discussions at the nine planning tables.

Complete minutes were prepared separately of each planning table session. The detailed minutes will be used by the respective planning tables to undertake the implementation of system integration in their community. The information from these meetings provides one source of information to be used by the nine planning tables. Specific recommendations regarding Francophone and Aboriginal & Inuit communities have been clearly identified for easy reference.

How can communication be improved within each local neighbourhood?

- One stop shopping database for professionals
- Continue various methods of written materials to disseminate information to community (i.e.: brochures, posters, websites, etc.)
- For hard to reach families = outreach workers.
- Develop Glossary of Terms for participants

Who is missing at the Planning Table?

- School administration (Principals, Teachers, Trustees)
- Healthcare providers
- Parents
- Elected Officials (city councillors)
- Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
- Representatives from the other Planning Tables

What are parents' natural points of contact in each neighbourhood?

- Ontario Early Years Centre's
- Recreation programs
- Schools

- Faith gathering points
- Healthcare professionals (doctors, etc.)
- Restaurants (specifically in rural areas)
- Community events (Aboriginal/Inuit communities)
- Child care agancies

What are the natural gateways to services within local communities?

- Ontario Early Years Centre's
- Community Health Centers
- City Services (i.e. Public Health, IHP, PSL, etc.)
- Recreation programs
- Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre / Wabano Center for Aboriginal Health / Tungasuvvingat Inuit Centre (Aboriginal / Inuit communities)

How will the Planning Tables develop a parent engagement Plan?

- Provide **transportation** and **on-site child care** at meetings.
- Ensure meeting are relevant to parents
- Ensure that concrete objectives are communicated to them (clarify the goal / provide incentive for participating (i.e. honorarium)
- Hold local / informal meetings (smaller groups, evenings, weekend)
- Vary the approach for parent involvement by using newsletters, websites, emails, and teleconference.
- Ensure a cross section of parents.
- Approach Parent Advisory Councils (existing & emerging)
- Identify neighbourhood leaders & engage them in disseminating info to cultural & linguistic groups.
- Aboriginals = hold cultural events (POW-WOW) (invite Non-Aboriginal groups to set up booths and provide information during cultural events)

What's needed to engage Stakeholders at the Planning Tables?

- Increase awareness in order for them to become champions of the cause.
- Clearly defined expectations
- Provide clear set of guidelines for next steps.
- Offer alternative form of meeting (i.e. teleconference, web based, etc)
- Provide access to Planning Tables minutes.

Potential Hubs locations identified:

- Ontario Early Years Centre's
- Schools (mostly in Francophone community)
- Community Health Centres
- Community Resource Centres

- Odawa Native Friendship Centre (Aboriginal / Inuit Community)
- Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre (Aboriginal / Inuit Community)
- Wabano Center for Aboriginal Health (Aboriginal / Inuit Community)

Existing partnerships in place:

- Generally, partnerships currently in place are based on services mandated by the Province.

How can links be created with neighbourhood schools?

- Motivate, advocate, and develop political will with School Boards & schools to participate.
- Ministry of Education to mandate school participation (buy-in from schools) through ministerial intervention.
- Build on existing transition plan (i.e. special needs, cultural integration)
- Connect with school principals, school council meeting groups (Parent Advisory Councils)
- Provide Best Start presentations at Professional Development days
- Use of school communication tools (i.e. Parent information boards)

Identify capacities to increase parental activity:

- Explore ways to co-facilitate / share space and resources & maximize use of equipment
- Strengthen partnership
- Develop collaboration network
- Coordinate partnership to eliminate duplication
- Look to partnerships to accommodate backlog.
- Develop triage and outreach strategies
- Accommodate parents by providing flexible hours in accessing services.
- Increase use of volunteers.
- Explore ways to use empty spaces (i.e. schools, libraries, etc)
- Create new Community Liaison Coordinator position to link with Aboriginal / Inuit communities
- Increase financial, human and space resources.

Barriers to Hub planning across the City of Ottawa:

- Silo syndrome – different mandates
- Fear – competing mandates, funding priorities (recommended that MCYS address these fears)
- Lack of financial & human resources
- Lack of language capability / multi-language

- Lack of motivation, resources, and lack of time (already stretched to the limit)
- Reaching hard to serve & isolated families
- <u>Francophone communities</u>: greatest obstacle is dealing with a citywide approach versus a local neighbourhood approach
- <u>Aboriginal communities</u>: 1) school staff is not reflective of the Aboriginal / Inuit population; 2) lack of trust

What supports are needed for Hub planning

- **Identify a Community Liaison Coordinator**
- Resources / funding
- Support from both Ministry of Children and Youth Services and Ministry of Education
- Marketing Strategies
- The concept of a "Mobile Hub Service" outreach is to be given serious consideration (i.e. special needs, rural)
- Up to date demographic information
- Aboriginal / Inuit Planning Table: - educate other Planning Tables about Aboriginal / Métis / Inuit populations, issues, and success stories

Future trends

- Income testing (change in family profile)
- Increased service demand
- More Families have computers/internet access
- Greater transportation needs
- Demographic shift - families moving to outskirts of Ottawa

Next steps for Planning Tables

- Hold Follow-up Information meeting for Planning Tables participants to comment on findings
- Shorter and smaller meetings
- Access to meetings results
- Enhance awareness of Best Start and Hub concept in communities.
- Raise the awareness between agencies in the community
- Create inventory list of services / website for information
- Need to assign a Community Coordinator / need framework / timelines / work plan / meeting schedule

Recommendation for lead role at the Planning Tables:

- Ontario Early Years Centre's
- Grandir ensemble (Francophone)

- Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start Inc. & Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre (Aboriginal volunteers)
- City of Ottawa
- Ministry of Children and Youth Services
- Community Health Centres

Closing Service Gaps

This section outlines gaps that have been identified through two processes. The first part addresses gaps identified in the Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan and provides information on any progress made in closing these gaps. The second part includes further gaps that have been identified by the community through the Phase Two Best Start planning table process in 2007.

Closing Gaps in Service First Identified in The Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan

The following gaps in service were first identified in the Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan. This section provides an update on the status of these service gaps and outlines any progress that has been made in closing the gaps.

Francophone Child Care Services

At the end of 2004, an imbalance was identified in the allocation of subsidized spaces in home child care between Anglophone and Francophone programs. The City of Ottawa undertook extensive planning and consultation to identify appropriate Francophone child care service levels, types of services required by Francophone families and the resources required to implement parity in the system.

The City retained Ronald Bisson and Associates to research and report on the current status of Francophone child care services in the City of Ottawa. The report states that 14.9% of the Ottawa population identifies French as their mother tongue. A significant proportion of this population is either immigrant or visible minority and has unique child care needs. It was identified that while the Francophone population has access to 19.5% of licensed spaces, exceeding the demographic weight of the Francophone population by 4.6%, there is a significant shortfall in the availability of subsidized spaces for the Francophone population, especially in home child care services.

To address this gap in Francophone subsidized child care services the recommendations from the Bisson report were used by City staff, with advice from the Francophone child care community to develop a Francophone child care catch-up plan. The former Health Recreation and Social Services (HRSS) Committee of the City of Ottawa endorsed the Francophone Child Care Development Plan. The plan outlines principles for the development of further subsidized Francophone child care spaces as well as the types of programs that will be given priority. The cost to implement the Francophone catch up

plan is $2.3 million.   HRSS Committee supported a 3 year implementation option and deferred the approval of funding to the 2007 budget process.

During the 2007 City of Ottawa budget deliberations the three year implementation option for the Francophone catch up plan was adopted and 100% municipal funds were allocated for the first year of implementation. The three year plan requires the allocation of $765,000 each year to the base budget for three years. The funds will be used for the creation of additional Francophone subsidized child care spaces in each of the three years. When the catch up plan is fully implemented after three years, there will be parity of funding in both Anglophone and Francophone child care services. The investment in these new subsidized spaces is significant but there is still a shortage of both Anglophone and Francophone subsidized child care spaces.

Services for 6 to 12 year old children

The Phase One Plan identified the issue of the shortage of child care spaces for school aged children 6 to 12 years of age. The creation of the new Best Start child care spaces for children ages 0-4 and JK/SK children in 2006 has provided more services for these age groups. But, as children move through the child care system and reach age 6 there is now a shortage of licensed spaces because there has not been corresponding growth for 6 to 12 year olds. When new child care spaces are created in the future, it is recommended that the Province permit municipalities to expand the number of spaces for 6 to 12 year olds in order to balance the system.

Immigrants and Newcomers

Recent immigrants and newcomers require more child care services outside of conventional work hours, since many are employed as shift workers or during evening and weekend hours. Many newcomers resort to unlicensed, unregulated child care to find services with flexible hours for their children. The 2006 Child Care Service Plan identified the need for more services and spaces that provide flexible child care hours to meet this service gap. The provision of flexible child care is an increasing gap that affects immigrants and newcomers. This service gap has not been adequately addressed and given the current funding levels for child care services it will be challenging.

The new Francophone Child Care Development Plan has established addressing the need for flexible child care as the top priority. The plan will only provide a small proportion of the required spaces and only for the Francophone immigrant and newcomer population. New Francophone subsidized spaces will be allocated first and foremost to Francophone child care services that will operate during the night and on weekends or during other irregular hours. The creation of these new subsidized spaces will begin in a small way to address this significant gap in service.

The Ottawa Network for Children does not have adequate representation from immigrant and newcomer groups or from organizations specifically focused on serving these groups. Due to this, the Network has not been able to comprehensively identify all the needs of

immigrants and newcomers. Some mainstream programs represented on the Network do serve immigrants and newcomers, and therefore are aware of issues faced by these groups. However mainstream programs are not part of the immigrant and newcomer community and therefore can not fully understand their needs to fully represent them at the Best Start planning table. Finding individuals to join the Network who can properly represent this population is a top priority. This will enable the Network to identify gaps in service for immigrants and newcomers and help develop strategies to address the gaps.

Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYCs)

In Ottawa, The Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYCs) system has worked collaboratively on a city wide level as well as at the neighbourhood level to plan and deliver services. The OEYC's provide information and referral services for children's programs in the community whether they are operated by the OEYCs or operated by other community agencies. There is a high demand for OEYC programs including drop-in play groups, toy lending libraries and parenting programs. The demand for these services is still far higher than the services available, resulting in waiting lists and families not being able to receive services in some cases.

With funds from Best Start, the Network of OEYCs in Ottawa is developing a city-wide strategic plan to determine the best ways to address these service pressures. Strategies could include coordinating their operational work. Increased marketing of these programs and services as part of the Best Start initiative will create further parental awareness and demand for services that cannot be met. Enhanced funding is required from the Province to address current waiting lists and to provide these services to more families in the community.

Services For Children With Special Needs

The Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan outlined issues identified by the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre for children with special needs. These issues are documented in detail in the gap analysis in the Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan. They include system-wide issues related to intervention and treatment services, and suggest options to build on the success of early identification programs.

The gaps in special needs services were captured in the Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan, but the Network did not undertake planning during 2006 to address these gaps, because there was no additional provincial funding available to meet identified needs. An Ottawa Network for Children sub-committee will be created in 2007 to further examine the requirements of children with special needs and their families. Additional funding will be required to address most service gaps identified. Existing gaps in service for the integration of children with special needs in licensed child care has widened due to the growth in licensed child care spaces through the Best Start expansion during 2006.

Description of Emergent Needs or Gaps Identified Since January 2006

During the spring of 2007 the 9 Inaugural Planning Table Sessions were held in Ottawa. These meetings were led by a facilitator that took each meeting through a series of questions. At these meetings an opportunity was provided for community participants to identify further service gaps that have recently emerged in Ottawa or were not captured in the Phase One Plan. From that input a list of new gaps was then presented to the Ottawa Network for Children meeting in April for review and discussion, where the Network also included additional items. The following list of service gaps reflects the series of discussions, described above in the Ottawa Community.

Francophone Service Gaps

- Francophones in the rural communities are not well served
- Francophone immigrant populations are not well served

Aboriginal Service Gaps

- Increase of Inuit population from 400 in 1997 to 1400 in 2007
- Inuit population with social needs – i.e. addictions, children needing special curriculum.
- Translation barrier for Inuktituk (primary language of Inuit)
- Shortage of language programs.
- Different Aboriginal nations have different languages.
- Increased waiting lists for housing.

City-wide Service Gaps

Gaps in Services for Immigrants and Newcomers

- Lack of services in mother tongue languages
- Language – ESL children not well served in child care.
- Shortage of resources to address refugees traumatic experiences

Gaps in Child Care Services

- Income testing has impacted eligibility for subsidies for middle-income families
- Centralized waiting list indicates significant shortage of licensed subsidized and full fee child care spaces

Special Needs Services

- Support services for special needs children have not increased as child care spaces have increased
- Increased number of children diagnosed with special needs – service gap widening.

- Increased demand to support special needs children (handicaps, allergies, etc.)
- More complicated issues and broader spectrum of needs

Specialized Services for Young Single Parents

- Lack of strategies to address the needs of young single parents and their children
- Limited use of universal programs

Health Services

- Breast feeding supports and programs lacking
- Lack of post partum depression services
- Prenatal support required by risk groups
- Mental health services lacking
- Lack of integration with addiction services
- Concern about accessibility to a physician or health care provider (especially within the first 48 hours after discharge)
- Lack of screening and assessment to meet school readiness goals
- Children's health – activity/nutrition/obesity not well addressed

Early Identification and Intervention Programs

- Earlier identification but without additional funding for services (exception – Autism).
- Waiting list for First Words program remains between 8 months to 1 year
- Longer waiting list for community referrals to Healthy Babies Healthy Children

Broad Service Issues

- Seamless services for 0-6 year olds but service and funding gaps for 6-12 year olds
- Urban sprawl has created geographic areas with gaps in services such as local schools, childcare centres, and community centres

Poverty, Affordable Housing and Homelessness and Their Influences on Child Development

There is considerable concern regarding the issue of affordable housing and the serious impacts that the lack of affordable housing have particularly on children. The Ottawa Alliance to End Homelessness produces an annual report card on the progress on ending homelessness in the City of Ottawa. The 2007 Report, with data from January to December 2006, indicates that over 10,000 households are on the waiting list for social housing. Sadly, 615 homeless families had to use emergency shelters in 2006. These families included 1, 163 children. The number of children using emergency shelters actually increased by 12.4% from 2005, even though the number of families using

shelters decreased slightly. This reflects the increasing difficulty large families (often newcomers to Canada) have in finding affordable housing. At average Ottawa rents, low income families cannot find housing within their means. Paying a high proportion of a meagre income for rent leaves families unable to eat well or to access the kinds of enriching activities for their children that middle income families can. Affordable housing is a fundamental building block of family well-being. Lack of affordable housing and homelessness mean many children begin life with a deficit in developmental opportunities and the scars of disruption, uncertainty and stigma that homelessness brings.

The provision of affordable housing is outside the scope and ability of the Ottawa Network for Children to address or impact in any meaningful way. The Network urges senior levels of government to recognize the serious impacts the lack of appropriate housing have on families and children and to act. The Ottawa Network for Children member agencies will try to support homeless and insecurely housed families and children as best they can, but only more affordable housing will truly address this serious problem.

Strategies to Further Close Identified Service Gaps

All the service gaps identified in this Community Plan will be forwarded to each of the 9 Planning Tables to ensure they are aware of the gaps. The Ottawa Network for Children will work to address service gaps at both the nine planning tables and at specific sub-committees. Some of the service gaps relate specifically to one of the Planning Tables, and if so those gaps will be addressed by that Planning Table. Some of the service gaps relate to work to be undertaken by one of the newly formed Network sub-committees.

The additional gaps identified regarding services for Francophone's will be forwarded to the Francophone Planning Table to consider in their integrated service planning and hub development process.

This Community Plan is the first opportunity the Ottawa Network for Children has had to begin to identify service gaps experienced by the Aboriginal and Inuit communities. The list will be forwarded to the Aboriginal and Inuit Planning Table to consider as they undertake their Best Start planning process.

The Ottawa Network for Children is placing a high priority on understanding the issues facing children with special needs and their families in Ottawa. Many families with children with special needs require supports to access services and to be part of the mainstream community. The Network will create a subcommittee in 2007 to undertake this work and to develop a plan. The goal of supporting social integration will be part of the mandate of the sub committee. The Network subcommittee on children with special needs will work to identify options to address service gaps identified in the Integrated Implementation Plan as well as new gaps identified in this Community Plan.

The demographics of children with special needs are not well captured as there is only anecdotal information and general data on population prevalence rates. There is a need to identify the population better and understand their requirements and the gaps in service they experience. Assistance from the Province would be highly valuable in this endeavour.

Children with medical needs are often unable to participate in licensed child care programs. A local committee has been established that includes representatives from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the City of Ottawa and Children's Integration Support Services to develop strategies to address this service gap.

Adolescent parents often will not access universal services. Specific strategies need to be explored to address issues related to addiction, drug use, anger managements and general needs of children of adolescent parents and the parents themselves.

The Ottawa Network for Children has identified a deficit in its membership to address issues and service gaps experienced by the Immigrant and Newcomer populations in Ottawa. During 2007 the Network will work to attract the right individuals to appropriately assist in addressing children's service needs for this community.

The Ottawa Network for Children discussed other service gaps identified in the Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan as well as additional service gaps when the Network developed their 2007 Workplan. All the service gaps can not be addressed by a sub-committee during 2007 due to the number of items already on the workplan for action. Those service gaps that have not been addressed in the 2007-08 Community Plan and corresponding Network Workplan will be reviewed when the 2008 Network Workplan is developed.

Obstacles and Challenges to Closing Gaps

Funding

The shortage of funding is a significant obstacle to undertake the planning processes that are required to address major service gaps. Communities in general can be very resourceful and innovative in finding solutions to address service gaps. Even so, additional resources are required to address significant shortfalls in service, such as support for children with special needs. Innovation and system integration will not provide the additional resources required to address all the service gaps that have been identified.

Funding pressures experienced by municipal governments are also having a direct impact on many families in Ottawa. To address limits on municipal budgets more user fees are being implemented that families must pay to access services. This is creating increased costs to families and limiting access to services that support the goals of Best Start.

<u>NCBS Reinvestment Dollars</u>

The Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) was announced in the 2007 provincial budget. It is a new benefit that will go to low-income families with children between the ages of 0-18 years, those working and those on social assistance.

One of the aims of the Ontario Child Benefit is to address the welfare wall and separate adult and child benefits. In July 2008, the social assistance rates will be restructured to take into account the new Ontario Child Benefit. The children's portion of basic needs, the back-to-school allowance and the winter clothing allowance, currently available through Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, will be consolidated with the OCB. The OCB is fully funded by the Provincial Government. As part of the restructuring, the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) will no longer be deducted from social assistance.

Once the Ontario Child Benefit reaches its full maturity in 2011, social assistance costs will decline as a result of child-related payments being consolidated into the OCB. This will mean a municipal net savings of $15 million/year. ($55 million in social assistance savings minus $40 million in NCBS reinvestment dollars). Municipalities will determine how to use these savings.

Currently, many children and family community programs are funded by the NCBS reinvestment money. With the above changes, there will no longer be the provincial transfer of NCBS reinvestment funds to the municipalities. Rather, municipalities will have a "savings". In addition, there is no longer a provincial directive to use the funds towards children and family programs. This leaves many children and family programs vulnerable that are most likely already under fiscal constraints. This additional financial burden could mean the end for some of these programs.

The concern is that Best Start's objective of service integration could be jeopardized if the programs are not continued. We strongly recommend that the Province work with municipalities to ensure that the programs currently under the NCBS Reinvestment program are maintained.

<u>Complex Service Delivery System</u>

Ottawa has a highly complex service delivery system. It is a major urban centre in the Province, but also has a large rural component, with a significant number of rural residents. Ottawa is also a regional centre for services within Eastern Ontario. The Ottawa community has many service providers that provide services to immigrants and newcomers, Aboriginals and Inuit, Francophones, urban dwellers, and rural residents. Some service providers offer targeted services while others offer services to all these different groups, city-wide. It will take time to mobilize this complex service system and develop further strategies for system integration and hub development.

Another characteristic of the Ottawa community is that it is actually a community within a community, Ottawa-Hull, which spans two Provinces, Ontario and Quebec. Many Quebec residents work in Ontario and the reverse is also true. Residents of Ottawa-Hull do not always access services in the Province in which they reside. The Province of Quebec has a reputation for affordable accessible child care, but other services for children aged 0-6 are not available. A trend that Ontario service providers are noticing is that Quebec residents are accessing services for their children in Ottawa, such as services offered by the OEYCs. This is creating increased demand for services that are not meeting the current needs of Ontario residents.

Human Resources

Most health and social service agencies have significant service demands but at the same time have very limited budgets. These limited financial resources make it difficult for service providers to hire more staff, even when individuals are available in the local labour market. There are increased expectations placed upon both organizations and staff to continually respond to more issues with existing resources. These additional expectations that are in most cases being dealt with by existing staff are creating long work hours and resulting in staff burnout. The capacity of organizations to do more with their existing human resources is extremely limited.

There are also system-wide human resource issues that require attention both at the provincial level and the local level. The lack of human resources to allow service providers to address service gaps permeates the entire service system in Ottawa. There are system–wide human resource shortages in many professional fields within the health and social service sectors. There is a great need for bilingual or multilingual staff in all professions to appropriately serve the Francophone, Aboriginal and Inuit, and immigrant and newcomer populations in their mother-tongue. There is a lack of nurses, librarians, mental health specialists, speech and language pathologists, and occupational therapists for example, as well as integration advisors and resource consultants to support children with special needs access licensed child care. There is a shortage of Early Childhood Educators (ECE's) that are necessary to offer quality care, expand child care services, and implement integrated early learning programs.

All of these highly trained professionals are required to meet the goals and deliver the service objectives of the Best Start Initiative. Local Best Start Networks can only make minor systems impacts to human resource training and development. Provincial leadership and planning to address human resource shortages in the health and social service sectors is required in partnership with local efforts.
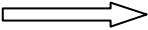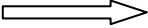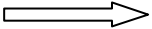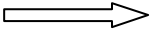
Evaluation Capacity

The Parent Resource Centre has Data Analysis Coordinators (DACs) that are provincially funded and provide the training and development to ensure the best program evaluation tools are used in the seven Ontario Early Years Centres in Ottawa. Effective program evaluation supports evidence-based planning and ensures that programs are designed,

implemented and adjusted to achieve established program goals. The ONC wants to ensure that the Best Start Initiative is developed using effective program evaluation and evidence-based planning. To achieve this additional resources are required to increase the evaluation capacity in Ottawa.

Strategies for System Integration

The Province provided a document that discusses the concepts behind system integration to assist all Best Start Networks to plan and implement system integration in their communities. Part of that document includes a chart that details the continuum of system integration that is titled The Integration Index. The chart follows:

The Integration Index				
Components of System Integration	**Awareness**	**Communication**	**Co-operation**	**Collaboration**
Integration as it moves along the Integration Index	Separate and independent programs/agencies in a community claim to have knowledge of each other's services although no effort is taken by any one of them to organize their activities according to any principles except those that conform to individual agency service missions.	Programs/agencies in the community have an active programme of communication and information sharing.	Programs/agencies use their knowledge of other services to guide and modify their own service planning in order to avoid duplication of service and to obtain a better set of links between services.	Programs/agencies jointly plan the offering of services to families and actively modify their own service activity based on advice and input from their mutual discussion (and with input from relevant stakeholders).
The Parent Experience as they move along the Integration Index	Parents develop awareness of the range of early learning and care programs individually and are responsible for hooking up with each of the appropriate programs. "I am aware of the programs that exist in my community. While I know which agencies exist, I must deal with each agency separately for my needs."	Programs can link parents and children to the array of early learning and care programs within the community. "I can learn about the early learning and care programs that exist in my community through any program within my community. I can call an early learning and care agency and they will help me contact the services/programs that I am requesting so I can access the service."	Parents and/or their children participate in early learning and care programming delivered through a consortium of programs/agencies in a seamless manner. "Agencies will work together with me and my child to provide the appropriate services. They will organize to support my service provision needs. However, I still deal with each program/agency as an independent entity."	Parents and/or their children have a one-stop access to a variety of early learning and care programs that have clear and complementary mandates within a seamless system of services. "I don't have to call around to coordinate appointments with various agencies. I just know if I go there the service(s) I need will be arranged, many of them will be right there, and they'll help arrange the ones that are somewhere else."
The Network Experience as it moves along the Integration Index	Participating network members are aware of the programs represented at the network. However, they plan for their respective individual program.	Participating network members share their program plans with the network. This facilitates understanding of the services provided by each program in the network and who to contact.	Participating network members plan their program within the context of the overall network plan. They coordinate activities to support families; however, they maintain independent goals and vision within the broader vision for the community.	Participating network members plan their programs within a common vision with a clear understanding of their respective goals which fulfill the vision for the community.
The Hub Experience as it moves along the Integration Index	Services are co-located, but operate as independent residents. Service providers know what services are available at the hub.	Services are co-located and service providers share information with one another about practices and understand each others' mandates.	Services are co-located and service providers modify their services as based on experiences within the hub and cooperate to meet the needs of specific families.	Services are co-located and service providers jointly plan and modify services to meet shared goals and to achieve a common vision.

At its May meeting The Ottawa Network for Children placed itself as a Network on the integration index. The Network took this step to document where the Ottawa community currently stands with system integration. This will act as a benchmark for future measurement of progress in implementing system integration in Ottawa.

The Ottawa Community On The Integration Index				
Components of System Integration	Awareness	Communication	Co-operation	Collaboration
Integration as it moves along the Integration Index ⟹	X			
The Parent Experience as they move along the Integration Index ⟹	X			
The Network Experience as it moves along the Integration Index ⟹		X		
The Hub Experience as it moves along the Integration Index ⟹	X			

Network Strategies to Move Forward with System Integration

The Ottawa Network for Children intends that the first step in system integration will be the development of the planning table process. The Ottawa Network for Children will concentrate its efforts on the development of the nine planning tables that have been established in the community. The development of the nine planning tables and the creation of neighbourhood hubs will support system integration efforts. The development of this planning and neighbourhood infrastructure will be essential to address service gaps in the community.

The planning table process is developing awareness and communication among all participants at each table. Some organizations involved in the planning table process already undertake cooperative if not collaborative service delivery. It is anticipated that the development of the planning tables will create movement along the continuum of system integration. Enhanced access to services will begin to be addressed through the planning tables.

This Community Plan includes a description of the role of each partner in the development of the planning table process in Ottawa. It is attached as Annex C.

Leadership of Planning Tables during 2007 to Support System Integration

As previously noted in this plan, at each of the nine planning table meetings the community made recommendations for who should be the lead agency for their respective planning table. At the nine planning table meetings many agencies were identified as potential leaders, including those agencies that had already provided leadership and coordination for the initial meetings.

In April the Ottawa Network for Children considered the community input regarding the best agencies to continue to lead the development of each planning table and support system integration. At the meeting it was agreed that the Network would formally request the agencies that had initially provided leadership to continue in that role. These lead agencies coordinated the initial Overview and Planning Table process in early spring, bringing together new and existing partners to explore the future of the planning table model. The lead agencies for the nine planning tables are organizations with the skills, knowledge and experience to move this initiative forward. All the lead agencies have extensive experience and knowledge of their individual communities and some expertise with a community capacity building model and/or framework.

As part of Phase Two of the Best Start Initiative, the following organizations have been formally asked by the Ottawa Network for Children to provide continued leadership for the nine planning tables to support system integration and the implementation of the neighbourhood hub model.

Nine Planning Table Lead Agencies' Contact Information:

Planning Table	Lead Agency	Address	Telephone
Ottawa South	Ottawa South OEYC	2330 Don Reid Drive	613-737-3716
Ottawa Centre	Ottawa Centre OEYC	475 Evered Avenue	613-728-1839
Ottawa Vanier	Ottawa Vanier OEYC	290 rue Dupuis	613-744-2892
Ottawa West Nepean	West-Nepean OEYC	1365 Richmond Rd.	613-820-4922
Orleans Cumberland	Ottawa Orleans OEYC	210 Centrum Blvd.	613-834-9620
Nepean Carleton	Nepean-Carleton OEYC	1099 Longfields Drive	613-823-7088
West Carleton Kanata	Ottawa-Carleton OEYC	2 MacNeil Court	613-591-3686
Francophone	Grandir ensemble	5, avenue Myrand	613-789-3020
Aboriginal and Inuit	Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start Inc. Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre	12 Stirling Avenue 230 McArthur Avenue	613-724-5844 613-747-2225

In April the Ottawa Network for Children determined that one-time resources would be required to support system integration and the development of the planning table process in the community. One time Best Start planning funds were available in Ottawa to support this effort. The lead agencies were requested to prepare a project plan on the requirements to build an effective system of planning tables using one-time funds that would develop a long-term sustainable system.

At the May ONC meeting two major needs were identified to support effective system integration. The first requirement is for additional resources to support the development for the nine planning tables and the second requirement is for resources to support evaluation capacity. The Parent Resource Centre (PRC) provides leadership in evaluation training and development in the Ottawa community and are a member of the Ottawa Network for Children. The PRC helped to identify the requirements to implement effective evaluation tools to support system integration.

The following information describes the two year project that the Ottawa Network for Children will implement to move system integration forward.

System Integration Project Description

Development of Nine Planning Tables

The goal of this project is to build a system integration framework for all nine planning tables, where neighbourhood hub locations and service integration will be established and sustainable. The mandate of the project will be for two years to plan and monitor the planning tables and to implement the neighbourhood hub model. To achieve this, the 10 lead agencies, the PRC, the City of Ottawa and Success by 6 will support the hiring of the 3 Community Developer positions and 1 DAC to support the development, implementation and long-term plan across the City of Ottawa. The Community Developers will be hired during the summer and fall of 2007 with the intention of a project start date of the fall, 2007.

The 10 lead agencies, the PRC, the City of Ottawa and Success by 6 will support the hiring of the three community developers and one Data Analyst Coordinator (DAC), including the development of job posting, job description and an interview guide. All will ensure that at a minimum, one Community Developer is bilingual (English/French) to serve the Francophone community and one Community Developer is knowledgeable of the Aboriginal and Inuit culture to serve its needs. In addition, all ten lead agencies and the PRC will be involved in the decision of where to house and manage these positions. All ten lead agencies and the PRC will be responsible for supporting the full range of activities as outlined in the project description, including: the development of the plan; establishment of community linkages; monitoring and reporting the progress on a local level; identifying community hub locations with a clear sustainability plan which will include local system integration moving towards service integration that will be community-owned both short and long-term.

The Community Developers will:

- link with Program Development Officer to ensure a balance between developing a consistency across the system while embracing the unique characteristics and needs of individual communities;
- link with Success By 6-Ottawa Network for Children in the development of system integration and work with Success By 6 staff in the development of system integration;
- support the development of the Planning Table framework;
- within a community development approach, mobilize/engage key stakeholders to participate in the planning table mandate at a local level;
- work with planning table coordinators to develop a plan where strategies will be developed to establish and maintain community linkages and relationships local/city-wide;
- develop a plan and strategies for Parent Engagement;
- develop plans that respond to unique community characteristics and needs on a local level;
- engage the education sector/schools in the local plan and implementation;
- develop community education and awareness activities;
- identify, develop and maintain local hub locations;
- local level system integration moving towards service integration;
- establish a community-owned system integration plan both short and long-term
- build a process for sustainability
- roles and responsibilities of the Community Developers may vary according to the specific needs, activities and evolution of each Planning Table.

Program Evaluation and Evidence Based Planning

Traditionally, the Ottawa Data Analysis Coordinators (DACs) have helped build capacity around program evaluation and evidence-based planning in the seven Ontario Early Years Centres. The creation of the Ottawa Best Start Community Plan, identifies the need for evaluation support in the broader early years sector and will increase the DACs' capacity building workload to include all programs in the Ottawa area that serve children 0-6 and/or their parents/caregivers. According to the last implementation of the Community Services Inventory this new workload could include over 350 early years' related programs. In order to ensure a level playing field for all agencies involved in the network, it is integral that each agency have the same or similar capacities with regard to program evaluation and evidence-based planning. Thus, in order for the DACs to be able to accommodate such a large increase in their workload additional resources will need to be added to their team. More specifically, the addition of new staff to accommodate the increased workload is required. The following budget will provide an overview of the financial resources needed to support the Planning Tables in moving forward with system integration.

<u>System Integration Project Budget 2007-2009:</u>

This project is intended to be for two year to assist the Ottawa Network for Children in moving forward with system integration. The Network identified the need for resources and dedicated staff to successfully achieve the goals of this project. Funding is required to provide the resources to successfully implement and operate this project. One-time Best Start Planning funds will be used to finance this project for two-years, at which time the project funds will be exhausted. It is important to note, that the proposed project and budget reflect a one-time (2 year) project that will move the community towards the successful implementation and vision of the Best Start system integration. The intention is that the work of the community developers will provide a sustainable system that can be managed by the Network after two years, without on-going funds.

Planning Tables Expenditures

Items:	Costs:	Total costs:
Staff salaries, benefits and supervision	$75,000 X3 Community Developers X 2 years	$450,000
Office space	$2,500 X3 Community Developers X 2 years	$15,000
Office costs, including telephone, fax, postage	$500 X3 Community Developers X2 years	$3,000
Travel	$1,000 X3 Community Developers X 2 years	$6,000
Program supplies, meeting costs, child care, etc…	$4,000 X3 Community Developers X 2 years	$24,000
Job Advertising	$4,000	$4,000
Translation	$3,000 X 2 years	$6,000
Sub-Total		**$508,800**
Admin costs (10% of sub-total)		$50,800
Planning Tables Total		**$558,800**

DAC Expenditures

Items requested	Approximate cost
1 FTE DAC salary and benefits x 2 yrs contract	$54,160 x 2 yrs = $108,320
7 new laptops with widescreen (3 for current Ottawa DACs, 1 for new DAC, and 3 for new Community Developers)	$1,500 x 7 = $10,500
4 copies* of SPSS software for statistical analyses	$1,800 x 4 = $7,200
Upgrade of current mapping software (MapPoint 2006)	Minimum $350 USD x 2= $700
Postal code conversion file	$1,100
Census Data (if unable to negotiate with City of Ottawa)	$50,000
Text resources (e.g., books)	$1,000
Maps	$500
Increase in professional development budget to accommodate emerging technology	$1,000 x 4 = $4,000
Sub-Total	**$18,320**
Administration costs (10% of sub-total)	$ 13,332
DAC Total	**$196,652**

GRANT TOTAL FUNDING REQUEST (Planning Tables Total + DAC Total)	**$755,452.00**

Ottawa Network for Children System-wide Planning

The primary planning focus of the ONC is at the nine planning tables and how services will be integrated and developed with neighbourhood hubs. Concurrently there are some system-wide issues that the Network has determined as priorities in its workplan. The ONC will establish specific system-wide sub-committees in 2007. The work of some of the subcommittees has been previously noted in the plan but all are listed below for reference:

- Parent Engagement
- Seamless day (Child care integration with JK/SK)
- Communications and Marketing
- Children With Special Needs

These system-wide sub-committees will each address their workplan but will also liaise as appropriately with the nine planning tables.   This will allow the development of effective strategies that can be implemented at the neighbourhood level. Below is a description of the sub-committees that have not yet been described in this plan.

<u>Integration of Early Learning Programs</u>

In 2007, a sub committee will be established to address the creation of a seamless day for JK/SK children. However, the difficulties of working with the Ministry of Education and the operational policies and practices of School Boards remain a challenge. The Province needs to address these issues in order to enable municipalities to move forward. These issues include:

- Change the Ministry of Education funding formula to support child care in schools;
- Encourage child care expansion in existing schools through policy changes;
- Establish school board staff positions to support the creation of a seamless days;
- Develop joint guidelines from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to facilitate planning a seamless day program.

The Ottawa Network for Children encourages the Province to address these issues.

<u>Communications and Marketing Sub-committee</u>

The communications and marketing sub-committee will be created in the fall of 2007. This sub-committee will develop a communications and marketing strategy to support the implementation of system integration. This sub-committee will need to liaise with all other sub-committees and the nine Planning Tables to ensure the communications and marketing requirements of all groups are addressed in the strategy.

The strategy will address ways to increase awareness of the Best Start initiative among all stakeholders, including parents. One tool to increase awareness will be the creation of a visual identity for Best Start hubs in Ottawa. Success By 6 has communications and marketing staff that will assist in the development of this strategy including the creation of a visual identity for Best Start.

<u>Challenges to Implementing System Integration</u>

Funding and a shortage of human resources remain challenges to the implementation of system integration. The Ottawa community is committed to the implementation of system integration and has identified one-time planning funds to address this need. The community has been very fortunate that organizations have agreed to use their existing resources to participate in the Network and send staff to planning table meetings.

There are many city-wide services that operate in Ottawa including some of the primary services for the Best Start initiative such as PSL, IHP and HBHC. How these services are integrated into the neighbourhood planning table process and the cultural linguistic planning tables remains a challenge that will be addressed during the system integration process.

The Hub as a Venue for System Integration

Each Planning Table will develop a hub model for its service area as part of the 2007 planning table work. The Network will develop additional guidelines on how hubs are to be created. It is expected and encouraged that each hub model will be different as each planning table responds to the unique needs of their neighbourhood. Some planning tables could establish many hubs, while other planning tables could develop one hub with additional smaller satellite sites. The Best Start Network will encourage innovation and responsiveness to community needs in the guidelines established for hub development.

The creation of neighbourhood hubs will provide tools that the Network can use to effectively offer services and service access points to parents. Until the planning tables have developed and implemented integrated service plans this will be an obstacle to addressing service gaps in the community. There is still the challenge of a lack of identified financial and human resources to create and operate neighbourhood hubs.   As the planning process develops the Ottawa Network for Children will have additional information to assess how large an obstacle funding will be to the development and operation of neighbourhood hub locations.

Francophone Planning Table Hub Development Process

At this point in the planning process the only Planning Table that has developed an Action Plan is the Francophone Planning Table. Their Action Plan for 2007 is attached as Annex D to this Community Plan. The Francophone Planning Table has identified two Pilot hub sites that they would like to begin in September 2007. Both sites are located in schools, one in a CECLFCE school and the other in a CEPEO school. The Francophone Planning Table has formally requested approval from the two school boards to open the pilot sites. The planned pilot sites are intended to be located at the following schools, pending formal school board approval:

- École élémentaire catholique Terre-des-Jeunes (CECLFCE)
  1303 chemin Fellows.
  Ottawa, ON K2C 2V8

- École élémentaire publique Marie-Curie (CEPEO)
  860 Colson Ave.
  Ottawa, ON K1G 1R7

The Community Plan 2007-08 Development Guidelines requires that the location of any planned neighbourhood hubs be provided as well as the services that are intended to be offered. The Francophone Planning Table has established a subcommittee that is currently in the process of identifying the services to be offered at the two pilot sites. The two pilot sites to be opened by the Francophone Planning Table are the only sites in Ottawa that fall under this requirement.

Remaining Planning Tables Hub Development Process

At the initial meetings for the 7 geographically based Planning Tables and the Aboriginal and Inuit Planning Table a series of potential hub locations were identified by the community. These 8 Planning Tables will review the lists of potential sites as well as the community demographics and requirements to develop the hub model for their planning table. The Planning Tables will then each make recommendations to the Network on the hub model that best suits their circumstances and where they should be located.

Planning in the Ottawa Community

In addition to the planning of services for children 0-6 being done for the Best Start Community Plan by Success By 6 through The Ottawa Network for Children, Success By 6 is also sponsoring the federally funded Understanding the Early Years (UEY) project in Ottawa.

Understanding the Early Years is a national initiative that enables communities to better understand the needs of their young children and families by providing the community with information on family and community factors, which may influence children's development, and on existing community resources. This information is then used to monitor early childhood development outcomes and create effective community supports. Success By 6 provides leadership in both the Best Start and UEY planning processes and provides the opportunity to link the different agendas and planning activity in a coordinated effort. Both Understanding the Early Years (UEY) and Best Start will be the foundation for the development of the Success By 6 Early Years Action Plan for Ottawa. The Early Years Action Plan will focus on improving outcomes for Ottawa's children.

In Ottawa, the community is also currently engaged in the development of a broader Children and Youth Agenda facilitated by the City of Ottawa and United Way/Centraide Ottawa. The goal of the Children and Youth Agenda is to develop as shared vision, guiding principles and framework that will improve access, availability and coordination of services for children and youth. The Children and Youth Agenda will focus on three specific age groups: Early Years (0-6), Middle Years (6-12) and Youth (12-18). The planning currently underway through the above two initiatives under Success By 6 for children 0-6 years old will support the Children and Youth Agenda.

Integration of Child Care With Schools

The Ottawa community has been very successful at locating new child care programs in schools though the Best Start capital expansion. Of all new spaces created, 559 or 71% of them were located in schools. Given the short timeframes to identify and open these spaces the Network is pleased with this accomplishment.

The Ottawa Network for Children has developed a workplan for 2007 to achieve the goals established by the group. The Network has established a goal of Seamless

Integration of Early Learning Development. A sub-committee will be created to work on this goal in September 2007. To advance this goal four items have been identified that the subcommittee will focus on:

1. Identify possible pilot to meet Ottawa Community needs
2. Link system of School Boards
3. Identify existing groups-possible partners
4. Develop an inventory of special services

The colocation of child care programs in schools provides excellent opportunities to create an integrated seamless early learning environment for children. The Network urges the Province to facilitate this development process through targeted funding and policies through the Ministry of Education to support and enable the school boards to implement integrated seamless day programs.

Preschool Speech and Language (PSL) and Infant Hearing Programs (IHP)

The mandate expansion to the IHP included assessing, monitoring and providing communication development services to children from birth to their eligibility to enter Grade 1. The IHP in Ottawa also serves the Champlain area. The IHP has actively participated in the planning table sessions across Ottawa to begin planning for hubs, potential services and system integration. The IHP will continue to plan with the Ottawa Network for Children to achieve the Network's vision and 2007-08 Plan.

Integration into the community continues for the screening component of the IHP program. Screening of all newborns is done in hospital and/or in community clinics post-discharge. The community clinics are held in 6 locations throughout the Ottawa including OEYCs, Community Health Centres and Community Resource Centres and 4 locations throughout the Eastern Counties including health units, Libraries etc. Should the communities decide that re-locating the community clinics into a Hub location make the screening clinics more accessible to clients, IHP will happily consider the request.

PSL has implemented strategies and services to achieve their new objectives as directed by the Province and to support the Best Start network's vision and 2007-08 Plan. Preschool Speech and Language received enhanced funding in order to reduce waitlists, improvement training in the areas of language and literacy through integrated planning with other program areas, and expand service to children with complex needs who do not attend senior kindergarten. This was an expansion of one year of services to the children and families as the previous mandate ended once the child was eligible for Senior Kindergarten.

In order to meet the mandate of this expansion, additional Speech and Language Pathologists, Communicative Disorders Assistants and Community Educators were hired. Wait list reductions are well underway and are focused on children between birth and age of three as the research demonstrates the window of opportunity being the highest for that age group. Children are being served up until they are eligible to enter Grade 1 when,

due to complex needs and medical reasons, they are unable to enter Senior Kindergarten. The hiring of a Community Educator as an addition to our outreach team will support greater training, building of awareness of speech and language and the literacy needs of preschoolers within the ECE community. This increases the capacity of PSL to reach out to the community agencies as well as to respond to the needs of the Hubs once they are determined/piloted. We are currently strengthening our partnerships with the Early Literacy Specialists to promote awareness of the importance of language and literacy rich environments.

The PSL looks forward to extending its outreach and education services into community Hubs once these are determined and implemented within the community. The PSL has actively participated with the IHP in the development of the nine Planning Tables across Ottawa and will continue.

Integration Amongst the Best Start Network Partners

The Ottawa Community has many agencies and organizations providing services to children aged 0-6. Some agencies are small, locally based and run exclusively by volunteers, while others are large professional, highly structured organizations with Memorandums of Understanding's (MOU's) and service protocols in place. The Neighbourhood Inventory of Services attests to the hundreds of organizations providing services in Ottawa.

The Ottawa Network for Children's intention is to focus system integration efforts at the nine Planning Tables that have been established in Ottawa, partially due to the complexity of the service system in the city. The Network believes that this will be the best method to achieve the Network's vision of system integration and improve access for children and families to services in their neighbourhoods or within their cultural/linguistic groups. The Ottawa Network for Children intends to focus system integration efforts at the planning table level, to document the progress at that level and to ensure city wide services are integrated into the local service system models.

Due to the emphasis on the nine Planning Tables in Ottawa and that system integration planning is just beginning, this Community Plan will outline the service integration that currently exists among the city-wide programs that is required by the Province for this Community Plan. The following information has been prepared to provide information about system integration for the following programs or services and has been prepared by the relevant organizations directly.

Child Care

Child Care services are planned in consultation with community agencies providing child care for children 0-12 years old. Local organizations such as the Child Care Council, Home Child Care Network, Ontario Early Years and the Ottawa Child Care Association have been funded in the past 12 months to develop strategic plans. As a condition of funding, these organizations were asked to consider how to align their services with the

provincial Best Start initiative. These associations are all represented on the Ottawa Network for Children and have provided input into the development of the 2007-08 Community Plan.

Opportunities to collaborate on service delivery within community hubs will exist once hubs are established and operational at a future date. Child care agencies have been actively participating on the planning tables in their geographic, linguistic, or cultural areas. As a result child care agencies are establishing new links with other community services that support children 0-6 and their families. The Ottawa Network for Children will establish a subcommittee in 2007 to further examine a seamless day approach to child care and JK/SK programs. Kindergarten and child care programs that are already co-located and communicating regularly will be encouraged to identify ways to cooperate in planning a curriculum for children attending both programs.

Mechanisms such as Memorandums of Understanding and service protocols will be developed between child care services and other Best Start partners to support collaborative service delivery. This practice is in place in the Ottawa community for services for children with special needs and will be built on to align hub and child care services.

Implementation challenges to the integration of child care with other Network partners include:
- Lack of space in schools to establish community hubs as envisioned in the Best Start initiative;
- Lack of commitment by some school boards to consider the use of available space for either licensed child care or community hubs;
- High demand for support services for children with special needs to facilitate integration into licensed child care programs.

Strategies to address these challenges include:
- Working directly with schools identified in hub planning areas and engaging school staff in the planning process;
- Piloting effective seamless day programs in various school sites to demonstrate the positive impact on improved outcomes for children in school and the community;
- Allocation of additional provincial funding in 2007-08 for supports for children with special needs.

Ontario Early Years Centres

Currently, the Ottawa Early Years Centre structure is comprised of 7 OEYCs; 7 Satellite organizations as well as 4 city-wide services within the Ottawa Early Years funding stream. Members of this structure play an integral role in setting the strategic direction of OEYC services. The identification of community needs is conducted through community consultations, data collection and analysis as well as in consultation with our regional counterparts.

In response to the request by the local Best Start Planning Table (ONC), OEYCs have been asked to take a lead in the system integration and community hub planning process. With the current knowledge, experience and ability as well as with sufficient financial resources, the OEYC's can move the community planning process forward with the development of a locally integrated system of services.

OEYCs currently offer community and neighborhood based community programs and services. For the past 5 years, OEYCs have strategically developed early years services in locations throughout the community, where there were no previous services or built on existing service models.

As the Best Start Plan unfolds and local community planning occurs, OEYCs' are committed to supporting, dedicating available resources and delivering services in hubs, that fall within their mandate. Where there is no request for service delivery in a hub location or where there is no service capacity of the OEYCs based on the lack of resources, OEYCs are committed to providing hubs with outreach support and access to information and referral as well as communication mechanisms to ensure continuity of service delivery. OEYCs have been given the mandate to facilitate service integration and the development of hubs. In doing so, we will work towards establishing a strong sense of community ownership, with clear mechanisms to evaluate, measure and plan for continued services and capacity to respond to community needs.

Currently, OEYCs have existing service agreements with other partners within the Best Start network. As the Best Start Plan unfolds, it is anticipated that additional agreements would be developed in order to respond to local planning needs.

The following chart identifies implementation challenges of the OEYC's with different stakeholders and the strategies to overcome these challenges.

Stakeholders	Challenges	Strategies
Overall	▪ The sharing of information regarding political climate; different mandates; lack of funding; salaries and turnover; retention of qualified staff ▪ Resources are required to balance direct service delivery with community engagement	▪ Piggy back on existing models of services delivery; integrate plans for Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC), First Words and integrate mandates of all children's services to provide a seamless continuum of services for families ▪ Consider a review of current core OEYC services ▪ Share resources to ensure sustainability

Stakeholders	Challenges	Strategies
	▪ *Challenges exist with legislation. Various governments have different views and support for OEYC mandate*	▪ *Recognize our capacity*
Parents	▪ *Rural parent engagement* ▪ *Transportation* ▪ *Large geographical area* ▪ *Child care* ▪ *Universal mandate but unable to universally meet needs – specialized services*	▪ *The priority is to bring education to parents that are using the services* ▪ *Adopt a model of "Welcome Wagon" to facilitate and encourage sharing of information* ▪ *Be creative and consider outreach /home visits that are proven to provide closer links with families & services* ▪ *Consider integration of HBHC as part of OEYC*
Children with special needs	▪ *Specialized services* ▪ *Resources and services* ▪ *Individual requests*	▪ *Explore the possibility of external service partners providing these services in collaboration with OEYCs* ▪ *Increase financial and human resources to respond to increase in child care services' demand and need*
OEYCs	*Capacity to develop service integration and hub model framework* *Demand for services exceeds financial and human resource capacity* *Our services are driven by our mandate*	*Request for 2 year financial support to develop model and sustainability plan* *Work towards successful service integration at a community level* *Explore opportunity to make changes to mandate based on community needs*
Aboriginal	▪ *Access to services*	▪ *Increase education and awareness*

Stakeholders	Challenges	Strategies
	▪ **Trust factor**	▪ **Provide integrated services and** ▪ **Facilitate and encourage the sharing of information** ▪ **Allow time to foster trust**
	Ability to reach, integrate and support francophone families throughout the city and in neighbourhoods	**Ensure joint planning with aboriginal planning table**
Francophone	**Ability to reach, integrate and support francophone families throughout the city and in neighbourhoods**	**Ensure joint planning with the francophone planning table**

<u>Preschool Speech and Language (PSL) and Infant Hearing Programs (IHP)</u>

The PSL and IHP staff had the pleasure of attending the local Best Start Planning Tables to hear and provide input into the different communities' needs and is excited about the opportunities for further partnership building and service provision as the locally integrated system continues to evolve. It will remain an active member of the Network as the determination of Hub locations unfolds. The Network has noted the importance of ensuring that the three core services (speech/language, infant hearing, blind/low vision), sponsored through Pinecrest Queensway Health Community Services are visible at the Best Start Planning Tables. As the details become available for the new blind/low vision program they will be provided to the Ottawa Network for Children.

The PSL services have a strong history rooted in partnerships with the community. Prior to the mandate expansion and funding increase, it provided intervention services in 7 different community locations including Community Health Centres, Community Resource Centres and Ottawa Children's Treatments Centres. It also provided services to harder to reach populations in their homes or in the day care environment. It also partnered with OEYCs, daycare centres, home childcare provider agencies, homes for young parents, Aboriginal and Inuit service agencies just to name a few and provides services in both English and French and other languages with the use of interpreters when necessary.

The expanded mandate will only strengthen the programs' capacity to respond to community needs both relating to the needs of different regions in the City of Ottawa as well as the different needs of different populations in the City e.g. francophone population, Aboriginal, harder to reach etc. Linkages with existing and new service hubs will continue to grow and formalize as the development of Hubs is conducted. The PSL

is open to hearing the needs of the community and responding by changing current practices as necessary and appropriate.

As mentioned earlier, the integration of IHP into the community continues for the screening component of the program. Screening of all newborns is done in hospital and/or in community clinics post-discharge. The community clinics are held in 6 locations throughout Ottawa including OEYCs, CHCs, CRCs etc and 4 locations throughout the Eastern Counties including health units, Libraries etc. Should the communities decide that re-locating the community clinics into a Hub location makes the screening clinics more accessible to clients, IHP will happily consider the request.

The opportunity for PSL to take part in the local Planning Tables provided a meaningful networking opportunity which will hopefully lead to further collaboration between agencies as the Best Start planning process continues. As said previously, PSL has existing strong partnerships throughout the City of Ottawa and is always seeking to expand the outreach of the program and services into other agencies. Once Hubs are decided upon, PSL will be in a better position to actualize further outreach and service provision into the community based on the Hub community's said needs.

Should the communities decide that re-locating the IHP community clinics into a Hub location makes the screening clinics more accessible to clients, IHP will happily consider the request.

The following are limits that will have to be considered regarding integrating services into Neighbourhood Hubs:

- Human resource limitations will not permit the therapy services to be located in every hub;
- Space requirements (e.g. quiet and large enough location with reception services etc.)
- Location (e.g. must be accessible to a large enough number of families needing speech and language services)

For the new Blind Low Vision (BLV) program the planning process is based on ensuring that BLV services are accessible to families and partnerships built with community agencies/Hubs. BLV planning includes members from the local Best Start Networks which will ensure that services are developed to respond to community needs.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children

The 0 to 6 Programs of Ottawa Public Health include Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, Reproductive Health, and the Early Years Health program These programs work closely together and also link with several other Public Health programs identified in the Mandatory guidelines (eg. vaccine preventable, chronic disease, injury prevention) to promote optimal, physical, cognitive, communicative and psychosocial development in children and provide support to families.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children has always been a co-ordinated, effective and integrated system of prevention, early identification and intervention services for families. Protocols exist with several community partners and new ones could be developed as needed. Initiatives and strategies are adjusted in ongoing collaboration with partners: (eg. CHCRCs, Young single parent agencies, shelters, CAS, hospitals, EYCs, etc). Strategies include: screening, assessment, postpartum support, home visiting by public health nurses and family visitors, referral, service planning and co-ordination, well baby drop ins and liaison.

The Early Years Health Program works collaboratively with parents and other service providers. The priority areas include promoting healthy family dynamics, healthy eating and physical activity, safe and healthy environments, and promoting healthy community capacity. Integrated planning, implementation, and evaluation of programming with other professionals and agencies are accomplished through: workshops, newsletter, training, coordination and participation in campaigns and events. An activity that did exist that could be explored would be early child development clinic/strategy.

Optimizing people's health before and during pregnancy, enabling them to have the healthiest babies possible and the best start to parenting possible is a key goal for the *Reproductive Health program.* Ongoing components include: classes for couples, young single women, multicultural, and women who smoke, training, preconception health promotion, curriculum support, development of public policies and outreach to health professionals   Other integrated delivery strategies are being explored to address integration with community partners: healthy pregnancy drop ins, increased outreach to vulnerable groups, working with other prenatal providers to address continuity of services.

Challenges are related to funding of programs and therefore resource allocation. Even though there is some flexibility in addressing community based needs, City Wide programs will need to evaluate on an ongoing basis how to best respond to these needs within their mandate and resource availability.

Infant Development Program

The Ottawa Infant Development Service (IDS) is a component of the Early Childhood Program at the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre. IDS is part of a multidisciplinary team including Early Childhood Consultants, rehabilitation therapists, Social Workers, Psychologists, Developmental Paediatrician and other health care professionals. IDS is an early intervention program that serves families of children from birth to six with a developmental delay or disability or who are at risk for delay. Services are delivered in home, Centre or group based settings. IDS has formed many community partnerships with other programs serving families of preschool children to increase access for families of children with special needs to community programs.

The following opportunities exist to further integrate the planning process of IDS with the development of a locally integrated system of services:

- Participation of IDS and OCTC staff at planning days for neighbourhood hubs;
- Participation of IDS staff at Strategic planning for OEYC;
- OCTC Outreach workers meet with OEYC staff to plan services for children with special needs;
- Participate in Family Support Network;
- Develop Outreach Plan for IDS with input from community partners based on identified needs taking into consideration availability of resources;
- OCTC does environmental scan for Strategic Planning, includes information about Best Start to determine priorities and assess impact on OCTC;
- IDS staff to participate in subcommittee of Best Start for children with special needs;
- IDS staff participate on Regional French Language Best Start Network as representative of OCTC;
- Program has linkages with community agencies such as CHC's, OEYC's, Family Resource Centres and their satellites.

The opportunities for IDS to engage in collaborative service delivery within future community hubs are as follows:

- All linkages and collaborations will be based on resources available and capacity to implement these collaborations;
- Possibilities may include: offering bilingual specialized drop in play groups in geographic areas to promote easier access for families of children with special needs;
- Offering therapy groups at East and West locations for OCTC clients in the hub locations e.g. Speech, Tools for School;
- Opportunities to introduce families to community resources and support inclusion;
- Provide consultation support (early identification and screening) to community hubs as needed for at risk or underserved populations as determined by community needs;
- Provide parent education, staff training and resources as required related to children with special needs;
- Bilingual services are provided. Opportunities for collaboration exist with Francophone hubs to be determined by community needs and resources available;
- Build a process for ongoing evaluation regarding community demands/needs for families of children with special needs at specific hub locations.

The following opportunities exist to develop mechanisms to facilitate collaborative service delivery between IDS and other Best Start partners:

- Service protocols have been developed with service providers serving joint clients e.g. Children's Integration Support Services, Autism Intervention Program, CNIB, First Words, CCAC
- MOUs have been developed for joint programs such as Specialized play groups or use of space for groups outlining roles and responsibilities, resources and liability
- Participation in community networks and committees related to children's services

The following implementation challenges and/or barriers exist for IDS to move forward with the community's vision for an integrated system of services as well as strategies to address these challenges:

- Barriers for families accessing services include transportation; medical and therapy appointments for children with complex needs; child care for siblings; families not accessing mainstream services;
- Strategies include: Provide funding for transportation to support access to service; Provide flexible programs at various times and days; support fathers, grandparents, extended family and family support individuals to attend programs; and develop outreach strategies to build relationships with marginalized or hard to serve populations;
- Challenge: Waiting Lists for Services: assessment, intervention, child care and preschool programs. There is a lack of qualified staff and multiple wait lists for children waiting for different services;
- Strategies include: Encourage families on waiting lists to attend specialized drop in programs; offer Parent education and support groups for newly diagnosed and undiagnosed. Link with colleges and universities to provide training to students; provide training to community early childhood educators;
- Barrier: Adequate specialized supports for child care. Children undiagnosed are accessing child care and child care staff are requesting consultation support from IDS. Another barrier is children with behavioural issues. Some children are not accepted into programs, child care staff require training and support. Families not qualifying for subsidy for children to access child care programs;
- Strategies: Provide funding to support therapy and early intervention services for children with special needs in child care programs. Provide additional training to child care staff, provide parent training, parent to parent mentoring and support. Review and evaluate eligibility criteria for subsidies and determine number of families of children who are not able to access child care;
- Challenge: Increasing number of children with Autism and ASD who are not eligible for services from the Autism Intervention Program;
- Strategy: Provide funding to support therapy and early intervention services for children with Autism. Provide group based services to promote social and communication skill development in EYC with support of specialized therapists and Consultants;
- Challenge: medically fragile children and accessing programs. Strategy is to develop more respite programs in partnership with the City of Ottawa Recreation Department at locations accessible to families;

- Challenge: Lack of qualified experienced recreational staff for programs for children with special needs. Strategy is to develop training program for recreational staff.

Conclusion

The Ottawa community was very successful at establishing partnerships and implementing the goals of Phase One of the Best Start Initiative. The Ottawa Network for Children has developed a sound implementation strategy for system integration using community development principles. The Ottawa Network for Children has allocated one-time funding for the development of its nine Planning Tables and to ensure evaluation capacity is created to implement evidence-based planning. The 2007-08 Community Plan outlines a solid framework to develop system integration and to create community hubs.

Glossary of Terms

CAAG	Community Advisory Action Group
CAS	Children's Aid Society
CÉPÉO	Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario
CECLFCE	Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est
CHC	Community Health Centre
CHEO	Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
CISS	Children's' Integration Support Services
CMSM	Consolidated Municipal Service Manager
CRC	Community Resource Centre
CSI	Community Services Inventory
DAC	Data Analysis Coordinator
ECE	Early Childhood Educator
EDI	Early Development Instrument
ELCC	Early Learning and Child Care
HBHC	Healthy Babies, Healthy Children
IHP	Infant Hearing Program
IDP	Infant Development Program
JK	Junior Kindergarten
MCSS	Ministry of Community and Social Services
MCYS	Ministry of Children and Youth Services
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHLTC	Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
NCB	National Child Benefit
OCCDSB	Ottawa Carleton Catholic District School Board
OCDSB	Ottawa Carleton District School Board
OCTC	Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre
OEYC	Ontario Early Years Centre
PSL	Preschool Speech and Language (First Words)
SB6	Success By 6

SK   Senior Kindergarten

UEY   Understanding the Early Years