

District of Sault Ste. Marie  
Community Proposal

**Journey Together**

**Needs Assessment**

September 2017

## **Community Profile**

(to be completed by CMSM/DSSAB following engagement with planning partners)

### **1) Please describe how you engaged and consulted with partners within your community in this process, as well as your approach to continued engagement.**

The District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board (DSSMSSAB) in partnership with Waabinong Head Start Family Resource Centre and the Indigenous Friendship Centre contracted NORDIK Institute to facilitate community consultations in the form of focus groups with off-reserve Indigenous families with children 0-6 years of age as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Early Years Service Providers. NORDIK Institute facilitated 5 meetings with various Early Years service providers and collected input from Indigenous families with children at 4 separate events, including official focus groups, a 'world café,' and two particularly successful input sessions at the Indigenous Friendship Centre's Early Years Fair and Waabinong Head Start's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration at which more than 100 attendees took part respectively. A total of 110 unique Indigenous community members engaged in the consultation processes overall. The resulting Community Strategic Plan for enhancing Early Years Programs for Indigenous Children and Families is attached for reference.

Participants in the Service provider consultations consisted of supervisors currently working in child care centres, Social Service staff, Best Start Network members and partners from other child serving programs in the District of Sault Ste. Marie. Planning Partners included representatives from the DSSMSSAB, the Sault Ste. Marie Indigenous Friendship Centre, Waabinong Head Start and Family Resource Centre, Métis Nation of Ontario (Historic Sault Ste. Marie Council) and Nog-Da-Win-Da-Min Child and Community Services.

Continued community engagement will be guided by the Early Years System Management Table and the local Early Years Community Planning Table (formally called Best Start Network) which will include Indigenous providers and develop subcommittees such as a Program Implementation Steering Committee and the Indigenous Service Providers Network to assist in provision and oversight of services. Meetings of the Program Implementation Steering Committee will initially take place monthly with an optional break during the summer months, or as needed.

**2) Who lives in and/or accesses early years programs and services in this region (please support with demographic data if available)?  
What are the available child care and family programs and services?  
What are the gaps/needs affecting Indigenous children and families?**

The 2011 Census identified a population of 79,800 for the Sault Ste. Marie Census Agglomeration, which includes Prince Township, the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Rankin Location 15D of Batchewana First Nation, Garden River First Nation, Macdonald, Meredith, and Aberdeen Additional Township, and Laird Township. The largest population centres in the Sault Ste. Marie CA overlap with the catchment of the District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board, however the District catchment does not include Macdonald, Meredith, and Aberdeen Additional (Population: 1,464), or Laird Township (Population: 1,057) to the east, however it does extend northward into a portion of the Algoma Unorganized North Part census subdivision up to Montreal River.

According to Zuppa, Hoffman, & Montgomery (2015), there are approximately 5,155 children between the aged 0 to 6 within the District of Sault Ste. Marie. Of these, 2,695 are female and 2,825 are males. The proportion of lone-parent families in the Sault Ste. Marie CA was also higher than the provincial average, with 18.3% of families headed by single parents in Sault Ste. Marie compared to the 15% provincial average.

Within the Sault Ste. Marie CA, a total of 8,065 people identified as Aboriginal, making up approximately 10.1% of the total populations. Of these individuals, 4,840 identified as First Nations, accounting for over half (60%) of the Aboriginal population of the Sault Ste. Marie CA. Another 2,995 identified as Metis, accounting for a further 36.6% of the Aboriginal population. A small percentage (2%) reported multiple or other Aboriginal responses. Nearly a quarter of all Aboriginal persons in Sault Ste. Marie were under the age of 15 in 2011. The two age groups with the highest proportion of Aboriginal people in the Sault Ste. Marie CA in 2011 were the 0-4 and 5-9 age groups with 20.1% and 17.8% respectively (Zuppa, Hoffman & Montgomery, 2015).

For off-reserve Indigenous families, Waabinong Head Start and the Sault College Child and Family Centre are the only licensed Early Years service providers with programs specifically designated for Indigenous children, and each provider has a significant waiting list.

Rankin Location 15D and Garden River First Nation each have a primarily Indigenous resident population, with the 2011 NHS Aboriginal Population Profile identifying a total aboriginal identity population of 1,120 in Garden River, however the data was suppressed for Rankin Location 15D due either to reasons of data quality, confidentiality, or being insufficiently enumerated. Within the City of Sault Ste. Marie, census tracts consisting of the city's downtown and areas west of

Korah Road and east of Goulais Avenue reported Aboriginal Identity populations between 15 and 30%, the highest rates within the City. These areas of the city also reported the highest proportion of youth under the age of 18 living in low income families, accounting for 55.2% of those living in the Downtown area and 46.9% in each of the Garden River and Rankin Reserves (Zuppa, Hoffman, & Montgomery, 2015).

The EDI is a questionnaire that measures kindergarten aged child development and school readiness. "School readiness", refers to the child's ability to meet the task demands of school. Although the data generated in the 2014/2015 implementation year does not address results for Indigenous children per se, the community as a whole shows some significant vulnerability across the population.

The **Social Competence** domain measures curiosity about the world, eagerness to try new experiences, knowledge of standards of acceptable behaviour in a public place, ability to control own behaviour, appropriate respect for adult authority, cooperation with others, following rules, and the ability to play and work with other children.

- In 2014/2015 in Sault Ste. Marie, the proportion of children deemed vulnerable in relation to social competence rose to 13.4% with the West and East Central Sault Ste. Marie neighbourhoods showing the highest vulnerability rates at 19.8% and 22.1% respectively. Ontario's average is 9.6% (Zuppa, Hoffman, & Montgomery, 2015).

The **Physical Health & Well-Being** domain measures gross and fine motor skills (holding a pencil, running on the playground, motor coordination), adequate energy levels for classroom activities, independence in looking after own needs, and daily living skills.

- This is down from nearly one in four (23.8%) in 2011/2012. In Sault Ste. Marie, vulnerability has traditionally been the highest in this domain as compared to all others; however in 2014/15 the vulnerability rate decreased 5.4 percentage points from the previous implementation. The West Central SSM and East Central SSM Neighbourhoods had the highest vulnerability rates in this domain at 25.7% and 26.5% respectively.(Zuppa, Hoffman, & Montgomery, 2015).

The **Emotional Maturity** domain measures ability to reflect before acting, a balance between being too fearful and too impulsive, the ability to deal with feelings at the age-appropriate level, and empathic responses to other people's feelings.

- In 2014/15, 16.4% of children in Sault Ste. Marie were deemed vulnerable in this domain compared to the Ontario rate of 10.3%. The West SSM

(16.7%), SSM North Unorganized (17.8%), West Central SSM (17.8%), West SSM (20%) and East Central SSM (31%) Neighbourhoods had vulnerability levels considerably higher than the province as a whole (Zuppa, Hoffman, & Montgomery, 2015).

The **Language & Cognitive Development** domain measures reading awareness, age-appropriate reading and writing skills, age-appropriate numeracy skills, the ability to understand similarities and differences, and the ability to recite back specific pieces of information from memory.

- In 2014/15, 7.1% of children in Sault Ste. Marie were deemed vulnerable in this domain, lower than the Ontario rate of 9.6% but up from 6.3% in 2011/12 and from 4.3% in 2008/09. The highest rate of vulnerability on this domain is found in West Central SSM at 14.9% (Zuppa, Hoffman, & Montgomery, 2015).

The **Communication Skills & General Knowledge** domain measures skills to communicate needs and wants in socially appropriate ways, symbolic use of language, storytelling, and age-appropriate knowledge about the life and world around.

- In 2014/15, 8% of children in Sault Ste. Marie were deemed vulnerable in this domain, which is lower than the Ontario rate of 9.6% and down from 10.6% in 2011/12. West Central, East Central and West SSM were the highest risk areas for this domain, at 10.9%, 11.5% and 10.9% respectively (Zuppa, Hoffman, & Montgomery, 2015).

While data for Sault Ste. Marie pertaining to other vulnerability factors of Indigenous youth is not available, national statistics demonstrate that 13% of off reserve First Nations children aged 2-5 were reported by parents or guardians to have speech and language difficulties. Three quarters of those children were diagnosed by a medical professional while only four out of five of those same children had ever received treatment (Findlay & Kohen, 2012). Another consideration pertaining to speech and language delays is the incidence of ear infections, which may become a reoccurring health issue or result in permanent impairment if left untreated. Indigenous children in Canada have the highest occurrence of this health issue at a rate between 7 and 31% (Ball, 2009).

The 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey administered by Statistics Canada demonstrates that Indigenous children throughout Ontario have higher rates of special needs, with 13% of children between the ages of 6 and 11 recording a learning disability, 7.3% with attention deficit disorder, 7.3% with emotional, psychological or nervous difficulties, 13% with speech or language difficulties, and nearly 14% with other long-term conditions such as autism, diabetes, developmental disability, or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) (Statistics Canada, 2017). In Ontario, more than 500,000 children and youth are estimated

to live with at least one mental health disorder, with FASD estimated to be as high as 20% among Aboriginal children (Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, 2013). While similar statistics were not tracked for non-Indigenous children in the same age ranges during the same period, these rates compare, for example, with 2.3% of the general population of Canada reporting a learning disability according to the Canadian Survey on Disability (Statistics Canada, 2014)

The Aboriginal Children in Care Working Group (2015) indicates that “48% of 30,000 children and youth in foster care across Canada are Aboriginal children, even though Aboriginal peoples account for only 4.3% of the Canadian population” (Aboriginal children in care working group, 2015).

When working with First Nations’ families where children may be dealing with special needs (FASD, delayed cognitive or language development, etc.) service providers and community members need to understand the intergenerational impacts of the socio-economic trials endured by Indigenous families stemming from the impact of colonialism and the residential school system. The socio-economic impacts of assimilationist approaches to Indigenous peoples have led to situations where Indigenous families’ needs are not being properly served. Culturally appropriate, holistic and strength-based approaches, assessments and screening tools need to be available to families who have youth requiring special needs support (Anderson, 2015). Currently there are “no monitoring, screening, diagnostic tools that have been validated for use with Indigenous children” (Ball, 2009).

*A listing of children’s services including child care and family support available within the District of Sault Ste. Marie can be found in Appendix 1.*

Gaps/Needs affecting Indigenous children & families fell into eight distinct categories: Culture; Indigenous Language; Land and Physical Activities; Programming; Social Interaction; Family Supports; Service Provision and Collaboration; and Transportation and Location.

#### Culture:

With respect to culture, there was a strong desire to see more programming and opportunities to learn and engage in traditional practices, ceremonies and teachings. Participants identified a number of examples of practices they wished to see, including but not limited to: beadwork; hand drumming; singing; learning traditional and ceremonial songs and dances; making regalia, moccasins, drums, shiishiigwan (shakers), and other leatherwork or traditional crafts; and introductions to pow wow protocols and dance styles. It was also emphasized that programming should be age-appropriate for the children, providing something for each age level.

Ceremonies that families want to see include, but are not limited to: sweatlodges; berry fasts; and receiving one's name, clan and colours. Desired teachings include, but are not limited to: men's and women's roles; creation stories; traditional medicines; water teachings and more.

#### Language:

The use and promotion of Indigenous languages was also accorded significant value. Interventions that would support the acquisition and promotion of Indigenous languages include providing classes for families; staging language nests where all communication is provided in the target language; bringing native speakers into the centres and providing opportunities for children to converse with speakers. It is noteworthy that the relationship between cultural practices such as singing and drumming or land based activities to the use of an Indigenous language in fulfilling these activities occurs in concert with one another thereby the increase of Indigenous language use is inevitable. This association is also applicable to the involvement of elders in Early Years programming and social interaction opportunities.

#### Land and Physical Activities:

Land and Physical Activities were tied closely to the cultural needs of families and children. Activities such as berry and traditional medicine picking, nature walks, gardening, fishing and hunting excursions, and instruction on basic survival skills for children were among those that families wished to see and were integral to cultural maintenance. The teachings connected to these activities also featured prominently in responses from families, emphasizing the need for such activities to integrate cultural education. Examples included teachings about seasons, about why certain animals exist, and the uses of different medicines. The critical dimension of such activities is to promote and maintain the children's sense of interconnection with the natural world.

Additionally families also wanted to see activities that encourage active, healthy lifestyles, including various sports such as swimming, hockey, soccer, and curling, and seasonal activities such as hiking, biking, skating, snowshoeing, and going for trips to parks.

A variety of other recreational activities were proposed, including a number of games, reading and movie screenings. Some additional expressed a desire for outdoor programming on the weekends.

#### Programming:

As is clear from a number of needs identified above, there was a clear desire for additional programming. In particular, participants also expressed strong interest in evening and weekend programming as well as summer programs.

In addition to cultural, language and outdoor programming, there was interest in health programs, such as infant wellness, longer contact with prenatal workers and education about post- and ante-partum depression. Programs that encourage or incorporate healthy eating and nutrition education were also of great interest.

A number of participants also emphasized the need to incorporate role-modelling and fostering intergenerational relationships into early years programming. Providing opportunities for children to interact with and learn from elders would help to build and maintain a broader sense of community throughout the immediate region while contributing to culture and Indigenous language use development and maintenance as well. Some expressed a desire to bring community leaders into the program in similar fashion.

#### Social Interaction:

Opportunities for social interaction were highly valued by many participants. Families placed high value on their children being able to play with others and in being able to spend time playing and interacting with their children.

#### Family Supports:

Participants identified a number of family supports they wished to see emerge or continue. These included family participation in children's programming and playing a role in identifying programming opportunities; financial support, such as funds to supplement groceries for expectant mothers or for emergency purposes; educational programming for families, including cultural teachings, financial literacy, and child wellness; and perhaps most significantly, mental health supports for children. A number of participants identified the need for more quality mental health specialists for children and youth.

#### Service Provision & Collaboration:

Organizational concerns ranged from promoting greater collaboration with other agencies, to the adoption of certain approaches in management and ECE practice, to ensuring that practices and resources are culturally sensitive.

Opportunities for greater collaboration include ensuring events are not overlapping (where it is avoidable), developing more formal partnerships, and meeting regularly to increase awareness of each other's activities and providing opportunities for innovation. Some suggested partnerships included: the Public Library, Parent & Family Literacy Centres, the Indigenous Friendship Centre, and the Metis Nation of Ontario's children's program.



Some respondents had specific ideas of the kinds of practices they wanted to see applied, including trauma informed service practice, and a move away from a “pathological” model of child care and service to a strengths-based model. The calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were also cited as being important to informing the kinds of services and programs offered. Among the calls to action most relevant to the community is the call for federal, provincial and Indigenous governments to “develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families” (p. 2). While the needs assessment itself is largely tasked with identifying means for ensuring the cultural appropriateness of the service, specific suggestions from families and service providers emphasized the need for ensuring resources such as books, crafts, toys, and any lessons did not reinforce negative or inaccurate stereotypes or images of Indigenous peoples, and that such resources be provided that address culturally relevant topics utilizing Indigenous language that provide Indigenous children positive images and associations with their culture.

Many emphasized the need for services to be inviting, and that service providers be willing to talk and listen to parents and children, and that the care children receive be patient and kind, with corrections done in a calm manner. Many families noted they were not always aware of the events and services available, and that there should be greater resources for outreach and advertising to increase that awareness. Similarly, there were questions about the accessibility of services, with some Best Start Hubs located in schools run by the separate Huron Superior Catholic District School Board, for instance, some families were not sure if they were eligible for the services offered by the Hub.

#### Transportation & Location:

Transportation was an issue for a number of families. Some indicated the need for free bus passes for families with children between 0 and 6 years of age, and that transportation was especially lacking for families living in Garden River or the West End. Some also indicated that the timing of bus schedules was not conducive for them attending programming.

Physical space was also a concern, with some expressing the need for additional space for Indigenous child care services and programming. Most participants did not specify a location, but when it was offered, among the suggestions were the city’s west end and generally outside of downtown.

### **3) What are the desired outcomes for Indigenous children and families in this region with respect to child care and child and family programs? Short term and long term goals?**

The long-term goal for child care and child and family programs in the District of Sault Ste. Marie is to support off-reserve Indigenous children and families with accessible, Indigenous-led Early Years centres/services that strengthen their relationship to Indigenous culture, language and contribute to healthy child development.

Short-term goals for the actualization of this vision include:

- Implement Indigenous culture and language based programming in Early Years services;
- Increase Indigenous organizations capacity to lead and deliver Early Years services;
- Provide wrap-around support services for Indigenous families; and
- Clear communication through networking and advocacy.

The desired outcomes for Indigenous children and families in Sault Ste. Marie District with respect to child care and child and family programs include:

- All Early Years service providers are equipped with cultural resources;
- All Early Childhood Educators are aware of Indigenous Culture;
- Early Years Hubs (to be rebranded as Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres) in 5/10 locations deliver cultural programming regularly;
- Families have access to Indigenous culture and language within an Indigenous led Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centre;
- Waabinong Head Start is expanded & re-located;
- Long-term Indigenous staff delivers Early Years services;
- Indigenous representation in oversight of Early Years service delivery;
- Active support for children during school transitions;
- Connection/access to specialized services;
- Programming suitable for all ages;
- Services are delivered on location;
- Indigenous families receive the support in making informed decisions regarding their child(ren)'s school integration;
- Early Years Organizations increase competency to deliver services to Indigenous families and children;
- All staff within Early Years organizations are more culturally aware as a result of intentional processes for knowledge transfer;
- Indigenous early years service providers are supported through the exchange of knowledge and resources.

**4) Is there any other relevant information you would like us to know about child care and child and family programs in the local community?**

Nog-da-win-da-min Child and Family Services have been mandated as of April 1, 2017, to assume full responsibility as the child welfare authority for members of the North Shore Tribal Council member First Nations (Batchewana, Garden River, Thessalon, Mississauga, Serpent River, Sagamok, and Atikameksheng Anishnawbek), including off-reserve Indigenous children and their families in Sault Ste. Marie. The Children's Aid Society of Algoma was previously responsible for all child protection services within this region.

Currently, Waabinong Head Start Family Resource Center and Sault College Child and Family Centre are the only culturally relevant and Indigenous-specific licensed child care providers in Sault Ste. Marie.

Waabinong provides services for 24 children in the morning and 24 children in the afternoon. As a result, families who are working or going to school find that the ½ day spaces do not meet their needs. Waabinong Head Start's enrolment is also prioritized to deliver opportunity to families with children who are at-risk and /or associated with involvement with child welfare organizations. Almost 100% of the children attending Waabinong Head Start receive outside agency intervention and are involved with child protection services, and approximately three quarters report having special needs in the form of cognitive, behavioural, or speech difficulties. Additionally, Waabinong does not have access to outdoor recreational space.

Waabinong has not received any additional funding since the Head Start program's initiation more than 20 years ago. Consequently inflation has resulted in wage suppression that exacerbates the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff and has caused the program to lose two full time staff positions since its inception. With Nog-Da-Win-Da-Min Family and Community Services assuming responsibility as the child welfare authority for members of the North Shore Tribal Council First Nations as of April 2017, Waabinong is anticipating a much higher number of referrals as the new authority has greater familiarity with Waabinong's services.

Sault College Child and Family Centre provides 31 (15 toddler & 16 preschool) designated Indigenous spaces. Because of the location, these spaces are mainly accessed by Indigenous students enrolled at the College. Parents outside of the college system are less likely to find these spaces accessible. The service is a collaboration with the College's Native Education program and the curriculum incorporates nature-based experiences, outdoor play and components of Indigenous culture. There is currently limited capacity to expand at this location.

**5) What program impacts are important to Indigenous children and families? How could these impacts on children, families and the community be measured? (e.g., assessment of developmental health and well-being at school entry, number of children accessing programs in traditional languages).**

The program impacts that are important to Indigenous children and families are the opportunities to participate in family programming, including culture, language and land based activities. Families also believe that accessible family support services that aid in behavioural and school support services are beneficial to their children and outreach to parents will increase use of Early Years services and positive social outcomes for children and families.

Common measures that will be tracked include:

- Number of visits made by parents/caregivers and number who attend workshops or other programming at Indigenous OEYCFC;
- Number of first time visits to Indigenous OEYCFC;
- Number of referrals given by the Indigenous OEYCFC;
- Number of children served by WCCC and Indigenous OEYCFC;
- Number of families receiving school transition support services; and
- Number of Child Care and Early Years staff accessing professional development opportunities to increase capacity to serve Indigenous children and families;
- Number of mentoring sessions and staff exchanges; and
- Number of programs that have a cultural or language component offered.

The collection of these statistics will demonstrate the utility of the proposed new and expanded programs through the documentation of demand. Additional measures will be tracked to assess the impact of cultural and language programming specifically.

### Culture Measures

The Cultural Resource Coordinator (CRC) will track the number and frequency of activities and requests for activities, number of guest speakers & lecturers and which pedagogies were utilized (e.g. inquiry and experiential learning) which will indicate the extent of cultural knowledge being shared within the community. The CRC will also encourage and facilitate greater Indigenous involvement on the Implementation Steering Committee by accessing feedback from families utilizing services and supporting participation on this committee. Professional Development of Early Years staff and organizations on topics related to Indigenous culture will also be tracked, as well as the number of culture, language and land based activities offered by each centre.

## Language Measures

Pre-language assessments could measure language proficiency prior to exposure to Indigenous language instruction, however given the very low rates of intergenerational transmission of Indigenous languages in the Sault Ste. Marie District, it is anticipated that the vast majority of children will have no pre-existing level of Indigenous language proficiency. Over time, an assessment tool will be identified to measure children's language use.

Another measurement for language use would be the development of a mentoring or partnering program between adult speakers and non-speakers. The number of participants could be tracked and assessed. The individuals would then be able to deliver the program after they are mentored. Language activities and programming will be tracked by each Ontario Early Years Child and Family Center. Specifics of language programming and assessment will be decided during the implementation process jointly by the Steering committee and the Cultural Coordinator.

**6) Please describe how all of the proposed program(s) address the needs and outcomes identified above, and align with the broader service system plan(s) in your region, existing government direction and priorities (e.g., Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres, increased access to child care and services).**

The Journey Together Plan was developed concurrently with the Early Years System Plan, with some of the input for each plan being gathered from shared community consultations with Indigenous families and coordinated with the consultants hired to conduct the Early Years system plan. There was a strong desire for additional partnerships, resources and knowledge about Indigenous communities, cultures and language for all Early Years service providers and clients. These collaborations also demonstrated a meaningful commitment from all participants to dialogue and engage with one another to support improving programming and services for Indigenous children and families.

The desire for greater integration of Indigenous cultural and language resources also demonstrate the need for a Cultural Resource Coordinator to facilitate connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous services, service providers and communities. The Coordinator will develop and maintain a list of cultural resources, Indigenous language speakers, recognized community elders and knowledge keepers and facilitate their integration into early years programs throughout the District of Sault Ste. Marie.

The proposed Indigenous OEYCFC will provide culturally relevant programming for both children and families facilitated by a team including at least one RECE and a qualified supervisor. A qualified part-time Indigenous language teacher will

also provide Indigenous language instruction and develop interactive programming to encourage both child and family language acquisition and integration of Indigenous language into daily routines. The Indigenous OEYCFC will also house an Outreach Coordinator who will work with the CRC to facilitate discussions between local service providers, Indigenous community stakeholders, and Early Childhood Education instructors at Sault College to integrate Indigenous cultural awareness into ECE training curriculum. They will facilitate training opportunities and staff exchanges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers throughout the District to promote greater awareness of Indigenous culture among Early Childhood Educators who are currently practicing, and increase all early years organizations' competency to deliver services to Indigenous families and children. The Outreach Coordinator will increase awareness of the services available to Indigenous families throughout the area and coordinate the development of a Program Implementation Steering Committee to assist with initial program development as well as a separate network of Indigenous early years' service providers to provide peer support, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and resources, and to identify additional staff support needs and solutions as they arise. The Outreach Coordinator and the School Liaison worker will also facilitate collaborations with Indigenous stakeholders and school boards throughout the district to develop active and coordinated support for Indigenous children transitioning to full-day school. Part of that process will also include providing mentorship and support for Indigenous families to make informed decisions regarding their child(ren)'s school integration.

The proposed Waabinong Child Care Centre will provide children with access to Indigenous culture and language through the presence of an Anishinaabemowin language teacher and will leverage the expertise of Waabinong Head Start's Indigenous Early Years management and staff in providing culturally responsive programming. The program will increase the number of fully-funded spaces for Indigenous children by 37 spaces with services expanded to include before and after-school care. The program will offer child care for a wider range of ages including toddlers and pre-school aged children. Through the presence of a Family Resource Worker, access to support of specialized services on location for children with a variety of special needs will be available. The total operating budget for Waabinong Head Start has remained stagnant since the program's inception more than two decades ago. Consequently inflation has resulted in wage suppression and the loss of two full-time staff since the program's beginning. The proposed program would facilitate efficiencies for Waabinong to increase its overall capacity and reduce its waitlist of 54 high needs children.

The proposed Homeward Bound Child Care Initiative stems from a collaborative community project in which the DSSMSSAB has participated with the IFC, Ontario Aboriginal Housing, Sault College, Algoma University, Métis Nation of Ontario and other Indigenous community organizations to provide key supports such as housing, child care, and access to education for Indigenous single-

mothers to break the cycle of poverty. Providing on-site child care is a vital component to ensuring single-mothers have the opportunity to access the education and training they need to achieve stable employment.

All proposed and expanded programs will employ **How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years** as their guide for child care operations and pedagogy, and each is also aligned with the **Ontario Child Care and Family Support Program Service Management and Funding Guidelines**. The funding model specifically includes consideration to increase access for Indigenous children to licensed child care. In particular, the proposal for fully funded contributions to 37 child care spots with the Waabinong Child Care Centre and 32 spots with the Homeward Bound Child Care Initiative fit the parameters for special purpose funding to support Indigenous children particularly those from families experiencing poverty.

Additionally a portion of materials and professional development funds are specified for Special Needs Resourcing, and the provision of a Family Resource Worker at the proposed Waabinong Child Care Centre will provide the support and care necessary for the disproportionate number of children with special needs that will populate those 69 additional spaces. The new programs also require additional start-up investment in play-based materials to promote children's learning and development through exploration, play and inquiry.

The proposed programs align with recommendations from various commissions dedicated to improving social conditions of and cultural maintenance within Indigenous communities. The development and provision of culturally appropriate family and child care programs through the Waabinong Child Care Centre, the Homeward Bound Child Care Initiative and the Indigenous OEYCFC responds to the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission's** 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Calls to Action to "develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families" and "develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families." Additionally, the opportunities created by the Cultural Resource Coordinator to provide Indigenous cultural programming in all Early Years programs that serve both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children speaks to the **Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's** recommendation 5.4.2 that: *Bodies that represent or serve both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people*

- (a) be proactive and innovative in promoting understanding of Aboriginal issues; and*
- (b) review their own activities to ensure that they contribute to cross-cultural understanding and enhance relations with Aboriginal people*

Similarly the Cultural Resource Coordinator will assist in integrating appropriate elders into the programming offered by Early Years programs, contributing to the fulfillment of RCAP's recommendation 3.5.28 to reinstate elders "to an active role in the education of Aboriginal children and youth." Finally, per recommendation

3.5.3, the new and enhanced programs will “foster the physical, social, intellectual and spiritual development of children, reducing distinctions between child care, prevention and education” while promoting “parental involvement and choice in early childhood education options” by ensuring that all Early Years programs throughout the District of Sault Ste. Marie have some degree of Indigenous cultural and language programming that will make all centres more welcoming and inclusive environments for Indigenous children.

**7) Please describe how the proposed program(s) would increase access to services within your region.**

The proposed programs would significantly increase access to service within our region by increasing the number of child care spots for Indigenous children and provide additional services and service providers to respond to and serve the needs of Indigenous families. The Indigenous OEYCFC would provide services that are not being provided by any other service provider currently within the District of Sault Ste. Marie. Services including family supports, that integrate cultural and language resources within both child care and family service settings, and the development of support and educational networks for Indigenous early years’ service providers would become available. Increased promotional resources will also expand the breadth of Indigenous families aware of both existing services that meet identified needs and the new services introduced to address gaps.

Finally the mentoring component of the current plan will have a profound effect on the ability of all Service Providers to be more culturally sensitive and aware in the development and delivery of services and positively impact the service experience of Indigenous children and families.





	<p>and Early Years development for children 2-5 years of age.</p> <p>Holy Cross offers Early Years development for children 18months to 12 years of age.</p> <p>Ecole Notre Dame du Sault (600 North Street Hub) offers Early Years development for children 18months to 5 years of age, with programming available in French.</p>	<p>North St. in central Sault Ste. Marie  <b>Hours</b> 7:30am to 5:30pm</p>
<p><b>Indigenous Friendship Centre</b></p>	<p>A number of family support programs are offered at the IFC.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aboriginal Healthy Babies Healthy Children program for children up to 6 years of age.</li> <li>- Healthy Kids Program which is a program set out to implement culture based activities to enhance the wellbeing and traditional knowledge of urban Aboriginal children and families.</li> <li>- Aboriginal Prenatal Nutrition Program is geared towards improving the healthy wellbeing of Aboriginal mothers living off-reserve, through education and prevention supports.</li> <li>- Urban Aboriginal Family Support Program provides holistic healing for parents and children in conjunction with traditional teachings, for children ages 0 to 6.</li> <li>- Akwe:go Program offers programming for children aged 7-12. The goal is to provide urban Aboriginal children the support, tools and healthy activities which build upon and foster their inherent ability to make healthy choices.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Location:</b> 122 East Street in downtown Sault Ste. Marie.</p> <p><b>Hours:</b> Monday to Friday from 8:30 - 4:30, with some programming offered after hours.</p> <p><b>Cost/Other details:</b> Some programs require registration.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.ssmifc.com/">http://www.ssmifc.com/</a></p>
<p><b>Nog-Da-Win-Da-Min</b></p>	<p>Services provided include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Genawenman Binojiuk (Alternative Care)</li> <li>- Cultural Services</li> <li>- Mino Madzwin</li> <li>- Prevention services</li> </ul> <p>Nog-Da-Win-Da-Min is the child welfare authority for members of the North Shore Tribal Council First Nations</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Head Office is located at 210 B Gran Street, Rankin Location of Batchewana First Nation.</p> <p><b>Hours:</b> Monday to Friday from 8:30 - 4:30, with some programming offered after hours.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.nog.ca/">http://www.nog.ca/</a></p>

	(Batchewana, Garden River, Thessalon, Serpent River, Sagamok, and Atikameksheng Anishnawbek). They assist communities with their responsibility to strengthen families and communities for the safety and well-being of children by providing community based services grounded in Anishnawbe values.	
<b>Metis Nation of Ontario (Sault Ste. Marie)</b>	<p>Programming includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MNO Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program for families with children aged 0-6</li> <li>- Canadian Prenatal/Postnatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)</li> </ul> <p>Programs focus on preparation for parenting, prenatal and postnatal care.</p> <p>Programs are voluntary and open to any Indigenous family.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> 26 Queen St. East in downtown Sault Ste. Marie.</p> <p><b>Hours:</b> Monday to Friday from 8:30 - 4:30, with some programming offered after hours.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.metisnation.org/">http://www.metisnation.org/</a></p>
<b>Child and Community Resources Algoma Region</b>	<p>Programs and Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skill building services</li> <li>- Applied Behavioural Analysis Workshops for Parents</li> <li>- Applied Behavioural Analysis Workshops for Professionals</li> <li>- Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness Presentations</li> <li>- Brief Behavioural Consultations</li> <li>- Social and Life Skills Groups</li> <li>- Intensive Services</li> </ul> <p>CCR and its partners offer a continuum of services ranging from community services accessible to all children, to specialized services for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and/or developmental needs. CCR spans across Northern Ontario and local services are coordinated by a local intake agency, with which the child must be registered to be considered eligible for programming. <b>Community Living Algoma</b> is the Intake Agency for the Algoma District.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Intake is provided by Community Living Algoma at 99 Northern Ave. East in Sault Ste. Marie's North End.</p> <p><b>Hours:</b> Dependent on intake organization.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.ccrconnect.ca/">www.ccrconnect.ca/</a></p>
<b>Community Living Algoma (CLA)</b>	CLA's Child, Youth and Family Services focus on providing support to children and youth with an intellectual disability and/or autism spectrum disorder, as well as their families. Programs include:	<p><b>Location:</b> 99 Northern Ave. East in Sault Ste. Marie's North End.</p> <p><b>Hours:</b> Monday to Friday from 8:30 - 4:30, with varied programming hours.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child and Family Support Workers;</li> <li>• Child and Family Transition Supports;</li> <li>• Respite;</li> <li>• Community Outreach;</li> <li>• Children’s Community Care Program;</li> <li>• Planning with People and/or Family Members</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cost:</b> Some funding available to support respite service.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://communitylivingalgoma.org">http://communitylivingalgoma.org</a></p>
<b>Algoma District School Board</b>	<p>Parenting &amp; Family Literacy Centres:</p> <p>Programs run throughout the school year for children ages newborn to six, encouraging caregivers to attend the centres and explore, play and learn together with their children.</p>	<p><b>Locations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Heights Public School, 210 Grand Blvd. in central Sault Ste. Marie;</li> <li>• H.M. Robbins Public School, 83 East Balfour St., in west-end Sault Ste. Marie;</li> <li>• River View Public School, 51 Wireless Ave., in central Sault Ste. Marie;</li> <li>• Pinewood Public School, 3924 Queen St. East, in east-end Sault Ste. Marie</li> </ul> <p><b>Hours:</b> Monday to Friday mornings.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.adsb.on.ca">www.adsb.on.ca</a></p>
<b>Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board</b>	<p>Licensed ½ day preschool program for children ages 2.5 years to 6 years of age.</p> <p>Service is available to student’s enrolled in the continuing education program.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> 102 Wellington Street, E</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.hscdsb.on.ca/?page_id=2832">http://www.hscdsb.on.ca/?page_id=2832</a></p>
<b>Algoma Family Services</b>	<p>Programs and services are focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child and youth mental health services</li> <li>- Specialized programs for youth substance abuse, young offender and family violence</li> <li>- Community partnerships, as a lead sponsor for a number of programs with local collateral agencies.</li> </ul> <p>Services are available for children and youth 0-18 years of age, and their families.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> 205 McNabb Street in central Sault Ste. Marie.</p> <p><b>Hours:</b> Reception desk available from 8:30am – 4:30pm.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="https://www.algomafamilyservices.org/">https://www.algomafamilyservices.org/</a></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced rates for families with more than one child</li> <li>- A variety of available hours</li> <li>- Almost 50 years of service and experience</li> </ul> <p>Programs and services are in place to ensure a child’s continued enthusiasm and capacity for life-long learning.</p> <p>Programming is available for children 0-12 years of age.</p>	<p>12:00pm – 5:00pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notre-Dame-des-Écoles Afterschool Program 600 North St., Sault Ste. Marie 3:15pm – 5:45pm</li> <li>• Holy Family Afterschool Program 42 Rushmere Dr., Sault Ste. Marie 3:05pm – 5:30pm</li> <li>• HM Robbins – Afterschool Program 83 East Balfour St., Sault Ste. Marie 3:15pm – 5:45pm</li> <li>• Riverview – Afterschool Program 51 Wireless Ave., Sault Ste. Marie 3:30pm – 6:00pm</li> </ul> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.sault.ymca.ca/content.php?ID=38">http://www.sault.ymca.ca/content.php?ID=38</a></p>
<p><b>Breton House- A New Link</b></p>	<p>Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alcohol and drug assessments</li> <li>- Individual counselling</li> <li>- Education on substance use and the effects on family</li> <li>- Referrals to appropriate services</li> <li>- Support groups for moms (child care and transportation may be provided)</li> <li>- Educational groups (transportation and child care may be provided)</li> <li>- Community kitchen (in partnership with the Red Cross)</li> </ul> <p>Programming aims to support pregnant and parenting women and their families affected by substance use to improve their parenting and influence a decrease in the harmful effects of alcohol and drug use on children.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> 126 Queen St. E., in downtown Sault Ste. Marie.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.bretonhouse.ca/aneblink.htm">http://www.bretonhouse.ca/aneblink.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Sault Area Hospital</b></p>	<p>Perinatal Bereavement Support Group for parents who have experience miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, 20-28 week pregnancy loss or full-term stillborn or neonatal death.</p> <p>Child Life Worker program provides educational services are provided to young patients that are admitted to the paediatric unit for day surgery and treatment</p> <p>Kids Health immunizations</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> 750 Great Northern Rd., in north-end Sault Ste. Marie.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.sah.on.ca/">http://www.sah.on.ca/</a></p>

<p><b>Sault Ste. Marie Public Library</b></p>	<p>A variety of programs and activities are offered by the Public Library including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lego my Library (4-12yrs)</li> <li>- Mother Goose Story Time</li> <li>- Saturday morning and story craft hour</li> <li>- Sandman Story time</li> <li>- Station mall story time</li> <li>- Family Story time</li> <li>- Toddler Time Program</li> <li>- Baby Time</li> <li>- Miscellaneous Infant/Toddler Programming</li> </ul> <p>Parental resources are also readily available through the Library.</p> <p>Special resources are also earmarked to provide information for expectant parents or caregivers; caregivers home schooling their children; parents and caregivers of LGBTQ children; parents and caregivers of children with learning disabilities; and resources for general recreation and entertainment.</p>	<p><b>Location &amp; Hours:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centennial Library, 50 East St. in downtown Sault Ste. Marie Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 9:00pm Friday 9:00am – 6:00pm Saturday 9:00am – 5:00pm Sunday 2:00pm – 5:00pm</li> <li>• Korah Branch Library, 556 Goulais Ave. in west-end Sault Ste. Marie. Monday – Wednesday 10:00am – 8:00pm Thursday 10:00am – 6:00pm Friday 10:00am – 5:00pm Saturday 10:00am – 5:00pm Sunday 2:00pm – 5:00pm</li> <li>• Children’s programming schedules vary.</li> </ul> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://ssmpl.ca/home/">http://ssmpl.ca/home/</a></p>
<p><b>Sault College Child and Family Centre</b></p>	<p>Licensed child care program with designated spaces for children of Indigenous students</p> <p>Eligibility is for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Toddler: 18-30 months of age, 5 days per week (max. 10 spaces)</li> <li>- Preschoolers: 31 months – 5 years, 5 days per week (max. 24 spaces)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Location:</b> 443 Northern Ave., Sault. Ste. Marie</p> <p><b>Hours:</b> September – June, 7:30am – 5:30pm</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.saultcollege.ca/services/ChildCare/index.asp">http://www.saultcollege.ca/services/ChildCare/index.asp</a></p>
<p><b>Prince Township Best Start Hub</b></p>	<p>A variety of interactive activities are offered on a drop-in basis.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> 3042 Second Line West, Prince Township, ON</p> <p><b>Hours:</b> Programming operates on a “drop-in” basis during operating hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday – Wednesday, 9:00am – 3:00pm</li> <li>• Thursday - 9:00am – 3:00pm &amp; 6:00pm - 8:00pm</li> <li>• Friday – 9:00am - 3:00pm</li> <li>• Saturday – 10:00am – 3:00pm</li> </ul>

		<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://princetwp.ca/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=section&amp;id=11&amp;Itemid=37">http://princetwp.ca/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=section&amp;id=11&amp;Itemid=37</a>
<b>Waterfront Child Development Center</b>	Licensed child care program for children 3 months to 5 years of age.	<b>Location:</b> 70 Foster Dr. #175, in downtown Sault Ste., Marie.  <b>Hours:</b> Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 5:30pm.
<b>Cedarbrook Child Development Centre</b>	<p>Licensed child care program for children 3 months to School Age</p> <p>Cedarbrook offers children a nature based education.</p>	<b>Location:</b> River View School, 51 Wireless Ave., in central Sault Ste. Marie.  <b>Hours:</b> Flexible throughout the week from 6:30am – 6:00pm, families pay only for time they need without committing to the same schedule each week.  <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.cedarbrookcdc.com/">http://www.cedarbrookcdc.com/</a>
<b>The Orchard Children’s Program (Alternative School)</b>	Licensed centre offers child care for children 3 months to 5 years of age.	<b>Location:</b> Étienne Brule School, 241 Albert St. W. in downtown Sault Ste. Marie.  <b>Hours:</b> 8:00am to 5:30pm.
<b>Back to Basics Children’s Program</b>	<p>Licensed program operated by the Soup Kitchen Community Centre, <i>Back to Basics</i> provides after-school programming for children 4-11 years of age.</p> <p>A variety of programming is offered, and food is included along with the programming.</p> <p>Children are actively engaged in stories and cooperative play.</p>	<b>Location:</b> Etienne Brule School, 241 Albert St. W., in downtown Sault Ste. Marie,  <b>Hours:</b> 3:00pm – 6:00pm.
<b>Brighter Beginnings</b>	<p>Licensed child care program offers a variety of activities and nutritious snacks for children 6-12 years of age.</p> <p>Offers arts and crafts, activities and field trips. Provides safe and stimulating environment Offers help with homework Provides licensed staff as well as</p>	<b>Location:</b> Soup Kitchen Community Centre at 550 Queen St., W  <b>Hours:</b> Monday - Friday 9:00am – 3:00pm; After school program Monday - Friday 3:30pm -5:30pm; March and Summer holidays Monday - Friday 1:00pm – 4:00pm  <b>Website:</b> <a href="https://www.soupkitchencommunitycentre.org/children-s-program.html">https://www.soupkitchencommunitycentre.org/children-s-program.html</a>



	<p>volunteers Accommodate children with special needs Provides a nutritious snack on a daily basis</p>	
<p><b>Community Cooperative Children's Centre</b></p>	<p>Licensed child care program for children 18 months to 12 years old.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Kiwedon Public School at 735 North St. in north-end Sault Ste. Marie. <b>Hours:</b> 7:30am to 5:30pm</p>
<p><b>Riverside Children's Centre</b></p>	<p>Licensed child care is provided for children 18 months to 12 years of age.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Anna McCrea School at 250 Mark St. in east-end Sault Ste. Marie. <b>Hours:</b> Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 5:30pm.</p>
<p><b>Mountain View School</b></p>	<p>Licensed after school program for children 6-12 years of age</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Goulais River at RR#1 Mahler Rd, Goulais, ON <b>Hours:</b> Monday to Friday, 3:30 - 6:00pm</p>
<p><b>Meadow Park Montessori</b></p>	<p>Licensed program based on Montessori pedagogy. "PreCasa" and "Casa" programming, utilizing a 1:5 student/teacher ratio.</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Meadow Park Montessori at 339 Elizabeth St. in east-end Sault Ste. Marie. <b>Cost:</b> Contact program. <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://meadowparkmontessori.com/">http://meadowparkmontessori.com/</a></p>