



**Social Services | Services Sociaux  
Zhawenimi-Anokiitaagewin**

Sault Ste. Marie District

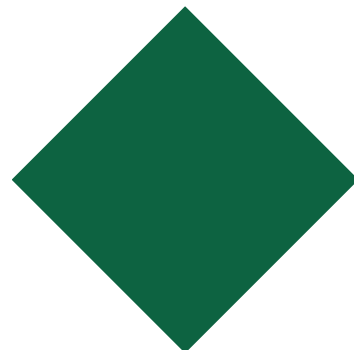
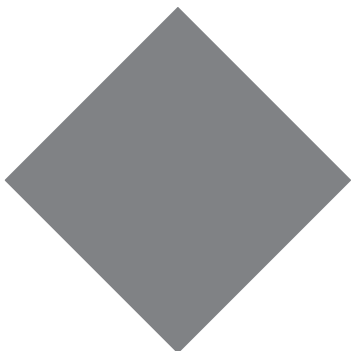
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2019

# Sault Ste. Marie Child Care and Early Years Environmental Scan

Executive Summary



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Our Community Profile

### OVERVIEW OF THE DSSMSSAB CATCHMENT AREA

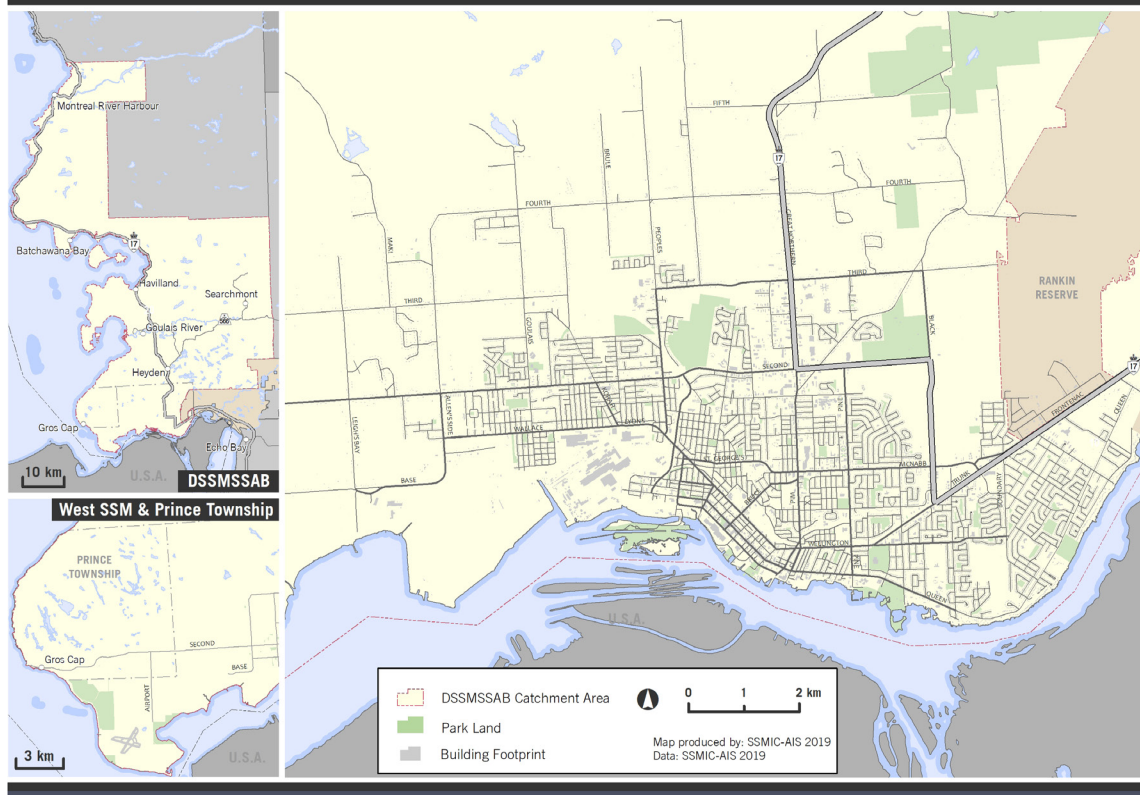
The District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board Catchment Area (also referred to as DSSMSSAB area) includes the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Prince Township, and a number of unorganized townships north of the City up to Montreal River Harbour. Please note that the official DSSMSSAB area does not contain the nearby First Nation Reserves of Garden River, Rankin, or Goulais Bay.

In 2016, the total population of the DSSMSSAB area was 79,077. Approximately 93% of this population lives in the City

of Sault Ste. Marie, while the remainder live in Prince Township (1%) or the unorganized townships north of the City of Sault Ste. Marie (6%) (Table 1–Appendix A).

The population of the district is projected to decline- this data includes the rest of the Algoma District (Figure 1 Appendix A). Sault Ste. Marie makes up about 65% of the population of the Algoma District. We can expect less children in the 0 to 4 and 5 to 9 age groups over the next two decades (Figure 3, Table 3 – Appendix A).

#### District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board Catchment Area



### LOCATION, NUMBER OF CHILDREN AGED 0 TO 12

Overall, the population has dropped for the DSSMSSAB area, but the population aged 0 to 12 has remained relatively the same between 2011 and 2016. In 2016, there were 9,770 children aged 0 to 12 living in the DSSMSSAB area (Table 6 – Appendix A). Of these children, 5,215 were between the ages of 0 to 6 and 4,555 were between the ages of 7 and 12 (Table 7–Appendix A).

The 0 to 12 population is spread throughout the city, with higher concentrations in the east end of Sault Ste. Marie, specifically near Cambridge Place, Grandview Gardens and Terry Fox Place; in the Crawford Avenue area, in the urban west end near Goulais and Second Line, the rural area of Sault Ste. Marie, and the Greenfield subdivision. Lesser concentrations are seen in downtown Sault Ste. Marie, Fort Creek area, near

the Sault Country Club and near Algoma Steel (Figure 6–Appendix A).

The population of children 0 to 12 remained consistent between 2011 and 2016 (45 additional children) (Table 6–Appendix A). The population 0 to 6 had a larger increase of

115 children, indicating a potential increased demand for Early Years services during this time. The population of children 7 to 12 dropped by 70 between 2011 and 2016 (Table 7–Appendix A).

## NUMBER AND LOCATION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THAT IDENTIFY AS FRANCOPHONE AND FRENCH LANGUAGE EARLY YEARS SERVICES

### CHILDREN WHO IDENTIFY AS FRANCOPHONE

Of the population of children aged 0 to 14, 250 (or 2.2%) are Francophone (Table 8 – Appendix A). There are proportionally fewer Francophone children aged 0 to 14 in the DSSMSSAB area than Ontario as a whole (4.9%) and Northeastern Ontario

(18.5%). The majority of Francophone youth live in the City of Sault Ste. Marie, specifically east of Pine Street, with higher concentrations in the P-Patch, near River View Public School and near Parkland Public School (Figure 10 – Appendix A).

### FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES

According to the Ontario government, the Algoma District (of which Sault Ste. Marie is a part) is one of the 26 French Designated Areas. This means Francophones living within the District have the right to local French services from the provincial government. As such, it is important that early years services be offered in French, as well as English.

French early years services are located near the central part of the City of Sault Ste. Marie. The École Notre-Dame-du-Sault site in the central area of Sault Ste. Marie offers French language EarlyON, licensed child care and schooling. The St. Basil EarlyON also offers weekly French language programming on Fridays. Écho-des-Rapides is the other full French school in Sault Ste. Marie and offers an after-school recreation program in French. There are also four French Immersion schools in the city: St. Francis in the west, Boreal in the north, F.H. Clergue

in the east central area, and St. Mary’s in the east (Figure 89 – Appendix A).

When visitors enter a Sault Ste. Marie EarlyON site for the first time, they are asked to register in the KEyON system. The KEyON system tracks visits to the EarlyON Centres and gathers information on the visitor’s preferred language. Between April 2018 and March 2019, 12 unique French speaking Parents/ Caregivers attended the EarlyON Centres at least once. This represents 1.1% of all parent/caregiver visitors to the EarlyON Centres in Sault Ste. Marie. Between this time, 18 unique French speaking children attended the EarlyON Centres. This represents 0.9% of all child visitors to the EarlyON Centres (Table 18 – Appendix A). The most common EarlyON site for French speaking visitors was Holy Cross, followed by Prince Township and Mountain View (Figure 90 – Appendix A).

## NUMBER AND LOCATION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THAT SELF-IDENTIFY AS INDIGENOUS AND INDIGENOUS EARLY YEARS SERVICES

### CHILDREN WHO SELF-IDENTIFY AS INDIGENOUS

Indigenous identity refers to those persons who self-identified with at least one Indigenous group (First Nation, Métis or Inuit) and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian, as defined by the Indian Act of Canada, and/ or those who reported they were members of a First Nation. It is important to note that the counts of persons who self-identify as Indigenous in the Census may be under-reported.

Of the population of children aged 0 to 14 in the DSSMSSAB area, 1,850 (or 17.5%) self-identify as Indigenous (Table 10 – Appendix A). There are proportionally more self-identifying Indigenous children aged 0 to 14 in the DSSMSSAB area than Ontario as a whole (4.1%) and proportionally fewer than Northeastern Ontario as a whole (19.4%).

Most youth identifying as Indigenous in the DSSMSSAB area live in Garden River First Nation. As well, a vast majority live in the east part of the City of Sault Ste. Marie in the area south of Chambers Avenue between Boundary Road and Dacey Road. There is also a large population of youth identifying as Indigenous in the area north of Wellington Street, south of McNabb Street, between Black Road and Pim Street (Figure 13 – Appendix A). Please note there is no data for Rankin Reserve or Goulais Bay Reserve and these communities would be expected to have a large population of youth identifying as Indigenous.

## INDIGENOUS SERVICES

As a result of the Journey Together community planning process, the Etienne Brule Community Hub, which houses the Urban Aboriginal Alternative High School, run by the Indigenous Friendship Centre, has been selected as the lead Indigenous EarlyON Centre in the area. A key component of the Journey Together plan includes the provision of opportunities for ongoing mentoring and partnering between the Indigenous EarlyON Child and Family Centre (OEYCFC) and the non-Indigenous Early Years system. This site is scheduled to open in early 2020.

DSSMSSAB Housing Services and Early Years have been working closely with the Ontario Aboriginal Housing services to develop the innovative Homeward Bound program in Sault Ste. Marie at 462 McNabb Street (formerly St. Bernadette Catholic School). This program will offer “a holistic job readiness program that integrates key local supports to help single urban Indigenous mothers enhance their lives. In addition to the cultural supports built into the program design, mothers will be provided with a furnished housing unit, goal orientated case management, academic upgrading, life skills training, child care, after school programs for children and youth, and trauma counselling.

Participants will also earn tuition paid college diplomas, complete internships through the innovation Industry Council and begin careers within fields of study targeted to the local labour market.”<sup>1</sup> This site is currently under construction and will have 30 new child care spaces upon completion.

Waabinong Head Start Family Resource Centre runs the Shkiyaak Niigaansiawag pre-school learning centre currently located at 169 Spring Street in downtown Sault Ste. Marie. This is a free child care program for Indigenous children aged 2 years and up. The Shkiyaak Niigaansiawag classroom is licensed to accommodate 24 children in the morning and another 24 in the afternoon. Classes are held from Monday to Thursday during September to June.<sup>2</sup>

Waabinong Head Start Family Resource Centre will also provide licensed child care for both the Homeward Bound location (30 spaces) and a second Indigenous program for up to 37 children. These two new programs were developed through community consultation as part of the Journey Together Initiative. All three programs will soon be co-located at the McNabb Street location.

## NUMBER AND LOCATION OF RECENT IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND/OR FAMILIES

Overall, the number of recent immigrants (immigrated between 2011 and 2016) to the DSSMSSAB area is low. A total of 290 people are estimated to be recent immigrants to the DSSMSSAB area. The total population of the DSSMSSAB area is 79,077. Recent immigrants represent less than 0.4% of the total population.

A total of 30 children aged 0 to 14 identify as recent immigrants. According to the 2016 Census data, the DSSMSSAB area has a total population of 11,205 children aged 0 to 14. Recent immigrants aged 0 to 14 represent 0.3% of the population of children aged 0 to 14.

## EXISTING EARLY YEARS PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN 0 TO 12 AND PARENTS/ CAREGIVERS

### EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE LOCATIONS AND UTILIZATION

EarlyON Child and Family Centres provide child and family centred programs and services that are consistent at all locations, but also meet the unique needs of the families who attend each program. A set of principles guide the development, delivery and evaluation of EarlyON programs and services. EarlyON Centres offer warm, welcoming environments that are inclusive, accessible, responsive, and support growth and long-term success, creating a sense of belonging, well-being, engagement and expression. These high quality programs support positive experiences and outcomes by fostering nurturing relationships between children and those who care for them. Collaboration with broader community services, school boards, early years partners, child care service providers, and parents and caregivers, is essential for a community led integrated system.

EarlyON Centres work together as part of the community to help children reach their full potential. Research has shown that

a child’s earliest experiences shape the physical development of the brain and the child’s capacity for further development. Children who have achieved their developmental milestones prior to school entry are better able to cope with, and take advantage of, all the experiences a school environment has to offer.

EarlyON Centres are dispersed throughout the DSSMSSAB area (pg.viii) and in Figure 15 in Appendix A. They are open weekdays, evenings and weekends to fit the needs of families in the community. EarlyON Centres also offer outreach opportunities, often in conjunction with other agencies, for families who could benefit from programs and services but who are not currently accessing services for a variety of reasons.

In 2018, the DSSMSSAB area EarlyON Centres recorded 24,233 total visits from children (21,057 from children aged 0 to 6

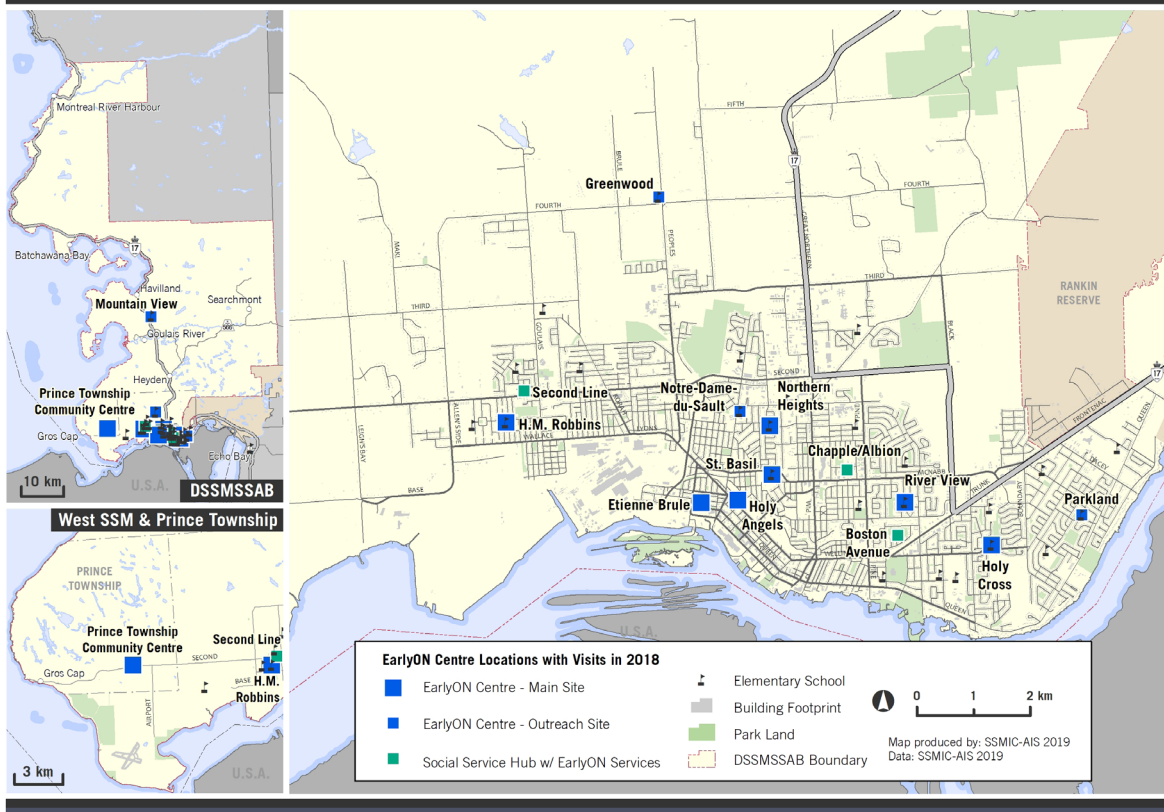
<sup>1</sup> District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board. Board Report, October 19, 2017. Accessed: [http://www.socialservices-ssmd.ca/documents/assets/uploads/files/en/iah\\_homeward\\_bound\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.socialservices-ssmd.ca/documents/assets/uploads/files/en/iah_homeward_bound_-_final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://oahsa.ca/ahs-sites/waabinong-ahs-sault-ste-marie/>





## Sault Ste. Marie Area EarlyON Centre Locations



and 3,176 from children aged 7-12) and 15,526 visits from parents/caregivers. There were 3,561 unique child visitors to the EarlyON Centres and 2,745 unique parents/caregivers in 2018 (Table 11 – Appendix A). 2018 saw the highest number

of recorded child drop-in visits to the DSSMSSAB area EarlyON Centres between 2013 and 2018 (note exception on page 39) (Figure 16 – Appendix A).

The most attended sites in 2018 were:

- Holy Cross with 7,625 child visits in 2018. This site draws heavily from the east end of Sault Ste. Marie (Figures 17 and 19 – Appendix A).
- Prince Township with 5,269 child visits in 2018. This site draws from all over the City of Sault Ste. Marie, with heavy concentrations in the rural area west and north of Sault Ste. Marie and the urban west end (Figures 17 and 20 – Appendix A).
- Holy Angels with 3,841 child visits in 2018. This site draws heavily from downtown Sault Ste. Marie and several other neighbourhoods throughout the city. This site tends to draw proportionally more visits from socio-economically marginalized neighbourhoods than other high-use EarlyON Centres in the DSSMSSAB area (Figures 17 and 21 – Appendix A).
- Mountain View with 1,699 child visits in 2018. Given the location, this site draws almost exclusively from the northern unorganized territory of the DSSMSSAB area (Figures 17 and 22 – Appendix A).
- H.M Robbins with 1,453 child visits from Q2 to Q4 in 2018. This site draws heavily from the west end of Sault Ste. Marie (Figures 17 and 23 – Appendix A).
- St. Basil with 1,049 child visits from Q2 to Q4 in 2018. This site is a newer one and draws from several neighbourhoods throughout the City of Sault Ste. Marie (Figures 17 and 24 – Appendix A).
- River View with 977 child visits from Q2 to Q4 in 2018. This site draws mainly from the east end of Sault Ste. Marie (Figures 17 and 25 – Appendix A).

The most popular months for visits in 2018 were March and January. The least popular were December and May (Figure 28 – Appendix A). From Monday to Thursday, there were typically 7-8 EarlyON Centres open across the DSSMSSAB area,

averaging 4.5 hours per site. Fridays had slightly reduced hours of operation with 8 sites open for an average of 3.5 hours. Saturdays had 6 sites open with an average of 2.6 hours. Sundays had very limited operating hours with Prince Township



and St. Basil each open once per month for 3 hours (excluding the summers). The most popular weekday was Tuesday with 4,832 combined child visits from all centres across the DSSMSSAB area, followed by Wednesday and Thursday (Figure 29 – Appendix A). The number of child visits on Mondays was comparatively lower than the number of child visits Tuesday through Friday (Figure 30 – Appendix A). During the summer months, Fridays typically had a lesser proportion of child visits than the other times of the year (Figures 33 to 36 – Appendix A).

Breaking age down by months per site, provides detailed information on the age demographic of children attending EarlyON Centres in Sault Ste. Marie. Taken together, most children attending the DSSMSSAB area EarlyON Centres are between 0 and 50 months in age (Figure 40 – Appendix A). Figure 40 to Figure 48 in Appendix A show the age breakdown for each site. Most of the children that visit Holy Angels are under 5 years of age, however this site also receives more visits from children between the ages of 6 and 12 years old (Figure 42 – Appendix A) than other sites in the area.

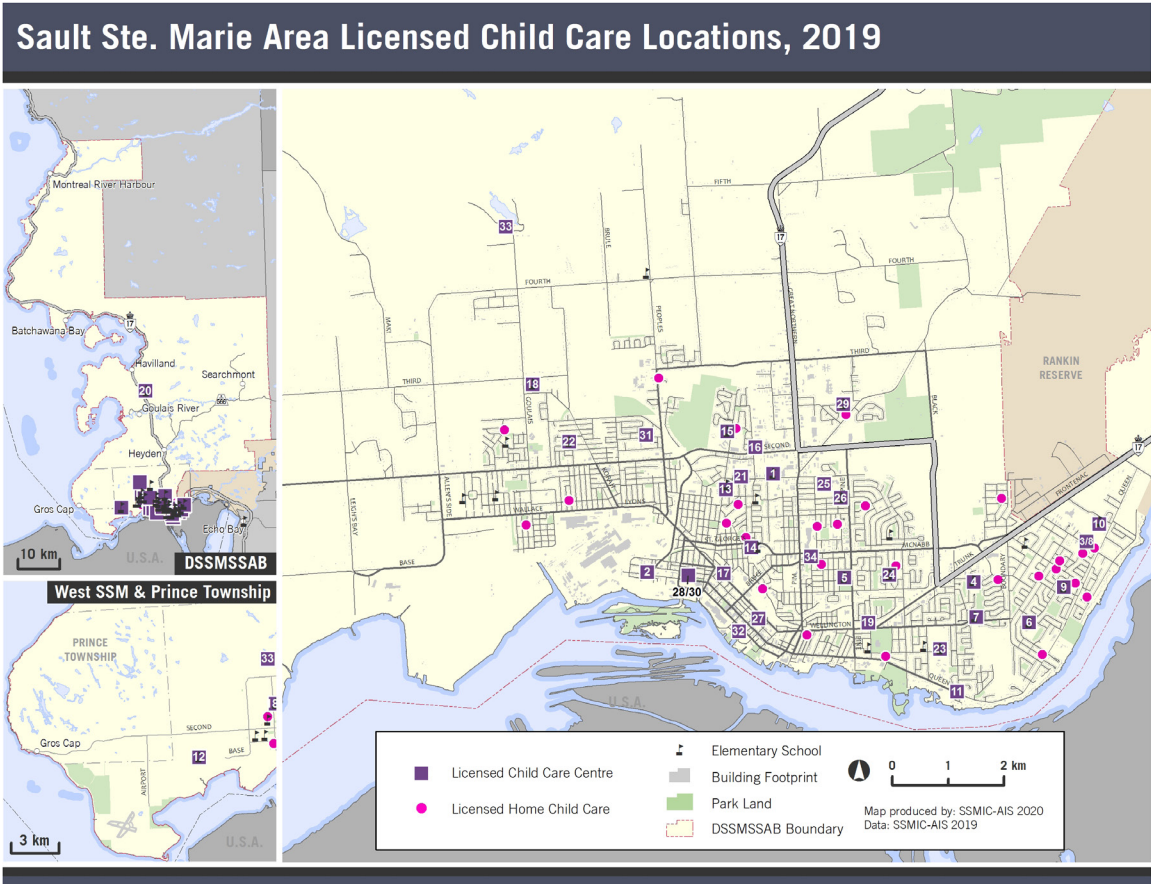
By combining the approximate population of children aged 0 to 4 for 2018 and the number of unique visitors aged 0 to 4 to the SSM EarlyON Centres, we can determine the approximate

EarlyON service uptake by this population cohort. Please note that unique visitor data is limited to those who signed in using the KEyON system (June to December 2018). The total estimated population of children aged 0 to 4 in the DSSMSSAB area in 2018 was 3,935 persons. The total number of unique children aged 0 to 4 who attended a DSSMSSAB area EarlyON Centre between June and December 2018 was 1,117. This means that of the 3,935 persons aged 0 to 4 in the DSSMSSAB area, 28.4% of them attended an EarlyON Centre between June and December 2018. Figure 60 in Appendix A shows the approximate EarlyON service uptake by children aged 0 to 4 between June and December 2018 in each DA. This is calculated by dividing the unique visitors by the estimated total population aged 0 to 4 in each DA and showing the result as a percentage. Figure 61 in Appendix A highlights the neighbourhoods that have a much higher and much lower than expected EarlyON service uptake percentage than the DSSMSSAB area as a whole. Areas that stood out as having a high population of children aged 0 to 4 and low EarlyON uptake were in the Jamestown area, in the urban west end of Sault Ste. Marie (particularly Goulais/Second Line and the A-Patch), south of Second Line near the Cara Community, parts of the P-Patch, the Crawford area, Heritage Place, and parts of the urban east end (Figure 61 – Appendix A).

CENTRE-BASED LICENCED CHILD CARE

Centre-based licensed child care is located across the DSSMSSAB area (Figure 62 – Appendix A). As of March 2019, there were 33 centre-based licensed child care sites operating in the DSSMSSAB area, with a total of 1,652 licenced child care centre spaces. There was also a total of 175 licenced home

child care spaces in the DSSMSSAB. As of March 2019, there were 26 licensed home child care locations in operation in the DSSMSSAB area.



There are currently 16 child care operators with licenced child care centres in the DSSMSSAB area. The operators are: Alternative School Childcare Services, Child Care Algoma, Community Cooperative Children's Services, Corporation of the Township of Prince, Hand in Hand Daycare Centre, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board, Little Lions Waldorf Child and Family Centre, Meadow Park Montessori School Inc., Northridge Montessori School, Riverside Christian's Children's Centre, Sault College Child and Family Centre, Sault Ste. Marie Soup Kitchen, Thrive Child Development Centre, Waabinong Head Start Family Resource Centre, Waterfront Child Development Centre Incorporated, and YMCA Sault Ste. Marie.

Of these centre-based licensed spaces, there is a total of 97 infant spaces, 283 toddler spaces, 517 preschool spaces, 277 kindergarten spaces, and 478 school age spaces (Table 14 – Appendix A). The DSSMSSAB area had a population of 5,215 children aged 0 to 6 in 2016 (Table 5 – Appendix A). This would cover the child care age groups infant to JK/SK (goes to 5 Years 8 months), which accounts for 1,174 licenced child care spaces at centre-based licenced child care. This covers centre-based licensed childcare for just over 22.5% of the area's population aged 0 to 6. Please note that unlicensed child care centres, unlicensed home child care, or those on Reserves are not included in the calculations of this summary.

The DSSMSSAB area has a significant waitlist for licensed child care. As of mid-2018 the waitlist is administered through OneHSN's Sault Ste. Marie Central Child Care Application Site. In May of 2018, there were a total of 1,084 individuals on the waitlist for licensed child care. Figure 69 in Appendix A shows the residence of child care waitlist registrants aggregated by DA. Nearly all neighbourhoods in the DSSMSSAB catchment area had at least one child on the waitlist in May 2018. Higher concentrations are seen in the rural west end of Sault Ste. Marie, the Greenfield subdivision, Cambridge Place, and

several other neighborhoods around the urban area of the City. As mentioned earlier, the population of children aged 0 to 6 grew in the DSSMSSAB area between 2011 and 2016 which has increased the demand for child care.

Although there are some programs located in the west end of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, it remains somewhat underserved in terms of centre-based child care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. In 2016, the City of Sault Ste. Marie made the decision to close their directly operated programs, and 2 of the 3 closures were in the west end. Currently, there are four licensed home child care sites in the west end of Sault Ste. Marie.

- Many infant spaces are in the central part of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, either in the downtown area or near Great Northern Road. There are no child care centres with infant spaces west of Carmen's Way, however, R.M. Moore will have infant spaces in the near future.
- Toddler spaces are spread through the central area and east end of Sault Ste. Marie. The west end has two centres that offer toddler spaces, H. S. McLellan Preschool (10 spaces) and Isabel Fletcher PS (10 spaces). Upon expansion, R.M. Moore will have 15 toddler spaces.
- Preschool spaces are located throughout the central area and east end of Sault Ste. Marie. The west end has three centres that offer preschool spaces, H. S. McLellan Preschool (24 spaces), Wild Roots/Little Lions located at St. Kateri Outdoor (16 spaces) and Isabel Fletcher PS (8 spaces). R.M. Moore has offered 21 preschool spaces in the past and will offer 24 with the current expansion.
- Kindergarten and school age spaces are plentiful and can be found throughout the urban area of Sault Ste. Marie. Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School located in the west end has 26 kindergarten and 15 school age spaces, while Isabel Fletcher PS has 13 kindergarten spaces. In addition, there are 26 kindergarten and 30 school age spaces at R.M. Moore.

## **LIBRARY EARLY YEARS SERVICES**

Public libraries are key contributors to literacy and lifelong learning. Studies have shown that the public library's role in early learning is particularly important for children in rural communities and for children from low-income families.<sup>3</sup> The Sault Ste. Marie Public Library currently has two branches: the James L. McIntyre Centennial Library and Korah Branch Library. A new branch is scheduled to open beside Boreal School. Both current locations offer early years programming. Early Literacy

Programs provided by the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library include Baby Time, Baby Picasso, Toddler Time, Preschool Storytime, Get Set for School, Lego Club, Sandman Storytime, and Stories & Crafts (Tables 15 and 16 – Appendix A). Please note that Prince Township also has its own public library. This library runs a Mother Goose Reading time in conjunction with the Prince EarlyON Centre but currently does not hold a regularly scheduled time.

## **SUMMER PROGRAMMING FOR EARLY YEARS AND YOUTH**

Many paid summer programs for youth exist in Sault Ste. Marie, mostly for kindergarten and school-aged children. Table 17 in Appendix A lists the names of the programs, as well as the name of the provider and target age group. All of these programs have a cost to register. Providers include Algoma District School Board, Algoma University, Art Gallery of Algoma, Bricks 4 Kidz, Cases Music, Catalyst Fitness, Jade

Wellness Studio, Sault College, Sault Ste. Marie Gymnastics Club, Science North, Strathclair Farm, Studio Dance, The Sault Youth Theatre, YMCA, and Camp St. Kateri.

Licensed summer programming for school-aged children is more limited, with 3 programs currently operating at Child Care Algoma-Parkland site (east end), Hand in Hand Summer

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Museum and Library Services, "Nine to Nineteen: Youth in Museums and Libraries – A Practitioner's Guide" (Washington: Institute of Museum and Library Services, April 2008). Accessed: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/environmental-scan-culture-sector-ontario-culture-strategy-background-document/sector-profile-public-libraries>



program (central) and Community Cooperative Children’s Services (west-central).

The DSSMSSAB offers the Kids Being Kids summer recreation program at 6 housing locations throughout the community (Figure 73 - Appendix A). The City of Sault Ste. Marie offers two summer recreation programs at Etienne Brule Community

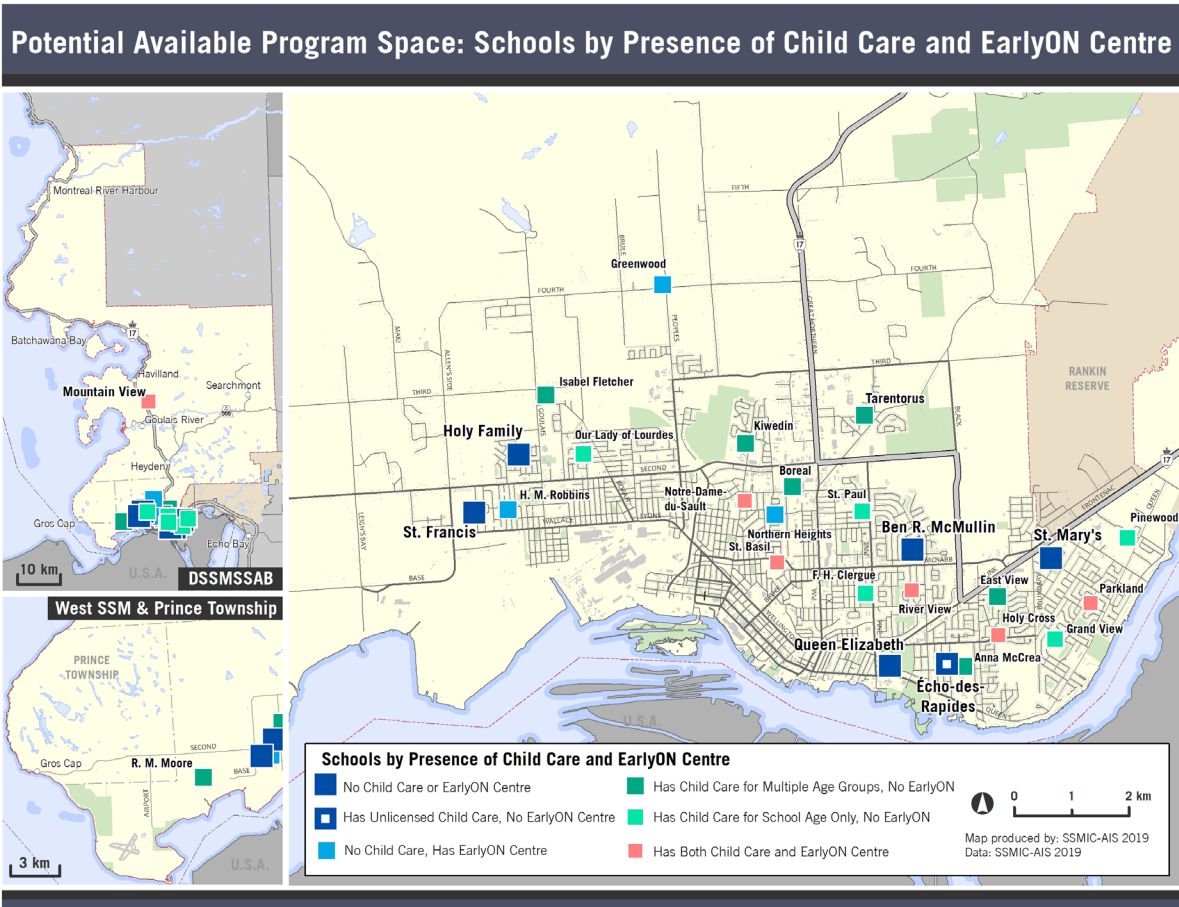
Hub/Greco Pool and at the Peter G. Manzo pool in the west end. The Sault Community Soup Kitchen also offers a drop in summer program at their west end location. These three programs are offered free of charge to children living in those areas.

## AVAILABLE OR POTENTIAL PROGRAM SPACE WITHIN LOCAL SCHOOLS

There are 4 school boards in the DSSMSSAB area: Algoma DSB, Huron-Superior Catholic DSB, CSD Catholique du Novel-Ontario, and CSD public du Grand Nord de l’Ontario. In total, there are 27 elementary schools in the area. Algoma DSB has 18 elementary schools in the DSSMSSAB area, Huron-Superior Catholic DSB has 7 schools in the area, CSD Catholique du Novel-Ontario has 1 school in the area, and CSD public du Grand Nord de l’Ontario has 1 school in the area.

Across the DSSMSSAB area, there are 19 licensed child care sites that are in schools. There are 7 out of 13 EarlyON sites located in schools. Currently, 6 schools have both a licensed child care site and EarlyON Centre, 3 schools have an EarlyON Centre but no child care, 5 schools have child care for school age only but no EarlyON Centre, 7 schools have child care

for multiple age groups but no EarlyON Centre, and 1 school has Board operated, unlicensed child care but no EarlyON Centre. This leaves 5 schools that currently have neither an EarlyON Centre nor child care program, and depending on space available could potentially be locations for future EarlyON Centres or child care sites. These are located at: Ben R. McMullin Public School, Queen Elizabeth Public School, Holy Family Catholic School, St. Francis French Immersion Catholic School, and St. Mary’s French Immersion Catholic School. Please note that Mountain View school is the only school that contains an EarlyON Centre and only contains child care for school-age children. All other schools that had both an EarlyON Centre and child care site had child care for multiple age groups (Figure 97 – Appendix A).





# SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA THAT MAY IDENTIFY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WITH ANY SOCIAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL VULNERABILITIES AND THEIR APPROXIMATE LOCATION

## ONTARIO MARGINALIZATION INDEX

The 2016 Ontario Marginalization Index (OMI) is an area based index that attempts to show differences in marginalization between areas, as well as understand inequalities in various measures of health and social well-being.<sup>4</sup> The OMI is calculated at the Dissemination Area (DA) level. A DA is a small, relatively stable geographic unit with a population of 400 to 700 persons.<sup>5</sup> The OMI is made up of four dimensions. To determine Overall Marginalization, Residential Instability, Material Deprivation, and Dependency Dimensions are used. The fourth dimension, Ethnic Concentration is of less importance to the DSSMSSAB area as the region has very few recent immigrants or persons who identify as a visible minority.

Figure 104 in Appendix A shows that the overall level of marginalization is generally higher in the DSSMSSAB area than in Ontario as a whole. 57.5% of DSSMSSAB area children aged 0 to 6 live in a marginalized neighbourhood (DA scored a 4 or 5), as compared to 27.8% in Ontario (Figure 105 – Appendix A).

The DSSMSSAB area contains proportionally more DAs in the ‘Most Deprived’ quintile than Ontario and is more deprived than the province as a whole. The downtown and urban west areas fall into the most deprived categories. The rural area within the city, in the urban area around the old hospital to the east of the Sault Country Club, the newer part of the P-Patch, and the Fort Creek area is less deprived. The Unorganized area is a mix (Figure 100 – Appendix A). The DSSMSSAB has proportionally more children aged 0 to 6 that live in deprived neighbourhoods than the province. 58.2% of DSSMSSAB area children aged 0 to 6 live in a deprived neighbourhood (DA

scored a 4 or 5), as compared to 37.6% in Ontario (Figure 101 – Appendix A).

There seemed to be somewhat of a correlation between Material Deprivation and EarlyON child visits. For the most part, neighbourhoods that had a high number of child visits to EarlyON Centres tended to be less deprived than the Ontario average. Neighbourhoods with few child visits to EarlyON Centres (100 or less), generally were more deprived than the Ontario average (Figures 18 and 100 – Appendix A). However, there are areas of the city that do not follow this trend at all. For example, the DAs in the east end of the City of Sault Ste. Marie recorded a high number of EarlyON visits but are also deprived (DA scored a 4 or 5).

Overall, there seemed to be strong correlation between Material Deprivation and EDI Neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods that had a lower percentage of children vulnerable in two or more domains of the EDI also tended to be less materially deprived than the Ontario average. These neighbourhoods are typically found in the rural parts of the city west of Allens Side Road (including Prince Township), north of Second/Third Line, and parts of the urban area including Fort Creek and the area from the old hospital neighbourhood to east of the Sault Country Club. The newer P-Patch area is an exception as this neighbourhood tended to have low levels of Material Deprivation but had a higher percentage of children vulnerable in two or more domains of the EDI (Figures 100 and 122 – Appendix A).

## SOCIOECONOMIC RISK: THE SOCIAL RISK INDEX CALCULATION

The Social Risk Index (SRI) is a measure of socioeconomic risk in communities and neighbourhoods and is derived from census data from Statistics Canada. The SRI used in this report is based on 2016 Census data. The index measures nine critical risk indicators and compares the results of each against the provincial average. If the neighbourhood is worse than the provincial average in a certain indicator, that variable is given a score of 1, if not it is given a score of 0. Adding up the scores for each indicator will result in a neighbourhood score of 0-9, where 0 indicates the lowest degree of socioeconomic risk and a 9 indicates the highest degree of socioeconomic risk. Results are generally classified by four established categories of risk: Low Risk (0 to 2), Somewhat Low Risk (3 to 4), Somewhat High Risk (5 to 6), and High Risk (7 to 9). The nine indicators used in the index are: lone-parent families, low-income, knowledge of an official language, immigration, tenancy, residential mobility, unemployment, education and government income transfers.

The DSSMSSAB area has a social risk index score of 4 and is considered to be at somewhat low socioeconomic risk (Table 20 – Appendix A). The SRI scores of the DSSMSSAB area DAs vary considerably. Many DAs in Sault Ste. Marie were deemed to be ‘High Risk’, each with a social risk index score of 7, and one with a score of 8. The majority of high-risk DAs are located in the mid-west end of the city and in the city’s downtown core. A few other high-risk DAs are found in the central and east areas of Sault Ste. Marie. Combined, these DAs had an approximate population of 1,540 children age 0 to 14 in 2016. The DAs deemed Low Risk and Somewhat Low risk tend to be in the more rural areas of the District (west of Allens Side Road including Prince Township, north of Second Line) and in the east end of the city to Dacey Road (Figure 106 – Appendix A).

<sup>4</sup> Ontario Marginalization Index (ON-Marg), 2006, Accessed: <http://www.crunch.mcmaster.ca/ontario-marginalization-index>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/dict/geo021-eng.cfm>



There seems to be somewhat of a correlation between SRI and the percentage of children vulnerable in two or more domains of the EDI. The more rural areas of the city (west of Allens Side Road, north of Second Line, west of Rankin Reserve) and the east end of the city around the waterfront area to the east of the Country Club tend to be low or somewhat low socioeconomic risk and also have lower percentages of children vulnerable in two or more domains of the EDI. The DAs located in the central and downtown core of the city tend to have higher percentages of children vulnerable in two or more domains of the EDI and the DAs also tend to be somewhat at risk or

## **LONE-PARENT FAMILIES**

Family structure has an important impact on a child's growth and development. Lone-parent families are more likely to be below the poverty level, rent their homes, and are not able to accumulate financial resources due to lower salaries and higher unemployment in comparison to couple families. Depending on the characteristics and parenting quality of the lone-parent, children living in lone-parent families on average

## **FAMILY INCOME DATA**

Tax return data can be utilized to more closely consider family income, especially as it pertains to families with children in the home. Figure 111 in Appendix A indicates that couple families with children in the home in the DSSMSSAB area had a median family income above that of Ontario in 2016, while the median income for lone-parent families (\$40,010) was significantly less than Ontario (\$46,260). The gap between the median income of couple-parent families and lone-parent families in 2016 was greater in the DSSMSSAB area (a difference of \$73,968) than that of Ontario (\$64,943). Figure 109 and Figure 111 in Appendix A indicate there were more lone-parents who had at least one child under the age of 6 in Sault Ste. Marie in 2016 and they were more likely to have a lower income in 2016 than lone-parents in other parts of Ontario. Between 2006

high risk on the SRI. Of course, there are DAs that stray from this trend, particularly the unorganized areas north of the city and the far east end of the city below Trunk Road. Some of this irregularity may be due to the difference in size of the EDI neighbourhoods and individual DAs, as an EDI neighbourhood may contain multiple DAs. For example, the EDI neighbourhood West Central B is about on par with Ontario's Baseline for percent of children vulnerable in 2 or more domains of the EDI. This neighbourhood is made up of a mix of DAs that range from Low Risk to Somewhat High Risk on the SRI (Figures 106 and 124 – Appendix A).

are more likely to exhibit behavioural problems and do poorer in school than children living with both parents.<sup>6</sup> As a percentage of families with children under 6 in 2016, 28.5% of families in the DSSMSSAB area were lone-parent families. This is proportionally higher than Ontario which had 17.9% of all families with children under 6 headed by lone-parents (Figure 109 – Appendix A).

and 2016, the median income of couple families with children in the home in Sault Ste. Marie remained above the Ontario average.

According to Statistics Canada's 2016 Low-Income Measure Before Tax (LIM-BT), 23% of the DSSMSSAB area's youth population (under the age of 18) lived in low-income families in 2016. 23.3% of Algoma youth and 20% of Ontario youth lived in low-income families in 2016. Sault Ste. Marie and Ontario youth living in lone-parent families were much more likely to be living in low-income situations than youth living in couple-parent families. Of the Sault Ste. Marie youth who lived in lone-parent families, 53.1% lived in low-income situations in 2016 (Figure 114 – Appendix A).

## **SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES**

There are multiple programs providing services for children with special needs. These programs include No Wrong Door and the Early Learning Resources Program (ELR). The No Wrong Door Digital Referral System manages child referrals in Sault Ste. Marie and the Algoma District to Algoma Family Services, Algoma Public Health, Community Living Algoma, and THRIVE Child Development Centre. Referrals sent between these organizations are considered internal referrals. Most external referrals are made by licensed child care centres/homes but may also include EarlyON Centres and other organizations (Figure 92 – Appendix A). Referrals increased steadily between 2015 and 2017 but dropped slightly in 2018 (Figure 91 – Appendix A). Nearly half of all referrals to the systems have been closed by THRIVE (Figure 94 – Appendix A). Most referrals happen when children are between 2 and 6 years of age (Figure 95 – Appendix A).

In Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma, the ELR program is run by THRIVE. This program provides Special Needs Resourcing Supports to licenced child care and EarlyON programs in the community. ELR is a specialized program that provides Early Childhood Education Resource Consultant support for children with developmental differences who are enrolled in licensed child care or attending EarlyON programs.<sup>7</sup> The goal of THRIVE is to have the Resource Consultant, the child care staff and the family working together as a team for the successful inclusion of every child into the child care environment and activities. This goal is achieved through the provision of support, education, consultation and co-teaching to the child care centres. The ELR program also supports the therapy needs of the children to further enhance their development, socialization and readiness for school.<sup>8</sup> Between 2014 and 2016, the number of children served by the ELR program steadily increased.

<sup>6</sup> Anne-Marie Ambert, Vanier Institute of the Family, "One parent families: Characteristics, causes, consequences, and issues", 2006.

<sup>7</sup> THRIVE Child Development Centre, 2019. Accessed via: <https://kidsthive.ca/service/early-learning-resources/>

<sup>8</sup> THRIVE, 2019.



Between 2016 and 2018, the number of children served by the ELR program decreased slightly to about the 2015 level (Figure

96 – Appendix A). It is important to note that at the end of 2018, there was a waitlist of 20 children waiting for service.

## EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT (EDI) RESULTS

The EDI is commonly used to get a sense of vulnerability in a population of senior kindergarten aged children and measures five domains of a child's development: Physical Health & Well-being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language & Cognitive Development, and Communication Skills & General Knowledge. The five major Sault Ste. Marie EDI implementations took place during the 2004/05, 2008/2009, 2011/12, 2014/15, and 2017/18 school years, however this summary will only focus on the latest implementation.

In the 2017/18 cycle, the DSSMSSAB area had a vulnerability rate of 29.5% compared to the provincial baseline vulnerability rate of 29.6%. In this cycle, the Sault Ste. Marie area vulnerability rates for the Physical Health & Well-being, Social Competence

and Emotional Maturity domains were higher than those of the provincial rate, Language & Cognitive Development was on par with Ontario and Communication & General Knowledge was slightly better than Ontario (Figure 120 – Appendix A).

Compared to the 2014/15 EDI cycle, only the Emotional Maturity domain showed a statistically significant decrease in the percent of vulnerable children in Sault Ste. Marie. The Physical Health & Well-Being, Language & Cognitive Development and Communication & General Knowledge domains showed a similar percentage of vulnerable children between 2014/15 and 2017/18 and the Social Competence domain showed a decrease, however this change was not statistically significant.

## MOST VULNERABLE AREAS IN SAULT STE. MARIE

Highlighting the most vulnerable areas in the City of Sault Ste. Marie can provide the DSSMSSAB with important information on specific neighborhoods that would benefit from more program development. The most vulnerable areas may be neighbourhoods that are currently underserved and/or may benefit from additional outreach. The following indicators were used in determining the most vulnerable areas in the City of Sault Ste. Marie:

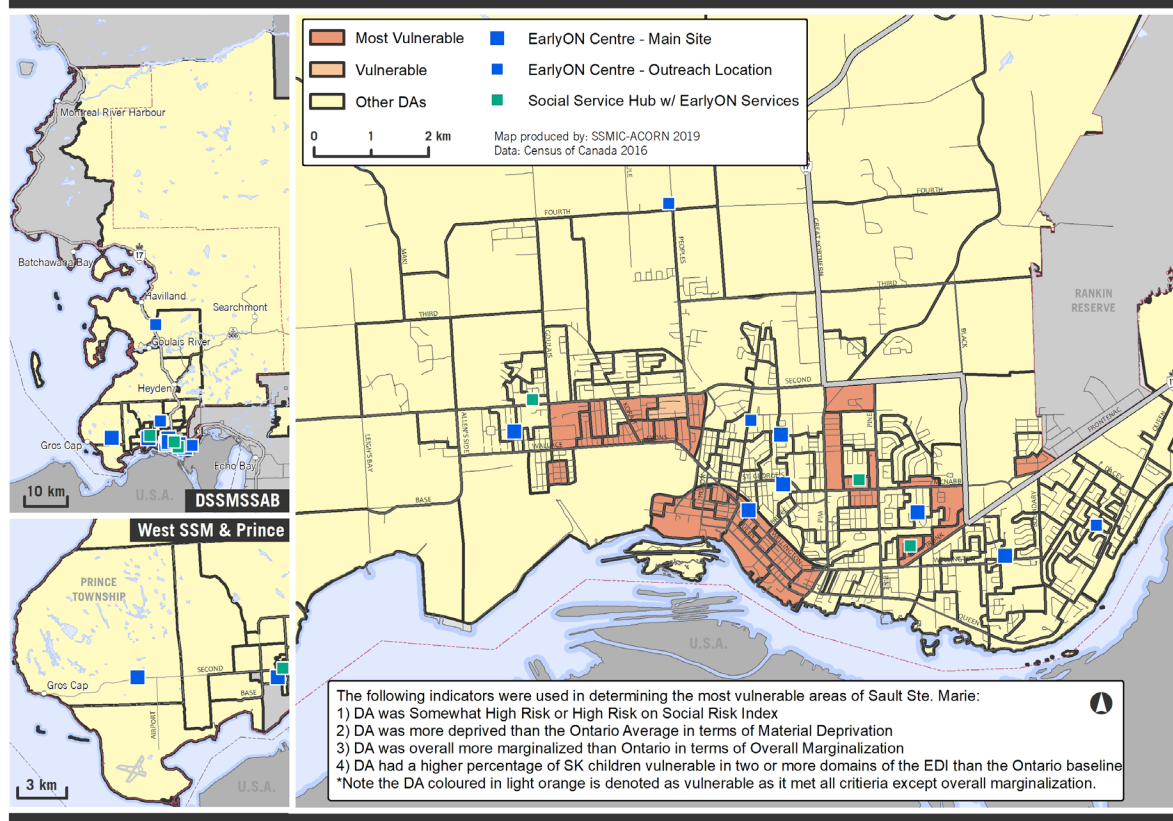
- the DA was somewhat high risk or high risk on the social risk index,
- the DA was more deprived than the Ontario average in terms of material deprivation,
- the DA was more marginalized than Ontario in terms of Overall Marginalization,
- and the DA had a higher percentage of SK children vulnerable in two or more domains of the EDI than the Ontario Baseline. In total, there were 31 DAs deemed most vulnerable.

It is important to note that EDI neighbourhoods are larger than DAs, and therefore each EDI neighbourhood contains multiple DAs. Due to the size of the EDI neighbourhoods, some DAs that one might expect to show up in the most vulnerable areas did not, as they did not meet all the criteria. This is particularly true in the east end of the City of Sault Ste. Marie where social housing/low-income housing areas tend to be small and mixed in with other neighbourhoods.

Figure 157 in Appendix A shows that the most vulnerable DAs in the City of Sault Ste. Marie tend to be in clusters and are all located south of Second Line except for one DA in SSM North Unorganized where Heyden is located. One of the most vulnerable areas in the City of Sault Ste. Marie is in the central downtown area from Wellington Street down to the waterfront and from Algoma Steel east to Pim Street. Another vulnerable area is the neighbourhood along both sides of Great Northern Road, between Second Line and Wellington Street. There are four DAs in the east end that fall just south of Trunk Road. There are also two DAs towards the west end along Second Line between Goulais Avenue and Allen's Side Road.

## Most Vulnerable Areas in Sault Ste. Marie

By Census Dissemination Area (2016)



Overall, the number of unique visits by children 0 to 4 to SSM EarlyON Centres is low in these DAs (Figure 158 – Appendix A). Three of the DAs had zero visits by children aged 0 to 4 to EarlyON sites. There were 5 DAs that had 10 or more unique children aged 0 to 4 that made visits to EarlyON sites.

Generally, the most vulnerable areas of Sault Ste. Marie also had low service uptake to EarlyON Centres (Figure 160 – Appendix A). 3 DAs had no service uptake, while 17 DAs had

21% or less service uptake. One DA had a service uptake of 65.4% (between North Street, St. Georges Ave E, Bruce Street, and Wellington Street E), while the remaining 10 DAs had a service uptake of between 21.3% and 42.3%.

As a result of the EarlyON planning process in the community, many of the most vulnerable areas in Sault Ste. Marie have an EarlyON Centre or Social Service Hub with EarlyON Services located on a DA in that cluster.

## PROGRESS IN 2019

As noted above, expansion is currently underway for 67 new licensed spaces at the St. Bernadette location through the Journey Together Initiative. Twenty eight additional spaces, including 10 infant and 15 toddler, have been approved for R.M. Moore School, located in the west end of the city.

Discussions are also forthcoming with Holy Family School in the west end of the city to utilize space for a licensed child care program for up to 16 children.

In September 2019, a new school age program will be located at Queen Elizabeth School.

The Indigenous EarlyON Centre will be opening soon as construction has recently been completed.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education and Child Care Algoma, the DSSMSSAB is constructing a new Community Hub at the old Rosedale School location, which will incorporate a Community Hub for Social Services, Senior Housing, space for community partners, an EarlyON Centre and licensed child care for 10 infants, 15 toddlers and up to 40 preschoolers, in addition to school age programs. Plans are underway for intergenerational programming as well as extended hours of child care service.

A new Community Hub is also being constructed at the Second Line West Social Housing Complex and will offer EarlyON outreach through Prince Township EarlyON. In the meantime, they are using the existing Social Housing Hub at that location and partnering for activities at the H. M. Robbins EarlyON site.



## MOBILE OUTREACH

A new mobile outreach vehicle has been purchased and has begun providing EarlyON outreach across the community and in neighbourhoods without easy access to an existing EarlyON site. This is a partnership with Child Care Algoma, DSSMSSAB, EarlyON and multiple community partners who will work together to identify neighbourhoods to visit on a regular basis. In addition, it will be used to promote EarlyON services and be visible at family and community events and locations.

The need for a service that goes into neighbourhoods where uptake of EarlyON programming is not occurring, despite a population of children 0-6 residing in those areas, was

identified in the DSSMSSAB 2017 planning process for EarlyON service delivery. Family activities are provided and resources are available. Service providers are encouraged to be present at the same time to build relationships with families living in the area. During a number of consultations held in the community, developing relationships was identified as the key to ensuring that families participate in EarlyON activities. This mobile service provides the link needed to encourage participation at a nearby EarlyON Centre. In addition, if transportation is a barrier (and it often is identified as such), there is an opportunity to build connections and mitigate resulting isolation for families.



