



Hastings County

2023

Directed Growth Plan

October 2023

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Opportunities and Challenges	3
Opportunities	3
Challenges	3
Access	4
Inclusion.....	5
Space Allocation.....	6
Strategic Priorities and Measurement Indicators	12

Introduction

Under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement with the Government of Canada, Ontario has been funded to support the creation of 86,000 new licensed child care spaces (relative to 2019) by December 2026. A key priority is to support the creation of new child care spaces in communities with populations who need them most. This directed growth approach will support child care space creation in regions of the province that have historically lower rates of space availability.

To support the implementation of these new spaces, the Ministry of Education (Ministry) has developed the Access and Inclusion Framework. The purpose of the framework is to support Service System Managers (SSM) to update local service system plans with an increased focus on access as it relates to inclusion. The Access and Inclusion Framework requires SSMs to identify eight priority neighborhoods within their region. To identify priority neighborhoods SSMs located neighborhoods with communities that have underserved and vulnerable populations, including low-income, Francophone, Indigenous, Black, other racialized, and newcomer communities, as well as children with special needs. This will allow for targeted space creation for communities that need them most. Ontario's vision for the CWELCC system is that more families in Ontario have access to high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live.

Opportunities and Challenges

The CWELCC system presents opportunities for SSM's across Ontario along with the Ministry to create a child care system that is affordable, inclusive, and accessible for all.

Opportunities

- Working closely with the Ministry, Hastings County can explore and make sustainable changes to the child care landscape.
- Assess the data and limitations related to diversity, equity, and inclusion as it relates to child care.
- Engage with organizations working with underserved and vulnerable populations to acquire information about gaps in data that is collected as it relates to underserved, vulnerable, and diverse communities.

Challenges

To implement a comprehensive growth plan to increase child care that meets the needs of communities across Hastings County the plan must be informed by the appropriate data. The lack of available and sufficient data poses several challenges, including:

- Demographic and socio-economic data related to children in licensed child care settings, is limited.

- Data related to Special Needs Resourcing such as the type of special needs and supports/ accommodations required, or Professional learning and capacity building supports has not been collected.

Access

Through the CWELCC Agreement, Ontario is improving access to child care by allocating funding to support the creation of 86,000 new, high quality, affordable child care spaces by the end of 2026. These new licensed child care spaces represent a mix of not-for-profit and for-profit settings, and community and school-based spaces offered in centres and homes. Ontario committed to maintaining or improving the proportion of not-for-profit licensed child care spaces for children aged 0-5 at 70% or higher by the end of 2026.

The Ministry has allocated CWELCC child care spaces for children 0-5 to all SSM`s to improve access to bring the provincial average access rate to 37% by 2026. This is equivalent to one affordable child care space available for every 2.7 children aged 0-5. To Determine the number of spaces each SSM where to be allocated the Ministry used a space allocation model based on available data which incorporates existing child care capacity, demographics, and social-economic indicators such as:

- Children ages 0-5 in lone-parent families
- Low-Income Measure (with children aged 0-5)
- Households spending >30% of income on shelter costs
- Recent immigrants, 2011-2016
- Women aged 25-44 not participating in the labor force
- Official languages, and capacity for growth,

From the allocation model, the Ministry allocated Hastings County 828 total spaces to be open by December 2026. These Directed Growth spaces are to ensure that service areas with high-needs populations have the capacity to provide affordable child care for those who need it most. Hastings County recognizes that the number of spaces required to meet the needs of underserved and vulnerable populations is greater than the allotted 828 spaces. Further, while the Ministry has used the above socio-demographic variables for the purpose of space allocations, this should not be considered an exhaustive list. Hastings County may rely on other data sources (i.e., Early Development Instrument).

The Ministry is working with SSM`s to support parental labor market participation with flexible spaces for those who work non-traditional hours and in non-traditional locations. To support parents who are shift workers Hastings County is willing to work with child care providers to increase the amount of evening, weekend, and overnight child care.

Inclusion

The Ministry acknowledges that every Ontarian has their own unique circumstances and that multiple factors can act as barriers that will need to be identified and assessed in the creation of an inclusive system of early child education. The CWELCC system presents an opportunity for Ontario to introduce initiatives that support the needs of diverse, underserved and vulnerable populations, including low-income, Francophone, Indigenous, Black, other racialized, and newcomer communities, as well as children with special needs. It aims to support children to have access to inclusive environments where they can participate, play, and learn in meaningful ways and form authentic caring relationships.

Key Principles for inclusion include:

1. Accessibility
 - Providing a wide range of opportunities for learning, play, and inquiry in physical and teaching environments across diverse settings and contexts is essential.
2. Participation and Belonging
 - This involves the intentional and instructional intervention approaches that enable children to actively engage in all parts of the day, including play and learning activities and social interactions.
3. Equity
 - Making sure everyone has what they need to succeed by removing barriers that disadvantage some groups over others, is a fundamental principle. Children should have equitable access to early learning opportunities that support them in realizing their capacity as engaged learners who are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential.

Ontario has been working to improve Inclusion through the following initiatives:

1. Special Needs Resourcing (SNR)
 - In Ontario SNR provides support for the inclusion of children with special needs with their peers in child care and early years settings. Supports include adaptive equipment, class-wide strategies, and staff development.
2. Fee Subsidy
 - Fee subsidy provides direct support to lower income families who access licenced child care.
3. How Does Learning Happen (HDLH)
 - In Ontario, structural equality is supported through provincial licensing standards, and program quality is guided by HDLH. HDLH sets out values, goals, and approaches to guide program development.

4. Indigenous and Francophone Child Care
 - The Ministry provides funding for professional learning opportunities for Indigenous and Francophone early years professionals to support the implementation of HDLH.
5. Ontario Child Care Tax Credit
 - Eligible families can claim up to 75% of their eligible child care expenses, including services provided by child care centres, homes, and camps.

Space Allocation

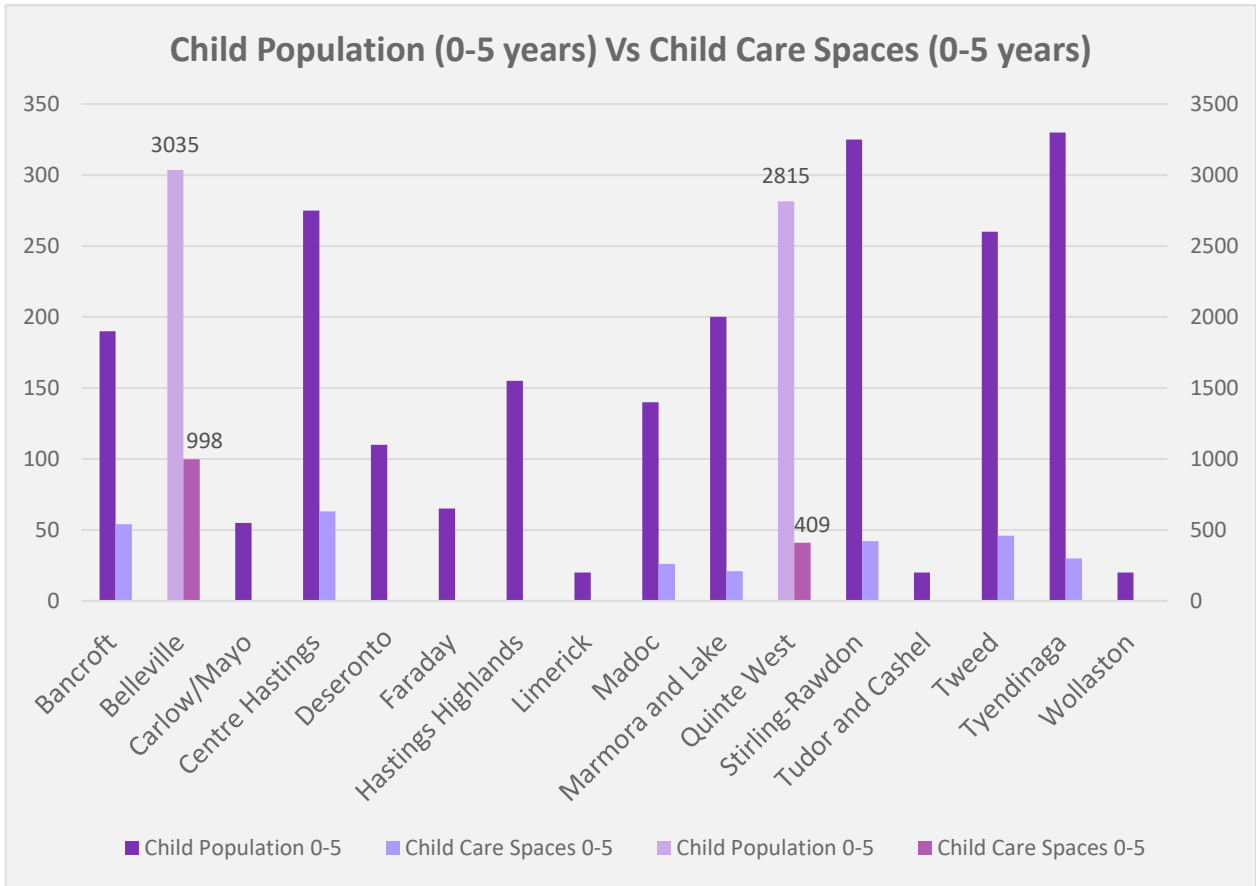
To support the needs of diverse communities and populations Hastings County has conducted a needs assessment of the 14 membered municipalities along with The City of Belleville and The City of Quinte West. As a result, the priority neighborhoods listed below have been identified as lacking available child care spaces correlated with population data of children aged 0-5, while accounting for the priority populations outlined by the Ministry.

- City of Belleville
- Centre Hastings Municipality
- Marmora and Lake Municipality
- City of Quinte West
- Tyendinaga Township
- North Hastings (Bancroft/Hastings Highlands)
- Township of Stirling Rawdon
- Tweed Municipality

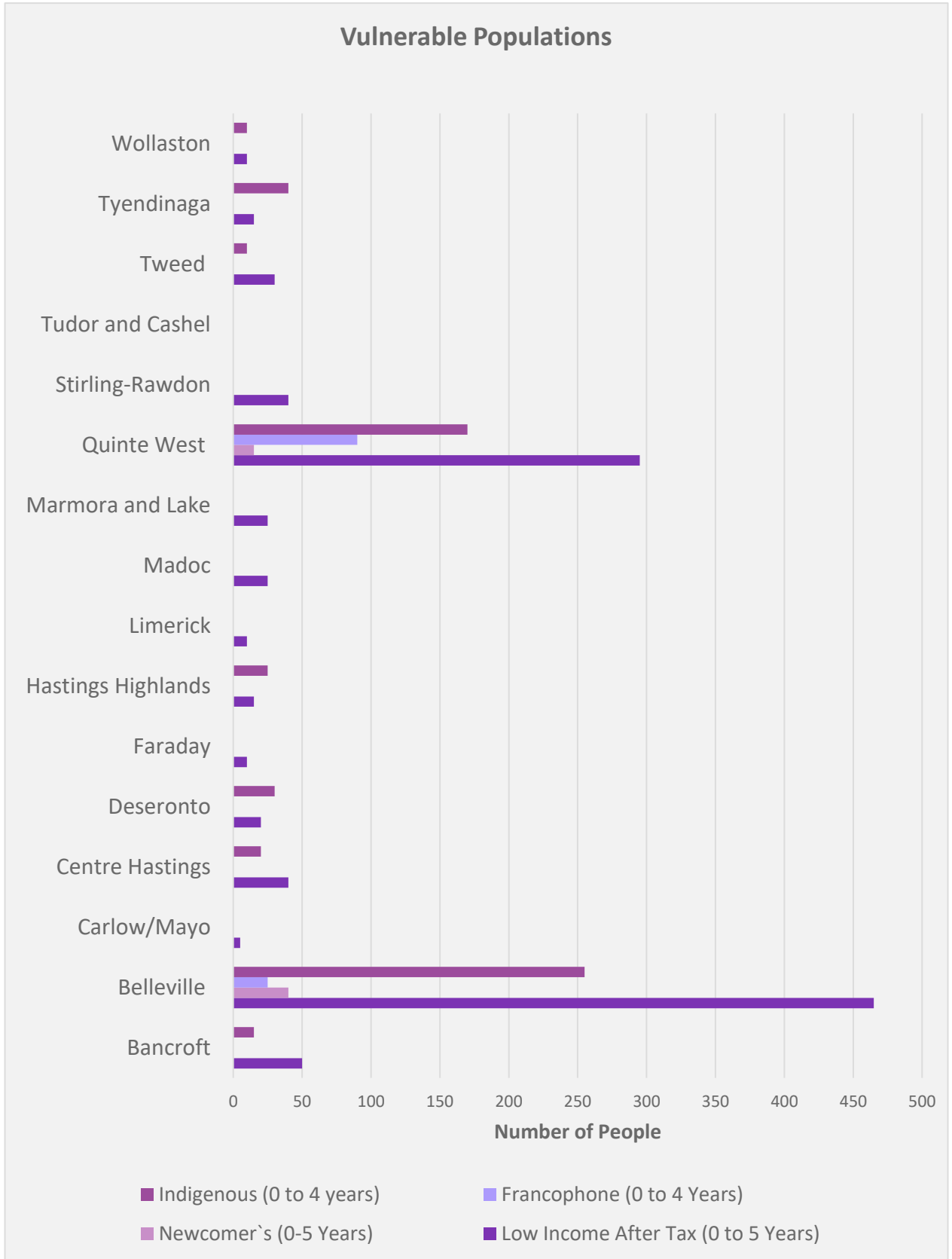
Hastings County used the following data sources to help determine the eight priority neighborhoods:

- Statistics Canada Census data from 2016, 2021
- 2018 Early Developmental Instrument (EDI)
- Parent Survey given out in early 2023
- Existing internal data and knowledge of neighborhoods

The following graphs used data that was collected from service providers from within Hastings County and Statistics Canada Census 2021. These were used to help determine where the vulnerable populations within Hastings County are located.



*Bellville and Quinte West use the second axis on the right side to allow for easier reading of the other municipalities numbers

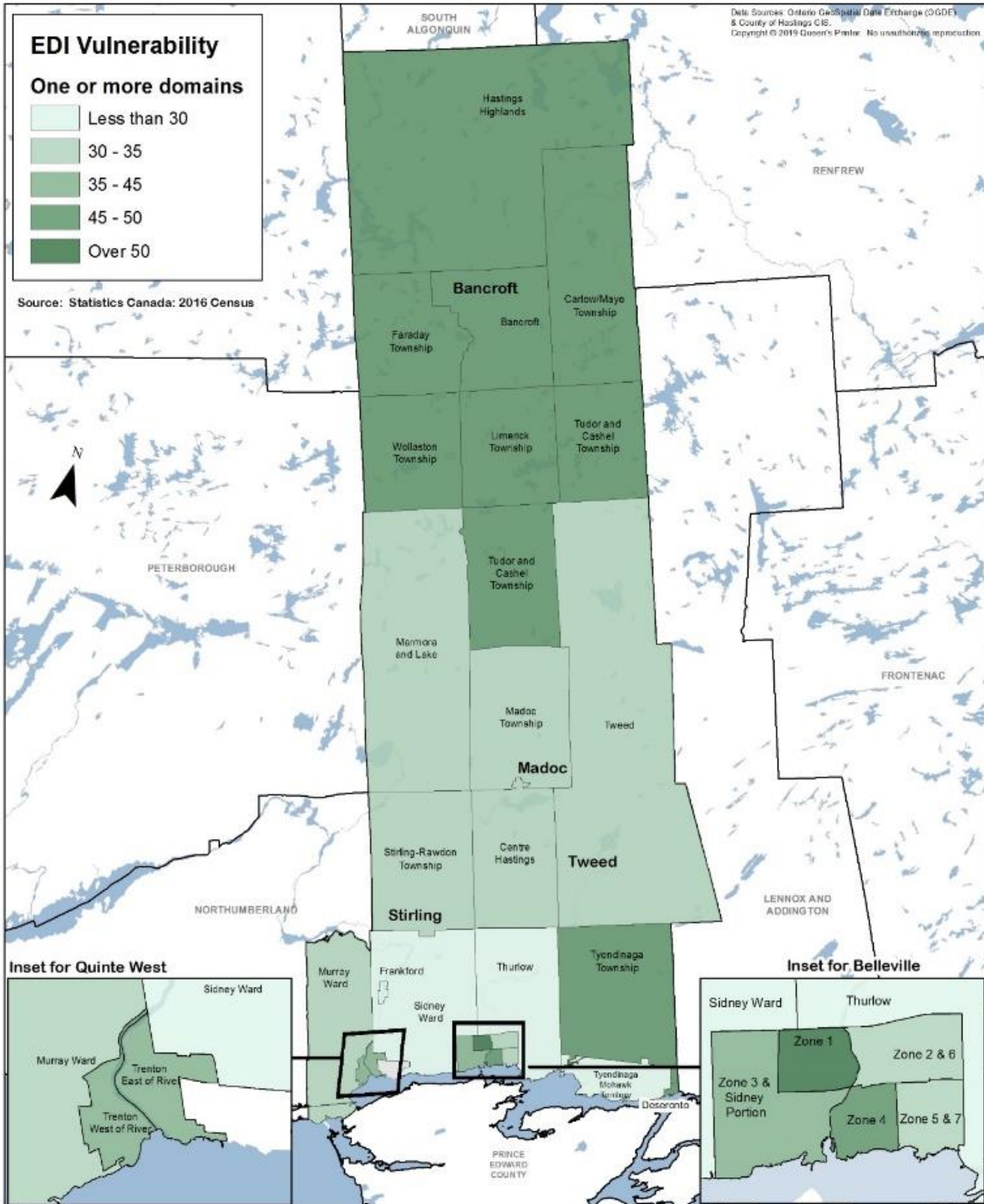


Following is a map of Hastings County showing the vulnerable neighbourhoods where children reside based on the Early Development Instrument (EDI) scores from 2018. The EDI is a questionnaire completed by kindergarten teachers in the second half of the school year that measures children`s ability to meet age-appropriate development expectations in five general domains:

- Physical Health and Well-Being
- Social Competence
- Emotional Maturity
- Language and Cognitive Development
- Communication Skills and General Knowledge

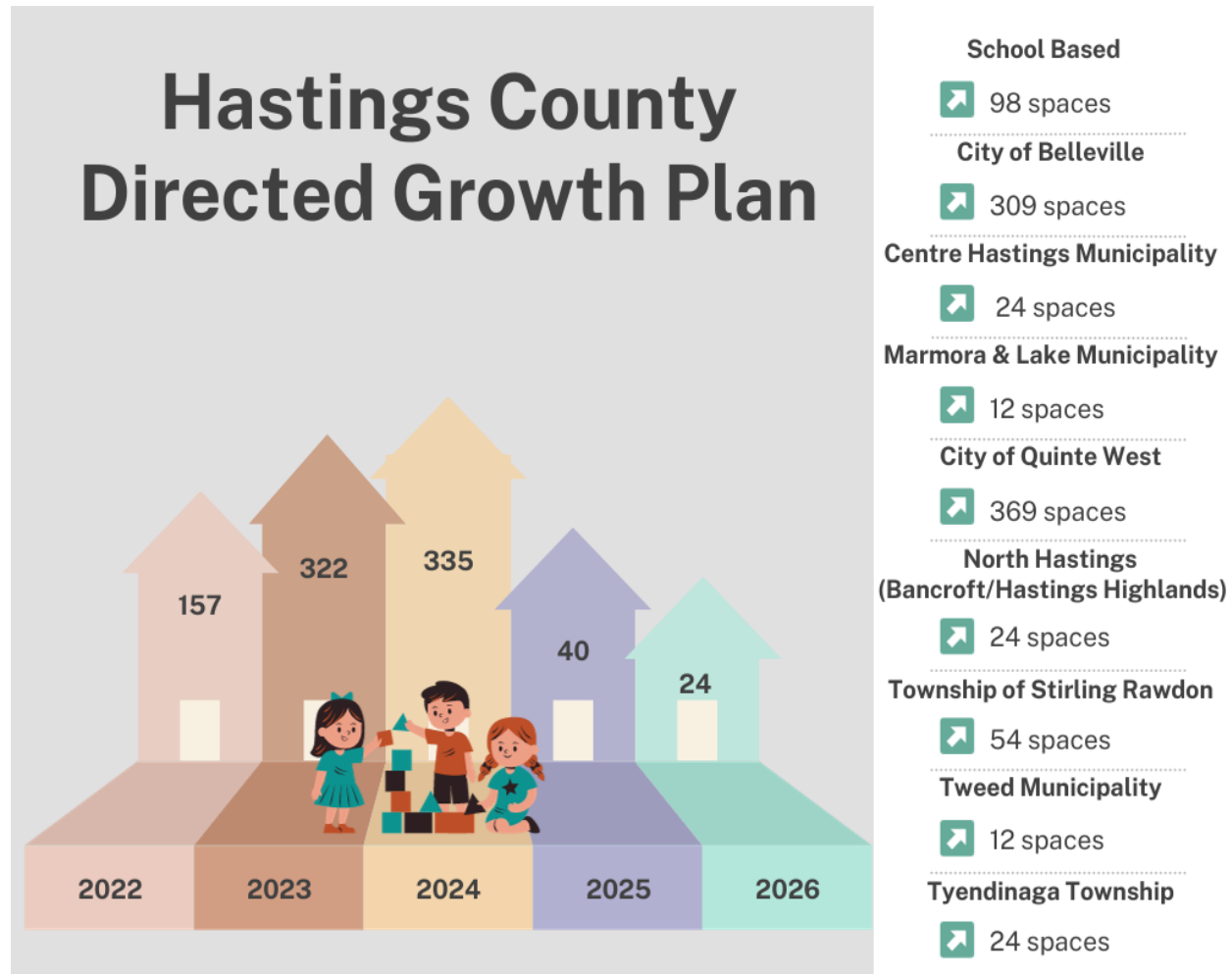
If a child scores below the 10th percentile cut off, the Ontario baseline population within one of the five domains, they are considered vulnerable for that domain. In the EDI map below, we can see in the darker green areas, there are a greater number of children that have been identified as vulnerable.

Neighborhood Vulnerability EDI on one or more domains



Hastings County engaged with key stakeholders within the community to ensure the Access and Inclusion plan is responsive to the community’s needs. A survey was deployed to the population of Hastings County, designed to collect feedback from key community stakeholders, including parent’s voices on child care needs in Hastings County. This will help to ensure the service expansion will meet the needs of the communities they serve.

Using all data collected the current space allocations have been distributed to the eight priority neighborhoods as follows and will aim to service all priority populations listed above.



The targeted areas are based on Ontario’s Access and Inclusion Framework and Hastings County’s environmental scan of the current population. These spaces are aimed at addressing the barriers to access and inclusion that these underserved and vulnerable populations face. The Ministry will review this data every year which may result in amendments to space allocations if required.

By increasing the number of child care spaces in the priority neighborhoods indicated, Hastings County is reducing the barrier of access for these populations. To ensure that the needs of the priority neighborhoods are being met, any child care provider that signs a service provider agreement to be part of the CWELCC (Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care) System must maintain their CWELCC partnership till the end of 2026. Requiring child care providers to meet the needs of the communities for which their new CWELCC spaces are open by having them adhere to the Access and Inclusion framework as outlined in the service provider agreement. This ensures that all service providers that are opening new childcare spaces under CWELCC are serving these vulnerable and underserved populations, providing them with high-quality child care.

Strategic Priorities and Measurement Indicators

Access and Inclusion	
<i>Strategic Priority</i>	<i>Indicator</i>
Increased access to child care	Open the number of child care spaces indicated by the Ministry for Hastings County under the CWELCC agreement
Access as it relates to inclusion	Opening child care spaces for low-income families
Access Equity	Increase access rate from the current 34.65% closer to 37% for children 0-5 years of age
Not-for-profit childcare	Improving non-for-profit care to 70% or higher