



LCCN Report – Child Care Advisory Committee

February 22, 2021

Licensed Child Care Network (LCCN) continues to meet the last Tuesday of each month, excluding July, August and December. Our network continues to grow and has become a place of support for many licensed child care operators, early years' professionals and child care advocates. Community partners provide regular updates at our monthly meetings including All Kids Belong, Strive, Fanshawe College, and Child Care Advisory Committee. There is space for information sharing at the end of each meeting for Operators and Early Years Professionals to share in knowledge, ask questions and provide updates.

LCCN met weekly via Zoom during the Covid-19 closure period between March – July 2020. The Children's Services Managers with the City of London and the County of Middlesex participated in these weekly meetings to provide updates regarding Federal, Provincial and Municipal decisions. LCCN was able to meet with Early Years Representation from the Ministry of Education and with Infectious Diseases and the Child Care Team from the London/Middlesex Health Unit during the closure period. Many discussions were focused on changes to funding models during the closure period and the implementation of new health and safety measures for reopening during the pandemic. LCCN meetings became a place of support for many child care operators who were struggling during the closure and reopening period of 2020.

LCCN continued to meet monthly after child care organizations reopened and continued to address the many changes developing throughout the pandemic. The Ministry of Education provided four reopening documents during the reopening phase so LCCN members were able to work together to support one another through these evolving requirements and recommendations.

The LCCN Advocacy Subcommittee began meeting weekly during the closure period and continues to do so now that most organizations have reopened. Covid-19 has brought to the forefront the struggles families are facing in accessing affordable, quality child care. Particularly for women wanting to re-enter the workforce. The LCCN Advocacy Subcommittee met with many local Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament to discuss the challenges licensed child care and families are continuing to face during the pandemic.

Dr. Celine Bourbonnais-MacDonald and LCCN partnered in 2019 to support the research and development of a National Early Years Framework Prototype with the support from Early Childhood Leadership students from Fanshawe College. Dr. Bourbonnais-MacDonald, Strive, and the research students were able to join LCCN and LCCN Advocacy throughout the closure and reopening periods in 2020. Amazing work was developed through this partnership, including an Early Years Town Hall with several MPs and MPPs, some from other areas of the province. The research students created a short video of the highlights from the Town Hall to be shared on social media through LCCN and Strive. The students also created an infographic to provide a medium for others to learn about the Early Years Town Hall. LCCN also provided an unpaid internship in partnership with the Fanshawe ECL program over the summer months.



LCCN Advocacy continued to send letters to the Premier and the Minister of Education through the closure and reopening periods to request more funding support for the sector, for recognition of the essential work of the Early Childhood Educators, and for adequate compensation for this important work. LCCN Advocacy, with the support of Strive, has embarked on an #IAmEssential social media campaign to recognize and highlight Early Childhood Educators and #ThankYouChildCare for families to share in support of licensed child care. This social media campaign involves frames for Facebook profile pictures and powerful images of educators engaged in their work for Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Strive has also created these images for posters.

LCCN has partnered in a Skills Advance Ontario Project with Carrefour Communautaire Francophone de London, Literacy Links South Central, and Workforce Planning and Development Board to create a pathway into the early childhood profession for job seekers. Allison Scott from Strive will represent LCCN at the Executive Advisory level to support this project work over the next two years. LCCN members will also provide Anglophone and Francophone representation on the General Advisory Committee for this SAO project. Job seekers will be trained in basic skills and offered a short, paid placement in licensed child care organizations that are searching for job seekers interested in learning more about becoming an Early Childhood Educator. The employer would have the choice to support the job seeker as they further their training through multiple pathways offered by local colleges to become a Registered Early Childhood Educator. Additionally, incumbents already employed in the child care profession, will have the opportunity to engage in learning skills through this project that would support necessary skills required to move into different roles in licensed child care. The total funding from the Ministry of Labour for this project is 1.2 million over the 22 month period of implementation.

LCCN has submitted a grant application to continue its important work on the Unsungheroes campaign through the Federal Early Learning and Child Care Innovation fund. The LCCN Unsungheroes campaign informs others about the important work Early Childhood Educators do in licenced child care and speaks to ways individuals can enter into training for the profession.

Much more work is on the horizon for this busy network. More updates to follow at the next CCAC meeting.