



Report To:	Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Board
From:	Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services and Suzanne Malette, Children's Programs Supervisor
Date:	April 28, 2011
Re:	<b>Best Start Child and Family Centres</b>

## REPORT

### Recommendation

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB requests that the Province transfer the full management of children's programs to DSSABs and CMSMs including the Ontario Early Years Centre funding.

The DSB is requesting that the Ministry of Education adequately fund the already fragile child care system in Ontario so that it can adjust to the movement of four- and five-year-olds into the school system and refocus on expanding much-needed services for younger children.

The Province should engage in collaborative discussions with DSSABs and CMSMs as the municipal service managers identified as partners in the development of Best Start Child and Family Centres.

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform our DSB Board Members of pertinent information with respect to the role of the DSB as it pertains to the development of Child and Family Centres.

### Background

As the Ministry of Education moves ahead on assuming the responsibility for Early Learning, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) has undertaken the work of designing and implementing the Best Start Child and Family Centres. This work references the Pascal Report which outlined a vision for integrated services through Best Start Child and Family Centres. The process for consultation for the development of Best Start Child and Family Centres with MCYS has been through a

limited number of community engagement tables during the past two months and information gathering through an on-line participant survey. The recognition of CMSMs and DSSABs as municipal partners has been largely minimized by the current process undertaken by MCYS. This is a concern in that there appears to be a continuation of two separate Ministries developing a framework around one system which is in contrast to the Pascal vision.

In addition, all of the funding responsibility has been transferred to the Ministry of Education, except for a small amount of funding under the Ontario Early Years and Family Resource Centre categories, which remained with MCYS. We find this inconsistent with the Best Start Vision.

As outlined in [Charles Pascal's Report, With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario](#), "Municipal authorities are in a good position to build the necessary links between and among public health, school boards, and specialized agencies to ensure that parents take advantage of the one-stop service model in the Best Start Child and Family Centres."

The current consultation process under MCYS has not been appropriate for seeking input from CMSMs/DSSABs into the full transformation of these services as recommended by the Early Learning Advisor, Charles Pascal. It is our concern that the Northern DSSABs need to individually and collectively address these oversights.

As background information, please review [OMSSA's Vision for the Best Start Child and Family System](#) that outlines in more detail the concerns addressed above.

## Conclusion

A successful implementation of the Best Start Child and Family System must include a sustainable funding framework jointly developed by the province and service managers as partners and should include allocations for planning and integration, similar to those provided under Best Start.