

\$95 Million to Improve Access to Child Care in Peel

755 new child care spaces by March 2006 will support a growing region

(Brampton) - The Ontario government has announced nearly \$95 million in funding over the next three years to expand access to early learning and child care services in the Region of Peel.

Mary Anne Chambers, Minister of Children and Youth Services called the new funding "the largest investment in child care and early child development in Ontario's history."

It springs from an agreement between Ontario and the Federal government to fund the province's Best Start Plan aimed at giving Ontario Children the best possible start in life and help them achieve success in school.

The plan involves a partnership between various levels of government, community agencies, and parents to provide integrated services and supports for children from birth to six years with the vision that "Children in Ontario will be ready and eager to achieve success in school by the time they start Grade 1." Lorna Reid, Director of Children's Services said, "We are delighted that more children in Peel Region will have access to quality early learning and care. Over the coming weeks, our staff will work with the local Boards of Education and the Best Start Network to develop an implementation plan that meets provincial requirements to ensure this funding and the services they represent are delivered to the residents of Peel."

The new funding will make, 755 new licensed [child care spaces](#) available to families throughout the Region by March 31, 2006. The majority of spaces are intended for children in Junior and Senior Kindergarten. The number of licensed child care spaces in Peel Region will grow by 2,085 to 21,153 by the end of March 2008. The funding will also increase access to subsidies, attract and retain qualified child care workers and provide other early learning and child care supports.

The Region of Peel [Children's Services](#) currently operates eleven child care centres with a total capacity of 798 licensed spaces, provides resources so that children with special needs can access child care and also purchases centre and home-based child care services to subsidize another 3,000 spaces.