

# Peel Special Needs Strategy for Early Learning and Child Care

October 2013



***A collaboration of:***

Brampton Caledon Community Living  
Community Living Mississauga

ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development

Peel Children's Centre

Surrey Place Centre Blind-Low Vision Program

Peel Early Learning Special Needs Advisory Committee (PELSNAC)

Region of Peel

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of the Region of Peel, I would like to thank the many families and community partners for supporting the development of the Peel Special Needs Strategy for Early Learning and Child Care. Altogether, over 300 participants shared their time, experiences and suggestions through interviews, focus groups and surveys.

I would also like to recognize the following members of the Special Needs Steering Committee for the passion and dedication they demonstrated in leading this initiative:

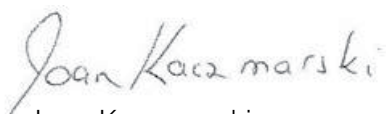
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Gunta Jurevics-Lawson (Co-Chair)	Region of Peel
Laura Mitchell-Collier (Co-Chair)	Region of Peel

A special thank you to the Peel Early Learning Special Needs Advisory Committee for its advisory role during the strategy's development process. This group was expanded to include both licensed child care providers and key community partners to ensure that building the capacity of licensed child care to provide inclusive quality programs remained a key driver of the strategy. We also wish to note our gratitude to Wendy Perry, Consultant, and Region of Peel staff, for their expert guidance throughout this journey – this report would not have been possible without their dedication and support.

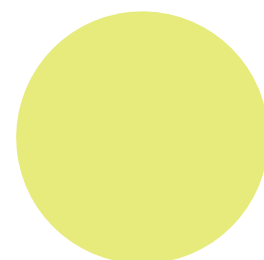
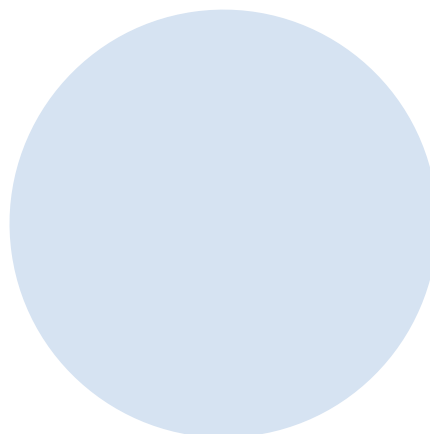
Finally, Regional Council and its Early Learning and Child Care Task Force must be acknowledged for their integral role in initiating this important work and providing the leadership and direction to this strategy.

The insight provided by all those who gave their time and experience was invaluable to the development of this exciting strategy and will be key to its success. I look forward to everyone's continued commitment to ensuring that all children with special needs have access to inclusive opportunities during the most foundational years of their lives.

Respectfully,



Joan Kaczmariski  
Director, Service System Management  
Region of Peel



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## OVERVIEW

Helping children achieve their full potential is a goal the Peel community shares. Peel's early learning and child care partners are committed to creating an environment where all children, regardless of differences, can grow, learn and thrive together.

The Peel Special Needs Strategy for Early Learning and Child Care (the Strategy) will help ensure that children with special needs and their families have access to the supports and resources they require.

Inclusive opportunities in early learning and child care benefit all children, and it is through that lens that this Strategy was developed. Inclusion is defined as the right for children with special needs and their families to have equal access to full participation in early learning and child care programs. The Strategy supports Peel's overarching goal to strengthen, stabilize and transform the early learning and child care system. Further, it aligns with the Government of Ontario's long-term vision to build a high-quality, accessible and coordinated early learning and child care system for all children, as outlined in the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework (2013).

Research estimates that 10% of children have special needs.<sup>1</sup> This means that in Peel, there are 9,700 children with special needs under 6 years of age, of whom 1,950 may require licensed child care.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SpecialLink, "The National Centre for Child Care Inclusion" and <sup>2</sup>the Peel Data Centre

### About the Peel Special Needs Strategy for Early Learning and Child Care

The development of the Strategy began in the fall of 2012, after the Early Learning and Child Care Task Force (the Task Force) heard that significant gaps in services existed for children with special needs in Peel. Upon identifying "enhancing special needs supports" as a key system priority, the Task Force directed the Region of Peel to develop a strategy to:

- Support children with special needs and their families
- Leverage existing resources to enhance special needs supports
- Strengthen and not duplicate, special needs services
- Manage a centralized wait list
- Build capacity of licensed child care providers to provide quality inclusive child care

The Strategy's development included a consultation process involving more than 300 community stakeholders and families. Significant gaps in the system were revealed that closely aligned to those heard by the Task Force. Gaps were categorized into nine key themes:

Limited range of capacity building opportunities	Blurred accountability
Multiple wait lists	Limited range of services
Inadequate access to information	Inefficient referral processes
Poorly defined services	Inconsistent service delivery and roles
System planning, data and outcome measures	

Addressing these nine key themes was an important focus during the Strategy's development and is reflected in the Strategy's Framework. As such, the Strategy will ensure that children with special needs and their families have:

- ✓ Easy access to information
- ✓ Consistent services across Peel
- ✓ Supported transitions
- ✓ Access to inclusive licensed child care
- ✓ A range of service options
- ✓ Coordinated/clear communications

The Peel Special Needs Strategy for Early Learning and Child Care has received overwhelming support from community partners. It has been approved by the special needs resourcing agencies' Executive Directors Group, endorsed by the Peel Early Learning Special Needs Advisory Committee (PELSNAC) in its advisory capacity and supported by Success By 6 Peel – an integrated planning committee of the Peel Children and Youth Initiative (PCYI).

A key element of the Strategy is a new special needs resourcing service model known as Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS). PIRS represents a critical first step in moving the Strategy forward and will help build the capacity of licensed child care providers to deliver inclusive child care.



## BACKGROUND

The Region of Peel, as Service System Manager, is responsible for service system planning, including establishing local priorities and outcomes, allocating available resources, ensuring service quality in keeping with the legislative framework, and governance of the service system. It is within this context that the Region of Peel, in 2012, established an Early Learning and Child Care Task Force to explore the options for the role of the Region in the provision of early learning and child care.

The Task Force consulted with families, the public, key stakeholders and staff affected by the changing early learning and child care landscape resulting from the phased-in implementation of full-day kindergarten. Among the many messages conveyed, the Task Force heard that:

- Families of children with special needs encountered multiple barriers in accessing services
- Ongoing inclusion training was essential to building the capacity of licensed child care providers
- Sustainable funding was required to enhance supports and increase services
- Public funds should be made available only to child care providers that are inclusive and welcoming to all children

Community partners and licensed child care providers highlighted the need to “fix” the current special needs system. To that end, in December 2012, a Special Needs Steering Committee was formed with a mandate to collaboratively develop a special needs strategy for early learning and child care. Co-Chaired by Region of Peel service system and strategic planning staff, representation on the Special Needs Steering Committee included six special needs programs receiving Ministry of Education funding to support licensed child care:

- Brampton Caledon Community Living
- Community Living Mississauga
- ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment & Development
- Peel Children's Centre
- Surrey Place Centre Blind-Low Vision Program
- Region of Peel – Children's Services Operations

The work of the Special Needs Steering Committee was informed by the Peel Early Learning Special Needs Advisory Committee (PELSNAC) which acted as the advisory committee throughout the Strategy's development. PELSNAC promotes the inclusion of children with special needs and their families in early learning settings.

PELSNAC is comprised of representatives from agencies, service providers, school boards and key stakeholders that provide support and services for children 0 to 12 years of age. For the purpose of this initiative, the membership of PELSNAC was expanded to include licensed child care providers and key stakeholders, to ensure all voices were heard. Please refer to Appendix A for a list of members of the Special Needs Steering Committee and expanded PELSNAC.

*“Collectively we hold a wealth of knowledge, experience and skill...”*

*-Special Needs Steering Committee Member-*



# WHAT WE HEARD

## Process

The Strategy's development began by engaging parents, staff and community partners, and colleagues in other municipalities (service manager areas) through a variety of information gathering methods:

- Key informant interviews
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Best practice research on other special needs resourcing models
- Validation sessions with PELSNAC and the Special Needs Steering Committee

The breadth of engagement ensured that a far-reaching perspective was achieved. More than 300 community stakeholders and families provided feedback to inform the Strategy.

The following consultation results showed a high degree of consistency with the gaps and opportunities presented to the Task Force and laid the foundation on which the Strategy was built.

## Gaps and Opportunities Analysis

The tables below summarize the Gaps and Opportunities Analysis by nine key themes that emerged during the engagement process.

1. Capacity Building	
Gap	Opportunity
<i>Limited Range of Capacity Building Opportunities</i>	<i>Expand Capacity Building Opportunities</i>
Limited special needs training opportunities and a lack of knowledge of training opportunities that exist.	Implement consistent use of best practices and support inter-professional knowledge exchange through such means as a Best Practices Handbook, Community of Practice approach.
Early Childhood Education (ECE) students are not adequately prepared or equipped with the skills required to work with children with special needs.	Create core inclusion workshops that all licensed child care providers take to receive special needs resource services.
Some staff in child care settings do not know how to apply strategies learned in workshops.	Use an evidenced based coaching model to support providers to implement newly learned strategies.
Training costs can be prohibitive.	Enhance training and professional development opportunities for all Resource Consultants and Assistants.
	Provide incentives for child care providers to send staff to training (e.g., funding for supply staff, subsidize training).
	Enhance inclusion/special needs curriculum training in ECE college and university courses.

2. Accountability	
Gap <i>Blurred Accountability</i>	Opportunity <i>Increase Accountability</i>
Observations that standards for inclusiveness and operating criteria need to be clearly articulated, publicized and monitored.	<p>Develop a partnership agreement between special needs resourcing agencies and child care providers that clarifies role expectations.</p> <p>Create standard operating criteria related to inclusion practices for child care providers.</p> <p>Include inclusion policy requirements and core training inclusion expectations into regional purchase of service agreements.</p> <p>Increase Region's monitoring of quality standards and inclusionary practices as part of operational criteria reviews.</p>

3. Wait Lists	
Gap <i>Multiple Wait Lists</i>	Opportunity <i>Centralize Wait Lists</i>
<p>Each special needs resource agency has its own wait list which results in families accessing multiple wait lists.</p> <p>System is not flexible enough to respond to both demands and fluctuating wait lists.</p> <p>Wait list data collection is unco-ordinated and inefficient.</p>	<p>Establish a centralized wait list for special needs resource services.</p> <p>Offer families supports while on the wait list (e.g., brief consult meeting, how to find child care, transition supports to child care such as a play group experience).</p> <p>Inform families of the estimated wait times for service and provide a contact name for families to call.</p>

*"...we need more focus on strengthening the skills and building the capacity of the child care provider to serve children with special needs. For the system to move forward, the model needs to reach out to child care providers that are not currently adopting inclusion practices."*

-focus group participant-



#### 4. Range of Services

<b>Gap</b> <i>Limited Range of Services</i>	<b>Opportunity</b> <i>Expand Range of Services</i>
<p>Lack of access to specialized supports (e.g., occupational therapy/speech language pathologists/physiotherapists, mental health, infant and child development, etc.).</p> <p>Services requiring diagnosis exclude many children with special needs not yet diagnosed.</p> <p>Lack of program options to support children in jeopardy of losing their child care placements.</p> <p>Children on wait lists may not be receiving supports.</p> <p>Inadequate transition supports.</p> <p>Limited access to equipment such as materials and toys.</p>	<p>Increase Resource Consultant access to specialized integration consults (e.g., mental health, infant and child development supports, speech/occupational/physiotherapy/behavioural therapies, etc.) to equip consultants to better support inclusion practices of providers.</p> <p>Refocus enhanced program staff support funding to build centre capacity by requesting provider (vs. child based) applications, building in centre based outcomes and training to support success.</p> <p>Combine existing enhanced program staff support funding and program assistants into one pool under a single lead organization.</p> <p>Establish a short term intensive inclusion program for children (diagnosed or undiagnosed) transitioning into child care or are already in child care settings but in jeopardy of losing their child care placement.</p>

#### 5. Access to Information

<b>Gap</b> <i>Inadequate Access to Information</i>	<b>Opportunity</b> <i>Increase Access to Information</i>
<p>Unclear where to access information about special needs resource services for families and child care providers.</p> <p>Families want access to information in a variety of ways, including online, hard copy, workshops, online videos, etc.</p>	<p>Develop a web portal for special needs resource services that includes information for families, licensed child care providers and professionals.</p> <p>Develop a marketing campaign to increase awareness of special needs resourcing services.</p>



6. Referral and Intake Processes	
<p><b>Gap</b> <i>Inefficient Referral Process</i></p>	<p><b>Opportunity</b> <i>Streamline Intake and Referral Process</i></p>
<p>Multiple referral sources and processes lead to confusion for families and inefficiencies in service delivery.</p> <p>Confusion about the role and responsibilities of Kids Pathways Peel and Special Needs Access Peel (SNAP).</p>	<p>Consolidate and clearly describe referral and intake process for special needs resource services under SNAP.</p> <p>Work with Kids Pathways Peel to clarify linkages between special needs resource services and service coordination.</p>

7. Define Services	
<p><b>Gap</b> <i>Poorly Defined Services</i></p>	<p><b>Opportunity</b> <i>Better Define Services</i></p>
<p>General lack of understanding of what special needs resource services are available.</p> <p>Families and agencies were unclear as to what services were available and how they could be accessed.</p>	<p>Establish one consistent service delivery model.</p> <p>Develop program guidelines that includes a visual 0-6 pathway for resource services.</p> <p>Develop a “brand” and logo for a new special needs resourcing service model.</p>

8. System Planning, Data and Outcome Measures	
<p><b>Gap</b> <i>System Planning, Data and Outcome Measures</i></p>	<p><b>Opportunity</b> <i>Enhance System Planning, Data and Outcome Measures</i></p>
<p>Unclear which planning table is responsible for ongoing discussions about services for children with special needs.</p> <p>Stakeholders need access to data to support planning.</p> <p>Lack of common outcome measures to show evidence-based results.</p>	<p>Clearly describe relationship and linkages between PELSNAC and other children’s planning groups in Peel.</p> <p>Develop common outcomes and performance measures for special needs resource services and centralize collection, analysis and report generation through a single entity.</p>

*“Clearly define the umbrella of services and pathways; even if we can’t fix the whole problem let’s be clear on who does what.”*

-focus group participant-

9. Service Delivery and Roles	
Gap	Opportunity
<i>Inconsistent Service Delivery and Roles</i>	<i>Define Service Delivery and Roles</i>
Inconsistent service delivery between special needs resource agencies.	Create standardized program guidelines that clearly describe services available to child care providers and families, roles and responsibilities, common forms, tools, etc.
Different models of service exist among special needs programs.	Develop a level of service tool for family supports and child care provider supports.
Absence of consistent vehicle to share best practices across disciplines.	Develop one job description for Resource Consultants to ensure consistency in role, approach and required skills.
	Connect Regional Purchase of Service Analyst role with Resource Consultants to build capacity of child care providers.

This analysis of gaps and opportunities was the start to the overall development of the Strategy's overarching Strategic Directions, associated Outcomes and Strategic Actions designed to move the Strategy forward.

***An observation...***

There was a high degree of consistency in the gaps, challenges and potential solutions identified by individuals participating in the consultation and with the Task Force findings as well as the results from the consultation conducted for Peel's Child Care Service Plan 2010-2011.

## THE STRATEGY

The Peel Special Needs Strategy for Early Learning and Child Care represents an important step in achieving Peel's overarching goal of strengthening, stabilizing and transforming the early learning and child care system. This will be achieved through expanding support to children with special needs and their families, with an initial primary focus on building an inclusive licensed child care system for children ages 0 to 6 years.

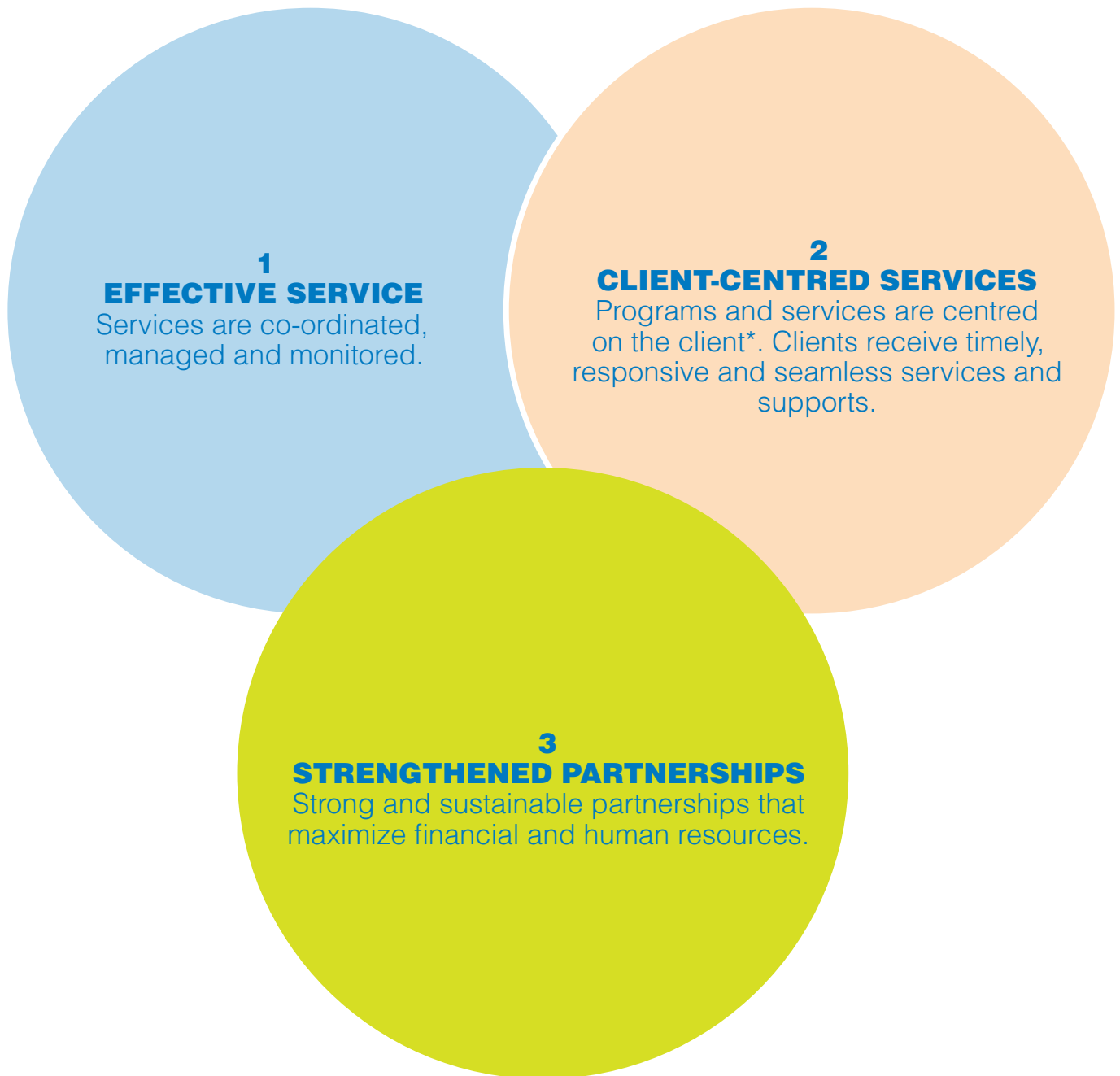
Early in the Strategy's development process, a vision, mission statement and set of values were established to help guide and shape the three Strategic Directions that were formulated.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Vision – Our Ideal Future State</b> In Peel, all children, play, learn and grow together</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mission</b> In Peel, the system will work collaboratively to increase the quality of and access to opportunities for inclusion that help children who have special needs, reach their fullest potential.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Values</b> Partnerships Inclusion System Planning</p>

The Strategy is comprised of three Strategic Directions, each of which include a series of Outcomes and Strategic Actions to help realize the vision that *In Peel, all children, play, learn and grow together*. Together, the three Strategic Directions will provide more effective and client-centred services built on a foundation of strengthened partnerships.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



\*Client refers to children, families and licensed child care providers.

Strategic Framework for Peel Special Needs Strategy for Early Learning and Child Care

<p><b>Strategic Direction 1</b>  <b>Effective Service</b>  <i>Services are co-ordinated, managed and monitored.</i></p>	<p><b>Strategic Direction 2</b>  <b>Client-Centred Services</b>  <i>Programs and services are centred on the client*.                      Clients receive timely, responsive and seamless services and supports.</i></p>	<p><b>Strategic Direction 3</b>  <b>Strengthened Partnerships</b>  <i>Strong and sustainable partnerships that maximize financial and human resources.</i></p>
<p><b>Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Enhanced capacity of licensed child care providers and resource agencies to provide quality inclusion services and supports to children with special needs and their families.</li> <li>ii. A co-ordinated service model between special needs resource agencies and child care providers that enhances supports to children with special needs and their families.</li> <li>iii. Increased system capacity to understand and incorporate best practices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and implement a system-wide inclusion training plan to build system-wide capacity (<i>Supports Outcome i.</i>)</li> <li>2. Establish standards of training for quality and inclusive practices (<i>Supports Outcome i.</i>)</li> <li>3. Develop a Peel Inclusion Resource Services model to build upon and co-ordinate existing resource services (<i>Supports Outcome ii.</i>)</li> <li>4. Develop a Peel Inclusion Resource Services web portal that provides clear information about Peel special needs resourcing; including an area for professionals that contains information about best practices and resources (<i>Supports Outcome iii.</i>)</li> <li>5. Establish a community of practice that promotes knowledge exchange between professionals (<i>Supports Outcome iii.</i>)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Improved access to information/resources and services by providing the right services at the right time for children, families and licensed child care providers.</li> <li>ii. Seamless and supported transitions for children between resource agencies, child care and schools.</li> <li>iii. Continuous improvement of quality and accountability standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase access to enhanced staffing supports for licensed child care programs serving children ages 0 to 12 years (<i>Supports Outcome i.</i>)</li> <li>2. Build awareness of special needs resources available to children, families and licensed child care providers through the development of a communications strategy (<i>Supports Outcome i.</i>)</li> <li>3. Increase families' access to special needs resources through a dedicated section on the Peel Inclusion Resource Services web portal (<i>Supports Outcome i.</i>)</li> <li>4. Engage key stakeholders to collaboratively develop transition supports and protocols for children with special needs (<i>Supports Outcome ii.</i>)</li> <li>5. Implement outcome measurement and quality assurance tools for continuous monitoring and reporting (<i>Supports Outcome iii.</i>)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Continued partnerships with community stakeholders and existing planning tables to ensure alignment with integrated early years system planning.</li> <li>ii. Resources are effectively managed to support the licensed child care system.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Address the broader system needs including, but not limited to, increased access to occupational, speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, infant child development, mental health and behavioural supports through ongoing collaboration with planning tables and community partners (<i>Supports Outcome i.</i>)</li> <li>2. Collaborate through local planning tables to inform integrated system planning, develop reporting mechanisms, collect, analyze and share data (<i>Supports Outcome i.</i>)</li> <li>3. Leverage collective resources of organizations that serve families and children with special needs (<i>Supports Outcome ii.</i>)</li> </ul>

\*Client refers to children, families and licensed child care providers.



## PEEL INCLUSION RESOURCE SERVICES (PIRS) MODEL

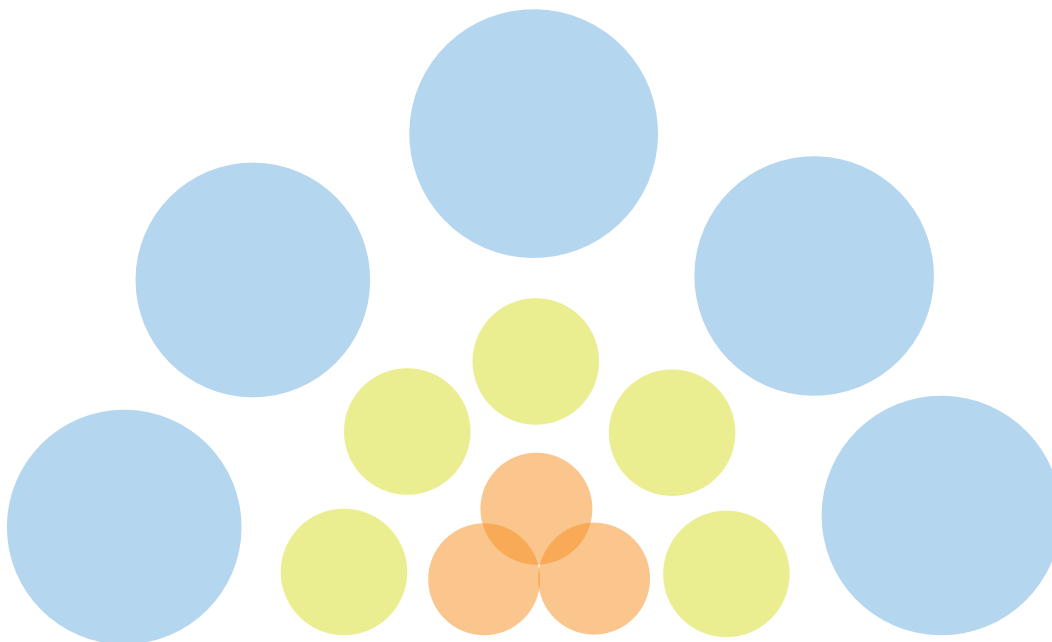
A key component of the Peel Special Needs Strategy for Early Learning and Child Care includes the Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) model. This model, which is part of Strategic Direction #1: Effective Service, represents an important first step in moving the Strategy forward and aligns with Peel's goal of strengthening and transforming the early learning and child care system. The PIRS model will help to ensure all children ages 0 to 6 years have an opportunity to participate in licensed child care and will build the capacity of licensed child care providers to enhance quality inclusion practices.

In 2013, 1,235 children with special needs received special needs resourcing in licensed child care programs in Peel.

61 children with special needs are on wait lists for special needs resourcing.

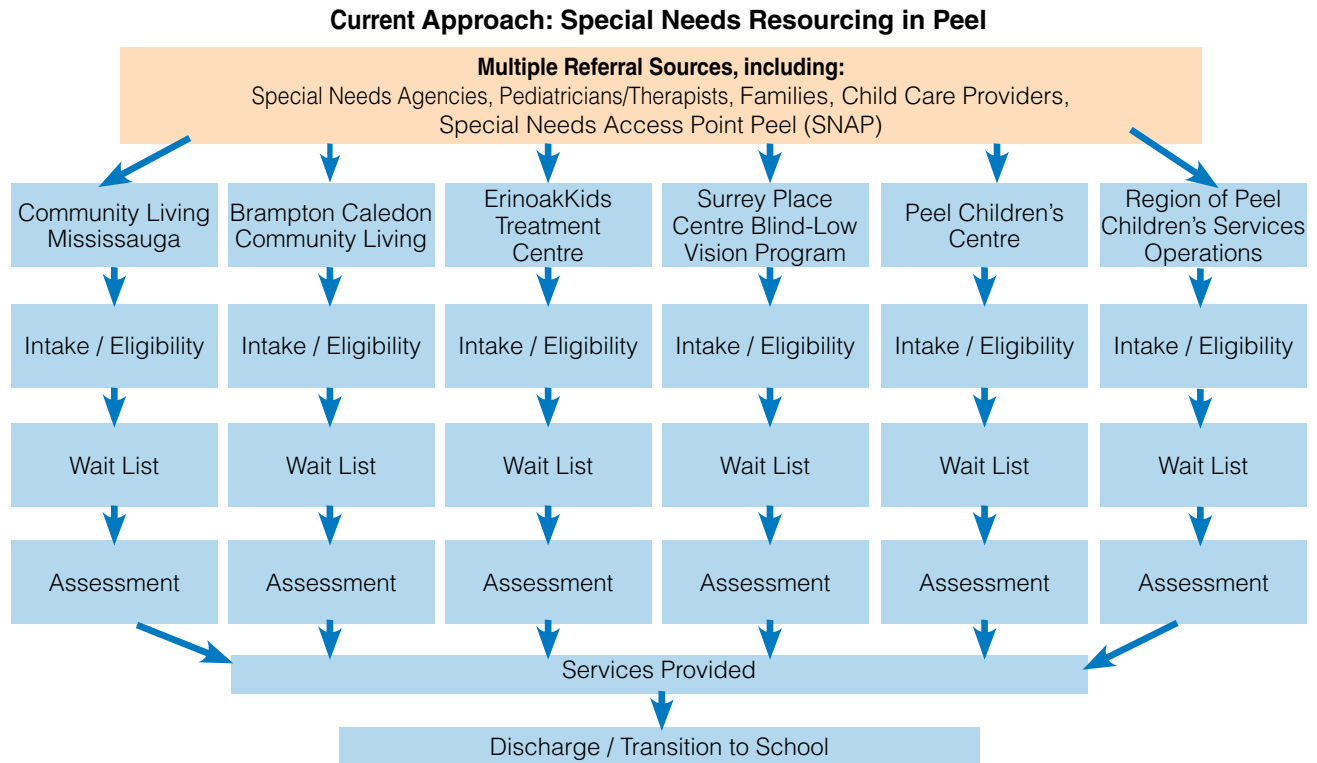
The PIRS model will strive to:

- Increase the number of children with special needs participating in licensed child care settings;
- Increase the number of child care providers that adopt inclusion practices;
- Improve the consistency and accountability for services offered to families, children and licensed child care providers across the Region of Peel;
- Develop uniformity in the types and quality of services offered;
- Better define the services provided and the important role of resource consultation; and
- Strengthen relationships between community child care providers and other agencies supporting families.



## Current Approach: Special Needs Resourcing in Peel

We clearly heard through the engagement process that the current special needs resourcing system in Peel is fragmented and inefficient in addressing the needs of families, children and child care providers. Families commented that the system is complicated and difficult to navigate.



As shown in the diagram, the absence of a clear method or place for referrals leaves families confused and often searching for appropriate supports and services. The lack of a centralized and co-ordinated wait list results in children being placed on multiple agency wait lists, leading to duplication and inefficiencies for both families and service providers. From a service delivery perspective, families and children encounter inconsistent methods of assessment to determine levels of service, as well as varying degrees of resource supports.

## Future Approach: The Peel Inclusion Resource Services Model

The new PIRS model, as depicted on the following page, represents a more innovative and seamless approach to providing client-centred services. The PIRS model will replace the current complicated system where families are referred to several agencies and placed on multiple wait lists, with the addition of a centralized intake and referral system. The PIRS model will be flexible to meet the service demands of five service areas and build the capacity of child care providers to deliver inclusive child care.

## Children

### Multiple Referral Sources, including:

- Special Needs Agencies
- Families
- Other community professionals
- Physicians/ Therapists
- Child Care Providers

### Centralized Intake and Referral

Supports for transition to licensed child care

### Five Service Areas: Family of Child Care Providers



Family of Child Care Providers includes licensed centre and home child care providers

### Five Service Area Leads and Teams, who will provide:

- Onsite resource supports
- Coaching/training/modeling
- Service coordination
- Home visits

### Resource Consultant Support Team

A Resource Consultant Support Team provides support to Service Area Teams, in the areas of:  
Blind-Low Vision / Occupational Therapy / Physiotherapy / Infant Development / Speech and Language / Behaviour / Mental Health

### Additional Supports will include:

**Enhanced Program Support:** Combines existing enhanced program staff support funding and program assistants into one pool

**Resources, materials and equipment:** Equipment pools in each Service Area to increase available materials for providers

**Peel Inclusion Resource Services web portal:** An online portal containing information and resources for both parents and professionals

**Intensive Inclusion Program:** A targeted program for children experiencing significant challenges impeding successful inclusion



The Region of Peel will be divided into five Service Areas. Each Service Area will have a Service Area Lead responsible for communication and coordination between the five Service Areas, identifying training and professional development requirements and fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration.

Within each Service Area, Resource Consultants from each of the special needs agencies will form a Service Area Team (staff from Peel's two community living associations will provide service according to their geographical boundaries). Service Area Teams will come together on a regular basis to share knowledge and expertise, identify challenges and brainstorm solutions.

The model will ensure that every licensed child care provider in Peel has access to support from a Resource Consultant.

Resource Consultants will be responsible for a group of child care providers known as a Family of Child Care Providers and deliver varying levels of support to child care providers and families, as required. Resource Consultants will work directly with child care providers to increase their capacity for working with children with special needs.

A Resource Consultant Support Team consisting of a variety of specialists (e.g. infant development, occupational therapy, speech/language, mental health, behaviour, etc.) can be accessed by Resource Consultants to provide additional strategies to support child care providers working with children with complex needs.

*"Our wish would be that they [children with special needs] have a loving child care provider ... and be treated like any other kid in the classroom."*

-A Parent-

The PIRS model will help to ensure that all children have an opportunity to participate in licensed child care and moves away from thinking that every child with special needs requires a 1:1 support worker. The model leverages the resources, expertise and strengths of Peel's six special needs programs to enhance services to families and child care providers.

The PIRS model will enhance capacity building within our community, whereby:

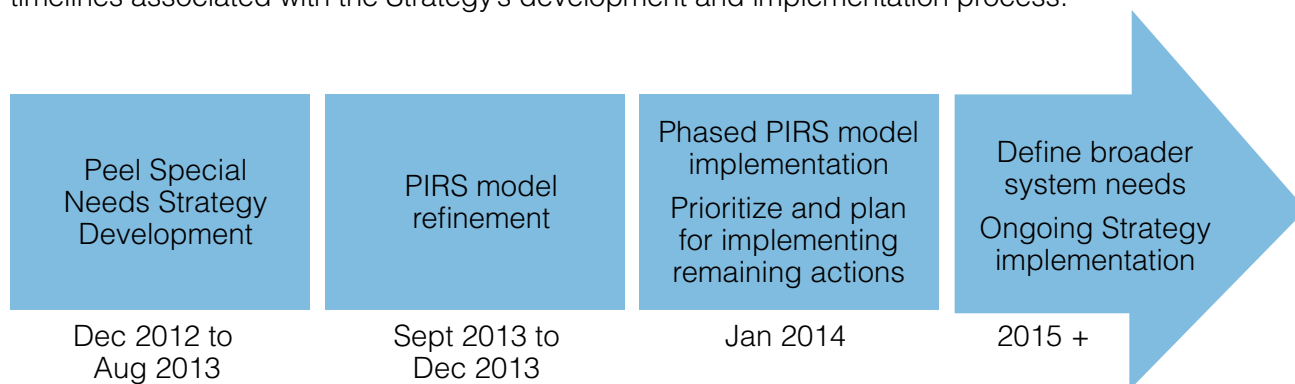
- Families will be empowered to find and access child care more efficiently without fear of rejection
- Licensed child care providers will be supported with the tools needed to ensure inclusive child care services are provided to children with special needs
- Special Needs Agencies will have access to resources, training and a consistent approach to serving licensed child care providers and children with special needs

*"Inclusion quality in child care does not happen on its own but rather, requires planning, resources and learning from each other."*

-D. Lero, K. Brophy, T. van Rhijn,  
University of Guelph-

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINES

Significant progress has been achieved since December 2012 when the development of the Peel Special Needs Strategy for Early Learning and Child Care began. The arrow below illustrates the timelines associated with the Strategy's development and implementation process.



Successful implementation of the Strategy will require the ongoing collaboration and combined efforts of many community partners. Three key groups in particular will have responsibility for overseeing its implementation:

Peel Early Learning Special Needs Advisory Committee (PELSNAC)	PELSNAC will lead the prioritization and implementation of the Strategy's Strategic Actions and will engage other planning tables in how to address broader system needs. The mandate of PELSNAC is the planning, co-ordination and delivery of special needs services for children (ages 0-12) in a variety of early learning settings within Peel region.
Peel Inclusion Resource Services Steering Group (previously referred to as the Peel Special Needs Steering Committee)	The Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) Steering Group will implement the new PIRS model of service. This group will inform the development and implementation of the PIRS model, with phased implementation to begin in January 2014. Working groups composed of front-line staff from each of Peel's special needs resource programs, play an integral role in the roll out and implementation of the PIRS model. See Appendix B for a list of the Working Groups.
Region of Peel – Human Services Department	In its role as Service System Manager, the Region of Peel has the responsibility for system planning, system management, quality assurance and overall system stewardship. Through the Human Services Department, the Region will facilitate and oversee implementation of the Strategy, including support to the PIRS model.

The continued engagement of families/caregivers is also very important to the successful implementation of this Strategy. During the consultation process a number of families volunteered to inform the process through participation in future focus groups. We look forward to receiving and acting upon their feedback.

## LOOKING AHEAD

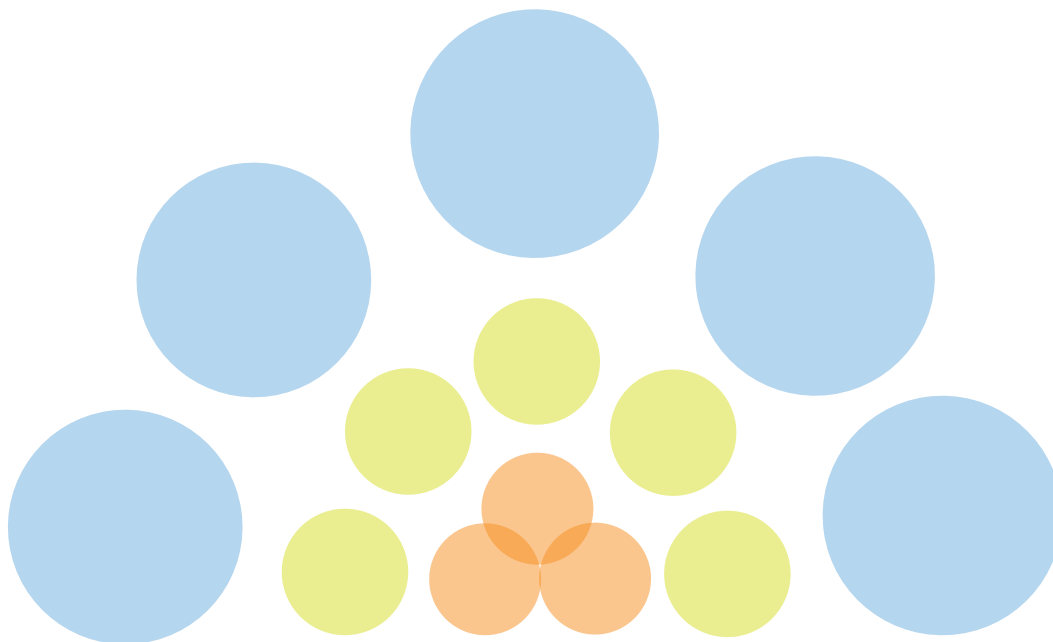
The Strategy will enhance support to children with special needs and their families, with an initial primary focus on building an inclusive licensed child care system for children ages 0 to 6 years. As such, the Strategy represents an important step forward in achieving Peel's overarching goal of strengthening, stabilizing and transforming the early learning and child care system.

*“Identify the inclusion leaders in the child care community and include them in the special needs strategy planning process and the planning for system improvements.”*

–focus group participant –

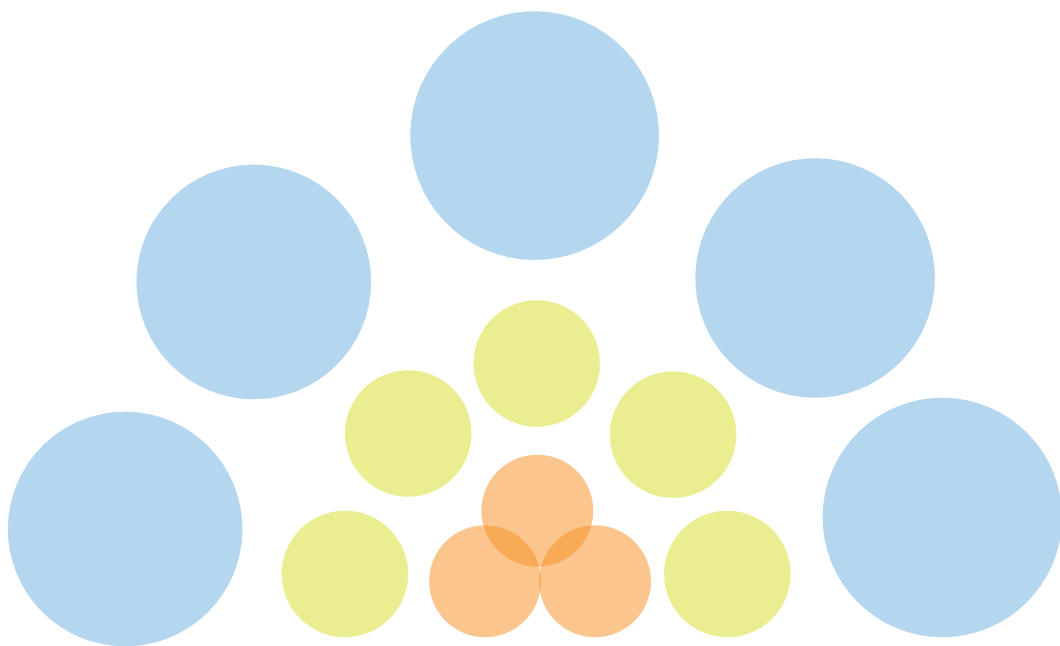
We recognize, however, that the need for early intervention and supports for children with special needs is a much larger issue. Long wait lists remain for infant development, occupational and speech and language therapy and many other support services for families both in and outside of formal licensed child care and other early years settings. To that end, addressing these broader system needs is an integral part of the overall Strategy and will be an important focus of the continued work of PELSNAC moving forward in partnership with other planning tables and initiatives.

The Region of Peel and its partners are deeply committed to ongoing collaborative leadership to support effective service system planning and the successful implementation of the Strategy. We are excited to continue working together with all our partners to achieve our collective vision of *In Peel, all children, play, learn and grow together.*





# APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### Peel Special Needs Steering Committee

**Members:**

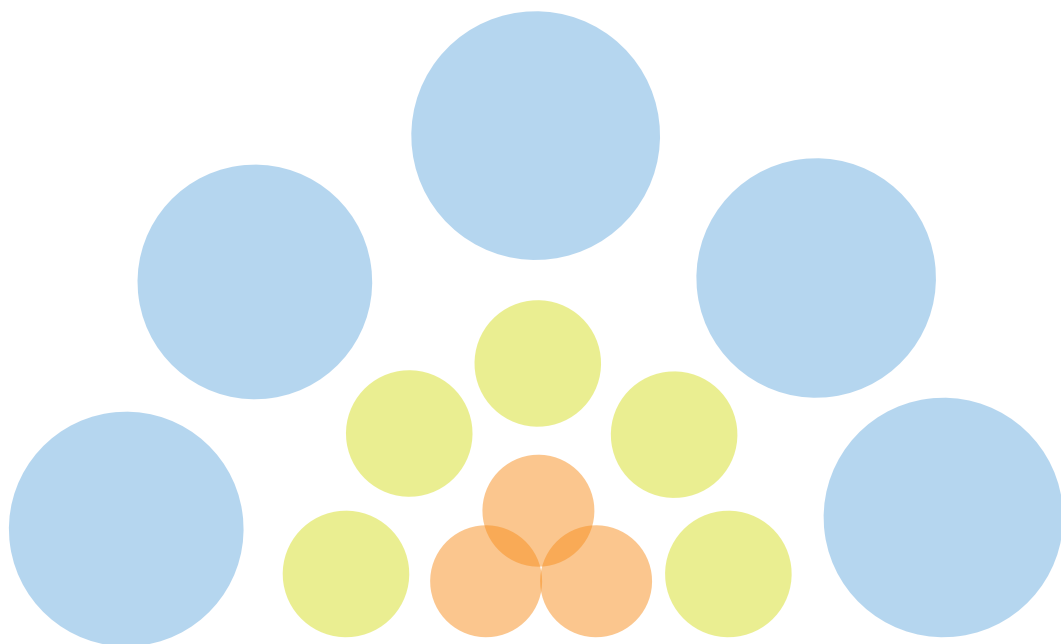
Gunta Jurevics-Lawson	Region of Peel	Co-Chair
Laura Mitchell-Collier	Region of Peel	Co-Chair
Ann Iannarelli	Community Living Mississauga	
Donna McIlroy	Peel Children's Centre	
Kelly Anderson	Brampton Caledon Community Living	
Kristi Morgan	ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development	
Lindsay Hillier	Surrey Place Centre Blind-Low Vision Program	
Lori O'Connor	Region of Peel – Children's Services Operations	
Sonia Pace	Region of Peel – Children's Services Operations	

**Consultant:**

Wendy Perry	Wendy Perry Consulting
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**Region of Peel Resource Supports:**

Andrew Bizzarro  
Jennifer Jeremiah  
Joan Kaczmariski  
Siobhan Kelly-Davis  
Jennifer Marvin  
Lisa Pecarski



## Peel Early Learning Special Needs Advisory Committee (PELSNAC)

The Advisory Committee comprised of the same membership as Peel Early Learning Special Needs Advisory Committee (PELSNAC), with additional members to represent licensed child care partners and other key stakeholders.

### **PELSNAC Membership:**

Donna McIlroy (Co-Chair)	Peel Children's Centre
Gunta Jurevics-Lawson (Co-Chair)	Region of Peel
Ann Iannarelli	Community Living Mississauga
Elizabeth Hawley	Child Development Resource Connection Peel
Joan Kaczmarek	Region of Peel
Kelly Anderson	Brampton Caledon Community Living
Kristi Morgan	ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development
Leanne Baldwin	Peel Behavioural Services
Lindsay Hillier	Surrey Place Centre, Blind-Low Vision Program
Lorna Montgomery	Infant and Child Development Services Peel
Lori Grant	Peel District School Board
Lori O'Connor	Region of Peel, Children's Services
Marilyn Minnick	Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
Sonia Pace	Region of Peel, Children's Services

### **Expanded Membership for Special Needs Strategy Development:**

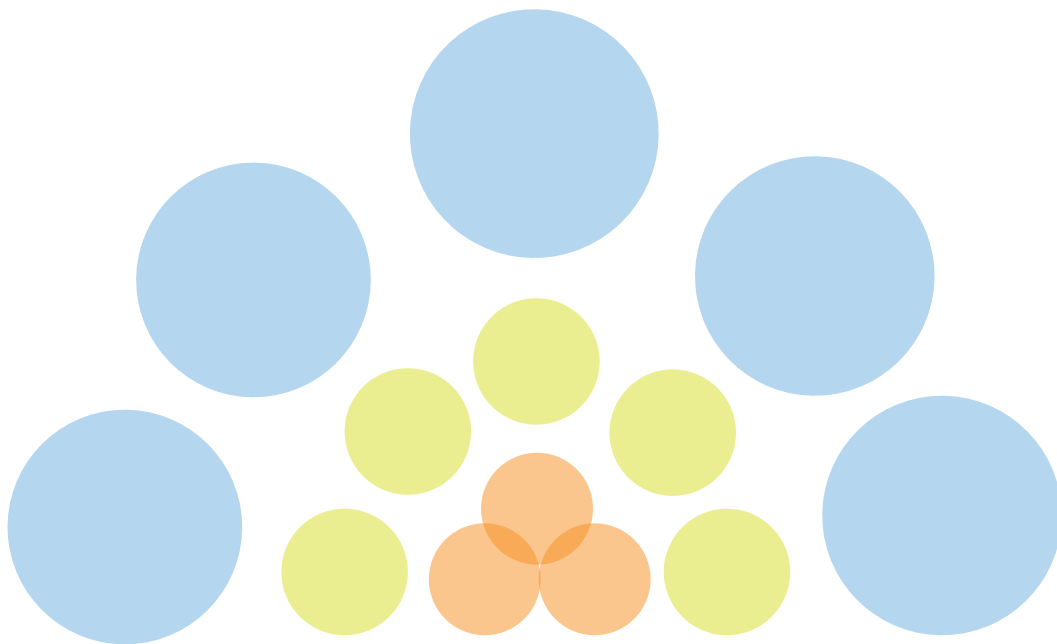
Ana Lia Pauchulo	Peel District School Board
Bridget Woodcock	Humber College
Diane Daley	Multi-site operator representative
Ginette Atkinson	ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development
Joanne Seaward	Non-profit child care representative
Lauraine Cote	Francophone Committee representative
Laura Mitchell-Collier	Region of Peel
Lisa Chiodo	Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Lynda MacIntosh	Infant and Child Development Services Peel
Mary Velanovski	Ministry of Education
Maverine Guerreiro	Licensed home child care representative
Muriel Axford	Surrey Place Centre Blind-Low Vision Program
Maryann Novak	Region of Peel
Penny Davies	Sheridan College
Shahin Shamji-Allard	Community Living Mississauga
Sue Ewen	Ministry of Education
Theresa Nagy	Peel Children's Centre
Sandra Vieira	Licensed private child care operators representative

## APPENDIX B

### Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) Implementation Working Groups

The following Working Groups are established to contribute to the development and implementation of the Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) model. They are composed of front-line staff from each of the special needs resource programs, and chaired by members of the Peel Inclusion Resource Services Steering Group.

- Communication, Media and Marketing
- Documentation and Forms
- Equipment
- Evaluation and Best Practices
- Guidelines and Procedures
- Professional Development
- Program Development – Enhanced Program Supports
- Program Development – Information, Intake and Referral
- Program Development – Resource Consultant Support Team
- Program Development – Intensive Inclusion Program



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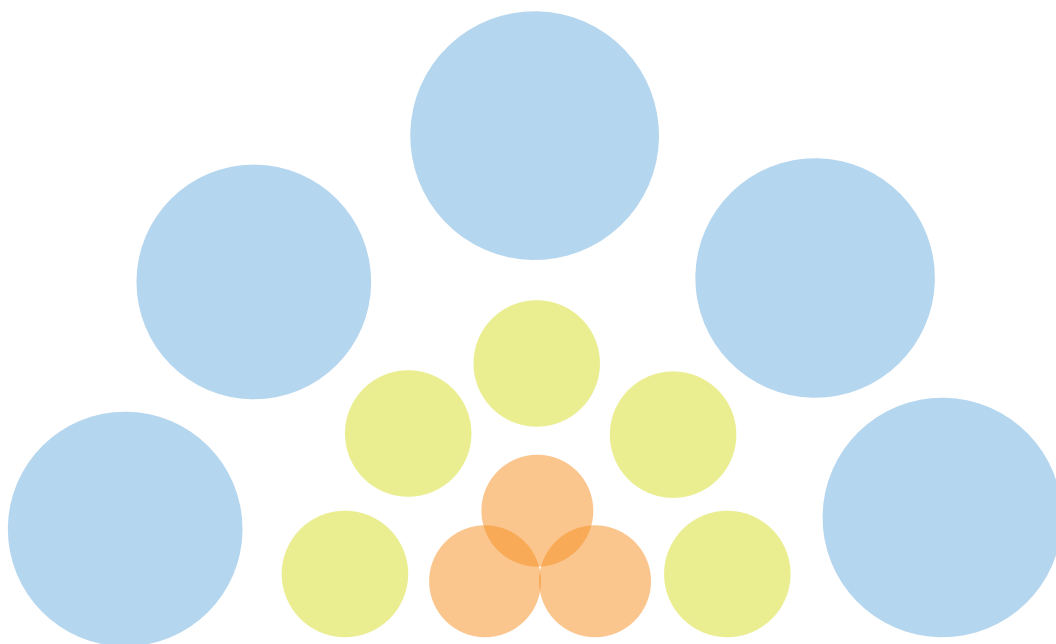
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**A collaboration of:**



Peel Early Learning Special Needs Advisory Committee  
(PELSNAC)

