



3. Child Care Services

WHAT IS THE SERVICE?

Municipal Children's Services divisions plan and manage their local child care system, focusing on the integration of government initiatives, inter-agency coordination, and the development of quality programs and services for children and their families.

Municipalities are mandated by provincial legislation under the *Day Nursery Act* to plan, direct, and deliver child care services. Responsibilities include:

- ▶ Providing leadership in the development and delivery of quality child care programs and overseeing policies, procedures, and funding relationships with the Province and the child care community
- ▶ Planning and allocating funding for child care fee and wage subsidies, and special needs resourcing
- ▶ For some municipalities responsibilities can also include directly operating child care centres and home child care programs, infant development and special needs resourcing programs

Objectives of child care services include:

- ▶ Providing a continuum of quality community-based services accessible to children, their families and caregivers
- ▶ Fostering partnerships with the community in planning and service delivery to ensure equitable access to high quality child care for children and support for families
- ▶ Providing financial support to eligible families to enable them to participate fully in employment, training and developmental opportunities
- ▶ Innovating and building on leading practices

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES?

Municipalities face a number of challenges in managing the Child Care Service system including:

- ▶ Increasing demand for service - for most municipalities, the development of spaces has not kept pace with the growth in child population, resulting in growing wait lists for child care
- ▶ Due to historical funding inconsistencies, the availability of fee subsidy for child care spaces and wage subsidy for child care workers is not evenly distributed across the province and impacts the amount municipalities have to invest in child care services

- ▶ Municipalities do not have control over the number or growth of regulated child care spaces as it is the Province of Ontario that is responsible for licensing. A collaborative approach to licensing would ensure adequate funding for capital start up costs, fee and wage subsidy, special needs resources and quality initiatives to support new centres
- ▶ Mid-year provincial policy and funding decisions create implementation challenges and impact service planning

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

How many regulated child care spaces are available?

FIG. 3.1 Licensed Child Care Spaces per 1,000 Children (12 years and under) in the Municipality

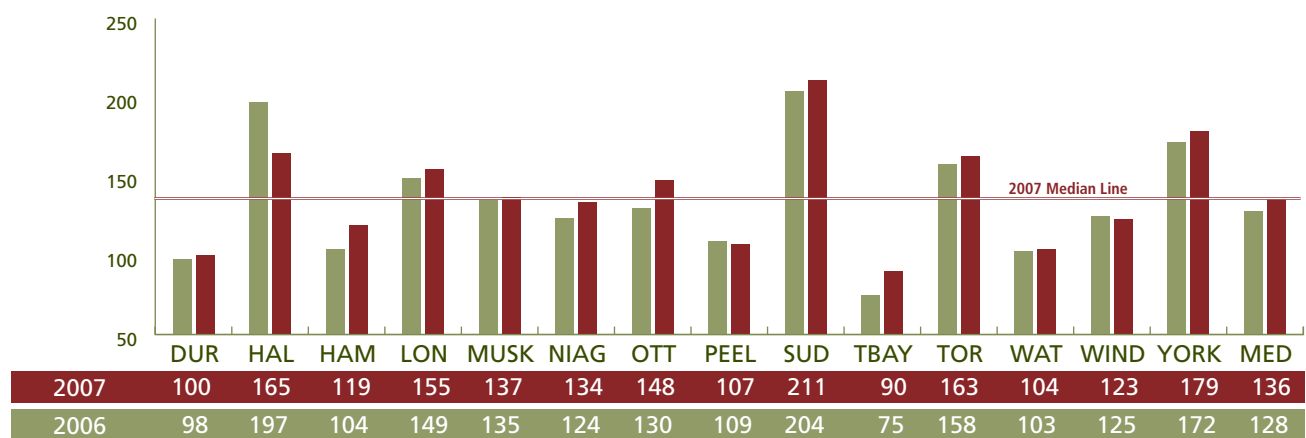
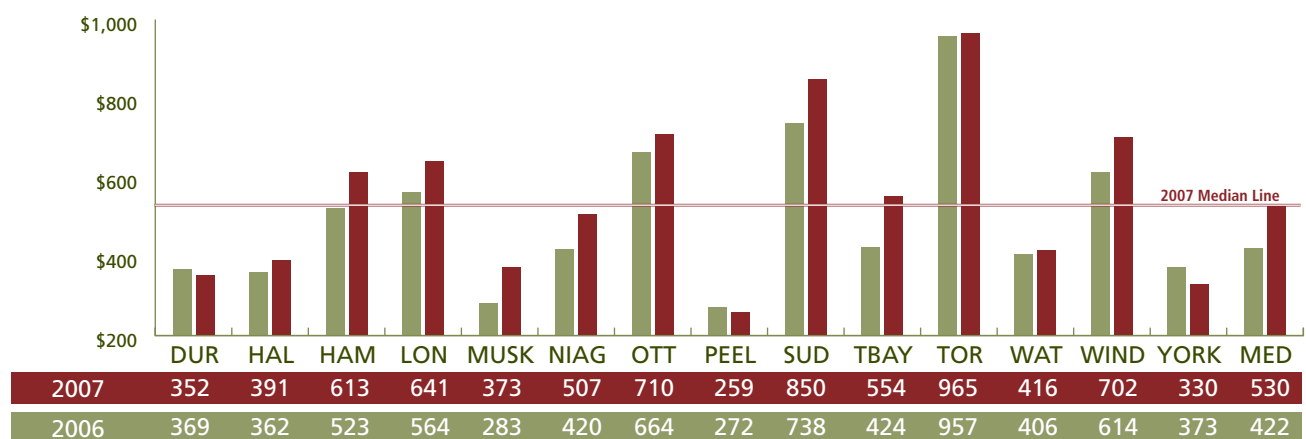


Figure 3.1 shows the number of licensed spaces in the municipality per 1,000 Children 12 and under. Most municipalities showed an increase in spaces from 2006 to 2007. However, for some municipalities, growth in child care spaces is offset, in varying degrees, by growth in the child population.

What is the investment per child (12 years and under) in the municipality?

FIG. 3.2 Investment per Child (12 years and under) in the Municipality



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Figure 3.2 shows the investment per child 12 years and under in the municipality. Investment includes provincial funding and municipal funding. For many municipalities, the funding from both of these sources has not kept pace with the growth in the child population. This is particularly true for Durham, Halton, Peel, Waterloo and York.

How much does an “average” subsidized child care space cost?

FIG. 3.3 Annual Fee Subsidy Child Care Service Cost per Subsidized Child Care Space

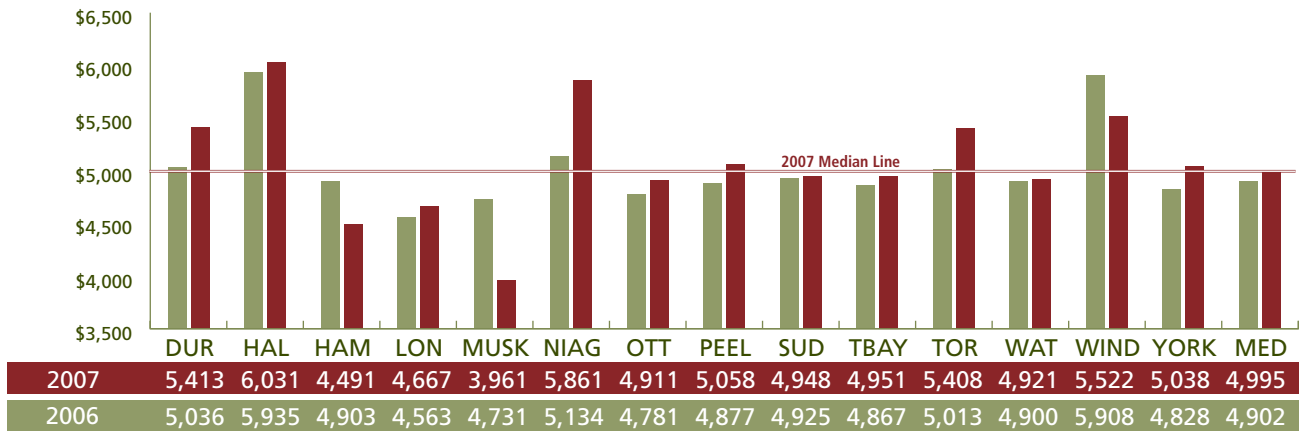


Figure 3.3 shows the cost of providing the average subsidized child care space. This measure reflects heavily on the local economy and has been normalized to reflect the mix of age groups and required staff ratios. A high cost result could reflect a higher percentage of spaces being directly operated by the municipality with higher wages, or the higher cost of care in large urban cities.

WHAT SHOULD YOU CONSIDER WHEN REVIEWING THESE RESULTS?

Each municipality’s results are influenced to varying degrees by a number of factors, including:

- ▶ Varying levels of child poverty in municipalities results in differing needs for subsidized child care
- ▶ The cost to provide child care can be impacted by economic variables such as the cost of living in the municipality and the income levels of its residents
- ▶ For child care spaces other than those directly operated by a municipality, rates are set in service agreements between the municipality and the child care service providers; these rates can be influenced by a number of factors including the level of funding available, local wage conditions, pay equity legislation, municipal policies and business practices

For more information about the results, contact the Municipality’s representative listed in Appendix F, page 94.