

“With our Best Future in Mind”

In June 2009, Dr. Charles Pascal, Special Advisor on Early Learning to the premier of Ontario, released his much anticipated provincial report “*With Our Best Future in Mind*”. Andrew Fleck Child Care Services (AFCCS) fully endorses the report in its entirety as it has the potential to transform our fragmented services into a more positive and seamless experience for families by developing an integrated system. We are one of the oldest and most diversified non-profit, charitable, full-service early learning, child care and family support organizations in Ontario. Our mission is to support children and their families through high quality, inclusive services that meet their diverse developmental, early learning and child care needs. In preparation for the exciting changes as recommended in the report we have completed a summary of each of our programs.

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Short Term Child Care

Mandate: Short Term Child Care provides reliable, accessible back up care for children 3 months to 12 years when the child is mildly ill, when regular child care arrangements are interrupted, or when other family emergencies arise. We offer flexible child care arrangements to meet the varied working schedules of working parents – days, evenings, overnight and weekends. We offer working parents with an alternative to missing days or even weeks of work due to a lack of temporary child care.

Employers/organizations/unions pay an annual access fee that entitles their employees/members access to the Short Term Child Care Program. Parents who use the services are charged a reasonable user fee, which may be subsidized partially or fully by their employer/union.

In addition to supporting working parents, trained caregivers also provide weekly early learning and child care sessions at the six Women’s Shelters in the City of Ottawa.

Short Term Child Care current structure: The team consists of 1 FTE placement coordinator working in the office, 2 Part time placement coordinators working from home from 6am until 9am and 7pm until 9pm in the evening, 1 recruiting and training coordinator working three days a week and one manager. As a non profit service Short Term Child Care employs an innovative, client-centred approach to its service delivery guided by STCC Principles of Service Quality. The service is driven by client need and developed to best support them during stressful time. Great care is taken to handle every request for care in the most efficient way possible. The three service options of the original STCC service were refined to meet partners' and families' current needs: in-home child care (the only option for mildly ill children); licensed home child care and licensed group day care centre (when regular child care arrangements had broken down). Requests for care by parents can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Microsoft access data base is used to collect data information from clients who access the service. Utilization reports are prepared on a regular basis and forwarded to consortium partners.

From the beginning, qualified, well-treated caregivers have been the essence of a successful, viable, high-quality STCC service. Significant effort and resources are directed in the recruitment, screening, training and orientation of STCC caregivers.

For many STCC caregivers, the program has provided an excellent opportunity for learning and working with children and families in emergency care situations.

The program also prides itself with providing full time summer camp to 6 women's shelters in Ottawa.

Principles:

- Program provides high quality bilingual back up child care services to eligible families of organizations which have a Purchase of Service Agreement with the Short Term Child Care Program
- We have an expectation of standards. Experienced caregivers are recruited, screened and participate in an orientation before being placed. Confidentiality must be ensured.
- All eligible families who access the services are to be served efficiently in a supportive manner.

Vision:

We believe that STCC should be part of the continuum of services offered by CFCs, available to all families when they require alternate care. User fees would apply; subsidies would be available for those that are eligible for financial assistance. Parents of families meeting Ontario Works Child Care program requirements would be able to access the respite care program.

Our unique service should continue to support the local women's shelters, ensuring continuity between their specialized programs and services available in the community.

We should be offering a centralized supply teacher service. We are piloting this internally at the moment. Staff who require a supply teacher call our placement line, the placement coordinator dispatches a caregiver who has already been orientated to that location. This eliminates the staff person, who typically is feeling unwell, from having to call multiple individuals to find a replacement.

As our sector engages in a transformational review, we believe that STCC is an important and necessary component of the early learning and care system. Our service is city-wide and flexible, we are able to provide supports that are unique and necessary. Unfortunately due to our current structure we are under utilized and inaccessible to most families.