



Strategic Plan 2026-2029

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Invest in Our People

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Deliver Exceptional Quality in Early Learning and Child Care

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Strengthen Community Partnerships and Inclusion

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Expand and Adapt Programs to Meet Community Needs

A Message from our Executive Director

In 2020, we entered a new strategic planning cycle with a clear vision for the next three years—however, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly reshaped our direction. Virtually overnight, our priorities shifted to focus on staffing, policy adaptation, communication, funding, and enhanced health and safety measures. The safety and well-being of the children in our care, along with the staff supporting them, became our primary focus during the initial years of the pandemic, until the introduction of vaccines provided a path to reducing risk and restoring stability.

These were challenging years. We learned to adjust and be creative. We needed the world to feel safe again for families, and we did our best to change our practices quickly without losing our sense of connection. Our 2020 graduation ceremony took place on the front lawn of each child's home, with a banner, a gift, and their child care educators standing six feet away. It taught us a great deal about ourselves—our resilience and our ability to carry on regardless. As difficult as it was, HGCC became stronger, braver, and more in tune with our community, shaping much of our thinking moving forward.

During the pandemic, Mount Albion Early Learning and Child Care was being built and required extensive planning, purchasing, and staffing, which became a priority. In 2022, CWELCC was introduced, and we spent many hours understanding the new funding model and adapting to a new way of operating. In 2023 and 2024, St. James began construction, and significant time was spent on-site, working with HWCDSB and planning this new centre. Our lease at 360 Isaac Brock Drive also ended, and the Board became heavily involved with the church in negotiating our continued stay.

Our organization experienced many changes and challenges, but this led to a strengthening of our vision, the development of new policies, and a renewed focus on building partnerships. By 2025, we entered a period of greater stability and understanding, which allowed us to begin focusing on new goals for 2026 and beyond. These years, although difficult, helped us revisit our policies and strengthen our workforce through training and targeted support. We evolved in ways we had not envisioned, becoming stronger and more focused on community, and on our role as an important part of the City of Hamilton.



Land Acknowledgement

The City of Hamilton is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

We further acknowledge that this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Today, the City of Hamilton is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island (North America) and we recognize that we must do more to learn about the rich history of this land so that we can better understand our roles as residents, neighbours, partners and caretakers.

Acknowledgment of Funders

Our programs are supported through a diverse mix of funding, including the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system, the Province of Ontario (including EarlyON and Canada Summer Jobs), the City of Hamilton, and parent fee contributions. We remain committed to aligning our services with funding requirements while continuing to respond to the evolving needs of children, families, and the community.

Organizational Background

Heritage Green Child Care Inc. is a non-profit organization that has been serving families in the Upper Stoney Creek community since 1993. What began as a small program with six children has grown into a multi-site organization supporting children from infancy through age 12.

The organization currently operates two licensed child care centres located within Mount Albion Elementary School and St. James the Apostle Catholic Elementary School, as well as an EarlyON Child and Family Centre at Valley Park Recreation Centre. Heritage Green has expanded over time in response to the increasing need for accessible, high-quality child care and family support services within the community.

Heritage Green Child Care Inc. is committed to delivering inclusive, play-based programs grounded in the principles of How Does Learning Happen? with a focus on supporting children's learning, development, and well-being. The organization works in partnership with the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board, and the City of Hamilton, and participates in the Hamilton Early Years Quality Project (HEYQP) to support continuous quality improvement.

Heritage Green Child Care continues to demonstrate strong reach and community impact through both its child care and family support programs. Valley Park EarlyON Child and Family Centre remains a key access point for families seeking early years support. During the reporting period of March 2023 to July 2024, the program experienced exceptionally high participation, with 15,837 visits—an average of approximately 932 visits per month. This level of engagement reflects the program's strong community presence and high demand for accessible early years services.

Across our licensed child care programs, Heritage Green currently serves 356 registered families and provides care for 527 children (2025). These figures highlight both the scale of our operations and the essential role we play in supporting working families and fostering early childhood development.

As the organization continues to grow and evolve, it remains committed to strengthening its workforce through ongoing professional learning and by supporting pathways for staff to advance within the early childhood education field.

How This Plan Was Developed

This strategic plan was developed in consultation with staff, families and the Board of Directors of Heritage Green Child Care Inc., and reflects the priorities and needs of the local community.

Priorities were identified through:

- Annual parent and guardian surveys;
- Annual staff surveys and engagement sessions;
- Ongoing program evaluation and operational planning; and,
- Community needs and continued growth in demand for child care.

The strategic priorities were also informed by key focus areas identified in local service system planning through the City of Hamilton's Early Years Quality Program (HEYQP) and the Early Years Community Plan, including:

- Advancing policies and programs which enable equity, diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging for children and their families;
- Encouraging pedagogical documentation and reflective practice;
- Promoting outdoor and nature-based learning experiences;
- Creating opportunities for arts-based learning and creative expression;
- Strengthening the development of early literacy; and,
- Ensuring strong engagement and partnerships with families.

These priorities align with the principles of How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, a resource guide released by the Ministry of Education to support curriculum/program development in licensed early years programs across Ontario, which guides program practices at Heritage Green Child Care Inc.

STRENGTHS

- Strong relationships and trust with families and the community
- Established practice, safe and structured learning environment
- Consistent demand for child care
- Compliance with licensing and quality standards
- Quality care, qualified and well trained staff who support the children and their individual needs
- Families like Storypark and the communication
- High retention rates in the child care centres

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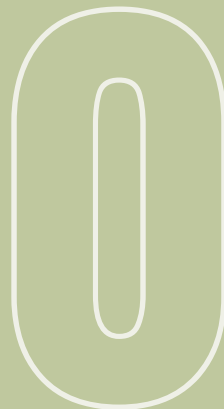
WEAKNESSES

- Qualified staff shortages
- Higher than normal turnover in BASP staff and staff on medical/mental health leaves, parents requesting notification of changes.
- Risk of burn out/less retention
- Limited physical space for expansion in child care
- Administrative workload related to regulations and documentation
- Storypark: families would like to see more features, but this is limited to the progra
- More planned activities in BASP

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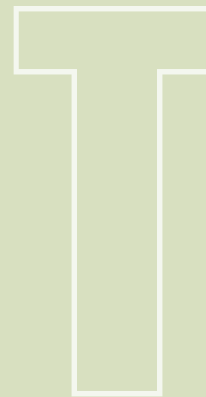
OPPORTUNITIES

- Increasing demand for childcare services
- Community funding initiatives
- Partnerships with school and other community organizations
- Expansion of services such as after school care
- Partnerships with other organizations

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THREATS

- Changes in government funding or policies
- Health crises (pandemic etc.)
- Rising costs
- Liability and safety concern
- Staff shortages

A large, white, stylized outline of the letter 'T' is positioned on the left side of the Threats quadrant, which has a solid green background.

Our Vision

To support each child's learning, development, health, and well-being by encouraging active learning, exploration, play, and inquiry, and by viewing children and their families as capable and valued participants in all aspects of our program.



Our Mission

We believe in empowering children to lead their learning, making it both enjoyable and meaningful.



Sense of Community

Creating a strong sense of community where each child can grow, learn, and thrive.

Individual Needs

Supporting each child's individual needs and helping them develop independence and emotional awareness.

Building Strong Teams

Working together as a strong team of educators to provide quality care and education while continuously improving our practices so that everyone feels safe, respected, and supported in their learning.

Supporting our Mission

Building Relationships

Building kind, respectful relationships with the children in our care and their families.

Celebrating Diversity

Celebrating diversity and ensuring every child has the opportunity to do their best.



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Progress toward strategic goals will be reviewed annually using:

HOW PROGRESS WILL BE MEASURED



Parent and guardian surveys



Staff surveys and engagement feedback



Enrollment and number of visits to the EarlyON centre



Staffing information



Professional development participation



Community partnership relationships

Workforce Profile (2026 Baseline)

2026 Workforce Baseline

Heritage Green Child Care currently employs 50 full-time and part-time employees across its programs that work directly in the classrooms.

Staff qualifications include:

- 35 Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) – 70%
- 5 staff with Director's Approval or are Qualified to work in the school age program – 10%
- 10 staff who are unqualified– 20%

The organization will continue to support staff interested in pursuing ECE education and professional growth, while maintaining a strong level of qualified educators across all programs.

Priority 1 – Invest in Our People

Goal: Support recruitment, professional learning, and leadership development to build a strong and sustainable workforce.

Objective	Year 1 Indicators	Year 2 Indicators	Year 3 Indicators	Measures
1. Support staff pursuing ECE or other relevant education	Identify staff interested in ECE education, apprenticeship program or other relevant education such as Child and Youth Worker	Provide mentorship and scheduling support for staff enrolled in programs	Continue supporting staff completing education programs	Increase number of non-qualified staff enrolled in ECE programs or other relevant education
2. Maintain a strong qualified workforce	Prioritize hiring RECEs/qualified staff when positions become available.	Maintain strong RECE staffing levels across programs child care and kindergarten programs. Maintain qualified staffing in the school age program.	Continue recruitment of qualified educators	Maintain approximately 80% RECE/qualified staff across all programs
3. Support professional learning	Provide access and information on professional development opportunities	Encourage staff leadership opportunities through training and mentorship	Continue internal training and mentorship	90% of staff participate in at least 3 professional learning opportunities per year (being tracked annually).

Priority 2: Deliver Exceptional Quality in Early Learning and Child Care

Goal: Maintain high-quality learning environments supported by qualified staff and strong leadership, guided by the principles of How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years.

Objective	Year 1 Indicators	Year 2 Indicators	Year 3 Indicators	Measures
1. Maintain high-quality learning environments	Review program consistency between centres	Implement improvements based on management observations, staff and family feedback	Continue quality improvement or maintenance practices	Maintain or increase parent/guardian participation in surveys (target 50%)
2. Staff succession planning	Formalize transition plan and timelines	Assistant Director transitions into Director role with mentorship Recruit and onboard a new Assistant Director with structured support	Evaluate the impact of the transition, including input from the Board of Directors to assess the Executive Director's leadership effectiveness	Increase staff participation in surveys by 10% (target 60%) Successful completion of leadership transition timeline by Dec 2027
3. Strengthen pedagogical practice and reflective learning	Review current practices to ensure alignment with How Does Learning Happen?	Support educators in reflective discussions, quality documentation and program planning based on children's interests and inquiry through use of the Storypark program with child care staff and trainings and support from our pedagogical lead.	Continue ongoing professional learning and reflective practice across programs	Positive Board and management feedback on leadership effectiveness through management surveys and successful operations of the organization Maintain quality pedagogical documentation and reflective practices to be monitored by site supervisors and/or pedagogical lead.

Priority 3: Strengthen Community Partnerships and Inclusion

Goal: Build meaningful partnerships that support equity, diversity, and belonging for children, families, and staff.

Objective	Year 1 Indicators	Year 2 Indicators	Year 3 Indicators	Measures
1.Support Truth and Reconciliation	Identify indigenous community partners and participate in professional learning opportunities	Develop programming and learning opportunities	Integrate age-appropriate programs and learning into ongoing practice	Providing more resources to our staff and natural inclusion of indigenous materials within the classrooms
2.Strengthen community partnerships	Expand connections with local organizations	Maintain and deepen partnerships	Evaluate impact of partnerships	Maintain number of active partnerships in the community
3.Support inclusive practices for children with diverse needs and advance equity, diversity and inclusion	Review current policies and practices through an equity lens	Implement inclusive practices and staff learning opportunities while strengthening partnerships with community agencies and resource consultants	Continue building staff capacity to support inclusive programming	Increase staff confidence in supporting diverse needs through training and community support measured through communication with staff, families and surveys

Priority 4: Expand and Adapt Programs to Meet Community Needs

Goal: Ensure programs continue to meet the changing needs of families and the community.

Objective	Year 1 Indicators	Year 2 Indicators	Year 3 Indicators	Measures
1. Possible expansion of school-age programming based on waitlists	Increase licensed capacity where needed	Continue to increase capacity if needed	Maintain sustainable program growth and monitor trends in waitlist numbers in line with Child Care and Early Years IT Modernization Initiative (implementation date to be determined)	Maintain enrollment aligned with capacity tracked through attendance records
2. Support youth leadership opportunities	Continue leadership opportunities in summer camp programs	Support high school students completing volunteer hours	Develop staff capacity to lead youth programming	Increase number of youth participating in leadership opportunities by 10%
3. Enhance program offerings through innovative and responsive learning opportunities	Identify community needs and pilot new program opportunities (e.g. expanded EarlyON hours, arts-based programming, enhanced outdoor environments)	Evaluate pilot programs and expand successful initiatives across sites	Sustain and integrate successful innovative programs into core service delivery	Positive family feedback and demonstrated community need will be achieved through surveys

**Heritage Green Child Care is
committed to continuous improvement,
strong partnerships, and providing
high-quality early learning
environments where children, families,
and educators can thrive.**

