

NORTH LAMBTON CHILDCARE CENTRE

Message from the Executive Director

2020

2020 will go on record as a year like no other. As I reflect on this past year, I am grateful that North Lambton Childcare Centre (NLCC) has a strong foundation and was able to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic quickly and efficiently.

When the initial pandemic lockdown was announced the Board of Directors quickly came together to prepare, adapt, and adjust to the evolving requirements during these unprecedented times. I would like to personally thank each Board Member for giving so much of yourselves: your time, your focus, and support to help us navigate all this uncertainty. Special mention to Karen Fogwill, who left the Board in December and to Laura Campbell who has completed her term after this summer. Thank you for your dedication and volunteering your time to NLCC.

The Board of Directors recognized immediately the importance for the employees to have some security and alleviate some of the stress and uncertainty we were all feeling. Before the federal government announced any financial supports, the Board had already met and agreed to wage security for all employees. Then, with the financial support of the federal government, NLCC continued to pay employees until child care re-opened in July 2020. During the closure, our child care and EarlyON educators used this time to support their professional development to strengthen their practices.

Our team of educators and support staff quickly adapted their practice to continue to support families during these pandemic times. The EarlyON educators need to be recognized for adapting their work and shift to offering virtual online programming for parents, caregivers, and their children. This was a major accomplishment, and it still amazes me to this day, how everyone stepped up, accepted this challenge, and stayed connected with families as best as they could. Our child care team are also commended for returning to work during very uncertain times. No doubt, re-opening child care in the height of the pandemic was truly daunting. We all recognized how this too was a positive experience listening to the laughter of the children as they once again connected with each other and the educators in safe, play-based learning environments. The NLCC COVID-19 Response Plan was activated with enhanced measures in place to protect the health and safety of the children and our staff. This included: changes to the learning environments, use of personal protective equipment, additional cleaning, and disinfecting regimens, health screening for symptoms, proper physical distancing, and hand hygiene. Thank you to all our educators for your patience and adaptability to the ever-changing landscape to operate safely during the pandemic.

NLCC was also appreciative of the financial support of the provincial government and the support of the County of Lambton. We were able to be more flexible and support our families returning to our child care programs. This includes suspending child care fees, ensuring families had a space for their child to return to, and being more lenient in our policies with respect to child absences and sick days. Thank you to our families for putting your trust in our programs. Your children have taught us compassion and resilience. Children are at the heart of all that we do.

North Lambton Childcare Centre opened its doors for the first time on December 3, 1990, marking **30** years in operation. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, we were not able to celebrate as we were planning. We look forward to another 30 years supporting children and their families through high quality, inclusive services to meet the early learning and child care needs in our communities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire Giles

Executive Director