

CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE (CWELCC)

COUNTY OF RENFREW DIRECTED GROWTH PLAN 2025-2026



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Renfrew**
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Overview

The purpose of the County of Renfrew Directed Growth Plan is to inform licensed child care operators, licensed home child care agencies and the public about the potential and prioritization for expansion and enrollment within the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system in the County of Renfrew for the period of 2025-2026.

The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System

On March 28, 2022, the federal government and Ontario entered into an agreement to implement the [Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care](#) system with the vision that more families throughout the province would have access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live.

The agreement focuses on 5 key pillars:

- lowering fees
- increasing access
- enhancing high-quality child care
- supporting inclusion
- enhancing data and reporting

Under the CWELCC Agreement, Ontario is supporting the creation of 86,000 new licensed child care spaces for children under the age of six by the end of 2026.

As the Service System Manager for the child care and early years sector, the County of Renfrew has been working collaboratively with the Ministry of Education and County licensees to implement the CWELCC system since 2022.

The County of Renfrew currently has 91% of licensed child care centres and licensed home child care agencies enrolled in the CWELCC system.

Access and Inclusion Framework

In June 2023, the Ministry of Education provided Service System Managers with [Ontario's Access and Inclusion Framework 2023](#) to support the development of local CWELCC expansion plans with an increased focus on access as it relates to inclusion.

The Ministry of Education has identified the following priority groups that must be taken into consideration for Directed Growth plans for new CWELCC licensed child care spaces:

- Low-income families
- Children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports
- Francophone children
- Indigenous children
- Black and other racialized children
- Children of newcomers to Canada

Any new CWELCC spaces that are allocated to the County of Renfrew will be created in alignment with the principles of access and inclusion that are outlined within this framework as it continues to evolve.

Auspice Information

As per the CWELCC Agreement, Ontario is required to maintain the proportion of not-for-profit licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 5 at 70% or above by the end of the agreement in 2026. The Ministry of Education has provided auspice targets for each service system manager to achieve and/or maintain in order to contribute to the overall 70% provincial target.

The County of Renfrew was at a ratio of 90% not-for-profit to 10% for-profit spaces as of December 31, 2023. As per the Ministry's direction, the County of Renfrew is required to consider auspice with any CWELCC expansion plans.

County of Renfrew Growth Targets (2022-2026)

When CWELCC was first introduced in 2022, the Ministry of Education asked service system managers to focus on enrolling existing licensees in the program. In 2023, child care expansion shifted to a directed growth approach.

To support the creation of new licensed child care spaces in Ontario, the Ministry of Education developed a Regional Allocation Model to determine the number of spaces to be allocated to each municipality for CWELCC growth. The Regional Allocation Model considered the following factors:

- Geographic equity of access – achieving a provincial access rate of 37% (ratio of spaces to children aged 0-5)
- Targeted spaces for vulnerable populations based on socioeconomic factors
- Francophone and Indigenous spaces
- Labour market participation
- Strategic reserve

Provincial funding and space targets have been allocated to help each region of the province progress towards a target provincial ratio of spaces to children, or access rate, of 37%. This is equivalent to there being one affordable child care space available for every 2.7 children aged 0-5.

The County of Renfrew was originally allocated 427 CWELCC spaces to create during the period of the CWELCC agreement from 2022-2026. Based on Ministry of Education data, the County’s access rate of spaces to children (0-5) in 2022 was 20% and is forecasted to be 28% at the end of 2026 once all spaces are created.

The Ministry designated the new CWELCC spaces as either school-based or community-based. School-based spaces were allocated for known builds and expansions that were previously approved by the Ministry of Education. These spaces incorporate infant, toddler and preschool spaces. Community-based spaces were allocated for new spaces outside of schools, or for kindergarten-aged spaces within schools (under 6 years of age).

Table 1 below outlines the original allocation of spaces for the County of Renfrew, by year and type. Table 2 breaks down the school-based expansion projects and

their status. Table 3 breaks down community-based expansion projects and their status.

Table 1 – Space allocation by year and type

SPACE TYPE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	TOTAL
SCHOOL-BASED	127	122	42	0	0	291
COMMUNITY-BASED	26	48	62	0	0	136
TOTAL	153	170	104	0	0	427

Table 2 – School-based space expansion 2022-2026

MUNICIPALITY	SCHOOL	LICENSEE	STATUS	TOTAL SPACES
Arnprior	École élémentaire catholique des Deux-Rivières	Centre éducatif Cœur des Jeunes des Deux-Rivières	Completed in 2023	49
Pembroke	L'Équinoxe	Centre éducatif Cœur des Jeunes L'Équinoxe	Completed in 2024	39
Pembroke	Our Lady of Lourdes	Leaps and Bounds Children's Centre	In progress (expected completion in 2026)	73
Petawawa	Herman Street Public School	Bamoonzhe Daycare	Completed in 2023	88
Renfrew	St. Thomas the Apostle	Leaps and Bounds Children's Centre	Completed in 2025	42
TOTAL				291

Table 3 – Community-based space expansion 2022-2026

MUNICIPALITY	LICENSEE	STATUS	TOTAL SPACES
Arnprior	Centre éducatif Cœur des Jeunes des Deux-Rivières	Completed in 2023	26*
County of Renfrew	County of Renfrew Licensed Home Child Care	Completed in 2023	10**
Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards	Kidz Kastle Killaloe	Completed in 2023	11
Pembroke	Centre éducatif Cœur des Jeunes L'Équinoxe	Completed in 2022	26*
Petawawa	Bamoonzhe Daycare	In progress (completion in 2025)	26*
Petawawa	PMFRC Early Learning Centre	In progress (expected completion in 2026)	49
Petawawa	PMFRC Licensed Home Child Care	Completed in 2023	24**
TOTAL			172***

* The Ministry of Education's original direction for kindergarten-aged CWELCC spaces was to count them as 0.5 of a space. In 2024, this direction changed, and they are now to be counted as 1.0 space, which has affected the County of Renfrew total allocation numbers.

** The Ministry of Education's original direction for licensed home child care spaces was to allow for natural growth outside of the CWELCC allocation numbers. This direction changed in 2023 and all CWELCC licensed home child care spaces are to be fully counted, which has affected the County of Renfrew total allocation numbers.

***As a result of the above information, the total amount of community-based spaces was in excess of the growth allocation target of 136 spaces by an extra 36.

Directed Growth Plan

As noted in the tables above, the County of Renfrew is currently in the process of fully creating all 427 spaces that were originally allocated as a part of the CWELCC agreement between the provincial and federal governments by the end of 2026. As a result of the approved community and school builds and expansions that were planned ahead of 2022, the County of Renfrew's growth plan was largely predetermined. The County of Renfrew would like to see further CWELCC growth and contribute more to the overall provincial growth targets, so there have been several requests to the Ministry of Education for more CWELCC spaces to be allocated.

On March 31, 2025, the Ministry of Education has responded with the results of a recalibration exercise which has resulted in a further 261 CWELCC spaces being allocated to the County of Renfrew, totalling 688 spaces for the period of 2022-2026.

Table 4 illustrates the new allocation that has been identified by the Ministry of Education for the County of Renfrew for the period of 2024-2026. It is important to note that these numbers include some overlap spaces from the original allocation of 427, relating to projects completed in 2024 and 2025 or scheduled for completion by 2026. These overlap spaces have been labelled as 'previous'.

Table 4 – New space allocation by year and type

SPACE TYPE	2024	2025	2026	TOTAL
SCHOOL-BASED	162 154 previous 8 new	0	0	162 154 previous 8 new
COMMUNITY-BASED	328 75 previous 253 new	0	0	328 75 previous 253 new
TOTAL	490 229 previous 261 new	0	0	490 229 previous 261 new

A Directed Growth Plan has been developed in alignment with the Access and Inclusion Framework to help guide the creation of new CWELCC spaces in the County of Renfrew. Priority neighbourhoods have been determined based on an analysis of demographic and socio-economic data (census 2021), Early Development Instrument (EDI) data (2022-2023), licensed and operating capacities of existing child care centres/agencies and waitlist information (see Appendix A). Regions with large child care gaps and higher vulnerability scores were identified as focus areas for new child care spaces.

As a top priority, the three existing licensees who are currently not enrolled in the CWELCC system in the County of Renfrew would be offered the opportunity to consider enrollment, as a consideration to provincial funding changes in 2025 that have financial impacts to non-CWELCC licensees that were not known when the agreement came into effect in 2022. Other priorities would include kindergarten-aged spaces for a pre-existing school build and catching up the excess spaces that had to be counted due to direction changes from the Ministry of Education.

The following communities within the County of Renfrew have been identified as highest priority:

- City of Pembroke
- North Algona Wilberforce Township
- Township of Admaston/Bromley
- Town of Arnprior
- Town of Petawawa
- Town of Renfrew
- Township of Laurentian Valley
- Township of McNab/Braeside
- Township of Whitewater Region

The data provided is not to be interpreted as a guarantee of approval. The priority neighbourhoods listed are to be used as a starting point for new and existing licensees when considering location for child care expansion.

As CWELCC continues to evolve, determination of priority neighbourhoods will be reviewed and updated to reflect current and new data.

In cases where options for the creation of CWELCC spaces in these priority neighbourhoods are non-existent, cost prohibitive or would exceed the

implementation timeline, the County of Renfrew reserves the right to consider designating CWELCC spaces to another community.

Application Process

With new CWELCC spaces being allocated to the County of Renfrew for the period of 2025-2026, a fair and transparent application process based on this plan will be developed to determine the approval of expansion projects or new growth within the CWELCC system.

Approvals would be considered based on the following:

- Availability of the requested spaces based on the targets provided by the province
- The proposed age groups to be served by the new spaces (children aged 0-5)
- The location of the proposed spaces aligning with priority neighbourhoods
- Maintaining the auspice ratio, as per provincial directives

Further details about the application process will be made publicly available once it is finalized.

Next Steps

The Children's Services Division remains committed to collaborating with the Ministry of Education and child care licensees to advocate for the growth of licensed child care services, ensuring families across the County of Renfrew have greater access to high-quality early learning programs.

Appendix A – Data Tables

Table A1 – Child Population to Child Care Spaces (0-5 Years)

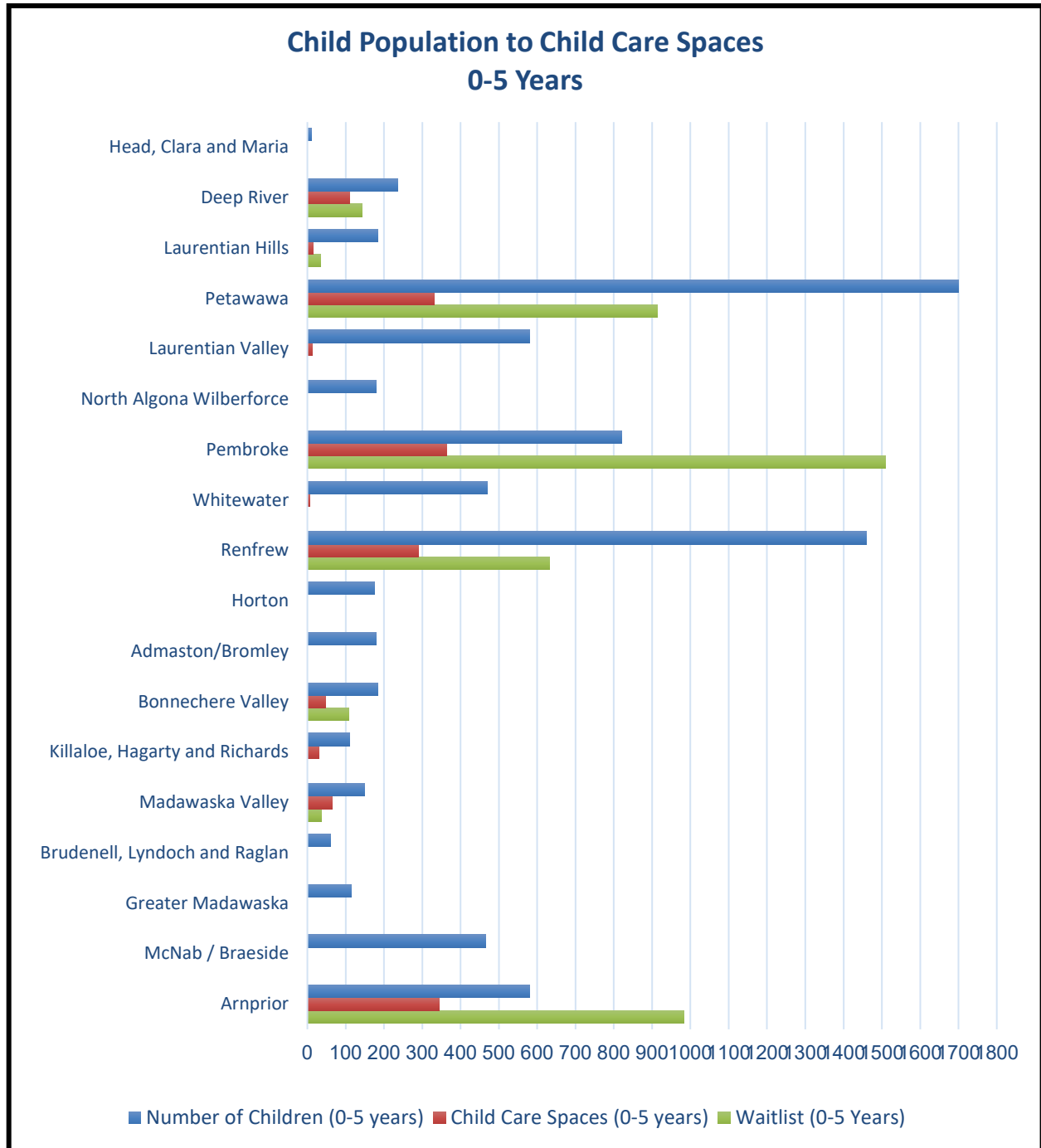


Table A2 – Low Income After Tax % (2021 Census)

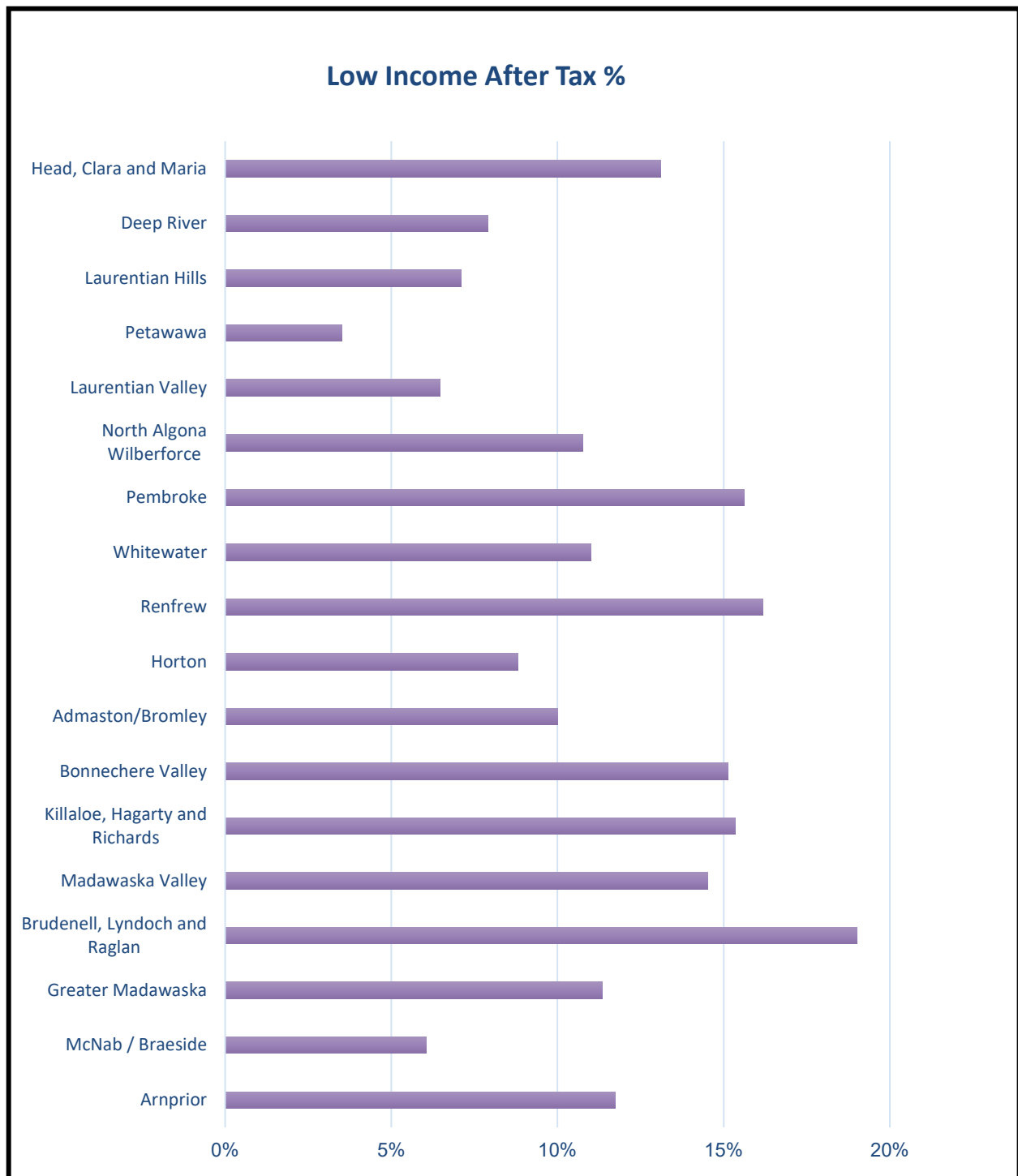


Table A3 – Visible Minority % By Municipality (2021 Census)

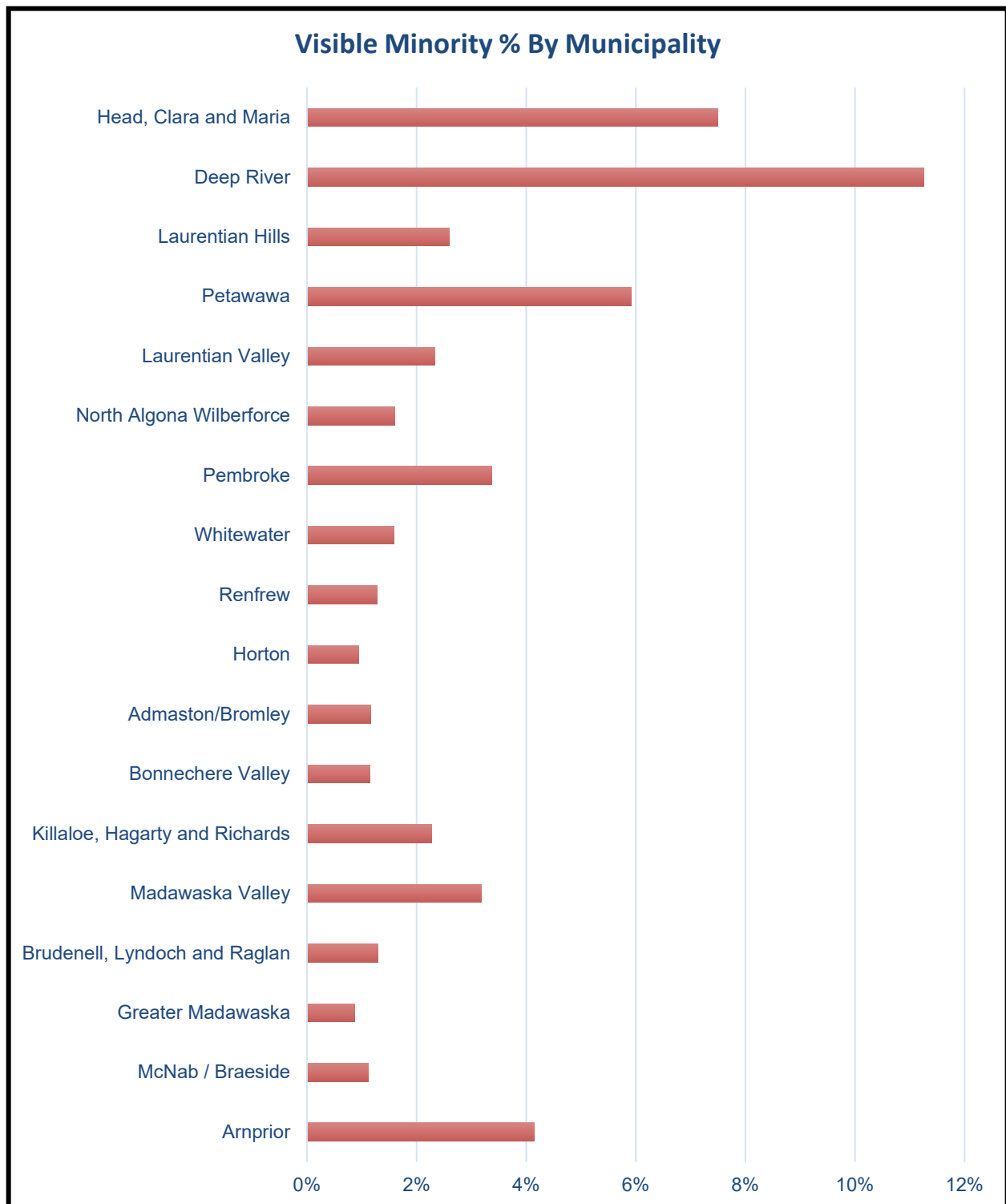


Table A4 – French as First Official Language Spoken % By Municipality (2021 Census)

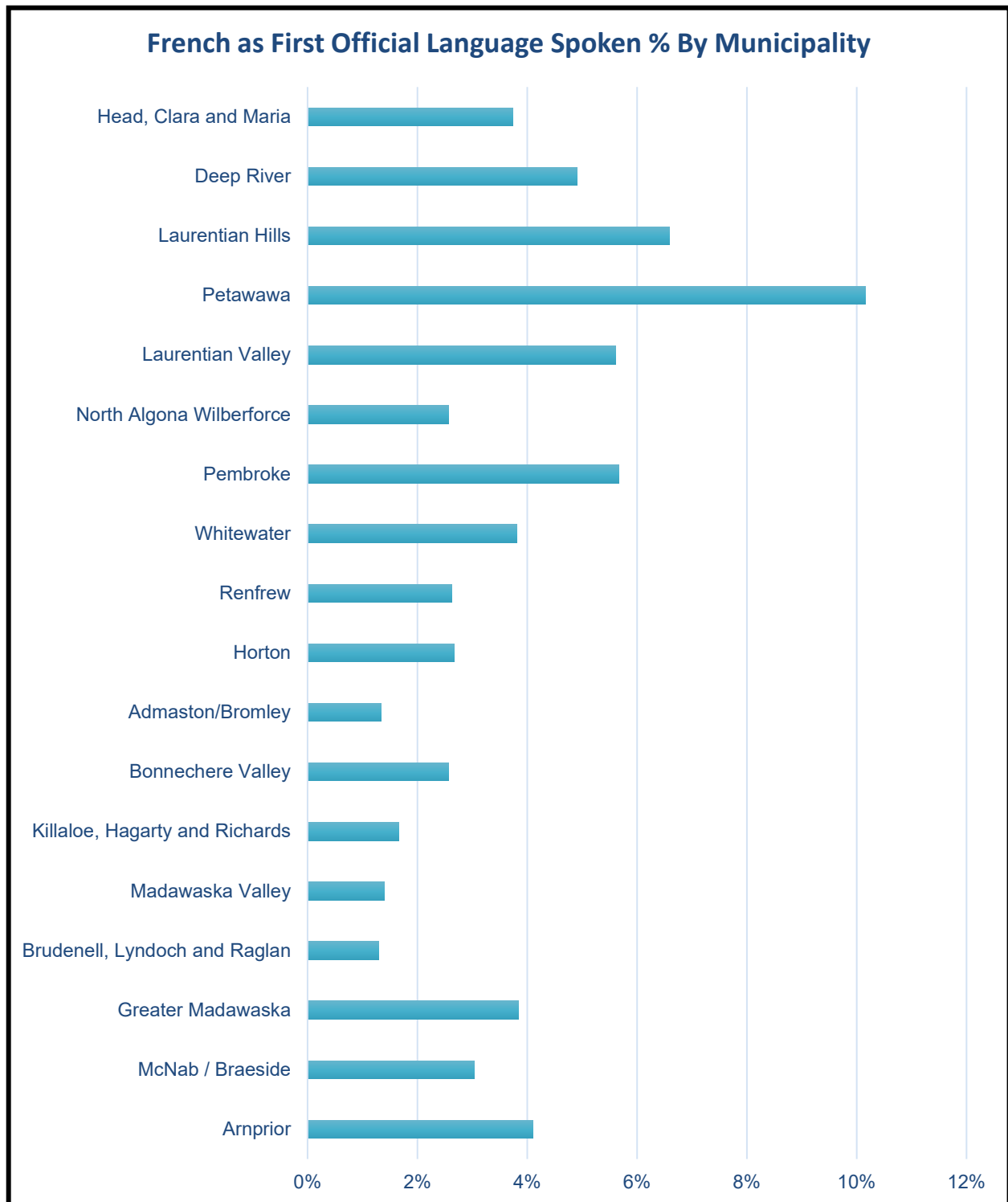


Table A5 - Indigenous Identity % By Municipality (2021 Census)

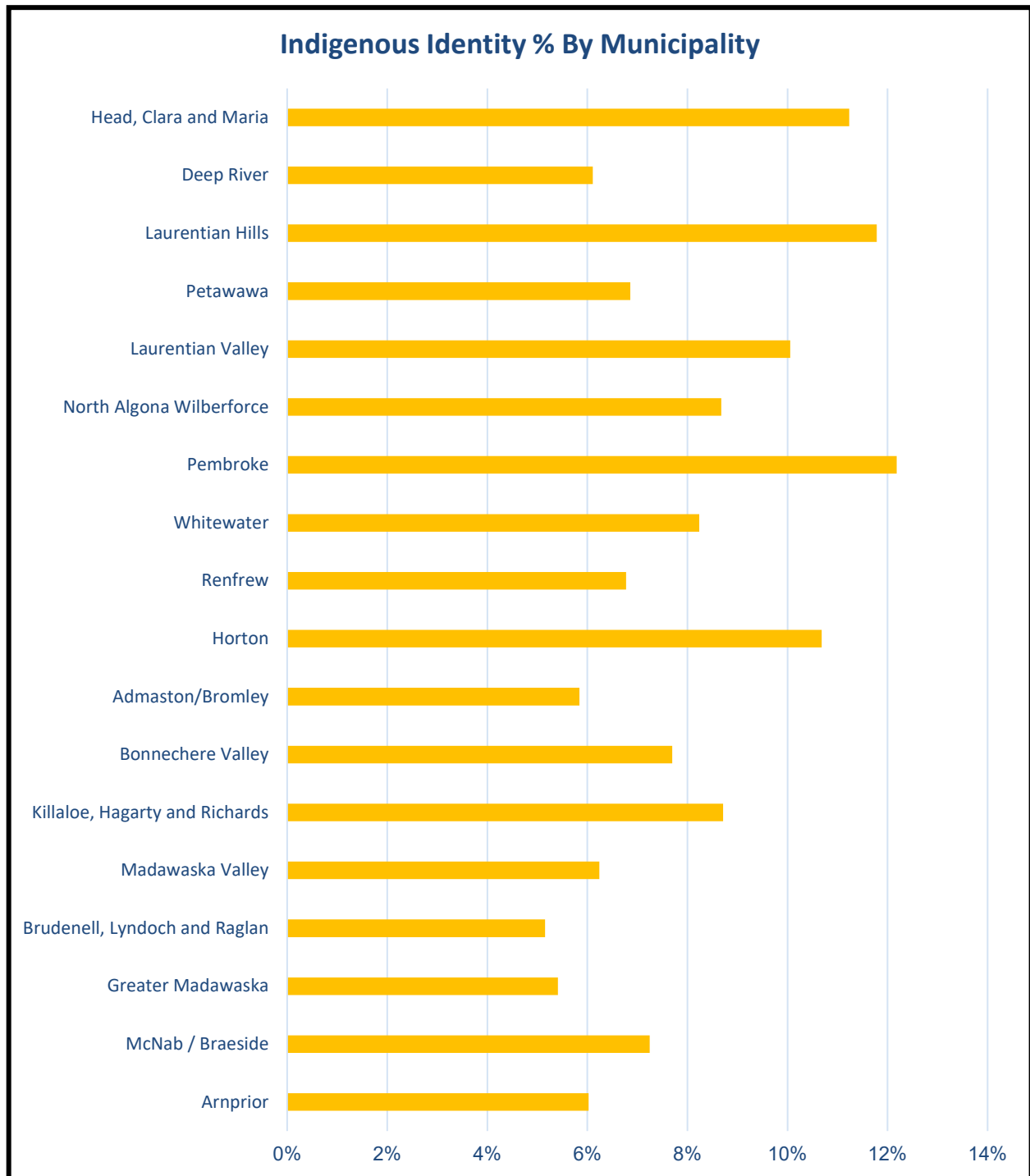
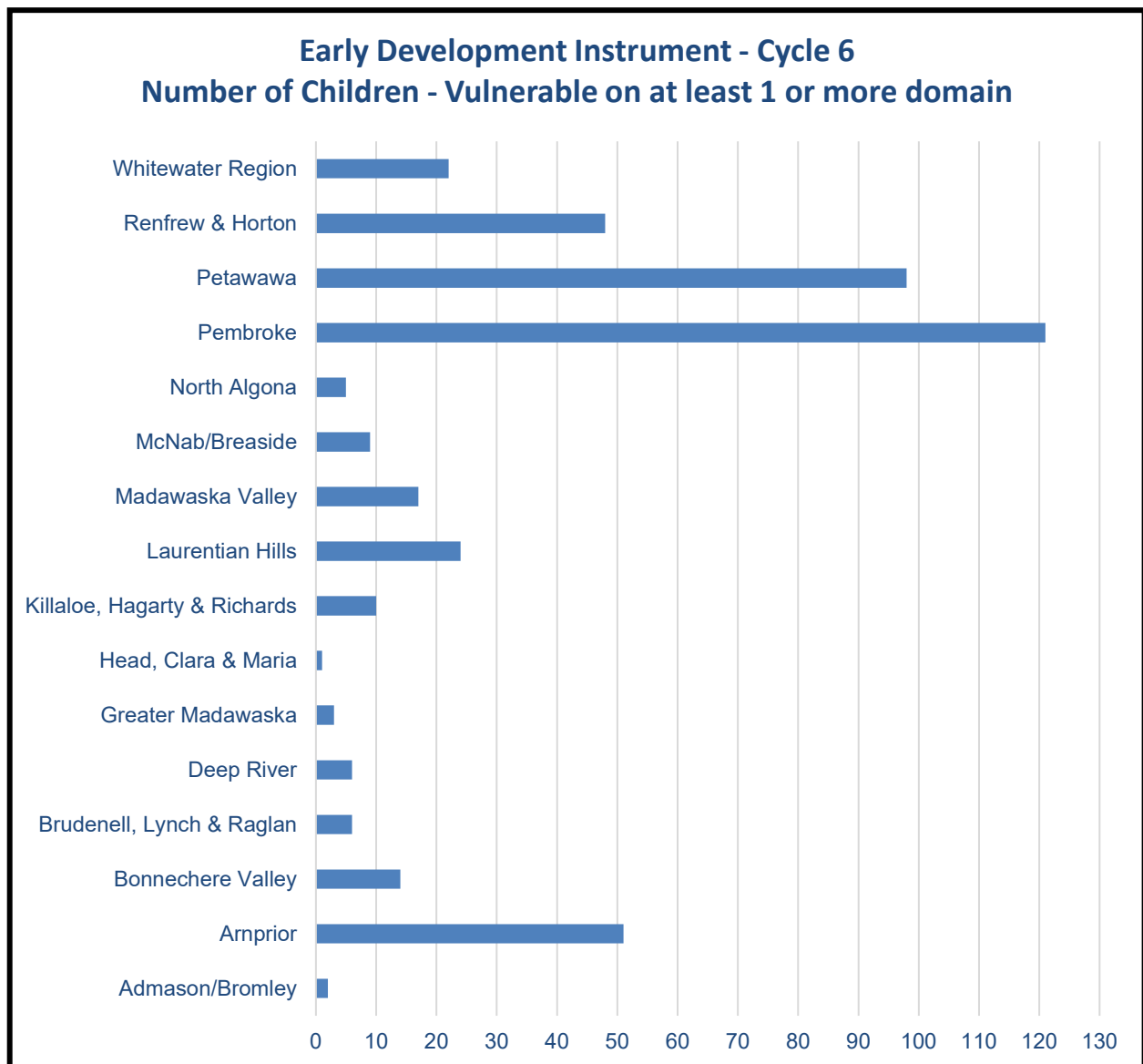


Table A6 – Early Development Instrument - Cycle 6
Number of Children - Vulnerable on at least 1 or more domain



The five domains on the Early Development Instrument are:

- Physical Health and Well-Being
- Social Competence
- Emotional Maturity
- Language and Cognitive Development
- Communication Skills and General Knowledge