



# **The Regional Municipality of Durham Children's Services Division**



## **Fee Subsidy Parent Information Handbook**

To meet the diverse needs of children, families and the people who work with them through leadership, co-operation and service excellence.

Child care subsidy is available to help with the cost of child care for families using licensed child care programs. This booklet is designed to answer frequently asked questions.

Visit the [Children's Services page on our website](#), for more information.

## **Applying for Child Care Fee Subsidy**

Apply on-line at [www.durham.ca/childrenservices](http://www.durham.ca/childrenservices) to have your name placed on the wait list.

Apply by contacting our office at:

Department of Social Services  
Children's Services Division  
605 Rossland Road East  
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3  
Telephone: 905-668-6238 or 1-800-387-0642

## **Eligibility**

To receive child care subsidy you must:

- Live in Durham Region.
- Have a child care space secured at a licensed child care operator or approved recreation program.
- Have a confirmed start date within the next three months.
- Be the parent or guardian of a child under the age of 13 years.
- Be working, in school or in an approved training program.
- Have a child with a special or social need or have a special or social need yourself.
- Be in an approved Ontario Works activity as determined by your Ontario Works caseworker.
- Be financially eligible based on your Canada Revenue Notice of Assessment (NOA), line 236.

## **To have your subsidy continue**

Your file must be reviewed at least once per year, either in person, over the phone or by mail.

Papers needed:

- ID for everyone in your family.
- Canada Revenue NOA or Canada Child Benefit Notice
- Proof of address within the Region of Durham
- Custody court order (if you have one)
- Paystubs, work letter, or school information showing a start and end date
- Special or Social Needs Form

Changes to your NOA, marital status, work or school, status with Ontario Works or ODSP assistance must be reported to your Caseworker promptly. Failing to report

changes may result in an overpayment and you will have to repay the monies paid on your behalf.

If you fail to submit the required information your file may not be reviewed prior to your closure date (usually 12 months from the last appointment). Your subsidy will terminate and you will be responsible for the full cost of child care until your subsidy can be determined.

If you are unsure about the importance of a change, contact your caseworker.

## **Obtaining your NOA if lost or misplaced**

You can contact Canada Revenue Agency and request your Notice of Assessment (NOA) at 1-800-959-8281.

## **Approvals**

### **Hours of care approved**

Child care will be approved based on your recognized need such as work, school, or a special or social need of child or parent.

### **Subsidy approval letter**

Approval letters will be mailed or emailed to you and the child care service provider that shows the start and end date of subsidy, your parent rate, approved hours and days of care, review date and absent allotment.

Any additional child care must be pre-approved by your caseworker. Failure to obtain pre-approval may result in you paying the full cost of care for the additional child care.

## **Choosing a Child Care**

Visit the [Child Care Directory](#) for more information. This map will help you locate all the child care agencies within the Region of Durham.

Subsidy is only available at child care centres that have a Fee Subsidy Purchase of Service Agreement with the Region of Durham. We have agreements with licensed child care centre, licensed home child care agencies and some recreation programs.

It is your responsibility to visit the programs and make a decision on suitable child care arrangements.

### **Changing Centres within Durham Region**

Before a child may be transferred to another centre you should contact the new centre to see if there is a spot available and if they have a subsidy agreement with the Region of Durham.

You must give your current centre their notice and pay any outstanding fees.

Contact your Children's Services Caseworker and advise them of the possible change. Your Caseworker will check the last day of expected payment with the current centre and approve child care with the new centre.

### **Moving from Durham Region**

If you move out of Durham Region, you must contact your caseworker before moving to report the change in address. Your child care subsidy will be closed.

Child care subsidy cannot be transferred to another Region. If you plan to move, call the new Municipality to find out their rules for getting child care subsidy. You may need to be placed on a wait list with the new Municipality.

## **Changes to your approved activity such as employment, education, special or social need**

### **Job Search Policy**

If you have lost your job or graduated from school, job search may be approved for three months. You will need to contact your caseworker to discuss your eligibility. Job search will not be provided to clients with school aged children during the school year.

### **Self-Employment policy**

Financial eligibility is based on line 236 of the Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment. Hours of care approved for subsidy are based on the current minimum wage and line 150 of the NOA.

A self-employment statement is required to be completed.

### **Maternity Leave Policy**

Clients on maternity leave are not eligible for child care subsidy.

An ongoing client who is going on maternity leave but plans on returning to work would be placed on a Break in Service. The Break in Service will last until the date the client expects to return to work. This date must not be more than 18 months from the start of the leave.

Similar policies are in place for paternity, parental or adoption leaves.

You must contact your caseworker in order to be placed on a Break in Service.

### **Special or Social Need Policy**

You may be eligible for child care subsidy if you meet the financial eligibility requirements and have a special or social need for your child or yourself.

Note: If there is another parent in the home, the other parent must also have a recognized need such as work, school, special or social need.

Subsidy for a special or social need ends when the child enters the school system.

### **Strike Policy**

Contact your child care caseworker immediately if you are affected by a labour disruption.

## **Policies that affect your child's attendance at child care**

### **Child Care Centre Policies**

It is your responsibility to discuss and follow all child care centre policies such as vacation policy and payment schedules.

### **Absent Days Policy**

Your child will be granted 36 days per year for illness, absence, or vacation. For the first year of subsidy, this amount is prorated according to your child care subsidy start date. This allotment renews every year to 36 days.

Absent days not used during the calendar year may not be carried over to the next year.

Parents are expected to pay their parent rate on days the child does not attend the centre. If your child's absent allotment has been used, then you are responsible to pay the Service provider the full fee.

Additional absent days may be granted through an appeal process where your child has a documented, verified medical need. If your appeal is not approved, you will be required to pay the full fee for the days over the absent allotment.

### **Subsidy during school holidays**

Subsidy will continue over school holidays such as Christmas vacation, March Break and Professional Activity (PA) Days. Parents are expected to pay their parent rate for these days. School age children are approved for full days on school holidays, if required.

Absences from the centre at these times will be deducted from the absent days.

### **School Snow Day Policy**

The snow day policy only applies where school buses have been cancelled. Children who normally walk to and from school are not affected by snow days and are not eligible for any extended child care coverage.

If school buses are cancelled your child may need to attend the centre for a full day.

The Service Provider must inform Children's Services Division of the bus cancellation and provide your child's name.

Until approval is provided by the Children's Services Manager you are responsible for the cost of care.

## **Summer Camp**

If you are receiving subsidy already, you may apply to the summer camp programs that have a Purchase of Service Agreement with the Region of Durham. You need to make sure that your space is still available in September at your present child care centre. Talk to your Caseworker and your child care centre.

If your approved activity such as work, school, special or social need requires your child to receive five full days of child care you can receive subsidy for summer camp.

If you need summer care only, contact your caseworker to be placed on a Break in Service for summer care only.

## **Overnight Care**

If your work or school schedule will not allow pick up of your child from the Service Provider by 10:00 p.m., overnight care will be approved based on 8 hours of sleep time plus reasonable travel time beginning when your approved activity ends.

The approved period of care must not exceed 23 consecutive hours as per the Child Care and Early Years Act.

## **Students and Summer Months**

If you are a student and you do not have an approved activity for the summer such as working or attending school your child care subsidy will end for the summer and your file will be placed on a Break in Service.

Re approval in September is dependent on returning to school and space availability at the child care centre of your choice.

## **Appeals**

### **Appeal of Decisions**

You have the right to appeal all eligibility decisions, which include: ineligibility, policy issues, and overpayments.

Appeals can be started by contacting your caseworker who will explain the appeal process. Appeals to a manager need to be put in writing.

Appeals will be reviewed and the decision will be communicated to you.

Not all appeals will result in a change in decision.

**The information contained in this handbook is only a guideline. It does not reflect all policies and procedures of the Children's Services Division.**