

Child care and early learning updates e-newsletter

July 25, 2025

Welcome to The Regional Municipality of Durham's child care and early learning updates e-newsletter. These e-newsletters provide licensed child care operators in Durham Region with updated information related to child care.

This edition includes the following topics:

- Enhanced Staffing Funding update
- Directed Growth update
- Directed Growth Plan annual update
- Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) caregiver infographic
- Changes to alerts in the Child Care Operator Portal
- New Durham Region Operating Criteria Assessment for Quality Improvement (DROC AQI) guidelines coming this fall

Enhanced Staffing Funding update

Fall applications: The online application form for Enhanced Staffing Funding for school-age programs, available for the September to December 2025 funding period, will open on Friday, July 25, and close on Friday, August 8, 2025. Applications will be accepted for licensed school-age rooms and programs only.

Additional staffing to support inclusion is considered an eligible expense through cost-based funding for CWELCC-enrolled centres and CWELCC-eligible children.

As a reminder, completed Enhanced Staffing Funding reports must be submitted by the 15 of the month following the month in which Enhanced Staffing Funding was approved and utilized (e.g., the August report is due September 15). Once the data for a reporting month has been entered, please upload your Operator Tracking Tool to the budget and funding folder in the Child Care Operator Portal.

Payments will be issued once monthly reports are submitted, reviewed, and reconciled by the Children's Services Division (CSD). Reports not received within two months of the month in which funding was used may result in the forfeiture of funding for that period. Late submissions delay the reconciliation process, potentially affecting overall funding levels and the availability of funds for future requests.

Directed Growth update

The CSD continues to review and process submitted Directed Growth applications, approving those that align with the Directed Growth Plan. At this time, the online application form remains closed; however, it may reopen if additional spaces become available following CSD review.

It is encouraged that multi-site operators regularly assess current licensed capacities. If there are any unused licensed spaces at one site, consider whether they could be reallocated and utilized at another location. Maximizing licensed capacity across sites helps ensure that directed growth spaces are used effectively to support new growth aligned with the overall plan.

Directed Growth Plan annual update

The Directed Growth Plan annual update is now available on [Durham.ca](https://durham.ca). The update outlines current data used to inform future planning opportunities for expansion of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system in the Regional Municipality of Durham.

SNR caregiver infographic

There is a new SNR infographic to highlight services, agencies and supports available for children in licensed child care. The infographic can be used to support conversations with families and caregivers. Please see the attachment provided with this EL update to review the new infographic.

Changes to alerts in the Child Care Operator Portal

CSD is implementing a new process that will change how teams notify service providers when documents are uploaded to the Child Care Operator Portal. Recently, Microsoft announced that traditional SharePoint alerts will be retired, meaning that automated notifications will no longer occur. As a result, CSD is implementing a new notification process to ensure timely updates continue to be received.

When: The new process will be phased in over the next few weeks, with further details to be provided.

What's changing: CSD staff will send service providers an email notification when a new document is uploaded to the portal that requires attention, a new child placement is added, or an existing child placement is modified, rather than receiving an automated notification.

This new process is designed to maintain the same level of communication and responsiveness service providers have always had with CSD. If there are any questions or issues accessing documents, please contact ChildCareTechSupport@durham.ca.

New DROC AQI guidelines coming this fall

New updated Durham Region Operating Criteria (DROC) Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI) guidelines will be coming this fall, however, the actual criteria for the DROC AQI remain unchanged. This is an important milestone in the ongoing efforts to advance inclusive practices within early learning environments. By making these changes, the CSD aims to ensure that all children and families, regardless of their backgrounds or identities, have access to welcoming and supportive programs that nurture their development. While the AQI requirements themselves remain unchanged, the language has been updated to reflect a more inclusive lens. This updated language was designed to better support the practice of educators by fostering a more equitable and welcoming approach in the way children and families are engaged with. The shift in language is not about altering the core requirements, but rather about ensuring practices are more intentional, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of the children, families, and communities. By adopting this updated language, it becomes possible to more effectively create supportive, enriching environments that foster the growth and well-being of all children and families. The CSD is looking forward to exploring these updates this fall collaboratively and is committed to supporting service providers in integrating these inclusive practices into their work.