

# Child Care and Early Learning e-Newsletter

## October 27, 2020

Welcome to The Regional Municipality of Durham's Child Care and Early Learning updates e-newsletter. These newsletters are to update child care operators on a variety of topics related to the closure and re-opening of child care including recommendations and information related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

### Early Learning Updates – Funding Updates

Below you will find information and clarification about Durham's funding approach to support child care operators with a Purchase of Service Agreement (POS) during the COVID-19 closure and reopening periods. Our goal was to develop a fair and equitable analysis and reconciliation process to support optimal funding while meeting the provincial funding guidelines. Operators are encouraged to contact Julie Gaskin, Manager, Early Learning at [Julie.gaskin@durham.ca](mailto:Julie.gaskin@durham.ca) to discuss funding questions or concerns.

#### **Contracts**

Service Agreements for Purchase of Service operators are being finalized and distributed over the next several days. The new multi-year agreements will be sent to the head office email we have on file.

Agreements for Wage Enhancement only operators will be distributed early November.

#### **Funding**

##### **Payments to operators with sites reopening on or before August 1, 2020**

Payments have gone out this week to operators with sites that reopened on or before August 1, 2020. These payments will include a full reconciliation of the closure period and a reconciliation of the reopening periods up to August 1 as applicable. Payments to reconcile the August 2 – 29 reopening period will follow in the next week.

##### **Payments to operators reopening after August 1, 2020**

Payments for sites reopening after August 1 will be made in the next week. This will include reconciliation of the closure period as applicable and of the August reopening period.

##### **Payments to operators reopening after September 1, 2020**

The reopening phase of reconciliation ends as of September 1, 2020. Sites reopening in September and beyond will be reconciled in early November.

##### **Safe Restart Funding (SRF)**

SRF will be allocated to sites in operation from September 1, 2020 to year end. Payments for SRF funding will begin in November.

##### **Payment Summaries**

Payment summaries showing reconciled amounts will be included with the agreements as part of the General Operating Service Description Schedule.

Reconciliations for all POS operators (excluding Home Child Care agencies who remained open) include the regular monthly GOP payments. Home Child Care Operators will continue to receive their GOP payments as previously allocated.

## **Wage Enhancement (WE)**

### **WE During the Closure period**

During the closure period, operators continued to receive their regular Wage Enhancement payments from the Children's Services Division. As child care positions were not eligible to receive Wage Enhancement during closure, no entitlement was to be paid to staff. As this funding was not spent, it is expected that operators will use the funds once sites have reopened and throughout the remainder of the year (see below).

### **WE after Reopening**

Operators are expected to apply for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) which allows for recovery of gross pay amounts (including Wage Enhancement). To offset the WE amount not recovered through CEWS, operators are expected to access the unspent closure period WE funding (as above). As CEWS is expected to continue through the remainder of 2020, we have calculated that the WE payments made to you during closure will be adequate to pay the WE not recovered by CEWS for the remainder of the year. At this time, WE payments to operators are not expected to resume for the remainder of 2020. Should you believe your organization requires additional WE funding in 2020, please contact Julie Gaskin at [Julie.gaskin@durham.ca](mailto:Julie.gaskin@durham.ca) to discuss.

As Wage Enhancement is an enveloped allocation with strict spending parameters, it is recommended that operators closely track this funding separate from other general operating funds received from the Region. Reconciliation of 2020 Wage Enhancement will begin this fall and will be finalized in early 2021. The Children's Services Division will send out a template to assist with WE tracking and reconciliation in the coming weeks. Please contact Julie Gaskin at [Julie.Gaskin@durham.ca](mailto:Julie.Gaskin@durham.ca) if you have any questions or concerns.

### **Q: Would staff who are fulfilling cleaning, screening and other duties outside of the classroom be eligible for WE?**

**A:** As of reopening, provincial wage enhancement funding can be provided to staff for the hours worked where normally staff are in an eligible position supporting ratio and had previously qualified for wage enhancement pre-COVID-19, but as a result of the new requirements, are temporarily taking on new roles to support the health and safety requirements set out by local health guidelines and policies during COVID-19, including fulfilling cleaning, screening and other duties outside the classroom.

**We thank you all for your continued commitment to early learning in Durham. Please contact your Quality Assurance Advisor and the Children's Services Division if you have questions. We will continue to provide information and clarification in the form of email updates and newsletters to all operators as quickly as possible. Thank you all for your cooperation and commitment to maintaining early learning and child care in Durham Region.**

As a reminder, you can view previous Early Learning Updates and communications on our web site under the heading [Children's Services COVID-19 early learning updates](#).