

Child care and early learning updates e-newsletter

November 17, 2023

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
- Canada Learning Bond (CLB) Clinics
- Looksee Update
- Snow Day School Bus Cancellation Process
- Cold Alert
- Child Care Workforce Strategy
- Early Childhood Education Diploma Opportunity for Indigenous Learner

Enhanced Staffing Funding Update

Effective January 1, 2024, approval and payment of Enhanced Staffing (ES) Funding will shift to the Region of Durham, Children's Services Division, and be integrated with current service agreements. Approved applications will receive eligible funding allocations directly from the Region of Durham following current payment processes.

To submit an ES funding application, complete the online [Enhanced Staffing Funding Application Form](#). ES funding applications will be accepted online in advance of each funding period as per the schedule below:

Application window	Funding period
November 15 to December 6, 2023	January to June, 2024
May 13 to June 7, 2024	July to August, 2024
July 15 to August 9, 2024	September to December, 2024

Detailed instructions for submitting an Enhanced Staffing Funding Application are in the Templates & Forms section of the Operator Portal. Click [here](#) to view.

Canada Learning Bond (CLB) Clinics

The Region of Durham Social Services Department is organizing Canada Learning Bond sign-up events this November. The events will support eligible families to open a free Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) and access the Canada Learning Bond for their child(ren). By opening the RESP, families can receive up to \$2,000 for education after high school from the Government of Canada. Representatives from Service Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency, and Social Services will be present at all events. Families must bring Social Insurance Numbers (SINs) and valid proof of identification for both parent and child. Click [here](#) for more information.

Lakeview Harbourside Community Room (1529 Ritson Road South, Oshawa) on Monday, November 20, 2023, 1 to 6 p.m. (The start time of 12 p.m. in the last edition of this newsletter was incorrect).

Clarington Public Libraries Bowmanville Branch (163 Church Street, Bowmanville) on Wednesday, November 22, 2023, 1 to 6 p.m.

A \$25 grocery gift card will be given to the first 40 households in attendance at each event on a first-come, first-served basis.

Looksee Update

As of September 2023, the Looksee developmental screening tool (also referred to as the Nipissing District Developmental Screening or NDDS) is no longer available for free to all Ontarians as the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) did not renew the province-wide licence.

This change represents a shift away from funding a single screening tool and allows service providers to choose appropriate tools based on their specific needs. It is part of a larger effort to improve the approach to early identification.

Individuals and organizations who wish to continue to use the Looksee tool can purchase the licence directly. Alternatively, individuals and organizations can explore other screening tools, some of which are available at no cost. Those who want to learn more or have concerns about a child's development can explore the following resources:

- The [Early Years Check-In \(EYCI\)](#) to assess a child's developmental status
- The [Play & Learn](#) website for activities to support children's development
- Visit a [SmartStart Hub](#) at a Children's Treatment Centre, or
- Speak with an early years professional or healthcare provider

Snow Day School Bus Cancellation Process

As winter weather is on the way, it is time for a reminder about snow days. If buses are cancelled due to weather, and a child normally takes the bus to school, a child care agency may be eligible for payment for a full day of child care if they provide a full day of care.

If there is a PA day in the month of the snow day, a comment on the billings is sufficient to receive payment for the day, as the full-day code will be available to choose from on the billings.

If there is not a PA day in the month of the snow day, each centre must submit a list of the children that attended the full day to their Fee Subsidy Caseworker. The full day code will be added to the child's OCCMS file to enable the agency to receive payment for the day. A request for a snow day list will be sent through the Operator Portal if a list is required.

Children who normally walk to and from school are not affected by a snow day and are not eligible for any extended child care coverage. Full-day payments are dependent on available funding and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Cold Warning and Information System (CWIS)

The Durham Region Health Department has started the Cold Warning and Information System (CWIS) for the 2023 – 2024 winter season. Extreme cold weather alerts are issued when Environment Canada forecasts a temperature of -15 degrees Celsius or colder, and/or a wind chill of -20 degrees Celsius or colder. The system will run from November 15, 2023 until March 31, 2024.

The CWIS will monitor and provide extreme cold event notifications during regular business hours Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If an extreme cold event is anticipated over the weekend, a notification email will be sent Friday afternoon. Social media posts and website updates will be set in advance to reflect any anticipated extreme cold events outside of regular business hours.

The following resources are also available:

- [Durham Region Extreme Cold Information](#)
- [Durham Region Social Services Department Emergency Shelter Information](#)

Child Care Workforce Strategy

On Thursday, November 16, 2023, the Ontario Government shared a [news release](#) regarding its comprehensive strategy to boost the child care workforce and protect children. Licensees are encouraged to view the memo they received from Holly Moran, Assistant Deputy Minister with the Early Years and Child Care Division. We are looking forward to learning more about this strategy and to working with licensees to support the early years work force.

Early Childhood Education Diploma Opportunity for Indigenous Learners

Mothercraft College of Early Childhood Education has partnered with Native Child and Family Services Toronto to offer an accelerated, intensive 12-month Early Childhood Education Diploma. The online program starts December 18, 2023, and offers free tuition, small adult class sizes, and access to culturally appropriate support. Spaces are limited. Visit www.mothercraft.ca for more details.