

Child care and early learning updates e-newsletter

January 28, 2026

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:

- Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Directed Growth update
- Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) - Enhanced Staffing Funding updates
- Professional Learning Funding
- Reconciliation reminders
- Site closures due to winter storms

Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Directed Growth update

The online application form for CWELCC directed growth spaces reopened in the fall of 2025. At that time, the Child Care and Early Years Division (CCEYD) accepted applications that met the provincial parameters of not-for-profit auspice maximums and data from our community analysis on high-priority neighbourhoods. Approvals for CWELCC-directed growth spaces must align with Ministry of Education requirements and are assessed using the following factors:

- 1) Number of CWELCC expansion spaces available to Durham Region (known as 'space targets' as provided by the Ministry of Education).
- 2) Whether the project is located in a high-priority neighbourhood identified in the Municipal [Directed Growth Plan](#).
- 3) Maintenance or increase of the proportion of not-for-profit child care spaces to for-profit child care spaces relative to March 2022 levels.

From 2023 to 2026, Durham Region received approximately 2400 expansion spaces, inclusive of school and community projects. At this time, all available space targets have been allocated.

The Ministry of Education announced an extension of the current federal/provincial CWELCC agreement until 2027, noting a commitment to its five-year target of creating 86,000 CWELCC expansion spaces by the end of 2026.

Should Durham Region be provided additional CWELCC expansion spaces, we will reopen our application, notifying all licensees via our [Early Learning Update](#) and the [Child Care and Early Years](#) page on Durham.ca in advance.

Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) - Enhanced Staffing Funding updates

As noted in the [September 29](#) and [October 29](#) Early Learning Updates, the Enhanced Staffing Funding model has been under review and is currently undergoing changes.

Commencing at the end of the current January to March 2026 funding period, applications for funding support to promote inclusion in eligible licensed child care programs will be submitted by the assigned Resource Consultant in collaboration with the child care program.

For further clarity, child care programs will no longer be responsible for submitting the online application form. This change enables continued collaboration and information sharing among child care staff and their assigned Resource Consultant, aligning more closely with the purpose of Collaborative Action Plans (CAP).

The online application form will be made available to Resource Consultants year-round, with specific parameters on how often a program can access funding and the duration of approved funding.

Finally, the early learning and child care community can also expect a new name for this funding support, one that more accurately reflects the nature and intent of the funding. A funding guideline including pertinent details will be shared in the near future.

Professional Learning Funding

The Ministry of Education (MEDU) is providing funding to support professional development initiatives that strengthen the recruitment and retention of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and other early years program staff. This funding is intended to support professional learning opportunities that build sector capacity and enhance the delivery of high-quality early years and child care programs. Licensees are encouraged to incorporate some or all of the identified priority areas into their professional learning strategies.

To access professional learning funding in 2026, operators must submit an [application](#) outlining detailed information about the proposed professional learning opportunity. All professional learning activities must be completed between January 1 and December

31, 2026, and will be subject to year-end reconciliation with required supporting documentation.

Professional Learning Application

For more information, please review the Professional Learning Funding policy (Policy #110) in the Child Care Operator Portal. If you have any questions about Professional Learning Funding, please contact Stacee Stevenson at stacee.stevenson@durham.ca.

Reconciliation reminders

As a reminder, several key reconciliation deadlines are approaching. Meeting these deadlines is essential to finalize 2025 and move forward with accurate allocations for 2026. Reconciliation documents can be accessed in the Child Care Operator Portal for your convenience. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Stacee Stevenson at stacee.stevenson@durham.ca.

Required Document	Deadline
Professional learning reconciliation (if applicable)	January 31, 2026
Emergency Funding reconciliation (if applicable)	January 31, 2026
CWELCC Standard Financial Report (SFR)	February 28, 2026
Local priorities reconciliation	February 28, 2026

A reminder that the Local Priorities Reconciliation includes the General Operating Program Utilization Statement (GOPUS). This section of the Local Priorities Reconciliation is to be completed by operators who serve children aged six to 12 and who received General Operating Program (GOP) funding in 2025. If further clarification is required, please contact Jackie Adams at jacqueline.adams@durham.ca.

Site closures due to winter storms

As winter is upon us, snow and severe weather may affect child care operations. Please follow the guidelines below when a site implements a closure:

1. Closure made by the child care agency.

If a child care agency chooses to close for the day because of snow or winter conditions, fee subsidy rates cannot be charged, neither to the parent nor to the fee subsidy program.

2. Closures directed by the school board.

If a school board closes the site, the closure may qualify under the Emergency Site Closure Policy. In these cases, payment may be requested from both the client and fee subsidy. However, if full fee families are not charged for the closure day, then fee subsidy cannot be charged.

3. Reporting closures.

If a site needs to close for any reason, the closure must be reported to the CCEYD. Please reach out to the assigned CCEYD Quality Advisor as soon as possible. Directions will then be provided on how to correctly complete billing for that day.