

Child Care and Early Learning e-Newsletter

December 21, 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 operating child care in Durham Region including funding for child care, legislative changes, recommendations and information related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Early Learning Updates – Funding

Below you will find information and clarification about Durham's funding approach to support child care operators with a Purchase of Service Agreement (POS). Operators are encouraged to contact Julie Gaskin, Manager, Early Learning at Julie.gaskin@durham.ca to discuss funding questions or concerns.

Child Care Operators who do not have a Purchase of Service (POS) Agreement including Wage Enhancement only operators are encouraged to contact their Ministry representative to discuss Provincial support.

Contracts

Service Agreements for Purchase of Service operators were sent out by email in early November. Operators with a Wage Enhancement-only agreement will see their agreements this week. The new multi-year agreements were sent to the head office email we have on file. If you did not receive your agreement, please email childcareoperators@durham.ca

POS operators will receive their Wage Enhancement Schedules and an updated GOP schedule with Payment Summary in the coming days to reflect the GOP/SRF payments (see Funding section below).

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

Funding

General Operating Funding and Safe Restart Funding (GOP/SRF)

For licensed child care operators who have a Purchase of Service Agreement (POS) for Fee Subsidy:

POS operators will receive a payment in the next week for 2020 GOP/SRF funding.

Safe Restart Funding must be used to adapt to the COVID-19 environment and address unique needs stemming from the pandemic to keep children and staff safe in child care and early years settings.

Operators may use the GOP/SRF funds to support operations as per the Service Agreement GOP Schedule including SRF supports needed.

Additionally, where a program or a room closes, fixed costs, similar to the closure/reopening period, are funded. These costs are expected to be supported through the operator's GOP/SRF allocation. Funding to support reimbursements to parents will be provided via the SRF Application process (see below) to ensure families are not charged for services not provided due to a Health Closure Order.

SRF Application for Health Department ordered COVID Site/Room Closures

Safe Restart Funding is now available for POS operators who are closed due to a COVID-19 related

closure order issued by Public Health. This funding is to allow Operators to reimburse families for fees paid during a health-ordered, COVID-related closure. Funding to support fixed costs incurred by operators during these closures is supported through the GOP/SRF allocation provided

Please contact your QA or Julie Gaskin to request an SRF application if you receive a COVID-19 related closure order from Public Health.

A Reminder to report any positive COVID cases to your QA or the Early Learning Team managers as part of your Regional Serious Occurrence reporting protocol. Your QA's are available to support operators with navigating the implications of a Health Department issued closure so please reach out if you require assistance.

For licensed child care Operators with No POS for Fee subsidy (Wage Enhancement only operators):

Operators with a Wage Enhancement only Service Agreement may apply directly to the Ministry of Education for funding support. Please contact your Ministry of Education Representative for information.

Wage Enhancement (WE)

We are pleased to confirm that Wage Enhancement funding will continue in 2021.

As we shift into the new year, we have determined that most operators should have enough funds remaining from 2020 to pay the required WE for January 2021. Please use your remaining 2020 WE funding to meet your January 2021 WE commitments. Please contact Julie Gaskin at Julie.gaskin@durham.ca if you have any questions regarding your 2020 WE funding.

2020 WE Reconciliations

A simplified 2020 WE reconciliation form will be sent out in early January to reconcile 2020 spending. WE payments for 2021 will resume once we have successfully reconciled 2020 funding.

We will continue to provide updates by email as we work through the processes.

Please see the [Early Learning Update dated October 27th](#) for more information about WE usage in 2020.

Funding and Supports in 2021

We are pleased to announce that the Children's Services Division as the CMSM for Durham has received our Provincial budget and Funding Guidelines from the Ministry of Education for 2021.

Previously announced administrative funding cuts have been implemented for the upcoming year, however a one-time mitigation allocation has been provided by the Province to keep our allocation at the same level as in 2020.

2021 GOP allocations are currently being calculated. Regular monthly GOP payments will resume when those calculations are completed later in January.

Early Learning Updates – General

For 2021, Operators must continue to maximize all available federal supports in Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan including the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB), Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB), the new Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy as well as any other new federal initiatives that may support the child care sector. These federal supports should be maximized prior to utilizing Provincial funding such as GOP or SRF. Please refer to the Federal Economic Response Plan website for the full list of federal support programs: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

The CSD has also updated our web site to reflect the recent changes and provide links and resources <https://www.durham.ca/en/doing-business/operating-a-child-care-centre.aspx>

You can find resources from Public Health posted under the Child Care tab of the [Community Reopening Toolkit](#).

Planned Holiday site closures

If your organization plans to close a site(s) during the holiday break due to reduced enrollment, please notify Julie Gaskin at Julie.gaskin@durham.ca of the closure and include an alternate contact person during the closure. This information will enable us to support Public Health with current information, should contact tracing be needed during holiday closures.

January Best Start Network Meeting

We have tentatively scheduled the Best Start virtual meeting January 22, 2021. Please hold the date. Please email the Best Start Network if you require more information at beststart@durham.ca or if you would like to be added to the Best Start Network email distribution list.

Ontario News Release - December 21, 2020

The Province of Ontario has announced a Province wide shut down to stop the spread of COVID-19. Please see the [Ontario Newsroom News release](#) for more information.

The Children's Services Division will provide further information on how this impacts child care as it becomes available.

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](#).



Wishing you all health and happiness this holiday season.

- Durham Region Children's Services Division