

Child care and early learning updates e-newsletter

April 21, 2022

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) system update, next steps, and implementation timelines:**
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Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system update, next steps, and implementation timelines

Current status

Thank you for your patience as we continue to work with the Ministry of Education to clarify the allocation and implementation details of the CWELCC to support a smooth transition, and provide child care licensees with details to inform their decisions to opt-in.

We understand that you and your families are eager to begin the process of enrolment in the new CWELCC system.

Our teams are working quickly to build the opt-in application tool while obtaining Regional Council approvals to proceed. The opt-in application will require licensees to provide organization and site data as well as additional financial details to assess eligibility, determine initial base fees, and inform the ministry of progress.

The opt-in application process will begin once the tool is complete and allocations, including initial base fees, are determined. **Information and applications will be shared and processed via the child care operator portal for those operators with an active funding agreement, and via head office email for those operators with no active agreement.**

The provincial government announced that fee rebates may begin as early as May. As a reminder, funds to operators will be provided after enrolments are complete. This

means that service agreements must be signed, and CWELCC applications for enrolment must be submitted **and** approved before payments to operators can be made. As the service system manager for child care in the Region of Durham, we will process licensee applications as soon as possible to ensure licensees are able to make parent refunds in a timely fashion.

Child care operators are encouraged to continue to communicate this information to parents to manage expectations about fee refunds and rebates.

Next steps

The Children's Services Division is currently awaiting detailed provincial funding information, clarifying questions related to the provincial guidelines, and is actively building the application for enrolment.

An information session for licensees is tentatively set for the week of May 9 to discuss CWELCC details and answer questions you may have. A Microsoft Teams invitation to this event will be sent to you directly by email once it has been confirmed.

We aim to have the application available in the coming weeks. We are working diligently to ensure a smooth transition for families and licensees.

All CWELCC information, updates, and items to watch for will be posted to the child care operator portal. If you require any support in accessing or navigating the child care operator portal, please contact Darlene Burns for assistance at (905) 668-7711 x 2644 or darlene.burns@durham.ca.

CWELCC implementation overview

As a reminder, all licensees with programs serving children under the age of 6 (or turning 6 before June 30) in Ontario are eligible to apply to participate in the CWELCC system.

Participation in the CWELCC system is optional; however, licensees are encouraged to participate so that families can benefit from fee reductions. Licensees will be able to choose between two options:

1. To participate in the CWELCC system, or
2. Not participate, and operate outside the CWELCC system

An application for enrolment may be denied in limited circumstances. All child care programs licensed as of March 28, 2022, are required to notify parents and staff by September 1, 2022, whether or not they intend to participate in the CWELCC.

Unlicensed child care programs, including unlicensed home child care, authorized recreational programs, and school board-operated extended day programs, are not eligible to participate in the CWELCC system. Unlicensed providers that wish to participate in the CWELCC system may want to consider applying to the ministry for a

licence under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) to operate a child care centre or home child care agency or reach out to a local home child care agency to begin providing child care that is overseen by the home child care agency.

Licensed home child care agencies participating in the CWELCC system must ensure that home child care providers charge parents of eligible children a base fee determined in accordance with O. Reg. 137/15, which applies to children who are agency placed and those children that are privately placed in the provider's care.

CWELCC implementation timelines

- CWELCC applications for enrolment must be submitted and approved before payments to operators can be made. Applications will be processed as soon as possible to ensure licensees are able to make parent refunds in a timely fashion.
- Licensees must communicate their CWELCC status to all parents and staff within 14 days of being notified of the results of their application.
- 31 days after a licensee is notified of their enrolment date, the licensee cannot charge a base fee that is higher than the applicable base fee for an eligible child.
- Licensees will be permitted to continue to pay eligible registered early childhood educators (RECE) staff below the wage floor for 31 calendar days after notification that they are enrolled in the CWELCC system. After 31 days, the licensee would be required to pay eligible RECE staff at least the wage floor (\$18 an hour in 2022, including wage enhancement). Licensees would then be given one additional month (for a total of 60 days from the day they were notified of enrolment) to provide eligible RECE staff with a retroactive payment for any wages that were below the wage floor, retroactive to the date their enrolment in the CWELCC system was confirmed.
- Following the application acceptance, refunds must be provided to families within 60 days of the licensee enrolment date.