

Child care and early learning e-newsletter

February 7, 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:

Funding Updates

General Operating Program Funding – POS Operators Only

Wage Enhancement (WE) – All Operators Receiving WE

Funding Applications for COVID-19 Related Absences – POS Operators Only

Emergency Child Care Data – ECC Operators Only

Durham Region Workforce Strategy

Funding Updates

Questions related to funding allocations or contractual obligations can be directed to Julie Gaskin, Manager, Early Learning at Julie.gaskin@durham.ca.

Thank you for the work you do, providing quality child care for children and families in Durham Region.

General Operating Program Funding – POS Operators Only

General Operating Funding allocations are currently being reviewed for 2022 based on GOP survey data. Monthly GOP payments for January and February 2022 will remain the same as 2021 monthly GOP payments. Any annual allocation adjustments will occur beginning in March for the remaining months in 2022.

2022 GOP schedules will be uploaded to your portal by the end of February 2022.

Wage Enhancement Reconciliation Statements (WERS) – All operators receiving WE

The deadline for submitting the 2021 WERS has been extended to February 28, 2022. Reconciliation templates have been posted on the operator portal. Please complete and upload as instructed.

Repayment of all unused 2021 Wage Enhancement (WE) funding will be required after reconciliations are analyzed.

Wage Enhancement may only be used for eligible expenditures, so we recommend holding WE funding separate from operating funds to support timely repayment of unused WE to the Region of Durham.

A reminder that all child care operators are expected to take advantage of any eligible Federal support during the pandemic recovery.

As per the [Canada Revenue Agency \(CRA\) website](#) the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) was extended to October 23, 2021. If you were eligible for the CEWS, you can still apply for past claim periods until 180 days after the claim period has ended. If your organization did not meet the eligibility for a CEWS claim period, you are required to provide notice to the Children's Services Division as part of the 2021 WERS submission.

Funding Applications for COVID-19 Related Absences – POS Operators Only

For 2022, the Ministry of Education has allowed municipalities to use some flexibility within our current budget to maximize support provided to child care operators. There has been no additional funding provided by the province for child care services in 2022.

Our division continues to closely monitor committed spending to meet our mandated obligations, and determine ways to reduce the pressure on child care operators and parents due to the COVID-19 absence policies. Supporting children, families and our child care partners is our priority as we move forward with additional funding supports for COVID-19 related absences.

For the **months of January and February 2022**, operators may apply to receive funding to offset children's absences due to COVID-19 related reasons. Continuation of this funding beyond February will be based on available funding. Operators will be notified of any extensions.

The applications for COVID-19 related absenteeism funding will be posted to the operator portal this week. Applications are due by the 15th day of the following month. Applications will be processed as we receive them to ensure allocations occur quickly.

Eligibility and requirements for COVID-19 related absenteeism funding:

Absenteeism funding supports are available to operators with a Purchase of Service Agreement (POS) only.

To be eligible for COVID19 related absenteeism funding, operators must not charge fees (or provide refunds/credits) for all children included in the application who are absent due to COVID-19 related reasons.

We encourage all operators to apply for this funding and to work with families to provide refunds/credits for COVID-19 related absences.

Please review the application information page for more details and requirements.

For auditing purposes, service providers must maintain financial documentation to verify spending outlined on their application submissions. This spending must also be reported in organizational audited financial statements. Additional documentation to support what has been reported in the funding applications or financial statements may be requested.

Emergency Child Care (ECC) Data – ECC Operators Only

Child care operators who provided Emergency Child Care in January 2022 are required to submit expenditure data on or before February 21, 2022.

This data is used for reporting purposes to the Ministry of Education. Templates were sent by email to head offices on February 4th 2022, and must be uploaded to the operator portal once complete.

If you have any questions, please contact Jackie Adams; Financial Analyst at Jacqueline.Adams@Durham.ca.

Durham Region Workforce Strategy

Beginning in 2022, the Ministry of Education allocated CMSMs one-time Workforce Strategy funding as part of the Federal Government's investment in the child care and early years workforce. This funding will support the retention and recruitment of a high-quality care and early years workforce with the key objectives to:

- Sustain the existing workforce to ensure a more stable and high-quality early years and child care system.
- Enhance access to opportunities for the workforce that promote retention and recruitment including PD, training, and qualification upgrade programs.
- Grow the number of qualified staff in the workforce to increase access to high-quality licensed child care for families.
- Attract and support the development of an increasingly diverse workforce to better reflect the children and families accessing programs.

Durham has submitted a preliminary plan that will evolve as data is gathered and key stakeholder involvement expands. Over the 15-month period, key components of the Durham plan reflect the Ministry mandate and will include:

- The completion of an early learning and child care sector research study and report that examines current workforce challenges, trends, and recommendations for addressing workforce pressures.
- Expansion of professional learning opportunities using a co-design model with local community advisory committees, and community members.
- Co-creation of a mentorship framework to support recruitment, onboarding, and leadership development.
- Partnership and collaboration with local colleges, school boards, and the early years sector to examine ways to reduce barriers and increase the number of ECE students.
- Collaborative marketing campaigns and partnerships to build awareness and understanding of pathways for qualification upgrade.
- Expanding partnerships that support a diverse workforce, reflective of the children and families in Durham Region.
- Support targeted recruitment events in collaboration with key stakeholders.

This initiative will involve a collaborative model of co-design and partnership with key members of the early learning community, local colleges, school boards, neighbouring municipalities, employment services providers, and governing ministries. Our division will be reaching out to the ELCC community during this initiative. We look forward to working with the ELCC community in the coming months to build a strong child care sector for Durham.

Please contact Tracy Barclay for more information at Tracy.Barclay@durham.ca