

Child care and early learning updates e-newsletter

December 14, 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:

- Child Care Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy
- Duty to Report – Proposed Changes to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017
- 2024 Contracts and Updated Funding Allocations
- Reconciliation and Application – Compensation and Wages
- Wage Enhancement (WE)
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- General Operating program (GOP) funding
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Child Care Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

Effective January 1, 2024, all licensed child care programs must have a safe arrival and dismissal policy in place. The new change made to O.Reg. 137/15 of the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 intends to enhance the health and safety protections in licensed child care settings. At minimum, the policy must set out the steps that will be taken if a child does not arrive at the child care centre or home child care as expected, as well as outline the steps that will ensure the safe dismissal of children. In addition, the safe arrival and dismissal policy must be included in the parent handbook and children's records must include records related to safe arrival and dismissal. Licensees may use the sample safe arrival and dismissal policy template provided by the Ministry of Education, on November 16, 2023.

Duty to Report – Proposed Changes to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)

Under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA), anyone who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is, or may be, in need of protection must promptly report the suspicion, and the information it is based upon, to a Children's Aid Society. Professionals who work with children who fail to report as required may be convicted of an offence under the CYFSA.

The Ministry of Education intends to consult on proposed regulatory amendments related to the training of staff on the duty to report. A summary of these proposed amendments will be posted on [Ontario's Regulatory Registry](#) in early 2024. Additional details, including a link to the summary and direction on how to submit feedback, will be provided at that time.

2024 Contracts and Updated Funding Allocations

On November 30, 2023, the Ministry of Education provided Service System Managers with updated funding allocations and budgets for 2024. Funding has remained similar to last year. **For January 2024, regular monthly payments to operators will continue at the 2023 amounts.** Funding paid based on billings will continue using the same process as in 2023.

Changes to funding allocations will begin to be flowed to operators after we receive and review applications submitted by operators in January and February of 2024. Funding allocations will be updated and will include funds retroactive to January 1, 2024.

Adjustments to Wage Enhancement, Workforce Compensation, and Minimum Wage Offset funds will be based on reviewed applications submitted by operators. We recognize the significant impact these compensation increases will have on educators across Durham Region, and we will work with operators to review applications and flow funding as quickly as we can.

2024 Service Agreement Schedules, including updated allocations, will be provided to operators via the Operator Portal once allocations have been determined.

Reconciliation and Application – Compensation and Wages

The Children's Services Division will provide the Wage Enhancement Reconciliation template early in 2024 via the Operator Portal. This template will also act as your

reconciliation for 2023 Workforce Compensation and Minimum Wage Offset funding as well as your application for Workforce Compensation and Minimum Wage Offset funding for 2024 for Canada-wide Early Learning and Child care (CWELCC) enrolled licensees. Once submitted and reviewed by Children’s Services staff, payments will be adjusted and backdated as needed.

Wage Enhancement (WE)

As of January 1, 2024, the hourly wage enhancement of \$2.00 per hour for program staff will be provided, subject to the **new cap of \$30.59 per hour**.

For home child care providers, the new ceiling for the full Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (HCCG) is **\$305.90 per day** and **\$183.54 per part day**.

Workforce Compensation: Annual Wage Increase

Per the 2024 funding guidelines, CWELCC-enrolled licensees are required to increase the hourly wage of eligible Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) by \$1 per hour plus benefits effective January 1, 2024. This is compounded from the previous year. Operators who choose to pay the workforce funding on January 1, 2024, will be retroactively funded to January 1, 2024, after funding applications have been reviewed. Operators may choose to pay staff retroactively after they receive the funding from the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM).

To receive the CWELCC annual wage increase, eligible RECE staff must be receiving WE funding. Their hourly wage, including the Wage Enhancement Grant, on December 31, 2023, must be below the wage cap of \$26 per hour for RECEs and \$29 per hour for RECE Supervisors or RECE Home Visitors. Benefits should not be included when determining the base wage.

Workforce Compensation: Wage Floor

Per the 2024 funding guidelines, CWELCC-enrolled licensees are required to bring the wage of all RECE program staff up to the wage floor, as identified in the table below. Operators who choose to pay the workforce funding on January 1, 2024, will be retroactively funded to January 1, 2024, after funding applications have been received and reviewed. Otherwise, operators may choose to pay staff retroactively once they receive the funding from the CMSM.

All new eligible staff hired during the year must earn at least the wage floor identified for the applicable year and the corresponding benefits. The wage floor for 2024 comes into effect on January 1, 2024.

Operators should note that the increase to the workforce funding floor is effective January 1, 2024. Funding from the Ministry of Education to support the [newly announced wage floor increase](#) is expected to be received by Services System Managers in early 2024.

Hourly Wage Floor 2022 to 2026*	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
RECE Program Staff	\$ 18.00	\$ 19.00	\$ 23.86	\$ 24.86	\$ 25.86
RECE Supervisors or RECE Home Visitors	\$ 20.00	\$ 21.00	\$ 24.86	\$ 25.86	\$ 26.86

For clarity, for 2024, RECE Program Staff should have a wage floor of \$23.86 per hour plus benefits, and RECE Supervisors or RECE Home Child Care Visitors should have a wage floor of \$24.86 per hour.

To determine annual wage and wage floor increase eligibility, licensees must follow this order of operations:

- Base wage by employer (includes any employer-based wage improvements such as obligations from collective agreements and minimum wage increases),
- Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) (\$2 per hour, up to a maximum of \$30.59 per hour as per the Early Years and Child Care guideline),
- CWELCC annual wage increases of \$1 per hour, compounded year over year, up to \$26 per hour for RECE Program Staff and \$29 per hour for RECE Supervisors or RECE Home Visitors, and
- CWELCC incremental wage floor increase, if applicable.

Example: RECE wage calculation for an educator with a base wage of \$19.50 per hour on December 31, 2023

Base Wage	WEG	Annual Wage Increase	Wage Floor	New Wage
\$19.50	\$2.00	\$1.00 + \$1.00	\$0.36	\$23.86

Example: RECE wage calculation for an educator with a base wage of \$20.00 per hour on December 31, 2023

Base Wage	WEG	Annual Wage Increase	Wage Floor	New Wage
\$20.00	\$2.00	\$1.00 + \$1.00	\$0.00	\$24.00

Minimum Wage Offset

To be eligible for the minimum wage offset, eligible licensees must employ staff in the following positions:

- Non-RECE Program Staff
- Non-RECE Child Care Supervisor
- Non-RECE Home Child Care Visitor

To be eligible for a minimum wage offset, licensees must employ staff in positions that were earning the minimum wage of \$15.50 per hour (not including WEG funding) prior to the provincial increase to \$16.55 per hour.

General Operating Program (GOP) Funding

General Operating Program (GOP) funding surveys were shared with eligible operators in November through the Operator Portal. Surveys are due by December 15, 2023. Operators are required to submit this survey to retain GOP funding.

2024 GOP payments will remain at 2023 levels until the survey reviews are complete and allocations recalculated for 2024. New 2024 allocations will be communicated to Operators via the Operator Portal once complete.

Children’s Developmental and Behavioural Supports (CDBS) Virtual Simulation Learning Opportunity

Educators are encouraged to register for one of the two virtual simulations offered by Children’s Developmental and Behavioural Supports. Virtual simulation allows participants to role-play challenging scenarios from the safety of their screen.

In the **At-Risk for Early Childhood Educators** simulation, participants will practice:

- responding to challenging behaviour in a preschool room,
- connecting with a child after the behavior,
- having a difficult conversation with parents, and
- building new relationships with caregivers

Click [here](#) to register for the **At-Risk for Early Childhood Educators** simulation.

In the **Calm Parents, Healthy Kids** simulation, participants will practice:

- managing a transition at home,
- managing a tantrum in the grocery store,
- what to do when you are on the phone and your child is trying to get your attention, and
- supporting two simulations of children hitting during outdoor time

Click [here](#) to register for the **Calm Parents, Healthy Kids** simulation.

Participants will be entered into a draw to win a fun prize pack.

Give your input on the new Canada Disability Benefit

The Government of Canada is seeking input on the design and regulation of the new Canada Disability Benefit. The benefit is intended to help reduce poverty among working-age Canadians with disabilities. Working-age Canadians with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty as working-age people without disabilities. Engagement is open until Thursday, December 21, 2023. Click [here](#) to learn more about how to participate and share your feedback.

Children's Services Division - Updates

Financial Analyst 2 – Congratulations to Grace Severn and Joy Proulx, the successful candidates for the Financial Analyst 2 role. Grace is currently in the role and Joy will join Children's Services on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Past editions of the Early Learning E-Newsletter can be viewed [here](#) or in the Broadcast section of the Operator Portal.

A 'Who to Call' quick reference contact sheet is located on the page 7 of this edition of the Early Learning E-Newsletter.

Name	Role	Contact	What they Support
Nathaniel Nolan	Business Technology Coordinator	Nathaniel.Nolan@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x3521	OCCMS, the Operator Portal, technology issues, IT questions, trainings, etc.
Andrew Mundy	Business Technology Coordinator	Andrew.Mundy@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x3662	OCCMS, the Operator Portal, technology issues, IT questions, training, etc.
Shaila Arman	Data Analysis Coordinator	Shaila.Arman@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x3629	Surveys, focus groups, consultation sessions, data collection and maintenance, etc.
Natalie Mercier	Data Analysis Coordinator	Natalie.Mercier@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x2758	Surveys, focus groups, consultation sessions, data collection and maintenance, etc.
	Fee Subsidy Caseworker	childrensservices@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x1804	Fee Subsidy inquiries, to speak with a Fee Subsidy Caseworker.
Lisa Bruce	Manager of Early Learning	Lisa.Bruce@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x2631	Operator budget consultations.
Emily Witlarge	Program Manager	Emily.Witlarge@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x2437	Enhanced Staffing funding, CWELCC expansion, and start-up grants.
Denise Dalton	Program Assistant	Denise.Dalton@Durham.ca 905-666-6239 x2829	Children's Development and Behavioural Supports inquiries.
Catherine Andre	Program Assistant	Catherine.Andre@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x2395	The electronic filing system, connecting community inquiries to the appropriate Early Learning Team member.
Nazish Kramat	Program Assistant	Nazish.Kramat@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x3910	The capacity team as they offer training, sector-specific recognition events, and the development of the GROW newsletter.
Jenna Peters	Program Assistant	Jenna.Peters@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x2136	Contracts/agreements, Best Start and Early Learning Administration.
Lisa Stewart	Program Assistant	Lisa.Stewart@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x2603	Administrative support related to system planning, CWELCC-funded child care expansions, and contracted services.
Meagan Burke	Training Specialist	Meagan.Burke@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x3691	Bilingual Training Specialist.
Jodie Matsushita	Training Specialist	Jodie.Matsushita@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x1755	Training and consultation support.
Sabrina Newman	Training Specialist	Sabrina.Newman@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x2827	Leading, supporting communities of practice.
Shannon Soul	Training Specialist	Shannon.Soul@durham.ca 905-666-6239 x2231	Mental health initiatives.

