

November 30, 2023

Canada-wide early learning and child care (CWELCC) program

Peel Region

Multi-year expansion plan and application process

Early Years and Child Care Services

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Overview

The [Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care \(CWELCC\)](#) plan supports a licensed child care system that is high-quality, easy to access, affordable, and inclusive.

The CWELCC program:

- Reduces child care fees for families with children under the age of six, and the goal is to reduce fees to an average of \$10 per day.
- Increases wages of Registered Early Childhood Educators to help support recruitment and retention of the workforce.
- Increases access to child care spaces by creating new spaces in targeted areas.

The Ministry of Education has shared an [Access and Inclusion Framework](#) to guide expansion of CWELCC. The goal of the framework is to support access to child care for children of low-income families, vulnerable children, children from diverse communities, children with special needs, and Francophone and Indigenous children.

This document is for child care providers who are planning to open new child care spaces in Peel. It provides information on how to apply and the approval process to participate in CWELCC. Child care providers approved to participate in Peel's CWELCC program will receive more details on how to use funding through the CWELCC Funding Guideline.

Expansion in Peel

As CWELCC continues to make child care more affordable for families, we expect the demand for child care to increase. Over the next three years, Peel Region is increasing access to licensed child care for families in our community.

In line with the Ministry's *Access and Inclusion Framework*, our Multi-Year Expansion Plan:

- is a targeted and phased approach

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- focuses on creating new child care spaces in **identified priority communities**¹ in Peel
- prioritizes increasing access to child care for diverse and underserved populations

See **Appendix 1** for a map of the priority communities in Peel.

Child care expansion targets in Peel

Our goal is to create 11,980 new child care spaces by 2026 to meet our Ministry directed expansion target (1,145 school-based and 10,835 community-based). This target includes spaces from child care providers who opted into CWELCC in 2023 (who opted out in 2022) and those with expansion plans in progress (entered in CCLS) prior to January 1, 2023.

Peel’s annual expansion targets are:

Year	Community-Based Targets (centres and home child care)	School-Based Targets
Total	10,835	1,145
2022	704	107
2023	2,989	366
2024	2,555	560
2025	2,785	112
2026	1,802	-

Auspice specific target

The Ministry has directed Peel Region to maintain its current child care system at a 60/40 ratio of not-for-profit and for-profit child care spaces for children aged 0-5 years. This means that at a minimum 7,170 not-for-profit spaces must be created as part of Peel Region’s CWELCC expansion plan and the remaining 4,810 spaces can be operated by for-profit providers.

¹ Peel’s priority communities were identified using child care demand data and additional well-being indicators included in Peel’s Neighborhood Information Tool, and were accepted by [Regional Council on March 9, 2023](#). As part of Peel’s eligibility criteria, we will consider programs that serve areas within a 2km radius of priority communities.

Update: We have been monitoring this requirement and our data shows that we need to prioritize expansion of non-profit spaces in Peel in order to meet the Ministry's auspice requirement. This means, beginning November 30, 2023 we will only accept applications from non-profit centre-based providers and licensed home child care (LHCC) agencies to meet the province's auspice requirement, and pausing applications from for-profit providers. We will continue to monitor this requirement throughout the expansion plan and provide updates to the child care sector.

Age grouping

At this time, Peel Region will only approve expansion of spaces for infant, toddler and preschool age groups. We will monitor the service demand and existing capacity for JK/SK spaces and revisit age prioritization if needed. All CWELCC eligible children will continue to be eligible for expansion in licensed home child care.

CWELCC multi-year expansion application process

If you are planning to create new licensed child care spaces in Peel for infant, toddler and preschool age groups, and are interested in applying to Peel's CWELCC program, you will need to complete Peel's **CWELCC Multi-Year Expansion Application Form**.

If you are interested in applying, please follow these steps.

Step 1: Do your research

We encourage you to:

- **Develop a business plan and prepare a projected cash flow statement:** Understand what child care is already offered in the community you are planning to open in; make sure your site will be able to enroll children and be viable based on anticipated revenue, expenses, projected enrollment. As part of your anticipated revenue, you should consider that if you are approved in CWELCC, Peel Region will not approve child care base fees higher than the maximum caps on fees set out in the [CCEYA regulations](#) by the Ministry of Education.
- **Use the [Peel EYCC Mapping Tool](#):** This map will help you determine if your proposed project is located in a priority community. Projects that are located in a priority community will be prioritized.
 - From the legend on the left-hand side, click on "**CWELCC Expansion**".

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- Hover over the priority communities to see which communities have achieved their space targets (and expansion is paused) and which communities have spaces available (focus for expansion).
- This tool will be updated regularly so you will know where there is a need for child care spaces.
- **Consult your local municipal Planning and Development Services:** Understand the relevant bylaws, zoning, permit requirements and municipal site plan restrictions, for your planned expansion.
 - [Planning and building online services - City of Mississauga](#)
 - [City of Brampton | Planning & Development | Planning & Development](#)
 - [Building Permits - Town of Caledon](#)

Note: We recommend your site receives CWELCC expansion approval from Peel before proceeding with municipal zoning, site plan approval, or entering into lease agreements etc. It is recommended that before you sign your lease agreement, that it has a “termination clause” which gives you the right to end the agreement without breaching your contract.

- **Review the Ministry’s licensing requirements:** Understand the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#) (CCEYA) and [Ontario Regulation 137/15](#) before applying.

How to start a child care program in Ontario: If you are interested in opening a child care centre or home, review these resources before you apply for a licence: [Child care licensing manual](#), [Home child care licensing manual](#), [Before and after school program licensing guideline](#), [Ministry of Education Child Care Centre Planning and Design Guidelines](#). You can find more information at the Ministry’s website: [Start a Child Care Program](#).

Child Care Licensing Questions:

- New child care providers - email the Ministry of Education at childcare_ontario@ontario.ca or call the central inquiry line at 416-325-2929.
- Child care providers currently operating - contact your Ministry of Education Program Advisor for more information on licensing.

Need More Information or Have Questions: To support you in understanding Peel Region’s Expansion Application Plan and Process, please review our [website](#) for updated information and supporting resources. You may also contact us by emailing earlyyearssystemdivision@peelregion.ca.

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Step 2: Determine if you are eligible

You are eligible to apply to participate in CWELCC Expansion if your project will be in operation by December 31, 2026 and you are a:

Not-for-profit centre-based child care provider and...

- currently taking part in Peel's CWELCC program and planning to increase spaces through a licence revision
- currently taking part in Peel's CWELCC program and planning to open a new child care site in Peel
- currently do not operate in Peel and would like to open a new child care site in Peel
- opted-out of CWELCC in 2022 and did not apply through the 2023 Expression of Interest (EOI) process released on May 17, 2023

Home child care agency and...

- would like to open a new home child care agency with a head office in Peel

You **do not** need to apply to the CWELCC program through Peel's Expansion Application Process if you:

- Are located in a school that has received Approval to Proceed from the Ministry of Education's Capital Priorities program or Early Years Capital Program for a child care capital project.
- Had a space expansion in progress in CCLS before January 1, 2023 and applied through Peel's 2023 EOI process released on May 17, 2023.

Update:

On September 7, 2023, the Ministry of Education announced a new approach to licensing for home child care, which will change the way approved homes are listed on the agency's licence. The Ministry is now including, on the agency's licence, the number of homes the agency may oversee in each specific service system area. As part of CWELCC expansion, LHCC agencies will be required to apply for new homes through the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS) online.

The Ministry indicated more information will be shared in their 2024 provincial guidelines. When we receive this information, we will update our resources to reflect any change in the application process and work with our LHCC partners to support the recruitment of new homes in priority communities.

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Home child care agencies currently participating in Peel's CWELCC program (head office in Peel):

We are working with you to understand your expansion plans to open new homes in Peel. We are reviewing recent data collected and will communicate next steps.

ACTION: On a monthly basis, report the number of active homes you have (where there is at least one child enrolled) in the comments section of the attendance record in OCCMS.

Home child care agencies currently participating in CWELCC outside of Peel Region (head office outside of Peel):

We would like to understand your expansion plans to open new homes in Peel. Please email EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca if you are planning to open new homes in Peel in 2024.

Step 3: Learn how applications will be assessed and approved

All applications will be reviewed against the following provincial requirements:

- Actively pursuing a licence, or licence revision to operate a child care program under Ontario's Child Care Licensing System (CCLS); **OR** have a licence under CCLS in good standing already approved by the Ministry of Education at the time of submitting the application
- Demonstrate financial viability.

Centre-based child care:

We will review the applications against Peel Region specific criteria based on the Service Delivery Area² for your proposed project.

The two main criteria are that the new spaces:

- Are located in one of Peel's **identified priority communities** or within a 2-kilometre radius of a priority community; and
- Meet the **demand for child care** programs in that community. Programs must serve infant, toddler, preschool age groups.

² Service Delivery Area (SDA) are geographies to support service planning and delivery by providing data relevant to the local geographies for delivering local services to the public, such as child care and early years services.

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- o Refer to the [Peel EYCC Mapping Tool](#) to support you with determining where your proposed project is in relation to our identified priority communities.

Note: if you do not have a confirmed address, you can apply for CWELCC expansion however, you must provide 6-digit postal code to indicate the proposed area in Peel Region that you are looking to expand.

Additional criteria based on Peel's [service system plan priorities](#) include:

- How the **base wages** you pay to Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) or Director-approved staff (that fill the position of a RECE) align with [2023 GTA living wage of \\$25.05/hour](#).
- If the new spaces are **co-located** in school, faith-based building, community centre, affordable housing building, etc.
- If the new spaces **improve access** to child care – such as offering evening care, extended hours of care above 11 hours, weekend care or flexible care options for families.
- If the new spaces **improve inclusion** for underrepresented groups – this may be through child care programs that target vulnerable and diverse populations such as Indigenous, Francophone, Black, other racialized groups, newcomers, and low-income families.

New home child care agencies:

Home child care agencies are encouraged, but not required to open homes in a priority community. We will work with agencies to support the recruitment of new homes in priority communities.

We will review these applications to assess:

- How **base wages** you pay Home Visitors (RECEs) align with [2023 GTA living wage of \\$25.05/hour](#).
- If the new spaces **improve access** to child care – such as offering evening care, extended hours of care above 9 hours, weekend care or flexible care options for families.
- If the new spaces **improve inclusion** for underrepresented groups – this may be through child care programs that target vulnerable and diverse populations such as Indigenous, Francophone, Black and other racialized groups, newcomers, and low-income families.

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Step 4: Complete Peel's CWELCC multi-year expansion application form

If you are interested in participating in the CWELCC program, please complete the **CWELCC Expansion Application Form**. See **Appendix 1** of this document for an infographic of the application process.

When to submit an application?

- First Application Window closed on **August 31, 2023**.
- Beginning **November 30, 2023**, we are accepting CWELCC Expansion Applications on an ongoing basis. At this time, we are prioritizing expansion applications from not-for-profit centre-based providers and home child care agencies.

How to submit completed applications?

- Send your completed application to EarlyYearsSystemDivison@peelregion.ca
- You can use this application form to apply for a Start-up Grant if you are interested. See page 9 for more information on Start-up Grants.
- Home child care agencies are eligible for Start-up Grants and will be required to complete the relevant tabs in the CWELCC Expansion Application Form.

Note: You are required to submit a new application if any of these situations occurred:

- The postal code of your new location changed from what you stated in your application.
- You were approved for CWELCC but the specific location you were interested in leasing is not available anymore. Approval is site specific and cannot be transferred to another location.

Important: Applying does not guarantee approval into the CWELCC program. All applications are subject to Peel's review and funding availability. Peel Region is not responsible for any liabilities or for the viability of new child care programs opening in Peel. Child Care programs must make informed decisions based on their own research related to program expansion.

Step 5: Application results

Applications submitted to Peel Region will be accepted on an ongoing basis. We will need up to 4 weeks to review completed applications and will share your application status after our review.

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Approved

You are considered “approved” if you have received written confirmation (or CCLS approval) from Peel Region to be part of the CWELCC child care program and are currently in the process of obtaining licensing.

If so, you:

- Will be sent a CWELCC Funding Expansion confirmation letter
- Do not need to apply for the CWELCC program annually. Agreements will be executed in [GovGrants](#).

Denied

You are considered “denied” if you have received a written confirmation (or CCLS denial) that you have been denied admission into Peel’s CWELCC program.

Applications may be denied if:

- We have reasonable grounds to believe the applicant has not or may not use the funds for its intended purposes, or if the applicant is not financially viable, or is not in good standing with Peel’s funding or licensing requirements under the *Child Care and Early Years Act*.
- The applicant does not meet the requirements of Peel’s CWELCC Expansion Plan including the eligibility criteria or does not align with Peel’s targets.

Waitlist

You are considered “waitlisted” if you have received a written confirmation for Peel’s CWELCC child care program that you are awaiting a final decision.

Appeal process:

If you would like to appeal a decision related to your participation in the CWELCC program, you must do so in writing by emailing EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca. All appeals will be handled in a fair and equitable manner by following the guidelines, and policies and practices determined by Peel Region, the CWELCC Agreement and Ministry of Education legislation.

Participating in the Peel Region CWELCC program

CWELCC funding for approved applications

If you are approved to take part in Peel's CWELCC program, you will receive funding for the following:

1. **Fee Reduction Funding:** this funding supports reducing your child care base fees and registration fees for families with eligible children, to an average of \$10 per day. We will work with you to set your approved base fees to participate in the program.
2. **Workforce Compensation Funding:** this funding should be used to meet the provincial annual wage increase and wage floor requirements until 2026 and to offset the wage increases associated with Ontario's increased minimum wage for non-RECE staff.
3. **Transition Operating Grant:** this funding supported the cost of inflation and costs to implement CWELCC for 2023 only. We will release details of this funding for 2024 in February/March 2024 after we receive provincial guidelines and funding allocations.

You may also be eligible for other EYCC funding supports, such as General Operating Funding (GOF) or LHCC Base Funding, subject to budget availability.

The CWELCC Funding Guideline and supporting resources for child care providers newly enrolled in the CWELCC program will be posted on the [website](#).

Early Years and Child Care (EYCC) funding agreement

Beginning in 2023, we have streamlined our funding agreements to build an inclusive, accessible, and affordable child care system. Child care providers who are approved to take part in Peel's CWELCC program will automatically enter into a EYCC Funding Agreement with Peel Region and must:

- Accept and include children who receive child care subsidy.
- Accept and include children with special needs by authentically participating in [Peel Inclusion Resource Services \(PIRS\)](#).
- Participate in continuous quality enhancement initiatives like *Raising the Bar in Peel* and professional learning opportunities.

To support this, child care providers will receive:

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- Child care subsidy funding to cover the cost of care for families receiving subsidy.
- Access to Resource Consultant supports and Enhanced Program Support Funding (centre based).
- Access to Early Years Specialist staff supports.
- Access to continuous quality enhancement initiatives like *Raising the Bar in Peel* and professional learning through [Child Development Resource Connection Peel](#).

Early Years Specialists will support onboarding new child care providers to understand the requirements of the EYCC Funding Agreement.

CWELCC expansion - start-up grant

Funding is available for a Start-up Grant to create new community-based licensed child care in centres and home child care. The grant can be used to offset costs needed to expand or create spaces, and includes equipment or leasehold improvements, such as retrofit, renovation or expansion projects.

The Start-up Grant is an offset or a support to child care providers for initial costs incurred when expanding or creating new licensed child care spaces. It is important that providers are not dependent on the grant for expansion. Proposed child care projects must be financially viable without the Start-up Grant.

Eligibility criteria

To receive a Start-up Grant, you must meet the following requirements:

- Be enrolled in CWELCC and participate in the system for the remainder of the current CWELCC agreement (March 31, 2026).
- Create new community-based, licensed full-day spaces for infant, toddler and preschool age groups in Peel's priority communities (see Appendix 1).
- Expand licensed spaces to accommodate a maximum group size for each age grouping.
- Spend the grant and open new licensed spaces within two years from the date the funding agreement is executed.
- *For licensed home child care agencies:* Maintain the number of approved child care spaces in the service area for the duration of the CWELCC agreement, even if the home child care agency or capacity of home child care agency changes prior to March 31, 2026.

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Available funding

Peel is currently waiting to receive our 2024 Start-up Grant allocation from the Ministry of Education. Once we receive this information, we will communicate more details on the Start-up Grant funding, including benchmarks.

While the Ministry of Education has established **maximum** funding benchmarks, these are not guaranteed. Peel will establish local benchmarks based on available funding and project demand. We intend to fund as many applications as possible to support our targeted expansion efforts in Peel.

Peel is prioritizing the Start-up Grant for the creation of community-based spaces that serve the infant, toddler and preschool age groups. Any approved Start-up Grant funding allocation will be calculated based on spaces serving these age groups.

Review of Start-Up Grant applications

We will review Start-up Grant applications and if you are approved for the grant, we will determine your eligible funding based on current benchmarks and spaces serving the infant, toddler and preschool age groups.

A service agreement will be executed to support project implementation. You are responsible for any project spending that is more than the approved funding allocation. More details on the requirements for this funding will be outlined in a funding guideline shared with approved service providers.

Need more information or have questions?

Email EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca

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APPENDIX 1: CWELCC child care expansion application process

Human Services

10 Peel Centre Dr. Suite B PO Box 2136, STN B Brampton, ON L6T 0E3

EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca, Tel: 905-791-1585

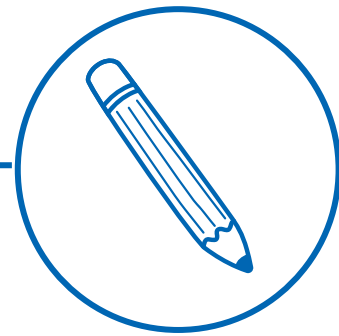
For more information visit [peelregion.ca](https://www.peelregion.ca)

CWELCC MULTI-YEAR EXPANSION APPLICATION PROCESS



Step 1

Before you apply, **do your research**, and review Peel's Expansion plan, including our Interactive Map to determine if you're in a priority community. Build a business plan and prepare a projected cash flow statement.



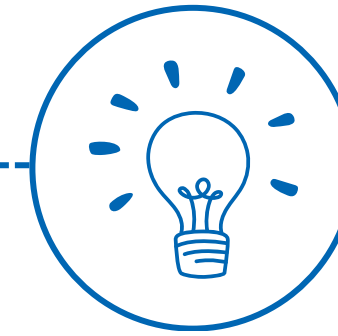
Step 2

Determine if you're eligible. You can apply if you are a non-profit and your project will be in operation by December 31, 2026. Review Peel's Expansion plan for more detail.



Step 3

We will review applications that meet the provincial requirements. Please note that the criteria differs between centre-based and home-based. Review Peel's Expansion Plan to **learn how applications will be assessed and approved.**



Step 4

Apply using the CWELCC Expansion Application Form. Completed applications should be sent to EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca. You can also use this form to apply for a Start-up Grant.



Step 5

We will review your CWELCC application within **4 weeks**. If approved, you will receive a confirmation letter and Peel will approve your participation into CWELCC through CCLS.