

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

Peel Region

Multi-year expansion plan and application process

Early Years and Child Care Services

Original released: July 25, 2023

Updated: November 30, 2023

Updated: May 2024

Table of Contents

Overview	3
Expansion in Peel	3
Child care expansion targets in Peel	4
Auspice specific target	4
Age grouping	4
CWELCC multi-year expansion application process	4
Step 1: Do your research	4
Step 2: Determine if you are eligible	6
Step 3: Learn how applications will be assessed and approved	7
Step 4: Complete Peel’s CWELCC multi-year expansion application form	9
Step 5: Application results	10
Participating in the Peel Region CWELCC program	12
CWELCC funding for approved applications	12
Early Years and Child Care (EYCC) funding agreement	12
CWELCC expansion - Start-up Grant	13
Eligibility criteria	13
Available funding	14
Review of Start-up Grant applications	14

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.

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. Through the CWELCC plan, 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.
- 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 including low-income families, children from diverse communities, children with special needs, and Francophone and Indigenous children.

Refer to the EYCC Mapping Tool of the priority communities in Peel on our [website](#).

¹ Peel's priority communities were identified using child care demand data and additional well-being indicators included in Peel's Neighbourhood 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 2 km radius of priority communities.

Child care expansion targets in Peel

Our goal is to create 11,980 new child care spaces in Peel by 2026 to meet our Ministry directed expansion target (1,145 school-based and 10,835 community-based).

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 commercial (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 commercial centre based child care providers.

Update: Our data shows that we have reached our commercial space targets in Peel and our efforts need to prioritize expansion of not-for-profit spaces in Peel Region. This means we are only accepting applications from eligible licensed home child care agencies and not-for-profit centre-based providers, and pausing applications from commercial centre-based providers. We will continue to monitor Peel's auspice targets 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 programs are offered in the community you are planning to open in; make sure your site will be able to enroll children and be financially viable based on anticipated revenue, expenses and 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 with remaining space. Projects that are located in a priority community will be prioritized.
 - From the legend on the left-hand side, click on **“CWELCC Expansion.”**
 - 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](#)

We recommend your site receives CWELCC expansion approval from Peel before proceeding with municipal zoning, site plan approval, or entering into lease agreements. Peel Region is not responsible for financial costs incurred by applicants prior to the CWELCC expansion approval, and applicants who choose to incur these costs do so at their own risk. Before you sign your lease agreement, we recommend that it has a “termination clause” which gives you the right to end the agreement without breaching your contract. You may be able to receive a letter from the landlord or property owner to secure your location without signing a lease agreement.

- **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 licensed child care centre or new licensed home child care agency, 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 your understanding of Peel’s Expansion Application Plan and Process, please review our [website](#) for information and supporting resources. You may also email us: earlyyearssystemdivision@peelregion.ca if you need more information on CWELCC Expansion in Peel.

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:

1. Registered not-for-profit child care centre...

- Participating in Peel’s CWELCC program and planning to increase spaces in an existing centre through a licence revision.
- Participating in Peel’s CWELCC program and planning to open 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 interested in applying to CWELCC for the first time.

Note: Centre-based providers must be registered as a not-for-profit child care provider before applying to Peel’s CWELCC program. You must maintain the status of a not-for-profit child care provider throughout the term of your CWELCC agreement.

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 been approved by the Ministry of Education 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.

2. Home child care agency

- With a head office in Peel, participating in Peel’s CWELCC program and planning to open new homes in Peel through a licence revision.
- With a head office outside of Peel, participating in CWELCC in another service area, and planning to open new homes in Peel through a licence revision.
- With a new head office in Peel, but not currently participating in CWELCC. We strongly recommend that new home child care agencies commit to expanding to a minimum of 18 homes by 2026.

Note: Applications from home child care agencies to open new homes in Peel will be approved in the priority order listed above.

Home child care agencies with a head office outside of Peel must have a CWELCC agreement with their respective service system manager before expanding into Peel.

Step 3: Learn how applications will be assessed and approved

We will review all applications based on availability of funding and spaces, and if they meet the criteria listed in this section.

All applications for licensed child care centres and licensed home child care agencies 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, and
- Demonstrate financial viability.

Registered not-for-profit child care centres:

We will review these 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.
 - 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.
 - o Refer to Peel's [Neighbourhood Information Tool](#) to support you with understanding how Peel's priority communities were identified using child care demand data and additional well-being indicators included in Peel's Neighbourhood Information Tool.

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](#).

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.

- If the new spaces are **co-located** – this may be in a faith-based building, community centre, or 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 diverse populations such as Indigenous, Francophone, Black, other racialized groups, newcomers, and low-income families.

Note: Preference may be given to child care programs located in Municipal or Regional buildings within Peel. Child Care programs will be required to complete an application as they must demonstrate financial viability.

Home child care agencies:

We will review these applications against Peel Region specific criteria 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 diverse populations such as Indigenous, Francophone, Black and other racialized groups, newcomers, and low-income families.

We will also review your application to assess your:

- Projected enrolment/active waitlist to determine if there are children waiting for admission to the new home; we will be approving new active homes where there is enrolment/active waitlist.
- Projected number of homes intended to open and estimated opening date. We will follow up with you to confirm when the new homes are operational. CWELCC funding is based on the operational date.
- Postal code to determine if the new homes that are opening will serve one of Peel’s identified priority communities. Home child care agencies are encouraged to open homes in a priority community. We will work with agencies to support the recruitment of new homes in priority communities.

Note to home child care agencies with Head Office outside of Peel: we may follow up with the service system manager where your head office is located to verify what child care funding you are already receiving, and to verify if your agency is financially viable and in compliance with child care funding requirements.

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

If you are eligible and interested in participating in the CWELCC program, please complete the [CWELCC Expansion Application Form](#). Refer to **Appendix 1** of this document for a visual of the application process.

When to submit an application?

- The first application window closed on August 31, 2023.
- Beginning November 30, 2023, we are accepting CWELCC Expansion Applications from licensed home child care agencies and not-for-profit centres on an ongoing basis.

How to submit completed applications?

- Send your [completed application](#) with the subject line, "CWELCC Expansion Application" to EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca
- You can use this application form to apply for a Start-up Grant if you are interested. Refer to the section on Start-up Grants below for more information.

Application Requirements:

- If you are applying to open a new child care centre in Peel, you must submit a letter from the landlord or property owner confirming your interest in the proposed location.
- You are required to submit a new centre-based application if any of these situations occurred:
 - The address 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.
- New child care programs must have a fiscal year end of December 31.

Important:

We are continually reviewing our data to determine if our targets are being filled as new child care spaces become operational. Before you apply, you may email us at EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca if you need more information regarding space availability in Peel's communities.

Applying does not guarantee approval into the CWELCC program. All applications are subject to Peel's review, as well as funding and space 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 are accepted on an ongoing basis. We need 4 to 6 weeks to review completed applications and will share your application status after review.

Approved

You are considered “approved” if you have received written confirmation from Peel Region to enroll in Peel’s CWELCC program.

- You will be sent a CWELCC Expansion Program confirmation letter from Peel Region with your approved base fees to participate in CWELCC.
- Once you receive your letter from us, you must return a signed copy within 10 business days to confirm participation. You must apply in CCLS for a new or revised licence and indicate your intention to apply for CWELCC funding.
- When you return the signed letter, we will provide CWELCC approval in CCLS. You are not considered approved until your CWELCC application is approved in CCLS.
- We will start the contract execution process for your CWELCC funding once your licence is issued and your new or expanded CWELCC spaces are operational.

When you are approved, you do not need to apply for the CWELCC program annually. Agreements will be executed in [GovGrants](#).

If you are approved to participate in Peel's CWELCC program, you must operate according to the information that was submitted and approved in your CWELCC application and confirmation letter. This includes operating in the approved location, providing care for the approved age groups, and applying the approved base fees and staff wages. If you fail to operate according to your approved application details, we reserve the right to cancel or void your CWELCC approval.

Denied

You are considered “denied” if you have received written confirmation from Peel Region that you have been denied admission to enroll in Peel’s CWELCC program.

Applications may be denied if:

- The application does not align with the requirements in Peel’s CWELCC Expansion Plan or does not align with Peel’s Directed Growth Plan or Ministry’s auspice targets.
- The application is considered not financially viable (deficits, liabilities or cash flow concerns). This includes where Peel Region has reasonable grounds to believe the applicant has not or may not use the funds for its intended purposes or the applicant is

not in good standing with Peel’s funding or licensing requirements under the *Child Care and Early Years Act*.

Note: Peel Region has the right to deny applications for additional reasons not listed above.

Waitlist

Applications that meet the eligibility criteria of Peel’s CWELCC Expansion Plan may be waitlisted due to the unavailability of funding and space availability. Waitlisted applications are prioritized based on alignment with Peel’s service system plan priorities. Peel Region will continue to monitor applications that have been waitlisted and will provide confirmation of eligibility as additional funding or space becomes available.

You are considered “waitlisted” if you have received written confirmation from Peel Region that you are awaiting a final decision to enroll in Peel’s CWELCC program.

Appeal process:

Applications that are denied can appeal the decision within 30 days. Depending on the reason for denial, additional documents may be required, such as:

- Revisions to the applicant’s CWELCC Expansion Application to better align with the requirements of Peel’s CWELCC Expansion Plan; or
- Additional financial documentation to demonstrate the financial viability of the proposed expansion plan.

If you would like to appeal a decision related to your CWELCC Expansion application, you must complete the Appeal Submission form, sent to you with your denial letter, along with any supporting documents and email it to EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca

We will review the appeal and notify you of our decision within 30 calendar days. Applicants who are unsuccessful in their appeal or who do not submit an appeal within 30 days of being denied, will remain denied. If you applied for the Start-up Grant, this application is also denied. The Start-up Grant is only available to child care providers approved to be enrolled into CWELCC.

All appeal decisions are final.

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 may receive funding for the following if you meet the specific eligibility for that funding:

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 for RECEs until 2026 and to offset the wage increases associated with Ontario’s increased minimum wage for non-RECE staff.
3. **Cost Escalation Funding:** this funding supports child care providers to offsets eligible non-discretionary cost increases that have taken place since fees were frozen when CWELCC was introduced in March, 2022. This funding supports providers to remain financially viable in CWELCC program.
4. **Emerging Issues Funding:** this funding provides additional support to eligible providers who are experiencing higher cost pressures and demonstrate that their total revenue for CWELCC-eligible spaces is not enough to support their non-discretionary costs.

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 be required to enter into an EYCC Funding Agreement with Peel Region and must:

- Accept and include children who are supported by 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:

- 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 the onboarding of new child care providers to understand the requirements of the EYCC Funding Agreement.

Child care providers are responsible to comply with the terms of the EYCC Funding Agreement, including applicable Regional guidelines, policies and legislation.

CWELCC expansion - Start-up Grant

Funding is available for a Start-up Grant for eligible providers who have been approved to participate in Peel's CWELCC program. The grant can be used to offset costs needed to expand or create new, community-based licensed child care spaces in centres and home child care. For child care centres, it includes equipment or minor renovations, such as leasehold improvements, retrofit, renovation or expansion projects. For home child care agencies, the grant can be used to purchase equipment and furniture.

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 approved into CWELCC in Peel, be approved for an expansion project or site, and agree to participate in the system for the remainder of the current federal and provincial CWELCC agreement that ends on March 31, 2026.
- Create new community-based, full-day licensed spaces for infant, toddler, and preschool age groups in Peel's priority communities or within 2km of a priority neighbourhood.
- Make every effort to expand licensed spaces to serve a maximum group size for each age grouping.
- Spend the grant to open new licensed spaces within two years from the date the Start-up Grant Funding Agreement is signed by all parties.
- For licensed home child care agencies:

- o 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 the home child care agency changes prior to March 31, 2026.
- o All CWELCC-eligible children will continue to be eligible for expansion in licensed home child care.

Available funding

Refer to the CWELCC Start-up Grant Guidelines for centre-based providers or licensed home child care agencies on our [website](#) for more information on available funding.

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

If you are approved to take part in Peel’s CWELCC program, we will review your Start-up Grant application. 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.

To support project implementation, you will need to sign a funding agreement. You will be 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 the CWELCC Start-up Grant Guidelines.

Need more information or have questions?

Email EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca

CWELCC MULTI-YEAR EXPANSION APPLICATION PROCESS

