

# CWELCC expansion in Peel

## Questions and answers

These Q&As are intended to support licensed child care providers who are opening new child care spaces in Peel.

Please visit our [website](#) for more information on Peel’s CWELCC Multi-Year Expansion Plan and Application.

Don’t see your question? Please contact your Early Years Specialist or email at: [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca).

### Table of Contents

CWELCC expansion .....	2
CWELCC expansion application process .....	4
How are applications approved?.....	5
Start-up Grant.....	6
Benchmarks .....	6
Ineligible settings / age groups .....	7
Equipping & furnishing .....	7
Minor Renovation.....	8
Expenditures .....	9

## CWELCC expansion

### 1. How were Peel's priority communities identified and will they change?

- Peel's priority communities were identified using child care demand data (which considered multi-generational homes, lone parent households, immigration, ethnicity, income, housing costs/conditions, health, employment, education, and crime) as well as the well-being/vulnerability indicators from the [Neighbourhood Information Tool](#). Data was used from Statistics Canada.
- We have updated the targets for the priority communities based on our expansion to date. This means that expansion in some priority communities will be paused as targets have been achieved and other communities can be the focus of expansion.
- To support you in identifying the priority communities open for expansion:
  - Use Peel's [EYCC Mapping Tool](#). We will update the tool regularly so you will know where there is still a need for child care spaces.

### 2. Why is Peel Region only accepting CWELCC applications from not-for-profit centre-based providers or home child care agencies?

- We have reached our current maximum provincially determined commercial space target of 4,810. Our efforts need to prioritize expansion of not-for-profit spaces to meet our overall expansion target of 11,980.
- This means we are only accepting applications from eligible not-for-profit centre-based providers and licensed home child care agencies, and pausing applications from commercial (for-profit) centre-based providers.

Note: according to the Ministry's provincial guidelines, new spaces created by for-profit LHCC agencies are eligible for expansion in Peel as these spaces will count towards our non-profit target requirements.

### 3. When will commercial operators be able to apply to CWELCC? How long will the applications be paused for-profits?

- We recognize there may be interest from commercial operators to apply.
- We continue to keep the Ministry informed on our ability to meet the provincial auspice target and will update the sector on any changes to this requirement.

#### **4. Is there funding available to support not-for-profit providers to expand?**

- We recognize that there are barriers not-for-profits may experience when considering whether to apply to CWELCC Expansion.
- We continue to advocate to the Ministry to share details on the new provincial 2024 funding formula, operational funding to support viability and expansion, and to release details of the [federal \*Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund\*](#).

#### **5. Can child care providers set their own child care fees in the CWELCC program?**

- The Ministry of Education has established regional maximums for child care fees in the *Child Care and Early Years Act* (CCEYA).
- Peel Region's role as service system manager is to ensure the effective use of public funding.
- If you are a child care provider licensed after March 27, 2022, applying through the CWELCC Expansion Application Process we will work with you to establish your approved base fee as part of the application process.

#### **6. Is Peel approving new sites or only providers that have CWELCC already?**

- We are accepting applications from both new sites/new child care providers and from existing providers who are interested in expanding sites.

#### **7. I am a commercial child care operator currently participating in CWELCC in Peel and would like to open a new room in my existing site. Will these new spaces be approved?**

- No, we have reached our targets allowed by the Ministry for expansion by commercial (for-profit) operators and cannot approve your new spaces into CWELCC.
- The Ministry requires that all eligible programs in a child care site must participate in CWELCC. If you expand or create new spaces within an existing site that are not approved in CWELCC, you must opt-out of CWELCC to ensure all eligible children and staff are included.
- We continue to keep the Ministry informed on our ability to meet the provincial auspice target and will update the sector on any changes to this requirement.

## CWELCC expansion application process

### 8. Can I apply if I am planning to open in an area that is not located in a priority community?

- We are giving priority to applications that are planning to open in any of Peel's priority communities or within a 2-kilometre radius of a priority community.
- We are continuously updating our [mapping tool](#) on our [website](#) for you to use to determine where your proposed project is in relation to our identified priority communities.
- If you are opening in a community that is not priority community, you may be placed on waitlist and we will monitor our targets and communicate any changes to you.
- Note: home child care agencies are encouraged but not required to open homes in a priority community. We will work with home child care agencies on expansion planning.

### 9. Can we apply to CWELCC Expansion if we want to expand our JK/SK spaces?

- To support the needs of families, we are only approving the expansion of spaces for infant, toddler, and preschool age groups.
- Our current data shows that Peel has sufficient spaces in our system to meet the need of the older age categories at this time. We will continue to re-evaluate system data to inform our direction.
- Consideration may be given in some instances, such as those who were licensed for these spaces before January 1, 2023 (when the Ministry announced changes to licensing) or those who were approved for these spaces before we released our Expansion Plan on July 25, 2023.

### 10. What do I need to submit to Peel Region to participate in CWELCC?

- Complete the Peel CWELCC Expansion Application Form and review the tab called Completeness Checklist for information on documents to submit.
- Registered not-for-profit child care centres must be registered at the time of submitting the application.  
With your application, you must submit a copy of your Certificate of Incorporation and Articles of Incorporation.
- Applications for new child care centres must submit a letter from the landlord or property owner confirming your interest in the proposed location.
- We recommend your application receives CWELCC approval before proceeding with municipal zoning, site plan approval and entering into lease agreements.

**11. Can we apply now if our new site is scheduled to be built in 2024-2025?**

- Yes, we will be looking at applications that will be licensed and opened by December 31, 2026.

**12. We are interested in opening a new child care site in Peel but waiting on zoning approval. Can we apply for CWELCC expansion?**

- As part of Step 1 in Peel's [CWELCC Expansion Plan](#), we encourage you to do your research.
- As part of your research, you should consult your local municipal Planning and Development Services to understand bylaw and zoning requirements as applicable:
  - [Planning and building online services - City of Mississauga](#)
  - [City of Brampton | Planning & Development | Planning & Development](#)
  - [Building Permits - Town of Caledon](#)
- It is important that you apply to Peel Region to ensure you are approved for CWELCC expansion before seeking zoning or site plan approvals or entering into a lease agreement. To secure your location, you may obtain a letter from the landlord, as you must submit an address in the CWELCC application form.
- If you are not approved for CWELCC, or are placed on a waitlist, you should inform Peel whether you wish to proceed with your project.

**13. Can Peel support the application process for building permits or zoning documentation?**

- Providers are responsible for managing this process with local municipalities.
- Staff have engaged local municipalities to explore opportunities to support licensed child care expansion. Discussions include reviewing potential barriers to expansion in municipal policies and processes, and identifying available public assets that are suitable for child care. Staff will continue to partner with our local municipalities to support expansion.

## How are applications approved?

**14. What is the Service Delivery Area (SDA) that is being used to assess my application?**

- The SDA is a smaller community within the Review Area and is your local community/geography.
- Data at the SDA level helps with local planning of programs such as early years and child care.

- We will assess applications against Peel Region specific criteria based on the SDA for your proposed project. Refer to the [CWELCC Expansion Plan](#) for more information.

### **15. Will my application be denied if I do not pay high staff wages?**

- We will assess the base wages (without grants such as WEG and GOF) paid to Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) to support the recruitment and retention of these staff in the sector and to our service system priorities.
- Research shows that higher-paid staff is associated with higher staff retention/recruitment through higher base wages and improved program quality.
- You are not required to pay this amount to staff; we are assessing and prioritizing how closely the base wages you pay to staff align to the [GTA 2023 living wage](#) of \$25.05/hr. We recognize that providers may have varying costs associated with operating child care program.

**Note:** We also review applications to assess if the new spaces improve access to child care and improve inclusion for underrepresented groups.

## **Start-up Grant**

### **Benchmarks**

#### **16. If my expansion project will use an alternate capacity for one or more age groups, how will my Start-up Grant allocation be calculated?**

- Peel Region calculates the Start-up Grant allocation based on the number of new infant, toddler, and preschool spaces you intend to create, as indicated in your CWELCC expansion application.
- In other words, the Start-up Grant is not calculated according to an age group's alternate capacity.  
For example, if a toddler room is licensed with an alternate capacity for preschool spaces, the Start-up Grant will be calculated based on the number of toddler spaces.
- Once the spaces are licensed and operational, your allocation may be adjusted to reflect the actual number of new licensed spaces that were created for these age groups, as listed in Schedule 1 of your Ministry of Education licence.

Example: if you originally apply to create 48 new preschool spaces but are eventually licensed for fewer preschool spaces, your allocation may be adjusted accordingly.

**17. If I change/increase the capacity of my centre after I complete and license my expansion project, am I eligible for more Start-up Grant funding?**

- No. Peel Region calculates your final Start-up Grant allocation based on the number of new infant, toddler, and preschool spaces that have been created, as listed in Schedule 1 of your Ministry of Education licence.
- Once your expansion project is licensed and operational, your project is considered closed and you will not receive any more Start-up Grant funding.

### **Ineligible settings / age groups**

**18. Can licensed child care sites in school-based settings be funded through this process?**

- School-based child care spaces are not eligible to receive a Start-up Grant.
- Funding requests for the creation of new licensed child care spaces in schools can be accessed through the Ministry of Education's Capital Priorities program.
  - The Capital Priorities program serves as the primary means for capital funding requests associated with school-based child care centre capital projects that are a part of a larger school capital project.
  - Through this program, projects can be approved that support costs associated with child care centre additions and/or renovation projects in schools.

**19. Why aren't new kindergarten and/or Before and After School Program (BASP) spaces eligible to receive the Start-up Grant?**

- In alignment with the Ministry's and Peel's expansion priorities, Peel Region is prioritizing expansion that creates new, community-based full-day licensed spaces for infant, toddler and preschool age groups only.
- We will continue to monitor both service demand and existing capacity for kindergarten and BASP spaces and adjust this decision, if needed.

### **Equipping & furnishing**

**20. I am building a new centre, and the construction costs will be funded outside of the Start-up Grant. Can I use the Start-up Grant to furnish and equip the new spaces?**

- Yes, the Start-up Grant can be used to furnish and equip new, community-based, full-day spaces created for infant, toddler and preschool age groups within the identified priority communities for expansion in Peel.

**21. If I acquire a site that is already operating child care, can I receive a Start-up Grant to equip and furnish the existing spaces and/or make minor renovations?**

- The intention of the Start-up Grant is to support the creation of **new** child care spaces for infant, toddler and preschool age groups.
- If you acquire a site that is already operational, you cannot receive a Start-up Grant for those existing spaces.
- However, if you decide to expand and create new spaces at an existing site, you may apply for a Start-up Grant through Peel’s CWELCC Multi-Year Expansion Application process.

Note: the grant will be calculated based on the number of net new CWELCC spaces created for infant, toddler and preschool age groups, as listed in Schedule 1 of the licence issued by the Ministry of Education.

## **Minor Renovation**

**22. “Minor Renovation” is broad. What counts as a Minor Renovation project?**

- Minor Renovation projects can involve:
  - Renovations, additions, or repairs to existing spaces to accommodate child care
  - Changes to outdoor play space
  - Leasehold improvements
    - A leasehold improvement is a change made to the interior space of a leased property to meet the operational needs of the child care provider, such as partitioning a large space to create smaller program rooms, flooring, etc.
- We will assess the scale, scope and complexity of your proposed Minor Renovation project based on the details in your Start-up Grant application, to ensure it is eligible for a Start-up Grant as outlined by the Ministry.
- The scope of your project will inform the type of project documentation and reporting required, which we will explain when a project is approved.

**23. If I am investing money through a mortgage, can I use the Start-up Grant to pay back my mortgage?**

- No, the Start-up Grant cannot be used for capital endeavours, such as debt costs (e.g., capital loans or mortgages), the purchase of land, or the cost of construction of new buildings.



**24. I am planning on purchasing / leasing an existing building / unit / former child care centre. Can I use the Start-up Grant for renovations to that space?**

- The Start-up Grant may be used for minor renovations, including leasehold improvements, to prepare an existing space to operate child care or add new licensed child care spaces to existing operations.
- The grant cannot be used for capital endeavours, such as for the purchase of land, construction of new buildings or debt costs (e.g., capital loans or mortgages).
- We will assess the scale, scope and complexity of your proposed minor renovation project based on the project details outlined in your Start-up Grant application, to ensure it is eligible for a Start-up Grant.

## Expenditures

**25. If I am approved for a Start-up Grant, do I have to repay it?**

- No, the Start-up Grant is not a loan. You do not need to repay the grant if it is used for eligible expenses, and you meet the following requirements:
  - You are approved into CWELCC in Peel, 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.
  - You create new community-based, licensed full-day spaces for infant, toddler and preschool age groups in Peel's priority communities or within 2km of a priority neighbourhood.
    - In licensed home child care agencies, all CWELCC-eligible children will continue to be eligible for expansion.
  - You make every effort to expand licensed spaces to serve a maximum group size for each age grouping.
  - You spend the grant to open the 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:* You 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.

**26. What happens if I opt out of CWELCC, and I have spent some or all the Start-up Grant?**

- To be eligible for the Start-up Grant, you must agree to participate in CWELCC until the current federal and provincial agreement ends on March 31, 2026.

- If you choose to opt out of CWELCC before March 31, 2026, and you have spent some or all your Start-up Grant, Peel will recover all of the funding and return it to the Ministry of Education.

**27. Can the Start-up Grant support expenses I have already incurred before I was approved for the grant?**

- We will review your application and the expenses you have incurred and contact you about your eligibility to receive a Start-up Grant.
- Eligible expenses incurred prior to project approval may be considered in alignment with the established benchmarks, dependent on project scope and available funding.

**28. Is there a reconciliation process after the expansion project is completed?**

- Yes, you will be required to reconcile the funding received, and to keep supporting documentation on file for seven years to provide to Peel (if requested).
- If you are approved for a minor renovation project, you may have additional reconciliation responsibilities. These will be communicated to you when your project is approved.