

Early Years and Child Care

Enhancing Support for Human Services

Policy Opportunities

Peel Region can further address challenges facing the workforce to ensure this sector in Peel continues to thrive and deliver high quality programs for children and their families with the following provincial support:

- Implement a compensation framework for early and child care staff that acknowledges both years of service and qualifications, and is comparable to Designated Early Childhood Educators in the school board sector.
- Work with Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism to prioritize work and studies in Early Childhood Education (ECE) for immigration pathways that incentivize Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) to remain in Ontario.

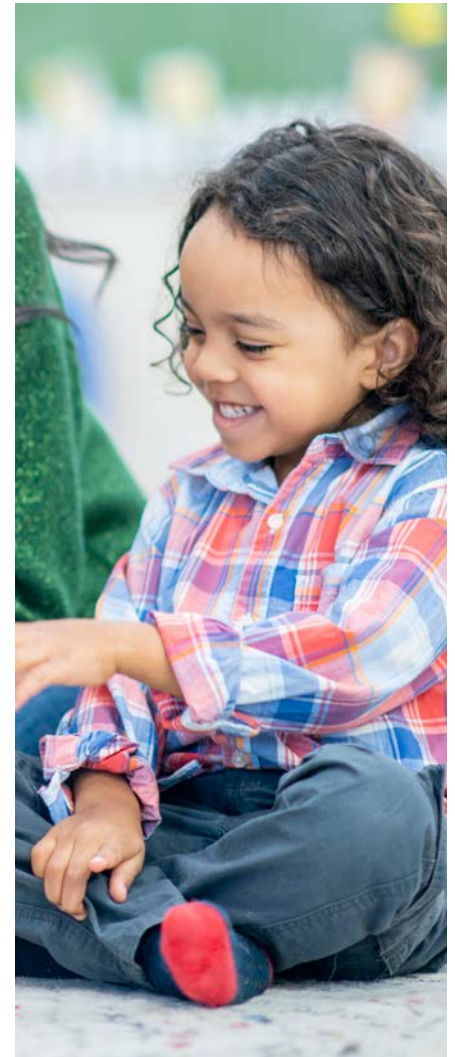
Funding Solutions

- Fund and support accelerated learning and credential pathways for individuals currently working in the sector to become RECEs.
- Provide adequate, flexible, multi-year funding to implement high impact initiatives to attract and retain the Early Years and Child Care workforce.

Background

The shared goal of expanding child care spaces in Ontario can only be achieved through workforce policy reforms aimed at ensuring there is sufficient, qualified staff.

An expansion target of nearly 12,000 new licensed child care spaces by the end of 2026 will bring a much-needed relief to families in Peel who pay some of the highest child care fees in Ontario. However, it is estimated that 1,625 additional early years and child care staff will be needed to support these new spaces.



- **12,000** Peel target for new licensed child care spaces by 2026
- **1,625** estimated additional child care staff needed in Peel

Safeguarding the momentum of the transformative Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program can be achieved by eliminating barriers, combined with provincial investments, and policy changes.

Fair and Competitive Wages

In order to ensure Ontario remains competitive, while also meeting child care demand in Peel and communities throughout the province, the provincial government can address the following challenges:

- A wage cost differential between experienced RECE and those newly entering the workforce is causing wage costs pressures for providers and inequities amongst staff.
- The current RECE wage floor (\$23.86 per hour in 2024) is low compared to the GTA living wage of \$25.05, and to Designated Early Childhood Educators employed by school boards.
- The Provincial Workforce Strategy excludes support for additional benefits that would increase job satisfaction and incentivize individuals to work in the child care sector.

Recruitment and Retention of Newcomers

This can be achieved through collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism to prioritize work and studies in ECE for immigration pathways that incentivize RECEs to remain in Ontario. Ontario's immigration policies currently limit this opportunity.

Accelerated Credential Pathways

The Province's workforce strategy should focus on accelerating education pathways for individuals to become qualified. Barriers such as financial constraints hinder the ability of aspiring child care staff to enroll in ECE diploma programs while continuing to work in the sector.

Further, the Province should fund and support accelerated learning and credential pathways for individuals currently working in the sector to become RECEs, which would increase the supply of RECEs.

Adequate Multi-Year Funding

While the Provincial commitment to innovation funding in 2024 is encouraging, details regarding this funding, including Peel's allocation, remains unknown. Multi-year flexible funding is needed to ensure Peel Region can implement responsive and innovative initiatives to grow the workforce to support child care expansion and meet community need.

