

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 expansion plan and application process.

Don’t see your question? Please contact your Early Years Specialist or email us at EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca.

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CWELCC expansion

1. When will commercial operators be able to apply to CWELCC? How long will the applications be paused for commercial operators?

- We recognize there may be interest from commercial operators to apply.
- At this time, we are only accepting CWELCC expansion applications for non-profit child care centres. This is in line with the Ministry of Education (EDU)'s auspice direction to maintain our current child care system ratio of 60% non-profit and 40% for-profit/commercial spaces.
- We have reached our commercial space goals, which means we are not currently accepting any new commercial expansion applications. We will update the sector if this direction changes.

2. Is there funding available to support non-profit providers to expand?

- We recognize that non-profits may experience barriers when considering whether to apply to CWELCC Expansion.
- The Start-up Grant is available to support eligible costs for renovations and leasehold improvements necessary to meet EDU licensing requirements to create new spaces. See our [website](#) for details.
- We continue to advocate to EDU to release details for the [federal Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund](#).

3. Can child care providers set their own child care fees in the CWELCC program?

- Starting January 1, 2025, all child care providers participating in CWELCC must have a daily child care fee of \$22 or less. This is the maximum amount that can be charged to families according to EDU regulations 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.

4. Is Peel approving new sites or only providers that have CWELCC already?

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

5. 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 expansion goal allowed by EDU for expansion by commercial (for-profit) operators and cannot approve your new spaces into CWELCC.
- EDU 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 inform EDU of our ability to meet the provincial auspice requirements and will update the sector on any changes to this requirement.

6. I am currently a commercial child care provider and I want to become a non-profit child care provider. How do I do that?

- If you are considering changing your business status to a non-profit child care provider, we encourage you to seek your own legal advice to inform your decision.

CWELCC expansion application process

7. 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 2km 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 eligible to expand in Peel and open in a community that is not a priority community, you may be placed on a waitlist and we will monitor our expansion goals and communicate any changes to you.

8. Can we apply to Peel’s CWELCC program if we want to expand our kindergarten spaces?

- No. We are only approving the expansion of spaces for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.
- Our current data shows that Peel has enough 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.

9. Can we apply now if our new site is scheduled to be completed later in 2025 or 2026?

- You can submit an application for projects that will be licensed and opened by December 31, 2026.
- We will not accept CWELCC expansion applications for projects that will be licensed and open after December 31, 2026.

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

- As part of Step 1 in Peel’s [CWELCC expansion plan and application process](#), we encourage you to do your research.
- As part of your research, you should consult your local municipal Planning and Development Services department to understand by-law 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 are approved for CWELCC expansion by Peel 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 Expansion Application.

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

- Applicants 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?

12. 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's specific criteria based on the SDA for your proposed project. Refer to [Peel's CWELCC expansion plan and application process](#) for more information on the specific criteria used.

13. Will my application be denied if I do not pay high staff wages?

- We will assess the base wages you pay to Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) to support the recruitment and retention of these staff in the sector.

- Research shows that higher-paid staff, through higher base wages, is associated with higher staff retention and recruitment, and improved program quality.
- We will assess and prioritize how closely the base wages you pay to staff align to the [GTA 2024 living wage](#) of \$26 per hour. We recognize that child care providers may have varying costs associated with operating a child care program.

Start-up Grant

Benchmarks

14. 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.
 - 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 EDU 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.

15. If I change or 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 EDU licence.
- Once your expansion project is licensed and operational, your project is considered closed. 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.
- If you identify a new opportunity to increase capacity at the site in the future, you will be required to submit a new CWELCC and Start-up Grant application to seek approval for another expansion project.

Ineligible settings/age groups

16. Can new, full-day licensed child care spaces be created in publicly-funded schools using the Start-up Grant?

- No, child care spaces in publicly-funded schools are not eligible to receive the Start-up Grant.
- EDU's Capital Priorities funding program is the primary program available to create new, full-day licensed child care spaces in a publicly-funded school.
- The child care expansion project must be part of a larger school capital project, and can include child care centre additions or renovation projects.

Equipping & furnishing

17. 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, you can use the Start-up Grant to furnish and equip new, community-based, full-day licensed spaces created for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers within the identified priority communities for expansion in Peel.

- You must demonstrate appropriate use of the funding for eligible equipment and furnishing expenses through a reconciliation process.

18. 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 or make minor renovations?

- The intention of the Start-up Grant is to support the creation of new child care spaces for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.
- 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 Expansion Application process.
- Note: The grant will be calculated based on the number of net new CWELCC spaces created for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, as listed in the primary capacity of Schedule 1 of the licence issued by EDU.

Minor Renovation

19. "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 EDU.

- The scope of your project will inform the type of project documentation and reporting required, which we will explain when a project is approved.

20. 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. This includes capital loans, debt costs, lease costs, mortgages, the purchase of land, or the cost of constructing new buildings.

21. 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?

- You may use the Start-up Grant for minor renovations, including leasehold improvements, to support eligible costs necessary to meet EDU licensing requirements to prepare an existing space to operate child care or add new licensed spaces to an existing child care site.
- The grant cannot be used for capital endeavours. This includes capital loans, debt costs, lease costs, mortgages, the purchase of land, or the cost of constructing new buildings.
- 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

22. 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 for a CWELCC expansion project in Peel 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, full-day licensed spaces for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in Peel's priority communities or within 2km of a priority neighbourhood.
- You make every effort to expand licensed spaces to serve a maximum group size for each age grouping.
- You spend the grant to licence and open the new child care spaces by December 31, 2026.

23. 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 the funding and return it to EDU.