

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

Peel Region

CWELCC expansion plan and application process

Early Years and Child Care Services

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Overview

The [Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care \(CWELCC\) program](#) aims to make child care more affordable and improve workforce compensation so families have access to high-quality licensed child care.

The CWELCC program:

- Reduces child care fees for families with children younger than 6 years of age, with the goal to reduce fees to an average of \$10 per day by 2026.
- 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 priority 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 our [2025 CWELCC funding guidelines](#).

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 expansion plan, Peel is increasing access to licensed child care for families in our community.

In line with the Ministry of Education (EDU)'s *Access and Inclusion Framework*, our CWELCC expansion plan:

- is a focused 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 underrepresented populations including low-income families, children from diverse communities, children who need extra support, and Francophone and Indigenous children.

Refer to the Early Years and Child Care (EYCC) [mapping tool](#) to see Peel's priority communities.

Child care expansion goals in Peel

On March 31, 2025, Peel received updated CWELCC expansion direction from the Ministry of Education. Our expansion goal was increased to over 12,000 new spaces, which must be licensed and open by December 31, 2026. The Ministry of Education also adjusted our expansion auspice ratio, creating some capacity for commercial (for-profit) expansion.

Centre-based, commercial (for-profit) child care provider application window

We accepted applications from commercial (for-profit) child care providers for centre-based expansion from **May 5 to June 13, 2025**. No further application windows are planned at this time.

¹ We identified and updated Peel's priority communities using child care demand data, system vacancy data, and additional well-being indicators included in Peel's [Neighbourhood Information Tool](#). We will consider CWELCC expansion applications across all of Peel, with continued priority given to programs that serve areas within a 2km radius of identified priority communities.

Centre-based, non-profit child care provider application window

We are accepting applications from non-profit child care providers for centre-based expansion until **September 29, 2025**, subject to space and funding availability. After this date, we will determine if additional spaces or funding are available to support further expansion.

We will only accept applications for expansion projects that create new licensed spaces for Peel's CWELCC system. We will not consider changes to applications that:

- have already been licensed and are operational in Peel's existing licensed CWELCC system, or
- have already been approved into Peel's CWELCC expansion program but have not yet been licensed.

Both available spaces and funding are limited. We will consider applications that align with Peel's expansion policy, directed growth plan, and system priorities.

We aim to communicate approval decisions within 4 weeks of receiving the completed application.

Licensed home child care (LHCC) agency application window

We are accepting applications from eligible LHCC agencies until **September 29, 2025**, subject to space and funding availability. After this date, we will determine if additional spaces or funding are available to support further expansion.

Both available spaces and funding are limited. We will consider applications that align with Peel's expansion policy, directed growth plan, and system priorities.

We aim to communicate approval decisions within 4 weeks of receiving the completed application.

Age groups

At this time, Peel will only approve centre-based space expansion projects for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. We will monitor the service demand and existing capacity for kindergarten spaces and revisit age prioritization, if needed.

All CWELCC-eligible children will continue to be eligible for LHCC expansion.

CWELCC expansion application process

If you are interested in applying to Peel's CWELCC program to create new licensed child care spaces in Peel for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in centre-based settings, you will need to complete Peel's [CWELCC expansion application \(centre-based\)](#).

If you would like to apply to Peel's CWELCC program to create new licensed child care spaces in Peel for CWELCC-eligible children in home settings, you will need to complete Peel's [CWELCC expansion application \(LHCC\)](#).

Follow these steps to get started.

Step 1: Do your research

We encourage you to:

- **Develop a business plan and prepare a projected cash flow statement:** It is important that you understand what child care programs are offered in the community where you are planning to open. You should make sure your site or agency will be able to enroll children and be financially viable based on anticipated revenue, expenses, and projected enrollment.

As part of your anticipated revenue, keep in mind that if you are approved in CWELCC, Peel will not approve child care base fees higher than the maximum

caps on fees set out in the [Child Care and Early Years Act regulations](#) by EDU (that is \$22 per day or less, as of January 1, 2025).

- **Use the EYCC [mapping tool](#):** This map will help you determine if your proposed project is located in a priority community. We will consider expansion applications across all of Peel, with continued priority given to programs that serve areas within a 2km radius of identified priority communities.
 - To use the map, select “CWELCC Expansion” under the legend.
 - We will update this tool regularly so you will know where there is a need for child care spaces.

Note: LHCC agencies are encouraged (but not required) to open homes in priority communities.

- **Consult your local municipal Planning and Development Services (centres):** Understand the relevant by-laws, 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 that your site receives CWELCC expansion approval from Peel before you proceed with municipal zoning or site plan approval, enter into a lease agreement, and/or purchase a property. Peel is not responsible for financial costs that applicants incur prior to 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. For more information, see the “application requirements” section [below](#).

Refer to the EYCC [Service Provider Handbook](#) to learn about the requirements to apply to, and participate in, CWELCC resulting from the sale, transfer, or acquisition of a child care business.

- **Review EDU’s resources before applying for a licence:**
 - [Apply for or renew a child care licence](#)
 - [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 \(CCEYA\) and Ontario Regulation 137/15](#)
 - [Child care centre licensing manual](#)
 - [Home child care licensing manual](#)
 - [Before and after school program licensing guideline](#)
 - [EDU Child Care Centre Planning and Design Guidelines](#)

If you have child care licensing questions:

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

Need more information or have questions?

To support your understanding of Peel’s CWELCC expansion plan and application process, please review our [website](#) for information and supporting resources. You may also email us at EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca if you need more information on CWELCC expansion in Peel.

Step 2: Determine if you are eligible

Centres

You can apply for Peel's CWELCC expansion program if:

- Your expansion project will be licensed and operational by December 31, 2026.
- You either:
 - Want to open a new child care centre in Peel.
 - Have an existing child care centre in Peel and:
 - You are currently participating in Peel's CWELCC program and you want to increase your centre's licensed capacity.
 - You want to opt in to Peel's CWELCC program and keep your centre's licensed capacity the same.
 - You want to opt in to Peel's CWELCC program and increase your centre's licensed capacity.

You do not need to apply to Peel's CWELCC program if you are located in a publicly-funded school that has been approved by the Ministry of Education for a child care capital project. These spaces are already pre-approved for CWELCC.

LHCCs

You can apply for Peel's CWELCC expansion program if:

- Your expansion project will be licensed and operational by December 31, 2026.
- Your head office is either:
 1. Located in Peel and:

- You're currently participating in Peel's CWELCC program, and you're planning to open new homes in Peel through a licence revision.
 - You have a **maximum of 2** inactive homes in your assigned capacity in Peel.
2. Located outside of Peel and:
- You currently have a CWELCC agreement with your overseeing service system manager.
 - You're currently participating in CWELCC in Peel, and you're planning to open new homes in Peel through a licence revision.
 - You have a **maximum of 2** inactive homes in your assigned capacity in Peel.
3. Located in Peel and:
- You're not currently participating in Peel's CWELCC program.
 - You're planning to open new homes in Peel with a new licence.
4. Located outside of Peel and:
- You currently have a CWELCC agreement with your overseeing service system manager.
 - You're not currently participating in Peel's CWELCC program, and you're planning to open new homes in Peel through a licence revision.

Important notes:

- Peel will approve LHCC applications in order of priority listed above.
- We will approve a maximum of 5 new homes at a time. This means once your initial application is approved and your homes are licensed and active, you may submit a new application(s) for 5 additional homes.

Step 3: Learn how applications will be assessed and approved

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

We will review all applications against the following provincial requirements. You must:

- Be 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 EDU at the time of submitting the application (if applicable), and
- Demonstrate financial viability.

Centres

We will review CWELCC expansion applications against Peel's specific criteria based on the Service Delivery Area² for your proposed project.

The main criteria are that the new spaces:

1. Are located in one of Peel's **identified priority communities**. We will consider expansion applications across all of Peel, with continued priority given to programs that serve areas within a 2km radius of identified priority communities.

² Service Delivery Areas (SDA) are geographies to support service planning and delivery at a local level. They provide data relevant to the local geographies for delivering local services to the public, such as early years and child care services.

- Refer to our [EYCC mapping tool](#) to support you with determining where your proposed project is in relation to our identified priority communities.
 - 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.
2. Meet the **demand for child care** programs in that community. Programs must serve infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers.

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 the [2024 GTA living wage of \\$26 per hour](#).
- If the new spaces are **co-located**. Examples: New child care spaces are in a faith-based building, community centre, affordable housing building, etc.
- If the new spaces **improve access** to child care. Examples: 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. Examples: Child care programs that focus on serving diverse populations such as Indigenous, Francophone, Black and other racialized groups, newcomers, and low-income families.

Note: Preference may be given to child care programs located in municipal or regional buildings, or publicly-funded schools in Peel.

LHCCs

We will review CWELCC expansion applications against Peel's specific criteria to assess:

- How the **base wages** you pay Home Visitors (RECEs) align with the [2024 GTA living wage of \\$26 per hour](#).
- If the new spaces **improve access** to child care. Examples: 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. Examples: Child care programs that focus on serving 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 and/or active waitlist** to determine if there are children waiting for admission to the new homes. We will only approve new homes where there is demonstrated demand.
- **Plan for opening the new homes.** For each new home, you must provide the postal code and estimated opening date. We will follow up with you within 6 months of the estimated date to confirm the new homes are operational. If they are not yet active, we will work with you to determine your plans.

Note: CWELCC funding is based on operational date.

If you have a head office outside of Peel, we may follow up with the service system manager where your head office is located to verify the funding you are receiving, if your agency is financially viable, and if you are complying with CWELCC funding requirements.

If you are a new LHCC agency, you must submit additional information as part of your expansion application. New LHCC agencies will be asked to demonstrate their:

- Strategies to increase enrolment in Peel.
- Strategies to recruit new home providers.
- Current child care presence in Peel, including locations.

- Understanding of Peel’s local communities and families accessing child care.

Step 4: Complete Peel’s CWELCC expansion application

If you are eligible and interested in participating in Peel’s CWELCC program, complete a CWELCC expansion application, which can be found on our [website](#).

It is important to note that:

- Applying does not guarantee approval into Peel’s CWELCC expansion program. All applications are subject to Peel’s review, as well as funding and space availability.
- Peel 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.

When to apply

We will accept CWELCC expansion applications from centre-based, non-profit child care providers and LHCC agencies until **September 29, 2025**.

We will communicate approval decisions on an ongoing basis.

We accepted applications from commercial (for-profit) child care providers for centre-based expansion from May 5 to June 13, 2025. No further application windows are planned at this time.

How to apply

Send your completed application with the subject line “CWELCC expansion application” to EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca by the relevant due date noted above.

You can use this application to apply for expansion funding. Refer to the “CWELCC expansion funding” section [below](#) for more information.

Application requirements

The CWELCC expansion application contains detailed information about application requirements, including a Completeness Checklist to ensure you submit all necessary information. If you do not submit a complete application, there will be delays in processing your submission.

2025 CWELCC funding guideline

Before applying, you must read and understand Peel’s 2025 CWELCC funding guideline, which is available on our [website](#).

Site confirmation (centres)

You must provide evidence to Peel that you are applying for a site for which the landlord or property owner is aware of your interest.

- Applications for **new child care centres**: Provide a letter from the landlord or property owner confirming your interest in the proposed location (example: letter of intent).
- Applications for **existing child care centres**: Include proof of ownership (if applicable), your lease agreement (if your proposed expansion will not affect your existing lease arrangements), or a letter from the landlord or property owner to show that they have agreed to your expansion at your existing location.

CWELCC approval is site-specific and cannot be transferred to another location. You must submit a new application if either of these situations take place:

- 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/purchasing is no longer available.

We recommend that your site receives CWELCC expansion approval from Peel before you proceed with municipal zoning or site plan approval, enter into a lease agreement, and/or purchase a property. Peel is not responsible for financial costs that applicants incur prior to CWELCC expansion approval, and applicants who choose to incur these costs do so at their own risk.

If you are conditionally approved to participate in Peel's CWELCC program, you must provide a signed lease agreement or proof of property ownership before we complete the approval process. See [below](#) for more details.

Step 5: Application results

Approved

Your application is considered approved once the following steps are completed:

1. You receive a conditional approval letter to participate in Peel's CWELCC program. This letter will outline your approved project details, address (applicable to centres), number of spaces, proposed operating date, and base fees.
2. You complete the action items outlined in the letter within the specified timelines:
 - Return a signed copy of the letter.
 - Submit a signed lease agreement or proof of purchase.
 - Apply on CCLS for a new/revised licence. Your CCLS application must indicate your intention to apply for CWELCC funding and must be consistent with your CWELCC approval.
3. Peel provides CWELCC approval on CCLS. You are not considered "approved" for Peel's CWELCC program until we approve your CCLS application.

Once you receive your licence from the Ministry of Education, we will send you a funding agreement. You must sign this contract to receive your CWELCC funding.

When you are approved into Peel's CWELCC program, you do not need to apply for CWELCC annually. Agreements will be signed in [GovGrants](#).

Note: If you are approved to participate in Peel's CWELCC program, you must operate according to the details outlined in your approval letter and CCLS application. This includes operating in the approved location, providing care for the approved age groups, and charging the approved base fees (maximum of \$22 a day). If you do not operate according to your approval, we reserve the right to cancel or withdraw your CWELCC approval.

Denied

Your application is considered denied if you have received written confirmation from Peel that you have been denied admission to enroll in Peel's CWELCC program.

We may deny applications if:

- Peel does not have available spaces or CWELCC funding.
- They do not align with the requirements in Peel's CWELCC expansion plan.
- They do not align with Peel's directed growth plan or the Ministry of Education's auspice objectives.
- They are not considered financially viable due to deficits, liabilities, or cash flow concerns. This includes where Peel 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 (CCEYA).

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

If you applied for expansion funding and your CWELCC application was denied, your request for expansion funding will also be denied. Expansion funding is only available to child care providers approved for a CWELCC expansion project in Peel.

Appeals

If we denied your application, you may appeal our decision within 30 days of receiving the denial letter. Depending on the reason for denial, we may ask you for additional documents, such as:

- Revisions to your CWELCC expansion application to better align with the requirements of Peel's CWELCC expansion plan.
- Additional financial documentation to demonstrate the financial viability of the proposed expansion project.

If you would like to appeal your CWELCC expansion application denial, you must complete the appeal submission form that you received 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 days. If your appeal is unsuccessful or you do not submit an appeal within 30 days of being denied, your application will remain denied.

All appeal decisions are final.

Withdrawn

Peel may withdraw CWELCC applications and/or approvals if:

- 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 or purchasing is no longer available.

- You tell us that you will not be moving forward with your CWELCC expansion project.
- There are outstanding action items that you do not address in the specified timeframe. Example: Submitting required documents.
- You do not operate according to your approval. Example: Charging base fees higher than \$22 a day.

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

Participating in Peel's CWELCC program

CWELCC funding for approved applications

Starting January 1, 2025, child care providers that participate in Peel's CWELCC program will receive funding based on EDU's new cost-based funding approach. CWELCC child care providers receive a program cost allocation to support eligible costs to deliver child care for children younger than 6 years of age.

As a new child care provider enrolled in CWELCC, your program cost allocation is calculated using the following amounts:

- **Benchmark allocation:** This amount helps cover typical costs of providing child care adjusted by Peel's Geographic Adjustment Factor (GAF). It includes staffing and operations.
- **Growth top-up:** This amount supports costs for adding new expansion-approved spaces. Peel's growth top up is 23%.
- **Amount in lieu of profit or surplus:** This amount is the allowable profit (commercial) or surplus (non-profit) that will be provided under the CWELCC program.

For details on the new funding approach, its requirements, and your obligations for 2025, review:

- Peel's [2025 CWELCC funding guideline](#)
- Ministry of Education's [CWELCC cost-based funding guideline](#)
- Ministry of Education's [CWELCC cost-based child care funding estimator](#)
- The Early Years and Child Care (EYCC) [Service Provider Handbook](#)

Additional resources for child care providers newly-enrolled in the CWELCC program are on our [website](#).

Early Years and Child Care (EYCC) Funding Agreement

If you are approved to participate in Peel's CWELCC program, you must sign an EYCC Funding Agreement with Peel and agree to:

- Accept and include children who receive child care subsidy.
- Accept and include children who need extra support 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 for centre-based sites.
- Access to Early Years Specialist staff supports.
- Access to continuous quality enhancement initiatives, including 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 must comply with the terms of the EYCC Funding Agreement, including applicable Peel guidelines, policies, and legislation.

CWELCC expansion funding

One-time expansion funding is available for eligible child care providers who have been approved to participate in Peel's CWELCC program. Funding must support the creation of **new** community-based, full-day licensed child care spaces for the age groups mentioned [above](#). Approved funding will be provided for eligible expenses to meet Ministry of Education licensing requirements to create new licensed spaces.

Child care centres must use expansion funding for eligible project expenses that create new licensed spaces through retrofits, leasehold improvements, expansions, additions or new construction (non-profit only), and may include equipment and furniture specifically for the new licensed spaces.

LHCC agencies must use expansion funding to purchase equipment and furniture specifically for the new homes.

Refer to the relevant expansion funding guideline for non-profit centre-based providers, commercial (for-profit) centre-based providers, or licensed home child care agencies on our [website](#) for more information.

Need more information or have questions?

Email EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca