

# **2026 Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) funding guideline**

Centre-based licensed child care providers



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# Highlights of changes

We made changes throughout the guideline to remove duplication and make it clearer. This section outlines the key highlights of relevant changes.

## Section 2: Child care centre eligibility

We made the following updates:

- We clarified that to enroll in CWELCC, providers' primary licence must reflect CWELCC eligible age groups.
- We updated legacy and growth top-up eligibility for 2026.
- We updated 2026 growth top-up eligibility to reflect the current calendar year.
- We added One-time Emergency Funding (OTEF) to the eligibility section.

## Section 3: Funding components, flexibility, budget management and requirements

We made the following updates:

- As communicated in 2025, we updated the expected base fee revenue offset calculation methodology to reflect a 5% vacancy rate.
- We refreshed budget management language, where possible, to align with the School-age funding guideline.
- We updated language to reflect site-level allocations and reconciliation for multi site providers.

## Section 4: You must reduce your base fees

We made the following updates:

- For ease of reference, we moved the "Appendix 3: What is included in your base fees and examples of non-base fees" from the 2025 guideline into section 4.1 of this guideline.
- We added the CWELCC age eligibility tables included in the 2025 "Appendix 4: Memo "Child care fees for children who age out of CWELCC" to section 4.6 of this guideline.

## Section 5: Meet staff wage and benefit requirements

We made the following updates:

- We clarified the requirement to maintain 2024 GOF regular wage enhancements.
- We updated Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) wage eligibility ceiling to \$33.81 an hour.
- We updated RECE wage floor to:
  - RECE program staff: \$25.86 an hour.
  - RECE child care supervisor \$26.86 an hour.
- For ease of reference, we integrated “Appendix 6: How to determine if staff qualifies for WEG” from the 2025 guideline into [Section 5.5](#) of this guideline.
- We updated WCF wage eligibility to:
  - RECE Program Staff: \$28 an hour.
  - RECE Child Care Supervisor \$31 an hour.
- For ease of reference, we integrated “Appendix 7: How to determine if staff qualifies for WCF” from the 2025 guideline into [Section 5.6](#) of this guideline.
- We added an example on how to pay wage enhancements for overtime hours.

## **Section 6: Provide planning time and professional learning to eligible staff**

We made the following updates:

- We assigned a dedicated section and updated the structure of the section for clarity.
- We updated language on flexibility for implementing planning time and removed the “retroactive” implementation period.
- We added a new planning time eligible activity: “setting up inclusive and engaging learning environments.”
- We added a new mileage premium of 72 cents for each kilometre to support professional learning time outside regular working hours.
- We updated staff eligibility for both planning time and professional learning.
- We added requirements to use communication template provided in [Appendix 5](#) and submit a copy of the staff communication.

## **Section 7: Maintain your service levels**

We made the following updates:



- We gave direction on unplanned paid closures that last for more than 5 days.
- We removed the 2025 transition plan for legacy centres that have more than 20 planned paid closure days.

## **Section 8: Make sure your parent handbook includes all CWELCC requirements and is updated**

We consolidated all parent handbook CWELCC requirements (fees, closures, and others) in a single section.

## **Section 10: Use your funding to support eligible costs**

We made the following updates:

- To align with provincial direction, we revised our approach for multi-site providers. Starting in 2026, we will reconcile funding allocations at the site level. Providers cannot use funding allocated to one site to cover CWELCC eligible costs for another site.
- We updated language on vehicle, maintenance and mileage eligibility ([Section 10.2](#)).

## **Section 11: One-time Emergency Funding (OTEF)**

We made the following updates:

- We specified additional documentation required for major capital expenses approved through OTEF.
- We referenced the new Accounting and Note Disclosure Guideline.

## **Section 12: Accountability requirements**

We made the following additions and updates:

- We updated the reporting details for the Ministry's Standardized Financial Report. For Peel sites, we will use your FAIR to complete this on your behalf.
- We added a requirement to comply with the new Accounting and Note Disclosure Guideline.
- We updated accountability requirements for multi-site providers to reflect site level reconciliation and Financial Annual Information Return.
- We reduced the number of KPIs for EPS and planning time and WEG.



## Appendices

We made the following additions and updates:

- [Appendix 1](#):
  - We added a list of acronyms used in this guideline.
  - We updated some definitions to increase clarity and added the definitions for Resource Consultant.
- [Appendix 2](#): Updated to reflect our 2026 CWELCC allocation approach.
- [Appendix 5](#): We updated the staff eligibility and eligible period for planning time and professional learning.
- [Appendix 6](#): We added a new appendix that outlines the eligible professional learning topics and activities supported.

## Section 1: Overview

The Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC) makes child care more affordable and supports workforce compensation, so children have access to high-quality licensed child care.

If you get CWELCC Funding, you must follow these rules:

- The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 ([CCEYA](#)), [Ontario Regulation 137/15](#), and the [licensing manual](#).
- The Ministry's [guideline](#) and its updates.
- Your Early Years and Child Care (EYCC) Funding Agreement, our [Service Provider Handbook](#), the Accounting and Note Disclosure Guideline, this guideline and their updates.

### This guideline is subject to changes

We will update this guideline to reflect changes to provincial rules and system priorities. We communicate updates by email and post them on our [website](#) at a later date.

**Tip:** Review [Appendix 1](#) for a list of acronyms abbreviations and definitions of the key terms we used and [Appendix 2](#) to learn how we calculated your funding.

## Section 2: Child care centre eligibility

### 2.1 General eligibility

To qualify for CWELCC Funding in 2026, you must:

- Be licensed to operate a child care centre(s) and spaces approved by Peel Region to participate in the CWELCC program.

**New!** New centres who enroll in CWELCC in 2026 must be licensed (primary licence) for CWELCC eligible age groups.

- Have a signed 2026 Early Years and Child Care (EYCC) Funding Agreement.
- Demonstrate (new centres) and maintain (all centres) [financial viability](#).
- Have a fiscal year-end ending on December 31 and provide your audited financial statements and accompanying Financial Annual Information Return (FAIR) annually by April 30 of each year<sup>1</sup>.
- Complete the Ministry's Annual Licensed Child Care Operations Survey. If you do not, we must put your CWELCC funding on hold.
- Comply on time with all CWELCC program, policies, financial, contract, and system planning requirements and data reporting requests as outlined in the [Service Provider Handbook](#), this guideline, and our [financial policies](#). For details, review our compliance policy.

This includes, but is not limited to, reporting your enrollment data and operating capacity data in the Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS), completing monthly and regular update task request from [GovGrants](#), participating in Peel Region surveys, and meeting all provider requirements.

### 2.2 2025 legacy top-up and 2025 growth top-up

To qualify for these top-ups in 2026, you must have received either a legacy or growth top-up in 2025, or both, and used the applicable 2025 top-up funding on eligible expenses.

To avoid funding disruptions, we will roll over your 2025 legacy and growth top-up (as applicable) amounts for the beginning of 2026, while we review your 2025 CWELCC reconciliation.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless we approved you for an exemption.

After we receive and review your 2025 CWELCC reconciliation, we will reassess and confirm your final rolling top-up amount based on your actual eligible program costs by site.

## 2.3 2026 growth top-up eligibility

In addition to the requirements listed in section 2.1, to qualify for the 2026 growth top-up:

- You must be a new child care centre or an existing centre that expands with new licensed spaces and approved to participate in CWELCC through our expansion application.
- The new centre or spaces must become licensed and start operations in 2026.

## 2.4 One-time Emergency Funding (OTEF)

To qualify for the OTEF in 2026, centres must have one-time, non-discretionary, and urgent costs, submit a complete OTEF application, and be approved for OTEF by Peel Region. You can apply for OTEF throughout the year, subject to funding availability.

# Section 3: Funding components, flexibility, budget management, and requirements

## 3.1 Funding components

We calculate CWELCC cost-based funding by centre and it includes the following components: program cost allocation, amount in lieu of profit/surplus, [base fee](#) revenue offset, and OTEF (if applicable).

Review [Appendix 2](#) to learn how we calculated your 2026 CWELCC allocation.

### Program cost allocation

This amount covers the [eligible costs](#) of providing child care services included in your [base fee](#) to CWELCC [eligible children](#) at your centre. It is made up of the following estimated amounts:

- Benchmark allocation: Helps you cover the typical costs of providing child care adjusted by Peel Region's Geographic Adjustment Factor (GAF). It includes program staff, supervisor, accommodations, and operations.
- 2025 legacy top-up (if applicable): Helps ensure your 2025 cost structure is covered in 2026.

- Growth top-up: Supports costs for adding new expansion-approved spaces in 2025 and 2026.

Your actual program costs at reconciliation may impact your funding. Review [Section 12.1](#) for details.

## Amount in lieu of profit/surplus

Amount in lieu of profit/surplus is the allowable profit (commercial) or surplus (non-profit) we can fund under the CWELCC program.

### How you can use the amount in lieu of profit/surplus:

- Commercial providers can use this amount in any way they see fit.
- Non-profit providers can reinvest this amount into their child care program based on their organization's by-laws or direction.

## Base fee revenue offset

You must use both your CWELCC program cost allocation and the [base fee](#) revenue you collect from families and the Child Care Subsidy program to support your eligible program costs for [CWELCC eligible children](#).

This is why your [base fee](#) revenue **reduces your cost-based funding** allocation.

The [base fee](#) revenue offset:

- Includes your estimated base fees. [Base fees](#) include your daily fees, registration fees, and any other mandatory fees you charge according to your parent handbook.
- Excludes other revenue such as donations, fundraising (not mandatory for families), interest income, and other non-base fee revenue.
- Is calculated using the same number of operating spaces and service days used to calculate your benchmark allocation.

### 2026 update: Expected base fee revenue offset calculation

Your expected base fee revenue offset is calculated by multiplying the amount of base fee revenue to be earned by an allowed vacancy rate. For 2026, the allowed vacancy rate changes to 5%. We encourage you to track the actual amount of base fee revenue earned throughout the year and keep tabs on your vacancy rate as you monitor your 2026 CWELCC budget.

Review [Appendix 2](#) to learn when this update will be reflected in your allocation.

## One-time Emergency Funding (OTEF)

OTEF supports one-time, unexpected, non-discretionary costs. Approvals are case-by-case, subject to eligibility, and budget availability. Review [Section 11](#) to learn more.

## 3.2 Your CWELCC funding in GovGrants

In 2026, you will continue to receive your CWELCC funding through the following [GovGrants](#) funding announcements:

- 2026 CWELCC cost-based funding (everyone).
- 2026 CWELCC allocation in lieu of profit/surplus (everyone).
- 2026 CWELCC One-time Emergency Funding (only if approved).

### 2026 CWELCC cost-based funding announcement

Your 2026 CWELCC cost-based funding announcement includes your program cost allocation and base fee offset, using the following budget categories:

- Program staffing.
- Supervisor.
- Accommodations.
- Operating – fixed.
- Operating – variable.
- Legacy top-up (if you received legacy top-up in 2025).
- Growth top-up (if you received growth top-up in 2025 or if you qualify for 2026 growth top-up).
- Expected base fee revenue offset (which is a negative number).

#### Note for multi-site providers

While you get a consolidated allocation for all your sites in [GovGrants](#), we will provide you with a site-by-site breakdown of your allocation when system-wide changes are made.

### 2026 CWELCC allocation in lieu of profit/surplus announcement

This announcement includes the amount in lieu of profit/surplus budget category for your centre(s).

### 2026 CWELCC One-time Emergency Funding (OTEF) announcement

This announcement only applies to OTEF approved providers.

### 3.3 Funding flexibility

You must use your site's CWELCC cost-based funding to meet the funding conditions outlined in [Section 3.5](#) first.

After you meet those conditions, your site's CWELCC funding is flexible, and you can use it to cover any [eligible costs](#) of your CWELCC enrolled site.

This means that you can use CWELCC funding across benchmark categories, provided that your total expenses stay within your program cost allocation. For example, you are not limited to the amount in your supervisor allocation to pay your supervisor(s).

#### Note for multi-site providers

Starting in 2026, funding flexibility does not apply between sites. We issue and reconcile CWELCC funding by site, and multi-site providers cannot move funding between sites.

### 3.4 Budget management

We encourage you to review your CWELCC budget regularly and use your program cost allocation on eligible costs. We will release a 2026 operating budget template in Q1 of 2026. In the interim, we encourage you to use the 2025 operating budget template to help with your budget planning.

If you face a funding shortfall **because your operating or licensed capacity increased**, email us with the subject line "CWELCC Funding Request" at [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca) copying your Early Years Specialist (EYS). We will review the data used to calculate your allocation and assess whether an adjustment is needed.

If your actual program costs exceed your program cost allocation after all in-year adjustments have been made, you must cover the difference.

### 3.5 Things you must do if you participate in CWELCC

If you participate in CWELCC, you must:

- Reduce (new providers) and continue to reduce (existing providers) your base fees ([Section 4](#)).
- Meet wage and benefit requirements ([Section 5](#)).
- Provide planning time and professional learning to eligible staff ([Section 6](#)).
- Maintain your service levels ([Section 7](#)).

- Make sure your parent handbook includes all CWELCC requirements and is updated ([Section 8](#))
- Use Enhanced Program Supports (EPS) appropriately ([Section 9](#)).
- Use funding to support eligible costs ([Section 10](#)).
- Meet reporting and accountability requirements ([Section 11](#)).
- Authentically participate. Refer to our [Service Provider Handbook](#), to learn about this requirement and the supports available to you.

Review the following sections for details on these requirements.

## Section 4: You must reduce your base fees

This section defines what base fees are, outlines what you must do to comply with the requirement to reduce your base fees, and describes child eligibility for the CWELCC reduced fees.

### 4.1. Base fees: definition and examples

For the purposes of this guideline, base fees are the fees you charge families to provide licensed child care to a CWELCC eligible child.

They must include anything you are required to provide under the [CCEYA](#), and, at a minimum, the following services:

- Supervision by an adult during operational hours noted on the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS), including extended care fees.
- Any programs or services that are included as part of your child care program and are part of the regular child care fees paid by families.
- Food and catering costs. Note: If a child receives care for 6 hours or more, you must ensure the food offered to the child includes 2 snacks along with any meals provided.
- Developing and implementing individualized plans such as medical, plans for children who need extra support, and anaphylaxis.
- Key fob for families if mandatory and nonrefundable, as families need it to access your services.
- Parent apps for communication.
- Mandatory annual handling fee for pre-authorized debit. If the fee is optional because there are other suitable payment methods available, it becomes a non-base fee.



- Any other mandatory cost the family must pay to support the child care program's operations, such as registration fees, mandatory fundraising fees, deposit fees, among others).

For more details on base and non-base fees, review [Ontario Regulation 137/15 s. 77.2](#) and part 2.3 of the Ministry's [licensing manual](#).

## Non-base fees

Non-base fees are fees charged:

- For optional items or services<sup>2</sup> such as:
  - Optional transportation and field trips where you charge a separate fee, and child care services are available to families who opt out.
  - Optional diapers.
  - Optional sunscreen.
  - Any other optional items or services where an extra fee is charged according to the terms of the agreement between the family and provider such as optional French, music, or yoga classes.
  - Refundable key fob for families. Families receive a refund when their child leaves the centre and they return the key fob.
- When families don't meet the terms of the child care contract. These penalty fees must be outlined in your parent handbook and may include:
  - Late pick up fees: Fees for child care provided beyond the centre's operational hours when families pick up their children late.
  - Not Sufficient Funds (NSF): Fees charged when families' accounts do not have enough funds available to cover the payment of the child care fees.

**Any other child care fees are base fees.**

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<sup>2</sup> For clarity, fees are optional when parents can opt-out without facing child care service reductions such as less service days or less hours of service. Optional fees cannot include anything that would impede a child's participation in the program should their family choose to opt out of the service

## 4.2 You must continue to reduce your base fees

In 2026, there are no changes to child care fees. This means that centres taking part in CWELCC must continue to reduce<sup>3</sup> your base fee for CWELCC eligible children to **the lower of:**

- \$22 a day.
- The CWELCC reduced daily base fee your centre was charging on December 31, 2024<sup>4</sup>.

The up to \$22 a day cap includes your daily child care fees, and any other one-time or recurring fee families must pay to get licensed child care services. If you charge mandatory fees outside of your daily fee, refer to [Section 4.3](#). For more details, review [Ontario Regulation 137/15](#) and the [licensing manual](#).

### Daily base fees for centres that enroll in CWELCC after December 31, 2024

If you enroll in CWELCC after December 31, 2024, [O. Reg. 488/24](#) under the [CCEYA](#) sets your daily base fees as follows:

**Table 1. Daily base fees for centres that enroll in CWELCC after Dec. 31, 2024.**

Age group for CWELCC eligible children	Daily base fee
Infant, full-day	\$22
Toddler, full-day	\$22
Preschool, full-day	\$22
Kindergarten, before, after, and before and after school program	\$13.35
Kindergarten, full-day	\$22
School-age, before, after, before and after school for CWELCC eligible children	\$12.27
School-age, full-day for CWELCC eligible children	\$22
Family Age group, full day for CWELCC eligible children	\$22

### Fee deposits

Fee deposits are pre-paid base fees. If you collect fee deposits for CWELCC eligible children, you must calculate them using your reduced daily base fee (\$22 a day or less) and the fee deposit period communicated in your parent handbook.

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<sup>3</sup> You must charge families the reduced fees. The practice of charging families a higher fee where the difference is later refunded or credited is not permitted.

<sup>4</sup> On December 31, 2024, CWELCC base fees were reduced by 52.75%. If your centre joined CWELCC after December 31, 2024, your fees must also meet the caps outlined in following section: [daily base fees for centres/spaces that enroll in CWELCC after December 31, 2024](#).

## **Fee deposits reduce your CWELCC funding at the time you earn the revenue**

Fee deposits are deferred revenue and count towards your fee revenue offset when you earn the revenue, not when you collect the fee. You earn the revenue when you use the deposit to pay for the child's base fees.

For example:

If your parent handbook asks for a 2-week fee deposit collected at registration and applied to the last 2 weeks of care, and you had a child registered and enrolled in August 2025 who left the program in May 31 of 2026:

- You must apply the fee deposit to the last 2 weeks of May of 2026.
- The fee collected counts towards your 2026 base fee offset.

## **All fee deposits, regardless of the collection date, must be based on the reduced fees of \$22 or less a day**

Providers that charged pre-paid fees (such as deposits or advanced fees) of more than \$22 a day, were to credit or refund the difference to families of CWELCC eligible children by March 2, 2025. For details, review the 2025 CWELCC guideline and the licensing manual.

## **The up to \$22 a day base fee cap applies to licensed child care services provided within a 24-hour period**

You may offer different types of care to meet the needs of families (such as part-day, full-day, part-time, full-time, extended care, kindergarten before, after, and before and after school care), but you cannot charge families more than \$22 for licensed child care services provided within a 24-hour period.

## **4.3 All mandatory fees are part of your base fees**

The up to \$22 a day cap, applies to the sum of your daily base fee and the amortized daily amount of all mandatory fees you charge to families, such as registration fees, mandatory fundraising fees, and the like. We strongly encourage you to not charge any mandatory fees as they reduce your CWELCC allocation.

If your daily base fees are lower than \$22 a day and you continue to charge mandatory fees, they will count towards your base fee revenue offset, you must report them at reconciliation, and they will result in a reduction of your CWELCC Funding<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> In 2025 Peel Region recommended that providers stop charging mandatory fees as any base fee revenue collected from families (including mandatory fees) reduces provider's CWELCC funding through the revenue offset calculation.

If, as of December 31, 2024, your daily base fees were \$22 a day or more<sup>6</sup>, you cannot charge any more one-time or other mandatory fees as you will exceed the \$22 a day cap set out in regulations.

## 4.4 Maintain the services included in your base fee

You cannot:

- Charge non-base fees for programs and services previously included in your base fees.
- Introduce new base or mandatory fees or increase existing base or mandatory fees. Mandatory fees are fees that families must pay to receive child care.

## 4.5 Communicate your fee schedule and Peel Region memo to families

To meet this requirement:

- Your fee schedule must:
  - Include your base fees, mandatory fees, and non-base fees.
  - Reflect the up to \$22 a day base fee cap.
  - Describe what is included in your services.
  - Clearly state the portion of the fees covered by Peel Region.
  - Include its effective date.
  - Be publicly available on your parent board.
  - Be included in your parent handbook. Review [Section 8: Make sure your parent handbook includes all CWELCC requirements and is updated](#) for details on this requirement.

We also recommend you post your fee schedule on your website.

- Share Peel Region's memo to families by **January 9, 2026**.

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<sup>6</sup> For providers who joined CWELCC after December 31, 2024, this amount may be lower. Review: [Daily base fees for centres that enroll in CWELCC after December 31, 2024](#).

## 4.6 CWELCC eligible children<sup>7</sup>

Under [Ontario Regulation 137/15 s. 1, \(1\)](#), the following children are eligible for CWELCC:

### A. Children younger than 6 years of age

All children younger than 6 years of age who are enrolled in a participating licensed child care program (full-day or part-day) qualify for the up to \$22 a day base fee cap.

### B. Children who turn 6 years of age in 2026

Children who are 6 years of age and are enrolled in a participating licensed child care program qualify for CWELCC reduced fees as noted on tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2. CWELCC eligibility of children who turn 6 in 2026 and are enrolled in a preschool, kindergarten, or family age groups.**

Child turns 6 between	Qualifies for CWELCC reduced fees of \$22 a day or less until	Must pay market fees starting
January 1 and June 30	June 30	July 1
July 1 and 31	July 31	August 1
August 1 and 31	August 31	September 1
September 1 and 30	September 30	October 1
October 1 and 31	October 31	November 1
November 1 and 30	November 30	December 1
December 1 and 31	December 31	January 1 of the following year

**Table 3. CWELCC eligibility of children who turn 6 in 2026 and are enrolled in a primary/junior school age room.**

Child turns 6 between	Qualifies for CWELCC reduced fees of \$22 a day or less until	Must pay market fees starting
January 1 and 31	January 31	February 1
February 1 and 28	February 28	March 1
March 1 and 31	March 31	April 1
April 1 and 30	April 30	May 1
May 1 and 31	May 31	June 1
June 1 and 30	June 30	July 1
July 1 and 31	July 31	August 1
August 1 and 31	August 31	September 1

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<sup>7</sup> Camp programs not licensed under the CCEYA, are not licensed child care. Children enrolled on these programs do not qualify for CWELCC.

Child turns 6 between	Qualifies for CWELCC reduced fees of \$22 a day or less until	Must pay market fees starting
September 1 and 30	September 30	October 1
October 1 and 31	October 31	November 1
November 1 and 30	November 30	December 1
December 1 and 31	December 31	January 1 of the following year

### **You must provide 2 months notice to families.**

You must monitor CWELCC child eligibility and communicate to families at least 2 months before CWELCC eligibility ends:

- When their child's CWELCC eligibility ends.
- The market fees that you will charge once their child's CWELCC eligibility ends.

## **4.7 Fee reduction for eligible children who receive Child Care Subsidy**

This section outlines how fee reductions are applied for eligible children receiving Child Care Subsidy.

### **Fees paid on behalf of children receiving subsidy**

The Child Care Subsidy program will continue to pay separately for the subsidy portion of your fees.

Under the provincial cost-based funding approach, municipal fees cannot exceed \$22 a day including daily base fee and other mandatory fees (for example, registration fees). If your municipal fee is \$22 a day you cannot charge any other mandatory fees.

Both Child Care Subsidy payments and payments by families are included in your base fee revenue offset and result in a reduction of CWELCC funding.

### **Reduced parent contribution for CWELCC eligible children**

Families who receive subsidy with children enrolled in participating programs receive a 50% fee reduction on their parent contribution paid for eligible children, even if their contribution is less than \$12 a day.

The parent contribution for CWELCC eligible children has already been reduced in the confirmation of subsidy letter. This means that:

- You do not have to apply an additional reduction.
- Parents must pay the parent contribution amount in the confirmation of subsidy letter.

## Children receiving subsidy who exceed their absent day allowance

When a family receiving Child Care Subsidy exceeds their absent day allowance, you must charge the family the same way as full fee-paying families for any remaining absent days for the year.

This means that the family would pay the market rate reduced by 52.75% to a cap of \$22 a day. Any fees paid by families already collected for that day would contribute towards the remaining amount that the family must pay. For information on the absent day allowance, review the [Service Provider Handbook](#).

## Children receiving subsidy who age out of CWELCC

If a child receiving subsidy ages out of CWELCC:

- Child Care Subsidy will pay your approved 6 to 12 municipal rate without the CWELCC fee reduction.
- You will receive an updated confirmation of subsidy letter with the child's updated parent contribution without the CWELCC reduction.

## Section 5: Meet staff wage and benefit requirements

This section outlines the wage enhancement and incremental benefit and deduction requirements you must meet in 2026 for staff who care for CWELCC eligible children.

If you participate in CWELCC, you must:

1. Meet [Ontario's minimum wage requirements](#) for all your employees. As of October 1, 2025, Ontario's minimum is \$17.60 an hour.  
**Tip:** Stay tuned for upcoming increases. Ontario's minimum wage is revised annually based on the Ontario Consumer Price Index (CPI). The province announces Ontario's annual minimum wage increase by April of each year.
2. Maintain 2024 regular General Operating Fund (GOF) hourly wage and benefit enhancements in 2026. This includes staff wages and benefits, historical funding, and pay equity that was added to an eligible staff's hourly wage as of December 31, 2024. This requirement does not include one-time top-ups ([Section 5.4](#)).
3. Meet Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) requirements for eligible program staff and supervisors. You must reassess staff eligibility based on the updated 2026 WEG wage eligibility ceiling of \$33.81 an hour ([Section 5.5](#)).
4. Meet the Workforce Compensation Funding (WCF) 2026 requirements for eligible RECE program staff and RECE supervisors ([Section 5.6](#)).



5. Ensure eligible staff affected by the change in the order of operations are, at minimum, held to their 2024 wage ([Section 5.7](#)).
6. Follow the benefits and additional requirements outlined in [Sections 5.8](#) and [5.9](#) of this guideline.

**These are minimum requirements.** After you meet these requirements, you have the flexibility to determine staff compensation within your overall program cost allocation.

**You can only claim staffing expenses once.** You must claim staffing expenses for:

- Staff who support children younger than 6 years of age, under CWELCC funding.
- Staff who support children 6 to 12, under the School-age funding.
- Floaters or staff who support both children younger than 6 years of age and 6 to 12, under the program where they spend most of their time.

## 5.1 Eligible positions

This section applies to program staff serving children younger than 6 years of age, who are employed in child care centres approved to participate in CWELCC by Peel Region.

Review [Appendix 1.2: Key terms](#) to know what program staff, supervisor, RECE, and RECE supervisor mean for this guideline.

### **Program staff and centre supervisors qualify for all hours worked as follows<sup>8</sup>:**

**Program staff and centre supervisors qualify for:**

- General Operating Funding (GOF) hourly wage enhancement received in 2024 (including Staff Wages and Benefits, historical and pay equity if applicable).  
  
For clarity, staff who did not get an hourly GOF wage enhancement in 2024 from their employer, don't qualify for GOF in 2026.
- 2026 WEG, if their hourly wage is eligible.

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<sup>8</sup> To qualify, staff must meet the individual eligibility of each funding, which may include, but is not limited to having a RECE designation, meeting the hourly wage eligibility, working for a centre that qualifies for the funding, among others. Refer to each funding section to know more.

### **Program staff and centre supervisors who are also RECEs:**

Program staff and centre supervisors who are also RECEs (Registered Early Childhood Educators) qualify for Workforce Compensation Funding (WCF), which includes up to \$4 an hour RECE wage increase and the RECE wage floor, if eligible.

### **Enhancements for program staff and centre supervisors apply to all hours worked**

This includes:

- Paid time in program supporting ratios for CWELCC eligible children.
- Paid planning time hours and paid professional learning time.
- Paid set-up time.
- Paid time spent in meetings mandated by the organization.
- Paid closure days that are not statutory holidays, vacation or sick days.

Review [Section 5.9](#) for requirements related to statutory holidays, vacation time and paid sick days.

### **Non-program staff who spend at least 25% of their time supporting ratio requirements only qualify for hours worked supporting ratios.**

Non program staff, such as assistant supervisors, bus drivers, cooks, administration staff, who spend at least 25% of their time supporting ratio requirements qualify for hours worked supporting ratio requirements or supervision of CWELCC eligible children, as follows:

- Hourly GOF wage enhancement received in 2024 (including Staff Wages and Benefits, historical, and pay equity as applicable).
- 2026 WEG if their hourly wage is eligible.
- If they are RECEs (designation), the 2026 WCF, including the up to \$4 an hour RECE wage increase and the RECE wage floor subject to the program staff WCF wage eligibility ceiling.

### **Hours worked outside of ratio do not qualify.**

For example, if a cook is scheduled to work 8 hours each day and is scheduled to work 2 of those hours to support rest time or cover program staff breaks, then that position is working in program for 25% of the time and may qualify for the enhancements above for 2 hours each day (10 hours each week).

## **5.2 Ineligible positions**

Requirements related to 2024 GOF maintenance, 2026 WEG, 2026 WCF, Wage Stability do not apply to the following positions:

- Non-program staff, such as bus drivers, cooks, housekeepers, custodians, janitorial staff, clerical staff, and administrators. Exception: See [non-program staff who spend at least 25% of their time supporting ratio requirements](#).
- Enhanced Program Support (EPS) staff, Special Needs Resourcing resource teachers or consultants and supplemental staff. Exception: See [non-program staff who spend at least 25% of their time supporting ratio requirements](#).
- Unpaid students and volunteers.
- Students not in a permanent position.
- Owner-operators who do not occupy an eligible position.
- Individuals hired through a third-party such as a temp agency.
- Fee for service contracts.

2026 WEG and 2026 WCF do not apply to the following position:

- Assistant supervisors do not qualify for WEG or WCF. Exception: See [non-program staff who spend at least 25% of their time supporting ratio requirements](#).

2026 Workforce Compensation Funding (WCF) does not apply to program staff and supervisors who are not Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE), like:

- Director approved staff.
- Non- RECE Montessori teachers.
- Non-RECE supervisors.

## 5.3 Order of operations

To help you determine staff financial eligibility and apply the wage enhancements, use our 2026 Staff Wages Planning Tool and follow this order of operations for staff in [eligible positions](#):

1. Start with your employer-paid base wage as of December 31, 2025.  
**Note:** If staff receive an increase to their base wage between January 1 and December 31, 2026, you do not need to reassess their eligibility for workforce funding in 2026, but you must include the increase when you determine their 2027 workforce funding eligibility.
2. Add (if applicable): [General Operating Funding](#) (GOF) hourly wage enhancements you provided to eligible staff in 2024.
3. Add: [Wage Enhancement Grant \(WEG\)](#). Full or partial WEG is added if the total from steps 1 and 2 is less than \$33.81.

If staff in eligible positions are also RECEs:

4. Add: [WCF annual wage increase](#) of up to \$4 an hour to RECE wage if the total from steps 1, 2, and 3 is less than \$28 an hour for RECE program staff and \$31 an hour for RECE supervisor. Staff must qualify for WEG before they qualify for WCF.
5. Add: [WCF RECE wage floor](#), if the total from steps 1 to 4 is less than \$25.86 an hour for RECE program staff or \$26.86 an hour for RECE supervisors.

If after step 3 (non-RECE) or 5 (RECE) staff's 2026 hourly wage is lower than their December 2024 hourly wage (including enhancements) due to the change in the GOF order of operations:

6. Add: Amount needed to keep staff's 2024 wage constant until they become eligible for more increases. Review [Section 5.7: Wage stability](#) for more details.

## 5.4 Maintain 2024 GOF regular wage enhancements

### **GOF is part of providers' CWELCC allocation**

If your centre opened and enrolled into CWELCC before December 31, 2024, legacy costs, including GOF expenses, were used to assess your CWELCC legacy top-up eligibility and are built into your program-cost allocation.

If your centre or space opened or enrolled into CWELCC after December 31, 2024, you did not get 2024 GOF and you do not have to maintain 2024 GOF wage enhancements. Instead, your centre can use its program cost allocation, including their growth top-up, to pay competitive base wages.

Child care providers who received GOF in 2024 must:

- Maintain the same General Operating Fund (GOF) hourly wage enhancement and benefit supports provided to staff in 2024.
  - This includes hourly wage enhancement paid through the former staff wages and benefits, historical, and pay equity wage enhancements (if applicable).
  - One-time top-up GOF amounts distributed to staff in 2024 are excluded from this requirement.

You must ensure that you maintain individual staff members' hourly GOF wage enhancement and benefits supported in 2024 as long as the staff member continues to work in a GOF eligible position.

- Follow the GOF distribution approach used in 2024.

- Apply the GOF wage enhancement on top of staff's base wage, and before WEG and WCF.

Staff supported in 2024 should not experience a decrease in their hourly wages. Refer to [Section 5.7](#) for details

## Pay equity

If you qualify for provincial pay equity funding, you must:

- Use your funding to meet pay equity obligations under the province's pay equity plan and the [Pay Equity Act](#).
- Let us know in writing when your pay equity obligations are achieved.

## 5.5 2026 Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG)

WEG supports an increase of up to \$2 an hour, plus incremental employer mandatory benefits and deductions for [eligible staff](#).

**You do not need to apply.** WEG supports are already built into your program cost allocation. You will not receive a separate amount.

### 2026 WEG eligibility ceiling

In 2026, the WEG wage eligibility ceiling is \$33.81 an hour.

The WEG eligibility ceiling is not a wage cap. Child care providers can make the business decision to increase staff wages above the eligibility ceiling within their program cost-allocation once they have met all [CWELCC requirements](#).

### How to determine if staff qualifies for WEG

To determine if staff qualify for WEG and the amount they qualify for in 2026, follow these steps:

#### Step 1. Confirm staff eligibility

Staff eligibility is based on staff position. To be eligible, staff must receive a T4 and hold one of the following positions:

- Program staff (position counted towards adult-child ratios under the [CCEYA](#)).
- RECE supervisor position serving children younger than 6 years of age at a CWELCC eligible centre.

Refer to the list of [eligible positions](#) and [ineligible positions](#).

#### Step 2. Determine staff's hourly wage

To determine if a staff's hourly wage qualifies, add together (as applicable) a staff member's:

- Base hourly wage paid by the employer as of December 31, 2025. For clarity, this includes any employer paid wage increases that took place from January 1 to December 31, 2025.
- 2024 General Operating Fund (GOF) hourly wage enhancement. This includes the former Staff, Wages and Benefits (SWB), historical, and pay equity payments as applicable.

If the total is less than \$33.81 an hour, their hourly wage qualifies for WEG.

### **Step 3. Determine the hourly WEG amount**

Using the hourly wage determined in Step 2:

- If the hourly wage is \$31.81 an hour or less, staff qualifies for the full WEG wage enhancement of \$2 an hour.
- If the hourly wage is between \$31.82 and \$33.80, staff qualifies for the incremental amount needed to bring staff's hourly wage up to \$33.81. This is called partial WEG.
- If the hourly wage is \$33.81 or more, staff does not qualify for WEG.

Salary increases for WEG cannot exceed \$2 an hour or the wage maximum of \$33.81 an hour.

### **Step 4. Apply WEG wage increase**

Apply the amount assessed in Step 3 to the hourly wage calculated in Step 2. The amount must be applied to all supported hours. As a reminder, supported hours for:

- Program staff and centre supervisor are all hours worked.
- Non-program staff who spend at least 25% of their time supporting ratio requirements are hours worked supporting ratios only.

Review [Section 5.1: eligible positions](#) for details.

## **WEG costs attributable to CWELCC**

Child care providers who serve both CWELCC and School-age children, must claim WEG costs as noted in [Section 5](#).

## **5.6 Workforce Compensation Funding (WCF) requirements**

The WCF is built into your benchmark allocation and improves wages for RECEs employed in centres participating in CWELCC.

To meet WCF requirements, you must increase the hourly wages of eligible RECE staff supporting CWELCC children by the:

- **RECE wage increase:** You must increase the hourly wage of eligible RECE program staff and supervisors by up to \$4 an hour in 2026, if their hourly wages are below the wage eligibility ceiling of:
  - \$28 an hour (including GOF and WEG) for RECE program staff.
  - \$31 an hour (including GOF and WEG) for RECE supervisors.
- **RECE wage floor:** You must pay RECE program staff at least \$25.86 an hour and RECE supervisors at least \$26.86 an hour (including the base wage, GOF, WEG, and WCF wage increase).

## How to determine if staff qualifies for WCF

To determine if staff qualify and the amount they qualify for, follow these steps:

### Step 1. Confirm staff eligibility

Staff eligibility is based on staff position and qualifications. In general, RECE's employed (receiving a T4) in a RECE program staff or RECE supervisor position serving children younger than 6 years of age, qualify. Review the list of [eligible positions](#) and [ineligible positions](#).

### Step 2. Determine staff's hourly wage

To determine if staff's hourly wage qualifies, add together (as applicable) a staff members:

- Base hourly wage paid by the employer as of December 31, 2025. This includes any employer paid wage increases that took place from January 1 to December 31, 2025, and provincial increases to minimum wage in 2025.
- 2024 General Operating Fund (GOF) hourly wage enhancement. This includes the former Staff Wages and Benefits (SWB), historical, and pay equity payments.
- Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG): up to \$2 an hour following the [WEG wage increase calculation](#). As a reminder, to get WCF, staff must get WEG first.

If the total is less than \$28 an hour for RECE program staff or \$31 an hour for RECE supervisors, their hourly wage qualifies for the RECE wage increase.

### Step 3. Determine the amount of the 2026 RECE wage increase

Using the hourly wage determined in Step 2:

- If the wage is \$24 an hour or less for RECE; and if wage is \$27 an hour or less for RECE supervisor, then the staff qualifies for the \$4 an hour wage increase.
- If the wage is more than \$24 an hour, but less than \$28 an hour for RECE program staff; and if wage is more than \$27 an hour but less than \$31 an hour for RECE supervisor, then the staff qualifies for the incremental amount needed



to bring the staff member's hourly wage up to \$28 an hour (for RECE program staff) or \$31 an hour (for RECE supervisor).

- If the hourly wage is \$28 an hour or more (RECE program staff) or \$31 an hour or more (RECE supervisor), then the staff member does not qualify for the wage increase. No further action is needed.

**Note:** The 2026 provincial wage eligibility ceiling for the annual wage increase is \$28 an hour for RECE program staff and \$31 an hour for RECE supervisors.

#### **Step 4. Apply 2026 wage increase to determine staff's revised hourly wage**

To calculate staff's revised hourly wage, including the annual wage increase, take the staff hourly wage from Step 2, and add the annual wage increase amount from Step 3.

#### **Step 5. Determine staff eligibility for the RECE wage floor**

The 2026 wage floor is \$25.86 an hour for RECE program staff and \$26.86 an hour for RECE supervisors. If after Step 4, the staff earns:

- Less than the wage floor: they qualify for the amount needed to bring their hourly wage to the 2026 wage floor.
- The wage floor or more: they do not qualify for the wage floor. Skip to step 7.

#### **Step 6. Apply 2026 wage floor**

Pay eligible staff at least the wage floor. To calculate the funding needed to bring up staff wages to the wage floor, subtract the staff's revised hourly wage (Step 4) from the 2026 wage floor (Step 5).

#### **Step 7. Apply 2026 employer wage increases, if applicable**

Apply 2026 employer wage increases after you applied the applicable WCF wage increases. Please note that 2026 employer wage increases impact WEG and WCF calculations for 2027.

## **5.7 Wage stability for staff affected by the change in the order of operations**

Starting in 2025, the Ministry told us to include GOF in staff base wages when calculating eligibility for the WEG and WCF. Due to this change, some staff who qualified for WEG or WCF, or both, in 2024 may no longer qualify for all or part of these enhancements in 2025 and 2026.

To ensure impacted staff, at minimum, maintains their current wages, you must hold their wages constant at the December 2024 levels until they become eligible for additional wage increases in future years.

This means that if staff continue to work in the same position, their 2026 hourly wage including wage enhancements cannot be less than their 2024 hourly wage with enhancements.

## Example of wage stability calculation

Mary is a RECE working in a toddler room. In **2024**, she earned an hourly base wage of \$22 and:

- She qualified for a full WEG enhancement (\$2) because her hourly base wage was less than the 2024 WEG wage maximum (\$30.59) = \$24 an hour.
- She qualified for a full WCF RECE wage increase (\$2) because her hourly wage with WEG was \$24, and below the 2024 wage ceiling (\$26) = \$26 an hour.
- She also received \$2.50 an hour in GOF, which was not included in the WEG or RECE wage increase calculation in 2024 = \$28.50 an hour.
- Her 2024 hourly wage with wage enhancements was \$28.50.

When the order of operations changed and her GOF wage enhancement was included in the WEG and RECE wage increase calculations. She did not get an employer paid wage increase in 2024 or 2025.

- Her hourly base wage (\$22) plus GOF (\$2.50 an hour) is \$24.50 an hour.
- She qualifies for a full WEG enhancement (\$2) because her hourly base wage was less than the 2026 WEG wage eligibility ceiling (\$33.81) = \$26.50 an hour.
- In 2026, the WCF RECE wage eligibility ceiling is \$28 an hour. This means that she only qualifies for a RECE wage increase of \$1.50 an hour = \$28 an hour.
- As her employer must maintain her 2024 hourly wage, Mary must receive, at least, \$28.50 an hour in 2026.

Since Mary's hourly wage with enhancements is lower in 2026 due to the change in the order of operations, her employer must, at least, hold her hourly wage constant at 2024 levels. This means that in 2026, her employer must pay her at least \$28.50 an hour, until she qualifies for an additional wage increase.

**Note:** In this example, wage stability supports reduce from \$1.50 an hour in 2025 to \$0.50 in 2026 due to the increase in the WCF wage eligibility ceiling from \$27 an hour to \$28 an hour for RECE program staff.

## Notations on pay stubs for impacted staff

Staff whose 2024 hourly wage are higher than their 2026 hourly wages under the new order of operations will get a "wage stability" amount to keep their wages constant with 2024 levels.

The wage stability amount is calculated by taking the difference between a staff's 2024 hourly wage with enhancements (as of December 31, 2024) and the 2026 hourly wage under the new order of operations. Using the example above, the wage stability amount for Mary is \$0.50 which is the difference between \$28.50 an hour (what she received in 2024) and \$28 an hour (what she was entitled to received in 2026 based on new order of operations).

Providers must include the stability amount under the "CWELCC" notation on a staff's paystub and report the expense under WCF. A tool is available to help you calculate the wage stability amount that your staff are eligible to receive.

## 5.8 Benefits

You must use your program cost allocation to support employer mandatory benefits and deductions, and existing (before August 15, 2024) supplementary benefits under your Human Resources Policy. You may also provide new or enhanced supplementary benefits within your program cost allocation.

### A. Mandatory benefits

You must comply with your statutory obligations, including the payment of employer mandatory benefits. This includes:

- Employer contributions to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Employment Insurance (EI), Workers Safety Insurance Board (WSIB), and Employer Health Tax (EHT) as applicable.
- Employee benefits such as vacation pay and [public holiday pay](#) (9 statutory holidays: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, and Boxing Day).

We encourage you to:

- Seek professional financial guidance on mandatory benefit payments to staff.
- Update your human resources policy.
- Monitor your budget to ensure that you have enough funding within your program cost allocation to meet your employer mandatory benefit obligations, including the incremental cost of the wage enhancement programs (former GOF, WEG, and WCF).

For more information, visit the Canada Revenue Agency website [Employers' Guide - Payroll Deductions and Remittances](#).

### B. Supplementary benefits

You have the discretion to support or enhance supplementary benefits or supply coverage for vacation days and sick days, group life insurance, supplementary health

and dental benefits, and supplementary pension within your program cost allocation amount.

As you make the decision to provide new or enhance existing supplementary benefits, you may want to consider that:

- You are working within your program cost allocation. Your actual costs at reconciliation cannot exceed your program cost allocation.
- New or newly enhanced benefits do not result in a recalculation of your legacy amount (as applicable).
- Typical costs of supplementary benefits and supply coverage for vacation days and sick days are reflected in the provincial ancillary cost percentages (13.4% and 16.2%). These percentages are for your reference, and do not limit your discretion within your program cost allocation.
- All costs, including supplementary benefits, must be attributable, appropriate, and reasonable.

## **5.9 Requirements that apply for all workforce wage enhancements**

The hourly wage enhancements, including 2024 GOF (staff wages and benefits, historical, and pay equity), 2026 WEG, and 2026 WCF:

- Are over and above Ontario's minimum wage and in addition to your planned salary increases. You cannot use hourly wage enhancements to reduce or offset other planned compensation increases for eligible staff, including, but not limited to merit increases.
- Should not interfere with your salary and compensation decisions or practices, including obligations under collective agreements. If you are subject to the terms of a collective agreement, you must seek independent legal advice on the implementation of wage enhancements.
- Must be paid for statutory holidays, vacation time, paid sick days, and centre closures if staff get paid for these days. Workforce wage enhancements for these hours are considered benefits.

Owner-operators employed by your agency (who receive a T4) qualify for the wage enhancements if they meet the [position](#) and financial eligibility requirements of the funding.

### **Staff communication requirements**

Child care providers participating in CWELCC must share the Peel Region memos as follows:

- Peel Region staff memo ([Appendix 3](#)): legacy sites must share this memo with their existing program staff and supervisors by January 9, 2026.
- Peel Region memo for new RECE staff ([Appendix 4](#)):
  - Centres who opened or enrolled in CWELCC after December 31, 2024 must share this memo with all program and supervisor staff within 30 days of CWELCC enrollment.
  - Legacy centres must share this memo with new staff eligible for workforce funding.

We may ask for proof of communication at any time.

## **Payments to staff requirements**

You must do all the following:

- Pay hourly wage enhancements (GOF, WEG, WCF, wage stability amount) to eligible staff with each pay cheque or payment made. This means that you must pay the wage enhancements at the same time you pay the hourly base wage they enhance. One-time, year-end payments of wage enhancements are not permitted.
- Pay hourly wage enhancements for hours worked between January 1 and December 31, 2026, including overtime hours.
- Pay wage enhancement grants for overtime hours at the same hourly rate of pay.

When staff work overtime, they should receive their wage grants for WEG, GOF, and WCF, for those extra hours. These grants are paid at the same hourly amount as regular hours, not at the overtime rate. So even though their base wage is multiplied by the overtime ratio (like 1.5×), the grants stay at the same hourly rate for each hour worked.

For example, if a staff qualifies for full WEG of \$2 an hour, they get paid \$2 for a regular hour and the same \$2 for an overtime hour.

- Include a notation for each program with the associated amounts payable on each paystub for: GOF, WEG, and CWELCC (WCF).

Important: if your staff need stability funding, you must include this amount on the CWELCC (WCF) notation on their paystub.

- Keep appropriate records verifying payments and distribution of GOF, WEG, WCF and wage stability, paid to staff.

Cash, or gift card payments are not permitted.

## 5.10 Child care staff inquiries

If one of your staff members contacts us about their staff wages and benefits funding, we will ask them to direct their question to you. If the staff member does not feel that their question was addressed, we will contact you on their behalf.

## Section 6: Provide planning time and professional learning to eligible staff

This section outlines what you must do to meet planning time and professional learning requirements.

Planning time and professional learning are built into your program cost allocation and help you attract and retain a skilled and committed child care workforce that delivers stable, quality child care programs for children in Peel.

### 6.1 Planning time

Planning time gives educators the chance to align pedagogy, reflect on what they have learned from professional development experiences, consider children's interests and goals, and organize materials and activities.

These efforts support quality care and learning, following [How Does Learning Happen?](#), Ontario's pedagogy for the early years and child care sector.

### Funding requirements

To meet planning time requirements, you must:

1. **From January 1 to December 31, 2026:** Provide [eligible staff](#) with a minimum of 4 hours of paid planning time each month based on operational needs outside of staff ratio responsibilities. Paid planning hours cannot be accumulated for more than 4 weeks.

You have the flexibility to schedule planning time based on your operational needs and staff availability. You can schedule planning time on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis. However, we strongly recommend that you:

- Maintain a consistent planning time schedule, as it supports staff preparation and reflection.
- Schedule planning time during staff's regular hours, with other staff covering to maintain ratios.

2. Use the funding to pay wages and employer mandatory benefits:
  - For eligible staff completing planning time outside of their regular work hours.
  - For staff providing coverage for eligible staff engaged in planning time during their regular work hours.
3. **By January 30, 2026:** Inform all eligible staff of the availability of planning time using the template provided in [Appendix 5](#) and keep proof of your communication.
4. **By February 13, 2026:** Send us a copy of your communication to [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca). This can include a copy of the email sent to eligible staff (with personal email addresses blocked) or a photo of a notice posted on a staff bulletin board.

## Staff eligible for planning time

Program staff who work a minimum of 20 hours a week supporting ratio requirements as outlined in the [CCEYA](#) in any one-week period (Monday to Sunday) within a consistent classroom or cohort of children.

## Eligible planning time activities

[Eligible staff](#) can use their planning time to conduct the following planning activities individually or as a group:

- Engaging in reflective practice and [collaborative inquiry](#) around [pedagogical approaches](#).
- Researching, planning, and documenting, based on child observations, interests, goals, teaching practices, and the 4 foundations of [How Does Learning Happen?](#)
- Applying learning from courses or training in the classroom.
- Setting up inclusive and engaging learning environments.
- Reflecting and documenting the impact of current practices and approaches on children, families, and others.

## 6.2. Professional learning costs and time

Professional learning provides eligible full-time equivalent (FTE) staff with opportunities to strengthen knowledge and skills, enhance their pedagogical knowledge, apply new strategies in practice, and reflect on their approaches to supporting children's learning and development. Professional learning opportunities must:



- Be relevant to child care.
- Support staff in their work with children.

Review [Appendix 6](#) for resources outlining eligible professional learning topics and activities, and [Appendix 7](#) for a general list of agencies or examples of eligible training.

## Funding requirements

We encourage you to accommodate staff professional learning requests whenever possible, and to provide an alternative time or comparable learning opportunity when operational needs prevent participation at the requested time.

To ensure professional learning is fully supported and accessible for eligible staff, you must:

1. Develop (if you do not have one) or update your existing internal professional learning policy and share your new or updated policy with staff. Your policy must outline:
  - How eligible staff can access professional learning.
  - The processes for requests and approvals.
  - Key timelines.

You must provide a copy of your policy upon request.

2. **By January 30, 2026:** Let eligible staff know that they can access up to \$500 for either professional learning costs or time, or both, using the template provided in [Appendix 5](#) and keep proof of your communication.
3. **By February 13, 2026:** Send us a copy of your communication to [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca). This can include a copy of the email sent to eligible staff (with personal email addresses blocked) or a photo of a notice posted on a staff bulletin board.
4. Use your program-cost allocation to offer eligible staff access to up to \$500 a year (in total) for:
  - **Professional learning costs:** Reimburse or cover registration costs and fees for approved professional learning opportunities for [eligible staff](#) from January 1 to December 31, 2026.
  - **Paid professional learning time:** encourage staff participation in eligible professional learning activities by supporting:
 

**Staff coverage (release time):** Pay supply staff wages and employer mandatory benefits for hours worked covering eligible staff while

they participate in eligible professional learning activities during their regular hours.

**Extra hours worked:** Pay eligible staff wages and employer mandatory benefits for extra hours worked participating in eligible professional learning activities outside their regular working hours. For example, a staff works 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM, then participates in professional learning from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM. This staff should be paid for the extra hours worked from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM.

**Travel time and mileage:** Pay eligible participating staff for up to one hour of travel time (round-trip) and mileage at the [CRA recommended](#)<sup>9</sup> rate for 2026 for in-person professional learning outside of regular working hours. For reference, the mileage rate for 2025 was 72 cents per kilometre.

### Staff eligible for professional learning

[Program staff](#) and [supervisors](#) who work a minimum 20 hours a week supporting ratio requirements as outlined in the [CCEYA](#) (excluding supply and casual staff).

Professional learning funding is calculated per FTE. This means that:

- Eligible staff with a 1.0 FTE status can receive up to \$500 for professional learning.
- Eligible part time staff can receive a prorated professional learning amount based on their FTE status.

For example, eligible staff with an FTE status of 0.75 can receive a prorated professional learning amount of up to \$375 (0.75 x \$500).

These amounts are a minimum, not a maximum. After you meet the minimum requirements, you can provide additional learning opportunities fairly among all eligible staff. Refer to [Section 3.3](#) of this guideline for more details.

## Section 7: Maintain your service levels

You must maintain all programs and services (including program quality, hours of service, availability) offered as of March 27, 2022, or as approved by Peel Region when you enrolled in CWELCC, under your base fee.

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<sup>9</sup> The CRA recommendation may yearly. Review the CRA website

Families should not experience reductions in service offerings or surcharges for services that were part of your base fees prior to CWELCC.

You must maintain:

- **The number of days you provide services to children.** Review [Section 7.1](#) to learn about program closure requirements.
- **Spaces for CWELCC eligible children** (for example, a licensed infant space must remain an infant space). You must report licence revisions or the use of alternate capacity using the comments section of your OCCMS attendance reporting.
- **Hours of operation.** If you are planning to change your centre's hours of operations, you must tell us about changes at least one month before the changes take place at [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca).
- **The services included in your base fee.** You must continue to provide through your base fee, any programs and services included as part of your base fee on March 27, 2022 (or at the time of CWELCC enrollment).

Changes to your service levels may result in funding adjustments and recoveries.

## 7.1 Program closures

This section provides information about the different types of closure days and the rules that apply to them.

### A. Types of closure days and funding impacts

Closure days are any days in which child care services are not available to children, even if your centre is open for other activities such as professional development days, parent-teacher interviews, open houses, or other activities. Closure days can be paid or unpaid (by families) and planned or unplanned:

#### How to know if a day is paid, unpaid, planned, or unplanned

##### **Paid**

Paid closure days are closure days for which you charge fees to families.

##### **Unpaid**

Unpaid closure days are closure days for which you do not charge fees to families according to your parent handbook. Unpaid closure days:

- Do not count towards your maximum number of closure days.
- Are not service days. This means that we will not include unpaid days in your funding calculations.

## Planned

Planned closure days are any days that the child care centre is scheduled to close (where child care services are not available). They include, but are not limited to:

- Closures due to provincially mandated statutory holidays (also known as [public holidays](#)).
- Closures due to other non-mandatory holidays (such as Civic Holiday, Easter Monday, Remembrance Day, March break, winter break, religious observances where services are not available to families).
- Closures due to other scheduled operational needs (such as professional Development (PD) days, parent-teacher interview days, routine maintenance).
- Closures that you can plan for, even if they are due to events out of your control. For example:
  - Unplanned repair work that does not require an immediate closure. If due to an event out of your control you must perform unexpected repair work, and you can schedule the work for a long weekend or on your next scheduled closure without compromising the children's safety, the closure is planned closure because you can plan for it.
  - Known landlord mandated closures (such as a special holiday closure, or a closure for planned repairs) that you can plan for are planned because you know when you have to close, and you can choose to either: adapt your closure calendar to align with your landlord's mandated closures or not charge families for the closure day.

## Unplanned

Unplanned closure days are any days you must close due to circumstances out of your control. Both the event, and the response to the event must be out of your control and require an immediate closure.

For example, a closure due to a major snow storm where Peel school boards make the decision to close is an unplanned closure. You do not have control over the weather or the school board decision, you cannot postpone it, and it is usually communicated early morning of the day, so you cannot plan for it.

## Planned paid closure days

These are days that you have a planned closure, and fees are paid by families. These days:

- Count towards your maximum number of paid closure days.
- Are service days and you are funded for them (following the funding formula).
- We cannot fund you for more than 20 planned paid closure days.

## Unplanned paid closure days

These are days that you have an unplanned closure and fees are paid by families. These days:

- Are service days and qualify for CWELCC funding.
- Do not count towards the 20 paid closure day maximum.

**New!** When unplanned paid closures extend for more than 5 business days, Peel Region will work with you to limit the number of days where fees are charged so that families are not negatively impacted.

## **B. You can have up to 20 planned closure days paid by families each year (including statutory holidays)**

You cannot close and charge base fees for more than:

- 2 weeks in a row.
- 4 weeks within a year. This is a maximum of 20 planned paid closure days a year.

Your number of planned paid closure days a year is counted as follows:

- If your program operates on a calendar year: From January 1 to December 31 of each year.
- If your program operates on an academic year: From September 1 to August 31 of the following year. This applies even if you operate a 10-month program.

Your parent handbook must reflect your compliance with the closure day requirements. Review [Section 8.1](#) for details.

The transition plan to support legacy centres that had more than 20 planned paid closure days ended on December 31, 2025. As of January 1, 2026, all centres must comply with the maximum number of planned paid closure days.

## Changes to your number of planned closure days

If you plan to change your number of closure days, you must:

- **Inform us in writing** before increasing your number of closure days, because this change may affect your CWELCC funding.
  - To notify us, email [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca) and your Early Years Specialist with the subject "change to closure days" including any relevant information about the change.
  - If you must increase your number of planned closure days, we encourage you to choose a day when attendance is historically low.

- Changes cannot result in more than 20 planned paid closure days a year.
- Update your parent handbook and share the updated version with us and your families.
- Give families at least a 60-day-notice, so they can plan for the closure.

## **C. Requirement to pay staff for closure days**

This section sets minimum staff payment requirements for closure days. It is not intended to reduce or limit your organization's compensation packages. Providers should seek independent legal advice on implementing these requirements.

You must pay staff for closure days as follows:

### **Public (statutory) holidays**

On public holidays:

- You must meet at least the [Employment Standards Act public holiday pay](#) requirements. For clarity, you cannot ask staff who qualify for public holiday pay to take a vacation or unpaid time off instead.
- If your existing employment contract or human resources policy says you must pay more, then you must pay the higher amount.

### **Professional activity and development days**

Time spent by an employee in training that is required by the employer or by law is counted as work time and must be paid. Thus, if you close for professional activities or development, you must pay staff who participate. Review the rules of [work time](#) under the Employment Standards Act.

### **Unplanned closure days (such as inclement weather when the public-school boards close)**

You must pay staff who were scheduled to work, the wages they were expecting to get. As you receive funding from both Peel Region and your families, the costs associated with that day are already part of your budget. There are no exceptions.

### **Other closure days**

Follow these rules for any other closure days not listed above:

- If you paid staff for other closure days in 2023, you must continue to pay them because we funded you based on your 2023 cost structure.
- If you did not pay your staff for closure days in 2023, we encourage you to pay staff for planned paid closure days working within your CWELCC program allocation. Paid time off supports staff recruitment and retention, and as you

have told us, attracting and retaining program staff is critical to your child care program.

- If 2023 was not a representative year and we funded you based on your 2024 costs, at a minimum you should continue to follow your 2024 staff payment practices. As noted above, we encourage you to pay staff for planned paid closure days working within your CWELCC program allocation.

## 7.2 Use of alternate capacity

You can use alternate capacity currently identified on your licence. For example, a room licensed as a toddler room may switch to a preschool room for a certain period. This means that if you are using a preschool alternate capacity:

- You must charge families the preschool rate during that time.
- You must report these children under the preschool age group in OCCMS following the User Guide. Reporting in OCCMS and [GovGrants](#) for Centre-based Programs

For the purposes of your funding allocations:

- The age group listed as licensed capacity applies to fixed cost components.
- We will use your reported alternate capacity to calculate your variable cost components and your anticipated revenue offset.
- If you use the same room for different age groups at different times of the day, only one service can apply for each space (as the spaces is being used in the same 24-hour period).

## 7.3 Mixed age groups

In 2026 we will be looking at the use of mixed age groups for school-age only programs.

In the interim, if you use mixed age groups, we will continue to fund you for CWELCC eligible children based on our 2025 approach:

- CWELCC eligible children: if CWELCC eligible children are enrolled in primary or junior school-age or junior school-age spaces we will include these children in your benchmark funding calculation.
- CWELCC ineligible children: if children ineligible for CWELCC are enrolled in CWELCC spaces (preschool or kindergarten), the costs of delivering child care to these children will not qualify for CWELCC funding. We will use a reasonable methodology to split eligible costs from ineligible costs.

We have flagged the complexities of this approach to the province and are currently reviewing its impacts. In the meantime, we ask that you keep both your revenue and expenses for CWELCC ineligible children enrolled in CWELCC spaces separated.

## Section 8: Include all CWELCC requirements in your parent handbook

The information in this section is limited to parent handbook requirements related to CWELCC. For a more comprehensive list of regulatory parent handbook requirements review the optional “parent handbook checklist” we shared on November 5, 2025, [Ontario Regulation 137/15 s. 45](#) and the [centre-based licensing manual](#)

Your parent handbook includes important information that helps us determine your funding allocations and compliance with the CWELCC program.

### 8.1 Parent handbook CWELCC regulatory requirements

[Ontario Regulation 137/15 s. 45](#) and the [centre-based licensing manual](#) say that your parent handbook must clearly outline<sup>10</sup>:

- If your centre(s) is(are) enrolled in the CWELCC program.
- The times when the services are offered.
- The holidays observed, and all your planned closures.

As communicated in 2025, your parent handbook must also include:

- If your program runs on a calendar (January 1 to December 31) or on an academic (September 1 to August 31) year.
- A list of all your planned closure days for the year, where you list separately your paid and unpaid closure days.

If this information is not findable or clear, we will assume that you operate on a calendar year and that families pay for all closure days.

To help you make these updates, we shared a closure template on October 29, 2025.

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<sup>10</sup> This list is not exhaustive as it only highlights the requirements that impact the CWELCC Funding. For a full list of requirements, refer to



- **All the fees that you charge families**, its frequency, the services that are included on each fee, what fees are base fees (mandatory), what fees are non-base fees (optional).

Review [Section 4.1](#) of this guideline to know the difference between base and non-base fees.

- Your fee payment approach (method of payment, such as e-transfers, and cheques).
- Your fee payment schedule (for example, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly).
- If refunds or credits will be provided and when. You must clearly state which fees are refundable, and which aren't, and under which circumstances.

## 8.2 Requirement to include information about other regional programs that support access to child care

As communicated on November 5, 2025, your parent handbook must include information about Peel Region's:

- Child Care Subsidy program.
- Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) program: Service for children who need extra support in child care.

## 8.3 Requirement to update

Part 7 of the centre-based [licensing manual](#) says that your parent handbook must have current information and that if something that needs to be in the parent handbook changes, you must **update your parent handbook immediately**.

When you send us your parent handbook, make sure that you send us the most updated version communicated to families.

## 8.4 Communication requirements

Following part 7 of the centre-based [licensing manual](#) you:

- Must share your parent handbook with families at least:
  - When the child starts receiving care.
  - Every time you update the parent handbook as soon as changes are made.
- You must be able to demonstrate that families were informed of any updates at the time they were made.
- Should make it available on your website, if you have one.

In addition to these requirements, you must:

- Send us a copy of your updated parent handbook:
  - Every year through [GovGrants](#).
  - Anytime you update it to your Early Years Specialist (EYS).
- Provide proof that you shared with families, your parent handbook and its updates upon request.

## Section 9: Use Enhanced Program Support (EPS)

Enhanced Program Support (EPS) is short-term funding support that allows you to hire extra staff, extend the hours of existing staff, both, when needs are present in your classrooms. Program support staff that is added to the classrooms must be above child care ratio requirements. Please note that:

- The goal of EPS is to create an environment that helps all children participate and be included in classrooms where program support is needed.
- EPS continues to be included in your program cost allocation. You have the flexibility to use EPS at any point in the year based on the needs in your program.
- EPS funding to support classrooms with school-aged children in licensed centre-based before and after school programs (BASP) will be funded separately through School-age (6 to 12) Funding.

You are responsible for using your EPS funding appropriately and must meet the following requirements:

### 9.1 Minimum and maximum allowable wage

You may only use EPS funding for staff wages and benefits.

You have the flexibility to choose how you compensate your program support staff, within the limits below:

- Minimum: You must pay your program support staff at least Ontario's current [minimum wage](#).
- Maximum: You cannot pay your program support staff an hourly wage that is higher than the hourly wage of the highest-earning non-supervisory RECE employed at your centre including wage enhancements.

For example, if the highest earning non-supervisory RECE in your centre earns \$27 an hour (including wage enhancements), the maximum hourly amount you can pay your program support staff is \$27 an hour.

## 9.2 Program support staff requirements

Program support staff:

### 1. Cannot be included in child care ratio requirements

Program support staff cannot be included in the minimum ratio requirements under the [CCEYA](#). For this reason, program support staff are not eligible for wage enhancements, such as GOF, WEG, and WCF.

### 2. Cannot provide 1:1 supports

EPS is a support for the entire classroom and program support staff cannot provide 1:1 support for an individual child or support specific children only.

Program support staff and educators are expected to work together to support all children in the classrooms and must share the responsibility of providing individual support to a child.

### 3. Must have these qualifications

- A current police record check, including vulnerable sector screening as outlined in [Section 59](#) of [Ontario Regulation 137/15](#) under the [CCEYA](#).
- Standard First Aid including infant and child CPR certificate outlined [in Section 58](#) of [Ontario Regulation 137/15](#) under the [CCEYA](#).

Other recommended qualifications may include:

- Previous experience working or volunteering with children with cognitive, physical, social, emotional, or communicative needs.
- Diploma in Early Childhood Education, Child and Youth, Developmental Support, Educational Assistant, or Recreation and Leisure.

## 9.3 Training requirements

All staff (supervisors, educators, and program support staff) working in classrooms where program support will be added must complete the [Together We Are One](#) training offered through Child Development Resource Connection Peel (CDRCP). We may ask you to verify that staff have taken the training.

We strongly encourage all staff to complete this training and will ask you to review the training if we update the content. Any new staff you hire must view the webinar as part of their orientation.

## 9.4 General inclusive practice requirements

You must be authentically participating to deliver inclusive practices in your program. Inclusive practices are evident when:

- All families have access to a child care program.
- You are not limiting days and hours of care of any children and are committed to supporting placements for all children.
- You are carrying out ongoing environmental assessments and adjustments to meet the needs of all children in your program.
- Your program staff share responsibilities of providing individual support and including other children in activities when possible.
- Your program staff are meaningfully working together with your Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) Resource Consultant (RC), including allowing them full access to your program and engaging in discussions about classroom needs and goals for EPS support.
- Your program staff carry out strategies that your RC recommends as it relates to using EPS support and are participating in professional development opportunities related to your program needs, goals, and inclusive practices.
- You are adjusting EPS hours and staffing in response to changing program dynamics and as you achieve goals, including a plan to fade out support.

## Section 10: Use your funding to support eligible costs

Under the cost-based funding approach, your funding is reconciled against the:

- Actual amount of eligible costs incurred to provide child care to [CWELCC eligible children](#) reflected in your base fees for the calendar year.
- Higher of your expected or actual base fee revenue.

To avoid incurring ineligible costs that may result in year-end recoveries, you must review, understand, and apply the rules in this section.

For multi-site providers, please note that we calculate and reconcile your funding at the site level. This means that you cannot use funding allocated to one site to cover CWELCC expenses for another site.

### 10.1 How to determine if your costs are eligible

You must spend your CWELCC funding on eligible costs. You are responsible to make sure all your expenses are eligible costs for CWELCC program delivery between January 1, 2026, and December 31, 2026. Using CWELCC funding for ineligible costs may result in year-end recoveries.

The following 3 principles provide guidance to determine whether costs are eligible:

1. **Attributable:** Costs are directly or indirectly related to the delivery of child care for CWELCC eligible children and included in the base fee.
2. **Appropriate:** Costs are necessary for the delivery of child care, and sound and practical to meet the operating needs of a child care program; required for health and safety, and cultural or religious purposes.
3. **Reasonable:** The cost amount or quality of the good or service aligns with your program needs (for example, operating capacity, needs of individual children, fair market value). Costs may be eligible in full or only partially eligible.

These principles allow flexibility for the different needs of child care providers. The intention is to allow you to provide high quality services over and above licensing requirements (such as staff to child ratios, food, programming) that make sense for your child care program. Review [Appendix 8](#) for a CWELCC cost eligibility assessment tool.

We encourage you to fully use your total program cost allocation on eligible costs throughout the calendar year.

### **Example: rising food costs**

Provider “AAA” operates an Islamic child care program for children younger than 6 years of age, which offers halal meals for religious purposes. Food costs have increased over the last couple of years, and recent quotes show a similar trend of increased prices among multiple food suppliers.

To determine if this cost is eligible, provider “AAA” would apply the cost principles:

- Is the cost **attributable**? Yes, food costs are directly related to the delivery of child care for eligible children younger than 6 years of age.
- Is the cost **appropriate**? Yes, the purchase of halal meals is required to meet the cultural or religious operating needs of the program.
- Is the cost **reasonable**? Yes, although the price has increased, multiple quotes from other food suppliers show that the cost is still at fair market value.

Since all 3 cost principles are met, the cost is eligible.

## **Get a minimum of 2 quotes for non-arm’s length transactions**

Non-arm’s length transactions are transactions between:

- Parties who are related and have a close relationship, such as family members or friends.
- Related companies: For example, when the owner of the leased property is the same owner as the child care centre, when the transaction occurs between subsidiary companies of the same corporate group, or between subsidiary and parent companies that are part of the same corporate group.

These transactions are only eligible when conducted at or below fair market value (verification may be required).

Before you purchase an item or work is completed by a family member or friend, you must get a minimum of 2 quotes. You must keep all documentation, including quotes, receipts, and paid invoices as we may ask you to submit it at reconciliation.

## 10.2 Ineligible costs

You cannot use this funding to support:

1. Costs deemed to be in lieu of profits such as dividends, in-kind benefits, bonuses, or perks directly or indirectly for the controlling owner.
2. Costs funded by another public source (such as the CWELCC Expansion Start-up Grant) or reimbursed by another source (such as insurance claims).
3. Major capital repair costs for existing spaces (unless approved by Peel Region for OTEF).
4. Costs for the delivery of child care for ineligible children ages 6 to 12.
5. Financing costs such as the portion of interest costs resulting from interest rates charged on loans or lines of credit that are higher than the [Canada Small Business Financing Program](#) rates. Loans from the federal or provincial governments are exempt from this restriction.

Under the Canada Small Business Financing Program, the maximum chargeable interest rate is the lender's:

- Prime lending rate plus 3% for floating variable rate loans.
- Single-family residential mortgage rate for the term of the loan, plus 3% for fixed-rate loans.
- Prime lending rate plus 5% for lines of credit.

This means that the portion of interest charged on the loan or line of credit over the amounts above is an ineligible expense. For example, your agency holds a line of credit with ABC Bank. Their prime lending rate is 4.5%. The interest rate on your line of credit is 11.2%. The interest you pay on the line of credit, up to 9.5%, is an

eligible expense under CWELCC, but 1.7% of the interest you pay on the line of credit is ineligible.

Loans or lines of credit do not have to be obtained through this program for interest costs to be eligible under CWELCC.

6. Penalties, fines, forfeitures, or liquidated damages.
7. Corporate and personal income tax based on the Ministry's direction.
8. Principal payment of third-party loans.
9. Vehicle financing, lease costs, or related maintenance costs (exception: if the vehicle is used to transport children from school to your child care program and that transportation is included in your base fee it may be eligible).

If the vehicle is used for other child care activities included in your base fee for CWELCC eligible children, you may be eligible for prorated mileage reimbursed based on the current [CRA recommendation](#)<sup>11</sup>.

For example, if your organization drove a car 5,500km for appropriate, attributable, and reasonable child care related activities in 2025, the total eligible mileage reimbursement is \$3,930 (5,000 km x \$0.72 = \$3,600 and 500km x \$0.66 = \$330 for a total of \$3,930).

10. Amortization and depreciation expenses unless the asset was purchased before August 15, 2024, and not paid for using previous or other government funding or reimbursed through insurance.
11. Donations and fundraising expenses.
12. Accrued interest in shareholder equity.
13. Fees paid on behalf of staff for membership in professional organizations such as the College of Early Childhood Educators.

This is not an exhaustive list of ineligible expenses. To be eligible, an expense must meet the principles outlined in [Section 10.1](#). If you claim an ineligible expense, we reserve the right to deem the expense ineligible and recover funding in whole or in part.

If you have any questions, email us at [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca).

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<sup>11</sup> The CRA recommendation may change overtime. Review the CRA website

# Section 11: One-time Emergency Funding (OTEF)

## 11.1 Purpose

The One-time Emergency Funding (OTEF) supports eligible providers participating in the CWELCC system who are facing urgent, non-discretionary, and one-time expenses that cannot be covered through their existing CWELCC program cost allocation.

To receive OTEF, you must apply and be approved by Peel Region.

Review this section for information on this funding and how to apply.

## 11.2 OTEF eligible expenses

If you are approved for OTEF, you must use the funding to support your approved OTEF expenses retroactive to January 1, 2026. Approved OTEF expenses must meet all of the following 3 criteria:

- **One-time:** Cost is not ongoing or recurring annually.
- **Non-discretionary:** Cost is necessary and unavoidable.
- **Emergency or urgent:** Cost is related to unexpected issues that require immediate resolution.

Examples of eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Cost to repair damage to the child care centre due to severe weather (for costs not reimbursed by insurance, such as deductible amounts or non-insurable damages).
- One-time operating costs related to an infectious disease outbreak at the child care centre.
- One-time operating costs to support counselling to staff, children, and families related to a traumatic event at the child care centre.

You must use your CWELCC program cost allocation for routine or general repairs and maintenance expenses. These expenses have been historically covered under Special Purpose Funding and include items such as appliances. Funding to support these types of expenses is already included in your CWELCC program cost allocation.



## 11.3 OTEF application process

Last year you told us to open OTEF applications earlier. To support your needs while we can confirm budget availability, we are opening OTEF applications from the beginning of the year. Approval is subject to budget availability.

### Step 1: Pre-screen discussion

If you think you qualify for OTEF, contact your Early Years Specialist (EYS) to schedule a pre-screen meeting. At the pre-screen meeting they will:

- Collect details about your emergency expense.
- Confirm that your 2026 operating budget is updated and that you cannot cover this expense.
- Confirm that you have explored other revenue sources to cover the expense such as insurance, warranty, and landlord responsibilities under your lease agreement.
- Confirm if the expense is eligible under OTEF.
- Help you with the OTEF application, if applicable.

To schedule a pre-screen meeting, email your assigned EYS and copy [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca), with the subject line "OTEF funding request."

**Important:** Only providers who pass the pre-screening will be invited to apply for OTEF. Passing the pre-screening process does not guarantee funding approval.

### Step 2: OTEF application

If you pass the pre-screen, we will send you the OTEF application form and instructions on how to submit your completed application.

To be considered for OTEF, you must submit the completed OTEF application form and all required documents. We will review your request to determine if the expense is attributable, appropriate and reasonable and review your financial and other supporting documents to determine whether all or a portion of it should be covered through other revenue sources.

If your expense is related to an insurance claim, we will review your application only after the insurance company settles your claim and you submit proof of the claim outcome to us.

**Important:** To be considered for OTEF, applications must be received and approved in 2026. Applying for OTEF does not guarantee funding approval. Approval is subject to budget availability and our review process.

## 11.4 Required documentation

As part of your application, you must include supporting documents to prove the need for OTEF. This may include, but is not limited to:

- 2 detailed cost estimates and if applicable, paid invoices (if retroactive to January 1, 2026).
- 2026 operating budget updated as of the most recent month at the time of application (with actuals for all previous months and projections for remaining months).

More supporting documentation may be requested to confirm actual expenses to date such as payroll information, lease agreement, and others.

- Previous year audited financial statements (if not already submitted to Peel Region).
- Building or playground inspection reports or reports from EDU licensing or local public health.
- Insurance and warranty claim outcomes (if applicable).
- Lease agreements.
- Other documents such as photos, if applicable.

Applications for major capital repair or replacement must include:

- Lease agreement (if you lease the space).
- Before and after photos of the repair or replacements.
- For completed work, paid invoices and 2 quotes.

## 11.5 Cost sharing requirement

If you are approved for OTEF, you must use money in your current allocation, prior year profits or surplus, reserves or other assets noted on the balance sheet to contribute a maximum of 20 percent of the total cost.

Cost share for major capital repairs or replacement cannot come from your current CWELCC program cost allocation as it is not an eligible expense. You may work with your landlord to meet your cost share requirement or explore other revenue sources.

We may require a reduced cost share percentage following our detailed review of a provider's financial documents such as your updated 2026 operating budget and prior years audited financial statements.

## 11.6 Payments and reconciliation

If we approve your OTEF request, you will receive your payment through the 2026 CWELCC One-time Emergency Funding [GovGrants](#) announcement. Payment(s) will be issued based on your approved OTEF allocation and reconciled based on actual paid invoices. Actual paid invoices must be submitted by the OTEF reconciliation deadline. We will recover any unused or ineligible use of OTEF funding.

You must use your OTEF received in 2026 by December 31, 2026.

**Important:** You must fully use your CWELCC program cost allocation to support eligible operating expenses before accessing OTEF. If your CWELCC program cost allocation is underspent, OTEF may be recovered at reconciliation, even if the expense was approved.

## 11.7 Accountability and oversight

You must only use OTEF for the approved purpose and child care site listed in your application and approval memo issued by Peel Region. We may conduct site visits, request further documentation, and perform audits to confirm the OTEF expense.

You must conduct related party (like a family member or owned company) transactions at fair market value (FMV). The FMV refers to the price of goods or services when a buyer and seller have reasonable knowledge of it and are willing to trade in the open market without pressure.

## 11.8 Major capital replacement eligibility

Child care providers cannot use their CWELCC program cost allocation to cover major capital repairs or replacement expenses. However, as the local service system manager, Peel Region may approve these types of major capital expenses under OTEF on a case-by-case basis.

A **major capital replacement** is a significant and costly expenditure required to replace or restore a major asset or component of a facility. They go beyond routine maintenance and usually need more planning, resources, and approvals. Examples of major capital expenses include:

- Major renovations such as replacing a roof or foundation repairs.
- Large equipment purchases like replacing a HVAC system.
- Upgrades to the child care building including new plumbing, electrical, or window replacements.

- Playground improvements such as resurfacing or installing permanent new shade structures
- Replacing outdoor fencing or hardscaping such as pathways and retaining walls
- Accessibility upgrades such as adding wheelchair ramps.

If you are a provider who owns the child care building or leases the space and are responsible for capital replacement, you may be eligible to receive OTEF for major capital expenses. We will not support expenses that must be covered by your landlord according to your lease agreement.

To help you plan ahead and reduce the need for emergency funding, providers should develop and maintain a capital replacement plan. If you do not have a capital replacement plan, we have developed a template and guide to help you with this process.

You can refer to the Accounting and Note Disclosure guideline on how to report major capital expenses funded by OTEF in your audited financial statements.

### **Commitment to CWELCC participation until December 31, 2032 for major capital replacement**

If you are approved to receive OTEF for a major capital expense you must commit to participating in CWELCC for 7 years (until December 31, 2032). Early withdrawal, closure, or sale of the program may result in Peel Region recovering OTEF funding on a prorated basis. This ensures the prudent use of public funds and provides families with continued access to affordable and high-quality care.

## **11.9 Appeal process**

If you disagree with a decision about your OTEF application, you may request a review using the CWELCC appeal process referenced in our [Service Provider Handbook](#). In your email, use the subject line: "OTEF Appeal," clearly state which decision you are appealing, provide a brief rationale, and attach any supporting documents that help explain your position. All appeal decisions made by Peel Region are final.

# **Section 12: Accountability requirements**

## **12.1 Reconciliation**

At reconciliation, we will review your actual program costs incurred and base fee revenue earned during the calendar year (January to December).

## When you may owe a funding recovery

You may owe a funding recovery (amount repayable to Peel Region), if your:

- Actual program costs are less than your program cost allocation (underspending)<sup>12</sup>. In this case, we will also use your actual program costs to recalculate your amount in lieu of profit/surplus.
- Actual base fee revenue is higher than your expected base fee revenue offset.

## Provincial standardized financial report

The Ministry requires all CWELCC enrolled child care programs to submit a Standardized Financial Report. This report includes operational and financial data based on actual eligible costs incurred and base fee revenue earned during the applicable funding year. We will collect this information as part of your CWELCC reconciliation and submit it to the Ministry.

## Funding is calculated and reconciled at a site level

This means that multi-site providers cannot use funding allocated to one site to cover costs for CWELCC expenses at another site.

You are also required to report the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) needed to report back to the Ministry.

You must complete and submit your 2026 CWELCC reconciliation accurately and on time. We will apply the Compliance Policy to late submissions. Review Appendix D of the [Service Provider Handbook](#) for details.

## Actual base fee revenue

At reconciliation, your actual base fee revenue offset is the greater of:

- The base fee revenue you earned for CWELCC eligible children during the calendar year including any mandatory fees (such as deposit fees).
- Your expected base fee revenue offset allocation.

This means that:

- If you collect more base fee revenue than expected:
  - You have more parent revenue to pay for CWELCC eligible expenses and the amount of CWELCC funding you need decreases.
  - You cannot use additional base fee revenue to offset costs above your program cost allocation.

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<sup>12</sup> Actual program cost that are lower than your program-cost allocation may also impact future top up allocations, if you qualify for one.

- If you collect less base fee revenue than expected, the expected offset is still used, except in cases of extenuating circumstances.

We strongly encourage you to track your actual base fee revenue and contact your Early Years Specialist if your program has a high vacancy rate.

## **12.2 Audited financial statements and FAIR requirements**

All CWELCC providers are required to submit their audited financial statements, in accordance with the Accounting and Note Disclosure Guideline and Financial Annual Information Return (FAIR). Please refer to the Accounting and Note Disclosure Guideline for Accountants and Auditors and the Service Provider Handbook for reporting requirement details.

If you are a multi-site provider, please note that while your Audited Financial Statement will be consolidated at the organization level, your Financial Annual Information Return will require financial information at the site level.

## **12.3 Actual expenditures and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) by program**

As a part of your annual 2026 CWELCC reporting requirements, you must report the following actual expenditures<sup>13</sup> and KPIs<sup>14</sup> by program:

### **A. GOF**

You must report:

- The following actual GOF costs: Total GOF wages paid to eligible staff serving CWELCC eligible children plus the GOF incremental employer mandatory benefits expenses paid on behalf of staff serving CWELCC eligible children (including any historically approved supplementary benefit expenses).
- Number of staff supported with GOF wage enhancements supporting CWELCC eligible children.

### **B. Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG)**

You must report:

- Your actual WEG expenditures: Total WEG wages and incremental employer mandatory benefits expenses paid on behalf of staff paid to eligible staff serving CWELCC eligible children.

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<sup>13</sup> If you serve both children eligible and not eligible for CWELCC, your actual expenditures must include only the amount incurred supporting CWELCC children.

<sup>14</sup> If a staff member is serving CWELCC eligible children and children not eligible for CWELCC you should report them in the category where they spend more time

- Total number of program staff and supervisors serving CWELCC eligible children supported by WEG.

## C. WCF

You must report

- Your actual WCF expenditures: Total WCF wages and incremental employer mandatory benefits expenses paid on behalf of RECE program staff and RECE supervisors, to eligible staff serving CWELCC eligible children.
- Total number of RECE program staff serving CWELCC eligible children supported by the WCF wage increase and or the WCF wage floor.
- Total number of RECE supervisors serving CWELCC eligible children supported by WCF wage increase and or the WCF wage floor.

## D. Wage stability

You must report:

- Your actual wage stability expenditures. The amount spent keeping wages the same for staff whose enhanced hourly wages were less in 2026 due to the change in the GOF order of operations (refer to [Section 5.7 Wage Stability](#) for employees affected by the change in the order of operations of this guideline).

**Note:** The amount reported in 2026 can be less than 2025 because staff may have become eligible for additional WEG and WCF supports, but it cannot be higher than 2025.

- Total number of program staff and supervisors serving CWELCC eligible children whose wages were held constant in 2026 because their 2026 hourly wages were less than their 2024 hourly wages due to the change in the wage calculation order of operations ([Section 5.7](#) of this guideline).

## E. Planning time

You must report:

- Your paid planning time actual expenditures.
- Number of individuals who were supported using funded planning time. Each individual is counted once.

## F. Professional learning cost

You must report:

- Your professional learning costs actual expenditures.

- Number of individuals whose professional learning cost were supported using the funding. Each individual is counted once.

## **G. EPS**

You must report:

- Your total 2026 EPS expenditures in your FAIR separately from your other expenses. Note: Staff wages and benefits for staff above minimum child care ratio requirements are the only eligible EPS expense.
- Number of hours of enhanced program support provided (cumulative): Total number of hours of enhanced program support provided in classrooms with CWELCC eligible children. The number of hours must align with the amount of funding spent on enhanced program support.
- Number of CWELCC eligible children who need extra support served (cumulative): Total number of CWELCC eligible children with cognitive, physical, social, emotional, or communicative needs that were supported by program support staff. Each child is counted only once in a calendar year.

## **H. One-time Emergency Funding (OTEF)**

You must report your OTEF costs actual expenditures, if you were approved for emergency funding.

## **12.4 Other accountability requirements**

Review your EYCC agreement and the [Service Provider Handbook](#) for details on our accountability and recovery requirements.

We expect you to cooperate with us and our third-party auditors for our compliance audit mechanisms, including direct engagement compliance audits, and cost reviews. This includes providing all necessary documentation related to cost-based funding, cost calculations, and service delivery.

We may add more reporting requirements at our discretion. We may ask for further documentation of actual expenditures to support our review.

If you receive a reduction of funds due to a past recovery or if we hold your funding due to non-compliance, you must still maintain the same level of quality service provisions as your overall allocation is not impacted.

## **Section 13: Contact us**

If you have questions, email your EYS or [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca).



# Appendix 1: List of abbreviations, acronyms and key terms

## A 1.1 List of abbreviations and acronyms

**The Agreement:** Early Years and Child Care (EYCC) Funding Agreement.

**AECEO:** Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario.

**AEFESO:** Association francophone a l'éducation des services a l'enfance.

**BASP:** Before and after school programs.

**CCLS:** Child Care Licensing System.

**CCEYA:** [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#).

**CDRCP:** Child Development Resource Connection Peel.

**CPL:** Continuous Professional Learning (CPL).

**CPP:** Canada Pension Plan.

**CECE:** College of Early Childhood Educators Ontario.

**CPR:** Cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

**CRRU:** Child Care Resource and Research Unit.

**CWELCC:** Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC).

**ECIS:** Eligible Child in an Ineligible Space.

**EHT:** Employer Health Tax.

**EI:** Employment Insurance.

**EPS:** Enhanced program support.

**EYCC:** Early Years and Child Care.

**EYS:** Early Years Specialist.

**FAIR:** Financial Annual Information Return.

**FMV:** Fair market value.

**GAAP:** Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

**GAF:** Geographic adjustment factor.

**GOF:** General Operating Fund.

**ICES:** Ineligible Child in an Eligible Space.

**IPP:** Individual Program Plans.

**KPI:** Key performance indicator.

**NSF:** Not Sufficient Funds.

**OCCMS:** Ontario Child Care Management System.

**OTEF:** One-time emergency funding.

**PD:** professional development.

**PIRS:** Peel Inclusion Resource Services.

**RC:** Resource Consultant

**RECE:** Registered Early Childhood Educator.

**Service Provider Handbook:** [EYCC Service Provider Handbook](#).

**SWB:** Staff Wages and Benefits.

**WEG:** Wage Enhancement Grant.

**WCF:** Workforce Compensation Funding.

**WIF:** Workforce Innovation Funding.

**WSIB:** Workers Safety Insurance Board.

## A 1.2 List of key terms and definitions

**Adjusted benchmark allocation:** Your benchmark allocation amount adjusted by the provincial Geographic Adjustment Factor (GAF) to reflect regional cost differences.

**Actual program costs:** Actual amount of the eligible costs incurred by an eligible child care centre to provide services included in their base fees during the calendar year. We encourage you to manage your budget so that your actual program costs align with your program cost allocation. We cannot give you extra funding if your actual costs are higher than your program cost allocation at reconciliation.

**Alternate capacity:** Ministry approval included in your licence to use a child care room for a different age group than it is normally licensed for. It counts towards your operating capacity and spaces (variable costs) but does not count towards your licensed spaces (fixed costs).

**Base fee:** Refer to [Section 4.1](#) of this guideline.

**Base hourly wage:** Hourly rate paid to the position by the provider before any regionally funded wage enhancements like GOF, WEG, and WCF. If the position is paid an annual salary, use an online salary calculator to convert to the hourly rate.

**Benchmark allocation:** The amount of program cost allocation you qualify for based on the typical costs of Ontario's licensed child care centres. It includes a program staffing benchmark, a supervisor benchmark, an accommodations benchmark, and an operating costs benchmark. The benchmark allocation is impacted by location (refer to Adjusted Benchmark Allocation) and may be enhanced by top-ups.

**Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 ([CCEYA](#)):** The Act that sets the rules and regulations for child care programs, including licensing requirements, staff qualifications, health and safety standards, and the types of services that you must provide to children. As a child care provider, you must follow the [CCEYA](#), its regulations and the [licensing manual](#) to maintain your program's licence.

**CWELCC expansion application process:** The process for interested providers to apply to the CWELCC program in Peel Region.

**CWELCC eligible children:** Refer to [Section 4.6](#) of this guideline.

**Deposits (prepaid fees):** A payment that a family pays upfront for child care services.

Providers can use it to hold a spot for a child in the program and later apply the amount towards child care fees if the child attends the program (usually the first or the last month's fees).

**Eligible centre:** A centre enrolled in CWELCC approved by Peel Region.

**Eligible costs:** Costs incurred by an eligible centre in the calendar year for the purpose of providing licensed child care for eligible children which are attributable, appropriate, and reasonable. Review [Section 10](#) for details.

**Eligible age group:** Any licensed age category as set out in Part 1 of O. Reg. 137/15 for which a licensee is licensed to provide child care at a child care and includes a licensed infant, toddler, preschool or kindergarten group, a licensed family age group, or home child care.

**Enhanced Program Support (EPS):** Short-term funding to hire new staff or extend the hours of existing staff to support classrooms when needs are present. Staff employed in this position cannot be included in child care ratio requirements.

**Existing centre:** An eligible centre that is not new to CWELCC.

**Financial viability:** You demonstrate and maintain financial viability when you have a sustainable financial plan to manage unexpected and non-discretionary costs without compromising ongoing operations or future sustainability. Common risks to financial viability include, but are not limited to accumulated arrears, not serviced debt, going concern issues on your audited financial statements, among others.

**Legacy centre:** A child care centre that enrolled in CWELCC in Peel Region before August 15, 2024, or applied for CWELCC enrollment in Peel Region by that date and was enrolled based on their application. The centre must have continuously participated in CWELCC since its enrollment.

**Licensed capacity:** The maximum number of children, including the number in each age category that are permitted to receive child care at one time, as set out in your licence.

**Licensed space:** A child care space in an eligible centre where, according to the centre's primary licence, is authorized to enroll a child. It does not include spaces designated for alternate capacity.

**New centre:** An eligible centre that is enrolling in CWELCC for the first time in a calendar year and is not a legacy centre.

**Non-base fees:** Refer to [Section 4.1](#) of this guideline.

**Non-discretionary costs:** Costs that are necessary for the delivery of licensed child care services for children younger than 6 years of age in Peel covered under the CWELCC base fee, which are beyond the provider's control and cannot be avoided. These costs must be reasonable, economical, and required to meet licensing requirements, including health and safety standards.

**Operating capacity:** The number of child care spaces a provider is serving based on their staffing complement and budget. The reported operating capacity must be reasonable and consistent with the provider's licensed capacity and staffing levels. It cannot exceed the licensed capacity, or the capacity supported by the provider's staffing.

**Operating space:** A child care space in an eligible centre where an eligible child is enrolled or could be enrolled immediately, and for which the centre charges a base fee for the enrolled children. Enrollment is only allowed if the centre meets the requirements of [Ontario Regulation 137/15](#) under the [CCEYA](#), including minimum program staff-to-child ratios for each room.

**Paid planning time:** Refer to Section 6.1 of this guideline for a definition and list of eligible activities.

**Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS):** A model that connects participating licensed child care providers with a dedicated Resource Consultant (RC) who offers capacity building, brief, and ongoing consultation supports to program staff.

**Prime lending rate:** The prime lending rate is influenced by the Bank of Canada's target for the overnight rate. Canadian financial institutions use the prime lending rate as the base for setting the interest rates on their loans and lines of credit.

**Program cost allocation:** The maximum amount a provider can spend on eligible costs minus the base fee revenue. It is the sum of your adjusted benchmark allocation, plus any applicable top-ups.

**Program staff:** Staff employed in a position that supports child care ratio requirements as outlined in [Ontario Regulation 137/15](#) under the [CCEYA](#). Program

staff may be Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) or non-RECE, depending on whether they meet the RECE definition below.

**RECE supervisor:** A RECE who holds a supervisor position, as indicated on the licence in accordance with [Ontario Regulation 137/15](#) s. 53.

**Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE):** A member in good standing of the [College of Early Childhood Educators](#) (CECE) as stated in the [Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007](#).

**Registration fee:** A common mandatory fee that a family pays when registering their child to secure a spot in the program. For the purposes of this guideline, registration fees that are applied to future services (such as the first month of service) are fee deposits.

**Resource Consultant (RC):** An experienced early childhood educator with specialized knowledge of child development, early intervention, children who need extra support, and inclusive practices.

**Service day:** A 24-hour period that begins in the calendar year, starting at the time the eligible centre first accepts children into care or at the end of the previous 24-hour period, during which the centre is enrolled in CWELCC and charges a base fee as outlined in the parent handbook, even if the centre is closed, such as on a statutory holiday.

**Supervisor:** Staff who work in a supervisor position. A supervisor must have Director's approval and meet licensing requirements outlined by the Ministry of Education.

**Statutory benefits:** The benefits that you must provide to your staff, by law, such as up to 2 weeks of vacation days, 9 statutory holidays, Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Employment Insurance (EI), Employer Health Tax (EHT) if applicable, Workforce Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) if applicable.

**Top-up:** Is an extra-amount that supplements the benchmark allocation of providers who qualify. In 2026, there are 2 types of top-ups: a legacy top-up and a growth top-up. Review [Section 3: Funding components, flexibility, and budget management](#) to learn more.

**Vacancy rate:** The number of operating spaces in which no child is enrolled, divided by the total number of operating capacity reported by the eligible centre.

**Wage floor:** The minimum that a provider participating in the CWELCC program must pay eligible RECE staff an hour.

**Wage stability:** Refer to [Section 5.7](#) of this guideline.

## Appendix 2: 2026 CWELCC funding allocation methodology

We calculated your 2026 CWELCC estimated funding using the methodology described in the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Allocation Guideline.

Please note, for multi-site providers, we calculate allocations at a site level.

### January 2026: Roll-over allocation

Your January 2026 CWELCC allocation is a rollover of your 2025 CWELCC amount (some exceptions apply):

- Benchmark allocation: Based on the licensed and operating capacity you reported in June 2025 and the provincial 2025 benchmarks.
- Legacy or growth top-up: If you received legacy or growth top-up in 2025, you will continue to receive the same amount in January. You can review the 2025 CWELCC guideline to find how your legacy costs were calculated.
- Amount in lieu of profit/surplus: You will continue to receive the same monthly amount in January based on your 2025 allocation.
- Parent fee revenue offset: We will continue to deduct the same monthly amount in January based on your 2025 estimated parent revenue offset. This is calculated based on a 10% vacancy rate.

If you opened new CWELCC spaces in 2025, we will update your allocation to reflect 12 months of operations for 2026.

### April 2026 update

By April 2026, we will revise your 2026 CWELCC funding allocations as follows:

- Benchmark allocation: Update your licensed and operating capacity data using the data you reported for October 2025 and the 2026 provincial benchmarks.
- Amount in lieu of profit/surplus: Update the amount using your revised cost-based allocation for 2026.
- Parent fee revenue offset: Update your estimated parent fee revenue offset to reflect a 5% vacancy rate.
- Legacy top-up and growth top-up – TBD.

## **EPS, planning time, and professional learning time are part of providers' CWELCC allocation**

If your centre opened and enrolled into CWELCC before December 31, 2024: Legacy costs including EPS, planning time and professional learning time expenses were used to assess your CWELCC legacy top-up eligibility and are built into your program-cost allocation.

If your centre or space opened or enrolled into CWELCC **after** December 31, 2024, CWELCC funding provides a growth top up in addition to the benchmark allocation to promote growth and recognize typical costs which include EPS, planning time and professional learning time.

# Appendix 3: Peel Region memo to existing child care staff impacted by the 2025 change in the GOF order of operations

January 5, 2026

Dear program staff,

We are writing to provide you with an update regarding your wages in 2026.

## Here is what you need to know

In 2026, child care providers must continue to apply the General Operating Funding (GOF)<sup>15</sup> before adding any other wage enhancements, such as the Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) and Workforce Compensation Funding (WCF).

This means that GOF funding supports may make some staff not eligible for new WEG or WCF enhancements. If this happens, staff wages cannot go down.

The 2026 wage eligibility ceiling and wage floor are:

- WEG wage eligibility ceiling is \$33.81.
- WCF Wage floor is \$25.86 for registered early childhood educator (RECE) program staff and \$26.86 for RECE child care supervisors.
- WCF Wage ceiling is \$28 for RECE program staff and \$31 for RECE child care supervisors.

**If your GOF funding pushes your hourly wage over the 2026 WEG or WCF wage eligibility ceilings, your hourly wage as of December 31, 2024, will be held, ensuring that your pay does not decrease.**

**Wage tool:** Your employer will receive a tool that will help them estimate your 2026 wages.

**Questions:** If you have questions or concerns about your workforce funding amount, please speak to your employer.

If you still have concerns, please email: [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca) using the subject line "Staff Workforce Compensation Inquiry" and include your employer's name.

Thank you for your continued dedication to support children and families in Peel Region.

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<sup>15</sup> The GOF includes Staff Wages and Benefits (SWB), historical funding, and pay equity.



Sincerely,

Early Years and Child Care Services

Peel Region

## Examples

To illustrate the change, and its impacts on staff wages for 2025 and 2026 review the example on Tables 4, 5 and 6. In this example a RECE program staff must be held at the higher 2024 Total Hourly Wage.

**Table 4. Example of 2024 wage calculation.**

2024 wage item	2024 hourly wage amount
Base wage	\$17.20
Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG)	\$2
<b>Subtotal of base wage and WEG</b>	<b>\$19.20</b>
Workforce Compensation Fund (WCF) Annual Increase	\$2
WCF Wage Floor	\$2.66
<b>Subtotal with WCF</b>	<b>\$23.86</b>
<b>GOF (SWB, historical, pay equity)</b>	<b>\$3</b>
<b>2024 total hourly wage</b>	<b>\$26.86</b>

**Table 5. Example of 2025 wage calculation.**

2025 wage item	2025 hourly wage amount
Base wage	\$17.20
<b>GOF (SWB, historical, pay equity)</b>	<b>\$3</b>
<b>Subtotal of base wage including GOF</b>	<b>\$20.20</b>
WEG	\$2
WCF Annual Increase	\$3
<b>Subtotal with WEG and WCF Annual Increase</b>	<b>\$25.20</b>
WCF Wage Floor	\$0.00
<b>2025 total hourly wage</b>	<b>\$25.20</b>
<b>Hourly wage to be paid in 2025</b>	<b>\$26.86</b>

Table 6. Example of 2026 wage calculation.

2026 wage item	2026 hourly wage amount
Base wage (increased due to increase in minimum wage)	\$17.60
<b>GOF (SWB, historical, pay equity)</b>	<b>\$3</b>
<b>Subtotal of base wage including GOF</b>	<b>\$20.60</b>
WEG	\$2
WCF Annual Increase	\$4
<b>Subtotal with WEG and WCF Annual Increase</b>	<b>\$26.60</b>
WCF Wage Floor (\$25.86)	\$0.00
<b>2025 total hourly wage</b>	<b>\$26.60</b>
<b>Hourly wage to be paid in 2026</b>	<b>\$26.86</b>

When you compare these tables, the 2025 total hourly wage is \$1.66 lower than the 2024 total hourly wage and the 2026 total hourly wage is \$0.26 lower than the 2024 total hourly wage. In this example, staff must be held at the higher 2024 hourly wage (\$26.86) until they become eligible for additional increases.

## Appendix 4: Peel Region memo to new RECE child care staff

January 5, 2026

Dear program staff,

Thank you for playing a fundamental role in shaping the future of children in Peel.

RECEs who work in licensed child care programs that are taking part in CWELCC, may receive higher wage increases through 2 key provincial workforce funding sources: the wage floor and wage ceiling.

Here is what you need to know.

### Wage floor

In 2026, the starting wages for eligible RECE program staff increased to \$25.86 an hour. The starting wage for eligible RECE supervisors and RECE home child care visitors is \$26.86 an hour. This means if you earn less than the wage floor (including Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG), and the RECE annual wage increase), you will receive workforce funds to bring your pay up to the floor.

Table 7. RECE wage floor from 2022 to 2026.

Wage floor 2022 to 2026 <sup>16</sup>	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>RECE program staff</b>	\$18	\$19	\$23.86	\$24.86	<b>\$25.86</b>
<b>RECE supervisors</b>	\$20	\$21	\$24.86	\$25.86	<b>\$26.86</b>

### Increase to the wage eligibility ceiling

The wage eligibility ceiling is the maximum wage that can be reached using workforce funding for the given year. The new provincial wage ceiling is in Table 8.

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<sup>16</sup> In addition to the hourly wage, staff must receive the associated benefits.

**Table 8. RECE wage eligibility ceiling from 2022 to 2026.**

Wage ceiling 2022 to 2026 <sup>17</sup>	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>RECE program staff</b>	\$25	\$25	\$26	\$27	<b>\$28</b>
<b>RECE supervisors</b>	\$25	\$25	\$29	\$30	<b>\$31</b>

In 2026, RECE staff earning less than \$28 an hour (including WEG) and RECE supervisor and RECE home visitors earning less than \$31 an hour (including WEG) will receive the workforce wage increase funding up to \$4 an hour.

Please note that this is not a wage cap. Employers can choose to pay RECE wages above the ceiling.

You will receive the applicable wage increases as part of your regular paystubs.

## Questions

Please refer to the examples below of how the provincial workforce funding is calculated for eligible staff.

If you have questions or concerns about your workforce funding amount, please speak to your employer.

If you still have concerns, please email: [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca) using the subject line "Staff Workforce Compensation Inquiry" and include your employer's name.

Thank you for your dedication to support children and families in Peel Region.

Sincerely,

Early Years and Child Care Services

Peel Region

## CWELCC workforce funding examples for new staff

We have included some examples in this memo to show how to calculate the Workforce Compensation Funding (WCF) for different staff. These examples are for informational purposes only.

**Table 9. Example of a RECE program staff with a base wage of \$17.60 an hour.**

Workforce compensation	Eligibility	Amount
Base wage (employer paid)	NA	\$17.6
2024 GOF	NA	\$0

<sup>17</sup> In addition to the hourly wage, staff must receive the associated benefits.

Workforce compensation	Eligibility	Amount
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$17.6</b>
WEG	Yes, base wage is less than the WEG maximum of \$33.81.	\$19.6
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$19.6</b>
Annual Wage Increase (WCF)	Yes, base wage plus WEG is \$19.6, which is less than the 2026 wage ceiling of \$28.	\$4
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$23.6</b>
Wage Floor (WCF)	Yes, base wage plus WEG, plus the Annual Wage Increase is \$23.6, which is less than the 2026 Wage Floor of \$25.86.	\$2.26
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$25.86</b>

**Table 10. Example of a RECE supervisor with a base wage of \$21 an hour.**

Workforce compensation	Eligibility	Amount
Base wage (employer paid)	NA	\$21
2024 GOF	NA	\$0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$21</b>
WEG	Yes, Base wage is less than the \$33.81 WEG maximum.	\$2
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$23</b>
Annual Wage Increase (WCF)	Yes, base wage plus WEG is \$23, which is less than the 2026 Wage Eligibility Ceiling of \$31.	\$4
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$27</b>
Wage Floor (WCF)	No, base wage plus WEG, plus the Annual Wage Increase is \$27, which is over the 2026 Wage Floor of \$26.86.	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$27</b>

## Appendix 5: Planning time and professional learning communication to eligible staff

<Date>

Dear early years and child care professional,

We are pleased to share that funding is available this year to support planning time and professional learning.

As professionals supporting young children, your work is valued. This funding is one way to recognize your role and support your professional growth.

### Planning time available from January 1 to December 31, 2026

Eligible staff will receive up to 4 hours of planning time every month. This can be scheduled weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. This time is meant to support you in planning thoughtful and engaging activities based on the interests and needs of the children in your care and can include reflective practices.

Program staff that work a minimum of 20 hours a week supporting ratio requirements as outlined in the CCEYA in any one-week period (Monday to Sunday), within a consistent classroom or cohort of children are eligible.

### Professional learning available from January 1 to December 31, 2026

Your organization's funding includes up to \$500 for each eligible full-time staff member to support participation in professional learning, based on your organization's discretion. You can use this funding to cover the cost of eligible sessions, courses, release time, or training that are relevant to your work and professional interests in the child care field.

Program staff and supervisors who work a minimum of 20 hours a week supporting ratio requirements as outlined in the CCEYA qualify (excluding supply and casual staff).

The amount you can receive is prorated based on your employment status. For example, a staff with a 0.75 FTE status can receive a prorated learning amount of up to \$375 ( $0.75 \times \$500$ ).

**IMPORTANT:** Before signing up or paying for any professional learning activity, you must get approval from your employer first.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this letter, please contact your  
<add supervisor Name>

## Appendix 6: Professional learning topics and activities

Under professional learning, you can use funding to cover the costs of registration, fees, release time and extra hours worked to participate in eligible training, courses and professional learning sessions on the following topics:

- Early years and child care pedagogical practices aligned with [How Does Learning Happen?](#)
- Supporting children with additional needs in an inclusive class-wide model and strategies that support the inclusion of all children.
- Health, safety, and well-being of children such as nutrition, environmental health, communicable diseases, and duty to report.
- Mental health and well-being of staff such as Compassion Fatigue, Personal Resilience, Addressing Burnout and Emotional Intelligence.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- The CCEYA, its regulations and ministry policy.
- Early years and child care leadership practices to support current and aspiring leaders seeking to learn more about management, administration, and leadership.
- Business administration such as financial literacy, human resource management, policy development and business software skills.
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) training requirements.
- ECE diploma courses (if paid out of pocket and not eligible for other grants such as the [Qualification Upgrade Program](#) (QUP), course work and field placement completion.
- Certification in standard first aid, including infant and child CPR, issued by a training agency recognized by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.  
Note: This is only eligible if the courses offered by [CDRCP](#) were not available at the time of their hiring.
- Completing the [Continuous Professional Learning \(CPL\) program](#) of the College of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (CECE) for RECEs only.
- [CDRCP professional learning](#) opportunities.
- Meeting with Quality Initiatives Mentor about Raising the Bar program goals.
- Participating in formal mentoring relationships or programs as Mentors or Mentees.



- Dedicated time outside of ratio for existing staff to coach and model practices for newly hired staff in their role (this does not include mandatory training or onboarding required by the Employment Standards Act).
- Meeting with PIRS staff on Individual Program Plans (IPP).
- Adapting activities and materials to support goals or strategies outlined in a child's IPP.

## Appendix 7: Professional learning resources

There is flexibility to participate in eligible professional learning in a format that best suits your needs. Sessions may be completed individually or in groups, either in - person or online.

Examples of ways to engage in professional learning include, (but not limited) to:

- Continuing education courses.
- Online learning such as courses, webinars, videos, presentations or articles.
- Facilitator-led training sessions.

Below is a general list of agencies and examples of eligible training that offer professional learning in the forms of live events, pre-recorded events, publications, documenting articles, news, and podcasts. Offerings change occasionally, so you must ensure that the training or learning that you engage in is aligned with the topics in the guideline.

- [Child Development Resource Connection Peel](#) (CDRCP).
- College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario: [The Continuous Professional Learning \(CPL\) Program | Welcome to the College of Early Childhood Educators](#).
- Canada Child Care Federation (CCCCF): [ELCC Professional Development | Canadian Child Care Federation](#).
- Association francophone a l'éducation des services a l'enfance (AEFESO): [Learning Activities | Services | AFESEO](#).
- Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO): [Professional Learning - Association Early Childhood Educators Ontario](#).
- Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development: [Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development | Ontario Institute for Studies in Education](#).
- Child Care Resource and Research Unit: [About CRRU | childcarecanada.org](#).
- Métis Nation of Ontario: [Education and Training - Métis Nation of Ontario](#).
- Harvard Business Review: [Harvard Business Review - Ideas and Advice for Leaders](#).
- Geneva Centre: [Learning - Geneva Centre for Autism](#).
- The Hanen Centre: [The Hanen Centre - The Hanen Centre](#).
- Ontario Aboriginal Head Start Association: [Professional Development - Ontario Aboriginal Head Start Association](#).

- Big Ideas for the Care of Tiny Humans: [A Resource for Early Childhood Educators on Infant Mental Health](#).
- Early Years Specialist (EYS), Quality Initiatives Mentor and Resource Consultant feedback.
- Training aligned with the Quality Enhancement Initiative - Raising the Bar goals.
- Physical literacy Network and programs as Active for Life or Play in Peel.

This is not an exhaustive list. You may engage in other eligible learning opportunities that meet guideline criteria.

## Appendix 8: CWELCC cost eligibility assessment

To determine if a cost is eligible for CWELCC funding, follow this step-by-step decision framework:

1. Was the cost incurred in 2026?
  - If the answer is yes, proceed to the next question.
  - If the answer is no, the cost is ineligible.
2. Is this cost on the ineligible list?
  - If the answer is yes, the cost is ineligible.
  - If the answer is no, proceed to the next question.
3. Is the cost attributable to the provision of child care included in the base fee for eligible children? Attributable means that the cost is directly or indirectly tied to providing child care to CWELCC eligible children.
  - If the answer is yes, proceed to the next question.
  - If the answer is no, the cost is ineligible.
4. Is the cost appropriate to the provision of child care for eligible children? Appropriate means that the cost is necessary and fitting for the circumstances?
  - If the answer is yes, proceed to the next question.
  - If the answer is no, the cost is ineligible.
5. Is the cost (or a portion of it) reasonable? In addition, is the quality and amount consistent with Fair Market Value? Fair Market Value is the price an item would sell for under current market conditions, assuming both the buyer and seller are seeking the best possible price.
  - If the answer is yes, the cost is eligible.
  - If the answer is no, the cost is ineligible.

This framework ensures that only costs that are appropriate, attributable and reasonable are considered eligible for funding.

Figure 1 is an illustrative format of the decision matrix described above. This will aid in guiding you through each decision point to determine cost eligibility under the 2026 CWELCC funding guidelines.

Figure 1. CWELCC cost eligibility assessment.

