

Strengthening affordable and accessible child care

Financial relief for families

Child care is widely considered an economic enabler while also improving early development in children.

In the time since the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement (CWELCC) was rolled out in 2019, more Peel families have access to affordable, high-quality child care.

The success of this program would not be possible without including the **\$5,359,251** Peel received from the Province of Ontario in new 2026 Infrastructure Funding to better support existing child care expansion projects.

Expansion challenges

While substantial progress has been made, several factors are limiting the ability to achieve expansion targets in Peel Region within current timelines:

Construction and permitting delays: While not all project timelines extend beyond the deadline, some new builds and facility retrofits are subject to zoning approvals, building permits, and construction timelines that extend beyond funding deadlines.

Capital funding timing: Delayed release of infrastructure funding has compressed project approval, planning and construction timelines, reducing the number of viable new builds.

Workforce shortages: Challenges recruiting and retaining Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) are slowing the operational readiness of new spaces.

As a result, many projects, particularly non-profit capital builds, are at risk of not being completed before funding deadlines. Without flexibility, Peel Region may be forced to forfeit approved projects despite demonstrated local need and readiness of providers to serve families.

Peel Region actions

Through the CWELCC expansion plan, the Ministry of Education has allocated Peel Region a target of **12,567 new spaces** to be added to the child care system by **December 31, 2026**. Work is ongoing with providers to operationalize these spaces by the deadline.



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Child Care expansion of this size is not without its challenges and Peel Region has already taken steps to support the successful completion of ongoing expansion projects. Peel Region staff continue to collaborate with Public Health and local fire departments to support licensing requirements as well as with local municipal staff on permits and construction regulations.

Peel Region has shared a list of all ongoing projects with timeline details to the Ministry of Education licensing unit so that they can effectively plan for increased workload and resourcing needs as projects come to them for licensing approvals.

To further mitigate the risk of funding clawbacks, should projects face delays, Peel Region has engaged Peel MPs and MPPs to inform them of the projects underway in their areas and the risks involved should funding be removed from these projects due to unforeseen delays.

Key takeaway

Flexibility protects provincial investment

The provincial government can support ongoing efforts in Peel Region to fully deliver on Ontario's Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care commitments and avoid unintended funding losses by providing flexibility for funding reallocation and project completion timelines.

