

2023 Child Care Funding and Service Guidelines



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 6

VISION 6

DEFINITIONS..... 6

CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS (CCEY) SYSTEM PLANNING AND EXPANSION 9

 System Planning Responsibility 9

 Expansion 9

 Funding Calculation..... 10

SERVICE AGREEMENT TERM AND CONDITIONS..... 10

 United Counties of Leeds and Grenville..... 11

 Operator 12

FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS 13

 Audited Financial Statements 13

 Board Approved Annual Budget..... 14

 Segregated Schedule of Revenues and Expenditures 14

 Post Audit Management Letter 14

 Interim Finance..... 14

 Basis of Accounting – Schedule Revenues and Expenses..... 15

 Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Insurance 15

 Compliance Reviews..... 16

 Supporting Documentation Requirements..... 16

 Reporting Year 17

 Late Filing 17

 Recovery of Funds..... 18

 Profits and Surplus..... 18

 Operating Reserves 18

 Ineligible Expenditures 18

BUSINESS OPERATIONS 19

 Reporting Business Updates and Changes..... 19

Fees	19
Duty to Report.....	20
Serious Incident Reporting	21
Conflict of Interest	21
Complaints Resolutions Processes.....	22
Reviews (Appeal Process)	22
Public Communications	22
Inquiries	23
CHILD CARE FUNDING	24
General Operating Funding (GOF)	24
Wage Enhancement/Home Child Care Enhancement Funding (WEG/HCCEG).....	28
Small Water Works (SWW) Funding.....	33
Pay Equity Funding	34
Reimbursement for Audited Financials Expense Funding.....	36
Administrative Funding.....	37
Child Care Fee Subsidy (CCFS) Funding.....	40
Business Quality and Improvement (BQI) Funding.....	43
Special Project Funding.....	48
Enhanced Support Funding (SNR)	50
CANADA WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE (CWELCC) SYSTEM	52
Funding.....	52
Enrollment in CWELCC	53
Eligibility Criteria.....	53
Eligible Children Under CWELCC	53
Fee Rates and Licensed Spaces	54
New Licensees/New Participation/Expansion	55

Opting-Out of CWELLC After Enrollment	56
Opting Out After Enrollment, Then Opting Back In.....	56
Sales and Acquisitions of Child Care Businesses	56
Fee Reduction.....	57
Implementation of Fee Reduction	57
Child Care Fee Subsidy: Parent Contribution.....	59
Implementation.....	59
WORKFORCE COMPENSATION FUNDING	59
Payments to Staff	59
Eligibility	60
Ineligibility.....	60
Alignment with Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant	60
Annual Increase.....	61
Wage Floor	61
Implementation.....	62
Benefits and Flexibility.....	62
Implementation.....	62
Minimum Wage Off-Set.....	63
Implementation.....	64
Staff Working in Programs Serving Children Aged 6-12	64
Alignment with Collective Agreements.....	64
Reporting	64
Terms and Conditions.....	65
AN INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE SYSTEM AND SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE SERVICE.....	66
Access	67
Special Needs Resource Services Available	67



2023 Child Care Funding and Service Guidelines
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

Inclusion Consultants.....	67
OTHER CONSULTATIVE SERVICES AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	68
Program Consultant	68
Professional Learning.....	68
APPENDIX - A	70
APPENDIX - B.....	71
APPENDIX - C	72
APPENDIX - D	73

INTRODUCTION

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (the Counties) is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) responsible for planning and managing licensed child care within Leeds and Grenville. As such, the Children's Services Department has set out policies and guidelines, contained within this document, for Child Care Operators (Operators) who have a Service Agreement with the Counties. This guideline outlines the parameters under which the Counties will flow child care funding and services, and describes the requirements of the funding/services, including any obligations and responsibilities of the Operator.

VISION

The Children's Services Department of the Counties envisions the highest quality licensed child care and early years system that provides inclusive and responsive child care programs; a system that views all children as competent and capable.

DEFINITIONS

Actual Cost means funding to support the costs incurred in the portion of the Operator's child care business for eligible children, net of generated revenues received by the Operator from base fees, any provincial and current Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) funding, municipal funding, and other revenues provided to an Operator to support the costs associated with base fees for eligible children.

Administrative Expense means costs associated with staff who do not directly deliver services to clients. This includes, but is not limited to, the following roles/positions in the Operator's organization: Executive Director, Director, Manager, Supervisor, Administrative Assistant, Legal, IT, Human Resources, Payroll, Finance, etc.

Arm's Length Transaction means transactions in which two or more unrelated and unaffiliated parties agree to do business, acting independently and in their self-interest.

Base Fee means any fee or part of a fee that is charged in respect of a child for child care, including anything an Operator is required to provide under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA), or anything an Operator requires the parent to purchase from the Operator, but does not include a non-base fee.

Base Wage means the hourly rate paid by the employer plus General Operating top-up plus Pay Equity (if applicable).

Capital Reserves means funds that are set aside for the capital needs of an organization with physical assets, such as vehicles and buildings, and help plan and prepare for both expected and unexpected capital replacement costs.

CCEYA means Child Care and Early Years Act (2014).

Child Care Operator is the licensed child care agency that provides child care at a centre or contracts with providers to provide child care in a home.

Child with Special Needs a child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development, are of such a nature that additional supports are required for the child (Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014).

CMSM/DSSAB means a Consolidated Municipal Service Manager/District Social Services Administration Board (CMSM/DSSAB) designated as a Service System Manager as defined in the CCEYA, 2014.

CWELCC means the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System for early years and child care funding provided for in an agreement entered into by the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada.

CWELCC Eligible Child means (a) any child, until the last day of the month in which the child turns six (6) years old, and (b) up until June 30 in calendar year, and child who (i) turns six (6) years old between January 1 and June 30 in that calendar year, and (ii) is enrolled in a licensed infant, toddler, preschool or kindergarten group, a licensed family age group, or home child care, as defined in the CCEYA.

EDU means Ministry of Education.

Enrollment means the number of children registered to attend a child care program.

Fair Market Value means the price an asset would sell for on the open market when certain conditions are met. The conditions are: the parties involved are aware of all the facts, are acting in their own interest, are free of any pressure to buy or sell, and have ample time to make the decision.

Financial Viability means that revenue meets or exceeds expenditures.

Funds means the money the Ministry of Education (EDU) provides to the CMSM/DSSAB to allocate.

Inclusion means all children, including those with special needs, are able to actively and meaningfully participate in licensed child care and early years programs and are supported to form authentic, caring relationships with their peers and educators.

Licensed Capacity means for a child care centre, the maximum number of children, including the number in each age category, permitted to be receiving child care in the child care centre at one time as set out in the license of the child care centre. Licensed Capacity for home child care means the maximum number of children permitted to be receiving child care in the home at one time as set out in the agreement between the licensed home child care agency and home child care provider.

Licensed Child Care Operator (the Operator) is defined as the business organization responsible for the delivery of licensed child care services as licensed by the Ministry of Education, Ontario.

Non-Base Fee means any fees charged for optional items or optional services, such as transportation or field trips, or any fees charged pursuant to an agreement between the parent and the Operator in respect of circumstances where the parent fails to meet the terms of the agreement (e.g. fees for picking up a child late, fees to obtain items that the parent agreed to provide for their child but failed to provide), as defined in the CCEYA.

Not-for-Profit Corporations Act means the legislation that provides the legal framework for the not-for-profit sector.

O. Reg. 137/15 means the General Regulation under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014.

Operating Capacity means the number of spaces the centre/home child care is operating as per the licensee's staffing complement and budget, to a maximum ceiling of the licensed capacity. Operating capacity differs from enrollment.

Operating Reserves means an unrestricted fund balance set aside to stabilize the organization's finances by providing a cushion against unexpected events, losses of income, and large unbudgeted expenses.

Profit Threshold means the break-even point at which a business becomes profitable. This threshold is reached when the total cost to run a business is equal to its total revenues. Above this threshold, the business is deemed to have entered a profit zone.

Schedule A is the schedule entitled Schedule "A", attached to and forming part of the Service Agreement that identifies funding allocations being provided by the Counties.

Service Provider means the business organization responsible for the delivery of licensed child care services as licensed by the Ministry of Education, Ontario.

The Counties means the Corporation of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS (CCEY) SYSTEM PLANNING AND EXPANSION

System Planning Responsibility

Designated as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), by the Government of Ontario, for Leeds and Grenville, the Counties is responsible for planning and managing licensed child care services and EarlyON Child and Family Centres (EarlyON) in our communities. The Counties is responsible for identifying community needs for licensed child care and EarlyON, allocating funding to address community needs and ensuring that system growth and service delivery aligns with the Leeds and Grenville Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan.

Expansion

Funding for expansion and child care operation, including Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) is not guaranteed, it is at the discretion of the Counties and is dependent on funding and provincial/municipal guidelines.

Existing Operators with a Service Agreement with the Counties, that have the intention to expand their licensed child care location(s), must contact the Counties at least four (4) months in advance of the anticipated start of the project, to discuss possible expansion funding opportunities and available operational funding.

New Operators that do not have a current Service Agreement with the Counties, that have the intention to build/develop new licensed child care programs in Leeds and Grenville, must contact the Counties at least six (6) months in advance of the anticipated start of the project to discuss expansion funding opportunities and available operational funding.

Possible expansion funds will only be provided to Operators whose child care expansion will increase the number of net new licensed child care spaces in Leeds and Grenville while ensuring equitable service to families and is in line with the Counties' Service Plan. Expansion funding will be prioritized for not-for-profit Operators.

Funding Calculation

Funding calculations are specific to each funding category. Funding will be issued upon approval and will be reconciled annually.

SERVICE AGREEMENT TERM AND CONDITIONS

Operators that hold a Service Agreement with the Counties are eligible to access and/or receive funding from the Counties as outlined in this document, to support the operation of licensed child care programs.

An Operator that does not currently have a Service Agreement with the Counties but wishes to enter into an Agreement, must complete the application process, which includes providing specific documentation and meeting established criteria. Application for an Agreement is not guaranteed, as the Counties reserves the right to deny any application and/or Operator that does not meet the required criteria. The Counties may also deny an application due to insufficient availability of funding or misalignment with service system planning.

Entering into an Agreement with the Counties, requires that service providers comply with applicable federal and provincial laws, such as the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Not-For-Profit Act, the Child Care and Early Years Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, as well as related regulations, provincial guidelines, and regional policies. Failure to comply will result in termination of the Agreement.

For Operators that hold an Agreement with the Counties, the following terms and conditions will govern the provision of funding and services:

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

- Eligibility for funding amounts as well as service provisions to Operators will be determined at the discretion of the Counties.
- Information submitted by the Operator for eligibility of expenditures will be subject to review as part of the Counties' funding and reconciliation process.
- The Counties has the discretion and right to:
 - Determine eligibility of an Operator's revenues, costs and expenses, based on funding requirements provided to Operators and to adjust funding provided based on review.
 - Deny funding for expenses, or to only pay what is deemed to be fair market value, as determined by the Counties.
 - Deny funding for expenditures arising from transactions not conducted at arm's length.
 - Deny funding for ineligible expenditures, based on applicable guidelines and parameters provided by the Counties.
 - Deny funding for expenditures above what has been determined eligible for funding by the Counties.
 - Deny the provision of services to an Operator (i.e. Special Needs Resourcing, Program Consultation).
 - Determine the amount of funding that can be spent by Operators on administration expenses.
 - Withhold or recover funds from on-going payments from the Counties, if required.

- Require Operators to seek approval if additional funding is required by the Operator above what is allowed.
- Determine if an Operator's operation in child care is sustainable and financially viable. The Counties has the discretion to define sustainable and financial viability.

Operator

Operators with a Service Agreement with the Counties are required to:

- Adhere to all requirements and expectations as outlined in the Agreement with the Counties as well as any/all Service Schedules, etc.
- Maintain their license and function in a manner that is consistent with the requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 and the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, including the Code of Ethics and Professional Misconduct Regulation.
- Not-for-Profit Operators must ensure alignment with the Ontario Not-For Profit Corporation Act as well as all applicable legislation and requirements.
- Ensure the service provision and inclusivity of children in need of fee subsidy, of children with special needs and of children from marginalized and racialized communities.
- Use funds to support funding objectives in accordance with the purchase of service agreement, applicable legislation, regulations and applicable guideline requirements provided to Operators. Failure to comply with any of the funding conditions herein may result in a claim for the recovery of funding as well as ineligibility to receive future funds under one or more funding streams.
- Inform the Counties of any changes to operating capacity thirty (30) days prior to the changes becoming effective.
- Notify the Counties in advance of the sale or acquisition of the child care businesses and/or change in ownership.
- Notify the Counties of changes to signing authority and/or change to the agency leadership including but not limited to a change in the Executive Director, Director and/or Board Chair.
- Provide in a timely manner sufficient and detailed financial, statistical, or other information related to child care operations as required by the Counties.

- Have sound business management practices and be in good standing with respect to financial/contract reporting requirements as set out by the Counties and contained within these Guidelines.
- Allow Counties staff or such other person(s) appointed by the Counties, at all reasonable times, to inspect and audit records of account (i.e. accounting or financial records).
- Maintain all financial and other documentation pertaining to funding and operations for no less than seven (7) years. In the event the Operator ceases operations, the Operator shall not, without the prior written consent of the Counties, dispose of any records related to the services provided for under this Agreement.
- Complete the annual Licensed Child Care Operations Survey as required by the Ministry Director, under O. Reg. 137/15 (77).
- Maintain a copy of the Service Agreement in electronic or hard copy format, on the child care premises and have available for Ministry of Education (EDU) inspection.
- In accordance with O. Reg 137/15, Operators must disclose in their parent handbook the times when child care services are offered and when holidays are observed, the base fee(s) and any non-base fees that may be charged and whether the site is enrolled in CWELCC.
- Provide to the Counties, in a timely manner, an updated version of the Operator's Parent Handbook each time an amendment or update is made.

FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Operators must submit the following financial documents and reports to the Counties on an annual basis, or when requested by the Counties.

Audited Financial Statements

Operators must submit Audited Financial Statements for the organization as a whole on a yearly basis to allow the Counties to assess the agency's overall financial condition.

Within the Audited Financial Statement, Operator revenue and expenses must be provided in a report and segregated from non-childcare operations of the agency. A Review Engagement will not be accepted as an Audited Financial Statement.

Board Approved Annual Budget

Operators must submit a Board approved annual budget to the Counties on a yearly basis.

Segregated Schedule of Revenues and Expenditures

Supplementary information segmented by service including a schedule of revenue and expenditures must be submitted. Supplementary information schedules require a minimum of a review report prepared by an independent professional accountant.

Post Audit Management Letter

This letter is issued by an independent professional accountant subsequent to the completion of the annual audit.

Interim Finance

As part of the reporting submissions, Operators will be required to report on and provide explanations for significant variances and the impacts on staff and services for child care operations located within Leeds and Grenville. Significant variance reports are required as per the following chart:

Expense/Data Type	Significant Variance Reporting
Major Expenditure Category	+/- 10% (or more) compared to its prior year's Financial Statements
Service Data	+/- 10% (or more) compared to its prior year's Financial Statements

The Counties will review all financial submissions and will examine/follow up with Operators on expenditures reported to determine reasonability of variances and/or eligibility of expenditure.

Basis of Accounting – Schedule Revenues and Expenses

Operators are required to report their revenues and expenditures using the modified accrual basis of accounting. The modified accrual accounting requires the inclusion of short-term accruals of normal operating expenditures in the determination of operating results for a given time period. Short-term accruals are defined as payable or receivable usually within 30 days of year-end.

Under modified accrual accounting, expenditures that would be amortized under full accrual accounting must be recognized as expenditures in the budget year the goods or services are received. Expenditures made once each year (i.e. insurance), must be treated consistently from year to year.

Non-cash transactions are not recognized as these expenses do not represent actual cash expenditures related to the current period; however, related payments are admissible. Non-cash transactions include:

- Provisions for pension expenses;
- Provisions for unused sick leave and wage settlements;
- Provisions for repairs or replacements;
- Provisions for bad debts;
- Retainer fees for legal services; and
- Provisions for amortization.

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Insurance

Operators are required to maintain WSIB insurance for their child care program(s), keep their account in good standing and to provide a copy of the WSIB certificate to the Counties on an annual basis.

In the event that an Operator does not hold WSIB coverage, but has coverage through another entity, Leeds Grenville will require a copy of the non-mandatory certificate issued by WSIB that confirms the agency is not required to cover WSIB coverage for the child care program, and verification of a comparable alternate coverage policy.

Compliance Reviews

Similar to auditing, regular compliance reviews provide an unbiased and objective review of Operator adherence to specific requirements, such as regulations, guidelines, policies and directives. A program compliance review will be conducted with each Operator on a rotational basis. Through reviews, the Counties aims to:

- Strengthen accountability with the Child Care and Early Years sector;
- Gather field intelligence on data and validate/strengthen existing processes and inform future policy decisions; and
- Obtain best practices contributing to continuous sector improvement.

Upon receiving a notice of intent to audit and/or review, Operators will be required to work with the Counties by:

- Ensuring that all requested documents are on-site.
- Being available to answer any questions that arise during the review.

Supporting Documentation Requirements

In addition to the financial/compliance documentation requirements, the following supporting documents will also be required from Operators on an annual basis where applicable:

- Copy of current lease/rental or mortgage agreement.
- Board approved annual budget.
- General Liability Insurance coverage and personal injury coverage which includes, where applicable:
 - Coverage for the employees of each child care centre and volunteers in each child care centre in an amount not less than five million dollars (\$5,000,000), the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Named as Third-Party Insurer.
 - Coverage for employees of the home child care agency and each home child care provider at a premise where the licensee oversees the provision of home child care, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Named as Third-Party Insurer.
 - Motor Vehicle Insurance coverage for all vehicles owned by the child care business/agency.
- List and contact information for the current Board of Directors.

- Proof of Board of Director Insurance.
- Copy of the Parent Handbook.
- Signing Authority Form.
- Any other supporting documentation requested by the Counties relevant to the funding, administration and operation of child care services.

Reporting Year

Unless otherwise required, the Operator must submit to the Counties Audited Financial Statements, Statement of Revenue and Expenses, and requested supporting documents within five (5) months of the calendar year-end. Interim Finance reports must be submitted no more than 45 days after June 30 each year.

Late Filing

Where an Operator submits required documents after the deadline, the Counties will take the following action until the submission has been received:

- Two (2) weeks after the deadline, inform the Operator that the submission is overdue.
- After 30 days, cash flow of Operator's GOF and CWELCC funding will be reduced by 50% of the Operator's monthly payment. The Counties will work with the Operator to discuss any challenges with providing the information and to offer support.

Upon receipt of submission requirements, the Counties will revert to the standard monthly payment process and will include the total amount withheld up to that point.

The Counties reserves the right to suspend any funding categories, in year or in the subsequent years. Should an Operator have outstanding submissions, the Counties may exercise its discretion by not providing funding in the subsequent calendar year until the submissions have been received. Further, the Counties may exercise its discretion to terminate the Agreement if submissions have not been received.

Recovery of Funds

As part of the reconciliation process, Operators who have unused funds will have this amount deducted from future payments and/or the Operator will need to make payment in the amount of funds owing, payable to the Corporation of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

This includes excess funding provided during the funding year, or funding not used for its intended purpose.

Where expenditures are ineligible, not related to child care, are deemed to not be at a fair market value, or is with a related company, the Counties has the right to withhold funding, reject the expense, recover funding already paid, or only provide funding for the expenditures the Counties deems to be fair market value.

Profits and Surplus

The Counties has the discretion to determine an annual profit/surplus level to be achieved from the provision of child care for the eligible children portion of an Operator's business. Where net profit or surplus exceeds a municipally or provincially established threshold, the Operator will be required to return excess funding.

Operating Reserves

Operators are permitted to contribute CWELCC and General Operating Funds (GOF) towards operational reserves. The Counties has the discretion to determine the maximum amount of CWELCC and GOF that may be contributed to an Operator's operational reserves. No other funding can be utilized to build operational reserves.

Ineligible Expenditures

Expenses that do not directly support child care funding goals and initiatives (i.e. expenses that are not related to the provision of child care for eligible children and mandated compensation increases for eligible staff), are ineligible.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Reporting Business Updates and Changes

Operators must notify the Counties when there are changes to the Operator's business, **before these changes occur**, including:

- Sale of business;
- Amalgamation;
- Program relocation;
- Opening of a new program/site;
- Expansion of an existing program/site; this includes any changes to the number of licensed home child care providers supported by a home child care agency;
- Changes to licensed or operating capacity, or implementation of an alternate license capacity;
- Disposition of furnishings or equipment purchased using funds provided by the Counties;
- Sale/transfer/renovation of child care properties that have received capital funding from the Ontario Government, either directly or through the Counties;
- Adjustments to license;
- Submission of application or new license; and
- Changes to the Board of Directors.

Fees

Operators must show transparency regarding any fees charged for child care services. Certain fees are prohibited under the CCEYA, or under the CWELCC agreement.

Waitlist Fees

Under the CCEYA, licensed child care programs in Ontario **are prohibited** from charging a waitlist fee. This requirement applies to all Operators, regardless of the age of the child and/or whether the Operator is enrolled in CWELCC.

Space Hold Fees

Operators are not permitted to charge a space holding fee if the fee will not be applied to future service and/or is not refunded to the parent, should the parent discontinue the child care service. Charging a hold fee that is not applied to future service or is not refunded would be considered a waitlist fee and is prohibited under the CCEYA. Operators may only retain the hold fee payment in cases where the parent discontinues service but does not provide the required notification, as outlined in the Operator's Parent Handbook.

Additional Fees/Charges

Operators enrolled in CWELCC **are not permitted to charge** a family with a CWELCC-eligible child any mandatory fees other than the daily parent fee. Operators cannot charge fees such as fundraising fees; registration fees or program enhancement fees. Operators may continue to charge fees for non-mandatory services where the parent can choose to opt-out of the additional service, but continue to receive daily child care services.

Duty to Report

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

Child care staff are required to make a report to Family and Children's Services (FCS) if the staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse or neglect has occurred or there is risk that it is likely to occur, regardless of whether the child and/or parent/caregiver is a client.

More information on the duty to report, what happens when a report is made and how to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect can be found at the Ministry of Children's Community and Social Services Children's Aid website <https://www.ontario.ca/page/child-welfare-and-child-protection-services>.

Serious Incident Reporting

As per the CCEYA 2014, Operators are required to complete the Serious Occurrence reports through the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS). As the service system manager, the Counties' Children's Services Manager has access to these serious occurrence reports, as well as all submitted updates. Operators must provide the Counties with additional updates, as requested.

At times, other serious incidents may occur that are not required to be reported through CCLS. These serious incidents must be reported directly to the Children's Services Department via email at childrenservices@uclg.on.ca within three (3) days of the incident occurring.

Serious incidents that must be reported to the Children's Services Manager include:

- Breach of confidentiality involving a client.
- Incidents that may result in media attention.
- Incidents that may significantly affect operations of the child care program.

Conflict of Interest

It is important for the public that Operators receiving EDU funds distributed by the Counties are being well managed. Situations can occur where a person or business interest dealing with an Operator has a conflict of interest that could damage public confidence in these funded programs.

Conflict of interest is a situation where personal or business interests of a party are in conflict with the best interests of the Operator. Conflict of Interest is defined by the Counties as:

"Occurs when, in the course of an employee's duties, the employee is called upon to deal with a matter in which the employee has a direct or indirect personal and/or financial interest. A direct interest can occur when an employee may derive, or be seen to derive, some financial or personal benefit or avoid financial or personal loss. An indirect interest may arise when the potential benefit or loss would be experienced by another person or corporation having a relationship with the employee. Conflict arises when an employee participates in activities, which could advance a personal interest at the expense of the Counties' interests."

Operators must closely monitor their relationships, arrangements, contracts and agreements and not engage in any that may result in a conflict of interest. Operators must advise the Counties, Children's Services Department immediately at childrenservices@uclg.on.ca should a conflict of interest arise.

Complaints Resolutions Processes

All Operators will ensure that any/all issues and concerns (complaints) regarding its services are addressed in a timely and transparent manner.

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially, and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of children, staff, students, volunteers and parents/guardians, except when information is disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the EDU, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities and/or Children's Aid Society).

The Operator should document and maintain a file outlining issues and concerns in detail, including a resolution or outcome to the complaint. This information must be provided to the Counties upon request.

Reviews (Appeal Process)

It is the responsibility of Operators to bring forward issues regarding program and service eligibility and funding decisions made by the Counties, that the Operator disagrees with. All requests for review must be made in writing, detailing the decision(s) and explaining why the Operator disagrees with the decision(s).

Submissions must be clearly marked "Request for Review", and directed to the Children's Services Manager within 30 days of the notice of the decision(s). Email Requests for Review to childrenservices@uclg.on.ca.

Public Communications

All public announcements regarding municipal, provincial and federal investments in Ontario's Child Care and Early Years System are potential joint communication opportunities for the provincial government, federal government, school boards, municipalities, service system managers and community partners.

Operators should not issue a news release or any other public communication directed at media regarding major child care investments and/or opening of new child care programs, without first contacting the Counties through childrenservices@uclg.on.ca about the Operator's plan to publicly communicate. A copy of the news release must be provided to the Counties to ensure it contains all the necessary information, such as recognizing the EDU's and the Counties' role in providing funding, and follows all prescribed communication protocols.

Inquiries

All questions and inquiries about child care funding within Leeds and Grenville should be directed to:

Children's Services Department
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
200 - 25 Central Avenue, West, Brockville, ON K6V 4N6
T: 613-342-3840, extension 2127 or Fax: 1-833-775-0561
Email: childrenservices@uclg.on.ca

CHILD CARE FUNDING

The provision of child care funding is at the discretion of the Counties and is dependent on provincial and federal funding allocations.

Available child care funding can be broken into two (2) general categories:

1. Funding for On-Going Business Operations
2. Funding for Business and Program Improvement

Funding On-Going Business Operations	Funding Business and Program Improvement and System Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Operating Funding* • Wage Enhancement/Home Child Care Enhancement Funding • Small Water Works Funding • Pay Equity Funding • Reimbursement for Audited Financials • Administrative Funding* • Child Care Fee Subsidy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Quality Improvement Funding* • Special Project Funding* • Child Care Expansion Funding* (see page 9) • Enhanced Support Funding

*This funding is available only to Operators enrolled in CWELCC.

See Appendix A for Child Care Funding Overview.

See Appendix B for Funding and Eligible Expense Diagram.

General Operating Funding (GOF)

General Operating Funding (GOF) supports the costs of operating licensed childcare programs to reduce wait times and fees for services, stabilize service levels, and where funds allow, improve access to high quality affordable early learning and child care services for children and their families.

Operators are strongly encouraged to utilize a minimum of 80% of GOF to enhance employee wages and benefits beyond minimum wage, Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERCs), Pay Equity funding, and Wage Enhancement funding. GOF used to enhance wages must be incorporated into regular hourly wages (i.e. cannot be paid out as a lump sum).

Remaining GOF amounts may be used for operational and audit costs, as well as for achieving wage equity where wage enhancement allocations are not sufficient, so long as the expenses are admissible as per the guidelines.

The provision of GOF funding is not guaranteed and is dependent on the Counties' annual provincial allocation.

Application/Eligibility

No application required. Operators with an existing Agreement with the Counties are not required to apply for this funding each year; allocations are provided on an annual basis. New child care programs/agencies must make an application for new or additional GOF beyond their existing annual allocation.

To Be Eligible For GOF, Operators Must

- Have an Agreement with the Counties and approval for this funding, as per Schedule A.
- Be enrolled in CWELCC (for more information about CWELCC, see page 52.)
- Demonstrate that they are able to meet the current minimum wage and mandatory benefits requirements for all staff, without the use of operating funding in order to qualify for funding.

Eligible Expenses

- Staff wages and benefits that work in the child care program, over the mandatory requirements for minimum wage plus mandatory employment related costs;
- Lease and occupancy costs of the child care program;
- Administration costs associated with the direct operation of the child care program;
- Transportation for children to attend the child care program;
- Nutrition for children attending the child care program;
- Utilities for the child care program;
- Resources (i.e. staff training);

- Program supplies for the child care program (e.g. toys, art supplies, food, etc.);
- Maintenance and repairs required for the child care business; and
- General operating expenditures of the child care business.

Ineligible Expenditures

- Bonuses (including retiring bonuses), gifts and honoraria paid to staff except in the case that they are provided as a retro-active wage increase that will be maintained the following year;
- Year-end payments to child care staff, agency staff or home child care providers;
- Debt costs including principal and interest payments related to capital loans, mortgage financing and operating loans;
- Expenses for child care programs located outside of Leeds and Grenville;
- Property taxes (under review);
- Fees paid on behalf of staff for membership in professional organizations such as the College of Early Childhood Educators;
- Any expenses not associated with the direct operation of the licensed child care program; and
- Any other expense not listed in the service description or as an eligible expense.

Funding Calculation/Allocation

An Operator's annual GOF allocations are calculated using operator-reported operating capacity data, annual operating budget and audited financial statements, and is contingent on the availability of funding from the EDU.

The intent of Provincial/Federal child care funding is that it is used to support public child care program/services. As such, not-for-profit child care agencies will be prioritized for GOF funding over for-profit agencies. Funding will be allocated monthly to Operators.

GOF for Licensed Home Child Care (Base Funding)

GOF is available to provide operating funding to support a base funding model for licensed home child care agencies to support the provision of stable, predictable funding to assist agencies with forecasting, planning and actively recruiting more providers.

These funds are expected to be used to cover operating expenses of the licensed home child care agency/program and eliminate any administrative expense being collected/charged by the agency from providers and/or parent fees.

Accountability/Reconciliation

The year-end GOF reconciliation shall be completed and submitted using the calendar year-end regardless of the provider's fiscal year end. A financial statement signed by the Board/Owner/Administrator, shall accompany reconciliations.

All Operators who receive more than \$20,000 in GOF and CWELCC combined are required to provide Audited Financial Statements completed by an external auditor.

Terms and Conditions

1. Operators are required to have a policy in place asserting equitable distribution amongst staff of any GOF going towards wages.
2. The amount of GOF used to enhance wages and benefits is to be incorporated into regular hourly wages and cannot be provided to staff/providers as a year-end payment.
3. Remaining GOF amounts may be used for operational and audit costs, as well as for achieving wage equity where wage enhancement allocations are not sufficient, so long as the expenses are admissible as per the Guidelines.
4. Operators must demonstrate that all qualified Registered Early Childhood Education (RECE) staff (including supply staff) working in an educator role, are paid a minimum hourly rate of \$17.00 per hour without Wage Enhancement or CWELCC Wage Top-Up.
5. Operators must demonstrate that the agency's daily administrative per diem deducted from child care fees is no greater than 20% (Licensed Home Child Care Agencies only).
6. Failure to submit required reports during the year in a timely manner may result in the suspension of the GOF allocation, or other remedies as determined by the Counties.
7. Any GOF not used for the intended purpose, or that exceeds the established thresholds and criteria, shall be recovered by the Counties.

Wage Enhancement/Home Child Care Enhancement Funding (WEG/HCCEG)

Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and other child care program staff play a key role during the critical years of a child's development. However, there is a significant wage gap between RECEs working in the publicly funded education system and those in the licensed child care sector. This wage gap creates challenges in retaining qualified pedagogical professionals to deliver affordable, high quality services.

The Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) helps to close the gap between RECE wages in the education sector and licensed child care sections by supporting an increase of up to \$2.00 per hour, plus 17.5% benefits for licensed program staff and home visitors.

The Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (HCCEG) supports an increase of up to \$20.00 per day for home child care providers contracted with a licensed home child care agency.

WEG is a prerequisite to applying for Workforce Compensation funding for eligible RECE staff under CWELCC.

The provision of WEG/HCCEG funding is not guaranteed and is dependent on Leeds Grenville's annual provincial allocation.

Application/Eligibility

By application. Operators apply for WEG/HCCEG funding once a year, and intake is done once annually. Any changes to staffing made after intake is not guaranteed and will be considered at reconciliation.

To Be Eligible for WEG/HCCEG Funding, Operators Must

- Be located within Leeds and Grenville.
- All licensed child care centres and home child care agencies are eligible to apply for WEG/HCCEG funding, regardless of participation in municipal quality initiatives or current Agreement status with the Counties.
- Operators are entitled to this funding regardless of auspice; non-profit or commercial may both make an application.

Eligible Expenses

Enhancement funding directed solely to licensed child care staff and home visitors to increase wages and to home child care providers to increase daily income. Note: in 2023, the Ministry has established an hourly wage maximum of \$28.59 per hour for centre-based staff or an equivalent rate of \$285.90 per day for home child care providers (\$171.54 for partial HCCEG).

Wage Enhancement Grant Staff Eligibility
<p>Full Grant</p> <p>To be eligible to receive the full 2023 WEG of \$2.00 per hour plus 17.5 per cent (17.5%) in benefits, staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be employed in a licensed child care centre or agency; ✓ Have an associated base wage excluding prior years WEG of less than the set provincial maximum hourly wage; ✓ Be in a position categorized as a child care supervisor (as identified in the agencies EDU licensing letter), RECE, home child care visitor or otherwise counted toward adult to child ratios under the Child Care and Early Years Act; and ✓ Child care program positions that are in place to maintain higher employee-child ratios required under the Child Care and Early Years Act and meet the eligibility outlined above, may also eligible for wage enhancement.
<p>Partial Wage Enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Where an eligible centre-based or home visitor position has an associated base wage rate excluding prior year’s wage enhancement between \$26.60 and \$28.59 per hour, the position is eligible for a partial wage enhancement. The partial wage enhancement will increase the wage of the qualifying position to \$28.59 per hour without exceeding the cap.

Home Child Care Enhancement Grant Provider Eligibility

Full Grant:

In order to be eligible to receive the full HCCEG of \$20.00 per day, home child care providers must:

- ✓ Hold a contract with a licensed home child care agency;
- ✓ Provide services to one child or more (including privately placed children; excluding the provider’s own children);
- ✓ Provide full time services on average (6 hours or more a day); and
- ✓ Receive base daily fees, excluding prior year’s HCCEG, of \$265.90 or less (i.e. \$20 below the cap of \$285.90).

Partial Grant:

In order to be eligible to receive the partial HCCEG of \$10.00 per day, home child care providers must:

- ✓ Hold a contract with a licensed home child care agency;
- ✓ Provide services to one child or more (including privately placed children; excluding providers own children);
- ✓ Provide part time services on average (less than 6 hours a day); and
- ✓ Receive base daily fees, excluding prior year’s HCCEG of \$161.54 or less, for example, \$10.00 below the cap of \$171.54.

Ineligible Expenses

- Regular staff performing the duties of Enhanced Support and whose hours are funded via Special Needs Resource Enhanced Support funding, are not eligible for WEG funding for any hours worked in this role (for more information, see the Counties Special Needs Resource Service Guidelines).
- Executive Directors, Directors, cooks, custodial and other non-program staff positions are not eligible for WEG funding. The only exception to this provision is if at least 25% of the non-program staff position is used to support ratio requirements; in which case the staff would be eligible for partial wage enhancement.
- Staff hired through a third party (i.e. temp agency) are not eligible for WEG funding.

Funding Calculation/Allocation

WEG/HCCEG funding is based on provincial thresholds; the Counties will determine eligibility based on Operator-reported information supplied in the annual WEG/HCCEG Funding application.

Operators are provided WEG/HCCEG Administrative funding annually to offset expenses associated with the administrative processes of accessing and providing the WEG/HCCEG funding.

Funding will be allocated monthly to Operators.

Benefits Funding and Flexibility

Benefits of 17.5% support Operators in meeting their statutory employer benefit requirements, including up to two (2) weeks of vacation and nine (9) statutory holidays. Once all statutory benefit requirements are met, any remaining funding within 17.5% can be used to fund other benefit expenses paid by the employer on behalf of the employee. Any residual benefits funding can be used to support wage enhancement salaries per the above allowable expenses. This is one-way funding flexibility only; salary funding cannot be used for benefits.

Supplemental Grant

An additional supplemental grant of \$150.00 is allocated to Operators for each eligible centre based FTE or home visitor FTE and \$50.00 for each eligible home child care provider. The supplemental grant must be used to support staff, home visitors' and providers' hourly/daily wage or benefits. It provides operators flexibility to cover salary shortfalls due to increased hours in program or new staff/providers and additional benefits (e.g. vacation days, sick days, PD days and/or other benefits) once mandatory benefits are covered.

Accountability/Reconciliation

The license holder/program shall complete a reconciliation in a format prescribed and provided by the Counties attesting that 100% of WEG/HCCEG was applied to increase eligible child care staff/provider wage/payment for the period.

Terms and Conditions

The WEG/HCCEG is subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Funding shall be distributed by the Counties to Operators for their distribution to eligible staff as determined by the EDU and shall be retroactive to January 1, 2023.
2. The WEG/HCCEG shall be distributed to license holders/programs by the Counties in the manner established by the EDU and is subject to the availability of Ministry funding.
3. All WEG funding is to be used to support wage increases of up to \$2.00 per hour plus applicable benefits to Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and other eligible child care program staff working in licensed child care centres.
4. All HCCEG funding is to be used to support home providers working in the licensed child care system and provide a daily increase of up to \$20 for eligible licensed home child care providers based on current hours of service provided. HCCEG eligibility and funding should be calculated based on the total fees the provider is receiving each day from all sources (private families + agency placed families). As HCCEG eligibility is based on a daily fee, it is possible that a provider may be eligible for HCCEG on some days or portion thereof and not on other days. Should an Operator exceed the per day maximum for full HCCEG, they would not be eligible to receive any HCCEG for that day.
5. Operators shall direct 100% of the WEG/HCCEG to eligible staff. To be eligible, staff receiving WEG/HCCEG must be employed in a licensed child care position that:
 - Existed in a licensed child care centre or licensed home daycare (LHDC) between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023.
 - WEG has an associated hourly base wage of less than \$28.59 per hour. HCCEG has a maximum of \$285.90 per day.
6. The WEG/HCCEG cannot be used to support system expansion or to reduce fees.
7. Operators must include WEG/HCCEG payments in each pay cheque or payment made (i.e. cannot be paid as a lump sum).
8. License holders/programs shall label the portion of funding that is being provided through the WEG/HCCEG on each staff person's pay/cheque by identifying it as "Provincial Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant" or "Provincial Home Child Care Enhancement Grant".

Small Water Works (SWW) Funding

Small Water Works (SWW) funding supports costs related to small water systems for licensed child care centres. Funding supports regular, on-going, water testing and maintenance for Operators that have drinking water systems that supply water to a child care centre where the source of the water is not from a municipal water service and must comply with O. Reg. 170/03 under the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002.

Application/Eligibility

Small Water Works funding is issued by a one-time application. Historical agreements with Operators will continue for approved child care sites, provided that the Operator continues to require this funding.

New Operators, or Operators with a new site requiring SWW funding, must apply. The provision of SWW funding is not guaranteed and is dependent on available funding.

To Be Eligible for Small Water Works Funding, Operators Must

- Hold an Agreement with the Counties and have approval for this funding as per Schedule A;
- Have a drinking water system that is not from a municipal water service; and
- Be required to comply with O. Reg. 170/03 under the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002.

Eligible Expenses

- Cost of laboratory tests;
- Courier costs for water samples to go to laboratories;
- Maintenance of water treatment equipment including replacing ultraviolet bulbs;
- Cost of chemicals where chlorination is used;
- Cost of correspondence course established by the Ministry of the Environment; and
- Required engineer's reports.

Ineligible Expenses

Any costs not listed as an eligible expense

Funding Calculation/Allocation

This is claims-based funding, issued annually and issued on actual expenses at time of end of year reconciliation. Funding is at the discretion of the Counties.

Operators must complete and submit a reconciliation form for reimbursement of approved funds.

Accountability/Reconciliation

Operators must submit verification of expenses at year-end reconciliation (e.g. invoices, receipts).

Terms and Conditions

1. SWW funding is provided to assist Operators with the eligible costs for testing and operating the required water treatment systems for programs licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act.
2. The Operator shall apply the funds only to allowable water treatment expenses.
3. If the Operator relocates the delivery of service to another site, eligibility for SWW funding shall be examined based on the compliance requirements of the new site.
4. The Operator shall submit to the Counties, a SWW reconciliation for the previous calendar year, (January 1 to December 31), with copies of all associated invoices/receipts for water testing and treatment expenses enclosed.
5. Operators are required to report any/all negative water tests to all regulatory bodies as per the CCEYA, as well as to the Counties.
6. All receipts must be provided annually to verify expenditures for SWW compliance.

Pay Equity Funding

Child care programs that have registered a Pay Equity Plan with the Pay Equity Commission are entitled to receive funding for the one percent (1%) base increase that they are required to make annually. The amount that programs are eligible for is calculated by the EDU and, as the CMSM, the Counties, distributes the funds accordingly.

Application/Eligibility

No application required. Pay Equity funding is based on historical agreements and as a result of the Memorandum of Settlement, and is not available to Operators not already in an Agreement or to new Operators.

To be eligible for Pay Equity funding, Operators must

- Hold an Agreement with the Counties and have approval for this funding as per Schedule A;
- Have registered a Pay Equity Plan with the Pay Equity Commission;
- Operators and programs must be located within the jurisdiction of Leeds and Grenville.

Eligible Expenses

Pay Equity funding as identified in the agency's Pay Equity Plan with the Pay Equity Commission.

Ineligible Expenses

Any expenses not listed as an eligible expense.

Funding Calculation/Allocation

Pay Equity Funding will flow as agreed in the Memorandum of Settlement.

Pay Equity is paid to Operators in a lump sum.

Accountability/Reconciliation

A Pay Equity Reconciliation form must be completed and submitted to the Counties by established due dates.

Terms and Conditions

1. Spend each year a minimum of one percent (1%) of the previous year's payroll on pay equity adjustments until pay equity is achieved in the workplace.

2. Any non-pay equity increases (i.e. merit, cost of living, etc.) are on top of the pay equity increase. If these increases take the form of a percentage increase, these will in fact increase the pay equity target.
3. Operators receiving proxy pay equity funding will provide all eligible employees, present and past, with a proxy pay equity payment in compliance with the Pay Equity Act, as required by the organization's proxy pay equity plan.
4. All questions related to Child Care Proxy Pay Equity plans should be directed to the Pay Equity Commission.
5. The Counties issues Pay Equity payments once per year. This payment represents annual entitlement for the one percent (1%) base amount.

Reimbursement for Audited Financials Expense Funding

Reimbursement for Audited Financials provides financial support to Operators who receive \$20,000 or more annually in GOF and CWELCC funding combined and are required to provide annual audited financial statements to the Counties. Eligible Operators may receive a reimbursement to a maximum of \$4,000 annually to use towards the costs of audited financial statements.

Application/Eligibility

No application required. Operators submit invoices from auditor upon completion of audit.

To be eligible for Reimbursement for Audited Financials Expense, Operators must:

- Hold an Agreement with the Counties and have approval for this funding as per Schedule A;
- Be enrolled in CWELCC (for more information about CWELCC, see page 52);
- Receive \$20,000 or more annually of GOF and CWELCC funding combined; and
- Be required to provide annual audited financial statements.

Eligible Expenses

Audited Financial Statements

Ineligible Expenses

Expenses not listed as an eligible expense.

Funding Calculation/Allocation

Funding is based on actual expenses to a maximum amount of \$4,000 annually.

Claims based. Operators must submit verification of Audited Financial Statement expense to receive funding.

Accountability/Reconciliation

Operators must submit verification of actual expenses (i.e. Auditor invoice).

Terms and Conditions

1. Reimbursement for audited financials is at the discretion of the Counties and is dependent on the availability of funds.
2. The Counties has the right to review any outstanding audit queries and deny funding if audit is determined to be incomplete or unsatisfactory.
3. Maximum reimbursement amount is \$4,000 annually, and must be used towards the cost of audited financial statements in 2023.

Administrative Funding

This funding is provided to offset costs for the administrative requirements involved in the operation of child care programs and the reporting requirements associated with holding an Agreement with the Counties.

The provision of Administrative funding is not guaranteed and is dependent on the Counties' annual provincial allocation.

Application/Eligibility

No application required. The Counties will review Administrative funding eligibility on an annual basis and will communicate funding allocations to Operators.

To be eligible for Administrative Funding, Operators must:

- Hold an Agreement with the Counties and have approval for this funding as per Schedule A;
- Be enrolled in CWELCC.

Eligible Expenses

- General administration expenditures;
- Administrative processes associated with child care operations; including registration of new children, and staffing costs;
- Professional Services (i.e. bookkeeper, etc.);
- Expenditures for IT systems required to support the management of child care delivery and administration that do not duplicate the functionality of OCCMS;
- Telephone, internet, printers and fax;
- Postage and courier;
- Provision of WEG/HCCCEG;
- Provision of CWELCC Workforce Improvement; and
- Office supplies and equipment.

Ineligible Expenses

- Expenses that do not directly support the administration of child care programs.
- Expenses not approved as an eligible expense.

Funding Calculation/Allocation

The Counties will assess each Operator's actual administration needs annually and will provide funding accordingly; funding details will be populated in Schedule A.

Funding will be allocated monthly to Operators.

Accountability/Reconciliation

Administration costs will be reviewed at reconciliation for eligibility.

Terms and Conditions

Administrative funding is at the discretion of the CMSM and is dependent on the availability of funds.

Administrative Expense Threshold

Administrative expenses are defined as the costs associated with staff that do not directly deliver services to clients. This includes, but is not limited to, the following roles/positions: Executive Director, Director, Manager, Supervisor, Administrative Assistant, legal, IT, Human Resources, Payroll, Finance, etc.

The Administrative funding threshold applies to the following expense categories:

Wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment of gross salaries and wages, vacation pay, sick pay, compassionate pay, over-time and statutory holiday pay.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer contributions for pension, employment insurance, workers' compensation, employee benefit plans, and other legal requirements of the employer.
Purchased Professional Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services that are not client related, including costs incurred in purchasing professional services for which the agency itself does not employ staff (e.g. fees for administrative or corporate legal work, audit or bookkeeping fees).

Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenses including office space lease/rental, utilities, etc. These expenses should reflect fair market value for accommodation. In the case of owned buildings, the eligible annual cost will be based on fair market value of tent or imputed rent.
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reimbursement of staff costs for travel (mileage).

Child Care Fee Subsidy (CCFS) Funding

Child Care Fee Subsidy (CCFS) supports parents in need of financial assistance to meet child care costs. Funding enables eligible families to access licensed or School Board approved child care programs within Leeds and Grenville, thereby supporting the demands of employment or schooling and healthy child development.

Operators submit monthly billing via OCCMS and receive reimbursement for subsidies for eligible children. The Counties manages and determines eligibility for CCFS assistance for residents of Leeds and Grenville under the authority of the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014.

Application/Eligibility

To be eligible for Child Care Fee Subsidy funding, Operators must:

- Hold an Agreement with the Counties; and
- Be a contracted licensed child care setting.

Eligible Expenses

CCFS expenses incurred by the family during the approved eligibility period.

Ineligible Expenses

- Fees incurred by the family prior to the approved eligibility start date, or following the eligibility end date.
- Parental contribution amounts that the family is responsible to pay directly to the Operator.
- Any other expense not listed in the service description.

Funding Calculation/Allocation

The Counties will determine the amount of subsidized child care for each eligible family in accordance with the policy statement "Access to Subsidized Child Care".

Payments for fee subsidy amounts will be allocated monthly to Operators based on actual expenses.

CWELCC Parental Contribution Reduction

The EDU has made amendments to O. Reg. 138/15 under the CCEYA to ensure that parents accessing subsidized child care also see financial relief under CWELCC through a reduction in their parental contributions for all CWELCC eligible children (for more information about CWELCC, see page 52).

Accountability/Reconciliation

Operators are required to complete and submit a "Web Enabled Record of Attendance" through the Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS) within 10 business days of the end of each month.

Operators are expected to reconcile their CCFS payment from the Counties each month. Any error or omission with CCFS payments to the Operator, must be reconciled within 90 days of the payment. Requests for adjustments beyond the 90 days will not be considered.

Operator's monthly attendance, billing and use of CCFS funding are subject to review and/or audit upon the Counties' request; Operators shall provide all information requested by the Counties in a timely manner.

Terms and Conditions

1. Families shall complete the application for CCFS with a Counties, CCFS Case Manager in order for a determination of eligibility to be made. In order to receive CCFS, families must choose an Operator that has available space and that has an existing Agreement with the Counties.

2. Operators will be notified by Counties' staff when a family is determined eligible for CCFS assistance. Approved rates may only be charged to the Counties from the confirmed date of eligibility. Fees incurred by the family prior to the approved eligibility start date are not to be charged to the Counties and are to be collected by the Operator directly from the family.
3. Operators are required to complete and return monthly a "Web Enabled Record of Attendance" through the use of the OCCMS. Authorized individuals within the child care program verify the actual days/times of a child's attendance at the applicable child care program. Attendance reporting shall be completed by the Operator through the OCCMS within 10 working days of receiving the "Attendance Schedule" to enable payment by the Counties.
4. If a CCFS child(ren) is withdrawn by the family without notice, the Counties shall reimburse the Operator the full portion of fee for up to a maximum of 10 days following the last day the child was present.
5. Operators are responsible for notifying the CCFS Case Manager when children are absent from their Program for five (5) consecutive days without notification from the parents.
6. Where an Operator is aware of the pending withdrawal of a child, notification must be provided by the Operator to the Counties within two (2) business days of becoming aware of the withdrawal.
7. In the event an Operator charges a Registration or Administrative fee for non-eligible CWELCC children, separate from child care rates; these fees are the sole responsibility of the family and shall not be reimbursed through the CCFS Program.
8. If a family is determined by the CCFS Case Manager to have "available income" to contribute towards the costs of the child care, the Operator is responsible for the collection of this amount (i.e. parental contribution) from the family. In cases where an Operator is unable to collect the monthly parental contribution from the family, the Operator will the Counties immediately.
9. Any and all child care fees that are incurred by a family, when determined ineligible for CCFS shall be the sole responsibility of the family and collection thereof shall be the sole responsibility of the Operator.
10. The Counties maintains the right to review and amend internal procedures and policies by which CCFS is administered.
11. The Counties has the right to identify and make changes to the existing processes between the CCFS Program and Operators to create efficiencies and accountability.

12. Operators enrolled in CWELCC are prohibited from increasing their child care rate for CWELCC eligible children.
13. All child care rate increases for non-CWELCC enrolled Operator and non-CWELCC eligible children in respect of the CCFS Program are subject to the approval of the Counties. Rate increases shall be submitted in writing to the Counties. The Counties will request a fee schedule for review and provide approval annually.
14. Child Care rates for non-CWELCC Operators as well as those rates charged for non-eligible CWELCC children at enrolled Operators shall be consistent with the market rate and in no situation shall the Counties pay above program market rates.
15. License holders or Programs are subject to review and/or audit upon the Counties' request and shall provide such information as deemed necessary by the Counties.

Business Quality and Improvement (BQI) Funding

Business Quality and Improvement (BQI) funding supports the costs associated with improving business practices, child care spaces/environments and/or staff/Board of Directors, thereby increasing the quality of child care services delivered.

BQI funding will be prioritized for infant, toddler and/or preschool programs. The provision of BQI funding is not guaranteed and is dependent on the Counties' annual provincial allocation.

There are four (4) funding streams within BQI funding:

1. Capacity Building Expense
2. Play-Based Material and Equipment Expense
3. Repairs and Maintenance Expense
4. Transformation Expense

Application/Eligibility

No application is required. Eligibility for BQI funding is assessed annually and is based on the Operator's operating capacity at time of assessment. Operators are provided with an approved amount for BQI funding at the beginning of the year, and amounts are reconciled at year-end.

BQI funding is claims based; paid on actual expenses submitted.

To be eligible for BQI funding, Operators must:

- Hold an Agreement with the Counties and have approval for this funding as per Schedule A;
- Be enrolled in CWELCC (for more information about CWELCC see page 52).

Stream 1: Capacity Building Funding

Capacity Building funding is intended to support professional learning and development opportunities that build the capacity of licensees, supervisors, program staff/caregivers, home visitors, home child care providers and non-profit volunteer board members to support the provision of high-quality programs. To ensure quality experiences for children, child care settings must support staff and home child care providers in continuous professional learning.

Eligible Expenses - Capacity Building Funding

Eligible expenses include training, seminars, conferences, etc. under the following categories:

- Professional learning and development opportunities that align with the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 regulations and ministry policy (e.g., workshops, mentoring and coaching, networks that are delivered in-person, virtually, etc.);
- Program-related professional learning opportunities that align with the views and approaches outlined in [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#), promote reflective practice and collaborative inquiry, and support the new regulatory requirements under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (i.e. post-diploma training programs);
- Mental health and well-being practices for children, families and the workforce;
- Anti-racist and inclusive practices;
- Incorporating Indigenous perspectives and pedagogies;
- Supporting children with special needs in an inclusive program model;
- Professional learning and development opportunities related to the health, safety and well-being of children (e.g. nutrition, First Aid/CPR, Food Handler's Certificate, environmental health, communicable diseases, etc.);
- Establishment of professional learning communities of practice to support early years program staff; professional learning and development opportunities related to child care program business administration (e.g., budgeting, leadership, human resource management, policy development, board governance etc.); Management staff that focus on staff engagement, financial acuity/bookkeeping, human resources and/or leadership;

- Board of Directors that focus on roles/responsibilities, Governance, staff engagement and/or leadership;
- Release time and overtime to support staff in participating in professional learning and development opportunities;
- Travel costs (in accordance with the OPS Travel Directive) to support attendance at professional learning and development opportunities (municipal policies pertaining to travel and accommodation apply).

Stream 2: Play Based Materials/Equipment Funding

Play-Based Material and Equipment funding is intended to help licensees create enriching environments both indoors and outdoors with open ended materials that promote children's learning and development through exploration, play and inquiry consistent with the views, four (4) foundations and pedagogical approaches of [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#).

Eligible Expenses – Play Based Material/Equipment Funding

Eligible expenses for Play Based Materials/Equipment funding include, but is not limited to:

- Non-consumable supplies/equipment to support the on-going regular operation of the child care program;
- Open ended toys and materials (e.g. gross motor toys, manipulatives, books, etc.);
- Play equipment;
- Replacement of existing toys/materials/equipment and purchase of new toys/materials/equipment (open-ended and non-consumable toys/materials) (e.g. tables, chairs, shelving, etc.);
- Outdoor play equipment.

Stream 3: Repairs and Maintenance Funding

Repairs and Maintenance funding is to support licensed child care centres that are not in compliance with licensing requirements or may be at risk of not being in compliance with licensing requirements under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014. Funding is intended to cover one-time repair and maintenance costs.

Funds may not be used for regular system maintenance (e.g. HVAC, Fire monitoring, etc.). Funding for Repairs and Maintenance is prioritized for Operators that can demonstrate they are not in compliance, or are at risk of not complying, with licensing requirements. Home Child Care Agencies are not eligible for Repairs and Maintenance Expense funding.

Eligible Expenses – Repairs and Maintenance

Eligible expenses for Repairs and Maintenance Funding include, but are not limited to:

- Food Preparation area repairs/replacements such as: hand washing sink in kitchen, dishwasher or hot water booster, purchase of major appliances;
- Washroom area repairs/replacements such as: fixtures, partitions, flooring material, change tables;
- Major system repairs/replacements such as: leaking roof, building foundation, heating/cooling system, ventilation system, sump pump, emergency lighting, accessibility, windows; doors, asbestos removal or encapsulation, securing entrances, wiring upgrades;
- Play area repairs/replacements such as: damaged walls/peeling paint that may contain lead, windows, damaged/worn flooring material or ceiling, damaged/worn outdoor safety surfacing, fencing, drinking water system, heating system;
- Code compliance repairs/replacements such as: Ontario Fire Code orders/recommendations, Ontario Building Code orders/recommendations, Health Protection and Promotion Act orders/recommendations.

Stream 4: Transformation Funding

Transformation Funding is intended to cover one-time costs for non-profit licensees, including licensed child care centres and home child care agencies that are involved in business transformation activities and/or require business transformation supports. Business transformation activities are defined as, but not limited to: the amalgamation of two (2) or more centres in a school or community setting; the relocation of a child care centre to a school or within the community; or, the retrofitting of an existing child care centre to serve younger age groups.

Eligible Expenses –Transformation Funding

Legal costs (available only to licensees that are amalgamating)

- Legal fees associated with transitioning from for-profit to not-for-profit status;

- Lease termination costs (available only to licensees that are amalgamating and/or relocating);
- Moving costs (available only to licensees that are amalgamating and/or relocating);
- Technology upgrades to facilitate internet connectivity for business purposes;
- Operating funding to support the viability of licensees that are transforming their business model;
- Funding to home child care agencies for home visitors to help support recruitment of home child care providers in under-served areas.

Ineligible Expenses –Transformation Funding

- Any expenses not listed in eligible expense categories.

Business Quality and Improvement (BQI) Funding Calculation/Allocation

This funding is based on an Operators' operating capacity and is allocated at the beginning of a calendar year. Funding provided will be prorated to support Operators with infant, toddler and/or preschool spaces at a higher amount than for kindergarten/school age spaces.

Claims based. Funds will not be advanced to Operators until receipt of the Funding Reconciliation Claim form to the Counties by **December 31, 2023**. Funds are flowed at the end of the year based on actual expenses and verification of cost.

Accountability/Reconciliation

Operators must maintain all receipts, tender/quotations and records of payment (if applicable), and allow staff of the Counties to request documents for audit. Operators must complete and submit a reconciliation form for reimbursement of approved funds and sign an attestation that funds were expensed in accordance with the Guidelines.

Terms and Conditions

1. Only approved expenses incurred during the period of **January 1, 2023 to December 1, 2023** are eligible for reimbursement. **All projects, purchases and/or training must be completed in 2023.**
2. Funding will not be not be advanced to Operators until receipt of the Funding Reconciliation Claim to the Counties.

3. If the Operator is eligible to claim a portion of their HST expenditures through Canada Revenue Agency, this amount shall not be recorded in the Funding Reconciliation Claim form.

Special Project Funding

Special Project Funding is a subset of BQI funding. The purpose of Special Project Funding is to further support Capacity Building Funding, Play-Based Material/Equipment Funding, Repairs/Maintenance Funding and Transformation Funding that has been exhausted (i.e. costs exceed approved funding). Funding can also be used to support a special project an Operator is looking to undertake to improve the delivery of quality and accessible child care services in Leeds and Grenville.

Special Project Funding is at the discretion of the Counties and may not be available in a given year.

Application/Eligibility

By application. Specific eligibility criteria will be detailed by the Counties at the time the funding is announced and opened for applications.

Special Project Funding will be prioritized for infant, toddler and preschool programs, programs not located in schools as well as projects that focus on improving and/or broadening services for children with special needs, children living in poverty and Black and Indigenous People of Colour (BIPOC) children.

To be eligible for Special Project funding, Operators must:

- Hold an Agreement with the Counties;
- Be enrolled in CWELCC (for more information about CWELCC see page 53);
- Demonstrate licensing or public health requirement;
- Demonstrate how funding will be used to support inclusion of children with special needs, and/or;
- Demonstrate how the project will improve the quality of the child care program.

Eligible Expenses

- All expenses as outlined under the following BQI categories: Capacity Building, Play Based Materials and Equipment, Repairs and Maintenance and Transformation;
- Fees for external consulting services as follows:
 - To assist with the development of the Operators' Succession Plan;
 - To assist with the development of or updating of the Operators' Strategic Plan;
 - To provide HR support/consultation for policy/procedure development, staff recruitment, employee engagement, employee contracts and/or adherence to all relevant regulation and/or legislative requirements to assist with the improvement of the Operators' financial record keeping, reconciliation, reporting and accountability.
- Renovations to improve the accessibility of the program environment;
- Funding to home child care agencies for home visitors to help support recruitment of home child care providers in under-served areas.

Ineligible Expenses

Any expenses not listed in eligible expense categories.

Funding Calculation/Allocation

This funding is based on availability of funds and on the information provided by the Operator at time of application (i.e. anticipated costs).

Claims based. Operators must complete and submit a reconciliation form for reimbursement of approved funds.

Accountability/Reconciliation

Operators are required to submit receipts for claim.

Terms and Conditions

1. Special Project Funding is at the discretion of the Counties and is dependent on the availability of funds.

2. Only approved expenses incurred during the period of **January 1, 2023 to December 15, 2023** are eligible for reimbursement. All projects, purchases and/or training must be completed in 2023.
3. If the Operator is eligible to claim a portion of their HST expenditures through Canada Revenue Agency, this amount shall not be recorded in the Funding Reconciliation Claim form.

Enhanced Support Funding (SNR)

Enhanced Support funding is offered through Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) funding and is available to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care settings. Under O. Reg 138/15, a "child with special needs" means a child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development, are of such nature that additional supports are required for the child.

The intent of Enhanced Support Funding is to allow Operators to hire additional non-ratio child care program staff for a period of time, as an extra 'set of hands' in a program, to ensure an inclusive experience for children with special needs.

Services and supports purchased through Enhanced Support funding are for the inclusion of children with special needs under 13 years of age in licensed child care centres and licensed home child care settings.

The provision of Enhanced Support funding is not guaranteed and is dependent on the Counties' annual provincial allocation.

Application/Eligibility

By application. Applications will be accepted on continuous intake. To apply, Operators must submit a completed Request for Enhanced Support Funds application and a completed Inclusion Planning Form.

To be eligible for Enhanced Support funding, Operators must:

- Hold an Agreement with the Counties;
- Must be working with an Inclusion Consultant;
- Demonstrate that the capacity of their staff or home child care provider is not sufficient to support the inclusion of the child(ren) with special needs in the licensed child care program.

Eligible Expenses

Hiring or acquiring the services of supplemental staff to support the inclusion of children with special needs.

Ineligible Expenses

- Treatment services (i.e. individual therapeutic service provision through existing programs like Preschool Speech and Language and Blind Low Vision programs);
- Wages/benefits for staffing hours not for the purpose of supporting the inclusion of a child with special needs.
- Programs and services outside of the child care program, including supports to children and families in their homes;
- Child care fees to cover operating costs for licensed child care;
- Nursing supports;
- Any expenses not listed as an eligible expense.

Funding Calculation

A determination of funding allocations will be made at time of application and will be communicated to the Operator at time of approval.

Enhanced Support funding will be funded for the period of approval, in monthly payments, and then reconciled at the end of the approved period to actual expenses.

Accountability/Reconciliation

Operators must reconcile expenses at end of funding period and report the number of hours the Enhanced Support Worker worked.

Terms and Conditions

1. Enhanced support funding will not exceed six (6) months per approval.
2. All service providers and regulated child care programs involved in the provision of SNR services must comply with legislative and regulatory requirements for the provision of services, obtaining parental consent for service and the exchange of information for any purpose (i.e. referrals).

3. SNR funded Enhanced Support staff hours may not be counted towards the required ratio of employees to children in licensed child care programs as specified in Ontario Regulation 137/15.
4. Where an Operator has been approved for Enhanced Support funding, the Operator will work with the Counties to identify in writing a detailed plan for the use of enhanced support including how the additional enhanced support staff will support the inclusion of children with special needs in the program.
5. Operators are responsible for hiring their own enhanced support staff. It is recommended that enhanced support staff hold an Early Childhood Education Diploma and have RECE designation. Should the Operator be unable to hire an RECE in this capacity, they should endeavor to hire staff with related education and/or experience such as, but not limited to, a Child and Youth Worker and/or someone who has previous experience working in child care or early years programs.
6. Enhanced Support staff are not eligible for the Provincial Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG). The minimum hourly rate paid to these staff must be minimum wage plus \$2.00/hour.

CANADA WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE (CWELCC) SYSTEM

The Government of Canada has identified child care as a national priority to enhance early learning and childhood development, support workforce participation and contribute to economic recovery. Funding under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement will be used to build and leverage the success of Ontario's existing early learning and child care system by increasing quality, accessibility, affordability and inclusivity in early learning and child care, towards achieving the objectives of:

- Reaching an average parent fee of \$10 a day by 2025 - 2026 for licensed child care spaces;
- Creating 86,000 new high-quality, affordable licensed child care spaces across the province (relative to 2019 levels), predominantly through not-for-profit licensed child care;
- Addressing barriers to provide inclusive child care; and
- Valuing the early childhood workforce and providing them with training and development opportunities.

Funding

The Counties will provide funding to Operators enrolled in CWELCC as revenue replacement to support eligible expenditures in order to achieve the required fee reductions to base fees for eligible children.

Funding for expenditures will be provided in accordance with the parameters set out in this Guideline and will not be provided for ineligible expenditures.

Enrollment in CWELCC

For 2023, licensed Operators with programs serving children under the age of six (6) or turning six (6) before June 30 in that calendar year, within Leeds and Grenville are eligible to apply to participate in CWELCC, even those that do not currently have an Agreement with the Counties. Participation in CWELCC is optional; however, Operators are encouraged to participate so that families can benefit from fee reductions.

Enrollment for CWELCC is at the discretion of the Counties and will be based on current Provincial rules, requirements and/or legislation, available funding, and alignment with the Counties' existing service system plan.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for CWELCC, Operators must:

- Enter into an Agreement with the Counties and operate under the criteria outlined in this Guideline;
- Demonstrate financial viability to the Counties;
- Reduce where required and maintain their child care fees at the rate charged prior to the CWELCC announcement on March 27, 2022 (the 2022 fee freeze) and implement the subsequent fee reductions;
- Complete an application to the Counties to demonstrate that they meet the current stipulated criteria to be eligible to participate in CWELCC.

Operators applying to participate in CWELCC are required under O. Reg. 137/15 to communicate to all parents and staff, within 14 days of notification from the Counties, of their approval or denial for CWELCC.

Eligible Children Under CWELCC

Funding under CWELCC is intended to support eligible children in Leeds and Grenville. An eligible child means:

- a) any child, until the last day of the month in which the child turns six (6) years old, and

- b) up until June 30 in calendar year, and child who
 - i. turns six (6) years old between January 1 and June 30 in that calendar year, and
 - ii. is enrolled in a licensed infant, toddler, preschool or kindergarten group, a licensed family age group, or home child care, as defined in the CCEYA.

See Appendix C for Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Defining Child Eligibility.

Fee Rates and Licensed Spaces

Operators participating in CWELCC must return to, where applicable, and maintain existing parent fee rates, as of March 27, 2022, unless previously communicated to parents. Operators who obtain their license after March 27, 2022 will be required to set parent fees at or below the regional maximum, as set out by age group pursuant to O. Reg. 137/15 of the CCEYA and outlined in the charts below.

These regional maximum base fees will apply until one (1) of the two (2) conditions is met:

1. The Operator provides notification to the Counties that they are not participating in CWELCC, or
2. The Operator receives notice from the Counties that their application for CWELCC has been accepted in which case the base fees must be reduced.

Centre –Based Programs	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Kindergarten	School Age	Family Age Group
Full Day Programs	\$53.98	\$44.09	\$40.68	\$39.59	\$39.59	\$44.09
Before and After School Programs				\$22.44	\$19.88	

Home Child Care Programs	Younger than 2 years	2-3 years	4-6 years	4-5 years *
Full Day Programs	\$48.89	\$48.89	\$48.89	\$48.89
Before and After School				\$23.85

* Fee also applies to children six (6) years of age who are still eligible for CWELCC (source: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/150137>)

In accordance with O. Reg. 137/15, a cap on all base fees and non-base fees for eligible children must be maintained by an Operator at a child care centre it operates or at a home child care premise enrolled in CWELCC. The cap on fees does not apply to fees charged to parents for children who are not eligible (i.e. school children over six years).

Any revisions or use of alternate capacity must be reported to the Counties before changes occur, and the Counties will determine whether this will result in a funding adjustment or recovery from the Operator.

New Licensees/New Participation/Expansion

If an Operator becomes licensed after March 27, 2022 or opens a new licensed program, the cap on the base fee is based on a regional maximum as set out in O. Reg. 137/15 (see chart on page 55). These regional maximum fees will apply to any new age groups that an Operator starts to operate after March 27, 2022, or where an Operator begins operating an age group after March 27, 2022 that it had not operated for at least two (2) years. The Operator must not charge a parent a higher daily base fee than the fee from March 27, 2022 unless a specific fee increase had already been communicated to parents on or before that date. Operators must submit a copy of this communication to the Counties.

These regional maximum base fees will apply until one (1) of the two (2) conditions is met:

1. The Operator provides notification to the Counties that they are not participating in CWELCC, or
2. The Operator receives notice from the Counties that their application for CWELCC has been accepted in which case the base fees must be reduced.

Where an Operator opted out of CWELCC in 2022 and increased fees, if they are eligible to enroll in CWELCC in 2023, their base fees, for purposes of the fee reduction, will be the base fee in effect during the 2022 fee freeze.

Opting-Out of CWELCC After Enrollment

If an Operator who is enrolled in CWELCC chooses to opt-out of CWELCC they must:

- Notify the Counties of this decision in writing. This notice must be provided 90 days in advance of the date which the Operator wishes to opt-out of CWELCC. Non-Profit Operators must include a copy of Board minutes, which clearly show that the Board of Directors has approved this decision.
- Within 10 business days of notifying the Counties, Operators must inform parents, in writing, of the decision to opt-out of CWELCC. This letter must include the CWELCC end-date, the date that a new fee amount will be brought into effect, and the new child care fees.
- Update the Parent Handbook(s) to indicate the Operator is not participating in CWELCC and include fee amounts in the handbook.

Opting Out After Enrollment, Then Opting Back In

In the event that an Operator has enrolled in and then opts-out of CWELCC, and then wishes to re-apply, the Operator will be required to return to the daily rate for all eligible age groups that was in effect at the time of the initial CWELCC approval. The Counties will determine appropriate cost escalations to the daily rate, if applicable, to address operating cost increases that may have occurred during the period of CWELCC non-participation.

Sales and Acquisitions of Child Care Businesses

If an Operator that is a Corporation transfers shares of the Corporation in sufficient numbers that would allow the person acquiring the shares to make a change to the Corporation's Board of Directors, the Operator would remain enrolled in CWELCC and must maintain the applicable base fee set out.

If an Operator sells substantially all of its assets and the purchaser obtains a new license to operate a child care centre or as a home child care agency, to continue operating the child care program, the purchaser must:

- Charge base fees in accordance with O. Reg. 137/15 for newly issued licenses;

- Apply to participate in CWELCC in accordance with the process set out by the Counties or notify the Counties, parents and staff that they do not wish to participate.
- Consulting the Counties on these types of transactions is necessary and where possible, three (3) months in advance is recommended

Fee Reduction

Making child care more affordable for families is a key part of the implementation of CWELCC. Fee reduction funding is focused on reducing parent fees for families with eligible children in licensed child care. In order to achieve this goal, base fees for eligible children in licensed child care will be reduced by the Operator. Operators participating in CWELCC must reduce and set base fees in accordance with O. Reg 137/15.

To ensure stability and sustainability of the child care system while working towards Ontario's goals for affordability, access, inclusion and quality, fee reductions will be implemented using a phased approach over the course of CWELCC.

Operators are permitted to continue charging higher parent fees for 20 calendar days after the Counties notifies them that they are enrolled in CWELCC. On and after the 21st day, the Operator is notified by the Counties of the enrollment date, the Operator cannot charge a base fee that is higher than the applicable base fee to parents of an eligible child.

A graduated approach to fee reductions began in Spring of 2022 as follows:

- A fee reduction of up to 25%, to a minimum of \$12.00 per day, for eligible children retroactive to April 1, 2022;
- A 50% fee reduction on average for eligible children on December 31, 2022;
- A \$10.00 per day average child care fee for eligible children by the end of fiscal year 2025-2026.

Implementation of Fee Reduction

Operators enrolled in CWELCC in 2022 were required to reduced their capped base fee by 25% to the floor of \$12.00 per day (retroactive to April 1, 2022).

Effective December 31, 2022, if the cap on an Operators' base fee was more than \$11.99 per day, the Operators' new base fee, once in CWELCC, became the greater of:

- \$12.00 per day; and
- An additional 37% on top of their already reduced fees through fee reduction.

In total, this results in a 52.75% reduction in parent fees relative to March 2022 levels.

Fees at or less than \$12.00 per day, are maintained.

The fee reduction on base fees applies regardless of program type (e.g. Infant, Toddler, etc.) or duration, and should be based on the **total amount paid per day**. All eligible spaces will be reduced, including those occupied by an eligible child receiving fee subsidy.

Operators of home child care agencies enrolled in CWELCC must also charge the parent of an eligible child a reduced fee, as determined above. This fee applies to children who are agency placed and those children who are privately placed. The Counties will work with Operators to ensure that parents of eligible privately placed children also receive a fee reduction.

In the case of before and after school programs, if parents pay for only before school care, or only after school care, each individual fee must be reduced for eligible children, provided that it does not go below \$12.00 per day. If parents pay for both before and after school care, **the overall daily fee must be reduced** as per above.

The Counties has the right to verify the timelines and accuracy related to the implementation of new base fees.

Operators are required to ensure the on-going update to their Parent Handbook(s) to indicate the Operator is participating in CWELCC and include reduced fee amounts for CWELCC eligible children in the handbook.

Non-base fees are not eligible for CWELCC funding and are not subject to the parameters described above. Note, however, that non-base fees must meet the definition set out in O. Reg. 137/15. Anything a parent is required to pay (i.e. mandatory fees) must be included as part of the base fee.

Fees for children who are not CWELCC eligible (i.e. school age children older than six years) are not subject to these base fee requirements and fee reductions.

Child Care Fee Subsidy: Parent Contribution

The ministry has made amendments to O. Reg. 138/15 under the CCEYA to ensure that parents accessing subsidized child care also see financial relief under CWELCC through a reduction in their parental contributions for all CWELCC eligible children.

Implementation

As CWELCC is implemented in Ontario, the fee subsidy model will continue to be an option for families who require financial assistance. O. Reg. 138/15 sets out an income test formula that the Counties will use to calculate the amount of subsidy that can be provided for a family, as well as the amount that a family must contribute to the cost of child care (the parent contribution). CWELCC funding will reduce the cost of a full-fee space that is currently occupied by an eligible child receiving fee subsidy.

WORKFORCE COMPENSATION FUNDING

Workforce Compensation funding is focused on supporting Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) staff who historically have been low wage earners. Increased compensation for low wage earners will help support the recruitment and retention of RECEs working in the child care sector as part of a provincial strategy to achieve system growth and ensure increased access to high quality licensed child care in Ontario.

The Counties will provide Workforce Compensation funding to all eligible RECE staff employed by an Operator that is participating in CWELCC regardless of the age of the children they are supporting (i.e. not limited to staff supporting children under the age of six).

To support the recruitment and retention of Ontario's child care workforce, a wage floor for RECE staff was introduced in Spring 2022. An annual increase of up to \$1.00/per hour will begin in January 2023 for eligible RECE staff.

Payments to Staff

Operators must include Workforce Compensation payments in each pay cheque or payment made. Workforce Compensation may not be paid at the end of the year as a lump sum payment.

Operators shall label the portion of funding that is being provided through the Workforce Compensation on each staff person's pay cheque by identifying it as "CWELCC Workforce Compensation".

Eligibility

To be eligible for the wage floor and annual increase, Operators must be participating in CWELCC and employ staff categorized as:

- RECE Program Staff;
- RECE Supply Staff;
- RECE Child Care Supervisor;
- RECE Home Child Care Visitor.

Ineligibility

Non-RECE program staff and non-program staff are not eligible for wage floor and annual increases. This includes non-program staff such as:

- Cook, custodial and other non-program staff positions;
- SNR-funded resource teachers/consultants and supplemental staff;
- Staff hired through a third party (i.e. temp agency).

The only exception to the first two (2) positions noted above is if the staff is an RECE and the position spends at least 25% of their time to support ratio requirements as outlined in the CCEYA. In these situations, the staff would be eligible for the wage floor and annual wage increases for the hours that they are supporting the ratio requirements.

Qualified staff, child care supervisors, or home child care visitors that are Director approved to be employed in these positions, but do not have an RECE designation, are not eligible for the wage floor or annual increase supported by Workforce Compensation funding.

Alignment with Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant

The Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) will continue to be provided to Operators enrolled in CWELCC to support the retention of qualified professionals to deliver affordable, high quality services.

Operators will be required to apply for the WEG to be eligible for the wage floor and annual wage increase under CWELCC. WEG Funding will be added to the base wage of staff when considering eligibility for the wage floor and annual wage Increase, plus benefits.

Annual Increase

To be eligible for an annual wage increase of up to \$1.00 per hour, staff must be receiving WEG funding. The staff’s hourly wage (including WEG funding) must be below the wage cap of \$25.00 per hour on January 1 of each eligible year. Benefits should not be included when determining the hourly wage.

Operators are required to increase the hourly wage of eligible RECE staff by up to \$1.00 per hour plus benefits, on January 1 of each year from 2023 to 2026. Staff are eligible to receive this increase for all hours worked as well as sick days, vacation, etc.

Staff at the wage floor in 2022 will have their hourly wage increased by \$1.00 per hour to move to the 2023 wage floor. Staff above the wage floor will have their hourly wage increased up to \$1.00 per hour, up to the \$25.00 per hour wage cap. Staff earning at or above \$25.00 per hour are not eligible for the annual \$1.00 per hour increase. Staff making \$24.00 to \$24.99 per hour are to have their wages increased by the incremental amount required to reach \$25.00 per hour. The annual increase should be calculated prior to any employer-based wage improvements.

Wage Floor

Operators are required to bring the wage of all eligible staff up to the wage floor identified in the table below, plus benefits. All eligible staff hired during the identified years must earn at least the wage floor identified for the year, plus benefits as defined below. The wage floor for 2023 comes into effect on January 1, 2023.

Hourly Wage Floor 2022 to 2026*

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
RECE Program Staff					
	\$18.00	\$19.00	\$20.00	\$21.00	\$22.00
RECE Child Care Supervisors or RECE Home Child Care Visitors					
	\$20.00	\$21.00	\$22.00	\$23.00	\$24.00

*In addition to the hourly wage, eligible staff are required to receive mandatory 17.5% benefits.

Implementation

To determine the RECE wage eligibility, the following order of operations must be followed:

1. 2022 base wage (by employer);
2. WEG (\$2.00 per hour, up to a maximum as per WEG guidelines);
3. CWELCC annual wage increase \$1.00 per hour, up to \$25/hour); and
4. CWELCC incremental wage floor funding, if applicable.

Annual Wage Increase and Wage Floor Examples

1. RECE program staff with base wage of \$15.50 per hour would qualify to have their wage increased to \$19.00 per hour:

 $\$15.50 + \$2.00 \text{ WEG} + \$1.00 \text{ per hour annual wage increase plus } \$0.50 \text{ incremental wage floor increase} = \$19.00 \text{ per hour which is the 2023 wage floor.}$
2. RECE program staff with base wage of \$18.00 per hour would have their wage increased to \$21.00 per hour:

 $\$18.00 + \$2.00 \text{ WEG} = \$20.00 \text{ per hour. The annual increase of } \$1.00 \text{ per hour is provided to bring the wage to } \21.00 per hour.
3. RECE program staff with base wage of \$22.50 per hour would have their wage increased to \$25.00 per hour:

 $\$22.50 + \$2.00 \text{ WEG} + \$0.50 \text{ annual wage increase} = \$25.00 \text{ per hour. The annual increase up to } \$1.00 \text{ per hour is provided to bring the wage to } \25.00 per hour.

Benefits and Flexibility

Workforce Compensation funding includes up to 17.5% in benefits.

Implementation

Operators are required to share, in writing, information about the wage floor and annual wage increases with eligible staff. The information must provide eligible staff with an understanding of upcoming annual changes to their wages as a result of workforce compensation funding. At a minimum, the information about wages must include the wage floor and required annual wage increase for each year up to and including 2026.

The Counties will work with Operators to oversee wage floor and annual increase implementation and will provide funding for the incremental amounts required to support wage floor and annual increases through CWELCC funding.

Child care staff employed by Operators with maximum wage increases specified under the Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019 (PSPSFGA) may not be eligible for an increase in compensation to the wage floor to the up to \$1.00 per hour annual wage increase. Operators are required to meet any applicable obligations under the PSPSFGA.

Minimum Wage Off-Set

Eligibility

To be eligible for the Minimum Wage Off-set, Operators must be participating in CWELCC and employ staff in a position categorized as:

- Non-RECE Program Staff (including Supply Staff).
- Non-RECE Child Care Supervisor.
- Non-RECE Home Child Care Visitor.

Eligibility will apply to staff that were earning less than \$15.50 per hour (not including WEG) on September 30, 2022. Staff hired after September 30, 2022 are not eligible for the minimum wage off-set.

Ineligibility

The minimum wage off-set will not apply to non-program staff such as:

- Cook, custodial and other non-program staff positions.
- SNR funded resource teachers/consultants and supplemental staff.
- Staff hired through a third party (i.e. temp agency).

The only exception to the first two (2) positions noted above is when the staff is a non-RECE and the position spends at least 25% of their time to support ratio requirements as outlined in the CCEYA. In which case, the staff would be eligible for the minimum wage off-set for the hours they are supporting the ratio requirements.

Implementation

Operators were required to comply with minimum wage legislation and bring the wages of their staff to \$15.50 per hour as of October 1, 2022. To off-set the minimum wage increase, the Counties will provide Workforce Compensation funding to Operators to cover the incremental amount needed to bring wages for eligible staff to \$15.50 per hour. For example, if an eligible staff was earning \$14.50 on April 20, 2021, the Operator would receive Workforce Compensation funding of \$1.00 per hour plus benefits to support that staff's wages.

Workforce Compensation funding for the minimum wage off-set will be provided to Operators starting the date of participation in CWELCC up to and including 2026.

The Counties will work with Operators to oversee minimum wage off-set implementation and will provide funding for the incremental amounts required through CWELCC funding.

Staff Working in Programs Serving Children Aged 6-12

Ontario is contributing funding as part of the workforce compensation allocation that will be used for compensation for staff in licensed child care programs serving children aged 6 to 12, who are currently ineligible to apply for participation in CWELCC. This aims to ensure equity of wages across staff serving different age groups and to avoid these increases being passed onto parents through higher fees. Operators with programs only serving children aged 6-12 that apply to the Counties for Workforce Compensation funding are not eligible to participate in CWELCC.

Operators with programs serving any eligible child must be a participant in CWELCC in order to access Workforce Compensation for eligible staff and home child care visitors serving children aged 6-12, and will be required to adhere to all the parameters of CWELCC.

Alignment with Collective Agreements

Operators with staff who are under a collective agreement should seek independent legal advice on implementing the wage floor and annual wage increase.

Reporting

Operators must report on data for meeting minimum wage off-set requirements as determined by the Counties and the reporting parameters set out in this Guideline. The Counties will provide templates to Operators to assist with their reporting requirements for Workforce Compensation funds.

For financial and audited financial statements where Operators make payments for Workforce Compensation related to the 2023 calendar year after December 31, 2023, Operators are required to follow the modified accrual basis of accounting as per provincial requirements.

Terms and Conditions

Leeds Grenville has the discretion and right to:

- Review and confirm that an Operator did not charge fees for eligible children higher than the fees at which it was capped after March 27, 2022 (unless the fees were communicated to parents prior to March 27, 2022).
- Verify that increases to base and non-base fees for the care of eligible children were permitted in accordance with O. Reg. 137/15, (i.e. a fee increase must have been communicated to families/parents prior to March 27, 2022).
- Verify that Operators are maintaining the spaces for eligible children for which they are receiving funding to reduce base fees (i.e. a licensed infant space must remain an infant space) along with the right to recover funding from an Operator as determined by the Counties.

Operator with a Service Agreement for CWELCC is required to:

- Set parent fees in accordance with O. Reg. 137/15. This includes regulations regarding rate freezes and base fees.
- Maintain licensed spaces for children aged 0 to 5 years for which they are receiving fee reduction funding or notify the Counties of any planned changes.
- Maintain their license and function in a manner that is consistent with the requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 and the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, including the Code of Ethics and Professional Misconduct Regulation.
- Apply for WEG funding on an annual basis. Information collected in the WEG will be used to determine Workforce Compensation funding.
- Ensure that CWELCC funding is not used to contribute to capital reserves.
- Maintain all financial and documentation pertaining to the CWELCC for no less than seven (7) years following the life of the Agreement. In the event the Operator ceases operations, the Operator shall not, without the prior written consent of the Counties, dispose of any records related to the services provided for under this Agreement.

- Not close for more than two (2) consecutive weeks and/or for more than four (4) weeks within a calendar year while receiving full funding from the CWELCC. Full base fees cannot be charged by an Operator for any closure beyond these timelines. For closures due to events outside of the Operator's control (e.g. natural disaster/weather event, pandemic, school board strike) the days of closure are not counted toward the two (2) consecutive weeks or four (4) total weeks of closure condition. If the program does not charge fees for the closure period, the days of closure do not need to be counted in the limits set out above.
- Return CWELCC funds to the Counties where funds are not used in accordance with the requirements established by the Counties that apply to Operators.
- Ensure that additional mandatory fees are not charged to families (e.g. waitlist fee, space hold fee, fundraising fee, registration fee, enhancement fees, etc.).

AN INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE SYSTEM AND SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE SERVICE

All Operators are expected to ensure the provision of an inclusive child care program for all children.

Where child care staff lacks the capacity, training and/or skills to offer an inclusive child care program for children, the Operator will request the services and supports offered through the Special Needs Resource (SNR) service provider. The Operator should only request additional supports if the capacity of their staff is not sufficient to support the inclusion of a child with special needs in the licensed child care program. Not all Operators may need SNR services to ensure inclusion of children with special needs, in its child care program(s).

The Operator is expected to:

- Ensure equitable access to child care programs for all families including those with a child with special needs.
- Partner with parents/guardians, SNR service staff and any other regulated health professional or community partner to support the inclusion of a child with special needs in their child care program.
- Modify program environment and incorporate the goals of the individualized support plan into the program to support the inclusion of a child with special needs.
- Participate in goal setting, implementation and maintenance of a child's individualized support plan.

As CMSM, the Counties is responsible for the planning, funding, oversight and accountability of the delivery of SNR services within the licensed child care system in Leeds and Grenville.

Access

All licensed program sites located in Leeds and Grenville, have access to SNR services funded by the Government of Ontario.

Requests for SNR service can only be made by an Operator. Requests/referrals for SNR service will not be accepted from a parent/guardian or other service provider.

Special Needs Resource Services Available

The following outlines the SNR services available to Operators:

- Program Consultation;
- Training/Workshops;
- Support for Specialized/Adaptive Equipment;
- Enhanced Support Consultation;
- Individualized Support Plan (ISP) Development Consultation; and
- Transition to School Consultation.

Inclusion Consultants

As a resource to licensed child care programs, the Inclusion Consultants are responsible for liaising between licensed child care providers and the Counties on matters of child care inclusion.

Upon request and/or approval of the Operator, the Inclusion Consultants will provide information, resources, strategies, mentorship and/or coaching to child care program/service agency staff based on-site observations, in the child care program setting.

The Inclusion Consultants can provide support, information, resources and training on a variety of topics to support inclusive practices, including but not limited to:

- Individualized Support Plan (ISP) Development
- Child Development
- How to Share Sensitive News
- Adaptive Strategies

- Inclusive Environmental Design
- Universal Screening Tools
- Customized training sessions tailored to a program's needs.

For more details about the SNR services, please see Special Needs Resource Service Guidelines 2023 [SNR-Service-Guidelines_9June2022.pdf \(leedsgrenville.com\)](#).

OTHER CONSULTATIVE SERVICES AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Program Consultant

As a resource to licensed child care programs the Program Consultant is responsible for liaising between licensed child care providers and the Counties on matters of professional learning and quality. The Program Consultant can provide support, information, resources and training on a variety of topics, including, but not limited to:

- How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
- The Environment as a Third Teacher
- 'Loose Parts' and the Importance of Open-Ended, Unstructured Play
- Play Based Learning
- The College of Early Childhood Educators/Continuous Professional Development Portfolio
- Provincial Education Upgrade Grant opportunities
- Topic-specific, customized training sessions tailored to a program's needs

Professional Learning

Continuous professional learning for all staff is an important element of a high-quality program. The Counties is committed to planning and providing on-going professional learning opportunities for staff working in child care programs in Leeds and Grenville. Operators that hold an Agreement with the Counties are eligible to access all professional learning opportunities either facilitated or hosted by the Counties at no cost.

Operators that do not hold an Agreement with the Counties, or those that only hold an Agreement with the Counties for CWELCC, may access professional learning opportunities either facilitated or hosted by the Counties at a cost.

See Appendix D for Child Care Service Overview.

Funding	Service Agreement Requirement	CWELCC Participation Required to Receive Funding	Additional Information (refer to 2023 Child Care Funding Guidelines for full eligibility criteria)
Audited Financial Reimbursement	Yes	Yes	Must receive \$20,000 or more annually of GOF and CWELCC funding combined to be eligible.
Administrative Funding	Yes	Yes	
Business Quality and Improvements (BQI)	Yes	Yes	Includes: Capacity Building, Play Based Material and Equipment, Repairs and Maintenance, Transformation.
Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC)	Yes	N/A	
Child Care Fee Subsidy	Yes	No	
Enhanced Support Funding	Yes	No	Must be working with an Inclusion Consultant to apply.
General Operating Funding	Yes	Yes	
Pay Equity	Yes	No	Historical Agreements, no new funding.

Funding	Service Agreement Requirement to Access Funding	CWELCC Participation Required to Receive Funding	Additional Information (refer to 2023 Child Care Funding Guidelines for full eligibility criteria)
Small Water Works	Yes	No	Operators must have drinking water system that is not from a municipal water service.
Special Project Funding	Yes	Yes	Refer to Business Quality and Improvements.
Wage Enhancement Grant/Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (WEG/HCCEG)	No	No	Must apply to WEG in order to be eligible for CWELCC Workforce Compensation funding.

***Note:** Application for a Service Agreement is not guaranteed, as the Counties reserves the right to deny any application and/Operator that does not meet the required criteria. The Counties also reserves the right to deny any child care funding to an Operator based on eligibility criteria, funding availability and/or misalignment with service system planning.

FUNDING ALLOCATION

CHILD CARE BUSINESS ELIGIBLE

Administrative Funding

Audited Financial Reimbursement Funding/One-Time Grant Audited Financial Reimbursement

Business Quality and Improvement (BQI)
(Funds can only be used for the approved project(s) and is not transferable)
Capacity Building, Transformation, Play Based Toys and Equipment, Repairs and Maintenance.

Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Operational Funding

Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Wage Improvement and Minimum Wage Top-Up Funding

CCEY Workforce Grant Stream

Child Care Fee Subsidy (CCFS)

Enhanced Support

Expansion Start-Up *(only for net new spaces)*
Capital, Play Based Toys/Equipment

General Operating Funding (GOF)

Pay Equity

Small Waterworks

Special Project Funding *(Funds can only be used for the approved project(s) and is not transferable)*
Capacity Building, Transformation, Play Based Toys and Equipment, Repairs and Maintenance

Wage Enhancement Grant/Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (WEG/HCCG)

Administration Expenses Wages/Benefits for: Executive Director, Assistant Director, Manager, Supervisor, etc.; non-child care program staff (i.e. multi-service agency), cook, Pedagogical Leader. Bookkeeping service, external consulting services, advertising, auditor services, office supplies, BOD expenses, banking fees, legal services, admin technology, company vehicle, etc.



Audited Financial Statements



Building Renovations Painting, construction, renovation, repairs and maintenance, etc.



Home Child Care Provider Payments



Well Water Testing



Program Materials Centre based toys and equipment and furniture, Licensed Home Child Care Loaner toy and equipment Library, art craft supplies, etc.



Program Operations Lease costs, mortgage, property tax, food, supplies, fundraising expenses, program expenses, insurance, utilities, advertising, etc.



Program Staff Wages/Benefits Educators, Home Visitor and Site Supervisors



Program Staff Wages/Benefits Enhanced Support Hours Only




Staff/Home Child Care Provider Training Expenses Staff wages/benefits for hours spent at training, home provider remittance for hours in training, mileage, workshop registration, conference registration, etc.)



Family eligibility for Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) has been determined by the Province of Ontario. Operators enrolled in CWELCC are required to charge the reduced CWELCC rate, that has been approved by the Counties, for all eligible children in the program and are prohibited from charging a rate that is higher than the approved CWELCC rate for eligible children, or changing the rate without prior approval from the Counties. It is the Operator’s responsibility to ensure that the correct fees are being charged to families at all times.

Under the CWELCC requirements, an **Eligible Child** is defined as follows:

January	February	March	April	May	June
 Child that turns 6 years old during this period <u>is eligible</u> for CWELCC until June 30th .					

July	August	September	October	November	December
Child that turns 6 years this month <u>is only eligible</u> for CWELCC until July 31st of this month.	Child that turns 6 years this month <u>is only eligible</u> for CWELCC until August 31st of this month.	Child that turns 6 years this month <u>is only eligible</u> for CWELCC until September 30th of this month.	Child that turns 6 years this month <u>is only eligible</u> for CWELCC until October 31st of this month.	Child that turns 6 years this month <u>is only eligible</u> for CWELCC until November 30th of this month.	Child that turns 6 years this month <u>is only eligible</u> for CWELCC until December 31st of this month.

Services	Service Agreement Requirement to Access Service	CWELCC Participation Required to Receive Service	Additional Information
Program Consultant Services	Yes	No	Services Available: Program Consultation and Professional Learning.
Special Needs Resource Services	No	No	Services Available: Program Consultation; Training/Workshops; Specialized/Adaptive Equipment Provision; Enhanced Support Consultation; Individualized Support Plan (ISP) Development Consultation; Transition to School Consultation.
Professional Learning (e.g. workshops, conferences, etc.)	No	No	Operators that do not hold a Service Agreement with the Counties, or those that only hold a Service Agreement with the Counties for CWELCC, may access professional learning opportunities either facilitated or hosted by the Counties at a cost.