

Child care and early learning updates e-newsletter

May 13, 2024

Welcome to The Regional Municipality of Durham's child care and early learning updates e-newsletter. These e-newsletters provide licensed child care operators in Durham Region with updated information related to child care.

This edition includes the following topics:

- Workforce Compensation – Funding Update
- Enhanced Staffing - Funding Update
- Information session with the Ministry of Education: Licensing and Serious Occurrences

Workforce Compensation - Funding Update

Licensees who employ staff eligible for Workforce Compensation will see a change in their monthly allocations starting with the June payment, to be provided to licensees before the end of May. Additionally, licensees will receive a lump-sum payment to be used to fund the retroactive Workforce Compensation payment to eligible staff. This payment has been processed and should be deposited this week (timelines may vary based on the banking institution). These funding increases are to support the 2024 increases announced in November 2023.

All funding received for Workforce Compensation must be used according to the terms of the service agreement and the updated Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Schedule to the agreement.

Background: On March 28, 2024, the Ministry of Education provided updated CWELCC management and funding guidelines. These guidelines address the increase to the wage floor amounts and wage eligibility ceilings indicated in the Workforce Strategy memo issued on November 16, 2023. Funding supports the recruitment and retention of qualified professionals, achieves system growth, and ensures increased access to high-quality licensed child care across the province.

In 2024, the wage floor was increased to \$23.86 per hour plus benefits for eligible Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) program staff, and \$24.86 per hour plus benefits for eligible RECE child care supervisors and RECE home child care visitors. The wage eligibility ceiling was increased to \$26 per hour for eligible RECE program staff and \$29 per hour for RECE child care supervisors and RECE home child care visitors.

Workforce Compensation funding is tied to the position, not the individual staff. However, an individual staff's base wage will determine how much CWELCC funding can be provided. Workforce Compensation funding is provided for all eligible staff who continue in their existing positions, newly filled existing positions (e.g., replace a previous staff member), or to fill newly created positions.

A calculator to assist with calculating staff entitlements for Wage Enhancement and Workforce Compensation has been posted to the Operator Portal.

Next steps for eligible licensees:

- In writing, share information with eligible staff about changes to the wage floor and wage eligibility ceiling that came into effect on January 1, 2024. At a minimum, the information must include the increase to the wage floor and wage eligibility ceiling, compounded annual wage increases for each year up to and including 2026, and an example of the order of operations for calculating wages.
- Ensure eligible RECE staff receive wages (and retroactive payments, if applicable) consistent with the Workforce Compensation changes that came into effect on January 1, 2024, within 32 calendar days of receiving funding allocations for this purpose.
- 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.
- Consider Workforce Compensation an addition to, rather than a replacement for, planned compensation increases for eligible staff. For example, the annual wage increase and increase to the wage floor cannot be used to reduce or offset planned merit increases for eligible staff.
- Licensees may decide to seek independent legal advice on implementing the wage floor and annual wage increase if subject to the terms of a collective agreement. Licensees are responsible for any associated costs.

Further questions regarding Workforce Compensation should be directed to Stacey Stevenson at Stacey.Stevenson@durham.ca or Natalie Mercier at Natalie.Mercier@durham.ca.

Enhanced Staffing Funding Update

Applicants are required to complete the [online learning session](#) before applying for enhanced staffing funding. The session is approximately 20 minutes in length and will support the successful completion of the application.

The enhanced staffing [online application](#) for the July and August funding period is open until Friday, June 7, 2024.

The online application and online learning session can be found using the links above and on the Operator Portal under Funding and Reporting within the Templates and Forms section.

Please note that enhanced staffing funding is one of several special needs resourcing (SNR) supports available to operators and must only be used as part of a broader support plan. A Collaborative Action Plan and/or Individual Support Plan is required as part of an application for enhanced staffing funding.

Information session with the Ministry of Education: Licensing and Serious Occurrences

Durham Region Children's Services is hosting an information session featuring a Senior Program Advisor from the Ministry of Education. The Senior Program Advisor will provide information about recent licensing updates and serious occurrence trends. The session will be held in the Regal Room of the Centennial Building (416 Centre St., Whitby) on Thursday, May 30, 2024, from 10 a.m. to noon. Attendees must [register online](#) to reserve a spot or contact Janine.Keith@durham.ca to be added to the waitlist. Licensing questions should be sent in advance to Janine.Keith@durham.ca. See the attached flyer for more details.