

Child care and early learning updates e-newsletter

December 17, 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:

- Fee subsidy kindergarten code change
- Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) update
- CWELCC rates in Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS) for January 2025
- Overview of employment changes in 2024

Fee subsidy kindergarten code change

Starting January 1, 2025, fee subsidy care codes for kindergarten-aged children are being streamlined.

Key changes:

- New codes: All kindergarten care codes will start with "K" for easy identification.
- No cost changes: Only the codes will change, not the associated costs.
- Implementation date: New codes will be effective January 1, 2025. Current codes will end on December 31, 2024.

New kindergarten codes:

- KB (replaces PEB, SEB, PKB & SKB)
- KA (replaces PEA, SEA, PKA & SKA)
- KBA (replaces PEBA, SEBA, PKBA & SKBA)
- KBL (replaces PEBL, SEBL, PKBL & SKBL)
- KAL (replaces PEAL, SEAL, PKAL & SKAL)
- KBLA (replaces PEBLA, SEBLA, PKBLA & SKBLA)
- KF (replaces PEF, SEF, PKF & SKF)
 - KF10, KF11, KF12, KF16, KF20, KF23
- KPA (replaces PEPA, SEPA, PKPA & SKPA)
- KM (replaces PEM, SEM, PKM & SKM)
- KMM (replaces PEMM, SEMM, PKMM & SKMM)
- KP (replaces PEP, SEP, PKP & SKP)
- KPL (replaces PEPL, SEPL, PKPL & SKPL)
- KPM (replaces PEPM, SEPM, PKPM & SKPM)

- KBR (replaces PEBR & SEBR)

Only the codes relevant to operator’s programs will be updated. Operators will receive a detailed care code description chart in the coming weeks. Mixed age group codes are also being removed.

As of January 1, only care codes applicable to a child’s age, regardless of the age-group space they are in, will be present. Children of mixed age groups can continue to use spaces as per the operator’s license in a class that is younger or older.

Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) update

The January 2025 allocation of CWELCC Cost-Based Funding has been issued and should be received by operators by December 19, 2024. We want to thank you for your thoughtful questions, providing requested information in a timely manner, and for your patience as we implemented the new cost-based funding formula.

Workforce compensation

Workforce compensation funding supports recruitment and retention of Ontario’s child care workforce through improved compensation. Effective January 1, 2025, CWELCC enrolled licensees are required to increase the hourly wage of Registered Early Childhood Education (RECE) staff by \$1 per hour. This is compounded from the previous years. Workforce compensation must be met by centres/agencies participating in CWELCC or centres/agencies exclusively serving children six to 12 years of age.

A staff compensation calculator is being created and will be uploaded to the operator portal as an optional tool to ensure that staff are being compensated appropriately.

Hourly Wage Floor 2022 to 2026*	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
RECE Program Staff	\$18.00	\$19.00	\$23.86	\$24.86	\$25.86
RECE Child Care Supervisors or RECE Home Child Care Visitors	\$20.00	\$21.00	\$24.86	\$25.86	\$26.86

Wage Eligibility Ceiling*	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
RECE Program Staff	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$27.00	\$28.00
RECE Child Care Supervisors or RECE Home Child Care Visitors	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$29.00	\$30.00	\$31.00

Eligible licensees must:

- Provide written communication to eligible staff regarding changes to the wage floor and wage eligibility ceiling by January 1 of each year, through 2026. Seek independent legal advice on implementing the wage floor and annual wage increase if they are subject to the terms of a collective agreement.
- 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.

Daily maximum fee

Effective January 1, 2025, base fees for child care in CWELCC-enrolled programs will be capped at a maximum of \$22 per day for eligible children. If the daily fee is already less than \$22, the lesser fee must be charged. Please note that programs that are not enrolled in CWELCC may continue to set their own parent fees.

Reminders as per the Memo distributed by Holly Moran (Ministry of Education) on December 3, 2024

Mandatory fees

Clarification has been provided in the memo from Holly Moran of the MEDU surrounding mandatory fees charged to parents/guardians when calculating the overall base fee. Fees that are not charged as part of the daily fee (such as a one-time registration fee) may be spread (“amortized”) over the number of service days in the calendar year in which they are charged to determine the impact on the overall base fee.

For example, a one-time fee of \$500 in a year with 250 service days would contribute \$2 towards the cap of \$22 per day. This will ensure that overall parent fees do not exceed the maximum daily fee limit set out in the regulation.

New information in the parent handbook

To support greater transparency for parents/guardians, the following information must be added to your parent handbook if it is not already included:

- Fee payment approach (e.g., that licensees accept the following as payment: e-transfers, cheques)
- Fee payment schedule (e.g., parents are to pay on a weekly, monthly, per “semester” or “term” basis)
- Circumstances in which refunds or credits will or will not be provided (e.g., refunds of pre-paid fees will only be provided in the following circumstances, all tuition is non-refundable)

2024 reconciliation reminders

As we approach year end, we will begin the process of reconciliation for 2024. Please see the list below to help you in your preparation.

- Special Purpose Funding – Approved funding must be used by December 31, 2024, and all receipts must be submitted by January 31, 2025. As a reminder, approved funding will not cover Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).
- Professional Learning Funding – The reconciliation template is currently available on the Operator Portal. The reconciliation template and supporting documentation must be submitted to the Operator Portal on or before January 31, 2025.
- Wage Enhancement, Workforce Compensation and CWELCC reconciliation will be uploaded to the Operator Portal for completion in January 2025.

CWELCC rates in Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS) for January 2025

To align with 2025 CWELCC guidelines and the distribution of CWELCC funding to child care operators, all CWELCC eligible codes in OCCMS will be updated for fee subsidy payments. Payments from fee subsidy will now reflect the new CWELCC rates. Families and caregivers remain responsible for their parent rate and fee subsidy will cover the remaining cost.

Updated Schedule B's will be posted to the Operator Portal prior to February 1, 2025. It is the responsibility of each operator to ensure that the posted rates are reviewed, and they match current rates.

Overview of employment changes in 2024

The below overview is a summary of changes gathered and provided by TJ Solutions from their end of year wrap-up newsletter. This summary highlights important employment and employee changes as well as helpful resources for all child care operators.

Employment Standards Act (ESA) changes in 2024

- Employers are not allowed to ask an employee to provide a medical note from a qualified health practitioner as evidence of their entitlement to the ESA sick leave of three days. (not required to be used consecutively).
- Employers can ask for another form of “reasonable evidence” that the employee is entitled to the sick leave. (E.g., copy of a prescription, confirmation of an appointment, a receipt for over-the-counter medication or employee attestation)
- Employers will be able to ask for sick notes beyond the ESA three days.
- Sick leave, attendance management and absenteeism policies should be updated accordingly.
- Employers must ensure employees have provided signed consent if vacation pay is different than the ESA lump sum payment provision. (vacation pay is provided as a percentage on each regular pay cheque or salary continuance throughout the employee's vacation)
- Employers are not allowed to restrict or require an employee to use an account at a particular financial institution for direct deposit of wages. The account must be selected by the employee and in their name.
- Employers with 25 or more employees must provide a copy of the right to disconnect and electronic monitoring policies within 30 days of being hired.
- As a reminder, employers with 25 or more employees on January 1 of any year must provide current employees with a copy of the right to disconnect and

electronic monitoring policies.

Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) changes in 2024

- The definition of the “workplace” is now expanded and includes employees who work from home or in or around private residences. Those employees are now covered under the OHSA.
- The definition of workplace harassment and workplace sexual harassment has been expanded to include “virtual” harassment that occurs in a workplace through the use of information and communications technology. It includes those employees who are working from home.
- Information required to be posted under the OHSA for employers with more than 20 employees can now be done in an electronic format if employees know where and how to access the information. (i.e., the information must be in a readily accessible format),
- Joint health and safety committees are now able to meet virtually.

Operators should review their workplace harassment policies to ensure that the definition of workplace harassment and workplace sexual harassment now references “virtual” harassment.

Employers should also be updating their social media policies/practices to include the statement that “any harassment, sexual harassment, and/or bullying that occurs virtually will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action.” The updated policy should be discussed with your employees to ensure that everyone understands these changes.

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services changes in 2024

Under the [Supporting Children’s Future Act 2024](#), service providers (children’s aid societies) are allowed to share personal information with the College of Early Childhood Educators to support proceedings such as complaints and investigations. The amendment also clarifies that early childhood educators may be subject to an offence if they fail to report a child who is or may be in need of protection.

Ontario Not-For-Profit Act (ONCA) changes in 2024

Organizations/agencies are now required to follow the requirements set out under the ONCA. Organizations must adopt the default bylaws provided by the government and amend articles of incorporation, if required, by referencing the [Guide to the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act 2010](#).

Bylaws do not have to be filed with Service Ontario however, charitable organizations must file a copy of amended bylaws with the [Canada Revenue Agency \(CRA\)](#). Charitable organizations who have not filed their updated bylaws with the CRA run the

risk of impacting their charitable status. The CRA does not approve them, it is just a confirmation.

Requested Mandatory Training and Information Links

Below are the free training links most often requested by clients of TJ Solutions. As employers you are required to provide the following training to employees and keep records that employees have received training. Placement students are required to receive the same workplace health and safety orientation as staff.

- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)
- [Collective Agreements Portal](#)
 - The Ministry of Labour has made it easier for organizations to find collective agreements which are relevant to their sector.
- [Ontario Human Rights Code \(OHRC\)](#)
- Occupational Health and Safety Training
 - Under the OHS Act every employer and employee who have not received training full health and safety certification (JHSC part 1 & part 2) course are required to take the basic health and safety training.
 - [Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in five Steps](#)
 - [Employee Health and Safety Awareness in four Steps](#)