

Child care and early learning updates e-newsletter

June 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:

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- Fee Subsidy Payment Policy and Procedures Manual – Update
- Ontario has a new Minister of Education

Professional Learning Funding - Update

The Ministry of Education (MEDU) is providing funding to support professional learning to improve the recruitment and retention of the Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) workforce and other program staff, and to support the implementation of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system.

Funding will support professional learning opportunities that build the capacity of the early years and child care sector to support the provision of high-quality programs that align with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

Professional learning funding will be provided to service providers to support up to one and a half professional learning days for eligible staff. The Professional Learning Letter of Agreement (LOA) will be available in the Operator Portal in three weeks.

The LOA must be signed and uploaded to the Operator Portal in the Budget and Funding Documents folder within 30 days. The signed LOA must be received before funds will be issued.

Reconciliation and supporting documentation will be required.

For questions about professional learning, please email Tracy Barclay at Tracy.Barclay@durham.ca or Stacey Stevenson at Stacey.Stevenson@durham.ca.

Workforce Compensation Funding - Update

Workforce Compensation Funding has been issued to operators. Last month, operators received the retroactive payment for January to May. The retroactive payment was titled CC-CWELCC-May/June-Workforce.

A calculator to assist with calculating staff entitlements for Wage Enhancement and Workforce Compensation is available in the Operator Portal.

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

Applications for enhanced staffing funding for July and August are under review. Decisions will be posted on the Operator Portal under *Service Agreements and Supporting Documents* by the end of June.

Enhanced Staffing Funding - Reminders

Child care centres must report on their use of approved enhanced staffing funding each month. The reporting template can be found in the Operator Portal. Completed reports are due by the 15 of the month following the month enhanced staffing funding was utilized (e.g., The report for January was due February 15, and the report for February was due March 15). Once a report has been submitted, service providers will receive a confirmation email to the address provided. If a confirmation email has not been received, the report has not been received. Payment will be issued when the monthly report has been submitted and reviewed by Children's Services. Late submissions will not be paid until the following pay period.

As indicated on the application form and Schedule G of the Child Care Services Agreement, staff members hired through enhanced staffing funding must be used in addition to the legislated required staff ratios for a room.

Fee Subsidy absent day policy change

Effective July 1, 2024, fee subsidy children will have 48 absent days per calendar year. This is an increase of 12 absent days from the previous allotment of 36 absent days per calendar year.

The increase in absent days for fee subsidy families is one way fee subsidy will ensure equity for all families following the implementation of the CWELCC system.

Please note:

- Absent days should be used for reasons such as sickness, vacation, alternative child care arrangements made with relatives, or an outbreak situation whereby the child is not permitted to attend care until symptom-free for a specified period.
- If a child is absent from care on their scheduled day, the parent/guardian must pay their daily parent rate and fee subsidy will pay the approved subsidized portion.
- Fee subsidy will pay the subsidized portion for the days a child is absent from care up to a maximum of 48 days for 2024. If a child starts care later in the year, their absent allotment is prorated based on the month they are approved for fee subsidy.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for paying the full daily cost of care for any additional absent days over their absent allotment. The service provider should charge the additional absent day(s) at the full fee rate.
- Every January, fee subsidy children will be issued an absent day allotment of 48 days per calendar year.
- Effective July 1, the total remaining absent day allotment for ongoing fee subsidy children will increase by 12 days.

Regular attendance at child care is essential for a child's development, routine, and learning. Children are expected to attend child care consistently. Parents/guardians are expected to communicate with the service provider when the child will be absent and the reason for the absence.

Service providers must mark absent days on the attendance to track the number of days children are missing from their program and the reason for each absence.

The following codes are to be used when completing the attendance record in OCCMS for an absent child:

S – sick – the child has been reported ill and cannot attend child care.

V - vacation – the child is on vacation. These days are typically pre-planned.

A – absent – the child is away, and a reason for the absence was not provided by the parent/guardian.

N - non-paid – the child was not expected to attend, no payment was expected.

Parents/guardians will receive communication about this policy change next week.

Contact the fee subsidy caseworker assigned to your site if you have any questions about this policy or how absent days work.

Fee Subsidy Payment Policy and Procedures Manual - Update

Policy #4-040 Statutory Designated Days has been updated. Effective this September, fee subsidy will subsidize the September Labour Day if the child attends a minimum of one week of summer care with an agency and is enrolled to attend care on the first week of school with the same agency. The parent/guardian must pay their daily parent rate for the day. The rate applied for kindergarten and school-age children will be the kindergarten/school-age enrolled rate.

As with all fee subsidy payment policies, this rule only applies if full fee payers are also charged for the September statutory holiday.

Additional directions on completing the attendance for the September designated day will be sent to operators before the completion of September bills.

The updated policy will soon be reflected on the Operator Portal and Durham Region website.

Ontario has a new Minister of Education

Last week, Premier Doug Ford unveiled changes to his cabinet ministers. Most notable was the role swap of Todd Smith, the new Minister of Education and Stephen Lecce, who will assume the role of Minister of Energy and Electrification. View the [news release](#) for more details on the changes to the cabinet ministers.