Child care and early learning updates e-newsletter

October 29, 2026

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:

- Knowing Our Numbers (KON) survey
- 2026 General Operating Program (GOP) survey
- Eligible Children in Ineligible Spaces (ECIS) reporting
- 2027 Funding Allocation Data Tool
- Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) update
- Temporary Program Assistant (TPA) funding update
- Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Directed Growth update
- Ontario Early Childhood Education (ECE) grants: Updates

Knowing Our Numbers (KON) survey

The Knowing Our Numbers (KON) survey is now available. KON is an Ontario-wide initiative, designed to better understand the early years and child care workforce, their experiences, needs, challenges, and priorities. The information collected will support system planning and help develop strategies that respond to the needs of those working with children and families.

If you are part of the early years workforce, work in licensed centre or home-based care, EarlyON centres, full-day kindergarten, or Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) programs you are eligible to participate. Findings from KON are intended to help inform service planning, policy development, sector engagement and investment decisions.

This confidential, anonymous survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Please only complete the survey once. The survey will close on Friday, November 20. For more information, please refer to the KON resources provided with this communication.

2026 General Operating Program (GOP) survey

The 2026 General Operating Program (GOP) survey is now available in the Child Care Operator Portal. Submission is only required for CWELCC operators serving children six to 12 years of age. Information collected through the survey will be used to determine

2027 GOP funding allocations. Please complete and submit the survey to the Child Care Operator Portal and email CCEYDnotifications@durham.ca to advise that the survey has been completed. The deadline for submission is November 27.

Eligible Children in Ineligible Spaces (ECIS) reporting

The 2026 ECIS reporting form will be posted to the Child Care Operator Portal on November 6. Operators should use this optional form to report any children who were five years old and enrolled in Grade 1 between September and December 2026. If this does not apply to your program, you may disregard the form.

Please upload the completed form no later than December 4, and email Grace.Severn@durham.ca to confirm submission.

2027 Funding Allocation Data Tool

The 2027 Funding Allocation Data Tool will be available in the Child Care Operator Portal in the near future. To support administrative efficiencies and ensure the tool aligns with 2027 CWELCC expectations, the release of the tool is being adjusted to allow for final alignment with program requirements.

The Funding Allocation Data Tool helps ensure your 2027 funding allocation reflects planned operating capacity, while also providing valuable information related to staffing. To prepare for completion of the tool, operators may begin gathering the following information for 2027:

- Projected operating capacity
- Staffing positions
- Scheduled hours of work
- Base hourly wage rates (excluding Wage Enhancement and Workforce Compensation funding)

Please note that actual expense data will be collected through the year-end reconciliation process and will not be required as part of the 2027 Funding Allocation Data Tool. An optional expense tracking tab will be included for operators who wish to use it as a planning and budgeting resource. The submission deadline for the 2027 Funding Allocation Data Tool will be communicated upon its release.

Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) update

As part of this year's ongoing SNR capacity building initiatives, the Child Care and Early Years Division (CCEYD) is excited to announce the upcoming release of a four-part asynchronous online learning series for the early learning and child care community.

Following its launch, completion of the Legislation Module will be a requirement for any program applying for Temporary Program Assistant (TPA) funding. More information about the learning series, including how to access it and launch dates, will be communicated in the near future.

Temporary Program Assistant (TPA) funding update

The CCEYD continues to receive, review and approve TPA funding requests to support licensed child care programs in implementing inclusive practices and responding to evolving classroom needs.

Funding allocations continue to be based on identified program needs and available funding. As a reminder, TPA funding is intended to enhance the capacity of the educator team and learning environment by providing additional temporary support as programs implement strategies that promote meaningful participation and belonging for all children. This may include time and support for program planning, environmental modifications, implementation of inclusive strategies, collaboration with families and community partners, participation in meetings, and reflective practice alongside resource consultants (RC). TPA funding support is used in addition to legislated educator-to-child ratios and is not intended to provide one-to-one support for an individual child.

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

Currently, all available CWELCC growth allocations for 2026 have been assigned. The Region continues to work closely with the Ministry of Education by sharing updates about the local child care system. Should more Directed Growth spaces become available, additional approvals will be communicated.

Durham Region has not yet received provincial direction regarding CWELCC growth, funding, enrolment processes, age-group priorities, or expansion opportunities beyond 2026. As a result, the CCEYD is unable to comment on potential opportunities for 2027,

whether current priorities will continue, or what future enrolment and expansion processes may entail. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

Ontario Early Childhood Education (ECE) grants: Updates

Semester updates: Effective November 23, Ontario ECE grants will begin accepting applications for the winter 2027 semester from past ECE applicants. All other applicants, including those for the Leadership Grant program, or the College of ECE Reimbursement, can apply as of December 7.

Changes to tuition coverage: Beginning with the winter 2027 semester, changes to funding coverage will apply to all eligible ECE applicants, whether tuition is paid directly by the student or through sponsorship. For further details on eligible and ineligible tuition costs, visit the ECE Grants webpage.

Leadership Grant applicants: For approved part-time programs that qualify under the Leadership stream, funding will cover or reimburse eligible tuition costs only. Ancillary fees will no longer be covered or reimbursed. Leadership applicants should take this change into consideration when planning for their studies and reviewing the total cost of their program.

Program requirement: The Ontario ECE Grants Program is introducing a new program requirement step of validating employment after graduation. This measure ensures that the program continues to support the professional journey while strengthening Ontario's early years workforce. For further details on the program requirement, visit the ECE Grants webpage.