

Extended Day Programs – Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: September 27, 2024

How do the school boards accurately estimate the demand for extended day care on an annual basis?

Based on the guidelines [outlined by the Ontario government](#), school boards conduct pre-registration sign-up to gauge interest in Extended Day programs for the upcoming school year. This process, occurs between January and April each year and serves as a critical planning tool to assess demand and allocate resources. However, it is important to note that pre-registration does not guarantee placement, as program viability is dependent on staffing levels and the number of interested families.

The boards determine the viability of each program, which must be reported to the Region of Waterloo by April.

How will parents get updated about their registration process?

When parents complete an online registration, they receive a confirmation email indicating that their child has been placed on a waiting list due to maximum capacity. Children are added to the waiting list in chronological order, based on the date and time the registration request is received.

Parents will be informed when a space becomes available, following the school board's waitlist policy. Admission is subject to space availability, which can be unpredictable as it depends on when current participants leave the program.

What is causing the capacity shortfalls and the resulting waitlists?

While specific figures are unavailable, alongside the region's population growth, the ongoing shortage of educators, and the increase in demand for child care programs across Ontario has placed additional strain on our programs.

We recognize that some families will continue to be placed on waitlists until a space opens up. The process for those on the waitlist through WRDSB is guided by the [Extended Day Program Wait List Policy and Procedures](#). The WCDSB waitlist policy is outlined in the [Extended Day Parent Handbook](#). Both Boards will continue to look for opportunities to increase the number of spaces available to families, as staffing and facility constraints allow.

How are the school boards addressing the capacity shortfall?

The school boards are actively recruiting more educators to support their Extended Day programs and expand programs where possible

Boards are actively exploring different models and reviewing all available options to better manage waitlists, while continuing to recruit and allocate resources effectively.

Are the boards planning to increase capacity to meet the demand in the long-term?

Like many licensed childcare providers across Ontario, we are facing a significant shortage of educators, which has severely limited our ability to expand programs. The unfortunate reality is that waitlists are likely to remain a part of the process as we work to address the challenges. We are continually reviewing our enrolment and staffing levels to ensure we are operating at full capacity with the resources we have. Both Boards will continue to look for opportunities to increase program spaces, as staffing and facility constraints allow.

When will families be able to manage their schedules on OneList?

We continue to work with OneHSN to process all requests and communications with families in a timely manner. We are working with the vendor to resume normal processes (schedule changes, new registrations). This is subject to quality assurance testing which is ongoing.

By October 3, 2024, parents will be able to manage child schedules directly within OneList, instead of through email.

Is the OneList Software accessible and AODA compliant?

OneHSN is fully committed to ensuring that OneList for school board registration and scheduling is mobile responsive and meets AODA compliance to provide equitable access to all families. Together with operators, we will prioritize and implement the updates to meet these standards and parent's preference for using mobile devices.

How are the boards working with OneHSN to prevent these issues going forward with the vendor?

Currently, the Region of Waterloo, Waterloo Region District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board all use the same vendor for their centralized application/registration process. This creates a central access point for families whether they needed licensed child care or before and after school care. Each organization manages their own service agreement with OneHSN.

All parties will continue collaborating with OneHSN and other key partners to find viable solutions to the current challenges we're facing. We are committed to exploring all options to ensure we can meet the needs of our community.

Where can families get the most up to date information on the registration process?

Families can follow the school boards website and opt in to emails to ensure they are up to date. All parties are taking valuable lessons from this year's registration challenges as we plan for the next school year. We are actively working to address the needs and exploring every option to support as many families as possible during this time.

Please continue to check the FAQ pages and websites of the Region of Waterloo, WRDSB, and WCDSB for updates, as we will provide the latest information once the plan for next year's enrolment is finalized.

How was the Canada Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) plan implemented by each board?

When the [Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care plan \(CWELCC\)](#) was announced in spring 2022, both the WRDSB and WCDSB opted to become licensed for before and after care, and were enrolled in the CWELCC program. CWELCC reduces child care fees for children ages 0-5. In before and after school programs, this means that only children in JK, SK, and 5 years in grade 1 are eligible for reduced child care fees.

Since becoming licensed and reducing fees for eligible children, both WRDSB and WCDSB have identified increased demand for their before and after school programs. There is a possibility of adding additional licensed child care spaces, if the current maximum licensed capacity is not sufficient to meet demand and adequate staffing could be maintained.

What supports are there through the Region?

As the Service System Manager (SSM), the Region of Waterloo Children's Services is responsible for service and system management for licensed child care programs serving children birth -12 years of age. Children's Services engages in system wide planning to determine local priorities and associated actions. As part of this work, the Region is currently engaged in the development of a workforce recruitment strategy to sustain and grow the workforce.