

Parent Guide to Licensed Quality Child Care in Waterloo Region



Find and apply for licensed
child care programs near you at
www.onelistwaterlooregion.ca



Region of Waterloo





Parent Guide to Licensed Quality Child Care

Table of contents

Step 1 - Understanding child care in Waterloo Region	3
Types of care	3
Before and After School Programs	5
Step 2 - Choosing a program	6
Things to consider	6
Quality matters!	6
Step 3 - Applying for licensed child care and before and after school care	7
OneList	7
Step 4 - After you have applied for child care	8
Waitlists	8
Being offered a child care space	8
Child care costs	9
Help paying for child care	9
Did you know?	9
Special needs supports	10
Questions or concerns about your child's care?	10
Additional resources	11

Step 1



Understanding child care in Waterloo Region

Types of care

As a parent, you want the very best for your child. Searching for child care can feel overwhelming, but this guide has everything you need to know about finding the right program for you and your child.

There are different types of child care available in Waterloo Region.

Programs can be licensed or unlicensed. Options include: centre-based or home-based child care. Child care programs are also available for school-age children before and after school.

Licensed (or regulated) child care

Licensed child care centres and licensed home child care agencies must meet provincial standards for health, safety and supporting the developmental needs of children (as outlined in the Child Care and Early Years Act). These programs are monitored and inspected for compliance by the [Ministry of Education](#)¹. Licensed programs will have a green decal prominently displayed near the entrance of their centre or home.

Unlicensed (or unregulated) child care

Unlicensed child care is not inspected by the Ministry of Education unless they receive a complaint, and is not required to follow the Child Care and Early Years Act. Unlicensed care could include unlicensed home child care providers, a nanny, or a relative. Care is often provided in the caregivers home, but may be provided in your home.



	Licensed centre-based care	Licensed home-based care	Unlicensed home-based care
Licensed by Ministry of Education	Yes	Yes, under the Home Child Care Agency, not the individual provider	No. They must disclose that they are not licensed
Who operates	Non-profit and for-profit organizations	Non-profit organizations and the Municipality	A relative, babysitter, or nanny
How is care provided	Age-specific groups (Infants/toddlers/preschoolers)	Small group (not age-specific) (Maximum of 6)	Small group (not age-specific) (Maximum of 5)
Ages of children cared for	0-12 years*	0-12 years*	0-12 years*
Hours of operation	Monday to Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.*	7 days/week 24 hours/day*	7 days/week 24 hours/day*
Fee subsidy available	Yes	Yes	No
Special needs resources available	Yes	Yes	No
Staff qualifications	Programs must all employ Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) as per the CCEYA. The percentage of RECE's varies from program to program.	Home child care providers have various educational backgrounds that are approved by a licensed home child care agency Licensed home child care agencies have consultants who are RECE's, who offer support to providers	Unknown
Vulnerable Sector Checks	Required by all staff	Caregivers have current checks for all family members over 18	Unknown
How to apply	OneList Waterloo Region	OneList Waterloo Region	Directly with the provider

*Ages of children cared for, hours of operation, and group sizes may vary across programs and providers.



Before and After School Programs

Before and After School Programs may be operated by school boards or by licensed child care providers. They are available in most schools for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6. These programs may also be called Extended Day Programs and / or Youth Development Programs (grade 3-6 only).

For a complete list of before and after school options, including locations and who operates the program, go to [OneList Waterloo Region](#)².

Depending who operates the program, there are different policies and procedures related to the registration and enrollment process. Each operator of these programs will have different policies and procedures related to changing your schedule, billing, cost of care, and notice of withdrawl/end care.

For the most up to date information, please contact either the Licensed Child Care Provider that operates your program, or the Extended Day Program at the appropriate School Board.

Step 2



Choosing a program

Things to consider

When choosing a program for your child, there are many things to consider



Location



Cost (for more information see "child care costs")



Hours of operation



Program philosophy/ approach to learning



Program policies



Group sizes



Qualifications/ training of educators/ caregivers



Rate of Educator turnover

It is recommended that you call the centre and book a visit so you can observe and [ask questions](#)³.

- Is the centre/home welcoming, clean and well maintained?
- Is there an atmosphere of warmth and respect?
- Are the educators/caregivers responsive to the needs of the children?
- Are the indoor and outdoor environments well equipped?
- Does the environment allow children to investigate, imagine, think, create and solve problems?
- Are the children actively engaged in learning through play?
- Does the centre hire only RECE's, or do they also employ untrained staff? How many RECE's per classroom?
- How long have staff been employed at the centre?
- Does the menu offer a variety of nutritious foods each day?

While visiting the centre you can ask to see their latest Licensing Inspection by the Ministry of Education. You can also go on-line and check the centres most recent [Public Health Inspection](#)⁴.

Quality matters!

Learn more about the [characteristics of a quality child care program](#)⁵.

In addition, all licensed child care providers participate in a continuous quality improvement initiative called [Early Years Engage](#)⁶.

The Ministry of Education has developed a resource guide: [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#)⁷ about learning through relationships for educators/ caregivers who work with young children and their families.

Step 3



Applying for licensed child care and before and after school care

OneList

OneList Waterloo Region is a web-based program, where parents/guardians apply for licensed child care in Waterloo Region (including centre-based, home-based, and before and after school programs).

Licensed Child Care Operators receive the applications and they continue with the registration and enrollment process, when they have a space for your child.

Getting started on OneList:

To apply for child care, parents/guardians will need:

- An email address to create an account.
- Access to a computer or a mobile device (such as a phone or tablet).
 - ▶ If access to a computer or mobile device is limited, you can visit a library, a community centre or the Welcome Centre at a Region of Waterloo building, (235 King St. E, Kitchener, 99 Regina St. S., Waterloo, or 150 Main St., Cambridge) to use a computer.

Steps to apply for child care:

- Go to OneListwaterlooregion.ca
- Create an account by registering your email address and creating a password
 - ▶ Use a personal email address
- Follow the steps to search and find the programs that you would like to apply to

Looking for a licensed child care centre?

- ▶ Choose Waterloo Region Licensed Child Care (then Centre-based)

Looking for Licensed home child care?

- ▶ Choose Waterloo Region Licensed Child Care (then Home-based)

Looking for before and/or after school care?

- ▶ Click the link under “Looking for Before and After School Programs?” to see a listing of all the schools and who operates the school age program at each school
- ▶ Choose the corresponding, colour-coded button to start the registration process
- Continue to follow the steps to select and apply to child care programs
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)⁸ about OneList

Step 4



After you have applied for child care

Waitlists

Every child care program manages their own waitlist. Your position on their waitlist is based on several factors, such as:

- Your application date
- Your child's age
- Days / hours of care required
- Programs may give priority to applications when (but not limited to):
 - ▶ A sibling is already enrolled
 - ▶ The applicant is a staff member
 - ▶ There is an agreement with an organization or learning institution to reserve child care spaces for their staff or students

OneList does not provide information about waitlist times, space availability or vacancies.

To inquire about where your child is on a waitlist or when a space may be available, contact the programs directly.

Should you no longer require care, please go into your account and remove your applications.

Being offered a child care space

When there is a space available for your child at a program that you have applied to, the program will contact you to offer you the spot.

Once you have accepted a space, the program will require you to complete a registration package. Some programs may charge a registration fee or deposit, which may or may not be refundable.

In addition, when you apply to programs through OneList, you will be asked to prioritize your top three applications. When you accept a space at a program, applications that were ranked below the one you accepted, will be removed from your account. Programs prioritized higher than the program you accepted, will remain on your account.

Child care costs

Child care fees vary from program to program and are based on the age of the child and sometimes, on the number of hours they attend.

With the introduction of the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program, families with children under six years of age enrolled in a child care program participating in CWELCC will receive a significant reduction to their child care fees. Daily fees will be reduced to an average of \$10/day by 2025. Visit [CWELCC](#)⁹ to see who is participating in the program.

Contact the child care centre, the home child care agency, or school board (or visit their website) for specific details on fees. In addition to the monthly fees, some programs may charge other fees, so it is important to ask about this ahead of time.

Help paying for child care

The Region of Waterloo, Child Care Subsidy program helps parents pay for licensed child care so they can go to work or school. Child Care Subsidy may cover all or part of a family's child care costs.

To learn more about Child Care Subsidy, visit the [Child Care Subsidy website](#)¹¹ or call 519-575-4400. You can also use the [online calculator](#)¹².

Parents can apply for Child Care Subsidy online or over the phone by calling 519-575-4400. You can apply for Child Care Subsidy up to nine weeks before starting care.



Did you know?

You can also claim the Ontario Childcare Tax Credit on your tax return to cover the cost of child care in centres, homes, and camps. For more information, visit

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-child-care-tax-credit>¹⁰



Special needs supports

If you have concerns about your child's development, call the Special Needs Access Point (SNAP) at 519-514-SNAP, visit the [Special Needs Access Point website](#)¹³, or email: snap@kwhab.ca.

SNAP is a single point of access for referrals to services and supports for children 0-12 years of age who are attending or planning to attend any licensed child care program within Waterloo Region. The SNAP Resource Coordinator will contact you to discuss your concerns and explain what supports are available to help your child.

There are other resources available in our community if you have a concern about your child.

Visit [Family Compass Waterloo Region](#)¹⁴ for a guide to services for children and youth.

Questions or concerns about your child's care?

Licensed child care

The first step is to talk to your child care educator / provider.

If they cannot resolve your issue, speak with the centre supervisor / home child care consultant.

If you still cannot resolve the issue, you may file a complaint with the [Ministry of Education](#)¹⁵:

- Licensed care, call 1-877-510-5333 or email childcare_ontario@ontario.ca
- Unlicensed care, call 1-844-516-6263 or email UCCV@Ontario.ca

You can also share your concern/complaint with the Region of Waterloo Children's Services by calling 519-575-4400.

Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) Extended Day Programs

For more information or questions (regarding Parent Handbook, policies, billing inquiries, tax receipts or schedule changes)

Email: care@wrdsb.ca

Phone: Extended Day Information Line at 519-570-0003 ext. 4704

Website: [WRDSB Extended Day](#)¹⁶

[Change Schedule Tip Sheet](#)¹⁷

Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) Extended Day Programs

Please direct your questions or concerns to the RECE in the Extended Day Program.

For more information or questions (regarding Parent Handbook, policies, billing inquiries, tax receipts, schedules etc.)

Email: extended.day@wcdsb.ca

Phone: 519-578-3660

Website: [WCDSB Extended Day](#)¹⁸

Additional resources

1. Ministry of Education
www.ontario.ca/page/child-care-rules-child-care-and-early-years-act
2. OneList Waterloo Region
regionofwaterloo.onehsn.com/
3. Questions to ask a Child Care Provider
dr6j45jk9xcmk.cloudfront.net/documents/4875/questions-to-ask-a-child-care-provider.pdf
4. Public Health Inspections
checkit.regionofwaterloo.ca/Home/About?returnUrl=~%2FSearch%2FByTable
5. Characteristics of a Quality Child Care Program
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/find-quality-child-care-and-early-learning.aspx
6. EarlyYears Engage, a quality initiative, through the Region of Waterloo, to support child care operators in continuous quality improvement
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/quality-improvement.aspx
7. The Ministry of Education resource guide: *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*
files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf
8. Frequently Asked Questions about OneList
https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/resources/Childrens-Services/OneList_FAQ_for_Parents.pdf
9. Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/national-child-care.aspx
10. Ontario Child Care Tax Credit
www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-childcare-tax-credit
11. Region of Waterloo, Child Care Subsidy website
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/help-paying-for-child-care.aspx#
12. Region of Waterloo, fee subsidy calculator
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/child-care-subsidy-calculator.aspx
13. Special Needs Access Point (SNAP)
www.kwhab.ca/early-learning/snap/
14. Family Compass Waterloo Region
www.familycompasswr.ca/en/index.aspx
15. Ministry of Education, complaints about child care
www.ontario.ca/page/make-child-care-complaint
16. Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) Extended Day Program
www.wrdsb.ca/beforeafter/
17. Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) Change Schedule Tip Sheet
www.wrdsb.ca/beforeafter/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/schedule_change_instructions.pdf
18. Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) Extended Day Program
www.wcdsb.ca/our-schools/register-for-school/extended-day-program/