Parent Guide to Licensed Quality Child Care in Waterloo Region

Find and apply for licensed child care programs near you at www.onelistwaterlooregion.ca
# Parent Guide to Licensed Quality Child Care

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

*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 Region².

Before and After School Programs, operated by the school boards, do not have a waitlist; however, they do require two-week’s notice for new registrations and/or schedule changes.

Some Before and After School Programs, operated by licensed child care operators, may have waitlists, some may not.

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 withdrawal/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.

- 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.

Quality matters!

Learn more about the characteristics of a quality child care program.

In addition, all licensed child care providers participate in a continuous quality improvement initiative called EarlyYears Engage.

The Ministry of Education has developed a resource guide: How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years 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 www.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 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 five 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.

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 or call 519-575-4400. You can also use the online calculator.

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-childcare-tax-credit

After you have applied for child care
**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](#), or email: [snap@kwhab.ca](mailto: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](#) for a guide to services for children and youth.

**Questions or concerns about your child’s care?**

**Licenced 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](#):

- Licensed care, call 1-877-510-5333 or email [childcare_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)
- Unlicensed care, call 1-844-516-6263 or email [UCCV@Ontario.ca](mailto: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](mailto:care@wrdsb.ca)

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

Website: [WRDSB Extended Day](#)

[Change Schedule Tip Sheet](#)

**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](mailto:extended.day@wcdsb.ca)

Phone: 519-578-3660

Website: [WCDSB Extended Day](#)
Additional resources

1. Ministry of Education

2. OneList Waterloo Region
   https://regionofwaterloo.onehsn.com/

3. Questions to ask a Child Care Provider

4. Public Health Inspections
   https://checkit.regionofwaterloo.ca/Home/About?returnUrl=~%2FSearch%2FByTable

5. Characteristics of a Quality Child Care Program

6. Early Years Engage, a quality initiative, through the Region of Waterloo, to support child care operators in continuous quality improvement

   http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/howlearninghappens.pdf

8. Frequently Asked Questions about OneList

9. Ontario Child Care Tax Credit
   https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-childcare-tax-credit

10. Region of Waterloo, Child Care Subsidy website

11. Region of Waterloo, fee subsidy calculator

12. Special Needs Access Point (SNAP)
    https://www.kwhab.ca/early-learning/snap/

13. Family Compass Waterloo Region

14. Ministry of Education, complaints about child care
    https://www.ontario.ca/page/make-child-care-complaint

15. Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) Extended Day Program
    https://www.wrdsb.ca/beforeafter/

16. Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) Change Schedule Tip Sheet

17. Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) Extended Day Program
    https://www.wcdsb.ca/our-schools/register-for-school/extended-day-program/