

# Licensed Child Care Fact Sheet 2024

## Licensed Child Care Overview:

There are numerous types of programs for licensed child care in our community. Centre-based programs operate in a variety of locations, including stand-alone buildings, workplaces, community centres, schools, and places of worship, and is available for children up to 12 years of age. Home-based programs are provided in approved private homes by caregivers who have a contract with a licensed home child care agency, and is available for children up to 12 years of age. To learn more about the various child care program options, please visit the [Children's Services website](#).

## Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement:

The [Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care \(CWELCC\) agreement](#) supports a high-quality, affordable, accessible and inclusive licensed child care system. CWELCC is a publicly funded system that will reduce the cost of child care to an average of \$10 per day by 2026 and improve access and quality across Ontario's child care and early years sector. As of January 2025, parents will pay a rate of \$22 per day for a full day of child care with further cost reductions expected in 2026. Without a reduction of rates through CWELCC, parents in 2024 would have to pay an average of \$60.70 per day instead; with a range from \$34.53 to \$91.72 per day.

As part of the implementation of CWELCC, the Region of Waterloo will add 4,136 new licensed child care spaces for children 0-5 years by 2026. [New CWELCC spaces](#) will be located in priority neighbourhoods and support families who need affordable child care the most, including families that are experiencing low income or that are underserved in our licensed child care system.

## Child Care Waitlist:

Our commitment to advancing child care availability continues to be central to our priorities. Recent progress has been facilitated by the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program, significantly increasing access to affordable child care within the region. As of December 2024, 31% of children aged 0-4 had access to affordable child care, a significant improvement from 26% in 2020 before the introduction of CWELCC.

This is a positive step forward in our mission to ensure every child has the opportunity for quality early learning experiences. However, the need for licensed, high-quality child care spaces remains acute and continues to increase. By December 2024, there were over 12,450 children on the waiting list for licensed child care, with 8,500 of these children urgently needing care.

## CWELCC (Publicly Funded) Licensed Child Care Spaces:

As of December 2024 there were 229 centre-based sites and 402 licensed home child care sites with capacity to provide CWELCC fee-reduced care for 18,921 children ages 0-5.

### Centre-Based CWELCC Spaces

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Kindergarten* (4-5)	Total Spaces (0-5)
All	457	1,865	3,967	10,383	16,672
Non-Profit	216	1,120	2,467	10,314	14,117
For-Profit	241	745	1,500	69	2,555

\*Most Kindergarten spaces were before and after school (10,184 spaces), while a few programs offered full-day kindergarten child care (199 spaces).

### Home-Based CWELCC Spaces

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Kindergarten (4-5)	Total Spaces (0-5)
All (Non-Profit)	305	609	1,219	116	2,249

### Non-CWELCC (Private) Licensed Child Care Spaces:

Private child care programs are not enrolled in CWELCC and are ineligible to receive funding to reduce parent fees; thus, parents pay full rates for these programs. As of December 2024, there were eight private centre-based sites with a licensed capacity for 480 children ages 0-5 years.

Auspice	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Kindergarten (4-5)	Total Spaces (0-5)
All	10	108	336	26	480
Non-Profit	0	9	32	0	41
For-Profit	10	99	304	26	439

There are also a few non-CWELCC programs that offer a full-day School Age option (138 spaces).

### Before & After School Programs for Kindergarten and School-Age Children:

Before and after school programs are available for children in kindergarten up to age 12 and are provided by Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB), and licensed child care providers. As of December 2024, there were 155 centre-based sites located at publicly-funded schools.

In the 2024/2025 school year, the school boards provided before and after school care for 6,789 registered children. Home child care caregivers provided before and after school care for 228 registered children. Early years and child care operators were licensed for up to 4,584 before and after school spaces.

Some programs enrol less than the maximum number of children permitted on their license, meaning there can be a discrepancy between number of maximum spaces and number of children enrolled. Below is a table that shows the overall licensed capacity of before and after school care for 2024:

Auspice	Kindergarten (4-5)	School Age (6-12)	Total Spaces (4-12)
All (Non-Profit)	10,300	5,032	15,332