

Early Years and Child Care Profiles 2020



Region of Waterloo

Trends

This profile highlights a number of key indicators for Early Years and Child Care (EYCC) in Waterloo Region and is a snapshot of programs and services in 2020. The year-over-year comparison can be used to identify trends and changes in the community and gain a better perspective on local opportunities to support planning for a community where all children thrive. Data included in this report refers to licensed child care as well as EarlyON Child and Family Centres for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2020 unless otherwise noted.

In 2020, the EYCC system was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as the Province mandated child care centres to close for least 25 per cent of the year.¹ Many programs had reduced capacity when they re-opened and experienced a temporary decrease in the demand for their program because of the pandemic. EarlyON Child and Family Centres were also required to close to in-person services and shifted to virtual programming.

Waterloo Region Child Population

Child Population ² (Census)	2011	2016	% Change
0-4 years	24,730	24,195	-2.2%
0-12 years	73,845	76,190	+3.2%

Access

Licensed Centre-based spaces	2018	2019	2020
Number of Licensed Centre-based sites (0-4 years) ³	103	105	106
Number of Licensed Centre-based spaces (0-4 years) ⁴	5,181	5,485	5,634
Percent of children (0-4 years) with access to a licensed EYCC centre-based space ⁵	21%	23%	23%
Licensed home child care	2018	2019	2020
Number of children (0-4) accessing licensed home child care ⁶	946	1,002	722
Number of children (5-12) accessing licensed home child care	533	573	406
Licensed centre based and home child care			
Percent of children (0-4 years) with access to a child care space (including both licensed Centre-based and home child care spaces)	25%	27%	26%
Before and after school programs ⁷	2018	2019	2020
Number of children accessing school-board operated programs	5,141	5,795	2,995
Number of licensed before and after school spaces operated by community agencies ⁸ . The actual number of children accessing these spaces was much lower than licensed spaces available.	6,276	6,404	6,009
School-aged spaces at child care centres	2018	2019	2020
Number of school-aged spaces in licensed child care centres (non before and after school) ⁹ .	451	434	434
Total number of EYCC licensed spaces (0-12) in Waterloo Region ¹⁰	18,528	19,693	16,200
EarlyON Child and Family Centres	2018	2019	2020
Number of EarlyON Child and Family Centre sites in Waterloo Region ¹¹	33	27	25

Affordability

Annual full time cost to attend licensed child care	2018	2019	2020
Infant	\$13,050 to \$23,677	\$16,443 to \$23,939	\$16,443 to \$23,939
Toddler	\$9,208 to \$20,880	\$10,513 to \$20,880	\$10,513 to \$20,880
Preschool	\$7,968 to \$18,539	\$8,613 to \$18,539	\$9,012 to \$18,539
Before and after school care (does not include summer care) ¹²	\$3,496 to \$5,044	\$2,685 to \$5,364	\$2,685 to \$5,364

Average daily rates	2018 ¹³	2019 ¹³	2020
Average daily rate for centre-based infant care	\$61.74	\$65.49	\$74.29
Average daily rate for centre-based toddler care	\$49.15	\$52.23	\$55.78
Average daily rate for centre-based preschool care	\$43.73	\$46.68	\$47.63

Child care subsidy	2018	2019	2020
Average number of children receiving child care subsidy per month	2,970	3,300	2,745
Percent of families receiving subsidy that are lone-parent families	76%	72%	71%
Percent of families receiving subsidy with a net income of \$20,000 or less	46%	45%	41%

Responsiveness

Special needs resourcing (SNR)	2018	2019	2020
Number of children in child care receiving SNR services ¹⁴	1,215	1,537	950
Number of additional staffing hours to provide supports	41,780	44,763	18,085
Culturally specific programs	2018	2019	2020
Number of French language centre-based child care spaces	174	143	221
Number of Indigenous-led child and family centres	0	1	1

Quality

	2018	2019	2020
Lowest wage for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) ¹⁵ in Waterloo Region	\$14.00	no data	\$14.00
Median wage for RECEs in Waterloo Region	\$20.46	no data	\$21.14

Funding

	2018	2019	2020
Children's Services annual budget	\$75 M	\$72 M	\$69 M¹⁶
Provincial contribution	\$64 M	\$61 M	\$58 M
Regional contribution	\$9 M	\$9 M	\$9 M ¹⁷
Other revenue	\$2 M	\$2 M	\$2 M

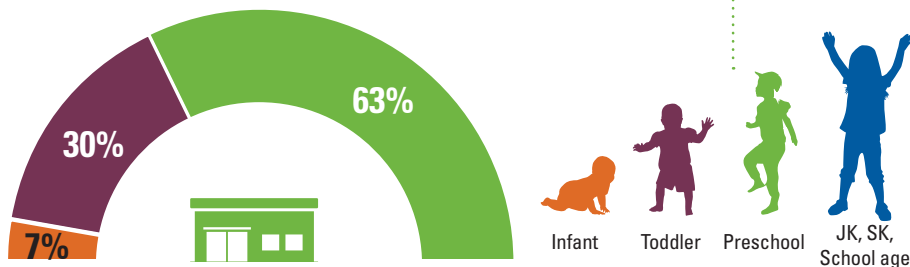
Access

Increasing access to quality, licensed early learning and child care programs continues to be a priority for Waterloo Region and will be identified in the 2021 to 2025 EYCC System Plan. Access to high quality, licensed EYCC for all children has links to improved developmental outcomes for children.¹⁸

Centre-based programs are operated in a variety of locations including stand-alone buildings, workplaces, community centres, schools and places of worship. Licensed centre-based child care is available for children up to 12 years of age.

As of December 31, 2020 there were **5,634 licensed spaces¹⁹ for children 0 to 4 years of age, an increase of 149 spaces (3%)** from the same time in 2019.

Distribution of licensed centre-based 0 to 4 year old spaces by age-group.

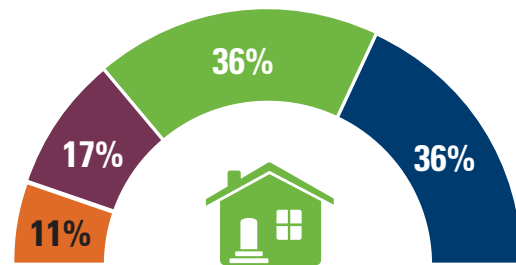


Home-based is provided in approved private homes by caregivers who have a contract with one of four licensed home child care agencies in Waterloo Region. Licensed Home-based early learning and child care is available for children up to 12 years old and may be available seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

As of December 31, 2020, there were approximately **369 home child care caregivers** providing care to **1,128 children** in Waterloo Region.



Age distribution of children in the Region's directly operated licensed home child care.²¹

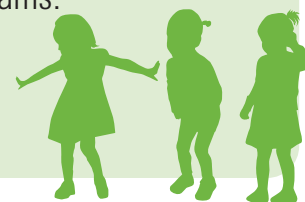


Before and after school programs

Before and after school programs are available for children 4 to 12 years of age. These programs are operated directly by school boards or licensed child care operators and are offered at all schools where there is sufficient parent demand. Before and after school programs experienced a significant reduction in enrollment during the pandemic. In the 2020/21 school year, 2,995 children were registered in before and after school programs operated by school boards. Licensed child care operators were licensed for up to 6,009 before and after school spaces, but the actual number of children registered was significantly less than the licensed capacity of these programs.²²

As of December 31, 2020 there were **434 licensed spaces for 4 to 12 year old children** in licensed centre-based care.²⁰ These are in addition to before and after school spaces.

For the 2020/21 school year, **89%** of schools offered before and after school programs serving children 4 to 12 years operated by the school board or licensed child care centre. The remaining **11%** of schools had insufficient demand to operate before and after school programs.



Access to licensed child care

Number of licensed centre-based spaces in Waterloo Region



About one in four children (26%) between 0 and 4 years old in Waterloo Region have access to a licensed child care space.²³

Child care desert

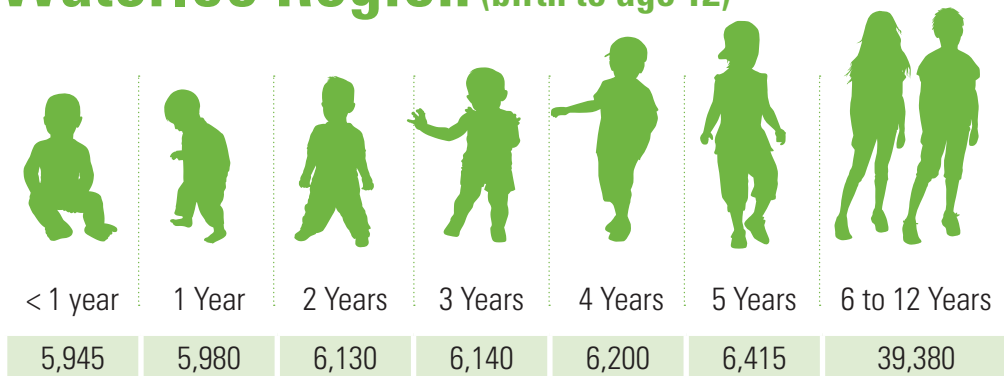
A **child care desert** is a geographic area by postal code where at least three children are in potential competition for each licensed child care space (regardless of fees).

In 2021, 76 per cent of neighbourhoods in Waterloo Region were identified as childcare deserts.²⁴



Percentage of children (0 to 4 years of age) with access to a licensed centre-based space by municipality.²³

Number of children in Waterloo Region (birth to age 12)²⁵



At the time of the 2016 Census, there were a total of **24,195** children 0 to 4 years of age and **76,190** children 0 to 12 years of age living in Waterloo Region.

In total, **321** children were placed in Emergency Child Care with about **71%** placed in home child care and **29%** placed in child care centres.

Emergency child care in 2020

The Province of Ontario ordered all licensed child care centres to close as a result of COVID-19 from March 16, 2020 to June 26, 2020. The Province fully funded an Emergency Child Care program to provide free child care for health care workers and other essential frontline workers with children ages 0 to 12. During that time, four licensed child care centres and four licensed home child care agencies provided care to eligible families.

OneList Waterloo Region: One connection. One application

OneList is the single point of access and online service where all applications for licensed child care in Waterloo Region are submitted. OneList also provides linkages to apply for financial help to pay for child care (child care subsidy) and referral information for special needs supports. Find out more at www.OneListWaterlooRegion.ca.

4,287
children are currently
registered with OneList
in 2021.²⁶

19% (836)

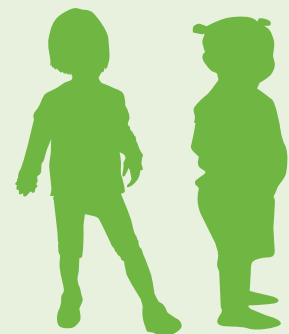
have a preferred start date within the next three months.

37% (1,576)

are pre-planning and have a preferred start date later than three months.

44% (1,875)

are past their preferred start date (e.g., they may still be waiting for child care).



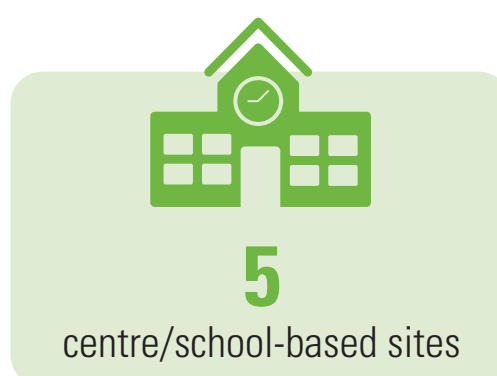
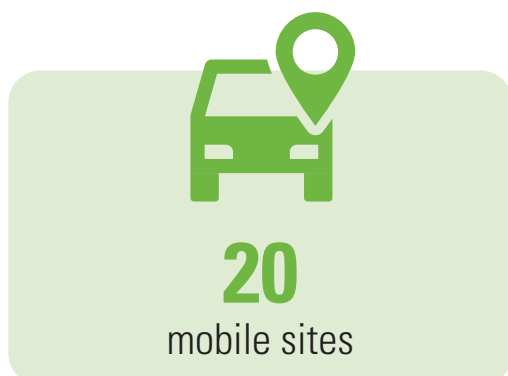
EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer free, play-based programs for children from birth to 6 years old, as well as supports and resources to their parents and caring adults. In Waterloo Region, the YMCA of Three Rivers is the lead agency for the delivery of EarlyON Child and Family Centres and Anishnabeg Outreach operates an Indigenous-led and supported Child and Family Centre.²⁷



At the end of 2020, there were 25 EarlyON Child and Family Centre sites operating, including five locations that were open at least five days per week. For most of 2020, however, EarlyON sites were closed to in-person programming due to the pandemic and virtual services were offered instead. EarlyON locations are changing based on community needs. There are two new centre sites and one Francophone mobile site planned to open in 2021/2022.

Families served through virtual pre-registered events and in-person programming:



Affordability

Access to child care and affordability are linked. High quality, licensed early learning and child care comes at a significant financial cost to families and prevents many families from even trying to find licensed care.

Child care type

Licensed centre-based care

- Infant (birth to 18 months)
- Toddler (18 to 30 months)
- Preschool (2.5 to 4 years)

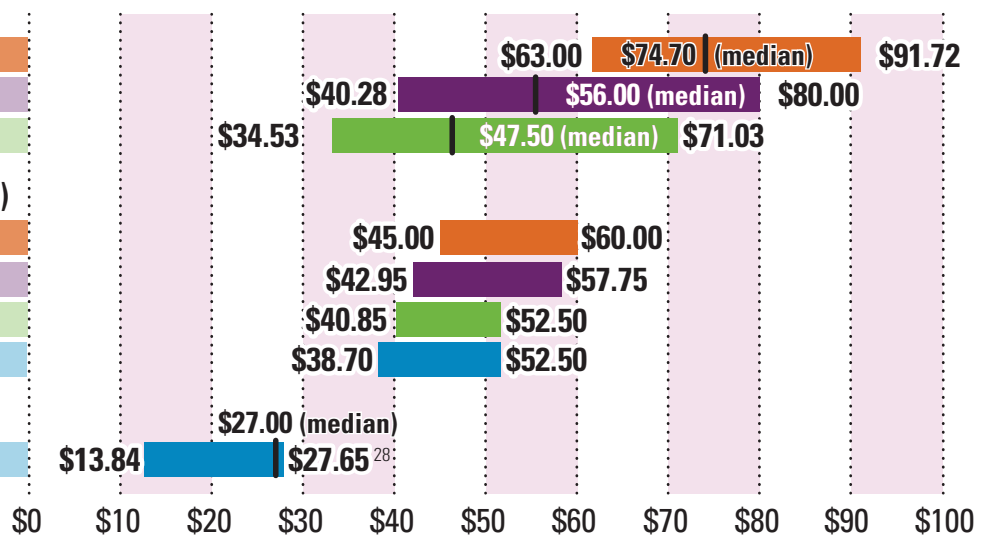
Licensed home-based care (8 hours)

- Infant
- Toddler
- Preschool
- School age (4 to 7 years)

School-based before and after care

- Before and after school

Range of parent fees for full day care, per day



Cost to attend licensed care on a full-time basis



\$9,012 to \$18,539²⁹

for a 3 year old to attend a centre-based program for a full year



\$10,662 to \$13,703

for a 3 year old to attend a home-based program for a full year



\$2,688 to \$5,364³⁰

for a 4 to 12 year old to attend a before and after school-based program during the school year



The cost for one child to attend full-time licensed child care from ages 1 to 4 is between **\$32,253 and \$60,658³¹**.

The cost for one child to attend before and after school-based child care and summer care from ages 4 to 12 is between **\$53,124 and \$58,704³²**.



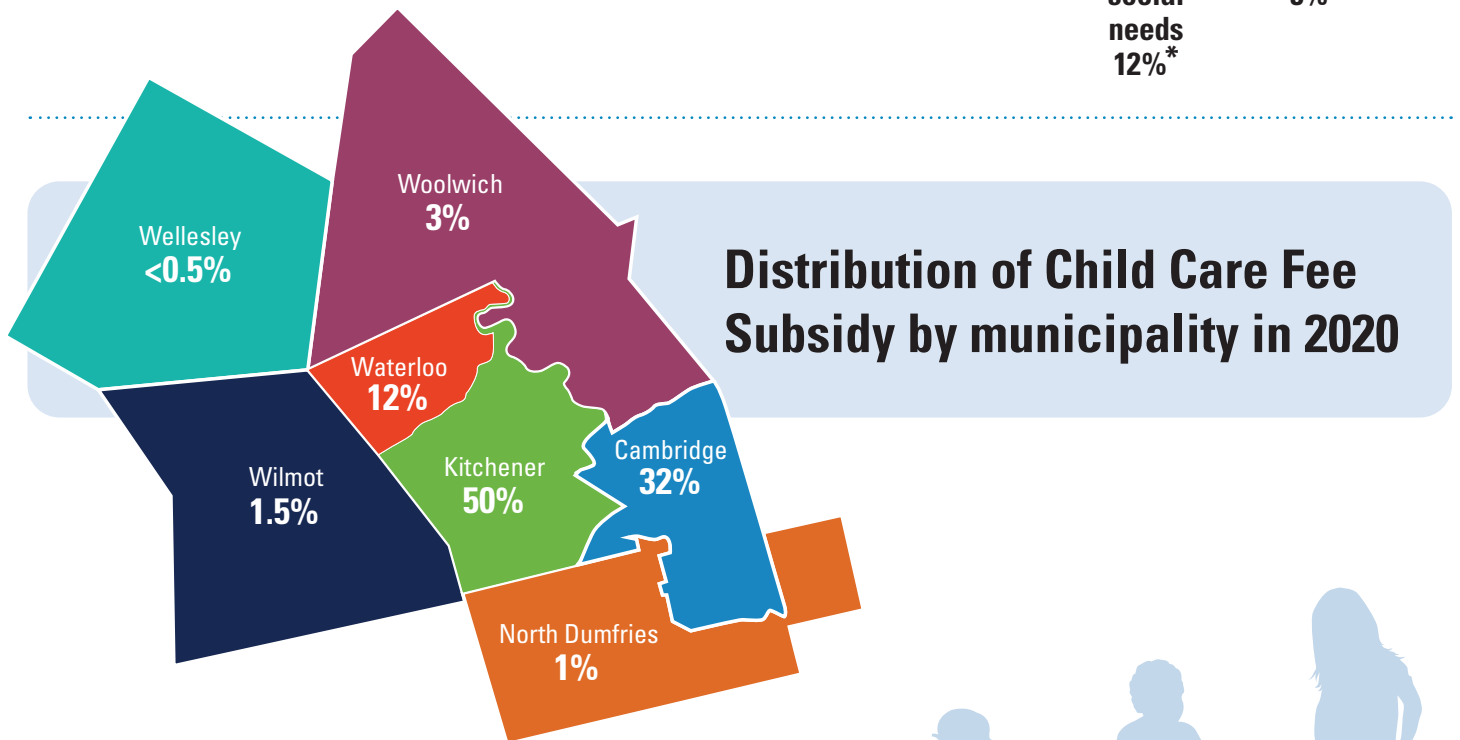
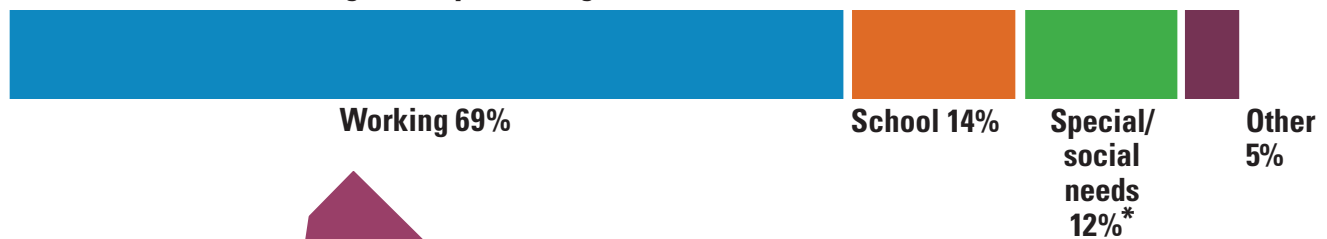
Child care fee subsidy

Child Care Fee Subsidy provides financial assistance to families to help pay for child care costs. The level of assistance is based on the family's income and the number of children in licensed child care.

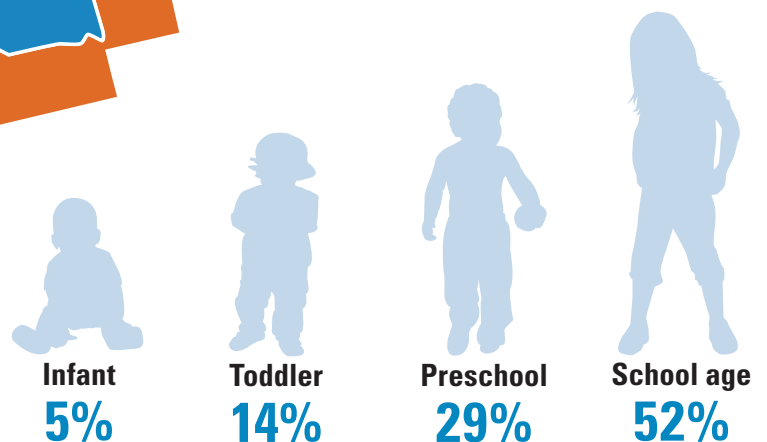
Income distribution of families on the Child Care Fee Subsidy caseload



Reasons families receiving subsidy are using child care



Age distribution of children receiving Child Care Fee Subsidy



*Parent Medical, Seeking Employment, etc

Responsiveness

Children are unique and grow and learn in different ways. All children, regardless of where they live in Waterloo Region, have the right to fully participate in quality licensed early learning and child care programs that respect and support inclusion and meaningful participation. Inclusion involves being responsive to the needs of children and families by providing a range of programs that are culturally appropriate, located in schools, communities, workplaces and home settings so that parents can choose the options that work best for their families.

Equity

The College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice identifies equity as “a state in which personal and social circumstances are not obstacles to being included and supported to achieve equal educational outcomes and well-being among all children. An early years’ environment that is equitable recognizes, values and builds on the diversity of each child and family.”

An equity lens has been used in the development of the 2021 to 2025 EYCC System Plan to identify and develop actions to remove systemic barriers and improving equity in the early learning and child care sector. Future EYCC profiles will highlight key metrics related to equity that aligns with the 2021 to 2025 EYCC System Plan.




In 2020, the Region of Waterloo’s directly operated licensed home child care program started a pilot program to support a small number of caregivers with limited English skills to deliver licensed home child care to families from the same language background. Caregivers were supported with interpreters, translations services, and other educational supports to ensure all licensing requirements are met and families are well supported. In 2021/22, there are plans to expand this program and increase the number of caregivers participating in this pilot program.

Francophone and Indigenous early years and child care

Availability of culturally inclusive programming is a priority in Waterloo Region. As the community changes the early learning and child care system should reflect the evolving and varied needs of children and families.

From 2018 to 2020, there was an increase of 47 spaces in French language spaces in Waterloo Region for a total of 221 spaces.

27%
increase in French language spaces in Waterloo Region from 2018 to 2020.



In 2019, Anishnabeg Outreach opened the first Indigenous-led Child and Family Centre in Waterloo Region. In 2020, all programming was provided virtually for most of the year. “Spirit bundles” containing food, information, clothing, diapers, etc. were created for the unique circumstances of families in need who access the services of Anishnabeg Outreach.

Supports for children with special needs

The Special Needs Resourcing Collaborative partners with child care programs to support all children to fully participate in licensed child care. Services are provided by resource consultants, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, kinesiologists and behaviour therapists. Support may be focused on one child, the whole classroom and/or home environment to promote inclusion including:

- Capacity building and training for staff,
- Individual assessments and plans to support child development,
- Information and support to families, and
- Additional staffing for child care programs.

In 2020, due to COVID-19, special needs resourcing agencies provided virtual supports to child care programs and families. The actual number of children served in 2020 was reduced due to the mandated closure of child care centres, fewer spaces being available when the system re-opened and lower demand for care.

950

Total number of children served with special needs supports



18,085

Total hours of enhanced classroom support in 2020

Quality

Responsibility for ensuring quality early learning and child care programs is shared across the EYCC sector. Locally, the Region, as Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), and the Early Childhood Professional Resource Centre located at Conestoga College partner to support quality in early learning and child care programs.



Early Years
Engage

Continuous quality improvement
in Waterloo Region

Continuous quality improvement

Continuous learning and growth is important for children and for early learning and child care professionals. Early Years Engage is the Region's continuous quality improvement program that supports and works together with EYCC partners to continuously improve early learning and child care in Waterloo Region.

In 2020, virtual group meetings provided the platform for early learning and child care professionals across the system to come together to plan quality improvement goals and implementation plans. The Early Years Engage team is working with the early learning and child care community to develop a new measurement framework to further enhance our collective progress towards quality. Implementation of the new measurement framework will begin in Fall, 2021.

Wages of Registered Early Childhood Educators

Hourly wages for all licensed child care centre staff³⁵

Position	Lowest	Highest	Median
RECE	\$14.00	\$38.43	\$21.14
Supervisor	\$16.00	\$54.95	\$30.00
Non-RECE program staff	\$14.00	\$36.63	\$17.00
Cook	\$14.50	\$31.29	\$18.48

The Province has identified that qualified, experienced educators are key to providing high-quality child care.³⁴ However, factors such as low compensation, difficult working conditions, and lack of professional learning contribute to challenges in recruiting and retaining educators in the sector.



Funding

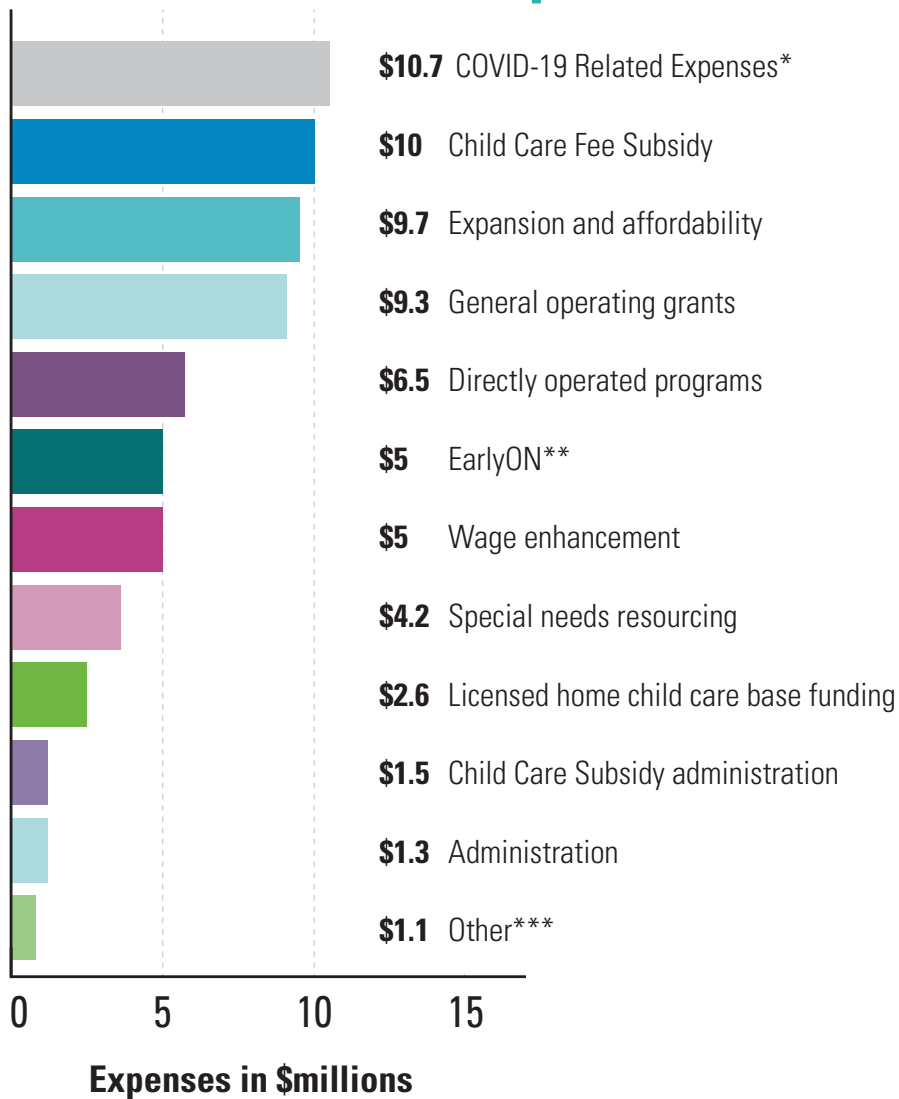
As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), the Region of Waterloo, Children’s Services has the responsibility for service and system management for licensed EYCC for children from birth to 12 years of age.

The Region of Waterloo, Children’s Services budget was \$69.4 million in 2020. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, actual expenses differed from the budget. The total expenditures for 2020 were \$66.7 million.

In 2020, the Region received additional COVID-19 related funding from the Province including:

- Sustainability Funding was provided to support child care programs while they were closed,
- Safe Restart Funding was provided to support programs with expenses associated with meeting new Public Health standards, and
- Emergency Child Care program expenses.

Children’s Services Expenditures, 2020 (in \$millions)



* COVID-19 Related Expenses included: Sustainability Funding, Safe Restart Funding, Emergency Child Care expenses, and COVID-19 related program expenses.

** EarlyON includes EarlyON Capital and one-time funding.

***Other = Children and Youth Planning Table, Pay Equity, Capacity Building, Repairs and Maintenance.

- ¹ On March 17, 2020, based on the advice of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and other leading public health officials, the Ontario government declared a provincial emergency under S. 7.0.1 (1) of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act
- ² Statistics Canada Census, 2011; 2016. Note that 0-4 years and 0-12 years refers to children up to, but not including, their fourth birthday and twelfth birthday respectively.
- ³ Region of Waterloo, Children's Services. Licensed Spaces. December 31, 2018, 2019, 2020. Figures include licensed community-operated before and after school programs.
- ⁴ Region of Waterloo, Children's Services. Licensed Spaces. December 31, 2018; 2019; 2020. Licensed spaces are the maximum number of spaces programs are approved to operate by the Ministry of Education. This differs from operating capacity, which is the number of spaces a program has staffing to operate. Often programs are licensed for more spaces than they actually have available to operate. In December 2020, programs were operating at 75% of their licensed space capacity (i.e., 4,209 spaces).
- ⁵ Calculated using the number of licensed spaces (0-4 years) and total population (0-4 years) from the 2016 census. Note that because not all licensed spaces are operating, this percentage represents how many children could have access to licensed spaces if they were all operating with appropriate staffing and funding.
- ⁶ Region of Waterloo, Children's Services. 2018-2020 Operating Funding applications.
- ⁷ The school year is from September 2020 to June 2021.
- ⁸ There is no data available in 2020 regarding the operating capacity of before and after school programs operated by child care operators. Note that in a typical year about 50% of these spaces are converted to summer care spaces during the summer months.
- ⁹ These are JK/SK and school age programs offered in child care centres. Includes summer camp care and programs offered throughout the school year. This does not include other summer camp programs operated by entities that are not licensed early learning and child care programs.
- ¹⁰ Includes centre-based spaces, children enrolled in home child care and children registered for before and after school programming. In 2020, there was a large decrease in spaces largely due to reduced enrollment in before and after school programs during the pandemic.
- ¹¹ Includes both mobile and centre/school based EarlyON sites.
- ¹² Based on a 194 day school year which is the minimum number of school days required in a year (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/list/calendar/holidaye.html>).
- ¹³ The Fee Reduction Pilot ran from July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019 and reduced infant fees by \$10/day, toddler fees by \$3/day, and preschool fees by \$2/day in participating licensed child care programs. The average rates in 2018 and 2019 reflect the reduced rates.
- ¹⁴ There was a significant reduction in services in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As child care centres were closed for at least 25% of the year and then re-opened, there was less demand for SNR services. This was due to reduced access and fewer children with special needs attending child care.
- ¹⁵ The Province provides up to \$2.00 dollars per hour Wage Enhancement Grant for eligible child care program staff making under \$27.75/hr that is not included in this calculation.
- ¹⁶ Other Revenue sources is primarily from parent fees.
- ¹⁷ In 2020, the Region contributed an additional \$3.5 million above the Ministry of Education's cost sharing requirement of \$5.29 million.
- ¹⁸ Burchinal, 2016; Cappella, Aber & Kim, 2016; Melhuish et al., 2015; Yoshikawa & Kabay, 2015.
- ¹⁹ Licensed spaces are the maximum number of spaces a program is approved to operate by the Ministry of Education.
- ²⁰ These spaces include school-aged spaces in licensed child care centres as well as summer care licensed through the Child Care and Early Years Act.
- ²¹ Average age distribution across age groups from 2017-2019.
- ²² The number of registered children in before and after school program operated by licensed child care centres is not available for 2020.
- ²³ Access to a licensed child care space includes both centre-based licensed spaces and home-based licensed spaces. Access to centre-based child care for ages 0-4 years is 23%.
- ²⁴ CCLS (December 31, 2020) and Statistics Canada.
- ²⁵ Statistics Canada - Census, 2016. Statistics Canada will release 2021 Census data in 2022/2023.
- ²⁶ OneList Waitlist Report as of June 2021, OneHSN.
- ²⁷ Visit <http://www.earlyyearsinfo.ca/> for EarlyON information and <https://aocan.org/about-earlyon-centre.html> for Anishnabeg Outreach Early Years and Family Centre.
- ²⁸ Before and after school care refers to care offered in school by school boards or community operators. Fees are not included for programs operating in private schools.
- ²⁹ Full year based on 261 paid days (365 days less 104 weekend days).
- ³⁰ School year based on 194 school days, the minimum number of required school days by regulation.
- ³¹ Calculation based on 2020 daily rates for centre-based licensed care for ages 0-4.
- ³² Calculation based on 2020 daily rates for school-board operated before and after school for ages 4-12, and 8 weeks of full-day summer home child care for ages 4-12.
- ³³ Distribution of child care fee subsidy caseload as of November 2020.
- ³⁴ Growing Together: Ontario's Early Years and Child Care Workforce Strategy, 2018. <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Growing%20Together-%20Ontario%27s%20Early%20Years%20and%20Child%20Care%20Workforce%20Strategy.pdf>
- ³⁵ 2020 figures include all programs, including full-day and half-day licensed centre-based staff. Hourly wages reported do not include Wage Enhancement.



Region of Waterloo

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COMMUNITY SERVICES

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