



## **Expression of Interest**

### **FAQs**

**CWELCC Licensed Child Care  
Expansion 2024-2027**



# CWELCC expansion in Lanark County

## Questions and Answers

These Q&As are intended to support newly licensed child care providers who are opening new child care spaces in Lanark County or new child care providers planning to expand in Lanark County.

Please visit our website for more information on Lanark County's Expression of Interest - CWELCC Licensed Child Care Expansion.

If you have any questions not found in this document, please contact the Children's Services Department at: [cs@lanarkcounty.ca](mailto:cs@lanarkcounty.ca).

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## **CWELCC expansion**

### **1. How were Lanark County's priority neighbourhoods identified and will they change?**

- Lanark County's priority neighbourhoods were identified using internal and external data collection tools. Data collected addressed multi-generational homes, lone parent households, immigration, income, housing costs, health, employment, and ethnicity. Lanark County also consulted with Lanark Early Integration Program as well as Lanark County Ontario Works. Data was also used from Statistics Canada and the 2021 Census Population.
- Priority Neighbourhoods are listed below. Note that being in a priority neighbourhood does not guarantee that your Expression of Interest will be approved.

<b>1. Smiths Falls</b>	<b>2. Carleton Place</b>	<b>3. Lanark Highlands</b>
<b>4. Mississipi Mills</b>	<b>5. Perth</b>	<b>6. Beckwith</b>

### **2. Is Lanark County accepting applications from non-profit providers AND for-profit providers?**

- Yes, Lanark County is currently accepting applications from both for profit and not-for-profit providers. While we are currently accepting applications from for-profit agencies Lanark County only has an allotment of 17 for-profit spaces.

### **3. Can child care providers set their own child care fees in the CWELCC program?**

- The Ministry of Education has established regional maximums for child care fees in the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA).
- Licensees must charge base fees in accordance with O. Reg 137/15.
- If you are a child care provider licensed after March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, applying through the CWELCC Licensed Child Care Expansion application process you must set your base fees at or below the regional max in accordance with O.Reg 137/15.

### **4. Is Lanark County approving new sites or only providers that have CWELCC already?**

- Lanark County is approving applications for both new sites/providers and for existing providers who are interested in expanding sites. After receiving Lanark County's approval, the Ministry will approve licenses for both new and existing providers as long as licensing requirements are met.
- New providers will need to apply and be accepted into the CWELCC program.

## **CWELCC expansion application process**

### **5. Can I apply if I am planning to open in an area that is not located in a priority neighbourhood?**

- We are giving priority to applications that are planning to open in any of Lanark County's priority neighbourhoods or within a 2-kilometre radius of a priority neighbourhood.
- If you are opening in a community that is not a priority neighbourhood, you may be placed on a waitlist, and we will monitor our targets and communicate any changes to you.

### **6. Can we apply to the CWELCC expansion program if we want to expand our JK/SK spaces?**

- To support the needs of families, we are only approving the expansion of spaces for infant, toddler, and preschool age groups.

### **7. What do I need to submit to Lanark County to participate in CWELCC?**

- You will need to indicate any revisions to your license or new license in CCLS before completing the Lanark County Expression of Interest - Licensed Child Care Expansion Application Form on our website.
- If you are a new licensee, complete the CWELCC forms and submit all applicable documentation.

### **8. Can we apply now if our new site is scheduled to start being built in 2025-2026?**

- Yes, we will be looking at applications that will be licensed and opened by December 21, 2026.

**9. Can Lanark County support the application process for building permits or zoning documentation?**

- No, providers are responsible for managing this process with local municipalities. Staff have engaged local municipalities to explore opportunities to support licensed child care expansion, however, the permits and zoning are solely the responsibility of the provider.

## **Start-Up Grant**

### **Equipping & furnishing**

**10. I am building a new centre, and the construction costs will be funded outside of the Start-Up Grant. Can I use the Start-Up Grant to furnish and equip the new spaces?**

- Yes, the Start-Up Grant can be used to furnish and equip new, community-based, full day spaces created for infant, toddler, and preschool age groups within the identified priority communities for expansion in Lanark County.

**11. If I acquire a site that is already operating child care, can I receive a Start-Up Grant to equip and furnish the existing spaces and/or make minor renovations?**

- The intention of the Start-Up Grant is to support the creation of **new** child care spaces for infant, toddler, and preschool age groups.
- If you acquire a site that is already operational, you cannot receive a Start-Up Grant for those existing spaces.
- However, if you decide to expand and create new spaces at an existing site, you may apply for a Start-Up Grant through Lanark County's Expression of Interest - CWELCC Licensed Child Care Expansion application process.
  - Please note that the Grant will be calculated based on the number of net new CWELCC spaces created for infant, toddler, and preschool age groups, as listed in Schedule 1 of the license issued by the Ministry of Education.

## **Minor Renovation**

**12. "Minor Renovation" is broad. What counts as a Minor Renovation?**

- Minor Renovation projects can involve:
  - Renovations, additions, or repairs to existing spaces to accommodate child care.

- Changes to outdoor play space.
- Leasehold improvements: A leasehold improvement is a change made to the interior space of a leased property to meet the operational needs of the child care provider, such as portioning a large space to create smaller program rooms, flooring, etc.
- We will assess the scale, scope, and complexity of your proposed Minor Renovation project based on the project details outlined in your Start-Up Grant application, to ensure it is eligible for Start-Up Grant funding as outlined by the Ministry.
- Depending on the project's scope, additional accountability measures may be required in terms of required project documentation and reporting.

**13. If I am investing money through a mortgage, can I use the Start-Up Grant to pay back my mortgage?**

- No, the Start-Up Grant cannot be used for capital endeavors, such as debt costs (e.g., capital loans or mortgages), the purchase of land, or the cost of construction of new buildings.

**14. I am planning on purchasing/leasing an existing building/unit/former child care centre. Can I use the Start-Up Grant for renovations to that space?**

- The Start-Up Grant may be used for Minor Renovations, including leasehold improvements, to prepare an existing space to operate a child care or add new licensed child care spaces to existing operations.
- The Grant cannot be used for capital endeavors, such as for the purchase of land, construction of new buildings or debt costs (e.g., capital loans or mortgages).
- We will assess the scale, scope and complexity of your proposed Minor Renovation project based on the project details outlined in your Start-Up Grant application, to ensure it is eligible for Start-up funding.

**Maximum group size**

**15. What does it mean to expand to accommodate to a maximum group size?**

- Each age grouping has a maximum number of children allowed in a group, as per the CCEYA:
  - Infants: 10 (staff to children ratio: 1:3)
  - Toddlers: 15 (staff to children ratio: 1:5)
  - Preschoolers: 24 (staff to children ratio: 1:8)

- The Start-Up Grant should be used to create new licensed spaces that ideally accommodate up to the maximum number of children allowed in a grouping as noted above.
- Based on space limitations, it may be necessary for you to align your expansion to the maximum allowable capacity for each age group that is possible within the available square footage, with consideration to staffing ratios as outlined in the CCEYA. See Section 16.1 (a) of the CCEYA for more information on area requirements.

## **Expenditures**

### **16. If I am approved for a Start-Up Grant, do I have to repay it?**

- No, the Start-Up Grant is not a loan. You do not need to repay the grant, if it is used for eligible expenses and you meet the following requirements:
  - You are enrolled in CWELCC and participate in the system for the remainder of the current CWELCC agreement (March 31, 2026).
  - You create new community-based, licensed full day spaces for infants, toddler and preschool age groups in Lanark County's priority neighbourhoods.
  - You expand licensed spaces to accommodate a maximum group size for each age grouping.
  - *For licensed home child care agencies:* You maintain the number of approved child care spaces in the service area for the duration of the CWELCC agreement, even if the home child care agency or capacity of home child care agency changes prior to March 31, 2026.

### **17. What happens if I opt out of CWELCC, and I have spent some or all of the Start-Up Grant?**

- To be eligible for the Start-Up Grant, you must agree to participate in CWELCC until the remainder of the current agreement (March 31, 2026).
- If you choose to opt-out of CWELCC before March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, and you have spent some of your Start-Up Grant, Lanark County will recover all the funding and return it to the Ministry of Education.

## **Project planning and implementation**

**18. I am interested in applying for a Start-Up Grant, but I am only in the planning stages for my project. Should I still apply if my project will be ready for implementation next year?**

- You should apply for a Start-Up Grant if you will complete your expansion project within two years or by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year the spaces are to be created.
- If you are considering expansion in future years, there will be other opportunities to apply to enroll into Lanark County's CWELCC program and to request Start-Up funding. Future opportunities will be communicated to the sector, once available.
- Please be sure to inform Lanark County in a timely manner of any risks related to project progress and/or completion within the required time frame, quality issues or issues affecting the budget.

**19. Is there a reconciliation process after the expansion project is completed?**

- Yes, you will be required to keep supporting documentation on file for seven years and provide it to Lanark County.
- If you are approved for a Start-Up Grant for a Minor Renovation project, you may have additional responsibilities in terms of the reconciliation process which will be outlined in your funding guideline and agreement.