

Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Growth Plan 2023 - 2026

Introduction

On March 27, 2022, Ontario reached a \$13.2 billion agreement with the federal government for a Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. The new system will lower child care costs and improve access, quality and inclusion across Ontario's child care and early years sector.

Child Care is foundational to supporting early childhood development, learning, well-being, and student success. It is also a key enabler of workforce participation, particularly for women, both as parents and providers.

Ontario's vision for the CWELCC system is that more families in Ontario have access to high quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live. Under the CWELCC Agreement, Ontario will support the creation of approximately 86,000 new licensed child care spaces by December 2026.

The addition of these spaces will help each region progress towards the provincial target of 37% access to licensed child care spaces for children 0 to 5 by 2026. This is equivalent to there being one affordable child care space available for every 2.7 children aged 0 – 5 years.

The new licensed child care spaces will include a mix of not-for-profit and for-profit centre and home-based settings to provide families with choice and flexibility. As part of the agreement, Ontario has committed to maintaining or improving the proportion of not-for-profit licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 5 at 70% or higher by 2026. In Peterborough, the proportion of not-for-profit licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 5 is 90%.

To support the CWELCC vision, the Ministry of Education (Ministry) has provided a notional space allocation target for the City of Peterborough and requires the service system manager to determine priority areas for new licensed child care spaces. The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the priority areas for child care growth in the City and County of Peterborough under the CWELCC system.

Notional Space Allocation for the City of Peterborough

As illustrated below the notional space allocation for the City of Peterborough is **485** new licensed child care spaces for children ages 0 – 5 years from 2022 – 2026, with **446** spaces designated for community-based locations and **39** spaces for school-based locations. The 39 school-based spaces opened in Norwood District High School in 2022 as part of a previously approved expansion initiative.

In response to the growing demand for child care since the implementation of the CWELCC system in 2022, Children's Services has requested an additional **162** community-based spaces. It is unknown how many, if any, of the requested additional spaces will be approved by the Ministry.

Number of Ministry Allocated Spaces and Additional Spaces Requested

Types of Spaces	Notional Space Allocation	Additional Spaces Requested	Total Potential New Spaces
School-based Spaces	39	0	39
Community-based Spaces	446	162	608
Total Spaces	485	162	647

Growth Plan 2022 – 2026

Location	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
School-Based Spaces	39	0	0	0	0	39
Community-Based Spaces	48	111	124	93	70	446
Total	87	111	124	93	70	485

In 2022, Children's Services staff achieved the target of opening 87 net new spaces. In 2023, 90 net new spaces were created. The remaining 21 spaces for 2023 can be added to the space allocation in 2024. To date, staff have approved 2023-2024 funding for three child care operators to open a total of 122 net new spaces in 2024.

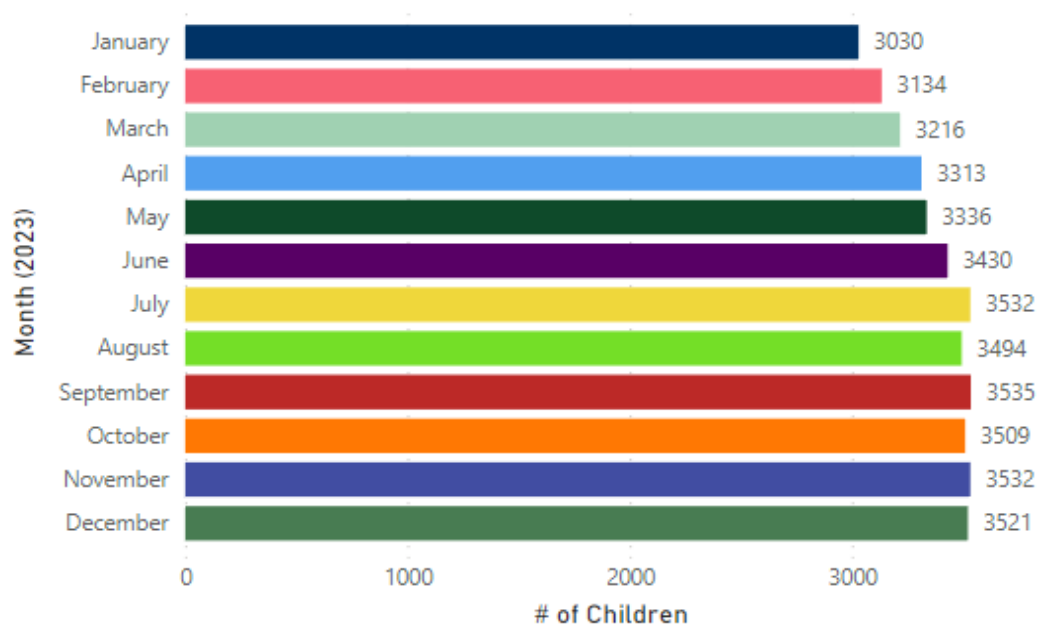
Child Care Spaces in the City and County of Peterborough in 2023



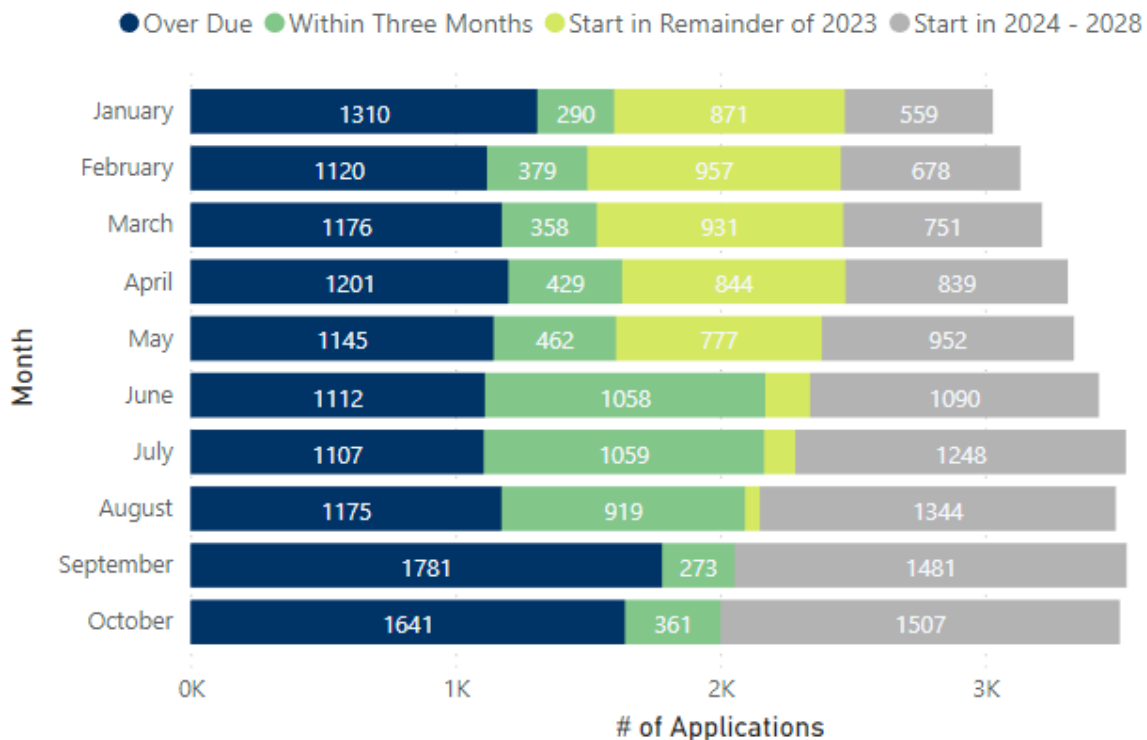
**4,466
licensed
spaces**

Number of Children on the Centralized Child Care Waitlist in 2023ⁱ

Number of Children with Active Applications on OneHSN Waitlist by Month



Children on Waitlist by Preferred Start Date



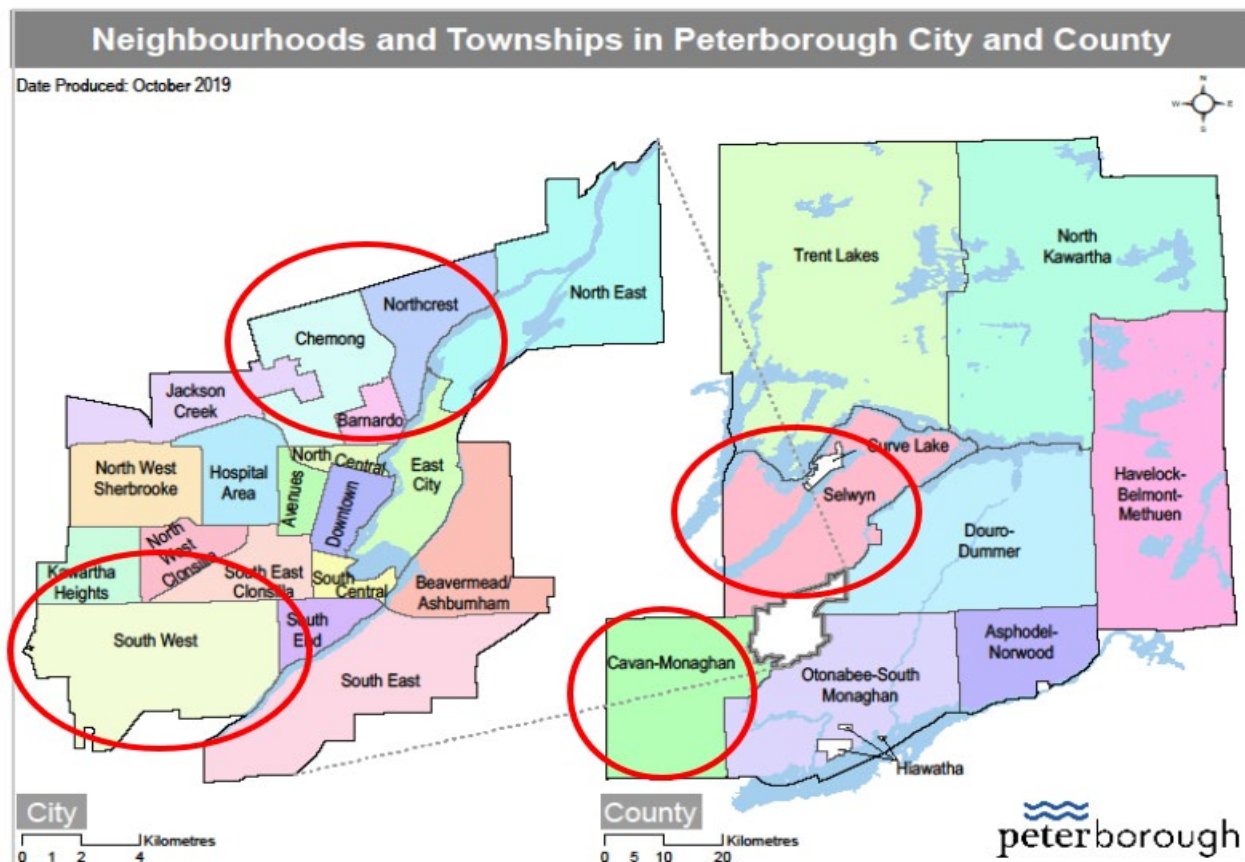
Priority Neighborhoods for CWELCC Growth

As outlined in the Ministry's Access and Inclusion Framework, new CWELCC community-based spaces must be developed in areas that support families who need affordable child care the most, including low-income families, children with disabilities, Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, and new immigrant children. Increasing flexible child care options for those who work non-traditional hours is also a priority. Licensed home child care is a critical part of the local child care system, offering parents flexible models of care and often serving the most vulnerable families.

Children's Services has identified six (6) priority neighborhoods in the City and County of Peterborough for new CWELCC community-based spaces. These areas were selected based on their limited access to existing licensed spaces, a higher percentage of children aged 0 – 4 years, and a higher proportion of vulnerable children in one or more developmental domains. The priority areas were determined using 2021 Census data, 2023 OneHSN Waitlist data, and 2020 Early Development Instrument data. ⁱⁱ

Priority Neighborhoods in the City and County of Peterborough

Chemong	
Northcrest	
Southeast Clonsilla	
Southwest	
Cavan, Monaghan Township	
Selwyn Township	



Community-based Growth

Community-based growth includes both home-based growth as well as centre-based growth at existing sites and new sites to be located in identified priority neighborhoods. Children's Services collected data from centre-based and home-based child care programs regarding their expansion and growth plans to help make projections for future growth. Based on this information, Children's Services has projected that approximately 280 spaces will support centre-based expansion and 166 spaces will support licensed home-child care growth. The actual number of spaces to be distributed across home-based and centre-based sites may vary due to several factors including finding suitable space in priority neighborhoods, alignment with local priorities and Ministry approval of additional space requests.

Community-Based Start-Up Funding

To support CWELCC expansion from 2023 - 2026, the Ministry will provide the City of Peterborough with Start-Up funding. This funding is intended to support community-based space expansion projects and prioritize the creation of new licensed full-day spaces for children aged 0 – 5 years. Not for-profit and for-profit licensed child care operators enrolled in the CWELCC system are eligible to apply for start-up funding. In 2023, there is a 98% CWELCC enrollment rate in the City and County of Peterborough.

Start-Up funding can be used to offset the initial costs required to expand or create spaces such as equipment and leasehold improvements, and may be used for retrofits, renovations, or expansion projects, but cannot be used to purchase land or buildings. Expansion projects for child care programs that operate during school hours for kindergarten and school-aged children are not eligible.

All expansion projects must be created, retrofitted, renovated, and/or expanded to accommodate a maximum group size for each age grouping for children 0 – 5 years.

Eligibility Criteria

- Participate in the CWELCC system for the remainder of the current CWELCC agreement (March 31, 2026).
- Spend the start-up grant and open the new spaces within two years from the date the service agreement between the applicant and the City of Peterborough is executed.
- Prioritize the creation of and access to new licensed full day spaces for children 0 - 5 years in communities with vulnerable children and children from diverse populations, including, but not limited to, children living in low-income families, children with disabilities and children needing

enhanced or individual supports, Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, and children of newcomers to Canada.

Eligible Expenses for Licensed Child Care Centres

- Play materials, equipment, and furnishings (both indoors and outdoors) as outlined in Section 19 of Ontario Regulation 137/15 under *the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.
- Non-consumable supplies/equipment to support the ongoing regular operation of the child care program (e.g. appliances, IT, supplies to support learning environments while adhering to health and safety requirements).
- Renovations, additions, or repairs to licensed child care facilities or potential child care facilities as approved by the service system manager.

Eligible Expenses for Home Child Care Licensees

- Play materials, equipment, and furnishings (both indoors and outdoors) as outlined in Section 27 of O. Reg. 137/15 under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014.

Ineligible Expenses

- Purchase of land or buildings.
- Debt costs including principal and interest payments related to capital loans, mortgage financing, and operating loans.
- Property taxes.
- Expenditures related to 6 to 12-year-old age groups.
- School-based child care spaces.
- Indoor and outdoor renovations, additions or repairs to home child care licensee premises or potential new home child care premises.

Application Process

Children's Service has developed an [CWELCC Application](#) to support a transparent and fair approval process. Interested individuals who currently operate or propose to operate a licensed child care program in the City or County of are invited to apply beginning in September 2023. Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application.

The maximum Start-Up funding available per project is \$350,000 for 50 new child care spaces with significant renovations. The funding is proportionally less for applications with fewer new spaces.

Start-Up funding is subject to entering into a Purchase of Service agreement with the City of Peterborough for the provision of Child Care Fee Subsidy and CWELCC

funding. Agreements will only be entered into with licensed child care service providers.

ⁱ The number of children on the centralized Child Care Waitlist is not a unique count. Some duplication exists as parents can put their child's name on a waitlist more than once. For this reason, the demand for child care spaces at any given time, could be less than the total number identified on the waitlist.

ⁱⁱ [Early Development Instrument – A Measurement of Child Developmental Health in the City and County of Peterborough, 2020](#)