
Memorandum

COM-C 6-2024

Subject: School-age Child Care Affordability Pilot Update

Date: May 7, 2024

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee (PHSSC)

From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

The Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement has resulted in a 52.75 per cent decrease of child care fees for children aged 0-5 years old. To parallel improved access to affordable child care for families of children 6-12 years-old, similar to some jurisdictions in Ontario, Niagara Region piloted a program to reduce fees for children in before-and-after school child care programs. Further to a request by PHSSC, the following provides information related to the success of this pilot.

In December 2023, families of children in before-and-after school programs received a rebate or credit to refund 52.75 per cent of their before-and-after fees, to a floor of \$12 per day or \$6 per morning for before-school programs and \$6 per afternoon for after-school programs. This was a pilot program that occurred as a one-time payment, for the period of September to December 2023.

Approximately 2,484 children received a credit/refund as part of the pilot. The pilot provided refunds of an average of \$318.53 per child, reducing the average before-and-after child care rate from approximately \$23.93/day to an estimated \$12.04/day.

Approximately 26 service providers participated in the pilot. Feedback from service providers confirmed that the credit/refund was appreciated by families. A service provider wrote, "Feedback has been positive with parents being surprised and thrilled with receiving refunds on their fees paid." Another service provider reported that "They [families] would like to see a permanent reduction in fees for children 6 to 12 years of age, equal to CWELCC", and a parent in receipt of a refund mentioned that "It is a big help for us that have not enough income."

In total, roughly \$1.05M was issued to families. This initiative was supported with the federal and provincial funding within Niagara Region Children's Services' 2023 budget. Financial support for this initiative was possible as a result of savings in fee subsidy expenditures and funding as part of the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) agreement.

Ongoing financial evaluation of the Children's Services budget and the impacts of the provincial funding formula will help determine the sustainability of this initiative in 2024.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Adrienne Jugley
Commissioner, Community Services