



Be an explorer.

BRUCE COUNTY CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Licensed Child Care Operators Handbook





Be an explorer.

This is our story.

We are the explorers. The dreamers who take roads less travelled. Those who turn alternatives into sustainable choices. Those who see tried and true as an invitation to try something new. Here's to children who look under rocks. And parents who help with the lifting. Here's to active, inquiring minds, and those with the vision to look beyond obstacles. Here's to celebrating business innovation – and just as important, to exploring farm life in the morning, beach life in the afternoon and bright starry skies all night long. Here's to the explorers – here's to us. Bruce County is where those roads less travelled become a journey: In life, in our work, in our communities, and in how we spend our days together.



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Children's Services Program Overview



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1.1 Purpose of the Operator Handbook

Bruce County Children’s Services has been designated by the Province of Ontario as the service system manager for Early Years and Child Care Programs operating within Bruce County.

In this role, Children’s Services plans and manages the local child care system focusing on the integration of government initiatives, inter-agency coordination, and the development of new programs and services.

This Operator Handbook provides information for Operators about the roles and responsibilities of Children’s Services as well as the requirements and expectations of the Operators holding a Service Agreement with the County of Bruce.

1.2 Policy Framework

The *Ontario Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework* provides a vision that “all children and families have access to a range of high-quality, inclusive and affordable early years and child care programs and services that are child and family-centred and contribute to children’s learning, development and well-being.”

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years helps bring the vision to life by providing a comprehensive framework to guide program development and pedagogy in early years settings. It builds on the guiding principles

to support Ontario’s vision of high-quality programs and services centred on the child and family with a view of children as competent and capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential.

How Does Learning Happen? helps move Ontario towards increasingly integrated programs and services for children and families whether in child care, family support programs or kindergarten. All of these programs and services have a shared view of the child, common pedagogical approaches and foundations of belonging, well-being, engagement and expression.

1.3 Principles of Quality Early Learning and Care

Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings (ELECT) contains six principles that Operators should embed into their program policies and practices:

- 1 Early childhood development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health.
- 2 Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.
- 3 Respect for diversity, equity and inclusion are prerequisites for honouring children's rights, optimal development and learning.
- 4 A planned curriculum supports early learning.
- 5 Play is a means to early learning that capitalizes on children's natural curiosity and exuberance.
- 6 Knowledgeable, responsive early childhood professionals are essential components of a high-quality early learning and care environment.

1.4 Directory of Children's Services

Consolidated Municipal Service Manager
Corporation of the County of Bruce

Department
Human Services Children's Services

Mailing Address & Location
30 Park Street, PO Box 399
Walkerton, Ontario, NoG 2Vo

T: 519-881-0431 | 1-800-265-3005

F: 519-881-4324

E: childcare@brucecounty.on.ca

www.brucecounty.on.ca

Key Contacts

Tina Metcalfe Children's Services Manager
TMetcalfe@brucecounty.on.ca

Cindy Tanner Child Care Program Supervisor
CTanner@brucecounty.on.ca

Tracey Shilvock Resource Program Supervisor
TShilvock@brucecounty.on.ca

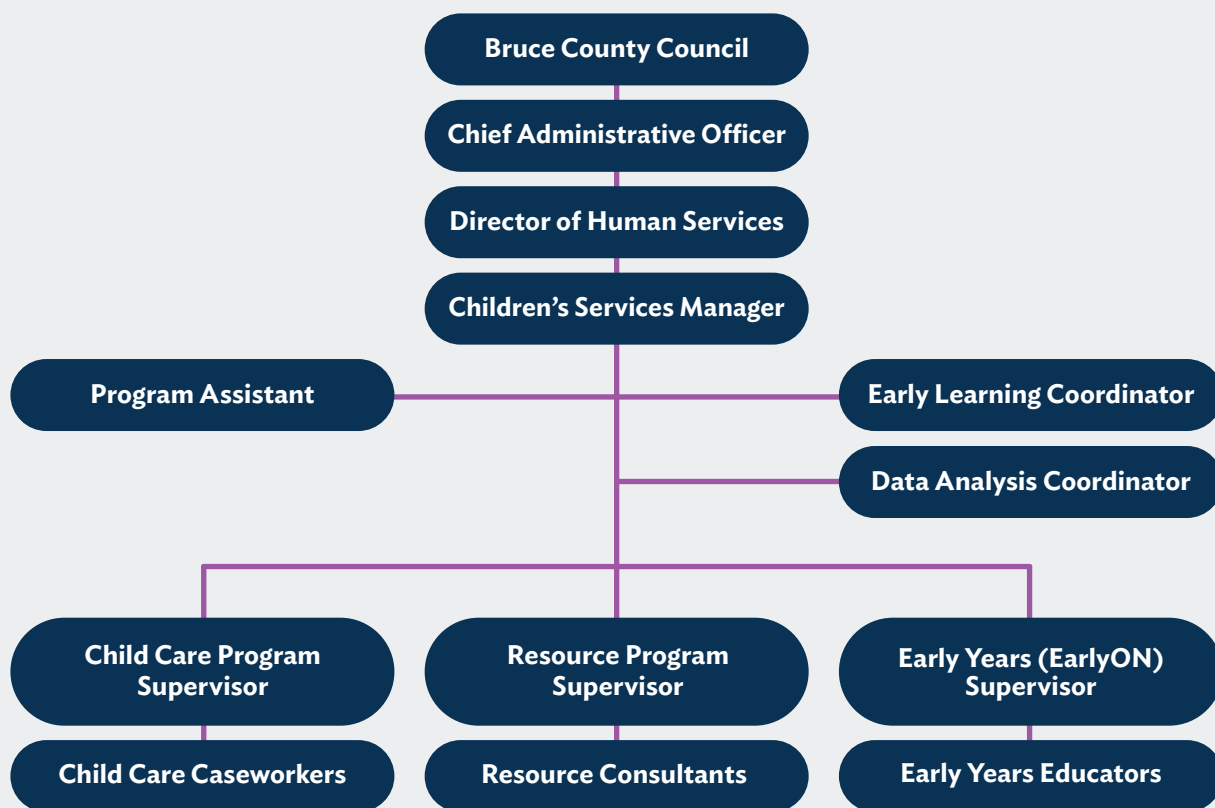
Kathy Johnston Early Years (EarlyON) Supervisor
KJohnston@brucecounty.on.ca

Angela Hopkins Data Analysis Coordinator
ACHopkins@brucecounty.on.ca

Gillian Andrews Children's Services Program Assistant
GAndrews@brucecounty.on.ca

Kelly Woodward Early Learning Coordinator
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1.5 Organizational Chart



Children's Services Manager

Responsible for the development of the Bruce County Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan, the development and delivery of the Bruce County Children's Services programs, developing and managing Service Agreements with community partners and with the Ministry of Education, and for the planning, development and management of program budgets. This involves supervision of the program units, formulating budget priorities and expenditures, allocating funding, policy development and interpretation, program design and implementation, and program review.

Program Assistant

Provides administrative support in the planning and funding of the local service system. In particular, the Program Assistant is the primary contact for Child Care Operators and Authorized Children's Recreation Service Providers with respect to the funding they receive from the County of Bruce including fee subsidy. The Program Assistant creates summary reports and assists in the monitoring and reporting of program expenditures to the Ministry of Education. The Program Assistant provides administrative support for OCCMS.

Data Analysis Coordinator (DAC)

Designs, conducts/or contributes to research, evaluation, data collection and planning in the early years sector. Organizes training and develops materials and reports related to the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The DAC also provides various types of support to select Committees and Ad Hoc Projects.

Integrated Services Assistant

Provides clerical support to the Children's Services Team when training events are planned for Bruce County Child Care Partners and Home Child Care Providers by creating, designing and managing information through Eventbrite. Administrative Support for OCCMS is also provided by the Integrated Services Assistant.

Child Care Program Supervisor

Oversees all administrative components of the Child Care Fee Subsidy and Home Child Care Program. The Supervisor also documents and monitors eligibility for fee subsidy and approves and monitors home child care providers.

Child Care Caseworkers

Caseworkers document and monitor eligibility for fee subsidy and approves and monitors home child care providers. Staff also organize and implement provider training and monitor child development and child/caregiver relationships in home child care and centre based settings.

Resource Program Supervisor

The Resource Program Supervisor directly supervises and oversees the daily operations of the Resource Program and staff. The Supervisor also approves and manages the Enhancement Program Support funding.

Resource Consultant

Resource Consultants support the integration of children with special needs into licensed child care programs. Resource Consultants participate in the development, monitoring and reporting of progress of Individual Profiles for each child and actively participate in the transition to school process.

Early Years Supervisor

The Early Years Supervisor directly supervises the Early Years Educator Team operating the EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs. The Early Years Supervisor oversees program operation and provides support and guidance to the EarlyON team and child care programs in collaboration with the Early Learning Coordinator.

Early Years Educators

Educators research, plan and deliver play-based learning programs at EarlyON Centres and mobile locations to prepare children 0-6 years for lifelong learning, health and well-being. Programs, information and support for families, caregivers and other professionals is also provided through the development and facilitation of workshops, modelling of behaviour, and through the compilation of pedagogical documentation to make learning visible.

Early Learning Coordinator

Bruce County's Early Learning Coordinator engages, mentors and supports Educators in the Child Care and Early Learning Community. This capacity role supports the implementation of the annual Quality Scan Tool (QST) Meetings. In collaboration with Children's Service Team the Early Learning Coordinator, coordinates professional learning events and opportunities for the Early Learning Community within Bruce County. These opportunities assist Educators to align and enhance the quality of their program(s) and aids in building capacity within Bruce County.

1.6 Human Services Vision and Principles

Vision

We will enhance the quality of life for individuals, families and communities by ensuring integrated and comprehensive services that remove barriers and create opportunities.

Principles

People-Centred Services

Making the needs of individuals, families and communities our priority.

Integrity

Practicing high standards of ethical behaviour.

Trust & Respect

Having confidence in the ability of others and treating others as you would like to be treated.

Fair & Equitable Treatment

Treating others in a just and unbiased manner while respecting individual differences and needs. Being accessible and providing clear and timely information.

Teamwork & Relationships

Developing common goals in an environment that is flexible, respectful and diverse. Promoting open and concise two-way communication.

Planning

Setting objectives and directions in a co-ordinated and consultative manner.

Enhancing Personal Learning

Providing the opportunity for individuals to achieve their full potential.

Creativity

Encouraging staff to embrace change. Working together to create solutions for individuals, families and communities.

Effectiveness, Efficiency & Economy

Making effective use of available resources and best practices to achieve optimum results.

1.7 Role of Bruce County

The Child Care and Early Years Act states that the duties of a service system manager such as the County of Bruce are to:

- Develop and administer local policies respecting the operation of child care and early years programs and services
- Administer the delivery of financial assistance (child care fee subsidy)
- Establish, administer, operate and fund child care and early years programs and services
- Coordinate the planning and operation of child care and early years programs and services with the planning and provision of other human services delivered by the service system manager
- Assess the economic viability of the child care and early years programs and services in the service delivery area and, if necessary, make or facilitate changes to help make such programs and services economically viable
- Provide assistance to persons who operate child care and early years programs and services to improve their capabilities in relation to governance, financial management, and the planning and delivery of programs and service
- Evaluate and assess the impact of public funding

Children's Services, on behalf of Bruce County, is also responsible for developing and implementing local child care service plans based on local community needs following a planning process that engages child care service providers, school boards, the community and local stakeholders.

Services provided by Children's Services include:

- Entering into Service Agreements with licensed child care programs and approved recreation providers
- Allocating funding to licensed child care programs including the General Operating Expense, Special Purpose Funding and Wage Enhancement/Home Child Care Enhancement Grant Funding
- Supporting the child care system through providing support to providers to ensure care is high-quality, accessible, inclusive and affordable
- Assessing and monitoring ongoing eligibility for fee subsidy
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres Programming
- Resource Programming
- Licensed Home Child Care Program
- Data Analysis Coordination
- Early Learning Coordination
- Journey Through the Ages and Stages

1.8 Role of Operators

Each Operator is responsible for:

- Providing a safe, quality, inclusive child care program for children
 - Managing the administrative operations of the program
 - Developing written policies and procedures to guide the operation of the program
 - Ensuring that all verbal, written and electronic information pertaining to children and their families is treated with respect and discretion and is stored and transmitted in a secure manner
 - Monitoring and reporting each child's attendance and number of absent days
 - Collecting parental contributions (fees)
 - Ensuring the child care program is in compliance with applicable legislation and local by-laws
- Ensuring the child care program is in compliance with the Bruce County Service Agreement and reporting requirements
 - Communicating openly and honestly with parents, with Bruce County Children's Services, with the Ministry of Education and with community partners
 - Providing quality assurance through annual quality assessments, professional learning opportunities for staff and mentorship initiatives
 - Participating in planning and information sharing opportunities
 - Collaborating with other Operators and service providers
 - Managing the child care application waitlist
 - Participating in Bruce County's Journey Through the Ages and Stages

Service Agreements



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2.1 Service Agreements Overview

Bruce County Children’s Services may enter into a Service Agreement with either a non-profit or for-profit Operator for the delivery of child care services. The Service Agreement is a legally binding contract between the County and the Operator.

2.2 Cross Jurisdictional Arrangements

Bruce County may enter into a Cross Jurisdictional Arrangement with another Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) if a parent who is eligible for fee subsidy is unable to access a licensed child care space within Bruce County.

In this instance, Bruce County Children’s Services will be responsible for determining the eligibility of the parent.

Bruce County will provide written notice to the hosting CMSM outlining the approved placement

start date, end date, days and hours of care and approved daily fee. Upon receiving written confirmation of the arrangements, Bruce County Children’s Services will confirm the arrangements in writing with the parent.

The hosting CMSM is responsible for notifying their Operator of the placement.

The Operator will invoice its own CMSM for the services provided who will then invoice Bruce County on a monthly basis.

2.3 Operator Service Agreements

Bruce County may enter into a Service Agreement for the purposes of fee subsidy to ensure that a parent in financial need who is employed or in training can access licensed child care. Such a placement must be determined to be in the best interest of the parent and child.

Bruce County Children’s Services will be responsible for determining the eligibility of the parent.

Bruce County will provide written notice to the parent and to the Operator of the approved placement start date, end date, days and hours of care and approved daily fee.

The Operator will invoice the parent (as necessary) and Bruce County directly.

2.4 Insurance

The Operator shall, at its expense, maintain and keep in force during the term of the Agreement:

A. Commercial General Liability Insurance satisfactory to the County including the following and underwritten by an insurer licensed to conduct business in the Province of Ontario

- **Commercial General Liability (“CGL”) insurance**, which includes the County as an Additional Insured and/or Named Insured, (\$5,000,000.00) inclusive per occurrence for bodily and personal injury, death and damage to property including loss of use. Interest Clauses, Products and Completed Operations coverage (twelve (12) months), and limits (\$1,000,000.00) Standard Non-Owned Automobile Liability.
- **Automobile Liability Insurance** licensed vehicles must have limits (\$2,000,000.00)

inclusive per occurrence for bodily injury, death and damage to property. Coverage shall be in the form of a standard owner’s form automobile policy providing third-party liability and accident benefits insurance and covering licensed vehicles owned and/or leased or operated by or on behalf of the Operator.

- **Professional Liability Insurance** (\$2,000,000.00) inclusive per claim, covering Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) services or activities that are professional in nature and excluded under the CGL policy.
- **Directors’ & Officers’ Liability Insurance** for non-profit agencies with a Board of Directors (\$1,000,000) per claim.
- **Abuse Liability Insurance** (\$5,000,000)

B. Automobile liability insurance for an amount not less than \$2,000,000 on forms meeting statutory requirements covering all licensed vehicles use in any manner in connection with the performance of the terms of this Agreement

Please refer to current year’s Financial Reporting and Reconciliation Schedule for Insurance Submission timelines.

2.5 Board of Directors and Staff Contacts

Each Operator must submit updates of the Board of Directors and Staffing Form to Bruce County Children’s Services via Licensed Child Care Program Operator Workbook to ensure correspondence is communicated.

2.6 Change in Ownership

If there is a change in ownership of a program with whom Bruce County Children’s Services has a fee subsidy Service Agreement, both the former owner and the new owner must follow the Change in Ownership steps below.

The fee subsidy Service Agreement with the existing Operator must be terminated in the event the owner of the business changes.

The Children’s Services Manager should be provided with a minimum of six months of notice to ensure a smooth transition for children, families, the County, the Ministry, and the new and former owners. The existing owner should forward written correspondence to the Children’s Services Manager indicating the intent to sell the business and advising of the date that the sale will be complete.

New Owner Has an Existing Fee Subsidy Service Agreement

If the new owner has an existing fee subsidy Service Agreement with Bruce County, the new owner should provide the Children’s Services Manager with at least 90 days of written notice indicating the effective date of the transaction, the hours of operation of the program, and the anticipated fee structure. A copy of the Insurance Certificate should also be provided.

The request will then be forwarded to Bruce County Council for its consideration. Upon approval of Council, a Service Agreement will be entered into and parents seeking child care will be advised that a fee subsidy Service Agreement is in place with the new owner.

No additional fee subsidy children will be placed until the Service Agreement has been approved with the new owner. Bruce County Children’s Services will exercise its discretion in determining whether children who are attending the program and receiving fee subsidy will continue to be subsidized during the transition period.

New Owner Does Not Have an Existing Fee Subsidy Service Agreement

The new owner may request a fee subsidy Service Agreement by contacting the Children’s Services Manager in writing and by submitting a completed Service Agreement Application and all associated documentation. Once the application and all documents are received, the Children’s Services Manager and/or designate, will schedule a site visit to meet the Operator and view the site.

The request will then be forwarded to Bruce County Council for its consideration. Upon approval of Council, a Service Agreement will be entered into and parents seeking child care will be advised that the program in question has a fee subsidy Service Agreement with the County.

No additional fee subsidy children will be placed until the Service Agreement has been approved with the new owner. Bruce County Children’s Services will exercise its discretion in determining whether children who are attending the program and receiving fee subsidy will continue to be subsidized during the transition period.

2.7 Provisional Licenses

Bruce County Children's Services may place restrictions on the placement of subsidized children if a child care program that the County has a fee subsidy Service Agreement with is issued a provisional license under the Child Care and Early Years Act.

The Children's Services Manager will confer with the Ministry of Education to determine the potential health and safety risks associated with the issuance of the provisional license. If the Manager is satisfied that children attending the program are not at risk, then new placements will continue to be made and ongoing placements will remain in place. The Operator will be sent correspondence that indicates the County's awareness of the provisional license and outlines the actions that shall be taken if compliance is not achieved by the date specified in the provisional license.

In situations where a potential health and safety risk may be evident, the County shall notify the Operator in writing that no further placements of subsidized children shall occur until a second provisional license inspection has taken place. The County will also ensure that all parents whose children are enrolled in the program are aware that a provisional license has been issued and that the health and safety of their children may be affected.

If the program fails to meet the requirements of the provisional license at the end of the second inspection, then the Manager will advise the Operator that the agreement is being terminated. The County will work with parents utilizing the child care program to explore alternative child care arrangements. Similarly, in instances where a license has been revoked or not renewed, the County will work with parents utilizing the child care program to explore alternative child care arrangements.

2.8 Establishment of Rates and Rate Increases

Bruce County Children’s Services will pay the rates established by licensed child care programs on behalf of subsidized families, subject to approval and providing the fee subsidy budget allows.

Should an Operator wish to increase child care rates, an application must be made to Bruce County, Children’s Services for a fee increase. As a Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, the County holds the right to approve, decline, and/or cap rates.

Please refer to current year’s Financial Reporting and Reconciliation Schedule for Rate Increase Request Submission timelines.

Child Care rates will be approved if the following two conditions are met:

1. Bruce County Children’s Services budget allows for the increase
2. The fee increase falls within the annually approved fee range, based on market value

These two conditions have been set to ensure the local budget can support the fee increase and to establish structure for how fees are set, along with a fee range.

As per the Ministry of Education Funding Guideline, if a requested fee increase is declined and/or capped, the childcare operator must not increase the parental contribution.

2.9 Closure and Disbursement of Materials

Once a program determines that it will close, relocate, convert from a day nursery to a private school, or be sold, the Operator must notify Bruce County Children’s Services Manager so that a discussion on the return of funds and/or the disbursement of assets can occur.

In the event of a service closure, unspent or surplus funds that have been received from Bruce County are to be returned to Bruce County Children’s Services. This includes but is not limited to funds received through the General Operating Expense and Wage Enhancement Grant.

The program must submit a list of what was funded and recommendations for the disposal of such. In general, it will be expected that the assets be transferred to another child care program located in Bruce County.

Bruce County retains an interest for four years in any repairs, renovations or equipment purchased using Repairs and Maintenance funding.

The cost of renovations and non-transferable assets will be recovered in the event that the program is sold to another Operator and will no longer be used for child care purposes. The recovery will be based on a depreciating value of 25% per year.

Fee Subsidy

3

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3.1 Fee Subsidy Overview

Child care fee subsidy is provided to eligible families in Bruce County within the approved fee subsidy annual budget. Children’s Services supports a parent’s right to choose the type of care they prefer and to choose the Operator that is best able to meet the needs of their family. Bruce County subsidizes families, not Operators.

Parents who are eligible under the provisions of the income test may be eligible for fee subsidies for children under 13 years of age.

Fee subsidy funds can be used to support full and part-time child care in licensed child care programs, private-home child care agencies, children’s recreation programs, third party and school board operated before and/or after school programs and non-instructional days.

Fee subsidies may also be available for school age children enrolled in approved recreation programs who are 4 years¹ of age, up to 12 years of age, or for children with special needs from 6 to 18 years of age. Parents of children with special needs who were in receipt of a service or received financial assistance before August 31st, 2017 will be allowed to continue to receive assistance until the child turns 18, provided that they meet other eligibility criteria that are unrelated to age (O. Reg. 138/15).

Children’s Services has written operational policies and procedures in place related to attendance, billing and payment. All attempts will be made to be equitable to the Operator and the family while maintaining fiscal responsibility for the funding used to provide subsidy.

References

¹For the purposes of defining school age children in approved recreation programs, “4 years of age” can mean a child that turns 5 years of age in the current year (i.e., by the last day of December).

3.2 Determining Eligibility for Fee Assistance

Application Process

Child Care Caseworkers are responsible for assessing and monitoring ongoing eligibility for fee subsidy.

To apply for subsidy or to obtain general information about subsidized child care, parents must call Children's Services at **519-881-0431** or toll free **1-800-265-3005**.

A Child Care Fee Subsidy Calculator is available on the Bruce County Children's Services website to provide parents with assistance in determining their monthly parent contribution towards the cost of licensed child care. Parents will need their most recent Federal Notice of Assessment (NOA) for themselves and their spouse (if applicable) or their Canada Child Tax Benefit Notice (CCTB) to use the calculator.

Child Care Caseworkers work closely with families who are seeking placement into a licensed child care or approved recreation program. Caseworkers determine initial eligibility for fee subsidy and assist families in reviewing their placement options. Children's Services staff also work closely with Operators to ensure that children with special needs have access to child care programs.

Bruce County Children's Services takes into account a family's reasons for needing child care in order to determine the amount of child care to subsidize. For instance, parents must be working, attending school, or have referral letters from community partners, service providers, resource consultants or other professionals. Bruce County will pay the Operator for 2 weeks termination notice when families are no longer eligible for fee subsidy.

Income Test

Eligibility for subsidized child care is determined through an income test conducted by the Child Care Caseworker. Parents must bring their most recent Canada Revenue Agency Income Tax Notice of Assessment or Canada Child Benefit Notice to the appointment. Once all required documentation has been provided and the file has been approved, letters of approval are sent to the parent and to the Operator.

Parental Contribution

Fee subsidies are available across a broad range of income levels. The parental contribution is determined through the income testing process.

If the parental contribution exceeds the cost of care for all children in the family, the family is not eligible for fee subsidy.

The parental contribution is paid to the Child Care Operator who is responsible for issuing a receipt for income tax purposes.

At no time can the Operator charge a subsidized family more than what the parental contribution states.

All parental contributions are recorded on the Operator's monthly invoice so that they may be deducted from the amount of fee subsidy payable by Bruce County Children's Services.

It is at the discretion of the Child Care Caseworker Supervisor whether parental contribution be calculated on a monthly or daily basis.

Children with Special Needs

A letter of recommendation from a service provider or professional is required that describes the child's special need, the number of hours/days per week child care is recommended and the timeframe suggested to respond to the child's special need.

A child may require child care to address a special need due to issues with the home or family environment. In these cases, a referral is required from the Resource Consultant, Public Health, a family physician or another service provider or professional familiar with the family.

Children with special needs may be approved for a maximum of three half-days of care per week. In instances where transportation is an issue, a maximum of two full days per week may be approved rather than three half-days per week.

3.3 Wait List

When the County of Bruce identifies the need to establish a wait list for fee subsidy, families who have been approved for child care fee subsidy, including those with children enrolled in before and after school programs, will be categorized based on family income. Within each respective income grouping, each applicant will be treated on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Child Care Caseworker Supervisor may approve immediate child care subsidy to families facing exceptional circumstances, such as victims of domestic violence, or identified special needs.

3.4 Ongoing Communication

Operators will be in regular contact with the Children's Services Child Care Caseworkers about the payment of fees as well as placement activity (e.g., admissions and withdrawals from programs). If an Operator accepts a child into their program without confirmation from Children's Services that subsidy has been approved, the full fee will be collected from the parent. Operators will receive a letter and verbal or electronic confirmation from Children's Services to confirm any admissions to or withdrawals from programs.

3.5 Absences and Closures

Illness and Vacation

If a child is ill, fee subsidy will be paid on the child's behalf.

Each licensed child care program shall advise the parent/guardian of the notice period the program requires should a child not be in attendance on a regularly scheduled day. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to abide by any such notice periods.

Child care programs shall advise Bruce County Children's Services if excessive absenteeism of any one child becomes a concern. The Child Care Caseworker will review the individual circumstances with the family to determine continued eligibility.

Inclement Weather

Should a child be unable to attend a placement as a result of inclement weather and the child care program is open, then the day shall be considered an 'absent' day and Bruce County Children's Services will pay the fee subsidy on behalf of the eligible child.

Should the child care program be closed as a result of inclement weather on a day when a child is regularly scheduled to attend, no fee subsidy (or parental contribution) shall be made to the child care program on behalf of the child.

Statutory Holidays

Bruce County Children’s Services will follow the policies put in place by individual child care programs when it comes to the payment of fee subsidies for the following statutory holidays:

Good Friday

Canada Day

Civic Holiday

Labour Day

Thanksgiving

Victoria Day

Christmas

Boxing Day

New Year’s Day

Family Day

3.6 Withdrawal

Parents/guardians in receipt of a fee subsidy shall provide both the child care program and Bruce County Children’s Services with a minimum of two weeks of notice should they wish to withdraw a child from a program.

The parent/guardian may be responsible for the full cost of the child’s regularly scheduled attendance if this notice of withdrawal is not provided.

If a child is absent for more than three consecutive scheduled days and the child care program has not been contacted by the parent/guardian, the program shall contact the Child Care Caseworker. If Bruce County Children’s Services is unable to contact the parent/guardian, notice of withdrawal will be given to the program and the child’s subsidy will be terminated. If the program fails to advise the Child Care Caseworker after the three-day period, payment will be stopped at the end of the two-week period following the child’s last scheduled day of attendance.

In special circumstances, the Children’s Services Manager may grant an exception to this policy on behalf of subsidy eligible families. Such circumstances may include employment lay-off, a change in residence resulting from family violence, etc. In these situations, Bruce County Children’s Services will pay the child care program the fee subsidy approved for the days of scheduled attendance during the two-week notice period.

On those occasions where a child care program feels it necessary to initiate the withdrawal or suspension of a child from care, then the parent/guardian and the County must be provided with two weeks of notice. Should the child care program initiate the withdrawal or suspension without providing both the parent/guardian and the County with two weeks of notice, Bruce County Children’s Services will not be responsible for the payment of subsidy beyond the last day the child was in attendance at the program.

If you have any questions regarding the Fee Subsidy Section, please contact the Child Care Caseworker Supervisor.

Funding Opportunities and Reporting Requirements



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- 4.10 Capacity Building (Professional Learning) Funding
- 4.11 Transformation Funding
- 4.12 Enhancement Program Support Funding (EPSF)

4.1 Reporting Requirements

Bruce County funding requests and reconciliation submissions will be completed electronically through the Licensed Child Care Program Operator Workbook. This excel workbook will be provided to operators at the beginning of each calendar year.

Child care operators will also be provided with a Financial Reporting and Reconciliation Schedule for the current calendar year. Please refer to this document for all reporting, application and reconciliation due dates.

4.2 Canada-Wide Early Learning Child Care System (CWELCC)

In March 2022, the Federal and Provincial governments signed the Canada-Wide Early Learning Child Care Agreement (CWELCC), which aims to make child care more affordable for families. This agreement is part of the Federal government's commitment to deliver \$10 per day child care.

For Operators opting in the CWELCC program, families of children aged 6 or younger may receive a 25% reduction on their fee, retroactive to April 1, 2022, building to a 50% reduction in average parent costs for licensed early learning and child care by the end of calendar year 2022, and reaching an average parent fee of \$10 a day by 2025-26 for licensed child care spaces.

Operators that have notified Bruce County that they will not participate in the CWELCC System may continue to run their operations under

the existing provincial licensing and regulatory framework. Operators can also continue to participate through their existing purchase of service agreements with Bruce County (if applicable). Operators that do not participate will not receive CWELCC System funding and may continue to set their own parent fees.

Operators are required to indicate in their parent handbook that they are not participating in the CWELCC system and must include their fee amounts.

Accordingly, a phased approach to implementing CWELCC will be utilized, with a focus on the immediate objectives of affordability for families and system stability, before moving on to addressing the objectives of increasing accessibility and inclusion over the longer-term.

Due to the evolving nature of CWELCC, and with 2022 being considered a transition year for the CWELCC program, changes can be expected to this program. As a result, this manual should be considered a living document and will be updated by Bruce County as further information is received and clarified.

To learn more about the CWELCC, visit www.ontario.ca/page/canada-ontario-early-years-and-child-care-agreement

Operator Eligibility Criteria

Under the CWELCC System, Bruce County may deny an Operator's CWELCC application in exceptional circumstances.

The Addendum describes an "exceptional circumstance" as a situation in which Bruce County, as the Service System Manager, "has strong concerns around entering into a purchase of service agreement with the Operator", including a reason to believe either or both of the following:

1. The child care centre is not financially viable or will not be operated in a manner that will be financially viable; or
2. The Operator will use the funding for improper purposes.

Accordingly, Operators must provide detailed financial information to Bruce County to satisfy the requirement that there are no serious concerns that the Operator is not financially viable and that the Operator will not use the funds for improper purposes.

Financial Compliance Audit

All child care Operators in receipt of CWELCC funding must submit financial information as well as audited financial statements to Bruce County to verify that the funding provided was used for the purpose(s) intended.

Financial compliance audits will be conducted each year with a random sample of Operators to ensure compliance and accountability related to the requirements of the CWELCC System. Operators will be required to participate in this process.

Maintenance of Rates

All Operators, regardless of participation in the CWELCC System, must maintain current parent/caregiver fees for eligible children unless a fee increase was approved by Bruce County and communicated to parents/families on or before March 27, 2022.

All licensed child care programs serving eligible children are subject to the fee-freeze until one of the two conditions is met:

- a. The Operator notifies Bruce County and parents of eligible children in writing that they are NOT participating in the CWELCC System this year and will therefore not be subject to the terms and conditions of the CWELCC System; or
- b. The Operator participates in the CWELCC System and is subject to the regulatory rules for parent fees in participating programs.

Operators must reduce and set parent fees in accordance with the Regulations under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA).

Maintenance of Spaces

Operators participating in the CWELCC System must maintain existing (pre-CWELCC System Announcement on March 27, 2022) licensed spaces for children aged 0-5 (e.g., a licensed infant space must remain an infant space).

Any revision or use of alternate capacity must be reported to Bruce County and the County will determine whether this may result in a funding adjustment or recovery from the Operator.

Annual Licensed Child Care Operators Survey Participation

Operators are required to complete the annual Licensed Child Care Operators Survey, per the Regulations under the CCEYA. Bruce County is required to withhold funding from Operators until the SSM has confirmed that the survey has been submitted.

Funding Streams

The CWELCC System is comprised of three funding streams. Within the three funding streams are distinct components. The following is a high-level overview of the CWELCC System funding streams and the associated components:

All the below funding streams will be administered to eligible Operators in the form of operational grants.

Funding Stream	Fee Reduction		Workforce Compensation		Admin
Funding Components	Retroactive Fee Rebate (RFR)	Ongoing Fee Reduction (OFR)	Annual Wage Increase (AWI)	Minimum Wage Off-Set (MWO)	Support for CWELCC Admin
Funding	25% reduction and rebate of the Base Fee amount for families of eligible children.	In 2022, a fee reduction of up to 25% (to a minimum of \$12 per day) for eligible children retroactive to April 1, 2022. A 50% daily fee reduction on average for eligible children by the end of calendar year 2022. \$10 average daily child care fees for eligible children September 2025.	\$1.00 per hour wage increase for eligible staff. <i>*refer to section 6 and 7 for eligibility terms.</i>	Difference between hourly wage and \$15 per hour.	Expenditures deemed reasonable and necessary for the provision of services subsidized by the Ministry.
Eligibility	All CWELCC Licensees will receive the funding allocation to provide to eligible families (children within eligible age range).	All CWELCC Licensees will receive the funding allocation to off-set the gap between "reduced parent fee" and "actual cost of base fee" for eligible families (children within eligible age range).	Eligible CWELCC Licensees will receive the funding allocation to provide to eligible staff (designated roles; WEG recipient; wage cap etc.). Includes up to 17.5% in benefits.	Eligible CWELCC Licensees will receive the funding allocation to provide to eligible staff (designated roles, \$15 per hour on March 31, 2021 etc.). Includes up to 17.5% in benefits.	Eligible CWELCC Licensees may receive a funding allocation to support eligible CWELCC Admin expenses. This is dependent on the availability of funds.
Start Date	April 1, 2022	Following the Retroactive Fee Rebate Period (late-2022)	January 1, 2023	April 1, 2022	April 1, 2022

Additional Notes

1. For further details and funding eligibility requirements, please refer to the **Addendum to Ontario Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service Management and Funding Guideline (2022)** and your Schedule J (CWELCC System Funding) of your Transfer Payment Agreement.
2. Funding is provided to support the gap between the Operator's actual eligible costs and revenues related to base fees and other funding sources received.
3. Where priorities for CWELCC initiatives are met and excess funding remains, Bruce County can provide funding to be used to support an Operator's general operating expenses (e.g., where there may be inflationary pressures for rent, food costs etc.).
4. To support fee reductions in child care for eligible children, CWELCC funding will be provided by Bruce County to Operators to support the actual cost associated with a mandated reduction in an Operator's base fee.
5. Inflation assumptions are included in Bruce County funding allocations, 2023 being 2.75%.
6. Bruce County has the right to deny Funds to an Operator for expenses, or to only pay what is deemed to be fair market value where expenditure levels are determined to be unreasonable, ineligible based on Ministry parameters, unrelated to child care, deemed to not be transacted at fair market value by Bruce County, or where transactions are with a related company.
7. As 2022 is a transitional period, Bruce County has discretion and may allow Operators, until the end of 2022, to align their budget/operations with the funding parameters where applicable.

Definitions

Base fee: any fee or part of a fee that is charged in respect of a child for child care, including anything an Operator is required to provide under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA), or anything an Operator requires the parent to purchase from the Operator, but does not include a non-base fee.

Eligible child: any child under 6 years old; and up until June 30 in a calendar year, any child who (a) turns 6 years old between January 1 and June 30 in that calendar year, and (b) is enrolled in a licensed infant, toddler, preschool or

kindergarten group, a licensed family age group, or home child care, as defined in the CCEYA.

Non-base fee: any fees charged for optional items or optional services, such as transportation or field trips, or any fees charged pursuant to an agreement between the parent and the Operator in respect of circumstances where the parent fails to meet the terms of the agreement (e.g. fees for picking up a child late, fees to obtain items that the parent agreed to provide for their child but failed to provide), as defined in the CCEYA.

CWELCC Reporting Schedule

On a monthly basis, participating Operators will report actual attendance of all eligible children using the existing OCCMS program.

To ensure accurate reporting each month, Operators will:

- a. Have each family complete a consent to participate in CWELCC form. This form will ensure parents are aware of enrollment of their child in the system and provide the information required to enter the placement into OCCMS
- b. Confirm with their Children's Services contact all placements are up to date prior to the first day of each month
- c. Additional reporting may be requested by the Ministry of Education in the future. Operators will be provided with the dates and tools to complete these requirements as they become available

Workforce Compensation

Workforce compensation funding is focused on supporting Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) staff who are low wage earners. Increased compensation for low wage earners will help support the recruitment and retention of RECEs working in the child care sector as part of a provincial strategy to achieve system growth and ensure increased access to high-quality licensed child care in Ontario.

The recruitment and retention of Ontario's child care workforce will be supported through improved compensation for low wage earners by introducing:

- A wage floor
- An annual wage increase for eligible RECEs

In addition, workforce compensation funding will be provided to Operators to offset wage increases for non-RECE staff associated with the increased minimum wage that came into effect January 1, 2022.

Wage Floor

Operators are required to bring the wage of all eligible staff up to the wage floor identified in the table set out in the Ministry Addendum, plus benefits. All eligible staff hired during the identified years must earn at least the wage floor identified for that year, plus benefits as defined in the Ministry Addendum.

The wage floor came into effect April 1, 2022. For all following years, the wage floor will come into effect on January 1 of each year.

To be eligible to have their wage raised to the wage floor, staff must be:

1. Employed by an Operator that is participating in the CWELCC System and be in a position categorized as:
 - RECE Program Staff
 - RECE Child Care Supervisor
 - RECE Home Child Care Visitor, and
2. Receiving wage enhancement funding, and
3. Their hourly wage (including wage enhancement funding) must be below the wage floor. Benefits should not be included when determining the hourly wage i.e., benefits are in addition to the hourly wages.

Annual Wage Increase

Operators are required to increase the hourly wage of eligible staff by \$1.00 per hour plus benefits, on January 1st of each year from 2023 to 2026, inclusive, up to the \$25.00 per hour wage cap.

To be eligible for an annual wage increase, staff must be:

1. Employed by an Operator that is participating in the CWELCC System and be in a position categorized as:
 - RECE Program Staff
 - RECE Child Care Supervisor
 - RECE Home Child Care Visitor, and
2. Receiving wage enhancement funding, and
3. Their hourly wage including wage enhancement funding must be below the wage cap of \$25.00 per hour on January 1st of each eligible year (i.e., base wage plus wage enhancement funding plus annual increase must be below \$25.00 per hour).

Benefits should not be included when determining the base wage.

Staff earning at or above \$25.00 per hour are not eligible for the annual \$1.00 per hour increase. Staff earning \$24.00 to \$24.99 per hour are to have their wages increased to \$25.00 per hour.

Programs Serving Children Aged 6-12 Years

The provincial government is contributing funding as part of the Workforce Compensation allocation to be used for compensation for staff in licensed child care programs serving children aged 6 to 12 years who are currently ineligible to apply to participate in the CWELCC System. This initiative

is designed to ensure equity of wages across staff serving different age groups and to avoid increases being passed on to parents through higher fees.

Benefits Funding and Flexibility

Workforce Compensation funding includes up to 17.5% in benefits. Benefits of up to 17.5% must support Operators in meeting their statutory benefit requirements. Once all statutory benefit requirements are met (including up to 2 weeks of vacation and 9 statutory days), any remaining funding within 17.5% can be used to fund other benefit expenses paid by the employer on behalf of the employee.

Information to Staff

Upon receiving confirmation of participation in the CWELCC System from Bruce County, and as new staff are hired, Operators are required to share, in writing, information about the wage floor and annual wage increase with eligible staff. The information must provide eligible staff with an understanding of upcoming annual changes to their wages as a result of workforce compensation funding. At a minimum, the information about wages must include the wage floor and required annual wage increase for each year up to and including 2026.

Minimum Wage Offset

Operators must apply for the Wage Enhancement Grant and qualify for the CCEWLC to be eligible to receive the Minimum Wage Offset funding and associated Mandatory Benefit increases through the CWELCC. The Minimum Wage Offset is specific to offset costs for those Operators who were required by law to increase wages because of the mandatory increase.

To calculate an Operator's entitlement for the Minimum Wage Offset, **Operators must be participating in the CWELCC System and employ staff in a position categorized as:**

- Non-RECE Program Staff
- Non-RECE Child Care Supervisor
- Non-RECE Home Child Care Visitor

The following staff positions are ineligible to calculate eligibility for Minimum Wage offset funding for Operators:

- Cook, custodial and other non-program staff positions
- Special Needs Resource (SNR) funded resource teachers/consultants and supplemental staff
- Staff hired through a third party (i.e., temp agency)

The only exception to the first two positions noted above is if the staff is a non-RECE and the position spends at least 25% of their time to support ratio requirements as outlined in the CCEYA in which case the staff would be eligible for the minimum wage offset for the hours that they are supporting the ratio requirements.

The Minimum Wage Offset is only eligible to staff who were working as of March 31, 2021 at less than \$15.00 per hour.

Staff hired after December 31, 2021, are not included in determining eligibility for minimum wage offset funding. Additionally, Operators who increased parent fees to offset pressures created from minimum wage increases are not eligible for Minimum Wage Offset funding. The funding provided for Minimum Wage Offset will be paid retroactive to the start date of the Operator's participation in the CWELCC System (April 1, 2022,

for most organizations) and will be paid annually as part of the CWELCC allocation to Operators to offset the costs of the increase for the life of the duration of the CWELCC agreement until 2026, dependent on all other criteria being met and available funds.

In summary, **Operators who meet all the following criteria will be eligible for Minimum Wage Offset funding:**

- Were paying eligible staff less than \$15.00 per hour in 2021
- Did not implement a fee increase
- If an increase was made, it was not done to specifically address the pressures created from the minimum wage increase
- The same staff individuals paid below \$15.00 per hour in 2021, continue to be employed as of April 1, 2022

End of Year Reporting and Reconciliation

To maintain a CWELCC schedule in conjunction with their purchase of service agreement, Operators will be required to submit a full audited financial statement on an annual basis. Surplus CWELCC allocations will be recovered in line with the County's annual reporting timelines.

Additionally, any CWELCC funding used for ineligible expenses will be recovered. Upon receipt of the audited financial statement, Bruce County will meet with individual Operators to review operating capacity and determine future funding allocations.

Service Data Reporting

Operators will be required to collect and submit the following service data to Bruce County:

1. Service data required for Fee Reduction funding includes the following (completed through OCCMS monthly attendance records):
 - Number of children served through fee reductions (excluding fee subsidy children)
 - Average monthly number of children served through fee reductions provided by age group (excluding fee subsidy children)
 - Number of licensed child care spaces supported with fee reduction by age group and type of setting (i.e., centre, or home-based), including full fee spaces occupied by children receiving subsidies
2. Number of children in receipt of required refunds Service data required for Workforce Compensation funding includes the following:
 - Number of RECE program staff, RECE supervisors and RECE home child care visitors supported by the wage floor
 - Number of RECE program staff, RECE supervisors and RECE home child care visitors supported by the annual wage increase (starting 2023) Service data required for Minimum Wage Offset funding includes the following:
 - Number of non-RECE program staff, non-RECE supervisors and non-RECE home child care visitors supported by the minimum wage offset

4.3 Quality Scan Tool (QST) and Funding Opportunities

When funding is requested, programs may be required to use their most recent QST results to support their funding application.

4.4 Wage Enhancement Grant

The Wage Enhancement and Home Child Care Enhancement Grant is funded by the Government of Ontario. The current year wage enhancement grant supports an increase of up to \$2 per hour, plus 17.5 percent benefits for licensed program staff and home visitors.

Goals

The goals of the wage enhancement are to:

- Close the wage gap between RECE wages in the school board and licensed child care sectors
- Stabilize licensed Child Care Operators by helping them retain RECEs/child care staff
- Support greater employment and income security

These goals support the ministry's priorities to:

- Stabilize and transform the existing child care system to increase program reliability for parents and support consistent, higher quality child care services to support children's learning and development
- Support licensed home child care agencies and strengthen the licensed home child care system

Eligibility

All licensed child care centres and home child care agencies are eligible to apply for wage enhancement funding, regardless of auspice, participation in municipal quality initiatives, or current purchase of service status with their local CMSM or DSSAB.

Licensed centres or agencies created in current year are eligible to apply for wage enhancement or HCCEG in the year the program begins operations.

Wage Cap

As the intent of the wage enhancement is to close the wage gap between RECEs working in the publicly funded education sector, and RECEs, child care program staff and providers in licensed child care settings, the ministry has established an hourly wage maximum for wage enhancement and a partial/full day for HCCEG. Please see your Licensed Child Care Program Operator Workbook for more details on the wage cap.

This wage cap aligns with the top of the existing school board Educator Salary Matrix for RECEs working in the Kindergarten program. The wage cap increases annually to align with adjustments to the salary and wages of the school based ECE grids in accordance with the current education sector labour agreements.

Wage Enhancement - Child Care Centre Program Staff

Note: Eligibility criteria is used to determine entitlement (based on hours worked in previous year) and to determine payments to staff in the current year. For licensees that open in the current year, please estimate number of hours to be worked.

Full Wage Enhancement

To be eligible to receive the full year wage enhancement of \$2 an hour plus 17.5 percent in benefits, staff must:

- Be employed in a licensed child care centre or agency
- Have an associated base wage excluding prior year's wage enhancement of less than current years rate or less per hour (i.e. \$2 below the wage cap of current years rate)
- Be in a position categorized as a child care supervisor, RECE, home child care visitor, or otherwise counted toward adult to child ratios under the *Child Care and Early Years Act*

Child care program positions that are in place to maintain higher employee-child ratios than required under the *Child Care and Early Years Act*, and meet the eligibility outlined above, are also eligible for wage enhancement.

Partial Wage Enhancement

Where an eligible centre-based or home visitor position has an associated base wage rate excluding prior year's wage enhancement between the maximum associated base rate and the ministry established maximum wage enhancement rate per hour, the position is eligible for a partial wage enhancement. The partial wage enhancement will increase the wage of the qualifying position to the ministry established maximum wage enhancement rate per hour without exceeding the cap.

Note: These rates may change from year to year. Please contact the Children's Services Program Assistant to obtain the current year's rate, or with any calculation questions.

Ineligible Positions (Non-Program Staff):

- Cook, custodial and other non-program staff positions
- SNR-funded resource consultants and supplemental staff
- The only exception to the two above noted positions is if the position spends at least 25 percent of their time to support ratio requirements; in which case the staff would be eligible for wage enhancement for the hours worked in the eligible position supporting ratio
- Staff hired through a third party (i.e. temp agency)

Supplemental Grant

The ministry will provide an additional supplemental grant of \$150 for each eligible centre based full time equivalent staff (FTE) or home visitor FTE and \$50 for each eligible home child care provider. The supplemental grant allows licensees some flexibility to provide and implement wage enhancement in a way that aligns with their regular operations. The supplemental grant must be used to support staff, home visitors' and providers' hourly/daily wage or benefits.

It provides licensees with the flexibility to cover salary shortfalls (due to increased hours in program or new staff/providers) and additional benefits, (e.g. vacation days, sick days, PD days and/or other benefits) once mandatory benefits are covered.

Any funding that is not used for these purposes will be recovered.

Application Process

Child Care Operators must complete Section 1 and 2 of the Staff Information tab of the Licensed Child Care Program Operator Workbook in order to be eligible for the Wage Enhancement Grant.

Please refer to your Financial Reporting and Reconciliation Schedule for deadlines.

Payments To Licensees

CMSMs and DSSABs may need to enter into new funding agreements/arrangements with licensed child care centres and/or home child care agencies for the provision of wage enhancement/HCCFG funding if there is no current purchase of service agreement.

Note: Bruce County will continue to have full discretion in determining which licensees they enter into purchase of service agreements with for the provision of other child care services (e.g. fee subsidy, special needs resourcing, general operating, etc.).

If child care staff or home child care providers exceed the cap at any time during the year, excluding wage enhancement or HCCFG, they will no longer be eligible to receive the increase.

Allowable Expenses

Wage enhancement/HCCFG funding (including the supplemental grant) is an enveloped allocation. Wage enhancement/HCCFG funding must be directed solely to licensed child care staff and home visitors to increase wages and benefits, and to home child care providers to increase daily income. Wage enhancement/HCCFG funding cannot be used to support child care system expansion or reduce fees.

CMSMs and DSSABs and licensees may only use the funding for the intended purposes of:

- Increasing wages of eligible centre-based staff and home visitors by up to \$2 per hour plus 17.5 percent benefits based on their current wage rate for all hours worked in program, including overtime hours

Note: The salary increase cannot exceed \$2 per hour in program and the ministry established wage cap per hour. Licensees may exceed 17.5 percent for benefits if the supplemental grant is used to support additional benefit expenses.

- Providing a daily increase of up to \$20 for eligible licensed home child care providers based on current hours of service provided

Note: The daily wage increase cannot exceed \$20 and the ministry daily cap rate.

Benefits Funding and Flexibility

Benefits of 17.5 percent support licensees in meeting their statutory benefit requirements.

Once all statutory benefits requirements are met (including up to 2 weeks of vacation and 9 statutory days), any remaining funding within 17.5 percent can be used to fund other benefit expenses paid by the employer on behalf of the employee.

Any residual benefits funding can be used to support wage enhancement salaries per the above allowable expenses. Please note this is one-way funding flexibility only, that is, salary funding cannot be used for benefits.

Supplemental grant provides licensees with the flexibility to cover additional benefits, (e.g. vacation days, sick days, PD days and/or other benefits) once mandatory benefits are covered.

Any funding not used for the intended purpose will be recovered by the ministry.

Wage Enhancement Administration Expenses

The ministry is providing child care service system managers with funding for administration to support the implementation at both the County and operator levels.

The wage enhancement administration funding allocation is to be used to fund administrative processes associated with implementing the wage enhancement/HCCEG such as creation of wage enhancement/HCCEG processes, outreach to licensees, training and support (including resource costs), etc.

Reconciliation

Bruce County Children's Services is required to have a reconciliation process for licensee use of wage enhancement funding.

Please ensure that for the purposes of reporting the reconciliation at year end, salaries and benefits payments are tracked separately by the licensee and CMSMs and DSSABs.

Note: Any funding not used for the intended purpose will be recovered by Bruce County.

Bruce County Children's Services will be required to collect FTE data as part of the reconciliation process.

Bruce County Children Services and licensees may use wage enhancement funding surpluses from one centre/agency to offset deficits in another centre/agency (within the same County).

Payments to Staff

Wage enhancement/HCCEG funding entitlements are based on previous year's data (for licensees that open in the current year, estimated number of hours to be worked); however, wage enhancement payments should be provided to eligible positions for each hour worked in the current year. Licensees have the flexibility to fund their current year's eligible positions, even if the position did not exist in previous year.

Licensees must include wage enhancement or HCCEG payments in each pay cheque or payment made. In addition, licensees must notify staff or home child care providers of the amount provided to them through this initiative on staff pay cheques/home child care provider fee transfers, or through a separate letter, labeled as follows:

- Provincial child care wage enhancement; or
- Provincial home child care enhancement grant

4.5 General Operating Expense

The General Operating Expense is to support the costs of operating licensed child care programs in order to reduce wait times and fees for services, stabilize service levels, and (where funds allow), improve access to high-quality affordable early learning and child care services for children and their families.

Eligibility Criteria

Licensees are required to demonstrate to Bruce County that they are able to meet their minimum wage and mandatory benefits requirements without operating funding in order to qualify for funding.

Priorities

Key considerations used by Bruce County to support general operating allocations include:

- Stabilizing child care fees
- Retaining stable, qualified staff
- Supporting quality programming
- Aligning with full-day kindergarten implementation and supporting licensees to expand programs for younger age groups:
 - Mitigating higher operating costs for younger age groups (ages 0-3.8)
 - Supporting the implementation of the Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit policy
- Prioritizing funding based on child care licensing history, financial history and viability of programs
- Capacity of programs to access funds through other means

Allowable Expenses

General Operating Funding may be used for ongoing costs, including staff wages and benefits, lease and occupancy costs, utilities, administration, transportation for children, resources, nutrition, supplies, maintenance. Ministry funding can only be used to offset salary costs over and above the licensees' regulatory requirements for minimum wage and mandatory benefits.

If you have any questions, please contact Children's Services Program Assistant childcare@brucecounty.on.ca

Operator Reporting Requirements

For the Child Care Operators to be considered for General Operating Expense Funding, they must be licensed, have a service agreement with Bruce County, and the reporting requirements as outlined below.

Each program must also submit their average monthly operating capacity in their Licensed Child Care Program Operators Workbook.

Operating capacity refers to the actual number of children attending the program, not the number of children the program is licensed for (i.e. licensed capacity).

4.6 Pay Equity Funding

Note: New funding is no longer available. All centres that are eligible for this funding have been notified.

4.7 Small Water Works Funding

Small Water Works funding is available to licensed child care centres where the source of the water is not from a municipal water service connection are required to comply with O. Reg. 170/03 under the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*.

Small Water Works funding should be used to support regular ongoing water testing and maintenance expenses, which are limited to the following expense categories – laboratory

testing, chemicals, supplies/filters, courier costs, maintenance of water treatment equipment including replacement UV bulbs and training.

Costs related to the purchase and installation of systems and equipment are not eligible.

Child Care Operators must submit a Small Water Works invoice with all applicable receipts in order to be eligible for Small Water Works funding allocation.

4.8 Repairs and Maintenance Funding

Repairs and Maintenance funding may be provided to licensed Child Care Operators and private home day care agencies that are not in compliance with licensing requirements or may be at risk of not being in compliance with licensing requirements under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.

Funding is intended to cover one-time repair and maintenance costs.

Bruce County Children’s Services will prioritize funding to those Child Care Operators that can demonstrate that they are not in compliance or are at risk of not being in compliance with licensing requirements under the Child Care and Early Years Act.

Repairs and Maintenance funding cannot be used for program expansion.

Repairs and Maintenance funding will be by application in the Operator Workbook.

Some common health and safety issues that may be eligible for Repairs and Maintenance funding by priority include:

Priority 1

Code Compliance

- Ontario Fire Code orders/recommendations
- Ontario Building Code orders/recommendations
- Public Health Code orders/recommendations

Priority 2

Major Systems Repair or replacement of:

- Leaking roof
- Building foundation
- Heating/cooling system
- Ventilation system
- Sump pump
- Emergency lighting
- Accessibility
- Windows or doors
- Asbestos removal or encapsulation
- Secure entrances
- Wiring upgrades

Priority 3

Play Area Repair or replacement of:

- Damaged walls/peeling paint that may contain lead
- Windows
- Damaged/worn flooring material or ceiling
- Damaged/worn outdoor safety surfacing
- Fencing
- Drinking water system
- Heating system

Food Preparation

Repair or replacement of:

- Hand washing sink in the kitchen
- Dishwasher or hot water booster
- Major appliances

Washrooms

Repair or replacement of:

- Fixtures
- Partitions
- Flooring material
- Change table

Repairs and Maintenance Funding Application

To be eligible for Repairs and Maintenance Funding operators must apply to Bruce County Children Services. To apply, please refer to your Licensed Child Care Program Operators Workbook. Other applications will be considered throughout the year should funds be available.

4.9 Play-based Material and Equipment Funding

Licensed non-profit and for-profit Child Care Operators may receive Play-based Material and Equipment Funding to create enriching environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote children’s exploration and learning through play, consistent with the principles of the Early Learning Framework.

Bruce County Children’s Services will give priority to those Operators who can demonstrate that the funding will be used to support children’s active exploration and learning through play.

Play-based material and equipment funding may be used to purchase non-consumable supplies/equipment to support the ongoing regular operation of the child care program (e.g. kitchen supplies, IT, etc.).

Requests for Play-based Material and Equipment Funding will be assessed on the basis of need, licensed capacity and available funding.

4.10 Capacity Building (Professional Learning) Funding

Capacity building funding is intended to support professional learning opportunities that build the capacity of licensees, supervisors, program staff/caregivers, home visitors, home child care providers and non-profit volunteer board members to support the provision of high-quality programs for children ages 0-12.

Professional learning and development opportunities may be designed to engage child care supervisors, program staff, resource consultants, supplemental SNR staff, cooks, home child care providers, home visitors, other staff or boards of directors of licensed programs.

In addition to funding system-wide professional learning opportunities, Bruce County Children’s Services may choose to prioritize Capacity Building Funding for licensed child care programs that:

- Have limited access to professional learning opportunities
- Require support in improving program quality
- Have limited capacity in business administration; and/or
- Serve Francophone or Indigenous children and families.

Allowable Expenses

In accordance with and/or as recommended in the Ministry of Education’s Ontario Child Care and Child and Family Program Service Management and Funding Guideline, Capacity Building Funding is to be used for:

- Professional learning opportunities that align with the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* regulations and ministry policy (e.g., workshops, mentoring and coaching, networks that are delivered in-person, virtually, etc.)
- Program-related professional learning opportunities that align with the views and approaches outlined in *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years*, promote reflective practice and collaborative inquiry, and support the new regulatory requirements under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (e.g. post-diploma training programs)
- Establishment of professional learning communities of practice to support early years program staff; Professional learning and development opportunities related to child care program business administration (e.g., budgeting, leadership, human resource management, policy development, and board governance etc.)
- Professional learning opportunities related to the health, safety and well-being of children (e.g., nutrition, first aid, environmental health, communicable diseases, etc.)
- Release time and overtime to support staff in participating in professional learning opportunities
- Travel costs (in accordance with the OPS Travel Directive) to support attendance at professional learning opportunities (municipal policies pertaining to travel and accommodation apply)

4.11 Transformation Funding

Transformation Funding is intended to cover one-time costs for licensees, including licensed child care centres and home child care agencies that are involved in **business transformation activities and/or require business transformation supports**.

Eligible expenditures under Transformation are grouped under three categories:

Category 1

Amalgamation of Two or More Licensees

- Amalgamation to support legal costs for two or more licensees that are amalgamating

Category 2

Relocation of a Licensee and/or Amalgamation of Two or More Licensees

- Lease Costs (i.e., to cover the expense of terminating a lease); and/or
- Moving Costs

Category 3

Business Transformation Supports

- Support business planning costs
- Technology upgrade costs that facilitate internet connectivity for business purposes
- Play-based material and equipment
- One-time operating funding to support the viability of licensees that are transforming their business model; and/or
- Funding to home child care agencies for home visitors to facilitate the potential movement of providers from unlicensed to licensed child care

Transformation Funding Application

To be eligible for Transformation Funding operators must apply to Bruce County Children Services using the application in the Operator Workbook.

Bruce County Children's Services will review all applications. Child Care Centres will be notified of their approved funding. All funding is required to be reconciled with receipts and any funding not used must be reimbursed to the County of Bruce.

4.12 Enhancement Program Support Funding (EPSF)

Objective

The Enhancement Program Support Fund is intended to support the inclusion of children with special needs (aged 0-12) in licensed child care programs, camps and authorized recreation programs at no additional cost to parents or guardians.

Children with Special Needs are defined under the Ontario Regulation 138/15, as a child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development, are of such a nature that additional supports are required for the child.

The goal of this approach is to increase capacity, allow for longer term planning and to improve efficiency within the Service System.

Outcomes

- Collaborative responsive system
- Funding to support overall service system capacity and inclusiveness
- Improve flow of system and eliminate barriers
- Data to support needs of children
- Reduced administration and red tape

Eligibility Criteria for Providers

To be eligible to receive direct funding, providers are required to satisfy the following requirements:

- Be a licensed child care setting, including camps or authorized recreation programs
- Inclusion of children with special needs by participating in Bruce County Special Needs Resource Program
- Have sound business management practices
- Be in good standing with respect to reporting requirements for all funds by Bruce County

Allocation of Funds

Providers will receive Enhancement Program Support Funding based on the following formula with a budget constraint included:

Aggregate Data Regarding Children with Special Needs



Providers Hourly Rate



Number of Operating Days



Allocation

Note: Providers with a lower operating capacity will receive a minimum allocation of funding.

Additional Funding Allocation

Providers may apply for additional funding if:

- They serve significantly more children with special needs than projected
- A child or children with a high level of exceptional needs starts within a program
- Situations arise where more intensive support is required for children with special needs and the funds allocated will not support these needs

Note: Providers may request additional funds by contacting the Children's Services Program Assistant.

Reporting Requirements

Providers will be required to submit an Enhancement Program Support Funding Report that indicates:

- Number of children served
- Number of children served and date of birth for 0-5 years of age
- Number of children served and date of birth for 6-12 years of age
- Number of hours of funding support provided
- Professional Learning/Training expenses
- Equipment purchases

Accountability Measures

Enhancement Program Support Funding must be used for its intended purpose. Funding not utilized for this specific purpose must be returned to the County of Bruce. Non-profit providers may not use their allocation to contribute (directly or indirectly) to their reserves. For-profit providers may not use their Enhancement Program Support Fund allocation to contribute (directly or indirectly) to their surplus/profit/retained earnings, etc.

Note: EPSF may not be used to offset budgeted costs and surplus funds must be returned to the County of Bruce. The County of Bruce will monitor the use of funding through a review of the reporting requirements, as well as the other requirements as determined by the County of Bruce.

Enhanced Program Support Staff (EPSS) Education and Qualification Requirements

- ECE degree or diploma, Child and Youth, Developmental Support, Educational Assistant, Recreation and Leisure and/or trainings in the fields of psychology or extensive experience without ECE
- If an ECE, be a member in good standing with the College of Early Childhood Educators in Ontario
- Previous experience working or volunteering with individuals or children with special needs
- Hold a Standard First Aid including infant/child CPR certificate as outlined in section 55 of the Ontario Regulation 137/15 made under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014
- Experience working with young children who are at different abilities or diagnosis

Enhanced Program Support Staff (EPSS) Child Related Services

- Implement program activities by following the Individual Support Plans and Goal Plans developed by the Resource Consultant and program staff when required
- Participate as a member of the child care team to best meet the needs of all children within the existing routine of the daily program
- In cooperation with child care staff, facilitate the inclusion of each child with special needs into the daily routine
- Share roles and duties with other child care staff as requested
- Consult on a daily basis with child care educator and on a regular basis with the Bruce County Resource Consultant

Enhanced Program Support Staff (EPSS) Child Care Program Related Responsibilities

- Support the principals of inclusion during all daily routines
- Remain on site or on outings with the designated program at all times. Individual outings with only the enhanced worker are not permitted
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Child Care program and all employer/employee expectations
- Follow regulations of the Child Care and Early Years Act
- Conduct oneself in a professional manner
- Be familiar with all pertinent information regarding each child in the program
- Be familiar with Serious Occurrence and Bruce Grey Child and Family Services reporting procedures and each person's duty to report
- Be aware of, and adhere to, confidentiality policies and procedures of the child care centre
- Prepare for and attend staff meetings, team meetings, case conferences and supervision sessions as requested
- Participate in in-service training sessions or professional development sessions to keep abreast of current information as it pertains to this position

Note: Enhanced Program Support Staff (EPSS) are not allowed to be included in teacher and child ratios at any time.

General Administration

5

- 5.1 Billing and Payment
- 5.2 Appeal Process
- 5.3 Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
- 5.4 Serious Occurrence Reporting
- 5.5 Duty to Report

5.1 Billing and Payment

Each Operator must complete and submit a web-based attendance schedule by noon on the 7th business day following the month in question. In particular, the Operator must verify and/or amend the attendance information for all children who have been approved for a fee subsidy.

Subsidy will be paid by Bruce County Children's Services at the approved rate, for each child less the parental contribution. It is the responsibility of each Operator to collect from the parent, the amount of the parental contribution stipulated in the Fee Subsidy Approval letter.

All questions related to discrepancies in the amount of the fee subsidy payment should be directed to the appropriate Child Care Caseworker or the Children's Services Program Assistant at **519-881-0431** or toll free at **1-800-265-3005**.

5.2 Appeal Process

If an Operator disagrees with a decision that has been made by Bruce County staff, the Operator is encouraged to raise the issue with the appropriate Supervisor. If the Operator is not satisfied with the results, they can speak with the Children's Services Manager who will review the Supervisor's decision. If the Operator is not satisfied with the outcome of the Manager's review, then they may appeal to the Director of Human Services.

5.3 Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

All staff and volunteers are expected to comply with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice adopted by the College of Early Childhood Educators. These reflect a core set of beliefs and values of care, respect, trust and integrity.

The Code of Ethics are as follows:

- 1 Responsibilities to Children
- 2 Responsibilities to Families
- 3 Responsibilities to Colleges & the Profession
- 4 Responsibilities to Community & Public

The Standards of Practice are:

- Caring and Responsive Relationships
- Curriculum and Pedagogy
- Safety, Health and Well-Being in the Learning Environments
- Professionalism and Leadership
- Professional Boundaries, Dual Relationships and Conflicts of Interest
- Confidentiality, Release of Information and Duty to Report

For more information visit: www.college-ece.ca

5.4 Serious Occurrence Reporting

The Operator is required to report all serious occurrences (as defined by the Ministry of Education), to the Child Care Licensing System within 24 hours of becoming aware of the serious occurrence. If the Operator is unable to submit the report within 24 hours, the Operator's Program Advisor should be contacted immediately.

The Child Care Licensing System – Reference Guide for Applicants/Licensees, provides further details on reporting, revising, updating and searching for serious occurrence reports.

www.earlyyears.edu.gov.on.ca/prodconsum/groups/csc/@eyp/@admo/documents/eyp_documents/prdroo8180.pdf

If the Operator is situated outside of Bruce County, they must notify Bruce County of the serious occurrence. If the Operator is situated within Bruce County, the County will be automatically notified of the serious occurrence.

5.5 Duty to Report

If a person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, that person has an obligation to report promptly to the Children's Aid Society (CAS).

Providers do not need to be sure that a child is or may be in need of protection to make a report. "Reasonable grounds" are what an average person, given his or her training, background and experience, using normal and honest judgement would suspect.

The person who has the reasonable grounds to suspect a child is or may be in need of protection must make the report directly to the Children's Aid Society (CAS). The person must not rely on anyone else to report on his/her behalf. Home visitors or the program supervisor will support providers through the reporting process as requested.

The Child and Family Services Act recognizes that each of us has a responsibility for the welfare of children. It states clearly that members of the public including professionals who work with children, have an obligation to report promptly to the Children's Aid Society if they suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection.

Call Bruce Grey Child and Family Services to report or discuss any concerns at **1-855-322-4453** or visit their website at **www.bgcfs.ca**.

Any Professional or official who fails to report a suspicion that a child is or may be in need of protection where the information is obtained in the course of his or her professional or official duties is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$1,000.

For more information visit:

www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx

Resources



- 6.1 Special Needs Resource Program
- 6.2 EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- 6.3 Quality Scan Tool (QST) and Liaison
- 6.4 Journey Through the Ages and Stages
- 6.5 Bruce County Children's Services

6.1 Special Needs Resource Program

The Special Needs Resource Program provides service and support for children under 13 years of age that reside in Bruce County and attend a licensed child care setting, EarlyON programs, camps and children's recreation programs.

The Resource Program is a voluntary program with no cost to parents/caregivers. Resource Consultants also help to link families with community supports and services and assist in planning for a seamless transition to school.

Screening tools are used by our Resource Consultants to assess your child's development. Your child may qualify for support if they are demonstrating difficulties in any of the following areas:

Gross Motor: Balance, climbing and eye/hand co-ordination

- Fine Motor: Picking up objects, drawing and using scissors
- Expressive/Receptive Language: Talking, listening and understanding words
- Self-help: Feeding, dressing, grooming, toileting
- Cognitive: Thinking, matching, colours
- Social Skills/Behaviour: Play skills, attention and group participation

The Resource Consultants

The Resource Consultants identify core team members to develop an Individualized Support Plan and inclusive programming that builds on the child's strengths and needs. The Plan sets out both the priorities to be addressed and the types of resources and supports required. Individualized Support Plans are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the outcomes are achieved and revised as necessary.

The primary functions of the Resource Consultants are:

- To providing hands-on intervention and consultation with the children and their families
- To support and work closely with the child care centres suggesting program adaptation strategies and facilitating learning through the provision of professional learning opportunities and the sharing of resources
- To provide referrals to community agencies
- To support children and their families throughout the transition to school process utilizing the Grey Bruce model for Preschool to School Transitions

6.2 EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON Centres offer families/caregivers with children prenatal through 6 years a range of free core services that can assist them in their parenting or caregiving role as well as provide a safe environment where children can experience a variety of learning activities and practice newfound skills. The four foundations of the Ministry of Education's *How Does Learning Happen?* document guides planning for Bruce County EarlyON programs. Activities provided for the children include creative experiences, science and math experiences, circle time, activities that promote literacy and experiences that promote social and emotional development. The environment is well-equipped with age appropriate materials and furnishings that contribute to the overall learning experience.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres welcome all families to participate in quality programs that:

- help strengthen adult-child relationships
- support parent education
- foster healthy child development

Registered Early Childhood Educators and a variety of guest professionals can help families and caregivers find support, get advice, make personal connections and access a network of resources.

www.brucecounty.on.ca/human-services/earlyon

6.3 Quality Scan Tool (QST) and Liaison

QST

The QST launched in 2018 in recognition of the need to support high-quality child care in Bruce County. *How Does Learning Happen?* states, “Studies show that children who attend high-quality child care are happier, less anxious and more motivated to learn, providing a foundation for a brighter future.” The QST is a tool to help support child care programs on the journey to increased quality, inclusivity and positive environments.

- Completed at a minimum annually and rescanned additionally (upon request) in collaboration with Child Care Supervisor, Liaison and Early Learning Coordinator to gain a deeper understanding of successes and challenges within the centre
- Completed through observations and information gathered from conversations between the supervisors and the educators
- Measurable goals set to increase quality based on outcomes
- If the County of Bruce receives funding from the Ministry of Education and budgeting allows, child care operators may apply for funding to support licensing requirements and quality care. Funding will be approved based on connections to goals set through the QST

Liaison

The liaison’s role is to offer support in relation to programming needs within the centre to bridge and support with *How Does Learning Happen?*. Liaisons empower educators to engage in collaborative inquiry as they test theories, question practices, share knowledge and critically reflect on program outcomes.

- Monitoring the programs progress with the QST goals through monthly on-site visits and ongoing consultations and visits

6.4 Journey Through the Ages and Stages

What is Bruce County's Journey Through the Ages and Stages?

- Bruce County's Journey Through the Ages and Stages uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to help parents and caregivers explore the developmental progress of children.
- It also allows the child care and early years system in Bruce County to be more proactive in planning and supporting the learning, development and well-being of children in Bruce County.

What are the goals of the Journey Through the Ages and Stages?

- Parents and caregivers will be more informed of the developmental needs of their child(ren) earlier and throughout their child's development.
- Families will have access to services that support their child's journey in learning.
- Aggregate data from the ASQ will help the child care and early years community plan and implement programs that support the needs of the children in Bruce County.

What is the Child Care Operator's Role in this initiative?

Bruce County Children's Services Team will provide Licensed Child Care Providers with ASQ packages to distribute to families within their programs. These packages will contain an information letter for families about the initiative, a Question and Answers document that provides additional information and the age appropriate ASQ's for each of their children.

If families choose to participate in our Journey Through the Ages and Stages initiative by completing the ASQ questionnaires for their child/ children, they can return the questionnaires to their Licensed Child Care Provider for pick-up by a member of the Children Services Team.

The Children Services Team will review each ASQ and if a child requires additional support, connections with the family will be made within 4-6 weeks.

Note: Information about children and families will only be shared with written consent from parents or legal guardians.

6.5 Bruce County Children's Services

If at any time an operator has any questions, concerns and or inquires, they are encouraged to reach out to Bruce County Children's Services.

Your dedication and desire to provide quality care for children is much appreciated. The Bruce County Children's Services Team is here to support you in all aspects.



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BRUCE county

Be an explorer.

Bruce County
Children's Services Division
30 Park Street Walkerton, ON NoG 2Vo

Toll free: 1-800-265-3005
Local: 519-881-0431
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childcare@brucecounty.on.ca

brucecounty.on.ca/childrens-services