




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	July 28, 2023
SUBJECT:	Supporting Families and the Early Years Community (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Jessica Chase Director, Children's, and Community Services Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

The Children's and Community Services Division is committed to creating a high quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive licensed child care system in Hamilton. Currently families pay an average of \$22.95/day to access licensed before and after child care for their school age children (ages 6 to 12). Rates also range from \$20.00 to \$30.65/day depending on the licensed child care operator.

To support equitable access across the system and school boards and to address child care affordability, a standardized rate of \$15/day will be charged to families for school age children participating in before and after school care. These changes will take effect September 5, 2023. Funding will be provided to licensed child care operators to support their operating costs and to offset lost revenue from the reduced fees. This is a pilot program that will remain in effect until June 28, 2024. Divisional staff worked closely with school board representatives and child care operators in schools to implement this strategy.

Families accessing licensed before and after school age care for their kindergarten age child will continue to benefit from the 52.75% fee reduction under the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement.

To address recruitment and retention challenges facing the child care and early years sector and retain Early Childhood Educators and program staff who work directly with children, a workforce grant will be offered to support the full costs of child care for their children aged 0-12 years. Applications will start on July 25th through the online

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

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[application](#). To be eligible, applicants will be required to submit identification and a letter to confirm employment as an Early Childhood Educator or program staff working directly with children. In addition, the applicant's child care provider must have a full funding agreement with the City of Hamilton and be participating in the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

This is a re-launch of a previous pilot program that will go into effect August 1, 2023, until June 28, 2024. The workforce grant is being re-launched based on the evaluation from the previous pilot implemented August 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023. Participants provided feedback to the City of Hamilton on the initial pilot, indicating the workforce grant helped to relieve financial stress, supported the well-being of families, and reduced household expense/debt. Participants also highlighted they felt valued and respected as a professional, which in turn has both inspired and committed them to stay in their career. In addition to these benefits, approximately 19% shifted their children from unlicensed to licensed care.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Jessica Chase, Director, Children's & Community Services at Jessica.Chase@hamilton.ca or (905) 546-2424 ext. 3590.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED: N/A