

**Child Care Wage Enhancement/Home Child Care Enhancement Grant**  
**Questions and Answers**

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**ACRONYMS & COMMON TERMS**

- CCEYA: Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014
- CMSM: Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (Lanark County Children’s Services Manger)
- HCCEG: home child care enhancement grant
- Ministry: Province of Ontario, Ministry of Education
- RECE: registered early childhood educators
- WEG: wage enhancement grant



## GENERAL

### **Q1. What is the wage enhancement/home child care enhancement grant initiative?**

- A. Wage enhancement funding will benefit low-income child care program staff in the sector, help retain RECEs, and support access to stable, high-quality child care programs for children in Ontario. The enhancement will also help close the wage gap between RECEs working in full-day kindergarten programs and RECEs/child care professionals in licensed child care settings.

In order to meet these goals, the wage enhancement initiative is intended to be an ongoing investment.

### **Q2. How much is the wage enhancement?**

- A. WEG funding will support an increase of up to \$2 per hour, plus 17.5 per cent benefits for Centre based staff. In addition, the HCCEG will support an increase of up to \$20 per day for home child care providers.

### **Q3. What is the supplemental grant and what can it be used for?**

- A. In addition to WEG and HCCEG funding, the Ministry will provide a supplemental grant for operators, equal to \$150 for each eligible centre based FTE and home visitor FTE and \$50 for each eligible home child care provider. This grant will be automatically calculated on the application forms, based on the information provided by operators.

The supplemental grant must be used to support staff, home visitors and providers' hourly/daily wage or benefits, and provides operators with the flexibility to cover salary shortfalls due to increased hours or staffing, and additional benefits (e.g. additional time in program, new staff or providers, vacation days, sick days or PD days and/or other benefits) once mandatory benefits are covered. Any funding that is not used for these purposes will be recovered.

Operators can contact Lanark County Children's Services with any further questions on how to use the supplemental grant.



## ELIGIBILITY

### Q4. Which child care staff are eligible for wage enhancement funding?

- A. To be eligible to receive WEG RECEs, home visitors, and other child care program staff must be:
- Employed in a licensed child care centre or home child care agency;
  - Have an associated base wage of less than the hourly wage stated in the current year Ministry Funding Guidelines, excluding their previous year wage enhancement; and
  - Categorized as a child care supervisor, RECE, home child care visitor, or can be otherwise counted toward adult to child ratios under the CCEYA.

Supplementary program staff positions that are in place to maintain lower adult- child ratios than required under the CCEYA are also eligible for WEG.

### Q5. What are the HCCEG eligibility requirements for home child care providers?

- A. In order to be eligible to receive HCCEG, home child care providers must:
- Hold a contract with a licensed home child care agency; and
  - Provide services to one child or more (excluding provider's own children).

To be eligible to receive the **full HCCEG of \$20 per day**, home child care providers must:

- Provide on average **full-time services** (6 hours or more hours); and
- Receive \$20 less than the stated cap in the current year Ministry Funding Guidelines, per day in base fees excluding their previous year HCCEG.

Home child care providers are eligible for a partial HCCEG of \$10 per day if on average they provide **part-time services** (less than 6 hours) and receive \$10 less than the partial day cap per day as stated in the current year Ministry Funding Guidelines in base fees excluding their previous year HCCEG.

If at any point a home child care provider stops serving children or earns more than the cap, the home child care agency must terminate the transfer of HCCEG funds to the provider.

### Q6. Are non-program staff (e.g. cook, custodial staff, and administrator) eligible for wage enhancement?

- A. Non-program staff positions may be eligible for wage enhancement funding where at least 25 per cent of the non-program staff position is used to support CCEYA ratio requirements. In these instances, the enhancement will be provided for the time in program.



**Q7. Are Resource Teachers/consultants or supplemental staff employed to support the integration of children with special needs eligible for wage enhancement funding?**

- A. Resource Teachers/consultants or staff employed to support the integration of children with special needs are not eligible for wage enhancement funding as their positions may not be counted toward the required ratio of employees to children in regulated child care programs. In addition, Resource Teachers/consultants are typically hired through an agency and are not employed directly by licensed child care programs, and therefore are not eligible for wage enhancement.

The only exception to this provision is if the position is employed by a licensed child care program and at least 25 per cent of the position is used to support ratio requirements. In this case, the staff could be eligible for wage enhancement for the hours worked in the child care program supporting ratio.

**Q8. Will wage enhancement funding be available to RECEs and other program staff employed by family support programs?**

- A. Wage enhancement funding is only available to child care professionals employed in licensed child care programs. At this time, there is no commitment for wage enhancement funding to be extended to staff in family support programs.

**Q9. What if a Supervisor only spends 25 per cent of their time working directly with children? Does that mean they are only eligible for 25 per cent of the wage enhancement?**

- A. Supervisors are required under the CCEYA, and are therefore eligible to receive the wage enhancement for 100 per cent of the time they are working in a licensed child care program, regardless of the amount of time they are working directly with children, provided they earn less than the cap.

**Q10. Can a child care operator provide WEG/HCCFG to current eligible positions or can it only be provided to eligible positions that existed last year?**

- A. Operators pay WEG/HCCFG to current eligible positions and providers for their hours or days worked in the current year.

**Q11. Why is funding based on the hours worked in the previous year?**

- A. Basing the funding on the hours worked in the previous year will help to estimate the amount of funding you will need for the current year. Child care operations are fairly stable year to year so this estimating process works well. In years when there is planned expansion, the operator should include anticipatory positions and estimate hours and wages in the application.



## **OPERATORS**

### **Q12. Why am I responsible for applying for funding on behalf of my staff?**

- A. WEG is paid out based on hours worked in the current year and should appear on eligible employee's paycheques. Since you process paycheques, the money is given to you to distribute to staff throughout the year based on actual hours worked. You receive administration funding to support the cost to your business to distribute funds to staff.

### **Q13. Is funding available to operators to support administration costs associated with implementing the wage enhancement initiative?**

- A. Yes, this allocation is to be used to fund the administrative effort associated with implementing the WEG/HCCCEG. CMSMs are required to provide administration funding to operators to support implementing WEG/HCCCEG.

### **Q14. Do I need to re-apply for funding every year?**

- A. Yes, WEG/HCCCEG funding entitlement is allocated to operators based on the hours worked in qualifying positions for the prior year. In the case of home child care providers, the HCCCEG entitlement is allocated to home child care agencies based on the actual number of days worked in the prior year. This means that operators will be required to apply for funding every year to update this information.

### **Q15. I missed the application deadline. Can I request an extension?**

- A. Unfortunately, there are no extensions for the provision of WEG and HCCCEG. You can apply for funding next year.

### **Q16. I am having difficulty completing the application, who can help me?**

- A. Please contact Lanark County Children's Services Clerk for support. Contact information can be found on the website where you downloaded your application and on the instruction page of the application.

### **Q17. If my licensed child care program opened after January of last year, will my staff still receive a full years wage enhancement for this year?**

- A. Yes, the WEG/HCCCEG application form which calculates entitlement takes into account centres and home child care agencies that started operation during last year by asking operators to estimate hours to be worked by eligible positions for a full year.



**Q18. How will Lanark County provide WEG/HCCEG funding to child care operators?**

- A. Operators must apply by the deadline set by Lanark County. The Lanark County will review the application form and assess whether the operator qualifies for the WEG or HCCEG.

Child care operators will enter into an agreement with Lanark County to receive WEG/HCCEG. If an operator has an existing purchase of service agreement, WEG/HCCEG funding can be added to it. Lanark County determines the timing of how funds are flowed to operators under these agreements. However, this timing should allow for operators to include WEG/HCCEG as part of regular payments where possible.

**Q19. Can the operator/agency decide when to give WEG/HCCEG funding to the eligible staff/providers?**

- A. Operators are expected to provide WEG/HCCEG on regular paycheques. Lump sum payments to eligible staff or providers is acceptable to back pay for hours/days already worked in the current year when you receive your funding allocation.

Operators must clearly indicate on staff paycheques and home child care provider fee transfers the portion of funding that is being provided through the wage enhancement/HCCEG labeled as follows:

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

**Q20. What benefits are included as part of the 17.5 per cent for employer- related benefits?**

- A. The following is a breakdown of the statutory benefits included in the 17.5%:

Statutory Contributions	Child Care
Canada Pension Plan (CPP), max \$52,500	4.95%
Employment Insurance (EI), max \$48,600	2.63%
Workers Safety Insurance Board (WSIB)	1.10%
Employer Health Tax (EHT)	1.23%
Vacation Pay	4.00%
Public Holiday Pay	3.59%
Total	17.50%



**Q21. My centre provides benefits at a rate higher than 17.5 percent. If I apply for the wage enhancement funding am I taking on a financial pressure for the benefits I provide over 17.5 per cent? Is there additional funding to support this cost?**

A. Operators will be provided with a supplemental grant to support shortfalls related to wage enhancement. The funding can be used to provide wage enhancement for additional days/hours worked, sick time, off site professional development days, and/or additional benefits.

**Q22. As a child care operator, what impact does wage enhancement have on my historical Pay Equity obligations?**

A. WEG funding must be provided in addition to pay equity payments agreed to under the pay equity memorandum of settlement.

**Q23. Does WEG funding replace the funding that my program receives from the municipality to pay for staff wages?**

A. No, wage enhancement funding is a separate investment and will be provided in addition to other funding sources, where applicable.

**Q24. What if an operator closes during the current year, will the staff or home child care providers receive WEG/HCCEG payments?**

A. The ministry outlines wage enhancement accountability measures in the Ontario Service Management and Funding Guideline. If a centre or agency that applied for WEG/HCCEG closes, CMSMs are to work with the operator to meet the accountability requirements and support payments to eligible staff and/or home child care providers for hours worked before the closure. Any unused funds would be recovered.



## **CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS**

### **Q25. How do I know that my centre/agency will apply?**

- A. You can ask your Centre or Agency if they plan to or have applied.

### **Q26. How do I know that my centre/agency will give me 100 per cent of my WEG/HCCCEG?**

- A. Operators must clearly indicate on staff paycheques and home child care provider fee transfers, the portion of funding that is being provided through the WEG/HCCCEG, labeled as follows:
- Provincial child care wage enhancement
  - Provincial home child care enhancement grant

Additionally, child care centres and participating home child care agencies are required to attest to their local municipality that they have provided 100 per cent of WEG/HCCCEG funding directly to eligible child care staff/home care providers.

Child care professionals should direct any concerns they have regarding an operator's use of WEG/HCCCEG funding to their CMSM.

### **Q27. Who do I contact if I have concerns about this funding such as how it is being used?**

- A. Inquiries can be directed to Lanark County Children's Services Manager or Clerk.

### **Q28. What happens if my operator does not apply for the funding?**

- A. The operator application process will be posted to Lanark County's website for a minimum of 30 days. Any operator who has not submitted an application for the WEG or HCCCEG by the deadline identified will not be allocated WEG or HCCCEG funding for the current year. Operators who miss the application deadline may apply for WEG or HCCCEG funding in the following year.

### **Q29. If the operator of my child care program does not apply for WEG/HCCCEG funding, what is my recourse?**

- A. To help encourage your operator to apply for WEG/HCCCEG, you may wish to gather information on the funding from your local CMSMs website and share that information with your operator. If they have further questions have them contact Lanark County's Children's Services Manager.



**Q30. I am entitled to a raise this year based on my centre's salary grid. Will I still receive WEG?**

- A. Provided that your base hourly wage does not exceed the cap set by the Ministry in their funding guidelines, yes, you will continue to receive WEG.

**Q31. If I pursue employment with a different child care centre, will the wage enhancement amount follow me to the new child care centre?**

- A. WEG funding does not follow individual staff, but stays with the original licensed program. The WEG entitlement for an operator is based on eligible positions that existed in the previous year. If your new position is an eligible position in the new child care centre, and the operator has applied for funding, then you should receive the WEG at your new place of employment.

Operators may also exercise some flexibility to provide newly created positions with wage enhancement in the year they are created.

**Q32. I am a licensed home child care provider who was not working with an agency last year, but recently joined a home child care agency; can I receive HCCEG this year?**

- A. Agencies have the flexibility to provide HCCEG to newly contracted home child care providers as long as they meet the eligibility criteria and funding is available. The criteria to pay new home child care providers is set by each agency, please contact your agency for details.

**Q33. I am an RECE working in a position that is eligible for wage enhancement, my operator has applied for funding, but I am beginning parental leave this year. Will I be eligible for the wage enhancement?**

- A. WEG funding is provided for positions rather than individuals. This means that there will be a full year of WEG funding available for your position.

If the operator is approved for the WEG funding, they would pay you for the hours worked in the eligible position for the actual hours you worked prior to your parental leave.

