

# June 2025 Directed Growth Update

Ontario's vision for the CWELCC system is that more families in Ontario have access to high quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live. Under the CWELCC agreement with the Government of Canada, Ontario has been funded to support the creation of 86,000 new licensed child care spaces (relative to 2019) by December 2026. Since 2019, 33,000 new spaces have become operational, with another 53,000 spaces to be created.

## Principles for Access

The ministry's CWELCC space allocation approach will support child care access as follows:

### 1. Access Equity:

CMSMs and DSSABs will be allocated CWELCC spaces for children age 0-5 improving access across the province to bring the provincial average access rate to 37% by 2026.

### 2. Directed Growth to support Underserved and Vulnerable Populations:

The province will allocate to each SSM a target number of CWELCC spaces that will be determined based on a formula that takes into consideration socio-economic indicators to support child care for underserved and vulnerable populations.

### 3. Francophone Spaces:

Meet or exceed the proportion of French language spaces for ages 0 to 5, proportional to the population of Francophone people in Ontario.



## ACCESS & INCLUSION

Under the Access and Inclusion Framework, the ministry has developed a model to allocate funding for new spaces for children age 0-5 across CMSMs and DSSABs, with a focus on improving equity of access by working toward a common provincial access ratio of 37%. The allocation model is based on available data and incorporates existing child care capacity, demographics, socio-economic indicators, official language minorities and capacity for growth, and provides the enclosed notional space targets in each CMSM or DSSAB for the period 2022 through 2026. Total space targets include spaces to be created in schools and those in communities. These notional targets are subject to the agreement with service system managers and ongoing monitoring.

In identifying priority neighbourhoods for space creation and updating service plans, CMSMs and DSSABs are asked to consider the degree to which new affordable child care spaces in those neighbourhoods will support access to licensed child care spaces for:

- Low-income families
- Vulnerable communities
- Diverse communities
- Children with special needs
- Francophone families
- Indigenous families
- Families needing more flexible models of care, including evening, weekend, and overnight care.

CMSMs and DSSABs have been provided with school-based space creation targets in line with the ministry's capital planning and are asked to work together with school boards on the planning and timing of these spaces, as well as ensuring that licensees occupying purpose-built child care spaces in schools are funded as part of the CWELCC system.

### *DIRECTED GROWTH*

*“Directed Growth” means the province’s plan to target child care space growth to areas of high need. In alignment with the Province’s CWELCC Access and Inclusion Framework to support better access to child care for communities that have traditionally faced barriers, CMSMs/DSSABs have an approved target number of new spaces to create, supported by CWELCC funds*

## DIRECTED GROWTH 2022 – 2026

The DSSAB's growth plan includes support for child care operators to enhance access for various groups, including low-income families, vulnerable children, those with special needs, diverse communities, Indigenous and Francophone families, newcomers, and those requiring more flexible care models. The DSSAB strives to create 128 new licensed child care spaces by March 2026, including 25 spaces in schools and 103 community-based spaces (centre and home child care). In 2022, the DSSAB conducted a survey with child care operators to assess their waitlist needs and compared the results with a previous child care scan from 2019. The findings from 2019 were consistent with those from 2022, indicating that the Town of Parry Sound, North East Parry Sound, and West Parry Sound required additional child care spaces.

# RECALIBRATION 2025

In early 2025, the ministry of Education completed a recalibration exercise. The recalibration was based on information submitted by CMSMs/DSSABs in October 2024. The recalibration exercise resulted in adjusted auspice targets by CMSM/DSSAB to support Ontario in achieving the overall space creation target of 86,000 spaces while working towards the 70% (or higher) proportion of not-for-profit licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 5 by the end of the current CWELCC Agreement. During the recalibration process, the District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration board had a reduction of **3 spaces** overall. The current **access ratio** in the district is approximately **30%**.

## TARGETED SPACES

**CWELCC Space Targets by Setting – Revised 2023** The table below shows the total number of child care spaces created each year from 2022 to 2026. The data is broken down into school-based spaces and community-based spaces. Most of the spaces are community-based, with only 25 school-based spaces created in 2024.

Total Spaces 131					School – Based Spaces 25					Community-Based Spaces 106				
2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
1	16	55	28	31	0	0	25	0	0	1	16	30	28	31

**Revised CWELCC Space Targets by Setting – May 2025** This table provides the revised targets for the creation of child care spaces from 2024 to 2026, following a recalibration exercise. (\*recalibration exercise only included a 3-year time frame of 2024-2026)

Total Spaces 119			School – Based Spaces 25			Community-Based Spaces 94		
2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026
56	25	38	0	25	0	56	0	38

### Achievements as of March 2025

This table outlines the achievements in creating new child care spaces as of March 2025. It includes the number of spaces approved, committed, and pending each year.

Year	Action	Details	Number of Spaces
2022	Approved	1 new space to an existing program	1
2023	Committed	Addition of 8 new spaces to an existing program to expand by 2025	8
2024	Approved	Addition of 2 home child care providers, creating 12 new spaces	12
2024	Approved	New licensed child care provider, creating 26 new spaces	26
2024	Approved	Addition of 13 new spaces to an existing provider to provide after school	13
2025	Committed	Addition of 25 new spaces to an existing provider– school based	25
2025/2026	Pending	Expression of interest with the addition of 30 new centre-based spaces	30
		Additional spaces to promote expansion with Home Child Care Program	13