

# Growing Better Together

## Child Care Space Expansion

### Our Ask

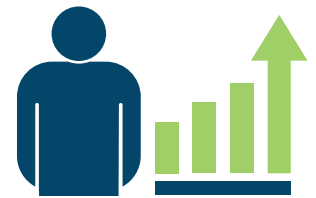
**That the Province invest in the compensation and wages of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and commit to continuously reviewing and updating Niagara Region's child care expansion targets to respond to community need.**

### Why is this Important?

Niagara Region has one of the highest enrolment rates for Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC). As CWELCC improves affordability for families and Niagara's population continues to grow, the demand for licensed child care will increase requiring a larger RECE workforce and greater child care space allocation.

### Aligning with Provincial Priorities

The Province has committed to creating 86,000 new licensed child care spaces by 2026, including targeted CWELCC expansion to diverse and underserved populations. Without further attraction and retention of RECEs, there will be an estimated workforce shortage of 8,500 by 2026. Ensuring municipalities have access to a qualified RECE workforce and allocating child care spaces reflective of community need will support the Province in successfully implementing the national child care program across Ontario.



**694,000**

Projected population

43% increase

**236**

Additional RECEs are estimated to be needed in Niagara

to ensure current centre-based care can operate at 90%



Estimated workforce shortage of

**8,500 RECEs**

across Ontario by 2026

## Our Opportunity

- As the Ministry of Education develops a province-wide strategy to address sector workforce challenges, there is an opportunity to introduce a recruitment and retention strategy that would support the expansion of the licensed child care system
- Providing RECEs with a liveable wage, which child care experts and advocates argue should be \$30 per hour, will support the successful implementation of the national child care plan
- Niagara Region has identified 12 priority communities for targeted CWELCC expansion to support low-income families, vulnerable and diverse communities, children with special needs, Francophone families, Indigenous families and families requiring flexible care

## Our Challenges

- In Ontario, only 55 per cent of RECEs registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators work in child care, with many finding opportunities in other professions
- As of March 31, 2023, the centre-based child care system in Niagara is operating at approximately 64 per cent of its licensed capacity
- To achieve 90 per cent capacity, it is estimated that an additional 236 RECEs are needed, not including any additional staff required to cover breaks and supply staff that are typically required to offset sick days and vacation
- Niagara Region has been allocated 4,067 spaces for CWELCC expansion
- While this is a welcomed investment, approximately 1,200 additional child care spaces are required by 2026 to adequately service Niagara's priority communities
- Further, to meet this expansion target, additional RECEs will be required

## The Impact

- Accessible, affordable, quality licensed child care supports the economy, advances early learning in children and can even reduce poverty in lower income families
- There is also clear evidence of a connection between access to affordable, high-quality child care and labour force participation by women
- By working with municipal partners to ensure licensed child care centres have the resources required to operate at a higher capacity, the Province will be supporting workforce participation and early childhood learning



Approximately  
**7,192**  
CWELCC eligible  
children  
need licensed child  
care in Niagara  
June 2022



Average Wages  
**\$23.46/hour**  
Licensed child care  
centre in Niagara  
VS.  
**\$27.75/hour**  
RECEs employed  
with local  
school boards  
2022

## Contact Information

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Let's create a sustainable child care system that can meet current and future community need. Let's Grow Better, Together.