

IMPLEMENTING THE SEAMLESS DAY MODEL

A Comprehensive Guide for School Board Extended-day Programs



building blocks
for
child care



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Centre

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
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FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

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This manual was developed by the Waterloo Region District School Board in collaboration with Building Blocks for Child Care and the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at OISE, University of Toronto.



Waterloo Region District School Board

Webpage: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/beforeafter/>



Buliding Blocks for Child Care (B2C2)

Webpage: <https://b2c2.ca/>



Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development

Webpage: <https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson>

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GLOSSARY

Although both education and child care fall under provincial jurisdiction and the oversight of the Ministry of Education, the two sectors often use different terminology. For the purposes of this manual, we have deferred to the terms most commonly used in the education sector.

To support clarity across both sectors, we have included a glossary here.

Education Sector:

Education Act - Provincial school board legislation

Plan of care - Individual plan for students with medical or allergy conditions

Students - Children from JK to Grade 6 registered in extended-day programs

DECE - A Designated Early Childhood Educator is registered with the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators and assigned to work in Ontario's publicly funded school system, typically in full-day kindergarten and extended day programs.

EA - Educational Assistant

B.A.S.S. - Before- and After-school Support Staff (staff who are not registered with the College of ECEs)

Early Years Lead - Ministry-funded leadership position dedicated to early learning and child care

GLOSSARY

Extended-day program - Board operated before- and after-school program

SSM - Service System Managers are responsible for the local planning, and management of early years and child care services. Referred to as District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) in northern districts without upper-tier municipal government, or Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) in regions, with established municipal structures.

Child Care Sector:

Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) - Child Care legislation

Individual support plan - Individual plan for students with medical or allergy conditions

RECE - Registered Early Childhood Educator

ECA - Early Childhood Assistant

CWELCC - Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care plan is a federal initiative that provides funding to provinces and territories to reduce parent fees, and expand access to licensed child care for children 0-5 years old.

LTO - Long term occasional staff

Licensed program - A program licensed under the CCEYA to provide child care for infants to children up to 12 years old.

VIDEO SERIES

To complement this guide, we have developed a short video series featuring insights into the establishment of the extended-day model and the benefits it offers to children, families, the workforce, and communities.



https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSGnYVQOOQ2F53AycR7rh1U_TUmjUIQaZU

This video series was made possible through the support of Building Blocks for Child Care, Toronto Education Workers/CUPE 4400, and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers in collaboration with the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at OISE, University of Toronto.





BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Prior to 2010, early learning in Ontario was supported by a patchwork of child care and part-time Kindergarten with limited before and after care for school-aged children. Schools that offered before and after care were located in high-earning communities and had long waitlists. A province-wide shortage of Registered Early Childhood Educators, many of whom were scheduled in split-shift roles in before- and after-care programs, contributed to high staff turnover and a steady decline in available spaces and program closures.

In 2009, Charles Pascal released [With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario](#), providing best-practice recommendations to school boards to phase in full-day kindergarten for 4 and 5 years olds beginning in September 2010. The plan recommended board-operated, fee-based before and after care for families who need it. Charles Pascal's vision would leverage school board staff and infrastructure as a means to expand school-age child care and improve access across Ontario, especially in underserved neighbourhoods and for families facing barriers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Several school boards assessed the availability of school-age child care and determined that services were not accessible in communities that need it most. Ottawa Carleton District School Board, Toronto District School Board, Waterloo Public and Catholic District School Boards, and Halton District School Boards moved forward to successfully pilot the extended-day program to better support children and families. This work would not have been possible without the dedication and deep commitment of senior leaders, trustees, directors, and Service System Managers (SSMs) who worked together to figure it out and pave the way.

Drawing on the many lessons learned by school leaders, this guide outlines how to implement the extended-day program. Although this guide reflects the specific context of Ontario's early years service framework, it contains insights and approaches that may be adaptable for use in other provinces and territories exploring after-school provision.

THE BENEFITS OF THE SEAMLESS DAY MODEL

As highlighted throughout this guide, operating an extended-day program offers significant benefits for children, families, schools, and communities. Children thrive in high-quality early learning environments led by registered early childhood educators. Play-based programs provide rich opportunities for cooperative games, problem-solving, and social skill development, along with daily outdoor physical activity before and after school. Children with special needs also benefit from school board–operated programs, where accommodations, resources, and strategies are integrated seamlessly into their school day.

Families gain convenient access to school-age child care directly within their neighbourhood at their child’s school, supporting workforce participation—particularly for women—and strengthening the local economy. Extended-day programs also enhance school–family relationships by creating daily touchpoints at drop-off and pick-up, fostering a stronger sense of belonging and community.



THE BENEFITS OF THE SEAMLESS DAY MODEL

Communities as a whole benefit when services that promote the health and well-being of children and families are readily accessible. For this reason, school boards that have implemented the extended-day program report that the benefits to children, families, and programs expand over time.

Reflection:

1. How does participation in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) plan align with your board's mission, equity commitments, and long-term strategic priorities?
2. What would success look like for your board, your families, and your early years workforce five years from now if you fully leveraged the benefits of extended-day programs and the CWELCC plan?



EQUITY & ACCESS

Demand for child care is growing and new strategies are needed or families who are marginalized will be further disadvantaged. Ontario's [Early Years and Child Care Annual Report \(2025\)](#), notes a 32.1% increase in school-age care across the province. Many of those spaces are attributed to new schools, while existing schools are reporting a loss in before- and after-school spaces.

With challenges for third-party providers in sustaining school-age spaces, school boards are well positioned to step in and operate extended-day programs. It is recommended that school boards annually review the data on the availability of school-age child care in their schools. Although boards are not required to report on individual program closures to the Ministry, they are required to report on the availability of before-and after-school programs for all schools within their board every school year. Reporting requirements are found in the [Before and After School Programs Kindergarten to Grade 6: Policies and Guidelines for School Boards – Reporting to the Ministry](#) section.

EQUITY & ACCESS

With the implementation of full-day Kindergarten in Ontario, school boards gained new responsibilities for early learning. The Education Act was amended (2014) to provide direction to boards to offer extended-day programs:

Extended day or third party programs

259 (1) Subject to the regulations, policies and guidelines made under this Part, every board shall do one of the following in each elementary school of the board, on every school day, other than professional activity days, outside the time when junior kindergarten and kindergarten are operated in the school, for pupils of the board who are enrolled in junior kindergarten or kindergarten:

1. Operate an extended day program.
2. Ensure that a third party program is operated by a person or entity other than a board. 2011, c. 9, Sched. 10, s. 5.

([Education Act section 259](#))

EQUITY & ACCESS

School boards that implemented the extended-day model reported improved access to school-age child care spaces. See figure below.

FIGURE 1.0 Waterloo Region District School Board

Before & After School Care	2009 Prior to Board-operated Extended Day	2025 Board-operated Extended Day
Availability	< 9% of students	100% of elementary schools
Coverage	JK to Grade 2 - Limited spaces / long waiting lists	JK to Grade 6
Program Type	Traditional child care	Extended-day Programs

A modern education system integrates child care services for families and understands and values the impact that high-quality early learning programs have for children and the economy.

Determining if there is a need for a before- and after-school program involves establishing if there is enough interest and long-term viability to support it. Ministry of Education guidelines require school boards to offer a program in every elementary school serving Kindergarten to Grade 6 when sufficient demand exists.

EQUITY & ACCESS

How to assess the need

To measure interest, school boards provide every family with a questionnaire to determine program viability. Viability surveys look different for each board. School boards are required to report the survey findings annually to the Ministry of Education and share results with Service System Managers for child care need assessment and planning purposes.

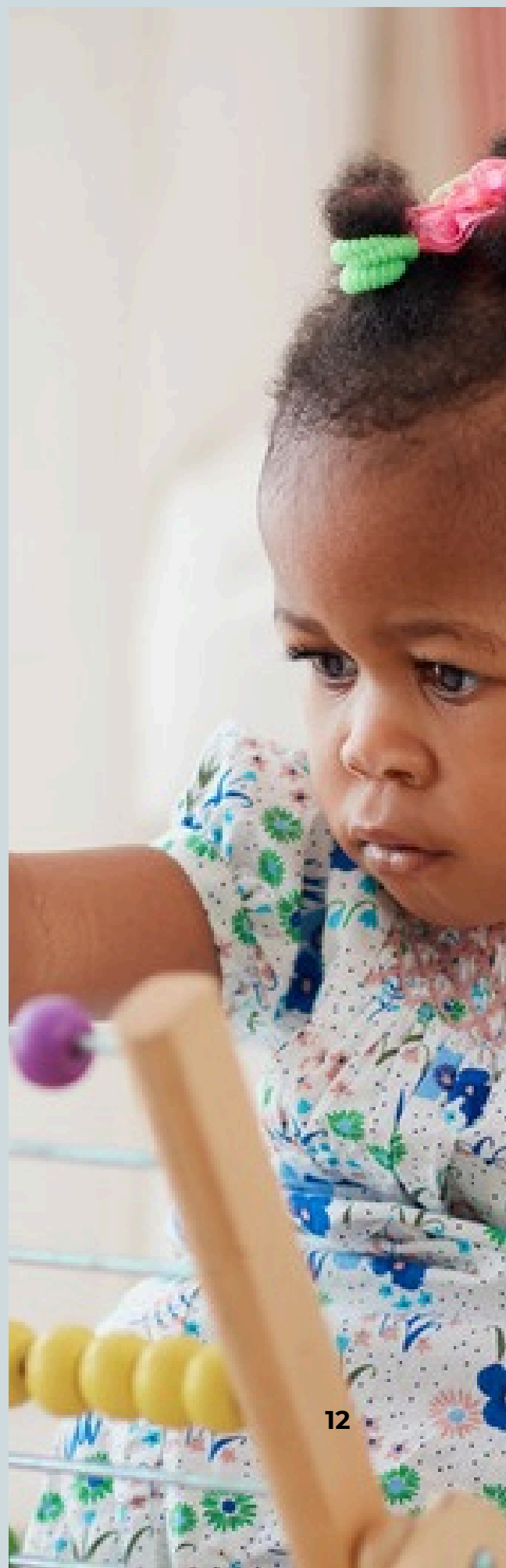
Reflection:

1. School boards are responsible for assessing the demand for services, collecting and reviewing data. What does the data say about who has access and who does not?
2. How can your board ensure that extended-day programs and CWELCC-supported spaces remove barriers for families?
3. What strategies could help your board better serve children with diverse needs, including those requiring accommodations or non-traditional hours?

AFFORDABILITY

School boards and families benefit from a system where extended-day programs are available in every school and programs are consistent for families (i.e., operating hours, fees, policies). School boards can enter into an agreement with the SSMs to ensure that extended-day programs are subsidy eligible for families who qualify. Currently, all board-operated programs have agreements in place that ensure programs are subsidy eligible to help make extended-day programs more affordable for eligible families. Regional children's service managers administer child care subsidies across the province and determine eligibility of both programs and families.

The CWELCC is a federal- and provincial-funded program that will see child care fees reduced to an average of \$10 a day by 2026 for children under the age of 6 years. In order to qualify for CWELCC funding, programs must be licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) and must be approved for CWELCC participation by the SSM. As of 2026, there are a limited number of new CWELCC spaces available in most municipalities. It is not yet known how many new CWELCC spaces will be available





AFFORDABILITY

starting in 2027. The limited number of new CWELCC spaces may mean that new Extended Day programs are not eligible to be approved for CWELCC participation. School boards should connect with their SSM to learn more about CWELCC expansion options in their community. Several school boards have undergone the process to license extended-day programs in order to offer the reduced CWELCC rate for families.

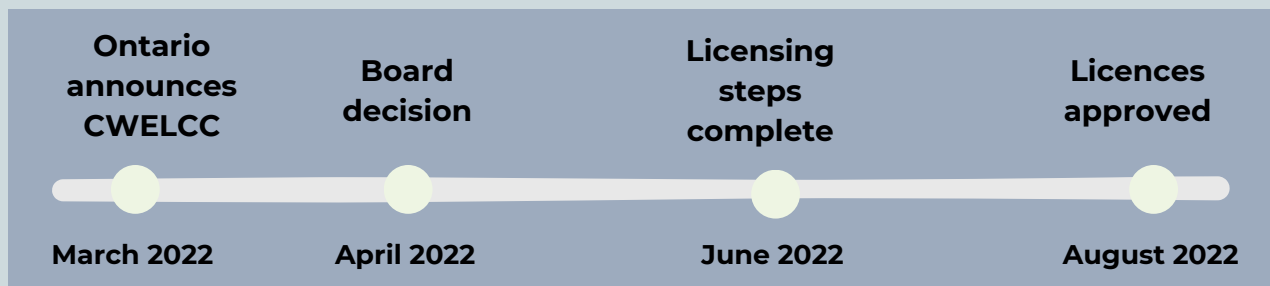
Canada and Ontario agree that the long-term vision and goals for a Canada-wide early learning and child care (ELCC) system will guide how funds are used. This shared vision includes ensuring that all families in Canada can access high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive ELCC services, regardless of where they live. Canada and Ontario aim to achieve the following:

- Reduce average parent fees for licensed ELCC by 50% by the end of 2022, and lower fees to an average of \$10 per day by the end of the 2025–26 fiscal year for children enrolled in the Canada-wide ELCC system.
- Expand the number of high-quality, affordable licensed child care spaces, with a primary focus on not-for-profit providers.
- Remove barriers that limit access to inclusive and flexible child care.
- Support and recognize the early childhood workforce by offering training and professional development opportunities.

AFFORDABILITY

Note: School boards that have licensed extended-day programs under the CCEYA were able to complete the licensing process within a reasonable timeframe (refer to Figure 2.0).

FIGURE 2.0 WRDSB timeline for licensing 75 schools



Reflection:

1. What opportunities exist within your schools and community to expand licensed, not-for-profit school-age child care spaces that align with the CWELCC's focus on quality, access, and affordability?



HIGH-QUALITY CARE

School board operated extended-day programs are led by qualified designated early childhood educators (DECEs) who deliver a play-based curriculum during before- and after-school hours. Programs operate in the school in a fully equipped Kindergarten classroom with familiar educators, reducing transitions for children.

How do educators support play-based learning in the extended-day program?

- Provide large blocks of time for both child-initiated and structured play; and
- Guide, shape, engage in, and extend play.
- Provide hands-on, concrete materials, tools, and equipment that encourage children to engage in different forms of play.
- Change materials to guide, shape, enhance, and extend the learning.
- Ask questions to expand and enhance play.
- Observe, engage, and document to make children's learning visible.

HIGH-QUALITY CARE

DECEs benefit from working within the school board, where positions are full-time, unionized, include benefits such as pension plan, medical and dental benefits and part of the public sector. This stability contributes to low staff turnover. Having consistent, qualified educators in place strengthens the overall quality of the program and has a positive impact on students.

Reflection:

1. How can your board ensure that extended-day programs and CWELCC-supported spaces remove barriers for families?
2. What strategies could help your board better serve children with diverse needs, including those requiring accommodations or non-traditional hours?

WORKING TOGETHER

Schools and extended-day programs work in partnership to provide seamless, high-quality programs for children throughout the day. As such, school principals, classroom teachers, and extended-day educators work together to ensure that shared space is available on an ongoing basis to provide consistent and seamless learning and care environments for children. This requires regular and consistent communication and cooperation amongst and between all partners. Schools play a key role in the support and growth of before- and after-school programs by providing a safe, high-quality environment for children immediately before and after regular school hours.

PLANNING EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAMS

Principals and Supervisors of Extended-day Programs

- Ensure that all spaces, including alternate spaces that will be used by extended-day programs are licensed. Plan for the location of a fridge — if the program will provide snacks.
- Set a meeting with school staff prior to the beginning of the school year to discuss expectations for sharing space and working together in partnership.





WORKING TOGETHER

- Notify school staff of the licensed space and program hours.
- Develop a schedule for use of shared space beyond the classroom.
- Establish a process for sharing critical information such as health and safety inspection reports, fire marshal reports, and/or serious occurrences.
- Review all relevant board policies and procedures that facilitate the safety of children and the sharing of information about children among the staff who work with them.
- Build and foster relationships by providing:
 - regular opportunities for staff working during the school hours and the extended day to share information;
 - opportunities for secretarial and custodial staff to meet with the principal and extended-day staff;
 - joint invitations to participate in School Council Meetings, Child Care Board of Directors, or Parent Engagement Committee meetings and;
 - regular principal and extended-day staff meetings to provide updates that may impact either program staff.

Extended-day and School Staff (Principals and/or Educators)

- Establish a communication protocol for inclement weather/emergency school closures.
- Develop a conflict management process that is clear to all staff sharing the space.
- Develop ongoing communication strategies to support all staff sharing the space (e.g., communication book, orientation checklist, advance notice of scheduling changes).



WORKING TOGETHER

- Prepare an information sheet to ensure supply RECE staff (extended-day) are aware of classroom/school expectations, especially with respect to transition procedures.
- Establish whether food will be served in the room or another area of the school (if applicable) in addition to related supervision and cleanup routines.
- Provide opportunities for information sharing from both the school and the extended-day program (e.g., in respective school and extended-day program newsletters, on websites, and posted on bulletin boards).
- Ensure exterior and interior signage is inclusive of both the school and the extended-day program.
- Schedule meetings to provide updates and discuss issues as needed.
- Establish strategies to notify the extended-day program in a timely manner when the program must be relocated to an alternate licensed space due to parent interviews or other school events.
- Consider sharing invitations to schools or extended-day program special events.
- Develop shared communication boards where information is posted for parents and caregivers.

Managers/Supervisors of Extended-day Programs

- Hold regular meetings with the local Child Care Operators Network.
- Conduct routine extended-day program on-site visits and facilitate meetings, as necessary.
- Communicate frequently via email and phone.



WORKING TOGETHER

- Mediate and serve as a liaison between parents and the program to address issues that arise with respect to child care arrangements.
 - Manage program hiring.
 - Ensure compliance with licensing requirements (CCEYA).
 - Participate in the development of extended-day program policies.
 - Participate in Public Health inspections and Licensing Inspections.
- Support/advocate for the program in their efforts to provide high-quality programs.

Extended-day Educators and Parents

- Maintain and follow communication protocols as outlined in the Parent Handbook Manuals.
- Address issues of concern as soon as possible.

Inclusive Programs

Children with special needs are welcome and supported in extended-day programs and programs must make every reasonable effort to support the individual needs of the child. On-going communication with the school administration and school staff is important to ensure continuity for the child, including sharing any safety plans, individual plans of care, with strategies and supports that are in place during core day hours should be reviewed and implemented in extended-day programs. Where possible, amend the plan of care template to include an “Extended Day” section with instructions for educators during before- and after-school hours.



WORKING TOGETHER

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Principals and Extended-day Educators and Supervisors

- Designate equipment, furniture, and materials and indoor/outdoor storage areas to be shared.
- Consider strategies to reduce unnecessary duplication in purchasing of equipment and furniture.
- Collaborate on outdoor learning space development, renewal, and design (e.g., a garden).
 - Ensure that visible play materials are available for children.
 - Place teacher personal belongings out of sight (e.g., in cupboards)

Educators

- Determine availability of space for display of children's work and parent/guardian information for both programs.
- Review availability of cubbies or places for children to put their belongings and share strategies to manage transitions.
- Determine strategies for managing materials so children can work on projects over an extended period of time.



WORKING TOGETHER

TRANSITIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND EXTENDED DAY

Principals and Extended-day Educators and Supervisors

- Develop schedules and routines outlining the transition between programs and rooms where necessary.
- Establish common expectations to ensure the school and classrooms are seen as shared space throughout the day.

Child Care and School Educators

- Develop transition routines that ensure smooth movement between child care and school for staff and children.
- Develop strategies for efficient set-up and clean-up routines for the incoming school or extended-day program.
- Reinforce common expectations to help all children develop a sense of responsibility and respect for classrooms, belongings, and each other throughout the day.



WORKING TOGETHER

PEDAGOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Principals and Extended-day Educators and Supervisors

- Work together to support opportunities for establishing a shared culture of reflective practice, including regular meeting times for shared learning/ professional dialogue and continuous professional learning.
- Create a space for relevant research and documents to be housed for shared staff access.
- Promote sharing of curriculum documents and relevant resources (e.g., Early Learning Framework, The Kindergarten Curriculum [2026], How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, operator's parent handbook).
- Include each other in professional learning opportunities whenever possible and as appropriate.
- Model a respectful and collaborative relationship in the best interest of students.

[Adapted from *York District Catholic School Board Operator Handbook*, 2023.]



PARTNERSHIPS

In Ontario, Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) are designated under the CCEYA, 2014 as SSMs. They are responsible for planning, overseeing, and coordinating child care services within their regions, including before- and after-school programs. Their role includes setting local priorities and balancing the needs of children and families while operating within the legislation, regulations, standards, and policies established by the ministry.

In addition, school boards are responsible for delivering before- and after-school programs. Under the Education Act, every school board must ensure that these programs are available in each elementary school for students in the primary and/or junior divisions (i.e., Kindergarten to Grade 6), provided there is sufficient demand and the program is viable.

It is critical for school boards to engage early in the planning stages with their local SSM to discuss implementation of an extended-day program in their region. SSMs will work with school boards to identify priority neighbourhoods that have high demand for

PARTNERSHIPS

school-age care and limited program availability. SSMs can also discuss child care subsidy guidelines and the process for entering into a service agreement for provision of fee assistance for families who qualify. Service System Managers can also share more about the availability and process for CWELCC participation, and any other funding or system supports that may be available.

School Boards can use the following checklist of strategic considerations when engaging with the SSM while exploring the implementation of an extended-day program.

Reflection:

1. How does operating extended-day programs position your board as a key partner in the broader early learning and child care system?
2. What governance, operational, or partnership structures could be strengthened to ensure sustainable, high-quality programming aligned with provincial and federal goals?

PARTNERSHIPS

EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOL BOARDS

1. Agreement for Child Care Subsidies

- Understand the process to become an approved operator eligible for fee subsidies.
- Confirm required documentation, policies, and program standards.
- Clarify how subsidy rates are set and how often they are reviewed.
- Review reporting, billing, and audit requirements.
- Identify timelines for application, approval, and renewal.
- Determine how families will be supported in accessing subsidy information.

2. Identifying Priority Neighbourhoods

- Request data sources used to determine areas of highest need.
- Obtain maps or analyses showing child care gaps or deserts.
- Understand the criteria used to define and rank priority neighbourhoods.
- Review demographic trends or anticipated population shifts.
- Confirm how the SSM collaborates with municipalities and community partners to identify needs.

3. Key Considerations for Program Implementation

- Clarify expectations for program hours, staffing ratios, and educator qualifications.
- Align with local policies, quality frameworks, and licensing requirements.
- Identify available funding supports (start-up, capital, operating).
- Discuss coordination with existing community child care providers.
- Review expectations for family engagement and accessibility supports.
- Understand licensing, inspection, and compliance processes.

4. Ongoing Collaboration and System Alignment

- Establish frequency and format of ongoing meetings with the SSM.
- Identify mechanisms for resolving operational challenges.
- Explore opportunities to participate in broader system-level planning tables.

STAFFING THE EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM

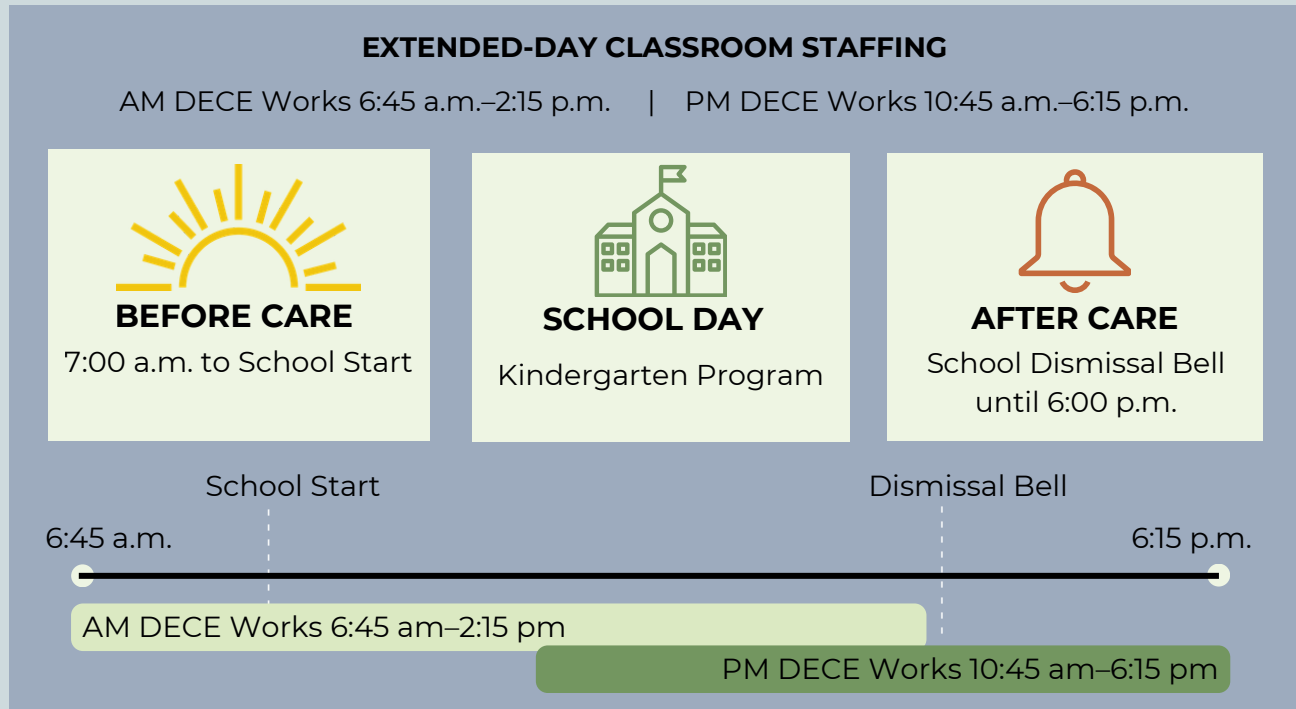
Once school boards have consulted with SSMs (CMSMs or DSSABs) and made the decision to move forward with a pilot program, determining a staffing model is the next logical step.

The Ministry of Education funds 1 FTE (35 hr DECE; e.g., 8:30 am–4:00 pm) for each full section of Kindergarten (each class of over 15 students). In classrooms that offer an extended-day program this funded DECE position works a different shift (e.g., 6:45 am–2:15 pm), the DECE starts their day in the before-school program and then transitions into the Kindergarten program until 2:15 pm. A second DECE is hired and funded by the extended-day parent fee (e.g., 10:45 am–6:15 pm) to overlap in the extended-day classroom, starting in the Kindergarten portion of the day and finishing their day delivering the after-school program. This means core day Kindergarten programs that operate in extended-day classrooms have a three-educator team (2 DECEs and 1 Kindergarten teacher), providing extra support to Kindergarten students with improved ratios (refer to Figure 3.0).



STAFFING THE EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM

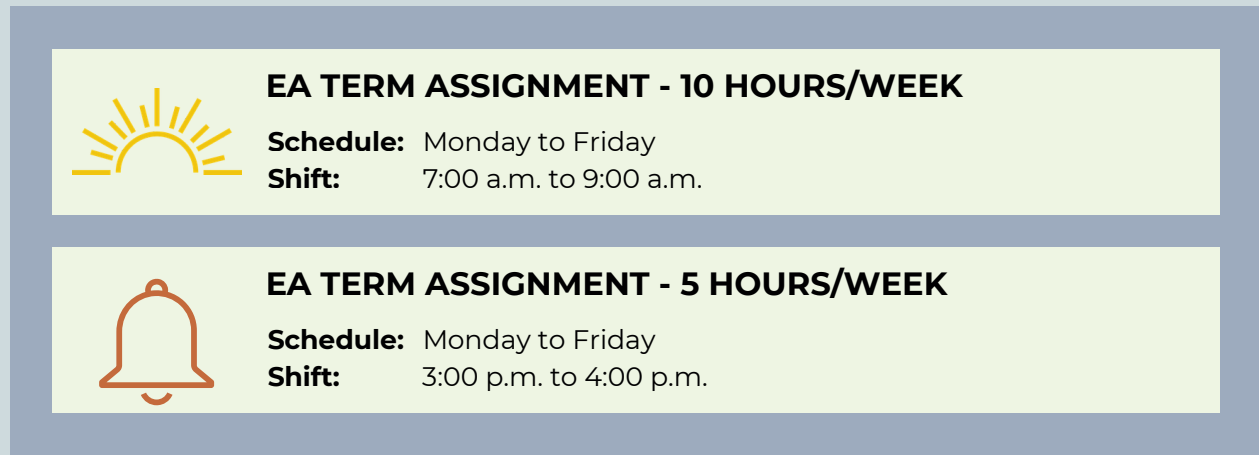
FIGURE 3.0 Extended-day Program Staffing



Extended-day programs operate at a ratio of 1 educator for every 13 children. An educational assistant or a before- and after-school support (B.A.S.S.) position is hired as the second staff, depending on program needs. The educational assistant or B.A.S.S. educator works alongside the qualified DECE to deliver the program to students and support ratios (refer to Figure 4.0). Educators already working in the school often apply to these term positions for additional hours.

STAFFING THE EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM

FIGURE 4.0 Common Extended-day EA Term Assignments



In addition to the educator staffing positions, central administration positions oversee the program operations to support program quality and school administrators, staff hiring, and compliance with policies and procedures.

For CWELCC-eligible programs, cost-based funding only supports staffing costs directly related to extended-day programs (i.e., not core day hours). Parent fees for children aged 6–12 years can support staffing expenses not covered through funding.

Program Oversight and Administration

An extended-day program supervisor can support a group of schools operating programs to provide operational oversight and ensure Ministry compliance. Supervisors are responsible for the following:



STAFFING THE EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM

Meeting program standards for:

- policies and procedures;
- health and safety;
- quality assurance; and
- Ministry compliance with the *Child Care and Early Years Act*.

Supporting professional educator teams by:

- observing and allocating support;
- demonstrating responsive relationships;
- reviewing guidelines for program planning;
- engaging with parents and asking for program feedback; and
- being the designate in charge during before and after hours (instead of the school principal).

Implementing a play-based program by:

- coaching and mentoring DECEs and planning and delivering professional development;
- creating guidelines for equipping programs with play materials; and
- mentoring staff.



STAFFING THE EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM

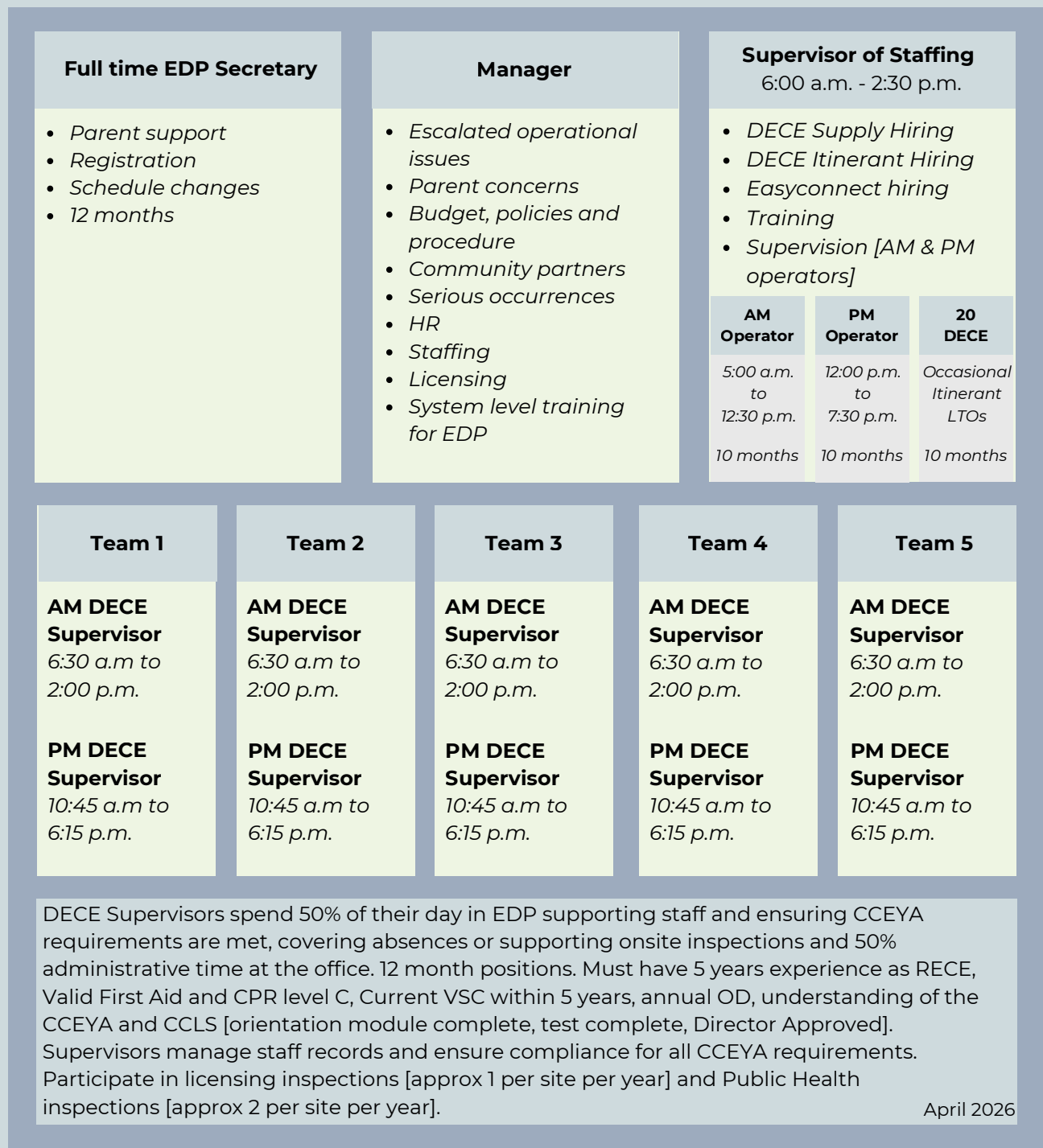
The extended-day program manager or early years lead works with school administrators, manages supervisors, and creates program policies and procedures. The good news is that the Ministry of Education currently funds 1 FTE early years lead position. Part of their portfolio includes child care services; it therefore makes sense for this position to oversee implementation and program operations. Figure 5.0 shows one example of central support for a large extended-day program of 75 schools supporting over 4,000 children.

Other Supports

One advantage of school board–operated extended-day programs is that school boards have access to centralized infrastructure that many child care providers may not, including human resources, facilities maintenance, accounting, communications, and health and safety departments. The programs benefit from the support, policies, and procedures provided by each of these specialized teams.

STAFFING THE EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM

FIGURE 5.0 Sample Administration Structure for an Extended-day Program (75 schools)





FEE STRUCTURE

The extended-day program fee is established annually in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education in Ontario Regulation 221/11. The underlying objective in establishing the fee is to ensure it bears a reasonable relationship to incremental operating costs incurred by the school board and that the program operates on a cost-recovery basis. This fee applies to students who are not eligible for a reduced fee under the CWELCC agreement, which only provides funding for children under age 6.

In determining the annual program fee, school boards must consider a variety of cost drivers, including the following:

- Wages and benefits – Direct staffing costs account for approximately 75% of total expenditures in programs directly operated by school boards; as such, any changes to salaries and benefits will have a proportionate impact on the extended-day program fee.

FEE STRUCTURE

- Administrative support – Although additional administrative requirements need to be met to maintain licensing under the CCEYA 2014, administrative costs as a proportion of total expenses remain relatively stable on a year-to-year basis. On average, administrative costs represent roughly 2–4% of total program expenditures. These expenditures are necessary to provide the appropriate level of oversight and support to schools, ensuring that the extended-day program achieves its mission of providing high-quality, affordable care to students. Administrative support staff (e.g., manager, supervisors, clerical) also provide oversight and support for programs operated by community partners, ensuring they meet contract requirements.
- Operating costs – In accordance with Ministry of Education regulations, school boards must establish an extended-day program fee that reflects the incremental cost of operating the program. This includes costs related to the operation of the school facility (such as utilities, consumable supplies (e.g., paper towels, cleaning supplies), and custodial services), as well as costs related to materials and food to support the delivery of a high-quality program. These costs are variable between boards, depending on the structure of their program and how they determine the incremental cost of certain items (e.g., school facility costs). At the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), these costs annually represent roughly 16–19% of the total extended-day program.
- Special education support – A core commitment of the extended-day program is that all students should have equity of access to the program and should have access to the support they need. Each year, the proportion of students participating in our program that

FEE STRUCTURE

require additional staffing, relative to the overall number of students, changes slightly. The decrease noted above is based on actual costs incurred during the past three years to support students with special needs.

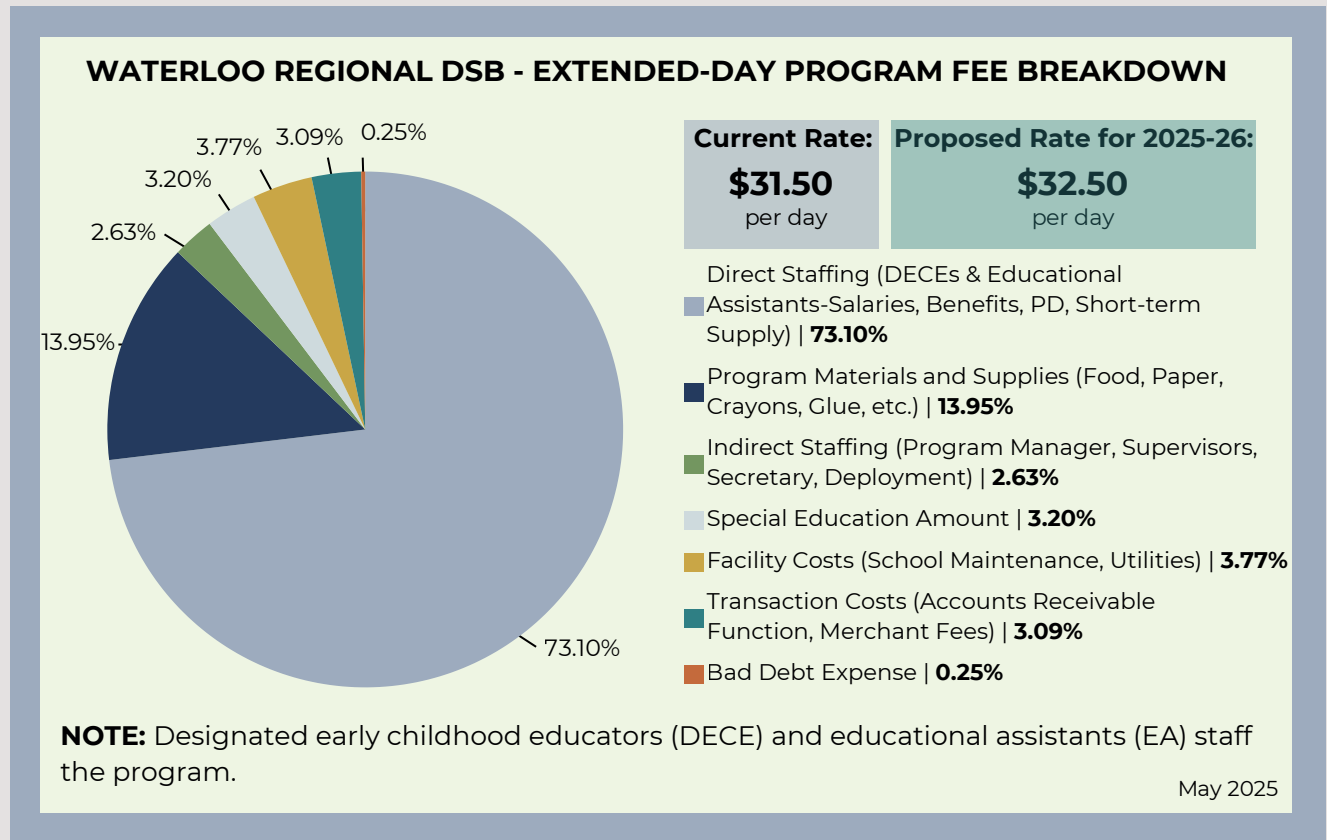
In addition to these cost drivers, school boards incur fixed (staffing) and variable (merchant fees) costs when invoicing and collecting fees from families. To operate on a cost-recovery basis, these costs need to be included in the overall fee charged for the extended-day program. School boards must also include a small amount to reflect fees that cannot be collected from families (e.g., bad debt). In addition, school boards need to consider other variable costs that may arise because of their program delivery choices. Boards should clearly communicate and explain these costs when determining the annual program fee.

Programs that are licensed under the CCEYA are eligible for reduced rates under the CWELCC program. The CWELCC program outlines that

Ontario families with children aged 5 years and younger, who are participating in licensed child care programs, will see their child care fees reduced to \$10 per day by September 2026. CWELCC funding is provided to school boards through their CMSM or DSSAB to offset the cost of offering the reduced fee for families. Figure 6.0 provides a sample fee structure for Waterloo Region DSB.

FEE STRUCTURE

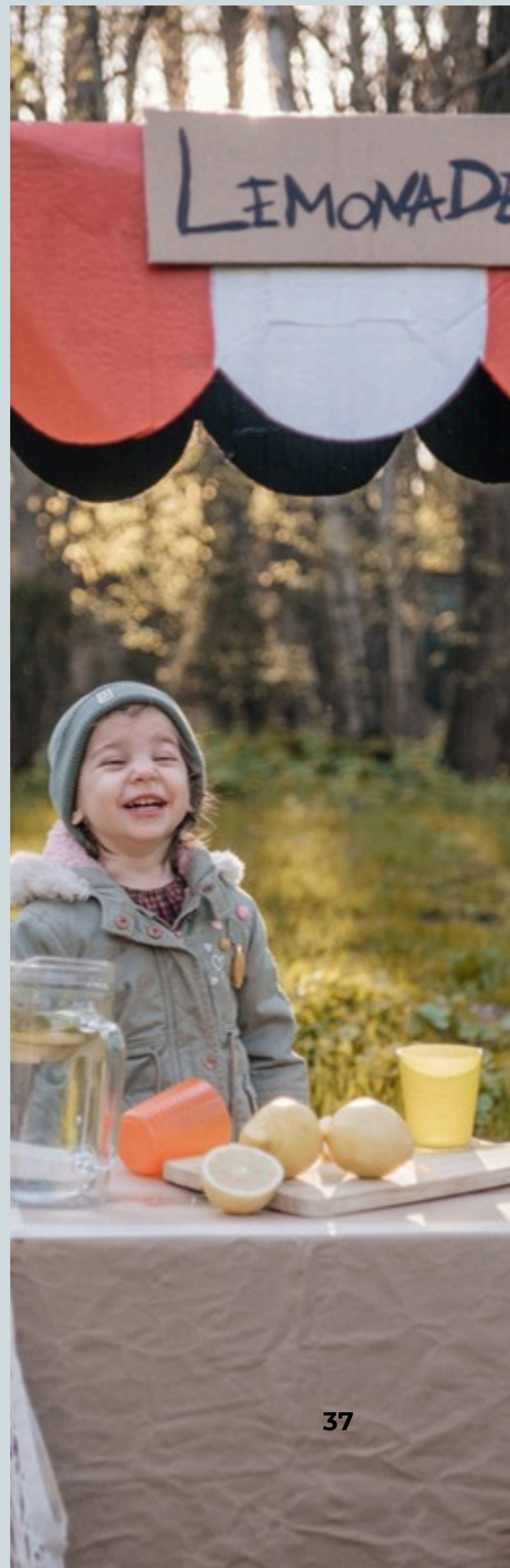
FIGURE 6.0 Sample Fee Structure from 2025–2026



FINANCE & FUNDING

Extended-day programs are designed to operate on a cost-recovery basis to ensure there is no financial impact on the school board. Program fees are reviewed and adjusted annually (refer to Fee Structure for more details). Program fees may be paid by parents/caregivers and/or through child care fee subsidies for eligible families (consult Affordability and Partnerships for more information about fee subsidies).

If an extended-day program is licensed and participating in the CWELCC plan, programs fees are reduced for eligible children (Kindergarten students and Grade 1 students who are under 6 years of age). To support the full costs of providing child care to these students, CWELCC cost-based funding is also provided. Funding is determined by site (school) and calculated based on a Ministry-established formula and annual benchmarks (http://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Child%20Care/2025/EN/Chapters/Chapter%202.2_EN.pdf). SSMs work closely with participating school boards to calculate and provide this funding. Funding can be used for eligible expenses (e.g., staffing, materials, administration) that are directly related to providing child care for CWELCC-eligible students.



FINANCE & FUNDING

In addition to program fees and CWELCC cost-based funding (if applicable), SSMs may provide additional grants (one-time or ongoing) to support extended day programs. Grants may depend on program type (e.g., licensed or not licensed), age groups served, local priorities, funding availability, and eligibility criteria. Grants may be available for the following:

- professional learning
- special needs supports
- wages
- purchase of play-based materials

School boards should connect with their SSM to learn more about possible grants.

Additional Information:

Ontario Ministry of Education, CWELCC Funding Guidelines (Nov 2025);
https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Child%20Care/2025/EN/Chapters/Chapter%202.2_EN.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education, Ontario Child Care and Early Years Funding Guidelines (2025);
https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Child%20Care/Guidelines/Ch.EN/Chapter3_EN.pdf



TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT ONLINE REGISTRATIONS

School boards should follow their procurement protocols for securing a vendor for online registration for before- and after-school programs.

Several school boards use Kaya to manage before- and after-school registrations. It includes child enrolment information, care schedules, waitlist prioritization, financial integration, and reports for educators. For more information, including a product demo, contact:



<https://www.kayaschool.com>

Built by Mekanys on the Salesforce platform, Kaya digitally powers

the child care sector with high-performance technology for governments, service providers, and families. By working as one connected system, public and private partners can maximize care spaces and expand access to high-quality, affordable child care.

Kaya's advanced online registration engine is built for speed, waitlist prioritization, invoicing, compliance, and accuracy - fully aligned with the Child Care and Early Years Act and equipped with custom reporting that gives school teams the data they need, instantly.

TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT ONLINE REGISTRATIONS

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The regulation that applies to website accessibility compliance in Ontario must be considered:

- IASR section 14: Accessible websites and web content
 - Designated public sector organizations and large organizations shall make their internet websites and web content conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, initially at Level A and increasing to Level AA
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0
 - WCAG 2.0 checklist

Note: School boards in Ontario are “designated public sector organizations” and are required to demonstrate compliance with the above Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation (IASR). In addition, if the supplier is an organization, the school board is obligated to ask the supplier for an attestation or confirmation of accessibility awareness training - IASR section 7: Training

PLAY-BASED PROGRAMMING

Extended-day programs offer children opportunities to learn in a play-based environment. Children in extended-day range in age from 4 years to 12 years old and therefore experiences and materials reflect a diverse range of ages and interests. The following chart is an example of what happens in the before school and after school portion of the day.

Sample Play-based Program

7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. | Children arrive throughout this time and are welcomed by the early childhood educator.

Activity	Learning Area Links	What the Child Does	What the Early Childhood Educator Does
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • independent exploration of classroom materials • preparation of a nutritious breakfast or snack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal and Social Development • Language • Mathematics • Science and Technology • The Arts • Health and Physical Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizes personal belongings (e.g. backpack, communication book, shoes) • investigates materials at various classroom learning centres • works with peers and the early childhood educator to prepare snack; eats snack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greets families • sets out and organizes learning materials • facilitates snack preparation • refers to communication books and team message board • extends children's thinking and investigations by questioning and prompting

PLAY-BASED PROGRAMMING

3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. | Children arrive and participate in the after-school program. Parents are greeted at arrival by the early childhood educator.

Activity	Learning Area Links	What the Child Does	What the Early Childhood Educator Does
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • independent exploration of classroom materials • preparation of a nutritious snack • planned experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal and Social Development • Language • Mathematics • Science and Technology • The Arts • Health and Physical Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participates in preparing a snack; eating snack • participates in a group project or learning experience (e.g. baking or making play dough) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervises the arrival of children from other classrooms • facilitates snack preparations • organizes materials for learning experiences and group projects • extends children's thinking and investigations by questioning and prompting



SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Schools are central to sustaining and strengthening extended-day programs because they provide a safe, high-quality environment for children outside regular instructional hours. Extended-day programs operate in areas that are licensed under the CCEYA through the Ministry of Education's Quality Assurance and Licensing Unit. Licensing rules set limits on the number of children permitted in each room and room locations are noted on the Ministry's Shared Space Attestation form.

Shared and Licensed Space Expectations

Kindergarten rooms should be designated as shared space for 4- and 5-year-olds because they are purpose-built for this age group and support the Ministry's goal of offering consistent, coordinated programming between the school day and the extended-day components. Similarly, rooms licensed for older children should align with the spaces those age groups use during the school day (e.g., primary and junior classrooms for ages 6–12). The extended-day fee factors in funds that are given back to the school annually to replenish play-based materials for children from 4–12 years old.

SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Annual Planning and Licensing

Licensed extended-day programs must operate in space that has been licensed under the CCEYA by the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance Licensing Unit. These programs must also take place in the rooms or spaces used by the licensed age group during the instructional school day (i.e., Kindergarten classrooms for ages 4 and 5 years). Hallways are not considered licensed space since they need to remain clear due to fire regulations and are not fully equipped to support play-based learning.

Each June, the school principal and the extended-day supervisor meet to confirm which rooms will be licensed and used for the upcoming school year. Both parties sign the Space Sharing Attestation Form, and the supervisor submits it to the Ministry of Education. Room assignments may be adjusted later, but any change must be re-filed with the Ministry.

Key Considerations When Selecting Space for Before- and After-school Programs

- Choose rooms located close to the school's main entrance to support smooth drop-off and pick-up.
- Provide consistent room assignments throughout the year to minimize disruption for children and families.
- Ensure direct, easy access to playgrounds and washrooms.
- Provide adequate storage for rolling shelves with program materials, a filing cabinet for administrative items, and a refrigerator for snacks and medication.
- Ensure safe welcome equipment (e.g., intercom, camera, TV) anchors the program in that room. Every extended-day program must have a minimum of one room with safe welcome for staff to buzz parents in at drop-off and pickup.

FULL-DAY CAMP PROGRAMS

Extended-day programs offer full-day camp programs on designated professional development days, during winter break and March break, and, in some school boards, during the summer months.

School boards should review the language used within collective agreements to outline the work year and discuss options with labour partners and human resources for supporting families with child care when schools are closed.

Professional Development Days

While it's important for educators to obtain mandatory professional learning (e.g., health and safety, BMS, etc.), some school boards have implemented a work schedule where DECEs work on designated professional development days when no mandatory training is scheduled.



FULL-DAY CAMP PROGRAMS

For example,

The WRDSB offers PD-day camp on two of the seven PD days, the two report card assessment days. A schedule is created to include all DECEs (including those who work CORE hours only) so that all DECEs work on one of the two PD camp days. This means that all DECEs receive professional development on six out of seven PD days and work one day.

Winter Break, March Break, and Summer Camp

School boards offer full-day programming during the break periods, and some also offer programming during the summer months. At the WRDSB, educators complete a camp week survey to indicate their availability and willingness to work during the break periods. Programs run at reduced operating hours, 8:00 am–4:30 pm, and all staff work the same shift. This reduces the number of staff needed—for example, an opening and closing

shift is not needed since everyone works core hours during camp programs. Educators appreciate the extra work and parents appreciate having access to care when school is closed. The board annually determines camp host locations that support all schools, such as 13–18 host locations to support 75 schools. The following factors are considered when determining host locations:

- geographically spread out
- on a bus route
- availability and accessibility of a playground
- number of Kindergarten rooms available to support a robust camp program (5–6)
- scheduled school renovations (boards typically avoid these locations for safety reasons)

FULL-DAY CAMP PROGRAMS

Extended-day supervisors work from camp locations to support educator teams operating camp programs and to be available for public health, licensing inspections, or issues that may arise. The board centrally provides program materials to ensure classrooms are equipped with play-based materials to support 4–12-year-old children.

The WRDSB offers PD-day camp on two of the seven PD days, the two report card assessment days. A schedule is created to include all DECEs (including those who work CORE hours only) so that all DECEs work on one of the two PD camp days. This means that all DECEs receive professional development on six out of seven PD days and work one day.

In a 2022 Parent Survey, 92% of parents indicated they need care on PD days and during winter and March break. (WRDSB, Parent Survey, 2022)

EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Checklist for School Boards

1. Assess Demand and Understand the Local Landscape

- Review demographic data and determine demand (survey families).
- Analyze existing child care services, capacity, and waitlist information.
- Identify gaps in access to before- and after-school care.

2. Consult With Other School Boards

- Connect with boards currently operating extended-day programs.
- Gather insights on staffing, operations, challenges, and best practices.
- Review sample policies, procedures, and program models.

3. Collaborate With Your Local SSM

- Discuss system-level priorities and alignment with local child care planning.
- Understand requirements for subsidy agreements, funding eligibility and potential for CWELCC participation.
- Confirm expectations for quality, reporting, and compliance.

4. Identify Priority Neighbourhoods for Initial Implementation

- Use data to determine areas with the highest need.
- Select 1–3 pilot school sites based on demand and feasibility.
- Consider equity, accessibility, and community impact in site selection.

5. Develop a Staffing Model

- Determine required staffing to meet ratios.
- Establish recruitment, onboarding, and training plans.
- Build schedules that align with program hours and operational needs.

EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

6. License Programs Under the CCEYA

- [] Review the Ministry of Education's Before-and-After School Program Licensing Guideline.
- [] Prepare required documentation for licensing applications (floor plans, PH approval letter).
 - See requirements for first aid certification, Vulnerable Sector Check, and Health Assessment.
 - Refer to sample policies required posted on the Child Care Licensing System.
- [] Register an account on the Child Care Licensing System.
 - Apply for a licence at the pilot locations; license all Kindergarten rooms to allow for growth or increased enrollment for camp programs.
- [] Ensure facilities meet regulatory standards (fire plans and public health approvals).
- [] Establish processes for inspections, compliance, and record-keeping.

7. Apply to the CWELCC Program

- [] Review eligibility requirements and financial implications.
- [] Complete the application process with the SSM.
- [] If approved, align fee structures and reporting practices with CWELCC guidelines.

8. Review and Refine Policies and Procedures

- [] Update or create policies related to health and safety, programming, and staffing.
- [] Create a parent website that includes important policies for families and a parent handbook.
- [] Align extended-day policies with existing school board frameworks.
- [] Establish clear communication protocols for families and staff.
- [] Create an online registration process to support enrollment and reports needed (staff attendance).

EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION



9. Develop a Growth Plan

- [] Set short- and long-term goals for program expansion.
- [] Monitor demand and adjust capacity as needed.
- [] Evaluate program outcomes and refine implementation strategies.

EXTENDED-DAY PROGRAM RESOURCES

Several school boards have developed comprehensive resources that may be helpful for new school boards implementing the seamless day model. School board communication departments are a great resource for information about parent webpages and parent handbook development.



Waterloo Region District School Board

Webpage: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/beforeafter/>

Parent Handbook: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/beforeafter/extended-day-program/handbook/>

Videos: *WRDSB Parent Video:* <https://youtu.be/FqysA12N3sU>



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

Webpage: <https://www.ocdsb.ca/programs-learning/early-learning/ocdsb-extended-day-program>

Parent Handbook: <https://www.ocdsb.ca/download/482548>



Buliding Blocks for Child Care (B2C2)

Webpage: <https://b2c2.ca/>

Resource: [The Seamless Day Project; Bridging Education and Care](#)

Atkinson
Centre

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development

Resource: [Schools at the Centre: Findings from Case Studies Exploring Seamless Early Learning in Ontario](#)

Resource: [Shared Space, Shared Responsibility Guidelines for School-Based Early Learning Environments](#)

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IMPLEMENTING THE SEAMLESS DAY MODEL

A Comprehensive Guide for School Board Extended-day Programs

