

CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FUNDING

GUIDELINES FOR EARLY YEARS
AND CHILD CARE SERVICE PROVIDERS

PRESENTED BY

DNSSAB CHILDREN'S SERVICES - 2026

District of Nipissing
Social Services
Administration Board



Conseil d'administration
des services sociaux
du district de Nipissing

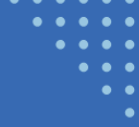


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PURPOSE

The Child Care and Early Years Workforce Strategy aims to build upon, complement and enhance existing professional learning opportunities. This initiative empowers each early years and child care service provider to plan and implement an Agency-Led Professional Learning Day, or its equivalent, tailored to the unique professional development needs of early years and child care professionals working within the agency. It is designed to support both provincial and local workforce strategies.

KEY OBJECTIVES

The Child Care and Early Years Professional Learning Funding aims to support the retention and recruitment of a high-quality workforce in the child care and early years sector as well as the implementation of the CWELCC Agreement.

Key objectives of this funding are to:

- Support professional learning opportunities that build capacity of the early years and child care sector to support the provision of high-quality programs that align with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.
- Provide access to professional learning opportunities to achieve higher levels of staff engagement, growth, recognition, professional efficacy and satisfaction.
- Enhance current professional learning supports to include mental health information to promote more meaningful relationships, enriched experiences and a greater sense of well-being for children, educators and families.

AGENCY LED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DAY

Early years and child care service providers are requested to plan and implement a professional learning day (or its equivalent) that addresses the unique professional development needs of early years and child care professionals working within their agency. Service providers have the flexibility to determine how to implement the professional learning day in alignment with agency priorities and professional learning needs.



When developing and implementing this day (or its equivalent), service providers should consider the following:

- Timing and approach that minimize disruption for families, where necessary, through appropriate communication to provide families with sufficient time to plan for alternate care on professional learning days where programs will be closed (e.g., include the dates in the annual parent handbook; reminders in newsletters, choosing dates that typically have low enrolment, etc...).
- Timing and approach to implementation based on the availability of supply staff.
- Supporting equitable access for all eligible staff, providers and supervisors in licensed child care programs, EarlyON Child and Family Centres and Inclusion Support Programs.

The approach for this day will allow early years and child care agencies to plan for a professional learning “day” that supports the unique professional development needs within each of the early years and child care programs and service that is delivered by the agency.

This approach will allow each agency the flexibility to:

- Plan an approach that best meets the needs of families and children (i.e. timing of the professional learning).
- Personalize their professional learning strategy to meet the needs of their teams, whether through full-day PL, evening, or weekend session, ensuring equitable access.
- Choose the topics and guest speakers that best address and support the team’s specific professional development needs (i.e. Indigenous and/or Francophone pedagogy, mental health and well being, How Does Learning Happen? (HDLH?)/inquiry-based programming, team building to build on internal mentoring opportunities, inclusive practices, etc.).
- Collaborate with other service providers that provide similar services and have similar needs to address.



PRIORITY AREAS

Service providers must incorporate some or all of the following Ministry identified priority areas into their professional learning strategies:

- Early years and child care pedagogical practices aligned with How Does Learning Happen?
- Mental health and resilience training for staff.
- Anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion practices.
- Incorporating Indigenous perspectives and pedagogies.
- Supporting children with special needs through inclusive approaches.
- Equity-based Communities of Practices (Francophone and Indigenous communities).

Each agency may determine additional priority areas for professional learning. These priorities can be integrated. For example, early years and child care pedagogical practices could be integrated with anti-racism and inclusive practices.

ELIGIBLE STAFF/PROVIDERS

- The funding is intended to support the following RECE, Non-RECE and Director Approved positions working with the early years and child care sectors.
- Licensed Child Care: Program Staff, Non-Program Staff and Supervisors.
- Home Child Care: Home Child Care Providers, Home Visitors and Supervisors.
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres: Program Staff and Supervisors.
- Special Needs Resourcing/Inclusion Support Services: Resource Consultants and Supervisors.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

The Funds are intended to support with actual expenses associated with planning and implementing the agency's Professional Learning Day, or its equivalent. Eligible expenses include:

- Costs associated with waiving parent fees, up to the maximum daily base rate, on the Agency Led Professional Learning Day or reimbursement of salaries and



benefits for the agency's staff attending Agency Led PD outside of regular operating hours (no centre closure; PD planned over evening/weekend hours), up to a maximum of 8 hours;

- costs associated with reimbursement of salaries and benefits for the agency for staff that are not regularly on site and do not form part of the agency's ongoing budget (i.e. call-in staff);
- costs associated with professional fees related to planning and implementing the Agency Led Professional Learning Day:
 - **Guest speakers**, up to a **maximum of \$2,500 per agency**.
 - **Catering, professional resources and recognition** up to a **maximum of \$85 per participating staff member** (to support with costs associated with morning and afternoon health breaks, lunch and non-alcoholic beverages as well as resources to complement the training or recognition items for agency staff).

REIMBURSEMENT

Following the Agency Led Professional Learning Day, the service provider must, by the 20th of following month:

- Request reimbursement using the 2026 Professional Learning workbook.
- Ensure that the request for reimbursement is based on actual costs.
- Upload all supporting documentation (e.g. certificate of participation, receipts, etc.) to SharePoint; and
- Email notice to DNSSAB to advise that documentation is ready for review.

In turn, DNSSAB will review the submission to ensure that all the appropriate information and documentation has been received. DNSSAB will then reimburse the agency in accordance with the eligible expenses (up to the maximum stated in these guidelines) by way of direct deposit.



ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES

The following Ministry of Education resources are available to support professional learning and have been developed to strengthen quality in early years settings:

- [*How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*](#);
- [*Introductory Guides to How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*](#);
- [*Think, Feel Act: Lessons from Research about Young Children*](#) research briefs and videos;
- [*Think, Feel, Act: Empowering Children in the Middle Years*](#) research briefs; and,

DNSSAB WEBSITE

Please visit [DNSSAB's Children's Services website](#) for additional information related to professional learning opportunities, program and financial guidelines and resources.

QUESTIONS & INQUIRIES

Questions about the Child Care and Early Years Workforce Funding should be addressed to:

District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board
Attention: Children's Services Department, Finance and Data Coordination Team
Email: csfundingrequest@dnssab.ca

DNSSAB will review and respond to questions and inquiries within two (2) Business Days.



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