

INFRASTRUCTURE GUIDELINES

2025 CWELCC START-UP GRANT & ELCC
INFRASTRUCTURE GUIDELINES FOR
LICENSED CHILD CARE SERVICE
PROVIDERS

PRESENTED BY

DNSSAB CHILDREN'S SERVICES – APRIL 2025


District of Nipissing
Social Services
Administration Board




Conseil d'administration
des services sociaux
du district de Nipissing

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

These guidelines outline the standards and procedures of the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) related to Infrastructure Funding, including the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Start-Up Grant and the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Infrastructure Fund. They are designed to help licensed child care Service Providers understand and implement the CWELCC System.

The standards and procedures apply to all Service Providers with an Agreement with DNSSAB. Service Providers should ensure these guidelines are accessible to all Agency staff responsible for the application, implementation, and reconciliation processes.

These guidelines contain the following sections:

[SECTION 1: CWELCC START UP GRANT](#)

[SECTION 2: ELCC INFRASTRUCTURE FUND](#)

[SECTION 3: APPLICATION PROCESS](#)

[SECTION 4: ACCOUNTABILITY](#)

[SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION](#)

[SECTION 6: DEFINITIONS](#)

It is important to note that these guidelines do not override the Service Provider's obligations under the Act or any other legislation or regulation. In the event of a conflict, the legislative requirements will prevail.

Additionally, if there is a conflict between these guidelines and the Agreement that the Service Provider has with DNSSAB, the Agreement will take precedence.

DOCUMENT UPDATES

As new information becomes available, these guidelines and related policies will be reviewed and amended to align with updated legislation, provincial guidelines, and municipal/provincial/local best practices as required.



SECTION 1: CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE (CWELCC) START-UP GRANT

BACKGROUND

In 2022, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement to enhance access to licensed child care. This initiative focuses on creating high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive spaces for children under six in targeted locations and neighbourhoods with the greatest need.

To support this goal, the province has allocated funding to create new, affordable child care spaces for eligible children in targeted neighbourhoods throughout the Nipissing District.

Start-up Grants are designed to facilitate directed growth by enabling the creation of child care spaces in neighbourhoods with historically low availability, in alignment with Nipissing's Directed Growth Plan.

ELIGIBILITY

Service Providers who are enrolled in the CWELCC System, regardless of auspice, are eligible to apply for the Start-Up Grant. This includes for-profit and not-for-profit centre-based and licensed home child care providers.

Start-up Grants are intended to fund projects required for child care facilities to be created, retrofitted, renovated, or expanded to accommodate a maximum group size for each age grouping for Eligible Children. These funds do not cover capital projects for Licensed Child Care programs operating during school hours for kindergarten and school age children, as well as before and after school programs.

Centre-Based Child Care Expansions*

Service Providers looking to expand centre-based licensed child care services may receive a grant of up to \$350,000 for every 20 child care spaces created. If the



expansion is for fewer than 20 spaces, the grant will be pro-rated to reflect the number of spaces being added.

Home Child Care Expansions*

Service Providers wishing to expand licensed home child care services may receive grants of up to \$1,200 per CWELCC space created, to a maximum of \$7,200 per provider.

*While the above information provides an overview of the maximum allowable grants, funding availability is contingent on Ministry funding and the DNSSAB Children's Services Budget.

Required Commitment

To access funding for Start-up Grants, Service Providers are required to make a commitment to:

- Participation in the CWELCC System: Service Providers must commit to participating in the CWELCC system and to maintaining the number of child care spaces for at least seven years from the first day of operation.
- Timely Use of Funds: Service Providers must spend the Start-up Grant funding by the negotiated date within the agreement.
- Prioritization of Vulnerable and Diverse Populations: The proposed new spaces must prioritize and enhance access to full-day licensed child care for children from infancy to four years of age in communities with vulnerable children and diverse populations. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Children living in low-income families
 - Children with exceptional needs
 - Indigenous children
 - Black or other racialized children
 - Children of newcomers to Canada
 - Francophone children
 - Families requiring more flexible care models, such as evening, weekend, and overnight care



Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses for centre-based licensed child care centres include:

- Play-based materials, equipment, and furnishings: Both indoor and outdoor items as outlined in O. Reg. 137/15 under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014.
- Non-consumable supplies/equipment: Items to support the ongoing operation of the child care program, such as appliances, IT equipment, and supplies to support learning environments while adhering to health and safety requirements.
- Renovations, additions, or repairs: Modifications to licensed child care facilities or potential child care facilities as approved by CMSMs/DSSABs.
- Changes to outdoor play space: Adjustments required due to the expansion of child care spaces to ensure compliance with O. Reg. 137/15. Funding for these changes is subject to the overall project cap of \$350,000 per 20 child care spaces created.
- Leasehold improvements.

Eligible expenses for licensed home child care include:

- Play-based materials, equipment, and furnishings: Both indoor and outdoor items as outlined in O. Reg. 137/15 that can be transferred between home child care licensees as required.

Ineligible expenses

Ineligible expenses include the following:

- Purchase of land or buildings.
- Debt costs, including principal and interest payments related to capital loans, mortgage financing, and operating loans.
- Property taxes.
- Expenditures related to licensed child care services for children aged 6 to 12.
- School-based child care spaces.
- Indoor and outdoor renovations, additions or repairs to home child care licensee premises or potential home child care licensee premises.

SECTION 2: CANADA-ONTARIO EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE (ELCC) INFRASTRUCTURE FUND



BACKGROUND

The Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund (ELCC Infrastructure Fund) aims to increase inclusion in child care for underserved communities by creating new, licensed child care spaces.

This fund supports not-for-profit licensed child care centres in alignment with Ontario's Access and Inclusion Framework and complements the Start-up Grant Fund. For further details on the CWELCC Start-Up Grant, please refer to Section 1.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible not-for-profit service providers enrolled in the CWELCC System can apply for the ELCC Infrastructure Fund.

The ELCC Infrastructure Fund is designed to support projects that create, retrofit, renovate, or expand community-based child care facilities to accommodate the maximum group size for each age grouping of eligible children. These funds do not cover capital projects for licensed child care programs operating during school hours for kindergarten and school-age children, as well as before and after school programs.

Required Commitment

To access funding from the ELCC Infrastructure Fund, service providers must commit to the following:

- Participation in the CWELCC System: Providers must commit to participating in the CWELCC System and maintaining the number of child care spaces for at least seven years from the first day of operation.



- Timely Use of Funds: ELCC Infrastructure funds must be spent by the negotiated date within the agreement.
- Prioritization of New Spaces: The proposed new spaces must enhance access to full-day licensed child care for children from infancy to four years of age in communities with vulnerable children and diverse populations. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Rural and remote regions.
 - High-cost urban areas.
 - Low-income households.
 - Communities with barriers to access (e.g., Black and other racialized communities, Indigenous communities, newcomers, parents, caregivers and children with disabilities, official language minority communities including Francophone children).
 - Communities requiring flexible care models, such as evening, weekend, and overnight care.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses include:

- Construction, renovations, additions or retrofits: Purpose built new construction, renovations, retrofits, and additions to community-based child care facilities. This includes expenses incurred through the planning, design and building stages of these projects.
- Land or buildings: Purchase of land or buildings.
- Play-based materials, equipment, and furnishings: Purchase of play-based materials, equipment, and furnishings (both indoors and outdoors) as outlined in O. Reg. 137/15 under the CCEYA.
- Non-consumable supplies/equipment: Purchase of non-consumable supplies/equipment to support the ongoing regular operation of the child care program (for example, appliances, IT equipment, supplies to support learning environments while adhering to health and safety requirements).



- Changes to outdoor play space: Changes to outdoor play space that are required because of the creation of new child care spaces so that the licensee continues to comply with O. Reg. 137/15.
- Leasehold improvements.

Ineligible expenses

Ineligible expenses include the following:

- Debt costs, including principal and interest payments related to capital loans, mortgage financing, and operating loans.
- Property taxes.
- Amortization of existing assets.
- Operating expenses.
- Expenditures related to licensed child care programs for kindergarten and school-aged children and before and after school programs.
- Expenditures related to facilities owned by school boards.
- Expenditures related to licensed home child care spaces.



SECTION 3: APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for the Infrastructure Funding, including the CWELCC Start-Up Grant and ELCC Infrastructure Fund will be available to service providers who have received approval to proceed with the proposed new licensed child care spaces within the District of Nipissing.

APPLICATIONS

DNSSAB will consider funding applications on an ongoing basis, subject to funding availability, policies, and guidelines. Service providers must ensure that applications are fully completed and include all necessary supporting documentation to be considered for funding.

Applications must:

- Where applicable, be supported with relevant documentation and plans, including a floor plan approval letter from the Ministry of Education's Child Care Licensing Branch for center-based expansions.
- Include quotes (in accordance with the required quotations as described below and within the agency's purchasing policy and process) and current-year receipts and/or paid invoices, where applicable.

The Infrastructure Funding application must also include an estimated date for the creation of the new licensed full-day child care spaces, which should be from the date of the application to December 31, 2026.

QUOTATIONS

Service providers must solicit and submit the minimum number of quotes as outlined in the chart below, while adhering to the agency's procurement policy and process.



If unable to meet the established quotation requirement due to a supplier's special knowledge, skills, or expertise, the service provider must demonstrate that every effort was made to meet the requirement, including providing written documentation of the failed search.

Quotation Requirements for Purchase of Goods and Services	
\$0 – \$24,999	1 written quote detailing purchase and/or scope of work to be completed
\$25,000 - \$49,999	2 written quotes detailing purchase and/or scope of work to be completed
\$50,000 - \$99,999	3 written quotes detailing purchase and/or scope of work to be completed
\$100,000 +	Request for Proposal or Request for Tender strongly encouraged, when feasible or 3 written quotes detailing purchase and/or scope of work to be completed

PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

Upon receiving all required information and documentation, DNSSAB will review and process the service provider's application within 20 business days. This process will be conducted in accordance with the established budget, priorities, policies, and guidelines. Once the review is completed, DNSSAB will determine the appropriate funding stream for which the service provider qualifies.

When approving expansions of licensed child care spaces and applications for funding, DNSSAB will consider the following factors:

- Alignment with Strategic Frameworks: New spaces must align with Ontario's Access and Inclusion Framework, Nipissing's Directed Growth Plan, and service system priorities.
- Cost Effectiveness: The financial feasibility of the proposed expansion.



- Available Operating Funding: The availability of funds to support ongoing operations.
- Funding Capacity: The program's ability to access funds through other means.
- Program Budget and Financial History: The financial stability and history of the program.
- Child Care Licensing History: The program's history with child care licensing.
- Current Capacity: The existing licensed and operational capacity of the program.
- Age Groups Served: The age groups that will be served by the new spaces.
- Long-Term Viability: The sustainability of the program over the long term.
- Quality and Inclusivity: Investment in quality and inclusive programming.

DNSSAB will also consider and monitor the proportion of not-for-profit and for-profit new spaces created to maintain the current rate of not-for-profit spaces (87%) in accordance with provincial guidelines and the CWELCC agreement.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

DNSSAB may provide funding to Service Providers based on demonstrated cash needs to minimize large advance lump sum payments.

Service Providers must complete the work and utilize the funding by December 31, 2026, or by the prescribed date within the service agreement.



SECTION 4: ACCOUNTABILITY

FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Service Providers will be required to report on service data and expenditures supported by this Funding. Reporting requirements have been incorporated into the application document and will be made available once the application has been approved.

In accordance with Policies and Guidelines, DNSSAB reserves the right to review all financial components while ensuring funding objectives are being achieved.

LATE SUBMISSIONS

DNSSAB acknowledges that most Service Providers submit required information on time. The late submission process ensures DNSSAB has the information required to demonstrate accountability for public funds.

DNSSAB will continue to support Service Providers with timely data and financial documentation filing through outreach, training and resources. The process for late submission of financial reports is as follows:

If a financial submission is not received by DNSSAB within the established timeline, DNSSAB will:

- Inform the service provider that the submission is overdue and allow time to remedy the situation.
- Withhold payments of any funds payable if DNSSAB determines that the service provider is in breach of any of its obligations or the warranties.

Upon submission of the requirements, DNSSAB will revert to the normal payment process and include the total amount withheld up to that point.



DNSSAB reserves the right to suspend Funding (in year or in the subsequent year(s)). If a service provider has any outstanding submissions, DNSSAB may exercise its discretion by not providing funding in the subsequent calendar year.

The Service Provider may be required to prepare and submit additional information to DNSSAB and must ensure that its staff and board members will be available for consultation with DNSSAB upon request.

Any unspent Funds issued to a Service Provider during the funding year or Funds not used for the intended purpose will be recovered by DNSSAB.

NON-COMPLIANCE

Service Providers who are deemed non-compliant with the terms and conditions of the Agreement, Policies and Guidelines may be ineligible to receive future Funding.

SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

QUESTIONS & INQUIRIES

Questions about the CWELCC Start-Up Grant and ELCC Infrastructure Fund 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

Individuals inquiring about the CWELCC System are asked to complete the "[Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System Inquiry Form](#)".

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

APPEALS

Service Providers may bring any issues regarding the application and Funding decisions forward in writing by completing and submitting a [Service Provider Appeal Form](#) and supporting documentation.

DNSSAB will review and respond to the Service Provider's appeal within ten (10) Business Days of receipt of the appeal.

DNSSAB WEBSITE

Please visit [DNSSAB's Children's Services website](#) for additional information, guidelines, and resources.



SECTION 6: DEFINITIONS

In this document, all capitalized terms noted below shall have the following respective meanings:

- “Act” means the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, C.11](#) as amended, and the regulations thereunder.
- “Agency” means the Service Provider’s business.
- “Agreement” means the Agreement entered into between DNSSAB and the Service Provider.
- “Business Day” means any working day, Monday to Friday inclusive, excluding Statutory or other holidays, namely: New Year’s Day; Family Day; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Victoria Day; Canada Day; Civic Holiday; Labour Day; National Day of Truth and Reconciliation; Thanksgiving Day; Remembrance Day; Christmas Day, Boxing Day and any other day which DNSSAB has elected to be closed for business.
- “Calendar Day” means consecutive days, inclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, Statutory or other holidays.
- “Calendar Year” means the period from January 1 to December 31 of the respective calendar year.
- “CWELCC System” means the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System for early years and child care funding provided for in an agreement entered into by the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada.
- “Directed Growth” means DNSSAB’s local plan to target child care space growth to communities 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, DNSSAB has an approved target number of new spaces to create, supported by CWELCC funds.
- “DNSSAB” means the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board.
- “ELCC” means Early Learning and Child Care.
- “Eligible Child” or “Eligible Children” means any child, until the last day of the month in which the child turns 6 years old; and up until June 30 in a calendar year, any child who (a) turns six years old between January 1 and June 30 in that calendar year, and (b) is enrolled in a licensed infant, toddler, preschool or



kindergarten group, a licensed family age group, or home child care, as defined in the Act.

- “Eligible Spaces” means Licensed Child Care spaces for children aged from infancy up to 4 years of age operated by a Service Provider enrolled in the CWELCC System.
- “Ministry” means Ministry of Education for the Province of Ontario.
- “Policies and Guidelines” means the policies and guidelines of DNSSAB or Ministry, as amended or replaced or added to from time to time.
- “Service Provider(s)” means a licensed child care operator or licensee.





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