

MEDIA RELEASE

*For immediate release
September 23, 2022*

Lanark County approves first child care centre under new program

Lanark County is approving its first Canada-Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC) centre as part of the new \$10-per-day program established by the federal government in partnership with provinces and administered locally.

"We are excited to announce Pakenham Community Early Learning Centre is the first centre in Lanark County approved under the new program," said Emily Hollington, Lanark County Social Services Director. "The licensed child care sector is a critical component for families and quality of life in our community, and this is a great step toward making high-quality child care more affordable for our families."



The Pakenham Community Early Learning Centre is a licensed, not-for-profit child care centre serving children from infants to 12 years and their families. Located in the Village of Pakenham, it provides services at two sites: the main location at 106 Isabella St. and the school-aged program at Pakenham Public School.

Originally named The Linda Lowe Daycare Centre, it was established in 1983 by Linda Lowe with a capacity of 24. The child care program in Pakenham flourished and, in 2022, it was renamed Pakenham Community Early Learning Centre with a licensed capacity of 144, including 10 spaces for infants under 18 months, 15 spaces for toddlers up to 30 months, 54 spaces for preschool up to six years, 20 spaces for Kindergarten and 45 spaces for primary/junior school age up to 13 years.

The centre has an executive director and a volunteer board of directors consisting of six to eight members, including parents and community partners. Staff include six Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE), an RECE supervisor, five ECE assistants and three additional staff.

"As a long-standing member of the Pakenham community in Lanark County, the Pakenham Community Early Learning Centre is pleased to be participating in the CWELCC program," said Executive Director Beverly Renaud. "Sustainable financial support for all families is long overdue. This commitment from the government will also hopefully signal the beginning of the recognition of

MEDIA RELEASE

quality child care and early learning as important and valuable pieces of a child's educational journey."

The CWELCC system is being phased in between now and 2026. Child care operators indicate their intent to participate in the new system by applying to the county, and then working with county staff to ensure they are meeting provincially and locally established requirements. "As soon as a child care provider's application is approved, rebates can begin," Hollington said.

In June, Lanark County Council approved an application process for the new system, along with policies around funding, subsidies and workforce compensation. The program is 100 per cent subsidized by the federal and provincial governments.

The county is responsible for local implementation of the new system. In the first phase, which is underway, the goal is for families with children in participating licensed child care centres who are under age six or who turned six before June 30, 2022, including those currently receiving fee subsidies, to start seeing a fee reduction of up to 25 per cent until the end of this year. It is retroactive to April 1.

Affordability and workforce compensation will continue to be a focus in 2023, along with the funding formula, child care workforce, inclusion and expansion plans. Fees for eligible parents will be reduced by an additional 25 per cent starting in January. Licensees will charge parents the new reduced fee, and the county reimburses the provider the 50 per cent reduction. The workforce compensation component supports RECE staff who are low wage earners. Increased compensation is intended to achieve system growth and increased access to high-quality licensed child care.

"Subsidized child care offers big economic benefits for people to return to work, particularly women," said Warden John Fenik (Perth Mayor). "This year is a transitional year and is the starting point. The goal is to increase affordability for families and enhance compensation for lower-income child care system employees, which is good news for our community and the child care sector."

The existing child care fee subsidy program will continue to be available to support lower-income families seeking child care whether their provider is participating in the new system or not.

For more information about local implementation of CWELCC, visit <https://www.lanarkcounty.ca/en/family-and-social-services/canada-wide-early-learning-child-care.aspx> or call Lanark County Children's Services at 1-888-9-LANARK.

– 30 –

For more information/media interviews, contact:
Emily Hollington
Director of Social Services, Lanark County
1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101