



Ministry of Education

Professional Learning Funding Guidelines 2024

***For Consolidated Municipal Service Managers
and District Social Services Administration
Boards***

Released March 2024

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DEFINITIONS

In this guideline, the following terms will have the following meanings:

“**CMSM/DSSAB**” means a Consolidated Municipal Service Manager/District Social Services Administration Board designated as a Service System Manager as defined in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)*.

“**CWELCC**” means the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care System for early years and child care and the related funding provided to support it through an agreement entered into by the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada.

“**Funds**” means the money the ministry provides to the CMSM/DSSAB to allocate pursuant to the CWELCC System.

INTRODUCTION

The Professional Learning Funding Guidelines 2024 (“Guidelines”) have been released to provide CMSMs/DSSABs with guidance to support the implementation of the new funding for professional learning, under the Ontario Child Care Workforce Strategy, which continues what has been previously supported through the Canada-Ontario Early Childhood Workforce Agreement and which can be used to support mental health/resilience training for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and other staff.

These Guidelines outline the requirements of the 2024 professional learning funding under the CWELCC System.

Direction outlined in the Ontario Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service Management and Funding Guideline (2024) and the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Guidelines (2024) remain in place.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

1.1 PURPOSE

The ministry is providing funding to support professional learning to improve recruitment and retention of the Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) workforce and other program staff, and to support the implementation of the Canada-Ontario Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement. This funding will 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*.

Access to continuous professional learning opportunities can support higher levels of staff engagement, growth, recognition, professional efficacy and satisfaction. Enhancing current professional learning supports to include mental health information for the child care and early years workforce will promote more meaningful relationships, enriched experiences and a greater sense of well-being for children, educators and families.

1.2 ELIGIBILITY

Eligible recipients

CMSMs/DSSABs may enter into service agreements with child care licensees and EarlyON service providers to provide professional learning funding for eligible staff and eligible expenses.

Eligible staff

CMSMs/DSSABs must prioritize funding to provide the following staff with the opportunity to participate in one professional learning day:

- Program staff and supervisors in licensed child care centres (RECE, Non-RECE and director-approved)
- Home Visitors and providers in home child care agencies
- Program staff and supervisors in EarlyON Child and Family Centres

CMSMs/DSSABs may also support professional learning days for additional staff such as non-program staff (e.g., cooks), management (e.g., executive directors), resource consultants, and authorized recreation and skill building program staff, to meet local professional learning priorities within approved funding allocations for professional learning.

Eligible expenses

CMSMs/DSSABs must cover the expenses incurred by eligible recipients, including:

- Release time/supply staff to support the participation of eligible staff in the professional learning day and/or mentorship programs;
- Wages and benefits for additional hours worked to participate in the professional learning day (e.g., evening and/or weekend professional learning session);
- Costs associated with waiving parent fees on the professional learning day;
- Costs associated with the development and implementation of professional learning resources and mentorship programs;
- Travel costs (in accordance with the [Ontario Public Service Travel Directive](#)) to support attendance at professional learning opportunities (municipal policies pertaining to travel and accommodation may also apply if CMSMs/DSSABs wish to support expense claims above the thresholds set out in the [Ontario Public Service Travel Directive](#)); and
- Costs associated with hiring non-profit organizations and/or post-secondary institutions to develop and/or deliver early years professional learning for eligible staff.

1.3 IMPLEMENTATION

CMSMs/DSSABs should prioritize funding to support professional learning opportunities that build on or complement existing capacity building initiatives that respond to the need of their communities.

CMSMs/DSSABs have flexibility to determine how to implement one professional learning day and should consider the following:

- Priority areas for professional learning, as described in the section below;
- Timing and approach to implementation based on the availability of supply staff (for example, two half professional learning days);
- Supporting equitable access for all eligible staff, providers and supervisors in licensed child care programs and EarlyON Child and Family Centres; and
- Approaches that minimize disruption for families, through timely communication to provide families with sufficient time to plan for alternate care on a professional learning day where programs will be closed (for example, licensees should communicate the date of the professional learning day on their website or in the parent information board, choosing dates that typically have low enrolment, etc.).

Through the regular year-end reconciliation process, CMSMs/DSSABs must recover any funding that eligible recipients do not spend on the prescribed eligible expenditures and return to the ministry.

1.3.1 Priority Areas

CMSMs/DSSABs are encouraged to embed some or all of the following priority areas into the development of their professional learning strategies:

- Mental health and resilience training for staff
- Early years and child care pedagogical practices aligned with *How Does Learning Happen?*
- Anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion practices
- Incorporating Indigenous perspectives and pedagogies
- Supporting educators in building capacity to support children with special needs through inclusive practices
- Equity-based Communities of Practices (this is for Francophone and Indigenous communities)
- Strengthening management/administration skills for those in director/supervisory roles as well as those considering moving into these roles (for example, staff supervision, financial management, communication strategies)

Professional learning priorities should be offered in an integrated manner. For example, early years and child care pedagogical practices should be integrated with mental health and anti-racism and inclusive practices.

1.3.2 Mentoring Programs

CMSMs/DSSABs may use professional learning funding to support mentoring programs for individuals who may benefit the most (for example, ECE diploma students and/or new staff and supervisors). CMSMs/DSSABs may build on existing mentoring programs and/or pilot new mentoring programs.

1.4 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

CMSMs/DSSABs will be required to report total professional learning expenditures and service data in EFIS through regular reporting processes. To support the ministry with reporting and accountability requirements under the CWELCC Agreement and for evaluation of the ministry's Workforce Strategy, CMSMs/DSSABs are required to report on the following:

Data Element	Description
Total professional learning expenditures – Child Care	Funding (net of recoveries) used by eligible child care licensees who incur eligible expenses during the year
Total professional learning expenditures – EarlyON	Funding (net of recoveries) used by eligible EarlyON Child and Family Centres who incur eligible expenses during the year

Data Element	Description
Number of child care program staff and supervisors participated in professional learning	Total number of child care program staff and supervisors (RECE and non-RECE) in licensed child care centres, home child care visitors and providers that have participated in the professional learning day. Count each staff person once.
Number of additional staff participated in professional learning – Child Care	Total number of additional staff that have participated in the professional learning day in child care licensees. Count each staff person once.
Number of EarlyON program staff and supervisors participated in professional learning	Total number of program staff and supervisors (RECE and non-RECE) that have participated in the professional learning day in EarlyON Child and Family Centres. Count each staff person once.
Number of additional staff participated in professional learning – EarlyON	Total number of additional staff that have participated in the professional learning day in EarlyON Child and Family Centres. Count each staff person once.
Number of child care licensees (centre-based and home child care agencies) supported.	For the child care staff participating in the professional learning day, the associated total number of licensees supported.
Number of EarlyON Child and Family Centres supported.	For the EarlyON staff participating in the professional learning day, the associated total number of EarlyON Child and Family Centres supported.
Number of individuals participating in mentorship programs.	Number of individuals that have been supported through mentorship programs. Count each individual once.

APPENDIX A: SUPPORTING FRANCOPHONE AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

CMSMs/DSSABs may wish to connect with these organizations to obtain resources, collaborate and plan complementary supports for Francophone and Indigenous communities:

- [The Ontario Aboriginal Head Start Association](#) supports professional learning for child care and early years staff in urban Indigenous settings.
- [Firefly](#) supports professional learning for child care and early years staff in First Nation communities;
- [L'Association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario \(AFESEO\)](#) supports professional learning for child care and early years staff in Francophone settings.

APPENDIX B: MINISTRY RESOURCES

The following 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; and
- [*Think, Feel, Act: Empowering Children in the Middle Years*](#) research briefs.