

EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE

LOCAL UPDATE

Start Slide

Current Licensed Child Care Spaces

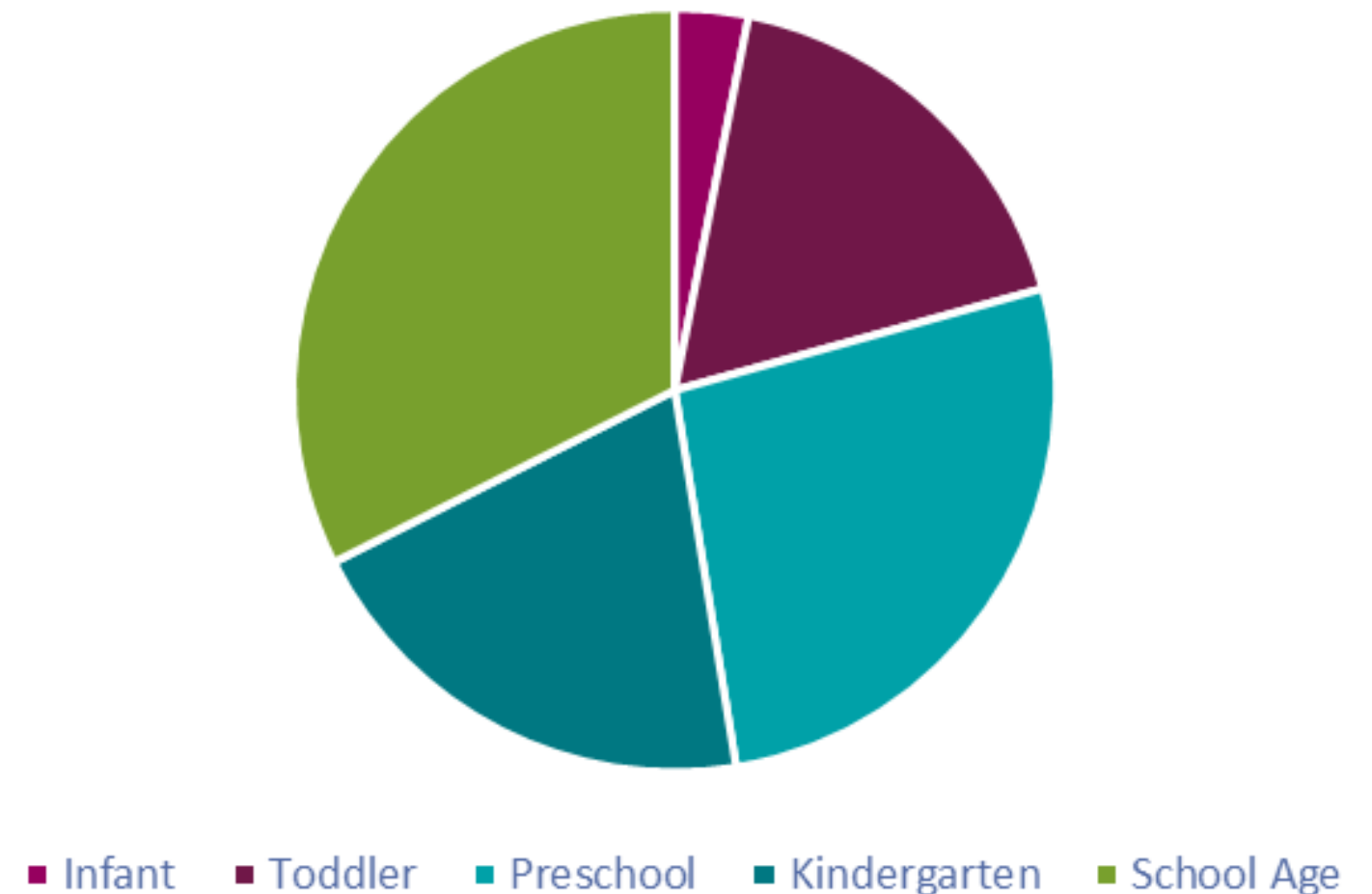


In Grey County there is a mix of licensed child care programs, including community based centres, school based centres and license home child care premises.

As of December 31, 2023 there were a total of 2250 licensed spaces across Grey County:

- Infant - 70
- Toddler - 396
- Preschool - 601
- Kindergarten - 453
- School Age - 730

Licensed Child Care Spaces in Grey County



Current Operating Capacity & Waitlists



Licensed child care operators report ongoing obstacles in recruiting qualified, quality staff to run their programs at their full licensed capacity.

In Grey County infant, toddler and preschool programs are currently operating between 70-80% of their licensed capacity, where before & after school programs are running between 60-75% of licensed capacity.

Grey County continues to work with local and provincial partners to support ongoing recruitment of staff.

As of December 31, 2023, operators reported 2129* children on waitlists for licensed child care

*Note - children may be reported in this number more than once as they may be on multiple waitlists

Canada Wide Early Learning & Child Care System (CWELCC)



The CWELCC system is designed to:

- give families access to more affordable and high-quality child care options
- help lower child care fees for parents of children under the age of six
- increase child care spaces
- support the child care workforce
- support inclusive child care

Licensed child care providers can participate in the CWELCC system to reduce fees paid by parents of children aged 0-6 years of age.

As of December 31, 2023, 87% of eligible spaces have opted in to the CWELC system in Grey County.

CWELCC Successes



- 87% of eligible licensed spaces in Grey County are enrolled in the CWELCC system
- Fees to families using these licensed spaces have been reduced by 52.75% compared to 2021
- In 2023, 1772 children were able to participate in licensed child care programming with their parents/caregivers paying reduced fees.
- Announcement of wage floor for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE)

CWELCC Challenges



- Current funding guidelines do not clearly address local operating costs.
- Operators are prohibited from increasing fees charged to families, resulting in operational pressures. Unplanned expenses such as rent or mortgage increases, rising utility and food costs run the risk of programs exiting the CWELCC System.
- The announcement of the wage floor for RECEs was welcome news in the sector, however SSMs have not yet received the funding or guidelines to support implementation of this initiative. Additionally, the funding only supports the wages of Registered Early Childhood Educators and does not support the wages of otherwise approved staff that support children in licensed child care.

CWELCC Targeted Expansion Plan



In 2022 the Government of Ontario Announced their targeted expansion plan for licensed child care. Information can be found here: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/canada-ontario-early-years-and-child-care-agreement>

A set allocation of spaces was assigned for the County of Grey, and at this time all expansion spaces have been allocated. More information about space allocation can be found here: [Grey County Targeted Expansion Plan](#)

New Partnerships



Knowing Our Numbers (KON) - Partnering with OISE - University of Toronto, and 42 other service managers, Grey County is taking part in a province-wide initiative to better understand the challenges of today's early years workforce with the goal of creating an evidence-based response to the current shortage of ECEs.

Infant and Early Years Mental Health (IEYMH) - Working with other service managers, Grey County is working with Dr. Jean Clinton and Lorrie Baird, to create training and resources for parents and early learning educators. Activities in 2024 include resource development, and in person training day with Dr. Clinton & Ms Baird, and the development of resources for parents to promote the importance of mental health starting in the early years.