



Committee Report

CEYD-25-05

To: Chair and Members of the Joint Social Services and Land Ambulance Committee
From: Ashley Vanderlaan, Director of Children’s Early Years
Date: Wednesday, June 11, 2025
Subject: Expansion of Wellington Place Child Care and Learning Centre in Aboyne

Background:

As the Service System Manager for child care and early years programmes and services, the Children’s Early Years Division (CEYD) is responsible for planning, coordinating, and administrating licensed child care for the Wellington service delivery area (Wellington County and Guelph). It is mandated by the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2024 to develop and implement a comprehensive five-year service plan that addressed local needs while meeting provincial guidelines. The priority of ensuring that families have access to high-quality, available, accessible, and affordable child care is outlined in the CEYD’s Child Care and Early Years Service Plan (2023–2027). In 2024, the Ministry mandated an addendum to current service plan entitled the Wellington Directed Growth Plan, Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care System (2023-26).

Through the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system, the Ministry of Education is working with Service System Managers to create 86,000 new CWELCC funded licensed spaces across the Province by the end of 2026, with a focus on underserved communities. Our area was provided a target of 1209 new CWELCC spaces in Wellington-Guelph for the period of 2024 to 2026. To date, our area has achieved 857 new spaces (325 in Wellington County and 532 in Guelph) with a remaining target of 352 new spaces by the end of 2026.

Update:

As outlined in the May Committee report, New Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Funding, the CEYD has been allocated approximately \$4.12 million in 2025 through two 100% Federal/Provincial funded programmes to support the creation of new licensed child care spaces under the CWELCC system:

Table with 4 columns: 2025 Funding Source, Total Allocation, Amount Committed, Remaining Balance. Rows include Infrastructure Fund, Start-Up Grant, and Total.

Of the Start-Up Grant, \$300,000 has already been committed in 2025 through an approved Directed Growth application for a community-based project. The remaining \$3.8 million is available to support capital and one-time costs for new child care spaces.

It is important to highlight that the Infrastructure Fund and Start-Up Grant must be committed by the end of 2025. With the year already half over, it is essential that the CEYD allocate funding to projects

that are ready to proceed. If these funds are not committed in time, they will be returned to the Province and lost as a local investment opportunity. Further, committed funds must be fully expended with spaces in operation by the end of 2026. The Ministry understands these are very tight timelines for new builds/additions and has confirmed that there will be no extensions.

Expansion at Wellington Place Child Care and Learning Centre:

To ensure these time-limited funds are used effectively, the CEYD recommends a strategic investment in the expansion of the Wellington Place Child Care and Learning Centre (Wellington Place CLCC) in Aboyne from 64 spaces to 79 spaces. Currently, there are 275 children on the infant waitlist, 214 children on the toddler waitlist and 198 children on the preschool waitlist.

Wellington Place CCLC currently has four programme rooms offering the following spaces:

- Room #1 – 10 infant spaces (birth to 18 months)
- Room #2 – 15 toddler spaces (18 to 30 months)
- Room #3 – 15 toddler/preschool (18 months to 48 months)
- Room #4 – 24 preschool spaces (30 to 48 months)

The proposed expansion of one room would result in providing 15 new toddler spaces, subject to Ministry licensing approval:

- Room #1 – 10 infant spaces (birth to 18 months) (New Addition)
- Room #2* – 15 toddler spaces (18 months to 30 months) (Retro fitted from infant to toddler)
- Room #3* – 15 toddler spaces (18 months to 30 months)
- Room #4 – 15 toddler/preschool spaces (18 to 48 months).
- Room #5 – 24 preschool spaces (30 to 48 months)

*Revised licence to accommodate 20% (3 spaces) from the lower age grouping provided child is 15 months of age and walking. Total=6 infants can be accommodated in these room combined.

Several factors that make the Wellington Place CCLC a strong candidate for expansion:

- Demonstrated need: The Ministry of Education has set a target rate of 37% for the population of children ages birth to 4 years. To date, the access rate for the Wellington service delivery area is 25.8% (13.5% for Wellington County and 34.8% for Guelph). The Township of Centre Wellington has one of the lowest access rates across the Wellington service delivery area for full-day, full-year licensed child care for children birth to age 4 (15.1%), and is therefore identified as a high priority in the Wellington Directed Growth Plan.
- Population growth: Centre Wellington is already the most populated of the seven rural municipalities in Wellington County and is expected to grow by 68.2% between 2021 and 2041, the highest rate in the County. Without action, child care access will continue to fall behind growing demand.
- Strategic readiness and cost efficiency: The proposed expansion at Wellington Place CCLC is both implementation-ready and cost effective. The building's architectural plans already include the provision of an additional programme room, allowing the project to move forward quickly without the need for major redesign or site preparation. This readiness reduces

timelines and costs compared to other potential sites that would be starting from the ground up but will require expedited capital approval processes to meet the 2026 deadline.

- Support for families and the economy: Expanding toddler spaces enables more parents to return to work, maintain income, and contribute to the local economy.

Advancing this project will assist the CEYD to meet the Provincial space target, aligns with and advances the CEYD's Directed Growth Plan, and ensures the County can fully leverage available funding before the end-of-year commitment deadline.

While Wellington Place CCLC is a ready-to-implement project, the CEYD remains committed to supporting the growth of licensed child care across the entire Wellington service delivery area. Applications for funding will continue to be available to local operators through a fair and transparent process. By advancing the Wellington Place CCLC expansion while maintaining support for community-led initiatives, the CEYD can make full use of available funding, respond to urgent child care needs, and strengthen the licensed child care system across Wellington-Guelph.

Operating Costs

In confirming potential funding for operating costs under the current CWELCC funding formula, staff have confirmed that the full cost of operations for the current 64 licensed child care spaces are 100% funded by the CWELCC system. Funding is provided under three streams of funding; CWELCC Base, CWELCC Growth Top-Up, and CWELCC Legacy Top Up.

The proposed addition of 15 new toddler spaces will not be eligible for the CWELCC Legacy Top Up and will therefore require an annual 100% County municipal contribution of approximately \$165,000 beginning in 2027. This assumes that the new spaces are operational towards the end of 2026 with no significant costs falling in that year.

Under the previous provincial funding model, the operation of the existing 64 spaces at Wellington Place was supported by a 100% County contribution in the amount of \$258,000. All municipal contributions for directly operated child care centres were eliminated with the implementation of the new provincial funding formula in 2025. This expansion will require a municipal cost be included in the budget on a go-forward basis.

Financial Implications:

Total projected capital costs of \$1.8 million would be completed funded through a combination of the Infrastructure Fund and Start-up Grant funding provided by upper levels of government. There would not be any required use of County reserve funds required to complete this expansion.

As indicated above, an annual ongoing 100% County cost of \$165,000 would be required starting in 2027. This would be included in the County's 2026 Budget and Ten-Year Plan process if approved.

Strategic Action Plan:

This report relates to the following objectives and priorities in the County's Strategic Action Plan:
Doing what the County does best – Providing Critical Daily Services for your residents

Attachments:

Appendix A – 3D Rendering from +VG

Appendix B – Site Plan from +VG

Appendix C – Floor Plan from +VG

Recommendation:

That the Joint Social Services & Land Ambulance Committee recommends to County Council approval of the expansion of the Wellington Place and Early Learning Centre in Aboyne;

That the design of +VG for an additional 1500 sq. ft. to accommodate up to 15 toddler spaces be approved;

That the project be funded from the ELCC Infrastructure Fund and the ELCC Start Up Grant, at an estimated cost of \$1,800,000 (including soft costs of \$400,000, and construction costs of \$1,400,000);

That \$165,000 100% County municipal funds be added to the 2027 budget and 10-Year Plan;

That the expansion project be completed using the construction management process in accordance with the County's Building Project Development and Approval Process Policy (Step 12 of the policy);

That the County Council members of the JSSLAC be considered the Building Committee if one is required (Step 8);

That the staff issue an RFP for pre-construction services (Step 12);

That staff be authorized to award the pre-construction services to the successful proponent (Step 12);
That staff and the consultant work with the selected Construction Manager to develop the final design and costing of the expansion project (Steps 10, 11 & 12);

That the final design and resulting Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) be presented to the appropriate Committee and County Council in September (or an earlier date) for approval (Step 16); and,

That the County Construction Manager's update reports be provided to the JSSLAC at their regular meetings (Step 20).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ashley Vanderlaan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Ashley Vanderlaan
Director, Children's Early Years

In consultation with/approved by:
Kevin Mulholland, Construction and Property Manager
Shauna Calder, Manager of Finance
Luisa Artuso, Social Services Administrator
Scott Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer