

City of Peterborough
Children's Services

Fee Subsidy Handbook

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Children's Services team work together to provide an accountable, caring, responsive and respectful service for the families accessing child care fee subsidy. We strive to build positive relationships with our families through open communication and by clearly outlining current practices for our parents, child care centre operators and our case managers.

As a family accessing child care fee subsidy, we have some important information to share with you to help you understand our practices and how they may effect your subsidy.

We ask that you read this information and keep it as a reference. Contact your case manager if you have any questions or concerns.

Children's Services Office: 178 Charlotte St.

My Case Manager is: _____

705 748 8830 ext. _____

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How to Apply

There are two ways to apply for subsidy.

- Telephone: call our office at 705 748 8830 and choose option #4
- Walk - In: visit our office at 178 Charlotte St.

One of our team members will gather your basic information and families who appear to be eligible will be booked into an appointment with a case manager, or placed on the waitlist if there is one.

Please have your most recent Canada Revenue Tax Notice of Assessment (NOA) with you when applying. This is the summary information that arrives after you file your income tax.

Waitlist

When there is a waitlist, everyone who applies for child care fee subsidy will be placed on our waitlist. An exception to this would be a family fleeing situations of domestic violence.

The waitlist works on a first-come, first-served basis. The date you applied for fee subsidy is your waitlist date

As funds become available, we will contact those on the waitlist with a letter giving directions to contact our office as soon as possible.

It is important for you to keep your address and telephone number up-to-date with our office so we can contact you if our waitlist is opened.

Will You Qualify?

You must meet the following criteria:

- You must be a resident of the County of Peterborough
- You must be a parent or guardian of a child under the age of 13 years.
- You must be employed, in school or in an approved training program.
- You must be in financial need. Your Canada Revenue Notice of Assessment will determine your financial need.
- You may qualify if you or your child have a recognized special need. For example: your child lives with a disability, or has a developmental need. A referral form is required in order to support the child's need.
- Families receiving Income and Employment Support Benefit (Ontario Works) may qualify depending on their activity (working, school). You will need to speak to your case manager before you apply for child care fee subsidy. Your Ontario Works Case Manager will make a referral to Children's services.

How is my financial need decided?

- We use your Canada Revenue Notice of Assessment, line 236
- Or we will use your Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB)
- All applicants are required to file an income tax return annually in order to be considered for child care fee subsidy.

I don't have my Notice of Assessment

You can contact Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and request your NOA at this toll-free number 1-800-959-8281

Appointments

What will my appointment be like?

- During your appointment, an income test is completed, which determines your available monthly income you may need to pay toward the cost of care (learn more on page 8).
- Funding for child care fee subsidies must also be based on your eligible hours (learn more on page 9).
- Once it is determined that you qualify, your case manager will create your child(ren)'s placement. At ongoing appointments, your child's placement need will be reviewed.
- Your approval letter will state when you are due for a review appointment and your subsidy contracted end date.
- You will be contacted each year to book an appointment to review your approved activity and financial eligibility.
- A file review may also be done at any time when there are changes to your address, employment, school or family.
- If your eligibility is not reviewed prior to your contract end date, your subsidy may be stopped and you will be responsible for the full cost of child care until your file review takes place.

You will need to bring the following items:

- Notice of Assessment or Canadian Child Tax Benefit from the current tax year.
- One months pay stubs and a letter from your employer noting your expected hours of work each month or school schedule and verification of start and end date of the school year.
- Families receiving income support through Ontario Works do not need to provide these items as they can be accessed through their case manager.

Ages of children that we subsidize

- Subsidy is available for children ages newborn to 12 years.
- Child care fee subsidy may be provided until your child's 13th birthday or until the beginning of the school year in which she/he turns 13 years of age.
- Parents of children with special needs may be eligible for fee subsidies for children under 18 years of age.

Subsidy Rates

Parent Rate

The parent rate is the amount you may need to pay toward your child care costs. During your appointment, an income test is completed, which determines your available monthly income you may need to pay toward the cost of care. The parent rate is calculated based on your available monthly income and the number of days the child(ren) will be attending child care. Parent rates are paid directly to your child care program. The Children's Services Program will subsidize the remaining amount.

Note: You are expected to pay your parent rate for all the approved days including statutory holidays, vacation, sick and absent days unless otherwise directed. For example: the centre may offer no-charge vacation days.

How much will I be expected to pay for child care?

Child care costs for subsidized families will be based on the family income. No family will pay more than the total cost of care.

Total Family Income (line 236 from NOA)	Daily Parent Child Care Fee for Licensed Child Care for Subsidized Families (Rounded to the nearest dollar and based on full time care)
\$0.00 - \$20,000	\$0.00
\$30,000	\$4.00
\$40,000	\$8.00
\$50,000	\$19.00
\$60,000	\$31.00
\$70,000	\$42.00

Important: If you have arranged your own child care and your child is currently attending a child care program, you are responsible for paying the full cost of care until subsidy is approved by Children's Services.

Hours of Care Eligibility

Funding for child care fee subsidies must be based on parents' eligible hours. "Eligible Hours" for child care fee subsidies are hours in which no parent in a household is able to care for his/her children personally due to participation in one or more of the following approved activities:

- Employment;
- Attendance at a training program;
- Attendance at an educational program verified by OSAP or college/university enrollment; and
- Any other employment assistance activity under the Ontario Works Act that is documented in his/her participation agreement, if the parent is an Ontario Works Participant.
- Any other child care needs must be discussed and pre-approved with your case manager. If approval was not secured, it may result in you paying for the full cost of care for the additional child care requirements.

Changes in Your Family

You are required to report all changes related to hours of work/school, housing, approved activities and family make-up (separation or new marriage).

Not reporting these important changes may result in you having to pay the City of Peterborough up to the full cost of care from when the change occurred.

When Do I need to Report Changes

Report Immediately

- Additional income due to a change in the family (new marriage or common law)
- If you are off work/school due to illness, injury or accident
- Changes in you or your spouse's work/school hours.
- If you remove your child(ren) from care.
- Address changes

Report at Your Next File Review

- If your annual income has decreased by 20% from your previous Notice of Assessment
- An increase in your annual income.

Changing Child Care Programs

- Families who wish to transfer their child to another child care program must:
 - * Provide the child care operator with the amount of days outlined in their policies and practices
 - * Contact the Children's Services office with ten (10) working days notice to complete any outstanding documents
- Operators are responsible for informing parents about their payment and it is your duty to pay any fees still owed to the centre. For example: if there is money owing to the centre from the parent, the centre will bill and collect the fee from the parent.

Moving Out of Peterborough County

- You must live in the County of Peterborough to be eligible for child care fee assistance.
- If you move out of the county, you are to contact your case manager prior to moving, to advise of the change in residency.
- Child care fee assistance is not transferrable to another region. If you plan to move, call your new municipality as soon as possible to find out their rules for obtaining child care fee subsidy. You may need to be placed on a waitlist in your new municipality.

Child Care Centres

Eligible Child Care Service Providers

- A "Finding Quality Child Care" guide is available, which provides information on service providers and programs and how to select the right care for your child. This guide is available on our website or at our office.

www.peterborough.ca/childrensservices

- It is your responsibility to visit the programs, check to see if there is a space for your child and get to know their policies.
- The child care centre or home child care agency you choose must have a Service Agreement with the City of Peterborough in order for fee subsidy to be sent to the centre.
- A child care directory with a listing off all child care programs that currently have a Service Agreement with the City of Peterborough is available on our website or at our office.

Absences from Child Care

Absent and Illness Allotment

- Your child will have 36 days per year for illness or absence. For the first year of fee assistance, this amount is adjusted depending on the time of year your fee assistance started. For example: if your child started subsidized child care in June, he/she would have 21 days until the end of the year.
- This allotment renews every January to 36 days if your subsidy is to continue for the full year.
- Absent days not used during the calendar year may not be carried over to the next year.
- Parents are expected to pay their parent rate on days your child does not attend the centre.
- If your child's absence allotment has been used, then you are responsible to pay the child care centre the full fee for all absent days over your allotment. The child care centre will bill parents and collect the fee.
- Additional absent days may be granted where your child has a documented, diagnosed special need. You will need to contact your case manager to discuss this option.
- It is your duty to manage your child's attendance. This is especially important if your child attends more than one centre. Information is not shared between centres; however your case manager will have access to all centre attendance.

School Holidays

- Subsidy will continue, and may increase to a full day of care if required, during school holidays, such as Christmas vacation. Parents are expected to pay their parent rate for these days.
- Absences from the centre at these times will be deducted from the absent allotment.

School Snow Days

- If school buses are cancelled due to a "snowstorm", your child may have to attend the child care centre. These days will need to be approved by your case manager. The child care program will contact your case manager to inform them of the added days in care.
- These added days may be approved by your case manager. The decision is based on available funding. You will want to talk to your case manager about getting approval for "snow days" before a snow day happens. Until approval is given by the case manager, you are responsible for the cost of care.
- The "snow day" policy only applies to those children whose school buses have been cancelled. Children who normally walk to and from school are not affected by snow days and are not eligible for any extended child care coverage.

Summer and Overnight Care

Summer Care

- If you are receiving fee subsidy already for your child, it may continue into the summer for your child and any eligible school-aged children.
- Child care hours may be increased to a full day if you are eligible for full day child care.

Summer Camp

- If you are receiving fee assistance already, you may apply to a summer camp program that has a service agreement with the City of Peterborough.
- You will need to consider if your space at your present child care centre will be available after summer camp has ended. Talk to your case manager and your child care program about this option.
- Talk to your child care program to see if they offer a summer camp program. Some summer camps will not provide sporadic child care.
- If you require summer care only, you will need to contact your case manager and have your name placed on our waitlist.

Overnight Care (Home Child Care)

- If your work or school schedule will not allow you to pick up your child before 10 pm., overnight care will be approved allowing for eight (8) hours of sleep time, plus reasonable time for traveling when your work or school ends.
- The approved period of care must not exceed twenty three (23) hours as stated in the Child Care and Early Years Act (2014).
- Informal home child care providers must be 18 years of age at a minimum (for programs that approve informal child care)

Job Search

- For people receiving Income and Employment Support Benefits (Ontario Works), job search is only available for two (2) days per week for three (3) months. Job search must be noted on your participation agreement. Talk to your OW Case Manager.
- For people not receiving Income and Employment Support Benefits (Ontario Works), who may have finished school, or lost their job, the City of Peterborough will provide up to a maximum of four weeks (full time) or six weeks (part time) for currently subsidized parents to search for employment without having fee subsidy withdrawn. For children attending part time care, the length of time will be determined based on the child's normal care requirements pro-rated over the previous 12-week period.
- Agencies will have their own preference for providing full time over part time care and parents will need to work within the agency guidelines. Job search status takes effect the date unemployment begins.

Self Employment

- Financial eligibility is based on line 236 of the Revenue Canada Notice of Assessment (NOA)
- Hours of care approved for subsidy are based on the current minimum wage and line 150 of the NOA
- A business plan is required in order to assist in deciding the hours of care that a family can qualify for.
- Additional hours may be approved for such things as administrative paperwork, sales calls, and purchasing supplies.

Break In Service

- A break in service lets families keep their child care fee subsidy place while not actively receiving subsidy. A break in service is only valid for four (4) months.
- For example: if a parent needs care through the school year, but does not need care through the summer, their case manager would place them in a break in service for July and August. Then subsidy would start in September when care is needed again. Parents would not have to go back on a waitlist.
- Seasonal employees may qualify for a break extension.

Bridging Service

- Students attending high school, community college or university will have semester breaks. During the “regular” school year, there is a semester break between first and second semester. Fee subsidy coverage during the semester break will be extended to ensure the child care space is available for the next semester.
- Many students may decide to continue on at school past the “regular” school year (for example: taking a summer course). You will need to contact the Children’s Services office twenty (20) working days prior to the end of the “regular” school year to ensure fee subsidy is available for them to take spring and/or summer courses.

Withdrawal without Notice

- Child care operators are responsible for contacting the Children’s Services office when children have been absent for three (3) days together without notice from the parents, and the operator has been unable to make contact with the family.
- Parents wishing to end care or transfer to another centre are required to provide the operator and the Children’s Services office with ten (10) working days notice before withdrawing a child from the child care program or transferring a child to another program or location.
- Fee subsidy may be terminated.

Change in Marital Status

- When a change in marital status takes place in a family and a client is requesting their spouse to be removed from the file, the spouses must be residing separate and apart for at least 90 days from the date declared by the client with no chance of reconciliation.
- Either parent must submit a written letter requesting that the name of the absent parent be removed from the file.
- When the sole support parent requests a change in status, one or all of the following documentation is needed:
 - Verification of the sole support parent's income from current NOA/CCTB is received; or
 - Separation papers reflecting change in marital status; or
 - Sworn affidavit as verification of change in marital status is required.
- A review of the family's file and eligibility will take place when the family composition changes.
- Exception: if the parent declares abuse, the Case Manager's Supervisor may waive the 90 day requirement.

Parental Leave after a Birth

- Parental leave is a special type of break in service granted to families who have had a birth in the family. It permits the other actively subsidized children in the family to continue receiving fee subsidy for up to 10 days after the birth.
- If the parent decides to return to work, school or a training program /less than 10 days after the baby is born, existing child care arrangements will continue.
- For families taking a full year leave from subsidy, ask your case manager to place you on the wait-list.
- Subsidized parents who think they might return to work/school within four (4) months of the birth of a new child can ask for a break in service.

What if I disagree with a decision or need to report a problem?

All employees for the City of Peterborough are expected to perform their duties with integrity, honesty and fairness and to conduct themselves at all times in a professional manner.

If you feel that an employee treated you improperly, we ask that you talk about the situation with the case manager and/or supervisor so it can be resolved. If you are not able to do so or if you are not satisfied with the response, then you can submit a formal written complaint to the Division head within a reasonable time of the incident (preferably within 5 days).

To assist the Division head in fully understanding the complaint, we ask you to complete a Client Complaint Form which can be found at our office or online at:

www.peterborough.ca/socialservices

The Division head will provide a written reply within 5 working days to confirm that the complaint has been received. When the investigation has been completed, the Division head will advise you of the findings.

Specific details of any disciplinary action taken will not be provided. Complaints about entitlement to any benefit must be addressed through the established internal review process.

I Couldn't Find the Answer to My Question

If you have other questions that we didn't answer in this handbook, please call or visit your case manager. We are happy to answer all of your questions.