

# Waterloo Region hopes new program will create more diverse child care <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

**WATERLOO REGION** — When Sheryl Mascoll started working as a child care consultant with the Region of Waterloo back in 2004, there was almost no-one who looked like her providing child care.

As a parent herself, “I would have loved to have someone who would be able to understand my culture and empathize with my challenges. Imagine a caregiver who speaks the same language as me and my child, cooks the same food, listens to the same music, celebrates the same holidays and traditions, but most of all, looks like me,” said Mascoll, who is Black.

A new program that helps people whose first language isn’t English become home child care providers will give a lot more parents that kind of option, she said Thursday at a virtual news briefing.

## SKIP ADVERTISEMENT

The program will provide peer mentoring and supports, as well as professional interpreters for key meetings with regional child care officials, with the aim of helping about 15 new caregivers set up home child care businesses in the first year.

“This is an opportunity for a woman who is new to Canada, likely feeling quite isolated, wanting to be able to work in the community and has the skills to be a great home child care provider but the only barrier is they don’t have enough English,” said Barb Cardow, the Region’s director of children’s services.

The program will boost the number of child care spaces, said Coun. Elizabeth Clarke — each home child care provider contracts with the Region to care for up to six children.

“Not only will we have more spaces available to families across the region, but they’ll be more representative of our community,” Clarke said. It will also provide more choice for parents. “Children will benefit from the skills, experience and rich cultural heritage of our diverse group of caregivers.”

It can feel very isolating to arrive in Canada as an immigrant without much English, said Nikolett Agoston, who like Mascoll now works as a child care consultant with the Region.

“As a newcomer to Canada I felt very isolated, even though my husband was supporting us. I knew I could do more, but I felt stuck. Some level of English is a requirement even for the most basic jobs, so there were not many options for me. My self-confidence was fading and I thought less and less of myself.”

Despite those hurdles, she went on to work as a home child care provider and earned her early childhood education diploma from Conestoga College. “Living through struggles myself that many newcomers are experiencing, I knew I wanted to be a part of (the new program),” Agoston said.

The program will cost about \$140,000 a year, and will be paid for out of a \$15-million fund included in the region’s 2021 budget meant to address the needs of Indigenous, Black and people of colour.

“This is something the community has expressed an interest in and a need for,” said regional Chair Karen Redman.

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** diversity <sup>[4]</sup>

inclusive child care <sup>[5]</sup>

family child care <sup>[6]</sup>

women <sup>[7]</sup>

newcomer families <sup>[8]</sup>

Source URL (modified on 26 Oct 2021): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/10/waterloo-region-hopes-new-program-will-create-more-diverse-child>

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