

# Wait lists for child-care in Waterloo region growing in anticipation of \$10 per day care <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** CTV News

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 11 May 2022

## AVAILABILITY

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

## EXCERPTS

Demand for child-care spaces in Waterloo region has long exceeded what is available, but with the recent announcement of a plan to eventually offer \$10-a-day child-care in Ontario, wait lists are growing even longer.

In March, the federal and provincial governments laid out an agreement that sees fee reductions starting in April 2022 with the goal of \$10-a-day care by September 2025.

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In Waterloo region, applications for licensed child-care spaces go through a central site, called OneList. In January, about 500 names were added to the list; in March and April, that more than doubled to approximately 1,100 added each month.

"The reality is there are more children needing licensed child-care than there are spaces. That's been a reality all along," says Barb Cardow, director of children's services at the Region of Waterloo.

More home child-care providers are now applying to be licensed, so they can offer the reduced rates. But Cardow notes it is impossible for licensed child-care centres to immediately increase capacity.

"It does take time and there does need to be additional funds," Cardow says, adding there are new facilities that are already planned.

RisingOaks is opening a new centre in September, attached to Oak Creek Public School in Kitchener. It will have 88 spots, but many have already been claimed.

"There are 700 families on that waiting list right now," says Parsons.

The advice for those who anticipate needing child-care in the future: get your name on the list as soon as possible, especially if you will need a spot for an infant younger than 18 months.

"We really do recommend the minute that you know that you are expecting, put your name on the OneList central registry," Parsons says.

The region is also asking families who already are on OneList to update their accounts and remove their child's name from centre wait lists if they no longer need or want a spot there.

Meanwhile, families with children already in care in Waterloo region are still waiting to get their first round of rebates.

As part of the federal-provincial announcement, families were told they would start getting up to 25% of their child-care fees reimbursed, starting in May 2022, retroactive to April 2022. But Cardow says rebates will start coming in the fall, as policies and procedures are developed.

"I know how excited and anxious people are – especially right now – they are certainly needing the relief, but I do want to say we are working on it as quickly as we can and families will be receiving these in the fall," Cardow says.

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

**Tags:** \$10aDay <sup>[4]</sup>  
child care <sup>[5]</sup>  
waitlist <sup>[6]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 5 Apr 2025):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/05/wait-lists-child-care-waterloo-region-growing-anticipation-10-day>

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