

# Elmira parents frustrated over lack of childcare options in rural communities <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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### Excerpts

There are around 8,300 children on waitlists for childcare across Waterloo region and in rural communities like Elmira, leaving some parents feeling frustrated.

Shilpi Katoch moved to a quiet Elmira neighbourhood because it was just a few minutes away from a school and a daycare. But with no room in that program for their two-year-old, they've been left to make hard decisions.

"We should not be sacrificing our career just because there is no proper childcare nearby," said Katoch. "I'm feeling very frustrated."

After waiting for more than year, she is relieved to have found a spot at a home daycare, but it is out of town.

"It's better than nothing," she said. "But I wish there were more options."

### Elmira daycare options

There are five licensed childcare centres in Woolwich Township, three of those are in Elmira.

The region said there are around 130 spaces in total in Elmira.

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"So, as of yesterday, it was looking like we had about 200 on our waitlist, and then we also have a waitlist book here for the families that are growing," said Wendy Elliott, a supervisor at the daycare.

She said families who already have their child in their care get priority for future kids, which means new families will have to wait even longer. Staff said a new family would likely have to wait about two years or more before a spot opens up for them.

Elliott said she wishes they could help more families, but they're also short staffed.

"So, in our case, if we do not get the proper staff that we need, our room will go from 24 to 15," worried Elliott.

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### The regions responds

The Region of Waterloo said waitlist times vary.

"Depending on the individualized needs of a family or child, such as the type of program they are looking for, the age of the child(ren) needing care, the hours of care needed, and other factors," staff said in an emailed statement to CTV News.

In April 2023, the region said there were more than 7,200 children on the waitlist.

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The region expects to have a total of 3,725 spaces by 2026, as part of the Canada Wide Child Care and Early Years (CWELCC) plan with the help of an \$8.4 million boost from the province.

"Wilmot, Wellesley, Woolwich Townships are all priority areas under our CWELCC growth plan," said Cardow, director of children's services at the Region of Waterloo. "We know that families in rural areas have unique needs. We are continuing to hold conversations with operators to identify how to best meet these needs and plan for growth."

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

options-rural

#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/08/elmira-parents-frustrated-over-lack-childcare-options-rural> [2]

<https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/elmira-parents-frustrated-over-lack-of-childcare-options-in-rural-communities-1.6532059> [3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856>