

Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care System Directed Growth Plan

Huron County | Update Report | 2025

Background and Provincial Direction

As announced in December 2022, beginning in 2023, the Ministry of Education has shifted child care expansion from open enrolment to a directed growth plan to create new child care spaces. A directed growth approach will ensure funding is available to support new spaces in communities most in need of access to high-quality, affordable child care.

As the service system manager, the County of Huron has developed a five-year directed growth plan that aligns with provincial directives and space targets while meeting the needs of communities across the region, particularly in underserved, remote and rural communities.

Huron County's Expansion Strategy (2024–2026)

The Ministry of Education has provided municipalities with space targets for CWELCC-funded growth and funding to support the expansion. Huron County is looking to expand the CWELCC system by 264 community-based locations between 2024–2026.

In Huron County, the focus for directed growth expansion will leverage existing child care centres in more populated areas to expand in place.

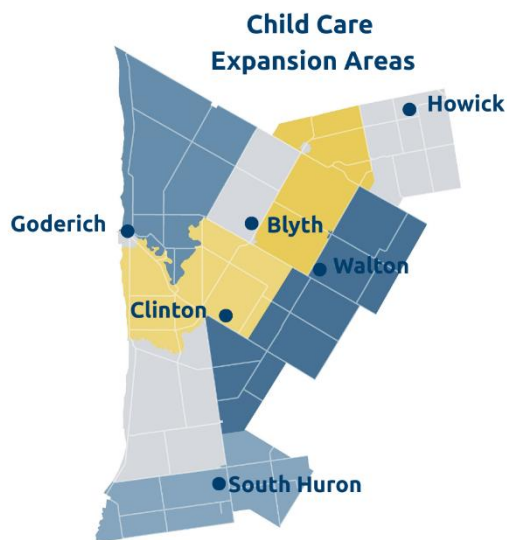
There will also be an exploration of underserved regions in the North and recruitment for home child care providers in those regions. This plan is incorporated in our five-year service plan. Approvals for growth are provided to operators by the Children's Services Division in alignment with our growth plans and space targets and in accordance with the Ministry of Education CWELCC guidelines for directed growth.

Identifying Priority Areas for Child Care Growth

Huron County's directed growth plan identifies regions with insufficient access to licensed child care. Huron County conducted an assessment using population growth projections and child care waitlist data to determine areas of highest need.

The findings identified the following areas as priority growth areas with demonstrated gaps in child care availability: Goderich, South Huron and Clinton

Additionally, Howick, Blyth and Walton were recognized as remote communities with emerging needs due to population growth and limited access to existing child care services.



Progress to Date and Future Expansion Plans

To date, child care centres in Walton, Goderich, North Huron and Clinton have received preliminary start-up funding, resulting in the successful and ongoing creation of additional licensed child care spaces.

As part of Huron County's ongoing commitment to address these service gaps, the current plan proposes the development of additional spaces in the following communities:

- South Huron
- Howick
- Clinton serves as a central hub for surrounding communities.

Supporting Provincial and National Child Care Goals

This directed-growth initiative supports the broader goals of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement, which aims to create 86,000 new licensed child care spaces in Ontario by 2026.

Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care System 5 Key Pillars

