

Ontario Works Directives

8.7: Child Care Supports

Legislative Authority

Section 1, 7(1) and (4) and 39(2) of the Act.

Section 49(1) of Regulation 134/98.

Audit Requirements

Documentation is on file to support decisions made.

Participant follow-ups are documented and have taken place.

Application of Policy

Child care is an essential support that allows participants to take part in employment assistance activities, make the transition to employment and achieve financial independence.

Through the planning process delivery agents will determine child care services appropriate for local needs and priorities and ensure that a continuum of child care supports are available for participants. Child care service planning should focus on the provision of seamless supports to individuals who are either participating in employment assistance activities, transitioning to employment or maintaining employment, including persons exiting to employment.

The following decision-making principles apply in managing child care resources:

- there is integration of participation planning and access to child care supports
- there are child care supports for participating in employment assistance activities, for transitioning to employment, and for maintaining employment
- there is cost-effective use of child care funding for participants

To maximize Ontario Works child care resources, delivery agents can purchase alternative, supervised care services such as:

- summer camps
- supervised homework programs

- recreational programs
- other supervised community-based programs

Child Care Supports

There are a number of child care supports which are available to participants who are involved in employment assistance activities, including:

- Ontario Works child care which covers the actual cost of formal/licensed child care, and informal/alternative child care arrangements up to the established maximums
- regular child care fee subsidies system under the **Child Care and Early Years Act** (e.g., for participants involved in the Learning, Earning, and Parenting Program (LEAP))
- fee subsidies for the Extended Day program (before and after school program) offered by school boards under the **Education Act** as part of full-day kindergarten
- advance child care payments

In addition, participants who are employed may be eligible to receive child care support through child care deductions which include:

- deductions made for the actual cost of licensed child care or the actual cost of the Extended Day program (before and after school program)
- the actual cost of informal child care up to the prescribed maximum per child (see [Directive 5.4: Child Care Deductions](#) for more information)

Parents should also be encouraged to ensure they are accessing other financial supports such as the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS) and the federal Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB). Both the OCCS and the UCCB are exempt as income for the purposes of social assistance (see [Directive 5.1: Income and Exemptions](#) for more information).

The use of child care deductions should be maximized and used where a regular child care fee subsidy is not available. Participants who are currently receiving Ontario Works child care supports continue to receive child care supports until they are eligible to access child care deductions or receive a regular child care fee subsidy.

Regular child care fee subsidies are used on a priority basis to support employment. In particular, regular child care fee subsidies are used to support participants transitioning into work or exiting to employment. If a regular child care fee subsidy is not available, delivery agents should plan for transitional supports for child care to ensure that the individual is able to maintain employment including those exiting to employment.

Administrators in First Nations and northern communities have the discretion to exercise flexibility when approving employment activities and/or expenses based on cultural and geographic considerations in order to support employment outcomes for clients.