

# INVESTMENT IN CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS SUPPORTS IN THE COUNTY OF RENFREW

## Overview

The County of Renfrew is experiencing significant growth across its communities, particularly in the **Town of Petawawa**, one of the fastest-growing areas in the region. Petawawa is home to **one of Canada's largest military bases**, and by 2026, an additional **400 troops and 180 command members** are expected to be posted there. As these men and women prepare to serve our country, it is critical that their families have access to safe, reliable, and high-quality child-care and early years programming. Accessible childcare is essential to supporting their transition, ensuring family stability, and enabling military members to continue serving with peace of mind knowing their children are well cared for.

## Current Context

As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager for childcare and early years in the County of Renfrew, we are working diligently to meet the needs of all families – including military families, low-income households, newcomers to Canada, Indigenous families, and racially diverse populations. However, demand for spaces and supports continues to exceed supply, particularly in high-growth communities such as Petawawa, which has been identified as a priority neighbourhood in the County's Directed Growth Plan due to its rapidly expanding population and unique community needs. There are approximately 6000 children on wait lists for licensed child care in Renfrew County demonstrating the high need across the region. While we have made significant progress under the **Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELECC)** system, our region requires **additional investment** to expand spaces and sustain operations.

EarlyON programs are the only free, low-barrier services that support families with children aged six and under. These essential programs provide opportunities for families to connect with qualified staff, learn about child development, and access parenting supports. In Renfrew County, there are eight EarlyON programs currently operating, including two mobile programs, one francophone program, and one Indigenous program, ensuring services are available to diverse communities.

**EarlyON Centre budgets have not increased since 2018**, significantly limiting opportunities for program expansion and innovation. Increased funding is needed to allow EarlyON programs to grow and adapt in response to the evolving needs of families, including the introduction of new approaches to better reach those facing barriers to participation.



Additionally, funding allocations must recognize the unique realities of rural service delivery, including higher transportation costs and the need for equitable hours of service to ensure accessible programming for all families. Without additional funding, EarlyON programs are unable to expand or enhance services, as they are already operating at high capacity despite many families in the community remaining unreached.

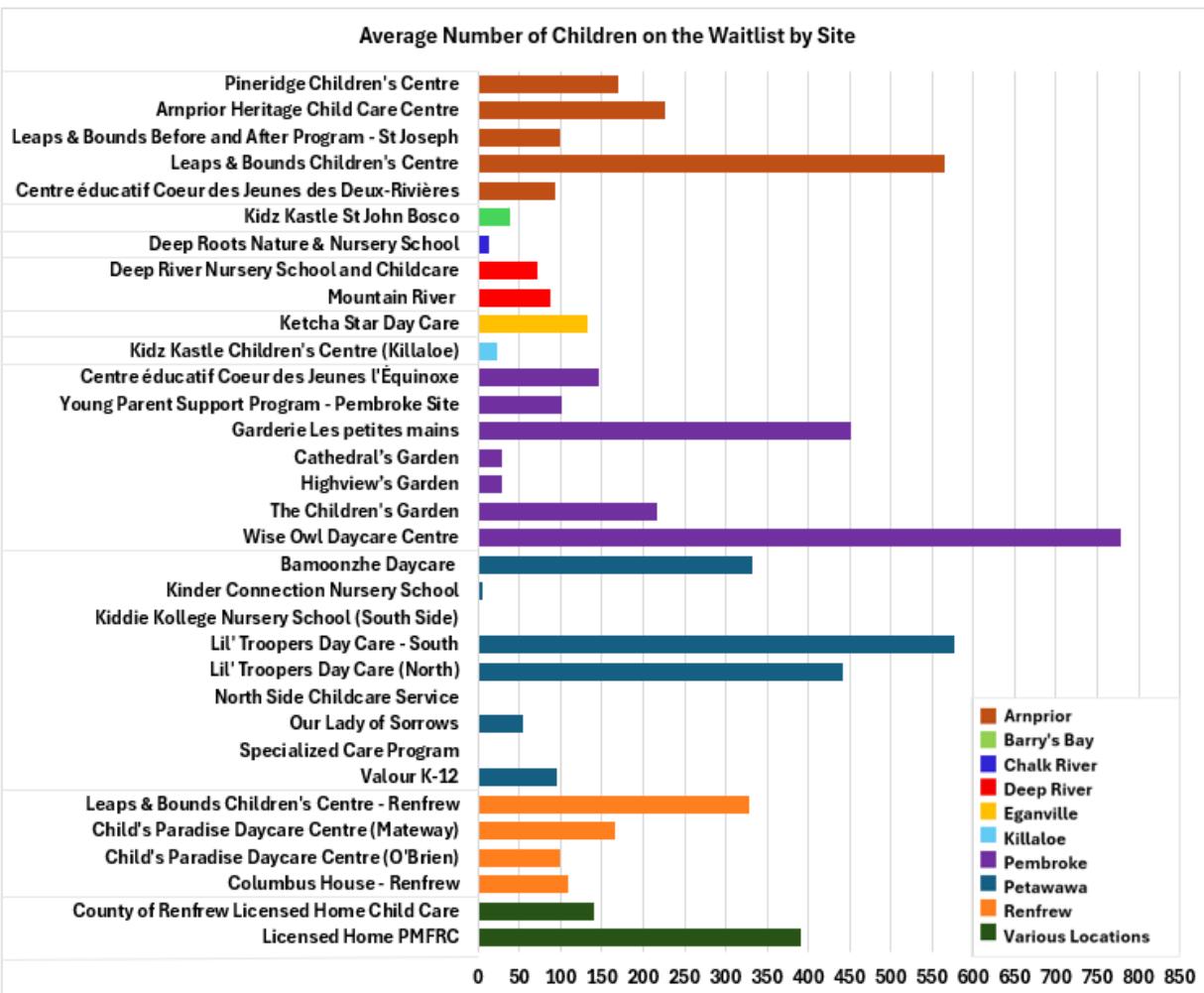
## Funding Request

The County of Renfrew is requesting **additional provincial and federal investment** to:

- **Expand the number of CWELCC spaces** within the County, particularly in the Town of Petawawa, to meet the needs of military and civilian families;
- **Provide necessary infrastructure funding** to support the construction of new child-care and early years facilities, ensuring the County is prepared to meet growing demand;
- **Increase funding for EarlyON programs** to enable the delivery of innovative, inclusive, and culturally responsive programming across our communities; and
- **Enhance equity of access** by finding new ways to reach families who face barriers to participation.

## Why Your Support Matters

Investing in child-care and early years services in the County of Renfrew is an investment in the wellbeing, stability, and prosperity of families who serve our country and contribute to our communities. Strengthening this foundation will ensure all children – regardless of income, background, or circumstance – have the opportunity to thrive. We look forward to partnering with the Ministry of Education to advance this shared vision for the future.



## EarlyON Child and Family Centre Data

Data Element	2025
Number of unique children served	5,825
Number of visits made by children	25,524
Number of unique parents or caregivers served	2,694
Number of visits made by parents or caregivers	17,954