



Child Care & Early Years

TBDSSAB manages the child care and early years service system for the District of Thunder Bay. We fund and support most licensed child care and EarlyON programs in our District. TBDSSAB manages the child wait list for the programs we fund. Families can pay less for child care through fee subsidies and the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program (CWELCC).

System Overview

TBDSSAB values the importance of investing in the physical, social, emotional, and economic health of our communities by supporting child care and early years programs that are accessible, affordable, inclusive, responsive, and of high quality.

As service system manager for the District of Thunder Bay, funded by the Ministry of Education, TBDSSAB administers:

- Operating funding for most licensed child care centres and all EarlyON child and family programs;
- Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Program (CWELCC), which funds licensed spaces at a reduced fee to families;
- Licensed private home child care;
- Child care fee subsidy for families;
- Special Needs Resource Program;
- Professional learning for educators;
- Capacity building processes for programs;
- ECE Recruitment and retention initiatives.



3,057 licensed
child care spaces



24 child care
service providers,
with 50 program
locations



36 licensed private
home spaces



16 EarlyON
programs



546 total program
staff / educators



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Impact Highlights

October 2025

2025 Highlights*

100% CWELCC opt-in amongst
TBDSSAB-funded programs.

\$22/day child care fees through
CWELCC for children ages 0-5.

444 fee subsidy recipients.

2,933 unique children served at
EarlyON programs.

3,812 children on the **child care**
wait list currently seeking care.

165 children supported through the
Special Needs Resource Program
in partnership with Children's Centre
Thunder Bay.

85 students received **ECE bursary**
for 2025/26 school year.

12 graduates from **Fast Track**
program in 2024/25 school year,
including students from across the
District of Thunder Bay

** Current as of Aug 30, 2025*

Workforce Growth

Our child care service system relies on the workforce maintaining a balance between having enough educators to staff programs and having enough programs with open positions to attract more people to the field.

TBDSSAB has a longstanding partnership with Confederation College to invest in the next generation of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs). Through this partnership, students can access:

1. Free Pre-ECE certificate
2. ECE Program Bursaries
3. Fast Track ECE Program to support those working in the field with prior learning and work experience on their path to become a registered ECE.

The Ministry of Education provided TBDSSAB with newly calibrated Direct Growth Targets for 2025/2026. We are on track to meet our new target of 196 new full-day licensed CWELCC spaces by the end of 2026. New and/or expanded partnerships to be announced once service agreements are in place.