

October 2026



VOTING EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Election Day is Monday October 26th, 2026
Advance voting is available from Tuesday, October 6th to Sunday, October 11th from 10AM to 7PM

Municipalities play an important role in early learning & child care.

- Mandated as a service system manager (SSM)
- Responsible for planning neighbourhoods and local services
- Provide public delivery of services
- Administer funding and fee subsidy programs
- Oversee special needs resourcing
- Can create opportunities for workforce leadership through professional learning

These are the traditional municipal government roles but, as we've seen since CWELCC*, these roles can and should evolve. There are opportunities for municipal leaders **to do more**. **Electing Early Learning & Child Care Champions makes a difference**. Finding and nurturing progressive champions at the city level can do great things for local child care such as; advocating to other levels of government, ensuring that early learning and child care are a central part of community planning, and making motions to set local priorities.

*CWELCC: Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care, also known as the \$10aDay program



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR LOCAL CANDIDATES

These questions reflect the recommendations of child care experts in the Institute for Municipal Finance and Governance publication, "The Municipal Role in Child Care". Some of the initiatives mentioned may already be in place in some regions, but in all places they could be strengthened.

Securing a Seat at the Table: How will you advocate for municipalities to have a direct voice in provincial and federal policy discussions under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreements?

Community Collaboration: Will you support creating or strengthening a local early learning and child care advisory committee that brings together municipal planners, community child care operators, Early Childhood Educators, parents, Indigenous leaders, school boards, and advocacy groups?

Tackling the Workforce Shortage: Child care expansion across Ontario is constrained by an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) recruitment and retention crisis. Will you support using municipal system management tools to establish competitive local wage benchmarks, benefits, pensions, and professional development support for ECEs and child care workers?

Unlocking Municipal Assets: What specific actions will you take to make city-owned land, vacant public buildings, and civic facilities (such as recreation and community centres) available for new public or non-profit child care spaces?

Direct Municipal Operation: Do you support maintaining or expanding municipally operated child care programs to meet supply shortages and service gaps, promote pay equity, and establish high-quality standards?

Dedicated Coordination & Strategy: As part of ongoing local child care service system planning, do you support establishing a comprehensive municipal child care strategy and aligning child care expansion with overall city planning?

Reducing Land Use Barriers: Will you advocate for updating municipal zoning bylaws to permit child care facilities across commercial and residential zones without imposing costly or lengthy rezoning processes?

Leveraging Developer Contributions: What is your position on utilizing development charges, Community Benefits Charges, or dedicated reserve funds from private developments to help finance local child care infrastructure?

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH CANDIDATES

- Host centre tours
- Talk at the doorstep
- Attend or organize a townhall or all-candidates meeting
- Share materials/resources like the [five papers](#) outlining the current & possible roles of municipalities in supporting child care