

## County funding bursaries for ECE at Georgian College

**By Paula Brown**

Dufferin County is funding new bursaries with Georgian College to support the Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce in the region.

A joint press release issued last Thursday (Aug. 11) announced the funding of 18 new bursaries, for Dufferin County residents pursuing early childhood education at Georgian College, to help meet the needs for more ECE workers.

“Accessible, inclusive and high-quality child care is essential to our economy and early childhood educators are at the forefront. Without a viable workforce, there is no child care,” said Lori-Jane Del Medico, program manager for Dufferin County’s Early Years and Child Care. “We’re committed to supporting and investing in the next generation of early childhood educators and we hope these new bursaries will make the required education and training more accessible for students.”

The bursaries are valued at \$2,000 each and will be presented to full-time students who demonstrate financial need. The funding may be renewed in year two of the program if students maintain good academic standing.

To promote diversity within the ECE sector, four of the bursaries will be available for students who self-identify as Black, Indigenous or Francophone.

“The bursaries for students will remove a barrier to those considering this in demand career path, and it will support them in becoming qualified Early Childhood Educators able to meet the workforce need,” said Brenda Burman, manager of Campus, Government and Employment Programs for Orangeville and South Georgian Bay campuses.

In August 2021, the provincial and federal governments signed a new Early Childhood Workforce Agreement with a one-time funding of approximately \$149.9 million to support the retentions and recruitment of high-quality child care and early years workforce.

The Early Childhood Education program at Georgian College is offered at their Orangeville, Orillia and Owen Sound campuses.

Admission is still open for the Early Childhood Education program, which will begin in September. Those who wish to learn more about the bursaries and apply can visit: [www.geogriancollege.ca/dufferinECED](http://www.geogriancollege.ca/dufferinECED).