

Bursary funding enhanced for childhood educator program at Georgian]

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The County of Dufferin is continuing to invest in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector with additional funding to ECE bursaries at Georgian College.

The county announced an additional \$80,000 in funding for ECE bursaries at Georgian College on Tuesday (April 18).

"Dufferin County is committed to supporting and investing in the next generation of early childhood educators and increasing diversity in the ECE sector," said Coun. Darren White, chair of the county's health and human services committee.

"We are proud to announce our additional \$80,000 investment to help build new and renewed capacity in the local ECE workforce, and hope these bursaries will increase accessibility for the next generation of dedicated ECEs as they pursue education and training through Georgian College's Early Childhood Education Program."

Dufferin County initially invested \$72,000 in funds to launch the Dufferin County ECE bursaries beginning in Winter 2022 as part of its workforce development strategy. With the additional funding, Dufferin County has now invested \$152,000 to establish a renewable bursary program for local residents pursuing early childhood education studies at Georgian College.

"Georgian College is proud to partner with Dufferin County," said Deb Bumstead, Georgian ECE coordinator. "The County's generosity will result in a more positive learning experience for students and ultimately grow our early learning sector of quality educators."

Bursaries available through the county funding include the Dufferin County Early Childhood Education Bursary, a \$2,500 bursary available to full-time students entering the ECE diploma program, and the Dufferin County Early Childhood Education Access Bursary, available to full-time Black, Indigenous or Francophone students entering the ECE diploma program at Georgian.

The bursary is renewable in year two of the program with demonstrated financial need and good academic standing.

According to the county, the investment could help fund up to 71 of their ECE bursaries for Georgian students over the next three academic years.

"Qualified early learning and care professionals like Registered Early Childhood Educators are a vital part of high-quality child care," said Lori-Jane Del Medico, program manager for Early Year and Child Care in Dufferin County. "Without a vital workforce, there is no child care. We're committed to supporting the next generation of early childhood educators, and are proud to continue to invest in these Georgian College bursaries."

The ECE program is offered at Georgian College's Orangeville, Orillia, and Owen Sound campuses. In the ECE program, students learn to facilitate the development of children from birth to 12 years old while encouraging their feelings of self-worth and social-emotional resiliency. Students are also prepared to design and implement play-based experiences, focusing on children's interests through indoor and outdoor play opportunities.

The next cycle of application for the bursaries will close on May 7. For more information and to apply, visit: georgiancollege.ca.