



Children’s Services Division COVID-19 Pandemic Update

April 13, 2020

In this special edition of the Early Learning Update, the Children’s Services Division has summarized key announcements, as related to licensed child care operators during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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State of Emergency Extension

Please see the [Ontario Newsroom news release](#) which speaks to the **extension of the state of emergency in Ontario**. This declaration extends the current order for the closure of child care centres (with the exception of home child care and approved emergency child care sites) and EarlyON programs. The state of emergency is extended until May 12, 2020 at this time. The declaration of emergency order can only be renewed for up to two weeks at a time. Any future extensions will be announced by the Government of Ontario. This and all Provincial news can be found on the [Ontario Newsroom website](#).

Emergency order halting Parent Fees

On Friday April 10, the Province issued an emergency order immediately preventing any child care operator from charging parent fees where care is not being provided. The order also means that parents cannot lose their child care space because they are not paying fees during this period. This will help provide much needed relief for parents during the outbreak. See the [Ontario Newsroom news release](#) .

Emergency Child Care

Following the directive of the Government of Ontario, The Regional Municipality of Durham is offering **emergency child care to eligible health care and frontline workers, at no cost**. Emergency child care services are being offered for children from birth to 12 years old and is reserved exclusively for eligible health care and frontline workers who have no other alternatives. The safest option for families is to have children remain at home if possible. Please share the [Durham News release](#) and the [online application](#) with families who may be eligible and have no other options.

The Emergency Child Care plan has moved forward and is expanding based on demand at a rapid pace. To accommodate the timelines, The Regional Municipality of Durham developed COVID-19 related policies and procedures then modified the licenses of the Regionally run child care sites to begin offering care the week of March 30. Additionally, the Region has partnered with local licensed child care operators and home child care agencies who have a Fee Subsidy Purchase of Service Agreement with the Region to provide emergency care as demand has required. Currently 24 hour care is available in Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa, Clarington and Uxbridge, and we are working to open more facilities across the region according to need. As the need for emergency child care expands, I will reach out individually to additional operators based on client need. Only those who had indicated interest in providing emergency child care will be contacted as needed. Additional sites will be included based on criteria including client need, site location, site amenities, staffing capacity (24 hour operations), physical space (both indoors and outdoors), etc. I thank all of you who have reached out to me to indicate your support for this service. I would like to extend a thank you to PRYDE Learning Centres and the GTA YMCA for partnering with us to open the first of our phase two (expansion) sites.

Funding

In recent days, the [Federal Government economic response](#) for individuals, businesses and industries has been released. We encourage you to apply for this Federal funding to support your business during the closures.

The Children's Services Division has continued to flow monthly Wage Enhancement and General Operating funding for March and April based on current allocations, and Fee Subsidy payments for March based on attendance with a plan to reconcile to actuals where needed once centres re-open. As noted above, organizations are encouraged to take advantage of the Federal economic response programs where eligible to sustain the fixed costs of operations going forward. Once the federal, provincial and local funding information is clarified we will be able to implement a reconciliation process for funding. The Children's Services Division continues to work with the Ministry of Education to develop an approach to sustain a reliable child care sector for the residents of Durham. We are committed to working with you to maintain the strong, quality child care sector, built from the hard work and dedication of the ELCC sector here in Durham Region.

Since the closures, we have been in contact with you to gather information on your approach to fees and salaries. Over the coming days we will connect with each of you once again to gather more detailed information on your current financial circumstances to determine the level of support needed which in turn will inform our recovery plan for child care. At this time, the Region of Durham Children's Services will continue to flow funding to operators at current funding levels. Once the child care recovery plan has been developed, including clear communication from the Federal and Provincial governments on the resources that may be made available to the Early Learning Community, a review of payments will be made and the funding received will be reconciled and/or repurposed as necessary.