

Child Care and Early Learning e-Newsletter

Issue 18

May 6, 2020

Welcome to The Regional Municipality of Durham's Child Care and Early Learning updates e-newsletter. This edition is to update child care operators on health-related recommendations and information related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Spotlight: The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates

As the situation around the globe continues to evolve, we would like to provide you with updates on information as we receive it. A list of supports applicable to licensed child care operators is available at durham.ca/quality. This website is regularly updated, so be sure to select "receive email updates" at the bottom of the page to stay connected. In addition, please be sure you monitor the Federal, Provincial and Local government web sites (listed below) for relevant updates on how to keep you and your staff, families and children calm, safe and well.

[Ontario Extends Emergency Order until May 19, 2020:](#)

On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government is extending all emergency orders that have been put in place to-date under s.7.0.2 (4) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* until May 19, 2020. This includes the existing closures of child care and other businesses. For a full list of closures related to the emergency order, please visit the [Province of Ontario website](#).

[Provincial Emergency Information and Orders:](#)

The declaration and orders fall under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. For details on these declarations and orders please refer to the links above or visit the Provincial Emergency Information and Orders website.

[School Closures Extended to Keep Students, Staff and Families Safe:](#)

Please see the Ontario Newsroom News Release sent April 26, 2020 regarding the extension of School Closures to at least May 31, 2020.

[Statement from John Henry](#), Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer on a State of Emergency in Durham Region.

Public Health Agencies

Public health agencies at every level are working together to provide accurate information, recommendations and/or direction to the public. Any direction to the public will come from the Government of Canada Public Health, the Province of Ontario Public Health and/or the Medical Officer of Health for Durham Region (Durham Region Health Department). **In any situation where public health is impacted, the Children's Services Division will defer to the below Public Health agencies for any direction or recommendations.**

[Durham Region Health Department:](#)

The Durham Health Department has launched a new webpage to provide updated information on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This website is updated daily and contains details about the virus, in addition to ways it is spread and how we can protect ourselves.

[Ontario Ministry of Health:](#)

Learn about how the Ministry of Health is slowing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Ontario. Find out how to protect yourself, what to do if you're sick after you travel and how to recognize possible symptoms.

[Public Health Agency of Canada:](#)

Information related to travel advisories, awareness resources, self-assessment tools and Canada's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

[World Health Organization advice for the public:](#)

Information on when and how to use masks, advice for getting workplace ready and 'Myth-buster' information.

[Statement from Dr. Robert Kyle](#), Medical Officer of Health on COVID-19 in Durham Region.

Mandatory Closures

On March 17, 2020 the Government of Ontario issued a mandatory closure of all licensed child care centres and EarlyON Child and Family Centres. This decision came from the advice of Dr. Michael Williams, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and is aligned with the Declaration of Emergency made by Premier Doug Ford.

[When will child care centres open?](#)

Licensed child care centres will reopen when the Declaration of Emergency is lifted by the Provincial Government. Mandatory closures can only be given every 14 days; therefore, the Province will reassess for an extension or end closures every two weeks.

[Why are schools set to open on May 31?](#)

The closures of schools are controlled directly by the Ontario Ministry of Education, under the directive of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Licensed child care centres, on the other hand, fall under the Declaration of Emergency, which rolls out every 14 days.

[Are some centres exempt from closures?](#)

Yes. Licensed home child care providers, unlicensed home child care providers, and centres deemed by the Municipality as sites for Emergency Child Care are exempt from mandatory closures. However, very stringent policies and practices are in place to ensure the health and safety of children, educators, and families.

Important Information for Businesses in Durham Region

[The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Program:](#)

As a Canadian employer whose business has been affected by COVID-19, you may be eligible for a subsidy of 75% of employee wages for up to 12 weeks, retroactive from March 15, 2020, to 6, June 2020.

[Invest Durham – Resources for Businesses in Durham Region:](#)

The Durham Economic Task Force has launched a website is for businesses in Durham Region regarding government programs, services and supports available during the COVID-19 pandemic. The site is updated at least once daily.

[Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan:](#)

The Government of Canada is taking immediate, significant and decisive action to support Canadians and businesses facing hardship as a result of the global COVID-19 outbreak. Stay informed as updates are released in regard to small business wage subsidies, small and medium-sized enterprise loans, and a co-lending program.

[Stop the Spread](#) – Business information line now open (1-888-444-3659):

The province has launched a toll-free line to provide support to Ontario businesses who have questions about the emergency order to close at-risk workplaces.

Information for Child Care Service Providers

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. 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. **If your organization is making any changes in business practices or decisions regarding operations post-closure, please inform Children's Services by contacting Julie Gaskin at Julie.gaskin@durham.ca. It is also recommended that agencies refer to and/or update their pandemic plan during this time.**

[Funding via Economic Support Options:](#)

- Child care operators are encouraged to take advantage of the federal and local opportunities for economic supports. We have provided a summary of economic support options on our [website](#) and will update regularly.
- Reconciliation for the 2020 year will be complex – we are recommending everyone to be diligent in maintaining documentation of all economic support applications (both acceptances and declines) as this information will be critical to reconciling 2020 funding.
- For guidance on applications or clarification on these supports, please contact the organization providing the support for guidance. Children's Services staff are unable to give direction on the multitude of supports that are managed outside of our Department.

Supports for Families and Children

[Emergency Child Care for Essential Workers:](#)

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. Currently, those eligible for this service are receiving care through the seven licensed child care centres and licensed home child care providers. Operators of privately-owned centres will be contacted if the community need exceeds the current capacity. Please share the latest [Durham news release](#) and the [online application](#) with families who may be eligible and have no other options. 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.

[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.

[The Canada Emergency Response Benefit:](#)

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) provides temporary income support to workers who have stopped working related to COVID-19. Eligible workers would receive \$500 per week for a maximum of 16 weeks. Applications are now [accepted online](#) and a website dedicated to [answering common questions](#) have been created by the Federal Government.

[Employment Insurance Benefits & Leave:](#)

Employment Insurance benefits and leave information for workers and families, as well as how to apply and submit a report. All application for employment insurance must occur online.

[COVID-19 Durham Community Resources:](#)

We're helping to get the word out to support vulnerable and marginalized individuals in our communities. The Region of Durham has compiled a listing of available resources that is being updated regularly and reflects our understanding of resources that are available at this time.

[The Spring 2020 GROW Newsletter:](#)

The Spring 2020 GROW newsletter is now available. Workshops and training are currently on hold. Resources to supplement cancelled workshops are included, as are resources regarding COVID-19 to support educators, families and children.

[Stay Home by Durham Region](#)

This web page has helpful resources on a wide range of subjects to help you stay home, such as fitness, mental health, learning opportunities, digital offerings from local libraries, and more.

[Learn at Home:](#)

The Learn at Home initiative will support children from kindergarten to grade 12 to stay engaged in academics and social interactions during the school closures. Learning resources are available in both English and French.

[Supporting children and teens who are worried about the COVID-19 Virus:](#)

The Kawartha Pine Ridge Schoolboard has also posted an information sheet on their website with information on supporting children who are worried about the Coronavirus.

[Talking to Kids About COVID-19:](#)

Anxiety Canada is a leader in providing evidence-based resources on anxiety for children, teens, and adults. Their website provides free downloaded resources, alongside tips, for how parents can have open and honest conversations about COVID-19 with their children.

[Cover Health Virtual Walk-In Clinic:](#)

Cover Health provides virtual walk-in clinic assistance to Ontarian's and its use is fully covered through OHIP. This website can serve most needs of patients through virtual interaction with Ontario doctor paired with prescription delivery.