

TO: First Nations with Licensed Child Care & Child and Family Programs

FROM: Phil Graham
Assistant Deputy Minister
Early Years and Child Care Division

DATE: June 2, 2021

SUBJECT: Child Care Updates

Thank you for your continued dedication and leadership to support families and keep children and child care workers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Education is committed to keeping you updated on key aspects of the province's pandemic response. The purpose of this communication is to inform you of the child care impacts associated with the recent decision to keep schools closed for in-person instruction and to continue with teacher-led remote learning through to the end of the school year.

Impact on Child Care Operations

Child care is to continue in the same manner as it has since April 19, 2021, when the current remote learning period began. The following describes the child care measures that will continue through to the end of the regular school year:

- Child care for non-school aged children (i.e. children aged 0-4) will remain open. This includes child care offered in licensed child care centres, and in home-based settings.
- Licensed child care centres, authorized recreation and skill building providers and district school boards will continue to be prohibited from serving school-aged children.
- Before and after school programs are not permitted to operate and continue to be prohibited from charging fees or otherwise penalizing parents during this time period (e.g., parents must not lose their respective child care spaces).
- The emergency child care program will continue for school-aged children of eligible front-line workers, at no cost to parents, during the period when schools are operating remotely.

These measures will end on the final day of elementary school instruction within your regions. This means that:

- Emergency child care will wind down on the last day that elementary schools are operating remotely in your area.
- Licensed child care centres may resume serving school-aged children for full-days in programming over the summer months, in accordance with the ministry's health and safety guidance (see below for more information).
- Those before and after school programs that operate as a camp over the summer will be permitted to do so, and updated health and safety guidance from the Ministry of Health will be made available soon.

Child and Family Programs must continue to remain closed and may not offer indoor or outdoor in-person programming. Child and Family Programs are encouraged to continue offering virtual programming, where possible, during this time. More information about the reopening plan for Child and Family Programs will be provided at a later date.

Funding for Emergency Child Care

First Nations that delivered Emergency Child Care are requested to keep track of costs associated with managing and operating Emergency Child Care sites. Provincial funding for ECC will be provided up to and including the last day of the regular school year. Your ministry Financial Analyst will follow-up with next steps.

Health and Safety

Everyone in the child care sector has worked incredibly hard to put in place strict health and safety measures, including, but not limited to:

- Screening every day for COVID-19 symptoms before any individual enters the child care premises (the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) is available to assist with symptom screening);
- Practicing good hand hygiene habits throughout the day;
- Practicing physical distancing;
- Wearing a mask and eye protection; and
- Avoiding sharing objects, toys, food, water bottles or other personal items.

The health and safety of children, child care staff and operators has been our primary concern throughout the pandemic. While child care staff/providers continue to be vaccinated, an important step in the continued health and safety of the child care sector, it is of the utmost importance that child care settings continue to adhere to all health and safety protocols regardless of the vaccination status of individual child care staff/providers.

As always, child care and early years partners may, particularly at the advice or direction of their local public health unit and/or Health Canada, choose to implement additional measures based on local circumstances.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration, to keep children safe, families supported, and child care settings healthy places for our children to learn and thrive.

Sincerely,

Phil Graham