

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR CHILD CARE CENTRES

Why was there a decision to suspend child care service?

This is an unprecedented situation and we need to adapt to the rapidly evolving circumstances around COVID-19. The decision to pause full operations at the end of the day on Friday, March 20th was based on advice from the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, Dr. Brent Roussin.

We understand that this situation is challenging and difficult for your child care centre, your governing boards and your staff, as well as the families and children you serve.

What does the decision to suspend child care services mean for our child care centre? Can we still operate with fewer children?

Child care centres are urged to remain open and serve up to 16 children per centre. Manitoba will provide existing operating grants to centres who come forward and offer to continue to operate at this reduced capacity, which is based on public health guidelines and advice.

Centres will prioritize these 16 spaces for essential services workers, utilizing the list collected to date.

Child care centres are expected to reimburse or offer a credit on parent fees that have already been collected for dates when care is no longer offered due to the pause in full operations.

How will we keep our centre safe for staff and children during this urgent public health situation?

An information package will be provided with public health information and advice, but existing licensing requirements mean centres are well-positioned to implement a high standard of public health prevention measures. A child care coordinator can provide additional information on this and answer other questions you may have.

For continued up-to-date and accurate information about Manitoba's COVID-19 response, please visit: www.manitoba.ca/covid19.

What funding is available to support continued operations with fewer spaces?

Existing operating grants will be provided for centres that continue to operate at reduced capacity. Parents using these spaces will pay existing regulated fees.

What if the funding will not cover the full cost of operations?

If your centre is willing to provide care for up to 16 children but is not able to design its operations and staffing based on the funding received, please contact your Child Care Coordinator to discuss your situation. You will be connected with a financial analyst who will review your financial circumstances and assess additional funding requirements/needs.

What if we offer to help but the situation changes again?

This is an unprecedented situation that is evolving rapidly and we are making decisions based on the advice of our Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, Dr. Brent Roussin. It is everyone's hope that the existing measures will be sufficient to address the current situation.

It is important to add that the federal government announced a new set of measures to support Canadians and businesses during this time. Centres are encouraged to also access federal supports that may be applicable. More information on those supports is available: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>.

Centres are making difficult staffing decisions. What help is available for child care centre staff that are impacted by these decisions?

We know that Manitoba's child care providers are dedicated, qualified and willing to support our response to this unprecedented situation. Child care providers can apply for and receive up to \$3,000 in start-up funding to provide quality care for up to four children in their home or in another appropriate community space. Priority for these spaces will also be given to front-line health care workers.

Child care providers are encouraged to access federal supports that may be applicable. More information on those supports is available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>