

CIRCULAR

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To: Early learning and child care providers, Early Learning and Child Care Program

Subject: **Temporary Child Care Services – UPDATE**

Program(s): **Early Learning and Child Care**

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 Procedure Information Only

Effective Date Immediately

Topic: Temporary Child Care Services – UPDATE

As Manitoba moves to restore safe services and re-open the economy, access to child care will be an important element to our economic recovery. Manitoba families will require access to child care to return to work or take steps to secure new employment.

A gradual approach to re-opening child care will be implemented based on public health advice and balancing the need to meet the demand for child care to align with the phased re-opening contained in Restoring Safe Services: Manitoba's Pandemic and Economic Roadmap for Recovery. A draft of the province's Phase 2 re-opening plan was released today and can be viewed online at https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/proactive/2020_2021/restoring-safe-services-phase-2.pdf. As safe services are gradually restored, changes will be made to the Temporary Child Care Services approach:

1. **Operating Grants:** To date, all facilities whether they have re-opened or remained closed, have received their full quarterly operating grant payment. All facilities are now expected to re-open at the reduced capacity determined by Public Health in order to continue to receive their operating grants past June 30, 2020. Facilities that remain closed beyond June 30, will not receive their second quarter operating grants. Facilities that open after July 1, will receive the pro-rated portion of their operating grant based on their actual opening date.
2. **Parent Fees:** Facilities are strongly encouraged to reimburse or credit parent fees to families that have been charged for services not provided during the COVID-19 response period. As regular child care services have been suspended, child care services are not available for regularly enrolled families and therefore they should not be charged for a service that they could not access.

3. Subsidy Payments: To date, facilities whether opened or closed received subsidy advance based on their last regular four-week payment covering the period up to May 30, 2020 ([Circular 2020-51](#)). Effective May 31, 2020 subsidy payments will be based on actual enrollments in the temporary service for opened facilities. New families enrolled and eligible for subsidy must apply to the subsidy program at <https://direct3.gov.mb.ca/CCO/FamilyEN>.
4. Preparing for the Next Phase: As a next step, child care services can now begin planning to increase volume to a maximum of 24 children plus staffing. In addition, centres can consider plans to accommodate more than one grouping of 24 children in a combination of separate rooms, provided each group of 24 has separate entrance/exits and will not be congregating in a larger common space as part of daily programming. These changes will take effect upon full implementation of Phase 2 of the province's Restoring Safe Services Plan, with an exact date to be determined based on public health advice. Families who have accessed a child care space under the temporary child care program as a critical service worker or as part of the re-opening of Manitoba's economy will not be displaced from their placement until regular child care services are no longer suspended.

Subsidy enquiries can be directed to cdcsubsidy@gov.mb.ca or to the Subsidy Program Intake Line at 204-945-8195 or 1-877-587-6224. For other enquiries, please email cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca or call 204-945-0776 or 1-888-213-4754.

Temporary Child Care Service Approach - BACKGROUND

- As part of Manitoba's initial response, regular child care services were suspended and a Temporary Child Care Service approach was implemented, which allowed for flexibility in order to change with provincial needs based on public health requirements. Early Learning and Child Care staff are in touch with licensed child care facilities on a weekly basis to encourage re-openings, confirm capacity and vacancies, and identify barriers.
- Health and safety concerns of facilities were addressed with enhanced guidelines for hygiene, infection prevention protocols and creation of the ELCC COVID-19 Practice Guide. Child care facilities were provided with Personal Protective Equipment, and received regular communication through circulars and by phone. Resources continue to be posted online at: <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/infomanitobans/childcare.html#resources>.
- As of May 4, 2020 all parents in need of child care were able to enroll their child into a space offered in the current Temporary Child Care Service system. All families can access available spaces online at www.eswchildcare.ca and contact the child care provider of their choice. In addition, facilities with vacancies can contact their regular families to inquire if they need child care at this time. These regular families can be enrolled into a vacant space only, and should not displace a family and child already enrolled in the Temporary Child Care Service system.
- Families that are planning for regular, permanent child care – post pandemic, should continue to be directed to use the Online Child Care Registry, located at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/occr/index.html>.

Child care facilities and early childhood educators continue to be essential to Manitoba's COVID-19 Response and critical to the staged re-opening of the provincial economy. Thank you for your cooperation as we work together to continue to support Manitoba families, children and communities during these unique and uncharted times.