

CIRCULAR

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To: All child care facilities, boards of directors, ELCC program staff

Subject: **Continuing the Re-Opening of Child Care Services – Phase 3**

Program(s): All

Type: Policy For Internal Reference Only
 Procedure Information Only

Effective Date Immediately

As Manitoba moves forward with Phase 3 of *Restoring Safe Services: Manitoba's Pandemic and Economic Roadmap for Recovery*, the planning and expansion of child care services to regular licensed capacity can begin on June 21, 2020. As part of the transition to normal services there are important considerations for all child care facilities and boards of directors to keep in mind.

Temporary Child Care Services

It is important to remember that during Phase 3, Temporary Child Care Services will continue to remain in place until the end of August. Facilities cannot displace children who are receiving care under Temporary Child Care Services before August 28, 2020. Regular child care services are expected to resume after August 31, 2020.

Facilities must keep in mind that the Manitoba Government and Public Health will continue to be vigilant in monitoring for COVID-19. The Premier has stated that if public health deteriorates, or guidelines are not sufficient, Phase 3 measures may be paused and previous measures may be re-introduced.

Please note that the Temporary Licensed Child Care Search website at <https://eswchildcare.ca/> will continue to be used for child care facilities to share information about available spaces during Manitoba's COVID-19 response efforts. During the ongoing restoration of services in Manitoba, facilities should continue updating their vacancies on the temporary child care website at <https://eswchildcare.ca/Identity/Account/Manage> .

Planning for the Next Steps

There is no obligation for facilities to resume services to full licensed capacity immediately on June 21, 2020. Child care facilities can begin expanding services on that date beyond the previous maximums, as long as directives by Public Health can be met. Through careful and strategic planning, facilities and boards of directors can map out a graduated approach to

expanding services to full capacity over the months of July and August, according to the best interests and capacity of your organization.

In order to increase enrollment capacity, facilities and boards of directors will need to ensure they will have adequate staffing in place to meet required ratios, and continue current health and safety practices as outlined in the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Early Learning and Child Care Practice Guidance document](#), which will be regularly reviewed and updated.

As Temporary Child Care Services remain in place, facility licenses will continue to be managed through extensions until regular child care services officially resume. The maximum group size of children that can be accommodated within a room is based on the physical space available per child in line with group sizes under the child care regulations, while still meeting public health requirements. Specific questions about your facility's space and ability to accommodate increases should be directed to your assigned child care coordinator.

Current Public Health guidelines for child care are being revised to address the increased group sizes at child care facilities and will be shared as soon as they are available. As facilities reopen more spaces, policies may need to be reviewed and revised to ensure that measures can be taken to comply with the revised health guidelines.

Resources for Boards of Directors

As we continue to navigate through Temporary Child Care Services towards the restoration of regular child care services, we recognize that boards of directors (and all facilities) have had to face difficult decision making and challenges with child care service planning.

If facilities are introducing new board members or require additional information on board governance, they are encouraged to access information for child care boards on the Early Learning and Child Care Program website at:

https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/centres_homeproviders/centrebased_childcare/board_development.html

Boards can also access online training on the Basics of Effective Board Governance, offered in partnership with the Manitoba Child Care Association, by going to https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/resources/board_governance.html.

Review of Current Practices

Facilities and boards of directors should review their current policies and practices as they begin to expand services. New families or families returning to the facility will need to be provided with information on current health practices and policies, including (but not limited to): how to drop off and pick up children, screening protocols, illness policies for children showing symptoms, hours of operation (if currently different from regular hours), physical distancing measures, and provision of meals and snacks. All temporary, new or amended policies should be provided to all returning and new families.

Parent Fees

Facilities and boards of directors will need to consider when to resume charging parent fees to returning families and reinstating their regular fee policies. Facilities should be contacting their regular families to determine if they will continue to require their space(s), and families should be informed of the date when billing for parent fees will resume. Parent fees can only be charged for a space that is available for service.

If a family confirms that they wish to maintain their regular child care space when it is available, they can be required to pay parent fees as per the facilities regular policies - even if they choose to not immediately send their child to the facility.

Provincial Funding

As a reminder, all facilities are expected to have started re-opening at the reduced capacity determined by Public Health in order to continue to receive 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.

As Temporary Child Care Services continue and facilities begin expanding services, full operating grant funding will continue to be paid to open facilities for July, August and September. If a facility is normally open for those months but is closed for a portion of the time, their operating grant will be pro-rated. If a facility is normally closed for a portion of those months, but they decide to open, their operating grant will be adjusted. For those centres that are normally closed for July and August and choosing to remain closed, their operating grant will not change as it is already prorated for the ten month period.

Child Care Subsidy Program

Effective May 31, 2020 subsidy payments started to be based on actual enrollments of a subsidized child in Temporary Child Care Services in opened facilities.

All child care facilities providing Temporary Child Care Services must continue to submit attendance reports based on the regular four-week reporting period. Attendance reports should be submitted to the Subsidy Program by the end date of each reporting period.

Facilities are required to report the names of each child currently enrolled and their actual attendance for the period. Children who are enrolled (subsidized and non-subsidized) but are not attending should be marked as absent on the attendance report.

Families who were previously approved for subsidy remain eligible (per the approval letter sent to them and copied to the facility). If a family's subsidy has expired, they will be required to reapply. If a family is uncertain of their subsidy status, they can contact the Subsidy Program at cdcsubsidy@gov.mb.ca.

New families enrolling in licensed child care spaces must apply to the Subsidy Program at <https://direct3.gov.mb.ca/CCO/FamilyEN>.

General 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.

Inclusion Support Program

In an effort to ensure we are meeting the needs of the community, parents should expect that they can enroll their child into any available child care space. All child care facilities and family child care homes that are licensed by the Early Learning and Child Care Program are required to have an inclusion policy. Licensed non-profit centres and home-based providers operating grant funding must accept enrolment of children with additional support needs.

As we move towards full licensed capacity, facilities should be prepared to submit new service plans for returning eligible children with additional support needs. It is possible that child care services will not immediately be the same as they were before Temporary Child Care Services began as there may be changes to staffing, enrollment numbers, procedures, etc. The revised new service plan needs to consider the new capacity of the centre at the time the child with additional support needs is enrolled or re-enrolled. Please discuss your Inclusion Support Program needs with your child care coordinator to ensure the proper documents are in place for children with additional support needs.

If facilities require enhanced support for a child who was not previously receiving ISP supports through the Early Learning and Child Care Program, an Eligibility Application will need to be submitted to the elcclm@gov.mb.ca mailbox. If the child, family and facility are eligible for the ISP, the response will include a request to submit a completed ISP Service Planning Request form for Child Care Facilities and supporting documentation. Application and ISP planning documents, and answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the ISP were sent to facilities by email on June 11.

Additional Information

The department is committed to supporting the sector during the safe restoration of regular child care services by providing accurate and up-to-date information. All circulars and the ELCC Practice Guide will continue to be available online at <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/infomanitobans/childcare.html>.

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