



MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

To / Destinataire Mayor and Members of Council

From / Expéditeur Donna Gray
General Manager
Community and Social Services

Subject / Objet Update from Children's Services: Date: January 9, 2021
Targeted Emergency Child Care and
EarlyON Child and Family Programs

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on [recent provincial announcements](#) impacting the child care and early years sector in Ottawa. As per the news release from the Ontario government on January 7, online learning will continue to be mandatory until January 25 (inclusive). The City of Ottawa targeted emergency child care program for school-age children has been operational since January 4 and will continue to be offered at no cost to eligible families based on the Ministry of Education approved [eligible worker list](#). Emergency child care is to assist those select eligible workers who are not able to support their child at home for the duration of the closure. With the extension of the program beyond a five-day period, the provincial government is expanding eligibility to include other front-line workers, as capacity allows, and we are awaiting further details.

Municipal Child Care Centres

Currently there are no impacts to our directly operated Municipal Child Care Centres who continue to offer child care to children 0 to 4 years old, and who are not enrolled in a school program. Spaces are available and families are encouraged to register on the City's Child Care Registry and Waitlist if they are looking for child care options.

Impact on licensed child care in the community

Infant, toddler and preschool programs:

- There continue to be no impacts to licensed programs offering care to children aged 0 to 4 who do not attend school.

School aged centre-based child care:

- During the period of January 11 to 25, licensed centre-based school-age, and before and after school programs, will continue to be prohibited from offering regular care and charging fees while elementary schools are operating virtually. Only licensed centre-based school-aged programs approved by the Ministry of Education and Children's Services may offer centre-based emergency child care.

School aged home child care:

- Home child care for school aged children remains operational for both emergency placements and regular placements. Providers are encouraged to offer full-time care to children normally accessing only before and after school care when practicable.

Licensed child care providers – emergency child care

Currently 12 not-for-profit service providers, at 31 sites, are providing emergency care to 104 children. Explicit approval is required from the Ministry of Education through Children's Services at the City of Ottawa to operate a targeted emergency child care site.

As the provincial list of eligible workers evolves, Children's Services will continue to work with local partners to increase the capacity to serve eligible families, including seeking provincial approval for additional interested not-for-profit service providers. Full details on the targeted emergency child care program for school-age children is available on ottawa.ca

Those eligible for emergency child care (ECC) include those who work in health care settings as well as those involved in public safety, whose children are enrolled in school. With the extension of the program beyond a five-day period, the government is expanding eligibility to include other front-line workers, as capacity allows. We have been informed that the Ministry of Education is working closely with the Ministry of Health and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, in addition to other government ministries, to determine eligibility based on need and capacity in the child care sector to accommodate. The government expects to determine expanded eligibility before the extension of the program begins on Monday January 11.

Eligible families are encouraged to contact their existing service provider / school if emergency child care is required and they meet the provincial list of [eligible workers](#). Service providers, with support from Children's Services, will continue to work collaboratively with families to determine need and assess eligibility.

EarlyON Child and Family Programs

All EarlyON Child and Family Centres will continue to be closed for in-person, indoor and outdoor programming for the duration of the lockdown. EarlyON Centres are required to continue offering virtual services, where possible. Virtual programming remains the safest way to deliver EarlyON programs and services to children and families during the ongoing COVID-19 case surge. A revised fact sheet previously shared with Council through the Human Needs Task Force of virtual programming is currently being updated and will be available in multiple languages to support families during the closures.

We will continue to work with our colleagues at Ottawa Public Health, the Ministry of Education and sector partners to ensure the continuation of access to high quality licensed child care and early years services for families in our community.

Sincerely,
Donna Gray, General Manager,
Community and Social Services

cc. Steve Kanellakos, City Manager
Senior Leadership Team
Dr. Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health, Ottawa Public Health
Community and Social Services Department Leadership Team