
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
2020CFD0017-000599
March 31, 2020

Ministry of Children and Family Development

Province helps essential service workers find child care
Chinese, French and Punjabi translations are available

VICTORIA – To support parents who are essential service workers during the response to novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the Province is launching a new process.

This process will match parents, who are working on the front lines of B.C.'s COVID-19 response and have children up to five years of age, with child care in their communities.

Starting today, essential workers can fill out a new “parent” form to identify their need for urgent child care. Forms can be accessed by calling 1 888 338-6622 and selecting Option 4, or online:

www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care

Child Care Resource Referral (CCRR) centres in 38 communities will act as community-based hubs. The CCRRs will reach out to essential-service workers in their area who filled in the form to connect them with available licensed child care spaces.

Applicants will be asked:

- which category of essential worker they are;
- their child's age; and
- in which community they need child care.

Child care spaces will be prioritized for children whose parents work in public health and health services, social services, law enforcement, first responders and emergency response sectors. Additional spaces will then be given to families working in other crucial roles, defined as essential service workers.

The number of spaces available for essential service workers will be up to each child care operator, based on its licensed capacity and following any additional health requirements established by the provincial health officer.

Hours of operation for spaces will vary by facility. While many centres are open Monday to Friday, others may offer care on the weekends and outside the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Government is monitoring whether the needs of essential service workers for care outside of regular hours are being met.

Child care centres, which are open, are required to follow the child care licensing regulation and guidelines on how to prevent the spread of and protect children and staff from COVID-19. This includes proper handwashing, regular cleaning and disinfecting, as well as identifying children who are sick. Families who want to access child care services must also continue to

ensure their children are practising physical distancing with anyone outside of their immediate family circle.

To help the child care sector through this pandemic, the Ministry of Children and Family Development is providing temporary emergency funding to support providers and ensure access to child care is maintained for essential service workers.

Licensed providers that are open and operating are eligible to receive emergency funding at a rate of seven times their average monthly child care operating base funding. Centres will continue to be eligible for the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative and the Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement. In addition, families accessing care from these providers may be eligible for the Affordable Child Care Benefit.

The form and matching process are temporary. They will remain in place for as long as the provincial health officer advises that all parents who can, should care for their children at home and that child care services can and must be provided for those families whose parents work in critical roles.

The Ministry of Education has been working closely with school districts and independent schools to identify and support children, aged five to 12 years (kindergarten to Grade 6), whose parents are essential service workers, with a focus on public health and health services, social services, law enforcement, first responders and emergency response sectors. School districts and independent school authorities have been asked to ensure students whose parents work in these fields have access to care during regular before-, during- and after-school hours.

Hours of care will vary by school district and independent school. If essential service workers who have school-aged children need before-, during- and after-hours care for their children, they are asked to contact their school district directly. Most school districts have already reached out directly to families through surveys to gather information on urgent child care needs.

As British Columbians navigate these uncertain times together, parents who can are asked to care for their children at home. All children and staff who are ill with fever, have cold, influenza or infectious respiratory symptoms of any kind must stay home. If they are unsure of their status, BCCOVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool and the BC Centre for Disease Control's online assessment tool can help assess whether or not they can return to child care.

Learn More:

Frequently asked questions about the matching program can be found here:
https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/FAQ_COVID_and_Child%20Care_Mar_30.pdf

To view the list of essential services in B.C. during the COVID-19 pandemic, visit:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/covid-19/list_of_essential_services.pdf

For recommendations on protecting yourself and your community from COVID-19, and to use an online self-assessment tool, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

BCCOVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/>

The BC Centre for Disease Control's online assessment tool: <http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

Translations:

For a traditional Chinese translation:

http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/IB_child_care_matching_March30_Chinese.pdf

For a French translation: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/IB_child_care_matching_March30.pdf

For a Punjabi translation:

https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/IB_child_care_matching_March30_punjabi.pdf

Contacts:

For non-medical information relating to
COVID-19:

Visit: www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19

Email: servicebc@gov.bc.ca

Or call: 1 888 COVID-19

Ministry of Children and Family Development
Government Communications and Public
Engagement
250 360-6597

Joint Information Centre
COVID Provincial Co-ordination Plan
embc.covidjic@gov.bc.ca
236 478-1336

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

BACKGROUND

For Immediate Release
2020CFD0017-000599
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Ministry of Children and Family Development

Information for essential workers requiring child care

Essential workers requiring child care for children, aged 0 to five years, can fill out a new "parent" form to identify their need for child care.

- Forms can be accessed here: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care>
- or by calling 1 888 338-6622 and selecting Option 4

Child care providers are to prioritize placements for children of essential service workers based on the following:

- Tier 1 (highest priority): employed in health and health services, social services, law enforcement, first responders and emergency response.
 - For child care, Tier 1 includes children referred by the ministry and Delegated Aboriginal Agency social workers.
- Tier 2 (second priority): all other occupations not included in Tier 1 that are listed in the Essential Service Workers list – see Tier 3.:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/covid-19/list_of_essential_services.pdf
- Tier 3 (third priority): all other families not employed in an occupation listed in the Essential Service Workers list. Accepting families in Tier 3 is not required, but providers may do so at their discretion.

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