

Dear Early Learning and Child Care Professionals:

Thank you.

We know that this past month has been incredibly challenging personally and professionally.

Thank you to everyone who has written in to us with questions, suggestions, concerns and support. We have only just started to have the capacity to respond individually, but please know that we have been reading everything you send to us and it has informed the plans we have developed. We remain committed to listening to your voices as we monitor how the programs and supports that have been developed are working and if there are any other measures that could be taken.

Our team has been working around the clock to get you the support and information you need in these quickly evolving times. We are proud to have developed a new emergency funding program to support the child care centres who have continued to deliver critically needed child care during the pandemic, as well as those who have needed to close so they can reopen when the time comes.

Thank you for your patience as we have rolled all this out. We are appending a summary of the major developments of the past month with links to find more information.

We have been and will continue to follow the direction of our Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry. She advises that all parents who can should care for their children at home, and that child care services can be and must be provided in a safe way for those families whose parents work in critical roles. Your professionalism and commitment has meant that parents on the frontlines fighting this pandemic can continue to do so knowing their children are being cared for.

We have worked so hard together during the past two years on our Child Care BC plan and have made real progress with new supports and solutions to address the child care crisis in British Columbia. However, the pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated the challenges that Early Childhood Educators and the child care sector continue to face. It has also highlighted what we already know to be true – that child care is a key building block of our community, our social support systems and our economy. Our goal is to provide the support needed now during the pandemic so that, moving forward, we can continue to work together on our Child Care BC plan to build an affordable, accessible and inclusive child care system for all families in our province.

With admiration and thanks,

Katrina and Kat

Katrina Chen
Minister of State for Childcare

Katrine Conroy
Minister of Children and Family Development

Child Care Efforts in light of COVID-19

Up to Date Information

There has been a lot of information circulating with frequent updates – in an effort to ensure all providers have access to the most up to date information, we have refreshed our COVID-19 Web page and added sections for providers, parents, ECEs and Child Development Support. Please take the time to read through all of the information and check back regularly, as new information will be added as it becomes available. Visit the provider section here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-response-covid-19/child-care-response-covid-19-provider>

Health and Safety Information

We know that those of you who have centres that remain open are committed to ensuring you are following best practices in the care of your own families and the children in your care. The Ministry of Health has provided guidelines to inform child care operators, early learning and child care professionals, and licensing officers on implementation of best practice. These guidelines were developed by the Ministry of Health and the Centre for Disease Control and have been approved by Dr. Henry. You can read the Guidelines, FAQs and any additional health and safety information as it becomes available here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-response-covid-19/child-care-response-covid-19-provider/child-care-response-covid-19-health-safety>

Temporary Emergency Funding

The vast majority of providers receiving CCOF have now opted-in to our Temporary Emergency Funding program. Thank you for your patience as we rolled out a new funding system in record time. We are proud that we were able to get funding to both open and closed providers flowing as of April 1, 2020, to ease the financial pressure you are facing. If you are still considering opting in, or have any questions, please call 1 888 338-6622 or visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/running-daycare-preschool/child-care-operating-funding/temp-emergency-funding>

Essential Service Workers

Government also clarified which jobs are to be considered essential service workers. Child care providers in receipt of Temporary Emergency Funding are to prioritize placements for children based on the [essential services workers](#) list using a tiered system. You can find more information here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-response-covid-19/child-care-response-covid-19-parent/child-care-response-covid-19-parent-form>