

Ministry of Education
Early Years and Child Care Division

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Ministère de l'Éducation
Division de la petite enfance et de
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TO: CCPRN (Child Care Providers Resource Network)

FROM: Shannon Fuller
Assistant Deputy Minister
Early Years and Child Care Division

DATE: April 22, 2020

SUBJECT: Parent Fees

I want to begin by expressing my gratitude for your continued dedication to families. Your work is important to Ontario's child care sector and your commitment during this challenging period is appreciated.

As part of our government's efforts to protect Ontario families, on March 17, 2020, the Premier of Ontario declared a state of emergency and ordered the temporary closure of licensed child care centres. Workplaces deemed essential are exempt from the order to close, including emergency child care services for frontline workers and home child care services.

As you know, the Minister of Education announced that effective April 9, all child care providers are prohibited from charging fees to parents where care is not being provided. The order also prohibits child care providers from penalizing parents, for example taking a child care space away from parents, who have not paid fees during this period of closure. If fees have been paid in advance by parents, child care providers should reimburse parents for any fees paid for April 9 and beyond.

The emergency order is the law in Ontario and supersedes the terms of any child care contracts. Even though a home child care provider (licensed and unlicensed) is able under the provincial emergency order to operate, in cases where they have closed or a parent has decided to remove their child due to COVID-19, the home child care provider is prohibited from charging parent fees, effective April 9.

The supports announced recently by the federal government offer financial assistance for businesses and individuals, including the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy for businesses and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit for individuals. We encourage child care providers to research and optimize these federal supports.

For details of all federal supports in Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

Child care providers who continue to operate should follow the recommendations of their local public health organization. If a local public health organization recommends the closure of a home child care in a particular municipality, that order needs to be followed.

Additionally, the Ministry of Health has developed a guidance document to support those operating emergency child care centres. It provides helpful advice, including requirements for health and safety, how to screen individuals accessing the centre (children, parents and staff), what to do if a child begins to show symptoms of COVID-19, and requirements for promoting the health and safety of staff. It can be found at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_child_care_guidance.pdf

Our government's top priority is supporting families and businesses during this challenging time. Thank you for your ongoing partnership and great work.

Sincerely,