

City of Toronto to open child care for essential and critical service workers ^[1]

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City of Toronto to open child care for essential and critical service workers
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The City of Toronto has received authorization from the Province of Ontario to open licensed child care centres specifically to provide care for children of essential and critical service workers. The centres will be spread across Toronto in existing City-run child care facilities and be operated and staffed by City of Toronto licenced child care workers.

The City is establishing an online registration system that will be communicated widely once available. The centres will then open as quickly as possible, following registration. Essential and critical service workers have been defined by the Province and a list of those services will be made available shortly.

To support essential and critical workers, licensed child care service will be available, at no cost, funded by the Province of Ontario, for children from infant to age 12, and will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to begin to address the unique demands of people who work shifts to keep the city safe and healthy. This is the first time a service of this type has ever been offered by the City of Toronto.

Given social distancing is not feasible when caring for young children, additional measures will be taken, in consultation with Toronto Public Health and the City's Occupational Health and Safety program, to maintain a healthy and safe environment. Precautions will include daily screening of children and families prior to admission, increased cleaning, and reduced group sizes.

The City's website is updated daily with the latest health advice and information about City services, social supports, and economic recovery measures. Check toronto.ca/covid-19 for answers to common questions before contacting the Toronto Public Health COVID-19 Hotline or 311.

Quotes:

"We are doing everything we can at the City of Toronto to help people get through this pandemic. Thanks to our ongoing cooperation with the Province, we have been able to finalize plans to open some child care centres on a 24/7 basis for health care workers and emergency responders and other essential and critical workers. This initiative – which staff are working to get up and running as quickly as possible – will help the heroes we are relying on to fight COVID-19 with their child care needs in the wake of the provincial emergency."

- Mayor John Tory

"I want to thank our City staff who have been working hard to develop this plan as quickly as possible. We are working together to help frontline workers who need child care help and we thank all frontline workers for their tireless efforts to combat this pandemic."

- Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson, City Councillor and Chair of Economic and Community Development Committee

"Every single day essential workers are doing everything they can to keep Torontonians safe. As a City, we're going to make sure that we have their back. Providing 24-hour childcare for the children of essential workers is necessary, and, in partnership with the Province, we're proud to do it."

- Joe Cressy, City Councillor and Chair of the Board of Health

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