

# Province supports child care providers during COVID-19 response <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:**

**Source:** Government of BC

**Format:** Press release

**Publication Date:** 20 Mar 2020

## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTED

The British Columbia government is taking steps to support the child care sector while ensuring parents who must work during the COVID-19 pandemic continue to have access to child care, with new funding for providers.

Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, has advised all parents who can, should care for their children at home. She also recognized that while some centres may close, child care services can and must be provided in a safe manner for those families whose parents work in critical roles.

The Province will give centres that remain open compensation to continue operating with reduced enrolment. Centres that close will also receive support for fixed operating costs, like rent or lease payments.

“As a former early childhood educator (ECE), I understand how difficult this time is for those working in the child care sector,” said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development. “We are working hard with the Ministry of Health to address concerns. We have heard from many child care providers and ECEs who want to stay open to support families and essential service workers at this time. The measures we’re announcing today will give them the support they deserve and the tools they need to continue safely caring for children.”

Child care providers staying open will receive enhanced funding to keep operations going. These centres are eligible to receive seven times their average monthly funding from government, which is expected to cover approximately 75% of a group facility’s average monthly operating expenses. Child care centres remaining open will continue to receive ECE wage enhancements for their staff. These expanded financial supports will help facilities stay open, even with reduced enrolment, to support care needs for those parents who need it.

Reducing the number of children in child care centres will make it easier for licensees and ECEs to follow preventative health measures. The Ministry of Health is developing detailed guidelines to inform licensees, ECEs and licensing officers on implementing best practice, which will be circulated to child care providers shortly.

Child care providers who close due to COVID-19 will also receive support to help ensure they are able to pay their fixed costs, like rent/lease/mortgage during the temporary closure, so they can reopen when able. These centres are eligible to receive two times their average monthly funding from government, which is expected to cover approximately 20% of an average group facility’s monthly operating expenses.

Smaller home-based child care providers are also eligible for these supports.

“I have received many messages from parents, providers and ECEs as this situation has evolved and this feedback has informed our way forward,” said Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care. “These measures will provide some financial support to child care providers who need to close until they can return to providing services for families and ensures parents don’t face the economic burden of paying fees for services they aren’t using.”

These measures are in addition to increased federal government measures to support workers through Employment Insurance, the new Emergency Care and Support Benefits, and the Employment Insurance Work Sharing Program, as well as the wage subsidy support for small business. The Province will continue to work with federal partners to advocate for higher benefits for people affected by the pandemic as it prepares to announce further provincial supports for people and businesses.

To support families who may be struggling with loss of employment and income, child care providers receiving these extraordinary payments must not charge parents fees for any periods of closure or for any vacant spaces while they are open, including when a parent chooses to temporarily withdraw a child due to COVID-19.

They must also agree to reserve spaces for families that were accessing their services before the pandemic, even if these families choose to temporarily withdraw, so families can be assured their spot will still be there once the pandemic passes.

Media Contact:

Ministry of Children and Family Development  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
250 812-0495

**Related link:**

**Region:** British Columbia <sup>[3]</sup>

---

**Source URL (modified on 25 Mar 2020):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/20/03/province-supports-child-care-providers-during-covid-19-response>

**Links**

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/20/03/province-supports-child-care-providers-during-covid-19-response> <sup>[2]</sup>

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020CFD0041-000530> <sup>[3]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7860>