

What parents paying for child care in N.L. need to know ^[1]

Education department announces funding for daycares, child-care centres to offset costs to parents

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EXCERPTED

Parents who had children enrolled in regulated child-care centres across Newfoundland and Labrador will no longer be on the hook to pay for their children while they're home amid fears over COVID-19.

The province will bear the brunt of the cost at the tune of \$4.9 million a month, according to Early Childhood Development Minister Brian Warr.

"It is a big price tag," said Warr when reached by phone Tuesday.

While some centres stopped charging parents, others continued to request payment because they were losing money.

"We understand over the last couple of weeks it's been a difficult time for families, early childhood educators and child-care service providers," he said.

"We've been listening, and the measures we've announced will provide financial support that's needed."

Warr said there is a plan in place to compensate families retroactively to March 17, when early childhood education centres and regulated daycare centres were ordered to close.

The 'when' not worked out yet

When that funding will be available, however, has not yet been determined.

"We've made the announcement but there's still a lot of moving parts," Warr said. "We've been working tirelessly here at the department to ensure we get this out as soon as we can."

Parents can expect to receive reimbursement or a credit from their child's daycare or child-care centre, and Warr expects nearly all operators to avail of the funding.

The assistance will be in place until April 30, at which time it will be reassessed if closures are still in place.

Operators will continue to receive grants while child-care centres are shut down.

Warr said his department is also contacting regulated centres across the province that could provide emergency services for essential workers, such as those in health care.

He said about 40 have expressed interest thus far.

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