

Essential workers lose emergency daycare, despite COVID-19 plan ^[1]

Husband and wife, who are both nurses in Fredericton, are without child-care options

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EXCERPTS

Two nurses in Fredericton are scrambling to find child care after a daycare for essential workers abruptly shut down over the weekend, citing problems with government funding as the reason why.

Rachelle Trail is a labour and delivery nurse and her husband, Chris, is a nurse in the intensive care unit at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital.

Last week the couple were forced to find emergency child care when their regular daycare announced it was closing because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Last Monday, the Health Department urged daycares to close during the coronavirus outbreak. Three days later, they were among the many businesses and operations forced to shut down under the state of emergency declared in the province.

Only places serving children of essential workers can stay open.

"It's really not an option to just not come to work," Rachelle Trail said Sunday.

The Trails filled out a form for essential workers and landed spots at a daycare in nearby Oromocto. Their two kids, Ava, 7, and Caleb, 5, attended on Thursday and Friday.

It wasn't the family's regular daycare, but the Trails were relieved to find a backup.

Caleb has autism and normally has a support worker in the mornings and a therapist in the afternoon at his regular daycare, so she was concerned about whether he would adjust.

"The kids had a great day, wanted to go back the next day," she said.

But the relief was short-lived.

The couple received an email on Saturday from the emergency daycare saying it was closing. The two nurses were without child care once again.

"We unfortunately did not get the answers I needed to be able to financially support remaining open as an emergency centre by the government," said an email from the daycare in Oromocto obtained by CBC.

"I'm needed at work," Trail said. "My husband is needed at work. And my kids need some security and routine as well. So, I'm pretty stressed."

Trail said the list of babysitters the family normally relies on has dwindled to no one. People don't want to come in contact with the Trails because the parents work in the hospital.

"I totally understand, I don't blame people for this — but, people are afraid to come to our home and babysit," Rachelle Trail said. "They are afraid of getting the virus even though we're not sick right now."

She said the couple are hopeful of finding another emergency daycare, but for now the family is without one.

"It does make you wonder when one daycare has closed, I wonder if the other ones will be able to stay open?"

No one from the government was available to answer questions about this Sunday.

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