

Free child care for essential workers: here's how you can apply ^[1]

Limited number of regulated services reopening, unregulated services will not be closed

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Source: CBC News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 26 Mar 2020

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTED

Premier Dwight Ball says regulated child-care services in Newfoundland and Labrador will be allowed to open for limited operation for children aged 1-13, on Wednesday.

The premier added those services will be free to essential workers who have no other option during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

An application process has been launched for essential workers in need of child care, Ball said Wednesday. The form is available on the provincial government's website.

According to the website, essential workers who can apply for child-care services are all health-care workers, paramedics, firefighters, police and correction workers, early childhood educators providing essential worker child-care services and other public servants required to work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ball said the province is not looking to close non-regulated child-care services right now.

The Department of Health and Community Services said information is being sent out to centres to gauge their level of interest in providing the service.

NAPE president Jerry Earle told CBC News the announcement is an important move, one they have been working on with other unions behind the scenes.

"It alleviates one of the many concerns they have, and a significant one," said Earle.

Earle said some workers have found alternate child-care arrangements, but he says there are situations where both parents are essential workers.

"Some people just cannot work from home, cannot be relieved of their duties and are on the front lines of this, not only in health care but in our correction facilities, social workers, respiratory technologies, lab and X-ray," he said.

"And I can go on with the list, even in some of our private sector areas, ensuring food supply is not interrupted."

Earle said it took time to find sufficient space for child care for essential workers.

"This is a very complex issue. We've been working on this, talking to the premier directly."

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