

Free child care for health-care workers to start Monday in Peterborough ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Free child care services will be available starting Monday for employees at Peterborough Regional Health Centre and Peterborough Public Health through a new emergency child care plan for provincially identified essential workforces.

The city announced Friday that 114 spaces would be made available for children from infants to 12 years old by reopening the municipal Peterborough Child Care and Pearson Child Care programs as well as working with community providers including Compass Early Learning and Care, Northview Day Care and Wee Watch Home Child Care.

To be eligible, participants must have no other option for child care, according to a release from the city.

The provincial government has allowed for the limited operation of licensed child care centres and licensed home child care that are approved to operate under the emergency child care plan, the release states, with health care professionals among those eligible to access the plan.

"Our frontline health care professionals, those who are risking their health to help others, are true heroes," Peterborough-Kawartha MPP Dave Smith stated.

"We need to take care of the hands that take care of us and our government's provision of child care for frontlines workers is, simply put, the least we can do."

The number of spaces is limited for health and safety considerations in the child care centres, the release states. There will be a maximum of six children and two care providers in each room — and not more than 50 people, including children, staff and parents, in a building at any one time.

No other licensed child care providers are allowed to be open at this time, except through the emergency child care plan, which is being delivered by social services department for the city and county.

"The workers at Peterborough Regional Health Centre and Peterborough Public Health are on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic," Mayor Diane Therrien said.

"Our community is extremely grateful for the efforts of all workers who are protecting the health and safety of others as well as ensuring that essential services continue."

Staff will be trained on how to monitor for illness and how to respond if someone becomes ill.

"We will ensure that there's active screening in place," Therrien said.

Information is being distributed by Peterborough Regional Health Centre and Peterborough Public Health to their employees on how to apply for the child care services.

The application process is centralized through the city. Applications will not be accepted by the approved individual centres. Applicants are being asked not to call social services directly.

Future phases of the program could be opened up to staff at long-term care homes, paramedics, fire protection services, police, water and electricity utilities and social services as well as other occupations identified by the province. The opening of applications for those phases would be announced if there are spaces available.

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Region: Ontario ^[3]

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<https://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/news-story/9918209-free-child-care-for-health-care-workers-to-start-monday-in-peterborough/> [3]

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