

# COVID-19: City offers free child care for essential front-line workers during crisis <sup>[1]</sup>

Health care, policing, firefighting, EMS, public health, long-term care, transit and corrections workers are eligible

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## AVAILABILITY

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

## EXCERPTS

The city has arranged for free emergency child care for essential front-line workers through three licensed home child-care agencies in Hamilton amid the coronavirus crisis.

Eligible workers are those in health care, policing, firefighting, EMS, public health, long-term care, transit and corrections.

The three agencies — Todays Family, Wee Watch Golfwood and Wee Watch Galbraith — can care for children 12 months to 12 years of age to accommodate 12-hour shifts.

"We're already getting calls," Marni Flaherty, CEO of Todays Family, said Wednesday.

It's difficult to anticipate what the uptake for the initiative will be, Flaherty said, noting families' situations have been fluid during the crisis. "This is just a moving target."

On Tuesday, Paul Johnson, director of the city's emergency operations centre — which is quarterbacking the COVID-19 response — said spaces for the program are limited. "But we'll try our very best to ensure that our front-line workers and essential services have access to child care while they do their important work."

Johnson previously estimated roughly 75 per cent of Hamilton's child-care spaces would be off-line with licensed centres temporarily closing operations to help prevent the spread of the virus. This leaves parents — also coping with school closures — in a tough spot.

But licensed home child-care spaces, which have a lower cap for numbers of children per site, have remained open.

Today's Family is doing its best to "mobilize" staff who aren't working at sites to open up their homes, where appropriate, Flaherty noted. The agency has a licence for 175 homes. "We have capacity to grow into that."

Johnson said parents can "rest assured" the agencies have "strict pandemic plans" to mitigate exposure to the virus.

Children and staff who have fevers or infectious respiratory symptoms must stay home; sound respiratory etiquette and handwashing; stepped-up cleaning of buildings; families who have recently travelled outside Ontario must stay home for 14 days.

Families are advised to identify themselves as essential front-line staff when they call:

- Todays Family: 905-574-9344 ext. 112 or [todaysfamily.ca](https://todaysfamily.ca); <sup>[3]</sup>
- Wee Watch Golfwood: 905-574-5409 ext. 203 or [Karenmitchell314@gmail.com](mailto:Karenmitchell314@gmail.com) <sup>[4]</sup>;
- Wee Watch Galbraith: 905-561-0008 or [wee\\_watch@hotmail.com](mailto:wee_watch@hotmail.com) <sup>[5]</sup>.

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[6]</sup>

**Tags:** spaces <sup>[7]</sup>

fees <sup>[8]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 18 Jun 2020):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/20/04/covid-19-city-offers-free-child-care-essential-front-line-workers>

**Links**

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/20/04/covid-19-city-offers-free-child-care-essential-front-line-workers> <sup>[2]</sup>

<https://www.thespec.com/news/hamilton-region/2020/03/26/covid-19-city-offers-free-child-care-for-essential-front-line-workers-during-crisis.html> <sup>[3]</sup>

[https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A\\_www.todaysfamily.ca&d=DwMFAg&c=KjisrLs2D0AXJmZjByAnZA&r=K2Kbo0ilOK4uO3CZqleBNeVEnCB8seqO\\_U-sX1tJmRE&m=m144Kw0-Jnx8Lpatllqg8nn4O5ubm6lc4Nz0iRVGgw&s=Rm6t6L2UDHTJrULJUd-bN0ln8oZ3E1NGkfolj5\\_De10&e=](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A_www.todaysfamily.ca&d=DwMFAg&c=KjisrLs2D0AXJmZjByAnZA&r=K2Kbo0ilOK4uO3CZqleBNeVEnCB8seqO_U-sX1tJmRE&m=m144Kw0-Jnx8Lpatllqg8nn4O5ubm6lc4Nz0iRVGgw&s=Rm6t6L2UDHTJrULJUd-bN0ln8oZ3E1NGkfolj5_De10&e=) [4]  
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