

Letter to the Minister for increased supports ^[1]

Author: Gomme, Heather., Crook, Amanda., Turns, Anita. et al.

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Dear Minister Schulz:

The undersigned organizations request the urgent assistance of the Government of Alberta to help early learning and child care organizations address the devastating financial impact they face as a result of the mandatory and necessary closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The closure of programs and services for the foreseeable future means that those that deliver early learning and child care services have no source of revenue to meet ongoing fixed operational costs such as rent, lease or mortgage payments, utilities, regular maintenance costs and insurance premiums.

While the provincial government's announcement of deferrals for tax payments and the federal government's offer of interest-free loans are welcome, they are insufficient to help organizations meet immediate and ongoing costs.

Across Canada, provincial governments have recognized the importance of early learning and child care organizations to the social infrastructure and have moved quickly to provide support, including the provision of temporary operating funding. This support is proving essential to ensure organizations sustain themselves until child care centres can again open and the economy can rebound.

The Government of Alberta has the opportunity to support early learning and child care organizations through the immediate introduction of a temporary emergency operating allowance, similar to that implemented by the Government of British Columbia. No new monies would be required to support the allowance. Rather, the monies previously budgeted for parent subsidies and wage enhancements can be redeployed for this purpose at this critical time.

The Ministry of Children's Services could calculate the allowance based on the number of licensed or regulated spaces an organization provided for children (all ages) for part-time and full-time care before the mandatory closure.

The temporary emergency operating allowance could be provided to all centre-based child cares, preschools and out-of-school care programs required to close during the pandemic. A temporary emergency operating allowance equal to a maximum of 20 percent of the average cost of a licensed space would enable the majority of organizations to remain financially viable as we plan for the recovery of service delivery.

The Government of Alberta's immediate support for early learning and child care organizations that have been required to close is vital to our short and long term survival. One of the key learnings from the Fort McMurray fires in 2016, was the importance of helping organizations through crisis, so that

they are ready and able to resume their critical services once the communities they serve return to work.

Representatives from the undersigned organizations welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal with you further. Please let us know how we can work with you and Ministry staff to ensure the continued financial viability of early learning and child care organizations across Alberta during this critical time.

Related link:

Region: Alberta ^[3]

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