

Toronto opening new two emergency child care centres after receiving 800 applications ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

TORONTO -- The City of Toronto has announced plans to open two new emergency child care centres after receiving more than 800 applications for the first four facilities.

The new facilities will be available only to the children of essential workers who have no other alternatives.

One of the new facilities will open up in an existing city-run childcare facility on Bathurst Street north of Front Street today while the other will open later this week at another existing city-run child care facility on Danforth Avenue near Greenwood Avenue.

The city says that since launching the online signup portal for the emergency child care facilities on March 26 it has received more than 800 applications and has placed nearly 200 children in care. It says that 71 per cent of all applications have been from frontline healthcare workers and first responders.

"We need these people at work. They are doing heroic work for us and we have responded by providing this child care," Mayor John Tory told CP24 on Monday morning. "It is city-owned child care with city workers staffing it and we have had a fair bit of demand. We are just trying to meet that demand."

The emergency child care centres are being entirely funded by the province and there is no cost passed on to qualifying parents.

A number of precautions are being taken in delivering the service, including daily screening of children and staff, increased disinfection and reduced group sizes. The city, however, notes in its release that "the safest option for families is to have children remain at home, if possible."

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