

Province taking steps to connect critical service workers with child care services ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

WINNIPEG -- The Manitoba Government is expanding its efforts to connect critical service workers and their families with child care services during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Province said over the next several days, its staff will be working to match parents remaining on the waitlist for child care before moving to a new online system.

The Province's families minister Heather Stefanson made the announcement during a press conference at the Manitoba Legislature Thursday afternoon.

"Child-care centres and homes that are opening their doors to children and their families during this challenging time are truly heroes helping heroes," said Stefanson.

According to the province, as of Thursday, more than 1,900 children of health-care and other emergency services workers have been matched with an available space.

"We continue to call on child-care facilities and early childhood educators to be part of our province wide response to COVID-19. Together, we can ensure children can continue to learn and grow in a safe, caring environment as their parents go to work helping those most affected by COVID-19."

Starting April 14, the Province said all parents who work in critical services, as defined by the chief provincial public health officer, will have access to child-care spaces available in licensed facilities.

This includes support staff at hospitals and clinics, grocery store staff, farmers and farm workers, construction workers, and bank or credit union employees.

The Province said on Friday, parents who work in critical service will be able to head to the province's website to see which facilities have spaces and work directly with them to secure care.

HOW CHILD-CARE FACILITIES CAN HELP

Minister Stefanson noted that licensed child-care facilities that want to help by re-opening or continuing to have spaces available can notify the province. They can do so by updating their facility status form through Manitoba Child Care online.

The province noted that the full provincial operating grant of over \$30 million dollars was distributed all licensed child-care facilities on April 1.

"Our government is providing child-care centres and home-based providers with the support they need to continue operating during this difficult time," said Stefanson.

"We will continue to do what we can to ensure that vital critical services workers can access child care so that they continue working on the front lines of this pandemic."

The province also launched an \$18 million dollar grant program for to help early childhood educators offer independent child care services in their homes, or in the community.

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<https://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/province-taking-steps-to-connect-critical-service-workers-with-child-care-services-1.4889964> [3]

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