

Ontario offers emergency child care to more frontline staff ^[1]

Expansion will assist essential workers during the COVID-19 outbreak

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EXCERPTS

TORONTO — The Ontario government is expanding the list of essential workers eligible to receive emergency child care. This will help additional frontline staff during the COVID-19 outbreak. An emergency order was issued which will offer support to those providing a variety of critical services including people who assist vulnerable communities, emergency response and law enforcement sector staff, more health and safety workers, and certain federal employees.

The announcement was made today by Premier Doug Ford and Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education.

"Our frontline workers have made so many sacrifices and put the needs of the community ahead of themselves," said Premier Ford. "These heroes work day-in and day-out to ensure everyone else can stay home and stay safe and healthy. The least we can do is ensure the safety of their children during these unprecedented times."

On March 20, 2020, the government issued an emergency order directing certain child care centres to reopen with fewer children to allow for physical distancing. This decision was made to support health care and other frontline workers responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. The list of essential workers eligible to access emergency childcare has now been expanded.

"Our frontline workers are making a real difference in our lives and deserve our support," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. "We are providing emergency child care to more frontline workers because in these unprecedented times, we will do whatever it takes to keep families safe, cared for, and healthy."

"Dedicated people are on the frontlines, serving our most vulnerable in developmental services agencies, in residential care homes," said Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. "We need to support them by making sure their families are taken care of when they go to work."

The additional frontline workers who can now access emergency childcare services include:

- Staff working in developmental services, victim services, violence against women services, anti-human trafficking services and child welfare services (children's aid societies) and in children's residential settings;
- Additional staff identified by the Ministry of the Solicitor General, including:
 - First Nations constables;
 - Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management fire investigators;
 - Select critical staff in community corrections, such as probation and parole officers;
 - Contractors in institutional corrections services;
 - Frontline staff at the Provincial Forensic Pathology Unit;
 - Critical staff at the Centre of Forensic Sciences; and
 - Critical staff operating the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre.
- Staff working in shelters (e.g., serving homeless populations);
- Power workers;
- Pharmaceutical and medical supplies and device manufacturing workers;
- Non-municipal water and waste-water employees; and
- Federally employed staff including Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers and Canada Post employees.
- "By ensuring staff who support some of our most vulnerable, including survivors of domestic violence, victims of human trafficking, and children and youth in care, have access to emergency child care, we can continue to provide these important services throughout the COVID-19 outbreak," said Jill Dunlop, Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues.

The Ontario Ministry of Education is working with Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSAB) in their role as service system managers for early years and child care, as well as First Nations, to

implement emergency child care centres in communities across the province.

Ontario will continue to monitor local needs to ensure frontline staff can continue to work and will communicate more details as the situation evolves.

A list of emergency child care centres is available on [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus).

Quick Facts

- The need for child care spaces could grow by an estimated 11,300 during the eligibility expansion.
- Since emergency child care was introduced last month, there are 74 child care centres up and running and home child care is being provided by 33 Licensed Home Child Care Agencies in communities across the province. 41 additional centres have also been approved and will be coming online in the coming days.
- On April 14, 2020, the government issued an emergency order to give violence against women and anti-human trafficking agencies who deliver emergency residential services greater flexibility to address staffing challenges arising from the COVID-19 outbreak.

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