

Montreal-area daycares change protocols, prepare for reopening ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

It's much quieter these days at Les Trésors de Marie-Claire in Kirkland.

The two daycares that operate in the building are currently offering emergency services.

At the moment, they have about eight children under their care – a far cry from their usual 160.

But as of May 19, they'll be able to open at 30-per cent capacity.

In order to do that, there has been a complete change in protocol, from the moment children and staff walk in until they walk out.

"The access to the establishment, to the inside of the place, is reserved only for the people who work here," said Henry Zephirin, a spokesperson for the establishment.

Parents will now have to drop off and pick up their child outside the building, while staff will have to wear protective equipment.

Children will be split into small groups and toys will be cleaned multiple times a day.

Though the daycare seems to have already implemented most of the new measures, for Les Flots Bleus, a private non-subsidized daycare, things are a little different.

"For us private, non-subsidized daycares, we aren't receiving any financial help, or any help with materials," said Amal Diabi, director of the daycare.

"We don't really know how it will all work."

In a statement to Global News, the family ministry said that equipment is on its way for all daycares across the network.

They also added that multiple guides with information on how to operate are available for all institutions.

A spokesperson for publicly subsidized daycares admits that adjusting to the new measures is challenging.

Over the last seven weeks, emergency daycares across Quebec have seen 28 cases of COVID-19 in their institutions – children accounted for about half that number.

"Of course, it is worrisome, we're venturing into unknown territory," said Marie-Claude Lemieux, spokesperson for L'Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance (AQCPÉ).

"We just hope by following strictly the guidelines from public health and CNESST, the labour commission, that we'll be able to maintain the infections at a lower rate."

According to provincial guidelines, daycares can begin operating at 100 per cent capacity by the end of June.

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