

Province (AB) announces help for child care sector ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Up to \$17.8 million in grants will be provided to child care centres and approved family day home agencies to ensure they are ready to safely restart and support families through Alberta's economic recovery.

Day care centres and out-of-school care centres will benefit from a phased approach for these supports.

Phase 1 – \$6.7 million:

- Centres will immediately receive a one-time grant to cover up to 25 per cent of overhead costs like rent and utilities. This accounts for the remaining portion of expenses not covered by funding under federal programs.

Phase 2 – \$3.2 million:

- Upon reopening, centres will receive a grant for cleaning and sanitation supplies to adhere to public health guidelines, as well as to assist with staff recruitment and training.

Phase 3 – \$6.9 million:

- After three months of being open, centres will potentially receive a third grant to offset deferred bills and to address unforeseen operational issues. This will be based on an assessment of other federal and provincial support programs.

“Access to quality child care is going to be an important part of getting Alberta's economy back on track. We're providing this money so child care centres will be ready to care for kids as soon as health guidelines allow.” - Rebecca Schulz, Minister of Children's Services

Once child care centres reopen, they will be required to adhere to public health guidelines developed by Children's Services and Alberta Health. These guidelines will be released as soon as possible.

“We appreciate the government's efforts to assist operators during the first phase of the province's relaunch strategy. This money will help operators start reopening their centres and support parents' return to work. We look forward to working with the Government of Alberta on a more long-term and predictable funding model for the sector.” - Anita Turna, chair, Alberta Association of Child Care Operators

“It's been very encouraging to work in collaboration with the Minister of Children's Services to provide support to owners and operators during this trying time. We look forward to seeing our families and children.” - Staci Wilson, chair, School Age Care Directors Association of Alberta

“Out-of-school care programs will look different now and we look forward to welcoming our kids back again. The Government of Alberta's staged funding program will help us do that safely and to cover some of the costs we incurred while no revenue was coming in.” - Jennifer Sissons, owner and director, A Child First Out of School Care

Approved family day home agencies will also be able to access funding, up to \$1 million total, to support current operations and supplies and equipment to adhere to public health guidelines.

This initiative is one element of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy that must be in place before Alberta can begin to safely remove public health restrictions. For more information, visit alberta.ca/COVID19.

Quick facts

- Supports are in addition to federal support for businesses, including:
 - Increased wage support for qualifying small and medium-sized businesses to 75 per cent, for up to three months.
 - Canada Emergency Business Account provides interest-free loans of up to \$40,000 to small businesses and not-for-profits to help cover their operating costs during a period where their revenues have been temporarily reduced.
 - \$10,000 is considered a grant and does not have to be repaid.
 - Deferral of GST payments until June 30.
 - Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance relief program, to cover 75 per cent of rent payments.
- Provincial support during the pandemic has been directed to ensuring child care is available for the children of essential workers.
- As of May 5, child care centres have reopened in 29 towns and cities across the province to support essential workers. There are a total of 183 centres open and a total of 4,008 spaces available. All reopened centres were provided a \$500 one-time grant for PPE and cleaning supplies, and receive a daily reimbursement for reopened spaces that aren't filled.
- Approved family day homes and private day homes have been permitted to remain open throughout the pandemic. In March, Children's Services allowed approved family day homes to serve six children, in addition to their own.
- About 18,000 Albertans work in the child care sector, serving more than 100,000 children.

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