

Manitoba childcare centres to accommodate more children in phase two of reopening plan ^[1]

Author: Blunt, Marney

Source: Global News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 25 May 2020

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Manitoba childcare providers will be able to start taking in more children as part of phase two of the province's reopening plan.

Phase two will allow providers to take up to 24 children in a room, plus staff, or 24 children in each segregated room. Strict sanitary and safety protocols will be in effect.

"If the child is showing any symptoms or had been in contact with anyone showing symptoms, they would not be permitted to come into the child care program," Manitoba Child Care Association executive director Jodie Kehl said.

For childcare centres that have 24 children in each individual rooms, staggered drop-off schedules will be in place along with separate entrances, exits and washrooms.

Kehl says other safety protocols include frequent hand washing, a no visitor policy, sanitation of toys and contact surfaces, and a no sharing rule for toys, supplies, and food.

Some day cares will also be spacing out lockers for physical distancing.

"They are trying to maintain social distancing as best you can with young children, which obviously is difficult," Kehl added.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 75 per cent of Manitoba's childcare providers closed their doors.

Of those providers, about 73 per cent plan on reopening this May or June, according to a recent survey by the Manitoba Child Care Association.

The association also says about 53 per cent are operating with the current 16-child limit in place. Kehl says there are still some vacancies with the current limit in place, which has some providers questioning if opening this soon will be worth it financially.

"I'm excited we're able to offer care for more children," said Earl Grey Children's Centre executive director Lynda Raible.

"However, I'm not really sure realistically if we'll actually be able to fill those 24 spaces to be able to generate enough revenue through that, so I'm a little bit apprehensive at this point."

Raible says a lot remains up in the air, and some parents have voiced safety and financial concerns.

"We have some parents that are maybe a little bit apprehensive about that group care at this point, or for some that aren't ready to pay the full fees that would be required for care for June," Raible said.

The Earl Grey Children's Centre closed its doors in March, but plans on reopening as part of phase two, which could happen as soon as June 1. Normally the centre takes up to 71 children.

"Financially right now it's really hard, we won't make any money if I'm not at that maximum amount to kind of warrant having more kids or having more staff," Raible said.

"Right now we're relying on that wage subsidy. If that ends and we're not back to our full capacity, then we will be losing money quite a bit."

Related link:

Region: Manitoba ^[3]

Tags: health and safety ^[4]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/20/05/manitoba-childcare-centres-accommodate-more-children-phase-two> [2] <https://globalnews.ca/news/6984758/manitoba-child-care-centres-reopening-plan/> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7857> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/health-and-safety>