

PSAC calls for more measures to support workers facing child care challenges ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

The Canadian economy is slowly reopening but many individuals, especially women, will be unable to return to the paid workforce due to the lack of affordable and accessible child care. There has always been a serious shortage of licensed child care services but COVID-19 has made it impossible for child care centres to function at full capacity.

Child care scarcity

It is expected that, as a result of safety concerns, the number of child care places available per program will be reduced for a period of time. For example, the government of Quebec is phasing the reopening of child care reducing the number of spaces to 30 per cent of normal capacity. Screening children and parents when they arrive, monitoring children's health throughout the day, and the required cleaning of toys and other surfaces can't be done without limiting the number of children in the care of staff.

Safety concerns

Many parents are concerned for the safety and health of their children and worry about child care safety—especially those who have no choice but to use unregulated and unlicensed service providers. The fact that provincial and territorial governments are not issuing uniform safety guidelines for child care is contributing to parents' lack of confidence in child care.

Workers need greater access to affordable childcare

The Public Service Alliance of Canada continues to advocate strongly for accessible, affordable, safe and high quality child care. COVID-19 has only reinforced the importance and challenges related to child care that existed pre-pandemic.

The government simply must do better. PSAC envisions a future where licensed child care:

- is accessible and affordable for parents provides high quality early childhood education and care;
- is inclusive and provides culturally relevant programs;
- ensures that early childhood education staff earn decent wages and are better supported;
- is flexible and comprehensive so that mothers in particular can choose to be in the paid labour force are able to return to work; and

The government must:

- expand the availability of safe, licensed, and emergency child care to parents of preschool and/or school-age children who are required to work through the pandemic, and provide this child care free of charge;
- build federal support for the child care sector into the government's pandemic response plan to ensure licensed child care programs will be available when the health crisis ends;
- make child care universal, accessible, affordable, inclusive and high quality; and
- ensure that federal workers continue to be able to use 699 leave when they cannot access safe and proper child care for their children.

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/20/06/psac-calls-more-measures-support-workers-facing-child-care> [2] <http://psacunion.ca/psac-calls-more-measures-support-workers-facing> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/economics> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/health-and-safety> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/workforce>