

Nova Scotia daycares will reopen on June 15 ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Licensed child-care centres and family daycare homes will reopen across Nova Scotia on June 15.

"Last week, Dr. Strang and his team advised me that the sector's reopening plan was not quite ready. More details were needed, and because this is about the safety of our children, we asked for your patience while the sector worked to finalize its plan," said Premier Stephen McNeil during a news conference in Halifax Tuesday afternoon.

"Today I'm happy to confirm the plan is ready." The provincial government says child-care centres will open beginning at a minimum capacity of 50 per cent and can move up to 100 per cent capacity if they are able to meet public health's COVID-19 guidelines for child-care settings.

Family daycare homes will open at full capacity.

"Daycares will communicate directly with families in the coming days about their specific reopening plans," said McNeil.

"Our daycares will open slowly and if there are any public health or safety issues we will immediately reassess."

Families will not be required to pay fees if they cannot access their child-care space or are not ready to return.

The province says daycare operators will receive funding on a sliding scale until September as they increase their capacity from 50 per cent, in accordance with public health guidelines.

"We know some families won't be ready to send their children back to a licensed daycare centre right away," said McNeil.

"We want to tell them their spots will be held and that they won't be charged and operators will continue to receive government funding until September to cover those unused spaces."

The province says all daycares and child-care facilities will be required to follow strict COVID-19 guidelines, which were created with input from pediatrics at the IWK Health Centre.

Licensed child-care providers are required to have an individual site-based plan in place to support reopening.

The province says plans will include measures such as:

- increased cleaning
- staggered pick-up and drop-off times
- limit the number of essential visitors entering the facility
- children will sleep six feet apart during nap time
- create groups so the same children are together every day
- limit contact with other groups in the centre
- staff, visitors and other groups will practise physical distancing when and where possible

The provincial government will provide licensed facilities with hand sanitizer and single-use surgical masks for the next six months.

Licensed child-care facilities and family daycare homes closed on March 17 as part of the provincial measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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