

# Reopening child care a huge undertaking for the county <sup>[1]</sup>

Early years director Luisa Artuso said child care centres need more time and information from the province on how they will be financially supported

**Author:** Kozolanka, Keegan

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

**COUNTY OF WELLINGTON** – The county’s children’s early years director said reopening child care is a huge undertaking under the new guidelines.

In a verbal report to the social services committee, Luisa Artuso said the latest guidelines allow for child care to reopen as early as Friday. Artuso said a month’s time was suggested at a provincial technical committee meeting.

“I just really want to take this opportunity to emphasize that child care is not a retail store,” Artuso said to the committee. “There is a lot of work that needs to get done in order for our system to re-open.”

Artuso explained that most of this sector was laid-off and they will need time to retrain staff on new protocols and transform child care centres to exactly the way emergency child care is being operated. Artuso said the early years division is building supports to expedite reopening but they still need time.

“I would be really concerned if anyone is opening up within two weeks,” Artuso said. “In order to do this and put everything in place, it would take a minimum of two weeks.”

Under the cohorting guidelines, groups of 10 children and staff who remain the same day after day, spaces have been limited across the system.

“Eighty per cent of the staff can deliver and receive revenue from approximately 30 to 50 per cent of the spaces,” Artuso said. “Child care was expensive before, it’s definitely not cost-effective for anyone to do it under this framework.”

She explained the ministry is working on a funding formula to subsidize and support operations but this information has not been received yet. She said not knowing how to financially support the system is a huge problem.

The majority of children in emergency child care are five-years-old and over. With emergency child care ending June 26, Artuso is concerned about a gap in school-aged care in the county.

“At this time there are no operators that can provide a summer camp or are willing to provide a summer camp with new guidelines in place in such a short period of time,” Artuso said.

Artuso said she hoped the guidelines would tell them which families to prioritize child care but the province did not do this. As a staff they’ll have to prioritize by considering which parents work from home or outside among other factors.

“There’s a lot of questions that we need to dig through but also the equity of families that might be in a hybrid situation,” Artuso said. “We will have a priority list done by the end of the week.”

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