

Revisiting "from reopening to recovery: a child care plan for Ontario"^[1]

Author: Powell, A., & Ferns, C

Source: Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario and Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

Format: Report

Publication Date: 19 Aug 2020

AVAILABILITY

Access online via OCBC^[2]

Access online via AECEO^[3]

Full report [PDF]^[4]

Excerpted from introduction

In May of 2020, we released "From Reopening to Recovery: A Child Care Plan for Ontario", which included 27 recommendations for how the Ontario government could safely reopen licensed child care centres, better support licensed home child care, support educators and the child care sector to provide safe, quality programs for young children, and ensure access and affordability for parents hard hit by the economic recession.

Our plan and its recommendations aimed to keep children, educators and families safe, maintain confidence in the licensed child care system, and ensure stability in the sector while we transitioned to a more publicly funded and publicly planned system. Our recommendations were based on a survey of nearly 4000 Early Childhood Educators and child care staff and consultations with parents, child care directors, researchers, and the best available evidence.

When we released the report there was general consensus across the sector that these 27 recommendations would help ensure a safer child care reopening. We shared copies of our report with the Ministry of Education and presented our recommendations directly to Ministry officials. Frustratingly, in June, the Ontario government announced a reopening plan for the child care sector that roundly ignored this advice. On June 9th, Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, announced that licensed child care centres could reopen three days later. Following the Minister's announcement inadequate and conflicting guidance documents were released to accompany the reopening.

In response to the Minister's reopening announcement over 23,000 Ontarians signed our Open Letter to Premier Ford and Minister Lecce calling for a re-think of their laissez-faire reopening approach. As we wrote in the Toronto Star:

- We recommended expanding emergency child care programs to serve more families. These vital services are being shut down by the end of the month.
- We recommended fully base funding programs to give centres what they need to operate safely, while providing parents with relief from fees. We got vague funding guidelines that do not increase the provincial child care allocation.
- We recommended repurposing available public space so that child care programs could meet higher capacity while respecting low group sizes. Crickets.
- We recommended raising pay and protections for ECEs, who will be on the front lines, keeping our children safe and helping them to navigate and recover from the trauma of a global pandemic. Instead, the minister gave ECEs a "thank you" – it's hard to pay the bills with that.

Subsequent to the reopening of child care in June with a cohort of 10 children and staff, the government announced a move to a cohort of 15 children on July 27th and a move to "full capacity" on September 1st in conjunction with school reopening in September.

On August 13th, the province released updated operational guidance documents to accompany the move to full capacity but, as of the time of writing, the Ministry has still not released updated funding documents.

Related link: [From reopening to recover: A child care plan for Ontario](#)^[5]

Region: Ontario^[6]

Tags: economic recovery^[7]

health and safety^[8]

policy^[9]

- [1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/20/08/revisiting-%E2%80%9C-reopening-recovery-child-care-plan-ontario%E2%80%9D>
- [2] https://www.childcareontario.org/revisiting_from_reopening_to_recovery
- [3] https://www.aecce.ca/revisiting_from_reopening_to_recovery
- [4] https://d3n8a8pro7vmtx.cloudfront.net/aecce/pages/2572/attachments/original/1597697664/Revisiting_Reopening_to_Recovery.pdf?1597697664
- [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/20/05/reopening-recovery-plan-child-care-reopening-ontario-and>
- [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856>
- [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9038>
- [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/health-and-safety>
- [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/policy>