

City looks to provide emergency child care to essential workers during post-holiday remote learning ^[1]

Author: Kennedy, Brendan

Source: Toronto Star

Format: Article

Publication Date: 30 Dec 2020

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

The city plans to provide emergency child-care services to essential workers with school-aged children while schools are closed for remote learning, Toronto Mayor John Tory announced Wednesday.

Pending provincial approval, the city will provide spaces for the children of essential workers at three sites from Jan. 4 to 8. The spaces will be paid for by the province and provided at no cost to parents.

Eligible workers include those in health care and public safety services. Teachers, grocery store clerks and other essential workers outside of the health care and public safety realms are not eligible. The full list of eligible workers is posted on the province's website.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Education said the rationale for keeping the list of eligible workers "focused" on those working in health care and public safety "is to ensure consistency with the public health measures associated with the Safer at Home approach by keeping families at home to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and pressures on the health-care system."

As part of the 28-day provincial lockdown announced last week, schools will remain closed for at least a week after the holidays. Elementary students are expected to participate in remote learning from Jan. 4 to 8, before their schools reopen Jan. 11. High school students will continue remote learning until Jan. 25.

Child-care programs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers will continue to operate as normal during the school closures. Home child-care programs will also be allowed to provide care to kindergarten and school-aged children of essential workers.

"The simple fact is that front-line essential workers are taking care of us and taking care of our city, and we therefore have a responsibility to take care of them," said Councillor Joe Cressy, chair of the city's Board of Health.

The three city-run child-care centres open for essential workers with school-aged children will be:

- Shoreham Satellite Early Learning and Child Care Centre in North York
- Taylor Creek Early Learning and Child Care Centre in Scarborough
- O'Connor Satellite Early Learning and Child Care Centre in East York

An additional 28 child-care centres that are not run by the city are expected to also provide spaces for essential workers, Cressy said.

If the locations are approved by the province they will be included in the list of approved emergency child-care providers on the province's website. Once the locations are approved, the city says eligible parents should contact the agencies directly to register their children.

If both the city-run and community centres are approved it will mean space for up to 3,000 children, Cressy said.

Child-care providers not operating during the provincial lockdown are prohibited from charging fees and parents will not lose their child-care spaces during the lockdown.

The city also announced on Wednesday that it will continue its school nutrition program during the remote learning period. The program usually provides meals to more than 200,000 children at more than 600 locations every day. Cressy said funding that would have gone toward the in-school program will be redirected to "grab-and-go" meal services and to providing parents with grocery store gift cards.

"Whether it's emergency child care for essential workers or food for kids affected by COVID, our commitment is the same as it's ever been," he said. "To do everything in our power to take care of those who are protecting us and those disproportionately affected by COVID."

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: health and safety ^[4]

COVID-19 ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 4 Jan 2021): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/01/city-looks-provide-emergency-child-care-essential-workers-during>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/01/city-looks-provide-emergency-child-care-essential-workers-during> [2] <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/12/30/city-looks-to-provide-emergency-child-care-to-essential-workers-during-post-holiday-remote-learning-week.html> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/health-and-safety> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9040>