

Childcare providers relieved to be on vaccine list ^[1]

"I feel like it was about time."

Author: Henderson, Jennifer

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EXCERPTS

Childcare providers and teachers across the province have been given the green light to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and say they are excited and relieved to be deemed eligible.

Amanda Otto, a childcare worker at A Nana's Love Daycare, said childcare workers are essential to the functioning of society and getting a vaccine helps protect them and the children they see each day.

"I feel like it was about time," Otto said, adding she understands the vaccine supply is limited and vulnerable people need to get vaccinated first.

The province has opened up vaccinations to teachers, childcare workers, bus drivers and all support staff to help protect educators in Alberta. They were able to book their shots starting May 4.

Otto was off work for a few months during the pandemic but said when she came back it was "a bit nerve wracking" to work without the vaccine.

The childcare worker said slowly she stopped worrying so much about the virus, partly because her employer has great health policies in place that make her feel comfortable.

"Of course it crosses my mind and everyone else's mind if there's a scare or whatnot, but for the most part I try to just go about my daily life without living in fear," Otto said.

Daycares and childcare are an essential part of society, Otto said, and it is important for employees to get vaccinated so families and their children can continue to rely on them for early education.

"I think it's important to keep ourselves safe as well as others. Overall, I am very just relieved and excited to be able to be a part of this next step," Otto said.

Mezia Hussain, executive director of the St. Albert Daycare Society said it is a relief to know they can finally get vaccinated.

Hussain said people don't always think of daycare employees as frontline workers, but they are, adding at the beginning of COVID-19, there was a lot of fear related to what those kids may be bringing into the daycare centre.

"We're putting ourselves at risk and our families (at risk) because we are with children whose parents have dropped them off who have who work in AHS or hospitals or things like that."

More than 52,000 certificated teachers, 29,000 support staff and 24,000 child care workers will be able to get the vaccine.

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney said Monday the province estimates around 60 per cent of these workers may have been vaccinated in other phases of the roll-out.

"The glue that has kept learning going and our kids focused has been our teachers," Kenney said.

"You work to keep school safe and keep students learning, even when going online and temporary closing was the last and best option."

As of Monday, 1.64 million doses of vaccine have been given out across Alberta, meaning 37 per cent of the population over the age of 16 has gotten their first shot.

"That's more than one in every three people, which is a remarkable accomplishment," Kenney said.

So far, 83 per cent of Albertans over the age of 75 have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 77 per cent of those between the ages of 65 and 74 have got their shot. Nearly 60 per cent of Albertans, aged 60 to 64 have gotten their first vaccine.

The province expects to open vaccinations up to the general public soon.

Region: Alberta ^[3]

Tags: COVID-19 ^[4]
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