

University of Manitoba survey shows child-care facilities are in distress ^[1]

Author: Harewood, K.

Source: Global News

Format: Video

Publication Date: 12 Jan 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Watch video [3:53] ^[3]

EXCERPTS



A recent survey conducted by the University of Manitoba shows daycares are buckling under the fast spread of Omicron and are in desperate need of government aid.

University of Manitoba microbiologist Aleeza Gerstein told Global on Wednesday that replies poured in when she and her colleagues launched the survey last Thursday.

“We were surprised by how quickly responses flooded in,” said Gerstein.

“The message that we got from people was sort of a shocking number of people just saying, ‘Thank you, thank you for asking us how we’re doing because we’re not doing OK.’”

More than 300 facilities, representing a total of 5,000 staff and 18,000 children, participated in the survey.

Gerstein found the results were grim.

“We’re seeing really high numbers of child-care worker (COVID-19) cases,” she said.

“We see high numbers of children, although the child-care centres themselves are not told when there’s a child associated with their centre who’s positive, so they no longer get any update from the government.

“And in many cases, because centres were closed, they actually have no idea how many of the children are currently positive or isolating due to COVID cases.”

Read more: New Manitoba rules allow symptomatic child care staff, others to return to work with negative test

Gerstein and her team were shocked to discover the government hadn’t been tracking any data regarding COVID-19 cases in child-care facilities.

“This data is not available anywhere in this province, and so for the parents who are sending their children to child-care facilities, there’s really no information available to know if they should be doing that.”

The situation is worsened by the lack of resources available to child-care workers.

“The message we’re getting is that people are feeling like their jobs aren’t safe and they’re simply not getting PPE (personal protective equipment).

“They haven’t been had access to rapid tests, so now they’re going to get some rapid tests if they’re symptomatic, but I think, personally, that’s not good enough.

“They’re not getting N95 masks. They haven’t received grants to upgrade their filtration. It just seems like the sector is being ignored and left behind, essentially in terms of places where the government has invested any effort in making it safer.”

The beginnings of these issues surfaced last December as Omicron took hold.

Last month the minister of families, Rochelle Squires, whose job it is to oversee early childhood education, told Global the government had been ensuring Manitoban child-care facilities have access to what they need.

“As of Dec. 17, over 5.1 million individual pieces of PPE, including over 4.8 million Level 3 medical-grade masks, have been distributed to child-care facilities at a provincial cost of \$1 million,” said Squires.

“Our government appreciates the impacts of recent health changes on the child-care sector, especially when given short notice due to the dynamic nature of Omicron. Information continues to be issued quickly and further updates will be forthcoming as soon as possible.”

Gerstein and her colleagues will be releasing their findings online for anyone interested in taking a look.

Region: Canada ^[4]

Tags: research ^[5]

data ^[6]

health and safety ^[7]

COVID-19 ^[8]

Source URL (modified on 12 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/01/university-manitoba-survey-shows-child-care-facilities-are-distress>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/01/university-manitoba-survey-shows-child-care-facilities-are-distress> [2] <https://globalnews.ca/news/8506206/child-care-distress-covid-university-of-manitoba-survey/> [3] <https://globalnews.ca/video/rd/83579508-73bc-11ec-8caa-0242ac110005/?jwsourc=cl> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/research> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/data> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/health-and-safety> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9040>