

P.E.I. expands childcare support amid COVID-19 restrictions ^[1]

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Source: CTV News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 20 Jan 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

HALIFAX -

Prince Edward Island is helping families who choose to keep their children home from a licensed early learning or childcare centre as COVID-19 public health measures tighten.

"The provincial government will credit the centre with the amount the families would normally pay. This will help ensure centers have the income they need to operate and that families do not lose their child's registered space," reads a release from the government.

Centres can expect to receive payment directly from the province, meaning parents don't have to apply.

Families with infant to school aged children, who have been negatively impacted by restrictions or who choose not to use their regular licensed child care and require a private babysitter, can apply for the Child Care Allowance online.

"As we move through this next stage of the pandemic, we recognize that some families are choosing to keep their children home from early years centers to help decrease their risk of exposure. We want to support these parents and their centres," says Natalie Jameson, education and lifelong learning minister, in a release.

The province says it will also continue to administer the School Age Child Care Allowance, which provides \$125 per week, per child for families with children aged five to 12 who require childcare while schools are closed to in-class learning.

Families with children attending a licensed school age centre will not need to apply, as the centre will be automatically paid by the province. If a family chooses to hire a private babysitter, they can register online for the Child Care Allowance.

Additionally, when licensed early learning centres are closed due to COVID-19, they will continue to be able to benefit from the province's Emergency Relief to Child Care Centre Program, which covers the parent fee.

"As remote learning continues, we also want to assure parents that our respite program, our student support services and our school based substitutes program will continue," added Jameson.

The government says schools across the province have respite care in place to provide support for students with special needs who are currently supported by a school educational assistant or youth service worker. As well, virtual services are in place to support children and families in the Intensive Behavioural Intervention program.

"We know that every family situation is different, and we are trying to meet the needs of all our students during these challenging days," said Jameson.

School based OT, SLP, school counselors and APSEA services are working with students both virtually and in person and substitute teachers have been hired to provide in-school support for students who are struggling academically or socially.

"Student services and teachers have been identifying students who many benefit from this type of support. Parents or guardians can reach out to their school's administrator if they feel their child would benefit from these supports," reads a release from the government.

Region: Prince Edward Island ^[3]

Tags: COVID-19 ^[4]

child care workforce ^[5]

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