

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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Date: March 18, 2020
To: Operators
From: Dominic Cardy, Minister
Subject: COVID-19 – supporting early learning and childcare

Dear Early Learning and Childcare Operators:

I would like to thank you for your ongoing service to the children and families of New Brunswick. Special thanks to those who stepped forward as emergency early learning and childcare facilities. Thank you for your quick and positive response to this unusual situation.

Our province, country and world are facing a crisis and it has resulted in decisions and actions that few could have ever envisioned even two weeks ago. One of government's most difficult and significant decisions, based on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jennifer Russell, was the closing of early learning and childcare facilities.

In our planning around this early learning and childcare decision, we followed one principle: to limit the negative financial impact of this crisis on families and operators as much as possible. Based on that principle we are implementing the following measures:

1. All facilities, whether open or closed, will continue to receive all current grants and subsidies provided by the Department.
2. Any early learning and childcare facility who has closed as requested, and laid off their staff, must not charge their parents. Those not complying will be subject to further measures by the Department.
3. Any early learning and childcare facility, which has closed as requested but not laid off their employees, may continue to charge their families their regular childcare fee. If, however, families have lost their income, the operators must notify the Department of these situations and we will cover the regular fees of those families.
4. Early learning and childcare facilities who stepped forward and opened their doors to serve essential workers must not incur a financial loss. Operators may continue to charge regular childcare fees to current families. If, however, they are aware that any of their current families have lost their income due to COVID-19, the operator must notify the Department and we will cover the families' costs. Facilities can charge a regular childcare fee to essential workers who are new to their centres because of the current situation.

5. Lastly, essential workers must not be charged twice for early learning and childcare services. Essential workers who are still being charged by their regular early learning and childcare facility must indicate this to the emergency early learning and childcare facility. The emergency operator will contact the Department, which will pay for their fee directly to the emergency facility.

These measures are temporary and apply only for the time emergency early learning and childcare services are required. We know this situation is unusual and has already had major impacts on your family, your kids and your business. However, we must all work together to ensure we support our essential workers across the province.

We also want to inform you that the Government of Canada has announced immediate and significant action to help Canadians facing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. On March 18, 2020, Ottawa announced measures to help stabilize the economy during this challenging period. These measures, delivered as part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, will provide up to \$27 billion in direct support to Canadian workers and businesses. You can find details of that program here:
<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/18/prime-minister-announces-more-support-workers-and-businesses-through>.

Everyone has a role to play in mitigating the impact of COVID-19. It takes more than governments and action from the health sector to protect the health and ensure the safety of New Brunswickers. We all have an important role to play.

We realize that you have many questions. We can assure you the department is working tirelessly and will provide information in the coming days as soon as it is available. Please contact your regional quality assurance monitor for more information.

Thank you,



Dominic Cardy
Minister