

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1
Tel.: 506 453-3678
Fax: 506 457-4810

Date: March 20, 2020
To: Parents and guardians
From: Dominic Cardy, Minister
Subject: COVID – 19

Dear parents and guardians:

We are facing a crisis that has required decisions that few could have envisioned even two weeks ago. One of government's most difficult and significant decisions, based on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Jennifer Russell, was the closing of early learning and childcare facilities.

Next to the health and safety of children and staff, our decisions have been guided by the desire to limit the financial impact on New Brunswickers. This includes ensuring that quality and affordable child care will continue to be accessible to all New Brunswickers once facilities re-open. We have to support our child care operators, most are small, local businesses. In difficult times New Brunswickers come together, and that is what I am asking you to do now.

We have told centres who have laid-off their employees to not charge parents. If your centre has laid-off their employees and does try to charge you, please contact the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

If a centre has not laid-off their staff, you will have to pay to ensure a place for your child is reserved. We understand this is difficult for many New Brunswickers – paying for a service you don't use on a snow-day is one thing, paying for weeks or months another.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will cover the fees of anyone who has lost their income due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation. We will continue to provide Parent Subsidies and encourage everyone to visit our website for more information, and to determine if they qualify for assistance.

For parents who are essential service workers: you will not have to pay double-fees for your childcare services, even if you are paying to reserve a space at your usual childcare facility but have your child attending one of the emergency childcare facilities. Please notify the department so we can make sure you are not double-billed; we will cover the costs of your emergency childcare.

Thank you for your understanding and ongoing cooperation with your early learning and childcare facilities. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to operators and educators who have stepped up to open and run emergency early learning and childcare facility. This gesture is one of great compassion and humanity. These facilities

will be providing needed support to essential service workers who will be there to ensure the safety of all New Brunswickers during the difficult days ahead.

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

We realize that you have many questions. Please do not hesitate to contact our early-learning staff on our toll-free line 1-833-221-9339 from 7AM to 7PM or ECSAP-PASPE@gnb.ca

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dominic Cardy". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Dominic" written above the last name "Cardy".

Dominic Cardy
Minister