

CIRCULAR

Date: April 23, 2020

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID-19: 2020-31

To: Child Care Centres, ELCC staff

Subject: **New practices to support the needs of child care centres**

Program(s): All

Type: Policy For Internal Reference Only
 Procedure Information Only

Effective Date Immediately

Current practices are being adjusted to ensure child care centres can provide care to families in the critical and essential services workforce.

Child care centres providing temporary child care services during COVID-19 can provide care to children from age categories outside of what they were previously licensed for. This will enable centres to provide their service to a family with children of various ages.

To ensure facilities are responsive to the needs of families, all child care centres remaining open will be granted a temporary licence with a provision to accommodate children of various age groupings. The provisions are as follows:

- Centres currently licensed for infants will receive a temporary licence with a provision stating: Due to COVID-19, provision is granted to care for a combination of infants, preschool and school age children until further notice.
- Centres not currently licensed for infants will receive a temporary licence with a provision stating: Due to COVID-19, provision is granted to care for a combination of infants, preschool and school age children until further notice. The centre is restricted to a maximum of four (4) children under the age of two (2) years.
- Temporary licenses will be mailed to child care centres to replace their previously posted licence.

Please note that licensed child care centres continue to be limited to no more than 16 children per centre. Some larger centres with segregated rooms and separate external entrances are able to offer care for up to 16 children per room. Changes to these numbers are contingent on directives from Manitoba's Chief Public Health Officer.

Please review the following additional provisions for child care centres:

- When children are cared for in a mixed age grouping, staff to child ratios can be prorated.
- Centres can provide the infant and mixed age grouping care for children without submitting the infant and mixed age group plans for ELCC approval.
- Centres can provide care for up to four infants; if caring for more than four, the building must be classified as B3 Occupancy.
- Centres must ensure the necessary age appropriate equipment and supplies are available.
- Centres must provide equipment for eating and sleeping for infants. This includes highchairs and playpens or cribs for children under 18 months.
- The physical space must be conducive to the health, safety, and well-being of children of all ages.
- Facilities operating solely as a school-age centre will have the natural light requirement waived in order to become an option accessible to families of infant and preschool children.

These provisions allow multiple children from the same family to attend one child care centre, ensuring siblings can remain in child care together, while also limiting the number of individuals that a family and child care staff are in contact with.

If you have any questions, please email cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca or call Manitoba Government Inquiry at 204-945-3744 or toll free 1-866-MANITOBA (1-866-626-4862).

Sincerely,
Early Learning and Child Care Program