

CIRCULAR

Date: April 3, 2020

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID-19: 2020-46

To: Child Care Centres, ELCC program staff

Subject: **Update on Matching Families with Licensed Child Care Spaces**

Program(s): All

Type: Policy For Internal Reference Only
 Procedure Information Only

Effective Date Immediately

On April 2, the province provided an update on the valued role that the child care sector has played during the COVID-19 response and announced a new process for matching eligible families with licensed child care spaces, which will be implemented April 14. The announcement can be read in full at:

<https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=47377&posted=2020-04-02>

Effective Tuesday, April 14:

- Eligibility for all available child care spaces in licensed facilities will be expanded to include children whose parents work in an essential service, as defined through a public health order. This includes grocery store staff, farmers and farm workers, construction workers, bank or credit union employees, and support staff at hospitals and clinics.
- A list of included occupations is available here, starting at page 4: www.news.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/newslinks/2020/03/BG-PHA - COVID-19-PR.pdf
- Families working in these sectors who have been unable to make other child care arrangements will be able to check online at www.manitoba.ca/covid19 to determine which child care providers have available spaces, and then work directly with facilities to finalize care arrangements.

It is important to note that the Department of Families will continue to accept applications from health care workers and other emergency services workers (as previously identified) for prioritization for available child care spaces until Wednesday, April 8.

Thanks to the cooperation and rapid response of the early learning and child care sector, as of March 31, 2020:

- more than 1,850 requests were received from parents who provide critical services;
- licensed child care centres opened more than 1,600 spaces; and
- more than 1,200 children have been matched with child care, with 100 families having made alternative arrangements.

Child care centres that have remained closed are encouraged to reopen in order to provide child care services to health care and other emergency services workers. If your centre is willing to re-open, please update your information online so we can ensure that families know spaces are available at <https://eswchildcare.ca>

Continuing Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic:

The province has provided direct support to the child care sector, including flowing over \$30 million in first-quarter operating grant payments to all facilities.

We are also partnering with the Manitoba and Winnipeg chambers of commerce and providing \$18 million for a grant program to help early childhood educators (ECEs) begin independently offering child-care services at their homes or in the community. ECEs can access a \$3,000 start-up grant and business mentorship through the chambers of commerce. Interested ECEs can read more about this program at <http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19/infomanitobans/index.html> and they are encouraged to apply by filling out the e-form at <https://forms.gov.mb.ca/temporary-child-care-service-grant/>.

The Minister of Families recently confirmed with the federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development that child care centres are eligible for the federal Emergency Wage Subsidy. More information about the Emergency Wage Subsidy and other benefits offered by the federal government can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/business/maintaingrowimprovebusiness/resources-for-canadian-businesses.html>

Your partnership and contributions as a sector have been greatly appreciated as we work through the COVID-19 pandemic together.

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). Manitoba Government Inquiry staff are working with the ELCC program, including child care coordinators, to respond and refer calls and emails when needed.

Sincerely,

Early Learning and Child Care Program