

## Community Consultation, Children's Services – May 14, 2020

### Discussion

- Darlene welcomed the group and referred to the Ministry memo dated May 9, 2020.
- Funding approach put in place during closure will align with timing of federal supports.
- An accessible child care system will be critical. Need to keep the system as stable and intact as possible
- Province providing direction about the use of the funding we have received, fixed overhead costs, rent assistance and working with landlords to see what assistance is being applied for.

### **Government assistance is broken out to two key areas for licensed child care centres:**

- Fixed Overhead Costs
  - Offering Support for Rent Assistance through the – Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program (OCECRA) website <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/finance-and-investing/covid19-cecra-small-business>
  - In addition; for those that have a purchase of service agreement for GOG and/or Fee Subsidy will continue to complete the monthly expense COVID19 Relief template.
  - For those service providers that only have a WEG agreement with the Region, they will now have to apply for assistance directly to the ministry. Instructions provided in the memo through the province can be found at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/childCareSupport.html> . Until the system reopens child care the WEG funding would be put on hold and a completed application will be required to be sent to the Ministry at [childcare@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare@ontario.ca)
- Salary and Wage Supports
  - Important direction that all child care operators apply for the federal government assistance and required to apply to the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) for businesses and the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit for individuals. Please continue to visit and find all information at <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>
  - This government assistance will be retroactive to March 15, 2020.

### **So what does this mean for the current process in place for service providers receiving funding from Children's Services?**

- Information in the funding agreements that can be found in OMS; base funding will continue to be cash flowed on a monthly basis;
  - Licensed child care and home child care agencies will continue completing the required monthly expense templates.
  - EarlyON and Special Needs Agencies will continue to report in their quarterly reports, which will now include additional information on any change of that service being offered to families and children, and the costs throughout the closure period.
- Based on our specific memo, received directly to Children's Services from the Ministry, we will be required to reconcile the amounts flowed, retroactive to March 15<sup>th</sup> to the end of the closure period.
  - For child care, this includes the advance that was issued for the COVID19 relief fund to help support fixed overhead and salary and wage costs until the government assistance was either received and to determine what the remaining costs are each month. The remaining costs are those expenditures to get covered from the amount in your cash flow each month.
  - The funding a service provider uses to increase wages to staff, above the CEWS 75% portion will be determined by each child care operator. We will work individually at the **end of the closure period**, with each service provider to reconcile the amounts used from all funding received in the Region's cash flow (back to the March 15<sup>th</sup> date).
- The ministry will be setting up a meeting with Children's Services to go over the funding information in the next two weeks. We will have more information and details to help answer further questions after that meeting.
- Overall, what that means is that we will work with each service provider to reconcile to the annual funding amount recognized in your funding agreements. For the base GOG and WEG amounts paid during the closure period, retro to March 15; it may just be called something different ie. COVID relief- for the period of the closure. We would make those adjustments in the funding agreement to balance out the required amounts to each funding description.
- Unfortunately, at this time we don't expect to have any flexibility with the WEG funding, that is now being provided as 75% of your CEWS assistance. Therefore we may need to reconcile the cash flow differently during the closure period to balance out to the total cash flow to coincide with the funding agreement. It's our current understanding, that we will have to attribute a portion from annual WEG cash flow to the COVID19 relief during the closure period.
- Timelines may be off due to going through all these pieces.
- Darlene thanked the providers who have submitted reports, funding will be withheld until the report is received.
- EarlyOn Centres and Special Needs – a requirement and expectation for virtual services and demonstrating that staff have been working in order for funding to continue, For special needs, transition to School , supporting clients in a virtual manner, needs to be flagged so we can show these activities happened.

- Survey went to before and after school providers, aside from COVID what else is happening and how do we prepare, e.g. kindergarten registration. We have no direction re: summer camp, how long the emergency order will continue, when schools will reopen. If the Emergency order is extended families won't need B&A care however can providers in schools continue. Do providers have capacity if there is a need in a new school?

Some of the questions we as systems managers have regarding reopening: Still no idea when widespread child care can reopen. Staffing may be an issue once providers can reopen. Parents may be cautious about putting their child in group care. There is a gap right now as some parents are asking for care but are not considered essential staff. We recognize this is an issue.

- In August we expect to look at families needs and see where the pressures are for Before and After school.
- Summer camps still in limbo.
- Darlene will send out a list of issues/questions that Children's Services have regarding reopening and providers can fill out their issues. Some examples are: cleaning, screening, financial obligations and ratio may be down, what new policies are needed, is a PH visit needed prior to reopening. Timeline of reopening, what expectations will the province have as well as PH.
- Implementation – how much time do providers need to become operational? What screening practices will be put in place? How many staff will you need? How many families need child care in the interim? Will providers hold spaces for previously enrolled children before taking new children. We will be looking at priorities for placement.
- Changes of age groups – how will school age children be supported. We added school age to our licensing. What additional PPE need? How will they get them?
- Operational concerns – location availability, if schools close but can child care in them stay open.
- Expect 2 weeks prep. time for reopening.
- If an outbreak occurs after a centre opens, what happens? Need to have a plan in place.
- We are working hard to get emergency families into child care, asked providers to be patient, hoping for announcement soon re: reopening centres.
- Providers can submit questions to Sarah Glenney at [sarah.glenney@niagararegion.ca](mailto:sarah.glenney@niagararegion.ca) and she will compile them.