

## Questions and Answers for service providers in follow-up to the May 14, 2020 teleconference

QUESTION	ANSWER
<p>Emergency Care Sites How the emergency have centres prepped staff and centres prior to re-opening?</p>	<p>Children’s Services has sent out a number of documents to service providers outlining processes in place at the emergency child care centres.</p> <p>As additional information and resources continue to be developed, Children’s Services will share with service providers.</p> <p>Within the recently sent COVID-19 information emails, contact information for Supervisors overseeing the emergency child care centres has been made available to answer questions by service providers.</p>
<p>Will current restrictions/guidelines that are in place for the Emergency Care centres be increased or decreased moving forward?</p>	<p>Any guidelines will be established by the provincial government, and at this time it is unknown when those guidelines will be available. Children’s Service recommends that service providers plan for a number of different scenarios.</p> <p>In order to inform planning by service providers, Children’s Services will be sharing two surveys that were developed by the City of Hamilton Children’s Services. The first survey is geared to families to gather information on child care needs once the economy re-opens. The second survey, geared to child care centre staff, gauges staff willingness and ability to work once the child care system re-opens. Information gathered should provide service providers with a sense of needs and staffing capacity.</p>
<p><u>Reopening Questions for Ministry Timing</u>  Will child care centres not be able to open until the state of emergency is lifted?</p>	<p>Correct. Licensed child care centres are to remain closed until such time the provincial government and/or the Ministry of Education give direction to reopen.</p> <p>Service providers are strongly advised not to communicate reopening plans with</p>

	<p>parents until there is clear direction from the Ministry of Education. To date, a specific date for the reopening of licensed child care centres has not been decided upon by the provincial government.</p> <p>In addition, service providers are also cautioned about communicating any particulars as to the operations of licensed child care under a global pandemic, as these particulars remain unknown at this time. The Ministry of Education will be establishing operating guidelines, including child adult ratios, to ensure the health and safety of children and their families, educators and staff.</p> <p>It is a good idea to be proactive and plan, but not communicate this at this time until there is solid direction from the Ministry. Factors to consider when planning; room size, age of children and number of staff.</p> <p>Once Ministry direction is received, then communication to families regarding the date of reopening would be appropriate. As well, when operating guidelines are released, plans for cleaning and staffing can and should be shared with families.</p>
<p>How much time will be provided for centres to properly retrain their staff before they are required to open?</p>	<p>During discussions with the Ministry of Education, Children’s Services has recommended a minimum of two weeks. At this time we are awaiting direction from the Ministry.</p> <p>The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO) website has information that may be helpful. The AECEO is lobbying for changes in child care. Service providers should be lobbying where possible from their own organizations’ perspective, to identify what the issues and challenges are/will be to reopen and operate. This would be a good opportunity for Niagara Child Care Sector and all local service providers to lobby the Ministry of Education. The more information the Ministry has regarding issues and challenges, the better they can respond.</p>

<p>Are centres required to open if the Ministry and local government give the go-ahead or is it an individual decision by each centre?</p>	<p>Once the Ministry gives direction to reopen, it is an individual decision by each service provider whether to reopen.</p> <p>Please be advised, once the Ministry of Education directs licensed child care centres to reopen, should your agency/organization choose not to reopen any year round licensed child care centre(s), Children’s Services can not guarantee continued funding.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given to past practices of operation. For example, some centres which operate 10 months of the year are wondering about operating in the summer. This would require a change in licensing. Children’s Services has reached out to the Ministry to ask about such scenarios requiring licensing changes. At this time we have not received a response.</p>
<p>Will the government/Ministry be providing standard policy and procedures for all childcare centres?</p>	<p>It is anticipated that the Ministry will provide some operating guidelines, however, we have no further knowledge.</p> <p>Children’s Services has shared a number of policies and procedures created for the operation of emergency child care, and invite service providers to change and adapt these documents according to their needs.</p>
<p><u>Physical Location:</u> Can child care programs that are within a school potentially open July 1</p>	<p>At this time it is unknown whether there will be provincial direction, or whether the decision to allow child care centres in schools, to open in the summer, will be a local school board decision.</p>
<p>If we share a building (rent from a church) and they are still ordered closed, can child care re-open?</p>	<p>At this time it is unknown. It will depend on how the reopening of licensed child care is directed by the Ministry</p>
<p>If 2 businesses operate on the same property and share a building do all of their staff count towards the gathering size?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>If we have access to other rooms in the community center how can we control other people from entering our space?</p>	<p>This will be a discussion point between the licensed child care service provider and the building owner/landlord.</p>
<p>Are we permitted to contact our PA to discuss “re-purposing” space to allow for best use of space within our centres (such as infant room to toddler, toddler room to preschool, creating school age spaces)</p>	<p>The Ministry of Education has indicated the Program Advisors are available to licensed child care service providers for consultation.</p>

<p>If a program operates as a one room centre how many children will we be allowed to have?</p>	<p>The Ministry of Education directive will most likely be a ratio of children to adults. It is anticipated that the ratio will be lower than the current license of child care centres.</p>
<p><b><u>PPE:</u></b>  Will there be a centralized supplier for Niagara child cares (i.e. the Ministry to source and distribute) for PPE?</p>	<p>Children’s Services has recently sent an inventory questionnaire to service providers to get a sense of what personal protective equipment and other items licensed child care centres currently have and the quantity.</p> <p>Children’s Services will be working through the ECCDC to try and facilitate purchases. There is a concern that individual service providers, particularly small stand alone operations, would have difficulty procuring PPE and other items. By coordinating the procurement, it allows for bulk purchases that are more cost effective and eliminates service providers competing against each other.</p>
<p>What PPE are children required to wear?</p>	<p>Children are not required to wear any PPE at this time. However, should a child become ill while in care, the child should be isolated until pick up, and the staff and child (if appropriate) should wear masks.</p>
<p><b><u>Catering/Delivery:</u></b>  Will catering companies still be able to delivery properly if they cannot enter the facility directly? If not, will there be menu changes to provide meals and snacks that may not require as much upkeep such as cold lunches instead of food that requires a hotplate to keep it warm? If we have outside food being delivered, what will policies look like for bringing outside items like that into the centre?</p>	<p>This will need to be a discussion between the service provider and the catering company.</p> <p>As well, Public Health may also be able to provide some direction.</p>
<p>How are catering companies who deliver to multiple centres maintaining safety?</p>	<p>Please discuss with your catering company.</p>
<p><b><u>Screening/Cleaning:</u></b>  What safety measures/equipment for safe screening can be provided to centres? Will there be help with sourcing and purchasing the necessary equipment?</p>	<p>Children’s Services has sent out a number of documents to service providers outlining processes in place at the emergency child care centres.</p> <p>As additional information and resources continue to be developed Children’s Services will share with service providers.</p> <p>Within the recently sent COVID-19 information emails, contact information for Supervisors overseeing the emergency child</p>

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<p>How does cleaning work when the children are in the room at the same time? Is there going to be a requirement set for ventilation in a room to counteract the amount of cleaning being done with chemicals that can produce fumes or scents like bleach.</p>	<p>Children’s Services has sent out a number of documents to service providers outlining processes in place at the emergency child care centres.</p> <p>Service providers must follow outbreak processes and remove toys and materials as soon as a child is finished with it.</p> <p>Constantly wiping down high touch areas and cleaning the room between use, e.g. when children and staff go outside. All children and staff must wash hands before and after all activities.</p>
<p>Are RECE’s working as cleaners or are centres hiring cleaning professionals?</p>	<p>At the emergency child care centres, the RECEs are working both as cleaners and educators. Each service provider will need to take into consideration their staffing capacity and needs to determine if additional support for cleaning is required.</p>
<p><b><u>Attendance/Enrollment:</u></b></p> <p>If ratios are reduced, how are the children provided care chosen? Will it be based on needs or first come first serve?</p>	<p>Children’s Services would recommend that service providers accept children who were previously enrolled.</p> <p>The number of families requiring care/returning for care is unknown at this time. Service providers should determine who is coming back (the use of the survey would be helpful) and then first come, first served. However, this could change per direction of the Ministry so it would be</p>

	beneficial for service providers to plan different scenarios.
Are the restrictions on children entering going to be on a percent basis or per day basis? For example, are we allowed to have a different group of children in the centre on Tuesday than we had on Monday as long as we meet ratio?	<p>At this time Children’s Services is not sure what directives will come from the Ministry of Education. The service provider could have a different group of children in the centre on different days of the week.</p> <p>However, the service provider needs to give consideration as to whether there is capacity to thoroughly disinfect the room and all equipment (cots, toys, etc.). If not, then it would not be recommended.</p>
What would the protocols be for the children that are not immunized (Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief for Children) and are attending at the centre going forward?	<p>Immunizations are available through local physicians. If service providers were accepting children whose parent had signed a Statement of Conscience prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, service providers should continue to do so.</p> <p>However, for new enrollments, there may be limitations in receiving a Statement of Conscience as this affidavit needs to be signed and, for school-aged children, parents must attend an education session typically provided by Niagara Region Public Health. At this time, the education sessions are not available.</p> <p>Service providers are cautioned about how they proceed and decision making about this issue as there could be a Human Rights complaint.</p>
If a family/child contract COVID and have to be away for 14 days do they lose their spot?	<p>It is possible that a family/child who contracts COVID-19 and be away for 14 days to lose their spot. There will need to be consideration given to demand for child care, number of absent days available to the family, and current policies in place regarding sick days.</p> <p>If it is a family in receipt of fee subsidy, the service provider should contact the fee subsidy caseworker.</p>
What if a toddler has a runny nose-teething?	If a toddler has a runny nose and it is believed to be due to teething, the parent should obtain a physician’s note that confirms the runny nose is due to teething.
Enrollment-part time still have space?	Service providers will need to determine demand for child care (the survey would be

	a helpful resource) and consider the space available to make a decision.
What needs to be removed from classrooms? Rugs sensory table	<p>Yes, items such as rugs and sensory tables must be removed from the classroom. Service providers must consider the materials in the space, and how easily they can be cleaned.</p> <p>Service providers must use their outbreak protocols. Children’s Services recommends that spaces with wall to wall carpets undergo a weekly steam cleaning.</p> <p>Public Health may set guidance on frequency of steam cleaning of carpets for spaces with carpeting.</p>
<p><b><u>CEWS/CERB/CECRA</u></b> Is it a requirement to apply for the CEWS retroactive back to March 17 before reopening?</p>	<p>The federal government has announced supports for businesses and individuals related to COVID-19, including the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) for businesses and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit for individuals. Child care service providers will be required to work with their staff and apply for staffing and wage supports that best meet their needs under the Federal COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, retroactively to March 15, 2020.</p> <p>When applying, service providers and staff should submit their salary and wages inclusive of the Wage Enhancement Grant amount.</p> <p>For your ease of reference, below is a link to the federal government site that outlines all federal supports in Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: <a href="#">Economic Response Plan</a></p>
If CEWS is backdated, do staff need to repay any monies they’ve collected through the CERB program?	Please refer to the “Frequently Asked Questions” on the federal government’s website for more information on the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) support: <a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions</a>
Is the 75% only based off the base hourly wage or hours worked?	See above link for government site and Q&A responses.
Am I now understanding that the WEG is lumped into the 75% wage subsidy and that we will no longer be receiving WEG?	The required monthly COVID-19 expense reporting with Children’s Services will continue until licensed centres reopen. Regular cash flow continues based on the funding agreement and a final reconciliation will be required when Federal COVID-19

	Response Plan funding ends and licensed centres reopen.
Should we continue providing the CEWS at 100% beyond June 6	See above. Continue to submit monthly expenses and when child care reopens a reconciliation will be done to account for the additional costs that are not being covered through Federal COVID-19 Economic Response plan funding.
Do we need to change their bi-weekly paystub to remove the WEG portion?	Cash flow will continue based on the funding agreement. Once the closure period ends a reconciliation will be done and an adjustment will be made at that time to review what WEG has been paid in pay stubs. The amount during the closure will be updated in the funding agreement as a COVID-19 relief fund expense. It is not necessary to change any payroll process you currently have in place for reporting to staff.
The CECRA funding seems to address some relief from rental expense paid to a third party (landlord). I have not been able to confirm that it would include coverage for other facility-related fixed costs (i.e. mortgage payments, property insurance, repairs and maintenance)?	Continue to submit monthly expenses and when child care reopens a reconciliation will be done to account for the additional costs that are not being covered through Federal COVID-19 Economic Response plan funding.
<p><b><u>Certifications</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happens with vulnerable sector checks/Criminal Offence Declarations that have expired during staff being on lay off?</li> <li>• What happens with the First Aid and CPR Level C Certifications that have expired (some have been given an extension, however may not have enough time to obtain prior to working. Will there be a grace period allowed by Ministry?)</li> </ul>	Children's Services, in discussion with the Ministry, has strongly suggested that the Ministry allow a grace period.
<p><b><u>Staffing</u></b></p> <p>What if a staff refuses to come back to work because they cannot find care for their children, or they feel it is still unsafe to work within a childcare setting given uncertainty of this coronavirus?</p>	Service providers should contact the Ministry of Labour.
What if a staff says they have an underlying health issue and is unable to work, are we able to obtain a physician's note to support their condition?	Service providers should contact the Ministry of Labour. Typically If it is a medical reason you can ask for a medical note to support the absence.
What should we be doing with staff vacations that were not taken due to the pandemic? Do they lose their vacation? Does their year get extended based on the amount of time they have been off work for the unused vacation?	Service providers have an obligation to follow and comply with labour laws and make operational decisions.



<p>How will staff be able to use out of classroom facilities like bathrooms? Will we need to change clothing when entering and exiting a classroom each time, especially if entering a community space?</p>	<p>No, staff do not need to change clothes when entering and exiting a classroom each time. At the emergency child care centres, some staff have elected to wear smocks over their clothes. As well, many staff will remove their clothing and place it in the washing machine immediately upon arriving at home.</p>
<p>Will there be restrictions on staff activities outside of work, other than the general restrictions set for everyone in the province? (i.e. not able to be working other jobs at the time of employment?)</p>	<p>The Ministry of Health may set guidelines regarding staff activities outside of the workplace. However, any restrictions will most likely be for staff that are working in another child care centre or group home.</p>
<p>What do staff numbers look like and when are staff scheduled? How do staff lunch and bathroom breaks work?</p>	<p>Within the recently sent COVID-19 information emails, contact information for Supervisors overseeing the emergency child care centres has been made available to answer questions by service providers.</p>
<p>If we don't have a staff room and only a small office, how do we maintain physical distancing for staff during lunch breaks, etc.?</p>	<p>Children's Services would suggest staff go outside the building. However, service providers should have a discussion with staff about their ideas and work with the Public Health Inspector.</p> <p>This question can be asked of the Health Inspector during the upcoming Health and Safety Advisory Table meeting, Tuesday June 2, 2020.</p>
<p>With a sector that is already struggling finding RECE's, how is supply working?</p>	<p>RECE supply staff continues to be an issue. Service providers will need to consider their current staffing and take into consideration increased staffing needs for screening and enhanced cleaning.</p> <p>Children's Service would recommend service providers hire a non-RECE to do the screening and cleaning rather than using a qualified staff.</p> <p>It is very possible a large number of people will be looking for work due to loss of employment because of the pandemic. The shortage of qualified staff has been an ongoing issue that has been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
<p><b><u>Programming</u></b> More insight from centres currently open with regard to scheduling and programming would be greatly appreciated.</p>	<p>Programming remains the same, with the Ministry looking at how emergency child care centres follow 'How Does Learning Happen' during COVID-19. Scheduling will</p>

	require additional staff to allow for screening and enhanced cleaning. All legislated requirements are still expected to be in place.
What will resources and supports for children with special needs look like. Will resource teachers and supports like Pathstone be reopening when childcare centres do? If not, will they be available for staff via electronic communication or video conferencing to help support the children in need? Will we be able to take these children back into our centres if those supports are not available?	Special needs agencies are still supporting families virtually (by phone, Zoom, etc.) and the virtual service provision will continue once licensed child care centres reopen. In the future, there could be on site visits.
<b>Funding</b> Added costs when/if we reopen i.e. cleaning, staffing but with reduced income – how will this be supported by the governments?	Children’s Services will continue to gather information to understand any additional costs, and provide support wherever possible. Children’s Services is asking for additional provincial funding. To date, we do not yet know the reporting plan.
For this first payroll we are providing staff with 100% AND on top of that, the WEG \$2/hour retroactively on this pay check. Is that correct?	When applying for CEWS, operators and staff should submit their salary and wages inclusive of the Wage Enhancement Grant amount.
As discussed, we are increasing staff payroll to 100% and my understanding is that this 25% portion will be considered an expenditure and eligible for the COVID funding?	Yes. Continue to submit monthly expenses and when child care reopens a reconciliation will be done to account for the additional costs that are not being covered through Federal COVID-19 Economic Response plan funding.
What if a child/family member gets COVID-19 & we have to close for 14 days! I feel that would be a set back from all the work we put into reopening/ cost of recleaning/confusing for finding care again for their children/ would we have to reapply for unemployment?	If a centre need to close for 14 days, upon reopening they must follow Public Health direction and Ministry requirements, as well as file a Serious Occurrence. Children’s Services must also be notified as there would be funding implications.  On Tuesday June 2, 2020 there is a teleconference to address health and safety concerns. It will include Health & Safety staff, along with a Public Health Inspection Manager. Ashley Havlin is the lead for this temporary advisory committee. Children’s Services will have information links available on the Niagara Region website.
Where can I get more information on the AECEO Reopening to Recovery Report?	<b>Here is the link:</b> <a href="#">From Reopening to Recovery</a>