

**CONTEXT:**

Licensed child care in British Columbia (B.C.) is provided by independent non-profit and for-profit businesses/organizations, school districts, municipalities, public institutions and First Nation governments. As such, they make their own business decisions/continuity planning and the **Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has no authority to mandate their closure**; such closure could only be mandated by the Provincial Health Officer/Medical Health Officer.

Licensed child care providers in B.C. draw the majority (roughly 80%) of their operating revenue from parent fees. The remaining 20% of operating revenue is comprised of other funding sources, including government funding (see below) and fundraising. The majority of expenditures (roughly 80%) is allocated to staffing/wages, and the remaining 20% of expenditures are used for fixed costs (e.g. rent/lease/mortgages, insurance costs, etc.).

While licensed child care providers are independent businesses, MCFD supports their operations through the following programs, which are administered under the *Child Care BC Act*:

- Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF) – covers a portion of the provider’s average monthly operating expenses – on average, CCOF offsets roughly 12% of Group facilities and 9% of Family facilities monthly expenses (e.g. rent/lease/mortgage, staff wages, etc.). Facilities must be licensed by their local Health Authority to be eligible; however, not all licensed facilities have enrolled (current estimates are roughly 10% of licensed spaces in B.C. don’t receive CCOF).
- Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) – reduces parent fees for facilities that opt-in.
- ECE Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE)– wage enhancement payment for front-line ECEs. Currently \$1/hour, increasing to \$2/hour April 1, 2020.

MCFD supports parents with the cost of care through:

- Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) - a monthly payment to assist eligible low-income families with the cost of child care. The program is governed under the *Child Care Subsidy Act* and the *Child Care Subsidy Regulation*.

In addition, MCFD is currently funding over 50 licensed child care facilities as Universal Child Care Prototype Sites (PT Sites). PT Sites are funded under the terms of the Canada-B.C. Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement to provide \$10/day child care for all families, regardless of household income. Total federal investment is \$30M/year over two years.

**Public Health Officer (PHO) Direction:**

As of March 18, the PHO provided advice to Ministry staff that some child care in BC should remain operational to provide services to essential service staff and other parents who need it.

March 18, 2020 PHO Statement:

- As we implement broad social measures to prevent and delay the spread of COVID-19 in BC, most parents will be working from home and will be caring for their children at home.
- This will take needed pressure off our day care centres and ensure that reliable AND SAFE child care is available for those families where parents work in our essential services sectors.

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- This will also help day care centres implement a more rigorous approach to hand hygiene, food handling, and social distancing amongst staff and the children they care for. Important measures like reduced numbers of children, use of appropriate facilities, enhanced cleaning and measures such as symptom checks are being reviewed and guidance will be provided in the coming days.
- Parents who depend on child care services can also help by practicing good hand hygiene with their children at home, taking care to ensure social distancing when dropping off or picking up children, and avoiding any gatherings and events.
- Our ministries will be providing more specific guidelines for preventing the spread of the COVID-19 in child care facilities facility owners and licensing officers in the coming days to ensure safe and reliable access to essential child care during this difficult time.

**Cross Jurisdictional Overview (Canada) (as of March 18, 2020 – see Appendix for detail)**

- Most (10/13) jurisdictions have closed child care centres
- Just over half of these jurisdictions (6/10) have approved family child care in homes to remain open (mainly due to lower numbers of children in these settings). The other 4 have also closed family child care.
- One jurisdiction (SK) has limited child care closure to child care located in schools
- Child care centres still open in BC, Yukon, and NWT and non-school based child care in SK

**Recommended Approach / Implementation Plan**

s.12; s.13

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s.12; s.13

**Implications**

s.12; s.13

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s.12; s.13

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s.12; s.13

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**Financial Implications**

s.12; s.13; s.17

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**Modelling Assumptions:**

s.12; s.13; s.17

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Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13; s.16