

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

April 8, 2020

Concerns regarding the sustainability of licensed child care

Dear Minister Lecce,

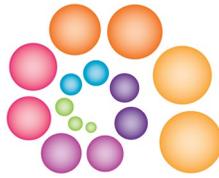
On behalf of the College of Early Childhood Educators (the College), we wish to share our sincere appreciation and gratitude for the government's prompt response to the COVID-19 crisis. Over the past few weeks, we've heard from registered early childhood educators (RECEs), child care program operators, labour federations and other valuable stakeholders, each of whom recognizes the gravity of the global situation. They conveyed how appreciative they are of the government's efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the safety of Ontarians. Understandably though, they are also worried about what the future may hold for access to child care.

The recent decision to make child care available to healthcare and other frontline staff demonstrates the importance of high-quality child care to both Ontario families and the economy. If parents are not able to entrust their children to a safe environment supported by qualified caregivers, they cannot participate in that workforce.

The closure of most child care centres was a necessary step to slow the spread of COVID-19. However, once the emergency period has passed, it will be critical for child care centres to re-open as quickly as possible. That way parents can also return to their jobs and support the recovery of Ontario's economy.

This is unlikely to happen without continued support from government. Without revenue from parent fees, many child care centres will be unable to meet their financial commitments in the interim. Those obligations go well beyond staff salaries and include occupancy and other overhead costs. Without additional support, many centres may be unable to open their doors again. That means the shortage of child care in Ontario will be further exacerbated, and parents may struggle to return to work.

The College oversees more than 55,000 RECEs in Ontario, more than 60 per cent of whom work in licensed child care. These professionals play a key role in supporting the development and well-being of children and families. There is a strong public interest in ensuring that families and child care operators will continue to be able to rely on a strong, highly qualified and committed workforce. That's why we have taken steps to support RECEs facing financial hardship during the current crisis. They're able to maintain their registration status and be ready to return to work as soon as it is safe. However, this is only one part of the solution. More will be required to ensure the ongoing sustainability of licensed child care.



We recognize that these unprecedented times will require innovative solutions. We remain committed to collaborating with you and your staff. Together, we can help ensure that RECEs are able to return to their practice – and Ontario families continue to have the high-quality child care they can trust.

Sincerely,

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