

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

June 12, 2020

Concerns regarding the re-opening of licensed child care

Dear Minister Lecce,

On behalf of the College of Early Childhood Educators (the College), we again offer to work with government, experts and stakeholders in the early learning and child care sector to ensure that the re-opening of childcare happens in a way that supports the health and safety of children, families and educators, while respecting the importance of early learning for the development of children.

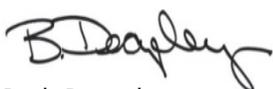
Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) providing emergency care to children of front line workers have demonstrated the importance of high-quality child care and the profession's commitment to providing it. The College oversees more than 55,000 RECEs in Ontario, more than 60 per cent of whom were working in licensed child care programs before the onset of the pandemic. 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.

Child care is not just a workforce support for economic re-opening; the benefits of high-quality early learning programs, led by qualified professional staff using evidence based pedagogy and curricula, is much more significant in its contribution to the well-being of Ontario's children and the future of Ontario, not just its economy. Responsible re-opening must be informed by experts in early learning and child development.

Any sustainable re-opening will require ongoing and flexible financial support from government. Rigorous health and safety protocols are necessary and are supported by the College and the sector; however, many operators will struggle to re-open under the required model, which involves reduced capacity and therefore less income from parent fees but significantly increased costs. We were encouraged to see the Re-opening Funding Guidance released yesterday to municipalities.

We recognize these unprecedented times require innovative solutions. We would encourage you to engage with the many experts in the early learning and care sector who have offered to provide advice, and we would be happy to convene a group to facilitate that process. We remain committed to collaborating with you to ensure that Ontario families continue to have safe, high-quality child care.

Sincerely,



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