

The Right Honourable Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON Canada K1A 0A6

April 20, 2020

**Concerns regarding the sustainability of licensed child care**

Dear Minister,

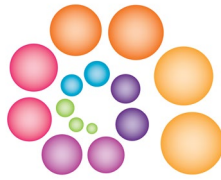
On behalf of the College of Early Childhood Educators (the College) we wish to share our sincere appreciation and gratitude for the federal government's prompt response to the COVID-19 crisis. The College oversees more than 55,000 Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) in Ontario, more than 60 per cent of whom work in licensed child care. These professionals play a key role in supporting families with the well-being, development and care of their children.

Over the past few weeks, we've heard from 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 Canadians. Understandably though, they are also worried about what the future may hold for access to child care.

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

This is unlikely to happen without continued support from our provincial and federal governments. In Canada, licensed and regulated child care is a delicate web of centres and home-based services. It is precarious at the best of times, but the COVID-19 pandemic makes the risk even more severe. Without revenue from parent fees, many child care centres will be unable to meet their financial commitments in the interim, which is likely to lead to the permanent closure of some child care centres. That means the shortage of child care in Ontario and likely across Canada will be further exacerbated, and parents may struggle to return to work.

Those child care centers that survive the crisis may be faced with a shortage of employees, as RECEs and other child care workers who were laid off or left their positions because they were not able to survive on 75% of their former earnings may not return to the child care sector, making a pre-existing workforce challenge that much more severe, and again impacting the availability of child care for Canadian families.



There is a strong public interest in ensuring that families and child care operators can continue 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. Assistance, from all levels of government, will be required to ensure the ongoing sustainability of licensed child care.

We recognize that these unprecedented times will require innovative solutions. We have already shared these concerns with the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Ontario's Minister of Education reiterating our commitment to collaboration. Together, with your provincial colleagues, we can help ensure that RECEs are able to return to their practice – and families continue to have the high-quality child care they can trust.

Sincerely,

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