

## Temporary Emergency Child Care for Essential Workers

To support parents who are essential service workers during the response to novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the Province is launching a new process.

This process will match parents, who are working on the front lines of B.C.'s COVID-19 response and have children up to five years of age, with child care in their communities.

Essential workers can now fill out a new "parent" form to identify their need for urgent child care. Forms can be accessed by calling 1 888 338-6622 and selecting Option 4, or online: [www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care](http://www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care)

Child Care Resource Referral (CCRR) centres in 38 communities will act as community-based hubs. The CCRRs will reach out to essential-service workers in their area who filled in the form to connect them with available licensed child care spaces.

Applicants will be asked:

- which category of essential worker they are;
- their child's age; and
- in which community they need child care.

Child care spaces will be prioritized for children whose parents work in public health and health services, social services, law enforcement, first responders and emergency response sectors. Additional spaces will then be given to families working in other crucial roles, defined as essential service workers.

Spaces will be prioritized in the following order:

- **Tier 1 (highest priority):** families employed in Health and Health Services, Social Services, Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Emergency Response. For child care, Tier 1 also includes children referred by MCFD and Delegated Aboriginal Agency social workers.
- **Tier 2 (second priority):** families in all other occupations not included in Tier 1 that are listed in the [Essential Services Workers](#) list.
- **Tier 3 (third priority):** all other families not employed in an occupation listed in the Essential Service Workers list. Accepting families in the third tier is not required but providers may at their discretion.

The number of spaces available for essential service workers will be up to each child care operator, based on its licensed capacity and following any additional health requirements established by the provincial health officer.

Hours of operation for spaces will vary by facility. While many centres are open Monday to Friday, others may offer care on the weekends and outside the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Government is monitoring whether the needs of essential service workers for care outside of regular hours are being met.

Child care centres, which are open, are required to follow the child care licensing regulation and guidelines on how to prevent the spread of and protect children and staff from COVID-19. This includes proper handwashing, regular cleaning and disinfecting, as well as identifying children who are sick. Families who want to access child care services must also continue to ensure their children are practising physical distancing with anyone outside of their immediate family circle.

The form and matching process are temporary. They will remain in place for as long as the provincial health officer advises that all parents who can, should care for their children at home and that child care services can and must be provided for those families whose parents work in critical roles.

The Ministry of Education has been working closely with school districts and independent schools to identify and support children, aged five to 12 years (kindergarten to Grade 6), whose parents are essential service workers, with a focus on public health and health services, social services, law enforcement, first responders and emergency response sectors. School districts and independent school authorities have been asked to ensure students whose parents work in these fields have access to care during regular before-, during- and after-school hours.

Hours of care will vary by school district and independent school. If essential service workers who have school-aged children need before-, during- and after-hours care for their children, they are asked to contact their school district directly. Most school districts have already reached out directly to families through surveys to gather information on urgent child care needs.

As British Columbians navigate these uncertain times together, parents who can are asked to care for their children at home. All children and staff who are ill with fever, have cold, influenza or infectious respiratory symptoms of any kind must stay home. If they are unsure of their status, BCCOVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool and the BC Centre for Disease Control's online assessment tool can help assess whether or not they can return to child care.

**Learn More:**

The full information bulletin, including a backgrounder can be found here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020CFD0017-000599>

The sign up form and frequently asked questions about the matching program can be found here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-response-covid-19/child-care-response-covid-19-parent/child-care-response-covid-19-parent-form>

To view the list of essential services in B.C. during the COVID-19 pandemic, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/essential-services-covid-19>

For recommendations on protecting yourself and your community from COVID-19, and to use an online self-assessment tool, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

BCCOVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/>

The BC Centre for Disease Control's online assessment tool: <http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

**Translations of the Information Bulletin:**

For a traditional Chinese

translation: [http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/IB\\_child\\_care\\_matching\\_March30\\_Chinese.pdf](http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/IB_child_care_matching_March30_Chinese.pdf)

For a French

translation: [https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/IB\\_child\\_care\\_matching\\_March30.pdf](https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/IB_child_care_matching_March30.pdf)

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