

Dear Staff,

RE: Childcare Resources during the COVID-19 Crisis

This email is to provide information to staff on childcare resources during this emergency event. Over the last few weeks we have heard a number of concerns from staff relating to the new reality in which we find ourselves, with all schools and many daycares now closed throughout the region. While some staff continue to have access to childcare through previous providers or family members, we are aware that others may be struggling to find viable childcare options to see them through the current crisis.

Wherever possible, the Province is urging families who are able to, to care for their children at home. However, we recognize this is not possible for many Metro Vancouver families, due to their roles requiring them to be onsite to fulfill their duties in delivering critical services to the region, as well other circumstances that make it not possible for a parent/caregiver to be at home.

As such, we have conducted some research and collated some **information that we hope will provide some guidance and assistance for those of you that do not have a solution to your childcare needs during this crisis**. At this time, the Ministry of Children & Family Development has launched a strategy to support parents who are essential service workers. This initiative is designed to ensure that parents who work in critical roles can continue to provide the essential services that we all depend on. At this time, childcare spaces will be prioritized as follows:

- **Tier 1** (highest priority): employed in Health and Health Services, Social Services, Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Emergency Response.
- **Tier 2** (second priority): all other occupations not included in Tier 1 that are listed in the Essential Service Workers list. **(Metro Vancouver staff are included in Tier 2)**
- **Tier 3** (third priority): all other families not employed in an occupation listed in the Essential Service Workers list.

On March 31, 2020, **the Province released a new form for parents to identify their need for urgent childcare. Forms can be accessed online [HERE](#)**. The number of spaces available 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. The referral system process currently in place is primarily designed to match parents of children up to 5 years of age, who work in critical roles, to access the childcare they need in their communities. Child Care Resource Referral (CCRR) centres throughout the region will connect essential service workers in their area to available licensed child care spaces. Applicants will be required to provide: which category of essential worker they are; their child's age; and in which community they need care.

While Metro Vancouver staff are not currently provided the highest priority for placement, we have spoken to a number of the referral agencies in the region and have been advised they are able to serve Tier 2 Essential Service Workers with referrals and placements without delay at this time.

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 hand washing, regular cleaning and sanitizing, identifying children who are sick, and practicing physical distancing with anyone outside their immediate family.

For school age children, 5-12, the Ministry of Education has been working closely with school districts to make spaces available for essential services workers. These placements are again prioritized for Tier 1 essential workers **at this time**. The process for placement in schools is driven school district by school district with some directing parents to the Principals of their catchment schools while others taking a centralized approach. Should you receive a survey from your school district and you are in urgent need childcare during this crisis, we would encourage you to fill it out and identify yourself as a Tier 2 essential worker. While it is not clear at this time if Tier 2 essential workers will be accommodated with placements in schools, we have been advised that the Ministry is interested in knowing the total need, and depending on demand, placement of Tier 2 essential workers may be a possibility. In addition to the school district in your area, the respective child care resource and referral centres can also provide assistance for matching parents with childcare for school age children as well.

This is of course an evolving situation and should you have additional information to share relating to resources you have identified, or a critical need for childcare that remains unfilled, please contact [Nancy Gill](#), Human Resources Advisor. We are actively working to collate as much information as we can so that we can share this with staff who are continuing to struggle to find viable childcare options.

Contact information for the various Child Care Resource Referral centres in the region are below. In addition to filling out the form available through the Ministry linked above, you may be in touch with the referral agencies directly for assistance. We've been advised that staff only need to identify themselves as Metro Vancouver employees/essential services at this time. Should you be asked for confirmation of your employment for childcare purposes, please reach out to our Human Resources department for assistance.

We recognize that so many of you are facing many pressures. Thank you for all you continue to do in support of our region.

Donna

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Burnaby; New Westminster; Port Moody; Port Coquitlam; Coquitlam; Anmore; Belcarra

YMCA Childcare Resource & Referral

1130C Austin Avenue

Coquitlam, BC

Phone: 604-931-3400

triccrr@gv.ymca.ca

Langley

Langley Community Services Society

20577 Fraser Hwy

Langley, BC

Phone: 604-533-4425

Email: langccrr@lcsc.ca

North Shore

Suite 201-935 Marine Drive

North Vancouver, BC
Phone: 604-985-7138
Email: nscr@nscr.bc.ca

Richmond

Richmond Child Care Resource & Referral Centre
7000 Minoru Blvd.
Phone: 604-279-7020
Email: swu@rcrg.org

Surrey, White Rock, Delta

Child Care Options Resource and Referral Program
100-6846 King George Boulevard
Surrey, BC
Phone: 604-572-8030
Email: childcareoptions@options.bc.ca

Vancouver

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
#225- 3665 Kingsway
Vancouver, BC
Phone: 604-709-5661
Email: info@wstcoast.org

***Please note, Child Care Resource and Referral Centres offices throughout the region are currently closed to the public however services are being provided over the phone and email.*

References / Resources:

Childcare process for parents designated as essential workers:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020CFD0017-000599>

Frequently asked questions about the matching program can be found here:

https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/FAQ_COVID_and_Child%20Care_Mar_30.pdf

To view the list of essential services in B.C. during the COVID-19 pandemic, visit:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/covid-19/list_of_essential_services.pdf

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