

Memorandum To: Licensed Child Care Centres

From: Boafoa Kwamena
Director, Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch
Early Years and Child Care Division

Date: January 15, 2020

Subject: **Licensed Child Care During a Labour Disruption**

The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that children are in safe and healthy environments in the event of any escalated job action as a result of education sector labour negotiations.

Escalating job action could require parents to make alternative arrangements for their kindergarten and school-age children. Full-day child care centres located in schools may also be impacted.

The ministry is taking specific actions to support parents and licensed child care operators in the event of a labour disruption impacting schools. I am writing today to provide additional information on these actions.

Full Day Operation

If school boards determine that their school buildings will remain open, it is likely that child care programs located in schools will have access to their space. However, these programs may have to operate under reduced hours.

To support continuity of care for children and families, before- and after-school programs in this situation are permitted to operate for the full-day in the same manner as they would operate for a PA Day or March Break.

In the rare circumstance that a program has a condition on their licence limiting their hours of operation, they are encouraged to connect with their program advisor as soon as possible to determine whether it is possible to amend the licence and remove this condition, thereby permitting them to operate full-day as well.

Temporary Relocation

Some school boards may determine that their school buildings will close, and licensed child care will not have access to the premises.

If your licensed child care program is in a school and you will not be able to access your licensed space, please contact your program advisor as soon as possible to let them know your plans.

If you can find an acceptable alternate location, the ministry is prepared to expedite the existing temporary relocation process to permit you to continue providing care at another premises.

Increased Capacity

Parents whose school-age children are not currently enrolled in licensed child care may be looking for alternative care arrangements if classroom instruction is cancelled.

Licensed child care programs who have the resources available to increase their capacity (e.g., staff, space, play materials), may wish to consider requesting a revision to their licence so that they are able to care for additional children. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact your program advisor as soon as possible so that the ministry can expedite your request.

Temporary Closure

If you decide to cease operations for the duration of a labour disruption, please ensure you inform families as soon as possible. You would not be required to submit a serious occurrence report for unplanned disruption of service for this planned temporary closure.

In the event of escalated job action, you are encouraged to communicate with your service system manager (i.e., CMSM/DSSAB) if you are making any changes to your program that will result in an increase in hours of operation and fees. Eligible parents/guardians whose children only attend before- and/or after-school care may request additional subsidy to pay for a full-day program.

Support for Parents

As announced today by the Minister of Education, the government is launching Support for Parents, an initiative that will provide financial support to parents of eligible children for each day of school that is missed on account of the labour disruption. Parents with children attending school-based child care centres that are closed on account of the labour disruption will also be able to receive support.

More details about this financial support can be found on the ministry's website or by calling the Support for Parents Helpline at 888-444-3770. If you are receiving questions from parents about this financial support, it would be appreciated if you could direct them to the ministry's website and/or the hotline.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Boafoa Kwamena