



Report To:	Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Board
From:	Donna Stewart, Director of Integrated Social Services and Lori Clark, Children Services Program Supervisor
Date:	June 25, 2020
Re:	Child Care Reopening – Issue Report

Background

At the May 2020 Board meeting, the Board approved the [Early Years Funding - Issue Report](#). The report outlined the direction received from the Ministry of Education since the province ordered Child Cares and EarlyON centres closed. It also outlined the local financial implication as a result of new provincial directives. Staff reported an approximate shortfall of \$54,725 to provide support to providers retroactively based on Ministry of Education directives.

Financial Implication Update

Staff continue to work with providers to firm up the actual financial impact. Since the last Board meeting, the Ministry of Education confirmed that Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) federal funds, could be used to support these retroactive costs. Staff were not aware that these funds could be used for this purpose, nor did staff have a commitment regarding these funds beyond March 31, 2020. Staff have since received confirmation of both and do not anticipate funding pressures during the closure period.

Child Care Reopening

On June 9, 2020, the Premier announced the provinces plan to reopen child care as of June 12, 2020. The [Guidelines](#) to reopen were released later the same day. The Minister of Education [wrote](#) to parents on June 13 explaining their plan to reopen child care and reassure parents that the Health and Safety of children and staff is paramount.

Staff are working with providers and public health to develop a reopening plan that protects children, staff, and families throughout the reopening. New policies will need to be developed focusing on screening, disinfecting, staff training, prioritization of children and health and safety. Due to the reduced number of people in a room, not all children will be able to return to child care during this initial phase of reopening.

Based on our conversation with local providers the reopening date of June 12, 2020 was unrealistic for this area. Local providers are meeting regularly and supporting each other with the goal of opening as soon as required Health & Safety measures are in place. Based on the above staff do not expect any reopening before July.

The [Funding guidelines](#) were also released to support the reopening of child care, several questions have been raised with respect to the funding guidelines for the reopening phase. New funding formulas will need to be developed with providers programs will be operating at a much lower capacity than they were before the order to close. Programs will also incur additional expenses as a result of screening, disinfecting and increased health and safety precautions.

Conclusion

At this point staff are comfortable that there will be no funding pressures during the closure period, as we have been allowed to use Federal ELCC funding to cover any retroactive shortfall created by the province.

The only outstanding pressure maybe the cost of funding during the reopening phase as there will be less children allowed in each centre which will reduce parent revenues. There will also be increased costs due to staff ratios, additional screening, and cleaning requirements.

Access to quality and timely childcare is critical for the local, provincial, and national economic recovery plan. Staff will continue to update the Board with respect to the status of reopening child care. Parents and children are looking forward to returning to licenced child care, staff are looking forward to reuniting with children. Health and safety of children and staff is paramount in guiding the reopening of child care.