



Report To:	Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
From:	Donna Stewart, Director of Integrated Social Services and Lori Clark, Children's Programs Supervisor
Date:	May 28, 2020
Re:	Emergency Child Care Issue Report

Background

On March 22, 2020, the Province of Ontario announced the introduction of Emergency Child Care. A [media release](#) was shared highlighting the steps taken to support child care for frontline staff. Certain child care centres are exempted from the order to close licenced child care.

Service system managers and First Nations partners were asked to submit a planning template for emergency child care in their communities. As centres open, they are added to a [listing of emergency child care centres](#) on the Ministry of Education website.

Emergency Child Care Planning

The planning template was due to MEDU on Wednesday March 25th, 2020, staff submitted a plan that did not include the request to open any centres at that time, rather, to conduct a needs assessment and assess provider readiness to open.

In larger communities, the service system managers elected to open directly operated programs first, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB does not have any directly operated programs which meant consultations with community providers was required.

A survey was conducted throughout the district to assess potential demand for emergency child care, in addition to the survey, providers reported receiving calls requesting care.

Staff submitted an updated planning template to MEDU on April 17th, 2020 identifying a potential emergency child care site in Little Current. Consultation with Rainbow District School Board and Public Health Sudbury and Districts took place in advance of submitting the updated planning template. On April 24th, 2020 staff received confirmation from the Ministry of Education that the potential site had been approved for Little Current. The site opened on April 29th, 2020 and is operated by Manitoulin Family Resources at Little Current Public School.

Prior to opening, centres are required by Public Health to thoroughly clean the centre, update policies, establish screening locations and provide training to staff regarding screening and updated policies. The Ministry of Health released [COVID-19 : Guidance for Emergency Child Care Centres](#) to support policy updates for emergency child care centres. In addition to updating policies, training staff and deep cleaning centres, sourcing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was required to ensure the safety of children and staff. Gowns, masks, goggles, gloves, and touchless thermometers are required prior to opening. Concerns have been expressed across the province regarding the ongoing availability of PPE.

All but one child care centre in the DSB are located in schools, therefore consultation with school boards is required to receive approval for emergency child care centres to open in schools, as they have all been closed since March 13th, 2020.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB [website](#) has been updated to provide current information to the community regarding emergency child care. The Province of Ontario is periodically updating the list of eligible workers who may access emergency child care. Families apply for emergency child care online, once Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff determine eligibility, the application is forwarded to the emergency child care centre to complete the enrolment process.

Eligibility

Emergency child care services are reserved exclusively for children of essential and critical workers who have no other alternatives for child care. The safest option for families is to have children remain at home if possible. If there is another adult in the home who is able to care for the children (even if they are working from home), families will not be eligible for Emergency Child Care. Only workers who are required to report to an official work location to deliver the service, without the ability to work from home, will be eligible.

Emergency Child Care is reserved exclusively for children of essential and critical service workers identified in the Province of Ontario's, "[List of Workers Eligible for Emergency Child Care.](#)"

Financial Implications

Emergency child care is more expensive to deliver than regular licensed child care due to several factors including, smaller group sizes, increased staffing levels, increased disinfecting and increased screening of children and staff. The service is at no cost to parents, which means base funding is required for agencies providing the service.

The Province of Ontario has indicated additional funding will be available to support Emergency Child Care, details of the funding have not been released. Existing resources are being used to fund Emergency Child Care at this time.