



1-188 Bunting Road
St. Catharines, ON L2M 3Y1
1.800.567.7075
admin@adco-o.on.ca

CHILD CARE REOPENING LIKELY TO BE DELAYED BY LACK OF CLARITY FROM MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

For Immediate Release

ONTARIO—June 9, 2020—Earlier today, Premier Doug Ford and Education Minister Stephen Lecce announced that licensed child care centres across Ontario could reopen on Friday, June 12. While the announcement came as good news for parents, the Ministry of Education has yet to provide many of the details child care licensees need in order to reopen. Some of the questions child care licensees are asking include:

- Are there any new Provincial requirements regarding safety for children or staff?
- What health screening measures are going to be required for children, staff and parents?
- What does the Ministry consider a “designated space” for each group of 10? Does that mean a classroom?
- How are the ages in the groups to be defined?
- Will the existing staff:child ratios stipulated by the Child Care and Early Years Act be maintained?
- What needs to go into the pandemic plan the Ministry of Education says is required, who approves it and when?
- If you have more families registered at your centre who need care than you have available spaces under the new reopening requirements, what’s the Ministry’s criteria for deciding who gets them?
- How is the funding formula going to be enhanced and when will the funds begin to flow to cover enhanced cleaning and PPE costs?
- When is the promised “sustainability funding” for the three-month closure period going to start flowing?
- Is the Ministry’s decision to funnel most child care funding through 47 municipal bureaucracies the reason for these funding delays? If not, what is the reason? What is being done to address it?

“Given that how the Ministry of Education answers these questions could have far-reaching impacts on the safety of children, families and child care staff, we hope that parents will understand if their licensed child care centre opts not to reopen at this time,” says Andrea Hannen, Executive Director of the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario, which represents the owner/operators of independent licensed child care centres across Ontario, both commercial and not-for-profit. “Licensed child care owner/operators and their staff teams are anxious to get back to work. They want to support Ontario’s economic recovery, but they need to do it safely. Child care licensees need both clear information from the Ministry of Education as well as the financial means in order to do so.”

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ADCO is the industry association for Ontario’s independent licensed child care centres. Independent licensed child care centres are those that are not run by public sector entities such as municipalities or school boards, or by large multi-service agencies such as YMCAs. While independent licensed child care centres may be run as businesses, not-for-profits or co-ops, their core business is licensed child care. Independent licensed child care centres account for more than a third of Ontario’s licensed child care spaces. Many are run as small businesses, owned and operated by women.

For further information, please contact:
Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO)
admin@adco-o.on.ca or 1-800-567-7075