

MEMORANDUM

TO: Licensed Child Care and Family Home Child Care Agencies

FROM: Denise Stone, Executive Director, Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Branch

DATE: May 28, 2021

SUBJECT: **Province's announcement re Regulated Child Care**

Dear Owner/Operator and Family Home Child Care Agency:

Thanks to the strong commitment of Nova Scotians to follow public health guidelines, our province has seen a rapid decline in new COVID-19 cases during this third wave. This afternoon, the province announced that the temporary restrictions on licensed child care and family home providers, operating under a licensed Family Home Child Care Agency, would be lifted.

Effective June 2, all licensed child care centres can begin operating at full capacity again. To facilitate this transition, the Operational Cost Grant (OCG), the emergency funding for operational and staffing support, will continue to be provided on a sliding-scale until a centre reaches its pre-lockdown attendance, or until June 30, whichever comes first. This is the same approach that was used when the sector reopened in June 2020. OCG funding for Family Home providers will also be ending as of June 30.

Families whose circumstances may mean they are not ready to access their child care space, may continue to keep their child/ren at home. Families will not be charged fees and their space will be held until June 30 (inclusive). As of July 1, these families must begin to pay their fees or withdraw from child care. Families should be encouraged to keep in regular contact with their centre/provider, to ensure they are aware of their child care needs.

The next allotment of OCG payment is being issued to centres today, May 28, and every two weeks until the period up to June 30 has been paid out, where necessary. The province will continue to supply PPE to centres and agencies, including hand sanitizer, masks, and gloves, until further notice.

We will be providing further information and direction, as each stage of re-opening the province dictates. In the first stage, effective June 2nd, there will be changes made to the *COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings* document. Some of these include:

- Continued use of the daily screening requirements for all staff and essential visitors; children and families will be excluded from daily screenings;

- Use of temporary enhanced eye protection will stop; staff may choose to continue wearing face shields however they will not be available to order from Shopify; and
- Children below school age will continue wearing masks until further notice.

We are committed to supporting the viability of centres and providers during the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Centres who have questions about their funding or wish to discuss additional cost pressures are asked to directly contact Nicholas Phillips at Nicholas.Phillips@novascotia.ca, or Anderson Rouse at Anderson.Rouse@novascotia.ca. Home providers may contact their agency with any questions.

Over this past year we have asked for your understanding and patience as we all work together to successfully navigate the viability of regulated child care. We appreciate that, as a business operator and home provider this has been challenging and we thank you for your ongoing support.

Please take care and keep well.