
Lanark County has partnered with two organizations to provide child care for essential service workers during COVID-19 pandemic

Lanark County has received authorization from the Province of Ontario to open two licensed child care centres specifically to provide care for children of essential and critical service workers. The Child Development Centre operated by the Town of Smiths Falls and TayCare Children's Centre in Perth operated by Tayside Community Residential and Support Options will open their doors in the coming days. Both centres are existing licensed child care facilities staffed by early childhood educators.

Perth Mayor, John Fenik noted "staff have been working with our partners at the Province of Ontario for more than a week to get the right approvals in place to open emergency licensed child care spaces as quickly as possible for our essential and critical workers."

To support members of this essential and critical workforce, licensed child care service will be available at no cost to families, funded by the Province of Ontario, for children under age 12. Services will operate for extended business hours Monday to Friday.

Emergency child care services are 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," who have no other alternatives. The safest option for families is to have children remain at home, if possible.

To be eligible, workers must be required to report to an official work location to deliver the service without the ability to work from home. Municipal staff required to report to an official work location to deliver core essential services are also eligible.

There are a number workers that are eligible for emergency child care, including, but not limited to police officers, firefighters or individuals providing fire protection services, regulated health care professionals, unregulated health care providers working in health care, paramedics, grocery and pharmacy clerks, individuals who perform work that is essential to the delivery of core services in a municipality (such as social services, water and solid waste).

A complete list of workers eligible for emergency child care is available on the Lanark County website or can be obtained by contacting Lanark County Social Services.

Due to limited space in order to maintain provincial health and safety requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic, the County will commit to child care spaces for eligible families on a first come, first served basis. Once families complete and submit the application via email they will be contacted by Lanark County Children's Services staff regarding their eligibility and space availability.

Because physical distancing is difficult when caring for young children, additional measures are being taken, in consultation with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, to maintain a healthy and safe environment. Precautions include daily screening of children and staff, increased disinfection, and limiting the number of people in the centre to 50 as per Provincial order.

Mayor Shawn Pankow indicated that “opening designated child care centres for essential and critical service workers is one way we can support those who are making exceptional efforts to keep our County working despite this pandemic. Knowing that their children are safe and well looked after will ease some of their burden through this difficult and dangerous time.”

The goal is to open these emergency child care centres as quickly as possible, following a simple application process for families. “County Council believes it is incredibly important for us to do what we can to support our front line and health care workers during this unprecedented time,” stated Warden Brian Campbell (Tay Valley Reeve). “Licensed child care will ensure the children of essential workers in our community are safely cared for.”

For details on eligibility and application, visit the Lanark County website, email ss@lanarkcounty.ca or call 613-267-4200 or 1-888-952-6275 ext. 2304.

– 30 –

For more information, contact:
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