



ALBERTA
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary-Shaw*

Dear child care operators and representatives,

Thank you all for passing on the concerns of child care operators across the province during the COVID-19 pandemic. I know your advocacy comes from a place of care and compassion.

Your request for a Temporary Emergency Operating Allowance is in line with similar discussions I have had with service providers in recent weeks, which many of you have been a part of. I will reiterate that while I certainly understand how such a measure could help in the immediate term, it is far too early to know what the long-term impact of this pandemic coupled with our current economic uncertainty will have on child care in Alberta.

Right now, my ministry is focused on providing child care to the thousands of brave essential services employees working to keep Albertans safe and secure during the pandemic. Following Dr. Deena Hinshaw's ordered closure of child care centres, we have opened up 4,000 child care spaces across the province for these workers and continue to re-open spaces in areas of need across the province.

As I've said repeatedly since the pandemic began, child care will be an essential component of Alberta's economic recovery and I am committed to using my department's current allotted budget to help centres get back up an running once the pandemic subsides.

In the meantime, operators can take advantage of both federal and provincial supports that will help them get through this time. While we have discussed this in our town-hall meetings, I would like to once again summarize these supports:

Provincial/municipal supports

- Corporate income tax deferral until August 31.
- Six-month education property tax deferral.
- Education property tax freeze.
- WCB premium deferral until 2021.
- Electricity and natural gas bill payment deferral for 90 days.

We have also asked ATB Financial and Alberta credit unions to work with their customers to ease their financial burdens during these times. Please contact your bank to inquire.

Federal supports

Earlier this week, I also spoke to my federal counterpart, Families, Children and Social Development Minister Ahmed Hussen, and he confirmed to me that Alberta child care operators do qualify for the federal government's 75% wage subsidy for employees and small business/non-profit loan benefits. I implore all operators to make full use of these opportunities. Bilateral negotiations continue regarding ELCC funding as well.

For the most up-to-date information about the Government of Alberta's response to COVID-19 and supports for Albertans, please visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-support-for-employers.aspx>

Thank you again for writing to share your ideas and for your advocacy.

Sincerely,



Hon. Rebecca Schulz
Minister of Children's Services