



ONTARIO NONPROFIT NETWORK

The Honourable Minister of Education Stephen Lecce
Ontario Ministry of Education
Toronto, Ontario
By email: minister.edu@ontario.ca

April 15, 2020

Dear Minister Lecce:

On behalf of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), we applaud your move to open emergency licensed child care spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic for front-line essential service employees as safe child care ensures frontline workers have the support they need to care for others during this time. However, we are writing to share our sector's concern that the current supply of licensed child care spaces is not meeting the needs of all essential service workers -- and indeed, many are not even eligible to apply.

We ask that you adjust the list of essential employees eligible for emergency child care to include workers in "essential services" in nonprofits and rapidly enable municipalities to open more safe licensed child care spaces through a transparent process for these workers to access.

More emergency licensed child care spaces would not only support a wider range of essential workers, but also meet increased demand, and protect the childcare sector so it is ready for parents when the economy begins to recover.

ONN is the independent nonprofit network for the 58,000 nonprofits and charities in Ontario, focused on policy, advocacy and services to strengthen the sector as a key pillar of our society and economy. We work to create a public policy environment that allows nonprofits to thrive. We engage our network of diverse nonprofit organizations across Ontario to work together on issues affecting the sector and channel the voices of our network to government, funders, and other stakeholders.

Safe childcare is of particular importance to the nonprofit sector in Ontario as 80 percent of its workforce of one million employees consists of women workers, who are known to be disproportionately the primary caregivers of children. Nonprofits and charities are also at the forefront of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic as many of our frontline workers are considered essential workers in essential services. This includes long-term care home care, community health, mental health, homeless and women's shelters, food security programs, developmental disability services, and organizations working with those who have come into conflict with the

law. In order for them to show up for work and continue serving communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, these nonprofit workers need access to safe licensed child care spaces.

The current number of emergency licensed child care spaces open are not meeting the needs of hospital workers and emergency responders, let alone other essential service workers. Expanding eligibility to a broader range of workers in “essential service” nonprofits and at the same time opening more safe licensed child care spaces can address increasing demand as well as ensure continuity in critical services in communities.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the child care needs of Ontario’s “essential service” nonprofits during the pandemic and as we transition into the recovery phase.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cathy" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Taylor".

Cathy Taylor
Executive Director
Ontario Nonprofit Network

Copy to: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark
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