



## MEDIA RELEASE

### *Reopening of Child Care Update*

**August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020** – The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Board (TBDSSAB) is the Service System Manager for Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

On July 23, 2020, revised guidelines for the operation of child care centres during the COVID - 19 Outbreak were distributed by the Ministry of Education. Child Care Centres have been working closely with TBDSSAB, The Thunder Bay District Health Unit and the Ministry of Education to plan and prepare for their reopening. Child Care Centres are to follow the Ministry of Education – Operational Guidance During COVID -19 Outbreak document when planning and preparing for reopening. (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/child-care-re-opening-operational-guidance.pdf>)

Key changes in the guidelines for the opening of child care centres at this time include:

- Increased cohort size for child care centres from up to 10 individuals per room to up to 15 children plus staff per room as of July 27, 2020;
- Revised guidance on how screening must be conducted;
- Revised guidance related to testing for COVID-19;
- Revised protocols for when an individual shows symptoms or becomes sick; and,
- Revised language about physical barriers between cohorts.

As of July 27, 2020, the District of Thunder Bay has 10 Child Care locations open, with a possible 6 more to reopen in August.

On July 30, 2020, the Ontario government announced its plan to allow licensed child care centres across Ontario to open at full capacity starting September 1, 2020. As a result, parents will be able to return to work knowing their children are in a safe and supportive care setting. Families whose children attended a licensed child care centre immediately before the emergency was declared will be given at least 14 days notice to accept a placement available on or after September 1, 2020.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres will also be permitted to reopen with in-person programming along with before- and after-school programs for school aged children which will be permitted to operate with standard ratios and maximum group size requirements.



**THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD**

Guidance documents for full reopening of child care and opening of EarlyON Child and Family Centres will be released in the coming days. All of these programs will be subject to health and safety protocols in order to keep kids safe.

Enhanced health and safety procedures will remain in place, with some additional measures established to protect children, staff and families, including:

- Requiring all child care staff to wear masks at all times, effective September 1;
- Ensuring frequent cleaning of child care centres;
- Screening of children and staff before entering a childcare facility;
- Maintaining attendance records for rigorous contact tracing and coordination with local public health authorities;
- Ensuring frequent hand washing and proper hand hygiene for children and staff; and
- Establishing clear and rigid case management protocols in the event a staff member or child becomes ill, or tests positive for COVID-19.

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For questions or more information, contact:  
Ken Ranta, Director, Integrated Social Services  
(807)-766-4216