

Ministry of Children and Family Development

COVID-19 Questions and Answers for the Child Care Sector

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Q1. Why isn't government shutting down child care?

- We are continuing to take direction from trusted public health officials, specifically Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer.
- Dr. Henry has advised that all parents who can, should care for their children at home. She also recognized that while some facilities may close, child care services can and must be provided in a safe manner for those families whose parents work in critical roles.
- Dr. Henry continues to maintain that child care centres can safely care for children if they are following the prescribed health protocols, and that fewer children at child care centres will reduce the burden on providers and Early Childhood Educators (ECEs).
- The Ministry of Health has developed a detailed guideline to inform child care operators, ECEs and licensing officers on implementation of best practice, which is [available online](#).

Q2. Why were schools in B.C. closed but not child care?

- The Public Health Officer has been clear – child care centres can operate safely by following the Public Health Office guidelines for this sector.
- We also know that kids – particularly young kids – are at very low risk of infection and don't appear to be a risk of transferring the virus to others.
- Also, it's important to note that the number of staff and children in child care centres is considerably less compared to how many staff and children are in the average school.
- Child care remains a critical service for many parents who must continue to work – including those providing essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Dr. Henry has stated that child care is necessary to ensure [essential service workers](#) are able to support community efforts to battle the pandemic.
- Across government, we are putting measures in place to ensure that we have appropriate, safe care for children who need it.
- School districts are supporting essential workers with in-class instruction for their school-aged children and for students who would benefit from additional supports.
- In-class instruction includes modified physical distancing, hygiene, operating and cleaning protocols.
- As more students return to class, we expect increased demand for Before and After School Care. Providers located on school grounds should contact their local school principal, or School District to discuss options regarding providing care on school grounds.
- Before and After School Care for school-aged children are also eligible for the Temporary Emergency Funding through the Ministry of Children and Family Development and should also contact their school principal and/or School District to discuss how best to meet community need and coordinate services.

Q3. Other provinces have decided to shut the child care system down and replace it with designated child care centres for essential service workers – why hasn't BC taken the same approach?

- We are continuing to take direction from trusted public health officials, specifically Dr. Henry who has advised that all parents who can, should care for their children at home.
- However, we know child care services can and must be provided in a safe manner for those families whose parents work in essential roles.
- Dr. Henry continues to maintain that child care centres can safely care for children if they are following the [prescribed health protocols](#), and that fewer children at child care centres will reduce the burden on providers and ECEs.

- We know that child care providers run professional operations and will make the best decisions they can for their operations, families and communities.
- We are offering support for centres who decide to stay open and those who choose to close. The safe operation of child care has been consistently available in B.C., unlike in many other provinces that closed all child care centres and are now trying to figure out how to accommodate the child care needs of essential service workers.

Q4. How will government help essential service workers find child care when so many centres are closing?

- [Child Care Resource and Referral \(CCRR\)](#) programs are reaching out to licensed child care facilities in their communities to develop and maintain a list of child care programs which have chosen to remain open and have available spaces for essential service workers.
- If a provider is aware of an essential service worker who is needing child care, and is unable to accommodate the request, the provider should, upon getting permission from the ESW, contact their local CCRR about the situation so the Ministry can assist the family.
- If an essential service worker needs urgent child care, they can fill out a new form identifying their needs. Forms can be accessed by calling 1 888 338-6622 and selecting Option 4, or online: www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care. CCRR programs will reach out to essential service workers in their area who filled in the form to connect them with available licensed child care spaces.

Q5. Do you have guidance on staff who are refusing to work due to concerns related to COVID-19?

- We are continuing to take direction from trusted public health officials, specifically Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer.
- Dr. Henry continues to maintain that child care centres can safely care for children if they are following the prescribed health protocols, and that fewer children at child care centres will reduce the burden on providers and ECEs.
- The Ministry of Health has developed a detailed guideline to inform child care operators, ECEs and licensing officers on implementation of best practice, which is [available online](#).
- This is a challenging and unprecedented time. We encourage employers to be as flexible as possible in supporting their staff with individual concerns related to COVID-19, while also balancing the needs of families requiring child care – particularly essential service workers.
- In the event a staff person is unable to attend work due to COVID-19, the employer and employee should discuss the most appropriate path forward.

- Sites may need to temporarily reduce service levels if there are not enough staff/ECEs available to provide care.

CHILDCARE BC FUNDING

Q6. Will funding be available to providers so they can remain financially viable during COVID-19?

- Yes, Temporary Emergency Funding (TEF) is available for licensed child care centres in receipt of Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF) that remain open and are able to prioritize care for essential service workers where possible and in alignment with the recommendations of the Provincial Health Officer.
- CCOF recipients that choose to or must close temporarily will be eligible to receive enhanced funding to help offset fixed operating costs, like rent or lease payments.
- TEF is provided on a monthly basis and came into effect on April 1, 2020. Funding is calculated by the Ministry for each eligible facility. Facilities that choose to remain open receive 7 times their average base CCOF monthly amount (instead of their CCOF base funding), so long as they agree to:
 - **Not charge fees to families if those families are not accessing child care** services at the facility, including in situations where families of enrolled children have chosen to withdraw the child(ren) temporarily due to concerns related to COVID-19;
 - **Not charge fees to families with enrolled or drop-in space children if the facility temporarily closes** as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - **Offer families the ability to return to their original space** that they occupied immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic once the pandemic situation subsides;
 - **Make every reasonable effort to continue to provide child care services at the maximum available capacity**, subject to the availability of sufficient staffing and subject to the facility being able to implement such measures as may be required to ensure the health and safety of children and staff in accordance with [advice from the Provincial Health Officer](#);
 - **Make every reasonable effort to provide care to all families that need care**, including children with support needs;
 - **Prioritize access to spaces (as able and as needed) for essential service workers**, as defined by Emergency Management BC in consultation with other government ministries and the Provincial Health Officer, while following the [advice of the Provincial Health Officer](#) related to the health and safety of staff and the children and families they serve. See section 4 below for more detail;
 - **Make every reasonable effort to provide care in response to community need**. This may include adjusting days/hours of operations to provide care during non-standard hours to

accommodate shift workers, accommodating the child care needs of temporary essential service workers, or relocating to an alternate location if necessary and reasonably possible; and

- **Apply any surplus funds remaining from the TEF toward relief measures** for families or supporting ongoing health and safety in the facility. For clarity, surplus TEF is not to be used for profit purposes or to pay off debts incurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Suitable uses of any surplus funds may include such things as temporarily reducing parent fees, providing temporary wage enhancements to staff, purchasing additional cleaning supplies, extending the hours or days of business in order to meet local demand, hiring additional temporary staff or purchasing cleaning supplies.
- Providers who are open and operating will continue to be eligible for the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) and/or the Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE). In addition, families accessing care from these providers may continue to access the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB).
- Facilities that choose to or must close temporarily will be eligible to receive 2 times their average base CCOF monthly amount, so long as they agree to:
 - not charge parent fees while closed; and
 - offer families the ability to return to their original space that they occupied immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic once the pandemic situation subsides.
- TEF for temporarily closed facilities will help child care facilities meet their fixed costs, like rent/lease, so that they are better able to re-open when they are able and offer employment to their staff and ECEs.
- Providers who are closed are not eligible for the CCFRI or the ECE-WE during the closure. In addition, families will not be able to access ACCB if facilities are closed.

Q7. How much funding is available?

- Licensed providers who are open and operating are eligible to receive TEF at a rate of 7 times their average monthly CCOF base funding, so long as they agree to modified terms and conditions of their Funding Agreement (i.e. to not charge fees for vacant spaces, to prioritize access for essential service workers where able, etc.).
- Licensed providers who close temporarily due to COVID-19 are eligible to receive TEF at a rate of 2 times their average monthly CCOF base funding, so long as they agree to modified terms and conditions of their Funding Agreement (i.e. not to charge fees while closed, to offer existing families their space once the pandemic passes, etc.).

Q8. Is Temporary Emergency Funding available to all child care providers?

- The TEF is available for licensed family, group, in-home multi-age, and multi-age child care providers that are in receipt of base CCOF.
- Eligible, licensed child care facilities not currently enrolled in CCOF are encouraged to apply for CCOF and TEF; please visit the [CCOF webpage](#) for information on how to apply.
- This funding is not available for registered license-not-required, license-not-required and in-child's-own-home care types; however, if such facilities choose to remain open/operational, families accessing their care may continue to be eligible to receive the Affordable Child Care Benefit.

Q9. Will my facility receive support if I have not yet been approved for CCOF renewal for fiscal 2020/21?

- Providers must have an active 2020/21 Funding Agreement with CCOF to be eligible for TEF. The Ministry is processing new and renewal applications for CCOF as quickly as possible.
- If a licensed facility has not yet applied/enrolled in base CCOF – they can visit www.gov.bc.ca/childcareoperatingfunding for information on how to apply.

Q10. Will facilities have to pay back funds received through this emergency funding?

- If a facility chooses to remain open and receives the higher rate of TEF, but then needs to close due to COVID-19, the facility will not be required to pay back the TEF already received, up to and including funding received for the month of closure.
- However, that facility may be required to provide a refund or future credit to families that have already paid fees for that month, depending on when the facility closes.
 - If the facility closes on or before the 15th of the month, the facility will be required to refund or, if viable and acceptable to impacted families, offer a future credit to families for at least 50% of their regular monthly fee.
 - The Ministry does not require facilities that close after the 15th of the month to provide families with a refund/future credit.
 - The Ministry expects any such refund or credit to be provided to families within 30 days, subject to any alternative arrangements that providers may have made with impacted families.
 - If a child ages out of the applicable care category during the pandemic, or is otherwise not returning to the facility, the Ministry expects that a refund, rather than a credit, be provided to impacted families.
- Upon closing temporarily, a facility must notify the TEF program and emergency funding will be reduced to the lower level effective the 1st of the next month (e.g. if a facility closes in May, they

will receive the lower rate of emergency funding in June) and will not be able to charge parent fees for the duration of the temporary closure.

- Facilities that remain open will receive payments for the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) based on the estimated total enrolled and drop-in space children each month. Facilities are asked to provide their best estimate at the beginning of the month. If additional children are enrolled, drop-in, or some children are withdrawn after the report is submitted, facilities will have an opportunity to submit an adjusted report.

Q11. I've already collected monthly fees from families; however, I now want to access the TEF which means I can't charge fees for temporary closures or temporary withdrawals due to COVID-19, or if a family has their care temporarily revoked to accommodate an essential service worker. What should I do?

- If you're planning to keep your facility open, you can continue to charge fees as usual from all families that are accessing care.
- TEF started April 1 and there are three scenarios in which a facility would be required to provide a refund or future credit to families:
 - If the parent/family provides notice to the facility they are **temporarily withdrawing** their child due to COVID-19. If the child is withdrawn on or before the 15th of the month, the family is entitled to receive at least a 50% refund or, if viable and acceptable to the family, a future credit for that month's fees. If the child is withdrawn after the 15th of the month, the Ministry does not require that the facility provide the family with a refund or future credit.
 - If the **facility temporarily closes** due to COVID-19. If the facility closes on or before the 15th of the month, families are entitled to receive at least a 50% refund or, if viable and acceptable to impacted families, a future credit for that month. If the facility closes after the 15th of the month, the Ministry does not require that the facility provide impacted families with a refund or future credit.
 - If a **parent/family has their care temporarily revoked** by the facility to provide room for the family of an essential service worker. In this circumstance, the family whose care was revoked is entitled to a pro-rated refund or future credit, based on the date that care was revoked (e.g. the family should not be required pay for any days of the month in which they weren't able to access the space).
- The Ministry expects any refund or credit to be provided to families within 30 days, subject to any alternative arrangements that providers may have made with impacted families.
- If a child ages out of the applicable care category during the pandemic, or is otherwise not returning to the facility, the Ministry expects that a refund, rather than a credit, be provided to impacted families. In all of the above three circumstances, parents must not be charged any fees for future

months (so long as the family remains withdrawn, care is revoked, or the facility is closed, as the case may be).

- Please note that if a child is temporarily withdrawn or the facility temporarily closes prior to the 1st of the month (e.g. prior to April 1, 2020), the facility cannot charge any affected families fees for that month. If a family has already paid fees for that month (e.g. April 2020), the facility is required to provide the family with either a full (100%) refund for that month or an equivalent credit towards future fee payments.

Q12. Will child care centres still be eligible to receive the Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE)?

- Licensed child care centres in receipt of base CCOF that remain open will continue to receive ECE-WE for their front-line, eligible staff.
- ECE staff of facilities that choose to remain open and employ ECE staff during the time in which TEF funding is received, and who meet the requirements as laid out in the [ECE-WE 2020/21 Funding Guidelines](#) are still eligible for the ECE-WE. As facility enrollment may not meet normal levels, ECEs who would meet the definition of a Front-Line ECE in the ECE-WE 2020/21 Funding Guidelines if the child care facility was operating at full enrolment will still be eligible for the ECE-WE during the time period that the child care facility is receiving TEF funding.
- We also recently implemented the previously announced increase to ECE-WE, increasing it to a total of \$2 per hour, as of April 1, 2020.
- If a child care centre temporarily closes due to COVID-19, they will not receive the ECE-WE; however, they may be able to receive TEF to help them meet their fixed costs, like rent/lease, so long as they agree to not charge fees during the period of temporary closure and offer existing families their space back once the facility reopens.
- TEF for temporarily closed facilities is being provided to assist these centres with being able to reopen once the pandemic passes and offer employment to their staff and ECEs.

Q13. Will parents who must self-isolate with their children lose their Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) funding?

- Families with previously established eligibility for ACCB may continue receiving their ACCB for as long as either the public health emergency or the provincial emergency is in effect:
- If the child is absent for any length of time from child care due to COVID-19 (i.e. self-isolation); or
- If the parent becomes ineligible (e.g. due to job lay-off) as a result of COVID-19.
- The amount of ACCB under the above circumstances is calculated based on the number of days of care the child was receiving before the circumstance arose.

- Families must still initially (e.g. at the time of their application) meet the current eligibility criteria, including demonstrating a valid reason for care. However, if they were impacted by COVID-19 on or after March 17, 2020 (i.e. due to job lay-off, inability to continue studies or search for employment), they will be eligible to continue receiving the ACCB.
- ACCB is only available if the family's child care provider remains open during the pandemic and charges the family a fee to hold their space.
- If a child temporarily withdraws due to general concerns related to COVID-19, and their provider is in receipt of TEF, the provider will not be allowed to charge this family a fee for the duration of their absence. However, if the space is filled temporarily during this time, the facility may charge a fee to that family using the space, and that family may be eligible to receive ACCB.

Q14. Will we have access to the maintenance fund? Will it be available to those who operate, as we will be relying on this now more than ever?

- Yes, the Maintenance Fund helps licensed child care facilities in emergency circumstances, defined as sudden and unexpected conditions that directly impact children's health and safety or may result in immediate facility closure.
- The Ministry recently launched its 2020/21 guidelines which outlines the new criteria to access this fund. Please visit the [Maintenance Fund webpage](#) for more information.

Q15. Can my facility receive TEF while I, my business, and/or my staff are also receiving other federal and provincial emergency supports (e.g. federal Temporary Wage Subsidy for Employers, Canada Emergency Response Benefit, or BC Emergency Benefit for Workers)?

- At this time, the Ministry will not consider whether you or your facility is receiving other federal and provincial emergency supports in determining your eligibility for TEF.
- Other federal and provincial emergency support programs may consider other forms of funding/income, such as TEF, in their eligibility criteria. Please continue to consult the eligibility criteria for these programs for more detail.
- At this time, the Government of Canada has indicated that recipients of the [Canada Emergency Response Benefit \(CERB\)](#) may also receive provincial or territorial support payments at the same, provided it is allowed in their province or territory.
- For more information regarding provincial and federal emergency supports in response to COVID-19, please consult [B.C.'s COVID Action Plan](#) and [Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#).

Q16. Where can I go to get more information regarding how to access the TEF?

- Information regarding the ministry's response to COVID-19 can be found at the following link: www.gov.bc.ca/MCFD-COVID.
- [Specific information on TEF for CCOF providers can be found on the Ministry's TEF webpage.](#)

FACILITIES/OPERATIONS

Q17. What steps are being taken to ensure child care facilities are safe?

- The Ministry of Health has developed guidelines to inform child care operators, ECEs and licensing officers on implementation of best practice, which has been sent to all licensed child care providers in B.C and is available at www.gov.bc.ca/MCFD-COVID

Q18. I have closed/plan to close my child care centre due to COVID-19. Who do I need to tell?

- Providers in receipt of base CCOF, or the TEF for open facilities must notify the program by email as soon as possible, so we can adjust your funding to reflect your temporary closure.
- Prototype Sites must notify the ministry at **1-888-338-6622, option 7** or mcf.prototype@gov.bc.cca as soon as possible, so we can adjust your funding to reflect your temporary closure.
- As per schedule H of the Child Care Licensing Regulation, if you plan to temporarily close your child care facility due to COVID-19, you are required to report your closure to your local licensing program/licensing officer within 24 hours.
- Child care facilities should also contact their [local CCRR office](#), to advise of the date of the temporary closure – as CCRRs are developing and maintaining a list of open/available child care centres for essential service workers.
- Please note, facilities must notify the families accessing care as soon as possible regarding any temporary closures. If the facility is in receipt of TEF and is closing on or before the 15th of the month, the facility must provide at least a 50% refund to parents for that month, and not charge any fees in future months for the duration of the closure. If the facility closes after the 15th of the month, the Ministry does not require facilities to provide a refund/future credit to affected families.

Q19. I plan to stay open/re-open to support essential service workers. Who do I need to tell?

- Providers in receipt of CCOF that are choosing to stay open or re-open a temporarily closed facility are eligible for TEF, up to 7 times their average monthly base CCOF amount.

- The link to the TEF sign-up form has been emailed to all providers who have an active 2020/21 CCOF Funding Agreement. Further information on how to complete the form and sign-up is available on the Ministry's [TEF webpage](#).
- Providers who do not have an active 2020/21 CCOF Funding Agreement must apply for base CCOF before becoming eligible to access the TEF. For more information on how to apply for CCOF, please visit the [CCOF website](#).
- If you plan to keep your child care facility open, or re-open a previously closed facility, please communicate this to your local CCRR office along with how many spaces you can provide, and if you will be able to accept new children on a temporary basis to support essential service workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please also alert your local licensing program/licensing officer for their awareness.
- Providers located on school grounds should contact their local school principal, or School District to discuss options regarding providing care on school grounds.
- Notifying the above parties will enable the Province to make referrals through the local CCRR for essential service workers who are requiring emergency/temporary care during the pandemic.

Q20. How will child care providers who choose to stay open and receive the TEF be required to prioritize families who require child care?

- Open facilities that opt to receive TEF are required to prioritize access to spaces (as able and as needed) for [essential service workers](#), if they can do so while continuing to follow the [advice of the Provincial Health Officer](#) related to the health and safety of staff and the children and families they serve. Child care providers are to prioritize placements for children of essential service workers based on the following priority:
 - **Tier 1 (highest priority):** employed in Health and Health Services, Social Services, Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Emergency Response. For child care, Tier 1 also includes children approved to access care at a designated Young Parent Program, referred to child care by MCFD or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency, and/or children of teachers and support workers providing care to children of essential service workers or students who would benefit from additional supports.
 - **Tier 2 (second priority):** all other occupations not included in Tier 1 that are listed in the Essential Service Workers list.
 - **Tier 3 (third priority):** all other families (not employed in an occupation listed in the Essential Service Workers list).
- If an open facility has an available space that may be used by an essential service worker, it is recommended that they contact their local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) program and

Health Authority Licensing Officer to inform them of this available space. The Province may publicly advertise and proactively notify any third parties of facilities receiving TEF.

Q21. What about existing families accessing care? Will I be required to ask them to temporarily vacate their space to make room for an essential service worker?

- If an essential service worker requires care for their child and a facility in receipt of TEF can provide the care while following the health and safety advice of the Provincial Health Officer, the facility must provide access to their licensed spaces for the child of the essential service worker.
- When accepting new families, the provider must prioritize requests for care where the parent is an essential service worker.
- If the facility has no available spaces, the facility is required to prioritize access for the essential service worker over access by an existing parent (provided the existing parent is not an essential service worker of the same or higher priority tier).
- If at any time an open facility is unable to accommodate a request for care by an essential service worker, the facility should notify their local Child Care Resource Referral and Health Authority Licensing Officer to inform them there is an essential service worker that requires access.

Q22. For the purposes of my facility's obligations under TEF, what is the difference between a parent permanently or temporarily withdrawing their children due to COVID-19?

- Facilities in receipt of TEF must not charge any fee for any months in which a child is temporarily withdrawn due to COVID-19. Additionally, families may be entitled to receive refunds or credits for fees paid in advance, subject to the Temporary Withdrawal Policy outlined in the TEF Guidelines
- The Ministry also expects that facilities not charge any fee for any months in which a child is permanently withdrawn due to COVID-19, and that families receive refunds or credits for fees paid in advance, subject to any existing alternative arrangements that providers have with impacted families.
- If a parent indicates that they are permanently withdrawing their child, the facility will not be required to reserve that space for the family's use after the pandemic. Conversely, if a parent indicates they are temporarily withdrawing their child, the facility is required to offer that family the ability to return to their original space that they occupied immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic once the pandemic situation subsides.
- If the parent has not yet indicated whether the withdrawal is temporary or permanent, they can do so at the time that the facility offers the family their space, once the pandemic situation subsides.

Q23. Are deposits considered pre-paid fees under the Temporary Withdrawal Policy?

- No, deposits are not considered child care fees under the Temporary Withdrawal Policy.
- Facilities may continue to refund deposits in alignment with any existing care arrangements with families.

Q24. What about fees for families that have had their care temporarily revoked to accommodate an essential service worker? Am I required to provide a refund/future credit?

- If a provider is required to temporarily revoke care from an existing family to provide care to an essential service worker's child, the provider may only charge fees up to the date that the existing family's care was revoked.
- The facility must not charge the existing family any fees for the remainder of the time the care is revoked. If the facility has already charged the existing family a fee for the time that care is temporarily revoked, the facility must provide a pro-rated refund or, if viable and acceptable to the family, a future credit to cover the days that the family is unable to access care because it is revoked. The Ministry expects any such refund or credit to be provided to families within 30 days, subject to any alternative arrangements that providers may have made with impacted families. If a child ages out of the applicable care category during the pandemic, or is otherwise not returning to the facility, the Ministry expects that a refund, rather than a credit, be provided to impacted families.
- If the space is no longer required by the essential service worker, the facility may invite the original family to access the space again. If the original family does not wish to access the space during the pandemic, the family will be considered to have removed their child from care as of the date that care was originally revoked, and the facility may not charge that family fees for subsequent months while the child is temporarily withdrawn.

Q25. Will my facility still receive a CCFRI payment for families that receive a fee refund/credit, either because the parent temporarily withdraws due to COVID-19, or because I need temporarily revoke care for an existing family to make room for an essential service worker?

- CCFRI funding remains available to eligible, open facilities that opt to receive TEF, for the purpose of reducing fees for families who are accessing child care at the facility. This includes the Parent Fee Reduction Payment and the Administrative Top-up Payment, as defined in the CCOF Funding Agreement.
- If an open facility opts-in to receive TEF, both the Parent Fee Reduction Payment and the Administrative Top-up Payment **will be based on the facility's reported enrolled and drop-in space children.**
- For clarity, CCFRI payments will not be provided for enrolled children who have had their care temporarily revoked to accommodate an essential service worker due to COVID-19 **before the 1st of**

the month, as the facility is not permitted to charge fees for these children who have had their care revoked in such a scenario.

- CCFRI payments will still be provided for half of the month for an enrolled child that is temporarily withdrawn on or before the 15th of the month, and facilities should report their enrollment for the first half of the month. If an enrolled child is withdrawn after the 15th of the month, CCFRI payments will be prorated and facilities should report their enrollment for the entire month.
- If care for an enrolled child is revoked to accommodate an essential service worker, the facility must report the enrolment of the family whose care was revoked only up to the last day they accessed care and must report the actual days of enrolment for the family of the essential service worker.

Q26. If a facility chooses to remain open and access the TEF and a parent wants to continue to pay their regular fee to access the space on an intermittent basis (e.g. due to rotating work schedule) how will the CCFRI be applied if the child is not in attendance on a given day?

- If the parent is paying a regular monthly fee for the space, they will be eligible to receive the regular CCFRI discount, even if they're absent from the space on an ad hoc basis, due to rotating schedule/need.
- However, it is important that all parents understand they may temporarily lose access to their space if there is an essential service worker who requires care and the facility can safely accommodate the request. The only exception is if the family that is already paying the fee to access the space is also an essential service worker.
- If facilities have under-utilized spaces, they are encouraged to make those spaces available to meet community demand, while prioritizing the needs of essential service workers. Providers with under-utilized spaces should let their local CCRR know they are able to take on additional families on a drop-in basis.
- This may result in offering drop-in/temporary access to another family to use the underutilized space and charging a pro-rated or drop-in fee for this service (and applying the CCFRI discount if available/applicable). This could result in a facility receiving two parent fees and two CCFRI discounts for the same space, if the space is being accessed on an intermittent basis between two families.

Q27. I already submitted my projected April 2020 enrolments in March, but my facility's actual April enrolments are much lower. Will I have to repay my April CCFRI payments immediately?

- Facilities will receive payments for the CCFRI based on the estimated total enrolled and drop-in space children each month. Facilities are asked to provide their best estimate at the beginning of the month. If additional children are enrolled or drop-in, or some children are withdrawn after the

report is submitted, facilities will have an opportunity to submit an adjusted report. Adjusted reports will also be required if the facility decides to temporarily close that month.

- Providers should continue to work with the CCOF program to determine whether any payment adjustments or repayments are required to account for an adjusted report. The Ministry will not require immediate repayment of any CCFRI overpayments for April 2020 as a result of having children withdraw or the facility temporarily closing.

Q28. Government has said providers could receive emergency funding even with reduced enrollment – will providers be required to fill all vacant spaces with essential service workers to continue to receive funding?

- For the purposes of receiving TEF, a facility is defined as “open” if there is at least one staff/educator employed at the facility who is available to provide child care, with a priority for essential service workers where possible and in alignment with advice/recommendations from the Provincial Health Officer.
- The higher rate of TEF (seven times the facility’s average monthly base CCOF amount) is available in place of a facility’s regular CCOF base funding so long as the facility is open to the community and ready to provide child care – even if there are no children currently requiring or accessing the care.
- Facilities with any vacant spaces should contact their local CCRR to notify/update that they are able to accommodate additional families.
- Facilities in receipt of TEF are required to prioritize access to spaces as able for essential service workers, as defined by the Provincial Health Officer and Government, while following the advice of the Provincial Health Officer related to the health and safety of staff and the children and families they serve.

Q29. Can providers count on the emergency funding for multiple months and what sort of recovery plan is in place?

- TEF was introduced in April 2020 as an emergency support measure to provide stability for facilities and for parents during the COVID-19 crisis.
- The Ministry is in the process of developing transition plans for both providers and parents to ensure a smooth transition back to regular funding mechanisms, once the current situations stabilizes.

Q30. What will happen to parents who must work, but they are not deemed to be an essential service worker?

- Open facilities that opt to receive TEF are required to prioritize access to spaces (as able and as needed) for essential service workers, if they can do so while continuing to follow the [advice of the Provincial Health Officer](#) related to the health and safety of staff and the children and families they serve. Child care providers are to prioritize placements for children of essential service workers based on the following priority:
 - **Tier 1 (highest priority):** employed in Health and Health Services, Social Services, Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Emergency Response. For child care, Tier 1 also includes children approved to access care at a designated Young Parent Program, referred to child care by MCFD or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency, and/or children of teachers and support workers providing care to children of essential service workers or to vulnerable learnings in a school setting.
 - **Tier 2 (second priority):** all other occupations not included in Tier 1 that are listed in the Essential Service Workers list.
 - **Tier 3 (third priority):** all other families (not employed in an occupation listed in the Essential Service Workers list.
- If an open facility has an available space that may be used by an essential service worker, it is recommended that they contact their local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) program and Health Authority Licensing Officer to inform them of this available space. The Province may publicly advertise and proactively notify any third parties of facilities receiving TEF.

Q31. How will families find out about this new essential service worker policy?

- To support parents who are essential service workers during the response to COVID-19, the Province has launched a new matching process.
- This process matches parents, who are working on the front lines of B.C.'s COVID-19 response and have children up to five years of age, with child care in their communities.
- Essential service workers can fill out a new parent form to identify their need for urgent child care.
- Forms can be accessed by calling 1 888 338-6622 and selecting Option 4, or online: www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care
- Child Care Resource Referral (CCRR) centres in 38 communities will act as community-based hubs. The CCRRs will reach out to essential-service workers in their area who filled in the form to connect them with available licensed child care spaces.

- Q32. I need to reduce my hours in order to allow for more time for cleaning the facility. Can I continue to charge my CCFRI approved rate for these reduced hours?**
- Within reason and provided that the facility continues to provide care during the reduced hours, the facility can continue to charge the approved CCFRI rates for full-time care.
 - However, CCFRI is claimed for care 4 hours or less or for care more than 4 hours, and facilities are expected to claim in accordance with the timeframe relevant for fees charged to families.
- Q33. My facility is going to be open longer hours in response to COVID-19. Will this be considered for the purposes of the TEF calculations (i.e. 7 x my usual enrolment)?**
- The TEF calculation is based on each facility's previous use of base CCOF. Depending on the facility's previous hours of operation, facilities may have received a half-day CCOF rate (for care for less than 4 hours/day) or a full-day CCOF rate (for care in excess of 4 hours per day).
 - The enhanced TEF rate for open facilities (7x average CCOF base funding) is anticipated to account for most changes to hours of operation, particularly given so many families are choosing to keep their children at home during the pandemic.
- Q34. I provide out of school care for school aged children, but these children now require full day care. Can I change my fees?**
- Facilities must continue to work with their local Health Authority Licensing Officer to confirm whether a licence change, or exemption is necessary or permitted.
 - Licensed school age providers caring for children Grade 1+ (and any other facility not eligible for or in receipt of CCFRI) may continue to make decisions regarding child care fees that meet their business needs, provided that they do not charge fees when a family has temporarily withdrawn/had their care temporarily revoked to accommodate an essential service worker, or during periods of closure.
 - However, if the care type is eligible for CCFRI (including School Age care for Kindergarten children), the provider must still apply for a fee increase through the CCFRI. For those facilities with an approved CCFRI fee schedule that includes full-time summer rates, you are approved to charge these rates if your school-age facility moves to full-time care as a result of COVID-19.
- Q35. If my facility is usually closed during the summer months, am I eligible to receive TEF for closed facilities?**
- Yes, provided that the facility meets the terms and conditions for closed facilities (i.e. not charging parent fees, reserving spaces for families until after the pandemic, etc.).

Q36. My facility is providing virtual care. Does this count as being open for the purposes of TEF?

- The authority for delivering the TEF is provided under the *Child Care BC Act*, which specifies that child care requires the care and supervision of children in a child care setting. Cases where child care providers connect virtually with children (e.g. while the child is cared for by their parents in a separate location) do not meet these specifications and so are not considered child care for the purposes of Ministry funding.
- Under the TEF Guidelines, a facility is defined as “open” if there is at least one staff member or educator employed at the facility who is available to provide child care. As such, facilities that are exclusively connecting with children virtually are not considered open for the purposes of TEF.

Q37. Why is information about my facility’s status being posted?

- One of the intentions of TEF is to support essential service workers to access child care services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Many essential service workers require temporary care arrangements during this time. The Ministry is looking at options for sharing information with families regarding access to child care during the pandemic, including posting a list of those providers that are open/operating and in receipt of TEF to help ensure essential service workers are informed about where to go in their community to access care.
- As condition of receiving TEF you agree to prioritize access to spaces (as able and as needed) for essential service workers, as defined by the Provincial Health Officer and Government, while following the advice of the Provincial Health Officer related to the health and safety of staff and the children and families you serve.
- To support parents who are essential service workers during the response to COVID-19, the Province is also launching a new process which will match parents, who are working on the front lines of B.C.’s COVID-19 response and have children up to five years of age, with child care in their communities.
- Essential service workers can fill out a new form to identify their need for urgent child care. Child Care Resource Referral (CCRR) centres in 38 communities will act as community-based hubs and will reach out to essential-service workers in their area who filled in the form to connect them with available licensed child care spaces.
- Please continue to monitor the [Ministry’s COVID-19 Information Page](#) for information related to the pandemic response and child care.

UNIVERSAL PROTOTYPE SITES

Q38. My facility is a Childcare BC Universal Prototype Site, will I also be provided with financial support if I stay open?

- Yes, if Prototype Sites can remain safely open to provide child care to families with a priority on supporting [essential service workers](#), they will receive their regular monthly funding, so long as they agree to:
 - **Not charge fees to families if those families are not accessing child care** services at the facility, including in situations where families of enrolled children have chosen to withdraw the child(ren) temporarily due to concerns related to COVID-19;
 - **Not charge fees to families if the facility temporarily closes** as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - **Offer families the ability to return to their original space** that they occupied immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic once the pandemic situation subsides;
 - **Make every reasonable effort to continue to provide child care services at the maximum available capacity**, subject to the availability of sufficient staffing and subject to the facility being able to implement such measures as may be required to ensure the health and safety of children and staff in accordance with [advice from the Provincial Health Officer](#);
 - **Make every reasonable effort to provide care to all families that need care**, including children with support needs;
 - **Prioritize access to spaces (as able and as needed) for essential service workers**, as defined by Emergency Management BC in consultation with other government ministries and the Provincial Health Officer, while following the [advice of the Provincial Health Officer](#) related to the health and safety of staff and the children and families they serve. See section 4 below for more detail; and
 - **Make every reasonable effort to provide care in response to community need**. This may include adjusting days/hours of operations to provide care during non-standard hours to accommodate shift workers, accommodating the child care needs of temporary essential service workers, or relocating to an alternate location if necessary and reasonably possible.
- A facility is considered “closed” if there are no staff employed by the facility and/or the facility is not available to provide care. Funding for closed facilities will only be made available to those facilities that have closed temporarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic with a good faith intention to re-open the facility once the pandemic situation subsides, at the latest.

Q39. What if I close my Prototype Site facility—what will happen?

- The decision to close a facility, or to remain open is at the sole discretion of the child care provider. When making this decision, facilities must adhere to current [advice from the Provincial Health Officer](#) and the local Health Authority. If providers choose to or must temporarily close due to COVID-19, they must notify the ministry (MCF.Prototype@gov.bc.ca) and payments will then be reduced to cover only fixed costs (e.g. rent/lease).
- This may mean some Prototype Sites will need to temporarily lay-off staff/ECEs and refer them (if eligible) to Employment Insurance and other provincial/federal emergency support measures.
- The federal government has implemented a range of [new financial support measures](#) to help Canadians facing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, including Employment Insurance without a waiting period, and the new Emergency Care and Support Benefits.
- The B.C. government has also announced additional financial support for British Columbians affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as part it's the [COVID-19 Action Plan](#).

Q40. I need to temporarily close my centre due to COVID-19. What funding will I receive? How is the Ministry defining “fixed costs”?

- Prototype Sites which choose to or must temporarily close due to COVID-19 may be eligible to receive continued monthly funding at a reduced rate, to cover their fixed costs, so long as they agree to not charge parent fees during the closure, and reserve existing spaces for families to access once the facility is able to reopen.
- Fixed costs are costs that can't be deferred during the temporary closure and which would jeopardize the facility's ability to re-open.
- This approach aligns with the funding available to other child care centres in receipt of Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF). As a benchmark – CCOF facilities which temporarily close are eligible to receive two times their average monthly base CCOF, to offset fixed costs.
- What constitutes a fixed cost will likely vary among Prototype Sites and will need to be discussed with the Ministry to determine an appropriate funding level for those sites that must temporarily close. Examples of fixed costs the Ministry will consider may include (but is not limited to):
 - Rent/mortgage payments for the centre;
 - Insurance payments;
 - Utilities payments; and/or
 - Property taxes.
- Fixed costs would likely not include:

- Wages for staff/ECEs (with the exception of wages that are required to be paid under the terms of a Collective Agreement);
- Cleaning while the facility is closed; and/or
- Other expenses that are not required to be paid when the facility is closed.

Q41. Regarding funding for fixed costs while the centre is closed, can we claim extra expenses like administrative staff, or administrative tasks?

- We will work with each site to determine their fixed costs and following the definition in question as there are many variables. In general, administration staff would be expected to be laid off if the centre is closed.

Q42. If programs stay closed, and staff use vacation to cover time off– is that a fixed expense?

- In general, if a Prototype Site closes temporarily due to COVID-19, funding will be reduced to cover fixed costs like rent/lease, and not wages.
- As such, the expectation is that in most circumstances, a temporary closure of a facility will result in temporary lay-offs for the facility's workforce. Please consult with the program team for more info.

Q43. If I choose to remain open, can I pay my staff more for their work during this time?

- If a Prototype Site can stay safely remain open while following the recommendations/advice of the Provincial Health Officer, the site will continue to receive regular monthly funding, which includes established funding for ECE/staff wages, so long as the site agrees to the additional terms/conditions of funding (see Q.37).
- The majority of Prototype Sites' expenses, including wages, are covered in the Sites' regular monthly funding.
- No additional funding is being provided at this time to increase wages due to current pandemic.

Q44. What if I have additional costs that I cannot manage through my usual payments- extra cleaning for example

- If you have unforeseen costs, including those related to COVID-19, please contact the Ministry directly to discuss these needs in greater detail.

Q45. If we remain open, will regular funding remain the same regardless of attendance?

- Yes. If you are open and able to provide care, including prioritizing care for essential service workers, your monthly funding levels will remain unchanged, even in the event a Site experiences reduced enrolment or low/sporadic attendance.
- Once the situation stabilizes, we anticipate returning back to regular funding mechanisms, which includes aligning funding levels with actual enrolments.

Q46. We closed in response to the COVID-19 situation. We want to re-open during the pandemic to provide care with a prioritization on essential service workers. However, our existing families don't need/want care due to COVID-19. Do I have to remain closed?

- No. If you can re-open and make your spaces available to others in your community with priority on supporting essential service workers you are encouraged to do so, as long as you charge each family accessing care the Prototype Site rates (max \$200 per month) per your Prototype Site funding agreement and hold/reserve the space for existing families to access once the pandemic passes.
- If you have available spaces for essential service workers, please inform your local Child Care Resource and Referral program and your Health Authority Licensing Officer.
- To support parents who are essential service workers during the response to COVID-19, the Province is launching a new process.
- This process will match parents, who are working on the front lines of B.C.'s COVID-19 response and have children up to five years of age, with child care in their communities.
- Essential service workers can fill out a new parent form to identify their need for urgent child care. Forms can be accessed by calling 1 888 338-6622 and selecting Option 4, or online: www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care

Q47. Are there restrictions or requirements regarding safe ratios, safe service, number of children, etc. related to the pandemic?

- Prototype Sites must continue (at a minimum) to abide by the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, and the Child Care Licensing Regulations.
- The Ministry of Health has developed [detailed guidelines](#) to inform child care providers, ECEs and licensing officers on implementation best practices during this time.
- Please contact your local Health Authority Licensing Officer regarding health and safety considerations and follow instructions from the Provincial Health Officer.

Q48. Is the ministry talking to the Health Authorities regarding licensing requirements? For example, can sites combine age groups temporarily due to reduced enrolment and still meet licensing requirements? Alternatively, can sites change temporarily change their license type in response to the pandemic?

- The Ministry of Health/Health Authorities are responsible for decisions related to licensing.
- Prototype Sites must continue (at a minimum) to abide by the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, and the Child Care Licensing Regulations.
- If Sites have specific licensing questions, they should contact their Community Care Licensing Officer.

Q49. We have staff who are also parents with dependent children at home. Will they be required to find alternative care for their children so they can come to work?

- This is a challenging and unprecedented time. We encourage employers to be as flexible as possible in supporting their staff who may be faced with additional obligations at home due to COVID-19, while also balancing the needs of families requiring child care – particularly essential service workers.
- In the event a staff person is unable to attend work due to COVID-19, the employer and employee should discuss the most appropriate path forward.
- Sites may need to temporarily reduce service levels if there are not enough staff/ECEs available to provide care.

Q50. Will the Ministry be adjusting funding received by Prototype Sites in fiscal 2019/20 (e.g. up to March 31, 2020) in response to COVID-19?

- The 2019/20 Prototype Site Funding Agreement renewals are now complete.
- In order to receive funding during the COVID-19 pandemic, Prototype Sites will have the option to enter into a modification of their 20/21 agreements which will allow them to continue to receive regular monthly funding if they remain open and agree to the additional terms/conditions (see Q.37), or a reduced monthly funding amount to cover fixed costs if they choose to temporarily close. The Ministry will contact each site to discuss how to complete this process.
- Once a prototype site has completed the 20/21 modification process, adjustments may be made to the 2020/21 Prototype Site Funding Agreement based on any temporary facility closures and unforeseen costs due to COVID-19 until the current pandemic resolves.

Q51. How will this affect our monthly reporting?

- We are aware monthly reporting for March 2020 and forward, particularly enrollment reporting, will be affected by the current situation.
- Sites are encouraged to complete their regular monthly reports as soon as able, while prioritizing the provision of child care for essential service workers during the current pandemic.
- If necessary, Sites will be provided with additional time to submit their reports

Q52. If we chose to remain open and attendance/enrolments are low, can we move staff to other non-prototype sites?

- Child care at Prototype Sites is available at a substantively lower cost to families than non-Prototype Sites.
- As such, and due to the current pressures on families, Sites should be making every effort to maintain/offer spaces at the Prototype Sites, so as many families as possible may benefit from the \$10/day care.
- In the case of low attendance/enrolments, Sites will continue to receive their regular monthly funding. If there are vacant spaces, facilities may consider temporarily offering families from non-Prototype facilities a space, so long as the facility continues to prioritize access for essential service workers.
- If the Site has vacant spaces, they should contact their local Child Care Resource and Referral program, as well as the local Health Authority, to let them know they have room for an essential service worker.

Q53. Can I use the Prototype Site funding to top-up Employment Insurance for staff who have been temporarily laid-off?

- There are a range of provincial and federal supports that have been recently announced to support individuals who have lost employment due to COVID-19.
- In general, providing additional funding to individuals in receipt of Employment Insurance may impact their eligibility and/or amount of benefit.
- Some organizations may have received approval from the federal government to supplement employee wages during temporary periods (e.g. maternity/paternity leave, sickness, etc.); however, the intent of the Prototype Site funding for open facilities is to support the ongoing provision of low-cost child care for families, while prioritizing access for essential service workers.
- Closed facilities will be eligible to receive a reduced funding amount; however, this funding is intended to cover fixed costs the facility is unable to defer during the temporary closure which

would impact the facility's ability to reopen once the pandemic passes. Funding for wages won't be included in the facility's fixed costs in most circumstances.

Q53. If we remain open and the staff complement is 7 staff to 2 children, is the requirement that all available staff work? Do all staff get paid?

- The majority of revenue for Prototype Sites is provided through the monthly funding from the Ministry; however, as facilities are not able to charge parent fees in the event a family temporarily withdraws a child, it is possible some Sites may need to consider reducing their workforce temporarily, if there is insufficient funding to keep everyone employed.

Q54. Are there long terms consequences if we close for a long time? Is there a plan for long term closure if the pandemic goes on?

- Dr. Henry continues to maintain that child care centres can safely care for children if they are following the prescribed health protocols, and that fewer children at child care centres will reduce the burden on providers and Early Childhood Educators (ECEs).
- Facilities that choose to or must temporarily close due to COVID-19 are eligible to receive a reduced monthly funding amount to cover their fixed costs (e.g. rent/lease, etc.) so long as they agree not to charge parent fees during the temporary closure, and reserve spaces for existing families once those facilities reopen.
- The intent of this funding for periods of temporary closure is to assist facilities in being able to reopen once the pandemic passes. Once the situation stabilizes, the intent is to reopen any Sites that have closed and resume normal operations and funding levels as indicated in your 2020/21 Prototype Sites Funding Agreements.

Q55. If I plan to close my Prototype Site, should I notify the Ministry's Prototype team, or wait for a call?

- Facilities that have closed or plan to close should notify MCFD as soon as possible.
- You are also required to notify your Health Authority and local CCRR program of any temporary closures.

Q56. If our site is closed because we didn't have Infant/Toddler staff, but want to re-open and offer care for other age groups (e.g. 3-5 years, school-age, etc.), can we still get full funding?

- Yes. Facilities that are open and provide licensed care to children, while prioritizing access for essential service workers, will receive their full monthly funding as per their 2020/21 Prototype Site Funding Agreement.

Q57. If a parent would like to withdraw until September, how long do we have to hold the space for pandemic?

- You are required to reserve/hold the space for a family that has withdrawn due to COVID-19 concerns until notified by the Ministry.
- Upon notification from the Ministry, normal withdrawal policies would apply.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Q58. How are you financially supporting ECEs during COVID-19?

- We are providing TEF to licensed facilities during the current pandemic – both those that choose to and are able to safely remain open during this time, as well as those that choose to or must temporarily close due to COVID-19.
- Funding for “open” facilities represents a significant increase –7 times what licensed facilities currently receive in base CCOF funding. Child care providers may choose to use this funding to support ECE wages during this period in addition to their existing ECE Wage Enhancement obligations (where relevant).
- We also implemented the previously announced increase to Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement, bringing it to a total of \$2 per hour, effective April 1, 2020.
- ECEs in facilities that close can apply for Federal government [support measures](#) such as Employment Insurance without a waiting period, and the new Emergency Care and Support Benefits. The Ministry is also providing enhanced funding to closed facilities, to help them meet their fixed costs like rent/lease, so that they are able to re-open once the pandemic passes and offer employment to ECEs.
- The B.C. government has also announced additional financial support for British Columbians affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the [COVID-19 Action Plan](#).

Q59. How is government addressing ECE health concerns while working during COVID-19?

- Dr. Henry continues to maintain that child care centres can safely care for children if they are following the prescribed health protocols, and that fewer children at child care centres will reduce the burden on providers and Early Childhood Educators (ECEs).
- The Ministry of Health has developed a detailed guideline to inform child care operators, ECEs and licensing officers on implementation of best practice, which is [available online](#).

Q60. ECEs have been declared an essential service - will they receive increased pay to recognize this?

- Government has put measures in place so child care providers will continue to be supported, whether they are able to remain open during the pandemic or not.
- Centres that remain open are eligible for TEF to continue operating with reduced enrolment. Facilities in receipt of TEF may choose to apply surplus funding toward supporting staff wages or hiring additional temporary staff, etc.
- Centres that temporarily close due to COVID-19 are eligible for support to offset fixed operating costs, like rent or lease payments, so that they are able to re-open and offer employment to their staff and ECEs when the pandemic passes.
- ECEs are the heart of the child care system and deserve both recognition and support for the essential work they do.
- Last year, eligible ECEs received a \$1-an-hour wage enhancement. As of April 1, 2020, the wage enhancement increased to a total of \$2 an hour.
- To date, the Province has invested close to \$23 million to provide more than 11,800 ECEs with our \$1-per-hour wage enhancement, with that additional \$1-per-hour lift effective April 2020.

PARENTS

Q61. My child care centre is temporarily closing due to COVID-19. Will I still have to pay fees to hold my spot?

- To support families who may be struggling with loss of employment and income, providers in receipt of CCOF payments who close temporarily due to COVID-19 can receive two times their average monthly operating funding from the Ministry to help offset fixed costs like rent/lease during the period of temporary closure, as long as the facility agrees to:
 - not charge parent fees while closed; and
 - reserve a space for families whose children were enrolled immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, so they can access that space again once the situation stabilizes (provided their child has not aged out of care).
- Facilities receiving TEF are not permitted to charge parent fees during temporary closures or from families that have temporarily withdrawn their child due to COVID-19.
- For non-TEF facilities, the Ministry recognizes that paying child care fees while your child is temporarily withdrawn or while your facility is closed can be a large burden during these difficult times. That's why we are supporting child care facilities to discourage such practice.

- Facilities are encouraged to sign up for TEF so that they may receive enhanced funding that allows them to meet their business needs while not charging families for vacant spaces or during temporary closures.

Q62. My family has already paid child care fees for the current month, but my provider has decided to close/or we have chosen to temporarily withdraw our child from care. Will we see a refund?

- Providers became eligible to receive TEF effective April 1, 2020.
- Providers in receipt of TEF will be required to provide at least a 50% refund or, if viable and acceptable to impacted families, equivalent future credit to families if:
 - The facility temporarily closes on or before the 15th of a calendar month due to COVID-19; or
 - The child is temporarily withdrawn by the family due to COVID-19 on or before the 15th of the month.
- Additionally, if a family has their care temporarily revoked by a facility to provide access to an essential service worker, the provider can only charge the existing family for days their child received care – this may include providing a full or partial refund based on the date that care was revoked.
- The Ministry expects any such refund or credit to be provided to families within 30 days, subject to any alternative arrangements that providers may have made with impacted families. If a child ages out of the applicable care category during the pandemic, or is otherwise not returning to the facility, the Ministry expects that a refund, rather than a credit, be provided to impacted families.

Q63. What if I choose to temporarily withdraw my child from care due to COVID-19?

- Licensed child care providers receiving TEF from the Ministry must not continue to charge parents fees if a parent chooses to temporarily withdraw a child due to COVID-19.
- Under the TEF arrangement, parents who notify their provider and withdraw their child on or before the 15th of the calendar month must receive at least a 50% refund/future credit from their facility. Parents who notify their provider and withdraw their child after the 15th of the month might need to pay their regular fee for that month. However, those parents will not be charged for any future months that they remain temporarily withdrawn (if the facility is in receipt of TEF).

Q64. Will I lose my child care space as a result of reduced service or temporary closure?

- Licensed child care providers receiving TEF must agree to reserve spaces for families that were accessing their services immediately before the pandemic, even if these families choose to

temporarily withdraw, so that families can be assured their spot will still be there once the situation stabilizes and TEF is discontinued.

- However, if your child ages out of the available space during the period of closure, the facility will not be able to guarantee you a space once the pandemic passes. (e.g. if you were accessing an infant/toddler space, and your child turns three during the period of closure).
- It is also important to note that child care providers in receipt of TEF are required to prioritize access for essential service workers during the pandemic. This may result in families who are not on the essential service worker list, or families that are on the list but aren't in employed in Health and Health Services, Social Services, Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Emergency Response having their care temporarily revoked to make room for an essential service worker.
- Families whose care is revoked to accommodate an essential service worker will not be charged a fee for any portion of the month they were unable to access their space and will be able to access their space again once the pandemic passes (so long as their child is still eligible for the space).

Q65. I'm required to self-isolate with my children, will I lose my ACCB funding?

- Families with previously established eligibility for ACCB may continue receiving their ACCB for as long as either the public health emergency or the provincial emergency is in effect:
 - If the child is absent for any length of time from child care due to COVID-19 (i.e. self-isolation); or
 - If the parent becomes ineligible (e.g. due to job lay-off, inability to continue studies or search for employment) as a result of COVID-19.
- The amount of ACCB under the above circumstances is calculated based on the number of days of care the child was receiving before the circumstance arose.
- Families must still meet the current eligibility criteria at the time of application, including demonstrating a valid reason for care. However, if they were impacted by COVID-19 on or after March 17, 2020 (i.e. loss of employment, or choosing to self-isolate at home), they will be eligible to continue receiving the ACCB.
- ACCB is only available if the family's child care provider remains open during the pandemic and charges the family a fee to hold their space.

Q66. I still need to go to work during COVID-19, but my child care is closed. What should I do?

- To support parents who are essential service workers during the response to COVID-19, the Province has launched a new process.
- This process matches parents, who are working on the front lines of B.C.'s COVID-19 response and have children up to five years of age, with child care in their communities.

- Essential service workers can fill out a new parent form to identify their need for urgent child care.
- Forms can be accessed by calling 1 888 338-6622 and selecting Option 4, or online: www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care
- Child Care Resource Referral (CCRR) centres in 38 communities will act as community-based hubs. The CCRRs will reach out to essential-service workers in their area who filled in the form to connect them with available licensed child care spaces.
- Parents will be able to find this and other regularly updated information on the ministry's COVID-19 response website at: www.gov.bc.ca/MCFD-COVID.

Q67. I still need to go to work during COVID-19, but my school-aged child needs care now that schools have suspended in-person instruction. What should I do?

- Schools across the province have been directed to provide in-school support for school aged children of aged 5-12 of essential service workers.
 - At a minimum, schools have been asked to ensure this support is available during regular school hours.
 - If before and after school care was also previously available, districts have been asked to provide this extended care either on their own or in partnership with local child care providers.
- Licensed school age child care facilities are also eligible for the TEF and ESW parents who require in-school supports for their school-aged children have been asked to contact their school principal to discuss their needs or check the School District website for information about how to access care for your child.
- You should not be charged a fee for in-school supports provide by a school district during school hours, however, there may still be fees charged for before and after school care if it is provided by a local child care provider.

Q68. If my child care is open, but I was turned away because I'm not an essential service worker, can my centre still charge me fees?

- Facilities in receipt of TEF are not permitted to continue charging fees to families who are no longer accessing child care. This includes cases in which a family has their care temporarily revoked to make room for an essential service worker.