

Child care in Ontario: From reopening to recovery

June 9, 2020



Agenda

- What we know so far
- Our plan: From Reopening to Recovery
- How to advocate for a safe reopening
- Next steps



**Women, parents and younger adults
more likely to feel anxious and
depressed during COVID-19**

OPINION

The parents are not okay

GTA

**Most parents are noticing changes in their
children's behaviour during pandemic, new
survey says**

Context Setting

- Ontario government had been cutting funding and deregulated child care prior to the start of the pandemic.
- During the pandemic, province has been slow to respond and failed to seriously address concerns of parents or the child care sector.
- Provided no new provincial money in the “sustainability funding” for child care centres during the closure period.



What do we know about the province's plans?

What's clear?

- Cohorting — putting children and staff in groups of 10 or less day over day
- COVID-19 response plan — all child care settings will be required to have a plan in place if a child, parent or staff member/provider is exposed to COVID-19
- If families are not offered access to their previous child care arrangement, operators will continue to be prevented from charging fees for these spaces.



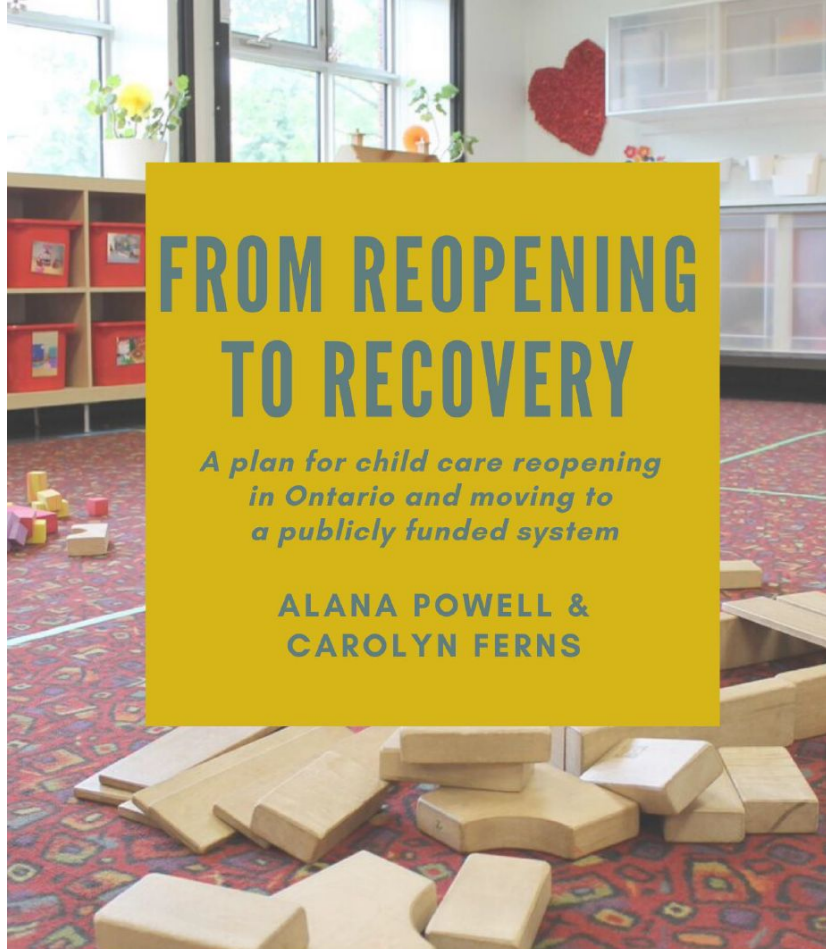
What do we know about the province's plans?

What's missing?

- **No new funding!**
- No transparent plan
- Not enough support for additional health and safety requirements
- No guidelines for re-entry for families (beyond prioritizing those in ECC)



Why this report?



ONTARIO COALITION FOR
Better Child Care



aeceo
Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario

Our Recommendations

A phased reopening modelled on best practices in funding and operation of Emergency Child Care (ECC).

- a) **Reduced groups sizes and enhanced ratios and keep groups separate** at all times;
- b) **Full base funding**, including funding for additional staff and consistent staff teams.
- c) **Provincial guidelines on eligibility** and priority of families;

Our Health and Safety recommendations

- **Approval by licensing and public health** prior to reopening. Operators should have a plan approved that includes use of physical space;
- **Repurposing available public space** to accommodate the increased need for physical space as a result of reducing group sizes and enhancing ratios;
- **Clear health and safety guidelines** for both centres and home child care providers.



Our Health and Safety recommendations

- **Training by local public health** on Personal Protective Equipment, screening, and health and safety procedures for staff, families, boards and operators;
- Clear **Covid-19 testing** policy;
- **Funding for and organized access to Personal Protective Equipment**, and health and safety supplies.



Our Health and Safety recommendations

- **Clear rules:** health screening, including requirements to disclose any symptoms and medication; emergency pick-up in case of illness; when and on what conditions children can return to program after illness;
- **Additional and dedicated support** from local public health support authorities;

Our recommendations to support ECEs and programs

- **Paid time** for staff to **prepare programs and to undertake training**, including health and safety training and trauma-informed practice;

Our recommendations to support ECEs and programs

- Direction on eligibility of vulnerable staff to access adapted work or refuse to work, and ensure they continue to be paid;
- Immediately **increase paid sick and emergency leave days** for all staff to at least 21 days;
- Immediate extension of **pandemic pay** to all program staff, and funding to ensure a **\$25 minimum wage** for all RECEs;



Benefits of this approach

- With this plan, Ontario will:
 - Gain a **real child care system** that will support children, parents and educators;.
 - It will be a system that is **prepared and nimble** to control outbreaks, respond to a second wave of Covid-19, and grow to meet demand
 - Put child care at the **core of social and economic recovery**.



What we need - next steps for advocacy

Join the Ontario Child Care Parents Network

- [Email: carolyn@childcareontario.org](mailto:carolyn@childcareontario.org)



Online action - send a letter to MP and MPP

Share the report and letter with 2 friends

Talk to local media

Set up a virtual **meeting with your MPP**

-> Join us Wednesday June 10 @ 1pm for a webinar: How to Meet Your MPP featuring Olivia Chow & *Review the OCBCC Campaign Tool-Kit*

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Keep in touch



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