

Re: Letter to PM, Premiers: Contagion: Close daycare venues ASAP

From [Families, Minister](#)

To info@kidsfirstcanada.org

Cc [Premier](#)

Date Today 09:00

Message Body

Dear Ms. Ward,

Thank you for your email to The Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba, in which you asked about the suspension of child care services in Manitoba to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. As the Minister of Families, I am pleased to respond.

Our government recognizes that this is a stressful time for child care workers and Manitoba families. This situation is evolving rapidly and we are making decisions based on the advice of our Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, Dr. Brent Roussin. After consulting with Dr. Roussin, our government has decided to suspend services in child care centres effective end of day Friday, March 20 until April 10 in alignment with the suspension of classes at Manitoba's K-12 schools.

However, we recognize that many families need child care, especially those who work in front line health services or other essential services. We also understand that smaller facilities such as home-based providers are currently deemed at lower risk due to the smaller number of children enrolled. That is why our Chief Provincial Public Health Officer has advised that home-based child care facilities can remain open after March 20. Home-base child care providers that are required by regulation to have no more than eight children per home (and in a small number of cases 12 children), can continue to operate. Given the demand for child care services during this difficult time, we will also be looking at measures to increase home-based child care options for working families.

For essential services personnel, we will be looking to the child care sector to share their expertise to help us find the best way to provide child care for families who have no other options during this challenging time. These plans will ensure that we limit the number of children

in each centre to 16 or less and maintain hygiene and social distancing practices consistent with the advice of Dr. Roussin. Plans for both home-based care and care for the children of essential services workers will be developed in the coming days.

We are currently taking an inventory of essential services workers who will need child care upon suspension of operations and are unable to make other, short-term arrangements. Please contact 204-945-0776 or 1-888-213-4754 (toll-free) or via email at cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca if you or a parent you know is an essential services worker who needs child care during this time. For continued up-to-date and accurate information about Manitoba's COVID-19 response, please visit: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html>

We are all in this together. During this time, we need families and communities across Manitoba to listen closely to public health advice and to help care for the most vulnerable. That includes reaching out to friends, neighbours and family members to help care for our children.

Thank you again for writing to me about this very important issue and your patience as we consult with public health officials to respond to this situation as it evolves. I can assure you that our government is very concerned about the well-being of our children, families, and communities. The perspective you have shared will help us plan for child care services as we respond to this significant public health challenge.

Sincerely,

Honourable Heather Stefanson
Minister of Families