



Childcare Working Group

April 7, 2020 at 1:00pm
Zoom Meeting Teleconference

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Renee Chadwick, Manager, Recreation Services
Christine Cho, A/HR Business Partner, Human Resources
Maryam Naser, Associate Superintendent, School District #40
Lisa Paterson, Community Development Worker, Ministry of Children and Family
Tazeen Bharucha, Program Supervisor, YMCA Childcare Resource and Referral
Jody Mischuda, Licensing Officer, Fraser Health Community Care Facilities
Licensing
Stephanie Erdelyi, Childcare Operator

REGRETS:

John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning

The meeting was called to order at 1:05pm.

1. Introductions

2. Terms of Reference

The Childcare Working Group Terms of Reference was supplied to members of the group as an attachment within the first meeting invitation and is included as Attachment 1.

3. Agency Updates

a) City of New Westminster

The City of New Westminster has activated their Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and the City has established 7 working groups. The Childcare Working Group has been established to look at the needs of internal and external. The Terms of Reference has been approved. The City of New Westminster is taking a facilitative role. The EOC meets on Mondays,

Wednesdays and Fridays and updates will be provided on the work done by the group.

We will be working with Communications on developing an online portal on the City's website.

b) Fraser Health

Some childcare operators had expressed concern about group sizes in facilities and taking children from families of front line workers.

Routine inspections of childcare facilities have restarted after the Spring Break. Fraser Health Inspectors complete a risk screening prior to attending, and inspections are limited mainly to health and safety, checking for high risk items and proper hygiene. The inspections are completed more quickly, and routine inspections may have more thorough inspections at a later date.

Fraser Health is working on a resource package for circulation.

c) School District #40

Maryam Naser, Associate Superintendent for the district provided an update from School District #40.

The District sent a survey to families at the end of Spring Break looking to identify families with guardians whom are essential workers working outside of the home.

The first step after the survey was to identify Tier 1 families and determine their needs for childcare. WCAS was able to reopen after Spring Break and was able to take in children for all day care at three locations in New Westminster: Howie, Queensborough, and Tweedsmuir.

Not as many families opted for all day care as was expected. There are approximately a dozen children attending these 3 facilities. As a result, the facilities have more staff on hand than expected.

As a result of the survey, the parents of 45 students identified they were in need of care and were not already connected with WCAS. Spots may become available by Thursday this week or early next week.

Some families have been reticent about childcare regarding the message from authorities to stay at home, so may be concerned about care outside the home. Principles are reaching out to other families who may have missed the survey. Staff notes the hardship for parents who are working outside the home and then must be engaged in learning with their children after work. As a result, the school district is working with WCAS on providing access to education for children while they are in care during the day.

d) Ministry of Children and Family Development

Lisa Paterson, Community Development Worker for the Ministry provided an update.

The Ministry is working diligently on addressing challenges at the grassroots level.

There is a concern that those in dealing with domestic violence could have their situation exacerbated by the need for self-isolation.

e) YMCA Childcare Resource

Tazeen Bharucha, Program Supervisor for the YMCA provided an update.

Last Friday, staff had a call with the Ministry to restrict all works at the YMCA to referrals only. The Office will remain open 7 days a week, from 7:30am to 9:00pm.

Staff are focusing on matching families with resources and childcare, particularly for essential workers, and working with those families on resources that match their schedules and of the care providers. The challenge has been that capacity is varying depending on staffing, physical distancing requirements, and ability to work with kids.

The online education for ECEs are currently on hold.

f) Childcare Operators

Stephanie, a childcare operator, provided an update.

The number of children on site is far fewer than expected. Stephanie noted that she currently only has one child on site, as opposed to the 10-12 that were anticipated. She noted that it is possible that more children will return to on site care in the coming weeks. She noted that other care providers are reporting the same.

Stephanie noted that many essential workers have made arrangements for their families other than with care providers outside of the home. There are spaces available for families, but many are choosing to place their children in the care of other family members.

4. Challenges and Opportunities

a) How do first responders know what spaces are available?

There are many spaces available but as noted above, many first responders have chosen alternate childcare options.

b) Occasional License Childcare

An operator with an occasional license has indicated that they would like to take children into care. It was noted that it is possible for an operator with an occasional license to obtain a flexible license, as it is an exemptible piece of legislation.

The operator must provide a care plan for safe play outside that adheres to physical distancing needs. The operator may apply but be denied if they cannot provide a safe place for play.

c) Personal Protective Equipment Need and Availability

Current stock of PPE includes gloves and hand sanitizer, but no masks. Tazeen Bharucha noted that the product can be stored at the YMCA facility and can assist in distributing to New Westminster child care providers.

d) Overnight Childcare Needs

The YMCA is currently making calls to care providers to find out if operators are interested in overnight care. Child care operators can also contact the Fire Department and licensing if they are interested in providing overnight care. The provider must present a safety plan that is signed off on by the Fire Department, which provides a letter of confirmation of the safety plan, and then submit to licensing for approval.

e) Other

New Westminster staff in need of child care can contact the YMCA for a referral or they can complete a child care request for services form online.

Challenges:

Childcare operators are struggling to find cleaning supplies. The group discussed options on meeting the needs of operators including the following:

- Discuss a plan with the Ministry to source supplies and get them to operators
- A system for child care facilities to order, pay and get supplies delivered directly to the facility

- Fraser Health licensing officers in New Westminster to email all operators requesting facilities with immediate supply needs to contact Renee Chadwick with their needs
- YMCA staff to assist in supply deliveries

5. Action Plan

Tazeen Bharucha from the YMCA has some information sheets available that she will send to members of the group.

Renee Chadwick will circulate the contact information for the Interdepartmental Manager to the group members.

6. Meeting Schedule

Meetings will be held on Tuesdays, at 1:00pm

7. Other

No items

The next meeting of the Childcare Working Group will occur on:

Date:	April 14, 2020
Time:	1:00 p.m
Location:	Zoom Meeting