

2 April 2020



To all families, service users and students enrolled in Mothercraft programs:

I hope you and your families continue to be well or as well as you can be under the circumstances.

Since my March 20<sup>th</sup> communication you will have heard from individual program managers about the alternative service plans Mothercraft staff have developed and are now implementing. To say that our team has gone above and beyond over the last two weeks is an understatement. Many of our staff have young families of their own so they know, first hand, how difficult this situation has been for parents and caregivers. Their response has been to go the extra mile for the communities we serve and I couldn't be more proud or grateful to work with such a dedicated group of professionals.

I am writing to provide an update on Mothercraft programs and services as well as to share what we know about recent government orders and their impact on our operations:

- The provincial state of emergency has been extended to April 13<sup>th</sup>. That means all non-essential business and activities are to remain physically closed, including non-emergency child care centres. We are all being asked to continue to stay home, self-isolate and practice social distancing when/if we need to be outside our homes during this period as well. You can read more about this [here](#).
- Elementary and secondary schools will remain closed until May 1<sup>st</sup> (re-opening on May 4<sup>th</sup>) though that date may be extended as it gets closer. Click [here](#) to see the media release with details about this announcement and information about online learning curricula in place or being developed.
- The province introduced new supports for post-secondary students and institutions, including loan deferral and flexibility with respect to academic schedules/learning modalities. Further information can be found [here](#).

***The implications of the above means that all Mothercraft locations are required to remain closed until AT LEAST April 13th.*** We are still assessing and seeking guidance about whether or not the extended school closures will impact any of our programs. We are also assessing what impact municipal closures and orders from Toronto's Medical Officer of Health may mean for the timing any resumption of services. And while there are still many uncertainties, you can be assured that as soon as we hear from public health authorities that it is safe to re-open our physical locations, are we are allowed to do so, we will be in touch to let you know how we intend to manage those re-openings.

Earlier this week, Mothercraft's Board of Directors met to review of the organization's response to the COVID crisis as well as to discuss contingency and business continuity plans being developed by myself and senior management. ***The Board endorsed the plans and approved a recommendation to continue to retain all staff on full salary and benefits until May 3<sup>rd</sup>.***

 <b>Head Office</b> EarlyON Child and Family Centre Robertson House Centre for Early Development 32 Heath Street West Toronto, ON. M4V 1T3 Tel: 416.920.3515 Fax: 416.920.5983	 <b>Mothercraft College</b> Community Data Group 646 St. Clair Ave. West Toronto, ON. M6C 1A9 Tel: 416.483.0511 Fax: 416.483.0119	 <b>Early Intervention</b> Breaking the Cycle Parent Infant Program 860 Richmond St. West Suite 100 Toronto, ON. M6J 1C9 Tel: 416.364.7373 Fax: 416.364.8008	 <b>Toronto Eaton Centre</b> Centre for Early Development 14 Trinity Square Toronto, ON. M5G 1B1 Tel: 416.340.9651 Fax: 416.340.7407	 <b>Brookfield Place</b> Centre for Early Development 10 Front Street West (Mail: 161 Bay St) Toronto, ON. M5J 2S1 Tel: 416.367.1758 Fax: 416.367.3839	 <b>CITYKIDS</b> 32 Heath Street West Toronto, ON. M4V 1T3 Tel: 416.920.6543 Fax: 416.920.1543	 <b>Magic Castle</b> Princess Margaret Hospital 610 University Ave Toronto, ON. M5G 2M9 Tel: 416.946.4501 ext. 5157
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As you may know, approximately half of Mothercraft's programs are fee-for-service (Mothercraft College of Early Childhood Education and child care) and were very vulnerable to the sudden closures. I'm happy to report that our ECE Diploma program shifted course instruction to an online platform and has been able to continue, save a few minor scheduling changes, with virtually no disruption to studies. Planning continues for the 2020/21 academic year and applications are now being accepted electronically. Amazing! Our child care programs have experienced revenue losses but, thanks many years of prudent decision-making by the Board of Directors, our reserve fund was quite robust prior to the onset of COVID. As a result, all child care staff are fully engaged in developing and delivering weekly program plans, resource and activity lists for parents, and individualized messages to every child in our centres. Also amazing!

The rest of Mothercraft's programs are funded by various orders of government. Thankfully, as of the time of this writing, all of these programs have received confirmation from government that funds will continue to flow in the immediate term. This is welcome news. It also means all of the staff within Breaking the Cycle, Building Connections, CityKids, CYSIS, EarlyON, Enhanced Language Training, Parent-Infant Program and Pregnancy Outreach are able to continue to serve families, students and other community organizations throughout this period. These programs have all gone "virtual": counselling services and in-home supports are being offered online and over the phone while drop-in programs have been replaced with videos of our educators delivering storytime and music circles so they can maintain connections with children and families. In fact, our EarlyON team has created a new page on the Mothercraft website with links to all of their new programming. Anyone and everyone is welcome to visit and use any of these resources. You can find them at <https://mothercraft.ca/index.php?q=earlyon-calendar> where they will be updated weekly.

Finally, I have attached an addendum to this letter outlining resources we have been providing to our staff that may be of interest to you and your family. As always, please feel free to contact your program/centre manager for additional information or if you have questions. Sending you my very best.

Sincerely,

Michele Lupa  
Executive Director

## **Addendum:**

### ***If you or someone in your family is exhibiting symptoms of illness:***

- Access Toronto Public Health’s “Health Advice” page - <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-health-advice/>. This page includes information about how to protect yourself against COVID, symptoms of the disease, when and where to go for diagnosis and assessment (as well as when not to go), treatments and additional supports. You can also contact your medical practitioners’ office but please note that many doctors’ offices and clinics are asking patients to call before coming in.
- Call Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600 to speak to someone or visit their website <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/>
- Use Ontario’s COVID self-assessment tool at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-self-assessment>
- Call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or visit their website at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-medical-advice-telehealth-ontario>

### ***For updates on COVID-19 in Canada and recommendations from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, visit:***

- Public Health Agency of Canada – <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>. They now have a “virtual assistant” on their website so you can chat with someone or be linked to the some commonly asked questions.

### ***If you or someone in your family is struggling or needs help coping:***

- Kids Help Phone has counsellors available to support children and youth (and, in Ontario, post-secondary students) by phone, text or chat 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. Visit their website at <https://kidshelpphone.ca/> or call 1-800-668-6868.
- The Gerstein Centre offers telephone crisis support 24 hours/day, 7 days/week and can be reached at 416-929-5200
- FindHelp Toronto operates the 211 call line in Toronto and across Ontario. They are a repository for all social services in the city (and the province) and can be found at <http://www.findhelp.ca/> or by dialing 211.