



Friday, March 20, 2020

We are here to Support you During COVID-19

Dear Parents and Provider Members;

Childhood Connections – Okanagan Family & Childcare Society greatly values, commends and honours our childcare community at this difficult time. Over the past week, community members have come to realize more than ever how much we rely on the important work that our childcare providers do for our community. Our childcare programs provide important, vital support for our working community – our childcare providers are *essential service workers*. They provide childcare for children whose parents are employed in essential services such as health care, emergency services, grocery stores, and pharmacies. We deeply thank and applaud our childcare providers for the important work you do, and for staying calm, safe and educated on the best practices to keep yourselves and our children safe during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Two days ago, Dr. Bonnie Henry advised parents who can, to care for their children at home. It is with this announcement, that Childhood Connections stands behinds our board decision to **temporarily close our walk-in and community outreach supports services as of March 17, 2020 until further notice**: Toy & Resource Library, Child Care Referrals Affordable Child Care Benefit support, Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Childcare Program Site Visits, Family Resource Programming group sessions, Community of Practice Learning Circles, and Community Training for Parents and Providers.

At this time, our staff will be available by phone and email to support you with all our services to the best of their ability. We encourage our members to contact our Childhood Connections staff via phone (250-762-3536) or email (resource@childhoodconnections.ca) Monday to Friday 9:00am – 4:30pm. Staff have staggered working-in-office and working-from-home schedules, and we are here to support and guide any questions you have about the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on our childcare community.

We truly empathize with you all about how all the changes over the past week have impacted on our childcare providers and families and we are here to support you. The Central Okanagan childcare community is strong and adaptable have supported each other tremendously over the years. And now faced with this challenge of COVID-19, we'll work together to adapt to the daily changing environments because we are the most adaptable sector around – you're real life superheroes (just ask some of the children in your care)!

Please keep in touch with us and don't hesitate to call or email if you have any questions. We are here to support, advocate for you. We are all in this together.

Melissa Hunt

Executive Director

Childhood Connections – Okanagan Family & Childcare Society

