

24 April 2020



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

I hope this message finds you well and that you and your families have settled into something of a routine since my last communication two weeks ago. Things have become “abnormally normal” for everyone at Mothercraft: program staff continue to deliver virtual services across all of our program areas; our admin team continue to ensure all aspects of the business operate as normally as possible; senior staff continue to monitor government announcements and public health guidance to ensure compliance with emergency orders; and our Board of Directors continues to provide leadership to the governance of the organization.

You are undoubtedly aware that the provincial state of emergency is now in effect until May 12<sup>th</sup>. This legislated measure allows various provincial ministries to order specific closures – for example, you may have seen in the media that all licensed child care centres (except for those deemed “emergency” centres) have been ordered closed until May 6<sup>th</sup> at this point. We fully expect these orders will continue to be issued until the province announces an end to the state of emergency even though the dates don’t always line up (that’s a process issue between legislative and bureaucratic authorities). Bottom line? Until orders are lifted and/or the state of emergency is rescinded, **all Mothercraft physical locations remain closed.**

We are in regular communication with various government bodies and regulators of our services. While we wait for emergency measures to be lifted, we are developing initial plans for the resumption of service which will likely be staggered. Of course, we fully expect that this will be a gradual process and that there will likely be directives about what can be opened when and that public health authorities will issue guidance about ongoing restrictions like social distancing, hygiene and sanitation protocols. We will keep you informed as more is known.

We are eagerly awaiting the launch of the expanded Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), announced by the federal government a couple of weeks ago to allow charities and not-for-profits like Mothercraft to receive financial aid resulting from revenue losses, on April 27<sup>th</sup>. As you know from my previous communications, several of Mothercraft’s services are fee-based and were impacted by closures. You’ll also recall that at the end of March Mothercraft’s Board of Directors approved the use of the organization’s reserves to retain all of our staff on full salary and benefits to the end of next week. Should our application to CEWS be successful, which we believe it will be, and with the commitments we’ve received to date from various orders of government for all of the grant-funded programs we deliver, we are confident we will be able to continue to provide our full suite of modified services for quite some time should that be necessary.

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Many of you have been in touch to share stories about how you and your children are engaging in some of our modified child and family programs. Thank you! Your expressions of gratitude and the videos/photos/messages you've sent telling us how you're doing and the ways in which you've been able to use the resources we're providing are deeply appreciated by all of our staff. We especially love the messages from the children – we're missing all of them as much as they're missing us!

Being able to transition the delivery of our post-secondary programs to virtual platforms so there was no disruption to classes is something we're extremely proud of. Staying connected with all of our students and being able to see/hear from you as you continue to work toward completion of your ECE Diploma, keeps all of us going. Kudos to you, and the people who are supporting you in your studies, for sticking with it during this difficult time. You can do it!

This past Monday, we were even able to launch our first ever, fully online Enhanced Language Training program (a program we've delivered for years to newcomers who want to enter the early learning and care profession) to a full cohort of students thanks to the creativity and hard work of the Mothercraft College team. Not only were they dealing with the uncertainty of all things COVID over the last five weeks, they were also figuring out how to shift from a classroom-based program model to a virtual one. Remarkable and a testament to the team's commitment to the individuals and communities we serve.

As always, should have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to our program managers. You can also find all of my previous communication – which include many links to important resources for children and parents/caregivers – on the Mothercraft website. Take good care.

Sincerely,

Michele Lupa  
Executive Director