



CUPE LOCAL 2204  
CHILD CARE WORKERS  
OF EASTERN ONTARIO  
251 BANK STREET, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
OTTAWA, ONTARIO, K2P 1X3  
Phone: 613-233-0228  
Email: cupe2204@gmail.com



## **Child Care Workers Disappointed with Ottawa Public Health Delaying Vaccines**

*CUPE Local 2204/ Child Care Now (Ottawa) – Joint Statement*

April 21, 2021

Demands for child care workers in Ottawa to be vaccinated are again being brushed off by media and government agencies alike. Ottawa Public Health and Dr. Vera Etches are unwilling to follow the example of many other Ontario municipalities and use their discretion to vaccinate child care workers.

Dozens of child care advocates and allies shared their concerns with the Ottawa Board of Health at their meeting on April 19, 2021. Child care staff and parents relayed fear, anger, anxiety, and frustration to the Board in the hopes of securing priority vaccination for child care workers across Ottawa's workforce, which Dr. Etches has the discretionary power to do.

The initial responses of the committee were tepid and often left speakers with more questions than answers. Dr. Etches and the Ottawa Board of Health seem committed to sticking to the Ford government's rollout plan, which is currently failing so many. It is unclear why vaccination prioritization has not been given to essential frontline workers while the city moves to vaccinate people in their 40s many of whom can work from home.

The Board committed to doing a review of the businesses and services still open (with employees who cannot work from home). This is a small token action for the essential workers of the city.

Child care workers have been at the front line working with unmasked children since May 2020 and have not closed since. Schools, day camps, and extended day programs have closed while daycares remain open. Special education workers — who currently work with unmasked kids as well — are being vaccinated right now. Meanwhile, child care programs are operating at full capacity with no mandatory closures (such as spring or summer vacations), no reductions in cohort sizes, and with increasing numbers of outbreaks across the city.

Child care programs stay open so that essential service workers can go to work: so that your doctor can care for you; so that bus drivers can get nurses to work; so that the grocery store clerk can serve you. All these industries could not run without the support of child care services looking after the children of essential workers.

Ontario's vaccination rollout stipulates that education workers will be included in Phase 2. The second phase has begun and yet child care workers are still questioning when Ottawa Public Health will give ALL child care workers access to vaccines.

Ottawa Public Health is ignoring and taking for granted the critical work of child care providers by not bringing them immediately to the front of vaccination lines!

Ottawa's child care workers and allies need to get organized and increase pressure on the city to include them for priority vaccination — if you are not yet involved, please get in touch with Child Care Now (Ottawa) either through the [registration portal](#) or by emailing [ottawa@ccnow.ca](mailto:ottawa@ccnow.ca). Someone will be in touch with you shortly about organizing your coworkers and program for further action.

Taylor Kociszewski

CUPE 2204 President

Nathan Prier

Child Care Now (Ottawa) - Parent Member