



**Press briefing - 363/05/2020**

## **A step-by-step plan to open day-care facilities for children in North Rhine-Westphalia**

**We will follow through with the stages planned next on 14 and 28 May 2020/ Minister Stamp: Facilitating reasonably restricted regular operation for all children as quickly and responsibly as possible**

**The Ministry for Children, Family, Refugees and Integration has reported as follows:**

North Rhine-Westphalia is initiating plans to further open day-care facilities for children and has presented a conceptual plan for this purpose, with due consideration of the current situation of infection. This plan, with some steps to follow, will allow more children to attend day-care from 14 May 2020 onwards. This concept has been closely coordinated with the local authorities and funding agencies and has been discussed with parents, trade unions and child day-care facilities. In addition, Family Minister Joachim Stamp has also addressed letters to parents, responsible bodies, employees, kindergarten management and child day-care staff, specifying the measures to be taken.

Minister Stamp: "The Corona pandemic has a major impact on children and families. I know the enormous pressure that families, especially with young children, are under after so many weeks of absence of regular day-care. Both child care and professional commitments are seldom feasible without a great deal of effort. As a father of two children, I am completely aware that our children need social interaction, space to play, romp and engage in learning. We would like to open day-care facilities for all children, but we have to proceed step-by-step and with utmost caution. This is because the trained professionals in day-care facilities and kindergartens, who are part of the risk group, are not available at the moment. As a result, the service is now considerably restricted and we can currently only power through with a careful step-by-step approach."

Nevertheless, we are committed to giving all children the opportunity for early childhood education again as soon as possible. The emergency care will initially be extended in two steps on 14 May and 28 May 2020. Following this, June will see all other children reintegrated into the day-care facilities as part of the next steps. The extent and form in which this can be done is contingent both on whether the development will allow larger groups to rejoin and on how many trained professionals will be available. Secretary of Family Services, Stamp: "We definitely want to get started with a reasonably restricted standard child care program for all children as soon as possible."

### **Conceptual plan for the opening of day-care:**

#### **Current regulation**

- Limited emergency care: Prohibition to enter day-care facilities and nurseries. A few exceptions are granted for children whose parents belong to special occupational groups and to ensure the well-being of the child in certain cases.
- Extended emergency care: Working single parents and single parents in their final year of school or university education.

#### **With effect from 14 May 2020:**

- Child care in day-care facilities will be opened for children of pre-school age, who are eligible under the Education and Participation Programme (BuT).
- Moreover, children with disabilities and children who are at risk of becoming severely disabled and who have been identified as such by an integration assistance institution may be cared for again in day-care facilities or in nurseries. Appropriate implementation for the care of children in curative education groups is to take place within the framework of existing possibilities.
- The nursery facilities for children, with their family-oriented and manageable range of childcare services, will be opened to children who have reached the age of two.
- The bridge projects can be re-opened.
- Child care privately organised by parents would also be possible under certain conditions.

#### **With effect from 28 May 2020:**

- All other pre-school children will be admitted.

**More steps to follow in June:**

- During the course of June, all other children should be able to go to their institution or nursery facility. The extent to which the offer can be implemented will be continuously reviewed and coordinated with the local authorities and funding agencies and will be carried out in consultation with parents, trade unions and child day-care associations.

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