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## Childcare and preparing for the return to work

### **A childcare operator has developed a detailed policy plan to enable the safe reopening of childcare centres to enable essential workers access support.**

[Tigers Childcare](#) has produced a detailed guide outlining the policies and procedures for the safe re-opening of its 13 centres during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CEO of Tigers Childcare Karen Clince believes the guide could provide a blueprint for how crèches and childcare centres can safely operate and start providing vital support to working parents facing childcare difficulties.

Today (8 May) the ESRI released [a study](#) stating that essential workers face “significant barriers” in accessing childcare, with 100,000 requiring childcare support.

### **A safe return to the new normal**

“Childcare and returning to work go hand in hand and we believe that appropriate protocols can be put in place to enable the safe re-opening of childcare centres,” said Clince.

“We’d call on the government and NPHET to consult with providers like us to find ways to re-open and start providing this vital service to the economy and society again.”

The Tigers Childcare guide covers pre-opening steps from sterilisation to setting up handwashing stations, PPE; entry procedures for children, parents and staff; temperature checking, and age-appropriate care, toileting and play procedures for children.

“Social distancing will not work for children as it’s not in their nature to keep at a distance from other children or carers and avoid close contact,” said Clince.

“We have considered in detail how we can enable normal development and interaction for our children while keeping our environment Covid-free and keeping children and staff coming into our centres Covid-free.”

“Re-opening childcare facilities is really important for so many different reasons - to support children in their development, to get parents back working but also to support vulnerable children in society, where coming to crèche every day for respite and to have their basic needs met is really important to their lives.”

“It makes no sense for playgrounds to potentially open on 29 June, where social distancing will be impossible to maintain, while properly supervised childcare centres remain closed. Let’s address this as a matter of urgency with proper sector input.”

Tigers Childcare has gone through rapid growth since establishing in 2003. From a small after-school service initially operated by owner and managing director Karen Clince, it has grown to become one of Ireland’s market leaders in childcare.

In January it secured [an investment of €5m](#) from Dunport Capital to help roll out its expansion plans in Ireland and the UK.

In March the company [opened its first childcare centre in south London](#) following a €2m investment.

Speaking of plans for Tigers Childcare in London Clince said: “We plan to reopen our London centre on 1 June and many UK services are already providing for the needs of essential workers. To date there has been no evidence of clusters in any childcare centre or creche there.”

***Pictured: Founder and managing director of Tigers Childcare Karen Clince***

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