

Ministry of Education    Ministère de l'Éducation

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**Memorandum To:**            Child Care Licensees  
Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District  
Social Services Administration Boards  
District School Boards

**From:**                        Phil Graham  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Early Years and Child Care Division

**Date:**                        November 6, 2020

**Subject**                      Updates to Child Care Operational Guidance

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As partners in the child care sector, we all know that child care and early years programming plays an integral role in the learning and development of children. It is critical for families to be able to continue working with confidence knowing that their children are in safe environments.

To continue supporting the safe and healthy operation of child care and before and after school programs across the province during this unprecedented time, I am pleased to share a revised [Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak: Child Care Re-Opening](#) document as well as a revised [2020-21 Before and After School Kindergarten to Grade 6 Policies and Guidelines](#).

Key changes in these documents include:

- Updated guidance around the health and safety protocols that must be included in all COVID-19 policies.
- Revised guidance around cleaning spaces and equipment to align with practices in schools, including updated guidance on cleaning outdoor playground equipment.
- Revisions to the masking and eye protection requirements to clarify the difference in requirements between staff/providers, parents or other adults, children in grade 4 and above, and younger children (grade 3 and under).
- Revised guidance around screening practices to clarify that screening prior to arrival at the child care setting is preferred, to encourage the use of the provincial screening tool, and to remove the requirement to maintain records of daily screening.

- Revised guidance on protocols for when someone in the program is symptomatic, including testing and reporting advice, and how to treat the siblings of someone who is symptomatic, to more closely align with guidance in schools and to clarify that a medical note is not required to return to a child care program after an individual has become ill.
- Revised definition of an outbreak in a child care setting to two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in children, staff/providers or other visitors with an epidemiological link, where at least one case could have been infected in the child care setting.
- Revised guidance on reporting serious occurrences to specify that licensees are no longer required to report a serious occurrence for suspected cases and if a parent has a case of COVID-19.
- Revised guidance on the inclusion of Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) staff in child care settings to clarify that licensees have discretion to determine which SNR staff are essential to physically provide service in the child care setting, rather than deferring to public health officers.

These changes reflect the latest advice from the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, and align with the guidance for reopening schools, where appropriate. The Ministry of Education will continue to work with its partners in the Ministry of Health and other sector partners on the health and safety measures in place and will make updates as the COVID-19 outbreak dictates.

In addition, an updated EarlyON Child and Family Centre guidance document that aligns with these documents, where applicable, will be released in the coming weeks.

Thank you again for your continued support and collaboration as we work together in partnership to maintain the delivery of safe and high-quality licensed child care and before and after school programs across Ontario.

Thank you,

Phil Graham