

Ministry of Education

Deputy Minister

438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2A5

Ministère de l'Éducation

Sous-ministre

438, avenue University, 5^e étage
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 2A5

Date: August 16, 2022

Memorandum to: Child Care Licensees

From: Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

Subject: **2022-23 School Year Health and Safety Measures in
Child Care**

For the past two years, Ontario's children, and their families, educators and staff and providers working in the child care and early years sector have demonstrated resiliency and flexibility in responding to changes to public health and workplace safety measures during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we approach the start of a new school year, the Ministry of Education remains committed to providing children with a normal and enriching experience that lets children take advantage of the activities and programs that enhance learning and build social and life skills.

On the advice of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and in alignment with community measures the current health and safety requirements remain unchanged.

Continuing with this direction and based on the advice of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, masks will not be required for children, staff, providers and visitors. We strongly encourage licensees to actively promote respectful, welcoming and inclusive environments for individuals who choose to wear, or not to wear a mask within their communities.

The government will continue to provide free high-quality masks for children, staff and providers and eye protection for staff and providers, if they choose to use them. All staff and providers will also continue to have access to non-fit-tested N95s. Licensees can continue to order this optional PPE through the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery (formerly the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services) PPE Supply Portal.

The ministry will continue to support the child care sector with access to rapid antigen tests, in ongoing alignment with provincial testing guidelines.

It is recommended that staff, providers, children and visitors continue to self-screen every day before attending child care using either the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#), or a screening tool designated by the local public health unit, in alignment with current provincial guidance. Following public health guidance, individuals should stay home if they are feeling ill to prevent the spread of illness.

Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should continue to be promoted and integrated throughout the day. Significant improvements have been made to ventilation through the deployment of HEPA filter units to schools, child care centres and EarlyON programs. The ministry continues to deploy HEPA filter units to child care centres and EarlyON programs as needed. Please note Public Health Ontario has updated its Frequently Asked Questions document on [Use of Portable Air Cleaners and Transmission of COVID-19](#).

Licensees are to continue to monitor their own absence rates and collaborate closely with their local public health unit. Should the absence rate increase above what a program would typically experience, and absences are not perceived to be linked to other factors (e.g., holidays), it is recommended that the licensee notify their local public health unit.

Increased absenteeism may indicate increased cases of COVID-19 or other respiratory or gastrointestinal infections in the child care program. Local public health units are encouraged to have a process in place to review absence data and may provide child care programs with additional guidance and support, including suggested resources for communication to children, staff, providers and families.

A general reminder that staff, providers, children, families, and visitors should ensure that they are complying with all applicable health and safety requirements as set out by their child care programs and local public health units.

Should you have any questions, please contact childcare_ontario@ontario.ca.

As always, thank you for continued collaboration and partnership in keeping children, staff and providers safe.

Sincerely,

Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

c: Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services
Administration Boards (CMSMs and DSSABs)

First Nations with Child Care Programs