

TO: Child Care Licensees

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

DATE: January 20, 2021

SUBJECT: Child Care Updates

Thank you very much for your ongoing efforts and patience as we continue to work through the ever-changing landscape brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. We so appreciate your collaboration and commitment to children and families in your communities.

Updated Approach on Return to In-Person Learning in Elementary Schools

As announced today, the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) has determined that the following Public Health Units (PHU) may return to in-person instruction in schools on January 25, 2021:

- Renfrew
- Leeds, Grenville and Lanark
- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington
- Hastings and Prince Edward Counties
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge
- Peterborough
- Grey Bruce

In these PHU regions, emergency child care will end on January 22, 2021, and before/after school programs may resume their usual operations on January 25, 2021, including the charging of parent fees.

In the remaining PHUs where elementary schools continue to be closed for in-person learning, before/after school programs will remain closed (and may not charge parent fees) and targeted emergency child care for school-aged children will continue to operate at no cost to eligible parents.

For reference, the public health units where elementary schools are remaining closed for in-person learning at this time, are:

- Windsor-Essex
- Peel
- York
- Toronto
- Hamilton
- Lambton
- Niagara
- Southwestern
- Eastern Ontario
- Durham
- Waterloo
- Middlesex-London
- Haldimand
- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph
- Halton
- Brant County
- Huron Perth
- Simcoe Muskoka
- Chatham-Kent
- Ottawa

Please note that there have been no changes with regards to the operation of child care for non-school-aged children (and JK/SK-aged children enrolled in child care immediately prior to Dec. 21, 2020) in any region. These settings remain open and are asked to implement enhanced health and safety recommendations (see below).

Updated Health and Safety Guidance

As indicated in the memo of January 12, 2021, to support the continued efforts to maintain health and safety in child care settings and based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ministry of Education has identified additional health and safety measures to protect children and staff, which will be reflected in the child care and before and after school operational guidance that are to be released shortly.

Revisions will include updated guidance on masking to reflect the move to mandatory masks for all children in grades 1 and up, as well as additional guidance on screening. Please see the attached addendum for further details.

These guidance documents are intended to represent the minimum recommendations of the Ministry of Education for operating child care and early years programs.

Note that service system managers, school boards and child care partners have been encouraged to work together to implement health and safety protocols where programs are located in schools.

Eligibility for Emergency Child Care

The Ministry of Education continues to monitor the implementation of emergency child care to determine if any changes are needed to eligibility. We will be in communication with regard to any changes to the current eligibility list.

And finally, as a reminder, where eligible, operators should continue to access federal support programs under the Canada Economic Response Plan. As well, eligible operators should apply for provincial programs available to businesses, such as the Ontario Small Business Support Grant: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/businesses-get-help-covid-19-costs>

Thank you once again for your hard work, commitment and dedication.

Phil Graham