

TO: Child Care Licensees
Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social
Services Administration Boards (CMSMs and DSSABs)
First Nations with Licensed Child Care Programs and Child and
Family Programs

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

DATE: August 27, 2021

SUBJECT: Updates to the Ministry of Health School and Child Care
Screening Tool

Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to supporting children, families, and staff working in the child care and early years sector. We are deeply appreciative of the efforts of the sector in ensuring children are in a nurturing, supportive and safe environment.

The purpose of this memo is to notify you of the updates made to the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#) and the [COVID-19 screening tool for employees and essential visitors in schools and child care settings](#). Updates to the screening tools reflect the latest advice from the Ministry of Health for schools, child care and other workplace settings.

Key changes to the screening tools include:

- **Symptoms** – in alignment with the Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#), the screeners now include a shortened list of symptoms that are most commonly associated with COVID-19. As per regular protocols, all sick individuals with any symptoms of illness – including those with symptoms not included on the screening tool – should stay home and seek assessment from their regular health care provider, if required.
- **Consideration for immunization status** - in alignment with the Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Fully Immunized and Previously Positive Individuals: Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance](#), asymptomatic individuals who are fully immunized (equal to or more than 14 days after receiving their second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or their first dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series) or who were previously positive within the past 90 days and have since been cleared, are not required to isolate if they are in contact with

an individual who is symptomatic or who tests positive for COVID-19, unless otherwise directed by the public health unit.

- **Isolation period** – in alignment with the Ministry of Health’s [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario](#) and [COVID-19 Guidance: School Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management](#), asymptomatic high-risk close contacts of a case are now required to isolate for 10 days, unless they are fully immunized or previously tested positive, as above.
 - Siblings and other people in the household of the individual identified as a high-risk close contact can go to school, child care or work, but must not leave the home for other non-essential reasons. Household members who are fully immunized or who previously tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and have since been cleared are not required to stay home.
- **International travel** – unvaccinated children under the age of 12 are now exempt from federal quarantine if they travelled in the company of someone who qualified for an exemption from quarantine based on vaccination status. However, they may not attend school or child care for 14 days after their arrival.
 - Children may also continue to attend school or child care if their international travel was solely due to a cross border custody arrangement.
- **Rapid testing** – the screening tool now includes a question about a positive screen on a rapid antigen or home-based self-testing kit.

Copies of the new screener are available for download [here](#). The downloadable screening tool will also be made available in multiple languages, which will be added online shortly.

The updated screening tool may be used by EarlyON Child and Family Centres and First Nations Child and Family Programs to meet provincial screening requirements.

We will continue to update the screening tool as public health guidance evolves and are committed to keeping our child care and early years partners informed of any changes. We ask that you continue to work with your public health units to review your own screening materials to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements outlined in provincial guidance. Public health units continue to have the authority to implement additional measures based on local circumstances.

On-site Screening:

As outlined in the COVID-19 operational guidance documents, the Ministry can direct licensees and child care providers, before and after school programs, EarlyON Child and Family Centres, school boards and schools to perform daily on-site confirmation of self-screening for children, staff and visitors. The ministry is asking licensees, child care providers, before and after school programs and EarlyON Child and Family Centres to implement daily on-site confirmation of self-screening for all children, staff and visitors as soon as possible, until September 24, 2021 (approximately two weeks after the start of the school year). As a best practice, we encourage child care and early years programs to implement confirmation of on-site screening processes during the

year, as a frequent reminder of the importance of screening daily. Schools and school boards are also being asked to implement daily on-site confirmation of self-screening for all elementary and secondary students, and all staff and visitors in schools for the first two weeks of the school year. This approach will support our collective efforts and help to ensure that all children, students, staff and visitors are monitoring their symptoms so that only those who pass the screening procedures are allowed to attend school or child care.

Where necessary, licensees, before and after school programs, EarlyON Child and Family Centres and school boards should work together to coordinate and implement how on-site confirmation of self-screening will take place across different programs.

Thank you again for your steadfast support and collaboration in delivering safe and high-quality licensed child care and early years programs across Ontario.

Sincerely,

Phil Graham