

TO: Consolidated Municipal Service Managers / District Social Services Administration Boards

FROM: Shannon Fuller
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Early Years and Child Care Division

DATE: August 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Operational Guidance for September for Child Care and Early Years Programs

Further to Minister Lecce's announcement on July 30, as of September 1, 2020 child care centres may return to maximum group sizes as set out under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA) (i.e., licensed age groups prior to the COVID-19 outbreak). EarlyON Centres and before and after school programs may also re-open beginning September 1, 2020. All programs must adhere to strict health and safety measures in order to operate, including but not limited to:

- grouping children and limiting interactions between groups;
- requiring medical masks and eye protection for all adults in the program and requiring non-medical or cloth masks for children in grades 4 and above;
- screening, limiting visitors, and recording attendance for contact tracing;
- developing COVID-19 health and safety protocols; and,
- enhanced cleaning.

To support re-opening of all programs, I am sharing with you three operational guidance documents: a revised version of the [*Child Care Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak*](#) as well as [operational guidance for the re-opening of EarlyON Child and Family Centres](#), and the [2020-21 Before and After School Kindergarten to Grade 6 Policies and Guidelines](#). The resource documents have been developed to reflect the updated health and safety measures to be in place for the fall, as well as specific guidance related to each program.

The revised [*Child Care Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak*](#) document provides new information on:

- returning to maximum group sizes as set out under the CCEYA prior to the COVID-19 outbreak;
- providing 14 days for parents to decide to accept a space before resuming parent fees, whether the space is used or not;
- allowing students who are completing post-secondary educational placements into child care settings;

- reporting a serious occurrence related to COVID-19; and
- updated guidance noting that when an individual does not pass the screening it does not need to be reported to the local public health unit.

The *EarlyON Child and Family Centre Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak* document provides direction to support partners with the re-opening of child and family programs including:

- COVID-19 operational guidance to support operating child and family programs with enhanced health and safety procedures;
- developing policies and processes for reserving and/or registering to participate in in-person programs and services in advance;
- the continued provision of virtual services to support families remotely;
- offering outdoor and mobile program options for families; and,
- not offering child minding and respite child care at this time.

The *2020-21 Before and After School Kindergarten to Grade 6 Policies and Guidelines* include:

- COVID-19 operational guidance to support the re-opening of before and after school programs with enhanced health and safety procedures;
- additional factors to consider when assessing viability and demand for the reopening;
- best practices to limit interactions between groups of students when attending before and after school programs; and,
- an update to reporting information on before and after school programs to the ministry.

These changes have been made in consultation with the Ministry of Health and through conversations with the sector. We continue to put the health and safety of Ontario's children, families, staff and providers at the forefront, and we are basing the updated guidance on advice from Dr. David Williams, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and the experts at the COVID-19 Command Table.

The Ministry of Education continues to work with the Ministry of Health and other sector partners on the health and safety restrictions in place and will make updates and amendments as the situation safely allows. The ministry remains committed to working closely with all partners to support children and families and to keep everyone safe.

Thank you,

Shannon Fuller