

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

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

DATE: June 8, 2021

SUBJECT: Updates to the School and Child Care Screener and Ministry of Health
Guidance to Public Health Units

Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to supporting children, families, and staff working 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, and allows parents to be able to continue working knowing that their children are in a supportive and safe environment.

The purpose of this memo is to provide you with updated COVID-19 screening guidance for early years and child care settings. 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](#) have been updated to reflect public health guidance for individuals experiencing symptoms post COVID-19 immunization.

The updates to the screening tool align with the Ministry of Health's new [guidance](#) for individuals who may be experiencing post-vaccine symptoms. In particular, individuals who are experiencing certain minor symptoms that are compatible with COVID-19, but have received a COVID-19 vaccine in the past 48 hours, may still be able to attend child care programs if these symptoms began after vaccination.

Key changes to the COVID-19 Screening Tool related to COVID-19 post-vaccination symptoms include:

- **Screening Process:** If the child care staff, provider, placement student, child or visitor received a COVID-19 vaccination in the last 48 hours and is experiencing mild headache, fatigue, muscle aches, and/or joint pain that only began after vaccination,

and no other symptoms, they should respond “no” in the screening tool and may continue to attend the child care program if they are feeling well enough to do so.

- If the child care staff, provider, placement student, child or visitor lives in a household with an individual who received a COVID-19 vaccination in the last 48 hours and is experiencing mild headache, fatigue, muscle aches, and/or joint pain that only began after vaccination, and no other symptoms, they should respond “no” in the screening tool and are not required to self-isolate (stay home).
- **Masking:** If the child care staff, provider, placement student, child or visitor received a COVID-19 vaccination in the last 48 hours and has mild headache, fatigue, muscle aches and/or joint pain that only began after immunization, and no other symptoms, they are to wear a properly fitted mask for their entire time in the child care setting. The mask may only be removed to consume food or drink and the individual must remain at least two metres away from others when their mask has been removed.
- **Isolation and Testing:** If the mild headache, fatigue, muscle aches, and/or joint pain symptoms worsen, continue past 48 hours, or if the individual develops other symptoms, they should leave the child care setting immediately, or if in a home setting the home care provider should no longer offer care, to self-isolate and seek COVID-19 testing.

In addition to updates to the School COVID-19 Screening Tool, the Ministry of Health has updated their [COVID-19 Guidance: School Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management](#). This guidance document provides information for local public health units investigating cases, outbreaks and suspected outbreaks. Updates to this guidance document were made to provide further clarity and to promote alignment with new provincial guidance related to variants of concern.

These changes reflect the latest advice from the Ministry of Health and will be reflected in the ministry’s operational guidance documents for early years and child care, which will be made available shortly. Copies of the new screener are attached to this memorandum.

Licensees should strongly encourage all eligible child care staff/providers to receive the COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible. Families with children of eligible age should also be encouraged to have their children vaccinated. While child care staff/providers continue to be vaccinated, it is of the utmost importance that child care settings continue to adhere to all health and safety protocols regardless of the vaccination status of individual child care staff/providers. 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 situation dictates.

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 early years programs across Ontario.

Thank you,

Phil Graham