

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: Holly Moran
Assistant Deputy Minister
Early Years and Child Care Division

DATE: December 16, 2021

SUBJECT: Winter 2021-22 COVID-19: Health, Safety Updates for Child Care
and EarlyON Child and Family Centres

Thank you once again for your ongoing dedication and commitment to keeping child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres safe and accessible for children, families and staff working in the child care and early years sector.

With the approach of the holiday season, the Ministry of Education would like to provide an update on the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) and clarification on rapid antigen testing requirements in child care settings. By following these requirements, we can all enjoy a safer holiday season and support the continued operation of child care and early years programs in the new year.

COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening:

As you are aware, as an enhanced safety measure, licensed child care centres, home child care agencies and providers, before and after school and EarlyON programs are required to implement daily on-site confirmation of screening results prior to/upon arrival at the premises for the two weeks following the winter break. We know that many programs already verify screening results daily; however, if you are not currently verifying screening results for each individual prior to entry, please ensure you do so for at least the first two weeks of January.

In order to provide further clarification around isolation requirements, the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#) will be updated to include a question regarding household members who tested positive on a rapid antigen test. When an individual tests positive on a rapid antigen test, any household members who are not fully

vaccinated are also required to stay home while the individual seeks a confirmatory PCR test.

Please ensure that staff and families are aware of and using the updated screener when they return to child care settings in January.

Rapid Antigen Testing:

As you are aware, all child care programs must have a COVID-19 vaccination disclosure policy in place that requires individuals to provide proof of:

1. Full vaccination against COVID-19; or,
2. A documented medical exemption; or,
3. Participation in an educational session on the benefits of COVID-19 immunization.

Individuals subject to the policy who do not show proof of vaccination must undergo rapid antigen testing on a regular basis and provide verification of negative test results three times per week. (Please note, testing is optional for licensed child care operating on-reserve).

Where a program is closed over the holidays, individuals subject to testing requirements **must complete screening and rapid antigen testing requirements once operations resume and prior to returning to child care settings in January**. Individuals subject to testing requirements are not required to complete rapid antigen testing while child care settings are closed. If your program is not closing, rapid antigen testing requirements continue to apply.

For further details on required health and safety measures for early years and child care settings, please see the [COVID-19 child care, before and after school, and EarlyON guidance documents](#).

Thank you for your efforts to comply with these requirements, and for your ongoing commitment to the children and families of Ontario. I wish you and your families a joyous and restful holiday season and look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,

Holly Moran
Assistant Deputy Minister
Early Years and Child Care Division