

Date: February 11, 2021

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

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

Subject: Child Care Updates Regarding March Break

I would like to extend our sincere appreciation for your ongoing work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your leadership and commitment have been key to supporting children, families and Ontario's early years and child care sector through these difficult times. The Ministry of Education (the 'ministry') has provided regular updates over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and I am pleased to provide you with an update on March Break.

As you know, our greatest priority is the safety and well-being of our children, families, child care staff and providers. The ministry is grateful for the support you have provided as schools and before and after school programs reopen across the province, and for the work to support countless families and children through the targeted emergency child care program.

We have worked together to ensure the safety of children, families, child care staff and providers by implementing additional health and safety measures, including enhanced screening protocols, masking for Grades 1-12 and outdoors where physical distancing cannot be maintained, and discouraging congregation in all indoor areas in a child care setting.

We know that the 2020-21 school year has been challenging for children, staff and families. We understand how important it is for students to be learning in-person – alongside their peers – to support their well-being, mental health, and development. We also recognize that all sectors, including the early years and child care sector, play an important part in stopping further spread of the virus.

The ministry will continue to focus on supporting the health and wellbeing of children, families and staff in what has been an unprecedented year. That is why, based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the ministry will be deferring March Break for the 2020-21 school year.

We recognize the importance of providing staff, children and families with an opportunity to rest and recharge. This is why we will be moving the planned break to the week of April 12, 2021.

The efforts of child care leaders, supervisors, Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs), Home Child Care providers, and program staff have been instrumental in helping to keep children safe, families supported, and child care settings healthy places for our children to learn and thrive, particularly during this challenging time.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and collaboration as we work through these challenging times together.

Sincerely,

Phil Graham