

TO: Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services
Administration Boards (CMSMs and DSSABs)
Child Care Licensees

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

DATE: April 27, 2021

SUBJECT: **COVID-19 Vaccine Update – Access for Child Care Workers**

Thank you for your continued efforts in keeping children, families, and child care staff safe during this challenging time. The Ministry of Education is committed to keeping you informed of measures Ontario is taking to protect health and safety, and the purpose of this communication is to inform you of the latest developments regarding access to COVID-19 vaccines for child care workers.

Eligibility

In follow-up to today's announcement, I am pleased to confirm that beginning **Thursday, April 29, 2021**, child care workers will be eligible to book vaccination appointments. At this time, child care workers eligible for this phase of vaccine access include the following individuals:

- Licensees, employees and students (18+) on an educational placement who interact directly with children in licensed child care centres and in authorized recreation and skill building programs.
- Licensed home child care and in-home service providers, employees of a home child care agency and students (18+) on an educational placement who interact directly with children in a licensed home child care setting.

In the coming weeks, eligibility will be expanded to child care workers in unlicensed child care settings across the province.

Timing and Registration

Registration for vaccine appointments for child care workers who meet the eligibility criteria above will begin no earlier than **Thursday, April 29, 2021**.

Eligible workers who are in a Public Health Unit (PHU) using the provincial booking system will be asked to book their vaccination appointment by calling the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line number at 1-833-943-3900. The line is open 7 days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Individuals will be asked identifying questions, such as the child care setting in which they work.

PHUs not using the provincial booking system (see appendix) will provide further details on how child care workers within their jurisdiction can book appointments. Please watch for updates and announcements from your local PHU.

Please ensure eligible child care workers do not call the provincial booking system or attempt to book an appointment until Thursday, April 29, 2021, as they will be unable to secure an appointment prior to this date.

Further, it is important that child care staff/providers **be patient during this period**, as it could take time for them to receive an appointment. While the child care staff/providers will now have the eligibility to book an appointment, this announcement does not prioritize the group ahead of others who are also currently eligible. We ask that child care staff/providers continue to monitor public service announcements in their communities to determine whether they may be eligible to register for a vaccine based on other eligibility criteria.

For general inquiries, individuals can call the Provincial Vaccine Information Line number 7 days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 1-888-999-6488.

Actions for Licensees

Licensees are asked to provide a letter, on letterhead, to each eligible employee/provider as soon as possible, citing the **eligibility** criteria above, and including the following information:

- Confirmation that the employee/provider is eligible for vaccination based on the above criteria;
- The child care license number of the home/centre;
- Strong encouragement that the employee/provider get vaccinated, as vaccines are safe, effective and the best way to protect them and those that they care for from COVID-19.
- Details on how individuals can book their vaccination appointment:
 - **Call the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line number no earlier than Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 1-833-943-3900. The line is open 7 days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.** Staff/providers will be asked identifying questions, such as the child care setting in which they work.
 - If your local PHU is not using the provincial booking system, please watch for updates and announcements from your local PHU on how child care workers can book appointments.

- Direct employee/provider to bring the letter and proof of employment (e.g. pay stub, agreement between home child care agency and provider) to the appointment as they may be asked to present this.
- As a best practice, it is recommended to include the employee's name and home address.

Child care licensees are asked to keep a record of the number of staff/providers that have received letters confirming their eligibility and to share this with their local PHU, upon request, for their planning purposes.

This represents general guidance from the province, and licensees are encouraged to confirm specific arrangements with their local PHUs.

Other Ways to Access COVID-19 Vaccines

Supporting vaccination for eligible child care workers is in addition to recent announcements to vaccinate individuals aged 45 and over by postal code in COVID-19 hot spot zones, mobile and pop-up clinics for individuals aged 18 and over in COVID-19 hot spot zones, and those with highest-risk health conditions. The province also offers the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to all individuals aged 40 and over at pharmacies and primary care settings across the province effective Tuesday, April 20, 2021. Visit [How to book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment](#) for more information.

Please note that local PHUs are responsible for managing and overseeing the distribution and administration of vaccines for their entire region. PHUs are required to take multiple factors into consideration including local context and available supply of vaccine. Timing of the booking of appointments and administration of vaccines for child care staff/providers may therefore vary for reasons beyond the PHU's control (e.g., vaccine supply).

Next Steps

It continues to be important to reinforce strong adherence to health and safety protocols in child care settings whether or not child care workers have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Please refer to the latest health and safety guidance available on the ministry [website](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced several challenges. We would like to thank the child care sector, Registered Early Childhood Educators and all child care workers for their dedication and commitment to supporting Ontario's children and families during this time.

Sincerely,

Phil Graham

APPENDIX:

Public Health Units not using the provincial call centre Bureaux de santé publique locaux n'utilisant pas le centre d'appel provincial

1. Lambton Health Unit / Circonscription sanitaire de Lambton
2. North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit / Bureau de santé du district de North Bay-Parry Sound
3. Peterborough County-City Health Unit / Bureau de santé de Peterborough
4. Sudbury and District Health Unit / Service de santé publique de Sudbury et du district
5. Timiskaming Health Unit / Bureau de santé de Témiskamingue
6. District of Algoma Health Unit / Santé publique Algoma
7. Chatham-Kent Health Unit / Bureau de santé de Chatham-Kent
8. Durham Regional Health Unit / Bureau de santé de Durham
9. Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit / Bureau de santé d'Haldimand-Norfolk
10. Halton Regional Health Unit / Bureau de santé de la région de Halton
11. Windsor-Essex County Health Unit / Unité sanitaire de Windsor-comté d'Essex
12. Brant County Health Unit / Bureau de santé du comté de Brant
13. Middlesex-London Health Unit / Bureau de santé de Middlesex-London
14. Porcupine Health Unit / Bureau de santé Porcupine
15. Southwestern Health Unit / Bureau de santé du Sud-Ouest
16. Huron Perth Public Health / Circonscription sanitaire de Huron et Perth
17. York Regional Health Unit (excludes Cornell clinic) / Service de santé de la région de York (à l'exclusion de la clinique du Cornell Community Centre)
18. Renfrew County and District Health Unit / Bureau de santé du comté et du district de Renfrew
19. Waterloo Health Unit / Bureau de santé de la région de Waterloo
20. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health Unit / Bureau de santé de Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph