

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: November 18, 2021

SUBJECT: Fall/Winter 2021-22 COVID-19: Health and Safety Update for Child
Care and EarlyON Child and Family Programs

Thank you 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.

The Ministry of Education (ministry) is committed to the continual review of health and safety guidance so that we can best adapt to the broader health trends. With the December break approaching, the purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the key actions that the ministry, in consultation and partnership with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH), is taking to help mitigate against any further impact on the health and well-being of children. The ministry is also taking this opportunity to communicate and reinforce existing federal protocols for international travel. These targeted measures will provide another layer of protection, particularly for unvaccinated individuals in child care settings.

Time-limited Health and Safety Measures in Child Care Settings:

To mitigate against risks associated with the colder weather and gatherings/travel over the winter holidays and to limit the number of contacts for unvaccinated populations, the ministry is implementing enhanced health and safety measures for child care settings. These will remain in place until the OCMOH recommends they be lifted.

Licensed child care centres, home child care providers, before and after school and EarlyON programs will be required to **implement daily on-site validation of the confirmation of screening prior to/upon arrival at the premises for at least two weeks following winter break for children and staff.** Early years and child care

programs and providers are encouraged to continue this practice throughout the year, or as prescribed by a local public health unit.

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](#).

Winter Break Travel Protocols:

With the holiday season approaching, it is anticipated that many staff, children and families will choose to make travel plans for the December break. As we prepare for this, we would like to remind early years and child care programs and providers to communicate to staff and families the need to follow federal directives related to international travel and quarantine requirements. By working together to share and discuss this information, we can help to ensure everyone has a healthy and safer holiday period.

Individuals must follow federal testing and quarantine requirements upon return from any international travel. Individuals over 12 years of age who are advised to quarantine or advised not to attend child care or an EarlyON Child and Family Centre program, **are not permitted to attend these programs for 14 days following their return from travel.**

While unvaccinated children under the age of 12 who travelled internationally with a fully vaccinated companion are exempt from federal quarantine, **they are not permitted to attend child care or EarlyON programs for 14 days following their return.**

Generally, individuals (staff and children) who are fully vaccinated are exempt from federal quarantine and may continue to attend child care and EarlyON programs. Individuals with all other federal quarantine exemptions (e.g., travelling for cross-border custody arrangements; travelling for medical treatment) may also continue to attend child care and EarlyON programs.

All staff, particularly unvaccinated staff considering international travel, must take into consideration federal testing and quarantine requirements for themselves and their dependents.

Vaccination represents our most effective strategy to prevent COVID-19 transmission and we are pleased to see the growing vaccination rates for staff and eligible children. While we anticipate the approval of vaccines for children aged 5-11 and the subsequent implementation of widespread vaccine campaigns as another protective measure to support safe and healthy early years and child care environments, it is important that we remain vigilant and pursue strategies that limit the spread of COVID-19 in child care settings. This is key to keeping child care open and ensuring children are in a nurturing, supportive and safe environment.

By following these requirements, we can all enjoy a safer holiday season and support the continued operation of child care and early years programs.

The ministry will continue to work with the Ministry of Health to support local public health units with the planning and prioritization of health and safety measures moving forward. We are encouraged by the progress made to date and remain committed to ensuring healthy and safe child care environments for staff, children and families.

Sincerely,

Holly Moran