



January 12, 2022

Children's Services
Social & Community Services
Department
Halton Region
690 Dorval Drive 5th Floor
Oakville ON L6K 3X9

RE: COVID-19 Updates, January 2022

Dear Service Providers,

The purpose of this memo is to provide updates on COVID-19 initiatives in child care, including school age emergency child care, N95 non-fit masks, HEPA filters and rapid antigen tests for staff and children. We will continue to update you as more information is shared from the Ministry of Education.

School Age Emergency Child Care – Additional Providers

As you are aware, emergency child care began operating on January 7, 2022 to provide care for school age children of eligible health care and frontline workers while schools are engaged in remote learning. Additional sites have been approved to meet the demand across Halton. An updated list of approved emergency child care providers is attached. Please be reminded that that other licensed child care centres are prohibited from serving school aged children who are registered in school during this time.

As announced today, schools will return to in-person learning on Monday January 17, 2022. The last day of emergency child care will be Friday January 14, 2022.

Non-Fit Tested N95 Masks

Non-fit tested N95 masks are being provided to licensed child care programs by the Ministry of Education. The requirement to wear a medical mask (e.g., surgical/procedural) remains in place and the N95 masks are being supplied as an alternative. Individuals have the option to wear the non-fit-tested N95 masks; however, the Ministry will continue to provide surgical/procedural masks to licensed child care programs should staff or providers prefer these masks. Staff should wear the mask that is the best fit.

Distribution of N95 masks is underway. Some child care centres across the province have received the non-fit-tested N95 masks and for those who have not, it is our understanding that they should be arriving soon.

HEPA Filter Units

The Province has committed to distribute 5,000 standalone HEPA filter units to the child care sector. A memo from Bofoa Kwamena, Director of the Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch was sent to centre-based operators on January 11, 2022 regarding distribution of the units. To support distribution of the units, the Ministry is requesting operators complete a survey regarding site information. Please complete the survey by Tuesday January 18, 2022. Separate communication will be provided for licensed child care home agencies.

Rapid Antigen Tests

The Ministry will be providing rapid antigen tests for the licensed child care sector. Tests will be available for staff and children. School boards will provide test kits for child care centres located in schools. Halton Region will support distribution to community-based child care. We are currently waiting information on shipping timelines, and expect test kits to arrive later this month. Once delivery dates are confirmed, we will provide detailed information for operators to pick up rapid antigen tests. The total number of rapid antigen tests for each child care operator has been determined by the Ministry of Education, based on licensed capacity and staffing levels. The Ministry of Education will provide guidance on how and when to administer the tests.

If you have questions regarding these updates, please email childcareservices@halton.ca or call Access Halton at 311 or 905-825-6000.

Thank you for your continued dedication to providing child care services for children and families in our community throughout the pandemic. We know there continues to be uncertainty and significant stress in the child care sector. We appreciate your hard work and tireless commitment in these challenging times. You are making a difference every day for children and families.

Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,



Sandy Palinski
Director, Children's Services

Attachment: Halton Region Targeted Emergency Child Care Providers

cc: Samantha Jackson, Acting Manager, Systems Planning and Evaluation
Donette Phillips, Manager, Direct Child Care Services
Catherine Wills, Manager, Children's Developmental Services