

**TO:** Child Care Licensees

**FROM:** Boafoa Kwamena  
Director  
Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch

**DATE:** February 1, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Update on COVID-19 Testing Strategy for Licensed Child Care

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As of January 21 all school boards and child care programs have received their shipments of rapid antigen tests (RAT) to create kits of two tests per staff and student/child.

### **Ongoing distribution of rapid antigen tests for symptomatic children and staff**

To support child care programs with an ongoing supply of tests, the ministry plans to begin distributing additional RATs on a bi-weekly basis. The next distribution began the week of January 24, 2022 and is expected to arrive to school boards and service system managers the week beginning January 31, 2022.

The distribution will provide an additional 3.6M RATs, in addition to the 5.2M rapid antigen tests that have already been provided for public schools/child care in 2022.

The ministry will be providing a bi-weekly replenishment that is intended to provide:

- two tests based on 30% of licensed capacity for infant, toddler, and preschool aged children
- two tests based on 30% of staff using staff to child ratio requirements

This level of test replenishment reflects current provincial supply RAT kits (containing two tests) should only be provided to children/staff when they return from an unplanned absence or dismissal at school/child care and require more tests in the event of another episode of absence.

Each kit should include two individual tests. Please see de-kitting instructions below in Appendix 1: De-Kitting Instructions.

## **Rapid antigen testing to support licensees immunization policies**

Child care programs will continue to receive rapid antigen tests to support their immunization disclosure policy which covers staff, providers and other individuals who may have regular and direct contact with staff, providers or children; however, please note that current provincial supply means that full boxes cannot be provided to these individuals.

This is based on self-reported numbers from the December survey of unvaccinated individuals in your child care program.

Child care programs are encouraged to provide individuals with enough tests to cover one to two weeks of testing at a time (i.e., three to six rapid antigen tests). This may require de-kitting of boxes in order to provide sufficient supply on a weekly/bi-weekly basis for asymptomatic screening in accordance with the immunization policy. Please see Appendix 1 for de-kitting instructions.

Shipments will be automatically delivered on a bi-weekly basis to support this testing, along with the broader supply of tests geared towards symptomatic use.

### **Where to get your rapid antigen tests**

For programs co-located with publicly funded schools, tests will be made available through the school/school board. For community-based programs, tests will be made available through the local service system manager.

Please do not reach out to your school or service system manager at this time. You will be contacted by your school board or local service system manager on how to receive your rapid antigen tests.

Please note, while school boards and local service system managers will receive deliveries on a biweekly basis, local distribution approaches may vary.

### **Updated guidance for the use of rapid antigen tests**

Please note that the Chief Medical Officer of Health has updated guidance for anyone who has had a positive test result (molecular/PCR or RAT). Individuals who receive a positive test result should not participate in antigen testing for **30 days** from their COVID-19 infection (based on the date of their symptom onset or test). After this period, symptomatic individuals can resume COVID-19 rapid antigen testing in accordance with the [Interim Guidance for Schools and Child Care during the Omicron Surge](#) .

### **First Nation Licensed Child Care Programs**

First Nation Licensed Child Care programs can access Rapid Antigen Tests through the Provincial Antigen Screening Program (PASP). The Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (IAO) is working with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to expedite and fulfill requests for tests by Indigenous communities and organizations. Access to the [Provincial Antigen Screening Program](#) is through the Ministry of Health's

website. Should you have any questions, please contact [IndigenousTestKits@ontario.ca](mailto:IndigenousTestKits@ontario.ca).

We acknowledge the important work that you are already doing to help keep child care programs open and to keep our children as safe as possible.

If you have any questions, please contact your local program advisor or the licensed child care helpdesk at [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)

Thank you once again for your continued partnership in implementing local testing initiatives to support the delivery of safe child care programs across Ontario.

Sincerely,

Boafoa Kwamena

c: Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards (CMSMs and DSSABs)

First Nations with Child Care Programs

## Appendix 1 – De-Kitting Instructions

### Equipment, Supplies Provided and De-Kitting Instructions:

- The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services will be delivering rapid antigen tests to service system managers beginning this week and service system managers will receive one of three test kits:
  - BTNX – 25 pack or 5 pack
  - BioSensor – 25 pack
  - FaStep – 20 pack
  
- Supplies contained in the boxes of tests include:
  - testing cartridge
  - swabs
  - depending on test type, either: test tubes + dispenser tip + pre-portioned ampules of buffer solution **OR** pre-filled test tube with buffer solution
  
- Schools boards/schools/ child care programs will be required to de-kit the boxes in order to distribute 2 tests per individual in alignment with the testing guidance.
  
- To make the mini kits with enough supplies for conducting two tests, please follow these instructions:
  1. If available, boards/schools/child care programs may wish to conduct the positive and negative control swabs on each new lot or shipment of rapid antigen tests for quality assurance purposes, however this step is **not required**.
  
  2. Collect two of all the necessary supplies for each kit, including:
    - Two (2) foil wrapped test cartridges
    - Two (2) packaged swabs
    - Depending on test type, either:
      - a) Two (2) prefilled test tubes with buffer solution **OR**
      - b) Two (2) test tubes + two (2) dispenser tips + two (2) pre-portioned ampules of buffer solution
  
  3. Put supplies into a small bag or another type of container.
    - Information letter to child care communities should be distributed with the kits but does not need to be included in the small bag .