

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

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

Date: January 12, 2021

Subject: **Child Care Updates**

I recognize the past few weeks have been incredibly challenging as child care and early years partners have been asked to develop and activate emergency child care plans under extremely tight timelines in order to ensure we are able to meet the unique needs of Ontario's families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to again extend my sincere appreciation for your continued efforts and patience during this unprecedented time, and your unwavering commitment to serving children and families. With your support, almost 3,000 children in the province have had access to targeted emergency child care since it was first established on January 4, 2021.

Emergency Child Care and Before and After School Programming

As you may be aware, the [Ontario government announced](#) today that students in the following public health units (PHUs) will not return to in-person instruction until February 10, 2021:

- Windsor-Essex
- Peel Region
- Toronto
- York
- Hamilton

The Chief Medical Officer of Health will make a determination on when schools will return to in-person instruction in the remaining southern Ontario public health units, and an announcement will be made by January 20, 2021.

The approach to emergency child care and before and after school programs that has been in place since early January will continue, meaning:

- Where the province is requiring elementary schools to operate remotely, before and after school programs will remain closed; these programs will continue to be prohibited from charging parent fees. Emergency child care will remain available for eligible parents of school-aged children.
- Where the province is permitting elementary schools to return to in-person instruction, emergency child care will end and before and after school programming may resume, including the charging of parent fees.

For communities where emergency child care will be ending, information about reporting and wind down will be shared with CMSMs/DSSABs and First Nations shortly.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres/First Nations-run Child and Family Programs

EarlyON Child and Family Centres/First Nations-run Child and Family Programs must continue to remain closed and may not offer indoor or outdoor in-person programming. EarlyON Centres are strongly encouraged to continue to offer virtual programming during this time.

Health and Safety Measures

To support the continued efforts to maintain health and safety in child care settings and based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ministry of Education will be identifying additional health and safety measures to protect children and staff. The ministry will be working with the Ministry of Health to update child care guidance documents with these additional measures, including enhanced screening and the introduction of asymptomatic testing in child care settings. Updated documents will follow shortly.

In the meantime, we request that child care operators continue to adhere to existing health and safety guidelines, including but not limited to the following practices:

- Daily screening of everyone before entering the premises and keeping attendance records for contact tracing;
- Practicing the proper use of masks and eye protection, proper hand hygiene and physical distancing; and
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of toys, equipment and the premises.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership as we work to keep child care safe and contribute to stopping the provincewide spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Phil Graham