

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: January 6, 2022

SUBJECT: Updates to the Ministry of Health School and Child Care
Screening Tool

We are deeply appreciative of your continued dedication and commitment in ensuring children are in a nurturing, supportive and safe environment. The purpose of this memo is to provide an update to the communication sent December 30, 2021, including information on the recent updates made to the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#).

Updated Screener

On the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, a more sensitive COVID-19 symptom list is being reinstated for daily active screening of all children and staff in schools and child care. Anyone who has symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 or is a confirmed positive case must self-isolate, regardless of vaccination status. These strengthened screening requirements are another way that we are helping to protect students, education and child care workers, and children in child care from COVID-19.

As an additional layer of protection for children and staff, child care programs are required to continue daily on-site confirmation of screening for all children and staff until further notice.

Updated testing and isolation guidelines are also reflected in the new screeners. Individuals with COVID-19 who are vaccinated, as well as children under 12, will be required to isolate for five days following the onset of symptoms. Their household contacts are also required to isolate with them.

Copies of the new screener are attached and updated versions of the screening tool will be posted on www.ontario.ca/SchoolScreening. Please ensure that staff, providers,

children and families are aware of and using the updated screener. The downloadable screening tool will be made available in multiple languages. These additional languages will be added online shortly.

Rigorous screening and monitoring of symptoms by families and staff is critical to limiting transmission and keeping child care programs safe and open. All child care programs are asked to communicate the new school and child care screener changes to staff and families.

We will continue to update the screening tool as public health guidance evolves and are committed to keeping child care partners informed of any changes. We ask that licensees/providers continue to work with local public health units to review your own screening materials to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements outlined in provincial guidance. Public health units continue to have the authority to implement additional measures based on local circumstances.

Ongoing Health and Safety Requirements

Enhanced screening is critical to reducing the spread of COVID-19 in our child care programs; however, as we adapt our pandemic response in light of the Omicron (B1.1.529) variant of concern, additional enhanced health and safety measures are necessary to keep our child care programs as healthy and safe as possible for both educators and families.

Non-fit-tested N95s for staff and providers will be delivered directly to licensed child care programs. These shipments have already processed, and programs should start to see these masks arrive in the coming days.

The Ministry also continues to explore options for expanding access to rapid antigen tests in the child care sector. Ontario currently has a limited supply of rapid antigen tests that are being prioritized for health care and highest risk settings. Please note, licensed child care programs are not eligible to order tests through the Provincial Antigen Screening Program online portal. We are working closely with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Government and Consumer Services to determine what options are available and we will share any new information with the sector as soon as it become available.

These measures supplement and build on the existing health and safety measures outlined in the [Operational Guidance for Child Care During COVID-19 Outbreak](#). An updated version of the guidance document is expected to be available online shortly.

Thank you again for your continued support and collaboration in delivering safe and high-quality licensed child care and early years programs across Ontario.

Sincerely,

Holly Moran