

Child Care and Early Learning e-Newsletter

October 21, 2020

Welcome to The Regional Municipality of Durham's Child Care and Early Learning updates e-newsletter. These newsletters are to update child care operators on a variety of topics related to the closure and re-opening of child care including recommendations and information related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Early Learning Updates – General Updates

Serious Occurrence Reporting

With enhanced Ministry Serious Occurrence (SO) reporting requirements, and an increase in testing reported, the Children's Services Division (CSD) has updated our SO reporting process in order to reduce the administrative burden to Operators.

To clarify, as of September 30 only serious occurrences that are CONFIRMED positive COVID-19 cases need to be reported to the CSD.

Operators are no longer required to report SUSPECTED cases of COVID-19 to Children's Services. Please note that the elimination of reporting only applies to suspected COVID-19 serious occurrence incidents and all other [Children's Services Serious Occurrence reporting requirements](#) must still be followed.

All existing Ministry of Education – Licensing, Serious Occurrence reporting requirements must continue to be followed.

Please remember to contact your Quality Assurance Advisor if you have any questions or concerns and for support and guidance. An updated version of the Quality Assurance Advisor caseload distribution list has been provided. For a copy of this list, please contact Beth.Carson@Durham.ca.

For further guidance, please refer to the Serious Occurrence section of the [Ministry of Education Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak - Child Care Re-Opening Version 3 – August 2020](#) for updates.

Electronic Screening Tools and Guidance

The Ministry of Health released the [COVID 19 Screening Tool for Children in School and Child Care](#) on October 1, 2020. We are aware that this tool and the guidance released with it has led to confusion and parent inquiries for many of you. While the tool is intended to be used by parents to assess whether their child has any symptoms of COVID-19 and if they are able to attend child care, the use of this screening tool does not allow operators to meet the legislative requirements for recording screening results as set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act (2014) as well as requirements dictated by the Durham Region Health Department as to when a child may return to care.

We have created new guidance documents and updated the [sample screening tools and policies](#) on our website to help you adapt the tools that you are using to continue to meet screening documentation requirements as well as requirements dictated by Durham Region Public Health.

We recognize that your organization may be using a school board/child care centre/early years specific screening tool/application or one developed by local public health partners. We ask that you align the criteria in these tools/application with the attached *COVID-19 Screening Tool for Children, Staff, and Essential Visitors in Durham Region Licensed Child Care*.

We understand that some families may be confused and frustrated with the many changes that are taking place. It is encouraged to communicate clearly with families that screening protocols, policies and Durham Public Health Department requirements are in place to keep everyone safe with the safety of their children at the forefront and that some of your policies as well as the expectations set out by Durham Region Public Health may go above and beyond what is outlined in the Ministry of Health screening.

As a reminder, you can view previous Early Learning Updates and communications on our web site under the heading [Children's Services COVID-19 early learning updates](#).

We thank you all for your continued commitment to early learning in Durham. Please contact your Quality Assurance Advisor and the Children's Services Division if you have questions. We will continue to provide information and clarification in the form of email updates and newsletters to all operators as quickly as possible. Thank you all for your cooperation and commitment to maintaining early learning and child care in Durham Region.