

Child Care and Early Learning e-Newsletter

August 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

Ministry of Education Guidance Documents

Beginning September 1, 2020, all child care centres across Ontario will be permitted to operate at full capacity. Child care centres will be able to return to maximum group sizes (i.e., licensed age groups prior to the COVID-19 outbreak) as set out under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA). EarlyON Centres will also be permitted to operate as of September 1, 2020. All programs will be required to continue following strict health and safety measures while operating at their full licensed capacity.

To support the full re-opening of child care and early years programs across the province, a memorandum to Child Care Licensees was sent on August 13, 2020, outlining a revised [Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak: Child Care Re-Opening](#) document which provides new information related to the following key changes for September (French version: [Directives opérationnelles durant la l'éclosion de COVID-19](#)). Changes have been made regarding return to full capacity, parental fees, student placements, enhanced health and safety, and EarlyON Child and Family programs.

Additional resources on the following topics have also been provided to reflect the updated health and safety measures to be in place for the fall and specific program guidance:

1. **Before- and After-School Programs:** The updated [2020-21 Before and After School Kindergarten to Grade 6 Policies and Guidelines](#) document includes COVID-19 operational guidance to support the re-opening of before- and after-school programs with enhanced health and safety procedures.
2. **EarlyON Programs:** The new [Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak: EarlyON Re-Opening](#) document provides direction to support partners with the re-opening of child and family programs.
3. **Pedagogy:** The recently-released [Building on How Does Learning Happen? Pedagogical approaches to re-opening licensed child care](#) shares ideas, reflective questions and lessons learned from emergency child care to help to support child care and early years settings to continue to meet quality and curriculum requirements as they work to provide healthy physical, social and emotional spaces for children and their families during the re-opening phase.

NOTE: Electronic copy attachments of the Child Care Operational guidance document, as well as memos to Child Care Licensees and updates on masking have been attached to the EL Updates email for easy reference.

Serious Occurrence Updates

We have received the following update from the Ministry of Education's Licensing Branch.

PLEASE NOTE: This update replaces the Ministry reporting direction sent as part of the July 31 EL Update; additional individuals and groups have been added for whom a serious occurrence is

required to be reported for due to a suspected and/or confirmed case of COVID-19 as per the recent regulatory amendments of [O. Reg 137/15](#).

Serious Occurrence Reporting - Ministry of Education Licensing branch:

A Serious Occurrence is required to be submitted under the category **“suspected/confirmed case of COVID-19”** when:

- 1) One of the following individuals has a **confirmed** case of COVID-19 **OR** a **suspected** case involving the individual exhibiting **2 or more symptoms AND** the individual has been **tested**, or has indicated that they will be tested for COVID-19:
 - i. A **child who receives child care** at a home child care premises or child care centre,
 - ii. A home child care **provider**,
 - iii. A person who is **ordinarily a resident of a home child care premises** (eg. The home provider’s child, the home provider’s spouse etc.; for complete definition please refer to the home child care licensing manual),
 - iv. A person who is **regularly at a home child care premises** (eg. The home provider’s friend who visits the premises once a week etc.; for complete definition please refer to the home child care licensing manual),
 - v. A **home child care visitor**,
 - vi. A **parent of a child** mentioned in subclause (i), or
 - vii. A **staff** member at a child care centre,
 - viii. A **student** at a home child care premises or child care centre.
- 2) Where a serious occurrence has been reported for a suspected case (as defined above) and the individual’s test results are positive, licensees must update the original serious occurrence report submitted to add this information.
- 3) Where a serious occurrence has been reported under this category and that report remains open in CCLS, should a second individual develop a suspected or confirmed case, licensees must update the existing/open serious occurrence report to add this information; i.e. new serious occurrence is NOT required to be submitted where there is an existing report that remains open. However, where a second individual develops a suspected or confirmed case and there is not an open serious occurrence report under this category, the licensee must submit a NEW report.
- 4) Please note: should the entire child care, part of the child care (i.e. a program room) or a home child care provider’s home close due to a “confirmed or suspected case” (as defined above), a separate serious occurrence for an unplanned disruption of service is NOT required to be submitted. Licensees must include this information in the Serious Occurrence report and/or update the serious occurrence report when the closure occurs.

A Serious Occurrence is required to be submitted under the category **“Unplanned Disruption of Service”**, with the sub-type of **“Other emergency relocation or temporary closure”** when:

- 1) The entire child care, part of the child care (i.e. one or some of the program rooms) or a home child care provider’s home closes for reasons that may be related to COVID-19 that do NOT include a confirmed or suspected case (as defined above). For example, where a program room closes due to an individual who is exhibiting only 1 symptom is being tested for COVID-19, a serious occurrence for an “unplanned disruption” would be reported.
 - **Please note:** A second serious occurrence under the category “suspected/confirmed case” is required to be reported should the incident develop into a “confirmed case” of COVID-19. The “unplanned disruption of service” serious occurrence will then be closed by the Program Advisor.

Serious Occurrence Reporting – Durham Region

In addition to the reporting requirements set out by the Ministry of Education, Durham Region Children’s Services Division (CSD) as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) is

supporting our local Public Health Department to track COVID-19, and therefore **DOES** require Licensees to:

- Follow local health protocols and report [symptoms of ill health to the Health Department](#) as per Outbreak management and reporting requirements follow the COVID-19 pandemic reporting protocols as established by your organization as directed by the Ministry of Education
- Report to the CSD any child care staff, children or parent who **has been** tested or has indicated that they **will be** tested according the [Serous Occurrence reporting](#) protocols
- Report all follow up testing results to the CSD

As a reminder, **all** critical serious occurrences or incidents that may result in media attention or require emergency services response, must be reported directly to the Regional Municipality of Durham, Children's Services Division. Incidents that may result in media attention or require emergency services response must be reported to Children's Services even if the Ministry of Education does not consider the incident a serious occurrence.

Durham Region's Early Learning & Child Care Virtual Town Hall

On Tuesday, August 25, 2020, a panel of experts in the early learning and child care field as well as Durham's Assistant Medical Officer of Health will answer questions surrounding COVID-19, child care reopening and how to support best practices in programming and quality child care.

The meeting will take place from 7 to 8 p.m. and can be accessed by visiting [ELCC Town Hall](#). Questions for the panel may be submitted anonymously at the following link: [Town Hall Questions](#).

GROW Newsletter – Recovery Edition

The [2020 GROW Recovery edition](#) of the newsletter is now available and can be accessed from the [Durham.ca](#) website. Check out the on-line opportunities and resources for professional learning. The Fall Edition of Grow will be coming soon.

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 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.