

Child care and early learning e-newsletter

January 09, 2021

Welcome to The Regional Municipality of Durham's Child Care and Early Learning updates e-newsletter. These special edition e-newsletters provide licensed child care operators in Durham Region with updated information related to re-opening child care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reporting COVID-19 cases in child care

If you have been notified about a positive COVID-19 case in your centre, the Durham Region [Health Department](#) must be contacted. Call the Durham Health Connect Line at 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or after hours 905-231-6524 (4:30p.m. to 8:30 a.m.):

- Messages will be responded to from Monday to Sunday, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Please leave only one message and your call will be returned in priority sequence.
- Include the following details in your message:
 - The name of your child care centre.
 - Contact name and number (weekend/weekday) for the Health Department to return your call.
 - The circumstance (be brief but clearly state if you may be in an outbreak situation).
 - Request immediate guidance if operations may be impacted (i.e., potential room or site closure).

Staff, parents and families should also be advised to call the Durham Health Connection line if they have tested positive for COVID-19 or believe they are at risk due to exposure.

Extended Response Times

The Durham Region Health Department has taken an active role in supporting Durham's child care programs to remain operational and safe. They are currently experiencing unprecedented call volumes, resulting in extended response times. Operators that have not heard back from the Health Department within a timeframe that meets operational needs should email their Quality Assurance Advisor and/or call the [Children's Services Serious Occurrence line](#). The Quality Assurance Team will assist in getting the answers needed to make informed decisions.

Room or site closures are only required if directed by Public Health.

The following Durham Region Health Department reference sheets are attached and recommended for review:

- [When a child tests positive for COVID-19: Guidance for licensed child care centres in The Regional Municipality of Durham](#). This document provides guidance on the steps for reporting a positive case. This document is also attached for print.
- [Instructions for individuals tested for COVID-19](#) . This document is also attached for print.

More information about the Novel Coronavirus is available on Durham's [website](#).

Before & After Programs and Extension of Emergency Child Care

The [Ministry of Education has extended teacher-led online learning until January 25](#). Emergency child care programs will be extended for this period. Eligibility for emergency child care has been expanded for a broader number of frontline health and safety workers.

More information about emergency child care including frequently asked questions and the emergency child care online application can be found on the [Finding Quality Child Care](#) page on durham.ca.

The Ministry of Education has placed limitations on some programs during the period when elementary schools are operating virtually:

- Licensed child care centres and authorized recreation and skill-building programs are **prohibited from serving school-aged children**. Operators with Junior/Senior Kindergarten-aged children who are not registered in school but are instead registered in licensed centres as of December 21, 2020, may continue to serve these children.
- All before and after school child care programs **must remain closed** where in-person instruction is not permitted in elementary schools. These programs may resume operation when elementary schools return to in-person learning.
- Targeted Emergency Child Care (ECC) programs established at the start of the lockdown will continue to operate. Licensees must obtain approval to operate emergency child care. Approval is received from the Ministry of Education through the CMSM (for Durham, that is the Children's Services Division). Please contact Julie Gaskin at Julie.gaskin@durham.ca for more information on providing Emergency Child Care.
- Operators of before and after school programs are prohibited from charging fees or otherwise penalizing parent during the closure period (e.g. parents must not lose their respective child care spaces).