

Child care and early learning e-newsletter

February 19, 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.

This edition includes the following topics:

Update on the Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Support for Families – Developmental Delays

Playground Inspections

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Update on the Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The process for PPE approvals has evolved with the COVID-19 pandemic. With the recent increase in community transmission of the COVID-19 variants, we have consulted with Durham Region Public Health regarding the PPE in use in child care.

The message from Durham Region Public Health is:

“With consideration of the current circumstances, PPE must be approved for the purpose for which it was designed – in this case, approved to protect against COVID-19.”

Therefore, as per Durham Region Public Health, child care staff should transition to using PPE approved by Health Canada and listed on [Authorized medical devices for uses related to COVID-19: List of authorized medical devices other than testing devices](#) when possible. Please be aware that this list is updated regularly, so save this link for future reference.

Steps to take:

- For question about the PPE your centre has received, please consult the Health Canada list noted above.
- If additional clarification is required, please contact your Public Health Inspector.
- If the PPE is not on the approved list, please contact your Ministry of Education Program Advisor to request additional approved PPE.

- If your program is running low on approved PPE, supplies may be ordered independently, and an application may be made to Children's Services for funding to cover the costs.
- For centres with no approved PPE available, please continue to use the PPE currently in stock during this transition phase and until new shipments are received. To inquire about a short-term supply, please contact Janine Keith at Janine.keith@durham.ca. Children's Services is currently working to procure a supply to support short-term needs and will share that with operators as it comes available.

Children's Services has been in contact with the Ministry of Education to inform them of Durham's Public Health decisions on approved PPE. Updates and new information will be shared as it becomes available.

Thank you for the important work you are doing for children and families in Durham.

Support for Families – Developmental Delays

The Health Department's Infant and Child Development Program and the Children's Services Division's Durham Behaviour Management Services are working together to support families with infants and young children who may have developmental delays or risk for developmental delays.

While the Infant and Child Development Program continues to help with COVID-19 related work in our community, staff from Durham Behaviour Management Services are working with families to provide support by discussing developmental goals, supporting new skill development and linking families to other appropriate programs. It is important for families to continue to be connected and supported. For more information about service and supports for families, please contact 905-668-4113 ext. 2829 or email behaviourmanagement@durham.ca.

Playground Inspections

Playground Inspections coming soon!

Quality Assurance Advisors (QAs) will be visiting centres over the next few months to complete playground inspections, touch base and answer any questions from supervisors and educators. The QAs will enter the playground while the children are using it but will not be entering centres unless it is necessary to gain entry to the playground. While on site, they will continue to practice infection prevention and control guidelines, including wearing masks and face shields/goggles.

The QAs look forward to hearing about some of the fantastic ways exceptional, safe care has been offered during these times. With permission, pictures of playground activities may be taken (with no children in the photos) to share. We know that quality programs are being offered throughout the Region, even during this pandemic! The QAs look forward to seeing playgrounds set up for learning opportunities that are easy to clean and that are safe. We know that many have incorporated sensory items that meet the current expectations for COVID-19, but we will be flexible when it comes to the sensory items provided. We look forward to seeing you in the near future!

[Durham's Playground Operating Criteria](#) can be viewed on Durham's website.

For specific questions, please contact your Quality Assurance Advisor directly.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

The Ministry of Education has provided the following update regarding COVID-19 vaccinations for child care staff:

“COVID-19 case numbers and protecting Ontario’s health system capacity are crucial priorities for the government in the vaccination distribution plan that is underway. The province has begun a phased vaccination campaign, starting with populations and groups that are at highest risk from COVID-19, and those who provide care to them. The next phase of the vaccine distribution plan will move to focus on vaccinating additional groups such as essential workers and older Ontarians.

While there are many variables associated with the immunization planning (such as vaccine supply, timing, etc.), work to-date has included child care staff as part of the “education workers” referenced in the government’s [news announcement on January 13, 2021](#). Groups eligible to receive vaccines as part of this next phase of the Ontario immunization program will include:

- Older adults, beginning with those 80 years of age and older and decreasing in five-year increments over the course of the vaccine rollout;
- Individuals living and working in high-risk congregate settings;
- Frontline essential workers (e.g., first responders, education workers, food processing industry);
- Individuals with high-risk chronic conditions and their caregivers; and
- Other populations and communities facing barriers related to the determinants of health across Ontario who are at greater COVID-19 risk.

The details of this phase are currently being finalized.”