

# Child care and early learning e-newsletter

**January 26, 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:

**Ministry of Education Memo to Operators - January 20, 2021**

**Enhanced Health and Safety Protocols - Operational Guidelines' Addendum**

**Notification of Withdrawal**

**2021 Provincial Budget Consultations**

**COVID-19 Relief Fund for Francophone Non-Profit Organizations**

## Ministry of Education Memo to Operators – January 20, 2021

As outlined in the attached memo from the Ministry of Education, the closure of schools has been extended in Durham Region until further notice. Closures are according to Regional Public Health Unit and not by school boards.

As of January 26, 2021 there has been no closure end date provided for our Region.

Emergency child care for school-aged children for eligible frontline health and safety workers will continue to operate throughout the closures at no cost to these families.

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.

Previous limitations placed by the Ministry of Education on some programs including before and after school programs remain in effect:

- 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 programs are to be closed.
- Operators of before and after school programs are prohibited from charging fees or otherwise penalizing parent during this period (e.g. parents must not lose their respective child care spaces).

These programs may resume operation when elementary schools return to in-person learning.

## Enhanced Health and Safety Protocols – Operational Guidelines' Addendum

The Ministry of Education released an addendum to the Operational Guidelines During COVID-19 Outbreak document. A copy is attached. The Addendum outlines changes to the document including enhanced health and safety protocols.

### Masking

The following masking changes are effective immediately:

- A non-medical mask or face covering is mandatory for all children in grades one and up while inside a child care setting, including in hallways. All younger children (aged two to SK) are encouraged but not required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering.
- All child care staff are required to wear medical masks outdoors when a distance of two metres cannot be maintained.
- All children in grades one and above are required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering outdoors when a distance of two metres cannot be maintained. All younger children (aged two to SK) are also encouraged but not required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering.

### Screening Requirements

The following changes are effective January 25:

- All licensees are required to validate daily self-screening for all child care centre staff, visitors and students completing post-secondary placements.
- If electronic screening is conducted at your centre, individuals must provide daily confirmation or proof that they have completed and passed the electronic screen

in a form deemed appropriate and that is accessible by the licensee **prior to or upon entry** to the child care centre or home.

Parents and guardians continue to be responsible for screening their children for symptoms of illness every day.

[Sample health and safety policies](#) are available for reference on the Durham website and will be updated to reflect these changes shortly.

## Notification of Withdrawal

Due to various circumstances around COVID-19, some operators may be experiencing withdrawal by families without the required notification according to their withdrawal policy. Please remind families of your withdrawal policy including the required notice prior to withdrawal.

If you have made recent changes to your withdrawal or break in service policy, please advise your Quality Assurance Advisor of these changes.

## 2021 Provincial Budget Consultations

The Ontario government has opened 2021 Provincial Budget consultations. Individuals and organizations can submit their opinions and ideas in several ways, including by completing an [online survey](#) or by written submission and emailing it to [submissions@ontario.ca](mailto:submissions@ontario.ca). For more information visit the [Ontario Government's website](#). Consultations remain open until February 12, 2021.

## COVID-19 Relief Fund for Francophone Non-Profit Organizations

Beginning January 25, francophone non-profit organizations can apply for financial assistance from the \$1 million COVID-19 Relief Fund. The fund, which is being administered by the *Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario*, will provide operational funding to eligible organizations to support them during the pandemic.

For more information, visit the [Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario](#) website.