

MEMORANDUM

TO: Licensed Child Care and Family Home Child Care Agencies

FROM: Denise Stone, Executive Director, Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Branch

DATE: May 10, 2021

SUBJECT: Sector Memo re Updated Guidance Document

The following high level updates have been made by Public Health to the *COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Regulated Child Care Settings (Updated May 10, 2021)*, which can be found at: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/education/#licensed-childcare>

- text box – found on the front page notes ‘temporary measures’;
- messaging has been aligned with updated and previously distributed [COVID-19 Daily Checklist](#) and [Factsheet for Child Care](#) to reflect provincial messaging around testing, including asymptomatic testing for individuals with large numbers of close contacts. This applies to both children and staff in child care settings;
- clarification that the cohort limit of 15 applies to all school-aged children in child care settings (pg.7)
- non-medical masks - this section has been updated to reflect new provincial guidance that wearing a [non-medical mask](#) is required for staff, visitors and children 2 or older when they’re in indoor childcare settings. Links are provided with additional information on exemptions to mask-wearing (pgs. 15-16)

As you know, due to the increase in case numbers, the attendance capacity of early learning and child care settings has been reduced to a maximum of 60%. As we work with centres to address reduced capacity, child care providers are encouraged to maintain cohorts for all ages to be as small and consistent as feasible. This is critically important at this time as part of our efforts to address the third wave of this pandemic.

Also, if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed to be connected to a child care setting, Public Health will do a risk assessment and will provide guidance on what happens next. If there is an exposure, there will be direct notification to the centre, staff, and families. Public Health will determine if a public notification is required. Public notices are issued only when Public Health feels that affected or exposed people cannot all be notified directly. Public Health will provide case management and contact follow-up of all COVID-19 cases. If an outbreak or exposure has

occurred at your centre, Public Health encourages families to connect directly with the centre for more information. The centre can also contact their ECD Consultant to advise of a confirmed case in the centre. Department staff will then follow up to confirm closure days and funding support information.

The Government of Nova Scotia has confirmed their commitment to keeping centres viable with emergency support funding during this third wave of the pandemic. This includes mandated closure days, reduced capacity requirements and lower attendance due to families choosing to keep their children at home.

We will continue to provide you with information as it becomes available and encourage you to reach out to our team with any questions. Thank you again for all you are doing to keep Nova Scotian children and their families safe.