

TO: Directors of Education
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

FROM: Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Education

REFERRAL TO _____
RECOMMENDED
DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED

DATE: August 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Before and After School Programs for the 2020-21 School Year

The government recognizes that before and after school programs are a critical support to parents and families. Further to Minister Lecce's announcement on July 30, effective September 1, 2020, all licensed child care and before and after school programs may operate at full capacity with standard ratios/maximum group sizes. In addition, EarlyON Child and Family Centres (EarlyON Centres) will also be permitted to reopen with in-person programming.

Enhanced health and safety measures will be in place for all programs, including but not limited to:

- grouping children and limiting interactions between groups;
- the requirement of medical masks and eye protection for all adults in the program and the requirement of non-medical or cloth masks for children in grades 4 and above;
- screening, limiting visitors, and recording attendance for contact tracing;
- developing COVID-19 health and safety protocols; and,
- enhanced cleaning.

To support the re-opening of before and after school programs, I am pleased to share the [2020-21 Before and After School Kindergarten to Grade 6 Policies and Guidelines](#).

This document has been updated and includes:

- COVID-19 operational guidance to support the re-opening of before and after school programs with enhanced health and safety procedures;
- additional factors to consider when assessing viability and demand for the reopening;
- best practices to limit interactions between groups of students when attending before and after school programs; and,
- an update to reporting information on before and after school programs to the ministry.

I am also enclosing a revised version of the [Child Care Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak](#), as well as the new [EarlyON Child and Family Centre Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak](#) to support the re-opening of EarlyON Centres.

The guidance documents have been developed to reflect the updated health and safety measures to be in place for the fall, as well as specific guidance related to each program.

A revised *Child Care Reopening – Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak* document provides updated direction on how to support the operation of child care. A highlight of those changes are outlined on page 4 of the guidance document.

The *EarlyON Re-Opening – Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak* document provides direction to support partners with the re-opening of child and family programs including:

- COVID-19 operational guidance to support operating child and family programs with enhanced health and safety procedures;
- developing policies and processes for reserving and/or registering to participate in programs and services in advance;
- the continued provision of virtual services to support families remotely;
- offering outdoor and mobile program options for families; and,
- not offering child minding and respite child care at this time.

The Ministry of Education has worked closely with the Ministry of Health in the development of these guidance documents, and they are based on updated advice from Dr. David Williams, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and the experts at the COVID-19 Command Table.

The ministry recognizes that for the operation of before and after school programs in September 2020 there are additional factors to consider in determining demand and viability in the current context. The ministry will work with you to support re-opening and meet the needs of families.

Thank you for your continued support as we move forward to the re-opening of schools, EarlyON Centres and licensed child care in the province. The ministry remains committed to working closely with all partners to support children and families and to keep everyone safe.

Thank you,

Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

c: Senior Business Officials

Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)