

High Birch Childcare & Learning Centres, Inc.



TO: Parents/Guardians/Families

FROM: Neena Ali, R.E.C.E
Owner/Childcare Operator

DATE: September 3, 2021

SUBJECT: Immunization Disclosure Policy and Health and Safety Updates

Thank you again for your continued commitment to cooperating with measures taken to support children, families, and educators in childcare and early years programs. It is because of our hard work and dedication that childcare settings have remained healthy, safe, and available for families over the past 18 months.

Immunization Disclosure Policy

Vaccination is one of the most important tools for helping stop the spread of COVID-19 and is a particularly important tool for adults working with young children who are not yet able to receive a vaccine. Promoting vaccination through a consistent provincial policy for schools and licensed childcare settings will support our children, families and communities.

Vaccinations will help create a safe environment for children, families, staff and providers, which will support the learning, development and well-being of children. High rates of vaccination in childcare is important to protect all staff, children and families who we provide care for and to help reduce the risk of outbreaks and the need for isolation or closing of programs. All vaccines delivered as part of Ontario's vaccine rollout provide high levels of effectiveness against hospitalization and death from COVID-19 and its variants, including the Delta variant. We strongly encourage you to get vaccinated if you are eligible and to consult with your doctor on your health history and review any resources that are available to you to make an informed choice about your personal health. We will support you in getting access to vaccination.

Other Health and Safety Updates

Changes are based on advice and support by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. To support those updates, amendments have been made to the COVID-19 specific rules in the childcare licensing regulation, O.Reg 137/15 under the *Child Care and Early*

Years Act, 2014.

The following regulatory changes will take effect:

- Essential volunteers are no longer prohibited in licensed childcare settings
- All childcare operators are no longer permitted to implement COVID-19 policies and protocols that prohibit parents/guardians from entering the childcare premises.

Childcare operators may continue to offer drop off and pick up procedures where parents/guardians do not enter the premises; however, if a parent/guardian wishes to enter the premises, they must be permitted to do so, unless the childcare operator is implementing a direction of a medical officer of health in respect of COVID-19. **If a parent wishes to enter the childcare centre, they must complete the Essential Visitors Screening Tool and make an appointment ahead of time indicating the reason why they would like to enter the childcare premises.**

If parents/guardians and volunteers do enter the childcare premises, childcare operators must ensure all requirements for those who enter the premises are met, including screening for symptoms of COVID-19 and maintaining up-to-date daily attendance records that include time in and time out.

Updates to Operational Guidance for Child Care and Early Years Programs

In light of the current public health environment and based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, masking requirements for childcare and early years workers have been updated.

Medical masks (surgical/procedural) are required to be worn by childcare and early years staff/providers outdoors if two metres of distance from others cannot be maintained. We recognize that children need fresh air and time outside without masks. Therefore, our staff will ensure that outdoor activities are facilitated with physical distancing. **However, children need to be compliant with the physical distancing requirements in order for us to allow them to be mask free outdoors.** Please help us in communicating this to your child and encouraging them to follow all instructions from our staff.

Eye protection is also required if a staff member/ provider comes within two metres of an unmasked individual both indoors and outdoors, as per occupational health and safety requirements. At the advice of the local public health unit, childcare operators and providers may choose to implement additional masking measures based on local circumstances.

The government will monitor the COVID-19 situation, including ongoing risks related to variants of concern (VOCs), and alignment with broader provincial guidance and direction. The ministry will continue to work with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and local public health units (PHUs) to assess key measures to inform and update provincial guidance and direction, including lifting measures when appropriate.

As always, childcare operators must comply with any direction of their local public health unit. Childcare operators may also choose to implement additional measures

based on local circumstances in consultation with local public health.

We sincerely appreciate for your support and cooperation during these unprecedented times. High Birch Childcare & Learning Centres, Inc. will continue to provide a trusted and safe environment for our children and a critical service for families and parents/guardians.