

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

INFORMATION BULLETIN, JUNE 18, 2020

FOR EDUCATIONAL CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

1- DECONFINEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL CHILDCARE ESTABLISHMENTS: EASING MEASURES ANNOUNCED

The new provisions

The new provisions, which were given the green light by the Direction générale de la santé publique (DGSP) for all educational childcare establishments in Quebec, are aimed at a return to practices that foster children's development, in a context that is safe for everyone, both children and workers. The key changes are outlined below:

- The rule requiring distancing between children and between children and staff has been revoked.
- The rule of two-metre distancing between adults is maintained.
- The mandatory wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) when two-metre distancing cannot be respected is maintained (this measure is designed to protect workers).
- Disinfection measures have been relaxed.
- Previously excluded materials and toys such as pencils, paper, scissors, puzzles, books and stuffed animals for naptime, are now permitted again, and the frequency for disinfecting the toys used within the same group has been reduced.
- Basic hygiene procedures such as brushing teeth and applying sun cream are now back in place.

Of course, the basic hygiene and cleanliness measures in facilities, such as frequent hand washing, remain in force to ensure the health and safety of the children, their families, and the childcare staff.

The work is ongoing as new knowledge emerges and the epidemiological situation evolves, and other easing measures could be introduced over the coming weeks. Tools

will be developed and distributed shortly in this regard for educational childcare establishments.

A new memory aid on best practices will soon be published by the Ministère de la Famille (MFA), in collaboration with the DGSP.

The guide produced by the Commission des normes, de l'équité et de la santé et sécurité du travail (CNESST) will also be updated early next week.

Organization of work

The bubble concept, cited for educational settings, is not well adapted to the reality of educational childcare facilities. In order to address the actual working conditions, it is suggested instead to approach the issue of the organization of work from the angle of the objectives sought:

- reduction in the number of contacts;
- stability in the groups and staff;
- traceability.

The following solutions are proposed with these objectives in mind and should be adapted to suit the realities of each childcare facility.

Managing contacts in **home childcare settings** is simple because there is only one group present and it is supervised by the same childcare providers.

In **childcare facilities**, the group concept is a standard part of organization, in accordance with the mandatory educator/child ratios of up to 10 children, depending on the age group.

Educational childcare facilities are therefore asked to **aim for stability in their groups**, for example:

- On a weekly basis (or for longer if possible), keep the **same children in the same group** as much as possible. However, new children may be integrated into the groups, provided that the prescribed ratios are not exceeded. Children are sometimes absent or may attend regularly on a part-time basis, but they should always **be part of the same group**.

- A **main educator** is associated with each group, and this person may be supported by one or more co-workers during breaks and on her fifth day of work. The important thing is to **ensure that this “team” remains as stable as possible**, and that a record be kept of all adults present with the group of children so as to facilitate investigations if outbreaks occur. Wearing PPE is also important to allow this minimal rotation and protect educators.

Arrival and departure times pose particular challenges. The basic rule of thumb is that **you should ensure stability in the staff and the children’s groups**.

- Weather permitting and if there is enough space, morning arrivals and end-of-day departures can take place outside. A bigger room can be used in some situations. Priority should also be given to **ensuring stability in the staff members who greet the children on arrival**, as they will in a sense form part of the team assigned to one or more of the groups. The staff should try to keep the usual groups of children together within this space, each in separate sections, and with a distance of at least one metre between groups.
- The children could also be grouped in different rooms by age group, depending on the layout of the premises, but always giving priority to **keeping the children in their respective groups** and ensuring stability among the staff who are in charge of the beginning and end of the day. Certain types of team games could be proposed as a way of keeping each of the groups together.

These practices are designed to minimize rotation and limit the number of adults in direct contact with the children to three or four, as well as to **avoid mixing children as much as possible** during arrival and departure times. It is understood that the groups can be reorganized as needed on a weekly basis during the summer period and to factor in the arrival of new children and family vacations.

All this requires considerable human resource planning. It may also require revising the procedures for establishing work schedules in order to minimize the rotation of educator staff within each group of children, while continuing to respect collective agreements, human resource management policies and work contracts.

Management personnel may, with the help of staff and parents, determine the best solutions for attaining these objectives so as to maximize stability among the educator staff within the groups in compliance with the applicable hygiene measures.

Staggered arrival and departures times may be agreed to with parents in order to prevent too many people from being present at the same time during these peak periods, when the parents' workplaces give them this flexibility.

2- RETURN TO NORMAL IN THE COLD ZONE ON JUNE 22, 2020

As of Monday, June 22, 2020, establishments outside the territory of the Montreal metropolitan community (CMM), the regional county municipality (RCM) of Joliette and the municipality of L'Épiphanie will be permitted to accept 100% of the maximum number of children indicated on their permit. Home childcare providers (HCPs) will be able to accept the usual number of children.

3- EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: DEADLINES AND REMINDERS OF REQUIREMENTS

Since June 8, 2019, the *Educational Childcare Regulation* (the "Regulation") has identified the essential elements that must be included in the educational program offered by each educational childcare provider.

Deadlines for complying with the requirements of the Regulation

Also since June 8, 2019, the Regulation has required that an educational program compliant with the new requirements be submitted to the MFA or a certified home childcare coordinating office (CO) respectively in order to obtain a daycare centre or childcare centre permit or to be recognized as a home childcare provider (HCP).

In addition, childcare providers who were permit holders or recognized HCPs on June 7, 2019, had until June 8, 2020 to adopt a compliant educational program, as well as 30 additional days to submit it to the MFA or a CO, as the case may be. However, in the context of the COVID-10 pandemic, the MFA suspended most of its inspection activities and recommended that the COs do the same. Therefore:

- Permit holders and HCPs who consider it impossible to meet the deadlines must contact their family services advisor or their CO to make an arrangement in this regard.
- However, such arrangements cannot be made for childcare providers whose permit or recognition is in the process of being renewed.

Reminder of the requirements regarding the educational program offered by educational childcare establishments

In concrete terms, the educational program of each childcare provider must state the means it intends to use to attain the goals defined in sections 6.9 and 6.10 of the *Educational Childcare Regulation*. These means may, for example, include:

- the organization of the premises;
- the materials chosen and how they will be used;
- interactions between educator staff and the children or parents;
- the types of experiences (varied and age-appropriate) that will be offered during the different parts of the day in the childcare facility (routines, transitions, playtime, etc.).

For more details or to find ideas for developing your program, we suggest that you consult the educational program titled *Accueillir la petite enfance*.

4- DELIVERY OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

PPE stocks are replenished in all zones at varying frequencies, depending on the geographic location or needs. Stocks are being replenished this week at all educational childcare establishments in cold and hot zones. This delivery will supply the establishments with equipment for the period from June 22 to July 5, 2020. However, for certain childcare establishments located in the Côte-Nord, Nord-du-Québec and Gaspésie – Îles-de-la-Madeleine regions, sufficient quantities are delivered to cover a slightly longer period of time.

Deliveries are made during the normal opening hours of the coordinating offices (e.g. Monday to Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).

The next delivery of PPE is scheduled to take place during the week of June 29, 2020, for use during the weeks of July 6 and July 13, 2020.

Reminders:

- Three masks per person per day are provided.
- For home childcare providers who are assisted (where services are provided to seven or more children), equipment is also provided for the assistant.

- Surplus boxes of masks are taken into account in the following deliveries.

Lastly, we wish to thank all CO personnel, whose diligent work helps protect the health and safety of the children and staff in educational childcare establishments. Distributing PPE is clearly not one of the customary tasks for either the MFA or the COs. We must therefore stress how important it is for all educational childcare establishments to follow the logistical instructions they are given (collection days and times). We also wish to remind you that the MFA determines the quantities and that this requires managing everything with the utmost rigour. This in turn makes everyone's job easier.

The Information Bulletin from the Ministère de la Famille is a publication that provides periodic information updates for educational childcare providers during the pandemic. Be sure to always consult the latest version of the Bulletin because the information on a given topic will most likely be updated as the situation evolves.

If you do not find the answers to your questions, please call the Centre des services à la clientèle et des plaintes of the MFA at the toll-free number 1-855-336-8568, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.