

August 27, 2020

Dear Parents,

Summer is winding down, and the arrival of fall is raising questions about a possible second wave of COVID-19 in Québec as elsewhere around the world.

While we were obliged to quickly shut down the educational childcare services network last March, we have used these past few months to review the lessons learned from the first wave and to draw the necessary conclusions. I would like to present some of these to you in this letter.

First, **our measures work**. Since March 13, in Québec's entire childcare services network, there have been only 123 cases of infection, including 57 children. The professionalism of our educators, the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE), and your adherence to the health-related instructions for childcare facilities played a big part in this.

Next, contrary to our practices during the first wave, if a second wave occurs, **we will not offer emergency childcare services**. Both science and experience have shown low rates of transmission among children, and we do not feel the need to limit access to childcare services as we did during the first wave.

If the Government of Québec finds itself having to confine a region, **attendance at childcare establishments in that region would then be optional**. We respect your freedom of choice and understand that some parents might prefer to keep their children at home.

However, whether or not your child is attending his or her childcare facility, **you will be required to pay your contribution**. As is currently the case, if a regional public health office orders the temporary closure of an establishment due to an outbreak, your service agreement will continue to apply. Since March 13 of this year, only 16 establishments out of 3,580 have been closed by a regional public health office. This is a very small number.

I also wish to draw your attention to the issue of symptom management. I understand how you feel because I also have a child in childcare, and I have doubts just like you do when I see a runny nose or hear bouts of coughing. In partnership with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, we have produced a self-care guide that will help you assess faster whether or not you can send your child back to his or her childcare facility.

In addition, we have provided you with a website and a telephone number where you can assess whether or not your child should be tested or can attend his or her childcare facility. From now on, you can visit Quebec.ca/decisioncovid19 or call 1-877-644-4545 to obtain answers to your questions.

If a second wave is confirmed, we will be much better prepared, knowing that our network can rise to the challenge. This is the most positive lesson I learned from the saga of this past spring.

I wish you all a great end to your summer.

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Minister of Families