

COVID-19 Winter Plan Early Learning and Childcare December 20, 2021

Questions and Answers

1. Q. What is involved with screening for symptoms at home every day?

- A. Children and staff will screen for symptoms at home every day. Children and staff presenting with one or more of the following symptoms will not be permitted to attend childcare: • fever or feverish (flushed, warm to touch) • sore throat • headache • runny nose • a new cough or worsening of a chronic cough • fatigue/exhaustion • diarrhea • muscle pain • loss of sense of smell and taste • in children, purple fingers and/or toes.

In this case, the child or staff member are only permitted to return to the facility once they receive a negative PCR result or after an isolation period of 14 days. This applies to operators of early learning and childcare homes and associated people that have contact with children during operating hours.

In the instances where a child or staff member have a known symptom that is constant and recurring, such as seasonal allergies, or are following Public Health guidance and have continued symptoms following a negative PCR, they may be able to continue to attend the child care facility and no additional COVID-19 test is required.

2. Q. When can a staff or child return to childcare if excluded for symptoms and not related to an outbreak, as defined by Public Health?

- A. The staff or child can return to childcare with a negative PCR test (excluding at home Rapid tests) and no new or worsening symptoms or after an isolation period of 14 days.

3. Q. Can a child who has one symptom do a rapid test at home and if negative, return to the facility?

- A. No, they must book an appointment for a PCR test and can only return to childcare once they receive a negative PCR test and no new or worsening symptoms or after an isolation period of 14 days.

4. Q. If staff have one symptom and a negative rapid test, can they report to work that day?

- A. No, the staff can only return to work with a negative PCR test (excluding Rapid tests (POCT)) and no new or worsening symptoms.

5. Q. Who needs to wear a mask in a facility?

A. Masks requirement are outlined in the Winter Plan.

Phase 1: Masks are required at all times for school age children and staff members (including in their own group). Masks must also be worn in common areas of the facility by children 24 months and over.

Phase 2: Masks are required at all times for children 24 months and over and staff members in all indoor areas of the facility. Staff members must wear a mask at all time. Masks are required for children 24 months and over and staff when outdoors.

Masks may be removed when resting or seated for eating or drinking.

Parents and visitors must wear a mask at all times.

6. Q. Do staff have to wear a mask at all times?

A. Masks are required at all times for staff, including in their own group. This applies to operators of early learning and childcare homes and associated people that have contact with children during operating hours.

Masks may be removed when seated for eating and drinking.

7. Q. Can children be grouped together at the beginning of the day and end of day when numbers are lower?

A. In Phase 1, It is recommended not to mix groups of children; they may be organized in smaller groups when the numbers are low at the beginning of the day and as they decrease at the end of the day. Mixed groups must not exceed the requirement for one educator. When a second educator is required, the group must be separated. Infants can never be mixed with another age groups.

In Phase 2 and 3, children will remain in their groups.

8. Q. How can school-age children be grouped if group size cannot be more than 20 children?

A. School-Age children can be organized in groups of no more than 20 children while following the group sizes and adult to child ratio set out in the *Licensing Regulation*.

For group sizes of 30 school-age children, two groups of 15 children can be divided in the same room, as long as the room dimensions allow 30 child spaces, the adult to child ratio and physical distance of two (2) metres between groups can be maintained.

9. Q. **Are employees of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (ELC licensing staff) required to show proof of vaccination or medical exemption when entering an Early Learning and Childcare facility?**
- A. No. All GNB employees must comply with the provincial vaccination requirement as of November 19, 2021. The proof of vaccination is provided to their employer.
10. Q. **Are the employees of Autism Services, Talk with Me, Family and Early Childhood required to show proof of vaccination or medical exemption when entering an Early Learning and Childcare facility?**
- A. No. All employees of these service providers must comply with the provincial vaccination requirement as of November 19, 2021. The proof of vaccination is provided to their employer.
11. Q. **Are parents allowed to enter an early learning and childcare facility?**
- A. In Phase 1, parents and guardians are permitted inside the facility. Masks are required.
- In Phase 2 and 3, parents and guardians are not permitted inside the facility unless identified as essential.
- Parents and guardians are not required to show their vaccination status to drop off or pick up their child daily.
12. Q. **Do visitors have to continue to sign a visitor's log when entering a facility?**
- A. Yes, visitors need to continue to sign a visitor's log when entering a facility, in addition to showing proof of vaccination.
- Parents entering the facility to pick up their children are not considered visitors.
13. Q. **Are students completing their practicum in an Early Learning and Childcare facility required to follow the Winter Plan?**
- A. Yes, students completing their practicum in an Early Learning and Childcare facility must comply to all guidelines of the Winter plan as they are considered staff members.
14. Q. **Does the Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Communicable Disease in Early Learning and Childcare Facilities still need to be followed?**
- A. Yes, the Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Communicable Disease in Early Learning and Childcare facilities must continue to be followed, particularly **Appendix C: Covid-19 Control and Outbreak Management in Early Learning and Childcare Facilities**.