

INFORMATION BULLETIN, NOVEMBER 6, 2020

FOR EDUCATIONAL CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

1- Financial assistance to compensate for increased needs during the pandemic

The ministère de la Famille (Ministère) will award \$50 M of financial assistance to subsidized educational childcare providers to help them comply with the public health authorities' recommendations in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This money will help cover some of the additional expenses incurred for organizational changes, cleaning and disinfection activities, or the purchase of clear-window masks if the childcare providers deem it necessary.

This financial assistance will take the form of specific allowances paid to childcare centres (CPEs), subsidized daycare centres, and home childcare providers (HCPs). The total cost of these allowances represents:

- for CPEs: \$26.8 M
- for subsidized daycares: \$13.6 M;
- for HCPs: \$9.6 M \$.

Information on the terms and conditions of payment will be provided by the end of November 2020.

Specific reporting procedures will be required to ensure that these allowances are used for their intended purpose.

2- New health instructions in response to the needs of childcare providers

Further to proposals made by the childcare services network, an agreement has been reached with the public health authorities regarding new instructions to facilitate educators' work while maintaining rigorous measures to prevent and reduce the risk of virus transmission. These new instructions have been incorporated into the INSPQ document titled *Services de garde en installation – Mesures de prévention de la COVID-19 en milieu de travail – Recommandations intérimaires* (in French only).

Some of these instructions apply to the **composition of "group bubbles."** In the context of a labour shortage and given the number of hours of service guaranteed daily by childcare establishments, it is sometimes difficult for them to respect group bubbles at arrival and departure times. The following instructions are designed to make it easier for them to manage and maintain these bubbles, particularly during the 6:30-8:30 a.m. and 4:00-6:00 p.m. periods.

- *When it is impossible to maintain the group bubbles at arrival and departure times, two group bubbles and their educators may merge into one bigger group. This bigger group should always include the same children and the same educators. Ideally, the group should never have more than 15 children. A record of all people in the group (children and educators) should be kept for easier contact tracing.*

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Regarding **staff assignments**, the public health authorities stress the importance of prioritizing stability and of avoiding assigning the same staff member to more than one area so as to minimize the risk of outbreaks associated with this practice. However, if, despite the use of other methods (reducing hours, creating a bigger group bubble, etc.), the suspension of services becomes inevitable in a facility, the use of an external resource could be envisaged as a last resort, subject to the following conditions:

- *Limit to two the number of facilities frequented by the same person.*
- *If the person is an educator, make sure that she or he is assigned to only one group bubble per facility and not assigned to a bigger group bubble.*
- *Due to the increased number of contacts involved, educators assigned to a second facility must be doubly rigorous about following all prevention measures, as well as wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) whenever the required minimum distance of two metres cannot be respected.*

Other instructions apply regarding **parents' access to the premises**. During the morning arrival times, as parents are often present in the cloakrooms to remove their children's outdoor clothing, it is recommended that guidelines be established to manage their presence. Some are provided here:

- *Limit the number of parents/siblings present at the same time inside the childcare facility according to the physical space available. Physical distancing of at least two metres must be possible and maintained at all times.*
- *Limit the parents' presence in the cloakrooms to 10 minutes.*
- *Plan safe routes, one way if possible, using both signs that promote physical distancing when people are moving around and floor markings.*
- *Make sure that parents and visitors wear medical-type masks or face coverings at all times.*
- *Ensure, if possible, that the mechanical ventilation system is on and that windows are open.*

Regarding the instructions already being followed, the updated INSPQ document includes some reminders, notably about **wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)**:

- *Staff members must wear PPE whenever the required distance of two metres cannot be respected between them and the children or between them and other adults, whether inside or outside the childcare facility. This also applies when educators are on break or in the staff room.*
- *It is recommended that high-quality medical (procedure) masks be worn when co-workers are less than two metres apart during interactions (always prioritize physical distancing between co-workers). If some co-workers are not wearing procedure masks, protective eyewear must be worn in addition to a procedure mask.*

- *It is important for educators to continue to rock, cuddle, comfort and hold children in their arms and to talk to them close up when needed. Wearing PPE helps minimize the risk of transmission in the event that a child or educator has COVID-19.*
- *Medical (procedure) masks are effective provided they are dry. They must be changed as soon as they become damp or dirty or at least every four hours.*

This INSPQ publication is available at the following address:

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2984-travailleuses-services-garde-covid19>

3- Budgetary rules for the 2020-2021 fiscal year

The budgetary rules and occupancy rules applicable to CPEs, subsidized daycare centres, the coordinating offices (COs) of home childcare providers and home childcare providers (HCPs), as well as the budgetary rules for the *Programme de financement des infrastructures* (PFI, or infrastructure funding program) for CPEs for fiscal 2020-2021 have been approved by the Conseil du trésor. They contain a number of tax relief and indexation provisions:

- Application of the optimization provision for the attendance threshold is suspended for fiscal 2020-2021 to take into account the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The eligibility criterion for the *Allocation pour la garde à horaires non usuels* (allowance for non-standard childcare hours), i.e. the requirement of an occupancy rate of 110%, does not apply for fiscal 2020-2021.
- Adjustments have been made mainly concerning the funding scales:
 - Most of the non-salary expenditures have been indexed at a rate of 2.11%.
 - The portion pertaining to food has been indexed at a rate of 4% to encourage local buying. For more information about local buying, you may refer to the [Stratégie nationale d'achat d'aliments québécois : pour une alimentation locale dans les institutions publiques](#).

You may also wish to consult the [Répertoire des aliments québécois](#).

- With regard to the PFI, the “purchase-construction” envelope has been increased by 4.14% to account for the rise in prices in the construction sector. The furniture-equipment and “outdoor play” envelopes have been increased by 2.11% to account for the variation in the 2019 consumer price index in Québec.
- In the absence of collective agreements for HCPs and of collective agreements for childcare workers, the scales for the majority of the allowances remain unchanged.
- The budgetary rules and occupancy rules for fiscal 2020-2021 are available on the Ministère’s [website](#):

[Centre de la petite enfance et garderies](#)

[Bureaux coordonnateurs de la garde en milieu familial](#)

Cadre de référence – MES

4- Update on health, safety, and well-being compliance inspections

The Ministère is continuing its inspection activities to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children using the childcare services network. To ease the burden of on-site inspections in facilities, it will be proposed to them that part of the verifications be carried out remotely (administrative verifications). Also, follow-up of certain breaches identified during inspection may be carried out by telephone. All in-person inspections are carried out in within the framework of protocols put in place in collaboration with the public health authorities in the context of the pandemic (notably, using personal protective equipment and disinfecting hands).

5- Update on the instructions applicable during a promotion to a managerial position or during a subsequent promotion to another managerial position

Further to the agreement reached between the Ministère, the Association des cadres des centres de la petite enfance, the Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance and the Conseil québécois des services éducatifs à la petite enfance, the Ministère developed a Guideline simplifying the instructions applicable during a promotion to a managerial position or during a subsequent promotion to another managerial position, as well as the related frequently asked questions (FAQs).

A new version of the Guideline simplifying the [instructions applicable during a promotion to a managerial position or during a subsequent promotion to another managerial position](#), and of the related [FAQs](#), is now available on the Ministère's [website](#).

For additional information, please communicate with the family services advisor responsible for your region.

6- Publication of a special “COVID-19” issue of the *Bye-Bye les microbes !* newsletter

The Ministère wishes to inform you that a new issue of the [Bye-Bye les microbes!](#) newsletter has been published. Prepared exceptionally at the Institut national de santé publique du Québec, this issue is dedicated to COVID-19 in children and to the health surveillance measures implemented in the childcare services network to prevent and control possible outbreaks.

The Information Bulletin from the Ministère 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.