

# INFORMATION BULLETIN

April 5, 2023

## TO EDUCATIONAL CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

### **The last COVID-19 bulletin**

In November 2022, the public health authorities adopted a new approach to the prevention of COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases and ended the mandatory five-day self-isolation period for people with COVID-19 symptoms.

Now that the health situation has improved and the public health authorities have moved forward with a new syndromic approach, there is no longer a need for regular COVID-19 bulletins. Before terminating this publication, however, we would like to review some of the topics addressed over the last three years. In addition, please be assured that the Ministère will continue to monitor information on the COVID-19 pandemic and will circulate any news that concerns you.

### **Masks and other personal protective equipment (PPI)**

Since the health emergency ended, the principal government departments and agencies responsible for managing personal protective equipment – the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS), the Agence du Revenu du Québec (RQ) and the Centre d'acquisition gouvernementale (CAG) – have gradually resumed their pre-pandemic activities and the provincial PPI inventory is now reserved exclusively for institutions in the health and social services network.

The situation has therefore returned to normal. Given that the demand for PPI from childcare establishments has declined significantly in recent months, each individual establishment will now be responsible for purchasing its own procedural masks and PPI, and must cover the cost from its operating budget.

### **Distribution of rapid test kits to childcare establishments**

The MSSS will continue to provide the childcare network with rapid test kits. There are currently no plans to change the kit distribution procedure.

## **New approach for COVID-19 testing at designated screening centres**

As a result of the new preventive approach published by the public health authorities, the MSSS has changed its COVID-19 testing procedure at designated screening centres to focus on the people for whom the virus may have more serious impacts, such as health sector workers, health and social service network users and people who meet the vulnerability criteria.

Since December 2022, all other individuals who used to have access to COVID-19 screening because of their jobs have been removed from the priority list. They include childcare personnel, as well as school staff members, police officers, firefighters and National Assembly security personnel.

The web page entitled [Getting a COVID-19 test](#) was updated in early December 2022 and the appointment page on the [Clic Santé](#) website now displays the new priority list.

## **COVID-19 vaccination for children between 6 months and 4 years of age**

The COVID-19 vaccine has been available to children between 6 months and 4 years of age since July 25, 2022. Parents can book appointments via Clic Santé. It is up to parents to learn about the benefits and potential risks of vaccination, and to make an informed decision. Regardless of whether or not a parent agrees to vaccinate their child, the decision must be respected. The child's vaccine status must remain confidential and must not result in differential treatment.

The [COVID-19 Vaccination](#) page on the Quebec.ca website provides useful information on vaccinations for children and adults.

## **Provincial monitoring of absences in childcare establishments**

Absences due to flu-like syndromes or symptoms of COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases are being monitored to verify the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases in Québec's network of childcare establishments. Among other things, the monitoring process is used to estimate the number of children presenting one or more symptoms of COVID-19 or other respiratory diseases.

Over the months, childcare establishments in different regions have been invited to take part in the monitoring process on a voluntary basis. The INSPQ uses the data collected to produce a monthly [bulletin](#) (in French only) reporting on the latest trends.

A survey was sent out to participants in the monitoring process between February 23 and March 23 last, to assess the system's performance, verify the participants' experience and identify barriers to or facilitators of participation. The main findings from the survey will be presented during a webinar

organized by the INSPQ for educational childcare providers, on Wednesday, April 19, from 1.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. The childcare establishments concerned will receive their invitations shortly.

### **Key public health messages and resources for childcare establishments**

The following recommendations continue to apply for childcare staff and children who attend childcare establishments:

- Stay at home if you have a fever.
- Children may return to childcare when they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of anti-fever medication.
- If you have symptoms but no fever, you may resume your activities at the childcare establishment.
- A staff member with symptoms (cough, sore throat, stuffy nose) must wear a mask.
- Educators are invited to wear masks when caring for sick children.

Please see [Educational childcare services in the context of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory infections](#) for instructions on what to do when a child or staff member exhibits symptoms of a viral respiratory infection.

The web page [Steps for limiting the spread of respiratory infectious diseases](#) also presents information that will help you to protect yourself and take care of others.

Lastly, please see the [COVID-19 Toolkit](#) for information on the steps to be taken by employers in the context of COVID-19.

This Bulletin provides periodic information updates for educational childcare providers during the pandemic. Be sure always to 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 on these websites, please call the Ministère's *Centre des services à la clientèle et des plaintes* at the toll-free number 1-855-336-8568, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.