

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

INFORMATION BULLETIN, MARCH 2, 2021

TO EDUCATIONAL CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

1- Clarification on the 24-hour observation period for assessing symptoms in children 6 months to 5 years of age

In the February 25 information bulletin, we set out the new guidelines in effect in all regions concerning isolation and the requirement to have a screening test.

These new guidelines state that a person who has COVID-19 symptoms must self-isolate and undergo a screening test. If this person lives with others, all members of the household must self-isolate even if they do not have symptoms until the symptomatic person's test result is received. They must then follow the instructions they are given.

It is important to note that for children 6 months* to 5 years of age, the 24-hour at-home observation period is still required before making the appropriate decision.

A child under the age of 5 who is the only member of the family or the residence with symptoms should be kept home and the symptoms should be observed for 24 hours before recommending everyone's isolation and having the child tested. A blocked nose and a runny nose, without other symptoms, ARE STILL NOT an indication that the child should be tested immediately or kept out of the childcare facility for a longer time. If, after the 24-hour observation period, there are no other symptoms, the child can return to the facility with no other guideline.

*Parents of a child under the age of 6 months who has symptoms should call 811 to confirm the appropriate care.

2- Regional instructions and COVID-19 bulletins issued by the Ministry of Families

We remind you that the Ministry issues as promptly as possible the Québec-wide COVID-19 instructions and information received from the Director of Public Health of the Ministry of Health and Social Services. For their part, the regional integrated health and social services centres (CISSS) and integrated university health and social services centres (CIUSSS) also issue regional-level tools and specific instructions. These instructions and tools may sometimes differ from region to region. It is important that you refer to them.

At the Québec-wide level, when the tools available on the Québec.ca site are updated, we will inform you.

3- The importance of continuing adequate cleaning and disinfection measures

The Committee for the prevention of infections in Québec childcares and schools (CPISEQ) reminds us that during this exceptional period, continuing rigorous cleaning and disinfection measures in the childcare facility is especially important in order to avoid the spreading of germs. Maintenance must be adapted to the transmission risks, the characteristics of the spaces and surfaces and the available means.

What to do with objects that cannot be cleaned or disinfected and are shared between groups of children? The current guidelines, as per the CPISEQ, call for objects shared between groups to be cleaned and disinfected after each use by a group before being used by another group. But *what should be done when it is not possible to clean and disinfect objects or parts of objects to be used with different groups of children?* Québec's institute of public health (INSPQ) recommends removing these objects and storing them or quarantining them so that the virus eliminates itself naturally or loses its infectious power. There are rare possible exceptions to this guideline, such as when the objects are handled only by hand in a strictly adult environment. The CPISEQ specifies that rigorous hand hygiene is then required.

For the principal instructions concerning cleaning and disinfection in childcare facilities, please refer to the INSPQ publication "Childcare facilities: COVID-19 preventive measures in the workplace", pages 10-12: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2984-travailleuses-services-garde-covid19>

We also invite you to consult the latest update of the INSPQ's "COVID-19: Cleaning and Disinfection of Surfaces" available at <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/3054-nettoyage-desinfection-surfaces-covid19>

The Information Bulletin 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 on these websites, please call the Ministry's Direction de l'amélioration des services à la clientèle et de la gestion des plaintes at the toll-free number 1-855-336-8568 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.