

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

INFORMATION BULLETIN, NOVEMBER 30, 2020

FOR SUBSIDIZED EDUCATIONAL CHILDCARE PROVIDERS (CHILDCARE CENTRES, SUBSIDIZED DAYCARE CENTRES, SUBSIDIZED HOME CHILDCARE PROVIDERS)

1. Composition of group bubbles during the holidays

Childcare facilities are wondering whether they will have to apply special recommendations regarding the composition of group bubbles during the holiday period. Since there will be far fewer children present at a childcare facility, could they all be put into the same group? And if so, what conditions would have to be respected? We put this question to the Direction générale de la santé publique. Given that childcare attendance will be greatly reduced during this period, the public health authorities consider that the risk associated with moving from one bubble to another at the beginning and end of the holiday period is minimal. It therefore does not object to new bubbles being formed temporarily and to children previously in different groups being grouped together during this period.

As it will almost certainly not be the same groups of children or the same educators who will be present during this two-week period, it will remain very important to rigorously follow the health instructions (physical distancing, wearing personal protective equipment, disinfecting, applying measures regarding visitors, etc.).

2. Management of closing days during the holiday period

During the holiday season, which runs from December 22, 2020 to January 4, 2021, educational childcare providers decide their own closing days. This decision takes into account parents' childcare needs during this period.

Educational childcare providers may postpone some of the closing days provided for in their subsidy agreement if they offered emergency childcare services on Good Friday, Easter Monday or the Fête des Patriotes (National Patriot's Day) when they would otherwise have been closed. For example, if these three closing days were included in their subsidy agreement but they offered emergency childcare services, they may postpone these three days to somewhere between Christmas and New Year's Day without amending their subsidy agreement in order to give their staff a longer rest period.

Childcare facilities must inform parents about any changes to the closing days provided for in their subsidy agreement as soon as the dates are determined and at least ten (10) days prior to each closing day.

This information does not require signing amended service agreements.

In addition, the closing days provided for in the subsidy agreement during the emergency childcare services period and the gradual re-opening – that is, from April 1, 2020 to June 21, 2020 (in cold zones) and to July 12 (in hot zones) – on which emergency childcare services were in fact offered, may be postponed to the holiday period without amending the subsidy agreement.

If a childcare facility was open on a closing day previously scheduled in its subsidy agreement, it must use codes “P” or “A,” depending on whether children were present or absent.

3. Extension of Operation Jetravaille

The massive operation of posting job vacancies on the Jetravaille job board of the ministère du Travail, de l’Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MTESS) will continue until **December 11**.

Remember that this initiative will support a number of the ministère de la Famille’s projects designed to ensure that the workforce you need is available to work in your childcare facilities.

You are therefore encouraged to participate en masse in this initiative by reporting your workforce needs, regardless of what they are (educators, maintenance workers, kitchen staff, etc.).

A letter from the Minister on this topic is enclosed with this information bulletin.

Jetravaille! job board: <https://emplois.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/loginunique/fr/connexion>

4. Use of masks during the winter season

When consulted about this issue, the Direction générale de la santé publique confirmed that the same health instructions will apply this winter, particularly those regarding the wearing of personal protective equipment. However, given that winter conditions risk affecting mask comfort and efficacy, masks may have to be changed more frequently. On extremely cold days, masks can be covered with a scarf, provided that there is no condensation that turns into ice. When going outdoors, wearing protective eyewear may be a more comfortable alternative to wearing a visor.

Lastly, wearing PPE outdoors will likely be more problematic when temperatures are extremely low (-20 degrees Celsius, for example), that is, periods when the children are not usually taken outside.

It should be noted that when calculations were made for the quantities of masks to be delivered in November 2020, they did not factor in the planned December closing days. Childcare facilities should thus have extra masks on hand.

5. Reminder of the health instructions

As indicated in the email message sent to you on November 20, 2020, it is important to be doubly rigorous about monitoring for symptoms and applying health measures. The childcare services network has a good track record so far, but the health situation remains fragile. We encourage you to refresh your knowledge of the publication produced by the Direction régionale de la santé de publique de Montréal. It provides useful information about the causes of transmission in childcare facilities. This document was sent to you on November 20.

In addition, the updated version of the INSPQ document titled *Services de garde en installation : mesures de prévention de la COVID-19 en milieu de travail* includes the following reminders:

- Staff members must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) whenever the required distance of two metres cannot be respected between themselves and the children or between themselves 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 (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>

The Information Bulletin from the Ministère de la Famille 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.