

INFORMATION BULLETIN

2 December 2021

TO EDUCATIONAL CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

Rollout of rapid COVID-19 tests for the entire educational childcare services network

To provide parents with a new tool to prevent infections and outbreaks, starting today, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) will be rolling out rapid COVID-19 tests (BTNX antigen tests) for the entire network.

Educational childcare centres will be required to provide all parents whose child over one year of age has developed symptoms resembling COVID-19 during the day with a test kit so they can do a rapid test (self-test) at home. If the result is positive, the persons concerned must go to a designated testing centre in their region to have the diagnosis confirmed by a lab test (a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT)). It should be noted that daycare centre employees are not authorized to administer the test themselves, even with parental consent.

The result of the rapid test is available within a few minutes and can quickly indicate whether a person is infected. However, the results of these tests are less reliable than the tests usually performed in a lab. That is why the positive result must be confirmed by a lab test. Rapid tests are an additional measure implemented by the childcare network and are also very useful in facilitating early COVID-19 detection. It is also important to point out that rapid tests are not very reliable when used by a doubly vaccinated person, which is why they are mainly being used on children under five years of age, since to date, no vaccines have been approved for this age group.

Where, when and how to get the rapid tests?

The test kits will be available for educational childcare centres starting today. The method used for test distribution will differ from one administrative region to the other. **Early childhood education centres, daycare centres and home childcare coordinating offices (CO) may go to the following website: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/testing-for-covid-19>** and click on the page “Rapid testing in educational childcare services (COVID-19)” **To find out how to obtain initial and subsequent test kits in their region.**

In some regions, the first supply of rapid tests will be delivered directly to the daycare centres, while in other regions, the test kits will need to be picked up at a centre designated by their regional CISSS or CIUSSS. The contact information and opening hours for each designated centre is indicated on each region's web page. The number of kits provided in the first delivery will be determined by the CISSS and CIUSSS but, in most cases, will be less than the total number of places in the daycare centre. A reminder that the kits are not intended to be given to all parents, just the parents of a child over one year of age who has developed symptoms resembling COVID-19.

Restocking of the tests will also be carried out in various ways specific to each region and to the average needs of each childcare centre.

It should be noted that the Ministère de la Famille has provided the MSSS with the list of educational childcare centres and the home childcare coordinating offices (CO) for each region, specifying the number of places.

Each delivery centre will keep a record of orders with the names and contact information of the daycare centres, as well as the number of kits provided for each centre and the date they were provided. **Since the delivery centres are located in facilities affiliated with the health network, the individuals who pick up the test kits must have a valid vaccine passport.**

Methods applicable to home childcare providers

The home childcare coordinating offices (CO) will receive test kits and ensure that they are distributed to the home childcare centres. Additional information on rollout for each region is available for the CO on the website <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/testing-for-covid-19>

Questions about administering the tests?

The educational childcare centres must refer parents to the website <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/testing-for-covid-19> if they have any questions about administering the test and what to do depending on the results of the test. All information and instruction necessary to administer the test (including video clips) will be available on this website as of **6 December 2021**.

For all questions about distribution, the educational childcare centres may consult their regional CISSS and CIUSSS whose contact information may be found on the website <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/testing-for-covid-19>.

Important reminder: COVID-19 test results are confidential information and therefore, the educational childcare centres may not demand proof of a negative result for a child as a requirement for returning to the childcare centre.

Rapid tests are another tool in our toolbox to reduce the risk of breakouts and avoid childcare centre closings and should be used in addition to the other preventive measures implemented in the childcare centres.

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 on these websites, please call the Ministère'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.