

To: Licensed Child Care Service Providers

From: Darlene Edgar, RECE
Director, Niagara Region Children's Services

Date: July 23, 2020

Re: Revised MEDU Operational Guidance and
Fee Subsidy for Children of Kindergarten Age Policy

On July 22, 2020, the Ministry of Education (MEDU) released the revised version of the *Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak* resource. The resource has been revised to reflect the change in cohort size in child care centres effective July 27, 2020, as well as other changes in consultation with the Ministry of Health and with the sector.

The revisions and updated information are based on the advice from Dr. David Williams, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and the experts at the COVID-19 Command Table. Please note that key changes are listed upfront in the guidance document and include:

- Increased cohort size for child care centres from up to 10 individuals per room to up to 15 children plus staff per room as of July 27, 2020;
- Revised guidance on how screening must be conducted;
- Revised guidance related to testing for COVID-19;
- Revised protocols for when an individual shows symptoms or becomes sick; and,
- Revised language about physical barriers between cohorts.

If your agency/organization has not already done so, please update your new capacities based on the guidance resource and report back to Jackie Galloway, Supervisor, Early Years and Child Care Services, at Jackie.galloway@niagararegion.ca

As you look toward the fall and make plans for the placement of children into care, please note the Children's Services *Fee Subsidy for Children of Kindergarten Age Policy*, attached for your reference. This policy states that children who are eligible to attend publicly funded kindergarten (children who will turn 4 years by December 31 of the current calendar year) will only receive fee subsidy for non-instructional times and days (before and after school care, PD days, March Break, etc.). Licensed child care spaces will continue to be limited for the foreseeable future, and it is important that preschool children and their families are supported in obtaining a child care space.

At this time, Niagara Region Children's Services is awaiting the Ministry of Education confirmed local school board plans for the upcoming school year. Once we have received the confirmed plans, licensed child care service providers will be contacted to discuss the plans and develop strategies to best support children in care.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darlene Edgar RECE".

Darlene Edgar, RECE
Director