

Letter to Parent Template

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for continuing to follow the public health and safety measures that have kept early years and child care programs open and safe. It is our collective effort that continues to ensure your children can learn with their friends in our program.

On April 7, 2021, the government announced a province-wide Stay-at-Home order starting April 8th for at least four weeks until May 6th in response to worsening trends in key community health indicators across the province.

During this period, child care and before and after school programs will remain open to support families. EarlyON Child and Family Centres may not offer in-person programming during this period, but may continue offering virtual programming during this time. Day camps will also be closed for this period.

As we head into this time-limited government action, we want to take the opportunity to highlight the importance of continuing to follow public health and safety protocols in child care settings and in your day-to-day activities. With spring break and the nicer weather around the corner, it is more important than ever that we continue to follow public health advice and do our part to keep COVID-19 from spreading in our communities.

At this critical point in the pandemic, here are some public health measures, intended to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, that we ask you to continue to follow if your children are attending early years and child care programs:

- Screening every day, including during spring break, for COVID-19 symptoms before attending child care. (The COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool is available to assist families with symptom screening);
- Practicing good hand hygiene habits throughout the day;
- Practicing physical distancing;
- Providing a non-medical mask or face covering for your child to wear each day (masking is mandatory for all children in grades 1 and above, and recommended for children age 2 to senior kindergarten); and
- Avoiding sharing objects, toys, food, water bottles or other personal items.

Strictly following these public health measures is of the utmost importance in ensuring schools and child care settings stay open and safe during the province-wide Stay-at-Home order.

Outside of child care settings, we encourage families to continue to:

- Socialize with your own household.

- Activities or playdates with those outside your household should be held outdoors and limited to no more than five people, with physical distancing and masking where distancing is not possible.
- Stay home and get tested if you feel ill.
- Refrain from travelling.
- Refer to [Ontario.ca/covidresponse](https://ontario.ca/covidresponse) to learn what public health measures are in place in our community based on the COVID-19 response framework. We also suggest checking out [Niagara Region Public Health](https://www.niagara.ca/niagara-region-public-health) website as it may also have helpful resources and supports.

For the week of April 12-18, pharmacies that currently offer testing and assessment centres across the province will accept appointments for children attending child care and child care staff for asymptomatic testing. The Ministry of Education will be working with school boards to offer school-based clinics. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of this testing capacity to have their children tested to support a safe return to school on April 19 and continued safe operation of child care.

Please stay at home as much as possible and continue following the direction of public health officials so that we can keep schools and early years and child care programs open.

If you have any questions, please let me know. Thank you for your efforts in these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

Director/Supervisor