

MEMORANDUM

TO: Licensed Child Care and Family Home Child Care Agencies

FROM: Denise Stone, Executive Director, Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Branch

DATE: April 27, 2021

SUBJECT: **Important wave 3 update.**

Child Care is an important support for Nova Scotians as we work together to once again battle COVID-19 across our province. Health Care workers and others critical to helping us all through this wave, need the support of the sector so we can all emerge strong and together. We know that this is stressful, but we also know that our Childcare sector will play this important role at this point in our province.

As Nova Scotia addresses child care in wave 3 of the COVID-19 pandemic, regulated child care, including family home child care providers operating under a Family Home Child Care Agency, will remain open for families who require care for their child/ren. When possible, available spaces in regulated child care will be directed to health care and other essential workers who require child care in order to do their work on behalf of Nova Scotians. We are providing contact information for those who need care and will connect them with centres in their area of choice and encourage you to say 'yes' to those who approach you.

However, there may be situations when a child care centre may need to close because of a positive case/exposure. In the event of a full or partial closure, parents will not be charged fees for the closure, and emergency operational and staff funding will be provided to ensure the centre is viable and ready to fully reopen when it is safe to do so. Centres and agencies will continue to receive their normal grants and subsidy installments uninterrupted.

In order to manage staffing pressures (i.e. staff are required to self-isolate or wait for a COVID-19 result and/or substitute staff cannot be found), centres will work with families to reduce attendance, if viable for families to do so until staffing returns to normal. Centres (on a case-by-case basis) will ask families if they can withdraw care for a period of time to support Child Care during this phase of the pandemic. In these cases, staff will continue to be paid by the centre, families will not be charged, and will not lose their space.

Public Health, EECD and centres will be working hard to ensure families receive accurate and clear information. Please understand that for reasons of confidentiality and privacy, EECD will not announce the list of centre closures unless deemed necessary for public safety. EECD will continue to provide emergency funding support to centres when it is necessary to do so. However, in order to ensure care is available for families, regulated child care centres who receive funding and subsidy, will not be eligible to receive this funding if they voluntarily/independently close i.e. are not providing a service to families.

We also ask that you continue your diligence with the following:

- use of the Daily Checklist by families and all staff found at: [Daily-COVID-checklist-en.pdf \(novascotia.ca\)](#);
- review plans for 'Cohort Grouping' (see page 6 - Guidance document);
- continue to practice proper use of non-medical masks, handwashing procedures and social distancing when/where possible; and **please note that,**
- **children age 2-4 years must wear a mask, however any child who cannot or won't wear a mask, will not be made to wear one.**

We know that you want to do your part, and our goal is to support centres, staff and families through this challenging time. We ask for your continued calm and trust in the information and direction you are being provided. We all want to ensure that children and those who care for them are kept safe.

We will be updating you as information becomes available. Please continue to visit the Nova Scotia link to COVID-19 information at: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada](#), and continue to use the guidance document created with your input, by Public Health – *COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings* found at [COVID-19-Childcare-setting-guidance.pdf \(novascotia.ca\)](#)