

**TO:** Child Care Licensees

**FROM:** Phil Graham, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Early Years and Child Care Division

**DATE:** October 28, 2021

**SUBJECT:** **Update on Rapid Antigen Testing**

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Thank you for your continued work in the implementation of the mandatory immunization disclosure policy announced by the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) on August 17, 2021. This memo provides an update on rapid antigen testing for licensed child care.

As you are aware, instructions issued by the CMOH required all child care programs to have a COVID-19 vaccination disclosure policy in place and fully implemented by September 27, 2021, that requires individuals to provide proof of:

1. Full vaccination against COVID-19; or,
2. A documented medical exemption; or,
3. Participation in an educational session on the benefits of COVID-19 immunization.

Individuals subject to the policy who do not show proof of vaccination must undergo rapid antigen testing on a regular basis (Please note, testing is optional for licensed child care operating on-reserve).

As of November 10, 2021, individuals subject to testing requirements **must now provide verification of negative test results three times per week** as an added measure to protect from the risk of COVID-19. We ask that you share this requirement with all affected staff immediately.

For individuals who are covered by the licensee's immunization disclosure policy but are less frequently in direct contact with children and/or staff, frequent testing may not be possible or reasonable (e.g. supply staff). In these cases, the individual must complete a rapid antigen test as part of screening and demonstrate a negative test result prior to entering the premises.

As a reminder, child care programs are required to have a verification and reporting system in place per the Letter of Instructions. Licensees accessing rapid antigen tests through a local chamber of commerce must report information to their local chamber.

Licensees that pick up their rapid antigen tests at a school or have them directly delivered must report information to the Ministry of Health through their Health Data Collection Service or by using the Thrive Health App.

For child care programs that would like to use the Thrive Health app, please register your program via the CDL registration [link](#). As part of the onboarding and set-up process, once registered CDL will provide a link to attend a kick-off webinar in the language you registered in. Please connect with CDL directly if you have any questions.

Ontario will agree to indemnify licensees to the extent that liability is incurred under the indemnity provisions<sup>1</sup> in the letters of agreement entered into by the licensee with CDL RSC and Thrive Health Inc.

For information on how licensees may secure an indemnification from Ontario related to the use of the Thrive Health, please contact Licensed Child Care Helpdesk at [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca).

Those child care programs receiving rapid antigen tests through direct delivery or through the school board that do not use Thrive will receive a Welcome Package from the Ministry of Health and then be onboarded to the Health Data Collection Service, to submit their data directly to the Ministry of Health.

### Access to Rapid Antigen Tests

To support rapid antigen screening for unvaccinated staff, the ministry recently requested information from licensees on their rapid test needs to inform future orders. Licensees who did not respond or indicated that they did not require tests will not be in receipt of tests from the ministry and will need to secure tests through an alternate method should they need tests.

To ensure expedient access to rapid antigen tests, the ministry is also in the process of reviewing the delivery approach assigned to licensees. Further information regarding your program's delivery method and next shipment will be provided to you shortly.

The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that children and staff have the best protection against COVID-19. As outlined in the ministry's guidance, child care licensees are responsible for ensuring their compliance with the instructions issued by the CMOH. Child care programs are also required to determine appropriate next steps in circumstances where individuals are not complying with vaccine disclosure policies, in accordance with their respective human resource policies and legal obligations.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 5(f) of the Agreement with CDL RSC and section 7.3 of the Agreement with Thrive Health Inc.

Thank you for your efforts to comply with these requirements and your on-going efforts to keep children, staff, providers and our communities safe.

Sincerely,

Phil Graham

c. Children Services Managers, Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards