

Some preschoolers now wearing masks at daycare as new guidelines take effect ^[1]

Rapid tests being handed out to families, staff

Author: Chang, Arturo

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EXCERPTS

Some toddlers and preschoolers will have to get used to wearing masks while they're at daycare.

New COVID-19 guidelines took effect for early childhood education centres Wednesday, including a recommendation that children two and older wear masks indoors. Staff, parents and visitors must wear three-layer masks at all times.

Jamie-Lynn Mosher, director and owner at Rainbow Beginnings, said she was surprised at how quickly kids had adapted to the changes.

"I guess we know in this sector children are resilient and they adapt much better than grownups, as we learned through this pandemic," she said. "Every time we throw something at them they seem to just get it and do it."

Mosher said parents have been "really receptive" and supportive of the measures.

Daily home screenings

The changes include a requirement for children and staff to screen for COVID-19 symptoms at home every day.

If they are feeling unwell, they should stay home and get tested no matter how mild the symptoms are.

Child-care centres are being provided with rapid test kits for children and staff.

At Little Ducklings in Stratford, they've started handing out the take-home test to families already.

"We were delivered some new ones [Tuesday] for staff and for the children and we had some delivered in the beginning of the pandemic and we just hand out as needed," said owner and operator Nicole LeClair. "Parents reach out and we continue to supply them with those."

Children can return to the centre after one negative test result, so long as their symptoms are improving. The tests must be repeated after 48 hours.

If a child develops symptoms while at the centre, they'll be placed in a room away from other children until their parents can pick them up.

Increased cleaning, physical distancing

A number of other measures are included under the new guidelines, including enhanced cleaning and disinfection for frequently touched surfaces, improved ventilation, and limits on visits. Physical distancing is required and kids are encouraged to interact with a consistent small group of friends.

The new guidelines were announced at a briefing on Tuesday.

Mosher said that while advance notice of such measures isn't always possible, a heads-up would have been useful.

"Sometimes all we know what's in the briefing as well, so parents are asking us 'Well, does this mean this or this or this?' where I'm like, 'We don't know yet,'" she said.

"Sometimes that can be tricky for parents too as we try to navigate this world together."

Region: Prince Edward Island ^[3]

Tags: health and safety ^[4]

policy ^[5]

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