

March 4, 2022

Dear Child Care Operator,

As the Omicron wave subsides and pressure on our health-care system decreases, Alberta is moving through a phased approach for lifting COVID-19 public health measures. Information about each step for the easing of measures can be found online at alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health-actions.aspx.

As you may be aware, Alberta entered Step 2 of this approach on March 1, 2022. Alberta Health has provided updated guidance for child care programs to align with changes for Step 2. Please go online to find the full updated guidance documents available at alberta.ca/child-care-during-covid-19.aspx.

Key highlights of the Step 2 guidance include:

- In accordance with the lifting of the provincial mask mandate, child care employees and family day home educators are not required to wear a mask while at work, but should be supported to do so if they prefer.
- Mandatory isolation periods for individuals who have core symptoms or have tested positive remain in place and have been updated to align with current provincial public health orders.
- Child care programs are not required to report positive cases or suspected outbreaks to the AHS Coordinated Early Identification and Response (CEIR), but can continue to contact CEIR for decision-making support by calling 1-844-343-0971.
- A number of enhanced measures have been removed, including: minimizing parents' time at the program; limiting access to food preparation areas; frequent cleaning of play structures and soft furnishings; discouraging non-essential personal items; and 2-metre spacing of beds for overnight care.
- Except for isolation protocols, the remaining measures outlined in the guidance are not mandatory, but are in place as recommendations for good public health practice to protect against COVID-19, as well as other types of transmissible illness.

We recognize that some child care programs will feel more comfortable moving at their own pace and may continue to take additional precautions and make decisions that are right for them and their families.

As future decisions are made about moving into Step 3 of easing measures, Children's Services will continue to work with Alberta Health to monitor the situation in child care settings and ensure you have information you need to move forward safely.

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Over the past two years of this pandemic, the diligence and hard work of child care operators has been essential in protecting the health, safety and well-being of Alberta children and families. Thank you once again for everything you have done and continue to do to keep our communities safe.

Sincerely,

Joni Brodziak
Assistant Deputy Minister