

CHILDCARE MANUAL

SECTION:	6 - HEALTH CARE	DATE OF APPROVAL:	August 23, 2021 R – September 8, 2021, Sept. 13, 2021
CODE:	HC- 020		
TITLE:	COVID-19 Vaccination Policy		

Policy

Kids & Us Community Childcare is committed to safeguarding the health, wellbeing, and safety of our employees, children, their families, and the community at large. Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*, the organization is obligated to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of workers in the workplace including hazards posed by infectious disease such as COVID-19 and associated variants.

High rates of vaccination in child care is important. Due to the close proximity of staff to unmasked children, parents and other staff members, staff are at increased risk of contracting COVID and for this reason, we strongly recommend that all staff to obtain their first and second doses of the COVID vaccine at their earliest opportunity. ***“Vaccination is one of the most important tools for helping to stop the spread of COVID-19 and is a particularly important tool for adults working with young children who are not yet able to receive a vaccine.”*** Phil Graham, Assistant Deputy Minister Early Years and Child Care Division. Vaccinations will reduce the risk of outbreaks and isolation, and/or closing of programs.

On August 17, 2021 the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of health issued a directive mandating vaccination policies in high-risk settings, in order to protect the most vulnerable including young children who are not yet eligible for the COVID-19 Vaccine. Additionally, the Ministry of Education will require all childcare licensees to implement a COVID-19 Immunization Disclosure Policy. This will support local Public Health Units with any case and contact management guidance.

Vaccines delivered as part of Ontario’s Vaccine rollout provide high levels of effectiveness against hospitalization and death from COVID-19 and its variants. Kids & Us strongly encourages vaccination against COVID-19 if you are eligible. Please consult with your doctor and review any resources available to make an informed choice about your personal health. We will support you accessing a COVID-19 vaccination.

Procedures

For the purpose of this policy, “staff” will refer to any one of the following;

- Employees of Kids & Us
- Volunteers
- Students on Educational Placements
- Any other person who provides childcare or others services to a child who receives care, e.g. SNRC

Staff on leave are exempt, however upon return to work must comply with this policy, e.g. maternity or paternity leaves. New hires are expected to comply with this policy on or before the first day of work.

Effective September 20th, 2021 this policy will be implemented and at a minimum will require all staff to provide proof of one of the following, via a COVID-19 Vaccination Attestation;

- Full vaccination against COVID-19 (all staff, students and volunteers must provide proof of vaccination* for their file)
- Provide a formal/official documented medical reason**, from a medical doctor or Nurse Practitioner, for not being vaccinated against COVID-19, OR
- Completion of a COVID-19 vaccination educational session prescribed by the Ministry of Education.***

*Anyone vaccinated in Ontario can get a copy of their vaccine receipt at <https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/> if they hold a green photo health card. If they have a red and white health card, they should call the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line at 1-833-943-3900 for an emailed version.

**A medical exemption must be from a physician or Nurse Practitioner. In some instances, the medical exemption may be time limited, the exemption should specify whether the exemption is permanent or time-limited. If time limited, should indicate how long it is expected to last. Follow up must be completed once any specified time period has expired to confirm proof of vaccine, or proof of completion of the educational session.

***Any staff who do not intend to be vaccinated, without a documented medical reason will be required to participate in an educational session about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination. Staff will be required to sign an attestation that they have completed the educational session that will be provided by the Ministry of Education.

Testing Requirements

Any staff not providing proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 will be required to undertake regular antigen testing, including any staff who have not provided proof of their second dose of COVID-19 vaccine +14 days. Staff **must provide verification of negative test results 2 times each week**. Staff will be accommodated with time off to obtain their vaccination(s) where possible, and when adequate notice is provided. If staff are not fully vaccinated and require regular antigen testing, it must be completed on their own time. Starting September 7, 2021, tests will need to be completed at a participating pharmacy, see attached list. By September 21st, 2021 the Ministry hopes to provide childcares with test kits for unvaccinated staff to use for asymptomatic testing. Unvaccinated staff requiring testing will be provided a letter to take to the pharmacy between September 7th and 21st to verify their employment and participation in the program. Please note that these letters cover asymptomatic testing only – if staff are experiencing symptoms, they will need to schedule a PCR test at a testing facility.

Any individuals who are not regularly present at the child care premises, e.g. SNRC, Supply Staff frequent testing may not be reasonable. In these cases, the individual must submit to an antigen point of care test as part of screening, prior to interacting with children.

Individuals subject to testing requirements must provide written verification or a photo of a negative test result to the childcare supervisor, then it must be forwarded to our head office/Executive Director to be shared with the Ministry in aggregate form only. (No personal or identifying information will be reported to the Ministry). Should the test result be positive, the individual must not report to work and notify their supervisor immediately. The individual will be required to arrange a Laboratory PCR test within 48 hours and follow current direction of public health for self-isolation.

A record of staff rapid antigen testing will be kept by the childcare supervisor in a secure location at each childcare. These records must be available for inspectors or Program Advisors at all times.

Employees who are vaccinated will still be required to wear full PPE until such time as Kids & Us Community Childcare is directed by Public Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Government of Ontario. (See HC-014 Appendix B Safe Work Plan for information on required PPE)

Please note that staff accommodations based on vaccine status may result in changes to your duties (including location) and/or hours of work, depending on Public Health and Ministry directives.

Educational Session

If staff objects to a vaccination for any reason other than a documented medical reason, the staff **MUST** participate in the educational session, and undergo regular rapid antigen testing. They must provide proof of a negative test result twice per week.

The educational session will be provided by the Ministry of Education in the fall of 2021. The staff need only complete the session once, unless they wish to view it more than once. Staff will attest that they have completed the education session via the attestation form.

Confidentiality

Kids & Us will ensure information regarding employee's vaccination status will be kept confidential. Employees will be reminded not to question other employees regarding their vaccination status as this information is considered confidential medical information.