

STATEMENT

Ontario Accelerating Boosters for Education and Child Care Staff

Dedicated COVID-19 Booster Clinics for Education and Child Care Staff Will Help Improve Access

January 06, 2022

[Education](#)

Today, Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, issued the following statement on additional measures and supports to protect children, staff, and families as Ontario responds to the Omicron variant:

"As part of our government's response to the Omicron variant, we are providing greater access to COVID-19 booster shots for education and child care staff. Starting tomorrow, these staff in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area will have planned access to vaccines at the International Centre in Mississauga as we work with all other public health units to urgently set up more clinics across Ontario. This is in addition to existing vaccine clinics with dedicated access for education and child care staff, including for example at CHEO in Ottawa, and select City of Toronto run clinics.

We are also further strengthening our protections for child care centres by introducing additional safety measures, including stricter screening protocols and deploying non-fit-tested N95 masks to support frontline workers.

Throughout this pandemic, critical staff on the frontlines have continued to carry out their work – from nurses, to personal support workers, to grocery workers and pharmacists – so that we can protect our communities. We owe it to them to ensure their children are cared for during this period, which is why our government is once again providing these frontline and critical workers with free emergency child care for their school-aged children. We thank education and child care staff, operators, and all Ontario families for their hard work, vigilance and kindness through this incredibly difficult time."

Acceleration of COVID-19 Boosters

To accelerate access to vaccines, starting January 7, the provincial mass vaccination clinic at the International Centre in Mississauga will support priority booking for education staff, including educators, custodial staff, administrative staff, and school bus drivers, and child care staff. The clinic will operate seven days a week, with specific appointments being made available for education and child care staff from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Eligible staff are encouraged to book their appointment through the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line at 1-833-943-3900.

For individuals living outside the GTHA, the Ontario government is working with all public health units (PHUs) to plan and provide access to third doses for education and child care staff. Local PHUs will provide further information on how vaccines can be accessed in their communities as it becomes available. School boards have an opportunity to use schools as a site for vaccination clinics together with PHU partners.

These measures being announced today build on the government's previous efforts and investments to improve safety in schools during the pandemic. Measures currently in place include:

- providing optional non-fit-tested N95 masks to all education staff, scheduled to arrive by the end of this week
- updated and stricter screening requirements to help limit the spread of COVID-19
- ventilation improvements measures at every school across Ontario, including more than 70,000 HEPA filter units and other ventilation devices already deployed to schools, with an additional 3,000 units being provided
- access for school boards to \$1.6 billion in resources to protect against COVID-19.

Child Care Safety Measures

All child care settings have continuously received quality PPE, additional funding for cleaning, and updated protocols and guidance for staff and families.

The below measures have also been put in place to ensure children, staff, and communities remain as safe as possible:

- providing optional non-fit-tested N95 masks for staff in licensed child care settings starting January 10, 2022
- updating and enhancing child care screening measures to help limit the spread of COVID-19.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health are working together with an aim of making more rapid-antigen tests available to support the ongoing operations of child-care centres, and schools when they return to in-person learning.

Emergency Child Care Eligibility

Starting January 10, 2022, the following workers are eligible for free emergency child care:

- health care workers, including but not limited to doctors, nurses, health care providers and those who work in long-term care and retirement homes, as well as individuals who manufacture or distribute medical/pharmaceutical supplies
- individuals performing work in relation to the administration, distribution or manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines
- education staff who are required to attend schools to provide in-person instruction and support to students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning
- child care workers, including those staffing the emergency child care programs
- truck drivers and transit workers
- construction workers
- grocery store and pharmacy workers
- public safety (police, fire, paramedics, provincial inspection/enforcement), justice/court and correctional system workers
- power workers
- non-municipal water and wastewater workers
- frontline staff in Children's Aid Societies and residential services
- individuals working in a homeless shelter or providing services to homeless persons
- individuals working in developmental services, violence against women services, victims' services, anti-human trafficking and those engaged in interpreting or intervenor services for persons who are deaf or deaf-blind
- food safety inspectors and individuals working in the processing, manufacturing or distribution of food and beverages
- workers involved in the collecting, transporting, storing, processing, disposing or recycling of any type of waste
- certain federal employees, including RCMP, Canada Border Services, Canadian Armed Forces and Canada Post workers
- OPS staff employed in Radiation Protection Services
- OPS staff performing critical tasks related to environmental monitoring, reporting and laboratory services
- employees of a hotel or motel that is acting as an isolation centre, health care centre, vaccine clinic or housing essential workers
- funeral, burial and cremation services operators
- any individual whose child was registered in an emergency child care program delivered by a Consolidated Municipal Service Manager or District Social Service Administration Board during the time period beginning on April 6, 2021 and ending on April 16, 2021.

To confirm whether or not your family is eligible for access to emergency child care, please contact [your local service system manager](#). See a [full list of eligible workers](#).

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