

# COVID-19

## Action plan in the event of a second wave

**EDUCATIONAL CHILDCARE SERVICES,  
FAMILY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS,  
COMMUNITY DROP-IN DAYCARE SERVICES  
AND COMMUNITY SOCIAL PEDIATRICS CENTRES**

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# 1 A PLAN PRIORITIZING CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**This action plan concerns educational childcare services, family community organizations, community drop-in daycare services and community social pediatrics centres. It will be implemented if a second wave of COVID-19 requires application by the government of new health measures.**

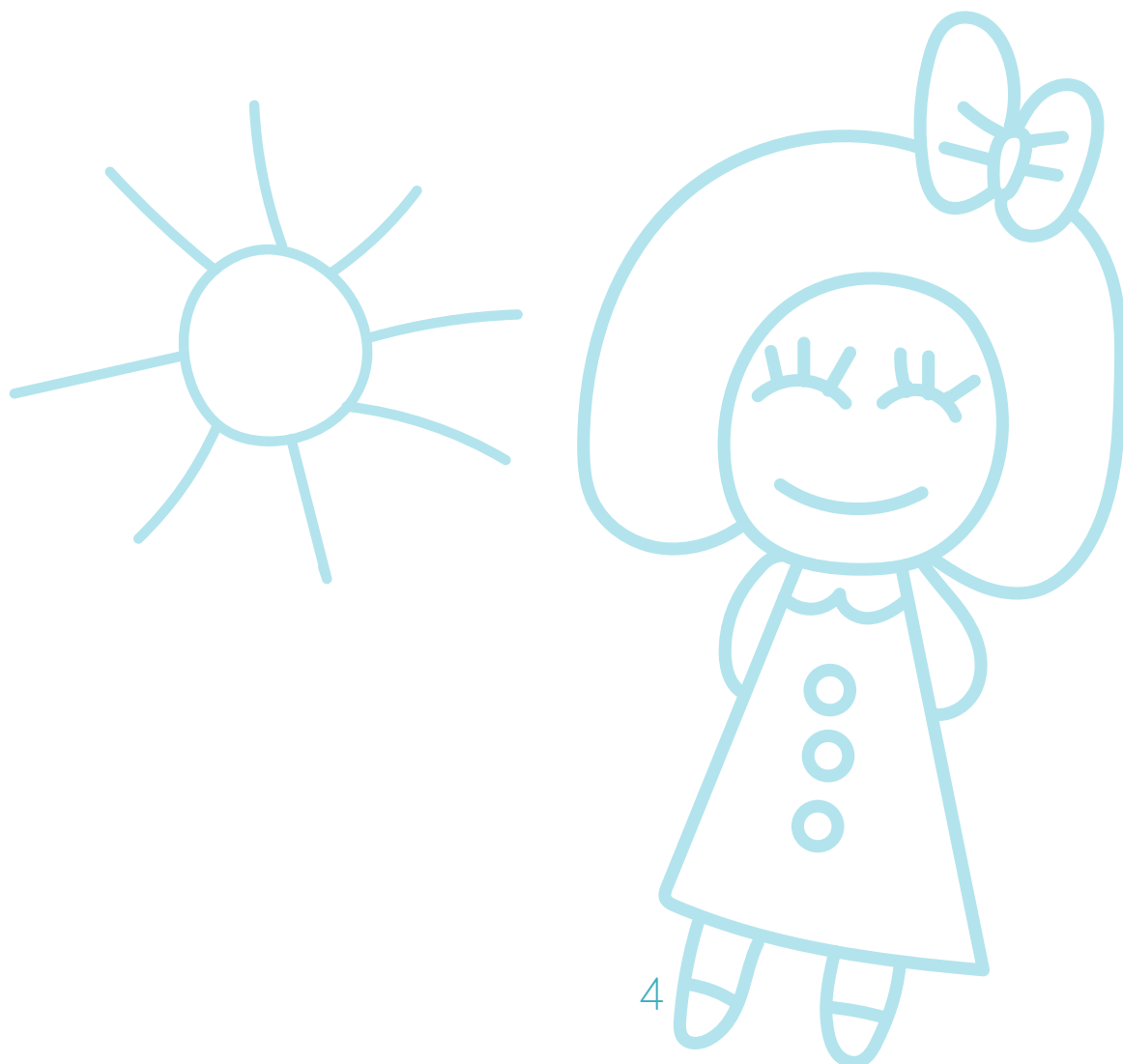
Based on the guidelines provided in the past weeks, the Québec government intends to proceed in a targeted manner, by region and/or by activity sector, if a new lockdown period proves necessary.

The actions called for in this plan prioritize ensuring the development, health and safety of children and their families. They are also aimed at enabling parents to continue carrying out their professional activities.

This plan is based on the experience of the first wave. It presents the improvements to be made and the steps to take with regard to health measures, financing measures, work relations, the sharing of responsibilities and communication between the various stakeholders.

The Ministère de la Famille's partners, in particular the Québec-wide daycare service associations, community organizations, community social pediatrics centres working with families, aboriginal representatives and union groups, were consulted. The findings and needs expressed have largely been taken into account in this plan.

Naturally, deployment of the measures proposed here will need to be based on an analysis of the situation prevailing at the time of this deployment, working closely with the Direction générale de la santé publique in the interests of children, families and staff of the organizations concerned.



## 2 LEARNING FROM OUR EXPERIENCE

**In March 2020, when the educational childcare centres were shut down and emergency daycare services were implemented, there was only rudimentary knowledge of the degree of transmission of the virus and the protective measures to take to minimize its spread. The actions required in the event of a second wave can now be planned taking into account the experience gained.**

### **Educational childcare services: essential services**

If the usefulness of educational childcare services had to be demonstrated, the pandemic has clearly shown how essential they are to Quebec society. Educational childcare services are an integral part of our social safety net because they promote the full development of young children and enable their parents to continue working.

Putting in place emergency daycare services during the lockdown period allowed thousands of essential workers to safeguard public health and ensure the smooth functioning of our communities' key activities.

Quebecers were then able to go back to work while benefitting from the progressive reopening of educational childcare services that has since contributed to Québec's economic revival.

### **The health and safety of children and staff first and foremost**

The implementation of adapted health measures in the emergency daycare services and educational childcare services has prevented the spread of the virus and limited the number of diagnosed cases.

The proof:

- Between April 3, 2020, the date that COVID-19 cases began being reported to the Ministère de la Famille, and May 11, 2020, the start date of the cold zone reopening, 43 confirmed cases of infection were reported in 36 educational childcare services
- From the start of the cold zone reopening up to July 31, 75 cases of infection were reported in 60 educational childcare services
- The total number of confirmed cases reported since April 3, 2020, is 118: 54 children and 64 adults
- Given that the entire network is now 100% open – 3580 facilities and a possible 306,152 places – the number of cases is considered marginal.
- Among these cases, there have been no deaths.

Furthermore, expanding knowledge now shows that the educational childcare service environment is less conducive to transmission than other environments.

## Government support is vital

The Québec government took many actions between March and July to support educational childcare services, family community organizations, community drop-in daycare services, community social pediatrics centres and, thereby, families.

Worthy of mention:

- Special financial assistance totalling \$141 million has thus far been given to subsidized and non-subsidized daycare centres
- Personal protection equipment has been distributed to the educational childcare services and community social pediatrics centres (CSPCs) in all regions
- \$5 million in emergency aid has been given to family community organizations and community organizations providing community child drop-in activities to enable them to continue offering their services to families in the context of the pandemic.

## Clear sharing of responsibilities and effective communication

During the past months, the Ministère de la Famille has maintained close ties with its partners. An information bulletin was sent regularly to associations and groups so that they could accompany their members in applying the guidelines. This ongoing communication, carried out as promptly as possible, greatly contributed to the smooth functioning of educational childcare services and organizations in the field.

Combining Ministère de la Famille health guidelines with those of the Direction générale de la santé publique, the Institut national de santé publique (INSPQ) and the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) will be the subject of an improved communication mechanism.

## Efforts to be made to ensure workforce availability

The pandemic situation impacts organizations' workforce needs. There was already a staff shortage in educational childcare services before the crisis began, thus the Ministère de la Famille will continue working with its partners to ensure workforce availability, in particular in non-subsidized daycare services and in home childcare services.

## Challenges to be met concerning continuity of services to families

Maintaining the services that family community organizations, community drop-in daycare services and community social pediatrics centres offer to often-vulnerable clients is also important and merits special attention.

### DECISIONS BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC MONITORING<sup>1</sup>

This action plan is based on learning derived from experience, recommendations from partners and rigorous scientific monitoring, from which emerge these findings:

- Few young children appear to be infected by COVID-19 and youngsters appear to experience few complications related to this disease and to be least likely to transmit it. Based on these results, there appears to be a lower risk associated with opening educational childcare services in the event of a second wave than was anticipated at the time of the first wave. This question is still under study by scientists.
- The pandemic and lockdown have negative impacts on families. These impacts appear to be greater among families with one or more children age 5 or younger and even greater among those presenting with vulnerability factors. These families' difficulties appear to be heightened by the additional constraints imposed by the pandemic. Access to daycare services in the context of a second wave could act as a social safety net protecting families and children, especially those most vulnerable.

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<sup>1</sup> Information collated by the Ministère de la Famille in August 2020 from scientific studies listed at the end of this document.

# 3 LOOKING OUT FOR FAMILIES

**In light of the learning done during the first wave and with the goal of continuing to provide educational childcare services because they contribute to the full development of young children, the following plan would be followed in the event of a second wave.**

## Maintaining health measures and strengthening them as required

In all scenarios, the health measures currently in place will be maintained:

- Size and stability of the groups contributing to prevention
- Physical distancing, wearing of personal protection equipment, frequent hand washing, etc.
- Vigilance, access control and management of cases
- Maintaining of guidelines concerning the integration of vulnerable children and handicapped children

The Ministère de la Famille will facilitate access to personal protection equipment among family community organizations by sharing with them the list of its suppliers.

Based on the guidelines of the Direction générale de la santé publique or the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail, certain measures may be added or strengthened. Such adjustments should be applied in a targeted manner according to regional realities.

## Information and tools for parents and daycare services

The Ministère de la Famille works together with public health authorities to provide a seamless response to questions from families and childcare network stakeholders on the monitoring and management of symptoms and cases. In this section you will find a summary of useful information and references.

### For families

#### ***How to assess symptoms?***

Assessing symptoms is a crucial step in preventing the spread of the disease in daycare centres. Parents are invited to use the **assessment tool** found at [Quebec.ca/decisioncovid19](http://Quebec.ca/decisioncovid19) to determine if their child can attend the daycare or if other actions involving a health professional are required. The automated questionnaire will facilitate a targeted analysis based on certain factors specific to each situation. It can be used by the entire family as often as needed.

#### ***What happens when a case is identified in a daycare centre?***

Each situation being different, public health authorities are the persons who determine the appropriate actions to take.

Any child presenting with symptoms in a group will be quickly isolated. A single staff member will take care of the child while awaiting the arrival of the parents, who must call 1 877 644-4545 without delay and follow the guidelines they are given.

If a child in a group receives a positive result or if a number of cases are diagnosed in the educational childcare service, regional public health officials will give detailed guidelines to the daycare. Regional public health officials, in collaboration with the management of the educational childcare service, will make recommendations, i.e. if it is necessary to shut down a group or a daycare service.

In all cases, daycare services will be responsible for informing parents and staff pursuant to the public health authorities' recommendation.

A document describing the procedure to follow in the event of **COVID-19** in a daycare centre is available at the following address: [www.quebec.ca/famille-et-soutien-aux-personnes/servicesgardeeducatifsenfance-covid19](http://www.quebec.ca/famille-et-soutien-aux-personnes/servicesgardeeducatifsenfance-covid19).

## For daycare services

### ***Links with public health branches***

To facilitate rapid joint action to ensure safe daycare environments, daycare services will receive an updated list of contacts in their regional public health branch, as well as emergency telephone numbers to call outside regular operating hours.

### ***Vigilance-symptoms***

Parents and staff are invited to use the symptoms assessment tool at [Québec.ca/decisioncovid19](https://quebec.ca/decisioncovid19). Daycare services must not hesitate to do likewise in any situation where doubt exists about a person on site.

### ***Case management procedure to follow***

Daycare services will continue to work closely with the public health authorities to tailor their responses to the demands of each situation. They may, however, consult a general process in the document describing the **procedure to follow in the event of COVID-19 in a daycare centre**. This document is available at: [www.quebec.ca/famille-et-soutien-aux-personnes/servicesgardeeducatifsenfance-covid19](https://www.quebec.ca/famille-et-soutien-aux-personnes/servicesgardeeducatifsenfance-covid19).

### ***Information to parents***

In all situations where a case has been declared in their centre, the daycare service manager or other person responsible must inform the parents upon recommendation of the public health authorities. In this regard, daycare services have access to models for what should be communicated to the parents (appended to the action plan).

### ***Screening prioritization***

In the event of an outbreak, staff and the children attending the daycare service will have priority access to testing. Currently, all persons needing to be tested can now have rapid access to tests and results.

### ***Reminder about good health practices***

The preventive practices in force are continuing and can be consulted in the memory aid recently updated on the basis of the health guidelines. Whether it's managing access to the site, site set-up, distancing, the wearing of protective equipment, questions to ask parents or employees, or the guidelines to follow for someone presenting with symptoms on site, there are important things to keep in mind to maintain a safe daycare environment.

## Planned actions in the event of a targeted renewed lockdown period

If the Québec government decides to proceed with a targeted renewed lockdown aimed at a specific region or activity sector, the plan would be as follows.

### Full opening of all educational childcare services

The stability of services provided to children is a major factor to consider. Thus, to ensure children's full development and enable parents to work, no educational childcare services will be shut down except in the case of an outbreak in a facility.

Current procedures for assessing particular needs in terms of shutting down educational childcare services will be continued under the leadership of the regional public health branches concerned. Sharing of information between the regional public health branches and the Ministère de la Famille will be improved. Providing information to parents will be prioritized and will come under the responsibility of the daycare services involved, which will have standardized tools provided by the Ministry.

The maintaining of safety services will also be based on speedy access to screening tests and results for staff and children attending educational childcare services.

Any child presenting with symptoms in a group will be quickly isolated. A single staff member will take care of the child while awaiting the arrival of the parents, who must call 1 877 644-4545 without delay and follow the guidelines they are given.

If a child in a group receives a positive result or if a number of cases are diagnosed in the educational childcare service, regional public health officials will give detailed guidelines to the daycare. Regional public health officials, in collaboration with the management of the educational childcare service, will make all necessary recommendations and indicate whether a group or a daycare service needs to be shut down. Daycare services will be responsible for informing parents and staff. Persons considered at moderate or high risk by the Direction régionale de la santé publique when it analyzes the situation will be removed from the setting and tested.

Information tools regarding symptoms to monitor and the procedure to follow in the event of COVID-19 in educational childcare services are available at: [Québec.ca//famille-et-soutien-aux-personnes/servicesgardeeducatifsenfance-covid19](https://quebec.ca/famille-et-soutien-aux-personnes/servicesgardeeducatifsenfance-covid19).

## Voluntary attendance and applicable rate paid by parents

If public health authorities order renewed lockdown measures, in the lockdown zones attendance at educational childcare services will be voluntary. The rate in effect will be paid by parents, whether their child attends the service or not.

## Regular childcare services for essential workers

Children of essential workers will benefit from their place at their usual daycare service or will be able to take a temporarily vacant place.

## Continuity of services offered by family community organizations, community drop-in daycare services and community social pediatrics centres

Contrary to the first wave and considering the essential nature of the support given to the most vulnerable families, the Québec government will help maintain the services provided by community partners such as community organizations and community social pediatrics centres.

The family community organizations, community drop-in daycare services and community social pediatrics centres will thus be able to continue serving vulnerable children and families while complying with public health guidelines.

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux will make available the tools required to maintain telemedicine services offered by community social pediatrics centres.

### APPROACH ADAPTED TO THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The aboriginal communities, having a certain autonomy, will need to be the subject of a targeted and adapted approach in the event of circumstances requiring the imposition of significant health measures and/or a major renewed lockdown. Communications addressed to them will be translated promptly and sent to them without delay.

# 4 CONTINUING TO WORK TOGETHER

## Implementation of communication and dialogue mechanisms

**The Ministère de la Famille will continue to work closely with the different Québec-wide associations, the representative associations of daycare service providers and the unions, and with the community sector.**

The Ministère de la Famille will also gather from them the information required for decision-making.

As the health situation develops, the Ministère de la Famille will promptly provide the specific applicable guidelines and procedures (opening, shutdown, procedures for providing priority services, health guidelines, ratios, regional differences, etc.).

Apart from establishing clear lines of communication and using the appropriate mechanisms, the Ministère de la Famille will put in place a distinct formal group to regularly bring together community partners and community social pediatrics centres. This dialogue group will allow for discussing the situation, difficulties encountered and potential solutions to meet the needs of families, children and organizations.

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# ANNEXES

# CHILDREN AND COVID-19

## STAY ALERT TO KEEP THE VIRUS FROM SPREADING

If your child shows symptoms on this list, it is recommended that they stay home and avoid contact with other people. After **24 hours**, re-evaluate the situation to see if there is any change in their symptoms.

Before sending your child back to their educational childcare centre or school (including school daycare), please use the **self-assessment tool** available on [Québec.ca/decisioncovid19](https://quebec.ca/decisioncovid19) or call **1-877-644-4545** and follow the guidelines provided to see if your child must be tested, or if they can return to school, school daycare or educational childcare centre.

 <h3>Fever</h3> <p>Children <b>ages 5 and under</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Rectal</b> temperature of 38.5°C (101.3°F) or higher</li></ul> <p>Children <b>ages 6 and older</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Oral</b> temperature of 38.1°C (100.6°F) or higher</li></ul>	 <h3>General symptoms</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sudden loss of sense of smell without nasal congestion, with or without a loss of taste</li><li>• Major fatigue</li><li>• Significant loss of appetite</li><li>• General muscle pain (not related to physical exertion)</li></ul>	 <h3>Respiratory symptoms</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cough (new or worse)</li><li>• Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing</li><li>• Sore throat</li><li>• Runny or stuffy nose</li></ul>	 <h3>Gastrointestinal symptoms</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nausea</li><li>• Vomiting</li><li>• Diarrhea</li><li>• Stomach aches</li></ul>
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**Click for the last update**

Do not send your child to school, school daycare or educational childcare centre if:

- you have received instructions from your public health authorities to self-isolate at home (your child and the people they have been in contact with)
- there is a chance that your child is infected, or you think they have been in contact with someone who has COVID 19
- you are in quarantine following travel outside Canada

**For all other conditions, meaning an illness other than COVID-19, the standard health criteria for attendance at educational childcare centres, schools and school daycares apply.** Therefore, children who are generally in good health (i.e. able to engage in their regular activities) can attend their educational childcare centre, school or school daycare (in particular, children with colds are permitted to attend).

# COVID-19 procedure to follow in educational childcare centres

## 1 If a child shows symptoms<sup>1</sup> while with their group:

- The child is automatically isolated.
- A single staff member cares for the child while waiting for the parent.
- An emergency kit containing the necessary materials (masks, glasses, gloves, etc.) is used.
- The room in which the child is isolated while waiting to be picked up must be ventilated, cleaned and disinfected afterward.
- The parent must contact 1-877-644-4545 as soon as possible and follow the guidelines that are provided. The child showing symptoms must remain in isolation at home until further public health guidelines have been received.

## 2 If a child shows symptoms<sup>1</sup> while at home:

- It is recommended that the child stay home and avoid contact with other people. After 24 hours, the parents must re-evaluate the situation to see if there is any change in the child's symptoms.
- Parents are encouraged to use the self-assessment tool available at [Québec.ca/decisioncovid19](https://quebec.ca/decisioncovid19) or call 1-877-644-4545 and follow the guidelines provided to see if their child should be tested or sent to their childcare centre.

## 3 If another child in my child's group tests positive for COVID-19:

- With help from the parents of the child concerned and the childcare centre, the regional public health authorities will follow up with contact tracing.
- Anyone considered to be at moderate to high risk will be contacted by the regional public health authorities and will be removed from the childcare centre and tested.
- Anyone considered to be at low risk will receive a letter from the childcare centre. They may continue to attend the childcare centre and monitor their symptoms over a period of 14 days.

## 4 If there are several cases of COVID-19 in the same group or if the outbreak involves several groups:

- The regional public health authorities will provide detailed instructions to the childcare centre, which will be responsible for informing all the parents and staff of the centre.
- In collaboration with the administration of the childcare centre, the regional public health authorities will assess the situation and make the necessary recommendations in the event that a group or childcare centre must be closed.
- With help from the administration of the childcare centre attended by the child concerned and the child's parents, the public health authorities will follow up with contact tracing at the childcare centre.
- Anyone considered to be at moderate to high risk is removed from the childcare centre and tested.

\* It is possible that intervention measures may be intensified (closing an educational childcare centre, etc.) based on the public health authorities' analysis of virus transmission in the centre and on the epidemiological factors specific to the community or region.

1. The symptoms to watch for are: fever, cough (new or worse), shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, sudden loss of sense of smell without nasal congestion, with or without a loss of taste, major fatigue, significant loss of appetite, general muscle pain (not related to physical exertion), nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach aches.

Click for the last update

Date

To Parents and Staff Members

Name of the childcare establishment

Address

**Subject: Confirmed case of COVID-19 in the childcare establishment**

Dear Madam or Sir,

A positive result on a COVID-19 test has been reported to the childcare establishment. In order to limit transmission, parents of the children who were in close contact with the person concerned have been asked to keep their child at home, call the 1-877-644-4545 line, and follow the instructions given by the public health authorities. The staff members working with the group affected have been removed and will also have to undergo a COVID-19 screening test.

The childcare establishment remains **open** and continues to apply all necessary measures to prevent any new cases.

We ask that you closely monitor your health and symptoms and those of your child.

If you or your child display **one or more** of the symptoms listed below, please call 1-877-844-4545 immediately to find out whether or not you should make an appointment for a COVID-19 screening test.

Here are the symptoms to watch for:

- Fever (for children aged 3 months to 5 years: rectal temperature of 38.5 °C or more (101.3 °F); for adults: oral temperature of 38 °C (100 °F) or more, or 1.1° higher than their usual temperature
- Cough (new or worsening)
- Sudden loss of smell with no nasal congestion, with or without loss of taste
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Generalized muscle pain not related to physical exertion
- Extreme fatigue
- Major loss of appetite
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Stomach aches

You may rest assured that we are following the situation closely in collaboration with the regional public health authorities. Our priority remains the health of the children and staff.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Name of the responsible person:

Title:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

To Parents and Staff Members

Name of the childcare establishment

Address

**Subject: Temporary closure of the childcare establishment due to an outbreak of COVID-19**

Dear Madam or Sir,

Some cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed at our childcare establishment. After analyzing the situation, the public health authorities have recommended the temporary closure of the establishment to prevent the virus from spreading.

With the help of the director and staff members, the Direction régionale de la santé publique will identify the close contacts that occurred at the establishment and communicate with the persons concerned.

If you or your child displays **one or more** of the symptoms listed below, you must call 1-877-644-4545 immediately to assess whether or not you should have a COVID-19 screening test.

Here are the symptoms to watch for:

- Fever (for children aged 3 months to 5 years: rectal temperature of 38.5 °C or more (101.3 °F); for adults: oral temperature of 38 °C (100 °F) or more, or 1.1° higher than their usual temperature)
- Cough (new or worsening)
- Sudden loss of smell with no nasal congestion, with or without loss of taste
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Generalized muscle pain not related to physical exertion
- Extreme fatigue
- Major loss of appetite
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Stomach aches

Our priority remains the health of the children and staff. You may rest assured that we are following the situation closely and that we will notify you as soon as we can re-open our doors in total safety.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Name of the responsible person

Title

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

[QUÉBEC.CA/CORONAVIRUS](https://quebec.ca/coronavirus)