



Department of Families

## DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES CIRCULAR

**Date:** May 13, 2021

**CIRCULAR NUMBER:** COVID-19: 2021-28

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**To:** Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) facilities and ELCC Program Staff

**Subject:** Changes to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Distribution

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**Type:**  Policy

Procedure

**Effective Date:** Immediately

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On May 9, 2021, it was announced that effective this week, shipments of personal protective equipment (PPE) to the child care sector would increase from 100,000 units per month to 1.1 million units per month to meet increased mask use requirements. The level of mask will also increase from level 1 medical grade to level 3 medical grade to enhance protection for child care staff, children, and their families.

As COVID-19 variants of concern are becoming the dominant strain of the virus in Manitoba, public health officials support the use of medical masks and eye protection in both centre and home-based child care facilities to further mitigate the risk of exposure and help safeguard the ability of ELCC facilities to remain open.

In centres (including nursery schools), medical masks have been required for staff use since November 2020. Public health has advised that medical masks will also now be required in family/group child care homes when the provider is unable to consistently and reliably maintain 2 metres/6 feet of physical distance from the children. Home-based providers can begin wearing medical masks once their first supply is received.

While public health supports the use of the additional PPE, it does not require eye protection to be used in ELCC facilities. Centre staff and home-based providers may choose whether to wear the additional PPE or not.

For those who choose to use eye protection, please note that the frames are reusable and the lenses are disposable. If eye protection needs to be removed for any reason, frames and lenses must be cleaned and disinfected and placed in a wipeable, disinfected container for reuse once dry. At the end of each shift, staff must discard lenses, and retain, clean and

disinfect frames and place in a wipeable, disinfected container for their next shift once dry. For more information, see: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/standard-operating-procedure-disinfecting-eye.pdf>.

## **Distribution**

### **Family/group child care homes**

In the upcoming two weeks, Child Care Coordinators will be delivering masks and eye protection to home-based facilities with the exception of some more remote facilities to which the supply will be mailed. Sufficient numbers of masks and eye protection will be distributed to accommodate its use by additional staff and/or residents who may interact with the children and are unable to consistently and reliably maintain 2 metres/6 feet of physical distance from children.

### **Centres and Nursery Schools**

The provincial offices designated for PPE distribution are 114 Garry Street in Winnipeg, Thompson, Flin Flon, The Pas, Swan River, Dauphin, Selkirk, Beausejour, Steinbach, Brandon, Portage, and Morden.

Supplies of masks and eye protection will be picked up by centres and nursery schools at the closest provincial office. Specific information about pick up dates and times will be provided in the near future.

Following the initial distribution, PPE will be picked up by centres and nursery schools on a monthly basis.

### **All ELCC Facilities**

Frames and lenses for eye protection in centres and homes will be provided in the first round of distribution only. If a facility requires more, it must be requested through their Child Care Coordinator.

Facilities may request changes to their monthly supply of medical masks, including a pause due to sufficient supplies, through their Child Care Coordinator.

A revised [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Early Learning and Child Care Practice Guidance](#) for technical information on using the PPE will be distributed within the next week to reflect the new public health directives.

For the latest provincial public health information on COVID-19, visit: [www.manitoba.ca/covid19](http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19).

Thank you for your continued efforts to providing a safe environment to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in ELCC facilities.

ELCC Program