

Human Resources Legislative Update

Ontario Announces Rapid Antigen Testing for Schools and Licensed Child Care Settings

Date: October 5, 2021

On October 5, 2021, the [Ontario government announced](#) that it is increasing access to rapid antigen COVID-19 testing for schools and licensed child care settings, where there is increased risk of transmission of COVID-19. The program will provide rapid screening for unvaccinated and asymptomatic children and students. The testing will be done on a voluntary basis.

As stated in the announcement, the testing for child care and school-age children will proceed in the following manner:

- the antigen screening will be implemented in regions based on local factors and needs, as identified by local Medical Officers of Health based on guidance from the Chief Medical Officer of Health
- only unvaccinated asymptomatic students and children who are not high-risk contacts will be tested
- symptomatic or high-risk contacts should access lab-based PCR testing
- parents will be able to choose whether their unvaccinated children participate in the screening offered by the identified schools or licensed child care settings
- the antigen screening for unvaccinated children may be done at home with instructions
- where a child receives a positive result, they will be required to seek a lab-based PCR test and must isolate until the result of that test is known, and
- where a child receives a negative result, they will be able to continue in-person learning.

The rapid antigen testing is in addition to existing prevention measures, including masking, cohorting and daily symptom screening.