Start planning now for September before and after school licensing

It may seem hard to believe that it’s time to start planning for back to school.

If you are currently operating a before and/or after school program, or plan to in September, now is the time to start planning for applying for a new child care licence or revising an existing licence to expand the licensed capacity.

By May 15, school boards must report a list of sites that will offer full-day kindergarten before and after school programs. But in many cases, boards and operators know many of the sites in advance of this May 15 deadline.

Licensing requests will be accepted in the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS) beginning April 17, 2014. Child Care licensing can be complex, and in many cases there is work that operators, school boards and municipalities can begin to do right away to prepare for this process.

It starts with proactive communication between school boards, school principals, FDK teams, third party operators, municipal staff and licensing staff. It also involves approval from local officials—zoning, fire, public health and building inspectors. Communicate early and often about municipal requirements and possible inspection requirements.

Identify sites as early as possible, particularly where renovations are planned. Sites must be identified and ministry site visits complete by June 15.

The FDK classroom should be the primary location of the FDK before and after school program, wherever possible. Programs should not be moved unless there is a special circumstance. A revised licence, which may include new municipal approvals, must be completed to change rooms. A best practice is to license alternate rooms as well.

Consider the current capacity for which the program is licensed and plan ahead for any anticipated growth in student enrolment. A change in capacity also requires a revised licence.

To assist third party operators, school boards and others, we have developed a toolkit of resources, including the following:

- best practices tip sheet
- timelines for before and after school licensing for September 2014
- Operator Confirmation Form for a Revised License
Access these resources in the Early Years Portal, in Child Care Licensing Resources tab:

www.earlyyears.edu.gov.on.ca/EYPortal/en/ChildCareLicensing/ChildCareLicensingResources/index.htm

We also recommend that you view the archive of the back-to-school licensing webcast we broadcast in February 2013. This webcast offers an excellent overview of the entire process. You can access the archive from the Early Years Portal in the Multimedia tab:


**Improvements planned to the Child Care Licensing System**

As you are aware, the ministry launched the Child Care Licensing System in December 2013. The system has been designed to make licensing tasks quicker and easier for operators, supervisors and home visitors to complete.

We have received extremely positive feedback about CCLS from child care operators across the province. We have heard that some operators have experienced challenges registering in CCLS, getting through to the Help Desk due to high call volume, and submitting licence revision requests.

The ministry is committed to improving the system on an ongoing basis. We have added additional resources to the Help Desk for phone calls and encourage you where possible to submit your requests for assistance first by email.

This April, you can expect a number of system enhancements, including:

- the addition of helpful on-screen instructions throughout the system
- and more

We are currently making improvements to the licence revision module. In the interim, operators can use CCLS to submit licence revision requests if the proposed date of the licence revision is before March 31, 2014.

If the proposed date of the licence revision is after March 31, 2014, operators can submit their requests in CCLS starting on April 16, 2014.

However, please contact your Program Advisor as soon as possible to discuss your proposed changes. This will help expedite the processing of your licence revision.

Our Help Desk is available to provide ongoing assistance with CCLS.
Contact us toll free: 1-855-457-5478 / Local: 416-314-6230
Monday to Friday 8:30am – 5 pm
or by email at childcare.helpdesk@ontario.ca