

City of Kuopio

Growth and Learning

Early Childhood Education and Care Services

16th of August 2021

Start of the new school year in early childhood education and care in Kuopio

Most of us have already had a summer holiday and therefore we welcome both children and persons who have custody of a child to start again a new school year in early childhood education and care with us!

As the corona situation continues, the City of Kuopio shall comply with the instructions updated by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Culture on the 5th of August 2021: [Recommendation from the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Education to providers of education and early childhood education and care during the COVID-10 epidemic \(in Finnish\) \(minedu.fi\)](#).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has updated instructions for the purpose of organising early childhood education and care: [Organising early childhood education and care and recovering from the corona situation as of the 1st of August 2021 \(in Finnish\) | the Ministry of Education \(oph.fi\)](#)

In early childhood education and care, unnecessary close contacts are still to be avoided and good hygiene to be followed. Despite the restrictions, it is important to see to that a child is taken care of with a quality care along with the proximity, safety and interaction that a child needs, provided by an adult in the same way as before.

As far as possible, children work in their own groups, on their own premises and with their own adults. The safety of children and employees is also taken care of by improving the cleaning of the premises, emphasizing the importance of hand hygiene and working in small groups within a child group.

An opportunity to familiarise with the activities at the beginning of the new school year

First-timers can come and familiarise themselves with early childhood education and care and pre-primary education outdoors. For example, children can come and play together with persons who have custody of a child in the yard of the day care centre for children after the daily activities of the centre have ended. Persons who have custody of a child and children can come and visit and familiarise themselves with the interior of the day care centre for children, taking into account space and hygiene issues. Parents shall not be shown around in the day care centres for children, except in those premises where they bring or pick up their children. Visits will be staggered, whereby the number of visitors remains small. The child will be provided with meals during the visit, if necessary, parents take care of their own meals.

The important thing is that there is enough space in the premises for the visitors in order to move around easily and safely and there will be no congestion. You can visit the day care centre for children or family day care only asymptomatic.

Alternative ways of organising parental evenings are being considered in the units. Large joint events and gatherings will not be organised in the event that the necessary safety distances and hygiene issues cannot be implemented.

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As a reminder to persons who have custody of a child

- A slightly ill child must not be brought to day care!
- Unnecessary physical contacts must still be avoided.
The presence and staying of other persons than children and personnel within early childhood education and care is to be avoided. Outdoor activities and eating times are to be staggered where possible.
- Children wash their hands when they come to the day care centre for children and family day care, during meals and when they leave the centre. Hands are also washed often during the day. Children are also advised to cough and sneeze into their sleeve or a handkerchief.

Symptoms of coronavirus

The coronavirus causes a respiratory tract infection, the symptoms of which may include, for example, cough, sore throat and fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches, abdominal symptoms and headache ([https://thl.fi/fi/web/infektioaudit-ja-rokotukset/ajankohtaista/ajankohtaista-koronaviruksesta-covid-19/oireet-ja-hoito-koronavirus, in English](https://thl.fi/fi/web/infektioaudit-ja-rokotukset/ajankohtaista/ajankohtaista-koronaviruksesta-covid-19/oireet-ja-hoito-koronavirus_in_English)). If someone is having any symptoms suggestive of ill health, she/he must not attend early childhood education and care.

A child under school age does not necessarily need to be tested, if she/he starts to show symptoms after other family members and the others with symptoms have been tested. Furthermore, if a child under school age becomes ill first, her/his mild symptoms can be monitored at home for a couple of days without testing. A child's symptoms are mild, if she/he is brisk and lively and is able to play, even though she/he would have cold, cough and fever. A child who is symptomatic, cannot, however, attend early childhood education and care. In the event that the symptoms disappear completely during the symptom monitoring, there is no need to get tested, but the child can return and attend early childhood education and care after at least one asymptomatic day. If the symptoms persist, it is good to find out if they are caused by the coronavirus infection.

If the symptoms are caused by an allergy and clearly relieved after starting allergy medication, a child can return and attend early childhood education and care, even if the symptoms have not completely disappeared. If the symptoms do not ease despite medication, a test is to be done. If the test result is negative, a child can return and attend early childhood education and care.

If a child's nose begins to run when going out, but the symptoms disappear indoors, the child can participate in early childhood education and care, provided that her/his general condition is otherwise normal and there are no symptoms of infection.

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