



MAY 27 2019

MR. KIERON TESTART
MLA, KAM LAKE

Oral Question 605-18(3) Junior Kindergarten Program

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Questions you raised on February 25, 2019 regarding medical screening requirements for licensed childcare centres and the Junior Kindergarten (JK) Program, teacher to children ratio in JK classrooms, and program review.

Children are not required to be immunized to attend licensed early childhood programs or public schools in the Northwest Territories (NWT). The *Education Act* and *Regulations* do not require JK- Grade 12 schools to collect immunization records for students; however, some schools choose to do so. School staff are not required to submit immunization records. Following changes made to the *Child Day Care Standards Regulations* in 2013, licensed early childhood programs are required to have a record of immunizations on file for every child enrolled in a facility. All staff employed in licensed early childhood programs are required to have up-to-date immunizations. With the recent discussion about immunizations, in particular with the recent cases of measles, ECE is considering whether changes are required to the *Education Act* and *Regulations* (1995).

Licensed early childhood programs and schools must immediately report any cases of suspected communicable diseases to their local health centre or public health as well as to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). Local health practitioners will also notify programs and schools if a case has been identified that requires contact tracing or further public health action with individuals affiliated with the licensed program or school.

The JK program is funded for a teacher to child ratio of 1:12. Most classrooms meet this ratio, or lower, with classroom assistants. Decisions regarding class size, teachers, and supports are made by the education authorities. It is up to schools to allocate funding and resources to meet the needs of their specific circumstances each year. ECE is unaware of any classrooms with a ratio of 1:25 as you mentioned during oral questions.

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JK is part of the JK - Grade 12 school system which undergoes continuous review. ECE provides ongoing support to schools to assess what is working well, what is not working well and how programs and services can be improved on.

Thank you for your questions and interest in this matter.



Caroline Cochrane
Minister, Education, Culture
and Employment

- c. Members of the Legislative Assembly
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Deputy Minister, Education, Culture and Employment
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