Recommendations for returning to school or daycare for children with congenital or acquired heart disease

We understand that this is a very stressful time for everyone, particularly for parents with children who have congenital or acquired heart disease. There is still a lot that we don’t know about COVID-19, and we continue to learn more daily. From what we know, however, most children who get sick from this virus have mild symptoms. However, patients with congenital or acquired heart disease are potentially at higher risk.

If you do not feel comfortable sending your child to school or day care after reading this, you should keep your child at home. We also realize that not everyone is in a situation that enables one parent to stay home with children. Whatever your decision is, it is important to continue practicing good hygiene including social distancing and frequent, effective hand washing for 20 seconds with soap and water.

Despite the absence of scientific studies, here are some sensible recommendations for children with congenital heart disease based on knowledge from adults and our collective experience.

1. **The following cardiac conditions are thought to increase the risk of serious illness with COVID-19 and we would not recommend returning to school or day care**

   - Systolic and/or diastolic dysfunction under medical treatment
   - Univentricular hearts (single ventricle physiology) operated or not (including Fontan palliation)
   - Pulmonary hypertension
   - Heart transplant
   - Residual and/or non-repaired hemodynamically significant lesions with symptoms
   - Kawasaki with giant aneurysms / coronary stenosis / or post coronary intervention
   - Poorly controlled arrhythmia on multiple drug therapy
   - Patient on semi-urgent or urgent waiting list for cardiac surgery and/or interventional catheterization
   - Condition reducing immunity (Trisomy 21, DiGeorge syndrome, heterotaxy)

2. **Recommendations for close contacts**

   - Young siblings (12 years old and younger) of the patients listed above should not go back to school
   - No restrictions for parents: practice social distancing and hand hygiene and follow public health recommendations

If your child’s cardiac condition is not listed above, he or she can return to school or daycare.
Should you still have questions about the information contained in this document, please call 514-412-4400 ext. 23269.