

# Advancing Health Equity in Housing and Child Care Settings: Opportunities for Improvement Through Collaboration Across Sectors

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OMSSA Exchange Conference

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**RentSafe**  
Connecting people across sectors towards healthy housing for all.



# About CPCHE

Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment, CPCHE ("kip-chee")

- National collaboration of organizations working towards healthy environments for all children in Canada
- OPHA and CCCF are founding partners



[www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)



**RentSafe**  
Connecting people across sectors towards healthy housing for all.

# CPCHE Partners



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Public Health



Little Things Matter  
Protecting Children from Toxic Chemicals



PEHE  
COLLABORATION

Region of Peel  
Working for you



TORONTO  
Public Health  
ask . discuss . connect

# Children's Environmental Health

Children are more vulnerable to environmental health hazards

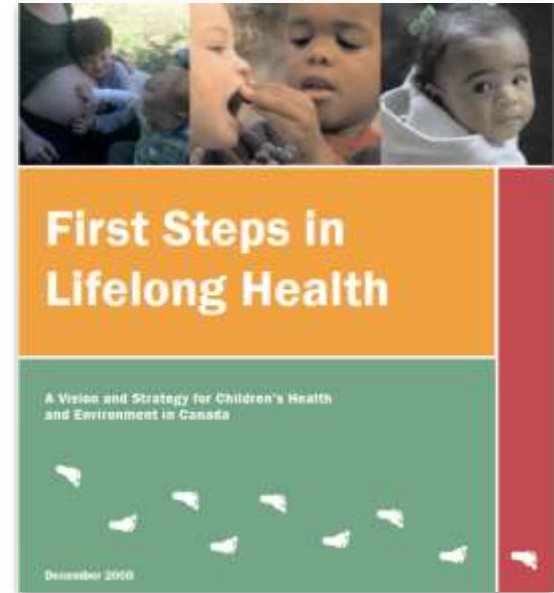
- Higher levels of exposure
  - Children eat, drink and breathe more than adults per unit of body weight
  - Behaviours (e.g., hand-to-mouth activity) increase exposures to contaminants
- Greater susceptibility to harm
  - Rapid, dynamic process of development creates “windows of vulnerability”
  - Immune and detoxification systems are immature

Environmental exposures are an important determinant of lifelong health

- Early life toxicant exposures linked to developmental harm, brain effects, chronic diseases (e.g., asthma, cancer), impacts on the endocrine and immune systems

Some children are at greater risk

- Income disparities, environmental injustice (e.g., nearby industry, unhealthy housing), parental occupations, geography, genetics
- Environmental exposures are largely preventable



# Learning Objectives

Today we will....

- Gain understanding of **intersectoral collaboration** among municipal social services, public health, community advocates and others to address community objectives related to health, well-being, housing, education, climate change and environmental sustainability
- Learn about resources to **address unhealthy rental housing conditions**, advance a rights-based approach to housing, and develop a more preventive and health-oriented focus on housing adequacy
- Identify ways to work across sectors to **advance healthy, equitable and environmentally sustainable child care settings**.

Let's hear from you

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# Advancing children's environmental protection requires...



- Intersectoral collaboration
- Upstream perspectives and equity-focused action

# Today is an opportunity to...

...strengthen intersectoral collaboration with municipal human services on environmental health issues related to:

- . Housing
- . Child care settings





# OMSSA Housing and Homelessness Data

- Ontario SSMs maintain 260,000+ affordable housing units, representing a combined \$40-billion asset.
- Total funding for housing programs increased from \$1.4 billion in 2016 to \$2.5 billion, largely funded by municipalities in 2024.
- Municipal contributions grew by 108%:
  - Rising from \$792 million in 2016 to \$1.64 billion in 2024.
  - Now covering 65.1% of all housing funding.
- Ontario's municipalities are the primary funders of community housing in Ontario, contributing more than \$1.77 billion annually.
- Most of the community housing stock in Ontario is between 18 and 50 years old, and the cost to address the backlog of needed repairs is sitting at \$1.5 billion.
- Each \$1 million of investment in affordable housing generates 5.66 direct Ontario jobs and 2.83 indirect Ontario jobs (8.49 in total).
- CMSMs and DSSABs are providing affordable homes to more than 680,000 Ontarians. 232,419 households were on waitlists for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing in 2024, an 8.9% increase from 2023.
- The number of RGI units (178,636) has not kept pace with rising demand.
- CMSMs and DSSABs administer funding, oversee standards, and provide capacity building to more than 1,500+ non-profit and co-operative housing providers.
- There is a need to build 75,050 net new community housing spaces in Ontario.
- In Ontario, 46% of rental households are paying more than 30% of their income on rent – and more than 1 in 5 are putting more than 50% of their income towards rent.
- There are currently 80,000+ homeless in Ontario and over 1400 encampments.

# OMSSA Early Years and Child Care Data

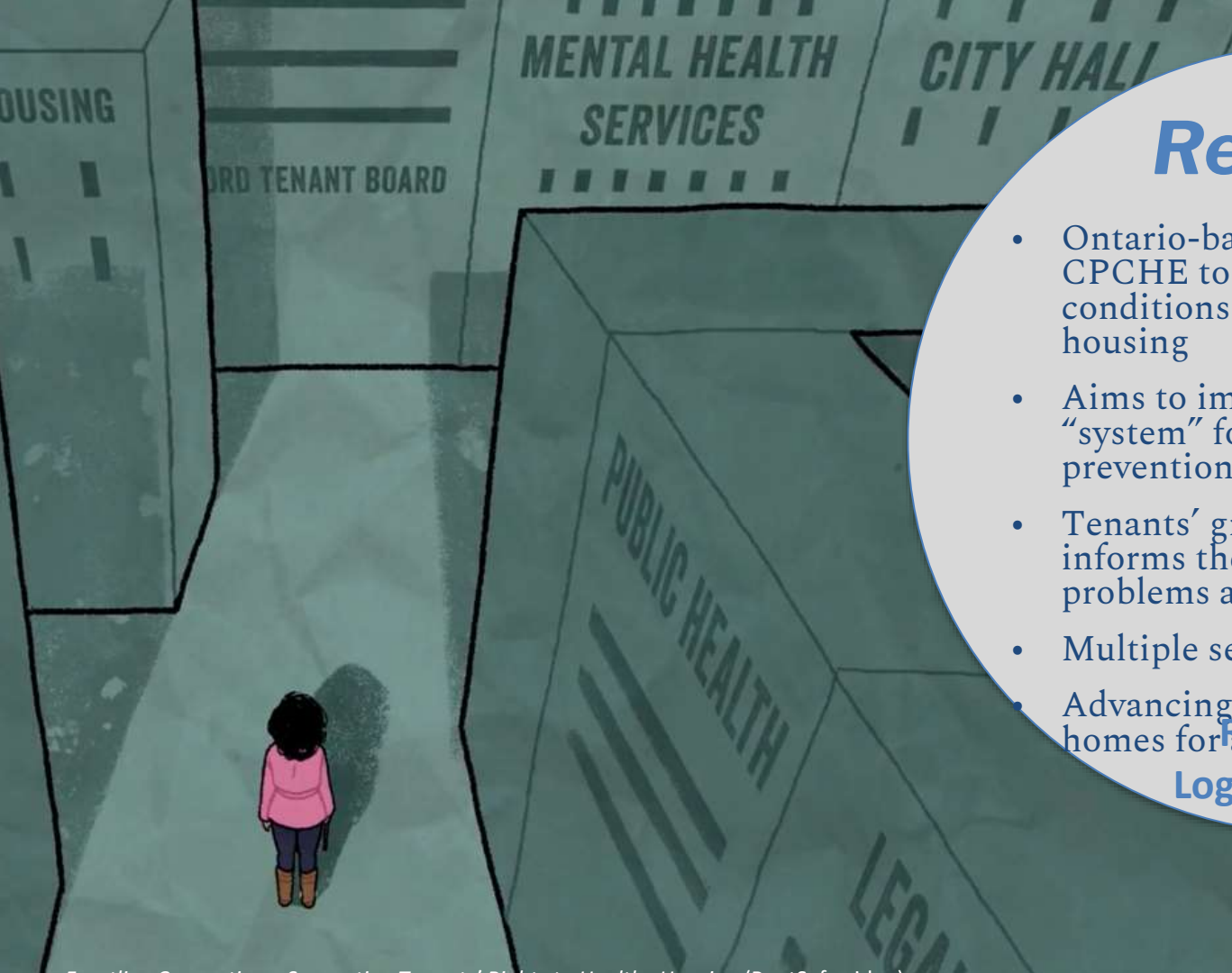
- The Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) reported to the Ontario Legislature in 2022 that increased demand will result in the need for an additional 300,000 spaces in Ontario. Currently the provincial target is 86,000.
- As of June 2023, 92% of Ontario's licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 5 were enrolled in the CWELCC system.
- As of June 2023, all municipalities executed agreements with their licensees. 95.9% of not-for-profit sites and 75.6% of for-profit sites were enrolled in the CWELCC system, including a total of 301,853 licensed child care spaces in centres and homes for children aged 0 to 5 years.
- In 2023, there were 5,576 licensed child care centres, 148 licensed home child care agencies, and 9,863 approved homes offering licensed home child care. This amounted to 505,055 available licensed child care spaces for Ontario families, which is enough to accommodate only 1 in 4 of children age 0-4 in Ontario.
- If spaces were available and affordable, it's estimated that almost half of children in this age group would be using licensed child care.
- In 2018-19, more than 400,000 children accessed child and family programs in 1,296 locations across Ontario, and more than 140,000 children received fee subsidies.
- 302,000 work as early childhood educators, early childhood assistants or home child care providers in Canada. 75,000 of them work in Ontario.
- 90% of child care providers have difficulty filling vacant positions. The average annual wage for RECEs in Ontario is \$44,512 – the lowest in Canada. As of January 2024, the wage floor for RECEs in Ontario working in programs participating in CWELCC readjusted to \$23.86 per hour.

# Healthy Rental Housing and Municipal Social Services

- In Ontario, municipal service system managers are responsible for community housing, homelessness, social assistance and early years and child care.
- OMSSA has been advocating for increased health and human services integration.
- OMSSA service managers work with lower tier municipalities on planning, housing/rental supply and enforcement of standards and by-laws.
- Municipalities work closely with their public health units.
- Municipalities are also working on Community Safety and Well Being Plans.
- Supportive housing is crucial to support successful tenancies.
- OMSSA members also engage in emergency social services and responses to local emergencies.

# OMSSA members rank rental supply as top priority.

- At a recent OMSSA housing leads meeting, OMSSA members ranked increased rental supply as our top advocacy priority based on need. Increased funding for community housing and supportive housing also ranked as top issues for OMSSA's housing and homelessness leads.
- Municipal service system managers enter into agreements and work closely with housing and child care providers.
- OMSSA strongly supports licensed child care in home and community settings.
- OMSSA released a paper on human services integration in 2023 [https://omssa.com/news\\_manager.php?page=26830](https://omssa.com/news_manager.php?page=26830)



## RentSafe

- Ontario-based initiative led by CPCHE to address unhealthy conditions in low-income rental housing
- Aims to improve the intersectoral “system” for response and prevention
- Tenants’ grounded (lived) expertise informs the conceptualization of problems and solutions
- Multiple sectors actively involved
- Advancing the right to healthy homes for all

[RentSafe.ca](https://rentsafe.ca)

[LogementSain.ca](https://logementsain.ca)

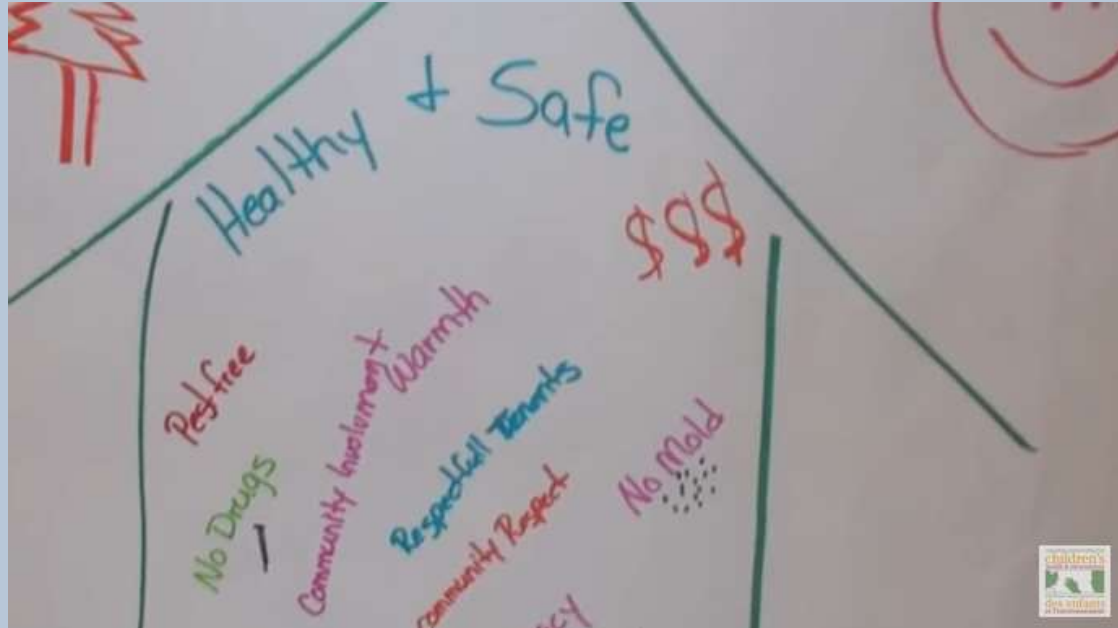
# A healthy home provides the foundation for health and wellbeing

Maintaining and improving the quality of existing rental housing is essential to support the **health and wellbeing** of tenants, address the **housing and homelessness crisis** and improve **health equity**

- Previous RentSafe research has highlighted tenants' experience of **multiple indoor environmental health issues** in their homes, e.g., mould, pests, poor ventilation

# A healthy home provides the foundation for health and wellbeing

## RentSafe Tenants' Rights Advocates Network – Defining Adequate



[https://youtu.be/9G8g4\\_OMCW8?si=RWF121XEFU-e62wR](https://youtu.be/9G8g4_OMCW8?si=RWF121XEFU-e62wR)



# **Mould is widespread**

## **RentSafe Survey of Small-Scale Landlords (2018)**

- 29% of respondents reported having experienced mould in their rental units.
- 23% of respondents identified mould as the housing condition most harmful to health.
- 95% of respondents feel mould is one of the most important housing conditions to minimize or eliminate.

# **Mould is widespread**

## RentSafe Owen Sound Collaborative Tenant Survey (2022): Key Highlights

**47%** of respondents reported mould in their unit

- Factors that increased likelihood of having mould in the unit:
  - Spending >30% of household income on housing (19% more likely)
  - Living in the unit for longer (24% more likely)
  - Living in a unit owned by a company or corporation (18% more likely)

**21%** of respondents did not report any bathroom ventilation

- Proper ventilation is essential to prevention of mould

## Unhealthy housing is a multifaceted, interconnected issue that is broadly situated

- Unhealthy rental housing is situated within the housing and homelessness crisis
- Housing is a driver of health (in)equity that intersects with structural and social determinants of health
- Housing is an intersectoral issue, needs to be considered across disciplines and sectors, including the engagement of grounded (lived) expertise

# Contextualizing Unhealthy Rental Housing

## *Unhealthy Housing and the Housing Crisis*

**Rental housing stock is ageing, in decline, in need of repairs, and increasingly unaffordable.** Factors contributing to this crisis include

- Reduced government investments
- Increasing financialization of housing
- Climate change
- Reactive and limited response systems
  - Maintenance and housing “standards” are poorly defined
  - Reactive, complaints-based system puts the onus on tenants to identify unhealthy conditions

# Preservation of existing rental housing is essential to achieve....

- homelessness prevention
- health equity
- right to housing



# Unhealthy and unfit conditions in low-income rental housing: an equity issue in Ontario

- Renters with low-income are more likely to experience housing inadequacy
  - A much greater percentage (40.6%) of renters in core housing need lived in inadequate housing (in need of major repair) in 2021, compared to owners in core housing need (16%), or all renters (7.8%). [3,4]
- Ontario's purpose-built rental housing supply is ageing
  - 85% was built before 1980
  - this housing is more affordable than rental housing built after 2000. [5]
- Populations who are disproportionately exposed to the risks of housing-related health inequities include: Renters with low-income, Indigenous peoples, racialized tenants, people who experience disproportionate risk and negative outcomes associated with climate change, and children and youth.

[3] Statistics Canada. (2023). Table\_98-10-0234-01 Dwelling condition by tenure: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations. <https://doi.org/10.25318/9810023401-eng>

[4] Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2021). Core Housing Need (2021) – Ontario. <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en#Profile/35/2/Ontario>

[5] Government of Ontario. (2019). Housing Needs in Ontario. Community housing renewal: Ontario's action plan under the National Housing Strategy. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/community-housing-renewal-ontarios-action-plan-under-national-housing-strategy/housing-needs-ontario#>

# Contextualizing Unhealthy Housing

## *Housing as an intersectoral issue*

The topic of ‘housing and health’ needs to be considered across disciplines and sectors due to its complex and multifaceted nature.

- Engagement of Grounded Expertise (People with lived and living experience of housing inadequacy) is central
  - Central to any intersectoral efforts to address the pillars of healthy housing is the presence and leadership of residents.



# Why address unhealthy rental housing conditions through collaboration across sectors?

- Improve prevention and early intervention
- Need for coordinated responses to immediate needs/acute issues
  - Leverage roles, responsibilities, expertise and capacity
- More effective service provision (referrals), policy change, system function
- Unhealthy housing conditions are related to several issues:
  - System responses to rental housing issues
  - Housing maintenance
    - Tenant and Landlord Rights and Responsibilities
    - Government funding and incentives for preservation of existing affordable housing
  - Low-Income
    - Energy poverty
  - Climate change

# Contextualizing Unhealthy Housing Housing as an intersectoral issue



## Involvement of other sectors

Public health	Tenants	Housing providers
Health care	Housing support	Housing developers
Legal services	Community Organizations	Emergency Services
Municipal governments	Indigenous governments	Provincial/territorial (P/T) governments
Federal government		

# RentSafe-OPHA Survey of Public Health Units in Ontario

The survey specifically sought to understand current approaches, opportunities and barriers related to practices used by public health units (PHUs) to address unhealthy housing conditions

Survey was completed by 41 respondents, representing 29 of 34 (85%) public health units in Ontario

- Representative of the public health landscape in Ontario, based on board governance, population and region.



## Key Survey Findings – Ontario Public Health Units

Overall, survey respondents reported that:

- **Housing habitability concerns come up routinely** in their work
- Unhealthy housing conditions are addressed through:
  - Public education (92.9%)
  - Education/information/referrals in response to complaints (85.7%)
  - Inspection/investigation in response to complaints (71.4%)
  - **Joint investigations with other municipal agencies (39.3%)**
- Responding to substandard housing issues should be a priority (59%)
- **Responses to housing habitability concerns were adequate (57%)**



## Key Survey Findings (2) - Ontario Public Health Units

- **Housing was highlighted as a complex issue that requires upstream interventions and collaboration**
  - Across sectors, organizations and PHU programs
- Respondents indicated **fairly low engagement in:**
  - **Collaborative processes** where unhealthy housing issues are addressed (39%)
  - **Policy review and advocacy** toward healthy housing (52%).
- Engagement in collaborations and policy work were identified among the top opportunities to address unhealthy housing.
- PHUs engage in promising practices to address unhealthy housing conditions
  - Engagement in promising practices is far from consistent and widespread



# Survey Findings

## Barriers

**Recurrent barriers** included

- **Limited capacity** (staffing levels and funding)
- Low priority at organizational level
- No prescriptive guidelines, interpreted as not mandated (flexibility within Ontario Public Health Standards)
- **Lack of legislative clarity and consistency** across jurisdictions

# Community collaboration to address mould and unhealthy rental housing

## Bright Spot on RentSafe Owen Sound Collaborative



RentSafe Owen Sound Collaborative has mobilized the findings from surveys of landlords and tenants to present a compelling case for action at the municipal level.

- Research findings presented to the City Council's Corporate Services Committee, highlighting the need to improve rental housing conditions and support landlords and tenants
- **Recommendations** include:
  - improve data collection,
  - adopt a mould model by-law, and
  - prioritize measures to help landlords maintain rental units and foster effective tenant-landlord relationships.

The committee unanimously approved a motion for City staff to explore actionable steps based on the report's recommendations.



# RentSafe Approaches to Prevent and Address Unhealthy Conditions in Rental Housing



- Engage and centre grounded expertise
  - Recognizing the expertise of people who live in unhealthy housing conditions
- Work with partners from across sector
  - Co-develop and implement strategies that advance healthy housing conditions
- Conduct and mobilize research and data collection
  - Can provide a meaningful focal point for intersectoral collaboration
  - Assess and report on
    - existence and extent of the population health and equity impacts of unhealthy housing
    - effectiveness of strategies to promote healthy housing
- Support person-centered service orientation and 'No Wrong Door'
- Participate in policy development and advocacy
  - Development of provincial mould model by-law
  - Advocacy in Owen Sound



# Policy Advocacy Opportunity

## Mould By-Law

Ontario Association of Property Standards Officers (OAPSO)'s updated **model by-law on mould in housing** can be adopted by municipalities across Ontario to include robust mould remediation language and enhance capacity for enforcement of Property Standards.

- Now available through OAPSO's Model Property Standards By-Law (see by-law 4.16), and RentSafe at: <https://rentsafe.ca/2025/03/07/model-mould-by-law/>
- co-created with the expertise of both public health inspectors and municipal property/by-law officers, with representatives from provincial professional associations from public health and municipal services, and RentSafe
- Informed by a comprehensive scan of existing by-laws across Ontario

# Opportunities for action to address unhealthy housing conditions in rental housing in Municipal Social Services



- Patient/client/tenant advocacy & support to address immediate/acute issues
  - Increased tenant and landlord education on their rights and responsibilities
  - Early intervention
  - Mediation re: Tenant-Landlord relationships or disputes
  - supportive housing for those who require additional wrap around supports
- Emergency Funds
  - Remediation (bed bugs, mould)
- Programs to support rental housing maintenance and retrofits
  - Climate resilient retrofitting
- Programs to support affordability
  - Energy, housing, adequate income, basic needs



# Municipal Services to Support Healthy Rental Housing

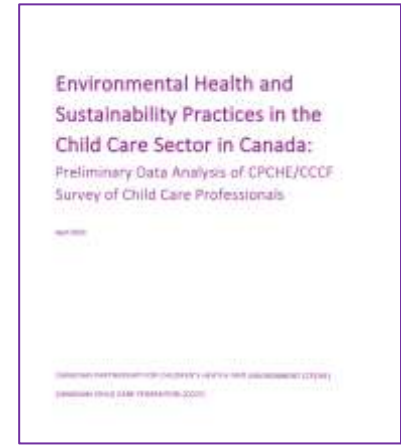
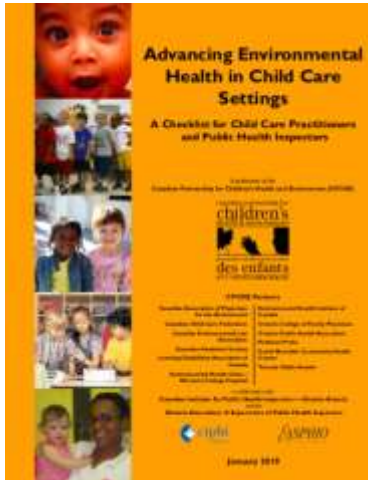
- RGI Housing
- Ontario Works and ODSP
- Supportive housing
- Shelter allowance
- Transit passes
- Employment, newcomer supports
- Energy benefits
- Child care fee subsidy, Special Needs Resourcing
- Non-profit and charity sector
- Incentives for affordable rental supply
- Emergency Social Services
- Municipal Property Standards & By-Law
  - Inspections and enforcement



# Municipal Policy and Advocacy Opportunities toward Healthy Rental Housing

- Community Housing Agreements
- Service Agreements
- Municipal mould by-law
- Proactive rental inspection
- Incentives for regular maintenance of rental housing
- Targeted funding for maintenance, retrofits of low-income rental housing (including supportive housing), remediation
  - funding for flood clean up (incl. personal protective equipment - masks)
- Provincial advocacy
  - Supports for tenants and landlords: supportive housing, mediation, hoarding
  - Affordability (of housing, energy, adequate income)
  - Increased supply, preservation and maintenance funds

# CPCHE collaborations towards healthy & sustainable child care settings



# Child care environments as an opportunity to advance children's health equity in Canada

- Federal-provincial/territorial \$10/day child care agreements, in place across Canada, present an unprecedented opportunity to invest in healthy and sustainable child care environments.
- Many children in Canada, including those who live in marginalizing circumstances, spend many hours each day in child care settings. How can we ensure that those hours are spent in settings that promote and support their health and well-being?
- Health equity: Ensuring that all children in Canada have an equal opportunity to learn and play in healthy and sustainable child care settings

Healthy & sustainable child care settings include those with:

- ✓ good air quality and ventilation
- ✓ minimal sources of toxic chemical exposure via cleaning products, craft supplies, plastics and furnishings
- ✓ clean drinking water
- ✓ below-guideline radon levels
- ✓ adequate shade
- ✓ plentiful greenspace
- ✓ protections from excessive heat and noise
- ✓ climate resilience



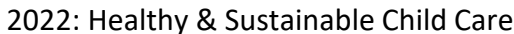
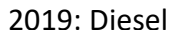
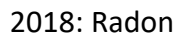
# The Vision – All Children Have a Right to Healthy Learning Environments

## Core elements of healthy & sustainable child care



1. **Built/retrofitted** to promote health and environmental sustainability
2. Located away from sources of **pollution**
3. Minimize **carbon emissions** and maximize climate resiliency
4. Safe **radon** levels
5. Minimize exposure to **toxic substances**
6. Access to safe drinking **water**
7. Access to the **natural world**
8. Advance **climate action** and counteract climate anxiety
9. Inclusive, accessible & culturally appropriate
10. **Staff supported** in their role in ensuring healthy & sustainable early learning environments

Annual campaigns raise awareness & encourage action to prevent environmental health risks to children in early learning environments & schools



# CPCHE/CCCCF Survey of Child Care Professionals on Environmental Health & Sustainability Practices

2022, n=~2000

- The majority were **concerned about risks to children's health** posed by:
  - air pollution (indoor 64%; outdoor 69%); toxic chemicals in products (69%); lack of access to nature (68%); climate change (68%)
- 48.5% felt that there were **unhealthy conditions** in their child care setting
- 50% felt that **their sector has a role** in reducing children's exposure to toxic chemicals & pollutants; 84% felt that it was important for the child care programs to strive to be **ecologically sustainable**
- Having a higher proportion of children who are visible minorities/Indigenous children was a significant **predictor of unhealthy conditions** within the child care setting e.g. structural disrepair, mould, lack of A/C, lack of shade
- Findings suggest that the **sector would benefit from resources and supports** to become healthier and more ecologically sustainable



# Survey Results: Air Quality

## Child care professionals reported that their centre was/had:

- < 500m from major roadway (53.5%)
- Affected by wildfire smoke in the past two years (35%)
- Policies in place in the event of poor air quality (62%)
- Taking action to reduce vehicle idling during drop-off and pick-up times (50%)
- Taking other action to reduce children's exposure to traffic pollution e.g. closing windows during peak traffic periods (55%)



## Why this is important:

Health Canada reports:

- Exposure to traffic-related air pollution (TRAP) increases risk of childhood leukemia, asthma, allergies, adult lung cancer, stroke, heart conditions and lung disease
- Every year in Canada TRAP contributes to 1,200 premature deaths, 2.7M acute respiratory symptom days, 210,000 asthma symptom days and 3,600 child acute bronchitis episodes
- 10M Canadians live in elevated TRAP exposure zones (<500m of highways or <100m major roads)
- 48% of schools (K-12) are located within 200 m of high traffic roadways; and 31% within 100m

# Survey Results: Climate Change

## Child care professionals reported that their centre was/ had:

- Taking action to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change (20%)
- Policies in place in the event of extreme heat (74%)
- Without air conditioning (27%)
- Without adequate shade in the outdoor play area (43%)
- Pavement on most/all of the outdoor play area (36%)
- Making efforts to conserve energy (64.5%)



## Why this is important:

- Children and other vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted by climate change
- Immediate and strong action is needed to drastically reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate change to protect current and future generations

## Thermally Comfortable Playgrounds Lit. Review

- Playgrounds often present some of the highest surface temperatures within an urban area

# Survey Results: Green Spaces

## Child care professionals reported that their centre had:

- Adjacent outdoor play area (80%)
- Outdoor play area without adequate shade (43%)
- Outdoor artificial turf (36%)
- Pavement on most/all of the outdoor play area (36%)
- Play area without natural vegetation (26%)
- Pesticides/ herbicides routinely used outdoors (21.5%)



## Why this is important:

Child & Nature Alliance of Canada

- Access to active play in nature & outdoors is essential for healthy child development.
- Recommend more outdoor play opportunities in all settings—at home, at school, in child care, the community

Jarvis, I. et al. 2022 & 2021

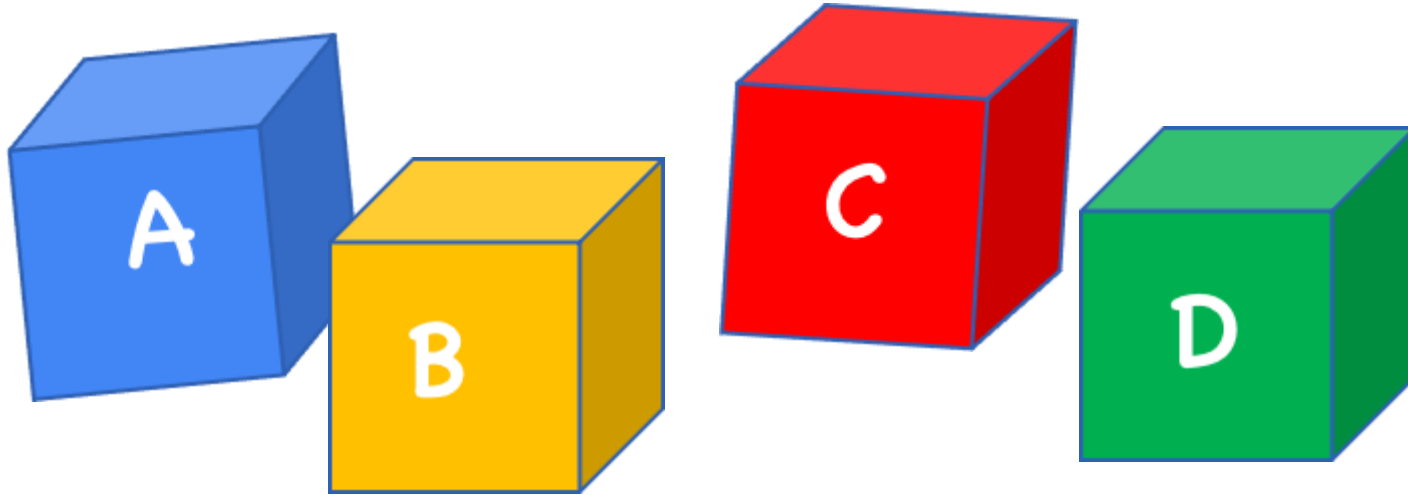
- Exposure to greenspace supports optimal childhood development with potential health benefits across the life course.
- Exposure to paved land negatively associated with childhood development

<https://www.phn-rsp.ca/en/position-statements/active-outdoor-play-statement.html>  
<https://www.outdoorplaycanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/position-statements-on-active-outdoor-play-en.pdf> <https://canue.ca/publications/>



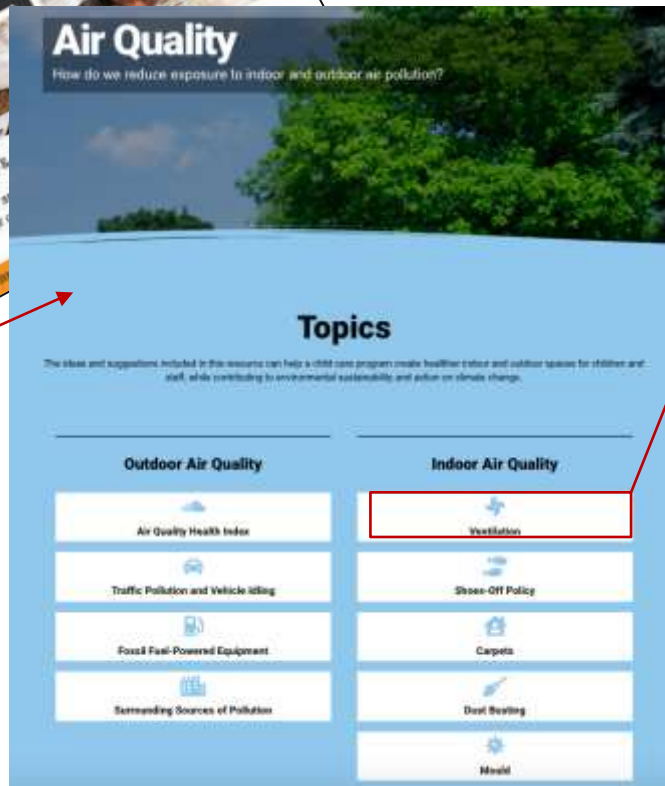
# Test Your Knowledge!

## Healthy & Sustainable Child Care





<https://healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/child-care-resource/>



# Healthy and Sustainable Child Care Checklist and Resource Hub

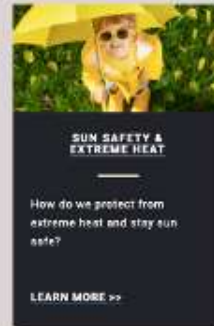
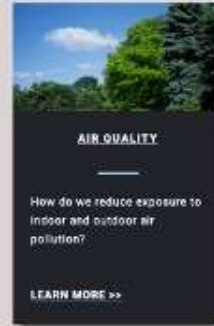




## Child Care Checklist

# 9 topic areas

- Air quality
- Outdoor learning and play
- Indoor learning and play
- Sun safety and extreme heat
- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Kitchen and food preparation
- Facility maintenance and office administration
- Sustainability and climate action
- Inclusivity, equity



# Public Health-Child Care Sector Collaboration to Advance Children's Environmental Health Equity in Child Care Settings

## Project Components:

- Professional Development for Child Care Professionals
- Strategy Development for Public Health-Child Care Sector Collaboration – The White Paper and Cross-sectoral Roundtable

Financial contribution:

Canada



# Webinars for Early Childhood Educators and Home-based Child Care Professionals

- Professional development webinars for centre-based and home-based child care
- Present practical, low-cost tips to reduce toxic exposures and create healthier child care environments
  - CPCHE Child Care Checklist
  - CPCHE Top 5 Tips
- Reminders to follow public health & safety requirements, and to:
  - *“Talk to your public health professional”*
- Webinars available in English and French; webinar for home-based care translated into Punjabi and Tagalog

<https://healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/child-care-resource/>



<https://youtu.be/jmsRHzKh6uc>

<https://youtu.be/1A6FsTgJFwA>

# Potential Pathways for the Public Health Sector to Advance Environmental Health Protection and Health Equity in Child Care Settings

1. Incorporate Healthy and Sustainable Child Care Messages within Routine/Mandated Public Health Inspections & Investigations
2. Leverage Existing Communication Channels
3. Leverage Mutually-Supportive Mandates across Public Health Programs
4. Participate in Intersectoral Committees at the Community Level
5. Engage Municipalities who have Oversight for Child Care
6. Engage Provincial Ministries with Mandates related to Child Care and Healthy Environments
7. Academic Learning and Professional Development

# Pathway 1. Incorporate Healthy & Sustainable Child Care Messages within Routine/Mandated Public Health Inspections

## Opportunity:

Use CPCHE's Healthy & Sustainable Child Care Resource Hub and Checklist to:

- Initiate discussions with child care provider on children's exposure to toxic chemicals, environmental health and sustainability
- As an additional tool when reviewing applications for new/renovated child care settings

## We asked Public Health Professionals (PHPs):

- *Do you feel it would be feasible to integrate the CPCHE Resource Hub into routine/mandated public health visits?*
- *What would be needed to put this into motion?*

# Pathway 1. Incorporate Healthy & Sustainable Child Care Messages within Routine/Mandated Public Health Inspections

## What we heard

- A standardized and concise resource would be most useful and would benefit from being incorporated as a resource/ guideline supported through provincial public health standards
- Opportunity for “teachable moments” about safe practices
- Challenges with incorporating the resource within routine inspections given the current public health mandate, lack of environmental health standards or guidelines, financial constraints, and workforce capacity and expertise on specific environmental exposures

# Pathway 5. Engage Municipalities that have Oversight for Child Care

## Opportunity:

- Engage municipalities (CMSMs) having oversight for licensed child care (centre and home-based) and encourage them to incorporate environmental hazard information (e.g., CPCHE's Resource Hub) into their quality assurance process
- Consider providing train-the-trainer sessions for CMSMs and staff, to increase awareness of environmental health risks
- Collaborate with OMSSA/CMSMs

## We asked Public Health Professionals (PHPs):

- Would public health collaboration with the municipal social services sector be a potential pathway to support the child care sector (focusing on the home-based sector and health equity)?

## What we heard:

- Capacity issues: takes time to build relationships; need to prioritize against other competing issues

# Final Thoughts & Request

**CPCHE resources and tools** aim to increase awareness and action to ensure that all children in Canada have healthy environments in which to live, learn, play and grow. They are: evidence-based, equity-focused, and partnership-driven.

**We encourage Municipal Social Services Professionals to:**

- Further explore how CPCHE's RentSafe and Child Care Sector resources could be used in your day-to-day professional practice
- Share your ideas on opportunities to build collaboration on these mutual areas of interest.





## Contacts

**Thank you!**

Looking for more information/interest in:

- Canadian Partnership for Children's Health & Environment  
[erica@healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](mailto:erica@healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
- RentSafe  
[geri@healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](mailto:geri@healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
- Public Health involvement in CPCHE projects  
[helen@healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](mailto:helen@healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
- OMSSA Policy Development & Advocacy  
[dwolk@omssa.com](mailto:dwolk@omssa.com)
- Canadian Child Care Federation  
[mflaherty@cccfc-fcsge.ca](mailto:mflaherty@cccfc-fcsge.ca)

[www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

# Appendix – Additional CPCHE Resources and Initiatives

## CPCHE Child Care Checklist and Resource Hub

- Were you aware of the checklist?
- If so, have you used it in your practice?
- If not, would you consider using it?

## Check out the Checklist!

<https://healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/child-care-resource>

- Scroll down and click on:  
Do the checklist >>
- Scroll down and click on:  
Information About You >> (leave blank)
- Scroll down and click on  
Start >>

The “LEARN MORE” button links back to the Child Care Checklist Resource Hub

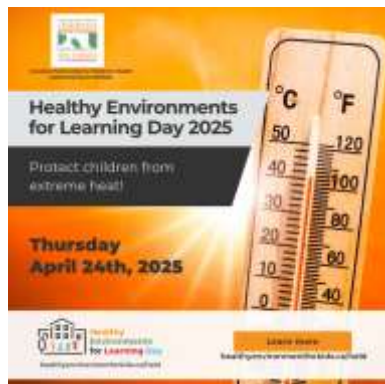


**Child care  
professionals  
completing the  
checklist receive a  
CCCF PD certificate!**



# Healthy Environments for Learning Day 2025

- The HELD 2025 campaign prioritized extreme heat in schools and child care settings
- **Collective Call for Action to Protect Children from Extreme Heat in Schools and Child Care Settings** – adoption of a maximum indoor temperature standard of 26C in learning environments, investments in building retrofits to support climate resiliency, guidance for schools to implement passive and behavioural cooling measures ...



The Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCH), with our partners, affiliates and collaborators, calls upon all levels of government to ensure that all schools, early learning and child care settings are equipped to protect children and staff from the escalating risks to health and learning posed by climate-related extreme heat events, starting with the following priority actions:

1. **Adopt a maximum indoor temperature standard of 26°C** in learning environments and operate, as needed, to ensure continued alignment with health-based guidance and emerging research on temperature thresholds in indoor environments from authoritative sources. (PCO/SC/CC/EC)
2. **Improve education and early child care legislation, occupational health and safety laws, public health standards and other applicable regulatory measures** to explicitly implement the maximum indoor temperature standard, coupled with the required resources, technical support and guidance to support schools and early learning and child care programs in meeting the standard.
3. **Invest in building resiliency to support climate resiliency in educational settings.** This may include installation/ upgrading of energy-efficient cooling systems, with carbon-free equipment targets – in the form of incremental percentages of regularly occupied spaces equipped with mechanical cooling – towards the achievement of facility-wide cooling in all educational facilities. All new builds should be equipped with energy efficient, low-carbon cooling to ensure heat health protection.
4. **Investigate needs of educational settings with the means and guidance to implement passive and behavioural cooling measures, such as window shading, landscaping and window coverings to block**
  - 1. **investigate** surfacing options, and opt for lighter coloured heat-reflecting surfaces (i.e. permitting the installation of artificial turf (with limited exceptions))
5. **Collect the data required to drive extreme heat adaptation measures in indoor and outdoor educational settings.** In order to decrease the risk of heat-related stress and disruptions to children's learning, data collection should include tracking of existing infrastructure needs (e.g., percentage and geographic distribution of educational facilities without adequate cooling), ongoing tracking of indoor and outdoor temperatures, and measurements to capture impact on student learning (e.g., school closures, student absences, test scores and other measures of student learning).
6. **Prioritize investment in extreme heat mitigation for learning environments in under-resourced communities to promote health equity.** Including providing socio-economically disadvantaged communities for upgrades to, or installation of, mechanical cooling systems. Such efforts must be undertaken with active involvement of community representatives and leadership to ensure that interventions are effective, culturally responsive, and aligned with local needs.
7. **Optimize and coordinate investments across all levels of government and relevant educational mandates**

<https://healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/held/>

# Healthy Environments for Learning Day 2024



- HELD 2024 campaign prioritized indoor air quality in schools and child care settings
- Collective Call for Action to Ensure Healthy Indoor Air Quality** – guidance\*, investments
- IAQ Speaker Series/Knowledge Exchange**
- Campaign Follow-up – **Promoting Awareness and Action on Climate-related Impacts on Children's Health and Well-being in Learning Environments**



*\*Anticipate release of Health Canada's Indoor Air Quality Guidelines for schools and other learning environments, including child care settings, in 2025*





# Top 5 Tips for Reducing Children's Exposure to Toxic Chemicals in the Home



Brochure, Tip Cards & Video available in multiple languages  
<https://healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/creating-healthy-home-environments-for-kids-top-5-tips/>  
<https://youtu.be/j10fctMsPkC>



# Reduce Radon

CPCHE and its partners are promoting awareness, testing and policy action to reduce children's exposure to cancer-causing radon gas in homes, child care programs and schools



<https://healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/reduce-radon/>

# Advocacy for Climate Action for Children's Health

## Reducing GHG Emissions to Mitigate Climate Change

- Regulatory measures, targets

## Investing in Climate Solutions

- Renewable energy, energy conservation, phase-out of fossil-fuel subsidies, just transition

## Supporting Climate Adaptation Measures for Health

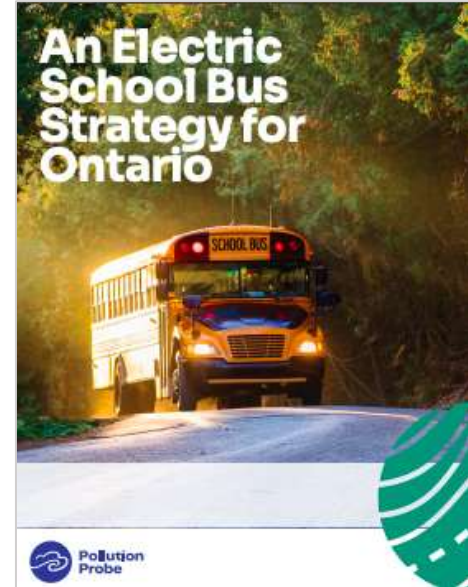
- Prioritizing the most vulnerable populations, including children
- Sustainable low carbon and climate resilient communities
- Reporting on health-co-benefits: air quality, physical activity, healthy eating, poverty reduction, health equity, mental health

## Advocacy for School Bus Electrification for Health

- Health impacts of diesel school bus emissions
- Opportunities to reduce GHG emissions and protect health through zero-emission electric school bus fleet



<https://healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/joint-statements-by-cpcbe-partner-organizations/>



2023 The Delphi Group, Pollution Probe, CPCHE <https://www.pollutionprobe.org/a/electric-school-bus-strategy-for-ontario/>



# RentSafe Mould resources



## Mould Expert Report

## Guide for Tenants

## Model Mould By-Law

### HEALTH IMPACTS OF INDOOR DAMPNES AND MOULD AND EFFECTIVE REMEDATION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Expert Review and Summary  
of Scientific Evidence

#### PREPARED BY

Richard Samuelsen  
Associate Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto  
and Research Director, Epidemiology

Robert Hart,  
Certified Public Health Inspector (Canada)

December 7, 2023

GUIDE FOR TENANTS/TENANTS LIVING WITH MOULD

### Are you living in a rental unit with mould?

Do you or your family members living in the unit suffer from any of the following symptoms?

- ☐ Ongoing cough that does not go away and is worse when in the home
- ☐ Asthma symptoms becoming worse (for example, needing to use an asthma inhaler more often)
- ☐ Stuffy or runny nose that associated with allergies that keeps coming back and is worse when in the home
- ☐ Trouble with breathing

Do you or any of your family who live in the unit suffer from any of the following conditions?

- ☐ Asthma or other breathing difficulties
- ☐ Lung disease or other respiratory illness

If you answered YES to any of these questions OR if you have young children and have mould in your home...

**You should talk to your doctor.**  
Mould may be harming your health or the health of your family.

You may want to keep a record of symptoms that you or family members experience. Be sure to note if the symptoms are worse when you are in the home and/or if you feel better when you are at work, school or friends' homes. Show your record of symptoms to your doctor.

Ask your doctor for a letter to document that you are suffering from symptoms related to the mould. A sample letter is online at: [www.rentsafecan.ca](http://www.rentsafecan.ca)

NAME	Street name	DATE	TYPE	UP-DOWN
Project 101	101 Main St	10/1/2023	10/1/2023	10/1/2023

- Ontario Association of Property Standards Officers (OAPSO) Model By-Law
- #### 4.16 MOULD
- Any accumulation of mould shall be immediately cleaned and removed by the owner of a building.
  - No person shall occupy, or permit the occupancy of a building, or portion thereof, where an extensive accumulation of mould exists which could pose a health concern to any person who occupies the building, or portion thereof.
  - Any condition in a building, including but not limited to water penetration, humidity or inadequate ventilation, which relate to the creation and growth of mould, shall be repaired, replaced or removed by the owner of the building. The owner shall take all reasonable steps necessary to prevent reoccurrence of mould growth.
  - If the mould accumulation is moderate or extensive, the Property Standards Officer may order the owner to provide, at the owner's expense, a report prepared by a Certified Air Quality Assessment professional, trained and knowledgeable in the field, detailing mould spore samples and related air quality.
    - The report in section 4.16.4 will detail the extent of the mould contamination, and remediation of mould removal, and any other items as the Officer may deem necessary.
    - The owner will provide a copy of the report to the Property Standards Officer;
    - The owner will undertake the appropriate remediation outlined in the report; and
    - The owner will provide a follow-up report which confirms that air quality levels are consistent with a healthy environment.
  - Notwithstanding any other provision of this Bylaw, section 4.16.1 and 4.16.2 shall not apply if the presence of mould is minor in nature and relates to general maintenance and/or lifestyle.

# RentSafe Mould resources: Intersectoral Webinar



## Addressing unhealthy conditions in rental housing: the case of mould

### Free Webinar

Wednesday, Mar 19, 2025



**Mould is one of the most common concerns contributing to unhealthy housing in Ontario**

Learn how to prevent and effectively address mould in rental housing

Watch the Replay Now



RentSafe.ca | Connecting people across sectors toward healthy housing for all



RentSafe



CLEO

Connective Local Elected Officials  
to address public administration issues



INDIGENOUS  
CLEAN ENERGY



Ontario Public Health Association



Ontario Public Health Association  
Association des professionnels de la santé publique



Public Health  
Santé publique

Partnership on health care  
Partenariat de la santé



Health  
Canada