

2025-2026



End of Year Summary Report

Program Overview

1 September 2020

The school-based saliva testing program was launched to support COVID-19 testing in Toronto schools.

2 Starting September 2024

The program expanded to include accessible testing for **influenza and RSV**, in addition to **COVID-19**.

3 2025-2026 School Year

The program continued to provide **free, accessible, non-invasive** testing while advancing research in TDSB school communities, with expanded testing for **select bacterial respiratory infections**.

2025-2026 Saliva Testing Program Highlights



30

Schools Participated



794

samples came from schools



+ 49%
increase

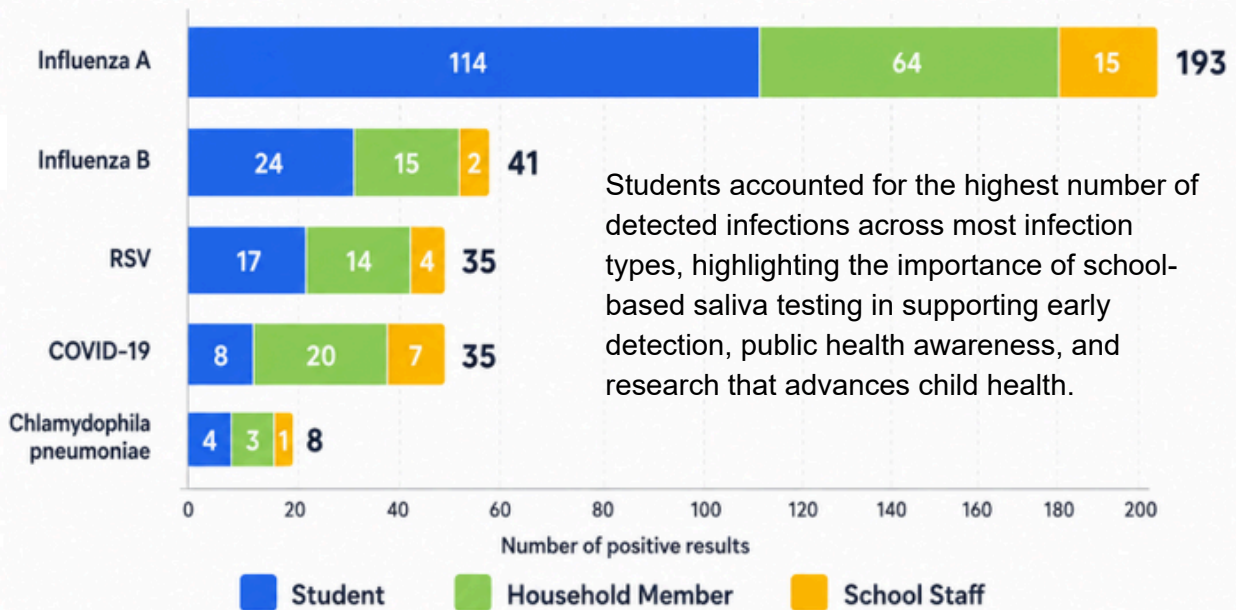
samples submitted year-over-year



312

samples tested positive

What We Detected Across School Communities



Students accounted for the highest number of detected infections across most infection types, highlighting the importance of school-based saliva testing in supporting early detection, public health awareness, and research that advances child health.

Thank you for being an essential part of our Saliva Testing Program

Learn more: <https://www.sickkids.ca/salivatestingprogram>

Research Program Highlights

2025-2026



AT A GLANCE



142

INDIVIDUALS WITH POSITIVE RESULTS AGREED TO RESEARCH



89

PARTICIPANTS AGREED TO DAILY SAMPLES TO ASSESS INFECTIOUSNESS



302

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS PROVIDED SAMPLES TO LOOK AT HOUSEHOLD TRANSMISSION

These numbers reflect the incredible commitment of our school communities and the meaningful impact of your participation. Together, we are helping advance child health research and building a healthier future for all children.

What this means for YOU:

- ✓ Better understanding of when students are most contagious
- ✓ Data to support illness-related communications with families
- ✓ Evidence to guide prevention strategies (e.g., staying home when sick)

Did you know?

We gave out:



As a token of appreciation, 190 gift cards were sent to families who took part.



Certificates of Participation



Volunteer Hours



Participation is completely voluntary.

Student Ambassador Tour Day



December 6, 2025

Students and parents within our communities are taking on leadership roles as ambassadors for the program by helping raise awareness, support scientific learning, and encourage conversations about child health research on a peer-to-peer level.

The Student Ambassador Tour Day provided students with hands-on exposure to hospital and laboratory environments! We toured the hospital and the new Patient Support Centre, experienced a virtual tour of the microbiology lab led by Dr. Aaron Campigotto, and listened to an insightful talk by Dr. Michelle Science.



WANTED:
STUDENT & PARENT
AMBASSADORS

FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR!



EMAIL US:
school.salivaresearch@sickkids.ca



All Student Ambassadors received a Tote Bag and a personalized SickKids Badge to take home!



Thank you for being an essential part of our Saliva Research Program

Learn more: <https://www.sickkids.ca/en/care-services/saliva-testing-program/research/>

Thank You & Your Impact

As we close the year, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of the Saliva Testing and Saliva Research Program. This program was made possible through collaboration, commitment, and shared dedication to supporting the health of students, families, and school communities.

We gratefully acknowledge and thank:



Toronto District School Board

For their partnership, support, and collaboration throughout the program.



School Principals and Leads

For helping coordinate program activities, support communication, and encourage school participation.



Student and Parent Ambassadors

For championing the program within their communities and helping raise awareness among students and families.



Courier Team

For supporting timely and reliable sample transportation.



SickKids Laboratory Team

For their role in processing samples and supporting accurate, timely results.



Broader School Community

For the participation, trust, and engagement that helped make this program possible.

What the community is saying:



“I liked how fast it gave us answers on what sickness our child had. **It saved time on doctor visits and helped us take quick action.**” — Parent



“I am writing to send a quick word of thanks for the saliva testing program and everyone involved. Influenza A is tearing through our school but because parents had access to these tests and prompt results and follow-up care, people kept their kids home and other students masked, vaccinations were booked, and much was done to limit the spread. Our family didn't catch it. **Access to testing and good health information works!** Such care for all our kids (and everyone they encounter!). Thank you!” — Parent



“Being part of this program in our school has been a **great addition to our community.** It shows children that they can make a difference. — School Lead



“**It reminded us that we were helping with important research.** My child knew their participation was meaningful and learned something valuable.” — Parent

Together, these contributions helped support a successful and impactful 2025-2026 year of saliva testing and research activities. We are looking at the continuation of the program for the 2026-2027 school year. **From both the Saliva Testing Program and the Saliva Research Program, we wish you all a healthy and fun summer!**

