

Information for Licensed Child Care Facilities: Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is a new virus that has not been previously identified. The virus spreads through close person-to-person contact. Everyone has a role to play to mitigate the impacts of this disease.

Licensed child care facilities continue to provide a vital role in supporting communities at this time. The following information serves as a reference document for services provided.

REQUIREMENTS

Child Care legislation, regulation and policy applies in all licensed child care facilities. The measures below highlight particular requirements or enhanced recommendations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

INTENT

The intent of this document is to provide supplementary information to facilities to assist with the provision of child care services to help protect the health and safety of children, families, child care facility staff and the larger community during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT TO REDUCE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Facilities are encouraged to provide these increased measures with parents.

Maximum Program Capacity – Child care facilities can maintain operations with their existing capacity as long as children are separated into defined groups.

Maximum Capacity Per Defined Group – The maximum capacity of any defined group is eight (8) children. Where possible, assign siblings to the same group. If you have a number of infants, you may want to care for infants as a separate group in a separate room. Keep the same children in the same group and same space throughout the day and every day.

Children must eat, sleep and play in the same space. Infants sleeping area can be an exception.

For home based child care, where there are more than eight children in the home at one time, ensure smaller groups of children are eating at staggered times and spaces are sanitized between groups.

Groups may be separated through the use of barriers or furniture such as room dividers or shelving units that need not reach floor to ceiling. You must have a minimum of 3.7 square metres of useable floor area as per [section 56 of The Child Care Regulations, 2015](#).

Ratios must be maintained. More than one adult may be required to care for one group.

No Person Who is Sick is permitted to Enter a Child Care Facility – Any child, parent or facility staff member with symptoms of illness should not enter a child care facility.

If you see symptoms of respiratory illness in a child (fever, coughing, shortness of breath), place that child in a separate space or distance them from other children until their parent or caregiver can come for them. This distance should ideally be two metres only.

Provide them with tissues to support good cough and sneeze etiquette and remind them to maintain good hand hygiene. After they have been picked up, use a disinfectant cleanser for the surfaces they have contacted.

It is important that a parent or caregiver can pick up the child and that they not take the bus or other mass transit while they are symptomatic. If there is no option except for that child to take the bus, advise the bus driver to try to maintain two metres, between themselves and other passengers for the best protection.

Active Screening – In addition to your daily health assessment of each child as per [section 26 of The Child Care Regulations, 2015](#), also consider checking children’s temperatures daily before allowing them entry to the child care facility. For Reference, normal temperatures are:

- Mouth: 35.5 -37.5 C (95.9-99.5 F)
- Underarm: 36.5 -37.5 C (97.7-99.5 F)
- Ear (not recommended in infants): 35.8 -38.0 C (96.4-100.4 F)

Underarm temperature testing is recommended over oral testing. Ensure appropriate sanitization of the thermometer between use. Parents may bring their own thermometer for use on their own children (see [link](#)).

As well, active symptoms screening by child care staff should occur with every parent every morning using the attached tool (Appendix A).

Meals and Snacks Must Be Provided – Meals and snacks must be provided to children who are six months of age or older in accordance with section 24 (see [link](#)).

Meals should be provided in containers individualized for each child. Children should not serve themselves. There should be no common food items such as a shared snack bowl. To avoid any cross contamination, ensure serving dishes are kept a safe distance away from where children are eating.

Thorough Cleaning Must Occur Frequently – Child care programs must follow requirements and enhance the frequency of actions regarding cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting in accordance with [section 21\(a\) of The Child Care Regulations, 2015](#).

[Section 21 \(b\)](#) also provides helpful information regarding handwashing for adults and children and other hygienic procedures.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness and is transmitted in the same fashion as influenza. Administrators, teachers, caregivers, parents and students should take the same precautions they do to prevent the spread of influenza.

Practice good cough /sneeze etiquette (into your elbow or tissue and immediately throw the tissue away), wash hands frequently (every hour) and immediately after using tissues. Staff will supervise children’s handwashing.

Hard surfaces (toys, counters, door knobs) must be cleaned frequently (several times a day) and when obviously soiled with an approved disinfecting solution such as household bleach (one part bleach to 50 parts water).

There is no special handling requirement for soiled laundry, such as blankets or towels. Blankets and towels must not be shared.

For further information, please see the [link](#) and go to COVID-19 Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection.

No Non-Essential Visitors and No Volunteers are Permitted – Only parents or guardians are able to enter the program.

Post Signs – Signs must be posted as reminders to everyone to perform proper hand hygiene, sneezing into their elbow, to wash hands after using tissues, and to remind persons not to enter if they are sick.

Social Distancing Practices to Implement – Avoid close greetings such as hugs or handshakes and maintain a minimum distance of two metres from others (See [link](#) for further information).

Please refer to the [Child Care Licensee Manual](#) for further detail regarding health and safety requirements.

Additional Program Considerations:

- **Activities** – Consider the variety of activities available. As well, consider how activities are arranged so children are dispersed within the space available for the group so that children can be in even smaller groups.
- **Outdoor Play** – Outdoor play is not restricted to eight children provided the requirements of section 59 of the Child Care Regulations, 2015 regarding the outdoor play area (seven square metres per space) is available. Rotate groups of children for outdoor play to ensure smaller groupings are maintained. As well, it is important to clean outdoors toys and equipment frequently (See [link](#)).
- **Napping** – Children's cots and bedding must be stored in the groups designated space. Educators should be mindful to place cots as far apart as possible with a recommendation of two metres.

Guidelines for Families

- **Allow More Time When Arriving** – Additional health and safety procedures upon arrival will take a little longer.
- **Be Respectful of Others** – Only one family should be in the entry way at a time. Practice social distancing.
- **Same Parent to Drop Off** – Where possible, the same parent should drop the child(ren) each day. As well, staff will sign the children in to limit the number of individuals handling these documents.

- **Limit Items from Home** – Parents are encouraged to limit items brought to the facility from home. Caregivers should ensure that children’s belongings are stored separately to prevent potential cross contamination. Sibling groups could be an exception.

Appendix A – Screening Questionnaire to Be Completed By Staff

Risk Assessment: Initial Screening Questions for Families:

1.	Do you, or your child attending the program, have any of the below symptoms:	CIRCLE ONE	
	• Fever	YES	NO
	• Cough	YES	NO
	• Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing	Yes	NO
2.	Have you, or anyone in your household, travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days or been in close contact with someone who has ?	YES	NO
3.	Have you or your children attending the program had close contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) with someone who is ill with cough and/or fever?	YES	NO
4.	Have you or anyone in your household been in contact in the last 14 days with someone that is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19 while not wearing appropriate protections of the health care system (gowns, masks and plastic shields, etc) ?	YES	NO

If they have answered “ **Yes**” to any of the above questions, **DO NOT** let the family enter at this time.

If they have answered “ **No**” to all the above questions, a staff member will sign the child(ren) in. Remind the parent/caregiver to practice hand hygiene (wash hands for at least 20 seconds, and or use hand sanitizer) before and after their visit.

Our goal is to minimize the risk of infection to staff and children, thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Parent
Name _____

Staff
Signature _____

Date _____