



COVID-19 POLICY

Home Child Care

Policies and Procedures

Policy Title:

COVID-19 Best Practices to Minimize Risk During Child Care

Revision Date:

September 21, 2020

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Government of Ontario – Ministry of Education**

Policy Statement:

While providing child care during COVID-19 alterations to programming, set up/routines, along with enhanced cleaning protocols, will help to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19. The following policy is meant as a tool/guide to support Caregivers in the daily operations of the child care setting.

Physical Distancing Practices:

- encourage physical space and individual activities with children as much as possible within the Caregiver home and during outdoor play
- indoor singing activities should be avoided
- consider more outdoor activities where additional play space may be utilized between children
- minimize personal belongings coming into the home (backpack, clothing). Label items and store in a designated area (e.g. cubby/coat storage area)
- avoid getting too close to children's faces

Meal Time:

- where possible stagger seating to promote distancing of at least 2 metres / 6 feet between children
- ensure proper hand hygiene is practiced by Caregiver when preparing food
- avoid food preparation activities with the children, Caregiver should handle all food/drinks for each child
- ensure proper hand hygiene is practiced by Caregiver and children before and after eating

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- no food should be provided by the family outside of regular meal provision (except where required and special precautions for handling and serving food are put in place, proper labelling should be on all foods/bottles)
- each child has their own plate, cup and utensils to use
- serve food to children in individual portions using utensils
- reinforce with children that food is not shared
- remove plates/cups/utensils for cleaning once the child is finished eating.
- tables and chairs being used are to be cleaned and disinfected before and after meals
- cups/sippy cups for water that children use freely during care should be labelled and should not be shared
- continue to supervise and hold bottles for infants not yet able to hold their own bottle to reduce the risk of choking

Toys and Materials:

- where toys and equipment are shared, they should be cleaned and disinfected prior to being shared
- choose toys and other materials that can be easily cleaned and disinfected (ie. avoid plush toys)
- it is recommended that books, puzzles, cardboard/boxboard, etc that are absorbent and cannot easily be cleaned and disinfected are limited or removed
- ensure toys and equipment are in good repair, clean and sanitary
- mouthed toys must be removed immediately after child is finished using it for cleaning and disinfecting
- consider using a separate container in the play area to collect items to be cleaned
- include toy shelves, containers as part of cleaning and sanitizing practices

Outdoor Play:

- utilize outdoor play as much as possible as this promotes physical distancing
- play equipment and materials in the Caregiver's yard (climbing structures, riding toys, etc.) are disinfected as part of the cleaning and sanitization protocols
- children should bring their own sunscreen (labelled with their name) where possible and it should not be shared. Caregivers should ensure proper hand hygiene before/after assisting with sunscreen application
- ensure children wash their hands after outdoor play

Sensory Play Activities:

- sensory materials (e.g. playdough, water and sand play) are permitted provided they are offered for single-use in individual containers and dedicated for the same child all day. Containers should be labelled with child's name

- materials used for sensory play (e.g. buckets, shovels, playdough tools, etc.) should be individual for each child and cleaned after use
- containers used for water play need to be emptied each day after use

Nap and Sleep Time:

- increase distance between cots/cribs/mats/playpens or arrange head-to-toe or toe-to-toe
- cots/cribs/mats/playpens are disinfected after each use
- launder bedding between children
- personal comfort items for sleep time are permitted but should be placed back into child's bag after sleep period ends

Planned Outings:

- outings in your neighbourhood (e.g. walks, nature trails) are always encouraged

When planning an outing to public spaces Caregivers should:

- review COVID-19 protocols at the public space
- discuss with the Home Child Care Consultant those protocols as well as your strategies to ensure sanitary practices/physical distancing with children in care
- discuss plans with parents before and receive their approval to attend outings (e.g. parks/splash pad, other outings)
- plan to attend parks that are not busy and confirm that if a park or other location becomes busy they will leave
- consider ages and number of children before attending
- have a plan for full supervision and physical distancing
- ensure children wash their hands before leaving and after returning from parks or other outings
- bring hand sanitizer for children to use following their play in park or other outing
- consider bringing disinfectant wipes for parks or outings where they know cleaning and sanitization is not occurring
- avoid eating snacks at the park or other location but water is available to the children (ensure children use individual cups for drinking water and monitor cups are not shared)
- remind children to not to put their hands in their mouth, and not to put their mouth on any playground equipment

Transporting Children in Caregiver's Vehicle (Planned Outings/School Drop Off/Pick up):

- prior to picking up children from school, the Caregiver needs to ensure Covid-19 pre-screening has been completed with parents

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- Caregiver will complete and document temperature checks for children being picked up from school (either prior to entry into vehicle, or if this is not possible child should have temperature checked prior to entering the Caregiver home)
- if a child being picked up displays a temperature of 37.8°C/100.04°F or greater care cannot take place and the parent will be contacted to pick the child up (see policy *COVID-19 Daily Health Screening for Children in Care* for more information about steps when a child displays symptoms while in child care)
- Caregiver should ensure children use hand sanitizer prior to entering or exiting the vehicle
- if picking up more than one child and not from same cohort or same household, then physical distancing should be maintained where possible. (e.g. if a van is used, then have one child per row)
- increase disinfecting protocols for frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door handles, seat belts etc.) to at least twice daily or more frequently as necessary, as this vehicle will be for personal use as well. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with 60% - 90% alcohol content) should be available in vehicle
- where possible, the seat directly behind the vehicle driver should remain empty to maintain physical distancing. Windows should be opened when feasible to increase ventilation
- Caregivers and other adults in the vehicle are required to wear a medical mask
- Children who are in Grade 4 and up are required to wear a non-medical or cloth mask while in the vehicle
- Children who are in Kindergarten to Grade 3 are recommended to wear a non-medical or cloth mask while in the vehicle
- It is not recommended that children under the age of 2 years wear a mask

Additional Resources:

COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool:

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>

Click [here](#) for testing sites located in Waterloo Region

Covid-19 Self-Assessment Tool

To access additional resources about licensed child care operations during Covid-19 follow the link below:

https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/coronavirus-resources-for-schools-and-child-care-centres.aspx?_mid_=31117

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