



COVID-10 Policy
Home Child Care
Policies and Procedures

Policy Title: HCC Best Practices to Minimize Risk During Child Care	Revision Date: May 19, 2022
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Authority: Manager, Home Child Care
Public Health, Region of Waterloo
Government of Ontario – Ministry of Education

Policy Statement:

Following the reduction in COVID-19 restrictions by the Ministry of Education as of March 21, 2022 the following protocols will help to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19. The following policy is meant as a tool to support Caregivers in the daily operations of the child care setting.

The Ministry of Education has changed its requirements for Masking, Mandatory Screening and Physical Distancing. Caregivers are able to practice additional COVID restrictions for their own premise at their discretion. If Caregivers choose to continue with COVID practices above and beyond what the Ministry of Education requires they should communicate their expectations to parents.

Effective March 21, 2022:

- Masks and Eye protection are no longer required, but can be chosen to be worn by Caregivers or children as a personal choice. All choices are to be respected. Consultants will continue to wear masks and eye protection as required for all Region of Waterloo Employees.
- Physical distancing will no longer be required for indoor or outdoor activities.
- On-site daily confirmation of screening will not be required to be completed by Caregivers. Parents are responsible for completing daily screening for their children and keeping them home if they are not well. Caregivers, others in the home, children and essential visitors should continue using the provincial screen and following isolation requirements: [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#).
- Rapid Antigen testing for those who are not vaccination will no longer be required.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health continues to recommend vaccination against COVID-19 as the best layer of defense against COVID-19.

Updated Case and Contact Management Guidance

The following is updated guidance for isolation requirements. Everyone must follow the [Ontario Covid-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) to determine if they can attend a child care setting.

- Asymptomatic individuals who are close contacts of a case or a symptomatic individual in the community are no longer required to isolate but must self-monitor for 10 days following last exposure. During the self-monitoring period, close contacts must wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings and avoid activities where they need to take off their mask.
- For children under 2 a well-fitted mask is not required. However, parents must monitor for symptoms for 10 days following last exposure.
- Asymptomatic household contacts of a case or a symptomatic individual are also not required to isolate if they are 17 or younger and fully vaccinated; 18 and older and have already received their COVID-19 booster; or tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and have completed their isolation period. Asymptomatic household contacts who are not required to isolate are also required to self-monitor for 10 days following last exposure, as outlined above.
- Children under 5 who are asymptomatic household contacts are required to stay home for 5 days.
- Upon return from international travel, fully vaccinated travelers are no longer required to wear a mask when in public settings for 14 days after arrival in Canada or to maintain a list of all close contacts for their first 14 days in Canada. Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individuals who are exempt from quarantine (including unvaccinated children under 12 years of age who are exempt from quarantine due to accompanying a fully vaccinated adult) are still required to wear a mask in public settings (including school and child care) and maintain a list of all close contacts for 14 days after arrival in Canada. Exemptions for this masking requirement include individuals who need to remove their mask for security or safety reasons; children under the age of 2; and children aged 2 to 5 who are unable to tolerate wearing a mask.

Remaining Health and Safety Measures in Child Care

The below safety measures will continue to be in place until the end of June, or specified by the Ministry of Education:

1. Absence Reporting

Caregivers are to continue reporting cases of illness and absence due to COVID-19 to their Consultant. This may result in the closure of some Home Child Care premises when a Caregiver or someone who resides in the home is symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19.

Parents will be notified of a positive COVID case in the premise if there is more than 30% absenteeism related to COVID. Parents will be notified by Region of Waterloo staff.

Under the CCEYA, licensees must ensure that a daily observation is made of each child attending child care before the child begins to associate with other children in order to detect possible symptoms of ill health.

Licensees are also required to ensure that where a child receiving child care appears to be ill, the child is separated from other children and the symptoms of the illness noted in the child's records.

As a reminder, anyone who is sick or has any new or worsening symptoms of illness (not Covid-19 related) should stay home until their symptoms are improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours for nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea) and should seek assessment from their health care provider if needed. Anyone who is sick or has symptoms commonly associated with Covid-19, should follow the Ontario Covid-19 School and Child Care Screening for isolation requirements.

2. Ventilation Measures

Home child care providers are encouraged to implement best practices and measures to optimize ventilation. Adequate ventilation should be provided by opening windows, moving activities outdoors when possible and through mechanical ventilation including HVAC systems.

Heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVACs) and their filters are designed to reduce airborne pollutants, including virus particles, when they circulate through the system.

- Ensure HVAC systems are in good working condition.
- Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear.
- Arrange furniture away from air vents and high airflow areas.
- Avoid re-circulating air.

3. Hand Hygiene, Respiratory Etiquette, Cleaning & Disinfecting Practices

Our program and Region of Waterloo Public Health continues to recommend the following:

Hand Hygiene

- Hand hygiene should occur when entering the premise, before and after eating, after washroom use, and other regular scheduled times throughout the day.
- Hand hygiene should occur before and after riding in shared vehicles
- Soap and water are the preferred way to clean hands
- Hand sanitizers can be used by children. It is most effective when hands are not visibly soiled
- For any dirt, blood, body fluids (urine/feces), it is preferred that hands be washed with soap and water

- Keep hand sanitizers in a safe location, especially around young children. Ensure young children are always supervised when using hand sanitizer.
- Provide paper towels/tissues for drying hands and lined, no-touch waste baskets (for example, foot pedal-operated, hand sensor, open basket).
- Hand sanitizer should be available, and/or plain liquid soap in dispensers, sinks and paper towels in dispensers.
- Hand sanitizer should be available at the entrance to the child care premise
- Support or modifications should be provided to allow children with special needs to regularly perform hand hygiene as independently as possible.
- Age appropriate educational hand hygiene posters or signage should be placed around the child care premise.
- All caregivers and adults in the home can participate in educational training around proper hand washing techniques. Please refer to the following videos and incorporate them into your hand washing hygiene practices.
 - For adults: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/7-steps-handhygiene>
 - For children: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/video/covid-19-hand-washing-heroes.html>

Hand Hygiene During Meal Times

- Ensure proper hand hygiene is practiced by Caregiver when preparing food
- Ensure proper hand hygiene is practiced by Caregiver and children before and after eating
- Remove plates/cups/utensils for cleaning once the child is finished eating.
- Tables and chairs being used should 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

Hand Hygiene During Outdoor Play

- 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
- 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

Hand Hygiene During Sensory Play

- Shared outdoor and indoor sandboxes, water tables and sensory materials can be used as long as adequate hand hygiene is used before and after use.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Toys

- Toys and materials children use in the home are to be cleaned and disinfected frequently as per regular cleaning and disinfected practices. Refer to the Sanitary Practices section in our resource manual as well as [Safe and Health Children: Preventing Illness](#) for reference.
- It is recommended that high touch surfaces be disinfected twice daily.

Documentation

- Documentation of cleaning and sanitizing is not required to be recorded in the Caregiver's daily log book.

4. Documenting Visitors into the Home Child Care Premise

Caregivers need to continue to document visitors name as well as arrival and departure time.

Additional Resources:

[COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#)

[Covid-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)

To access additional resources about licensed child care operations during Covid-19 click [here](#).