



May 27, 2020

To: All childcare centres supporting families of essential workers

Re: COVID-19 Guidance for Emergency Childcare Centres

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) recognizes that there are key healthcare and essential workers who do not have any other options for childcare. Maintaining these workers' ability to go to work is an important part of having capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With community transmission of COVID-19 in Ottawa, there is a risk that transmission from both symptomatic and asymptomatic persons may occur. While measures to attempt to control these risks may be implemented in a childcare centre, it is important that parents and staff are made aware of, and understand, the risks. Please see the **Notice of Risk** below:

Notice of Risk

When children from multiple families attend a single childcare centre, there is an increased risk of the COVID-19 virus coming into the centre. Children who are infected with the COVID-19 virus are more likely than adults to have very mild infections or to have no symptoms at all, but these children can still transmit the infection to other children and to adults in the centre. This means that children can bring home an infection acquired in the centre and put other persons at risk. This childcare centre has a screening process to help detect infections when there are symptoms; however, this screening process will not detect infected children or adults who do not have symptoms at the time of screening.

The risk of serious COVID-19 infection increases with age, which older childcare providers should consider in terms of the risk to themselves personally, particularly if working in childcare centres with children from multiple families.

The following recommendations have been developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Health documents: [COVID-19 Guidance: Emergency Childcare Centres](#) and [COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance Update May 2, 2020](#) . OPH recommends all Emergency Childcare Centres that will support the families of essential workers have the following measures in place to avoid the spread of COVID-19 to multiple persons and families:

<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this time, it is recommended that <u>only</u> staff and children enter the centre and that all others, such as parents/guardians of children and delivery persons, be met at the door. • Only allow one point of entry and exit. • Clearly communicate to parents/guardians to check their children's temperature and ask staff to check their own temperature daily before coming to the childcare setting. • OPH recommends that those who enroll their children in the Emergency Childcare Centre should be actively informed (e.g., through sign-off of a consent form) of the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 in the centre. While much transmission occurs from people who have symptoms, there is the
-----------------------	--

	<p>possibility of transmission from persons not exhibiting symptoms at the time, and individuals should be aware of this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Plans: Childcare centres must have a communication plan or protocol in place in the event that a child, parent or staff member at the site is exposed to COVID-19.
<p>Active Screening of Children and Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active screening is required for anyone entering the childcare centre. • Active screening is the process of proactively checking for symptoms (e.g., temperature checks and asking questions), travel history and contact (without appropriate Personal Protective Equipment) of a person(s) who may have COVID-19. • Screeners should take appropriate precautions when screening, including maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (six feet) from those being screened, or being separated by a physical barrier (such as a plexiglass barrier or window), and wearing PPE (i.e., surgical/procedure mask; gown; gloves; eye protection (goggles or face shield)). • At any time, children who have an infectious illness that may be communicable should not be entering a childcare facility while infectious. Examples include infectious respiratory illnesses and gastrointestinal illnesses. For guidance on when children can return to childcare with illnesses other than COVID-19, please consult Ottawa Public Health. • For COVID-19 specifically, anyone who fits the criteria below will not be allowed into the childcare centre and will need to self-isolate for a period of 14 days: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you have any of the symptoms outlined below, from the Ministry of Health's ‘COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms’: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fever (temperature of 37.8 degrees C or greater), new or worsening cough, shortness of breath ○ Other symptoms – sore throat, difficulty swallowing, new olfactory or taste disorder(s), nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, runny nose, or nasal congestion (<i>in absence of underlying reason for these symptoms such as seasonal allergies, post nasal drip, etc.</i>) ○ Other signs – clinical or radiological evidence of pneumonia ○ Atypical symptoms and signs - unexplained fatigue/malaise/myalgias, delirium (<i>a serious medical condition that involves confusion, changes to memory, and odd behaviours</i>), unexplained or increased number of falls, acute functional decline, worsening of chronic conditions, chills, headaches, croup, conjunctivitis, multisystem inflammatory vasculitis in children, unexplained tachycardia (<i>heart rate over 100 beats per minute</i>), including age specific tachycardia for children, decrease in blood pressure, unexplained hypoxia (<i>even if mild i.e. O2 sat <90%</i>), lethargy and difficulty feeding in infants (<i>if no other diagnosis</i>) 2. If you or your child(ren) have symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and in whom laboratory diagnosis of COVID-19 is inconclusive 3. If you have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days

	<p>4. If you live with, or provided care for (<i>without appropriate Personal Protective Equipment</i>), or spent time with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, is suspected to have COVID-19, has an inconclusive laboratory diagnosis of COVID-19, or who has symptoms that started within 14 days of travel outside of Canada</p> <p>5. If you or your child(ren) lived in or worked in an institution, group home, or other facility known to be experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19 (e.g., long-term care, prison)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare centres are to assess the temperature of all children/staff during screening and to maintain a log of all testing and results. Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the temperature is equal to or greater than 37.8 degrees Celsius or if the child/children have any of the above symptoms, they should stay home. ○ Ensure that the thermometer has been disinfected, and gloves are worn. Staff must complete hand hygiene (hand washing or hand sanitizing), then put on a mask, eye protection and gloves. ○ To maintain at least 2 metre distance from others, have two staff complete the screening: one to take the temperature and the other to document. ○ Take temperature, partner will record, remove gloves, and complete hand hygiene (hand washing or hand sanitizer). Remove eye protection and mask once screening of all children/staff is complete and perform hand hygiene (hand washing or hand sanitizer). ○ Disinfect thermometer and wait appropriate disinfectant contact time as per the manufacturer’s instructions for use.
<p>Staffing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services according to provincial guidelines, up to a staffing ratio of 1:5 per room, as is feasible. • Cohort staff and children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Try to keep the same staff working with the same children to minimize exposure(s). ○ OPH recommends when possible, children of the same family be put together in a group (as per current regulatory operating ratios and group size; and subject to Ministry of Education approval) to reduce the likelihood of transmission to children of multiple families. ○ Limit cohorts to one room and avoid interaction with children and staff in other rooms. • Staff should stay within their designated role and not cover off other role(s). Staff assigned to a cohort of children should remain with the same cohort when covering breaks. • Food trolley’s/bins should be delivered just outside the door to each room, to avoid staff entering multiple rooms. • Maintain physical distancing of >2m between people in staff/lunchrooms. If physical distance cannot be maintained, only one (1) person at a time should be in the room. If physical distancing cannot be maintained and staff must be in the same room, all staff should wear masks. Information on masks, including how to correctly use one, can be found on OPH’s masks webpage.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine COVID-19 prevention strategies should be observed, refer to staff guidelines for more details. • Everyone should practice physical distancing when not at work. For more details, visit OPH's physical distancing webpage.
<p>Management of Child(ren) and Staff with COVID-19 Symptoms</p> <p>Please note: all children and staff who are symptomatic should be referred for testing</p>	<p>1. Child and/or staff with symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptomatic child(ren) and staff must be immediately separated from others in supervised area until they are able to leave the childcare centre. Please be beware that the first symptom of a COVID-19 infection in children can be gastrointestinal, including diarrhea. • Staff where possible should maintain a distance of at least 2 metres while supervising the ill child. Appropriate PPE should be worn by the staff member supervising the child. Staff should follow procedures in place on what PPE is required as it is dependent on type of symptoms the child is experiencing. Ensure staff discard PPE and perform hand hygiene after the child has left the facility • Environmental cleaning and disinfecting of the space in which the child was separated should be conducted immediately after child has been picked up • Staff who develop symptoms during a shift should wash hands and put on a surgical/procedure face mask or 2-layer cloth mask until they can leave the childcare facility. Refer to Management of Symptomatic Staff Flowchart for next steps. • Staff who report feeling unwell before coming onto a shift should refer to Management of Symptomatic Staff Flowchart for next steps. • Contact the Outbreak (OB) Reporting Line at 613-580-2424 ext. 26325, 7 days a week between 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or 311 outside business hours and ask to speak with on-call public health inspector for further guidance. <p>2. Child and/or staff with symptoms and referred for COVID-19 testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and/or staff should stay home and self-isolate while waiting for results of COVID-19 test. Please refer to the Self-isolation Instructions on the OPH website. • Close contacts of the symptomatic child or staff at the centre over the past two days (48 hours prior to when their symptoms started) should be monitored for symptoms and cohorted while results are pending for the staff /child. If the child / staff results are positive, additional testing may be required as directed by the local public health unit. • If not tested, the child and/or staff member should stay home and self-isolate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o For 14 days from the first day of symptoms OR o Until 24 hours AFTER symptoms have FULLY resolved, whichever is longer • Determining when the child and/or staff member can return to the centre will be done in consultation with the OB Reporting Line. • Determining closure and re-opening of the classroom and/or facility will be done in consultation with the OB Reporting Line.

	<p>3. Child and/or staff who are symptomatic and have a negative COVID-19 result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to the centre may be based on usual policy and procedure (e.g., 24 hours symptom-free without fever-reducing medication, or 48 hours after resolution of vomiting and/or diarrhea). Consult with OB Reporting Line as needed. <p>4. Child and/or staff who have a positive COVID-19 test result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child and/or staff with a positive COVID-19 test should self-isolate and not attend the centre. Please refer to the Self-isolation Instructions on the OPH website • Determining when the child and/or staff member can return to the centre will be done in consultation with the OB Reporting Line. • Determining closure and re-opening of the classroom and/or facility will be done in consultation with the OB Reporting Line. <p>5. Child and/or staff who has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child and/or staff who has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case should self-isolate and not attend the centre. Discontinuing self-isolation depends on whether or not they are still in contact with a case of COVID-19 and will be determined in consultation with the OB Reporting Line.
<p>Cleaning and Disinfecting</p>	<p>OPH recommends the following enhanced cleaning practices to support infection prevention and control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces at least twice a day, using an enhanced cleaner/disinfectant used for outbreaks; • Clean and disinfect ill children’s cots/cribs when excluded from the centre and launder sheets and blankets; • Remove sensory play (e.g., water or sand activities, use of playdough); • Remove shared items such as toys that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected; • Reduce clutter and limit toys to those that can be disinfected daily; and • Enhance hand hygiene practices for both staff and children. • Clean/disinfect staff/lunchrooms regularly.
<p>Physical Distancing Strategies within the Childcare Centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread children out into different areas; • Stagger or alternate lunchtime and outdoor playtime; • Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children; • Extend outdoor play as much as possible as this will limit close contacts and close playground equipment; and • Increase the distance between nap mats. If space is tight, place children head-to-toe or toe-to-toe. • When holding infants and toddlers, use blankets or cloths over childcare providers clothing and change the blankets or cloths between children

Supporting Each Other and Our Community

We understand that these enhanced measures place an additional burden on childcare centres and staff; however, measures like this are needed to ensure that the spread of COVID-19 in our community is reduced. We appreciate all the efforts to help protect the employees who are providing emergency care. We thank you for the service that you provide to our community.

It is important to recognize that the COVID-19 situation continues to change. Please visit [Ottawa Public Health- Novel Coronavirus](#) , [Ottawa Public Health Child Care Providers](#), and [Ottawa Public Health Outbreaks in Child Care Centers](#) for up to date information.