



# Child Care COVID-19 Pandemic Plan

## Introduction:

A pandemic is distinguished as an infectious disease/illness that becomes a worldwide epidemic that spreads easily and rapidly through many countries and regions of the world affecting a large percentage of the population. A pandemic occurs when an infectious disease emerges to which the population has little or no immunity. It may spread easily from person to person and may cause serious illness and death. Pandemics are unpredictable and can affect any age group with the severity affecting each individual differently. During a pandemic, infectious diseases or illnesses can be prevented through appropriate hygiene, sanitation and infection prevention/control practices. Provisions of daily health screenings for children/staff and heightened disinfecting are put in place to protect the health, safety and well-being of children and staff.

A Pandemic Plan is intended to:

- Ensure all staff are educated about pandemic risk factors and prevention procedures
- Ensure staff recognize that the educational information provided is to be utilized in the workplace to protect themselves and the children
- Control infection risks through the application of preventative measures
- Integrate pandemic prevention strategies into day to day operations.

## Expectations:

YMCA Child Care staff must adhere to the guidelines and practices described below (and in other associated documents) in order to reduce the risk of contracting or transmitting an infectious disease or illness during a pandemic. Staff should also familiarize themselves with the recommendations in the Niagara Region Public Health Child Care Manual (5<sup>th</sup> Edition).

YMCA Child Care staff will review the Pandemic Plan at the beginning of their employment and on any occasions when the plan is revised. Staff will sign off to indicate that they have reviewed the policy.

## Procedures:

Staff will make themselves aware of the pandemic by:

- Reading the centre communication log book daily and initial both at the beginning of their shift and after lunch break, if applicable.
- Reading YMCA emails regarding Pandemic information.
- Reviewing all Pandemic guidelines and expectations set by the YMCA.

- Reviewing all meeting minutes shared by the YMCA, in particular Health and Safety and staff meeting minutes.
- Participating in any required training to maintain a current understanding of health and safety related to the pandemic.

#### Staff Schedules:

\*refer also to *COVID-19 Child Care Operations* document for complete details

- ✓ Staff members will be assigned to a specific cohort of children and all efforts will be made to have them remain with that cohort for the duration of the program for a minimum of (7) seven days.
- ✓ Movement of Supervisors/Designates should be limited between rooms and only when necessary, and personal protective equipment (PPE) will be required.
- ✓ Staff will be scheduled in a manner that ensures that cohorts are set and maintained as much as possible.
- ✓ Scheduling of staff will consider that cohorts should not be mixed at the beginning or end of the day.
- ✓ Schedules may require adjustment based on operational needs and hours of care that families will require.
- ✓ All efforts will be made to have Educators work at only one child care centre. If an Educator must be scheduled at 2 centres, it will be a regular assignment and all safety protocols will be strictly adhered to.
- ✓ All efforts will be made to schedule Educator Supply staff to only support one child care centre and possibly one cohort during a 7 day period.

#### Staff Health Screening:

- ✓ Staff will complete an on-line self-screen prior to entering the child care centre. (**YMCA Child Care Health Screening Checklist - Employees**)
- ✓ If an on-line screen is not completed, staff will complete an in person screen on paper.
- ✓ Staff who do not pass the screening must stay home.
- ✓ If directed to go home due to symptoms of illness, staff will be directed to contact a physician or Public Health for direction. There may be specific direction from Public Health regarding timelines for return to work.
- ✓ Staff will sanitize their hands upon entry to the centre.

#### Post-Secondary Placement Students:

Post-secondary placement students will be assigned to a specific group of children. Students will be subject to the same health and safety protocols as for staff, such as reviewing and following COVID related policies and practices, screening, and wearing PPE.

#### Staff Responsibility during Child Health Screening:

- ✓ Staff will observe each on-line screen result from the parent/guardian at drop

off.

- ✓ If an on-line screen is not completed, staff will complete an in person screen for the child on paper.
- ✓ Staff will sanitize their hands between each individual screened.
- ✓ Staff will clean and disinfect door knobs and any area that is touched by a parent or child during the screening process before screening the next family. (I.e. pens, table, doorbell etc.)
- ✓ Staff will use personal protective equipment provided as required by Public Health direction (i.e. masks, face shields, gloves).
- ✓ Staff will receive children from parent at the entrance of the child care centre whenever possible.

#### Child Health Screening:

- ✓ Parents/guardians will show staff their child's on-line screening result; children with a failed screen will not be permitted in the centre.
- ✓ If an on-line screening result is not available, complete the screen on the paper form.
- ✓ When possible, we request that only one parent/guardian drop off child/ren to assist with quicker screening wait times and to avoid increased exposure.
- ✓ Parents/guardians should wear masks at drop off and pick up.
- ✓ Families will be required to physically distance themselves from other families waiting.
- ✓ Parents/guardians and children over the age of 2 years will be required to use hand sanitizer at the entrance to the child care centre.
- ✓ Children under the age of 2 years will be required to wash their hands immediately at the first available sink upon entry with the assistance of a YMCA staff.
- ✓ During the midday health check, if the child has a temperature or any symptoms listed on the screening form, the child will not be permitted to remain at the child care centre.
- ✓ Children that are not permitted to remain at the child care centre will be directed to contact their health care provider or Niagara Region Public Health for direction.
- ✓ If a child develops symptoms after being accepted into care, they will be isolated under the supervision of a staff. The child's parent/guardian or emergency contact person will be contacted for immediate pick-up.

#### **Management of Children with Possible Illness/Symptoms\_(COVID-19)**

*\*refer to Child Care Illness & Exposure COVID-19 Protocol for details*

If a child begins to experience symptoms of illness (COVID-19) while attending child care, it is recommended that:

- ✓ Symptomatic children are immediately separated from others in a supervised area until they can go home.
- ✓ In addition, where possible, anyone who is providing care to the child should maintain a distance of 2 metres.

- ✓ If a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained from the ill child, staff will adhere to policy guidelines to prevent/limit virus transmission while isolated/separated:
  - The child may wear a medical mask, if tolerated.
  - Practice hygiene and respiratory etiquette while the child is waiting to be picked up.
  - Provide tissues to the child for proper respiratory etiquette, with proper disposal of the tissues and proper hand hygiene.
- ✓ Environmental cleaning of the space the child occupied while separated will be conducted after the child has been picked up.
- ✓ The Supervisor will maintain a list of other children and employees in the centre who came into contact with the symptomatic child so that they can be identified for the purpose of contact tracing, if necessary, under direction from Public Health.
- ✓ **Public Health** may provide direction related to next steps which may include recommendations for isolation or testing of the individual, the family, cohorts and employees.
- ✓ Children with a confirmed case of COVID-19 must be excluded from child care for 14 days after the onset of symptoms, as recommended local Public Health.
- ✓ A child may return to child care when directed by Public Health, a physician or health care provider, and they do not have a fever and symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours, or after an exclusion period of 14 days. In each case, the child must also complete the daily health screening checklist successfully.

#### **PPE & Reducing Risk of Spreading the Illness:**

- ✓ All child care staff will wear PPE while at work as mandated by the Ministry of Education and the local Public Health.
  - PPE (masks and face shields/goggles) will be worn in all areas of the centre at all times.
  - Exception is made only for staff working in the office at the computer, alone and with the door closed.
  - Exception also made for staff while in a designated break area/staff room of the centre, only while eating or drinking, and while keeping socially distanced.
  - Any exception requested by staff for wearing PPE will be reviewed by Human Resources.
- ✓ Parents/guardians are responsible for providing their child(ren) with a non-medical mask(s) or face covering each day, and children will require a way to store their mask when not in use. Masks are required for children in grades 4 and up, and encouraged but not required for younger children.
- ✓ Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze by using a tissue or coughing into your sleeve or elbow; dispose of the tissue immediately into a garbage can and wash your hands.

- ✓ Teach and encourage the children to cover their coughs and sneezes by coughing into their sleeve or elbow when developmentally appropriate and to wash their hands.
- ✓ Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze and assist the children with doing the same.
- ✓ When soap and water are not readily available, alcohol-based hand rub/sanitizer with 60-90% alcohol is required by Public Health. (excluding children under age 2)
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth to prevent the spreading of germs.
- ✓ Social/physical distance yourself when possible to prevent the spread of illness. Distancing yourself 2 meters from other individuals is required wherever reasonably possible.
- ✓ If you become ill, you will be asked to leave the centre and required to contact a physician or Public Health for direction. Refer to *Child Care Illness & Exposure to COVID-19 Protocol* for details.
- ✓ Limit contact with others during this time as a preventative measure.
- ✓ Visitors will not be permitted into the child care centre during a Pandemic.

#### **Pandemic Heightened Handwashing, Hand Sanitizer and Disposable Glove Use:**

Staff will implement strict heightened hand washing practices after all activities for themselves and the children. Alcohol based hand rub may be used in the event that hand soap is not readily available. Hand washing with soap and water should be the first choice if available. Activities where hand washing should be implemented are included but not limited to those outlined below:

- ✓ Upon entering the child care centre.
- ✓ After screening each individual upon entry to the child care centre.
- ✓ Before/after direct physical contact with clients/children.
- ✓ After each transition whenever possible.
- ✓ Before/after preparing, serving or eating food.
- ✓ Before/after staff break/lunch times.
- ✓ After diapering a child, cleaning up messes or wiping a nose.
- ✓ After toileting a child or self.
- ✓ After sneezing or coughing.
- ✓ After a child sneezes or coughs in close proximity.
- ✓ After taking out garbage.
- ✓ Before/after giving any medications.
- ✓ Before/after applying sunscreen or insect repellent to each individual child.
- ✓ After contact with blood/body fluids.
- ✓ When hands are visibly soiled.
- ✓ Before/after using protective gloves.
- ✓ After completion of work shift to avoid taking micro-organisms home.
- ✓ If handling chemicals, wash hands **before** eating, drinking, smoking or using the washroom.

Staff will use correct hand washing procedures as outlined below:

- Use a hand wash sink supplied with hot and cold running water, paper towels and liquid soap in a dispenser.
- Use soap and water for soiled hands. Wet hands under running water.
- Apply soap to palm of hand.
- Use friction to clean between fingers, palms, backs of hands, wrists forearms and under nails and base of thumbs for approximately 20 seconds.
- Rinse under running water for a count of 5 seconds.
- Dry with a clean towel or paper towel.
- Turn off taps with a paper towel.
- Dispose of paper towel in an appropriate container.

Staff may use the appropriate 60-90% alcohol based hand rub procedures as below:

- Alcohol-based hand rubs should only be used if your hands are not visibly soiled and if soap and water are not readily available.
- If possible remove hand and wrist jewelry.
- Apply one to two pumps of hand rub (about the size of a “loonie”) onto one palm. Rub your hands together. Clean all surfaces of your hands, concentrating on fingertips, between the fingers, nail beds, back of your hands and base of thumbs.
- Continue rubbing hands until product is dry; this will take a minimum of 20 seconds if sufficient product is used.

If your hands look dirty and running water is not available, use a moistened towelette (i.e. baby wipe) to remove dirt, followed by the use of an alcohol-based hand rub.

**NOTE:** When soap and water are not readily available, alcohol-based hand rubs are the preferred method for cleaning your hands, provided they contain alcohol concentrations of 60-90% as recommended by Public Health.

**NOTE:** Disposable non-latex gloves are to be used for infection control purposes (available in each child care centre); however, the use of disposable non-latex gloves does not replace the need for hand washing.

#### **Disposable Glove Use:**

Staff will:

- Wash hands before/after glove use.
- Gloves are intended for single use per task.
- Store disposable non-latex gloves in a cool, dry place.
- Use as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Remove after use and dispose of in the regular garbage (never wash and reuse).
- Wash hands as indicated above after disposable non-latex gloves are removed.

**NOTE:** Remove gloves from wrist and peel inside out prior to disposal.

### **Pandemic Program Guidelines and Practices:**

#### **1. Water Play and Sensory Play**

- ✓ Group sensory and water play will be **suspended** until the end of the pandemic to prevent spread of illness through these activities.

#### **2. Lunch Time**

- ✓ Children will not be permitted to self-serve or share food or utensils during pandemic.
- ✓ Staff will ensure tables have been cleaned and disinfected before/after eating.
- ✓ Staff will ensure all children/staff wash hands before/after eating.
- ✓ Where possible, children should practice physical distancing while eating.

#### **3. Outdoor Equipment and Sandboxes/Sandpits**

- ✓ Outdoor sand toys must be cleaned and disinfected after each use during a pandemic outbreak.
- ✓ All equipment used by children during outdoor play must be cleaned and disinfected when outdoor play is finished.
- ✓ Any materials/toys that are mouthed by a child must be removed, cleaned, and disinfected before being used again.
- ✓ Remove all toys/items from play that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected (e.g. plush toys or absorbent in nature).

#### **4. Limit the amount of group play/activities as much as possible.**

#### **5. Waste disposal**

- ✓ There should be an accessible garbage container in each room that is emptied regularly.
- ✓ Children should be reminded not to touch garbage containers.
- ✓ Metal garbage containers with tight fitting lids are required.
- ✓ Keep all garbage containers covered and away from food storage and food preparation areas.
- ✓ Thoroughly clean and sanitize all garbage containers daily.

#### **6. Daily Cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces**

- ✓ Cleaning is the essential first step in minimizing the risk of spreading during a pandemic.
- ✓ Without cleaning, dirt or organic matter can interfere with the disinfectant's ability to kill pathogens (germs) present on surfaces.
- ✓ If you are cleaning multiple surfaces, move from the least to most soiled areas to reduce the risk of spreading contamination.

#### **Proper Cleaning Steps:**

- ✓ Wash all surfaces with soap and water using friction to remove dirt or organics.
- ✓ Rinse with clean potable (drinkable) water.
- ✓ Air dry or use single-use paper towel.

Disinfecting:

- ✓ A disinfectant is a chemical product used to reduce pathogens to a safe level.
- ✓ There are many different products available, including some disinfectants that function as a cleaner as well. Be sure to follow directions on the label regarding contact time, expiration dates and proper use.
- ✓ Pre-mixed or concentrated solutions.

Pre-mixed Disinfectants: Some disinfectants can be purchased through a supplier in a formula that is pre-mixed to a desired concentration. These should be used as directed as per manufacturer's instructions.

Concentrated Disinfectants: These products are a concentrated formula, which you will need to mix with water to a designated ratio as indicated on the product label.

- ✓ If you are responsible for mixing and preparing the disinfectant solution, you need to use corresponding test strips to verify that it contains the proper concentration. The correct concentration is important for safe and proper disinfection.

**7. Disinfecting toys/equipment**

- ✓ Toys/equipment and other high touch surfaces such as door handles and handrails in the child care centre will be disinfected each day and a schedule will be developed for constant and enhanced cleaning and disinfecting by the Supervisor in alignment with Public Health guidelines.
- ✓ Buckets/containers will be used in each area/room for toys that have been mouthed by the children or are soiled. This equipment/toys will be cleaned and disinfected before being put back into use.

**8. Drop off and pick up routines**

- ✓ Following their successful health screening at drop off, a staff (runner) will escort the child and his/her belongings from the screening area to their individual classroom (cohort).
- ✓ Parents/guardians will call the centre at time of pick up to notify staff of their arrival. The staff or runner will go to the child's classroom to gather the child and all of his/her belongings. The runner will bring the child to the child care entrance to greet the parent/guardian and release the child from care.

**Pandemic Management:**

- ✓ If a child(ren) becomes ill, isolate the child(ren) and arrange for immediate pick up.
- ✓ Establish control measures per Public Health direction for each Child Care Centre:
  - Exclude all ill children and staff from Child Care Centre as per Public Health directive.
  - A Public Health Inspector (PHI) may be on site daily to ensure that all infection



prevention and control measures have been implemented as discussed with PHN. Please ensure that all staff has knowledge and are implementing these recommendations.

- Review hand hygiene with staff. Increased hand washing is required during a pandemic. Children and staff must have access to warm running water, single use soap and paper towels. Cloth hand towels must only be used one time and then laundered.
- Families must clean their hands at the screening area of the Child Care Centre with an alcohol-based hand rub provided. (children under 2 excluded and hand washing required once screened)
- Must not partake in any social outings.
- Practice social/physical distancing whenever possible.
- Implement an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting program (at minimum twice daily or as needed) of high touch surfaces such as door handles, handrails, sink/toilet handles, etc.
- Cleaning and disinfecting should be documented.

#### **A Confirmed Case of COVID-19:**

- ✓ Upon receiving information that there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 among children or staff of a centre, the Supervisor will immediately inform a Regional Director, and together (while maintaining confidentiality) will:
  - Inform Child Care GM and VP, and Public Health
  - Follow direction from PH, including for communication to families and other stakeholders (ie: school)
  - Submit Serious Occurrence to Ministry of Education
- ✓ Regular child care operation can continue unless directed otherwise by Public Health.

#### **Attendance Records:**

- ✓ Attendance records will be properly completed by staff each day, and filed weekly in a secure and orderly manner to facilitate contact tracing.
- ✓ Friday afternoons, weekly attendance records will be sent in by the centres to their Regional Director to be stored centrally for weekend access.
- ✓ The daily records of all those visiting the centre will also be kept up to date and filed in a secure and orderly manner to facilitate contact tracing.

#### **Communication with Parents:**

- ✓ It is essential that parents/guardians be kept informed of the status of the pandemic. It is also important that they understand the policy surrounding exclusion and understand why ill children are not to be present in the child care facility.
- ✓ Communication will be provided to families explaining these key points.
- ✓ In-person communication with parents/guardian will be limited. Staff will strive to communicate with parents/guardians via telephone, Weemarkable, or use technology for on line/video meetings.

- ✓ Group events traditionally held within the centre involving multiple families (i.e. parent nights) as well as group field trips will be suspended until further notice.
- ✓ When centres are prepared to offer service to prospective families, new protocols in place of in-person tours and orientation to new families may include on-line orientation, virtual or photo tours.
- ✓ **If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19** or an outbreak in a YMCA Centre, phone calls will be made to each family in the centre to make them aware. Parents/guardians will also be communicated information by email, as well as by Weemarkable for full day care programs.

#### **Outside Services:**

- ✓ Essential delivery services and contractors will be required to complete a health screen before entering the Child Care Centre. (***YMCA Child Care Health Screening Checklist – Essential Visitors***)
- ✓ If they are unable to enter due to screening result, the company will be contacted and arrangements will be made for another delivery or alternative to the delivery.
- ✓ If safe to do so, the product can be left outdoors and be brought into the Child Care Centre by a staff member.

#### **Redeployment:**

If the YMCA of Niagara is experiencing a Pandemic Outbreak, there is a possibility that staff will be re-deployed based on the need of each Child Care Centre, in order to remain in compliance with all regulatory bodies (i.e. Ministry of Education, CCEYA).

**NOTE:** Policies and Procedures are subject to review to be modified/revised when needed as the Pandemic evolves.

**The Medical Officer of Health is the authority that deems when a Pandemic has ended.**