



# 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 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 be screened upon entering the child care centre with questions related to the pandemic. (**YMCA Child Care Health Screening Checklist - Employees**)
- ✓ Staff temperatures will be taken as part of the screen. If a staff member has a temperature or any symptoms listed, they will be required to go 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.

#### Staff Responsibility during Family Health Screening:

- ✓ Staff will disinfect the thermometer between each use as per manufacturer's instructions.
- ✓ 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.

#### Children and Families Health Screening:

- ✓ All family members will be screened at the child care entrance with questions related to the pandemic.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Each child will have their temperature taken and the staff will document on the screening form. 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.
- ✓ Families 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 should be conducted once the child has been picked up.
- ✓ The Supervisor will create a list of other children and employees in the centre who came into contact with the symptomatic child so that they can be identified as a close

contact, cohorted (i.e. grouped together) and monitored for symptoms until laboratory tests, if any, have been completed or until 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.
- ✓ A child may return to child care when documentation is provided by a physician or health care provider, documentation of a negative COVID 19 test result and 24 hours since symptoms have resolved, or after an exclusion period of 14 days. In each case, the child must also complete the health screening checklist successfully.

### **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.
- ✓ 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 70% 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 70% 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 70% or higher 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 during pandemic outbreak.
- ✓ Staff will ensure tables have been cleaned and disinfected before/after eating.
- ✓ Staff will ensure all children/staff wash hands before/after 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 becomes ill, isolate 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.

**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.
- ✓ A communication letter 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.



- ✓ At this time, centres will provide services to existing families only, eliminating the need for tours of the centre by prospective families. In the future when centres are prepared to accept additional families, new protocols will be implemented to offer tours and orientation to new families and may include on line orientation, virtual tours or tours of the centre after hours.

**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.**