



**Coronavirus COVID-19 Policy and Guidance
for Licensed Home Child Care**

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction of enhanced emergency procedures for both Community Home Child Care program children and families as well as Providers and their households. These procedures and processes have been set out to support the health, safety, and well-being of everyone.

POLICY

Providers will follow the procedures as set out in this document to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken.

HEALTH SCREENING PROCESS

Program Families

Prior to arrival at the Provider's home, every child and their parent/guardian are expected to self-screening using the provincial screening tool by accessing <https://connect.lcc.on.ca/user/login> or <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> and to follow the directions provided.

If your child fails the screening, and is therefore unable to attend the program, please contact your Provider to let them know.

Providers and Residents of the Home

Every Provider, and each resident of their home, are expected to self-screening, prior to the home child care program, opening each day using the provincial screening tool by accessing <https://connect.lcc.on.ca/user/login> or <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> and to follow the directions provided.

If an individual has failed the screen or there is a situation of a suspected or confirmed case, Providers must document the incident in the Daily Written Record and connect with their Home Child Care Coordinator for further instruction.

The failed screen of a Provider or a Provider's household member will result in the temporary closure of the Provider's program.

The Provider will:

1. Inform all program families
2. Report the failed screen to the Coordinator.
3. Document the incident in the Daily Written Record
4. Post the Serious Occurrence Notification form as required

The Coordinator will:

1. Report the Serious Occurrence within 24 hours, based on the direction of the Ministry of Education.
2. Give the Provider the Notification form which must be posted for 10 business days at the Provider's home.
3. Conduct any necessary follow up.

If the ill individual has received 2 negative Rapid Antigen Test (24-48 hours apart) or a negative PCR COVID test result, the Provider may resume the program when the individual's symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (for children and adults 48 hours if they had nausea/vomiting/ diarrhea) and does not have a fever (without using medication).

In the case of a Rapid Antigen or PCR confirmed infection, Community Home Child Care will follow the direction of our local Health Unit's isolation instructions.

UNPLANNED ABSENCE

If a child has an unplanned absence from program, the Provider must contact the family to determine the reason for the absence. The Provider will report any health-related absence to their Coordinator.

For the most current list of COVID-like symptoms please visit:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread>

CHILD ILLNESS: COVID-LIKE SYMPTOMS DISPLAYED

If a parent contacts the Provider to inform them that their child is presenting with COVID-like symptoms, the Provider will refer them to <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> for next steps, which will depend on the symptoms.

Management of Children with Possible COVID-19

Once children have entered care, Providers will continue to monitor the children and themselves for possible symptoms of COVID-19.

If a child exhibits COVID-like symptoms during program hours,

The Provider will:

1. Isolate the child immediately from the other children in a designated and supervised area until they go home.
 - Having hand sanitizer or soap and running water available would be recommended.

- The child may play/read books on a surface that can easily be cleaned and disinfected.
2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres, where possible.
 - It is recommended that the provider wear Personal Protective Equipment including a mask, shield/goggles and gloves.
 - In addition, the Provider should perform hand hygiene and attempt to not touch their face with unwashed hands.
 3. Increase ventilation in the designated isolation area, if possible (i.e., open windows).
 4. Contact the parent to arrange for their child's immediate pick up.
 5. Call the Coordinator to notify them of the child's illness.
 6. Record the illness in the Daily Written Record.
 7. Thoroughly clean and disinfect the area and surfaces within 2 metres of the ill person, including items used by the individual, as soon as reasonably possible once the child has been picked up.
 8. Remove all items that cannot be cleaned (e.g. stuffed toys) and store them in a sealed container for a minimum of 7 days.
 9. Self-monitor for symptoms as directed in the screening document.
 - During this period, Provider's should avoid contact with vulnerable persons or settings where there are persons at increased risk of severe illnesses (e.g., long-term care homes).
 10. If the ill child has received 2 negative Rapid Antigen Tests separated by at least 48 hours or a negative PCR COVID test result, the child may return to the program when their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (for children and adults 48 hours if they had nausea/vomiting/ diarrhea) and does not have a fever (without using medication).
 11. In the case of a Rapid Antigen or PCR confirmed infection, Community Home Child Care will follow the direction of our local Health Unit's isolation instructions.
The Provider will maintain confidentiality of the ill individual.

The Coordinator will:

1. Conduct any necessary follow up, while maintaining confidentiality of the ill individual.

PROVIDER/HOUSEHOLD ILLNESS: COVID-LIKE SYMPTOMS DISPLAYED

If a Provider, or a household member exhibits COVID-like symptoms during business hours, the Provider will:

1. Contact parents/guardians to pick up their child/children
2. Advise the Coordinator
3. Record the symptoms in the Daily Written Record

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Licensed child care programs must follow the direction of the Ministry of Education and report a serious occurrence when:

- a) A voluntary closure of a Provider's program related to COVID-19, causing an unplanned disruption of service.

In the event of a voluntary closure of a Provider program related to COVID-19:

The Provider will:

1. Report any COVID-like symptoms to the Coordinator.
2. Document the incident in the Daily Written Record
3. Post the Serious Occurrence Notification form as required

The Coordinator will:

1. Report the Serious Occurrence within 24 hours, based on the direction of the Ministry of Education.
2. Give the Provider the Notification form which must be posted for 10 business days at the Provider's home.
3. Conduct any necessary follow up.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Providers are to maintain records of all children receiving child care, and all visitors who enter the premises. These records must be kept on the premises and include the individual's name.

Should a Provider's program absenteeism rate reach 30%, above the baseline absenteeism rate, the Coordinator will inform the Middlesex-London Health Unit. A notification letter prepared by the Health Unit will be sent to all program families.

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

New policies will be shared with families for their information and to ensure they are aware of these expectations, include keeping children home when they are sick, which are aimed at helping to keep all children and Providers safe and healthy.

HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK

The newest version of the Ministry of Education's Operational Guidance for Child Care emphasizes that it is important to use multiple strategies and a layering of controls to create healthy and safe environments for children and Providers. There is no one specific measure that will prevent COVID-19 transmission from occurring in childcare settings. Rather, there are multiple things that we need to do to reduce the risk of infection and that contribute to creating healthier childcare spaces.

Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are among the most important protective strategies. Hand hygiene should be conducted by anyone entering the child care setting and incorporated into the daily schedule at regular intervals during the day, above and beyond what is usually recommended.

Hand Hygiene

Refer to manual section 7-Sanitary Practices

Preventing COVID-19

Understanding how COVID-19 is transmitted and ensuring that proper public health measures are in place is important for preventing the spread of COVID-19 in child care settings. Implementing all recommended public health measures is important to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your program (i.e., no single measure should be relied on by itself).

Please visit Public Health Ontario's website for a refresher presentation series about the practices that help prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 for those working in a child care setting.

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Diseases-and-Conditions/Infectious-Diseases/Respiratory-Diseases/Novel-Coronavirus/School-Resources/School-Presentations>

HOW TO REDUCE RISK – IN PROGRAM (FOR PROVIDERS)

Cleaning and Disinfecting of the Program Environment

The home child care premise should be cleaned daily. Refer to Provider manual section 7-Sanitary Practices.

Toys and Materials

- The risk of spreading COVID-19 between shared objects is low.
- Instead of regular cleaning of shared objects the focus should be on regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of infection related to shared equipment.
- Use toys and materials which are made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected as much as possible.
- Mouthed toys should be removed following use for cleaning and disinfecting between users.

Ventilation

Providers are encouraged to implement best practices to optimize ventilation (see Public Health Ontario's guidance: Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems in Buildings and COVID 19). Adequate ventilation should be provided by opening windows, moving activities outdoors when possible and through mechanical ventilation including HVAC systems.

- Ensure HVAC systems are in good working condition
- Change furnace filters in homes where there is a forced air system
- Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear
- Arrange furniture away from air vents and high flow areas
- Open windows whenever possible
- Avoid re-circulating air

PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN

Positive, responsive relationships between Providers and children are critical for emotional well-being for all children. It is also important to maintain a welcoming and care environment for children. Maintain routines to help reinforce the sense of security for children.

Pay attention to the children's feelings and reactions, and let them know that it is okay to be concerned. Reassure children about their personal safety and health, and that there are many things they can do to stay healthy (for example: hand washing, coughing and sneezing into their elbow). Let children know that they can ask questions and make sure that the information that is provided is suitable for their age/development level. Consider the use of stories, short videos, and activities to share the information routinely in an engaging manner rather than only in time when emotions may be high.

SEEKING HEALTH CARE FOR COVID-19

If you are unwell with any COVID-like symptom as identified on the screening tool, you are strongly encouraged to report your concerns to your Coordinator, follow guidance from screening tool, take a Rapid Antigen Test, if available, or seek a health assessment for COVID-19, as soon as possible.