

# EPUC CHILD CARE CENTRE

## COVID-19 Response

EPUC Child Care Centre has developed the following administrative and infection prevention/ control (IPAC) policies and procedures to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

### Screening

EPUC Child Care Centre will prepare a designate screening area in the lower lobby of the main entrance. Signs will be posted outside the main door, indicating conditions that parents/children are not to enter. Also, due to physical distancing, only one family allowed in the lower lobby at a time, unless a distance of 2 metres can be maintained. Signs will be posted in a visible location clearly explaining the screening process and the rules and conditions for entry.

Please maintain a minimum of two metres/six feet distance between staff conducting in-person screening and the individual being screened.

**Parents are responsible to complete the COVID-19 school and child care screening checklist prior to arrival.**

**How to fill out the screening:**

- 1) **parents log into <http://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening> . A QR code for this site is also available on site.**
- 2) **Please answer all questions**
- 3) **If once completed your screen indicates “go to school/child care” with a check mark on a green screen, you may proceed to child care.**
- 4) **If once completed your screen indicates “do not go to school/child care” please follow the instructions on the screen:**
  - **contact EPUC CCC and indicate the reason for the negative screening**
  - **visit an assessment centre to get a COVID-19 PCR test**
  - **self isolate until the results are in**

**- if positive, you must self-isolate for 10 days if not vaccinated and 5 days if you are vaccinated against COVID-19.**

**- if negative, you may return to child care**

**We will also conduct daily temperature checks of all individuals prior to entry/drop-off**

Staff and parents/guardians of children attending the childcare centre **MUST NOT ATTEND** the childcare program when they are ill, and that they should report any symptoms to the Executive Director.

We will actively screen and check the temperature of children, childcare staff, and any other individuals **prior to entry/arrival** to the childcare centre. Temperature must be lower than 37.8C

### **Self-Isolation Period**

If a child is positive on a RAT or has come into contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and is unvaccinated, they must self-isolate for 10 days. (Please note that 10 days does not include the date that the test was positive. E.g. If a test is positive on day 1, the child must isolate from day 1-10 and can return on day 11 as long as they are not experiencing any symptoms and tested negative on a RAT.

Any child care fees paid during this time is the parents responsibility and will not be credited or reimbursed. If the program is forced to close due to illness (as directed by public health), communication will be sent to parents about fees during the closure period.

### **1. Is the student/child currently experiencing any of these symptoms?**

The symptoms listed here are the symptoms most commonly associated with COVID-19. If you have these symptoms, you should isolate and seek testing.

Anyone who is sick or has any symptoms of illness, including those not listed below, should stay home and seek assessment from their health care provider if needed.

Choose any/all that are new, worsening, and not related to other known causes or conditions they already have.

## **Symptoms:**

### **Fever and/or chills**

Temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius/100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher and/or chills

### **Cough or barking cough (croup)**

Continuous, more than usual, making a whistling noise when breathing

(not related to asthma, post-infectious reactive airways, or other known causes or conditions they already have)

### **Shortness of breath**

Out of breath, unable to breathe deeply (not related to asthma or other known causes or conditions they already have)

### **Decrease or loss of taste or smell**

Not related to seasonal allergies, neurological disorders, or other known causes or conditions they already have

### **Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea**

Not related to irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety, menstrual cramps, or other known causes or conditions they already have

## **What is a rapid antigen test?**

A rapid antigen test can be performed anywhere (i.e., on-site, at the place of employment) by a health professional or trained individual and does not require shipping a specimen to a lab for processing. It is currently administered through an anterior nasal swabbing (both nares) and takes approximately 15 minutes to yield results.

Customers/Employees should continue to adhere to the necessary COVID-19 covid 19 infection prevention and control measures, such as appropriate distancing, use of PPE, and hand washing, to reduce the risk of infection. A positive result on a rapid antigen test is considered a **positive case**. The individual who received a positive result on the rapid antigen screening test must self isolate for 10 days if not vaccinated or 5 days if vaccinated against COVID-19.

### **Benefits**

A key benefit of participating in the Provincial Antigen Screening Program is that rapid, on-site antigen screening may facilitate the identification of an individual infected with COVID-19 that regular screening protocols (e.g., symptom screening) might otherwise miss. It may therefore help prevent asymptomatic individuals from unknowingly spreading COVID-19 and break the chain of transmission.

### **Eligibility**

- Any **asymptomatic** individual looking to obtain access to EPUC Child Care Centre.
- Any individual who is currently **symptomatic** or in contact of a confirmed case should perform a rapid screening test

### **Frequency of specimen collection and screening:**

Asymptomatic individuals: specimen collection and screening should be performed 1-2 times per week.

Frequent screening with rapid antigen tests increases the chances of early identification of cases in otherwise asymptomatic individuals and mitigates the lower sensitivity of a single antigen test.

### **Specimen Collection**

EPUC Child Care Centre will be administering the rapid antigen NP swab as a lower nasal swab, as this has been determined to be an acceptable specimen collection modality by the MOH.

Rapid Antigen specimen advantages include:

- o Increasing the availability of testing as an option by allowing for a broad range of health professionals to collect the specimen
- o Reducing the inconvenience or discomfort due to repeated nasopharyngeal swabs
- o Improved adherence to screening programs
- o Potential for more immediate and robust uptake of this test

### **Negative Results**

If the results on the rapid antigen test yields a negative result, the tested individual will be granted access to EPUC Child Care Centre. (As long as they have not been in close contact with a confirmed case and are symptom free).

### **Positive Results**

Any positive results from rapid antigen screening must result in self-isolation for 10 days for non-vaccinated individuals and 5 days for vaccinated individuals.

### **Inconclusive Results**

If after 15 minutes the results are inconclusive, a second test will be administered. If after a second test is completed and results are again inconclusive, the individual will be permitted access to the centre as long as they have no symptoms of COVID-19 and have successfully passed the additional screening questions and temperature check listed in the EPUC IPAC document.

### **Organizational Responsibilities**

Organizations that conduct rapid antigen screening are responsible for:

- Retaining existing public health measures such as symptom screening, appropriate distancing, using personal protective equipment and hand-hygiene activities. Rapid antigen screening is not a replacement for any of these measures.
- Following all public health guidance for managing an individual with a positive case
- Ensuring compliance with any applicable legislation related to the collection of personal health information, including PHIPA

- Cooperating with their local public health unit in the event of a potential workplace exposure of COVID-19 or an outbreak investigation.

### **Mid-Day Screening Procedure**

All children will be temperature checked prior to nap time commencing at 12:00 each day. The All staff leaving the premises in the middle of the day for lunch, will be re-screened prior to re-entering the centre each day.

### **Attendance Records**

EPUC Child Care Centre will maintain daily attendance records of all individuals entering the childcare centre. This includes, but is not limited to, maintenance workers, cleaning/ environmental staff, and government agency employees (e.g. public health inspectors, fire inspectors).

Records will include the following information: name, company, contact information, date, time of arrival/departure, reason for visit, rooms/areas visited, screening and temperature check results. All records will be kept on site.

EPUC Child Care Centre will follow-up with all individuals who report as an unplanned absence, and determine if the absence is due to illness to note any symptoms (e.g. fever, sore throat, cough). This information will be recorded and kept on file.

We will encourage parents of ill children and staff to follow self-isolation protocols as well as perform a RAT to confirm infection and upon return to the program.

### **Non-essential visitors will not be permitted to enter the childcare centre.**

Hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) will be available at the screening station for individuals who have answered NO to all questions for use prior to entry. Hands must be washed once inside the centre and prior to gaining access to a program classroom.

Individuals who answer YES to any of the questions WILL NOT BE PERMITTED to enter the childcare centre.

Parents must not pass the screening area or enter the childcare centre unless there is a specific need to do so, e.g. emergency.

## **The Physical Space**

Inside the centre, we will increase space between seating and play areas so that children and staff can maintain two metres/six feet apart. Hand washing will be conducted prior and post group sensory play, and a strong emphasis on regular hand washing throughout the day is key to keeping infection transmission low.

## **Staff Training**

All EPUC Child Care Centre staff will be trained on the signs and symptoms associated with COVID-19. Some people may experience mild or no physical symptoms. Symptoms can take up to 14 days after exposure to COVID-19 to appear, and include:

- o Fever
- o Cough
- o Difficulty breathing
- o Loss of taste or smell
- o Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- o If you are having difficulty breathing, call 911.

## **Cohorts**

Each class will be cohorted individually and staff/child ratios as designated in the CCEYA will always be adhered to.

Cohorts will be designated to a specific "family group" or area. Programming will be planned in a manner that prevents cohorts from mixing throughout the day and over the course of the childcare program/session.

Each group will be cohort with one other group only if needed to maintain ratio due to staffing shortages.

## **COVID-19 Exclusion Policy**

EPUC Child Care Centre is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, families and employees. We will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the risk of communicable diseases within our school including a screening tool upon arrival.

To ensure that all staff are aware of and adhere to the directive established by Halton Region Public Health, and Children's Services Division regarding the exclusion of sick staff and/or children attending EPUC Child Care Centre.

### **Legislative Authority/ Regulations/ Guidelines**

Child Care and Early Years Act

Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak

Halton Region Child Care Health Resource

Halton Region Health Department

COVID-19 Emergency Child Care Guidance: Emergency Childcare Centres (March 2020)

COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms

### **Procedure**

NOTE: Children and staff must not attend the program if they are sick, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.

As required by the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA), child care employees must separate children of ill health and contact parents/guardians to pick up their child immediately. When children are ill and/or exhibit COVID-19 related symptoms, staff will ensure the following:

- Ill or symptomatic child will be separated into the designated exclusion room, and be removed from other children to be monitored by a staff until parent/guardian pick-up
- Symptoms of illness will be recorded in the child's daily record and in a daily log as per the CCEYA
- The parent/guardian of the ill child will be notified to pick up their child immediately; or
- if it appears that the child requires immediate medical attention, the child will be taken to the hospital by ambulance and examined by a legally qualified medical practitioner or a nurse registered under the Health Disciplines Act. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 34 (3)



If you suspect a child has symptoms of a reportable communicable disease, (refer to Halton Child Care Health Resource), please report these immediately to Halton Region Public Health at 905-825-6000.

**When to exclude:**

Staff and children should be excluded when there are signs and/or symptoms that are greater than normal, or if a child is unable to participate in regular programming because of illness.

Common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever (temperature of 37.8°C or greater)
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath (dyspnea)

Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Difficulty swallowing
- Loss of taste or smell
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain

**How to exclude:**

- Supervise the child in a designated room with a hand washing sink and hand sanitizer available
- Notify parents/guardians of the sick child for pick up immediately
- Only one staff should be in the designated room and attempt physical distancing from the ill child maintaining a distance of 2 meters. If physical distancing of 2 meters cannot be maintained, staff should wear a surgical/procedure mask, eye protection and gloves and should perform hand hygiene and attempt to not touch their face with unwashed hands. The ill child should also wear a surgical/procedure mask if it is tolerated and the child is above the age of two

- Staff should not interact with others while waiting with ill child
- Staff should avoid contact with the child's respiratory secretions
- Tissues should be provided to the child for proper respiratory etiquette, with proper disposal of the tissues and proper hand hygiene
- Increase ventilation in the designated exclusion room if possible (e.g., open windows)
- Clean and disinfect the area immediately after the child has been sent home
- Items that cannot be cleaned (paper, books, cardboard puzzles) should be removed and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 7 days
- Children with symptoms should be tested
- Staff and children who were in the same room with the ill child will be cohorted and Halton Region Public Health will provide further direction on testing and isolation of these individuals
- Children or staff who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 should be excluded from the child care centre for 10 days/5 days depending on vaccination status
- Children or staff who have been in contact with a probable COVID-19 case should be monitored for symptoms and cohorted until a negative RAT can be provided.

### **Reporting:**

As you are aware, the Ministry of Health recently made changes to the provincial case, contact and outbreak management approach, resulting in an end to routine notification of confirmed cases to families in schools and child care settings. In addition, on the advice of the OCMOH, the ministry has suspended public reporting of COVID-19 cases in child care.

To support ongoing monitoring and transparency related to COVID-19 impacts on child care, the ministry is encouraging licensees to monitor absenteeism rates in their programs.

Given the widespread transmission of the Omicron variant and changes to the provincial testing approach, child care operators will no longer be routinely notifying families of positive cases or if an individual is absent due to symptoms associated with COVID-19.

If absenteeism rises to a defined level in a child care program (approximately 30% above baseline), licensees are expected to send a template notification to families and staff/providers in the affected child care setting, signed by the local medical officer of health, with information on public health measures for families and staff/providers to follow (e.g., monitoring of COVID-19 symptoms). Licensees are encouraged to reach out to their local PHU in this scenario to get access to the required template.

When a PHU receives information from a school principal or child care operator regarding absenteeism, or other required reporting under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7, guidance outlined in the following documents and related protocols and guidelines should be followed:

- Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability
- Infectious Diseases Protocol, 2020
- COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge

Further information is being shared by the OCMOH to all local PHUs.

### **Communication with families/guardians and other stakeholders**

EPUC Child Care Centre will communicate with parents through our parent engagement App to provide program information and protocols on health and safety measures (e.g. screening practices, physical distancing, staying home if you're sick). Other communication platforms will be our websites, email, and telephone. We have rescheduled or cancelled all pre-planned group events and in-person meetings, till further notice. We will use the telephone or Zoom video conferencing when possible for meetings between childcare staff and with parents/guardians and third party stakeholders. Signs will be posted at all entrances instructing participants and their families not to enter if they are sick. We have communicated with East Plains United Church and we have designated separate entrances at the back of the building so there will be no cross-contamination. EPUC Child Care Centre will be assuming cleaning and disinfecting of this entrances, staircase, and elevator as well as the regular childcare centre for the duration of the pandemic

### **Testing for COVID-19:**

- Symptomatic staff and children should be referred for testing.
- Those who test negative for COVID-19 must be excluded until 24 hours after symptom resolution
- Those who test positive for COVID-19 must be excluded from the child care centre for 10 days after the onset of symptoms or 5 days if fully vaccinated and symptoms have subsided.
- Asymptomatic contacts of a confirmed case may consider going for testing for COVID-19 with a RAT and self isolate based on vaccination status. If they test negative and become symptomatic after the negative test, they should be re-tested.
- Asymptomatic contacts must remain in self isolation for 10 days (5 if fully vaccinated) from their last exposure to the case, even if they get a negative test result.
- Staff who test positive for COVID-19 inform their supervisor of the positive test result

NOTE: Child care staff who are tested as part of the surveillance screening are not required to self-isolate and may return to work as long as they pass the daily screening for the workplace.

### **Surveillance:**

Ensuring that all environmental conditions are constantly monitored is essential in preventing and reducing illness. Staff must monitor for an increase in above normal amount of illnesses among other staff and children by looking at the normal occurrence of illness at that location and during the specific time period.

Ensure surveillance includes the following:

- Observe children for illness upon arrival
- Active screening is required for anyone entering the childcare centre. Anyone who fails screening criteria will not be allowed into the childcare centre
- Record symptoms of illness for each child including signs or complaints the child may describe (e.g., sore throat, stomach ache, head ache)
- Record the date and time that the symptoms occur
- Keep all screening records on site
- Record the room the child attends (e.g., room number/description)

- Record attendances and absences

### **Returning from Exclusion Due to Illness:**

Staff/children who are not symptomatic and pass the screening questions are eligible to gain access to the child care centre.

NOTE: A Serious Occurrence is generated through the Child Care Licensing System to report all probable or confirmed cases of COVID-19 for anyone attending or regularly present at the Emergency Child Care Centre including a child, staff or parent/guardian

### **Hygiene Etiquette**

We will enforce regular washing of hands thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) provided hands are not visibly soiled.

Encourage covering coughs or sneezes with your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash hands.

Provide additional hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) stations (e.g. wall mounted hand sanitizer dispensers) in supervised areas where children cannot access it independently.

Staff will ensure that proper hand hygiene is practiced often and when necessary (e.g. before and after eating, after using the bathroom, after covering a cough or sneeze). This includes supervising and/or assisting children with hand hygiene.

### **Environmental Cleaning and Disinfecting Practices**

EPUC Child Care Centre has reviewed Public Health Ontario's recommendations related to COVID-19, and has developed procedures to ensure that the learning space is safe and clean for children and staff, such as:

- Staff will be trained on required disinfectant contact times (i.e. amount of time that the product will need to remain wet on a surface to achieve disinfection).
- Directions for where and how to securely store cleaning and disinfectant supplies as well as appropriate PPE.
- Designated staff will be assigned to conduct environmental cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day on high traffic surfaces at least twice a day.

- Staff will clean and disinfect individual items in each room after each play session.
- Cots and cribs will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Maintain logs to track cleaning and disinfecting activities for each room/area, individual/play items and sleeping equipment such as cots and cribs.

### **Assign childcare staff and children into designated cohorts**

Maximum group sizes are to remain at the CCYEA mandated group size for each classroom. Childcare staff and children will be in their designated classrooms, and will be asked to keep to those rooms as much as possible to cut down on cross contamination. Programming must be planned in a manner that prevents groups from mixing throughout the day and over the course of the childcare program/session. Staggered/alternate scheduling including:

- the use of our outdoor playgrounds and play spaces by different cohorts.
- If a childcare staff must cover for a colleague in a different cohort/room they must do so in a manner that maintains physical distancing as best as possible, and they must use a face masks and eye protection.

### **Toys and Equipment**

EPUC Child Care Centre will provide toys and equipment that are made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected easily. Mouthed toys will be separated, cleaned, and disinfected immediately after the child has finished using it. Toys will be washed and rinsed prior to disinfection and allowed to air dry.

### **PPE**

EPUC Child Care Centre will be providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for use by staff and children when necessary. We will always maintain a two weeks supply of all PPE. Staff are required to wear a mask and eye protection at all times inside. Gloves must be worn when it is anticipated that hands will come into contact with mucous membranes, broken skin, tissue, blood, bodily fluids, secretions, excretions, contaminated equipment, or environmental surfaces. Staff are required to use blankets over clothing if holding or carrying infants or toddlers (blankets must be changed after each child).

Hand sanitizer will be provided throughout the centre, as well as face masks and face shields.

\*Only staff who have maintained a medical exemption from a physician will be exempt from wearing PPE but asked to wear a face shield, if possible.

### **Communication**

EPUC Child Care Centre will communicate with parents to provide program information and protocols on health and safety measures (e.g. screening practices, physical distancing, staying home if sick).

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- Ontario Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidance: Emergency Childcare Centres Version 2-May 8 2020. Retrieved from [http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_child\\_care\\_guidance.pdf](http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_child_care_guidance.pdf)
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2020). Operational Guidance during COVID-19 Outbreak: Childcare Re-opening. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/child-care-re-opening-operational-guidance.pdf>

### **Policy Review:**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed and signed off by all staff prior to commencing employment and annually thereafter.

Created: July 29, 2020.

Updated: January 14, 2022.