

Questions and Answers

Child Care Centres and Providers

Highlights of Changes

- Revised cohort size to maximum of 15 children, as of July 27, 2020 (See *Staffing and Cohort/Class Setup*, “Can rooms be combined to reduce staffing needs?”)

*Please note that due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, information below is subject to change with new guidance and information

The [WDGPH COVID-19 Guidance: Child care centres & providers](#) is referenced in many answers below.

The [COVID-19 Child Care Centre Self Auditing Checklist](#) is referenced in many answers below.

Last modified: July 24, 2020

Table of Contents

- Reopening 4**
 - Do we need to be inspected prior to opening? 4
 - Can we request an inspection by public health prior to opening to ensure compliance? 4
 - Do centres require a water test to be completed prior to opening? 4
- Staffing and Cohorting/Class Setup 4**
 - Do staff need to be tested before opening? 4
 - Can staff cover breaks in different rooms in a centre? What would be appropriate PPE? 4
 - Can we use dedicated cleaning staff for all rooms? 4
 - Can kitchen staff do enhanced cleaning in classrooms while children are not in the room? 5
 - Who is an essential visitor? 5
 - Will food delivery be essential and granted access in the centre? 5
 - Can child care staff (including supply staff) also work in other workplaces? 5
 - Can the same staff work with part-time children: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (cohort A) and Thursday, Friday (cohort B)? 5
 - Are mixed groupings allowed during quiet times to reduce having extra staff? 5
 - Can rooms be combined to reduce staffing needs? 5
- Illness/Screening/Exclusion/Isolation 5**
 - What happens if a child, staff or parent/guardian presents with symptoms at screening? 5
 - What happens if if a child tests positive for COVID-19? 5
 - What thermometers should be purchased for the morning screenings? 6
- Staff or Child becomes sick at centre 6**
 - What happened if a staff member develops symptoms at work? 6
 - What happens if a child/children develop symptoms? 6
 - If more than one child is sick can they be isolated together? 6
 - If one sibling is sick, but the other(s) are healthy, do they all need to go home? 6
 - If a child has an episode of diarrhea, do they need to be sent home? 6
 - Are staff, who supervise an ill child, allowed to go back to class? 6
- Cleaning/Disinfection/Infection Prevention and Control 7**

Can children bring personal items into the child care centre?.....	7
Can toys be cleaned and disinfected in a dishwasher?	7
Are we allowed carpets in the rooms?	7
Can we spray carpets at the end of each day with Lysol for disinfecting?	7
Are we required to deep clean every night? What does this mean?	7
How should child care centres clean and disinfect outdoor play structures?	7
Is there a list of approved cleaners for all surfaces?	7

Personal Protective Equipment 8

When are child care staff required to wear PPE?	8
Where do we get PPE?.....	8
We are in a public building; do our staff members have to wear masks under the Section 22 order issued by WDGPH?.....	8

Other 8

Can staff go out for lunch?.....	8
Can we receive training from WDGPH?.....	8
Are policy and procedure templates being provided?	8
Can nature-based outdoor structures be used?.....	8
Can sprinklers be used for outdoor play?	8
Are children expected to stay 2 meters away when playing at tables or in the classroom?	8

Reopening

Do we need to be inspected prior to opening?

Reopening inspections are not required. Following reopening, WDGPH will be in touch with operators to arrange a routine compliance inspection.

Can we request an inspection by public health prior to opening to ensure compliance?

Child care providers can get answers to any specific reopening or COVID-19 related questions or concerns via phone at 1-800-265-7293 (or 519-822-2715) Ext. 4753 or by emailing PHI.Intake@wdgpublichealth.ca

Do centres require a water test to be completed prior to opening?

If a child care centre gets their water from a private water source, (e.g., a drinking water well), you are required to flush the water lines as well as take a microbiological sample and receive the results prior to reopening if the building has been shut down for a period of seven or more consecutive days.

If your centre obtains their water from a municipal source you are not required to sample your water, but you are required to flush the water lines according to Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) direction. Please refer to the MECP [Sampling and Testing Reference Document](#)

Staffing and Cohorting/Class Setup

Do staff need to be tested before opening?

Currently, there is no requirement for staff to be tested. Testing of asymptomatic individuals without the presence of other risk factors is not recommended at this time. Testing provides a point-in-time measure only and can provide a false sense of security. If a new directive for facility-wide testing is issued by the government, Public Health will notify all of our operators.

Can staff cover breaks in different rooms in a centre? What would be appropriate PPE?

Yes. The Ministry of Education guideline indicates that supply/replacement staff should be assigned to specific cohorts. With regards to staff acting as a “floater” (child care staff who provide coverage for breaks), the facility should limit movement of staff between rooms as much as possible. If a floater is utilized, the floater is required to wear a surgical/procedure mask or cloth mask while in the room with the children. Floater must also wash/sanitize hands before entering the room and after leaving.

Can we use dedicated cleaning staff for all rooms?

Yes. With appropriate protocols and proper training in place, cleaning staff can safely and effectively clean and disinfect different rooms within the facility, with minimal risk of cross contamination. If a facility chooses to have dedicated cleaning staff who will have no direct care or close contact with children or other staff, they are required to wear a surgical/procedure mask or a cloth mask and gloves as required. It is not required for cleaning staff to replace PPE between rooms, given their PPE is being worn properly and is in good repair. Refer to the WDGPH Guidance Document for more information on PPE.

Can kitchen staff do enhanced cleaning in classrooms while children are not in the room?

Yes. Staff should follow proper hand hygiene, PPE and food safety guidelines.

Who is an essential visitor?

Essential visitors are those performing work that is essential to the delivery of core services to the child care program or provides support to a child (e.g., special needs resource, plumber)

Will food delivery be essential and granted access in the centre?

Food delivery personnel should drop off food at the door for pick up by staff member.

Can child care staff (including supply staff) also work in other workplaces?

Staff should work in only one child care centre. It is up to individual facilities to develop an internal policy to restrict this further.

Can the same staff work with part-time children: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (cohort A) and Thursday, Friday (cohort B)?

Every effort should be made to limit staff movement between cohorts. Having said that, we can understand the need to provide part time child care to your families. In keeping with this, if you would like to have the same staff member between two different cohorts on different days, the staff member would be required to wear a mask, at all times, when with the children. This is also in line with the requirement for floater staff to wear masks when they are covering breaks.

Are mixed groupings allowed during quiet times to reduce having extra staff?

Each cohort must stay together throughout the day and are not permitted to mix with other cohorts. As much as possible, Public Health is strongly recommending that siblings remain together in the same cohort. This will allow for better infection control management. Mixed age grouping is permitted as set out under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) where a director approval has been granted on the license.

Can rooms be combined to reduce staffing needs?

As long as this is a permanent change such that cohorts are not mixing, staff-to-child ratios are maintained, and max cohort size remains 15 children.

Illness/Screening/Exclusion/Isolation

What happens if a child, staff or parent/guardian presents with symptoms at screening?

Anyone presenting with symptoms at screening will not be permitted entry into the facility (including a child of a symptomatic parent/sibling) and will be asked to go for COVID-19 testing. Exclusion and self-isolation requirements are clearly outlined in the WDGPH COVID-19 Guidance document.

What happens if a child tests positive for COVID-19?

This process is clearly outlined in the WDGPH COVID-19 Guidance document. Additionally, Public Health conducts case management on all positive cases and will guide the facility through these situations.

What thermometers should be purchased for the morning screenings?

Non-contact thermometers are recommended. Ear thermometers must be covered with single-use protective covers (discarded after each use)..

Staff or Child becomes sick at centre

What happened if a staff member develops symptoms at work?

Staff should not attend work if they are ill. If a staff member develops symptoms at work they should isolate immediately and replacement staff should be called as per regular workplace policy. Exclusion and self-isolation requirements are clearly outlined in the WDGPH COVID-19 Guidance document.

What happens if a child/children develop symptoms?

The WDGPH COVID Guidance Document clearly outlines what to do when a child develops symptoms while at the centre as well as how this will affect other children and staff who were present in the room.

If more than one child is sick can they be isolated together?

Every effort should be made to isolate symptomatic children from different cohorts separately to prevent possible transmission (keep in mind there are a number of different illnesses that have similar symptoms to COVID-19 that may be transmitted within a child care setting). If however, your facility does not have more than one isolation room, the ill children can be isolated in the same room, given that physical distancing between the children is maintained as much as possible (have children on opposite sides of the room, provide a physical barrier splitting the room, children can wear a mask where tolerated). Once children have been picked up, thorough cleaning and disinfection of the isolation room and items the children had contact with must be completed.

If one sibling is sick, but the other(s) are healthy, do they all need to go home?

Yes. All children from the same household are required to be isolated and immediately picked up by their parents/guardians even if only one child is displaying symptoms. The child that has symptoms should be referred for testing. All children will require self-isolation pending test results. Exclusion and self-isolation requirements are clearly outlined in the WDGPH COVID-19 Guidance document.

If a child has an episode of diarrhea, do they need to be sent home?

Yes. Any child who has a symptom that is compatible with COVID-19 must be denied entry into the child care centre or be immediately isolated and picked up by a parent/guardian if the symptom begins while at the child care centre. Please refer to the [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#)

Are staff, who supervise an ill child, allowed to go back to class?

Yes. The staff member caring for an ill child must wear full PPE (i.e., mask, gloves, gown and eye protection (face shield or goggles)) to prevent any contact with respiratory secretions from the ill child. Following proper PPE doffing (taking off), including hand hygiene, and disposal of PPE, the staff can re-enter the classroom. Please refer to the Public Health Ontario documents on [Putting On PPE and Taking Off PPE](#)

Cleaning/Disinfection/Infection Prevention and Control

Can children bring personal items into the child care centre?

Bringing personal items into the child care centre should be strongly discouraged and limited only to essential items. Any hard surface items (e.g., water bottles) must be cleaned and disinfected. Personal items such as bags, blankets, extra clothes and stuffed toys must be stored in a dedicated area for each child (i.e., cubby labelled with child's name). Staff must wash hands/use hand sanitizer before and after touching personal items.

Can toys be cleaned and disinfected in a dishwasher?

Toys that are hard plastic and dishwasher-safe may be cleaned and disinfected in a commercial dishwasher with a chemical sanitizer or a hot rinse cycle (>82°C). Toys that can be cleaned and disinfected can also be done so by submersing in a disinfection solution or using a spray disinfectant. If using a spray, be sure to increase ventilation and apply only when wearing proper PPE and no children are nearby to limit inhalation of any aerosols. Ensure that the disinfectant is safe and suitable for use on toys. Consult the manufacturer's recommendations for dilution and contact times for these disinfectants.

Are we allowed carpets in the rooms?

Area carpets should be removed if possible in infant rooms due to the high probability of contact with respiratory droplets. Vinyl mats that can be properly cleaned and disinfected may be used as replacement. If the infant room has carpeting that cannot be removed, consider covering with vinyl matting or use a vacuum with a HEPA filter. All other rooms (i.e., toddler, preschool and school aged rooms) are permitted to have area carpets that should be vacuumed daily, ideally with a vacuum equipped with a HEPA filter.

Can we spray carpets at the end of each day with Lysol for disinfecting?

Spraying carpets is not recommended. Steam cleaning at least every 6 months. A low level disinfectant may be used when cleaning up a blood or body fluid spill on carpet. Refer to WDGPH COVID-19 Guidance document for details on cleaning and disinfecting.

Are we required to deep clean every night? What does this mean?

A deep clean entails that the entire facility is properly cleaned and disinfected. All surfaces, toys, play structures, equipment, must be cleaned and disinfected. For further information on cleaning and disinfection, refer to the WDGPH Guidance Document.

How should child care centres clean and disinfect outdoor play structures?

Refer to the WDGPH Guidance Document for information on cleaning and disinfecting play structures.

Is there a list of approved cleaners for all surfaces?

[Health Canada](#) has provided information on hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers including a list of disinfectants. For more information, refer to the WDGPH guidance document, cleaning and disinfection section.

Personal Protective Equipment

When are child care staff required to wear PPE?

We have developed clear messaging with regards to PPE use for each type of staff and various situations. Refer to the PPE Section in the WDGPH Guidance Document.

Where do we get PPE?

The province has developed a [PPE supplier directory](#). This is linked to in the WDGPH guidance document as well as the PPE document.

We are in a public building; do our staff members have to wear masks under the Section 22 order issued by WDGPH?

Child care centres are not part of the WDGPH Section 22 Class Order regarding face coverings in commercial establishments. If you are entering part of the public building that does fall under this Order, you are required to wear a face covering/mask. Visit [website](#) for more information.

Other

Can staff go out for lunch?

Yes. There is no guidance prohibiting staff from leaving the facility for breaks/lunch.

Can we receive training from WDGPH?

Refer to Appendix B in the WDGPH Guidance Document for a list of training videos.

Are policy and procedure templates being provided?

It is the responsibility of each centre to develop the required policies and procedures. Policies and procedures cannot be standardized across all child care centres. The WDGPH Guidance Document provides detailed information on requirements that should be used as a foundation for your policies and procedures.

Can nature-based outdoor structures be used?

Ideally, any toy/equipment that cannot be cleaned and disinfected should not be used. Nature based play structures that cannot be cleaned and disinfected must be dedicated to a single cohort or used by one cohort at a time. Children and staff must wash hands before and after use.

Can sprinklers be used for outdoor play?

Sprinklers can be used on the property of a child care centre by only one cohort at a time where the water being sprayed is potable and single use (drains away/absorbed by ground after use). Staff and children must wash hands before and after outdoor play. Any toys/equipment used, must be cleaned and disinfected between each cohort.

Are children expected to stay 2 meters away when playing at tables or in the classroom?

Every effort should be made to maintain and help children understand physical distancing. Provide individual activities and a classroom layout that facilitates physical distancing as much as possible. Strategies for physical distancing are outline in the WDGPH Self-Auditing Checklist.