

Coronavirus COVID-19 Policy

APPROVED BY: Director, Children's Services

DATE: June 15, 2020

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 15, 2020

LATEST REVISION: January 22, 2021

Authority:

Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014: Regulatory Amendment to O. Reg. 137/15
Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak, Child Care Re-opening, Ministry of
Education.

Niagara Region Public Health: Child Care Manual, Fifth Addition, Niagara Public Health
Department.

Niagara Region Public Health Department.

College of Early Childhood Educators: Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for
Registered Early Childhood Educators in Ontario, July 2017.

Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007

Health Protection and Promotion Act

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Intent:

The Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program strives to provide a safe
environment for children, parent(s)/guardian(s), Home Child Care staff, contracted
Home Child Care Providers and residents of the home during Coronavirus (COVID-19).

To reduce risk of contracting or transmitting Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the Home Child
Care Provider's home, expectations and guidance have been developed for Home Child
Care staff, contracted Home Child Care Providers and families during Coronavirus
(COVID-19).

Definitions:

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): an infectious disease.

Policy:

In order to meet operational guidance requirements by the Ministry of Education during Coronavirus (COVID-19), the following procedures and protocols are a part of our COVID-19 policy. They will be utilized by all Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care staff and/or contracted Home Child Care Providers:

- Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program Protocols for COVID-19 guidance.
- Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program COVID-19 Health Screening Checklist for Participating Children.
- Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program COVID-19 Health Screening Checklist for Providers and Residents of the Home.
- Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program COVID-19 Health Screening Checklist for Essential Visitors.
- Cleaning and Sanitizing Checklist.
- Personal Protective Equipment and Other Equipment Inventory.
- Ministry of Education: Use of Masks, Eye Protection and Personal Protective Equipment: Guidance and Tips for Home Child Care Agencies and Providers.

Scope:

This policy is specific to Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care.

Procedure:

Once approved, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) policy will be reviewed with each Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care staff and each contracted Home Child Care Provider who are providing child care.

The review will take place annually after the first review, as long as it is applicable, and any other time when substantive changes are made to the policy or procedures.

The policy will be shared with the parent/guardian of each child enrolled in the Home Child Care Program through email or mail out until face to face enrolment intake resumes.

The Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program staff and contracted Home Child Care Providers will be provided with Public Health Ontario video links specific to

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training on the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Review and sign off forms will be completed by each individual and retained at the agency head office.

The Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program will complete the attestation form relating to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) policy and will submit it to the Ministry of Education, upon request. Children's Services enters into a contract with French language licensed child care centres, family resource centres, and agencies providing supports to children with special needs.

Contracted non-profit organizations must comply with all additional Niagara Region Children's Services requirements.

Through the Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan, Children's Services identifies the geographic location, levels of service, and includes relevant information identified through the local French language planning council. When dollars become available through the Province of Ontario, Niagara Region Children's Services ensures that an appropriate percentage of resources are allocated for expanded or new French language licensed child care and early years services to address identified needs and gaps in service.

Daily Health Screening Checks:

1. Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program electronic COVID-19 screening can be used by Home Child Care Providers, adult residents of the home, parent/guardian on behalf of children, Home Child Care Home Visitors/staff, and Essential Visitors that have smart devices. Alternately, hard copy screens are available at the Home Child Care premise and must be completed, if the screen is not completed electronically on a smart phone.
2. The electronic daily health check screening option complies with the Ministry of Health's recommended set of health screening questions for school and child care.
3. Links can be saved to the phone's home screen ensuring that it is conveniently accessible for daily use.
4. Screening can be completed prior to child care taking place daily.
5. Verification for each individual will be required with a Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program contracted Home Child Care Provider viewing the "pass" result saved on a smart device screen.

Serious Occurrence Reporting:

Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program has a duty to report confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the medical officer of health under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Niagara Region Public Health does not require that licensees report suspected cases of COVID-19 to their department.

The Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program must report to the Ministry of Education any confirmed case of COVID-19 (i.e. a positive COVID-19 test result) of a:

- Child
- Student
- Home Child Care Provider,
- Home Child Care Visitor/staff ; or a
- Person who is ordinarily a resident/ regularly present at a home child care premises.

If a child, staff, student, Home Child Care Provider, Home Child Care Visitor or a person who is ordinarily resident/regularly present at a home child care premises has a confirmed case of COVID-19 (i.e. a positive COVID-19 test result), Regional Niagara

Licensed Home Child Care Program must:

- Report this as a serious occurrence to the ministry.
- Report to the local public health unit and provide any materials (i.e. daily attendance records) to public health officials to support case management and contact tracing and other activities in accordance with all applicable legislation, including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- Public Health officials will determine any additional steps require, including but not limited to how to monitor for other possible infected staff/providers and children and the declaration of an outbreak and closure of rooms and /or of entire child care settings.
- If a closure is ordered by the local public health unit and the Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program has already submitted a serious occurrence for a confirmed case, the existing serious occurrence must be updated to reflect the closure. Should additional individuals at the home child care program develop a confirmed case, licensees must either:
 - Revise the open serious occurrence report to include the additional cases; or,

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- Submit a new serious occurrence report if the first has been closed already
- While the Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program is no longer required to report a serious occurrence for suspected cases; if the local public health unit determines that closure of the home is required, a serious occurrence report must be submitted under the “Unplanned disruption of Service” category.

Please note: there are requirements of employers to let workers know if they may have been exposed in the workplace. Niagara Region has a process in place for this, which is outlined in the Protocols for COVID-19 Guidance.

When to Contact Public Health:

Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program has a duty to report confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the medical officer of health under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

Refer to Memorandum dated August 28, 2020- “Niagara Specific Guidance for COVID-19 in the Child Care Setting”, from Niagara Region Community Services and Public Health, located on the “Vine”: VINE//Children’s Service//Home Child Care Program//COVID-19 Policies

This memorandum overrides the “Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak Child Care Re-opening Guideline” Version 4 November 2020 for reporting suspect cases.

Process:

- Call Niagara Region Public Health to report **Confirmed** Cases at 905-688-8248 Ext 7330
- Call Niagara Region Public Health to report **Suspect** cases proactively (before test results are back) if individuals are symptomatic **AND** they have had exposure.
- An exposure is:
 - Symptoms and travel outside of Canada in the last 14 days
 - Symptoms and exposure to a known case in the last 14 days
- Do not report individuals who are symptomatic and going for testing without any known exposure even if a serious occurrence report is completed.

Outbreak Management:

- An outbreak may be declared by the local public health unit when:
 - Within a 14-day period, there are two or more laboratory–confirmed COVID-19 cases in children, staff/providers or other visitors with an epidemiological link (i.e. cases in the same home child care) where at least one case could have reasonably acquired their infection in the home child care setting.
- The local public health unit will work with the Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care to determine whether epidemiological links exist between cases and whether transmission may have occurred in the child care setting.
- If the local public health unit declares an outbreak, they will determine what happens next. This could include closing the home child care setting.
 - If the public health unit determines that the home child care setting is required to close, the Regional Niagara Licensed Home Child Care Program must revise their existing serious occurrence report for a confirmed COVID-19 case to include information about the closure.

Accountability:

Accountability is maintained through reporting of key Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan goals and deliverables with the Ministry of Education and local community stakeholders on an annual basis.