

Operational Policy: Pandemic Protocol Policy (Program)	Revision Date: June 2020
Policy Status: Working Draft	Applies To: Staff, Supply Staff, Providers, Students, Volunteers and Resource Teachers
References: Public Services Health & Safety Association Ministry of Education Operational Guidance during COVID-19 Outbreak	Approved By: Marni Flaherty, CEO 

PANDEMIC PROTOCOL POLICY

Intent

To ensure a safe and healthy environment, Today's Family staff, providers and volunteers will follow this policy to ensure the ongoing health and safety of our people, children and families. This will ensure child care continuity in the event of an influenza pandemic in accordance with federal, provincial and local health authorities' guidelines.

PLEASE NOTE: This policy is in effect during periods of pandemics or outbreaks and is in addition to the following program policies the agency upholds and enforces:

- Sanitary Policy
- Illness and Exclusion Policy
- Infectious Diseases and Universal Protocol Policy

This policy outlines how Today's Family will operate during and throughout the recovery phase following a pandemic and is in place until further notice.

Procedure

Additional Sanitation of Child Care Space, Toys and Equipment:

In addition to those requirements set out in the Sanitation Policy, the following sanitation protocols are in effect during pandemic periods. Today's Family Staff and providers will mitigate infection spread through the following practices:

- Ensuring all toys used at the centre are made of material that can be cleaned and disinfected (i.e. avoid plush toys).
- Increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting objects, toys and frequently touched surfaces.
- Frequently touched surfaces, including doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, and tabletops are most likely to become contaminated, and must be disinfected at least twice a day.
- Only using disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). Low-level hospital grade disinfectants may be used.
- Checking expiry dates of products used and always following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Water and sensory tables cannot be used.
- Cots and cribs are disinfected after each use.
- Linens are laundered between children.

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- Children must not share soothers, bottles, sippy cups, toothbrushes, facecloths, etc. Label individual children's items to reduce accidental sharing.
- No food sharing permitted.
- Snacks or meals should be individual for each child and multi-use utensils must be sanitized.
- Performing proper hand hygiene (including assisting children with hand hygiene).
- Incorporating additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedule.

Physical Distancing in the Child Care Environment:

In addition to those requirements set out in Today's Family's Infectious Diseases and Universal Protocol Policy, the following physical distancing protocols are in effect during pandemic periods. Physical distancing between children in a child care environment is difficult and we encourage child care staff and providers to maintain a welcoming and caring environment for the children in our programs.

Today's Family Staff and Providers will mitigate infection spread through the following practices:

- When holding infants and toddlers, educators should place a blanket or cloth over their clothing; blankets and cloths should be changed between children.
- Where possible, avoid getting close to the faces of all children.
- Encourage more physical space between children by:
 - spreading them out among the premise and using visual cues to promote social distancing;
 - staggering lunchtime and outdoor playtime; and
 - incorporating more individual activities to encourage space.
- In shared outdoor space, cohorts must maintain a distance of at least 2 metres between groups and any other individuals outside of the cohort.
- Increased distance between nap mats or cots. Where more distance is not available, place children head-to-toe or toe-to-toe.
- Shared spaces and structures that cannot be cleaned and disinfected between cohorts should not be used.
- Recognizing that physical distancing is difficult with small children and infants, additional suggestions include:
 - planning activities that do not involve shared objects or toys;
 - when possible, moving activities outside to allow for more space; and
 - avoiding singing activities indoors.

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Screening Practice:

In addition to those requirements set out in Today's Family's Illness and Exclusion Policy, the following screening protocols are in effect during pandemic periods.

Today's Family Staff and Providers will refuse any person who is ill, who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days, or who has come in contact with someone who has tested COVID-19 positive through the following daily screening practices:

- All individuals, including children, parents/guardians and staff must be screened upon arrival.
- Deny entry to any person including the child of a parent/guardian who has any of the symptoms outlined in the 'COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms' on the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 website.
- Children in particular should be monitored for atypical symptoms and signs of COVID-19.
- Screeners should take appropriate precautions when screening, including maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from those being screened, or being separated by a physical barrier (such as a plexiglass barrier), and wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) (i.e., surgical/procedure mask; gown; gloves; eye protection (goggles or face shield)) as per the local health authority guidelines.
- Today's Family has a duty to report suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. The centre should contact their local public health unit to report a child suspected to have COVID-19. The local public health unit will provide specific advice on what control measures should be implemented to prevent the potential spread and how to monitor for other possible infected staff members and children.
- Thermometers must not be used between children/staff without single-use protective covers or disinfecting between use.
- Do not permit children who are ill to attend the child care centre.
- If a child begins to show symptoms of COVID-19 while in child care, parents/guardians must immediately pick up their child.
- For licensed home child care: if a person who resides in the home becomes symptomatic and/or tests positive for COVID-19, the home child care provider should not operate until clearance is received from the local public health unit.

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How to Report Illness:

In addition to those requirements set out in Today's Family's Illness and Exclusion Policy, the following health check protocols are in effect during pandemic periods. Today's Family Staff and Providers will screen children in program throughout the day. If a child begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while attending child care, it is recommended that the following protocols be adhered to:

- Symptomatic children be 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 at least 2 metres.
- If a 2-metre distance cannot be maintained from the ill child, advice from the local public health unit will be necessary to prevent/limit virus transmission to those providing care.
- Contact the local public health unit to notify them of a potential case and seek advice regarding the information that should be shared with other parents/guardians of children in the child care centre.
- While contacting the public health unit, at a minimum the child and staff member should wear a surgical/procedure mask (if tolerated), and any other personal protective equipment appropriate for the circumstance.
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be practiced while the child is waiting to be picked up.
- Tissues are to be provided to the child for proper respiratory etiquette, along with proper disposal of the tissues.
- Environmental cleaning of the space where the child was separated should be conducted once the child has been picked up.
- Children with symptoms should be tested.
- Other children and staff in the centre who were present while a child or staff member became ill should be identified as a close contact and cohorted (i.e., grouped together). The local public health unit will provide any further direction on testing and isolation of these close contacts.
- Children or staff who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 should be excluded from the child care setting for 14 days.

Scheduling of Staff Shifts (where applicable)

Where possible, Today's Family will implement flexible shifts or rotational shifts so that fewer employees are on site at any given time. For front line educators, the following protocols will be adhered to where possible:

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- Educators should be assigned to the same cohort of children in the same room where possible. For the purposes of this document, a cohort is defined as a group of children and the staff members assigned to them, who stay together throughout the duration of the program for minimum 7 days.
- Each cohort must stay together throughout the day and are not permitted to mix with other cohorts.
- Staff should only work at one location.
- Supervisors and and/or designates should limit their movement between rooms, doing so only when absolutely necessary.
- Supply/replacement staff should be assigned to specific cohorts.
- Staggered shifts – Today’s Family will stagger cohort educators shifts to ensure coverage for meal times while adhering to CCEYA ratios and for overlap so that addition sanitary practices can be upheld.

Rescheduling of Group Events/in-person meetings

Please note, during periods of pandemics all Today’s Family group events and in-person meetings will move to a virtual environment to protect the health and safety of our staff, providers, children and families.

Parent Drop off and Pick-up Procedures

- Pick up and drop off of children in program should happen outside of the child care setting (unless it is determined a parent/guardian needs to enter).
- As much as possible, parents/guardians should not go past the screening area.
- All entrances that will be used for parent pick up and drop off will have hand sanitizer available for use. Please note that hand sanitizer should only be used when soap and water is not available. When a child or staff member enters the building, they should we washing their hands with soap and water immediately.
- Personal belongings (e.g., backpack, clothing, etc.) should be minimized. If brought, belongings should be labeled and kept in the child’s cubby/ designated area.