



DURHAM REGION
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Wee Care

Spring / Summer 2021



Newsletter



We are here for you

As we pass the one-year mark of the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to acknowledge and reflect on all the various challenges you have endured and to also celebrate your victories. Through all the guidance updates and changes to the daily operation of your child care centre, you have worked tirelessly to keep the children under your care safe and healthy, providing a nurturing and supportive environment. For that, the Health Protection community thanks you.

A gift that has come from COVID-19 is that it has strengthened our relations and caused us to work together more closely, forming meaningful partnerships. We have enjoyed connecting with you through virtual

presentations and information sessions, as well as answering your various inquiries and walking you through outbreaks. As the situation continues to evolve and we ride the COVID wave, we want to assure you that Durham Region Health Department continues to be available to support you and provide guidance. No question or inquiry is too small or insignificant, and we are always happy and willing to help.

Below is a list of helpful resources to keep you organized and navigate infection prevention and control measures and operational guidelines. These resources are linked directly to webpages, so they will always be up-to-date as things change with the various agencies.

[Child Care Re-Opening - Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak](#) – Ministry of Education

[Durham Region Screening Tool](#) – Durham Region Health Department

[Memo: COVID-19 Screening Tool for Children, Staff, and Essential Visitors in Durham Region Licensed Child Care](#) - Durham Region Health Department

[COVID-19 School and Child Care Online Screening Tool](#) – Ministry of Health / Ministry of Education

[Before and After School Programs Kindergarten – Grade 6: Policies and Guidelines for School Boards](#) – Ministry of Education

[Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak: EarlyON Reopening](#) – Ministry of Education

[Information on Child Care and the Early Years](#) – Ministry of Education

[Community Reopening Toolkit](#) – Durham Region Health Department

[Operating a Child Care Centre](#) – Durham Region Health Department

[Child Care Outbreak Reporting Form](#) - Durham Region Health Department

[Outbreak Control Package](#) - Durham Region Health Department

Questions? Comments? We're here to help! Contact the Durham Health Connection Line at 905-668-2020/1-800-841-2729.



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Your Questions Answered

Updated child care guidance

In March 2021 the Ministry of Education released Version 5 of the Operational Guidance for Child Care During COVID-19 Outbreak with enhanced health and safety protocols which included:

Masking Indoors

- Children in grades 1 and above are **required to** wear a non-medical mask or face covering while inside a child care centre, including in hallways
- Younger children (aged 2 to SK) are **encouraged but not required to** wear a non-medical mask or face covering while inside a child care centre

Masking Outdoors

- Children in grades 1 and above are required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering outdoors when a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- Younger children (aged 2 to SK) are also **encouraged, but not required to** do this
- Child care staff are required to wear medical masks outdoors when a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained

Screening

- **Daily confirmation or proof** that self-screening has been completed prior to or upon entry to the child care centre or home for all staff, visitors and students
- Parents and guardians must continue to screen their children for symptoms of illness every day prior to attending child care
- The following questions have been added to the screening tool:
 - In the last 14 days, have you received a COVID Alert exposure notification on your cell phone?
 - Does anyone in your household currently have symptoms of COVID-19 or is waiting for a COVID-19 test result?



Updated child care guidance (cont'd)

Exclusion

- Staff, students and children with any **new or worsening symptom of COVID-19**, even one symptom, must stay home until:
 - They receive a **negative COVID-19 test** result
 - They receive an **alternative diagnosis** by a health care professional (HCP), or
 - It has been **10 days since their symptom onset, and they are feeling better**
- In addition to the above, Durham Region has implemented additional screening requirements that indicate staff, students and children can only return when:
 - They do not have a **fever** (without using medication)
 - It has been at least **24 hours** since symptoms have improved (note: this does not apply during an outbreak)
 - It has been at least **48 hours** since gastrointestinal symptoms have resolved

Isolation of Household Contacts

- Staff/providers and children are required to stay home if anyone in their household has **new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19** and has been recommended for isolation and testing
- This includes **well siblings of an ill child**
- All well household contacts of ill individuals are required to **isolate until the ill household member:**
 - Receives a negative COVID-19 test result
 - Receives an alternative diagnosis by a HCP
 - Is cleared by public health
- If the ill individual **tests positive**, or is **not tested** and **does not receive an alternative diagnosis from a HCP:**
 - They must isolate (including from household members) for 10 days from symptom onset, and
 - All household contacts must isolate until 14 days from their last contact with the ill individual

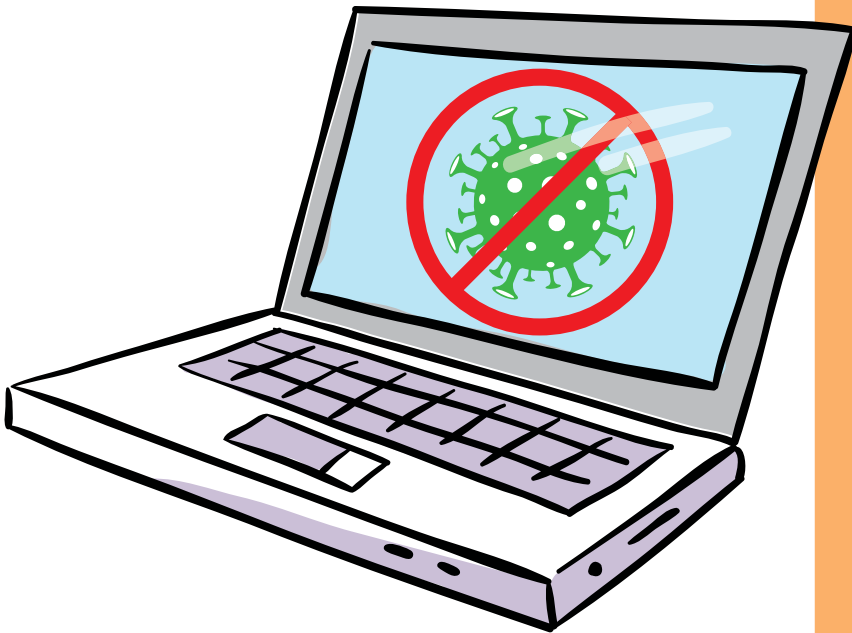


Good news: the outbreak control package is now online!

Easily accessible resources have never been more valuable as it is today. We are happy to announce that the Outbreak Control Package is now available online in a fillable format. This allows for it to be filled out electronically which can then be saved to your computer with no printing required.

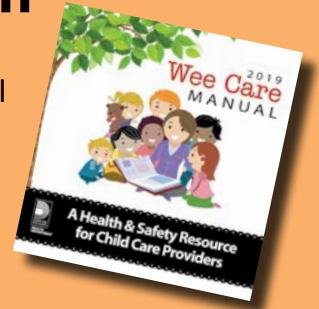
The Outbreak Control Package contains important outbreak control measures and reflects current COVID-19 guidance. It is in a convenient checklist format and is used as a tool by Public Health Inspectors to guide child care centres through outbreaks.

To access the Outbreak Control Package, visit our Operating a Child Care Centre [webpage](#).



Wee Care manual distribution

The Wee Care Manual is an educational resource provided by the Health Department to all licensed child care centres for all your centre's day-to-day needs. It contains chapters on infectious diseases, infection control, outbreak management, immunization, safe environment, healthy lifestyles and fact sheets.



The manual was revised in 2019 and centres were invited to pick-up a copy from our Whitby office. If you have not yet received an email to pick-up a manual, please contact Heather Peel at 905-668-2020 ext. 4604 to arrange for this.

*Notes:

- The manual was revised and printed before COVID-19, therefore, it does not specifically reflect COVID-19 guidance
- The Outbreak Control Package has been revised to reflect COVID-19 guidance. When you obtain your revised manual, replace the existing Outbreak Control Package with the revised version which can be found [here](#).



Introducing our new email address... Wee Care Durham

Introducing Wee Care Durham! We have created this email specifically for our child care community. It will be used to disseminate important information from the Health Protection Division to all our child care operators.

Please add weecaredurham@durham.ca to your contacts list, otherwise you may miss out on some vital information.

This email account is not intended to replace communication you have with your area public health inspector for centre-specific queries.

At this time, weecaredurham@durham.ca will not be frequently monitored for incoming emails, so please continue to email urgent or time sensitive matters to either EHL@durham.ca or your area public health inspector.

IPAC module update

In the last issue of the Wee Care newsletter, we let everyone know that a new and improved online learning module on Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) for child care centre staff would be available shortly, free of charge. The content was condensed, and our learning module system updated. The module is accessible from any computer, tablet or smart phone with an internet connection, includes interactive videos, a post test and a printable certificate of completion. It is a useful resource for anyone who takes care of children.

Due to the demands that COVID-19 has posed on the Durham Region Health Department, we are still working on finalizing the updates and will notify everyone once this revised learning module is posted online and available. We thank you for your patience and can't wait for you to see the improved module. For current IPAC resources, please see our [website](#) or contact your public health inspector.



Q:

Can a staff member or child who tested positive for COVID-19 and completed the 14-day isolation period return to child care if they still have a lingering cough/runny nose?

A:

A child or staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19 or have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive must remain on self-isolation until Durham Region Health Department informs them isolation is no longer required and they can return to the child care centre.

If a child or staff still has a lingering cough or runny nose, they can return to the child care centre as long as it has improved for at least 24 hours (48 hours if the centre is in outbreak).

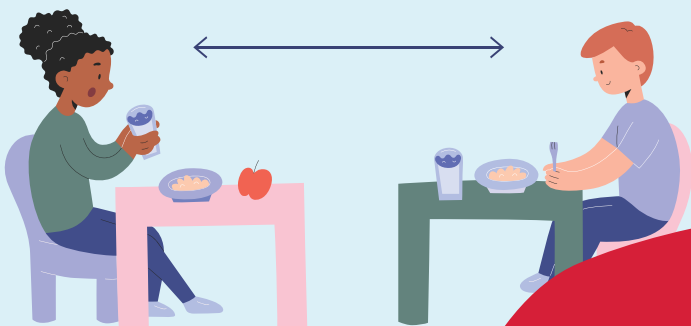




Are staff allowed to eat with children during meals?



- Staff are required to wear a medical mask and eye protection while inside the child care centre and are not permitted to remove them while in a room where children are present
- Because of this, child care staff are not permitted to eat with children during meal times and must eat in staff rooms or designated areas where physical distancing from others is maintained



REMINDER!

To support communication between our licensed child care centres and Durham Region Health Department, email communication has become vital. A current contact list will help us deliver information more efficiently. If your centre has had any changes to your contacts such as managers, supervisors, telephone numbers and/or email addresses, please forward this information to your area inspector or contact DHCL to update our database.



We would like to remind all child care centre owners, supervisors and staff that we welcome any suggestions that you may have for future article topics or ideas. Your questions for the Q&A section of the newsletter and any comments you have improve the newsletter!

We welcome your ideas and suggestions!

Please submit comments by email to veronica.memme@durham.ca



Important note: The content in this newsletter reflects guidance current as of March 2021. With the everchanging guidance for child care settings, please consult with the Ministry of Health/ Education or a public health inspector for current direction.

Please print and post this e-newsletter in a common area for those who do not have access to email.

