



DURHAM REGION
HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Wee Care

Fall/Winter 2020

Newsletter



Helpful COVID-19 resources

We understand that COVID-19 has presented various challenges and that it has and will continue to impact the daily operation of your child care centre. Although Durham Region Health Department has dealt with a higher demand of work during this time, we are still here and available to provide you with support and guidance.

With the COVID-19 situation constantly evolving and information being updated, we have compiled 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

[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

Questions? Comments? We're here to help! Contact the Durham Health Connection Line, (formerly known as the Environmental Help Line).



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Health Protection Division updates

There have been many staffing changes to our inspection team over the last few months. Several new staff have joined our child care team. Due to COVID-19, we have created an outbreak management team, dedicated solely to outbreak management in child care centres. This team is managing the influx of illness reporting and necessary follow-up. This compliments the inspection team who is dedicated to complaints and general inquiries to support our centres in this capacity.

To reach the child care inspection team please contact the Durham Health Connection Line at 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 who will connect you with the appropriate staff. Please note that your former area inspector may not be the same with recent staff changes.

If you are reporting an increased level of illness in your centre please submit the [child care setting outbreak reporting form](#) and someone from our child care outbreak management team will contact you as soon as possible.

With the pandemic situation evolving, more changes may come to our staffing and we will continue to surf the COVID wave.



The Environmental Helpline has changed to Durham Health Connection Line

Your access to Durham's public health services has now changed in an effort to harmonize and improve customer service through a single point of contact for all public health inquiries.

Our Durham Health Connection Line (DHCL) provides information to residents of Durham Region and beyond about health information as well as access to programs and services available through the Health Department. DHCL staff respond to inquiries from the community on a variety of health topics such as health education, counselling, referrals, connections with community supports and services, and complaints.

This harmonization has brought our divisions (Health Protection, Population Health and Oral Health) under one brand and phone number.

With recent staffing changes, please contact DHCL if you are uncertain of the public health inspector who is assigned to your centre and they will help you connect. Please contact DHCL at 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729.

Child care absenteeism reporting

It's not too late to participate!

As a very different school year began, we requested co-operation from **all full-time child care settings with preschool programs** to routinely report a **summary of child absenteeism** to the Durham Region Health Department starting September 14.

With the COVID-19 pandemic in full force, reporting illness levels from your child care centre has never been more important. It is one of the many important indicators of measuring community health in Durham Region and contributes to [Durham's Weekly Influenza Bulletin](#). This bulletin is currently being revamped to better serve our community.

This illness reporting is done through an online survey **every Monday** for the previous week's absenteeism. The survey is short, simple, user-friendly, and does not require log-in information so any staff can submit it.

The survey can be accessed at the following web link: <https://ocean.cognisantmd.com/questionnaires/core/QuestionnaireOnline.html?accessKey=zkJA1Gy8gEx2DqWfkEno>

Please bookmark/save the link for quick weekly reference!

Helpful tips:

- If a child is ill on more than one day, count the child as absent on each day they were absent. For example, if a child was absent on Monday and Tuesday due to illness, count each day separately.
- Do not count absences if due to vacation or other reasons. For example, do not count a well sibling of a sick child who was directed to be excluded by public health.

Please note:

- This does not replace outbreak notification. Follow your usual protocol for outbreak notification.
- This does not replace the specific requirement to notify public health when a child/staff demonstrates symptoms of illness or has tested positive for COVID-19.
- **School-age only** programs do not need to participate since illness reporting is captured by the schools.
- Nursery school programs do not need to participate.

We are counting on every centre with a preschool program to participate. If you are not already participating, it's not too late! Please notify Mandi Theberge or Veronica Memme via email at mandi.theberge@durham.ca or veronica.memme@durham.ca if you are interested.

We wish everyone success this coming COVID/influenza season and appreciate everyone's contribution to Durham Region's community illness surveillance.



New online child care outbreak notification reporting form

Effective February 2020, the Durham Region Health Department requested all child care settings to report increased levels of illness or suspect outbreaks through a new online reporting form.

This [child care setting outbreak reporting form](#) is a quick and easy tool to ensure that outbreak (or suspected outbreak) notifications will reach a public health inspector that is available to follow-up as soon as possible.

- For questions about the online reporting tool contact Veronica Memme at veronica.memme@durham.ca.
- For questions about outbreak management contact Durham Health Connection Line (DHCL) at 905-666-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 or by [email](#) to connect with your area inspector or someone from the outbreak management team.
- To report an outbreak by phone (e.g. if the online notification tool is not accessible) or if you need to contact your area inspector and are unsure of who that is, please contact DHCL.

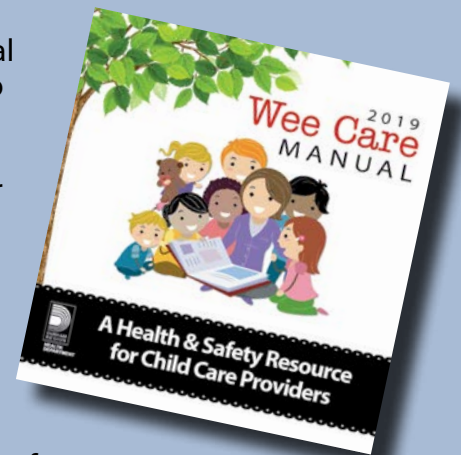
Additionally, you can also use the following resources to prevent outbreaks and to detect when they occur:

- [Pre-outbreak checklist](#)
- [Flu prevention guide](#) | [Guide de prévention de la grippe](#)
- [Outbreak sign](#) | [Flambée de la maladie](#)
- [Illness surveillance form](#)
- [Outbreak line listing form](#)
- Revised Outbreak Control Package for Child Care Centres (to be posted online soon)



Wee Care Manual-2019 edition now available

The Wee Care Manual has been updated to a new 2019 edition. This new edition will soon be available for pick up at our office so stay tuned for an email notification with more details.



Because this edition was revised and printed before the COVID-19 pandemic, it does not specifically reflect COVID-19 guidance. With the guidance constantly being updated with the changing situation Ontario is faced with we may still rely on the Wee Care Manual for the foundation of information it provides. We did, however, include a revised Outbreak Control Package for your convenience.

The new manual will be posted online once it is made fully accessible as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards, but in the meantime, a PDF will be sent to all centres. Please share this with all your child care staff.

The Manual is an educational resource provided by the Health Department to all licensed child care settings for all your day-to-day needs. The manual has information about:

- Infectious diseases
- Infection control
- Outbreak management
- Immunization
- Safe environment
- Healthy lifestyles
- Fact sheets
- Services and resources

We hope the updated manual is a helpful resource.

Don't guess, get assessed!

Where to get a COVID-19 assessment:

When symptomatic children fail the childcare/school screening tool and are advised to get a COVID-19 assessment, communication to parents and guardians about the next steps are critical. Advise parents and guardians to have their child assessed by either:

- a health care provider, e.g., family physician, walk-in clinic;
 - completing a COVID-19 online assessment form at covidswab.lh.ca; or
 - contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.
- **Please do not direct parents/guardians to contact the Health Department/ Durham Health Connection Line for a COVID-19 assessment.**

Getting a doctor's note for chronic conditions:

For children/staff with pre-existing or chronic conditions (e.g. asthma, allergies), you may wish to have a doctor's note on file regarding ongoing symptoms due to this condition. A parent/guardian/staff can attest to the chronic condition based on a health care provider's assessment. Please note that the Health Department does not require these, but support centres in developing their own policies around this if desired.

The note should specify the:

- symptoms associated with the pre-existing/chronic condition (e.g. nasal congestion, runny nose, etc.); and
- expected frequency and duration of illness

This way, when the child(ren)/staff experience any symptoms specified on the doctor's note and are consistent with this condition, the child(ren)/staff would not need to be excluded and assessed by a health care professional every time. However, **if the noted symptoms worsen** or if any other symptoms not specified on the note would require exclusion and assessment. Noting the expected frequency and duration of illness allows the child care centre to alert the Health Department if it goes beyond what is expected.

Please let parents/guardians and staff know what a medical note must specify to ensure an efficient trip to the doctor.



Updated online learning module for child care staff

The Health Department would like to let everyone know that a new and improved online learning module on Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) for child care centre staff will be available soon, free of charge.

After listening to your feedback and reviewing the surveys we have condensed the content and updated our learning module system. This is a good opportunity

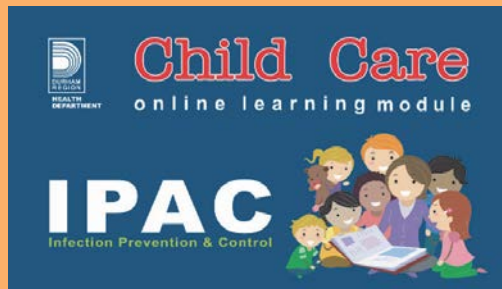
to learn or refresh your understanding of the role you play in preventing the spread of illness in your centre and at home. The module is user-friendly and can be accessed from any computer, tablet or smart phone with an internet connection. The module consists of the following chapters:

- Chain of Transmission
- Hand Hygiene
- Hygiene and Disinfection Practices
- Environmental Controls
- Outbreak Management

There are interactive videos to enhance your learning throughout the module. Audio narration and closed captioning is also available to increase accessibility. You may stop the module and then come back to continue as it will track your progress. You may review previous slides and watch videos at your own pace.

There is a post-test and you can print a certificate of completion once completed.

This was created with you in mind, however it is a useful tool for anyone who takes care of children including volunteers and students. We hope everyone will take this opportunity to learn more about IPAC. We will notify everyone once this new learning module is posted online and available.



New workshop: Child Care in Times of COVID-19

We have partnered with Children's Services Division to offer a new virtual workshop that offers great information and value.

Workshop description: Infection prevention and control (IPAC) has never been more important than now, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. As new 'norms' are being created in every aspect of our daily lives, the Health Department will present some insightful information to child care centre staff based on current provincial guidance. Focusing on IPAC-related best practices and health and safety requirements, we want to tailor our workshop to address your specific needs. So, this fall season, don't turn into a pumpkin and get your answers by attending our workshop!

We hope to "see" you during this virtual workshop on Oct.22, 2020, otherwise, check the GROW Newsletter for other future learning opportunities.



Vulnerable sector attestation checks

Many of you have been asking whether our inspectors are required to provide vulnerable sector attestation checks. Based on the CCEYA requirements and with consultation with our contacts at the MEDU (Ministry of Education), our inspectors are not required to provide this information.

Please see revised/updated [CCEYA](#) (Child Care and Early Years Act) section 61.1 statement below, specifically the section highlighted in red for future reference:

Other persons at child care centre

61.1 (1) Every licensee of a child care centre shall obtain, in respect of **any person who provides child care or other services to a child who receives child care at the child care centre**, other than a person described in subsection 60 (1),

(a) an offence declaration from the person; or

(b) an attestation from the person's employer or from the person or entity who retained the person's services that,

(i) the employer, person or entity has obtained and reviewed a vulnerable sector check from that person,

(ii) the vulnerable sector check was performed within the last five years, and

(iii) the vulnerable sector check did not list any convictions for any offences under the *Criminal Code* (Canada) listed in subparagraph 1 ii of subsection 9 (1) of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 39.

(2) A licensee shall obtain the offence declaration or attestation described in subsection (1) in respect of a person,

(a) before the person begins interacting with children at the child care centre; and

(b) every year thereafter, no later than 15 days after the anniversary date of the most recent offence declaration or attestation, if the person continues to provide such child care or other services. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 39.

Revised posters available in French

Good news for our French child care centres.

Look out for the revised posters in French for the following resources. These resources will also be available on our webpage soon.

- [Changer une couche](#)
- [Routine de toilette](#)
- [Consignes de sécurité concernant les jeux d'eau](#)
- [Nettoyer un écoulement de sang ou de liquide organique](#)
- [Animaux dans un service de garde](#)
- [Animaux dans un service de garde ressource d'oppui](#)
- [Mesures de prévention et de control des infections pour les articles/matériaux dans les établissements de services aux enfants](#)



Q:

Do I need to cover cots while they are being stored?

A:

Cots do not have to be covered in all circumstances as every centre stores them differently.

Cots need to be protected from contamination when stored:

- in immediate play or eating areas
- near diapering areas
- near sinks or water play where there's risk of splashing
- in any area where there is a likely risk of contamination

Options to protect cots from contamination include:

- covering with a sheet, plastic cover, etc.
- stored in a closet, storage room, etc.
- located so that they are blocked off (e.g. in the picture below the play kitchen could be put up against the stack of cots to prevent access by the children)

Here is an example of when cots need to be covered - see picture below.





What is Hand, Foot & Mouth disease?



Hand, foot and mouth disease is an infection caused by the Coxsackie virus, commonly affecting young children.

- How does it spread? It is spread by contact with saliva, mucus or the stool of an infected person.
- What are the symptoms? They include fever, poor appetite, lack of energy, headache, and sore throat often followed by painful sores in the mouth. A rash with blisters may also develop on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, or on the buttocks.
- How long does it last? This illness usually lasts for 7–10 days. It may take up to 6 days after getting the virus before symptoms start to show. The virus can persist in stool for several weeks even after symptoms have gone away.
- Is there a treatment? There is no specific treatment for hand, foot and mouth disease. Over the counter medications can help with fever and pain and drinking fluids is important to prevent dehydration.
- What is the exclusion period? There is no exclusion period, children may return once they feel well enough to participate in activities. If there is an outbreak, a PHI will guide you through the exclusion period, and will declare an outbreak over in due time. In general, the exclusion during an outbreak may last up to 6 days or more.



Download, and print our [Facts About Hand, Foot & Mouth](#) for more information.

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 to 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 October 9, 2020. With the ever-changing 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.

