

SECTION:	Health
POLICY:	EY Division - Pandemic Policy
POLICY NUMBER:	3.11
EFFECTIVE DATE:	September 3, 2020
REPLACES:	August 20, 2020

Pandemic Policy

The following policy and procedures are being implemented by Social Enterprise for Canada (SEC) Early Years Division (including EarlyON Child & Family Programs, Licensed and Regulated Child Care) based on the recommendations of Public Health or other governing bodies, standards or legislation, with the intent to reduce potential risks of the contraction and spread of diseases in the event of a declared pandemic.

SEC is committed to the safety of its staff, volunteers, and participants regarding any real or suspected symptoms. This policy will err on the side of caution with regards of recognizing signs, symptoms and proper safety precautions by all staff and participants to properly manage the safety for all.

Curriculum and Programming

SEC will continue supporting our philosophy that children are strong, capable and competent. Programs will promote this view of children by providing choices within the curriculum, the environment, and are encouraged to exercise autonomy and decision making throughout (See Program Statement), based on current recommendations. Some adjustments will be made to observe physical distancing within individual programs as required.

Examples may include:

- Capacity in each room
- Same children grouped together and not mixing groups or changing rooms (cohorting) may be required.
- Same staff may be assigned with one group of children.
- Less children at each table for play and snacks.
- Toys or equipment difficult to clean will be stored or closely monitored (e.g. plush toys, fabrics, books).
- Craft materials will be available in individual containers for each child.
- Sensory materials will be available in individual containers and disposed after each child's use (e.g. sand, playdough, slime).
- During this time of Infection recovery children will continue to be provided with snacks however, we have changed our meal practices to ensure there is no self-serve or sharing of food at meal times.
 - Utensils will be used to serve food.
 - Meals will be served in individual portions to the children.
 - There will be no items shared (i.e., serving spoon or salt shaker).
- Staff will be responsible for serving all food and drinks to children and bowls of food will be kept out of the reach of children on a cart or counter. *Please do not send any food from home unless approved by the staff and labelled with your child's name.
- Outdoor playtime will be increased where possible and ensure cohorts have a minimum of 2 metre distance.
- Staff will incorporate fun learning opportunities to support children with physical distancing and personal hygiene.

Program Procedural Changes

Safety Precautions: Health Checks, Masks, and Social Distancing

As required or recommended, medical grade masks and face shields will be used for staff members. Masks will be required children including and above grade 4, and recommended for children JK-grade 3 when social distancing is

difficult. Staff will set-up the environment to help children social distance by limiting seats at a table, providing individual sensory and art supplies, providing activities encouraging individual play, and distancing activities within the room. When possible, staff will increase outdoor program and decrease indoor program time. Health screens will be conducted upon arrival in the morning and afternoon and as needed if any signs or symptoms develop. Staff will continue to promote personal hygiene as a priority, as it is understood, that masks, social distancing, and health checks are a few of many protective measures to ensure safety.

Staff have been trained based on the recommendations of Public Health to identify symptoms, proper safety procedures, cleaning and disinfecting with increased precautions, proper application and removal of PPE, and personal hygiene.

Please see SEC Key tips for mask wear, removal and disposal

Arrivals

All staff, children, and parents will be required to answer a set of questions provided by Public Health, designed to screen for illness. Staff, caregivers, and children will have their temperature taken and recorded upon arrival before entering a program.

If a family member is experiencing any signs and symptoms or in close contact with someone suspected or confirmed of contracting the identified disease, or has travelled outside of Canada within 14 days, they will be sent home, and not permitted to enter the facility. As required Public Health will be notified for suspected or confirmed contact for further instructions.

With regards to childcare programs, parents or caregivers will not be allowed to enter the building to minimize the risk of spreading the infection. If the child is healthy and screening is complete, a staff will escort the child to their room.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

SEC has adopted enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures recommended by Public Health to help reduce the spread of infection. A staff member will be designated for cleaning program rooms before and after program, while children are participating in outdoor programming, and between transitions from school to Before and After care. High traffic areas such as door knobs, counters, tables, chairs, sinks, and mouthed or compromised toys (e.g. coughs or sneezes on a toy) will be cleaned minimum 2 times a day or as needed. Toilets in classrooms will be disinfected between each use. Washrooms in common areas will be cleaned between cohorts use. Toys difficult to clean (e.g. plush toys, books, fabrics) will be removed from program or closely monitored until further notice.

Personal Hygiene

Staff will plan fun and creative ways to teach and promote hand washing throughout the day, including activities, games, routines, and signs. Staff will schedule planned hand washing through transitions such as entering program, transition from outdoor play, before and after snack time, and after using the washroom. Staff will ensure all hands are washed after using a tissue, sneezing, coughs, or any time hands are in contact with the mouth.

Hand sanitizer will be available for staff and for children when soap and water are not readily available (e.g. outdoor program). Hand washing is preferred, however when not possible, staff will monitor hand sanitizer used by children at these times and ensure appropriate amount and use.

As much as possible, staff will remind children the importance of coughing/ sneezing into the elbow, handling of tissues and washing hands, not touching the face or adjusting the mask when appropriate.

Snack Time

Staff will prepare snacks on an individual bases rather than self-serving family style snack time, until further notice. Snacks will be prepackaged while still ensuring healthy options and following guidelines of the nutrition guide for children. Water will be available and water fountains will be used to refill water bottles only.

Parents will be reminded that all lunch bags, water bottles, and individual containers must be labelled to assist staff in monitoring children's snacks and ensuring children are not sharing.

If a Child Becomes Ill at a Child Care Centre

In the event a child develops signs or symptoms while in program, that parent will be notified to immediately pick-up or make arrangements for child pick-up. If a parent is unavailable by phone, the emergency contact will be called. Parents are responsible to ensure someone will be available for pick up in the event their child becomes ill during program. While the child waits, a staff will supervise the child in an isolated designated area away from other children and staff. The supervising staff will wear a mask, shield, gloves, and gown. Children over the age of 2, with no medical conditions will be required to wear a mask while waiting for parent to arrive. If the child does not have one, a disposable mask will be provided. Any siblings will be sent home as well. Supervisor will notify Public Health for further instructions.

If a Staff Becomes Ill at a Program

In the event a staff develops symptoms while working, the staff will be removed from program, and be sent home immediately. Supervisor will notify Public Health for further instructions.

Reporting Suspected Cases and Testing

If a parent, child or family member is suspected or has been around someone else suspected of the infection, it is our duty to contact Public Health for further instructions and as required report suspected and confirmed cases to the Ministry of Education. Public Health will then advise the program supervisor and parent of any requirements for testing, self-isolation, and communication necessary to keep other families safe. Public Health will initiate contact tracing and then determine if closure of a room or centre is required.

Rest Time

Children ages 0-3.5 years in child care programs are given a rest period each day. If it is difficult to distance bedding by 2 metres, then cots and cribs should be placed head to toe so children are not face to face when resting. Bedding and toys will be laundered each day.

Visitors and Fieldtrips

Non-essential visitors will not be allowed in program rooms. School or SEC officials (e.g. caretakers, administrators) emergency services, and ministry visitors will have limited access. When possible, visitors will enter outside program hours or while children are outdoors.

Fieldtrips and special guests will be cancelled until further direction from Public Health.

Pick-up from Child Care programs

Parents or caregivers must call the program phone and meet the staff and child(ren) at the designated screening area for the program (same as arrival). Staff are not responsible for bringing children to the car.

How Parents Can Help

- If a member of your household is showing signs or symptoms of the illness or has been in close contact with anyone showing signs or confirmed case, keep children home as a precaution. Call the program phone to let the supervisor know the symptoms, so we can notify Public Health and track any contacts.
- As much as possible, have the same adult drop-off and pick-up to minimize exposure and risk.
- Anticipate more time for drop-off and pick-up to allow for screening, distancing between families, phone calls, and 1 staff escorting each child.
- Have a plan in place in case a child needs to be picked up early or is unable to enter program due to sudden symptoms.
- Update contact and emergency contact information for any adult allowed to care for your children. An adult is 18 years or older.
- Remember as a community we all need to work together to keep one another safe. Encourage children to practice routines of washing hands, wearing masks, coughing/sneezing in elbows, keeping distance, and staying patient.

Supporting Documents

- [3.11B Addendum - Licensed and Regulated Child Care Enhanced Protocols for COVID-19 Aug 2020](#)
- [3.11C Addendum - EarlyON Enhanced Protocols for COVID-19 Aug 2020](#)