

COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY INDOOR PROGRAMS

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus that can cause illness ranging from the common cold to more serious respiratory infections. Emerging information on COVID-19 suggests that children may have milder or asymptomatic infections; however, they may still be able to spread the virus to other people.

EarlyON programs are permitted to operate in accordance with the Government of Ontario [Roadmap to Reopen](#). EarlyON programs that are permitted to operate must have enhanced health and safety measures in place.

The following are recommendations to help reduce the risk of acute respiratory illness, including COVID-19, in EarlyON Child and Family Programs.

General recommendations	
<p>Prior to reopening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EarlyON Child and Family agencies are to develop enhanced health and safety policies and procedure to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in EarlyON programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cleaning and disinfecting EarlyON programs ○ Physical distancing, space/group capacity and grouping ○ Safe sign-ins ○ Equipment and usage of toys ○ Outdoor programs ○ Mobile programs ○ Requirements on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) ○ Consumption of food and drink ○ Screening for COVID-19 symptoms ○ Attendance records ○ Monitoring and responding to reports of COVID-19 symptoms ○ Outbreak management ○ Reporting ○ Staff training ○ Shift scheduling ○ Return to work for symptomatic persons or confirmed cases • Refer to Ontario online screening tool; COVID-19 School and

	<p>Child Care Screening Tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ontario online screening tool is downloadable on the COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool in multiple languages • Report illness, cases and outbreaks to York Region Public Health and follow the advice of Public Health
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Health and safety measures

<p>Pre-registration for Programs and Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families must reserve and/or register in advance of participating in programs and services in-person. Where possible, EarlyON programs should collect contact information, such as name, phone number and email address, and provide the Ontario online screening tool; COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool and distribute health and safety policies and procedures as part of reservation/registration process. This is in the event contact tracing is required • Signage posted at the entrance explaining hand hygiene, physical distancing, symptom screening and usage of masks (as applicable) • EarlyON programs are to use signage/markings on the ground to direct families through the entry, where to wait and how to exit • One-way traffic flow throughout the space is encouraged • All EarlyON programs must maintain daily records of anyone entering the EarlyON program and the approximate length of their stay • Records are to be kept on the EarlyON site premises • Records such as name, contact information, time of arrival/departure must be kept up-to-date and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak • All children and program participants must pass screening prior to participation in the program parents/caregivers should be reminded of this at advanced registration and through visible signage at the access point to the EarlyON program
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Screening of parents, caregivers, children, staff, and essential visitors entering the EarlyON Child and Family Program

	<p>A more rigorous and cautious approach has been adopted to support a comprehensive and enhanced screening program. EarlyON program staff, placement students, essential visitors and participants (children/parents or caregivers) or their household contacts, with any new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19, as indicated in COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool, even those with only one symptom, must stay home until:</p>
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- They receive a negative COVID-19 test result
- They receive an alternative diagnosis by a health care professional, or
- It has been 10 days since their symptom onset, and they are feeling better

EarlyON staff, participants, and placement students:

- In addition to daily self-screening, EarlyON agencies are expected to have a process in place to validate the daily self-screening of EarlyON staff, placement students and essential visitors upon their arrival at the EarlyON Centre
- The EarlyON agency will be responsible for ensuring all EarlyON staff, placement students and essential visitors have completed and passed their daily COVID-19 self- screen
- The [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) can support providers to meet this requirement
- At a minimum, EarlyON staff, placement students and essential visitors are to complete and provide daily confirmation of having self-screened, in a format deemed appropriate and accessible by the provider (such as proof of completed paper copy of screener, mobile application indicating a “pass”), prior to/upon entry
- Any individuals that do not pass the on-site screening procedures will be asked to return home and self-isolate. At the advice of the local public health unit, providers may choose to implement additional on-site screening measures based on local circumstances
- EarlyON agencies are to conduct daily on-site confirmation of self-screening for EarlyON staff, placement students, participants and essential visitors, parents/caregivers, and children.

Children/Parents/Caregivers:

- Parents and caregivers are required to screen themselves and their children prior to attending an EarlyON program. The [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) is available to support parents and caregivers to meet this requirement
- All individuals who would like to enter the EarlyON location or participate EarlyON programs are required to complete and pass the self-assessment COVID-19 EarlyON Child and Family Program Screening Tool; or Ontario’s online screening tool; [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#)
- EarlyON agencies are to ensure that onsite confirmation of self-assessment is conducted by parents/caregiver and children
- In the event that an individual is not screened prior to arriving at the EarlyON program, in-person screening should be

available when necessary. If screening is taking place at the EarlyON program, designate an area near the main entrance to conduct the screening. The screener should maintain at least two metres/six feet from those being screened or being separated by a physical barrier (i.e., plexiglass). If a two-metre distance or physical distancing cannot be maintained, screener should wear full personal protective equipment (PPE), such as medical mask, gloves, gown, and eye protection

- Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) containing 60 to 90% alcohol content must be available at the screening station for hand hygiene
- Contactless thermometers should be used. If non-contactless thermometers are used, they must be covered with single-use protective covers (which is disposed after each use) and cleaned and disinfected with an everyday level disinfectant before reuse. Refer to [Proper Cleaning and Disinfection Practices](#) poster for details
- EarlyON programs do not need to collect screening results but they are responsible to maintain daily records of anyone entering the program
- Attendance records must be maintained and kept on the premises. Where possible, contact information should be obtained electronically, such as online form, survey, or email, or by phone prior to arrival at the EarlyON program. The following information must be included in the record:
 - Name of all individuals who enter the premises
 - Contact information
 - Time of arrival and departure
- EarlyON programs should post signs at entrances to remind families of the program participants of the screening requirements, health guidelines and physical distancing. These are available on <https://www.york.ca/wps/portal/yorkhome/health/yr/covid-19/preventingcovid19intheworkplace>
- Signage can be placed in a visible area, which clearly explains the screening process and the rules and conditions ([COVID-19 Screening Sign](#), [self-monitoring signage](#))
- Programs should post signs at entrances to remind staff, program participants and essential visitors of screening requirements. ([COVID-19 Screening Sign](#), [self-monitoring signage](#))

- The Ministry of Health updated guidance to public health units regarding COVID-19 variants of concern, requiring all household contacts of symptomatic individuals to quarantine
- All asymptomatic household contacts of symptomatic individuals are required to quarantine until the symptomatic household member:
 - Receives a negative COVID-19 test result, or
 - Receives an alternative diagnosis by a health care professional
 - If the symptomatic individual tests positive, or is not tested and does not receive an alternative diagnosis from a health care professional, the symptomatic individual 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 symptomatic individual
- A staff who becomes ill while providing programming should leave the program immediately and advise their employer as soon as possible. The staff member may visit the [York Region Public Health website](#) (or their local health unit) for more information about completing a self-assessment
 - The employer should notify York Region Public Health (call 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days a week or after hours you can call 905-953-6478) if any staff informed the employer that they have tested positive for COVID-19, or if the employer has any concerns of staff working while ill with COVID-19-like symptoms at their workplace
- If a child/parent/caregiver/essential visitor/student begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while attending the program:
 - Advise parents/caregivers/essential visitor/student to leave the program immediately
 - Notify York Region Public Health (call 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days a week or after hours you can call 905-953-6478) of a potential case and seek input regarding next steps
 - A two-metre distance should always be maintained during the programming. The focus should be on removing the ill person from the program
 - Clean and disinfect the space used by the symptomatic person once they have left the program. For more information on environmental cleaning and disinfection, please refer to [Proper Cleaning and Disinfection Practices](#) poster

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ill person should be encouraged to go for testing and to isolate at home. If they test positive, public health will notify close contacts • Staff/children/caregivers/essential visitor/students with symptoms must be excluded from the program to self-isolate while pending test results. Please refer to the “Tested! Now What” Guidance document that provides the various scenarios that outline if an individual receives testing and what the recommendations are in terms of self-isolation requirements while the individual is waiting for results, if the individual tests negative or if the individual tests positive • Staff/children/caregivers/essential visitors/students that are being managed by York Region Public Health (YRPH) such as confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19, should follow instructions from YRPH to determine when to return to the program • EarlyON programs need to follow the EarlyON Serious Incident reporting requirements and must report all confirmed cases of COVID-19 to earlyoseriousincident@york.ca
<p>Laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For further questions about testing guidance, contact COVID-19 phone line at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. (seven days a week) ○ 905-953-6478 (after hours)
<p>Masks</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EarlyON programs must ensure that there are written policies and procedures detailing the requirements on the use of PPE and must ensure that these policies and procedures are consistent with the information in this section as well as any direction provided by their local public health unit • Parents/guardians are responsible for providing their child(ren) and themselves with a non-medical mask(s) or face covering when participating in EarlyON programs and services in person • All EarlyON staff and students on educational placements are required to wear medical masks (such as surgical/ procedural) while inside the premises, including hallways and other shared areas. Eye protection (such as face shield or goggles) is required for individuals working in close contact with children who are not wearing face protection (children younger than grade 1). Eye protection is not required for individuals working

	<p>with children who wear face protection (children grade 1 and above).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other adults (parents/caregivers/essential visitors/students) are required to wear a face covering or non-medical mask • All children in grades one and above are required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering while inside an EarlyON setting, including in hallways • Children younger than grade one or higher are encouraged to wear a non-medical mask or face covering while inside an EarlyON setting, including in hallways • Masks are not recommended for children under the age of two • See information about the use of masks on the Provincial COVID-19 website • EarlyON programs should document their requirements and exemptions related to masks (such as within their COVID-19 policy). Please note that while programs may choose to set out in their policy that a doctor's note be acquired for an exception related to a medical condition, it is not a requirement of the ministry and is discouraged as a general practice • When wearing a mask, you should wash your hands before putting on a mask and before and after removing the mask. Refer to York Region Public Health resources for how to properly wear and take off medical masks and eye protection, such as goggles and face shield
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Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

<p>Handwashing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are among the most important protective strategies. EarlyON staff, visitors and students on educational placement should be trained and able to assist children on appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, including the use of alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR), and reinforcing its use • Hand hygiene should be practiced by anyone entering the EarlyON setting and incorporated into the daily schedule at regular intervals during the day, above and beyond what is usually recommended (for example, before eating food, after using the washroom) • EarlyON staff, visitors, students on educational placement and children should be provided with targeted, age-appropriate education in proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette • Local public health units can provide additional guidance. Age-appropriate posters or signage should be placed around the EarlyON setting • Soap and water are preferred as the most effective method and
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	<p>least likely to cause harm if accidentally ingested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABHR can be used by children. It is most effective when hands are not visibly soiled • For any dirt, blood, body fluids (urine/feces), it is preferred that hands be washed with soap and water • Safe placement of the ABHR to avoid consumption is important, especially for young children • Support or modifications should be provided to allow children with special needs to regularly perform hand hygiene as independently as possible • Tissues and lined, no-touch waste baskets (for example, foot pedal-operated, hand sensor, open basket) are to be provided, where possible • ABHR with a minimum 60% alcohol concentration must be available (60 to 90% recommended, including ideally at the entry point to each EarlyON room) and/or plain liquid soap in dispensers, sinks and paper towels in dispensers <p>Refer to Public Health Ontario's:</p> <p>https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-COVID-19-hand-hygiene.pdf?la=en</p> <p>https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/C/2013/clincial-office-cough-signage.pdf</p>
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Cleaning and disinfecting

<p>Enhanced cleaning and disinfection</p>	<p>To stop chain of transmission, cleaning, and disinfection play an important role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently touched surfaces including doorknobs, water fountain knobs, light switches, toilet handles, electronic devices, and tabletops, are most likely to become contaminated and must be disinfected at least twice a day • Frequently touched surfaces, including any used toys and materials, should be cleaned, and disinfected in between program sessions • Shared objects, such as toys and equipment, and spaces, such as rooms and bathrooms, should also be cleaned between each use, and only one group at a time should access any shared space/equipment • Disinfectants must have a drug identification number (DIN) if approved for use in Canada (common household bleach and 70 to 90% isopropyl alcohol can be used as a disinfectant) • Cleaning and disinfecting logs to track and demonstrate cleaning schedules is recommended
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check expiry dates of disinfectant products and always following the manufacturer’s instructions for use • For more information on environmental cleaning, please refer to Proper Cleaning and Disinfection Practices poster • EarlyON programs are encouraged to limit usage of shared toys and equipment where possible • Toys and equipment should be cleaned and disinfected between users as well as between program groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personal items should not be shared ○ If sensory materials such as playdough, water, sand are offered, they should be provided for single use only • Ensure all toys used at the EarlyON program are made of material that can be easily cleaned and disinfected (e.g., remove plush toys) • Mouthed toys should be cleaned and disinfected immediately after each use by the child • If Sensory materials (such as playdough, water, sand, etc.) are offered, emphasis should be placed on hand hygiene before and after the use of material • Onsite play structures/playground equipment can only be used by one cohort at a time. Proper hand hygiene is performed before and after using shared outdoor structures • EarlyON agencies should secure and sustain an adequate amount PPE and cleaning supplies that can support their current and ongoing operations
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Food and drink provision	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting proper hand hygiene before and after eating • Promoting safe masking practices before and after eating, including safely storing their mask when not in use • Ensuring there are no buffet or self-serve methods of providing food or drink • Ensuring that there is no sharing of food items among participants • If food/snack is being provided the following practices are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food is served in individual portions ○ Proper hand hygiene is practiced when staff are preparing food and all individuals practice proper hand hygiene before and after eating ○ There is no sharing of items, such as saltshaker, serving spoon, etc.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that if a microwave needs to be used that it is cleaned and disinfected after each use
Gathering restrictions and physical distancing strategies	
	<p>EarlyON programs in Public Health Units that have entered Step 3, the applicable regulation is Ontario Regulation 364/20</p> <p>The following provisions under O. Reg. 364/20 will help guide determinations around indoor capacity limits for EarlyON programs: Section 3 Capacity Limits for businesses or facilities open to the public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3) 50% indoor capacity – as long as they can maintain physical distancing of two metres based on fire code capacity limits • 4) 25% indoor capacity - as long as they can maintain physical distancing of two metres based on fire code capacity limits • EarlyON agencies must post a sign in a conspicuous location visible to the public that states the maximum capacity they are permitted to operate under. <p>Physical distancing strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When setting up indoor play space and using outdoor space, physical distancing of at least two metres must be maintained between children, parents/caregivers/students/essential visitors, and staff • Maintain at least two metres between children and other program participants within the same group/cohort, if possible. This can be achieved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spreading children out into different areas incorporating more individual activities. ○ Planning activities for smaller groups when using shared objects or toys ○ Using markings on floors and walls to promote physical distancing ○ Moving activities outside to allow for more space • Singing is permitted indoors; masking is encouraged but not required for singing indoors if a minimum of two-metres distance can be maintained between groups/cohorts and as much distancing as possible maintained within a groups/cohort • When using gymnasiums to provide opportunities for physical activity for children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children and staff should not be engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity indoors. When moderate to vigorous physical activity takes place outdoors, program participants should maintain physical distancing. ○ Masks should not be worn for high intensity activity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gymnasiums should only be used for moderate activity where physical distancing measures and current masking protocols for children and program staff can be followed • Ensure EarlyON staff is practicing physical distancing during breaks and lunches. Rearrange chairs and tables to ensure physical distancing in staff room
Occupational health and safety	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EarlyON programs should have written policies and procedures for worker safety, including measures and procedures for infection prevention and control. Detailed guidelines for COVID-19 are available on the Ministry of Health COVID-19 website • If a staff member is suspected to have or diagnosed with COVID-19, the program should contact public health for closure direction • The self-monitoring signage can be used as a reference • If the program was closed by Public Health, EarlyON programs should consult with York Region Public Health to determine when programs can reopen • Any instances of occupationally acquired infection shall be reported to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) within 72 hours of receiving notification of said illness
Policies and procedures	
	<p>Every EarlyON program must ensure that there are written policies and procedures outlining their health and safety protocols for EarlyON programs, including in-person, mobile and outdoor offerings. These policies and procedures must be consistent with any direction from local public health and include information on how the EarlyON Program will operate to prevent and minimize the impact of COVID-19 in an EarlyON setting, including, at a minimum, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cleaning and disinfecting EarlyON programs ○ Physical distancing, space/group capacity and grouping ○ Safe sign-ins ○ Equipment and usage of toys ○ Outdoor programs (if offered) ○ Mobile programs (if offered) ○ Requirements on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ○ Consumption of food and drink ○ Screening for COVID-19 symptoms ○ Attendance records ○ Monitoring and responding to reports of COVID-19 symptoms

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outbreak management ○ Reporting ○ Staff training ○ Shift scheduling ○ Return to work for symptomatic persons or confirmed cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed guidelines for COVID-19 are available on the Ministry of Health COVID-19 website • EarlyON Child and Family Program must have a written policy and procedure for COVID-19 response to ensure staff knows what steps to take once a child/parent/caregiver/essential visitor/student or staff member is symptomatic/positive for COVID-19 • EarlyON staff/providers receive training on current health and safety measures
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Additional resources

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Public Health Guide for Child Care Providers is a resource that can be referred to for more information on infection prevention and control in child care centres • Ministry of Education - Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak: EarlyON Re-Opening • Public Health Ontario – Coronavirus • Public Services Health and Safety Association - Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19 For Employers of Child Care Centres and COVID-19: Precautions When Working As A Childcare Provider • York Region – york.ca/COVID19
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