

COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY OUTDOOR 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.

OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

SCREENING

All individuals, including children, parents/caregivers, essential visitors, students, and staff members must complete self-screening on a daily basis, prior to participating in a program. The self-assessment checklist must be completed daily before participating in a program.

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:

- 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.
- 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
- Each program can use Ontario’s online screening tool; [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#)
- EarlyON programs should post signs at entrances to remind 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/>
- Families must reserve and/or register in advance of participating in programs and services. Where possible, EarlyON programs should collect contact information, such as name, phone number and email address, send Ontario’s 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 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](#))
- Each EarlyON program should have a first aid kit and appropriate PPE kit containing, but not limited to, the following items:
 - Gloves
 - Medical masks
 - Gowns
 - Eye protection
 - Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) containing at least 60 to 90% alcohol content
 - Signage
 - Clipboard
 - Pens
 - Tissue
 - Bags
 - Disinfecting wipes with a Drug Identification Number that are approved for use in Canada
- PPE kit and a first aid kit must be at each program location. This will be used in the event a child or family member is sick or requires first aid assistance
- EarlyON programs should secure and sustain an amount of PPE and cleaning and disinfecting supplies that can support their current and ongoing operations

OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

- Group size may not exceed **100 participants** – this includes children, parents/caregivers/staff/students, and essential visitors
- Families are required to register in advance for any outdoor program offering
- Participants will be asked to use ABHR prior to starting the program
- Programs must be set up to maintain distance of two-metres/six feet between families
- Program space needs to have a clear barrier defining the program space from the public
- Staff will stay two-metres/six feet apart from each other and the families. If physical distancing cannot be maintained, staff are required to wear medical mask and eye protection
- 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.
 - Personal items such as sunscreen should not be shared.
 - If sensory materials such as playdough, water, sand are offered, they should be provided for single use only
- EarlyON programs should keep a cleaning and disinfecting log to track and demonstrate cleaning schedules

- Staff should remind families that during the EarlyON program, the park playground equipment is not accessible as cleaning of equipment cannot be maintained as it is for public use
- Encourage more physical space between children by incorporating more individual activities that encourage more space between children
- Staff must read and understand the agencies' enhanced health and safety policies, and other operational measures
- If space permits, visual guides should be provided to assist with physical distancing in the event that a line-up forms while people are waiting to confirm registration
- Where possible, stagger arrival times to prevent a queue from forming and to allow enough time for screening information to be obtained
- Encouraging one-way traffic flow throughout the space
- When moderate-to-vigorous physical activity takes place outdoors, children and staff should maintain physical distancing. Masks should not be worn for high-intensity activity

HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

- Handwashing with soap and water is recommended for children. When soap and water are unavailable, ABHR can be used instead. Post signage to promote personal hygiene practices ([hand washing](#), [hand sanitizing](#), [respiratory etiquette](#), [how to prevent respiratory illness](#))
- ABHR containing 60 to 90% alcohol can be used only if hands are not visibly soiled
- Follow proper cough and sneeze etiquette (cough or sneeze into your sleeve or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and throw the tissue out immediately. Wash your hands afterwards.)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands

MASKING REQUIREMENTS

- 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 physical distancing cannot be maintained
- All children in grades one and above are required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering outdoors when a distance of two metres cannot be maintained
- Children younger than grade one are encouraged to wear a non-medical mask or face covering when participating in EarlyON programs and physical distancing cannot be maintained
- Masks are not recommended for children under the age of two
- See information about the use of masks on the [Provincial COVID-19 website](#)

- All staff, including placement students, are required to wear medical masks outdoors when a distance of two metres cannot be maintained
- All other adults (parents/caregivers/essential visitors) are required to wear a face covering or non-medical mask outdoors when a distance of two metres cannot be maintained
- EarlyON programs should document their requirements and exemptions related to masks (e.g. 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

GUIDANCE ON WASTE MANAGEMENT

- No special precautions are recommended; [routine practices on waste management](#) are sufficient

MANAGEMENT OF STAFF/PARENT/CAREGIVER/CHILDREN/ESSENTIAL VISITOR/STUDENT WITH POSSIBLE COVID-19

- 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
- 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
- For further questions about testing guidance, contact COVID-19 phone line at:
 - 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. (seven days a week)
 - 905-953-6478 (after hours)

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 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

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- EarlyON agencies should have policy and procedures in place to notify York Region Public Health when there is an increased number of children/parents/caregivers/students/essential visitor and staff experiencing is symptomatic/positive for COVID-19. Detailed guidelines are available on the [Ministry of Health COVID-19 website](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [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