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City of Hamilton – COVID-19 – Child Care Centre Operation

Cleaning and Disinfection, Hand Hygiene and Shared Equipment/Spaces Updated September 2021

Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19. In order to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses including COVID-19, licensed child care settings will be required to maintain their routine cleaning and disinfection schedules, providing enhanced cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces and mouthed toys.

Further information on routine cleaning requirements and scheduling recommendations can be found in City of Hamilton's [Infection Control Guidelines for Child Care Centres](#).

All products including cleaners and disinfectants must be out of reach of children, labelled and must have Safety Data Sheets (SDS) that are up to date and stored in WHMIS binder on site. Each classroom and washroom should have its own designated detergent and disinfectant.

Cleaning: completed with soap and water to remove dirt and grease that can hide and protect germs from disinfectants. Cleaning with soap and water will also substantially reduce the number of germs that may be on surfaces.

Disinfecting: after cleaning, disinfectant solution will kill most of the germs that were left behind. A routine housekeeping schedule is necessary to ensure these duties are completed (a checklist is useful).

Selection of Disinfectants

It is important to choose an approved, non-expired disinfectant with a drug identification number (DIN). It must be appropriate for the surface it is being used on and the contact time (time the surface stays wet) must be achievable. Public Health recommends a product with a shorter contact time between 1 and 3 minutes.

Usage of PPE While Cleaning

If staff/students are unable to practice physical distancing from each other while cleaning and disinfecting, PPE (medical masks and face shields) should continue to be worn. It is recommended that staff also review the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) sheets for health and safety information about cleaning products, substances or chemicals that are classified as hazardous substances or dangerous goods in order to determine whether additional PPE such as medical gloves should be worn.

Record Keeping

The child care setting must produce a specific cleaning and disinfecting schedule for each group, washroom, kitchen, common areas, indoor/outdoor play areas, and other areas accessed by the program.

A cleaning and disinfection log must be used to track and demonstrate cleaning schedules (indoor and outdoor).

Existing cleaning and disinfection practices should be reviewed to determine where enhancements might be required, including frequency and timing of cleaning and disinfection, areas to clean and/or disinfect, choice of cleaning products, and child safety, staffing, signage, and PPE use when cleaning.

The child care setting must designate staff, and backup staff, to clean and disinfect. These individuals will be responsible for keeping cleaning and disinfecting records, which should include the date, time, product used, the name of the staff responsible, etc.

Enhanced Cleaning Frequencies

Child care centres and home child care premises should be cleaned frequently.

Cleaning plus disinfection twice daily is suggested at a minimum, however, more frequent cleaning and disinfection may be necessary, depending on the frequency of use and extent of soilage.

Frequently Touched Areas

- Frequently touched surfaces include but are not limited to washrooms (for example toilet fixtures, faucets), eating areas (for example, tables, sinks, countertops), doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, touch screens, push buttons, handrails, computers, photocopiers, sports equipment, water fountain knobs. These areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day and more often as needed.
- Staff must adhere to diapering and toileting steps and ensure proper cleaning and disinfecting between diaper change or toileting processes.

Shared Spaces/Objects

The risk associated with transmission with shared objects is low. Instead of regular cleaning of shared objects, the focus should be on respiratory etiquette and proper hand hygiene before and after touching/handling any shared materials/objects and spaces to reduce the risk of infection related to shared equipment. This is especially the case for young children where shared equipment is important for learning (for example, toys for imaginative play, manipulatives for math).

Play structures

While cleaning and disinfecting play structures is not required, hand hygiene must take place before and after children use the play structures. Child care providers should also focus on maintaining distance and limiting total gathering size on playgrounds.

Washrooms

Only one group should access the washroom at a time, and it is recommended that the facilities be cleaned twice daily.

Linens

Linens (i.e., infant blankets and single-use face/hand cloths) and cot covers are laundered in between children, or weekly at a minimum if used by the same child. Daily laundering of linens and cot covers is not required unless being shared between children.

Singing

Singing indoors is only permitted within the cohort, masking is required by staff at all times and distancing is encouraged between individuals.

Equipment and Toy Usage and Restrictions

Licensees and home child care providers are encouraged to provide toys and equipment which are made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected (e.g., avoid plush toys) as much as possible.

Mouthed toys should be cleaned and disinfected immediately after the child is finished using them.

Licensees and home child care providers are encouraged to have designated toys and equipment (e.g., balls, loose equipment) for each room or group of children.

The use of indoor or outdoor sensory bins and activities such as water tables are permitted. If shared, sensory bins should be cleaned in between cohorts. Focus should be placed on proper hand hygiene before and after using any type of sensory activities.

Food Provision

Licensees and home child care providers should follow regular food preparation guidelines.

- Utensils are used to serve food.
- Family style meals are permitted to operate provided food handlers use adequate food handling and safety practices.
- Ensure proper hand hygiene is practiced when staff are preparing food and all individuals before and after eating.
- Where possible, children should practice physical distancing while eating.

There is no food provided by the family/outside of the regular meal provision of the program (except where required and special precautions for handling and serving the food must be in place).

Where an individual is suspected of having COVID-19 in the child care setting

- Establish a protocol to determine contaminated areas and a written process outlining how to carry out cleaning and disinfection, including timing, when to return to use, methods of cleaning, PPE to be used while cleaning, and waste disposal.
- Identify areas that may require cleaning plus disinfection (items used by the individual and all surfaces within 2 metres of the ill person) versus cleaning alone (such as a hallway or room where the individual has passed through).

- Use disposable cleaning equipment, such as disposable wipes, where possible.

For further information on cleaning and disinfection, visit Public Health Ontario's website at <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en>

