



City of Hamilton Reopening EarlyON Child and Family Centres

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated September 23, 2020

This document highlights frequently asked questions to support our EarlyON community in the reopening process. Questions have been themed and responses are found throughout the document:

New 1

Groupings 2

Access 3

Screening and Illness Exclusion 3

Food Provision 4

Workforce 4

New

1. Are families permitted to bring personal belongings such as strollers, car seats, wagons, etc. into an EarlyON centre?
 - Wherever possible, families should limit bringing personal items into the EarlyON centre. If items such as strollers are brought, they should be stored so that other families are not in contact with them and so that the items don't touch one another. Items do not need to be disinfected but should be stored to allow families easy access without touching items belonging to other families (e.g. storing strollers with the handles facing out).
2. In the event that a child/family tests positive for COVID-19 who tracks this and monitors their safe return to program?
 - Families that test positive for COVID-19 would be excluded from all centres for 14 days and until they receive clearance from Public Health.
3. If a parent or caregiver chooses not to wear a mask at the EarlyON centre for medical reasons should staff request a doctor's note or other documentation?
 - Wearing a mask or face covering is required in enclosed public spaces under City of Hamilton By-Law 20-155, however there are a number of exemptions including "A person who has an underlying medical condition which inhibits their ability to wear a face covering".

- No family should be denied entry or stigmatized if they indicate they are unable to wear a mask or face covering due to a listed exemption.
 - Medical documentation is not required and should not be requested in these circumstances.
 - Please practice patience and kindness as everyone adjusts and navigates through these uncertain times.
4. Do parents and caregivers need to wear masks while participating in an outdoor EarlyON program?
- Masks are not required outdoors if adults can physically distance at least 6 feet from other individuals not from the same household.
5. Do children need to maintain a physical distance of 6 feet from each other while attending an EarlyON centre?
- Physical distancing is encouraged at all times.
 - Ways to encourage physical distancing include planning activities that do not involve shared objects or toys; using visual cues to promote physical distancing and when possible, moving activities outside to allow for more space.
 - Additional consideration should be given to high risk activities such as eating and during transition times such as entry and exit from the program.
 - We recognize that physical distancing is difficult with small children and infants and may not always be possible.
6. Are temperature checks mandatory at EarlyON centres?
- EarlyON operators shall not conduct temperature checks of children, caregivers or staff as part of the daily screening process unless an individual requests it or otherwise indicates they have not checked their temperature prior to arrival.
 - Thermometers should be available at all EarlyON centres to facilitate temperature checks as needed.
 - Operators must keep records of daily screening results (pass/fail) and store information onsite.

Groupings

1. What is the participant limit for each EarlyON session?
- As of August 20, 2020, 15 individuals per session, not including staff, will be permitted at this time. Smaller EarlyON centres may choose to further restrict the number of individuals in order to maintain physical distancing.
 - This limit applies to both indoor and outdoor programming.

2. Can the participant limit of 15 be exceeded to allow for companion programs/events such as Infant Massage and Baby Picasso if they take place in a separate program room from the main "drop-in" space?
 - Yes, this is allowed, but the scheduling for each group should be staggered so that entry/exit times differ between groups and physical distancing must always be maintained.
 - Consideration should also be given to the potentially increased washroom usage if more than one group of 15 are accessing the centre at once. Increased cleaning and disinfection of all high touch surfaces including the washroom should take place.
 - Operators need to ensure there are enough staff available at the centre to properly track attendance and screening for each group.

Access

3. Can families access more than one EarlyON centre?
 - Yes, this is allowed provided that each participant completes the attendance and screening procedure at every centre they choose to attend.
4. Should we limit the number of times families can access a centre?
 - At this time, we will not be limiting the number of EarlyON programs or centres a family can access however operators may wish to monitor this as we begin to understand the demand for in-person programming.
 - At the time of reservation families will be encouraged to be mindful of the number of events they register for at once.
5. If a family shows up at an EarlyON session/event without having reserved a spot in advance, are they allowed to attend?
 - Families should be encouraged to reserve a space in advance of a session, however if a family arrives, they may attend provided there is still space within the session, and they have completed the required attendance and screening procedures.
6. What should we do about families who reserve a spot and don't show up?
 - Spaces are reserved for those families who have signed up in advance. Families should be encouraged to cancel their reservation if they can't attend, otherwise it may impact the ability for others to access the program.

Screening and Illness Exclusion

7. Are temperature checks mandatory before entry to an EarlyON Centre?

- While all individuals planning to attend an EarlyON Centre are encouraged to conduct temperature checks prior to arrival it is not mandatory that they do so once they are onsite.
 - Thermometers should be available to provide to families who are unable to check temperatures in advance.
8. If the family is not well but is registered for sessions at other sites how are those sites notified?
- If upon arrival any individual fails to pass the screening questions, or if a fever is identified, this individual will be refused entry into the EarlyON Centre. The screener will deny entry and the operator will support and if necessary, enforce the decision. Any individual who fails the screening process should be advised to contact their health care provider as well as Public Health at 905-974-9848, option 2 for testing.
 - Families should be asked to cancel their reservations for all other sites until they are able to attend.

Food Provision

9. Can families bring their own snacks?
- Yes, families may bring their own food however sharing of food amongst participants from different households should be discouraged.
10. May we continue to prepare food together as a group?
- Currently, it is preferable to have staff members preparing, plating and serving food in order to minimize risk.
 - At this time, group food preparation activities are discouraged but not prohibited. At the discretion of the operator, group meal preparation may take place as long as multiple health and safety measures are observed (e.g. maintaining physical distancing, not sharing utensils, adhering to PPE requirements).
 - If group meal preparation is taking place, safe food handling practices should be followed, and all high touch surfaces should be noted by staff. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices of high touch surfaces should occur.
11. May we eat together as a group?
- Yes, snack/meals may be eaten together provided physical distancing of 2-metres is maintained amongst all individuals. Hand hygiene should occur before and after eating.

Workforce

12. Can staff working for a multi-service agency work at more than one EarlyON location, or at an EarlyON centre and child care program?

- Operators should try and adjust their staffing models in order to minimize staff mobility from location to location as much as possible. Where this isn't operationally feasible, in order to minimize the risk of transmission, operators should ensure that all staff have completed the necessary training on the usage of PPE and are familiar with the various health and safety requirements required within each early years setting. COVID-19 training materials should be reviewed by staff from time to time.
- Operators should be aware of the potential implications on multiple programs if a staff member working in more than one location were to be exposed to COVID-19.