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**Hamilton**

## **City of Hamilton – COVID-19 – EarlyON Operation Physical Distancing, Space/Group Capacity, and Grouping November 2020**

EarlyON Centres must implement a physical distancing policy of at least two metres amongst all individuals at all times. Note: this does not apply to parents/children living in the same home.

### **Space/Group Capacity**

In response to the City of Hamilton moving into the red control zone of the COVID-19 Response Framework, as of November 23, 2020 all **indoor** EarlyON centres are closed. This closure will be in place until January 1, 2021 and will be re-assessed at that point.

Outdoor EarlyON programs continue to operate with a capacity of 15 individuals per session, not including staff. EarlyON operators may choose to further restrict the number of individuals in order to maintain physical distancing. These size limits are in place to reduce the transmission and spread of COVID-19.

### **Multiple Groups at the same Location**

Concurrent programs at the same location, each with a capacity of 12, may be offered provided the groups do not mix. 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 12 are accessing the facilities 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 premises to properly track attendance and screening for each group.

### **Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing is difficult with small children and infants and may not always be possible. Suggestions to promote physical distancing in an environment with young children include:

- planning activities that do not involve shared objects or toys;
- using visual cues to promote physical distancing; and
- when possible, moving programs outside to allow for more space

### **High Risk Activities**

Additional consideration should be given to high risk activities such as eating and during transition times such as entry and exit from the program.

Singing is a high-risk activity, as respiratory droplets can spread further. At this time, singing at an in person EarlyON program (indoor or outdoor) is discouraged. If operators choose to incorporate singing into their programs, please consider the following recommendations:

- a. Physically distance at least 2 metres
- b. Everyone wear masks (or be behind plexiglass if possible)

### **Grouping of Participants in EarlyON**

It is recommended that EarlyON providers group (cohort) participants when offering in-person programs and services to the greatest extent possible. Grouping participants reduces the number of exposures that increase the risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19.

At this time, operators should encourage participants to limit their in-person attendance to one EarlyON location and access virtual programs on other days.

In addition, operators should continue to schedule dedicated time with families to provide 1:1 support for information and referrals, either virtually or in-person.