



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

Masking and PPE Requirements Updated September 2021

Child Care Staff and Students

- All child care staff, home child care providers, home child care visitors and students on educational placement are required to wear medical masks (e.g. surgical/ procedural) while inside a child care setting, including in hallways and staff rooms (unless eating – but time with masks off should be limited and physical distance should be maintained).
- Eye protection (e.g. face shield or goggles) is required both indoors and outdoors, as per occupational health and safety requirements for individuals working in close contact with children who are not wearing face protection. Eye protection is not required for individuals working with children who wear face protection (e.g. kindergarten age and up).
- All child care staff, home child care providers, home child care visitors and students on educational placement are required to wear medical masks when providing transportation for children. Eye protection for drivers should not interfere with the safe operation of vehicles and is intended to protect drivers during close contact with children, such as during boarding and exiting.
- Medical masks and eye protection are required to be worn by individuals conducting screening and/or receiving children at the entrance whether this takes place indoors or outdoors.

School-Age Children 3.8 years and older

In order to obtain consistency across all child care settings and to ensure alignment with the local school board masking policies, all child care settings must observe the following, regardless of whether the program is in a school or other facility.

- All school-age children, Kindergarten and above, are required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering while inside the child care premises, including hallways and other shared areas. This includes school and community-based child care locations.

- Masks must cover the nose, mouth and chin without gaping. A properly fitted mask provides better protection.
- School-age children must wear a non-medical mask before they enter the child care premises. Masks are not to be shared or traded with others.
- Children may wear their own non-medical masks provided the childrens' own mask can be worn in the appropriate manner. Non-medical masks should be made available, if needed.

Children 2 - 3.8 years

Children between the ages of 2 and 3.8 years are encouraged to also wear a mask however this remains at the parent's discretion. Child care operators should provide communication to all parents and caregivers advising them of this recommendation.

Children under 2 years

Masks are not recommended for children under the age of two.

Parents and Caregivers

- Licensees may continue to offer drop off and pick up procedures where parents do not enter the premises; however, if a parent wishes to enter the premises, they must be permitted to do so, unless a licensee is implementing a direction of a medical officer of health in respect of COVID-19.
- Parents/caregivers are required to wear a face covering or non-medical mask, if tolerated, when dropping off or picking up their child(ren) if this takes place indoors. If the child care is located in a school, the masking policy for the local school board would apply (e.g. medical mask is required to be worn).

Additional Requirements

Outdoor PPE Requirements

- Children are not required to wear masks outdoors. Physical distancing is strongly encouraged between groups.
- Eye protection (e.g. face shield or goggles) is required both indoors and outdoors, as per occupational health and safety requirements for individuals working in close contact with children who are not wearing face protection. Eye protection is not required for individuals working with children who wear face protection.

- Masking is not required outdoors when two metres of distance is maintained from others. Physical distancing is strongly encouraged between groups.
- If an individual requires a “mask break”, they should be encouraged to move to a space that is a minimum of 6 feet away for all other children and staff before removing their mask.
- Masks may become harder to breathe through when they become damp, and although this should not affect filtration capacity significantly the recommendation is to replace the mask when the dampness become uncomfortable.
- Masks should also be replaced when they become visibly soiled, or frozen in cold weather.
- Multiple masks may be needed throughout the course of the day if they are being worn outdoors in cold weather.

For more information, see Public Health Ontario’s [Cold Weather Tips for Schools.](#)

Provision of Masks

- Parents/guardians are responsible for providing their child(ren) (if applicable) with a non-medical mask(s) or face covering when participating in child care programs.
- Non-medical masks should be made available by child care operators for school aged children if needed.
- Child care licensees and home child care providers should secure and sustain an amount of PPE (including but not limited to face shields or goggles, medical masks, gloves, etc.) and cleaning supplies that can support their current and ongoing operations.
- To support healthy and safe operation of child care programs, a supply of medical masks and eye protection (i.e., face shields) is being procured and delivered through the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services to licensed child care centres and home child care agencies on a monthly basis.
- The Ontario Together Portal has a [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#) that lists Ontario businesses that provide PPE and other supplies.

Safe Masking Practices

Mask Instructions

Putting on a Mask

- Encourage children to practice hand hygiene before putting on, taking off or adjusting mask.
- Non-medical masks should fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- Be large enough to completely cover the nose, mouth and without gaping

The City of Hamilton offers this helpful illustration on mask usage.



Safely taking off a mask

- Encourage children to practice hand hygiene before and after removing the mask
- Remove mask by pulling ties or ear loops away from ears
- Touch the ties only and not the mask
- Put mask into a clean bag or onto a clean surface and keep it separate from other items
- If folding, fold so that the interior of the mask is touching together
- If not folding, face the interior of the mask away from surfaces like a table

For more information, see <https://www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus/face-coverings-and-masks>.

Exceptions/Exemptions

Reasonable exceptions to the requirement to wear masks may be put in place by licensees and it is expected that these will be relatively rare cases. Exceptions to wearing masks could include circumstances where a physical distance of at least 2

metres can be maintained between individuals, situations where a child cannot tolerate wearing a mask, reasonable exemptions for medical conditions, etc.

Licensees are asked to carefully review their masking exceptions policies and ensure that children are supported to wear masks to the greatest extent possible. Licensees may discuss with parents/guardians, in consultation with the child's health care provider, whether other types of face coverings might work for the child.

In addition, resources are available that can be shared with parents/guardians on supporting children in wearing masks and on health and safety practices for children who cannot wear masks. See for example this [tip sheet](#) from Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital.

- Child care centres should document their requirements and exemptions related to masks (e.g. within their COVID-19 policy).
- Note that medical documentation is not required and should not be requested in these circumstances.