



# YCD FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN SEPTEMBER 2021



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## **YCD FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN SEPTEMBER 2021**

### **BACKGROUND**

- January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.
- March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic and a worldwide health concern to all of humanity.
- As a result, governing countries and their leaders around the world acted to mitigate the spread of this virus by restricting travel, testing, and quarantining symptomatic individuals, enforcing physical distancing, closing schools and non-essential businesses, and requesting residents to stay inside their homes.
- This document provides a framework to mitigate risk for educators, families, children, and community partners and provides general guidance on the prevention and management of COVID-19.
- Under Ontario law, employers have the duty to take every reasonable precaution to keep workers safe, informed and ensure the use of the appropriate protective equipment.
- York Region Public Health (YRPH), Ontario Ministry of Health, Health Canada, and the WHO provide resources, information, and guidance with respect to COVID-19.

### **PLANNING PRIORITIES FOR REOPENING**

All YCD Programs:

- Will comply with the guidance documents, from the Ministry and York Region, to continue delivering Family Support Programs (FSP) during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. The guidance in this document is intended to support CMSMs, FSP providers (YCD) and York Region School Boards.
- Will comply with this guidance in conjunction with Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) and its regulations, and the Ontario Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service Management and Funding Guideline 2021 (for EarlyON).
- Will comply with any requirements from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
- Understand that York Region Public Health (YRPH) guidance must be followed, even in the event it is different from the guidance in the Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak Version 5 - August 2021.
- Will comply with the direction that child minding and respite child care as outlined in the Ontario Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service Management and Funding Guideline may not be offered at this time. Partners will be notified when this restriction has been lifted.
- Will update the Region on our reopening plans (EarlyON) in order to ensure the EarlyON website information is updated.
- Will ensure continued delivery of mandatory core services including:
  - recognizing that service delivery methods may have shifted as a result of COVID-19
  - FSP will continue to deliver high quality programs and services that support early learning and development, engage parents and caregivers, and make connections for families through a variety of methods that support the health, safety and well-being of children and families.
- Will ensure the ongoing delivery of virtual services, where possible, so that children and families can access programs and services without having to attend in-person.
- Will encourage a variety of service delivery methods as part of their re-opening plan to continue delivering FSPs during the ongoing outbreak.
- Will ensure all in-person programs and services will be offered with enhanced health and safety protocols and physical distancing measures in place (when applicable).
- Will provide updates to families and the CMSM when we resume in-person.
- Will approach service planning through this equity lens that helps to remove barriers to access and better ensures that FSP and services continue to remain accessible to all children and families in Ontario during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.

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### **SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19**

YCD will ensure that current information, regarding the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for both adults and children, are prominently posted in all our programs, shared with educators and families and available on our website. This information will be obtained from YRPH. <https://www.york.ca/wps/portal/yorkhome/health/yr/covid-19>

### **HOW COVID-19 SPREADS AND REDUCING THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION**

YCD will ensure that current information, regarding how COVID-19 spreads and how to reduce the risk of transmission are prominently posted in all our programs shared with educators and families and available on our website. This information will be obtained from YRPH. <https://www.york.ca/wps/portal/yorkhome/health/yr/covid-19>

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

No one specific measure will prevent COVID-19 transmission from occurring in FSP, rather there are multiple structural and individual elements that contribute to making FSP healthier spaces and reduce the risk of infection for educators, families, and essential visitors. Each of the control measures identified in this plan provide some benefit in reducing spread. However, it is the combination and consistent application of these layered controls as a bundle that is most effective for reducing disease spread in FSP. YCD will employ multiple strategies and a layering of controls to support healthier and safer environments for children and educators.

### **Working with York Region Public Health**

While the ministry is providing guidance on how to operate FSP during the COVID-19 pandemic, YCD must follow the advice of YRPH when establishing health and safety protocols.

The ministry recognizes that this may result in local and regional differences in these protocols but given the varying impact of COVID-19 in different communities, it is important to follow the advice of YRPH to keep children and families safe in their respective communities.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

YCD has written policies and procedures outlining health and safety protocols for FSP, including in-person, mobile and outdoor programs.

These policies and procedures are consistent with the direction from YRPH and include information on how the FSP will operate to prevent and minimize the impact of COVID-19, including, at a minimum, the following:

- how cleaning and disinfecting the space, toys and equipment will be conducted.
- how to report illness.
- how physical distancing will be encouraged, particularly between groups
- requirements on the use of medical masks and eye protection, and personal protective equipment (PPE), including information on exemptions or exceptions.
- how work locations/shifts will be scheduled how attendance records will be organized and maintained in order to facilitate contact tracing.
- a communication plan in the event of a case/outbreak.
- rescheduling of group events and/or in-person meetings.
- arrival and departure procedures.

### **Cleaning Protocols**

Existing practices have been reviewed to ensure enhancements are put in place including frequency and timing of cleaning and disinfection, areas to clean and disinfect, choice of cleaning products, and child safety, staffing, signage, and PPE use when cleaning.

- which products to use, including disinfectants with Health Canada Drug Identification Numbers (DINs)
- how to clean and disinfect different materials, including minimum surface contact time
- other items to remember, including checking expiry dates of cleaning and disinfectant products and following the manufacturer's instructions.

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### **Cleaning Products**

YCD has procured and will ensure an adequate supply of both cleaning and disinfection products that are approved for use in Canada and are current dated. Educators will be trained to use these products safely based on manufactures instructions. Cleaning and disinfecting logs will be used in all FSP.

### **Cleaning Program**

FSP's and materials will be cleaned frequently. The focus will be on regular hand hygiene to reduce the risk of infection related to high touch surfaces. Cleaning plus disinfection twice daily will occur at a minimum, however, more frequent cleaning and disinfection may be necessary, depending on the frequency of use and extent of soilage.

- 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.

### **Shared Spaces/Objects**

The risk associated with transmission, of COVID-19, with shared objects is low. Instead of regular cleaning of shared objects, the focus should be on enhanced hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of infection related to shared equipment. This is especially true in the case for young children where shared equipment is important for learning (for example, toys for imaginative play, manipulatives for math).

Where an individual is suspected of having COVID-19 in a FSP:

- YCD has protocol in place to identify contaminated areas and carry out cleaning and disinfection, including timing, when to return to use, methods of cleaning, PPE to be used while cleaning, and waste disposal.
- Identified 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).

### **Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are among the most important protective strategies. FSP educators will be trained and able to assist children on appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, including the use of alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR), and reinforcing its use.

Hand hygiene should be practiced by anyone entering a FSP and incorporated into the daily schedule at regular intervals during the day, above and beyond what is usually recommended (for example, before eating food, after using the washroom).

FSP educators will ensure children are provided with targeted, age-appropriate education in proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. YRPH can provide additional guidance. Age-appropriate posters or signage will be placed around the FSP.

- Soap and water are preferred as the most effective method and least likely to cause harm if accidentally ingested.
- ABHR can be used by children. It is most effective when hands are not visibly soiled.
- For any dirt, blood, body fluids (urine/feces), it is preferred that hands be washed with soap and water.
- Safe placement of the ABHR will occur to avoid consumption, especially for young children.
- Support or modifications should be provided to allow children with special needs to regularly perform hand hygiene as independently as possible.
- Tissues and lined, no-touch waste baskets (for example, foot pedal-operated, hand sensor, open basket) are to be provided, where possible.
- ABHR with a minimum 60% alcohol concentration must be available (60-90% recommended, including ideally at the entry point to each FSP) and/or plain liquid soap in dispensers, sinks and paper towels in dispensers.

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### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

All FSP educators will be trained on the proper use of PPE provided. YCD will ensure an adequate supply of PPE and cleaning supplies to support ongoing operations. To support healthy and safe operation of EarlyON 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 EarlyON Centres monthly. YCD has purchased stock for CAPC.

Full PPE is used in the program:

- When conducting active screens of children, staff, or essential visitors.
- When taking care of a symptomatic child at the centre prior to pick up.
- When cleaning and disinfecting an area/room of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case.
- When a staff member becomes sick at work.
- When encountering blood or body fluids.

### **Medical Masks & Eye Protection- Adults**

- All FSP educators are required to wear medical masks while indoors, including in hallways and staff rooms.
- Eye protection is required for educators working in close contact with children who are not wearing face protection (children younger than grade 1).
- All other adults (parents/caregivers/ visitors) are required to wear a face covering or non-medical mask while inside the premises, including hallways and other shared areas.
- Masking and eye protection are not required outdoors. Physical distancing is strongly encouraged between groups.
- Hands will be washed prior to donning a mask and after removing a mask.

### **Medical Masks- Children**

- Masks are not recommended for children under the age of two.
- Children younger than grade 1 are encouraged to wear a non-medical or cloth mask while inside a FSP, including in hallways.
- All children in grades 1 and above are required to wear a properly fitted non-medical or cloth mask while inside a FSP, including in hallways.
- Masking is not required outdoors. Physical distancing is strongly encouraged between groups.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for providing their children with a mask (if applicable).
- Exclusions from wearing masks will be evaluated on an individual basis. Exceptions to wearing masks indoors could include situations where a child or educator cannot tolerate wearing a mask, reasonable exceptions for medical conditions, etc.

Signage regarding the donning and doffing of face covering will be posted throughout the program. At the advice of YRPH, FSP may choose to implement additional masking measures based on local circumstances

### **Gloves and Gowns**

- All gloves and gowns provided are compatible with the disinfectant products being used.
- Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Be sure to clean hands after removing gloves.
- Gloves should be removed after cleaning a room or area occupied by ill persons.
- Signage regarding personal protective practices will be posted throughout the programs.

### **Screening for Symptoms**

All individuals entering a FSP must self-screen every day before attending the program using the provincial screening tool or a screening tool designated by YRPH. The screening tool may be updated as required.

- Parents and guardians are to screen themselves and their child(ren) for symptoms of illness every day.

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- Parents or guardians of any child that have not completed the screening for symptoms prior to arriving at the child care setting will be required to complete screening prior to entry.
- Educators will support families in the use of the electronic screening tool to ensure ease of use.
- All FSP educators and visitors must self-screen.
- YCD has an electronic system in place to collect daily screens for all individuals entering our programs.
- Any individuals that do not pass the screening procedures will be asked to return home and self-isolate
- All individuals must follow the monitoring and isolation advice outlined in the screening tool.
- YCD will ensure signs are posted at entrances to FSP to remind educators, parents/caregivers, and visitors of screening requirements.
- YCD has protocol in place to remind families of daily screening requirement imbedded in the in-person outdoor pre-registration process.
- Self-assessment information will be made available to families and educators to ensure awareness of possible symptoms of COVID-19.

In the rare event that an electronic screen is not available educators must conduct an active screen.

When screening an adult or child(ren) educators will take appropriate precautions that may include, maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres from those being screened, being separated by a physical barrier (such as a plexiglass barrier), and providing alcohol-based hand rub containing 60% to 90% alcohol content at all screening stations.

### **Attendance Records**

In addition to attendance records for adults/children we will be maintaining daily records of anyone entering a FSP. These records will include all individuals who enter the premises (e.g., cleaners, people doing maintenance work, people providing supports for children with special needs).

- Records will be kept on the premises and along with name and contact information will include time of arrival and time of departure, screening completion for each individual and PPE use.
- Records will be kept up-to-date and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak (i.e., records can be made available to YRPH within 24 hours of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak).

### **MONITORING AND RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**

Persons who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the guidance of YRPH and health care professionals regarding direction for isolation and returning to a FSP. The individual cannot return until cleared by YRPH. Note that individuals do not need to provide a medical note or proof of negative result to return to the program.

If an individual becomes ill while in the FSP:

- Ill individuals should leave the program immediately.
- The ill individual and their parents/caregivers and/or child(ren) should immediately be separated from others in a separate room, where possible (i.e., an isolation room) in the event that they need to be picked up.
- Parents will be advised to call YRPH in the event of a potential case and seek input regarding next steps.
- Anyone providing care to the ill individual should maintain as much physical distance as possible. If physical distancing is not possible (e.g., if a young child needs comfort) educators must wear additional PPE (i.e., gloves, gown).
- The person caring for the individual must wear a medical mask and eye protection and be trained on proper use of PPE, including donning and doffing. If tolerated, the ill individual should also wear a medical mask.
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be practiced while the ill individual is waiting to leave or be picked up.
- Cleaning of the area the separated individual was in and other areas of the FSP where the ill individual was should be conducted as soon as reasonably possible after the ill individual leaves.
- The ill individual and/or their parent or guardian should be advised to use the online self-assessment tool and follow instructions which may include seeking medical advice and/or going for testing for COVID-19.

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- Communication protocols to update and inform necessary stakeholders while maintaining confidentiality of the ill individual should be initiated (e.g., service system manager or if located in a school contact the school). Note, suspected cases of COVID-19 do not need to be reported to the ministry.
- Regular FSP can continue unless directed otherwise by YRPH. An ill individual who has a known alternative diagnosis provided by a health care professional may return to the FSP if they do not have a fever and their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours.

YCD, together with Ministry of Health and YRPH, will work closely to monitor and respond to reports of COVID-19 symptoms.

### **Reporting Confirmed Cases to the Ministry of Education (EarlyON)**

Where an educator has a confirmed case of COVID-19 (i.e., a positive COVID-19 test result), YCD must report this to YRPH. CAPC programs must also report to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

YCD will report, the case, to YRPH and provide any materials (e.g., daily attendance records) to public health officials to support case management and contact tracing and other activities in accordance with all applicable legislation, including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

YRPH officials will determine any additional steps required, including but not limited to how to monitor for other possible infected educators, parents/caregivers, children and essential visitors and the declaration of an outbreak and closure of rooms and/or entire FSP setting.

### **Outbreak Management**

An outbreak may be declared by YRPH when within a 14-day period, there are two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in children, educators/providers, or other visitors with an epidemiological link (e.g., cases in the same room, cases that are part of the same indoor cohort) where at least one case could have reasonably acquired their infection in the FSP.

YRPH will work with YCD to determine whether epidemiological links exist between cases and whether transmission may have occurred in the FSP. If YRPH declares an outbreak, they will direct appropriate next steps, which could include a partial or full closure of the FSP.

If the public health unit determines that partial or full closure of the FSP is required, YCD will report this to their CMSM. CMSMs must notify the ministry through their Early Years Advisor, see section on 'Reporting Confirmed Cases to the Ministry' (EarlyON programs).

## **PROGRAMS**

### **Pedagogical Approaches During COVID-19**

This PRP focuses on the health, safety, and operational measures that are required to safely deliver FSP during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, however, it is also critical to keep the well-being of children and families at the forefront by continuing to provide a welcoming and caring environment.

YCD will ensure that How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years (HDLH) and Building on How Does Learning Happen? play central roles during this time. Now more than ever, HDLH is a key support for children, families and educators as Ontario recovers from the challenges of this unprecedented time.

These documents:

- continue to be the guide to support learning through relationships for those working with young children and families.
- acknowledge that children's health and physical well-being is important, but we also know that FSP's play a critical role in supporting their learning, development, and emotional well-being.
- the values, foundations for learning, and pedagogical approaches in HDLH can also help to guide discussions on ways to ensure children's emotional well-being and capacity for learning continue to be nurtured.

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- we know it is critical to put measures in place to support the immediate health and safety needs of children, families, and educators; however, emotional well-being should be given the same level of care and attention.
- children need responsive and caring relationships and environments that support exploration, play and inquiry, which have a long-term impact on children's mental health, well-being, and capacity to learn.

### **Program Delivery Models**

#### **Virtual Programs**

YCD will continue offering virtual services, where possible, so that children and families can access programs and services without having to attend in person.

#### **Outdoor Programs**

YCD will strongly encourage an outdoor program delivery model as it can easily allow for safe, physically distanced activities for children and families. Where programming is being offered in a shared setting (e.g., park), YCD will work in collaboration with the YRPH to follow their advice. Group size may not exceed 100 participants. This includes children, parent, caregiver, educators, and essential visitors. All programs require pre-registration in accordance with this plan. Requirement of 7-day cohorting has been removed.

NOTE: At this time YCD is pleased to be offering in person outdoor programming. We will be offering our outdoor programs with a group size not exceeding 35 individuals (including educators). This will be reviewed and potentially increased in the future.

#### **Indoor Programs**

Indoor programs are permitted to operate in accordance with the Government of Ontario 'Roadmap to Reopen'. FSP that are permitted to operate must have enhanced health and safety measures in place. Those enhanced health and safety measures are outlined in this plan.

Indoor capacity will be determined, per site, based on provincial guidance under the 'Roadmap to Reopen' and regulation O.Reg.364/20.

- YCD will ensure signage and communication indicating capacity is posted in a conspicuous location visible to the public that states the maximum capacity they are permitted to operate under.
- Capacity will be based on the capacity to physically distance within the space.
- All programs will require pre-registration in accordance with this plan.

NOTE: At this time YCD is not offering indoor programs. YCD will work in collaboration with YRPH and community partners to follow public health advice regarding programs being offered in a shared setting (e.g., schools, a community centre). Families will be notified of the reopen through social media and eblast communications.

#### **Pre-Registration for Programs**

YCD has a process in place to ensure all programs require registration in advance of participating. Pre-registering helps to promote enhanced health and safety by:

- safely collecting information of participants for the purposes of contact tracing
- promoting advanced screening of participants before entering a FSP
- providing important communication to participants on enhanced health and safety measures in advance of attending in-person programs and service
- enabling FSP to maintain and manage group/space capacity
- supporting safe and timely sign-ins and preventing crowding /waiting at entrances
- helping to organize programming options that support an enhanced level of health and safety. (e.g., such as participants registering for multi-week programs).
- where required, registration policies and/or processes may permit reasonable exceptions, i.e., active screen, to the pre-registration requirement that support the unique needs of families while continuing to meet health and



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- safety requirements, which includes: the ability to safely screen all individuals before they enter the FSP and the collection and maintenance of daily records of anyone entering the FSP

### **Communication with Families**

YCD will ensure ongoing communication with families regarding the enhancement of health and safety measures.

We will share with families, information to ensure they are aware of expectations:

- keeping children home when they are sick and staying home themselves if unwell, which is aimed at helping to keep all children and educators/providers safe and healthy
- daily screening protocol requirements
- masking requirements
- protocols if a child or individual in the program becomes ill
- any updates to health and safety measures

### **IN-PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Visitors and Students on Placement**

Only essential visitors will be permitted to enter FSP at this time. No student placements at this time.

#### **Safe Sign-in Procedures**

YCD has develop policies and procedures for safe sign-ins including establishing how physical distancing can be maintained. Pre-registering for programs and services ahead of time helps to promote safe and timely sign-ins for children and families. Further suggestions to promote safe in person sign-ins include:

- Display signage at the entrance explaining hand hygiene, physical distancing, symptom screening and usage of masks (as applicable)
- Consider using signage on the ground to direct families through the entry, where to wait, and how to exit
- Encouraging one-way traffic flow throughout the space
- Encourage hand hygiene by providing hand sanitizer containing 60%-90% alcohol content at the entrance with signage demonstrating appropriate use
- Conduct frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces
- If storage for personal items is required (e.g., strollers, diaper bags, etc.), protocol will be developed for each location to promote safe storage and physical distancing when accessing the space as well as regular cleaning.

#### **Equipment and Toy Usage and Restrictions**

The ministry understands that in an FSP, equipment and toys may be required to deliver programs or services. The following requirements will be followed regarding the use of toys and equipment:

- FSP educators will 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
- If sensory materials (e.g., playdough, water, sand, etc.) are offered, emphasis should be placed on hand hygiene before and after the use of materials.

#### **Outdoor Play**

- FSP educators will schedule outdoor play by groups in order to facilitate physical distancing between groups/cohorts as much as possible, however, children are not required to wear masks.
- FSP educators will find alternate outdoor arrangements (e.g., community walk) when there are challenges securing outdoor play space. FSP educators will follow physical distancing practices when possible.

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### Space Set-up and Physical Distancing

Physical distancing between children in an FSP can be difficult to maintain; however, it is an important strategy that should be encouraged whenever possible.

The building of supportive, caring, and responsive relationships is at the forefront. We need to create a safe space where children can play and interact with their parents/caregivers and their peers. The ministry recognizes the detrimental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's mental health and well-being. The ministry's documents, 'How Does Learning Happen?' and 'Building on How Does Learning Happen?' support the operation of early years and child care programs in Ontario during the COVID-19 outbreak.

- More than one FSP can be offered per building/space as long as they are able to maintain separation between the groups/cohorts and follow all health and safety requirements that apply to those programs.
- Physical barriers (which begin at the floor and reach a minimum height of 8 feet) are not required if a distance of 2 metres can be maintained.
- Ensure educators are practicing physical distancing during breaks and lunches. Rearrange chairs and tables to ensure physical distancing in staff room. When in the same common space (e.g., entrances, hallways), physical
- distancing of at least 2 metres must be maintained between different groups and should be encouraged, as much as possible, between children within the same group by:
- spreading children out into different areas, particularly at snack time incorporating more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children using visual cues to promote physical distancing.

In shared outdoor space, mixing between groups and any other individuals outside of the group is permitted, though physical distancing should be encouraged between groups as much as possible.

Recognizing that physical distancing is difficult with small children and infants, additional suggestions include:

- planning activities for smaller groups when using involve shared objects or toys
- when possible, moving activities outside to allow for more space
- When using gymnasiums to provide opportunities for physical activity for children.
  - gymnasiums should only be used for moderate activity where physical distancing measures and current masking protocols for children and educators can be followed.
  - children and educators should not be engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity indoors.
  - masks should not be worn for high intensity activity outdoors.

### Ventilation

FSP's are encouraged to implement best practices and measures to optimize ventilation. YCD will connect with community partners, school locations etc. prior to opening in person indoor programs to inquire about the ventilation systems in shared spaces.

Adequate ventilation should be provided by opening windows, moving activities outdoors when possible, and through mechanical ventilation including HVAC systems. Ensure HVAC systems are in good working condition.

- Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear.
- Arrange furniture away from air vents and high airflow areas.
- Avoid re-circulating air.

While ventilation is important, it must be used along with other public health measures.

There is not one public health measure that can guarantee protection from COVID-19; multiple strategies are needed. Other measures include symptom screening and self-isolation for people with symptoms, practicing physical distancing, wearing a mask, and practicing good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

### Food and Drink Provisions

FSP educators should follow regular food preparation guidelines. Where possible, children and their parents/caregivers should practice physical distancing while eating.

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FSP educators will consider the following best practices regarding food and drink provision:

- Promoting proper hand hygiene before and after eating.
  
- Promoting safe masking practices before/ after eating, including safely storing their mask when not in use.
- Ensuring there are no buffet or self-serve methods of providing food or drink.
- Ensuring that there is no sharing of food items among participants.

### **Mental Health**

The ministry recognizes the detrimental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children’s mental health and well-being. The ministry’s Building on How Does Learning Happen? supports the operation of early years and child care programs in Ontario during the COVID-19 outbreak. It provides information on how early years settings can support the social and emotional health and wellbeing of children and families, in addition to safe and healthy

environments. FSP educators are also encouraged to collaborate with child and youth mental health agencies to support strong connections and make the best use of mental health resources and supports across the integrated system of care.

### **OTHER OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **FSP in Schools**

The ministry recognizes that there are additional considerations for FSP located in schools.

School boards are required to find safe ways to allow FSP to enter their centres located in schools, in order to prepare their space and ensure they meet the operational guidelines provided by the ministry. School boards should familiarize themselves with this guide to optimally facilitate FSP operating in schools.

School boards, CMSMs and EarlyON partners (YCD) should work together collaboratively to ensure that FSP programs located in schools are able to operate and that health and safety policies and requirements for programs and schools are complementary and aligned with the advice of YRPH.

#### **Educator Training**

CMSMs must ensure that training that is aligned with YRPH is provided to all FSP program educators on the health, safety and other operational measures outlined in this document plus any additional local requirements in place.

Updated training will be provided for all FSP educators on current health and safety measures in place according to the Operational Guidance as well as those in place by YRPH.

#### **Data Reporting Requirement (EarlyON)**

CMSMs will continue collecting information on the data elements outlined in the Ontario Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service Management and Funding Guideline 2021. CAPC will continue to report to PHAC through documents already in place.

### **LINKS / RESOURCES**

- Visit: [www.york.ca/covid19](http://www.york.ca/covid19) or Contact: York Region Public Health at 1-800-361-5653
  
- Ontario COVID-19: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>
  
- Canada COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
  
- Public Health Ontario: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/>

**YCD FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS  
PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN SEPTEMBER 2021**

- Public Health Agency of Canada:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
  
- World Health Organization (WHO):  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
  
- Ministry of Health: [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019\\_guidance.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx)
  
- Follow the Public Health Agency of Canada's steps for self-assessment: <https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>
  
- The following resource can be provided to families and printed for the FSP:  
*Poster: What you need to know to help you and your family stay healthy*  
<https://files.ontario.ca/moh-coronavirus-pec-poster-en-2020-03-09.pdf>
  
- For detailed information on surface cleaning, please visit:  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en>