

Support for RECEs working in child care centres

On March 22, the Ontario government announced that select child care centres will be open for children whose families are working on the front lines of healthcare and emergency services.

The work that you're doing to support frontline workers is vital. You're ensuring that healthcare workers and other essential-service employees, such as firefighters, police and paramedics, are able to do their work.

We want to take a moment to thank you for your dedication to the profession, and for helping others get through this global pandemic.

To keep RECEs and everyone safe, the government has put strict measures in place, such as limiting the number of children in each centre.

On March 29, the Ministry of Health provided this resource: [COVID-19 Guidance: Emergency Childcare Centres](#).

Policies and procedures

Child care services must have policies and procedures in place to conduct daily health checks, implement sanitary practices and exclude children, parents and staff who are sick.

Symptoms:

COVID-19 symptoms for children could include:

- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea

COVID-19 symptoms for adults include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Pneumonia in both lungs (diagnosed through a chest X-ray)

Higher-risk individuals:

Your risk of severe disease may be higher if you have a weakened immune system. This may be the case for:

- Older people
- People with chronic disease (for example, diabetes, cancer, heart, renal or chronic lung disease)

All persons over 70 years of age and individuals who are immunocompromised are advised to self-isolate for a period of 14 days. Members are strongly encouraged to take steps to protect any such family members if they are providing child care from their home.

Actions to protect your health:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Sneezing and coughing into your sleeve
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Stay at home if you are sick and remind parents that they should be monitoring their children's health and keeping children who are unwell at home
- If traveling outside of Canada, stay home for 14 days and remind parents to do so as well.

Standard III of the [Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice](#) focuses on health and safety within the learning environment. It states that RECEs are familiar with a variety of strategies to promote and support children's well-being and safety in the learning environment including, but not limited to, nutritional, physical, mental and emotional health. RECEs observe and monitor the learning environment and take responsibility to avoid exposing children to harmful or unsafe situations.

You may also find the following resources helpful:

Surface cleaning:

For detailed information, visit the Ontario Public Health's webpage [here](#).

Social distancing:

Social distancing involves taking steps to limit the number of people you come into close contact with (i.e., within two metres of another person) outside of your immediate family. This practice is recommended to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Supervising smaller groups of children and offering increased outdoor play are strategies that support social distancing. In outdoor environments, RECEs should continue to be conscious of the cleanliness of the surfaces that children will come into contact with. For example, in many jurisdictions, authorities have recommended against the use of public playground structures as a part of outdoor play.

Talking to children about COVID-19:

The Canadian Paediatric Society released the advice about [talking to children about the current situation](#).

We're here to help

We recognize that this is a difficult time and have included contact information below. During a global pandemic, we each have a responsibility to support our frontline workers while also caring for ourselves. [Check out our FAQs](#) for resources on dealing with COVID-19. We'll be updating these FAQs as we receive new questions and produce fresh resources for you.

Please do not hesitate to reach out:

Questions about your practice: practice@college-ece.ca

Questions about your membership: registration@college-ece.ca

Any other questions: er@college-ece.ca

Thank you again for your support of the children of families working on the front lines. Without you, they would be unable to care for those in dire need.