

COVID-19 Awareness and Education

Guidance for Early Learning and Child Care Providers to Limit the Spread of a Virus

Reinforce "no sharing" policies

It will be important to reinforce "no food sharing" policies in group care settings. Though in general, these policies are put in place in an effort to reduce potential exposures to allergens, the practice of not sharing food in the facility setting will support the efforts of reducing virus transmission between staff/children.

To prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, water bottles should not be shared.

Maintain cleaning and disinfecting policies

It is not yet known how long the virus causing COVID-19 lives on surfaces however preliminary evidence is suggesting it can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to days. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high-touch surfaces will help to prevent the transmission of viruses from contaminated objects and surfaces.

Increased monitoring of hand cleaning supplies is also recommended to ensure all sinks in washrooms, kitchens and laundry areas are well stocked with hand washing supplies at all times (i.e., soap and single use towels).

As per standard procedures, it is recommended that facilities have toys that are easily cleaned and disinfected (e.g., avoid plush toys). It may be prudent to increase the frequency of the cleaning schedule for these items, especially when illness is circulating in the setting or the local community or if symptomatic staff/children have been touching the toys.

Care providers are encouraged to review existing activities and practices within their settings to help determine where enhancements or increased cleaning frequency may be recommended.

High-Touch Surfaces: It is recommended that high-touch objects and surfaces (e.g., pencil sharpeners, doorknobs, faucet handles, remote controls, toys, electronic devices and small appliances) in facilities are cleaned and disinfected regularly and that this process is monitored.

Cleaning Products: Although there is lack of specific evidence for their effectiveness against COVID-19, cleaning with water and household detergents and use of common disinfectant products should be sufficient for cleaning and disinfection in facilities. If household or disinfectant cleaning products are not readily available, hard surfaces can be disinfected using a mixture of 1 part bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) and 9 parts water, ensuring the dilute solution makes contact with the surface for 1 minute for disinfection.