

CIRCULAR

Date: April 16, 2020

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID-19: 2020-57

To: All child care facilities, ELCC program staff

Subject: **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Use in Child Care Facilities**

Program(s): All

Type: Policy For Internal Reference Only

Procedure Information Only

Effective Date Immediately

Topic: Public Health Guidance on the use of Personal Protective Equipment in Child Care Facilities

We have a shared responsibility to safeguard the health of children and child care providers, including staff. Public Health guidance is evolving as the situation unfolds. Manitoba Families is committed to providing updated information and guidance as it becomes available.

Shared Health has provided guidance related to the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). This guidance is primarily directed at health care settings and social services where full-time residential care is provided. There is however, some applicability to child care settings. This is primarily related to proper hand washing and screening of staff and children for symptoms.

As outlined in the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Early Learning and Child Care Practice Guide, children and staff who are ill should not attend a child care facility.

Screening practices should be in place to ensure that children do not attend if they, or others in their home, are unwell.

Similarly, **centre employees are reminded that anyone who becomes sick with a fever and cough at work should go home immediately (provided that appropriate care arrangements have been made) and call Health Links - Info Santé at: 204-788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257.**

For child care programs, the most effective steps are screening, cleaning, sanitizing, good hand hygiene and maintaining social and physical distancing where possible. Maintaining a healthy environment based on these existing good routine infection control practices is important and our best defense against the spread of viruses.

PPE is a supplement to these measures and should not be relied upon as a stand-alone prevention measure. It is also not required for the day-to-day provision of child care and would only be required if a child or child care provider or staff develops cold/flu-like symptoms while they are in the centre or home.

PPE creates a physical barrier between individuals to minimize exposure and prevent transmission of viruses spread by direct and prolonged contact with large respiratory droplets. Medical and non-medical PPE have varied levels of application and appropriateness, with medical PPE prioritized for health care workers and workers engaged in other high risk occupational settings/tasks.

Included below is the preliminary information that you need to know in terms of what PPE needs to be worn, and when, in a child care setting:

- ✓ Eye Shield: **only in** the presence of child or staff person that has cold/flu-like symptoms.
- ✓ Mask: **only in** the presence of child or staff person that has cold/flu-like symptoms (N95 respirators are not required and it is anticipated that Public Health will soon provide further direction on cloth mask use).
- ✓ Gloves: **only in** the presence of a child or staff person who has cold/flu symptoms or when providing intimate personal care (contact with bodily fluid, e.g., diapering or toilet assistance).

Note: Wear disposable gloves in accordance with regular child care practices and guidelines. When possible, reusable gloves should be substituted for disposable gloves (e.g., cleaning duties).

- ✓ Gown: **only in** the presence of child that has cold/flu-like symptoms and the child cannot be isolated due to age or cognitive needs. Note: if you have washable gowns, they can be regularly laundered and reused.

All child care facilities are required to ensure that PPE is used responsibly, such as prioritizing washing hands over wearing gloves, to ensure that provincial PPE supplies are available to meet needs.

Important: If cold/flu symptoms are present, practice a tiered approach to care and revisit PPE directives.

Further details on putting on and removing PPE and infection control procedures are available by referring to <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/PPE-on.pdf> and <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/PPE-off.pdf>.

If you have any questions, please email cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca or call Manitoba Government Inquiry at 204-945-3744 or toll free 1-866-MANITOBA (1-866-626-4862). Manitoba Government Inquiry staff are working with the ELCC program, including Child Care Coordinators, to respond directly and refer calls and emails when needed.

Sincerely,

Early Learning and Child Care Program