



LITTLE LEADERS – COVID-19 OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

FOR LITTLE LEADERS HOME CHILD CARE OPERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK. Version IX; October 2021

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HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE HOME – TOYS, SPACE, MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT

These measures should be followed wherever and whenever possible. Due to variation in program structure and the unique layout of each home, it is understood that that there may be circumstances where these changes may not be met.

Current infection prevention and control practices should be practiced and strictly adhered to. This includes but is not limited to:

- Ensuring all toys used for the childcare program can be cleaned and disinfected. Hard surfaces must be cleaned with appropriate cleaning solution or disinfectant (i.e. has D.I.N. and primary use is cleaning and disinfecting) or bleach.
- Encourage activities that, while indoors, maintain physical distance between children. (i.e. individual sensory bins, separate art tools for each child, more individual play indoors, etc)
- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting objects, toys and frequently

touched surfaces

- Frequently touched surface are most likely to become contaminated and should be cleaned at **least twice a day**. These surfaces include doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, tabletops, baby gates, eating areas, phones, etc.
- Mouthed toys should be cleaned and disinfected immediately after the child is finished using it
- Only use disinfectants that have a DIN (drug identification number) – This can be done by choosing disinfectants that follow the ‘List of Disinfectants (COVID-19)’ available at Canada.ca. Follow expiry dates of these products, and always following manufacturer’s instructions. Additionally, Little Leaders is happy to provide disinfectant upon request.
- Incorporate additional hand washing and hand hygiene into the daily schedule and ensure that hand washing is done thoroughly and properly when it is performed
- Avoid use of sensory or water tables. *OR* if sensory materials (e.g. play dough, water, sand, etc.) are offered, these should be provided for single use (i.e. available to the child for the day) then disposed of, *OR* labelled with the child’s name and reused by only that same child.
- All surface disinfectant provided by Little Leaders must be used in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions, including how to clean and surface contact time. Consult Little Leaders manual for proper cleaning and disinfecting with bleach.

SCREENING FOR COVID-19 AT THE HOME CHILD CARE

Providers & Residents of the home:

1. Home child care providers and residents must be screened each day using the most recent version of the Ontario *COVID-19 Screening Tool for Students and Children in School and Child Care*. This must be recorded on the front-door screening checklist.
2. Screening must include observations, verbal questionnaire using the ‘COVID-19 Screening Tool for Students and Children in School and Child Care’, and body temperature check via thermometer. Deny entry to any person who has any of the symptoms outlined in the COVID-19 Screening Tool, does not pass the screening, or has a temperature above 37.8 °C.
3. If a child care provider or resident of the home does not pass screening, the child care provider must contact Little Leaders and not open the child care.

Children & other individuals entering the home:

1. All individuals, including children, parents/guardians, and visitors *must* be screened upon arrival.
2. Screening must include observations, verbal questionnaire using the *COVID-19 Screening Tool for Students and Children in School and Child Care*, and body temperature check via thermometer. Deny entry to any person who has any of the symptoms outlined in the COVID-19 Screening Tool, does not pass the screening, or has a temperature above 37.8 °C.
3. The *COVID-19 Screening Tool for Students and Children in School and Child Care* must be made available to all parents. An up-to-date version of the screening tool is available on the Government of Ontario’s website.

4. All home child cares must maintain daily records of screening results. Records are to be kept on the premises. This may be recorded on the front-door checklist sheet.
5. Any individual who is symptomatic, does not pass screening, or has been advised to self-isolate by the local public health unit must not be permitted to attend the program and should stay at home (this includes children, home child care providers and those ordinarily resident/regularly at the home child care premises).
6. Children should have a note from a medical professional, if a child persists with a COVID-19 symptom that is medically recognized to not be related to COVID-19 (i.e. asthma).
7. Child care providers should perform the screening (not other residents of the home, nor volunteers, nor students), and should take appropriate precaution when screening. Proper precaution includes maintaining a physical distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet) whenever possible from those being screened, being separated by a physical barrier, wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as a mask and faceshield.
8. Thermometers must be thoroughly and properly disinfected between uses on different children/individuals if touched by anyone other than the provider (i.e. underarm thermometer or touched by a child/individual).
9. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol content should be placed at all screening stations. Dispensers should not be in locations that can be accessed by young children during the day.
10. Parents and guardians should be reminded of all requirements when children are first registered for the program and through visible signage at the entrances and drop-off areas.
11. All attendance records must be kept accurate and up-to date for contact tracing records in case of possible outbreak.

DOCUMENTATION DURING COVID-19

Little Leaders home child care providers should note the importance of 4 documents used during the enhanced COVID-19 health and safety measures:

1. Front Door Screening Check List – **mandatory** - this should be printed and completed every day. Please use a check mark for the boxes if the screening has been completed and the child has passed the screening. Please use an 'X' for the box if the screening was completed but the child was not permitted to enter the home. Children of the same family should be placed on separate entries.
2. Attendance – **mandatory** – this does not differ from the normal attendance for your program, however, be diligent in recording when children are in attendance as this will help with contact tracing if required.
3. Cleaning and Disinfecting Record – highly **recommended** – child care providers must be able to recall from memory when each item that the children use was last cleaned and disinfected. To aid in accuracy, a written record may be used. (i.e. If the home visitor asks “*When was the outside of the toy bin last wiped down?*” the home child care provider should have an accurate answer. As detailed above, any frequently touched surface, toy, material, etc., should be cleaned at least twice each day.
4. Health and Safety Log – **mandatory** – this does not differ from the normal wellness log/health record that is maintained for all children in the home, however, please be diligent in recording any and all signs of illness that appear, regardless of whether or not the symptoms may be attributed to COVID-19. A journal entry must be made if a child does not come to care for a

health reason, or is rejected at the door for a health reason. (ie. If a child seems particularly lethargic one day, is acting strangely, or other possible signs of feeling unwell).

PROTOCOLS WHEN A CHILD OR HOME CHILD CARE PROVIDER DEMONSTRATES SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS OR BECOMES SICK

1. Any child, child care provider, resident of the home, or other individual required to enter the home who is exhibiting symptoms may not be permitted entry into care.
2. The individual will be permitted to once again attend care when:
 - They receive a negative COVID-19 test result
 - They receive an alternative diagnosis by a health care professional, or 16
 - It has been 10 days since their symptom onset and they are feeling better.
3. Child care providers must inform parents that if symptoms begin to appear in the middle of a day, immediate pick up will be needed.
4. If a child begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while attending child care, it is recommended that:
 - Symptomatic children be immediately separated from others in a supervised area until they can be picked up. In addition, where possible, anyone who is providing care to the child should maintain a distance of at least 2 meters, and at minimum wear a mask and shield. Additional PPE (gown, gloves, etc.) is strongly encouraged. Where appropriate, the child must also wear PPE.
 - If a 2-meter distance cannot be maintained from the ill child, advice from the local public health unit will be necessary to prevent/limit virus transmission to those providing care.
 - Hand hygiene must be strictly enforced, and practiced frequently, until the child is picked up.
 - Tissues should be provided to the child for proper respiratory etiquette, along with proper disposal of the tissues.
 - Environmental cleaning of the space the child was separated from should be conducted once the child has been picked up.
 - Other children and residents of the home who were present while someone (adult or child) in the program became ill should be identified as a close contact. The local public health unit will provide any further direction on testing and isolation of these close contacts.
 - Children or staff who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 should be excluded from the child care setting for 14 days, or until a negative test has been received.
5. If a child care provider or resident of the home becomes symptomatic or has been notified as a close contact of COVID-19 the home must be closed immediately and not operate until:
 - deemed safe according to the COVID-19 Screening tool for students and child in

- school and child care and consultation with public health,
- or clearance is received from the local public health unit,
- or a negative COVID-19 test result has been obtained since the onset of symptoms and clearance has been provided by public health

TESTING FOR COVID-19

1. Symptomatic child care providers and/or other residents of a child care home must contact Little Leaders and will be referred for testing.
 - Those who are tested for COVID-19 due to onset of symptoms, must be excluded from care until a negative test result has been received.
 - Other individuals residing with a symptomatic individual are required to quarantine until the symptomatic household member either receives a negative COVID-19 test result or an alternative diagnosis by a health care professional
2. Testing of persons without symptoms should only be performed as per provincial testing guidance and/or public health recommendation.
3. The home child care must be closed immediately, and remain closed until a negative test result is obtained if the child care provider, or any residents of a child care home, are tested for COVID-19 due to the following:
 - Individual is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (new symptoms, or symptoms due to unknown cause)
 - Individual has come in contact with a known positive case of COVID-19
 - Individual has been notified that they are high-risk of COVID-19 (as per alert from public health)
 - Individual has any reason to believe they may have COVID-19
4. 2 or more laboratory confirmed COVID-19 case of a child, parent/guardian, or resident of the child care home is considered an outbreak. An outbreak number will need to be provided, and the child care will close until it is cleared by public health.
5. All above details are in compliance with the COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance. For updated information regarding the requirement for routine testing in a child care setting please refer to the COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance (available online) and follow if the Province of Ontario's direction if any information contradicts this document. The Provincial Testing Guidance should also be followed in the case of a suspected case.

POSITIVE CASE of COVID-19

1. If a symptomatic individual tests positive, or is not tested and does not receive an alternative diagnosis from a health care professional, the symptomatic individual must isolate (including from household members) for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and all household contacts must isolate until 14 days from their last contact with the symptomatic individual.
2. Anyone who does not pass COVID-19 screening may not be permitted to attend the program or enter the child care home premises. (Unless it is the child care provider or resident of the home

in which case the home may not open for care).

3. Any individual who tests positive for COVID-19 must follow guidance of local public health and their health care professional regarding direction for isolation and returning to the child care.
4. A positive case of a child care provider, resident of the home, or child in the program, must be reported to Little Leaders immediately (no longer than 24 hours from learning of the positive case).
5. Child care providers must provide any documentation from public health regarding the specific positive case to Little Leaders.
6. Child care providers must perform a highly thorough cleaning of all toys, materials, etc in the child care space before reopening.
7. The child care home may only reopen according to direction from public health (no sooner than 14 days from the positive result).

SERIOUS OCCURRENCES

8. All positive cases of COVID-19 (in a provider, child, resident/person regularly present at the home, student/volunteer, or home visitor) are considered as a *Serious Occurrence* and will be reported to the Ministry of Education and local public health unit.
9. Serious occurrence report will be delivered to the child care provider, and must be posted in the home for 10 business days following the positive case.
10. If closure of the home is mandated by public health, this will be reflected in the serious occurrence.
11. Child care providers must update Little Leaders if any additional COVID-19 cases in the home or program appear, or if the status of the home changes in any manner. Little Leaders will revise the current serious occurrence report or submit a new report as fitting.

POSITIVE CASE of COVID-19 – Information for Parents

Should a confirmed positive COVID-19 case appear at a Little Leaders licensed home child care location (where the individual is the child care provider, a resident of the child care home, a child of the child care home, or close contact of the child care home) Little Leaders will proceed in the following manner:

1. The child care provider will notify all parents immediately of the situation (upon learning of the COVID-19 case), and deal with the positive case according to public health direction. This may include, immediate closure of the home child care, or closure of the home child care on the next business day (and subsequent days).
2. Little Leaders will inform parents of the positive COVID-19 case within 24 hours via email (and phone call when possible). This email will include information about the expected reopening date, and how to proceed during the home closure, according to direction from public health. The initial email will also include a formal letter from public health.
3. Little Leaders will continue to monitor the home premises during the closure period. Parents/guardians and families are asked to contact Little Leaders in the case of further positive COVID-19 cases.
4. Little Leaders will reach out to each family of the child care home before the expected re-opening

date to confirm if the home is ready for opening, or must be delayed further due to the appearance of additional COVID-19 cases. Parents will be notified if the home is not ready to reopen.

5. Communication will continue as specified in steps 4 and 5 until the home is safe to reopen.
6. Parents will be notified via email (and phone call when possible) the exact date of the home reopening

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- All home child care providers, other residents of the home, home child care visitors and placement students are required to wear medical masks and eye protection (i.e., face shield or goggles) while inside a child care setting, including in hallways and other rooms (unless eating – but time with masks off should be limited and physical distance should be maintained).
- All home child care providers, residents of the home, home child care visitors and placement students are required to wear medical masks outdoors when a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- All other adults (i.e. parents/guardians, and visitors) are required to wear a face covering or non-medical mask while inside the home child care premises
- All children in grades 1 and above are required to wear a non-medical or cloth mask while inside in the child care premises. Children younger than grade 1 are encouraged, but not required to wear a mask in the child care home.
- Masks or any other face coverings are not recommended for children under the age of two.
- Exceptions to mask-wearing: Child care providers must contact Little Leaders for exceptions to mask and/or shield wearing. Exceptions will be granted on individual bases. Situations may include the following:
 - o Exception for a home resident who is not accessing any of the child care facilities (i.e upstairs on another level, at a safe distance from the children, and not in any communal child care space such as the kitchen where food for the child care is prepared).
 - o Exception for a home resident who is not present in the home at any time during the hours of child care operation.
 - o Exception for all home residents when the child care has a separate entrance, and does not overlap with any of the home's private space (i.e has separate washrooms, kitchen, entrance and exit, and other necessary facilities).
- A doctor's note may be required for exemption from mask-wearing.
- Masks and face shields will be distributed to all homes in ample quantities. Child care providers should not need to purchase their own masks, but are welcome to do so.
- Little Leaders child care providers are strongly encouraged to share all information about mask-wearing procedures and policies with parents in an open and timely manner. Thorough and continual communication will set clear expectations and prevent any miscommunication (due to unclear or false information shared in the media).

CHILD CARE SPACE – Physical Distancing

Little Leaders recognizes that physical distancing between children in a child care setting is difficult and encourages child care staff and providers to maintain a welcoming and caring environment for children while practicing physical distancing wherever possible.

- Recognizing that physical distancing is difficult with small children and infants, suggestions to support physical distancing include:
 - o planning activities that do not involve shared objects or toys; and,
 - o when possible, moving activities outside to allow for more space.

OUTDOORS – Physical Distancing

- Child care providers can allow children to play on public play structures, when . If a child care provider is using a play structure in their backyard, the play structure should be cleaned each time before use (i.e once daily).
- Child care providers are encouraged to find alternate outdoor arrangements (e.g. community walk), if there is no available outdoor space to play at a safe distance (i.e. if park green space is quite crowded).
- Child care providers must wash hands between sunscreen application for children, specifically after touching a child's face.

MEAL TIME & FOOD – Physical Distancing

- Child care providers, or other adults responsible for food preparation, must wear a mask while preparing the children's food.
- Child care providers are still required to supervise and hold bottles for infants not yet able to hold their own bottle to reduce the risk of choking, otherwise children should handle their own food and bottles wherever possible.
- Children must not share soothers, bottles, sippy cups, etc.
- There cannot be any self-serve or sharing of food at meal times.
 - o Utensils should be used to serve food.
 - o No utensils may be shared
 - o Meals should be served in individual portions to the children.
 - o No food can be shared between children
 - o There should be no items shared (i.e., serving spoon or salt shaker).
- Children should neither prepare nor provide food that will be shared with others
- Ensure proper hand hygiene is practiced when staff are preparing food and for all individuals before and after eating.

Where possible, children should practice physical distancing while eating (i.e sitting further apart so that it is not possible for children to touch each other, or each other's food while eating).

NAP TIME – Physical Distancing

- Home child care providers must increase the distance between cots/resting mats/playpens or place the children head to toe or toe to toe if the space is limited.
- Soft blankets are not to be shared between children (even if not used during nap time)
- Cots should be stacked back to front, so that sleep surfaces are not touching each other
- Cots and play pens should be disinfected between uses

TRANSPORTATION

- Child care providers must not transport children in a vehicle or other enclosed space unless mandatory (i.e transportation to and from school/before and after school program)
- For a child to be permitted access to transportation from Little Leaders, the child must have been properly screened for COVID-19 symptoms during that given day.
- Hand sanitizer must be used when children enter the vehicle
- Masks must be worn in the vehicle for children in grade 1 and above, and should be encouraged for children from age 3 to grade 1 (Halton Region – for all other regions, please consult with local municipal guidelines, or direct inquiries to Little Leaders).
- Child care providers must clean frequently-touched surfaces in the vehicle twice daily, or when visibly soiled.
- Children should be responsible for touching only their own personal belongings in the vehicle (i.e backpacks, coats, etc)
- Parents are responsible for providing school-age children with masks.

VISITORS – Physical Distancing

- No non-essential visitors are permitted at the child care program during child care hours.
- Volunteers, students, parents of the children, or other individuals associated with the child care program are permitted to enter the home during child care hours.
- Child care providers are required to note the time and date of *any* individuals that come into the home that are not ordinarily residents of the home for contact tracing.
- The Ministry of Education staff and other public officials (i.e fire marshal, public health inspectors) are always permitted to enter and inspect a child care home

ADMINISTRATION

Communication with Families

All families will be thoroughly informed of Little Leaders enhanced health and safety measures for transparency of operations and ease of execution with parent's aid. The child care provider and parent will work in tandem to create a safe and stress-free environment for children.

Little Leaders does not have a current wait list. Individual wait lists with providers are recommended., if needed.

Parent Fees

Please contact Little Leaders for further details about when parent fees are required. When additional funding is made available, parents will not be charged for periods of exclusion due to COVID-19 symptoms or positive COVID-19 case.

Priority Care

Little Leaders will not be prioritizing families based on child care needs, family needs, or other factors. As always, child care will be provided on a first come first serve basis, and a desire for the family and child care provider to work together. If any child care provider feels that their family is at higher risk for COVID-19 and does not want to work with front-line worker's families, the child care provider must submit a notice in writing in advance to Little Leaders admin.

Staff Training

Little Leaders child care providers were all informed of the enhanced health and safety measures and all other operational changes due to to COVID-19 on June 13th, 2020. Little Leaders will continue to support child care providers by hosting bi-weekly online meetings, where child care providers can discuss their experiences, ask questions, and admin will share any updates that should be done to the child care program. Attendance will be recorded and available to the Ministry of Education or Halton Region upon request.

For all COVID-19 related questions, please contact any of the following supports:

Little Leaders office: 905-335-8335

Little Leaders emergency: 289-208-5008

Halton: 905-825-6000

Hamilton: 905-974-9848

Peel: 905-799-7700

