



COVID-19 Protocols

Child Care/Before and After School Programs

Effective starting September 19th, 2022

This document is subject to change in accordance with direction from the Ministry and local health officials.

The most recent updates are highlighted in yellow throughout the document.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

These protocols are intended to support and provide clarity to Growing Together families, staff and essential visitors as we navigate through the Covid-19 pandemic. These protocols will be communicated via email to all GTFRC families and staff. They will also be available to view on the www.gtfr.org website and a printed copy will be available at all Growing Together main sites. We will monitor the COVID-19 pandemic closely and revise this document as required, in consultation with the:

- [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 \(CCEYA\)](#)
- Federal and Provincial Government
- Ministry of Education
- Municipality
- Public Health Unit

Mandatory Training

Growing Together will ensure staff are aware of, and adhere to, the GTFRC Covid-19 Protocols put in place in response to the Pandemic. All staff will:

- Receive Mandatory Health and Safety training before commencing employment.
- All staff will receive additional training as needed/recommended by Health Unit and sign off once training is complete.
- As updates are made to the protocols, all GTFRC staff will read and sign off on the changes.

The following are the 3 areas of training put in place by Growing Together:

1. All Growing Together employees will watch the training video below before commencing employment and will sign off after receiving the training.
 - Hand Washing Video from World Health Organization <https://youtu.be/3PmVJQUcm4E>
2. All Growing Together employees will complete HR downloads Personal Protective Equipment Training online and sign off before commencing employment.
3. All Growing Together employees will read the Growing Together Covid-19 Protocols Document before commencing employment and will sign off.

Screening

Parents/guardians, staff and essential visitors are required to complete the online Covid-19 school and child care screening assessment tool for themselves and their children attending Growing Together every day prior to entering the building. The screening assessment tool can be accessed at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>. The screening tool continues to be revised to align with the updated COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance.

If a child, parent, staff or essential visitor does not receive a “PASS” on the on-line screening assessment tool, they will not be permitted to enter a Growing Together location and will be required to:

- Follow the direction given by the on-line Covid-19 school and child care screening assessment tool which may require the use of PPE.
- Contact Growing Together to let them know the child, staff or essential visitor will be absent. Communicate with Growing Together next steps according to the direction received through the on-line screening assessment tool.
- Follow the household isolation requirements as listed on the on-line screening assessment tool.
- Retake the on-line screening assessment tool before attending Growing Together. A “PASS” must be received.

The following Health Screening Protocols will be in place:

- Upon arrival, parents/guardians will be asked to buzz in at the main child care entrance. The child care doors will be opened and parents will be able to drop off and pick up their child/children directly from their classroom. (No sign in or screening confirmation will be required.)
- Anyone entering the facility will be asked to perform hand hygiene and classroom staff will assist children with hand hygiene upon entering their program.
- Alcohol based hand rub containing at least 70% alcohol content will be available at all main entrances.
- Any individual who fails the online screening assessment tool, will not be permitted to attend child care and must follow the requirements stated in the on-line screening assessment tool.
- Children, staff and essential visitors should stay home from child care if they are unwell.
- We encourage individuals to distance themselves from other families as much as possible when dropping off and picking up children.

Exclusion of Symptomatic Children/Adults Protocols

When Children, staff or essential visitors are ill and or exhibit COVID-19 related symptoms, Growing Together will ensure the following:

- Ill children will be separated from the other children to be monitored by staff until parent/guardian picks up.
- Symptoms of illness will be recorded in the child’s daily record and in a daily log as per the CCEYA
- The parent/ guardian of the ill child will be immediately notified to pick them up and take them home. Emergency pick up contacts should be readily available to pick up an ill child if required
- Staff and Essential visitors will be sent home as soon as possible when becoming ill.
- If a child, staff or essential visitor is unresponsive, having trouble breathing, having a convulsion, or whose condition is deteriorating rapidly and must receive immediate medical attention, 911 will be called.

- In the event that a child, staff or essential visitor becomes ill throughout the day, we will access the online screening tool at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> and follow the direction provided. If we are not able to properly answer the questions for an individual child we will contact the child's parent and complete the screening tool together over the phone.

COVID-19 Management

Reporting Cases/Contacts, etc.

- Growing Together will monitor absenteeism rates in all programs.
- If absenteeism rises to a defined level in a child care **program (approximately 30% above baseline)**, Growing Together will contact the Public Health Unit and follow recommendations for next steps which may include classrooms and/or centres going into isolation. In this scenario, Growing Together will send a notification to families, staff and essential visitors in the affected child care setting, signed by the local medical officer of health, with information on public health measures.
- In the event that a single classroom has 50% or more children out due to covid symptoms and/or have tested positive for covid, the classroom will be closed for 5 days. All parents/guardians with children in the classroom will be made aware of the closure. Parents/guardians will not be charged child care fees for the duration of the closure.

Enhanced Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

From what is currently understood about COVID-19, commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against the virus. In order to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses including COVID-19, Growing Together will maintain routine cleaning and disinfection schedules as recommended by the Local Public Health Unit.

Growing Together will consult with the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit to determine the preferred type and grade of disinfectant to use. All products including cleaners and disinfectants will be stored out of the reach of children, labelled and will have up to date Safety Data Sheets (SDS) on site. Each classroom and washroom will have its own designated disinfectant. Growing Together will ensure cleaning and disinfectant products are not expired, and will follow all manufacturer's instructions.

Cleaning: will be done primarily with soap and water which will remove dirt and grease that can hide and protect germs from disinfectants. Cleaning with soap and water will also substantially reduce the number of germs that may be on surfaces.

Disinfecting: after cleaning with soap and water, disinfectant will be sprayed on surfaces and staff will ensure the recommended contact time (time the surface stays wet) is achieved.

Enhanced Cleaning Frequencies

Growing Together will focus on regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of infection in the programs. All individuals are required to sanitize their hands upon entering a Growing Together location and regularly throughout the day.

All items used by a symptomatic individual will be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible. The tables, chairs and any surfaces the symptomatic child touched will also be cleaned and disinfected. If the items cannot be cleaned (e.g. books) they will be removed and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of Seven days.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Intent

Growing Together Family Resource Centre is committed to the health and safety of its employees and as such has created this policy regarding personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE is legislatively required and can prevent many workplace injuries. This policy must be observed at all times when working in areas requiring PPE.

Guidelines

All employees and essential visitors of Growing Together Family Resource Centre must wear appropriate CSA-approved PPE as follows:

- When handling blood, staff must wear disposable gloves and protective eye wear.
- When handling feces, eye discharge, saliva, urine and vomit, disposable gloves must be worn.
- When mixing or using chemicals in a high concentrated level, disposable gloves and protective eye wear must be worn. (Use of diluted bleach and water and diluted disinfectant for regular routine cleaning does not require the use of PPE.)
- When working in the kitchen, close toed shoes must be worn.
- When cleaning pet cages disposable gloves must be worn.

All of the PPE used and provided by Growing Together will comply with the requirements under the Ontario occupational health and safety legislation.

PPE used by Growing Together Family Resource Centre employees will be stored and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and requirements. Any PPE that is damaged, broken, or in need of service or repair must be removed from service immediately and provided to the centre supervisor. All PPE that has been removed from use will be tagged "out of service" and should not be used again unless repaired and inspected by a qualified person.

No PPE should be modified or changed contrary to its manufacturer's instructions, specifications, or occupational health and safety legislation.

Who should not wear a mask?

Face Masks should not be placed on or used by:

- children under the age of two

- anyone who has trouble breathing
- anyone who has a medical condition that makes wearing a mask unsafe for their health
- anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance

***In the event of an outbreak or Pandemic, enhanced measures around the use of Personal Protective Equipment may be required. Growing Together Family Resource Centre will follow the recommendations put in place by the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit. These enhanced measures will be provided to staff with additional training if applicable.

Recommendations for PPE due to Covid-19

Masking & Staff Personal Protective Equipment

In alignment with community masking requirements, masks will no longer be required for staff, essential visitors, children or any other individuals at Growing Together. Eye protection for staff will also no longer be required. Individuals will have the option to continue to wear face masks and/or protective eye wear. Growing Together will continue to provide masks and protective eye wear to individuals as needed. Growing Together will respect and support an individual's choice to wear PPE. We will encourage inclusive practices within our programs.

Individuals will be required to wear a face mask as outlined in the on-line Covid-19 school and child care screening tool for a specific period of time depending on their symptoms. The on-line screening tool can be accessed at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>.

Hand Hygiene

Hand Hygiene is a general term referring to any action of hand cleaning. Hand hygiene relates to the removal of visible soil and removal or killing of transient microorganisms from the hands. Hand hygiene may be accomplished using soap and running water or a hand sanitizer (at least 70% alcohol based). Hand washing with soap and running water must be performed when hands are visibly soiled. **Hand washing using soap and water, wherever possible, is recommended over alcohol-based hand rub.** Perform and promote frequent, proper hand hygiene (including supervising or assisting participants with hand hygiene). Hand washing using soap and water is recommended over alcohol-based hand rub for children.

Hand Hygiene Procedure

Hands carry and spread germs. Touching your eyes, nose, mouth, sneezing, or coughing into your hands may provide an opportunity for germs to get into your body or spread to others. Keeping your hands clean through good hygiene practice is one of the most important steps to avoid getting sick and spreading germs.

Ensure that employees and children are always practicing proper hand hygiene (including assisting children with hand hygiene) when hands are visibly dirty and/or after;

- Sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose

- Using the washroom
- Handling garbage
- Handling raw foods
- Outdoor play
- Toileting/diapering routine
- Handling soiled laundry or dishes
- Handling soiled toys or other items
- Coming into contact with bodily fluids
- Coming into contact with any soiled/mouthed items
- Gardening

*Also incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedules

Hands should be cleaned using soap and water or hand sanitizer before and after:

- Preparing, handling, serving and eating food
- Handling animals
- Touching a cut or open sore
- Changing diapers
- Glove use
- Dispensing/handling expressed breast milk
- Before and after giving medication
- Communal sensory play activity

When hands are visibly soiled, follow these steps for cleaning hands:

- Wet hands and Apply soap
- Lather for at least 15 seconds. Rub between fingers, back of hands, fingertips, under nails
- Rinse well under running water
- Dry hands well with paper towel or hot air blower
- Turn taps off with paper towel, if available

When hands are not visibly soiled and a hand-washing station is not accessible, follow these steps for cleaning hands:

- Apply hand sanitizer (at least 70% alcohol-based)
- Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds
- Work sanitizer between fingers, back of hands, fingertips, and under nails
- Rub hands until dry

Hand Sanitizing Information

When your hands are not visible dirty, hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol base, can be used. Hand sanitizers can only be used on children who are over the age of two and must always be used under adult supervision. Adults must ensure that the product has completely evaporated from the child's hands before allowing the child to continue their activity. Growing Together requires Parent consent forms to be signed before staff are able to use hand sanitizer on children in our programs. Growing Together will distribute consent forms to parent for FDK and school age children only. If a consent form is not completed, the child will only sanitize their hands using soap and water. Growing Together will not

administer hand sanitizer on children in preschool and younger programs. Children under the age of 2 are not permitted to ever have hand sanitizer applied in our programs.

Glove Use

Gloves shall be worn when it is anticipated that hands will come into contact with mucous membranes, broken skin, tissue, blood, bodily fluids, secretions, excretions, contaminated equipment or environmental surfaces. Nitrile gloves are single use only.

Hand hygiene shall be practiced before applying and after removing gloves. Gloves shall be removed and discarded after use.

To reduce hand irritation related to gloves:

- Wear gloves for as short as time as possible
- Ensure that hands are clean and dry before wearing gloves
- Ensure gloves are intact, clean and dry inside
- Gloves are single use only, and must be task specific such as nitrile gloves for diaper changes

Covering Your Cough Procedure

Germs, such as influenza and cold viruses, are spread by coughing and/or sneezing. When you cough or sneeze on your hands, your hands carry and spread these germs.

Keep your distance (preferably more than 2 metres/6 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing.

Follow these steps to stop the spread of germs:

- If you have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose when you cough, sneeze or blow your nose
- Put used tissues in the garbage
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not in your hands
- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer

Ventilation

Growing Together will optimize ventilation by:

- opening windows
- moving activities outdoors when possible
- mechanical ventilation including HVAC systems

Heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVACs) and their filters are designed to reduce airborne pollutants, including virus particles, when they circulate through the system.

- 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.

HEPA filter units will be installed in all classrooms.

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.

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.

Early years and child care program providers 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.