

# GUIDANCE FOR LICENSED FAMILY DAY HOME/GROUP FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

## Overview

By implementing good public health practices, businesses and entities can reduce transmission of infections such as COVID-19, influenza, common colds and norovirus (a common germ that causes diarrhea and vomiting). All businesses and entities should promote that all staff, volunteers and attendees and other eligible persons be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine as well as supporting good public health practices such as:

- implement practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among attendees and staff, such as staying home when sick, washing or sanitizing your hands often and practicing good respiratory etiquette;
- provide procedures for rapid response if an attendee develops symptoms of illness;
- ensure that attendees maintain high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene; and
- complying, to the extent possible, with any applicable Alberta Health guidance found at on the COVID-19 info for Albertans [website](#).

The COVID-19 vaccine was approved for children aged 5 to 11 years of age in November 2021. There is currently no COVID-19 vaccine available for children aged 4 years and under. To support ongoing safe operations, Operators should follow this guidance and the [General Guidance for COVID-19 and other Respiratory Illnesses](#). All Albertans are required to follow all applicable Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) Orders including the continued requirement for isolation.

This document has been revised to support operators of licensed family day homes and licensed group family child care programs in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19, including the more transmissible Omicron variant, as well as other infections among attendees (children, adolescents, adults, parents, guardians, staff and volunteers). This guidance builds upon the [Alberta Health Services \(AHS\) Health and Safety Childcare Guidelines](#) and [Day Home Guidelines](#).

All licensed group family child care programs and licensed family day home programs will also be required to be in compliance with applicable zoning and health and safety legislation, including the [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#), Early Learning and Child Care Regulation (or *Child Care Licensing Act* and Child Care Licensing Regulation, for group family child care programs), and/or [Alberta's Family Day Home Standards](#).

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## COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

<b>General Guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program educators are encouraged to review and follow the <a href="#">General Guidance for COVID-19 and other Respiratory Illnesses</a>.</li><li>• Program educators should notify families of the steps being taken to prevent the risk of transmission, and the importance of their roles in these measures.</li><li>• Operators can consider implementing strategies that encourage spacing, for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Consider activities that reduce close contact with others.</li><li>○ Plan for spaced activities.</li><li>○ Consider ways to set up rooms to avoid clustering or congestion.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Screening and Response Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff, parents/guardians and children must not attend the program if they have COVID-19 symptoms.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Fully vaccinated<sup>1</sup> individuals are legally required to <a href="#">isolate</a> at home for a minimum of 5 days if they have tested positive or have any core symptoms that are not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition. If no longer symptomatic at 5 days, they can discontinue their isolation on day 6 or later but must continue to mask in all public spaces until 10 days have passed since the start of their COVID-19 symptoms or, if asymptomatic, the date when they took the first COVID-19 test. It is recommended that Albertans continue to limit their contacts during this period as much as possible.</li><li>○ Individuals who are not fully vaccinated are legally required to <a href="#">isolate</a> for 10 days if they have tested positive or have any core symptoms that are not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition.</li><li>○ Although close contacts of positive cases are no longer legally required to quarantine, it is strongly recommended that all <a href="#">unvaccinated household</a> contacts of a person infected with COVID-19 should stay home for 10 days.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A household contact is defined as a person who lives in the same residence as the case OR who has been in frequent, long-duration, close-range interaction with the person who tested positive.</li><li>▪ This definition would include unvaccinated childcare staff who provide direct care for children requiring staff to be within 2 metres or 6 feet who are unable to implement good standards of respiratory</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> A person who has received the complete vaccine series for COVID-19 and it has been 14 days after the second dose in a two dose series, or one dose in a one dose series (i.e., Janssen vaccine in adults only)

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hygiene (e.g., unable to perform appropriate hand washing, covering coughs/sneezes, using and disposing of tissues).

- NOTE: A close contact who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days AND is currently asymptomatic, can attend school, work, childcare and/or other activities, independent of vaccine status.
- Before leaving home, staff and children who will enter the family day home program or group family child care program, are encouraged to self-screen or be screened by a parent/guardian for symptoms each day that they enter the home using the applicable checklist for their age group ([Child Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) or [Adult Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#)).
  - The program educators should ask parents/guardians if the children attending are feeling well.
  - Parents/guardians should be provided a copy of the [Child Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) upon registration.
  - Operators are encouraged to set an expectation with parents/guardians that the checklist should be completed on a daily basis.
- Providers must not open their home for child care if they or anyone else residing in the home has symptoms of COVID-19.
  - The symptomatic person or persons can use an [at-home rapid test](#) if available.
  - If the person(s) is negative for COVID-19, the day home may re-open once the symptoms have resolved. Please note that two rapid tests done at least 24 hours apart are required to rule out COVID-19.
  - If the COVID-19 test is positive, the day home must remain closed during the legal isolation period for the case.
- If a child develops symptoms while at the day home, the child should be isolated in a separate room and the parent/guardian should be notified to come and pick up the child immediately. If a separate room is not available, the child should be kept at least 2 metres away from other children. If child is safely able to mask, masking is recommended.
- If the child is young and/or requires close contact and care, staff can continue to care for the child until the parent/guardian is able to pick-up the child. Staff should wear [a well fitting medical mask](#) or a seal-checked KN95 respirator, gloves, a gown and eye protection during all interactions with the child and should avoid contact with the child's respiratory secretions. Hand washing before, after and during care is highly recommended in addition to, or as an alternative to, gloves if not worn.
- Anyone that reports symptoms should be directed to stay home, use a rapid test if available (please note that home rapid tests should not be used in

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	<p>children less than 2 years of age<sup>2</sup>), seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary health care practitioner, or 911 for emergency response), and refer to the <a href="#">AHS Online Self-Assessment tool</a> for additional instructions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proof of a negative COVID-19 test result is not necessary to return to child care.</li> <li>• Programs should keep records of children’s known pre-existing conditions. If a child develops symptoms that could be caused by either COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies), the child should be tested at least once for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to child care. This will be considered the child’s baseline health.</li> <li>• Written confirmation by a physician that a child or staff member’s symptoms are due to a chronic illness is not necessary. Repeat testing is not necessary unless the nature of the symptom changes (e.g., a chronic cough worsens).</li> <li>• Programs directly associated with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 should follow routine public guidance, including accessing testing if individuals are symptomatic.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Expectations for Drop-off/Pick-up and Entry Areas</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs can consider implementing procedures for drop off and pick up that reduce congestion to the greatest extent possible. Possible strategies include having one designated parent/guardian pick up and drop off each child, staggering entry, or limiting the numbers of people in entry areas.</li> <li>• Day home agency consultants visiting licensed provider homes may consider wearing a mask, and washing their hands (or using hand sanitizer) when entering or exiting the day home.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hand Hygiene</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand sanitizer should be placed in convenient locations throughout the home, but be kept out of reach of unsupervised children.</li> <li>• Programs must adhere to handwashing guidelines outlined in the <a href="#">AHS Health and Safety Guidelines for Child Care Facilities</a>.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol is recommended as there is evidence that it reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19.</li> <li>○ Hand sanitizer can help reduce the risk of infection by and the spread of microorganisms when hand washing is not possible.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If parents/guardians have questions about their child using alcohol-based hand sanitizer, they should contact the child care program to discuss potential alternatives.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> NOTE: Children 2 years of age and younger who are not eligible for rapid testing should complete the [AHS Online Self-Assessment tool](#) to access lab-PCR testing.

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<b>Additional Public Health Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program educators who prefer to wear a mask while at work should be supported to do so.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Masks should be well-constructed, well-fitted and properly worn.</li><li>○ Non-medical masks should be constructed of at least three layers: two of breathable tightly woven fabric, such as cotton, and an additional effective middle filter layer, such as non-woven polypropylene.</li><li>○ Medical masks are another option for staff and children to provide additional protection.</li><li>○ If KN95 masks are used, they should be seal checked each time they are donned.</li><li>○ Once a disposable mask, gown, eye protection or gloves have been removed, they should be thrown in a lined trash bin or if reusable, place in a sealed container to be cleaned.</li></ul></li><li>• Children attending a family day home or group family child care program are not required to wear a mask while at child care but should be supported to wear one if their parent/guardian prefers.</li></ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family day home providers and group child care program staff are expected to follow provincial masking laws if using public transit.</li><li>• If a child becomes symptomatic during a trip, a face mask should be made available. The driver should contact the day home to make the appropriate arrangements for the child to be picked up (see screening and response plan above).</li><li>• Vehicle cleaning and records:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ It is recommended that there be increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces, such as door handles, child seats, window areas, rails, steering wheel, mobile devices and GPS.</li><li>○ It is recommended that vehicle cleaning logs be kept.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Cleaning and Disinfecting Items</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Programs should engage in frequent, thorough cleaning and disinfecting.</li><li>• Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, including diapering areas, as per <a href="#">AHS' COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Environmental Cleaning of Public Facilities</a>.</li><li>• Cleaning and disinfecting of toys should be done by:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Commercial dishwasher.</li><li>○ A domestic dishwasher with a sanitizing cycle.</li><li>○ If using a dishwasher without a sanitizing cycle, wipe/spray/immerse/rinse the toys in disinfectant after the dishwasher cycle is completed</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>OR</b></p>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Wash with detergent and water;</li><li>2. Rinse with clean warm water;</li><li>3. Wipe, spray or immerse for 2 minutes in an approved disinfectant. Toys that may be mouthed by young children should be rinsed prior to disinfecting if using 1000 ppm bleach or another non-food grade disinfectant is used; and,</li><li>4. Air dry.</li></ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If coat hooks, lockers or open cubbies are to be used to store personal items program educators may want to consider assigning each to a single child or ensuring that they are cleaned and disinfected in between uses.</li><li>• Equipment that is required for children’s day-to-day use (e.g., mobility or feeding devices, weighted blankets, headphones) should be cleaned and disinfected at drop off and pick up, and should not be used by anyone other than the child.</li></ul>
<b>Overnight Child Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Before offering overnight care, operators should consult with Children’s Services and Alberta Health Services to assess respiratory illness risk specific to their overnight program and collectively determine if additional measures are needed to minimize risk of transmission during overnight care.</li></ul>
<b>Other Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General information regarding COVID-19 (Government of Alberta) <a href="http://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx">www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx</a></li><li>• How to hand wash (AHS) <a href="https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/if-hp-ipc-flu-handwash-how-to.pdf">https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/if-hp-ipc-flu-handwash-how-to.pdf</a></li><li>• How to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (AHS) <a href="https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/if-hp-flu-hand-rub-how-to.pdf">https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/if-hp-flu-hand-rub-how-to.pdf</a></li><li>• Diapering procedures poster (AHS) <a href="https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eph-diapering-procedure-poster.pdf">https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eph-diapering-procedure-poster.pdf</a></li><li>• Hand washing posters (AHS) <a href="https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-you-d-clean-em.pdf">https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-you-d-clean-em.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-you-d-clean-em-2.pdf">https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-you-d-clean-em-2.pdf</a></li><li>• Arts and crafts safety (AHS) <a href="https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-arts-crafts-safety.pdf">https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-arts-crafts-safety.pdf</a></li></ul>

This document and the guidance within it is subject to change and will be updated as needed.

Last Revised: March 2022