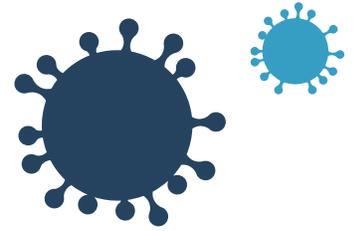




March 22, 2020



COVID-19

Public health guidelines for educators in special childcare centres offering services to workers in essential services

It is important to remember that special childcare services are one of the essential components that have been implemented to adapt to the current situation, notably to ensure the ongoing availability of workers who provide essential services and who have children.

Please note that these recommendations may change in light of any new governmental measures.

Educators must rigorously apply the infection control protocols they already use during respiratory infection season. For more information, consult the document entitled “*Prévention et contrôle des infections dans les services de garde et écoles du Québec – Guide d’intervention, édition 2015*” (in French only) at the following address:

<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-000374/>

Inclusion criteria for children permitted to attend special childcare centres:

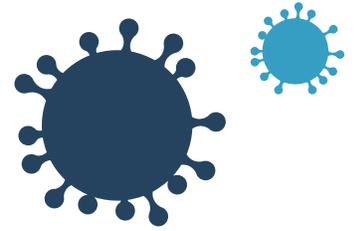
Children of parents who work in the health network or in essential services may attend the special childcare centres.

Exclusion criteria for children and personnel:

- People who have returned from travel within the past 14 days
- People with COVID-19
- People who have had close contact with cases of COVID-19 during the isolation period
- People who have not travelled but who have developed flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue, aches and pains or severe fatigue). They should not come to the childcare centre until **36 hours after their symptoms have disappeared**, even if, in the current situation, the risk of them having COVID-19 is low.



March 22, 2020



COVID-19

Specific recommendations for special childcare centres

- The individuals in charge should keep a detailed record of everyone present (children and staff) each day and for each group, and should avoid mixing groups. Simple measures can be taken, such as staggering the children's arrival and departure times, spreading out the use of the outdoor play area to allow smaller numbers of children to play together and thus avoid large groups, and limiting all activities during which several groups of children interact.
- The children, parents, and staff of the childcare centre must wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water (for 20 seconds) or with an alcohol-based disinfectant solution (such as Purell), whenever they enter or leave the childcare centre.
- Parents must avoid moving around the childcare centre unnecessarily during the children's arrivals and departures.
- Make sure that the children are distanced from each other during meal time and nap time, insofar as possible.
- Ideally, try to avoid activities involving direct contact between the children as much as possible (for example, holding hands or cuddling each other), as well as toy sharing (for example, rather than playing a table game in which all the children touch the tokens or dice, it should be one child in the group who handles the material).
- Limit the number of children who are in the communal areas at the same time (for example, alternate the groups of children in the activity rooms).
- Reduce the ratios in the groups to ensure that the above principles can be applied. This decision is up to the person in charge, who must take into account criteria such as the size of the childcare centre.
- Outside outings with the children at the centres are encouraged.

Recommendations when a child presents flu-like symptoms

- Be on the lookout for the onset of symptoms. Procedures must be put in place to ensure that any child who presents with symptoms upon arriving at the childcare centre or during the day is returned home as soon as possible.
- If a child has a fever, cough or difficulty breathing, he or she must be removed from the childcare centre **until 24 to 48 hours** after the symptoms have disappeared.

- While waiting for the child to be taken home:
 - Keep him or her away from the other children until he or she leaves. If possible, find a way to cover the child's nose and mouth. Ideally, have the child wear a procedural face mask; if not, have the staff member who is tending to the child wear one. A cloth scarf (for example, made of cotton) may also be used.
 - Only one staff member should stay with the child until he or she leaves.

Recommendations for a child presenting with symptoms of a benign upper respiratory tract infection

A child with a benign cold (no fever, simply a runny nose, little or no cough) does not have to be excluded. As the aim of special childcare services is to keep essential services workers on the job, it is important to weigh out the advantages and disadvantages of excluding all children with colds.

Instructions for a child or staff member with COVID-19

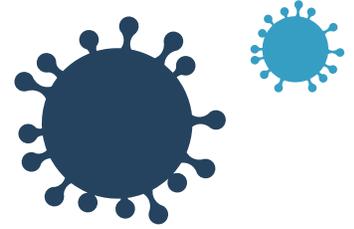
If the staff are informed that a child has tested positive for COVID-19 or that a staff member herself has tested positive, you must first call your regional public health branch (if it has not already contacted you) to ensure that it investigates and takes the necessary measures to take charge of each of the sick child's contacts (staff, children, and close family).

The person with the confirmed case must be removed from the childcare centre and the health guidelines must be applied. The instructions may vary from one children's group to another. The decision to close a childcare centre will depend on several factors, and will be made on a case-by-case basis with the public health authority (for example, the number of people affected or occurrence of secondary cases).

On weekdays, during opening hours, please use the contact information in the list provided at the following address: <https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/documents/liste-directeurs-sante-pub.pdf>.

Outside opening hours, please call the following number: **1-877-644-4545**.

March 22, 2020



COVID-19

Wearing masks and gloves

Wearing masks is **not** recommended for either the children or the employees in special childcare centres.

Nor is it recommended that gloves be worn at all times. They should be worn only as normally required (for example, for cleaning tasks or when changing diapers).

Both masks and gloves represent false security, particularly if they are not used properly.

Cleaning and disinfecting

- The virus is transmitted mainly through droplets and direct contact (for example, saliva). It can also be transmitted through indirect contact (for example, touching contaminated objects), but this is not the main mode of transmission.
- Cleaning reduces the number of viruses and the risk of contagion. However, it does not eliminate all viruses. It is therefore essential to disinfect surfaces and materials with the usual disinfection products. We recommend disinfecting surfaces and materials more frequently and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- At present, we do not have data specifying how intensely or frequently cleaning and disinfecting should be done. However, surfaces that are touched frequently (such as door handles and light switches) in communal areas should be given priority.
- The person who cleans and disinfects materials and surfaces should wear gloves. After finishing these tasks, the person should throw the gloves away and wash her hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based disinfectant solution.
- Refer to the "*Guide d'intervention : prévention et contrôle des infections dans les services de garde et écoles du Québec*" (in French only) (MSSS, 2015, <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-000374/>), which provides information on cleaning and disinfection procedures in childcare centres (see *Chapitre 4 – Entretien, hygiène et salubrité des objets, des surfaces et des locaux*). Maintenance schedules are also proposed for childcare centres (see appendices 3 and 4).
- For any other question, we invite you to consult the FAQ section of the Ministère de la Famille website, which is updated regularly.

General information on COVID-19 is available at the following address:

<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-002490/?&date=DESC&type=questions-et-reponses&critere=type>

If you have any concerns about the health of a child or staff member, call **1-877-644-4545** or visit the following website: **Québec.ca/coronavirus**.