



COMMUNITIES TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN

Monitoring and Responding to Reports of COVID-19 Symptoms in an EarlyON Setting

4. COVID-19 Reporting
CATEGORY: Health and Safety

Date: August 5, 2021
REVISED: September 15, 2021

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction for EarlyON Service Providers when reporting an occurrence of illness in an EarlyON participant or staff, as per the Ministry of Education *Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak: EarlyON Re-Opening*. This policy is designed to help reduce risk of the spread of illness, including COVID-19.

Policy

Communities Together for Children EarlyON will ensure that all reporting requirements as described in this policy are met, and that all guidance provided by Public Health on COVID-19 related matters is followed.

Anyone who is symptomatic, does not pass screening, or has been advised to self-isolate by the local public health unit will not be permitted to enter the EarlyON premises and should stay at home (this includes children, parents/caregivers, staff, students, and other essential visitors).

All confirmed cases of COVID-19 associated with an EarlyON program must be reported to the TBDSSAB at megan.brown@tbdssab.ca cc/ Louise.Piercey@tbdssab.ca.

A suspected case of COVID-19 is defined as any individual experiencing signs or symptoms consistent with the Ministry of Health *COVID-19*. These cases do not need to be reported to the Ministry.

All individuals must follow the monitoring and isolation advice outlined in the screening tool. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>

1. Persons who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the guidance of their local public health unit and health care professional regarding direction for isolation and returning to an EarlyON Centre. The individual cannot return until cleared by their public health unit.
*Note that individuals do not need to provide a medical note or proof of negative result to return to the program.

2. The Ministry of Health updated guidance to public health units regarding COVID-19 variants of concern, requiring all household contacts of symptomatic individuals to quarantine.
 - All asymptomatic household contacts of symptomatic individuals are required to quarantine until the symptomatic household member:
 - receives a negative COVID-19 test result, or
 - receives an alternative diagnosis by a health care professional.
3. If the 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 symptom onset, and
 - all household contacts must isolate until 14 days from their last contact with the symptomatic individual.
4. Anyone 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 EarlyON Centre or program (this includes EarlyON staff, students on educational placement, visitors and participants (children/parents or caregivers) at the premises).

Procedure

1. If an individual becomes ill while in the EarlyON setting:
 - The ill individual and their parents/caregivers and/or child(ren) will immediately be separated from others in a separate room, where possible (i.e., an isolation room).
 - The ill individual (and parent/caregiver if the ill individual is a child) will be asked to leave program as quickly as possible, while continuing to maintain physical distancing. The individual will be asked to:
 - Stay home, isolate and:
 - Contact the EarlyON program to let them know about this result.
 - The ill individual and/or their parent or guardian should be advised to use the online self-assessment tool [[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) self-assessment \(ontario.ca\)](#)] and follow instructions which may include seeking medical advice and/or going for testing for COVID-19.
 - Note, suspected cases of COVID-19 do not need to be reported to the ministry.
 - Regular EarlyON operation can continue unless directed otherwise by the local public health unit.
 - An ill individual who has a known alternative diagnosis provided by a health care professional may return to the EarlyON setting if they do not have a fever and their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours.

- Anyone providing care to the ill individual should maintain as much physical distance as possible. If physical distancing is not possible (e.g., if a young child needs comfort) staff/providers should consider additional PPE (i.e., gloves, gown).
- The person caring for the individual must wear a medical mask and eye protection and be trained on proper use of PPE, including donning and doffing.
- If tolerated, the ill individual should also wear a medical mask.
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette must be practiced while the ill individual is waiting to leave or be picked up.
- Cleaning of the area the separated individual was in and other areas of the EarlyON setting where the ill individual engaged will be conducted as soon as reasonably possible (after the ill individual leaves).
- Communication protocols to update and inform necessary stakeholders while maintaining confidentiality of the ill individual will be initiated (e.g., service system manager or if located in a school contact the school). Note, suspected cases of COVID-19 do not need to be reported to the ministry.

All early years' sector partners, together with Ministry of Health and local public health units, will work closely to monitor and respond to reports of COVID-19 symptoms.

Outbreak Management

An outbreak may be declared by the local public health unit when within a 14-day period, there are two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in children, staff/providers or other visitors with an epidemiological link (e.g., cases in the same room, cases that are part of the same before/after school care cohort) where at least one case could have reasonably acquired their infection in the EarlyON setting.

The local public health unit will work with the provider to determine whether epidemiological links exist between cases and whether transmission may have occurred in the EarlyON setting.

If the local public health unit declares an outbreak, they will direct appropriate next steps, which could include a partial or full closure of the EarlyON Centre.

If the public health unit determines that partial or full closure of the EarlyON setting is required, the Executive Director (or Program Coordinator) will report this to their TBDSSAB at megan.brown@tbdssab.ca cc/ Louise.Piercey@tbdssab.ca through a Serious Occurrence Form.

Reporting Confirmed Cases to the Ministry of Education

1. Where a staff, child, parent/caregiver, or essential visitor has a confirmed case of COVID-19 (i.e. a positive COVID-19 test result) and/or program closure, CMSMs/DSSABs must:
 - report this to the ministry by contacting their Early Years Advisor and including the following information:
 - Name and address of EarlyON Centre;
 - Name of school board, if located in a school;
 - Name of school, if located in a school;
 - Who tested positive (i.e. child, parent/caregiver, staff, student, essential visitor);

- Whether the centre closed (full or partial) and the date of the closure; and
 - Optional: Short description of the situation.
2. Where a staff, child, parent/caregiver, or essential visitor has a confirmed case of COVID-19 (i.e. a positive COVID-19 test result) and/or program closure, CMSMs/DSSABs must:
- report to the local public health unit and provide any materials (e.g., daily attendance records) to public health officials to support case management and contact tracing and other activities in accordance with all applicable legislation, including the [*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*](#).
 - Public health officials will determine any additional steps required, including but not limited to how to monitor for other possible infected staff, parents/caregivers, children and essential visitors and the declaration of an outbreak and closure of rooms and/or entire EarlyON setting.

Policy and Procedure Review

- Communities Together for Children EarlyON will review this policy monthly and recognize that this policy may be amended as needed in response to continually evolving circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Communities Together for Children will confirm with the TBDSSAB that this policy/procedure is being followed by ensuring all staff has reviewed the policy and any amendments and signed an attestation.

