

## Mothercraft Ottawa's Pandemic Plan for Reopening Childcare Services, Licensed Group Care Parent Information

**Introduction:** This document was developed to communicate to parents the health and safety protocols we, at Mothercraft Ottawa, are committed to implementing as we re-open licensed child care. The information and protocols have been developed based on our Pandemic Plan and has been developed by Mothercraft Ottawa and is based on the Ministry of Education - *Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Child Care Re-Opening* (June 10, 2020)<sup>1</sup> and the Ottawa Public Health COVID-19 Guidance for Childcare Centres (June 19, 2020)<sup>2</sup>.

*Acknowledgement and thanks:* We wish to thank Andrew Fleck Children's Services for sharing their plan with the Ottawa childcare sector as this plan has been largely adapted from their resource.

### **Risk**

With community transmission of COVID-19 in Ottawa, there is a risk that transmission from both symptomatic and asymptomatic persons may occur. While Mothercraft Ottawa has put measures to attempt to control these risks in a home childcare setting, it is important that parents and home childcare providers are aware of, and understand, the risks. Please see the **Notice of Risk** below:

### ***Notice of Risk***

*When children from multiple families attend a childcare centre, there is an increased risk of the COVID-19 virus coming into centre. Children who are infected with the COVID-19 virus are more likely than adults to have very mild infections or to have no symptoms at all, but these children can still transmit the infection to other children and to adults in the childcare centre. This means that children can bring home an infection acquired in the childcare centre and put other persons at risk. Mothercraft Ottawa has a screening process to help detect infections when there are symptoms; however, this screening process will not detect infected children or adults who do not have symptoms at the time of screening.*

**Priority of Limited Spaces:** We are hoping to be able to offer a space to all of our families who require one. The reality of this situation is that we may not be able to do so. We will be opening registration at a pre-announced time, and open until a set due date and time, after which we will be reviewing the registration requests. Any spaces remaining after the initial registration period will be granted on a first-come-first-serve basis for families already enrolled at Mothercraft Ottawa.

- Families who were approved for and accessed Emergency Childcare as a frontline worker.
- Priority will be given to parent(s) who must return to work outside of the home, and who require child care for five days per week (Evered Ave) or both sessions (Elmdale/Waterbridge).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/child-care-re-opening-operational-guidance.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/professionals-and-partners/resources/Documents/COVID-19\\_Centre-based-Childcare-Guidance-EN.pdf](https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/professionals-and-partners/resources/Documents/COVID-19_Centre-based-Childcare-Guidance-EN.pdf)

- If space allows, we will do our best to accommodate families who are requesting only one session (Elmdale/Waterbridge).
- Siblings who are already enrolled in the same location and who have been attending prior to March 13 will be considered as a family unit.
- In order to ensure adequate staffing, children of Mothercraft Ottawa Staff may be granted priority.
- Mothercraft reserves the right to consider the individual needs of a family and any remaining spaces will be offered based on a lottery basis.

If enrollment requests exceed availability, spaces will be offered based on a lottery system.

**Activation:** This plan will be activated and remain in place at all Mothercraft Ottawa licensed child care programs providing care during the pandemic and until further notice.

**Authorization:** Alicia Ashton, Executive Director and Julia Thompson, Board President

**Date Approved:** June 29, 2020

**Current Version Date:** June 29, 2020

### Important Information to Note Before Returning to Care:

- It is extremely important that you keep children at home if they have any signs of ill health
- Please inform the Program by phone or email immediately if your child has any symptoms of illness and / or if you are going to be away for any reason. We will follow-up with you if we do not hear from you if your child is away;
- If you have questions about COVID-19, or think you have been exposed you should call Ottawa Public Health and follow their advice – they can be reached by dialing 311; comprehensive information is available at [www.ottawapublichealth.ca](http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca);
- There will be a daily screening process for anyone entering the building including staff and children, We will send you pictures of what that will look like before your first day;
- At this time, it is recommended that only staff and children enter the building and that all others, such as parents/guardians of children and delivery persons, be met at the door;
- Someone must be available to pick up the child within 30 minutes of being contacted if the child has developed symptoms. Siblings who attend a different Mothercraft program or location must be picked up at the same time as a sibling who develops symptoms;
- Contact information must be kept up to date guardians including emergency alternates, we ask all parents to confirm their information before returning to care;
- You are asked to check your child's temperature daily before coming to the child care setting; we will also be checking your child's temperature upon arrival;
- If the temperature is equal to or greater than 37.8 degrees Celsius (100F) or if the child/children have any signs of illness they must stay home;
- We advise that you organize back up care in case the Program is required to close.

## Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures:

You and your child will be greeted each day by a screener, who may not be someone you know and / or may be unrecognizable because they will be wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – we send pictures of the screening process so you can see the location and what someone looks like when wearing PPE – we encourage you to share the pictures and the accompanying story with your child so they are prepared.

- Before your child is able to enter the building you will be asked a series of questions – this is the active screening that must take place each day for anyone entering the building (same questions are asked of staff as well). The screening questions are developed by Ottawa Public Health (OPH) and based on the symptoms identified in the most recent **Ministry of Health's 'COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms** [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_reference\\_doc\\_symptoms.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_reference_doc_symptoms.pdf) - OPH determines the additional questions that we must ask. **We will be sending you these questions and we will let you know if they change.**
- It is the Screeners' responsibility to determine if someone is deemed to be in good health and therefore able to enter the building, they make the final decision. We trust that all parents will respect the decision of the screener – the reason will be shared with you and you will be encouraged to go for testing (if appropriate).
- At this time OPH is recommending that parents be discouraged from entering the Building, this is to reduce the potential spread of the virus. We understand that being able to connect with your child's Educator is important to you – we will find alternate ways for you both to communicate (e.g. outside the fence when the group is outside – while still maintaining physical distancing, by phone or email) – please know that we will do our best, based on the time available since the Educators will also be with the children.

## How to report illness

- You are asked to call and / or email your Program immediately upon noticing your child has any signs of ill health including a mild fever – this includes the evenings and weekends (email for after-hours is preferred to ensure it is received).
- You are encouraged to contact OPH at 311 for guidance, additional information is available at [www.ottawapublichealth.ca](http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca) including the location of the testing centres. At this time anyone, regardless of whether they have symptoms, is able to be tested for COVID-19. Test results are typically returned in less than 48 hours.
- If you or your child has signs of illness – you must remain home – here are the anticipated steps / options:
  - Child and/or parents with symptoms and referred for COVID-19 testing:
  - Child and/or parent should stay home and self-isolate while waiting for results of COVID-19 test. Please refer to the Self-isolation Instructions on the OPH website.
    - If not tested, the child and/or parent should stay home and self-isolate:
      - For 14 days from the first day of symptoms OR
      - Until 24 hours AFTER symptoms have FULLY resolved, **whichever is longer**
  - Child and/or parent who are symptomatic and have a negative COVID-19 result:

- Return to the Program once they are 24 hours symptom-free without fever-reducing medication, or 48 hours after resolution of vomiting and/or diarrhea. Consult with OPH's Outbreak Reporting Line as needed.
- Child and/or parent who have a positive COVID-19 test result:
  - Must self-isolate and not attend the Program. Please refer to the Self-isolation Instructions on the OPH website
    - Determining when the child can return to the Program will be done in consultation with OPH.
- Child and/or parent who has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case:
  - A child and/or parent who has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case should self-isolate and not attend the Program
  - Discontinuing self-isolation depends on whether or not they are still in contact with a case of COVID-19 and will be determined in consultation with OPH.

**These are the same expectations and requirements for staff.**

If a child develops signs of illness while at the Program the child will be immediately separated from their cohort or group with someone that is familiar to them (e.g. an Educator); that person will put on PPE (face mask / shield / gloves) to protect themselves. The parent will be called and you are asked to please arrive within 30 minutes. If the child is feeling well enough, the Educator may wait outside to reduce the risk of exposure. The program spaces that the child was in will receive a thorough environmental clean.

Whenever someone has signs of illness, all parents will receive a notification (without identifying the person) so that you can continue to monitor your child and your self – based on the experience of the emergency child care centres you can expect that this will be quite frequent. While we are focused on COVID-19 there continues to be other mild illnesses present in our community that mimic the same symptoms. This also reflects how diligent people have been in monitoring for symptoms, this is very much appreciated!

We will follow all OPH requirements and Ministry requirements for reporting illnesses.

## **The sanitization of the space, toys and equipment**

- During the day, all high touched surfaces will be disinfected at least twice daily using a sanitizing product approved by OPH.
- Additional staff will not be entering the rooms while the children are present, but may enter the room when the children are outside to complete additional cleaning tasks.
- The Educators will be diligently monitoring the toys that the children put in their mouth, discreetly removing them for disinfecting, once the children are finished.
- All high touch surfaces such as riding equipment will be wiped down before a new group of children enters the yard. Our climbers will be closed for the time-being.
- The program room windows will be opened as much as possible; at a minimum when the children are

outside and / or for 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon to allow for air flow

- All toys and equipment will be sanitized as required by Ottawa Public Health guidelines.
- We have a sufficient supply of sanitizer, hand soap, hand sanitizer, PPE and other products available at each of our sites, we are carefully monitoring our stock.
- We will continue to have after hours cleaning.
- Children and staff will be required to wash their hands multiple times a day, but at a minimum:
  - Whenever entering or leaving the program room
  - Before and after eating
  - Before and after using the washroom
    - Parents we encourage you to model and expect frequent handwashing since we know this is a very effective way to prevent transmission.

## How physical distancing will be encouraged

Once completing the active screening, children are deemed to be healthy and will be encouraged to play as children do but there are still many ways we can naturally encourage physical distancing:

The number of children in the program rooms is significantly less – the maximum capacity of each room, including staff is 10 – this does not include people who are supporting children with special needs who are not counted in ratios – here are the differences:

<i>Age group</i>	# of children as we re-open	# of Staff in the Cohort	Licensing Ratios*
<i>Infant</i>	6	4	3 Staff 10 Children
<i>Toddler</i>	7	3	3 Staff 15 Children
<i>Preschool</i>	8	2	2 Staff 16 Children
<i>Kinder</i>	8	2	2 Staff 26 Children
<i>School age</i>	8	2	1 Staff 15 Children

\* In many cases, Mothercraft either has enhanced staffing or fewer children than required by licensing ratios

The smaller number of children means more space, more space to spread out at lunch, rest, and while at play. We will set up and encourage activities that promote individual or small group play; we will prioritize being outside as much as possible.

All children and staff will be cohorted, this means that they will stay with the same program group for a minimum of

7 days (where possible); they will not mix with other groups inside or outside – this is to keep the “bubble” as small as possible.

We will try our best to send you pictures throughout the week so you can see your child actively engaged in play.

The Custodian, Program Manager or other staff will not enter the program room when the children are present unless absolutely necessary, and if so, will do so wearing PPE.

## **Rescheduling of group events and/or in-person meetings**

We are committed to maintaining effective engagement and contact with parents, we know that you want to be a part of your child's day. During this time all contact with the Educators will need to be virtual, but we have become quite proficient at virtual connections so please do not hesitate to reach out. We will not be hosting in-person events or meetings until further notice.

## **In conclusion**

To prepare for re-opening, we are available for virtual parent meetings and invite parents to send us questions. You are also encouraged to connect with your Program Manager. What we have learned over these last few months is that this is an ever-evolving situation and that while we are as prepared as we possibly can be we are adapting as new information is provided to us. Our commitment to parent engagement remains the same, we will consistently update this plan as appropriate.

Please do not hesitate to share any ideas of what else we can be doing to support you and your child as we transition from being closed, to partially being re-opened. We appreciate all of your support and your confidence in us!