



Pandemic Influenza

Planning Checklist for Child Care Centres

2009

August 7, 2009

Adapted from *CHILDCARE AND PRESCHOOL PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING CHECKLIST*, Department of Health and Human Services, USA

Child care centres play an important role in the health and well being of the children, families and staff involved in these programs. In the event of an influenza pandemic, it is important to be prepared by having a plan in place to deal with the effects of the pandemic and reduce the negative impact on children, families and staff.

A pandemic plan may include some existing policies and procedures while others may need to be modified or developed.

The following checklist provides some guidance on what you may need to consider before and during an influenza pandemic. This checklist may be adapted to address your specific needs. More information on pandemic influenza is available at www.gov.nl.ca/health .

Planning and Coordination

- Consider forming a committee to develop a plan for dealing with a flu pandemic
- Identify the ways a flu pandemic might affect your program. Consider what you will do, for example, if staff members are off sick or become sick during the licensed hours, or if children become sick while at the centre
- Review current illness policies and modify if necessary
- Consider the requirements of children with special needs
- Plan on how you will continue to provide services during a pandemic
- Assign one person to identify reliable sources of information and to monitor the latest news and public health warnings and advisories
- Learn about resources and supports available in your community
- Encourage parents to have back-up child care in place in case it is needed
- Compile a list of contact information for all agencies, suppliers and other important contacts you have regular dealings with and keep the list up to date
- Share your plan with other members of the child care sector in your area to provide mutual support and possibly work together to pool resources

Communications

- Make sure that parents and staff (including substitutes and anyone else who may have responsibility for the children) are aware of the pandemic plan and their roles and responsibilities in the event of a flu pandemic
- Determine your methods for keeping in touch with staff and parents, for example, e-mail, telephone trees, websites, text messages, local radio stations
- Allocate space on your parent information board for relevant articles, information and updates
- Pass on information found at the Department of Health and Community Services website at www.gov.nl.ca/health and at www.fightflu.ca

Administration

- Plan how you will deal with staff and children's absences that may occur during a flu pandemic
- Compile a list of substitutes who will work if needed, consider board members, existing substitute staff, parent volunteers and previous staff
- Make sure everyone on the substitute list has a current Child Protection Records Check and Certificate of Conduct on file
- Cross train staff and develop written instructions for essential tasks
- Ensure staff know the location of important items and key information

Infection Control

- Prevention is the best approach
- Review the infectious disease and managing illness sections of *Standards and Guidelines for Health in Child Care Settings* with all staff and volunteers
- Keep common surfaces clean and disinfected
- Ensure that all staff follow Universal Precautions when handling blood or other bodily fluids
- Increase monitoring of children's hand hygiene and remind everyone to Clean, Cover, Contain
- Strictly enforce exclusion policies: staff and children who are ill must stay at home until they have recovered
- Arrange an area where ill children can be away from the others until they are picked up to go home
- Advise parents that ill children should not be taken to another child care setting, even for a short time
- Keep a good supply of items you will need to help control the spread of infection (for example soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues)
- Encourage staff to get annual flu shots
- Inform families that the *Public Health Agency of Canada* recommends annual flu shots for all children 6-23 months and all Canadians 2-64 years are encouraged to receive the influenza vaccine
- Contact your community/public health nurse if you have specific concerns or questions

Local Public Health Contact Phone Numbers

Region	Phone Number
Eastern Urban	752-4882
Eastern Rural	229-1603
Central	651-6238
Western	637-5417
Labrador-Grenfell	897-2137
After Hours	1-866-270-7437