Updates

We have new posters – see our new Diapering Procedure, and Toileting Routine posters. Other updated posters are also linked in the Q & A section. Ask your inspector for more posters or download and print at your convenience.

WeeCare Manual Update

Our last print of the hard copy would be 2019, and we will no longer be providing a hard copy of the Wee Care Manual in the future. To make the Wee Care Manual accessible in the future, we will be posting it online, with all updates communicated to child care operators by email. Revised content will be highlighted online as well.

WeeCare Newsletter Update

Based on the survey that closed on May 17, 2019, your preference was to receive the electronic copy of the newsletter. As a result, we will no longer be providing a hard copy of the Wee Care Newsletter in the future. Starting 2020, we will be communicating with you by email. Our newsletters can also be accessed online by visiting durham.ca/childcare. Thank you to all those who have provided us with your feedback to improve our communication. Please submit any questions related to the child care centre operation such as cleaning and disinfection, infection control and outbreak management.

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**Your Questions Answered**

**Q:** How often should a sanitizer be tested for food contact surfaces?

**A:** Ready-to-use solutions should be tested weekly and solutions that are manually diluted should be tested daily…but not required and testing does not need to be recorded. However, a test reagent must be readily available where the sanitizing takes place.

**Q:** Do the diaper table cleaning supplies need to be accessible at the change table (ie. hanging on the side of the table) and separate from the cleaning supplies for the rest of the room?

**A:** Yes. Please note that solutions have to be ‘out of reach’ so hanging on the side of the table might not be the best location to store these bottles.

**Q:** When dealing with wood or wood logs, acorns, etc., how do you go about treating them so that they are acceptable to have in the room longer than a week? Can I use Modge Podge?

**A:** Try sealing with a non-toxic product that can withstand routine cleaning and disinfection.
Q: Wondering how to have natural items in the science area, which is ok with the Health Department. (e.g. rocks, leaves, pinecones, shells) Are natural wood pieces ok for the building area? If materials are brought in from outside example leaves are they to be washed?

A: Please look at the IPAC Measures for Pedagogical Approach, and the Cleaning and Disinfection Schedule posters for the answer.

Natural items can be brought in, ensure they are cleaned/disinfected (if applicable) or discarded weekly or enclosed in a sealed case or baggie to prevent exposure of potentially contaminated items e.g. bird’s nest.

Q: Are toys allowed in the bathroom especially for toddlers to occupy the children?

A: Toys that are used on the toilet/potty must be cleaned and disinfected after each use vs. toys used in the general washroom area must be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each day (Keep these toys in a bin designated for washroom use only).

Q: If we want to deep clean can we use spray? Also, what can we use that is safe for children for a deep clean?

A: Always follow manufacturer’s instructions for application of a chemical and precautions to take. Always conduct a risk assessment to determine what risks there are and how to prevent exposure to staff and children.
Is there a list of common items for child care centres that are considered unsafe? Are there acceptable alternatives? e.g. Contact lens solution + Borax (used to make slime), kidney beans, flour, rice, etc.

A: The health department does not assess the safety of various products used in a centre’s programming. Inspections focus on the infection prevention and control, and safety aspects of the physical setting.

The 2019 Early Learning Spring Update Statement states that: We view educators as competent and capable. It is our expectation that all educators provide activities that stem from the children’s interests with an awareness of health and safety based on the needs and abilities within your group. We expect that infants and toddlers will not have access to any harmful substances in their program at any time. Educators working with children older than infant and toddler can make informed decisions on what materials they can safely use, based on the needs of the children in their group and the educator’s ability to closely supervise.

As a starting point, we suggest sourcing recipes that contain safe ingredients, however if this is not an option, consider risk VS benefit when thinking about why you would want to use an ingredient that could potentially cause harm. Therefore, if an educator deems their group is capable of safely using items such as borax, shaving cream or Tide, they may be used provided the educator is sitting with the children and closely supervising. When not being closely supervised, these materials should not be accessible to the children.

Remember, when using any product outside of the manufacturer’s instructions there may be associated risks.

Q: Are we allowed to use snow?

A: Yes, follow the Water Play Safety Guidelines poster.
Reminder! Check your KI tablet quantities

Early in 2019, all child care centres located within 10-kilometres of both the Pickering and Darlington Nuclear Generating Stations received a new batch of potassium iodide (KI) tablets that will expire in 2029.

As we begin the 2019 school year, please confirm that your child care centre has enough KI tablets for all the children and staff in case your capacity has increased since the distribution in February 2019.

To order additional KI tablets, or if your child care is located outside the 10 kilometres radius of either the Pickering or Darlington Nuclear Generating Stations, please contact Pamela Khan at pamela.khan@durham.ca or 905-723-3818 ext. 4649 or the Environmental Helpline at or 1-888-777-9613.

If your centre is located within a school building, please coordinate this effort with the Principal of the school who will submit one order for their school’s increased capacity and, your child care centre.

For more information please visit durham.ca/KI, preparetobesafe.ca, or contact Senior Public Health Inspector, Pamela Khan.

Outbreak Management/Daily Illness Surveillance

Staff should be observing the health of each child on a daily basis to monitor for clinical signs of illness such as fever, cough, diarrhea and vomiting and changes in a child’s behaviour as an indicator of possible illness.

Please record symptoms of illness using the Health Department’s Daily Illness Surveillance Form as it will track illness levels and give you an indication of enteric or respiratory illness. When it becomes apparent there is a sudden or unusual increase in the number of children or staff exhibiting similar symptoms, you are required to notify the Health Department immediately at 1-888-777-9613 or 905-723-3818. A Public Health Inspector will be available to discuss the situation and declare an outbreak if necessary.

Here are some simple ways to help prevent the spread of infection:
• Stay home when sick and until at least 24 hours after a fever and/or after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.
• Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, faucet handles, etc.
• Avoid touching your face (lips, mouth, nose, eyes).
• Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue.
• Wash your hands often using soap and warm water (wash for 15 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer)
• Encourage everyone to get their flu shot.
• Check out our Flu Prevention Guide for more information.

Also, refer to the new Child Care Pre-Outbreak Checklist and the Outbreak Control chapter in your Wee Care Manual for useful information.
IPAC Online Module

We are making changes to the way we provide the Infection Prevention and Control online learning module. Look out for our revised and updated module coming this Fall/Winter 2019/2020. We took your feedback and modified the learning to fit your needs. There are 5 chapters in the revised module that include the Chain of Transmission, Environmental Controls, Hand Hygiene, Hygiene and Disinfection, and Outbreak Management. There will be a test at the end of the module which will test your learning, and upon completion, a Certificate of Completion will be issued. Please make continuous learning a priority and plan to take the revised learning module when it is released.

REMINDER!
Update your contact information

From time-to-time, there may be an urgent message that Durham Region Health Department will have to send to all child care centres and to distribute the Wee Care Newsletter. A current contact list will help us disseminate the information to you more efficiently.

If your centre has had any changes to your child care centre contacts, such as managers, supervisors, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, please forward the new information to your area health inspector to update the list.

We would like to remind all child care centre owners, supervisors and staff that we welcome any suggestions that you may have for future article topics or ideas, your questions for the Q&A section of the newsletter and any comments you have to improve the newsletter!

We welcome your ideas and suggestions!

Please submit comments by email to agnes.kim@durham.ca

Please print and post this e-newsletter in a common area for those who do not have access to email.