

PROGRAM POLICIES	SERIOUS OCCURRENCES	SUBJECT	COVID-19
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POLICY

Serious Occurrences must be reported to the Ministry of Education and to the Region of Durham and include:

1. Death of a child who receives child care services, whether the death occurs on or off the premises.
2. Abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child which occurs while participating in a centre program.
3. Life threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives care at the centre.
4. Any situation where a child is missing or temporarily unsupervised while receiving care at the centre.
5. Unplanned disruption to the normal operations of the child care centre that poses a risk to health, safety or well-being of children receiving care.
6. Confirmed COVID-19 cases for a child, staff or student. A confirmed case includes a positive test result on a PCR test or a rapid antigen test.
7. Room, centre or premises closure by public health due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

For further clarification and examples, please see Appendix C – Reportable Serious Occurrences in the *Child Care Early Years Act, 2014*.

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PROCEDURES

Responding to a Serious Occurrence

Staff will respond immediately to any situation of a serious nature. This response may include but is not limited to:

- Providing medical attention
- Addressing any risks to health or safety
- Contacting appropriate services – e.g. Ambulance, Police, CAS
- Informing parent/guardian

Missing Children

If it is suspected that a child is missing, time is of the essence.

Staff must review group attendance. Check with the team partner and other children in the group. Note the time.

If the team partner is not in attendance, another staff may be called for assistance. Staff must ensure that the children in the group are supervised.

The Supervisor or designate must be notified of the situation. The Supervisor or designate is responsible for beginning a search of the building and of the grounds. One person should be assigned to check indoors and another person to check the playground and surrounding area. All staff are required to check their own rooms. It is essential to ensure the safety of the children while a search is being conducted.

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Once it is determined that a child is missing, the Police must be notified. Emergency numbers are posted by the telephone in each child care centre. A description of the child including age, weight, height, hair and eye colour, clothing etc. will be required.

Additional information that should be reviewed includes:

- Is the child familiar with the local area?
- Is the child new to the centre?
- Is the child able to open exit doors or gates?
- Where might the child go?
- What are the child's developmental abilities, could he or she be playing a game?
- What is the family situation, are there custody issues?

This information may assist the Police in their search.

It is not necessary to wait until the internal search has been completed prior to calling the police. The police should be called as soon as possible.

The search should be continued until the police arrive. If staffing allows, the search may continue along with the police.

The Supervisor or designate is responsible for notifying the child's parent(s) as soon as possible.

Once the situation has been resolved, the procedure for reporting a Serious Occurrence must be initiated.

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Reporting a Serious Occurrence

A description of the serious occurrence must be submitted to the Ministry of Education within 24 hours of the supervisor/designate becoming aware of the incident. Some serious occurrences require an update. These include incidents requiring investigations by a third party (e.g. CAS). The Ministry may also request additional information at any time until the status of the serious occurrence is deemed “closed”.

For confirmed COVID-19 cases, updates to the serious occurrence form or a new serious occurrence form (if the first one has since been closed) is required when additional COVID-19 cases are confirmed.

Serious Occurrence reports are completed in the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS) by the supervisor/designate. If the supervisor/designate is absent, the report can be completed by the Program Manager/Manager.

If CCLS cannot be accessed, the Ministry Program Advisor must be notified via telephone or email within 24 hrs and a serious occurrence must be completed in CCLS as soon as the system becomes available.

Once the report is submitted in the CCLS, an email is generated to notify the Ministry of Education, Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch and the Region of Durham, Children’s Services Division.

Posting Serious Occurrence Notification Forms

The CCLS will generate a Serious Occurrence Notification Form but the description must be completed by the supervisor/designate. The Notification Form is communication to parents about the serious occurrence that happened.

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- No identifying information is included in the Serious Occurrence Notification Form, e.g. child name, staff name; age or birth date of child; age group/room
- Post the Serious Occurrence Notification Form in a conspicuous place at or near the entrance used by parents and ideally near the child care license and licensing summary chart.

The Serious Occurrence Notification Form is posted as required under the CCEYA and retained. For confirmed COVID-19 cases, the form must be posted unless Public Health advises otherwise.

CRITICAL SERIOUS OCCURRENCE REPORTING

Completion of certain fields on the Serious Occurrence Report in CCLS triggers the status of “critical” and an e-mail is generated notifying the management both at the Ministry of Education, Child Care Licensing Branch and the Region of Durham, Children’s Services Division.

Extra reporting procedures will be followed when emergency services (i.e. police, fire and/or ambulance) are used in response to a significant incident and/or the incident is likely to result in significant public or media attention.

Serious occurrences considered significant must be reported immediately to the Ministry of Education using CCLS and to the Designated Authority at the Region within one hour using the telephone.

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