

# Hand Hygiene Policy and Procedure – COVID-19

## Policy Statement

Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services (TELCCS) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, families and employees. TELCCS will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the risk of communicable diseases within all our locations.

## Purpose

To ensure that all employees are aware of, and adhere to, the directive established by Toronto Public Health (TPH), and Children's Services in all TELCCS locations.

## Application

This policy applies to all employees, students, community members, and any other persons engaged in business with TELCCS.

## Definitions

Hand Hygiene is a general term referring to any action of hand cleaning. Hand hygiene relates to the removal of visible soil and removal or killing of transient microorganisms from the hands. Hand hygiene may be accomplished using soap and running water or a hand sanitizer (70 - 90% isopropyl alcohol based). Hand washing with soap and running water must be performed when hands are visibly soiled.

## Procedures

Hands carry and spread germs. Touching your eyes, nose, mouth or sneezing or coughing into your hands may provide an opportunity for germs to get into your body or spread to others. Keeping your hands clean through good hygiene practice is one of the most important steps to avoid getting sick and spreading germs.

Ensure that frequent proper hand hygiene (hand washing/hand sanitizing) is enhanced and promoted. This includes supervising and/or assisting participants with hand washing as required. Ensure that employees and children are always practicing good hand hygiene when hands are visibly dirty and before and/or after:

- Sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose
- Using the washroom
- Handling garbage
- Handling raw foods
- Outdoor play
- Handling soiled laundry or dishes
- Handling soiled toys or other items
- Coming into contact with bodily fluids
- Coming into contact with any soiled/mouthed items

- Gardening
- Preparing handling and serving food
- Toileting/diapering routine
- Handling animals
- Touching a cut or open sore
- Glove use
- Dispensing/handling expressed breast milk
- Giving medication
- Entering the child care centre
- Entering a room within the child care centre
- After touching your eyes, nose or mouth (inadvertently/accidentally).
- Touching any child's personal belongings, or any shared items
- Any time when staff determined that hand hygiene is required

When hands are visibly soiled, follow these steps for cleaning hands:

- Wet hands
- Apply soap
- Lather for at least 15 seconds. Rub between fingers, back of hands, fingertips, under nails
- Rinse well under running water
- Dry hands well with paper towel or hot air blower
- Turn taps off with paper towel, if available

When hands are not visibly soiled, follow these steps for cleaning hands:

- Apply hand sanitizer (70-90% isopropyl alcohol based)
- Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds
- Work sanitizer between fingers, back of hands, fingertips, and under nails.
- Rub hands until dry

## **Hand Hygiene Monitoring**

To ensure that employees are using proper hand hygiene methods, supervisors will review hand hygiene practices on a regular basis and provide feedback to employees as required.

Child care supervisors must monitor hand hygiene supplies to ensure adequate amounts of liquid soap, paper towel, hand sanitizer, tissues and waste receptacles lined with plastic bags.

## **Hand Sanitizing Information**

When your hands are not visible dirty, a 70-90% isopropyl alcohol based hand sanitizer can be used. Hand sanitizers can only be used on children who are over the age of 18 months and must always be used under adult supervision. Adults must ensure that the product has completely evaporated from the child's hands before allowing the child to continue their activity. Please ensure that written parent consent is obtained before applying hand sanitizer

to any child. Hand Sanitizer used MUST be food-grade and approved by Toronto Children's Services Health and Safety.

## **Glove Use**

Gloves shall be worn when it is anticipated that hands will come into contact with mucous membranes, broken skin, tissue, blood, bodily fluids, secretions, excretions, contaminated equipment or environmental surfaces. Nitrile/vinyl gloves are single use only. Refer to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy and Procedure – COVID-19 for further direction

## **Gloves and Hand Hygiene**

Hand hygiene shall be practised before applying and after removing gloves. Gloves shall be removed and discarded after each use.

To reduce hand irritation related to gloves:

- Wear gloves for as short a time as possible
- Ensure that hands are clean and dry before wearing gloves
- Ensure gloves are intact, clean and dry inside
- Gloves are single use only, and must be task specific such as nitrile/vinyl for diaper changes

## **Gloves when Cleaning/Disinfecting**

When employees are mixing chemicals into bottles or buckets, they must wear thicker dishwashing-like gloves. These gloves can be reused, must be cleaned after each use and each employee should have their own pair. Also, employees must wear these gloves when immersing toys in diluted disinfectant when toy washing, as their hands are more frequently immersed.

## **Covering Your Cough Procedure**

Germs, such as influenza and cold viruses, are spread by coughing and/or sneezing. When you cough or sneeze on your hands, your hands carry and spread these germs.

Attempt to keep your distance (preferably more than 2 metres/6 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing. Follow these steps to stop the spread of germs:

- If you have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose when you cough, sneeze or blow your nose
- Put used tissues in the garbage lined with plastic bags
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not in your hands
- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer (70-90% isopropyl alcohol-based) regularly and immediately after using a tissue on yourself or others

## **Policy and Procedure Review**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed and signed off by all employees before commencing employment/unpaid placement in a TELCCS location, and at any time where a change is made.

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