

Pandemic Response Planning Checklist for Child Care Facilities

In the event of an influenza pandemic, child care facilities will play an important role in the protection of the health and safety of staff and children and their families.

To help you to prepare, Vancouver Coastal Health has developed the following checklist for child care facilities. It identifies important, specific things you can do now to get ready. Further information can be found in the VCH Pandemic Response Plan at: www.vch.ca/pandemic

Specific chapters that may be of interest are:

Chapter 4: Infection Control: http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/ch04_infection_control.pdf

Chapter 5: Self Care: http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/ch05_self_care.pdf

You can also refer to **Sneezes & Diseases** for information about the flu or about proper hand hygiene at: http://www.vch.ca/public/communicable/docs/sneezes_diseases.pdf

Planning for the impact of a pandemic on your facility

- Is there a person or group responsible for pandemic planning for your facility?
- Have you talked to parents about the need to plan for a pandemic?
- Have you made plans to provide services during a pandemic? Staff may be home ill or looking after a sick family member.
- Have you made communications plans to deal with fear, anxiety, rumours and misinformation among staff and families?
- Have you talked to parents about finding alternate care for their children if your facility were to close during a pandemic?
- Have you considered liberal, non-punitive sick leave policies to be implemented during a pandemic? Staff who are ill with influenza should stay home from work until their symptoms are gone.
- Have you taught staff how to check children each day, as they arrive, to see if they are sick?
- Do you have plans to keep children, who become ill at your facility, away from other children until someone arrives to take them home?
- Do you have plans to exclude children who are sick with influenza from your facility until they are better? Have you talked to parents about this?
- Have you made plans to provide more frequent cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and toys during a pandemic.
- Have you identified resources to help staff and children deal with grief and loss in a pandemic?

Take action now to support pandemic response

- ❑ Encourage parents to notify you, if their children are absent because of illness.
- ❑ Work with the Licensing Officer assigned to your facility to ensure timely reporting of absenteeism.
- ❑ Encourage staff to get their annual flu shot.
- ❑ Encourage parents to have their children vaccinated against influenza and pneumococcal disease. Healthy children aged 6-23 months are eligible for free influenza vaccination, as are their parents and others who care for them. Pneumococcal vaccine is also free for children under 18 months.
- ❑ Work with the public health nurse to learn about the signs and symptoms of influenza, how it spreads and about personal and family protection.
- ❑ Work with the public health nurse assigned to your facility to learn about and encourage good infection control and hygiene practices now. Learn about proper hand washing and cough & sneeze etiquette. Make good infection control a habit now.
- ❑ Provide adequate supplies to control the spread of infection - soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, tissues and receptacles for their disposal.

