

Ideas and practices suggested by childcare services as part of their pandemic service continuity plans ^[1]

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EXCERPTED

In 2007, the Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés asked all childcare centres and day care centres to prepare a service continuity plan in the event of an influenza pandemic.

An analysis of the service continuity plans prepared by childcare centres and day care centres has made it possible to make a list of tangible and effective approaches to notably promote the awareness of children and inform parents and staff members about the ways and means of preventing the spread of the virus. The Department considers it advisable to inform all childcare services of these ways and means, particularly within the current context of the influenza A(H1N1) pandemic.

Following the declaration of a pandemic by medical authorities, all childcare services must increase their vigilance to the maximum level and greatly reinforce the prevention measures recommended by these authorities, such as washing hands and respiratory hygiene. This document also incorporates these recommendations.

Through the dissemination of these approaches and due to the current pandemic context, the Department wishes to encourage childcare services that have already put in place a plan to reinforce it and to provide support to those services that are in the process of completing the development of their plan. It is important to recall that for the preparation or the updating of their plan, childcare services must refer to the Guide for preparing a service continuity plan in the event of an influenza pandemic: childcare centre and day care centre (facility) available on the Department's web site.

Part 1 - Activities that should be carried out at all times

- Washing hands

This practice is the most important that you can implement for prevention purposes to reduce the spread of the influenza virus and several other infections.

- Respiratory hygiene

Respiratory hygiene focuses on simple steps that should be taken when a person coughs or sneezes to prevent the spread of viruses.

- Wearing a mask

According to public health authorities, the wearing of a procedure mask is a prevention measure that is only intended for staff in charge of keeping a watch over children with flu-like symptoms (fever and cough accompanied by headache, fatigue, aches and pains, or intense fatigue, etc.), until they return home.

Without emphasizing to children that staff members could wear a mask in a pandemic situation, you can carry out activities with masks so that children grow accustomed to this object and reduce the likelihood of them becoming afraid if masks are worn.

- Vaccination

Vaccination is an effective means to protect oneself against seasonal influenza because it enables the immune system to defend against the virus.

- Cleaning of surfaces

It is possible to limit the spread of viruses by cleaning the workplace frequently.

- Cleaning of toys

The spread of viruses may be limited through the frequent cleaning of toys, which are major virus transmission vectors.

- Management of sick children

For prevention purposes, it is important to manage the presence at the childcare or day care centre of persons with flu-like symptoms (for example, fever and coughing with headache, extreme fatigue, or aches and pains).

- Other practices put in place

Other practices may help limit the transmission of infections and viruses.

- Replacement staff and human resources

According to public health authorities, the staff absenteeism rate could reach 35% in a pandemic situation. Given such a rate, staff replacement planning is a must and various replacement options should be envisaged in order to have the required labour force to maintain essential services.

Related link:

Region: Quebec ^[3]

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