



Section 14

Immunization, Illness and Communicable Diseases



Section 14

Immunization, Illness and Communicable Diseases

This section looks at regulations designed to prevent illnesses and diseases, and to prevent the spread of illnesses and diseases if they do occur. It describes procedures for:

- shots for staff and children
- dealing with illness in an adult or child
- dealing with a suspected communicable disease in an adult or child
- the role and authority of public health in preventing and managing disease outbreaks

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40(1)

All children attending a child day care facility and all staff must have current proof of any immunization required by health care professional.

54(1)

No permanent staff person shall be hired without a certification of medical examination and immunization update.

Regulation 40(1) and 54(1)

Proof of Immunization

Why

- To ensure that staff and children in facilities are protected from certain diseases
- To ensure that staff and children in facilities don't spread certain diseases to the other staff and children in their care
- To ensure that staff in facilities are in general good health and able to perform their duties

What it means

- All staff and children must have an up-to-date immunizations (shots) record. Follow the *Nunavut Immunization Schedule*.
- It is recommended that all staff and children have a tuberculosis (TB) screening test.
- All staff must give the operator a copy of their updated immunization record showing they have the required shots *before* they can start work at the centre if available. If unable to provide a copy add a letter to the staff file explaining the reasons.
- All parents must provide an updated copy of their child's immunization record to keep on file before they start. If a parent has chosen not to immunize their child then a letter from the parent stating this decision must be kept in the file.
- The operator must keep a current copy of each staff person's immunization record and TB screening, if available, in the staff person's file at the facility.
- All staff must provide a medical note of good health showing that they are healthy and able to work in the facility *before* they start work at the facility.

How

- Make sure that the qualifications section of all job descriptions shows that updated immunization records are required.
- It is recommended that the qualifications sections of all job descriptions also show that tuberculosis (TB) testing is required.
- Contact the Department of Health to find out which immunizations are needed, and how to obtain screening for TB.
- Make sure all potential staff give you a copy of their updated immunization record and proof of TB screening before they start work if available. If they are not able to provide this record then they must provide a letter explaining the reason.
- Make sure all potential staff give you a copy of their medical note of good health before they start work.
- Keep this information in the staff person's file.
- State in the application package for a child that a parent must provide a copy of the child's most current immunization record. If a parent has chosen not to immunize their child then a letter from the parent stating this decision must be kept on file.
- It is recommended that you also require each child to provide proof of TB screening.
- Keep a copy of the child's immunization record or parental letter in the child's file.
- Update staff and children's immunization record every year.

54(2)

All casual and temporary staff and all volunteers shall be in good health while working or serving in any capacity in a child day care facility.

Regulation 54(2)

Illness of Staff or Volunteer**Why**

- To ensure that staff and volunteers are healthy
- To ensure quality care for children
- To protect children's health

What it means

- If the operator of a family day home or a staff person at a centre is sick, or has any health problem that could affect children's health or care, they should NOT work at the facility.
- If a volunteer is sick, or has any health problem that could affect children's health or care, they should NOT volunteer at the facility.
- The responsibility is on the operator – even if a staff person or volunteer reports to work, if the operator believes the staff person or volunteer is sick or has any health problems that could affect children's health or care, the operator must prevent the person from working or volunteering in the facility.

How

- Remind staff and volunteers that children's care and health should be their primary concern – they should not be in the facility if they are sick or have any health problem that could affect the care and health of children.
- Illnesses of most concern include chest infections or stomach/intestine infections with diarrhea or vomiting. When in doubt, ask the staff member or volunteer to get a note from their health care provider saying that the person does not have any health condition that could negatively affect the health and/or care of children.
- Ask staff to give you as much notice as possible if they will not be reporting to work for health reasons.
- Send staff and volunteers home if they are sick or have any health problem that could affect the care and health of children.
- Wash and sanitize any equipment, bedding, dishes, bathroom facilities or other materials that the staff member or volunteer had contact with, before anyone else uses or touches them.

- If you think a staff person or volunteer has a communicable disease, follow the procedures for communicable diseases.
- Have a backup plan if staff are sick so that you have enough staff to meet the supervision requirements. For example, have a list of “subs” that you can call. Be clear about what you expect a sub to do, as well as what they should not do. Orient them to the facility, program and emergency procedures.

54(3)

The public health officer or an operator may require a staff person to undergo a medical examination if there is reason to believe that the person is not in good health.

Regulation 54(3)

Medical Exam and Tests For Staff

Why

- To protect children’s health
- To ensure quality care for children

What it means

- The operator or a health officer could ask a staff person to have a medical exam and/or tests, as recommended by a doctor or nurse.
- The operator or health officer would do this if they have reason to believe that the person’s health could affect the care that they provide, or the health of children.
- The staff person must get the medical exam and tests before they are allowed to return to the facility.

How

- Remind staff and volunteers that children’s care and health is your primary concern – if you, or a health officer ask a staff person or volunteer to have a medical examination and/or tests it’s because you are concerned about the children.
- If a staff person refuses or does not get the requested medical exam or test, ask the health officer to prevent the staff person from returning to the facility, and hire another staff person to replace them.
- If a volunteer refuses or does not get the requested medical exam or test, do not allow the person to volunteer at the facility until a health officer gives the okay.

40(2)

Where an operator is aware that a child attending the child day care facility or a staff person has a communicable disease, the operator shall, as soon as possible,

- (a) notify a health care professional; and
- (b) in the case of a child, notify the parent or guardian of the child.

40(3)

An operator shall not permit a child or a staff person suffering from a communicable disease or acute illness to attend the child day care facility during the period established by a health care professional.

40(4)

A child with a communicable disease who has been absent from the child day care facility must not be returned to the facility unless a health care professional issues a certificate stating that the child may be returned to the facility.

Regulation 40(2)(a)(b) and (3) and (4)

Communicable Diseases**Why**

- The outbreak of a communicable disease is very serious. Anyone suspected of having a communicable disease needs to be isolated from all other persons as quickly as possible to contain the potential spread of the disease.
- The Medical Officer of Health needs information on suspected cases of a disease in order to prevent and/or manage a disease outbreak.
- To recognize the authority and role of the Medical Officer of Health or other health officers in protecting the health of people in Nunavut.

What it means

- A communicable disease is any disease or condition that is spread by interaction with other people. This includes colds, lice, impetigo, diarrhea and pinkeye. Some, more serious, communicable diseases can be prevented by immunization including diphtheria, flu, measles, rubella (German measles), chickenpox and mumps.
- If the operator has reason to believe that any staff person or volunteer may have a communicable disease (other than the common cold) the operator must:
 - as soon as possible, make sure that the person has no further contact with children, staff or volunteers,
 - notify the Health Centre or Public Health (if you are in Iqaluit) as soon as possible,
 - not let the person return to the child care facility until they have seen a health care professional and until the health professional gives the approval through a letter from a medical professional.
- If the operator suspects that a child may have a communicable disease (other than the common cold) the operator must:
 - isolate the child from other children,
 - call the parent, guardian or authorized person to pick the child up immediately,
 - provide supervised care while waiting for the child to be picked up,
 - notify the Health Centre or Public Health (if you are in Iqaluit).
- The Medical Officer of Health or another health officer will decide if a child will not be allowed to attend the child care facility, as well as for how long.
- The operator must not allow the child to return to the facility until the Medical Officer of Health or another health officer gives approval.

How

- Make sure staff and volunteers understand the procedures outlined in the shaded box.
- Ask staff and volunteers to inform you they have reason to believe that a staff member or volunteer has a communicable disease, and then follow the procedures in the shaded box. Immediately isolate the person from children, other staff and volunteers.
- Ask staff and volunteers to inform you if a child is sick, and then follow the procedures in the shaded box. Isolate the child from other children and make sure the child is supervised until the parent can pick up the child.
- If the parent cannot be reached, call the alternate emergency contact identified on the child's application for enrolment
- Don't worry about "being sure" or diagnosing a disease yourself. That's the role of the health officer. Your job is to report any suspected disease and let the health officer take it from there.
- Cooperate with and take direction from the Medical Officer of Health, other health officer or health care professional.
- Wash and sanitize any equipment, bedding, dishes, bathroom facilities or other materials that the child, staff member or volunteer had contact with, before anyone else uses or touches them.
- If the suspected disease in question can be prevented by immunization, check the immunization records of all children to determine which ones are at risk because they do not have certain immunizations. Then:
 - notify parents of children who have not been immunized that a child, staff member or volunteer may have a communicable disease, and
 - advise them that the Medical Officer of Health has been notified of the possible disease and will take whatever action is needed to keep all children safe. This could include preventing a child who has not been immunized from attending the child care facility until it is safe to return.
- Ask the Health Centre or Public Health for information and support to effectively manage a possible communicable disease.
- If a communicable disease is confirmed, inform the Regional Early Childhood Officer.
- Before allowing a child to return to the facility, ask the parent for a letter or certificate from the Medical Officer of Health or another health officer saying that it is safe for the child to return.

40(5)

Notwithstanding subsection (3) and (4), the operator of a family home day care facility may allow a child with a communicable disease to attend the facility if the operator and the parents or guardians of all children attending the facility consent.

Regulation 40(5)

Consent to Attend a Family Day Home

Why

- To set out the conditions under which a child with a communicable disease may attend a family day home

What it means

- This regulation applies only to operators of family day homes.
- The operator may allow a child with a communicable disease to attend the family day home:
 - IF a health officer gives permission,
 - AND IF the parents of ALL other children agree. This must be a written agreement on file.

How

- Ask the health officer to explain to parents the reasons for permitting a child with a communicable disease to attend the family day home.
- Ask the health officer what additional precautions you need to take to protect the child with the communicable disease, and the other children in the family day home.
- Explain these precautions to parents.
- Get written consent from all parents to indicate that they agree to the presence of a child with a communicable disease at the family day home.
- If even one parent does not give written consent, do not allow the child with the communicable disease to attend until the Medical Officer of Health or other health officer decides that the child no longer has a communicable disease.

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Where a child attending a child day care facility is ill, the operator shall

- (a) ensure that the child received medical assistance;
- (b) notify the parent or guardian of the child; and
- (c) provide supervised care in an area separate from other children until the parent or guardian takes the child home.

Regulation 41 (a) and (b) and (c)

Illness of a Child

Why

- To ensure that sick children receive the medical assistance they need
- To protect other children from also getting sick

What it means

- If a child is sick the operator must:
 - isolate the child from other children. Make sure the child is supervised,
 - notify the parent and ask that the child be picked up as soon as possible,
 - provide medical assistance, if necessary, until the child is picked up.

How

- Call the parent, or if the parent cannot be reached, the alternate emergency contact identified on the child's application for enrolment.
- Follow the other procedures in the shaded box.
- Include the procedures for dealing with a sick child in the parent information handbook.
- Wash and sanitize any equipment, bedding, dishes, bathroom facilities or other materials used by an ill child before anyone else uses or touches them.
- Centre operators, make sure staff are familiar with the procedures for dealing with a sick child.

