

Child Care Connection

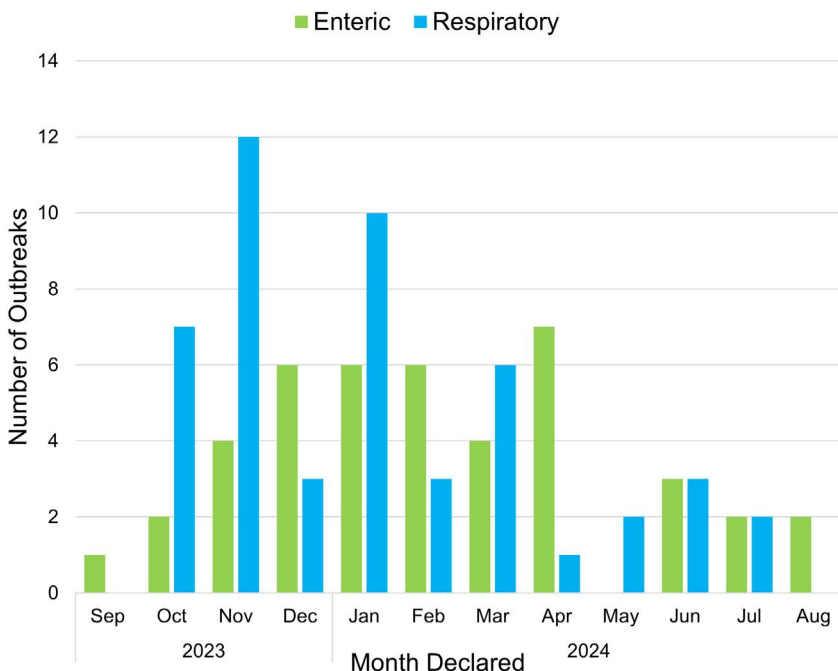
PREPARE FOR OUTBREAKS

Child care centres are at greater risk for experiencing outbreaks of illness because large groups of children spend prolonged time together sharing the same toys/activities, classrooms, and washroom facilities. This, in addition to underdeveloped immune systems, decreased hygienic practices, and incomplete immunization series, make children more susceptible to infections. Your centre plays a role in minimizing the spread of illness.



WHEN DO OUTBREAKS OCCUR?

Child Care Outbreaks 2023-2024



In 2023/24, we saw the highest number of confirmed enteric and respiratory outbreaks in child care centres ever.

Increases in illness and outbreaks occur during the Fall/Winter months due to several factors including:

- Viruses like norovirus, influenza and RSV are more active in the colder months; and
- People are indoors more often, increasing close contact with others and the likelihood of germs spreading
- COVID-19 is impacting on child care centres year-round

Data Source: Integrated Public Health Information System (IPHIS), extracted September 18, 2024



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HOW CAN YOUR CENTRE PREPARE FOR OUTBREAK SEASON?

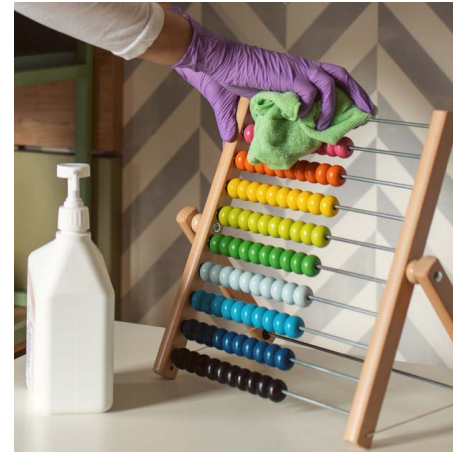
- Know when an outbreak is suspected. Refer to the Outbreak QuickStart for guidance on when to report an increase of illnesses to SMDHU and the next steps your centre can take to prevent further spread.
- Know where to access [outbreak resources](#) which may include illness tracking forms, outbreak checklists, specimen collection kits, line lists, and signage.
- Prepare staff.
 - a. Provide training and education to staff before the outbreak season. For example:
 - i. What symptoms should staff be looking out for?
 - ii. Where will the ill child isolate while waiting to be picked up?
 - iii. How will increased cleaning and disinfection be accomplished?
 - b. Utilize the [enteric](#) and [respiratory](#) outbreak checklists to train staff
 - c. Decide how classrooms will [revise activities](#) during outbreaks and conduct a risk assessment of each activity/toy:
 - i. Can the toy/item be cleaned and disinfected properly?
 - ii. How can we create individual activity stations instead of group activities?
 - iii. Consider increasing outdoor activities (weather permitting).
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette is the best way to prevent the spread of infection. Increase handwashing when an outbreak is suspected. Here are some resources designed to support teaching children.

[Hand Washing Heroes](#) - Government of Canada video for young children

[Handwashing for Kids](#) (PDF) and [Hand Sanitizing for Kids](#) (PDF) posters for use in centres

[Coughs and sneezes spread diseases video](#) - World Health Organization

- Parents and guardians play a vital role in helping to minimize the spread of illness. To aid with your communication with parents and/or guardians, SMDHU has developed the following resource:
 - a. [Template for notification to parents and/or guardians](#)
 - b. [FAQ for parents and/or guardians](#)



REMINDERS

Line list

Need help completing a line list? Review the [SMDHU line list video](#).

Immunization

Check annually that staff and child immunization records are completed or updated. For more information on immunization requirements visit [SMDHU immunization for Child Care Operators](#).

For more information, contact the **Infectious Diseases Team** at 1(877) 721-7520 ext. 8809, Monday to Friday, 8:30am - 4:30pm or visit www.smdhu.org/childcare

