

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Parents,

In anticipation of the upcoming flu season we have reviewed the guidelines for preventing and managing flu-like illness, including the H1N1 flu virus, from federal and provincial governments and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. Our goal is to protect the health of children enrolled in our centre and minimize the spread of illness.

The H1N1 flu virus is spread from person to person in the same way as seasonal influenza—mainly through coughing or sneezing. Symptoms of H1N1 flu virus are similar to seasonal flu and they include: fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, joint pain or weakness. Young children may also have vomiting and/or diarrhea.

Our centre is taking steps to control the spread of flu-like illness and to protect the health of your child. These measures include:

- encouraging frequent and correct hand hygiene—particularly after sneezing or coughing, before and after eating, after sensory play and after going to the washroom
- encouraging the children to cough and sneeze into their sleeve (not the hands) or use a tissue to cover the mouth and nose
- thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting the commonly touched surfaces throughout our centre on a routine basis
- notifying parents immediately if their child has become ill while at the centre or arrives to the center ill and isolating the child promptly in a separate, supervised area away from others until they are picked up by the parent/guardian
- ensuring ill children are excluded from the centre for the recommended length of time
- working closely with our local public health unit and following up-to-date control measures.

There are additional measures you can take at home to protect your child's health as well, including:

- follow the basic prevention measures of hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette and regular cleaning of high touch surfaces
- monitor your child for signs and symptoms of flu-like illness
- keep your child home from day care and other activities when ill
- keep children home until they no longer have symptoms of illness and are feeling well and able to fully participate in daily programs
- seek medical attention if your child becomes ill and is at increased risk for complications from the flu (i.e. if your child has an underlying illness)
- talk to your health care provider about seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines.

At this time, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is working closely with child care centers to be sure the appropriate precautions are taken to minimize the impact of H1N1 flu virus. For more information on H1N1 you can visit the health unit website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org or please feel free to contact us should you have additional questions.

Sincerely