SERIOUS OCCURRENCE POLICY AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

Manual:	Child Care Centres	POLICY #:	**4.6**
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy and the procedures within is to provide clear instructions for child care staff, how to identify, respond to, and report a serious occurrence. It ensures that there is a plan to deal with any serious incidents that may affect the health, safety and well-being of children and those working directly with children, and that these serious incidents are reported, tracked and followed up on.

This policy requires that an annual review be conducted of serious occurrences that took place over the last calendar year for an opportunity to reflect on the incidents that took place and consider approaches that will be implemented to minimize the chance that the incidents will occur again in the future.

POLICY

As a requirement of the *Child Care and Early Years Act*, *2014 (CCEYA),* any incident of a serious occurrence shall be identified, responded to, and reported according to Network's *Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures,* below:

Identifying a Serious Occurrence

The Child Care and Early Years Act (Ontario Regulation 137/15) defines a serious occurrence as:

1. Death of a child who receives child care at a child care centre.

2. Abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at a child care centre.

3. Life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives child care at a child care centre.

4. An incident where a child who is receiving child care at a child care centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised.

5. An unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a child care centre, that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving child care at the child care centre.

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REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR A SERIOUS OCCURRENCE

See also *'Appendix A'* of this policy for reporting specific incidents.

1. All Serious Occurrences and follow up reports are reported to the Ministry of Education on the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS).

2. The child care Centre Supervisor has the reporting responsibility for serious occurrences and ensures that a designate is assigned in the Supervisor's absence to ensure the reporting procedures below are followed within the required time frame.

3. Child care staff are required to notify the Centre Supervisor, designate, or Program Manager of a serious occurrence as soon as they become aware of the incident.

4. In all cases involving the death of a child, the Centre Supervisor must immediately contact the local coroner at (416)314-4000.

5. If there is reason to suspect that a child has been abused or in need of protection, the child care staff member who has knowledge of the circumstances shall immediately contact the Children's Aid Society, in accordance with Network's Child Abuse Policy and Reporting Procedures.

Within 24 hours:

1. The Centre Supervisor or designate is required to report all serious occurrences online through the Ministry of Education's Child Care Licensing System (CCLS) within 24 hours that the Supervisor or staff becoming aware of the occurrence.

2. Identifying information such as children or staff names must not be included in the serious occurrence reports. Children and staff shall be identified by their initials.

3. If CCLS cannot be accessed (e.g. where CCLS or an internet connection is unavailable), the Supervisor or designate making the report, is required to notify the Ministry of Education's Program Advisor (PA) assigned to the license, by email or by telephone within 24 hours of becoming aware of the occurrence. A serious occurrence report will be submitted in CCLS as soon as the system can be accessed.

4. Where a Ministry of Education Program Advisor (PA) cannot be reached by telephone, a voicemail message will be left to notify the PA of the incident.

5. All updates to serious occurrences will be reported online through CCLS until the serious occurrence has been closed by the Ministry of Education's Program Advisor.

6. Where the Ministry of Education requests updates to a serious occurrence in CCLS, these will be provided by the Centre Supervisor as soon as possible though update reports.

7. Serious occurrences reported to the Ministry of Education will be documented in the daily written record.

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8. Although not required, unless otherwise informed, the Centre Supervisor may choose to contact their Toronto Children's Services (TCS) Consultant, they may reach call directly or call the Toronto Serious Occurrence and Incident line at (416) 397-7359. This line is staffed Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding statutory holidays.

Posting a Serious Occurrence Summary (Notification Form)

1. The Centre Supervisor, or designate, will post the Serious Occurrence Notification Form (SONF).

2. The Serious Occurrence Notification Form (SONF) is posted at the child care centre in a place that is visible and accessible to parents for a minimum of ten (10) business days, regardless of the type of serious occurrence and the status of any related investigation.

3. All updates to the serious occurrence will be added to the posted SONF and it will remain posted for an additional ten (10) business days each time any updates are added.

4. All serious occurrence summaries will be retained for three (3) years from the date they are created or last updated (whichever date is most recent).

Reports and Records Management

Serious Occurrence reports and other related documents shall be retained and secured in the child care for a minimum of three (3) years from the date the report has been made.

POLICY REVIEW

Network's Serious Policy is reviewed and acknowledged by way of a signature by all child care staff members, students and volunteers, before they begin employment with Network, and at least annually thereafter, or when changes are made to the policy. A written record of each review must be signed by the Centre Supervisor and each staff member.

Network's Site Supervisor maintains a record of each policy review on Network's Policy Review Form on file in the child care centre.

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Appendix A: Reportable Serious Occurrences

Category 1 - Death of a Child

Definition: The death of a child who received child care at a home child care premises or child care centre.

For greater clarity, a death of a child must be reported as a serious occurrence if there may be a relationship between the child's death and the child's care in the licensed program.

The following provides some examples of what would be considered a serious occurrence under this category.

Examples of Category 1 That Must be Reported as a Serious Occurrence:

- A child was unresponsive and not breathing while receiving child care. The child was later pronounced dead by emergency medical staff.
- A child developed a severe illness while at the child care centre or home child care premises and later passed away in hospital.
- A child developed a high fever at the child care centre or home child care premises and was sent home. The child later passed away.
- A child incurred fatal injuries from an accident while on a field trip from the child care centre.

Examples of Category 1 That Would Not Be Reported as a Serious Occurrence:

- A child died following a known illness/disease/medical condition (e.g., cancer).
- A child was taken out of child care by their parents because they were very ill (in other words, the child is no longer enrolled in the child care centre). A few weeks later, one of the staff at the centre let the licensee know that they found out that the child passed away.

Category 2 - Abuse/Neglect or Allegation of Abuse/Neglect

Definition: Abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at a child care centre. This includes an allegation against any person who is on-site at the child care centre premises (i.e. anyone working visiting or otherwise attending the child care centre program).

The following provides some examples of what would and would not be considered a serious occurrence under this category.

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Examples of Category 2 That Must be Reported as a Serious Occurrence:

- A staff, student or volunteer observed a child care centre forcefully grabbing a child.
- Network or the Supervisor received an email from a concerned parent alleging that a staff member was upset that a preschooler had a urine accident and the staff refused to permit the child to change his/her soiled clothes.
- A staff member, student or volunteer is observed using harsh/degrading language to a child.
- A parent noticed a bruise on his/her child's face; the child told parent that a staff member had hit him/her.
- A staff member observed a parent slap a child while on the premises.

Examples of Category 2 That Would Not Be Reported as a Serious Occurrence:

A child tells a staff member that something bad happened to them while they were at their sibling's soccer game (in other words, not during the time the child was getting child care at the child care centre). While this is not considered to be a Serious Occurrence because the alleged incident is not related to the licensee or the child care centre, there is a duty to report the information to the local children's aid society as per Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017.

Category 3 - Life-threatening Injury or Illness

Definition: A life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives child care at a child care centre.

- CCLS has two sub-categories reportable Category 3 Serious Occurrences:
    1) Injury
    2) Illness.
- When reporting a category 3 Serious Occurrence, the Supervisor, or designate making the report, must indicate whether the injury or illness being reported as a Serious Occurrence appeared while the child was receiving child care at the child care centre OR whether the threatening injury or illness appeared before the child came into care but was sustained/developed while the child attended the child care centre.
- Life-threatening injury or illness is defined as an incident that can cause death.

Examples of Category 3 That Must be Reported as a Serious Occurrence:

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Injuries, including but not limited to:

- Injuries to the head, back or neck resulting in unconsciousness or physical paralysis
- Severe eye injury (impalement)
- Injuries to the chest resulting in difficulty breathing (collapsed lung), heart attack, or vomiting blood
- Anaphylactic reactions
- Near drowning
- Substantial blood loss
- Drug overdose
- First time seizure, multiple seizures or seizures lasting more than 5 minutes
- Life threatening suspected fracture with bone deformity and /or bone exposure.

Illness, including but not limited to:

- E. Coli
- Flesh Eating Disease

Examples of Category 3 That Would Not Be Reported as a Serious Occurrence:

- A child with a pre-existing seizure disorder had a seizure at the child care centre. Because the licensee had an individualized plan for the child with medical needs, staff knew what to do and the child was not hurt during the seizure episode. The child did not require emergency medical attention. The supervisor called the child's parents, and they picked up the child.
- A child fell on the outdoor playground/structure and sustained a cut that required a few stitches.
- A child tripped while running and chipped a tooth.
- A child ingested a non-toxic substance (for example, playdough).

Category 4 - Missing or Temporarily Unsupervised Child(ren)

Definition: An incident where a child who is receiving child care at the child care premises or child care centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised. If a child goes missing while getting child care at the child care centre, this must be reported as a Serious Occurrence whether the child was found or is still missing. This is why CCLS has two sub-categories of Category 4 serious occurrences:

1) Child found; and
2) Child still missing

Examples of Category 4 That Must be Reported as a Serious Occurrence:

1) Missing – Child found:

- A child was left alone on the outdoor premises at the end of outdoor play and was later located.

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- A child was not met by the child care staff when getting off a school bus to attend a child care program and was located before time of reporting.
- During transition time, a child was left in a room unattended as the staff and children went outside. Child was found by another staff member.
- A child left the child care premises and walked home. The child was greeted by the parents/guardian at home.

2) Missing – Child still missing:

- A child left the child care premises. The child care staff did not notice and the child's whereabouts are unknown.

Examples of Category 4 That Would Not Be Reported as a Serious Occurrence:

- A parent picked up their child early from school and did not inform the child care centre staff. The staff called the parent and was able to confirm that the child was with the parent.
- An expected child did not get off the bus after school. The staff member called the parent and found out that the parent had picked the child up from school.
- A child went missing while in the care of their parent.

Category 5 - Unplanned Disruption of Service

Definition: An unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a child care centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving child care.

Unplanned disruption of service may involve program closure, relocation (not including a planned temporary relocation), immediate evacuation, prohibition to enter the premises and /or restrictions placed on people coming and going into the child care centre (i.e. when there is a lockdown, or an outbreak of a communicable disease).

CCLS has these sub-categories of category 5 Serious Occurrence:

1) fire,
2) flood,
3) gas leak,
4) detection of carbon monoxide,
5) outbreak,
6) lockdown,
7) other emergency relocation or temporary closure.
8) Public Health ordered closure.

The following provides some examples of what would and would not be considered a serious occurrence under this category.

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Examples of Category 5 That Must be Reported as a Serious Occurrence:

- A fire caused an emergency relocation or closure of a child care centre.
- A fire occurred at a home child care premises on the weekend when no children were present. The program is closed until repairs are completed or until air quality is tested.
- There was a gas leak at a child care centre (that occurred before/during/after operational hours).
- Carbon monoxide was detected at a child care centre, staff and children had to evacuate.
- The local medical officer of health declared an outbreak of a contagious disease which caused closure of a room or the entire child care centre and child care cannot be provided for some or all children.
- There is a lockdown at a child care centre due to a threat inside the building that restricts movement within the child care centre and results in a disruption in service.

Examples of Category 5 That Would Not Be Reported as a Serious Occurrence:

- The program does not open or must close due to extreme weather conditions (such as because of a significant snow storm).
- A planned temporary relocation for the licensed site (such as resulting from labour disruption and the child care centre decided to relocate to continue operation of child care centre).
- A boil water advisory was in effect.
- A fire alarm was activated, the child care centre evacuated and fire services determined that there was no danger (in other words, it was a false alarm because someone pulled the fire alarm).
- The local medical officer of health declared an outbreak and has put restrictions on the program (for example, directing the licensee to discontinue all sensory play).
- There was a “hold and secure” situation at the child care centre.

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