

Today Tomorrow Learning Society

TNTLS Child Care Operations During the Covid-19 Pandemic

POLICY

- Care will be provided for Tier 1 workers who communicate individually in writing their schedule of care needs.
- Children cannot attend more than one childcare facility at one time.
- Care providers cannot work at more than one facility at one time.
- Access Control: Parent/caregivers and visitors must not enter the childcare. Only childcare workers and authorized SD71 Maintenance or Operations staff may enter. In all cases authorized Maintenance and /or Operations staff must thoroughly sanitize hands prior to entering the childcare area and must wear a single use surgical mask or a fit tested N95 Respirator if entering while the childcare is occupied.
- Registration forms must be complete for all children, including up to date emergency contact numbers should the child become ill while at the center.
- A plan is in place for replacement of educators who become sick during their shift. An additional educator will be on site to ensure that ratios are met in accordance to the Child Care Regulations if an educator needs to leave due to illness.
- Responsive adherence to wellness policies and ‘pick up if sick’ policies that are currently in place.
- Assure families that guiding and caring policies remain firmly in place ie. an infant will be held and physically comforted.
- Staffing levels in childcare will be such that a symptomatic child can be isolated and supervised without compromising minimum required supervision ratios.

Prevention Measures

We will continue to follow applicable health and safety legislation to ensure the safety and health and well-being of children. This includes all standards within The Community Child Care Standards Act and Child Care Licensing Regulations in accordance with VIHA.

The safety and wellness of staff and children is paramount, so effective immediately, the following modifications are being made to current policy and practice requirements. These instructions will be adapted as guidance to British Columbians evolves.

The staff and the children in care will take actions to limit the spread of COVID-19. Some of these are already part of the quality care provided through our programs. However, special attention will be paid to ensure additional measures are followed at this time.

Daily Screening

A designated staff member for each individual child will take the temperature of each child daily before they enter the center using a no-touch thermometer.

Symptoms staff will look for include: • fever (anything 38 degrees or above) • cough • shortness of breath • sore throat • runny nose • nasal congestion • headache • a general feeling of being unwell. *(Childcare providers will exercise judgment. For example, children who are crying can exhibit a runny nose.)*

Teachers will utilize the screening questions in the *Risk Assessment Screening Questionnaire* daily for each child before families drop off to support staff and the families they care for and maintain a healthy environment. Symptoms will be assessed on a case by case basis. Parents may be asked to have their child tested for Covid 19.

Contracted childcare staff must also complete and document daily health checks. Results must be documented and retained. Staff must in all cases use the prescribed SD71 Health Check form. No-touch thermometers must be used to take temperature.

No person who has a temperature greater than 38 deg c may enter/occupy the childcare area. Symptoms will be reviewed at check in.

Parents will not enter the center, rather they will “hand-off” the child outside in the designated drop-off area. The staff member will sign the children in with direction on pick-up details provided by the parent.

If parents are dropping off and they see another family dropping off at the same time, please remain in your vehicle with your child until the other family has left the centre and returned to their vehicle, only then may you enter the designated space outside the centre in the fenced area for drop off.

Social Distancing

It is important to note that social distancing advice is meant for interactions among colleagues, strangers and adults, etc. When working in a childcare setting:

- * Children with no symptoms should continue to be treated as you typically would care for a child.
- * Where possible, arrange spaces to encourage more separation. For example, spacing children to avoid close contact during meal and nap times and assigning a designated chair and table for each child.
- * Remember that young children need easy to understand visual prompts. For example, use tape on the floor, hoops, mats or other items that can mark off personal space. Another idea is to organize play activities with a visual cue about how many children should be in that area. For (example, two chairs next to an activity with markers or numbers taped to the floor.).

Wash your hands with soap and water frequently and when you come into close physical contact with a child (e.g., soothing a crying child, changing diapers or helping with washroom routines). Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Hygiene

Six steps to proper handwashing:

1. Wet hands with warm running water.
2. Apply a small amount of liquid soap. Antibacterial soap is not required.
3. Rub hands together **for at least 20 seconds** (sing the ABC's). Rub palms, backs of hands, between fingers and under nails and creating a lather.
4. Rinse off all soap with running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.
6. Discard the used towel in the waste container.

Children should wash their hands...

- When they arrive at the centre and before they go home
- Before eating and drinking
- After a diaper change, using the toilet
- After playing outside
- After sneezing or coughing into hands
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Childcare staff should wash hands...

- When they arrive at the centre and before they go home
- Before handling food, preparing bottles or feeding children
- Between handling raw and cooked food – cross contamination is a risk
- Before and after giving or applying medication or ointment to a child or self
- After changing diapers, assisting a child to use the toilet, using the toilet
- After contact with body fluids (runny noses, spit, vomit, blood)
- After cleaning tasks
- After removing gloves
- After handling garbage
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty:
 - Childcare staff should help young children to ensure handwashing is done correctly.
 - If soap and water is not readily available staff may use hand sanitizer to disinfect their hands.
 - Gloves are not recommended; good handwashing and sanitization practices are.

Cough and sneeze etiquette

Cough and sneeze into your arm or tissue. If using a tissue, wash hands afterward and immediately dispose of the tissue.

Fever or coughing

If a child or staff member starts showing symptoms of what could be influenza or COVID-19, it is important to:

- Contact the child's parent or caregiver to come and pick them up right away.

- The staff room is our separate and supervised area where you can promptly separate a child from others until their parent or caregiver can come and pick them up.
- Any staff showing symptoms should go home right away.
- Continue to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene such as coughing in elbows instead of hands and throwing tissues out immediately after use.
- Do a thorough cleaning of the space once the child has been picked up.

The use of masks

- Masks are not recommended for children. In young children in particular, masks can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/common-questions>
- All childcare workers have access to surgical masks to wear as needed if they have contact with children or staff exhibiting symptoms.

Keep clean

Do not touch your face, particularly your eyes, nose and mouth.

If you're ill – stay at home

Within childcare settings, children and staff will often have influenza or other respiratory viruses with symptoms similar to COVID-19 (i.e., influenza). For this reason all children who are ill with fever, influenza or infectious respiratory symptoms, unusual stool or rash need to stay home. We request that children and staff with these symptoms receive testing for covid 19. If test results are positive they are required to stay home and self isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms. Once they show no signs or symptoms the child may return to childcare. If test for COVID 19 is negative, then we refer to our original health policy for guidelines on returning to care.

Daily Operations /Specifics for Providing Group Child Care during a Pandemic:

- The centre will be operating with enhanced ratios. The number of children in each program will gradually increase over time at dependant on circumstances. Ratios are at the discretion of the manager in keeping with licencing regulations
- An additional staff not included in ratio is present to allow for potential isolation of a sick child, replacement staff, and to support enhanced cleaning practices.
- For both 3 to 5 and infant/toddler programs there should be three staff on site at all times. Two can care for the children by splitting them up into small groups and “social distancing” each group.
- One staff member shall be responsible for constantly cleaning – toys, surfaces, bathrooms after each use. They will act as emergency carer should a staff member become ill while at work.
- All staff members will practice safe social distancing with each other by tending only to their assigned group of children.
- Childcare staff will implement ongoing cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas throughout the day both as a routine practice and on an as needed basis.

- Space requirements are based on an allowance of 6 ft of distance around *everyone* in the centre (whereas licensing space requirements are calculated based only on children occupancy.)
- Each classroom will be deep cleaned at night:
 - Custodial staff must clean the childcare thoroughly every evening after the childcare is closed.
 - Custodians must complete and document daily health check lists.
 - Custodians must wear a surgical mask or fit tested N95 mask whenever they are in an occupied childcare space.
 - Custodians will follow standardized “enhanced cleaning procedures” as directed by the SD71 Custodial Manager. See SD71 Protocols Appendix E.
 - Custodians will use “wet mop methods” or “backpack” HEPA vacuuming only. No dry sweeping.
- In our licensing requirements (Section 22), programs have plans in place to address ANY emergency; this plan should be referred to at current time.

All areas used for childcare operations have:

- Good ventilation that meets or exceeds Worksafe BC standards. CO2 levels must be maintained as near to outdoor levels as practicable and must not at any time exceed 1000 ppm. Good ventilation reduces the potential for COVID-19 transmission.
- An adjacent separate room with door to isolate a child who presents symptoms of COVID-19.
- Conveniently located, hand sanitizers stations.
- A pump bottle of hand sanitizer and tissues located within easy reach and in direct proximity to each commonly used entrance and exit to the childcare.
- Boxes of tissues strategically located in the room to provide ready access. Boxes of tissues are also available outside both in the yard and on outings.
- A hand washing sink with soap and towel supplies checked twice daily.

Sick Children

Any child exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms must be isolated from others and supervised in a separate room with a door. Parents / caregivers must be notified and advised to pick-up the child immediately. Staff supervising symptomatic children must use strict hand washing techniques and wear a surgical mask or fit tested N95 respirator (fit testing and masks available, contact safety@sd71.bc.ca).

Except for the designated Supervisor, there must be no access to the seclusion room during isolation. There must be no access to the room after child pick-up until terminal cleaning has been affected by custodial staff. The isolation room must be terminal cleaned before reuse. See Appendix F of SD71 protocols.

Staff supervising a sick child must disinfect touch points with a disposable disinfectant wipe (available from SD71 contact safety@sd71.bc.ca) or hand sanitizer and paper towels then properly

don respirator and thoroughly sanitize hands before leaving the room used for isolating the sick child.

Access to sanitation supplies

- Follow the proper and appropriate use of masks
: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

Hazardous Materials

- All disinfectants, detergents, hand sanitizers will be safely stored out of reach of children.
- Washing with soap and water is the preferred method of cleaning a child's hands and hand sanitizers will only be with children under extenuating circumstances.
- All chemicals will be properly labelled in accordance with WHMIS requirements.

Child Care Materials:

- Toys and art supplies are cleaned after each use
- Toys will be used once and then taken out of rotation to be cleaned, no sensory bin items will be used at this time; such as playdough or unless it is used specifically for an individual child and then thrown away after use; as these items cannot be easily disinfected.
- We will not be providing any fabric material items such as dress-up clothes, pillows, stuffies, etc.
- Only a limited number of toys will be brought out each day and all toys indoor and out will be cleaned after being used, and then placed in prescribed containers supplied by SD71 and sanitized again at the end of everyday, by SD71 cleaners using an electrostatic sprayer.
- As needed, we will develop specific plans for children requiring additional support.
- We will increase children's opportunity for outside play, while ensuring that children do not access public playground structures.

Meal Times:

- No food sharing.
- No food preparation in the Childcare area. Other than fresh fruits and vegetables, client provided or pre-packaged commercial food items only.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables with soap and cold water then rinse before consuming.
- Place all food items in a designated, delineated and freshly sanitized tabletop / countertop area labelled "Incoming Food" upon arrival.
- The exterior packaging on all individualized food items must be wiped with alcohol disinfectant and then placed in a designated, delineated and freshly sanitized "Food - Packaging Sanitized" clean area and allowed to sit 10 minutes before being opened.



Consideration for Families:

Parents will provide lunches and snacks, in plastic containers. Food is not to be shared. Lunch kits are sprayed with sanitizer when they enter the building.

If your child has a special cuddly for naptimes that stays at the centre it will be washed regularly with the children's bedding. If you are wanting to bring a comfort item back and forth between home and daycare please wash it before it comes to daycare and bring it in a plastic bag. Staff will place their cuddly back in the bag after nap to go home.

Early Childhood Educator of BC Practice and Policy Guidelines for Educators:

Day-to-day care during COVID-19

Reassurance

Provide reassurance to children and youth about their personal safety and health. Telling children that it is okay to be concerned is comforting. Reassure them about their safety and explain there are many things they can do to stay healthy. (see day to day prevention above).

Listen to Children

Children want to be heard. They do not need detailed information about events, but they do need to talk about their feelings.

Let them know they can ask questions. Answer questions honestly, but make sure that the information is suitable for their age level. If you do not know the answers to their questions, it is okay to say so and together look for resources that can answer their questions.

Remember children are often listening when you talk to others about COVID-19. Staff should consider this and minimize discussions of COVID-19 that are not related to the childcare setting.

Staff should be mindful of how children share information in less supervised settings (e.g. during outdoor play, before and after school, lunch and snack times). In these settings, children can become misinformed. It is important for staff to correct this misinformation as they become aware of it.

Maintain activities: Maintaining familiar activities and routines will reinforce the sense of security of children. While outings to social gatherings are discouraged, and prohibited for gatherings of more than 10 people, getting outdoors for walks or to the park (avoiding any play structures) with the children are generally safe activities. Remember to have everyone wash their hands when they re-enter the centre.

As every childcare provider knows, play is a priority – it promotes physical and mental health and development – and gives kids an outlet for their energy, concerns and emotions. The current situation presents many challenges for group play but can also be a source of creativity. Spread children out as much as possible with small groups in different rooms, or have a group outside while another is inside, as another way to encourage physical distance.

Consider the equipment and play materials. Conduct an assessment of play materials currently available and remove those that are harder to clean and sanitize.

Keep black plastic buckets close by for items to be deposited when they need to be cleaned.

Consider activities where children can do something to learn about and support all the people working to keep others safe and healthy:

Talk about people in their neighbourhood or community and the role they are playing (e.g., mail carriers and grocery clerks, doctors and nurses).

Young children could create artwork to post in windows to say thank you to health care workers and paramedics, etc.

Older children could write a thank you song or a short play, then videotape a performance to send to essential workers

Children could connect virtually with children at another centre to perform their songs for each other or perhaps collaborate on something.

Depending on the age of the children in the centre, they will have ideas and suggestions.

Discuss the concept of social distance, using a visual such as a string. Brainstorm with them, asking for their ideas in terms of coming up with about ways they can play, and activities they think will allow an appropriate distance. Ask them about some of the typical experiences that are part of their typical day (e.g., circle time and snack), or areas in the playroom (e.g., housekeeping or block areas). Give them scenarios - "How could you play in the block area" – and use the string to try out their ideas.

Government Action during COVID19- Provincial Information Bulletin April 6,2020

B.C. taking further action to support essential service providers during pandemic:

Government is taking steps to protect those providing essential services by ensuring they cannot be held liable for damages caused by exposure to COVID-19 while continuing to operate, so long

as they are complying with orders from the provincial health officer and other authorities. The order is being introduced because a number of essential service business owners identified challenges with their insurance as a result of the pandemic. The changes government is implementing are intended to assist with some of these concerns. For example, a child care provider will not be liable for a child in their care or a family member being exposed to COVID-19, so long as they are following established protocols on how to prevent the spread of the virus, like proper handwashing, regular cleaning and disinfecting and identifying children who are sick. Essential service providers who are not compliant with respective authorities or who are grossly negligent will not receive protection under the order and will be held liable for damages. The order only applies to situations related to COVID-19 and will remain in effect for as long as the state of emergency remains in place. Additionally, it will continue to protect essential service providers until any relevant limitation periods have expired. The Province, in consultation with Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, has defined the essential services British Columbians rely on in their daily lives in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery. This is distinct from essential service designations under the Province's Labour Relations Code.