

COVID-19 Safety Plan

YMCA of Greater Vancouver – Early Years and Kids Clubs

What is COVID-19?

In late 2019, a novel coronavirus is believed to have crossed from animals to people. It has spread quickly between people around the world. COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) primarily targets people ages 70 or older, especially those with significant co-morbidities, such as diabetes, cardio-vascular disease, etc. People may experience a range of symptoms, but the most common are fever and cough. Most people who get sick will experience relatively minor symptoms and recover fully.

As this is a new virus, there are many unknowns about transmissibility, treatment and prevention methods. However, there is a body of evidence from existing respiratory diseases and previous pandemics to provide guidance, which will be modified as new evidence emerges. The virus is believed to be primarily transmitted by passing from person to person in the form of droplets expelled from symptomatic people to others, either directly or onto hands which then touch the person's mucous membranes (e.g. mouth, nose, eyes). Vaccinations have been shown to be highly effective in mitigating the spread and effect of COVID-19.

The main references for this plan are the current guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control including "[Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings](#)", "[Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)" BC's COVID-19 [self-assessment tool](#), BC's COVID-19 [K-12 self check tool](#), as well as ongoing interactions with Dr. Patricia Daly (Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health) and Child Care Licensing.

A copy of our plan is posted to www.gv.ymca.ca and is available at each one of our centres.

Mitigating the spread of COVID-19

Public health has mandated several approaches to slowing the spread of COVID-19.

1. Everyone entering a facility is to complete a health declaration, and anyone who is experiencing symptoms (as per BC Centre for Disease guidance for licensed child care), or who has been asked to self-isolate is expected to stay home, and follow current guidance from public health.
2. Respiratory and personal hygiene
3. Physical distancing as well as other practices such as limiting unnecessary program access, limiting unnecessary physical and social interaction, as appropriate
4. Cleaning and disinfecting, including shared, "high-touch" surfaces
5. Wearing of a cloth, [non-medical face mask](#), by anyone aged 9 (grade 4) or older while indoors (see exceptions for Early Years)

Staying home if symptomatic

All people wishing to enter a child care centre (e.g. staff, children, participants, contractors, consultants) must complete a daily health declaration. Anyone who is currently symptomatic or is under an order to self-isolate (e.g. positive COVID-19 test, close contact with a person confirmed to have COVID-19, recent out of country travel) or are awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test, is not to remain in the centre.

Parents/caregivers are not allowed to enter child care centres at this time, and sign-in and sign-out is done outside the program area. Parents are expected to follow public health guidance and orders, including physical distancing, observing posted occupancy limits and wearing non-medical masks while indoors. In keeping with BC Centre for Disease Control recommendations, children’s temperatures will not be routinely taken.

Staff who meet any of the exclusion criteria will be asked to not attend work, and their Manager and/or Human Resources advisor will be contacted.

Anyone who is observed with symptoms (e.g. cough) or reports feeling unwell (e.g. fever), will be asked to immediately leave the facility. Parents/caregivers will be called and asked to pick up their child as soon as possible and advised to follow the public health guidelines which may include completing the K-12 on-line self-check tool, contacting 811 or staying away for 24 hours after the symptoms appeared. If anyone needs to remain in the facility while awaiting transportation, they will be offered a non-medical mask and directed to a pre-designated area to wait. The supervisor/manager for the program is to be notified, as soon as possible.

Anyone who has been asked to leave a program because they were symptomatic cannot return to the program until they have passed the clearance criteria, which could include receiving a negative test, being cleared by a medical professional or their symptoms appropriately resolved.

Respiratory and Personal Hygiene

Hand washing with soap and warm water is the preferred method of hand hygiene. Each child care centre has an adequate number of sinks and supplies, for both staff and children. Teaching proper hand-washing is already part of child care programming. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available at the sign-in table. Staff and children will be given adequate opportunity to wash their hands throughout the day including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After entering or leaving the facility, including going outside or playing with difficult to clean play objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After cleaning or removing garbage
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After using the washroom/changing diapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before applying and after removing gloves
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After sneezing into one’s hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whenever hands get soiled
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before and after eating or preparing food	

Everyone in a child care centre is reminded to cover their coughs, either by coughing into their elbow, or into a tissue, immediately discarding it and washing their hands. Children are not to assist with food preparation. Food will be served in individual portions on personal dishware. Food and drink sharing is discouraged, as always. Dishes are washed using the 3-step method (clean, rinse, sanitize) or in the program's dishwasher.

Gloves are to be worn while diapering children.

Wearing of Non-Medical Masks

Kids Club staff and children who are in grades 4-12 are required to wear a non-medical mask while indoors. Children in Kids Clubs in Kindergarten to grade 3 are encouraged to wear a non-medical mask.

Early Years staff must wear a non-medical mask when in indoor public areas where they might be within 2 metres of other adults, such as lunch rooms (when not eating), hallways, sign-in area. Wearing a mask while in programming is optional for Early Years staff.

People are exempted from wearing a mask if:

- They cannot tolerate wearing a mask (for health, psychological, behavioural reasons)
- They cannot put on or remove a mask by themselves
- The mask is temporarily removed for the purposes of identification or communication
- The mask is temporarily removed for an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask
- The person is eating or drinking
- The person is physically separated by a barrier

There is no requirement to wear a mask outdoors.

Risk of transmission of COVID-19 from close contact (a.k.a. physical/social distancing)

BC's Medical Health Officer has asked that people try to keep 2 metres/6'7" from other people whenever possible. This is a recommendation, not an order, as there are situations when people are going to be in close proximity with each other for short periods of time.

Some strategies that will be employed to maintain physical distancing:

- Limiting the number of people on site (e.g. parents/caregivers, contractors, deliveries)
- Conversations between staff and parents should happen outside the program space where privacy and distancing can be maintained
- Adults will physically distance wherever possible
- Avoiding close greetings like handshakes with parents/guardians, or side hugs/high fives with the children
- Small group activities will continue, with children interacting with a limited number of staff
- Children will spend more time outside
- Activities will be arranged to encourage individual play
- Eating areas will be arranged with more room between tables and fewer children at each table

First Aid

Usual first aid precautions apply, but staff should attempt to take a person's history from a distance, have the person assist with the assessment and even perform much of their own first aid, if possible. Any treatments or assessments that have to be done in close proximity will be kept to a minimum with both parties wearing a non-medical mask (located in first aid kits).

Cleaning and disinfecting, including shared "high-touch" surfaces

Surface contamination is not believed to be a significant source of COVID-19 transmission. However regular cleaning is seen as a good practice to reduce the risk. Household bleach, diluted for routine cleaning at 100:1 (e.g. 1L of water to 10ml/2 teaspoons of bleach) is sufficient to kill a coronavirus. For other body fluid contamination (e.g. blood, vomit, feces) a concentrated mix at 10:1 (e.g. 1L of water to 100ml/20 teaspoons of bleach) shall be used. The Daily Cleaning Checklist in place at each child care centre outlines areas which require regular or repeated cleaning.

The BC Centre for Disease Control recommends that cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces should occur once per day, and that high touch areas should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day. Eating areas should be properly cleaned after each person finishes eating.

Toys and play activities which are difficult to clean and sanitize (e.g. plush toys, sand tables) can be used, provided children wash their hands after finishing play, and before moving to another activity.

Bus transportation

The YMCA-operated bus pickup services will continue under the following conditions:

1. Pre-screening for COVID-19 symptoms will not be conducted, as children will have been screened at the program/school ahead of boarding the bus.
2. As much as possible, the bus windows will be opened ahead of children boarding, subject to weather conditions and any behavioural concerns. They will remain open for the duration of the trip.
3. Children and staff will be asked to use hand sanitizer ahead of boarding the bus (either while leaving the program/school or at the bus)
4. Children will only be allowed to board the bus when all children have arrived, to minimize time spent on board.
5. The bus will be loaded from the back. Children will be spaced as much as possible.
6. Masks required for children and staff, except for the bus driver, while driving.
7. After each trip the bus will be sanitized, focusing on high touch areas (e.g. handles, seats, steering wheel (if different drivers might be used))
8. Children and staff will sanitize their hands upon entry to their program/school.

Site Rules (applies to shared spaces such as schools, malls, office complexes)

Some sites may have additional rules that go above and beyond what is in this plan. This may include limiting access to specific areas or equipment, maintaining cohorts of participants, or a request to disclose information about possible exposures. While we will strive to work with the site on these issues, we cannot violate the terms of our service/property agreement, privacy legislation, Child Care Licensing, public health recommendations, or agree to requests which unreasonably impact our operations. When asked, we will inform affected people about these site-specific policies, but we will not take a role in enforcing them. Staff are to forward any notifications about changes in site practices to their manager.

Privacy

Medical information related to COVID-19 is considered personal information which is to be kept confidential and will be shared on a “need to know” basis. Details about COVID-19 vaccination status, testing, symptoms, absences from programming and possible exposures of staff, children and families are not to be shared, except to program or HR managers, where that information needs to be assessed for operational purposes. Broader disclosure will be done with the advice of the applicable Health Authority and under the direction of the Senior Leadership Team. Public Health is solely responsible for contact tracing, and the role of the YMCA is to provide details to assist them in that undertaking.

Staff Training and Communication

Regular meetings are held with site leaders, and with individual teams to discuss new practices, hear concerns and answer questions.

Periodic emails go out from Human Resources, the CEO and the VP of Child, Youth and Family Programs advising staff of new information. Communication to staff and participant parents/caregivers is done in consultation with the VP of Marketing and Communications.

Stakeholder communication will be guided by best practices, transparency, the YMCA’s values and our mission as a health-based organization trusted by the public.

All staff, leads, supervisors and managers have access to a Risk Management team who can answer questions, research best practices and provide in-person responses.