

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 concerning are fever, cough, loss of taste and difficulty breathing. 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 negative health effects for those infected with 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. Vaccination
2. Everyone entering a facility is to attest to their health and anyone who is experiencing symptoms (as per BC Centre for Disease Control), or who has been asked to self-isolate is expected to follow public health guidance.
3. Respiratory and personal hygiene practices (e.g. hand washing, covering coughs)
4. Ensuring spaces have functioning ventilation
5. Limiting physical closeness, unnecessary physical interaction and access to program spaces.
6. Cleaning and disinfecting, including "high-touch" surfaces
7. Wearing of a cloth, [non-medical face mask](#), by all adults working in child care settings and all children aged 5 and older, while indoors.
8. Closing programs where there is widespread transmission of COVID-19 or staff shortages due to staff following public health guidelines

Vaccination

The YMCA of Greater Vancouver has mandated that all staff be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Anyone who has a legitimate exemption from this policy may continue to work, provided they are tested for COVID-19, at least once per week.

Staying home if symptomatic

All people entering a child care centre (e.g. staff, children, participants, contractors, consultants, volunteers) must attest to their health every day. This is part of the sign-in process for children. Anyone who is symptomatic or is under an order to self-isolate (e.g. positive COVID-19 test (or any type), 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. Sign-in sheets will be kept for at least 45 days.

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 keeping their children home, in accordance with any symptoms of concern, and wearing non-medical masks while indoors.

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.

The current list of COVID-19 symptoms of concern are posted at the sign-in table and in staff areas, including steps to take if someone is experiencing one or more symptoms. This may include being asked to leave the program, to seek testing and/or to stay away until symptoms have satisfactorily resolved.

If anyone needs to remain in the program 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.

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 preparing or eating 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.

Adequate Ventilation

Each licensed child care space has adequate ventilation which meets the BC building code. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems need to be inspected and maintained periodically to ensure that the system is providing adequate fresh air as well as regulating heating, cooling and humidity. Staff are to relay any concerns about a building's ventilation to Facilities, their property manager, or the risk team.

Risk of transmission of COVID-19 from close contact

Some strategies that will be employed to maintain physical distancing while indoors:

- Limiting the number of people on site (e.g. parents/caregivers, contractors)
- Conversations between staff and parents should happen outside the program space where privacy and distancing can be maintained
- Adults will try to maintain 2 metres (6.5 feet) from each other, including when eating or meeting. Limits on room and elevator capacity will be posted.
- 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 time outside

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. Non-medical masks are located in the 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 200 ppm (e.g. 1L of water to 5 ml/1 teaspoon) is sufficient to kill a coronavirus, including on food contact surfaces. Rinsing with clean water is not required. 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 and Weekly Cleaning Checklist in place at each child care centre outlines areas which require cleaning.

The BC Centre for Disease Control recommends that cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces should occur once 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.

Wearing of Non-Medical Masks

All Kids Club and Early Years staff, as well as any children aged 5 and older are required to wear a non-medical mask, while indoors.

People are exempted from wearing a mask if:

- They cannot tolerate wearing a mask (for health, psychological, behavioural reasons) – a doctor’s note may be required.
- 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.

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.

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.

Program Closures and Exposure Notifications

Staff and individual families are to be notified if there is a report of someone who may have been infectious with COVID-19 while at the program AND where there is an indication of being a “close contact”. Individuals are to follow the public health guidance on self monitoring, self isolation and vaccination, based on the known information.

There may be other situations where programs have to close because of an outbreak (as determined by child care licensing, staff shortages from following public health guidance or because of closures to the buildings where the programs are housed (e.g. schools).

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 providing direction related to contact tracing. In some cases, this puts the onus for contact tracing on the person who gets COVID-19. The role of the YMCA is to provide assistance to either public health or that individual to fulfill that task, as far as the law allows.

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 Senior Leadership 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-focused 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.