

Public Health Guidance: Enhanced measures at Yukon child care facilities during the COVID-19 crisis



Yukon Communicable Disease Control (YCDC) and Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health are working diligently to ensure that essential services throughout Yukon continue to offer the key services that support our society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The health and safety of licensed child care staff and children are of utmost importance. Child care centres and day homes also provide a very important service to Yukon families. During this time it is critical to maintain sufficient services to support essential service workers and the health and well-being of vulnerable children and families.

We have created the following list of public health measures to assist our centres and day homes in remaining open, to help maintain a safe and healthy environment and to minimize the risk of COVID-19 in Yukon.

Occupancy

Please limit children attending your program as much as possible, and keep children together in small groups that are consistent throughout the week when they are in attendance.

For licensed child care centres:

- Children should be limited by size and grouping. Children enrolled should be in small groups of 2 to 5 children (depending on ratio and age of child) with a single educator. This is the main method to reduce spreading infection, and it is critical to maintain this.
- Teach safe spacing (social distancing, keeping two meters of separation) and encouraging activities that encourage more distancing than normal. We recognize that safe spacing is not always easy and/or realistic to maintain with very young children, but teaching this is important.
- Use separate toys/objects for children as much as possible.
- Day homes can operate with a maximum of 10 people, including staff and children.
- Day care centres can operate with up to half of usual occupancy to a maximum of 30 people, whichever is greater as long as:
 - Groups of children in centres are in separated rooms and kept in smaller groups of maximum of 10 total people per room (including staff).
 - Children are not allowed to congregate in groups larger than their grouping.

Note: the licensing requirement for child/staff ratios must be maintained at all times.

Illness

Any child, staff or parent/guardian who is sick is not permitted to enter the facility, even if the symptoms are mild. Symptoms to look for include, but are not limited to, fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat or feeling unwell.

If a child develops symptoms while at the facility, please take the following actions:

1. Isolate the child in a separate room.
If a separate room is not available at that time, keep the child at least two metres away from other children. Educators should be mindful of hand washing and avoid contact with the child's respiratory secretions.
2. Notify the parents/guardians to come and pick up the child immediately.
3. All items (toys, bedding, tables, etc.) use by the child should be immediately removed from the reach of any other children and should be sanitized right away.

Each facility is required to identify a plan for self-isolation, including a room with a closed door and designated space to hold a sick child.

Please contact YCDC at (867) 667-8323, if absenteeism is higher than expected level (i.e.>5-10 per cent) determined by the daycare, and it is thought to be due to a communicable disease such as influenza or a gastrointestinal illness.

Screening

Parents/guardians need to conduct screening at home daily, prior to bringing their child to a licensed centre or day home.

Parents/guardians should check their children's temperatures daily before coming to the facility. Parents should be informed at the time of program enrollment or registration that this is the practise and place visible signage (posters) at the facility as a reminder.

For reference, normal temperatures are:

- Mouth: 35.5-37.5°C (95.9-99.5°F)
- Underarm: 36.5-37.5°C (97.7-99.5°F)
- Ear (not recommended in infants): 35.8-38.0°C (96.4-100.4°F)

Parents/guardians must conduct active symptoms screening every morning (see Appendix A). Educators must complete the tool with the parents/guardians each morning when the child is dropped off.

Hand hygiene

All licensed childcare centres and day homes must adhere to the following hand hygiene guidelines.

Programs must engage in frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Teaching children to properly wash hands should be part of the daily curriculum.

Hand washing should be frequent throughout the day and should occur at, but not limited to, the following times:

- At the start of the work day and before going home.
- After using the washroom.
- After each diaper change – both staff and children.
- Before food preparation.
- Before eating or helping to feed infants and children.
- After getting hands dirty.
- After sneezing, coughing or handling dirty tissues.
- After cleaning tasks (staff).
- After all outdoor activities.

Educators should help all children to ensure hand hygiene is performed correctly.

Hand sanitizers (alcohol-based products) are not recommended for use in routine childcare.

Posters about practicing hand hygiene are available here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/reduce-spread-covid-19-wash-your-hands.html>

https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/hss/hss-imgs/hss_sign-handwashing_2020.pdf



Meals and food handling

Encourage parents/guardians to provide meals and snacks for the child.

If a child does not have a home-provided meal for the day, the program may provide food to the child.

If it is not possible for parents/guardians to regularly provide meals or snacks, the following measures are recommended:

- Staff serve food and plates directly to the children
- Remove all shared containers from the dining areas (water/milk pitchers, snack bowls, etc.)
- If using single-service packets of food or condiments, pass it directly to the child rather than letting them self-serve.
- All snacks should be pre-packaged and passed directly to the child.
- Children and visitors are prohibited from entering the kitchen and nourishment areas.
- Children are not allowed to participate in food preparation activities.
- All educators who are handling food must practise diligent hand hygiene and are not to work if symptomatic.

At meal times, children should be served food items that are individually wrapped.

Avoid common food items such as snack bowls.

If possible, children should be encouraged to use utensils for eating, not fingers.

Outdoor activities

Outdoor activities can be continued with the following recommendations in place:

- Private, facility-owned outdoor facilities may remain open for play as long as children are kept in their smaller groups and appropriate social spacing is encouraged.
- All playground and outdoor equipment must be cleaned, sanitized and disinfected between groups to help reduce the transmission of germs.
 - Consider reducing playground material to items that can easily be cleaned, sanitized and disinfected.
- It is recommended not to use public playgrounds or stations, as appropriate infection-prevention measures are not possible to enforce to reduce germ transmission.
- Outdoor walks are encouraged with appropriate social spacing measures in place.

Infection control measures

All programs must follow the territorial regulations regarding cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting:

http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/ccc_regulatory_guidelines.pdf

It is encouraged to clean, sanitize and disinfect common areas and items (such as tables, chairs and toilets) more frequently, at least three to four times a day, as feasible.

Each educator is encouraged to clean and disinfect shared staff items, such as phones, staff bathrooms, etc., at least twice a day.

If a child becomes sick while at the facility, all items used by the child must be cleaned and disinfected.

Any water in play tables should be changed between groups. Please wash and sanitize the basin after each group. All children must wash their hands after the activity is completed and water must be immediately discarded.

Visitors

Only parents/guardians/child care services unit staff are permitted to enter the facility.

All parents/guardians/Child Care Services Unit staff must observe social spacing of two metres from all persons except their own children.

All non-essential visitors and volunteers are not permitted to enter.

Signage

Post signs and other visual cues throughout the facility to remind staff, children and parents/guardians to perform hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene (cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing).

Post signs to remind individuals not to enter if they are sick, even if their symptoms are mild.

COVID-19 posters can be found here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/awareness-resources.html#wb-auto-5>

Social distancing

Social distancing practices are encouraged at home and in the work environment whenever possible. Avoid close greetings such as handshakes and hugs to help reduce the spread of illness.

Posters with additional social distancing measures are available here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/social-distancing.html>

General guidelines

Strict adherence to the Yukon Health and Human Services Childcare Guidelines continues. The guidelines can be found here:

http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/ccc_regulatory_guidelines.pdf

Appendix A: **Daily Screening Questionnaire**

Dear parent or guardian, so we can assess our ability to care for your child today, please fill out this questionnaire to determine if your child can attend today.

1.	Do you, or your child attending today, have any of the following symptoms?	CIRCLE ONE	
	• Fever	YES	NO
	• Cough	YES	NO
	• Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	YES	NO
	• Sore throat	YES	NO
	• Runny nose or congestion	YES	NO
	• Feeling unwell	YES	NO
	• Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea	YES	NO
	• Muscle aches	YES	NO
	• Headache	YES	NO
	• Conjunctivitis	YES	NO
2.	Have you, or anyone in your household, travelled outside of Yukon in the past 14 days?	YES	NO
3.	Have you, or your child(ren) attending today, had close contact (within 2 metres) with someone who has a cough or fever?	YES	NO
4.	Have you, or anyone in your household, been in contact in the last 14 days with someone that is being investigated for or confirmed to have COVID-19?	YES	NO
5.	Have you, or anyone in your household, been instructed to self-isolate?	YES	NO

If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, DO NOT enter at this time.

If you have recently developed any of these symptoms, please call 811 or visit:

<https://service.yukon.ca/en/covid-19-self-assessment/> to do a self-assessment to see if you require testing.

If you have answered “no” to all the above questions, please sign in.

Be sure to practise good hand hygiene (use hand sanitizer or wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds) before entering and leaving the facility.

Our goal is to minimize the risk of illness to you, your children and family and our staff. We thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____