

2022

Bethany Child Care Centre COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN

WORKSAFE BC / BC MINISTRY OF HEALTH / BC CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL

BETHANY CHILD CARE CENTRE | RICHMOND BC

Bethany Child Care Centre

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Understanding our risk

“Based on the current epidemiology of COVID-19 in B.C., and the fact that children are at a much lower risk of developing COVID-19, child care providers are encouraged to remain or re-open, while supporting the health and safety of children and adults. Child care services should adapt as much as possible to implement public health and infection prevention and control measures, including staying home when ill, physical distancing, minimized physical contact, hand hygiene, frequent cleaning and disinfection, as described in this guidance.”

COVID-19 in BC

The most important measure to prevent COVID-19 transmission in the child care settings is to ensure that anyone eligible is fully vaccinated. Cases in the child care settings reflect cases and vaccination rates in that community. While overall the B.C. population is highly immunized, there is significant variation across communities. In particular, many communities currently have immunization rates that are below the provincial average. Immunization offers community protection against COVID-19, including against variants of concern detected in B.C.

COVID-19 is mainly spread by droplets released when people infected with the virus breathes, coughs, sneezes, or talks. COVID-19 can also spread when a person touches a surface or object with the virus on it and then touching their own eyes, nose, or mouth, although this is less likely. Variants spread the same way as the original COVID-19, which means established prevention measures continue to protect against it. As of when this guidance was published, the Omicron variant was the most commonly detected variant in B.C. While the Omicron variant appears to spread more easily, current evidence shows it presents the greatest risk to unvaccinated adults. Currently, it does not appear that the Omicron variant results in a greater risk of serious outcomes for children. Children continue to be at low risk for serious outcomes from COVID-19, including variants of concern detected in B.C.

Nevertheless, as COVID-19 is present in our communities, there will continue to be COVID-19 exposures in child care settings and cases amongst children and staff. Because cases in child care settings reflect those in the community, these are more likely to occur in communities with lower vaccination uptake and during times of higher COVID-19 activity. COVID-19 cases can result in significant disruptions, both for families and communities. For this reason, vaccination of people who are eligible is the most effective measure to prevent COVID-19 infection and transmission.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit the B.C. Centre for Disease Control's (BCCDC) website.

COVID-19 and Children

- COVID-19 virus has a low infection rate in children. In B.C., less than 1% of children and youth tested have been COVID-19 positive. Most children are not at high risk for COVID-19 infection.
- Children under 1 year of age and older children with immune suppression and medical complexity are considered more vulnerable and at higher risk for illness
- Children who are considered more vulnerable can attend child care. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to consult with their health care provider to determine if their child should attend child care if they are uncertain.
- Children and youth typically have much milder symptoms of COVID-19 most often presenting with low-grade fever and a dry cough. GI symptoms are more common over the course of disease, while skin changes and lesions, are less common.
- Many children have asymptomatic disease. However, there is no conclusive evidence that children who are asymptomatic pose a risk to other children or to adults.
- Evidence indicates transmission involving children is primarily limited to household settings, and from COVID-19 positive adults to children. Most cases in children have been linked to a symptomatic household member.
- Clusters and outbreaks involving children and youth are unusual and tend only to occur in areas where there are high levels of community spread.
- Children are not the primary drivers of COVID-19 spread in child care facilities, schools or in community settings. Childcare facility closures have significant negative mental health and socioeconomic impacts on vulnerable children and youth.
- Prevention measures and mitigation strategies involving children and youth must be commensurate with risk.
- For younger children maintaining physical distance is less practical and the focus should be on minimizing physical contact instead.

Reference:

Covid-19 – Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings: BC Centre for Disease Control, BC Ministry of Health, updated December 20th, 2021 (see [Bethany Child Care Centre Documents](#))

The risk in the Bethany Child Care Centre is primarily between adults – Educators, Administrators, Parents and transmission through the children.

- Parents are to remain outside the building or only enter the lobby (depending on the physical layout of the centre)
- Parents are asked to use hand sanitizer on arrival.

- Educators are encouraged to keep appropriate distance between themselves as is practical in delivering child care.
- Common items/tools used in the classroom are to be sanitized on the twice-daily sanitization schedule for all high touch surfaces.
- Administrators will limit their visits to centres as much as practical.

Protocols to reduce the risk

Access to child care facilities

- Administrators, Educators, children, parents and guardians must not enter the workplace if they have symptoms of COVID-19, have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days, or have been identified by public health as a close contact of a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Signage is posted at entrances to all centres reminding people not to enter the site if they have symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- Every Monday parents/guardians will sign a health declaration form. Each day staff will assess children's health visually on arrival and ask parents any health related questions that are applicable.
- Administrators and Educators with symptoms of COVID-19 will be excluded from work, stay home, and self isolate until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious disease, and their symptoms have resolved.
- Parents / Guardians are required to assess their children daily for the presence of symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease prior to drop off.
- Parents / Guardians must keep their children at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, and their symptoms have resolved or stay home for 10 days AND have their symptoms resolved (see Bethany Child Care Centre COVID-19 Return to Care policy).
- If a child becomes ill in care, they will immediately be isolated from the group with an Educator who will wear a mask while with the child until they are picked up.
- At this time, Bethany Child Care Centre is placing strict limits on any visitors to the facility. Anyone requesting access to the centre other than the Licensing Officer must be approved by the Director.
- Bethany will still be open to supporting E.C.E. practicum students after a health and Safety check.

Pick up and drop off

Drop off and pick up should occur outside of the centre or in a designate parent drop off space close to the front door.

- CoVID-19 occupancy signs will designate the number of people in any area to ensure physical distancing is maintained at drop-off and pick-up.
- **Only one parent/guardian may enter the facility.**
- Parents/guardians to unpack lunch items into a plastic bin, that is sanitized daily, and remove the lunch bag.
- Any bedding should be placed in the child's container and all bags from home removed.
- Soft comfort items must be laundered daily.
- Avoid close greetings such as hugs and handshakes.

Hand Hygiene

- Hand washing, hygiene and respiratory protocols are posted.
- Hand hygiene stations are available at the entrance of all centres.
- Children are immediately taken to wash hands on arrival.
- Keep hand sanitizer out of the reach of children and supervise its use.
- Educators will wash their hands regularly throughout the day, including:
 - When they arrive at the centre and before they go home
 - Before and after handling food (raw, cooked or pre-packaged), preparing bottles or feeding children
 - Before and after giving or applying medication or ointment to a child or self
 - After changing diapers
 - After assisting a child to use the toilet
 - After using the toilet » After contact with body fluids (e.g., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood)
 - Before donning and after doffing personal protective equipment
 - After cleaning tasks
 - After handling garbage
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Children will be supported to wash their hands regularly throughout the day, including:
 - When they arrive and before they go home
 - Before and after eating and drinking
 - After a diaper change
 - After using the toilet
 - After playing outside
 - After sneezing or coughing
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty

- All Bethany Child Care Centre Staff and children will be directed to:
 - Cough or sneeze into their elbow sleeve or a tissue.
 - Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.
 - Not touch their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

Physical distancing

- Educators and Administrators should maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from each other when practical. Where this is not possible, for example when transferring a very young child from one worker to another, plan and communicate the work task in advance to ensure that time spent in close proximity is minimized.
- COVID-19 occupancy limits for common areas in centres are posted.
- As often as possible incorporate activities involving books and individual games to encourage physical distancing between children.
- We recognise that it is not always possible or appropriate for Educators to maintain physical distance from children, and between children, when in care. We will adhere to the principle of physical distancing where possible, by:
 - Minimizing the frequency of direct physical contact with children.
 - Forming a number of separate play areas in order to space children apart. Note that children who live in the same home do not need to maintain physical distance from each other.
 - Creating smaller groups or cohorts of children and keeping these groups separate from each other.
 - Minimizing the number of different workers that interact with the same child or group of children.
 - Organizing snack/meal areas to space children apart.
 - Organizing nap areas to space children apart and placing children head-to-toe or toe-to-toe.
 - Including the use of outdoor space for various activities, including snack/meal time, while adhering to physical distancing and hygiene principles.

Cleaning and disinfection

- Remove toys from the centre that have surfaces that are not easily cleaned, such as plush stuffed animals.
- Ask parents and caregivers to only bring personal comfort items (e.g., stuffed animals) if they are clean and laundered each day.
- Remove unnecessary items from the workplace to reduce surfaces that could become contaminated.
- Identify all common areas (e.g., washrooms) and frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, cupboard handles, light switches, faucet handles, tables, chairs, toys). Develop

and implement a cleaning and disinfection schedule and procedures in accordance with the BC CDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document.

- **General cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace should occur at least once a day.**
- **Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day.**
- Toys and objects that children have placed in their mouths should be set aside, for example in a "to be washed" bin, until they are cleaned and disinfected. Toy, objects, and surfaces known to have been in contact with bodily fluids should be cleaned as soon as possible and between uses by different children.
- Clean and disinfect cots and cribs after each use, and launder crib linens between children. If parents are providing their own crib linen, the linens should be laundered and placed in a sealed plastic or washable bag before bringing to the centre. Do not shake the linens.
- Clean and disinfect diapering stations after each use.
- When holding young children, for example when feeding or rocking to sleep, use a blanket or cloth to cover clothing. Change blankets or cloths between children.
- Wash blankets, face cloths, towels, and bibs between uses by different children.
- Empty garbage containers daily at a minimum.
- If an Educator or child leaves the workplace due to symptoms of COVID-19, clean areas those individuals were in, including surfaces they may have touched, immediately upon their departure.
- Maintain an adequate supply of cleaning and disinfection products and materials.

Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

- COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings states that personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves, are not needed beyond those used by staff as part of regular precautions for the hazards normally encountered in their regular course of work.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning body fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine) and when diapering.
- Determine what PPE may be required for workers who are responsible for cleaning and disinfection. Read product labels and Safety Data Sheets to help make this determination.

Non-Medical Masks & Face Coverings (Masks)

Personal protective equipment (including masks) can provide an additional layer of protection to the infection prevention and exposure control measures described above. Masks provide some protection to the wearer and to those around them. The term "mask" in this document means a non-medical mask or face covering.

All adults (including staff, practicum students, volunteers and visitors) child care settings should wear a non-medical mask or face covering (a "mask") at all times while indoors, subject to the following exceptions:

- If the adult is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person;
- If the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the adult wearing it;
- If the adult is eating or drinking;
- If the adult is behind a barrier (e.g., a divider or in a room by themselves); or
- While providing a service where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements are important.

Infants under two years of age should not wear masks as it may make it difficult for them to breathe and may become a choking hazard.

Children attending child care programs in family child care settings may wear a non-medical mask or face covering based on personal or family choice.

To align with requirements in other settings, such as schools, school-aged children attending child care programs in nonfamily child care settings and children attending child care programs in K-12 school settings should wear a non-medical mask or face covering at all times while indoors subject to the following exceptions:

- If the child is unable to wear a mask because they don't tolerate it (for health or behavioural reasons, including health impacts experienced during excessive heat events or poor air quality);
- If the child is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person; 10 • If the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the child wearing it;
- If the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g. actively playing a wind instrument, high-intensity physical activity, etc.);
- If the child is eating or drinking; or
- If the child is behind a barrier (e.g., a divider, a cubicle, or in a room by themselves).

Younger children (i.e. non school-aged children) attending child care programs in non-family child care settings may wear a non-medical mask or face covering based on personal or family choice.

A health care provider's note (e.g. doctor's note) is not required for the above exceptions.

Child care staff should supervise and support children to ensure safe and proper use if masks are worn. Child care providers are encouraged to support mask use by children through positive and inclusive approaches, and not punitive or enforcement activities that exclude students from fully participating in activities or that could result in stigma. Child care providers are also encouraged to ensure there are opportunities throughout the day for children to remove their masks.

Face shields are a form of eye protection for the person wearing it. They may not prevent the spread of droplets from the wearer. Face shields should not be worn in place of masks, except for those communicating using lip-reading, when visual facial cues are essential, or when people may be unable to wear a mask. Clear masks that cover the nose and mouth are another option when visual communication is necessary. Information on non-medical masks is available from the BCCDC website. On December 3, 2021 a [Order of the Provincial Health Officer provided direction regarding Face Coverings.](#)

Meals and snacks

- Do not allow sharing of food or drink by workers or children.
- Do not use self-serve and family-style meal service. Provide snacks and meals directly to children in individual servings.
- Do not use self-serve water dispensers at this time
- Ensure children's water bottles are distanced from each other at all times.
- Educators to refill all water bottles as needed
- Store all food safely in the provided plastic bins or in the fridge as is applicable
- Do not allow children to participate in food preparation.
- Reusable dishware, glasses, and utensils must be cleaned and sanitized after each use.

Other methods to control risk

- Limit sharing of supplies and equipment (e.g., pens, telephone, tablets, computer mouse) between workers.
- Provide adequate amounts of high touch materials, such as art supplies, in order to minimize sharing between children.
- Store children's belongings separately, for example through the use of cubbies.
- Do not allow sharing of soothers, bottles, sippy cups, toothbrushes or other personal items. Label personal items with the child's name to prevent accidental sharing.
- Ensure adequate ventilation and open windows if possible.
- Have children outside wherever possible, including play time, snack time, and for learning activities.

Everyone at Bethany Child Care Centre is dedicated to keeping the Children Healthy and Safe.

Be kind, be calm, be Safe.