

SSCS Childcare Programs Covid-19 Policy

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The BC Ministry of Health maintains that childcare centres can safely care for children if they are following the prescribed health protocols. The risk of introducing COVID-19 into childcare programs is reduced if staff, children and parents/caregivers: self-isolate if required by law or public health, perform a daily health check, stay at home when sick, and call 8-1-1 or use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool to determine if a COVID-19 test is required. Please remember that the Covid-19 pandemic is constantly changing, and our ability to remain open may change without notice; or we may be ordered closed at any time by BC's provincial health officer and/or our licensing officer. Accordingly, please note the following Covid-19 Health and Safety policy, which applies to all staff and children within the SSCS childcare facilities. This policy will be updated as the pandemic evolves.

It is recommended that children have their temperature taken at home before leaving for the childcare program each day **before** entering the facility. If the child has a temperature, they must remain home and follow the health policy below. Typically a child has a fever when his or her oral (mouth) or armpit temperature is 37.5°C (99.7°F) or higher. ***Ear thermometers will not be used*

Staying home when sick and when new symptoms develop:

Staying home when sick is one of the most important ways to reduce the spread of communicable diseases, including COVID-19. This is why it is important for anyone who is sick to stay home. Staff or children who are experiencing symptoms of a previously diagnosed health condition do not need to stay home and should not be required to provide a doctor's note to attend a childcare program. Asymptomatic staff and children may still attend the childcare program if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness. If the household member tests positive for COVID-19, public health will advise on self-isolation and when they may return to the childcare program.

Children and childcare staff should stay at home when new symptoms of illness develop, such as:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Difficult breathing (in small children, this can look like breathing fast or working hard to breathe)
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

For mild symptoms without fever, children and staff members should stay home and monitor symptoms for 24 hours. If symptoms improve and the child/staff member feels well enough, they can return to the childcare facility without further assessment or doctor's note.

If symptoms include fever or difficulty breathing, or if symptoms last for more than 24 hours or get worse, seek a health assessment by calling 8-1-1 or a primary care provider. If a COVID-19 test is recommended as a result of the health assessment, self-isolate while waiting for results.

- If the COVID-19 test is positive, self-isolate and follow the direction of public health.
- If the COVID-19 test is negative, return to the child care facility once well enough to participate.
- If a COVID-19 test is recommended but not done, self-isolate for 10 days after the onset of symptoms and return when feeling well enough to participate.

If you are unsure, call 8-1-1 for advice. See the BCCDC website for more information on when to seek emergency care.

If a COVID-19 test is not recommended, staff and children may return when well enough to participate.

Children and staff should be permitted to return to the child care facility with mild symptoms of illness remaining to ensure staff and children are not kept out of the childcare program for longer than necessary. A doctor's note to confirm the health status of any individual should not be required unless needed to support medical accommodation as per usual practices. All childcare fees are due in full regardless of any absences due to illness or other cause. There are no refunds or make up days for days missed.

If a Child Develops Any New Symptoms of Illness While in a Childcare Setting:

Staff must take the following steps:

1. Immediately separate the symptomatic child from others in a supervised area.
2. Contact the child's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.
3. Where possible, maintain a 2-metre distance from the ill child. If not possible, staff should wear a non-medical mask or face covering if available, and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth.
4. Provide the child tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform hand hygiene.
5. Avoid touching the child's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene.
6. Once the child is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene.
7. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the child was separated and any areas recently used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).

Parents or caregivers MUST pick up their child promptly once notified that their child is ill. When that is not possible then another local contact person must be available.

If a Staff Member Develops Any New Symptoms of Illness While in a Childcare Setting:

Staff should go home as soon as possible.

If unable to leave immediately:

1. Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others.
2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.
3. Use a tissue or non-medical mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up.
4. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).

Additionally, our regular sick policy stands:

Children may not attend SSCS childcare programs while they have any of the following symptoms:

- Infected skin or eyes, or an undiagnosed rash
- Pain – any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- An acute cold with fever, runny nose and eyes, coughing and sore throat
- Difficulty breathing – wheezing or a persistent cough
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Headache and stiff neck – child should see a physician
- Unexplained diarrhea or loose stool combined with nausea, vomiting or abdominal cramps. The child must stay home until he or she has been clear of all symptoms for at least 24 hours.
- Please note if this is Gastro Intestinal (GI) related children must stay home 48 hours after the last symptom.
- Severe itching of body and/or scalp
- Children with known or suspected communicable diseases

Drop-off and Pick up:

Parents will be asked to agree to a statement each morning confirming that their child is symptom free and that their child has not been given acetaminophen or ibuprofen in the last 12 hours. Daily health checks are used to reduce the risk of a person, staff or a child, attending a childcare program when potentially infectious. The SSCS Daily Health Check is attached below. Children that are healthy to attend the program upon completion of the assessment will be directed to wash their hands as soon as they enter into the program.

It is recommended that only childcare staff handle the sign in/out sheet. Pick-up and drop-off of children will be outside the classroom when possible unless there is a need for the parent or caregiver to enter the facility (e.g., very young children). If a parent, caregiver or other visitor must enter the facility, they will be asked to maintain physical distance from staff and other children present and be reminded to practice diligent hand hygiene. They may also be encouraged to wear a mask. Parents and caregivers that are symptomatic must not enter the childcare facility.

Cleaning and Disinfection:

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. SSCS childcare facilities will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document which will be kept on location at each site.

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the facility should occur at least once every 24 hours.
- Frequently-touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice every 24 hours
 - These include door knobs, light switches, faucet handles, table counters, chairs, electronic devices, and toys used by multiple children.
- Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Use common, commercially-available detergents and disinfectant products. Follow the instructions on the label. See the BCCDC Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings guidance for more information.
- Consider limiting the use of frequently-touched items that cannot be easily cleaned (e.g., avoid plush/stuffed toys).
- Empty garbage containers daily, at minimum.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine). Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.
- Clean and disinfect cots or sleeping mats after each use, and launder bed linens between children.
- Clean diapering stations after each use.
- There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution of books or paper based educational resources to children because of COVID-19.

Hand Hygiene:

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water is the single most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Children and staff can pick up germs easily from anything they touch, and can spread those germs to objects, surfaces, food and people. Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene. Parents and staff can teach and reinforce these practices amongst children.

Children should perform hand hygiene:

- When they arrive at the childcare facility and before they go home
- Before and after eating and drinking
- After a diaper change
- After using the toilet
- After playing outside
- After handling pets and animals
- After sneezing or coughing
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Staff should perform hand hygiene:

- Every time they enter or exit the childcare facility/room to avoid spread of germs
- 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)
- After cleaning tasks
- After removing gloves
- After handling garbage
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Physical Distancing

The physical space requirements for licensed childcare settings set out in the Child Care Licensing Regulation mean that facilities have sufficient space to practice physical distancing between staff without reducing the number of children in care at any one time.

Within the childcare facilities, physical distancing should include avoiding physical contact between staff, avoiding unnecessary physical contact between staff and children, minimizing close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions where possible, and encouraging everyone to spread out as much as possible within the space available. It is not necessary to attempt to eliminate close contact between children, recognizing the importance of children's emotional, physical and developmental needs. However; staff should try to encourage children to minimize physical contact with each other.

Personal Protective Equipment:

Personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves are not needed in the childcare program, beyond those used by staff as part of regular precautions for the hazards normally encountered in their regular course of work. They should only be used when all other controls have been fully explored.

There is no evidence to support the use of medical grade, cloth, or homemade masks in childcare programs at this time. Wearing one is a personal choice. It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect. Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine) and when diapering. Remember to wash your hands before wearing, and after removing gloves.

For further information and guidance, please refer to the Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings During the COVID-19 Pandemic

BC Centre for Disease Control – BC Ministry of Health

Updated: September 25, 2020

SSCS Childcare Daily Health Check

The daily health check is used to determine if a child or staff member should attend a childcare program each day. **Remember, if you think your child is ill, please keep them at home**

1. Key Symptoms of Illness: Do you have any of the following new key symptoms?		
Fever	YES	NO
Been given fever reducing medication in the past 12 hours	YES	NO
Chills	YES	NO
Cough or worsening of chronic cough	YES	NO
Breathing difficulties (breathing fast or working hard to breathe)	YES	NO
Loss of sense of smell or taste	YES	NO
Nausea and vomiting	YES	NO
Diarrhea	YES	NO
2. International Travel: Have you returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3. Confirmed Contact Are you a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	YES	NO

If you answered "YES" to two or more of the questions included under 'Key Symptoms of Illness', or you have a fever or difficulty breathing, seek a health assessment. A health assessment includes calling 8-1-1, or a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner. If a health assessment is required, you should not return to the child care setting until COVID-19 has been excluded and your symptoms have improved.

If you answered "YES" to only one of the questions included under 'Key Symptoms of Illness' (excluding fever and difficulty breathing), you should stay home for 24 hours from when the symptom started. If the symptom improves, you may return to a child care facility when you feel well enough. If the symptom persists or worsens, seek a health assessment. A health assessment includes calling 8-1-1, or a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner.

If you answered "YES" to questions 2 or 3, use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine if you should seek testing for COVID-19.

If a COVID-19 test is recommended as a result of the health assessment, self-isolate while waiting for results.

- If the COVID-19 test is positive, self-isolate and follow the direction of public health.
- If the COVID-19 test is negative, return to the child care facility once well enough to participate.
- If a COVID-19 test is recommended but not done, self-isolate for 10 days after the onset of symptoms and return when you or the child are well enough to participate.

If a COVID-19 test is not recommended, staff or children may return when well enough to participate.

A health-care provider note (i.e., a doctor's note) should not be required to confirm the health status of any individual.