
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. We may unexpectedly close due to possible exposures and self-isolation advisories. 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.

This policy reflects the Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance_Child_Care.pdf)

[Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance_Child_Care.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance_Child_Care.pdf). Additionally, Out of

School Care Programs located in school settings will also follow Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools when possible [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf)

[Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf).

Daily Health Checks:

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 their oral (mouth) or armpit temperature is 37.5°C (99.7°F) or higher.

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 will not be required to provide a doctor's note to attend a childcare program. All staff, children and visitors entering the childcare facilities will be required to complete a daily health check and all adults must sign in for contact tracing.

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
- Difficulty 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 may be permitted to return to the childcare facility with mild symptoms remaining and are well enough to participate in the program. If the staff or children (or their parent) indicates that the symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition and are not unusual for that individual, they can continue to attend the program. Further assessment or a note is not required from a health care provider to confirm the health status of any individual unless needed to support medical accommodation as per usual practices.

Please note: 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 SSCS must close a childcare program due to exposure or other cause, fees will be waived.

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, and 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

Each childcare program will have a designated space available where children or staff who are ill can wait comfortably. This space will be safe and separated from others. This can include being in the same room as others, as long as the person experiencing illness is at least 2 meters away from others and wears a mask if they're able to. Younger children must be supervised.

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.

Only childcare staff will 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) but this must first be cleared by childcare staff.

Personal items from home such as drink & food containers, must be labeled with the child's name and washed daily at the end of each day. Comfort items such as toys or stuffed animals are discouraged at this time but parents and caregivers are requested to speak directly with their child's childcare provider for program specifics as necessary.

Visitors:

All visitors entering a childcare program will be limited to those supporting activities that are of benefit to the children's learning and wellbeing. This can include but not limited to; parents, caregivers, health-care providers, volunteers, practicum students, relief staff and/or support staff. Occasionally, maintenance or deliveries may be scheduled during program hours and all visitors will follow the enforced protocols for childcare facilities.

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, be reminded to practice diligent hand hygiene, sign in for contact tracing and agree that they are symptom free. **It is mandatory for all visitors to wear a mask while in the facility and communicating with staff. Parents, caregivers, staff and all visitors that are symptomatic must not enter the childcare facility.**

Ventilation:

The Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings states that outdoor spaces are ideal when weather permits. When possible, SSCS childcare programs will choose to have play time, snacks/meals and learning activities outdoors.

To increase air flow for activities that take place indoors, staff will open windows or doors if weather permits and it doesn't impact the functioning of ventilation systems. All mechanical heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems will be checked regularly to ensure they are working properly.

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 will 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.
- Dress-up clothes and other fabrics/materials should be limited and will be laundered daily.
- Frequently-touched items that cannot be easily cleaned, will be limited to those that support learning, health and development. If harder to clean items are used, everyone will practice hand hygiene before and after use. (e.g. sand, playdough, rice, etc can be used if proper hand hygiene is practiced).
- 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 or laminated and glossy paper-based products such as magazines. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution of books or other paper based educational resources to children because of COVID-19. Due to the low risk of contamination, these items do not need to be cleaned, disinfected or quarantined or for hand hygiene to be practiced before or after use.

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
- Before and after using manipulatives (sand, playdough, etc)
- 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 will try to encourage children to minimize physical contact with each other.

Staff will try to:

- Reduce prolonged face-to-face contact between other staff members, practice physical distancing where possible and wear a mask when physical distancing is not possible.
- Reduce the number of different staff that interact with the same children throughout the day.
- Minimize unnecessary physical contact with children and wear a mask when it is not possible
- Minimize the number of visiting adults that enter the centre, unless that person is providing care or supporting the inclusion of a child in care.
- Organize more activities that encourage individual play and more space between children and staff.
- Encourage children to minimize physical contact with each other.

Personal Protective Equipment (Masks):

Masks can provide an additional layer of protection when more effective prevention and exposure control measures are not feasible. Masks do have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19 but do not prevent the spread on their own. They are not to replace physical distancing and other more effective measures. There must be no crowding or congregating of people, even if masks are worn.

There are times during the day in a childcare facility where the required physical distance cannot be practiced, especially when staff must meet the needs of young children in care.

All SSCS school age program staff, and other adults in the school aged childcare programs, must wear a mask at all times when indoors and interacting with other adults and children except when there is a barrier in place or eating and drinking.

All SSCS preschool age program staff, and other adults in the preschool aged childcare programs, must wear a mask when indoors and interacting with other adults except when there is a barrier in place or eating and drinking. Masks may only provide limited protective value for adult-child interactions in preschool childcare facilities, as there are multiple effective exposure control measures in place and young children are less likely to be infected. **Preschool staff may choose to wear a mask indoors when engaging in prolonged, close interaction with children.** Careful consideration should be given to the potential impact of mask wearing on visual cueing and non-verbal communication with children, as these interactions play an important role in learning and development. For example, preschool staff may choose not to wear a mask when leading a large group time activity.

It is a personal choice for all SSCS childcare staff to wear a mask outside but all prevention and exposure measures should be considered when making that decision. For example, masks are recommended when walking in groups within the community and interacting face-to-face with children or adults in any outdoor setting but may not be necessary when exerting physical activity such as bike riding or running.

Masks are not needed when urgent actions are required to support child safety. Children ages 2-12 years old may wear a mask based on personal or family choice.

Transportation:

Public transportation will not be in use during the pandemic by SSCS childcare programs. However, the school aged camps may hire private buses/vans for special activities. When this occurs, buses/vans used will be cleaned and disinfected according to the guidance provided by the province and Transport Canada.

Drivers will:

- Clean their hands before and after completing trips.
- Follow their company's health & safety protocols.

Children will:

- Clean their hands before and after being in the bus/van

Staff will:

- Clean their hands before and after being on the bus/van
- Wear masks at all times while in the bus/van.

To reduce the number of close, in-person interactions, the following strategies are recommended:

- Use consistent and assigned seating.
- Prioritize children sharing a seat with a member of their household.
- When possible, each child should have their own seat and sit beside the window to increase the amount of space between children.

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: February 12, 2021

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 or worsening symptoms?		
Fever or chills	YES	NO
Been given fever reducing medication in the past 12 hours	YES	NO
Sore throat	YES	NO
Cough or worsening of chronic cough	YES	NO
Breathing difficulties (breathing fast or shortness of breath)	YES	NO
Headache, body aches, extreme fatigue or loss of appetite	YES	NO
Loss of sense of smell or taste	YES	NO
Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea	YES	NO
2. International Travel: Have you returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3. Confirmed Contact Have you been identified by Public Health as a close contact of someone with COVID-19?	YES	NO
4. Self-isolation Have you have been told to isolate by Public Health?	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 you answered "YES" to question 4,** then you should be self-isolating until directed by Public Health.

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.