

Exploring the Puddle

COVID-19 Safety Plan



UPDATED OCTOBER 2020

What we know about COVID-19 in children (source: BC Centre for Disease Control)

- Children are at a low risk of catching and spreading COVID-19. In BC, less than 1% of children and youth have tested positive for COVID-19.
- Children and youth typically have much milder symptoms of COVID-19. They most often present with low-grade fever and a dry cough. Some may also experience nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea.
- Clusters and outbreaks involving children and youth are unusual and tend to only occur in areas where there are high levels of community spread.
- For younger children maintaining physical distance is difficult and therefore, the focus is on minimizing physical contact.

PLEASE NOTE

The following protocol and guidelines are in place to protect our staff as well as the children and families that attend our centre. At NO time will we tolerate any kind of hostility or disregard of this safety plan.

Illness & Self-Isolation

When Staff Should Not Attend

- If experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms including fever, chills, cough, breathing difficulties, loss of sense of smell or taste, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting. Staff may attend if experiencing non-COVID symptoms of illness but are required to wear a mask while symptoms last. Prior to attending work everyday, staff are required to complete the “Daily Health Check List” as outlined by the BCCDC.
- Staff who have travelled internationally and have not self-isolated for the mandatory 14-day period.
- Staff who live in a household with or are in close contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive.
- Staff who have been told by public health to self-isolate for 14 days.

When Children & Families should not attend

- Children with COVID-19 symptoms such as headache, sore throat, fever, nausea, diarrhea, or coughing. Siblings may attend as long as they do not present with any symptoms.
- Children and family members who have travelled internationally and have not self-isolated for the mandatory 14 day period.
- Children and family members who live in a household with or are in close contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive.
- Any child who has been told by public health to self-isolate for 14 days and/or any family member who has been told to self-isolate by public health for 14 days should not visit the centre.

Physical & Social Distancing

Based on the current epidemiology of COVID-19 in B.C., and the fact that children are at a much lower risk of contracting COVID-19, public health guidelines for young children differ from that of adults.

Children & Environment

Physical distancing of 2m is not an expectation among children in a child care setting where risk of transmission is low. Instead, health officers emphasize the importance of minimizing direct physical contact (e.g., hugs and handshakes). ETP has adopted the following protocols to encourage children to spread out and minimize direct physical contact:

- Staff will teach and encourage children to avoid direct physical contact (“hands to yourself”) and practice appropriate distancing whenever possible.
- The Ministry encourages time outside and asserts that outdoor playgrounds are a safe environment for children to play together. Emphasis will be placed on minimizing direct physical contact between children and proper hand hygiene before and after play.
- Where possible, activities will be set up for individual play, smaller groups, or conducted outdoors.
- Equipment and learning materials will be limited to those that can be easily cleaned. Items from home will only be permitted at quiet time for comfort purposes while children are on their cots.
- Children, who develop symptoms of illness during class, will be put in a designated area away from the other children until they can be picked up.

ETP will continue to ensure that thorough and proper cleaning in each classroom is being maintained daily.

Staff

- Staff will maintain a distance of 2 metres from one another (and other adults) and minimize direct physical contact with children as best as possible.
- If staff are required to be in direct physical contact with children (e.g., to wipe bodily fluids), gloves will be worn and staff may wear PPE at their discretion.
- Staff will be trained on COVID-19 safety measures and will model and teach good hygiene practices. They are aware of their role in providing care and attention to students.
- Staff will avoid taking children from parents' arms. Parents are asked to place a child down and a staff member will come to the child.
- Masks and aprons are provided to all staff and may be used at their discretion.
- Staff will conduct all signing in/signing out of children.
- Staff will ensure proper sanitization of the centre.
- Staff will space out children or put children in smaller groups for circle, meal, nap, art and activity times. Nap cots will be spread out as far as possible and children will sleep head to toe. Children's bedding and other items that are left at the centre will be placed in their own labelled baskets, washed thoroughly and sent home when necessary.
- Staff will wash/sanitize hands upon entering and exiting the building, after using the washroom, aiding children with toileting or blowing noses, before and after eating, and before and after outings.

Parents & Guardians

- Pick up and Drop off will occur outside whenever possible. Only 2 parents will be allowed in each room at one time in order to maintain the 2m distance. Parents are ONLY allowed in the entrance ways and cubby spaces. Please give yourself plenty of time at drop off and pick up as you may need to wait to enter the building.
- Parents will be asked to sanitize/wash their hands and their children's hands upon entering and exiting the building. Staff will sign children in/out.
- It is the responsibility of the person dropping off the child/children to verbalize that you, your child/children attending and anyone else in your household is symptom free.
- Please arrange for only one person to drop off/pick up. Avoid bringing siblings into the building if possible.
- Maintain 2m distance from staff members and other parents at all times.
- Parents are responsible for sending their child with sufficient supplies for each day: spare clothes, blankets, lunch and water bottle, weather appropriate gear (jacket, boots, hat, sunscreen).
- Disposable masks are available for parents who wish to wear one during pick up and drop off. If masks become mandatory, we will require that all parents wear one on the grounds at all times.

FURTHER PROTOCOL

- Children must wash their hands upon arrival, after using the bathroom, blowing their nose, before and after outings, before and after meals, and whenever else staff deem necessary. Hand Sanitizer is used when proper washing facilities are not available.
- Continue to encourage your children to do as much as possible on their own (put on/take off shoes, coats, get lunches etc.). Backpacks will be hung outside when possible.
- If toys are sneezed on/put in a child's mouth they are immediately put into the sink or "to be sanitized" bin to be properly washed.
- All soft surfaces have been removed (sitting carpets, pillows, etc.). Sensory bins have been limited to those that can be effectively disinfected daily and plush toys have been limited to those that can be washed daily.
- Cribs and cots are disinfected after each use and bedding is laundered between children.
- Children are not permitted to return unless they have provided one of the following: a Doctor's note which clearly states that the child **DOES NOT** have COVID-19, a confirmed negative COVID 19 test, or proof that an online self-assessment has been completed (screen shot). If parents choose not to provide any of the above, children must remain home for 14 days and may only return once **ALL** symptoms have subsided.

Resources and Documents

Exploring the Puddle has referenced the following material and websites for the content of our Safety Plan:

BC Centre for Disease Control Website

Child Care & Schools Child care safety guidance for parents

COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings

WorkSafeBC: Child care and day camps - Protocols for returning to operation

Professional Collaboration

In addition to following the above guidelines and protocol sources, Exploring the Puddle has collaborated with:

- Interior Health (Williams Lake & District) Licensing Officer
- Williams Lake practicing General Practitioner
- All ETP Staff Members

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A LIVING DOCUMENT AND WILL BE UPDATED AS NEW INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES ARE PRESENTED BY THE ABOVE MENTIONED SOURCES.

AT THIS TIME, IT IS NOT A REQUIREMENT FOR STAFF TO WEAR PPE SUCH AS A MASK OR FACE SHIELD. STAFF MAINTAIN THE RIGHT TO WEAR PPE AT THEIR OWN DISCRETION UNTIL OTHERWISE DIRECTED BY THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF BC AND/OR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA.