

# Child care and day camps: Protocols for returning to operation

*The following content was posted to WorkSafeBC's website on June 24, 2020. For the most current version, please visit [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).*

These protocols are for child care providers and day camp operators. These employers may also benefit from reviewing protocols related to office space.

This information is based on the BC Centre for Disease Control's COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings.

## Developing a COVID-19 safety plan

Employers are required to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Employers must involve frontline workers, joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for their workplace.

The COVID-19 Safety Plan follows the six steps outlined on COVID-19 and returning to safe operation. You can also refer to the COVID-19 Safety Plan OHS Guideline for information about developing a safety plan, including the level of detail required and use of supporting documentation.

Employers are not required to submit plans to WorkSafeBC for approval, but in accordance with the order of the provincial health officer, this **plan must be posted** at the worksite and on their website, if they have one. During a WorkSafeBC inspection, we will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers or to see the plan if it has been developed.

One part of developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan is identifying protocols that everyone at the workplace must follow to keep workers safe. We've provided industry-specific protocols below to consider as you develop the plan for your workplace.

These protocols are not a list of requirements; however, they should be considered and implemented to the extent that they address the risks your workplace. You may need to identify and implement additional protocols if the protocols suggested here do not sufficiently address the risk to your workers.

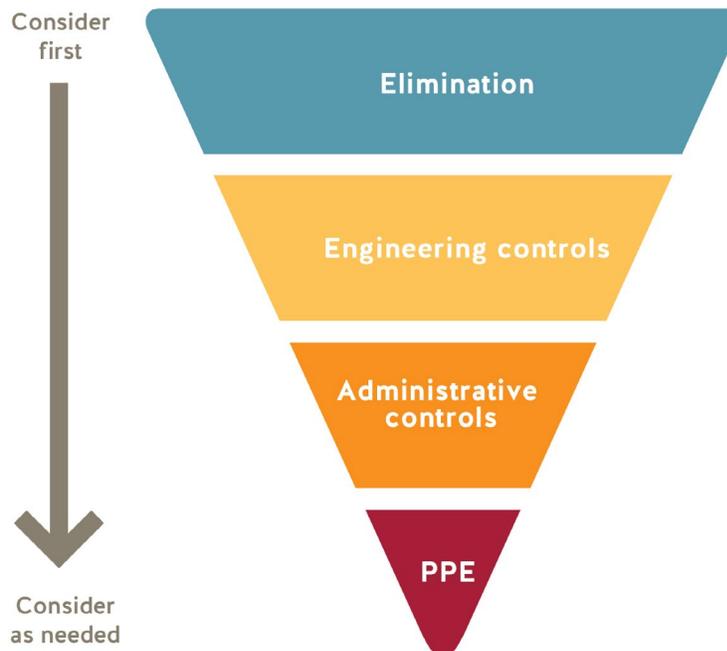
## Understanding the risk

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Higher risk situations require adequate protocols to address the risk.

- The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and the number of people you come near. Physical distancing measures help mitigate this risk.
- The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

## Selecting protocols for your workplace

Note that different protocols offer different protection. Wherever possible, use the protocols that offer the highest level of protection and add additional protocols as required.



**First level protection (elimination):** Use policies and procedures to keep people at a safe physical distance from one another. Limit the number of people in your workplace at any one time, and implement protocols to keep workers at least 2 metres from other workers, customers, and members of the public.

**Second level protection (engineering controls):** If you can't always maintain physical distancing, install barriers such as plexiglass to separate people.

**Third level protection (administrative controls):** Establish rules and guidelines, such as cleaning protocols, telling workers to not share tools, or implementing one-way doors or walkways.

**Fourth level protection (PPE):** If the first three levels of protection aren't enough to control the risk, consider the use of masks. Ensure masks are selected and cared for appropriately and that workers are using masks correctly.

## Protocols for child care

### Access to child care facilities

- Implement a policy stating that workers, children, parents, and caregivers must not enter the workplace if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days. Communicate this policy to workers, parents, and caregivers. Post signage at entrances to the workplace reminding people not to enter the site if they have symptoms associated with COVID-19. At drop off, implement a daily “yes/no” verbal confirmation that children do not have symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease. Do not accept a child drop off if the answer is yes.
  - » Workers with symptoms of COVID-19 must 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.
  - » Communicate to parents and caregivers the requirement for them 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 and caregivers 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.
- Develop and communicate policies around the management of staff and children who become ill while at the facility. Refer to page 11 of the COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings for policy details. Train employees about the symptoms associated with COVID-19 and the protocols in place in the event that a child becomes ill while at the facility.
- Use telephone or video conferencing when possible to meet with workers, parents, and caregivers.
- Limit or prohibit visitors to the facility.

### Pick up and drop off

- Drop off and pick up should occur outside of the child care setting where the age of the child and building design make this reasonably practicable.
- Implement strategies to ensure physical distancing is maintained at drop-off and pick-up areas. Consider staggered drop-off and pick-up times, using multiple entrance points if available, and placing markers at entrance points to support physical distancing.
- Where parents or caregivers must enter the child care setting for drop off or pick up:
  - » Designate an area within the facility for this.
  - » Direct them to maintain physical distance from workers and other children, and practice hand hygiene. Where this is not possible, for example when transferring a very young child between a parent and a worker, plan and communicate the work task in advance to ensure that time spent in close proximity is minimized.
- If parents or caregivers have to enter the facility at pick up or drop off, establish a policy that only one parent or caregiver enters the facility.
- Avoid close greetings such as hugs and handshakes.

## Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Establish hand washing, hygiene and respiratory protocols for everyone in the workplace.
- Set up hand hygiene stations at the entrance to the workplace. Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations where a sink is not available. Ensure there is an adequate supply of hand washing supplies and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Require workers, children, and others to wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately upon entering the facility. Keep hand sanitizer out of the reach of children and supervise its use.
- Require workers to wash their hands regularly throughout the day, including:
  - » When they arrive at the workplace 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
- Support children to wash their hands regularly throughout the day, including:
  - » When they arrive at the workplace 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
- Provide education and direction to workers and children 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

- Workers should maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from each other. 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.
- Establish and post occupancy limits for common areas such as break rooms, laundry rooms, and kitchens.
- Arrange common areas in a way that allows at least two metres of physical distance between each worker. For small areas or rooms, such as a small laundry room, implement schedules and/or procedures for single-worker or limited-worker access to maintain physical distance.
- Stagger worker break times.
- Consider incorporating activities involving books, individual games, video, and online games to encourage physical distancing between children.
- Consider placement of children when using multi-seat strollers, for example keeping children within their smaller groupings where present, and placing children with an empty seat beside them and diagonally between rows.
- It is not always possible for workers to maintain physical distance from children, and between children, when in care. 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.
  - » Staggering snack/meal and nap times.
  - » 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 workplace 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 at the end of 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., door knobs, 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.
- Consider installing hands-free sinks and hand driers.
- Empty garbage containers daily at a minimum.
- If a worker 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.
- Where PPE has been identified for tasks prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, continue to use this PPE when performing these tasks.
- 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.

### **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 allow children to participate in food preparation.
- Establish a procedure for receiving and handling parent and caregiver provided food items and containers (e.g., lunch boxes). Consider designating a tabletop/countertop receiving area and ensure this area is sanitized. Food provided by parents and caregivers should be stored with the child’s belongings or, if refrigeration is required, it should be kept in an area designated for the child’s grouping or cohort, where applicable.
- 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.

### Related links

See the following links for additional information, guidance, or resources that may assist you in the development of your plan.

- [BC CDC COVID 19: Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings](#)

### For more information

The information on this page is based on current recommendations and may change. For the latest guidance, please see the health information from the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control and the latest news from the government of British Columbia.

### If you have a question or concern

Workers and employers with questions or concerns about workplace exposure to COVID-19 can call WorkSafeBC’s Prevention Information Line at 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland (toll-free within B.C. at 1.888.621.SAFE). You’ll be able to speak to a prevention officer to get answers to your questions, and if required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at your workplace.

### Translated resources

Our key COVID-19 related resources are also available in Chinese (simplified), Chinese (traditional), French, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese.