



Child and Family
Development

YMCA Child Care

Revised Parent Handbook Guidelines for COVID-19

YMCA Child Care Guidelines for COVID-19 are approved by the Ministry of Education Child Care and Early Years Licensing Branch and local Public Health units, and follow the most current recommendations provided by the Ministry of Health. The YMCA has trained all staff to implement the following measures that will reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious illness within the center. These guidelines are subject to change as per the direction of the Ministry of Education Child Care and Early Years Licensing Branch and local Public Health Units.

How You as a Parent Can Help

- If your child has signs and symptoms of illness, especially a fever of 37.8 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit) or higher, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, keep them home. Call the YMCA program and let them know your child's symptoms, so we track this information for Public Health.
- If someone in your household has come in close contact with an individual who is suspected of having COVID-19 or has a confirmed case of COVID-19, keep your child home. Call the YMCA program and let them know, so we track this information for Public Health.
- As much as possible, have the same adult drop-off, and pick-up each day, to reduce the number of adults who come in contact with the staff. The YMCA considers an adult to be any responsible person 16 years of age or older.
- Plan for drop-off and pick-up to take more time than it usually does to allow for screening for illness and for staff to escort your child to the door at the end of the day.
- Provide us with any changes to your contact information or your child's medical information (e.g. allergies)

Curriculum & Programming

The YMCA will continue to deliver our Playing to Learn and A Place to Connect play-based curriculum in our centers. Some adjustments will be made to observe physical distancing. Examples include:

- Less children in each room
- Same group of children will stay together (cohorting), and not mix with other groups
- Same staff will work with one group of children
- Storage for children's personal belongings will be spaced (i.e. use every second cubby)

- Less children at each table for play, snacks and lunch
- Toys or equipment that are difficult to clean and disinfect will be stored or use will be monitored (e.g. plush toys, dress-up clothes, puppets, books, board games)
- Craft materials will be provided in individual kits/baskets for each child
- Sensory materials like playdough or goop will be provided in individual containers and discarded after each child's use
- Where possible outdoor playtime will be increased
- Staff will incorporate fun learning activities that teach children about physical distancing and personal hygiene

Program Procedure Changes

Daily Screening Process

Each day upon arrival all parents, children and staff will be asked questions provided by Public Health that are designed to screen for illness. Each individual will also be required to report their temperature. Each center will put a process in place based on the local Public Health unit recommendations. For example, in some regions individuals can self-report temperatures, while in other regions, a YMCA staff must monitor individuals taking their own temperatures.

If the parent or any of their children are experiencing signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or have come in in close contact with an individual who is suspected of having COVID-19 or has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or has travelled outside of Canada in the previous 14 days, they will be sent home, and not permitted to enter the center. You will be given instructions on the closest testing site available.

If your child is healthy, and screening is completed, a staff member will meet you at the front entrance and escort your child to their room. Parents will not be permitted to enter the center. Your program Supervisor will provide you will specific details on the process.

Cleaning & Disinfecting

The YMCA has implemented enhanced cleaning and disinfecting measures to help reduce the spread of infections illness. A staff member is dedicated to cleaning and disinfecting rooms, toys and equipment while each group is playing outdoors. A schedule of the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting required has been recommended by Public Health. A focus is placed on high touch areas including door handles, sinks, toilets, and toys. Any toy that is difficult to clean and disinfect has been put away (i.e. plush toys, dress-up clothes, puppets). Anytime a child places a toy in their mouth, coughs or sneezes on a toy, it is taken out of rotation until it can be cleaned and disinfected.

Personal Hygiene

Staff and children follow a routine of **hand washing** with soap and water throughout the day. For example, we wash our hands when we arrive at the center, after using the washroom, before and after eating, after playing outdoors, after using a tissue, and any time hands are visibly soiled. Staff schedule hand washing routines into the day and demonstrate how to wash hands and monitor children while they wash their hands.

When running water is not available, for example outdoors, children over the age of 2 years can use **hand sanitizer**. Staff monitor children using hand sanitizer to ensure it is applied properly.

Staff will demonstrate for children how to **cough and sneeze** into the arm or shoulder. Anytime a child uses a tissue they are taught to discard the tissue in a garbage bin, and to wash their hands.

As much as possible staff will remind children to avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth.

Children's personal creams, lotions, and diapers should be labelled with the child's name, and will be stored in an individual container just for that child that is kept out of reach of children on a shelf, or in cupboard.

If a Child Becomes Ill at the Center;

In the event that a child shows any signs or symptoms of illness that cannot be explained (e.g. teething, seasonal allergies), the parent will be called to immediately pick-up their child. If the parent is not available by phone, the emergency contact will be called. While the child waits to be picked-up they will be separated from the other children and staff (isolation) and supervised by one staff member. The staff will wear a mask and gloves, and children over the age of 2 years who can tolerate a mask will be asked to wear one. If the child has siblings attending the centre, siblings will also be sent home.

If a Staff Becomes Ill at the Center;

If a staff member becomes ill at the center they will be separated from children and other staff and sent home immediately.

Reporting Suspected Cases of COVID-19 & Testing

Each Public Health unit has a requirement for centers to report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, but the process for testing varies between units. In the event an individual is suspected of having COVID-19 the Public Health unit will advise the program Supervisor and parent of any requirements for testing, and/or self-isolation. One case of COVID-19 does not necessarily result in a center being closed. Public Health will do contact tracing to determine who the individual came in close contact with at the center and will determine the requirement for closure of a room or center based on their findings.

Licensed child care centers are required to report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 or testing being conducted to the Ministry of Education. A notification for parents will be posted for your information.

Use of Masks

Wearing a mask, is one strategy to reduce the spread of illness, including COVID-19. Public Health is not recommending that staff or children wear a mask during activities at the center. The other strategies being implemented (e.g. screening, smaller groups, keeping same children and staff together, providing individual materials, increased frequency of cleaning and disinfecting, and hand washing) all work together to reduce the requirement for masks, and other personal protective equipment like gloves.

If you wish for your child to wear a mask, the staff will help your child to understand the proper method to put on/take off a mask to prevent spreading illness. Public Health does not permit children under 2 years of age to wear masks.

During the closure, the YMCA operated emergency child care centers for frontline and essential service workers. Staff found wearing masks uncomfortable and restrictive, and quickly stopped using them when they better understood the high level of standards in place to reduce illness.

Nutrition

0-3.8 years

Children will continue to be provided with snacks and lunches from our catering partners. Staff will be responsible for serving all foods and drinks to children, and bowls of food will be kept out of the reach of children on a cart or counter. Parents are required to put all feeding instructions in writing for children under 1 year of age. Please do not send any food from home unless approved by the staff, and labelled with your child's name.

4-12 years

Children will be provided with a morning and afternoon snack. Staff will be responsible for serving all food and drinks to children, and bowls of food will be kept out of the reach of children on a cart or counter. Parents will be required to provide their child with a bagged lunch. Please ensure all containers are labelled with your child's name, and that any products that contain or may have come in contact with nuts are not sent. Most centers have limited fridge space, so we advise you to include an ice pack in your child's lunch.

Rest Time

Children 0-3.8 years are provided with an opportunity to rest each day. Children who do not sleep, or wake up, are provided with quiet activities. Where cribs and cots cannot be placed 2 meters apart, children will lay down head to foot on their own crib or cot. Please send only blankets and sleep toys that can be laundered, as they will be washed at the center.

Visitors, Field Trips and Special Guests

At this time all special activities like field trips, special guests that do presentations, and visitors will be suspended. As the situation improves, and Public Health advises, community activities will be reconsidered. Children can continue to take neighborhood walks, as long as physical distancing is maintained from members of the public.

Pick-Up

At the end of each day, when you arrive at the center, call the center phone number. A staff member will escort your child to the front entrance where you can pick-up.

Placing your child care space on hold

Families who are not ready for their child(ren) to return to care upon the reopening of your child care program can place their child care space on hold at this time. Fees **will not be** charged at this time. Space availability in the future will be dependent on current registration levels and groups size maximums.

Absence from Care during the Covid-19 Pandemic

For absences from child care due to any of the symptoms listed below related to COVID- 19, child care fees will be credited toward future child care payments.

Based on Ontario Public Health (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread>) symptoms can include:

- fever (feeling hot to the touch, a temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius or higher)
- chills
- cough that's new or worsening (continuous, more than usual)
- barking cough, making a whistling noise when breathing (croup)
- shortness of breath (out of breath, unable to breathe deeply)
- sore throat
- difficulty swallowing
- runny, stuffy or congested nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions)
- lost sense of taste or smell
- pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- headache that's unusual or long lasting
- digestive issues (nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain)
- muscle aches
- extreme tiredness that is unusual (fatigue, lack of energy)
- falling down often
- for young children and infants: sluggishness or lack of appetite

Withdrawal Notification

If you choose to withdraw your child from their YMCA child care program, 10 days' notice of withdrawal is required. Withdrawal fees are being waived at this time. We will continue to waive withdrawal fees until September 15, 2020 provided the withdrawal date is within 10 days of the last day of care indicated.