



## **Pandemic**

# **Health and Safety Plan**

Thank You for your commitment to service in our community by being present for the children that need your special care and guidance. What an unprecedented time as child care providers. The work we are doing is an “Essential Service” to this community.

To maintain a safe and healthy environment for our staff, children and families and to help slow the potential spread of COVID-19, the following additional control measures have been implemented at all Hand in Hand facilities. The additional safety measures are in response to COVID-19 in accordance with the Ministry of Health and WorkSafe BC recommendations, along with the licensing regulations we already abide by. All staff is required to review and adhere to these additional procedures.

## **Children and COVID-19 – What we know:**

- Children are at a much lower risk of developing COVID-19. Less than 1% of children have tested positive.
- Most cases in children have been linked to a symptomatic adult household member.
- Most adults infected with COVID-19 will have mild symptoms and will not need care outside of their home.
- As challenging as it can be with the children, maintaining a physical distance is less practical and the focus should be on minimizing physical contact instead.
- There is no need to limit the use of books and paper to the children as there is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted via books or other paper-based products.
- There is no evidence to support the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as gloves and masks in the child care setting. PPE is the least effective of the infection and exposure control measures.

## **Public Health Measures (Ministry of Health & BC Centre for Disease Control)**

- **If you are ill – Stay at Home**
- All children and staff, who show symptoms of a cold, flu, fever or infectious respiratory symptoms of any kind need to, stay home.
- If a child or staff displays symptoms, they are to self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the onset of the symptoms. The child or staff member may return to the centre once they have been accessed by their physician or nurse practitioner and the symptoms are resolved.
- If a member in a family is displaying any of the above symptoms and they are self-isolating to monitor the symptoms, the child that is attending Hand in Hand must also remain at home for the 10 day period.
- Parents and staff that are symptomatic must not enter the centre.
- **Respiratory Etiquette:** Children and staff must learn to cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue. Teach children to throw away their used tissue and immediately perform hand hygiene.
  - It is not recommended that children wear cloth or homemade masks.
  - Remind children to not touch their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands. ("Hands below your shoulders") and wash their hands if they do.
- Quarantine is a term reserved for persons who return from travel outside of Canada as they are at a higher risk of developing COVID-19.

## Environment Measures for Hand in Hand Operations:

- There will be a maximum of 10 children per centre. The same staff will be placed with the same children to limit your exposure to parents and other adults as they drop off & pick-up the children.
- Have the children outside often. This can include play time, craft activities and snack or lunch.
- There are to be no baking/cooking activities with the children.
- Have windows open when possible to ensure adequate ventilation of the room.
- Remove toys and other items that cannot be easily cleaned (e.g. – plush toys, dress-up clothes, pillows etc.) There are to be no personal items of this type from home.
- The cubby area is to remain closed during free play. Other than snack & lunch time children should not need to gather in the cubby area. They must wash their hands before returning back to the program.
- **School district playgrounds are closed at the present time and are out of bounds.**

## Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

- Pick-up and drop-off of children will occur outside. A sign-in area is to be set-up outside the main entry door.
- Parents will **NOT** be entering the centre unless there is an agreed upon need.
- “STOP” signs and red tape will be placed at the main entry area as a visual for the parents.
- Parents may need reminders to maintain physical distance from staff and other children.
- Ensure you have hand sanitizer at the sign in area in the event you require a parent to use it.
- Staff will greet the parent and child at the door.
- For regular attending children ensure they hang items on the same hook every day and space the items out as best as you can.
- **Hand Hygiene** is the first step as the child enters the centre. Each child must wash their hands before entering into play or interacting with others.
- Please be patient with the parents, use gentle reminders, as they get use to the new routines.
- Parents and staff should use their own pens. If a parent uses a centre pen allow them to keep it or wipe it down after each use.
- Staff should practice hand hygiene after touching items at the sign in area.

## Daily Health Assessment:

- **Staff will conduct daily** checks at drop-off by asking parents to confirm that their child does not have symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory diseases before signing them in to the centre. This is a **requirement** as part of the drop-off protocol.
- Children who are ill are not permitted to attend the centre.
- Staff must also assess themselves daily for symptoms indicated on the assessment form.
- If a parent or staff member are unsure of their status, they should be directed to use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment online assessment tool or call 8-1-1 or the public health unit to assess whether one should stay home or not.

### **Hand Hygiene:**

- Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds (sing “ABC’s” “Happy Birthday” etc.) is all that is needed in a child care centre.
- Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19 safety measures.
- Children will regularly forget about proper hand washing at any age. Staff should regularly model hand washing properly in a fun and relaxed way.
- Staff should supervise and assist young children with hand hygiene as needed.
- Encourage appropriate hand hygiene practices are followed for the children throughout the day. This includes after using the toilet, after a cough or sneeze, before, during and after outdoor play; before and after lunch and snack.
- If outside supervised use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% alcohol may be used. Keep hand sanitizer out of reach of the children and supervise its use.
- If hands are visibly soiled, hand sanitizer may not be effective at eliminating respiratory viruses. Soap and water is the best practice in this instance.
- Handwashing posters are available to post in the washroom and in main area as reminders.
- Ensure the centre is always well stocked with hand washing supplies including plain soap, paper towels, waste bins and when appropriate, hand sanitizer.
- Staff should supervise and assist young children with hygiene as needed.

### **Physical Distancing:**

- **A distance of 2 metres** needs to be taken into consideration when planning for both indoor and outdoor activities. Spread the children out to minimize direct physical contact.
- Staff should minimize the frequency of direct physical contact with the children and maintain the same with each other.
- Encourage the children to minimize physical contact with each other when possible. A “hands to yourself” gentle reminder.
- Be creative with the room configurations by separating the tables, moving shelves in a new way.
- Set up small group environments to reduce the number of children in a group. Less chairs at each table.
- **Illness at the Centre:** Plan to have a separate, supervised area available for a child who may develop symptoms of illness where they can rest until they are picked up. Ensure this area is cleaned and disinfected immediately after the child has left.
- Minimize the number of adults entering into the centre.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting** – Prior to Mid-day Shift Change and Between 5 – 6 pm:

- Cleaning, sanitizing and practicing good hand hygiene for staff and the children is the most important thing to ensure the prevention of transmission.
- General cleaning schedules and disinfecting of the centre should occur **at least once a day**.

- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected **at least twice a day**. Prior to the mid-day shift change and at the end of the day, a staff member will be designated to perform the following duties including:
  - doorknobs, light switches, tables, chairs, counters, cubby areas and coat hooks, toy shelves and faucet handles and a wipe down of toilet area and handles.
- Staff must follow the daily cleaning chart posted and initial after each task is complete.
- Clean and disinfect any surface that small hands may have touched. Walls, door way entries etc.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids (e.g. vomit, runny nose etc.). Wash hands before and after removing gloves.
- All free play and table top toys used during the day are to be washed and sanitized, using bleach and water. Lay toys out in a designated cleaning area, to dry overnight.

### **Toys & Equipment:**

- Minimize the number of toys, puzzles, books and art supplies you have on the shelf each day.
- Toy and Table Top shelves are to remain closed during the day.
  - Rotate 3 – 4 toys for the day and place them on the top of the shelf. Toys used will be washed and disinfected daily.
- Plastic multi-piece toys, like Lego must be divided into 2-3 smaller amounts. These bins will be rotated each day. This will also reduce larger group play. The toys and bin must go through a bleach bath, rinsed in hot water, then left out to dry before they go back into the closed shelf.
- Books and puzzles are porous items that make it difficult to disinfect. Consider ways you can limit these items on a daily basis.

### **Outside Time**

- **The school district playground equipment has been closed and will be out of bounds.**
- Remind the children daily about outside boundaries. Plan field play with games and have a supply of outdoor equipment (soccer balls, footballs etc.).
- Neighbourhood walks are encouraged; avoid places where other groups of people may be.
- Move tables and other activities outside – crafts items, paint, chalk, cardboard creations etc. Use your imagination and have the children join in...there is a lot to do – enjoy the sun shine!
- With the warmer weather ensure parents are providing hats, proper foot wear and that they have applied sunscreen before arrival.

### **Lunch & Snack**

- Ensure each child's lunch kit is wiped down before coming into the main room.
- Encourage parents to wipe down their child's kit every day. Remind children to place their lunch kits back in their back packs after each use.
- Parents must label personal items with their child's name to discourage accidental sharing.
- Children must wash their hands before and after eating.
- Children and staff should not share food, drinks or other personal items.
- Food items will not be stored in the centre fridge.
- Children will not be allowed to prepare or serve food.

- Centre prepared snacks must be given to the child by a staff member using utensils. Children are not to take food from the tray.
- In order to physical distance children at the table, set up no more than 4 chairs at each table. Remind children they are not able move the chairs closer to their friends.

**Ideas for Check-Ins with your Group:**

- It is our role to teach the children we all play a part to ensure we all stay healthy and safe!
- Have ongoing conversations with the children about the importance of the new routines.
- Help the children to understand the change in rules and routine both inside and outside.
- Build on daily topics or things you have heard the children talk about.
- Have Fun & Be Creative Together!
- Allow them to talk about COVID-19 & why we are doing what we do to keep everyone safe.
- What ideas do they have for indoor and outdoor fun? Work on emergent curriculum mapping to allow them to take part in developing plans together.
- Loose parts supplies can be an asset to both indoor and outdoor creativity! Let the parents know what items you are looking for.
- Community Encouragement – Have the children work on posters, virtue messages that can give little notes of encouragement to be given to teachers, janitors, placed throughout the neighbourhood on trees, poles, fences etc. Write letters, paint rocks, draw pictures to mail out to friends and family members that they are not able to visit right now.

For more information about preventing workplace exposure to COVID-19 visit BC Centre of Disease Control or [worksafebc.com](http://worksafebc.com). If you have any ideas or recommendations to share please feel free to share them with your admin team.

*Have Fun!*

*This is not Forever..... It's just for Now!*