



Dartmouth Day Care Centre COVID-19 Re-Open Plan

June 2020

Welcome Back

Introduction

The goal of this document is to provide guidance on how to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 in our childcare centre, provide safe and healthy environments for our children / staff, and balance the public health and safety measures with unintended impacts.

Dartmouth Day Care Centre must follow the Public Health Order issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and direction arising from the Order given under the authority of the Health Protection Act.

This document provides guidance to staff, children, families and outside visitors for the prevention and control of COVID-19 in our centre. The foundational document that must be used in conjunction with this guidance is the *Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control for Child Care Settings*.

This guidance document is based on the latest available scientific evidence and expert opinion about this emerging disease and **may change** as new information becomes available. The Public Health Agency of Canada will be posting regular updates and related documents at <https://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/>.

The risk level of the introduction and transmission of COVID-19 within our childcare centre is impacted by transmission of the virus in the community. If there is COVID-19 activity in the community, the likelihood of it being introduced into our centre is higher. At the present time, the level of community transmission in Nova Scotia is low. As the situation evolves, we will need to stay informed and adjust processes and programming in order to support the health and safety of our children and staff; our centre is will be innovative and creative in implementing the public health measures. Although evidence suggests children are not the primary drivers of transmission, we need to be diligent in maintaining adherence to the public health guidance as outlined in this document. Ensure families are kept up to date on current information and policies related to COVID-19 as part of our regular communication to families. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will communicate any changes to this guidance as necessary.

(Note: All information contained in this document is a guide. The guidelines will change and be adjusted as needed. This plan is specific to Dartmouth Day Care Centre)

The term **staff** to include employees and volunteers of child care centre. Employees fulfill various functions within our child care centre, such as but not limited to, early learning educators, kitchen staff, administration, practicum students, and summer employees.

The term **child/children** refer to participants in our program.

The term family include **parents/guardians** of children who participate in our child care programs.

The term **visitor** includes those individuals who intermittently enter the centre. Only visitors that are required to provide essential services are permitted into the centre including, but not limited to essential external program providers (i.e. early intervention, EIBI service providers, licensing officers, etc.), delivery personnel and maintenance workers

Public Health Measures

COVID-19 is most commonly spread from an infected person through respiratory droplets generated through coughing, sneezing, laughing, singing, and talking. It spreads more easily when contact is close (within 2 metres) and prolonged (more than 15 minutes). COVID -19 can also be spread by close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands or touching something with the virus on it and then touching one's mouth, nose or eyes before washing one's hands. Some people who have few or no symptoms can still spread COVID-19.

Although public health measures can significantly reduce the risk of COVID-19 entering and being transmitted in our child care centre, the risk is never zero. It is important to remember that while children tend to have less severe disease; this is not always the case. COVID-19 can also cause more severe illness among people who are 65 and over and those who have compromised immune systems or underlying medical conditions. Children under one year of age and those with immune suppression and complex medical histories are considered more vulnerable and at higher risk for severe illness. Parents, guardians, and staff are encouraged to consult with their health care provider if they have concerns about their own health, their child's health, or health of other household contacts.

The most effective measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 include separating people by maintaining physical distance and the use of physical barriers. However, these measures are not always practical within our child care centre.

It is important to consider the mental health and wellbeing of children and staff. Fear and anxiety are normal responses to recent events. It is important to listen to our children, recognize their concerns, and provide reassurance where possible (<https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/the-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>). Being a positive role model and maintaining familiar activities and routines (where appropriate) can decrease fear and anxiety. It is also important to be mindful of how COVID-19 is discussed around children.

Preventing the Introduction of COVID-19 into our Child Care Centre

The following people should self-isolate and not enter our child care centre:

- * Any person who is experiencing symptoms suggestive of COVID-19
- * Any person who travelled outside Nova Scotia in the previous 14 days
- * Any person who is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
- * Any person who is awaiting a COVID-19 test result

Anyone who is unsure whether they or their child should self-isolate should be directed to the 811 assessment tool at <https://when-to-call-about-covid19.novascotia.ca/en>

Monitoring Staff, Children and Essential Visitors for Symptoms

Monitoring for symptoms is important to identify any potential cases of COVID-19 as quickly as possible.

Monitoring Staff for Symptoms:

- * All staff must self-monitor daily for symptoms of COVID-19 at home. DDC will maintain records of staff absenteeism.
- * Staff should monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Below is the most up to date list of symptoms:

Most common symptoms:

Fever
Dry cough
Tiredness

Less common symptoms:

Aches and pains
Sore throat
Diarrhea
Conjunctivitis
Headache
Loss of taste or smell
A rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes

Serious symptoms:

Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
Chest pain or pressure
Loss of speech or movement

- * Staff will be kept informed of the most updated list of signs and symptoms.
- * Staff that have an elevated temperature or any of the symptoms listed above must stay home, isolate and must be excluded from work. Call 811 for an assessment for testing.
- * Before entering our child care centre, essential visitors will met by a staff member and will be directed to complete the 811 screening tool and confirm that they have no symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and are not required to self-isolate.
- * We will keep a list of all essential visitors that enter our centre with confirmation that they have been screened
- * Visitors with any symptoms should not enter our child care centre.

Monitoring Children for Symptoms

Dartmouth Day Care Centre encourages all families to clearly communicate and monitor their child (s) daily for symptoms before sending them to child care.

Morning drop off and afternoon pick up will look a little different. Parents and guardians will complete the chart below each morning upon entering the centre (please allow 5-10 extra minutes

for morning drop off) . They will be asked to confirm all answers with DDC staff and management. If parents are unsure about any of the answers to the questions they will be asked to contact 811 before bringing their child into the centre. If YES is answered to any one of these questions, their child is not able to attend child care. Parents will be instructed to provide the reason for their child’s absence. If you answered YES in Question 1 or 2, or if you have any questions, contact 811. A child with chronic stable cough, sneeze, runny nose, or nasal congestion that is unchanged and clearly linked to a known medical condition such as asthma or allergies may still be able to attend child care. Changing or worsening of chronic symptoms requires isolation and contacting 811.

As we limit the amount of exposure to the centre, our teachers will meet and greet you and your child each morning at the front entrance. Staff will escort your child and their belongings safely to their classroom/locker area. Parents and guardians will be asked to leave the centre in a timely manner as other families will be arriving. We ask that you be respectful of social distancing when possible.

When the weather permits, morning drop off will take place from our outside play area. Parents and guardians will bring their child to the outside play area along with their belongings. A staff member will meet and greet you and your child and escort them into the outside play area. Staff members will put your child’s belongings in the locker area.

Afternoon pick up will be done in the same fashion. Parents and guardians will arrive at the centre and we will bring your child and his belongings to you.

Only essential items will be permitted to be brought from home. No toys, food, or other items will be accepted.

Both sites are equipped with infrared thermometers. If you would like you child’s temperature taken at drop off one of our staff would be happy to assist.

Hand sanitizer will be provided throughout the centre and outside play space.

Below is the Screening Tool for Children that will be used each morning when attending DDC:

1. Is your child unwell?	Yes	No
2. Does your child have any of these symptoms?		
Fever (or chills or sweats)	Yes	No
New or worsening of a previous cough	Yes	No

Sore throat	Yes	No
Headache	Yes	No
Shortness of breath	Yes	No
Muscle aches	Yes	No
New or worsening sneezing	Yes	No
New or worsening nasal congestion or runny nose	Yes	No
Hoarse voice	Yes	No
Diarrhea	Yes	No
Unusual fatigue	Yes	No
Loss of sense of smell or taste	Yes	No
Red, purple, or bluish lesions (spots) on feet, toes or fingers without clear cause?	Yes	No
3. In the last 14 days, has your child travelled outside Nova Scotia?	Yes	No
4. In the last 14 days, had your child has close contact (within 2 metres / 6 feet) with someone confirmed to have COVID-19 infection?	Yes	No
5. Is your child awaiting result from a COVID-19 test?	Yes	No

Presentation of Symptoms of COVID-19 while in our Centre

Staff

*Staff must not work while ill, even with mild symptoms.

- *If a staff member becomes symptomatic while they are working in the child care centre, they should immediately wash their hands, tell the Director, avoid contact with other staff and children and go home to isolate. Staff with symptoms should call 811 for an assessment to determine if they need to be tested.
- *If 811 deem they don't need to be tested, return to work once symptoms resolve.
- * Staff can return to work once it has been determined that it is safe to do so. If staff is tested and are negative for COVID-19, they can return to work once their symptoms resolve.
- * If staff receives a positive test, staff will be followed by Public Health. Public Health will let the staff member know when they are able to return to work.
- * Additional environmental cleaning will occur if a staff or child has been identified to be symptomatic. Focus should be in high-touch areas and areas where the staff or child spent time.

Children

A staff member will be available to supervise an unwell child if needed. The staff room will be the designated area to take a sick child. Parents and guardians should be aware that they will need to pick up their child promptly and contact 811 for an assessment if notified that their child has developed symptoms.

If a child develops symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 infection:

- * A staff member will supervise the child
- * Immediately separate the child from others in a supervised area
- * Notify family so designated family member can pick up the child and contact 811 for assessment
- * If staff members cannot maintain 2 metre distance from the child, they should wear a medical mask.
- * Where appropriate, it is an option to close inside doors and open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation
- * Support children to cough or sneeze into sleeve or tissue. Immediately discard used tissues and perform hand hygiene.
- * Staff should perform frequent careful hand hygiene.
- * Clean and disinfect any common areas and toys used by the child.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



****Children are not required to wear masks or other PPE in our child care centre.***

*Staff should maintain current practices for the use of PPE with respect to the hazards normally encountered in their work, with one exception of wearing a medical mask (surgical/procedural mask) when unable to maintain a distance of 2 meters from a child who is exhibiting signs or symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. ***There is no rule for the use of a PPE in this setting.*** Glove use is only required as per your regular practices and current policies.

How to put on a mask safely:

*Clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

*Place the mask on your face carefully so it covers your mouth and nose, handling it with the strings/elastic ear loops as much as possible, and mold the nose bridge to ensure it does not move while on. Avoid touching the mask once you have put it on. If you need to adjust it, clean your hands before and after adjusting the mask. Never pull the mask down below your nose or mouth and chin. Never dangle the mask from one ear or both ears.

To remove the mask safely:

*Remove the mask from behind using the strings/elastic ear loops; do not touch the front of the mask. Discard the mask immediately, ideally in a no touch receptacle.

* Clean hands with alcohol based hand rub or soap and water.

Non-Medical Masks

The use of non-medical masks (cloth or home-made masks) within child care centre is not required. However, staff and children may choose to bring and wear a non-medical mask while in centre. ***Masks are not recommended for children under two years of age.***

If a non-medical mask is used, hands should be cleaned before and after putting it on and taking it off. Avoid touching the mask once you have put it on as per recommendations for the use of medical masks above. Removed masks should be stored safely.

It is important to respect individual decisions and treat people who choose to wear a non-medical mask with respect. Family and staff can teach and reinforce these messages with the children.

Our Classrooms

Physical distancing of 2 metres or 6 feet between all individuals helps reduce the spread of illness.

However, this will be challenging in your classrooms. *Where possible*, maintain physical distancing:

*At present there is no determined group size. As we return ratios will be smaller than what is typically mandated by the government. These ratios will increase as more families decide to return to the centre.

* PPEs will be worn when social distancing is not possible, i.e. diaper changing, nap time, etc.

* Arrange beds/cots so there is a 2 meter/6-foot separation between children's heads during nap time. This can be arranged by staggering cots or using a head-to-toe arrangement. If physical distancing is not possible, consider the use of dividers between children during naps if safe to do so

* Visual cues can be used to encourage physical distancing such as floor markings

*Where physical distancing cannot be maintained between individual children, it is important to maintain at least 2 metres between groups of children.

* Children and teachers of the same group will stay together throughout the day.

* Staff will remain at their current centres and will not be travelling between sites; with the exception of the Executive Director and Government Officials

* Siblings will be grouped together when reasonable (i.e.. siblings are within the same age range)

* Siblings are not required to physically distance from each other i.e. siblings can hug, be within 2 metres/6 feet of each other), even if they are in different groups within the centre.

* Groups should not be in shared spaces (including hallways, entrances, foyers) at the same time. Where this is not possible, physical distancing is required.

* Daily records will be kept that include the names of the children and staff participating in each group.

* Remove toys that cannot be easily cleaned such as dress-up clothes, stuffed animals and sensory play (unless the sensory play can be cleaned and disinfected between use or each child is designated their own sensory play).

* Increase ventilation – open windows if possible and it is safe to do so.

* Serve food rather than have family style eating (i.e. where children are involved in serving themselves). Do not involve children in the preparation or serving of food. Physically distance during meal time as much as possible.

Outside Play Area

- * Physical distancing of 2 metres or 6 feet between teachers and children during outdoor play time when possible.
- * Move activities outdoors if possible
- * Avoid field trips (e.g. that require transportation or require entry into another facility/building)
- * Schedule outdoor play to maintain cohorts (groups) of children of staff
- * If possible, designate space and toys within the play area for each cohort
- * Outdoor play area and toys should be cleaned and disinfected between use as per your regular cleaning and disinfection procedures (twice per day)
- * A designated hand washing station will be located by the sandbox area. Children coming and leaving the area must wash their hands
- * Walks around neighbourhood and nearby trails are encouraged
- * Access outdoor green spaces within walking distance of the centre where physical distancing can be maintained
- * Keep enough toys available to encourage individual play
- * Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing (e.g. art supplies)

Hygiene Practices

- * Everyone within the child care centre must wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water is not available and if your hands are not visibly soiled, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a minimum alcohol concentration of 60% can be used.
- * If hands are soiled, and you have no access to water, a twostep approach must be taken. Hands must be wiped clean then use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a minimum content of 60%.
- * Staff and children should wash their hands upon arrival into the centre.
- * Alcohol based hand sanitizer will be in areas throughout the centre, at the front entrance and in locker areas (ensure the children cannot access it without supervision).
- * If alcohol based hand sanitizer is used with children within the centre, and it has been deemed safe to do so based on age and ability (e.g. hand sanitizer should not be used for

children who routinely put their hands in their mouth), staff will dispense the sanitizer into the child's hand and observe while the child thoroughly rubs in the sanitizer.

- * Practice with the children, cough etiquette by coughing and sneezing into your sleeve or a tissue and discard immediately.
- * Practice hand hygiene (wash hands or use hand sanitizer) often; including but not limited to:

After:

- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Blowing your nose
- Toileting/diaper changing
- Outdoor play
- Handling pets
- Eating/Drinking
- Handling bodily fluid
- Cleaning

Before:

- Entering the facility/classroom
- Eating/drinking/handling food
- * Staff need to stay home if they are ill, even if their symptoms are mild
- * Children need to stay home if they are ill, even if their symptoms are mild
- * Avoid sharing personal items (i.e. backpacks, hats, hair pieces, lip chap, food/drinks, etc.)
- * Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes

Environmental Cleaning

Cleaning refers to the removal of visible dirt, grime and impurities. Cleaning does not kill germs but helps remove them from the surface. Disinfecting refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This is most effective after surfaces are cleaned. Both steps are important

to reduce the spread of infection. Do not mix cleaning agents and disinfectants together or use multiple disinfectants together.

- * Daily environmental cleaning and disinfection is required throughout the facility (including cots outdoor play equipment and toys).
- * More frequent (twice daily or more often as needed) cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, railings, bathrooms, tables, light switches, etc.) is required.
- * Clean and disinfect shared items between each use (e.g. toys, electronics, play areas, including outdoor play equipment/toys, etc.)
- * Additional environmental cleaning will occur if a staff or child has been identified to be symptomatic. Focus will be in high-touch areas and areas where the staff or child spent time.
- * Disinfectants should be used to eliminate the coronavirus that causes COVID-19
- * Disinfect electronics and handheld devices with 70% alcohol or wipes.
- * Waste should be disposed of regularly. Hands should be washed after waste removal. No touch waste receptacles should be used.
- * Wash hands after handling dirty laundry.

Kitchen/Laundry

- * Follow our regular laundry schedule (posted in the kitchen area).
- * All kitchen staff must wear hairnets.
- * No staff, children, or parents are permitted to enter the kitchen area.
- * All food trays will be picked up while maintaining social distancing.
- * Any clothing belonging to a child should be bagged and sent home with the family for laundering. If possible, do not shake laundry (minimizes possibility of dispersing virus through the air).
- * Soiled facility linens/towels should be laundered using regular laundry detergent and hot water. If possible, do not shake laundry.
- * If the laundry container comes in contact with contaminated laundry, it should be cleaned and disinfected.
- * Items/clothing should be laundered regularly in hot water and thoroughly dried.

