



YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg  
Enhanced Health and Safety Measures  
Summer 2021

Updated May 31, 2021

## **Welcome!**

Thank you for choosing the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg as your child-care provider. At the Y, we take great pride in providing a safe and secure environment while nurturing the potential of children with play-based activities that encourage them to develop relationships and self-worth. We acknowledge that these are unique times and that trusting us with your child's care during COVID-19 was likely not an easy decision to make.

The health and safety of the children, families and staff is our number one priority. In response to COVID-19, we have increased the health and safety measures in our centres.

The following sources of information have guided, and will continue to guide, our decisions.

- Manitoba's Chief Public Health Officer – including Public Health Orders
- Department of Early Learning and Child Care's Infection Control Guidelines and Coronavirus Practice Guidelines
- YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg's Health and Safety Practices

The following is designed to be a flexible document that allows for a focus on safety, health and well-being along with your child(ren)'s growth and development. Any changes in information will be communicated to families in a timely manner.

## **How to access the child care centre**

**Preschool Sites** - Parents are required to ring the doorbell and wait for a staff member to unlock the door. Parents will then be welcome into a designated drop off/pick up area where they will be expected to wear masks and maintain physically distanced from others. All families will be asked to patiently wait while adhering to physical distancing measures.

**School Age Sites**- Individual programs have designated entrances which have been approved through discussions with the administration of the school and/or community site where they are located. Program staff will contact families prior to their start date to update protocols regarding site specific drop off and pick up procedures.

**Reminder:** Only individuals listed on the registration form collected through the ePACT registration system are eligible to pick children up at the end of the day. Please ensure they bring photo ID, as centre staff will ask for this information.

## **Enhanced drop-off/pick-up procedures**

Drop-off procedures will take longer than usual due to increased safety measures. Families are asked to plan for extra time (5-10 minutes) at drop off, so staff can follow the required procedures.

### **What are the enhanced drop-off/pick-up procedures?**

- Staff greet all families upon arrival.
- Parents/guardians will be expected to wear masks at drop off and pick up times.
- Physical distancing strategies will be implemented at drop-off and pick-up times with staff limiting direct contact with/between parents as much as possible. If multiple parents arrive at the same time, we will do our best to expedite the process and do appreciate your patience.

- Upon entry to the foyer/hallway/doorway, Preschool parents/guardians will be asked daily to confirm that their child has no COVID-19 symptoms, is not exhibiting other signs of illness or is otherwise required to self-isolate. School age parent/guardians are expected to complete the online Shared Health Screening Tool prior to attending the centre.
- Temperature checks are done each morning on all children, it only takes a few seconds, and all temperatures are recorded. Thermometers will be non-contact or will not be used between children/staff without single use protective covers or disinfecting between use.
- Preschool staff members will accompany children to program spaces. School Age programs will have procedures in place based on their location. Children will be required to wash their hands prior to entering/upon entering the program space.
- The same process (minus screening and temperature taking) is in place when picking up your child at the end of the day. Staff will transfer care of the child(ren) and their belongings to their family at the end of the day.

#### **Who will be allowed entry into the children's program space?**

Only children/staff are allowed into the program space. Parents/guardians/visitors/students/volunteers are only permitted past the program foyer/door if explicit permission has been provided by the staff member on site and all health protocols (hand hygiene, mask use and physical distancing) are being followed.

#### **Updated Health Policy**

**The following policy is in addition to the Health Policy located in our parent manual and will take priority unless otherwise noted.**

- Child care providers **will exercise judgment related to illness symptoms but when in doubt, err on the side of caution**, restrict the child's access to the program and advise the parent/guardian to contact Health Links – Info Santé or their health care provider.
- While a runny nose with clear discharge will not exclude a child from care, a runny nose with white, yellow or green discharge will.
- A chronic stable cough, sneeze or nasal congestion that is **unchanged and clearly linked to a known medical condition** such as asthma or allergies is not an absolute requirement for exclusion, however a doctor's note may be required to attend program.

#### **Under what circumstances will a child be asked to not attend/leave the centre due to illness?**

- Public Health advises the following...*People who are sick must stay home from their early learning and child care centre, even if mildly ill or if they think their sickness is unrelated to COVID-19.*
- Therefore, children will not be allowed to attend the centre if they exhibit any combination of symptoms as noted by Public Health related to illness or have been medicated to alleviate symptoms of illness. **This may include cough, headache, fever/ chills, muscle aches, sore throat/ hoarse voice, shortness of breath/ breathing difficulties, vomiting, or diarrhea for more than 24 hours, runny nose, fatigue, nausea or loss of appetite, conjunctivitis (pink eye) or skin rash of unknown cause.**

- A child or staff who displays COVID-19 symptoms as noted on the most current screening tool will not be admitted to the centre. In this case the parent/guardian will be advised to refer to the online screening tool, consult Health Links - Info Santé or their health-care provider for further direction. While we understand the implications on families, the exclusion of staff and children who display COVID-19 symptoms follow current public health orders and is necessary to reduce the transmission of illness.

#### **What steps are taken if my child becomes ill while at the centre?**

- If your **child becomes ill while at the centre**, we will make your child as comfortable as we can and contact you to pick them up. If we cannot reach you, we will contact your designated emergency contacts.
- Children who develop symptoms of illness while at the facility will be isolated in a separate room if possible. If that is not possible physical distancing measures will be implemented. Staff may also put a mask on your child (based on age and comfort level of child).

#### **What happens if a child exhibits symptoms of COVID 19?**

- Staff members will use personal protective equipment and either isolate the child in a separate room or ensure a distance of at least two metres between them and other children.
- The parent will be notified to come and pick up the child immediately.
- The space will be sanitized once the child goes home.
- Further measures will be taken under the direction of Public Health

#### **My child was sent home due to symptoms related to COVID-19 illness, when can they return?**

- All families are expected to follow the most current Public Health advice regarding isolation and testing. Children may return once the mandated protocols have been followed and **the child has been symptom free for 24 hours.**
- If the illness is due to a non-COVID –19 illness our regular health policy will apply.

#### **Can my child attend childcare if a member of their household is unwell?**

- If a person in the household is unwell, **they are required to complete the Health Screening Tool to determine entry prior to the child attending the centre.**
- All families are expected to **follow the most current Public Health advice regarding isolation and testing.** Children may return once the mandated protocols have been followed.

#### **Can my child attend childcare if a member of their household is being tested for COVID, has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or if anyone in the household has travelled out of the province (as per current Public Health Orders)?**

- If a person in the household is being tested for COVID, has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or if anyone in the household has travelled out of the province (as per current Public Health Orders), **they are required to follow the most current Public Health advice regarding isolation and testing.** Children may return once the mandated protocols have been followed.

#### **What precautions are in place for staff health and safety?**

- In addition to the operational measures listed within this document, all staff members are required to stay away if ill, complete the COVID screening tool, have their temperatures taken upon arrival each day and wear masks as per Government directives

### **Personal Protective Equipment - including masks and eye protection**

Regarding personal protective equipment, we are following the recommendations of the Department of Early Learning and Child Care and Public Health.

- Children who are required to wear masks when in the education system will be required to wear masks while at childcare. If a child has limitations on when they can wear a mask a parent is required to provide written notification specifying their child's limitations.
- Visitors (including parents/guardians/students) in the childcare program space will always be required to wear masks.
- Aside from approved PPE breaks, Staff members working in our childcare programs are required to always wear masks both indoors and out and eye protection when indoors.

### **Staffing**

The YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg strives to provide the highest quality care for your children. This requires an adequate number of qualified staff members present to care for children. Although the program proactively manages staffing and is dedicated to employing Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Assistants as staff persons, there may be occasions where the program has insufficient staff to provide care for all the children enrolled in our program.

#### **What actions will be taken if the required number of staff are not available to care for the children?**

When we are unable to provide enough qualified staff members to care for your children, we will have to limit the number of children attending the Centre in order to maintain legislated child-to-staff ratios.

In the event that the centre is understaffed and must apply limits by reducing the number of available spots open in a day, program staff will attempt to notify families as soon as possible in order to allow families as much time as possible to make alternate child-care arrangements. Should staff be unable to provide adequate notice, families will be notified upon arrival at the program.

Our program will use a rotating system to ensure no one family is repeatedly left without care.

**You will not be charged for days on which the Program cannot provide childcare for you due to a staffing shortage.**

### **Personal Hygiene**

#### **What does hand hygiene look like?**

As we know, little and big hands pick up germs easily, and can spread those germs to objects, surfaces, food and people. Handwashing with soap and water is still the single most effective way to reduce the spread of illness.

Staff and children are encouraged to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 15 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol may be used by staff and supervised school age children.

Staff and children are encouraged to wash their hands at least every hour and a half. This may be monitored by alarms being set as a reminder.

In addition to scheduled hand washing, staff members and children will wash hands in the following scenarios:

- Arrival to the facility
- Before and after handling or eating food or drink
- Before and after applying sunscreen or other ointments
- Before and after using the bathroom
- After blowing their nose or contact with any other bodily fluid
- After completing cleaning tasks
- After playing outdoors
- After getting hands dirty or a child/staff feel they have become contaminated

### **Enhanced Cleaning Measures**

#### **What enhanced cleaning measures have been implemented?**

Evidence suggests the COVID-19 virus can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to days. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high-touch surfaces is very important to help to prevent the transmission of viruses from contaminated objects and surfaces. Cleaning is tracked on an hourly, daily and weekly basis as required.

- **High-touch objects and surfaces** (e.g. doorknobs, faucet handles, light switches) in facilities are cleaned and disinfected hourly.
- **Toys and shelves** are sanitized frequently throughout the day. We will only provide toys that are easily cleaned and disinfected.
- **Toys** that children have been contaminated by body secretions (e.g. placed in a child's mouth) are set aside until they are sanitized.
- **Children's books**, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission.
- **Sensory play** will be allowed only when individual access is provided (e.g. individual basins of water for water play where the water is replaced, and the materials are sanitized between children).
- **Outdoor play** is permitted as long as children wash hands upon re-entry to the program space. Outdoor toys are sanitized daily.
- **Children's personal toys** that they require to offer them security and comfort are not to be shared with other children and should be stored in lockers/cubbies when not in use.

### **Physical Distancing Measures and Cohorts**

#### **What physical-distancing measures will be observed?**

Understandably, physical distancing is challenging in a child-care setting. Children are distanced as much as possible; however, they still play together as children do. At the same time, it is important that we do what we can to assist staff members and children. Staff members are encouraged to think creatively

about all opportunities to increase the physical space between children and manage child interactions in group settings. Specific strategies for distancing are based on the feasibility given by the unique space and needs of the program.

Some strategies may include:

- **Setting up mini environments** to reduce the number of children in a group, for example setting up 2 or 3 craft areas for colouring or doing crafts.
- **Increasing the space** between children during activities such as snack and lunch by moving or separating tables and chairs so they are farther apart.
- When children want to use the same area or do the same activity, **redirecting** some children to another area or creating duplicate activity areas.

#### **How will cohorts (groups) be managed in the child-care setting?**

**Cohorting** involves keeping groups of children together and avoiding interactions with other groups. The purpose of cohorting is to limit the mixing of children and staff so that if a child or staff member develops an infection, there are fewer possible exposures and contact tracing can be more easily done.

- Whenever possible, children and staff will be **assigned to a cohort (group)** and kept together throughout the day.
- **Cohorts (groups) will not be in shared spaces at the same time** (e.g. we will stagger individual group times on the playground). Where this is not possible, physical distancing measures between groups will be observed.
- If circumstances present where **mixing of cohorts is unavoidable** (e.g. staffing shortage, early/late child pick up due to emergency) we will keep daily records that include the names of the children and staff members participating in each group throughout the day. Our first course of action, if possible, will be to move staff members between groups.

#### **Lunches and Snacks**

**Snacks are not being provided by the centre during COVID operations and the snack fee is not being charged during this time.** Milk and/or water will be available for all children.

We are a nut-aware facility. Please **do not bring** any products containing nuts or traces of nuts into the centre.

#### **What is the expectation for snacks and lunches?**

- **Parents are responsible to send 2 snacks and a lunch** (including utensils) for their child daily. It is recommended that parents send their children with food in child-friendly containers or individually wrapped packages that children can easily open and close by themselves.
- Children are encouraged to **bring their own water bottle** (labelled please); however, disposable cups and water will be readily available.
- If your program has a **microwave for warming children's lunch** the following sanitization procedures will be used: changing gloves and wiping down the microwave between uses. **Check with your site supervisor to ensure access to a microwave is available.**

#### **Questions**

Should you have any further **questions about our Enhanced Health and Safety Protocols**, please feel free to speak with your Centre Supervisor/Director.

Thank you once again for choosing the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg Child Care Programs.