

Decisions and Safety Recommendations for Daycares Reopening in Nunavik

Version: June 12, 2020

Context

Children benefit from attending school, daycare and camps. It supports their overall development. For some children, attending daycare is a shelter from hostile households. Consequences of closing daycares will be broad and long lasting.

COVID-19 infection in children is less risky for them than many infections commonly transmitted in the region (e.g. bronchiolitis & influenza). Some studies suggest that children are less likely to transmit COVID-19 than adults, however, more studies are required to better understand how the virus is transmitted.

Children bear the consequences of lockdown with minimal benefit to their own well-being. As a region fighting to heal from intergenerational trauma, the importance of the well-being of children cannot be understated. Leaders should be careful in crafting decisions and take the big picture into account.

Objectives

- Prevent the spread of COVID-19 to numerous families through the childcare centre.
- Allow protection of vulnerable children
- Allow children to experience enriching activities (educational and traditional)
- Allow parents to resume work

Concise recommendations

In COVID FREE communities:

Prevention measures that have minimal impact on children should be put in place. The goal is to minimize the impact of an infected child on local transmission, while allowing full benefits.

Protocols are in place minimize the disruption, should a community move from COVID-19-free to COVID-19+.





- The symptomatic child will be placed into a separate space, the daycare should contact the nursing station for an appointment and the parents should bring the child to the nursing station for evaluation and testing as needed.
 1. Fever in children: 38°C (100.4°F) and above (rectal temperature),
 2. A new cough or a cough that gets worse
 3. Difficulty breathing
 4. Sudden loss of sense of smell without nasal congestion, with or without loss of taste.
- The room should be aired and disinfected with appropriate class management. Considering many children will not be sick from COVID-19 and knowing that children don't seem to be high-risk COVID-19 transmitters, staff should avoid overreacting emotionally and dramatically in their interventions.
- At the end of the day, the child will be dressed and brought to the entryway where a parent will be waiting.
- Once all children have been picked up, the educator will clean the room, disinfect objects with spray and remove garbage.
- Physical distancing is not recommended in an educational setting for children under 12, as it may be harmful for development.
- As long as communities remain COVID-19-free, there is no need for childcare workers to wear personal protective equipment. Seeing facial expression is essential for communication with small children.
- In the occurrence of a COVID-19 + situation in a community, Public Health will evaluate the risk for daycares and provide guidelines for enhanced measures.
- If face covers are required, they should be transparent to allow children to see the face of their educator.

Address Mental Health/Psychosocial support needs

- Encourage children to ask questions and voice their concerns.
- Provide information in an honest and age-appropriate manner.



Parents Guidelines during COVID-19

To benefit from the services, the child must have been attending daycare before the closure.

When a parent/guardian enters the centre, please follow the preventive measures set in place for the safety of the child and staff. Upon arrival, the parent/guardian will see that childcare centres have closed off the entryway to make a designated pick up and drop off area. The childcare center will only accept children of a working parent.

- Only one parent/guardian per family will be permitted in this area.
- If the child is showing signs of illnesses, he or she will not be accepted until 48 hours after symptoms have cleared.
- Please have an identified bag to place the child's belongings, the educator will take the bag with the child upon arrival.
- The educator will bring the child to wash their hands and then to their room.
- Throughout the day the child will be encouraged to wash their hands regularly.
- If the child begins to feel unwell and/or shows flu-like symptoms, the child will be placed in a designated quarantine area room and the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the child as soon as possible.
- Communicate clearly in advance with the parent/guardian to schedule a time that the child will be picked up in order for the educator to prepare the child to be met in the lobby.
- If possible, create opportunities for children to play and relax. Keep a stable environment.
- Provide age-appropriate explanations about the situation. Share information in a reassuring way. e.g. If your child is feeling sick and staying at home or the hospital, you could say, "You have to stay at home/at the hospital because it is safer for you and your friends. I know it is hard, scary or even boring at times, but we need to follow the rules to keep ourselves and others safe. Everything will go back to normal soon."

N.B. The return to daycare is voluntary. Parents are encouraged to contact their daycares to discuss the terms of their child's return.

