



Recommendations for the Reopening of Youth Centres in Nunavik

Context

Children benefit from attending youth centres. It supports their global development. For some children, the youth centre is a shelter from vulnerable households. Consequences of closing services for children and youth will be broad and long-lasting.

COVID-19 infection in **children** is less risky and some studies suggest that children are less likely to transmit COVID than adults, although more evidence is needed to fully understand how the virus is transmitted.

Children themselves bear consequences of lockdown, with very little benefit to their own health. In a region fighting to heal from intergenerational trauma, the importance of the well-being of children cannot be understated.

Objective

- Prevent the spread of COVID to many families through youth centres.
- Allow protection of vulnerable children.
- Allow children to engage in enriching activities (educational and traditional).

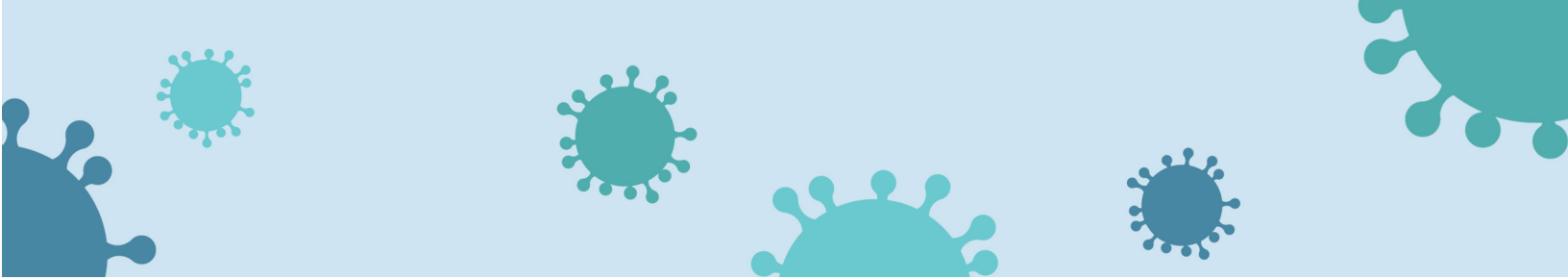
Concise recommendations

In COVID-FREE communities (COVID -):

- Preventive measures 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 to minimize the disruption, should a community move from COVID – to COVID+.

In communities where there are cases of COVID-19 (COVID +):

- Allow services to be offered when deemed safe by Public Health (for example, if a single case is a traveller with no contact with community members, youth centre activities could go on safely.)
- Public Health should examine every situation of transmission on a case-by-case basis and give recommendations.
- Youth centres should be closed when their closure entails a benefit in outbreak control.



Detailed recommendations:

1. Comply with isolation instructions whenever applicable

- Children and NYHA staff with symptoms of COVID-19 or who have tested positive for COVID-19 should not attend youth centres until they have been cleared by a health professional.
- Children and NYHA staff returning from the South must complete their quarantine and be free from symptoms of COVID before attending the youth centre. They are not permitted to attend the youth centre while in quarantine.
- Children and NYHA staff who are considered as contacts of a COVID-19 case must be assessed and cleared by a health professional before attending the youth centre.

2. Follow hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette

- Promote hand hygiene measures by making the necessary materials available (alcohol-based sanitizers, contactless trash cans, disposable paper towels, etc.).
- There must be proper ventilation that ensures good air circulation. It is essential that ventilation systems are maintained properly in accordance with the regulatory requirements for the type of establishment. It is also important to ensure that air is not blown directly on people.
- When possible, open windows during working hours to ensure good air circulation.
- Install hand-sanitizer dispensers at strategic points (entrance/exit, washrooms, kitchen).

2.1 Promote the practice of respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette:

- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, using tissues or the bend of the elbow, and wash hands afterwards.
- Immediately throw used tissues into the trash and wash your hands.
- Ideally, use contactless trashcans.
- Do not touch your mouth or eyes with your hand.

2.2 Handwashing/disinfecting when:

- Entering the youth centres
- At the start and end of every activity
- Before going to the toilet and immediately after
- Before snacks
- After blowing nose or when hands are soiled



Face coverings are an additional measure to help slow the spread of COVID-19 when combined with social distancing in public settings.

Face coverings should be washed after each use. It is important to always remove face coverings correctly and wash your hands after handling or touching a used face covering.

Cleaning Process: How to wash

Washing Machine:

- Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used to make the face covering.

Washing by hand:

- Soap and hot water
- Rinse thoroughly with cool or room-temperature water.

Cleaning Process: How to dry

Dryer:

- Use the highest heat setting and leave in the dryer until completely dry.

Air dry:

- Lay flat and allow to completely dry. If possible, place the cloth face covering in direct sunlight.

In the event a child develops symptoms while at the youth centre, isolate him/her in a separate room.

3. Setting examples for physical-distancing measures

NYHA staff should set examples for good behaviour. Limit activities where children are unable to respect the two-metre distance guideline. The idea is to limit the number of children and NYHA staff exposed, should a child or a member of NYHA staff be infected.

- Establish and post occupancy limits that ensure the physical-distancing requirement can be maintained. Consider floor surface area, possible reconfiguration of accessible areas and availability of equipment when determining capacity limit.
- If equipment cannot be moved and will result in people being within two metres of one another, you may erect barriers, such as Plexiglas, between pieces of equipment or restrict access to certain equipment.
- It is recommended to avoid shouting inside the youth centre to lower the risk of transmission of the coronavirus.
- Limit indoor activities where physical-distancing measures are not possible if it is not possible to provide the children and NYHA staff with face masks.
- Reduce the number of children in the youth centre by implementing group periods.
- Divide open hours into separate group periods.



Administrative procedures

- Keep a detailed entry log (name, date, arrival/departure time) so possible infectious contacts between children and NYHA staff can be traced adequately in the event of a positive COVID case.
- Keep children from entering the coordinator's office and kitchen.
- Contact your region's Department of Public Health to find out what procedures apply in the event of an outbreak at the youth centre.

4. Ensure that frequently touched objects and surfaces are cleaned and Disinfected

To limit contamination, the frequency of cleaning and disinfection must be increased. Shared objects (water cooler, art and crafts supplies, video-game console and controllers, computer mouse and keyboard, and ping-pong paddles), sanitary facilities, common areas and other surfaces should be disinfected at set times, safely using the housekeeping and disinfection products normally used.

- Youth centres are to be cleaned and all frequently touched equipment disinfected at the end of each day by staff.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment (e.g., video-game consoles, computers) between uses.

If the youth centre does not have functioning water services, it can still operate if it can ensure access to proper disinfecting products or an external source to provide water with diluted bleach. (Suggested concentration: 1:50, or 20 ml bleach in 1 litre of water, 980 ml to be more precise)

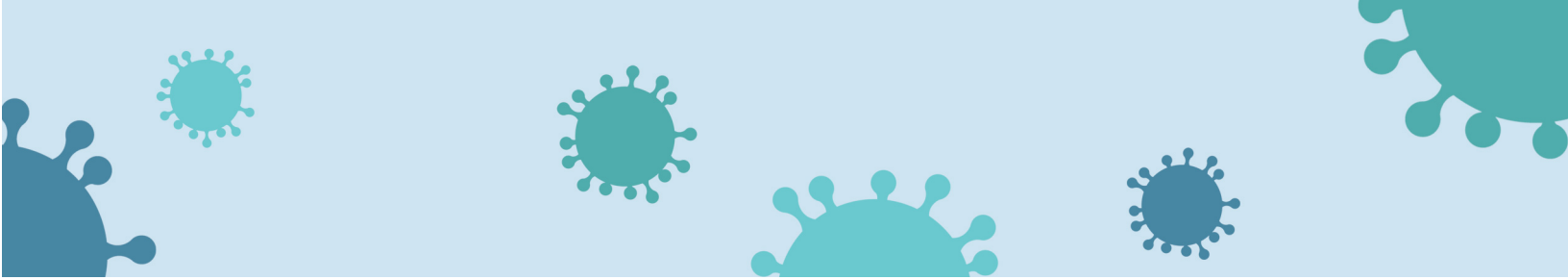
5. Be outdoors whenever possible

Favour outdoor activities

- Modify activities so that they can be held outside.
- Modify games so they can be held outdoors.

Adapt interior spaces

- Make changes to certain rooms so that children can be received there.
- Arrange furniture to provide space between items.
- Set aside a place for children or NYHA staff presenting with symptoms of COVID-19 so that they can be isolated.



In case of bad weather

- In advance, determine what activities are possible inside the youth centre in the event of rain.
- Prepare a range of contactless activities that can be used in the event of rain (freeze dance, charades, lip-sync contest, improv, etc.).

Wherever possible, have meals eaten outside

- Favour cold meals and limit the handling of food and of cups, plates and utensils by several people.

6. NYHA staff

- Ensure all NYHA staff are knowledgeable with respect to how COVID-19 is transmitted (i.e., droplet and contact transmission).
- Provide a consistent supply of hand soap, paper towels and garbage receptacles to encourage handwashing among staff and children.
- In between groups, NYHA staff must disinfect frequently touched surfaces (such as video controllers, doorknobs, computer mouse and keyboard, ping-pong paddles, desktops, sink fixtures).
- Each coordinator must determine an appropriate length of time the youth centre will be closed between groups to ensure disinfection of frequently touched surfaces.
- Limit the use of any equipment that is not washable or made of fabric (soft toys, costumes, etc.). Laminate games if possible to be able to wipe down with disinfectant wipes.
- NYHA staff are required to wash their hands before handing out equipment.
- Review activities proposed and remove anything that cannot be disinfected.
- Avoid having food handled multiple times (individual portions handled by the same NYHA staff each shift).

7. Address mental health/psychosocial support needs

Encourage children to discuss their questions and concerns. Explain it is normal that they may experience different reactions and encourage them to talk to NYHA staff if they have any questions or concerns. Provide information in an honest, age-appropriate manner. Guide children on how to support their peers and prevent exclusion and bullying. Ensure NYHA staff are aware of local resources for their own well-being. Work with street workers/social workers to identify and support children and NYHA staff who exhibit signs of distress.



For general information related to COVID-19, contact 1-833-301-0296, chat with the NRBHSS Facebook page through *Messenger* or consult the webpage <https://nrbhss.ca/en/coronavirus>.

A public-health scientific committee revised these guidelines.

Useful links

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/>

https://nrbhss.ca/sites/default/files/covid19/Coronavirus_recommendations_EN.pdf

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/2946-community-organizations-covid19.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>