

## City of Surrey Preschool Programs: Safety Guidelines and FAQ's

As the start of the preschool year is just around the corner. We would like to take this opportunity to share the City of Surrey's commitment to keeping children safe in light of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The safety of our children and staff is our top priority. All of our preschools will operate under strict guidelines developed in conjunction with the Fraser Health Authority, Provincial Mandates and Health and Safety Standards. We will actively monitor our programs and may modify procedures as necessary. In addition, we may need to change sites or cancel programs if transmission rates go up or a community outbreak occurs. We will immediately inform parents of any changes.

Based on the health guidance for schools and childcare programs, our plans include a heightened level of health and safety measures. These include:

- Increased outdoor activities
- Routine daily screening for all staff and children
- Routine and frequent environmental cleaning
- Explicit policy for children or staff who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19 with coughing or sneezing not coming into preschool
- Promote and educate on good hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Hand washing will happen continuously throughout the day
- Physical distancing (activities will all have the central idea of being socially distant) and for younger children, reducing physical contact through activities.
- Children will have their own designated area to put their belongings and will access in an orderly fashion.
- No food sharing
- Designated outdoor sign-in and sign-out area for parents.

### **Routine cleaning and sanitization**

#### Following the current health authority guidelines for sanitization and care:

- Disinfection must be completed using a health authority approved sanitizer, which is a bleach, alcohol or quat-based solution. We respect that some families prefer us not to use these, and feel they are "unnatural" cleaning products. Unfortunately, these are the only options we have for disinfection.

- High-Touch Surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, toys and small appliances) in the facility are cleaned and disinfected regularly, including all accessible materials, are disinfected throughout the day.
- All surfaces are disinfected (counters, chairs, tables, etc.), sinks, toilets, faucet handles and the different types of dispensers after each use, if possible.
- General cleaning and disinfecting of the entire space occurs at closing everyday.

### **Illness and Attendance**

- Children may not attend preschool if they exhibit and symptoms of respiratory illness or fever. Our pandemic health and illness policy is attached. There are no exceptions to this illness policy.
- At drop off, parents will additionally be asked to confirm that they have reviewed their child's health prior to being dropped off at preschool and that their child is symptom free
- For the well-being of children, staff and families, open transparency and candor is required around all the above requirements. We understand that this may lead to challenging conversations as such it is important to acknowledge and respect the necessity and intention of care during the pandemic.

### **What will Physical Distancing look in Preschool?**

Maintaining a distance of 2 metres between two or more children can be challenging and not always feasible in a preschool setting. However, the following physical distancing strategies will be implemented where possible.

- Educators will regularly remind children to “keep your hands to yourself”
- Educators will utilize outdoor space as much as possible
- Educators will continue to incorporate “Open snack” instead of group snack. Open snack allows children to eat when they feel hungry. This will allow for a staggered snack transition time and minimize larger groups of children eating at the tables.
- Parents, caregivers and other non-staff adults will not be allowed into the preschool space. All pick up and drop off will be taking place at the outdoor exit to our preschool spaces.

### **Why are masks not recommended for children?**

- The COVID-19 guidelines for child care centres provide a safe setting for both staff and children. Therefore masks are not recommended nor necessary.
- For young children over the age of two years, masks are generally not recommended as they can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes.

### **How will play be offered safely?**

- Exercise, play, and other activities will be done outdoors as much as possible. In the event of extreme weather, we have scheduled gym time in our gymnasium.
- Group play activities will be organized in a thoughtful way, taking into consideration physical distancing. Hand hygiene will be encouraged before and after play.

#### **Will children be sharing toys and other items?**

- We will offer toys and items that encourage individual play and that can be easily cleaned and reduce hand-to-hand-contact and cross contamination.
- We will provide adequate amounts of high touch materials, such as art supplies, in order to minimize sharing between children. There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via books, paper or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit sharing of books or paper based resources to children.
- Supplies and materials (such as writing utensils) that have been used by children will be placed in a “To be cleaned” bin

#### **What about the use of sensory play such as sand and water?**

- Sand and water can be used for play provided that children wash their hands before and after play.
- COVID-19 does not survive well on surfaces, other than hard surfaces.
- There is no evidence showing that the virus survives on sand, in water, or on playdough.

#### **Will the class sizes be smaller?**

- The physical space requirements for licensed child care settings set out in the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) mean that child care centres already have sufficient space to support the physical distancing recommendations of the Provincial Health Officer.

#### **In the event my child comes down with symptoms while at preschool:**

- Symptomatic children are immediately separated from others and taken to the isolation room until they can go home. A staff member will remain with the child at all times.
- The parent or emergency contact will be notified to pick up the child immediately.
- Educator will get our “isolation package/comfort kit” which includes gloves, mask. Hygiene and respiratory etiquette will be practiced while the child is waiting to be picked up.

- Our staff will at this point be wearing a gown, gloves and mask. The space the child was isolated in will be disinfected once the child has been picked up.
- The local public health unit (8-1-1) will be contacted and notified of a potential case and seek input regarding the information that will be shared with other parents of children in the childcare centre.

#### **Who must stay home even if they are not sick?**

- If someone has travelled outside of Canada, they must self-isolate for 14 days upon return. Returning travellers who develop symptoms of COVID-19 during this time period should go for testing, but will still be required to complete their 14 days of self-isolation if they test negative. Those who test positive will be advised on further isolation by public health.
- If someone was told by public health or a health care provider that they are a close contact of a COVID-19 case, self-isolation is required for 14 days from the day of last contact.