

Environmental Scan of Public Health Guidelines for ELCC during COVID-19

Province/Territory	Date of Review of Guidelines	Re: Use of outdoors to reduce exposure to COVID-19	Re: Use of outdoor community spaces	Re: Use of centre's playground equipment	Re: General guidance for play materials and loose parts (no distinction between indoor and outdoor materials)	Re: Physical distancing guidelines	Re: Groupings and/or ratio changes	re: Regular use of masks (excluding guidelines for symptomatic children)	Source(s)
Alberta	As of June, 2020	No mention.	Encourages outdoor community walks and play in parks (except for playgrounds).	Use is limited to one cohort at a time and disinfected after each use.	Play materials designated for each cohort with cleaning and disinfection between use. No sharing of sensory materials within a cohort.	Maintain distancing and modify activities where possible.	Use cohorts of 10.	Staff use masks for "prolonged close interactions" (eg., feeding, diapering) or if interacting with more than one cohort.	Alberta Health Services, "COVID-19 Information: Guidance For Day Care/Out of School Care (Child Care)," June 11, 2020, accessed June 11, 2020, https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/54c64016-fd3f-40f5-a259-f5e08483bb29/resource/909dab18-4117-4022-9f29-460c81070dd8/download/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-daycare-out-of-school-care-2020-0611.pdf .
	As of May, 2021	Encourages outdoor settings when doing field trips or outings.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Cohorts of 30 people. Cohorts may not share outdoor space.	Same as above.	Alberta Health Services, "COVID-19 Information: Guidance for Daycare, Out of School Care (Child Care)," November 2, 2020, accessed on May 26, 2021, https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/54c64016-fd3f-40f5-a259-f5e08483bb29/resource/ae56544f-aad3-4395-8462-c866a019e79d/download/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-daycare-out-of-school-care-2020-11.pdf .
British Columbia	As of June, 2020	Encourages use of outdoors. Examples include snack, lunch, activities and play time.	No mention.	No mention. Reassure caregivers that outdoor playgrounds are safe. Encourage hand hygiene before, after, and during outdoor play.	Reduce physical contact by using materials that encourage individual play and eliminate materials that promote group play. Encourage hand hygiene.	Focus on limiting physical contact through small groups and arranging the environment for more space.	Use smaller group sizes. Use cohorts when possible.	Masks are not recommended. Measures such as hand hygiene and sanitizing are prioritized as more effective.	British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, "COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings," updated May 19, 2020, accessed June 2, 2020, https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19-pho-guidance-childcare.pdf .
	As of May, 2021	Same as above.	No mention.	Same as above.	Same as above - Sensory items may continue to be used as long as hand hygiene is practiced before and after.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Masks are recommended for indoors when physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained. Other measures such as physical distancing, hand washing are more prioritized.	British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, "COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings," updated February 12, 2021, accessed on May 26, 2021, http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance_Child_Care.pdf .
Manitoba	As of June, 2020	Encourages use of outdoors.	Encourages outdoor community walks and play in parks (except for community playgrounds).	No mention.	Limit high-contact and shared materials. Regular cleaning and disinfection.	Use small groups where possible. Encourage distancing by arranging the environment and modifying activities. Physical distancing is recommended among adults.	Use smaller group sizes. Use cohorts when possible. Cohorts of 30 children.	No mention (except for situations of symptomatic children).	Manitoba Public Health, "Coronavirus (COVID-19) Early Learning and Child Care Practice Guidance," April 9, 2020, accessed June 2, 2020, https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/famcirculats/Covid-19_Practice_Guide_ELCC_April92020.pdf .
	As of May, 2021	Same as above.	Same as above.	Children can play on play structures or play equipment as long as physical distancing can be maintained and hand hygiene can be done before and after use.	Younger children with more hand-to-mouth activity should not share toys in indoor or outdoor settings. Sensory materials can be used as long as each child is provided with their own.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Staff must wear non-medical masks, particularly when physical distancing is not maintained.	Manitoba Public Health, "Coronavirus (COVID-19) Early Learning and Child Care Practice Guidelines," September, 2020, accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/pubs/covid-19-elcc-practice-guide-updated-sept-2020.pdf .
New Brunswick	As of June, 2020	No mention.	No mention.	Use is subject to municipal directives	Regular cleaning and disinfection. Eliminate toys that cannot be easily cleaned including sensory items.	Distance cohorts from one another. Encourage children not to touch each other.	Use cohorts with maximum of 15 children and normal ratio guidelines.	No mention (except for situations of symptomatic children).	New Brunswick Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, "COVID-19 Recovery Phase: Guidance to Early Learning and Childcare Facilities and Day Camps," May 7, 2020, accessed June 2, 2020, https://www.nbed.nb.ca/ParentPortal/Content/Covid-19/ELCC%20May%207%202020%20EN%20FINAL.pdf .
	As of May, 2021	Encourages outdoor settings when doing field trips or outings.	Children can use their own facility structures or municipal play structures. Hand washing is required before and after outdoor play.	Child can use although outdoor activities may have to be staggered to meet physical distancing requirements.	Same as above.	Children do not have to physical distance within their group but must stay 2 metres from other groups.	Same as above.	Non-medical masks should be used when needed by following the mandatory order which they are in.	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, "COVID-19 Guidance for Early Learning and Childcare Facilities," December 16, 2020, accessed May 26, 2021, https://www.nbed.nb.ca/parentportal/Content/Covid-19/Guidance%20for%20ELCC%20facilities%20FINAL.pdf .
Newfoundland and Labrador	As of June, 2020	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health, "COVID-19 Child Care Operations Policy – Alert Level 3," 2020, accessed June 20, 2020, https://www.gov.nl.ca/eecd/eecd-covid-19-child-care-information/covid-19-child-care-operations-policy/ .
	As of May, 2021	No mention.	Encourages outdoor walks and play in public playgrounds. Hand-hygiene must be followed before reentering the child care services.	Limited to one homeroom and staff at one time. Hand-washing is encouraged.	Avoid sensory play unless the activity can be individualized for single child (or sibling) use. Remove shared items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected.	Physical distancing during large group activities should be maintained if possible.	Use cohorts.	Masks and face shield must be worn by staff.	Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health, "COVID-19 Regulated Child Care Operations Policy Effective during NL Life with COVID-19," March 22, 2021, accessed on May 26, 2021, https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/20247-A_COVID19RegulatedChildCare_OperationsPolicy.pdf .
North West Territories	As of June, 2020	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	N/A
	As of May, 2021	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	Hand hygiene is encouraged.	Physical distancing of 6ft.	Same as above.	PPE is provided for staff.	Northwest Territories Chief Public Health Office, "Child Care Information," May 6, 2020, accessed on May 26, 2021, https://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19/en/services/education-and-child-care/child-care-informationN .
Nova Scotia	As of June, 2020	Encourages outdoors.	Encourages outdoor community walks.	No mention.	Regular cleaning and disinfection. Eliminate toys that cannot be easily cleaned including sensory items	Distance cohorts from one another where possible.	Use cohorts.	Staff should wear masks when they are unable to keep a distance of 2 meters. PPE is required for normal sanitary practices (eg., diapering).	Nova Scotia Public Health, "COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings," June 3, 2020, accessed June 5, 2020, https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/education/#licensed-childcare .
	As of May, 2021	Same as above.	Encourages outdoor walks and to use neighbourhood outdoor green spaces. Public playgrounds may be visited.	Clean and disinfect outdoor play equipment as per regular cleaning schedule.	If possible designate space and toys within the play area for each cohort. Sandboxes may be used if toys are not shared and physical distance remains.	Maintain physical distancing where possible between cohorts of 15 (smaller if possible). Encourage children to avoid direct physical contact.	Use cohorts of 15 and support children to avoid physical contact and choose activities that allow for physical distancing when possible.	Same as above.	Nova Scotia Public Health, "COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings," updated May 10, 2021, accessed on May 26, 2021, https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19-Childcare-setting-guidance.pdf .
Nunavut	As of June, 2020	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	Regular cleaning and disinfection.	N/A	Separate groupings planned if COVID-19 enters the territory.	Masks will be implemented if COVID-19 enters the territory.	Nunavut Public Health, "Child Care Facility Guidelines for Re-opening June 1, 2020," (n.d.), accessed June 2, 2020, https://gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/child_care_facility_re-opening_guidelines_complete_en.pdf .
	As of May, 2021	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above. Verified on June 2, 2020
Ontario	As of June, 2020	No mention.	Use outdoor community space where centres have insufficient outdoor space.	Use is limited to one cohort at a time.	Play materials designated for each cohort with cleaning and disinfection between use. Eliminate toys that cannot be easily cleaned including sensory items.	Physical distancing where possible and between cohorts.	Use cohorts of 10.	PPE for normal sanitary practices eg., diapering.	Ontario Ministry of Health, "COVID-19 Guidance: Emergency Child Care Centres," May 8, 2020, accessed June 2, 2020, http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/child-care-re-opening-operational-guidance.pdf .
	As of May, 2021	Encourages doing activities outside to allow for more space for younger children.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above - Sensory materials must be only offered for single child use.	Same as above.	Permitted to use maximum group sizes as set out by CCEYA.	Staff must wear PPE while inside child care facility and medical masks must be worn outdoors if 2 metres can not be maintained. PPE required indoors at all time.	Ontario Ministry of Education, "Operational Guidance for Child Care During Covid-19 Outbreak," March 2021, accessed on May 26, 2021, http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/child-care-guide-child-care.pdf .
Prince Edward Island	As of June, 2020	No mention.	Encourages outdoor community walks.	One cohort is allowed in the play space at a time, but no use of playground equipment. School-aged children are permitted to use school playground structures.	Regular cleaning and disinfection. Limit the amount of toys. Play equipment such as balls can be shared.	Physical distancing of 2m among staff, and where possible with children and between cohorts. Siblings are permitted to intermingle.	Use cohorts. Enhanced educator-to-child ratio for preschool and school-age groups.	No mention.	Prince Edward Island Public Health Office, "PEI Chief Public Health Officer COVID-19 Response: Conditions for Re-opening Select Licensed Child Care Centres," March 20, 2020, accessed June 2, 2020, https://www.ecdaofpei.ca/user-content/resources/PEICovidChildcareDocMarch2020-v1.2.pdf .
	As of May, 2021	Encourages outdoor learning and play time.	Encourages walking, visiting nearby playgrounds, field trips.	Playgrounds and play equipments are safe for children to use - appropriate hand hygiene is encouraged.	Limit the use of shared equipment between children from different cohorts, frequent and thorough cleaning and sanitizing must happen each day - when items are shared, ensure to take precautions such as hand washing.	Same as above.	Cohorts must be used - should not exceed 50 people. Two cohorts may be combined during outdoor play.	Staff are required to wear masks.	Prince Edward Island Public Health Office, "PEI Chief Public Health Officer, Directive on Licensed Child Care Centres," November 20, 2020, accessed on May 26, 2021, https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/cphdirectivonlicensedchildcarecentres_updated.pdf .
Québec	As of June, 2020	No mention.	No mention.	No use of fixed playground equipment.	Reduce sharing of materials.	Physical distancing of 2 meters maintained at all times.	Use small groups.	PPE (including masks) provided to staff because impossible to maintain physical distancing.	Quebec Public Health Branch, "Educational childcare services in the context of COVID-19 pandemic," 2020, accessed June 23, 2020, https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/services-de-garde-educatifs-a-lenfance-dans-le-contexte-de-la-covid-19/ .
	As of May, 2021	Encourages outdoor activities, if possible.	No mention.	Clean when visibly soiled.	No mention.	Distance of 2 metres between adults and children - no distancing measures for children of the same group.	Maximum 10 children per group.	Same as above.	Institut National De Sante Publique Du Quebec, "Services de Garde en installation," November 3, 2020, accessed on May 26, 2021, https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/2984-travailleservices-garde-covid19.pdf .
Saskatchewan	As of June, 2020	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	Frequent cleaning of outdoor materials.	Physical distancing of 2 meters.	Use cohorts of 8 and normal educator-to-child ratios. Include siblings in cohorts where possible. Small groups can play outdoors within the regulated play space requirements per child.	No mention.	Saskatchewan Public Health, "Information for Licensed Child Care Facilities: Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)," March 23, 2020. Retrieved June 2, 2020 from https://www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/SK_COVID-19%20-%20Measures%20to%20Reduce%20Spread%20of%20the%20Disease%20-%20Final.pdf .
	As of May, 2021	No mention.	Encourages neighbourhood walks.	Play structures may only be used by one group and must be cleaned and disinfected before and after use by each group.	Limit toys that encourage group play in close proximity. Sensory play should be eliminated. Hand hygiene is encouraged.	Staff should minimize frequency of direct physical contact with children and encourage child to do so as well. Encourages younger children to focus on minimizing physical contact since physical distancing is less practical.	Groups must be separated from each other and must remain with the same children and staff. No mention on how many children per group.	Staff should wear PPE.	Saskatchewan Public Health, "Child Care Facilities Guidelines" (n.d.), accessed on May 26, 2021, https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/re-open-saskatchewan-plan/guidelines/child-care-facilities-guidelines#guidelines-for-general-operation .
Yukon	As of June, 2020	Outdoors encouraged. Examples include snack, lunch, activities and play time.	Encourages use of community spaces including public playgrounds.	No mention. Regular cleaning of outdoor spaces.	Reduce physical contact by using materials that encourage individual play and eliminate materials that promote group play including sensory materials.	Discourage physical contact and encourage physical distancing among children. Physical contact is permitted for comforting children. There must be no intermingling of cohorts at all times.	No mention.	PPE for normal sanitary practices eg., diapering.	Yukon Public Health, "Public Health Interim Guidance for Yukon Daycares and Day Homes: Enhanced Measures During the COVID-19 Pandemic," May 14, 2020, accessed June 2, 2020, https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/hss/hss-ims/interim_guidance_child_care_covid-19_may_14_en.pdf .
	As of May, 2021	Same as above.	Same as above.	No mention.	Water tables may be used by the same group, and must be washed and sanitized between groups. Use toys that can be cleaned easily during the day.	Close contact is permitted within a group or cohort. Other general prevention measures should still be followed where possible.	Groups or cohorts are recommended if possible.	Staff are required to wear non-medical masks.	Yukon Public Health, "Guidance for Yukon Licensed Child Care Centres, School Age Programs and Family Day Homes: COVID-19," May 26, 2021, accessed on May 26, 2021, https://yukon.ca/en/health-and-wellness/covid-19/child-care-centres-and-family-day-homes .