

Child Care Summer Programming - Frequently Asked Questions

The following recommendations are intended to help child care operators and staff (including home care providers) working in both licensed child care centres and home child care to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

The recommendations provided in this document must be used to guide summer programming for licensed child care programs. Operators must ensure that appropriate infection, prevention and control (IPAC) measures are implemented and maintained in order to provide safe and healthy child care services. This document must be used in addition to Toronto Public Health's [COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings](#). Please note that this information may be updated as appropriate.

Recommendations for Child Care Operators and Staff to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19:

Can children participate in outdoor water play?

Outdoor water play is permitted as long as physical distancing (6ft/2m) is maintained. Participants must perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.

Can guests come lead outdoor enrichment programs?

If guests come on-site to lead outdoor enrichment programs please adhere to the following:

- At a minimum, child care staff, students, and visitors are to complete and provide daily confirmation of having self-screened, in a format deemed appropriate and accessible by the licensee, refer to [COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings](#)
- In shared outdoor space, physical distancing of at least 6 ft/2m must be maintained between groups and any other individuals outside of the group at all times
- When moderate to vigorous physical activity takes place outdoors, children and staff should maintain physical distancing of 3 meters
- Maintain a record of the visit as per [COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings](#).

Can we use the local splash pad?

Shared outdoor spaces and playgrounds may be used if physical distancing (6ft/2m) can be maintained between groups and other individuals outside of the group at all times. If it is difficult to maintain physical distancing (6ft/2m), schedule activities in outdoor spaces at times when the area is not occupied by other cohorts/groups.

Should children wear masks?

Indoors - All children in grades 1 (as of September 1, 2021) and above are required to wear well-fitting masks (e.g. non-medical) while indoors, unless medically exempt.

Children and staff can engage in low intensity physical activity indoors, while wearing masks and maintain physical distancing (6ft/2m). Children and staff should not be engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity indoors.

Outdoors - Use of masks is not required for outdoor activities if physical distancing of 6ft/2m can be maintained between children and cohorts.

When moderate to vigorous physical activity takes place outdoors, masks are not required; however, children and staff should maintain physical distancing of 3 meters.

Masks should not be worn for high intensity activities; however children and staff should maintain physical distancing of 3 meters.

Can children be bussed to/from our summer program?

If daily chartered transportation is provided for children, the following must be adhered to:

- Parents/guardians must screen children for any symptoms of COVID-19 prior to sending them to board the bus
 - Children who have symptoms associated with COVID-19 or may have been exposed to COVID-19 must not be allowed to take the bus
- All children and parents/guardians must maintain physical distancing (6ft/2m) while waiting for the bus
- Hand hygiene must be performed prior to and after each bus trip
- All children in grades 1 (as of September 1, 2021) and above are required to wear well-fitting masks (e.g. non-medical) unless medically exempt
- Bus seats for children must be assigned and cohorts should be kept together. Children must not change seats at any time during the bus trip. A record of the seating plan must be kept by the operator for contact tracing purposes
- Eating and drinking should not be permitted on the bus
- Maintaining physical distancing (6ft/2m) from those outside of the cohort group

Can the summer programs use shared space?

For more information regarding shared spaces please refer to the [COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings](#).

Where different cohorts are using the same indoor area (e.g. gymnasium) child care staff must ensure that physical distancing is maintained between the cohorts and that the groups do not mix.

If physical distancing cannot be maintained, consider using temporary physical barriers to prevent mixing of groups. The height of the barrier should take into account the tallest user and should consider the user's breathing zone. The breathing zone is defined as a pocket of air from which a person draws breath and generally extends 30 centimeters or 12 inches around (and above) the mid-point of a person's face.

Can we provide special lunches to children, outside of regular meal offerings?

Ensure food safety practices are in place:

- Reinforce "no sharing" policies and procedures. This includes the current practice of not sharing food, water bottles or other personal items
- Child care operators must modify meal practices to ensure that there is no self-serving or sharing of food at meal times
- Meals must be served in individual portions to the children.
- For more information please refer to the [COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings](#)

More information

For more information, visit Toronto Public Health's website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19 or call at 416-338-7600.