

REOPENING PLAN FOR CHILD CARE

Overview

To maintain the safe care of children, families and community members, the re-opening of licensed child care programs will follow a measured approach, in accordance with Public Health Guidance from Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services (AHS) and in compliance with the *Child Care Licensing Act* and regulations from Children's Services.

Considerations:

- This plan proposes re-opening child care programs gradually, and decreasing restrictions over time. Restrictions will be lifted in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services. Restrictions may be re-instituted as needed if there is increasing incidence of COVID 19 disease in the community. When the incidence of COVID 19 disease is eliminated or greatly reduced, all child care licensing activities will return to conditions prior to the COVID-19 program closure with enhanced public health guidelines.
- Any program connected to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 will be required to close for a minimum of 72 hours to allow contact tracing, and then adhere to recommendations from Alberta Health.
- Unless directed otherwise, all re-opening child care programs will be required to comply with the following:
 - Additional Public Health Measures, which outlines enhanced measures to prevent the spread and risk of contracting an illness. These are the same guidelines that were issued for child care programs that had re-opened for essential service workers. These guidelines can be embedded into the child care program plans required by Children's Services and would be monitored by child care licensing staff. These will be available in the near future.
 - Alberta Health Services Child Care Facility Guidelines, which combines regulatory requirements for child care programs and recommendations from AHS. These health and safety requirements are monitored by AHS to minimize the likelihood of child illness or injury. The guidelines can be found here: www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-health-safety-guidelines-child-care-facilities.pdf.
 - All applicable zoning, health and safety legislation, including those within the *Child Care Licensing Act* and regulations. This includes all standards not modified or suspended through an order or a superseding public health measure.
 - Alberta Health's [Workplace Guidance for Business Owners](#), which provides guidance for all businesses to help them reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among workers, volunteers and patrons.
- Currently, Alberta is recommending people keep a physical distance of 6 feet or 2 metres when possible. While it is understood that caring for children does not allow for a 2 metre separation, it is recommended this distance is maintained where possible (for example, staff should try to maintain 2 metres of space between each other).
- Licence holders will be required to ensure records are kept up to date and available as per the Child Care Licensing Regulation.
 - Attendance must be tracked. This will help ensure a possible COVID-19 outbreak can be contact traced and addressed quickly.
 - All visitors attending the centre for more than 15 minutes must be documented in the attendance checklist.
 - The Child Care Licensing Regulation allows for the collection of any relevant health information about a child provided by the child's parent, which would include the Visitor's Checklist provided in the Additional Health Information.

Child Care Phased Re-Opening Plan

Phase 1: Re-opening child care programs safely

- Same standards as re-opened child care programs for essential service workers
- Only daycare (DC) and out of school care (OSC) programs are permitted to re-open

Duration:

- At least 2 - 3 weeks in consultation with Alberta Health

Conditions:

- No known outbreaks in child care program or larger community
- No issues identified by Alberta Health Services or Alberta Health

Assumptions:

- Group sizes and larger gatherings are still restricted or allowed to occur under specified public health guidelines.
- Not all families in this phase will be able to return to their former program and we should continue to encourage using centre based child care if they have no other option.
- Programs will need time to implement cleaning protocols, change program plans, and maintain a state of new normal prior to bringing up enrollment.

Outbreak Risk:

- Programs permitted to re-open in communities where there is determined to be a low risk of outbreak.
- Any program connected to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 must close for a minimum of 72 hours to allow contact tracing, and then adhere to recommendations from Alberta Health/AHS.
- Programs that are located in seniors centres or recreations centres that do not have the ability to operate as a stand alone program (separate entrance, separate washrooms, and separate play areas) will not be able to open.
- Programs that are located in a church or community centre can only operate when the facility is not being used by another group to ensure there is no sharing of space or entrances. Rigorous cleaning of high touch surfaces should be completed before and after another group uses the same space. There needs to be a responsible party dedicated to do this cleaning.
- Operators who offer both DC and OSC in one building will be allowed to open both programs as long as they are able to keep/maintain physical separation between the 2 programs and follow all health requirements, including group size.

Additional Measures:

Programs will be required to follow the “Additional Public Health Measures” issued for programs that have re-opened for essential service workers including active screening, increased handwashing, physical distancing (See detailed description below).

- Masks are not mandatory; however, if a mask is used in a program the person needs to follow the [public health guideline](#) on how to use the mask.

Group Size:

Each room (day care and out of school care) must not exceed a 10 person maximum capacity.

- Groups of 10 must be cohorted and not mix with other groups of 10 in the same daycare/out of school care.
- More than one program can be offered per building (e.g. a daycare and an out of school program) as long as they are able to keep/maintain separation between the programs (separate entrances/exits, washrooms, and common areas) and follow all health requirements, including group size.
- Programs that use dividers, half walls, or temporary barriers to break up a larger room into smaller spaces are not able to utilize their room for more than 10 people.
- All spaces need to be cleaned before and after use if children are moved within a program or play equipment.

Record Keeping:

- Programs will be required to keep records of anyone entering the facility (e.g. staff working each day, parent drop offs, contractors, anyone who stays for 15 minutes or longer, etc.). Records must be kept up-to-date and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of an outbreak.
- Program attendance will need to be reported weekly to the Ministry of Children’s Services.

Special Events:

- To align with physical distancing requirements, field trips, group transportation, holiday events, performances or celebrations must be postponed or cancelled.

Program Plans:

- Licence holders will have program plans that include physical distancing and other measures in keeping with recommended public health guidelines, including:
 - Staggered drop-off and pick-up times;
 - If possible, one designated parent/guardian to drop-off and pick-up child;
 - Nap rooms able to meet physical distancing requirements;
 - While eating, children are practicing physical distancing;
 - Telephone or video conferencing when possible to meet with staff and parents;
 - Indoor and outdoor equipment able to be cleaned between groups of children; and
 - Food must not be served family style.

Phase 2: Graduated implementation under less stringent public health guidelines

- Focus on expanding implementation of day care and out of school care

Duration:

- TBD in consultation with Alberta Health

Conditions:

- No known outbreaks in child care program or larger community
- No issues identified by Health
- Child care program has demonstrated compliance to all health guidelines

Assumptions:

- Many places of work will have begun re-opening under new guidelines and more Albertans will require access to full time child care. Program occupancy will be increased to take on more children

Outbreak Risk:

- Same as Phase 1

Additional Measures:

- Same as Phase 1

Group Size:

Daycares and out of school care programs can run at 75% of their maximum capacity up to a maximum of 20 persons cohort per room in day care and 30 person cohort per room in out of school care.

Children must be cared for within their cohort. There cannot be any intermingling of children between rooms within a program.

- All spaces need to be cleaned before and after use Spaces within the centre such as playgrounds or rooms that are used by more than one group can only be used by one cohort at a time and must be cleaned between each cohort.
- Programs that use dividers, half walls, or temporary barriers will be able to open divided space as a separate room for children as long as each cohort can be kept from intermingling.

Record Keeping:

- Programs will be required to keep records of anyone entering the facility (e.g. staff working each day, parent drop offs, contractors, anyone who stays for 15 minutes or longer, etc.). Records must be kept up-to-date and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of an outbreak.
- Program attendance will need to be reported bi-weekly/monthly to the Ministry of Children's Services.

Special Events:

- Holiday events, performances or celebrations must continue to be postponed or cancelled.
- In-person parent engagement activities are discouraged and must not occur unless essential.
- Field trips or group transportation are discouraged but may be allowed if there is adherence to public health guidelines.

Program Plans:

- Programs will continue to implement physical distancing where possible, as outlined in their program plans, and adherence to all public health guidelines.

Phase 3: Continue phases to reach full enrollment with conditions

- TBD in consultation with Alberta Health