

Child care safety guidance for parents



Why are parents encouraged to return their child to child care settings?

- ✓ *Child care settings have many benefits, including: spaces for healthy eating, exercise, social and emotional development and connecting with others.*
- ✓ *These benefits help with the physical and mental well-being of children.*
- ✓ *There are no extra risks in child cares than in other public spaces.*
- ✓ *Children are less likely than adults to catch or spread COVID-19*
- ✓ *Continuing child care operations gives access to child care for parents who need to work.*

What's the risk of COVID-19 for young children?

Very few children get sick from COVID-19. In BC, children have had a much lower rate of COVID-19 infection than adults. If children do get sick with COVID-19, they have mild symptoms. Parents should focus on preventing the spread of COVID-19 between adults.

Some children may have a higher chance of more serious symptoms if they get COVID-19. This includes children under 1 year of age, those with weakened immune systems and those with pre-existing lung conditions. Check with your healthcare provider if you have concerns.

You can learn more about COVID-19 at bccdc.ca/covid19. You can check your symptoms using the self-assessment tool at bc.thrive.health.



How can I protect my child(ren) and others from COVID-19?

If your child is healthy and not showing symptoms, it is your choice to send them to a child care setting. All child care settings have put measures in place to help reduce the spread of the virus. You can protect your loved ones and others by following the guidelines below.

Keep your child home if they are sick

- Check in with your child(ren) daily to see if they have COVID-19 symptoms.
- If they have symptoms: (a) do not send them to child care; (b) get them tested for COVID-19.
- Be aware of common COVID-19 symptoms. Teach your children about them if they are old enough to understand.
- If a parent is sick, but does not have COVID-19: their child can be sent to child care if the child does not have symptoms
- If a parent has COVID-19, their child cannot go to child care until allowed by public health



Practice prevention before and after child care

- Have everyone wash their hands before they leave for child care and after they get home.
- When dropping off and picking up children, adults should keep 2 metres from other adults not in their own household.
- Drop off your child(ren) at drop-off times assigned by staff. Avoid going into the child care setting if possible.
- Clean all items the child takes to child care, (e.g., toys, backpacks, bottles, sippy cups and lunch containers) before and after child care.



Outside of the child care setting:

- Follow all guidance from public health.
- Limit play dates to the same children as much as possible.

Teach children about prevention

- Wash hands often, including before and after they play, go outside, eat, use the washroom or touch shared things like toys.
- Be aware that some hand sanitizers are not safe for infants, children and pregnant or breastfeeding women. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is approved by Health Canada. Read labels carefully.
- Encourage children to avoid physical contact. This is more important than keeping 2 metres apart
- Teach kids about keeping their hands below their shoulders, so they don't touch their face.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with elbow/tissue.
- Put tissues straight in the garbage.
- Masks are not recommended for any children in child care settings. Children under two years of age should not wear masks. For children over two years of age, masks may lead to increased touching of the face. Some parents may choose to have their older children wear a non-medical mask.
- Avoid sharing food, drinks, soothers, bottles, sippy cups, toothbrushes and other personal items.



Be open and honest with kids and teens

- Listen to children who might be worried about going back to child care
- Let them ask questions
- Tell children what their child care setting does to help keep them safe
- Maintain familiar activities like mealtimes and outdoor exercise
- Focus on positive behaviours and acknowledge/give kudos to children for their efforts when they follow guidelines, even if they have to be reminded
- Help children realize that they can do a lot to protect themselves and others, such as washing their hands

