

Communicable Disease Plan

Introduction

The Public Health Guidance for Communicable Disease (including COVID-19) Management in Child Care Settings was updated on August 25, 2022 to reflect the advice of public health experts and to continue to build on the experiences of previous years. Public Health Guidance for Communicable Disease (including COVID-19) Management in Child Care Settings was developed by the Ministry of Education and Child Care in collaboration with the BC Centre for Disease Control, Indigenous rights holders and education partners.

Key Principles

The following principles will continue to guide TreeFrog Daycare to reduce the risk of transmission of any communicable disease (including COVID-19):

- Communicable disease prevention measures continue to be aligned with public health guidance.
- The Provincial Health Officer or local Medical Health Officers may issue temporary provincial, regional or local recommendations or orders of additional prevention measures during times of increased communicable disease risk.
- “Childcare operators are responsible for implementing their own health and safety policies as independent organizations. Childcare operators are encouraged to take the time needed to adjust their policies to best suit the needs of staff, children, and families.”
(BCCCD)
- Steps are taken to reduce the risk to workers from communicable disease as per WorkSafe BC

Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures

Infection prevention and exposure control measures (also called communicable disease measures or health and safety measures) help create safe environments by reducing the spread of communicable diseases, including COVID-19. TreeFrog Daycare continues to provide a supportive environment for communicable disease prevention by implementing the following strategies:

- Robust illness policies for children and staff. (Appendix A)
- Reinforcement and adoption of effective personal practices (such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette)
- Various environmental measures (such as enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices, ensuring HVAC systems are operating properly).

Health Awareness

“Childcare operators should ensure that staff, parents, caregivers, other adults entering the facility, and children are aware that they should not come to childcare if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. Childcare operators should support this practice by communicating the importance of everyone doing a health check. A health check means a person regularly checking to ensure they (or their child) are not experiencing symptoms of illness (including but not limited to COVID-19 symptoms) that would limit their ability to participate fully in regular activities before coming to childcare” (BCCCD). Clear signage to remind people not to enter the facility if they are sick will be posted at facility entrances. TreeFrog staff will ask families to confirm their child’s health at drop off, and staff will self-monitor daily.

Communicable Disease Management

Most communicable diseases experienced by children and staff within childcare settings may be managed by the individual/family and through routine preventive measures, such as staying home from childcare until well enough to participate in regular activities.

Public health may become directly involved if certain reportable diseases, such as measles, are identified where there are effective interventions available to prevent further spread and protect against severe disease. Additional time-limited public health measures may also be implemented at the discretion of the Medical Health Officer or Provincial Health Officer in response to broader risk of communicable disease transmission in the community. Childcare facilities are not required to close unless directed to do so by public health. *(BCCCD)*

In The Event of Illness

- Children and staff in the childcare setting who are exhibiting symptoms of illness (including but not limited to COVID-19 symptoms) should stay home until they are well enough to participate in regular activities, and meet TreeFrog's Health Policy criteria (appendix A)
- Children and staff can attend childcare if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies, asthma) or symptoms have improved enough that they feel well enough to return to regular activities and their fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g. acetaminophen, ibuprofen) *(BCCCD)* for a minimum of 48 hours.
- Families are required to notify the daycare via email if their child has any symptoms of illness that require them to stay out of care.
- When children or staff are experiencing illness they should follow the BCCDC guidance outlined in [When to get a COVID-19 test \(bccdc.ca\)](https://www.bccdc.ca/when-to-get-a-covid-19-test). If you are unsure or concerned about your symptoms, connect with your health care provider, or call 8-1-1. *(BCCCD)*
- Children and staff in the childcare setting who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the guidance on the BCCDC website as to how long they should self-isolate. *(BCCCD)* They can return to childcare when they no longer need to self-isolate if symptoms have improved for 48 hours without medication, and they are well enough to participate in regular activities.
- If a staff member or child develops symptoms of illness at childcare and is unable to participate in regular activities, they will be required to be go home as soon as possible. Parents will be called immediately at the emergency number provided daily at drop off and will be expected to pick up in a timely fashion according to our Health Policy (appendix A). Appropriate infection control precautions will be taken while the person is preparing to leave the childcare premises, including use of appropriate hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of surfaces soiled with bodily fluids. Staff may use a mask if they are experiencing respiratory symptoms or assisting a child who is unwell.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Cleaning: the physical removal of visible soiling (e.g., dust, soil, blood, mucus). Cleaning removes, rather than kills, viruses, and bacteria. It is done with water, detergents, and steady friction from cleaning cloth.

Disinfection: the killing of viruses and bacteria. A disinfectant is only applied to objects; never on the human body. *(BCCCD)*

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the daycare will occur regularly by our cleaner, in addition to ongoing cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day by staff.
- Toys will be sprayed frequently throughout the day and allowed to air dry
- Disinfectant bins or sinks will be used throughout the day to soak any toys which are mouthed
- Frequently touched surfaces such as taps, doorknobs, light switches, handles, tables, counters, chairs, etc. will be sprayed with disinfectant throughout the day
- Bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly
- All garbage will be taken outside daily
- We will use commercially available detergents and disinfectant products, following the instructions on the label, according to the BCCDC Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings guidance
- Please completely empty your child's cubby daily to allow for thorough cleaning
- We will also ensure adequate ventilation, and open windows whenever possible. Air purifiers will be run throughout the day.

Hand Hygiene

Hand washing with plain soap and water is the single most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Children and staff will be encouraged to practice frequent hand hygiene.

How to perform hand hygiene:

- Wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds (sing the “ABC’s” or “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”)
- If sinks are not available (e.g., children and staff are outside), supervised use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol may be considered.
- If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand sanitizers may not be effective at eliminating respiratory viruses. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty.
- BCCDC’s Hand Hygiene poster and signage will be posted by daycare’s sinks.
- Staff will assist young children with hand hygiene as needed, and model proper handwashing throughout the day

Respiratory Etiquette

Children and staff should practice routine respiratory etiquette:

- Cough or sneeze into their elbow sleeve or a tissue.
- Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene (“Cover your coughs”).
- Not touch their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands (“Hands below your shoulders”)

(BCCDC)

Vaccines

Vaccines are important tools to protect against many serious communicable diseases. Vaccination protects against serious illness due to Covid-19 and is the most effective way to reduce the impact of Covid-19 in our communities. To get the most effective protection against serious cases of Covid-19, it is important to get all recommended vaccine doses. While vaccination is not mandatory, if your child is vaccinated, we do require up to date information for our records.

Visitors

Visitors will be welcomed with an appointment. All visitors will be expected to follow the daycare's communicable disease protocols and requirements, and have completed a self-check, prior to entering the daycare, and to follow applicable communicable disease prevention measures outlined in this document.

Communications and Protecting Personal Privacy

Staff and/or Board will communicate to families the need to follow any recommended public health measures, practice health awareness, and to stay home when sick. We will continue to exercise caution in providing communicable disease notifications in a manner that protects personal privacy. Information about communicable illnesses (beyond colds), including possible exposure dates and programs, will be shared in a timely fashion via email and the private Parent and Staff Facebook page. In the interest of privacy, details beyond what we share will not be provided and we ask that families refrain from asking staff for further information.

Functional Closures

"Childcare operators can use their discretion to close if they have operational or business reasons. For instance, facilities experiencing illness amongst staff may need to close for operational reasons if they are unable to maintain staff to child ratios as required under the Child Care Licensing Regulation." (BCCCD)

TreeFrog Daycare will implement a functional closure in the event staff are away or unwell, and we are unable to temporarily replace them sufficiently to cover ratio for the number of children in care.

When children are ill, the active environment of the daycare is not the place for them. They require a more relaxed atmosphere and more individualized attention than the daycare can provide. The following information is intended to minimize the health risks inherent in caring for children in a group setting. All the children, parents and staff benefit when these guidelines are followed.

NOTE: All Public Health guidelines, will take precedent over our regular policy until further notice. To ensure consistency, the daycare follows Public Health guidelines and our own policy in all cases, not the directions of individual doctors.

Your child should not come to daycare with the following conditions. Your child may return to daycare when s/he has been symptom-free for 24 hours without medication, unless otherwise specified:

Acute cold: To help limit the spread of germs, please keep your child at home if they are feverish, coughing a lot, have frequent discharge from the nose that requires wiping more than twice in an hour, or is otherwise obviously unwell. Child may return to daycare when symptoms have subsided for 48 hours without medication

Cough: Frequent bouts (3-5 times per hour) and especially if accompanied by choking or vomiting. Child may return to daycare when symptoms have subsided for 48 hours without medication

Influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory diseases: Children must remain home if they are showing symptoms including but not limited to fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, headache, body aches, sore throat, nausea/vomiting, stuffy or runny nose. They may return to the centre once it is determined that they do NOT have COVID-19, and their symptoms have resolved for a minimum of 48 hours without medication. If all symptoms have resolved aside from a clear runny nose or post-viral dry cough, please refer to our Health Decision Making document see if your child is ready to return to care. In the event your child tests positive for COVID-19, follow the guidance on the BCCDC and return when symptoms have improved for 48 hours without medication, and are well enough to participate in regular activities

Antibiotic Treatment: Child may return after s/he has received 24 hours of treatment.

Communicable Diseases: (chicken pox, etc.) Report to the daycare as soon as possible. Tree Frog will guide you in observing Public Health standards for returning to daycare.

Diarrhea: (more than one abnormally loose bowel movement in 24 hours). Child may return when s/he has had normal bowel movements for 48 hours.

Vomiting: A child will be sent home when vomiting for any reason. The child may return after s/he has not vomited for 48 hours.

Fever: 38 degrees Celsius (101 degrees Fahrenheit) or over, usually accompanied by other symptoms such as listlessness. The child may return when the fever has remained below 38 for 24 hours **without medication.**

Skin or Eye Infection: The child may return when a doctor has examined him and received medical clearance. Pink eye (conjunctivitis) must be treated and eyes clear before the child returns.

Medication: (Tylenol, etc.) The child may return when symptoms have subsided, and the child no longer requires medication for pain or fever. Staff do not administer non-prescription drugs. In the event of a chronic condition (asthma, allergies, etc.) we will require a care plan be completed and reviewed annually.

Parasitic Infestations: (Head Lice, Pinworms, Scabies) Report to the daycare as soon as possible. Tree Frog will guide you in observing Public Health standards for returning to daycare. All members of the household must be treated to prevent re-infestation. **In the case of head lice, the child must be completely nit free before returning to the daycare.**

If a child displays symptoms of any of these conditions at Tree Frog, the parent will be contacted and will be required to pick up the child. If the parent cannot be reached or does not return a message within 30 minutes, Tree Frog will contact the emergency pick-up person on the child's registration form. The child must be picked up within 2 hours of the original call to the parent.

It is extremely important that parents notify the daycare of any illnesses in order to prevent the illness from spreading. This is particularly important concerning communicable diseases, as immunization is not mandatory

Consequences of non-compliance:

The 1st occurrence of:

- (a) the parent or emergency contact not picking up the sick child within 2 hours of the original call, or
- (b) a parent knowingly bringing their sick child to daycare, or
- (c) a violation of any of the above conditions,

will result in a warning and the parent will be required to sign a copy of the Health Policy.

Additional occurrences will be subject to the following charges:

2nd occurrence: \$25

3rd occurrence: \$50, as well as written notice that there will be withdrawal of care if it happens again.

Charges will be added to the next monthly invoice.

