

# Guidance and Consideration for Children's Day Camps during COVID-19 Pandemic



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## INTRODUCTION

The BC Recreation and Parks Association's (BCRPA) members operate more than 500 indoor and outdoor facilities in every community of our province, generating over 80 million visits in a typical year.

Municipal summer day camps service hundreds of thousands of children each year, helping to support working families and providing safe, informative and fun activities for children throughout the summer months. BCRPA's position is that these day camps are essential to active, healthy and connected children and families. which is so desperately needed during these turbulent times.

Recognizing that this is a starting point, BCRPA will continue to provide opportunities across the province to collaborate through resource and best practices sharing, day camp staff onboarding training and by supporting the connection of our members.

## GOALS OF THIS DOCUMENT

- To provide information, tools and considerations for local day camp decision-makers regarding safe operations that will limit transmission of COVID-19 within camp settings.
- To communicate a common approach that can be applied to the sector while meeting the broader guidelines and directives as set out by the BC Provincial Health Officer (PHO).
- To provide a template for those developing procedure manuals for their day camps.

## PUBLIC HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

BCRPA has kept informed of the Provincial Health Officer's (PHO) Orders, notices and guidance, recognizing that their responsibility is to monitor the health of the population across the province, while working with the BC Centre for Disease Control, and the provincial Medical Health Officers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the PHO has established eight principles for preventing the transmission of COVID-19. These are:

1. Staying informed, being prepared and following public health advice;
2. Practising good hygiene – hand hygiene, avoid touching your face and respiratory etiquette;
3. Staying at home and away from others if you are feeling ill – with no exceptions – whether for school, work or socializing;
4. Maintaining physical distancing outside the household, e.g., no handshakes or hugs, keeping your number of contacts low and keeping a safe distance;
5. Making necessary contacts safer with appropriate controls, e.g., redesigning spaces;
6. Increasing cleaning of frequently touched surfaces at home and work;

7. Considering the use of non-medical masks in situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained, such as on transit or while shopping; and,
8. Continuing to minimize non-essential personal travel.<sup>1</sup>

These principles have been reinforced in the Province’s BC’s Restart Plan, May 6<sup>2</sup>, with the following chart:

## Five Principles For Every Situation

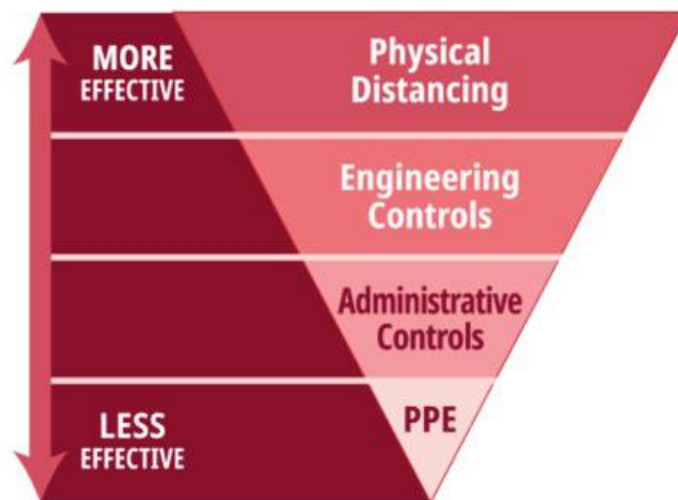
Personal Hygiene:	Stay Home if You Are Sick:	Environmental Hygiene:	Safe Social Interactions:	Physical Modifications:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent handwashing</li> <li>Cough into your sleeve</li> <li>Wear a non-medical mask</li> <li>No handshaking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routine daily screening</li> <li>Anyone with any symptoms must stay away from others</li> <li>Returning travellers must self-isolate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More frequent cleaning</li> <li>Enhance surface sanitation in high touch areas</li> <li>Touch-less technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with small numbers of people</li> <li>Maintain distance between you and people</li> <li>Size of room: the bigger the better</li> <li>Outdoor over indoor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spacing within rooms or in transit</li> <li>Room design</li> <li>Plexiglass barriers</li> <li>Movement of people within spaces</li> </ul>

The Restart Plan also includes the hierarchy of controls for COVID-19 which are fundamental to the information the recreation sector needs to restart operations.

### Hierarchy of Controls For COVID-19

The hierarchy of controls is a framework for reducing transmission hazards. The most effective controls are at the top of the pyramid.

Source: Koehler, K, Rule A. Can a mask protect me? Putting homemade masks in the hierarchy of controls. [Internet] 2020 April 2. Johns Hopkins Education and Research Center for Occupational Safety and Health.



<sup>1</sup> [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/gdx/bcs\\_restart\\_plan\\_web.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/gdx/bcs_restart_plan_web.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.energeticcity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BC-Restart-Plan.pdf>

This document provides information and considerations for the day camp sector to support compliance with these principles and focuses on three main areas for both children and their families as well as staff.

1. Processes to restart safely;
2. Measures to keep people safe and avoid further outbreaks;
3. Guidance in the event that a case or an outbreak should occur.

To address these three considerations, strategies are provided for physical distancing controls, hand hygiene provisions, and touch point sanitization.

## **COVID-19: OVERVIEW**

It is important for all recreation staff to know the following:

- Coronavirus is transmitted via larger liquid droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, but also potentially when they are talking in very close proximity to another person. The virus in these droplets then can enter the body of another person when that person breathes in the droplets. Also, droplet contact with mucous membranes in the eyes, nose or mouth via contact with contaminated hands or objects can also introduce the virus into the body.

This requires you to be in close contact – less than the physical distancing of 2 meters. This is referred to as ‘droplet’ transmission and is believed to be the primary way COVID-19 is transmitted.

- In addition, droplet transmission is much more likely when in close contact in an indoor setting.
- COVID-19 may also be transmitted through droplets in the environment if someone touches the contaminated area then touches their face or eyes without cleaning their hands. This speaks to the importance of regular hand cleaning and also the cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas in the environment.
- Thus far in the pandemic, COVID-19 has a very low infection rate in children; they seem to be at lower risk of developing symptoms.

### **COVID-19 Symptoms could include:**

- Fever
- New cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Headache
- Runny nose
- Diarrhea
- General feeling of being unwell

As understanding of the virus increases, the symptoms may periodically be updated. For current information, refer to the BCCDC website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/symptoms>

Your risk of severe disease may be higher if you have a weakened immune system or underlying health conditions. This may be the case for:

- older people
- obese individuals
- people with chronic disease (e.g., diabetes, cancer, heart, renal or chronic lung disease)
- Some children

### **Actions to Protect your Health**

- stay at home when sick, and remind parents that they should be monitoring their children's health and keeping children who are unwell at home
- washing your hands often with soap and water, including before meals, after using the bathroom, and when hands are visibly dirty
- sanitizing hands regularly throughout the day with alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneezing and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or face
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- if traveling outside of Canada, stay home for 14 days after returning to Canada, and remind parents to do so as well.

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR DAY CAMP STAFF**

### **Procedures**

All organizations intending to run summer day camps in 2020 must have procedures in place to conduct daily wellness checks, implement cleaning and disinfecting practices, and excludes children, parents and staff who are sick.

In addition to this document, please refer to BCRPA's [Guideline for Restarting Operations](#), and resources from the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) (including COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings) and WorkSafeBC (including <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/child-care>) for information in developing your procedures.

According to Provincial Government's [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#), *"physical distancing is challenging in a K-12 school setting, particularly with younger students. As such, it is reasonable to establish different expectations for varying age levels and activities."*

The following considerations and procedures should be implemented where possible for day camp settings:

- Clearly communicate with parents and caregivers that they must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to camp. Alternatively, conduct daily checks at drop-off each morning by asking parents and caregivers to confirm their child(ren) do not have the aforementioned symptoms.
- Staff must assess themselves for symptoms of common cold, influenza or COVID-19 prior to attending camp.
- Clear procedure for participants and staff who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19. Those with COVID-19 symptoms should contact 811 or the call centre to inquire about testing.
- Avoid close greetings and regularly remind campers to keep "hands to yourself"
- Reduce the ratio of children to staff
- A staff person not overseeing a group of children can help to support sign-in and sign-out procedures to help maintain physical distancing in the reception area that may become choke point.
- A staff person available should a child feel unwell and need to be separated from the group until their parents arrive
- Outdoor programming wherever possible
- Each staff member to have access to tissues for children who may be sneezing or coughing and hand sanitizer.
- Stagger pick up and drop off times
- Encourage appropriate hand hygiene practices

## **Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing involves taking steps to limit the number of people you come into close contact with (i.e. within 2 meters of another person) outside of your household. This is recommended to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Understandably, physical distancing is challenging in a childcare setting. At the same time, it is important that we do what we can to try to assist children. Use ideas that work for your setting like programming

for outside more often than inside, and staggering snack and lunch time so you can accommodate smaller groups with more space, etc.

Other steps that can be taken to support physical distancing may include:

- Provide activities that don't require physical interaction;
- Supervise smaller groups of children;
- Offer activities in an outdoor environment;
- When indoors, host activities in a sufficiently large space for the size of the group, provide separated work and play areas for each child;
- Provide access to hand hygiene stations.

BCRPA has created a series of webinars to support camp leaders with ideas for activities to keep children engaged and having fun while maintaining physical distance and not sharing equipment. There can be found at: <https://elearn.bcrpa.bc.ca/>

For more information about physical distancing, please visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/common-questions>, and <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/childcare-schools>

## DAY CAMP OPERATIONS

Plain language text and picture signage is suggested to help everyone adhere to the following guidelines.

**If at any time children have any symptoms, please request that the parent/caregiver take their child home and seek medical advice as necessary.**

Upon arrival to the camp:

### Greeting families and participants

- When congestion may be of concern, have a staff person who is not leading a group greet summer day camp children and parents with guidance on keeping a 2-metre distance (floor markings may also be helpful) while waiting their turn to register. If the camp is located indoors this should be done at the doors of the facility so that only camp leaders and participants are permitted indoors.
- Families should approach the staff person one by one, maintaining physical distance (two metres) from other families and from the staff person on duty.
- Where possible, sign-in and sign-out should be a verbal interaction to limit close physical contact among parents/caregivers and staff.



- It is suggested that families be provided a time range for drop off and pick up so that everyone is not arriving at the same time (i.e. 9-9:30am drop off, or surnames from A-M arrive at 9am and those with N-Z arrive at 9:15am).

### Daily Screening

- Parent/caregiver should be asked by staff if they or their child/ren have any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Responses are recorded on sign-in sheet.
- Parent/caregiver says goodbye.
- OUTDOORS: Staff can assist child/ren with finding their camp leader who will have a designated area for their participants and a designated area for their backpacks with their lunches (shaded area).
- INDOORS: Staff can assist child/ren with placing their belongings in a designated area.
- INDOORS & OUTDOORS: Offer children frequent hand hygiene options; they should wash their hands at the hand washing station at the beginning of the day, after using the washroom, and prior to eating. Hand sanitizing should occur regularly throughout the day.

### Daily Activities

- Attendance should be taken each day including any parents or caregivers who remain on site for any length of time. This will help with contact tracing should the need arise.
- Staff should consider carrying masks and gloves with them should they encounter situations where close contact is necessary (i.e. injury, etc.).
- BCRPA has professional development webinars for staff on activities that can be run while maintaining a 2 meter distance. See <https://elearn.bcrpa.bc.ca/>

## WHEN TO STAY HOME

**If any staff or children are sick, stay home.**

It is common for children and staff to show other respiratory symptoms that are similar to COVID-19 and this is the reason that they would normally be asked to stay at home when they have a new cough, cold, or a fever. In the case of symptoms appearing, advise parents to call 811 and arrange for testing.

**The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are provided by the BCCDC** <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/symptoms>

If a staff person starts showing symptoms of what could be a cold, influenza or COVID-19:

- An additional staff person must take over the duties immediately, and staff must be available to cover the remainder of the camp.
- They should go home right away and self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days.
- The space should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected once the (sick) staff person has left the camp.

**NOTE: Provincial health advice is to self-isolate for 10 days after first symptoms present themselves. If staff or campers have been notified by Public Health that they have been in contact with anyone who has tested positive, they should follow direction of Public Health staff and self-isolate until they have been cleared by Public Health, typically after 14 days.**

## ILLNESS PROTOCOL

If a child or staff member develops symptoms while at the program, they should be isolated away from the rest of the children and the parent or caregiver should be notified immediately to come and pick up the child.

If a child requires close contact and care, staff can continue to care for the child until the parent or caregiver is able to pick them up. Staff should wear a mask and eye protection during all interactions with the child and should avoid contact with the child's respiratory secretions. Staff should perform hand hygiene (washing or sanitizing their hands) before donning a mask, before and after removing the mask, and before and after touching any items used by the child.

Consideration: Staff may wish to have a change of clothes available should they have any concerns that the virus transferred onto their clothing while caring for the sick child before returning to the other campers.

Items used by the child while isolated should be cleaned and disinfected after the child has been picked up.

If a child or staff member tests positive, public health will contact and instruct families or staff as necessary. Camps may be asked to participate with and facilitate Public Health Officials in identifying all contacts; public health will determine at-risk contacts and reach out to them regarding self-isolation. Camps can contact their Public Health Authority for advice on communications and to determine if there is a risk to that individual or others at camp; public health may work with the camp activities operators to notify those at risk. Mass communications by the camp, or messaging to potential contacts, should be discussed with public health. Camps should also have a policy in place regarding decisions on the need and breadth of closing the camp should an outbreak occur.

## IMPORTANCE OF HAND HYGIENE

**Proper handwashing remains the most important strategy to stay healthy.** Wash hands with soap and water often – for at least 20 seconds. Where possible wash hands when arriving at camp and when leaving. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. Handwashing practices and procedures should include:

- Posting proper handwashing posters throughout the camp setting.
- Having hand sanitizers in all rooms and in all entrance ways. If possible, a hand sink (with soap and paper towels) at an entrance way is an asset.
- Having tissues readily available for nose blowing as well as a plastic-lined garbage container to dispose of them.
- Requiring all staff and participants to wash hands properly upon arrival to camp and keep hands sanitized throughout the day.

### **Six steps to properly wash hands are:**

- 1) Wet hands with warm running water.
- 2) Apply a small amount of liquid soap.
- 3) Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds (sing ABC's). Rub palms, backs of hands, between fingers and under finger nails and create a lather.
- 4) Rinse off all soap with running water.
- 5) Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.
- 6) Discard the used towel in the waste container.

### **Staff and children should always wash their hands:**

- 1) When they arrive at camp and before they go home.
- 2) Before eating and drinking.
- 3) After using the toilet.
- 4) After playing outside or handling pets.
- 5) After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- 6) Whenever hands are visibly dirty or have been touching surfaces touched by others.

**Please also ensure to:**

- Cough or sneeze into a sleeve/elbow.
- Be careful about touching objects and then touching faces (especially eyes, nose and mouth). Wash your hands prior to touching your face.

## **CLEANING AND DISINFECTING**

COVID-19 spreads by respiratory droplets of an infected person to others with whom they have close contact such as people who live in the same household or provide care. It can survive for varying lengths of time on different surfaces, and decreases with the passage of time; there is a very low risk of transmission hours or days after contamination. The virus can be killed by cleaning and disinfection. The following measures should be taken to reduce the risk of transmission of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19.

**What is helpful to know:**

- 1) Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Use only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is approved for use in Canada.
- 2) Frequently touched surfaces are most likely to be contaminated.
- 3) Check the expiry date of products you use and always follow manufacturer's instructions.
- 4) Playgrounds are not expected to be disinfected. The provincial statement on playgrounds in [Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#) and state: "Reassure children and parents that playgrounds are a safe environment, and encourage appropriate hand hygiene practices before, during, and after outdoor play."

### **Cleaning Products: the difference between cleaners and disinfectants**

**1) Cleaners:**

- Break down grease and remove organic material from the surface.
- Are used separately before using disinfectants.
- Can be purchased with cleaner and disinfectant combined in a single product.

**2) Disinfectants:**

- Have chemicals that kill most germs.
- Are applied after the surfaces have been cleaned.
- Have a drug identification number (DIN).

### 3) Disinfectant Wipes:

- Have combined cleaners and disinfectants in one solution.
- May quickly dry out, if not stored properly in their air tight container, due to their fast drying properties. Should be discarded if they become dry.
- Are not recommended for heavily soiled surfaces.

#### Preparing cleaning and disinfectant products for use:

- Where possible, use a pre-mixed solution that contains both a detergent for cleaning and a disinfectant.
- Wear any other personal protective equipment recommended by the manufacturer.

For further information on cleaning and disinfecting please view the webinar by BCRPA and RFABC:

<https://elearn.bcrpa.bc.ca/#CLEAN>

#### Things to consider:

- Outdoor camps will have fewer touch points in general.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces twice daily as recommended in the [Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#), such as worktops, chairs, tables, light switches, door knobs and frames, cabinet handles, phones, shelves and equipment.
- Ensure the camp is well-stocked with hand washing supplies at all times (e.g. soap, disposable towels, a minimum of 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer, etc.).
- Increase the frequency in hand cleaning for all staff and participants, before and after touching equipment, using the washrooms and eating or drinking.
- Use water, household detergents and common disinfectant products as this is sufficient for cleaning and disinfection.

## ACTIVITY PACKS

If the camp will be using supplies for crafts, each child should have their own activity pack to keep at camp. Each activity pack should be stored by camp leaders somewhere. At the end of the week those items that can't be disinfected can go home with the child so there is a new kit for the following week with new children.

## FOOD AND MEALTIMES

Parents and caregivers are solely responsible for bringing all of their child/ren's food to camp, including water for the duration of camp. Parents and caregivers should be encouraged to bring thermos

containers and/or insulated lunch bags all of which will be kept in children's backpacks until lunch and/or snack times.

Camp leaders should double check with the parents and caregivers when they are dropping off their children that they have sufficient water and food for the day.

**The following food practices should be followed consistently:**

- Wash hands thoroughly before and after eating.
- Do not have communal meals/snacks- food must not be shared.
- Use individual plates, cutlery and serving utensils only (if applicable).
- Do not touch anyone else's food. If food falls onto a table or floor, clean it up and discard it in the garbage.
- Practice physical distancing (staff and children sit two metres apart) while eating food.
- A staff member should clean and disinfect any tables or chairs at the end of the camp.
- After meals or snacks, children should put all their food away in their backpack and wash their hands.

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

All staff should have access to or carry a mask and gloves in case they are required to care for a sick or injured child. First aid kits carried by staff should also contain equipment to perform resuscitation in a safe manner.

It is important to remember that children who are injured or feeling unwell still need comforting by a caring adult. If a leader is concerned that they may have been exposed to droplets when caring for a sick child it is advised that they contact 811 for health advice.