



## **Physical Distancing Policy and Procedure COVID-19**

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Reference: Toronto Public Health Covid-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings, August 21, 2021, June 24, 2021, December 4, 2020, October 8, 2020 August 28, 2020, Ministry of Education Guidance Version 4, November 2020, Version 3, August, 2020, Reopening of Childcare Risk Assessment Date Approved by the Board of Directors: July 22, 2020, September 20, 2021

### **Policy Statement**

Orde Day Care must follow all applicable Health and Safety Legislation to ensure the safety, health, and well being of the children in our care. The safety and wellness of our staff is paramount, and modifications will be made to current policy and practice requirements as the Ontario Ministry of Health and Toronto Public Health directives evolve.

To protect and promote the well being of the children, families and staff members of Orde Day Care, physical distancing measures will be practiced as best as possible to maintain a two metre/six feet distance between staff and children, and children to children. Physical distancing must not compromise supervision or the or the child's safety, emotional or psychological well being. The Ministry of Education and Orde Day Care recognize that physical distancing between children in childcare is difficult, especially with the infant to preschool age groupings, and encourages staff to maintain a welcoming and caring environment for all the children.

### **Purpose**

To ensure that all employees are aware of and adhere to the directive established by Toronto Public Health (TPH), and Orde Day Centre regarding physical distancing in the childcare environment at our centres.

### **Definition:**

Physical distancing means keeping our distance from one another by staying at least 2 metres (or 6 feet) away from others, as much as possible. This means making changes in everyday routines and activities in order to minimize contact with others. Physical distancing is sometimes referred to as social distancing. Physical distancing must not compromise supervision or child safety or emotional or psychological well being

Where different cohorts use the same indoor area i.e. gym, staff must ensure that physical distancing is maintained between the cohorts and the groups do not mix

Toronto Public Health strongly recommends physical distancing between cohorts should be maintained outdoors, if feasible.

Each cohort must have their own assigned indoor space, separated from all other cohorts by a physical barrier. The purpose of the barrier is to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets that are thought to transmit COVID-19 and to reinforce physical distancing requirements between cohorts. The physical



barrier must begin at the floor and reach a minimum height of 8 feet to ensure that it will always be 12 inches taller than the tallest person in the daycare centre. It must be as wide as the space/room will allow

### **Procedures:**

By making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between each other, we can slow the spread of COVID-19. Physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. Everyone has a role to play. This means making changes in everyday routines to minimize close contact with others.

The concept of physical distancing is new to everyone, especially the children, and we need constant messaging in various ways to act as reminders. Help younger children learn about physical distancing and less physical contact by creating games that include basic principles such as “two arms lengths apart”. Regularly remind children to keep “hands to yourself”.

### **Program adjustments to promote physical distancing**

#### **Communication**

- Encourage children and staff to greet each other using non-physical gestures (e.g. wave or nod, virtual high five or verbal “Hello”) and to avoid close greetings such as hugs and handshakes- refer to **TPH 10 Ways to greet from 6 feet.**
- Singing, shouting and speaking loudly should be avoided inside
- Use of alternate method to gain groups attention, ie hand-clapping, turning off the lights
- Use of visual cues
- Verbally remind children to keep their hands to themselves and recognize efforts for keeping distance between each other
- Encourage discussions to address our new norm, i.e. Physical distancing and limiting physical interactions between children when possible and as per age appropriateness
- Encourage and teach the proper way to wash hands, cover coughs, sneezes and use hand sanitizer
- Encourage parents to call or email centre with concerns or questions
- Encourage staff to communicate with one another from other cohorts using house phones/daycare phones/walkie talkies

#### **Personal Items**

- Limit the number and types of personal items that can be brought into the childcare center
- Children’s personal items must be labelled (i.e. water bottles, milk bottles) to prevent accidental sharing
- Reinforce no sharing policies and procedures – such as food and water bottles
- Any items, i.e. wet clothing, accident forms must be given to the escort who will pass onto the parent
- Ensure the child has enough extra clothes left in the cubby, as required
- Inform parents that outside food items are not allowed unless to meet specific dietary requirements



- Pizza lunch is allowed if provided by an inspected source and that food handlers use adequate food handling and safety practices
- Family style servings are permitted as long as food handlers use adequate food handling and safety practices

### **Daily Routines**

- Will be conducted to promote distance between children during routines such as toileting, going outside, getting dressed, lining up and any other routine where children are in close proximity to one another
- Will encourage staff/children not to proceed in hallway unless clear or physical distancing can be maintained
- Encourage children to be spread out particularly for dressing and meal times
- Will schedule the use of the elevator at Satellite for the infants and toddler groups to ensure that it is being disinfected between cohorts
- Where children share washroom facilities, only one cohort should access the washroom at a time
- Will include a scheduled bathroom routine for all age groups to ensure that only one cohort uses the bathroom at one time
- Will promote the use of every urinal or toilet fixture for the basement bathrooms
- Will ensure physical distancing measures are maintained by reducing the number of children sent to use the bathroom at the same time in the same cohort
- Will designate the use of stalls to certain cohorts
- Will check with the other programs in the basement to see if there is another child using the bathroom in the basement before sending another child
- Will allow a child in the school-age program to go to the bathroom by themselves and be supervised by a staff member in their cohort with appropriate physical distancing- ie waiting outside
- Will allow for the cleaning of the bathrooms between cohorts and children when sharing stalls (School Age)
- Will discourage the use of the water fountains and encourage the use of individual water bottles or disposable cups
- Should include a schedule that encourages frequent hand hygiene, upon arrival, after toileting, before eating, before playing with toys, when returning from outside
- Will allow snacks and lunches to be eaten outside when possible with proper hand hygiene before and after eating

### **Hallways**

- Staff are required to wear masks **and face shields/goggles** in the hallways or any other communal areas and ensure physical distancing.
- Staff should communicate with other rooms while standing in hallways or entrance of the classroom door
- Schedule transitions for each room at different times so that more than one group is not using the hallways and/or cubby area at the same time
- Hallway seating areas should be limited to enforce distancing.
- Designate walking pathways for hallways/staircases, such as arrows identifying “up” and “down.”



- Maintain a distance of 2 meters in any common space between cohorts (entrance, hallways, stairwells)

### **Planned Activities**

- Will be planned to encourage individual play
- Will be planned to encourage space between children

Children should practice hand hygiene before and after use of toys and equipment, especially when the cleaning of shared objects are not feasible.

- Must include materials that are easily cleaned and disinfected, no plush toys or those that hold water
- Will ensure that any objects/toys that are mouthed are immediately cleaned and disinfected after use

### **Sensory Play**

- If sensory materials are made available emphasis should be place on hand hygiene before and after use of materials
- Physical distancing should be maintained as much as possible during sensory play
- Suspend sensory play in the event of an outbreak is declared at the childcare
- All preplanned group activities or in-person meeting will be cancelled and rescheduled using zoom or teleconference

### **Physical Activities**

#### **High Contact Physical Activities**

- are defined as activities where two meters or more can't be maintained
- High contact physical activities should take place in outdoor settings only
- Masking is not required for high contact physical activities

#### **Low Contact Physical Activities:**

- Are defined as activities where two metres or more can be maintained
- Low contact physical activities are permitted indoors

### **Indoor Play Environments**

- Will have visual cues to promote physical distancing such as accessible signage and floor markings
- Organize children into smaller groups and spread children out to minimize direct physical contact.
- Use different room configurations by separating tables, removing excess chairs, marking on tables, such as tape marking play areas or to divide a large table and have specific chairs/seating for each child.
- Set up environments to reduce the number of children in a group, for example, set up 2 or 3 areas for colouring or creative activities.
- Push shelving units together to block access.
- Remove toys that encourage group play in close proximity or increase the likelihood of physical contact.



- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children and staff,
- Select enough items only for the limited children in the room
- Encourage physical distancing while children are dressing and in the cubby area.
- Will have cubbies/hooks arranged to allow distance between children, by using every other or every third cubby when feasible
- Ensure cubbies are easily identifiable for child, name, picture as their cubby may be relocated to promote physical distancing
- Will have fixed seating arrangements, instead of flexible to define physical distancing measures
- Redesign play areas to increase distancing and to create purposeful movement either toward or away from specific areas.
- Room arrangements should be fluid. Adjust to what is observed with the children's movements once the programs start and adjust to continually create a flow of movement and play areas away from each other.
- Will redesign play areas to encourage solitary play i.e. drama centre
- Will restrict the use of the gross motor room at the Satellite site for the isolation of ill children only, **and will not be used by any groups during this period of reopening**
- Ensure that COVID-19 measures do not introduce new occupational hazards. i.e. propping up of fire doors to reduce exposure to frequently touched door handles or blocking entrances/exits with stored screening items when not present or in use
- Position garbage bins with lids and hand sanitizer outside of classroom doors for hand hygiene and proper disposal of PPE

### Rest Time

- Position cots for maximum distancing (2m/6ft)
- Cots are placed head to toe when side by side, or toe to toe when in front of each other
- Adjust room layout for cots to achieve appropriate distancing when children leave the rest area and have enough space to play

### Meal Time

- If necessary, stagger snack or meal time to allow spacing between children during meals
- Encourage quiet lunch times
- Have children wear masks after meal times are over (FDK and School age)
- Ensure that staff and children practice hand hygiene before and after meal times and snacks.
- Will have lunch table seating that promotes physical distancing between those at the same table and other tables

### Outdoor Play Environments

- Where there is shared outdoor space, cohorts must maintain a distance of 2 meters/6 feet between groups and any other individuals outside of the cohort
- **Use of masks for children over two is not required if physically distancing of 2 meters/ 6 feet is maintained (unless medically exempt)**
- **Children must wash/sanitize hands before and after using the play structure and any and all outdoor play**
- **Outdoor water play is permitted as long as physical distancing of 6 ft is maintained**



- **Individual sensory bins are strongly encouraged- no small pools are allowed**

- Only one cohort at a time may use the play structure
- Physical barriers/markers can be used to define a space between two cohorts
- Will be organized so materials and toys are not shared between rooms and are divided between cohorts ie room 2, room 3, using same outdoor space but designated toys coded by coloured stickers/or other method to note designation of toys for each cohort
- Benches, picnic tables or any other fixed structures will be wiped down after use and between cohorts
- Will have visual cues to promote physical distancing such as accessible signage and floor markings to assist when children are lining up, arriving in yard or for fire drills
- Any large plastic play materials left on playground must be designated to cohorts and must be disinfected between cohorts/individual children

### **Office/Kitchen and Staff Room Area**

- Supervisors workspaces will be relocated or redesigned with plexiglass to allow for physical distancing measures
- Respect the number of individuals allowed in Room 28 at one time, do not enter if it will be exceeded
- Communication to the Executive Director will be done via email to admin@ordedaycare.org when she/he is off site
- Any formal communication or meetings with staff will be undertaken ensuring a 2-metre/6 feet distance between staff or through zoom
- Kitchen area will only be available to the kitchen/float staff – staff should not come to the kitchen
- Staff room area is available to staff, physical distancing markers must be respected when using this space
- **Staff must maintain physical distance while on break in the staff room,**
- **Extra chairs should be removed from the staff room**
- **Masks must be worn by staff when not eating**
- Main and outside door to office will be kept open to allow for ventilation

### **Policy and Procedure Review:**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed and signed off by all employees before commencing employment, upon introduction of a new policy, annually, and at any time changes are made.

I acknowledge receipt of Orde Day Care **Physical Distancing Policy and Procedures**. I understand it is my responsibility to read, understand, and comply with the **Physical Distancing Policy and Procedures**. I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding the policy and procedure, I will consult with my immediate supervisor.

Please read the **Physical Distancing Policy and Procedures** carefully to ensure that you understand the policy before signing this document.



Staff Name	Supervisor Name:
Staff Signature:	Supervisor Signature:
Date:	Date: