



British Columbia Covid-19 Update: May 22, 2020

Dear BrightPath Families,

As the provincial government's restart plan is rolling out, we thought it would be a good time to connect with our families and provide an update on what has been taking place in our centres over the last two months and what further changes you can expect to see. As you may know, BrightPath has remained open for essential service workers and families who continued to require care for their children. This was not only allowed but supported by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. As more workplaces open and families require care to go back to work, we want you to know that we are open and ready to welcome your children back into a safe and welcoming environment.

We are excited to be reconnecting with our families, our educators, and our children. As many of you are beginning to return to work, we promise that the safety of both our children and our team of educators is our top priority. We gained solid understanding of how to implement and maintain safety measures when we stayed open for essential services workers and are very confident of our ability to implement a safe environment for your children as they return to our centres.

We appreciate the anxiety you may be facing as you return. As such, we want to advise you in advance regarding what you should expect in returning to the centre so that your family's restart with us is as fluid and stress free as possible. There will be some necessary changes within our practices and routines. A detailed breakdown of these changes follows. We hope this provides you with not only an update of our enhanced procedures, but also assures you that we are focused on the health and safety of the children, your family and our beloved staff.

Physical Distancing

While we are thrilled to be able to see our families again, we are bound to maintain a level of physical distancing where possible. This begins right at arrival time. Unfortunately, we do need to save our hugs and handshakes for a safer time but will be full of smiles and excited waves! Each educator will aim to connect with our children through eye level, personalized and joyful greetings. We will forge unique forms of connecting without physical contact as we continue down this new path.

We will work with our families to plan arrival times as we proceed, but please note that when there is more than one family arriving at the same time, we do need to implement a 2-metre separation. We will provide markings, both inside and outside, to help implement this. This may require that families wait outside should a family already be present in the lobby of the centre. Finally, we also ask that only one family member, and ideally the same family member as much as possible, attend at drop off and pick up of your children.

We ask that you wait for a centre representative to bring children to their classrooms. Parents are unfortunately not permitted entry into any classroom. Please note that we will be minimizing movement between classrooms to reduce contact with others as much as possible within the centre. As our enrollment increases, we may be required to revisit room allocations and configurations. We anticipate that things will continue to change, and we will evolve and adapt as they do. We will keep you updated as that occurs.

We will not allow non-essential visitors or tours within our centres at this time.

Access to the Centre

Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrance and we ask that you use it when entering the building. We are also required to take the temperatures of all family members, children, and staff who enter each day. We are required to ask that all people entering our facilities answer a short screening questionnaire. Any evidence of symptoms will prohibit you from entering the centre, and you will be advised to contact HealthLink BC for further direction.

Classroom

Our classrooms have been re-organized to allow for multiple small group interactions instead of one large group. Activities that were traditionally entire group activities, like circle time and mealtimes, have been replaced with small group activities to enforce physical distancing. Lesson plans and visual cues will be provided to help our children understand what physical distancing looks like. Our educators have also been empowered to program those activities that provide quality learning and engagement while ensuring space between the children.

Sensory tables and sensory activities that involve shared mediums have been removed and replaced with materials that promote individual experiences. Materials that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected, such as soft toys and porous materials, have been removed from the classrooms. The only exception we can make to this is a comfort item for napping where necessary, and these will be stored within a closed bin or bag within each child's cubby. Items brought in for napping will be placed in a labeled, separated spaces, where they remain until nap time. Sleeping mats and cots will be placed further apart and we will practice head to toe placement. In addition, we will space cubbies apart to ensure the 2-metre physical distancing is achieved when placing and retrieving items for or with your children.

We must limit items brought from home at this time including toys. Show and Share times will involve telling stories and sharing memorable experiences instead of sharing physical items.

Outside Activities

Only one classroom will use the outdoor play area or gym at a time. Transitions to outside or to the gym will also be staggered to eliminate waiting or congestion times, and to limit interaction between the classrooms. We will have designated toys for each group outside and in the gym. Where this is not possible, we will clean and disinfect toys between groups. Community (offsite) playgrounds will not be used.

Lunch

Family style dining has been eliminated during this crisis. We are limiting the number of children per table at mealtimes by leaving an empty space between them. While these changes are necessary, our educators continue to facilitate engaging conversations and interactions throughout mealtime, especially reflecting on the morning learning activities.

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting

Cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces take place frequently throughout the entire day. Regular and frequent handwashing by our staff members are being role-modelled for the children and encouraged throughout the day. Children are required to wash their hands at multiple times throughout the day, including arrival time, after outside time, before and after eating, and after toileting. Parents have been especially appreciative of this modelling. Any toys that are mouthed by young children will be removed, cleaned, and disinfected before being put back into use.

We ask you to take bedding home each day to be washed if it is not feasible to do this at the centre, but we will attempt to do so. We ask you to bring water bottles home for thorough cleaning each night.

Symptom Monitoring and Suspected Illness

Where we have the space in a centre, we have a designated “one-on-one” room set-up that will be able to safely house a child who should exhibit symptoms of illness while at the centre. If your child becomes symptomatic with any illness throughout the day, we will call you to come and pick them up. Should your child engage in behaviour that is significantly atypical as to perhaps indicate that they are unwell, we will also contact you.

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative

I am happy to also share with you that BrightPath has received its renewal for the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. We will continue to include this reduction on your future monthly fees.

Before closing, I wish to thank our staff who continue to ensure that your children receive the best care possible during these difficult times. We appreciate their dedication, effort and their exceptional commitment and determination to give every child the best start in life! And we continue to appreciate your faith in us to care for your children.

Warm regards,

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