

**Massey Centre**

**Early Learning Centre COVID-19 Physical Distancing Policy and Procedures**

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6. **Introduction**
   1. The Massey Centre’s Early Learning Centre (ELC) will ensure that all child care staff, children, parents/guardians and essential visitors are aware of the recommendations set by Toronto Public Health (TPH), and Toronto Children's Services regarding physical distancing in child care settings to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.
7. **Policy**
   1. The Early Learning Centre will make changes to our physical space, curriculum planning and daily routines in order to minimize close contact with amongst children and child care staff and help prevent the risk of infection.
   2. We recognize that the practice of physical distancing is new to everyone and this will be an adjustment for children, families and staff.
   3. Consistent messaging around physical distancing will be positively reinforced in a developmentally appropriate way for young children through role modelling, visual cues, reading social stories, games that incorporate concepts of “two arms lengths apart” and by acting out dramatic play scripts.
   4. All staff, parents/guardians, children and essential visitors will be expected to practice physical distancing as best as possible between each other. Physical distancing must not compromise child supervision or child safety.
8. **Definition**
   1. “Physical distancing” is the practice of maintaining a two meter/six feet distance from one another.
9. **Procedures**
   1. **Drop off and pick up times** 
      1. Drop-off and pick-up times will be scheduled and staggered to prevent high traffic and congestion at the screening station area.
      2. Visual markings will be used to increase physical distancing while families/staff are waiting outside of the Centre to be screened or at their designated pick up/drop off time.
      3. Visual and/or physical barriers will be used to increase the physical distance between families/staff as they approach the front desk/screening area. This will include signage, tape markings and a protective barrier.
      4. Encourage children to greet each other using non-physical gestures (e.g. wave or nod or a verbal “Hello”) and avoid close greetings (e.g. hugs, handshakes).
      5. Child care staff and children will be assigned into designated cohorts with a maximum cohort size of 10 individuals for each room.
      6. Children will be divided into small groups to allow for small group transitions and small group program planning.
      7. Activities and transitions will be planned for small groups to maintain physical distancing and minimize direct contact between children.
      8. Activities that encourage individual play and increase space between children.
      9. Activities that involve shared objects or toys will be avoided.
      10. Activities involving singing, shouting, or speaking loudly indoors will be avoided. Singing activities will be held outside.
      11. A “No Sharing” policies and procedures will be reinforced. This includes the current practice of not sharing food, water bottles or other personal items.
      12. Schedules and routines may be staggered to permit physical distancing. This includes snack times, lunch times, use of outdoor playgrounds and play spaces by different cohorts.
   2. **Shared Space**
      1. Lobby seating will be removed to enforce social distancing.
      2. Transitions for each cohort will be scheduled at staggered times so that groups do not pass each other in the hallway.
      3. Staff meal breaks will be staggered and occupancy limits will be set in the two designated staff lounge areas. Signage will be posted to reinforce this message.
   3. **Program Rooms**
10. Space between seating and play areas will be increased so that children and staff can maintain social distancing. For example: Extra chairs, tables, shelves will be removed; and furniture will be arranged; Tape, signs, mats, trays or other visual markers will be placed on floors, tables, seats and other play areas to help both child care staff and children visually maintain physical distancing
11. Distance between cots and cribs will be increased and children will be placed the head-to-toe or toe-to-toe positions.
12. All toys/games that encourage group play will be removed. Children will have clearly labelled, individual art and play materials. When children are finished playing with toys they will be removed for sanitizing.
13. Physical distancing while children are dressing in cubby area will be practiced.
14. Outdoor experiences will be encouraged to support physical distancing.
15. **Acknowledgement and Agreement**

I, , acknowledge that I have read and understand the Early Learning Centre COVID-19 Physical Distancing Policy and Procedures of Massey Centre. I agree to adhere to this policy in whole. I understand that if I violate the rules set forth in this policy, I may face disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment.

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