



## Curious Minds Learning Centre Ltd. Covid-19 Pandemic Bulletin – May 2020

Recognizing that in BC we have been able to flatten the Covid-19 curve, that we have a significantly lower infection rate than other provinces, that children have a very low infection rate (3%). The BC government is implementing a safe “return to work action plan” with child care listed as services to be restored under enhanced protocols (Government of British Columbia, 2020) CURIOS MINDS has decided to tentatively and **cautiously reopen June 1st, 2020**. CURIOS MINDS will be offering childcare services **to our enrolled families at this time, and families must agree to the entire Pandemic Health and Wellness Policy**. CURIOS MINDS families will have secured spaces for their children upon reopening until they feel secure in returning or by the Ministry of Health recommendations.

Please remember that **Covid-19 public health can rapidly change, and CURIOS MINDS’s ability to remain open may change without notice**. I am confident with the information that Dr. Bonnie Henry has been sharing during her media updates that we could be experiencing a reprieve during the summer as long as BC carefully and slowly restores services, physical distancing is continued when in the community, good hygiene is practiced, physical contact with others is limited (no handshaking or hugs) and people stay home when ill. As for the fall, we just don’t know. The Covid-19 virus could return in abundance and or mutate causing a prolific incline in BCs curve, infecting vast numbers of people. If this were to happen, CURIOS MINDS would need to reassess and adjust our policies, possibly even close again. While I am somewhat confident about the summer months and less confident for the winter, I believe our best hope is to move forward slowly, carefully, respectfully and knowledgeably. This may be our new normal until a vaccine is developed and that could be 12-18 months, so a return to some form of a new normal is inevitable. We have created a **Covid-19 Pandemic Health and Wellness Policy** as a firm structure for a shared understanding (between CURIOS MINDS and our families) of the rules and procedures CURIOS MINDS will utilize during this time. Please read it carefully, ask any questions that arise to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the policies and agree to it in its entirety BEFORE agreeing to return your child to CURIOS MINDS’s program. I am asking all parents to **respect and follow the Pandemic Health and Wellness Policy meticulously**; it is in place for the safety, health and wellness of everyone.

It is our intention at this time to open two of our centres.

We will open the MRSS Infant/Toddler centre for both the I/T and the 3-5 programs. Staff from both programs will be involved with their own age groups as much as possible. However, there may be some crossover of staff due to reduced numbers and shortened operating hours

We will open the Glenwood module for an early summer program for both MRE and Glenwood school age children. At this time, we are not prepared to accommodate in school attendance. Children can bring personal tablets so they can participate in remote learning online / zoom meetings with their teachers

**CURIOUS MINDS will be decreasing operating hours.**

**Until further notice CURIOUS MINDS will be open 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.**

(This is only a temporary measure and could be extended at any time. If you have specific needs please contact me)

Once you have read CURIOUS MINDS's Pandemic Health and Wellness Policy, please communicate your childcare needs with me via email. What I will need to know is:

- 1) if you wish to return in June or if it is too soon for your family,
- 2) your required days and times of childcare

**After I have received a response from all the families, I can then utilize that information to decide confirm details opening June 1st as tentatively announced. Please be sure I receive your response no later than May 22, 2020.**

CURIOUS MINDS has carefully constructed the following Pandemic Policy to ensure adequate preventative measures are in use during and after operating hours. **This Pandemic Policy will help guide us in a joint purpose of helping to safeguard the health and wellbeing of all our children and family members.** It is with great care, caution and attentive thought; as well as the direction of many professional resources that CURIOUS MINDS has created this Pandemic Policy. Please respect and adhere to it, and the safety measures within, in its entirety for the well-being of us all. If at any time you have a concern, or would like to share newly discovered information about the Covid-19 pandemic, best practices or increasing safety, please know that I am fully open to receiving this information. Information about Covid-19 is still emerging and there is new science surrounding it being discovered all the time.

***Dr. Bonnie Henry is advising the public to continue to distance outside your family and in the community as much as possible while allowing for a careful restart plan in BC with a restoration of some services under enhanced protocols.*** Families who are able, or who do not have employment that falls within the guideline of ***BC's Restart Plan*** (Government of British Columbia, 2020) are asked to continue to care for their children at home if possible.

### ***Distancing and Physical Contact***

CURIOUS MINDS is a childcare facility and as such we have groups of children attending. Maintaining social distancing and proper hygiene practices along with a group code of ethics will help us to keep our “childcare community bubble of exposure” to a minimum. While physical distancing is encouraged in the general public and with extended family, physical distancing becomes much more difficult with children. Some strategies can help encourage physical distancing among young children; however, these strategies are not an assurance that children will adhere to physical distancing and will not engage in physical contact with others. While I believe children are resilient and capable, I also believe that they naturally learn through physical contact and making social connections, they are born with a natural desire and need for physical contact. It is through these experiences that children gain essential skills for life; and the context of which they experience these situations impact their development so all encouraged distancing practices will be implemented with great care and attention to the children’s whole wellbeing while keeping advised safety precautions intact as much as possible.

CURIOUS MINDS WILL endeavour to encourage but NOT enforce physical distancing in the childcare setting by utilizing the following methods: role modelling and reminders, positive reinforcement (verbal encouragement/ affirmations, stories, books, songs, puppets, circle time props, and other literacy extensions), room arrangements/ furniture placement to encourage individual play, play provocations and learning centres that support individual play or distanced play and focusing on emotional literacy at home and daycare. A strong focus will be placed on emotional literacy because verbally identifying and sharing feelings becomes even more important to gaining self-regulation skills as physical contact becomes less acceptable. However, although physical distancing will be encouraged here gently and in a developmentally appropriate way, physical contact will not be eliminated. Children will still need comfort and hugs when big emotions arise, they will still want to sit close to read a book, and they will still need to be compassionately cared for when diapers are changed. These are just a few of the many circumstances in which physical contact is necessary when caring for young children.

CURIOUS MINDS will NOT utilize the following conduct to encourage or enforce physical distancing: negative or alarming verbal statements, physically obstructing or restraining children, rejection of children’s advances for affection during the day and at times of emotional sorrow, injury or vulnerability.

### ***Distancing at Nap Time***

At nap time CURIOUS MINDS will “ensure that children’s naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart.” CURIOUS MINDS will also, to the best of their ability, place “children head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread” (CDC, 2020). Bedding will be stored individually and sent home to be laundered weekly. We will clean and disinfect each cot and crib after each use

### ***Distancing at Pick-up & Drop-off Times***

As per the CDC’s recommendations, arrival and drop off times will be staggered and distancing at drop off and pick-ups will also be encouraged to help limit direct contact between parents and staff members if you notice groupings please allow extra time to wait in vehicle or outside until social distancing protocol can be reached. (CDC, 2020). If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk” (CDC, 2020). At pick up; if we are outside, the children will be given hand sanitizer to clean their hands before leaving, if we are inside we will assist the children to wash their hands before leaving. There will be no need for parent sign in/out; a staff member will note arrival and departure times.

### ***Changing Diapers***

Children's diapers will be changed as frequently as needed and with the same compassion as children have always experienced. There is no such thing as distancing to change diapers. The only precaution for health and safety in these instances is to wear gloves, a mask, to thoroughly disinfect surfaces and to wash the hands of both the child and caregiver. When changing a child's diaper CURIOUS MINDS staff will always follow safe diapering practices: the changing mats will be prepared, disposable gloves will be put on, the child will be gently cleaned, soiled diapers and wipes disposed of, a clean diaper fitted, the child's hands washed, the diaper station disinfected with a bleach sanitizing solution and finally the caregiver's hands will be washed.

### ***Caregivers Protection***

As per the CDC (CDC, 2020) child care providers can protect themselves by:

- wearing large bib aprons, long-sleeve button-down shirts or having multiple changes of clothes on hand
- aprons, button-down shirts or clothing should be changed, if soiled
- tying hair back into a ponytail
- routinely washing hands, neck and anywhere touched by a child
- changing children's clothes if soiled
- routine frequent hand washing and hygiene
- continual cleaning of surfaces throughout the day and disinfecting either before opening or after closing

Personal Protective Equipment are not needed in a childcare setting beyond those used by staff as part of regular precautions normally encountered in their regular course of work. Wearing one is a matter of personal choice and it is important to respect those who care to do so.

### ***Talking with Children about Covid-19***

At CURIOUS MINDS we will talk about Covid-19 in developmentally appropriate ways. What will this look like? Below are some points that I have come up with using the guidance of the CDC (CDC, 2020) - When talking about Covid-19 we will make every effort possible to remain calm and reassuring. - We will make ourselves available to talk to and will not shut down questions surrounding Covid-19, the pandemic or new protocols in the childcare setting

- Children will be given information that is honest, accurate, and developmentally appropriate - Children will be taught ways to reduce the spread of Covid-19 through modelling, reminders, stories, games, experiences and dialogue.

Parents should also have developmentally appropriate conversations with their children at home about Covid-19, hygiene practices and physical distancing to positively educate them with the reasons for changes in their world around them and to preload their children for changes in our normal routines or behaviours (non-entry of parents, hand washing importance etc.). This will assist me in guiding the children gently and helping them make the transition to our "new normal". This will also help them feel more secure and less frightened by the changes around them.

### ***Group Code of Ethics***

**Families agree to continue to physically distance themselves and their children from the community outside the family home and daycare as much as possible** CURIOUS MINDS is allowing families “bubbles of exposure” into the daycare setting through each family’s children’s attendance in the program. Doing this is putting faith in everyone’s families to keep their “exposure bubbles” as limited as possible. The greater each family’s “personal exposure bubble” is, the greater our “daycare community exposure bubble” will be. Let’s keep it as small as possible!

**Families agree to keep their children home for a minimum of 10 days if ANY signs of un-wellness develop in their children** or anyone in their family home or if they have been exposed to anyone showing signs of un-wellness. Examples of un-wellness are but are not limited to: fever, lethargy, lack of appetite, runny nose, cold, flu, or COVID-19 symptoms including coughing or sneezing. Parents also agree to have persons in their family home tested for Covid-19 if signs suggest a Covid-19 infection. For the safety of everyone in the centre, the parents agree to share positive test results with CURIOUS MINDS and give consent for these results to be then shared with all families so that exposures can be appropriately mitigated, appropriate persons tested and Fraser Health notified.

**Parents agree that children with any underlying health concerns should not attend the child care programs during the Covid-19 pandemic. Parents and caregivers should consult with their healthcare provider to determine if the child can attend.** It is best to keep your children home with you as much as possible; however, CURIOUS MINDS does recognize the need for parents to return to work. Where possible CURIOUS MINDS encourages working from home to reduce “contact intensity” and “number of contacts” we are all exposed to (Government of BC, 2020). For some this may be returning to a more efficient work-from-home (uninterrupted from children) schedule, while for others this may look like returning to an outside the home working schedule. No matter what your working schedule looks like, parents agree that childcare will be exclusively for necessary working hours.

**CURIOUS MINDS agrees to implement a no visitor’s policy.** CURIOUS MINDS will NOT permit visitors within the program, with exception of the mandated requirement to give access to our child care licensing officer. If the licensing officer were to require access, I would ask her for a verbal statement of health and ask her to wear a mask during her time with us. Visitors not permitted during childcare hours include but are not limited to potential clientele or extended family members.

**Parent’s physical interactions within the program will need to be limited;** within the child care space, with interactions with the children and other parents and with the staff.

### ***Environmental Precautions & Frequent Cleaning***

CURIOUS MINDS will limit the amount of and type of toys that will be available to children (musical instruments, plush toys, dress-up clothes and toys not easily disinfected will be temporarily removed from use). Toys will be cleaned and disinfected with diluted bleach and water solution followed by rinsing, at the end of each day. A “Yuck Bucket” will be designated for children to place toys that require attention and need to be temporarily eliminated from use during the day. These toys will NOT be returned to use until disinfected.

CURIOUS MINDS will practice *enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols* that are in line with typical practices during an outbreak of respiratory illness and the recommendations of the BC CDC, Ministry of Health and Fraser Health’s Childcare Licensing Regulations. Strong attention will be given to high touch surfaces (doorknobs, tables, faucets, bathrooms, light switches etc.) that will be disinfected at least two times per day during operation and again at the end of each day. The bleach-water solution listed below will be predominately utilized; however, Lysol wipes may also be used on occasion for rapid disinfection. The CDC recommends *disinfection using household bleach solutions* Bleach will NOT be mixed with soap as this can be toxic and decreases the efficacy of bleach. Bleach solutions will be given a minimum contact time of 1 minute to disinfect surfaces and toys. Additionally, because bleach is light-sensitive and once mixed with water it is only effective for 24 hours; a new solution will be made each morning. We have altered our operation times to allow for time to thoroughly and diligently disinfect CURIOUS MINDS’s facility and equipment at the end of each day (as per our cleaning policies and the best practices recommended by the BCCDC & MOH)

### ***Arrival, Admittance & Attendance Logs***

Parent interactions within the program will need to be limited; within the child care space; with the children, with staff and with other parents. Sadly, parents will no longer be allowed to enter the daycare, at least until further notice; our open-door policy has been suspended. We ask that all parents now say their goodbyes and part from their children at the outside doorway, respecting a 6-foot distance from the entrance. Only the child should be entering the child care space.

Parents are asked not to sign their children in and out each day, as usual. A staff member will record arrivals and departures.

### ***Screening Children upon Arrival***

Parents are asked to take their children’s temperature each day before leaving their home, making note of the temperature. When the door is open, you will be greeted, verbally asked to verify your child’s health (fever, un-wellness, shortness of breath or cough?), a brief visual check is given and then your child is welcomed into the childcare setting, where they will immediately be guided to wash their hands.

### ***Personal Belongings***

Personal belongings will not be permitted into the daycare. Please only send what is required for the day. Changes of clothes, diapers and wet wipes can be replenished as needed. Sunscreen should be applied at home before childcare, if needed staff will reapply sunscreen that has been provided by the parent. They will use gloves or wash their hands before, between and after all sunscreen applications. Parents wishing for their children to have sunscreen applied as needed at daycare must supply the sunscreen and it must remain at daycare – transfer back and forth from home to daycare will not be permitted.

### ***Meals, Snacks & Water Bottles***

***Parents are to provide all their children's food and cutlery during the pandemic.*** CURIOS MINDS has suspended supplying all snacks and cutlery for health and safety reasons until the pandemic has passed. Please pack your child's lunch box accordingly with enough food for the entire day in care. Parents are to pack lunches, snacks and disposable cutlery in their child's lunch bag. The lunch bag should be a clean (never used before) disposable bag or a simple fabric washable reusable sack. Some ideas are – large zip locks, paper lunch bags (available at the dollar store), small biodegradable kitchen compost liners, or easily washable fabric sacs. Note that fabric sacs are preferable from an environmental perspective. Fabric sac must be laundered between every use. Backpacks and padded commercial lunch boxes will not be accepted, as they can be vectors for transmission of Covid-19 and are not easily cleaned daily. If parents wish to eliminate the possibility of bringing germs home, they should make the lunch (bag and packaging) entirely disposable, however at this time that is not mandatory. CURIOS MINDS believes that as long as the bag is cleaned and changed daily, and daycare cutlery is not shared our risks are greatly reduced. Self-help will be encouraged to reduce the transference of germs and cross contamination, so please use easily opened containers or zip locks. Of course, I understand that with young children opening containers/Ziplocs is a skill they are still learning to master; therefore, staff will assist them and wash hands before touching each child's lunch containers. Please also package NONMESSY foods at this time. Again, to lower are contact risks. Serving messy foods means a greater risk of less sanitary eating and more cleanup of the child.

Water bottles are also to be supplied by parents. Water bottles will have their exterior wiped down with a soapy wet wipe then rinsed and air-dried. To prevent the spread of germs and support distancing, water bottles will NO LONGER be communally stored in a basket or lined up together on a counter. They will be separated about 6 to 12 inches from each other on the counter so that they can be reached without the need to touch other bottles OR placed in different areas of the kitchen. The water bottles will be sent home daily to be sanitized and returned the following day.

Water bottles, snacks and lunches will NOT be shared. We will eat together however; we will sit as far apart from each other as possible. Some days we may utilize the outdoor spaces and have a picnic. Everyone will wash their hands prior to and after eating.

Remember snacks will not be supplied by CURIOS MINDS and children should have enough food for the entire day.

### **Hand Washing & the use of Masks**

We will assist children to follow *frequent hand washing* practices with soap and water for a minimum of 20-30 seconds, scrubbing as per the CDC's hand washing steps.

Particular attention will be given to guiding children to wash their hands: immediately upon entering the program, before eating, after toilet use, after playing outside, after sneezing or coughing, if touching the face/nose/mouth and whenever the hands are visibly dirty. (CDC, 2020) (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020).

Particular attention will be given by staff to wash their hands: when they arrive at the centre and before they go home, before feeding children or handling their food containers/Ziplocs, after changing diapers, assisting a child to use the toilet, using the toilet, after contact with body fluids (runny noses, spit, vomit, blood), after cleaning tasks, after removing gloves or masks, after handling garbage, upon entry from outdoors, after assisting children and whenever hands are visibly dirty. (CDC, 2020) (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020). At the end of each day, before leaving childcare and when running water is not readily available alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will be used (CDC, 2020). CURIOUS MINDS will not be using masks on the children. "Masks are not recommended for children. In young children, in particular, masks can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes" (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020). The caregiver may use a mask on their face at their discretion; in cases of changing soiled diapers or if they become ill partway through the day and utilize one as a precautionary measure to keep the children safe.

### **Programming – Curriculum and Play**

CURIOUS MINDS will provide a limited selection of free choice toys along with various provocations throughout the playroom room to encourage individual play. Toys accessible will be ones that can be easily cleaned (i.e., no dress-up clothes or stuffed animals). CURIOUS MINDS will limit the use of playdough and goop to single-use individual portions to reduce hand-to-hand contact and cross contamination. (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020)

We are lucky that the warmer weather and summer is fast approaching. This means we can spend the majority of our days outside. The enlarged variation in setting and space promotes individual play more naturally and allows for a lesser chance of direct transmission of viruses. Outdoors we will also have various individual play opportunities such as the outdoor play kitchen, balls, balloons, ride on cars, and the small slides, group games that encourage distancing and individual play, art and provocation areas. All outdoor equipment will NOT be disinfected between uses but will be cleaned (spritzed with a soapy water solution and wiped down) from time to time, then disinfected with a bleach water solution, rinsed and left to air dry at the end of the day.



### ***If a Child Becomes Sick While at Daycare***

The BC CDC states that “Childcare centres will need to take additional precautions to maintain the health and safety of their employees and the children they are caring for.... Measures that will be implemented to reduce transmission in childcare school settings include routine daily screening for all staff and students. Routine and frequent environmental cleaning. An explicit policy for children or staff who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19, with coughing or sneezing, not coming into child care” (BC CDC, 2020). **Despite these precautions there is no way to fully ensure that children do not get sick from common illnesses or Covid-19.** It is important for us to be prepared and have a plan in place for if what will happen if a child becomes sick at daycare. **CURIOUS MINDS will: separate a sick child as much as possible from the rest of the group, call the parents to pick up the sick child immediately.** Remove all toys from the program that the sick child was in contact with until they can be properly disinfected. Open windows and doors to increase air circulation, clean and disinfect all the common areas such as the bathroom, tables, chairs, light switches and door handles. Staff will disinfect the childcare space again at the end of the day. (CDC, 2020) **The sick child will be excluded from the childcare program for “a minimum of 10 days, or until symptoms are completely resolved”.** (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020). Depending on the illness symptoms, especially if respiratory-related, a Covid-19 test may also be indicated. Child care fees are due regardless of attendance.

## Covid-19 Statement of Health

A parent should be able to answer the following to confirm to themselves their child can attend

***“Children with Covid-19 illness typically have a fever, dry cough and fatigue. Some may also experience nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea”*** (BC Center for Disease Control and the BC

My child has had their temperature taken and is currently fever-free

My child has not been given any fever-reducing medications or treatments in the past 12 hours

My child does not have a runny nose OR sinus congestion

My child does not have a cough and is not sneezing

My child does not have difficulty breathing or wheezy breathing

My child does not have unexplained fatigue, aches or signs of un-wellness or cold/flu-like symptoms to the best of my knowledge, our family has not been in contact with anyone that may have been infected or exposed to Covid19 in the last 14 days

No one in our family has travelled or been out of BC or the country in the last 14 days

Both my child and family have been physically distancing from people outside of the daycare and family home AND have kept our bubble of exposure to a minimum

## **Fees**

### **Infant / Toddler**

2 days/week	- \$385.00
3 days/week	- \$490.00
5 days/week	- \$700.00

### **3 to 5 year old's**

2 days/week	- \$385. <sup>00</sup>
3 days/week	- \$465. <sup>00</sup>
5 days/week	- \$575. <sup>00</sup>

### **Out of School**

K – Gr. 7

2 days/week	- \$500. <sup>00</sup>
3 days/week	- \$600. <sup>00</sup>
5 days/week	- \$750. <sup>00</sup>