



## Outdoor Programming

**6. COVID-19 Outdoor Programming**

**Date: October 5, 2020**

**CATEGORY: Health and Safety**

**REVISED: September 15, 2021**

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to identify and provide direction on considerations specific to outdoor EarlyON programs, in keeping with the Ministry of Education *Operational Guidance During COVID-19 Outbreak: EarlyON Re-Opening*. This policy is designed to help reduce risk of the spread of illness, including COVID-19.

### Policy

All policies and procedures described in this document must be carried out in outdoor programs as applicable. Participants in outdoor programs will be required to pre-register as of September 1, 2020.

### Procedure

- Communities Together for Children's EarlyON programs will schedule outdoor play in small groups in order to facilitate physical distancing.
- Outdoor space, with limited structures are recommended.
- If play structures are to be used, they must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each user (pre-registration open model) or before and after each group (cohort model).
- Where toys and equipment are shared, they will be cleaned and disinfected prior to being shared. If cohorted toys can be shared between members of the cohort and clean and disinfected afterwards. If not co-horting sharing is discouraged and all toys/equipment must be cleaned and disinfected between users
- An alternative to hand washing outdoors, when no running water is available, is to use hand sanitizer.
- Communities Together for Children's EarlyON will find alternate outdoor arrangements (e.g. community walk), where there are challenges securing outdoor play space.
- The use of masks is not required outdoors for adults or children if physical distancing of at least two meters can be maintained.
- Staff are not required to wear a medical grade mask or safety glasses (shield).

## **Weather Considerations:**

### **Outdoor EarlyON ON Programs in WINTER months:**

- Plan to reduce the amount of time children spend outside when the temperature falls to -25 C (-13 F) or colder, with or without wind chill.
- Never send children outside in extreme weather conditions, such as a snowstorm.
- Keep them indoors whenever the temperature or the wind chill is reported to be -27 C (-16 F) or lower.

### **Outdoor EarlyON ON Programs in SUMMER months:**

- Protecting children from getting too much sun is important. A child can sunburn easily, even on a cloudy day.
- Make sure play areas have a shady spot.
- Encourage parents/caregivers to apply sunscreen 30 minutes before heading outside.
- Sunscreen is not recommended for infants under 6 months old, who can rub it in their eyes and mouth. Keep young infants in the shade.
- Make sure children, even infants wear a sun hat with a wide brim and a flap or “tail” to protect the back of the neck from the beginning of April to the end of September.
- For strong sunlight, encourage parents/caregivers provide their child with sunglasses that screen out all UV rays (“broad spectrum”).
- To prevent overheating, suggest to parents/caregivers to dress children for warm weather in light loose clothing, in layers that can be put on or taken off easily.
- In the event of a thunder storm, temperature above 29 degrees C or a humidex of 36 degrees C or more outdoor programs will be held indoors or cancelled.
- In the event of an Air Quality Advisory, outdoor programs will be held indoors or cancelled if the Air Quality is a 7 or higher.

### **Outdoor play areas are attractive to unwanted visitors; human and animal. Hazards may be reduced by taking the following steps:**

- Do not assume that a fence will keep out unwanted visitors. Check the perimeter for gaps.
- Check the outdoor play area for including the sandbox for animal feces, broken glass or cans, condoms, needles and syringes.
- Do not pick up sharp objects with your hands. Gloves will not provide protection from punctures. Provide a rigid barrier between the object and your hands, such as tongs, scoop or shovel. (NOT for needles/syringes: see below)
- Please call Superior Points Needle Exchange if you find sharps in the community <tel:8076258831>
- Scoop animal feces and surrounding soil or sand with a small shovel or scoop, and discard.
- Rake sand on a regular basis. Sunlight provides an effective protection against some microscopic contaminants. Treating sand with chlorine bleach solutions and/or boiling water has very little effect on microorganisms.

### **Policy and Procedure Review**

- Communities Together for Children’s EarlyON will ensure that all staff have reviewed this

policy and procedure prior to commencing work in an indoor EarlyON Program and maintain a record to this effect.

- Communities Together for Children EarlyON will review this policy monthly and recognize that this policy may be amended as needed in response to continually evolving circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Communities Together for Children will confirm with the TBDSSAB that this policy/procedure is being followed by ensuring all staff has reviewed the policy and any amendments and signed an attestation.

