



## Physical Distancing, Space/Group Capacity and Grouping

**8. COVID-19 Physical Distancing**

**Date: October 5, 2020**

**CATEGORY: Health and Safety**

**REVISED: September 15, 2021**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a description of practices to encourage physical distancing in EarlyON Programs in accordance 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**

Given the increased risk of infection due to COVID-19, routine practices must be modified in order to support physical distancing. EarlyON programs and services will be offered in a way that maintains physical distancing.

Physical distancing of at least two metres must be maintained amongst all individuals, at all times. Note: This does not apply to parents/children living in the same home.

Physical distancing measures will be implemented and communicated to children in a positive manner so as not create undue stress, anxiety or disruption for children. It is expected that EarlyON staff will share physical distancing expectations with parents and caregivers, who will then in turn support their children with physical distancing practices. It is recognized that maintaining physical distancing with young children is exceptionally challenging. Every effort must also be made to maintain a warm and caring atmosphere.

### **Procedure**

- Each indoor EarlyON program location has a maximum number of participants established by Communities Together for Children. We would apply the regulatory requirement of indoor gatherings. This number is based on a maximum of 50% capacity of the indoor space maintaining that 2 m of distancing. This capacity is calculated by the fire code gatherings.
- Upon each visit to Communities Together for Children's EarlyON program, physical distancing expectations (or reminder of the expectations) will be communicated to parents/caregivers. Physical Distancing of at least two metres amongst all individuals (except those living in the same home) will be expected at all times.

- Play materials and “invitations to play” will be set up to encourage children to spread out as much as possible.
- Multiple copies of popular items will be available and dispersed throughout the room.
- Communities Together for Children’s EarlyON educators will set up multiple “points of interest” throughout the program space
- Communities Together for Children’s EarlyON will remove furniture to eliminate “bottle necks” and create more space for children to move, while maintaining distance.
- Singing is permitted indoors; masking is encouraged but not required for singing outdoors if a minimum of two metres distance can be maintained between groups/cohorts and as much distancing as possible maintained within a groups/cohort.
- Snacks and beverages (coffee) will not be provided by Communities Together for Children’s EarlyON programs at this time.
  - If parents choose to offer their child a snack during an EarlyON program, it must be ensured that a 2-metre distance is kept from all other participants, and that the area where the child has eaten is cleaned and disinfected immediately afterward. Children’s water bottles and cups must also be labeled and kept separate from others.
  - Proper hand hygiene practices must be followed by washing hands before and after eating, before donning and after doffing a mask and their mask must be safely stored when not in use
  - Participants will be notified that due to the requirement to wear a mask, all beverages (including coffee) will not be permitted on site.

### **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.

