

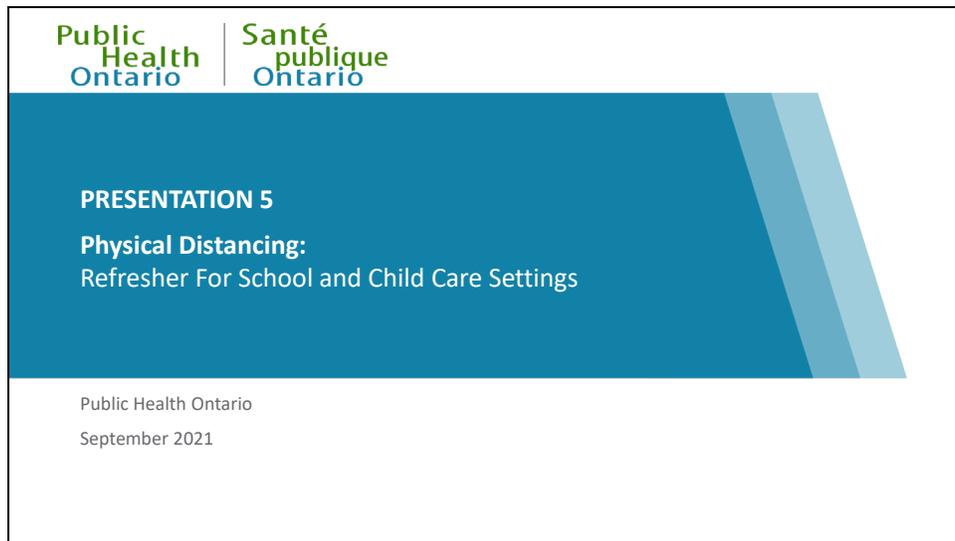
# Presentations for Schools and Child Care Settings: **Physical Distancing**

Transcript: Presentation 5 of 6

September 2021

# Slide 1

---



This presentation reviews the utility of physical distancing regarding COVID-19 transmission and is intended for the school and child care settings.

## Slide 2

---

### Disclaimer

This document was developed by Public Health Ontario (PHO). PHO provides scientific and technical advice to Ontario's government, public health organizations and health care providers. PHO's work is guided by the current best available evidence at the time of publication.

The application and use of this document is the responsibility of the user. PHO assumes no liability resulting from any such application or use.

This document may be reproduced without permission for non-commercial purposes only and provided that appropriate credit is given to PHO. No changes and/or modifications may be made to this document without express written permission from PHO.

PublicHealthOntario.ca

2

### Disclaimer

This document was developed by Public Health Ontario (PHO). PHO provides scientific and technical advice to Ontario's government, public health organizations and health care providers. PHO's work is guided by the current best available evidence at the time of publication.

The application and use of this document is the responsibility of the user. PHO assumes no liability resulting from any such application or use.

This document may be reproduced without permission for non-commercial purposes only and provided that appropriate credit is given to PHO. No changes and/or modifications may be made to this document without express written permission from PHO.

# Slide 3

---

## Objectives

- To review physical distancing and its role in reducing the transmission of COVID-19
- To review strategies to maintain physical distancing both indoors and outdoors in school and child care settings
- To provide approaches to take when physical distancing isn't possible

PublicHealthOntario.ca

3

There are three objectives for this presentation:

- To review physical distancing and its role in reducing the transmission of COVID-19;
- To review strategies to maintain physical distancing both indoors and outdoors in school and child care settings;
- To provide approaches to take when physical distancing isn't possible

# Slide 4

## What is Physical Distancing?

- Physical distancing, also referred to as social distancing, means keeping space between you and others whenever possible.
- The purpose of physical distancing is to prevent exposure to droplets and aerosols from an infected person that when expelled are dispersed into the environment and onto people nearby
- In general, a distance of 2 metres (or 6 feet) is recommended.



PublicHealthOntario.ca

4

- Physical distancing is a key preventative measure for COVID-19. When a person is infected with COVID-19, being in close distance of the infected person increases the risk of exposure to their infectious droplets and aerosols. Maintaining distance from others is one measure that helps to reduce the risk of potential exposure to COVID-19.
- The term, physical distancing means that staff, essential visitors and students/children are to stay away from one another whenever possible. This is particularly important when masks need to be removed, for example during a lunch or break.
- In general, a distance of 2 metres (or 6 feet) is recommended. As much distancing as possible between students, between students and staff and between staff members should always be promoted when age appropriate.
- Physical distancing is one measure in a bundle of measures used to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. No single measure should be relied on by itself.

## Slide 5

**What Can I Do to Reinforce Physical Distancing for Students/Children?**

The risk of transmission occurs most commonly with close, unprotected contact.

**Talk to children/students about physical distancing and why it is important**

**Incorporate visual reminders/use cues to show how far 2 metres (6 feet) is**

**Encourage or plan activities that promote physical distancing**

**Model appropriate behavior**

**Masking when distancing is not possible**

World Health Organization. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2: implications for infection prevention precautions: scientific brief [Internet]. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020 [cited 2021 Apr 1]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/item/modes-of-transmission-of-virus-causing-covid-19-implications-for-ipc-precaution-recommendations>

PublicHealthOntario.ca

- Consider physical distancing depending on the local context and age of students/children.
- The risk of transmission occurs most commonly with close, unprotected contact.
- This slide provides a few examples of what can you do to reinforce physical distancing with students/children when indicated.
- Talk to students or children about physical distancing and why it is important in a non-judgmental manner
- Visual cues e.g. markings on floors/walls to show distance between people. (e.g. tape or decals) can be helpful
- If age appropriate, plan activities that promote physical distancing
- Model appropriate behavior by demonstrating consistent physical distancing from other staff members
- It is important to note that strict physical distancing may not always be possible or recommended (especially for younger children) – masking is an important supplemental strategy that will reduce the risk with close interactions

## Slide 6

---

**What Can I Do To Support Physical Distancing In Classrooms**

- Classroom/Indoor spaces:
  - Ensure desks/tables/seating are kept in the approved configuration
  - Encourage activities that limit prolonged close physical contact between children where practical



Ontario, Ministry of Education. COVID-19: health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [modified Aug 3; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/covid-19-health-safety-and-operational-guidance-schools-2021-2022>

PublicHealthOntario.ca 6

- What can you do support physical distancing in classrooms
- The classroom/childcare setting grouping is a natural cohort.
- Where distancing is recommended within the classroom, avoid having children move desks closer together or change the orientation of desks. These configurations should aim to allow distance between children and/or maintain cohorts or groups.
- While it is important to maintain physical distancing at all times between cohorts, it is recognized that it is not always feasible or recommended within a cohort. Therefore it is important to remember physical distancing along with other prevention measures such as hand hygiene and proper PPE use must be used together to reduce the risk of COVID 19.

# Slide 7

---

## What Can I Do To Support Physical Distancing When Moving Between Spaces?

- Stagger periods of movement and promote one way flow of traffic
- Maintain physical distance at all times between cohorts/groups



Ontario. Ministry of Education. COVID-19: health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [modified Aug 3; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/covid-19-health-safety-and-operational-guidance-schools-2021-2022>

PublicHealthOntario.ca

7

What can you do to support physical distancing regarding movement between spaces?

- Stagger periods of movement and promote one way flow of traffic
- Maintain physical distance at all times between cohorts

## Slide 8

---

### What Can I Do To Support Physical Distancing During Physical Activities Within A Cohort?

- Exercise/Gym:
  - May be associated with increased droplet/aerosol formation
  - Encourage outdoor activities
  - Promote activities that limit prolonged physical contact
  - Physical activities allowed indoors may vary by jurisdiction based on local epidemiology – refer to local public health and school board guidance

Ontario. Ministry of Education. COVID-19: health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [modified Aug 3; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/covid-19-health-safety-and-operational-guidance-schools-2021-2022>

PublicHealthOntario.ca

8

What can you do to support physical distancing during exercise/use of the gym?

It is important that there be careful consideration around exercise and gym class because physical activity can be associated with increased droplet and aerosol formation. With this in mind, outdoor activities should be encouraged and large, well-ventilated spaces should be used if moderate to vigorous physical activity is permitted indoors. Attention should be given around processes and behaviours associated with exercising/gym class, with consideration of how to reduce person-to-person contact and spread of droplets and aerosols. For example, signage should be posted informing students of the maximum occupancy to facilitate physical distancing during the use of locker rooms and showers; students should avoid direct and close physical contact.

## Slide 9

---

### What Can I Do To Support Physical Distancing During Outdoor Activities?

- Transmission risk is reduced outdoors, but health and safety measures should continue to be encouraged
- Within cohorts: Encourage activities that limit prolonged physical contact between children
- Between cohorts: Physical distancing between cohorts should be maintained wherever possible

World Health Organization. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2: implications for infection prevention precautions: scientific brief [Internet]. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020 [cited 2021 Apr 1]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/transmission-of-sars-cov-2-implications-for-infection-prevention-precautions>

Ontario. Ministry of Education. COVID-19: health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [modified Aug 3; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/covid-19-health-safety-and-operational-guidance-schools-2021-2022>

PublicHealthOntario.ca

9

What can you do to support physical distancing during outdoor activities?

- The risk of transmission is reduced outdoors, but health and safety measures should continue to be encouraged.
- Consider activities such as nature or scavenger hunts, hide and seek, tag, and obstacle courses that can occur outside.

## Slide 10

---

**What Should I Keep In Mind Regarding The Use Of Playground Equipment?**



- Limit capacity and avoid crowded playgrounds to maintain physical distance
- Perform hand hygiene before and after playground use
- Masking outdoors as recommended by local public health

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Frequently asked questions: schools and COVID-19 [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/nCoV/sch/2020/12/covid-19-faq-schools.pdf?1a=en>

PublicHealthOntario.ca 10

On the playground, important protective measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 include: limiting the capacity and avoiding crowded playgrounds and cleaning your hands before and after using playground equipment with ABHR or soap and water. Wearing a mask outdoors should follow local public health guidance and can be considered when physical distancing is not possible.

# Slide 11

---

## Lunch And Nutritional Breaks: Points To Remember

- Stagger lunch and nutrition breaks and remain in designated areas assigned for eating food and drinking (e.g., classrooms, staff rooms, outside if weather permitting)
- Safely take off, store and put masks back on after lunch or nutrition breaks
- Perform hand hygiene before and after touching the mask and eating/drinking

### Special considerations for staff rooms:

- Staff should maintain at least 2 metre physical distance when masks are removed while eating or drinking

Ontario, Ministry of Education. COVID-19: health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [modified Aug 3; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/covid-19-health-safety-and-operational-guidance-schools-2021-2022>

PublicHealthOntario.ca

11

- This slide highlights a few points related to lunch and nutritional breaks.
- In order to promote distancing, lunch and nutritional breaks can be staggered and remain in designated areas assigned for eating food and drinking. Distancing should be promoted as much as possible at times when masks are removed.
- Clear instructions should be provided to students and staff on how to safely take off and store masks at lunch or other nutrition breaks, as well as putting masks back on afterwards.
- Hand hygiene is to be performed before and after touching their mask and eating/drinking.
- For staff rooms, staff should maintain at least 2 metres distance when masks are removed while eating and drinking.

# Slide 12

---

## For More Information ...

Public Health Ontario resources:

- [COVID-19 - Schools and Related Settings](#)
- [COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Elementary and Secondary \(K-12\) Schools Checklist](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Physical Distancing](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): How to Protect Yourself from COVID-19](#)

If you would like more information, please see the list of resources here.

# Slide 13

---

**How Did We Do?**



PHO would appreciate your thoughts on these presentations.

Please visit PHO's school resources webpage to access and complete a short survey.

PublicHealthOntario.ca 13

PHO would appreciate your thoughts on these refresher presentations. Please visit PHO's school resources webpage to access and complete a short survey.

## Slide 14

---

**For More Information About This Presentation, Contact:**

[communications@oahpp.ca](mailto:communications@oahpp.ca)

Public Health Ontario keeps Ontarians safe and healthy. Find out more at  
[PublicHealthOntario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/health)

Ontario 

If you have questions, please email [communications@oahpp.ca](mailto:communications@oahpp.ca). Thank you!