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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
What Is Physical Distancing?

- Physical distancing, also referred to as social distancing, means staying at least 2 metres (or 6 feet) away from other people whenever possible.
- The purpose of physical distancing is to prevent exposure to droplets and aerosols from an infected person from being dispersed into the environment and onto people within 2 metres (or 6 feet) distance.
- 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.
What Can I Do to Reinforce Physical Distancing for Students/Children?

The risk of transmission is higher indoors, particularly when physical distancing is not practiced and/or when masking is not practiced consistently by all.

- 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

What Can I Do To Support Physical Distancing In Classrooms Within A Cohort?

• 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


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


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
  • Avoid engaging in moderate to vigorous physical activity indoors
  • Promote activities that limit prolonged physical contact


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
  • Maintain 2 metres (6 feet) physical distance when possible and practical, especially any time masks are removed for eating or drinking

• Between cohorts:
  • Physical distancing between cohorts should be maintained wherever possible


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

- Limit capacity (e.g., one school cohort at a time) and avoid crowded playgrounds to maintain physical distance.
- Wear a mask when physical distancing is not possible.
- Perform hand hygiene before and after playground use.

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 2 metre physical distance at all times, especially when masks are removed while eating or drinking


For More Information ...

Public Health Ontario resources:

• Public Health Ontario – Schools and COVID-19 webpage
• COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Elementary and Secondary (K-12) Schools: Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Overview (webinar)
• COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Elementary and Secondary (K-12) Schools Checklist
• COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Elementary and Secondary (K-12) Schools - Checklist Orientation (webinar)
• Physical Distancing
How did we do?

Your feedback is important to us. Please provide your input by clicking on the survey button. Thank you!
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