

PRESENTATION 5

Physical Distancing:

Refresher For School and Child Care Settings

Public Health Ontario

September 2021

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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 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.

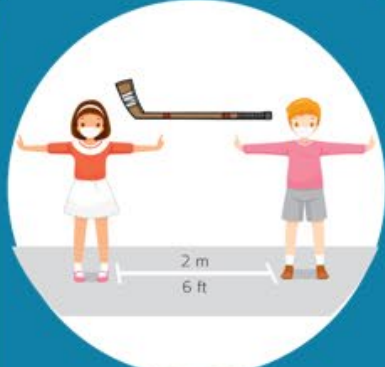


What Can I Do to Reinforce Physical Distancing for Students/Children?

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



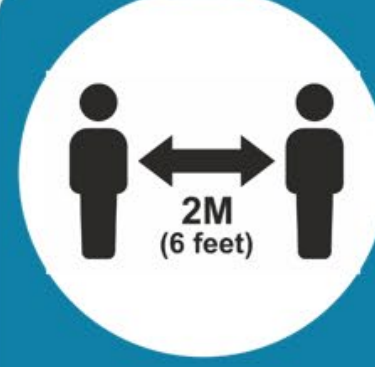
Talk to children/students about physical distancing and why it is important



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/i/item/modes-of-transmission-of-virus-causing-covid-19-implications-for-ipc-precaution-recommendations>

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>

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>

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>

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/transmissionof-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>

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?la=en>

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>

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](#)

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.

For More Information About This Presentation, Contact:

communications@oahpp.ca

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PublicHealthOntario.ca