

LICENSING'S LATEST CHILD CARE NEWSLETTER



Community Care Facilities Licensing

Spring 2020

Message from the Regional Manager

I hope this message finds you and the children in your care healthy and well. While many things have changed in our world over the past six weeks, our commitment to working as partners in protecting the healthy and safety of children in licensed care has remained steadfast. As a licensing program we have heard and seen your commitment, cooperation, and hard work as you continue to operate your facility, meeting the intent of legislation and the needs of children and families — thank you.

During this unprecedented time, it's crucial to observe the [Provincial Health Officer](#) guidelines and to follow best practices to keep children, families and yourself safe. In this current state, it is normal to feel anxious and apprehensive — things are uncertain. However, it is more critical now than ever, to activate practices which dissipate fear and anxiety. Are you participating in activities that are not evidence based such as social media, cable news and conversations with friends and colleagues that are focused on speculation versus fact?

This is the time to seek out high quality connections with others such as your [Licensing Officer](#), Consultants from the [Child Care Resource and Referral program](#), members of [Early Childhood Educators of BC](#), and friends and family who are committed to sharing reliable information, enacting protective practices, and positivity. To be more accessible to you during these extraordinary times, the Community Care Facilities Licensing program in the Island Health region has temporarily moved to a seven-day model. Yes, we are also adjusting and trying new things, and more importantly, we are doing it with you to protect the health and safety of children in licensed care.

We will continue to communicate messages, share resources, and provide guidance through email memos, telephone conversations and virtual connections. During this emerging time of uncertainty, we are here to help facilitate your success operating a licensed child care facility. In the next couple of weeks, Licensing Officers will be contacting you to conduct a virtual inspection, and/or onsite health and safety inspection.

Licensing looks forward to working with you as partners in compliance and supporting the Provincial Health Officer guidelines. Please reach out by email at shelley.mcclure@viha.ca or by telephone at 250.816.5267 if you have questions. I look forward to hearing from you, until then, please stay safe and healthy.

[Shelley McClure](#), EdD, MA, CEC, CAM, BGS, ECE

In This Issue

- Message from the Regional Manager
- Staying Informed Covid-19
- BC Council for Families— Resources
- COVIBOOK
- Virtual and Onsite
- Video Surveillance
- Frequently Asked Questions



Staying Informed @ COVID-19

Accessing evidence-based information about COVID-19 is foundational to protecting the health, safety and wellness of yourself and children in your care. There are multiple sites with resources we encourage you to explore and follow:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control COVID –19](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19) found at <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>
- [Canadian Pediatric Society](https://www.cps.ca/en/tools-outils/covid-19-information-and-resources-for-paediatricians) found at <https://www.cps.ca/en/tools-outils/covid-19-information-and-resources-for-paediatricians>
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html) found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>
- [Government of Canada Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html) found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
- [Island Health Covid-19](https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/covid-19) found at <https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/covid-19>
- [Ministry of Children & Family Development to COVID-19](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/covid-19-information) found at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/covid-19-information>



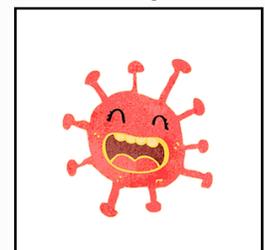
BC Council for Families—Resources

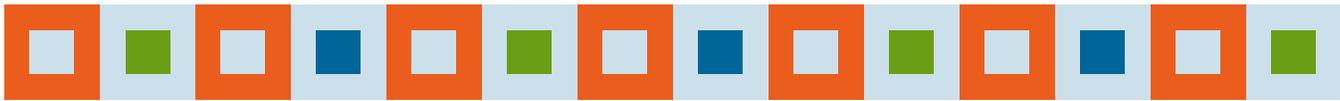


The BC Council for Families has compiled articles and tip sheets to support families during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The resources can be found at <https://www.bccf.ca/bccf/blog/covid-19-resources-for-families/>. Additionally, you can sign up for a free monthly E-Newsletter with current, research based resources on information for families available at <https://bccf.us3.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=3c86d63f87094b29641038e95&id=8aebc01ca2>.

COVIBOOK

Manuela Molina (2020) has created a short fantasy book designed to reassure children about COVID –19. The book is for children aged 7 and under and can be printed off and shared with children. You can find this resource at <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>





Virtual and Onsite Inspections

Licensing Officers are continuing to monitor, inspect and investigate facilities during the Pandemic. Our goal is to work in partnership with you to reduce the risk of harm to children in care and to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children is promoted and protected. A newly developed *Health and Safety Inspection Checklist* has been created and will be sent to you in advance of a scheduled virtual or onsite inspection. Areas monitored during the inspection may include (a) Employee & Children Records, (b) Health and Safety Requirements (c) Programming, (d) Policies and Procedures and (e) Provincial Health Officer guidelines.



As a licensee, you and your colleagues play an important role in creating safe and healthy environments for children. In addition to complying with applicable legislation and regulations, please adhere to the guidelines for [sanitizing the facility and equipment](#), and [hand washing](#). Additionally, please employ social distancing such as greeting children and parents with a wink and gesture to follow you, setting up the space with multiple stations for play — duplicate book areas, create a variety of exploration centers, large motor areas, and specific areas for snacks and lunch.

This is a wonderful time to experiment with creative ideas. For example, creating mini picnic areas (small patterned blankets for one) for snack time, setting up easels with distinct distancing in mind, and providing sanitizing stations for washing hands throughout the space (children love using products to clean their hands). The Ministry of Education has developed a book titled, [Let's Play!](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/early-learning/teach/earlylearning/lets-play-activities-for-families.pdf) Found at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/early-learning/teach/earlylearning/lets-play-activities-for-families.pdf> that may guide some of your activities. Additionally the BC Centre for Disease Control in partnership with the BC Ministry of Health has developed a resource titled, [COVID-19: Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19_PublicHealthGuidanceChildcareFacilities.pdf) to further guide you found http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19_PublicHealthGuidanceChildcareFacilities.pdf

We believe that an organized and transparent inspection process will enable you to be successful with meeting the provincial guidelines. Section 9 of the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) requires licensees to make their facilities available for inspection. Please contact your Licensing Officers to learn more about inspection processes, answer questions you may have or provide you with resources to assist your success.



Video Surveillance- by Kate Skye, Child Care LO

Video Surveillance in early years settings has become a hot topic. Surveillance can be viewed as a valuable tool for Licensees who work alone, or as a way for parents to connect in and see what their children are doing. Video Surveillance can also be used to improve security. While the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and Child Care Licensing Regulations do not speak directly to the use of video surveillance, issues of confidentiality and dignity do apply. *CCALA – 7(1)(b)(i) Standards to be Maintained – A licensee must do all of the following: (b) operate the community care facility in a manner that will promote (i) the health, safety and dignity of persons in care.*

Licensees, Managers and child care providers are also required to follow guidelines set out by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and the RCMP and video surveillance must be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.



One of the first questions child care providers need to ask is what is the purpose of the video surveillance? Is it to provide parents with a mechanism to link in and view their children during the day, or to manage employee productivity, or do Licensee's working alone hope it can be used if Licensing is conducting a complaint investigation? Perhaps the surveillance is about security and safety, recording possible break ins and potential theft of equipment and damage to property. Does the type of system being used, open circuit (external company services) or closed circuit (in house video equipment) or live feed, meet the purpose of the surveillance?

If a facility wants to install video surveillance a policy is recommended so employees, parents and visitors know the purpose of the video surveillance and the implications as they relate to privacy and confidentiality. If discussed in a Parent Handbook or Employee Manual the following issues can be addressed:

- What is the rational and purpose of the video surveillance system?
- Where are the cameras located, what is their field of vision?
- Do staff and children have a reasonable expectation of privacy such as cameras not showing bathrooms, nap areas or staff lunchrooms?
- How are the video recordings stored and for how long?
- Are the recordings destroyed or overwritten?
- Which personnel are authorized to operate the system? Who has access to the recordings?
- What happens if a parent or family asks to view the footage based on personal issues? Could the parent pursue legal counsel to access the video footage if access is denied by the Licensee?
- What happens if the system is hacked and persons outside of the organization gain access to the footage?
- What identification is posted showing that video surveillance is occurring?
- Who can be contacted with answers to questions and provide information about the system?
- How is any release or disclosure of any of the recordings documented?

Child Care centres must maintain adequate internet security measures to protect against unauthorized access to surveillance systems, which may include: (a) Changing passwords, (b) Tracking filtering measures, (c) Reporting any unauthorized access to the system, and (d) Taking immediate corrective action in response to any abuse of the system.

Finally, operators of surveillance systems should be fully aware of the purpose of the system and be fully trained in rules protecting privacy. The rights of individuals to have access to their personal information should be respected at all times.

BC Civil Liberties Association (2020) Retrieved from <https://bccla.org>

Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada(2020). *Privacy topics*. Retrieved from <https://www.priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics>.

Frequently Asked Questions and Responses

Q: Do I have to move my facility to **Not Operating during the Pandemic if I am not operating?**

A: No. However, we highly encourage you to move your facility to **Not Operating** to enable the program to produce current data regarding what facility is operating and what facility is closed during the Pandemic.

- Moving to Not Operating status will not effect any MCFD funding.

Q: Can children in my care have increased screen time during the Pandemic?

A: No. The Director of Licensing Standard of Practice - Active Play states that all licensed child care programs must limit screen time (TV, computer, electronic games) to 30 minutes or less a day.

- Programs where children are in attendance for 3 hours or less should not include screen time activities into the daily routine and screen time is not offered to children under two years of age.

Q: Can I keep children inside all day during the Pandemic?

A: No. Children need to play outside. The safest place for children to play is in your outdoor play area.

- Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer encourages outdoor time while adhering to social distancing.

Q: Can I exceed my maximum capacity during COVID-19?

A: No. Group sizes and employee ratios must be met. You may have fewer children to enable social distancing, however you cannot exceed your licensed capacity.

Q: My first aid has expired do I have to close my facility?

A: No. While a valid first aid and CPR certificate is a requirement, during the Pandemic if your first aid has expired we trust that you are cable of effectively communicating with emergency personal and that you have an accessible first aid kit on premise.



Community Care Facilities Licensing Contact Information Temporarily Seven Days a Week: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

South Island

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