

Montessori Early Learning Centre

Nurture. Inspire. Engage.

COVID-19 Policies & Procedures

General Health Guidelines

Parents and Program staff have a joint responsibility to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, or other infectious diseases, when attending the program, by adhering to the following Alberta Health guidelines:

- 1) Practice physical distancing by staying at least 2 meters away from other people not in your household. If you are unable to stay 2 meters away from others, then wear a non-surgical face mask.
- 2) Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- 3) Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- 4) Practice personal hygiene when coughing or sneezing.
- 5) Stay home and away from others if you are feeling unwell.

COVID-19 Symptoms

Alberta Health states common COVID-19 symptoms are like influenza and other respiratory illnesses, and include:

- Cough
- Fever (over 38 °C)
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Nasal congestion
- Painful swallowing
- Headache
- Chills, muscle, or joint aches
- New fatigue or severe exhaustion
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or unexplained loss of appetite)
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Feeling unwell in general

Infectious and Communicable Diseases, including COVID-19

Parents must keep their child at home if they are unwell. If children become unwell whilst attending the Program, then parents will be called to collect their child immediately. If a child is sent home, MELC will record and maintain a record of sickness, including the child's name, date and time when symptoms were observed and name of staff member who identified the symptoms, time when the child's parent/emergency contact was initially contacted and the name of staff member who contacted them, time the child was removed from MELC's program and the date the child returned to the program.

If a child has COVID related symptoms, they must stay at home and isolate for at least 10 days or until they are symptom free for at least 48 hours, whichever is longer.

If a child has COVID related symptoms and tests negative for COVID-19 they must stay at home until they are symptom free for at least 48 hours.

If the child has non-COVID related symptoms, they must stay at home until they are symptom free for at least 48 hours.

Finally, if a child has returned from international travel in the last 14 days or has close contact with someone with COVID-19, then they must self-isolate for 14 days.

Supervised Care of Sick Children

If a child becomes ill while attending the Program, the child will be isolated in a separate room and the parent or guardian will be notified to come and pick the child up immediately. All items used / touched by the child will be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible. Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g. paper, books, cardboard puzzles) will be removed from the classroom and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 3 days.

All such illnesses will be logged and analyzed, monthly, to understand root cause(s) and possible actions needed to address any existing deficiencies.

MELC's commitment

Our primary priority is to keep everyone, children, staff, and families, safe and healthy to the best of our abilities and always comply with Alberta Health guidelines. We know our parent community also shares this commitment and together we can achieve it.

The measures MELC will take to this end are as follows:

Cohorts and staffing

Alberta Health's guideline on classroom sizes is 30 people, including staff and children. MELC will hence operate one cohort of 30 people across our two classrooms.

Physical distancing

Where possible, program staff and children will maintain a 2-meter distance between each other. To help facilitate this the following guidelines will be followed to the best of our abilities:

- Activities will be limited to one child, at a time, if a 2-meter distance between them can not be maintained.
- Only one child, at a time, will be permitted to sit at a table unless the table enables social distancing.
- Staff and children will not hug, kiss, or hold hands.

Hand washing

Program staff and children will wash their hands with soap and water, at a minimum, when:

- Entering / leaving the program.
- After using the bathroom.
- Before / after handling food and/or eating.
- Before/after playing / going outside.

Daily COVID-19 screening

All program staff and parents must actively screen themselves / their child and complete a daily online screening questionnaire at home before leaving, to assess whether they may have been exposed to COVID-19 or have any COVID-19 related symptoms. Please ensure you submit the online questionnaire no later than 8.30am. Program

staff will conduct a temperature check, using a non-contact thermometer, prior to admitting each child at drop off and again after lunch, each day.

Anyone feeling unwell, with/without COVID-19 symptoms or may have been exposed to COVID-19 must stay at home and notify the program, either via email (office@mntelc.com) or phone (403-399-0021), and call Health Link. The program shall have a zero-tolerance policy towards any kind of sickness.

Please note, the program will not admit a child if they have not been screened and/or their online screening questionnaire has not been submitted.

Pre-existing health conditions

Parents must inform the Program, in writing, if their child has any pre-existing health conditions e.g. allergies, food intolerances or dietary restrictions.

If the symptoms caused by a known pre-existing health condition are similar to COVID and the parent provides a doctor's note stating what the condition is, what the symptoms are and how/when the symptoms are caused, then we will not require the child to be removed from the Centre and/or get tested for COVID if the child develops these symptoms whilst attending the Centre. Otherwise, parents will be required to collect their child and follow Government requirements on self-isolate or provide a negative COVID test before returning their child to the Centre.

The Program will maintain a list of health concerns, including allergies, intolerances, and dietary restrictions, for each child in the classrooms.

Drop off / Pick up procedure

Parents must drop off / pick up their child from the Centre's entrance area only. Parents are not permitted to enter the Centre unless authorised to do so. When dropping off or picking up, parents must comply with the following general guidelines:

- One (1) designate parent, per family, should drop off and pick up their child each day.
- All parents must wear a non-surgical face mask when attending the Program facilities.
- All parents must clean their hands, using hand sanitizer, once they enter the Centre.
- Only one (1) parent, at a time, will be permitted to enter the designated drop off/pick up area.
- All waiting parents (and children at drop off) must wait outside the Centre and maintain a 2-meter distance between themselves and other waiting parents / children.

Drop off procedure

Program staff will meet each child in the designated drop off / pick up area, wear a non-surgical mask and sanitizer their hands before attending to each child. Parents will be asked to confirm they have screened their child and submitted their online COVID19 screening questionnaire before assessing the child. Provided these steps have been taken, staff will then visually check that the child does not present any COVID related symptom before taking their temperature. If the child's temperature is below 38 °C they will be asked to sanitize their hands, change their shoes and admitted to their classroom. If a child is refused admission, parents will need to take their child home.

Pick up procedure

Children will be guided to wash their hands with soap and water before packing all their belongings and changing their shoes. Parents must take all their children's belongings, except indoor shoe and change of clothes home with them each day.

Please note, it is important children are picked up on time, to enable us to fully clean and disinfect the program facilities and equipment in a timely manner, so staff can go home at a reasonable time.

Program visitors

There shall be no non-essential visitors or volunteers at the program. Parents and/or guardians will be permitted to enter the program only if necessary, but will need to wear a mask, sanitize their hands and remain two metres away from others.

Essential program visitors, who provide important supporting program services, may be admitted if deemed in the best interest of the Program and/or children. All such visitors will be screened, required to sanitize their hands, wear a mask and maintain a 2-meter distance from others.

All visitors admitted to the Centre who stay for 15 minutes or longer **must** complete a Visitor's Log in case there is a COVID-19 outbreak at the Centre, to enable contact tracing to occur.

Program events

All field trips, group transportation, holiday events, performances and celebrations will be postponed until further notice, as these events offer fewer possibilities for physical distancing and may lead to the mingling of cohorts.

Parent observations & meetings

The Program will use telephone, videos, and/or video conferencing for parent events, like parent meetings, observations, and parent education events.

Refrigerating / heating food

MELC will be unable to refrigerate and/or heat children's food due to possible cross-contamination. Please ensure you send your child's food in a thermos and include a cold pack, if required.

Reporting an outbreak

If two or more people attending the Program, i.e. Program staff and/or children, have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, the Program will follow outbreak notification procedures and inform Alberta Health, as per routine zone protocols.

Closure due to COVID19

In the event of a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, the Program will close for a minimum of 72 hours to allow contact tracing. The Program will then adhere to recommendations from Alberta Health, before reopening.