



Returning to ABC Head Start Information for Families

ABC Head Start Society is a registered Canadian charity that began 35 years ago. We are committed to supporting children and families across the city. For those children attending any of our programs, we want parents/guardians to be aware that ensuring the safety of children, family members, our staff and volunteers is paramount. We are committed to adhering to all government health guidelines including those responding to the evolving COVID health crisis.

Schools have been directed to plan for three scenarios that could exist in the Fall:

- Scenario 1 - In school classes resume with some restrictions
- Scenario 2 - In-school classes partially resume (additional health measures)
- Scenario 3 - At-home learning continues (in-school classes suspended/cancelled)

Guiding principles have been identified by Alberta Education to help drive this process:

- Safety of children, students, and staff comes first
- Children and student learning will continue
- ECS authorities have flexibility to do what is best for their community

Alberta Health Guidelines change according to the most recent health information and direction from the Government of Alberta please go to this link for current information: <https://www.alberta.ca/schools-and-child-care.aspx>

Children across Alberta will return to class for the 2020/21 school year under [Scenario 1: In-class learning with enhanced health and safety measures](#). Below are the guidelines we are following under Scenario 1.



SCREENING

Before leaving home, staff, children, visitors, and volunteers who will access ABC sites for work or education, must self-screen for symptoms each day that they enter the site using the attached tool (See [Appendix C](#))

Parents and children must be provided a copy of the screening tool upon program registration with the expectation that it needs to be completed daily.

Our program is required to keep records of your child's known pre-existing conditions. It is your responsibility to inform ABC Head Start staff of any pre-existing health issues that may impact your child such as allergies, asthma. A child that is exhibiting COVID-like symptoms must be tested at least once according to the Alberta Health Services Guidance. This will establish a baseline for the individual. If symptoms change (worsen, additional symptom, change in baseline) the child must stay home and be tested and cleared.

Anyone that reports symptoms will be directed to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary health care practitioner, or 911 for emergency response), and fill out the [AHS Online Self-Assessment tool](#) to determine if they should be tested.

[Signs](#) will be posted reminding everyone not to enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.



PHYSICAL DISTANCING

ABC program sites have developed procedures for drop-off/pick-up that support physical distancing where possible between all persons (except household members). Physical distance is defined as keeping at least 2 metres/6 feet (about the length of a hockey stick) distance from other people.



We considered strategies to support physical distancing such as staggering drop-off and pick-up times and other protocols to limit contact between staff/parents/guardians/children as much as possible.

Our sites have instituted controls to promote physical distancing between all children in areas in and outside of the classroom, including hallways, washrooms, and common areas. This may include:

- Staggering start and end-times for classes to avoid crowded hallways.
- Posting signs, marking floors.
- Removing seating in public areas to prevent gathering.
- Considering limiting bathroom occupancy at any one time



CLEANING and SANITIZING

A thorough cleaning of the facilities will take place prior to re-entry. We have instituted enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, including daily cleaning for all areas of the site, washrooms and high-touch surface cleaned several times a day or more as needed. Regularly scheduled deep cleaning when children are not present will be completed as per Alberta Health Services Guidelines.

As per the health guidelines, we have developed procedures that outline hand hygiene and cleaning requirements for our sites and your child such as:

- Staff will teach and model proper handwashing techniques to each child and will be ensuring handwashing is complete upon entry/exiting of building/classroom, after washroom use/diapering, prior to eating and throughout the program time.
- For staff we have placed approved hand sanitizers in entrances, exits, classroom entrances, close to high-touch equipment such as tables, doorknobs. A list of Health Canada approved hand sanitizers is posted [here](#).
- Increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of:
 - High contact surfaces (including water fountains).
 - Washrooms.



- Shared equipment inside and outside classrooms.
- Auxiliary spaces and common rooms; and
- Other areas that may apply.
- We have added enhanced toy cleaning and are providing separate bins per cohort to be cleaned weekly
- Class supplies are not to be shared amongst cohorts
- We are also supplying each child with a small bin with school items for their use only. Staff can provide you with a list of what each child will receive.



COHORTS and SOCIAL DISTANCING

When possible, we will practice some physical distancing as a good precaution to prevent the spread of disease. A cohort is defined as a group of children and staff who remain together.

In classrooms, buses and during activities when physical distancing may not be possible, extra emphasis is put on other hygiene practices.

Cohorting of children by class will be instituted at all ABC Head Start sites.

Your child will only be with their cohort during all site-based activities including time in the playground or outside.

Reorganization of rooms to allow for more physical space.

Where possible we will guide foot traffic flow through entrances and hallways by using markers on the floor or pylons/barriers.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Personal protective equipment is required for staff as part of the Government of Alberta re-entry plan; however, the following should be noted:

- All staff will be provided face shields and cloth masks.
- Your child can wear a mask if they wish; however, children under 5 may not want to wear masks and our staff will help them with your family's choice about mask wearing. We will have masks available for each child should that be your choice. You can also send cloth masks with your child in their backpack. It will be returned each day and should be washed as per health guidelines.
- No site can provide an absolute assurance that a child will not be exposed to COVID; however, ABC Head Start is committed to providing any necessary PPE, staff training and support to ensure we minimize the risk.
- Please send an extra set of clothes with your child.



ILLNESS OF CHILD

- Masks are recommended for a child who takes ill at a program site and moved to isolation area until the child is picked up by their parent/guardian or emergency contact.
- Staff caring for the child will wear masks, face shield, gloves, and gown while attending to the child, and adhere to strict handwashing techniques before and after.
- All items and areas that may have been exposed to by the child will be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the student has been isolated and again after they are picked up. Any items that aren't easily disinfected will be removed and stored in a sealed container for 10 days.
- Parents/guardians will be given instructions at time of pick up on next steps and when the child can re-enter the program.



ILLNESS AT SITE

ABC Head Start has procedures in place to address illness at site which adhere to Alberta Health guidelines.



PRIVACY

All ABC Head Start staff are required to maintain the privacy of all children and families who attend our program. This also applies in the case of a suspected COVID case or actual diagnosis. We will do our best to ensure that your child's privacy is preserved therefore "contact tracing" will be done by Ministry of Health not by ABC staff. We will only share information with the Medical Officer of Health that is legally required.



Meals & Snacks

- No activities that involve the sharing of food between children or staff should occur.
- No self-serve or family-style meal service will happen at this time. As our usual practice, we will serve individual pre-packaged meals or meals served by designated staff.
- If you are sending food with your child to school, it will be stored with your child's belongings.
- Children will be encouraged to practice physical distancing while eating.
- There will be no common food items (e.g., cheese and crackers)
- Each child will get their own disposable utensil, plate, and cup each day.



BUSING

SOUTHLAND Transportation provides busing services to ABC Head Start Society.

SOUTHLAND remains committed to the Safely Home promise and hope that the actions taken will give confidence in their dedication to the health and safety of their passengers, customers, and employees.

As a part of SOUTHLAND Transportation's daily routine cleaning, all vehicles and offices are cleaned at regular intervals. Recently, they have enhanced their sanitation efforts by increasing the frequency, method, and materials used to complete this work.

These include:

- Thorough wipe down of all high contact areas in the workplace (including buses) to be completed twice daily. Including, but not limited to, handrails, doorknobs, chairs, armrests, keyboards, and head rests
- Sanitizing bus interiors with approved disinfectant
- Checking and/or replenishing hand sanitizer stations in offices
- Provision of extra hand sanitizer refills on site
- Increased supply of disinfectant wipes and/or disinfectant spray
- Enhanced cleaning process with external cleaning staff, where applicable

SOUTHLAND Transportation is committed to customer service and remaining the service provider of choice. As such, they are proactively executing several internal initiatives to ensure they are prepared for the possibility of widespread illness. These initiatives include, but are not limited to:

- Execution of a robust communications plan
- Travel and health related protocols
- Operational contingency planning and testing



COMMUNICATION

For updates go to our [Facebook](#) page, [website](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and any other social media platforms we have given you access to. If your question is not answered after reviewing the information, please email info@abcheadstart.org

If you have any questions about if you should or shouldn't be sending your child because of possible symptoms, please call 811 and follow their instructions.



WELLNESS SUPPORT

- For immediate support call 780-424-2424 to talk to Access 24/7. This local service is available at all hours to support your emotional wellness.
- Every ABC Head Start location hosts a parent support group that you can attend. Contact ABC's Family Engagement Team or talk to your child's teacher to get connected.
- ABC Head Start society offers a program on thriving as a family through COVID-19. In it, you will learn how to recognize signs of anxiety in yourself and your children, and how to combat stress and move forward with resilience. To get connected to these services please email tbennett@abcheadstart.org
- Alberta Health Services
 - [Mental Wellness Moments](#)
 - [Help in Tough Times](#)
 - [Phone Numbers & Supports](#)
 - Text COVID19HOPE to 393939 ([more](#))
- Mental Health Commission of Canada
 - [Resource Hub: Mental health and wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)



Your Role as Parent/Caregiver

- Complete the daily health screening questionnaire.
- DO NOT send your child to ABC Head Start if you answer “Yes” to any of the health screening questions. Please complete the online Assessment Tool or call 811 for next steps.
- Ensure that ABC Head Start has the most up to date contract information in the event that your child needs to be picked up.
- Contact ABC Head Start if your child is positive for COVID-19.
- Check for updates on Microsoft Teams daily.
- Be involved with your child’s progress, attend support groups and IPP meetings.
- Ask questions!



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I am not comfortable having my child return to school

The re-entry scenario was determined by the Minister of Education in conjunction with the Chief Medical Officer of Health. All Early Childhood Service providers such as ABC Head Start have worked with the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges of Alberta (AISCA) and Alberta Education to develop a plan that uses a variety of strategies that work together to support our sites to be as safe as possible. The Education Act presents schools and parents with the expectation that children attend school regularly and diligently. We recognize the uncertainties and sensitivities that many of our children and families have about COVID-19, and we are planning for the best measures to ensure our sites remain as safe as is possible under the circumstances.

What if my child has an underlying medical condition that makes it highly risky for her/him to attend school?

In certain clearly documented circumstances, exceptions can be made in clear and early consultation with ABC Head Start. These exceptions necessitate medical confirmation of the need to be allowed at-home learning, and in which case our staff would provide alternate learning opportunities for your child to achieve their development outcomes and learning goals.

What about field trips?

Under provincial direction, field trips that require children to ride on a bus are postponed. At this time virtual field trips, classroom field trips or physically distanced community walking trips can occur with appropriate safety measures in place.



What does my child need to bring for PPE or any other class material and personal belongings?

Right now, facial masks are not required for our children as part of the provincial re-entry plan; however, the following should be noted:

- All our staff have been provided face shields and masks by ABC Head Start
- Children are encouraged to include a mask as part of their school supplies and will be reminded to wear a mask where close contact (<2m) cannot be avoided. We recognize and understand that masks may not be appropriate for all children. Parents and guardians know their children best

Will visitors be allowed to sites?

Westmount Campus at the Winnifred Stewart building, the Newton site and the Millwoods Campus will allow visitors prior approval at the discretion of site supervisors and in compliance with all the guidelines dictated by Alberta Government related to COVID-19.

At this moment, no visitors are allowed at Edmonton Public Schools (EPS). Both our sites at EPS locations, Afton Elementary School and Delwood Elementary School, will not allow visitors. Some exceptions may be made and will require prior approval by the site supervisor in consultation with the school principal.



COVID-19 INFORMATION

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY- SCENARIO 1

In-school classes resume (near normal with health measures)

Appendix C Screening Questionnaire

PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CHILDREN MUST USE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE DAILY TO DECIDE IF THE STUDENT SHOULD ATTEND SCHOOL

Risk Assessment: Initial Screening Questions

1.	Do you, or your child attending the program, have any of the below symptoms:	CIRCLE ONE	
	Fever	YES	NO
	• Cough	YES	NO
	• Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing	YES	NO
	• Sore throat	YES	NO
	• Chills	YES	NO
	• Painful swallowing	YES	NO
	• Runny Nose / Nasal Congestion	YES	NO
	• Feeling unwell / Fatigued	YES	NO
	• Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea	YES	NO
	• Unexplained loss of appetite	YES	NO
	• Loss of sense of taste or smell	YES	NO
	• Muscle/ Joint aches	YES	NO
	• Headache	YES	NO
	• Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	YES	NO
2.	Has the person attending the activity/facility travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3.	Have you/your child had close unprotected* contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) with someone who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days and who is ill**?	YES	NO
4.	Have you/your child attending the program or activity had close unprotected* contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) in the last 14 days with someone who is ill**?	YES	NO
5.	Have you/your child or anyone in your household been in close <u>unprotected</u> contact in the last 14 days with someone who is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19?	YES	NO

* "unprotected" means close contact without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

If you have answered **Yes** to any of the above questions, please **DO NOT** enter the school at this time. You should stay home and use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine whether you need to be tested for COVID-19.

If you have answered **No** to all the above questions, you may attend school.

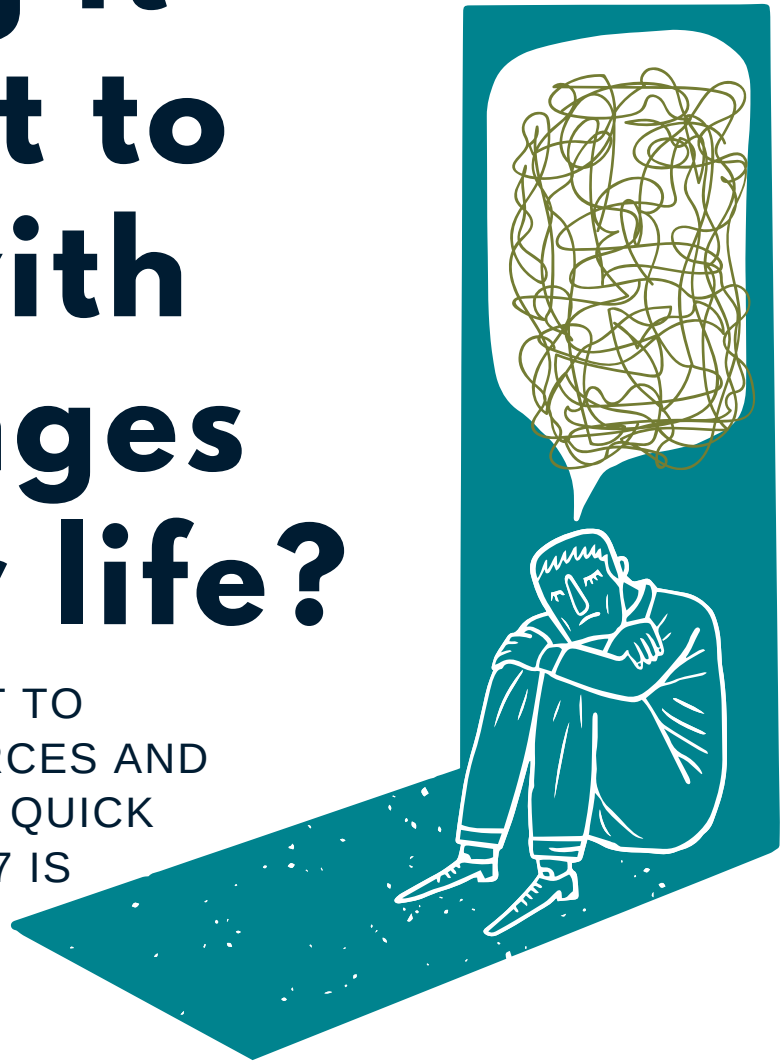
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Finding it difficult to cope with challenges in your life?

WE'VE REACHED OUT TO
COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND
DISCOVERED THAT A QUICK
CALL TO ACCESS 24/7 IS
THE FASTEST WAY
TO FIND THE
SUPPORT YOU NEED.



ACCESS 24/7
780-424-2424

CRISIS LINE - WALK-INS - ADDICTIONS - COUNSELLING

Monday - Friday
8:00 - 3:00

Anderson Hall
10959 102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 2V1

