

Oasis Montessori academy Covid-19 Pandemic Bulletin – May 2020

Recognizing that in BC; we have been able to flatten the Covid-19 curve, that we have a significantly lower infection rate than other provinces, that children have a very low infection rate (3%), and that the BC government is implementing a safe “return to work action plan” with child care listed as services to be restored under enhanced protocols in mid-May (Government of British Columbia, 2020) Oasis has decided to tentatively and cautiously still open, oasis will be offering childcare services to the exclusively to our enrolled families only at this time, and families must agree to the entire Pandemic Health and Wellness Policy.

Please remember that Covid-19 public health can rapidly change, and Oasis ability to remain open may change without notice. We are confident with the information that Dr. Bonnie Henry has been sharing during her media updates that we could be experiencing a reprieve during the summer as long as BC carefully and slowly restores services, physical distancing is continued when in the community, good hygiene is practiced, physical contact with others is limited (no handshaking or hugs) and people stay home when ill. As for the fall, we just don't know. The Covid-19 virus could return in abundance and or mutate causing a prolific incline in BC's curve, infecting vast numbers of people. If this were to happen, Oasis Academy would need to reassess and adjust our policies. While we are somewhat confident about the summer months and less confident for the winter, We believe our best hope is to move forward slowly, carefully, respectfully and knowledgeably. This may be our new normal until a vaccine is developed and that could be 12-18 months, so a return to some form of a new normal is inevitable. We have created a Covid-19 Pandemic Health and Wellness Policy as a firm structure for a shared understanding (between Oasis Academy and parents) of the rules and procedures Oasis Academy will utilize during this time. Please read it carefully, ask any questions that arise to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the policies and agree to it in its entirety BEFORE agreeing to return your child to Oasis Academy program. I am asking all parents to respect and follow the Pandemic Health and Wellness Policy meticulously; it is in place for the safety, health and wellness of everyone.

Once you have read Oasis Academy Pandemic Health and Wellness Policy, please communicate your childcare needs with me via email. What we will need to know if you wish to return in June. Please be sure we receive your response no later than May 28th 2020.

Covid-19 Pandemic Health and Safety

Oasis Academy has carefully constructed the following Pandemic Policy to ensure adequate preventative measures are in use during and after operating hours. This Pandemic Policy will help guide us in a joint purpose of helping to safeguard the health and wellbeing of all our childcare and family members. It is with great care, caution and attentive thought; as well as the direction of many professional resources that Oasis's has created this Pandemic Policy. Please respect and adhere to it, and the safety measures within, in its entirety for the well-being of us all. If at any time you have a concern or would like to share newly discovered information about the Covid-19 pandemic, best practices or increasing safety, please know that I am fully open to receiving this information. Information about Covid-19 is still emerging and there is new science surrounding it being discovered all the time.

Dr. Bonnie Henry is advising the public to continue to distance outside your family and in the community as much as possible while allowing for a careful restart plan in BC with a restoration of some services under enhanced protocols. Families who are able, or who do not have employment that falls within the

guideline of BC's Restart Plan (Government of British Columbia, 2020) are asked to continue to care for their children at home if possible.

Distancing and Physical Contact

Oasis academy is a small childcare facility and as such we have a small group of up to 16 children normally attending. This along with a group code of ethics, will help us to keep our "childcare community bubble of exposure" to a minimum. While physical distancing is encouraged in the general public and with extended family, physical distancing becomes much more difficult with children. Some strategies can help encourage physical distancing among young children; however, these strategies are not an assurance that children will adhere to physical distancing and will not engage in physical contact with others. While I believe children are resilient and capable, I also believe that they naturally learn through physical contact and making social connections, they are born with a natural desire and need for physical contact. It is through these experiences that children gain essential skills for life; and the context of which they experience these situations impact their development, so all encouraged distancing practices will be implemented with great care and attention to the children's whole wellbeing while keeping advised safety precautions intact as much as possible.

Oasis WILL endeavour to encourage but NOT enforce physical distancing in the childcare setting by utilizing the following methods: role modelling and reminders, positive reinforcement (verbal encouragement/ affirmations, stories, books, songs, puppets, circle time props, and other literacy extensions), our room arrangements/ furniture placement already encourage individual work Montessori work provocations and learning that support individual work or distanced play (i.e. telephone or pass) and focusing on emotional literacy at home and daycare .

A strong focus will be placed on emotional literacy because verbally identifying and sharing feelings becomes even more important to gaining self-regulation skills as physical contact becomes less acceptable. However, although physical distancing will be encouraged here gently and in a developmentally appropriate way, physical contact will not be eliminated. Children will still need comfort and hugs when big emotions arise, they will still want to sit close to read a book, and they will still need to be compassionately cared for when diapers are changed. These are just a few of the many circumstances in which physical contact is necessary when caring for young children. Oasis will NOT utilize the following conduct to encourage or enforce physical distancing: negative or alarming verbal statements, physically obstructing or restraining children, rejection of children's advances for affection during the day and at times of emotional sorrow, injury or vulnerability.

Distancing at Nap Time

At nap time Oasis will "ensure that children's naptime mats (or cribs) are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart." Oasis will also do the best of their ability, place "children head to toe in order to further reduce the potential contamination

Distancing at Pick-up & Drop-off Times

designated person should drop off and pick up children every day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk” (CDC, 2020). At discharge; if we are outside the children will be given hand sanitizer to clean their hands before leaving, if we are inside I will assist the children to wash their hands before leaving.

Note that I am working on an outdoor hand washing station, so we can limit the use of hand sanitizers. As per the CDC’s recommendations, arrival and drop off times will be staggered to help ensure distancing and driveway pick-ups will also be encouraged to help limit direct contact between parents and staff members (CDC, 2020). A schedule

As per the CDC (CDC, 2020) child care providers can protect themselves by:

- ☑ wearing large bib aprons, long-sleeve button-down shirts or having multiple changes of clothes on hand
- ☑ aprons, button-down shirts or clothing should be changed, if there are secretions on it
- ☑ tying hair back into a ponytail
- ☑ routinely washing hands, neck and anywhere touched by a child’s secretions
- ☑ changing children’s clothes if secretions are on the child’s clothes
- ☑ routine frequent handwashing and hygiene
- ☑ continual cleaning of surfaces throughout the day and disinfecting either before opening or after closing

Talking with Children about Covid-19

At Oasis we will talk about Covid-19 in developmentally appropriate ways. What will this look like? Below are some points that we have come up with using the guidance of the CDC (CDC, 2020) When talking about Covid-19 we will make every effort possible to remain calm and reassuring. We will make ourselves available to talk to and will not shut down questions surrounding Covid-19, the pandemic or new protocols in the childcare setting

Children will be given information that is honest, accurate, and developmentally appropriate Children will be taught ways to reduce the spread of Covid-19 through modelling, reminders, stories, games, experiences and dialogue.

Parents should also have developmentally appropriate conversations with their children at home about Covid-19, hygiene practices and physical distancing to positively educate them with the reasons for changes in their world around them and to preload their children for changes in our normal routines or behaviours (non-entry of parents, hand washing importance etc.). This will assist me in guiding the children gently and helping them make the transition to our “new normal”. This will also help them feel more secure and less frightened by the changes around them.

Group Code of Ethics

Families agree to continue to physically distance themselves and their children from the community outside the family home and daycare as much as possible – this means no playdates, no parties, no parks, no visits to wander the mall etc.) through each family’s children’s attendance in the program. Doing this is putting faith in everyone’s families to keep their “exposure bubbles” as limited as possible.

Families agree to keep their children home for a minimum of 10 days if ANY signs of un-wellness develop in their children or anyone in their family home OR if they have been exposed to anyone showing signs of un-wellness. Examples of un-wellness are but are not limited to: fever, lethargy, lack of appetite, runny nose, cold, flu, or COVID-19 symptoms including coughing or sneezing.

Parents also agree to have persons in their family home tested for Covid-19 if signs of un-wellness more surely suggest to a Covid-19 infection. For the safety of everyone in the centre, the parents agree to share these test results with Oasis and give consent for these results to be then shared with all enrolled clients so that exposures can be appropriately mitigated if appropriated further persons tested and Fraser Health notified.

Parents agree that children with any underlying health concerns should not attend the child care programs during the Covid-19 pandemic and that children that do attend should be attending the minimum number of hours required.

It is best to keep your children home with you as much as possible; however, Oasis does recognize the need for parents to return to work. Where possible Oasis encourages working from home to reduce “contact intensity” and “number of contacts” we are all exposed to (Government of BC, 2020). For some this may be returning to a more efficient work-from-home (uninterrupted from children) schedule, while for others this may look like returning to an outside the home working schedule. No matter what your working schedule looks like, parents agree that childcare will be exclusively for necessary working hours.

Oasis agrees to implement a no visitor’s policy. Oasis will NOT permit visitors within the program, with exception of the mandated requirement to give access to our child care licensing officer. If the licensing officer were to require access, I would ask her for a verbal statement of health and ask her to wear a mask during her time with us. Visitors not permitted during childcare hours include but are not limited to potential clientele, extended family members and repairmen.

Environmental Precautions & Frequent Cleaning

Oasis will limit the amount of and type of work that will be available to children (musical instruments, not easily disinfected will be temporarily removed from use). The materials will be cleaned and disinfected with diluted bleach and water solution (1:9) followed by rinsing, at the end of each day.

Parent’s physical interactions within the program will need to be limited; within the child care space, with interactions with the children and other parents and with the provider. Please see the Arrival and Admittance section to find out more.

Oasis will practice enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols that are in line with typical practices during an outbreak of respiratory illness and the recommendations of the BC CDC, Ministry of Health and VCH Health Childcare Licensing Regulations. Strong attention will be given to high touch surfaces (doorknobs, tables, faucets, bathrooms, light switches etc.) that will be disinfected at least two times per day during operation and again at the end of each day. The bleach- water solution listed below will be predominately utilized; however, Lysol wipes may also be used on occasion for rapid disinfection. The CDC recommends disinfection using household bleach solutions (at least 1000ppm sodium hypochlorite) at a ratio of 4 tea spoons.

The ministry of health and BCCDC recommends disinfection on using household bleach solution at a ratio of 1.9 or 2 tablespoons bleach per cup of water (~7800 ppm available sodium hypochlorite) (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020).

Oasis will follow the guidelines of the dilution rate of 1:9 or 2 tablespoons bleach per cup of water, utilizing Clorox regular bleach. Bleach will NOT be mixed with soap as this can be toxic and decreases the efficacy of bleach. Bleach solutions will be given a minimum contact time of 1 minute to disinfect surfaces and materials. Additionally, because bleach is light-sensitive and once mixed with water it is only effective for 24 hours; a new solution will be made each morning.

To allow for time to thoroughly and diligently disinfect Oasis facility and equipment at the end of each day (as per our cleaning policies and the best practices recommended by the BCCDC & MOH) Oasis will be decreasing operating hours. From June 1st until further notice **Oasis will be open 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.**

Arrival, Admittance & Attendance Logs

Parent interactions within the program will need to be limited; within the child care space; with the children, teachers and other parents. Sadly, parents will no longer be allowed to enter the daycare, at least until further notice; our open-door policy has been suspended. We ask that all parents now say their goodbyes and part from their children at the outside doorway, respecting a 6-foot distance from the entrance.

Only the child should be entering the building. Parents will be asked to sign their children in and out each day, as usual, however, the sign-in/out sheet will be on the exterior of the door. Along with a revised and individualized sign-in/out sheet parents will find a daily health screening sheet that they must also sign (see more about this below). Parents will have their own folders and pens for signatures to help limit exposures.

Personal Belongings

Personal belongings will not be permitted into the Oasis Academy. Please only send what is required for the day. Shoes and coats will be hung outside the front door and not permitted indoors. Changes of clothes, and wet wipes can be replenished as needed. Please put them in a disposable plastic bag and we will transfer them into your child's cubbies as needed. Sunscreen should be applied at home before childcare, if needed I will reapply sunscreen that has been provided by the parent. I will use gloves or wash my hands before, between and after all sunscreen applications. Parents wishing for their children to have sunscreen applied as needed at daycare must supply the bottle and the bottle must remain at daycare – transfer back and forth from home to daycare will not be permitted.

Meals, Snacks & Water Bottles

Parents are to provide all their children's food and cutlery during the pandemic. Oasis has suspended sharing snacks program and cutlery for health and safety reasons until the pandemic has passed. Please pack your child's lunch box accordingly with enough food for the entire day in care. Parents are to pack lunches, snacks and disposable cutlery in their child's lunch bag.

The lunch bag should be a clean (never used before) disposable bag or a simple fabric washable reusable sack. Some ideas are – large zip locks, paper lunch bags, small biodegradable kitchen compost liners, or easily washable fabric sacs. Note that fabric sacs are preferable from an environmental perspective, BUT you must have one for each day of care and the fabric sac must be laundered between every use.

Backpacks and padded commercial lunch boxes will not be accepted, as they can be vectors for transmission of Covid-19 and are not easily cleaned daily. If parents wish to eliminate the possibility of bringing germs home, they should make the lunch (bag and packaging) entirely disposable, however at this time that is not mandatory. Oasis believes that as long as the outer vessel is cleaned and changed daily, and daycare cutlery is not shared our risks are greatly reduced. Self-help will be encouraged to reduce the transference of germs and cross-contamination, so please use easily opened containers or zip locks. We understand that with young children opening containers/Ziplocs is a skill they are still learning to master; therefore, we will assist them and wash my hands before touching each child's lunch containers. Please also package NON-MESSY foods at this time. Again, to lower are contact risks. Serving messy foods (fried rice, spaghetti) means a greater risk of less sanitary eating and more cleanup of the child.

Water bottles are also to be supplied by parents. Water bottles will have their exterior wiped down with a soapy wet wipe then rinsed and air-dried. To prevent the spread of germs and support distancing, water bottles will NO LONGER be communally stored in a basket or lined up together on a counter. They will be separated about 6 to 12 inches from each other on the counter so that they can be reached without the need to touch other bottles OR placed in different areas of the kitchen. The water bottles will be sent home daily to be sanitized and returned the following day. Water bottles, snacks and lunches will NOT be shared. We will eat together however; we will sit as far apart from each other as possible.

Hand Washing & the use of Masks

We will assist children to follow frequent handwashing practices with soap and water for a minimum of 20-30 seconds, scrubbing as per the CDC's handwashing steps. We will sing a song as we wash our hands to help us determine the length of time needed to wash for. We usually sing the following song two times
lave les main lave les main,
Soaping up our hands, soaping up our hands
Before we rinse them, Tops and bottoms
In between, Getting all the germs off, that can't be seen!

Particular attention will be given to guiding children to wash their hands: immediately upon entering the program, before using material, eating, and after toilet use, after playing outside, after sneezing or coughing, if touching the face/nose/mouth and whenever the hands are visibly dirty. (CDC, 2020) (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020).

Particular attention will be given by caregivers to wash their hands: when they arrive at the centre and before they go home, before feeding children or handling their food containers/Ziplocs, after assisting a child to use the toilet, using the toilet, after contact with body fluids (runny noses, spit, vomit, blood), after cleaning tasks, after removing gloves or masks, after handling garbage, upon entry from outdoors, after assisting children and whenever hands are visibly dirty. (CDC, 2020) (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020). At the end of each day, before leaving childcare and when running water is not readily available alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will be used (CDC, 2020).

Oasis will not be using masks on the children. "Masks are not recommended for children. In young children, in particular, masks can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes" (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020). The caregiver may use a mask on their face at their discretion; in cases of changing poopy diapers or if they become ill partway through the day and utilize one as a precautionary measure to keep the children safe.

Programing – Curriculum and work

Oasis will provide a limited selection of free choice of work along with various provocations throughout the classroom to encourage individual work accessible will be ones that can be easily cleaned (i.e.no more work on the mats,

Oasis will limit the use of playdough and goop to single-use individual portions to reduce hand-to-hand contact and cross-contamination. (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020)

We are lucky that the warmer weather and summer is fast approaching. This means we can spend the majority of our days outside. The enlarged variation in setting and space promotes individual play more naturally and allows for a lesser chance of direct transmission of viruses. Outdoors we will also have various individual play opportunities such as the outdoor play kitchen, a ball run, a digging area and tires, balls, balloons, the group games that encourage distancing, and individual play, art and provocation areas.

Sadly water play will not be happening this year unless otherwise authorized by Child Care Licensing, All outdoor equipment will NOT be disinfected between uses but will be cleaned (spritzed with a soapy water solution and wiped down) from time to time; then disinfected with a bleach water 1:9 solution, rinsed and left to air dry at the end of the day.

If a Child Becomes Sick While at Daycare

Measures that will be implemented to reduce transmission in childcare school settings include routine daily screening for all staff and students, routine and frequent environmental cleaning and an explicit policy for children or staff who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19 with coughing or sneezing not coming into child care” (BC CDC, 2020). Despite these precautions there is no way to fully ensure that children do not get sick from common illnesses or Covid-19.

It is important for us to be prepared and have a plan in place for if what will happen if a child becomes sick at daycare. Oasis will: separate a sick child as much as possible from the rest of the group, call the parents to pick up the sick child immediately, remove all the material from the program that the sick child was in contact with until they can be properly disinfected, open windows and doors if possible to increase air circulation, clean and disinfect all the common areas such as the bathroom, tables, chairs, light switches and door handles, and finally I will be prepared to thoroughly disinfect the childcare space again at the end of the day. (CDC, 2020) The sick child will be excluded from the childcare program for “a minimum of 10 days, or until symptoms are completely resolved”. (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020). Depending on the illness symptoms, especially if respiratory-related, a Covid-19 test may also, be indicated. Child care fees are due regardless of attendance.

If I Become Sick during Daycare

If one of staff becomes sick during child care hours, all parents will be notified and asked to pick up their children immediately. If indicated, we will wear a mask and make every effort to limit contact with the children during the window of onset of illness and the parent’s arrival. Our staff will isolate for “a minimum of 10 days, or until symptoms are completely resolved”. (BCCDC and BC Ministry of Health, 2020). This means the daycare will have to close down for a minimum of 10 days. Child care tuition fees will not be due for child care closure events.

We will need to take additional precautions to maintain the health and safety of our employees and the children we care caring for.