



## Storyoga Inc. Covid19 Health and Wellness Policy

Storyoga Inc. is licensed and regulated by the Ministry of Health and Vancouver Island Health Authority. Storyoga Inc. may be directed by the Ministry or by a childcare Licensing Officer to close operations during a pandemic or other communicable disease outbreak.

Storyoga Inc. will follow all directives provided by the Ministry of Health. The legal authority to close a childcare program for public health reasons falls under the purview of the local Medical Health Officer and the Provincial Health Officer, and their decision overrides any decision to stay open.

Based on the current epidemiology of COVID-19 in B.C., and the fact that children are at a much lower risk of developing COVID-19, childcare providers are encouraged to remain open or re-open, while supporting the health and safety of children and adults. Dr. Bonnie Henry maintains that childcare centres can safely care for children if they are following the prescribed health protocols as outlined below.

Before arrival, staff and parents are required to refer to the daily health check provided and to follow its guidelines.

### **In addition, children may not attend childcare if they have any of the following symptoms:**

- Eye infections
- Unexplained rashes or any rash that is not confirmed by a doctor to be non-contagious
- Known or suspected communicable diseases (ie. measles, chicken pox, pink eye, hand food and mouth, pertussis, etc.)
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea in the last 48 hours

If your child develops any of the symptoms listed below while in our care, they will be guided to a separate supervised area, and you will be notified to pick up your child immediately. If your child has ANY of the symptoms listed below, they are not permitted to return to Storyoga Inc. for 48 hours from the cessation of symptoms.

### **Key Symptoms of Illness:**

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough or worsening of chronic cough
- Breathing difficulties (breathing fast or working hard to breathe)
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Tiredness/extreme fatigue
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea
- Nausea and vomiting
- Runny nose

### **If A Child or Staff Begins to Experience Symptoms of COVID-19 While In Our Care:**

- Symptomatic children will immediately be separated from others in a supervised area until they can go home. Symptomatic staff will be sent home.
- Environmental cleaning and sanitizing of any space the symptomatic child was in will be conducted as soon as possible; and the separate supervised space will be cleaned and sanitized upon pick up of the symptomatic child.
- Children and/or staff who are sent home are encouraged to seek out testing via the local health unit (Saanich Peninsula Hospital is our closest testing site).

### **If A Child or Staff Tests Positive for COVID-19:**

- As per BC CDC guidelines dated, January 19, 2022, children who test positive for COVID-19 need to self-isolate for 5 days. Children may attend child care after a 5 day isolation provided they are symptom free.

*“If you are 18 years of age, test positive for COVID-19, and are not fully vaccinated, you need to self-isolate at home for 5 days AND until you no longer have a fever AND your symptoms improve. You do not need to be re-rested for COVID-19 after your self-isolation period ends to return to normal activities; you can test positive for many*

*weeks, even after you are no longer infectious.”*

- Self-isolation for a staff member testing positive for COVID-19 will range from 5 - 10 days depending on vaccination status. All staff must be symptom free before returning to work.

### **If A Child or Staff is Exposed to a Confirmed case of COVID-19:**

- As per BC CDC guidelines dated, January 19, 2022, staff or children who are exposed to COVID-19 may continue to attend child care, regardless of vaccination status, unless they develop symptoms and/or test positive for COVID-19.

### **Ratios and Hours of Operation**

Childcare ratios are required during operation, regardless of a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak. Unforeseen circumstances could have an impact on both the ratios and operating hours. In the event that some employees are unable to come in to work or are in quarantine, any or all the following could happen:

- The centre may be closed indefinitely. This would be determined by input from our local health authority.
- Ratios may be lowered to meet expectations from the health authority, or if there is not enough staff available to maintain regular ratios.
- Hours and days of operation may be adjusted to ensure that the programs are able to meet all licensing expectations regarding ratios, while ensuring that the programs are able to meet all protocol expectations.
- If ratios are lowered, Storyoga Inc. will follow the guidelines set out by the Provincial Government or other governing bodies regarding priority placement of children in available spaces.
- During a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak, any parent that is at home due to any type of leave from work or is now working from home due to the outbreak, will be expected to keep their children at home. This will allow the programs to operate at lower ratios while providing care to parents deemed as essential service.

### **Additional Health and Cleaning Measures in Place:**

- Staff and children will follow stringent health protocols. Staff will wash or sanitize hands upon entering the building and will practise frequent and thorough hand washing throughout the day.
- We will be limiting the number of toys and materials available indoors and sanitizing each item at the end of each day.
- All high touch surfaces (door handles, light switches, washrooms, sinks, etc.) will be cleaned 2 - 3 times per day.
- We will be ensuring adequate ventilation and opening windows to encourage extra fresh air flow throughout the day. A Hepa Air filter will be used in the classroom.

### **Masks and Social Distancing:**

- As per provincial health orders all parents and guardians (adults and children 5 years and up) are required to wear a mask while inside the building. *Parents and guardians do not have to wear a mask outside.*
- Children are NOT required to social distance from each other. Children are social beings and adhering to standard social distancing guidelines will not be possible at all times throughout the day.
- Children are not required to wear a mask during their daily interactions. Children may wear a mask based on personal or family choice.
- Masks are not mandatory for staff at this time.

### **Vaccination Policy:**

While staff are encouraged to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 proof of vaccination is not currently required for staff working in child care settings. As such we have chosen not to make the vaccine mandatory for our staff at this time. We are unable to disclose individual vaccination status.

**Fees During a Pandemic/Communicable Disease Outbreak:** (also outlined in parent handbook)

**Refunds will not be given** in the event your child is required to stay home for 10 days or more. Our 30-day policy will remain in effect and is required to withdraw your child.

In the event of a short-term closure due to a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak (less than 30 days), fees are due and payable as per usual operations. Fees payable during closures exceeding 30 days will be reevaluated based on information received from the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

In the event of a closure of 30 days or more, Storyoga Inc. may be unable to hold spaces at no charge while families are in isolation and nominal charges may need to be imposed to cover ongoing operating costs. As each outbreak or pandemic is different, the guidelines around these situations would be different as well. Each situation will be decided based on information provided by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

The ACCB, (Affordable Child Care Benefit), formerly known as subsidy, is provided through MCFD and may or may not be provided during a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak closure. Parents/Guardians may directly contact the MCFD office at 1-888-338-6622 to discuss MCFD's policy regarding the ACCB payments. This decision is outside of Storyoga Inc.'s authority. If MCFD will not cover the fees, then parents will be responsible for the full monthly fee for their childcare if a closure under 30 days occurs.