

FINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SUBSECTOR RECOVERY GUIDE

June 12, 2020

PURPOSE

The child and family services subsector recovery guide (the guide) is a tool to support the development of agency specific operational plans to ensure that all service providers approach COVID-19 recovery planning safely, consistently, transparently, and with the support of government partners. As the subsector is diverse, and populations and situations within it are unique, this guide does not provide specific operational examples or one-size-fits-all processes- rather it aims to be a reference tool.

Given the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, this guide focuses on the short-term planning needs of the subsector. The guide will be reviewed periodically in response to pandemic changes, and the monitoring and tracking of service delivery.

BACKGROUND

The partners in service delivery for the child and family service sector are all dedicated to the health and well-being of the children, youth and families we serve. Throughout the pandemic, service providers have continued to deliver services to the most vulnerable. Whereas other sectors have closed, the social services sector has made modifications to adjust to Provincial Health Officer (PHO) guidelines. [BC's Restart Plan](#) details the phases of recovery, and a Social Sector Recovery plan outlines the impacts of the pandemic on the most vulnerable. The [BC Go Forward Management Strategy](#) details how the province of British Columbia is adapting to the next stage in pandemic management.

As noted in the Restart Plan, social services continued to provide essential services to children, youth and families during Phase 1. We are now preparing for implementation of Phase 2, opening up the possibility of in-person services and return to full service with enhanced protocols.



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Children and COVID-19

It is important for the child and family services subsector to continue to consider the growing scientific evidence regarding the COVID-19 virus, including what we are learning about the virus in children:

- Children and youth are at a much lower risk of developing COVID-19 than adults. In BC, less than 1% of children and youth tested have been COVID-19 positive.
- Children are not the primary drivers of COVID-19 spread in schools or in community settings. Transmission involving children is primarily within household settings, and from COVID-19 positive adults to children.
- Children who do become infected with the virus and develop COVID-19 have milder symptoms, if any, and very few become critically ill.

Research also shows that many of the necessary COVID-19 response measures- resulting in loss of school routine, inaccessibility of social service resources and lack of peer engagement- have negative psychological impacts on children and youth.

This evidence has informed the current public health guidance for K-12 school settings and child care settings in BC, and is important context for all child and family services.

LINK TO RELEVANT GUIDELINES

The child and family services sector is diverse, offering a wide array of services to children, youth and families. From individual therapies and counselling to large group family settings, from early intervention work with small children to youth work, and from residential to drop in settings, the variety of services and supports means that there is no one-size fits all guideline for service providers.

There have been a series of guidelines and recommendations issued by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), WorkSafeBC and more recently Doctors of BC, to support the social sector in continuing to provide services safely. The following are some of the guidelines and recommendations that are applicable to working with children and for the social sector:

- [A letter to the social sector \(March 18, 2020\)](#)
- [Interim Guidance to Social Service Providers for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in their Facilities \(April 4, 2020\)](#)
- [In-person counselling: Protocols for returning to operation](#)
- [Offices: Protocols for Returning to Operation](#)
- [Guidelines for Child Care Settings \(updated May 15\)](#)
- [Health care and COVID safety](#)
- [Education \(K-12\): Protocols for returning to operation](#)
- [Doctors of BC: Recommendations for expanding in-person care in community-based physician practices](#)
- [Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework](#)

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- [Guidelines for Community social services \(non-residential community-based services and residential services\)](#)

While the PHO and/or WorkSafeBC may be issuing additional guidelines, these provide a starting point for service providers to determine what additional measures, service changes and guidance needs to be provided to ensure continued safety of staff and clients.

The following is taken from the WorkSafeBC guidelines:

Developing a COVID-19 safety plan

Employers are required to develop a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This plan follows the six steps outlined on [COVID-19 and returning to safe operation](#). Employers must involve frontline workers, joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for their workplace. You do not need a formal plan in place to begin operation, but are expected to develop it while protecting the safety of your workers.

WorkSafeBC will not be reviewing or approving the plans of individual employers, but in accordance with the order of the [Provincial Health Officer](#), this plan **must be posted** at the worksite. During a WorkSafeBC inspection, we will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers or to see the plan if it has been developed.

One part of developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan is identifying protocols that everyone at the workplace must follow to keep workers safe. We've provided industry-specific protocols below to use as you develop the plan for your workplace.

These protocols are not a list of requirements; however, they should be considered and implemented to the extent that they address the risks your workplace. You may need to identify and implement additional protocols if these do not sufficiently address the risk to your workers.

Understanding the risk

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Higher risk situations require adequate protocols to address the risk.

The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased by:

- being within 2 meters (two adult arm lengths) of other people;
- the length of time you spend in close contact (i.e. within 2 meters of other people); and
- the total number of people with which you have contact.

Physical distancing measures help mitigate these risks.

The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact the same surface, potentially contaminating the surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Frequent cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

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Selecting protocols for your workplace

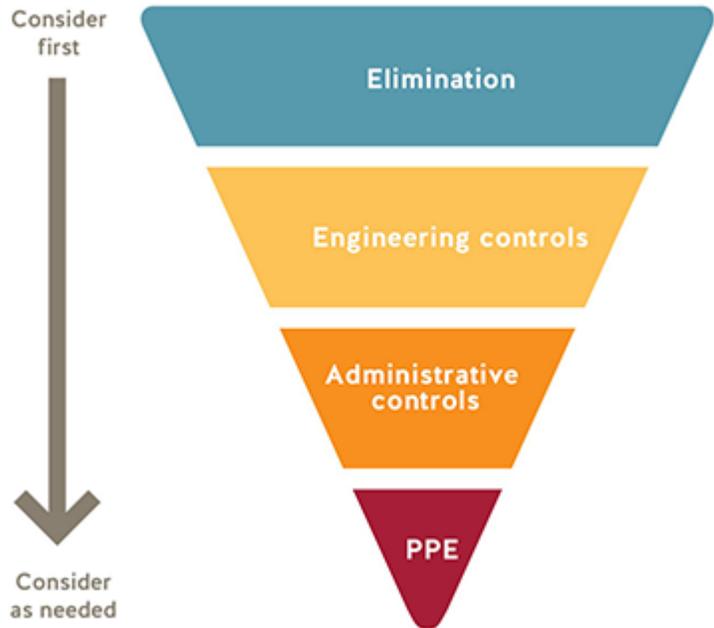
Note that different protocols offer different protection. Wherever possible, use the protocols that offer the highest level of protection and add additional protocols as required. Layering multiple types of protections provides the greatest risk reduction.

First level protection (elimination): Use policies and procedures to keep people at a safe physical distance from one another. Limit the number of people in your workplace at any one time, and implement protocols to keep workers at least 2 metres from other workers, customers, and members of the public.

Second level protection (engineering controls): If you can't always maintain physical distancing, install barriers such as plexiglass to separate people.

Third level protection (administrative controls): Establish rules and guidelines, such as cleaning protocols, telling workers to not share tools, or implementing one-way doors or walkways.

Fourth level protection (PPE): If despite the first three levels of protection, situations arise wherein individuals are unable to maintain physical distancing, consider the use of [non-medical masks](#). Be aware of the limitation of non-medical masks to protect the wearer from respiratory droplets. Ensure workers are [using masks appropriately](#).



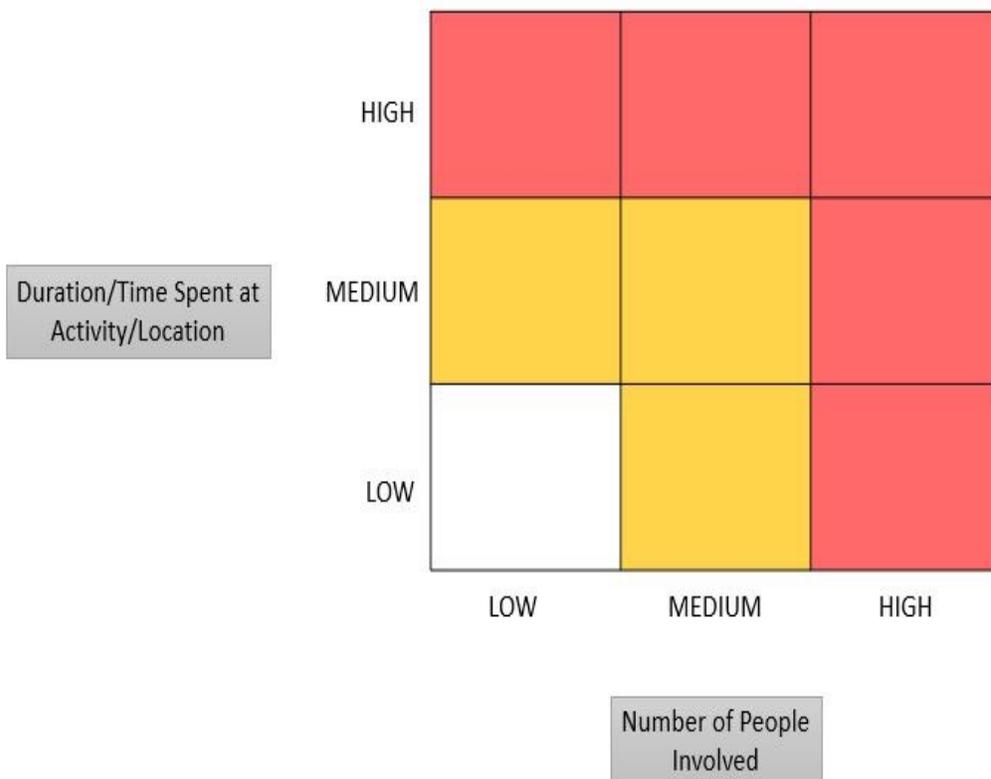
GUIDE TO ASSESS SERVICES			
Service	Clients Served (# and Description)	Current Model for Delivery	Modifications Required

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The risk of COVID-19 is based on two factors – 1) number of contacts and 2) contact intensity. The figure below, creates a matrix that can help assess risk of COVID-19 spread. To assess risk in your setting first, consider what is the contact intensity in your setting – the type of contact (close/distant) and the duration of contact (brief/prolonged). Second, what is the number of contacts in your setting or the number of people present in the setting at the same time. By doing this you are able to evaluate risk throughout your services.

Using the tool below helps identify situations where large numbers of people come together (higher risk) and/or individuals are unable to maintain physical distancing (higher risk). After illuminating these higher risks, agencies may use the measures outlined in the inverted pyramid illustrated above to help mitigate the contact intensity of their services. For example:

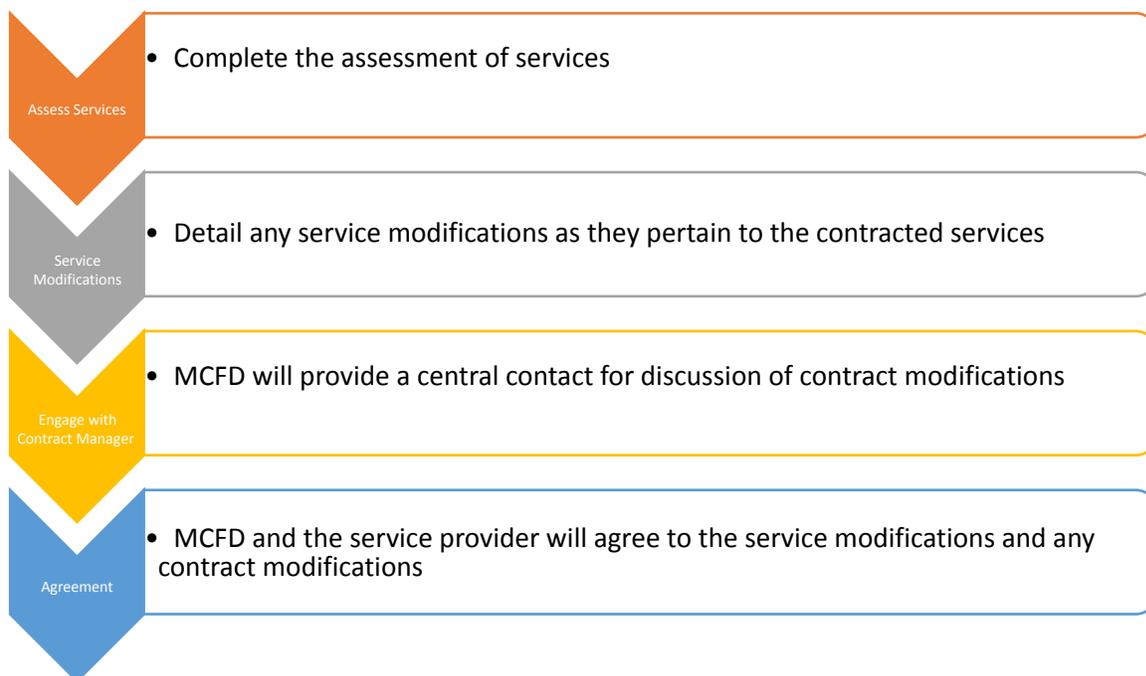
- Keeping groups of clients small
- Changing the setting to give people more space to maintain physical distancing (i.e. outside, and/or in larger rooms with smaller #'s of people)
- Stagger times of different programs



PROCESS FOR CONTRACTORS

Those who are contracted to deliver services on behalf of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) may need to adjust their model for service delivery. Service providers must discuss those modifications with the ministry once they have completed the assessment above.

MCFD does not have authority to increase the value of contracts at this time. MCFD recognizes the innovation and changes to program delivery models that service providers incorporated to maintain services during Phase 1. As we move to the next phase of service delivery, MCFD acknowledges that the subsector requires continued support in order to be responsive and flexible in their approach to delivering services, while also ensuring they maintain a healthy workforce; modifications may need to be contemplated to contracts while continuing to deliver services to the same number of clients and maintaining cost neutrality.



WORKSAFEBC GENERAL INFORMATION

Resources to assist businesses and sectors as they restart their activities including new Health Guidelines and Checklists are available from [WorkSafeBC](https://www.worksafebc.com). These include:

- **COVID-19 Safety Plan:** Employers are required to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- **COVID-19: A guide to reducing the risk:** This resource is for employers, outlining the steps to follow to make sure you are minimizing the risk of COVID-19 so your business can operate safely.
- **Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: Cover coughs and sneezes:** This poster reminds workers and visitors to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, and to wash their hands afterward.