

I am not receiving email communications from the YMCA. How do I update my email address?

Please email childcare@northernalberta.ymca.ca with your name, your child's name, your centre and your updated email address.

I would like to see the emails that have been sent to me from the YMCA Child Care team, where can I view this?

For the most up-to-date information on YMCA Child Care and COVID-19, please visit northernalberta.ymca.ca/ChildCare.

I have contacted my Director with questions and have not had a response. Why?

On March 20, the YMCA of Northern Alberta temporarily laid-off 90% of our employees. Some of our Child Care Directors are still unavailable for the time being, so if you do have questions, please contact our team at childcare@northernalberta.ymca.ca.

Why can't the YMCA access the buildings they operate in while they're closed?

In many cases, the YMCA of Northern Alberta does not own the buildings where our child care centres operate in. At this time, our landlords have restricted our access in response to health and safety measures implemented by the Government of Alberta. We continue to work with our landlords to ensure that our facilities remain a safe and secure space.

How can I collect my child(ren)'s belongings from their child care centre?

If you need to collect any of your child(ren)'s belongings from their Child Care centre, please email childcare@northernalberta.ymca.ca with your name, your child's name, your centre and we will look to arrange this with you.

Why didn't the YMCA of Northern Alberta open child care centres on May 14?

The Government of Alberta shared the required safety procedures on Friday, May 8, and has made multiple changes to those guidelines since then. To ensure our centres are safe spaces for your child(ren), we will not open our centres until we are certain that we can provide the same quality child care while implementing the new safety precautions. Starting Monday, June 15, select YMCA Child Care centres are opening to welcome families back to care, and we couldn't be more excited!

Which YMCA Child Care centres are permitted to open?

The Government of Alberta has permitted Early Years and Out of School Care programs to re-open as of May 14. We are still implementing our plans and procedures for a safe reopening of the centres we will open and will keep you informed via email.

When will YMCA Child Care centres start to open?

As of Monday, June 15, select YMCA Child Care centres have opened to welcome families back to care, and we couldn't be more excited!

Will you offer part-time care for families?

At this time, we are not offering part-time care for families.

Which YMCA Child Care centres will open?

The YMCA of Northern Alberta is taking a phased approach to opening centres for a number of reasons. Taking a phased approach allows us to ensure our YMCA Child Care team is fully trained and educated on all COVID-related policies, procedures and expectations. It also provides certainty that the YMCA will have an adequate supply of all disinfectant supplies and personal protection equipment (PPE) required to keep spaces and people safe and healthy. As soon as we have the demand, dates and plans to open more locations, we will make sure you are fully informed. **Please note that all dates and plans are subject to change.**

- [Click here for Edmonton reopening information](#)
- [Click here for Grande Prairie reopening information](#)
- [Click here for Spruce Grove reopening information](#)
- [Click here for St. Albert reopening information](#)
- [Click here for Wood Buffalo reopening information](#)

Upon opening, spots will be offered to families registered at these locations first, then made available to all others on a lottery basis.

Why wasn't my centre listed to open right away?

Upon review of the Government of Alberta's phase one guidelines for the opening of child care, we've determined that some YMCA Child Care centres are not well suited in terms of size, floor plan, or access to washrooms to operate YMCA Child Care under the new mandatory guidelines, or there was no initial demand. We are actively working with our school board and community partners to determine a plan and timeline for opening our remaining centres. We also heard from you, our valued families, and we know that not everyone is needing care at this time.

If your child attends the YMCA NewAlta Child Care in Fort McMurray, we're sorry to report that this centre did receive significant damage in the flood and will not be able to reopen during Stage 1. As you know, this centre is in the Sport and Wellness Centre at Keyano College. While we don't yet know when we will be able to access our child care centre or eventually reopen, we do know, unfortunately, none of the contents of our centre will be usable, and we will have to replace all of our equipment.

If your child attends YMCA St. Gabriel Child Care in Edmonton, please note that this centre is moving! The Edmonton Catholic School Board has given us notice that they need our child care space to offer their school program, so we will be moving to a nearby location. We began moving our equipment on June 2, 2020, and the program will reopen on September 1.

We know parents still need access to quality child care at this time so we apologize if you're disappointed that your centre is not opening at this time. **Please know we are working to open additional child care centres** and we will keep you informed when we know which centres those are. If there is a centre close to you that has available space, moving your child to that centre may be an option for you. We will keep you informed as we know more.

My centre is opening, what do I need to know?

The YMCA Child Care team will be following all [Government of Alberta recommendations and guidelines](#) related to the opening of child care. Families should also be aware that the YMCA Child Care environment will look a little different. We are making changes such as removing non-essential items, ensuring available toys are easy to clean and sanitize, and making changes to our drop-off and pick-up procedures.

Prior to returning to our care, the YMCA Child Care team will provide your family with everything you need to know to return to care feeling fully informed and prepared.

How can I transfer and attend an alternate location temporarily until my location reopens?

Our child care team has sent further communication on transferring or attending alternate YMCA Child Care locations. For more information on this, please visit northernalberta.ymca.ca/ChildCare.

I have decided I no longer need YMCA Child Care services and would like to withdraw. Am I required to provide one month's notice? Will I receive my deposit?

At this time, families may withdraw permanently from YMCA Child Care without providing one month's notice if their centre does not have a scheduled reopening date. We will review your account and if there are no outstanding balances, your deposit will be returned to you. Please email childcare@northernalberta.ymca.ca with your name, your child's name, your centre and that you would like to withdraw permanently from care.

If your centre has a reopening date, please notify the director if you are choosing to withdraw. The deposit will be refunded provided 30-day written notice is given on or before the first of the month.

What extra safety precautions will be implemented once a YMCA Child Care centre is opened?

The Government of Alberta has shared its [reopening plan and guidelines for child care facilities](#) that outlines how we are to operate and what safety standards we are to implement, at a minimum. Here's what we know from their announcement:

- Before every shift at a child care centre, a staff member must assess themselves for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Only Day Care and Out of School Care programs are permitted to re-open as of May 14. Programs must not exceed a 30-person maximum capacity in a group, including children and Educators. This group of children and Educators assigned to them is called a "cohort". A cohort may include one or two classrooms.
- Staff members, parents and guardians and children must not attend the program if they are sick, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.
- Staff must ask parents and guardians to check the temperatures of their children daily before coming to the program, using the screening tool [found in appendix B of the Government of Alberta's guidelines](#). Staff will also conduct active symptom screening of each child every day with their parent or guardian during drop off.
- Programs must keep daily records of anyone entering the facility who stays for 15 minutes or longer (e.g. staff working each day, children, contractors). Records must be kept up-to-date and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of an outbreak. This program attendance will need to be reported weekly to the Ministry of Children's Services.
- We will develop new procedures for drop off and pick up that support physical distancing and separate cohorts to the greatest extent possible. Details on how this will look will be sent to child care families prior to the opening of your child care centre.

- Cohorts cannot mix with other cohorts or be within the same room/space at the same time, including pick-ups and drop-offs, meal times, playtime, outdoor activities and staff rooms. Parents picking up children from more than one cohort at the centre should not be allowed to intermingle with children in the cohorts.
- Programs should engage in frequent, thorough cleaning and disinfecting each day. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces as per [AHS' Guidelines for Environmental Cleaning of Public Facilities during Respiratory Illnesses in the Community](#).
- Child care programs must adhere to [handwashing guidelines outlined in the AHS Health and Safety Child Care Guidelines](#). While alcohol-based hand sanitizer is not typically recommended for routine use in child care, it has been proven effective for hand hygiene when soap and water are not readily available.
- No self-serve or family-style meal service will be available. Families will be required to provide packed lunches and snacks.
- Any person (director, float staff, etc.) who will enter the space of more than one cohort must wear a mask any time they are in the presence of other staff/children and they must wash their hands (or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer) when entering or exiting each room. Use of masks by program staff is only encouraged for prolonged close interactions with children (e.g. changing a diaper or assisting with feeding).
- Shared spaces and structures that cannot be cleaned and disinfected between cohorts should not be used. If play structures are to be used by more than one group, the structures can only be used by one cohort at a time and must be cleaned and disinfected before and after use by each cohort.
- If a child develops symptoms while at the facility, the child should be isolated in a separate room and the parent or guardian should be notified to come and pick up the child immediately. Any program connected to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 will be required to close for a minimum of 72 hours to allow contact tracing, and then adhere to recommendations from Alberta Health.

To read more from the Government of Alberta's announcement, please [click here](#).

My child always has a runny nose or allergies, will they not be let into the program? Who is responsible for taking children's temperatures?

As per the Government of Alberta's [guidance for licensed child care centres](#), **YMCA staff, parents and children must not enter the child care space if they are sick**, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold. Symptoms to look for include but are not limited to fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, headache, and a general feeling of being unwell.

According to requirements from Alberta Health Services, parents are responsible for taking their children's temperatures each day. Parents will be reminded of this requirement when children are first registered for the child care program, and through visible signage at the entrance to the child care centre. For reference, normal temperatures are:

- a) Mouth: 35.5-37.5°C (95.9-99.5°F)
- b) Underarm: 36.5-37.5°C (97.7-99.5°F)
- c) Ear (not recommended in infants): 35.8-38.0°C (96.4-100.4°F)

Child care staff must conduct active symptom screening of each child every morning with the parent at drop-off, using [the screening tool found here, in appendix B](#). The YMCA will have thermometers available should a family forget to take their child's temperature or if a child develops symptoms while on site.

How will cohorts be grouped? Can I cohort with some of my children's friends?

Cohorts will include siblings and requests from our child care families, where possible and appropriate. We will do our best to make arrangements with you so long as they are within [the guidelines of the Government of Alberta](#).

I have children registered at two different locations – can they be together at one location?

We can serve children from the same family at one location, if the children are of the age we are licensed for and we have the space to accommodate a temporary transfer.

I am currently registered, and I am interested in transferring permanently to another location, when will I know if this can take place?

If your family is looking to transfer to another YMCA Child Care location, please speak to the Program Director at your current centre to see if we can accommodate this request.

I do not know when I will return to YMCA Child Care and I am worried I will lose my space. Do I have to pay child care fees when you reopen, if I am not attending, to hold my space?

As of Friday, June 12, the Government of Alberta and Alberta Health Services have changed their requirements for the capacity in child care as well as the size of cohorts. This has allowed us to return to regular capacity in our Early Years programs currently open and scheduled to open.

We have happily held spaces in our programs without payment until capacity opened up. Now that we can provide care to all of our families in Early Years and most Out of School Care programs, **spots will no longer be held unless you are registered and have active scheduled payments upon the opening of your program**. For programs that have not been scheduled to open at this time, families choosing not to return to care immediately upon opening will have their spaces held without incurring fees. Our YMCA Child Care team will provide families with as much notice as possible when this changes.

Please note, we are limited in the number of children we can serve at Out of School Care programs as outlined in the [Government of Alberta's reopening plan and guidelines for child care centres](#). Each classroom can only serve a maximum of 30 people, including staff. Once all available spots are filled, families will not be able to return to the centre until space becomes available as the Government of Alberta's restrictions ease, or additional centres open. We cannot guarantee care at a future date. Families choosing not to return to care immediately upon opening will have their spaces held without incurring fees and when more space comes available it will be offered at that time.

If you were prompted to select a return date on the survey we sent out, please know the date is used as a guideline for us to anticipate when we need more safety equipment, staff and spaces. It was not a definitive date. We recognize that your needs for child care are changing or will change and we will work with you to ensure your child has a safe and welcoming space to stay while you work.

I need child care but am also in a position where cost is a barrier. How can I receive assistance?

The Government of Alberta's Child Care Subsidy program is available for lower-to middle-income families if:

- you and/or your spouse/partner, or the child receiving care are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada and live in Alberta

- you or your spouse/partner are an Alberta resident
- your children are 12 years of age or younger and are not yet attending Grade 7
- you and your spouse/partner:
 - are currently working, attending school, looking for work, have special needs or your child has a special need

Your eligibility will also depend on:

- your income
- your reason for needing child care
- the number of children requiring care
- the size of your family
- the type of child care program you are using
- when your child started or when they will start attending care

To apply for the Government of Alberta's Child Care Subsidy and to learn more about the program, [click here](#). It is important to note, depending on the details of your application, you may be required to provide additional documentation. Should this apply to you, the Government of Alberta will let you know what documents are required.

If you have questions for this program, please contact the Alberta Supports Contact Centre toll-free at 1-877-644-9992, or 780-644-9992, for Edmonton residence. You can also email them at css.childsubsidy@gov.ab.ca.

How can I place my child on a waitlist?

At this time, **there are some YMCA Child Care waitlists open to families in Edmonton and Grande Prairie**. To register for an open waitlist in Edmonton, [click here](#). To register for an open waitlist in Grande Prairie, [click here](#).