



Okanagan Indian Band

12420 Westside Road • Vernon, BC • V1H 2A4
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June 17, 2020

Dear Parents,

snc'c'amala?tn Early Childhood Education Centre is planning to resuming childcare services on Monday, July 6. However, this will be on a limited capacity, at first, to ensure that all new health and safety protocols are enacted appropriately in order to proceed in a cautious, thoughtful and safe manner.

The centre will first open to all parents working on-reserve and Tier 1 essential workers. Those offered a daycare space can schedule time to coincide with their work hours and commuting time, between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm.

We know some employers will be encouraging you to return to work, but unfortunately we are not in a position right now to extend places to all children. Spots will continue to be held for children who were enrolled in the two daycare rooms, unless you choose to withdraw your child or the child is no longer of age for the program.

Reopening of snc'c'amala?tn is still conditional and dependent on several key factors; however, we are hopeful that we will be ready for July 6. One main factor is dependent on continued **positive trends as reported by the** Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Health Minister Adrian Dix. We will also continue to take direction from Chief and Council and the OKIB Health Department.

Having received guidance from the Province, we have begun to create an action plan to prepare for our phased reopening. You will soon be contacted and asked about your intentions to send your child back to daycare. We recognise that you know your children and their personal situation best, and that there are many factors which will influence your decision. We understand that this is a very unsettling time for us all, but be assured that we will do everything we can to make sure that we are ready to safely receive any children who are returning. All our plans will be reviewed by the OKIB Health Department. We will keep you updated with our preparations for making snc'c'amala?tn as safe as possible so that you can make an informed decision. *snc'c'amala?tn has implemented Provincial hygiene protocols but can not fully protect you or your child from contracting COVID 19.*

Some of the measures that will be put in place are:

Increased disinfecting, cleaning and handwashing

A detailed plan and stringent sanitation measures will be put in place. Staff members will receive training on prevention of COVID-19.



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Physical distancing strategies and the use of personal protective equipment

We will be looking at what is practical and necessary in a child care setting.

Limiting toys and activities

Toys and equipment that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected will be removed. Activities that were previously shared like play dough will be used by one child only.

Lower ratios and smaller group size

Our capacity will be reduced during this first phase of reopening. As mentioned above, only children of Okanagan Indian Band employees and essential services staff will be in attendance. This will give us the opportunity to practice new protocols and measures.

More outdoor play

Recent evidence suggests that the transmission of COVID-19 is lower outdoors compared to indoors.

Revised staff and child illness policies

This will be necessary to ensure that no one enters the building with COVID-19 symptoms or if they have been exposed to anyone with symptoms. Symptoms include fever, chills, cough, sneezing, sore throat, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath, headaches or fatigue. If a child experiences any of these symptoms they will be immediately isolated and the parent will be required to take the child home immediately.

Food services

Procedures for safe food handling, cooking practices and serving food will be reviewed.

There will be many changes at the centre in order to provide a safe environment and keep staff, children and families healthy. Thank you for your patience as we work to ensure the maximum level of health and safety for families and staff.

You will be receiving further communications from us in the upcoming weeks. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we move towards a safe reopening.

Sincerely,

Gareth Jones
Director of Education, Language and Culture

Lorraine Ladan

Lorraine Ladan
Program Manager