

PROGRAMMING

For general workplace guidelines, please refer to COVID-19 Workplace Information (www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/re-open-saskatchewan-plan/covid-19-workplace-information). All workplaces in Saskatchewan must be in compliance with these guidelines.

The information below provides specific information for Public Libraries planning to offer Programming.

This document outlines key measures for the public library sector to implement during the pandemic in order to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and patrons, and prevent transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Phases of Programming

- Virtual programming such as YouTube story times and online coffee chats can be done remotely and without risk.
- Programming that is held outdoors is the next potential phase.
- Indoor programming is the final phase.

Outreach Programming

- Public Libraries traditionally offer a variety of outreach programming. This may include taking materials to community without a library, or visiting a care home.
- Curbside service may be extended to Outreach communities.
- Outreach activities to vulnerable communities such as acute and long-term care, personal care and group homes must follow visitation restrictions for those facilities. When visitation restrictions allow visitors outside immediate family members, library staff should contact these facilities to determine if library outreach activities will be allowed.
- Outreach activities to other vulnerable residents such as shut-ins are recommended to remain virtual and/or maintained at a distance. Delivery of materials to an individual's home is possible.
- Outreach activities to residents who are not vulnerable can proceed as long as all appropriate restrictions are followed.

Guidelines from the Saskatchewan Re-opening Plan

- Physical distancing (two metres) must be applied for participants not from the same household.
- Group sizes must comply with currently posted public gathering restrictions. Consider hosting online or virtual activities.

Safety precautions

- Determine how many participants can be registered for a program and also allow for social distancing. Also consider public gathering restrictions.
- Consider the need to modify room configurations (e.g. separating tables) to promote physical distancing. Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children and staff.
- Determine how to limit outdoor participation to meet public gathering restrictions.
- Staff must encourage and practice physical distancing.
- Staff should minimize the frequency of direct physical contact with program participants and encourage them to minimize physical contact with each other.
- Where possible, remove or reduce play with toys that encourage group play in close proximity or increase the likelihood of physical contact. Keep toys that encourage individual play.
- Eliminate or reduce use of shared objects & surfaces, that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected. Any activity materials that cannot be easily disinfected after the program must be quarantined for 72 hours.
- Avoid close greetings like hugs or handshakes, and encourage physically distant greetings such as 'air fives' and waves.
- Singing is a high-risk activity because the virus can be transmitted through saliva or respiratory droplets. Therefore, singing is not recommended at this time.
- Although not recommended, when singing, participants must wear masks if 2 metres apart or be 4 metres apart when not wearing masks.

Food and Refreshments

- Close drinking fountains. Water bottle filling stations are acceptable if appropriately and frequently sanitized.
- No potlucks, or shared food.
- Utensils should be used to serve food items (not fingers).
- If meals or snacks are provided, ensure all children have their own individual meals or snacks. Reusable utensils must be cleaned and sanitized after each use.
- Food from home must not be shared with other children.
- Children are not allowed to participate in food preparation.
- Where possible, children should practice physical distancing while eating. Consider staggering snack or meal times to allow spacing between children during meals.

Children and Families

- Communicate that parents and caregivers should monitor their children for any signs or symptoms of illness and remain home if any known symptoms are apparent.
- Modify procedures for gathering that support physical distancing and separate groups to the greatest extent possible. Possible strategies include limiting to one parent/guardian,

staggering entry or limiting the number of people in entry areas. Ensure patrons are informed of all procedures.

- For younger children, maintaining physical distance is less practical and the focus should be on minimizing physical contact instead.
- Help younger children learn about physical distancing and less physical contact by creating games that include basic principles such as 'two-arm lengths apart.'
- Children from the same household (e.g. siblings) do not need to maintain physical distance from each other.
- Where possible, tactile and STEM play should be discontinued. If necessary, it should be conducted as an individual activity (e.g. each child gets a ball of playdough and tools, or LEGO). Individually used items must be disinfected or quarantined for 72 hours prior to another use.
- Handwashing must occur before and after using shared items, children must be supervised and discouraged from touching their faces, and items must be disinfected or discarded between uses by different groups.

Sample Program: Storytime

- Location must allow for physical distancing.
- Number of participants cannot exceed public gathering restrictions.
- Singing is not recommended but is possible if all participants wear masks and are 2 metres apart from each other. If not wearing masks, participants must be 4 metres apart.
- It is recommended to avoid sharing and touching of items by participants; common touch items should be cleaned regularly.
- If running a weekly program, ensure participants register in advance so you are able to cap numbers (to fit your space).

Procedures:

- Section off an area that will fit the number of expected participants to the program.
- Indicate specific seating areas:
 - use plastic cushions placed in pairs 2 metres apart from each other;
 - OR direct participants to physically distanced spots as they arrive; and,
 - OR use craft items to indicate seating areas.
- Provide options for hand washing such as soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- Staff running program should have a space in front where they are visible to all participants and also physically distanced; a second staff person may be needed to assist with crowd control.
- Consider an expanded physical distance for highly animated and engaging presentations.
- Welcome program participants with a wave or virtual “high five”. Discourage physical touching.

- Start program with rhyme or movement activity; remind all of physical distancing in a child appropriate manner; provide reminders (for example: when I put my hand up over my head, put your hand up too, and look to see if you are in your spot).
- Read picture books and/or tell stories; remind of physical distancing as/if children creep closer. If available, use an e-book to project a copy of the book onto a screen behind the presenter.
- Provide time and space for talking, questions and movement; encourage interaction within family units.