

ADDENDUMUN DURING A PANDEMIC

REGISTRATION/ORIENTATION

In preparation for your child's first day at Thunder Bay Aboriginal Head Start (AHS), an interview with the AHS Program Supervisor or a staff member will be made. We believe an interview provides both the parent and the Supervisor the opportunity to clearly convey their expectations of AHS by going through our enrollment package one-to-one. All forms will be filled out electronically and sent through email or dropped off prior to the child's first day. A review of the contents of the Parent/Caregiver Handbook will be completed during the interview. A virtual tour, of our Center can be arranged where children can participate with the parent.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Children are curious about their world. They enjoy socializing and playing with their peers. The new rule of physical distancing will be hard for all of us at AHS. However, children will never be denied a hug when they need it or a hand to hold. We **encourage** children to physically distance by their own observations and we will use the environment to assist distancing. We will do this by setting up classrooms which will encourage physical distancing, having specific chairs for children to sit at the table and reminders of washing hands frequently. Outdoors, the playground will be divided so children will have specific areas assigned to them. Children will remain within cohorts* with the same educators throughout the day every day.

SAFETY MEASURES DURING A PANDEMIC

We want to ensure that everyone who enters our building is safe. Protocols have been put in place to prevent the spread of illness. We will ensure that our center and vans are cleaned and disinfected throughout the day. We need your help to ensure that we do not have to close a room, or the AHS Centre, by abiding by the rules we have set forth.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Parents/caregivers will be responsible for reporting or informing staff of changes pertinent to their child's attendance and they are responsible for reporting their child's absenteeism to AHS staff the day before or by 8:00 a.m. the day absent.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

While in this phase of operation, children may not bring in any personal belongings aside from a backpack with extra clothes, diapers/pull-ups and or what has been pre-approved. No toys or personal items from home will be permitted during a pandemic.

VISITORS

Visitors, volunteers or students will not be permitted in the Centre during the pandemic.

MEALS AND SNACK TIMES

AHS will provide a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. To protect children, we are asking that no outside food or beverage be brought into the center or on the vans.

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM & TODDLER PROGRAM

To meet with current regulations, our toddler program will be cancelled until further notice. However, we will continue to accept children for pre-registration into the Toddler Program for when we are able to resume. Our Family Support Program will be cancelled until further notice. Please contact your child's educators or the AHS Program Supervisor if you need assistance.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

In addition to the list of health guidelines, children are to remain home if they show signs of the following:

- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea
- Fever (equal or greater than 38 degrees or 100.4 Celsius)
- Coughing (new or worsening)
- Difficulty breathing
- Sluggish or lack of appetite
- Muscle aches
- Rash
- Shortness of breath (dyspnea)
- Difficulty swallowing
- Abdominal pain
- Chills
- Headaches
- Vomiting

Children are monitored throughout day to ensure they are well enough to participate in the program. If a child shows any of the above symptoms, the child will be isolated until a parent/caregiver can be reached and protocols will need to be followed. (See protocol for Any Person Showing Symptoms.)

DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

A designated staff will be available at the front entrance for child drop off and pick up. If there is no staff present, please ring the doorbell, and wait outside (doorbell is located on the left side of the entrance). We are requesting that you have a designated drop off/pick up person and use this person consistently.

At our screening station, at the front entrance, a staff member will ask you to disinfect your hands prior to starting the screening process. Responses to the health screen, including body temperature, will be documented for you and your child. If you refuse to respond or pause while responding to any question or you or your child are running a temperature above 100.4 F or 38 C, both you and your child will need to leave the AHS Centre. From this point, steps will be followed according to our protocol for Any Person Showing Symptoms. Once screening is successfully completed, your child will be brought to their cubby and then proceed to the bathroom to wash their hands with soap and water, before joining their cohort.

We ask that the designated drop-off and pick up person not be a “vulnerable” person (older person such as grandparent or person with a serious underlying medical condition).

PICK-UP PROCEDURES

If you see another family being helped, please be patient until it is your turn and keep a minimum of 2 metre (6 feet) away. A staff member will bring your child(ren) to the front door for pickup.

VANS/TRANSPORTATION

When your child is scheduled to be picked up by our van, a staff member will call families prior to arriving at your home to complete the health screening questionnaire for each child attending our program. If screening turns up a concern, the van will proceed without the child and the supervisor will be immediately notified. Next steps in the health protocol will then be followed.

If a family cannot be reached prior to pick up after two tries, the van will proceed to the next stop. We appreciate that some families screen their calls, however, given the current circumstances, families need to anticipate AHS staff phoning each morning, or families need to phone back immediately after our first attempt to reach you. In cases where two attempts have been made to reach families and failed, the parent/caregiver will be responsible for dropping their child off at the AHS Center prior to 10 am or miss the day’s programming.

If families pass the telephone health screen, our van will proceed to the home where the parent/caregiver will bring the child to the van (remaining at a distance of 2 meters or 6ft) from the van so that temperatures can be taken. If the child’s temperature is lower than 38 degrees C, Shkoday staff will assist child(ren) onto the van and buckle them in their respective seat(s). If the child’s temperature is 38 degrees or higher, the child will not be able to enter the van. The Program Supervisor will be called, and our health protocols will be followed.

At drop off, parent/caregiver needs to be physically present remaining at a distance of 2 meters or 6ft from the van. Shkoday staff will unbuckle your child, collect their belongings, and bring your child to you. Please be patient while staff do this.

SUNSCREEN

To prevent the spread of germs, children are to bring their own sunscreen.

PROTOCOL FOR ANY PERSON SHOWING SYMPTOMS

If a child shows symptoms or is sick, the child will be separated from the other children in the class while a staff member remains with the child. A family member or emergency contact will be contacted for immediate pick-up.

Children, including siblings of the sick child, and child care staff in the program who were present while the child or staff member became ill, will be identified as a close contact, grouped together and kept away from others until the children are picked up by parents/guardians to self-isolate at home. The Thunder Bay District Health Unit will be contacted for next steps and recommendations. Please be aware that if your child is sent home, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit will most probably call you to discuss next steps.

***Cohort: This is a group of children that will remain together during program hours. They will be in the same group day after day and the children will have the same educators as well. To minimize the possibility of transmitting a virus or illness, cohorts will not mix with other cohorts. Each cohort will have their own set of toys and will access outdoor activities together where they will continue to remain away from other cohorts. By using a cohort system we can isolate and minimize the spread of any illnesses.**