



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve

Implementing an Outreach Delivery Model during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve programs can be delivered in many ways depending on a community's needs – including at a physical centre or as an outreach program. With physical distancing measures required to control the spread of COVID-19, some communities may be considering an outreach model. This resource provides operational information about developing an outreach delivery model. Think of this as a source of community-based inspiration to use at your own pace and in accordance with your own decision-making process.

Important Links

FNHA COVID -19 Pandemic Updates, Resources and News <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus>

Ministry of Children and Family Development-Child Care Updates

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/covid-19-information>

Ministry of Children and Family Development COVID-19. Questions and Answers for the Child Care Sector Updated: March 24, 2020 https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/covid-19/qa_child_care_sector.pdf

What are Head Start Delivery Models?

Communities make different choices about how to best use their Head Start funds, taking into account community size, number of children, existing services and capacity, isolation factors and transportation challenges, family and community needs and priorities, and the availability of qualified staff. Some communities use Head Start funds to supplement and enhance existing programs and link with other funding sources, while others use funds to create programs where none existed before. Communities are not required to conform to a particular “model,” but many communities have chosen to deliver their programs in ways similar to those described below.

Head Start funds can focus on services and/or reaching out services to children and families, supplemented by regularly scheduled family activities. This works especially well in communities where there is no facility, not enough children or transportation barriers make it difficult to run a centre-based program. An outreach program is offered to engage families who cannot access a centre-based program and the program can be scheduled on an ongoing basis or as an occasional event.



Sample Design of an Outreach Program during the COVID-19 Pandemic

When considering the design/program for your community, it is important to develop policies and procedures for staff and for the families involved in the program that meet provincial health guidelines to control the spread of COVID-19. Please see the following website page for up to date information on safety protocols: <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus>

Clear policies and procedures assist both staff and families in understanding how the program would operate and their own roles and responsibilities. Consider an approach that is strength-based, family-centered and culturally safe while practicing social distancing. Set goals, provide linkages, teach and/or share information and empower families.

1. Develop a Handbook and/or Support System for Staff

When developing a handbook, start by thinking about the questions staff will have about achieving the goals of the program and maintaining safety. You may want to include the following information in the handbook:

What is social distancing?

Social distancing means that we do not use usual greetings, such as handshakes, hugs and kisses. Safe greetings include a wave, a nod, a bow and anything else you can think of that does not include physical contact. Social distancing also includes staying one to two metres away from other people.

Why is social distancing important?

When someone coughs or sneezes, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth that may contain the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease. Avoiding physical contact while greeting friends, family and community members helps to prevent COVID-19 from spreading to the people we care about.

<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus/public>

What is physical distancing?

Physical distancing is the practice of reducing close contact between people to slow the spread of infections and viruses. For COVID-19, the following physical distancing actions are recommended: stay two metres (six feet) away from other people, avoid groups of people and cancel social gatherings. Physical distancing also means we cannot use our usual social greetings, such as handshakes, hugs and kisses.



<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Physical-Distancing-Dos-and-Donts-Poster.pdf>

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-The-Math-Behind-Physical-Distancing-Infographic.pdf>

2. Create a Staff Agreement Form

A Staff Agreement Form is a brief outline of your expectations for staff and how they will assist in the success of supporting families through the COVID-19 pandemic. By signing the form, staff acknowledge that they have read, understand and will abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook. Date and sign the form so both such as leadership and the staff are in agreement.

3. Outline Policy and Procedures

Your policy and procedures might cover definitions of social distancing and self-isolation, what families can expect as you support them through social distancing while developing resources/curriculum or planning materials, proper sanitization and hand-washing methods and other relevant topics for your particular situations. <https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Prevent-COVID-19-by-Washing-Your-Hands-Poster.pdf>

Set clear boundaries. Your policy and procedures might include guidance on absolutely no favours or errands; the need to abide by health and safety measures; cultural safety and awareness; steps for conflict of interest and /or disclosures; confidentiality; no transportation; guidance on cell phone use; the process of healthy and positive communications; and how to conduct respectful relationships through social distancing.

Describe how staff can support families. Staff can support families by sharing and setting goals for their children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking the lead from the family will guide the opportunities to learn. This may include topics such as activities in the home during the COVID-19 pandemic, wellness, addressing challenging behaviours, potty training, bedtime routines, managing stress, etc.

Consider a registration or a process for scheduling. This will assist you in noting whom you connected with and/or how you may be of support. Develop a record-keeping process. After the phone call has been completed by staff, keep notes or running records of what took place, discussions, suggestions, concerns, etc.

Take note of patterns, challenges or successes as this will assist the planning process.

- Consider who else can be of support or may need to be aware of a referral
- Build respectful and supportive relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Be non-judgmental and refrain from comments that may shame or blame anyone
- Consider the transportation and safety of staff, including road conditions, inclement weather, phone use, etc. If your program offers transportation to a family you should consider the appropriate vehicle insurance and liability.
- Consider time for organization and preparation
- Consider what other services are available to support your families, such as community health nurses

Reach out to families

- Identify early learning and child development resources you could develop and share with families, such as lending books, take home activities and crafts
- Consider a nutritional program - some communities have been sharing lunch packs or garden baskets to families through drop offs
- Consider other supplies the family may require, such as diapers, baby food, etc.

4. Develop a Parent Flyer /Handout and/or E-newsletters

When developing a flyer, e-news or information for families, consider what families can expect from your program and/or what an outreach program looks like during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are a few examples of what you should consider:

- Is there already a bulletin or e-news in the community? Try to lessen how much is shared as it can be overwhelming. Is there enough information being shared?
- Describe your outreach program, introduce the Head Start program and describe its six components and how they can help support children's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development.
- Outline the registration process, what families can expect, social distancing protocols and the drop off or pick-up of resources

Inspire and implement the six key components. Look at each area and strategize ways in which you can incorporate them in your outreach program: (1) culture and language, (2) education, (3) health promotion, (4) nutrition, (5) parent and family involvement, and (6) social support.