

10 TIPS FOR INCORPORATING MORE PLAY IN YOUR PROGRAM

1. Set aside larger blocks of time for play. Children may be slow to warm to the staff when they return and may need more time to engage in deeper play. Larger blocks of time will also allow staff to interact with all of the children and enhance or extend play.
2. Provide plenty of play space to encourage social distancing while allowing children to play freely. A more spacious play area will encourage social distancing while allowing children to freely play without feeling any stress.
3. Have creative supplies, writing materials and dramatic play options available so children have a play-based way to express themselves. Creative and expressive activities give the children an outlet to release and express emotions in a safe way. Creative experience can still happen safely!
4. Use play as a way to reinforce and practice some of the hygiene (ie: a fun song or timer when children are washing their hands)
5. Use games and activities that encourage physical distancing and avoid policing the children during their play. It can interfere and disrupt the natural flow of their play.
6. Observe what the children are playing with and find ways to extend their play and learning while still meeting provincial directives.
7. Transitions may take longer than before so keep them as playful and relaxed as possible. (ie: Use tape to indicate where children should stand but play fun activities like simon says while you wait, encourage children to participate in cleaning activities by turning them into a game)
8. Activities and play should still be selected by the children. Staff selected activities may feel as though there is a control on the germs spread by the children however in doing so, the children are not truly engaging in play and missing the opportunities that a stress free play environment provides.
9. Have enough materials available for exploration and open ended play. Materials should be able to be sanitized however staff should try not interrupt play to clean the toys. Allow children to fully engage with the materials as much as possible.
10. Allow play to be child-driven and guided by the children's interests.

