

# Health and Safety Information

## Early Learning and Child Care

### **Extreme Heat and Heat Advisory Information Sheet**

Information for Licensed Centres, Nursery Schools, and Homes

#### **What is an extreme heat event?**

An extreme heat event occurs when daytime and overnight temperatures are significantly hotter than what is normally expected for the season and may pose increased health risks. These events may include heat warnings or heat advisories issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada, as well as periods of sustained high temperatures even when a formal advisory is not in place.

#### **Why Extreme Heat Matters in Child Care**

Extreme heat events are becoming more frequent and can pose serious health risks, particularly for young children. Children are less able than adults to regulate body temperature and may not recognize or communicate signs of heat-related illness. High temperatures can quickly lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke if precautions are not taken.

#### **Role of Child Care Providers**

- Monitor weather forecasts for heat advisories and warnings daily during warm weather months using Environment Canada weather forecast page or the [WeatherCAN app](#).
- Adjust programming, schedules, and environments to reduce heat exposure.
- Closely observe children for signs of heat-related illness and respond promptly.

#### **Understanding Heat Warnings and Advisories**

- Heat advisories are issued when temperatures are expected to be hot enough to pose an increased risk of heat-related illness, particularly for vulnerable populations such as young children. Advisories signal the need for increased awareness and preventative actions.
- Heat warnings are issued when more severe or prolonged heat conditions are expected and the risk of heat-related illness is higher. Warnings indicate that immediate protective actions are necessary to reduce health risks.
- Manitoba's Heat Alert and Response System, [Heat Advisories and Response | Health | Province of Manitoba](#), provides guidance on recognizing heat events and taking appropriate protective actions during both heat advisories and heat warnings, including additional considerations for child care and other settings serving vulnerable populations.

#### **Planning Outdoor Activities During Hot Weather**

- Schedule outdoor play for cooler parts of the day, such as early morning.
- Reduce the intensity and duration of physical activity.
- Provide frequent breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.
- Cancel or move outdoor activities indoors during heat advisories or warnings.

## **Hydration and Cooling**

- Ensure drinking water is readily available and encourage children and staff to drink water frequently.
- Offer water breaks more often than usual, even if children do not request them.
- Use cooling strategies such as shade, fans, cool wet cloths, or air-conditioned spaces where available.

## **Clothing and Sun Protection During Heat**

- Encourage light coloured, loose fitting, breathable clothing.
- Use wide-brimmed hats and sunscreen when outdoors.
- Avoid heavy, dark, or restrictive clothing during hot weather.
- For more information on sun safety review the Education and Early Childhood Learning Sun Safety Information Sheet online at:  
[https://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/resources/pubs/elcc\\_sun\\_safety.pdf](https://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/resources/pubs/elcc_sun_safety.pdf)

## **Children at Increased Risk from Heat**

- Infants and young children are at higher risk of heat-related illness.
- Children with chronic medical conditions, fever, or dehydration may be more vulnerable.
- Extra care should be taken for children who cannot communicate discomfort clearly.

## **Signs of Heat Related Illness**

- Heat exhaustion signs may include heavy sweating, fatigue, dizziness, headache, nausea, or irritability.
- Heat stroke signs may include confusion, hot or dry skin, rapid breathing, or loss of consciousness.
- Heat stroke is a medical emergency and requires immediate action.
- For more information on extreme heat and health protection measures, refer to the [Heat and Your Health](#) website and [Manitoba Health Alert and Response System Guide](#).

## **Responding to Heat Related Illness**

- Move the child to a cooler area immediately.
- Offer fluids if the child is conscious and able to drink safely.
- Loosen or remove excess clothing and cool the body using cool cloths or fans.
- Seek medical attention immediately if symptoms are severe or worsen.

## **Recommended Practice for Early Learning and Child Care Programs**

- Develop an extreme heat response plan for the facility. See section below, *How to Create an Extreme Heat Response Plan* for guidance on creating this plan.
- Review emergency procedures and staff responsibilities before summer.
- Communicate heat-related policies and expectations clearly to families.
- Review and adjust practices following heat events as needed.

## How to Create an Extreme Heat Response Plan

An extreme heat response plan helps programs prepare for hot weather and respond consistently when temperatures may pose a risk to children and staff. Plans can be brief and should be incorporated into the facility's existing enhanced safety plan.

Key elements include:

1. When the plan applies
  - Applies during heat advisories, heat warnings, or periods of unusually hot weather.
  - Identifies who is responsible for monitoring weather conditions (e.g. director or designate).
2. Prevention measures
  - Provide frequent access to drinking water and water breaks.
  - Adjust outdoor play (shorter periods, shaded areas, cooler times of day).
  - Use indoor or shaded spaces during peak heat.
  - Support appropriate clothing, hats, and sunscreen, as applicable.
3. Staff roles and responsibilities
  - Identify who monitors children for signs of heat-related illness.
  - Clarify who adjusts routines and activities and who communicates changes to families.
  - Ensure staff know what to do and who to notify if a child shows signs of heat stress.
4. Response to heat-related illness
  - Ensure staff are familiar with signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
  - Reference existing medical and emergency response procedures, including when to seek medical attention.
5. Communication with families
  - Describe how families will be informed of heat-related adjustments and expectations.
  - Share heat-related policies in advance of summer, where possible.
6. Review and improvement
  - Review practices after extreme heat events.
  - Update the plan as needed and share changes with staff and families.

### For Additional Information:

- [Heat and Your Health](#) website
- [Manitoba Health Alert and Response System Guide](#)
- [Heat and Your Health](#) Fact sheet
- [When It's Hot Poster](#) poster
- [Extreme Heat Events: Overview](#)
- [Staying Healthy in the Heat](#)
- [Keep Children Cool!](#)

Government of Manitoba | Education and Early Childhood Learning  
<https://gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/index.html>