

# Nellie's Children's Program

## COVID-19 Protocol



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Nellie's Children's Program is committed to upholding the highest safety standards for the children who use our program. Due to COVID-19, modification to our delivery of services is crucial to maintain safety for staff and kids alike. Utilizing outdoor space, reducing numbers of children per session (if applicable), rethinking of the activities, crafts, and the topics we discuss are all ways we are changing how we approach the children's program during the pandemic.

### New COVID-19 Measures

Staff are following all protocols laid out by both the Ministry of Education and City of Toronto Public Health for reopening of childcare centers. In addition an emphasis has been placed on accessing training models from the City to ensure the safety of children participating in the program.

Included among the new protocols are screening kids upon entry into the program space, including a temperature check and asking children 2 years and older to wear a mask. Reusable and disposable masks are provided, to everyone, as part of our shelter wide COVID-19 response.

The playroom now includes visual cues, including tape on the floor and tables to assist in children physically distancing from each other and staff. A reduced number of toys will be available for play, and when a child is finished the toys are taken out of rotation to be disinfected.

Children are given their own pencil case with crayons, markers, glue and scissors to reduce sharing of materials. Kids are now given their own craft supplies so they won't share from a communal bowl of materials.

The program will be using individually packaged snacks (such as mini packs of goldfish, individual wrapped cheese and banana bread, and granola bars.) Fruit will be cut up and already placed in disposable bowls pre-program.

Children will be encouraged to bring their own water bottles (provided by the shelter) to the program, and disposable cups will be used otherwise.

### Taking Programing Outside



Like so many other people in our community, families living at Nellie's have mainly remained inside and only going outside for necessities. With that in mind we turned our side yard into a small garden for kids and moms. Nurturing the garden provides an opportunity to get some fresh air, and provides a bit of normalcy during difficult times.

Our Friday program is now our gardening program where children tend to the garden, while discussing issues. Discussion topics include managing change (pre/post COVID experiences), managing emotions and stress management strategies.

For kids holding programing outside provides an opportunity to include chalk drawings on the pavement, playing skipping games and play ball.

At the end of each session kids are served a tasty treat- taking advantage of the local produce that we only have for a short time-such as watermelon and blueberries.

We hope to continue to hold programing outside well into the fall.

## Fostering Mother-Child Bond

The Children's Program is also creating socially distancing activities for both moms and kids. Twice a month the Children's program will host a movie night in the living room. (To help with physical distancing the living room has been primarily closed.)

Staff will be on hand to ensure physical distancing, and provide snacks and support to moms, so they can have an opportunity to bond with their children, and forget about the pandemic for a couple of hours. Temperature checks, screening and mandatory masks will continue to be in place.

Thank you  
for supporting  
the Children's Program



*Nellies*

## A month into the pandemic, a woman in shelter tested positive for the Coronavirus.

In total 11 women and children were infected with the virus. Infected women and their children moved to City of Toronto run quarantine site. Healthy residents moved to a nearby hotel so the shelter could be disinfected.

When it was safe to return to the shelter, only women and their children moved back; others continue to live at the hotel.

A pandemic specialist determined there simply wasn't enough space in our shelter to safely practice physical distancing with everyone back in the shelter. Our front-line staff continue to work in both spaces

