



Residential Care Settings for People with Developmental Disabilities Visitation Policies during COVID-19

This document provides a summary scan of visitation policies among residential care settings for people under the age of 65 with development disabilities in each Canadian province and territory. This document has been prepared by the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) and is current as of July 17, 2020. CACL would like to acknowledge the support of Dr. Yona Lunskey in the preparation of this document.

Province/Territory	Visiting Policy	Number of Visitors	Policy specific to developmental disability settings or same as Long-Term Care (LTC)
British Columbia	Each residential care setting is expected to develop their own visitor policies using this information from WorkSafeBC as a guide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Visitors should be limited to close family and persons of significance to residents.- Visitors should schedule a time to visit.- Visitors should be asked to provide “yes/no” verbal confirmation that they do not have symptoms.- Outdoor spaces for visits should be used as much as possible.	- Varies by residential care setting	Distinct from LTC but not specific to developmental disability. These WorkSafe BC guidelines apply to Community-based residential services delivered in facility, group home, shared living, and supportive living settings.
Alberta	All visitors in long term care and designated supportive living facilities must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pre-arrange visits and timing of the visits with the facility manager and care team.- Complete health screening prior to entering the facility, including a temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sites may allow one Essential Visitor to support either care needs that cannot be met without their assistance, or to support quality of life.- The Designated Essential Visitor may be a family	Same policy that applies to LTC applies to licensed group homes (4 or more residents).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - check and a questionnaire. - Continuously wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth while inside the facility or while visiting outside the facility. - Be escorted by site staff to the resident's room and remain in the resident's room for the duration of the visit. - Perform hand hygiene (hand washing and/or use of hand sanitizer) when entering and leaving the facility and when entering and leaving the resident's room. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> member, friend, religious and spiritual advisors or paid caregiver 18 years of age or older. - An outdoor visit may be arranged for a resident not on isolation. A Designated Essential Visitor and up to one additional person may visit as long as the additional person remains outside and does not enter the facility. 	
Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current policies, outlining that the family member/support person be screened, wear a medical grade mask, practice physical distancing and hand hygiene, and limit their movement within a facility will be maintained. - Outdoor visits can include more than one visitor at a time, provided that physical distancing can be maintained and they are not limited to the two identified family members/support people. - For outdoor visits, family members/support people will be asked to mask but may choose not to mask if it is a barrier to communication and they are able to maintain two metre physical distance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to two members/support persons be designated for each patient/ resident/ client. - One family member/support person can visit at a time. The two designated persons may visit at one time under exceptional circumstances. 	Same policy that applies to LTC.
Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indoor and outdoor visits with Community Living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indoor visits: A maximum of one visitor may be 	Policy specific to Community Living



	<p>disABILITY Services (CLDS) participants who live in facilities may resume.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facility residents may visit their family home or a cabin, including overnight stays, if the home or cabin is located in Manitoba or northwestern Ontario. - All residents and visitors must continue to practice hand hygiene before, during (if possible) and after any visit and maintain physical distancing wherever possible. - Facility operators or staff are responsible for determining visiting hours and the duration of visits. - Facility residents and visitors are not required to wear PPE indoors or outdoors. The use of a non-medical (i.e., cloth) mask may be used during visits if they choose to do so. 	<p>allowed inside a residential care facility at a time. If two or more residents would like to have a visitor on the same day, the visitors must come at different times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor visits: A maximum of two visitors may be allowed outside a residential care facility at a time. If two or more residents would like to have outdoor visitors, the total number of visitors cannot exceed two at any given time. 	<p>disability Services (CLDS) participants - adults with intellectual disabilities</p>
<p>Ontario</p>	<p>Effective July 22, 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor Visiting + Indoor Visiting for nonessential visitors permitted. - Protocols are in place to maintain the highest of Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) standards prior to, during and after visits, which include that: Where appropriate, the congregate living setting is able to facilitate visits in a manner aligned with physical distancing 	<p>Effective July 22, 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 2 visitors at a time per resident for outdoor visiting; - 1-2 visitor(s) at a time per resident for indoor visiting to allow for appropriate physical distancing 	<p>Distinct from LTC. Policy applies to all Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services licensed congregate living settings.</p>



	<p>protocols.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-essential visitors must undergo a screening administered by staff and attest that they are not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms. - Visits must be scheduled in advance and visits are for one resident at a time. This will allow for appropriate physical distancing (where possible) and appropriate staffing coverage. - Visits may be time-limited but not restricted to less than 30 minutes, at minimum once per week. - Non-essential visitors must wear a non-medical mask (essential visitors must wear a surgical/procedure mask) when visiting inside or outside the home and maintain proper respiratory etiquette and hand washing before and after visiting. - Essential overnight absences (e.g. to a family home) are permitted if the absence is considered necessary to maintain the health, wellness and safety, or any applicable legal rights, of a resident. 		
<p>Quebec</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hand hygiene when entering and leaving the facility, as well as entering and leaving the resident's room. - Correctly wear a mask upon entering the facility and wear it for the duration of the visit. The mask cannot be used for a subsequent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of visitors permitted varies depending on the type of setting and ranges from a maximum of 2 people from a single household to a maximum of 10 people from three different households. 	<p>Same policy that applies to LTC</p>



	<p>visit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An arrival and departure time can be allocated to avoid contact between people present in the living environment at the same time. 		
New Brunswick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visits can occur between 2 and 8 p.m., daily. - Visitors must wear a community mask at all times during their visit. - Visitors must follow the facility's Infection Prevention and Control policies, such as maintaining physical distancing and cleaning their hands frequently. - At any time, staff can restrict the number of visitors in an area or the length of visits to ensure physical distancing can be maintained. - Active screening of patients, visitors and support persons will continue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patients no longer need to have designated visitors. Patients can welcome any healthy visitor - however, only ONE visitor can attend at a time. Exceptions may be made if one visitor requires a support person (a second visitor may be permitted). Visitors must be 12 years of age or older. 	<p>Distinct from LTC. New Brunswick does not appear to have one set of guidelines for residential care settings. This information is taken from the hospital and healthcare facility guidelines.</p> <p>In NB, Special Care Homes and other residential care settings are licensed by the Department of Social Development. These settings do not appear to have one standard policy, rather rules for visitors may vary between settings.</p>
Nova Scotia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoors, monitored visits in designated area, by appointment. - Pre-visit and on-site screening. - Visitors must indicate that they understand the possible impacts of COVID-19. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximum of two (2) visitors may attend a visit at one time. 	<p>Policy specific to Disability Support Program Licensed Homes for Special Care – residential support for people with disabilities.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visitors must wear a non-medical mask. Once at the designated visit area, the non-medical mask may be removed at the discretion of the service provider. - For the entire duration of the visit, visitors must maintain physical distancing of two (2) metres between themselves and the participant. - Time limits will be in effect. 		
Prince Edward Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor and indoor visitation permitted. - Physical distancing is encouraged at all times. - If the care home is engaged in “Universal Masking” of staff then the visitors must don a non-medical mask for the duration of the visit. - Visitors will be screened by staff for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entering the home. - Visitors must perform hand hygiene upon entry to the home and after the visit at point of exit. - Visits will be scheduled at designated visiting times agreed upon by the visitors and facility. - Family members may take residents for a drive for an agreed upon time frame. - Residents may go to one pre-designated home for a visit. Visits will be for an agreed upon timeframe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For indoors visits a maximum of 2 visitors per resident per visit - does not have to be the same 2 individuals every visit. Maximum 6 designated indoor visitors. 	Same policy that applies to LTC.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All support persons/ designated visitors will be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each resident can identify a support person 	Same policy that applies to LTC.



Newfoundland & Labrador	<p>provided a mask and are required to wear the mask for the duration of their visit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Visits must be coordinated with the clinical care team or staff of the home.- Only visit once per day, as coordinated with the clinical care team.- A maximum of two people can visit per day, and two visitors can attend at the same time.- Visitors must go straight to the patient/resident room or visitation space.- Visitors must be screened upon arrival/prior to the visit beginning.- Homes can choose from in-home, window or outdoor visiting, and identify a process amenable to the particular home and needs of residents.- A designated visitor can take a resident for a drive in their car, but the visitor should wear their mask at all times.	and up to five designated visitors, and these six individuals should remain constant for the duration of the visiting restrictions.	
Nunavut	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Will accept visitors on a limited basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Each resident or inpatient may have no more than two visitors at once, and visitors shall be restricted to immediate family members only (which includes grandchildren and great-grandchildren).	Same policy that applies to LTC. Nunavut does not appear to have any policies specific to residential care settings for people under 65 years of age. This information relates to the territory's Continuing



			Care Centres (CCCs) and Elders' Homes.
Northwest Territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individuals living in their own homes can do visits within the general guidelines for all territorial residents. - A few people with development disabilities live in long-term care (LTC) settings. - In LTC, families are just starting to be allowed to do a distanced visit outside on a porch or deck. - Masks are encouraged. - Everyone is required to confirm they do not have symptoms. - LTC visitor exemptions may include 'patients' with intellectual/developmental disabilities (visitors include both family and caregivers). 	- 1 essential visitor over 18 years of age.	Same policy that applies to LTC. There are no individuals living in group home settings in NWT.
Yukon	- Outdoor visits for long-term care residents are now permitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently residents can identify one visitor with whom they can visit in a pre-set outdoor location. - The reintroduction of visitors is staged over four phases. Phase 2 will permit two outdoor visitors at the same time. 	Same policy that applies to LTC. Yukon does not appear to have any policies specific to residential care settings for people under 65 years of age. This information relates to the territory's five long-term care homes.



British Columbia

Link:

These WorkSafe BC guidelines apply to Community-based residential services delivered in facility, group home, shared living, and supportive living settings.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information/community-social-services-residential> (under 'visitors' section)

Highlights:

WorkSafeBC requires each residential care setting to develop their own visitor protocol, using this information as a guide:

- Visitors should be limited to close family and persons of significance to residents. Phone calls and other virtual visiting methods should be used to maintain contact with extended family and friends.
- Residential care settings should determine the number of visitors a resident may have at a given time. Visitors should schedule a time to visit. Residential settings care should monitor the number of people on the premises at any given time.
- Visitors must stay home if they have symptoms of COVID-19, have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days, or have been directed by public health to self-isolate.
- Visitors should be asked to provide "yes/no" verbal confirmation that they do not have symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory illness prior to them entering the residence. Signage should be posted reminding visitors of these requirements.
- Outdoor spaces for visits should be used as much as possible.
- Post signage at the entrance to assist with communicating expectations about hand hygiene, physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, and not entering the facility when ill. Post in accessible formats and multiple languages, if appropriate.
- If using reception or waiting areas, consider placing 2-meter markers, using a plexiglass shield and arranging area in a way that allows 2 meters of physical distance between each visitor.



Alberta

Link:

In Alberta, group home of 4 or more people fall under the same legislation as long-term care.
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/hi-ipc-covid19-infosht-visiting-pts-pandemic.pdf>

Smaller residential care settings (3 or less people living together) are provided with guidance and advice, but it is up to the service provider to determine their policies.

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/687a81a7-7448-4db1-9e30-42aa563739f4/resource/1cb75464-3347-436d-beb9-24b4cc35017f/download/css-covid-guidance-disability-service-providers-re-opening-or-continuing.pdf>

Highlights:

- Sites may allow one Essential Visitor to support either care needs that cannot be met without their assistance, or to support quality of life.
- The Designated Essential Visitor may be a family member, friend, religious and spiritual advisors or paid caregiver 18 years of age or older.
- A Designated Essential Visitor may visit in cases where:
 - The resident's quality of life and/or care needs cannot be met without the assistance of the Designated Essential Visitor.
 - In end-of-life situations where there is a time sensitive need to be with a loved one.
 - An outdoor visit may be arranged for a resident not on isolation. A Designated Essential Visitor and up to one additional person may visit as long as the additional person remains outside and does not enter the facility. While outside, all appropriate precautions must be taken to prevent exposure to COVID-19, including physical distancing and the requirement that all visitors wear a mask or face covering.
- All visitors in long term care and designated supportive living facilities must:
 - Pre-arrange visits and timing of the visits with the facility manager and care team.
 - Complete health screening prior to entering the facility, including a temperature check for fever over 38 degrees Celsius (where available) and a questionnaire.
 - Continuously wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth while inside the facility or while visiting outside the facility.
 - Be escorted by site staff to the resident's room and remain in the resident's room for the duration of the visit other than when assisting with required quality of life or care activities (e.g. meal time) or supporting an outdoor visit.
 - Perform hand hygiene (hand washing and/or use of hand sanitizer) when entering and leaving the facility and when entering and leaving the resident's room.



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Saskatchewan

Link:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/public-health-measures/guidance-for-health-care-facilities>

Highlights:

- Up to two members/support persons be designated for each patient/resident/client.
- One family member/support person can visit at a time. The two designated persons may visit at one time under exceptional circumstances.
- The policy will apply to all hospitals, long-term care homes, personal care homes, Saskatchewan Cancer Agency sites and Ministry of Social Services Community Living Division group homes.
- Current policies, outlining that the family member/support person be screened, wear a medical grade mask, practice physical distancing and hand hygiene, and limit their movement within a facility will be maintained
- This policy will apply to all indoor visits. The current outdoor visitation policy developed by the Saskatchewan Health Authority for long-term care will remain in effect, with the expectation that its core principles will be applied consistently across sites.
- Outdoor visits can include more than one visitor at a time, provided that physical distancing can be maintained and they are not limited to the two identified family members/support people.
- For outdoor visits, family members/support people will be asked to mask but may choose not to mask if it is a barrier to communication and they are able to maintain two metre physical distance.
- Arrangements should be made in advance with the home. Screening for visitors can be done in advance while booking the visit or at the door through the regular screening process.
- Food and beverages can be delivered to or brought into SHA facilities.



Manitoba

Link:

<https://abilitiesmanitoba.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-CLDS-FAN-Bulletin-3-EN-June-24-2020.pdf>

A more recent version replacing this June 15th document was circulated to residences on June 24th by email but could not be located online. PDF version was provided.

https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/covid/famcirculars/COVID-19_Circular_2020-99_Vis_Rest_Eased_in_CLDS_Resid_Care_Fac_June_15-2020.pdf

Highlights:

- Indoor and outdoor visits with Community Living disABILITY Services (CLDS) participants who live in facilities (i.e., shift-staffed homes or home shares) may resume only if the visitor and resident:
 - have not been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 or is being tested for COVID-19 with results pending;
 - have not been instructed to self-isolate;
 - have not travelled outside Manitoba in the last 14 days; and
 - do not have any symptoms associated with COVID-19 (i.e., cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat, weakness or headache).
- Facility residents may visit their family home or a cabin, including overnight stays, if the home or cabin is located in Manitoba or northwestern Ontario. However, residents must meet the above screening criteria when returning to the facility to protect the health of other residents.
- All residents and visitors must continue to practice hand hygiene before, during (if possible) and after any visit and maintain physical distancing (two metres or six feet apart) wherever possible. Any personal contact should be brief and kept to a minimum.
- Indoor visits: A maximum of one visitor may be allowed inside a residential care facility at a time. If two or more residents would like to have a visitor on the same day, the visitors must come at different times.
- Outdoor visits: A maximum of two visitors may be allowed outside a residential care facility at a time. If two or more residents would like to have outdoor visitors, the total number of visitors cannot exceed two at any given time. Given that the risk of transmitting the virus is less likely in outdoor settings, CLDS continues to encourage facility visits to occur outside wherever possible.
- Facility operators or staff are responsible for determining visiting hours and the duration of visits. CLDS encourages facility operators or staff to consider evening visitation for some portion of visitor hours, due to visitors' schedules.
- Facility residents and visitors are not required to wear PPE indoors or outdoors. The use of a non-medical (i.e., cloth) mask may be used during visits if they choose to do so.



Ontario

Link:

http://www.children.gov.on.ca/docs/MCCSS_Visitor_Guidelines_Congregate_Living-EN.pdf

This previous version of the policy required visitors to attest to a negative COVID test within 2 weeks before their scheduled visit.

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_resuming_visits_congregate_living_settings.pdf

Highlights:

- Outdoor Visiting + Indoor Visiting for nonessential visitors permitted.
- Protocols are in place to maintain the highest of Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) standards prior to, during and after visits, which include that:
 - Where appropriate, the congregate living setting is able to facilitate visits in a manner aligned with physical distancing protocols, including identifying a space(s) where visiting takes place and the areas that are off-limits to visitors.
- Non-essential visitors must undergo a screening administered by staff and attest that they are not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Visits must be scheduled in advance and visits are for one resident at a time. This will allow for appropriate physical distancing (where possible) and appropriate staffing coverage.
- Visits may be time-limited but not restricted to less than 30 minutes, at minimum once per week.
- Upon resumption of indoor visiting, agencies should establish a procedure to escort visitors to the space/room where the visit will take place.
- Non-essential visitors must wear a non-medical mask (essential visitors must wear a surgical/procedure mask) when visiting inside or outside the home and maintain proper respiratory etiquette and hand washing before and after visiting.
- Essential overnight absences (e.g. to a family home) are permitted if the absence is considered necessary to maintain the health, wellness and safety, or any applicable legal rights, of a resident. Agencies should take careful consideration as to whether an overnight absence is truly vital to maintain the health, wellness and safety of a resident. This should include whether the support or care to be provided during the absence could be reasonably, safely, and fully assumed by agency staff, or reasonably, safely and fully assumed by an essential visitor to the resident at the residence under the existing visitor policy (instead of through an absence).



Quebec

Link:

It appears these guidelines related to seniors' settings are also being applied to people with an intellectual disability under age 65 living in group settings.

<https://msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/covid-19/covid-19-directives-au-reseau-de-la-sante-et-des-services-sociaux/proches-aidants/>

Highlights:

- Visitors are only allowed in living environments without active COVID-19 outbreaks.
- Visitors are all people who wish to visit the person in the living environment and who do not meet the criteria to be identified as a caregiver, that is to say, a person who provides significant help or support to a person.
- Hand hygiene when entering and leaving the facility, as well as entering and leaving the resident's room.
- Correctly wear a mask upon entering the facility and wear it for the duration of the visit. The mask cannot be used for a subsequent visit.
- The number of visitors permitted varies depending on the type of setting:
 - CHSLD (residential and long-term care centers): a maximum of 2 people (caregivers or visitors) can take care of only one resident at a time, respecting a physical distance of 2 meters.
 - In RI-RTF (intermediate and family-type resources) with 10 residents or less: a maximum of 10 people (caregivers or visitors) from three different households can visit a resident, respecting a physical distance of 2 meters.
 - In RI with more than 10 residents: a maximum of 2 people (caregivers or visitors) from a single household can visit a resident, respecting a physical distance of 2 meters.
 - In RPA (private residences for seniors): a maximum of 10 people (caregivers or visitors) from three different households can visit a user, while respecting a physical distance of 2 meters.
- In accordance with the wishes of the caregiver or the visitor, an arrival time can be allocated to them, in order to avoid contact between people present in the living environment at the same time. The same precautions can be implemented for the exit of the caregiver or the visitor. If no arrival and departure time is allocated, it is important to take all necessary measures to ensure that the physical distance of 2 meters is respected.
- The number of new caregivers or visitors can be adjusted according to the capacity and the specific context of the living environment.



New Brunswick

Link:

New Brunswick does not appear to have one set of guidelines for residential care settings. This link describes guidelines established for provincial hospital and health care settings (Department of Health) [https://en.horizonnb.ca/home/patients-and-visitors/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)/covid-19-visitor-restrictions-at-hospitals-and-health-care-facilities.aspx](https://en.horizonnb.ca/home/patients-and-visitors/coronavirus-(covid-19)/covid-19-visitor-restrictions-at-hospitals-and-health-care-facilities.aspx)

In New Brunswick, Special Care Homes and other residential care settings are licensed by the Department of Social Development. These settings do not appear to have one standard policy, rather rules for visitors may vary between settings. The highlights below are taken from the hospital and healthcare facility guidelines.

Highlights:

- Visits can occur between 2 and 8 p.m., daily.
- Patients will be able to welcome ONE healthy visitor at a time. Exceptions may be made if one visitor requires a support person (a second visitor may be permitted).
- Patients no longer need to have designated visitors. Patients can welcome any healthy visitor - however, only ONE visitor can attend at a time.
- Visitors must be 12 years of age or older. Pet visits are not permitted at this time.
- Visitors must wear a community mask at all times during their visit. Visitors will not be permitted to enter without a mask. We encourage visitors to wear their own mask; if they don't have one, one will be provided.
- Visitors must comply with all Public Health measures in place and must follow the facility's Infection Prevention and Control policies, such as maintaining physical distancing and cleaning their hands frequently.
- Visitors must limit their interactions with staff, patients and other visitors. They must leave the patient's room when staff are conducting procedures.
- At any time, staff can restrict the number of visitors in an area or the length of visits to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
- All visitors and support persons must monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms before each visit. Active screening of patients, visitors and support persons will continue.



Nova Scotia

Link:

No weblink is available but a PDF copy of the *Disability Support Program - Visitor Guidelines* from June 12th has been provided. A document about *Lifting Community Access Restrictions* from June 26th was also provided which focuses on outings in the community. These documents were not publicly available online and had to be requested from the Department of Community Services.

Although long-term care facilities are not the focus of this document, there are a significant number of people with developmental disabilities under age 65 living in LTC settings. The following visitor guidelines are in effect for LTC settings: <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20200717003>

Highlights:

- guidelines apply to the following DSP licensed settings:
 - Residential Care Facilities (RCF)
 - Group Homes (GH)
 - Small Option Homes (SOH)
 - Developmental Residences (DR)
- Outdoors visits in designated area, by appointment.
- A maximum of two (2) visitors may attend a visit at one time.
- When scheduling a visit, staff must screen the potential visitor via phone for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- When visitors arrive for their scheduled visit, staff must screen them for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Visitors must indicate that they understand the possible impacts of COVID-19 and the need to follow physical distancing, where possible, and hand hygiene throughout the visit. Staff should ensure visitors wash their hands before and after their visits.
- Staff must monitor the visit and provide personal protective equipment to visitors, if necessary.
- Visitors who have been determined as eligible to visit a participant must wear a non-medical mask – cloth and homemade masks are allowed – for the duration of their visit. Once at the designated visit area, the non-medical mask may be removed at the discretion of the service provider.
- If the use of non-medical masks presents as a barrier for effective communication between participants and their visitors, the masks may be removed if physical distancing can be maintained and at the discretion of the service provider.
- For the entire duration of the visit, staff must ensure that visitors maintain physical distancing of two (2) metres between themselves and the participant.
- Time limits will be in effect to ensure all residents who are able have a chance to visit with family and friends.



Prince Edward Island

Link:

PEI does not have a specific policy for residential care homes, as they have been following the Chief Public Health Office's guidelines for LTC facilities. No weblink is available but a PDF copy of the document *Visitation Guidance Residential Homes PEI* has been provided.

Highlights:

- Visitation can now include outdoor and indoor visitation.

For Indoor Visits:

- Identify a designated area for indoor visits. A designated area can be the resident's room.
- Physical distancing is encouraged (6ft/2meters) at all times. Brief close encounters are allowed (e.g. hug at beginning and end of visit).
- If the care home is engaged in "Universal Masking" of staff then the visitors must don a non-medical mask for the duration of the visit.
- If staff in the care home is not "Universal Masking" then visitors do not have to mask.
- Maximum of 2 visitors per resident per visit - does not have to be the same 2 individuals every visit. Maximum 6 designated indoor visitors.
- Visitors must be well and have no signs of illness. Visitors will be screened by staff for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entering the home.
- Visitors must perform hand hygiene upon entry to the home and after the visit at point of exit.
- Visitors may visit together or separately depending on the facility's capacity to support this practice.
- Visits will be scheduled at designated visiting times agreed upon by the visitors and facility.
- Visitor log should be maintained (dates, names and phone numbers) and made available to Public Health if needed. Records should be kept for one month to facilitate contact tracing in the event of an outbreak.

Residents who have unique care needs may have one designated individual (family member, guardian) whose role goes beyond visitation. This designated individual upon review of the resident's care needs can visit and assist in personal care needs of the resident (feeding, bathing etc).



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For Drives and Home-Based Visits:

- Family members may take residents for a drive for an agreed upon time frame.
- Residents may go to one pre-designated home for a visit. Visits will be for an agreed upon time frame.
- Drives cannot include disembarking unless at the designated home.
- If the care home is engaging in Universal Masking then the family must social distance or don a non- medical mask while the resident is in their care.
- All occupants of the home must be free of illness and COVID-19 symptoms.
- All occupants of the homes must have no risk factors for COVID-19 (recent travel, exposure to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 individual etc.).



Newfoundland & Labrador

Link:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/guidelines-for-support-person-designated-visitors/>

Highlights:

- Each resident can identify a support person and up to five designated visitors, and these six individuals should remain constant for the duration of the visiting restrictions.
- A support person/designated visitor can be a loved one, friend, paid caregiver, or other person of the patient/resident's choosing.
- All support persons/designated visitors will be provided a mask and are required to wear the mask for the duration of their visit. Visitors cannot wear their own mask.
- The support person/designated visitor must consult with the clinical care team or staff of the home to coordinate when the support person/designated visitor will be in attendance with the patient/resident.
- The support person/designated visitor may only visit once per day, as coordinated with the clinical care team of the patient/resident. When the individual leaves the facility that is considered the end of the visit for the day.
- A maximum of two people can visit per day, and two visitors can attend at the same time.
- The support person/designated visitor is to be provided education on the following:
 - screening process upon entry into the facility/home;
 - signs and symptoms of COVID-19;
 - proper hand hygiene;
 - donning and doffing of appropriate personal protective equipment;
 - physical distancing (to the greatest extent possible); and,
 - limiting their social interactions outside the home (people in their "bubble") to minimize their personal risk and risk to the patient/resident.
- The support person/designated visitor must not visit any other resident or staff and must go straight to the patient/resident room or visitation space.
- The support person/designated visitor is permitted to bring food into the facility/home for themselves or the patient/resident.
- For all visiting, support persons/designated visitor(s) must be screened upon arrival/prior to the visit beginning.
- Homes can choose from in-home, window or outdoor visiting, and identify a process amenable to the particular home and needs of residents.
- A designated visitor can take a resident for a drive in their car but the visitor should wear their mask at all times.



Nunavut

Link:

Nunavut does not appear to have any policies specific to residential care settings for people under 65 years of age. The following information relates to Continuing Care Centres and Elders' Homes.

<https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/news/covid-19-department-health-services-update>

Highlights:

- Continuing Care Centres (CCCs) and Elders' Homes will accept visitors on a limited basis.
- Each resident or inpatient may have no more than two visitors at once, and visitors shall be restricted to immediate family members only (which includes grandchildren and great-grandchildren).

Northwest Territories

Link:

There is no policy for residential care (group home) settings as these do not exist in the Northwest Territories. There are a few individuals living in long-term care (LTC) settings. The most recent updates regarding visits and visitor exemptions for LTC settings is available at:

<https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-updates/visitor-restrictions-and-processes-during-covid-19>

Highlights:

- There are no individuals living in group home settings.
- Individuals living in their own homes, can do visits within the general guidelines for all Territorial residents.
- Families are coming for distanced porch visits.
- Masks are encouraged.



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A few people with developmental disabilities live in long-term care (LTC) settings.

- In LTC, families are just starting to be allowed to do a distanced visit outside on a porch or deck.
- Allows 1 essential visitor, who must be over 18 years of age.
- Visitors will be required to go through screening, sanitize their hands, wear a medical mask, and keep physical distancing while they are visiting.
- LTC visitor exemptions may include 'patients' with intellectual/developmental disabilities (visitors include both family and caregivers).

Yukon

Link:

Yukon does not appear to have any policies specific to residential care settings for people under 65 years of age. The information below relates to the territory's five long-term care homes.

<https://yukon.ca/en/news/june-12-2020-covid-19-update>

Highlights:

- Outdoor visits for long-term care residents are now permitted with the release of a staged plan for the reopening of long-term care facilities in Yukon to visitors.
- Currently residents can identify one visitor with whom they can visit in a pre-set outdoor location.
- The reintroduction of visitors is staged over four phases. Phase 2 will permit two outdoor visitors at the same time.



Key Learnings

- The majority of provinces and territories do not have policies specific to residential care settings for people with developmental disabilities. Many are currently following long-term care guidelines. In some provinces and territories, residential care settings for people with developmental disabilities are licensed by the same government department responsible for long-term care homes. While there are some similarities between these two types of settings, and the vulnerabilities of people within those settings, there are also some key differences. In some cases, there does not appear to be a standardized policy, with each residential care setting responsible for creating their own rules.
- Visitor policies are not always readily accessible online, and in some cases can only be located by contacting government representatives. Some individuals expressed frustration about the lack of clarity around visitation policies and in some cases described having to contact individual homes before each visit to confirm their rules. Policies are often changing frequently and quickly.
- Rules about the number of visitors, frequency, duration, and location of visits varies between jurisdictions. This is expected to some extent, as the number of active COVID-19 cases, and risk of community transmission varies between provinces and territories.
- Requirements for scheduled visits, screening upon entry, maintaining physical distancing and practicing hand hygiene are common across most settings. Requirements for use of non-medical or surgical masks varies between jurisdictions. Outdoors visits generally offer more flexibility in terms of number of visitors than indoor visits. Maintaining physical distance and/or wearing a mask may be challenging for some people with developmental disabilities. Some provincial/territorial policies do not outline how to allow family visits to occur safely when these requirements are difficult to follow. This leaves people who may urgently need family connections for their mental and physical health, at risk of being denied essential visits.

Considerations Moving Forward

- There has been significant attention drawn to people living in long-term care setting but relatively little focus on people with developmental disabilities living in congregate care settings such as group homes. As a result, there have been limited discussions on the current policies in these congregate settings, or the impact of these policies.
- Some individuals with developmental disabilities are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 and dying from it. Others experience less medical risk from COVID-19 complications but are more at risk of detrimental mental and physical health consequences of isolation, due to COVID-19 based restrictions.
- Isolation and lack of connection to essential family caregivers places people with developmental disabilities at increased risk for neglect or abuse and can leave them without access to those who may be best equipped to understand and interpret their needs and unique communication styles.



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- In these situations, families and other key supporters are not just social visitors, but essential partners in care. Finding the right balance of ensuring access to key supporters, while also mitigating the risk of COVID-19 transmission, is key.
- Some key questions to consider include:
 - Who determines visiting policies for residential care settings for people with development disabilities?
 - Should these rules be the same as long-term care settings?
 - Should providers be allowed to establish their own rules?
 - Who does someone go to if they think their rights are being violated?
 - How do current policies balance different types of risk (for example: risk of transmission vs. risk of detrimental mental health outcomes due to isolation)?
 - How can people across Canada communicate more effectively to share best practices?
 - How are current policies impacting individuals, staff, and families?

In July 2020 the National Institute on Ageing released [*Finding the Right Balance: An Evidence-Informed Guidance Document to Support the Re-Opening of Canadian Long-Term Care Homes to Family Caregivers and Visitors during the COVID-19 Pandemic*](#). The document is focused on long-term care settings, but offers valuable insight into the principles that should guide the development of visitor policies in other congregate settings as well. This document, and others like it, have been developed through collaborative processes that bring together multiple stakeholders including mental health experts, infectious disease experts, people with disabilities, and family advocates.

A similar process is required to design safe, flexible, equitable, rights-based policies for people with developmental disabilities in residential care settings. While there are valuable lessons to be learned from the long-term care sector, policies cannot simply be applied to people with developmental disabilities without appreciating the unique needs.