

“Reopening” Children’s Ministry in a COVID-19 World

As churches consider reopening in-person gatherings, the safety of children is paramount, and extra precaution is necessary and appropriate. This document will help you ask the right questions as you plan for reopening your in-person children’s ministry. Each state and province has different rules and guidelines, and there is not a one-size solution that fits all. Check with your local authorities, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)), the Public Health Agency of Canada (canada.ca/en/public-health.html), or the World Health Organization ([who.int](https://www.who.int)) for the most up-to-date information and guidelines.



Christian Reformed Church
**Faith Formation
Ministries**

Suggested General Ministry Considerations

- With slow openings and limitations on the use of nurseries and children’s church in some locations, consider how your church engages in intergenerational worship. This is the perfect opportunity to show children that they are part of Christ’s body. Check out Faith Formation Ministries’ [Ten Ways to Strengthen Intergenerational Worship](#) for ideas.
- How can we help reset expectations during this unique season? Who can help us look for new and creative ways to accomplish our goals? How can we communicate that the things we are doing differently now may or may not continue into the future?
- Is it possible to open the ministry in phases? Have we considered what schools, childcare centers, and preschools are doing in our area? Do we have the capacity to move children’s ministry activities outside during the summer?
- Have we checked with our insurance company regarding any legal or liability issues?
- How sustainable and flexible is our plan? Do we have contingency plans in case circumstances change? When and how will we evaluate how this plan affects all involved?
- How will we communicate if a child, parent, or volunteer tests positive for COVID-19? What are the contact tracing requirements set by our state/province? Do we have an accurate registration process in place for all volunteers and participants in nurseries and children’s ministries?
- How can we balance the need for opening ministries with the feasibility of having enough staff and volunteers? What will we do if we do not have enough volunteers to staff the rooms?

Questions Related to Children and Parents

- How can we lessen anxiety for children and/or parents coming back to our facility? Could we continue live-streaming services for those who are not yet comfortable attending in person?
- What are the guidelines from our province/state and our insurance company regarding admitting children into the building? Are there mask requirements? Do we need to take temperatures? What are the recommendations for accessible hand washing/sanitizing?

- Is it possible to pre-register children, limiting the number of children in a room at one time?
Could we designate a drop off/welcome area so parents avoid entering classrooms or nurseries?
Is it possible to have only one parent/guardian/caregiver checking their child in?
- How can new procedures be communicated to parents before they arrive at the building?

Thinking about Children's Ministry Area/Rooms

- Is it necessary to control entry into the children's ministry area? Is it possible to have a single point of entry and a separate point of exit?
- Would a checklist be helpful to remember what needs to be cleaned and how often for each room and in the entire ministry area?
- What does the state/province require in terms of cleaning? Will all toys, surfaces, doors, water fountains etc. need to be cleaned between uses? How can we wash soft toys (such as cloth books or stuffed animals)? Is it possible to deep clean the entire children's ministry area before opening? What nonessential items could be removed from each room? Have we checked the CDC/PHAC guidelines for childcare centers, community centers, and religious organizations?
- What supplies should be on hand before we reopen? How much facial tissue, soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, etc. should be stocked?

Questions Related to Volunteers

- Who can volunteer? Are there risks to certain people that might keep them from volunteering?
- What are the places volunteers are needed, and how many should be in each room? Do we need extra volunteers to assist and calm children?
- What is the best way to communicate with volunteers and make sure they understand these new procedures? How are appropriate social distancing and sanitation issues (including hugs, hand-washing, bathroom visits, etc.) best explained? Can we provide mandatory training for all volunteers that includes safe church practices and health standards?
- What does the state/province require of those working with children? Are they required to wear masks or have their temperatures taken? Is it possible to have extra masks available?
- What would it entail to take the temperature of volunteers and/or children? Is there a nurse or doctor in our congregation who might be able to assist us?

For more about children's ministry, email us at childrensministry@crcna.org, follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/groups/crcchildrensministry/ and subscribe to our [Children's Ministry Newsletter](#).