

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre - North York

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre ♦ Northview Advent Child Care

Weather Alerts Policy

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York is required to provide at least two (2) hours of outdoor play time, weather permitting, for children attending our programs for at least 6 hours or more, as stated in the *Child Care and Early Years Act 2014*. With our changing climates, Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York takes every precaution in order for children to have a safe, healthy and meaningful outdoor play.

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York staff will assess outdoor play time in the event of extreme heat alerts, smog alerts, and extreme cold alerts by:

- Checking the local weather forecast.
- Assessing the actual temperature, Humidex, air quality and wind chill.
- Modifying outdoor time if necessary.

SUN SAFETY

In hot weather conditions, outdoor play will be reduced when temperatures are above 30C. Exposure to extreme heat, humidity and smog can be hazardous or even life-threatening to children. Sunburns, feeling unwell, headache, nausea, and dizziness are signs and symptoms of hazardous hot weather conditions.

The City of Toronto may advise of a heat alert when the combination of heat, Humidex, UV Index and other weather conditions become dangerous to health.

It is important for children to be active and get fresh air; however, if there is a heat or smog alert, it is recommended that outdoor time be reduced for children. When children exercise outdoors during a heat or smog alert, their body temperature may get very high and their bodies work extra hard to keep cool. In these instances, outdoor activities should be planned in a shaded area whenever possible. Staff in charge will consider more than one factor when making a decision about the length of time children spend outdoors.

In the event of hot weather, Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York will take the following precautions:

- Outdoor play will be reduced
- Staff will assist children to apply sunscreen prior to going outdoors.
- Children will be provided with water to stay hydrated
- Outdoor activities will take place in shaded areas when possible.

Smog typically forms between May to the end of September but it is possible to have winter episodes of smog. Afternoons and early evenings are the peak times for smog formation during the day.

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre - North York

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre ♦ Northview Advent Child Care

SMOG AND AIR QUALITY

The quality of air has an impact on our health. The Ministry of Environment monitors air quality in Ontario and provides daily an Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) reading online at: <http://www.airqualityontario.com/aqhi/index.php>

Air Quality Health Index Low Risk (1-3)

If the AQHI is in the low risk range of 1-3, it is the ideal air quality for outdoor activities and children can enjoy usual outdoor activities.

Air Quality Health Index Moderate Risk (4-6)

If the AQHI is in the moderate risk range of 4-6, there is no need to modify usual outdoor activities unless symptoms of coughing and throat irritation arise. Strenuous activities should be reduced or rescheduled if there are signs of the above symptoms.

Air Quality Health Index High Risk (7-10)

If the AQHI is in the high-risk range, outdoor activities should be reduced for children.

Air Quality Health Index Very High (Above 10)

If the AQHI is in the very high-risk range, outdoor play should be avoided for children. *If a smog warning has been issued and the current AQHI is High – Very High risk, then outdoor time will be cancelled.*

SUNSCREEN

Children's skin is thinner than adults and is more sensitive to UV rays and makes them a higher risk for over-exposure to sunlight. Without proper prevention and over time, the risk for skin damage is increased, therefore making protection for children from these harmful rays' imperative.

Important Facts:

- Use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher that gives protection from both UVA & UVB rays
- Sunscreen with an SPF 15 is the *minimum* protection recommended.
- Burn time without sunscreen 10 minutes
- Remember that, while UVB rays are most damaging from 10 am to 4 pm, UVA rays are also of concern and are present throughout all the daylight hours.
- Use a sunscreen even on cloudy, hazy or foggy days.

Parents are required to apply sunscreen to their child upon arrival to the child care centre. Child care staff will reapply sunscreen on children after PM snack for afternoon.

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre - North York

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre ♦ Northview Advent Child Care

COLD WEATHER

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York continues to offer outdoor play time to children even in the winter time. It is important for children to participate in outdoor activities even when the weather is cold outside. There are many benefits for winter outdoor play:

- Breathe Fresh Air: most viruses and germs are circulated in closed environments and going outdoors for fresh air may help decrease exposure to germs and bacteria.
- Strengthen Immune System: being outdoors will help children develop stronger autoimmune systems and resistance to allergies.
- Engage in physical activity: children have the opportunity to stay active in the winter time.

Parents need to provide their child with the appropriate attire for outdoor play; warm coat, snow boots, snow pants, gloves, scarf and hat. With the proper attire, children will have a more enjoyable outdoor play time.

In the event of extreme cold weather, Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York staff will monitor local weather conditions to determine how long outdoor play should be.

When the temperature and/or wind chill factor indicates -6C to -10C, outdoor play time will be shortened to 20 minutes.

When the temperature and/or wind chill factor indicates -10C or lower, outdoor play will be cancelled and staff will provide indoor gross motor activities.

SEVERE WEATHER EMERGENCIES AND CHILD CARE CLOSURE

Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York is committed to running our programs on all scheduled days. However, we recognize that emergencies may occur such as the breakdown of essential services (hydro, heat and/or water) or there may be days of severe weather. In these situations, we must consider the safety of all children and staff when we make difficult decisions regarding early or full day closures of the child care centres.

If **Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York is required to close the centre due to an emergency situation or if the TDSB decides to close, the staff of Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York will do their best to inform parents as early as possible. Parents are also asked to call into their specific centre on severe weather days to confirm that their centre is open. Centre voicemails will be updated regularly to keep families informed. **Northview Heights Early Learning Centre – North York** will also send a SMS via HiMama to inform the parents that we will be closed as soon as we are notified.*