

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES CIRCULAR

**Date:** January 21, 2021

**CIRCULAR NUMBER:** COVID-19 2021-02

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**To:** Early Learning and Child Care facilities

**Subject:** In-person meetings and gatherings

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**Type:**  Policy

Procedure

**Effective Date:** Immediately

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In recent weeks, the province has received several inquiries from early learning and child care facilities asking whether in-person meetings, group tours, open houses, etc. are permissible under the current public health orders.

While child care facilities are exempt from the order prohibiting more than five people from gathering, this exemption is for the purpose of providing a safe early learning environment to support programming and service delivery. It allows facilities to continue to care for more than five children at a time. Facilities are not permitted to hold gatherings of more than five people for other purposes or after hours, and are encouraged to use virtual means for meetings, tours, etc.

While the current [ELCC Practice Guide](#) does allow volunteers and visitors, this was to support activities and programming in facilities, and was recommended that this be limited to the greatest extent possible. The Government of Canada's [Risk Mitigation Tool for Child and Youth Settings Operating during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) recommends limiting or restricting non-essential visitors/guests and establishing a process for essential visits. As well, public health officials continue to ask that Manitobans only leave their homes for essential purposes.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the health and safety of children, staff, and others who access your program.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Manitoba, visit [www.manitoba.ca/COVID19](http://www.manitoba.ca/COVID19).