

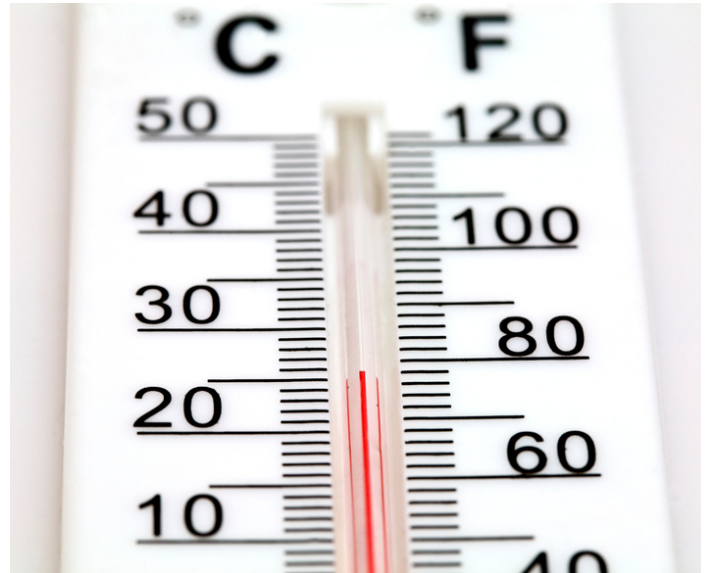
Child Care Facilities and Heat

Why should I pay attention to heat?

Extreme heat can trigger a variety of heat-related illnesses including dehydration, heat exhaustion and **heat stroke**, a medical emergency that can lead to permanent disability or death.

Infants and young children are especially sensitive to the health effects of heat, particularly those with pre-existing conditions or who take certain medications.

Making sure that children have a way to stay cool and drink plenty of water is the best way to prevent heat-related illnesses.



Signs of heat exhaustion:

- New skin rash
- Heavy sweating
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid breathing & heartbeat
- Headache
- Difficulty concentrating
- Muscle cramps
- Extreme thirst
- Dark urine & decreased urination

If possible, move them to a cool space. Give them water to drink. Loosen or remove clothing. Cool their body with water, e.g. wet their clothes, apply wet towels, provide a cool shower. Continue cooling and hydration until symptoms resolve. If symptoms do not resolve or progress to signs of heat stroke call 911.



Signs of heat stroke:

- High body temperature (above 38°C)
- Fainting or decreased consciousness
- Confusion
- Lack of coordination
- Very hot and red skin

CALL 911 OR SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION.

If possible, move them to a cool space. Loosen or remove clothing. Quickly begin cooling their body with cool water, e.g. wet their clothes, apply wet towels, provide a cool sponge bath or shower. Continue applying cool water and watch them until 911 or medical personal arrive.



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What can I do to prepare for the heat season?

- It is recommended that child care facilities expand their emergency plan to include a **plan to respond to extreme heat**.
 - Prepare staff** to recognize the signs of heat illness and know when it is an emergency.
 - Know where to get official information on heat alerts.
 - Environment Canada [Public Weather Alerts for British Columbia](#)
 - Environment Canada [WeatherCAN App](#)
 - Learn about ways to **keep the building cool** during the summer. Some examples include:
 - Install exterior window shading or glazing to reduce sun penetration into the indoor space.
 - Plant trees on the side of the building where the sun hits the building during the hottest part of the day and use trees to create shade in the outdoor play space.
 - Contact a professional to install a green roof on the building.
 - If passive cooling (e.g. outdoor shading or glazing, closing blinds, opening windows and using fans to bring outdoor air in during the evenings) is not enough to keep your building comfortable, consider installing an energy efficient active cooling system (i.e. heat pump) to be used on hot days. Ideally temperatures should be below 26 degrees indoors.
 - If the entire facility cannot be cooled, consider creating a specific cooling room with air conditioning where children can cool off for a few hours on hot days.
 - If the building has air conditioning, make sure it works properly before the hot weather starts.
- Look up nearby locations to visit where children can cool off for a few hours a day during extreme heat events
- (e.g. a public library, community center, shaded park, etc.).



Child Care Facilities and Heat

What should I do during a heat alert?

- Check the latest **heat alert information** and weather forecast.
- Pay close attention** to how children are feeling and watch for signs of heat-related illness.
- Give children **plenty of water**.
- Keep the children and indoor space cool.**
 - Keep shades and blinds closed during the day.
 - If you don't have air conditioning, close windows around 10:00am to trap the cooler air inside and open windows and doors around 08:00pm to let the cooler overnight air in.
 - Use multiple fans strategically to help move cooler air into the space overnight if possible
 - Prepare meals that don't need to be cooked in an oven.
 - Make sure children and staff are dressed for the weather with loose fitting, light-coloured and breathable clothing.
 - Reschedule outdoor activities to cooler times of the day and avoid sun exposure when outside.
 - If the building is hot:
 - Provide sprinklers outdoors.
 - Apply cool water or wet towels to the skin or have the children wear wet shirts.
 - Give children a break from the heat by ensuring they spend a few hours in a cool place (e.g. air conditioned room, community center, library, tree-shaded area etc.).

Note: Fans cannot effectively reduce body temperatures or prevent heat-related illness in people at risk. Do not rely on fans as your primary cooling method during an Extreme Heat Emergency.

Heat Events and Wildfire Smoke

Wildfire smoke and heat events can often occur at the same time. Overheating is more dangerous than smoke exposure for most people at risk. Cool and clean indoor air is the best way to protect from negative health impacts. See resources for additional steps to take during smoke events.



Risk of Window Falls

Window falls are more common during hot weather when windows are open to cool buildings. Between 2016-2020, trauma centres across BC admitted 81 children after falling from windows or balconies, often with life-altering consequences. Childcare operators and staff can help reduce these injuries by installing window guards or window stops, and sharing information with families (see Resources below).



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Heat Resources

<u>Online Weather Alerts for BC (ECCC)</u>	Online weather alerts. Environment and Climate Change Canada is the weather source used by government, emergency management and the health system.
<u>WeatherCAN App (ECCC)</u>	Cell phone notifications for weather alerts issued for your saved locations. Environment and Climate Change Canada is the weather source used by government, emergency management and the health system.
<u>Keep Children Cool (Health Canada)</u>	Resource on protecting children from extreme heat
<u>Extreme Heat Webpage (Fraser Health)</u>	Information for the public, community partners and health professionals regarding extreme heat, including a number of links to public factsheets and resources
<u>Extreme Heat Poster (Fraser Health)</u>	A poster describing heat-related illness and actions to take during a heat event (translated) .
<u>Heat-related Illness in Infants and Young Children (HealthLink BC)</u>	Signs of heat-related illness in young children and actions to take for each age group (translated) .
<u>Safety for Infants and Young Children During Extreme Heat (HealthLink BC)</u>	How to prevent heat-related illness and dehydration in young children (translated) .
<u>Staying Healthy in the Heat Infographics (Health Canada)</u>	Three 1-page cartoon infographics: “Signs and Symptoms”, “Who’s at Risk” and “Safety Tips”
<u>Heat Resources for Buildings and Tenants (BC Housing)</u>	Resources for managing heat in facilities and buildings.
<u>Fans in Extreme Heat FAQ (Fraser Health Authority)</u>	Fans should not be used as the primary source of cooling for susceptible people in hot indoor environments. Learn how to effectively use fans.
<u>Cool Kits (Vancouver Coastal Health and City of Vancouver)</u>	How to make a Cool Kit: Everyday items to cool the body during heat events (translated) .
<u>Wildfire Smoke Webpage (BC Centre for Disease Control)</u>	Resources for wildfire smoke, including people at risk, health impacts, recommended actions and what to do when there is smoke and heat at the same time (translated) .
<u>Health Checks During Extreme Heat (National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health)</u>	How to check on family, friends, neighbours, coworkers and others during heat events.
<u>Window Safety for Children (Fraser Health)</u>	Tips to prevent falls from windows and balconies.