

# The impact of COVID-19 on eating environments and activity in early childhood education and care in Alberta, Canada: A cross-sectional study <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## Excerpted from abstract

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) environments influence children's early development and habits that track across a lifespan. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of COVID-19 government-mandated guidelines on physical activity (PA) and eating environments in ECEC settings. This cross-sectional study involved the recruitment of 19 ECEC centers pre-COVID (2019) and 15 ECEC centers during COVID (2020) in Alberta, Canada (n = 34 ECEC centers; n = 83 educators; n = 361 preschoolers). Educators completed the CHEERS (Creating Healthy Eating and activity Environments Survey) and MEQ (Mindful Eating Questionnaire) self-audit tools while GT3X+ ActiGraph accelerometers measured preschooler PA. The CHEERS healthy eating environment subscale was greater during COVID-19 ( $5.97 \pm 0.52$ ;  $5.80 \pm 0.62$ ;  $p = 0.02$ ) and the overall score positively correlated with the MEQ score ( $r = 0.20$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ). Preschoolers exhibited greater hourly step counts ( $800 \pm 189$ ;  $649 \pm 185$ ), moderate-to-vigorous PA (MVPA) ( $9.3 \pm 3.0$  min/h;  $7.9 \pm 3.2$  min/h) and lower sedentary times ( $42.4 \pm 3.9$  min/h;  $44.1 \pm 4.9$  min/h) during COVID-19 compared to pre-COVID, respectively ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings suggest the eating environment and indices of child physical activity were better in 2020, which could possibly be attributed to a change in government-mandated COVID-19 guideline policy.

**Region:** Alberta <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** physical activity <sup>[4]</sup>

COVID-19 <sup>[5]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 1 Dec 2021):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/21/12/impact-covid-19-eating-environments-and-activity-early>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/21/12/impact-covid-19-eating-environments-and-activity-early> [2]

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