

Health & Safety Guidance for Open Early Learning Programs

For early learning programs that remain open and for schools providing child care, it is crucial to minimize the risks of spreading the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

The following guidance is designed to help maintain health and safety standards and social distancing directives while providing much needed child care service.

This information is based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) as of August 21, 2020.



Health & Safety Tips

A child care program must have a written health and safety plan that aligns with CDC guidance to minimize the risk of COVID-19. The safety plan must be communicated to staff and enrolled families.

Please see the Child Care Facility COVID-19 [Health and Safety Plan Template](#) for developing a health and safety plan.

Face Masks

- In the state of Pennsylvania, the following order was signed on April 19, 2020, regarding all patrons and employees wearing masks: bit.ly/WorkerSafetyOrder_PA (PDF).
- All child care staff are required to wear face coverings while providing care.
 - Children 2 years old and older are required to wear a face covering as described in the [Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Order for Universal Face Coverings](#), unless you fit one of the exceptions included in Section 3 of the Order.
 - A face covering should not be used on children younger than age 2.
 - A cloth face covering is not a substitute for social distancing: bit.ly/DIYclothfacemasks_CDC (web).

Staff Considerations

- The following individuals are encouraged not to provide child care during this time:
 - adults 65 years of age and older;
 - people who have serious underlying medical conditions like: heart disease; diabetes; lung disease; immune disorders; and pregnant women; and
 - anyone (who provides home-based child care) who lives with a household member who has any of the conditions described above.

Delivery & Drop-Off Procedures

- When possible, stagger arrival and drop off times.
 - Children and parents should be screened in a separate entrance or met at the door so only the child enters the program.
- Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off the child every day.
 - If possible, older people such as grandparents should not drop off their children.
- Hand washing or sanitizing stations should be set up at the entrance of the facility.

- **Conduct a daily health screening for staff and children receiving care:**
 - Screen children and staff for cough or shortness of breath upon arrival each day.
 - It is strongly recommended that you take the temperature of all children and staff at check-in. No-touch methods are preferred to reduce contact.
 - People with a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should be sent home until they have had no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., Advil, Tylenol).
 - Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of infection, which could include flushed cheeks, fatigue, extreme fussiness, etc.
 - Exclude children, staff, parents and guardians from sites if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- **Do not allow outside visitors and volunteers into your facility.**

Classroom Environment | Social Distancing Strategies

- **Class Size**
 - Maintain state required child:staff ratios.
 - Spaces for children should be structured to follow social distancing guidelines (six feet apart).
- **Schedule/Placement**
 - Whenever possible, the same early educators should remain with the same group each day.
 - Alter schedules to reduce mixing groups (e.g. stagger large muscle room/outside time).
 - Programs with sufficient space should place children six feet apart at naptime as much as possible.
 - Masks should not be worn on children while napping.

Hygiene & Sanitation Guidelines

- **All children, staff, and volunteers should engage in hand hygiene at all times.**
 - Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used.
 - Supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
 - Sanitizer is not to be used as a substitute for handwashing when soap and running water are available.
 - Place posters describing handwashing steps near sinks.
 - Developmentally appropriate posters in multiple languages are available from the CDC: bit.ly/HandWashing_CDC (web).

- **If your workplace, school, or business has been unoccupied for 48 hours or more, it will only need your normal routine cleaning to reopen the area.**
 - COVID-19 has not been shown to survive on surfaces longer than this time.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces daily, as often as possible.**
- **Clean and sanitize all toys used at the end of each day.**
 - Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used, including items such as soft toys, dress-up clothes, and puppets.

Diluted Bleach Solution

- Two tbsp. bleach per quart of water in a spray bottle to disinfect surfaces.
- ½ cup bleach per gallon of water to disinfect toys.

Bleach spray should be completely air dried on surfaces to be fully effective.

Always keep out of reach of children.

- **Use bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags) that can be washed.**
 - Per child care licensing regulations, children's bedding is required to be stored separately.
 - This may be in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags.
 - Cots and mats should be labeled. Bedding that touches a child's skin should be cleaned weekly. Consider providing these items and washing daily.

References:

Caring for Our Children sets the national policy for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting educational facilities for children: nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/3.3 (web)

bit.ly/DisinfectionDecisionTool_CDC (PDF)

https://bit.ly/ReopeningAmericaGuidance_CDC (PDF)

Food Prep & Meal Service Guidelines

- **Children must wash hands prior to eating.**
- **Caregivers must wash their hands before preparing food and after helping children to eat.**
- **If a cafeteria or group dining room is typically used, serve meals in classrooms instead, where possible.**
- **If meals are typically served family-style, plate each child's meal to serve it so that multiple children are not using the same serving utensils.**
- **Practice social distancing at mealtimes, when possible.**

Pick-Up Procedures

- When possible, stagger departure and pick-up times.
- Ideally, the same parent or designated person should pick up the child every day.
 - If possible, older people such as grandparents should not pick up their children.
- Hand washing or sanitizing stations should be set up at the entrance of the facility.
- Conversations about a child's day are encouraged to be done by phone with parents or caregivers.
 - Handwritten notes or electronic communication are encouraged.

Resources

Prepare

Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 https://bit.ly/COVID19page_CDC (web)
- Pennsylvania Department of Health COVID-19 https://bit.ly/COVID19page_PADOH (web)

Update your emergency contact lists.

- Confirm contact info for families you serve, staff, and others you work with regularly.
- Ensure lists are accessible in key locations in your facility and digitally.
- Know how to reach your local or state health department in an emergency.

Communicate about COVID-19 to your families.

- Provide updates about changes to your policies or operations.
- Use all communication channels available to you, including direct communications (face-to-face, letters), electronic communications (your program's website or social media pages), and virtual parent meetings to share updates.
- It is critical to maintain confidentiality for staff and children.
- Make sure to plan ahead for linguistic needs, including providing interpreters and translating materials.

Procedures for Confirmed COVID-19 Case at Your Facility

- Consult with the PA Department of Health at: [1-877-724-3258](tel:1-877-724-3258).
- Contact OCDEL Western Region Office of Certification at: [1-800-222-2149](tel:1-800-222-2149) or [412-565-5183](tel:412-565-5183).

- Report new active cases of COVID-19 via the [Licensed Facility COVID Data Collection Tool](#).
- Complete this online form if a child or staff person in your program tests positive: bit.ly/COVID-19PositiveForm_ACDHS (form).

Other Resources

CDC Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Childcare Programs

https://bit.ly/EduAdminGuidance_CDC

CDC Supplemental Guidance for Childcare Programs That Remain Open

https://bit.ly/ChildCareGuidance_CDC

Providers Caring for Children of Essential Personnel During COVID-19

https://bit.ly/ChildCareGuidance_EssentialWorkers_PAKEYS

Let's Grow Kids: Coronavirus Resources

https://bit.ly/COVID19_LetsGrowKids

Parent And Caretaker Guide For Helping Families Cope With COVID-19

https://bit.ly/HelpFamiliesCope_COVID19

Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring The New Coronavirus

<https://bit.ly/JustForKidsCOVID19Comic>

Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus) - A Parent Resource (English Resource)

https://bit.ly/TalkToChildren_COVID19

Trying Together Resources

https://bit.ly/COVID19eceresources_TryingTogether

OCDEL Child Care Facility COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan template

<https://bit.ly/health-safety-plan-template>

SharedSource PA Coronavirus Resources

<https://bit.ly/shared-source-covid>

Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Health and Safety Systems Support Training Series

<https://www.pakeys.org/hstrainingseries>

Questions

Pennsylvania Department of Health

www.health.pa.gov

1.877.PA.HEALTH | 1.877.724.3258

Allegheny County Health Department

www.alleghenycounty.us/coronavirus

412.687.2243

United Way

www.PA211sw.org

Dial 2.1.1.

Text zip code to 898-211 (to receive text alerts)

Daily Drop-Off Checklist

- Adult washed/sanitized hands
- Child washed/sanitized hands
- Made a visual inspection of child for signs of infection
 - flushed cheeks
 - fatigue
 - extreme fussiness

- Asked if child is or was experiencing shortness of breath
- Took temperature

Daily Pick-Up Checklist

- Adult washed/sanitized hands
- Child washed/sanitized hands

Classroom Environment Checklist

- Children washed/sanitized hands
- In correct child:staff ratio per state regulations

Number of children:

Hygiene & Sanitation

- Double-checked that diluted bleach solution was secure
- Flyers/Posters about hand-washing posted near sink
- Reviewed flyers/posters about hand-washing with children
- Surfaces and toys have been cleaned and sanitized

Meals/Snacks

- Caregivers washed their hands before preparing food
- Children washed/sanitized hands prior to eating
- Children's meals were plated separately
- Meals were served in classroom
- Children were spaced six feet apart
- Caregivers washed their hands after helping children to eat
- Children washed/sanitized hands after eating

Napping

- Children's bedding was found stored separately and labeled
- Children are spaced six feet apart without masks on
- Children's bedding was laundered
- Children's bedding was stored separately and labeled