

Guidance for California Child Care Providers Caring for Children of Essential Workers during COVID-19

The following guidelines provide information and procedures on how child care programs and providers can safely provide care during the COVID-19 pandemic in California. Check for updates as new information and guidance develops.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Establish procedures for drop-off and pick-up to maintain social distancing. Consider moving the sign-in station outside the facility. Provide hand sanitizer or handwashing facilities to use before and after families sign in and out. Do not share pens. If check-in is electronic, clean and disinfect the screens or keyboards frequently.

Consider alternating drop-off and pick-up times for each small group to avoid a large number of people gathering outside the facility.

Limit entry to people who are essential for the care of children. Have office staff work remotely from home. No students, parent volunteers, or other visitors should enter the facility during shelter-in-place. Continue Individual Education Plans (IEP) for children with special needs.

Daily Health Screening

Conduct a health screening on each child before their parent leaves. Wear a mask during the health screening. Check children for fever and general signs of illness.

Exclude children and staff when they have symptoms of COVID-19, a temperature over 100.4 degrees F, and/or dry cough and shortness of breath; have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days; or are at high risk for COVID-19.

Children or staff who are sick with other illnesses meeting usual exclusion criteria should also stay home.

Hand Hygiene

Have children and staff wash their hands upon entering the facility and frequently thereafter. Follow strict hand hygiene procedures at all times. (See the CCHP poster *When to Wash Hands* poster based on the CFOC Standard 3.2.2.1: <https://cchp.ucsf.edu/content/when-wash-your-hands> and the CCHP poster *Wash Your Hands Properly* based on the CFOC standard 3.2.2.2: <https://cchp.ucsf.edu/content/wash-your-hands-properly>).

Use hand sanitizer (60%-95% alcohol) when soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty. Keep the sanitizer out of children's reach.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Disinfect high-touch surfaces including manipulative toys, door handles, light switches, and electronic devices. Create a schedule and tracking sheet for cleaning and disinfecting.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for child care and other facilities can be found at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

Step-by-step posters for child care providers for cleaning and disinfecting can be found on the California Childcare Health Program (CCHP) website:

Step-by-Step Cleaning for Child Care Programs: <https://cchp.ucsf.edu/content/step-step-cleaning-child-care-programs>

Step-by-Step Disinfecting for Child Care Programs: <https://cchp.ucsf.edu/content/step-step-disinfecting-child-care-programs>

Reminders for Using Disinfectants can be found on the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) website: https://apps.cdpr.ca.gov/schoolipm/iopubs/reminders_for_using_disinfectants.pdf

Other measures to avoid spreading disease include: wearing a mask (adults), covering your cough and sneeze, and keeping your hands away from your face.

Meals and Snacks

Eliminate family-style eating during the pandemic, and wear gloves when serving food to children. Serve food on individual plates for each child. Seat children at the table with more distance between them than usual (six feet, if possible). Make sure children wash their hands before and after they eat. Provide healthy meals, snacks, and beverages.

Guidance on Social Distancing

A group size of no more than 12 children is stated in many local health orders. Smaller groups reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Children and staff should not change groups or mix groups. Assign groups and teachers their own classrooms. In addition, lower child: staff ratios will decrease the number of exposed children if someone in the group becomes ill.

Plan activities for individual play and small groups that do not require close physical contact, waiting in line, or sharing objects.

Provide proper ventilation indoors. Open windows safely for fresh air.

Arrange furniture to allow for more social distancing. Place cots and cribs 6 feet apart, if possible, with children facing head to toe at naptime.

Refrain from hugging and shaking hands.

Encourage outdoor play so children get fresh air and physical activity. Disinfect high-touch outdoor play equipment.

Infants and Toddlers

It is not possible to care for infants or toddlers from a distance. Infants under one year of age are more vulnerable when sick with COVID-19. Wear a mask for close contact and when handling body fluids. Provide clean smocks for staff, and change children's clothing when soiled with secretions or body fluids.

Communicate with Families

Update emergency contact information. Inform families about your policies during the COVID-19 pandemic using posters, social media, group texts, and/or newsletters.

Children or Staff who Develop COVID-19 Symptoms

If a child or staff member becomes ill during the day with fever (100.4 degrees or higher), dry cough, and/or shortness of breath, isolate them, apply a mask, and notify their family to pick them up right away. Always provide supervision for ill children. If symptoms persist or worsen, call the child's health care provider for further guidance.

Require staff and family to inform the program immediately if diagnosed with COVID-19. Contact your local public health department, immediately, if you are aware of confirmed COVID-19 cases among staff or children. Your local public health department will provide guidance on when the infected person can return to the facility and if the facility needs to close.

The duration of closures due to COVID-19 illness in child care programs may depend on staffing levels, outbreak levels in the community, and severity of illness in infected individuals. Symptom-free children and staff should not attend or work at another facility, which would potentially expose others.

Employee Health and Safety

California employers are required to have an Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) to protect employees from all worksite hazards, including infectious diseases. Guidance from CAL/OSHA for child care programs: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Infection-Prevention-in-Childcare-Programs-Guidance.pdf>

COVID-19 Information and Resources

Centers for Disease Control (CDC): Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>

California Department of Social Services, Child Care Licensing Program: <https://cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/community-care-licensing>

California Department of Public Health (CDPH): <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>

FAQs from the CDC about children and the novel coronavirus: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>

Your local public health department has the latest information and advice for your geographic location, such as cases of confirmed COVID-19, school closures, and cancellations in your city or county: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/LocalHealthServicesAndOffices.aspx>