

Additional Considerations for COVID-19

COVID Modifications were added to some Caring for Our Children (CFOC) National Health and Safety Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This supplementary information helps the early care and education field adopt healthy and safe environments and practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

See below for information on the COVID Modifications and links to supplemental information from CDC, AAP, FDA, USDA, and other health and safety experts. Additional information is available from the California Department of Public Health and the CDSS Community Care Licensing Division.

Visitors to Child Care Settings

COVID-19 modification as of January 07, 2022

CFOC Standard 6.5.2.1 Drop-Off and Pick-Up

- Limit non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations with people who are not fully vaccinated, especially in areas when there is moderate-to-high COVID-19 community transmission.
- Develop procedures for parents and/or guardians to visit their children while maintaining prevention strategies.
- Home-based ECE programs with people living in or visiting the home are required to wear a mask while in the same room as children in care, regardless of vaccination status. Visitors and home residents that are not engaged in the care of children should also keep as much physical distance as possible when children are present.

Hand Hygiene

COVID-19 modification as of September 20, 2021

- Wash hands after touching or handling masks.

Family Style Meals for the Childhood Nutrition module

COVID-19 modification as of January 07, 2022

Programs may resume family style meals if the following implement strategies are followed:

- Children (2 years and older) and staff are required to wear a face covering until eating.
- Set up the table with serving dishes, water pitchers, and utensils prior to the meal.

- Seat children farther apart.
- Provide as much fresh air as possible.
- Wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Children eat outdoors or in well ventilated spaces.
- Clean and sanitize food surfaces before and after meals.

Programs should continue to:

- Serve meal components in serving sizes as specified in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Hold conversations at the table with children to guide their decisions about how much they want to eat.
- Ensure that children are not sharing food or touching each other during mealtime.
- Practice [physical distancing](#) during mealtimes.
 - Create smaller groups and stagger mealtimes if space is limited.
- Inform families of changes to mealtime practices and communicate how their children respond.

Socialization During Meals

COVID-19 modification as of January 07, 2022

Programs may resume family style meals if the following implement strategies are followed:

- Children (2 years and older) and staff are required to wear a face covering until eating.
- Set up the table with serving dishes, water pitchers, and utensils prior to the meal.
- Seat children farther apart.
- Provide as much fresh air as possible.
- Wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Children eat outdoors or in well ventilated spaces.
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 - Create smaller groups and stagger mealtimes if space is limited.

- Inform families of changes to mealtime practices and communicate how their children respond.

Bottle Feeding

COVID-19 modification as of July 13, 2021

Modifications for bottle feeding include:

- Continue to hold infants when bottle feeding. Physical distancing does not provide infants with the safety and comfort required for feeding.
- Staff can protect themselves, when feeding or holding infants, by wearing a large, washable apron, smock, or shirt that covers their clothes completely, and can be changed between infants. Wash these coverings daily.
- Wear long hair up so it is off the neck/collar and out of the face.
- Wear a mask and consider using goggles or a face shield when feeding a child, per facility and state/local public health guidelines.
- Have extra changes of clothing for children and staff available in case clothing is soiled during feeding. Follow guidance in CFOC [Standard 5.5.0.1](#) regarding storage and labeling of personal articles.

Fresh Air When Transporting Children

COVID-19 modification as of September 22, 2021

CFOC Standard 6.5.2.3 Child Behavior During Transportation

- Allow fresh air to pass through the vehicle through vents or windows while transporting children in and out of vehicles as weather permits.
- Minimize contact between vehicle drivers, other staff, and families. If possible, adults should stay at least 6 feet apart from each other.
- Masks and hand hygiene supplies should be readily available. Children (2 years and older) and staff should be encouraged to use hand sanitizer when boarding the vehicle/bus and wear masks.
- Open windows on transport vehicles (cars, vans, etc.) when safe to do so.
- Allow fresh air to pass through the vehicle through vents or windows as weather permits while transporting children.

Heating and Ventilation Equipment Inspection and Maintenance

COVID-19 modification as of September 22, 2021

CFOC Standard 5.2.1.1 Ensuring Access to Fresh Air Indoors

Improving ventilation is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy that can reduce the number of virus particles in the air.

- Consult with building facility staff or administrators to ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the recommended occupancy levels for each space.
 - Prior to returning buildings to service during the COVID-19 pandemic, building ventilation systems should be evaluated to ensure compliance with Indoor Air Quality standards and COVID 19 recommendations.
 - Clean and change filters as recommended by manufacturer for all air and water devices.
 - If system allows, ensure filters are MERV 13 or higher, as recommended by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).
 - Home-based programs should have good ventilation, ensure heating and cooling systems are inspected as described in this guidance, the systems are maintained in good repair, and any filters are changed on the recommended regular basis.
 - Find an experienced heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) consultant when considering changes to HVAC systems and equipment.
 - Ventilation system upgrades or improvements can increase the delivery of clean air, remove some potentially harmful particles, and reduce some childhood respiratory complications.

Sleeping Equipment and Supplies

COVID-19 modification as of September 20, 2021

- Allow additional square footage whenever possible during naptime, as children are unmasked and need to be further apart.
- Place children head to toe on alternating mats (or cribs).

Storage and Labeling of Personal Supplies

COVID-19 modification as of September 20, 2021

- Label and store masks separately when removed for eating and sleeping.
- Have more than one mask on hand so that you can easily replace a dirty mask with a clean one. Store wet or dirty masks in a sealed plastic bag or container. Store dry masks in a paper bag
- Place contaminated clothes or other personal items in a plastic bag and send home.

Drop Off and Pick Up

COVID-19 modification as of May 21, 2021

CFOC Standard 3.1.1.1 Conduct of Daily Health Check

CFOC Standard 3.6.1.1 Inclusion/Exclusion/Dismissal of Children

- Modify drop-off and pick-up procedures.
- Schedule children in the same cohort to arrive together.
- Assign staff for each cohort to welcome and screen them upon arrival.
- Stagger drop-off and pick-up times to limit direct contact with parents, and prevent children and families from crowding together.
- Remind staff and families to adhere to current masking and [physical distancing](#) recommendations.

Specifically:

- Plan drop-off and pick-up outside the facility.
- Curbside drop-off and pick-up should limit direct contact between families and staff members.
- If drop-off and pick-up cannot take place outside the facility, ask families to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer and to wear well-fitted masks.
- Encourage drop-off and pick-up by a consistent family member.
- Provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol next to sign in/out sheets. Keep hand sanitizer out of the reach of children.
- Have a supply of masks available at the entrance for children and families that do not have them.
- Limit staff who welcome and screen children at drop-off.
- Encourage families to be alert to signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick.

Child Behavior During Transportation

COVID-19 modification as of January 7, 2022

Consult local health officials and other state and local authorities, to the extent feasible, when making decisions about transporting children.

When transporting children:

- Allow fresh air to pass through the vehicle through vents or windows while transporting children in and out of vehicles as weather permits.
- Minimize contact between vehicle drivers, other staff, and families. If possible, adults should stay at least 6 feet apart from each other.
- ECE programs should supply face coverings and hand hygiene supplies. Children (2 years and older) and staff are required to wear a face covering and use hand sanitizer when boarding the vehicle/bus.
- Conduct a health check of all children and staff before they board the vehicle. Do not transport individuals who show signs of illness.

- Position children as far apart as possible on vehicles, preferably 3 to 6 feet apart, with one child per bench and no consecutive rows. If children are coming from the same home, they may sit together. If possible, ensure children sit 3 to 6 feet away from the vehicle operator.
- Reroute or stagger bus runs, where possible, to keep group size small and minimize potential exposure between children.
- Keep class groups together on bus runs to minimize potential exposure between different groups of children.
- Use visible cues, such as stickers on the floors, to guide children and offer gentle prompts to help them understand the new protocols.

Clean Vehicles Between Each Use

- Transportation staff should [clean and disinfect](#) vehicles between each use. Refer to CDC's recommended process using [products that are U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19](#). Make sure all surfaces are dry before children enter vehicles to prevent contact with chemicals.
- For seatbelts, and other child safety restraints, programs should use methods and products that are effective on COVID-19 and safe for use with the restraint system, particularly seatbelt webbing. Chlorine- or ammonia-based solutions may cause deterioration of safety restraint components and cannot be used. For cleaning guidelines, consult the vehicle or restraint system manufacturer.

Additional Resources:

American Academy of Pediatrics

- [Guidance Related to Childcare During COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 and Safe Transportation in Motor Vehicles](#)

American Society of Heating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)

- [ASHRAE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES: Resources to Address COVID-19](#)
- [Guidance for Building Operations During the COVID-19](#)
- [ASHRAE In-room air cleaner guidance for reducing COVID19 in air in your space/room](#)
- [Core Recommendations for Reducing Airborne Infectious Aerosol Exposure](#)

California Childcare Health Program

- [Healthy Air in Your Child Care Facility](#)
- [Healthy Air in Your Child Care Facility \(Poster\)](#)

Caring for Our Children Standards:

- [Standard 3.2.2.1 Situations that Require Hand Hygiene](#)
- [Standard 3.2.2.2 Handwashing Procedure](#)
- [Standard 3.2.2.5 Hand Sanitizers](#)
- [Standard 5.2.6.9 Handwashing Sink Using Portable Water Supply](#)
- [Standard 5.5.0.5 Storage of Flammable Materials](#)
- [Standard 5.6.0.3 Supplies for Bathrooms and Handwashing Sinks](#)
- [Standard 3.1.5.1 Routine Oral Hygiene Activities](#)
- [Standard 3.1.5.2 Toothbrushes and Toothpaste.](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [COVID-19 Guidance for Operating Early Care and Education/Child Care Programs](#)
- [Your Guide to Masks](#)
- [Use Masks to Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)
- [Food and coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Handwashing](#)
- [How to Clean, Sanitize, and Store Infant Feeding Items](#)
- [General Business Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19](#)
- [Ventilation in Schools and Childcare Programs: How to use CDC building recommendations in your setting](#)
- [Ventilation in Buildings](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K–12 Schools and Child Care Programs](#)
- [Guidance for Child Care Programs That Remain Open](#)
- [Child Care Decision Tool](#)
- [Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)
- [What Bus Transit Operators Need to Know About COVID-19](#)

Children's Environmental Health Network

- [How to Choose a Portable Air Cleaner](#)
- [COVID-19: INDOOR AIR QUALITY IN CHILD CARE FACILITIES](#)

Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center

- [Family Style Meals](#)
- [Child Care Food Handling Procedures During COVID-19](#)

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- [EPA Air Cleaners, HEPA Filters, and COVID](#)

- [Creating Healthy Indoor Air Quality in Schools](#)
- [EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools Guidance](#)
- [IAQ Tools for Schools: Preventive Maintenance Guidance](#)

Food and Drug Administration.

- [Is Your Hand Sanitizer on FDA's List of Products You Should Not Use?](#)

Harvard School of Public Health and UC, Colorado Boulder

- [Portable Air Cleaner Calculator for Schools](#)
- [Healthy Buildings for Health: 5-Step Guide to Checking Ventilation Rates in a Classroom](#)
- [Schools for Health: Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools](#), June 2020

New Jersey Department of Health

- [Guidance on Air Cleaning Devices for Indoor Spaces](#)

Office of Head Start.

- *Head Start Transportation Services and Vehicles During the COVID-19 Pandemic - ACF-IM-HS-20-04*

USDA

- [FNS responses to COVID](#)