

## Guidance for California Child Care Providers during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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. This guidance does not supersede applicable federal, state, and local laws and policies for child care programs. The guidelines will be updated when and if new information is available.

### Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Establish procedures for drop-off and pick-up to maintain physical 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. Ask parents to bring their own pens or clean pens between users. 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 nonessential visitors and postpone or cancel use of classroom volunteers. Continue Individual Education Plans (IEP) for children with special needs.

### Daily Health Screening

Conduct a health check on each child before their parent leaves. Wear a face mask during the health check. Ask about fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell within the last 24 hours. Consider each child's health history. For example, a child with documented allergies does not need to be excluded for allergy symptoms.

If you have a touchless thermometer, you can do a temperature screen of all staff and children at the beginning of the day. Wear gloves and use alcohol to disinfect the thermometer after each use.

If you do not have a touchless thermometer, ask families to take their child's temperature before coming to the facility. Staff and residing family members in family child care homes should also take their temperatures and check for COVID-19 symptoms as above before the child care day begins. Document each child's daily temperature.

Child care center staff should check their temperatures and for COVID-19 symptoms at home before coming to work.

If anyone, staff, child, or household resident, has a temperature of 100.4° F or higher or other signs of COVID-19 they must be excluded from the child care program and consult their health care provider.

Children or staff meeting usual exclusion criteria for illnesses other than COVID-19 should also stay home.

### **Children or Staff Who Develop COVID-19 Symptoms during the Day**

If you only have a digital thermometer, you may use it if you suspect a child or staff person has a fever. If a child or staff member becomes ill during the day with fever (100.4 degrees or higher) or other signs of COVID-19, isolate them, and notify their family to pick them up right away. The ill child (over 2 years old) or staff person needs to wear a face mask. Always supervise ill children and have the adult wear a face mask. If symptoms persist or worsen, call the child's health care provider for further guidance.

### **Hand Washing and Personal Hygiene**

Have children and staff wash their hands upon entering the facility and frequently thereafter. Follow strict hand hygiene procedures at all times. Display proper handwashing guidelines/posters for staff and children in bathrooms and near sinks. (See the CCHP poster *When to Wash Hands* 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 (with 60% or more alcohol) when soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty. Keep hand sanitizer out of children's reach.

Other personal hygiene measures to reduce the risk of spreading disease include:

- wearing a face mask (adults and children over two years old, if possible),
- covering your cough and sneeze,
- keeping your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Disinfect high-touch surfaces including manipulative toys, door handles, light switches, and electronic devices. Create a schedule and a 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](https://apps.cdpr.ca.gov/schoolipm/iopubs/reminders_for_using_disinfectants.pdf)

### **Meals and Snacks**

Make sure children wash their hands before and after they eat. Wear gloves when serving food to children. Serve food on individual plates for each child. Do not pass food in common bowls or share serving utensils. Use disposable plates and utensils when possible. Seat children at the table with more distance between them than usual (six feet, if possible). Clean and sanitize food surfaces, equipment used to prepare food, dishes, utensils, and other objects intended for the mouth. Provide healthy meals, snacks, and beverages.

Stop tooth brushing during child care hours. Encourage parents to regularly brush children's teeth at home.

**Guidance on Physical Distancing**

Smaller, stable groups reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and protect staff and children by limiting the number of exposed people if someone becomes ill. Include children from the same family in the same group, if possible. Children and staff should not change groups or mix groups. Assign groups and teachers their own classrooms. Should these guidelines differ from local health ordinances, follow the stricter guidance.

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. Ventilate the facility before and after children arrive.

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

Encourage outdoor play so children get fresh air and physical activity. Stagger indoor and outdoor play and adjust schedules to reduce the number of children in the same area. Disinfect high-touch outdoor play equipment.

Keep a distance of six feet when possible. Find creative ways for children to create their own space while staying socially engaged. Refrain from hugging and shaking hands.

***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 face-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. Collect mouthed toys and objects in a tub to clean and disinfect at the end of the day.

**Communicate with Families**

Update emergency contact information. Make sure asthma action plans and special health needs care plans are up-to-date. Note: Nebulizers are not recommended during the COVID-19 pandemic because they can increase the amount of the virus in the air. Inform families about your policies during the COVID-19 pandemic using posters, social media, group texts, and/or newsletters.

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

**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>

California Department of Public Health: COVID-19 Updated Guidance for Child Care Programs and

Providers <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-childcare.pdf>

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>