

CONSIDERATIONS FOR **FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS OFFERING EMERGENCY CARE** DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

FCC professionals play an important role during public health emergencies by offering care for children of medical personnel, first responders, and other essential staff. Because many FCC professionals play multiple roles (e.g., small business owner, family member, service provider) and because they often provide care in their own home, they face unique challenges related to operating under a public health emergency.

We have compiled the information below to help family child care providers who are responding to the critical need for child care for medical personnel and first responders in their communities.



Stay in touch with your CCR&R and/or subsidy and licensing agent. Communicate any program changes before you implement them. Temporary waivers and other arrangements may be available to you and the families you serve. Close communication with local and/or state leadership can also help you maximize these potential options and minimize potential challenges.



Determine a public health contact you can call directly for questions and reporting

You can search for one at: <https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/index.html>
Consult with public health experts about symptoms you should watch for in yourself and the children in your care that could indicate the presence of coronavirus.



Consider your hours of operation based on who you are serving. Programs that

serve medical providers, first responders, etc. often remain open 12 to 24 hours per day. Think about the adaptations you might need to make (e.g., sleep space, meals, etc.).



Consider your own health and the health of everyone in your household. Caregivers should check their temperature often (at least once daily) and self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, specifically fever, cough, and shortness of breath. They should monitor these signs and symptoms for those in their household as well. If the caregiver or anyone in the home has a fever of 100.4 or higher, the caregiver should alert the agency coordinating emergency child care (if there is one) and ask for guidance. They should not care for children in their household until they receive that guidance, or until the caregiver or household member with a fever has received a negative test for COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing quickly, so check the following sources frequently to obtain the most up-to-date information. These organizations and individuals have reliable information you can use to guide your decisions:

- [Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization](#)
- [Local and state health officials](#)
- [State child care licensing](#)
- [OSHA](#)
- [Your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency](#)
- Local/State Child Care Health Consultants, if available



Be vigilant with cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting practices.

One of the most important steps in reducing the spread of infectious diseases in child care settings is cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting surfaces that could possibly pose a risk to children or staff. Routine cleaning with detergent and water is the most useful method for removing germs from surfaces in a child care setting. However, some items and surfaces require an additional step after cleaning to further reduce the number of germs on a surface to a level that is unlikely to transmit disease.

Sanitizers are products that reduce germs on inanimate surfaces to levels considered safe by public health codes or regulations. A sanitizer may be appropriate to use on food contact surfaces and toys that children may place in their mouths.

Disinfectants are products that destroy or inactivate germs on an inanimate object. A disinfectant may be appropriate to use on non-porous surfaces such as diaper change pads, counter tops, door and cabinet handles, and bathroom surfaces.

Ensure that you have a sufficient quantity of cleaning and disinfecting supplies, and that those products are approved by Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control. You can find a list of approved products [HERE](#).



Disinfect high-touch hard surfaces throughout the child care program frequently,

including door handles, light switches, faucets, toys, and games that children play with.



Enhance daily deep cleaning in all areas used for caregiving,

but ensure that you are using cleaning products as recommended on the label. Stronger solutions (less dilution) may not be better.

- Do not offer toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized.
- Review cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting frequency, procedures, and equipment with all household members and helpers.
- Increase the availability of anti-bacterial hand sanitizers and disposable gloves.
- Increase the use of sanitizers for all electronic devices such as phones and iPads. They should be sanitized after each use.
- Consider ways to adapt meal service. If meals are typically served family-style, consider plating each child's meal. That practice ensures that multiple children are not using the same serving utensils.



Bleach is often the recommended sanitizing/disinfecting agent for child care programs and it is inexpensive.

When using bleach, (5-10% regular strength and unscented), follow the manufacturer's instructions for applying it and ensuring proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

To make a disinfecting bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water OR
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

If a surface is visibly dirty: First, clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent. Then use a disinfectant to kill germs.

Many disinfecting products recommend that you:

- Keep the surface wet for several minutes to ensure germs are killed. Follow the manufacturer's recommendation for necessary contact time of the product that you are using.
- Take precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation while you're using the product.



Isolation Procedures

- Review procedures to isolate or quarantine a sick child until they can be picked up. Stay in touch with and seek guidance from your licensing agent and/or your local CCR&R.
- Plan to have a quiet, comfortable isolation room/area that could be used for quarantine for a child who has become ill. After the child is picked up, be sure to disinfect/laundry anything in the area that the sick child may have come into contact with.



Follow Stringent Check-In/Drop-Off Practices

- Conduct daily health checks to include temperature checks for children at check-in while the parent is still on-site. For children, fever is defined as: 100.4 degrees when using a forehead thermometer, 99 degrees or higher with an armpit thermometer or 99.5 with an oral thermometer.
- Ask your local health department or child care health consultant (if available) for guidance/procedures on conducting daily health checks.
- Consider asking the child's parent/guardian questions about the child's household members at the time of enrollment and daily at drop-off:
 - Do you live with anyone or have you had close contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
 - Is anyone in your household showing signs of a communicable illness — a cold or flu, fever, cough and/or shortness of breath?



Limit the number of people who enter your child care program by limiting visitors to your home.



Do not take field trips and do not allow guests on site in order to limit exposure and follow social distancing guidelines.



Consider implementing a 'stay at home' collaborative agreement for child care families when they are not at your child care program. This social distancing practice will lessen the likelihood family members – and therefore their children – are exposed to COVID-19.



If at all possible, practice social distancing of children and separating children into smaller groups



Wash hands frequently (adults and children)

- **Upon arrival for the day**
- **Before and after:**
 - Preparing food or beverages
 - Eating, handling food or feeding a child
 - Giving medication or applying an ointment
 - Playing in water
- **After:**
 - Using the toilet or helping a child to use a toilet, or diapering
 - Handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood, vomit), including those you're exposed to from children sneezing, wiping or blowing their noses, or from mouths or open sores
 - Handling animals or cleaning up animal waste
 - Playing in sand, on wooden playsets and outdoors
 - Cleaning and handling the garbage

- CCAoA recommends reducing overall group size by at least half, to increase the square footage per child.
- If at all possible, keep 6 ft. of space between children, even when they are engaged in play activities and routines.
- Consider smaller groups for meal times (staggered schedules).



If you have staff/helpers who are not household members

mandate that those who are not feeling well stay home to prevent the spread of germs.



Be prepared to support employees based on their physical and mental health needs.



Establish policies on sick leave and compassionate leave during a pandemic.



Recommended practices for all caregivers (and their helpers):

- Consult with your physician and come forward if you believe that you are more susceptible to coronavirus.
- Get trained in proper disinfection techniques.
- Avoid sharing your phone, other devices, or your meal or eating utensils with one another or children.
- There is no need to wear a mask. Currently, they are not recommended due to: 1) a lack of data to support the benefit of wearing a mask if you're healthy and 2) regional shortages in masks urgently needed by front line staff in the health care industry.
- Communicate frequently and transparently with parents, including about your efforts to protect the children in your care. Use multiple channels of communication including email, newsletters and your website.
- Confirm plans for how you'll communicate with parents/guardians if you have a child who shows symptoms of, or is confirmed with, COVID-19.

Additional CDC Resources:

- [Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Childcare Programs](#)
- [Checklist for Teachers Planning and Preparing for COVID-19](#)
- [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)
- [EPA List of Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-COV-2](#)