



Preparing Child Care Programs for A Viral Outbreak

Adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics

Communication

During an outbreak, strong connections between child care and public health leaders is critical because recommendations can evolve rapidly. During a viral outbreak, such as the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, child care programs will need to plan for ways to both receive and share information with families and officials.

Planning strategies for communicating from your program to families may include:

- Keeping current a list of contact names, e-mail addresses and phone numbers of key family members for children served in your program.
- Keeping current a list of all program staff and volunteers, their alternate emergency contact, email addresses and phone numbers.
- Assigning responsibilities for who will call whom in what circumstances.
- Preparing and sharing a “telephone tree” for issuing information alerts.
- Preparing parents for ways they may receive updates from you in addition to phone or email

correspondence. Such methods may include via a social media site for your program, like Facebook.

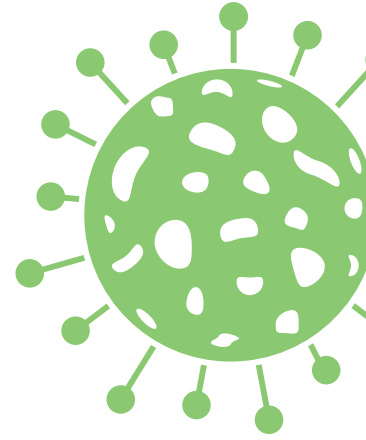
Planning strategies for sharing and receiving critical outbreak communication from officials (child care licensing, public health department, State Governor, city officials, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), for example) may include:

- Signing up for important infectious disease or other health alerts that your state or local public health department may offer.
- Being aware of outlets officials are likely to use to share important breaking news. Outlets may include radio and television stations, live online video streams or official social media accounts.
- Creating a list of contacts if you need to report an infectious disease incident. Contacts may include officials in child care licensing, state department for children and families, your state and local public health department or your state Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) administrator.

Training

Child care programs also should take steps to ensure their staff and volunteers are prepared and equipped with plans, information and resources for managing a viral outbreak. Consider making in person or online training sessions on virus prevention and control available to your team. Collaborate with local agencies to offer joint training opportunities. Also, engage professionals like pediatricians, child care health consultants and health department representatives in your training strategy. Training can achieve the following goals:

- Improve day-to-day preparedness.
- Increase knowledge about response plans for active outbreaks.
- Keep staff informed of ongoing community preparedness efforts.



Steps for Improving Preparedness

- Develop a written [emergency/disaster plan](#) that includes a process and timeline for updating the plan.
- Prepare handouts for staff and parents in advance. The CDC has posters and print outs that you may use, including topics like [COVID-19](#) and [influenza](#).
- Discuss the process for ordering supplies (and maintaining inventory) during times of staff absences or when there is an increased need for certain hygiene or cleaning supplies.
- Use seasonal influenza as an opportunity to practice preparedness and response efforts. A sample drill log for child care programs is available [here](#).
- Collaborate with community partners on preparedness activities or contingency planning.
- Collaborate with nearby child care programs or collaboratives on the use of substitutes, mass supply ordering, and/or training.
- Review criteria for and steps involved in facility closure.
- Implement steps to support families and employees in the development of [personal preparedness plans](#).

