



Summary of COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Settings

Updated: March 26, 2020

This document summarizes guidance from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Minnesota Department of Health as it relates to child care settings. Child care providers should continue to use the hotline (1-888-234-1268) for questions and concerns.

Best practices in all contexts:

- Ensure handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially upon children first arriving; after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Consider increased frequency of handwashing for children and staff.
- Ensure adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissue) to support healthy hygiene practices. The Children's Cabinet is working on partnerships to help with supply chain issues. Should you have issues, please email childrenscabinet.MMB@state.mn.us.
- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This may include cleaning objects and surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops). Ensure adequate cleaning supplies are kept on hand. Remove plush toys as they cannot be adequately cleaned.
- Implement social distancing strategies for rooms and movement through the building. For centers this could mean groups of 10 or fewer kids using common spaces like playgrounds and gyms at any given time and staggering the times when kids travel throughout the building. Additionally, keeping group sizes to 10 or fewer within a classroom is advised.
- Consider regular health checks of children and adults like checking temperatures at the time of drop off and throughout the day.
- Consider modifying caregiver drop-off and pick-ups so that they do not enter the child care setting. For example: pick-up child from their parent or caregiver in the entryway or from the vehicle.
- Require sick students and staff to stay home. Utilize the screening tool [here](#).
- Keep sick students and caregivers separate from well students and caregivers until they can leave. Plan to have areas where these individuals can be isolated from well students and staff until they can leave.

Food and Nutrition:

- Stagger meal times, as needed to maintain a group size of 10 or fewer and support social distancing.
- If possible, provide bagged or individual lunches. Catered meals are still acceptable.
- If possible, consider providing pre-approved, individually wrapped snacks.

Preparation:

- Keep up-to-date and stay informed about the COVID-19 outbreak by following the [Minnesota Department of Health](#).
- Plan ahead in case your program needs to close, decide how you will communicate with parents, staff and vendors.
- Additional resources are continually made available at <http://mn.gov/childcare>.

If there is a confirmed case in the building:

- If there is a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 in a staff or student identified as an exposure of concern (medium to high risk), public health officials will reach out to you to provide information and guidance on notifications and other infection prevention actions. Please contact MDH if you have questions so they can help determine the appropriate steps to take (MDH hotline: 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903).
- 2-5 day closure to clean, disinfect, and contact trace in consultation with local public health officials.
- Requires sick children and staff to stay home.
- Keep children who are sick in an isolated area (e.g. office) until a parent or caregiver is able to pick them up. Supervision must be maintained at all times.
- Follow the [guidance for schools and childcare](#) developed by the [Minnesota Department of Health](#).

“Stay In Place” Guidance for Childcare Providers Who Chose to Stay Open

On March 25, 2020, Governor Walz issued an Executive Order that directs Minnesotans to *Stay at Home* and limit movements outside of homes beyond essential needs for two weeks. This will be effective Friday, March 27 at 11:59 p.m. through Friday, April 10 at 5 p.m. The Executive Orders directing closures in our communities do not apply to child care providers. Caregivers and child care providers are expressly listed as critical sector exemptions. Essential activities of critical sectors and emergency workers include the transportation of children and families to a child care provider and caregiver transportation to and from home or other setting. However, each provider will need to determine for themselves whether they wish to remain open or to close during this public health emergency.

The Executive Order expressly encouraged child care providers to remain open to provide child care services to the critical sectors during the Stay At Home order period. Our guidance encourages those open to provide care for children of all essential workers in the Governor’s Stay at Home order, to prioritize space for children as capacity allows in this order (sectors further described below):

- Children of Tier 1 workers (age 0 to 5)
- Children of other essential workers (age 0 to 5), and
- School-age children of essential workers.

Schools are directed to provide school-age care to district-enrolled 5- to 12-year-olds to Tier 1 critical sectors. If they cannot do so, schools are asked to work with child care providers to identify and contract for this care if possible. All other families within the critical sectors (many groups beyond the Tier 1) will continue to need your services.

Tier 1:

- Healthcare and public health
- Law enforcement, public safety and first responders
- Food and agriculture, including groceries and essential supply stores
- Educators
- Childcare providers
- National Guard
- Judicial Branch

In addition to Tier 1, workers in critical sectors also include:

- Animal shelters and veterinarians
- Charitable and social services organizations
- Chemical
- Communications and information technology
- Construction and critical trades
- Defense industrial base
- Energy
- Faith leaders and workers
- Financial services
- Hazardous materials
- Hotels, residential facilities and shelters
- Labor Union Functions (Critical)
- Laundry services
- Legal services
- Manufacturing (Critical)
- Notaries
- Public works
- Real Estate Transactions
- Shelters for displaced individuals
- Essential Supply Stores
- Transportation and logistics
- Water and Wastewater
- Other community-based government operations and essential workers
- Executive Branch (priority services)
- Executive Constitutional Offices
- Legislative Branch (essential services)
- Federal employees
- Tribal Governments

Families are ordered to Stay At Home, other than exempted activities like going to the grocery store, doctor, walking outside or other activities [here](#); people working in critical sectors, are permitted to leave home if they need to do so for work. There is nothing in the order that specifically prohibits a family from taking their child to child care and if a provider wants to continue taking these children, the Executive Order does not expressly prohibit that; however, this is not keeping with the overall message and spirit of the order and goal to keep child care providers open for emergency workers. The Governor is asking people to stay home unless they are leaving for work in a critical sector, and, as a result, families you were previously serving may no longer utilize your care during the period of the Stay At Home order (through April 10).